



Lerna Ekmekcioglu at the Armenian Patriarchate's library in Istanbul reads a copy of *Hay gin*.

Lerna Ekmekcioglu: Researching Post-World War I Turkish Armenians

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Dr. Lerna Ekmekcioglu has been teaching at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) since fall 2011. She completed her doctorate at New York University in 2010 and taught at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for one year through the Armenian Studies Program post-doctoral fellowship there before moving to Massachusetts. She is, like most scholars in Armenian studies, a pioneer in her subfield in the United States, specializing in the history of the Armenians of Turkey after World War I and in the ensuing Republican period. She is particularly interested in issues of feminism and gender as they affect the Turkish-Armenian community.

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Catholicos Appoints New Primate to Australian See

By Arthur Hagopian

SYDNEY — For the Armenians of Australia, the year 2013 may turn out to be one of the most interesting (if not momentous) of times in the century-old history of their presence in this country.

As they await the arrival of a new spiritual leader, dispatched by the mother church following the death of the charismatic former primate, Archbishop Aghan Baliozian, they will be looking forward to the future with mixed feelings.

The Catholicos of All Armenians, Karekin II, has designated one of his most outstanding bishops, Haigazoun Najarian, as the new Armenian primate of the diocese of the Armenian church of Australia and New

Zealand, an unknown entity to most.

His appointment took effect from January 1.

“Bishop Najarian leaves his position as the pontifical Legate of Central Europe and Sweden to which he was appointed in 2010. Based in Vienna, Austria he tended to the spiritual needs of Armenian communities in more than a dozen countries,” a church statement says.

Najarian served in the Eastern Diocese of the United States as vicar general and has been pastor of a number of parishes in both the US and the UK.

A graduate of the Gevorkian Theological Seminary at the Mother See of Echmiadzin, where he also lectured, he completed his studies at St Augustine's College in Canterbury, King's College in London and

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AGBU Raises \$700,000 for Syrian Armenians

NEW YORK — Since launching an online and phone fundraising campaign for its Syria Emergency Relief Fund, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) has witnessed enormous support from donors all over the world who have joined forces to help raise \$700,000 and counting. All of the proceeds, in addition to the \$1 million pledged by the AGBU Central Board, is being used to assist the thousands of Armenian families who have found themselves at the crossroads of the conflict and the thousands more who have been forced to flee the country as the crisis intensifies.

AGBU's relief efforts toward Syrian Armenians are now expanding across the region in response to the rapidly increasing number of families who are crossing the border to safety. Up to 7,000 Syrian Armenians have arrived in Armenia in the past several months, adding greater urgency to the situation. In September, AGBU President Berge Setrakian and Armenia's Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan met to discuss ways to accommodate the sudden influx. Setrakian pledged AGBU's support to the Syrian-Armenian Relief Coordination Center, a joint initiative of non-governmental organizations that are creating essential safety nets for Syrian Armenians now living in Armenia. In addition, AGBU has established a local 11-member committee that, to date, has administered over \$135,000 directly to families in need. Together, the AGBU committee and the Syrian-Armenian Relief Coordination Center have developed a three-month assistance program that includes housing provisions, job placement and school registration, and will run through the end of 2012, after which further steps will be considered. Until then, every weekday, the two groups gather in the AGBU Yerevan Office, which has opened its doors to all Syrian-Armenian families and is conducting one-on-one consultations to both assess and help meet their needs.

AGBU's programs serving Syrian Armenians in the homeland parallel the organization's ongoing efforts in the greater Beirut area — efforts that have been given a significant boost by AGBU benefactors Vatche and Tamar Manoukian, who recently donated \$100,000 to the Emergency Fund to support AGBU Lebanon's work. The Manoukians' gift has made a difference in the three AGBU schools in the area, where requests for enrollment have jumped from 25 to 100 over the past few weeks and administrators

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Raffi Hovannisian: 'Big Mining Is Poisoning Armenia'

YEREVAN (Hetq) — Heritage party leader Raffi Hovannisian issued a statement recently deploring the intense mining in the country.

“By now it is clear that the rise of big mining in Armenia has been not a project of the national interest but a privilege of the chosen few, who have amassed fantastic fortunes while our country descends into poverty and despair. In recent years we have witnessed grave violations under the guise of eminent domain, the destruction of historical monuments, and the obliteration of vast, prospering ecosystems. In place of lush forests, lakes of hazardous toxic waste cover Armenia. Our homeland is being poisoned,” he said in the statement.

He suggested that all mining licenses should be reevaluated, including the license in Teghut, the forest in the Lori region, all licensing processes be checked for transparency and the environment and tax codes to be redrafted to ensure that the extraction of ores does not harm the environment.

Rep. Sherman Speaks Against Military Transfer to Turkey

WASHINGTON — Rep. Brad Sherman, a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, spoke on the House floor against provisions of a bill allowing the transfer of two vessels to Turkey. HR 6649, the Naval Vessel Transfer Act of 2012, contains provisions that provide for the free transfer to Turkey of two Oliver Hazard Perry class guided missile frigates, the USS Halyburton and the USS Thach.

Sherman highlighted how Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to accompany international flotillas to Hamas in the Gaza Strip with armed Turkish naval escorts in order to confront Israel. “Erdogan called for Israel to be punished for interfering with the previous effort to aid Hamas with the flotilla,” warned Sherman.

“In September 2011, after a United Nations report on the Gaza flotilla was released, Turkey threatened to send an armed naval presence to the eastern Mediterranean to confront Israel, and Prime Minister Erdogan said that Israel should expect more naval presence from Turkey in the area,” Sherman recalled.

In his floor speech Sherman also noted that Turkey has aggressively threatened legitimate Cypriot and Israeli cooperative efforts on energy exploration. Ankara has boosted Turkish armed naval presence around the natural gas fields between Israel and Cyprus and declared “invalid” an agreement between Cyprus and Israel on demarcating their respective energy exploration areas.

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French MP Valérie Boyer Initiates New Genocide Bill

PARIS (PanArmenian.net) — French Member of Parliament Valérie Boyer initiated a new draft law criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide.

The bill, dated December 19, calls for an introduction of amendments to the 1881 law on freedom of the press.

The bill includes a provision asking for a 45,000-euro fine and a year in prison for denial of crimes against humanity, including the Armenian Genocide.

On January 23, 2012, the French

Senate passed a bill criminalizing the Armenian Genocide. The bill included a similar penalty for denial of the Armenian Genocide. However, the French Constitutional Council ruled that the bill adopted by the French Senate was unconstitutional.

In July, French President Francois Hollande confirmed plans for a new law criminalizing denial of the Armenian Genocide with representatives of the Armenian community.



Member of Parliament Valerie Boyer



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

President Sargisian's New Year Address

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenian President Serge Sargisian addressed fellow Armenians with a New Year's congratulatory message.

In his message, he spoke about the challenges and accomplishments of the previous year.

He said, "the year 2012 is coming to its end. First and foremost, it was a year of hard work, a year for creation and life. In 2012, almost 33,000 young people in our countries started families. Let the year 2013 bring happiness and security to the Armenian hearths."

He also spoke about the plight of Armenians in Syria. "The passing year has been a trying one, particularly for our brothers and sisters in Syria. I wish resilience and courage to those who found refuge in the Motherland and to those who remain in Syria."

He concluded, "We are entering the New Year with new hopes and great expectations of progress. We are confident that Armenia's political and economic course is right and serves the interest of our nation. Certainly, there are things to amend, and we will do it together."

Artsakh Liberation 25th-Anniversary Committee Formed

STEPANAKERT — Nagorno Karabagh Republic (NKR) President Bako Sahakyan signed a decree to form a state commission for the celebration dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Artsakh liberation movement.

By another decree, a committee led by NKR Parliament Speaker Ashot Ghulyan was formed to develop and discuss the program.

Govt. to Help Syrian-Armenians Feel at Home

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The government of Armenia has initiated a number of programs to support the Syrian-Armenians to overcome the present difficulties they have to face, said Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian at a press release at the end of the year, during which scholarships were granted to 110 Syrian-Armenian students.

Said Sargisian, "We must stand beside each Syrian-Armenian and understand how we can help them. Currently, about 7,000 Syrian-Armenians have settled in Armenia and many of them see their future in Armenia. They are thinking about working and educating their children in Armenia."

Among the measures Sargisian mentioned were implementing various programs for Syrian-Armenian children as well as a heavy emphasis on organizing summer camps due to which hundreds of Syrian-Armenian children paid their first visit to Armenia and got acquainted with the motherland and Armenian environment.

National Assembly Hosts Children

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — On December 28, Parliament Park was the site of a festive program for New Year and Christmas, held under the auspice of the National Assembly President Hovik Abrahamyan.

The Open Doors program organized a children's concert and a meeting with the characters of the beloved folk-tales and animations for them. The sounds of the songs by Arevik nsemble of the Public Radio, Dalita, Starlets Project, Silva Hakobyan, Nune Yesayan and others and the participation of Santa Claus and the Snow Maiden created a joyful atmosphere in the park.

Abrahamyan and the MPs mingled amongst the children, expressed wishes for a happy new year and talked to them.

An exhibition was also on display in the park, featuring works by the children from the Henrik Igityan Aesthetics National Centre and the Arabkir Hayordats Tun (Armenian Youth Union).

The Spiritual Work of a Banker

By Ashot Vavyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — It is not easy to meet people who appreciate spiritual values in our consumer society, and for those in the financial industry, it seems almost impossible. Yet Grigor Movsisyan, the financial director of Armswissbank in Yerevan and an expert in his field, has a spiritual life too.

Every day in the Mother Cathedral of Holy Echmiadzin, he participates in the morning services, organizes trips to our wonderful monasteries hidden in the mountains, pictures and turns our attention to the damaged, careless and unknown to many of us churches.

Recently, Movsisyan made a noteworthy surprise to the public. It was the presentation of his book *The birth of Vahagn and the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which was attended by the country's cultural and public figures and the minister of diaspora. As it is said in the book, for a long time the

author could not come to terms with the idea that the ancient Armenian epic poem, "The Birth of Vahagn," is dedicated to pagan god. And, behold, readings of the Bible during Lent led him to a conclusion that the poem is the concentrated picture of the sacrament of the holy book: it is the revelation of our Lord's second coming, of His righteous judgment and luminous image.

When a reader first begins the book, there is surprisingly no mention of the relation of the poem to the Bible. On this subtlety, Movsisyan's work is worthy of appreciation. And the reader begins to ponder: had the Bible left its own influence on the composition, or perhaps it was



Grigor Movsisyan (right) and painter Mayis Mkhitarian



The curtain of St. Mashtots Church before hanging

the historian Movses Khorenatsi, who first wrote down the song-poem from people in the fifth century, who had mixed some religious colors in it? Maybe the people of the cradle of civilization and biblical Land of Ararat had left their own mark right in the Bible? Movsisyan does not express a clear opinion in this regard, and allows the readers to draw their own conclusions. But the presented impression, from his words: "this little poem unceasingly sounded through our lips," indicates that there is a prophecy that was raised from the bosom of our ancient nation.

The pages of the book are illustrated by painter Mayis Mkhitarian. The stage curtain of St. Mesrop Mashtots Church in Oshakan is one such depiction. There are five embroidered Cherub Angels on it, with bright eyes and with six wings ready to take flight.

AVC Professional Corps: 'If You Can Dream it, You Can Do it!'

YEREVAN — Thirty years in corporate publishing was enough. But what wasn't enough for Suzanne Daghlian, 53, of New Jersey, was the two weeks she spent volunteering in Armenia each summer. She had been traveling to Armenia every summer since 2006 and building houses with the Fuller Center for Housing. As a team leader, her time in Armenia was full, attending to the volunteers she had recruited, organizing their days working on construction sites, their evenings out on the town and their touring days visiting the sights of Armenia. She felt the time always flew by and she was never able to really enjoy the pace of Armenia, to learn the language or relax. So when she lost her job along with many other veterans of the old guard of New York publishing, she knew it was time to realize her dream of living abroad and helping others.

Daghlian is a lifelong resident of New Jersey, commuting to Manhattan for work each day. Her parents were founding members of the Armenian Church in Tenafly, and Daghlian has always been active in the church. Her travels have taken her from the Andes and the Amazon to Kenya and Tanzania, from Scandinavia to Hawaii, as well as all over the continental US for her work. For the past seven years, however, her heart has been in Armenia.

"I always dreamed of taking off and moving to a different place with a different point of view. And then I fell in love with Armenia. I found the Armenian Volunteer Corps (AVC) website years ago and would leave it open on my computer at work and fantasize about being a long-term volunteer in Armenia. But I didn't think I would ever have the guts to leave



At left, AVC Professional Corps volunteer Suzanne Daghlian with other AVC volunteers during an Armenian Volunteer Corps community service project with Fuller Center Armenia, in Ujan village.

my life behind and go. When I lost my job, the stars aligned for me and I just knew I had to do it."

Daghlian made all the arrangements — she produced a budget, arranged to pay her bills online, found a house sitter to take care of things at home and applied to AVC. Once accepted, she began to tell people about her plan to go to Armenia to volunteer for four months.

Her family and friends were ecstatic for her. "It's amazing how many of my friends and cohorts say they want to do something like this, but they feel they can't get away from their responsibilities. But I have not left my responsibilities — I am paying my bills and keeping in touch with all I need to, and I'm living here in Armenia for four months. In this day and age, with all the technology we have access to, it's really easy to be in two places at once."

The AVC has coordinated her volunteer placements. Daghlian is volunteering at the American University of Armenia in their Extension Program. She is helping

them promote a new branch of the program in Karabagh. She is also working at the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia, where she knows the mission and the need and is able to help them with editing, writing and marketing.

"Not only has AVC provided me with job placements that are in alignment with my experience, but they provide me with an amazing community of friends made up of the other volunteers in-country. We have language classes together, go on weekend excursions out of the city and attend cultural events. In addition, the AVC office is a home away from home — a place where we are always welcome and will always find a friend."

"Armenia got inside me and called me back, over and over again. I love it here — the pace, the people, the scenery, the very soul of it has me in its sway and won't let go. Having the opportunity to come here and work for Armenia is a gift I gave myself. I'm learning so much, but the most important lesson is that if you can dream it, you can do it!"



INTERNATIONAL

Armenians Voice Fears Over Threat to Rights in Holy Land

By Arthur Hagopian

JERUSALEM — The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, a member of the triumvirate of Guardians of the Christian Holy Places, has voiced grave fears over the threat of the erosion of its historic and traditional rights in the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem.

The rights and privileges that are the legacy of the Armenians are indelibly inscribed within the tenets of a Status Quo that has been in place since the Ottoman administration of the land.

But recent developments in Bethlehem, involving its sister guardian, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate (with the Latin Custodia forming the third member of the triumvirate), are threatening to seriously impact on Armenian rights, church officials claim.

