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Armenia's Amb. To UK to Be Buried in Armenia after Death in the US

YEREVAN (Armenpress/ArmeniaNow) — Armenia's Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Karine Kazinian died in the United States on December 6. Her body was expected to be returned to Armenia by the end of the week, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Spokesman Tigran Balayan.

No cause of death was provided, though some sources said she had suffered from a lengthy illness and had died during surgery. However, that information has not been confirmed.

She was born on January 8, 1955, in Yerevan. She graduated from Yerevan State University in 1977. She worked in the then-USSR Embassy in Mozambique and later in the USSR Embassy in Portugal. From 1992 to 1994, Kazinian worked as a lecturer of English at the Law



Ambassador Karine Kazinian

and Philology Departments of Yerevan State University. In 1997 she was appointed chargé d'affaires of Armenia in Romania, eventually becoming ambassador in 1999. Later, she was the country's ambassador to Germany, as well as being a deputy minister in the Foreign Ministry.

She received a degree from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in June 2010.

see AMBASSADOR, page 3



A Marash school

Houshamadyan Project Reconstructs and Preserves Ottoman Armenian History

By Gabriella Gage

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — The website for the Houshamadyan project (www.houshamadyan.org), at first glance, seems to provide a colorful depiction of small-town Armenian life in the Ottoman era — a forgotten subject in history. Upon further exploration, however, visitors realize that

Houshamadyan is more than a typical website — it is an interactive archive. Viewers do not merely read the history, they experience it firsthand through written documents, images, artifacts, digitized textiles, depictions of traditional games as well as sound and video recordings.

“The strength and beauty of the Houshamadyan website is that it aggregates and organizes a vast body of information in a way that makes it accessible see ARCHIVE, page 16

Armenian, Azeri Foreign Ministers Face off in Dublin at OSCE Gathering

DUBLIN, Ireland (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The 19th meeting of Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) ministerial council ended this week, with both Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers delivering speeches. Naturally, the Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh) conflict settlement was in the focus of both speeches.

Besides “ruling out any alternative to peaceful resolution of the conflict and offering to intensify OSCE Minsk Group efforts in development of a comprehensive peace

agreement,” Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov issued unfounded accusations against Armenia, such as, “Armenia reinforces the status quo by violating the OSCE regulations and uses force to maintain control over the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.”

Mammadyarov's speech further accused Armenia of “hampering the intra-community dialogue, economic development of the region and attempts to erase all traces of Azerbaijani culture.”

see DUBLIN, page 3

24 Years on, Armenian Earthquake Remembered

GUMRI (ArmeniaNow) — Nearly a quarter of a century after the devastating 1988 earthquake there are still families in Armenia that live with the consequences of that natural disaster.

By Siranuysh Gevorgyan

most children were in school and adults at work. As a result, the earthquake, measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale, killed at least 25,000 people, causing vast destruction in the towns and villages in large parts of northern Armenia.

Twenty-four years on, however, some people in the affected areas still continue to live in rusty metal makeshifts. And in certain areas, like Gumri, then known as Leninakan, there are still earthquake-damaged buildings that have not been torn down.

Successive Armenian governments have promised to eliminate the consequences of the earthquake and the very notion of the disaster area, but the challenge is on despite efforts to provide immediate earthquake survivors with new housing.

Still, even after the completion of the 2008-2013 housing construction program of the current government Gumri alone will have about 4,000 families living in huts. These families who, too, consider themselves to be the ones bearing the see QUAKE, page 2



A street clock in Gumri stopped in the aftermath of the earthquake to show the time when a devastating tremor struck the city on December 7, 1988.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mirror Christmas Break

WATERTOWN — The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for one week in honor of Christmas. The issue of December 22 will be our last before the break. We will resume with the first issue of the New Year, dated January 5. As New Year's Day interferes with our deadline, the paper will be mailed out one day later than usual.

We wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Azeri Drones Reported In Iran, NKR Border

TABRIZ, Iran (PanArmenian.net) — Israeli-made Azeri drones were reportedly spotted flying over Iran and Nagorno Karabagh's common border on what is believed to be a “spy mission.”

According to Iran's Press TV, Azerbaijan has enlisted the help of Israeli military advisors in order to improve its drone capabilities.

Another Armenian Killed in Syria

DAMASCUS (Armenpress) — An ethnic Armenian man, Yusuf Pachora, who had been wounded a few days ago in the city of Hasake on the Turkish border, has died.

At the beginning of December it was reported that an Armenian man had been killed and his son wounded by militants in Hasake. The incident took place during an attempted kidnapping.

Spokesperson of the Berio Diocese Jirair Reisian informed that there were no serious changes in Aleppo. The only positive thing was the electricity which had been switched on for a little bit long period.

Baku Pledges to Ensure Armenian Athletes' Security at Olympics

BAKU (ArmeniaNow) — Azerbaijan has pledged to ensure the security of Armenian athletes wishing to participate in the European Olympics in three years' time, said vice president of Azerbaijan's National Olympic Committee, Chingiz Huseynzade.

The General Assembly of the European Olympic Committee decided last week to hold the first-ever European Games in Baku in 2015. Armenia refused to vote on the decision.

“We are ready to provide security assurances to all participants of the Olympics, including Armenian athletes,” Huseynzade said.

Earlier this month a dozen Azeri athletes took part in world youth boxing championships in Yerevan after security guarantees had been extended by the Armenian federation. AIBA, the governing body for international amateur boxing, praised the level of organization of the Yerevan championship.

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Istanbul Properties

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Echmiadzin Launches Assistance Project for Syrian Armenians

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – An Echmiadzin-based organization launched a project on December 10 to provide some immediate assistance to families of ethnic Armenians who have left the conflict in Syria and recently settled in Yerevan or elsewhere in Armenia.

The program, spearheaded by the Armenian Round Table Interchurch Foundation, received the blessing of Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, and funding from the Alliance United Church. It will provide food and other essentials to more than 200 such disadvantaged families.

According to the press service of the Armenian Church in Echmiadzin, the project will be implemented in cooperation with the Ararat Patriarchal Diocese.

Among the supporters of the project is also Yerevan City, a supermarket chain. From December 11 to 17, the beneficiaries of the project will receive special shopping cards which will allow them to purchase essentials at the participating supermarkets.

An estimated 6,000 Armenians left their homes in Syria, mainly from Aleppo.

Hayrikyan Announces Presidential Candidacy

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – During a press conference last week, leader of the Union for National Self-Determination Paruyr Hayrikyan announced his intention to run for president of Armenia.

"I have a right to announce my candidacy more than others, because the best housemaster is the one who has built the house with his own hands," said Hayrikyan, referring to his active participation in the Armenian independence movement. This will also serve as the official slogan for his party's presidential campaign.

Hayrikyan predicted he would receive only 20 percent of the votes in the national election because he believes the incumbent president has already secured many political allies. Hayrikyan said that while he welcomes the Armenian Revolutionary Federation's (ARFD) platform, he does not believe there is enough time to implement and discuss the platform before the election in February.

UN Office Marks Human Rights Day

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The International Human Right Film Festival, a debate on human rights and a rock concert were the culmination of a campaign to mark Human Rights Day on December 10.

"My Voice Counts" is the annual slogan for the campaign, aimed to further promote inclusion and pro-active participation in public life.

In 2012, the UN Human Rights Council adopted the first-ever resolution on the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet. It affirms that human rights in the digital realm must be protected and promoted to the same extent and with the same commitment as human rights in the offline world.

The UN Office in Armenia together with its partners organized the International Film Festival featuring short films on promotion and protection of Human Rights in the digital age. The goal of the festival was to promote human rights in the new era of technology through a variety of means such as the Internet, the majority of whose users are young people. The festival was organized simultaneously in Armenia, Austria and Ukraine.

The International Organizations Jury awarded the first prize to the producers of the film "Homo Habilis" and the second prize to the makers of the film "Real Rights in Virtual Life."

The award ceremony continued with a public debate led by the Human Rights Defender of Armenia Karen Andreasyan.

Nation Bids Farewell to Beloved Singer Flora Martirosyan

YEREVAN (Armenpress/ArmeniaNow) – Armenian President Serge Sargsian, First Lady Rita Sargsian, music fans and various cultural figures came together on December 11 to bid farewell to singer Flora Martirosyan, a People's Artist of Armenia.

Martirosyan, who moved to the US in 1991 and had shuttled between her home and her native Armenia, died in Los Angeles, on November 20, at 55. With consent of the family, the body of Martirosyan, was transferred to Yerevan Monday after a ceremony at St. Ghévond's Church in Los Angeles, and she was laid to rest at the City Pantheon in the Armenian capital. People of all walks of life – from state officials and dignitaries to scholars and ordinary fans of her music – attended the funeral organized by an Armenian government commission.

Martirosyan, a native of Gumri, was the youngest in the family of four children. Having inherited vocal skills from her

song performed by Martirosyan has stayed on top of the Armenian music charts for 15 years, to become the singer's trademark song.

As a soloist at a state folk orchestra, Martirosyan visited more than 70 countries and also headed a music school in Yerevan until 2001. In 2002, Martirosyan established an international music academy in the United States and in 2006 initiated A Pan-Armenian Song Contest Festival.

In 2008, the singer, jointly with Michael Stone (a brother of Sharon Stone), set up an international organization, Artists for Peace, to raise aware-



Flora Martirosyan

it as a duet with Martirosyan after he heard her perform last year in a concert promoting awareness of the Armenian Genocide.

Wonder was one of the famed artists to join the Armenian singer in a cause against injustice.

Martirosyan intended to stage more of her "Never Again" events until 2015 when Armenians worldwide will commemorate the centennial of the Genocide, but she succumbed to complications after a surgery at a US clinic last month.

Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosyan said of Martirosyan, "She had had an invaluable role in almost all spheres."

Martirosyan had many fans in and outside Armenia who attended her concerts. One of them, Bella Kurghinyan, said that the singer was always interactive during her concerts, she talked to the audience and always wanted people to accompany her in singing and the audience responded gladly.

"Unlike many other singers who quickly disappear from stage, she patiently stayed and talked to everyone, allowed everyone who wanted to take pictures with her. She is a symbol of femininity and morality for me," said Kurghinyan.



Flora Martirosyan with Stevie Wonder

mother, the young singer took part in the Garoun 1973 song contest to win the first place among 800 participants. In 1978, she went to win her first international prize at a festival in Hamburg, Germany.

Gusan Ashot's famous *Tsovastghik*

ness of crimes against humanity and the 2011 "Never Again" concert featuring several famous artists was part of the organization's efforts.

Living soul legend Stevie Wonder had promised to write a song and sing

24 Years on, Earthquake Remembered

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consequences of the earthquake, have not been included in the lists of beneficiaries – they are usually the second generation of earthquake survivors with their own new families who had nowhere else to live but these slums. Other such people are not immediate victims of the earthquake or their descendants or had received new homes, but had to sell them because of their debts and go back to living in makeshift housing.

In October as many as 1,756 families in Gumri received new apartments. Since 2010, 2,812 of officially registered 4,270 homeless families in Gumri have received housing of their own as part of the government program. Authorities have promised to provide an additional 1,351 apartments in Gumri in 2013, but for various reasons they have been reluctant to address the problems of the people who are left out of the housing construction program.

Members of the "The City is Ours" civic group that was set up in Gumri before last May's parliamentary elections demand that these families, too, be enabled to leave their old metal housing and provided with proper liv-

ing conditions. They have stressed the general unemployment and poverty in the city and the province that they say have reached "alarming proportions". According to official data, an estimated 47 percent of people in Gumri live in poverty, which is higher than the average poverty rate for Armenia (about 35 percent).

The group has urged the National Assembly, the president and the government of Armenia to recognize all groups of citizens who currently live in makeshift housing in the earthquake area as beneficiaries of the state housing programs and provide them with homes according to the actual number of family members within the next two years.

Under the currently applied regulations, families get apartments of the size that they used to have before the earthquake. The program does not take into account the natural growth of families, on the other hand, if a family shrinks by a person, it gets a smaller apartment (by one room).

The activist does not consider the government pledge to rehabilitate the earthquake area to have been fulfilled yet, as she points to the general problems that exist in Gumri.

"You can still find collapsed buildings in visible parts of the city. These earthquake rubbles have not been dismantled until today. We feel like we have been tinned and preserved since those times. We psychologically feel like we are detached from the rest of Armenia, because even the traces of the earthquake have not been completely removed here," says Mkrtchyan.

The woman cites the example of Spitak. She says that traces of devastation, by contrast, are barely seen in Spitak today, which makes it easier for the townsfolk to cope with current difficulties of life. Meanwhile, she says, people in Gumri have been able to only partly get rid of the disaster zone mentality.

Mkrtchyan, who runs a small production of clothes and accessories in Gumri, also stressed the need for creating jobs and training qualified workforce for the future development of the town.

"We have a lot of institutions that train designers and tailors in Gumri, but I still can't find a proper worker for my enterprise, a worker who would meet the modern-day requirements of the market," says Mkrtchyan.



INTERNATIONAL

Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian on Working Visit to US

LOS ANGELES – On December 8, Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian kicked off a working visit to the United States.

On the first day of the visit, the Sargisian went to the California Institute of Technology, where he met with University President Jean-Lou Chameau.

During the meeting, the prime minister introduced the ongoing educational reform in Armenia aimed at improving the quality of education and promoting Armenian universities' international accreditation. As they discussed the prospects of bilateral cooperation, the parties touched upon the IT developments in Armenia and the existing growth potential.

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), attending the meeting, said Armenia has the potential to become a Silicon Valley in the Caucasus.

Sargisian next met with alumni and students of the Technological University of California and US-based Armenians scientists.

Answering questions from the audience, he referred to the current status and the prospects of development in the sphere of humanities and natural sciences. Discussed were issues related to Armenian studies, astronomy, physics, mathematics, general pedagogy.

Thanking the participants, Sargisian urged them to strengthen ties with the Homeland and promote development of science in Armenia.

Working visit of the Prime Minister in the United States continued through December 12.



The prime minister and his delegation meet with Rep. Adam Schiff and technology leaders in California.

AGBU Recognizes Outstanding Individuals for Service and Dedication during 87th General Assembly in Armenia

YEREVAN – For more than a century, AGBU has enjoyed the support of tens of thousands of members and volunteers in carrying out its mission. Eight members of the Union, along with three individuals who have demonstrated exceptional service to Armenia, were honored during AGBU's 87th General Assembly, which took place in Armenia on Saturday, October 20, 2012. In attendance were Armenia's Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan and Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, as well as AGBU's leadership and delegates from around the world.

For their outstanding services rendered to the homeland, Gabriel Djambardji, Smpad Lpudyan and Ralph Yirikian were recognized with the AGBU Medal.

As a noted philanthropist and the president of the Pyunik Foundation, which focuses on education in Armenia, Djambardji has contributed generously to various projects in the homeland, including financial assistance to schools to modernize their facilities and to the recent refurbishment of the Matenadaran. He and his wife Kohar, who are Syrian diasporans, have also been generous patrons of their local community, as well as of various religious endeavors within the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Smpad Lpudyan, who holds the world's highest chess title of Grandmaster, has used his expertise for years to cultivate the talents of Armenian youth and ensure that Armenia maintains its strong foothold in the world of chess. As the vice president of the Armenian Chess Federation, which is headed by President Serge Sargisian, he cooperates closely with AGBU to organize the annual Interschool Republican Chess Tournament, which brings together more than 5,000 students from Armenia, Karabagh and the Armenian schools in the Javakhsk region of Georgia, many of whom have followed in his footsteps, rising to the professional level.

