

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Nishan Atinizian Receives Anania Shiragatsi Medal from President of Armenia

YEREVAN – Every year, during Armenia's independence celebrations, the president of the republic hands out awards to individuals in Armenia and the diaspora who are outstanding in their fields and have contributed to the betterment of Armenia.

This year, among the honorees singled out by President Serge Sargisian was Nishan Atinizian, co-owner of Armenia Marriott hotel, who was awarded the Anania Shiragatsi medal during the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Ministry of Diaspora.

Upon his arrival in the US from Turkey in the early 1980s, Atinizian immersed himself in the Armenian community in Boston and served as a link to his own culture. He has been recognized in the community as a leader and has received several awards for see AWARD, page 9



President Serge Sargisian gives Nishan Atinizian the medal.

## Wife of Boston Mayoral Candidate Connolly Hopes to Bring Armenian Flavor to City Hall

By Gabriella Gage  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – Meg Kassakian Connolly, is more than just the wife of Boston mayoral hopeful, John R. Connolly; she is a clinical



The Connolly family, from left: Meg Connolly and her husband, Boston mayoral candidate John R. Connolly, with children, Clare, Mary Katherine and Edward

psychologist with a passion for issues of mental health and immigration. She is a Harvard graduate and a soccer champ. She is a mother of three. She is also an Armenian-American with a deep appreciation for her family's heritage.

Connolly grew up in Newton, attending public schools, before going on to Harvard University, where she studied sociology and captained the soccer team.

She has fond memories celebrating holidays with delicious Armenian food and

spending time with her paternal grandmother, Mary Kassakian (maiden name Kondrajian,) who instilled in her an appreciation for her Armenian heritage and for the gift of family.

The Kondrajians arrived at Ellis Island from Sivas in 1910, narrowly missing the Genocide, amid the escalating climate of fear – a blessing that her grandmother did not fail to appreciate.

“She would always tell me how lucky I was to know my grandparents,” said Connolly. “There was a great optimism but also a deep sadness that would come across when she would talk about it.”

Mugerdich Kondrajian, Mary's father, worked hard toward the “American Dream” while also taking time to participate in the building of the new Armenian-American community blossoming in the

Northeast. Kondrajian went on to become one of the founding members of the Armenian General Benevolent Union's (AGBU) New York Chapter.

Meg Connolly's paternal grandfather's family, the Kassakians, arrived years before the Kondrajians, and also shared the dual appreciation of embracing the culture of their new home while remembering their Armenian heritage. Both the Kassakian and Kondrajian families were involved in see CONNOLLY, page 8

## Armenian ‘Orphan Rug’ Is in White House Storage, as Unseen as Genocide Is Neglected

By Philip Kennicott

WASHINGTON (*Washington Post*) – The rug was woven by orphans in the 1920s and formally presented to the White House in 1925. A photograph shows President Calvin

Coolidge standing on the carpet, which is no mere juvenile effort, but a complicated, richly detailed work that would hold its own even in the largest and most ceremonial rooms.

If you can read a carpet's cues, the plants and animals depicted on the rug may represent the Garden of Eden, which is about as far removed as possible from the rug's origins in the horrific events of 1915, when the fracturing and senescent Ottoman Empire began a murderous campaign against its Armenian population. Between 1 million and 1.5 million people were killed or died of starvation, and others were uprooted from their homes in what has been termed the first modern and systematic genocide. Many were left orphans, including see RUG, page 12

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARMENIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION



Cover for *President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug*

## Annual Najarian Human Rights Lecture Sheds Light on Human Trafficking Epidemic

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – Tea, hand-woven rugs and prostitutes, on the surface, seem to have very little in common. However, according to speakers at the K. George and Carolann S. Najarian MD Lecture on Human Rights on October 24 at Faneuil Hall, they often involve trafficked persons.

On the demand side, keynote speaker Siddharth Kara explained, consumers want to pay less and less for goods, thus a product made by slave labor, by definition see LECTURE, page 7



Siddharth Kara

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### School No. 44 in Yerevan Named for Hrant Dink

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Mayor of Yerevan Taron Margaryan attended the solemn ceremony of naming the capital's school No. 44 after prominent Armenian journalist and intellectual from Istanbul Hrant Dink this week. The Information and Public Relations Department of the Yerevan Municipality reported that aside from the mayor, Dink's widow Rackel Dink, participating in unveiling a commemorative plaque dedicated to Hrant Dink.

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

While Samast has since been taken into custody, it has since been revealed that a deep chain going high up in the government was involved in the decision to assassinate Dink.

### Morocco's Ambassador Presents Credentials to Armenian President

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – On Tuesday, the newly appointed Ambassador of Morocco to Armenia, Mina Tounsi, presented her credentials to President Serge Sargisian, the president's press office reported.

Sargisian congratulated Tounsi on her appointment and expressed hope that during her tenure in office, she would make every effort to invigorate bilateral relations between Armenia and Morocco.

Sargisian noted that Armenia attaches great import to the deepening of her relations with the Arab world and underscored that the country actively cooperates with many Arab states in different areas. In that context, the President of Armenia stressed the importance of developing interstate cooperation with Morocco.

Tounsi assured Sargisian that she concurred and wanted closer ties with Armenia.

### Sargisian Congratulates Gul on Turkey's Republic Day

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President Serge Sargisian of Armenia sent a message congratulating his Turkish counterpart, Abdullah Gul, on October 28, on the occasion of Turkey's National Holiday – Republic Day.

There was no word on Gul's response.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Defense Minister Meets Austrian Counterpart

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Minister of Defense of Armenia, Seyran Ohanian received Austrian Ambassador to Armenia Alois Kraut, Austria's Honorary Consul to Armenia Aram Marutyan and Military Attache of the Embassy of Austria to Armenia Helmut Fellner. During the course of the meeting held on October 28, Seyran Ohanian, welcomed the guests and congratulated the people of Austria on their national holiday – the day of the Declaration of Neutrality.

During the meeting the sides held a discussion on issues related to the bilateral cooperation in the field of defense. Kraut stated that Austria is ready to continue cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of Armenia.

## President Hosts IAAF And ABAF Delegations

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian President Serge Sargsian received welcomed senior officials from the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) and the Association of the Balkan Athletic Federations (ABAF) led by IAAF Deputy President and legendary pole vaulter Sergey Bubka. The delegation arrived in Armenia for its annual IAAF conference.

During the meeting, delegation members from various countries of the world highlighted the importance of young children having opportunities to interact with professional athletes.

Bubka and other officials of the two athletics federations introduced the activities and upcoming programs of the ABAF to Sargsian.

## Armenian Parliamentary Delegation to Visit Iran

YEREVAN (PressTVIran) – A parliamentary delegation from Armenia is set to pay an official visit to Tehran next week to discuss issues of mutual interest in meetings with Iranian legislators.

The trip comes to further boost parliamentary, political, economic and cultural relations between the two countries, said Director of the Protocol Office of Iran's Majlis (Parliament) Mohammad Yasrebi. Leader of the Republican Party of Armenia parliamentary faction Galust Sahakyan, who leads the Armenian team, is scheduled to sit down with Iranian authorities, including Ali Kaeidi, the chairman of the Iran-Armenia Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The Armenian lawmakers are also expected to meet Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani during their stay in Iran.

On August 5, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the Islamic Republic will seek to expand relations with Armenia.

"The relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Armenia have always been friendly, close and based on mutual interests, and definitely in the future, Tehran's efforts will focus on deepening relations and improving cooperation in all sectors," Rouhani said in a meeting with his Armenian counterpart Serge Sargsian in Tehran.

## British to Establish Architectural School in Gumri

GUMRI (Hetq) – It was announced this week that a British-funded school of architecture will be established in the city. Gumri Mayor Samvel Balsanyan hosted Ken Brown, a member of the Bristol Institution of Structural Engineers and a trustee of the Architecture Centre, and American architect Jane Britt Greenwood this week to discuss the plans.

Since 2009, the two have been working in the Kumayri Historic District. Brown and Greenwood informed the mayor of their plan to turn a building into an architectural school and that volunteers and students from overseas will arrive in the spring of next year to work on the project.

# AGBU Young Professionals' 'Go Green' Mission Promotes Economic Sustainability in Armenia

YEREVAN – In recent years, the AGBU Young Professionals (YP) Network has focused its global initiatives in Armenia on environmentally-friendly green projects to help promote economic sustainability. Implemented this year, the Pan-YP Greenhouse Project for border village Barekamavan is the second collective initiative by the YP Network in Armenia, and builds on the success of the YPs' first initiative, the construction of a new park in Khachik in 2010.

Funded and developed entirely by the YP Network, two greenhouses were constructed in Barekamavan this year to help promote economic self-sufficiency and sustainability. The following sixteen YP Groups and YP Partners took part by pooling their resources in one unified effort: YP Athens, YP Boston, YP Buenos Aires, YP Greater New York, YP Lebanon, YP London, YP Los Angeles, YP Marseille, YP Montréal, YP Northern California, YP Philadelphia, YP Sofia, YP Tehran, YP Toronto, and YP Yerevan, as well as AGBU partner,



Multiple generations come together to learn about farming and crop cultivation.

London Coordinator Ara Yeromian. "Thanks to the support of our London community, who donated both online and during our fundraising events, we will make a difference in the lives of many families in Barekamavan. This was definitive-

Network embraced the greenhouse initiative in 2013. "It was amazing to see so many young Armenians from all over the world come together to help advance Barekamavan," said YP Yerevan Coordinator Anna Aghajanian.



One of the AGBU YP-sponsored greenhouses yields tomato crops in the first harvest of the season.

HAIK, in Frankfurt.

Many groups who backed the Khachik Park Project in 2010 returned to lend their support to the Barekamavan Greenhouse Project by organizing a number of special benefit events such as YP Toronto's Jingle Jam, YP Northern California's San Francisco Winter Gala Weekend, YP Los Angeles' Networking Mixer, YP Marseille's Classical Concert, and YP Buenos Aires' Friend Day Mixer. Other groups such as YP Athens, YP Boston, YP Lebanon, YP London, YP Montréal, YP Sofia, and YP Tehran joined their peers to support this year's pan-YP initiative for the very first time.

"As part of the global YP Network, YP London was proud to raise funds for such a unique and impactful project," said YP

ly the first of many future contributions to pan-YP initiatives."

Barekamavan's socio-economic development has long been hindered by steadily increasing emigration and ongoing tensions at the nearby border with Azerbaijan. Located in Armenia's Tavush province, the village of 400 is home to a mere 33 youth, whereas, decades ago, it boasted over 300. Nevertheless, current residents refuse to abandon their homes and land on this strategically vital outpost.

Yet, the fertile land holds promise for the future—promise that AGBU supporters identified when they set out to develop greenhouses in Barekamavan in 2011-12. Seeing the potential for growth and encouraged by the positive impact of the Khachik Park Project, the YP

Overseeing the project in Barekamavan, YP Yerevan conducted a thorough needs assessment taking into account a range of factors including the families' size, readiness, and ability to commit to the project before selecting the Abasyan and Vihrabyan families to participate. This spring, working alongside the families and agricultural specialists, YP Yerevan began to implement the project. The greenhouses were constructed on land adjacent to the families' homes, since Barekamavan has no communal agricultural lands. Fruit trees, seedlings, and fertilizer were purchased and professional training seminars were delivered on farming, crop cultivation, and sales.

Now, the families, relishing in the first harvest of the season, are assured a steady source of future income, cementing their resolve to remain in Barekamavan rather than searching for opportunities elsewhere. "For years we felt that we were forgotten by everyone; we went months without seeing anyone from outside our village and received no support," shared wife and mother Tamar Vihrabyan. "You haven't just given us a greenhouse, you have given us, our village, and our country hope for the future. We don't have to leave to find work to feed our families now; we can stay right here, protect our lands and watch our children grow in their ancestral homeland."

For more information on the Pan-YP Greenhouse Project, visit [www.agbu.org/yppsgogreen](http://www.agbu.org/yppsgogreen).



A view of one of the greenhouses constructed in Barekamavan, Armenia, with funds raised by the AGBU Young Professionals Network.

## Correction

A caption on the front page last week provided incorrect information about a fundraiser by the Knights of Vartan.

The Ararat Lodge of the Knights of Vartan held a Surf, Turf and Cigar Evening in September to benefit the Armenian Sisters' Academy of Lexington, Mass.

The previous year they had held a fundraiser for the other Armenian day school in the region, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School.



## INTERNATIONAL

## Georgian PM Scorns Elections His Candidate Won

By Lynn Berry

TBILISI (Associated Press) – The billionaire prime minister of Georgia should have been pleased: his candidate swept a presidential election that international observers praised on Monday as a step forward for democracy in this US-aligned former Soviet republic.

Instead, Bidzina Ivanishvili denigrated the losing party and the 22 percent of voters who chose its candidate. He also reprimanded his own supporters who had not listened to him and stayed home on election day, saying they had neglected their duties as Georgian citizens.

In the wide scolding, delivered during a nearly two-hour news conference,

## Diaspora Minister Attends Celebrations Dedicated to Armenian Community of Berlin

BERLIN (Armenpress) – The Minister of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia Hranush Hakobyan participated in a ceremony celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Armenian community of Berlin. Among other participants were the Mayor of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf Rainhard Nauman, representatives of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to Germany, and other guests.

The Ministry of Diaspora reported that the event began with opening remarks delivered by leader of the Armenian community of Berlin Vardges Alyanak.

