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California Assembly Panel Votes to Recognize Artsakh

SACRAMENTO – With a 9 to 1 vote and 1 abstention, the California State Assembly Rules Committee, on Monday, May 5, passed Assembly Joint Resolution 32 calling for the United States to recognize the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic as a sovereign state and promoting the right of “self-determination and democratic independence.”

AJR 32, introduced by Assembly Member Mike Gatto (D-Los Angeles), makes California the most populous governmental entity to call for Nagorno-Karabagh’s recognition or to recognize it outright.

“It has been my privilege to work with the leaders of the local Armenian American community and their outstanding representatives on this Resolution and I am proud that it has passed in the Rules Committee and is on its way to the Assembly floor for a full vote,” said Gatto.

Providing testimony were Sevak Khatchadorian, chair of the Armenian Council of America, and Alina Nalbantyan, who hails from the Shahoumian region of Artsakh, and Nora Hovsepian from the Armenian National Committee of America.

Along with Gatto, Assembly Member Katcho Achadjian (R-San Luis Obispo) addressed the Assembly Rules Committee, stressing the importance of the California State legislature to pass AJR 32, and support a people who strive to create a peaceful and democratic nation.

Co-author of the Resolution, Assembly Member Cheryl R. Brown (D-San Bernardino) who visited Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh last September reiterated her support. “I’m supporting this Resolution because I believe people should have an independent nation and should be free to vote however they want to vote,” said Brown. “People in Karabagh are warm, welcoming, happy and have a strong desire for self-determination. I do understand second class treatment and my heart goes out to everyone in this room.”

Correcting the Azeri lobby, Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian (D-Sherman Oaks), stated that Shushi is historically Armenian, and his grandparents were natives of Shushi prior to being forced to relocate due to Azeri aggression.

The full California Assembly was scheduled to vote on the measure on May 8.



NEW YORK — At the Diocesan Assembly held this past weekend in New York, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian was reelected as Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern). A full story will appear in a subsequent issue.



The two archbishops, Hovnan Derderian and Moushegh Mardirossian, consecrated the grounds of the Pasadena Genocide memorial.

Ground Consecrated for Pasadena Memorial

PASADENA, Calif. – More than 700 people attended a ground blessing at the site for the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial Sunday, April 27, during a public ceremony at Memorial Park.

The presentation of colors was conducted by HMEM Azadamard Chapter. Retired US District Court Judge Dickran M. Tevrizian served as master of ceremonies and consecration of the ground was performed by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

see MONUMENT, page 16

White House Says Orphan Rug To Be Displayed in Near Future

WASHINGTON (*Glendale News Press*) – After a joint letter from more than 30 members of Congress, a letter from local Armenian leaders, years of community pressure and a petition drive on a website, the White House has agreed to exhibit in the near future, likely this fall, a rug made by Armenian orphans more than 90 years ago, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) said on Wednesday.

The rug, woven by orphans of the Armenian Genocide in 1920, was presented to President Calvin Coolidge in 1925 as a symbol of gratitude for American aid and generosity for US assistance during the genocide.

“It’s an incredibly important historical artifact literally produced by the hands of the survivors of the genocide,” Schiff said by phone Wednesday, adding that he was pleased by the development. “It’s a tangible piece of evidence that speaks volumes about American contributions at the time.”

Measuring 11 feet, 7 inches by 18 feet, 5 inches, the Armenian orphan rug has more than 4 million hand-tied knots and took the Armenian girls in the Ghazir Orphanage of the Near East Relief Society 10 months to weave. It is set to be displayed in an area accessible to the public, Schiff said.

At the time, Coolidge noted that, “The rug has a place of honor in the White House where it will be a daily symbol of goodwill on earth.”

The rug – which has been in storage at the White House for decades – was supposed to be released in December for exhibition in a Smithsonian event for the launch of Hagop Martin Deranian’s new

ACF Releases Second Edition of Armenian Orphan Rug Book

ARLINGTON, Mass. – On April 29, the Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF) announced the release of the second edition of the *President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug* by Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian.

