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NEWS IN BRIEF

Echmiadzin



President Serge Sargisyan and his wife, Rita, attended Christmas Services at Holy Echmiadzin.

Pontifical Divine Liturgy for the Holy Nativity and Theophany in The Mother See of Echmiadzin

ECHMIADZIN – On January 6, on the Feast of the Holy Nativity and Theophany, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, celebrated a Divine Liturgy at the Mother Cathedral.

Under a canopy, a Pontifical Procession led the catholicos and President Serge Sargisyan, walked to the cathedral. The canopy bearers were Hrach Martikyan, Armenian-Sudanese benefactor; Armen Elbakyan, art patron in the Republic of Armenia; Hravard Hakobyan, art critic; and Tigran Nersisyan, celebrated actor.

Bishop Hovnan Hakobian, grand sacristan of the Mother Cathedral of Holy Echmiadzin, and Bishop Mushegh Babayan, operations director of the Mother See of Holy see CHRISTMAS, page 2

Damascus



Syrian Armenians light candles during the Christmas Day Mass at Airmen Orthodox church in Damascus (Reuters)

Remaining Armenians Pray for Peace at Christmas in Damascus

DAMASCUS (Reuters) – A small congregation of Armenian Orthodox Christians prayed for peace at a Christmas service in Old Damascus on Monday and reflected on the hardships of living in an uneasy middle ground in Syria's increasingly sectarian conflict.

They lamented a low turnout compared to previous years – many have fled Syria and others were unable to get through a maze of checkpoints and traffic bottlenecks to reach the church of St. Sarkis for Armenian Christmas, celebrated on January 6.

"You used to see this entire church courtyard full, but it's been fewer and fewer people every season," said one of the community organizers who, like all those interviewed for this article, asked to remain anonymous due to sensitivities.

"The trouble is many would have liked to come today but see DAMASCUS, page 16

Petition Aims to Change Verdict Supporting Genocide Denial

PARIS – The Coordination Council of Armenian Organizations of France (CCAF) has launched a petition asking Switzerland to appeal the most recent judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which found in December that Dogu Perincek, president of the Workers' Party of Turkey, could not be condemned for saying publicly in Geneva in 2007 that the "so-called Armenian genocide is an imperialist lie."

The letter says, in part, "In a decision of 17 December 2013, which will remain an absolute disgrace in the history of the European Court of Human Rights, this jurisdiction which has never so little deserved its name, decided to give reason to Dogu Perincek, the zealous and determined denier of the Armenian Genocide by proposing to condemn Switzerland for its infringement of freedom of expression!

"At present imprisoned in Turkey for taking part in the attempted coup by the Ergenekon organisation (which did not prevent Ankara from defending him before the ECHR in this particular case), Dogu Perincek had indeed claimed that the 'Armenian Genocide' was an 'international lie' at a series of meetings in Switzerland.

see PETITION, page 3

California Assemblyman Mike Gatto Introduces Resolution to Recognize Nagorno Karabagh

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Assemblyman Mike Gatto (D-Los Angeles) joined with people of Armenian descent around California and the world in calling for the United States to recognize the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic as a sovereign state this week. The resolution he introduced, AJR 32, invokes strong language from the United States' own history regarding the rights of the people to "self-determination and democratic independence." If Gatto's resolution passes, it would make California the most populous governmental entity to call for Nagorno-Karabagh recognition, or to recognize it outright.

In 1921, the Soviet Union illegally severed Nagorno-Karabagh, also known as Artsakh, from Armenia, and placed it under the newly created Soviet Azerbaijani administration. Seventy years later, the people there formed the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic. On January 6, 1992, the democratically elected legislature of the Republic formally declared independence. Since proclaiming independence, the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic has registered significant progress in democracy building, including a presidential election last year that was assessed by international observers as free and transparent.

Three organizations that have already expressed support for the legislation are the Armenian Council of America (ACA), the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), and the Unified Young Armenians (UYA).

Gatto has worked with each of these organizations on legislation he has authored in the past, including a resolu-

tion calling for US recognition of the Armenian Genocide and on legislation extending the statute of limitations for victims of the genocide to file insurance claims. The Assemblyman has also sup-



California Assemblyman Mike Gatto

ported events sponsored by each organization, including their stellar efforts to raise money for Armenians in need around the world. "The community is united in support of recognizing Nagorno-Karabagh," stated Gatto.

"It has been my privilege on this resolution to work with the leaders of the local Armenian American community and their outstanding representatives," said Gatto. "I am especially honored to introduce this legislation on a day when Armenians around the world are celebrating Christmas with family and loved ones."

see RESOLUTION, page 16

Smoking Rates among Armenian Men Third Highest in the World

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Despite anti-smoking campaigns and smoking bans in many places, researchers have observed more people smoke worldwide today than in 1980, said the findings in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, according to medindia.net.

The study, led by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington, measured data from 187 countries.

It found that the global smoking rate among men was 41 percent in 1980, but has since declined to an average of 31 percent. Among women, the estimated prevalence of daily tobacco smoking was 10.6 percent in 1980, and by 2012 that had fallen to 6.2 percent.

The highest smoking rates among men in 2012 were in Timor-Leste (61 percent) and Indonesia (57 percent), followed by Armenia (51.5 percent), Russia (51 percent) and Cyprus (48 percent).

Top countries for women smokers were Greece (34.7 percent) and Bulgaria (31.5 percent).

Two Suspects Arrested In Hrant Dink Case

ISANBUL (Armenpress) – Two suspects in the murder case of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink were arrested on Tuesday in the northwestern province of Trabzon, Turkey. The Court decided to arrest Osman Hayal and Zeynel Abidin Yavuz when they failed to appear before the court, the Anadolu Agency reported.

Hayal is the brother of Yasin Hayal, who was charged with being the instigator of the assassination.

Dink was assassinated in Istanbul in January 2007, by Ogün Samast, a 17-year-old Turkish nationalist. This was shortly after the premiere of the Armenian Genocide documentary "Screamers," in which he is interviewed about Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and the case against him under Article 301.

Echmiadzin Donates to Syria Schools

ECHMIADZIN (Panorama) – To mark the Christmas season, the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin has transferred \$100,000 to the Damascus Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church to meet the needs of the Armenian schools in Syria.

The situation in Syria and the conditions of Syrian Armenians remain the focus of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin. The Armenian Apostolic Church dioceses provide regular assistance to Syrian Armenians in order to help them overcome the hardships they face in that country's civil war.

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News From Armenia

Nalbandian Confirms Meeting with Azeri Counterpart

LIMA, Peru (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian confirmed talks with his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-chairs will take place in Paris in the second half of January.

During a meeting with representatives of the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nalbandian spoke about the efforts to resolve the Nagorno Karabagh conflict through peaceful means.

Meanwhile, Trend news agency said that the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs, ambassadors Igor Popov of Russia, James Warlick of the United States and Jacques Fore of France, will next week meet with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter to discuss the Nagorno Karabagh conflict settlement.

The source also voiced hope that a meeting between Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan will take place late January, as it was earlier reported by Turan news agency.

The OSCE MG Co-chairs met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on December 15 in Baku and with Armenian President Serge Sargsian on December 16 in Yerevan. They travelled to Nagorno Karabagh on December 17.

In Stepanakert, NKR President Bako Sahakyan stressed Artsakh's full-fledged participation in the negotiations and halt of Azerbaijan's destructive and aggressive policy as key conditions in the process.

Armenian Prodigy Becomes World Youth Chess Champion

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Young Armenian chess player Aram Hakobyan won the U-12 group at the World Youth Championship held in Al Ain, UAE, reported the Chess Federation of Armenia. He had no defeats and scored 9.5 points out of 11.

This major World Chess Federation (FIDE) event staged between December 17 and 29 in Al Ain. More than 1,800 participants from 120 national chess federations took part.

The World Youth Chess Championship's history goes back to 1974. France was the first country to host the young participants of the World Cadets, U17 tournament. Later on the championship experienced many changes in the name and regulations. These days, the World Youth Championship is far and away one of the most important tournaments in the career of any chess player.

Catholicos Receives Administrative Directors Of Mother See

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – On January 8, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, received the administrative directors of the departments of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, in the Events Auditorium of the Gevorkian Theological Seminary.

The Information Services of the Mother See reported that during the meeting the catholicos offered his congratulations on the occasion of the feasts of New Year and Christmas, extending his blessings and best wishes to the staff.

He expressed his appreciation to the employees of the Mother See for their devoted service, highlighting the importance of their efforts in successfully realizing the mission of the Armenian Church. Karekin II encouraged the department leadership to carry on their service with the same spirit and fervor,

for the welfare of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church and the Armenian people. Over the course of the meeting the Catholicos of All Armenians also reflected on the upcoming projects and undertakings for the new year.

Pontifical Divine Liturgy for the Holy Nativity and Theophany in The Mother See of Echmiadzin



The Divine Liturgy at Holy Echmiadzin with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II

CHRISTMAS, from page 1

Echmiadzin; assisted His Holiness during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

During the Pontifical Divine Liturgy, the catholicos

extended his blessings and Message to All Armenians worldwide.

(The full text of Karekin II's message can be seen on page 15.)

ATP Plants Another 230,000 Trees Throughout Armenia in 2013

YEREVAN – Armenia Tree Project (ATP) has recently completed its ninth year of reforestation with the planting of another 174,267 tree seedlings in Northern Armenia. This brings the total number of trees planted to 230,451 in 2013. The additional 56,000 trees were planted by ATP's flagship Community Tree Planting program.

The organization has now planted a total of 4,455,869 trees since 1994.

ATP was founded by Armenian-American philanthropist Carolyn Mugar.

"We're extremely proud of this result," noted ATP Yerevan Director Areg Maghakian. "Our work is planting trees and we've done that with more than four million in the ground, but it's also about people. ATP is creating green jobs in Armenia and connecting our programs with supporters all over the world. It's a truly grassroots effort that will pay huge dividends in the future."

With help from a substantial grant from Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2012, ATP began planting a new 20-hectare forest site in the town of Koghes in Lori. This spring, several thousand pine seedlings were added to the existing oak, ash, apple and pear trees to finalize the forest planting.

In the summer, seasonal workers were hired to maintain the sites reforested by ATP. "Because it was such a fertile year, some sites had to be maintained twice as the grass had been growing so quickly," Maghakian emphasized.

In the fall, dozens of local villagers helped replant tree seedlings in a new forest being established in Tsaghkaber. The planting of this site in Lori was supported by the Federal Ministry for the

Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) of the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW as part of its International Climate Protection Initiative. The project was implemented by WWF Germany, WWF Caucasus and WWF Armenia in cooperation with the Ministry of Nature Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture and ATP.



ATP employs dozens of people at its three nurseries; these two men are hard at work at the Mirak Family Reforestation Nursery in Margahovit where hundreds of thousands of trees are under cultivation.

ATP has collaborated with a number of other organizations over the past year. This summer, ATP organized a special tour for local media and organizations in the environmental sector. The tour included ATP's Mirak Family Reforestation Nursery where more than half a million tree seedlings are being nurtured, along with the nearby Hrant Dink Memorial Forest and a new forest being established in the town of Katnajur. Yerevan-based Deem Communications participated in several events with ATP this year, including planting trees at a kindergarten in Margahovit.

ATP has also collaborated with the Homeland Development Initiative Foundation (HDIF), an organization that aims to nurture sustainable development initiatives in rural parts of Armenia. ATP employees in Margahovit discovered Samvel, a talented woodworker who was unemployed because he is wheelchair-bound, and introduced him to HDIF, which now sells his unique, handmade crafts.

ATP's newest initiative, announced this fall in collaboration with Sosé and Allen's Legacy Foundation, is the Sosé Thomassian and Allen Yekikian Memorial Forest. The young couple, who had strong ties both in Armenia and the diaspora, lost their lives in a tragic car accident in May 2013.

"Our goal is to create a living tribute to

our dear friends. We're also incorporating social media into this campaign," explained Maghakian. "For every new 'like' of ATP's Facebook page, five trees will be planted in the memorial forest. We hope the effort will attract at least 10,000 'likes' in order to plant 50,000 trees and raise awareness of ATP's mission."

The municipality of Stepanavan has agreed to lease 73 hectares of land to ATP for 25 years and 25 percent of that land will be allocated to the Sosé and Allen Memorial Forest, where planting will commence in the spring of 2014.



INTERNATIONAL

Turkey, Iran Grow Closer as Erdogan Plans Visit to Islamic Republic

By Ariel Ben Solomon

ISTANBUL (Jerusalem Post) – Turkey and Iran seem to be boosting relations as the two countries continue to exchange high-level visits.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is planning to visit Iran at the end of this month, his foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, announced on Saturday at a press conference with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, reported the Turkish newspaper Today's Zaman.

In addition, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is planning a visit to Turkey in February, said Davutoglu, adding that Zarif would return for an Iran-Azerbaijan-Turkey meeting.