Yirikian, a Lebanese diasporan and General Manager of one of Armenia's largest companies, Viva-Cell-MTS, is dedicated to advancing Armenia's well-being through corporate social responsibility initiatives. Viva-Cell is often recognized as a leader in sponsoring social and educational programs and events. Yirikian has received numerous awards, including the Presidential Shield from the president of Lebanon, the Movses Khorenatsi Medal from the President of the Republic of Armenia and the Saint Gregory the Illuminator Medal from Catholicos Karekin II.

The Central Board also bestowed upon five of its longstanding members the status of AGBU Honor Member for their staunch dedication in perpetuating the organization's mission: Jacques and Florine Deyirmendjian, Denis Ketchedjian, Panos Titizian and Sona Yacoubian.

For four decades, Jacques and Florine Deyirmendjian of Paris, France, have worked tirelessly in the French Armenian community and committed themselves to serving AGBU. Jacques Deyirmendjian holds degrees from France's most important grandes écoles – the Ecole Polytechnique, the Ecole Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Administration Economique and the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Musique de Paris. He has held important leadership posts at Gaz de France SA, one of the country's top energy companies, and currently serves as president of Deynergies, a joint stock company, which he founded. He has served the Union in various positions. When he first joined AGBU, he was the chair of UGAB Jeunes, the organization's French youth group. He later went on to become the Paris Chapter Chair and also served on the France District Committee. In addition, he has been bestowed with the order of knighthood in both France and Germany. Flora Deyirmendjian, a CPA and a graduate of the School of Management of Lyon serves on the Paris Chapter Committee and has been active within the local AGBU Alex Manoogian Center, which offers courses in language and culture to scores of youth and adults.

Another French Armenian to receive the honorary membership was Denis Ketchedjian, who served as the France District Chairman from 2002 until 2008. Most notably, he oversaw in 2006 the four-day AGBU Centennial Celebrations, which culminated with a gala at Versailles. A prominent lawyer who, for decades, also contributed his services as the organization's counsel in France, he is currently the Secretary General of the AGBU France District. Panos Titizian, a noted community leader and activist, who is a pharmacist by profession and a graduate of the American University of Beirut, was bestowed with . AGBU Honor Membership, as well as the Outstanding AGBU Volunteer Medal. Titizian has been an AGBU member for more than eight decades, over the course of which he has used his talents as a strategist to benefit the organization, particularly throughout Lebanon's civil war. He served for many years on both the Education and District Committees of Lebanon, and continues today to serve the organization from Southern California, attending to special assignments.

Sona Yacoubian is the founder of AGBU Hye Geen (est. 1994), an initiative dedicated to the promotion of the rights and well-being of Armenian women. In 2002, under her leadership, Hye Geen established the first of its five Pregnant Women's Centers in Gumri, Vanatzor, Talin, Yeghvard and Yerevan in response to Armenia's rising infant mortality rates and the country's general decline in maternal health. This year, the AGBU Hye Geen Pregnant Women's Centers celebrated their tenth

anniversary - a decade of helping deliver over 1,400 healthy babies. In addition to its Armenia-based initiatives, Hye Geen's activities in California raise awareness of a host of issues that affect the broader Armenian community, including its annual Interdisciplinary Conference, which is organized in collaboration with local universities.

AGBU President Berge Setrakian also granted the AGBU President's Award to three current and former AGBU chairs who have demonstrated distinct leadership and have dedicated many years to the organization: Sofia Chapter Chair Sonia Avakian-Bedrossian, Plovdiv Chapter Chair Roupen Chavoushian and former Montevideo Chapter Chair Gustavo Zulamian.

Instrumental in reviving AGBU's activities in Sofia in the post-Communism years, Sonia Avakian-Bedrossian has been the chapter chair for more than a decade. A true leader with a creative mind and a vision to attract the new generation, she energized the Chapter's base through various activities and programs, in particular the Mothers' Committee and the Nur Dance Ensemble. She was responsible for initiating Camp Unger, a Chapter program designed to bond AGBU Sofia's youngest members, and most recently, in collaboration with the AGBU Plovdiv Chapter, for initiating Camp Hayler, which unites youth from across Bulgaria. In 2007, she established the AGBU Sofia Chamber Orchestra, which consistently draws scores of Armenian and non-Armenian music lovers alike to several concerts each year, and organized in 2004 the XVII AGBU World Games, which brought together over 250 young Armenian athletes from five continents to the Bulgarian seaside town of Albena for a week of sports competitions and social events.

Roupen Chavoushian was one of the key individuals who re-established the Plovdiv Chapter after the fall of Communism. He has played a great role in perpetuating the Armenian heritage in the city, which is home to the country's largest Armenian population. As the current and longtime Chair of the AGBU Plovdiv Chapter, he administers a number of Associated Chapters in Burgas, Dobrich, Haskovo, Russe, Silistra, Sliven and Yambol, and initiated AGBU Saturday Schools in each of these towns, ensuring the organization's strong presence across the country. He also established the Plovdiv Chapter's Saturday School Theater Group, which won first place in Yerevan's 2011 Pomegranate Seed Theater Festival. On a bimonthly basis, over 800 readers receive the publication AGBU Voice, which Chavoushian founded. His numerous contributions to the town's community were recently acknowledged with a medal awarded by the Mayor of Plovdiv.

Dr. Gustavo Zulamian is considered one of AGBU's most talented young leaders in South America. He has served as the General

Secretary of the AGBU Montevideo board and as both the Chair of the Montevideo Chapter and the AGBU Nubarian-Manoogian School, of which he is an alumnus – all while maintaining a dentistry practice. He has been involved with the organization since childhood; as a young athlete, he brought his active involvement to the Chapter's Liga de Jóvenes (Youth League) and South American Regional Games. More recently, he has dedicated himself to the arts and media, serving as editor of the monthly magazine Hai Endanik, (Armenian Family), which covers Armenian issues. He continues to assume special assignments on behalf of the organization.

Armenia's Ambassador to UK Karine Dies; Remains Return to Homeland

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Kazinian was appointed the ambassador to the UK in 2011.

Sh had received the Mkhitar Gosh medal and the Romanian Grand Cross Order for Merit.

British Ambassador to Armenia Katy Leach sent a message of condolence to Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian.

"It is with enormous sadness that I heard the news today about my dear colleague and friend, ambassador to the UK Karine Kazinian. Karine was of course a very talented diplomat, who had made a vital contribution, in her former position as Deputy Foreign Minister, to the step-change in Armenia's relations with the EU. But she was also a warm and genuine person, someone with whom it was a pleasure to work. Her energy, charm and clear sense of purpose had already made a great impact during her first year as Ambassador in London. I know that following the great success of the events she organized in London in November, to celebrate 20 years of diplomatic relations between Armenia and the UK, she was full of ideas for how to take things forward and work together. Jonathan and I were looking forward to it tremendously.

Please accept my personal and heartfelt condolences, and those of all my colleagues here in Yerevan and in London who knew and admired Karine, for a tragic, untimely loss. Our thoughts are with her family and friends at this very difficult time," Leach said.

Kazinian, 57, was a widow. She is survived by a son and a daughter.

President Serge Sargisian sent a letter of condolence to her family, as did Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan.

(PanArmenian.net contributed to this report.)



INTERNATIONAL

International News

EU Foreign Affairs Council Outlines Armenia Partnership

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.net) — The European Union's (EU) Foreign Affairs Council has agreed on the protocol required for the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Armenia, which will allow the country to participate in EU programs. The council submitted a draft of the required protocol to the European Parliament for its consent.

The document requires the European Commission and Armenia to sign joint memorandums that outline the extent of the Armenia's involvement in EU programs and its financial participation in the EU.

This partnership will include participation in the following sectors: tax and customs, financial control, consumers' rights, justice, countering terrorism and organized crime, healthcare and others.

Armenian Pianist Honored with Moscow Composers' Union Medal

MOSCOW (ArmeniaNow) — Renowned Armenian pianist Hayk Melikyan was awarded the Moscow Composers Union's medal of honor.

Melikyan performed on Monday at a solo concert in Moscow, where he had been invited by the union's president, Oleg Galakhov.

The program included masterpieces of the 20th century and contemporary music.

At the end of the concert, Galakhov bestowed the honor upon Melikyan, praising his contribution to the development and dissemination of contemporary music.

FM Nalbandian Meets with Armenian Diplomats in Europe

PARIS (Panorama.am) — On Sunday, Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian met with Armenian diplomats accredited to European countries and international organizations, the Armenian Foreign Ministry's press service reported.

The sides discussed the results of the meeting of heads of central staff and diplomatic missions of Armenian Foreign Ministry held last August as well as the implementation of Armenian president's directives.

Nalbandian presented the ambassadors with the latest developments in Armenia's foreign policy as well as dwelt on the settlement of the Karabagh conflict, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Ministerial Council meeting in Dublin and the upcoming presidential elections in Armenia.

Nalbandian gave instructions to the diplomats for intensification of integration into international organizations, expansion of cooperation with international organizations, development of relations with European countries.

The diplomats presented processes going on in Europe and international organizations aimed at development of relations with Armenia.

Georgia Seeks Business Cooperation with Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenian Ambassador to Georgia Hovhannes Manukyan met with Georgian Minister of Finances Nodar Khaduri on December 11.

According to the public relations department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a number of issues of bilateral interest were discussed during the meeting.

Manukyan congratulated Khaduri on his appointment and said that he hoped for further cooperation between the two countries.

Khaduri also spoke of strengthened bilateral relations and indicated Georgia's interest in business cooperation with Armenia.

Five Armenians Die in Brazzaville Crash

By Vahe Sarukhanyan

BRAZZAVILLE, Congo (Hetq) — On the evening of November 30, an Ilyushin Il-76T plane crashed when attempting to land at the Maya-Maya Airport in the Congo capital.

The plane was on a cargo flight from Pointe Noire when it crashed short of the runway in bad weather.

All seven crew members, five of them from Armenia, one police officer on board the aircraft and 26 people on the ground were killed. 14 people on the ground were injured.

Aljazeera initially reported that the plane belonged to the Trans Air Congo company and that it was carrying out cargo runs for another local airway Aéro-Service. Trans Air quickly denied that the plane was theirs. It later turned out that the plane belonged to the Armenian company Rich Airways.

Rich Airways, along with eleven other airways, is registered in Armenia with the Civil Aviation Agency. In the RA State Registry, Sergey Kocharov is listed as the owner.

In a letter to Hetq, airplane Captain Vitali Poghosyan writes that the plane actually belongs to another company with the same name that is registered offshore. Poghosyan says that those who died in the Brazzaville crash were his friends.

In general, many airways registered in Armenia operate overseas, mostly in Africa and the United Arab Emirates. Three years ago, Ishkhan Zakaryan, President of the RA Control; Chamber, noted that airlines register in Armenia because it is free of charge. The taxes they pay the Armenian government are minimal at best when compared to Armavia or ArmAero.

Airways belongs to Deputy Head of the RA General Staff, Lieutenant-General Stepan Galstyan, but that the company is registered in his wife's name. Poghosyan says four other planes belonging to Galstyan also operate in Africa. He estimates that \$9 million was spent to acquire the planes.

Poghosyan also points out that the young general had only four years of peace time service before rising to his present rank and that he never attended any military academy.

According to the Armenian Ministry

of Defense website, Stepan Galstyan served in the Soviet military from 1983-1992 and that he graduated from the Armavir Military Pilots Aviation Academy in 1988.

Naturally, the ministry has refuted the above information regarding Galstyan and says it's an attempt to smear the good name of the military.

But what's more important is the plane itself, rather than who owns the company. Poghosyan claims that the plane had been operating in the Congo for 16 months and illegally for the past four.

Poghosyan goes on to claim that the plane's documents had been forged and the Congolese aviation authorities were in a panic when this was discovered.

The pilot says that, in fact, the documents of all Rich Airways planes are forged and that the plane that went down and its crew were not insured.

Poghosyan, who is now working in

Africa, says the plane couldn't fly without crew insurance. The fact that the plane never underwent a technical inspection deprived it of being insured as well.

Poghosyan writes, "So who is responsible regarding the compensation of the families and third parties. And why didn't the RA Civil Aviation Administration react in a timely fashion? This agency has been turned into a commercial body rather than an administrative one. In all probability, they will claim that the plane was never registered in Armenia in the first place."

The website of the Ilyushin Aviation Complex, the manufacturer of the IL model planes, lists the operating life spans of the IL-76 planes. The plane that crashed in the Congo is not listed. However, according to the website, nine of the 11 IL-76 planes registered in Armenia have surpassed their estimated lifespan.

Denmark's Royal Library Under Fire for Genocide Exhibit Organized with Turkey's Help

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (Hetq) — Denmark's Royal Library has attracted heavy criticism after agreeing to let Turkey co-arrange an alternative exhibition about the Armenian Genocide.

The library has complied with the wishes of the Turkish ambassador to Denmark to be involved with the exhibition, "The Armenian Genocide and the Scandinavian response," which is currently on display at the University of Copenhagen.

The Turkish Embassy has been granted the opportunity to stage a Turkish version of the historical events in a move that has generated criticism from a number of circles, including politicians, historians and the Armenian Embassy in Copenhagen.

"This is giving in to Turkish pressure and it won't do. Without comparing the two events, it's like asking neo-Nazis to arrange a Holocaust exhibition," the Copenhagen post quottes Soren Espersen, a spokesperson for Dansk Folkeparti (DF), as saying to Berlingske newspaper.

Matthias Bjornlund, a historian and leading Danish expert on the Armenian Genocide, is perplexed over the Royal

Library's decision in the case.

"If you believe that all versions of history are equal, then you've undermined your role as a research institution," Bjornlund told Berlingske. "It was genocide and not all interpretations of this history are correct."

The Armenian ambassador to Denmark, Hrachya Aghajanyan, who is a co-host of the original exhibition, is disappointed by the move.

"I hope that the Royal Library will reconsider their decision and not give in to the possible Turkish pressure," Aghajanyan told Berlingske.

But Erland Kolding Nielsen, the director of the Royal Library, denied that the institution buckled under pressure from Turkey.

"One can't pressure us, and we have not spoken about removing the Armenian exhibition. We have simply given them the opportunity to show their alternative exhibition," Nielsen told Berlingske.

It is not yet known when the Turkish exhibition version will debut, but the Turkish embassy said that preparations were underway.

Armenian, Azeri Foreign Ministers Face off in Dublin

DUBLIN, from page 1

"No intact monuments of Azerbaijani culture remained in the territories occupied by Armenia," Mammadyarov said.

Mammadyarov also mentioned the Stepanakert airport in his speech, saying, "it would further escalate tensions in the region."

Meanwhile, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian's speech objectively pointed to Azerbaijani attempts to foil the Karabagh conflict settlement.

"It has become habitual for Azerbaijan to backtrack even on agreements to which it had previously consented. Despite the agreement on the creation of a mechanism to investigate the ceasefire violations, as you know, Azerbaijan did everything to prevent its creation, even threatening to veto the entire OSCE budget.