Welcoming the participants, Hakobyan congratulated everyone on the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the community and praised the community's history, its efforts, dedication and patriotism. The minister particularly mentioned: "Thanks to your efforts, the Armenian community of Berlin has Armenian Sunday schools, cultural houses, a church and Armenian centers at universities. Through your daily efforts, you try to transmit the Armenian language to Armenian children and youth, create cultural groups, provide them with knowledge about Armenian history and help introduce them to the historic Homeland with visits to the Homeland."

The Director of the Diaspora and Genocide Research Institute of Bokhumi Mihran Dabagh spoke during the event. The event also included musical performances by Hrachuhi Bassenz, Silva Schmeding-Farmasian and Gor Harutyunyan.

The Armenian community of Berlin was established and officially registered in 1923 and was the first Armenian community established in Germany. In 2006, the community was renamed the Armenian Church and Cultural Community of Berlin. The community has nearly 1,500 members and a center that the members call the Armenian Home. Every Friday, the Armenian Home is a nice place for members of the Armenian community and all Armenians to gather.

The Armenian Home has an Armenian Sunday school and a dance group and recently opened a community library where members of the community can find books for children, as well as Armenian literature, books devoted to Armenian arts, history, language, the Church and religion and encyclopedias. The community also has a church choir.

Ivanishvili left little doubt that he will remain the most influential figure in Georgia even after he hands over the prime minister's job next month to a member of his team. The tone of his remarks suggested he sees himself less as an elected official and more in the role of a wise patriarch or CEO.

"He treats Georgia like a company that he has taken over, built according to his desires, and then transferred the management of to his assistants, while still continuing to control it," said Gia Nodia, a political scientist who heads a research institute in Tbilisi, the capital.

Ivanishvili became prime minister a year ago when his coalition routed the party of his bitter rival, outgoing President Mikheil Saakashvili. The billionaire consolidated his political control in Sunday's presidential election when his chosen candidate, 44-year-old former university rector Giorgi Margvelashvili, won with 62 percent of the vote.

Ivanishvili said he hoped on Saturday to announce his choice for the next prime minister, now the more powerful post in Georgia's new parliamentary system. The nomination would need to be approved by parliament, which his party controls.

Both new Georgian leaders would then be beholden to Ivanishvili. The president-elect, speaking at Monday's news conference, said he would have no reason not to listen to his "authoritative friend."

Ivanishvili's vast wealth and generosity give him considerable clout. Nearly a decade ago, when Georgia was close to economic collapse, he stepped in to pay the salaries of government officials and beloved theater actors. Georgians only in recent years learned that he had funded the construction of the new cathedral.

This year, he committed \$1 billion to a new investment fund to stimulate the economic development of Georgia. His estimated \$5.3 billion fortune is equal to one-third of the economic output of the entire Georgian economy.

Ivanishvili said he was stunned that the presidential candidate from Saakashvili's party, former parliament speaker David Bakradze, received as high as 22 percent of the vote among 23 candidates.

"I could not imagine it even in the worst scenario," Ivanishvili said. "And it showed what I was always saying, that we lack political culture."

The billionaire has talked about dedi-

cating himself to the development of civil society in Georgia in the coming years.

The election won high praise from international observers.

"In a positive and transparent election, the Georgian people have confirmed last year's historic transfer of power," Joao Soares, who led the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe observer mission, said in a statement. "This clean election following a political cohabitation tells me that Georgia's democracy is maturing."

Jen Psaki, spokeswoman for the US State Department, said Monday that the vote "clearly represented the will of the people" and urged "all parties to work together constructively to promote Georgia's political stability and strengthen its civil society to advance its democratic and economic development."

Ivanishvili has maintained the pro-Western course set by Saakashvili during his nearly 10 years in office. With Georgia due to sign an association agreement with the European Union next month, his government has stressed its commitment to European values.

Nodia, the political analyst, said Ivanishvili has demonstrated a peculiar understanding of democracy.

"It seems he just doesn't want to accept that the main value of democracy is pluralism," Nodia said. "He thinks the people should be on someone's side, on his side."

During the past year, criminal charges have been filed against dozens of Saakashvili loyalists, including several former ministers. Saakashvili also is expected to be questioned after he leaves office next month.

Also on Monday, a Georgian court convicted a former defense minister, Bacho Akhalaia, and ordered him sent to prison for three years and nine months.

Akhalaia was found guilty of using excessive force to suppress a prison uprising in 2006 in which seven inmates were killed and 22 injured. He was head of the prison system at the time. He also served as an interior minister in charge of police under Saakashvili.

The prosecutions have raised concerns in the US and Europe that Ivanishvili's government is using the justice system to settle political scores. He denies this, and his government has welcomed international monitors to attend the high-profile trials.

## EU Agrees to Restart Turkey Membership Talks Next Month

LUXEMBOURG (BBC) – The European Union (EU) says it has agreed to resume membership talks with Turkey.

The EU's European affairs ministers, meeting in Luxembourg, said the talks would restart on November 5, after being stalled for three years.

The EU had first agreed to relaunch negotiations in June, but postponed the talks after members criticized Turkey's crackdown on anti-government protests.

Turkey first applied for full membership of what was then the European Economic Community in 1987.

The ministers of the 28 EU members based their latest decision on a recommendation by the European Commission.

In its 2013 progress report on Turkey published last week, the Commission had criticized as excessive the use of force by Turkish police in dealing with widespread demonstrations.

But it recognized that Turkey had introduced judicial reforms. It also praised the announcement last month

by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of a series of political reforms, including increased rights for Kurds.

Linas Linkevicius, the foreign minister of Lithuania, which currently holds the EU presidency, congratulated Turkey on the resumption of the negotiating process, which he said was overdue.

Turkey has been an associate member of the European Union (then the European Economic Community) since 1963.

Turkey met the last condition for accession talks in 2005, but negotiations have stalled over a range of issues, including concern over freedom of speech and democracy, treatment of religious minorities, judicial reform, and ongoing tensions with Cyprus, an EU member.

During that time Ankara has watched other countries overtake Turkey in the queue for membership. Croatia became a full member of the EU in July, while Serbia achieved official candidate status earlier this year.

## International News

### Greek Defense Ministry Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian President Serge Sargisian hosted a delegation headed by Greek Minister of National Defense Dimitris Avramopoulos on October 29. During the visit, they discussed the bilateral Armenian-Greek relations based on their strong history of bilateral cooperation in the fields of politics, defense, military, educational and cultural affairs.

Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian also met with Avramopoulos. The Greek Minister noted the cases in history when the Armenian and Greek people jointly fought against foreign invaders and how these events helped to forge the bonds between the two countries.

Avramopoulos and the delegation visited the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial and paid tribute to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims, placing a wreath and flowers by the unquenchable fire and honored the memory of the innocent victims with a minute of silence. The Greek Delegation then visited the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute.

### Mayor of Marseille Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Armenian President Serge Sargisian received a delegation headed by Senator-Mayor of Marseille Jean-Claude Gaudin this week.

Sargisian said the reciprocal visits on different levels help ensure the continuous development of bilateral ties. The interlocutors stressed that the cooperation between Armenia and France based on centuries-old friendly ties between the two peoples is steadily developing in all spheres – political, economic and cultural.

The Armenian President ascribed an important role to the decentralized cooperation in the development of relations between the two countries and expressed confidence that the visit of the delegation headed by Jean-Claude Gaudin would promote the further development and reinforcement of Armenian-French cooperation.

Gaudin noted that the visit of French businessmen will encourage the establishment of new ties and attract new investments, and he said that he welcomed the establishment of the Armenian Consulate General in Marseille.

### Armenian-Language Election Campaigns Allowed in Turkey

ANKARA (PanArmenian.net) – A package of reforms suggested by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan allows conducting electoral campaigns in Armenian. Before the move, usage of any language beside Turkish during campaigns was forbidden, according to Haber Turk.

Politicians in Istanbul, Hatai, Diyarbakir and Kars which are home to descendants of the 1915 Genocide victims can address the voters in Armenian.

According to the Turkish Linguistic Society's assessment, Turkish population speaks 36 languages: 15 million speak Kurdish, one million and a half are Alevites, with Armenian, Arabic, Greek, Abkhazian, Georgian, Kazakh are among the languages spoken. A Western Armenian dialect, Hamshen, which has not changed in the last 200 years, is also spoken.

Armenian news service has been operating at TRT state channel for more than a year.

On September 30, Erdogan unveiled a long-anticipated package of reforms designed "to strengthen democracy and keep on track a fragile settlement process" to end the conflict with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The most important reforms include removing restrictions of wearing Islamic headscarves, possibility of education in mother tongue, restoration of original names of villages, districts and provinces that existed before 1980, sweeping changes in law on political parties, possibility of lowering 10 percent electoral threshold in entering parliament, improving assembly freedom and other small rights for religious and ethnic minorities.



# Community News

## AEF Supporters Raise \$80,000 to Help its Mission

GLENDALE – The Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) held its annual fundraiser on October 13, at the home of Armen Panossian and Dr. Katherine Panossian. One hundred seventy guests attended the fundraiser and contributed to support the education of the children of Armenia. The majority of those in attendance were young professionals many of whom offered to volunteer with AEF projects.

Melody Petrossian, AEF Fundraising chair, stated, “The extraordinary part of the evening was that it was planned, executed and hosted by the future leaders of the organization. We are truly grateful to the Panossian family for hosting this event and for creating a platform for the next generation of AEF supporters.”

AEF will use 100 percent of the funds raised to renovate the Darpas Village school in the Lori region of Armenia where 210 students attend classes that are in urgent need of repair. AEF has renovated more than 180 schools in remote villages in Armenia, Artsakh and Javakhk and provided aid to thousands of students. Since 2000, AEF has awarded more than \$960,000 in scholarships to students in the United States, Lebanon and Armenia. For the past five years, AEF has been providing full tuition in the form of four-year scholarships to approximately 50 students attending public universities in Armenia and Artsakh.

For more information or to make a donation, contact the AEF office at [aef@aefweb.org](mailto:aef@aefweb.org) or write to Armenian Educational Foundation, 600 West Broadway, Suite 130, Glendale, CA 91204.

## NAASR Lecture to Focus On Armenians and Assyrians in Urmia Region

BELMONT, Mass. – Dr. Nicholas Al-Jeloo will give a lecture titled “Armenian and Assyrian Cooperation and Co-Habitation in Iran’s Urmia Region,” on Thursday, November 14, at 7:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), 395 Concord Ave.

While much information and research has enlightened understanding of Armenians from Isfahan, little other information exists in English about Armenians living in other parts of Iran, even Armenians in Tabriz, a prosperous and important urban community. Like the Assyrians who were largely based in villages throughout the Middle East, the Armenians of the Urmia plain led agrarian lives for much of the 19th century and even when they moved into the city of Urmia, a hub of agrarian wholesale markets in wheat and raisins, they often engaged in trade that involved their village roots. Inter-marriage with local Assyrians was also very common. The Minassian family, for example, who held the wheat wholesale market, was married into an Assyrian family from Golpashan, one of the richest towns on the Urmia plain.

Al-Jeloo’s illustrated lecture represents a rare opportunity to learn about the intertwined history of the Armenians and Assyrians of the Urmia region. Much of the information about Armenians on the Urmia plain comes from Assyrian memoirs and histories. While the church institutions remained separate and the communities maintained separate languages, there was considerable inter-marriage, dual language understanding, and cooperation on many fronts, commercial as well as political.

Al-Jeloo is an Australian-Assyrian whose high-quality photographs have been used in art and history books about the Middle East, such as Christoph Baumer’s *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (I.B. Tauris, 2006). He received a PhD in Assyrian/Syriac Studies from the University of Sydney this year and holds an MA from Leiden University.



The researchers visit the second grade class.

## Researchers From Armenia Visit TCA Arshag Dickranian School to Conduct Study

LOS ANGELES – Researchers from the Department of Diaspora Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia – Institute of Archeology and Ethnography visited TCA Arshag Dickranian School (ADS) on Friday, October 18, as a part of a comparative study they are conducting of Armenians in their own and other national environments. The school was selected as a representative of the Armenian educational model in Los Angeles, where the researchers conducted interviews and interacted with teachers and students. The visit was coordinated through the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles.

Researchers Lusine Tanajyan and Syuzanna Barseghyan arrived at ADS at 11 a.m. accompanied by Consul for Economic and Community Affairs Suren Vardanyants. The guests were greeted by Board Chairman George K. Mandossian, Board Member Angine Garibyan and Principal Dr. Manoug Seraydarian and were invited to briefly speak about their research project and their impressions of the Armenian community of Los Angeles.

Next, Seraydarian led the researchers on a tour around the School, along with Mandossian and Garibyan. The researchers’ first stop was at the second grade, where the students were taking their Armenian class. The children were very excited to see the guests and enthusiastically recited poetry in Armenian to impress them. The researchers then visited the Walter and Laurel Karabian Hall where the School’s different events and student services are held. They briefly met with the Head of the Armenian Department Anahit Nasoyan and inquired about the School’s Armenian program. Next, the researchers were escorted to see the School playgrounds, followed by the Junior High and High School sections, where they visited the classrooms and the Science and Computer Labs. Lusine Tanajyan and Syuzanna Barseghyan met with the seventh-grade students while they were also taking their Armenian lesson and briefly conversed with their teacher Nazelie

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Lusine Tanajyan and Syuzanna Barseghyan along with Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers and students

## Armenian Bar Association Celebrates Annual Judges’ Night

LOS ANGELES – Several hundred dignitaries, public officials and guests joined the Armenian Bar Association on October 10 to celebrate, honor and recognize the career and service of Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Peter Espinoza. His first column of respect was comprised of nearly 40 judicial officers from the federal and state courts who had come to pay homage and respect to one of their own. This celebration took place at Armenian Bar Association’s Annual Judges’ Night Dinner at the Phoenicia Restaurant in Glendale, Calif.