"When Rouhani became the Iranian president, Turkey and Iran decided to communicate frequently, if possible every month, to discuss our mutual agendas and exchange views. I can say that we have accomplished this in the past five months," said Davutoglu according to the report.

Moreover, he said that the two countries are planning to establish a High

Level Cooperation Council mechanism before Erdogan visits Iran.

In addition, the countries are planning to increase trade, aiming for \$30 billion in the next few years, with a further possibility for \$50 billion, depending on legal issues, said Davutoglu.

Prof. Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, said that "this is a continuation of an economic and political trend that is amplified by the nuclear agreement" reached between Iran and world powers in Geneva in November.

"Turkey needs Iranian energy and markets, while Iran needs Turkey to circumvent the sanctions," said Inbar, adding that they both probably decided that Syria, where their interests collide, is a secondary issue.

"Turkey's economic and political relationship with Iran continues to expand, even as the Turkish political elite's ties to the Iranian underworld have mired the AKP government in scandal," Jonathan Schanzer, vice president for research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said.

"Iranian gold traders have been at the center of this scandal, underscoring the dangers of working with Iran's shadow

economy," he added.

Schanzer went on to point out that instead of scaling back relations, "it appears that the AKP is doubling down on Iran," adding that "it is unclear why Turkey would stake out such a high-profile position at a time when Iran sanctions remain in place."

Michael Rubin, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and a former Pentagon official told the Post, "Before the corruption scandal became public, Erdogan sought to have the best of both worlds: helping Iran evade sanctions for a profit, but was accepted in the White House as a pro-Western leader.

"With his dealings now blown open, it was decision-time, and he cast his lot with Iran."

"It's important to get inside his mind," Rubin added, pointing out that "Erdogan believes his own conspiracy theories, is deeply anti-Semitic, seeks Israel's eradication as a Jewish state, and is more inclined to see Iran rather than the West as an ideological ally because at least Iran doesn't allow its few remaining Jews to control the newspapers, banks, and 'interest-rate lobby.'"

Erdogan Family Drawn into Corruption Probe

ISTANBUL (Deutsche Welle) – In the wake of a sweeping corruption probe, the Turkish opposition has requested a parliamentary inquiry into the relationship between Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's son Bilal and a Saudi Arabian businessman.

Ugur Bayraktutan, a member of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), is one of the opposition politicians demanding that Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan make public his family's ties to Saudi Arabian businessman Yasin al-Qadi.

Within a month, Erdogan must reply to the request. Bayraktutan wants to know whether Bilal Erdogan actually met with al-Qadi, as the media have reported. "Al-Qadi was here illegally, we have photos to prove it," Bayraktutan said.

US authorities list al-Qadi as a supporter of the al-Qaeda terrorist network – an accusation the Saudi businessman

rejects. Until October 2013, his name was on a UN list of persons sanctioned because of his alleged contacts to al-Qaeda. During this time, al-Qadi reportedly visited Turkey repeatedly, escorted by the prime minister's security detail.

Another problem for Erdogan

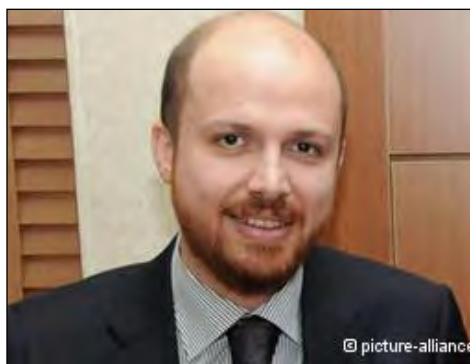
The prime minister's son Bilal Erdogan is accused of involvement in the corruption scandal.

Bayraktutan's accusations are yet another problem for Erdogan as he tries to handle the corruption scandal currently engulfing his government. In mid-December 2013, Istanbul prosecutors arrested several dozen people who allegedly took bribes from an Iranian businessman, who was also detained. Two sons of Turkish ministers and the head of the state-owned bank Halkbank are in investigative custody.

A week later, the prosecution was preparing to order a second wave of arrests when head prosecutor Muammer Akkas was removed from the ongoing case at short notice. According to media reports, al-Qadi was on this list of suspects – and the premier's son, Bilal Erdogan, was due to be summoned as well.

Al-Qadi is no stranger to the Turkish government. In 2006, Erdogan publicly defended the Saudi Arabian businessman against the US allegations. The Istanbul prosecutors had him in their sights because al-Qadi is reported to have shown an interest in the privatization of property belonging to a police school in the city's Etiler neighborhood. According to media reports, the land is valued at one billion dollars (735 million euros), but was to be sold to investors, with no public bidding, for less than half this amount. Al-Qadi was one of the potential buyers.

Turkish media has published photos that allegedly show al-Qadi, surrounded by Turkish bodyguards, speaking to Bilal Erdogan in a hotel in Istanbul. In a separate inquiry, CHP politician Umut



Bilal Erdogan

Oran asked Prime Minister Erdogan whether his son Bilal acted as mediator in the real estate deal in Etiler. According to the Istanbul city administration, the property was not sold and is still in public hands.

As the corruption scandal grows, so does people's dissatisfaction with the government.

"They're targeting my son, but it's me they want to hit," was Erdogan's response to the accusations. The Turkish premier says the graft allegations are an invention by enemies of the government who are trying to weaken his AK Party ahead of municipal elections on March 30. Erdogan hinted at the existence of a "state within a state" that wanted to discredit the government. The Turkish leadership holds a movement led by Islamic cleric Fethullah Gulen, once a close ally, responsible for the corruption accusations. Gulen has rejected the charges.

It is not clear what effect the accusations against the government and Erdogan's family will have on voters. Ilker Turan, a political scientist at Istanbul's Bilgi University, anticipates that they will be watching closely to see how Erdogan responds.

So far, the prime minister hasn't come up with a convincing explanation concerning his son's ties with the Saudi Arabian businessman, Turan told Deutsche Welle. The opposition in Ankara, however, is doing all it can to ensure that an explanation will be forthcoming.

International News

Armenia, Peru to Establish Embassies

LIMA, Peru (Arka) – Armenia's Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian and his Peruvian counterpart Eda Rivas discussed bilateral cooperation and development of diplomatic relations, the press office of Armenian Foreign Ministry reported.

The sides reached an agreement to accredit ambassadors with concurrent accreditation, appoint honorary consuls, set up a legal framework, hold consultations between the two foreign ministries, intensify cooperation in international organizations, develop framework agreements on economy and simplified visa regime to be signed at a high-level meeting in the near future.

Nalbandian was currently in Peru as part of his Latin American tour January 6-11. He was also expected to visit also Panama and Cuba.

1.28 Million Armenians Visited Georgia in 2013

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – In 2013 1.28 million Armenian citizens visited Georgia according to the statistic data on foreign visitors entering Georgia, published by the Informational-analytical Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

In December 2013, 391,724 visitors crossed the Georgian State border. To compare recent results with the previous year the number of visitors has increased by 5 percent. As for the January-December period, 5 365 356 visitors crossed into Georgia in total. In comparison with the results of the 2012, the number of visitors increased by 21.1 percent in January-December period of 2013.

In December, Turkey had the top number of visitors to Georgia, though it was down 25 percent from the previous year, followed by Azerbaijan (+16 percent), Armenia (+26.8 percent), the Russian Federation (40.6 percent), Ukraine (+69.7 percent) and Iran (-33.8 percent). Similar positive tendency is preserved in connection with countries of European Union, where the number of tourists from Poland, Czech Republic and Austria, France, Germany and Italy has substantially increased, reaching 80 percent, 32 percent, 22 percent, 19 percent, 17 percent and 15 percent respectively. Number of tourists from Middle Asia, namely from Kazakhstan has increased by 40 percent, while the number of tourists from Israel has reached 29 percent.

Wolfsburg Willing to Pay 7.5 million Euros for Yura Movsisyan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The German soccer (football) team Wolfsburg is willing to pay 7.5 million euros for the transfer of the forward of the Armenian National Football Team and Spartak Moscow Yura Movsisyan.

The German Newswalk website reported the Armenian footballer can move to Wolfsburg. "Currently the striker shows a very good performance in the Russian Premier League," Newswalk noted. Armenian family of parents Sergey Movsisyan and Aida Sahakyan and brothers Movses and Hovhannes. Yura has no memories of his home. All he recalls is his family left in "late 1991 or early 1992" because of what Yura remembers as "Killing ... everything." His family moved to the United States and settled in the Los Angeles area, where there is a large Armenian community. Movsisyan attended and played soccer at Pasadena High School, and played a year of college soccer at Pasadena City College before being discovered by MLS scouts prior to the 2006 MLS SuperDraft.

He joined the Armenian national team in 2010 and made his debut in a friendly against Iran on 11 August 2010. He was one of the most prolific strikers in the UEFA Euro 2012 qualifying campaign, netting in 4 goals and assisting in 5 others.

He was sold for 2.5 million euros to FC Krasnodar in Winter 2011. Movsisyan was selected as the Most Valuable Player of the Year for 2011 by the club. Movsisyan completed a move to Spartak Moscow in 2012 for a reported 7.5 million euros.

Petition Aims to Change Verdict Supporting Genocide Denial

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"These statements, offensive against the memory of the victims and defamatory against their descendants, were condemned under the Swiss law on the repression of denialism.

"The European Court of Human Rights, to which he had appealed, is therefore considering condemning Switzerland, in the name of an inconsequential reading of the freedom of expression and a restrictive interpretation of human dignity. This jurisdiction, in a judgement that is just as irresponsible as it is grotesque, thus gave its support to the denialist propaganda on the Armenian Genocide."

The full petition can be read and signed at Change.org.

Community News

TCA Arshag Dickranian School Observes Season With Two Events

LOS ANGELES – The Christmas Season was a special experience for the Tekeyan Cultural Association's (TCA) Arshag Dickranian School (ADS) this year, as students performed at two events dedicated to the celebration of Christmas. Both were events that garnered admiration and lit the Christmas spirit in the Arshag Dickranian community.

The first performance took place on December 5, at the Western Diocese in Burbank, where all Armenian schools were invited to celebrate Christmas together as a Diocesan tradition. The ADS school team, composed of the third, fourth, fifth, ninth and 11th grade students, was the sole provider of entertainment at the event.

Arshag Dickranian School's hour-long performance started at 10 a.m. and included Christmas carols, poetry and dances. The other Armenian schools that attended the event praised Arshag Dickranian School for its talented students.

After the event, Principal Dr. Manoug Seraydarian was invited to the podium by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and was reward-



Principal Seraydarian delivering his closing remarks

ed an icon of the Baptism of Jesus Christ, as a gesture of gratitude and recognition for the performance of the students. Seraydarian thanked the archbishop and the Diocese and promised to always encourage students in being creative the way they have been this season.

The second celebration was the Annual Christmas Program, which took place on December 16, at the school's Walter and Laurel Karabian Hall. The guests of honor were school benefactress Cindy Norian, school benefactor Hmayak Baltayan and Board Chairman George K. Mandossian. Parents, teachers and guests eagerly awaited with their cameras ready to record their children's performance.

The program started at 7 p.m. with the Silent Night sung by 11th-grade student Armine Gulyan, who enchanted the hall with her operatic voice. Next, ninth-grader Marine Sanosyan delivered the welcoming remarks, greeting guests and wishing everyone a Merry Christmas.

Heralding the birth of the infant King, the masterfully staged program was comprised of Christmas carols, such as Deck The Halls and Feliz Navidad, sung intermittently by the school choir under the direction of music teacher Komitas Keshishian, a variety of solo and group recitations, selective solo and group dances, as well as several skits depicting the myth of the season.

The solo recitations were delivered by ninth-grader Mania Mgdasyan (Shnorhavor Nor Dari), seventh-grader Victoria Topalian (Arants Havadi), and ninth-graders Lily and Ani Sarafian (Hye Lezoon), while the dances were

see CELEBRATIONS, page 5



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian holds up the relic of St. James the Bishop of Nisibis.

Ancient Relic Arrives at St. James Church

EVANSTON, Ill. – On Saturday, December 14, St. James Church of Evanston celebrated its name day with a special service of veneration before the relic of its patron saint. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy and presided over the day's events.

Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the Primate consecrated three new icons in the church sanctuary. The icons depict St. James the Bishop of Nisibis, St. Gregory the Illuminator and St. Stephen the Protodeacon. A requiem service was held for the deceased founders and pastors of the church and for Archbishop Karekin Hovsepian and Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, two primates of the Eastern Diocese who were involved in the church's construction.



The relic of St. James the Bishop of Nisibis is composed of bone fragments of St. James and encased in a metal reliquary.

Plovdiv for safekeeping.

"Relics serve a very special purpose in the spiritual life of the Armenian Church," said the Rev. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyan, pastor of St. James Church. "They are not just old remnants of the past – their presence with us is a tangible inspiration for believers today to remember the real-life struggles and great faith that sustained Christians over the centuries."

