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'Rebirth' Concert in NYC Unites Community, Celebrates Two Decades of Armenia



Seated, from left, Andy Torigian, Nana Nazarian, Garen Nazarian, Silva Kouyoumjian Takvorian, Hasmig Aprahamian, Zarmair Setrakian, Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian; standing, from right, Hagop Vartivarian, Svetlana Amerkhanian, Harout Chatmajian, Shoghig Chalian, Sirvart Demirjian, Krikor Markarian, Shmavon Atamian, Marie Zokian, Vartouhy Hartunian and Hagop Mekonian

NEW YORK – A few months ago with the recommendation of Armenia's ambassador to the United Nations, Garen Nazarian, a special committee was formed to organize a celebratory concert, named "Rebirth," dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Armenia, joining the United Nations and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian armed forces.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association committee of New York/New Jersey, combined the preliminary plans and venue, with the participation of community cultural organizations of the New York metropolitan area: The Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society, The Armenian Relief Society and the Knights and Daughters of Vartan.

The combined committees collaborated and organized this concert event that will take place on April 28, at the Merkin Hall of Kaufman Center.

The concert will feature the Philharmonic Community Symphonic Orchestra of Rhode Island, consisting of 40 see REBIRTH, page 16

Actor/Writer Eric Bogosian Gives Talk at Cultural Foundation

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

ARLINGTON, Mass. – The leafy and quiet Mystic Street here is far from the glamour of Beverly Hills or the edgy chic of New York City, both locales where Eric Bogosian is equally at home. However, on March 31, the actor/novelist was at the Armenian Cultural Foundation, giving a talk organized by the Armenian Women's Welfare Association.

The connection? Cheryl Panjian, the emcee of the program, is Bogosian's cousin.

Bogosian, who hails from Woburn, was relaxed and entertaining. He joked while he was addressing the capacity crowd at the graceful setting that everyone wanted to hear him talk about former co-star Steven Seagal or "Law and Order," but that he was more interested in talking about a book he is writing on Armenian history. The book is going to be finished by June, he explained. The format is going to be like a magazine article, meaning more anecdotal and less academic than a textbook, "but 500 pages long," he explained.

Bogosian said that he has been focusing on learning about the subject, particularly see BOGOSIAN, page 14



The Peace of Art billboard in Foxboro, Mass.

New Billboards Honoring Genocide Victims Go up in Watertown, Foxboro

WATERTOWN – During April, Peace of Art, Inc., will display commemorative billboards of the Armenian Genocide on Mount Auburn and Arsenal Streets, with the message "Mr. President, Don't Turn your Back! Recognize the Armenian Genocide."

This year, Peace of Art will display a second message on a digital billboard in Foxboro, on Route 1, near Gillette Stadium and Patriot Place, with the message "Honoring the Memory of 1.5 million Lives. Recognize the Armenian Genocide." This simple message is written against an image of Der Zor. This digital billboard went up on Easter Monday.

Daniel Varoujan Hejinian, president of Peace of Art, Inc., said, "It is morally wrong for the president to turn his back on his promise to acknowledge the mass murder of 1.5 million Armenians as genocide."

Hejinian further stated that "doubting and denying the Armenian Genocide is to repeat the crime against humanity, and debating it is an insult to the memory of 1.5 million Armenians who were slaughtered."

Candidate Quits Armenian Parliament Race after Alleged Assault

ARMAVIR (RFE/RL) – An independent election candidate has pulled out of the Armenian parliamentary race after being injured in a reported attack, which his family blames on his main rival backed by President Serge Sargsian's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK).

Meruzhan Mkhoyan's relatives confirmed on Monday, April 2, that he withdrew his candidacy from a single-mandate constituency in the southern Armavir region because of the assault. "They were telling us, 'Drop out or we'll hurt your kids,'" his

wife said, referring to local loyalists of HHK candidate and businessman Aleksan Petrosian.

According to his family, Mkhoyan was kidnapped from his house in the regional capital Armavir and driven to a nearby village cemetery by a group of men early on Friday. The incident is said to have degenerated into a mass brawl after the candidate's friends and male relatives rushed to his aid moments later.

Law-enforcement authorities have so far given few details of the incident. They only

said on Friday afternoon that two young men were injured in the melee and that a criminal investigation is underway. There are no arrests yet.

It emerged that Mkhoyan and his cousin Mushegh were also taken to an Armavir hospital later on Friday. Doctors there said the candidate had suffered a concussion.

Mkhoyan, who is not known to have engaged in political activities before, withdrew from the race on Saturday. According to a district election commission in see ELECTIONS, page 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ragip Zarakolu Released from Prison

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – The founder of Belge Publishing House in Istanbul, Ragip Zarakolu, who has published a number of works about the Armenian Genocide, as well as 15 other fellow detainees, were released from prison on Tuesday, April 10.

Zarakolu was arrested for his alleged connections with the Kurdish KCK party, which is considered the political wing of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), reports Armenpress citing Dogan Turkish news agency.

Turkish security officials arrested him months ago on suspicion of "cooperating and supporting the KCK and PKK."

Zarakolu has published several titles on the Armenian Genocide, including Turkish translations of books by Taner Akcam and Vahagn Dadian.

Maine Senate Passes Genocide Resolution

AUGUSTA, Maine (WLBZ) – On Tuesday, the Maine State Senate recognized the Armenian Genocide. A joint order on the docket that recognizes that in 1915 the Ottoman Empire launched a campaign to wipe out the Armenian people, resulting in the deaths of more than 1.5 million people. The resolution says that some survivors settled here in Maine and they want to recognize those survivors' contributions to the state and express their sympathy to the families of those who died.

Diaspora Minister Honors Guzelian with Saroyan Medal

LONDON – On March 28, Minister of Diaspora Hranoush Hakopyan honored poet, writer and journalist, Assadour Guzelian, with the William Saroyan Medal at the Armenian Embassy, in the presence of Bishop Vahan Hovhannissian, prelate of the UK Armenians; Karine Kazinian, ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United Kingdom, and representatives of Armenian organizations. Guzelian was given the medal for his contribution to Armenian literature, culture and education, as well as services rendered to the nation for almost 60 years.

Guzelian thanked her for honoring him and congratulated the ministry for strengthening ties of cooperation between Armenia and the diaspora.

"Rarely in history has an appropriate position been occupied by an appropriate person at an appropriate time," said Guzelian and added, "you are that appropriate person."

Guzelian wished success to the minister for the projects her ministry has undertaken and appealed to all Armenian organizations to support the activities of the Ministry of Diaspora with united effort.

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Lens Trained

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Tatul Hakobyan Presents New Book

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Tatul Hakobyan's book, *Glance from Ararat: Armenians and Turks*, was published this week. The book speaks about one of the most important episodes of Armenia's first, second and third republics, particularly relating to the Armenian-Turkish relations.

The author said writing the book took eight years.

"Armenia's history is terribly distorted. I am going to prepare three books presenting Armenia's history. "Soviet Armenia" book will also be prepared for giving right picture of Armenia," he said.

Hakobyan stressed that *Glance from Ararat: Armenians and Turks* has three chapters. The first one addresses the First Republic and the Ottoman Empire, the second delves into the years of Cold War and the third from 1988 afterwards.

Hakobyan's first book, *Green and Black Artsakh Diary*, was published in 2008 and was translated into western Armenian, Russian, English, Arab and Turkish languages.

Genocide Museum-Institute to Publish 25 Books This Year

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute will publish about 25 books by the end of the year.

Hayk Demoyan, director of the museum, told reporters this week that the works will be compiled by the employees of the museum. Some books will be reissued. "It will be our "firework" within the framework of the Yerevan World Capital of Book event," Demoyan said.

He also stressed that it does not matter whether the research about Genocide is being prepared in Armenia or abroad, it will by all means be published.

Ancient City Found Beneath Tatev Monastery

YEREVAN (news.am) – There is an ancient city beneath Tatev Monastery, suggests a story in *Iravunk* newspaper. The paper is quoting archeologists from Russia who are planning to come study the as-yet-unexamined remains.

"Senior specialist Boris Gasparyan of the [Armenian] Institute of Archaeology said: "There is a dwelling place here, but no one has excavated to understand what it is. When a church is restored here, first its surroundings must be excavated to reveal the economic life around it. And this is expensive and demands a long time."

Gasparyan noted that any foreign expedition needs to have the participation of Armenians.

No foreign expedition can carry out any activities in Armenia without

Premier Invites former British Minister Darzi to Competitiveness Council

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Former British Minister of Healthcare Ara Darzi has agreed to participate in the works of the National Competitiveness Council (NCC), Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian said during presentation of Mediamax's "50 Global Armenians" project.

"The members of the National Competitiveness Council are people who have reached success in the diaspora. Ara Darzi has expressed readiness to implement pro-Armenian activity," said Sargsian. According to him, NCC organizes its works within the framework of uniting the potential of all Armenians, trying to increase the country's competitiveness.

Sargsian said it is the government's duty to create a platform uniting the potential of all Armenians, as it should be the competitiveness advantage of the Armenian nation.

Tuvalu-Armenia Diplomatic Relations Anger Azerbaijan and Georgia

By Aris Ghazinyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – On March 16 Armenia established diplomatic relations with Tuvalu, a 26-square kilometer Polynesian island in the Pacific Ocean, with a population fewer than 13,000. However, despite its modest size, this country is a member of the United Nations with the right to vote.

Tuvalu is part of the Commonwealth of Nations and has the British monarch as its nominal ruler.

Before the establishment of Armenia-Tuvalu diplomatic relations, the only connection between the two countries was registered in 2007 during the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly when the resolution on "The Situation in Azerbaijan's occupied territories" providing for "immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all of Azerbaijani Republic's occupied territories" was adopted.

The Baku-submitted resolution was approved by 39 votes (including Tuvalu) and 100 abstentions.

It would seem that the relations between Armenia and Tuvalu were initially negative as Tuvalu supported Azerbaijan's resolution. However, the events that followed the 2007 resolution have brought significant changes.

After the Russian-Georgian war in



The United Nations representatives of Tuvalu and Armenia sign documents that establish diplomatic relations between the two nations.

August 2008, Moscow unilaterally recognized Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence, Tbilisi responded by tearing the diplomatic ties with Moscow and declared the conflict zones as occupied territories.

Following Russia's example several other countries recognized Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence, and Tuvalu was among them.

That's the reason this February Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili severed that nation's diplomatic ties with Tuvalu and signed a decree terminating the protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

between Georgia and Tuvalu.

A month later, Armenia and Tuvalu established diplomatic relations. Georgia took the news with extreme displeasure.

The Russian Regnum news agency reported: "...the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Tuvalu will hardly contribute to further development of Armenian-Georgian relations."

Even more than Georgia the news outraged Azerbaijan, where it was perceived in the highlight of UN-member Tuvalu's prospective recognition of Nagorno Karabagh's independence.

Armenian Coalition Parties Accused of Buying Votes

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The three political parties represented in Armenia's government are handing out food and other "gifts" to voters in hopes of buying their support in the forthcoming parliamentary elections, the country's largest vote-monitoring organization claimed earlier this month.

Harutjun Hambarzumian, head of the It's Your Choice group, said the ruling Republican Party of Armenia

(HHK) and its two coalition partners are actively engaged in supposedly charitable activities which he condemned as vote buying.

Hambarzumian said the material benefits given to voters across the country by all three parties as well as individual candidates representing them include food, alcohol, fertilizers and services such as road repairs and free busing for university students. The practice is particularly wide-

spread in impoverished rural regions, he added.

"The parties are saying that that has been done for one or two years" and has nothing to do with the May 6 elections, Hambarzumian told a news conference. "But I view that as a form of vote buying," he said.

"This can be characterized as illegal activity," agreed Karen Tumanian, a lawyer who trains election observers and candidate proxies.

Armenia's Electoral Code explicitly bans election contenders from providing any goods or services to voters. But Armenian elections have long been marred by opposition allegations and media reports of vote buying, including cash payments on polling day.

HHK spokesman Eduard Sharmazanov insisted earlier this month that the main ruling party does not and will not resort to the illegal practice. "Only individual Republicans who have charity foundations may engage in benevolent activities through those foundations in accordance with law," he said.

"We are one of the few political parties which are real parties, rather than charities or limited liability companies," said Sharmazanov.

The Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK), a coalition partner led by businessman Gagik Tsarukian, has also faced vote buying allegations. Ever since the party began operating in 2006 Tsarukian has provided large-scale material assistance to many voters through a charity run by his family. BHK representatives have repeatedly denied any connection between that aid and Tsarukian's political activities.

Under the Electoral Code, charities whose names can be associated with party leaders and other politicians are not allowed to operate during election campaigns. Campaigning for the upcoming elections officially started.

Candidate Quits Armenian Parliament Race after Alleged Assault

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Armavir, he gave no reason for the move.

Mkhoyan was at home on Monday but refused to comment on the incident, leaving it to his wife and other relatives to answer journalists' questions. The relatives insisted that Petrosian's loyalists attacked him in order to force him to stop challenging the HHK candidate in the May 6 election. Petrosian's campaign aides denied the allegations, however.

The HHK leadership in Yerevan also denied any connection with the violence. "I don't think that was done for the Republican Party," HHK

spokesman Eduard Sharmazanov said. "But if anyone breached the law in any way, they must be strictly punished regardless of their party affiliation."

"Everyone must realize that paying [the ruling party] a lip service will not work anymore," he said. "Everyone must know that for the Republican Party the most important objective is the conduct of free, fair and democratic elections."

Sharmazanov added that the incident must not call into question the seriousness of the Armenian authorities' pledges to make the May 6 parliamentary elections the most democratic in the country's history.

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In English, Armenian, Russian and Turkish



INTERNATIONAL

Tekeyan Trust, London TCA Chapter Come To Life

LONDON – On March 17, at the Copthorne Tara Hotel, an official dinner reception was held to celebrate new beginnings and new leaders.

More than 100 guests from London, Paris, Geneva, Beirut, Armenia, the US, Cyprus and other corners of the world came to witness the official launch of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) London program of events. All the Tekeyan devotees gathered to pay tribute to the great individuals, as thanks to their efforts. The TCA was established in Beirut in 1947 and later, in 1975, in London.

Vartan Ouzounian is the president and Hratch Kouyoumdjian is the chairman.

At the beginning of the function, Bishop Vahan Hovhanessian (Armenian Church of the UK and the Republic of Ireland) offered the invocation, which was followed with a minute of silence to honor the memory of the late, devoted leaders, Dr. Antranig Zoulikian, Barkev Boyadjian, Garo Arevian, Tavit Meserlian and benefactor Garo Krikorian, who contributed to the establishment and development of the TCA London. In his congratulatory address, Hovhanessian emphasized the role of this cultural organization in the life of Armenian communities as well as in the prosperity of the British-Armenian Diocese.