The master of ceremonies for the evening was Armenian Bar Association Chairman Garo B. Ghazarian. After welcoming remarks by ArmenBar Board member Gerard Kassabian, Ghazarian was introduced by Los Angeles Superior Court Judge and former Armenian Bar chairman Judge Zaven Sinanian. Sinanian recognized Ghazarian by stating that “Garo’s whole concept in life is to serve the community, never giving up and relentlessly fighting for what is right in life.” He also applauded him for leading the organization toward unprecedented heights of public service and achievement, while simultaneously serving on multiple fronts. Sinanian also took a few moments to express his heartfelt thanks to the evening’s guest of honor, Peter Espinoza, who was a mentor to Sinanian when he first took the bench more than 10 years ago.

In his opening remarks, Ghazarian stated, “Tonight, we thank Judge Espinoza and his colleagues on the bench for their public service, for their activism, for their commitment to the ideal that in order for our civil society to progress, we must have a strong and independent judiciary.”

In a show of Armenian community unity and cohesion, usually reserved for April 24th commemorations, Ghazarian thanked and acknowledged the presence of Armenian Revolutionary Federation Central Committee Chairman Dr. Viken Hovsepian, Armenian Democratic League Central Committee Board member Dr. Raffi Balian, Armenian General Benevolent Union Vice-President and World-Wide Board of Governors, Sinan Sinanian, and Armenian National Committee Western United States Chairwoman Nora Hovsepian.

Ghazarian then called upon Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court David Wesley to address the rapt audience. Wesley described the enormous challenges that face the California judiciary today, noting the massive budget cuts that have been imposed upon the court system. But, despite those setbacks in funding, he explained that the California courts are still seen as a model for judicial excellence across the country. He thanked the judges in attendance for maintaining the highest levels of judicial performance in these difficult times.

Another very special guest for the evening was Judge Fred Rotenberg of the Los Angeles Superior Court currently sitting in Glendale, Calif. Rotenberg was one of the guests of honor at the Inaugural Judges’ Night of the Armenian Bar Association last year. Rotenberg thanked the Armenian Bar Association for bestowing on him with the public recognition for his work as a judge. He stated that he shares a common history with the Armenian community in that he, like many in the audience, saw their parents and grandparents endure extreme hardship. Rotenberg’s mother, Helen, is a Holocaust survivor and was present at last year’s Judges’ Night event. Rotenberg stated that he understands how these experiences impact a person’s life and he is mindful of this in his work as a judge.

In an unexpected moment during the evening, former mayor of Pasadena presented

see ARMENBAR, page 5



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Norair and Siroun Megerdichian Celebrate 40th Anniversary

LIVINGSTON, N.J. – More than 150 family members, friends, Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) and Armenian Democratic Liberal party (ADL, Ramgavar) members were invited by Lara and Avo Megerdichian to take part in a surprise celebration of the 40th wedding anniversary of their parents, Norair and Siroun Megerdichian, on Saturday, October 19, at St. Mary's Armenian Church.

The couple married in their native Beirut and in the late 1980s relocated to West Orange, NJ. Norair Megerdichian has been involved in many community activities, including the ADL and TCA. He was the chairman of TCA Greater New York Chapter and a member of ADL District Committee. Siroun Megerdichian was the director of AGBU Camp Noubar.

Among the guests in attendance were benefactor Harry Toufayan, Henry Dimijian, the chairman of TCA Greater New York Hagop Vartivarian and his wife, Maria, Dr. Hagop Gulekjian, Haroutioun Diratzouian, Vartan and Adrine Abdo of the Armenian Radio Hour of NJ as well as Mr. and Mrs. Shemavon Atamian.



The couple dances.



Friends gathered to mark the anniversary.

## Armenian Bar Association Celebrates Annual Judges' Night

ARMENBAR, from page 4

Ghazarian with a medal of honor for his efforts in persuading the City of Pasadena to establish an Armenian Genocide Memorial in Pasadena's Memorial Park. Paparian explained that work on the monument will begin on April 24, 2014, and the memorial will be consecrated on the occasion of the 100th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide on April 24, 1915.

There were many civic leaders in attendance at the gala event, among them the mayor of Glendale, Dave Weaver, the treasurer of the City of Glendale, Rafi Manoukian, member of the Glendale City Council and Board of Directors of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority, Ara Najarian, Montebello city councilman, Jack Hadjinian, the leadership of the Glendale Police Department led by Deputy Chief Carl Povalitis, and Chief Jim McDonnell, who is the chief of the Long Beach Police Department and president of the Los Angeles County Association of Chiefs of Police. McDonnell spoke of his background as a child of Irish immigrants and how the diversity of America, being a nation of immigrants, has strengthened the country.

The highlight of the evening was the honoring of Espinoza. Ghazarian explained to the audience that the Judges' Night dinner was originally scheduled to take place a week earlier, but that it was delayed because Espinoza would still be in Armenia at that time. Ghazarian fondly recalled that Espinoza, through his activism in the Chicano movement, his respect for cultural diversity born of his own roots as a Mexican-American, his understanding of the cause for civil and human rights brought to the forefront by people such as Cesar Chavez, has enriched California's judiciary to make it truly reflective of its citizenry. Ghazarian added that Espinoza has been so highly respected as a member of the judiciary that California's governors often consult Espinoza for his recommendations for new judicial appointments to the bench. Ghazarian then welcomed Espinoza to the podium to a standing ovation.

Espinoza began his remarks by acknowledging several members of his family who accompanied him to the event, including his wife, two of his children and their spouses and a grandchild. He reminisced about his youth growing

up in East Los Angeles and reminded the audience that before Hollywood, Glendale and the Valley, the origin of the first Armenian community in Southern California was in East Los Angeles and Montebello. He recalled meeting many Armenians in his childhood and mentioned that he never thought he would ever visit Armenia at that time. But that trip he never thought he would take, he explained to the guests, recently became a reality because of the outstanding work of his daughter, Elizabeth Espinoza. Espinoza's daughter is a volunteer for the United States Peace Corp and has been teaching English in the small village of Shatin in southern Armenia for the past 17 months. Espinoza told the audience that the recent visit to Armenia by him and his wife Dyanna, far exceeded his expectations. He urged everyone in the audience to "come to Armenia" to experience its rich history, its beauty and to aid the Armenian people to realize their full potential. He also explained that while the capital of Yerevan is a major cosmopolitan city that reminded him of Mexico City, he alerted the audience that life in the Armenian villages is far different and that the people there need assistance with infrastructure and other basic necessities.

Espinoza fondly recalled that a highlight of his trip was when he met and visited with Raffi K. Hovannisian, the founder of the Armenian Bar Association.

Espinoza also recalled that during his trip to Armenia, he learned that toasting is an important part of a social gathering. In keeping with that grand tradition, Espinoza gave two toasts in honor of his daughter Elizabeth Espinoza and to Raffi K. Hovannisian.

Upon the conclusion of Espinoza's remarks, Ghazarian, Armen K. Hovannisian and Edvin Minassian presented Espinoza with an original work of art from artist Seroon Yeretsian, eloquently inscribed with poetic words of gratitude for Espinoza's life work in public service and the promotion of civil and human rights.

In an interview following the event, Ghazarian stated, "I am very proud of the Armenian Bar Association. Once again we were able to recognize and honor the best and brightest of our judicial and legal community, like Judge Peter Espinoza. The outstanding response from a diverse cross-section of our community to our Judges' Night represents another major milestone for our organization and the Armenian community. We look forward to carrying on this tradition for years to come."

## Researchers from Armenia Visit TCA Arshag Dickranian School to Conduct Study

RESEARCHERS, from page 4

Kojayan and the students asking them about Armenia and their impressions when they visited the homeland. As the researchers were led back to the office, they came across elementary students who welcomed them and were excited to interact with them, asking questions about the purpose of their visit. The researchers were delighted by the young Armenians in the School and charmed by their friendliness and warmth. The tour's last stop was at the Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten section where the researchers were pleased with the colorful environments of the classrooms and playgrounds and watched the children play and learn.

After the school tour was over, the researchers met with Seraydarian in his office and interviewed him about school life, the activities of various Armenian organizations and associations, the involvement of Armenians in the American public life, the expectations of the Diaspora from the Republic of Armenia and investing in the Republic of Armenia. Before their departure, Tanajyan and Barseghyan thanked Seraydarian for the hospitality of TCA Arshag Dickranian Armenian School.

For more information visit the school's website [www.dickranianschool.org](http://www.dickranianschool.org).

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Holy Trinity Armenian Church Celebrates 52nd Anniversary, Honors Deacon Gregory Krikorian as 'Parishioner of the Year'

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — "It was a very special day," stated pastor, the Rev. Vasken A. Kouzouian.

On Sunday, October 20, with a former pastor, Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian presiding and delivering the sermon; with Guest Celebrant, the Very Rev. Krikor Maksoudian, son of former pastor, the late Rev. Papken Maksoudian and with the current pastor, the Rev. Vasken A. Kouzouian, also the son of a former pastor, the Rev. Mampre A. Kouzouian, the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston celebrated the 52nd Anniversary of the consecration of the church on Brattle Street in Cambridge, and also paid tribute to Deacon Gregory Krikorian, who was honored as Parishioner of the Year.

Following the Divine Liturgy, a special Requiem was held to observe the first anniversary of the passing of Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem. Also observed during the Requiem Service was the first anniversary of the Rev. Papken Maksoudian's passing.

Parishioners and family and friends of the honoree gathered in the Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall following church services for an impressive banquet that spanned the generations. James Kalustian served as master of ceremonies; Maksoudian gave the Invocation and Gregory A. Kolligian, Jr., Parish Council chairman, extended a welcome. The pastor gave the toast, honoring the Building Committee and all who labored to build the church on Brattle Street, and expressed the parish's appreciation to Deacon Gregory Krikorian for his 48 years of service on the Altar.

Parish Council Treasurer, Mark Haroutunian,



Deacon Gregory Krikorian, center, with Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian and members of the clergy present at the banquet

gave a brief overview of the parish's Stewardship Program, and Gregory Kolligian expressed the parish's appreciation to three outgoing Parish Council members, Lt. Col. Robert G. Lang Jr., Richard Sahagian and Armen Skenderian for their service to the church.

In his remarks honoring the Parishioner of the Year, Kolligian talked of Krikorian's 48 years of dedication, commitment and love to Holy Trinity Church, not only as a deacon, but also as a Diocesan Delegate, former Parish Council member, former Trinity Men's Union chairman, and for his years serving as choir chairman. Fellow Deacon Armen Skenderian warmly expressed

the deacons' appreciation of Krikorian's love for the *Badarak*. Oscar Derderian III, Stephen Hollisian and Gregory Torosian, three young adults who serve on the altar and have been mentored by Krikorian, shared their heartfelt views and appreciation of his time and commitment to help them on their journey to become sub-deacons. A short video, prepared by Ara Hollisian, was shown of him with the four pastors he has served. The video also included remarks by another altar server, Harry Lang, who shared his thanks to Krikorian.

Krikorian expressed his appreciation to Kouzouian and the Parish Council and acknowl-

edged with deep gratitude the four pastors of Holy Trinity he has served. He spoke of the deep love for the Armenian Church and its traditions that his parents instilled in him and stated "they are the reason I stand before you today." Being ordained a deacon in 1983, fulfilled a lifelong dream to follow in his father's footsteps. "My job now," he stated, "is in mentoring the boys and young adults on our Altar, and I am happy to see the desire and love for the Divine Liturgy and the Armenian Church that they have in their hearts."

Relaying a story of an "exquisite violin" only being made exquisite if it renders "heart-moving golden music that stirs you," Kouzouian spoke of Krikorian being handed that "violin" to him by his parents, especially his father, the late Deacon Khugas Krikorian who served the Holy Cross Armenian Church in Lawrence Mass. He went on to explain that this "exquisite violin" that the younger Krikorian found is called the Divine Liturgy, and that it was "nurtured over time by the late Very Rev. Oshagan Minassian in the Lawrence parish in Dn. Greg's earlier years, and then by Fr. Papken, Yeghishe Surpazan and Rev. Mampre Kouzouian here at Holy Trinity. These four clergymen of our church collectively taught him how to play not just notes, but how to turn notes into prayer, and how to play it from the heart, and how proud he has made them."

Rev. Vasken Kouzouian also spoke warmly of Carol Krikorian, the deacon's wife, saying "because she saw how much her husband loved his church, she joined him in his journey, step-by-step, every step of the way."

The program concluded with the benediction by Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian.

## OBITUARY

### Dr. Vahey Pahigian Dies Dedicated Surgeon

By Tom Vartabedian

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Throughout his storied career, Dr. Vahey Pahigian never knew the meaning of retirement.

Nor did he ever relinquish his medical persona: "A patient in need was a patient indeed."

He practiced his vocation diligently through his 93rd year before death took him October 17 at the age of 95.

In the interim, he was a true friend to the Armenian community of Rhode Island and a giant in the profession of women's health issues.

