

Turkish Ambassador Returns to France

Row Spreads to Algeria

PARIS (RFE/RL, Now Lebanon) — Turkish Ambassador to France Tahsin Burcuoglu has reportedly returned to Paris at the weekend more than two weeks after being recalled to Ankara in protest against a French bill criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide.

“The ambassador has finished the consultations for which he was recalled and returned to France on Saturday [January 7],” Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Selcuk Unal told the AFP news agency on January 8.

Hurriyet Daily News reported last week that Burcuoglu would be sent back to Paris to “coordinate” Turkish efforts to prevent the Genocide bill’s passage by the French Senate.

The Senate is expected to debate and vote on the measure, strongly condemned by Turkey, on January 23.

The French government and the opposition Socialist Party, which holds a majority of seats in the chamber, have signaled support for its passage.

The Turkish ambassador was recalled for consultations immediately after the bill was approved by the lower house of France’s parliament, the National Assembly, on December 22.

Ankara reacted furiously to that vote, banning French military aircraft and warships from landing and docking in Turkey and freezing political and economic meetings.

Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip see AMBASSADOR, page 3



Istanbul's Surp Krikor Lusavorich Armenian Church

Istanbul's Oldest Armenian Church Reopens

ISTANBUL (Hetq) — Istanbul's Saint Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Apostolic Church was reopened after a six-month restoration on Sunday.

Surp Krikor Lusavorich Armenian Church, said to be the oldest Armenian Church in Istanbul, was restored by the Sisli Municipality. It has a specific place among the other Armenian churches with its conical dome. Inner illumination is provided by the few narrow windows suitable to Armenian church design. The bell-fry next to the entrance is also in line with classical Armenian church architecture.

A mass was held at the church, which is located in the city's Karakoy neighborhood.

Armenian, Azeri Leaders Set for Fresh Summit

SOCHI, Russia (RFE/RL) — Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is expected to host fresh talks this month between his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts in an effort to kick-start the stalled Nagorno-Karabagh peace process.

Citing an “informed” Russian diplomatic source, the Regnum news agency reported on Monday that the meeting is scheduled to take place in the Russian Black Sea city of Sochi on January 23-24.

President Serge Sargisian's office did not refute the information. Commenting on it, Sargisian's spokesman Armen Arzumanyan said that the presidential press service “announces meetings and visits of the President of Armenia in due course and in an appropriate manner.” Arzumanyan did not comment further.

There was no immediate reaction to the Regnum report from Azerbaijan's



Azeri and Armenian delegations surround Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

President Ilham Aliyev and other officials in Baku. In his New Year's address to the nation, Aliyev accused the Armenian side of effectively renouncing further negotiations with Azerbaijan.

That Aliyev and Sargisian will hold yet another trilateral meeting with Medvedev this month was confirmed by another source privy to Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks mediated by Russia, the United States and France. The Russian president has organized about a dozen such meetings since 2008.

Aliyev and Sargisian came close to agreeing on the basic principles of a see SUMMIT, page 20

Christmas, Blessing of the Water Celebrated in Armenia



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II blesses the water in Echmiadzin. See story and more photos on page 2.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PACE Turkish President Leaves Office

BRUSSELS, Belgium (news.am) — Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) President Mevlüt Çavusoglu's term has expired.

He held the office for two years and will occupy another one in the Venice commission.

The Armenian delegation has complained often about Çavusoglu's bias. In particular, he hindered Armenian delegates' speeches by displaying a sharp, anti-Armenian disposition.

Six Armenians Are Among Injured in Moscow Blast

MOSCOW (Armenpress) — At least two people died and another 39 were injured when an explosion caused by a natural gas leak took place at the Italian Il Pittore restaurant in the Russian capital.

As reported by the Armenian embassy in Moscow, among those injured in the explosion and fire are Roma Markosyan, (aged 24), Yelena and Victoria Aghajyanov (aged 52 and 30), Nika Aghajanova (aged 3), Siranuysh Yeghussyan (aged 36) and Felix Mkrtchyan (aged 14). Only three of them were hospitalized, but all were said to be in stable condition.

Aronian to Participate In International Chess Tourney in Holland

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenian chess grandmaster Levon Aronian will participate in the international chess championship in the Dutch town of Veik-an-Zee.

The Tata Steel championship will be conducted February 14-29, Armenia's Chess Federation website reports.

Armenian chess player Elina Danielyan will also participate in the championship.

Restoration School to Open in Matenadaran

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — A special restoration school is planned to open in the Matenadaran manuscript repository and museum this year to prepare necessary specialists in the field.

The head of the restoration department of the Matenadaran, Gayane Eliazyan, said as a result of the program, future restorers will be selected from among the students of the school. The most talented will be appointed in the Matenadaran itself.

Eliazyan said the school will not only provide restoration classes but also classes for miniaturists as well as teaching old Armenian.

INSIDE

Armenian Culture

page 13

INDEX

Arts and Living	13
Armenia	2
Community News.	5
Editorial	17
International	3, 4



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Tatev's Wings Operates Year Round

GORIS, Armenia (Armenpress) – In January and February Tatev's Wings aerial tramway will work on Saturdays and Sundays. The interest in the cable way was big during the holidays. Working only on January 5 and 6 the cable way served 150 passengers.

Director of the cable way Tigran Ghazarian said that since its opening in October 2010, through December 2011, about 75 000 people have made use of the tramway, 10 percent of whom were residents of the nearby villages. Unlike tourists, they are using it as a means of transport free of charge. The director of the tramway said the majority of tourists are from CIS countries, the US and Europe.

Ghazarian noted that the cables are regularly inspected, adding that no changes are expected in the near future. The cost for using it is 2,000 drams one way, and 3,000 drams roundtrip.

Tsarukyan Receives Reconciliation Award

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Reconciliation Movement NGO has handed this year's award to Gagik Tsarukyan. Upon taking the award, he urged everyone to unite toward strengthening Armenia.

"We are guided only with the principle of reconciliation, tolerance and consent," he said. For the third year, the NGO is granting awards to recognize figures who displayed political consciousness during the year.

For the first time, the award was given for artistic efforts, this year to Ara Gevorgyan.

Government Gives Amnesty to 2,490 People

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – As of December 16, about 2,490 people were released from prisons through the amnesty declared on May 26 by the Republic of Armenia National Assembly on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Armenia's independence.

According to the official website of the Armenia's judicial system, criminal cases against 514 people have been suspended and about 1,976 people have been released.

Warm Weather Worries Fruit Growers

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Residents of southern villages of Armenia are concerned about the recent high temperatures because they worry that trees may blossom, and later the cold weather may damage this year's crop.

However, both official sources and experts of the agricultural sector state that at the moment the weather does not threaten the agricultural yield.

"As of now the weather conditions are quite normal, and there is no threat," Vahagn Martirosyan of the Ministry of Agriculture said.

Hrach Berberyan, head of Agrarian-Rural Union of Armenia NGO, added that early budding is not a widespread concern.

"We have had a normal winter. The weather will stabilize in a few days and there will be no problem of cold and warm weather," Berberyan said.

Nevertheless, villagers of Armenia's southern regions are worried. Zarine Sargisian, a resident of Gladzor village, Vayots Dzor province, said that their trees are already budding.

"I see at this moment that cherry trees are sprouted up and the buds are quite big. Now it is very warm here. If the temperature remains high, the apricot trees will also blossom. I understand that the weather is warmer in our region [as compared to other villages of Armenia], but the temperature will drop soon, and the trees will be frost-bitten," Sargisian said.

However, cold weather is forecast. Representatives of the Emergency Situations Ministry report that the temperature in Armenia is expected to drop by several degrees.

Christmas, Blessing of the Water Celebrated in Armenia

YEREVAN – Hundreds of Armenians attended the Holy Mass performed by the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church Karekin II in Echmiadzin, which is the seat of the Catholicos of All Armenians, to celebrate Christmas Friday.

President Serge Sargisian, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and other high-ranking officials attended the ceremony. Representatives of foreign embassies in Armenia were also invited to the event.

After the two-hour Holy Mass in the Holy Mother of God Cathedral in Echmiadzin crowds of believers surrounded the Catholicos of All Armenians, to touch his hand.

In his sermon on Armenian Christmas, Karekin II urged Armenians to return to the church and start embracing its values, if they want happier lives.

"Through Christ, God's love was revealed to mankind; the Son of God came into the world to eliminate sin, dissipate the darkness of death and to lead humanity to its Creator – to accept everlasting life. Through Christ, divine



President Serge Sargisian and his wife, Rita, walk with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II in Echmiadzin on Armenian Christmas Day.

modern world. It is burdened with manifold difficulties, deprivations, contradictions and conflicts. The rejection of Christ and His commandments gives

birth to wars and tragedies, harms our planet, becomes the cause of a weakening soul and spirituality, as well as the violent interruption of God-granted life – murder and suicide. The universal crisis of our day, which is explained through political, economic and material causes, is also fundamentally a result of the alienation and straying from the luminous path that leads toward God, the rejection of the gifts of heavenly love by sinful ways. Christ is life and in keeping his commandments, God's love, truth, holiness, justice and mercy are implemented in

this world, leading it towards the good and perfect, the full life that was our Lord's earthly life, which was faith and love for the heavenly Father and blessing for mankind."

He then offered blessings to everyone, singling out several leaders.

"On the soul-renewing occasion of the Holy Nativity and Theophany of our Lord, we greet the incumbents of the hierarchal sees of our Apostolic Holy Church with Christ-bequeathed love: His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia; His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem; His Eminence Archbishop Mesrob Mutafian, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople; President Serge Sargisian of the Republic of Armenia and the First Lady, present here today for the Divine Liturgy; and the state officials of the Armenians. We extend greetings to President Bako Sahakian of the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh. We convey our pontifical love and blessings to the oath-bound clergy of our Church and to all our people dispersed throughout the world. With the glad tidings of the Holy Nativity, we greet the spiritual heads of our Sister Churches and the representatives of diplomatic missions accredited in Armenia."



Catholicos Karekin II delivers a sermon on Christmas.

love is dispersed throughout the world entire – over man and nature – to always renew and fill it with life and joy. However a way of life opposed to the divine will turns life into a focus of problems and challenges. Let us look at the

straying from the luminous path that leads toward God, the rejection of the gifts of heavenly love by sinful ways. Christ is life and in keeping his commandments, God's love, truth, holiness, justice and mercy are implemented in

British Ambassadors Promise to Strengthen UK Relations

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The newly appointed ambassadors of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Armenia, Jonathan James Aves and Catherine Jane Leach presented this week copies of their credentials to Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian.

The press office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that Nalbandian wished them success in their mission, expressing confidence that the ambassadors will contribute to

the development and expansion of bilateral relations.

Aves and Leach said they would do their best during their office to contribute to the reinforcement and deep-

ening of Armenian-British ties.

During the meeting Nalbandian expressed hope that the relations between the two countries will expand in the fields of trade and cultural ties.



Ambassadors of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Armenia, Jonathan James Aves and Catherine Jane Leach meet with Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian.

Correction

An article in last week's *Mirror-Spectator* on the upcoming congressional elections by Taniel Koushajian transposed the names of two persons. Rep. Dale Kildee is retiring and his nephew, Dan Kildee, is seeking the seat.



INTERNATIONAL

Trouble in the Region: Russian Military Base In Armenia Is Factor in Possible War on Iran

By Naira Hayrumyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) — The United States has stepped up sanctions against Iran amid ongoing information preparations for the possible application of force against Iran. Both the Islamic Republic and Russia, which remains a major player in the region, have warned that a military strike against Teheran may entail unpredictable consequences.

But Russia has gone further and, in fact, stated that it will take part in a possible war, because it may affect its vital interests.

Among these “vital interests” for Russia may also be its military base, which is located in Armenia, which also has the function of protecting the security of the South Caucasus ally.

The influential *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* Russian newspaper published an article on Thursday quoting sources as saying that the situation forming around Syria and Iran “causes Russia to expedite the course of improvement of its military

groups in the South Caucasus, the Caspian, Mediterranean and Black Sea regions.” The paper quotes sources at the military department as saying that the Kremlin has been receiving information about plans for a US-backed Israeli strike against Iran’s nuclear facilities. “The strike will be a sudden one and will happen soon, but the data is unspecified. Tehran’s response is likely to be quick, too, with the possibility of a full-scale war, whose consequences could be unpredictable,” according to the paper.

“Military Base 102 [situated in Gumri, Armenia] is a key point, Russia’s outpost in the South Caucasus. It occupies a very important geopolitical position. But the Kremlin fears lest it should lose this situation.”

Remarkably, the Russian newspaper suggests a new war is possible between Russia and Georgia. It says that Georgia now blocks the only land transportation route for Russian military cargoes meant for the military base in Armenia, and even fuel now has to be obtained from Iran. “In fact, the Russian-Armenian group in the South Caucasus is already isolated. The

war in Iran would mean the cutting of supplies through this channel.”

Russia has also decided to “strike” Azerbaijan, dropping hints that it is from its territory that Israel might attack Iran. On Thursday it was officially stated in Baku that Azerbaijan will not be used as a springboard for an attack on Iran. But military expert Col. Vladimir Popov thinks that in such a situation Azerbaijan may also solve some of its problems as well.

“If against the background of the war in Iran, Azerbaijan, with the support of Turkey, attacks Armenia, then, of course, all the attacks of the enemy aircraft against Armenia will be resisted by Russia together with air defense units of the armed forces of Armenia. It is hard to say whether this will be considered as Moscow’s participation in military operations. Undoubtedly, Russian troops will not participate in hostilities in the territory of Nagorno-Karabagh. But in the event of a military threat to Armenia, for example, from Turkey or Azerbaijan, Russia is likely to engage in ground battles,” said Popov.

Churches in Israel Struggling to Keep up With Mass Influx of Foreign Workers

By Julia Niemann

JAFFA and JERUSALEM, Israel (*Ha’aretz*) — Shifting demographics are changing the landscape of Israel’s Christian communities as an influx of migrant workers poses a new set of demands for local churches.

While the number of Christians with roots in Israel — including Arabic, Ethiopian, Coptic, Greek and Armenian Christians — is diminishing due to immigration, statistics show the overall population of Christians remains steady due to the arrival of many foreign workers. In fact, the churches themselves appear to be growing.

But in many cases, the additional membership is only temporary. Many of these foreign workers eventually leave Israel, either after they’ve made enough money to return home or when their visas expire.

This shift in demographics is evident in the Masses at two Roman Catholic

churches in Jaffa. While St. Anthony and St. Peter offer only two Masses in Arabic for the town’s native Arab Christian population, they now offer four Saturday Masses in English.

Those services are attended primarily by Filipina caregivers.

Additional services are also offered in Spanish and French for African migrants, and several are offered in South Asian languages. St. Peter holds a service in Hebrew for more fully assimilated Christian children and Russian immigrants.

Fr. Ramzi Sidawi — an Arab Catholic from Jerusalem and the parish priest in Jaffa — says the presence of foreign workers poses a unique challenge for the community. Some, he said, try to prove paternity or seek baptism for children without papers. Recently, he said, a woman visited his office who had a visa for only two days.

“They gave it to her on the 13th of December and it [expired] on the 15th,” he said, shaking his head. “But somehow these people manage. Nobody

knows how many there are, but they also provide cheap labor in jobs no Israeli wants to do.”

Sidawi said his community has about 1,000 Arab Christians and about 20 times as many church members who hail from other backgrounds; in most cases they come from the Philippines. A separate church near Tel Aviv’s Central Bus Station also caters specifically to Filipino churchgoers.

“The language does make a difference,” said Sidawi. In some cases Indians and Filipinos are able to follow along in shared services, he said; sometimes they understand Spanish.

“That is why,” Sidawi explains, “there is little contact among them beyond shared Masses on Christmas and other festivals: 80 to 90 percent remain in their own communities.”

Non-Arab churchgoers in Jaffa tend to live elsewhere, he said, mainly in districts in south Tel Aviv with many foreign workers. These workers typically bus to church.

“I have been living here for 30 years now,” said Shirley, a Filipino immigrant whose son is an altar server at St. Anthony.

“We are very warm and friendly with each other in this church,” she said, noting that Arab churchgoers often keep to themselves.

Shirley said her community has changed drastically due to deportation over the past 10 years. Sidawi also has noticed a change. He recalls the many Romanian foreign workers who once lived and worked in Israel in the early 1990s. “They all vanished,” he said.

Provost Uwe Grabe of Jerusalem’s Church of the Redeemer now speaks of “a completely new Christianity in the Holy Land.” It remains unclear whether, in the long run, it will be possible to create a dialogue between the old and new communities, he said. If not, he said they risk becoming disconnected, fragmented islands — a trend he foresees happening in the future to West Bank Christians.

According to Grabe, Christian emigration from the West Bank is causing a continuous decrease in the number of Arab churchgoers. Eventually there will only be a few communities left around the holy sites, he warns.

Turkish Ambassador Returns to France

AMBASSADOR, from page 1

Erdogan slammed the French bill as “politics based on racism, discrimination and xenophobia” and accused French President Nicolas Sarkozy of pandering to France’s influential Armenian community.

He also claimed that France itself committed genocide in Algeria, its former colony.

Erdogan’s references to colonial-era killings in Algeria prompted criticism from Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia.

He said on January 7 that “nobody has the right to make the blood of Algerians their business.”

Ouyahia noted that Turkey was a member of NATO during the independence war in Algeria and as such provided material support to France.

“We say to our [Turkish] friends: Stop making capital out of Algeria’s colonization,” AFP quoted him as saying.

Ouyahia noted that Turkey had been a member of NATO during the independence war in Algeria and as such had provided material support to France.

“We say to our [Turkish] friends: Stop making capital out of Algeria’s colonization,” he added.

But Soltani said Sunday: “We don’t accept anyone saying that Erdogan is making the blood of Algerians their business,” he told reporters.

Bouguerra Soltani, the leader of an Algerian Islamist party, denounced Ouyahia’s comments as “a service rendered to France.”

Soltani said Erdogan asked nothing of Algeria. “He just told France ‘You say that Turkey exterminated the Armenians in 1915, I am reminding you that you exterminated the Algerians,’” he told journalists.

Soltani, head of the Social Movement for Peace (MSP) party, backed Erdogan after he was criticized by Ouyahia.

“We have a historic cause,” he added.