Kouyoumdjian continued the official ceremony extending congratulations to all Tekeyan members and thanking them for entrusting him with such an honorable position. The chairman also spoke about the work done to realize the future programs of the organization.

Karine Kazinian, ambassador to the UK, was among the guests at the reception who delivered a speech on the occasion. The ambassador, citing some historical facts, commended the activities of the TCA and its devotion to the



From left, Papken Megerian, Rosett Ouzounian, Ambassador Karine Kazinian, Bishop Vahan Hovhanessian, Vartan Ouzounian and Hratch Kouyoumdjian

Armenian nation. Kazinian also emphasized the importance of the organization in the development of British-Armenian relations.

Ouzounian, chairman of Tekeyan Centre Fund (Armenia) and honorary secretary of the Tekeyan Trust London (TTL), was invited to the podium to present his congratulatory note. He described the idea of establishing the TCA and TCA London and the further development of these organizations, including the recent interruption of the activities of the London chapter for various reasons.

The president recalled vividly a number of cultural events organized by the TCA amongst which were performances by the Armenian State Dance Company at Sadler's Wells, the Armenian State Folk Song and Dance Company at the Royal Albert Hall, the Armenian State Choir as well as staging sundry arts exhibitions and concerts. Ouzounian spoke about the TCA Armenia and its importance in the national life. He finalized his speech with the mission and activities of Tekeyan Centre Fund Armenia and the Tekeyan Schools in Armenia and Karabagh sponsored by the Fund.

Among the people who spoke at the official ceremony of the event were: Nar Khatchadourian (Lebanon), the trustee

of Tekeyan Centre Fund Armenia and London Tekeyan Trust; Sylva Krikorian (France), the chair of London Tekeyan Trust and the trustee of Tekeyan Cultural Fund (TCF) Armenia, and Papken Megerian (US), the trustee of TCA Armenia and the Central Board member of TCA USA/Canada. They all extended their congratulations to the TCA London and wished all the best in future endeavors.

Armen Tsulikyan, the director of Tekeyan Centre Fund in Armenia, congratulated the TCA London branch on its second birth and offered kind cooperation and support. He also reasoned that the interruption of the TCA London activities was due to construction of the Tekeyan Centre in the 1990s. All the efforts of the TCA and TTL were directed towards one aim, namely to establish a cultural center in Armenia.

The official ceremony concluded with the introduction of all Board members of the TCA London as well as a group of young activists from the London-Armenian community who were eager to continue the ideas and traditions of the TCA.

The evening featured musical performances by vocalist Sipan Hakobian, as well as a video and slide show of the TCA activities involving Tekeyan school-children from Armenia and Karabagh.

AGBU Honors Bulgarian Scholar Dr. Petar Goliyski with Garbis Papazian Award

SOFIA, Bulgaria – In the first concert of its sixth season, the Armenian General and Benevolent Union (AGBU) Sofia Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of conductor Bedros Papazian, celebrated the talents of Bulgarian violinist Kalina Hristova and Armenian pianist and AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship recipient Hayk Arsenian. The performance also served as a venue to bestow upon Dr. Petar Goliyski, the Bulgarian philologist and head of the Armenian Sciences Department at the Sofia State University, the 2011 AGBU Garbis Papazian Award.

The joint event, held on Sunday, March 11, at the Sofia National Music Academy, drew a diverse audience of dignitaries, intellectuals and religious leaders who hailed from both Bulgaria and overseas.

Attendees included Yuriy Isakov, Russian ambassador to Bulgaria; Anna Sahakyan, the Armenian consul to Bulgaria; Sonia Avakian-Bedrossian, AGBU Sofia Chapter chair; Razmik Tahmasians, representative of Garbis Papazian and coordinating member of the Award Committee, who traveled from Vienna especially for the occasion; Very Rev. Abgar Hovakimian, the locum tenens of the Armenian Diocese of

Bulgaria, as well as Armenian Ambassador to Bulgaria Arsen Skhoyan, whose support made the event possible.

At the age of 36, Goliyski's research and publications have already shaped the fields of Armenian history, culture, folk epic and legends. His contributions made him the third Bulgarian to be honored by the AGBU award, as Avakian-Bedrossian noted in the opening remarks. Standing alongside Tahmasians and

Goliyski, she underscored the importance of the award, stating, "The Armenian nation fortunately has very good friends who contribute impartially to introducing Armenian people, history, culture, the Genocide and the Armenian cause to their respective nations. These individuals deserve the gratitude and appreciation of our people." Avakian-Bedrossian then read the congratulatory address issued by AGBU President



AGBU Sofia Chapter Chair Sonia Avakian-Bedrossian and coordinating member of the Award Committee Razmik Tahmasians present Dr. Petar Goliyski (left) with the 2011 Garbis Papazian Award.

Berge Setrakian, who praised Goliyski for his "outstanding explorations of the exchange and mutual impact of the Armenian and Bulgarian folklore in the historical context of world civilizations." Avakian-Bedrossian also recognized Arsenian for his achievements as a pianist and composer, presenting him with a certificate from the AGBU Sofia Chapter. The concert was followed by an official reception.

International News

Darchinyan Loses Bantamweight Fight

TOKYO (ArmeniaNow) – Armenian professional boxer Vic Darchinyan lost an opportunity to get the WBC bantamweight title fighting against the defending champion, Shinsuke Yamanaka, of Japan, on Friday.

In the battle of the two lefties, the 29-year-old Japanese (16-0-2; 11 KOs) managed to overpower the 36-year-old Armenian nicknamed "Raging Bull" in the late rounds of the bout at Tokyo International Forum to win on a unanimous decision, 117-111, 116-112, 116-112.

Darchinyan attempted a desperate comeback in the final round, but was unable to cause any damage to the champion who had plenty of energy left.

Alain Delon Gets Prize At Music Awards

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Renowned French actor Alain Delon, who attended Armenia Music Awards in Moscow as an honored guest on April 7, was given a "Legend" prize at the event.

"I am thankful for this prize and I am very happy to be here, although I was released from hospital not long ago," the actor said.

Delon was hospitalized with heart problems on April 4 and was released the next day after he underwent a 10-minute operation.

Armenians of France not Voting as Bloc in Race

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Armenian community of France is not going to participate in the upcoming election of France's president with one front, representative of the Armenian community Alex Govjian said.

"Like each citizen of France, the French Armenians have different views. I do not think it will be possible to go with one front," he noted.

The pre-electoral campaign in France started on April 9. The first phase of elections is scheduled for April 22. The three main candidates are incumbent President Nicolas Sarkozy, his main rival Socialist François Holland, and Marie Le Pen.

Six Graveyards Returned To Jewish, Greek, Armenian Communities

ATHENS, Greece (Greek Reporter) – Six historic graveyards were returned to Istanbul's Jewish, Greek and Armenian communities last week, following a decision by a government board that regulates the practices of the country's non-Muslim communities.

The decision of the Directorate General for Foundations (VGM) to restore the cemeteries to their respective minority communities is the first ruling on a February application by 19 non-Muslim foundations for the return of 57 historic properties.

In September, the government authorized the return of properties seized from non-Muslim religious communities in decades past.

The VGM ruling saw the return of two cemeteries to the Beyoglu Yüksek Kaldırım Ashkenazi Jewish Synagogue Foundation, as well as the repatriation of cemeteries belonging to the Beyoglu Greek Orthodox Churches and Schools Foundation, the Balat Surp Harutun Armenian Church and School Foundation, the Kadiköy Hemdat Israel Synagogue Foundation and the Kuzguncuk Beit Yaakov Ashkenazi Synagogue Foundation.

Laki Vingas, the representative of non-Muslim foundations at the VGM, told the *Radikal* Daily last week that the decision is a sign that the minority property law passed in September is being acted upon by the government.

Turkey has roughly 65,000 Armenian, 20,000 Jews, 15,000 Assyrians and 3,500 Greeks. Armenian groups have 52 foundations, Jewish groups 17 and Greeks 75. Some of the properties that were seized from those foundations include schools and cemeteries.



Community News

Holy Trinity Church To Celebrate Golden Jubilee with Gala on May 12

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — “On the historical street made famous by many American patriots, proudly stands an Armenian Church we have called our own for the last 50 years,” states Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church located at 145 Brattle St. “Fifty years ago,” he continues, “our parents and grandparents mounted up their courage and met every challenge placed before them to build a stunning Armenian Church on Brattle Street, and on May 12, 2012, we will celebrate like never before.”

The committee for the Golden Jubilee Gala, co-chaired by Aram and Becky Hintlian and Harvey and Valerie Kolligian Thayer, has been working to prepare a spectacular evening. “Aram and I,” stated Valerie Thayer, “were proud to be asked to co-chair the Celebrate 50 events in honor of his father and uncles and my grandfathers and great-uncles who served on the Holy Trinity Building Committee so many years ago. We are inspired by the dedication of the entire Building Committee and are grateful for their tireless work on behalf of our community so that now, 50 years later, we can all come together and worship as a church family in a peaceful setting.”

Adorned with high-top tables, low bistro tables, plenty of lounge seating including couches and ottomans and a large white dance floor, the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall on the church complex will be transformed. Extra seating will be available in Johnson Hall. Appetizers and dinner will be available, as well as a full cash bar, featuring the Pomegranate Cosmopolitan, in honor of the occasion. Armenian and American music to dance the night away will add to the celebration.

Through the generosity of the families of the original Building Committee members who are helping to underwrite this



Golden Jubilee Gala co-chairs, Aram and Becky Hintlian, left, and Harvey and Valerie Kolligian Thayer, right, with two members of the committee, Nancy D. Kasarjian and Cynthia Kazanjian

event, tickets will be \$50 per person and \$35 for young adults (ages 13-21).

The committee is grateful to these families for helping put together an elaborate evening at an affordable price.

A Golden Raffle will be held featuring three prizes: a night at the Sheraton Commander with dinner for two at Ten Tables, Cambridge, and breakfast at Nubar, Sheraton's new restaurant; a Boston Pops performance with special guest Steve Martin and a baton signed by Keith Lockhart and an iPad 3.

Tickets are by advance paid reservation only and available by calling the church office or online at www.htaac.org/gala.



Students from St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School visit ATP's nursery in Karin Village and meet peers from local schools as part of the Building Bridges environmental education program.

ATP's Environmental Education Program Is 'Building Bridges'

WATERTOWN — Armenia Tree Project (ATP) is now into the third year of a program to introduce its environmental education material in Armenian schools throughout North America. The program, “Building Bridges: Connecting Diaspora Armenian Students with Their Environmental Heritage,” has been funded by a grant from the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation.

It has been positively received by students and teachers at Armenian schools across the US. One of the first achievements of the project was the publication of an English edition of ATP's Plant an Idea, Plant a Tree education manual. The 97-page manual includes information on the importance of forests, lessons on exploring the environment and ecological and cultural heritage. A lesson, titled “The Beetle School as a School of Nature,” for example, includes a first-ever English translation of a poem by Hovhannes Toumanian.

The second major achievement of the project has been the publications of two editions of the Building Bridges newsletter. The newsletters and manual are available on the ATP website and in print format and have been distributed to teachers and students in Armenian schools across North America for the past two years.

“Environmental education has been a key program priority for ATP for quite some time and since we have developed the resources about Armenia, it made sense to introduce the material in the diaspora,” said Building Bridges Program Manager Sarah Hayes. “The overall goal is to raise the level of awareness about Armenia's natural heritage and environmental challenges, as well as making connections between young people.”

ATP has been working with schools in the diaspora and in Armenia to present the material and to strengthen these connections. For the past two years, representatives from ATP's Watertown and Los Angeles offices have visited schools in California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan and New Jersey. ATP's environmental education program staff in Armenia works with local students and teachers to facilitate introductions between peers around environmental issues.

“In addition to using our educational material in the classroom or hosting presentations at school assemblies, we have encouraged schools to visit and see ATP's programs during class trips to Armenia as part of the Building Bridges program,” added Hayes.

Already, ATP has created connections for students at a number of schools including the AGBU Sisag H. Varjabedian School in Chicago, the Ari Guiragos Minassian School in Santa Ana, Calif., St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown and the Hovnanian School in New Milford, NJ.

During a Building Bridges presentation at the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School in Canoga Park, Calif., ATP representatives Jeff Masarjian and Anahit Gharibyan were surprised by a donation from the students to sponsor the planting of 55 trees in Armenia. “For the school's 35th anniversary, the Elementary Armenian Department wanted to ‘give something to our Homeland,’ so we decided to help turn Armenia green,” said Armenian teacher Maral Voskian.

A number of schools have partnered with ATP in order to enrich existing teaching material with information about Armenia's environment. “We see great value in teaming up with ATP because we want our students both to do well academically and socially, and to feel compelled to assist their neighborhoods and communities in meaningful ways. One avenue can be through environmental efforts,” explains Ararat Charter School Principal Aida Tatioussian, from Van Nuys, Calif.

“Making connections to the motherland is a very important factor in teaming up with ATP. It's critical that our students know who they are, where they come from and feel proud about their culture and heritage. We are constantly exploring new and innovative ways to teach our students about the world around them, and ATP fits into this,” she added.

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Authors of New Armenian Cookbook to Be Hosted by AGBU YP Philly

PHILADELPHIA — The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Young Professionals of Philadelphia presents on April 20, at 7:30 p.m. chef and restaurant owner, Aline Kamakian, and co-author Barbara Drieskens from Beirut, Lebanon, with their newly-released cookbook, *Armenian Cuisine*. This event will be a celebration of Armenian culture and tradition through food with an intimate demonstration, tasting and discussion with the two authors.

Kamakian is a passionate chef and co-owner of Mayrig, acclaimed as one “of the most famous Armenian restaurants in Beirut” by *FAD* magazine. Drieskens holds a PhD in social and cultural anthropology and is a published author of several novels. Together, both women traveled through the land between Mount Ararat and Kayseri, also known as Cilicia, “a magical name; (Armenians) sing about it; it is the homeland (they) lost,” according to the book.

During their travels, Kamakian and Drieskens gathered recipes, encounters, stories and photographs, all captured in *Armenian Cuisine*.

“This wonderful cookbook,” said Paris One-Star Michelin chef, Alain Reix, “brings us an Armenian cuisine of intelligence and taste. It has that little extra. It is cuisine from grandmothers who spent their lives cooking.”

“*Armenian Cuisine* introduces the Armenian cultural of food to the rest of the world through its spicy recipes that carry the most delicious flavors and aromas of homeland Armenia,” according to *Zartok* daily.

The program will be held upstairs of Gallery309, located at 309 Cherry St., Old City Philadelphia. Tickets may be purchased at: <http://bit.ly/H71Sh1>.

ALMA Holds Joint Commemoration of Three Genocides

WATERTOWN — On Sunday April 22 at 3:15 p.m., the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) will commemorate not only the Armenian Genocide but also the Ukrainian Genocide, which occurred in the 1930s and resulted in millions of deaths, largely forgotten today, and the Great Hunger of the Irish people in the 1840s and the tremendous number of deaths, probably in the millions, resulting from the deliberate “Potato Famine.”