He was the type of guy who could save your life, then laugh with you over a cup of coffee. Beneath the veneer was a humble man who would never permit himself airs.

He served in the US Army as a field hospital surgeon and was later named Chief of general surgery at Women & Infants Hospital. Pahigian was a pioneer in breast cancer surgery in Rhode Island.

"Legend has it that when he walked the corridors of hospitals, nurses would take a bow as they passed him by," said Steve Elmasian. "He told me he wanted to stay in the profession forever because he never wanted to stop caring, treating and advising his patients. That kept him going until he could no longer walk."

Among Pahigian's patients was Elmasian's mom, who faced three surgeries. Stephen Elmasian himself was also operated on by the doctor.

"His hands were as steady as a young intern glued in cement," Elmasian said. "Whatever is said about this man in writing or verbally won't come close to doing him justice. His one regret was that in spite of saving so many lives over the years, he could not save his own wife."

Pahigian was married to Elizabeth S. (Champlin) Pahigian, a registered nurse. Together, they had two children, Beth and Craig.

Elmasian recalled the time he called the doctor one Sunday night late with an emergency



Dr. Vahey Pahigian

request and he honored it immediately. A prescription was quickly filled and the patient recovered the next morning.

"So many Armenians were his patients and for good reason," Elmasian brought out. "He was a small man in physical terms but an absolute giant of a doctor and human being. He will be sadly missed."

Pahigian was born in Lowell, Mass., son of the late Mihran and Haiganoush (Boyajian) Pahigian. He attended Lowell High School, the University of Rhode Island and Tufts Medical School.

He was a United States Army veteran, serving in the Third Army Corps during World War II as a field hospital surgeon. Up until his retirement in 2013, he ran his own private practice.

"Having been one of Dr. Pahigian's first emergency patients while he was an intern at Rhode Island Hospital in the early 1950s, my admiration and respect for him continued through these many years," said Anahid Varadian. "His compassion and skill as a physician is a testament to his being the best in his profession. The Karentz and Varadian families are very grateful to him."

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Annual Najarian Human Rights Lecture Sheds Light on Human Trafficking Epidemic

LECTURE, from page 1

tion, will be cheaper than one made by a regular workforce. "We as consumers prefer lower prices and capitalize on a low-wage, unregulated market," he said.

The industries that use slave or trafficked labor include frozen shrimp, tea, coffee, hand-woven carpets, rice, potato, corn, granite and limestone, apparel and sporting goods.

The speakers at the podium by turns scared, horrified and encouraged the audience, speaking about the incredible prevalence of trafficking both near and far.

Kara spoke about his experiences witnessing trafficking both in the US and in far corners of the earth. He suggested that trafficking should be called what it is: slavery. Kara, who has written extensively on the subject, teaches a course on it at Harvard Kennedy School.

Kara linked trafficking, be it for sexual, labor or organ harvesting, to the world economy, saying it was "the dark underbelly of globalization."

"Slave trading is the same thing as human trafficking. The purpose is the same" as those who enslaved Africans 500 years ago, he noted.

The topics the former investment banker addressed were not easy to listen to but the audience was transfixed. "I will never forget the first trafficked sex slave I met. She was 14. She looked to me like she was already dead," he said. That incident was 13 years ago and "thousands of miles away. It [the encounter] convinced me that I have to dedicate my life" to exposing and eradicating sex trafficking.

Her story is not unique. Kara said this past summer she met a girl who had been trafficked here in the US from Mexico, promised a cleaning job. Women and girls like her from Mexico as well as Guatemala and other central American countries, have to pay large sums for them, in this case \$800, in order to come here. Once they arrive, almost all of their salary is garnered by the traffickers and thus they are in a cycle in which they cannot pay back the traffickers to gain their freedom.

If they don't cooperate, they are threatened with death or rape. The girl in San Diego told him after her escape that every day she had prayed for release from the hell in which she survived. "I knew God had sent me to hell, but I did not know why," she had told him.

Kara said that those battling trafficking should learn cooperation techniques from traffickers who link across the world and create networks that are "brutally efficient."

He then spoke at length about the economics of trafficking, using his background in finance to show how lucrative it is and thus why it is so prevalent.

"There are immense profits and they continue to grow," he said.

"The early definition of slavery focuses on [the aspect] exercising power over someone because you legally owned them," he said. In the modern context, he explained, it is still the same. What is not the same, he said, is the price of slaves. Whereas when in the 18th century the price of a slave from Africa was about \$5,000, today a trafficked person is worth about \$400.

"You get a new slave when you have chewed up the other one," he said.

There are more than 2.5 billion people who live on \$2.50 or less a day. Those are people who often face social instability, bias against the female gender and political unrest. All these factors combined create the ideal condition for traffickers to swoop in, Kara explained.

Kara said there are three steps in the business model of trafficking: acquisition, movement and exploitation. Even when freed, those who have been enslaved often suffer so much because of the stigma of what they have done, that they end up being trafficked again and again.

Children bear a huge brunt of the slave market, be it for sexual or labor purposes.

He showed a photo of young children in Southeast Asia at a loom, weaving a carpet. They work 16-17 hours a day and receive just enough sustenance and rest in order to keep going. Some of the rugs their little hands create are sold at Macy's or Neiman Marcus, he said.

Similarly, he explained, Bangladesh has become a gigantic exporter of tea, but the people picking the tea leaves are often descendants of tea-leaf pickers from the 1860s imported from India, continuing the cycle of enslavement.

### Links to Armenians

The program was opened by Dr. Carolann Najarian, who said that trafficking of children or women for sexual purposes was certainly something that some Armenians who died or survived

the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey certainly endured.

"It is not an easy subject to think about. It is the heinous form of exploitation, slavery," said Najarian. "It is slavery in our midst."

"People have to educate themselves to unmask this monster," she continued. It is often dangerous work.

She recalled that her father, in whose memory the endowed public program of the Armenian Heritage Foundation, the sponsor of Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway lecture series was founded, would speak about women who

Incredibly, he said, in Massachusetts it was not a crime to exploit another being for commercial gain. It was a crime that did not exist. Massachusetts was the 47th state in the US to put a trafficking law in its books and passed a law that juveniles should not be prosecuted for prostitution. The law, he said, "gave us a roadmap of what to do next in Massachusetts."

He went on to say, "This is not a woman's issue; this is our issue," to great applause.

Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, who was welcomed warmly by the audience, said as a society "we must promote greater awareness on this issue.



The speakers gathered at a reception after the lecture at the Millennium Bostonian Hotel.

would take poison rather than be forced into a harem or work as sex slaves in Turkey.

She said the subject, therefore, is one that is important to her as "an Armenian, as a woman and as a citizen of the world."

Another speaker, Cherie Jimenez, the founder and executive director of the EVA (Education, Vision and Advocacy Center) Project, entranced the audience by her first-person account of living in the world of sexual servitude.

"I was caught up for many years in the industry," said the petite blonde, shocking many in the audience. "It is an industry built on gender inequality," with women "reduced to a commodity to be used."

She said her ultimate goal is to shut down the prostitution industry, but in the meantime, she said, the Swedish model of commitment to gender equality should be followed in the US.

Right here in Boston, she said, there are many vulnerable women who are easily victimized. "There is a culture that creates the image of women and girls as commodities. We should acknowledge prostitution in all its forms," she said, including pornography.

Speaker Liam Lowney, executive director of the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance, thanked Jimenez for her efforts. "She has been a leader in this."

He went on to say, "My 'aha' moment happened in Cambridge Superior Court," where a young girl had been arrested as a prostitute in Belmont.

When she was arrested 12 years ago, the young girl was labeled a criminal – a juvenile prostitute – rather than what she was, a trafficked child.

"She was arrested by Belmont police who released her to her 'uncle,' who took her to Georgia. She called the Belmont detective from Georgia, who helped bring her back to Massachusetts," he recalled. She was 16 and because of the detective's efforts, she had trusted him and thus was able to flee an abusive situation and turn her life around.

"She did not identify herself as a victim. She was funny, smart and determined," he said, qualities which ultimately helped her reclaim her life, but which did not help her be identified as a victim of trafficking and pimps. "She needed a place to live, education, mental health and a job," he said. Now, he said, she has received her GED and has two children. "I am truly honored to know her and her success is due to her only," he said.

Lowney praised the work of then Rep. Peter Koutoujian, calling him the "go-to guy" for victim assistance and Attorney General Martha Coakley for drafting legislation on trafficking.

To combat trafficking, we must all become educated and remain vigilant."

Turning to Kara, he thanked him for bearing witness to so many painful sights involving trafficking around the world, in order to shed light on the issue. "It must be something you carry with you," he said.

Koutoujian paid tribute to Clara Barton, "who right here, in this hall, spoke to help ease the plight of the Armenians." He segued into the Armenian Heritage Park, saying that the park was "constructed so that people would not forget" the atrocities the Armenians faced in the Ottoman Empire.

Next, quoting Martin Luther King Jr., he said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

He said about 27 million people around the world have been trafficked, with 87 percent younger than 25.

"The question is what can we do to combat human trafficking? The first step is we have to identify them," Koutoujian said.

Signs of trouble he pointed out include an employee that lives with an employer, who when questioned answers in a rote, scripted way.

"Reach out to your legislators," he urged. "Until 10-12 years ago, no one knew what I was talking about," he said, with regard to human trafficking.

Kara concurred, urging increased resources to combat trafficking, cleansing the supply chains, protecting the vulnerable and increasing the penalties for those who are convicted of the crime.

The days of slavery, he stressed, are not over. "This is not the case. We all know especially now." He suggested pointing the light on it, as "sunshine is the best disinfectant."

He added, "You are all becoming agents of change."

Also present at the event were two persons tasked with helping trafficked persons day or night, Det. Sgt. Dona Gavin of Boston Police and Julie Dahlstrom, director of the Boston University School of Law's new Human Trafficking Clinic, and managing attorney at Lutheran Social Services.

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Sheriff Peter Koutoujian



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Wife of Boston Mayoral Candidate Connolly Hopes to Bring Armenian Flavor to City Hall

CONNOLLY, from page 1

the rug business. Kapriel Kassakian hailed from Istanbul originally and in 1906 was involved in the groundbreaking and founding of Holy Cross Armenian Church in Union City, NJ.

Given the history of her family's involvement in developing the Armenian community in the Northeast, it is no surprise Meg Connolly feels especially grateful for the installation of the Armenian Heritage Park and the Genocide Memorial.

"I'm so proud that Boston has a park that remembers the Armenian Genocide. I was

Edward (Teddy), 4, (named after her Armenian uncle, Edward, who died of pancreatic cancer shortly after Teddy's birth) and Mary Katherine (MaryKate), 2 months, named after Meg's beloved grandmother.

Clare Connolly is already in the Boston school system.

"Improving the opportunities and quality of education for all people in the city, especially children who are under-served is a huge passion of his as shown by his work on the City Council and his work as a teacher," his wife said.

John Connolly had worked as a teacher at the Boston Renaissance Charter School and a school in New York's Lower East Side.

"John has a real personal investment in the city as a parent with children growing up here," she added.

Meg Connolly praised her husband's independence of thought. "He got into this race before Mayor Menino, whom we have a great respect for, announced his departure. I think that shows a real dedication to his vision and his ideas and ability to make difficult decisions and take a stand. He is not bogged down by outside interests or union interests. He isn't owned by anyone."

Meg Connolly stressed her commitment to community mental health, issues of trauma facing the immigrant population and the trickle-down effects of exposure to violence.

"I would welcome a role as a psychologist taking a huge interest in the intersection of mental health and public health, the experience of the diverse range of immigrants coming to our city and their varied experiences. I would be extremely committed to making sure that our city is as warm and welcoming

as possible taking real time to listen and learn of their experiences whether it be housing, jobs, educational opportunities, mental health service and public health services," she noted.

She added that with her background she could "bring a real dedication to the interests



Kassakian family portrait after leaving Istanbul at the turn of the century. Meg Connolly's grandfather, Zareh Kassakian, is pictured at left as young boy.



A young Mary Kondrajian, pictured left, paternal grandmother of Meg Connolly. The Kondrajian's arrived at Ellis Island in 1910.

really grateful to know that Councilor [Michael] Ross had advocated strongly for that park and I thanked him. It's very meaningful to myself and my family that it is being acknowledged and presented in such a beautiful way. I'm going to have a place to take my children to help them to learn and understand what happened when they are old enough," said Connolly.

Bringing Heritage Park to fruition was in large part due to a strong working relationship between Mayor Tom Menino and the Greater Boston Armenian community.

It is exactly this kind of relationship and open willingness to work with others that Meg Connolly said her husband John, will foster if elected mayor of Boston. "John will absolutely continue this relationship and take an interest in the issues that matter to his constituents," she said.

She also sees other overlaps between her husband's vision and the issues important to Armenians in the area. "Armenians bring so much to the Greater Boston community. ... So many people in the community contribute in different ways because of the values they came here with and because they understand the struggles and are very grateful for what they have because of their history. [Armenians] value education so highly, social justice and generosity," she said.

"The love of education is one reason that I believe John would resonate well with the Armenian community. Education is huge for him as well."

The couple has three children: Clare, 5,



Groundbreaking of Holy Cross Armenian Church, Union City, New Jersey in 1906, Meg Connolly's paternal great-grandfather, Kapriel Kassakian, attended as a founding church member.

of Armenians in the Greater Boston area and those in Armenia. I would be really interested in bringing together a trade delegation to see how we might come together and visit Armenia to understand their needs: social, physical, mental health, public health, medical facilities and infrastructure of the country."