Barsamian blessed the congregation with the relic and parishioners came up one by one to bow down and touch the sacred object.

"We are blessed to have his holy relic among us today," Barsamian said. "James, or Hagop, was a nephew of St. Gregory the Illuminator, and the bishop of Nisibis on the border of Syria, who attended the great Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. As such, St. James was one of the holy figures responsible for the Havadamk – the Nicene Creed we recite every Sunday. His desire to live the Gospel of Christ led him on an incredible quest, to climb Mt. Ararat in order to find a relic of Noah's Ark. We don't have to climb mountains in order to live the Gospel," the Primate continued. "But the direction in which God leads us can be just as unexpected."

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Rev. Haig Kherloopian Ordained at Evangelical Church

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – Sunday, December 15, was a day of great celebration as Haig Kherloopian was ordained as the minister of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, in an impressive and elegant service before more than 200 in attendance, including family, friends, supporters, and clergy from sister churches.

Among the special guests in attendance were Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian, moderator of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, and pastor of the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church in Havertown, Penn.; Rev. Dr. Peter Doghramji, former Pastor (now retired) of the Armenian Evangelical Church, NY; Rev. Berj Gulleyan, pastor of the Armenian Presbyterian Church, Paramus, NJ; Rev. Mgrdich Melconian, Interim Executive Director/CEO of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and Rev. Kevin M. Fiedler, guest minister of the Armenian Evangelical Church, New York.

Clergy from neighboring churches included the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, executive director of the Armenian Diocese's Zohrab Information Center, and Professor of Liturgical Studies at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary; Rev. Mesrob Lakissian, pastor of the St. Illuminator's Armenian Cathedral; Rev. Bedros Kadehjian, visiting pastor of the Holy Cross Armenian Church and Deacon Shant Kazanjian, director of Armenian Religious Education Council (AREC), Armenian Prelacy (eastern region).

Also present was Tigran Samvelian of Armenia's Mission to the United Nations.

The one and a half hour deeply spiritual service began with Rev. Nishan Bakalian's call to worship, and with prayers, anthems, and scripture readings recited in Armenian by Deacon Shant Kazanjian, and in English by Catherine Momjian, granddaughter of Rev. Dr. Soghomon Nuyujukian. Beautiful Armenian (*Soorp, Soorp, Hayr Mer*), and English hymns were sung by the church choir led by choir director Ivanka Petkovic who accompanied on the organ, and Shaant Shishmanian on guitar.

In his sermon delivered in Armenian, and directed to the new pastor, Rev. Mgrdich Melconian related the story that began 627 years before the coming of Christ, when God said to Jeremiah who was lacking in self-confidence, that he had been chosen to lead his people. When the unsure Jeremiah protested, God replied, "Don't be afraid. I will help you. No one will harm you. I will be with you all the way. May God bless you Haig," he said in conclusion.

The message of Dr. Ara Jizmejian, Eastern Region Youth Minister of AEUNA, who was not

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ORDINATION, from page 4

(HARRY KOUNDAKJIAN PHOTO)



The laying on of hands by the ministers



COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Arshag Dickranian School Observes Season With Two Events

CELEBRATIONS, from page 4

performed by Marine Sanosyan (Gadagy Bar), Lilit Ayrapetyan and Hagop Toumanian (Cha Cha Cha), sixth-graders (Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer) and 11th-graders (Ov Hayotz Ashkharh).

The performances of the pre-kindergartners and kindergartners were of special note, charming the audience as they appeared on stage one by one clapping their hands. The pre-kindergarten students recited short poems about Christmas, whereas the kindergartners, who appeared in Christmas-themed costumes recited poems about their costumes.

The group performances included the recitation of "Mer Aypoopen" and "Lseer Vortees" and the song *All I Want For Christmas* which

was sung by the first and second graders. The 5th graders delivered a short play called "Varteniner Yev Yeghevneen", dressed in colorful costumes of flowers, pine trees and Santa Clause, which delighted the audience and kept them entertained.

At the end, all students who participated in the program, ranging from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, gathered on the stage as the final part of the event, singing Silver Bell, following the lead of seventh-grade students Jacqueline Mkrtychyan and Teresa Harutunyan. Ninth-grade student Mania Mgdsyan then invited Seraydarian to the stage to deliver his closing remarks.

"Thank you to all the students for such a wonderful performance tonight. Thank you also to our teachers, without whom this event would have been impossible to organize. I take great pride in being the principal of a school that has so many talented, creative students and hard working teachers," said Seraydarian. He then proceeded to announce the donations that were



Finale - Students singing "Silver Bell"

made to the school that evening. "I would like to thank the daughters of the late Arshag Dickranian, school benefactresses Cindy Norian and Laurel Karabian, for donating \$25,000 and school benefactor Mr. Hmayak Baltayan for

donating \$1,000. We appreciate your dedication and interest to help and support the school." The audience clapped in gratitude for the wonderful event and for the donations that were made to the school.

The school thanks music teacher Komitas Keshishian, Armenian teachers Nazeli Kojayan and Arevik Nazaryan, pre-kindergarten teacher Madlena Marikyan and assistant Tamara

Rev. Haig Kherlopien Ordained at Evangelical Church

present due to illness, was read by Sevag Bakalian, current youth leader of the AMCC, Havertown, Penn. "We should constantly learn as pastors," the message said, and outlined three steps towards this goal which included first "taking care, with actions, of your flock, because love is at the center of a pastor's heart." Secondly, "pastors are soldiers in the army of the Lord and should not get caught in civilian affairs." And thirdly, "love your people and obey your God. On difficult days, your people and your ministry will help you. You are not alone!"

In his exhortation to the congregation, done with his self-confidence and warmth, Doghramji who has been the pastor of the church for 10 years, related that three covenants were being made today between the pastor, the people, and the mother church. Using the example of Moses who as his people fought, raised his arms which indicated victory, said, "You are the congregation which will raise Haig's arms. You have the duty to help him and raise his hands."

Listening intently to the advice of his elder mentors throughout the service, Kherlopien stood at the pulpit, and explained why he had decided to enter the ministry. He related the 2000-year-old story of the martyrdom of Princess Sandookht who became a Christian martyr. "She was the first martyr of the Armenian," said Kherlopien.

He noted that his family, hailing from Aintab, has had four generations of Evangelical Christians. "I learned to read by learning the Bible," he said with emotion, and revealed that at one point he had doubted his faith while in high school. "But then the Holy Spirit came and I felt peace. I Believed in Jesus Christ. In college, during a worship service, I received a call to preach. I changed my major, went to seminary and graduated. Today is the confirmation to keep me preaching for years to come. He concluded with an emotional, "I love you all."

The ordination ceremony began with the church Moderator Mossig Makhouljian presenting the new minister to Bakalian who asked him the formal questions. Following his responses, the attending six ministers ascended the pulpit and placed their hands on the kneeling ordinand, as Bakalian declared, "Rev. Haig Kherlopien, you are the ordained minister of this church." As clergy from other churches embraced him, the large crowd broke into loud cheering and clapping for several minutes.

In presenting his personal robe and red stole to the new minister, Rev. Doghramji said, "This is your mantle of authority. Teach, exhort." He also gave Rev. Kherlopien a communion box, a book of worship of the United Church of Christ, and a book of his own sermons.

After Bakalian read letters from the AMAA,

and the Armenian Evangelical Union of America, the singing of the Hayr Mer by the congregation, the benediction by Rev. Haig Kherlopien, and the postlude, concluded the formal service.

During the reception which followed, the cutting of the congratulatory cake took place with the people lining up to congratulate the new minister.

The son of Avedis and Ruby Kherlopien, and the younger brother of Dr. Armen Kherlopien, Rev. Haig Kherlopien, at age 27, has an impressive resume which includes a master's degree in divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, a bachelor's degree in government from American University, and studies at London's King's College in philosophy and religion.

He has served two years at both the Armenian Martyrs Congregational Church and the Armenian Presbyterian Church in Paramus, NJ, with a short period at the Armenian Evangelical Church in Hollywood. He was also a Sunday school teacher at St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church for more than two years.

He has volunteered at several organizations, including Bellevue Hospital, the US Congress, the Armenian Assembly, Syria Relief, Habitat for Humanity, Our Lady of Armenia camp, Urban Outreach as well as with Hurricane Katrina Relief.



5th graders performing a skit about winter and Christmas

Nahapetyan, kindergarten teacher Aline Bezdikian, elementary teachers Lilit Beyleyan, Lusine Asatryan, Violet Tatoian and Ashley Kirakossian and all the students who participated in the performances. The school also thanks parent Michel Antossian for designing the costumes of the performers and the parents of the kindergarten students for raising the funds for their children's costumes.

Ancient Relic Arrives at St. James Church

RELIC, from page 4

What He asks us to do, most of all, is to draw near to Him. To fill our lives with His love. To allow Him to smile upon us — as our infant Lord Jesus smiled upon those who drew near him, as he lay in a manger on that first Christmas day."

Also taking part in the day's services were the Very Rev. Aren Jebajian, pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Chicago, Ill.; Rev. Paren Galstyan, pastor of St. George Church of Waukegan, Ill. and Holy Resurrection Church of South Milwaukee, Wis. and Bishop Avel of the Chicago-Detroit Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

"It was a momentous day for our community," said Khoja-Eynatyan. "To be in the presence of our patron saint helped us to reflect on the mission of our church and to consider ways we might continue to carry forward that mission in the 21st century."

A luncheon was held in the church hall. The program included a musical presentation and a video featuring greetings from former St. James parishioners who have relocated to other parts of the country.

On Friday, December 13, Barsamian and Jennifer Morris, director of the Diocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, met with Midwest-area clergy at St. James Church. They spoke about Diocesan summer camps, pilgrimages and other programs.

That evening Barsamian and former Diocesan Council Chair Oscar Tatosian met with Parish Council members of local Armenian churches and representatives of the AGBU and the Knights and Daughters of Vartan to discuss possible avenues of collaboration on future projects.

On Sunday, December 15, the Very Rev. Apgar Hovakimyan, Locum Tenens of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Bulgaria, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at St. James Church.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Richard Hovannisian to Lecture on Smyrna Catastrophe at Holy Translators Church

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian will present an illustrated lecture, "The Smyrna Catastrophe, 1922," on Friday, January 24, at 7:30 p.m., at the Armenian Church of the Holy Translators, 38 Franklin St. The program will be co-sponsored by the Church of the Holy Translators and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

September 2012 marked the 90th anniversary of the Smyrna Catastrophe when much of the city, the second largest in the Ottoman Empire, was destroyed by fire during the final phase of the Greco-Turkish War. The calamity marked the end of a strong Christian presence in the historic Aegean coastal regions and turned hundreds of thousands of Greeks and Armenians into refugees.

In this illustrated lecture, Hovannisian will discuss the important role of Smyrna (Izmir) in modern Armenian history and the inferno that engulfed the city in September 1922. Hovannisian is the editor of *Armenian Smyrna/Izmir*, the 11th volume of proceedings from the UCLA conference series "Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces." He also traveled to Izmir and environs in June 2012 as the historian-guide for a NAASR Armenian Heritage Tour led by Armen Aroyan.

A book signing of *Armenian Smyrna/Izmir*



Prof. Richard Hovannisian

will immediately follow the lecture. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Hovannisian is the author of *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, the four-volume history *The Republic of Armenia*, and has edited and contributed to more than 25 books, including *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective; The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times; Remembrance and Denial; Looking Backward, Moving Forward; and The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*. Hovannisian was the first holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA and is presently Distinguished Chancellor's Fellow at Chapman University.

For more information write to hq@naasr.org.

OBITUARY

C. Robert Jingoian



C. Robert Jingoian

WATERTOWN — C. Robert Jingoian of Watertown died on December 24, 2013. He was 83.

He was a high school teacher.

He was the husband of Lillian (Harutunian) Jingoian and father of James of Washington, DC, David of Pennsylvania,

Michael of Oregon and Robert Jingoian and his wife Maria of Walpole, Mass. He leaves eight grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

He was a veteran of the Navy, serving in Korea.

He was active at St. James Church, serving as past Parish Council treasurer and past superintendent of Sunday School. He was past Master of Waltham Triad Lodge A.F. & A.M. and past Grand Commander of Knights Templar Commandery of Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Masonic services were held on Saturday at the funeral home.

Services were held at St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., on Saturday, December 28. Interment was in Ridgelawn Cemetery, Watertown.

Memorial donations may be made to: St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home, 576 Mt. Auburn St.

Katch Julian Adrian Katchadurian

DANBURY, Conn. — Katch Julian Adrian Katchadurian, given name Katchadour and known by relatives as Katcho, died here on December 7, 2013.