The event will consist of brief talks on all three genocides and a brief religious service by a Ukrainian priest and choir.

The leadership of ALMA believes it is important that the adoption of the Armenian Genocide's model by other countries ties, makes it imperative that Armenians also learn about and commemorate other genocides.

Admission to the program is free and open to the public.



COMMUNITY NEWS

90-year-old Armenians Still Making their Mark

By Tom Vartabedian

If life begins at 80, as they say, then it really blossoms at 90.

For a group of elite Armenians, their longevity and subsequent activity appear to be giving geriatrics a positive image.

Let us look into the lives of a few venerable folks:

Dr. H. Martin Deranian

With a new play opening in Boston and his work with the Armenian orphan rug, Dr. H. Martin Deranian only seems to be getting better with age.

The prominent Worcester dentist teamed with Joyce Van Dyke in bringing the story of his mother to the stage. Martin Deranian is the son of Varter Deranian, who provided Van Dyke with the inspiration and much of the research on which the production, "Deported/ a dream play," is based.

Deranian's ongoing quest to have the President Calvin Coolidge orphan rug given its rightful place in American history has never waned. Despite his advanced age, he continues to be a public speaker of note, promoting the Armenian Cause, and giving the genocide added exposure through a rug which was woven by 400 orphans during 1924-25 in a town called Ghazir,

Mamigonian, director of academic affairs for NAASR. "It goes without saying that NAASR owes him the debt of our existence. We're indebted to him for the strides made by Armenian-Americans over the past half century, politically, culturally and most assuredly educationally."

Ardashes Aykanian

We caught up with Ardashes Aykanian at 9 a.m. on a weekday morning, heavily involved in a meeting with five other experts on the West Coast. The subject at hand: transforming waste into energy for the Big Island of Hawaii.

The soon-to-be 90-year-old says landfills are overflowing with waste and he is working toward a plan to convert garbage into electricity and liquid fuel.

This is the same guy who invented the flexible straw (Bendi-straw), the spoon straw for slush consumers, foam-core, the blue strip on car wind-

shields, the first form of Tupperware and 26 other patents involving plastics, including the liter containers for Coca-Cola. On a chemical note, he was among the first group of scientists that ever extracted uranium.

Now, he is trying to help save the world as an engineering consultant.

"I've been working my fanny off all my life and can't stay idle," he said. "So long as I can solve problems

people present to me, my purpose in life will always be stimulated."

These days, California is home to the Springfield-Indian Orchard native who came through the Armenian Youth Federation ranks and served his time improving the youth organization as a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Central Committee.

He lost his first wife in an auto accident and later married a woman 21 years his junior. Four children and six grandchildren help keep him young at heart. A brother, Ara, and sister, Araxie, are both in their 80s and reside in Massachusetts.

Aykanian served with the US Navy in World War II before securing an engineering degree from UMass and a master's degree from MIT.

His success in the engineering field could very well be attributed to one of his UMass instructors. He happened to be Manoog Young who is also being featured in this piece.

Armen Babamian

Music mentor Armen Babamian sang his first solo at the age of 12 in Holy Cross Armenian Church of Union City, NJ. He hasn't stopped. At age 97, he remains the epitome of inspiration to his family, church and community.

He was born on Christmas Day in 1915. Through music, he has weaved the fabric of culture for his people throughout the diaspora.

Babamian has served as choirmaster for St. Illuminator's Church in New York for 25 years and was choirmaster of St. Vartanantz Church in Ridgefield, NJ. His conducting career actually started in 1949 with the Armenian National

Chorus of New York where he was principal soloist.

In 1999, he was presented the Mesrob Mashdots Medal and Holy Encyclical by Catholicos Aram I of Antelias.

"We're very grateful for the invaluable service he has performed toward the preservation of our precious cultural legacy," said Charles Kasbarian. "He always encouraged the youth."

Daughter Lucine Kasbarian concurs, calling to mind the impact Babamian had upon herself and her brother Antranig.

"Those who know him can vouch for how he has measured up to his birth date," she said. "Armen has embodied the spirit of Christ and the resurrection of our genocidal people throughout his lifetime as a guardian and disseminator of our great Armenian musical legacy. He is that rare talent and patriot who knows the context of the music so that his resulting interpretation contains all the emotion and authenticity the musical subject matter requires."

Antranig and Lucine began singing in their father's choir at ages 6 and 5 respectively and still embrace the man fondly for his vast contributions.

"Our experience directly contributed to our active involvement in Armenian community affairs," she said. "Many of his young singers were touched by his example and followed in his footsteps by performing and/or teaching our Armenian musical heritage."

Peter Khanbegian

Until recently, Peter Khanbegian took his airplane for a spin. But a minor accident forced him to ground the aircraft for safety's sake and focus his attention on more sedate activity – like writing his third book.

The Windham, NH, resident is determined to finish his trilogy which started with Groong (The Crane) and followed with Flames of Artsakh, two fictional accounts with family repercussions.

"The best means of introduction to the history of a people, past and present, is through a well-researched and documented novel," says the one-time hi-tech writer, who served with the US Navy in World War II. "It's been a lifelong ambition to tell the story of my people through the printed word."

As a young man, Khanbegian worked in his father's dry cleaning store in Lawrence. He later enjoyed building model airplanes and motorcycling along Brooklyn's circumferential parkway.

"He was also a good artist who painted and sketched when inspiration came knocking," said his friend Vahram Sookikian. "He is still as sharp as a tack and sets a good example for people in their 90s."

Rose (Vartanoosh) Derderian

A typical day for Rose Derderian might include time spent cultivating a garden, sewing, crocheting baby clothes, shopping, cooking and reading. An independent lifestyle is putting it mildly.

On election day in Indian Orchard, you will find her at the polls checking in voters – a job she has held the past 30 years in addition to the Citizens Council and Survival Center assisting families in need.

As a member and supporter of St. Gregory's Church for 73 years, she could easily pass for the "matriarch" of her community. For many years, she was a member and supporter of the Armenian Relief Society. In addition to raising her family, she worked 25 years inside an accounting office.

Nerses Krikorian

As a pioneer in the United States' nuclear weapons program, Nerses Krikorian has been labeled an "alumni of distinction" at Niagara University from where he graduated in 1943.

He arrived here from Armenia in 1925 after the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire. Upon graduating with honors, he landed a job with Union Carbide in Niagara Falls and worked on the now-historic Manhattan Project.

When the project closed, he was assigned to the Los Alamos Nuclear Laboratory in New Mexico. He was a charter member of the lab's

intelligence council and met with representatives of the former Soviet Union's nuclear research program.

Krikorian was at the forefront of dialogue between the Soviets and United States in breaking down the barriers of the Cold War.

More recently, he has been awarded an honorary doctor of science degree from Niagara.

Krikor George Elmasian

He proudly served his nation with the US Army in World War II, commuted for years from his home in Providence to a job at Fort Devens, Ayer, and like many of his peers, put service above self when it came to his church and community.

After losing his wife, Anahid, 40 years ago, Elmasian spent much of his time caring for others. He would take his nephews to Boy Scout meetings and followed their progress in both the athletic and educational arenas of Rhode Island.

For years, he served as a caretaker for his mom Araxie until she was finally moved to a nursing home. Three children and a grandson bring him all the joy and comfort he can imagine.

"He was the kind of guy you could always approach if you needed information on just about any topic," said his nephew, Steve. "His path was always lined with vigor and vitality."

Rose Narzakian

When it comes to the Armenian Relief Society, Rose Narzakian is all heart. And for good reason. The Lowell Chapter is named after her mother, Lousintak.

She has helped many Armenian charities and orphanages, touring Armenia twice with her late



Manoog Young, left, celebrates his 90th birthday at NAASR, joined by Sandra Jurigian, Barbara Young and Marc Mamigonian.

just 40 miles north of Beirut.

The rug subsequently wound up in obscurity inside the White House as Armenian historians and archivists like Deranian look for a more permanent home, bringing greater exposure to the heirloom.

Deranian has turned himself into a self-imposed rug ambassador in seeking the cause of justice. By unraveling this mystery, he hopes to provide greater credence to the Near East Relief and the scores of orphans saved during the Genocide years of 1915-1923.

Manoog Young

At the ripe age of 95, Manoog S. Young continues to remain an icon with the National Association of Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), which he helped initiate in 1955 and served as a board member for 47 years, now chairman emeritus.

His resume appears like a veritable who's who when it comes to service in the Armenian community. Suffice it to say, he has never recanted when it comes time to promote his heritage.

The Belmont resident served as the first School Committee chairman of the AGBU School and has been a board member since its inception of Facing History and Ourselves national foundation.

At a time when education was at a premium, he received a mathematics and physics degree from Northeastern University and a master's in history and international relations from Clark University.

"When Armenian Studies needed to exist at top universities throughout the country, Manoog Young was a visionary," said Marc A.



Rose Derderian continues to remain active as a devoted Armenian-American in her Springfield-Indian Orchard community.

twin brother, Harry.

She has lived in Lowell her entire life, worked 40 years for Raytheon Corporation and helped her brother operate a variety store.

"I've lived a full life," she said. "I see the sun shining and am happy to be alive. The fact I was born and raised an Armenian has been a privilege and I've done my best to promote that."

Charlie Zamgochian

On any given Sunday, Charlie Zamgochian will drive 30 miles to church, involves himself with carpentry projects and puts his skills to use as a butcher when it comes time to trim the meat. He has been a philanthropist of the utmost kind, a friend in need and a living testament to morality and goodness.

Quite possibly the most active 90-plus churchgoer you will find around Merrimack Valley, time seems to complement him nicely.

"Look at Charlie," people may boast. "Not bad for a 91-year-old."

"Make that 91 and a half," he will quickly retort. "When you get my age, don't forget the half. Each day counts."



COMMUNITY NEWS

103-year-old Survivor Calls for Justice

By Tom Vartabedian

WORCESTER, Mass. — Heghine Minasian considers her life miraculous on two accounts.

First, that she survived a horrific genocide in her village in Kharpert. And second, that she is still alive and kicking at age 103.

Minasian does not look upon herself as a poster child of her generation, nor any great geriatric wonder as the city's oldest Genocide survivor. Instead, she prefers a more subtle role, away from unnecessary fanfare.

She is content living an independent lifestyle in the comfort of her own home, watching "Jeopardy" every night, doing her knitting and crocheting and enjoying the love of her family.

Three daughters tend to dote on her, including one next door, along with eight grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

But make no mistake about it. When it comes time to speak her mind about the massacre, Minasian is most opinionated and does not hold back. If President Barack Obama was in the area, this is one person he may want to avoid.

"Obama promised us recognition and delivered us empty words," she said. "It bothers me and all other Armenians, too. He failed to live up to his promises."

In the background is daughter Alice Kanaley, who is not surprised by her mother's actions. She has heard this before, including publicly two years ago when Minasian was given the keys to the city by the Worcester mayor. A TV station was on hand to document the event and interviewed the woman.

"She handled it like a charm," Kanaley said.

In accepting the honor, Minasian used the moment to remind everyone about her feelings and how Armenians should band together in the name of unity for greater impact.

"Mom's really feisty when it comes to mat-

ters like this," Kanaley said. "She's a true ambassador for our cause."

Minasian was old enough to remember the Turks invading her city. She doesn't go into details, only to say it was a sad experience. Her mother died when she was 8. Minasian never met her father. He had come to America and was never seen again.

Her husband, Garabed, was more exposed to the brutality of conflict.

The two enjoyed a happy and rewarding life together in France, Canada and Worcester for 49 years before his death in 1976. They ran a hairdressing salon in the city and enjoyed giving their clientele a bright new look after they entered.

"Worcester has always been home to the immigrant population," said Kanaley. "It's been a wonderful city to live and work — to practice your heritage, too. Mom's enjoyed it here."

Word around town is that nobody made a better choreg than Minasian. Cooking was always a passion and one got to sample her fare at church dinners and other public gatherings.

Twice a week, elder care drops by to check on her. A visit to her apartment unveils a meticulous setting. Except for her blood pressure pills, there are no other medications.

"Jeopardy" is not the only daily ritual she cultivates. Her Bible also gets a workout. Minasian is a woman steeped in faith.

"God must be keeping me for a reason," she noted. "I'm blessed in many ways and wish the same for others like myself."

On occasion, Kanaley will take her mother to Avak lunches at the church. She will play cards, relish the hospitality of others and pass along her wisdom.

"My mother is my pillar of strength," said Kanaley. "Mentally, she is 90 percent with it. Except for her knees, she's the perfect picture of health. When I'm with her, it keeps me going. She is an inspiration."

Much of it had to do with her lifestyle. She

never drove and refrained from tobacco. Except for a sociable glass of wine, alcohol was never consumed. Another hobby, reading, is also going strong.

The fact that both mother and daughter communicate in Armenian and not English keeps the language alive in their home. It has been an Armenian family that hasn't lost its spirit.

"She wanted us to live the dream," said Kanaley.

To what does Minasian attribute her longevity? She doesn't give it a second thought.

"You must have faith in God," she answers. "Miracles are keeping me alive. You have to believe in miracles."

As the 100th anniversary of the Genocide rolls around in three years, Heghine advises those around to see the anniversary, to "stick together, remain strong and fight for recognition. Above all, keep our culture and history alive by practicing it every day."

Giragosian

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OBITUARY

Zareh Melkonian, Poet and Educator

FREMONT, Calif. — Zareh Melkonian, author, poet, educator and director of Armenian cultural and community affairs, passed away on March 30 at his home. He was born in Aleppo, Syria on August 15, 1923.



Zareh Melkonian

Melkonian began his career in Beirut in 1947 as a teacher of Armenian and French at the local Protestant middle and high schools. Until 1967, he taught Armenian language, grammar and literature at Hovagimian Manoogian and Tarouhie Hagopian High Schools. From 1964 to 1968, he served as vice principal of the AGBU Hovagimian Manoogian and Tarouhie Hagopian High Schools. From 1964 to 1968, he was the principal of Tarouhie Hagopian.

In 1968 Melkonian immigrated to the United States. From 1968 until 1983, he served as the director of the AGBU's Midwest Chapter and was the director of the organization's Northern Armenian School Project, spearheading fundraising efforts to benefit ABGU Armenian schools throughout North America. He subsequently taught Armenian at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, for two years (1984-85).

Melkonian was a prolific writer and intellectual, a witty storyteller and a beloved teacher. His literary career spans well over 65 years and covers many literary genres. He was a poet, a playwright, a grammarian, an essayist, a linguist, a lecturer and an editor. From 1956 until 1964, he was the editor in chief of *Shirag*, the monthly TCA Armenian literary magazine. Melkonian published 12 volumes of poetry, 13 plays, numerous literary essays and eight textbooks of Armenian grammar and literature.