"This was the case again after the Sochi Summit of January of this year. Despite the reached agreement to accelerate accord on the Basic Principles for a Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, confirmed by Los Cabos Statement, Azerbaijan by its maximalist approaches, is seeking one-sided advan-

tage in the negotiating process and is doing everything possible to neglect, even to reject this agreement," Nalbandian said.

He added, "Azerbaijan is not only ignoring the expectations of the international community, but is constantly taking new steps against the values of civilized world. The latest such case is the Azeri government's release and glorification of the murderer [Ramil] Safarov, who had slaughtered with an axe Armenian officer in his sleep, during a NATO program in Budapest simply because he was Armenian. The Azerbaijani leadership made him a symbol of national pride and an example to follow by youth. The world's reaction was unanimous in condemning what was done by Baku."

In Washington, Armenian National Committee of America Executive Director Aram Hamparian expressed regret at the latest statement by the heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries this week which demonstrated an artificial evenhandedness toward Azerbaijan and Armenia, with no mention of the ongoing aggression against Armenia and glo-

rification of anti-Armenian attacks, including the praise and promotion of convicted Azerbaijani axe-murderer Ramil Safarov.

"The heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries do a disservice to the cause of peace by, once again, seeking to impose a false symmetry on the Nagorno Karabagh situation. For all their patently political and artificial attempts at evenhandedness, the facts on the ground are undeniable: Azerbaijan is the party that started —and lost — a war aimed at destroying democracy in Artsakh and preventing self-determination for the people of this proud republic. It is Azerbaijan that regularly commits fatal cross-border attacks and is threatening to use its rapidly expanding arsenal of arms to restart its open aggression and plunge the region into conflict. It is Baku, not Yerevan, that is rejecting international calls to pull back its snipers and deploy more OSCE observers, and that is vetoing the participation of the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh — the key stakeholder in any enduring settlement — from full participation in the peace process," he said.



Community News

Brad Sherman Honored at DC Program Celebrating NKR Anniversary

WASHINGTON — Rep. Brad Sherman was presented the Mkhitar Gosh medal at a Congressional celebration of the 21st anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh on December 5.

Earlier this year, President Serge Sargsian of Armenia awarded the Mkhitar Gosh Medal to Sherman for his efforts to enhance US-Armenian relations and to achieve international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Mkhitar Gosh was an important Armenian scholar, clergyman and codifier of the Armenian civil and canon laws.

Sherman, a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, has been leading efforts since 1997 to provide US aid to the people of Artsakh.

Earlier in the day, Sherman also met with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh, Karen Mirzoyan, to discuss ways to expand cooperation between the US, Armenia, and Nagorno-Karabagh.

The following are excerpts of Sherman's remarks at the celebration last night:

"I thank the President of the Republic of Armenia, Serge Sargsian, for honoring me with the Mkhitar Gosh medal in recognition of my efforts to expand US-Armenia ties and recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Thank you, Ambassador Tatoul Markarian, for this award. I am privileged to receive this honor.

I would like to recognize and thank the esteemed Foreign Minister of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic, Mr. Karen Mirzoyan, for joining us tonight. Congratulations to you and



Rep. Brad Sherman met with Karen Mirzoyan, the foreign minister of Nagorno-Karabagh.

your citizens on the 21st anniversary of Artsakh's independence. On December 10, 1991, Nagorno Karabagh held an independence referendum and overwhelmingly voted for independence.

Today we celebrate Artsakh's freedom and independence. Artsakh continues to strengthen its democracy and held its fifth presidential election this year. The election in July 2012 was monitored and deemed free and fair by international observers.

Despite Azerbaijan's deeply unjust blockade and a devastating war from 1991 to 1994, Artsakh continues to solidify its democracy and improve its economy. Nagorno Karabagh has been successful in its transition from a state-run economy to a market economy, which helped achieve steady economic growth.

I was the first member of Congress to introduce legislation for direct aid to Nagorno-see SHERMAN, page 7



Sunday School students at St. John Church

Sunday School Students Give Thanks

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — On November 17 and 18, Elise Antreassian, coordinator of Christian Education in the Diocese's Department of Youth and Education, visited the Sunday School of St. John Church, where she led a workshop for educators and gave a presentation on faith development to parents.

Antreassian met with members of the Sunday School staff and school superintendent Alberta Godoshian for a workshop titled, "What Every Sunday School Teacher Needs to Know."

"Our teacher workshops accomplish a few modest but important things," Antreassian said. This includes sessions on topics teachers need to brush up on, as well as a focus on creative teaching methods, such as games or activities appropriate for a classroom setting.

"Teachers then do a little lesson planning together, as a team, which is something they rarely have time for in the routine of the school year," she added. "We also stress personal spirituality.

And it's a great networking opportunity — we all learn from each other, sharing expertise and experience."

The workshop began with the screening of a new film on the history and meaning of the Nicene Creed, which inspired a thoughtful discussion on faith, tradition, doctrine and doubt. This was followed by a review of *Bible* basics, related classroom activity ideas and a general meeting airing concerns and strategies.

On Sunday morning, the Sunday School children participated in a Thanksgiving-themed exercise with the Fr. Garabed Kochakian, pastor of St. John Church. He explained to the young students that just as they help set the table at Thanksgiving, altar servers help prepare the altar for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The children then assisted the deacons in bringing altar candles, the service book and other items to Kochakian. They learned about the significance of each object and each received a blessing from the pastor.

During the morning procession, the children carried lit tapers in the sanctuary. Older students passed the Kiss of Peace among the congregation. "It was a moving experience to see the children so involved, the superintendent and teachers intently supervising, and the congregation equally engaged in their participation," Antreassian said.

Later in the afternoon, parents gathered to hear a presentation titled "Raising Children of Faith." The talk emphasized that there is no better way to prepare children for the challenges of the world than a deep and lasting faith in Jesus Christ.

Antreassian shared the "whys" and "hows" of faith development and the importance of the Church. "Jesus began to build a community of believers and taught by word and action what the Kingdom of God is like," she said. "The same healing and miracle is forever possible in each of our lives through Christ."

"We also stress personal spirituality. And it's a great networking opportunity — we all learn from each other, sharing expertise and experience."

Knights of Vartan Ani Lodge 21 Participates in Human Rights Reception

WASHINGTON — On Thursday, November 29, members of the Knights of Vartan Ani Lodge #21 attended the second Annual St. Andrew Human Rights and Religious Freedom Reception on Capitol Hill. Hellenic Caucus Co-Chair John P. Sarbanes (D-MD) sponsored the event, in cooperation with the US Helsinki Commission, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, the International Religious Freedom Caucus and the Hellenic Caucus.

Sarbanes and fellow Hellenic Caucus Co-Chair Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) delivered remarks and thanked the standing-room-only crowd for their support and participation. The presence of Representative-Elect Dina Titus (D-NV) was also acknowledged, as she will be the only Greek-American woman in Congress when she is sworn-in next month. Religious, political and diplomatic dignitaries were also in attendance, such as Cyprus' Ambassador to the US Pavlos Anastasiades, Father Milton Gianulis, Command Chaplain of the United States Marine Corps, and former Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-MD).

The theme of this year's reception was "Human Rights, Religious Freedom and the Role of Civil Society," featuring Ivan Vejvoda, vice president of the German Marshall Fund.



Rep. John P. Sarbanes (D-MD), left, and Sbarabed Jake Bournazian

His speech touched on the Christian communities that have been driven out of most of the Middle East. He provided statistics on the population declines over the last 50 years in Turkey and Iraq from 1 million to less than 100,000, as well as the exodus of Christians from Syria, Egypt and Iran.

"This event benefits all Christians who are discriminated against and persecuted by the Turkish government," stated Ani Lodge Sbarabed Jake Bournazian. "We are here tonight because human rights abuses in Turkey should be raised and discussed in Congress routinely, not only in April. Istanbul is home to both the Armenian and Greek Patriarchs and it is important that we confront mutual problems in chorus. Tonight, Asbeds [Knights] are here keeping the candle lit and we will remain a stakeholder for the Armenian people until others can join and participate in our righteous endeavors."

On The Feast Day of Saint Andrew, on November 30, the world's 300 million Orthodox Christians — the world's second largest church — venerate the first called apostle and patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Seventeen centuries ago, Saint Andrew laid the foundation for the establishment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the ancient Anatolian City of Byzantium, which later became the Roman-Byzantine capital Constantinople, and which is now modern day Istanbul, Turkey. Over the last 100 years, the Ecumenical Patriarchate — the Center of the Orthodox Christian Church — has struggled for survival against state-sanctioned abuse and discrimination. The annual tribute to Saint Andrew is an opportunity to assess what progress is being made towards restoring full dignity to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and towards advancing human rights and religious freedom the world over.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Remembering the Kuljian Family

ARCATA, Calif. — The Freshwater community tragically lost three members of the Kuljian family on November 24. Howard, his wife, Mary, and their son, Geddie, perished in the surf of Big Lagoon where they often took family walks with their surviving daughter/sister, Olivia.

Mary Elena Scott was born in Peoria, Illinois on April 8, 1955. She was the daughter of James Scott (deceased) and Ruth Krenn Scott (deceased). She had two brothers, Michael Scott (deceased) and David Scott as well as one sister, Theresa Jenkins. She graduated high school from St. Mary's Academy in Nauvoo, Ill. and then attended the University of Iowa before moving to Eureka in 1979 where she finished her nursing degree.

Howard Gregory Kuljian was born July 13, 1958 in Hampton, Va. He was the son of Iris Kuljian and Roy Kuljian (deceased). He is survived by his mother, Iris, brother, Daniel Kuljian, and sisters, Lynnette Johnson and Rachel Ikola as well as their spouses, and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews. Howard attended Simi Valley High School and then fought fires on the Hot Shot crews in the summers; however the Eureka community was calling. He was the grandnephew of the late Levon T. Levonian of the Ousoumnaseratz School of Aleppo.

Gregory (Geddie) James Kuljian was born June 5, 1996 in Arcata. He was a junior at Arcata High School. He had hopes of becoming a medical assistant in the military after high school. Geddie also had a deep interest in the study of aeronautical engineering.

Howard, Mary and Geddie are survived by their loving daughter and sister, Olivia. Olivia graduated from Arcata High School in June and is attending college classes at College of the Redwoods.

Mary and Howard met and fell in love on a backpacking trip in the Trinity Alps. Howard proposed to Mary on the peak of Mt. Shasta and they were married in Kneeland on a nearby hilltop. Their love deepened with the births of their children, Olivia (Livie) Ruth Kuljian, born on Sep 25, 1994 in Arcata and Gregory (Geddie) James Kuljian born on Jun 5, 1996 in Arcata.

Mary Kuljian's gift for loving and caring for others came to its fullness during the six years she helped provide support and resources for these people whose lives were transformed because of her. She was an artist and cartoonist with an incredible sense of humor. She volunteered extensively in the community through her children's schools, the Freshwater Grange, and anywhere she felt she was needed.

After recovering from breast cancer in 2000, she joined the Humboldt Community Breast Health Project where she built a patient navigation and support program for women facing breast and gynecological cancer concerns. She worked tirelessly on behalf of women and their families, trained countless volunteers, built an angel fund to provide resources to those in need, collaborated with the medical community to raise awareness of the needs of women with cancer, role modeled to the staff that nothing was impossible, reached out to minority populations with education and support and stayed present to every single woman who came to the Project in need of information and support.

Howard Kuljian was the forest fire ecologist of the Six Rivers National Forest. He received his undergraduate degree in geography from Humboldt State University, worked at Adventure's Edge for years, then settled down and raised a family. He was also a longtime graphic artist at Bug Press. After 20 years, he followed his longterm dream of pursuing a degree in fire ecology and redefining his career path. He finished his master's degree in 2010.

Geddie Kuljian was often mistaken as being much older than he was because of his maturity and the orderly way he presented himself. He volunteered to help wherever he could, and he was not afraid to reach out to people, even if it meant an inconvenience to himself. He wrote a newsletter for the Humboldt County Breast Health Project when he was ten describing what it was like to be a child with a mother undergoing treatment for breast cancer. He was also often the server for the Freshwater Grange pancake breakfasts. At school he was involved in both cross country, track, sailing and loved his art classes.

A Memorial Service took place on December 9, at Arcata High School.

The sole survivor, Olivia, is a student at the College of the Redwoods. She is an accomplished artist and track athlete. She witnessed the tragic accident.

The Olivia Kuljian Fund has been established at the Wells Fargo Bank 27440 Hawthorne Blvd. Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274 in order to help her.

Donations may be made at any Wells Fargo Bank, Account #113-60-34-673.

Mail to: Olivia Kuljian Fund # 113-60-673
PO Box 4030 Palos Verdes, CA 90274
(Online via PayPal
OliviaKuljianFund@gmail.com)

(This obituary was an expanded version of the one that appeared in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* two weeks ago.)

Torch is Passed at Church of Our Saviour

WORCESTER, Mass. — On Sunday, November 18, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), visited the Church of Our Saviour in Worcester, Mass., where he celebrated the Divine Liturgy and ordained eight acolytes.

The eight thirs — Alex Arakelian, Armen Balian, George Balian, Andrew DeMauro, Patrick Kapur, Ryan Lott, Thomas Mshooshian and Nareg Manoukian — are Sunday School students, who have been working with the Fr. Aved Terzian, parish pastor, to prepare for their new responsibilities.

"They have been faithfully coming to church," Terzian said, adding that in some cases the boys gave up extracurricular activities to make time for altar service. "With their parents' guidance and the love of the church, they will rise to the occasion."

Barsamian congratulated the young men and encouraged them to continue their involvement in the life of the Armenian Church. "It's inspiring and uplifting to see young parishioners stepping forward to serve our Lord Jesus Christ," he said. "May God bless you and guide you always."

Several hymns of the Divine Liturgy were sung by the parish's Junior Choir, under the direction of Linda Bullock.

Following services, the parish hosted its "Recognition Day Banquet" to honor longtime parishioners for their many years of involvement in parish life.

Awards were presented to the following honorees: Ardem Andonian, Dorothy Asadoorian,

Sid Davagian, Paul Davis, Michael Gulbankian, Sr., Gerald Kheboian, John Merzigian, Heghine Minassian, Francis Najarian, Vahan Pogharian and Agnes Torosian.

Posthumous honors were given in memory of Ruth Aroian, Haroutune Bilazarian, Rose Gulanian, Richard Maksian and Bizer Simonian.

The honorees were selected for their contri-



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian ordains young parishioners to the rank of acolyte.

butions as role models for the younger generation of parishioners at the Church of Our Saviour and for being "an inspiration to young people to be well-rooted in their community," Terzian said.

"It always gives me joy to visit the Armenian Church of Our Saviour," Barsamian said. "It is wonderful to see today's community continuing the legacy of the founders of the first parish of the Armenian Church in America."

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OBITUARY

Marguerite (Moranian) Dinjian

WEST HYANNISPORT, Mass. — Marguerite (Moranian) Dinjian of West Hyannisport, died on November 20.

She was the wife of the late Nubar Dinjian. She was the sister of the late Alice Skenderian, Helen J. Kasarjian and Thomas Moranian.

She leaves her sister, Dorothy Keverian, and her husband, Jack, as well as many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

Funeral services were held at St. James Armenian Church on Tuesday, November 27.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to St. James Armenian Church or Plan International, 155 Planway, Warwick, RI 02889.