International News

Iranian Vocalist, Armenian Philharmonic To Perform in Tehran

TEHRAN, Iran (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Iranian vocalist Nazeri will perform a concert in the Iranian capital in collaboration with the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra this spring, *Tehran Times* reported.

Iranian composer Peyman Soltani will participate in the concert, which is titled “Melal,” director of Qoqnus Music Institute, Mohammad-Hossein Tutunchian, told the Persian service of ISNA on January 3.

Nazeri received a Chevalier de la Légion d’honneur medal from the French government in 2008.

McCain Calls on Azerbaijan to Release All Political Prisoners

WASHINGTON (AzeriReport) — On New Year’s Eve, Sen. John McCain sent a personal letter to President Ilham Aliyev calling for the release of all political prisoners. The Turan News Agency was informed that McCain had praised the last act of clemency by the Azerbaijani president, in which youth activist and blogger Jabbar Savalan was released. “I urge you to immediately release 16 other prisoners convicted for organizing peaceful rallies, as well as all other prisoners of conscience,” the message says. The US senator expressed “extreme concern” that the authorities still hold the brothers Farhad and Rafiq Aliyev in jail, although both could be released in accordance with Articles 76 and 78 of the Criminal Code (parole and for health reasons).

Requiem for Repose of Souls of Syrian Martyrs

HASAKA, Syria (SANA) — The Armenian Catholic congregation of St. Joseph Church held on Sunday a requiem for the repose of the souls of the Syrian martyrs who sacrificed their souls to protect Syria’s security and peace.

The participants prayed to God to preserve Syria, protect its security and stability and bless its land and people.

Leader of the Armenian Catholic community in Qamishli, Antranig Ivasian, said the crisis Syria is passing through has consolidated national unity among the Syrian people.

Ivasian added that “Syria is the cradle of civilization and an example to be followed regarding unity, tolerance and coexistence.”

French Weekly Pays Tribute to Aznavour

PARIS (Armenpress) — All four May issues of the French weekly *Telerama* will be devoted to singer Charles Aznavour. The weekly has a circulation of 1 million.

An Armenpress correspondent from Shirak reports a correspondent of the weekly, Clementine Derodit, is in Armenia. She has already been in Yerevan and Gumri and will soon visit Vanadzor and Akhalkalak.

“*Telerama* is an art weekly. Annually four issues are being prepared especially for one author. In May the weekly will fully be dedicated to Charles Aznavour. It is impossible to speak about Aznavour and not present Armenia, the artist’s ties with Armenia,” Derodit said.

The French journalist said she has been treated warmly.

“Of course, in France everyone accepts Charles Aznavour as a great art figure but in Armenia he is spoken about with special warmth. It is strange that in Armenia people insist that Aznavour is a world star and present their love toward him very modestly. Aznavour is like a key: you say Aznavour and all doors open. Generally, I have been in many countries but Armenia is the first one to love French people so much, and be so hospitable,” she said.



The Muzzle Tightens in Turkey

By Dan Bilefsky and Sebnem Arsu

ISTANBUL (*The International Herald Tribune*) — Human rights activists say the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey is repressing freedom of the press through a mixture of intimidation, arrests and financial machinations.

A year ago, the journalist Nedim Sener was investigating a murky terrorist network that prosecutors maintain was plotting to overthrow Turkey's Muslim-inspired government. Today, Sener stands accused of being part of that plot, jailed in what human rights groups call a political purge of the governing party's critics.

Sener, who has spent nearly 20 years exposing government corruption, is among 13 defendants who appeared in state court this week at the imposing Palace of Justice in Istanbul on a variety of charges related to abetting a terrorist organization.

The other defendants include the editors of a staunchly secular website critical of the government and Ahmet Sik, a journalist who has written that an Islamic movement associated with Fethullah Gulen, a reclusive cleric living in Pennsylvania, has infiltrated Turkish security forces.

At a time when Washington and Europe are praising Turkey as the model of Muslim democracy for the Arab world, Turkish human rights advocates say the crackdown is part of an ominous trend. Most worrying, they say, are fresh signs that the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is repressing freedom of the press through a mixture of intimidation, arrests and financial machinations, including the sale in 2008 of a leading newspaper and a television station to a company linked to the prime minister's son-in-law.

The arrests threaten to darken the image of Erdogan, who is lionized in the Middle East as a powerful regional leader who can stand up to Israel and the West. Widely credited with taming the Turkish military and forging a religiously conservative government that marries strong economic growth with democracy and religious tolerance, he has proved prickly and thin-skinned on more than one occasion. It is that sensitivity bordering on arrogance, human rights advocates say, that contributes to his animus against the news media.

There are now 97 members of the news media in jail in Turkey, including journalists, publishers and distributors, according to the Turkish Journalists' Union, a figure that rights groups say exceeds the number detained in China. The government denies the figure and insists that with the exception of four cases, those arrested have all been charged with activities other than reporting.

Last month, the Turkish justice minister, Sadullah Ergin, blamed civic groups for creating the false impression that there were too many journalists in jail in Turkey. He said a new plan to enhance freedom of expression this year would alter perceptions.

In court Wednesday, a defiant Sener, looking gaunt and pale, accused the police officials he had investigated of setting him up.

"It has been 11 months that I have not been given the chance to utter a single word to defend myself," he said, speaking to friends during a brief intermission. "I have

been a victim in a revenge operation — nothing else."

The European Human Rights Court received nearly 9,000 complaints against Turkey of breaches of press freedom and freedom of expression in 2011, compared with 6,500 in 2009. In March, Orhan Pamuk, a Turkish writer and Nobel laureate, was fined about \$3,670 for his statement in a Swiss newspaper that "we have killed 30,000 Kurds and one million Armenians."

Human rights advocates say they fear that with the Arab Spring lending new regional influence to Turkey, the United States and Europe are turning a blind eye to encroaching authoritarianism there. "Turkey's democracy may be a good benchmark when compared with Egypt, Libya or Syria," said Hakan Altınay, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, a US research organization. "But the whole region will suffer if Turkey is allowed to disre-

There are now 97 members of the news media in jail in Turkey, including journalists, publishers and distributors, according to the Turkish Journalists' Union.

gard the values of liberal democracy."

Among the most glaring breaches of press freedom, human rights advocates say, was the arrest of Sener, 45, a German-born reporter who was working for the newspaper *Milliyet* at the time of his arrest. In 2010 he won the International Press Institute's World Press Freedom Hero award for his reporting on the murder of Hrant Dink, a prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist who was assassinated in Istanbul in 2007.

Sener said he believed that he was in jail because he dared to write a book criticizing the Turkish state's negligence in failing to prevent Dink's murder. His defense team says the prosecution's case rests on spurious evidence, including a file bearing his name that an independent team of computer engineers concluded had been mysteriously installed by a virus on a computer belonging to OdaTV, an anti-government website. He was held for seven months without charges. If convicted, he faces up to 15 years in jail.

"Nedim Sener is being accused on the basis of rumors and fantasies," said his lawyer, Yucel Dosemeci. "He is being targeted to create a culture of fear."

In late December, Turkey drew fresh criticism after the police detained at least 38 people, many of them journalists, saying they had possible links to a Kurdish separatist group. But critics say dozens have been arrested whose only offense was to have expressed general support for the rights of Kurds, a long-oppressed minority here.

Over the past year, the government has been arresting prominent critics like Sener, as well as dozens of current

and former military personnel, intellectuals and politicians who have been linked to what officials say was a plot to overthrow the government by an organization called Ergenekon.

Four years into the investigation, no one among the more than 300 suspects charged in the case has been convicted, even though courts have heard more than 8,000 pages worth of indictments, many of them based on transcripts of surreptitiously recorded private telephone conversations.

Advocates for press freedom say that the government has also moved to mute opposition by using punitive fines and by intimidating the ownership of leading media companies.

In a celebrated case in 2009, the Dogan media group, a large conglomerate, was saddled with a \$2.5-billion fine by the Tax Ministry for unpaid taxes. Dogan officials say privately that the real reason was that its publications had given prominent attention to a series of corruption scandals involving senior government officials.

The European Union has expressed concerns about the chilling effect of the fine, which was negotiated down to about \$621 million, officials familiar with the case say, as part of a tax amnesty issued last year.

Now, some journalists who work for the Dogan group say there is an unwritten rule not to criticize the governing party. Erdogan, who has previously called on his supporters to boycott the Dogan group, strongly denied any political motives behind the fine.

After Erdogan swept to power in 2002, human rights activists initially lauded him for expanding free speech. But after an unsuccessful attempt by the secular opposition to ban Erdogan's party in 2008, critics say, Erdogan embarked on a systematic campaign to silence

his opponents.

They say the curbs on press freedom also reflect the fact that Turkey no longer feels obligated to adhere to Western norms at a time when it is playing the role of regional leader and its talks on joining the European Union are in disarray.

Sener and Sik were defiant in March as police officers took them into custody at their homes before television cameras. "Whoever touches it gets burned!" Sik shouted, referring to the Gulen movement, whose members, analysts say, have infiltrated the highest levels of the country's police and judiciary.

In March, the unpublished manuscript of Sik's book on the movement, *The Army of the Imam*, was confiscated by police officers. But the police were unable to stop its publication on the Internet, where at least 20,000 users downloaded it.

While the Internet has become the main weapon against censorship, more than 15,000 websites have been blocked by the state, according to engelliweb.com, which tracks restricted pages. For more than two years until last autumn, YouTube was banned on the grounds that some videos on the site were insulting to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey.

The monitoring agency last summer called on websites to ban 138 words, including "animal," "erotic" and "zoo" in English and "fat," "blonde" and "skirt" in Turkish. It is a tribute to Turkey's still vibrant media culture that the prohibition inspired an online competition to create the best short story out of the banned words.

Armenian Consulate Opened in Madras

MADRAS, India (news.am) — The Armenian Ambassador to India Ara Hakobyan visited this city recently to inaugurate the new Armenian consulate, the Hindu reports. The first Honorary Consul of Armenia in Madras is businessman Shivkumar Eashwaran.

The Armenian presence in Madras began to increase from 1688 when the East India Company, finding the Armenians "sober, frugal and wise," gave them the same trading rights as English freemen. These privileges were granted after negotiations between Coja Panous, Calendar of Isphahan and the Company in London. The

agreement was dated June 22, 1688 and was in due course communicated to the principal Armenian merchant in Madras, Gregorio Paroan, and his associates.

It was also promised that as soon as there were 40 Armenian merchants in Madras, they would be granted land to build a permanent church.

The first well-known house of an Armenian in Fort St. George is called Admiralty House. It was built by Coja Nazar Jacob Jan who arrived in Madras in 1702.

Aga Nazar Jan was the first of the great Armenian merchants of Madras and was

followed by the legendary Coja Petrus Uskan, Aga Shawmier Sultan and Aga Samuel Moorat. When Samuel Moorat died in 1816, his son, Edward Moorat, ran through his huge patrimony in enjoying a life of luxury. With his death, the Armenian presence in Madras began to fade.

One Armenian of this era who left a different kind of heritage was the Rev. Harutyun Shimavonian, who started in Madras in 1794 the first Armenian journal in the world, *Azdarar*, and published several Armenian classics before he died in 1827.

Armenian Air Charter Arrives in Aqaba

AQABA, Jordan (Petra) — An Armenian air charter arrived last Friday at the King Hussein International Airport.

The flight was part of a program that included the arrival of 400 Armenian tourists over two days.

The Governing Authority of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZA) has recently launched an initiative to support charter flight operations to Aqaba to make a contribution to the marketing costs, which are needed to open new tourism markets and to support existing ones.

The initiative aims to encourage tour operators to include Aqaba in their programs and to increase the destination's exposure through joint marketing.

Community News

NAASR to Present Five-Week 'Visual Journey through Armenian History'

BELMONT — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will offer a five-week "Visual Journey Through Armenian History," presented by Joe Dagdigian, beginning Monday, February 13 and running through March 12. Each session will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. at the NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave.

"A Visual Journey Through Armenian History" is an introduction to Armenian history utilizing, wherever possible, images of historical sites, artifacts, maps, etc., to illustrate 3,000 years of Armenian history and culture. It is intended primarily for those seeking a basic overview of Armenian history and a sense of what Armenia's past and present look like.

A portion of the proceeds from this class will be donated to the Shengavit Historical and Archaeological Cultural Preserve in Armenia.

The course starts with the Armenian arrival on North American shores, then goes back to the origins and early history of the Armenian nation and covers up to the present Republic of Armenia.

There will also be considerations of Armenian art, oral history and literature. Many of the images used in the course are the instructor's own photographs taken on many journeys in



Joe Dagdigian

Armenia.

Dagdigian previously offered a version of the course as a non-credit personal enrichment course at Middlesex Community College.

Dagdigian was brought up in Lowell, and has a bachelor's in electrical engineering with a master's in computer engineering from UMass-Lowell. He has studied Armenian at the Nshan Palanjian Jemaran in Beirut. He is a past chairman of the Armenian Youth Federation Central Executive, past co-chairman of the Armenian National Committee of Merrimack Valley and serves on the Board of the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association. With Anahid Yeremian, a physicist at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center in California, he is a co-founder of the Support Committee for Armenia's Cosmic Ray Division (SCACRD).

For more information, including fees, or to register for the class, contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org or visit the headquarters.



From left, California Supreme Court Justice Marvin Baxter, Garo Mardirossian and California Court Supreme Court Justice Carlos Moreno

Armenian Bar Association to Host 'European Court of Human Rights Ruling Regarding Turkey's Rule 301' Conference

Garo Mardirossian to Be Honored

LAS VEGAS — The Tropicana Hotel and Casino will be the venue as the Armenian Bar Association (ArmenBar) gathers on January 14. Garo Mardirossian, past chairman of the Consumer Attorneys of Los Angeles, who has gained acclaim as a civil litigator, will receive recognition at a luncheon in his honor.

The panel discussion dealing with the European Court of Human Rights will focus on the case filed by Turkish national and chairman of Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University, Prof. Taner Akçam. The case is titled "Taner Akçam vs. Republic of Turkey." A ruling was rendered on October 25, 2011, declaring Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code to be a violation of human rights.

On June 21, 2007, Akçam submitted an application against the Republic of Turkey for violations of Articles 7, 10 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The application arose from the effective criminalization under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code of historical scholarship and public discourse relating to the 1915-17 destruction of Ottoman Turkey's Armenian population.

Akçam was investigated under Article 301 for "insulting Turkishness" on account of an editorial opinion in *Agos* newspaper in which he defended his close friend and colleague Hrant Dink, a prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist and editor of *Agos*, prosecuted under Article 301 for alleged use of the term "genocide" in describing the events of 1915-17. On January 19, 2007, an assailant Ogün Samast murdered Dink in Istanbul and justified his act by claiming that Dink considers "Turkish blood is dirty." It is widely believed that the murder resulted from Dink's stigmatization under Article 301.

Appearing on behalf of Akçam, McGill University Law Prof. Payam Akhavan, Associate Legal Officer Sheila Paylan and Armenian Bar Vice Chairman Harry Dikranian, argued that the Turkish Court has been wholly indifferent not only to the violation to freedom of speech and the principle of non-discrimination, but also to the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

The Turkish Court has in effect stated that any person that uses the term "genocide," in relation to the 1915-17 destruction of Armenians, is inciting violence against himself.

The fact that the Turkish Court on its own initiative and without any justification whatsoever declares Akçam a criminal pursuant to Article 301 and orders the initiation of a prosecution, was said to be a deliberate attempt to stigmatize Akçam with the foreseeable consequence that he may suffer the same fate as his close friend and colleague Dink.

The panel will focus on the history of the case, article 301 and the ruling rendered by the ECHR. Attorneys attending the lecture will receive 2.5 units of continuing legal education credits.

In 2000, Mardirossian was voted CAALA's "Trial Lawyer of the Year." He has been on the Board of Governors for 16 years and is the first person of Armenian descent ever to be president of the prestigious organization when he was appointed in 2009.

Mardirossian and his wife Kathy are the managing partners of Mardirossian and Associates, a seven-lawyer boutique personal injury firm, where Mardirossian has achieved multi-million dollar jury verdicts in several cases over his 28-year career. Notably, a \$24.85 million judgment rendered in the case of *Dole v. County of Los Angeles* in 1995 remains the largest police brutality verdict ever achieved in California. As recently as May 2009, Mardirossian obtained a judgment of \$21.6 million in the case of *Pannu v. Land Rover North America, Inc.* In that case,

see ARMENBAR, page 7

University of Michigan Workshop Continues Assessment of the State Of Armenian Studies

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Leading experts in Armenian Studies from around the world recently gathered at the University of Michigan to assess the current state of Armenian Studies in academic institutions in North America, Europe and the Middle East. The cross-disciplinary meeting took place from October 14-16, 2011, as part of the ongoing project to assess "The State of Armenian Studies." The gathering was organized by the Armenian Studies Program (ASP) of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and convened parallel to events marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the first endowed chair in Armenian studies at the University in 1981 and of the program itself.

The project has been able to gather a tremendous amount of information on Armenian studies and had made that information available to the participants for their analysis and comments.

Ambitious in its scope, the three-day meeting sought to have the input of these scholars to survey a wide array of programs, activities and publications in Armenian studies over the last 30 years throughout the world, not including Armenia. The research team at the University had prepared lists of books published in French, German, Farsi, English, Spanish, Turkish, Italian and Russian; the gathering made an general assessment of publishing interests and trends and laid the groundwork to complete even more extensive surveys of works published in Armenian, Polish and other languages. The meeting sought to bring to light all of the undergraduate and graduate courses that have been offered in Armenian studies over the last decade in order to better grasp how the next generation of scholars is being trained and to make recommendations regarding what kinds of courses need to be offered in the future. The continuing relationships between Armenian studies as it stands in the university system and other institutions outside of that system — such as research centers and archival and cultural organizations — were also surveyed and discussed. Additional reports were prepared separately to address the state of the field regionally, such as in the US, in Europe and in the Middle East.

The goal of the meeting was to gain a more complete understanding of recent advances in scholarship relevant to the field as well as to survey avenues for future research, to discuss the relationship between Armenian studies programs and the general public, to brainstorm how to attract both established professors already in the university as well as new students, and to ensure that scholars in Armenian Studies continue to produce work that is cutting-edge in terms of recent methodological and theoretical developments within greater academia.