The result of more than three decades of research and investigation, Deranian’s work traces the history of the rug and the Armenian orphans: their transportation from Urfa to safety to the present day Lebanon by the great Swiss humanitarian and physician Jakob Künzler, known as the “Father of the Armenian orphans.” He details its journey to the United States, presentation to President Calvin Coolidge in the White House,

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book, *President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug*.

However, the rug was not displayed at that time, raising concerns among the Armenian community and some lawmakers.

The rug not only can teach White House visitors about the genocide, but it also can shed light on the American philanthropic work to support survivors, Schiff said.

Schiff, along with 32 other Congressional see RUG, page 16

NEWS IN BRIEF

Akhtamar Church Increases Tourism in Van Province

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – The Holy Cross Armenian Church on Akhtamar Island on Lake Van has greatly contributed to an increase in the number of tourists there, according to a report in *Agos* newspaper. The renovation of the church started on May 20, 2005, and concluded on July 21, 2006. On March 29, 2007, it was officially opened as a cultural museum.

According to the Department of Culture and Tourism of Van, if before 2006 the visitors of the Armenian Church of the Holy Cross Church on the island of Aghtamar constituted a few hundreds, in 2009 their number was 34,000, and in 2013 the number of the visitors reached 71,000.

Spielberg Launches Center for Research on Genocide

LOS ANGELES (*Jewish Journal*) – Filmmaker Steven Spielberg announced earlier this month the establishment of a Center for Advanced Genocide Research at the University of Southern California (USC). The center’s primary goals will be to investigate the conditions leading to genocides and how to intervene in time to prevent such mass violence and slaughter.

Specifically, the center will focus on three aspects of genocides, said Spielberg, who established USC Shoah Foundation 20 years ago, following the release of “Schindler’s List.” He was joined by USC President C.L. Max Nikias for the press conference on campus.

The three announced research areas are resistance to genocide and mass violence; violence, emotion and behavioral change and digital genocide studies.

“The USC Shoah Foundation has made tremendous progress during its first 20 years, but its work is far from finished,” Spielberg said. “The institute has collected and indexed nearly 52,000 testimonies and established educational programs, such as iWitness and Teaching with Testimony that bring people who experienced history into classrooms around the world. “Now comes the next significant chapter, one that establishes the institute as one of the leading academic centers of excellence for the study of the Holocaust and genocides. The potential is there for groundbreaking research.”

The trove of 52,000 testimonies deal primarily with the Holocaust, but also contains eyewitness accounts of the 1994 Rwandan Tutsi genocide and the 1937 Nanjing massacre.

Material on the Armenian and Cambodian genocides will be added to the archives next year.

USC history professor Wolf Gruner will serve as director of the new center.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Tourism Increases by 20 Percent This Year

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – In the first quarter of the year the number of the tourists that arrived in Armenia, compared to the same period of 2013, increased by 20.5 percent, reported the National Statistical Service. According to their figures, between January and March 2014, as many as 154,471 tourists arrived in the country.

In 2013, 924,965 tourists visited Armenia.

Argentine Benefactors to Build Center in NKR

STEPANKERT (Armenpress) – Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh) Prime Minister Ara Harutyunyan received a group of the Armenians from Argentina who arrived in Nagorno-Karabakh accompanied by the representatives of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund. At the meeting on May 3, welcoming the guests, Harutyunyan stressed the importance of projects carried out by the foundation in Artsakh and the participation of the diaspora in its economic development.

The Argentine-Armenian benefactors expressed their willingness to support the projects carried out in Artsakh and expressed to the prime minister their intention to build a community center and to repair the sports school in Karin Tak. He welcomed the initiative and wished them success.

NKR Leader Receives OSCE Envoy, Russian Philanthropists

STEPANAKERT (ArmeniaNow) – According to the Karabagh president's press service, issues related to the current stage of negotiations as part of the Azerbaijani-Karabagh conflict settlement process and its prospects as well as the situation along the contact line between the NKR and Azerbaijan armed forces were discussed during a meeting with the OSCE envoy.

The same day, Sahakyan received a group of Armenian philanthropists from Russia headed by Vladimir Avagyan.

The president expressed his gratitude to the philanthropists for funding a number of projects in the social sphere as well as in infrastructure and healthcare, pointing out their importance for Nagorno-Karabagh. Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Arthur Tovmasyan was present at the meeting.