She is not the only member of the family with ties to Armenia. She said, if her husband is elected mayor, she would also work with John's uncle, Greg Connolly, a professor of

public health at Harvard University, who has worked to curb the smoking epidemic in Armenia, a leading public health issue there.

Voters in Boston go to the polls on November 5.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# John Ohanian Receives International Trade / Broker of the Year Award

ALBANY, N.Y. — On October 16, Leosons Overseas Corporation was honored at the Tech Valley Global Business Network 2013 International Trade banquet. Companies at this event were awarded for their accomplishments in international trade, conducting business overseas or support for international trade in the Tech Valley (Upstate) New York Region.

At this event Leosons received the 2013 International Trade / Broker of the Year Award. Leosons Overseas Corporation is a family-owned business that has been owned and operated by John L. Ohanian since 1984. Ohanian, a native of Lebanon, moved his family to Albany during the Lebanese civil war. Leosons is an international trade company which distributes various US-made over-the-counter (OTC) pharmaceutical products to more than 30 countries throughout the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

In 2012, Leosons purchased two national brands, N'Ice Sugar Free Cough Lozenges and



John L. Ohanian

Fiberall, a laxative formula. This acquisition expanded the company's business model from solely international trade to also include domestic distribution of its products.

Ohanian, general manager and president of Leosons, said of receiving the award, "We are proud of our growth and success at Leosons. Our recent acquisition of the N'Ice and Fiberall brands has broadened our existing sales and distribution reach and has brought scale to our business. After 30 years of distributing US goods we are very honored to accept this award."

Leosons Overseas Corporation was estab-

lished to "build a bridge between manufacturers of pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals and specialty drugs to consumers in the Middle East and Africa." Headquartered in Albany, and with affiliate offices in Dubai Healthcare City, Dubai, as well as Los Angeles, California, which are managed and operated by Ohanian.

The Tech Valley Global Business Network is a partnership among the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber, Chamber of Schenectady County, Rensselaer County Regional Chamber, Chamber of Southern Saratoga County, Saratoga County Chamber and the Center for Economic Growth.

## Nishan Atinizian Receives Anania Shiragatsi Medal from President of Armenia

AWARD, from page 1

his efforts. Since 1982, he has been a supporter of the Armenian Sisters' Academy and has served on its executive council in the past. In appreciation of his commitment to the school, he was awarded the Armenian Sisters' Academy Humanitarian Award. Currently, he serves on a number of boards, including the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) and the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) and is active in other organizations, including the Council of Armenian Executives and the Knights of Vartan.

Atinizian's faith and deep religious beliefs have fostered his involvement in area churches. He served as a Parish Council member of the St. James Armenian Church, where the Atinizian Media Center can be found, supported initiatives at the Diocese and the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

As a result of his deep commitment and financial aid to the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and Holy Echmiadzin, he received the St. Gregory the Illuminator Medal and Pontifical Encyclical, from Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II for his dedication and service, the highest honor in the Armenian Church. He has been generous to other religious causes, including financial assistance for the building and completion of the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church in Belmont, which houses the Nishan and Margrit Atinizian Hall.

Atinizian travels frequently to Armenia and has initiated several investments there. In 2004, he spearheaded Armenian-American investors in the acquisition of Armenia Marriott Hotel in Yerevan, of which he is a co-owner. He is also the founder of the very first mortgage company in the country, appropriately named First Mortgage Company. His most recent endeavor is the development of a community of residential homes in Gumri, called the "Gumri City Center." He continues to support numerous orphanages, schools and other projects there,

including the Nishan and Margrit Atinizian Senior Center in Gumri, which provides a warm and safe environment, meals and fellowship to the 200 seniors who depend on the soup kitchen and senior center.

During his visit to Armenia in October, he participated to the Annual Investors Forum in Yerevan and presented his ideas to the participants from all over the world, regarding effective and helpful investment strategies in



Nishan Atinizian, President Serge Sargsisian and Margrit Atinizian

Armenia. During that forum, the Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hagopian awarded Atinizian with a certificate of appreciation for his investment in the country.

As well as being devoted to Armenian organizations, Atinizian has incorporated his greater Massachusetts community in his altruistic work. He received the Paul Harris Award from the Rotary Club of Cambridge, as well as a citation from the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives for his many contributions to the educational, cultural and religious establishments of the Armenian-American community of Massachusetts. Lastly, in 2005, Atinizian was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

He is married to Margrit Atinizian and has two children, Carolyn Atinizian Yardemian, an attorney, and Arthur Atinizian, vice president and CFO of UpFront Consultants, an Internet marketing firm. He has a granddaughter, Bianca Yardemian.



From right to left, Leo Ohanian, vice president of Leosons; John Ohanian, president of Leosons; Rita Ohanian, office manager and Isabel Kubikian, business developer



## AGBU HYE GEEN

### AGBU Hye Geen 20th Anniversary Celebration Continues

### Armenian Diaspora in the US vs. the Middle East

November 2, 2013  
AGBU Pasadena Center  
2495 East Mountain St., 11:00 a.m.

Speakers:

#### Tamar Kevonian

Publisher of *Mosaix Magazine*, on Gender Inequalities in the Armenian Community of Los Angeles

Guest speaker

#### Baydzig Arabian-Kalaydjian

Executive director of the Boston-based Tekeyan Cultural Association Board of Directors, on the Changing Armenian Diaspora and replicating the success of the Middle Eastern communities

Summing up by **Sona Zeitlian**



Nishan Atinizian addresses the Investors' Forum in Yerevan.

# Arts & Living

## Pianist Tigran Hamasyan Gives Jazz an Armenian Twist

By John Lewis

LONDON (*Guardian*) – Somewhere, there is home-movie footage of a 3-year-old Tigran Hamasyan at his childhood home in rural Armenia. He is listening to Black Sabbath's *Paranoid* and freaking out on a toy guitar. "That was my childhood ambition," he laughed. "Still, to this day, if I could become a killer guitar player in a couple of years, I'd quit playing the piano and start learning now. I'd love to front a thrash metal band!"

Thankfully, thrash metal's loss has been jazz's gain. At the age of 26, this tiny, impish Armenian-American is the hottest pianist in jazz, selling out arenas and earning fervent praise from the likes of Chick Corea, Brad Mehldau and Herbie Hancock (the latter declared: "Tigran, you are my teacher now!"). But Hamasyan isn't even sure if he makes jazz music. "I suppose it's jazz in the sense that I'm improvising," he said. "But the language I try to use when I'm improvising is not bebop but Armenian folk music."

Hamasyan has an omnivorous musical diet. He devours traditional songs from Armenia, Scandinavia and India, and has studied classical music to a high level (he has suggested a budding jazz pianist would be better off playing Bach or Chopin than studying bebop), while his iPod playlist is that of the 20-something hipster – J Dilla, Flying Lotus, Radiohead, Sigur Rós, Skrillex and a heavy dose of thrash metal.

But the music he makes doesn't really sound like any of the above. We met after he'd played to a sold-out 2,000-seat theatre in Toulouse, where his 90-minute set lurched from delicate, impressionistic versions of eastern orthodox hymns to bursts of electronica; from Keith Jarrett-like meditations to full-on jazz-rock.

"I get into different types of music and really immerse myself in each one and then move on," he said. "But I try to retain that intensity whenever I revisit any particular music." In the past 18 months alone he has collaborated with Indian percussionist Trilok Gurtu, Tunisian *oud* player Dhafer Youssef, dubstep collective LV, oddball hip-hop producer Prefuse 73, along with fellow Armenian-American Serj Tankian from prog-metal outfit System of a Down.

Hamasyan was born in Gumri, near Armenia's border with Turkey. Neither of his parents were musicians (his father was a jeweler, his mother a clothing designer), and he grew up listening to his father's heavy rock collection – Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple and Queen. By 3, he was picking out pop melodies on the family piano; from 6 he attended a specialist music school. "We can be grateful to the old Soviet Union that we had classical education systems in place," he said. "Everybody had a piano in their house, whether they were musicians or not." By the age of 9 he began to immerse himself in jazz, and even guested as a singer with a local big band. He said, "I was this weird, talented kid who sang a couple of standards and a Beatles song, *Oh Darling*."

As a young teenager, he moved on from bebop to experiment with Armenian folk music. "My idea was to try to weave these folk melodies into jazz improvisations," he said. "My first attempts were terrible! The challenge is that folk music is modal, with no chord changes. So you are trying to find harmonies for a music that's not supposed to have harmonies. That's tough." Few Armenian jazz musicians had tried this; instead Hamasyan was inspired by classical composers Avet Terterian

see JAZZ, page 13



Lena Gorginyan at the exhibition

## One-Day Lace Exhibit Dazzles with Intricate Designs

NEW YORK – For centuries, Armenian women have painstakingly made intricate lace designs which have been treasured by family members and passed down through the generations. Some are so delicate and fragile that they are preserved with the utmost love and care, only to see the light of day when shown to admiring viewers.

On Sunday, October 13, under the auspices of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral and cathedral dean, the Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian, an exhibition of the wondrous lace creativity of master needlework artist Lena Gorginyan was on view. Never before had attendees been treated to the harmonious, creative and unique patterns, more than 40 laceworks – some as large as five feet by

By Florence Avakian

three feet – that were exhibited in this one-day show.

There were crosses, khachkars, churches, flowers, doves of peace, coasters, shawls, tablecloths as well as mystical and poetic designs, all created from Gorginyan's heart and spirit. "One should not only see the nature, but also experience it," she has written. "I have strived for a harmony in heart and mind. Until now, I wonder and fail to explain what invisible mysterious spirit has guided me to create symbolic patterns, the existence of which I was never aware of before."

Welcoming the more than 200 attendees at the exhibition, event organizer Angela Kazarian, a specialist in the art of needlework, pointed out that though there are many types of needle-laces in the world, Armenian needle-lace "is very original and differs from the needle-works of other nations. It is unique in its technique, ornament patterns, and especially, in the order of its exclusive arrangement along the lace."

Kazarian explained that the different themes of Gorginyan's creations "expand beyond the boundaries of decorative-applied art and state a new reality." Also unique is the fact that no one before tried to make khachkars in lace. "Using the eternity symbol and Armenians' fascination with flowering and rebirth, she created a new genre in the history of lace. Khachkars had always been 'needlework' on stone. She created that needlework on lace," she said.

Attending the exhibition, Dr. Helen C. Evans, the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a well-known specialist on Armenian illuminated manuscripts, related that women working on lace are one of the memories of her first visit to Armenia in the early 1980s.

"I was so fascinated with the bobbins hanging from the lace being made by the women guards in the National Museum that I remember their work as much as I remember the antiquities that I saw then," she said.

She pointed out that equally important is that these works of Gorginyan depict khachkars, "a lasting symbol of Armenia. Their monumental stone forms are evoked here in exquisite lace-works, she said, and invited all to come to the Metropolitan

see LACE, page 11

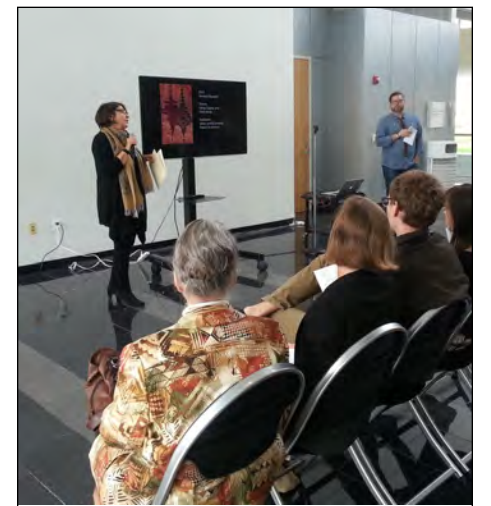
## Hagopian Design Competition Honors Late Friend, His Love of Animals

BIRMINGHAM, Mich. – Celebrating 25 years, the Hagopian World of Rugs/College for Creative Studies Student Rug Design Competition takes on a special meaning through a collaboration with The Michigan Animal Adoption Network.

For the 25th competition Hagopian is asking students to create a design in honor of their friend and family member Ken Snow whom they lost to cancer earlier this year. Describing Snow as a man who lived his life with integrity and who embraced Ghandi's message "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated," Edmond Hagopian indicated that Snow worked with the Michigan Humane Society and the Michigan Animal Adoption Network to create and support resources for abandoned animals; feeding them, finding them permanent homes, making available low-cost vaccinations, supporting shelters and providing hands-on rescue efforts. His hard work and dedication knew no bounds and his imprint is indelible. He did this in addition to running a successful business as a way of giving back to the community and to be an inspiration to others to open their hearts and find a way to make a difference in their communities.

Students are asked to create a design that encompasses his love of animals and the spirituality of his ideals of volunteerism, giving back and making a difference. The idea is to convey to the students that by giving back.

Marie Skladd, president of the Michigan



The students at the College for Creative Studies

Animal Adoption Network (MAAN), and Director of the Michigan Humane Society, and a close friend of Snow, will speak at a presentation at the school and encourage students who are interested to volunteer as he did. She will present opportunities for them to do so. The collaboration will also help to highlight the good work of the non-profit MAAN and The Michigan Humane Society and encourage community support for these entities.

Once the designs are submitted, interior designers from the local design community will act as judges and select the top three designs. The first-place design will be made into a rug and displayed during the annual Student Exhibition in May. Scholarship Awards are presented by Suzanne Hagopian to the winning students on the opening night of the annual exhibition. In addition, Hagopian makes an annual gift to the school.