He was born in the Armenian Quarter of the Old City, Jerusalem, Palestine, on April 28, 1933. He attended St. Tarkmanchats for elementary school and Jerusalem Terra Sancta College for secondary education, completing the London University General Examination (GCE).

In Beirut, Lebanon, he worked at Intra Bank of the Middle East. In 1956 he migrated to the United States and worked full-time at the Bank of America in Manhattan while also completing his bachelor's degree and two master's degrees, in finance and banking, respectively, at Pace College. He spent two years in the US Army in Verdun, France, and received a medal for expert marksmanship and commendations for his efficient accounts system that saved the military many thousands of dollars.

He returned to New York and eventually became senior vice president of Bank of America. He later joined Allied Bank, a 16-bank consortium in Manhattan, as senior vice president. In 1985, he moved with his family to Bahrain, Manama, where he built the Bahrain Middle East Bank "from scratch," which he managed for the following 10 years. He returned to the US after retirement.

Charismatic, articulate and witty, he had a brilliant mind and vast knowledge of economics and finance, and was often consulted by journalists and bankers. He had deep love, caring, and loyalty to his family, relatives, and old friends, as well as his dogs. He was preceded in death by his parents, Apraham Kevorkian and Elizabeth Sahakian. He leaves family members, including his brother, Haig Khatchadourian, his former spouse, Adriné, his daughter Lisa, son James and wife Marisol, and grandchildren Nicholas, Alexander, Christopher and Shahé, and, nieces, nephews and cousins residing throughout the world.

Kaspar Ozcan

WATERTOWN — Kaspar Ozcan of Watertown died on January 2. He was the husband of Anna (Cinar) Ozcan. He leaves his children, Robert and his wife Seta, Seta, Eric and his wife Silva and Varujan and his wife Hilda; grandchildren Michael, Manuk, Casar, Ohan, Anita and Oliver and many loving nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were at Saint James Armenian Church on Tuesday, January 7. Interment was in at Ridgelawn Cemetery, Watertown.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Saint James Armenian Church.

Arrangements were by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home.

Christmas Donations

Several Christmas donations were sent to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator but were received after the last issue of the year was printed. We thank our supporters and print their donations below:

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Dr. Myron and Ruth Allukian, Boston, MA \$50

In addition, we received donations from Nazar and Artemis Nazarian and the Detroit Chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

Thanks

Special thank you for your generous donation

We express our deepest thanks to all our supporters, Mr. & Mrs. Nazar & Artemis Nazarian, the Ignatius Foundation, the Detroit Tekeyan Chapter and Dr. Carolann and George Najarian for their recent donations to our newspaper. Generous gifts from donors like you provide the financial and moral support needed to continue our mission.

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator staff and management are continually inspired by the generosity of donors who help us accomplish our mission.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

2013 in Review

JANUARY

• Katherine Sarafian, executive producer of the film, "Brave," accepted the award for Best Animated Feature Film at the Golden Globes.

• Eilian Williams, leader of the Cardiff organization Solidarity with the Victims of All Genocides, was attacked by members of the Turkish Embassy in London when he attempted to deliver a letter of protest to the Turkish ambassador on the anniversary evening of Hrant Dink's death.

• Thousands marched in Istanbul to commemorate the sixth anniversary of Turkish-Armenian journalist's Hrant Dink's assassination. On January 19, 2007, Dink was shot outside his office at the Agos newspaper. As part of the commemoration,



linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky presented a lecture titled, "Turkey and the Emerging World Order" at Bogazici University.

• Among several US events, St. James Armenian Church of Watertown, Mass., hosted a Hrant Dink Memorial Coffee Hour with guest speaker Umit Kurt, a graduate student of Genocide Studies at Clark University.

• The Very Rev. Ghevont Samoorian of Billerica, Mass., died on January 20, at the age of 78.



• On January 24, the members of the St. James Brotherhood elected Archbishop Nourhan Manougian as the new Patriarch of Jerusalem after a two-day conclave. Manougian, originally from Aleppo, had previously been elected Grand Sacristan of the Holy See in 1998 and elevated to the rank of bishop in 1999.

• The controversial statue of former Azeri President Heydar Aliyev was finally removed from a major Mexico City avenue after a series of protests regarding Aliyev's authoritarian past. Azerbaijan had donated \$5 million toward the renovation of the area where the statue was placed and threatened to cut investments in the country upon removal of the statue. The statue was returned to Azerbaijan.

• On January 31, former Armenian presidential candidate Paruyr Hayrikyan was shot in the shoulder near his home in Yerevan. Samvel Harutyunian and Khachatur Pogosian, former employees of another presidential candidate, Vardan Sedrakyan, were later arrested in connection with the attack.

FEBRUARY

• An exhibit titled, "Lost and Found: The Pinajian Discovery," opened on February 13 to showcase the work of the late, neglected artist Arthur Pinajian. The exhibit was hosted by the

Antiquorum in New York City and was scheduled as the first in a series celebrated underappreciated late-career artists.

• Dr. Sona Haroutyunian began an extended series of lectures at Fresno State University, Calif., on the Armenian Genocide in Literature, Translation and Cinema.

• Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev stripped prominent novelist of Akram Aylisi of his national title "People's Writer" and his state pension. The decision was a reaction to the release of Aylisi's novel *Stone Dreams*, which portrayed Azeri brutality towards Armenians in the 1990s.

• Dr. Majorie Housepian Dobkin died at the age of 90 in New York City. Dobkin was considered one of the most prominent Armenian-American writers of her generation for works such as *A Houseful of Love* and *The Smyrna Affair*.

• President Serge Sargisian was re-elected to a second five-year term, receiving 59 percent of the vote. Raffi Hovannisian came in second with 37 percent while the other candidates earned less than 4 percent of the total vote, according to the Central Election Commission. Hovannisian later claimed victory and cited alleged electoral fraud and staged a series of extensive protests urging Sargisian to step down, to no avail.



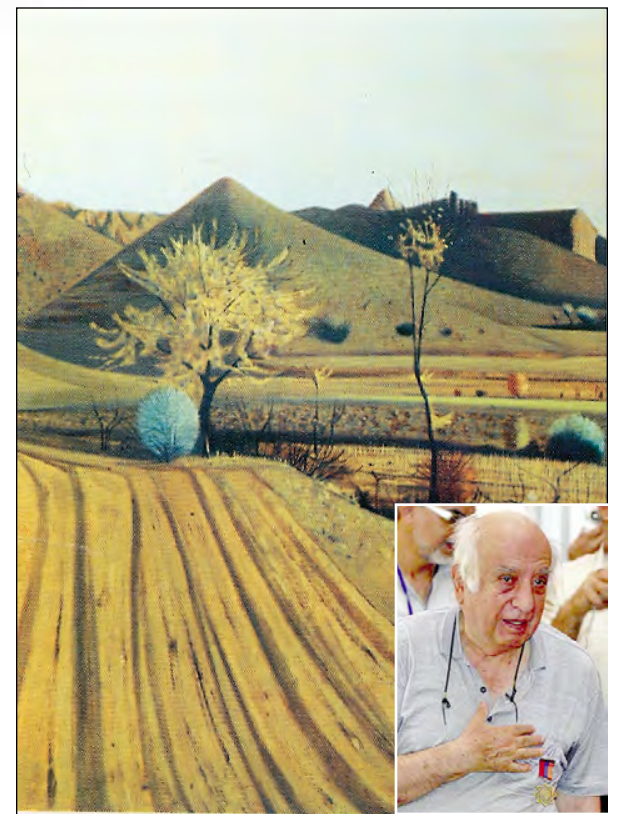
MARCH

• Armenian wrestler Davit Safaryan won the gold medal in the European Championships in Tbilisi. Safaryan beat out Turkish contender Yakup Gor in the finals.

• The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* lost one of its own on March 2, with the death of former staff member Daphne Abeel. An avid writer and editor, Abeel worked at the *Mirror-Spectator* for more than 10 years and continued to contribute book reviews up until her death at 75. She had a long career in trade publishing and also co-founded Abeel & Leet Publishers in 1995, in addition to working for several publications. She was a skilled pianist, linguist, reader, traveler, cat lover and tennis player. She will be remembered and missed by all those who knew her. [Page 1, issue 3/23/13]

• Author of the book *1915: Armenian Genocide*, journalist and writer, Hasan Çemal, was fired from *Milliyet* newspaper, where he had worked since 1998 after the paper refused to print his latest controversial column. Çemal, who often speaks about the Armenian Genocide, is the grandson of Jemal Pasha, one of the three planners and executors of the Armenian Genocide.

• Renowned Armenian painter Hakob Hakobian died in Yerevan on March 9 of a heart attack at age 89. Born in Egypt, Hakobian later repatriated to Soviet Armenia where he was given the title "People's Artist." He was best known for his



paintings, "A Woman Frying Fish" and "The Village of Malishka."

• Two Armenians were wounded in an explosion in the Christian district of Damascus, Syria, on March 11. Several explosions and episodes of kidnapping and violence continued throughout the year. According to UN data, more than 100,000 have died in the past two years of the Syria conflict. Currently, 4.5 million refugees have scattered in Syria, with 1.5 million living in neighboring countries.

• On the 25th anniversary of the Azerbaijani massacres of Armenians in Sumgait, Kirovabad and Baku, a solemn memorial service was held for the Armenian victims at St. Vartan Cathedral, New York.

• Arsen Demerjian, an activist in the Chicago-Armenian community, succumbed to a heart attack on March 26, while visiting family in California. He was one of the most dedicated members of the Tekeyan Cultural Association's Central Board and the ADL District Committee of the US and Canada, along with being a successful restaurateur and founder of the Sayat Nova Armenian restaurant in Chicago. Demerjian was also a dedicated supporter of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

APRIL

• Armenian businessman Mikayel Baghdasarov's Armavia, the country's leading airline, declared bankruptcy and formally cancelled flights on April 1. The company, founded in 1996, was unable to pay off debts owed to airports and contractors. Armavia had 14 aircraft and was the first operator of Sukhoi's Superjet 100.

• On April 7, the annual reconfiguration of the abstract sculpture at the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston took place. The split dodecahedron was created as symbol of Armenians and all who were pulled apart from their country of origin and came to the US. This was the first in a series of changes that will take place annually.

• Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan, who is serving a life sentence in Turkish prison, issued a formal statement to the Armenians and Assyrians that was forwarded through the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party. Öcalan said, "From now on any initiative that will be aimed at violating the rights and freedoms of the Armenian and Assyrian peoples will be unacceptable. There can be no democracy without that."



YEAR IN REVIEW

• Dr. Mariam (Kenosian) Chamberlain, who played a pivotal yet little-known role in establishing women's studies in the American college curriculum, died in New York City at the age of 94. Chamberlain had a PhD from Harvard University in economics and helped to finance early research about the inequities women faced in the workplace and other areas of society.

• On Monday, April 15, twin blasts occurred at the finish line of the Boston Marathon in an act of terror. The blasts killed three people and injured more than 175. In the days that fol-



lowed, all eyes turned to Watertown, after a police chase of the alleged suspects, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, led police from the crime scene of MIT police officer Sean Collier's murder in Cambridge to Watertown. A shootout with police ensued, during which suspect Tamerlan Tsarnaev was killed and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev escaped. After an unprecedented manhunt, including various local city police forces, SWAT teams and K-9 units, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was found injured, hiding in a boat trailer in a backyard on the evening of April 19.

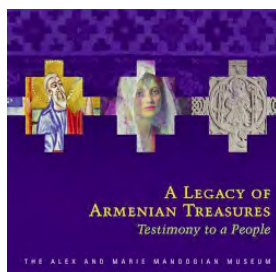
• On April 24, Armenians around the world commemorated the 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and the loss of 1.5 million lives. Local and international events took place in the days surrounding Martyrs' Day. The annual commemoration ceremony at Massachusetts State House was cancelled due to the lockdown in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings. On April 21, Times Square in New York hosted a large-scale commemoration.

• On April 30, Ruslan Tsarni, the uncle of alleged terror suspects, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, contacted the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* directly to issue an apology to the Armenian community for his recent statements referencing Armenians in his discussions of the Boston Marathon bombings. In previous media statements, Tsarni had discussed a recent convert to Islam named "Misha" – Mikhail Allakhverdova – stressing that he was of "Armenian descent" while implicating the man in the possible "brainwashing" of Tamerlan Tsarnaev with notions of violence against non-Muslims.



MAY

• The Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Southfield, Mich., published the text, *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures: Testimony to a People* on May 1. The book features more than 160 of the museum's pieces, each reproduced in full color and accompanied by a detail entry. Executive editor was Edmond Y. Azadian. He collaborated with Sylvie Merian and Lucy Ardash.]



• The official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the expanded offices of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) New York/ New Jersey chapter took place with the participation of Primate Khajag Barsamian and other notable guests. [



• On Friday, May 10, Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, honored lifelong benefactors Nazar and Artemis Nazarian with the Knight of Holy Echmiadzin Medal, the highest honor of the Armenian Church. The Eastern Diocese and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) co-sponsored the celebratory event at the Plaza Hotel in New York City and close to 400 people attended.