Golden Apricot Festival To Take Place in July

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Golden Apricot International Film Festival will be held July 13-20 this year. The festival has already received more than 1,500 films from 101 countries.

The start of this year's festival is dedicated to the director Sergei Paradjanov's 90th anniversary. A retrospective of all his films will be held, as well as films dedicated to Paradjanov created in later years.

Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosyan at a press conference on May 6 that the festival is growing every year.

Armenian Soldier Missing, Search Underway

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – A search is under way for missing soldier Meruzhan Harutyunyan, Armenian Defense Ministry spokesman Artsrun Hovhannisyan said on May 6.

Senior lieutenant Meruzhan Harutyunyan went missing in Vayk on May 1. According to some versions, Harutyunyan might have lost his way or drowned in a lake.

The spokesman also said that no evidence has been found yet.

Andranik Papers Find Home in Armenia

YEREVAN – The manuscripts of General Andranik Ozanian, the Armenian national hero who died in 1927, have found their permanent home in Armenia.

The manuscript – 65 pages long – is the only known memoir of General Andranik written by him. The general had sent them in 1921 to Hovhannes Boghossian, editor of the journal *Abaka* in Paris to be published. *Abaka* was then an organ of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (Ramgavar) in France.

In the 1960s, Boghossian handed these over to Hampartsoum Kouyoumjian (Koumrouyan), a former editor of the *Zartok* daily and a former member of the Central Committee of the Ramgavar Party and the Tekeyan Cultural Association in Beirut, so that would be handed over to the relevant authorities in Armenia at an opportune moment. This was also the explicit wish of Hampartsoum Kouyoumjian.

Hampartsoum Kouyoumjian handed these over to his son, Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian, in 1988, three years before his death, with this express wish. He feared for the documents' safety



Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian with the Director of the National History Museum Dr. Anelka Grigoryan where the manuscripts are to be kept

during the civil war in Lebanon when his house was damaged by bombs. The manuscript has survived since 1921 after travelling from the UK to France, to Lebanon, to Greece and finally to England.

"By handing the manuscript to the National History Museum in Yerevan through Culture Minister Hasmig

Boghossian, I am finally fulfilling the wishes of many who wanted these manuscripts to be housed in their rightful place. We are approaching the 150th anniversary of General Antranig's birth and the centennial of the Armenian Genocide; this will be one small contribution to these commemorations," Hratch Kouyoumjian said.

On the Forefront of Environmental Engagement in Armenia with Birthright Alumni

PHILADELPHIA – When it comes to Armenia's current day challenges, many would agree that environmental protection ranks high amongst the priorities. At the forefront of that campaign are three young, dynamic professionals, Armine Sargsyan, Lena Tashjian and Areg Maghakian, all of whom got a thorough introduction to Armenia's needs while serving as Birthright Armenia volunteers. All three were able to envision a role for themselves by engaging in work on the ground to address these needs, and now serve as effective leaders of environmental organizations in Armenia, namely Armenian Environmental Network (AEN), Go Green Armenia and Armenia Tree Project.

AEN is a relatively new organization focusing on connecting Armenians and others in the worldwide conservation community to facilitate environmentally-sustainable development in Armenia. Armine Sargsyan's AEN involvement dates back to 2010 while based in Northern California. She was a Birthright Armenia volunteer in 2011, and when the offer for a Yerevan-based position with AEN was tabled in the finding environmentally valid ways of dealing with solid waste, Sargsyan knew the position was a perfect match. This was an area that deeply interested her, so she moved to Armenia in 2013 to lead the charge as AEN's Armenia office director.

Sargsyan explains the importance of size and power in numbers, "Armenia is a small country, so any environmental dysfunction will affect her entire territory. We need to be aware and vigilant, and we need to connect all those who are already involved in the sector as a force. Pooling worldwide and local resources is critical, and Armenia is small enough whereby the right solutions can be implemented throughout the country. There are proven international models that work well on a small scale, so we need to connect the dots of local government, resources, and technology to arrive at a winning solution in areas of Armenia that currently have no comprehensive waste management solutions."