The director of ASP, Gerard Libaridian, has been at the helm of the State of Armenian Studies Project for the last four years, and the recent gathering of scholars to discuss the findings of the project represents a milestone — but by no means an endpoint — in the ongoing project. Most recently, scholars were invited to respond to a series of questions about various dimensions of Armenian studies. All respondents to the questionnaire were invited to continue the discussion at U-M in Ann Arbor. The participants included many seminal and active figures in the field, such as Robert Thompson, Ara Sanjian, Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Peter Cowe, Susan Pattie, Sergio La Porta, Robert Hewsen, Khachig Tololyan, Asbed Kotchikian and Marc Mamigonian, as well as the faculty of ASP at U-M: Kathryn Babayan, Kevork Bardakjian, Ronald Suny and Libaridian. Post-doctoral fellows and graduate students associated with ASP at U-M also participated in the

see ASSESSMENT, page 6



COMMUNITY NEWS

Diocesan Sunday School Worship Program Underway

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — In 2009, the Eastern Diocese launched a Sunday School Pilot Program to cultivate attendance at the Divine Liturgy each Sunday as the goal and core of the traditional Sunday School curriculum. Two years later, most Sunday Schools are involved and have found the effort — which is coordinated by the Diocese's Department of Youth and Education (DYE) — productive.

Many students are in church more regularly and for longer periods, and they are receiving Holy Communion more often. Although each school's morning schedule continues to be tweaked and challenges addressed, educators and pastors have said the program is a "success in progress."

The program is modeled on the morning schedule that was developed at the Armenian Church of the Holy Translators in Framingham, by the parish's pastor, the Rev. Krikor Sabounjian. Sunday School students go directly to church with their families at 9:30 a.m. They are able to hear the Epistle and Scripture Readings, recite the Nicene Creed and respond to the prayer petitions of the deacons. They sing with the choir and other parishioners and experience the hymns where they appear in the liturgy, not just as isolated songs to be learned. Prior to receiving communion, Sunday School students sit in the chancel for an object lesson from Sabounjian. After communion, they attend Sunday School classes for approximately one hour. The program extends into fellowship where the children are joined by their parents.

This approach recognizes that the Divine



Rev. Krikor Sabounjian delivers an object lesson to Sunday School students at the Church of the Holy Translators in Framingham, Mass.

Liturgy is the central aspect of life in the church, and stresses the importance of including children in this integral portion of the Armenian faith as they grow up in the church. Holy Translators Sunday School superintendent Laurie Bejoian remembers having grown up with the experience of attending Sunday School class in the morning and then going to church at the end of Divine Liturgy. "I thought as a child that the *Badarak* was only communion and *hokehankist*," she said. "It's such a joy to see our young people participating in the *Badarak* from the beginning of the service."

Teens regularly attend the entire Divine Liturgy, taking on active roles during the service. On such days, the younger grades go to

church in time for the object lesson and communion and remain in church through the Last Blessing and *hokehankist*.

Sunday School students throughout the Diocese are well versed in the *Badarak* by the time they graduate, but at Holy Translators students get a truly thorough acclimation. Other parishes and pastors have addressed the challenge of accommodating classroom and *Badarak* worship in a variety of different ways, guided by local circumstances. Thanks to the dedication of innovative pastors and superintendents and to model programs such as the one in place at Holy Translators, and elsewhere, Diocesan Sunday School students and their families are enjoying a more holistic Sunday morning experience.

University of Michigan Workshop Continues Assessment of the State Of Armenian Studies

ASSESSMENT, from page 5

discussion. Many others from around the world had participated in the preparation of the charts, lists, and special reports.

Generally, organizations that are dedicated to one academic discipline will assess overall trends in scholarship and make recommendations for future research and pedagogical practices every five to 10 years. The problem, however, is that Armenian studies is not a discipline — that is, a specific methodological approach to train a certain type of scholar, such as a historian, literary critic, anthropologist, sociologist or political scientist — but rather a field related to every aspect of Armenian life past, present and future. This is not a weakness of Armenian Studies, but is generally believed to be a strength of the field, as it is informed and shaped by many different kinds of scholars working together across multiple disciplines to create new bodies of knowledge. The flourishing of Armenian studies programs, however, has merited a report on par with what other disciplines produce every five to 10 years. To this end, the meeting concluded with preliminary plans to publish a report on the state of Armenian studies which could be put to good use by scholars around the world, as well as serve to inform the general public of what topics are of utmost importance today in Armenian studies, how to continue to grow the field, what still needs to be done and why it matters within and beyond academia.

The project is co-sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and the Society for Armenian Studies, currently chaired by Bardakjian.

OBITUARY

Harry Kullijian

Married to Broadway's Carol Channing

LOS ANGELES (*Fresno Bee*) — Longtime Modesto-area resident and former City Council member Harry Kullijian died Monday, January 9, in Southern California with his wife, Broadway star Carol Channing, at his side, according to their foundation.

Kullijian would have celebrated his 92nd birthday on Tuesday.

B. Harlan Boll, head of publicity for the Los Altos-based Channing-Kullijian Foundation, said late Monday that Kullijian was at the couple's Rancho Mirage home last week when he was stricken. His wife was doing a Christmas show in the area December 21.

Kullijian collapsed the next day and was taken to Eisenhower Medical Center, where he was treated for an aneurysm. Boll said he was treated for the same condition two years ago. Kullijian spent Christmas at home with his family, but Monday was rushed back to the hospital, where he died.

Kullijian is perhaps best-known today as the husband of Channing. But he served for eight years on the Modesto City Council, began Citizens Leading Effective Action Now (CLEAN) to fight against pornography and spent the past decade working with Channing to raise funds to keep the arts in public schools.



Harry Kullijian with Carol Channing

"We go to these celebrity events and, of course, everyone knows and loves Carol and wants to talk to her," Kullijian said in an interview, in October 2011. "Then they point to me and ask, 'Who's he?' So I've adopted a new name: Who's he? It doesn't matter who I am; it only matters that I'm helping someone else."

Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

Giragosian

F U N E R A L H O M E

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC
Funeral Counselor

576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606
www.giragosianfuneralhome.com

Edward D. Jamakordzian, Jr. d/b/a Edward D. Jamie, Jr. Funeral Chapel

Licensed in New York and New Jersey
208-17 Northern Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361
Service any hour,
any distance

(718) 224-2390 or toll
free (888) 224-6088





COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU Young Professionals, Northern California to Host Global YP Network

SAN FRANCISCO — The AGBU Young Professionals of Northern California (AGBU-YPNC) are preparing to host the 13th Annual AGBU San Francisco Winter Gala — “A Sweet Escape” February 17-20. The weekend will be the largest gala weekend to date with three full days of events. AGBU-YPNC will donate a por-

Gala dinner dance, will be held at the Green Room at the San Francisco War Memorial Performing Arts Center in downtown San Francisco. The gala will feature a four-course meal, open bar and Armenian dancing to the sounds of DJ Raffy and DJ Tigran.

Sunday, February 19 brings the newest addi-



Guests pose outside the hall.

tion of the weekend proceeds to the AGBU Hye Geen Pregnant Women’s Centers in Armenia.

The weekend kicks off Friday, February 17 with a welcome reception, at the host hotel, the Sir Francis Drake in Union Square. Following the mixer guests will head to Monroe Night Club where DJ Raffy will be spinning the best hip-hop, top 40 and mash-ups in a venue with an upscale lounge experience infused with the classic taste of yesterday.

The fun continues on Saturday, February 18 with a walking city tour which departs from the host hotel and will explore exciting districts of San Francisco, such as Chinatown and North Beach to name a few. Later that evening, the weekend’s signature event, the “Sweet Escape”

tion to the Winter Gala weekend, a Napa Valley Wine Tour, with a party bus departing from the host hotel. Attendees will experience an all-inclusive tour to two of Napa Valley’s finest wineries, a gourmet boxed lunch and round trip travel. The Wine Tour concludes the weekend long “Sweet Escape,” as attendees say farewell to new and old friends alike

“Each year we work to improve on the previous, and offer the best experience for YP’s around the world, while raising funds for AGBU charities. This year we are offering the largest Gala weekend to date, and a true escape for out-of-towners and locals alike,” said Steven Cherezian, AGBU-YPNC chairman and gala chairman. “We look forward to hosting the YP’s



Revelers took to the dance floor.

and to benefiting a wonderful charity such as Hye Geen.”

For event information, tickets, weekend pack-

age specials and to donate, visit www.agbusfgala.org. For information, email agbusfgala@gmail.com.

ACYOA Members Become a Part of ‘Lay Ministry’

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — On Sunday, December 18, 2011, 21 Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) members gathered to celebrate Christmas at the West Palm Beach Garden Mall. The event was organized by Rev. Nareg Berberian and Andrew Merjian.

The youth enjoyed each other’s company and created stronger bonds. Several new ACYOA members signed up. Berberian welcomed everyone and emphasized the importance of youth in the life of St. David Armenian Church. He explained that this year was declared the “Year of Lay Ministry.” He hoped that the youth (particularly the girls) of St. David would become a part of this ministry by contributing their time and talents. Most of the boys are already altar servers.

The ACYOA members promised to take a more active role at St. David Armenian Church and serve in various capacities in the organizations of the church.



Members of the St. David ACYOA

Armenian Bar Association to Host ‘European Court of Human Rights Ruling Regarding Turkey’s Rule 301’

ARMENBAR, from page 5

Mardirossian proved that a defective design in the Land Rover resulted in an accident causing his client to become paralyzed. Armen Akaragian, Mardirossian’s nephew and an associate in the firm, assisted in trying the Pannu case.

Mardirossian currently represents the family of Kelly Thomas, a homeless man who was beaten to death by members of the Fullerton Police Department. The case has received national attention.

“We are extremely proud to present such a distinguished group of legal scholars to our

membership, and to honor one of the nation’s leading attorneys,” said Edwin Minassian, chairman of Armenbar. “While this legal education event is geared toward the legal community, we invite members of the public to attend what promises to be a fascinating presentation,” said Minassian.

The event is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., in the Tropicana Conference Center and will include a luncheon and an evening reception following the lectures.

For more information about the event, including fees for attending, visit the Armenian Bar Association website at www.armenianbar.org.



From left, Armenian Bar Treasurer Sara Bedirian, Garo Mardirossian, Armenian Bar Chairman Edwin Minassian and Armenian Bar Rights Watch Chairman Saro Kerkonian



COMMUNITY NEWS

A Prayer for Cory Garabedian

By Tom Vartabedian

PROVIDENCE — Cory Garabedian is the type of son any parent would be proud to call their own.

A fine student-athlete, he has been an even better Armenian-American whose heritage never wavered — not for a moment.

As a member of two champion relay teams at the AYF Olympic Games, Garabedian represented his Providence Chapter the way a fervent politician stood for a political party. With conviction and plenty of gusto. Best be said, he didn't just fit the mold. He broke it!

Today, the 23-year-old lies in a hospital bed, his fate in God's hands. He suffered serious injuries in a horrific auto accident Christmas Eve morning when his vehicle swerved to avoid another automobile before striking a barrier. Garabedian was ejected 75 feet from the back seat. The end result has become a living nightmare.

As of this writing, Garabedian remains critical inside the Intensive Care Unit of Rhode Island Hospital under the care of a Russian specialist named Bella Arvanessian who happened to graduate from nearby Brown University.

Garabedian had planned to finish his education at Dean College in Franklin, Mass. and play football after distinguishing himself in high school.

Michael Varadian, a highly-regarded Providence mentor, holds a high position with the Rhode Island Department of Health. Varadian contacted the hospital's chief of staff and chief of vascular surgery to watch over Garabedian.

Numerous surgeries have taken place to address a fractured neck and other injuries. A leg was amputated from the knee down. An induced coma has kept him from feeling the pain. According to reports, his injuries are survivable.

Rev. Shnork Souin of St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Church joins Rev. Archpriest Gomidas Baghsarian of St. Vartanantz Church with reg-

ular visits and prayers of healing.

E-mails and Facebook messages continue to arrive from around the country from friends, acquaintances and even total strangers.

The annual AYF Convention wrapped up in Philadelphia with \$1,700 being raised for Cory's medical expenses. According to insiders, fines were purposely being imposed to enhance the fund. Additional contributions are expected to be raised through raffle proceeds at the Providence AYF Victory Ball the end of January, far surpassing other amounts from the past.

A special fund has been created to assist with medical and rehabilitation costs. Checks can be made payable to Friends of Cory and sent to Sovereign Bank, attn: Ryan Purcell, 184 Taunton Ave., East Providence, RI 02914.

"Cory could be seen wearing the jerseys of local Armenian teams, including the ACYOA and the AYF," said Steve Elmasian, his advisor-coach. "A whole new world opened up for him and he was taking it all in as fast as he could. Cory's talent for the game was something to behold, whether he was making plays or shooting three-pointers. He made it look so easy."

Basketball shares the spotlight with his track prowess. He ran the anchor leg on two gold-medal-winning relay teams during the AYF Olympics in New Jersey and Rhode Island.

He played on HMEM teams that traveled to Montreal and Washington, DC. A trip to Armenia was negated when Garabedian was called to duty in Cuba with the Army National Guard after high school. He spent time in Guantanamo Bay as a military police officer.

"Cory can run like the wind," said Elmasian. "He's a true team player and complements that with a kind, funny, endearing and respectful personality — a coach's delight. He wears his uniform with pride."

Apart from the Armenian arena, Garabedian



Cory Garabedian

played high school basketball, baseball and football at Central Falls High School, where he was named the Most Valuable Player of the Division 4 Super Bowl a few years ago.

All his AYF and ACYOA friends turned out on a cold and wet day with a large Armenian flag in the stands, leaving him with an indelible impression. Garabedian later admitted it was all the inspiration he would ever need to help his team to victory.

"I saw my flag and you all made me proud to be an Armenian," he told his admirers.

Meanwhile, an entire Armenian community waits anxiously for a son to heal from injuries that may have taken a lesser person.

"The power of prayer is what Cory needs now," said Elmasian. "Most people would never have survived the crash this great-grandson of Genocide survivors has endured. My guess is that this young man is quite special because he's getting an enormous amount of requests every day to get well. There's a long road ahead for Cory but knowing him, he's up for the challenge."

Legal Scholar Garo Ghazarian Appointed To Glendale Civil Service Commission

GLENDALE — The City Council of Glendale has unanimously confirmed the nomination of law school dean and professor, Garo Ghazarian, to the City's Civil Service Commission. In making the nomination, Glendale City Council member and two-time former mayor of Glendale, Rafi Manoukian, referred his Council colleagues to Ghazarian's vast array of relevant

Besides his commitment to the City of Glendale for the next four years as one of its five Civil Service Commissioners, Ghazarian continues to serve as the dean of the Peoples College of Law in Los Angeles, where for the past 17 years he has been a professor of criminal law. In addition, he is the vice-chair of the Armenian Bar Association, co-chair of its pro-



From left, Edvin Minassian, chair, Armenian Bar Association, Garo Ghazarian, Los Angeles city attorney, Carmen Trutanich and former Los Angeles County District Attorney, Robert Philibossian

legal experience and to his significant community involvement. The nomination was seconded by Council member Frank Quintero, who had this to say about Ghazarian, "He is a great nominee and he is going to do a very good job on the Civil Service Commission."

Council Member Ara Najarian, a past Glendale mayor, added, "I support Mr. Ghazarian. I've known him for many years. He is a very active member of the community, the law enforcement community and the local bar associations. Garo Ghazarian is not afraid to speak his mind, and does so with due respect." Laura Friedman, Glendale's presiding mayor, remarked that though she does not personally know Ghazarian, "Looking at his resume, I thought to myself, wow, what a catch!" With that, the mayor concluded by saying, "I am very happy to support the nomination."

Ghazarian, having taken the oath of office, attended his first Civil Service Commission hearing on December 14, 2011. From the dais, he thanked Manoukian for the nomination, and the City Council for the appointment. He also congratulated his predecessor, Ara Hatamian, for a job well done during his tenure.

bono committee, a board member of Mexican-American Bar Association, Political Action Committee (MABA-PAC), a board member of Yerevan-based think tank Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) and a regular legal commentator on national and international news networks, including CNN, Headline News and Al Jazeera English TV.

"Garo Ghazarian is an indispensable member of the Armenian Bar Association," said Armenian Bar Chairman Edvin Minassian. "His service to the community is vital and well documented. His appointment to the Glendale Civil Service Commission confirms his great commitment to serving his community."

The Civil Service Commission establishes the rules and policies under which Glendale's merit system operates, ensuring continuation of Glendale's reputation as a city whose employees attain and keep their positions on the basis of ability, training and experience, rather than on unwarranted considerations and affiliations. It also serves as a quasi-judicial body in hearing employee appeals against disciplinary actions such as suspension, reduction or removal.

WE REMEMBER:

JANUARY 19, 2007-JANUARY 19, 2012



Coffee Hour in Memory of Hrant Dink



SUNDAY
JANUARY 22, 2012

following church services

**St. James Armenian Apostolic Church
Tarvezian Hall**

465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472

Featuring
Reflections by Khatchig Mouradian:
"It has been 5 years and counting, no justice in sight yet!"

Hosted by Friends of Hrant Dink

P.O Box 382061, Cambridge, MA 02238

FHD is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, tax exempt organization

Website: www.friendsofhrantdink.org ~ Email: info@friendsofhrandink.org



COMMUNITY NEWS

MLK Jr. Unity Breakfast in Watertown on January 16

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Members of the community are invited to attend the 12th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Unity Breakfast on Monday, January 16, at 9 a.m. at the Hellenic Cultural Center, 25 Bigelow Ave.

The sponsor is World in Watertown, in collaboration with Survival Education Fund, Inc. and Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment.

The keynote speaker will be James deWolf Perry, executive director of the Tracing Center on Histories and Legacies of Slavery, based in Watertown.

In addition, music will be provided by the Greater Boston Intergenerational Chorus, under the direction of Joanne Hammil, and Chosen Voices of Harmony, under the direction of Sylvester Hill.

Tickets are \$10. Email Mark Harris at fpwatertown@comcast.net for advance sale tickets.

Tickets are also available at the door on the day of the event.

Women's Guild of St. David Church Celebrates Christmas At Sundry House

DELRAY BEACH, Fla. — On Saturday, December 10, the Women's Guild of St. David Armenian Church celebrated Christmas at the Sundry House, a historic landmark restaurant here. Fr. Nareg Berberian was present at this event, at which 55 Women's Guild members enjoyed each other's company.