The Armenian Patriarchate has lodged an urgent call for a return to the Status Quo that has governed relations between the churches and with governments, ever since its promulgation in the 19th century.

The Guardians, as well as the dozen other Christian denominations of the Holy Land, are bound by the tenets of the set of agreements thrashed out by the Ottoman Sultans with the aim of safeguarding Christian rights and avoiding internecine clashes.

While not perfect, the Status Quo, outlined in a 1929 document titled, “The Status Quo in the Holy Places” by L.A.G. Cust, an official of the British Mandate of Palestine, seems to have served the Christians well over the centuries.

Departures from the spirit of the agreement are rare, and any that do occur are mostly of a temporary nature.

But according to the Armenians, there have been some serious infractions recently, with unpalatable results.

To impartial Western observers, the sweeping of a neighbor’s tile, or the movement of a ladder from one part of a wall to another, may seem trivial in the cosmic order of things, but to the owner of the tile or wall, in the troubled Holy Land, the action is viewed as an unwarranted encroachment on its territorial rights.

The Armenian Patriarchate says the latest breach concerns the annual cleaning arrangements within the Nativity Church in Bethlehem, jointly “owned” with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

Conflicts over the threat of territorial encroachment have been a festering wound for the Armenians for years, culminating in an incident in December 2007 when the Greeks unilaterally “imposed” some amendments on the cleaning process.

The Armenians charge that the Greeks had decided to move a ladder “three places” during the annual cleaning of the church.

As things have stood for years, the ladder is placed in the (northern) Armenian section of the church, and would be used during the cleaning process, to reach the upper walls belonging to the Greeks.

The Armenians promptly objected to this variation of the Status Quo, pointing out that the ladder stays only in one designated place during the cleaning chore. They also wanted to be around when the Greeks start their cleaning.

The Greeks were adamant and a scuffle broke out, captured on YouTube.

The next year, to avoid a recurrence of the clashes, Palestinian Authority Minister for Christian Affairs Ziad Bandak, brought the two sides to a negotiating table and succeeded in hammering out an agreement allowing the ladder to be moved twice only.

The Armenians considered the change a “one-off” to cover the 2008 annual cleaning arrangements only, and said it should in no way be construed as a permanent amendment to the standing protocols of the Status Quo.

The Greeks, supported by the Palestinian Authority, whose Presidential Committee for the Christians is composed overwhelmingly of Orthodox Greeks, with not a single Armenian aboard, thought otherwise, and attempted to clean the Armenian section of the church as well, and another scuffle broke out, necessitating police intervention.

The Armenians considered the Greek move null and void and demanded a re-institution of the Status Quo but despite official protestations to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, the next three years saw a repetition of the same scenario.

Reinstitution would mean that both



The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem

churches begin the cleaning operation simultaneously.

“We are against being forbidden to enter the church while the Greeks start cleaning, because that gives the Greeks a ‘superiority’ over the holy site when we are equal partners in its ownership,” a church official said.

“We have complained repeatedly against this breach of the Status Quo, but to no avail,” he added.

The Palestinian Authority response has been that the matter is one for the two Patriarchates to settle, with Committee president Hanna Amireh declaring: “The same arrangements which were reached last year are the most suitable arrangement for this year too.”

The Armenians have urged the Palestinian Authority to reconsider, pointing out that the annual cleaning the year before had ended with a clash between the Armenians and Greeks, a doubted this was a “most suitable arrangement.”

Two weeks ago, the most senior Armenian church official in Jerusalem, Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, met with Amireh and reminded him that the Greek cleaning “re-arrangement” was intended for that year only, and that thence it would be “a breach of the centuries old Status Quo and must be cancelled, that the Armenians stand firm on their historical rights and shall never sacrifice their centuries old rights in favor of the Greeks.”

In a last-ditch attempt to paper over their differences, representatives of the Armenian and Greek Patriarchates met in Bethlehem earlier this month with Amireh, but despite Armenian insistence on a return to the Status Quo and cancellation of the one-off arrangement of 2008, the Greeks refused to give ground, the Armenians say.

Meanwhile, Amireh declared that the decision of the Palestinian Authority “shall remain unchanged and the Armenians must submit to the Authority’s decision,” warning it will “take all measures against those who dare to cause any kind of clash,” this correspondent was told.

The Armenian reaction was swift. It vociferously objected to Amireh’s declaration, calling it “an unprecedented injustice against the Armenian Patriarchate” and wondering about the impartiality of the Committee.

“The Armenian Patriarchate is seriously concerned about its historical rights in the Nativity Church,” church sources said, “which is as sacred service to us as one of the solemn ceremonies in the Holy Places,” may be denied to the Armenians, “who for centuries have had the right of equally sharing in the Holy Places of Christendom together with the Greek Orthodox.”

International News

Aliyev Says Yerevan ‘Is Historic Azerbaijani Land’

BAKU (Hetq) — During a ceremony opening a building to house Karabagh war veterans in Sumgait, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev is quoted to have declared Yerevan as “historic Azerbaijani territory” and the present Republic of Armenia a “fictitious” state.

“Erivan khanate is our historical land. Once, in the beginning of the last century in the historical lands of Azerbaijan fictitious Armenian state was created. Now, we can never afford the second fictitious Armenian state is created in the historical lands of Azerbaijan. It will never happen,” Aliyev is alleged to have said according to an article on December 25 from the Azeri APA news agency.

The second “fictitious” state he referred to was Artsakh. That too, Aliyev boasted, would be returned to Azerbaijan.

“Azerbaijan will restore its territorial integrity by any means. Both historical justice and international law recognize this right for us.”

Aliyev said that Armenia was dragging its feet on the settlement process in order to prolong the status quo, adding that Baku was not hopeful and thus could only rely on its own strengths, including the power of the Azerbaijani army.

Anti-Corruption Group Names Aliyev ‘Person of The Year’

SARAJEVO (Hetq)— Ilham Aliyev, the president of Azerbaijan, has won the first ever Organized Crime and Corruption Person of the Year bestowed by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). The award is given for the person who figured prominently in 2012 on stories on crime and corruption in its coverage area. Aliyev was chosen because of new revelations this year about how his family had taken large shares in lucrative industries including the telecom, minerals and construction industries often through government related deals.

The award is chosen by the 60 reporters and 15 news organizations that make up the OCCRP consortium. Runners-up included Albanian drug lord Naser Kelmendi, President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“2012 was a banner year for those of us who cover organized crime and corruption,” said OCCRP editor Drew Sullivan. “It’s a growth industry around the world and we expect a lot of work next year as well.”

OCCRP, based in Sarajevo and Bucharest, is a non-profit, consortium of independent investigative centers, media outlets and investigative journalists from 20 countries. Its purpose is to educate readers worldwide on how organized crime and corruption works.

Romania Honors Armenian Education and Science Minister

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenian Education and Science Minister Armen Ashotyan received a certificate of honor from Romanian Ambassador to Armenia Rodica Crina Prunariu in connection with the fifteenth anniversary of Armenian-Romanian diplomatic ties. Prunariu stressed Ashotyan’s personal contribution to the strengthening of Armenian-Romanian relations, specifically in the expansion of cooperation in the fields of education and science.

During the meeting, the interlocutors noted that, as a result of the Armenian-Romanian cooperation in the domain of education, an Armenian chair was opened at the University of Bucharest, and its students have become more active.

Expressing gratitude for award, Ashotyan noted that bilateral cooperation especially the student exchange programs have prospects for further development.

Hungary Opens First ‘Trade House’ in Baku

By Shant Krikorian

BAKU (Hetq) — Nearly three months after a suspected backroom deal between Budapest and Baku in the transfer of the Azeri officer Ramil Safarov, Peter Szijjártó, the Hungarian secretary for foreign affairs and external economic relations, led a delegation to Baku for the opening of a “Hungarian Trade House” in Azerbaijan.

The intensified push to strengthen Azerbaijan and Hungary economic relations comes as a result of Hungary’s weakened economic climate. Just last month, Moody’s downgraded Hungary’s credit rating to below investment grade, with Commerzbank’s country briefing noting that “the negative connotation in terms of dwindling foreign capital participation is obvious.”

While many still question Viktor Orban’s domestic fiscal measures, Budapest still denies that Safarov was extradited to Azerbaijan in exchange for purchased Hungarian bonds and securities totaling nearly 3 billion euros.

The latest move to open the Hungarian Trade House has been seen as a way to help Hungarian small and medium-sized businesses expand in high growth Eastern economies, and is a product of Orban’s foreign economic policy called “The Eastern Opening.”

While the trade delegation was primarily in Baku to discuss the possible opening of a direct WizzAir route from Budapest, Szijjártó also expressed interest in the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Romania Interconnector project, with Hungary being both a possible customer and transporter of Azeri liquefied natural gas.

Constraints imposed on Hungary from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, have galvanized Orban’s government into seeking warmer relations with Central Asia, the Maghreb and the Far East. Trade Houses are set to open in Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, China and Russia in 2013.



Community News

South Hamilton School Sponsors Armenian Teacher Exchange

By Jaclyn Reiss

SOUTH HAMILTON, Mass. (*Boston Globe*) – Armenian community members from all over the state are collaborating to bring their culture to a South Hamilton school in January and February by hosting teachers from Armenia, displaying culturally significant exhibits and putting together an assembly that is open to the public.

Two teachers from Armenia will visit the Pingree School in South Hamilton in early February as part of the first exchange between an American independent school and an Armenian school.

Following the visit of the Armenian teachers, Pingree's Director of Multicultural Education Trina Gary and English teacher Michelle Ramadan will travel to Armenia to visit a school there in March.

The teachers visiting from Armenia and those from Pingree will spend time in each other's classrooms with students and faculty, sharing culture, history, teaching methods and philosophies of education for two weeks.

The exchange was facilitated by Jack and Eva Medzorjian of Winchester, who worked with the staff and administration of Pingree School on the project.

In addition to the teacher swap, Pingree will feature Armenian exhibits around the school, including photographs from Project SAVE Armenian Photographic Archives in Watertown. These photographs represent life in Armenia before and after 1915, as well as Armenian-American life in the United States.

The library will also display several fiction and non-fiction Armenian books from the private collection of John Soursourian of Beverly, whose wife works at Pingree. Soursourian's father was born in Historic Armenia, the school said.

The school will also set up a display in the main lobby's cabinet with Armenian objects on loan from the Medzorjian's private collection, including jewelry, carved and ceramic vases and bowls, dolls, miniature models of churches and musical instruments, handmade lace and other items.

School officials will host an assembly on January 10, and Ruth Thomasian of Project SAVE will present the organization's photographs, discussing their significance and the power of seeking and discovering one's family roots.

Her presentation will be followed by a film trailer screening by Nubar and Abby Alexanian of Gloucester, who have traveled to old Armenia to document their family roots. They will also talk about their venture and goals. Nubar Alexanian is a renowned photographer whose work has appeared in many books and periodicals including National Geographic magazine.

Members of the community are invited to view exhibits and attend the 9 a.m. assembly on January 10.

For more information, contact the school.



Ambassador Heffern answers questions following his presentation at the Diocesan Center.

Ambassador Heffern Speaks at the Diocese

NEW YORK – On December 17, US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern spoke to an audience of more than 150 people at the New York headquarters of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern.)

By Florence Avakian

Heffern explained US goals, programs and incentives in Armenia, during his "town hall" meeting organized by the Diocese and the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), with the participation of a number of Armenian organizations. The gathering was one of several appearances by the ambassador before Armenian-American audiences scheduled for his current visit to the United States.

Prior to the public gathering, the Heffern was welcomed in a reception in the formal reception room (tahlij) of the Diocesan Center, by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the Diocesan Primate; Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Diocese's Ecumenical Director; the Diocesan Council; and members of the Fund for Armenian Relief board of directors.

In a cordial atmosphere, the group of Diocesan leaders had an opportunity to offer their greetings to the ambassador and his staff, and to exchange thoughts on his mission in Armenia, and the Diocese's own efforts in the homeland, through FAR.

Later in the evening, during a large gathering in the Diocesan Center's Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, FAR Chairman Randy Sapah-Gulian introduced Heffern to the crowd, and the ambassador greeted the audience with the traditional Christmas refrain in Armenian. This expression elicited applause from the audience, after which Heffern revealed that he had been studying Armenian with his wife, Libby.

Delving into the topic of the US partnership with Armenia, he related that US-Armenia relations began 20 years ago and that the "relationship and dialogue is good." He pointed out that President Obama has met with President Serge Sargisian several times, and that for the first time in 18 years, a US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, had traveled to Armenia (in 2010 and 2012).

Using video clips, he paid tribute to medical and developmental programs in Armenia, run by Armenian-American organizations and individuals.

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Ambassador Heffern speaks with Fund for Armenian Relief board member Dr. Edgar Housepian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.

Parish Observes Father Khachatur's Fifth Anniversary At Sts. Vartanantz

CHELMSFORD, Mass. – Some 175 parishioners and friends gathered for an Appreciation Family Dinner to mark Rev. Father Khachatur Kesablian's fifth anniversary as pastor of Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church and to recognize the loving and active support provided by Yeretzgin Anna.

Among those present were a number of guests from neighboring Armenian Churches as well as the following clergy: Rev. Krikor Sabounjian (Metrowest), Rev. Fr. Vart Gyoazian (Hye Point), Rev. Dave Rinas (Trinity Lutheran, Chelmsford), and Rev. Tom Barrington (Episcopal Church, Chelmsford).

Past Parish Council chairman, George Simonian, served as master ceremonies and offered welcoming remarks.

Denise Oldham and Sara Martinian, representing the Sunday and Armenian School schools, presented Kesablian a book of drawings and essays by the students with the theme "Why do we love our pastor?"

Samantha Sarkisian, representing the ACYOA, gave Kesablian a collage of pictures highlighting his active involvement with our parish youth. Milka Jeknavorian and Dany Barooshian, representing the Women's Guild and Men's Club, respectively, expressed their appreciation for Kesablian's support of and dedication to the church.

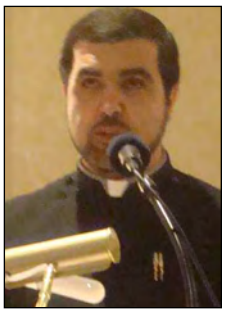
Deacon James Kalustian, representing the Diocesan Council as well as being a close friend to Father Khachatur and Yeretzgin Anna Kesablian, offered warm greetings from the Primate of the Eastern Diocese, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.

Ara Jeknavorian dedicated a slide presentation which highlighted the dynamic growth of parish life, church organizations and membership that has occurred over the past five years.