Areg Maghakian, originally from Southern California, volunteered with Birthright Armenia in 2007. After several months of volunteering, "It was simply a matter of the stars aligning," as he

knew very early on during his volunteer service that he'd be based in Armenia for the long term.

His prior involvement with the Armenia Tree Project (ATP) dates back over ten years, when he was a supporter of the Watertown and Yerevan based non-profit organization that works towards reforestation, sustainable development and environmental education in Armenia. Fast forwarding to 2010, Maghakian was appointed as deputy director and two and a half years later he was promoted to Armenia operations director for ATP. He explains, "We work on both the macro and micro scale, partnering with the smallest remote schools to planting large swaths of the countryside. Deforestation is a major challenge in Armenia, and dates back to when trees served as a substitute for heating fuel during the energy crisis in the early 1990s. Our goal is to assist the Armenian people in using trees to improve their standard of living and protect the global environment."

Currently Maghakian oversees a staff of several dozen employees, running nurseries and education programs in many regions. "The future of Armenia depends on the health of her environment. Our success will largely depend on having local communities understand the value of preservation and thinking green. I'm heartened by many that want to partner with us, and care about their environment. Despite our progress, there is still a long road ahead, with much work to do and a lot of ground to cover."

Maghakian has been in Armenia since 2007 with his wife, Nyree Abrahamian, also a Birthright Armenia alum, and their 18-month-old son, Arame.

Canadian-born Lena Tashjian volunteered with Birthright Armenia at Green Lane NGO in 2011, and extended her initial three-month stay to continue working with their fresh produce market project. She enjoyed listing the non-traditional items farmers were growing and began creating nutritional profiles on them in order to help market them. The nutritional information was received really well, and she was a natural fit to be doing this kind of work. Since becoming vegetarian and then vegan while living in Canada, she was researching all the food she was eating to make sure she was get-

ting all the nutrients she needed. Realizing she had a strong interest in nutrition, Tashjian went to school to become a certified nutritionist.

"During my volunteer work with Birthright, I began to focus on farmer profiles, interviews, taking their pictures, listing what they grow on our item list, and again, that was well received. It encouraged me to continue creating links between the food we eat and the farmers who are producing the goods," she explains. So as the Green Lane market project ended in June 2013, Lena clearly saw its potential and the benefits of having it thrive. She received permission to extend the project, but was told it needed to be separate from Green Lane, alas the impetus for a new entity to be created.

"Carolyn Baghoomian from Boston and I co-founded Go Green Armenia in late July 2013, with the primary goal of supporting Armenian farmers by selling, marketing and delivering their produce to people in Yerevan. We focus on chemical-free agriculture and also support farmers who grow non-traditional items like kale. In addition to focusing on the sale of food items, we also sell other natural products as well, for example, a woman's handmade, herb-based soaps with plants straight from her backyard. When we find interesting items like this that fit our general mandate, we make sure to include them in our item list to spread the word about these interesting projects and help them garner support."

She and her partner also want to have an aspect of the business dedicated to agro-tourism. "Our vision for the future includes focusing more on events, including organizing farmers' markets outside of the city center, monthly vegetable picking events for seasonal fruits or vegetables, and also events where people can come and watch how the natural soaps are made. We think it is wiser to focus on events and introduce people directly to those producing or making the food products or items, all the while keeping a market aspect to our business," explained Tashjian.

Sargsyan, Maghakian and Tashjian are just three of 60 Birthright Armenia alums who live in Armenia currently. To learn more about Birthright Armenia please visit www.birthrightarmenia.org



INTERNATIONAL

Ancient Passageway Named 'Armenian Bridge' in Amsterdam

AMSTERDAM, Holland — An ancient Amsterdam bridge, which was a frequent passageway for Armenian merchants in the 17th century, has been renamed the Armenian Bridge," thanks to the efforts of 60-year-old Nikolai Romashuk.

The Jerusalem-born Romashuk, whose mother is Armenian, immigrated to Holland in 1976 and settled in the northern city of Assen. Since then, he has been an active member of the Dutch-Armenian community. He said that he spent years researching the history of Julfa Armenians, whose merchants traveled the world, at the Dutch National Archives at the University of Amsterdam.

It took several more years to convince the Amsterdam municipality that naming the old bridge after the Armenian merchants was a worthwhile idea.

