

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXIV, NO. 29, Issue 4323

\$ 2.00

The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

Czech President Says That Ottoman Killings Constitute 'Genocide'

PRAGUE (RFE/RL and Armenpress) – Czech President Milos Zeman said this week that the mass killings of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey amounted to “genocide.”

“Next year it will be 100 years since the genocide of the Armenian people in the year of 1915, when 1.5 million of Armenians died,” Zeman said during Armenian President Serge Sargisian’s official visit to Prague on January 30.

The Czech Republic, a member of the European Union and NATO, is not among



President Serge Sargisian in Prague with Czech President Milos Zeman

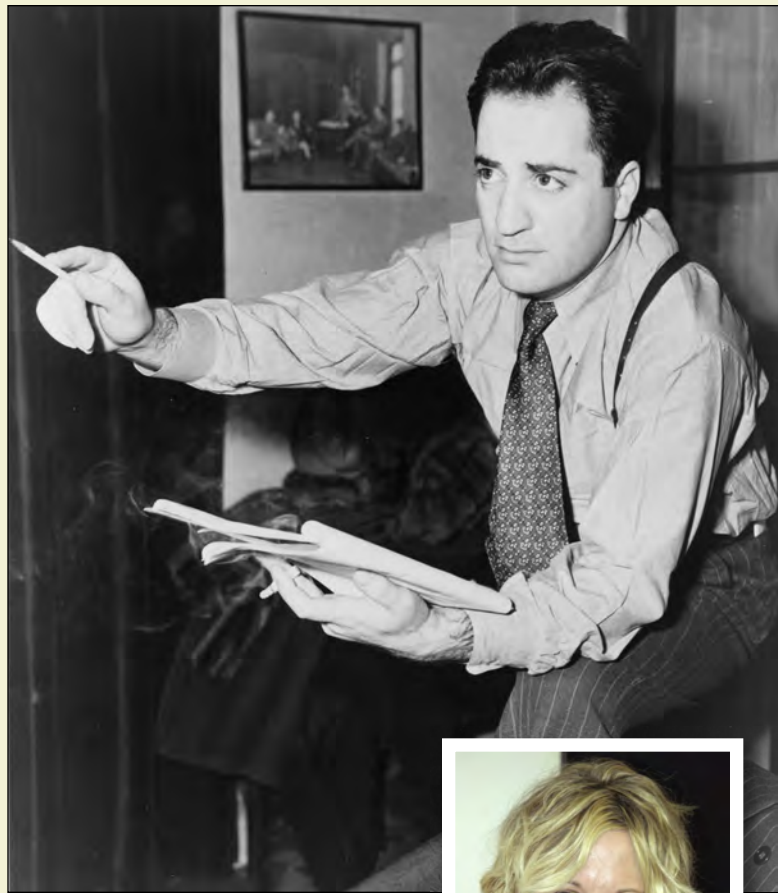
the 23 countries that formally recognize the mass killings as genocide.

Zeman took office last year.

Czech Senator Jaromir Stetina welcomed the statement of the Czech president about the Armenian Genocide. He has regularly advocated for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide at the course of his activities.

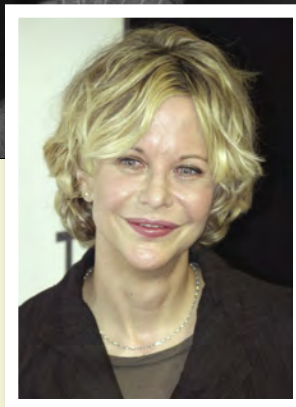
In a conversation with Armenpress, Stetina said that he intends to introduce a declaration on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide to foreign relations and defense committees of the Parliament of Czech Republic on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. “The declaration will be introduced in 2015 ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I would like Czech Senate to join the civilized parliaments which have recognized the Armenian Genocide. Preparatory work activities towards the declaration will launch in late 2014,” Stetina stated.

see CZECH, page 4



William Saroyan

Meg Ryan to Direct Film Adaptation of Saroyan’s *Human Comedy*



Meg Ryan

NEW YORK (*Guardian*) – Meg Ryan is directing her first feature film, “Ithaca,” an adaptation of the 1943 William Saroyan novel, *The Human Comedy*.

She will also star in the film alongside Sam Shepard and Melanie Griffith, while Tom Hanks, whom Ryan memorably starred alongside in “Sleepless In Seattle” and “You’ve Got Mail,” will be executive producer. Also starring will be Meg Ryan’s son Jack Quaid.

The Human Comedy, written for the Ryan version by Band of Brothers producer Erik Jendresen, is about a teenage telegram delivery boy in small-town America during World War II witnessing the impact of the conflict on those he delivers messages to. The novel was originally written as a screenplay by Saroyan, before he was fired from the project; he swiftly turned it round into a novel and published it before the film came out, which starred Mickey Rooney.

Production is set to begin this summer.

Komitas Chants Sung at Metropolitan Museum

By Florence Avakian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK – In the magical setting of the Temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan



The Hilliard Ensemble

Museum of Art, the glorious and soulful chants of Komitas were sung by the Hilliard Ensemble. These were a few of the sacred compositions, ranging from the ancient to the modern, performed by this masterful quartet of male singers, in a memorable program on Wednesday, January 22, titled, “Arkhangelos: A Millenium of Music.”

The program had been made possible, in part, by Arax Simsarian, who noted in the written program that it was “in recognition of composer Komitas Vardapet.” This generous benefactor, now 91, had established, while at Aetna, where she worked, a fund to benefit Armenian culture.

More than 650 people braved frigid, icy weather to attend this see HILLIARD, page 16

Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Provides Ongoing Support to Syrian-Armenians

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Hayastan All-Armenian Fund continues to assist the Syrian-Armenian community, with financial contributions made by various fund affiliates since the beginning of 2014 as well as proceeds from the fund’s 2013 Telethon. Armenpress reports, citing the official website of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund that a total of 100,000 Euros raised by the French affiliate will benefit various Syrian-Armenian-relief projects through the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. Contributions by the fund’s German affiliate, totaling 35,000 Euros, have already been transferred to the Syrian-Armenian Emergency and Rehabilitation Committee.

see SUPPORT, page 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenians Wounded in Aleppo Explosions

ALEPPO, Syria (Armenpress) – On February 3 two Armenians were wounded in the result of the explosions in the New Village district of Aleppo. Sources from Aleppo told Armenpress that the injuries are not serious and, that Armenians are not among the dead. The source also stated that about 13-15 explosions were heard in the New Village district and the damages are mainly material.

Another Armenian was slightly wounded as a result of the explosions on February 2. Concerning the current situation in the city, our source noted that explosions sound but relatively less.

During the Syrian conflict the number of the victims has reached 120,000, including more than 70 Armenians.

Tobacco Production in Armenia Increases

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The production and export of tobacco have registered a considerable growth in Armenia in 2013. In 2013 the volumes of the production, in comparison with the previous year, have increased by 25.6 percent. In 2013 7.7 billion cigarettes were produced in Armenia. In 2012 the production of the cigarettes made 6 billion, the National Statistical Service report.

The cigarettes, produced in Armenia, are exported to more than 20 countries of the world – Iraq, Turkmenistan, Georgia, Syria, Russia, United Arab Emirates, etc. During the nine months of the previous year about 4.5 billion pieces of cigarettes were exported from Armenia.

Canonization Committee in Antelias

BEIRUT – From January 27 to 29, with the blessing of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, and Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, the Canonization Committee of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church convened in the Mother Cathedral of the Great House of Cilicia. Prior to the meeting, the members of the Canonization Committee met with Aram I, receiving his blessings and appreciation for their efforts.

During the meeting they discussed and made decisions on canonization conditions, service, canon of hymns devoted to the Genocide victims, the service and date of the liturgical commemoration, as well as issues relating to the preparation of their relics and icons. The committee also made an agreement to complete the whole canonization process in 2015. Appropriate assignments were made in this regards. The meeting was closed with prayers.

The next meeting of the Canonization Committee will be convened from May 25 through 30, in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

INSIDE

Nail Buff to Stars

Page 5

INDEX

Arts and Living	9
Armenia	2
Community News.	5
Editorial	13
International	3,4



News From Armenia

Lake Sevan Foundation Gets New Director

YEREVAN (Hetq) – Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian has appointed Vahan Davtyan executive director of the Lake Sevan Restoration, Preservation and Development Foundation.

Davtyan had been serving as the head of the Chemistry Division at the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources' Department of Development.

Armenia's Defense Minister Hosts CSTO Secretary General

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The administrative complex of the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Armenia on February 4 held the meeting of the Defense Minister of the Republic of Armenia Seyran Ohanyan with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary General Nikolay Bordyuzha and CSTO Joint Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Alexander Studenikin.

The Department for Mass Media and Public Relations of the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Armenia reported that the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, Colonel-General Yuri Khatchaturov and the first Deputy of the Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan attended the meeting.

At the course of the negotiations the interlocutors discussed current and prospective issues related to the development of CSTO military component.

Armenian Companies to Participate at Photonics West 2014 Exhibition

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian companies will participate in Photonics West 2014 exhibition to be held in San Francisco, USA. This is the premier photonics and laser event. Among the Armenian companies participating in the event are "LT-Prikal" CJSC, "Spectraluys" CJSC, and "Astra Cristals" CJSC.

The Armenian Development Agency reported that with more than 1,250 companies, this exhibition continues to be the flagship event to find the latest products, tools, and applications for your research or business needs.

Photonics West 2014 is the largest and most influential event for the laser and photonics community in North America: 20,000 attendees, two exhibitions, 1,250 exhibiting companies, a wide range of papers on biomedical optics, biophotonics, translational research, industrial lasers, optoelectronics, microfabrication, optical MEMS, and more.

Armenia's PM Hosts New Ambassador of Italy

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Tigran Sargsian received the newly appointed Ambassador of Italy to Armenia Giovanni Ricciulli on January 30. His office reported that Sargsian congratulated the Ambassador on the appointment and wished him efficient activity in our country. In addition, the prime minister noted that long-term Armenian-Italian friendly relations have been based upon the rich historical and cultural ties. Tigran Sargsian stated that he is hopeful that the Ambassador's activity will serve a new impetus for those relations.

In turn, Ricciulli expressed his gratitude to the prime minister for warm reception, assuring that during his term in office he will spare no effort for strengthening and expanding cooperation in various areas.

Among other things the interlocutors touched upon the prospects of cooperation in both bilateral format and within the framework of the EU as well. The head of the government praised the EU's technical and financial assistance for the realization of reforms in the country. Sargsian emphasized that Armenia is interested in the expansion of ties with the EU and expects Italy's active assistance in that issue.

First Armenian Tablet Officially Launched

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia and Armenpress) – The first Armenian tablet, ArmTab, was officially launched on Tuesday, February 4. The Ministry of Educational and Science and the Technology and Science Dynamics Company signed a

mony. It won the "Best Multimedia Project" and "Software of the Year" awards at the GITI 2013 conference in Tbilisi. The mass production of the Armenian tabs will be launched in the coming months.

ArmTab Company actively cooper-

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian. Welcoming the initiative, the Prime Minister noted that "a virtual revolution has taken place in the world, and we are a participant of it."

Armenpress reports that Tigran Sargsian stated that the present world cannot imagine itself without the information technologies. "The Republic of Armenia thus finds one of the most important economic specialization sectors," said the prime minister, adding that the field of information technologies is in the center of attention of the government. Sargsian expressed gratitude to the founders of the program and highlighted the introduction of the information technologies in the education system.

In the coming three years the Technology and Science Dynamics Inc. is expected to produce 10,000 to 50,000 tablets with the unit price of \$180. The government of the Republic of Armenia allowed the producing company to function in the Free Economic Zone. The software and hardware design of the tablets is carried out in Armenia. The tablets are assembled in the United States and Hong Kong. It is considered to start the mass production and sale of the Armenian tablets on January-February 2014, involving 25-50 top Armenian experts of the realm in the production.



Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian holds the Armenian tablet.

Memorandum of Understanding, under which the ArmTab will be introduced in the Armenian educational system from 2015.

The idea of ArmTab was presented at the DigiTech Expo in 2013, founder of the Technology and Science Dynamics Company Vahan Chakaryan said at the official cere-

monies with local organizations. In particular, the Arax operating system developed by Instigate Design Company, the educational applications of the Locator, Bitlis-MEN Companies and the Regional Mobile Application Laboratory will be installed in the tablets.

The ceremony was attended by

Armenian Ombudsman Reveals Bribery 'Price List'

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia's judiciary is reeling from a report detailing unbridled corruption in the courts.

According to findings published on December 9 by the country's human rights ombudsman, Karen Andreasian, bribe-taking is so rampant in Armenian courts that judges even use an unofficial price list for kickbacks.

The amounts paid as bribes can allegedly go up to \$50,000.

"The data obtained through our interviews shows that the bribe amounts to 10 percent of the cost of the lawsuit," Andreasian's deputy, Genya Petrosian, told a news conference on December 9. "The majority of our interviewees said bribe rates fluctuate within the following range –

from \$500 to \$10,000 at courts of first instance, from \$200 to \$15,000 at the Court of Appeals, and from \$10,000 to \$50,000 at the Court of Cassation."

Andreasian's team reached its conclusions after conducting interviews with some 120 lawyers, judges, and prosecutors, and analyzing all the rulings handed down over the past seven years by the Court of Cassation and the Council of Justice – an oversight body headed by the president, the prosecutor-general, and the justice minister.

The report has sparked angry reactions from judicial authorities.

The Council of the Union of Judges has accused its authors of spreading "wrong ideas" about Armenia's judiciary

and slammed it as "antigovernment."

"This report based on unfounded judgments represents a serious threat to the stability of the state and to public order," the union said in a statement on December 11.

On the same day, Prosecutor-General Gevorg Kostanian demanded that the ombudsman present evidence to substantiate his allegations.

Justice ministry spokesman Arsen Babayan has also sought to cast doubt on the report by questioning its fairness and accuracy.

Attorneys, however, overwhelmingly back the claims leveled by the ombudsman.

One lawyer, Tigran Hayrapetian, said that it was impossible to imagine a "better or more reliable report."

Armenian lawyers have long complained of corruption in their country's judiciary.

More than 500 lawyers held a one-day-strike last year to protest what they described as pervasive irregularities at the Court of Cassation.

Attorney Hayk Alumian says he knows of many cases where judges asked for bribes in return for favorable court decisions.

Alumian believes that authorities are in no rush to crack down on the practice, which he says allows them to manipulate judges to their advantage:

"Judges have become vulnerable both to prosecutors and security services," he says. "It is now very easy to control a corrupt judge, and the presence of such judges suits authorities."

The ombudsman's team says no judge has been brought to justice yet in Armenia for taking bribes.

Corruption watchdog Transparency International describes the judiciary as one of the most corrupt sectors in Armenia.

This year, the country's judicial system scored 4 on a 5-point scale (with 5 indicating the highest level of graft) in the organization's annual Global Corruption Barometer.

Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Provides Ongoing Support to Syrian-Armenians

SUPPORT, from page 1

In addition, of the funds raised through the 2013 Telethon, 15 million Armenian drams will be allocated for continuing support to address the social, healthcare, and education needs of Syrian-Armenian families currently residing in Armenia. The assistance will include the defrayal of student tuitions as well as the costs of surgeries and funerals. Program beneficiaries are selected by the Ministry of Diaspora. Reminding that Armenia-based and Diaspora benefactors and organizations that have contributed to the cause include Hirair Hovnanian, Ara Abrahamyan, Petak LLC, HayRusGasArd CJSC, the Raffi Galustanian Charitable Center, Judges of the Republic of Armenia, RA NAS Institute of History, Banants Football Club, Kara-Murza State Musical College of Gumri, Turvand LLC and others.

The fund has used the contributions to implement a range of healthcare, educational, and social-assistance projects. As of June 2013, the fund has provided

the following amounts in assistance to the Syrian-Armenian community. One hundred thousand euros raised by the French affiliate, 12,000 Euros from the German affiliate, and \$100,000 from the Lebanese affiliate have been used essentially to pay the salaries of teachers at Aleppo's Armenian schools.

Contributions from the Brazilian, Argentinean and Swedish affiliates have been used to cover the tuitions of 110 Syrian-Armenian students attending various colleges and universities in Armenia; to pay for the heart surgeries of six Syrian-Armenian individuals; and to cover the cost of funerals for three others. The amount of 10,000 dollars raised by the US Western Region affiliate has been donated to Yerevan's Kilikian School, which has opened its doors to children from Syrian-Armenian refugee families.

As for contributions made by industrialists Hirair Hovnanian and Ara Abrahamyan, they have been used to pay for refugee flights between Aleppo and Yerevan.



INTERNATIONAL

Rwanda Genocide Trial Opens in France

PARIS (*Guardian*) – The first trial in France over Rwanda's genocide has opened two decades after a killing spree that left at least a half a million people dead.

Pascal Simbikangwa, a 54-year-old former intelligence chief, faces charges of complicity in genocide and complicity in war crimes. He could face a life sentence if convicted after the seven-week trial in Paris.

The defendant, who uses a wheelchair after an accident, was brought into the courtroom then transferred by gendarmes into a glassed-in area.