Carol Hildebrand, Parish Council chair, thanked Kesablian for the leadership he has proved to the parish. Father Khachatur, speaking on behalf of himself and Yeretzgin Anna, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the special committee that organized the Family Appreciation Dinner to celebrate his 5th year anniversary of his ministry with the Sts. Vartanantz parish. Considering the short period of time to organize the event, he complimented the committee, chaired by Bruce Kayajanian, for the great teamwork. Father Khachatur expressed his sincere appreciation to the entire parish for embracing his family with love and warmth, welcoming his family with an open arms, and encouraging and supporting his ministry. Kesablian also thanked his family, especially his wife, for her love, patience and encouragement in his ministry.

Kesablian shared that his ministry has been motivated by his desire to meet the spiritual needs of the parishioners, and help grow their faith. Among his many goals, he has strived to increase church attendance on Sundays, strengthen the various church organizations, and bringing Christ into the lives of every parishioner, and above all, bring comfort to those in need.

Kesablian closed his remarks by sharing his vision of the model, spiritually focused parish. "We have spent the past five years laying the foundation for this model parish together. Now as we look forward, we can with God's grace continue to build and evolve our church family into this model parish. Therefore, I am asking you, encouraging you and challenging you to help me, to help us build this dream parish."



Rev. Father Khachatur Kesablian



COMMUNITY NEWS



FRESNO — The Patriarchal Locum Tenens of Jerusalem meets with Armenian Church leaders in the San Joaquin Valley. The group of concerned leaders raised questions regarding the status of matters in Jerusalem with Archbishop Aris Shirvanyan, pictured left to right, Fr. Yeghia Hairabedian, Fr. Shahe Altounian, Sarkis Shirvanyan, Prof. Abraham Terian, Shirvanyan, Deacon Allan Yeghia Jendian, Fr. Vartan Kasparian and Fr. Kevork Arakelian. The archbishop said he was pleased to meet with those whom he has collaborated with during his tenure of service in America, and especially in the Western Diocese.

Ambassador Heffern Speaks at the Diocese

HEFFERN, from page 4

In enumerating the United States' goals in Armenia, he said, "What we are trying to do is to help Armenia succeed as a democratic, prosperous and secure country," as well as to "pull" Armenia to the West. "We are doing this by internal change: keeping the private sector separate from politics," he said, "as well as helping key people and policymakers adopt laws and regulations consistent with democratic ethics." He listed "free and fair democratic elections, with all candidates having access to the media, along with healthy political competition," as among the US goals.

On Armenia's economic side, he prescribed more trade and investment. "We want to help transform Armenia in the 21st century economically, by taking advantage of the Armenian people's creative talents." Those resources, he said, are considered by the United States to be of "high quality." As an example, he cited the IT Center in which "all big US companies are participating." He also spoke about American agricultural projects in Armenia. However, on the negative side, he noted a lack of investment in Armenia by American businesses, which illustrates, he said, Armenia's need for "more transparency on tax and customs procedures, as well as more independent courts and the rule of law."

Heffern pointed to signs of progress, citing the World Bank's decision to move Armenia up 18 points in international rankings, putting it in second place among the former Soviet Union republics. He praised Armenia-NATO cooperation, especially the sending of Armenian troops to Kosovo and Afghanistan. However, he noted that "defense reform" is necessary, with the hazing of troops in the military being a serious problem.

Calling Armenia a small country with borders closed by Turkey and Azerbaijan, and problematic relations with Georgia, he pointed out that the only border country that is a "lifeline" to Armenia is Iran, which he termed a "risky" situation. Advocating open borders with Turkey — a position he acknowledged was "hard," and even "harder" in the case of Azerbaijan — he said Armenia needs to be "reintegrated in the region."

"Turkey closed the border; the ball is in their court," he said. He also called for an open Kars railroad and cross-border activity between Turkish and Armenian business people.

On Genocide recognition, he replied that Obama's statement had acknowledged that "one and a-half million Armenians had been marched to their death." He said that any elaboration would have to be issued by the US State Department before he could address it further in his capacity as US ambassador.

Heffern concluded his talk by calling for the "planting of seeds of change" through partnerships — identifying Armenians who share American values. "We find them through exchange programs and working with the youth and other people who share our values."

In the question-and-answer period led by FAR Executive Director Garnik Nanagouljian, Heffern addressed several issues, including the Karabagh question, the peaceful resolution of which, he

said, is critical. "The alternative is that the big powers will push their own solution, which is not preferable."

As for the most promising business sectors in Armenia, Heffern listed IT, hotels, tourism, pharmaceuticals, dried fruit products and wine.

Thanking the Heffern and his wife, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian paid tribute to the great efforts that Armenian-Americans have made to support a free Armenian homeland. He recalled the close relationship the Diocese has had with all the US ambassadors to Armenia, from the very first one, Ambassador Harry Gilmore.

And he thanked America for the support it has shown. "From the first days of Armenia's independence, the US has stood by our people as an inspiration, a beacon of hope, and a partner," he said. "The Diocese has played a special role in this partnership, working through the Fund for Armenian Relief and with Holy Echmiadzin to help develop Armenia."

"The partnership between Armenia and America was forged out of the tragedy of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia," the Primate recalled; and reflecting on the tragedy which had occurred a few days earlier in Newtown, Conn., he led a prayer for the children and adults who were killed.

With a nod to the message of Christmas, the Primate closed by saying, "We pray for Peace on Earth, and Good Will to All People."

Organizations participating organizing the town hall meeting included the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, the Armenian Students Association, the Armenian Assembly of America, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society, the Constantinople Armenian Relief Society, the Esayan-Getronagan Alumni, the Tibrevank Alumni and the Armenian-American Support and Educational Center.

Dr. Rubina Perroomian to Lecture on Armenian Genocide in Literature

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — Dr. Rubina Perroomian will give a lecture titled "The Armenian Genocide in Literature: Perceptions of Those Who Lived Through the Years of Calamity" on Sunday, January 13, 4 p.m. at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum's Hasmik Mgrdichian Gallery.

The lecture, based on Perroomian's most recent book, is sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Museum and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). There will be a reception and book signing following the lecture.

The Armenian Genocide that took place almost a century ago remains influential in Armenian writing. Obsession with the past fueled by denial of the crime, the deniers' distortion of history and the image of a lost homeland that kindles a sense of deprivation are hallmarks of the literature produced in the Armenian Diaspora.

Perroomian's present volume begins with the response of the first-generation writers who survived, complementing her work *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993) and demonstrating the depth of the initial psychological shock of the traumatic experience as well as struggle in dispersion. It then proceeds to discuss the literary response of the orphan generation, anapati serund, in its diversity and complexity and as a stark departure from the worldviews and literary traditions of the past with, nevertheless, the Genocide at its core. The final chapter is devoted to the memoirs of the aging survivors, ordinary men and women who, without a claim to artistry but with an urge to record their harrowing past experiences for posterity, have put their personal stories in writing.

Perroomian holds a PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures from UCLA. She has taught Armenian studies courses, lectured widely, participated in international symposia, authored books and contributed chapters to scholarly volumes.

For more information contact the Ararat-Eskijian Museum at ararat-eskijian-museum@netzero.net or NAASR at hq@naasr.org.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

COAF Annual Gala Raises \$1.3 Million for Rural Armenian Programs

NEW YORK – The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), a non-profit organization working to improve the living conditions for village children in Armenia, hosted its ninth annual holiday gala on Thursday, December 13, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in The Temple of Dendur in The Sackler Wing. The event, featuring an array of celebrities and longtime friends and supporters, raised \$1.3 million for COAF's programs. Special guests in attendance included Nathan Lane, Sean Hayes, Victor Garber and Patricia Field.

For the sixth year in a row, Emmy and Tony Award-winning actress, Andrea Martin was the master of ceremonies. She was also honored for her longtime commitment to the organization

with the COAF Humanitarian Award. Martin has been a longtime advocate of COAF's mission in creating and sustaining opportunities for growth and progress among children in impoverished rural Armenia. The COAF Humanitarian Award was created to recognize individuals doing outstanding work in advocacy and awareness both inside and outside the organization.

Both Sam and Sylva Simonian and Nathan Lane were also honored for their philanthropic accomplishments. Sam Simonian, president and CEO of INET, also founded the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies in Armenia. TUMO is a state-of-the-art digital technology center that serves as a precursor for teens wanting to pursue careers in animation, video games, web development, and digital video and audio. Lane, notably known for his work in film, stage and television, was also honored for his philanthropic work. Lane sits on the Board of Trustees for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, one of the nation's leading industry-based, nonprofit AIDS fundraising and grant-making organizations.

The evening also featured performances by children who had traveled to New York from the villages of Armenia where COAF works. They played traditional Armenian musical instruments and shared their success stories with those in attendance. Brian Stokes-Mitchell captivated the crowd with a performance of *What a*

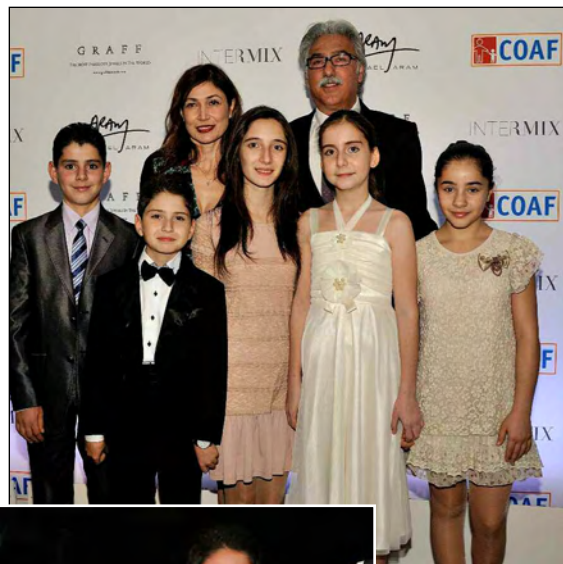
Wonderful World and the evening came to a close after singer Lauriana Mae delivered her rendition of *The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)*.

The gala was co-hosted by artist Michael Aram. The event also featured both silent and live auctions conducted by Sotheby's celebrity auctioneer C. Hugh Hildesley. The money raised from these auctions will support the expansion efforts of COAF's programs to additional villages.

For more information, please visit www.coafkids.org.



2012 COAF Humanitarian Award Recipients Andrea Martin and Nathan Lane

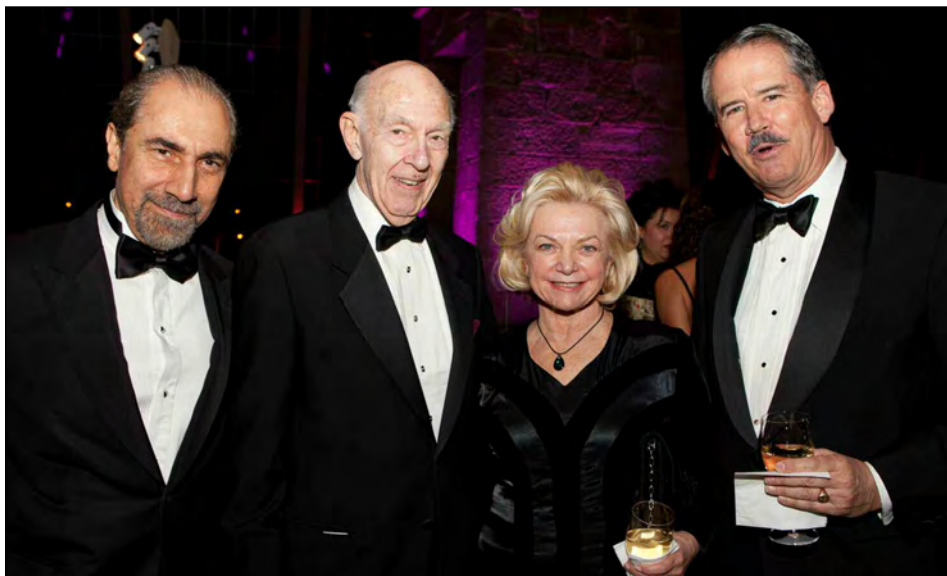


ABOVE PHOTO: Silva and Sam Simonian with guests from Armenia's rural villages PHOTO LEFT: Mane Parsamyan and Gurchen Avelisyan



Additional Christmas Donations made to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator as of January 2, 2013

G. Ignatius Foundation, Los Angeles, CA	\$1,000
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COAF Founder and Chairman Dr. Garo Armen, with Board Members Herb Alpert and Donna Evans and Ambassador John Evans

OBITUARY

Armen Babamian

NEW MILFORD, N.J. – Armen P. Babamian, a longtime resident of New Milford, formerly of Cliffside Park, died on December 24, 2012, at the age of 97.



Armen Babamian

He was a retired insurance salesman, avid tennis player and a renowned singer. He began his career in 1949 with the Armenian National Chorus of New York as a principal soloist. He was a choir master at St. Illuminator Armenian Church in

Ridgefield, NJ, for 25 years.

In 1999, he received the Mesrob Mashtots Medal and Holy Encyclical Medal from Catholicos Aram I of Antelias.

He leaves his wife of 71 years, Rita; daughter Carole Abbatiello and her husband Joseph and son Armen J. Babamian and his wife Amelia; grandchildren Christine Manning (Michael), Lynn Madden Toufayan (Arthur), Joseph Abbatiello (Carissa), Gernelle Bokuniewicz (Dan) and Armen P. Babamian II and 10 great-grandchildren and a large extended family.

Funeral Services were on Friday, December 28 at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Ridgefield. Interment followed in George Washington Memorial Park, Paramus.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church or the American Heart Association

New York City for 25 years and the conductor of the Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church in

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Arts & Living

London Salon Mashup to Include 'Deported/a Dream Play'

LONDON — Boston area playwright Joyce Van Dyke's play about Armenian Genocide survivors, "Deported / a dream play," which premiered in March 2012 at Boston's Modern Theatre where it played to sold-out houses, will be part of Salon Mashup, a radical new art and performance event organized by the Armenian Institute in London. Developed by actor/director Seta White, Salon Mashup: Armenian Perspectives on Displacement and Regeneration will bring together 40 artists, performers, musicians, filmmakers and others over a four-day period in an exciting and varied collaboration presenting the experience of displacement and regeneration. The exhibitions will be co-curated by Vazken Khatchig Davidian and Shohair Mavlian and performances developed by White will take place January 31-February 3, in the popular art spaces of London's Shoreditch Town Hall.

During the day, art exhibitions, installations and film screenings will fill the spaces. Live performances will take place in the evenings, some in collaboration with hanging exhibitions, merging different artistic media. Evening events will include music, spoken word, performance art and theatre including "Deported/a dream play" excerpts which will be directed by Bill Barclay of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. There will also be opportunities to meet the artists.

"The idea is for a space where different artists and performers are able to collaborate, merging different artistic media. I envisage Salon Mashup, with its creative energy channeled into exciting and collaborative new work, becoming a platform for Armenian culture today, inspiring and leading to future work between the artists," said White.

