

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

# Kessab Attacked

## Armenian Population Flees as Town Is Attacked by Rebels

KESSAB (Combined Sources) – *Asbarez* newspaper reported that the Armenian-populated town of Kessab and its surrounding villages were the targets of three days of brutal cross-border attacks from Turkey by al Qaeda-affiliated bands. The attacks have cost 80 lives and forced the civilian population of the area to flee to neighboring hills.

Some 670 Armenian families, the majority of the population of Kessab, were evacuated by the local Armenian community leadership to safer areas in neighboring Basit and Latakia.

One initial report suggested that government forces have repelled the rebels, but later the report was disputed.

The Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II was in contact with Catholicos Aram I of the See of the Great House of Cilicia regarding the state of the Armenians in Syria and asked for the shelling and murders to stop.



A scene from Kessab after it was attacked

Social Democrat Hunchakian Party Chairman Narek Galstyan said in a Facebook post that the rebels are moving toward Latakia, where many Armenians have found refuge.

see KESSAB, page 16



The reconfigured abstract sculpture (Matt Conti photo)

## Armenian Heritage Park's Sculpture Reconfigured for 2014

BOSTON – The Abstract Sculpture, a key feature of Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, was recently reconfigured, the third annual reconfiguration since the park opened in 2012.

According to the 25-year configuration schedule prepared by Don Tellalian, AIA, the park's designer/architect, the sculpture was reconfigured early Sunday morning, March 23. Aurelian Mardiros, whose company, A&A Industries, fabricated the sculpture, and Bill Martin, representing the Armenian Heritage Foundation, oversaw the configuration skillfully handled by Jerry Rigging Corporation that, for the third year, provided the cranes and rigging services pro bono. The fabrication of the park's abstract sculpture is the gift of A&A Industries and the Mardiros family. Police detail and other costs associated with the annual configuration are supported by the endowed fund established by Bilezikian Family Foundation.

Annually, the abstract sculpture, a split dodecahedron, is reconfigured, symbolic of all who pulled away from their country of origin and came to Massachusetts to establish themselves in new and different ways. Commemorating the immigrant experience, the sculpture sits atop a reflecting pool; its waters wash over its sides and re-emerge as a single jet of water at the labyrinth's center. The sculpture is dedicated to lives lost during the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 and all genocides that have followed.

## Ukraine Recalls Amb. to Armenia over Crimea Recognition

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Ukraine recalled its ambassador to Armenia on Friday after warning of serious damage to bilateral ties and demanding an official Armenian explanation regarding President Serge Sargsisian's acceptance of a referendum in Crimea that led to its annexation by Russia.

A spokesman for the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said Ambassador Ivan Kukhta was ordered to return home for consultations.

Deputy Foreign Minister Danilo Lubkivsky announced earlier in the day that the Armenian ambassador in Kiev, Andranik Manukian, has been twice summoned to the Ukrainian Foreign Minister and handed an official note.

"We appealed to Armenia to officially and publicly state that it does not recognize the annexation of Crimea," Ukrainian news agencies quoted him as saying. "We expect such a response."

"In case of statements or actions that we could interpret as unfriendly, there will be negative consequences for our bilateral relations," Lubkivsky warned, according to the RBK-Ukraine news agency. He did not specify those consequences, saying only that the Ukrainian side will consider taking "a broad range of measures" against Yerevan.

## US Ambassador to Armenia Expresses Regret

Asked to comment on the development, Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman Tigran Balayan said, "As soon as we receive the Ukrainian side's note, we will formulate our response and decide whether or not we will publicize that response."

The Ukrainian protest stems from Sargsisian's remarks made during Wednesday's phone call with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin. Sargsisian was cited by his press office as saying that the weekend referendum on Crimea's secession from Ukraine, condemned as illegal by the international community, was "yet another example of the realization of peoples' right to self-determination through a free expression of will."

Sargsisian appealed to Ukrainians and described them as "brothers" of Armenia on Friday as he sought to minimize the fallout from his decision to welcome Crimea's secession from Ukraine.

However, Sargsisian stopped short of publicly explaining the implications and rationale

of his move criticized by the United States.

"For centuries, we fought shoulder to shoulder against aggressors. We have thousands of glorious pages of common history. This has been the case and this will be the case," he said in a speech during an awards ceremony held at the presidential palace in Yerevan.

"It happens so that in the heat of time and events, different phenomena are perceived in different ways," continued Sargsisian. "But the great thing about time is that over time things clear up, misunderstandings and disagreements disappear and everything returns to normal. I want to repeat that the Ukrainians are our brothers."

Sargsisian spoke after handing out annual Armenian presidential awards to dozens of artists, writers and scientists. Olena Fetisova, the Ukrainian screenwriter, producer and co-director of a new feature film about the late Sergey Paradjanov, a renowned Soviet filmmaker of Armenian descent, was supposed to be one of those artists. Fetisova decided at the last minute not to accept the award carrying a monetary prize of 5 million drams (\$12,000) in see UKRAINE, page 2

## Armenian Deputies Head to Syria

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A group of deputies of the National Assembly of Armenia – Samvel Farmanyan, Arman Sahakyan, Naira Karapetyan, Tevan Poghosyan, Edmon Marukyan and Levon Martirosyan – have left for Syria to get acquainted with the problems and the conditions of compatriots there.

They issued a statement on March 24: "Armenians all over the world are shocked by the recent events in Kessab and the surrounding areas in the result of which the resident Armenians were again deported because of the actions of the Turkish Armed Forces again taking the road of migration after almost a century of the Armenian Genocide. We, as Deputies of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, assessing the incident not as internal affairs of Syria or Turkey, but as an extraordinary case of massive violation of human rights, strongly condemn the actions of the Turkish Armed Forces which, in essence, are a new challenge directed to the Armenian Diaspora formed in the Middle East as a result of the Genocide. We call on the Syrian and Turkish authorities to conduct an impartial investigation upon the events. We also demand the international community to give an unequivocal assessment to these heinous cases of human rights violation by sending UN observers to the Armenian-populated areas of Kessab to document the events of the massive human rights violations."

## Azerbaijan Demands Warlick's Dismissal

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A Tweet by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group US Co-Chair James Warlick, that the Nagorno Karabagh conflict is "between Karabagh and Azerbaijan" and not between Armenia and Azerbaijan, caused a raucous in Baku.

Warlick wrote earlier: "I was corrected today – the conflict is Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan. Still, we want a peaceful settlement for all parties for NK." Former political advisor to the President of Azerbaijan Vafa Guluzade stated in an interview with an Azeri site that "it is necessary to dismiss James Warlick from the OSCE Minsk Group." Azerbaijan did not like that the American side got certain in the fact that Stepanakert should be fully involved in the negotiations to settle the Nagorno Karabagh conflict issue.

An Azeri pro-government website called him "foolish" and expressed discontent on the fact why Washington has appointed a "diplomat, who writes such unserious things in social networks" in the Minsk Group. President Serge Sargsisian met with the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and discussed the current state of the settlement process of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict. The meeting took place on March 23 in the Netherlands.

## INSIDE

### Tufts Talk

Page 4

#### INDEX

Arts and Living	10
Armenia	2
Community News	4
Editorial	14
International	3



## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Six Sentenced in Restaurant Killing

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Six men have been sentenced to long prison terms after being convicted of beating a military doctor to a death in 2012.

The six, security guards and other employees of the Harsnakar restaurant, were accused of attacking Vahe Avetian and his friends on June 17, 2012.

Avetian died in the hospital two weeks later as a result of severe head injuries.

The incident led to public uproar as hundreds of people protested at the restaurant and the home of its de-facto owner, Ruben Hayrapetian, a wealthy businessman and lawmaker from Armenia's ruling party.

The outcry forced Hayrapetian to resign from parliament and apologize to Avetian's family.

Each defendant received a 12-year prison sentence and was fined \$250.

## Armenia Seeks Closer Ties with Peru

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The governments of Armenia and Peru hope that by signing a bill abolishing visa requirements for those with diplomatic passports, the two countries would develop closer ties.

The draft of the agreement was introduced to the agenda of March 27 session of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

"The agreement will contribute to the promotion of mutual visits of citizens bearing diplomatic passports: the lack of diplomatic representations between the two countries complicate the visa acquisition," according to the statement.

## More than 400 Mines Operate in Country

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – There are more than 400 mines in Armenia at present, 26 of which are for mining metal. The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Armenia Armen Movsisyan told about it at the two-day international forum "Establishment of responsible mining industry in Armenia: Possibilities and challenges" on March 25. Movsisyan stated that more than 850 mines of solid fossil are registered in our Republic, including 37 metal mines. "From the mentioned mines and their sites 474 organizations exploit about 400 of them, 26 of which metal ones," said Movsisyan.

## Armenian Soldier Killed By Azeri Sniper

STEPANAKERT (News.am) – Another soldier from Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh) Defense Army has been shot by Azerbaijani sniper on Monday.

According to preliminary information, 22-year-old Garnic Torosyan became a victim of an Azeri sniper on Monday at around 9:50 a.m. local time. Torosyan was shot at the base of a military unit on the east line of contact with Azerbaijani Armed Forces. The gunshot was fatal and Torosyan died immediately.

The Defense Ministry of Nagorno Karabagh expressed its condolences to the family of Torosyan. A criminal case has been initiated.

## Armenia to Sign Agreement in May

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Armenia has implemented the greater part of measures envisaged by the roadmap for joining the Customs Union, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsisian said on Monday.

Speaking in the resort town of Tsaghkadzor while attending an international symposium on education, Sargsisian also announced that the agreement on accession to the Russian-led trade bloc will be signed as early as May.

In June, the parliaments of Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia are expected to ratify the agreement, while formally Armenia will become a Customs Union member on January 1, 2015.

# Armenian, Turkish Filmmakers to Meet at Festival

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Turkey Cinema Platform (ATCP) is getting ready for its tenth meeting. The platform, promoting joint film production between Turkish and Armenian filmmakers, will convene on April 14-16 as part of activities on the fringes of the 33rd Istanbul International Film Festival. The ATCP this year is backed by the European Union, a unique accomplishment for which the filmmakers deserve congratulation, Al-Monitor reports.

The ATCP, which has ushered bilateral cultural ties into a new era, was formed in 2009 by the Yerevan Golden Apricot Film Festival and the Anatolian Culture organization. Meeting twice every year, it evaluates project applications from Turkey and Armenia and brings together filmmakers from the two countries. Over the past five years, it has brought together more than 200 filmmakers and supported 13 films. "Diyar," which in 2012 became the eighth film to receive ATCP support, was selected for the Istanbul Film Festival. A documentary chronicling the life of director Devrim Akkaya's grandfather, making its debut at the Istanbul Film Festival, will be meaningful.

Applications remain open ahead of the ATCP's April meeting. Filmmakers from Turkey, Armenia and their diaspo-

ra can submit projects by March 28. The initiative had started with short films and documentaries, produced with amateur means and based on human stories that moved the audiences and built cultural bridges. The quality of productions, however, increased throughout the years. So did the prestige of the platform, which has offered financial support to filmmakers since 2010.

This year, the platform's international jury will assess 10 projects and award one a \$10,000 grant. ATCP officials say they received a submission even from Africa this year and regret they had to reject it on eligibility grounds.

There are remarkable examples of how the film quality has improved and the initiative moved forward. "I Left My Shoes in Istanbul" – a documentary by Lebanese director Nigol Bezjian, a friend of [Turkish filmmaker] Kutlug Ataman from the renowned UCLA film school – has received international acclaim. The film follows poet Sako Arian as he travels – both fearful and curious – to Istanbul, the city of his ancestors, which he knows almost street by street from the books of Armenian writers and his family history, and visits prominent people from both communities in the city. "I Left My Shoes in Istanbul" was selected for showing in the "Home" section of the

Istanbul Film Festival, a nice gesture to both the film's director and main hero and the ATCP.

Lusin Dink's "Saroyan Country," which received financial support in 2011, is another source of pride for the ATCP. It was embraced in Turkey and Armenia alike. The film competed both in the "Armenian Panorama" section of the Yerevan Golden Apricot Film Festival and the national section of the Istanbul Film Festival. Two days ago, it received the "Best Balkan Film" prize of the Film Critics Jury at the Sofia International Film Festival. In 2013, it won the 2013 Best Documentary prize of [Turkey's] Cinema Writers Association (SIYAD).

In "Ziazan" – another ATCP-supported production, which is currently counting down to meet the audience – a surprise name is behind the camera. Derya Durmaz, the popular actress of many movies and TV series, is making her debut in the director's chair, telling the adventures of a five-year-old girl in the name of chocolate cream her uncle brings from Turkey. The film, scheduled to make its world premiere at a European film festival soon, reflects the child's innocent view of the world as it tells a naive story about the "losses" caused by the closure of the Turkish-Armenian border, displaying an able directing of child actors.

# Armenian Boxers Cruise to Victory

MONTREAL – Local Armenian boxing fans had been eagerly anticipating the March 21 boxing gala organized by Grant Brothers Boxing and presenting an evening of 5 amateur and 4 professional fights.

Two promising professional boxers of Armenian descent, Erik Bazinyan and Arsen Goulamirian, were among the combatants.

Born in the Republic of Armenia,

Bazinyan, 18, started boxing four years ago and quickly rose through the ranks in his native country. He won the 2010 Armenian Republic Championship and the Armenia Olympic Federation's 20th Anniversary Competition prior to becoming the international champion of Georgia in 2011.

Since moving to Canada at the age of 16, he has earned two Golden Gloves, the Canadian National Golden Glove

Championship and the International Adidas Cup. He also won the international competition in Poland as a member of team Canada. Prior to turning pro in September 2013, he had 109 victories and only one loss as an amateur. His professional record before the match stood at 2-0 with two KO's.

Goulamirian, also born in Armenia, is 26, with an impressive record. As an amateur he won 52 of 65 fights and earned titles that include "Champion de France" in 2005 and winner of the 2009 Francophone Games in Lebanon. Since turning pro, he built a flawless 6 - 0 record while fighting in France, including a unanimous win against a fighter who had been previously unbeaten in nine professional bouts.