Interment was in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

Arrangements were made by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home in Watertown.



Marguerite (Moranian) Dinjian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Cambridge Program Addresses Border Incursions in Northern Armenia

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On December 4, a small group of concerned Armenians assembled at the hall of Holy Trinity Armenian Church to listen to presentations by Rev. Dajad Davidian and Eva Medzorian and others on the escalating violence on Armenia's northeastern border with Azerbaijan, primarily in the former Shamshadin region of the Tavoush province, with its epicenter in the

town of Berd.

The evening began with a presentation by Davidian, who had recently returned from that region. Since retirement several years ago as the pastor of the St. James Church in Watertown, he has spent most of his time in Armenia working on spiritual revival of the population, especially the youth.

He presented an overview of the geography

and ancient history of the Berd region with all its splendor, glory and breathtaking beauty. He then followed with a grim presentation of the violence and vengeance thrust upon the area Armenians by the aggressive Azeris on the border, who, since independence and without provocation, have been attacking Armenian civilians. He described what is in reality a David and Goliath scenario, with the Berd region's 30,000 villagers facing off against Azerbaijan's 1,000,000-plus, heavily-armed villagers on the border. He reported that the population of Berd, mostly youth and even entire families, are leaving the area because of a lack of jobs as well as unsafe living conditions. Unless this situation is corrected, he predicted dire circumstances for the region. In fact the Azeris could eventually walk right into Armenia and take our lands, which he said is their goal.

Next, a 20-minute documentary was shown, produced by Eva Medzorian, with footage taken during her visits in May and September/October 2012, focusing on the town of Berd and five surrounding villages, Nerkin Garmir Aghbyur, Aykebar, Movses, Chinari and Artsvaberd. Also included were archival video clips from Armenia of the destruction in the early 1990's during the war in Karabagh, which spilled over to this area of Armenia by aggressive Azeri destructive action. Included are videos of scenery, children, schools and houses bombed by Katusha missiles and interviews with eyewitness residents. The video showed how these incidents are accelerating; for example, in May, a band of Azeri soldiers slipped into Armenia at nighttime, ambushed a vehicle, killed three Armenians and fled back. Also, in the same month, another band of Azeri soldiers crossed the border at the border village of Chinari and sprayed the exterior walls of a kindergarten with bullets. There are daily intermittent sniper attack on civilians. In May, one of these snipers struck Vajakan Melkoumyan, a local farmer while he was working his fields. He has lost use of one of his legs, so he is no longer able to put food on the table for his family.

Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Nigoghos Atinizian also spoke about the importance of the region. He has proposed that the Knights and Daughters of Vartan focus on the development of the Tavoush province with an emphasis on the Berd

region and listed some important projects in the area already under way by the Knights.

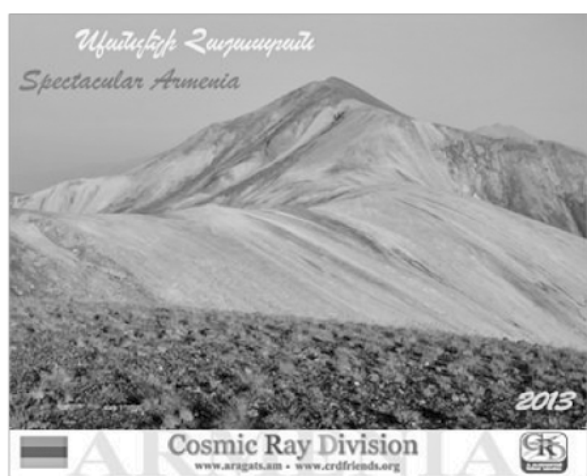
Berd native Victor Hayapetian was also present and made a few remarks about the region and his personal experiences and passion for the area. Hayrapetian is a creative individual and dedicated Armenian, who has already invested considerable funds in renovation of the former Berd cinema, "Averaberd" into a modern, state-of-the-art facility complete with Internet cafe and a modern cafe/restaurant. In less than two years since opening, Arevaberd has become the meeting place for young and old alike, has hosted banquets and has sparked other investors to undertake developments of their own. Berd is a tourist paradise with its sweet, clean air, gorgeous landscapes and intelligent, friendly people. A new mayor, Haroutiun Manoucharyan, has many down-to-earth ideas and plans for revitalization.

Jack Medzorian reported on a project of the Knights of Vartan which he leads for helping a local village hospital in Artsvaberd village. This project is underway, a fundraiser is in progress and his Knights of Vartan volunteer team is busy packing a 40-foot container of supplies and equipment. He met with the newly appointed minister of health in October to enlist his support. The minister promised to complete the renovations of this hospital especially as it is in a strategic, "de facto war" zone.

An important local figure in the Berd region is Rev. Aram Mirzoyan, a young pastor assigned by the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II two years ago to bring about a spiritual revival of the area. He has already begun the construction of a new church, the St. Gevorg Church, in the center of Berd on the same street as the Arevaberd cinema, to replace the one that was destroyed by the communists during the early 1920s. The benefactor of this church is the late John Stevens from Fresno, Calif., who donated nearly \$1,000,000 for the project. Besides being the local pastor, Mirzoyan is also concerned for his people, looking after not only their spiritual needs but also by being involved in revitalization of the economy, health, education and cultural needs. In a short time he has become a true pillar of the church and a community leader.

— Eva Medzorian

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Brad Sherman Honored

SHERMAN, from page 5

Karabagh. In 1997, I introduced an amendment during the House International Relations Committee's consideration of a foreign aid authorization bill for fiscal year 1998 for direct US humanitarian aid to Nagorno Karabagh. While this amendment did not pass, it accelerated the movement for direct US aid to Artsakh.

In September 2012, I backed Nagorno-Karabagh's efforts to reopen the airport in Stepanakert. The opening has been delayed several times. Unfortunately, officials in Baku have threatened to shoot down civilian planes traveling to Stepanakert. It is time for that airport to open.

I condemn Baku's pardoning and freeing of an Azeri axe-murderer, Ramil Safarov, who was imprisoned in Hungary for killing an innocent Armenian officer in his sleep in Budapest. We must hold Azerbaijan accountable for this grave injustice.

Thank you."



Ambassador of Armenia to the US Tatouil Markarian, left, presented the Mkhitar Gosh medal to Rep. Brad Sherman.



COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Sahag Church Welcomes New Pastor, Looks Forward to the Future

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), visited St. Sahag Church of St. Paul, Minn., this month as the parish marked the 10th anniversary of the church's consecration and welcomed its new pastor, Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan.

On Saturday, December 1, Barsamian and Diocesan Council members, Fr. Aren Jebejian and Lisa Esayan met with the pastor, Parish Council Chair Avo Toghrumadjian and Parish Council members to help the parish create a strategic plan.

The meeting began with a prayer service and Bible study on First Corinthians ("one body, many members"). Participants reflected on the importance of unity and the significance of each member's contribution of his or her unique skills to the parish.

Jebejian then outlined some elements of a "model parish," and Esayan presented ways in which the parish council might attract new members to St. Sahag and stressed the importance of communication between the council and the pastor.

During the daylong session, the church members developed a multi-faceted strategic plan for St. Sahag Church, which built on the vision of Barseghyan with input from all parish council members. The plan promotes community outreach and communication, leadership development, multi-generational education and the parish's financial stability.

The day concluded with a reception in appreciation of the supporters of St. Sahag Church.

Also on Saturday, Khoren Mekanejian, the Diocese's Music Ministry coordinator, worked with the parish choir in preparation for Sunday's services.

On Sunday, Barsamian celebrated the Divine Liturgy and elevated young parishioners Hagop Toghrumadjian and Andy Ylitalo to the sub-diaconate. Both are active members of the parish, and regularly serve on the altar.

The Primate also formally introduced Barseghyan to the community, and wished him

a fruitful ministry at St. Sahag Church. "Fr. Barseghyan is an energetic and capable young clergyman," Barsamian said. "May our Lord guide him, and may He continue blessing the Armenian community of St. Paul."

Following services, 140 people gathered for an anniversary banquet in the church hall. Sunday School and Armenian School students recited poems, and parishioner Mariam Kocharian sang a selection of Armenian songs.

Parishioners congratulated the newly-ordained sub-deacons and welcomed Barseghyan with a celebratory cake. "There is full support of our new pastor," Toghrumadjian said. "We all have the same mission of growing our parish."

Barseghyan thanked the community for its warm welcome since his arrival earlier this fall. "This is a new milestone for us," he said. "I look forward to working with all of you to reach new heights for our St. Sahag family. It is truly a blessing and joy to have your support as we embark on this new chapter of our parish his-



Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan with Hagop Toghrumadjian and Andy Ylitalo during the ordination service.

tory."

Toghrumadjian also spoke to parishioners about Saturday's strategic planning session and encouraged them to come together to achieve the goals envisioned.

"There is a very upbeat feeling in our community," he concluded.



Summer 2012 volunteers take a break following a day of painting.

Serve, Tour and Play with SERVICE Armenia

BERKELEY, Calif. — Applications are now available for the Paros Foundation's SERVICE Armenia 2013 Program. The program will run from June 24 to July 23, 2013, and will facilitate young people to travel and tour Armenia and Artsakh, while engaging in meaningful service projects benefiting Armenia and her people.

"Following the successes we experienced in 2012 with both groups of Armenian and American young people working on service projects in both Yerevan and in the regions, we look forward to summer 2013. Participants will be working on renovating school classrooms and distributing shoes and other humanitarian aid," said Peter Abajian, executive director of the Paros Foundation.

Throughout the program, participants will tour historic, religious and cultural sites throughout Armenia and Artsakh with experienced, English speaking staff and guides. Safe and well located accommodations and transportation combined with interesting cultural and educational activities will ensure all will have a terrific and memorable experience. The program is open to both Armenian and American young people wishing to participate. Knowledge of the Armenian language is not required.

More information including photos and video and the application form can be found at www.paros-foundation.org/Armenia2013. For more information, contact Peter Abajian at peter@paros-foundation.org.

ASA Awards \$68,000 in Scholarships

WARWICK, R.I. — The Armenian Students' Association founded in 1910 has to date awarded over \$1.7 million in scholarships to students of Armenian descent. Lori Kooloian, chairperson of the ASA Scholarship Committee reported that the Armenian Students' Association of America (ASA) has awarded a total of \$68,000 this year in scholarships to aid 30 college and university students in the United States for the academic year. Spanning the continent, fields in the arts, sciences, business, law and medicine the 2012-2013 scholarship award undergraduate, graduate and doctoral recipients and their school for the year 2012-13 are:

Ani Avetisyan, George Washington University, International Development; Amy Ishkanian, Columbia University, Speech-Language Pathology; Tara Guarino, Fuller Theological Seminary, Psychology; Brian Duffell, Tulane University, Medicine; Dana Majajian, Columbia University, Medicine; Adrina Shamlian, Univ of Southern California, Dentistry; Brittany Kademian, Georgetown University, Public Policy and Security Studies; Ani Megerdichian, Quinnipiac University, Physicians Assistant; Kathy Akopjan, University of Pennsylvania, Law; Anush Avetisyan, American University, International Relations; Jesse Sourourian, Columbia University, Film-Writing and Directing; Ruzan Stepanyan, Loyola University, Law; Emily Hanoian, Providence College, Sociology; Neli Martirosyan, UCLA, Comparative and International Education; Ivet Parseghian, Lincoln Memorial University, Medicine; Varant Chiloyan, Boston University,

Mechanical Engineering; Kristin Allukian, University of Florida, English, PhD; Maria Petrosyan, UCLA, Business Administration; Lara Maldjian, Columbia University, Public Health; Vanine Najarian, Arts Institute of Chicago, Interior Architecture; Nellie Ekemkjian, UCLA School of Medicine, Medicine; Kyle Dinkjian, Bentley University, Economics/Finance; Arik Avagyan, Univ of Illinois, Engineering Mechanics; Jesse Arlen, Wheaton College, Historical Theology; Nicole DerAnanian, Suffolk University, Marketing; Gary Bedrosian, University of Maryland, Dentistry; Clara Avakian, UCLA, Economics; Alexander Calikyan, Catholic University, Philosophy; Armen Derian, UCLA Medicine, David Geffen School of Medicine and Narini Badalian, Northeastern University, Law.

The ASA Silver Medal Award Committee selected five high school seniors to receive the Silver Medal Award. The Silver Medal Awards are given annually to high school seniors who have demonstrated outstanding scholastic ability.

The following students were selected to receive the award: Matthew R. Janigian; Jane Frances Bedrossian; Emily J. Papazian; Natalie Oundjian and Christina A. Zaroogian.

All ASA Award Information can be found at <http://asainc.org/national/awards/>

ASA Scholarship applications are available by contacting the ASA National Office, 333 Atlantic Ave., Warwick, RI 02888 or e-mail: headasa@aol.com. To download applications, visit www.asainc.org. Deadline for scholarship applications to be submitted is March 15, 2013.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Fifth Annual AGBU NYSEC Performing Artists in Concert Raises more Than \$50,000 to Support Students and Music Programs Worldwide

Sold Out Performance at Carnegie Hall Pays Tribute to Sayat Nova

NEW YORK – World premieres and a range of classical pieces, all inspired by the celebrated Armenian bard Sayat Nova, made the fifth annual AGBU Performing Artists in Concert an unforgettable evening. Presented by the AGBU New York Special Events Committee (NYSEC), the sold-out event drew crowds of more than 260 to Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall on Saturday, December 1, 2012, to honor the 300th anniversary of the birth of Sayat Nova. Showcasing the talents of AGBU scholarship recipients from around the globe, the concert raised more than \$50,000, which will enable AGBU to continue to support many more bright young musicians and musical initiatives.

Throughout the evening, the AGBU artists proved that Sayat Nova's influence has not only endured, but has also laid the foundation for a new genre, one that layers traditional Armenian and modern Western elements. Centuries after his time, the musician, poet, singer and master of languages who produced hundreds of Armenian ballads, continues to shape Armenian music. As the concert's co-artistic director Sofya Melikyan commented, "One of the greatest pleasures of being a musician is the opportunity to travel back in time and give new life to music. It was an honor to collaborate with all



Composer Vahram Sargsyan (conducting) debuts one of his world premiere pieces played by (from left to right) Armine Chamasyan, Tatevik Ayazyan, Gurgen Simonyan, Vardan Gasparyan, Anoush Simonian and Sofya Melikyan (on piano) at the AGBU NYSEC Performing Artists in Concert.

from the audience. In the second half of the concert, the piece *Poem* by AGBU Performing Arts Department Artistic Director Hayk Arsenyan made its New York debut, adding to the evening's distinctive ensemble, which was at some points lively, at others dramatic and somber – yet inspiring throughout.

Under the direction of Hayk Arsenyan and

Tatevik Khoja-Eynatyan, pianist Sofya Melikyan, violist Anoush Simonian and clarinetist Gurgen Simonyan, have trained and performed in some of the world's finest institutions and venues – the Conservatory of Geneva, the Juilliard School of Music, the Peabody Conservatory, the Vienna Conservatory and Yerevan Komitas State

who love great music, will continue promoting Armenian talent and fostering in our youth the desire to excel and ascend to the world's great stages, thereby advancing the cause of Armenian tradition and culture."