Marge Lave was recognized by the Executive Board and was given a gift as a token of their appreciation. Rose Killian, Virignia Norsesian, Lucy Hamalian, Alice Mikaelian, Nina Stapan and Makruhi Movsesyan were also awarded a gift for their service in the Women's Guild. After the luncheon, Stapan, Zepure Andreasian and Louise Apoian led the singing of Christmas Carols. Gifts were exchanged among the members, and a lottery was drawn. They were all in a festive mood. There were beautifully hand-crafted centerpieces prepared by Virginia Norsesian, Christmas ornaments by Stapan and complimentary homemade chocolate by Mikaelian.

The Women's Guild of St. David is an active organization in the community and they have numerous social, cultural, spiritual and educational programs prepared for the year 2012. See the upcoming flyers and Retreat Program on the website and e-Newsletter.

— Carol Norigian

Priceless Ruby Sculpture Taken in Theft

Kazanian Brothers' Liberty Bell Likeness Had Been Headed for Museum

By Cris Barrish and Adam Taylor

WILMINGTON, Del. (*News Journal*) — When four bandits pulled off a dramatic smash-and-grab robbery and tied up four employees at a swank Wilmington jewelry store in November, they made off with more than the \$2-million worth of high-end pieces adorned with diamonds, gold, emeralds and other precious gems. They also took a rare piece, valued at about \$2 million alone, made from what the FBI calls the largest mined ruby in the world.

That piece, known as the Liberty Bell Ruby, is a one-of-a-kind sculpture that its California owners hoped to sell to a philanthropist who would donate it to the National Liberty Museum in Philadelphia.

Jim Stein, owner of Stuart Kingston Jewelers on Pennsylvania Avenue in Wilmington, kept the jewel in his walk-in vault for about two years while trying to broker a deal to sell the ruby.

About five inches high and weighing four pounds, the ruby found near Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa more than a half-century ago was sculpted into a Liberty Bell guarded by a bald eagle and bedecked with 50 diamonds, one for each state. Though the ruby is not of gem quality and lacks the clarity to be made into conventional jewelry, Stein said the sculpture is unique, more a work of art than jewelry.

The *News Journal* learned about the theft of the ruby when a reporter was searching the FBI's website for an unrelated story. On November 1, when the heist occurred in broad daylight at the store in the same complex as the busy Michael Christopher hair salon and Santa Fe restaurant, a short news release by Wilmington police did not mention the ruby.

Wilmington police said they asked the FBI to disseminate more information about the crime within days. The FBI put the additional information on its website on November 17, but neither agency notified Delaware media about the ruby. Neither the FBI nor city police would comment on the status of the investigation.

The FBI's release contained new details about the crime, including a picture of the ruby, sur-

veillance photos of the four suspects — three who wore ski masks and one who waved a gun — and a replica of the U-Haul rental van with stolen New York license plates that the robbers used. The bandits took cash from the register and used small sledgehammers to smash glass cases holding the most expensive pieces, some valued at more than \$75,000, Stein and fellow employees said.

'It cost me a robbery'

Stein and his staff gave the *News Journal* a blow-by-blow account about the bold, frightening four-minute heist, which will be the subject of a segment on the television show "America's Most Wanted" in February. When a reporter visited the store last week to conduct interviews, a film crew from the crime show was setting up its equipment.

Employees also revealed several new details, such as the fact that a witness followed the robbers' van up Interstate 95 at about 100 mph in a Mercedes sedan, speaking to a 911 operator much of the way, only to stop the pursuit north of Chester when the bandits opened the rear door and pointed a gun at his car.

Stein theorized that the ruby would have little value on the black market because it is so identifiable and few people would be interested in purchasing a non-gem ruby that cannot be worn. He speculated that the robbers probably sold it for \$10,000 just for the diamonds.

The jeweler also thinks that a November 2010 *News Journal* article about the Liberty Bell Ruby might have spurred the crime. Stein had hoped the story about the ruby would generate interest and attract a buyer.

But Stein said an investigator told him an inmate had told authorities he knew that some people were discussing a hit on the store to get the gem, which the newspaper story said was kept in the vault. Though the bandits didn't ask for the ruby in particular, they demanded access to the vault.

"We were trying to trump up, publicize this as much as possible," Stein said, "and it cost me a robbery."

The Theft

At about 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 1, a man appeared at the door to the store and the receptionist, only glancing up at his face, hit the buzzer to unlock it — the normal security procedure for the store with millions of dollars worth of inventory on display. Once inside, the man waved a gun and the receptionist yelled while the bandit held the door open for three other men

who burst inside.

The men raced around the store, found four employees inside, and bound them with plastic zip-tie handcuffs, forcing them to lie face down on the floor. They dashed to the display cases holding high-value jewels, smashing the glass and scooping out necklaces, earrings, rings and other pieces made of diamonds, platinum, gold, sapphires, emeralds and rubies. They didn't touch the less expensive silver, pearl or other semi-precious stones, such as blue topaz or aquamarine, said office manager Jamie Stein, one of the four employees who were tied up.

Stein recalled that, while lying on the ground, she thought to herself, "Please don't shoot anybody. Get what you are getting and leave with everybody alive."

Dan McGrath, the store's gold buyer, who also was bound, said the robbery "happened so fast I didn't have time to get nervous about it."

After clearing out the cases, the robbers forced Stein's son, Edward, to let them into the vault, where they took the box holding the ruby as well as other pieces, including an opal and several loose stones.

Jim Stein, who was in the back of the store, said he ran outside to call police, and after waiting a few minutes, ran back inside, only to be chased outside by the fleeing bandits. He saw them escape in the \$19.99-a-day rental truck.

The ruby was created in 1976 for Beverly Hills-based Kazanjian Brothers jewelry company by sculptor Alfonso de Vivanco for the US bicentennial. It was made in the same spirit as sapphire busts of presidents that the jeweler's charitable foundation presented to the White House when Dwight D. Eisenhower was president.

The ruby sculpture, however, went unsold, so two years ago, the jeweler partnered with Stein, who had been negotiating with potential buyers who would donate the sculpture to the National Liberty Museum just blocks from the real Liberty Bell at Philadelphia's Independence Hall.

The Wilmington jeweler said the Kazanjians are immigrants from Armenia who have become philanthropists and "very patriotic people who wanted to give back to America, which gave them an opportunity when they came here."

Michael Kazanjian, the store's owner, did not return calls for this story, but Stein said they are distraught about the loss.

Gwen Borowsky, chief executive at the museum, said she did not know about the ruby's theft until last week, when a reporter notified her.

"It's such a shame," she said.

Ex-Navy Secretary Paul. R. Ignatius to Speak in Calif.

GLENDALÉ — Former Secretary of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius will give a pair of talks in Southern California, on January 29 and 30, in connection with the publication of his memoir, *Now I Know in Part*, in a revised and expanded edition.

On Sunday, January 29, Ignatius will speak at 2:30 p.m. at the Glendale Public Library, an event sponsored by the University of Southern California (USC) Institute of Armenian Studies, the Ararat-Eskijian Museum and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). On Monday, January 30, at noon, NAASR and USC Institute of Armenian Studies

will sponsor a talk by Ignatius at USC, his alma mater, at the Colloquium in Armenian Studies, Von Kleinsmid Center, Room 156. Both events are free and open to the public.

Now I Know in Part, a substantially revised and expanded edition of a memoir that was first published privately in 2000, was issued in late 2011 by NAASR's Armenian Heritage Press. The book will be available for purchase and signing by the author at both events.

A descendant of Armenian parents from the Kharpert region of Historic Armenia, Ignatius is a native of Glendale and a graduate of USC. He earned an MBA from Harvard University after serving as a naval officer in World War II. He is also the author of *On Board: My Life in the Navy, Government, and Business* (Naval Institute Press, 2006).

Ignatius served for eight years in the presidential administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, first as an assistant secretary of the army, then as under secretary of the army and assistant secretary of defense and finally in 1967 as secretary of the navy. Following his government service, he was president of the *Washington Post* for two years and president of the Air Transport Association for 15 years.

He is the recipient of the Army Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award, and the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Award.

In *Now I Know in Part*, Ignatius looks back on family history, childhood in Glendale, long before it had been home to a large Armenian community, colorful characters (both famous

and obscure) and Hollywood brushes with greatness, military service during World War II and more.

In the book's foreword, Ignatius writes that, "There is quite a lot in these stories about Armenia and my parents' Armenian friends. I never thought much about all this when I was growing up, probably because it would make me seem to be different from my schoolmates, and I wanted to be just like everyone else. Now I look with a different eye on my heritage. I have come to believe that I am a more interesting person, to myself and to others, because of this background."

Also, he adds, he enjoyed telling "stories about the old days, about growing up in California with parents of Armenian heritage and getting to know a lot of characters, mostly Armenian, who came to our house in Glendale. I would acquaint them with William Saroyan's *Uncle Aram*, who told jokes in crazy ethnic dialects, and with Levon Agha and Armenag Effendi Kurkjian and how my brother and I did the wash in the old Maytag and invented silly languages in our shared bedroom before going to sleep."

Chapters newly added for this second edition include reminiscences of Ignatius' former boss, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, during a difficult time in US history, and two homecomings of a sort: one to Hoover High School in Glendale and the other a visit to ancestral lands in Historic Armenia.

For more information, contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org or visit NAASR at 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

for

Students of Armenian Descent

Having Completed One Year of College by June, 2012

Applications and other information may be obtained from

ARMENIAN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Scholarship Committee

333 Atlantic Avenue • Warwick, RI 02888

Tel. 401 461-6114 • Fax 401 461-6112

e-mail: headasa@aol.com

Deadline for returning completed Applications: March 15, 2012



COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Arshag Dickranian School Holds its 31st Christmas Program

LOS ANGELES – The Tekeyan Cultural Association's Arshag Dickranian School held its 31st Christmas Program on Wednesday, December 21, 2011 at the school's Walter and Laurel Karabian Hall.



First-grade students Katrina Kourouyan and Gevork Nalbandyan welcome guests.

The program was jointly organized by pre-kindergarten teacher Madlena Marikeyan, Kindergarten teacher Anahid Avanessian and

Nalbandyan, much to the delight of the audience. Next, students from the fourth, fifth and sixth grades enacted various scenes of the way of life in Bethlehem around the time before the birth of Jesus. Then, third-grade student Hamlet Oganessian gave the tidings of Jesus' birth and the program took a more festive turn. The pre-kindergartners took the stage and performed a Christmas Broadway dance wearing shiny hats, followed by recitations of Christmas poems in Armenian, after which the kindergartners danced to *Silent Night*. A series of Christmas carols performed by the school choir, and medleys and dances were then performed by students ranging from pre-kindergarten through sixth grades, the theme of which was "to give rather than receive." Next came a performance by 10th and 11th-grade students who danced an Armenian folk dance to the delightful voice of soloist and 2010 school alumna Ani Nercessian.

Near the end, 12th-grader Morris Sarafyan made an imposing entrance dressed as Santa cheering the crowd. Students then circled him



Tenth- and 11th-grade students performing Armenian folkdance with 2010 school alumna and soloist Ani Nercessian

her assistant Tamara Nahapetyan, Armenian teacher Emma Umroyan, music teacher Komitas Keshishyan and dance teacher Robert Arakelian.

Students ranging from pre-kindergarten through 11th grade participated, performing a medley of stage presentations and dances, interjected by recitations and Christmas carols sung by the school choir. The program began with the welcoming and humorous remarks of first-grade students Katrina Kourouyan and Gevork

and danced to the tune, *Eem Anoonne Hayastan Eh*, while parents cheered to the brilliant performances of their children.

Principal Vartkes Kourouyan delivered the closing remarks by thanking all the hands involved in the preparation and production of this event, giving guests, faculty, students and teachers his best holiday wishes and inviting guests to socialize and enjoy refreshments.

For more information, visit www.dickranianschool.org.



Kindergarten students dance to Silent Night.



Bedourian family: Der Karekin, Yeretzgin Sevan and newly-christened Megheti

One Priest's Mission: 16,000 Miles in 48 Hours for Child's Christening

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. and KESSAB, Syria – On the same day in this very same city, the oldest Armenian resident was buried hours before a child was christened.

One woman's death was offset by the breath of a new life.

The woman was 104-year Kalila Yarialian-Manjikian, somewhat of a matriarch they call Nene in this heavily-populated Armenian community.

The child belongs to Rev. Karekin Bedourian and his wife Sevan. The two had traveled 8,000 miles in 24 hours to get there – a place they both call home. Double it both ways.

Even more ironical was the date, November 11, 2011 or, putting it numerically, 11/11/11. It turned out to be the same church the couple were raised in and baptized in their day in the same font.

By Tom Vartabedian

Soorp Asdavadzazin Church was also the setting for their wedding day in 2008 and Bedourian's ordination the following year.

"It was the natural place to have our daughter Megheti christened," said Der Karekin, pastor of St. Gregory Church in North Andover. "We wanted her to have close ties with our beloved Kessab community with both families present. Many of those who attended the funeral in the morning came to the christening that afternoon. The emotion of this day will live with us forever."

The family left by car for New York where they boarded a flight at JFK Airport. From there, they flew to Jordan, then to Aleppo, followed by a three-hour drive to Kessab over winding, unpaved roads.

Megheti was well-behaved throughout her journey, bewildered by the planes and hordes of people at the airports. Once inside a car, she fell asleep.

The Bedourians arrived home to an exuberant family greeting, especially with a 16-month-old in tow. On hand were both sets of parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins. It marked Karekin Bedourian's first return visit home since his ordination in 2009.

"Tears of joy were shed," he described. "It's very difficult being removed from your family circle but such is the lifestyle of a priest and his Yeretzgin. Careers take hold. By traveling to Kessab for my daughter's christening, I made an entire village happy. Nothing is more satisfying for me than this."

Some 150 guests turned out on a Friday afternoon for the service, performed by Very Rev. Tatoul Anoushian, accompanied by the host pastor, Rev. Muron Avedisian. A celebration followed in the church hall. Earlier that day, Bedourian participated in the Yarialian-Manjikian funeral service.

"Until she was immersed into the holy water, Megheti was very happy," her father beamed. "Then came the tears. For us, tears have a very special meaning of rebirth."

The child was dressed in a special white dress bearing crosses made especially for this occasion.

Together with Megheti, the Bedourians have cultivated a lifestyle inside their new church. It has been a marriage blessed with tremendous faith and love. The two have known each other since their kindergarten days in Kessab. They were classmates through school. While Bedourian pursued his theological studies at Antelias, she waited patiently for him. Six hundred guests turned out for their wedding at Soorp Asdavadzazin Church.

The choices was simple: either have the child christened at St. Gregory Church where he was assigned or make the trip to Kessab. They chose Syria.

"When Megheti gets older, she will visit Kessab and the church where her roots are planted," said Bedourian. "It'll be a very significant moment in her life, knowing that was where her parents were baptized and the church where I was ordained."


New York
METRO

New York's St. Vartan Cathedral Resounds With 'Good News' of Christmas on January

NEW YORK — In more than one way, Friday, January 6 turned out to be a beautiful day in New York City. Outside, it was clear and unseasonably mild. Inside St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian celebrated the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Nativity and Theophany, before a large crowd that had gathered to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Individuals as well as families, young and old alike, took time off from work or school to worship. Hundreds of people took part in the Christmas celebration over the course of the day's events. Local parishes throughout the Eastern Diocese reported that their own January 6 (and later on Sunday, January 8) services were likewise well attended.

In his homily, the Primate noted that, while modern society is awash in bad news of all sorts, "What sets Christians apart is that we proclaim the Good News. The Good News is timeless, eternal; always good and always new. The Good News can sustain us against all the bad news of the world. Indeed, the Good News has sustained the Armenian people for countless generations."

He reminded listeners that the words *medz avedis* — great Good News — are an essential part of the traditional Armenian Christmas greeting. And he defined that world-altering news as the faith that, "In Jesus Christ, God became incarnate as man. Beneath the stars which he created, God lay as an infant, in the arms of a young mother. He lived as a human being, redeeming our lives, giving us an exam-



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presided over the Armenian Christmas service at New York's St. Vartan Cathedral on Friday, January 6.



Khoren Mekanejian directs the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir in its beautiful rendering of the sacred music of the Divine Liturgy, with Florence Avakian at the organ (not shown).

ple of true humanity.... He is intimate with human concerns and knows each of us personally. He feeds our hunger and renews our spirits. He gives us hope."

He concluded by exhorting the worshippers

to share the *medz avedis* with those around them. "In everything you do," he said, "do it in a spirit of sharing the Good News of God's love for mankind. Proclaim with love and pride, our beautiful Armenian greeting — to a family mem-

ber, to a friend, or even to a stranger. In Christ's name, go forth and perform this simple but meaningful ministry: this Ministry of the Faithful. And shine the light of Christ into our world."

As celebrant during the January 6 liturgy, the Primate was surrounded on the altar by a number of clergymen, deacons and seminarians. Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, former Primate of

Public participation was also robust at the Armenian Christmas Eve service on the evening of January 5. The celebrant was Gizirian. The Christmas Eve service featured scripture readings by students from the Diocese's Khrimian Lyceum, who also added their voices to the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir's singing of the Divine Liturgy. A festive reception followed the Christmas Eve service.



The Blessing of Water ceremony — commemorating Jesus's baptism by John the Baptist — is performed during the Armenian Christmas service, by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. The godfather of this year's *churohnek* ceremony was Dr. Raffy Hovnaessian.



In Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, a dance performance was offered by the Akh'tamar Dance Ensemble of New Jersey.

the United Kingdom; St. Vartan Cathedral dean Fr. Mardiros Chevian and cathedral priest Fr. Sooren Chinchinian all participated in the service.

Dr. Raffy Hovnaessian served as godfather for the *churohnek*, or Blessing of Water Ceremony, which commemorates the baptism of Jesus by the hand of John the Baptist. Dr. Hovnaessian stood on the cathedral altar in the company of his three young grandsons — the eldest of whom the doctor had first brought to the cathedral 15 years earlier, on Armenian Christmas 1997, just days after the child's birth.

The sacred music of the Divine Liturgy was performed throughout the service by the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Khoren Mekanejian. Accompanying on the organ was Florence Avakian.