Seeking a more active career in a reputable boxing city, Goulamirian relocated to Montreal and trains under the tutelage of Grant Brothers Boxing.

The boxing event started with five amateur matches after which started the pro matches, the first being in the 178 lbs category, a six rounder, between Bazinyan and Alexandre Bouvier of Victoriaville, Qc.

There was a capacity crowd of around 550 spectators, among them a strong contingent of 60 to 70 Armenians with their noisy supporting presence and visible tricolors.

The first round started with a short period of boxers testing each other, but soon the pace picked-up and the taller and heavier Bouvier was at the receiving end of a string of hard punches. The referee stopped the fight after three rounds, giving Bazinyan the win.

The bout between Goulamirian and Alvaro Enriquez of Mexico lasted even less time, when at the 50th second a series of rapid punches by the Armenian pugilist, culminated by a powerful left uppercut to the right ribs of his opponent, ended the match. Alvaro was on his knees with a broken right rib. The game was over only after 50 seconds of the 1st round, with the second Armenian knockout.

The Armenians in the crowd were elated by both of the bouts, carrying the Armenian flag and cheering their athletes.

– Arto Manoukian

## Ukraine Recalls Amb. to Armenia Over Crimea Recognition

UKRAINE, from page 1

protest against Sargsisian's decision to accept the outcome of the referendum that was followed by the region's annexation by Russia.

"I would like to kindly ask you to convey my part of the remuneration of the State Prize of Armenia to the Armenian orphans," she said in an open letter to Sargsisian. "I am sure that Sergey Paradjanov would do the same."

"I simply could not have come to Yerevan and thereby welcomed a situation in which my homeland is in danger and Armenia's leadership unfortunately does not stand by my country," said the Ukrainian filmmaker in a phone interview.

"I will pass the state award on to her through her colleagues and, in accordance with her wish, we will use its financial component for benevolent purposes," Sargsisian said at the ceremony. "I understand Ms. Fetisova's motives but want to appeal to the distinguished lady and the Ukrainian people by saying that we are brotherly peoples."

### US Disappointed

John Heffern, the US ambassador to Armenia, on Thursday voiced Washington's disappointment with the Armenian government's decision

to effectively recognize Russia's annexation of Crimea strongly condemned by the West.

Heffern described Sargsisian's statement to that effect as "very unfortunate."

The envoy reiterated the official US line that the weekend referendum in which residents of Crimea voted for becoming part of Russia was illegal. "There are many things [the Russians] could have done short of what they did," he said at an international conference on regional security held in Yerevan.

Heffern did not say whether Sargsisian's move will seriously harm US-Armenian relations. The Obama administration has imposed asset freezes and visa bans on some Russian officials involved in the seizure of Crimea and is considering adding more serious sanctions on Russia.

Sargsisian has enjoyed US support throughout his six-year presidency not least because of his foreign policy initiatives, notably an attempted rapprochement with Turkey. He faced no public criticism from U.S. officials even after unexpectedly deciding last year to make Armenia part of a Russian-led union of ex-Soviet states at the expense of an Association Agreement with the European Union.





## INTERNATIONAL



## Armenian Church in Aleppo Attacked; Four Wounded

ALEPPO (Public Radio of Armenia) – Four people were wounded as a result of shelling on the Armenian Church in Nor Gyugh (New Village) district of Aleppo, the

Press Service of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation reported. According to the report, the Armenian Church and nearby houses were the target of the attack.

# Tensions High after Turkey Shoots Down Syrian Military Jet

ANKARA (*Today's Zaman*) – Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has said Turkey will not hesitate to retaliate over any violation of its airspace from Syria and that a “crisis desk” has been set up in the event of an attack on the tomb of Süleyman Shah, which is considered Turkish territory within Syria, following the military having shot down a Syrian military aircraft that violated Turkish airspace on Sunday.

Speaking to journalists on Monday, Davutoglu, who is campaigning in Konya ahead of the March 30 local elections, criticized press reports saying that the government’s act is probably an attempt to divert attention from corruption and bribery allegations against members of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party).

Davutoglu said the Syrian fighter jet violated Turkish airspace by about one kilometer and accused Turkish media outlets of “treason” due to their reports suggesting that taking down the plane was a possible attempt to divert public attention from the allegations targeting the AK Party.

“Some in the [Turkish] press act as if they are the spokespeople of the Syrian regime,” said Davutoglu, adding that any kind of violation of Turkey’s airspace from Syria would be retaliated.

Turkey has notified the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and NATO, and has provided relevant documents regarding the violation of Turkey’s airspace, said Davutoglu, adding that he talked to NATO Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has offered his open support to Turkey.

“We [Turkey] hope that Syria will not dare to do the same thing again. Turkey is always for peace. Peace requires determination. No one should doubt our determination for peace,” Davutoglu said.

Davutoglu has categorically rejected press reports questioning the timing of the incident, as it took place only days before the local elections. Saying that Turkey does not invite anyone to violate its airspace, Davutoglu added that if Syria violates Turkish airspace again, it will face the same reaction.

Turkish military on alert, Gül says  
“In the light of what’s happening in Syria, all units of the Turkish Armed Forces [TSK] have been put on alert – land, air and naval,” Gül said on

Monday. The president, who is attending a nuclear security summit in Holland, said: “We all need to own up to these national issues. These issues are not about politics.”

Gül called Chief of General Staff Gen. Necdet Özel on Sunday to congratulate him and his staff after taking down the Syrian military aircraft. The incident took place on the border between Turkey and Syria, near Yayladagi, a district in Hatay province. According to a TSK statement, two Syrian MIG-23 warplanes were warned four times when they began flying close to Turkish airspace. After the warnings, one of the aircrafts in question started to leave the area, but the other warplane began flying over Turkish airspace near the border outpost at Yayladagi; two F-16 fighter jets then fired a missile and shot down the Syrian jet in line with Turkey’s rules of engagement.

TSK made a statement on Monday saying that a Syrian missile system locked radar onto a Turkish fighter jet for more than four minutes on Sunday, the same day that TSK warplanes shot down the Syrian jet for violating Turkish airspace.

It was not immediately clear if the radar incident happened before or after the plane was shot down. Turkish military said the Turkish F-16 jet was on routine patrol of the Turkish-Syrian border when it was hassled by the SA-5 missile system.

### ‘Crisis desk’

“We have taken all necessary measures to [address] security problems that have emerged surrounding the tomb of Süleyman ah, the burial place of the grandfather of Osman I, the founder of the Ottoman Empire,” said Davutoglu.

Stressing that this latest incident of Syria violating Turkish airspace shows that Turkey might encounter risky situations as such, Davutoglu said Turkey has calculated the risk of such scenarios and has prepared itself accordingly. He said Turkey has set up a “crisis desk” to protect the Turkish territory in Syria surrounding the tomb of Süleyman ah.

Davutoglu stressed that the situation around the tomb is stable and that there has not been much movement. There were recent reports about the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) moving closer to the tomb and

demands from ISIL to Turkey to lower its flag and withdraw troops protecting the tomb within three days.

Syria’s Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning Turkey’s actions late on Monday. “The Turkish government should end its aggression,” it said, adding that Turkey’s leaders “should not drag the Turkish army into an adventure.”

According to Agence France-Presse (AFP), a source from the Syrian military said Turkey shot down the warplane “in a flagrant act of aggression that is evidence of [Prime Minister Recep Tayyip] Erdogan’s support for terrorist groups.”

The aircraft “was chasing terrorist groups inside Syrian territory at Kasab,” said the source, referring to the disputed border crossing. The pilot was able to eject himself.

The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported that the Syrian pilot said his aircraft was seven kilometers away from the border when it was shot down by the TSK. The pilot, whose name was not disclosed in SANA’s report, claimed that he was targeting terrorists in Kessab and that he was about the return to his base when he was shot down.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry said Syria has been warned about airspace violations several times, and that Turkey will take measures if Syrian jets come within five kilometers of the border.

Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Sunday that “a military approach” would only escalate the tensions in the region.

Amir-Abdollahian said that Iran is calling for restraint as tensions run high between Turkey and Syria. He stressed that Ankara and Tehran are determined to continue to fight against terrorism and support a political solution to the Syrian conflict.

This is not the first time the Turkish military has downed a Syrian aircraft near the border. Turkish warplanes first shot down a Syrian helicopter last September when it, too, crossed into Turkish airspace. Following Syria’s shooting of a Turkish jet in 2012, the military’s rules of engagement changed, and Erdogan said any Syrian element approaching the border would be deemed a threat and treated as a military target.

## International News

### Turkey, Israel Near Compensation Deal

ANKARA (AP) – Turkey’s deputy prime minister says Turkey and Israel could soon reach a deal over compensation payments for the victims of a 2010 Israeli raid – a key condition for restoring ties between the countries.

Relations between the two former allies soured after Israeli commandos stormed an aid ship trying to breach a blockade of the Gaza Strip in May 2010, killing eight Turks and one Turkish-American.

Israel apologized to Turkey for the deaths last year under a US-brokered agreement and agreed to pay compensation, but the sides could not agree on terms.

### Toronto to Present Performance Dedicated To Aznavour

TORONTO (Armenpress) – On the occasion of the 90th birthday of Charles Aznavour, the Necessary Angel Theatre Company will present a performance in October, devoted to the life and activities of the great singer. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia reported that a special event was being organized in Toronto with the assistance of the Armenian Embassy in Canada, attended by the Armenian Ambassador Armen Yeganyan, as well as cultural and public figures.

Aznavour (Shahan Vaghinak Aznavouryan) was born in Paris in 1924 to a family of Armenian migrants Mikayel and Knar Aznavouryans. He has appeared in more than 60 movies, composed about 1,000 songs (including at least 150 in English, 100 in Italian, 70 in Spanish and 50 in German), and sold well over 100 million records. In 1974, Aznavour became a major success in the United Kingdom where his song She went to Number One in the charts. His other well-known song in the UK was Dance in the Old Fashioned Way.

There is a square named after him in central Yerevan on Abovian Street, and a statue erected in Gumri. In 2004 Aznavour received the title of National Hero of Armenia for his humanitarian work, Armenia’s highest award.

### Turkey May Act as Mediator between Russia, Crimean Tatars

ANKARA (*Today's Zaman*) – After Russia signed a treaty on Tuesday annexing Crimea despite threats of sanctions from the US and Europe, Turkey may be able to mediate between Russia and Crimean Tatars though it remains a question to what extent Turkey is prepared to oppose Russia.

“Turkey’s foreign policy allows it to act as a mediator. Turkish officials expended great effort to protect Crimean Tatars during the crisis in the peninsula,” Namik Kemal Bayar, the deputy head of Crimean Turks Culture and Solidarity Association, told Sunday’s Zaman.

Bayar also said Crimean Tatars in Turkey expect Ankara to raise its voice on the crisis.

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has heeded the calls of Crimean Tatars and has pledged to extend protection. Turkey also declared on Monday that it does not recognize the Crimean referendum, calling the poll “illegitimate” a day after the Crimean people voted overwhelmingly to secede from Ukraine and join Russia.

According to Mensur Akgün, director of the Global Political Trends Center (GPoT), Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s diplomatic efforts in calling Russian President Vladimir Putin on March 4 can also be considered part of Ankara’s attempt to reduce tension and act as a mediator.

“It seems as though Turkey will manage to play that role since Putin has pledged to preserve the rights of Crimean Tatars,” Akgün added.

Since the beginning of the unrest in Ukraine, Ankara has underlined the importance of preserving Ukraine’s political unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.



# Community News

## Koutoujian to Speak at Tufts' Genocide Commemoration

MEDFORD, Mass. – Tufts University, the Darakjian-Jafarian Chair in Armenian History, the Department of History, the Armenian Club at Tufts University and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research will sponsor the annual Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at Tufts on Wednesday, April 16, at 7 p.m. The event will feature a talk by Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian. The evening will be hosted by Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, professor of history and Darakjian-Jafarian Chair of Armenian History at Tufts University.

The commemoration and lecture will take place in Goddard Chapel on Tufts' Medford,



Sheriff Peter Koutoujian

campus. A reception will follow in the Coolidge Room in nearby Ballou Hall.

Koutoujian is the current sheriff of Middlesex County. First appointed by Gov. Deval Patrick and then elected in 2012, Koutoujian has focused his efforts on further professionalizing the Middlesex Sheriff's Office, while providing additional resources for those in his custody in an effort to address their criminal behavior. Prior to his tenure as sheriff, he served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, where he chaired the Committees on Healthcare, Public Health and Financial Services.

## Temple Israel to Commemorate Armenian Genocide At Shabbat Service

BOSTON – The rabbis and congregation of Boston's Temple Israel invite the Armenian community to a commemoration of the Armenian Genocide during Friday evening services on April 11. "A Shabbat of Remembrance and Empowerment: Commemorating the 99th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide" will feature Dr. Dikran Kaligian, who will speak on the Genocide and the quest for recognition in face of denial. Following the service, there will be an opportunity for discussion over refreshments.

Rabbi Ronne Friedman, Temple Israel's senior rabbi, is a leader of the Coalition to Recognize the Armenian Genocide, a grassroots group composed of members of the Boston-area Armenian and Jewish communities. Together with Rabbi Howard Jaffe of Lexington, Friedman has been active in educating the Jewish community about the Armenian Genocide and in working toward its recognition.

Temple Israel is located at 477 Longwood Ave., Boston. The service will begin at 5:45 p.m. For directions and parking information go to: <http://www.tisrael.org/directions.asp>



The women in politics from Armenia stand with former Cambridge Mayor David Maher.

## Panel Discusses Women's Leadership in Armenia

BELMONT, Mass. – Six women from Armenia, ranging in age from 27 to 31, participated in a panel discussion at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) headquarters March 14, on the topic "Women in Politics and Government," organized by the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) and co-sponsored by NAASR and the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA).