Scholarship recipient Tatevik Khoja-Eynatyan, who has performed at the White House and recorded two award-winning albums, attested to AGBU's great impact, commenting, "This fellowship gave me the key to my professional development, and I love sharing my passion for music through both performances and teaching. I'm deeply thankful that I am able to do so because of AGBU's support."

Over the past four years, the annual AGBU NYSEC concert has raised more than \$200,000, which has supported gifted young Armenian performers, as well as AGBU musical programs and events. Proceeds from the 2012 NYSEC event, which included pre-concert fundraising efforts, will continue to support AGBU student grants and projects worldwide. Since the AGBU NYSEC event's inception, it has benefitted from the continuous support of concert benefactor Paul Khoury.

The fifth annual AGBU Performing Artists in Concert was organized by the NYSEC Committee, co-chaired by Nila Festekjian and Sossy Setrakian. Members include Anita Anserian, Carol Aslanian, Betty Cherkezian, Melissa Demirjian, Maral Hajjar, Hilda Hartounian, Maral Jebejian, Vesna Markarian and Vera Setrakian. AGBU Performing Artists



Co-artistic directors Sofya Melikyan and Hayk Arsenyan share the stage during the 5th annual AGBU NYSEC Performing Artists in Concert.



AGBU scholarship recipient Tatevik Khoja-Eynatyan plays the marimba during one of several performances inspired by the legendary Armenian bard Sayat Nova.

the incredible AGBU artists to commemorate Sayat Nova's birth and a delight to witness the ways he continues to motivate the next generation of Armenian composers."

The program opened with the premiere of *Ashkharums Akh Chim Kashil* (I Would Not Sigh in this World), arranged by Artur Akshelyan, the first-place winner of the 2006 AGBU Sayat Nova International Composition Competition. The performance, which featured the marimba, was one of four world premieres that marked the event; a second piece by Akshelyan, *The Universe in a Nutshell*, as well as two works by composer Vahram Sargsyan, an arrangement of Sayat Nova's *Usti Kugas* (Where Do You Come From?) and *Hunting the Hunter*, all drew repeated rounds of applause

Sofya Melikyan, the 10 artists paid tribute not only to Sayat Nova, but to many contemporary classical composers, as well. The Armenian composer Alexander Arutiunian, who died this year, was honored with a performance of his acclaimed *Suite for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, which is rarely heard in concert. Compositions by Antonín Dvorák, Tigran Mansurian, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Robert Schumann were among the other works performed by the musicians, some of whom are based locally, and others who traveled from as far as Austria, Belgium and Canada to share the stage in New York. The participants, pianist Hayk Arsenyan, mezzo soprano Garineh Avakian, violinists Tatevik Ayazyan and Armine Chamasyan, pianist Tanya Gabrielian, cellist Vardan Gasparyan, marimbist

Conservatory, among others.

As both established artists and rising stars, the NYSEC concert participants represent the greatest talents of their generation, each of whom have benefitted from the AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship Program, which is administered by the AGBU Scholarship Program. AGBU Performing Artists in Concert Co-Chair Sossy Setrakian stressed the organization's commitment to young musicians, stating, "The annual AGBU NYSEC concert at Carnegie Hall supports our talented artists in their quest for recognition and professional distinction. I was impressed by the diversity and complexity of the musical repertoire and the extraordinary talent of the performers. I hope AGBU NYSEC, with the support of all those

in Concert Contributors include AGBU Performing Arts Department Artistic Director Hayk Arsenyan, graphic designer Alex Basmagian, events coordinator Sharis Boghossian, AGBU Associate Director of Education Natalie Gabrelian and concert coordinator Leslie Aslanian Williams.

For decades, AGBU scholarships have been awarded to qualified, talented students of Armenian descent studying in the performing arts who have demonstrated excellence in their chosen fields. Those who would like to make a contribution to the AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship Program to help sustain and support the enhancement of future Armenian musicians may contact AGBU by email at scholarship@agbu.org.

Dr. Armen Marsoobian Appointed Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor at Columbia University

NEW YORK – Dr. Armen T. Marsoobian has been appointed the Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University for the Spring 2013. He is a professor of philosophy at Southern Connecticut State University and chairperson of the Philosophy Department. Marsoobian received his PhD in philosophy from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His primary areas of research are American philosophy, aesthetics, Peircean semi-

otics, metaphysics and genocide studies.

Marsoobian will teach a seminar-style course titled, "Armenian Literary and Artistic Responses to the Genocide of 1915."

The Armenian Genocide has engendered complex and conceptually challenging literary and artistic responses because of its unique status as a genocide that was virtually forgotten for 50 years and has been continuously denied by the Turkish state for more than 90 years. The ongoing denial has meant that the Genocide itself has never come to an end and justice has been

delayed. The issue of denial raises challenging questions and added burdens for those artists and writers who attempt to portray the aftermath of the Genocide itself, especially the continuing trauma that characterizes the lives of the survivors and their descendants.

The course will explore these themes in various works in translation in film, poetry, novels and non-fiction.

Registration for this course begins January 14 and ends January 18 and is open to auditors as well as to matriculating students. Classes

begin the week of January 22. Registration may be completed online at www.ce.columbia.edu/auditing.

The Visiting Professorship program at Columbia was established by the late Dr. Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian in 1998. Previous visiting professors have included Levon Abrahamian, Vardan Azatyan, George Bournoutian, Seta Dadoyan, Helen Evans, Roberta Ervine, Rachel Goshgarian, Arman Grigoryan, Robert Hewsen, Ara Sarafian and Khachig Tololyan.



Arts & Living

Michael Aram Partners With Creative Converting To Launch Madhouse

NEW YORK and INDIANAPOLIS — Designer Michael Aram, known for his beautifully sculpted metalware tabletop and home decor accessories, has partnered with paper and partyware manufacturer, Creative Converting, to launch a new brand, Madhouse, a collection of home entertaining accessories and paper tableware.

Madhouse will make its debut in January at the winter gift markets. The brand will launch six coordinated collections of high-end, premium paper tableware, statement tabletop pieces, including paper plates and napkins; melamine bowls, plates, trays, plastic drink ware, cutlery; and silicone placemats. The six collections — Ocean, Black Orchid, Olive Branch, Fig Leaf, Botanical Leaf and Lemonwood — are interpretations of six of Aram's nature-inspired core collections.

"Today, entertaining at home has become about the formalization of casual and the casualization of formal," states Aram. "Hosts want their gatherings to feel special, but they don't want to spend a fortune creating a beautiful tablescape. Madhouse will bridge that gap, giving accessible options for elegant, yet easeful entertaining."

The development of the collection is a licensing arrangement with Aram as the licensor and Creative Converting as the licensee. But, as Andy Romjue, vice president of marketing for Creative Converting, noted, "I've never been a part of a licensing agreement with so much collaboration. My product team and Michael and his product team were constantly working together flying back and forth to New York, then to China and the melamine factory, together with Michael and his Indian team, to work on sculpts for the melamine pieces. The collaboration is at an extremely high level. Michael has approved or designed each piece that we are putting out there."

The partnership, which came about almost by accident, has been a huge undertaking. The development of the collection, more than 18 months in the making, has not been without its challenges. Creative Converting and its supply partners had to do things that have never been done before. For the paper products, the company, which has been producing paper products for more than 100 years, introduced treatments, printing and screening processes that it had never done before in order to create the different textures and other qualities that emulate the same look and feel that Michael Aram accomplishes with his sculpted pieces.

There were similar challenges with the melamine products as well, such as creating the pearlescent treatments, which had not been done before, as well as incorporating the sculptural quality of Aram's work. "Michael spent hours and hours carving the pieces — whether it was a botanical leaf or a woodgrain that would be the basis for the molds," said Romjue. "In China, he even went there himself and went carving into the mold to get the result that he wanted. His hand is all over this project." The end result is a beautiful heavy quality melamine that could be mistaken for stoneware — and in fact was, when early pieces were shown to some retail consultants, according to Romjue.

In addition to the six debut collections, plans are already in development for two collections of melamine and paper tableware, as well as some giftable items with a "Christmas-y feel" for fall holiday 2013 and a new collection and line extensions of the six debut collections for spring 2014. "We weren't able to do everything that we wanted to on the first go-round, so there are a few things that we will be launching, as well as some natural solid color stories," said Romjue.

Aram added, "This brand has been a dream of mine for a long time, and we're looking forward to expanding the Madhouse product offering through 2013 and beyond."



François K in studio

Electronic Music Pioneer François K Reflects on a Life Of Electronica

NEW YORK (Music Radar) — There are few people that could match François Kevorkian, aka François K's, career CV, one of the most significant contributors to Electronic music over the past 30 years. He has been a drummer, a DJ, an A&R man, studio owner, producer, remixer and fully-fledged recording artist in his own right. But, more notably, he is still creating and remixing at the forefront of technology and music, headlining huge DJ gigs and producing tracks.

"I tried DJing because the drumming work was so hard to get, I taught myself to splice and edit tape using some scissors and scotch tape."

Born in France, but now a fully-fledged New Yorker, François Kevorkian started as a drummer during his college years around 1973 and although he was a drummer, he always seemed to be taking care of the electronic side of things when playing in the bands he joined. After a brief experience as a DJ playing background music, he moved to New York in '75, looking for work as a drummer.

Eventually he landed a strange gig playing drums alongside a DJ (notably which led to Kevorkian learning the art of DJing and furthering his interest in the technical aspects of music). "I already knew some basic stuff about tape and recording", explained Kevorkian, "I could do tape echoes and silly effects between tape machines and such. I tried DJing because the drumming work was so hard to get, I taught myself to splice and edit tape using some scissors and scotch tape." These edits and prior musical training gave Kevorkian a real edge over many of the other DJs. Having his own dubplates to play his exclusive versions of the records meant he quickly rose through the DJ ranks.

When asked about those days and if there was any piece of technology that changed everything, Kevorkian sharply replied, "I've been asked this before and to be honest, I don't see how you could choose just one development as there were so many. For a start, the Linndrum and Oberheim DMX machines meant that people could program and sequence music very quickly and efficiently."

"In the beginning a remix was another mix of the record whereas now it's really a re-production," he explained.

Once MIDI came, these instruments could not only synchronize with each other but could actually talk and communicate with each other. The third of course would have to be Pro Tools, or Sound Designer as it was called back then, but when it went fully multi-track in the '90s it was the real changing point." In the mid-'80s, Kevorkian started to produce more and more and had built up a small amount of gear, but was frustrated at the studios he was using. "I was constantly living in other people's studios", explains Kevorkian "it was such a mess trying to set these studios up for Electronic music. They were all geared towards Rock music, with valve amps, mics and so on, but really knew nothing about MIDI, or timecode or anything like that."

see MUSIC, page 11

Diana Der-Hovanesian Featured in Poetry Magazine

By Adria Holmes

The December Issue of *Ibbetson Review*, based in Somerville, Mass., features the work of Diana Der-Hovanesian, longtime president of the New England Poetry Club. As poet Robert Clawson says, not only has she directed the poetry organization for decades, arranging countless readings by world-renowned, as well as local poets but she has also won numerous awards for her own poetry and poetry collections. She has written extensively about the Armenian Genocide and has been a strong voice making sure this holocaust will not fall into the dustbin of history.

Adria Holmes: How did your presidency of New England Poetry Club come to be?

DDH: Well, reluctantly I must say. I was taking a class at Harvard, actually the last class, Robert Lowell gave. and someone, before the class began, told us all about a poetry reading that evening at the Faculty Club. And I went to hear the New England Poetry Club program. In those days there were daily poems on the editorial pages of *The Times*, the *Trib*, the *Monitor*, in pages of *Yankee*, *Saturday Review*, *Harpers*. There was a lot of poetry being published. It was easier in those days and I was selling a lot of it, since I had given up full time writing jobs to do free lance and take care of two babies.

AH: So you went to that meeting...

DDH: After the reading, there was a lot of socializing. I had not met any other poets here in Boston. I used my married name with acquaintances so no one, really, except my family knew me as DDH and I was startled that so many at the club, knew me from published stuff! In fact the president at the time, Victor Howes, asked me to join: even asked me to be secretary!

AH: And that was the beginning.

DDH: Well no, I said I didn't know shorthand and wouldn't make a good secretary. And he laughed saying no, no, not that kind. He had a secretary at his university. I would merely send notices of meetings to the printer who'd send cards to the membership. Well, I found myself, also getting speakers for Victor. It was a good partnership. And then after a few years he and the board asked me to be president because I was working at the annual *Boston Globe* Book Festival arranging poetry readings and panel discussions at the Boston Public Library.

AH: So you started?

DDH: Not for another year. I said, I didn't know Robert's Rules, etc., etc. and was willing to continue getting speakers. Not be president. But finally I was talked into it, I'm sorry to say.

AH: You regret it?

DDH: Well, in a way: I wasted a lot of time, arranging meetings, but in other ways, it's been a different kind of adventure meeting the princes and prima donnas of the poetry world. And arranging a lot of international poetry events.

AH: Did you know Amy Lowell, Robert Frost or Conrad Aiken? And are they still an influence in some ways.

DDH: I heard Robert Frost, once at Harvard. My mother had taken me to that reading! And I heard a lot of Frost and Lowell stories from older members. The club still seems to be a meeting place of both poetry from the academic and the popular world. What I did was bring in a lot more international poetry, which had been Amy Lowell's early aim. And our current board, especially Fred Marchant, finds Conrad Aiken, still an influence in anti-war and or other poetry of conscience.

AH: I've heard that you made a lot of changes in the local poetry scene by moving the usual program hour of 8 p.m. to 7. And inviting more than one poet on a program, giving more poets exposure. Now do you think

see POETRY, page 13

Andy Serkis Plays Dual Role in ‘Hobbit’ – Gollum and Director

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) – Andy Serkis reprises his role as Gollum in “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey,” to be released worldwide this week, but his main role this time was as a second unit director, shooting battle sequences in 3D for director Peter Jackson.

The British-born actor, 48, who rose to fame as the obsessive Gollum in Jackson’s “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy, spoke about playing the popular CGI character, and his role behind the camera in New Zealand for “The Hobbit.”

Q: Was it nice to get re-acquainted with Gollum after almost 10 years?

A: Yes, but he’s never been that far away from me. Not a day goes by where I’m not reminded of Gollum by some person in the street who asks me to do his voice or wants to talk to me about him. But because “The Hobbit” has been talked about as a project for many years, I knew that at some point I’d have to reengage with him.

Q: Martin Freeman (Bilbo Baggins) is new to the franchise and so are many other actors. As a veteran, did they come to you for advice?

A: It sort of manifested itself more in a way where (as a vet) you understand the scale and scope of what’s required stamina-wise. It’s a different rhythm than most movies. For a lot of the actors, you’re 12,000 miles away from home. It becomes a way of life – getting up at five in the morning, shooting every day, day in day out, for 270 days. The new cast playing the dwarves were carrying incredibly heavy weights in their suits, they sat through hours of make-up every day. So it’s quite challenging from a stamina point of view.



From left: Andy Serkis, Peter Jackson, Martin Freeman, Richard Armitage and Elijah Wood pose on a stage at a news conference promoting their movie “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey,” in Tokyo, on December 1.

Q: Playing Gollum was not your only job. You were also doing second unit directing. What did that entail?