Davidian explained, "The collaborations, themselves dynamic responses to the diverse art displayed, provide varied interpretations on the theme of displacement and regeneration, at once both personal and universal."

Salon Mashup is envisioned as an annual event with changing themes and participants. The theme this year is displacement and regeneration and will be focusing on the Armenian experience of loss and resettlement. The Armenian Institute aims to bring different communities together, raising awareness of the horrors often preceding dislocation, the anxieties of resettlement and the ways in which the arts can help to express these feelings, create new community and help to heal the wounds. Participating artists explore the tensions between past, present and future, working together to stimulate new ideas.

Young professional artists, and others who are well-established, will be together at Salon Mashup 2013, working in an environment that will provide a synergy for their collaboration and inspire them to create new works. Salon Mashup is supported using public funding by Arts Council England, and supported by grants from The St Sarkis Charity Trust, the AGBU London Trust and contributions from generous individual donors.

The Salon Mashup 2013 participating artists are:

Helin Anahit: A PhD candidate at Middlesex University, Anahit has been exhibiting internationally for many years. Working with installations, video and a variety of other formats in recent years, Anahit has increasingly explored the life of Armenians in Istanbul where she examines concepts of belonging and displacement.



Elizabeth Souin sings at the annual concert.

Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Church Hosts Children's Christmas Concert

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — On December 15, the Egavian Cultural Center of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Church welcomed children, parents and friends to its annual Christmas concert. The Cultural Committee's Christmas Concert featured the students of the Arts Education Program, the Nazeli Dance Group and the Junior Choir.

First on the program was the Junior Choir singing Christmas Carols, including Armenian Christmas Hymn *Park Ee Partsoons* (Gloria in Excelsis,) directed by Konstantin Petrossian. The new Youth Orchestra of Arts Education Program also played a few Christmas Carols. The guitar group's presentation included the Christmas Carols and songs. The students of the Arts Education Program, chaired by Janna Guegamian, followed.

The varied performances included piano, flute, vocals, violin, clarinet and guitar. In addition to the Arts Education Program, the Cultural Committee organizes the Nazeli Dance Group.

Rev. Shnork Souin, pastor of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Church, congratulated all the performers and thanked the teachers and parents for their efforts. The evening closed with desserts prepared by the parents of the Arts Education Program, the Nazeli Dance Group and the Junior Choir.

For application or more information about the Arts Education Program visit the church's website: <http://stsahmes.org/NewWebsite/culturalcommittee.shtml>



Simone Semerjian plays the violin.



The youth orchestra performs during the concert.



The Children's Nazeli Dance Group.

Kelly Stuart Wins ADAA's Saroyan's Prize

David Kherdian Receives Armenian Star Award

LOS ANGELES — New York playwright Kelly Stuart won the Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA)'s third Biennial William Saroyan Prize for Playwriting for her play, "Belonging to the Sky." The \$10,000 grand prize was announced and presented at ADAA's memorable awards event on Saturday, December 8, at the Pasadena Playhouse.

"Belonging to the Sky" is a lyrical duet of monologues by Sabiha Gökçen (Ataturk's adopted daughter) and assassinated journalist Hrant Dink, and their tragic historical connection. Stuart teaches playwriting at Columbia University and has traveled nine times to Turkey and speaks Turkish.

"I was haunted by the intersection of these two lives," says Stuart, "so the play is the interwoven monologues of Hrant and Sabiha, both confronting their identity and the approach of death in two different ways."

The other finalists were two-time Saroyan Prize finalist Sevan Kaloustian Greene's "Doon," a dramatic look at four generations of a New Jersey Armenian family, and Adriana Sevahn Nichols' "Night Over Erzanga," inspired by her Armenian grandparents' survival of the Genocide in 1915. All three finalists were present at the event and read excerpts of their powerful plays. Many attendees considered these readings to be the highlight of the evening.

"I had never read the text of my play, in public, and there was something very potent about speaking my grandmother's words, to a room full of Armenians. I think, somewhere, in the voices of our characters, all of our hearts were joined together," said Sevahn Nichols.

The prize was awarded by Hank Saroyan, the nephew of William Saroyan and Emmy-winning director of Saroyan's "The Parsley Garden." Before awarding the prize he shared delightful and touching stories about his "Uncle Bill," who was passionate about "the spirit of the writer above all else."

Television host and entertainment journalist Jill Simonian served as the enthusiastic mistress of ceremonies, engaging the audience throughout the evening and recalling how ADAA has helped her connect with other Armenians in the industry.

Author David Kherdian received ADAA's 2012 Armenian Star Award for his outstanding writing career as a poet, novelist and memoirist. As he was unable to attend, Kherdian's friend and colleague, novelist Aris Janigian (This Angelic Land) accepted the award on Kherdian's behalf and presented a moving tribute to the author, who began as a poet and was mentored by William Saroyan in his early career and has since seen his numerous works of fiction and nonfiction translated into 14 languages, including his bestselling memoir of his mother, The Road From Home. Gomidas Press will publish Kherdian's retelling of David of Sassoun in February, 2013.

Some of the industry's finest Armenian American actors were also in attendance, including Ken Davitian ("The Artist") and Hrach Titizian (Showtime's "Homeland"). ADAA Founder Bianca Bagatourian talked about ADAA's array of recent activities. Other key ADAA artists in the audience were Ovation Award-winning director Michael Arabian, actress Karen Kondazian, director Michael Peretzian, Fountain Theater Artistic Director Simon Levy and Pasadena Playhouse Artistic Director Sheldon Epps.

The winner was selected by this year's Honorary Jury of renowned theater artists: playwright Catherine Filloux ("Dog and Wolf"), playwright/screenwriter Eduardo Machado

see ADAA, page 9



ARTS & LIVING

Lerna Ekmekcioglu: Researching Post-World War I Turkish Armenians

RESEARCH, from page 1

Ekmekcioglu was born in Istanbul but her parents were from Adiyaman and Mersin. Her father’s family moved to Iskenderun and her father later was sent to Tibrevank’s Armenian boarding school in Istanbul to further his education. Ekmekcioglu went to Armenian schools, learning fluent Armenian and graduating the Getronagan (Central) High School in Istanbul. While Armenian language and literature were taught in school, Armenian history was off limits. In the summers Ekmekcioglu visited her mother’s family in Mersin. She remembers as a teenager that her aunt once counted all the Christians – Armenians, Greeks, Levantines, Europeans and others – living there, roughly around 100, and noted that her aunt knew nearly all of them.

Learning about the experiences of her family and seeing how Armenians and other minorities struggled to live in an often unwelcoming environment in Turkey led her to ask questions that later turned into fruitful topics for academic work. When she began her undergraduate studies at Bogaziçi University in Istanbul she planned on studying sociology, but she also became involved in Turkish feminist groups and became interested in the history of women and women’s movements in Turkey. By her second year, she and her Armenian friends at the same university, including Melissa Bilal (with whom she would later co-edit a book), began to wonder why Armenian

women intellectuals were absent in the standard Turkish studies on Ottoman women’s movements. This led to a significant turn of events.

Ekmekcioglu and some other graduates of Armenian schools were unaware of Western Armenian women



Lerna Ekmekcioglu

intellectuals outside of Zabel Yesayan and Zabel Asadur. This changed when the writer and poet Yervant Gobyenyan gave them a copy of Hayganush Mark’s 1954 volume. Fascinated, these young Turkish-Armenian women formed a more formal Armenian feminist group and began organizing events. Then Ekmekcioglu, Bilal and a third friend published an article in a Turkish academic journal as part of a competition for Turkish university students, and won third prize. The article was critical of previous writings on the Turkish feminist movement. At this point, Ekmekcioglu said, she intuited that this field might turn be suitable as a focus for her career.

The third year of college Ekmekcioglu went to Greece for one year and learned Greek, the language of her maternal grandmother. She also investigated the role of Greek women during the rise of feminist consciousness in the Ottoman Empire, but found that little had been done on the Constantinopolitan Ottoman Greeks. When she returned for her fourth and final year at Bogaziçi she, like many other students at this university, applied to graduate schools in the United States with the intent of writing the history of the Armenian and Greek women’s movements in Turkey. New York University (NYU) gave her a full fellowship, and the 9/11 events paradoxically impressed on her the importance of this cosmopolitan city, so Ekmekcioglu moved to New York.

During her second year at NYU she decided to drop the Greek aspect of her work and focus on Armenians, although there was no faculty member in Armenian studies to guide her work at that university. She instead got assistance from the Zohrab Information Center staff and several Armenian scholars at other institutions. While her doctoral work evolved, she published a Turkish-language volume edited together with Bilal titled *Bir Adalet Feryadi, Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Be Ermeni Feminist Yazar (1862-1933)* [A Cry for Justice: Five Armenian Feminist Writers from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1862-1933)], which was connected with her topic.

Soon she decided to turn her focus to the later period of the 1920s, and examine the role not only of women but of men too, especially the leaders of institutions like the Armenian Patriarchate and public intellectuals. Her dissertation focus broadened into a study of the Armenian community of Istanbul from 1918 to 1933, but she continued to use the perspective of gender to aid in her analysis of how this group managed to survive. The periodical published by feminist Hayganush Mark, *Hay gin* [Armenian Woman], remained her most important primary source. She submitted her thesis, titled “Improvising Turkishness: Being Armenian in Post-Ottoman Istanbul, 1918-1933,” and received her doctorate in 2010. She did more research while at the University of Michigan. Over the years, she has collected materials from libraries and archives in Yerevan, Paris, Beirut, Turkey and the US. Now, while on leave from MIT in the first half of 2013, she is transforming her thesis into a book to be titled *Surviving the New Turkey: Armenians in Post-Ottoman Istanbul*.

It will be the first such monographic study published in English on this topic, though there are a couple of unpublished works on similar topics in Turkish and Armenian. Ekmekcioglu feels that many coincidences in her life, beginning with her personal search for Armenian role models and her questioning of the circumstances of the Armenians she saw living in Turkey, led her to this work. The assassination of journalist Hrant Dink in Turkey and changes in Turkish society are now leading many others, Armenians and Turks, to work on similar topics.

Ekmekcioglu’s dissertation avoided the question of whether the decision of the Armenian public intellectuals of Istanbul to align themselves with the Kemalist movement was sincere or artificial and born out of necessity. Why did some individuals like Hayanush Mark who had the means to leave Turkey and who were openly anti-Turkish during the immediate post-World War I period before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey choose to stay in the new republic? Ekmekcioglu compared the writings of contemporaries who chose to leave and pub-



A caricature of Hayganush Mark, published in the 1920 issue of *Dsablvar darekirk* published by Yervant Odian in Istanbul, and used by Ekmekcioglu in her dissertation. Mark is in the garb of a French or British suffragette, holding the flag of the Armenian Women’s League in her right hand and the flag of *Hay gin* (the journal she founded, edited and considered as her daughter) in her left.

lished memoirs abroad to Mark’s own memoirs to find some clues.

She found that strategies of survival, surprisingly, were shared by the Ottoman Muslim religious establishment, leftists, Turkish feminists, and the Armenian community when they faced oppression under Kemalism. For the Armenians, family was the main sphere of life in which Armenianness could be nurtured and reproduced. Ekmekcioglu looks at some of the “wrong things” that the Armenian community leadership did during this period, especially in connection with women who wanted to play a bigger role in the administrative bodies of the Armenian patriarchate.

Ekmekcioglu discovered through experience that the field of Armenology could benefit from the creation of a mentorship program for Armenian graduate students. She said this could provide help on “practical things like how to

apply to fellowships, or big institutions; when and how to start publishing as a graduate student; and how to enter the job market. There are things about which you need advice. That would lessen the role of luck and coincidence. There are not many Armenian studies programs in the US but there are enough Armenian scholars in various institutions. Maybe the Society for Armenian Studies could match people–juniors and seniors; maybe even undergraduates.”

Digitalization of more source material, and the addition of search capabilities, is another way that Ekmekcioglu suggests could facilitate Armenological studies.

Armenians supported Ekmekcioglu’s research. She received modest but significant scholarships from the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the Armenian International Women’s Association, and the Organization of Istanbul Armenians in Los Angeles for many years. She said, “I found a receptive and helpful diaspora community in the US.”

Her fellowship from the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan, Ekmekcioglu feels, made so many things possible for her, including her present position at MIT. Though renowned primarily for its science and math, humanities are respected at the latter institution. Ekmekcioglu found that “the student body is really smart. They are not humanities-minded people but they get me very fast.” She teaches courses related to the modern Middle East, and also is affiliated with the Women and Gender Studies Program, which allows her to teach at least one course per year connected to feminism in the same region.

Though Armenian or even Ottoman history courses are considered too specialized for MIT’s purposes, she is able to integrate materials on Armenians and Turks as part of her courses. Ekmekcioglu is in touch with both Armenian and Turkish student groups at the university and last year had a research assistant from Armenia.

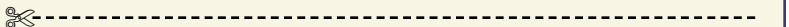
As holder of the McMillan-Stewart Career Development Chair, each semester she organizes one lecture pertaining to women in the developing world. Ekmekcioglu usually gives three to four lectures a year herself, participating in conferences and workshops.

She is looking forward to seeing her newest article published in the first half of 2013 in one of the most prestigious humanities journals in North America (*Comparative Studies in Society and History*). Titled “Reclaiming People, Reclaiming Lands: Politics of Inclusion after the Armenian Genocide,” it is about Armenian women and their children from Muslim fathers during and after World War I.

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ARTS & LIVING

ALMA Hosts Holiday Party

WATERTOWN —The Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) ushered in the holiday season on December 13 with a party spread over the three levels of the building. More than 100 guests enjoyed an array of festive fare while taking in the museum exhibits and new books and other new items now being featured in the gift shop. A short tour led by curator Gary Lind-Sinanian was conducted on the second floor while guests mingled and viewed exhibits including “Highlights from ALMA’s Collection,” the Karsh Exhibit and “Who Are the Armenians” on the ground floor.

MFA Boston chief designer Keith Crippen, graphic designer Jennifer Munson and Eulogio Guzman, professor at the Museum School of Tufts University visited the museum for the party, the first time they have returned since their work at the museum in summer 2011. At last year’s party, the team was putting the finishing touches on their work just as the first guests arrived for the opening of the Karsh Exhibition and newly-renovated Bedoukian Galleries.

Following the cocktail portion of the evening, guests were invited to the Contemporary Gallery on the third floor for coffee and desserts, with live piano music playing jazz and holiday songs.



Sheriff Peter Koutoujian (center) with ALMA Trustees Robert Khederian and Michele Kolligian



Kelly Stuart Wins ADAA’s Saroyan’s Prize

ADAA, from page 7

(“Floating Islands”), and Artistic Director/actress Gates McFadden (“Star Trek”).