The panel also included Massachusetts state Rep. Marjorie Decker.

The women were hosted by CYSCA in the Greater Boston area for an eight-day intensive program of meetings/dialogues with directors of women's leadership programs at local universities and local organizations for women in politics and government as well as Cambridge and state officials. The program was made possible by a grant issued to CYSCA from the Open World (OW) Leadership Center at the US Library of Congress.

The OW program aimed to give the participants first-hand exposure to America's democratic government and free-market system. A key goal of the program was to develop leadership capability of young women in government and political organizations by engaging them with their American counterparts. Few women in Armenia are in leadership positions in politics and even government. Currently, only 11 of 131 (8 percent) of the members of Parliament are women, although in the city council of Yerevan, 15 percent are women.

CYSCA designed and hosted a comprehensive program for the visitors, including visits/dialogues with various organizations/individuals in the Greater Boston area, including Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, UMass Boston Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, Tufts University Fletcher School, Suffolk University, Massachusetts League of Women Voters, Mass. Caucus of Women Legislators, State Senate and House women leaders, Cambridge City government, the Armenian International Women's Association, and numerous other organizations and individuals.

The panel discussion began by the participants describing their work experience in Armenia and reflecting on their visit to the US. They were: Anahit Beglaryan, attorney in the Chamber of Advocates of Armenia, defending human rights; Violeta Hovhannisyan, expert on the Armenian Parliament committee on integration of the Republic of Armenia laws with European Community laws; Sona Minasyan, head of the Free Democrats Political party in Kapan; Nune Sakanyan, head of international investment programs of the city of Yerevan; Lilit Seyranyan, attorney at the Chamber of Advocates and Anna Shahnazaryan, facilitator for the group, currently external relations coordinator for Yerevan-based Civitas Foundation, a civil rights organization.

Panelists reflected on issues concerning women's leadership in Armenia. Beglaryan commented that there is no real training mechanism for women in Armenia to help them learn the process of entering, leading, and advancing in the political arena. Minasyan also felt that women need education and skill training for going into politics. She was impressed with the program at UMass Boston's Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy and hopes to have international cooperation with them. Hovhannisyan felt that leadership training must happen in universities; otherwise it would not be taken seriously. Also, she pointed out that candidates in Armenia do not fund-raise personally and was surprised to learn that candidates themselves fund-raise in the US. Seyranyan suggested that even secondary schools should incorporate into their curriculum equality in the workplace and leadership training for women. She also feels that women's organizations in Armenia need to cooperate and network more with each other. Shahnazaryan pointed out that politics in Armenia is regarded as unclean and corrupt, which is

see WOMEN, page 16

## AMAA Opens West Coast Office

GLENDALE – On January 25, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) officially opened a branch office at 1101 North Pacific Ave., in the heart of the Armenian Community of the Greater Los Angeles area.

More than 80 people attended the opening ceremony. The guests included AMAA Board members, Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) pastors, Haigazian University Board members, Child and Orphan Care Committee members, representatives from the Diocese and Prelacy and members of the media and local City Council.

Levon Filian, AMAA West Coast executive director, welcomed the guests and thanked God for the opportunity to open an office on the West Coast. Rev. Ron Tovmassian, senior pastor of the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, offered the opening prayer. Rev. Joseph Matossian brought greetings on behalf of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America and introduced the clergy guests. Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, conveyed his congratulations and greetings. Rev. Ardak Demirjian, representing Archbishop Moushegh Mardirosian, Primate of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, conveyed the archbishop's greetings. Rev.



Los Angeles City Councilman Paul Krekorian presented a resolution to the AMAA from the city of Los Angeles. Pictured, from left, Dr. Mihran Agbabian, Rev. Ron Tovmassian, Harut Sassounian, Levon Filian, Krekorian, Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian and Rev. Joseph Matossian.

Dr. Vahan Tootikian, executive director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, shared his involvement with the AMAA for over 40 years and congratulated the Board for its vision to open an office on the West Coast to better serve the Armenian Community. Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, AMAA's interim executive director/CEO, and Dr. Joseph Zeronian, AMAA president, shared their heartfelt comments. Harut Sassounian, representing the United Armenian Fund, welcomed the AMAA as a longtime partner in serving Armenians.

Los Angeles City Councilman Paul Krekorian presented a resolution to the AMAA from the city of Los Angeles, honoring the AMAA for its extensive humanitarian and Christian ministry around the world and congratulated the AMAA for opening an office in Glendale, CA. The closing prayers and the Lord's Prayer were offered jointly by all the clergy present.

Following the ceremonies, the guests were invited to a reception, toured the facilities, and congratulated each other and the community for a new chapter of AMAA's ministry and service in the Greater Los Angeles area.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Lisa Apovian Earns Top Award in Education

By Tom Vartabedian

LAWRENCE, Mass. — Somebody once imparted words of wisdom to Lisa Apovian during her 17 years as an elementary teacher in Lawrence: “If you love your job, you will never work a day in your life.”

It has stuck like glue with the third-grade instructor at Parthum School, where she has endeared herself to her students inside a locality that can best be described as “challenging.”

Apovian was presented the coveted Sontag Prize in Urban Education, given to the educator who best symbolizes the educational welfare of a community.

The prize is bestowed upon a teacher who best provides top-level instruction to some of the more needy students in the areas of mathematics, English, Language Arts and other disciplines.

Along with a plaque, \$3,000 honorarium and an iPad came a scholarship for a two-day training period at Harvard University where she rubbed elbows with some of the best educators throughout the state. Most importantly, this award recognizes excellence in teaching and provides students with an extra week of high-quality education.

One of the reasons for attending Harvard was training to teach an accelerated academy over the school vacations. The

stipend will compensate for her services during those periods.

“I truly love going to work every day,” she said. “I was encouraged by my peers to apply and was embarrassed at first. Getting this award was the experience of a lifetime.”

While at Harvard, Apovian worked on team-building tasks. One personal highlight was meeting actor Tony Plana, a Cuban immigrant, who has appeared in such films as “Three Amigos” and “Ugly Betty.”

“We sat over lunch and shared stories of our immigrant families,” she said. “Combining theater with English and writing brings positive results in the classroom. He started a company in California that introduces Shakespeare to children in urban settings.”

At St. Gregory Church, Apovian has taught Sunday School; served as a trustee and member of the Bazaar Committee; chaired the Ladies Guild, and worked bingo. She planted her roots as a Sunday School student here and helps with the newsletter.

With a wedding date in December, and three stepchildren walking into her life, Apovian is enjoying quite a year. She is also taking additional classes toward an eventual doctorate in counseling. For three years, she’s been volunteering in a Trauma Intervention Program in her community.

“I’d like to work inside a school setting as a counselor surrounding children and grief counseling,” she added. “Hopefully, I will earn my doctorate and pursue a specialized area which has long interested me.”



Lisa Apovian

## Armenian Bar Group Part of Panel Advocating Joining Professional Groups

LOS ANGELES — A trio of Armenian Bar Association Board and active members — Saro Kerkonian, Fred Mesropi and Sara Bedirian — formed the centerpiece of a special presentation at Glendale Law School focusing on the ways and means for law students to maximize their job placement opportunities and to hone their professional skills. The event was held on March 10, at Glendale Law School and was organized in cooperation with Italian American Lawyers’ Association, the Glendale Bar Association and the Pasadena Bar Association.

The program began in a crowded room of more than 100 participants drawn from the stu-

dents and faculty of Glendale Law School. With rapt attention, the students eagerly listened to the panel introductions on the concepts and benefits of bar association membership and the important positions such organizations hold in the legal profession and in the life of an engaged practitioner.

The first series of speakers was from the Glendale Bar Association. The group’s vice president, Michael Zuckerman, delved into the myriad examples of the benefits of bar association membership. He informed the students that their involvement would greatly assist them in landing a job and would allow them to

fulfill their MCLE requirements. Edgar Gutierrez of the Glendale Bar Association spoke next and emphasized that the business of law is much about building relationships and the importance of getting involved to develop key contact and work opportunities.

At the core of the evening presentation were the Armenian Bar Association representatives, Mesropi and Kerkonian, who, in motivating and inspiring fashion, offered the audience a primer on the fulfilling professional and personal benefits of joining bar associations. Kerkonian, a member of the Board of Governors and the Chair of the Armenian Rights Watch Committee, spoke briefly of the history and mission of the Armenian Bar Association and its founder, Raffi K. Hovannisian. Mr. Kerkonian described the great success of two recent events that were held jointly with the Armenian law student organizations of Loyola Law School and Southwestern Law School for purposes of hands-on mentorship and effective resume preparation. He also shared the unique opportunities which bar associations often avail their members, citing his own experience of participating on a legal panel with two California Supreme Court justices.

Mesropi, deputy district attorney with the Los Angeles County’s District Attorney’s Office, delivered his unique perspective as a public servant and the significance of bar association membership. Without the necessity of business-generating possibilities as a government prosecutor, Mesropi nevertheless made a compelling case for public servants’ continued involvement in professional organizations and their engagement in community education projects. In addition to helping create professional connections, Mesropi commented, his experience in the Armenian Bar Association has led to meaningful relationships and lasting friendships with other members.

Pasadena Bar Association members Heidi

Bitterman and Christopher Chaplin spoke on the topic of how bar association membership may be of assistance in mastering the students’ craft in the law. Both stressed the fact that bar association membership would provide exposure to attorneys in different practice areas and would provide resources for exchanges and consultations spanning the gamut of the areas of law. As bar association members, the students were told that they would be in a good position to learn from premier practitioners either speaking at continuing legal education events or networking functions.

Prof. Delores Yarnall of Glendale Law School was introduced to the attendees by Dean Darrin Greitzer who expressed appreciation to the students and speakers. Yarnall emphasized what Kerkonian had earlier stated, namely that there is a vast number of different ethnic and specialized bar associations which provide value and meaning to their members. She spoke of her personal favorite, the Cowboy Lawyers’ Association, and how they were celebrating their 25th anniversary this year. She mentioned that members go on exhilarating trail rides with sides of sumptuous catering and wine tastings in a relaxed atmosphere, which helps promote relationships with peers and opponents alike, all the while helping to create and maintain professional civility.

Damian D. Capozzola, president of the Italian American Lawyers’ Association concluded the event by talking about how bar associations can help you land clients. Capozzola stated that bar association membership would also provide general networking meeting opportunities and allow for people to interact with their peers and have access to partners, general counsel of corporations and key people in law firms, which could lead to client opportunities. For information on becoming a member of the Armenian Bar Association visit [www.armenianbar.com](http://www.armenianbar.com)

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## A Parish Says Thank You to Priest

WASHINGTON – Parishioners at St. Mary Church of Washington, DC, recently honored their pastor, the Rev. Hovsep Karapetyan, on the 10th anniversary of his ordination into the priesthood of the Armenian Church.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), visited the community on Sunday, February 23, where he presided over the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and delivered the sermon.

At the conclusion of badarak, the Primate presented Karapetyan with a pectoral cross and congratulated him on this milestone.

“A decade ago a young deacon entered the ranks of the priesthood in the Armenian Church,” Archbishop Barsamian said, recalling Karapetyan’s ordination at St. James Church in Richmond, Va. “Today he continues to be a dedicated servant of the Lord, one who is committed to helping his parish grow and is, in turn, well respected by the Armenian community of Washington.”

A requiem service was held in memory of deceased parishioners and victims of the 1988 pogroms in Azerbaijan, an event commemorated in February.

Also that afternoon Archbishop Barsamian elevated three altar servers – Armen Chubukian, Aras Mermer and Edwin Tilimian – to the rank of sub-deacon. Archbishop Barsamian presented the newly ordained with crosses from Holy Echmiadzin.

“It is an immense happiness for me on this anniversary to see Aras, Edwin and Armen ele-



Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan celebrates the Divine Liturgy at St. Mary Church.

with Karapetyan, both on Sundays and during the week, to prepare for the sub-diaconate. He said the experience was at once challenging and uplifting and he looks forward to his new role.

“The ordination was amazing,” he said. “It’s such a privilege to serve on the altar and I consider it the greatest accomplishment I have had to this day.”

Following services, more than 200 people gathered in the church hall for a luncheon and program in celebration of Karapetyan’s anniversary.

In addition to Barsamian, guests included Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Diocese’s ecumenical director; Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian, the long-serving former pastor of St. Mary Church; Diocesan Council Chair James Kalustian; Ambassador Tatoul Markarian, Armenia’s ambassador to the United States and the entire embassy staff; Robert Avetisyan, Permanent Representative of Nagorno-Karabagh to the United States; and Colonel Mesrop Nazarian, Armenia’s Defense Attaché in Washington.

Parish Council member Sintia Pertrosian-Gusmao served as master of ceremonies. Reflecting on the Diocese’s theme “Living the Gospel of Christ,” Kalustian spoke about the ways in which pastors set an example by following in Christ’s footsteps. Barsamian and Aykazian spoke about Karapetyan’s pastoral leadership.

Markarian described Karapetyan’s ongoing

effort to maintain close ties with the embassy through lectures, presentations and other jointly-sponsored events. Women’s Guild member Clara Andonian, parish council member Sarine Zenian and Deacon Garegin Vardanyan spoke about Karapetyan’s warm personality and his support of various church organizations. In addition, letters of congratulation were read from those who could not attend the February 23 celebration.

ACYOA members and sub-deacons presented Karapetyan with a commemorative plaque and the parish council ordered a handmade silver cross from Armenia.

The program also featured a musical performance by the talented Chamsayan Sisters and a slide show depicting Karapetyan’s pastoral journey.

### New Energy

Karapetyan studied at Gevorkyan Theological Seminary at Holy Echmiadzin, St. James Seminary at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New Rochelle, NY.

He was ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and went on to serve as deacon-in-charge at St. James Church of Richmond, Va., where he was ordained to the priesthood by Barsamian in February 2004.

In 2007, he was assigned to St. Mary Church, where parishioners say his vision and hard work have helped the community take on new projects.