After the service on January 6, a reception convened in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, where a dance performance was offered by the Akh'tamar Dance Ensemble of New Jersey.

Concurrent with the Armenian Christmas observances, a special art exhibit was on display in the cathedral complex. In "Armenian Christmas and the Legacy of Ten Armenian Artists," curator Vicki Shoghag Hovnaessian assembled works by prominent Armenian artists, which conveyed both aesthetic beauty as well as religious devotion.

A traditional home-blessing ceremony rounded out the Armenian Christmas program. Vartouhi Papazian and her team of chefs prepared the food for the reception.



New York METRO

Syracuse Surgeon, Dr. Samuel Badalian, Trains Doctors and Helps Patients Here and Abroad

By Kathleen Poliquin

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (*Post-Standard*) — Dr. Samuel Badalian's heart sinks when he sees surgical supplies going unused and being discarded in the operating room at St. Joseph's hospital, where he is chairman of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department. His heart sinks, not because he is worried about cutting costs in his department, but because he knows first hand how rare and precious those supplies are in countries such as Armenia and Kazakhstan.

Badalian visited Kazakhstan in July, and Russia and Armenia, where he was born, in October, to perform urogynecological surgeries and to teach doctors there surgical techniques — something he has been doing for almost seven years. And he plans to keep going back.

Besides his leadership position at St. Joseph's, and his duties as clinical professor at SUNY Upstate Medical University, the Manlius doctor has a bustling private practice and a full calendar of about 170 surgical cases here each year. But his advanced urogynecological surgical skills, coupled with his fluency in Armenian, Russian, French and English, put him in high demand abroad, where wait-listed surgical patients eagerly anticipate his return and doctors strive to learn and replicate his techniques.

Many of the patients Badalian treats overseas suffer from unrelenting pain and incontinence. Typically, the women have a condition called prolapse, which results when the muscles and ligaments supporting their pelvic organs weaken due to age, heredity or complications of childbirth, causing the organs to slip out of place. Many have already had up to three ineffective surgeries that have left them scarred, deformed and desperate. Their doctors, absent proper training, may have tried to approximate surgical techniques they watched on Internet videos. And because of a shortage of proper surgical devices and supplies, it's not unheard of for doctors to cobble together hand-made devices from non-sterile materials or to reuse single-use instruments many times.

While he uses his own resources to fund his overseas travel, Badalian asked for and received donations of surgical kits, which cost

\$1,000 to \$1,500 each — some with imminent expiration dates — from American medical and surgical supply companies.

Badalian can only do a limited number of surgeries during his jam-packed visits, but he also instructs and lectures as much as he can, sometimes with surgeons from other countries. On a typical day, he would perform surgeries on patients in an auditorium from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. before nearly 300 physicians, speaking into a microphone while a camera filmed over his shoulder. From 5 to 7 p.m., he would give lectures, then eat and go to his room.

"Even physicians from other countries are watching," Badalian said. "They're watching me, I'm watching them. I'm learning from them, they're learning from me. That's an exchange of experience also. It gives me energy."

Badalian has seen progress in Russia since he first traveled there six years ago. American surgical supply companies now have sales reps there and some physicians in the larger cities are able to perform the intricate surgeries.

Regarding the week he spent in July in Kazakhstan, Badalian said, "I was with another physician from Israel. It is a Muslim country and there I am from the US and he is there from Israel, and both of us were teaching them how to do surgeries. They were very happy and very excited. They plan to call us back. They have everything — gas, oil, a lot of money, but they don't know how to do these complicated cases."

Badalian said he hopes to travel to Ghana in the spring to do surgeries and to teach there. He would also like to take more physicians with him when he returns to Armenia next fall.

"When you go and see what's going on in those places, you truly appreciate when you come back," Badalian said. "Your work ethic changes, you are becoming a different doctor. You are working differently, you are helping people differently. You really appreciate your place, your hospital, your work. You are treating your patients and your colleagues much better than if you don't know what is going on behind you. Plus, you are giving them your knowledge. When you are teaching other physicians, it makes you a better physician, much significantly better. And with this, we will try to make a difference."

ANSEF Selects 2012 Winners

NEW YORK — For the last 12 years, the Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF), which is sponsored by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), has supported world-class scientific research and education in Armenia by awarding grants to top research groups.

ANSEF's review board recently completed its marathon review of more than 200 proposals for the 2012 ANSEF awards. The list of the 25 awardees includes 12 groups in the physical sciences, nine in the natural sciences, three in engineering and one in the humanities.

As chairman of ANSEF, Prof. Yervant Terzian said, "The results of the vigorous 2012 competition showed that 51 proposals received very high evaluations from our reviewers — leading scientists in their respective fields — the highest percentage in 12 years. We are painfully aware that some excellent proposals are not in the final list. Unfortunately, ANSEF can provide funding for only 25 awards."

In 2012, the ANSEF Board of Trustees will conduct its very first ANSEF symposium

in Armenia to celebrate ANSEF's successes, and to unite the many scientists and scholars who have produced so much. The date of symposium will soon be announced.

ANSEF was established in 2000. It was modeled on western funding agencies such as the National Science Foundation, and adapted to meet Armenia's special needs. For the past 12 years, ANSEF has provided more than \$1.4 million dollars to fund research by over 700 scientists in Armenia. This has resulted in hundreds of publications from Armenia about the cutting edge physical sciences, engineering, natural sciences, humanities and social sciences and has ultimately slowed Armenia's "brain drain." For many of Armenia's brilliant minds, the ANSEF award has become a springboard from which they can achieve international recognition.

Fund for Armenian Relief is extending its appreciation to the ANSEF board, the research council and reviewers from around the world.

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

CHALLENGES TO HUMAN RIGHTS & RULE OF LAW IN ARMENIA

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2012 7:30 PM
ST. LEON ARMENIAN CHURCH, ABAJIAN HALL
12-61 SADDLE RIVER ROAD, FAIR LAWN, NEW JERSEY
For further info call (201) 791-2862

After 20 years of Armenia's national independence, it's time to take a sobering inventory of its record in transitioning to a democratic state. Join us for a presentation of the key issues challenging success, possible solutions and the consequences of non-action.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- Human rights abuses and absence of Rule of Law—from Armenia's judicial system to the military and elections.
- The impact of entrenched corruption and oligarchical power on foreign investment, economic growth and national security.
- How elements of fear, intimidation and reprisal influence Armenia's civil society.
- The implications of Armenia's poor rankings in international democracy-progress reports.
- Challenges in Armenia-Diaspora relations and Armenia and the West.
- The role of individuals, civil society groups, foreign governments, and international institutions in promoting human rights and democracy in Armenia.

GUEST SPEAKER

SIMON PAYASLIAN

Charles K. and Elisabeth M. Kenosian Professor in Modern Armenian History and Literature at Boston University
Author of the recently published *Political Economy of Human Rights in Armenia: Authoritarianism and Democracy in a Former Soviet Republic*

KAREN HAKOBIAN

Human Rights Activist and Organizational Trainer, Armenia

ARAM HAMPARIAN

Executive Director, Armenian National Committee of America, Washington, DC

GARO YEGNUKIAN, ESQ

Senior Fellow, Policy Forum Armenia, Yerevan

ARDA HARATUNIAN, MODERATOR

Q&A

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

ADMISSION: FREE

Armenian Heritage Park

On the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, Boston



under construction

Sponsorship/Naming Opportunities
James Kalustian 781 777.2407
Charles Guleserian 617 484.6100
Haig Deranian 617 489.2215
Walter Nahabedian 781 891.7249
Dr. Jack Kasarjian 617 232.6350

DONATE

online: www.ArmenianHeritagePark.net
check: Armenian Heritage Foundation
25 Flanders Road
Belmont, MA 02478

Arts & Living

AFFMA Founder Sylvia Minassian Receives Cultural Medal of Honor

LOS ANGELES — Prominent Hollywood actors, directors, producers and media representatives gathered at the House of Armenia, the new Los Angeles office of the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia, for an end-of-the-year reception and surprise ceremony.

In his opening remarks, Consul General of Armenia Grigor Hovhannissian thanked the Armenian American cineastes for their valuable contributions towards promoting Armenia and the Armenian talent in the creative capital of the world. Alex Kalognomos, director of Arpa International Film Festival, recapped the year 2011, which was ripe with significant projects both in Hollywood and Armenia.

The highlight of the forum was the Golden Medal of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia honoring Sylvia Minassian, founder of Arpa Foundation for Film, Music and Art (AFFMA) and Arpa International Film Festival. Minassian was awarded one of the highest Armenian cultural awards for her outstanding contribution to promoting Armenian cinematic arts domestically and internationally.

In a surprise award ceremony, Hovhannissian bestowed the honor to Minassian on the 15th



Sylvia Minassian with the medal

anniversary of Arpa International Film Festival, AFFMA's signature event.

In 1995, with the help of other civic-minded Armenians, Minassian founded AFFMA to enhance the artistic climate of Los Angeles and bridge the cultural divide, unifying diverse people and cultures through the arts. Arpa International Film Festival was created two years later. AFFMA has staged networking events, concerts, art exhibits, fashion shows, book signings and various fundraising events to promote emerging Armenian talents, most significantly, the international film festival.

Since 1997, the festival has honored more than 100 artists and filmmakers with grants and awards. Minassian was born in Istanbul, Turkey and came to the US in 1960. She attended California State University in Fresno (Fresno State College) and completed post-graduate work at Clairmont University and UCLA. With a teaching credential in French and Spanish, Minassian embarked on a career in

see MEDAL, page 16



Avignon: Jean-François Colosimo, with ascot, next to unidentified citizen, in front of statue of Jean Althen (Hovhannes Altounian) in Avignon, with plaque honoring Armenian Genocide victims and Armenians who sacrificed their lives fighting for France

France Celebrates Armenian Culture

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

PARIS — On October 16 to 23, 2011, a major festival called “Arménie-Arménies,” or, in English translation, “Armenia-Armenias,” was organized in France celebrating Armenian culture and the 20th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Armenia. More than 20 Armenian writers and intellectuals from the Republic of Armenia and the diaspora took a train trip aboard the storied Orient Express from Marseille through Avignon, Valence, Lyon to Paris. Along the way, they gave talks on Armenian literature, politics, history, culture and society, participated in discussions, and met with representatives of the media. Traditional and liturgical Armenian music and jazz were performed on a number of occasions, a guided tour of Armenian manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale Française was given, and during the last two days of the festival, films of Sergei Paradjanov, Atom Egoyan and Robert Guédigian were shown. At least one art exhibition — the sculptures of Toros (Rast-klan, or Rastguelénian) and an exhibition of photographs by Antoine Agoudjian, were held. Armenian cuisine was discussed as well as tasted.

This itinerant festival was financially sponsored by the French Centre national du livre (CNL or the National Center of the Book), with the support of the cities visited, various local French and French-Armenian institutions and the French media. Armenian culture was the first to be celebrated in a series of forthcoming events that the CNL will organize as part of CNL Mondes (CNL Worlds). The CNL is an institution which is part of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. The present minister of culture, Frédéric Mitterand — nephew of François Mitterand, the late president of France — was in favor of this decision.

CNL President Jean-François Colosimo explained in an interview with Krikor Amirzayan in *Nouvelles d'Arménie* that “Armenia occupies a special place in our hearts and spirits,” and in addition to what the French knew already about the Armenians, it was the presence of around 500,000 French-Armenians that led

see FRANCE, page 15



Poster for Arménie-Arménies

Calliope Ensemble to Present Benefit Concert for Armenian Heritage Foundation

BOSTON — Calliope, Boston's collaborative choral/orchestral ensemble, will close their fifth season with “Immigrants to Our Shores,” a benefit concert for the Armenian Heritage Foundation, on Saturday, February 4, at 7:30 p.m. at First Church Boston, 66 Marlborough St.

“Immigrants to Our Shores” will feature music by and about a variety of immigrants to the Boston area, including those of Armenian, African-American, Asian, Czech, Jewish, Irish, Italian and Puerto Rican descent. *Largo* from Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, along with a few traditional spirituals and excerpts from Menotti's “The Saint of Bleecker Street” and “West Side Story,” are planned for this program. Given the cause of the evening, there will be a particular focus on Armenian music, including Alan Hovhanness' *Prayer of Saint Gregory*, Parsegh Ganatchian's *Oror* and Dexter Morrill's setting of texts by Peter Balakian and arranged specifically for Calliope and this performance.

In a time when many arts organizations are struggling to survive, Calliope, a non-profit volunteer music organization of more than 75 singers and instrumentalists serving Boston and surrounding communities, continues to thrive. This season it has grown into a new performance venue at Boston's First Church. Directed by its founder, Julia O'Toole, Calliope seeks to encourage collaboration between musicians, promote positive social change and inspire young people to become listeners and participants in the world of music. Its musicians bring a great variety of choral and instrumental training and experience to their music making. The group takes its name from the eldest of the nine Muses, Calliope, whose name means beautiful voice.

The Armenian Heritage Foundation is the sponsor of Armenian Heritage Park, a gift to the City of Boston and the Commonwealth from Massachusetts Armenian-Americans. Armenian Heritage Park commemorates lives lost during the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 and all genocides that have followed, acknowledges the history of Boston as a port of entry for immigrants and celebrates those who have migrated to Massachusetts and contributed to the richness of American life and culture. For more about the Armenian Heritage Park, visit www.armenianheritagepark.net.

As has become tradition, a raffle and auction will be held during intermission at this performance as part of ongoing efforts to support Calliope's future.

Individual tickets for this performance can be purchased in advance through Calliope's website www.calliopemusic.org as well as at the door on the day of the performance. Discounted rates are available for groups of 10 or more.

To find out more about Calliope, ticket prices or this upcoming performance visit www.calliopemusic.org.



Lucy Der Manuelian Pursues Love of Armenian Art

BOSTON (*Rocky Mountain Hye Advocates*) – Rocky Mountain Hye Advocates offers a profile of Prof. Lucy Der Manuelian and her pioneering work on Armenian monasteries and churches. She states it perfectly: “My mission was to present to as wide an audience as possible – academia, museums, the general public – the distinctive achievements of Armenian art and architecture. I’m very happy if my work opened other people’s eyes to a different part of the world.”

The now-retired Tufts University art historian broke ground establishing public concern for the preservation and restoration of 1,000-year-old cliff-side monasteries. She chronicled her research in “Lost Treasures of Christianity: The Ancient Monuments of Armenia,” televised in the mid ‘90s on many public broadcasting stations. As reported at the time: “The program offers a spellbinding look at Armenia’s medieval castles, churches, and monasteries, stone-carved images and brilliantly illuminated manuscripts.” Aerial views of the monasteries carved into cliffs and perched on mountaintops were filmed by Der Manuelian, using her savvy negotiating skills to bargain the use of a Soviet helicopter.

Der Manuelian’s early life was defined by the Genocide. Her father’s parents and sisters were all brutally murdered. Despite this inheritance of loss, her godfather, Arshag Fetvadjian, an authority on Armenian architecture, had, at the turn of century, documented the ruins of Ani in thousands of sketches, watercolors and paintings which were widely exhibited throughout Europe. It was Fetvadjian who nurtured her curiosity, which eventually led to her life’s work. She reflects: “When I was little I knew he had done something special but it was quite unexpected when my intellectual interest coincided with this emotional memory. If I had deliberately started out to fulfill my godfather’s mission, I couldn’t have done it in a better way.”

Der Manuelian’s quest began during her graduate years. “I was researching my dissertation when I read of the possible connection between Armenian art and architecture and

the famous cathedrals of Europe. Some scholars examined those medieval cathedrals, Notre Dame for example, and realized that the building techniques used by European architects for those towering churches were similar to the ones used centuries earlier by Armenian architects building their own churches.” She became the first Western scholar to research the hundreds of medieval churches and architectural sculptures in



Lucy Der Manuelian

Armenia while living at the Yerevan Polytechnic Institute. Der Manuelian’s dissertation advisor, Harvard Prof. Oleg Grabar, noted her fundamental courage. “Despite encountering many obstacles and challenges in the former Soviet Union, she succeeded in photographing, studying and writing about hundreds of medieval monasteries while undaunted by unheated apartments, threats by the KGB and scary helicopter rides.”

In more firsts of many throughout her rich career, Der Manuelian was awarded the first PhD in Armenian art ever granted in the United States. Her Armenian spirit of adventure persisted and in 1988 she traveled by jeep far and wide through Soviet Armenia with 200 pounds of rented Hollywood filming equipment to accomplish her vision and create her documentary, which she literally smuggled out of the country.

Later in 1989, Der Manuelian was the first

appointee to the Dadian/Oztemel Professorship, the first-ever endowed chair at a university devoted to Armenian art and architectural history. Der Manuelian explained at the time: “Tufts’ new chair is important for the field of art history because it acknowledges the significance of Armenian art and is an important step for the support of research and training the next generation of scholars.”

In 1990, the *McGill Reporter* quoted Der Manuelian: “From the time Armenia adopted Christianity in the fourth century it protected the West from invasion, fending off attacks by Persian, Arabs, Seljuks, Mongols and Turks. After each period of war and struggle, the nobles returned to church building and commissioning manuscript copying in the monasteries – these were sacred duties.” From the fourth to the 14th-century, thousands of churches were constructed and Ani was the heart, soul and vibrant commercial crossroad on China’s silk road. Der Manuelian describes Armenia’s ancient city of Ani and its thousand and one churches with beautifully carved outer walls as “a cross between Camelot and Hong Kong.” Ani is now the political epicenter and hope for H. Res. 306 in realized preservation of what remains of Armenia’s rich and ancient culture.

Der Manuelian clearly enunciates the intended purpose of H. Res. 306: “It is often said that the soul of a people is revealed more fully in its architecture than in any other way. If so, there can be no more eloquent spokesman for the Armenians than the handsome medieval churches that have stood for centuries perched at the crests of mountains, nestled or silhouetted against massive cliffs. They tell a haunting tale of a people with a religion and an identity to preserve – at all costs.”

The Tuftonian, in 2000, reported on Der Manuelian’s work documenting the medieval Church of the Holy Cross on the island of Aght’amar, Turkey build in 915 by King Gagik I. The building’s exterior is almost completely covered “with richly-ornamented relief sculp-

ture from the *Old and New Testaments*: Adam and Eve, Jonah and the Whale, David and Goliath, the Nativity and important Armenian saints.