Stuart’s journey to write the play is compelling: “While traveling in Turkey I visited the archive of a historian who told me a story I couldn’t get out of my head...The story he told me was about an Armenian girl named Hatun, who was left in an orphanage with her sister in the aftermath of the genocide. Ataturk came to the orphanage and saw this very pretty little girl, and took her away to adopt her. This girl became “Sabiha Gokcen,” the icon of Turkish womanhood; her Armenian identity “cleaned” and “erased.” Some consider Hrant Dink’s treatment of this topic in Agos newspaper as the event that possibly led to his own tragedy, hence Stuart’s exploration of them both.

ADAA’s William Saroyan Prize for Playwriting, for plays on Armenian themes, is made possible by a grant from the William Saroyan Foundation, with additional funding

from Gagosian Galleries.

The next biennial Saroyan Prize deadline will be April 1, 2014. Next year, ADAA will sponsor the Paul Screenwriting Awards for screenplays on Armenian themes, with a deadline of April 1, 2013.



From left, Adriana Sevahn Nichols, Sheldon Epps, Kelly Stuart and Sevan Kaloustian Greene

ADAA’s mission is to project the Armenian voice on the world stage through the arts of theater and film. It accomplishes this through two writing contests, playreadings, the Boston Armenian Film Festival, various networking events, and the pre-eminent Armenian performing arts website in the world, www.armeniandrama.org.

London Salon Mashup to Include ‘Deported/A Dream Play’

DEPORTED, from page 7

Christine Anserlian: Armenian-Lebanese interdisciplinary designer with a Masters degree in applied imagination in the creative industries from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design.

Karen Babayan: Artist, curator and writer, Babayan was born in Iran of Armenian/British parentage. Now based in Cumbria, her work documents a visual and textual journey using photography, print, performance and fiction-writing, through which themes of migration, displacement and diaspora are explored.

Marc Balakjian: Artist and printmaker, Balakjian has had one-man shows and participated in numerous group shows including many International Print and Drawing Biennales and Triennales in Europe, Japan and the US. His work is included in galleries and museum collections worldwide.

Vanessa Berberian: Photographer. Born in Boston, Berberian studied Classical Archaeology at Dartmouth College and became a travel photographer, working for major publications including Condé Nast Traveller, Frommer’s, Fodor’s/Random House. Her personal work focuses on intimate, documentary portraiture exploring family, nostalgia and the passage of time. www.vanessaberberian.com

Aikaterini Gegisian: Artist. Gegisian established her career through a series of moving image works addressing issues of memory, landscape and transcultural migration in South East Europe. Her work features in the collection of the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art and State Museum of Contemporary Art, both in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Sarah Greaves: Mixed media artist who uses the traditional craft of embroidery to vandalise and graffiti everyday objects with emotive, political and thoughtful text. Sarah is an Aesthetica Magazine Creative Works Competition finalist. She has recently undertaken research in Armenia, funded by the Arts Council.

Vahagn Matossian: Designer. Matossian specializes in interactive art and design. He has worked with TROIKA, on the ‘Cloud’, ‘All the Time in the World’ installations at Terminal 5 and Digital By Design Book. Clients include

Yamaha, Hulger, Glastonbury Festival, British Film Institute, Innovation Labs, Denmark and Cybersonica. Matossian is currently design director at Superleggera.

Sevan Nigogosian: Artist. Nigogosian’s work explores aspects of regeneration, construction and deconstruction within a landscape and traditional still life setting. Using oil paint, pigment, latex, clay, rubber, he explores painting in a fluid, organic, impressionistic and abstract way.

Helen Sheehan: Artist, currently working on practice-based PhD at the University of the Arts London. Sheehan has a post-grad diploma in photojournalism from London College of Printing and an MA in photography, London College of Communication. Recent exhibitions include Ca Zenobio Venice Armin Wegner, Helen Sheehan Image and Testimony: Diyarbakir Dikranakerd.

Film makers:

Nora Armani: An award-winning actress/writer/director Armani was born in Egypt of Armenian parents. She has performed on stage internationally in her self-penned and other plays and has appeared in many films/TV series. Armani co-directed “Last Station,” premiered at IFFR in 1995.

Marlene Edoyan: Montreal-based documentary filmmaker and producer. Edoyan previously worked as a production director and artistic director for internationally co-produced animated films and TV series for children. With a keen interest in sociopolitical issues, Edoyan set up Fauvefilm and directed her first feature-length documentary Figure of Armen.

Hasmik Gasparyan: Filmmaker. Born in Yerevan, Armenia, her TV project The Puzzle of Nationalities of Armenia won a UNESCO prize at the 2008 Boundless Media Contest. As a Chevening Scholar, she completed an MA in Screen Documentary at Goldsmiths, University of London. Currently, she lives and works as a filmmaker in Sheffield, UK.

Performers:

Bill Barclay: Composer, director. Barclay is currently music director at the Globe Theatre, London. A Shakespeare specialist, he has also worked with Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA and the Actors’ Shakespeare

Project in Boston. Barclay is the creator of several original musical works and has created several solo performances. He has held Artist Residencies for directing, composing, or conducting at various universities and is the recipient of many awards.

Levon Chilingirian: Violinist, leader of the Chilingirian Quartet. In addition to chamber music and solo performance, Chilingirian is also director of several music festivals and leads chamber orchestras. He currently works with El Sistema of Venezuela, coaches chamber music and is a Professor at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Tigran Grigoryan: Composer and pianist. Grigoryan has composed choral music (a Mass and a Requiem) which has been received to great acclaim as well as his instrumental music for piano and strings.

Vergine Gulbenkian: Storyteller. Gulbenkian performs traditional tales and epics in museums and theatres around Britain and at international storytelling festivals. She also works with the Story Museum and education staff at the University Museums in Oxford performing stories around exhibitions.

Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayan: Composer, singer & harper. Currently Composer-in-Residence at Handel House. A graduate of Cambridge University and Trinity Laban, her many compositions range widely. Chosen for the Panufnik Young Composers Scheme and a PRSF award to compose a piece for Refugee Week 2011, she is co-founder of ‘Out of Neverland’ festival in Thorpeness, Suffolk and received an Arts Council England award to produce her debut album ‘[Big Ears]’.

Alexandra Kharibian: Costume designer, Kharibian has worked as a costume supervisor at Guildhall School of Music and Drama as well as designing costumes for numerous theatrical productions including working as an associate designer at the Bush Theatre.

Shakeh Major Tchilingirian: Solo dance artist and choreographer, Tchilingirian has performed and taught throughout Europe and the Middle East. A founding member and Principal Soloist of the Arax Dance Ensemble and co-producer with Laura Shannon of “Gorani” a CD/booklet of Armenian folk dance music. Tchilingirian’s dance is the focus of an award winning art-documentary film

“Verve” by Nigol Bezjian.

Teni Matian: Choreographer, dancer. Matian trained at the Royal Academy of Dance in London. She has launched her own dance school in Yerevan called “Mshool,” specializing in teaching youngsters aged 4-16.

Nouritza Matossian: Writer and broadcaster on music and the arts, biography, food, travel, and Armenia, she has also organized arts festivals in England and Cyprus.

Aris Nadirian: Baritone soloist, Nadirian is also a choral conductor and has most recently organized and prepared the choir and sung a leading role in the opera Anoush in London.

Sonya Nikolosina: Performance poet. Nikolosina studied Film and Comparative Literature and in 2006–07 she published three anthologies of poems. In 2009, Nikolosina was awarded a place in the Poetry Rivals Collection by *Forward Poetry* and in 2010 a place in the ‘op 5 Poems for January 2010 by *Forward Poetry*.

Steven Ounanian: A self-initiated researcher into emerging technologies, Ounanian uses collaborative experiments and public interventions to prototype future scenarios. These collaborative experiments ask questions about family, authenticity, and religion in the context of a technology driven age.

Lev Parikian: Musician and writer. Parikian currently holds Principal Conductor posts with several London-based orchestras, and is Principal Conductor of the City of Oxford Orchestra and Artistic Director of The Rehearsal Orchestra. He recently conducted the Armenian opera, “Anoush” in London.

Joyce Van Dyke: Playwright. “Deported/ a dream play” (about the Armenian genocide) was a finalist for the 2011 O’Neill National Playwrights Conference. Awarded many honors, Van Dyke’s plays have been published in Laugh Lines: Short Comic Plays and Contemporary Armenian American Drama. She teaches Shakespeare at Harvard University Extension School.

Seta White: Actor/Director. White works extensively as an actress and as a director has recently directed the first UK production of Anoush. She is also the producer of the Namus project, which in 2011 was performed in Armenia, a collaboration between British and Armenian artists. White is an experienced workshop leader.



THE YEAR

2012

IN REVIEW

JANUARY

- Acting US ambassador to Azerbaijan, Matthew Bryza, left his post after only a year in the wake of the US Senate's decision to go into recess without voting on his appointment.
- In Jerusalem, two Armenians, Georges Dilsizian and his son, Andre Gustave Dilsizian, were named Righteous among the Nations, bringing the total number of recognized Armenian rescuers of victims of the Holocaust up to 21. Georges Dilsizian died in 1946; Andre Gustave Dilsizian in 1971.
- Istanbul's oldest Armenian church, Saint Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Apostolic Church, reopened on January 8 after a six-month restoration project. The church was restored by the Sisli Municipality and features a conical dome and belfry.
- The head of the restoration department of the Matenadaran manuscript repository and museum, Gayane Eliazian announced they would open a special restoration school in order to train and prepare specialists to work in restoration, train miniaturists and teach old Armenian.



Yasin Hayal was convicted of masterminding Dink's assassination.

- Turkish courts jailed Yasin Hayal and sentenced him to a life in prison for the 2007 murder of Hrant Dink, founder of the Armenian-Turkish newspaper *Agos*. Nineteen other suspects believed to have a connection to the murder or acting as part of a terrorist organization were cleared. Hayal was sentenced to a life sentence for soliciting the murder, but the court decided there was no evidence of a criminal organization, and suspect Erhan Tuncel, who had been charged as a main instigator of the killing, was found not guilty. Tuncel, was, however, sentenced to 10 years and six months' imprisonment for a separate crime. All other suspects were acquitted.
- Tens of thousands of protesters marked the fifth anniversary of Hrant Dink's murder on January 19. Crowds celebrated the Turkish-Armenian journalist's life, but also decried the failed trial of his murderers.



Tens of thousands marched in honor of Hrant Dink's death.

- Longtime supporter of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, Samuel Maserejian, died on January 19. Maserejian served as the paper's contact person at the central post office and was an active member of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). Interment took place at Mt. Auburn Cemetery.



Demonstrators at the French Embassy in Yerevan thank President Sarkozy.

- On January 23, the French Senate passed a measure making denial of the Armenian Genocide a crime. The measure was approved by 127 votes to 86, and threatened jail time to anyone in France who denies that the 1915 massacre of Armenians by Ottoman Turk forces amounted to a genocide. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, whose UMP party put forward the bill, hoped the bill would be signed into law the following month. Turkey froze all political relations with France over Genocide dispute. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan cancelled permission for French military planes to land and warships to dock in Turkey, and additionally annulled all joint military exercises. The Genocide Law was put on hold January 31 after politicians opposed to the legislation demanded that its constitutionality be examined.
- In Oakland Gardens, N.Y., the Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) celebrated its 45th anniversary with a gala benefit that took place on January 28.



- Grandmaster Levon Aronian (far left) won the top prize at an international competition that ended on Sunday, January 29. In the final round of the annual Tata Steel Chess Tournament at Wijk aan Zee, Holland, Aronian earned a draw against Azeri grandmaster Teimour Radjabov to score nine points overall and finish on top among 14 competitors.

FEBRUARY

- The Armenian Sisters' Academy (ASA) of Lexington, Mass., celebrated its 30th anniversary with a gala at the Fairmount Copley Plaza in Plaza on February 11. During an interview, Sister Cecile Keghiayan, the ASA's principal, spoke about her dedication to the education of children.
- Turkish Courts acquitted Coskun Igci, one of 19 defendants in the murder case of Hrant Dink. Igci, who presumably called on Yasin Hayal to buy a gun with which to shoot Dink, was accidentally left out of the final verdict and the judge issued a separate ruling on February 13.
- Prof. Taner Akcam spoke to a packed audience at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in Belmont, Mass. His lecture concerned post-World War I trials of Genocide perpetrators in Istanbul and other cities in Ottoman Turkey. The event was part of a tour for his new book, *Judgment at Istanbul*, a collaborative effort by Akcam and Prof. Vahakn Dadrian.
- A 15-member Congressional delegation from the US House of Representatives headed by Chairman David Dreier met with President Serge Sargisian and Speaker of Parliament Samvel Nikoyan on February 19. Dreier, chair of the House Democracy Partnership (HDP), highlighted the importance of the parliamentary elections to the bilateral relationship and urged the government and parties to "do everything in their power to ensure free, fair and credible elections."



2012 IN REVIEW

•The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* lost one of its own, with the death of its former editor Ara Kalaydjian who died on February 26. Family and friends celebrated the life of this well-respected figure in the community with services in Watertown and interment in Grove Hill Cemetery in Waltham.

•On Tuesday, February 28, France's top court ruled that the law backed by President Nicolas Sarkozy to punish denial of the Armenian Genocide was unconstitutional and infringed on the freedom of expression in the country. France's Constitutional Council added that it wished "not to enter the realm of responsibility that belongs to historians." While Turkey welcomed the ruling, Sarkozy vowed to draft a new version of the law.



Ara Kalaydjian

MARCH



Armenia's Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian paid a visit in Washington to US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta on March 22.

•US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta met with Armenia's Minister of Defense Seyran Ohanian at the Pentagon to discuss how they could bolster military ties between the US and Armenian. The visit underscored Armenia's increased defense cooperation with the US within both bilateral and NATO frameworks. Ohanian then continued his US tour with a visit to the headquarters of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America in New York. He was welcomed by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, and 25 leaders of the Eastern Diocese. Ohanian spoke about the role of the Armenian Church in providing spiritual nourishment for the Armenian people in the 20 years since independence.

•Sen. Robert Mendez (D-NJ), a longtime champion of Armenian issues, along with Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL), who had previously served as co-chair of the Armenian Caucus during his tenure in the House of Representatives, urged their colleagues to cosponsor a new Armenian Genocide Resolution. The resolution is similar to the House version and adds a key finding from the 1951 US filing before the International Court of Justice concerning the Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

•Joyce Van Dyke's "Deported/a dream play" premiered at Suffolk University's Modern Theatre. Using many flashbacks to provide historical information, the play was inspired by the true stories of two of its main characters – the playwright's grandmother, Elmas Sarajian Boyajian, and her best friend, Varter Nazarian Deranian, the mother of Dr. H. Martin Deranian of Worcester. The play was also accompanied by several Boston-area events and lectures, including a 90th birthday celebration in Arlington for Deranian.