During his tenure, St. Mary Church completed renovations to its hall and sanctuary. The latter included the renovation of the main altar and two smaller altars, window enhancements

and the renovation of the church floor, ceiling, pews and candle room. In addition, new entry doors were created and a carving of St. Mary installed at the entrance. On church grounds, a khatchkar was put up in memory of the deceased parishioners of the community. Now the parish is working on the construction of an Armenian bell tower to adorn the exterior of the building.

“Fr. Hovsep has been a very big asset to our community,” said Parish Council Vice Chair Mike Tashjian. “He has brought many people together in our parish.”

Karapetyan and his wife, Jennifer Karapetyan, have injected new energy into parish organizations. The combined Sunday and Armenian School has seen an increasing number of students, while the ACYOA has implemented an active schedule of worship and social and cultural activities.

Meanwhile, programs with Armenia’s Embassy and Nagorno-Karabagh’s Mission to the United States have allowed parishioners to learn of developments in the homeland and to become involved in supporting initiatives there.

The Women’s Guild likewise has expanded its programming and participation in recent years. Earlier this winter, the organization hosted an evening of worship and fellowship to raise funds in support of the Fund for Armenian Relief’s Vanadzor Old Age Home in Armenia.

“Looking back at the past seven years as the pastor of St. Mary Church,” Karapetyan said, “I give thanks to God for the many wonderful people whose encouragement and sustenance have strengthened my ministry and inspired me to continue serving God and his church.”



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian ordains sub-deacons at St. Mary Church. He is assisted by the Rev. Hovsep Karapetyan.

vated to the rank of sub-deacon,” Karapetyan said. “It gives me great joy to see them grow in their faith, knowledge and commitment to our church.”

Aras Mermer, who in addition to serving on the altar is active in the parish’s ACYOA, said the young men have been meeting regularly

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Historian Akçam Delves into Controversial Memoir by Armenian Soldier at Clark Talk

WORCESTER – Clark University's Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies will present a lecture by Prof. Taner Akçam on April 17, "On Truth and Memoirs: The Case of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Army," which will explore the subject of a vigorous debate over the authenticity of a memoir recently published in Turkey.

Akçam will discuss the case of Sarkis Torossian who served as a lieutenant in the Ottoman Army during World War I. According

to his memoir, Torossian was a graduate of a military college and a decorated Ottoman officer who served at Gallipoli and other important battlefronts. Learning that his parents and sister were deported and died in the Armenian Genocide, Torossian switched his allegiance. He joined the Arab rebellion in Palestine and Syria and fought with a French battalion against Kemalist forces in Cilicia. Akçam will consider the veracity of Torossian's account and interpret the public debate surrounding the memoir in Turkey. Turkish scholars Ayhan Aktar and Edhem Eldem will comment and respond.

Torossian immigrated to the United States in 1920. In 1947, he published his memoirs in English, *From Dardanelles to Palestine: A True Story of Five Battle Fronts of Turkey*.

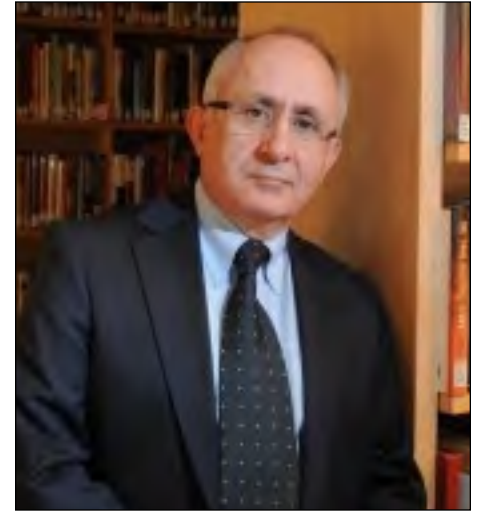
Following the Turkish translation published in 2012, reactions in the Turkish press have been intense. Some discredited the memoir as fabricated. Others championed its authenticity. Akçam will discuss the veracity of Torossian's account and interpret the public debate surrounding the memoir in Turkey.

A pre-lecture reception, hosted by the Friends of the Armenian Chair at Clark University, will begin at 6 p.m. in the Lurie Conference Room at the Higgins University. Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP to [Jdefronzo@clarku.edu](mailto:Jdefronzo@clarku.edu).

A professor of history at Clark University, Akçam holds the Robert Aram & Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at the Strassler Center. An internationally recognized human rights activist, he was one of the first Turkish intellectuals to recognize and openly discuss the Armenian Genocide. He is the author of several books, most recently, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (2012), which earned the Middle East Studies Association Albert Hourani Book Award (2013) and was named one of the year's (2012) best books on the Middle East by *Foreign Affairs*.

This event is part of the 2013-2014 "Critical History" lecture series at the Strassler Center.

This lecture and discussion is free and open to



Prof. Taner Akçam

the public. It will begin at 7:30 p.m., in Tilton Hall at the Higgins University Center, 950 Main St. For more information, visit [clarku.edu/holocaust](http://clarku.edu/holocaust) online.

### US Diplomat's Diary From 1915 Subject of Talk at Fresno State

FRESNO – The Armenian Studies Program (ASP) at Fresno State announces the publication of a new book, *Inside Constantinople: A Diplomat's Diary During the Dardanelles Expedition, April-September, 1915* by Lewis Einstein, published by the Gomidas Institute (London), in cooperation with the ASP.

To mark the launch of the book, Ara Sarafian (Gomidas Institute, London) will present a lecture "Saving Armenians: The United States and the Armenian Genocide Thesis, 1915" at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191.

The lecture is co-sponsored by the Armenian Students Organization and the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

This talk presents new insights into the role of the United States in documenting the Armenian Genocide and publicizing the plight of Armenians in 1915. It stresses that the United States had access to vital information about the plight of Armenians, and that the United States embassy in Constantinople was staffed by extraordinary individuals who took a moral stand and chose not to ignore the plight of Armenians. The embassy staff was headed by Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, but also included Special Agent of the State Department, Lewis Einstein, who made his own incredible contribution to the understanding of the Armenian Genocide.

Sarafian is an archival historian specializing on late Ottoman history. He is the director of the Gomidas Institute, which is a leading research and publication center related to modern Armenian history.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

## Hai Guin Awards Scholarships, Plans May Fundraiser

BELMONT, Mass. – The Hai Guin Scholarship Association of Boston announces the recipients of its annual scholarship awards. Each student has an impressive background in their community, is in good academic standing and is well respected by their peers and professors. This year's recipients are Alexander Bacon, Amanda TabEEK, John Norayr Orchanian and Rebecca Shahverdian.

Bacon of Peabody, is a business administration major at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell where he has been named to the Dean's List. An acolyte at Holy Trinity Church (Cambridge) from grades 5-12, he served as an assistant Sunday School teacher and has been a long-term member of the ACYOA. A student athlete in high school, he participated in football, wrestling and rugby.

TabEEK of Dedham, is a communications major at Curry College. A member of the Holy Trinity Church community (Cambridge), she has been an assistant Sunday School teacher and an assistant at Trinity Kids Place (vacation bible school) for a number of years. She has participated in the pilgrimage to Armenia in 2008 and has also been a counselor-in-training at St. Vartan Camp in New York.

Orchanian, of Lexington, is an information technology major at Northeastern University where he has been named to the Dean's List. A member of the Armenian Memorial Church (Watertown), he has also been a youth group leader at the First Armenian Church (Belmont)

and a counselor and worship leader for younger children at Camp Arevelk for four years. He enjoys playing piano and trumpet.

Shahverdian, of Belmont, is a sociology and psychology major at Suffolk University and has served as the secretary of the Suffolk Armenian Students Association. She was a member and athlete of the Homenetmen Florida chapter, attended St. David Armenian Church School (Boca Raton, Fla.) for eight years and was a member of the ACYOA Juniors (Florida) where she held the office of chairperson for two years.

the Armenian Sisters' Academy (Lexington), St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (Watertown) and the Soorp Tarkmanchatz School (Jerusalem), as well as an annual honorarium to a Watertown High School student who has excelled in Armenian studies.

Hai Guin Scholarship Association applications for the 2014-2015 academic year are now available and can be obtained by contacting the group on its Facebook page (Hai Guin Scholarship Association of Boston) or in writing to PO Box 509, Belmont, MA 02478.



Alexander Bacon



Amanda TabEEK



John Norayr Orchanian



Rebecca Shahverdian



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The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is seeking a Senior Programme Officer (Western Armenian Language).

**The closing date for this position is  
15 April 2014.**

To find out more please visit  
[www.gulbenkian.pt/ArmenianCommunities](http://www.gulbenkian.pt/ArmenianCommunities)

She has been a member of the Sayat Nova Dance Company for three years.

Celebrating its 79th year, the Hai Guin Scholarship Association continues the mission of helping Armenian students, a labor of love that began when a handful of women joined together to provide financial assistance to the young members of the community for their sacred and secular education.

Since those early years, the group has awarded more than \$150,000 in scholarships to Armenian students along with annual gifts to

Applicants must have completed one year of study and be permanent residents of Massachusetts. Recipients may attend any college or university in the United States.

On May 10, the Hai Guin Scholarship Association will host an event to raise funds for its scholarship effort. This year's Luncheon and Fashion Show, will be held at the Boston Marriott Newton and will feature red carpet designs from Lorraine Roy at Bella Sera of Danvers. For more information about this event or to purchase tickets, contact Joyce Guleserian




**New York**  
**METRO**

# 'Big Bad Armo Show' Makes Grand East Coast Premier

Leaves Audiences Asking for more

By Talar Sesetyan Sarafian

NEW YORK – “The Big Bad Armo Show” took New York City by storm for two nights, performing to two sold-out audiences at the Symphony Space, on February 28 and March 1. Bringing a slice of Los Angeles life with them, “The Big Bad Armo Show” invited and hosted in New York/New Jersey by the Tekeyan Cultural Association Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group, proved that Armenian theater is alive and well in its various forms.

Since 2009, “The Big Bad Armo Show” has garnered a huge following with its witty and hilarious sketches about the Armenian-American experience. With a vast array of off-

beat characters, illuminating cultural commentary, outlandish improv and down-right funny vignettes, “The Big Bad Armo Show” brings laughter and insight onto this community that has planted its marble column roots from Fair Lawn, NJ to the “Hills of the Glendale.” From being the first nation to adopt Christianity to Kim Kardashian, the show holds up a fun house mirror to the 10,000 years of cultural idiosyncrasies that have made up the Armenian community.

Written and created by National Endowment for the Arts grant recipient Lory Tatoulian, “The Big Bad Armo Show” introduced the East Coast audiences to a world of new characters and hilarious comedy. Tatoulian is originally from Reedley, a small town near Fresno, where she grew up with her Kharpertzi parents. In her own words, Tatoulian “eventually made the inevitable migration to Los Angeles,” where she managed to conceptualize, create, write and



A scene from “The Big Bad Armo Show”



The cast and crew of “The Big Bad Armo Show” with members of the Mher Mgerdchian Theatrical Group

produce five different installments of “The Big Bad Armo Show:” “The Big Armo Show,” “Big Bad Armo X-Mas,” “Big Bad Armo: World Domination,” “Dreaming of a Big Bad Armo Christmas” and “The Big Bad Armo’s Are Coming for Christmas Dinner.”

James Martin is the director of the production. And, as he noted in the program booklet, he is, in fact, Armenian. He exclaims, “Yes, I’m Armenian. No, I did not learn Armenian just for this show. I grew up Armenian. I’m probably more Armenian than you are. Can you read and write Armenian? Hmmm? Because I can. Were you in Armenian Scouts for 13 years? Because I was... Now enjoy the show.”

And, what a great show, it was! It left the audiences laughing and talking about it even for weeks after. The cast consists of six to seven actors, plus a handful of musicians and technicians. “The Big Bad Armo Show” is not only for Armenians, but anybody who has lived, drank, friended, married, divorced, negotiated or worked with Armenians.

The hilarious, myriad of skits included great characters like Marty and Varty, the perpetual entertainers of the Armenian Heritage Cruise

and Sossi Hayrabedian, the foul-mouthed and scantily-dressed mayoral candidate of Pasadena. Other skits include the courtroom drama of what happens when Mexicans and Armenians become neighbors, what family really pays the check after dinner, and even a guest appearance via video by celebrity attorney Mark Geragos...and much, much more!

On both evenings, TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group’s executive committee member, Talin Sesetyan welcomed the guests at Symphony Space and introduced the production. In fact, it was Sesetyan’s initiative that made it possible to bring “The Big Bad Armo Show” to the East Coast. And, what a success it was. After the second show, TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group hosted a reception at the Symphony Space Bar Thalia adjacent to theater to allow guests to meet and mingle with the cast and crew.

Audiences are asking for more and those who missed this opportunity are asking if and when “The Big Bad Armo Show” will return to New York. The answer is a big yes, and the Mher Megerdchian Group is working on bringing it back - this time with their Christmas show.

## Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Massachusetts State House

# APRIL 11

Beginning at 10:30 a.m



A joint House and Senate resolution will be presented to architect Donald Tellalian, who designed the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston.



Keynote Speaker  
Attorney  
**Mark  
Geragos**



Catered  
reception in  
the Great  
Hall

Complimentary bus service, provided by the Knights of Vartan, will be available from the St. Stephens and the St. James Churches for the round trip transportation. This is a free event. For more information, contact Lalig Musserian at 617-319-2651 or lalig@musserian.com

**99th ANNIVERSARY  
COMMEMORATION  
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**  
 ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՑԵՂԱՍՊԱՆՈՒԹԻՒՆ  
 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

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 St. Thomas Armenian Church  
 Highway 9 & E. Clinton Ave., Tenafly, NJ  
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 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

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 Edward Barsamian (917) 885-9729  
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To learn more about the Armenian Genocide, please visit  
[www.theforgotten.org](http://www.theforgotten.org), [www.armenian-genocide.org](http://www.armenian-genocide.org), [www.twentyvoices.com](http://www.twentyvoices.com)





## New York METRO

# HMADS 26th Annual Science Fair Dedicated to the Late Dr. Albert Kapikian

By Kristen Reed

OAKLAND GARDENS, N.Y. – The 26th Annual Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) Science Fair 2014 took place March 11 to March 13.