Inside the church is embellished with wall paintings that illustrate more than 34 biblical events in the dome, a series of paintings depicting unusual scenes from Genesis.” Der Manuelian says “this is the oldest surviving Christian church with such a wealth of decoration. There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world.”

As her career was concluding, Der Manuelian literally broke new ground using a ground-penetrating radar system developed by Geophysical Survey Systems to Armenian and conducted a geophysical survey of 12 early Christian and medieval sites and two Urartian fortresses to detect architectural remains beneath the ground’s surface. Her pioneer work “uncovered hidden treasures, bringing to light obscured landmarks and neglected monuments.”

“Armenia was a very great civilization and the churches the Armenian nobility built are the most important documents of Armenia achievement and impact, especially with the historical inscriptions cared on their walls. Their architecture is a record in stone. It is my hope that others will also see in it the heart of a great Christian kingdom and one deserving of dedicated preservation.”

Der Manuelian is the author of three volumes on Armenian architecture, as well as of numerous other publications. She has written and narrated three television documentaries on Armenian art, has appeared on radio and television news programs, including the “McNeil-Lehrer News Hour” and has given more than 1,000 public talks on the subject of Armenian Art and Architecture. In 1994, she received the “Woman of Achievement” award at the First International Conference of the Armenian International Women’s Association in London. She is listed in several Who’s Who catalogues, including the *Who’s Who of Women* and the *Who’s Who of American Women*.

Lecture on Hawaii Artist Arman Manookian

MISSION HILLS, Calif. – Prof. John Seed of Mt. San Jacinto College in Southern California will speak on Sunday, January 22, at 4 p.m., at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, 15105 Mission Road. The lecture, titled “Arman Manookian: An Armenian Artist in Hawaii,” will be cosponsored by the museum and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). The event is free and open to the public.

Seed is the winner of a 2002 Society of Professional Journalist’s award in art and entertainment writing and has written about art and artists for *Harvard Magazine*, Maui No Ka Oi, Honolulu and Christie’s auction houses. He is the author of the book, *Arman Manookian: An Armenian Artist in Hawaii*.

Seed has done extensive research into the life and art of Manookian (1904-31). He has delved into his childhood and education in

Constantinople, where he studied at the Armenian school where Daniel Varoujan served as principle, as well as his training in the US and his experiences and paintings during his short stay in “Paradise.” He will cover historic events during his lifetime as well as how they affected his thinking as well as the lives of his family members and his teachers.

Manookian, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, spent his final years in Hawaii, where he is recognized as one of the state’s greatest artists. In 2011, the Honolulu Academy of Arts held a retrospective of his work.

There will also be a short presentation about the relationship of post-traumatic stress disorder, genocide and genetics.

More information about the lecture may be had by contacting the Ararat-Eskijian Museum at aem@ararat-eskijian-museum.com or NAASR at hq@naasr.org.

FRIENDS OF HRANT DINK

Presents

AN EVENING WITH AHMET ALTAN

Editor and Founder of Taraf, Turkey’s leading liberal newspaper

Recipient of the 2011 International Hrant Dink Award



Turkey After Hrant Dink

Across the Turkish-Armenian Divide
and the Future of Genocide
Recognition in Turkey



SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2012, AT 6:30 P.M.

Armenian Library and Museum of America
65 Main St. Watertown, MA 02472

Public parking available in lot behind museum building.

Sponsored by Friends of Hrant Dink

P.O. Box 382061, Cambridge, MA 02238

FHD is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, tax exempt organization

Website: www.friendsofhrantdink.org ~ Email: info@friendsofhrantdink.org





ARTS & LIVING

France Celebrates Armenian Culture

FRANCE, from page 13

to this choice. The CNL president visited Armenia twice and met with the Armenian minister of culture in order to obtain advice concerning the organization of the festival.

Alexis Lacroix, advisor to the CNL president and the moderator of several of panel discussions in the festival, said in an interview with René Dzagoyan in the same French-Armenian periodical, *Nouvelles d'Arménie*, that Colosimo initially came up with the idea of a traveling festival and then immediately thought of the Armenians. Presenting their culture would not only examine the diasporan experience but also have something to say to the French.

Lacroix felt that as a diasporan experience, the Armenian one was emblematic of the condition of all peoples faced with advanced globalization. Identity is no longer an immediate "natural" given but an open question, to which art can help reformulate answers. The films shown in the festival are evidence of this. Lacroix said, "the camera of the great filmmakers of Armenian origin is, together with the novel, the other 'medium' by which a dispersed people tries to recognize that which creates, despite its dispersion, its mysterious unity." Certainly, then, the films of Paradjanov are marked by Soviet filmography, just as all the films of Egoyan depend on the canons of North American cinematography, while Guédiguian incontestably fits in the French tradition of social film. However, a part of their works, also visible and immediately perceptible, contains the persistent enigma of "Armenianness."

In the introduction to the official program brochure Colosimo said that Arménie, Arménies was intended to raise questions concerning the nature of Armenian culture and identity, both in the diaspora and in the Republic of Armenia, and how different commemorative reconstructions have taken place after 1915. The intent of the CNL series was to show that "the book remains the best key for understanding a world in transformation."

The Armenian participants are creators and transmitters of Armenian culture not only in Armenian, but in many other languages such as French, Spanish and English. Some, like Peter Balakian, do this though they do not speak Armenian. The invitees — actually 22 in number, but 20 is more symbolism due to the anniversary — were from eight different countries: the Republic of Armenia (Karen Antashyan, Henrik Edoyan, Violet Grigoryan, Vahram Martirosyan and Shushanik Tamrazyan), the US (Peter Balakian, Viken Berberian and Marc Nichanian), Argentina (Ana

Arzoumanian), Lithuania (Vahagn Grigorian), Estonia (Gohar Markosyan), Romania (Varujan Vosganian) and Switzerland (Vahé Godel), along with France, of course, (Daniel Arsand, Nathalie Baravian, Krikor Beledian, Denis Donikian, Raymond Kévorkian, Michel Marian, Gaïdz Minassian, Claire Mouradian and Ara Toranian).

The French Orient-Express, a very fancy old-fashioned train apparently, took the Armenians along the same path that the post-Genocide Armenian immigrants to France traversed. The train only traveled during the day, and the Armenians stayed in hotels in the various cities

together for a full week a group of Armenian writers from various places in the world. We had a chance to get a sense of what other writers are doing. It gave me a deeper sense of the complexity of whatever it might mean to write from an Armenian cultural zone. A typical conference is a day or two and you can't get to know your colleagues, but here we had time to hang out and talk; it created a unique kind of potential for literary community. I'm in touch now with writers I didn't know a few months ago."

Martirosyan noted that more than two-thirds

the world, and said: "...it wasn't called Western and Eastern Armenia, but 'Arménie-Arménies,' thus emphasizing the question of identity. So we realized that as there are different ways of being 'Armenians,' so there is more than 'one' Armenia. And I do think that only a mature population, a population that grows out of the place of the victim, that grows out of the idea of persecution, could accept such differences among themselves that enrich their own identities, heterogeneous identities." All this, she concluded, was expressed in French thanks to the possibilities given by French culture. On the Orient Express, "we were almost obliged to be all together, these orphaned brothers that tried to show to each other whom the "mother/motherland" loved more! I felt compassionate."

When Arzoumanian returned to Argentina, she gave a talk with all the books, novels, poems and photographs that she took during the trip, thus giving both Armenian and non-Armenian Argentines the opportunity to learn about the complexity of Armenian reality. She also made a video available on YouTube with images from the trip and text in French (<http://youtu.be/2IGtvDyvOsU>).

Balakian, whose lecture text on Bishop Krikoris Balakian was printed in the *Mirror-Spectator* issue of November 12, 2011, was deeply impressed by the event, and the connection the French had with Armenian culture. He declared, "It was clear to me that the French have a deep feeling about Armenian history and culture and a sense of the long historical ties between the two cultures. It was refreshing to see how France embraced the Armenian literary voice and culture. Unlike in our country, in France, there was no fear of the Armenian intellectual voice. Everywhere we went we were feted in high style and embraced by government officials, the people, and the media. I thank France and for putting on such splendid festival, and feel great gratitude to the French people for their embrace."

Balakian contrasted the French attitude to that of Americans: "The problem here is that our government is afraid of Turkish pressure, and so things Armenian become a source of anxiety. It's an absurd situation because the US government is capable of, I believe, at least I think... of standing up to Turkey."

Lacroix in his *Nouvelles d'Arménie* magazine interview summarized the results of the cultural events: "Through the stops of the Orient Express in Marseille, Avignon, Valence and Lyon we noted with satisfaction that our festival has generated a great response, sparking passionate encounters and discussions with the public. ...This large audience of Arménie-Arménies is inseparable from the great welcome reserved for this literature which many Frenchmen still know poorly." One result which will be realized in the future is the translation into French and publication of more works from Armenia and the Armenian diaspora.



From left, translator Michael Celemensky, CNL panel moderator Alexis Lacroix and Peter Balakian

in which they stopped. One of the writers invited from Armenia, Martirosyan, jokingly wrote afterwards that the first thought that came to mind when hearing of the French plan was of Agatha Christie's detective novel, *Murder on the Orient Express*, which made him wonder whether a few Armenians might disappear during the trip.

The collective trip was useful not only for audiences, but also for the participants, as Martirosyan declared. Balakian said to the *Mirror-Spectator* that "one of the important dimensions of the festival was that it brought

of the discussions dealt in some fashion with genocide and diaspora, while there was much else in Armenian culture to be discussed, along with life in contemporary Armenia. Despite the focus on the Armenian Genocide and its aftermath, as noted by CollectifVan.org, the final program announcement avoided the actual use of the word genocide, using terms such as "l'abîme de 1915 [the abyss of 1915]" in its place.

Arzoumanian, an Argentine poet, found Arménie-Arménies to have a great significance as a meeting of Armenian writers from all over

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2012



Since its inception in 2001, TCA's 'Sponsor a Teacher' program has raised over \$477,750 and reached out to 3,700 teachers and school workers in Armenia and Karabagh.



☐ Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them to educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.

☐ \$160 ☐ \$320 ☐ \$480 ☐ other \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Tel: _____

Make check payable to: Tekeyan Cultural Association - Memo: Sponsor a Teacher 2010
Mail your check with this form to:

TCA Sponsor a Teacher
5326 Valverde, Houston, TX 77056

Your donation is Tax Deductible.

839 Washington Street
Newtonville, MA 02160
(617) 964-3400



KAROUN
Restaurant

Armenian Mid Eastern Cuisine

**Entertainment Fridays
and Saturdays**

Eurdolian Family



ARTS & LIVING

AFFMA Founder Sylvia Minassian Receives Cultural Medal of Honor

MEDAL, from page 13

education at Carlsbad High School in Southern California. Other professional highlights include being the first female representative ever hired by Gillette Company.

She is married to Dr. Haig Minassian and they have three children – Levon, Lori and Melissa – and three grandchildren. For more than 25 years, she volunteered for such organizations and educational institutions as AGBU (Ladies Auxiliary chairperson); ChildHelp USA (vice chairperson); Alex Pilibos High School Special Events and Educational Committees and numerous schools and medical societies. Minassian continues her philanthropic work through

Don Hannah and Troy and Chris Minassian.

In addition to serving as a forum for Armenian and American cineastes, this gathering, which is designed to become a tradition, will also help to take stock of major developments in the Armenian movie industry.

2012 marks the 15th anniversary of Arpa International Film Festival, which will be held in September at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood, Calif.

AFFMA and Arpa Film Festival grant and award recipients (partial list since 1995): Eric Agopian, France, film; Joseph Siraki, US, writing; Open Letter, US, writing (Literary Group); Tina Bastajian, Canada, film; Armen



Producer Valerie McCaffrey, Actor Vache Mangassarian, Diyanna Ghazarian, Minassian with AFFMA Board members Sonia Keshishian, Appo Jabarian and Zaven Khachatryan

AFFMA.

Before making the announcement of the award and in an effort to surprise Minassian, Hovhannissian invited award-winning filmmaker Eric Nazarian and actor Ken Davitian to speak about Minassian's unending devotion to the arts and the development of artists. Moved to tears by the recognition, Minassian accepted the Medal of Honor and spoke of her vision to see Armenian artists produce great works of cinematic art that would be appreciated by a global audience.

The evening was attended by a host of prominent personalities representing the Hollywood movie industry as well as Minassian's immediate family. Participants included Victoria Hovhannissian; actors Anne Bedian, Marco Kahn, Davitian and Vache Mangassarian; artist and actor Vahe Berberian with wife, art decorator, Betty Berberian; filmmakers Sevak Vrej, Carla Garapedian, Haik Ghazarian and Nazarian; Toni Hagopian, wife of filmmaker Michael J. Hagopian; producers Maral Jerejian and Valerie McCaffrey. Members of the press included: Appo Jabarian (publisher *USA Armenian Life Magazine*), Ani Tadevosian (*Horizon*), Azzie Mekhtarian (*Yerevan Magazine*) and Harut Sassounian. AFFMA board and committee members in attendance included: Armen Toumajan, Maral Kazazian, Dr. Zaven Khachatryan, Sonia Keshishian, Jacqueline Der Mesropian, Eileen Keusseyan, Aida Navasargian, Maro Khodaveerdi, Alex Kalognomos, Talia Tanielian,

Chakmakian, US, music; Oshin Saginian, US, art; Hamlet Sarkissian, US, film; Michael Tolajian, US, film; John Altoon, US, art; Nora Armani, France, film; Robert Davidian, US, film; Ara Ebrahimian, US, film; Levon Ichkanian, Canada, music; Sam Kodjoglanian, US, music; Levon Minassian, France, film; Zadik Zadikian, US, art; Georges Adourian, US, film; Kevork Andonyan, US, music; Patrick Antonyan and Baruir Panossian, US, music; Vahe Berberian, US, writing; Viken Berberian, US, writing; Abeline Galustian, US, art; Eric Hachikian, US, music; Annette Gurdjian, US, art; Armineh Johanness, France, art; Meher Kouroyan, US, film; Jay Krikorian, US, film; Ara Oshagan, US, art; Vem Zadikian, US, writing; Armen Donelian, US, music; Karina Epperlian, US, film; Linda Ganjian, US, art; Vahe Hayrapetyan, Armenia, music; Emy Hovanesyan, US, film; Aram Kouyoumdjian, US, writing; Eric Nazarian, US, film; Levon Parian, US, art; Asbed Pogarian, US, film; Susanna Tchoubarian, US, music; Araz Artinian, Canada, film; Christopher Atamian, US, writing; Vasken Brutyan, US, art; Manuella Guiragossian, US, film; Greg Kojar, US, music; Ara Madzounian, US, writing; Tigran Martikyan, US, music; Mariam Matossian, Canada, music; Elsie Mehagian, writing; Lara Minassian, US, art; Dan Teager, US, music; Ani Maldjian, US, music; Ashot Shiroian, US, music; Garine Torossian, Canada, film; Arno Yeretzian, US, film; Martin Yearnazian, US, film, and Lori Bedikian, US, writing.



Sylvia Minassian with her family, from left, Dr. Haig Minassian, Lori, Melissa and Levon

CALLIOPE

presents

IMMIGRANTS TO OUR SHORES

A concert to benefit the Armenian Heritage Foundation

Commemorating the immigrant experience and celebrating all who come to these shores and reinvent themselves in new and different ways

Saturday, February 4, 2012 at 7:30 pm
First Church Boston, 66 Marlborough Street, Boston MA



Labyrinth image taken from the Armenian Heritage Park on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway in Boston

Program includes music by and about immigrants, including Dvořák's *Largo* from *New World Symphony*, Morill's setting of poems by Peter Balakian, Barber's *The Coolin'* (*Reincarnations*), an excerpt from Menotti's *The Saint of Bleecker Street*, *Somewhere* from Bernstein's *West Side Story*, Parsegh Ganatchian's *Oror*, Alan Hovhaness' *Prayer to St. Gregory*, and more

Tickets: \$45 premium seating, \$35 general admission, \$25 students and seniors with ID may be purchased at www.calliopemusic.org or 617-759-2057 or at the door on the day of the performance

SILENT AUCTION AND RAFFLE AT INTERMISSION



Tekeyan Cultural Association sponsors the film projection and presentation of

Opera Buffo **Gariné**
by Dikran Tchouhadjian
English Subtitled

Gerald Papasian, Actor/Director will make the introduction in person

Remarks by Dr. David DiChiera
Director, Michigan Opera Theater

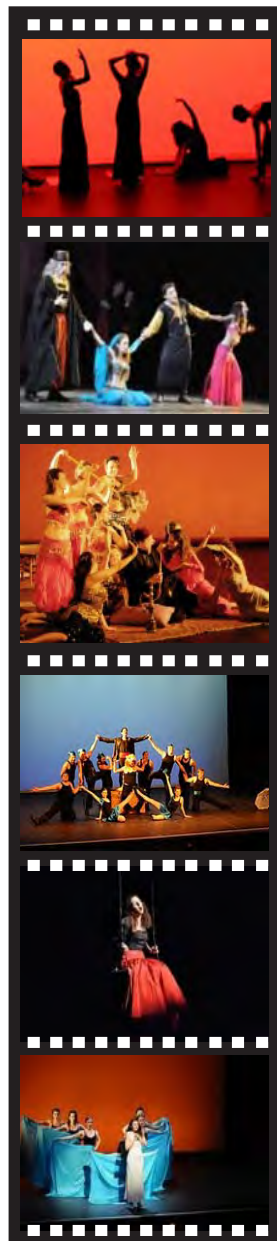
Tuesday, January 24, 2012
6:30 pm Refreshments
Program begins 7:00 pm sharp

Bloomfield Township Library
1099 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield, MI
(corner of Telegraph and Lone Pine)

Public is cordially invited

Tekeyan Cultural Association will screen Gerald Papasian's modified version of Dikran Tchouhadjian's "Gariné" Opera at the Bloomfield Public Library. The Opera will be presented by Gerald Papasian, the artistic director of the Dikran Tchouhadjian Research Center of Paris, and will be followed by the projection of the performance. Tchouhadjian's "Gariné" operetta, originally called "Leblebji Horhor Agha," was written in 1875 in Turkish, and quickly became a hit. Tchouhadjian used the urban and folk melodies of his time in the framework of a comic operetta. The setting was in the harem of Prince Khurshid Bey, in the 18th century. The prince fell in love with young Fatime, whose father, Horhor Agha, was a poor chickpea seller. He wanted to save his daughter from what he thought was a kidnapping, but his daughter was actually in love with Khurshid. The operetta was translated into Armenian while Tchouhadjian was still alive, and in the 20th century it was translated into Greek, French, Russian and German. In the 1940s, it was performed in Soviet Armenia under the new title "Gariné.". In 1967 the Armenian version was made into a film. It was still set in Istanbul, but the harem story was changed. While Tchouhadjian's original score has been lost, Papasian discovered scores in Paris in French translation that were intended for a French production that never occurred. After this discovery, and through lots of detective work, Papasian was able to use the various versions to make his own revisions for a new Western Armenian script. He changed the figure of the father from a poor vendor into a rich man, changing also the development of the love story to allow for a livelier plot. Gariné gradually falls in love with Armen, a young intellectual who returns from his studies in Venice and establishes the theatre company in which Gariné performs. After creating a new Western Armenian version, with a revised script, Papasian translated the operetta into French and English. The French version was staged in Paris and Marseille last year by a company of 40 singers/actors, dancers and musicians (including Gerald Papasian as the father, Horhor Agha), to critical acclaim.