Dr. H. Martin Deranian with Joyce Van Dyke

•Archbishop Aram Ateshyan, the acting head of the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul, on March 14 filed a lawsuit against Turkey for the return of its properties including the historic Sansaryan School in Erzurum, which was the site of the 1919 Erzurum Congress led by the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

•Roy Essoyan, the Associate Press reporter who in 1958 broke the news of the Sino-Soviet split and was subsequently expelled from the Soviet Union for his breach of Soviet censorship, died in his Hawaii home on March 22, at 92.

APRIL

•In Merced, Calif., Peter Balakian was named the seventh recipient of the Spendlove Prize for Social Justice, Tolerance and Diplomacy on April 12. The prize, endowed by Dr. Sherrie Spendlove in honor of her parents, Alice and Clifford Spendlove, has been awarded to distinguished figures throughout the years including President Jimmy Carter.

•On April 17, Noubar Armen Manoogian, 17, became the first Boy Scout of Armenian descent to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout in Arizona, a rank which is only achieved by only 5 percent of Scouts. For his final project, Manoogian created a Memorial Walkway for the Armenian Genocide, which was the first of its kind in the United States.

•On April 20, members of the Armenian community in Massachusetts filled the State House to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. Speakers ranging from politicians to humanitarian activists paid tribute to the 1.5 million victims of the Genocide at the hands of the Ottoman



Empire. The keynote address was delivered by Khatchig Mouradian, editor of the *Armenian Weekly*. The ceremony also included resolutions to recognize the achievements of former state senator Steven A. Tolman and the playwright Joyce Van Dyke, whose work "Deported/a dream play," is a tribute to her grandmother's life during and after the Genocide. Many students hailing from the two area Armenian schools held up pictures of Genocide survivors from their families. Violinist Haig Hovsepian, accompanied by his mother, Ani Hovsepian, performed.

•The Armenian government formally decided to extend operations at the Metsamor nuclear power plant, a move reflecting the apparent delay in its planned replacement by a new and more modern facility.

•Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian spoke out against possible Western military action against Iran during a joint press conference. Lavrov warned of "very serious" consequences for regional security and said that attempts to end the West's nuclear standoff with Tehran by force would destabilize not only the Middle East but also the South Caucasus.

MAY

•An Armenian school and church were attacked in Homs, Syria, on May 19 by members of the Syrian opposition. The opposition forces seized the school and church, for use as a hospital and convalescence center.

•Holy Trinity Armenian Church celebrated its 50th anniversary with a gala at the Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall on May 12. The event was attended by 400 parishioners and friends of the church. Holy Trinity also hosted several other events throughout the 2012 as part of its yearlong celebration of its 50th anniversary.

•A dedication celebration and official unveiling was held at the May 22 opening of Heritage Park on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway in Boston. The memorial park was the culmination of almost a decade and a half of planning and work by the Armenian community. The park's focal point is an abstract sculpture, a split dodecahedron designed by architect Donald Tellalian, a labyrinth and a reflecting pool. The park is representative of the huge impact of Boston's immigrant community and is a \$6-million gift to the city from the Armenian community. The event was led by Master of Ceremonies Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, one of the project's co-chairs. Participating were Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and Armenia's Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian. An accompanying banquet celebration also took place in the evening at the Renaissance Hotel in Boston.



The abstract monument at the Armenian Heritage Park

•Armenia boycotted a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Chicago in protest against a declaration adopted by the leaders of the alliance's 28 member-states referring to the unresolved conflicts in Nagorno-Karabagh as well as Georgia and Moldova in a long list of security challenges facing the West. The document failed to mention any reference to the people of Nagorno-Karabagh's right to self-determination.

•On May 24, the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* celebrated its 80th anniversary with a gala at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge. Dr. Gregory H. Adamian, chancellor and president emeritus of Bentley University, was awarded a lifetime achievement award and Janet Shamlian, a national correspondent for NBC News, and Charles Mahtesian, Politico's national news editor, received the 2012 Awards of Excellence. Armenia's Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan spoke at the event.



From left, Edmond Azadian, with Margrit and Nishan Atinjian

Roughly 250 supporters gathered to celebrate the paper's anniversary and raised \$80,000 for the maintenance and operation of the newspaper.

2012 IN REVIEW

JUNE

• Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry (D-MA) along with Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ), raised key policy issues during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing of Ambassador-designate to Azerbaijan Richard Morningstar. Menendez expressed strong concerns about continued US military assistance to Azerbaijan given recent cease-fire violations.



The 2012 graduating class of the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School

- U.S. News & World Report named AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School one of the country's best high schools according to their annual rankings. The Southfield, Mich. school has operated since 1963 and its rigorous K-12 curriculum is designed to help students develop intellectual, moral and physical skills and deepen their understanding of Armenian language and culture.
- Turkey announced they would drop sanctions against France over the Genocide denial bill and praised the “positive attitude” adopted by the new French President Francois Hollande. The bill had been struck down by France’s constitutional court in February and had been the cause of Turkey’s suspension of military and political cooperation with France.
- An exhibition of Seeroon Yeretzian’s painting and a presentation of her new art album took place, on June 14 at the Zorayan Museum of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church in Burbank, Calif. It was organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Los Angeles Chapter.
- The Armenian Tree Project (ATP) planted more than 230,000 trees in 11 regions of Armenia. With the help of the Armenian communities in Ireland and Dubai and the support of organizations such as AGBU, three greenhouses were built for families in Barekamavan, Armenia.

JULY

- Manoog Soghomon Young of Belmont, the founding chairman of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and its chairman until 2001, died on July 3, at the age of 94. Young spearheaded the establishment of the first-ever Armenian studies chair at Harvard. He is survived by his wife Barbara Young and children Armen Young and Adrina Young Gobbi, as well four grandchildren. The funeral took place at St. James Armenian Church in Watertown.
- For the first time in its 100-year history, the Knights of Vartan honored two internationally distinguished men of Turkish origin as “Men of the Year.” Dr. Taner Akcam and Ragip Zarakolu were honored at the July 7 Knights of Vartan awards ceremony hosted at the ballroom of New York City’s Marriott Downtown Hotel. Akcam is the Robert Aram, Marianne Kaloosdian, and Stephen and Marion Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University in Worcester. Zarakolu, a noted publisher, has been imprisoned several times for his courageous human rights work and publishing works about the Armenian Genocide in Turkey.
- Two opera stars, Victoria Avetisyan and Yegishe Manucharyan, joined Cambridge poet Diana Der-Hovanessian on July 22 at the Longfellow National Historic Site and Museum to celebrate the release of her 25th book of poetry titled, Armenian Poetry of Our Time.
- In Yerevan, Parliament member Ruben Hayrapetyan announced his resignation from parliament out of a “sense of moral responsibility” he felt in the aftermath of a fatal beating at the hands of his bodyguards of a military physician at his restaurant.

AUGUST

- Esteemed New England *dumbeg* player Vahe Der Manuelian died on August 7 at 73. Manuelian performed at picnics, anniversaries, parties, weddings and kefs. He also performed as part of the New England Ararats Orchestra. He left behind a wife, son, daughter, and four grandchildren and a memorial service was held at St. Stephen’s Armenian Church in Watertown.
- Armenia won three medals at the 2012 Olympics in London. The silver medal was won on August 6 by Arsen Julfalakyan in the 74-kilogram Greco-Roman wrestling category. Winning a bronze medal in the same category, in the 96-kilogram division on August 7 was Arthur Aleksanyan. Winning another bronze medal was weightlifter Hripsime Khurshudyan in the women’s 75-kilogram category.



From left, Arsen Julfalakyan, Hripsime Khurshudyan and Arthur Aleksanyan

- On August 24, Israeli Diaspora Minister Yuli-Yoel Edelstein visited Armenia. During the visit, he went to the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan and laid a wreath.
- Armenian-born and current German citizen boxer Arthur Abraham became the World Boxing Organization’s (WBO) super middleweight champion in a unanimous decision over fellow German Robert Stieglitz on August 25.
- Two university seniors, Datev Hovannisian and Armen Abkarian, accepted their awards as co-winners of the Marilyn Arshagouni Scholarship in a ceremony on August 25. Hovannisian is a senior at UCLA majoring in mathematics and Abkarian is a senior at Cal State University, majoring in political science
- On August 31, Ramil Safarov, the convicted Azeri soldier who had murdered an Armenian soldier, Lt. Gurgun Markarian, with an axe in Hungary more than eight years ago during a NATO training course in Budapest, received a hero’s welcome in Baku following his extradition from Hungary and immediate pardoning by President Ilham Aliyev. He was promoted from the rank of lieutenant to major, granted a free apartment and paid eight years’ worth of back pay the following day. The release of the convicted killer provoked a furious reaction from Armenia and strong international criticism. The United States, the European Union and Russia said it was a serious blow to their long-running efforts to broker a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.



Arthur Abraham

SEPTEMBER

- French President Francois Hollande’s administration and the French Education Ministry declared that they would include a chapter about the 1915 Armenian Genocide in secondary-school geography and history textbooks. This move came after the French move to ratify a Genocide denial law in France, which resulted in strained tensions between France and Turkey.
- In response to a directive issued by the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin calling on all dioceses to initiate efforts for Syrian relief, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), asked parishioners of member churches to take part in starting a relief fund.
- The Republic of Armenia celebrated its 21st anniversary on September 21. Many world leaders sent congratulatory messages to President Serge Sargisian, including President Barack Obama,



who said, “I extended my warmest wishes to you and the people of Armenia as you celebrate national day on September 21.”



Archbishop Aghan Baliozian

- The Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand Archbishop Aghan Baliozian died on September 22.
- A senior Azeri military official announced that Ramil Safarov would soon return to active military service after a vacation. The Azerbaijani officer was convicted of murdering an Armenian colleague in Hungary, but was released after being transported from Hungary to Azerbaijan to serve his life sentence.
- The Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) announced the appointment of Dr. Susan Pattie as its new director, effective September 24. Pattie had previously served as the co-founder and director of the Armenian Institute in London, among a long list of other accomplishments.

OCTOBER

- On October 5, more than 400 friends and admirers of the longtime community activist Hirant Gulian paid tribute to him during a celebratory banquet sponsored by the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern). The event took place at St. Leon Armenian Church in Fair Lawn, NJ, and Diocesan Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presided over the occasion.
- St. Stephen’s Elementary School opened its new campus expansion which was completed on August 31. A grand opening ceremony took place on October 14 at the school in



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



2012 IN REVIEW

Watertown. The expansion, one of the largest projects in the Greater Boston Armenian community in the past two decades, cost approximately \$1.37 million and included the addition of a new two-story structure, with a learning center and indoor and outdoor recreation areas.

- On October 12, Patriarch of Jerusalem Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, 96th in line of succession from Abraham, died at age 93. After 24 years of service in Eastern Diocese, Manoogian had been named the Jerusalem Patriarch in 1990. The funeral was held on October 22 and the casket was carried in a procession from the Jaffa Gate to St. James Armenian Cathedral, where the Divine Liturgy was celebrated. The Patriarch was interred at the Holy Savior Monastery.

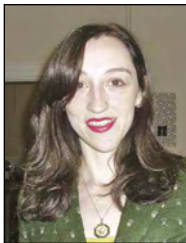
- On October 20, hundreds of Angelenos



The late Patriarch Torkom Manoogian

took part in the Walk of Life 2012, the annual walkathon of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR). A six-kilometer walk-run event helps raise awareness for health issues while raising funds for vital research in immunogenetics, in the ongoing quest to match bone marrow donors,

- *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* welcomed their new assistant editor, Gabriella Gage to the staff.



Gabriella Gage



Carolyn Kaloostian, Md., waving flags as she reaches the walk's midway point, at the Armenian Consulate in Glendale.

NOVEMBER

- Bishop Mikael Mouradian was named the new head of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of the US. Born in Beirut and ordained in 1987, Mouradian served the Armenian Catholic Church in Lebanon, Syria and Armenia before taking on his new role in the US. The Armenian Catholic Church is one of the five rites that form the Universal Catholic Church and is led by Nerses Bedros XIX, who is based in Beirut, in the Monastery of Bzommar.

- The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Young Professionals (YP) held a fundraising dinner for AGBU's Syrian-Armenian Relief Fund on November 13 at the Armenian American Social Club (Agoump) in Watertown. The event raised more than \$1,000.

- As part of the Armenian community's celebration of the 500th anniversary of Armenian book printing and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s naming Yerevan the World Book Capital for 2012, hundreds of events honoring Armenian printing history with lectures and rare books on display took place throughout the global Diaspora. Local events included the November 15 lecture hosted by the Worcester Armenian Book Commemoration Committee on "The Power of the Printed Word: Successes and Challenges, Past and Present." The event featured current perspectives from Editor Alin K. Gregorian of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and Khatchig Mouradian of the *Armenian Weekly* and took place at the hall of Church of Our Saviour in Worcester, Mass.



Bishop Mikael Mouradian



From left, Van Aroian, City Councilor Philip Palmieri, Alin K. Gregorian and Khatchig Mouradian

- An advisory commission in Mexico City recommended the removal of a statue of Azerbaijan's late President Heydar Aliyev that was erected along a main boulevard of the Mexican capital and suggested relocating the statue to a less "emblematic" location. Azerbaijan's government paid

around \$5 million for the renovation of the section of the park where the statue is located and the park was subsequently named "Mexico-Azerbaijan Friendship Park." Baku warned of damage to Azerbaijan's relations with Mexico if the statue is removed, including the potential closure of its embassy and the suspension of Azerbaijani investments in Mexico.

DECEMBER

- In response to a year of struggle for Syrian-Armenians, members of the global Armenian community participated in fundraising and humanitarian efforts throughout 2012. The uprisings in Syria, which began during the previous year, continued to escalate, leaving Syrian-Armenian communities in the crossfire. Prior to the conflict, more than 90,000 Armenians called Syria home. Now, thousands of Syrian-Armenians are fleeing the country for Armenia, Lebanon and elsewhere. Major organizers of the fundraising include the Syrian Armenian Relief Fund, AGBU Syria Emergency Fund and Armenian Relief Society.



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

- The fifth annual AGBU New York Special Events Committee (NYSEC) hosted a concert featuring several artists. The sold-out concert took place at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and raised more than \$50,000 to support students and music programs worldwide.

- On December 7, Armenians remembered the 24th anniversary of the earthquake which struck northern Armenia, with epicenter in the small city of Spitak. The earthquake, measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale, killed at least 25,000 people and caused millions of dollars in destruction.

- Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian visited the Boston area on December 12 as part of a brief US tour. The visit included a meeting with Governor Deval Patrick, a visit to the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston and small private events at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government as well as MIT.