This year's Science Fair was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Albert Kapikian, a virologist, who died on February 24, 2014 at the age of 83. Kapikian was a pioneering virologist at the National Institutes of Health who discovered the norovirus in 1972, with his colleagues identified the hepatitis-A virus in 1973, was the first scientist in the United States to detect human rotavirus, and led a decade long effort that resulted in the first licensed rotavirus vaccine in 1998. In 1967 Dr. Kapikian was appointed as the former chief of the epidemiology section of the Laboratory of Infectious Diseases at NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a position he held for 45 years.

His father, Zareh Kapikian, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, was a staunch believer in Armenian education and was considered the grandfather of HMADS.

Students also learned about another loss for the world of science, Grigor Gurzatian, astrophysicist, who was born in Baghdad, Iraq, to parents who had survived the Armenian Genocide and moved to Armenia. He had died at age 91 in Armenia in February.

On March 11 the Science Fair kicked off with

Ms. Hripsime's First Graders and Ms. Mayda's Second Graders singing The Water Cycle Song. Kindergarten, First and Second grades then presented their Science Fair Projects. Participants went "Under the Sea" with the Kindergarten, traveled through the tropical "Rain Forest" with the First grade, and went back in time with the Second grade and walked with "Dinosaurs."

Special guest of the day was pharmacist Ted Guekjian, RPh, whose daughter, Carolina, is in the third grade at HMADS. Guekjian taught the students about the chemistry of soap making, and with the help of his wife, the students even got to make their own soap.

In the afternoon students played Science Trivia and answered questions presented by the teachers.

On March 12, the students had the chance to dress up as their favorite scientist and discuss the person. Special guest was Dr. Mary Grigoratos, orthodontist, the sister of sixth-grade teacher Ms. Christina.

On the last day, the third, fourth, fifth and sixth graders presented their Science Fair Projects. They ranged from "Endangered Animals" to "Organ Systems," "The Scientific Method" and "Cells."

In the afternoon, the special guests arrived: Vahan Tanal, P.E., AESA, NY-NJ Section's Chairman of the Mentoring Committee, and a former parent, Aram Setian, Physics / MBA, President of AESA, NY-NJ branch and Project Manager Engineering and Quality Media Support, Mercedes Benz-USA, Mr. Hovhannes



HMADS Young Inventors from grades 4, 5 and 6 with jurors

Mardirossian, Nuclear Physicist, Vice President of AESA, NY-NJ branch and Chairman of Technology and Education, and Shaunte Baboumian - HMADS class of '99, a graduate student at Columbia University. Also joining the Science Assembly were Robert Karapetian, a veteran photographer and Kariné Kocharyan, the president of the VOA, Armenian TV.

Hovhannes Mardirossian explained with the help of a Power Point Presentation the use of

LASER to the students.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth graders participated in the HMADS Invention Center and presented their inventions. After much debate and contemplation the winners were chosen. In third place was Olivia Nercessian, fourth grade, with the "Liter Meter," in second place was Haig Piramzadian, fifth grade with the "Duo Shaker," and in first place was Margaret Sakar, sixth grade with the "Home Use Bottle Shredder."



Kristen Reed with her class



First, second and third place winners with the jurors

## Another Record Year Kicks Off AAHPO's 20th Anniversary

By Lawrence V. Najarian, MD

NEW YORK – Following another year of record member participation and service to the community, the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) begins its 20th anniversary year with a commitment to improve the health of Armenians.

In 2013, AAHPO cast the widest net ever to improve the lives of fellow Armenians both here and in Armenia. Among the highlights for 2013, AAHPO: Expanded the depth and range of services offered to the Armenian communities in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, maintained and enhanced projects that will help our brethren in Armenia and collaborated with a number of Armenian organizations that serve communities here, in the Mid-Atlantic region and in Armenia.

AAHPO's Annual Report for 2013 was delivered to AAHPO members last December at the Clinton Inn, Tenafly, NJ. Following the Annual Meeting, members and guests celebrated the Holiday season with a brunch and program co-chaired by Knarig Khatchadurian



At the 2013 Christmas Brunch, AAHPO members, spouses and families were treated to a special performance by The Hamazkayin Arekag Children's Choir.

Meyer, PhD and Kim Hekimian, PhD. The Hamazkayin Arekag Children's Choir performed.

AAHPO was founded in 1994 by health care professionals determined to improve health care for their brethren. Originally a local organization, AAHPO has expanded to become an important international voice. AAHPO members represent all health care professions, including physicians, nurses, den-

tists, nutritionists, psychologists and public health experts.

In 2013, AAHPO continued to be a vibrant organization of volunteer healthcare providers led by a hard-working, selfless board, 100 percent of whom contributed to the financial support of the organization.

The past year was an important one for AAHPO, and 2014 is sure to escalate the momentum. Many programs and events are

planned for the tri-state area, culminating in a 20th Anniversary Banquet on November 21.

AAHPO plans to conduct four medical missions over the next two years to Karabagh and Armenia, with the first in August 2014. The missions will focus on medical and surgical diseases of the thyroid, a common problem in Armenia. Medical teams from Lenox Hill Hospital and St. Barnabas Medical Center will participate and multidisciplinary teams will include pathologists, oncologists, endocrinologists and surgeons. The missions will focus on skill transfers to local physicians and will use the HyeBridge Telehealth Program, a medical information highway that enables physicians in Armenia and New York to freely transmit medical data and information in a consultative process. AAHPO hopes to expand the Telehealth program to as many as 18 locations in Armenia by year's end.

AAHPO initiatives are funded entirely by member dues, fundraising events, and contributions from the Armenian community. To donate to these initiatives, visit [www.aahpo.org](http://www.aahpo.org).



# Arts & Living

## New Human Rights/ Social Justice Focus Of ADAA 2014 Saroyan Prize

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA) announces that the William Saroyan Prize for Playwriting will launch a Human Rights/Social Justice focus, beginning with the 2014 cycle of the competition. The prize will be awarded for themes which engage an audience with social and political issues and/or promotes peace, social justice and human rights.

In continuing with the work of previous years to support Armenian stories and artists, a special Commendation for Armenian Excellence will be additionally awarded to a play on an Armenian theme.

Deadline for full-length stage plays is June 15. A professional jury will select three finalists from the submissions, and an honorary jury will determine the grand prizewinner.

The prize will be awarded Human Rights Day, Wednesday, December 10, at ADAA's annual awards event in Los Angeles.

The 2014 Saroyan Prize Committee includes the following theater professionals: Erik Ehn, dean of playwriting, Brown University, US; David Lan, Young Vic Theatre, UK; Jose Luis Valenzuela, Los Angeles Theater Center, US; Catherine Filloux, playwright, US; Michael Peretzian, director, US; Lisa Kirazian, playwright, US; Bianca Bagatourian, Playwright, US.

Advisory Theaters for the 2014 Saroyan Prize are: The Pasadena Playhouse, US; The Young Vic, UK; The Bush Theatre, UK; The Los Angeles Theater Center, US; Golden Thread Theater, US; The Fountain Theatre, US and more.

The late William Saroyan believed that the performing arts were a powerful tool for facilitating civic engagement and advancing social change. ADAA, with the advice of its theater and funding partners around the world, decided to expand the scope of the competition to promote intercultural understanding and be inclusive of more playwrights exploring the transformative power of theater to address issues of global significance. This is certainly in keeping with the spirit of William Saroyan – a longtime advocate of human rights. It will also further the aim of the Armenian arts community as a whole, in its quest for justice and acceptance.

Scripts can tackle topics as diverse as homelessness, genocide, human exploitation, whether the conflicts are international, among groups and individuals, or through political participation. Scripts can also seek to create understanding of how conflicts can be resolved non-violently instead of violently. Other themes can include minority issues that focus on racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination both in the United States and abroad, with writers making real and relevant the impact of human rights issues on our everyday lives. ADAA hopes this widened scope of the competition will help shed new light on religious, spiritual, and cultural differences and issues and build respect for cultural expression and identity in a world that is experiencing rapid globalization.

Playwrights must submit a half-page synopsis of their play for the committee to confirm that it is a play dealing with human rights/social justice, whether Armenian or non-Armenian themed. Writers will then be invited to submit their full-length script for consideration.

The Saroyan Playwriting Prize is supported with grants from the William Saroyan Foundation, which inaugurated the prize at ADAA in 2007, and by Gagosian Galleries and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

For submission guidelines, visit ADAA's website, <http://www.armeniandrama.org>. Submissions for the prize are electronic only and must be sent by June 15, to [adaa@armeniandrama.org](mailto:adaa@armeniandrama.org).



"Church of Marmeshen" Acrylic on Panel

## Tashjian Solo Show at Art Exchange Gallery in Santa Fe

SANTA FE, N.M. – The Art Exchange Gallery is going to host a solo show for painter Richard Tashjian in June, titled "Richard Tashjian Paintings, Old and New."

The show will be launched at a reception on Friday, June 6, 4-6 p.m.

Some works feature Armenian scenes such as Mt. Ararat, the Garni mountains and Mt. Aragats. His New Mexico imagery has a striking resemblance to some of the Armenian paintings. The curator and owner of Art Exchange Gallery, Jeff Tabor, states, "We discussed this and he mentioned that the New Mexico landscape reminds him of being in Armenia. It is a comfort for him to be here in the high desert of New Mexico. Richard is not only a talented artist, but is a good, God fearing man as well."

Tashjian has traveled back to his roots at least a dozen times and has done many drawings and paintings of historic and Biblical scenes. He has done paintings that depict internationally famous artists of Armenian heritage, William Saroyan (writer), Aram Khatchadourian (composer), Arshile Gorky (abstract painter) and Komitas Vartabed (musician/composer), all of whom have gained considerable prominence in their individual fields. He has painted Biblical and Historic Mt. Ararat on location and in his studio upon returning to the states. His paintings of Armenia capture the spirit of the land and people of Armenian heritage.

Born in Chelsea, Mass., in 1926, Tashjian served in the US Navy Reserve in World War II 1944-46 as a photographer and later graduated from the Museum School of Fine Arts in Boston, 1950. He studied design under Prof. Gyorgy Kepes at the MIT School of Visual Design Architectural Center in Cambridge. His talents resulted in a successful career in advertising art, where he worked as a commercial artist and art director for various distinguished ad agencies throughout the Boston area. For several years, he owned and operated an art studio and gallery in Watertown.

His dozen trips to Armenia resulted in rewarding relationships with well-known artists like Hagop Hagopian, Jean Jansem, Karnig Carzou and Minas Avetisian. His resume is filled with an extensive and interesting life.

The Art Exchange Gallery is located at 60 E. San Francisco St. Ste. 210, Santa Fe. The show runs through June 30 and is free to the public.



"Village of Pthni" Acrylic on Panel

## 'Remembering the Armenians of Bitlis' Exhibition at Fresno State

FRESNO – The Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, in cooperation with the Gomidas Institute (London) and the Leon S. Peters Foundation, presents "Remembering the Armenians of Bitlis," an exhibit which will run March 30 to April 30, on the second floor of the Henry Madden Library.

A special opening reception to highlight the exhibit of rare photos, documents, and maps from the Bitlis area will be held on Sunday, March 30, 3 to 4 p.m. The reception is free and open to the public.

Immediately following the reception Ara Sarafian of the Gomidas Institute will present a talk, "Down and About Bitlis: An Exhibition on Bitlis Armenians on the Shores of Lake Van (March 1-2, 2014)" at 4 p.m., in Room 2206 of the Madden Library, next to the exhibit area.

On March 1-2, the Gomidas Institute with the support of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, held an extraordinary exhibition in Tatvan, on the shores of Lake Van, titled "Bitlis Ermenileri" (The Armenians of Bitlis). This event was part of the Gomidas Institute's "bridge-building initiative" which was started in June 2013 to build contacts between Armenians, Turks and Kurds.

The Bitlis Armenians' exhibition was based on

key ethnographic maps and photographs depicting the Armenian presence in the Ottoman province of Bitlis before 1915. These were the result of extensive academic research at the ABCFM Archives (Houghton Library, Harvard University), Mt. Holyoke College



Ara Sarafian

Archives (Mass.), AGBU Nubarian Archives (Paris), and the Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives (Istanbul). The exhibition was shown at the Tatvan Cultural Center with the support of the local mayor's office as well as several other organizations in Bitlis and surrounding areas.

This exhibition was the first such event in eastern Turkey and was attended by a whole spectrum of people from students and workers to local politicians and members of the Turkish Parliament. The Turkish Human Right's Association (especially its committee against racism and discrimination) supported the event and sent three of its members to attend the opening.

## New England Poetry Club Holds Monthly Reading

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The New England Poetry Club Monthly Readings will feature Aaron Poochigian and David Slavitt on Monday April 7, 7 p.m. at Harvard University's Yenching Library, 2 Divinity Ave., near Memorial Hall.

Poochigian, of New York, and the author of *The Cosmic Purr*, received his PhD from the University of Minnesota. His first book of translations from Sappho was published by Penguin Classics with a preface by the British poet laureate. Penguin will publish his translation of the Greek epic *Jason and the Argonauts* this year.

Slavitt, author of 107 books including the recent novel, *L'Heure Bleue*, will be reading from both original poems and translations. Last year, Johns Hopkins University Press published four plays of Horace, and Louisiana State University Press published *Poems and Renditions*.

Another novel, *Shiksa*, is forthcoming.





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Skipping Stones Children's Literary Magazine Features Coverage of Armenians in Spring Edition

EUGENE, Ore. — *Skipping Stones International Multicultural Magazine*, an award-winning children's periodical, is featuring Armenia and Armenians in its Spring 2014 edition. Distributed to schools, libraries and individuals/families, *Skipping Stones* magazine celebrates ecological and cultural diversity, facilitates a meaningful exchange of ideas and experiences and is suited for readers ages 8-16 (grades 4-11). The non-profit, quarterly magazine is independently produced by a group of human rights, multicultural and diversity educators and is in its 26th year of publication.