Melkonian will be remembered as his generation's most charismatic, versatile and unique poet and educator. Throughout his life he has inspired many by instilling a deep appreciation and love of the Armenian language and literature. His vast body of work has enchanted, moved and provoked his many students and readers all at once.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday, April 3, at St. Andrew Armenian Church in Cupertino. He was interred at Gates of Heaven in Los Altos.

Melkonian is survived by his daughters, Silva and Lina Melkonian, his sister, Seta Ekmekji, and her sons, Alec and Raffi and their families, and his brother, Hratch Kahkejian, and his family.

Melkonian graduated from the Melkonian Educational Institute in Cyprus in 1945. In 1947 he moved to Beirut, married Kohar Melkonian and embarked upon his lifelong teaching career while pursuing his education at the American University of Beirut, receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees in education and psychology.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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Hye Pointe Sunday School Prepares Easter Baskets

HAVERHILL, Mass. – The Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Sunday School recently prepared more than 50 Easter baskets for children in need. The project was a joint effort by Hye

fering of children from disadvantaged families. Lent began on February 20 and continued for a 40-day period. During Lent, people are called to follow the Holy Spirit in order to confront their



The students of the Hye Pointe Sunday School, with their teachers and Rev. Vart Gyoazalian, show the baskets they made for needy children.

Pointe's new priest, Rev. Vart Gyoazalian, and the Sunday school staff. One of the Sunday School teachers, Carole Hanedanian, is a case worker with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

As a social worker, she sees firsthand the suf-

inner turmoil through prayer, fasting, self-examination and then gain the strength to work at being more loving, humble, in service to others. This Sunday school project aimed to instill the meaning of love, humility and strength to improve the lives of those less fortunate.

Not Your Average Joe's Dedicates Booth to Frequent Guest

WATERTOWN, Mass. – Sonia Boyajian has been a regular at the Not Your Average Joe's restaurant in Watertown since it opened in 1998, stopping by for lunch or dinner at least once a week. Now, the restaurant is rewarding her loyalty with the dedication of the official Sonia Boyajian Booth.

"It's only fitting," says Steve Silverstein, founder and CEO of Not Your Average Joe's, "that the booth where she spends so much time be hers in name as well as in spirit. This is the

first time we've ever done a seat plaque so it's quite an honor for me to be a part of this," he added.

The dedication ceremony for the octogenarian took place in Watertown. More than 100 invited guests and friends of Boyajian attended along with supporters of the Watertown Education Foundation, where Boyajian served as president for two years.

Silverstein presided over the dedication that includes the affixing of a brass plaque to the table and offered a toast to the honoree.

Headquartered in Middleboro, Mass. and founded in 1994 by Steve Silverstein, Not Your Average Joe's has 16 locations in Boston and Northern Virginia.

ATP's Environmental Education Program Is 'Building Bridges'

ATP, from page 4

"We are extremely proud of the initiative shown by students involved in this program and we are grateful that the trustees of the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation have supported Building Bridges as part of their mission to foster a stronger sense of Armenian-American identity. We hope this work strengthens the bonds between Armenia and the diaspora and further engages young Armenians to become stewards of the environment," said Hayes.

For more information about the Building Bridges Program and to request copies of the educational material, contact Hayes at sarah@armeniatree.org.



Sonia Boyajian and Stephen Silverstein

State House Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide

Friday, April 20

Proclamations for
Former State Sen. Steven Tolman and
Playwright Joyce Van Dyke

Marking the 97th Anniversary of the Genocide

Keynote Speaker
Khatchig Mouradian

Hosted by State Rep. Jonathan Hecht
State Rep. John Lawn
State Sen. William Brownsberger

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Reflections of an *Odar* on Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry

By Patricia P. LaCroix

LOS ANGELES – The first Armenian word I learned was *odár*. This is not surprising, since it was obvious when I walked into Mark Geragos' office 11 years ago that I was, indeed, *odár*. Little did I know then that my association with the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) as its development consultant would take me on a journey of such professional and personal significance and that the *odár* term that the Board Chair of the organization used to describe me then would eventually be sup-

known someone with cancer? In my consulting career I once worked on a project to fund facilities and programs to make children with cancer more comfortable at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles.

Through my association with the ABMDR, I have helped enable more than comfort – I have had the privilege of helping this organization prepare for and facilitate the saving of lives. Since its first full year of operation in 2001, when 2,500 people were recruited, the ABMDR has recruited an impressive 21,554 potential donors, identified 2,135 patients, found 1,753 potential matches, and facilitated 13 bone marrow transplants.

Unkeruhi. I have provided consulting services for over 30 clients and none has a more committed and loyal cadre of volunteers than the ABMDR. While there are some men giving of their time, the majority are women who are bonded by serious intent, and an eager spirit. These are the unkeruhiner – mine and yours – ages 10 to 90, who organize and publicize recruitment drives, educate their communities, and raise funds for processing donors, from Hollywood to Hayastan and everywhere in between. Over its 12-year history the ABMDR has reached well beyond its initial

bases of operation in Los Angeles and Armenia into 14 countries across three continents.

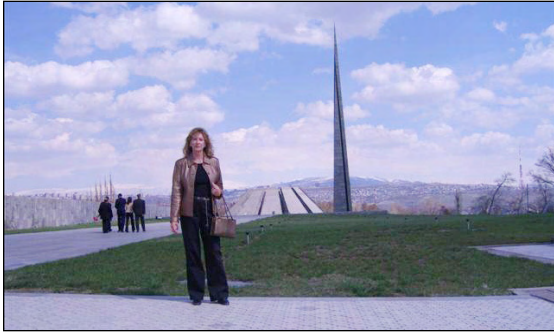
Hamaynk. The ABMDR not only serves the Armenian community, it is an important contributing member of the larger medical community of bone marrow donor registries, and the scientific community of immunogenetics. It has earned its place among its professional peers. The ABMDR's state-of-the-art DNA molecular tissue-typing laboratory is the first of its kind in the Commonwealth of Independent States to receive accreditation from the

European Federation of Immunogenetics (EFI). It has also received accreditation from this same agency for its new Stem Cell Harvesting Center. The ABMDR is a member of the National Marrow Donor Program and World Marrow Donor Worldwide. It collaborates with the world-renowned City of Hope, Dana Farber Cancer Center, Glendale Memorial Hospital, Children's Hospital, and Glendale Adventist Hospital. It also works closely with Armenia's Ministry of Health and its Oncology and Hematology Institute.

The ABMDR has benefited immensely from these associations and now is in a position to

benefit other registries getting started. At the recent EFI conference hosted by the ABMDR in Yerevan, those just developing their registries in the Caucasus were able to see first-hand the scope and quality of the ABMDR, which now serves as a model to help them set the standards and protocols of their work in their countries.

(With over 30 years of experience in non-profit management and consulting, Patricia P. LaCroix has served a range of organizations in education, healthcare, social services, and the arts. She has been assisting the ABMDR in its marketing and fundraising efforts over the past 11 years.)



Patricia LaCroix at Dzidzernakaber.

plemented by the word *jan*. In between *odár* and *jan* are other Armenian words I have learned that mark the journey I have taken with this remarkable organization.

Kaghtskegh. Ognel. The ABMDR is special to me not merely for its Armenian focus. Its mission to bring hope and healing to those worldwide who suffer from life-threatening blood-related cancers by recruiting and matching donors to patients requiring bone marrow stem cell transplants is a cause that every person, including myself, can get behind. Who has not

Arshag Dickranian School Holds First Walk-a-thon

By Morris Sarafian

LOS ANGELES – On March 2, the students of the Tekeyan Cultural Association's Arshag Dickranian School, participated in a four-mile walk-a-thon along with the teachers, principal, parents and several members of the Parent Teacher Organization and the Board of Trustees. At the suggestion of George K. Mandossian (chairman of Board of Trustees), and with the guidance of Principal Vartkes Kourouyan and Vergine Harutunyan, head of the Math Department, the event was organized to raise awareness throughout the community of the school's reputation for academic excellence, efforts toward cultural preservation and safety.

The walk-a-thon allowed students to show our community that we are confident, educated and respectful students who value our heritage.

As seniors, we led and supervised the groups with the help of homeroom teachers, and at the same time, we made memories that will last a lifetime. The extremely long walk, heading east on Hollywood Boulevard and returning to school along Sunset Blvd., left bruises on our feet, but I do not regret participating in the event. The bruises and blisters eventually healed but that day created memories that will always remain.

The school's first ever walk-a-thon proved to be successful, and we hope to maintain that success as we try to help our school grow. I hope that this event will become an annual tradition at our school. When we returned to school, the entire school was more cheerful, a mood that was heightened by the fact that we also managed to raise a large sum of money for the school's scholarship fund.

For more information about TCA Arshag Dickranian School, visit www.dickranianschool.org.

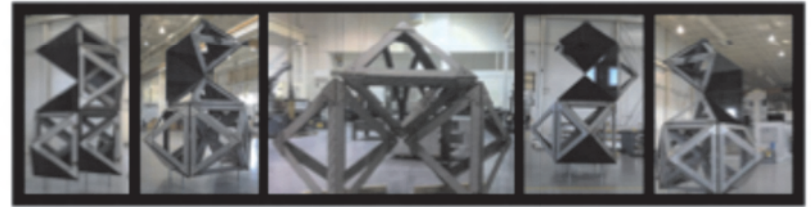


Students and teachers walked to raise awareness about the school in the community.

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Join us to see History Being Manufactured! This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to see the Armenian Heritage Park sculpture on the shop floor. Visit the location where the sculpture is being fabricated from scratch. Funds raised will be gifted to the Armenian Heritage Park Committee on behalf of the Knights of Vartan, the Armenian international fraternal organization. We're looking forward to seeing you on April 26th on the shop floor!

See below for Reply Form



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Event hosted by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan

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For more information visit www.armenianheritagepark.org

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NAASR Lecture to Focus on Armenian Interaction with Islam in Medieval Times

BELMONT, Mass. — Prof. Seta B. Dadoyan will give a lecture, titled “Rethinking Armenian History Through Paradigms of Interaction: The Armenian Experience with Islam as a Case Study,” on Thursday, May 3, at 8 p.m., at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave.

The Armenian experience in the medieval and modern Middle East is too diverse to respond to ideological demands and simplistic constructs. If from the beginning of their history, Dadoyan argues, the Armenians and their native land as well as their habitat spread from central Asia Minor and the Black Sea to the Southern Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, to

Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt, then their history too is part of these locations and their peoples and their world was governed by more or less the same laws that governed the region. In other words, things Armenian are also things Near/Middle Eastern and must be studied as such.

Dadoyan will discuss the several and often contradictory trends and close interactions on all levels that went into processes which by their nature do not meet the criteria of traditional and modernist Armenian narratives. She explores these in her massive, three-volume work *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction, Seventh-Fourteenth Centuries*

(Transaction Publishers). The first volume, *The Arab Period in Arminyah – 7th-11th Centuries*, was published last year. This large project is the culmination of a long and hard journey into uncharted territories and two decades of research and publication.

Dadoyan has taught at the American University of Beirut, Haigazian University, Columbia University, St. Nersess Seminary and the University of Chicago. She is the author of numerous articles in scholarly journals and several books, including *Pages of West Armenian Philosophical Thought* (1987), *The Fatimid Armenians: Cultural and Political Interaction in the Near East* (1997) and *The Armenian*

Catholicosate from Cilicia to Antelias: An Introduction to the Political History (2003). Her magnum opus is *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction, Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries* (2011-2013).

The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World (vol. 1) will be available for purchase and signing the night of the lecture.

More information may be had by e-mailing hq@naasr.org or writing to NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478.

St. Mary Armenian Church, Knights of Vartan Ani Lodge and NAASR Host Paul Ignatius

WASHINGTON — On Thursday, March 29, the Knights of Vartan Ani Lodge and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) featured former Secretary of the Navy and Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul R. Ignatius at St. Mary Armenian Church. Greg Aftandilian served as master of ceremonies and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, legate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church, provided the evening's invocation.

The standing-room-only crowd listened to the warm childhood stories and vivid professional experiences that were shared. Following the presentation, Ignatius answered questions and signed books before attending a reception with the guests. The Knights of Vartan Ani Lodge and Daughters of Vartan Dikranouhi Otyag, led by Commander Jacob Bournazian and Matron Marge Satian, respectively, provided the hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.

“We are proud to recognize the highest ranking US government official of Armenian ancestry who was positioned to lead the US military during a special time in 20th century history; a time when Soviet generals of Armenian ethnicity also held similar leadership roles in the former Soviet Union,” stated Bournazian.

Ignatius' latest book, *Now I Know in Part*, is a substantially revised and expanded edition of a memoir that was first published privately in 2000. NAASR's Armenian Heritage Press issued the revised edition in late 2011.

A descendant of Armenian parents from the Kharpert region of Historic Armenia, Ignatius



From left, Greg Aftandilian, Rev. Hovsep Karapetian, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Ignatius, son David Ignatius, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian and Jacob Bournazian

is a native of Glendale, Calif., and a graduate of the University of Southern California. He earned an MBA from Harvard University after serving as a naval officer in World War II. He is also the author of *On Board: My Life in the Navy, Government, and Business* (Naval Institute Press, 2006).

Ignatius served for eight years in the presidential administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, first as an assistant secretary of the army, then as under secretary of the army and assistant secretary of defense and, finally, in 1967, as secretary of the navy. Following his government service, he was pres-

ident of the *Washington Post* for two years and president of the Air Transport Association for 15 years. He is the recipient of the Army Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award and the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Award.

In *Now I Know in Part*, Ignatius looks back on family history, his childhood in Glendale (long before it had a major Armenian community), colorful characters (famous and obscure), Hollywood brushes with greatness, military service during World War II, a memorable journey to Historic Armenia with NAASR in 2006 and more.

Richard Hovannisian to Speak on Changing Landscape of Historic Western Armenia

FRESNO — Richard G. Hovannisian, A.E.F. Professor Emeritus of Modern Armenian history at UCLA, will speak on “The Changing Landscape of Historic Western Armenia: Reflections on a Journey Into the Past” on Thursday, April 19, at 7:30 p.m. in the Leon S. and Peter P. Peters Educational Center Auditorium, Save Mart Center.

The lecture is part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring Lecture Series and is co-sponsored by the Armenian Students Organization at Fresno State.

The landscape of Historic Western Armenia is ever changing. The mystical names of the villages, towns and provinces of a now-vanished generation remain deeply imbedded in the minds and hearts of many descendants. But how similar are the imagined homeland and the existing landscape?

After many years of hesitation, Hovannisian set out on a quest to reconcile the “imagined” with the “real.” His travels took him through a part of the historic provinces from Trebizond and Samsun on the Black Sea to Baiburt, Erzerum, Kemakh, Agn, Sebastia, Amasia, Kharpert, Mush, Diarbekir, Bitlis, Van, Kars, and Ani. He will present his impressions in an illustrated presentation in this special event for the San Joaquin Valley audience.