Hagopian, a name known throughout the Detroit area for more than 75 years for Oriental and area rugs and the Original Hagopian Cleaning Services, is committed to encouraging interest in the textile arts.



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# New Book Teaches Toddlers about Church

NEW YORK – It's a familiar scenario: a family attending church and the little ones get restless, naturally enough. A few parishes stock pews with Christian activity books and children's picture Bibles or have some available as families walk in. After receiving repeated requests for toddler resources about the Armenian Church, the Diocesan Christian Education department responded with a book for the youngest worshippers: *When I Go To Church*.

Sized for children's small hands, the book is also made of thick coated cardboard to withstand the curiosity and energy of a toddler. Its 15 pages feature simple bilingual text lines describing what children experience in church – praying, lighting candles, singing, receiving Holy Communion and more. Best of all, children will be entranced by the illustrations of Anush Movsesian Avejic.

This is Avejic's first project for the Diocese. She grew up in California inspired by her family's love for the Armenian Church; she attended church as a child, sang in the choir and held var-

ious executive offices in the ACYO. Later she joined the Diocesan Camp committee, organizing and running Armenian church-centered programs for the children of the Diocese. She taught at the St. Gregory Hovsepian School, helping it to achieve full accreditation. Currently, she is a member of the St. Peter Armenian Church and Youth Ministries Center in Glendale, where she is one of the directors of the "In His Shoes" mission (launched by her brother, Fr. Vazken Movsesian), providing outreach to the local community and working on projects of global responsibility for the Armenian Church.

and sacred, but alive! As a child, I would sit between my two grandmothers – both Genocide survivors – while my parents sang in choir and my brothers served on the altar. I loved the fact that our church is interactive, and this is what I wanted to convey to the children. We worship actively – crossing ourselves, kneeling, bowing, sharing the good news with others that Christ is among us! I grew up in the church, singing in the choir as a teenager, getting married and raising a family there, and then serving within my church with its various outreaches to the needy of our community. The appeal of this project – and I hope it's apparent in my illustrations – was to be able to share the love of our Armenian Church and its richness with families everywhere."

Perhaps the biggest challenge of the project was the attention to detail and the need for accuracy. In the Armenian liturgy the priest and deacons are clothed a certain way, and church altars and buildings have a very distinctive look; people are crossing themselves and receiving Communion in a prescribed manner. "There is reason and meaning behind everything that is done in our Badarak – the way the censor is held, how the priest holds the hand cross – all of these things had to be taken into consideration and fine-tuned by a clergyman before the illustrations were done." Finalizing the pencil drawing was the hardest part – each one took quite a few sketches and roughs before it was considered finished. As challenging as it was though, it was truly a labor of love and a joy to watch the drawings grow to the final stage of laying down the color.

Regardless of her contribution, Avejic is delighted that such a book is being published. "Children need to feel connected to their church family. When parents bring their children to church, they begin to understand that there is something greater than themselves. Setting aside time for weekly worship at church becomes the norm, and children grow up with a sense of belonging to God and His family."

Ideal for placing in the pews, or for Sunday School and Armenian School, it is, as well, a perfect gift for baptisms, name days, birthdays, and Christmas. The book is available from the Diocese's St. Vartan Bookstore.

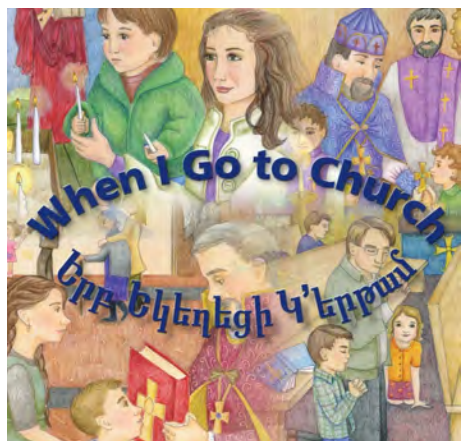


Illustrator Anush Movsesian Avejic

ious executive offices in the ACYO. Later she joined the Diocesan Camp committee, organizing and running Armenian church-centered programs for the children of the Diocese. She taught at the St. Gregory Hovsepian School, helping it to achieve full accreditation. Currently, she is a member of the St. Peter Armenian Church and Youth Ministries Center in Glendale, where she is one of the directors of the "In His Shoes" mission (launched by her brother, Fr. Vazken Movsesian), providing outreach to the local community and working on projects of global responsibility for the Armenian Church.

Avejic received her degree in graphic design/illustration and her first love is illustrating children's books (specializing in pen and ink, watercolor and colored pencil media). Her pleasure in creating beautiful things was the impulse behind her own line of jewelry – Pomegranate & Eye – which often features the Armenian pomegranate motif.

She was very excited about illustrating *When I Go To Church* from the beginning: "I really feel very passionate about our spiritual journey and love our church, viewing it as not only beautiful



Members of Aradzani Dance Group

## Aradzani Dance Group Travels to Historic Armenia Through Dance

BAYSIDE, N.Y. – The Aradzani Dance Group will have a premier showing of excerpts from its second two part instructional dance DVD titled "A Trip Through Historic Armenia Through Dance II" on Sunday November 17, at 1 p.m. at The Armenian Church of The Holy Martyrs Auditorium at 209-15 Horace Harding Expressway.

The first part of the two-part DVD is a presentation of dances from four regions of pre-1915 Historic Armenia. It includes video and slide footage of each town visited followed by a performance of dances from that particular town. The first part also includes an interview with Sason Demirjian a native of Arkhund Village of Sasun. While Sason is giving information about his native village video footage from the village will be presented. The second (instructional) part of the DVD explains the steps of each dance presented in the first part.

The dances presented on this DVD are endangered and are from the following towns and villages of pre-1915 Historic Armenia:

Parstr Hayk: Gamakh, Gerjanis, Yerznga, Kghi, Terjan, Papert, Sper, Garin, Basen, Alashgerd.

Gars: Gars

Vaspouragan: Van, Ardamed Village, Hayots Tsor villages of Khorkom and Ankegh, Shadakh, Moks

Daron: Sghert, Paghesh, Sasun, Mush.

The DVD will be available in a number of libraries including The Library of Congress and The National Library of Armenia.

The DVD can be purchased from several internet sites and from the following bookstores:

Massachusetts: ArmenianVendor.com, St. Vartan Bookstore at the Diocese of The Armenian Church, The Armenian Church of The Holy Martyrs Bookstore, Bayside, Abril Bookstore in Glendale.

The Aradzani Dance Group is an ethnographic dance group whose objective is to preserve and perpetuate songs and dances of pre-1915 Historic Armenia. The group has a repertoire of 120 dances. This two-part DVD is part of Aradzani's ongoing project of documenting all of the dances in its repertoire for future generations.

## One-Day Lace Exhibit Dazzles with Intricate Designs

LACE, from page 10

Museum to see the Armenian stone khachkars. One, from Geghard, belongs to the United Nations as Armenia's gift to the world body, and is now housed at the Metropolitan while the U.N. is being renovated. The other, a monumental khachkar, is on loan to the Metropolitan from Armenia for several years. "It has interlaces that can remind you of lace," she explained, and called Gorginyan's work "exceptional."

Born in 1930 in Odzun village in Lori, Gorginyan studied at the Yerevan State Pedagogical University, majoring in physics and mathematics. For 51 years, she taught physics and astronomy in high schools in Yerevan and Shamlugh, receiving many honors and prizes, including the title of "Honored Teacher of the Republic of Armenia".

In 1975, she started lacemaking, and in 2009 was awarded the title of "National Expert of Embroideries" at the Ministry of Culture. In both 2009, and 2012, her exquisite work was exhibited at Yerevan's Folk Art Museum, as well as the 2012 monumental exhibition dedicated to the "500th Anniversary of Armenian Printing" at the Yerevan History Museum.

Many notable citizens of Armenia have rec-



Children examine one of Lena Gorginyan's masterpieces.

ognized and complimented Gorginyan's artistry, among them, poet and writer Metakseh who calls the needlework "fascinating and amazing. The beauty and richness of these pieces are like non hand-made monuments dedicated to the eternal Armenian spirit. They are deeply emotional and amaze the viewer with their delicacy, rich patterns and

uniqueness."

And playwright Samvel Khalatyan has written, "Mrs. Gorginyan is a worthy heir of her Armenian ancestors who cherished the traditions of creativity and highly artistic taste of lacemaking. Each of her pieces has an important spiritual value incorporating music, elegy and silent eloquence."



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Armenian 'Orphan Rug' Is in White House Storage, as Unseen as Genocide Is Neglected

RUG, from page 1

the more than 100,000 children who were assisted by the US-sponsored Near East Relief organization, which helped relocate and protect the girls who wove the "orphan rug." It was made in the town of Ghazir, now in Lebanon, as thanks for the United States' assistance during the genocide.

There was hope that the carpet, which has been in storage for almost 20 years, might be displayed December 16 as part of a Smithsonian event that would include a book launch for Hagop Martin Deranian's *President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug*. But on September 12, the Smithsonian scholar who helped organize the event canceled it, citing the White House's decision not to loan the carpet. In a letter to two Armenian American organizations, Paul Michael Taylor, director of the institution's Asian cultural history program, had no explanation for the White House's refusal to allow the rug to be seen and said that efforts by the US ambassador to Armenia, John A. Heffern, to intervene had also been unavailing.

Although Taylor, Heffern and the White House curator, William G. Allman, had discussed during a January meeting the possibility

of an event that might include the rug, it became clear that the rug wasn't going to emerge from deep hiding.

"This week I spoke again with the White House curator asking if there was any indication of when a loan might be possible again but he has none," wrote Taylor in the letter. Efforts to contact Heffern through the embassy in the Armenian capital of Yerevan were unsuccessful, and the State Department referred all questions to the White House.

Last week, the White House issued a statement: "The Ghazir rug is a reminder of the close relationship between the peoples of Armenia and the United States. We regret that it is not possible to loan it out at this time."

That leaves the rug, and the sponsors of the event, in limbo, a familiar place for Armenians. Neither Ara Ghazarians of the Armenian Cultural Foundation nor Levon Der Bedrossian of the Armenian Rugs Society can be sure if the event they had helped plan was canceled for the usual political reason: fear of negative reaction from Turkey, which has resolutely resisted labeling the events at the end of the Ottoman Empire a genocide. But both suspect it might have been.

"Turkey is a very powerful country," says Der Bedrossian, whose organization was planning to fund a reception for the event.

And it's a sign of the Obama administration's dismal reputation in the Armenian-American community that everyone assumes it must be yet another slap in the face for Armenians seeking to promote understanding of one of the darkest chapters in 20th-century history.

Aram Suren Hamparian, executive director of the Armenian National Committee of America, says the president has had "a very negative reception across the board in the Armenian world, and that includes both Democrats and Republicans." The principal emotion is profound disappointment. As a candidate, and senator, Obama spoke eloquently about the Armenian Genocide, risking the ire of Turkey and Turkish organizations. But since taking office, says Hamparian, Obama has avoided the word, making more general statements about Armenian suffering. Critics of his silence point to the geopolitical importance of Turkey in a region made only more complex by the Arab Spring and a brutal civil war in Syria.

The word genocide is a flash point in the ongoing animosity between Turkey, Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora. Turkish resistance to accepting the historical facts of the Armenian genocide has included wholesale denial that the events took place, an effort to contextualize them as the fallout of a complicated, violent period, and semantic argument based on the 1948 legal definition of genocide,

established by the United Nations. Independent scholars have eviscerated the first of these claims, demonstrated the bad faith of the second (the treatment of the Armenians was egregious) and grappled seriously with the legal particulars, especially the difficulty of proving the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such." But few seriously argue that the events weren't genocidal.

Samantha Power, for example, uses the term "Armenian Genocide" throughout her landmark 2002 book on genocide, *A Problem From Hell*. Power was appointed by Obama to serve as US ambassador to the United Nations, and was confirmed in August.

But the president's language has been more circumspect. As a candidate, he said, "The Armenian Genocide is not an allegation, a personal opinion or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence. America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides." But in his most recent presidential proclamation honoring April 24's Armenian Remembrance Day, he used the Armenian term "Meds Yeghern" — "great calamity" — while avoiding explicit mention of genocide.

U.S. government officials and the Smithsonian have been reluctant to address a controversy that is often dismissed as just another intractable historical dispute. Although Armenian musicians performed at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 2002, a Smithsonian spokeswoman says the institution hasn't taken up the subject of the genocide, a remarkable omission of scholarship concerning an important ethnic group in the United States and one of the last century's most critical and notorious historical events. (Even Adolf Hitler supposedly referred to the Armenian genocide in a quote that is also disputed by some scholars: "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" he asked in a speech just before Germany invaded Poland in 1939.)

In Power's book, the author notes the power of "Turkish objections" to prevent official U.S. recognition of the genocide. As a presidential candidate, Obama said in a statement that he "stood with the Armenian-American community in calling for Turkey's acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide." But April's presidential proclamation finessed the delicate situation by saying, "I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view has not changed," suggesting he strongly supports a truth he no longer has the courage to utter.

Calls and e-mails to the Turkish Embassy in Washington weren't returned.

The status of the rug remains ambiguous. It was last taken out of storage in 1995 and is reported to be in good condition. But a White House spokesman declined to answer questions about whether it might ever be seen again, if the climate is simply too politicized for the rug to be exhibited.