Among the features spotlighted in the April-June 2014 issue will be seven pages of articles and photos about Armenia and the Armenians. Curated by Armenian-American children's book author Lucine Kasbarian in time for April, the feature includes a photo essay, "A Journey Through Armenia;" a profile of an Armenian artist, art teacher and historic preservationist, Ashot Avagyan, called "Teaching Hope in Sisian" and written by Kasbarian; an essay called "A Child of Immigrants Remembers His Childhood," written by writer-editor C.K. Garabed; "Unknown," a poem by Gayane Jamgotchian, a graduate of the Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School in New York; reproductions of artworks created by students from the Sisian Art School; and an overview of Armenia. A photo, taken by Joseph Dagdigian, depicting a shepherd and his flock with Mt. Ararat in the background, adorns the front cover of this issue.

*Skipping Stones'* mission is to encourage cooperation, creativity and to celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity. The magazine explores stewardship of the ecological and social webs that inform and nurture the world, and offers a unique forum for communication among children from different lands and backgrounds — expanding horizons in a playful, imaginative way and without commercialization. Each issue of *Skipping Stones* contains essays, stories, poems, an advice column, letters to the editor, photos, recipes and folktales written by both children and adults from around the world. Multicultural and



The photo by Joseph Dagdigian which became the cover of *Skipping Stones'* spring 2014 issue

nature books are also recommended in every issue of the magazine.

"We try our best to make reading an active experience, relevant to issues today's young people confront on a local and global level," said Arun Toké, executive editor of *Skipping Stones*. "Our readers hail from north, south, east and west. From villages to inner cities, youth of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds have something to say — about their culture, school, religion, environment or neighborhoods. *Skipping Stones* provides a place for writers and artists of all ages and backgrounds to communicate openly and creatively."

The magazine has been honored with a number of recognitions, including the Name Award of the National Association for Multicultural Educators, two EdPress Awards, a Parent's Choice Award and a 2003 Writer Award. Over the years, *Skipping Stones* has been reviewed in publications such as *Utne Reader*, *School Library Journal*, *Multicultural Education*, *Multicultural Review*, *Rethinking Schools*,

*Creative Classroom*, *Earth Island Journal*, *Green Teacher*, *Learning* and *East-West Journal*. Every year, it prepares an Honors List of exceptional multicultural and nature books for children and their educators. In keeping with its ecological concerns, the magazine is printed on recycled paper with soy ink.

Young readers from all over the world are encouraged to submit stories, artwork and photographs to the magazine.

School librarians or principals in a low-income countries or regions of the world are encouraged to request a free, one-year subscription to *Skipping Stones*, a set of 100 back issues of the magazine, or a box of children's books (mostly in English).

To order the *Skipping Stones'* Spring 2014 issue about the Armenians, or an annual subscription (four issues), contact the *Skipping Stones'* subscription department at: [subscriptions@skippingstones.org](mailto:subscriptions@skippingstones.org) or by mail at: Subscriptions, *Skipping Stones* magazine, P. O. Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403.

## Ararat-Eskijian Museum Hosts Lecture on Life of Thomas Christie

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — On Sunday March 30, at 4 p.m., Ararat-Eskijian Museum will host Dr. Gregory Ketabgian for a talk about Thomas Christie of Tarsus College. The program is co-sponsored by the National Association of Armenian Studies and Research.

Thomas Christie and his wife, Carmelite Christie, were in Turkey as American missionaries between 1878 and 1920. They witnessed the Hamidian Massacres, the Adana Massacres and the Armenian Genocide in 1915. While doing their teaching and missionary work they tried to help the Armenians who suffered all of these atrocities and kept diaries as eyewitnesses of these massacres. One of the reports in the Bryce Blue Book is that of Carmelite Christie. Thomas Christie was a charismatic teacher and impressed on his students the value of knowledge and pursuing lifetime learning. A large percentage of his graduates went on to higher learning. Some of these graduates and their descendants will be discussed, as will Tarsus College's connections to Jenanyan College, Haigazian University and other institutions.

Special recognition will be made of Dr. Pierre and Alice Haig as exemplary descendants of its graduates. The Haigs were devoted and active members of the Southern California Armenian community and its organizations and were deeply involved in its cultural and religious life.

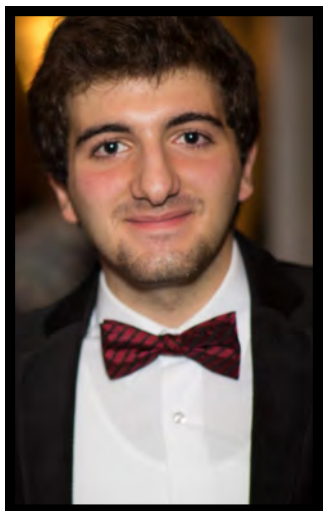
Ketabgian is a retired physician born in Aleppo, Syria, to Genocide survivors. He received his initial education in Aleppo College and later a bachelor's at UCLA and medical education and specialty training at the University of Southern California. He had a private practice in Pasadena for 35 years where he had the occasion to care for waves of Armenian immigrants escaping the catastrophes in Soviet Armenia, Lebanon, Iran, and Turkey. Currently he is completing a family memoir, *Leaving Kayseri: A Journey of One Hundred Years*, and has lectured on "The Adana Massacres: A Psychosocial Study" and "Armenian Survivors on the Titanic."

The program will include a musical interlude by the Ani Quartet.

For more information contact the Ararat-Eskijian Museum at [ararat-eskijian-museum@netzero.net](mailto:ararat-eskijian-museum@netzero.net)



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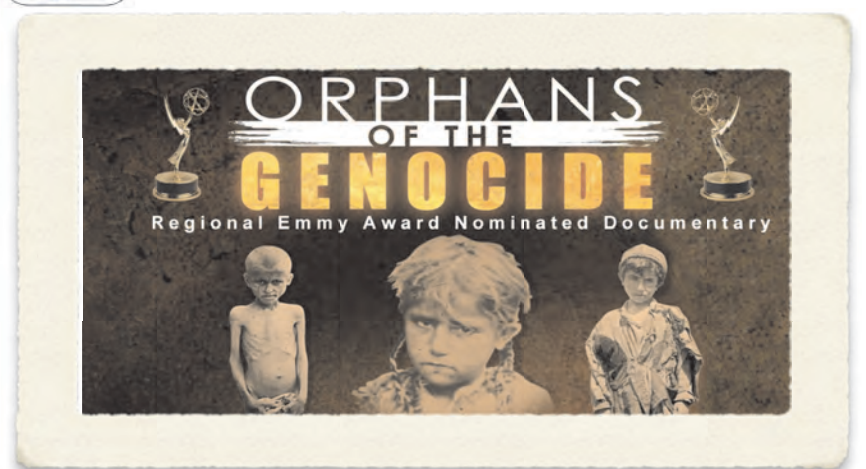
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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian's Latest Book Sheds Light on the Man and His Times

By Dr. Robert Kachadourian

In January, the Armenian Heritage Committee published Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian's 36th book, titled *My Life Journey*. The book is a compilation of the life of a clergyman, author, educator, lecturer and family man. These are only a few of the roles Tootikian has had.

Tootikian's birthplace, Kessab, has not only a strategic historical location but is described as a wonderful place to grow up.

Education was always important even from the earliest days of Tootikian's journey. His joy for learning literally "jumps" out at the reader. It is almost a "joie de vivre." This lifelong learning quest not only resulted in writing this

book but the previous 35.

A portion of the book is almost like reading the current events of that particular period. For example, the era of the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser is referenced with interesting anecdotes. Tootikian was there during this tense time when Egypt and Syria became the United Arab Republic. This caused political and personal repercussions for many. Tootikian's experiences are enlightening and give the reader the actual history of what happened.

Other aspects of *My Life Journey* encapsulate Tootikian's experiences in his pastorates from Damascus to Detroit. Since most of Tootikian's pastoral journey has been in the United States, one would be remiss to not reference his story on these shores. Upon his arrival he immediately pursued his lifelong

love of education. Attaining various degrees which culminated in receiving a doctorate, he began his service to the Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown. Tootikian not only served his church but the Armenian community at large.

Upon arriving in the Armenian Congregational Church of Greater Detroit (Southfield, Mich.), Tootikian again not only immersed himself in church activities but served the community in general again. There's a theme here. Tootikian has served the Armenian community in any area possible wherever he has gone.

It may also be said that Tootikian is a lifelong learner: In *My Life Journey* one isn't merely taken through the various pastorates in which he served. It's a study in service dedicated to the betterment of mankind.

The book is an examination of a life that is not only on a journey but on a mission to serve others in the name of God. It can be said that this is manifested in every ministerial position Tootikian has had in this nation.

We must not stop with the pastorates of Watertown and Southfield. It extends coast to coast. He has served as moderator of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America four times; has served the Armenian Evangelical World Council as secretary and president and since 2003, has been serving AEWC as its executive director.

*My Life Journey* is a history of a journey with all he encountered along the way. It is a journey he now shares.

This book may be obtained from the Armenian Heritage Committee, 3922 Yorba Linda Blvd, Royal Oak, MI 48073.



Ani Dardarian



Sona Bardakjian

### Correction

The photos of Ani Dardarian and Sona Bardakjian were transposed in a story about paying tribute to Vartan Mamigonian at the Armenian Sisters' Academy in Philadelphia, in last week's edition of the *Mirror-Spectator*. Here are the correct names and photos.

## Armenian App to launch by April 24

LOS ANGELES — "Partam: All Things Armenian," an app providing a wealth of information about modern Armenian identity, will be released by April 24, on the occasion of the 99th anniversary of the Genocide.

The Partam app features high-quality photos and descriptions of Armenian landmarks and institutions throughout the United States, profiles of hundreds of eminent Armenian-Americans and information about numerous Armenian commercial establishments.

The geographical material is searchable by US city and categories including Armenian Centers, Schools, Churches, Khatchkars and Genocide Memorials. Users can click on any entry to see maps and driving directions. In addition, they can directly connect with their destinations of choice through the provided phone, Web, and email links.

The Partam app's geographical destinations are complemented by a treasure trove of information about outstanding Armenian-Americans, including inventors, scientists, artists, writers, political and military leaders, athletes, entrepreneurs, and others. The information includes biographical profiles, photos, and reproductions of US patents.

Partam app users can get registered, create

bookmarks, and leave comments.

"It's all about instilling in our youth an awareness of their cultural heritage," said Stepan Partamian, the creator of the app, which is being offered to the public free of charge.

"I'm launching the Partam app as a major project connected with the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the 1915 Genocide," Partamian continued. "I am gifting this app, which is the culmination of ten years of my work, to the Armenian nation, as a tool for Armenians throughout the world to research and rejoice in their cultural identity, and also, ultimately, to help bring the worldwide Armenian community closer together."

During the past decade, Partamian has traveled throughout the US, Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere to research and photograph Armenian landmarks and institutions. Concurrently, he has compiled a vast amount of material on Armenian-Americans who have contributed their talents and inventions to American civilization. His documentary work has been published in several books (all available at [TheArmenian.com](http://TheArmenian.com)), and is now being made accessible through the Partam app as well.

Partamian said the app will be a "work in progress," in the sense that material will be added to it in the months leading up to April 24, 2015, and enhancements will continue to be made afterwards. "By the centenary of the Genocide in 2015, the Partam app will include photos and descriptions of Armenian landmarks and institutions in not only the US, but also Lebanon, Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, Switzerland and the UK," Partamian explained.

Initially the Partam app will be available for the iPhone, through the App Store. Eventually, and with additional funding, Partamian said, the app will be available for the iPad and Android devices as well.

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**The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is now accepting all calendar items for free. All items should be sent to [mirrorads@aol.com](mailto:mirrorads@aol.com). Calendar items may be edited to fit the space.**

# CALENDAR

## CALIFORNIA

**MAY 4 – Sunday, Armenia Tree Project 20th Anniversary Celebration** at the historic Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino. Reception 6 p.m.; Dinner 7 p.m. For information contact: Maral Habeshian, [maral@armeniatree.org](mailto:maral@armeniatree.org), 818 913-2563, visit [www.ArmeniaTree.org](http://www.ArmeniaTree.org).

## MASSACHUSETTS

**APRIL 5 – Daughters of Vartan, Santoukht Otyag, Worcester, present "First Ladies of the White House: Ida McKinley to Michelle Obama."** Elegant Afternoon Tea and Light refreshments to follow. 2 p.m., First Baptist Church, Gordon Hall 111 Park Ave., Worcester. Tickets \$20. Checks payable to: Daughters of Vartan. Mail checks to: Janet Monroy, 57 Cedar Road, Holden MA 01520 or email [janetmon57@hotmail.com](mailto:janetmon57@hotmail.com). Reservation deadline is March 29.

**APRIL 7 – St. James Men's Club, Monday, Speaker Jacqueline Karaaslanian**, executive director of Luys Educational Foundation, speaking on "Luys Empowers Transformation in Armenia." Vosbov Kheyima & Imam Bayeldi Dinner. Social Hour (mezza) 6:15 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. \$14 per person, St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Ladies welcome.

**APRIL 10 – A Place Far Away – Book Talk with Author Vahan Zanoian**, 7:30 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. The Greater Boston area community is invited to a compelling book talk with Vahan Zanoian on his new novel, A Place Far Away, a powerful portrayal of the heart-breaking realities of human trafficking in Armenia. Reception to follow talk. Signed books will be available for purchase that evening. All proceeds from the sale of the book are being donated to organizations devoted to protecting children and fighting human trafficking. For further info, contact the church office, 617.354.0632, or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**APRIL 11 – The Armenian community is cordially invited to "A Shabbat of Remembrance and Empowerment: Commemorating the 99th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide,"** starting at 5:45 p.m. Speaker: Dr. Dikran Kaligian, Temple Israel, 477 Longwood Ave., Boston. Following the service, there will be an opportunity for discussion over refreshments.