To help get the green light from city

hall, Romashuk also pointed out that he had discovered the graves of a number of Armenian priests and merchants in the Old Church in the heart of Amsterdam.

One such grave bears the number

444. To further buttress his case of the old Armenian-Dutch relations, he added that Soviet Armenian soldiers, veterans of World War II, are buried in the Dutch city of Leusden.



Views of the Armenian Bridge in Amsterdam

This is not the first time Romashuk

has raised the Armenian profile in his adopted country. Some years ago, Romashuk, the founder and chairman of the Armenian Social and Cultural Foundation, helped bring to Assen a huge khachkar (Stone Cross) from Armenia. Now every year, on April 24, Assen Armenians commemorate, in front of the khachkar, the genocide of the Armenians by Turkey in 1915.

There are 300 to 400 Armenians in the city, mostly from Armenia, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey.

Genocide Commemorated in Argentinian National Congress

BUENOS AIRES (Agencia Prensa Armenia) — A public recognition was held on Tuesday April 29 in the Argentinian National Congress, under National Law 26.199, which has established every April 24 as the "Action Day for Tolerance and Respect between People" in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

The event, organized by the Armenian National Committee (CNA) of South America, was attended by Deputy Cristina Ziebart, Deputy Carlos Raimundi, Senator Ruben Giustiniani and Deputy Secretary for Educational Equity and Quality of the Education Ministry, Gabriel Brenner, along with Director of the National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism Pedro Mouratian, editor and human rights activist Ragip Zarakolu and Armenian Ambassador in Argentina Vahagn Melikian.

Dr. Hugo Kuyumdjian, representing the CNA, opened the event saying that Law 26.199 "is the result of successive

parliamentary statements and resolutions at national and provincial level, along with the public recognition in 1987 of President Raul Alfonsin."

However, he warned that "all these advances that we assume that are consolidated, encounter daily attempts of Turkish lobby, and more recently the presence of Azerbaijani lobby, two countries that are operating together," to "keep alive the idea of ethnic cleansing towards the Armenians, considering not only the struggle for recognition of the Armenian genocide, but the existence of Armenia an obstacle to their interests," something that "translates into everyday attempts to influence in academics, educational, political and media spheres, presenting a false version of history."

Then, he referred to the statement of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, issued the day before the commemoration of the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, explaining that "although some media

that raised the news described it as historic, the Turkish government has always denied that the massacres occurred and often blamed the Armenians themselves to be responsible for their own genocide."

"The proposal to establish a joint committee composed of Turkish and Armenian historians to study what happened, is an idea used for years by Turkey to deny genocide, attempting to present two opposing views on the subject, something that we know from Argentina as the 'theory of the two demons,' where there are two opposing sides and not a victim and a victimizer," added Kuyumdjian, referring to the last military dictatorship of Argentina.

Raimundi said that in international relations you "must look out for different interests," but "there are some key points that can not be subjected to pressure or any kind of consideration." Referring to Law 26.199, he highlighted the example and the plurality of the parties that approved it and said: "when a historical event that affected the human condition is at stake, there is no possible negotiation," in relation to Turkish pressures.

Giustiniani recalled and repudiated the 1915-1923 events, mentioning that "each genocide anniversary should be an occasion to think about how much progress has been made and what still remains to memory and justice."

"The memory of the people and their historical consciousness are the roots for a future of peace," he added.

Brenner stressed the importance of education as "construction of otherness" and that "we live in times marked by the figure of the other as a threat, and that is also the prelude to the negation of the other". Similarly, he noted that the processes of silence and denial are another form of violence.

Finally, Ziebart spoke about the "commitment to remember what happened in the past," to "learn from the experiences and not repeat past mistakes."

"This is not only to commemorate the genocide, we must also make a commitment to continuously review the indicators of all forms of intolerance," she said.



Catholicos of All Armenians with then Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, now Pope Francis

Catholicos Travels to Rome To Meet with Pope

ECHMIADZIN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, left for the Vatican on May 7, where he is scheduled to have a meeting with Pope Francis.

On May 9 Karekin II is scheduled to leave for the United States to meet with benefactors of the Mother See to discuss different programs implemented by Holy Echmiadzin.