• Members of the Armenian General Benevolent Union Young Professionals of Boston (AGBU YP) led a 5K untimed walk/run through Watertown to benefit The One Fund.

• The Turkish Supreme Court of Appeals overruled previous decisions absolving suspects in the Hrant Dink murder case of any connection to armed criminal organizations. The ruling stated that the suspects are indeed believed to be members of an "organized" crime group and therefore, are subject to retrials on additional charges of terror organization.

• Very Rev. Aren Jebejian was elected Primate of Canada during the annual meeting of the diocese in Montreal. However, after a whirlwind of criticism over the selection and political controversy sparked by opponents, Jebejian resigned citing his intention to avoid a crisis.

• Areka (Janikian) Der Kazarian of Watertown, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, died on May 18, at the age of 101.

JUNE

• The Friends of Armenian Culture Society (FACS) presented the 62nd annual Armenian Night at the Pops at Symphony Hall, Boston. The evening featured young violinist Emmanuel



Tjeknavorian from Vienna who was joined by Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Orchestra in a performance of Franz Waxman's *Carmen Fantasy*.

• "Lost and Found in Armenia," a film by Gor Kirakorian starring Jamie Kennedy and Angela Sarafyan, opened on June 7 in selected cities.

• The US Supreme Court refused to revive a California law that would allow heirs of victims of the Armenian Genocide to sue in state courts for unpaid insurance benefits. The law, passed in 2000, was struck down in 2012 by a federal court of appeals, which said California was intruding into sensitive foreign policy questions that were the exclusive domain of the federal government. The Obama administration endorsed the appellate ruling and asked the Supreme Court to deny review.

• Weeks of protests intensified in Istanbul's Gezi Park, resulting in hundreds of deaths and violence. While motivations of the protestors varied, one of the most popular reasons for protesting was the proposed authoritarian rule of President Recep Erdogan.

• A new mayor of Yerevan, Taron Margaryan, was sworn into office. It was the first time someone in the office was elected rather than appointed.

• Russia delivered up to \$1 billion worth of military equipment to Azerbaijan, including tanks, artillery systems and infantry fighting vehicles. According to the Russian Defense Ministry, the shipments were the result of contracts signed in 2011 and 2012.

• Joyce J. Kolligian, executive director of the Simmons Leadership Conference and wife of the late Dr. Michael Kolligian, died in Florida at the age of 76.

JULY

• Leader of France's Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Norvan Zakaryan resigned. Zakaryan submitted his letter of resignation to the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II. Zakaryan had become the leader of the France Diocese in 2007.

• Hrachya Harutyunyan, an Armenian citizen, was charged with a deadly bus crash in Moscow which occurred when a truck loaded with gravel crashed into a bus, killing 18 passengers. He faces up to seven years in prison for manslaughter.

• The Westborn Market in Dearborn, Mich., celebrated 50 years since it opened as a fruit stand in 1963. George and Jeanette Anusbigian started the stand, which eventually grew into a large market, now with several locations run by the couple's sons.

• The Knights of Vartan held their 95th Annual Meeting in Las Vegas. During the four-day convocation of the Daughters of Vartan and Knights of Vartan, Nigoghos Atinjian II was reelected as commander of the brotherhood.

• Switzerland announced it would double its investments in the South Caucasus. In Armenia alone, Switzerland said they would invest \$30 million, according to Rudolf Shokh, regional director of the Swiss Cooperation Office in the South Caucasus.

• The US House State-Foreign Operations Subcommittee proposed a significant reduction in foreign aid spending for Fiscal Year 2014. This move will cut nearly 20 percent from both last year's figures and the Obama administration's budget request, an obvious cause for concern for Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh.

• The presentation of the project of an Armenian Genocide Museum in Uruguay was launched on July 17. The museum will be the first of its kind created by a state initiative outside the territory of Armenia



• The members of the class of 2013 of the Tekeyan Cultural Association's (TCA) Arshag Dickranian School (ADS) traveled to Armenia for a two-week excursion. The group visited Garni, Geghard and Ashtarak, among other tourist sites.

AUGUST

• An official document penned by the Istanbul Provincial Education Directorate has surfaced, revealing that Turkey's population administration system has been recording citizens who have Armenian, Jewish or Anatolian Greek (Rum) origins with secret "race codes." As part of the practice, Greeks were coded 1, Armenians were coded 2 and Jews were coded 3.

• Samantha Power, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and foreign policy advisor to President Obama, won confirmation as the new US ambassador to the United Nations with a vote that completes the administration's foreign policy team for the second term. Power had aggressively courted Armenian voters' support for then-candidate Obama, but since his election, she has not publicly commented on the Armenian Genocide.

• Noted Israeli blogger and traveler Alexander Lapshin was the only representative of his country to appear on Azerbaijan's annually-updated "blacklist." Lapshin was singled out for visiting Artsakh and for subsequently writing about his visit on his blog. He also received threats from a Azeri security service representative.

• The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) suspended two football referees, Andranik Arsenyan and Hovhannes Avagyan, from Armenia while it prosecutes them for match-fixing.

• Vaché Thomassian and close friends launched the Sosé and Allen Foundation, a charity aimed at supporting his sister and her husband's core values: education, repatriation, volunteerism and democratic development. The young American-Armenian newlyweds, Sosé Thomassian and Allen Yekikian, were tragically killed in May in a car accident in the country of Georgia. They had chosen to live in Armenia.



YEAR IN REVIEW



• Famed doorman at Boston's Taj Hotel, Norman Pashoian, retired after 66 years of service on Newbury Street. Pashoian, 85, had greeted an array of heads of state, famous actors and prominent politicians during his many years at the front of the Taj and Ritz.

• A new report by UK-based watchdog Amnesty International decried the lack of protection for Armenia's beleaguered lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, highlighting the intimidation tactics and harassment campaigns committed against activists who question the government's policy on important social and political issues.

• The book *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures: Testimony to a People*, about the collection at the Manoogian Museum in Detroit, was presented by its executive editor, Edmond Y. Azadian, at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). A capacity crowd listened to Azadian and bought copies of the book. Introducing Azadian was *Mirror-Spectator* editor Alin K. Gregorian.

SEPTEMBER

• Edmond Azadian, a member of Tekeyan Cultural Association Board of Directors, and Hagop Minassian, distributed funds raised for the organization's Sponsor a Teacher Project. The project serves to help the teachers. It was established in 2000



and since then, every year, all the schools in Armenia and Artsakh named after poet Vahan Tekeyan, receive financial help. On September 20, the members of Yerevan TCA visited the No. 92 school to hand the checks to each teacher and staff member. Each teacher received \$130 and staff members \$30.

• Levon Ananyan, writer, journalist, translator and chairman for the past 12 years of the Writers Union of Armenian, died from cancer on September 2 at the age of 66.

• In one of biggest stories of the year, President Serge Sargisian announced that Armenia would join the Russian-led Customs Union despite seemingly working towards incorporation in the European Union. Sargisian made the surprise announcement after talks with his Russian counterpart, President Vladimir Putin, in Moscow on September 3. Sargisian vowed to continue communicating with "European structures," adding that his government remains committed to institutional reforms sought by those bodies. Several protests were staged in response to the controversial decision.



• Kevork Marshlian retired after 24 years of dedicated service managing the offices of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party's Eastern District of US and Canada and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. Marshlian will continue his services to these organizations on a voluntary basis, as his health allows.

• Lebanon ADL District Committee and Tekeyan Founders members represented by former deputy Hagop Kassardjian, chairman of ADL Lebanon's District Committee Harout Yerganian, met. The meeting was held at the Tekeyan Cultural Association Center in Beirut. Attending the meeting was Hagop Vartivarian, a member of the TCA Central of the US and Canada, who was in Beirut for this occasion.

• Armenians everywhere celebrated the 22nd anniversary of the independence of Artsakh or Nagorno-Karabagh.

• Prominent Armenian benefactor Gerard Cafesjian died at the age of 88 in St. Paul, Minn. Cafesjian was a businessman and philanthropist who founded the Cafesjian Family Foundation,

the Cafesjian Museum Foundation and the Cafesjian Center for the Arts.

• This year among the honorees singled out by President Serge Sargisian for the annual presidential medal ceremony, was Papken Megerian, co-chair of the Armenian Democratic



Liberal (ADL) party District Committee of Eastern US and Canada and member of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada.

OCTOBER

• After Sen. John Kerry was named secretary of state by Obama, Rep. Edward Markey won the special election in June to become the state's junior senator. An intense battle for the open House seat was launched, with seven Democrats and three Republicans vying for the seat. Among those was Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian. State Sen. Katherine Clark of Melrose topped the Democratic side with 32 percent of the votes. In second place was Koutoujian with 22 percent of the vote.

• "Where's Your Groom?," a play written, produced and codirected by Taleen Babayan, debuted at The Players Theatre in New York's Greenwich Village to much fanfare and was deemed a success. The play raised questions of identity, assimilation and generational divides among Armenians in a comedic manner and featured a guest appearance by musician Robert Chilingirian.

• The friends of Abaka weekly of Montreal, a publication of the Tekeyan Cultural Association and sister paper of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, organized a benefit dinner to celebrate the 38 anniversary of the trilingual Armenian weekly of Canada.



• Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian addressed the 68th United Nation General Assembly in New York and spoke on issues from the Genocide, to the Syrian conflict and NKR resolutions.

• On October 9, the sixth Pan-Armenian Journalists' Coordinating Committee convened in Yerevan under the auspices of Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan and the Armenian Journalists' Union. The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* was awarded the newspaper of the year award by the committee for its efforts in the diaspora.

The Armenian national soccer team bid farewell to the team's coach and squad manager Vardan Minasyan after he announced he would leave his post before the new qualification stage in the World Cup.

NOVEMBER

• Stella Arakelian, 17, a native of Armenia, received treatment for cancer at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. Doctors treating her at the Cleveland Clinic with monthly chemotherapy had told the family that her best chance for beating the cancer was by receiving a bone marrow transplant. Against all odds, she found a match earlier this fall and had a success surgery on November 8.

• On November 4, at the World Council of Churches' 10th Assembly, the delegates voted for Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, to serve as one of

the presidents of the World Council of Churches for the next eight years.

• In a decision believed to be politically-fueled, the White House refused to lend out a rug that was presented to President Calvin Coolidge by Armenian orphans in 1925 Hazir in appreciation for the work of the Near East Relief efforts to aid these women and children after the Genocide. The Smithsonian had planned on exhibiting the rug as part of book launch event on December 16 for the Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian's book, *Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug*, but the event was later canceled due to the White House's decision. More than 30 members of the House of Representatives signed a letter to President Obama urging him to release the rug for public display, an action that was spearheaded by Representatives David Valadao and Adam Schiff.

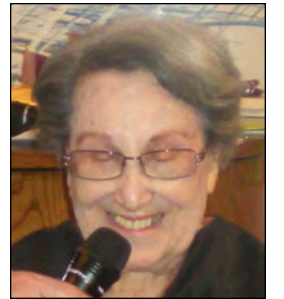


• The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Serge Sargisian and Ilham Aliyev, met in Vienna on November 19, for the first time in two years.

• The St. George Church of Hartford celebrated the 60th anniversary of its consecration.

• Several countries, including Armenia, welcomed the historic agreement reached between the US, Iran and five other leading world powers regarding Iran's nuclear program. Iran agreed to halt all uranium enrichment above 5 percent and to neutralize its existing stockpile of near-20 percent enriched uranium below 5 percent within six months. In return, some of the economic chokehold would be relaxed on that country.

• Nora Azadian retired after 20 years of serving as chair of the Detroit Tekeyan Chapter. A reception at the Belian Art Center hosted by the TCA and the Belian family, brought together a diverse group of Tekeyan members and long-time friends on the occasion of her retirement as chairman of the TCA.



DECEMBER

• On the 101st birthday of Armenian Genocide survivor Vahram Nahikian, his family and friends gathered at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church to hear his family's survival story shared by his granddaughter Anaide Nahikian, and to



see him receive a proclamation presented by state Sen. Will Brownsberger and a citation from Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian. Very Rev. Raphael Andonian hosted the December 8 ceremony.

• Denying that mass killings of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey in 1915 constituted genocide is not a criminal offense, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in a case involving Switzerland. The court, which upholds the 47-nation European Convention on Human Rights, said a Swiss law against genocide denial violated the principle of freedom of expression.

• The Armenian parliament ratified a controversial natural-gas agreement with Moscow amid protests. Opposition lawmakers boycotted the vote on December 23. The deal gives the Russian energy giant Gazprom, which already owns 80 percent of the ArmRosgazprom Armenian-Russian joint venture, the remaining 20 percent.