**APRIL 11 – Beginning at 10:30 a.m., for the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, which will take place at the Massachusetts State House, at the House Chamber.** Keynote speaker will be attorney Mark Geragos. A joint House and Senate resolution will be presented to architect Donald Tellalian, who designed the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston. In addition, Anahis Kechejian will help lead young people remembering their ancestors who are genocide victims, as part of Stand up for Your Survivor. Also, children from St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School and the Armenian Sisters' Academy will sing America the Beautiful and the Armenian National Anthem. The program will end by noon, followed by a catered reception in the Great Hall. Complimentary bus service, provided by the Knights of Vartan, will be available from the St. Stephen's and the St. James Churches for the round trip transportation. This is a free event and open to everyone. For more information, contact Lalig Musserian at 617-319-2651 or [lalig@musserian.com](mailto:lalig@musserian.com)

**APRIL 27 – Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley observance**, 3 pm, North Andover High School, 430 Osgood St., Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble performing; joint requiem service by MV Armenian churches; reception to follow; complimentary admission.

**APRIL 27 – "Make it Count" Luncheon, book talk and signing with Celtics' great Jojo White**, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, noon, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Luncheon donation: \$12 for adults and \$8 for children under 12. RSVP required by April 23 to Church office, 617-354-0632 or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org)/

**MAY 1 – Avak luncheon**, noon, St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church, 158 Main St., North Andover, MA. Speaker, Tom Vartabedian, A 50-year Retrospect into Armenian-American Journalism, with stories and photos.

**MAY 8 – Cocktails and Conversation**, sponsored by Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, 6:30 p.m., Karoun Restaurant, 839 Washington St., Newton, complimentary mezza & cash bar; free and open to the public; prelude to 40th anniversary next year.

**MAY 10 – The Armenian Churches of Worcester County (Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic, Armenian Church of Our Saviour and Soorp Asdvadzadin)** present the Third annual



**On March 31, AGBU Ararat and Armenian Network of America, Inc.-Greater New York Region & Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society of NY will present a screening of "Bolis" and Conversation with its director, Eric Nazarian, at 7 p.m., AGBU Central Office, 55 E 59th Street, 7th Floor, New York. Admission is free and a reception will follow. To RSVP, email your full name to [rsvp@agbu.org](mailto:rsvp@agbu.org) or call AGBU 212-319-6383 x140**

benefit dance, 7 p.m. to midnight, Armenian Church of Our Saviour Cultural Center, 34 Boynton St., Worcester. Live music featuring Der Mugrditchian Ensemble with special guest appearance by Miss Massachusetts Outstanding Teen Kristina Ayanian. Music, Mezza, cash bar, raffle. Donation \$30, students \$25. All proceeds to Mrgashen Village School, Akhourian Mother and Child Clinic and Armenians in Syria. For tickets contact Dr. Robert Babigian (508) 842-7231.

**MAY 10 – Unveiling of a new genocide memorial by Lowell City Hall**, sponsored by the Armenian Genocide Monument Committee of Merrimack Valley; 10 a.m., downtown procession, followed by program at City Hall and reception in St. Ann's Church Hall at noon. Musical interlude by soloist Sevan Dulgarian; Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, MC.

**MAY 21 – Chefs Party for Our Park!** Benefit for the Armenian Heritage Park's Ongoing Care., 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, mingle and enjoy. and mingle. Advanced Reservations required. To receive the invite, email [info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

## MICHIGAN

**MARCH 29 – Young Turkish-Armenian pianist Artun Miskciyan will perform at 7 p.m., Steinway Piano Gallery**, 2700 E. Maple Road, Commerce Township. The program will include pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Bartok and Khachaturian. The concert is sponsored by the Metro Detroit Tekeyan Cultural Association and dedicated to Margaret Benian. RSVP Diana Alexanian 248-334-3636 Leslie Balian 248-303-4690 Nora Azadian 248-303-7171. Tickets are \$15 per person. A reception will follow the concert.

## NEW YORK

**MARCH 31 – AGBU Ararat and Armenian Network of America, Inc.-Greater New York Region & Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society of NY present "Bolis" Screening and Conversation with Eric Nazarian**, 7 p.m., AGBU Central Office, 55 E 59th Street, 7th Floor, New York. Free admission and reception to follow. To RSVP, please email your full name to [rsvp@agbu.org](mailto:rsvp@agbu.org) or call AGBU 212-319-6383 x140





## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Clash of Imperial Ambitions

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The 20th century witnessed the process of decolonization; many colonial powers gradually allowed their subject nations to determine their own ways of development and sovereignty, which were often achieved through the shedding of tremendous amounts of blood and tears, from the Indian subcontinent to Africa.

But the 21st century came to witness the reversal of that process; it looks like colonialism is returning with a vengeance, albeit under a different guise. France is back in Mali and the Central African Republic. The US, during the Bush-Cheney administration, boasted of imperial aspirations, destroying sovereign nations and bringing forth "regime change," a priority in their political agenda. When a neocon from the Bush-Cheney cabal was asked why the US should destroy Iraq and target Iran, his cynical answer was: "Because we can."

President Obama rose to tame that arrogance, advocating that the US is not the world's policeman, to the chagrin of Cold War relics like Sen. John McCain. The latter has been visiting all the hotspots of the world and dispensing his simplistic solutions to the complex problems of the world – that the US has to solve all those problems at the butt of a gun. Fortunately, there aren't too many takers in the war-weary public that respond to that kind of rhetoric. Even the most hawkish presidential candidates are treading cautiously, though they may blame President Obama for being too soft. For any demagogue, it is easy to blur the line between softness and diplomacy.

Today, the focus is on President Putin and Russia. The annexation of Crimea to Russia is being portrayed as imperial arrogance; Putin is being blamed for trying to rebuild the collapsed Soviet Union, neglecting to mention that Crimea was part of Russia until 1954 and is populated by majority Russians.

During their long phone conversation, when President Obama accused President Putin of violating international law, the latter pointed to the case of Kosovo. Indeed, the US and the European Union bombed the former Yugoslavia into submission and its constituent republics were forcibly "liberated" and Kosovo, a country on lands usurped from Serbia, had installed as its leaders former thugs and gun-runners overnight who became statesmen, standing with the help of NATO forces to this day.

The blame game will continue between the major powers for some time to come.

Another rising imperial power is China with a population of 1.5 billion. Beijing has been flexing its muscles in Southeast Asia to intimidate Japan, India and Vietnam. Incidentally, there is no love lost between the two communist nations of China and Vietnam, who at one time resorted to war and the ironic outcome of that conflict was that Communist Vietnam offered its deep sea ports to the US navy.

The most dangerous imperial ambition is the one harbored by Turkey. At one point, Prime Minister Erdogan's posturing was believed to be perennial megalomania, until Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's emergence as an advocate of Ottomanism. Davutoglu is a scholar diplomat, who knows his history well. He came to add an ideological veneer to Erdogan's grandiose dreams to regain his nation's former imperial glory.

Davutoglu is not embarrassed to state in sophisticated circles that in the Ottoman period, all subject nations lived in "brotherly love" and that he longed to bring those idyllic times back.

Davutoglu was successful to a certain extent in bringing back

Ottoman influence to the Balkans, with the help of NATO.

All the nations in the Balkans had suffered for four centuries under the bloody rule of the sultans, until they revolted and liberated their countries from under Turkish tyranny. But today, the West is using Turkey as a watchdog in solving any problems in the Balkans.

One casualty of Turkish presence in that region is the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Bulgaria, which suffered under the Turkish yoke, like the Armenians. But a powerful Turkish presence in Bulgaria and its parliament thus far has hampered Genocide recognition.

Emboldened by NATO support, Ankara has been extending its imperial ambitions all the way to Central Asia. The last time there were clashes in the Uyghur region of China between the Muslim Uyghurs with ethnic Chinese, Erdogan blamed Beijing for perpetrating a genocide against the Uyghur minority. However, later, to spite his NATO partners, Erdogan did not hesitate to strike an arms deal with "genocidal" China.

Turkey does not miss any opportunity to remind the world of its past glory days as an empire and is trying to revive that notion whenever there is a whiff of hope.

During the virtual partitioning of Iraq into three identifiable administrative regions, Ankara tried to capture the oil-rich Kurdish Kirkuk region, capitalizing on the presence of the Turkomans there and even threatened to intervene militarily to "protect" the Turkomans who were not in any danger. But the Kurds pre-empted and they prevailed, establishing their own administration. Today, the safest region for Armenians is the Kurdish region, where they even have two representatives in the local parliament.

Ankara tried to extend the same kind of "protection" to the Tatars during the recent Crimean crisis. Russia and Turkey have waged two wars over Crimea and the Tatar population is left over from those wars.

Ankara resents the Crimea takeover by Russia for two reasons: Ukraine is more friendly with Turkey than Russia. During the Karabagh War, Ukraine helped Azerbaijan militarily and the current unelected government is cut from the same Turkophile cloth.

The other reason is that the Black Sea was becoming an unchallenged waterway for the Turkish fleet, which will be overshadowed by the Russian fleet after the recent events.

Ankara and Baku claim to be one nation with two governments and Turkey effectively supports Azerbaijan's territorial ambitions by trying to debilitate Armenia under their joint blockade.

Ankara's Ottomanist designs fuel Azerbaijan's war rhetoric. During the recent celebration of Nowruz, President Aliyev once again unleashed an angry tirade against Armenia stating, "Armenia is a fascist state created on historic Azerbaijani lands, which will eventually be won back by Azerbaijan – not only Nagorno-Karabagh but also substantial parts of modern Armenia is ancient Azerbaijani territory."

This hallucinatory statement is tantamount to a declaration of war and yet, every time there is a flare up on the border, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe representatives, who seem to have traded diplomacy with hypocrisy, call on both sides to restrain themselves. This is a case where it seems simplistic even-handedness covers up blatant war-mongering.

The globe is plagued with many conflicts that result from the clash of the ambitions of imperial powers that act in the same manner as their colonial predecessors, only under more modern images and slogans.

Armenia is trapped in the Russian zone of influence. That is its curse as well as its blessing.

## THE ARMENIAN Mirror Spectator



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## A Letter to a Late Priest and Friend, Vartan Kassabian

By Tom Vartabedian

Dear Der Vartan:

Can't believe it's been five years since you took your leave from our community and joined a better world. You always said heaven would be a better place and no doubt, you found that out for yourself.

Just last night, you were affectionately remembered by a small but intimate group at the Merrimack Valley Lodge, Knights of Vartan, where you once served as commander.

I recall you saying how you had the best of both worlds, serving your church and your community with equal regard. You would have been proud sitting there watching your Yeretskin Pauline and son Mgo mingle with the members.

Pauline outdid herself with a meatless casserole and a lasagna that made you go

for seconds. Nobody was counting calories, least of all Mgo. I saw him with two heaping portions. Like you, he just couldn't get enough of mom's cooking.

Anyway, it was an evening of recollection and initiation. The recognition part saw members get up one by one and tell their favorite Der Vartan story. It was all very flattering and sentimental.

Commander Harry Alexanian laid out the foundation for a delightful evening, followed by some nice words by Walter Ohanian. You'd be impressed to hear that your best friend, Very Rev. Antranig Baljian, drove up from Watertown to speak.

He was there to see his son, Der Stephan, installed as a third-generation member of the Knights. You may recall how he served as commander of the Boston Lodge, much like his dad who was also a "sparabed." Nothing like keeping the Masonic tradition in the family, eh?

The church at St. Gregory is still where

you left it in North Andover with lots of good changes. We've had one priest come and go in your absence. Der Karekin Bedourian, went off to serve another parish in California.

Here to take his place was Der Stephan Baljian, the priest who replaced you at Granite City. Sounds like some spiritual boomerang.

You know me, always looking for a story. Well, I found one last evening at the lodge. There were two ladies in attendance and one was my wife. The other happened to be Sylvia Tavitian who, together with her late husband Paul, was active with the Knights and Daughters of Vartan.

Come to find out, this represents her 65th year behind the organ at St. Gregory Church in Haverhill, starting there when she was just 14. Now that's what you call dedication.

You'd be pleased to know that the reconstruction is nearly complete at our church

*continued on next page*





## COMMENTARY



**My Turn**  
By Harut Sassounian

## What Should Armenians Learn From Prime Minister Erdogan?

The purpose of this column is to draw lessons from the recent attacks on the Armenian town of Kessab in Syria.

Last week, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan took two bold actions: 1) he blocked Twitter, a social media site with 12 million users in Turkey, to cover up revelations of corruption about himself and his inner circle; and 2) he aided and abetted the Jihadist fighters' invasion of Kessab, located in the Northwest corner of Syria, bordering Turkey.

What do these two seemingly unrelated events have in common?

Erdogan himself indirectly answered this question, during a campaign rally on March 20: "we will wipe out Twitter. I don't care at all what the international community says. Everyone will see the power of the Turkish Republic."

Clearly, the Prime Minister does not care that he would be criticized for violating the democratic principle of freedom of expression and acting as an autocratic thug. He says and does whatever he thinks is in Turkey's or his own best interest.

US officials reacted by paying mere lip service to Erdogan's Internet crackdown. Samantha Power, US Ambassador to the United Nations, tweeted the following message: "Deeply troubling that Turkey blocked Twitter. Shutting down free access to info inconsistent with democracy; support citizens' call to unblock." Douglas Frantz, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and former managing editor of the Los Angeles Times, who was forced to resign after blocking publication of an article on the Armenian Genocide, described Erdogan's anti-Twitter action as: "21st century book burning." Similar benign criticisms were voiced by State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, and European Union Digital Agenda Commissioner Neelie Kroes.

Did Erdogan care about these verbal lashings? Absolutely not! He didn't give a damn! He had already blocked YouTube for two years, because the website carried videos deemed insulting to Kemal Ataturk. The Turkish Prime Minister now threatens to ban both Facebook and YouTube after the March 30 elections.