He identified himself to the court as Pascal Safari," a combination of his real name and his alias, Senyamuhara Safari, according to court documents.

The case has highlighted criticism of France's reaction to the genocide, and the slow progress of justice after the slaughter of at least 500,000 people over 100 days.

"Today's trial in Paris ... will be an important moment in the global fight against impunity," Leslie Haskell, the international justice counsel for Human Rights Watch, said in a statement. He noted the creation of a special war crimes unit in the French justice system in 2012.

"France now has the tools it needs to ensure [that] perpetrators of the world's most serious crimes don't escape justice or find a safe haven in the country," Haskell said.

France had close ties to the government of Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana, an ethnic Hutu who was

killed when his plane was shot down in 1994. Thousands of ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in reprisals in what has been called the 20th century's fastest genocide.

Civil parties to the case allege that Simbikangwa, who came from the same town as Habyarimana and was allegedly a relative, incited the army to identify and slaughter Tutsis.

Critics say that France was slow to act out of a combination of self-delusion and unwillingness to face up to bad decisions. Before the killings, French troops armed and trained the Rwandan army. During the genocide, they allegedly helped radical Hutus flee. Later, France took in a number of exiles who were allowed to live freely.

A French trait for "ill-founded self-certainties" that engulfed "the administration, the army and the diplomatic corps" was to blame, according to French former foreign minister Bernard Kouchner, who made repeated trips to Rwanda during the genocide as a humanitarian aid activist.

Simbikangwa's defence lawyers planned to argue for an acquittal, but have expressed concern the hearing will be lopsided in part because of the difficulty in finding witnesses who will speak out in their client's defense.

More than 50 witnesses including journalists, historians, farmers, security guards and intelligence officials are expected to be called to testify, nearly all by the prosecution. During the proceedings, several films are to be shown,

including a 2004 documentary on the genocide called Kill Them All.

The trial could be the first of many. Another 27 cases linked to Rwanda's genocide have been lined up by the Paris court's war crimes unit, including one focusing on Habyarimana's widow.

The UN tribunal on the Rwanda genocide and several western countries including Belgium – a former colonial overseer of the African country – have brought scores of Rwandans to justice. The United Nations international criminal tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania, will close later this year, and is now only hearing appeals, officials say.

Documents from the Tanzania tribunal show France over the years handed over only three suspects – a fraction of the number of cases waiting in French courts.

Argentinean-Armenian Businessman to Buy 21 Greek Airports

DAVOS, Switzerland (*Armenpress*) – Argentinean-Armenian billionaire Eduardo Eurnekian, owner of the airport management company Corporacion America, is apparently expanding his investments in southern Europe, taking advantage of the lower prices resulting from the crisis.

"Our holding will enter the sector very actively, since the crisis has opened a lot of opportunities for us," said Martin Eurnekian, head of Corporacion America and Eduardo's nephew, in an interview on January 22 here. "Our mission is to expand in America and Europe, focusing on the Mediterranean. We have always invested in projects which allow us to retain the control of the management," he added, *Armenpress* reports, quoting *grreporter.info*.

In parallel, in his statement the businessman noted that Corporacion America, which has annual revenues of \$1.2 billion, currently had no financial needs which should be covered by the bond market. "In 2010, the company used its revenues from issuing bonds worth \$300 million in order to renew Ezeiza Airport in Buenos Aires. Furthermore, the Brazilian Development Bank BNDES funds it at a low price," he added.

According to Bloomberg, the company is expected to submit offers for 21 Greek airports to the Agency for Public Private Property.

The Greek Agency for Public Private Property is carrying out an open international competition for two groups consisting of 14-20 provincial airports via providing their operation to private investors. The rest of the provincial airports will be transferred under the provisions of the law of the Company for management of regional airports, which is 100-percent state owned.

The sector of regional airports in Greece consists of 39 airports, including those in Thessaloniki, Rhodes, Kos, Corfu, Zakynthos, Santorini, Lesvos, Samos and Mykonos, as well as in Chania on Crete. In the coming days, Corporacion America will acquire 23 percent of the airport in Pisa, Italy, and is planning to integrate the airports in Tuscany by adding the airport of Florence. The holding manages 51 airports worldwide.

Besides Greece, it will also submit offers for airports in Peru, Colombia and Chile. According to Forbes magazine, 81-year-old Eduardo Eurnekian is considered to be the second richest Argentinean with personal wealth amounting to 1.8 billion euro.

Chess Champ Aronian Defeats World's Top Player in Zurich

ZURICH (*Armenpress*) – Levon Aronian, the leader of the Armenian national men's chess team, this week defeated world champion Magnus Carlsen in the Zurich Challenge chess tournament. Carlsen still managed to win the overall tournament with the most number of points, with Aronian coming in second.

On the last day of the tournament the participants measured forces in the rapid chess. In the first round, Aronian bested Vishy Anand, while Carlsen defeated Boris Gelfand. Hikaru Nakamura was then defeated by Fabiano Caruana.

In the second round Aronian defeated Magnus Carlsen with obvious advantage. Nakamura defeated Anand, while Gelfand-Caruana couple shared the point.

Zurich Chess Challenge was launched on January 29 and will end today on February 4.

Aronian, as of May 2012, was ranked number 2 in the world by the World Chess Federation (FIDE), he was ranked number two in the world and had an Elo rating of 2825, making him the third highest rated player in history.

Cheering him on in the Zurich tournament was Charles Aznavour. Aronian Tweeted a picture of the two having a meal, writing, "Today's game is dedicated to our legend Charles Aznavour, who was so gracious to visit me here in Zurich."



Levon Aronian dining with Charles Aznavour

International News

French Justice Minister Confirms Genocide Denial Law in the Works

PARIS – On January 29, the day marking the anniversary when France recognized the Armenian Genocide in 2001, the Coordination Council of Armenian Organizations of France (CCAF) organized a dinner, under the patronage of Charles Aznavour, attended by many French personalities in the arts, politics and the press, as well as religious figures.

During the celebration, the official logo that will be used to mark the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide was displayed for the first time.

During the event, French Minister of Justice Christiane Taubira confirmed that the "French government is working on a legal instrument condemning the denial of the Armenian genocide. (Jean Eckian)

Activist Blogger Nisanyan Jailed

IZMIR (*Hurriyet*) – The Turkish-Armenian writer and linguist Sevan Nisanyan started serving a two-year sentence on January 2 after he was convicted of an illegal construction project in Izmir.

The court of appeals upheld the decision.

Nisanyan completed the construction of a house in Irince town despite the court decision, ruling he should not enter the area, which is natural site.

Nisanyan is one of Turkey's leading linguists. He has penned columns for the Turkish-Armenian weekly *Agos* and daily *Taraf*.

Former Prime Minister Gets Back Georgian Citizenship

TBILISI (*PanARMENIAN.Net*) – Georgia's top court has ruled to restore the citizenship of former Prime Minister and billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili more than two years after it was revoked by presidential decree, according to RIA Novosti.

The Supreme Court of the former Soviet state said in a statement late Monday that it had decided to cancel a 2011 decree issued by then-President Mikheil Saakashvili that stripped his political rival Ivanishvili of Georgian citizenship.

Ivanishvili, 57, who founded and formerly headed the Georgian Dream coalition, was originally granted Georgian citizenship in 2004 – in addition to his existing Russian citizenship – but it was revoked after he received a French passport in 2010.

Georgia allows dual citizenship, but Ivanishvili was stripped of his Georgian citizenship on the grounds that he could be a citizen of three countries.

The tycoon gave up his Russian citizenship in the run-up to the 2012 parliamentary election.

Group Tries to Disrupt Genocide Program

ISTANBUL (*Today's Zaman*) – A group of young Turkish nationalists attempted to foil a conference organized by the Irkçiliga ve Milliyetçilige DurDe (Say no to Racism and Nationalism) initiative in Turkey.

During the conference titled "Why states do not apologize," which was held in Istanbul and ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, a group of youth from the Workers' Party of Turkey – which is led by Armenian genocide-denying Turkish politician Dogu Perincek – entered the conference hall and began chanting, "Genocide is a lie and a US project!" Marksist.org of Turkey reports.

In response, the conference participants began chanting, "Go out!" and "We are all Hrant [Dink], we are all Armenians!"

After leaving the conference hall, the nationalists went on to chant in front of the building.

But the conference continued despite the incident.



INTERNATIONAL

New Russian Law Has Consequences for Armenian Migrant Workers

By Gayane Mkrtychyan

YEREVAN and MOSCOW (ArmeniaNow) – Upon returning to Armenia from Pempz, Russia a week ago, migrant worker Garush Grigoryan learned that he cannot return to Russia for three months later.

Grigoryan and thousands others are subject to a new law passed by Russia that restricts return travel to Russia for anyone who has resided there for at least 90 days.

“If they at least had told me when crossing the border... I left my car there, have a salary to receive, and now how can I sit and wait for three months?” says Grigoryan, 51, a native

of Aygshat village, Armavir province. He supports his six-member family by working in Russia. Grigoryan says before, when their visa would expire they would go to the Ukraine or Kazakhstan for a day to just cross the border and then go back to Russia again, however the new law provides for return to the foreigner's native country (or the country s/he had come to Russia from). Armenian men living off migrant labor are in panic now. Many among those who had come to Armenia to spend the holiday season with their families are now trying to decide whether it makes sense to go back under the new conditions. “My father and brothers worked in Moscow with me. We were big cargo truck drivers, and now we have decided not to go back. How

much would we have to earn to be coming back to Armenia every three months? We are now looking for employment here, and there isn't much, but still it's better to stay; at least we are home,” says Koryun Gyulnazaryan, 24.

According to Gagik Yeganyan, head of the State Migration Service of Armenia, any new approach such as this one adopted in Russia after July 2013, is meant to restrict people's entry to that country. “If before the citizens of none-visa countries were allowed to stay for 90 days in 365, it has now been cut down to 180 days. If before those having no residency status could cross the border on the 90th day and get a residency status, we see these new changes to the laws as aimed at stopping that practice,” Yeganyan told

Civilnet.

Would joining the Customs Union provide for exceptions for Armenian citizens on the part of the Russian authorities? Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian told the press that it is a procedure adopted by Russia and it has to be respected, just as any other country's similar decision.

“What exceptions might apply to Armenia and whether those would be connected to the Customs Union is hard to say... The Customs Union is more related to economic, than those kinds of issues. However, I do not rule out that during further negotiations and considering our ally relations with Russia certain processes might be possible,” said Nalbandian.

Procedure of Providing Political Asylum to Azerbaijani Family In Armenia Launched

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The five-member Azerbaijani family that sought political asylum in Armenia has already submitted an application to the Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia asking to provide them with a political asylum. The head of the Migration Agency, Gagik Yeganyan, said that the process has been launched though he could not provide any other information about the dates and the process, as the information is confidential.

The External Relations Associate at the Armenian Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Anahit Hayrapetyan informed that the family is under the auspices of the UN Yerevan Office. According to Hayrapetyan, the organization asked the Armenian authorities to deal with the issue in compliance with the international norms and the Armenia's national legislation standards and control the process maintaining the international protection mandate.

“We welcome the maintenance of the non-return principle on the Armenian-Georgian border, as well as the fact that the Armenian authorities applied alternative measures towards the Azerbaijani family instead of detention,” Hayrapetyan said, adding that the UN Refugee Office does not provide any confidential information to the media about individual cases, based on its global policy provisions.

According to the National Security Council, Javid Orujov, born in 1976, along with his wife and three children, applied to the Armenian-Georgian Bagratashen checkpoint on January 29 to ask for a political asylum in Armenia. Orujov told that he was exerted pressure by Azerbaijani law-enforcement agencies as his wife Roya Mirzoyeva has Armenian origin. Not enduring the inhuman oppression, Orujov agreed to cooperate with the Azerbaijan's special services and through the relatives of his wife living abroad, he found some data about Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora. Realizing the dangerous situation for him and his family, Orujov tried to settle in a European country, after the extradition from which the pressure upon him by the Azerbaijan's special services became more intensified. Having appeared in a hopeless situation and feeling the real danger for his family, Javid Orujov decided to ask for a political asylum from the Armenian authorities.

Georgia PM Garibashvili in Sochi Warning to Russia

By Chris Morris

BRUSSELS (BBC) – Georgia has warned it will take action if Russia makes any move to bolster the independence claims of two break-away Georgian regions during ceremonies at the Winter Olympics in Sochi.

Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili said he hoped there would be no official welcome for the “so-called Abkhazian and South Ossetian authorities.”

Russia is one of a few countries that recognize the regions' independence.

Merkel Reiterates Germany Reluctant on Turkey's EU Membership

ISTANBUL (*Today's Zaman*) – German Chancellor Angela Merkel has expressed reservations about Turkey's EU membership bid, reiterating her long-held position that Turkey should do more if it wants to join the 28-member bloc.

In a press conference on Tuesday, Erdogan and Merkel spoke about bilateral relations as well as positions of their respective countries on the issues of EU membership, assimilation and regional policies. The news conference came after a bilateral meeting between the two leaders.

Merkel reiterated her country's position on Turkish membership, noting that she believes the accession negotiations are an “open-ended” process and that she has some reservations about Ankara's full membership with the bloc. She expressed her backing of the negotiations but gave a cold shoulder for the full membership.

Turkey's talks on joining the 28-nation bloc began in 2005 but are barely moving – mainly due to Turkey's dispute with EU member Greek Cyprus and unease about admitting a populous, largely Muslim country.

Merkel said that she supports opening those sections of Turkey's membership negotiations that address justice and human rights “as soon as possible.”

Both leaders also discussed the issue of Turkish community in Germany, with Erdogan forcefully assuring the German leader that Ankara has no policy of telling Turks not to integrate into the mainstream German society. He, however, rejected policies of assimilation. Merkel also commented on the integration issue and said she is everybody's chancellor in Germany and that this includes the Turkish minority living there as well. The German government is not against the dual citizenship for Turkish people living in Germany, Merkel added.

Merkel also stated that judicial system was mentioned during the meeting, noting that they discussed the independence of judiciary, including the selection criteria of the judges and prosecutors. “We also talked about the reforms made in the field law,” Merkel said.

Georgia has had no diplomatic ties with Moscow since their brief war in 2008.

Tbilisi already expressed deep concern about Russia's decision last month to expand its Olympic security zone into Abkhazia, which is less than 40 kilometers (25 miles) along the Black Sea coast from Sochi.

“It was a tough decision not to boycott the Games [in the first place],” Garibashvili said during an interview on a visit to Brussels, where he has been meeting EU and NATO leaders.

“But if there are any surprises we will of course react adequately,” he warned.

There have been demonstrations in the Georgian capital Tbilisi calling for a boycott of the Games, but the prime minister said he was trying to take a constructive approach.

“We offered to co-operate with Russia on security as well,” he said. “I don't want to believe there will be any surprises, [but] this conflict issue remains the biggest concern.”

If the leaders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are given prominence at Sochi, domestic pressure to withdraw Georgia's small Olympic team will intensify.

Garibashvili refused to be drawn on how exactly he would respond, but the option of withdrawal clearly remains open.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov argued recently that the problems between the two countries stem from Georgia's refusal to recognize realities on the ground.

“The reality is that there is only one country

on our territory,” Garibashvili argued. “And this is Georgia.”

Hundreds of protesters rallied in the Georgian capital on Saturday calling for a Games boycott

At the age of 31, Garibashvili is the youngest democratically-elected head of government in the world. But he has a lot on his plate.

He admits that he has been watching events in Ukraine closely and “with extreme concern.”

Under pressure from Moscow, the Ukrainian government changed course last year and abandoned a wide-ranging trade and co-operation deal with the European Union, triggering the recent protests.

But Georgia is determined to continue pursuing a path of closer relations with the EU, and membership of NATO. It hopes to formally sign its own partnership deal with the EU later this year.

That is why many in Georgia are braced for a lot more pressure from Russia on this issue once the Winter Olympics are over.

Garibashvili himself strikes a note of defiance, while trying to hold out an olive branch.

“We are less dependent on Russia - [it] doesn't have so many political or economic levers as us,” he said.

“[But] we have to convince Russia that Georgia's Euro-integration is not a threat. Russia should be interested in having a strong, reliable and democratic neighbor.”

Czech President Says That Ottoman Killings Constitute ‘Genocide’

CZECH, from page 1

He said he strongly hopes that the official visit of the President of Czech Republic to Armenia by the invitation of the President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan will greatly contribute to the adoption of the declaration on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Czech Senator also assessed positively the meeting of the President of the Republic of Armenia with the spiritual leader of the Czech Republic, Archbishop of Prague Dominik Duka who supports the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Zeman hosted a state dinner in honor of Sargsyan, during which the latter offered a toast to the Czech Republic, the prospects of closer ties, historical relations of the two peoples, the Armenian community of the Czech

Republic, which introduces a natural bridge for the Armenian-Czech relations and several other subjects.

Among other things the both sides emphasized that the friendship of the Armenian and Czech peoples is a firm basis for the development and strengthening of interstate ties.