• As of December 24, the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) dropped a couple of words from its name and add a few: it will now be known as the Armenian Museum of America, Inc., in recognition of its primary function as a museum.

Arts & Living

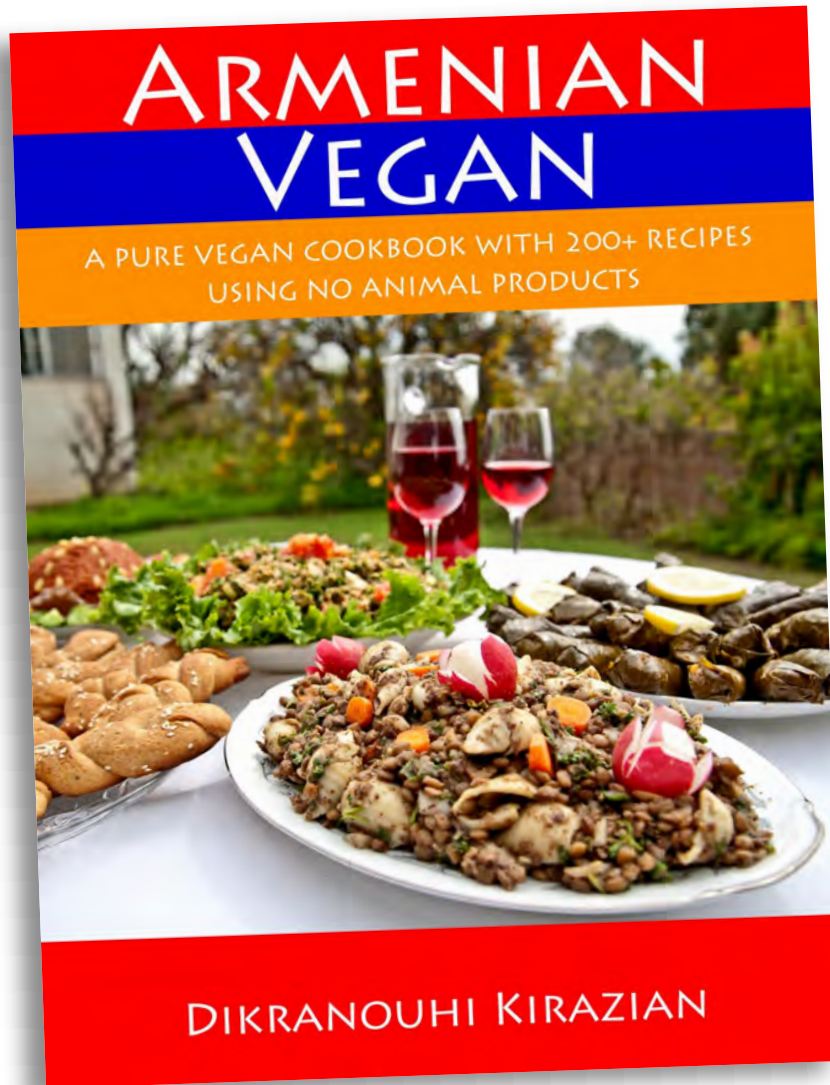
France 2 Presents Program about Charles Aznavour

PARIS (Armenpress) – France 2 TV Company has prepared a program devoted to the prominent French-Armenian singer, actor and public figure Charles Aznavour. In the 1.5-hour-long program Aznavour speaks about his childhood and the difficulties he had while making the first steps in the singing, when nobody believed that he would achieve success and get an international recognition. His songs are known to everybody and are a part of the cultural heritage though the hero himself remains unknown. For years his appearance – the short stature, the large nose and the hoarse voice – has always been in the center of attention of the critics. He is the embodiment of an artist, who is in demand for his talent, according to the program.

Aznavour (Shahan Vaghinak Aznavouryan) was born in Paris in 1924 to Armenian immigrants Mikayel and Knar Aznavouryan. As a young man he was fond of theatre, but in 1940s he started to give performances in cabaret with Pierre Roche. Besides being one of France's most popular and enduring singers, he is also one of the best-known singers in the world. Aznavour is known for his unique tenor voice: clear and ringing in its upper reaches, with gravelly low notes. He has appeared in more than 60 movies, composed about 1,000 songs (including at least 150 in English, 100 in Italian, 70 in Spanish, and 50 in German), and sold well over 100 million records. In 1974, Aznavour became a major success in the United Kingdom where his song *She* went to the top spot in the charts. His other well-known song in the UK was *Dance in the Old Fashioned Way*. Artists who have recorded his songs and collaborated with Aznavour include Édith Piaf, Fred Astaire, Frank Sinatra (Aznavour was one of the rare European singers invited to duet with him), Andrea Bocelli, Bing Crosby, Ray Charles, Bob Dylan (he named Aznavour among the greatest live performers he has ever seen), Liza Minnelli, Elton John, Dalida, Serge Gainsbourg, Josh Groban, Petula Clark, Shirley Bassey, José Carreras, Laura Pausini, Nana Mouskouri and Julio Iglesias. Fellow French pop legend Mireille Mathieu has sung and recorded with Aznavour on numerous occasions. In 1974, Jack Jones recorded an entire album of Aznavour compositions titled "Write Me A Love Song, Charlie," re-released on CD in 2006. Aznavour and Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti sang Gounod's aria *Ave Maria* together. He performed with famed Russian cellist and friend Mstislav Rostropovich to inaugurate the French presidency of the European Union in 1995. One of Aznavour's greatest friends and collaborators from the music industry is legendary Spanish operatic tenor Plácido Domingo. In 1994, Aznavour performed with Domingo and Norwegian soprano Sissel Kyrkjebø at Domingo's third annual Christmas in Vienna concert. The three singers performed a variety of carols, medleys and duets, and the concert was televised throughout the world, as well as released on a CD internationally. On September 30, 2006, Aznavour performed a major concert in Yerevan to start off the cultural season "Arménie mon amie" in France. In 2008, an album of duets, "Duos," was released. It is a collaborative effort featuring Aznavour and his greatest friends and partners from his long career in the music industry, including Céline Dion, Sting, Laura Pausini, Josh Groban, Paul Anka, Plácido Domingo, and many others.

Since the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, Aznavour has been helping the country through his charity, Aznavour for Armenia. There is a square named after him in Yerevan and a statue erected in Gumri.

In 2004 Aznavour received the title of National Hero of Armenia for his humanitarian work, Armenia's highest award. During a career that has lasted over 70 years, he has appeared in more than 60 films, composed more than 1,000 songs and sold more than 100 million records worldwide.



New Cookbook Offers Armenian Twist on Vegan Diet

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – During the six years she took to create her new cookbook, *Armenian Vegan*, Dikranouhi Kirazian insisted on telling no one about her passion project.

"I wanted it to be a surprise," she said.

And it was. When she finally revealed and released the book in December, family and friends alike were so excited to hear of the book that they have started cooking out of it and buying it for friends, Armenian and non-Armenian alike.



Dikranouhi Kirazian

But Kirazian's desire to write the book was to leave a legacy – to honor her mother, grandmother and aunts, who taught her so much about authentic Armenian cooking, and also to help future generations keep the heritage alive.

"It's for my children and grandchildren, nieces and nephews, so that they will always remember," she said.

With the help of her husband, George, an author and editor, Dikranouhi meticulously prepared and wrote more than 200 pure vegan recipes using no animal products, taking pictures along the way.

The recipes include appetizers, entrees, salads, soups, desserts, breakfast items, pickles, sauces and drinks. Vegan versions of favorite Armenian recipes like yalanchi, mante, lamajoun,

pilaf, stuffed vegetables, paklava, hummus, eech and many others are included, alongside many completely new recipes.

"Our Armenian food is very healthy – a lot of it is already vegan, but I created my own dishes as well," she says.

Kirazian points out that for those who cannot quite make the leap to vegan eating, most all of the recipes can be made with meat if desired.

Armenian Vegan is published and available on CreateSpace at <https://wwwcreatespace.com/4554831> and on Amazon at <http://amzn.com/1494365189>. *Armenian Vegan* is also on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ArmenianVeganCookbook>, and the Twitter handle is @ArmenianVegan. Recipes and other resources will appear on the website soon.

For more information, visit <http://www.armenianvegan.com>.

Distinguished Scholars Speak on 'Survivor Meaning'

By Taleen Babayan

NEW YORK – A symposium on the meaning of being a survivor, which featured leaders in the field of study, including Peter Balakian, Jay Lifton and Marianne Hirsch, was held at Columbia University on Wednesday, December 4, in an event hosted by the Armenian Center at Columbia University.

Titled "Survivor Meaning: After the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, and Hiroshima," the panel delved into the aftermath of the survivors of these human catastrophes as they searched for an understanding of their tragic experiences.

Acclaimed poet and prize-winning author, Balakian was introduced by Hirsch, the William Peterfield Trent Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, who served as the moderator of the panel and who has written several important books on trauma and memory and the Holocaust.

Balakian presented a personal and inherited familial narrative, which was the case of his grandmother, Nafina, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide as a "way of engaging conversation in survivor experience."

A resident of Diyarbakir during the time of the Armenian Genocide, her family's homes and properties were looted and confiscated and she was witness to the massacre of her family and community. Nafina survived a forced march, in which everyone in her family was killed.

Having arrived in Aleppo in the fall of 1915, she began to compile affidavits for what would be a human rights suit against the Turkish government for all the losses endured by her family. Balakian read his grandmother's insurance claim from his *New York Times* bestselling memoir, *Black Dog of Fate*. He said the claim, which she filed when she arrived in the United States, "contributed to the understanding of a survivor in the immediate aftermath of an enormous encounter with mass killing, rape, starvation, famine and death."

"She was witness to the truth," said Balakian, who is the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities at Colgate University and the Ordjanian Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies at Columbia University.

Scholar, psychiatrist and historian Lifton, who has written more than 20 books on trauma, survival and violence, defined a survivor as someone who has in some way encountered death, witnessed it and at the same time remained alive.

"There's a triumph in surviving because one stays alive," said Lifton, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at CUNY/Graduate Center and John Jay College for Criminal Justice. "It's necessary to give meaning to that catastrophe if one is to find meaning in the rest of one's life."

He said survivors of the bombing in Hiroshima, Japan after World War II experienced a lifetime of "death haunted imagery" from the encounter itself to the effects of the tragedy that carried over to the next generation.

"From survivor meaning comes a survivor mission which one carries out in order to assert that meaning," said Lifton, who concluded his presentation by returning to Nafina's story. "There was a heroic struggle by this woman who sought to oppose the forces of destruction in her life. I don't think there could be a better moral principle in which to base our world."

Following Balakian's and Lifton's presentations, Hirsch posed follow up questions, including why Nafina "chose a legal claim, not to seek repair but to voice the wrong and to commemorate the dead."

"It's a stay against being expunged or annihilated," said Balakian, who remarked that see COLUMBIA, page 12



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Music At Metropolitan Museum of Art

NEW YORK – New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art will present a concert featuring Armenian liturgical chants later this month.

England's celebrated a cappella vocal quartet, the Hilliard Ensemble, will perform the concert on Wednesday, January 22, at 7 p.m. in the dramatic setting of the Metropolitan Museum's Temple of Dendur exhibit.

Their program, titled "Arkhangelos, A Millennium of Music," will include a number of classic Armenian liturgical chants and one modern composition, alongside chants from other traditions.

The Armenian selections performed on January 22 will include *Ov zarmanali*, *Hays harg*, *Amen Hayr sourp* and *Sourp Der zorutyants*. Hilliard will also perform *Lord, Who Made the Spring Run*, a new Armenian piece by Vache Sharafyan, the composer featured in the Silk Road Project organized by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, set to an ancient text.

The Hilliard Ensemble has had a long artistic association with Armenia and its music. In 2004, the group was invited to Armenia to record sharagans of the Armenian Church arranged by Komitas. Hilliard's original recording of the Komitas pieces was made in the 13th-century monastery of Saghmosavank atop the gorge of the Khasakh River.

The Metropolitan Museum is holding "Arkhangelos, A Millennium of Music" as a complement to its extensive collection of Byzantium artwork. In addition to the music of Armenia, the concert will include music from 13th-century France and 16th-century England, and will celebrate the ensemble's ongoing relationship with living composers Arvo Pärt (from Estonia), Katia Tchamberdji and



The Hilliard Ensemble

Alexander Raskatov (both from Russia).

Visit www.metmuseum.org/tickets for ticket and perfor-

mance information. The performance will be live-streamed by Q2 Music at www.q2music.org.

Distinguished Scholars Speak on 'Survivor Meaning'

COLUMBIA, from page 4

nothing came of the claim and that the document remained in a dresser drawer for 60 years until he himself found it. "In cases of mass killings and genocides, the survivors end up taking the ethical role and family is essential.

catastrophe and retold the story through the means of her legal claim. "What is unsuccessful in a legal sense, starts legal ramifications of the witness, and there's something moving about that."