Why don't Armenian leaders – in Armenia and Diaspora – act more boldly, similar to Erdogan, especially when the survival of Armenians is at stake? It is most appropriate to raise such a question after the invasion of Kessab by Jihadists, taking Armenian hostages, pillaging their homes, and desecrating their churches.

Regrettably, repeated pleas by Armenian-American organizations to US officials, to help protect Armenians and other Syrian Christians, have fallen on deaf ears. On March 24, the ANCA sent another strongly-worded letter to President Obama, demanding immediate White House and congressional intervention to stop the attacks on Kessab. The US government does not seem interested in the tragic fate of Syrian-Armenians and other minorities, since

Washington is hell-bent on toppling Bashar al-Assad's regime, ignoring the loss of innocent lives.

Armenians should not be content by merely shaking their heads and complaining to each other about the tragic news emanating from Syria. They must wake up from their collective coma and take bold action. Daily demonstrations must be held in major US cities and in front of American, British, French, Saudi, and Turkish embassies and consulates around the world to protest their arming of so-called rebels who are kidnapping and murdering Syrian Armenians, among many others.

Urgent meetings should be held with top US, British and French officials, demanding that they immediately halt deliveries of all weapons and financial assistance to "rebels" in Syria, until they cease attacks on civilians!

I wrote a column back in 2002 with the following headline: "The Armenian 'Mouse' Needs to Roar More Often." Basically, it was a call for bolder action. I had referred to the short story written by William Saroyan, titled: "The Armenian Mouse," in which a brave mouse, by its aggressive behavior, manages to defend itself from more ferocious beasts.

Remaining silent and inactive are no longer viable options, while our compatriots are getting slaughtered in Syria. Sheepish behavior only serves to embolden the enemies of the Armenian nation.

Armenians need to be proactive rather than reactive. On the eve of the Genocide Centennial, they cannot be silent bystanders while the Turkish government and its allies are directly or indirectly embarking on a new campaign of exterminating Armenians in Syria.

Armenians must speak up, protest, and take effective action to defend their countrymen in all corners of the world. They need to become the "mouse" that roars!

## Letter to a Late Priest and Friend, Vartan Kassabian

from previous page

with the erection of new classrooms, a much polished sanctuary with bright windows, and many other improvements. A new steeple will be the coup de grace.

A new board of trustees has taken the upper hand these days, with fresh leadership and more enthusiasm by the members. Our weekly Avak luncheons have attracted a number of interesting outside speakers. And Sunday School is going well with a new influx of students eager to learn religious education and Armenian.

Are you ready for this? Your old pal Greg Minisian has dedicated an annual Cigar Night in your memory. It's so much in demand, tickets are sold out and there's a waiting list. You never turned down a good corona and a snifter of brandy.

The gang at Heavenly Donuts sends their regards, along with Father Lenny Faris, your Antiochian buddy from Lowell. He's still very much a part of our church family.

Remember Charlie Jamgochian? The guy just turned 93 and still drives himself 60 miles to and from church every Sunday. Puts a lot of others to shame, hardly ever missing a Badarak in his suit. Just so happens to be the Year of the Elderly and the Prelate gave him a nice award at our anniversary.

Like any church community, it continues to remain a challenge filling the empty seats each week and getting more people involved. But we manage, thanks to a dedicated group.

I never got a chance to thank you for the visits you paid my mother and other residents at the nursing home. You never skipped a beat, whether they were Armenian or not.

I broke the news to my mother after you passed and a tear rolled down her cheek. She hung on for a couple more years before joining you, just shy of her 99th birthday.

"Why didn't God take me instead?" she grieved. "He always made me laugh."

I told her that as a servant of God, you

# Twitter Ban Batters Turkey's Image, but Does Erdogan care?

By Fadi Hakura

International criticism swiftly and robustly censured the decision by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to block access to social networking website Twitter. European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes called the ban "groundless, pointless, cowardly" and the US State Department likened it to "21st century book burning."

But Erdogan is less concerned about what the "international community says" and more determined to stem the seemingly unstoppable leaking of illicit audio recordings posted on Twitter and YouTube, allegedly documenting corruption in the highest echelons of the Turkish government, ahead of next Sunday's municipal elections.

Twitter is gaining popularity in Turkey as a forum for unhindered debate and information at the expense of traditional sources of news. It played a critical role in mobilizing opposition to Erdogan during last summer's Gezi Park protests. And no wonder – media freedom in Turkey has plummeted from 98th to 154th position worldwide since 2006, according to Reporters Without Borders.

Publicity surrounding the Twitter ban notwithstanding, one should be careful not to exaggerate the near term impacts of this policy move. Emarketer research company estimates that a mere 15 percent of Turkish citizens are Twitter users. This statistic suggests that Twitter use is limited to a small segment of tech-savvy and globally-connected Turks –

a fact that partly explains why they had the technical acumen to circumvent the ban and actually boosted Twitter usage by 33 percent, as revealed by social media rating agency Somera.

More broadly, the vast majority of the Erdogan's core supporters – religious and conservative Turks – are probably not avid Twitter fans. Their main concern is not media freedom or the pervasiveness of corruption but bread-and-butter economic issues. Ali Carkoglu, a political scientist at Istanbul-based Koc University, notes that popular perceptions of the state of the economy have not deteriorated significantly implying that while Erdogan may lose some votes, he is likely to largely retain his base of support in Turkey's upcoming elections.

What the Twitter ban indicates is that the Turkish leadership psychology is incapable of tackling effectively the myriad serious political, economic and external challenges facing the country. It does not appear inclined to implement structural and liberalizing reforms to prevent a "middle income trap" – in other words a slow growth regime – from taking hold. As I argued in a recent Chatham House report, in the absence of these reforms Turkish growth rates of 3 percent or lower will become the norm rather than the exception.

Turkey is addicted to continuous flows of fickle global capital and external debt to fund private consumption. Its economy suffers from persistently high current account deficits, meaning that imports vastly outpace exports and cannot be paid for by the low lev-

els of domestic savings.

Unwisely, Turkey's focus on hubristic construction projects such as the third Istanbul airport and its capricious use of the law to suppress Twitter, rather than competitiveness and innovation, will most likely further undermine future business plans and – critically – the confidence of foreign investors.

Turkey's brand, which was on the rise during the first decade of this century, has witnessed a formidable hammering in the Middle East and North Africa. Very few in the region now look to Turkey as an inspiration for liberal politics and open markets. Tunisia has primarily supplanted Turkey on the consolidation of democracy, despite the latter's six decades of electoral experience.

Turkey is a vivid illustration that personality-based top-down governance and fragile institutions are not a recipe for political maturity and lasting economic success.

This strategically-located nation of 76 million people demonstrates the time-honored principle that "absolute power corrupts absolutely" and reinforces Winston Churchill's dictum that "democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

(Fadi Hakura is the associate fellow and manager of the Turkey Project at the London-based think-tank Chatham House. He has written and lectured extensively on Turkey's political, economic and foreign policy. The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely his. He wrote this column for CNN International.)

## 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.





## SOAR-Brussels Holds Inaugural Masquerade Party

BRUSSELS, Belgium – The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR)-Brussels Chapter held an inaugural event on March 8, and it was a rounding success. Approximately 300 guests enjoyed the chapter's first annual "Masquerade Party," raising nearly 2,700 euros (\$3,800). Thanks to the many sponsors and volunteers, the chapter presented several surprises during the event, including a face painting atelier, traditional Khachapuri cookies, flowers for the ladies to celebrate International Women Day, and a Tombola offering a dinner for two in a local Armenian restaurant. All proceeds benefit the three Armenian orphanages in Syria: St. Theresa's Little Flower Orphanage (Azzizie and Meydan) and S.O. Khach Orphanage. Above, the merry makers celebrate for a good cause.

## Panel Discusses Women's Leadership in Armenia

WOMEN, from page 4

one reason some women prefer not to be involved. Sakanyan stated that men are stereotypical and strive for power, whereas women tend to be issue-oriented. Furthermore, she feels that with more women in politics, government will be more transparent, responsive and accountable. She also pointed out that the Yerevan municipality has improved protection of women and children's rights, and a new "one window" system for handling of inquiries that has resulted in more transparency, efficiency, less bureaucracy and less corruption. She said that she was so impressed with the many women leaders she met on this visit who were enthusiastic and energetic, that she also became inspired. In general, many of the issues of women's rights discussed seem to evolve from cultural reluctance for women to strive for leadership positions and lack of an institutional

framework to train, develop and encourage women for roles in society outside of the home and family.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation by Decker, who related her humble beginnings living in subsidized housing and being the first of her siblings to graduate from high school. Through hard work and dedication she went on to graduate from the Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and became active in Cambridge politics, eventually being elected to the legislature, following 19 years as a Cambridge City Councilor. She spoke passionately about her work and dedication to the improvement of the lives of her constituency and promotion of women in politics.

The audience was impressed with the caliber of the women from Armenia and their optimism for future improvement in the role of women in leadership in their country.

## Armenian Population Flees as Kessab Is Attacked, Apparently by Rebels

KESSAB, from page 1

In a written statement, the Armenian National Committee-International (ANC-I) condemned the attacks and Turkey's active role in aiding and abetting extremist groups in their targeted attacks against the Christian and minority populations in Syria. "For months, we have warned the international community of the imminent threat posed by extremist foreign fighters against the Christian minority population in Syria," noted the ANC-I statement. "These vicious and unprompted attacks against the Armenian-populated town and villages of Kessab are the latest examples of this violence, actively encouraged by neighboring Turkey."

The ANC-I called on all states with any influence in the Syrian conflict to use all available means to stop these attacks against the peaceful civilian population of Kessab, to allow them to return to their homes in safety and security. "In the last one hundred years, this is the third time that the Armenians are being forced to leave Kessab and in all three cases, Turkey is the aggressor or on the side of the aggressors," the organization charged.

According to news reports, the armed incursion began earlier on Friday, with rebels associated with Al-Qaeda's al-Nusra Front, Sham al-Islam and Ansar al-Sham crossing the Turkish border and attacking the Armenian civilian population of Kessab. Snipers targeted the civilian population and launched mortar attacks on the town and the surrounding villages. According to eyewitness accounts, the attackers crossed the Turkish border with Syria openly passing through Turkish military barracks. According to Turkish media reports, the attackers carried their injured back to Turkey for treatment.

A few families with relations too elderly to move were either unable to leave or chose to stay in their homes in Kessab. The following day, March 22, Syrian troops reportedly launched a counteroffensive in an attempt to regain the border crossing point. However, on Sunday, March 23, the extremist groups once again entered the town of Kessab, took the remaining Armenian families hostage, desecrated the town's three Armenian churches, pillaging local residences and occupying the town and surrounding villages, reported Asbarez.com.

The Armenian embassy in Syria is developing a plan of swift actions to help protect the ethnic Armenian population of the town, Armenian President Serge Sargisian said during his visit to The Hague this week for the Nuclear

Security Summit.

Sargisian's press office said the president expressed his deep concern over the events around Kessab and spoke about previous attacks by Turkish troops on Kessab in 1909 and 1915. He said the current third attempt of Turkish authorities to make Armenians leave the area is a serious challenge to 21st century's mechanisms to protect national minorities.

"I think that everyone should realize that the parallels that come to one's mind should be sobering to all the sides," he said.

Sargisian thanked the Syrian government for its steps taken in this difficult time to protect the Armenians of Kessab.

"I have already instructed the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Armenia to the UN in New York and Geneva offices to ask corresponding international agencies dealing with human rights and minority issues to address the issue of security of Armenians in Kessab and guarantee their safe return to their homes," said Sargisian.

The president also discussed this issue with the Catholics of Cilicia Aram I.

Touching upon the historic events, Sargisian recalled another date in history – the year 1915. The Armenians of Kessab were deported in two directions, to Deir ez-Zor and Jordan. Thousands of them died, most of them in the deserts of Deir ez-Zor.

"Today's deportation of Kessab Armenians – the third in history – is a most serious challenge to the mechanisms of the 21st century targeted at the protection of national minorities. I think everyone should realize that these parallels should be sobering for all parties," Sargisian said.

(Reports from Public Radio of Armenia, ArmeniaNow, Arka and Asbarez were used to compile this story.)

## Three Teens, Senior Rescue Two Adults and a Dog from Burning House

SAN RAMON, Calif. (*Contra Costa Times*) – Three California High School students and a 76-year-old man rescued a 94-year-old woman and her adult daughter from a burning home Monday morning, officials said.

Neighbors reported hearing multiple blasts similar to a shotgun firing and then a loud boom from the home at 112 Scarboro Place at about 10:05 a.m.

Neighbor Bob Smith, 76, said he ran to the front door and pushed it open as the three boys entered the fiery backyard to rescue the daughter. Inside, Smith said, the 94-year-old woman was covered in soot and sitting on a chair in the dining room. Unable to carry her out himself, he hollered for the three teenagers, who rushed inside and carried the woman out, he said. They also dragged out the woman's dog.

"Boy, I'll tell you, it was bad in there," Smith said. "That woman would be dead. Another minute and a half – I don't think she could have lasted. Those kids are real heroes."

The three were Garen Kissoyan, Peter Kravariotis and Kirill Yantikov.

Firefighters extinguished the second-alarm blaze within 45 minutes.

The woman was taken to the hospital and later transferred to a burn unit in San Francisco. Her 71-year-old daughter did not appear harmed.

The three were driving in the neighborhood when they saw smoke and hurried to the home.

Peter Kravariotis, a 17-year-old senior is a four-year starter as goalie on the school's varsity lacrosse team. His father, Steve Kravariotis, said his son "would give the shirt off his back. It doesn't surprise me what he did today. It was meant to be today for them to be late."

The cause of the fire is under investigation. Next-door neighbor Andrea Allen said it sounded like oxygen tanks were exploding.

"The whole backyard looked like it was on fire. I can't believe for how big it looked they were able to contain it," Allen said.

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