Sargsyan expressed his gratitude and stressed that the Armenian people remembers with acknowledgement the names of the worthy sons of the Czech people, such as President of Czechoslovakia Tomas Masaryk and his contemporary, Czech author and humanist Karel Hansa, whose humanistic and socio-political activity spread light on the Armenian Genocide, which was the first genocide of the 20th century.

EU powers and NATO members France and Germany are among those who have recognized it as “genocide.”

For Your Internal News of Armenia

Log on to

www.AZG.am

Community News

California State Assembly Passes Armenian Genocide Curriculum Bill

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Despite heavy opposition by pro-Turkey lobbying groups, the California State Assembly voted unanimously on Jan. 29 to pass Assembly member Adrin Nazarian's bill, AB 659, encouraging schools to use oral histories when teaching about the Armenian Genocide. AB 659 will now move on to State Senate for consideration.

"The unanimous passage of AB 659 sends a strong message that California officials cannot be bought or bullied into denying truth and justice. The ANCA WR [Armenian National Committee of America-Western Region] commends Assembly members Nazarian and Achadjian for spearheading through this important genocide education legislation and looks forward to working with them in garnering similar support in the State Senate," stated Elen Asatryan, executive director of the ANCA-WR.

"AB 659 has enjoyed overwhelming support from my colleagues in the Assembly," commented Nazarian, following the vote. "I look forward to continuing to work with the ANCA-WR to garner support from our counterparts in the Senate. The personal testimonies of Genocide survivors will give educators a powerful tool to engage students in the subject matter in ways they have never been taught before. If we expect to stop the genocides of the future, it is important that we strengthen the teaching mechanisms on past genocides."

Joining Nazarian as co-authors AB 659 were state Sen. Mark Wyland (R) and Assembly members Katcho Achadjian (R), Steve Fox (D), Mike Gatto (D), Scott Wilk (R) and Cheryl Brown (D). Other members of the State Assembly who spoke in support of the measure during the floor session today were Assembly members Tim Donnelly (R) and Diane Harkey (R).

Achadjian, principal co-author on AB 659, worked closely with his Republican colleagues to secure broad bipartisan support for the measure, noted, "I am proud to be a principal co-author of AB 659. Part of ensuring a better world for our children includes educating them about the past. We must take the initiative to recognize such tragic acts of violence in order to prevent such events from happening again. It encourages teachers to educate our students on the Armenian Genocide."

Earlier this month, AB 659 was unanimously adopted by the State Assembly Education and Appropriations Committees. Education Committee Chairwoman Joan Buchanan explained, "It is important for California students to understand and learn from the lessons of history, including the atrocities of genocide around the world. I am proud to support AB 659, which encourages schools to include the Armenian genocide in our history courses."

Once adopted by the State Senate and signed into law by the governor, AB 659 would encourage the incorporation of oral testimony and teacher training, such that the Genocide may be more comprehensively taught in California's public schools.

The Genocide Education Project (GenEd), a non-profit organization based in San Francisco which has developed model resources for high school teachers regarding the Armenian Genocides, hailed the measure. "With the proper materials and training, teachers can incorporate the Armenian Genocide into their social studies curriculum in a meaningful way," said Roxanne Makasdjian of The Genocide Education Project. "This resolution reminds education administrators across the state of California's commitment to the inclusion of the Armenian Genocide as an essential part of its courses on world history, genocide, and human rights."



Bishop Armash Nalbandian, Armenian Primate of Damascus speaking about the plight of Christians in Syria at the Heritage Foundation.

Plight of Christians, Armenians in Syria Focus of Panel Discussion

WASHINGTON – This week, the Heritage Foundation held a panel discussion titled "Marked for Destruction: The Plight of Syria's Christians with Syrian Christian Leaders." The panel featured Rev. Adib Awad, General Secretary of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, Bishop Elias Toumeh, the Orthodox Bishop of Pyrgou-Syria, Rev. Dr. Riad Jarjour, Presbyterian clergyman from Homs, Syria and the former General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches (1994-2003), Bishop Dionysius Jean Kawak, Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church and Bishop Armash Nalbandian, Primate of the Armenian Church of Damascus.

The discussion was co-hosted by the Westminster Institute and Barnabas Aid Fund, who was represented by International Director Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo. Bishop Julian Dobbs of the Anglican Church of North America made introductory remarks, while Becky Norton Dunlop, Heritage Vice President of External Relations, opened and closed the program.

To explain the current situation in Syria, the panelists provided a historical context of centuries-long persecution and massacres of Christians in the greater Middle East. Speaking first was Rev. Dr. Riad Jarjour, who talked at length about the "indigenous Christians" of Syria. He expressed the uncomfortable feeling registered among Christians, especially since Ottoman times, directly citing "what happened to the Armenians." Jarjour went on to state that Christians in Syria today do not feel safe "in the land they were born." He then reflected on current events, highlighting the kidnapping of priests and nuns, the confiscation of churches, and the brutal beheading of Armenians all by Al-Qaeda/Al-Nusra Front and other extremist groups. "At least 80 people have been used as human shields in Homs," said Jarjour, "they are not allowed to leave the city." In a plea to all Syrians, Jarjour warned of the consequences of a "Syria without Christians," sharing his view that not only will the Christian community of Syria loose, but that Syria's Muslims will also loose a very significant segment of their society.

Bishop Dionysius Jean reflected on specific episodes of Christian persecution in the Ottoman Empire. He mentioned the massacres of Christian Armenians "since 1860 and 1895," the latter a direct reference to the Hamidian Massacres that served as a precursor to the Armenian Genocide.

Rev. Abid Awad called attention to "terrorists" in Syria "from 83 countries" that he said were "armed, supported and funded by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey."

In an expression of solidarity, with all the various religious groups in Syria, Nalbandian warned against heeding the calls of Islamaphobes. Nalbandian explained the uniqueness of the Armenian situation. "After the Armenian Genocide, Syrian Muslims accepted us, welcomed us," Nalbandian said. Nalbandian differentiated between secular Syrian Muslims who want peace and the foreign extremists who are kidnapping and killing Christians.

Addressing the panel from the audience, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) stated, "Three close allies of the United States, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, are supporting terrorist groups in Syria. What can America do to hold countries like Turkey accountable for supporting extremists in Syria," he asked. The dignitaries tried to avoid delving into politics.

There are a number of steps that the US can take, such as a drastic reduction and/or full cessation in the transfer or sale of US military aid and equipment to such countries. It's not about dismissing the US-Turkey relationship; it's about putting the relationship on an honest footing – be it Turkey's inexplicable campaign to deny the Armenian Genocide or its blatant support of Islamic extremists whose efforts run counter to US values.

Jessica Vartoughian Nails Award from Glamour Mexico

MEXICO CITY, Mexico – *Glamour Magazine Mexico* honored Jessica Vartoughian, CEO and founder of Jessica Cosmetics, Inc., with a Glam Award at its 15th Anniversary Gala here in October. The Glam Award recognizes the achievements of industry leaders who have inspired readers of the magazine. The recipients of this award are typically those who have worked hard to turn their dreams into reality, and maintain an immense passion for life.

Vartoughian, dubbed the "First Lady of Nails," received the award at a glamorous gala and the award winners were featured in the December issue of *Glamour Mexico*.

Other recipients included Eva Longoria, Demi Lovato, fashion designer Rolando Santana, and jewelry architect Daniel Espinoza.

"*Glamour Magazine* has always been a fashion and beauty bible for young women," says Vartoughian. "They have championed the Jessica brand since my



Jessica Vartoughian

distributors, Mario Del Duca and Ioanna Alvarez launched the range in Mexico in 2010. What made this a heartfelt moment is that the readers voted! It was such a magical evening."

Along with Jessica, the award was presented to such luminaries as Eva Longoria, Demi Lovato, fashion designer Rolando Santana, fashion designer Carolina Herrera de Baez, and innovative jewelry architect Daniel Espinoza to name a few. The recipients share a passion for life, and a dream that became a reality to enliven the public.

As CEO, founder and creator of JESSICA Cosmetics International Inc., Vartoughian brings her experience and expertise in beauty to nail care professionals and consumers with a complete color and treatment line that allows women to achieve healthy and beautiful natural nails. The brand is available in more than 54 countries.

Her clients, both men and women, are a who's-who of Hollywood elite, from Drew Barrymore to Michael Douglas.

The Romanian-born Vartoughian is well known for her philanthropic efforts and her commitment and dedication to serving both the Armenian and American community.

Vartoughian founded Jessica Nail Clinic in 1969 in Los Angeles. Being the first nail salon of its kind then and now, Jessica Nail Clinic remains a center of natural nail care with its unique manicure technique and exceptional treatments created by her.



OBITUARY

Victor J. Jamal



Victor J. Jamal

NEW YORK – Victor J. Jamal was born on May 17, 1921, in Tabriz, Iran, the son of an Assyrian father, Joseph Jamal, and an Armenian mother, Arpen Aftandilian. He died on September 13, 2013, in Bronxville, NY.

He attended an Armenian elementary school and then continued his education at the American Presbyterian Alborz College. His father, an influential government official, exposed young Victor to important political, social and economic issues.

In 1945, Jamal immigrated to the United States, where he served as a consultant for Iranian importers at the Iranian Consulate General in New York City. Following this, he received a master's degree from the University of Michigan in mechanical engineering. He was the senior development engineer and project manager for diverse assignments at Union Carbide.

He then joined the Pullman Corporation as their vice president and managing director of Pullman Swindell Iran, Inc., in Tehran.

During his career, he was granted six US patents for various engineering designs.

He was a member of many professional groups, including the National Society of Professional Engineers, New York Society of Professional Engineers and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

He belonged to the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in the state of New York and was a longtime member of the New York Athletic Club.

Jamal was an Armenian in his heart and soul. He was a gentle, caring man, both interested and interesting.

He leaves his wife, Sweetlana; his niece, Patricia Meloni and her husband, Ronald; nephews Robert Abrahamyou and William Jamal; sister-in-law Dorothy Jamal as well as by all the Jamal, Jamal, Aftandilian, Yaldae, Garabedian, Nazarbekian, Voskianian, Sarkissian, Paulissian, Karam and Tamimi families.

He was predeceased by his parents, brother Emile and his sister Emma.

Lillian Jingoian

WATERTOWN – Lillian (Harutunian) Jingoian of Watertown on January 27, 2014.

She was 84.

She was the wife of the late C. Robert Jingoian. She leaves her children James, David, Michael Jingoian and Robert Jingoian and his wife Maria; eight grandchildren and siblings Harold, Ruth, Abraham and John Arthur Harutunian.

One sister, Mariam Kavonian, predeceased her.

She was a guidance counselor at Watertown public schools for 20 years. She was the former superintendent of the Sahag Mesrob Armenian School of St. James Armenian Church.

She was a member of St. James Women's Guild.

Services were held at St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown on Friday, January 31. Interment was in Ridgelawn Cemetery, Watertown.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in her memory to WCI-Work Community Independence, 135 Beaver St., Waltham, MA 02452.



Lillian Jingoian

Rochambeau Anthony Herosian

SILVER SPRING, Md. – Rochambeau Anthony Herosian of Silver Spring died on Friday, December 6. He was 92.

He leaves his wife, Pauline Herosian; children Arthur Charles (Vicky) Herosian and Eleanor Mae Hughes; grandchildren Dawn Renee (Aaron) Aumiller; great-grandchild William Aumiller; step-grandchild Andrew Jung and brother Edward (Ann) Herosian of Falmouth, Mass. One brother, George Herosian, predeceased him.

The funeral was on Thursday, December 12, at the Collins Funeral Home, 500 University Boulevard, West, Silver Spring. Interment will take place at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

Memorial contributions in his memory may be made to Breast Cancer Research Foundation, 60 East 56th St., 8th Floor, New York, NY 10022.



Rochambeau Anthony Herosian

John Garabedian



John Garabedian

BELMONT, Mass. – John K. Garabedian of Belmont died on January 29, 2014. He was 82.

He was an Army veteran who served in Korea.

He leaves his wife, Helen (Boghosian) Garabedian; children Mark Garabedian and his wife Ann of Billerica, Jennifer Andonian and her husband Samuel of Lincoln and Gregory Garabedian of Belmont; grandchildren Alexander J. and Sammy J. Andonian and Kyle J. Garabedian; sister Mary Carpenter and her husband Elwood of Belmont.

A visitation period was held in the parlor of the First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont on Monday, February 3, followed by a funeral service. Interment was in Belmont Cemetery, Belmont.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in his memory to the First Armenian Church or the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), 31 West Century Rd., Paramus, NJ 07652.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

Arshalous (Vanian) Bezjian

WATERTOWN – Arshalous (Vanian) Bezjian of Watertown passed away on January 28, 2014 at home in Watertown with her family by her side.

She was the wife of the late Harry Artin Bezjian.

She was the mother of Nigol Bezjian of Lebanon, Raffi Bezjian and his wife Silva of Watertown and Njeh Bezjian of Watertown; grandmother of Nareg Bezjian; sister of Alice Mikaelian of Boston and Arsine Baboian of Lebanon.

The funeral service was held on Thursday, January 30, at St. Stephen's Armenian Church, 38 Elton Ave., Watertown. Interment was in Ridgelawn Cemetery, Watertown.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Stephen's Armenian Church or to the Homenetmen, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown, MA 02472.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home.



Arshalous Bezjian

Nardolillo Funeral Home

Est. 1906

John K. Najarian, Jr.

Rhode Island's Only Licensed Armenian Funeral Director

1278 Park Ave. Cranston, RI 02910 (401) 942-1220
1111 Boston Neck Rd. Narragansett, RI 02882 (401) 789-6300

www.nardolillo.com

Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

Giragosian

FUNERAL HOME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC
Mark J. Giragosian

Funeral Counselors

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

Edward D. Jamakordzian, Jr. d/b/a

Edward D. Jamie, Jr. Funeral Chapel

Serving the entire Armenian Community

Any Hour • Any Distance • Any Location

Call (718) 224-2390 Toll Free (888) 224-6088

Bus. Reg. 189-06 Liberty Ave., Hollis, NY 11412

Consultation Office: 217-04 Northern Blvd., (Suite 23), Bayside, NY 11361





COMMUNITY NEWS

Alfred of Wessex and Gagik of Vaspouragan: A Regal Study at Ararat-Eskijian Museum

MISSION HILLS, Calif. – Dr. Anne Elizabeth Redgate will present an illustrated lecture on “Portrait and Representations: Alfred of Wessex and Gagik of Vaspouragan: Progress and Prospects,” on Sunday, February 10, at 7 p.m. at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Sheen Chapel.

The event is sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Museum and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

In this lecture Redgate will present her work comparing the early-10th-century King Gagik Artsruni of Vaspurakan with his near-contemporary, the late-ninth-century King Alfred of Wessex (in southern England), and their ideas about kingship. Both kings commissioned works of art and historical writings, and the comparison draws on these. She will also discuss her most recent work on the sculpture that decorates a window at the seventh-century Armenian church of Ptghni and the family of its founders, the Amatunis, and their ideas and

claims concerning political authority. She will reflect on the similarities between King Alfred and King Gagik, the importance of the Amatunis to the Artsrunis and some links between Amatuni Ptghni and King Gagik's early-10th-century Church of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar, Lake Van. These are the foundations for her next book, whose working title is Christian Kingship in England and Armenia from the Late-Ninth to the Mid-Eleventh

Century; Liturgy, Law and Self-Representation (Edwin Mellen Press).

Redgate is Lecturer in History at Newcastle University in the UK, where she has taught Anglo-Saxon history, Armenian history and world history. She is the author of *The Armenians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998) and *Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, 800-1066* (in press, Routledge). She has made contributions to conferences and volumes in

the UCLA Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces series and other articles. She is especially interested in the period between 300 and 1100 AD, in questions of national identity, vernacular liturgy, heresy, the use of artistic imagery as a medium of political expression and comparative history.

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

Armenian Bar Association Accepting Applications for Ninth Scholarship Program

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Bar Association announced recently that it is accepting applications for its Ninth Annual Scholarship Program. The program is designed to support meritorious students of Armenian descent attending, or accepted for admission to,

an approved law school in the United States, Armenia or elsewhere. Recipients must demonstrate an outstanding academic record as well as a strong commitment to the Armenian community, particularly in humanitarian and/or law-related endeavors.

The Scholarship Program is primarily funded by donations and by fundraising events hosted by the Armenian Bar Association.

In addition to the Scholarship Program, the Armenian Bar Association supports Armenian law students through its varied programs and events including the mentorship and internship programs and presentations by legal scholars.

Students interested in applying for an Armenian Bar Association scholarship should obtain an application at the group's website (www.armenianbar.com). The application deadline is March 31. The application must either be postmarked by March 31, or if e-mailed, it should be received no later than midnight (PST) of March 31.

The Armenian Bar Association is the largest organization of Armenian lawyers in the world. The Armenian Bar Association performs many functions on behalf of the Armenian community, such as responding to the press or media about topics relating to Armenians, educating American-Armenians regarding their legal rights, and advocating the rule of law in Armenia, all of which are important aspects of advancing both the economic and the humanitarian well-being of Armenia. The Armenian Bar Association also has engaged in many cross-national efforts between the United States and Armenia, such as hosting Armenian attorneys and judges in the United States and promoting Armenian-American attorneys' involvement in the Armenian business and legal world, both as educators and as advisors.