Hovannisian is the author of the four-volume history *The Republic of Armenia, Armenia on the Road to Independence*, and has edited and contributed to more than twenty books including *The Armenian Image in History and Literature*, *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, *Remembrance and Denial*, *Looking Backward, Moving Forward*, and eleven volumes on historic Armenian cities and provinces, the most recent of which is *Armenian Kars and Ani*.

A reception will immediately follow the program, hosted by the Knights of Vartan.

Many of Hovannisian's available titles will be available for signing before and after the presentation.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

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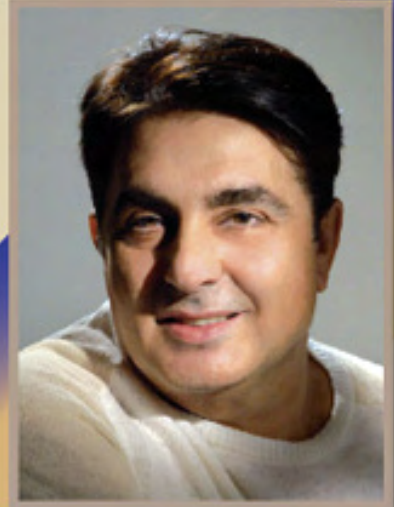
COMMUNITY NEWS

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New York METRO

YP Greater New York 11th Annual Silent Auction and Cocktail Party Breaks Worldwide YP Giving Record with \$25,000 Donation to AGBU Children's Centers

NEW YORK – Drawing a crowd of nearly 225 young professionals, Armenian General Benevolent Union Young Professionals of Greater New York (AGBU-YPGNY) hosted its 11th annual Silent Auction and Cocktail Party at Openhouse Gallery in SoHo, to benefit the AGBU Children's Centers in Armenia. In addition to proceeds raised through its annual Helping Armenia's Little Ones (HALO) campaign, YPGNY donated a record-breaking \$25,000 from the event, representing the largest donation the group has ever made to a cause and the largest donation ever made by an AGBU YP Group.

Openhouse Gallery, an event space transformed into a pop-up park for the winter months, provided the perfect setting for an upscale garden party theme, creating an ideal backdrop for guests to “unlock something green this winter.” Aline Markarian, YPGNY 2011 chairwoman, reflected on the success of the evening, “We really set a high standard this year for a fantastic evening. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, it is tremendously rewarding to be able to make a significant impact on such an important AGBU program. As a long-time committee member, I am proud to see how this event has grown thanks to the tireless collaborative effort of such a strong and dedicated committee.”

Donors contributed to the display of auction items, including round-trip tickets to Los Angeles, goods from Ferragamo, Movado and Baccarat, tickets to Mets and Rangers games,



YPGNY 2012 Chair Alexis Halejian (center) with guests from the evening

Broadway shows, Jimmy Fallon late night talk show tickets and more. Among the most coveted pieces were 11 original works of art made by the children of the AGBU Children's Centers that highlight their creative skills. Raffle items included a piece from Michael Aram, restaurant gift cards and a Canon digital camera.

An abundance of goodies popped up in the park for guests to enjoy, including a picnic table featuring an elaborate gourmet cheese display

donated by Fairway Market. Glasses were served by guest bartenders from the YPGNY community, including Berge Barsoumian, Ella Baroyan, Peter Endrigian, Alex Karapetyan and Tamar Nahabedian, who competed to earn the most tips, which were then donated to the AGBU Children's Centers. The wine and spirits were donated from a number of individuals including Clovis Point Winery, Cognito Inc., Kaleidoscope Imaging, Manhattan Beer Distributors and Société Perrier.

With first-hand experience visiting the AGBU Children's Centers in Armenia, Alexis Halejian, longtime YPGNY Committee member and 2012 chairwoman, shared her thoughts on the evening, “It is inspiring to see so many Armenian young professionals in the same

room, enjoying each other's company, and even more heartwarming was knowing that we can send a record-breaking donation to the AGBU Children's Centers in Armenia this year.”

Since 2000, YPGNY has hosted the winter reception as an enjoyable and unique way to raise funds for the three Centers in Yerevan. Back in 1993, AGBU joined forces with the Holy See of Echmiadzin to establish the AGBU Children's Centers in the Nork, Arapkir and Malatya sections of Yerevan. Providing a constructive after-school environment to more than 3,500 students ages 6 to 16, the centers cultivate the talents of young Armenians by broadening their knowledge in courses unavailable to them at overcrowded public schools. With an administrative staff of 300, the centers provide four hours of daily instruction in music, dance, arts and crafts, gymnastics, martial arts, computers, language, history as well as developing other practical real-life professional skills. Throughout the years, more than 15,000 students living in low- to middle-income homes have benefited from this program.

Making an ongoing commitment to support the AGBU Children's Centers, YPGNY established an AGBU YP Endowment in 2002 for the cause. Now a pan-YP endeavor, YPGNY's annual contribution is raised through the Silent Auction and Cocktail Party and HALO campaign. Suitable for recipients of all ages, the YPGNY HALO campaign allows individuals to give a gift from the heart and simultaneously help children of Armenia during the holiday season. Donations, made in honor of a loved one, family or friend, are transformed into personalized gift cards by YPGNY's group of Santa's helpers. This year, close to 70 certificates spread holiday cheer to mailboxes worldwide. With YPGNY's 2012 donation, the AGBU YP Endowment now totals nearly \$160,000.

Andreas Roubian Hosts Reception in Honor of Defense Minister Ohanian

SADDLE RIVER, N.J. – While in the United States with a contingent for a historic meeting with high-ranking United State Defense and Intelligence Officials, Seyran Ohanian, defense minister of the Republic of Armenia, was honored with a dinner reception at the home of Andreas Roubian.

The reception was held while Ohanian was in the United States to meet with US Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta and Central Intelligence Agency Director David Petraeus, as well as deputy directors and assistant secretaries. The purpose of Ohanian's meetings was to continue to foster mutually-beneficial military and civilian cooperation between the United States and the Republic of Armenia in both regional and worldwide security and defense issues. At the reception hosted by Roubian, Ohanian was accompanied by his wife, Ruzanna, ambassador of Armenia to the United Nations Garen Nazarian, and his wife, Nana, First Deputy Defense Minister of Armenia David Tonoyan, as well as Col. Mesrop

Nazarian, defense attaché of the Embassy of Armenia to the US, and other dignitaries.

Ohanian, formerly the defense minister of Karabagh, who played a major role in the Karabagh War, has, like many, made sacrifices, including the loss of a leg in the war, for the Armenian homeland. Roubian welcomed Ohanian as an Armenian hero and called for the continued support of Armenia and its defense. Ohanian spoke of his long-standing friendship with Roubian and recalled some highlights of their times together. He also fondly spoke of his friendship with Hrant and Ruby Gulian. All were acknowledged for their services to the people of Karabagh during the Karabagh War. Roubian was chair of the Karabagh Committee and instrumental in organizing support for the Karabagh people. Ohanian expressed special thanks to the hostess, Priya Katragadda, for the unmatched quality of the reception. At the reception, medals were awarded by the minister to Roubian, Hrant Gulian and Hagop Vartivarian for their services to the republic.



From left, Andreas Roubian, Hrant Gulian, Minister Seyran Ohanian and Hagop Vartivarian

'Fractured History, Reconstructing Identity' Topic of Exhibit in New Jersey

PARAMUS, N.J. (Armenian Radio Hour New Jersey) – More than 300 people, representing a cross-section of the metropolitan New York-Armenian community, attended the opening reception of “Fractured History, Reconstructing Identity: Degrees of Westernization in Armenian Painting and Other Mediums” art exhibit, on April 3, at Gallery Bergen, Bergen Community College. The works of the artists projected hope and rebirth.

Prof. Thomas La Pointe, director of the Center for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Center at Bergen College, introduced a number of people representing the college and the Armenian community, as well as the Bergen County Executive Kathy Donovan, to address the attendees.

Kathleen Donovan and Vice President of the College Academic Affairs Bonnie McDougal congratulated the Armenian community for the work that went into such a major art project. They said they hoped similar projects with the Center for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation will help promote understanding and goodwill among people.

Seta Nazarian Albrecht, whose support made the exhibit possible, thanked all gathered for “taking our vision and turning it into a reality...we didn't want the exhibition to be sad, we wanted to show people that we Armenians have risen...the message of this exhibit is ‘yes we have been through atrocities but we have risen.’

We have a home here (at Bergen College) and I hope I can look at all of you to support us...there is a lot we want to do.” Albrecht, the daughter of philanthropists Nazar and Artemis Nazarian, comes from a family who has supported numerous cultural, humanitarian and educational projects in the diaspora and in Armenia.

Curator Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian was introduced by Prof. Thomas La Pointe as a “pre-

eminent curator, one of the most successful curators of contemporary Armenian art in the world today.” She has been an avid collector of Western and Armenian art for the past three decades. Hovanessian said, “my sole purpose was to promote the works of Armenian artists internationally. This exhibit demonstrates the power of our Armenian artists. Their art is equal to any internationally-renowned artist.” The central premise of the exhibit was to demonstrate through contemporary works of art the substantial progress Armenian culture has made within its present homeland and the United States, despite the hardships of a fractured history.

Hovanessian was emotional when she quoted her late father, educator and author Sisag Hagop Varjabedian: “One of the most fascinating virtues of an Armenian is his diamond-like quality of indestructibility.”

Garen Nazarian, ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations, said, “We will never forget the past and we will never stop working to prevent Genocides. This exhibit serves as a prism through which we feel the power of Armenian contemporary art – reflecting on the past, examining the present and envisioning the future with optimism.”

The participating artists of the exhibit include: Arevik Arevshatian, Gagik Aroutiunian, Assadour, Ashot Bayandour, Arman Grigorian, Ruben Grigorian, Sarkis Hamalbashian, Hamlet Hovsepian, Aram Jibilian, Vasken Kalayjian, Mariam Khachatryan, Haig Kocharian, Vartoush Magarian, Karine Matsakian, Kardash Onnig, Rudik Petrosian, Vahan Rumelian, Ararat Sarkissian, Arthur Sarkissian, William Saroyan, Shanoor and Albert Vartanian.

The exhibit will be open to the public through April 26, at Gallery Bergen, Bergen County College, West Hall, 400 Paramus Road. A talk by Peter Balakian will take place April 26, 6-8 p.m., in the Pitkin Education Center.



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Arts & Living

Demirdjian Snaps VIPs

By Daphne Abeel

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

PASADENA, Calif. – Jacob Demirdjian has been taking photographs ever since he was child, and assisting his father, also a photographer. Born in East Beirut, he later worked with Varoujan Setian, who was the official photographer for the president of Lebanon.

In the 1970s, Demirdjian moved to Paris where he continued his work. In 1980, he moved to the United States and first set up a studio in East Los Angeles. He later moved to Pasadena, where he continues to work in the studio he established there.

He has focused on taking portrait photographs of well known Armenians. Among his subjects have been dignitaries such as Catholicos Vasken I and Karekin II. California Gov. George Deukmejian, Krikor Kalayjian, Kirk Kerkorian and the singer Charles Aznavour.

“Whenever someone important visits from Armenia, Israel or Lebanon, I am often called upon by Armenian organizations to photograph them,” said Demirdjian in a recent interview. “I have a good relationship with Vartan Oskanian, the former foreign minister of Armenia, and he has arranged photo sessions for me. I am multilingual and speak Armenian, Arabic, French



Jacob Demirdjian

and Turkish, as well as English, so these abilities are helpful to me in my work.”

His images have been published in the Beirut Times, the Armenian Mirror-Spectator and Asbarez, among other publications. His pictures are also distributed in many of the oil-producing countries in the Middle East, including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

In 2004, Demirdjian mounted an exhibition of his work at the Forest Lawn Museum in Glendale and received, at that time, a number of grateful tributes to his work.

Among them were the following comments from Dr. Garbis Der Yeghiayan, then president of Mashtots College: “Jacob is a diligent worker on any photo project or challenge assigned to him. He meets all challenges with initiative, confidence and a high standard of effectiveness. Community leaders, professionals of all walks of life and friends who have been associated with Jacob describe him as a very special person – honest, humble, friendly, hardworking, service-oriented, conscientious and dedicated with innate spirituality, a generous heart and a deep-rooted pride in his ancestral values.”

Although he has not returned to Lebanon for many years, citing the turmoil there, Demirdjian has made numerous trips to Armenia.

“I want very much to continue my service to the Armenian community and to take photographs, which has been my lifetime passion,” he said.



David Boyajian, an artist, working on a piece commissioned by the state to commemorate the 10th anniversary of September 11

The Delicate Task of Reshaping Remnants Of 9/11

WESTPORT, Conn. (*New York Times*) – Scuffed, torn and with rivet holes, rubber gaskets and sealing putty still intact, though no burn marks, they were about to become part of a sculptural addition to the state’s 9/11 Living Memorial at Sherwood Island in Westport.

By Jan Ellen Spiegel

The task of transforming these industrial-looking remnants into art had fallen to David Boyajian, 53, and another Connecticut artist, Matt Rink, 27. Both sculptors had been chosen by the state from the four finalists who had emerged, after portfolio reviews, from a pool of about 100 artists in the database maintained by the Connecticut Office of the Arts, formerly the Commission on Culture and Tourism.

Public art projects can be tricky under the best of conditions, with community concerns and artistic visions sometimes clashing, but this one presented the sculptors not only with physical limitations, but also with an emotional challenge: anxiety about marring the significance of their material.

“We haven’t touched it,” Boyajian said in late July, two weeks into a tight, month-long production schedule. “We haven’t marked them. We haven’t done anything to them. We’ve washed them, but that’s about it. But even that – ‘Oooh, we’re taking the dust off of it’ – it’s intense.”

Although Rink was only a high school student in Fairfield on September 11, he too found the aluminum daunting. “It’s a whole lot of responsibility in terms of: What are you going to do?” he said.

see BOYADJIAN, page 15



David Boyajian, left, and Matt Rink installing the piece, which uses metal recovered from the twin towers

Sibil Holds Debut Concert In New Jersey

HACKENSACK, N.J. – Sibil, the Armenian singer from Istanbul, had her debut performance on March 31, at the Bergen County Academies, while finding time to enjoy the Metropolitan New York area.

Many recognize Sibil as the first modern Armenian singer whose songs were heard in the streets of Istanbul. Her Armenian songs were welcomed and enjoyed by all, including Turks.

Sibil arrived in New York on Monday, March 26, and left a day after her concert. The Constantinople Armenian Relief Society (CARS) organized and sponsored the event. A well-organized committee took care of the details of her trip. “Never did I imagine I would travel to New York to perform. It was a dream come true,” she said.