At the governor's office, after concluding the meeting with Gov. Deval Patrick, third from right, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, fourth from right, with Armenia's Ambassador to the US Tatoul Markarian and other dignitaries

- US Ambassador to Armenia John A. Heffern visited St. James Armenian Church on December 13, in Watertown, as one of the stops on his local visit. Heffern spoke about positive US-Armenian relations, US objectives in the country as well as Armenia's relations with its neighbors. He also spoke at St. Stephen's Armenian Church in Watertown. Other stops in his tour included New York and Los Angeles.



Ambassador John A. Heffern

- The ruling Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) formally nominated incumbent President Serge Sargsian at its 14th annual convention in Yerevan. Using the campaign motto "Towards a Secure Armenia," Sargsian is seeking another five-year term as president in the national election to be held February 18.



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Established 1932
An ADL Publication

EDITOR
Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Gabriella Gage

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR
Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:
Edmond Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

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

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
Philadelphia - Lisa Manookian

Contributing Photographers:

Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian, Jirair Hovsepien

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509
Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorsads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

U.S.A.	\$80 a year
Canada	\$125 a year
Other Countries	\$190 a year

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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Baikar Association, Inc.

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

COMMENTARY

2013: A Year of Anticipation and Trepidation

By Edmond Y. Azadian

One of the cliché traditional wishes of New Year is “Peace on Earth,” yet we see anything but. To begin with, it seems that Mother Earth is undergoing violent transformations with unusually-powerful hurricanes, tsunamis and rising temperatures melting polar ice caps, which give new urgency to space exploration with the hope of colonizing nearby celestial bodies, just in case we mess up this planet of ours beyond hope.

Nature’s destructive force is compounded by manmade catastrophes of wars, conspiracies and clashes of civilizations.

One of the most frightening prospects at home is the alarming rate of gun sales throughout the country following the recent Connecticut tragedy which may lead to stricter gun control laws; therefore, anyone’s life hinges on the mental stability of the ubiquitous gun owner; no Second Amendment and no law enforcement body is guaranteeing the safety of citizens.

Following the massacre of children in Newtown, Conn., the National Rifle Association (NRA) came up with more creative and cynical slogans to boost sales in the country: “The only thing that can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun,” echoing the Wild West culture of yesteryear.

At the dawn of the New Year, America was saved from a fiscal cliff, after burning the midnight oil, which gave pyrrhic victories to the opposing parties, with very little to improve the lives of the ordinary citizens.

On the world scene, it seems that President Obama’s cautious policy is yielding some dividends. Had the other Bible-peddling contender, Mr. Romney, been elected, we would be at the verge of new wars in Iran and North Korea, and perhaps somewhere else, with the Cold War with Russia intensifying. Iran has already signaled that is relenting on its nuclear ambitions and North Korea’s baby-faced despot, Kim Jong Un, has announced that he is fed up with the confrontation with South Korea. This means that two hot spots in the world are somewhat cooling down. It would have caused a disaster for Armenia had the stand off with Iran veered towards a new conflagration, as Iran is Armenia’s only stable and open border.

The US was not directly involved in wars in Libya and Syria which would have added to the more than 6,500 US military casualties suffered in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although there are some hopes around the world to cool down potential outbreaks of conflicts, that positive development does not bring Armenia much relief, except for the Iran scenario. Other than that, the noose is tightening around Armenia with the Turkish and Azeri blockades joined in by Georgia in plain sight of an indifferent Russia. Azerbaijani oil and a strategic alliance with Israel have emboldened President Ilham Aliyev, whose bellicose voice is rising in its pitch every day.

Turkey has become a major player in the region, which means that it will not relent in its blockade of Armenia in the foreseeable future, isolating it from energy and transportation infrastructures developing in the region.

Many pundits had predicted that Turkey would become a useless strategic relic for the West with the demise of the Cold War, yet the opposite has happened. In the first place, the Cold War is continuing, albeit at a lower intensity, still benefiting Turkey. As a surrogate in instigating an induced war in Syria, Ankara won tangible plaudits in the West. On the other hand, Turkey has become an economic powerhouse, while the rest of the world was reeling during an economic crisis. That, in turn, helped boost Turkey’s political and strategic value for all the parties concerned.

Turkey’s economy benefited from the manufacturing invest-

ments of the West. It also became a tourist destination, in the aftermath of instability in Lebanon and Egypt, overshadowing that other eastern Mediterranean destination, Cyprus. Russia opened up construction of Turkish building companies, raising economic and trade relations with Moscow to unprecedented historic highs.

Politically Ankara extended one hand to Israel (never mind the phony rhetoric) to strengthen the West’s hegemony in the Middle East and with the other hand extended to Egypt’s new rulers, building confidence in the Islamic world. Thus, the lip service of Turkey’s Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu to the Armenian historic grievances found a credulous audience in the West.

As Armenians are heading towards the centennial commemoration of the Genocide, Turkey has already tried to diffuse our endeavors all around the world, on every level possible. A case in point is a recent development in Norway where Europeans agreed to listen to the “other side” of the Genocide story, while they never attempted to hear any other view on the Holocaust, if there was one. The Turks are very smoothly developing an alternative parallel narrative of the Genocide to thwart our efforts. Besides, Armenian internal fighting creates more chaos than outside disruptive forces. The parties involved in building the Genocide Museum in Washington are at loggerheads to make the entire Genocide issue a laughing stock for the Turks.

Moving from the macro world of politics to the micro world of Armenian politics, we have been facing two significant elections in 2013: the presidential election in Armenia and the patriarchal election in Jerusalem.

There are 10 candidates for president in Armenia, but almost all of them have symbolic value only, except the incumbent, Serge Sargisian, who has all but eliminated the competition, making the outcome very predictable. In a way, that will contribute to stability in the political whirlwind of the Caucasus.

War is hanging over the head of the citizens in Armenia and a sure hand is a guarantee for success. But Armenia is equally plagued by other problems which may be as devastating as the war itself. If the system continues, oligarchs will become richer pushing the rest of society to desperation. Part of Armenia’s economic problem is being resolved through its depopulation. As the unemployed leave the country the burden of unemployment will be relieved until the system collapses.

The Russians are doing a disservice to the unemployed and skilled Armenians by offering work, housing and citizenship in the scarcely-populated parts of the Russian hinterland. This solution may serve as temporary relief for the destitute families but it is courting disaster in the long run for Armenia.

What Armenia needs is a stable political system with a combat-ready army, backed by a developing economy, promising hope to the families and the youth.

Jerusalem is another burning issue on the Armenian agenda as the patriarchate’s historic significance and real estate holdings are monumental assets, which are left to the mercy of the Brotherhood, at this time engaged in election horse trading. Jerusalem’s rulers over the centuries have specifically designed a system to prevent any outside interference from the higher hierarchy of the churches to keep a vulnerable monastic group under control. If the Brotherhood can rise above personal ambitions, realize the dangers of divisions and envision the future, then Armenians will be in a win-win situation.

As we can see, at the dawn of 2013 Armenian life is replete with overbearing challenges and very few cheery prospects.

That should give us enough reason to take up the challenges with confidence.

LETTERS

Noah’s Ark Project in Russia

To the Editor:

One of the News In Brief items that appeared in the December 8 issue of the Mirror-Spectator caught my interest. The item noted that Karen Balayan, president of the Ayas Nautical Research Club recently “spoke of plans to construct Noah’s Ark in Sochi.”

My interest in this matter stems from a proposal that evolved in March of 2010. I came up with a proposal that embraced the building of a giant-sized replica of the ark which would be located on the plains in front of the monastery of Khor Virab and in the shadow of Mount Ararat and would be referred to as Noah’s Ark

National Park and Zoo. It was my belief that such an undertaking would not only bolster tourism and contribute to Armenia’s economic well-being, but it also would be given solid financial support by Armenians throughout the diaspora.

I submitted this proposal to a few highly regarded Armenian organizations – including the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia (NCFA). Aside from indicating that the proposal had a great deal of merit no one expressed willingness to get involved and to see to its realization. Lacking the financial means and staff to undertake this project on

my own I decided to stop ‘chasing the rainbow’ and thus closed the book after nearly two years of fruitless efforts.

POSTSCRIPT: Recently, I learned that an ambitious initiative is being taken by the Committee of Culture of the Public Council in Armenia to construct an exact replica of Noah’s Ark and to situate it on the hilltop of Yerevan’s Victory Park. Mr. Balayan would do well to collaborate with the Committee since it makes more Biblical sense for the Ark to be replicated in Yerevan, Armenia rather than in Sochi, Russia.

— Haig Garabedian



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

European Cows Can't Stand Poor Living Conditions in Azerbaijan

In keeping with the holiday spirit, this column is devoted to a light-hearted topic.

In a story titled: "Imported Cattle no Bovine Boon for Azerbaijan," Seadet Akifqizi of the Azerbaijani Service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) reported that the government of Azerbaijan spent \$23 million to import "4,500 pedigree cows from Germany and Austria in an effort to improve livestock quality and boost milk production." Each European cow was expected to produce 40 liters (10.5 gallons) of milk a day compared to the domestic Azeri cow that yielded only 9 liters (2.4 gallons), Akifqizi wrote.

Unfortunately, the project was a failure and the invested funds were wasted. Many of the high-class European cows could not survive the miserable living conditions in Azerbaijan.

Baku officials blame farmers for "not caring properly for the imported cows, which apparently require a certain degree of pampering." Azeri agricultural analyst Vahid Maharramov explains that the cattle brought from overseas "require high-quality feed and special hygiene."

Farmers, on the other hand, complain that they cannot afford to extend such lavish care and attention to the foreign cows, because "it is not cost effective and would lead to a steep increase in the price of milk."

Farmer Tarbiya Yusifova is unhappy that her major investment in imported cows did not pay off: "The price of the milk we produce is expensive for most customers because the hay we buy for the cattle is very expensive."

This is how the government's "lease a cow" program works: Farmers pay half the price of the cows when leasing them from the state-controlled firm Agrolizing. The balance is to be paid in three years. Farmers must "have their own sowing area and adhere to strict guidelines for their barns," Akifqizi explained. "The humidity and lighting needs to be just right and their diets and hygienic conditions should remind the European cattle of home."

However, conditions in Azerbaijan are far from ideal for the imported cows. When the RFE/RL reporter visited Firudin Hasanov's farm in the Qushchu village, she learned that the farmer had to send most of his 30 pedigree cows to relatives in the Baku area because he was unable to provide the proper living conditions for them.

Akifqizi describes Hasanov's farm as "a squalid barn that looks like it hasn't been cleaned for months. It is littered with manure, spiders climb the walls, and flies buzz around the feed containers." Hasanov explained that he "couldn't afford to upgrade his barns because in the countryside he can't sell his milk" at a price that would cover his costs.

To make matters worse, farmers have to pay Agrolizing the full amount of the lease, even if the cows die prematurely. RFE/RL reports that "at least 260 of the imported cows have died since 2009, equal to around \$1.3 million in losses." It is not known how many of these cows committed suicide

because they could not stand living in such unbearable conditions.

The story takes a more serious turn when the RFE/RL reporter raises serious questions about the price of the European cows and the identity of the companies that imported them.

Agricultural analyst Maharramov notes that "the prices Azerbaijani farmers are being asked to pay for the pedigree cows is significantly higher than in other countries." RFE/RL revealed that "pedigree cattle imported from Austria cost \$5,000 per head, as opposed to around \$3,000 in Turkey."

According to Agrolizing, three little-known companies had won the tenders to import European cows to Azerbaijan: Rista Alliance, Ninox Alliance and Swisspoint Merchants Limited, which was registered in New Zealand from 2009 until 2011. "The website of the New Zealand commercial registry says the firm was directed by a Latvian citizen named Inta Bilder," RFE/RL discovered. A search of the registry identified "Bilder as the director or shareholder of hundreds of companies. Earlier this year, the Ukrainian newspaper Dzerkalo Tyzhnia reported that one of those companies, Falcona Systems, was linked to an alleged fraud worth more than \$150 million involving state-owned companies."

Maharramov is suspicious. He told RFE/RL: "Considering that the government directs budget resources [to buy cattle from abroad] hastily and without any preparation, you can suspect that there were some other intentions in this."

Maharramov should be very cautious when talking about imported animals. In 2009, Azeri blogger Emin Milli was jailed for reporting that the government of Azerbaijan had paid exorbitant prices for imported donkeys.

Preventing the Coming US Disaster in the Caucasus

By David Boyajian

The United States is risking a disastrous renewal of war in the Caucasus between Armenians and Azeris over the breakaway Armenian-populated Republic of Mountainous Karabagh (RMK, or Artsakh in ancient Armenian).

A new war between Azerbaijan and RMK (with its ally, Armenia) would undoubtedly destroy much of Azerbaijan's energy industry. This includes key Azeri oil and gas pipelines which lie just a few miles north of RMK and snake through Georgia and Turkey.

Azerbaijan's economy and corrupt government are massively dependent on oil and gas revenue and would be in deep trouble. The already conflict-ridden Caucasus – recall the Abkhazia stalemate and 2008's Russian-Georgian war over South Ossetia – would be hopelessly destabilized. US policy, in particular, would lie in tatters.

Not surprisingly, Western energy giants such as BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil and Total (France) own huge stakes in Azerbaijan's energy infrastructure.

As expected, the conflict's mediators – the US, Europe and Russia – have an insatiable greed for Azerbaijan's substantial oil and gas deposits. Yet had they, especially the US, formally recognized RMK's independence from Azerbaijan, the conflict would have been resolved years ago. Such recognition remains the only practical and just solution.

Azerbaijan would be unhappy, yes, but would continue to sell most of its oil and gas to the West. Azeris will never sell only to Russia. That would bind them too tightly to their former overlord.

Azeri Violence

The conflict in Mountainous Karabagh broke out in the late 1980s just after its Armenian majority, long-abused by Azerbaijan, peacefully declared its desire for union with Armenia.

Azerbaijan replied with murderous attacks against Karabagh civilians. Mobs hunted down and killed Armenians in the Azeri cities of Sumgait and Ganja. After the USSR dissolved in 1991, RMK held a referendum boycotted by Azeris. It voted for independence. Azerbaijan's response was full-scale war.

Even with help from Turkish military officers and paramilitaries, and Afghan Mujahedin, Azerbaijan lost the war. A ceasefire was declared in 1994. Yet almost daily Azerbaijan threatens a

new war and snipes across the contact line.

Pumped up with billions in oil and gas revenue, Azerbaijan's \$3-billion military budget dwarfs Armenia's entire national budget. But Armenian troops are universally acknowledged to be better trained and to possess much greater esprit de corps because they are defending their ancient lands.

But the US, Europe and Russia might be coming to their senses. A few years ago, they proposed that RMK's 100,000 mostly-Armenian citizens decide its formal status in a referendum. In return, Armenians would hand over vast tracts of territory to Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan rejected this compromise. It insisted, unreasonably, that its entire population of nearly 10,000,000 must participate in such a referendum so as to outvote RMK's 100,000 people.

How solid is RMK's case for independence? Very.