Donations

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* received a donation of \$100 from Ruth and Wil Swisher of Newington, Conn., in memory of her mother, Siranoush Hovsepian, aunts Esgouhi and Sirvant Simonian and Godmother Maritza Ohanesian.

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* received a donation of \$250 in memory of longtime reader Victor J. Jamal, from his widow, Sweetlana Jamal.

In memory of Arsen Demirdjian, Tomas T and Armine Fermanian Webb of Asheville, NC donate \$500 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

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



KAROUN
Restaurant
Armenian Mid-Eastern Cuisine

Entertainment Fridays
and Saturdays

Eurdolian Family

Tekeyan Cultural Association

presents...

Family Movie Night

featuring

“Lost and Found in Armenia”

with Jamie Kennedy, Angela Sarafyan and Dave Sheridan
in a delightful light comedy.

A vacation in Turkey meant to help an American tourist get over a recent breakup goes seriously awry when he ends up in Armenia accused of spying. Luckily for the tourist, he also meets a beautiful Armenian woman who risks her safety to save him.

Rated four out of five stars by average customer reviews.

**Friday, February 7th at AGBU School,
Southfield, Mich.**

Please join us for the movie, snacks and fun
Doors open at 7 pm – movie begins 7:30 pm promptly
\$3 admission includes movie and two refreshment tickets.

General seating
Movie is 88 minutes long

Please call to RSVP

Reporter Wanted

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* is seeking an assistant editor, working 20-25 hours a week.

The ideal candidate should have a good grasp of journalism and be willing to cover a variety of subjects. Some editing will also be required.

Salary commensurate with experience.

Send resumes and writing samples to editor@mirrorspectator.com.

Announcing the Home of Watertown's Newest Law Center, Gregory H Arabian & Associates, LLC

124 Watertown Street – Suite 3A West

Watertown, MA 02472

617-744-6778

Facsimile 781-744-0368

garabian@aol.com

www.gregarabianlaw.com



Parker School Building, Location of Law Offices of Gregory H. Arabian & Associates, LLC



Attorney Greg Arabian

Now, in his 53rd year of active legal trial practice, Attorney Greg Arabian has represented thousands of clients. He is accredited by the Massachusetts Bar, Veterans Organizations, and many professional and community organizations. Mr. Arabian has lectured and appeared in the Media on cases involving Asset Protection, Wealth Enhancement, Family Asset Planning, Aviation Law, Products Liability, Social Security Recoveries and Workers' Compensation. An Air Force Veteran, he is Commander of Belmont AMVETS Post 2008, and serves as Vice Commander of 10 NE AMVETS Posts. He invites your inquiry.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Joe Almasian's Olympic Experience Was One Remarkable Journey

By David Pevear

WESTFORD, Mass. (*Lowell Sun*) – He still has never set foot in Armenia, under whose red, blue and orange flag he proudly competed in the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway.

Westford resident Joe Almasian hopes to visit his ancestral homeland someday.

"It's on my bucket list," says the 46-year-old father of three and youth soccer coach who plays in an Over-the-Hill Soccer League on Sunday mornings in the fall.



Joe Almasian

Never on his bucket list was driving a two-man bobsled for any country in the Winter Olympics. But their spirit of adventure and deep respect for their Armenian heritage pulled Almasian, a mechanical engineer

who grew up in Sherborn, Mass., and his brakeman Kenny Topalian, who ran an auto repair shop in Pawtucket, RI, to Lillehammer 20 years ago to establish an Olympic foothold for a newly independent Armenia. They did so with a second-hand bobsled rented from the American Samoans for \$1,500.

Both were athletic. Almasian, 26 at the time, had played soccer and run track for the University of New Hampshire. Topalian, then 30, had been a hurdler in high school. They grew up participating in athletic and cultural activities within the Providence chapter of the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF).

Their talents were known to Paul Varadian, a former Providence AYF member and US bobsledder with strong Olympic connections, determined to plant Armenia's flag on the Olympic stage after independence was secured with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

"The quickest entry was through the sport of bobsledding, which I was familiar with," says Varadian, 60, who lives in Newton. "I reached out to them because they were both athletes and both nearby and they were willing to give it a shot."

Almasian remembers being at work at EMD Millipore in Bedford (where he still works) when Varadian called sometime around Thanksgiving 1992 with his Olympic idea.

"While I appreciate sports and athletics, and very much love participating in them, I can honestly say it was never my dream to become an Olympic bobsledder," says Almasian with a smile.

Not long after that phone call, Almasian was speeding down a bobsled run at a beginners' camp in Calgary, where he and Topalian became properly licensed. "Because you actually need a license to drive these," says Almasian.

In the beginning, they started each run from halfway up the track, reaching 50 miles per hour, about 30 mph slower than competition speed. "We didn't die, so we agreed we'd give (the Olympic quest) a try," says Almasian.

Every Friday night thereafter during the winter of 1992-93, Almasian and Topalian drove six hours to Lake Placid, N.Y.

They stayed at a motel or at the Olympic Training Center. The bobsled run was open three hours each morning on Saturday and Sunday. They borrowed 1960s-vintage sleds which they welded back together after each bumpy learning run.

They eventually hired a coach, Jim Hickey, a former US bobsledder who lived in the Lake Placid area. Hickey would remain their coach through the 1994 Olympics. Almasian and Topalian shared Hickey with the Greek and American Samoan teams to spread the costs. They spent nearly \$20,000 of their own money on their Olympic adventure.

"We say we had two sponsors," says Almasian. "I sponsored Kenny, and Kenny sponsored me."

There were no guarantees their investment would all pay off. The Olympic dream Almasian never dreamed still seemed a wild

dream.

To meet Olympic qualification standards, Almasian and Topalian needed to obtain Armenian citizenship and compete in at least five international races on three different tracks over two seasons. The only two tracks in North America at that time were in Lake Placid and Calgary. So for their final qualification step they raced in St. Moritz, Switzerland not long before the Olympics.

"I think we gained one World Cup point for finishing last," says Almasian.

Varadian handled the politicking to secure temporary Armenian citizenship for the bobsledders, which required a decree by Armenia's then-President Levon Ter-Petrosian. Almasian recalls it being 2 1/2 weeks before the Opening Ceremonies in Lillehammer when they got the green light.

They were nearly joined on that first-ever Armenia Olympic team by one other athlete. Arsen Harutyunyan, an Alpine skier from Armenia, fell short on a qualification technicality but carried his country's flag at the 1994 Opening Ceremonies and skied in two future Olympics.

An eight-member Armenia Olympic delegation, featuring Almasian and Topalian as its only participating athletes, marched at the Opening Ceremonies in Lillehammer. "It was held in the ski-jump area. It was freezing cold. The stands held only about 3,000 people," recalls Varadian. "I remember Kenny saying, 'Gee whiz, this is no big deal.'" So Varadian pointed to a nearby television camera. "See that," he told the two bobsledders, "that is one billion people."

They marched not far behind "America" (countries march in alphabetical, according to the host country's native tongue), so a glimpse of the Armenian flag was seen on CBS' telecast to the United States.

"The sad part is we had everybody back home pumped up to watch us," says Almasian. "I think my boot enters the screen, and then they cut away to something else." An Armenian reporter, serving as the team's press attaché, arranged a press day for any reporters who might want to interview Almasian and Topalian. "We figured at least a couple of guys would be there," says Almasian.

The two were shocked to arrive to a room packed with media.

"We were happy to sit there and take questions," says Almasian. "Come to find out later, though, just randomly through a scheduling

process, our press conference was between Tonya Harding's and the Italian skier Alberto Tomba's. Those who had their front-row seats for Tonya Harding wanted to keep them for Tomba."

But Almasian and Topalian were a story. The *New York Times'* Ira Berkow wrote about

Swiss but ahead of seven other sleds. The Jamaicans, inspiration for the movie "Cool Runnings" released the year before, finished last, disqualified for an overweight sled.

"My boss had told me he'd let me take a leave of absence to go to the Olympics, but 'you'll have to beat the Jamaicans,'" says Almasian with a smile. "In fact, we did beat the Jamaicans ... but with an asterisk."

In the blink of an eye, as they crossed the finish line on their first run, Almasian and Topalian noticed two Armenian flags being waved above them by a group of proud Norwegian-Armenians.

Almasian's wife Kim, his fiancée at the time, flew over to Lillehammer to surprise him. Almasian's only regret is that the return flight he booked brought him home before the Closing Ceremonies.

He has not been in a bobsled since Lillehammer 1994. Armenia has sent teams to every Olympic Games since



Joe Almasian (front) and Kenny Topalian prepare for the start of the bobsled competition at the 1994 Winter Olympics.

the two hoping someone in Armenia, "where the electricity and gas aren't working and people are cold in their homes and food is scarce," knew of what they were doing and felt proud.

What began for Almasian as a quest to honor his grandparents, who escaped their homeland following the 1915 Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Turkish government (which has denied it occurred), gained a competitive edge. "There was the Armenian-spirit side of me, for sure," says Almasian. "But the athlete in me wanted to be as competitive as possible within our knowledge of the sport."

At Least They Weren't Last

In Lillehammer, Almasian and Topalian successfully completed their four bobsled runs over two days. They finished 36th, an aggregate nine seconds behind the gold medal-winning

Almasian and Topalian paved the way. The country has won 12 medals at the Summer Games, none yet in the Winter Games.

Almasian has never received any official acknowledgment from Armenia for his Olympic service. He and Topalian after returning from Lillehammer were presented with Olympic rings made by a jeweler of Armenian descent living in Canada. Almasian kept his racing helmet and suit. He brings them out on occasion when speaking at church and civic-group functions.

He also has the medallion given to all the participants in Lillehammer (along with a silver cheese slicer with the Olympic logo).

And he is proud to have been an Olympian.

"It's fun to tell the story to people who know me, but don't know that part of my history," says Almasian, who has lived in Westford for 10 years. "For me, it was a proud moment."



American
University
of Armenia

AUA Summer 2014 Program

The American University of Armenia is pleased to announce the **AUA Summer 2014 Program**. Come join us for three weeks at Armenia's very own **American-accredited** institution and get in touch with modern-day Armenia. **Application deadline has been extended to February 15, 2014.**

For more information, visit summer2014.aua.am

Arts & Living

Zareh – Transforming Universal Issues and Awareness into Art

By Ditta Triwidianti

LOS ANGELES (*LA Splash*) – Zareh began to draw at a very young age. As a child, he used to draw animals, portraits and other subjects. Drawing or painting has always been an outlet that makes him feel alive. Art is a temple that he has created in which his soul dances freely, his imagination is welcomed and his desires and emotions are expressed. The movements of his hand when he draws help him to release and transform his energy and his thoughts. These through pencils, paints and media, in turn, transform and become images of his artwork. Some artwork contours are blended, smudged and multiplied, creating a feeling of motion and a relationship with the surrounding.

Born in Aleppo, Syria, in 1956, he moved with his family to Lebanon in 1963. During the Lebanese Civil War of the 1970s, Zareh studied art at Beirut's Al Kaslik University. The atrocities of the war, followed by the breakdown of tolerance and civility between quarreling communities, had a profound effect on the sensitive young artist. What he witnessed in those years would start to define the core concerns and attributes of his art, expressed at turns through sorrow, apprehension, and explosive outrage at manifestations of social and political injustice.

After moving to the United States in 1983, Zareh dedicated himself to create his artwork



Painting #28 Untitled 1991 Acrylic and ink on paper 19 1/2 X 25 1/2 inches

with much of his output designed to raise public awareness of universal issues such as environmental degradation, globalism and its dire consequences for disenfranchised societies, and human-rights violations. The memories and influences of the past come to life in his work. These very influences interact with his present experiences and continually change.

Many of Zareh's critically-acclaimed exhibitions, such as "The Red Trees of the Armenian Genocide" and "Marry the Priest," have been featured in the US media, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *La Opinion*, KTLA and others. Some projects were performance pieces, which were publicly displayed on the streets of Greater Los Angeles area.

"Existence is a collective experience. The feeling of existence is a sense of being different. Differences engender reaction and reaction leads to change. Life is the change. Changes bring awareness of time and movement. Differences enable us to compare and measure. Measure and proportion are the logic of mind. Completion and perfection do not exist. Reality is not absolute, it is relative. Art is an expression relative to environment and period." Zareh also enjoys exploring the commonality and the differences of living things. He likes to combine, change and transform them into art. "Sometimes, simplified organic forms, dots, an outline and geometric forms intricately accompany the realistic execution of my art."

Zareh's artwork is an act in which time and transformation seek existence in movement, see ZAREH, page 12



Stefan Martirosian (also spelled Stepan Martirosyan) with actress Catherine Zeta Jones

Drugs, Diamonds, International Intrigue – You Won't Believe Two Hollywood Producers' Crazy Backstory

LOS ANGELES (*LA Weekly*) – Remington Chase and Stefan Martirosian (also spelled Stepan Martirosyan) should be on top of the world. In the last two years, they have produced a dozen films, including "Lone Survivor," starring Mark Wahlberg as a Navy SEAL fighting for his life in Afghanistan. Two years ago, no one in the industry had heard of them, but now they mingle with A-list stars. By their own estimate they have

By Gene Maddaus

become the biggest independent financiers in the business, plowing \$100 million in cash into production, plus another \$200 million in bank loans.

In the week before Christmas, just before the premiere of "Lone Survivor," they're having coffee at Urth Caffé in Santa Monica – and sitting down for their first in-depth interview.

But Chase and Martirosian aren't here to talk about the bravery of the Navy SEALs or about working with Peter Berg. Instead, they want to quash a story about their pasts.

And no wonder. Their backgrounds include convictions for cocaine trafficking; ties to the Russian oil business, the Armenian government and the African diamond trade – and stints as federal informants. Most disturbing are allegations that they orchestrated a contract killing in Moscow – allegations that the Moscow police took seriously enough to investigate.

Chase and Martirosian say they can explain everything. (They've brought along a Hollywood publicist to help.) But they are deeply worried that if information about their pasts comes to light, they will lose their financing, which will ruin their movie careers.

After nearly 30 years in America, Stefan Martirosian still speaks with a thick Armenian accent. A mop of dark, black hair falls over his eyes.

Remington Chase is a hefty man, with sandy hair and glasses. As a kid in LA, he got bit parts on TV shows. Now, among other things, he is a helicopter pilot with an interest in aerial photography. While Martirosian projects Eastern European charm, Chase brims with intensity.

By their account, they met at a tourism conference in Moscow in 1979. Martirosian had come there as a student from Armenia, which was then a republic of the Soviet Union. Chase says he was there "on an interest in Moscow." They became friends. When Martirosian immigrated to Los Angeles in 1985, the two went into business together.

The nature of that business is not entirely clear – they maintain that their first venture was a dollar store in Moscow – but it is probably no coincidence that both were ensnared in separate drug stings in Jacksonville, Fla., in 1993.

It wasn't Martirosian's first brush with the law. In April 1989, he was on a bus that was stopped at the Border Patrol checkpoint in Sierra Blanca, Texas. Questioned by a Border Patrol agent, he said he was a Soviet citizen with legal residency in the United States, but he did not have his resident alien card.

As Martirosian was being taken off the bus, the agent spotted a duffel bag above his seat. Inside were four kilos of cocaine and a Russian newspaper.

To this day, Martirosian says the bag was not his. "I've never seen any cocaine in my life," he says. "I've never touched it."

see HOLLYWOOD, page 10

Pianist Armen Donelian to Present 'Sayat-Nova' Album

NEW YORK – Pianist, composer, bandleader and educator Armen Donelian and his trio will perform music from "Sayat-Nova: Songs of My Ancestors" at two CD release shows in April: at Tenri Cultural Institute of New York (April 4, 7:30 p.m.); and Castle Street Café, Great Barrington, Mass., (April 27, 4 p.m.), the New York Armenian Students Association announced.

Donelian has carved out an enviable career spanning four decades, including seminal stints with Jazzmen Sonny Rollins, Billy Harper, Chet Baker and Mongo Santamaria. But two other streams – Classical and Middle Eastern – have influenced Donelian's artistic direction. His new double album, "Sayat-Nova: Songs of My Ancestors," his 10th release for Sunnyside, which will be released on April 1, combines these divergent paths into a work of stunning cohesion and sonic beauty and further elevates Donelian's status as an improvising artist of the highest order.

As both a solo pianist and leader for nine years of a working trio (heard on *Oasis*, also on Sunnyside) with David Clark and George Schuller, Donelian focuses here on the quintessential and exquisite songs of the 18th-century Armenian troubadour, Sayat Nova (1712-1792). Sayat Nova's verses have been compared to Shakespeare's and his melodies rank with those of the greatest European composers. For generations, Sayat Nova has been revered throughout the Middle East as a musician, composer, poet and even philosopher.

"As a child," Donelian says, "the sounds of Middle Eastern, European Classical and American Jazz records were continually present in our multicultural household. These three threads form the tapestry of "Sayat-Nova: Songs of My Ancestors." Integrating them into a single coherent work is the realization of my lifelong aspiration. I am proud to present it to a broader public."