For more information call 248-302-7576



The Music of Hayg Boyadjian: A CD Titled ‘Vientos’

By Robin McNeil

I’ve been fortunate recently to discover some new CDs, one of which has really kindled my interest for a variety of reasons. The new CD that I will tell you about is titled “Vientos” (named after the seventh work on this CD), which means winds. It is a selection of compositions by the Armenian/Argentine/American composer, Hayg Boyadjian. This CD has allowed me to discover this composer, and his music is quite exciting. In addition, I am also fortunate enough to know one of the outstanding performers on this CD, James Pellerite, who was a professor of flute at Indiana University. On this CD, Pellerite performs on the Native American flute, which has been a passion of his now, for several years.

All of the performers on this CD are truly outstanding, which makes it one of the most enjoyable CDs of chamber music that I’ve heard for a while.

Quoting from Boyadjian’s website:
“Hayg Boyadjian was born in 1938 in Paris, France. At an early age, he immigrated with his family to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he started his musical studies at the Liszt Conservatory. In 1958, he immigrated to the US, and presently lives in Lexington, Mass. In the US, he continued his musical studies as a special student first at the New England Conservatory and later at Brandeis University. Among his teachers were Beatriz Balzi (student of Alberto Ginastera, with whom Boyadjian had several consulting meetings), Seymour Shifrin, Alvin Lucier and Edward Cohen. He has composed a large number of works from chamber to symphonic. Many of his compositions have been performed throughout the world: the US, Brazil, Argentina, Japan, Korea, Russia, France, Holland, England, Spain, Armenia and others. A number of his scores are available through the American Music Center, New York and on the Internet through Sibelius Music. Some of his chamber and symphonic compositions are recorded on the following CD labels: Living Music, Society of Composers Recordings, North/South Consonance Recordings and Opus One Recordings.

“He is a member of the Composers’ Union of Armenia, ASCAP, Society of Composers, the MacDowell Colony and others. His name is found in the Who’s Who in American Music and the International Who’s Who in Music. He has received awards from ASCAP, Meet the Composer, the Lexington Arts Council, the New England Foundation Meet the Composer, the 50th Anniversary Commission Project-American Music Center and others. A number of his writings on music and a number of his poems have been published in various publications.”

Boyadjian is an amateur astronomer, and in the first work on this CD, which is titled Cassiopeia, he took the shape of the constellation, which is roughly a W, and made a five-note cell and traces that letter, and thus the melodic line, in the score. The motive that process creates can easily be heard as it comes back in several sections of the piece. When I hear brand-new works such as this one, I am amazed at so many styles of avant-garde music, which I grew up with that have fallen by the wayside. No longer is there an era of experimentalism. And, really, while there may be snippets here and there of serialism, or 12-tone derivation, that, too, is not so prevalent anymore. Most composers have fallen back – or, truly, they have fallen forward – into tonally-centered music.

The opening work, Cassiopeia, has some dissonant opening chords and then there is a remarkable driving rhythm, which is irrevocable, it makes you feel as if you get in the way, it will simply run you down. It is performed with great excitement by the clarinetist, cellist and pianist. Those individuals are Suren Khorozyan, Karen Kocharyan and Armine Grigoryan, respectively. This is a beautiful piece of music built around snippets of counterpoint and it is incredibly difficult.

The next work on this program, which is also inspired by astronomy, is titled Perseus. However, this work has no pianist: it is written

for flute, Tigran Gevorgyan, and cello, Karen Kocharyan. There is a marvelous section in this work where the writing for flute is very close to J. S. Bach’s writing for the violin. It is echoed, then, by the cello. It sounds just as difficult for the flute as Bach’s writing has to be for the violinist – and cellist. This work alone is worth the price of the CD. Boyadjian’s fluency as a composer and his artistic ability are readily noticeable.

The third work on this CD, which also shows the influence of Boyadjian’s interest in astronomy, is Pleiades. This work is dedicated to Pellerite, who plays the Native American flute. The other members of this chamber group are: Kathryn Lukas, flute; Rose Armbrust, viola; Yotam Baruch, cello; Brian Blume, marimba, and Charles Latshaw, conductor.

As Boyadjian points out in the notes, the Native American flute is played like a recorder, and it sounds more like a Baroque recorder than a transverse flute. Pellerite has made improvements in the instrument so that it has a wider range, and one can also play it chromatically so that there is more versatility.

This is an amazingly haunting piece, and the Native American flute has an unusually soothing quality of sound. It is dulcet and warm, and Pellerite is remarkably skilled in bringing out a wide variety of dynamics, which help shape the phrasing. Boyadjian has written some very sophisticated rhythm, which gives this relatively slow piece a definite forward momentum. There is no question that Pellerite is making the Native American flute a main-stream instrument. If other flautists perform on this instrument with his ability, perhaps more composers will write compositions for the instrument. Boyadjian and Pellerite deserve much applause.

As Boyadjian says in the program notes, it would be very difficult to dance to *Mi Tango*, the second composition on the CD. In order to give it his own particular flavor, Boyadjian changed the accents in the tango, and also used different meters other than the common two/four of the tango. Frankly, though it is an absolutely wonderful composition, I am not sure that I would recognize it as a tango. Aaron Larget-Caplan is the guitarist in this work and his musicianship seems to be entirely effortless.

The fourth, fifth and sixth bands on this CD comprise the three-song cycle, *De Profundis*. The cycle is performed by the soprano, Gayane Geghamyan. She has a wonderful voice quality, though, at least, in the first song, *De Profundis*, she seems to be more of a mezzo that a soprano. Mind you, now, that is certainly no criticism; it is simply an observation. She has a beautiful voice.

These three songs were inspired by the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Boyadjian uses

texts by Georg Trakl and Rainer Maria Rilke. They are dark and unbelievably tragic with no chance of respite. They are beautifully written and performed. The soprano has near perfect technique except for one item: her diction. It could be the recording process, but I found it impossible to understand her words.

The trio, *Vientos*, is the seventh track on this CD. Remember, as I stated above, vientos means wind. It is written for guitar, violin and mandolin: Matt Gould, Beth Schneider-Gould and Avi Avital. I have listened several times to this composition, and I am still puzzling over how Boyadjian creates the sound in this work. His writing and the instrumentation truly captures the fitful capriciousness of the wind. It is a wonderful example of his compositional ability, and you simply must hear it.

This is an excellent CD, which shows the artistry of a composer with whom I was unfamiliar. It is a joy to listen to, and it is firmly on my iPod. The compositions are masterful and so are the musicians – they are truly artists. I have listed them below.

This CD was recorded in 2010 on the Albany label: TROY1219.

Pellerite served for many years as professor of flute at Indiana University, and many of his students now hold prominent university and symphony positions.

Khorozyan, clarinetist, has been principal clarinetist of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Grigoryan is a professor of the Yerevan State Conservatory and since 2004, director of Aram Khachaturian house-museum.

Kocharyan is one of the founding members of the Khachatryan trio, first solo cellist of the Armenian Chamber Players (ACP), associate concertmaster of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Geghamyan has been a principal soloist with the National Opera Theatre since 1999.

Mandalyan has been a lecturer on the faculty of the State Conservatory’s School of Training for Concertmasters since 1988.

Duo46 classical guitarist, Gould, (BM Peabody Conservatory, MM University of Arizona, DMA Arizona State University) has been described by former teacher Manuel Barrueco, as “a guitarist capable of giving performances of great beauty, enthusiasm and control.”

As a member of Duo46, violinist Schneider-Gould (B.M. Indiana University Bloomington, M.M. University of Arizona) made her solo debut at the age of 16 with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

The Israeli mandolin player, Avital, is recognized by the *New York Times* for his “exquisitely sensitive playing” and “stunning agility.”

Larget-Caplan is on the faculty of the Boston Conservatory, the New School of Music and has an active private studio in Boston. He is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston where he studied with David Leisner and Eliot Fisk.

Latshaw is the music director of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Ars Nova Chamber Orchestra in Washington DC.

Armbrust has currently completed her master’s at Indiana University where she held the merit-based Viola Associate Instructorship while studying with Atar Arad and was a member of The Kuttner Quartet, the university’s quartet in residence.

Baruch, at the time of this recording, was studying with cellist Janos Starker at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University.

Blume is also a graduate of Indiana University and is currently percussionist with the Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra and has also played with the Lafayette Symphony, Columbus Indiana Philharmonic, Carmel Symphony and Bloomington Camerata Orchestra.

Gevorgyan has been a professor of flute at the Yerevan Conservatory since 1985.

(This review initially appeared in the music blog, OpusColorado.)

Boyadjian to Speak in Merrimack Valley Feb. 2

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. – Grammy nominee Hayg Boyadjian will discuss his music career February 2 during an Avak luncheon at St. Gregory Church, 158 Main St.

Boyadjian will also play excerpts from some of his 11 recordings, including his latest called “Vientos,” which has been critically acclaimed. The composition is accompanied by flute, cello and vocals.

Since emigrating here in 1958 from Argentina, Boyadjian has carved a niche in the classical music world. A number of his scores are available through the American Music Center, in New York, as well as the Internet through Sibelius Music. He is currently working on an Armenian suite and living in Lexington.

A number of his writings on music and poems have been printed in various publications.

Boyadjian’s presentation will follow a luncheon at noon. The event is free.

C A L E N D A R

MASSACHUSETTS

JANUARY 21 – The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) presents jazz sensation Grace Kelly in Concert. Proceeds to benefit the Avedisian School in Armenia. National Heritage Museum, Lexington. Tickets \$35, \$20 with student ID. Cocktails at 6:30 p.m., concert at 8 p.m. For tickets or more information, call AMAA at (201) 265-2607; Jean Marie Papelian at (781) 904-2700 or visit www.gracekellymusic.com or www.amaa.org.

NEW YORK

MAY 19, 2012 – HMADS Gala Dinner Dance. Details to follow, June 25. HMADS 30th Commencement Exercise at 8 p.m., Kalustyan Hall.



On January 21, at 8 p.m., the Armenian Missionary Association will present a concert by Grace Kelly, pictured here, with proceeds to benefit the Avedisian School. Tickets are \$35 and \$25 with student ID. For more info, visit www.gracekellymusic.com or www.amaa.org.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Genocide Bill Makes Waves in France and Beyond

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Criminalizing the Genocide in France has touched off a political debate with international repercussions. The passage of the bill on December 22 in the French National Assembly has angered Turkish leaders, who are threatening France with a number of measures and decrying the “irreparable damage” to Franco-Turkish relations, should the bill be ratified by the French Senate before end of January, as predicted.

In the past, Ankara used to recall its ambassador for a period and gradually forget its threats of retaliation. This time around, it does not seem to be business as usual. Indeed the Turkish Ambassador to France Tahsin Burcuoglu has returned to Paris after consultations in Ankara and he has been assigned to lead the political campaign against the passage of the bill in the French Senate.

Instead of keeping the ambassador out of France, Turkey has threatened to discontinue discussions with Paris on the developments in Syria.

As has become common knowledge by now, Washington has begun using surrogates in the Middle East to topple regimes hostile to Israel, as was the case in Libya, rather than sacrificing 4,500 of its own military, as it happened in Iraq.

Syria is the next target in line, which compels cooperation between Paris and Ankara. Turkey is also threatening to revise its military and economic relations with France. France is Turkey's fifth largest export market and sixth largest importer with bilateral trade worth \$14 billion in 2011 and growing. France is also a contender to build a nuclear power plant in Turkey, which also has become a political hot potato in the current atmosphere of tension.

In the meantime, some developments have emerged inside and outside of France, which may have a bearing on the Senate vote.

One development is the opposition party's position on the issue; indeed, the passage of the Genocide bill had become an election campaign issue for President Nicolas Sarkozy. But the Socialist candidate for the presidency, Francois Holland, stole the wind out of Sarkozy's sail, when he announced that he would also support the Genocide bill.

This announcement rendered the issue as a double-edged sword; on the one hand, the bill gains bi-partisan support, especially when the Socialists have a majority in the Senate; on the other hand, it loses its political value, allowing Armenians to vote for either candidate.

Another development was a misstep by France's Prime Minister Alain Juppé in Ankara.

Traditionally, France has a policy of preventative action. We should remember the day when the late President Francois Mitterrand walked in unannounced into an Armenian gathering to dispense his unbound love for the Armenian people and pledge his support for Genocide recognition. That was just on the eve of the French Court's announcement of its verdict on some Armenian youth arrested for political violence in France. Only later did it dawn on the Armenians that it was a measure to soften the blow.

Similarly, a preventive strike was taken by the French prime minister, after Mr. Sarkozy threw “his bombshell” in Yerevan, warning Ankara to take steps before the end of the year, otherwise France was to implement its own policy. France needed some damage control before the December 22 vote. Thus Mr. Juppé headed for Ankara, where he fell into the Turkish trap by espousing one of Ankara's hollow, favorite arguments about the Genocide issue. To appease angered Turks, he offered to host a group of representatives from both sides “to study” the issue, as if anything else was left to study, after the recognition of the Genocide by 20 nations, and after the numerous statements by internationally-recognized Genocide scholars.

Turkish leaders know that they are trying to dupe the international community, by trying “to leave history to the historians,” while emphatically maintaining that “there was no Genocide in

Turkish history.”

When they know the outcome of a study, calling an “impartial committee of scholars” is tantamount to political charade. Also, which scholar will dare to pronounce the word “genocide” when article 301 is in the Turkish penal code and when publisher Recep Zarakolu is in prison, exactly for speaking out as an “impartial scholar.”

Mr. Juppé's misstep in Turkey touched off a firestorm in the French-Armenian community and it did not make a dent on the Turkish resolve to fight the issue.

Another political storm is brewing across the Mediterranean in Algeria. When the Turkish prime minister accused France of committing “genocide” against Algerians during the colonial war, that country's prime minister, Ahmed Ouyahia, responded that “nobody has the right to make the blood of Algerians their business.” This gave the opportunity for Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government to play its Islamic card. While maintaining a dignified posture, Erdogan put to action the Islamist parties in Algeria to fight their own prime minister and the French Parliament. The first party to react was Algeria's Social Movement For Peace (MSP), a large party aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood. Its leader, Bougera Sultani, backed the Turkish Premier Erdogan.

Another Algerian opposition party, Ennahda, known as the Islamic Renaissance Movement, also reacted negatively to the prime minister's statement. It looks like the debate sparked a political crisis in that country, since even Ouyahia's coalition partners joined the barrage of criticism.

Turkey and Azerbaijan have been skillfully using the Islamic card, especially in the annual convocations of the Islamic conference, where resolutions are adopted routinely on the issue of Karabagh conflict and Armenia is always condemned.

While Turkey shows its Western face to be admitted to the European Union, it remains a power broker in the Islamic world, where nuanced politics hardly make any sense, since everything is black and white; suffice it to taint any issue as a religious conflict, Islamic nations rally around it in defense.

In all this turmoil, pitting parties and countries against each other, a small voice has also been heard in the Istanbul patriarchate. Turks push forward the hostage Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul. On behalf of the Patriarchate Archbishop Aram Ateshian has stated that the problem should be addressed within Turkey, and Armenians are “in favor of solving our problems with our [Turkish] state,” adding that “second hands, arms and opinions should not interfere with the issue.”

Of course nothing else could be expected from the poor cleric, who himself is a political pawn. He certainly cannot speak on behalf of all Armenians, because the Genocide and the murder of 1.5 million Armenian souls is not a parochial issue in an Istanbul neighborhood. The Turkish government supported Ateshian's candidacy to succeed Archbishop Mesrob Mutafian, who was used and abused by the Turkish state for its political ends and now he is rendered a shadow of his former self. The state support for Ateshian is paying its political dividends today.

While we understand the archbishop's predicament, a non-statement on the issue would have been much more powerful. One of his predecessors, His Beatitude Archbishop Shnork Kalousdian, kept a low profile during the reign of the harshest political dictatorship in Turkey thus did not provide anti-Armenian ammunition to the Turkish state to be used against the world Armenian community.

While denying the right to Archbishop Ateshian to speak on behalf of all Armenians, we understand that any responsible community leader has to bear in mind that the Turkish state can unleash a September 6 massacre anytime.

Returning to the French Senate vote, it looks like the bill has gained momentum, but nothing is certain until it is done. The French have treated Armenians in a cavalier manner many times in history. Sarkozy himself is known to turn against his closest allies, driven by political expediency. We hope this time around, political expediency moves him in the right direction.

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Established 1932

An ADL Publication

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

PRODUCTION

Dilani Yogaratnam

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:

Edmond Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

Florence Avakian, Elizabeth Aprahamian, Daphne Abeel, Dr. Haroutiune Arzoumanian, Taleen Babayan, Prof. Vahakn N. Dadrian, Diana Der Hovanessian, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Sonia Kailian-Placido, Harut Sassounian, Mary Terzian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian

Boston - Nancy Kalajian

Philadelphia - Lisa Manookian

Contributing Photographers:

Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian, Jirair Hovsepian

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July, by:

Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

U.S.A.	2nd Class	\$75 a year
	1st Class	\$120 a year
Canada	Air Mail	\$125 a year
All Other Countries	Air Mail	\$190 a year
	Display advertising rate: \$7 per column inch	

© 2011 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA
and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, P.O. Box 302, Watertown, MA 02471-0302

Other than the editorial, views and opinions expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the policies of the publisher.