Sibil’s concert was almost a sold-out event with more than a 1,000 attendees. Some of the reasons for the success were: the historic popularity of Sibil in Turkey; the CARS organization that enjoys the support of so many Armenians who hail from Turkey; the effective publicity of the event over social media networks and the Shushi Dance Ensemble’s guest appearance.

The program contained 29 songs and dances. Seven of the songs were arranged by Majak Tosikyan, Sibil’s musical director. “I rearranged the music to appeal to the masses. Turkey is my



Sibil on stage in New Jersey

territory and I wanted the songs to be enjoyed by all people, not only Armenians.” Said Tosikyan, “The music had to agree with Sibil’s character and voice.” The songs, which were presented, included: Namag, Im Bantught Hayer, Tsarav Seri, Gyanki Mi Hamar and Siro Tsayn. “These classical songs were more appealing to the older generation who have not lost the art of listening. Sibil’s songs are for listening and not dancing. Unfortunately we have lost the art of listening and enjoying music,” said Tosikyan.

Impressive, also, was the 12-member Melik Ohanian Orchestra which accompanied Sibil on stage. The energetic, young dancers of Shushi Dance Ensemble with their beautiful costumes added vibrancy and color to the evening. Pianist Burak Bedikyan, who accompanied Sibil from Turkey, and the appearance of composer Majak Tosikyan on stage added to the success of the evening. The response of the audience was more noticeable when familiar and traditional songs were sung: Gligya, Im Anush Davigh, Kedashen, Adanai Vogperki, Artsakh, Pari Arakil, Yerevan Erepuni and the finale, where the entire cast appeared on stage and presented Azk Parabantz. Once again the attendees responded positively, giving the performers a much-deserved standing ovation.

Comments from the audience were plentiful. Arto Khrimian wrote “...Heartfelt congratulations on organizing the triumphant Sibil’s concert! You and your team relentlessly worked for

see SIBIL, page 16



ARTS & LIVING

Actor/Writer Eric Bogosian Delves into Armenian History

BOGOSIAN, from page 1

in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide, in the past five or six years. As he has gotten older, he noted, he has embraced and understood his roots all the more.

"Honestly, when I was a kid, growing up in Woburn, I was not entirely comfortable with my identity," he explained. "There were a lot of Irish Catholic kids and I felt really different. I didn't want to feel different."

He and his family attended St. James Church, where he was an altar boy. Speaking of his family, he said he was "very, very proud of [his] wonderful Armenian family. Both sides were immigrants and they were a very loving and warm family."

Bogosian noted that he does not speak Armenian, aside from a few words. While he said speaking it would be a plus, he added he thought that ethnic groups could survive without language. He gave as an example the African-American community, which feels ties to Africa, with less than 1 percent speaking Bantu, the most commonly-used language on that continent.

Bogosian recalled that when he first got an agent in the 1970s, the agent assured him of success, "if I fixed my nose, changed my last name and straightened my hair."

Of course, he did none of the above.

He spoke about his early career, right after graduating from Oberlin College, when he was fearless and enamored of the theater. One of his first projects there was directing a play in Spanish for people who do not speak Spanish, with a very large cast. "And I don't speak Spanish," he quipped.

He performed at the New York Shakespeare festival and he was dared to write a piece. He ended up writing the Pulitzer Prize-nominated "Talk Radio," which cemented his reputation on the New York stage. Later, Oliver Stone directed the movie version of the play,

starring Bogosian.

Bogosian, who has starred in many movies, including Stephen King's "Dolores Claiborne" in 1995, said that for him, the 1990s were defined by working with Atom Egoyan in "Ararat." The intense immersion experience alongside Egoyan shook Bogosian, whose knowledge of Armenian history up to that point was superficial and summed up by the following: "My grandfather told me if you ever meet a Turk, kill him," he recalled.

Before and during the making of "Ararat," Bogosian immersed himself in studying history. "Egoyan recreated this town in Van. I walked through there, among these people, and I got it. It was then that Peter Balakian's *Black Dog of Fate* came out." Watching the news then, concurrently, when the former Yugoslavia was breaking up and genocide was being waged against Bosnians, made the subject that much more intimate for Bogosian.

One of the threads of post-Genocide history that fascinates Bogosian is the story of Soghomon Tehlirian, who assassinated Talaat Pasha in Berlin. The more commonly-told story is that Tehlirian's family was slaughtered in front of him and that after he managed to escape to Germany, he spotted Talaat and after meticulously studying his routine, shot him pointblank. As the story goes, his heartfelt story justified the murder in the eyes of the German jury. However, Tehlirian, as history buffs know (and Bogosian found out), was not a mere student, but an assassin in Operation Nemesis, based in Watertown, Mass., run by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. The group, which also included Shahan Natalie, knew many of the Young Turks from the years before the Young Turks came to power and waged genocide against the Armenians. Thus, after their erstwhile friends became their enemies, they knew exactly who their targets were and through



From left, Susan Giragosian, Karen Hovsepian, Cheryl Panjian, Eric Bogosian, Nellie Bogosian, Karen Diranian and Brenda Khedrian

Operation Nemesis, dispatched the top eight leaders, including Talaat, Enver and Jamaal. The group disbanded once the eight Turk masterminds (as well as three Armenian traitors who had fed information to the Ottoman and Turkish authorities) were killed.

There is original research in the book, including some of Tehlirian's papers, translated by Aram Arkun.

Bogosian said the more he learns about Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the more impressed he becomes. "They could not have had that empire without Armenians. [By killing the Armenians] they killed themselves."

Bogosian is married to director Jo Bonney and has two sons. "My younger son has taken

the trouble to learn Armenian," he said. "It's weird, because I'm only used to old people speaking it," he joked.

Among the plays he has performed in and written are "Funhouse," "Drinking in America" and "Suburbia." He has published several books, including *Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead* and *Mall*. He has also been in movies such as "Under Siege 2: Dark Territory," with Seagal, Woody Allen's "Deconstructing Harry," the mystery thriller, "Gossip," "Wonderland" with Val Kilmer and "Igby Goes Down." He was also on TV's "Law and Order: Criminal Intent" for many years.

A reception followed his talk, during which he gamely answered questions from many fans.

Sayat Nova Dancers to Perform at Armenian Genocide Observance April 15

By Tom Vartabedian

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. — A memorial dance program by the Sayat Nova Dance Ensemble of Greater Boston will highlight the 97th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide April 15 in Merrimack Valley.

The event will take place at 3 p.m. in North Andover High School, sponsored by the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley. More than 350 people are expected to attend this musical tribute to the martyrs.

The observance will also honor three remaining survivors in the region: Ojen Fantazian, Thomas Magarian and Nellie Nazarian.

"The Armenian Genocide is an important fabric of world history and cannot be forgotten," said Sossy Jeknavorian, committee chair. "We owe it to these survivors as well as 1.5 million martyrs who perished under the Ottoman Turkish yoke during the years surrounding World War I. Recognition and reparations continue to remain steadfast with Armenians throughout the world."

The Sayat Nova ensemble has more than 80 members including dancers, stage crew and other volunteers. It is into its 26th year under founder and director Apo Ashjian.

Clad in colorful costumes, the group has performed throughout the United States and Canada, making two trips to Armenia in 1995 and 2006.

"As part of a rich culture, Armenian folk dancing is a reflection of the life and legacy of the Armenian people," said Ashjian. "Our company is a symbol of pride and achievement for the Armenian people and it's our privilege to showcase this heritage in Merrimack Valley. Our mission is to elevate multicultural awareness within all ethnic communities worldwide."

The keynote speaker will be Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, a former state representative from Waltham, who has been active in promoting Genocide awareness

throughout the state.

The group will honor members of the Armenian Heritage Park, which is currently finishing a \$6-million memorial park at Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway.

The program's theme will be "Our Day to Remember."

A joint memorial service will open the program, conducted by area clergy. Complementing the service will be hymns by a combined liturgical choir from the community

under the direction of Paul Ketchoyan, accompanied by Arsen Russian.

Children from various Sunday Schools throughout the region took part in an essay contest on genocide. The winners will be announced that afternoon.

Since the committee's inception in 1994, net proceeds totaling more than \$50,000 have gone toward assisting worthy charities in Armenia.

The anniversary is being planned by individ-

uals from various churches and organizations, surrounding the catchphrase, "Remembrance, Renewal, Resolve — We Shall Survive."

Communities in Greater Haverhill, Lawrence and Lowell will commemorate the Genocide throughout the week of April 22-28 through proclamation signings, meetings and flag-raising ceremonies with their respective city legislators.

A reception will follow in the school cafeteria. The public is invited.

ALMA to Host Book Presentation by Prof. Taner Akçam

WATERTOWN, Mass.— Prof. Taner Akçam, Kaloosdian & Mugar Professor of Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University, will discuss new perspectives on the Armenian Genocide based on his latest book at a program at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) on Sunday, April 15, beginning at 2 p.m.

The book, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: the Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, has just been released by Princeton University Press. In it, Akçam introduces new evidence from more than 600 secret Ottoman documents that demonstrate in unprecedented detail that the Armenian Genocide resulted from an official effort to engage in demographic engineering and assimilation in order to rid the Turkish Empire of its Christian subjects.

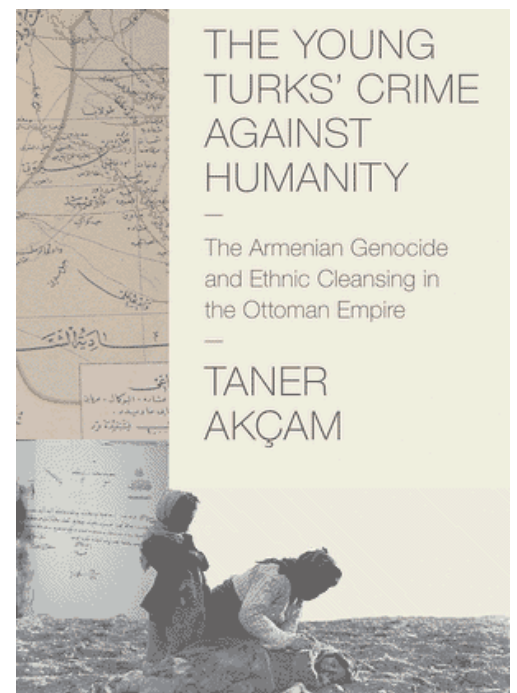
These previously inaccessible documents, from deep inside the bureaucratic machinery of Ottoman Turkey, along with the author's expert context and analysis, show how a dying empire embraced genocide and ethnic cleansing.

This book follows another major study by Akçam released last fall, *Judgment at Istanbul*, coauthored with genocide scholar Vahakn Dadrian, in which the indictments and verdicts of the Turkish Military Tribunals

held at the end of World War I were published in English for the first time. These tribunals court-marshaled wartime cabinet ministers, Young Turk party leaders and a number of others for crimes committed against the Armenians.

One of the first scholars of Turkish origin to publicly acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, Akçam has published a series of groundbreaking books and articles on the subject, including *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*. He also lectures and participates in conferences throughout the United States and abroad.

Born in of a small town in northeastern Turkey, Akçam graduated from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. Active in the Turkish student democracy movement, he was arrested and sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment. After one year he managed to escape to Germany, where he earned his doctorate from Hanover University, writing a thesis on Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide. He was associate professor of history at the University of Minnesota, before joining the faculty at Clark



Cover of Taner Akçam's latest book

in 2008.

The ALMA program is free to the public. A reception and book-signing will follow the program.



ARTS & LIVING

The Delicate Task of Reshaping Remnants of 9/11

BOYADJIAN, from page 13

The idea of a sculpture evolved from a couple of parallel goals. One was to complement the existing footstone memorials to the state's 153 victims – two long strips installed on Sherwood Island in September 2003 – by creating a key to the location of individual names as well as plaques with more biographical material about each victim. Another goal stemmed from a request by Paul Kirwin, whose son Glenn had been among the Cantor Fitzgerald employees who died, to do what many other memorials had done: obtain a steel I-beam that had been in a tower to exhibit intact.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, which runs the Sherwood site as part of its park there, merged the two ideas, deciding in the process to obtain some of the aluminum the Port Authority has among its remnants from the buildings because it would withstand the elements – particularly salt spray from Long Island Sound – better than steel.

Those competing for the \$10,000 commission had to be able to work with aluminum and had to come up with a design to fit in a space that was about nine-feet-high and 24-feet-wide and would incorporate plaques for each victim,

to be produced by Rumney Associates in Madison along with other signage.

While not a requisite, the artists also had to be mindful that emotions have run high around September 11 memorials, with survivors often clashing with government and others over what ought to be done.

"It did have the potential for being messy," said Deanna Lia, who was on the committee that chose the artists and was also one of two state officials lent from other departments – in her case Children and Families – to form the Office of Family Support, established by the state not long after the attack to assist families of victims. "What we tried to do was be as respectful as possible."

"It is a dance of sorts," she said. "You have to remember these people have been touched in a way that few of us can really understand. I think it's been handled well. I do."

Boyajian admitted that people are likely to have different opinions about the memorial, but, he said, "you have to be on the outside of this thing – I think artists have always done that." Boyajian and Rink's design, named "Sanctuary," grew from Boyajian's perception of the Trade Center arches as trees, and his notion that trees were the first room, the first

form of shelter. The theme is rebirth – new life growing from the remains.

New aluminum with a brushed finish was used for tree trunks on each side of what in essence is a frame around the name plaques. The artists fashioned 79 leaves for a canopy across the top. Scattered across the tree tops are large, poppy-like flowers – one for each year since the attack – transformed from the old aluminum, but retaining its history in the visible holes, tears, scars, corrugations and dulled exteriors. The folds and angles catch light and shadows unevenly, casting faint, almost ghostly images as if a body had been there.

Reshaping remains from the site instead of leaving them whole is unusual among September 11 memorials. And making that first cut back in July had the two artists decidedly anxious.

"How do I feel about cutting those pieces up?" asked Boyajian at the time. "I don't feel like really great about that, to tell you the truth. But in terms of where we're going and what we're doing it becomes an important part."

Rink added: "I think we come at it from a humble perspective and with good intentions, trying to respect and honor the materials as much as we possibly can through the way that we actually work with them, which I think comes from trying to preserve as much of the surface detail as possible."

That concept has resonated with those who saw the sculpture before its September 8 unveiling at the site's annual memorial service.

"The way in which he shaped the aluminum from the World Trade Center left me with a really deep feeling," said Susan Frechette, a deputy commissioner at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection who was also part of the selection committee. "You look at the floral images he made out of the aluminum and see the scars; it was painful, yet I think it had the desired effect, which was to make you remember – and at the same time it provides a sense of beauty."

Frechette and many others said they appreciated the reverence the artists had for the World Trade Center metal.

"What impressed me is you could see the

numbers on the material," Kirwin said. "I think it's beautiful. It has a nice feeling to it. They did a beautiful job. No complaints."