Preserving every detail of Sayat Nova's melodies, Donelian further redefines them both as a solo performer and with his cohorts, with one CD fully dedicated to each musical format. Using an alchemy of contemporary Jazz harmony and exuberant polyrhythm, Donelian polishes his 21st-century interpretations with an elegant and spacious Classical aesthetic that has identified his distinctive pianism and artistic vision since his 1975 debut with Santamaria.

One explanation for the trio's profound affinity for Donelian's music is that he shares significant history with these players. His collaboration with veteran bassist David Clark stretches back to 1993, when they first met as colleagues at the Interplay Summer Jazz Camp. While touring with the 1980s Middle East-Jazz fusion group, Night Ark, led by oudist Ara Dinkjian, Donelian met drummer/producer George Schuller whose group, Orange Then Blue, shared the same concert stage.



ARTS & LIVING

Drugs, Diamonds, International Intrigue – Two Hollywood Producers' Crazy Backstory

HOLLYWOOD, from page 9

Nevertheless, he pleaded guilty – and then skipped out on his sentencing. Two months later, he was in Las Vegas to watch a boxing match with his uncle. He says his attorney's assistant spotted him in a restaurant and turned him in.

Back before a judge, Martirosian tried to withdraw his plea. He claimed that he had only pleaded guilty because he thought he would get probation in exchange for providing information on KGB agents to the FBI.

The judge denied his request, and threw the book at him for fleeing his sentencing hearing. He was ordered to serve 9½ years in federal prison.

His luck improved, however, when the case went to appeal. The appeals court found that he had not been advised of the mandatory minimum sentence, overturning the conviction and the sentence. In 1992, he was released.

A free man for the first time in two years, Martirosian quickly turned around and offered to sell large quantities of cocaine to an undercover FBI agent in Jacksonville.

Court records tell the story. In May 1993, he arranged financing and traveled to Costa Rica to check on suppliers. Unfortunately for him, the DEA had infiltrated the suppliers. Martirosian agreed to help transport 800 kilos to St. Augustine, Fla. They agreed that Martirosian would send \$200,000 from LA to Colombia, and that the cocaine would be shipped from Colombia to Costa Rica and on to Florida. Instead, in September 1993, he was arrested in a St. Augustine hotel room.

Martirosian pleaded guilty and admitted the facts as outlined above. However, today he maintains his innocence.

Under the plea agreement, he was sentenced to nine years. He also agreed to help the government prosecute other cases.

Around this time, Martirosian called an old acquaintance, Michael Yamanis, a Greek businessman who had recently been released from prison after running a massive marijuana-trafficking organization in the late 1970s and early '80s.

By the time he was 34, Remington Chase had been to several colleges without getting a degree, and had gone by several names. At the time he was primarily known as William Paul Elliot, but he had also used William Elliot Westwood. Friends just called him Bill.

Then, in January 1993, he flew from Los Angeles to Atlanta, and then caught a connecting flight to Jacksonville. He picked up two items at the Delta ticket counter, went to his hotel and made a phone call.

That night, he and a friend boarded a yacht on the St. Johns River. Inside, they met their contact, who told them he had \$20,000 – the agreed purchase price for a one-kilo sample of cocaine. If the deal worked out, Chase had agreed to fly with him back to L.A., where he would sell the contact another 20 kilos.

Chase and his friend returned to the yacht after midnight, with one kilo in two plastic bags. Their contact field-tested it, and then turned over \$20,000 for Chase to count.

Chase and his friend disembarked. But before they were even off the docks, they were in handcuffs – accused of selling to undercover DEA agents. According to his plea agreement, Chase quickly admitted his guilt and volunteered to cooperate.

Martirosian and Chase might have spent the rest of their lives getting in and out of legal scrapes were it not for a wealthy Armenian friend. Vitaly Grigoriants is an oil man who has supplied the capital for their legitimate business ventures, including their foray into film production.

Martirosian met Grigoriants at Moscow State University. In the privatization scramble that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, Grigoriants became one of Russia's minor oligarchs. He accumulated his wealth trading in oil and gas, and later moved into banking and real estate. For the last 15 years, Martirosian says, he has acted Grigoriants' point man in the United States, which has given him entree to elite circles in Moscow and Yerevan, the Armenian capital.

For decades, Grigoriants has been a good friend of the Armenian president, Serge Sargsian, who came to prominence in the early 1990s as a commander of Armenian military forces during the Nagorno-Karabagh War. Following the cease-fire, Sargsian became the country's defense minister.

As for the president's oligarch friend, Grigoriants, he has kept a low profile in Armenia and Russia. He received some media attention for his role in funding a new Armenian cathedral in Moscow, but otherwise he is rarely mentioned.

By that time, Martirosian had been overseeing Grigoriants' enterprises in the United States for at least a decade. According to a deposition he gave in a real estate bankruptcy case in 2010, Martirosian convinced Grigoriants to invest in condo projects in California as a hedge against his Russian portfolio.

Martirosian has invested Grigoriants' money in real estate projects in California, Hawaii, Nevada, Arizona and the US Virgin Islands.

"It was bumpy, I have to say," Martirosian tells the *Weekly*. "We built condos we couldn't sell. One of the reasons we got into the movie business was the uncertainty of real estate."

In October 2010, a 70-year-old Hungarian man was arrested at his home in Vienna. Istvan Kele had a long criminal history, including the 1972 murder of a New Jersey bank guard during an armed robbery. For that crime, he was sentenced to life in prison – but he was paroled in 1989.

This time around, Kele and three other Hungarians were accused of plotting to break into the home of a Los Angeles jeweler, hold him

Randall Emmett and George Furla. In 2012, another announcement boosted the fund to \$525 million.

The announcements were not exactly true. There was no "fund," and the numbers were chosen for effect more than accuracy, according to Grant Cramer, an executive VP at Envision. But the pair was pumping serious money into production. (In credits, Martirosian appears as Stepan Martirosyan. He said he changed his name slightly to avoid having his cocaine case appear on Google.)

Martirosian and Chase say they were majority investors on many of their projects, funding 80 percent of "Lone Survivor," 80 percent of "2 Guns" and 50 percent of "Escape Plan," the action film starring Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Martirosian was interested in having his picture taken with movie stars. His IMDb page includes photos of himself with Robert De Niro, Bruce Willis, Jessica Alba, Nicolas Cage and many more. If he was more star-struck than Chase, it may be because he grew up in the Soviet Union, watching bootlegged American movies on video.

While the producers achieved commercial and critical success with one film – last year's "End of Watch" – most of the rest have been dismal flops.



Remington Chase, left, and Stefan Martirosian, right, at Cannes in 2012 with Gerard Butler, who was to star in a film they were producing, about a felon seeking revenge on those who framed him. The project was canceled before shooting.

at gunpoint and take \$5 million in cash and jewels from his safe. According to federal prosecutors, Kele detailed his plan to a confidential informant.

The informant was none other than Chase.

Kele had met Chase a few years before, through Martirosian. Kele and Martirosian went way back, to their days in prison together at Terminal Island in Los Angeles in the early 1990s. When Kele was arrested, he realized that Chase had set him up.

As soon as he was extradited to Los Angeles, Kele called his old friend Martirosian from Kern County Jail and vowed to get even. That call was recorded and later obtained by the *Weekly*.

Earlier in 2010, Chase had been arrested in Nevada after being indicted on charges of Social Security fraud. While in custody, he had once again volunteered to cooperate with the government. Chase was released within a few weeks and eventually pleaded guilty to using a false Social Security number on a mortgage application. He was given probation.

Kele believed that Chase had set him up in order to reduce his own sentence. He blamed Martirosian for not warning him about it.

The businessman, Kasca Kalendarishvili, had been in the oil and gas industry, and Kele said he had run afoul of Martirosian's Russian boss.

Kele claimed that he never intended to carry out the murder, and that at some point Martirosian and Chase called it off.

Kalendarishvili had, in fact, been murdered on a snowy street near his apartment, in a wealthy district of Moscow, in February 2009. According to Russian news accounts, the 47-year-old man was out walking his dog just before midnight when an assailant ran up and shot him in the head.

In fact, Martirosian and Chase burst on the Hollywood scene just six weeks later, in September 2011, with an announcement at the Toronto International Film Festival. They had set up a company, Envision Entertainment, along with a \$250 million fund to produce films in partnership with two low-budget action producers,

The Mark Wahlberg/Denzel Washington movie "2 Guns" went over budget and underperformed at the box office. "Broken City" cost \$35 million and grossed just \$20 million.

"We were shocked, actually," Martirosian says. "We had three great stars. Russell Crowe, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Mark Wahlberg. The movie tanked. Very frustrating."

Among their projects now in development are movies based on two Hasbro board games: Monopoly and Hungry Hungry Hippos.

Kele told the police that he'd been informed that Kalendarishvili was blackmailing Martirosian and Chase's Russian employer. He claimed not to know the employer's identity.

In his letter to the Russian Embassy, Kele said he shot a lot of video of Kalendarishvili to prove that he was working.

"I had always lied to them why the 'killing' could not be done," Kele wrote. He also supplied the embassy with Kalendarishvili's license plate number – an apparent show of proof that he was involved.

After several trips to Moscow, Kele said that Martirosian grew frustrated and called off the killing. It was long afterward, Kele claimed, that he discovered that Kalendarishvili had, in fact, been killed.

In correspondence with LAPD, Moscow police seemed eager to follow up on the information.

Shortly thereafter, however, something very unusual happened. The US Attorney's office dropped the armed robbery case against Kele and his associates. In their motion, prosecutors explained that they were doing so because the FBI wanted to protect their informant, Chase.

Prosecutors believed they were required to hand over a copy of Chase's hard drive to the defense attorneys. The FBI believed that would compromise Chase's personal information, and his safety.

What's strange about that explanation is that Kele and the other defendants were well aware of Chase's identity. Kele had known him for years, and he knew exactly whom he was talking to

when the alleged conversations about an armed robbery occurred.

Nevertheless, Kele and his co-defendants were set free. Kele was sent back to Vienna, where he remains a free man. Berkesi was interviewed by a Hungarian news outlet. He alleged the FBI had tampered with evidence against him but acknowledged, "We are not angels."

Nothing ever came of the Moscow police and their "great international investigation."

It's unclear why. What is clear is that Kele was the key witness in the investigation. But with the threat of prosecution and lifetime incarceration no longer hanging over him, he no longer had any incentive to cooperate in an investigation of Chase – which might also ensnare himself.

Reached by email, Kele blamed the FBI for incarcerating him for more than a year on phony charges. But he did not blame Remington Chase.

Instead, he claimed that he was duped by a completely different person, who was only pretending to be Chase.

"I believe I was making an impetuous conclusion about being the same man," Kele wrote to the *Weekly*. "I am sorry, I cannot be of further help."

The FBI declined to comment on the case. Yvonne Garcia, the lead prosecutor, also declined to be interviewed.

Stefan Martirosian's passion project is a film about the Armenian genocide – the "Schindler's List" of Armenia. He hired a writer to draft a script and pitched it to Martin Scorsese. Though Scorsese said he was busy with other things, Martirosian considers the conversation the highlight of his career in movies. "I always thought of him as a gangster. ... I couldn't believe how spiritual he was. We discussed tragic things in Armenian history. He was really well informed."

But the story becomes more difficult to fathom when Chase tries to explain his earlier relationship to Kele.

For that, he must back up 35 years, to when, he says, he began working for federal authorities. "I became friends with law enforcement," he says, repeating this for emphasis.

He says that he has traveled the globe, on the government's behalf, in pursuit of terrorists. Among his tasks was talking to Kele about his "Afghani friends."

"The most important thing about Kele was he was really close to an Afghani terrorist," Martirosian says.

The entire relationship with Kele, in Chase's telling, was an elaborate ruse to try to get information about terrorism. The only reason he went to Africa with Kele, Chase says, was to explore connections between terror networks and gun-running rings. "Every day we were with them in Africa, federal authorities were in the hotel room next to us," Chase says.

The diamond deals were just part of the cover story, he says.

"We have no interest in diamonds," Chase says. "We have no interest being in Africa. I don't know shit about diamonds."

(On the jail call with Kele, Martirosian made several references to diamonds. At one point, he claimed that Chase had lost thousands on a diamond deal in Africa. "He ripped me off for \$27,000," Martirosian complained. "He lost my diamonds in South Africa. ... You know what happened to my f***ing money with the diamonds.")

Asked specifically about the murder in Moscow, Martirosian says he's never heard the name Kalendarishvili.

Throughout the conversation, Maxine Leonard, the publicist, has been quiet, occasionally looking down at her phone. But as the conversation progresses, her eyes grow wider and wider. Finally, she simply has to interrupt.

"Can I just stop right here?" she asks, in a very polite British accent. "This is all just kind of incredible, amazing stuff. You don't want any of this – nobody wants any of what I've been listening to for the last 30 minutes, anywhere in any kind of like print story about you guys being involved in Hollywood making movies."

They try to allay her worries, but she is not kidding around.

"Any of this stuff coming out," she says, "is horribly damaging."

(This story has been abbreviated from its original version because of space constraints. To see the story in its entirety, visit

<http://www.lawweekly.com/2014-01-02/news/remington-chase-stefan-martirosian/>)



ARTS & LIVING

The Day the Music Didn't Die

By Carl M. Cannon

WASHINGTON (RealClearPolitics) – Let's get this out of the way, because although it's a cliché, it's an indelible one: February 3, 1959, was not the day the music died.

Rock-and-roll was really just getting started when the small airplane carrying Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper crashed in an Iowa cornfield. The music they had played earlier that night at the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake can be heard in Iowa to this day – even at the venue where the three doomed troubadours performed their last show – and in every continent on the globe.

Actually, it didn't even stop for even one day. The show must go on and this one did: "Winter Dance Party" continued that night, February 3, 1959, as the rest of the musicians on the ill-fated tour – Dion and the Belmonts, guitarist Tommy Allsup, bass player Waylon Jennings and others – played their scheduled concert in Moorhead, Minn.

Montreal filmmaker Sevan Garabedian recently unearthed a photo of Jennings – who gave up his seat on the doomed plane at the last minute – playing before 1,100 fans at the Moorhead Armory. "You can see the anguish on his face," Garabedian told a Minneapolis reporter.

Waylon Jennings was haunted by the tragedy for years and not just because he lost two friends from Texas (Holly and the Big Bopper, whose real name was J.P. Richardson) and not only because he surrendered his seat at Richardson request – or because when Valens learned Jennings had given up his berth, he badgered Allsup into flipping a coin for the last seat on the plane. The problem for Waylon was what he and Buddy had said to each other about it.

It was cold that night and snow had begun falling during the show. The three performers who were flying to the next concert were driven to the Mason City airport to meet up with a 21-year-old newly married local pilot named Roger Peterson. According to the subsequent accident report by the Civil Aeronautics Board, a precursor agency to the FAA, Peterson made an "unwise decision" in taking off in such conditions. But the fault wasn't entirely the young pilot's. Inexplicably, Peterson wasn't provided

with an updated "flash" report from the US Weather Service showing that a 100-mile band of snow had appeared out of Canada, vastly reducing the ceiling he'd be flying into. Although he didn't know it, Fargo's airport was closed by the time he took off because of the blizzard conditions.

In addition, the four-seat Beechcraft Bonanza that Peterson was flying was equipped with a new gyroscope, the Sperry F-3 Gyro, which hadn't been in the planes he'd used during his instrument training. They displayed the horizontal pitch the opposite of what he was used to. The plane taxied at 12:55 a.m. and Jerry Dwyer, who owned the Beechcraft, watched it take off from the airport tower. Although Dwyer dismissed it as an optical illusion, he thought at the time that he saw the plane "going down at a very slow rate of descent as it went farther away from us."

Sadly, he was right. Peterson apparently thought he was climbing when he was really descending and his plane hit the ground at 170 miles per hour, killing all four aboard instantly. By the time the surviving musicians reached their destination 360 miles away, they knew what had happened. It was then that Waylon Jennings' mind returned – and not for the last time – to his final conversation with Buddy Holly.

The Bopper approached his good friend Waylon. "Man, I've been sick," he said. "I have the flu. I can't get any rest at all. Would you mind if I take your place on the plane?"

"If it's okay with Buddy," Jennings replied, "it's okay with me."

Holly understood, but he couldn't resist needling his bass player. "I hope your damned bus freezes up again," he told Waylon with a grin.

"Well," Waylon quipped in reply, "I hope your ol' plane crashes."

By his own admission, it took Waylon Jennings many years to get over that. Yet he went on to a long and influential career. And he wasn't alone. The 15-year-old singer who took Holly's place in Moorhead that night was named Robert Velline, who would later be known as Bobby Vee.

Bye, Bye, Miss American Pie

Buddy Holly had recently left his hometown of Lubbock, Texas, resettling with his young wife in a New York apartment where he taped

some poignant new songs. The most well-known and talented of the touring stars in his group, Holly had big plans for his career. They included a new direction in his music, his own record label and appearances in the movies. To get them launched, he needed money and he put together some other rock-and-rollers for a tour the promoters dubbed the "Winter Dance Party of 1959," playing venues in the upper Midwest to sold-out crowds of teenagers.