Lifton noted that calamities like the Holocaust, Hiroshima and the Armenian Genocide annihilate meaning along with human beings and structures.

"As human beings, we are meaning hungry creatures," said Lifton. "That's why the struggle for meaning is so difficult and poignant and painful - but it always goes on because that's how we function mentally. We must recreate all that we perceive."

The presentation was followed by lively audience questions and the after-math conversations went on

well into the evening in what was the conclusion to a memorable semester of events hosted by the Armenian Center at Columbia.



Prof. Peter Balakian recounting the story of his grandmother Nafina's escape during the Armenian Genocide

This claim has a graveyard dimension to it."

Lifton observed that it was a series of bearing witness since Nafina experienced the

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ARTS & LIVING

New Archives Enhance Armenian Jerusalem Website Project

By Arthur Hagopian

JERUSALEM – The Armenian Jerusalem website project, which has been set up with the objective of chronicling and preserving the culture, history and traditions of the Armenians of Jerusalem, is being enhanced in the wake of new archival material contributed by friends around the world.

The new material casts an intriguing light on the vicissitudes of members of this Jerusalem clan, and comes as a timely update to the existing records.

Catching up with modern social networking trends in its quest to reach a wider audience, the project has now created a Facebook page located at <https://www.facebook.com/armenian.jerusalem> and is on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/HagopianArthur>.

Although the project is primarily of interest to Armenians, it welcomes non-Armenians – whether scholars, researchers or mere visitors – who are eager to learn more about the contribution of this clan of hardy survivors who have helped make Jerusalem the center of the world.

Acutely sensitive to Jerusalem's unique character and the various conflicts raging around it, the project's Facebook administrators unequivocally stress that its basic tenet is research and scholarship, with absolutely no divergence into political or other controversy.

"Our whole aim is to portray the glory of Jerusalem and the vital role Armenians have played in the evolution of its history," they say.

Among the latest archival revelations, from a source in the United States, is the story of the Armenian mason, Kevork Necessian, who arrived in Palestine, then under Ottoman rule, probably in the 1850s, from the town of Marash in Armenia (it is currently in Turkish hands), seeking business opportunities in the land of milk and honey. He owned a large tract of land in Safad in the Galilee, and eventually became mayor of the city. He later sold his property to the British who converted it into a hospital.

One of his descendants is the renowned emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Haig Khatchadourian, a very close relative of the composer/conductor Ohan Dourian.

Information from a source in Brazil reveals that another member of the Khatchadourian clan, named Eli or Elias, who is said to have spoken 15 languages, became an ambassador in

Palestine.

Armenians are scattered all over the world, the greater part refugees or descendants of refugees fleeing Turkish pogroms which culminated in the 1915 Genocide, and spawned a mass exodus.

Thousands of children were orphaned, hundreds dying along the way from disease or malnutrition. One and a half million Armenians had perished.

Among the survivors was a 4-year-old girl who was sent to a Christian Approach Mission for schooling after her parents died. The mother had tried to save her 11-year-old son by changing the date of his birth so he could enter the priesthood but he ended up in an unknown destination, perhaps Lebanon.

Another rootless family, the father drowned in the Mediterranean, trekked to Jordan in a stumbling caravan of bedraggled refugees. In Amman, the two little granddaughters were forced to stack street tiles in order to earn a living, while the grandmother, who had become so exhausted along the road, she had wanted to just lie down and go to sleep, suckled the babies of strangers for a pittance.

The paucity of documented chronicles has made the task of trying to unearth the variegated story of the Armenians of Jerusalem extremely difficult.

"Our major source of information, apart from official *domars* [records of births, marriages and deaths] maintained by the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, remains anecdotal," the project administrators concede.

"The *domars* we have accessed go back to only 1840," they note, adding more ancient documents exist in the Armenian Patriarchate, but access to those is problematic at the moment.

"At the moment, we have neither the manpower nor the means to unearth those archives and delve into them. It's a mammoth undertaking and would require years of work. Look how long it took one researcher, Haig Krikorian, to complete his omnibus tracking back the lives and times of the Armenian patriarchs of Jerusalem: eight years. We will just have to wait for more opportune times."

"Another factor complicating access and preservation of anecdotal data is the that the major

repositories of such information, the elders of the community who are best equipped to regale us with their tales, are passing away at an alarming rate, one after another, taking a large, irreplaceable chunk of our story with them."

Among the most recent Armenian losses is Araksi Kaplanian, who had been living in Australia. Her husband, Kevork, a community leader, was instrumental in founding the leading Armenian youth club in Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Armenian Benevolent Club (JABU).

Earlier, Arshaloos Zakarian, a veritable encyclopedia of knowledge about her compatriots,

their weapons into pruning forks, and not learn war any more.

The relentless battles over Jerusalem have taken a heavy toll on the city's population, but in recent times, it is the year 1948 when the first major confrontation between the Semitic cousins, the Arabs and the Jews, took place, that stands out as seminal for the Armenians. Even before the hounds of war were let loose, the Armenian community had seen its numbers shrink drastically in the wake of an unprecedented return of large numbers, back to their homeland in Armenia.



Archival photo of a Jerusalem Armenian family

and a lifelong teacher and educator with a son who became editor of a major US publication, had passed away.

Haig Khatchadourian's brother, Khatcho, and his cousin, Ohan Dourian, were other irreplaceable losses.

Perhaps, future researchers will fare better, now that the Armenian Patriarchate has begun computerizing its records, an initiative taken by the late Patriarch Torkom Manoogian, who wanted to unequivocally reinforce the place of Armenian Jerusalem on the map of the world.

Jerusalem has always been a battlefield for the nations, and seems likely to remain so until those nations beat their swords into plowshares and

Death and devastation followed soon after as Arab and Jew lobbed missiles at each other across the walls of the hallowed city, several landing in the lap of the Armenians, and claiming dire casualties.

But although the numbers may never again reach the magical figure of 25,000 just before the epochal year 1948, Armenian Jerusalem is here to stay.

For even if only two Armenians remain to hobble among the cobblestones of its alleys, "see if they will not create a new Armenia."

Wherever they meet anywhere in the world. But particularly in Jerusalem, "zahrat ul mada'en," "yerushalaym shel zahav."

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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

The Lesser Evil in Turkey

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Any Armenian commentator would be loath to state his or her favorites amongst successive Turkish administrations, as long as they are all in the mode of Genocide denial. But the principal of relativity will help us sort out this dichotomy.

Turkey is facing one of the most intense crises in its modern history. Its leader, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has his back against the wall.

Some analysts compare Erdogan's meteoric rise to power to that of Icarus' tale in Greek mythology embodying hubris. Icarus' wings were made of wax and as he flew closer and closer to the sun, they melted, causing his downfall.

Mr. Erdogan's AKP party is a coalition of moderate Islamists, nationalists and liberals, catapulting him to power through three successive elections. Domestically, he has been able to introduce some reforms, improved the economy and opened the dialog with the restive Kurdish minority. One of his major achievements was to tame the military, which took over the government three times, through coups, since the establishment of the republic in 1923. He neutralized the army brass, accusing them of plotting to overthrow his government. The Ergenekon scandal revealed that a "deep state" within the state was in action and responsible for many crimes.

In eliminating the secularists and the "deep state," he had the support and the cooperation of another cleric, Fethullah Gulen, whose Hizmet movement turned out to be another "deep state," poised to undermine his government in the current crisis.

On the international scene, he has been the standard bearer for Islamists while appearing as the democratic reformer for the European Union and the West.

This political illusionism has come to an end and his apparent downfall seems equally dramatic.

The news media is abuzz with the details of Turkey's deepening crisis; three ministers have resigned thus far under the charges of corruption, one of them Erdogan Bayraktar, did not go quietly. He called for the resignation of the prime minister as well, who had approved all his decisions in urban development.

In an awkward damage-control mode, Erdogan fired or replaced 400 police officers and judges, banning all investigations without the investigators reporting to their superiors. This meant the usurpation of the power of the judiciary in an attempt to salvage his control over the executive. These actions came under severe criticism at home and abroad, calling for respect for the rule of law, allowing for the legal procedures to take their course without interference.

These investigations hit not only Erdogan's closest allies, but also even his own son, Bilal.

At this point, the prime minister is in a combative mode and nowhere near willing to relinquish power. He has been blaming internal and foreign conspiracies for his troubles. He has certainly had a fall-out with former ally Gulen, who seems to have many followers in the police and the judiciary. One of the bones of contention between these former allies is that Gulen has criticized Erdogan for antagonizing Israel. Erdogan is trying to eliminate Gulenist followers in these institutions, who have been after him.

He has also implicated the United States and Israel in this conspiracy. Some AKP-supporting newspapers have even called for the ouster of US Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone Jr., who has been after the Halkbank, on the grounds that its president has been violating the sanctions against Iran.

Although the US has been dismissing outright Erdogan's accusations, some truth may be behind his finger pointing at Israel. Granted, Prime Minister Netanyahu grudgingly apologized to Erdogan for sinking the Turkish Mavi Marmara ship, but he certainly vowed to get even at the right moment and this

seems to be that moment.

The US and Israel have a full arsenal of retaliatory weapons when push comes to shove and one of those weapons should be the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Erdogan may be down, but not out yet, gearing for the crucial municipal elections in Istanbul. There is general consensus that whoever carries Istanbul's mayoral race, carries Turkey. The parliamentary and presidential elections will soon follow the municipal ones.

Turkey's president is elected by a two-third-majority vote in parliament. Mr. Erdogan has his eye on the presidential palace with more executive powers. If he cannot garner two-thirds of the vote, he may maneuver to amend the constitution to allow him the chance to run for a fourth term as prime minister. The elections will be nothing less than a test of survival for Erdogan's political future.

The current crisis has severely impacted Turkey's economy and the Turkish Lira fell to a record low against the dollar.

The irony of this situation is best illustrated when we consider that against the backdrop of the scandals, where Erdogan's cronies stash millions of dollars in shoeboxes and violate every law in the books, an Armenian maverick blogger, Sevan Nisanyan, has been put in jail supposedly for violating some building codes.

Erdogan is no saint and no friend to Armenians by any measure. His despotic instincts are well documented. However, the reforms he carried out indirectly benefitted the Armenians, especially the Armenian community in Turkey. No previous administration had dared to introduce any reforms. Of course, those reforms are mostly self-serving, rather than being driven by a charitable motivation.

During Erdogan's rule, a fissure has appeared on the wall of silence on the Armenian Genocide. Hrant Dink's assassination rendered the Genocide a topical issue in the Turkish news media and scholarship.

Also, a number of confiscated properties were returned to the Armenian community, a timid yet welcome initiative. The renovation of Akhtamar Church was showcased with obvious political intent. The controversial protocols were negotiated, if not consummated.

Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu's reference to the Armenian deportations by the Ottoman government was a revealing new step, not coming close to uttering the word "genocide." Davutoglu characterized the deportations as "inhumane," which his government has never supported.

In view of the enormity of the crime of genocide, these are minor steps, but for the Turkish side, they have significant political implications.

In all the current turmoil, the Kurds in Turkey are demonstrably quiet. Erdogan has bought their silence at a price. He needs Kurdish votes to consolidate his power. Also, he wishes to gain brownie points from Europe as a leader who respects minority rights. In return, he has made some vague pledges, which may or may not materialize, depending upon future political developments.

Erdogan himself has apologized to the Kurds for the Dersim massacres of the 1930s, although that may be interpreted as a double-edged political sword, implicating the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), which was in power during those atrocities. He has yet to apologize to the Armenians for the Genocide.

Erdogan's AKP party has taken incremental steps toward improving minority rights. Those steps have served more the party's political agenda rather than the minorities themselves, but still, marginally, they are steps in the right direction no matter the motivation.

The issue of Genocide still remains unresolved as does the opening of the border with Armenia. But compared to previous Turkish regimes which have been ruthless oppressors, Erdogan's and AKP's performance may rank the prime minister as the lesser evil in Turkish politics.

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

— All submissions should include the name of a contact person and a daytime telephone number.

— Deadline for submission of all articles and advertising is noon on the Monday of the week of publication.

— Photos will be published without charge at the discretion of the editors and art director. Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is included.

— The M-S will publish only one article about an upcoming organizational event. For major special events, exceptions may be made only by special arrangement with the editors.

— Telephone numbers, ticket prices and other details (at the discretion of the editors) will not be included in press releases, but should be reserved for calendar listings and advertisements.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Canadian Turk Should Condemn, Not Condone, Genocide Denial

Canadian Turks launched a petition last month seeking the removal of all references to the Armenian Genocide from the 11th-grade curriculum of Toronto high schools.

This petition is a part of Turkish denialists' long-standing efforts to reverse the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) 2008 decision to educate students about the Armenian, Jewish, and Rwandan genocides. TDSB's action follows the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the Canadian Senate in 2002 and the House of Commons in 2004. In addition, since 2006, successive Canadian Prime Ministers have issued official annual statements acknowledging the Armenian Genocide, despite intensive political pressure and economic blackmail by the Turkish government.