A: Directing was my main job this time – more than playing Gollum. I worked 200 days with a huge team shooting battle sequences, aerials. It was an amazing experience and one which I was very, very thankful to Peter for asking me to do.

Q: How did that come about?

A: I’d already started directing short films when we were doing ‘Lord of the Rings,’ then videogame projects. So Peter’s known that I’ve been heading towards directing for a long time. But I always thought my first outing would be a couple of people and a digital camera in the back streets of London somewhere!

Q: Why do you think Peter let you do it?

A: I think because the second unit was going to have a lot of principal cast, Peter wanted someone that could take care of the performances and create an atmosphere where the actors felt safe. Obviously I was briefed closely by Peter. But it was a huge

challenge – mental, technological. I’d never shot with 3D. Plus the day to day logistics of dealing with such an enormous operation.

Q: Any plans to direct again?

A: Just before I headed off to New Zealand to work on ‘The Hobbit,’ I was in the process of setting up (my new company) The Imaginarium (with producer Jonathan Cavendish), which is a performance-capture studio and a development company. We are developing our own slate of film projects, one of which is George Orwell’s “Animal Farm.” It’s going to be the first film that I’ll be directing.

Q: Where does acting fit in to your new-found career?

A: At the moment, my trajectory isn’t to think about acting. I’m absolutely devoted to The Imaginarium, our projects and directing. And watching and enabling other actors do their thing in our studio is hugely rewarding. I expect at some point I’ll probably want to go back on stage and do some theater, because I’ve not done theater in 10 years.

Q: With two more installments of “The Hobbit” still to come over the next few years, you’ll be the voice of Gollum for fans for many more years. Are your kids proud or embarrassed when you’re asked do his distinctive raspy voice?

A: I’m probably running out of credits in terms of my kids enjoying me do the Gollum voice for others. Especially my older ones (Ruby, 14, Sonny, 12). It was cool when they were younger. But my youngest (Louie, 8) absolutely revels in it. He would have me do it all day long for his friends at school. So I still have great currency there!

Electronic Music Pioneer François K studio interview

MUSIC, from page 10

There was almost resentment towards Electronic music and no studio in New York catered for it. So, every time we had a session in one of these studios we’d have to spend at least half a day setting all of this stuff up. I got to the point when I was so sick of setting up, I decided to make my own facility.”

By 1987, Kevorkian had his facility, Axis Studios, consisting of a single room before it

quickly expanded into four rooms, three commercial and one private. The client list for Axis became an incredible list of huge chart-topping names such as Madonna, Teddy Riley, Mariah Carey, Dee-Lite to name a few, and he wasn’t short of gear to put in it as he explains. “By this point I had all the outboard you could imagine – SSL consoles, Amek consoles, Studer and Mitsubishi tape machines and some of the gear still sat around me today.”

When we asked about how this shift from analogue to digital has affected the way he works, Kevorkian positively commented, “I have five or six different Pro Tools configurations, from the full HD3 to the tiny Mbox Micro for when I’m on the road.”

Modestly, Kevorkian has never considered

himself a mix engineer. “I only ended up doing it because the engineer didn’t show up, or there was no budget for one so I had to do it all myself. But basically as of late, compared to what I used to do, most of my work has been orientated towards DJing and live performance again. I’ve been for 20 years like a gun for hire, and mixed over 1,000 records in every kind of music you can imagine. “In the beginning a remix was another mix of the record whereas now it’s really a re-production.

If a guy shows up with a track using a Depeche Mode sample, he then wants me to create a new track using this sample, give me a flat fee and he then owns my record. But mine has been born the same way as his, it’s just an original track using a Depeche Mode sample.

It’s fine to build your name this way and be involved with exciting acts this way like the remixes I did for Moloko. It’s nice to work with a vocal like Roisin’s but she called me again recently and I had to say no. I haven’t been able to bring myself to do any commercial remixes in the last year really.” Kevorkian has really stepped back from being the producer of others and really only gets excited now about what he calls, ‘the blurring of live performance and music creation.’ “I just find it much more exciting. I can be playing to a crowd and creating new music at the same time.”

It’s these blurring boundaries and Kevorkian’s previous history as an accomplished drummer that leads us to question how he sees himself – as a programmer or a player. “Well, from time to time I hire professional players when I really want some masterful playing, but really this is a question that would be relevant 10 years ago.” He defensively explains, “The track *The Road Of Life*, I made after I bought the Arturia Moog Modular software. I was playing around with the sounds and I made a track. Is that programming or playing?”

It’s clear that François K will make music with whatever is there, regardless of technology.

This DJing freedom translates into the studio where Kevorkian’s track creation is far from regimented. “I know some people will start with the drums, or some chords but I really can’t work like that. I think I would have got bored by now if I tried to work to a musical template. I’ve worked in the studio for so long and have seen many producers and engineers who have templates for treatments of tracks, putting the same reverbs on the same sends and using the same preset delays and so on. I much prefer to work in a quirky kind of way, whether it’s starting from a sweet melody or some nice chords I’ve heard to fiddling around with random sounds. It’s much more inspiring.”

Still at the forefront, François K is still a name very relevant to the new generation of music lovers but we wondered what he was going to next. “As far as the future goes”, Kevorkian explained “I’m working on much of my own solo material and I need to find some time to really finish a complete coherent album as I’ve just been doing mixes and compilations. I’ll still be touring and playing live but as I said before, I’m cutting back on the remixing and other projects to focus on my own material.”

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ARTS & LIVING

2012 Declaration:

A History of Seized Armenian Foundation Properties in Istanbul

By Raffi Bedrosyan

TORONTO — After two years of painfully detailed research through thousands of documents, the Hrant Dink Foundation in Istanbul has produced a monumental work explaining the overall history and present status of all real estate belonging to the Armenian charitable foundations in Istanbul, seized by the Turkish state government over the last few decades.

The comprehensive study, some 400 pages long, for the first time compiles a list of all the seized properties and thereby illustrates the overall picture and enormity of the plunder suffered by the Armenian schools, orphanages, churches and hospitals in Istanbul, dependent on the sole income from these properties for survival.

The title, *2012 Declaration*, makes reference to the Turkish state decree of the 1936 Declaration, which ordered the minority charitable foundations to list their assets and properties in 1936.

During the height of the Cyprus crisis in 1975, the state arbitrarily legislated that any real properties obtained by the minority charitable foundations after 1936 through donations, inheritance, wills and gifts, are deemed illegal, since they were not listed in the 1936 Declaration. The *2012 Declaration* makes reference to this illogical legislation and exposes the legalized but unlawful seizure or state robbery that took place, and the recent small steps to undo the gross injustice.

The book is not a mere historical document listing an inventory of physical properties, or statistical records or legal statements. It is a story of enormous human suffering, ranging from children being thrown out of their school to orphans no longer finding a home, with the most tragic story of a summer camp complex of buildings literally constructed by orphan children, including Dink himself, seized by the Turkish state or sold to Turkish individuals.

The four members of the Hrant Dink Foundation, Mehmet Polatel, Nora Mildanoglu, Ozgur Leman Eren and Mehmet Atilgan, sifted through the Patriarchate, church and school archives, government deed and title records, foundation lawyers' personal archives, old maps, surveys, purchase and sale agreements, and Dink's own research files, to produce a concise history of each charitable foundation, number, location map and type of properties gifted to each foundation and then seized by the state, and more than 200 photographs. The most heartbreaking aspect of this historic document is the photographs. The attempts of the research team to obtain documents from the government offices, even equipped with the Freedom of Information Act, were mostly unsuccessful, as the 1915-1925 era deed and title records of the Armenians are still not open to the public, as they constitute, according to the state, "threats to state security."

This article will attempt to summarize the 400-page document and give some striking examples of the Istanbul Armenian history.

First, some excerpts from the Introduction Section: "This book is not the story of seized buildings made of stone or cement, but the story of flesh and bone human beings. These seized institutions and buildings were cherished belongings of human beings rich and poor, young and old, men and women, who had worked hard to create or acquire them. These unjustly-seized buildings gave life to the schools, churches, orphanages and retirement homes of the whole community. The social and cultural fabric of the Turkish Armenians depended on this economic foundation. It is our wish that similar injustices will not be carried into the future, as people read in this book the documented 'why' and 'how' of the attempts to wipe out the life and culture of our community. The issue is not only the seizure or return of the properties, but understanding this dimension of the history and passing it to future generations. As long as the ancestral people of

these lands are marginalized or defined as 'others', as long as minorities are not seen as equal citizens, the democratization efforts in Turkey will be stunted. It is our wish that this study will contribute to facing history."

The book then lists the Armenian charitable foundations and their assets. There are 53 Armenian charitable foundations in Istanbul, administering 18 schools and orphanages, 48 churches, 2 hospitals and 20 cemeteries of the Istanbul Armenian community, supported by the rental revenue and assets that they owned or received through wills or gifts. These foundations owned 1,328 properties, of which 661 were seized by the state due to several different reasons.

The study could not determine the fate of 87 properties. After exhausting all legal means of obtaining the seized properties back from the state through Turkish courts, some of the foundations took their cases to the European Human Rights Court in the last ten years. As they started to win all their cases, and since the European court decisions were binding on Turkey through European Union accession expectations, the Turkish state recently decided to amend the 1975 legislation related to the foundations, which had enabled the legal but unlawful seizures. With the improved legislation in the last few years, 143 properties, or about 10.77 percent of the 1,328 properties have now been returned to the Armenian foundations.

The types of seized properties are listed as follows: Residential apartment building, residential apartment unit, house dwelling, vacant lot, orchard, fountain, store/shop, warehouse, factory, commercial building, office building, office unit, hospital, workplace, summer camp, church, school and cemetery.

The owner status of the seized properties are listed as follows: Unknown, municipal government, state treasury, public building, vacant, lost deed/title, individually owned, owned by other foundation or owned by the State General Directorate of Foundations.

The process by which the foundation obtained properties is listed as follows: Donation, will, purchase or by Ottoman Sultan decree.

The process by which the foundation lost properties is listed as follows: Seizure by state, made public by state or sale to individuals or corporations.

The book explains some of the seizure stories in great detail. Some examples are given below:

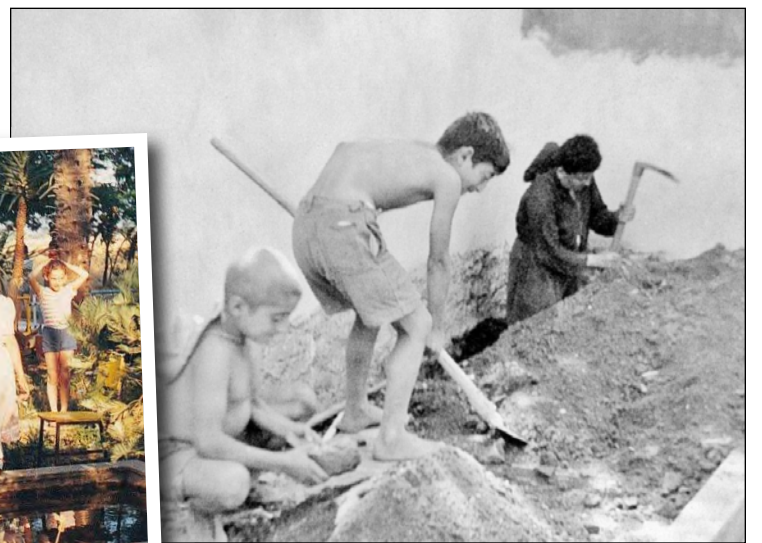
Mkhitarayan Bomonti School

This is the tragic story of a 200-year-old Armenian school, which ended up being a tenant in the building that it used to own, but nevertheless, a story with a happy ending.

The Armenian Catholic Mkhitarist order in Venice founded a boys' school in 1830 in the Pera neighborhood. In order to serve the increased student population in better educational facilities, the school foundation decided to move the school to a larger building and in 1958, purchased the present site at Sisli-Bomonti neighbourhood for 710,000 Turkish liras from a woman named Emine Tevfika Ayasli. The school name was changed to Private Bomonti Armenian Catholic Primary School. In 1979, The State Charitable Foundations



Tuzla orphans' camp built by the orphans themselves, Gedikpasha Armenian Protestant church



Directorate started a court case against the Armenian school, based on the argument that since this school was not listed in the 1936 Declaration, the purchase of the new school building was illegal. The Directorate demanded that the purchase be cancelled and the building be returned to the seller or the heirs of the seller. The court accepted the argument and in 1988 the Appeal Court turned down the Armenians' appeal. The deed was turned over to the former owner, who had since deceased, and as per the directions of her will, got deeded to her brothers and to the Ankara Ayas Municipality. The brothers sold their share of the building to a construction company specializing in apartment buildings, named Miltas.

It is interesting to note that Ayasli's will was prepared years after the school building was legally sold to the Armenian school foundation.

In 1998, the Ankara Ayas Municipality entered into a tenancy agreement with the school and started charging rent. But the other owner, Miltas, objected to the tenancy agreement and started court proceedings to have the school vacate the building. In February 1999, Miltas won the case and on the same day, the school building contents were moved outside into the schoolyard. Contents included students' desks, library shelves and books, kindergarten toys and the school piano. Faced with an incredible situation of suddenly having no school in the middle of the winter, the Armenian parents, in an exceptional fashion, resorted to civil disobedience and started camping in the schoolyard. The public outcry forced the mayor of Istanbul's Sisli Municipality to intervene and arrange to buy the shares of Miltas, the construction company. He also struck an agreement with the Ayas Municipality to have the school continue to function by paying rent to the Ayas Municipality. Naturally, the school lost most of its students after these disturbances and the student population dropped to 35. Meanwhile, the school foundation went to court to re-claim the building.

In November 2012, two days before the publication of the subject book, the court case ended with victory for the Armenian school and now, the deeds are finally returned to the Armenian foundation and the school has stopped paying rent.

Tuzla Armenian Children's Camp

In the 1950s, the Armenian Protestant Church in the Gedikpasa neighborhood of Istanbul was the arrival point of many poor and homeless Armenian orphans, especially from Anatolian settlements. These children, numbering in the 60s, received their education at the Gedikpasa Armenian Protestant school in the winter under tolerable conditions, but had nowhere to go in the summers. The church foundation decided to purchase a vacant, treed lot near the Marmara Sea in the Tuzla municipality, for a summer camp for these children.

In October 1962, the purchase was completed from an individual named Sait Durmaz, and registered in the church title, according to all applicable legal procedures. From then on,



Bomonti Mkhitarian School students holding class on the street after the school was seized and desks, books and piano were thrown out.



ARTS & LIVING

every summer the children, aged 8-12, were given the task of building the camp buildings, supervised by a builder named Tuzlali Hasan Kalfa.

The children first erected the poles and the canvas tents that they would live in during construction. Then they dug a water well, taking turns pumping the water needed for construction. Then the foundations were prepared. Since the sea was only 500 meters away, they carried all the needed sand and gravel from the beach by wheelbarrows. Slowly but surely, over three summers, the vacant land was transformed into a summer camp complex with buildings, dormitories, dining halls, play areas, soccer field, pond, and gym. They stocked the pond with frogs and ducks. Armenian boys and girls learnt how to talk, sing, play, cook, clean together in Armenian. Hrant Dink was one of those boys and his wife, Rakel, was one of those girls.