Holly's dreams would come true, but only posthumously. Immortality would also accrue to Ritchie Valens, the Mexican-American prodigy from California. Both were the subject of feature films about their lives. "La Bamba" helped introduced the world to Hispanic actors Lou Diamond Phillips and Esai Morales, as well as the movie subject's song-writing ability and talent for cultural fusion.

On the flip side of his La Bamba single was an even better song, Donna, which inspired a generation of Mexican-American artists ranging from Carlos Santana to Los Lobos.

Meanwhile, Waylon Jennings cast out on his own, gravitating first toward country and western music and later, in rebellion against the strictures of Nashville, he was at the vanguard (along with Willie Nelson) of a sound called "Outlaw Country," based mostly in Austin, Texas. The enduring quality of that music can be measured by the fact that at this year's Grammy Awards, Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson played a tune made famous by Willie and Waylon, *Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Cowboys*.

The 2014 Grammy show also featured the two surviving Beatles, which was fitting as well. In 1958, Buddy Holly's band, The Crickets, played at The Palladium in London. Young John Lennon couldn't make the scene, but he watched on television and said later that he copied everything from having the lead guitar player sing, to being willing – as Buddy was – to wear glasses on stage. Lennon even said the name Beatles was a takeoff on The Crickets.

"Holly passed it on via the Beatles and via us," Keith Richards of the *Rolling Stones* once said. "He's in everybody ... not bad for a guy from Lubbock, right?"

And in *American Pie*, the 1971 hit by Don McLean, their contribution was immortalized for a new generation of music aficionados.

A long, long time ago

I can still remember how that music used to make me smile

And I knew if I had my chance

That I could make those people dance

And maybe they'd be happy for a while

But February made me shiver

With every paper I'd deliver

Bad news on the doorstep

I couldn't take one more step

I can't remember if I cried

When I read about his widowed bride

But something touched me deep inside

The day the music died.

It's evocative writing, to be sure, but the music was very much alive – and mutating constantly. The Grateful Dead performed Holly's hit *Not Fade Away* more than 500 times in concert. This keeps happening to Holly's music. Three-and-a-half decades after *American Pie*, a Buddy Holly song called *Dearest*, which was recorded in his New York apartment sessions, was featured on the soundtrack to the hit indie movie "Juno." Thus was Buddy Holly's music introduced to a generation of young moviegoers who could have been his great-grandchildren.

"I play Buddy Holly every night before I go on," Bruce Springsteen told *Rolling Stone* magazine in 1978. "That keeps me honest."

When Bob Dylan won a Grammy award in 1998 for his album "Time Out of Mind," he said at the awards ceremony that he'd been in the audience when Buddy Holly performed in Duluth on January 31, 1959.

Dylan was being lyrical, but in Iowa this time of year, when the wind kicks up and the snow swirls, fans of the music find it easy to imagine the specters of the past. In 1979, in the run-up to the 20th anniversary of the crash, an Iowa radio personality known as the "Mad Hatter" (real name Darryl Hensley) was in the studio at a new FM radio station in Clear Lake gabbing

to his listeners.

On a whim, he told me 30 years ago, he said over the air that "we must be in a time warp, because Buddy Holly had just walked through the door." The Hatter then did a make-believe interview with Holly, played some of his records and suggested a concert be held in his honor.

Soon, the phone in the station was ringing off the hook. "Are you going to do it?" they asked. So he decided to go for it. They held the show, naturally, at the old Surf Ballroom. It eventually sold out, just as it had in 1959 and it's been an annual happening in Northern Iowa ever since, even as the music industry has changed. The radio station changed call letters and owners, as did the Surf Ballroom, which is now owned by a non-profit dedicated to historical preservation. The Hatter himself ended up in Vermont, but not before being elected to Iowa's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In the meantime, Iowa has become known for something else, as well: the quadrennial political caucuses that kick off the presidential nominating process. In 1984, as a slew of Democrats vied for the dubious distinction of running in November against Ronald Reagan, I covered those caucuses.

Yes, it seemed that President Reagan would be impossible to beat, but the caucuses held four years before showed that you never knew what might come out of Iowa. Reagan was essentially the presidential nominee-in-waiting for his party in 1980, just as Hillary Clinton seems to be today. But other prominent candidates lined up to test Reagan, just as Clinton will be challenged in 2016 and it was perhaps the least-feared of these contenders who temporarily stalled Reagan's coronation by defeating the Gipper in Iowa. The would-be usurper's name was George H.W. Bush.

Reagan eventually dispatched Bush, along with the other challengers, but he tapped Bush as his running mate. This led to an eight-year run as vice president for Bush, a four-year stint as president – and a two-term presidency for Bush's eldest son. And today, another Bush son, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, is emerging as a possible GOP hope for 2016.

Little of that was apparent back in 1984, when I was covering the Democrats in Iowa, but that's the thing about politicians: Like musicians, you have to see them perform out on the road and listen to their tunes to really understand their appeal.

"Americans," Ronald Reagan proclaimed in his first real campaign stump speech, "have a rendezvous with destiny." Conservatives loved the sound of that, but Reagan was riffing off FDR, who said it first.

In this way, politicians are more like musicians and less like the journalists who cover them. Plagiarism scandals are rarer in politics and music than in the media for the simple reason that in those professions imitation really is considered a sincere form of flattery. Yes, Bobby Vee filled in for Buddy Holly – and copied him, too – but Holly's career was never the same once he opened for Elvis Presley in 1955 and neither was his sound. As for the Crickets, their basic two guitars, bass and drummer formula was copied by the Beatles and countless other bands.

"I shamelessly do a tribute to Holly in just about every show that I do," Bobby Vee once told Minnesota journalist Pamela Huey. "He was my Elvis. As much as I loved Elvis, Buddy was the guy who spoke to me."

Thirty years ago, I dropped off the Iowa campaign trail briefly – although not as briefly as I thought – and drove from Des Moines to Clear Lake. The Mad Hatter gave me an interview and a nice perch at the Surf Ballroom where the bands played their nostalgic little hearts out. The kids in the audience weren't kids anymore – some of them had been at the 1959 show – but they sang and danced as if they were young again. On the fateful and snowy night that Buddy Holly was there, the teenagers didn't want to let him leave the stage. And 25 years later, in 1984, they didn't want it to end, either.

Outside, the wind had kicked up, leading to a whiteout that would strand us in that town for days. Inside the Surf Ballroom, however, no one knew that and we danced one last time to Peggy Sue. As the concert came to a close, the emcee shouted, "Buddy Holly lives!" So do they all.

(Carl M. Cannon is the Washington Bureau Chief for RealClearPolitics.)



Tekeyan Cultural Association Of Greater NY/NJ



Please join us

for a Middle Eastern specialty

Za'tar Mana'esh, Labneh, Cheese, Fresh Greens, all the fixings & dessert

Sunday, February 16th at 1:30 pm

The TCA Center

560 Sylvan Avenue

Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

\$25 per person

BYOB

RSVP by Feb 16th to Diana at (201) 568-9748



ARTS & LIVING

Dr. Levon Chookaszian To Speak on Art of Armenians of the Crimea and Romania

FRESNO – Dr. Levon Chookaszian, director of the UNESCO Chair of Art History at Yerevan State University, will give a presentation titled “The Armenians of the Crimea and Romania as Seen Through Their Art,” on Wednesday, February 12 at 7:30 p.m. The lecture will be held in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191, on the Fresno State campus and is part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring 2014 Lecture Series.

The lecture is co-sponsored by the Virginia-based Ararat Foundation, which was founded in 1985 and promotes Armenian culture and Christian faith, through lectures on Armenian subjects, seminars, literature distribution and research. The foundation has worked independently and in cooperation with other groups and has sponsored more than 60 lectures, held mostly in Washington DC. Dean Shahinian organized the foundation and has served as its executive director since its inception.

The study of the artistic legacy of the Armenians in medieval Crimea and Romania allows for the reconstruction and imagining, to



Dr. Levon Chookaszian

a certain degree, of a broader picture, a kind of mosaic of the culture of immigrants from Armenia. The Armenian churches, monasteries, and illustrated manuscripts, are the main art works testifying to the presence of Armenians in medieval Crimea and Romania and their cultural activity there. Chookaszian will explore this rich, but for many, little-known cultural heritage.

Chookaszian is one of the leading authorities in the world on Armenian art. He is the author of two monographs: one on the art of 13th century Armenian miniaturist Grigor (*Grigor Tsaghkogh*, 1986), and the other on the art of the painter Arshag Fetvadjan (*Arshag Fetvadjan*, 2011). Chookaszian has taught at Yerevan State University since 1978 and is one of the founders of the department of art history. In 1996 he established the UNESCO Chair of Armenian Art History. Since 1992 he has delivered nearly 200 lectures at universities, libraries and museums across the world.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

Zareh – Transforming Universal Issues and Awareness into an Artwork

ZAREH, from page 9
change, sequence, repetition, relationship and resemblance. His work conveys feelings, imagination, communication, struggle, relief and his marks of existence. “My art on canvas has evolved and transcended to an outlet using our ever growing media, the issues of social injustice compelled me to utilize my expression of art as a voice to the multitude.” added him.

To find most of his artworks and more information check Zareh’s website (www.artistzareh.com).

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

MARCH 1 – Poon Paregentan Dinner-Dance. Sts.Vartanantz Armenian Church, Chelmsford, Annual Poon Paregentan Dinner Dance will be held at the church’s Kazanjian Ballroom, 180 Old Westford Rd. Chelmsford. Children’s Activities, 5-6 p.m. Dinner, 6 p.m. Following dinner, non-stop Armenian and Middle East music provided by the Ani All-Stars featuring: Vocals and dumbeg, Jason Naroian; Joe Kouyoumjian, oud; Ara Jeknavorian, clarinet; and Kevin Magarian, guitar. Paid advance tickets (February 23) are \$25 for adults, \$10 for children (6-12), and 5 & under, free. At-the-door, \$35 for adults and \$15 for children. For reservations, contact Patty- 978-937-9379 or email pkcookie@comcast.net

MARCH 8 – Revolt of February 18 anniversary by Lowell “Aharonian” Gomideh, 6:30, ARS Community Center, 142 Liberty St., Lowell. Buffet dinner and program, “More Unknown Sites of Armenia” by Joe Dagdigian. Admission, \$20 adults; \$10 students.

MARCH 29 – Saturday, 7:30 p.m., Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston presents a Musical Evening featuring Janet Khalarian, with the participation of the Hamazkayin Erebuni Dance Ensemble, St. James Armenian Church, Mosesian Cultural Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Donation \$20. For tickets, call (617) 926-6268 or Meri Memirjian at (781) 273-2770.

MAY 14 – NEW DATE: Chefs Party for Our Park! Benefit for the Fund to Care for Armenian Heritage Park, Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston, Cambridge. Celebrate with Boston’s Top Chefs presenting signature dishes inspired by parents, grandparents or mentors for you to taste while you mix and mingle. Advanced Reservations required. To receive the e-invite, email info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 9 – Tribute to the Late Abp. Torkom Manoogian, at St. Vartan Cathedral, 630 Second Ave. (corner 34th St.), New York City. Following Sunday Divine Liturgy and Requiem (services start at 10:30 a.m.) in sanctuary. Luncheon & program – “Patriarch, Primate, Poet: The Legacy of Abp. Torkom Manoogian” – begins at 1 p.m. in Haik & Alice Kavookjian



On Saturday, March 29, at 7:30 p.m., Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston presents a Musical Evening featuring Janet Khalarian, with the participation of the Hamazkayin Erebuni Dance Ensemble, St. James Armenian Church, Mosesian Cultural Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Donation \$20. For tickets, call (617) 926-6268 or Meri Memirjian at (781) 273-2770.

Auditorium. Donation is \$50 per person. For information or to reserve, contact Lynn Beylerian at (201) 848-7984 (lynnbeylerian@gmail.com) or Andrea Halejian at (201) 445-6882 (halejian@hotmail.com). RSVP by Feb. 2.

Finding solutions to your legal needs can be challenging

With over 90 attorneys serving our clients needs, the McLane Law Firm has the depth and experience in a variety of practice areas:

Commercial Litigation
Corporate Law
Domestic & Family Law
Employment Law
Intellectual Property Law
Real Estate & Land Use Law
Tax Law



www.mclane.com



For more information, please contact
Jeanmarie Papelian at 781.904.2700 or
jeanmarie.papelian@mclane.com

TradeCenter 128 Woburn, Massachusetts 781.904.2700



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Heroes or Villains?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

When Osama bin Laden was shooting Soviet Mig fighter planes in Afghanistan using shoulder-launched heat-seeking rockets supplied by the US, he was hailed as a hero, a freedom fighter struggling to defeat an atheist power occupying the Moslem land of Afghanistan. And when Brezhnev's army left Afghanistan, tails between their legs, bin Laden turned the muzzle of his gun against his US allies, eventually bringing his violence to the American shores and destroying the World Trade Center, the same voice which had credited him with heroism branded him overnight as a terrorist.

There is an Armenian saying, fire burns where it falls.

Indeed, more than 3,000 families were burnt and they will never forgive nor forget the acts which took the lives of their loved one.

But, in addition to the pain of the victims and the survivors, the story has a moral. The moral of this story is that the definition of a hero or a terrorist depends mostly on the perspective of the person defining the act of violence and the actor.

If an act of terror is in line with the party's interest, then the perpetrator is a hero. Conversely, if the violence is against that party's interest, the perpetrator becomes a vile terrorist.

Acquisition and use of power can never be viewed neutrally since the 16th century when Niccolo Machiavelli published his seminal book on political philosophy, *The Prince*. Ever since, the word "Machiavellian" has become synonymous with deceit, despotism and political manipulation, although the author – a poet and a playwright at the same time – was objectively describing the power of the rulers and the exercise of governing people.

Armenians being at the receiving end of that power throughout their history can better understand being the underdog under a hostile rule. Armenians, in their turn, have sometimes resorted to violence only to defend themselves.

This year marks the 41st anniversary of the beginning of such violence, which shook the powerful state of Turkey and once again promoted the forgotten issue of the Genocide on the world political agenda after it lay seemingly forgotten in history's waste basket.

It began on January 27, 1973, when Gourgen Yanikian assassinated two Turkish consular officers, Mehmet Baydar and Baladir Demir, in a Santa Barbara hotel room in California. On the occasion of this anniversary, the Assembly of the Turkish American Associations (ATAA), which seems to be the propaganda arm of the Turkish government, issued a statement reminding the Armenian public the "evil deeds of Marxist Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and neo-Fascist Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG)."

According to the statement, these groups, who took over for Yanikian in the ensuing years, carried out 300 attacks killing 77 diplomats and civilians and wounding more than 700 people, including non-Turks.

The ATAA has also published 48 pictures of the victims, mostly Turkish diplomats.

Looking at these pictures, a bystander may sincerely empathize with these victims and their families, none of whom directly had a hand in the Armenian Genocide.

But the perpetrators of those acts of violence were motivated and propelled by a deep wound and a never-ending sense of anger. Yanikian himself was troubled throughout his life by the murder of his family members and the murder of an entire nation. Also, the youth who followed suit had a selfless dedication to a cause that they deemed justified putting their own lives in harms' way to carry the mission.

The victims of the political violence had their own personal dreams, dreams for their families and for their nation. That is one side of the equation. On the other side of the equation, a million and a half Armenians had their dreams, they deserved to live their personal lives and enjoy a free and independent sovereign homeland. Since the Turks have reduced all the perished lives to a debate about statistics, then we may forgo the human aspect of the body count and conclude that the pain and loss of the Armenians outweigh the Turkish losses. Don't forget that in addition to the loss of human lives, Armenians lost their homeland of 3,000 years.

One may be for or against political violence but the truth of the matter is that Turkey's political establishment – long assuming the Genocide to be forgotten – only reacted to those acts and Turkey's foreign minister at the time, Ihsan Sabri Caglayangil, invited the leaders of the three political parties to Geneva, Switzerland – the ARF, Hunchak and ADL – to explore the means of stopping the acts of terror.

The negotiations which began in Geneva were supposed to continue in New York, when the foreign minister planned to attend the UN General Assembly session.

But the Turkish government had in the meantime done its homework and found out that the Armenian political parties no longer enjoyed their erstwhile organizational discipline which had brought to justice the perpetrators of the Genocide earlier in the century. The movement had gotten out from the hands of the Armenian political parties and the young generation had joined the worldwide political action movement. Therefore, the Turkish Foreign Ministry even did not bother to disinvite the party leaders. Instead, they chose a more serious course; they approached the Israelis and made a common cause with them as Armenian groups had made an alliance with the Palestinians with whom they were training in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

When Ariel Sharon invaded Lebanon in 1982, his mission was to destroy the power structure of the Palestinians. That mission also included turning over the Armenian youth caught in the camps and all related documents to Ankara, so that the Turkish "Deep State" could do its job and bring a halt to political violence.

The ADL, as a conservative organization, has not espoused political violence outside historic Armenia. But it looks like the facts of life sometimes defy ideologies. The 1970s and 1980s brought the issue of the Armenian Genocide to the world political focus, whether positive or negative – that is an undeniable fact.