Back in 2008, a similar Turkish petition failed to sway TDSB to amend the genocide curriculum, after gathering more than 11,000 signatures, mostly from Turkey. Indeed, the Ankara government and its Turkish proxies in Toronto have done everything possible during the past seven years to undermine this curriculum.

Below are the baseless claims made by the Turkish peti-

tion against TDSB's genocide curriculum, followed by my rebuttal:

– Turkish Petition: “As the Turkish/Turkic speaking parents of students attending the Toronto District School Board, we are deeply concerned about the negative impact of the current curriculum module on ‘Armenian Genocide’ and the learning resources adopted by the Board since 2008.”

My response: There has been NO violence or intimidation against a single Turkish student in Toronto schools even though the genocide curriculum has been taught there for several years. The reason is that Armenians do not hold today's Turks responsible for the crimes committed by the Government of Ottoman Turkey almost 100 years ago, except those who associate themselves with these crimes by their denial. The Republic of Turkey, on the other hand, as successor to the Ottoman Empire, is responsible for the continuing consequences of the Armenian Genocide. Denying the facts of the Genocide has a far more serious negative psychological impact on Armenians than its inclusion in the curriculum on Turks. Furthermore, the truth cannot be concealed in order not to offend the sensibilities of those who wish to cover up historical facts. Would anyone advocate erasing all references to the Jewish Holocaust from history books in order to not offend present-day Germans?

–Turkish Petition: “The textbook on the Genocide of the Armenians and other readers, such as Barbara Coloroso's Extraordinary Evil, unremittably discredits one community's narrative over the other; and, adversely affects the students of TDSB with Turkish and Turkic heritages.”

My response: There cannot be two narratives or two versions of the proven facts of the Armenian Genocide. There can only be one version – the truth!

– Turkish Petition: “We firmly believe that the values of mutual respect, understanding and peaceful coexistence can be achieved through an honest and open dialogue on history. Moreover, fair and unprejudiced learning should be based on historical facts and not solely on the narratives of select communities while ignoring others. It should also be noted that there are no court decisions on any of these historical claims and the opinions of historians differ regarding the details and the definitions of these events.”

My response: ‘Mutual respect, understanding and peaceful coexistence’ cannot be achieved through distortions and lies. Only after acknowledging the truth and making appropriate amends, Canadian Turks can talk about such lofty ideals. Furthermore, contrary to the Turkish claims, there are several court verdicts on the Armenian Genocide, starting with the Turkish Military Tribunals of 1919, and judgments by Argentinean, Swiss, and U.S. courts. Significantly, the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted in 1985 a report acknowledging the Armenian Genocide. The ultimate arbiter of any genocide is the United Nations, since the Genocide Convention is a UN document.

To sum up, this latest Turkish petition is a total failure since its initiator, the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations, has so far collected less than 2,000 signatures out of a claimed membership of 200,000 in Canada. Interestingly, most of the signatories are not from Canada, but Turkey where the petition has been widely circulated.

A more worthwhile initiative for Canadian Turks would be to start a petition urging the Turkish government to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and make proper restitution to the descendants of this heinous crime on the occasion of the Genocide's Centennial.

MESSAGE OF KAREKIN II, SUPREME PATRIARCH AND CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS ON THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NATIVITY AND THEOPHANY

The Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II issued the following message on January 6 at Holy Echmiadzin, on the day of Armenian Christmas.

(The Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II issued the following message on January 6 at Holy Echmiadzin, on the day of Armenian Christmas.)

Dear and faithful people in Armenia, Artsakh and the Dispersion,

It is with the exultation of Christ our Lord's Holy Nativity that we offer today our joyful gratitude to God. We glorify our Savior – the infant Jesus born in Bethlehem. On the blessed day of the Holy Nativity, the earth became heaven, and the ray of Justice with the light of righteousness dawned to illuminate the souls of men, so that they know, see, and find their salvation.

The Son of God humbled Himself from the heights of heaven, became man and came to earth, to save man who had been exiled from paradise through the deception of the intriguer, from sin and from the power of Satan who breeds sin. He came to return the lost generations of the first-created man who had come out against God in transgression to the kingdom of heaven, and to turn them into the children of God. “Teach me the way I should go, Lord, for to you I lift up my soul.” (Psalms 143:8). In response to this plea of mankind that was raised up to heaven by the psalmist's lips, the voice of our Savior resounded: “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life.”

By making truth and life one with Himself, our Lord proclaimed that truth is a value equal to life. He dispersed the darkness of aimless wanderings and sinfulness with the rays of truth, and granted to men the Holy Spirit of Truth (John 14:17), so that the path of mankind be established in a life of peace and righteousness – a life founded on love and honesty for one another.

Through the Lord's act of salvation, the defeated evil fights today as well with fury for the souls of men, trying to obscure with fog the light of truth brought by Christ; so that men do not see the path that leads to heaven, and by leading them astray through snares of deception, be denied the eternal life of the kingdom of God. Evil has no rest – it works day in and day out and works through men. Evil creates the path when vigilance for the truth is lacking in life, and falsehood finds its collaborators. The beguiling ways of evil are strengthened when man strays from the principles taught by Christ – filling life with falsehoods and distortions. It is thus that the presentation of realities are transformed into intrigues and false evaluations; arbitrary and selfish interpretation in religions, give birth to cults; by the demands of the defense of human rights, society is at times also compelled to adopt behaviors that are contradictory with societal thinking and value structures.

It is in this manner that morality in the world cedes ground to immorality, freedom of speech is transformed to licentiousness of speech, and testimony becomes the distortion of truth. By distorting the truth, political interests often oppose peace



and justice, frenzy to acquire the material and selfish desires oppose mercy and philanthropy, and multiply the conflicts, sorrows, wants and pains in the world.

The world shall be liberated of these life-agitating realities when men accept the truth of Christ, when they witness the presence of the Lord through their faithful works, and like the Apostle, proclaim, “...the truth of Christ is in me!” (2 Corinthians 11:10). Only by bearing the truth can mankind secure the progress of life, reformation, beneficial results and development; because nothing that lasts is built on deception – neither relationships between individuals, nor a vibrant societal life or statehood. When truth is not within men, dedication, righteousness and brotherhood have no value; however through truth they take on strength and the power to be transformed into work.

In our reality, dear pious faithful, regrettably we also find impropriety and slander, indifference towards the general welfare of the country. Traditional family values are in retreat, and in the face of difficulties, the spirit of conscientiousness. Unreserved behavior and insult are regarded as courageous; responsibility is subordinated to rights. Frequently, the right to express one's personal opinion is wrongly utilized to distort the truth, in order to spread subjective or biased opinions.

It is in this mentality that falsehood is veiled with a mask of truth, debate becomes argument, discussion transforms into scorn and condemnation, from which the Spirit of God's truth and the wisdom of God move away; and we have difficulty – yes, even cease – to see the good and the just; and faith and trust in one another, as well as hope and optimism for the future, all weaken in our lives.

Dear faithful, it is the child born in Bethlehem who is the way, the truth and the life. We must rely on Him, we must bear His truth in our hearts so that our lives are transformed, be filled with unwavering trust, and the strength to overcome difficulties, and everything will be made right through the power of God's benevolent will. The truth is liberating. “And you will

know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:32), says our Lord. Let us live and work with Christ's truth; let us make his word and commandments the light that disperses the darkness in our lives; let us make His love and mercy for us the power that unites us – the power that creates the unity of the nation. Let us keep steadfast and strong our unanimity, spirit of harmony, let us care for and attend to one another, for our country and the elevation of our spiritual and national life. It is in this manner – and only in this manner – that we shall build and create our vibrant and prosperous homeland. It is only in this way that we shall transform the 100th anniversary commemorating the Genocide of the Armenians into the platform of victory for our righteous cause, and lead to a just and positive solution the fundamental issue of Artsakh. It is in this way we shall keep the Diaspora vibrant and energetic, and become the hope and refuge for our Syrian-Armenian brothers and sisters bearing the adversities of conflict. And may all of our labors be with the Lord.

It is with this wish and the good tiding of the Holy Nativity that we extend our greetings to the incumbents of the hierarchical sees of our Holy Apostolic Church: His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia; His Beatitude Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem; His Beatitude Archbishop Mesrob Mutafian, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople; to all of our oath-bound and devoted clergy; and to the graceful heads of our sister Churches.

With pontifical blessings and the appeal for the graces of the Holy Nativity, we greet the President of the Republic of Armenia, Serge Sargisyan and the First Lady, present here for the Divine Liturgy today. We convey our greetings to the President of the Republic of Artsakh, Bako Sahakian, to all high-ranking state officials of the Armenian people, to the leaders of diplomatic missions accredited in Armenia and representatives of international organizations.

From God-built Holy Echmiadzin and the Holy Altar of Descent of our Lord and Savior, with the good tidings of the Holy Nativity, we extend our pontifical love and blessings to all of our sons and daughters dispersed throughout the world.

On this joyful day, let us pray for the graces of the Savior's birth to always reign over the earth, and with the entreaty of the prophet, “Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.” (Psalms 85:10).

May the illuminated rays of our Lord Jesus Christ's birth give brilliance to our Holy Church, our Homeland, to Armenian life in the Diaspora, so that it be glorification to the Most-High God and grant to our nation constant and endless spiritual happiness, and today and always, may we always proclaim with joy,

Christ is Born and Revealed
Great Tidings to All



Remaining Armenians Pray for Peace at Christmas in Damascus

DAMASCUS, from page 1

they couldn't because of the traffic at checkpoints."

Syria's conflict has grown increasingly sectarian since it started as a peaceful uprising in March 2011 and then evolved into an armed rebellion against President Bashar al-Assad.

Majority Sunni Muslims dominate the uprising while minorities have for the most part stuck with the government, which is dominated by members of Assad's Alawite sect, an offshoot of Shi'ite Islam.

Syria's Christians, around 10 percent, occupy an uneasy middle ground. Some Christians have fled to government-held territory, while others have stayed with the rebels. Some have joined the insurgency.

Archbishop Armash Nalbandian led the mass then delivered a short sermon, with a prayer for better days.

"Last year witnessed many martyrs and kid-

nappings ... There have been martyrs in our schools ... children aged six and seven killed," he said. "We pray this year for the release of the kidnapped, and for peace in our country, Syria," he said.

An estimated 100,000 Armenians live in Syria, many the descendants of Armenian Genocide survivors.

Many of the Armenian Orthodox Christian congregation live in the outlying Damascus district of Jaramana, a densely populated area that is home to many of the city's Christians.

Jaramana has been the site of several car bombs and dozens of mortar and rocket attacks that the government blames on rebels who control the adjacent suburbs. Some rebels blame Christians for sitting on the fence during the uprising.

The community organizer said it took him one and a half hours to arrive from his home in Jaramana to the church, walking most of the way. Two years ago, before the checkpoints, the



A worshiper receives communion at Saint Sarkis.

California Assemblyman Mike Gatto Introduces Resolution to Recognize Nagorno Karabagh

RESOLUTION, from page 1

"The introduction of AJR 32 by Assemblyman Gatto is an integral step towards the recognition of Nagorno-Karabagh as a sovereign state," stated Sevak Khatchadorian, chairman of the Armenian Council of America. "The Armenian Council of America applauds Assemblyman Gatto for his courageous and heroic effort toward promoting democracy and the right to self-determination in the region. This legislation will not only serve as a triumph for people of Armenian descent, but also as a victory shared by citizens of the world who value democracy, freedom and justice."

Once passed by both houses of the California Legislature, a copy of AJR 32 will be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the California delegation to the United States Congress.

Gatto is the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee in the California State Assembly. He represents Burbank, Glendale, La Cañada Flintridge, La Crescenta, Montrose, and the Los Angeles neighborhoods of Atwater Village, East Hollywood, Franklin Hills, Hollywood Hills, Los Feliz, and Silver Lake.

drive would have taken around 20 minutes.

The church pews snugly fit about 100 congregants but were mostly empty when the service commenced. By the end of the two-hour service about 200 worshippers had shown up, spilling over into the courtyard. Congregants estimated that in 2013 there were twice as many in attendance and in years passed there were hundreds more.

Among the congregants were newly displaced Armenians from Aleppo and elsewhere in Syria. One couple said they escaped dire conditions in Aleppo, where power and water cuts continue for days at a time.

"It took us 52 hours by bus to get here and we slept two nights inside our bus, which was parked inside a garage," said the wife. The journey took about eight hours before the war.

Some Armenians also tried to escape the violence and repatriate to Armenia. But community leaders say many of those who left have come back to Syria.

"We might feel that our origin is Armenia but the country is totally alien to us," said a community elder. "Armenia is a very modern country with lots of big companies. But here? We're used to small family business. It just doesn't work over there, so people came back."

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