And the Smithsonian is distancing itself from Taylor. "Dr. Taylor put this together on his own, nobody knew about it, certainly senior leadership didn't know about it," says Randall Kremer, who handles public affairs for the National Museum of Natural History, where Taylor is employed.

Taylor says he doesn't want to speculate about why the White House won't lend the object, and he says he isn't an expert on the tortured politics of the region. It was the rug, its iconography, its status among Armenians and its history that intrigued him, especially after hearing Armenians discuss it during a 2012 visit to Armenia.

"We're not afraid of doing Armenian exhibitions," he says. "I would love to do one."

Although the White House can offer no explanation about why the rug is off limits to the American people, Der Bedrossian is optimistic that it might someday see the light of day.

"Rug weaving is a metaphor for me: We can make peace weaving together," he says. "We are patient. I tend to believe in miracles. Someday it will come."

## Schiff, Valadao Urge White House to Reverse Decision

US Representatives Adam Schiff (D-CA) and David Valadao (R-CA) are urging their Congressional colleagues to join them in co-signing a letter urging the White House to reverse its decision to block the public display of the rug.

The Congressional letter campaign comes in the wake of the reports that the White House, after agreeing to lend the rug for an exhibition at the Smithsonian Institute, organized in cooperation with the Armenian Cultural Foundation and Armenian Rug Society, mysteriously and abruptly announced it would not make this historic artwork available for display.

In their letter, Valadao and Schiff, who are the lead sponsors of the Armenian Genocide Resolution (H.Res.227), note: "The Armenian Orphan Rug is a piece of American history and it belongs to the American people. For over a decade, Armenian American organizations have sought the public display of the rug and have requested the White House and the State Department grant their request on numerous occasions. Unfortunately, Armenian Americans have yet to have their requests granted."

## Review: Charles Aznavour Performs at the Royal Albert Hall

By Neil McCormick

LONDON (*Daily Telegraph*) — On stage at the Royal Albert Hall, Charles Aznavour had a confession to make: he was using a teleprompter to remind him of the lyrics. He has, he points out, better excuses than most performers: "It is difficult sometimes to come from a concert in Italy and remember to sing in English."

This, his mock modest gesture suggests, is a joke: the Armenian-born French *chanson* star has been deftly switching between five languages without prompting for his entire career. His real excuse, he reveals with a shrug, is that in "two months, I'm going to be 90 years old."

Small, dapper, with fluid movements and a rich, expressive voice, it almost seems condescending to say that Aznavour looks and sounds amazing for his age. Particularly since he has always seemed old. He wrote his first song in 1941 and by the time his fame spread from the Continent to Britain in the 1970s, his sets were filled with elegant lyrical ballads grappling with nostalgia, regret and the relentless passage of time.

You could say he has grown into the songs, and the conclusion of *Yesterday When I Was Young* is delivered with such devastating, wistful pathos it is faintly mind-boggling to consider that it was written in 1964, when Aznavour was just 40.

Something has been lost along the way, but not too much. With a trembling hand and a lack of suppleness in the lower timbre that sees him flattening out some of those beautiful melodies, he no longer has the commanding vigor that once made *What Makes A Man A Man* such an electrifying showstopper.

He rose to the occasion with a beautiful higher register, but rushed through *She*, and for a moment seemed bored with his biggest hit. The performance was hampered by the flatness of the sound, clattering drums and a bland mush of keyboards at times overwhelming the nuance of his vocal. I know the Albert Hall's unusual proportions present acoustic challenges, but the venue has been around even longer than Aznavour and you would think professional sound engineers would have worked it out by now.

The fantastic quality of Aznavour's songs and the sheer charisma of his presence hold the center. His audience proved as devoted as teens at a One Direction concert. When he threw a cloth into the front rows at the end of *La Bohème*, there was an unbecoming scrum, with a bearded white-haired gent scrabbling on the floor in a tug of war with a bountiful woman in a red dress. Further proof, perhaps, that music keeps you young.

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## CONNECTICUT

**NOVEMBER 23 — Holiday Fair** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Holy Resurrection Armenian Church, 1910 Stanley St., New Britain. Featuring Armenian food and pastries, vendors for holiday shopping, Kitchen Cafe, Santa appearance from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Admission is free. For more info, contact the church office at 860-223-7875.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**NOVEMBER 1 and 2 — 57th Annual St. Stephen's Bazaar**, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Open to the public; lamb, losh and chicken kebab, Armenian pastries, gourmet food, harvest store and silent & live auctions.

**NOVEMBER 7 — Avak luncheon**, noon, Jaffarian Hall, St. Gregory Church, 158 Main St., North Andover, speaker, Dr. Edward Khantian, clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, "Impressions of a Keynote Visit to Armenia."

**NOVEMBER 8 and 9 — Annual Autumnfest Bazaar sponsored by the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe**, 110 Main St., Haverhill, Friday 12-8 p.m. and Saturday, 12-7 p.m. Lamb, losh and chicken kebab and kheyra. Dinner served all day. Pastry table, Armenian cuisine, gift basket raffles and raffles for cash and prizes. For more info, visit our new website [www.hypointearmenianchurch.org](http://www.hypointearmenianchurch.org) or call 978-372-9227.

**NOVEMBER 10 — "The Art of Madeline and Eunice Kolligian"** opening reception. 3 to 5 p.m. Armenian Library and Museum of America, Inc. (ALMA), 65 Main St., Watertown. Contemporary Art Gallery (3rd floor). Free Admission. For more info. [info@almainc.org](mailto:info@almainc.org), (617) 926-2562.

**NOVEMBER 10 — St. Stephen's Ladies Guild presents "The Gamavor Story,"** performed by the Way We Were Ensemble of New York/ New Jersey, 2 p.m., St. Stephen's Church Hall, Elton Ave., Watertown. Tickets: \$20 advanced purchase, \$25 at the door, \$10 children under 12. For tickets, contact Mary Derderian at [hyeguain@yahoo.com](mailto:hyeguain@yahoo.com) or 781-762-4253; make checks payable to St. Stephen's church.



**On November 16, the Second annual Mer Doon Benefit Dance will take place from 7:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown, Mass. The event will feature John Berberian, Bob Mougamian, Mal Barsamian and Bruce Gigarian, as well as Mezza, a dessert table and more. Tickets are \$40 for adults and \$30 for students. For tickets and table reservations, please call Mark at 617-256-5358.**

**NOVEMBER 16 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) 38th Annual Luncheon Auction**, Burlington Marriott, Burlington; 11 a.m. silent auction and bidding; Guest auctioneers Al Kaprielian and Cindy Fitzgibbon; \$60 per person, Visa and MasterCard accepted. For reservations and info, contact: [awwauction@gmail.com](mailto:awwauction@gmail.com).

**NOVEMBER 16 — Second annual Mer Doon Benefit Dance**, 7:30 p.m. to 1 a.m., Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown. Featuring John Berberian, Bob Mougamian, Mal Barsamian and Bruce Gigarian. Mezza, dessert table and more. Tickets: \$40 adult, \$30 student; for tickets and table reservations, please call Mark at 617-256-5358.

**DECEMBER 6 — Anniversary celebration by Lowell "Aharonian" Gomideh**, 6:30 p.m., St. Gregory Church, North Andover; dinner and program honoring 50-year members Steve Dulgarian and Joe Dagdigian; remembering the 25th anniversary of the earthquake in Armenia; soloist Nina Hovsepian, accompanied by Mary Barooshian; donation, \$20 adults, \$10 students.

**DECEMBER 6 AND 7 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar**, Friday, 3-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge.

**DECEMBER 15 — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra-Christmas Holiday Concert**, 7 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date, details to follow.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

**NOVEMBER 3 — Ararat Armenian Congregational Church Celebrates 100 Years: 1913-2013.** Join the historic Armenian American community of Southern NH for a celebration lunch at Tuscan Kitchen restaurant, 67 Main St., Salem; 1 p.m. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, contact [janigian@comcast.net](mailto:janigian@comcast.net).

## RHODE ISLAND

**NOVEMBER 9 and 10 — Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence, 83rd Annual Armenian Food Fair and Bazaar**, Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 6 p.m., Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St. Authentic Armenian food and pastries, Take-out food booth. Armenian Market featuring traditional Armenian favorites. Activities for children. Daily & scratch ticket raffles. Silent auction, Penny social, TV room for football. Cash, Check, Visa and MC accepted. Free admission — everyone welcome. FREE valet parking. Call 401-272-7712 or visit [www.armenianfoodfairri.com](http://www.armenianfoodfairri.com)

## Tigran Hamasyan Gives Jazz an Armenian Twist

JAZZ, from page 10

and Arno Babajanian, who "took Armenian folk music into insane territory."

At 16, he left to study in California. "There are probably more Armenians there than in Armenia," he joked, where he has lived ever since. He quickly made connections on the LA jazz scene, recording his first album when he was only 18. His fifth and latest, "Shadow Theatre," features a varied lineup, mixing Hamasyan's piano and wordless vocals with touches of baroque, jazz-rock and electronica. One Armenian folk song, *Drip*, is transformed into juddering dubstep, another, *Pagan Lullaby*, resembles *Sigur Rós*. But, if the settings are expansive, the melodies are simple and direct.

"I've been stripping away layers of complexity with each album," he said. "You can play a bunch of fast stuff or write a complicated melody, but the musical part of that is to make it flow naturally." He will often do that by singing along with himself as he solos, in the style of Keith Jarrett or Glenn Gould. "Singing along can help to make your improvisation sound natural," he said. Sometimes you can hear him beat-boxing while he plays, or singing rhythmic patterns in the style of an Indian tabla player. He will often deliberately restrict himself to a small range, soloing within the space of a single octave. "When I solo I tend not to think of myself as a pianist. In my head, I'm playing a violin or a guitar, say. Often it's all about just finding a sound and sticking in that register."



Tigran Hamasyan

Hamasyan has spent much of the past year back in Armenia, which has made him all the more fascinated by its traditional music. "Folk is like the first form of expression. Nowadays, if you're a musician, you're supposed to be cool or special or something," he said. "But, back in the day, everybody was a musician. Every action, every ceremony, was accompanied by music. You watch women churning butter and there's a folk song that accompanies each movement in that process. You go to parts of rural Armenia and you see people singing and harmonizing, spontaneously. It's amazing, like watching the birth of music itself."

## Virtuosity and Versatility Mark Mazmanian Quartet's Performance in Midwest

By David Luhrssen

GREENFIELD, Wis. — The Mazmanian Family took its audience on a musical world tour with Armenia as the home base. At their October 26 concert at St. John the Baptist Armenian Church here, the quartet journeyed across Eastern Europe, to Spain via Cuba, to Ireland and the US, but their repertoire's heart and soul was rooted in the Armenian homeland.

Leading the San Francisco ensemble was violinist Greg Mazmanian, a veteran musician who has performed with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra along with Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Ray Charles. He acted as the evening's host and humorous icebreaker in brief introductions for each piece on the program, and leading his three grown children through the selections. Ida anchored the quartet on piano with siblings Eddy and Rose joining their father on violin.

The Mazmanians fused virtuosity and entertainment in a program that included Gypsy music, a rendition of the jazz standard *Take Five* as never heard before and an orig-

inal variation on the familiar melody of *Fiddler on the Roof*. The torrid flamenco rhythms of *Malaguena* by Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona provided lively contrast.

The Mazmanians responded to an audience request by performing a medley of Irish jigs.

Much of the evening, however, was rooted



The Mazmanian Family Quartet

in Armenian traditional music, especially the melodies collected at the turn of the 20th century by Komitas Vartabed and transmuted into art songs. After a standing ovation, the Mazmanians concluded their concert with a rousing encore of Aram Khachaturian's *Sabre Dance*.



## COMMENTARY

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror Spectator

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## COMMENTARY

## 'Georgian Dream' Comes True

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The presidential election in Georgia is not only significant for the Georgians, but also for its neighbors in Armenia and the entire region.

Georgian Dream is a political coalition put together by the Georgian billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili to unseat President Saakashvili and his United National party ruling for the last 10 years.

Mikheil Saakashvili came to power through the Rose Revolution, which ousted President Eduard Shevardnadze and set Georgia on a new political course. It was a time when political activists, funded and trained by the Soros Foundation, fomented political upheavals in the former Soviet republics with the avowed purpose of promoting democracy, but in fact, were reorienting the policies of those countries towards the West.

The following year, Ukraine was "democratized" through the Orange Revolution.

The US-trained Saakashvili placed his country in a path firmly heading towards the West and NATO and in the process, he antagonized his northern neighbor, Russia, to a point that in 2008, war broke out between the two and Georgia lost two regions – Abkhazia and South Ossetia – to Russia.

That full decade of rule was marked by mixed results – the economy was developed, rule of law was established and corruption almost uprooted. But the campaign, which had started to bring democracy to the country, experimented with changes at the expense of harsh rules – excessive cases of detentions, torture and this time corruption by the new administration.

During the election campaign, Ivanishvili noted that tax collection mechanisms became very efficient only to be able to misappropriate the collected taxes.

Under Saakashvili, the Georgian government's relations with Armenia were very unfriendly – if not outright hostile. This Georgia always voted against Armenia and with Azerbaijan at the UN, despite the fact they are the only Christian nations in this Islamic ocean. Saakashvili's last hurrah was his speech at the UN last September, making unsavory remarks about Armenia's joining the Customs Union with Russia. Saakashvili also conspired with Azerbaijan to isolate Armenia in all regional developments – oil and gas lines were routed through Georgia to deny Armenia access to those energy resources.