Copying for other than personal use or internal reference is prohibited without express permission of the copyright owner. Address requests for reprints or back issues to:

Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

Notice to Contributors

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* welcomes articles, commentaries and community news from our readers. In order to assure the accurate and timely publication of articles submitted, please note the following policies:

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

daytime telephone number.

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



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Azerbaijan and Obama Suffer Setbacks As Ambassador Bryza's Service is Cut Short

As a result of successive political blunders by the Obama administration, Matthew Bryza was forced to abandon his ambassadorial post in Azerbaijan last week.

President Obama ignored repeated warnings that the candidate he was nominating as ambassador to Azerbaijan in May 2010 had serious flaws. Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee accused Bryza of having a pro-Azerbaijani bias and questionable ties to Azeri officials. The Senators were troubled by reports that foreign officials had given Bryza lavish gifts at his Istanbul wedding, during which the foreign minister of Azerbaijan had served as a groomsman. In addition, the nominee's Turkish-born wife, Zeyno Baran, was accused of conflict of interest while working on Caspian energy issues at a Washington think tank. She had also antagonized the Armenian-American community by testifying against recognition of the Armenian Genocide at a Senate Subcommittee hearing.

When President Obama failed to take these concerns seriously, Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Robert Menendez (D-New Jersey) had no choice but to place a hold on Bryza's nomination, effectively blocking his confirmation. Obama then compounded his error by appointing

Bryza as ambassador to Azerbaijan in late 2010 without Senate approval. The president seemed oblivious to the potential damage to his own reputation, the prestige of the United States and US-Azeri relations, should the Senate not confirm Bryza's nomination, forcing him to leave his post and return to Washington upon expiration of his 12-month appointment.

As Ambassador Bryza's temporary assignment was ending in December 2011, Obama administration officials pressured Senators Boxer and Menendez to allow him to continue serving in Azerbaijan by confirming his nomination. The two Senators remained steadfast in opposing Bryza, even though it is not easy for these Democratic politicians to turn down a request from the President of the United States, who also happens to be the nominal leader of their own party.

The Senators were also pressured by the government of Azerbaijan and its powerful lobbying firms which went into overdrive to justify their exorbitant fees. Through their special connections they were able to get the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post* to publish editorials attacking the Senators and the Armenian National Committee of America which had spearheaded a public campaign against this unqualified Ambassadorial nominee.

Not surprisingly, the *Wall Street Journal* heaped lavish praise on Bryza, calling him a "respected career foreign service officer," and accused the two Senators of "kissing up to the Armenian-American lobby."

The Washington Post was even nastier. Its editorial could be described as outright racist and anti-Armenian. Contrary to its claim of defending "the larger US national interest," the newspaper was actually advocating the confirmation of an Ambassador with questionable credentials who would weaken, rather than strengthen America's interests.

The Washington Post concluded its shameful editorial by accusing "oil-poor" and "isolated" Armenia as being the biggest loser in the Bryza controversy. We beg to disagree.

This is an American issue and Armenia had no role in it. In fact, the biggest losers are those who lobbied long and hard for the confirmation of an ill-qualified Ambassador who was more intent on serving the interests of Baku in Washington than those of America in Azerbaijan.

In my opinion, the real losers are:

1) President Obama who picked a poorly qualified nominee and stubbornly pushed for his confirmation when it was crystal clear from day one that Bryza did not have the chance of a snowball in hell to get confirmed.

2) The government of Azerbaijan which spent a fortune on lobbyists who miserably failed to get the job done.

3) Azeri and Turkish organizations, such as the Azerbaijani-American Council, Azerbaijan Society of America, Pax Turcica Institute, US Azeris Network, and Assembly of Turkish-American Associations, which issued countless press releases and sent thousands of e-mails to the Senate – to no avail. By supporting Bryza, they confirmed that in fact he was "their man," and not an unbiased diplomat.

4) The *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post* which compromised their journalistic integrity to please their "petro-friends."

5) The 36 former US officials who signed a joint letter urging the Senate to confirm Bryza. It is no mere coincidence that most of these signatories are currently associated with think tanks and lobbying firms that are funded by Azerbaijan or expect such funding in the future.

There are, however, two clear winners:

1) The Armenian-American community which has sent a loud and clear message to Baku, Ankara, and Washington that it represents a powerful political force to be reckoned with.

2) Matthew Bryza and his wife, who as lobbyists for Azerbaijan and Turkey, can be expected to make millions by cashing in on their high-level connections in Baku and Ankara.

French Genocide Bill Provokes Uproar, Sparks Debate

Turkish Overreaction May Backfire

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

The bill voted up on December 22 by the French parliament (Assemblée Nationale), which would make denial of genocide (including the 1915 genocide against the Armenians in Ottoman Turkey) a crime, has provoked strong reactions from the Turkish government and sparked a debate among Turks and Armenians worldwide. The bill, which must still be debated by the senate, would penalize anyone denying the Genocide with up to one year in prison and a 45,000-euro fine.

The response from Ankara was swift and furious. Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan announced that he had recalled his ambassador from France, frozen all military cooperation with France and suspended economic and political meetings.

In addition, Turkish President Abdullah Gul urged that France withdraw from the Minsk Group, on grounds it could no longer claim to be impartial in the Nagorno-Karabagh dispute.

There were not a few ironies to the development. First, Turkish opponents to the bill claimed it would criminalize free speech and hamper historical research – yet, according to Turkey's penal code Article 301, any mention of the Armenian Genocide, in so many words, is deemed an offense and is punishable – so much for free speech and historical research. Over the past months, scores of Turkish intellectuals, journalists and civil society leaders have been jailed on allegations of affiliation with terrorist organizations simply because they have spoken out regarding Kurdish civil rights or the Armenian issue. For years, writers who addressed the Armenian case, even those who judiciously avoided using the proper term genocide, have been jailed, mishandled, and, in the case of Hrant Dink, murdered. A further irony lies in Erdogan's charge that France has no right to launch such accusations when it was itself guilty of genocide against Algerians in the

independence war. As many journalists noted, this was a backhanded admission of wrongdoing on the part of the Ottoman Turks.

Finally, criticism from Ankara pointed out that French President Nicolas Sarkozy, whose UMP party presented the bill, was doing so because it was speculating on winning support from the estimated half million Armenian voters in France in the next elections. No irony here: it is quite obvious that Sarkozy is using the Armenian issue as a political football. This is, sadly, not the first time that the Genocide issue has been cynically exploited. Whenever Washington would get upset with some foreign policy initiative coming out of Ankara, the knee-jerk reaction would be to threaten to use the "g-word" at the White House. Recently, the Israeli Knesset has brought up discussion of the Armenian Genocide, as

a not-so-subtle response to Turkey's having put bilateral relations on ice. Such exploitation of mass murder is morally repugnant and only adds to the offense against the memory of those who perished in 1915-1917.

That said, there are a couple of intriguing questions provoked by the French legislators' move worth mention. First: is the vote truly representative of the French parliament's viewpoint? According to French press reports, the bill passed by a "large majority of the 50 or so parliamentarians present," and "about half a dozen voted against it." Out of a total of 577 members of parliament, this does not strike me as constituting an overwhelming mandate.

But numbers aside, is it in principle the prerogative of any elected parliamentary body to determine by vote whether or not genocide has been committed? To most honest intellectuals, the Armenian Genocide is a historical fact documented through primary sources on various sides, including American, Danish, German, as well as Armenian and Turkish. Secondly, can one legislate morality, by criminalizing denial of historical facts? If it becomes illegal to deny the Genocide, does that make its affirmation somehow "more true?" Does that mean that those who deny it will, under threat of punishment, alter their views? Is it not wiser to thrash out the issues of the controversy, as prominent genocide historians continue to do, in the

patient effort to convince the doubting Thomases or ideological denialists that what they hysterically reject did in fact occur?

This leads to the real point, and the one occupying center stage in the debate inside Turkey, a debate ironically nourished in part by the French vote. The real issue is Turkish recognition of what occurred in 1915. Why cannot the Turkish establishment acknowledge the historical record, relieve itself and its people of the burden of collective guilt, apologize to the descendants of the victims and work towards reconciliation? Energized by the debate about the French vote, it appears that a growing number of individuals and civil society organizations

are accelerating their efforts to arrive at just such a goal. The Human Rights Association Istanbul Branch, put out a press release on December 22, titled

"Let's Raise Our Voice Against Denial, Not the French Parliament."

In their view, denial of a crime against humanity, like genocide, could not be considered a violation of freedom of expression. On those grounds, they called on intellectuals and others to end their campaigns against the French parliament and instead "work for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, the Assyrian genocide and the ethnic cleansing of Greeks by the state and the society as a whole." On December 24, the DSIP (Revolutionary Socialist Workers' Party) put out a press release arguing along similar lines, and urged recognition of the Genocide including all relevant legal, cultural, and political aspects.

A day earlier, *Today's Zaman* carried an article by Ahsan Yilmaz who criticized the Erdogan government reaction as exaggerated and went on to suggest that the proper way to deal with the problem would be to seek "normalization vis-à-vis 1915." Citing the official Turkish version of events, according to which "several hundred thousand Armenians were either massacred or died because of the terrible conditions during their forced deportation," he put forward the view that the state had had a duty to protect these citizens and had failed to do so. "Turkey has to apologize," he concluded, "at least for its inability to protect them. Then, it must invite Armenians abroad to come and get

their inheritance in Turkey.

Thirdly, Turkey must erect some monuments and build museums for these massacred, great people who had lived in these lands for thousands of years but faced extinction because of some secular-nationalist Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) dictators' faulty, to say the least, decisions and actions."

Although the author compromises with the official Turkish propaganda line, carefully sidestepping any reference to the documented intent to annihilate the Armenian people, what is noteworthy in his article is his insistence that Turkey must somehow finally deal with its past. That such an article could appear in a leading English-language Turkish publication indicates the breadth of the debate now raging in Turkey. The same *Zaman* carried a similar piece days later by Sahin Alpay, who saw the crux of the issue in the fact that, despite controversy over the term "genocide," Armenians were indeed killed through forced deportations, during which even denialists estimated that up to 700,000 died. He concludes with a call for an official apology and cites a retired Turkish ambassador, Volkan Vural, who said: "What happened in history is unworthy of the Republic of Turkey. If I were in charge, I would also apologize. A state like ours has to do this. The state must tell the deported Armenians and to Greeks forced to leave the country.... 'I am extending citizenship to you and to your descendants.' The Armenian problem can be solved not by historians but by politicians. Historical facts are well known."

With all their limitations, what these articles illustrate is an unprecedented discussion process unfolding in Turkey. Robert Fisk, a seasoned journalist for the *Independent*, provided further insight into it in a piece, titled, "Turkey's long road to reconciliation," published on December 25.

He was reporting on a promotional tour in Turkey that he had just completed to push the Turkish translation of his book, *The Great War for Civilisation*. He had conducted a whopping 21 interviews with Turkish TV and press to introduce his book. And the book, he writes, contains a chapter on 1915 titled, "The First Genocide" – yes, "genocide" even in the

see DEBATE, page 20

OPINION



Vernissage: A Mosaic of Armenian Cultural Treasures

[TOM VARTABEDIAN PHOTO]

By Tom Vartabedian

YEREVAN — As the sun rises over Yerevan, visages of an outdoor flea market come to life like a Brigadoon. It is Saturday — and people are getting restless. Business can't wait.

A vagabond strolls the dirt aisles, looking to peddle his wooden bookmarks. He tells you they're hand-made but who knows? A limp and a mercenary look are easy sells for this street vendor.

The place is an outdoor flea market, the biggest in all Armenia, as a cornucopia of art and crafts are up for grabs. For the right price. Negotiations are part of the trade. You might call Vernissage a bargain-hunter's paradise.

What's your pleasure? Is it jewelry? Woodwork? Pastels? Ceramics? Books? Coins, stamps and medallions? Hardware?

Armenian, Azeri Leaders Set for Fresh Summit

SUMMIT, from page 1
peaceful settlement proposed by the three mediating powers at their most recent face-to-face talks held in the Russian city of Kazan last June. But they failed to overcome their differences, raising more questions about the future of the peace talks.

The two leaders said through their foreign ministers last month that they are ready to meet again "in the near future."

In an interview with Azerbaijani state television aired later in December, Medvedev insisted that the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict may still be resolved in the near future despite the current impasse in the negotiating process. "In my view, this is perhaps the only conflict in the post-Soviet space that can be settled at the moment," he said.

Analysts are skeptical about Karabagh peace prospects, however, pointing to continuing bitter recriminations traded by the conflicting parties and their diametrically opposite public statements on how the dispute should be resolved.

The eye sets upon a cache of skeleton keys? Another table held electronic bits and old razors. Something for everyone, goes the sales pitch. You feel like a child running amok in grandma's attic.

If anything, the shopping paradise represented a cornerstone in a mosaic of cultural art.

"The spirit of art is alive and well," a merchant told me. "Ancient traditions and culture are reinvented and reborn each week. Tourists love this place. So do our residents."

More important than the merchandise was the manner in which these vendors bonded. The competitive attitude ran parallel with a sense of economic well-being. I was on a mis-

[TOM VARTABEDIAN PHOTO]



Armenian vendor peddles his wares at Vernissage toting a New York Yankees hat.

sion to bring home gifts for my family. Friends also passed along their requests.

While one opted for a gold Armenian cross, another wanted a cloth doll. A painting of Ararat was on the list. So was a tavlou board, duduk, some CDs, lace and handicrafts. If I arrived with two suitcases, the return trip would be enough to fill four.

I was quick to learn that "vernissage" was a French word that entered the parlance of Yerevan during the late 1970s by Armenian artists who wanted to bring fruits of their labor

to the people.

A largely dormant concrete park during the week, the place blossoms on weekends in the heart of the capital city by a monument dedicated to the late painter Martiros Saryan.

A fascinating potpourri of historic artifacts was tastefully blended with contemporary goods to entice the most discriminating shoppers both young and old. Lawns of the park disappear under rows of paintings, indicating the spirit of art was alive and well here.

A child was seen holding two bags of merchandise she had purchased. Elsewhere, a woman in her 80s was bargaining with a craftsman. They went back and forth before settling on a price.

I picked up three dolls. The dealer made a tempting offer. Buy another and the fifth one would be free. She also included a ceramic urn in case one broke during transit.

The man with the crutch selling bookmarks appeared cloned. He was everywhere with his hands extended. Paying no attention to proper protocol, I assumed he was the bearer of gifts. I took one, thinking it was complimentary.

I may as well have robbed the jewelry counter at Tiffany's.

Two merchants left their booths and chased me down, annoyed that I had taken advantage of a handicapped man. One of his bookmarks was jutting from my pocket — the one I had assumed was free.

"He was expecting some money," one guy said in Armenian. "He survives on what he earns here. Please show some respect."

Without a moment's hesitation, I returned to the lame derelict and paid him perhaps three



Books are always an attraction among bibliophiles at Vernissage.

times what the craft was worth, out of chagrin. Far be it for me to leave the country with a tarnished reputation. As the day wore on, I managed to exceed my anticipated budget.

A visit to Vernissage left me with an impression of how a certain class of people made the best of their artistic talents — sharing it with others to keep the economy stable. The view of Mount Ararat from afar was an added bonus.

French Genocide Bill Provokes Uproar, Sparks Debate

DEBATE, from page 19
Turkish translation, despite Article 301.

Fisk said that that most journalists did not even question his account, for the simple reason that, although officialdom denies it, "[f]or hundreds of thousands of Turks, the Armenian Genocide is now a fact of history." How so? he asks rhetorically. And he explains that it is because "[t]housands of Turks are digging into their own family histories. Why, they are asking, did they have Armenian grandmothers and great-grandmothers?"

Fisk poses the obvious question: why can't the Turks face up to this history as the Germans dealt with the Holocaust? He referred to Erdogan's admission just a few weeks earlier of the massacres of thousands of Kurds, adding that *Zaman's* coverage of that event had queried whether or not this might be a prelude to acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide. Again, Fisk pointed out, the phrase used by *Zaman* was not "alleged genocide" but "genocide." Such ostensibly minor details might be considered nitpicking, but they are actually loaded with significance and may indeed presage some positive developments.

Looking at such events as part of a long but steady process of questioning inside Turkey, it appears that the French bill, quite irrespective of its merits or demerits, may have given a healthy nudge to that process.

The phenomenon of Turkish citizens' discovering their Armenian ethnic roots going back to the Genocide first broke through public silence

when Fetiye Cetin published her book, *My Grandmother*, in 2004. Since then numerous biographical studies have appeared in Turkey as personal memoirs or institutional studies documenting the fact that tens if not hundreds of thousands of Armenian children, especially girls, were spared death and forcefully assimilated as concubines, slaves or wives of Turks. Their offspring and their descendants now bear witness to this fact. But how to interpret this unique occurrence? On the one hand, it shows that, although some Turks sought to exploit the Armenian females, others sought to save the young girls out of human compassion. On the other hand, it demonstrates a very fundamental principle: truth will prevail. If the 1.5 million Armenians slaughtered in the Genocide can not come back and testify before a court of law as to what happened, their grandchildren, born of mixed marriages with Turks, can. They need not go to court. Their mere existence as Turkish citizens of Armenian descent constitutes the most damning proof of what happened almost 100 years ago. For a discussion of the implications of this phenomenon in Turkey today, see: <http://www.reporter.am/go/article/2011-11-22-seminar-in-germany-focuses-on-inner-turkish-debate-of-1915->

(Muriel Mirak-Weissbach is the author of *Through the Wall of Fire: Armenia - Iraq - Palestine: From Wrath to Reconciliation*. She can be reached at mirak.weissbach@googlemail.com or

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

YES, I would like a 1-year subscription to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator.

USA/Second Class Mail \$75.00

CANADA /Air Mail \$125.00

USA/First Class Mail \$120.00

☐ THE SUBSCRIPTION IS FOR ME

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

☐ THE SUBSCRIPTION IS A GIFT FOR:

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

Please make check payable to: The Armenian Mirror-Spectator and mail to:
755 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472-1509

All payments must be drawn on US banks

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!