The 9/11 Living Memorial is in Sherwood Island State Park, Sherwood Island Connector, Westport, 8 a.m. until sunset, year round. For information, visit ct.gov/deep or friendsofsherwoodisland.org.

Ara Ghazarians to Speak At Ararat-Eskijian Museum On Swiss Humanitarian Jakob Künzler

MISSION HILLS, Calif. – The Ararat-Eskijian Museum will host a presentation about Jakob



Ara Ghazarian

Künzler by the curator of the Armenian Cultural Foundation of, Arlington Mass., Ara Ghazarians, on Tuesday, April 17, at 7:30 p.m.

Künzler was a Swiss of German origin who resided in an Orient mission in Urfa and witnessed the Genocide.

From 1915-1917, Künzler became an eyewitness of the Genocide aimed at the Armenians, and he writes about this in his book, *In The Land of Blood and Tears* (1921). Even though his life was in peril, he helped provide for thousands of Armenian orphans and resumed the hospital in Urfa.

Ghazarians received his PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. He has translated and edited 10 books, including three books by and about the prolific Armenian writer Karapents, including Hakob Karapents: A Bibliography.

In the Land of Blood and Tears will be available for sale after the talk, as well as other publications by the Armenian Cultural Foundation.

For more information contact the Ararat-Eskijian Museum at ararat-eskijian-museum@netzero.net.

Play on Armenian Genocide to Be Staged in New York

NEW YORK (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Libra 6 Productions, Inc. presents "Silence," an original play by Herand Markarian, directed by Kevin Thompson, starring Lorraine Serabian and beginning May 4, Broadwayworld.com reports.

Set against the backdrop of the 1915 Armenian Genocide, "Silence" is the story of a woman's journey to survive, embrace her family and preserve her Armenian heritage.

"Silence" holds the power to enlighten us to the tangible effects that the Armenian Genocide has left upon families and individuals during the past 100 years. It evokes the silence of history and the silence of those who survived the Genocide. As we move toward the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide it is time to educate the world that this atrocity really happened. Moreover, we must learn from "Silence" to draw parallels to current world affairs in Syria, Darfur and other parts of Africa," according to Broadwayworld.com.

"Silence" will begin previews on May 4, at The Shell Theater and run through May 24, with talk-backs following the performances on May 4, 9, 12 and 24.



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ARTS & LIVING

Zerounian Ensemble to Perform at Regattabar

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Julia Zerounian and the Zerounian Ensemble will perform at the Regattabar on April 19 at 7:30 p.m.

The following musicians comprise the ensemble: Kista Buckland Reisner, violin; Marco Granados, flute; Claudio Ragazzi, guitar; Grant Smith, percussion; Mark Henry, bass and Sarkis Zerounian, piano.

For reservations and additional information go to the Regattabar website.

Sibil Debut Concert in NJ

SIBIL, from page 13

many months and until the last minute for the success of the event. The result was fantastic. Inviting Sibil to New York was a daring but brilliant idea. Second, being able to fill the hall with nearly 1,000 people was a great feat. Third, coordinating the performance of so many musicians and dancers on the stage with one rehearsal alone was amazing. With her unique voice and style Sibil immediately enchanted the audience. Burak Bedikyan on the piano and the Melik Ohanian Orchestra conducted by veteran-musician Majak Tosikyan in the background gave cumulative eloquence to the concert. The performance of the Shushi Dance Ensemble overjoyed their fans once again. All in all, it was such a memorable evening." Similar congratulatory messages were heard and received from many other attendees.

Special thanks went to CARS from Herman Hintiryan, who wrote: "...without the generosity and hard work of organizations such as CARS, Terchoonian Home Orphanage (in Armenia) would not be as successful as it is today."

(Report courtesy of the Armenian Radio Hour New Jersey.)

'Rebirth' Concert in NYC Unites Community

REBIRTH, from page 1

musicians, under the direction of Konstantin Petrossian, who has undertaken the musical arrangements and will be conducting and directing the concert.

The evening will highlight the two legendary artists from Armenia: Ruben Matevosyan and Raysa Megerdchian. Also participating will be two opera singers, Yeghishe Manucharyan, who is a tenor with the Metropolitan Opera, and Victoria Avelisyan, a mezzo soprano with the Boston Opera.

Other popular singers will perform as well: Vicken Tarpinian from France and Arevik Gharibyan and Johnny Roubian from Yerevan.

Also participating in the commencement of the concert will be the Hamazkayin Arekag chorus, under the direction of Vagharshag Ohanian.

This event brings together the different cultural community organizations, in the New York Metropolitan area.

— Shoghig Chalian

Art & Jazz SpringFest on the Main Line to Benefit Birthright Armenia

WYNNEWOOD, Penn. — Shaking things up in Philadelphia, a 20-member committee of volunteers is working for Birthright Armenia's premier Philadelphia event, Art & Jazz SpringFest on the Main Line, taking place on Saturday, May 5, in the newly-renovated Memorial Hall of St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church.

"Our team of volunteers has put their best out-of-the-box thinking into every step of the event planning trail," said Committee Chair Lisa Manookian. "What started out as a just a concept over dinner 10 months ago, has turned into an elegant, cutting-edge and much anticipated event for all of us here in Philadelphia. What attracted me to Birthright Armenia, enough to motivate me to volunteer numerous hours each week, is its ability to transform the lives of a generation of young adults who visit our homeland and return to their communities with a vigor and compassion to serve. The spirit of volunteerism and civic responsibility instilled by the organization is inspiring, particularly among those who never grew up with an Armenian connection. The proceeds of this event will go to further expand upon the great work Birthright Armenia has solidly produced over the last eight years. We're hoping to sponsor at least an additional 30 volunteers to Armenia in 2012 with SpringFest's success," said Manookian.

The event will showcase more than 130

pieces of original artwork by 32 artists of Armenian descent, with a portion of their sales benefiting the hosting organization. In addition to the art, hors d'oeuvres, raffle items, open bar from 7 to 8 p.m. and the first area appearance of Boston's Black Sea Salsa Band are all included in admission price.

"It is a coming out event for Birthright Armenia that includes many 'firsts' for us," said Executive Director Linda Yepoyan. "SpringFest is a completely new concept for the Philadelphia area and our hardworking committee is pulling out all the stops to ensure its success. What attendees are used to experiencing here in terms of fundraisers will not be found at SpringFest. Like everything Birthright Armenia does, we enjoy mixing things up and raising the bar a bit higher to challenge ourselves and others to do things just a bit differently than what most expect or consider traditional. And we are proud to be bringing Black Sea Salsa to town, as this will mark their first appearance outside of New England," added Yepoyan.

Led by composer and trumpeter Dan Teager, Black Sea Salsa is a 15-piece world-music group made up of six horns, four vocalists and a five-piece rhythm section, playing an original blend of Latin jazz and blues that can best be described as "Armenian salsa." Yepoyan added, "I just keep promising people the salsa, mambo and Armenian line-dancing all in one, which

attendees are surely anticipating."

Featured will be the following diverse artists from throughout the US, Canada and Armenia: Virginia Arakelian, Alice Aznavourian, Margaret Boyajian, Elizabeth Derderian, Areg Elibekian, Robert Elibekian, Vagharshag Elibekian, Tigran Ghuylian, Lynne Dian Gulezian, Armen Gyulamiryan, Sayyat Hacikoglu, Hakob Hakobian, Lucy Kalian, Rosanne Kaloustian, Armen Kankanian, Jackie Kazarian, Monique Kendikian-Sarkessian, Mher Khachatryan, Roudolf Kharatian, Jeanette Koumjian, Rose Manteghian, Sema Ohanian Mellian, Adrienne Minassian, Varteni Mosdichian, Rudik Petrosyan, Mary-Roud, Simon Samsonian, Serli, Christina Vandian, Irene Vandian, Armen Yepoyan and Ara Zebarian.

"The works of Vagharshag Elibekian and Simon Samsonian, both deceased, are noted collectibles in the art world. Birthright Armenia is grateful to their grandsons, Areg Elibekian and Alan Semerdjian, for sharing their grandfathers' works for this special event," said Yepoyan.

For tickets, contact Arpie Zerounian at a_zero@comcast.net. Or purchase tickets online via Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/events/211436842272166>.

For additional information, visit <http://www.birthrightarmenia.org>.

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

APRIL 21-22 — Armenian Food and Music Fest - 2012. Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Sunday, 12-5 p.m. Armenian food, pastries, including Mediterranean specialties. Arts and crafts vendors and music, Kids Fun Zone, bounce houses, face painting, games and fun surprises. St. Mary Armenian Church, 4050 NW 100 Ave., Cooper City. Festival Hotline: (954) 450-5578. For information, e-mail stmaryfl@aol.com.

MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL 15 — "Our Day to Remember," a memorial tribute to Armenian martyrs featuring Sayat Nova Dance Ensemble, 3 p.m., North Andover High School, 430 Osgood St., sponsored by Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley. Adults, \$15. Students, \$5. Reception to follow.

MAY 24 — Celebrating 80 years and beyond, Benefit Gala of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. Thursday, reception, 6:30 p.m.; dinner 7:30 p.m., Boston Royal Sonesta, Cambridge. Keynote speaker, Vigen Sargsyan, chief of staff of the President of the Republic of Armenia. 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award will be bestowed upon Dr. Gregory H. Adamian, chancellor and president emeritus of Bentley University; 2012 Award of Excellence will be bestowed upon Janet Shamalian, national correspondent for "NBC News" from Texas, and Charles Mahtesian, Politico newspaper's national policy editor, Washington, DC. For information, call (617) 359-0413.

NEW JERSEY

MAY 19, 2012 — HMADS Gala Dinner Dance. Details to follow, June 25. HMADS 30th Commencement Exercise at 8 p.m., Kalustyan Hall.

OCTOBER 28 — Save the date. The Armenian American Support and Educational Center, Hye Doon, celebrates its 35th anniversary. Felician College, Lodi. With the participation of Akh'tamar Dance Ensemble and other talented guest performances. Details to follow.

NEW YORK

APRIL 22 — "Turkey is Guilty of Genocide, Denying the Undeniable is A Crime," Armenian Genocide Commemoration at Times Square. 2 p.m., 43rd and Broadway, New York City. Sponsored by Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Inc. Co-sponsored by AGBU, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian National Committee of America, ADL-Ramgavars, Armenian Council of America with the participation of: Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Catholic Eparchy for US and Canada, ACYOA, AYF, Armenian youth organizations, Armenian university and college clubs. For free bus



On April 28, a concert dedicated to the 20th anniversary of both the Armenian National Military and Armenia's membership to the UN, featuring the Philharmonic Symphonic Orchestra, will take place at 8 p.m. at the Merkin Concert Hall of Kaufman Center, pictured above, 129 West 67th St., New York City.

transportation to and from Times Square, call: Diocese (212) 686-0710; Prelacy (212) 689-7810, NJ; Sona (551) 427-8763; Holy Martyrs, John, (718) 631-2247; St. Sarkis, Eddy, (917) 885-9729; St. Vartanantz, NJ, Kostan, (201) 741-9789; Paramus, Andy (201) 368-2791; Holy Cross, NJ, Very Rev. Vazken Karayan (201) 865-2790, Queens Armenian Center, Sako, (516) 805-5816 and Brooklyn, Tigran, (374) 291-7765 or visit www.knightsofvartan.org, click April 24, <http://april24nyc.com>, www.armenianradionj.com or www.theforgotten.org.

APRIL 28 — Rebirth Concert: dedicated to the 20th anniversary of both the Armenian National Military and Armenia's membership to the United Nations. Organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of NY/NJ. With the participation of renowned artists from Armenia and the Philharmonic Symphonic Orchestra of Rhode Island, to take place at 8 p.m.; the Merkin Concert Hall of Kaufman center, 129 West 67th St., New York City. Save the date. Details to follow.

MAY 12 — Shushi hosts a Gala Dinner Dance for an evening of "Celebration," 20th anniversary of Shushi's liberation, Mother's Day. Anniversary of Shushi Dance Ensemble, Kavookjian Hall, 630 Second Ave., New York City. Details to follow.

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COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

Armenian Genocide in Progress

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Why is the Armenian Genocide relevant today, after 97 years? This question is asked often by non-Armenians and sometimes even by Armenians themselves. Therefore, we need a broader definition of that act of ethnic cleansing that befell the Armenian nation in order to understand its relevance today.

First of all, the Genocide is not an act that began and ended in 1915. It had a long history before that date – and it has been continuing since that date – with the single purpose of exterminating the entire Armenian race from the face of the earth.

Nazi Germany invented the concept of “vital space” just before and during World War II. Their goal was to extend and expand Germany at the expense of other nations. But the Turks had already been practicing that philosophy ever since they set foot on the Anatolian plateau by displacing and exterminating the local people, and from there on, building their empire.

The major obstacle in their way was the declining Byzantine Empire, which was destroyed effectively by Fatih Sultan Muhammad in 1453 AD.

The corruption, political myopia and loss of self-respect contributed to the downfall of the Byzantines, perhaps more than the might of the emerging Ottomans.

Armenia and the Armenians became the collateral damage in that apocalyptic collision.

From then on, it was a natural process for the Turks to seek and attain that vital space in their need for settlement and expansion.

The process of genocide began against the Armenians with the imposition of the Ottoman rule on historic Armenia.

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was adopted by the United Nations on December 9, 1948, can be applied retroactively against the Turkish government, which continually violated the principles of that convention.

Article 2 of the UN Convention defines genocide in the following terms:

- killing members of the group;
- causing serious bodily or mental harm to the members of the group;
- deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- imposing measures intended to prevent birth within the group and
- forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

All the above conditions were imposed on the Armenians by the Ottoman rulers, a time which Turkey's present foreign minister considers one when there were ideal and idyllic relations between the rulers and their slave society.

The most cynical condition imposed on the Armenians was section (e) of the article 2, namely “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” This case was a wicked component of the Janissary system, whereby the Ottoman government would seek and kidnap (or “collect,” as the term was) the recruits as part of *devshirmes*, the name given to the young kidnapping victims. After years of rigorous military training, these converts were transformed into the most brutal force used to repress the Armenians and other Christians, the very people who had given birth to them.

The 1915 Genocide was only a modern version of what was being perpetrated against the Armenians for centuries before that date.

But the Genocide was not a single act that took place at a certain date and ended at a certain date. It is a process that has continued since 1915 and continues even to this day. That is why it is important to broaden its definition and its existential impact on the Armenian history.

After Turkey was defeated during World War I, the Ittihadist leaders fled the country to avoid the punishments the military trials were expected to mete out, but the rank and file, the government *apparatchiks* who actually carried out the grisly orders of their leaders, were still in the country and ready to change their skin and enter the service of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, whose policy of the Turkification of Turkey was no different from that of his predecessors. That is why the Kemalist forces were equally ruthless in dumping the Greeks into the sea in Smyrna and deporting the Armenians from Cilicia.