There were four main reasons that shaped the Georgian policy regarding Armenia:

- The Tbilisi government perceived Armenia as Russia's vanguard in the region.
- Armenia, already blocked by two hostile neighbors – Turkey and Azerbaijan – would not react to Tbilisi's actions in order not to compromise a third border access with the world. Against all provocations by Tbilisi, Armenia soft-pedaled its Georgian policy
- The restive Armenian region in Javakhk would be agitating for autonomy, therefore Armenia had to be punished for Javakhk's political aspirations and
- Georgians have always been jealous of the Armenians who built their capital, Tbilisi, and handed it over to them on a silver platter.

Of course the 2008 war with Russia further complicated the relations between the two nations. But a revolution, which had started with roses, had begun to serve only thorns to the Georgian people, when Mr. Ivanishvili came into the picture.

Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream Coalition soundly defeated Saakashvili's United National Movement Party last year, occupying a comfortable lead in the parliament with 85 seats. That began a year of French-style cohabitational politics, with a lame-duck president representing the opposition and a prime minister

and the parliament representing the majority.

Although the West qualified the process as maturing democracy, the president and the prime minister exchanged openly-bitter barbs with each other until the October 27 presidential election, where Mr. Ivanishvili's handpicked candidate, Giorgi Margvelashvili, won 67 percent of the votes against David Bakradze's 20 percent, while Nino Burjanadze trailed in third place with 10 percent of the votes. She was a former Saakashvili ally who had turned against him during the 2008 war with Russia, openly advocating a policy of rapprochement with the Kremlin. Her 10-percent vote may also denote the measure of Russia's popularity in Georgia.

Georgia's constitution was changed to leave a ceremonial role for the president, except for being commander in chief of the armed forces, concentrating all executive powers in the hands of the prime minister, to be elected after Mr. Ivanishvili retires in 2014. The name of the next prime minister still remains a mystery.

The new president is a colorless academic with scant experience in politics. He fits exactly Mr. Ivanishvili's image of a leader. Indeed, the billionaire politician vowed to eliminate from Georgian politics the "superman" rulers, which Saakashvili tried to portray.

The NATO, PACE and EU representatives qualified the election as transparent and fair. They all found the elections moving Georgia towards a Euro-Atlantic sphere.

The leaders of the Georgian Dream Party plan to have a balanced policy; while moving towards European integration, they will try to mend fences with Moscow.

Western powers rushed to congratulate the victory of the new president. As of this writing, no message was issued by the Kremlin. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov wished that the new administration would have an improved relation with Moscow.

Armenia has become a hostage to the hostility and the rivalry between Moscow and Tbilisi. To measure the level of rancor and the grudge harbored by the Georgian president, it suffices to read about the exchange of insults between Mr. Saakashvili and Vahakn Chakhalian, an Armenian activist in the Javakhk region, jailed by the government for expressing autonomy aspirations for Javakhk Armenians.

During the presidential campaign, Saakashvili visited an Armenian Church in Akhalkalak, where he faced Chakhalian. The latter said, "You took four and a half years of my life." Saakashvili called Chakhalian and a few others "bandits," "separatists" and "criminals." He boasted about having expelled the Russian military base from that Armenian-populated province (which was providing security and jobs to area Armenians) and he enforced the Georgian language to assimilate the young generation, while forbidding the importation of textbooks from Armenia.

Saakashvili's policy was two-pronged: while assimilating the young generation of Armenians, he impoverished the province to force many Armenians to leave, which they did and he was able to quell the autonomy aspirations.

Mr. Ivanishvili thus far has made contradictory statements about Armenians in Georgia, since coming to power. But the majority of the Armenians voted for his candidate, perhaps out of spite toward Saakashvili's policies, and also with the hope that some change could be brought in to improve the economy of the province.

If and when relations normalize between Moscow and Tbilisi, transit trade and movement of people and goods will be facilitated with the outside world.

As far as confiscated Armenian Churches in Georgia and the tacit discrimination against Armenians are concerned, only patience and non-violent resistance will help.

The Georgian presidential election promises positive changes for the region, hopefully with some dividends also going to Armenia.

## 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

# The Two Sisters of Diyarbakir

By Tom Vartabedian

**T**hey were young and exuded innocence. They were born and raised in Dikranagert before the Ottoman Turks ran roughshod over their land. The year was 1915 and they watched in horror as members of their family were put to death outside their door.

Vergeen Hekimian was the dancer, who could beguile any crowd in her village and later in what we call the Diaspora. Ojen Hekimian took the back seat, comfortably remaining in the background.

Together, they were the two Hekimian sisters of Diyarbakir.

Ojen Hekimian escaped the brutality by hiding in a well before taking refuge with a Kurdish family. Vergeen Hekimian was corralled with thousands of others on their harrowing trek toward persecution.

Fortunately for them, the sisters survived along with their mother Vartouhi Hekimian before being reunited in Marseilles and eventually set up residence in Greater Boston. The story of these two young girls is the story of their people as we approach the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

They settled first in Newton Upper Falls and later Somerville, raising their families and cultivating a lifestyle that kept their proud heritage intact. At hantesses and other cultural soirees, the applause usually rang loud and clear for Vergeen Hekimian.

Despite her limp, up she rose to dance, twirling her arms and body to the rhythm of her music. A permanent injury to her leg had left the woman handicapped but not

debilitated. She always found that surge of vitality whenever it came time to do a solo or lead a line dance.

As immigrants, the family sacrificed their means in the new world. The teenaged sisters became young entrepreneurs in Davis Square, operating a confectionary store together with extreme diligence, helping their parents with whatever meager income they could raise.

The scars and emotion of having survived an onslaught did nothing to extinguish their spirit. When Ojen husband opened a coffee shop, you usually found Vergeen helping behind the counter.

They took their families to Revere Beach and visited their departed together at the cemetery each Memorial Day. One's joy was another's pleasure. In sorrow, they would grieve together.

Eventually both became widowed and lived a mile apart. They would visit one another with diligence. Being three years ahead, Ojen upheld her role as the "big sister." She was the designed driver.

They infused the language and heritage into their children, gave them a spiritual presence as Armenian Catholics and kept the embers burning to a fine ethnic glow. When Ojen buried a son, Vergeen was right by her side offering solace.

The dancer danced, bum leg and all. The wallflower was an admiring spectator. It was that way for 90 years.

At Vergeen's birthday party, she rose from her seat and took to the dance floor. The Roger Krikorian Band was entertaining at the Karoun Restaurant in Newton. Roger was a dear family friend and knew Vergeen's penchant for dancing. But this was a switch. It was Ojen who took to the floor first for a rare occasion. She was the birthday girl and wasn't going to be upstaged on this day.

You had to be there to see this spectacle. The two sis-

ters – ages 90 and 87 – were peerless in their dancing mode. It attracted a beeline finally as other octogenarians took to the floor. A celebrated fraternity of lifelong friends joined in the music.

It was not the Club Omar Khayyam or any other Oriental hotspot, but rather their very own kef time soiree.

When asked about her longevity, she would wink an eye and say, "Join a health club and hang around people young enough to be your grandchildren. That'll keep you young and fit."

Ojen did just that. At 90, she was the oldest regular at Healthworks Fitness Club in Cambridge. And drove herself to the gym.

At age 95, Vergeen was reluctantly taken from her home and placed inside a Haverhill nursing home. A few months later, Ojen was transferred to a similar facility a mile or two away.

One week Ojen would visit Vergeen and another week, they traded places. They would sit and talk about the bad times in Turkey and the good times in their adopted land.

They would chat and smile about their children and their grandchildren. On occasion, Ojen would remind Vergeen about her dancing.

"You could always excite the crowd," she would say. "Bad leg and all, you put on a show."

"You weren't a bad dancer yourself," Vergeen retorted, "when you wanted to be. After all, how many people 90 years old can even leave their chair?"

Vergeen preceded her sister in death. She was my aunt. Ojen was a month shy of her 99th birthday when she followed in repose as the last remaining Genocide survivor in Haverhill. I was proud to have her for my mother.

Together, they were the two sisters of Diyarbakir.

# How Turkey Betrayed Israel and the US

By Frida Ghitis

A new report has sent a jolt through the world of spies and spy-handlers, with revelations of a major betrayal by a key ally of the United States and the West. That ally is Turkey, a member of NATO, a candidate for membership in the European Union and nation with

close ties to the United States and, until a few years ago, a good friend of Israel.

The well-connected Washington Post writer David Ignatius reported the shocking news that Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan gave Iran the names of as many as 10 Iranians who were spying for Israel. The spies had been traveling to Turkey for meetings with officers of the Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency.

In 2012, Tehran announced it had found a

spy ring working for Israel. Since then there have been several reports of executions in Iran of men charged with spying for Israel.

The story comes just days after a Wall Street Journal report that American officials believe Turkey's powerful spymaster, Hakan Fidan, handed Iran crucial intelligence collected not just by Israel but also by the United States.

If the reports are correct, Turkey is not just failing in its duties as a NATO ally; it is also acting as an enemy of the United States and its European allies, members of NATO. If the allegations are true, Ankara undermined a campaign focused on what is probably the most important of all strategic concerns for the West: preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu denied the Washington Post report, saying it was part of a campaign to discredit his country. And Mustafa Varank, a close adviser to Erdogan, blasted the story as "incoherent," tweeting that, "The intelligence world operates according to agreements."

Indeed, relations between intelligence agencies unfold on a different level from the normal ups and downs of political life. That was the case as relations between Israel and Turkey deteriorated in recent years, but ties between spies continued to function.

Israel and Turkey developed close intelligence links in the first decade of the Jewish state's existence. The relations had survived the profound acrimony that marked relations between the two countries since Erdogan and his Islam-based Justice and Development Party (AKP) rose to power. Erdogan endeavored to raise his country's profile and increase its influence. A key element of his strategy included fulminating against Israel in public forums and championing the Palestinian cause.

Relations stretched to the breaking point in 2010 when Israeli forces boarded a Turkish boat, part of a flotilla trying to break the Gaza blockade. Nine Turks were killed in the clashes. The US administration worked to repair the deep rift between two key Middle East allies.

Last March, during President Obama's visit to Israel, he arranged a telephone call in which Netanyahu apologized to Erdogan for operational mistakes in response to the flotilla.

Relations, however, remain very tense, and the latest news will only make them worse.

Former Mossad chief Danny Yatom characterized Turkey's reported revelations of the spy network as "unheard of" in the annals of intelligence.

Although personal and commercial links between Israel and Turkey continue, relations between the two governments are unlikely to return to normal anytime soon. What is less clear is what will happen to ties between Washington and Ankara.

According to Ignatius, American officials have known that Erdogan and Fidan had exposed the Israeli spies, viewing the incident as "an unfortunate intelligence loss." Washington did not complain to Turkey, and President Obama has maintained particularly warm relations with Erdogan.

Turkey is uniquely positioned at the hinge between East and West, and Washington wants to secure Turkish cooperation in dealing with the many challenges in the region, including the civil war in Syria and the conflict with Iran. Still, it is troubling that US policymakers would ignore a government's actions so clearly against US interests.

In the spy world, however, Turkey's behavior is likely to leave its mark. Yatom wondered aloud, "Who is going to trust them now? Who is going to share sensitive information with them?"

In the end, relations between nations are based on shared interests. Turkey, it seems, has judged that hurting Israel is so important that it justifies undermining its allies. As long as that is the case, its interests diverge from America's, and the closeness between the two governments is not justified.

(Frida Ghitis writes about global affairs for the Miami Herald. This column originally appeared in the October 21 edition of that newspaper.)

## LETTERS

### Using Social Media to Combat Turkey

To the Editor:

Reading your recent commentary titled "Turkey Revamps its Image" by Edmond Y. Azadian, your senior editorial columnist, I feel compelled to rush and bring the level of his analysis from the normal soliloquy based on time-worn practices to today's reality of social media and their power in our global society.

Mr. Azadian may not be aware that while Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan was blaming social media for the huge demonstrations in Gezi Park (Taksim Square), his advisors were diligently analyzing the power of social media and how they had been used to have many thousands of demonstrators communicate and gather in that square to demonstrate against Sultan Erdogan and his governing practices.

Turkey's prime minister proved to be a highly intelligent and nimble politician, however, and once he realized the "power of the medium," he made a complete about face and decided to use this powerful weapon of social media to his advantage. Last week, the Press in Turkey announced the government was hiring some 6,000 young men and women to dedicate themselves in developing the internet's social media and communicate Erdogan's and Turkey's message to the world.

These young people have instructions to

engage Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and other available social media to influence and direct mass feelings in the best way of serving Erdogan's policies. This approach will, therefore, become an incredibly influential tool in his hands and serve his purposes.

One of these purposes will, undoubtedly be to support his candidacy for Turkey's presidency but, more sinister for us Armenians, social media in various languages will certainly be used in 2015 to influence global communities and world opinion about the Armenian Genocide thwarting our efforts to commemorate this tragic historical event of Turkish inhumanity.

So, instead of following the age-old practices of Armenian columnists such as Mr. Azadian telling other Armenians what is happening in Turkey, maybe we should just make the leap to the 21st century and use our own very able young Armenian men and women involved with social media to use their knowledge and abilities to countermand Turkey's future domination of cyberspace and look for creative ways of getting our message to the millions of social media users around the world. It's the right time!

— Miran P. Sarkissian  
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.



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