International News

Large Gathering Remembers Genocide

ISTANBUL (Hurriyet) — A large crowd gathered on Istanbul's central Istiklal Avenue on April 24 to commemorate the 1915 killings of Armenians, which Turkey refuses to recognize as "genocide."

Nearly 1,000 people, including journalists, writers and activists, lit candles and held pictures of those who lost their lives in an event that was staged for the first time in Istanbul in 2010.

Rakel Dink, the wife of the murdered Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, and the parents of Sevag Sahin Balikçi, a young Armenian killed while performing his military duty on April 24, 2011, also attended this year's commemoration.

The names of prominent Armenian public figures and community leaders who perished in 1915 were also read out during the event.

Human Rights Group Describes Erdogan Message as Denial

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) — The Istanbul branch of the Human Rights Office described the condolence message of the Prime Minister Erdogan addressed to the Armenians on April 23, as a denial of the Genocide.

Lawyer and human rights activist Eren Keskin at an organized press conference here said, "What happened to the Armenians in 1915 in the Ottoman Empire was a genocide."

"Although this time the language has changed, the text is still a text of denial," said Keskin.

Tehran Armenians Commemorate Genocide

TEHRAN (Panorama.am) — A morning requiem service was held on April 24 here for the souls of the Armenian Genocide victims at St. Sargis Church. Afterwards, the participants of the liturgy marched to the Turkish embassy.

Karen Khanlaryan, an Iranian member of parliament who is of Armenian origin, touched upon the statement of the Turkish Prime Minister. He said, "The statement of Erdogan can be considered as a 'positive' change, however, that statement does not satisfy the demands of the Armenian nation."

The rally was attended by Archbishop Sebah Sargsian, the leader of Armenian Prelacy of Tehran, who also spoke.

Italian Translation of Book of Whispers Presented at the Vatican

ROME (Armenpress) — The Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to the Holy See organized the presentation of the Italian translation of The Book of Whispers by the Romanian-Armenian writer, Sen. Varuzhan Vosganian at the Vatican's Centro Russia Ecumenica cultural center on April 28.

In his speech the Ambassador of Armenia to the Holy See Mikayel Minasian underscored the significance to voice around the whole world the awful events that the future generation of the Genocide survivors saw.

The Book of Whispers is about the Armenian Genocide and the other horrors of the 20th century. It was published in 2009 in Bucharest and won several awards and rave reviews. Just three months after the publication of the novel, the Spanish Pre-Textos publishing house acquired the right to publish it in Spanish.

The Spanish version was published in the early 2011, by Joaquín Garrigós' translation and in August of the same year, it was released in Argentina by the presence of the author and translator.

The Turkish Embassy to Romania sent a note of complaint to the Romanian authorities, when a meeting dedicated to the book and its author was organized in one of the country's museums.

Community News

Rhode Island Commemorates Genocide, Celebrates Culture

PROVIDENCE – On Sunday, April 27, under dark clouds and the threat of rain, the Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Committee of Rhode Island commemorated the 99th anniversary of the 1915 Armenian Genocide at the Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Monument at the entrance to North Burial Ground. The program opened with the presentation of the flags by the Homenetmen Scouts and with placing of wreaths by the ARS "Arax" Chapter, ARF, AYP, Homentmen, ACYOA and the Daughters of Vartan in front of the monument.

Archpriest Rev. Gomidas Baghsarian from Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church was ill and was not present this year. Rev. Shnorik Souin, Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, Rev. Dr. Ara Heghinian and Rev. Hagop Manjikian of the Armenian Evangelical Church performed a requiem service in memory of the 1.5 million martyrs. The combined choirs from the Armenian churches sang hymns. Elected officials present were state Rep. Katherine Kazarian, Secretary of State Ralph Mollis, Attorney General Peter Kilmartin, General Treasurer Gina Raimondo and Warwick Mayor Scott Avedisian.

Rep. David Cicilline addressed the audience and remarked about his visit to Armenia from which he had just returned. While in Armenia, his congressional group had met with Catholicos Karekin II and he was present at the Tsitsernakabert Genocide Memorial on April 24. Former lawmaker and supporter of Armenian causes, Aram Garabedian, spoke and made clear his wishes for a large gathering in Washington next April. Nearly 400 Armenians were present to pay homage to martyrs and survivors.