After four decades, in hindsight, some people may applaud the deeds of the Armenian youth, others may blame them and say they tarnished our reputation. To objectively assess those events, one has to go outside the parameter of the Armenian thinking and find out the impact of those times on non-Armenians. One case in point is the prominent Turkish writer Elif Shafak, who is an established and outspoken Turkish author and columnist. The Free Encyclopedia qualifies her "as Turkey's bestselling female writer. Shafak is a brave champion of cosmopolitanism, a sophisticated feminist and an ambitious novelist who infuses her magical realist fiction with big, important ideas Critics have named her as one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary Turkish and world literature."

She was born in 1971, the period when Armenian political violence began. She was the daughter of a Turkish diplomat and throughout her formative years, the word "Armenians" sent shivers down the backs of her and her family.

As she grew up, she was curious to find out the source of the Armenians' anger. And when she read history – the real one and not the one taught in her homeland – she became one of the most ardent sympathizers of the Genocide victims and in one of her novels, *The Bastard of Istanbul*, she dealt with the issue of Genocide only to find herself in front of a Turkish court, being accused of "insulting Turkishness."

Another compelling case is the story of a Spanish journalist, Jose Antonio Gurriaran. On December 30, 1980, he left the building of the newspaper *Pueblo* in Madrid and entered a telephone booth to talk to his wife. When he put down the receiver, two bombs exploded in the nearby headquarters of Swissair and TWA. Nobody died but among the nine injured was Jose Antonio. While still in the hospital, when he struggled to save both legs, he started to read books and materials about the case and the history of the Armenians. He also interviewed ASALA members. Soon after the incident, his book, titled *La Bomba*, was released, giving the first-hand account of a Spanish journalist and the tragic story of the survival of a whole nation.

When asked whether it was worthwhile so much sacrifice and bloodshed, and were the fighters, heroes or terrorists, Armenians may never come up with an objective answer. It is a burning issue and we will always have a subjective answer.

Therefore the best way is to leave the answer to a prominent Turkish writer and a Spanish journalist.

THE ARMENIAN Mirror Spectator



Established 1932
An ADL Publication

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Gabiella Gage

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR
Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:
Edmond Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

Florence Avakian, 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
Berlin - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:

Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian, Jirair Hovsepian

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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

© 2014 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 02472-0302

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

Notice to Contributors

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

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

telephone number.

– Deadline for submission of all articles and advertising is 12 noon on Monday of the week of publication.

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

– The *MS* will publish only one article about an upcoming organizational event. For major special events, exceptions may be made only by special arrangement with the editors.

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

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

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



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

European Court of Human Rights Intervenes in Artsakh Conflict

It is noteworthy that the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is holding simultaneous hearings on two rival lawsuits filed by Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Is this a mere coincidence or an attempt by the court to intervene in a thorny dispute that political leaders have failed to resolve for over 25 years?

This week, ECHR is hearing the case of "Sargsyan vs. Azerbaijan," dealing with Minas Sargsyan's complaint against the Republic of Azerbaijan, claiming that he was forced to flee his Gulistan home in the Shahumyan region, after his property was destroyed by Azeri armed forces in June 1992. The Sargsyan case was first filed with ECHR on August 11, 2006. Interestingly, the Court held hearings on both the Armenian and Azerbaijani complaints on the same day: it heard the "Chiragov and Others vs. Armenia" case in the morning of September 15, 2010, and later that afternoon, the "Sargsyan vs. Azerbaijan" case.

In a preliminary decision on December 14, 2011, ECHR found Sargsyan's complaint to be partly admissible. The court rejected Azerbaijan's contention that the case should be dismissed because it covered events prior to Azerbaijan's ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights in 2002. Unfortunately, applicant Minas Sargsyan passed away in 2009, but his two children are continuing the complaint. ECHR will further probe the merits of the Sargsyan case during its February 5, 2014 hearing.

Two weeks earlier, ECHR heard the rival case of "Chiragov and Others vs. Armenia," in which six Azerbaijani Kurds had filed a complaint against the Republic of Armenia. They claimed to be unable to return to their homes and properties in the Lachin district since May 17, 1992, having been forced to flee because of the Karabagh (Artsakh) war.

The Azeri complaint against Armenia was first filed with ECHR on April 6, 2005. In a preliminary decision on December 14, 2011, ECHR agreed to take up the case, finding that the ongoing negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan did not preclude the Court from dealing with this contentious situation. ECHR held a subsequent hearing on January 22, 2014, to consider the following questions:

- 1) does Armenia exercise effective control over the territory of Artsakh?
- 2) do the six Azeri citizens possess sufficient documentation proving their identity and ownership of the claimed properties?
- 3) should the Azeri applicants have exhausted all domes-

tic remedies (ECHR requirement) by applying first to Artsakh courts prior to filing a complaint with ECHR, considering the further complication that Artsakh is not a recognized state?

Here are some thoughts about ECHR's crucial role in these two conflicting cases:

1) Both complaints were filed with ECHR almost 10 years ago and cover alleged human rights violations that had occurred over two decades earlier. Since the Armenian applicant and one of the six Azeris had died in the intervening years, neither one will ever see the justice that they had sought from the European Court. As the popular saying goes, "justice delayed is justice denied!"

2) ECHR's obvious effort to take simultaneous action on these two separate yet opposing cases indicates that the Court might be trying to resolve not only these two complaints, but also lay the groundwork for the resolution of the Artsakh conflict, at least the refugees' right to return to their homes.

ECHR's even-handed treatment of Armenian and Azerbaijani applicants thus far would lead one to believe that the Court would eventually rule in favor of both cases opening the door to thousands of additional complaints from refugees on both sides who suffered a similar fate during the Artsakh war. Since all member countries of the European Council are obliged to comply with ECHR's decisions, the Court may order that these refugees be allowed to return to their native homes, thereby imposing a partial humanitarian solution on an intractable conflict that the leaders of both countries and international mediators have been unable to resolve for over 25 years.

Keep on Truckin': Turkey and Al Qaeda in Syria

By Dr. Can Erimtan

In view of Turkey's possible meddling in the "civil" war in neighboring Syria, news about a Turkish truck headed for the Syrian border appears rather uncomfortable for the ruling government in Ankara, already in the throes of a corruption scandal.

In the first days of the new year, Turkish media reported that a truck carrying aid for Syria that had been collected by the by-now notorious Humanitarian Aid Foundation, or IHH, had been stopped by the local gendarmerie of the Turkish province of Hatay bordering Syria.

IHH garnered a lot of public attention in 2010, as a result of Israel's violent attack on the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza. Now, with war raging in Syria, it seemed that IHH again appeared willing to aid fellow-Muslims under threat, supplying humanitarian aid to those in need. But some days later, the journalist Fevzi Kizilkoyun revealed in the popular daily *Hürriyet* that the truck had allegedly been carrying weapons and ammunition, bulletproof jackets and electronic devices, in addition to a number of survival goods.

When the gendarmerie moved the truck to their headquarters, a total of three individuals were detained - two Turkish and one Syrian national. IHH disowned the truck, and subsequently it was revealed that the truck in question actually belonged to Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT) and that the detained individuals were to be freed on account of their special status as intelligence officers. The MIT operatives then revealed that the truck and its cargo had been part of an operation classified as a "state secret."

In this context, Turkish President Abdullah Gül entered the fray to declare that "[certain] very extreme groupings have emerged in parts of Syria close to the Turkish border. There exists a Turcoman entity that is being crushed in the middle of these very hard conditions. It is [Turkey's] duty to offer aid to Syria's Turcoman [community]. They stated that this affair to do with this truck was [about] a vehicle delivering aid to the Turcoman [community] in Syria. I asked them about this truck [and] that is what I was told as well."

The fact that Turkey's notorious intelligence organization MIT appeared directly involved led to the application of the 26th article of the law

regarding the National Intelligence Organization (Law No. 2937, adopted in 1983), which specifically prohibits criminal proceedings against MIT members and hence the real contents of the truck have not been made public. Thus the allegations of the presence of "weapons and ammunition, bulletproof jackets and electronic devices" could not be substantiated. The Interior Ministry instead intervened directly and allowed the truck to continue on its journey.

The government intervention apparently aimed at thwarting a serious investigation into the affair ensured that the opposition eagerly grabbed hold of the truck and its alleged contents to attack the Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and his government. This truck affair appeared on Turkey's political scene in the middle of a huge corruption scandal that has also been marred by government intervention. The leader of the opposition CHP (Republican People's Party), Kemal Kılıçdaroglu, for example, immediately made the pronouncement that Turkey was supplying weapons to Syria's armed opposition, elaborating that "[b]y means of sending weapons to the Syrian opposition Turkey is saying as much as go kill your neighbor."

Abdüllatif Sener, a co-founder of the AKP in 2001, who left the party in 2007 and has since joined the ranks of those critical of Turkey's current government, appeared on the opposition television channel Halk TV claiming that Erdogan himself is personally responsible for Turkey's current policy on Syria. He posited that the Free Syrian Army (FSA) was no longer active on the ground in Syria as it had been defeated by Islamist groupings, Sener calls "Al-Qaeda" and literally stated that "there is a [direct] link between Turkey and [Al] Qaeda elements." Sener even went on to say that the truck in question had been carrying "weapons for Al-Qaeda, [and that it was going into] a region controlled by Al Qaeda."

In this way, one can see how the US war on terror, originally launched by George W. Bush in 2001, has now even entered the political discourse in Turkey as a sure means to slander Tayyip Erdogan and his Muslim-democrat party, the AKP or Justice and Development Party. The war in Syria harbors a great many factions, some of which have clear Islamist leanings, with the Al-Nusra Front (ANF) being the most prominent and notorious one till recently. The West easily call this group an "Al-Qaeda associate" active in Syria. Another name that also seems to have dominated the airwaves recently is the

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), referred to as an "al-Qaeda splinter group." In this way, the current war in Syria is presented as another part of the supposedly never-ending war against the enemies of civilization, centered around a mysterious organization known only as Al-Qaeda.

The main armed opposition in Syria initially was formed by the Free Syrian Army (FSA), heavily supported by the US and Turkey. But the fighting over the past years has now led to a remarkably different landscape, where Islamist and Jihadist groupings are now calling the shots. Just like the FSA, these latter factions are also heavily dependent upon outside support, notably from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, apparently funneling millions of dollars to these "rebels" (or should they be classified as "terrorists" instead, giving their clear anti-Western and Islamist credentials?) on a monthly basis.

In fact, this material support apparently went even a lot further in some case. For instance, in the course of 2012, video footage emerged of auctions held in Saudi Arabia where fathers offered their sons up as would-be suicide bombers in exchange for substantial compensation offered by the highest bidder. It needs to be stressed, though, that this footage was originally aired by the Hezbollah-backed al-Manar TV, a source that cannot be seen as a neutral party in the Syrian conflict. In the end, however, the serious support received by these Islamist groupings has now led to a shift in the focus of the fighting - violence that has now led to more than 120,000 dead on the ground.

The armed opposition has now become mired in serious infighting, a violent power struggle that is currently pitting the FSA against ISIL. Already some three years ago I wrote that, in this context, a phrase that "Al-Qaeda remains a catch-all ghost entity" appears very helpful. At the time I wrote that "the name Al-Qaeda is used by the US to suggest the presence of a threat that is then employed to justify [possible US] military intervention. The flipside of that stance is now that terrorists and like-minded individuals opposing US dominance and interventionism equally cite the name Al-Qaeda to gain credibility, notoriety and media exposure."

Even today, the media persist in using the name Al-Qaeda to hint at the existence of a "global network" of Islamist fighters. In Syria, this seems abundantly clear as well, as Al-Nusra's current leader Abu Mohammad al-Golani even proclaimed his allegiance to Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, conspicuously absent from the news over the past years. And

now, the Turkish opposition also seems to have seized upon this opportunity by using the name Al-Qaeda to insinuate the AKP's supposedly nefarious goals in Syria (and possibly Turkey).

The story surrounding the seizure of the truck headed for Syria has in this way become another opposition argument against Tayyip Erdogan and his government, an argument that directly links the AKP with the name Al-Qaeda, hinting at the existence of certain affinities and sympathies that are clearly meant to create a wedge between the Turkish public and their openly pious prime minister. In contrast, the government has countered such reasoning by inserting the Turcoman community living in Syria into the narrative as an obvious appeal to Turkish nationalist sentiment, arguably to deflect attention from possible links to "Islamist groupings and/or Al-Qaeda affiliates."

As such, some members of the Turcoman minority in Syria opposed to Assad have already sought refuge in Turkey and even founded their own political organization last year, called the Syrian Turcoman Assembly, led by Semir Hafiz. At the time, Hafiz even declared his intention to set up a number of Turcoman brigades to join the fight against the Assad regime, as the Turcoman community was caught in the middle of competing factions - Kurdish and Islamist, to be precise.

Given all the external meddling, the conflict in Syria has become incredibly convoluted, and now that the Assad regime appears to be gaining ground against the opposition, the media tend to focus on the "Islamist groupings and/or Al-Qaeda affiliates" active in Syria. In the end, one cannot but wonder whether the Turkish truck destined for Syria was carrying "weapons and ammunition" for so-called Al-Qaeda affiliates, or logistical aid for the beleaguered Turcomans of Syria.

A few weeks have now passed, and on January 19 a grand total of seven more trucks headed for Syria were stopped near the Turkish city of Adana - trucks also supposedly carrying humanitarian aid for the suffering people of Syria. But again, mortar-shells, rockets and various other pieces of ammunition were also found inside those vehicles.

In response to these additional trucks being investigated, the government has not revived its earlier-employed Turcoman argument in defense. The fact that these trucks are being stopped now, as Turkey is mired in a corruption scandal that has led the prime minister to declare that his government is being attacked

see SYRIA, page 15



COMMENTARY

A Closer Look at Philadelphia's Armenian Presence

By George S. Yacoubian, Sr.

An anniversary is, by definition, an observation of a notable event.

When viewed through the prism of a church consecration, the occasion, whether commemorative or celebratory, is an expression of communion, devotion and pride.

And so it is that four local Philadelphia Armenian churches will have observed, beginning in 2013 and continuing through 2014, significant anniversaries. As follows: Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church (June 1, 2014), its 80th Anniversary; St. Gregory The Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church (October 27, 2013), its 90th Anniversary as well as 46 years at its present location; St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church (October 19, 20, 2013), its 50th Anniversary at its present location; and St. Mark's Armenian Catholic Church (May 4, 2014), its 90th Anniversary.

Ironically, the one silent church — Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church — is the oldest church in our region, having celebrated its 100th Anniversary on December 2, 2007.

Given the confluence of these anniversaries, voices have suggested a chronological history of Philadelphia's five Armenian churches. The thought expressed is that such a study might well instill in the descendants of our founding fathers, an admiration for the religious fervor of those who were transplanted thousands of miles to a new world, confronted with prejudice and hostility, stymied by a strange language, an alien culture-yet determined to both retain and nurture their cherished heritage.

It was about 1830 that the first Armenian set foot in Philadelphia. He was a young vartabed, Rt. Rev. Haroutune (alternately Haroutium) Vehabedian, who, upon completing his education, returned abroad. Later he became an archbishop, Patriarch of Constantinople (1885-1888) and Patriarch of the St. James Armenian Monastery of Jerusalem, (1888-1910).

The Philadelphia Armenian population in our area, in the early 1900s, was numbered at about 120. Primarily male, they travelled to America for employment. Many of them anticipated returning home. Homesick and lonely, these few, bonded by ethnicity, language and culture with the Christian faith firmly embedded in their psyche, gathered together, regardless of denomination, to worship.

Itinerant clergymen, primarily Protestant, but Apostolic as well,

performed occasional religious services at the Protestant Episcopal Church at 5th and Buttonwood Streets, the Odd Fellows Hall on North Broad Street as well as at both the Old Elks Hall at 232 North 9th Street and the Morning Star Hall at Vine and Ridge Avenues.

The first Board of Trustees/ joint steering committee/Parish Council was organized in 1902 by Father (later Archbishop) Hovsep Sarajian. Reflecting the ecumenism that defined that period, it comprised five men, two of whom were Protestant.

A later influx of compatriots prompted, however, a denominational realignment. On July 18, 1907, The Armenian Evangelical Church of Philadelphia for the Protestant Armenians was founded. Services were held, at first, in the Central Congregational Church at 18th and Green Streets, and later, in the gymnasium of the historic Holy Trinity Church on Rittenhouse Square. In 1913, a small church for the Apostolic, at the corner of Pike and Broad Streets (1913-17) was consecrated (by one account) as St. Sahag and St. Mesrob.

Due in no small measure to the massacres of 1895/96, 1909 and the Genocide of 1915, the number of Armenians in America increased exponentially. Philadelphia was not excepted.

The capacity at Pike and Broad was soon deemed inadequate. On March 21, 1917, a larger facility on Pine Street, near Broad, was acquired and on September 30, 1917, was consecrated as the St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, (1917-23). That the consecration was performed by Archbishop Moushegh Seropian, placed the parish firmly within the orbit of the Apostolic faith as well as the Diocese (as it is known today) of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

But the hereditary defect of Armenians for disputation, on this occasion a doctrinal struggle regarding faith and good works, intervened. On March 7, 1920, a disaffected Protestant church, The Armenian Congregational Church of Philadelphia, was launched in Liberty Hall at the corner of Larchwood and 60th Street and formally constituted on November 21, 1920. Given the propensity of that denomination to diffuse, two other short-lived congregations, The First Armenian Methodist Church in America and The Armenian Church of the Brethren, provided options.