One of the reasons historian Taner Akcam believes Turkey is reluctant to recognize the Genocide is the fear of compensation, since most of the families ruling Turkey's economy now have been sitting on wealth confiscated from the Armenians.

Ataturk's Turkification policy was more modern, effective and thorough, albeit with all the trimmings of racism, which the West chose to ignore.

Ataturk and his successors were no more charitable than their Ittihadist predecessors, as they demonstrated time and again their ruthless policies against the minorities, especially the Armenians, virtually destroying Armenian schools and applying all manner of legal gymnastics to the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923.

And then, another deportation during World War II and its aftermath, concocting a tax rule, called Wealth Tax (*Varlik Vergisi*) which ruined the Armenian, Greek and Jewish communities and murdered many of its business leaders in the labor camps of Ashkala.

This was the visible phase of the continuing Genocide told by Armenians leaving Istanbul, especially after the barbaric attacks of September 6, 1955, in demonstrations sanctioned and organized by the government, as later revelations came to prove.

Incidentally, similar demonstrations were organized by the government in Istanbul to commemorate the “genocide” of Khojali (in Karabagh), with the participation of the Istanbul Mayor Kadir Topbas and the Minister of Interior Idris Naim Sahim. The latter spoke to a bloodthirsty crowd vowing to avenge the blood of Khojali victims.

While these violent acts of terror were being perpetrated against Armenians in Istanbul recently, the inexorable process of genocide was continuing against the surviving Armenians in the interior. Millions of them have been silently converted to Islam or have tried to conceal their identity in any way they could in order to escape arbitrary killing, persecution, property confiscation and abuse for being “gavours.”

The outside world seldom hears about the plight of those left behind.

Recently, an interesting book was published by a young writer whose family had survived in the interiors, in Palu, close to the Syrian border. The book is titled *Grey Wolves and White Doves*. Although it is presented as a work of fiction, every abuse, insult and murder perpetrated against Armenians in that region and described in the book can be corroborated by eyewitness accounts.

The book does not delve into the Genocide era nor the Ashkala period; instead, it gives insights into the 1960s and '70s. The description of a single incident gives the entire tenor of this 400-page docudrama.

The protagonist, Jonah, and his two brothers, are being taken to the passport office in Istanbul to receive exit visas to leave for the Armenian seminary in Jerusalem: “[the passport officer] was clearly intrigued. Armenians from the Mardin District. His tone was one of astonishment mixed with a healthy dose of contempt. ‘I thought we had solved the Armenian question and no *gavours* were left in Anatolia.’”

The reluctance of the officer – who had taken the boys to be Jews – softens upon receiving the proper amount of bribes and he issues the visas with the following comments: “What do I care if the Jewish bastards go to Jerusalem or not? As far as I'm concerned, it would be so much the better for Turkey if they did. We need to get rid of all of you! Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Kurds – all the same despicable vermin!”

Today, the official mentality of the government is no different. The Turkish government today continues to commit cultural genocide against 2,000 Armenian churches and monasteries, showcasing only the Akhtamar and Diyarbakir churches to dupe Europe.

The Genocide not only killed 1.5 million, but also many more unborn millions. This is not an unusual demographic projection, since it has its precedence. Thus, when Poland joined the EU, its president demanded that his country be given voting power in the EU Parliament than its actual population warranted, arguing that Poland's population today would have been 25 million more had it not been for the Nazi extermination. Today the number of Kurds in Turkey has grown to 20-22 million. Had Armenians been left in their historic habitat, they would certainly have matched that number.

Therefore, the guilt of the Genocide extends over the unborn, which would have ranked Armenia among the major powers in the region.

Unfortunately, today the Azeri President Ilham Aliyev speaks with contempt about the dwindling population of Armenia, a direct result of the Turkish-Azeri blockade in their continuing policy of destroying Armenia.

The Genocide has also another dimension, which we consider to be our curse, but we seldom relate to the Turkish plan of assimilating Armenians. During the negotiations leading to the signing of the Lausanne Treaty, Lord Curzon of Britain asked the Turkish representative, Ismet Onunu, whether Turkey would be willing to absorb the surviving Armenian refugees, and Onunu cynically retorts: “There are vast and vacant lands in Canada and Brazil. Why don't you settle them there?”

And Armenians did exactly what Onunu had prescribed for them.

Yes, indeed, Armenians are living in affluent societies, but material wealth does not compensate for the loss of identity. And who said that had Armenians continued to live in their ancestral lands, they would be less affluent than they are today in the West?

The child who cannot utter his mother tongue is a continuing victim of the Genocide, no matter how much opulence is afforded to him.

Unfortunately, world powers are still courting their “trusted ally” and dancing around the word “genocide” while Turkey's guilt is festering and poisoning modern history and civilization.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Turkey's Foreign Minister In Search of 'Soft' Armenians

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey's "man on the run," has added to his extremely busy schedule the new task of traveling around the globe trying to recruit "sensible" Armenians.

Davutoglu has embarked on such a desperate initiative after the failure of all Turkish attempts to divide and conquer the Armenians and weaken their resolve to pursue their just cause. The Turkish foreign minister openly acknowledged that his urgent efforts are prompted by the looming 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide that hangs like a Damoclean Sword over his country.

After the collapse of the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) and Turkey's futile attempts to seek "friendly" Armenians around the world, Ankara gave up on the diaspora altogether and turned its attention to a "softer target" – the government of Armenia.

Initially, Turkey registered some success when the Armenia-Turkey Protocols were signed by both countries, under the guise of opening their mutual border. However, this latest attempt to drive a wedge between "soft" Armenian officials and "hard-line" diasporans also failed, when the much-touted Protocols were not ratified.

Realizing that Turkey had to deal with the diaspora, not just Armenia to resolve Genocide related issues, Davutoglu once again turned his attention to Armenian communities

worldwide. During a March 24, 2010 CNN-Turk interview, he announced that Turkish authorities would initiate a dialog with "sensible" Diaspora Armenians.

To pursue this stratagem, in April 2010 Davutoglu met in Washington with Turkey's ambassadors to the United States and Canada and consul generals in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles and Toronto. He instructed them to contact Armenians who are open to dialog, and to avoid "hard-line groups," according to the Turkish *Today's Zaman* newspaper.

A few weeks later, *Hurriyet* reported that the Foreign Ministry issued a 10-point action plan, instructing Turkish diplomats worldwide to:

- Invite and involve local Armenians in Turkish events;
- Participate in Armenian community activities;

- Contact Armenians who are materially benefiting from making Genocide claims as well as recent immigrants from Turkey and invite to Turkey those who harbor anti-Turkish sentiments;

- Establish good relations with Armenian diplomats and attend their official events;

- Accept speaking opportunities at local community and university events to explain Turkey's position on Armenian genocide claims;

- Establish contacts with local academics to explain to them Turkey's position;

- Develop contacts with diplomats of countries neighboring Turkey and familiarize them with Turkey's position on Armenian Genocide claims;

- Advocate the creation of "a joint commission of historians"; Promote normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations and Emphasize that the peaceful resolution of the Karabagh conflict would benefit Armenian-Turkish relations.

In December 2011, Turkey announced a revised concept of "Diaspora" to include all descendants of "Anatolia," regardless of their religion or sect. Davutoglu instructed all Turkish diplomats to hold "face-to-face" meetings with such individuals in order to discuss their "joint history"

and "the suffering of all Ottoman people during the incidents of the World War I era."

Dissatisfied with the efforts of his diplomats, Davutoglu decided to take matters into his own hands. Last month, he spent several hours in Washington meeting privately with several Armenians and non-Armenians from the Los Angeles area to discuss "Armenian-Turkish reconciliation." The Turkish Foreign Minister also invited the attendees to come to Ankara and bring along other "prominent" Armenians. Since then, Davutoglu has held similar meetings elsewhere.

Meanwhile, another Turkish-initiated group on "Armenian-Turkish reconciliation" will be launched on April 12 in Washington. The host group "HasNa" is set to meet at the offices of Arnold & Porter, a lobbying firm hired by the Turkish government. The attendees will include some Armenians and Turks, US government officials, members of the media, non-governmental organizations, academics and others.

Armenians who choose to get involved in Turkish recruitment schemes could well be seeking fame or fortune, or are well-intentioned, but naive do-gooders. However, regardless of the reasons for their involvement in such questionable practices, they should be mindful of the consequences of their actions:

Dialog for the sake of dialog could do more damage than good to the Armenian Cause. The Turkish government would exploit such efforts to create the false impression that Armenians and Turks are in the process of reconciling, thereby derailing the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by other countries.

Unless a specific positive outcome is agreed upon in advance, there is a good chance that the Armenian participants would end up holding an empty bag.

Only Armenian officials and credible leaders with diplomatic expertise should be negotiating with shrewd and skilled Turkish diplomats. Otherwise, Turkish officials will cleverly cut a deal with those who are bound to be less demanding and more accommodating.

Western Armenian Is Nearing Extinction

By Dr. Arda Jebejian

"We must know the white man language to survive in this world. But we must know our language to survive forever." (Darryl Babe Wilson, a Native American)

The recent well-justified alarm that western Armenian is among the world's thousands of endangered languages (that is, predicted to die in the next 100 years), important though it is, is not enough. What this language, culture and people need is the development of therapeutic undertakings and approaches.

The case of endangered languages is just a short-cut way of referring to endangered cultures and cultural identities, especially in an era where globalization, definitely not a culturally neutral or impartial phenomenon, has rendered reversing language shift an unequal struggle for linguists.

As an Armenian sociolinguist, not only am I committed to pursue the goals of strengthening my own endangered language, culture and identity via objective persuasion and advocacy of positive attitudes to foster intergenerational continuity but also to seek a reasonable compromise with respect to the culturally stronger dominant languages neighboring Armenian diasporic communities. Admittedly, such a combination of sensitivity and of priorities is difficult to achieve; hence, the demanding task of strengthening endangered

languages.

Linguists have identified thousands of the world's languages that are endangered because of a recognizable syndrome that varies in kind and degree, from one endangered language to another. Similarly, the cures must also vary.

The bulk of Armenian diasporic communities were formed after the 1915 Genocide. Since then, the impact of forced dispersal, survival in host countries and the dominant majority languages on the status of their language and the linguistic and attitudinal behavior of their members has been tremendous.

Seven years ago, when I began researching the vitality of western Armenian in Beirut, Lebanon, the findings almost shocked the Armenian community but slowly generated an awareness of the current trends in language maintenance, language shift and transmission of their ethnic, minority language whose alphabet, like the Ten Commandments, was bestowed on Mesrob Mashdots in a divine vision.

What unfolds is deterioration in the status of western Armenian and the oral fluency of its speakers. The generational disparities in attitudes and perceptions demonstrate that along with the significant changes in the way different generations of Armenians grasp their ethno-cultural identity, there are also considerable differences regarding feelings of loyalty to their ethnic language, homeland and heritage.

After 97 years of diasporic existence, some

Armenian communities seem to have developed a defeatist, pessimistic stance towards the preservation of their ethnic language, with a stubborn conviction that

I am French. Why should I speak Armenian?

What good will it do me in France?

I am American. I feel American. The fact that my ancestors were Armenian a 100 years ago has no significance to me.

Why do we always have to make it hard on ourselves? We have to move on with our lives.

Who cares if nobody ever speaks Armenian any more?

We will never go back to Armenia or western Armenia. What is the good of wasting time, pressuring our kids, demanding that they speak Armenian?

I don't speak Armenian but I feel Armenian.

Let's admit it. In today's world, Armenian is a useless language.

Armenian is so difficult. English is much much easier.

English is my mother tongue now. I do everything in English and don't need Armenian.

Forget it. It's a lost case. Have you ever heard how Armenians speak Armenian in Armenia? Let them worry about their language.

I don't want to hear about it. It makes me feel guilty.

Life is already hard. Don't make it any harder.

I wasn't born in Armenia. Why should I speak Armenian?

How is Armenian going to help my children find a job? There is no future in Armenian.

Indeed, there is very little a sociolinguist can do when faced with such attitudes emanating from members of a group whose ethnic language is endangered.

At this moment, many Armenian children are not being taught Armenian, and parents do not realize that soon it will not be there to be revived. As a sociolinguist I must make this as clear as possible, but it may not change many minds.

Rightly, linguists assert that besides being linguistically expressed, behaviors such as the education, the religious beliefs and observances, the self-governmental operations, the literature, the folklore, philosophy of morals and ethics, the medical code of illnesses and diseases, childhood

socialization, establishment of friendship and kinship ties, greetings, jokes, songs, benedictions and maledictions are usually enacted through the specific language with which these activities endured, have been identified and inter-generationally associated. Hence, as efforts and awareness campaigns are directed at slowing down environmental damage, similar efforts should be directed at helping the world's endangered languages and cultures, including western Armenian and culture. Any reduction of language diversity diminishes the adaptational strength of the human species, which constitutes a huge intellectual loss and reduces the most direct glimpses at the creativity of the human mind. Also, it represents an incalculable loss of scientific data, which causes a loss of traditional cultures and identities, stultifies human creativity and leads to totalitarianism.

Joshua Fishman, the prominent linguist, describes the proponents of "one language, one culture as 'reductionists' whose 'realism' reduces human values, emotions, loyalties and philosophies to little more than hard cash and brute forces." Alts'iisi, a Navajo, puts it this way:

"When the words of all people become one, then the world will come to an end. Our language is holy, and when it is gone, the good in life will be gone with it. When the old ones said that the world would end with the disappearance of our language, they meant that the young people could not hear, understand and heed the teachings, words of encouragement, expressions of love, scoldings and corrections that were offered by the parents and elder relatives; nor would they be able to pray. Without prayers, our lives cannot be good, for without words there can be no prayers."

These are far from being exhaustive lists, but hopefully they get across the message that optimally all efforts must be exerted to instill pride in the Armenian language and identity and create a linkage system, whereby young Armenian parents, adolescents and children utilize the Armenian language or relearn it and transmit it intergenerationally.

(Dr. Arda Jebejian received her PhD in linguistics and teaches at universities in Lebanon and Cyprus.)

LETTERS

Titanic Deaths Get More Ink than Genocide Victims

To the Editor:

This April marks the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, in which one and a half thousand souls perished through an act of God. There will be appropriate expressions of remorse over this tragic loss of life in the English-speaking world and beyond. In another April, three years hence, it will be the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in which one and a half million souls perished because

of an act of human depredation. I don't expect the descendants of the perpetrators of this barbaric crime to indulge themselves in any show of remorse, but it would be entirely fitting for the more civilized members of the human race to express a sense of anguish over the cruel and senseless destruction of such a large portion of innocent humanity.

— Berge Tatian Stoneham, Mass.



The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

Celebrating 80 Years & Beyond



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