RMK's Best Case

On every measure – history, demographics and sheer decency – RMK has as good a case as other nations, such as South Sudan, East Timor and the republics and regions of the former Yugoslavia, that have recently been freed from their overlords.

During pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet times, Azeris have persecuted and murdered Mountainous Karabagh's Christian Armenians.

Since 1994, RMK has been a functioning, democratic, de facto independent state.

Ancient Greek and Roman historians – Strabo, Pliny the Elder and others – testify that Artsakh/Mountainous Karabagh was part of Armenia since before the time of Christ, and has always had an Armenian majority.

Only a thousand years later did Turkic-speaking nomadic tribes from Central Asia begin dribbling into the Caucasus. At no time, however, did they or Muslims constitute more than a fraction in Mountainous Karabagh itself. An 1823 Russian survey reported it to be 97-percent Armenian.

From 1918 to 1920, Azeris – in a pan-Turkic alliance with Turkey – attacked and massacred thousands of Armenians in and around Karabagh. Shortly thereafter, Russian Bolsheviks – allied with Kemalist Turkey at that time – Sovietized the Caucasus.

Lt. Col. John C. Plowden, a British military representative in the Caucasus, reported in 1919 that Mountainous Karabagh is "the cradle of their [Armenians'] race ... Armenian in every particular and the strongest part of Armenia, both financially, militarily and socially."

But in 1921, Stalin, the Soviet Commissar for Nationalities, gifted Mountainous Karabagh to Azerbaijan, probably to curry favor with Turkey. Karabagh was thereby artificially and physically severed from Armenia, mere miles to the west.

Azerbaijan deliberately neglected not only Karabagh's economy and roads, but also its communication and transport links with Armenia. Law enforcement positions were filled with Azeris, even though they were a minority. Armenians protested to Moscow in vain.

An Azeri policy of depopulation caused 30 percent of Karabagh's Armenian villages to disappear between 1926 and 1980.

Azeris were also brought in to shift the demographics. Mountainous Karabagh's Armenian population dropped to 94 percent in 1921, 89 percent in 1926, 80 percent in 1970 and 76 percent in 1989.

Were RMK to fall under Azeri control again, it would inevitably suffer the same fate as Nakhichevan, another Armenian province that Stalin gifted to Azeris.

Nakhichevan Emptied

Under Azeri rule over the past decades, Nakhichevan has been totally emptied of its Armenians.

One Azeri official has actually declared that "Armenians have never lived in Nakhichevan." Since the existence of Armenian buildings, churches, and monuments disprove such absurd claims, Azeris have undertaken to deface or level them in Nakhichevan and elsewhere.

In 2005, for example, Azerbaijani servicemen used sledgehammers and machinery to completely destroy thousands of ancient Armenian Khachkars (intricately carved stone crosses) in a cemetery in the city of Julfa. The Azeris were caught in the act from across the border. The astonishing video is on the Web.

The destruction has been compared to the Taliban's dynamiting of ancient Buddhist statues in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan has banned foreign observers and ambassadors from the site.

Due to their falsifying others' history and culture, we are compelled, sadly, to examine Azeris' own roots.

The Invention of Azerbaijan

Most people are unaware that "Azerbaijan" was created as a country – out of thin air – in 1918, just after Russia's Bolshevik Revolution.

The region's Muslims had never been known as "Azeri," an ethnicity that had never existed. Rather, they called themselves Turks, Tartars or simply Muslims. Large numbers of Armenians, Georgians and others also inhabited that same territory.

Prior to 1918, "Azarbayjan" referred merely to two provinces – not a country – in northwestern Persia (Iran). These were always located strictly to the south, below the Arax River, of the artificially-created Azerbaijan of 1918.

The so-called Azeris speak a Turkic language. But the word Azerbaijan is actually Persian, not Turkic. It is derived from the name Atropates, a Persian governor appointed by Alexander the Great around 327 BC.

The Azeris probably chose the name "Azerbaijan" in 1918 to further their designs on Iran. Indeed, during and after WWII, the Soviets tried unsuccessfully to carve out a "People's Republic of Azarbayjan" in Iran's northwest.

The Sordid US State Department

The US State Department's policies toward Azerbaijan have a particularly sordid aspect involving personal gain and undue influence.

In 2010, for example, President Obama appointed Matt Bryza as interim American ambassador to Azerbaijan, despite Bryza's questionable ties to Azeri officials.

Not surprisingly, after a year in Baku, Bryza joined the Istanbul-based Turcas Petrol Corporation, a partner of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR).

The United States-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce (USACC) has always been crammed with former US officials such as Vice President Dick Cheney, former Secretaries of State James A. Baker and Henry Kissinger, Richard Armitage, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Perle and Brent Scowcroft. They rub elbows with USACC fat cats from corporations that invest in Azerbaijan's energy industry.

Israel, known for its influence on US policy, and some Jewish American organizations, have allied themselves with Azerbaijan. 30 percent of Israel's oil imports come from Azerbaijan. Israel is selling \$1.6 billion worth of advanced weapons, including drones, to Azerbaijan, which is threatening to use them against RMK.

The RMK conflict is not unsolvable. The facts are clear. Azerbaijan has no valid claim to RMK. Yet US support of Azerbaijan may drag it into war.

America must take the lead and formally recognize RMK's independence. Europe and Russia will follow. The alternative may be another U.S. war whose cost in blood and money we Americans cannot afford.

(The author is a freelance journalist. Many of his articles are archived at http://www.armeniapedia.org/wiki/David_B._Boyajian.)

Catholikos Appoints New Primate to Australian See

AUSTRALIA, from page 1

St Andrew’s College in Scotland, obtaining his master’s in history at Columbia University in New York.

Najarian is arriving in Sydney in time to celebrate Armenian Christmas on January 6, in accordance with the church’s old “domar” (calendar). He will also be following in the footsteps of the region’s first primate, Archbishop Karekin Kazanjian (1968), who was later to be crowned Patriarch in Turkey, after serving as Grand Sacristan of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, regarded by Armenians as their second most important spiritual fount after Echmiadzin.

The situation in Australia today is a far cry from a century before, when Armenian pioneers began landing here, spurred by the Kalgoorlie gold rush in Western Australia. There were no priests among the prospectors and they had to trudge for miles to hear a semblance of divine service conducted by laymen.

(The first Armenian clergyman, Father

Asoghig Ghazarian, arrived in Australia in 1954, following the founding of the first Church Council in Sydney).

The devastation caused by the First World War spawned another influx of displaced Armenians, their number swollen by yet another, more desperate wave of migration after the Second World War.

The wave peaked in the early 1960s as more Armenians sought the safer haven of the land Down Under.

Their numbers have broken through the 50,000 mark (minuscule compared to the million or so in the US and Canada), concentrated primarily in the two capital cities, Sydney and Melbourne, the majority of the emigrants tracing their roots back to the troubled, simmering cauldron of the Middle East, with Lebanon’s contribution accounting for the lion’s share.

The Armenians here have prospered on the whole – several, like Gladys Berejiklian (New South Wales State Transport Minister) and Joe Hockey (Federal Deputy Opposition Leader),

have risen to political prominence, while others, like the Soghomonian and Hovagimian brothers, have created powerhouses in the automotive and associated industries.

“The Armenians of Australia have a lot to be thankful for,” as one community leader averred, noting that unlike the unsettled political discombobulations in the Middle East and the proliferation there of totalitarian and police states, “people here enjoy the protection of a stable, democratic government, access to health and economic security, and the freedom and opportunity to be and do what they aspire to.”

They have their own schools, churches and political parties.

What they don’t have is unity.

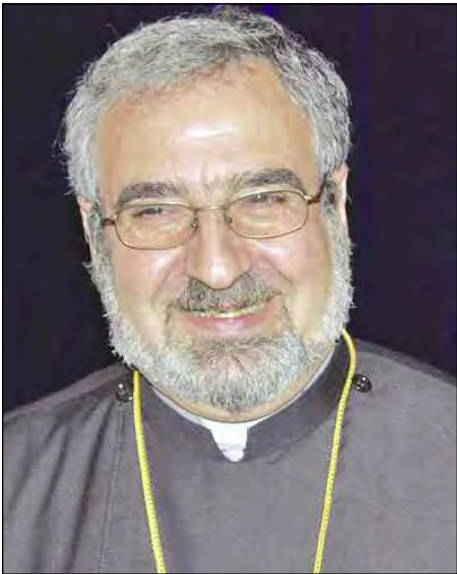
“It is true that no two Armenians will ever agree on one thing, but despite their differences, when they come together, they are family, and they know how to have a good time,” he said.

The recent visit to Sydney of veteran crooner Harout Pamboukjian solidly buttresses this assertion.

Pamboukjian sang only half a dozen songs, but his electrifying performance at an annual Armenian festival, galvanized his audience. In the euphoric spirit of the moment, they had him carried on their shoulders, tossing and turning in an ocean of ecstatic Armenian faces, swarming all over him.

They had come from all parts of the city, the young and the old, hippies, businessmen, students, children of varying ages, even some people in wheelchairs, blue-collar workers, to hear Harout sing Armenia, and accord his unforgettable “Asmar Aghchig” tribute to dark complexioned girls.

The nationalistic songs echoed along the



Bishop Haigazoun Najarian

AGBU Raises \$700,000 for Syrian Armenians

SYRIA, from page 1

are taking every measure to ensure that no student sacrifices a high-quality education, despite the extraneous circumstances. After-school programs and Saturday classes have been designed and instituted especially for new students so they do not fall behind in their coursework. Additional staff is now being hired, and existing teachers are taking on extended hours to meet the new challenges in every classroom. At the same time, AGBU-AYA Lebanon youth are organizing social events, creating a much-needed sense of community and solidarity with their Syrian peers. While the schools’ initiatives have been successful, they have also created a great fiscal burden. Faced with a large deficit, the schools are struggling to finance the high costs of tuition, bus transportation, registration fees and books, as well as administrative expenditures.

Across Syria, AGBU is also continuing to marshal all available resources to deliver humani-

tarian aid to vulnerable families. In Aleppo, more than 80 AGBU volunteers are distributing food packages daily to more than 3,000 families that include basic staples such as cereal, cooking oil, dry meat, eggs, lentils, milk, potatoes, rice, sugar and wheat. In Damascus, hundreds of boxes of food are also being stockpiled, while in Kamishli, dozens of AGBU volunteers are continuing to take cautionary security members. Emergency response, healthcare and shelter are the other areas of aid on which AGBU has directed its focus, and an AGBU Aleppo facility has been transformed into a comfortable living space fully equipped with medical supplies and personnel to serve local families.

To donate online, visit: <https://donate.agbu.org/agbu-urgent-appeal>, or call +1-855-AID-AGBU (243-2428) for phone donations. Checks may be sent to: AGBU Syria Emergency Fund, 55 East 59th Street, New York, NY 10022. Indicate “Emergency Humanitarian Fund” in memo line.

Coalition of Organizations Raises Concerns Regarding Teghut Mining

Government Goes Ahead with Controversial Project

YEREVAN — The Armenia Copper Programme (ACP), a division of the Vallex Group registered offshore in Liechtenstein, has begun operating a controversial mining project initiated in 2007 in the northern village of Teghut. Preliminary work on the project began with the clearing of a portion of the pristine Teghut Forest to create a massive tailing dump for the toxic waste left after mineral processing. Currently, the company is aggressively removing a mountain in order to reach the underground deposits of copper and molybdenum.

The Republic of Armenia has made mining a key part of its economic development strategy for the country, despite widespread public protest on environmental, economic and social grounds. There are more than 400 active mines and 19 tailing dumps in Armenia, a small country the size of the US state of Maryland. Scientists have reported major health risks in communities around the mines scattered throughout Armenia. Human rights and environmental activists have also protested violations of property rights and the loss of rare and endangered ecosystems and biodiversity.

A coalition of 14 organizations including Armenia Tree Project (ATP) and Armenian Environmental Network (AEN) sent a letter to President Serge Sargsian and Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian on October 30, requesting an independent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Teghut mining project.

“Cases brought in opposition to the operations in Armenian courts have been cursorily and improperly dismissed on strictly procedural bases without proper examination as to the substance of the claims. The Environmental Impact Assessment and public notice requirements are fatally flawed. The irreparable damage already done to Teghut, and the yet greater damage that will be done to the region if mining continues, demand immediate attention,” reads the letter, in part.

The joint letter requests the EIA in order to:

- 1) comply with domestic and international laws,
- 2) determine and present an accurate analysis of the environmental impact of the Teghut mining operations,
- 3) address the potential public health impacts of the Teghut mining operations,
- 4) take alternative development options to mining into consideration and
- 5) restore public faith and trust in government.

The coalition recently received a response to the letter from Edgar Pirumyan, Ministry of Nature Protection Chief of Staff, who said that an EIA was completed within the scope of the law and that the project was therefore approved.

“We are disappointed with the perfunctory response through the Ministry of Nature Protection whose primary mission is the protection of Armenia’s environment. While an environmental assessment was conducted for the Teghut mining project, the organization conducting it, LMI, is a subsidiary of Vallex, which is the project sponsor. By international standards, the LMI assessment certainly cannot be considered an ‘independent’ environmental assessment,” notes ATP Managing Director Tom Garabedian.

“We restate our request that a valid independent environmental impact assessment be conducted before any further work at the Teghut site is undertaken,” added Garabedian.

“The Teghut issue resonates with Armenians near and far because it weaves together a number of contemporary issues: rule of law; transparency in decision-making; public health considerations; and public access to information,” says Ursula Kazarian, President of AEN.

The letter was co-signed by Acopian Center for the Environment, Armenian American Health Professionals Organization, Armenian American Medical Association, Armenian American Nurses Association, Armenian American Pharmacists Association, Armenian Bar Association, Armenian International Dental Association, Armenian Medical International Committee, Axis of Justice (Serj Tankian), Civic Forum, haikProject and World Wide Fund for Nature, Armenia.





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Dinner with open bar \$75/person
Dance (after 10 pm) \$35/person
RSVP Nora Azadian at 248-757-2320
Hagop Alexanian at 248-334-3636

Each year the Metro Detroit Chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association hosts an annual Holiday party in January to raise funds for two major projects: the Sponsor a Teacher Program and the Orphans Higher Education Fund. The Sponsor a Teacher Program supports five schools, four in Armenia and one in Nagorno Karabagh, with funds designated to assist the underpaid educators ensuring they are able to continue educating the children. The Orphans Higher Education Fund is designed to offer educational assistance to Armenian orphans and help to prepare them for an independent life. While the cost to attend university is modest by our standards, the tuition per year is a huge expense in the eyes of an orphan. The Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit organization and your donation is tax exempt to the fullest extent allowed by law. The potential of such an investment is immeasurable. It has the power to change lives and offer hope and inspiration.

Please plan on joining us this year to have some fun and do some good!