The happy days came to an end when the State Charitable Foundations Directorate applied to the courts in February 1979 to reverse the purchase agreement and have the property returned to its previous owner, arguing that the Gedikpasa Church Foundation had no right to purchase a property. After four years of trials, the court cancelled the summer camp deed and returned the property to the former owner, Sait Durmaz, including the extraordinary facilities that the children had constructed. The camp, imprinted in the memories of 1,500 Armenian children, became abandoned, with rusting bed frames, broken windows and overgrown weeds. In 1987, the Appeal Court approved the previous court decision. The owner sold the camp to new purchasers, who in turn sold it again. Several court applications by the Armenian foundation in the 2000s and most recently in August 2011, were all turned down. One of Hrant Dink's last articles, titled, "Humanity, I take you to court!...", was a solemn cry in the face of this gross injustice.

Kalfayan Orphanage

In 1865, a cholera epidemic in Istanbul left many children poor orphans. An Armenian nun named Srpuihi Nshan Kalfayan decided to care

for 17 orphan girls, aged 2 to 10, at her home. She also started teaching them handicrafts and sewing. These personal efforts led to the founding of one of the most important Armenian educational institutions in Istanbul, the Kalfayan Orphanage School. The orphanage survived until the late 1960s, when the school building was expropriated without compensation and demolished, in order to build the expressways leading to the Bosphorus Bridge crossing between Europe and Asia. The foundation owned a large parcel of land where it wanted to transfer the orphanage school. The State Charitable Foundations Directorate responded that since this land is not registered in the 1936 Declaration, building of a new orphanage there could not be allowed, and that the orphans and their teachers should be just redistributed into other orphanages. Repeated applications did not yield any results and 150 people, combined total of orphans and staff, spent the next 30 years in various dilapidated buildings, until a new arrangement was made in 1999 to share the school building of Semerciyan School in Uskudar.

Surp Hagop Cemetery

The Surp Hagop Cemetery lands were decreed by Ottoman Sultan Suleiman to the Armenian community in 1550, as a reward to his Armenian cook Manuk Karaseferyan of Van, who had uncovered a plot to poison the Sultan by German spies during the siege of Budapest. The cemetery was in use for 400 years until the



A map showing Kalfayan Orphanage and other Armenian properties expropriated for Bosphorus Bridge expressways

1930s, when the Istanbul Municipality expropriated the lands after years of legal wrangling. At present, these lands, which have become one of the most valuable and fashionable district of Istanbul, are occupied by the State Radio and Television Headquarters, The Turkish Armed Forces Istanbul Headquarters, the Military Museum, many expensive hotels such as Hilton, Regency Hyatt, Divan, several apartment and office buildings, as well as the expansive Taksim Park, which has some walkways made from marble of the Armenian tombstones.

The 2012 Declaration book documents the Armenian properties lost in Istanbul, mainly during the 1970s, using the illogical but legal argument that if the charitable foundations

obtained properties after 1936, then they are deemed illegal because they are not included in the 1936 Declaration. But the extent of the gross injustice would pale in comparison, when we consider the amount of seized or lost Armenian properties after 1915, not only in Istanbul, but all over Anatolia, especially in historic Armenia.

To illustrate the sheer enormity of the loss, consider these numbers: there were more than 4,000 Armenian churches and schools in Anatolia, each one with its own land, each one with its own income generating additional lands, properties and assets. The recently-reconstructed Surp Giragos Church in Diyarbakir had more than 200 separate deeds and titles to different properties such as shops, houses, farms, orchards, which were lost and taken over by the government and private individuals, erecting apartment buildings, office buildings, state schools, shops and houses, even a highway. Thankfully, the process to take these properties back has already started in Diyarbakir.

These figures are for only Armenian church and schools, that is, community owned buildings. Next, add the properties owned by private Armenian individuals, such as houses, shops, farms, orchards, factories, warehouses, mines and so on. It is quite difficult to grasp the enormity of wealth transfer. No wonder there is resistance in facing history or acknowledging the facts.

(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer as well as a concert pianist, living in Toronto. For the past several years, proceeds from his concerts and two CDs have been donated toward the construction of school, highway, water and gas distribution projects in Armenia and Karabagh, in which he also participated as a voluntary engineer. He was involved in organizing the Surp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church reconstruction project, as well as promoting the significance of this historic project worldwide as the first Armenian reclaim of church and properties in Anatolia after 1915. In September 2012, he gave the first Armenian piano concert in the Surp Giragos Church since 1915.)

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Diana Der-Hovanesian Featured in Poetry Magazine

POETRY, from page ?

NEPC would benefit from social media, such as a blog or Twitter?

DDH: You and other younger members will have to tell us and lead.

AH: How do you think the Armenian Holocaust impacted poetry?

DDH: Well, horrifically, of course, because 250 poets were the first to be rounded up and executed! Here, we don't think of poets as particularly influential or dangerous. But to Armenians, poetry was a way of imparting pride and keeping up hope with references to past heroes. Poets were leaders. This was 1915, when the Turkish Ottoman Empire was falling apart in Europe. Greece and the Bulgarians were the last to be freed and the Turks were afraid the Armenians would be the next to free their lands. So during World

War I, (when they were on the side of the Germans) they drafted all the young Armenian men, but instead of being armed and trained, they were all executed. Then the general population was marched into the deserts toward Syria. Most died. No more poets and no more readers.

AH: Oh. Now I can understand its impact on the next generation: and on your work.

DDH: Yes, an intelligent reader should know history should not be rewritten. Evil should not be rewarded. One genocide is as wrong as another. The Turkish success led Hitler to say in 1935: "Who now remembers the Armenians?" when he started on his path.

AH: I have a different question. What do you find the most difficult part of writing?

DDH: Finding enough time, I guess. Rewriting, sending out.

AH: Any advice for writers wanting to be published?

DDH: Don't be discouraged. Rewrite when and if something comes back. Especially if the editor makes suggestions. When I was young and starting out, no one told me to

always send a note telling of previous publications or where you've studied. I thought stuff like that was frowned upon. I never knew to rewrite and send back to the editor who made suggestions. I didn't know anything. I didn't think of editors as friends: writers themselves who want you to succeed. It was one of my poetry editors who first suggested I do translations from the Armenian.

The interview was followed by seven poems by Diana including the following:

TO YOU THE LIVING

Greetings!
from us, from the past.
Our message is simple:
Nothing lasts
except honor. Of course
love, also is good
while you're alive and it is understood
even in memory.
But honor lives past

history. History
depends on the best reports and who owns
the press.

Then it is forgotten by all except the gods
That do exist.
Oh yes,
Against all the odds
they do.
But with different names than you
guessed.

OTHERS

Other people
can have individual sorrows,
personal defeats, and aims.

Not Armenians
They owe two million ghosts
two million debts to claim.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE for

Students of Armenian Descent
Having completed one year of college by June, 2013
Applications and other information may be obtained from

ARMENIAN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
Scholarship Committee
333 Atlantic Avenue, Warwick, RI, 02888
Tel. (401) 461-6114, Fax (401) 461-6112
Email: headasa@aol.com

Deadline for returning completed applications: March 15, 2013

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COMMENTARY

A Bleak Outcome for Syria

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Syria has been one of the most stable countries in the Middle East and home for the most affluent Armenian community attached to its roots and heritage.

The deportations and the Genocide of 1915 ended in Northern Syria; millions perished in Der Zor and survivors settled in Aleppo. For many decades Aleppo has educated and provided writers, editors, teachers as well as political and religious leaders to the Armenian communities in the Middle East and beyond. That is why all calls and appeals around the world to help Armenians in Syria emanate not only from a humanitarian concern, but from a rightful gratitude that the Diaspora Armenians owe to that embattled community.

For many years, that proud and prominent Armenian community has proven to be a thorn in the side of the Turks, especially with its clout in Syria and its Martyrs Monument in Der Zor, bordering modern-day Turkey. Pictures and news broadcast from Syria painfully present the destruction inflicted on the Der Zor Church and monument by Turkey's hired guns to overthrow the government in Syria.

In addition, threats are being directed at Armenians in Kessab to abandon the region, which they have inhabited since Roman times. Kessab was also situated in the southeastern border of the Cilician principalities and the kingdom which lasted for 300 years. Therefore, within the framework of the larger Syrian conflict, Turkey is conducting a mini-genocide as its attempts at eradicating the Armenian people from its original habitat continue.

Of course, this does not concern or bother the parties involved in the Syrian war, which is continuing ferociously and thus far has claimed more than 40,000 casualties, including many Armenians.

Each party has its own objective in destroying Syria. Therefore, it will be our concern to point out the reality and pursue a policy which will help our community in Syria, whether or not that policy is in synch with the goals of the parties engaged in this bloody conflict.

No one can exonerate the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his father, Hafez Assad, from being dictators. But Armenians have been protected and enjoyed a privileged life under both rulers. The Syrian people have also experienced prosperity despite all outside pressures to isolate the country economically.

The irony in this conflict is, as pointed out by remarks by Robert Fiske, Middle East correspondent of the Independent daily of London, that a host of Middle Eastern despots, beginning in the tiny principality of Qatar and ending in the medieval monarchy of Saudi Arabia, have been commissioned to bring democracy to Syria.

Another such medieval monarchy, Morocco, has also joined the fray in hosting and organizing Syrian opposition groups on its territory. Along with the other "messengers of democracy," this corrupt kingdom has been fighting the Polisario Front freedom fighters to keep their people in Western Sahara under its domination.

Of course, Syria being on the fault line of East-West confrontation – throughout the Cold War and beyond – it has been on the wrong side of the Middle Eastern chessboard of politics.

First, being a bastion of Arab nationalism on the frontline with Israel has irritated the West tremendously. This war has nothing to do with democracy; it is a grand scheme to eliminate one by one all the regimes in the region considered threats to Israel, and some of the Arab regimes engaged in the battle have become accessories to that policy.

The other "mistake" of the Syrian regime is to be aligned with Iran, and they are both considered Russian allies by default in the continuing Cold War. Russia also has its own interests in the region; the collapse of the Assad regime may have a domino effect on the Iran-Syria axis, at a high cost to Moscow's foreign policy.

The Syrian war, which began with peaceful protests against Assad's regime in March 2011, escalated into a civil war, mainly because of outside interference and the launch of a proxy war for foreign interests seeking regime change in Syria. Recently a rad-

ical Islamist group seized large swathes of a Syrian military base west of Aleppo, consolidating its control over the territory, near the Turkish border, as reported by Agence France Presse. It was most revealing to find in a report filed by Elad Benari in the Israel National News that "many of the fighters are non-Syrians and one of the leaders, who identified himself as Abu Talha, said he is from Uzbekistan."

Any political analyst has to be endowed with the wildest possible imagination to see the aspirations of the Syrian people for democracy in a thug from Uzbekistan, of all places.

Of course the West has been using these extremist groups to achieve short-term goals with the consequence of creating long-term threats to its own security. Osama bin Laden was armed by the US with shoulder held Stringer rockets to shoot down Soviet MiG jets in Afghanistan, but who ended up bringing down the World Trade Center in New York. These groups have proved over time that they are loose cannons dedicated to their own extremist ideology and can only harm civilized societies.

The Syrian conflict has spilled over from the Middle Eastern borders into a worldwide confrontation between East and West, with the US and the European Union insisting on regime change in Syria while Russia and China blame foreign interference in Syria in the United Nations.

Recent meetings between President Vladimir Putin and Premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov were not able to break the deadlock.

Russian officials have repeatedly said that Moscow is not insisting that Assad remain in power, but that his fate must not be decided by foreign governments or external forces including the UN Security Council. Putin's spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, has specifically indicated that "We cannot say, sitting in Ankara or London or Qatar that Assad must go. That cannot be, it is not viable. Such decisions could potentially lead to a worsening of the situation."

The US secretary of state, visiting Dublin, has countered the Russian position by directing her criticism to the internal developments in Russia, away from the Syrian conflict.

In her recent pronouncements, she seems more and more like a Cold War relic, and perhaps, she is planning her political comeback in the 2016 presidential election with that agenda.

Before her meeting with Lavrov, Mrs. Clinton took aim at what she described as a new wave of repressive tactics and laws aimed at criminalizing US outreach efforts. "The trends are indicative of a larger reversal of freedoms for the citizens of Russia, Belarus, Turkmenistan and other countries that emerged from the breakup of the Soviet Union two decades ago. There is a move to re-Sovietize the region.... It's not going to be called that. It's going to be called a Customs Union, it will be called a Eurasian Union and all of that," she said, referring to the Russian-led efforts for greater regional integration. "But let's not make a mistake about it. We know what the goal is and we are trying to figure out effective ways to slow down or prevent it."

In the above quote by Mrs. Clinton, Armenia falls within "other countries that emerged from the breakup of the Soviet Union." And Moscow has been twisting the arm of that "other country" to join the Eurasian Union. Therefore, no mater what foreign policy may Armenia adopt, it is perceived by the Foggy Bottom to be in the Russian sphere of influence and that answers many questions which have been torturing Armenians; why doesn't Mr. Obama use the word "Genocide?" Why doesn't the State Department criticize Azerbaijan for destroying Armenian monuments in Jugha? Why doesn't Karabagh conflict get solved? Why doesn't Washington demand Turkey to end blockading Armenia? Why does the US aid to Armenian dwindle?

All the answers to these questions are within the subtext of the new Cold War being reconfigured.

Coming back to Syria, which generated this global analysis, two major prospects are very obvious. First, no matter whatever the outcome of the conflict, the vibrant Syrian-Armenian community will not be the same any longer.

Next, in the a broader perspective of the Arab Spring (or Nightmare) – which the Syrian conflict is part of – the policy is achieving its goal in this artificially-created turmoil because no one (except as a form of lip service) is talking any more about the Palestinian people nor the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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- Articles sent by fax are acceptable, and e-mail submissions are encouraged.
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- 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, but should be reserved for calendar listings and advertisements.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Reflections of a Righteous Turk: Can Germany be a Model For Turkey?

If it were possible to clone prominent Turkish commentator Orhan Kemal Cengiz and make multiple copies of his kind heart and righteous conscience, the Turkish government would then be able to come to grips with Armenian demands from Turkey in a humane and just manner.

Cengiz visited Germany recently with a group of Turkish journalists and human rights activists at the invitation of the European Academy of Berlin with the financial support of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Turkish visitors participated in a conference titled, “Difficult Heritage of the Past,” on how today’s Germans face crimes committed by Nazis.

After returning to Turkey, Cengiz wrote two poignant articles published in Today’s Zaman: “Can Germany be a model for Turkey in confrontation with past atrocities?” and “Turkey and Germany’s past atrocities.”

Cengiz confesses that before his visit, he thought that “Germans were forced to look at their troubled past by external powers who had them on their knees after World

War II.” He wonders whether Germany could serve as a model for other countries in facing their past voluntarily. To his surprise, the Turkish columnist discovered that even though Germans had begun confronting their past after a devastating defeat, they were determined to create a new country “based on an endless process of remembering, commemorating and confronting the past.”

The righteous Turkish writer was “extremely impressed and touched” seeing a brick wall in a Berlin kindergarten. Every year teachers would ask students to identify themselves with Jews who once lived in the neighborhood before being killed by the Nazis. The students would then write the Jewish names on bricks and put them on top of each other forming a wall. It became clear to him that “remembering has become a part of daily life in Germany.”