By 1923, the congregation of the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Church had sufficiently diverged demographically to require two churches, one in West Philadelphia and the other in North Philadelphia. The Pine Street church was sold-the name St. Sahag and St. Mesrob- assigned to the West Philadelphia parish. While the proceeds of \$30,000 (after expenses) were to be equally divided, one parish council temporarily administered both groups.

That same year, on December 15, 1923, with the arrival of Rev. Stephen Stepanian, the first Armenian Catholic Church in America was launched in the basement of St. Columba's Church on Lehigh Avenue.

On September 5, 1924, the Armenian Congregational Church of Philadelphia held a ground-breaking ceremony at 6029 Ludlow Street (1924-1962); the cornerstone was laid on October 5, 1924 and the church formally dedicated on the last Sunday in November 1928.

With the Pine Street church sold, the West Philadelphian Armenians held church services in St. George's Episcopal Church at 61st St. and Hazel Ave. But by July 22, 1925, a large house and adjacent lot at 6006 Walnut Street was purchased; its consecration as the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church (1925-50), taking place in October 1932.

That same year, on August 25, 1925, confronting the futility of separatism, the two surviving Armenian Protestant congregations merged; the surviving entity becoming The Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church of Philadelphia. Their first united service was held on September 16, 1925.

On April 5, 1926, St. Mark's Armenian Catholic Church relocated to 142 North Robinson Street (1926-46).

On March 2, 1927, the North Philadelphia Armenians, after having worshiped for the past four years in Episcopal churches located at 12th and 18th Streets on Diamond, purchased the Memorial Church of Our Redeemer at the corner of 16th and Oxford Streets. The edifice was consecrated on April 1, 1928 and designated St. Gregory The Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church (1927-1935).

Once again, the inherent Armenian predisposition for implosion erupted. The tragic events of 1933 and 1934, which plague us even today, are beyond the scope of this study, but for those so inclined, *The Torch Was Passed*, pp 27-35, edited by Chris Zakian and *A History of the Armenian Holy Apostolic Orthodox Church in the United States (1888-1944)*, pp 265-289, authored by (later Very Reverend) Oshagan Minassian are recommended readings.

Its repercussions, unfortunately, impacted the Philadelphia community. Because a plurality, if not a majority, of the members of St. Gregory The Illuminator Church were determined to disassociate with, once again, we know today as the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), the parish was sundered. Those members faithful to the Diocese and Echmiadzin, in 1934, reorganized as Holy Trinity Armenian Church and rented facilities for worship. Those who were in opposition met at a Lutheran Church at 22nd and Columbia Avenues. Possession of the vacant (court ordered) 16th and Oxford facility became the subject of litigation which wasn't resolved definitively until February 1935, when it was awarded to the second group and reopened as a unaffiliated parish (1935-1966).

In 1941, the Diocesan loyalists, demonstrating a more complimentary Armenian trait — resiliency — regrouped and purchased the Marshall Street Church at Susquehanna Street. A new sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church (1942-1964), was consecrated on December 26-27, 1942.

On May 11, 1946, St. Mark's Armenian Catholic Church, now at 6014 Market Street (1946-75), previously a vacant bank building, was officially dedicated and blessed, while its consecration wasn't scheduled until December 23, 1951.

Once again, St. Sahag and St. Mesrob, requiring even greater capacity, in 1947, purchased land at 63rd and Locust Streets. Having sold 6006 in September 1950, religious services were held at the Episcopal Church at 56th and Markets Streets until a church hall (1951-61) was constructed.

In the interim, it became apparent that the schism within the Armenian Church was both irrevocable and untenable. In 1957, the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, responding to a resolution passed at a gathering of the separated churches assumed authority and jurisdiction over St. Gregory and their co-religionists. In 1959, the Eastern Prelacy (as it is known today) of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America was established.

At about the same time, evolving demographics in West Philadelphia, as well as ingrained Armenian attributes for diligence, industry and thrift, rewarded many families with resources to escape their West Philadelphia row homes, inducing all three West Philadelphia churches- within walking distance of one another- to seek suburban locations.

The first to flee was St. Sahag & St. Mesrob. On February 19, 1961, acquisition of the Agnes Irwin School for Girls, on 630 Clothier Road, Wynnewood, an 8 1/2 acre property, was approved. The church was consecrated on November 24, 1963.

On May 5, 1963, Armenian Martyrs' held yet another ground-breaking ceremony, this time at 100 North Edmonds Avenue, Havertown. The new sanctuary of The Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church was dedicated one year later, on November 8, 1964. In the interim, services were held down the street at the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

On December 7, 1975, St. Mark's was dedicated at 400 North Haverford Road, Wynnewood. With the creation of the Armenian Catholic Exarchate of North America in the month of July 1981, St. Mark's acceded to its authority and jurisdiction while volunteering to host the Episcopal Seat for three years. As a result, St. Mark's was subsumed within the Catholic community of North America.

The two churches to the north experienced circumstances not unlike their western brethren. On December 1, 1964, Holy Trinity, at Marshall and Susquehanna was completely destroyed by fire. But because, almost presciently, in 1956, 11 acres of land in Cheltenham had been acquired, Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, today, employing classical Armenian architecture, may be found at 101 Ashmead Road in Cheltenham; its consecration, September 18, 1966.

St. Gregory The Illuminator was the one church to remain, albeit on its periphery, in Philadelphia. Sixteenth and Oxford was sold during February 1966. But the parish had already previously decided to relocate. The Morgan Estate, a 7 1/2 acre property at 8701 Ridge Avenue became available and on September 13, 1959, a ground-blessing ceremony took place. Consecration of their church, its structure of traditional Armenian architecture, was held on May 20, 21, 1967. Many years later, in September of 2010, the church complex was enhanced by an adjoining Founder's Hall.

Despite all that has rippled through our region these many years, it can be said, that today, fostered by a spirit of cooperation and pride, the fabric of accommodation blankets our society.

The creation of the Philadelphia Inter-Communal Committee in the early 1960s is a case in point. Three times a year, all five churches come together, alternating facilities, to commemorate Sts. Vartanatz, Armenian Martyrs' Day and October Cultural Month.

For over 30 years, PAND, Philadelphia's Nor Daree -New Year's Eve Celebration- has been hosted by a coalition, representative again, of all five churches. This spirit of cooperation has been tempered by the Armenian Sisters' Academy. Its establishment 46 years ago has brought together children, parents and grandparents, who in all probability may not have, in any other circumstance, met one another, becoming acquaintances, colleagues, even friends.

Continuing, a broad-based Genocide Walk-A-Thon Committee, confirms the commitment of 3rd and 4th generation Philadelphia Armenians to the memory of our hallowed Martyrs. And while, admittedly mundane, a group, however modest, of senior citizens, again representative of all five churches, come together on Wednesdays for a meal and camaraderie.

In addition to the above, a series of ad hoc committees, prompted by extraordinary circumstances and cemented by shared values and tragedies, confirms the obligation of Philadelphia Armenians to one another. The Armen Ounjian Fund is one such example. The Bicentennial Commemorative Committee culminating with the statue Meher being donated to the City of Philadelphia was a second. And most recently, the successful drive to place an appropriate memorial at the grave site of Khatchadour (Paul) Garabedian, an Armenian Civil War veteran.

In all, no small accomplishment. Perhaps there's hope after all.

Turkey and Al Qaeda in Syria

SYRIA, from page 14

by a "parallel structure," does appear to be significant.

In other words, Tayyip Erdogan is now claiming that the allegation that Turkey is in the process of smuggling weapons into Syria is nothing but part of an organized smear campaign aimed at discrediting Turkey's AKP government. As it is, ever since the outbreak of violence in Syria, Turkey has spent about \$200 million sending aid into Syria in hundreds of trucks. Iran's Fars News Agency nevertheless reports that the apprehended trucks' drivers "confessed that the terrorist groups are handed the weapons in a border area they describe it as 'a buffer zone' . . . The Turkish drivers stressed that they deliver not only weapons and ammunition to what they described as "the opposition," but all sorts of goods with the knowledge of all Turkey's officials."

Turkey's prime minister visited Brussels some days ago, and in addition to having talks with the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, he also took time to talk at a summit organized by the Turkish business organization TÜMS AD. Addressing these businessmen, Erdogan managed to voice his opinion on the apprehended trucks and Turkey's relationship with Syria's opposition: "Now, with the help of the 'parallel structure' there are some attempts to show that Turkey as a country is supporting terrorism [in Syria]. Turkey's efforts to transfer humanitarian aid [to Syria] have been prevented. While Turkey has been struggling with the [Kurdish terrorist groups, the] PKK and the PYD, while it is struggling with the DHKP/C [Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front], al-Qaeda and al-Nusra, there are some efforts to show that Turkey is arm-in-arm with terrorism [in Syria]."

Were these trucks carrying humanitarian aid or were they ferrying weapons to the Syrian opposition? The answer to this question may be a key to understanding whether Turkey's government is being unfairly targeted by a nefarious cabal bent on disrupting the democratic process in Turkey or, conversely, these trucks constitute a definite proof of Turkey's complicity in the ongoing war in Syria.

(Dr. Can Erimtan is an independent scholar residing in Istanbul, with a wide interest in the politics, history and culture of the Balkans and the Greater Middle East. This analysis originally appeared in *Russia Times* on January 31.)



'Gift of Life' Program Helps Fund Treatment of Children with Cancer

YEREVAN (Arka) – Children suffering from cancer in Armenia are treated with the latest medicines, Grigor Badalyan, head of Pediatric Oncology and Chemotherapy Department at the National Oncology Center, said this week.

"We use all methods of cancer treatment – surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy – to treat children suffering from cancer," he said to the press conference marking the International Day against Cancer.

He said these children are being aided by the Armenian fund "Gift of Life," chaired by First Lady Rita Sargsisian.

"The fund provides seek Armenian children with all the necessary medicines, even the most expensive," he said, adding that only two or three cases have needed medical care abroad.

"There is a group of children with very severe type of the disease requiring extremely high dosages of chemotherapy to be fol-

lowed by bone marrow transplant, and it is the only method we do not have here. In such cases, the children should be treated abroad, however, it is not a treatment guaranteed 100 percent," he said.

Badalyan also presented statistics, which say that treatment effectiveness in developed countries is 75-80 percent, and 20-25 percent in underdeveloped countries. He said this figure for Armenia is 65 percent.

Of 7,877 primary cancer cases reported in 2012 more than 50 were children, he said denying allegations that this number was on the rise.

February 4 is marked by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the Day against Cancer. WHO forecasts that by 2020 the number of new cases in the world will reach 20 million, and the disease may become epidemic.

Komitas Chants Sung at Metropolitan Museum

HILLIARD, from page 1

special program at the Metropolitan Museum on January 22, to hear this famed a cappella quartet which is now on its farewell tour after 40 years of performing to great acclaim across the globe. Due to ice-strewn runways in New York, the group had flown from performances in North Carolina to Philadelphia, then had taken the Amtrak to New York, arriving just in time for the concert, this being their last performance in North America.

Before the start of the program, the performers revealed to WQXR reporter John Schaefer, host of the evening, that in November 2004, the group had been invited to Armenia to record and perform some of the *sharagans* arranged by the legendary composer and musicologist Komitas. The recording of these *sharagans* took place in Saghmsovank, a 13th-century monastery which is situated on top of the Khasakh river gorge, from where Mount Aragats is visible.

During the Metropolitan Museum performance, the members of the quartet, countertenor David James, tenors Rogers Covey-Crump and Steven Harrold, and baritone Gordon Jones interpreted the soulful Komitas *sharagans*, *Hays Harg*, *Soorp Soorp* and the

Christmas hymn *Ov Zarmanali* with seamless phrasing, deep spirituality and understanding, together with perfect pronunciation. For the last 10 years, the Hilliard Ensemble had become musical ambassadors, exposing the beauty and uniqueness of Armenian sacred music to such huge audiences.

In addition to Komitas' chants, the group also performed at the Metropolitan Museum concert, a piece, *Lord Who Made the Spring Run*, by Vatche Sharafyan, a 48-year-old composer from Yerevan who has been associated with, and become well known through famed cellist Yo Yo Ma's Silk Road project.

In an e-mail communication, Sharafyan revealed that he had first met the Hilliard Ensemble at the Komitas recordings in Saghmsovank, organized by VEM radio studio. "The organizer asked me to compose a special piece for them, and I wrote one based on the fifth century hymn of Mesrob Mashdotz, The sea of our life is troubling me, for which I used three duduks together with the Hilliard. This piece was first performed and recorded by the Hover Chamber Choir in Armenia together with *Lord Who Made the Spring Run*."

Sharafyan related that he had composed this piece "in one night" while he was a lecturer at the

Armenian Theological Seminary in Jerusalem for four years, where he said he was "entirely surrounded by sacred music and spiritual life." Both works are in the repertoire of Hilliard, as well as that of Hover, and released in 2013 by LCMS on a CD, titled "In Search of Miraculous."

The "most important value of *Lord Who Made the Spring Run*," Sharafyan noted is its "genuineness, when one does not just pretend to be, but really lives what he is saying, singing or writing about. From this point of view, my piece is entirely exact, and should be sung by the Hilliard whom I really admire for this quality. They are perfect!"

For 40 years, the Hilliard Ensemble has been known for their unique style and virtuosic musicianship in presenting both early and new music. David James, the countertenor of the quartet has commented, "As well as all the music that we have discovered and enjoyed performing over the years, we want to embrace the important relationships and people that have contributed to some of the remarkable landmarks and turning points in our career."

At the end of 2014, the group will disband, following performances in the US, Canada, Australia, Austria, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

US Company Buys Armenian Power Plants

YEREVAN (Reuters) – US power company ContourGlobal said it will acquire three hydroelectric power plants in Armenia in a \$250-million deal.

The company said it had bought the Vorotan Hydro plants for \$180 million and planned to invest an additional \$70 million, making it the largest single US private investment there.

The deal may decrease Armenia's dependence on Russia, Yerevan's main trading partner and biggest foreign investor.

The Vorotan Hydro Cascade complex is a series of three hydroelectric power plants totalling 405 megawatts on the Vorotan river in southern Armenia.

It accounts for about 15 percent of Armenia's power capacity and provides energy for 250,000 homes.

The long-term power purchase agreement was signed on Wednesday between ContourGlobal and the Armenian government.

THE BIG BAD ARMO SHOW
TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP PRESENTS

FEB 28 MAR 1
\$35 8 PM
\$45 DOOR

IN THIS ISSUE:
ODARMAN

THE BIG BAD ARMO SHOW

WRITTEN AND CREATED BY LORY TATOULIAN

PETER NORTON
symphonyspace
Leonard Nimoy Thalia
2537 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY 10025
WWW.BIGBADARMO.COM
FOR TICKETS PLEASE VISIT
TICKETS.SYMPHONYSPACE.ORG
212-864-5400

99th ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATION
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՑԵՂԱՄՊԱՆՈՒԹԻՒՆ
TURKEY IS GUILTY OF GENOCIDE • DENYING THE UNDENIABLE IS A CRIME

TIMES SQUARE
43rd Street & Broadway
New York City
Sunday, April 27, 2014
2:00-4:00 PM

Sponsored by the Knights & Daughters of Vartan
Co-sponsored by AGBU, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian National Committee of America, ADL-Ramgavars, and Armenian Council of America
With the participation of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Catholic Eparchy for US and Canada, Mid-Atlantic ACYOA, AYF-YOARF, Armenian Youth Organizations, and University Armenian Clubs

FREE BUS TRANSPORTATION TO & FROM TIMES SQUARE

New Jersey Churches
Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church
461 Bergen Blvd., Ridgefield, NJ
Church Office (201) 943-2950
Kostan Charkhutian (201) 741-9789
St. Thomas Armenian Church
Highway 9 & E. Clinton Ave., Tenafly, NJ
and
St. Leon Armenian Church
12-61 Saddle River Rd., Fair Lawn, NJ
Sona Manuclian (551) 427-8763
Armenian Presbyterian Church
140 Forest Ave., Paramus, NJ
Andrew Torigian (201) 368-2791

New York Churches
St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church
38 65 234th St., Douglaston, NY
Edward Barsamian (917) 885-9729
Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs
209 15 Horace Harding Expwy., Oakland Gardens, NY
John Kasarjian (718) 631-2247
St. Vartan Cathedral
630 2nd Ave., New York, NY
Church Office (212) 686-0710

Brooklyn
Chase Bank (@ Coney Island Ave.)
1002 Brighton Beach Ave., Brooklyn, NY
Tigran (718) 891-8486 (347) 291-7765

For more information about the commemoration, please visit
<http://kofv.org> and click April 24 or <http://www.facebook.com/events/TBD-in-2014>
To learn more about the Armenian Genocide, please visit
www.theforgotten.org, www.armenian-genocide.org, www.twentyvoices.com