Cengiz hopes that someday Turkish “children would do a similar thing. I imagined children in Istanbul building a wall by writing on bricks the names of Armenian intellectuals who were taken from their homes on April 24, 1915 and never came back again.” He is convinced that “confronting the past is a clear state policy here in Germany. Museums, exhibitions and the school curriculum all show how the state apparatus invested in this endeavor. So little by little I started to realize that Turkey can significantly benefit from the German experience on this difficult terrain of confrontation with the past.”

In his second article, Cengiz boldly describes the 19th and 20th centuries as “centuries of genocide,” which included the Armenian Genocide. He explains that contrary to the mass crimes committed by other nations, the ones perpetrated by Germans and Turks were against “neighbors with whom they had lived side-by-side for centuries. I think this alone is the most distinctive element of the German and Turkish example. ... When you kill your neigh-

bors, it creates a black hole, a gap in your national identity.”

In seeking to emulate the German experience, Cengiz hopes that he would see memorials erected in Turkey about “Armenian massacres, pogroms targeting Jews and Greeks, massacres targeting Alevis and others. When Turkey starts to remember and commemorate past atrocities, the Topography of Terror Museum, which is built on a former Nazi headquarters, the Jewish Museum of Berlin and others might be good examples to follow.... Turkey has a lot to learn from Germany in coming to terms with past atrocities.”

While Turkey’s acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide is long overdue, the actual process of reconciliation could begin by removing the names of the Turkish masterminds of the Armenian Genocide from schools, streets and public squares throughout Turkey. The Turkish government should also dismantle the shameful mausoleum of Talaat in Istanbul and replace it with a monument dedicated to the Armenian Genocide. It should also pay billions of dollars in compensation to descendants of Armenian victims, similar to German payments to Jews. Most importantly, Turkey should return to Armenians the occupied territories of Western Armenia!

Germany too, as Turkey’s close ally in World War I, has an obligation to Armenians – the acknowledgement of its role in the Armenian Genocide. It should apologize and make amends to the Armenian people. Only then would Germans fully deserve the praise heaped upon them by Orhan Cengiz for honestly facing their past.

While Turkey’s genocidal precedent served as model for Nazi Germany in committing the Holocaust, it is now Germany’s turn to become a role model to Turkey for reconciling with its genocidal past.

Armenagan Is Oldest Armenian Political Party

Recently, the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party (SDHP) organized a seminar and celebration in Los Angeles, dedicated to the 125th anniversary of the formation of the political party. During the seminar, some of the invited speakers mentioned that the SDHP is the oldest Armenian Political Party, which was formed in 1887.

In reality, the SDHP formed two years after the formation of the Armenagan Party in Van, Western Armenia, in 1885. Inspired by Khrimian Hairig and Mgrditch Portugalian, in 1885 a group of students founded a secret organization in Van. Its aim was to prepare the Armenian people for an eventual armed struggle. In 1908, the majority of the membership of the Armenagan Party was absorbed into the Constitutional Ramgavar Party, one of the elements which in 1921 joined to form the Armenian Democratic Liberal (Ramgavar) Party.

The following is an excerpt from the book, *The Heroic Figures of the ADL*, by Ara Aharonian, published in 2006 which details the formation of the Armenagan Party in 1885:

The students of Portugalian’s Normal School used to secretly gather in the garden of the home of the brothers Megerdich and Krikor Terlemejian, where they had a press-house devoid of furniture. Which was called Khusri Doun. It was in this house that the Armenian liberal movement gave birth to its first revolutionary organization, the Armenagan Party, in August 1885.

Megerdich Avedisian-Terlemejian, who was the actual founder of the party, together with his fellow ideologues edited the by-laws and made the organization’s existence official, selecting Vashbouragan as the party’s center.

Subsequently plans were cultivated to also open branches in Salmasd, Moush, Baghesh (Bitlis), Trebizond and Constantinople. The party had begun to announce that the purpose of the Armenagan Party was to secure, through revolution, the right of the Armenian people to self-determination.

The Armenagans, with farsighted wisdom, saw the successful end of the Armenian liberation struggle in cooperation and the employment of realistic measures – to bring about an internal force by joining together patriots serving the same idea, to motivate it to engage in firing practice and military discipline by providing weapons and ammunition, and the necessary funds for them. At the same time, it aimed to prepare roving military squads, which could defend the Armenian quarters.

We note with pride that the Armenagan Party became the only Armenian political-revolutionary organization, which was formed and functioned on the soil of the homeland for the realization of its goals without preaching unfavorable doctrines. The members of the Armenagan Party learned to be discreet and act with daring but unobtrusively. The Armenagans remained firmly convinced that the way to liberate the fatherland was through collective force and persistent martial activity, as opposed to expecting assistance from foreign powers. In the following decade, the Armenagans organized their martial power by secretly arming themselves through underground activity. Soon, the founding group was joined by certain revolutionary-minded youths.

The Hamidian massacres followed in 1896. After massacring 300,000 innocent Armenians in Western Armenia, the massacrers reached the gates of Van. Moving into action, Megerdich Avedisian organized the self-defense of Van, which was crowned with success. Tragically, however, after rescuing the Armenians of that region, Avedisian was treacherously murdered, along with hundreds of his comrades-in-arms, in the field near the Bartholomew monastery, while he was on his way to Persia.

With his death, Avedisian joined the multitude of heroes.

—KM

Children Keep Holiday Vigil Sacred

By Tom Vartabedian

In a Christmas world often marked by frenzy, nothing appears more conducive to the season than the voices of young children dressed as cherubs and holy figures.

Go to most any Armenian church from now through January 6 and you will find our younger generation performing in their traditional season roles.

The angels are joined by shepherds, Magi impersonators, even barnyard animals. They come dressed as Joseph and Mary. The youngest child in the congregation usually winds up as the infant Jesus and church members watch from the pews.

It’s a time for reconciliation— a moment of truth – an opportunity for all of us to dispel the usual rigmarole and put Christ back into Christmas.

Nothing, not the tree or the gift-giving, affords me more pleasure than annual pageant. Having put three children through the Armenian Church, some of my most memorable moments centered around this tradition and all its ramifications.

My youngest child wanted no part of his pageant. But because he was joined with a class, there would be no excuses. Everyone had to participate, recite the usual prayers, sing the carols and relive a moment that dates back a couple thousand years.

Otherwise, they would catch the wrath of a Sunday School superintendent or even worse, the Der Hayr.

“I hope my ‘odar’ friends don’t see me dressed as a sheep,” he said one day over supper. “I’ll be the laughing stock of my whole school. They’ll never let me live it down.”

“No need to worry,” I told my son. “They wouldn’t recognize you in that outfit. Besides, you won’t be alone. You’ll be with a goat and a cow. All you have to do is look interested and utter one word.”

“What’s that?”

“Ba-a-a. Can you handle that?”

“Maybe with a little practice,” he gushed out.

My second son was a bit more adventurous. Because he could build things out of wood, he was a natural Joseph, who eked out a meager living as a carpenter.

So there he was, the day of the pageant, making his way down the aisle with the Blessed Mary,

cradling the infant Jesus.

Was this the same boy who, just the day before, was checking opponents against the boards in a hockey game and yelling at the referees over a controversial call? He had gone from nasty to nice in a single day. Maybe it was the exposure to being a saint.

My son had traded in his uniform for robes and a beard. His hockey stick had been replaced by a staff. He looked a bit more pious than his brother the sheep.

My daughter stole the show. She was Mary. Maybe it was because she was my first child and was making her debut. She looked like a natural. No arguments. Suffice it to say it launched an early career on stage.

I sit and watch the children each passing year. The names and faces may change but not the show. While one child waves to a proud mom with a camera in hand, another may have his eyes glued to the floor.

An itch that needs attention. A frown that knows no smile. A smile that knows no frown. A twinkle in some child’s eye. A tear from some dad. It runs the emotional gamut.

It’s what Christmas is all about – the pure essence of children in their splendor and glory. The one time when all are at center stage in a house of God.

Take all the Santas in the world, all the hysteria that surrounds the day, all the decorated trees and promotional gizmos and nothing could ever replace the majesty of a Christmas pageant.

You see, I, too, had that pleasure when I attended an Armenian church in my prime. And yes, my mother made me do it. Being a staunch Armenian Catholic, she taught us that it was better to give of ourselves than to receive.

We lived down the street from a Catholic church with the most realistic manger display you would ever imagine. It could have passed for a live tableau. At night, I would look out my bedroom window and see the crèche all illuminated with music filling the air. It was divine.

Until one day when the unthinkable occurred. A thief stole the infant Jesus from the cradle. The neighborhood was on the lookout for the holy child. Turns out, the culprit was a 5-year-old child with good intentions.

“I just wanted to give the baby a ride in my wagon,” he announced.

Houshamadyan Project Reconstructs and Preserves Ottoman Armenian History

ARCHIVE, from page 1
to a wide audience. Through the presentation of the material in this way, the website allows visitors to explore and find material that they did not necessarily come to the website to look for. This is a form of historical and cultural exposure that is often lacking in today's world of Google searches and Amazon.com," said Nora Lessersohn, the project coordinator for the Houshamadyan Association and website.



Chorbajian family portrait in Marash

These resources are aimed at enhancing "the visitor experience and helping make the reconstruction of these lost communities all the more vivid."

Lessersohn's involvement in the project came in tandem with an exploration of her own familial and cultural identity. Lessersohn first encountered the Houshamadyan website while researching her own family history and was immediately inspired to get involved. After emailing the project director, Lessersohn submitted her own great-grandfather's recordings of lullabies to the project while she was living in New York.

"I also wrote a short narrative piece on my reading of my great-grandfather's memoirs of his life in Marash," said Lessersohn, which can be listened to via the Houshamadyan website.

Lessersohn, a graduate of Harvard College (AB'09 in The Study of Religion), has also

worked at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Once Lessersohn relocated to the Boston area, she became the project coordinator for Houshamadyan and has worked to collaborate with the local community and abroad to expand the project's reach.

"Through my work with the project, I have become increasingly interested in the issue of representing and communicating historical and cultural identity and complexity. I have also, of course, taken a great interest in the study of Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire, and their interaction with other Ottoman communities and peoples. I hope to explore these themes as well as others in my future studies," said Lessersohn.

According to the website, the name for the non-profit association, Houshamadyan, references "a special genre of Armenian publications that is characterized by its individuality and is immediately linked to the general subject of our website. These are memorial books, which are also known under the name of compatriotic union publications. 'Houshamadyan' is a complex word, made up of 'housh' (memory) and 'madyan' (book) – which can mean either 'register' or 'parchment manuscript' – putting the words together."

Unlike many archives and special collections with rare materials that close their collections to the public or require special permission or payment, the Houshamadyan Association aims to share historical resources with the global community. Association members collect resources and materials from around the world, most often digitized versions of materials, as well as hardcopies of materials, which are stored in their small Berlin headquarters.

Lessersohn noted, "We should emphasize that all the materials we receive from the public are accessible to the public: i.e., if someone is preparing a publication or an exhibition, and would like to use an image or material from our website, we will provide the material without charge – this is the essence of a collaborative website."

The concept of using online and digital archives remains an emerging form of preservation in academia, which still chiefly relies on standard academic resources such as printed books, conferences or museum exhibitions for



Photo of the Gakavian family in Van preparing thread from cotton (Source: Christine Gardon collection of Houshamadyan)

preservation and research. "...The world is changing rapidly, and we believe we are using a medium through which we can provide academically serious material in an accessible and attractive way to an increasingly large audience. We are proud to say that, as far as we can tell, our work is in this way innovative and pioneering," said Lessersohn.

As with any attempt at reconstructing history, the Houshamadyan Association must be mindful of the narrative they put forth and the version of history they represent. Project collaborators say their goal is not to advance a particular historical narrative, but rather to "communicate and recover the life, custom, traditions, cuisine, and environs of the Ottoman Armenian communities." Lessersohn explained, "We aim to fill in the gaps in Ottoman studies that have not often utilized Armenian primary sources, as well as the gaps in both Turkish and Armenian nationalist historiographies that often downplay the Ottoman lived reality of the Armenian people. In this way, we aim also to be the means by which Ottoman memory may be returned to the Armenians."

Given both the destruction and suppression of Armenian-Ottoman resources, as well as the dominant historical narrative put forth, Houshamadyan faces the difficult task of "reconstructing a lost world: material possessions, architectural structures, family documents, ways of life, and historical narratives, have all been lost." Material possessions, architecture, ways of life, and countless sources have

been lost and it is no easy endeavor to piece them together, nor are there countless archival sources or teams of historians. "As collaborative website, we are able to draw on the materials and memories of people from all over the world, and rebuild and



Nora Lessersohn

reconstruct what we can, with the materials we are given," said Lessersohn.

Houshamadyan's small team consists of project director and chief editor, Vahé Tachjian; art director, Silvina Der-Meguerditchian; a few translators and authors; President of the Houshamadyan Association Elke Hartmann and Lessersohn. Houshamadyan has partnered with the Otto-Friedrich University, Bamberg (chair of Turkology, Bamberg, Germany), Haigazian University (Beirut), the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (Yerevan) and the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) in Watertown, where Lessersohn recently delivered a lecture on the project in November.

Houshamadyan's success as a historical endeavor rests entirely on collaborative efforts. The team not only hopes to share these resources with the global community, but it also

welcomes the public to get involved in the project by actively preserving history. Readers are encouraged to visit the site, to join their newsletter, ask for additional information or provide project members with materials of any sort that they would like to contribute to the project. "We are always looking for new information and connections," said Lessersohn.

Houshamadyan is currently fundraising for the publication of their first book, *Ottoman Armenians, Vol. 1: Life, Culture, Society*. The book will be an extension of the website, with new articles, extended versions of current pro-



Portrait from Houshamadyan project

jects and more than 200 images, rather than just a replica of the site. While Houshamadyan is chiefly a web-based archive, the Houshamadyan team says they also value the tactile and representative importance of physical archives and preservation of hard copies of materials. "We believe it is important to have such a publication, to keep in libraries and family homes, to give to others as a gift or an educational tool, and to reach audiences who do not necessarily have access to the internet [...] it will only add to the strength and reach of our work if we produce materials in all forms (website, books, exhibitions, workshops, etc). It is always good to express oneself in as many ways as possible, to reach as many people as possible." Coordinators hope to eventually translate this first publication and future publications, into Armenian and Turkish. Visitors can already access the website in both English and Armenian, and translation into Turkish is forthcoming. Also in the works is a full exhibition and accompanying workshop in Berlin in 2013.

To get involved with Houshamadyan or make a contribution to the publication of their forthcoming book, visit <http://www.houshamadyan.org/> or email directly at houshamadyan@gmail.com.

Holy Liturgy October 23, 2010

St. Giragos is an Armenian Apostolic Church in Diyarbakir, was renovated through fund raising efforts of the Armenian community of Turkey and reopened on October 23, 2011.

The community had to rely on loans to complete the construction and now is dire need to pay back the loans.

As members of our Armenian Community, we need to extend a hand to our brothers in Turkey in order to encourage them for more church reconstructions in western Armenia.

On this joyous Christmas and New year, please send your tax deductible donation made to the Armenian Diocese to:

**St. Giragos Church Fund
Armenian Diocese
630 second Ave.
New York, NY 10016**

Pilgrims from US 2010