Pauline Getzoyan and Esther Kalajian, who represent the Genocide Education Project, Rhode Island Branch, announced the 2014 Genocide Educator of the Year. She is Lisa DerManouelian, a teacher at St. Peter's School in Warwick. This award includes a \$500 stipend, made possible through the donations of the Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Committee of Rhode Island and the Armenian National Committee of Rhode Island.

This year the Martyrs' Committee sponsored a statewide essay contest on the legacy of the perpetration and denial of the Armenian Genocide. First-place winner was Lori Simonian an eighth-grade student at North Attleborough Middle School, winning a cash prize of \$200. The second-place winner was Alexander Azar, a 10th grade student at Providence Country Day School, winning \$100.

A rendition of *Groong* was played on the duk by David Gevorkian.

The guest speaker this year was Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian of Middlesex County, Massachusetts. He has served as a representative in the Massachusetts State Legislature and was a lead sponsor of the annual Armenian Genocide commemoration at the State House. He was actively involved with getting approval for the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston and has received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and the Mkhitar Gosh Medal.

Koutoujian spoke of his Armenian heritage and told the story of his grandparents who suffered through the Genocide and how they finally came to America and raised their family. He spoke of the importance of keeping our Armenian language and culture, and at the same time getting a good education and encouraging young people to think about public service. He was a dynamic speaker and received a standing ovation at the close of his remarks.

The Honor Guards included the Armenian Masonic Degree Team, the Knights of Vartan and the Homenetmen Scouts.

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JoJo White

Celtics Legend JoJo White Offers Inspiring Message

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – On Sunday, April 27, through the sponsorship of the ACYOA Seniors and Parish Council of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, parishioners enjoyed an intimate luncheon with retired Boston Celtics two-time NBA champion, JoJo White. With his engaging, honest and gentle nature, White captured the hearts of those in attendance, sharing stories from his days as a professional ball player, chronicled in his biography, *Make It Count: The Life and Times of Basketball Great JoJo White*.

Also in attendance was author of *Make It Count*, Mark C. Bodanza, who together with White, shared poignant, inspiring and captivating stories about White's childhood, family life, and especially, his exciting NBA days during a time of great racial tension in America.

That afternoon, fans of all ages witnessed White's steadfast Christian faith and marveled at his unwavering example of living out his faith in the secular world of professional sports. White's message was especially inspiring to the many youth and young adults in attendance, reminding them that their greatness comes from God, that there is no "I" in TEAM, and that life is about "passing it on." Whether you had watched White play at The Garden back in the 1970s, or had just met him for the first time, all those present walked away as lifelong fans of White, a man of great Christian faith, whose impact will not soon be forgotten in the Holy Trinity community.

"Everything I am I got from God. Everything I know I learned from someone else. That's why I pass it on. We all have to pass it on," he said.

White was an All-Star for seven straight years from 1971 through 1977, finishing in the top 10 in the league in assists from 1973-77. In 1974 and 1976, White helped lead the Celtics to the NBA championship and was named the most valuable player of the 1976 NBA Finals. White continues to be involved in basketball and is currently the Boston Celtics' director of special projects and community relations.



JoJo White with some of the young attendees

Handling Obstacles with Grace, Ani Ayanyan Leads By Example

By Tom Vartabedian

CRANSTON, R.I. – Ani Ayanyan, 10, blew out the candles on her birthday cake on March 7, but not before making a wish.

Forget the American Girl doll or a new bike. A trip to Disney World would be nice but not a priority. Neither is the dream of becoming an actress or a star athlete.

All Ani wanted for her birthday was the gift of life.

After battling cancer the past year, which led to the removal of a grapefruit-sized tumor in her brain, the ordeal has left her weakened, but not discouraged. Six weeks of radiation and chemotherapy produced the best news ever.

She is now tumor free, making her birthday wish a reality.

"What a great way to celebrate," said her mom, Deanna. "Not one complaint and always with a smile on her face that goes with the flow. A follow-up visit to MGH [Massachusetts General Hospital] showed wonderful results. Her blood work looked great. Ani continues to amaze us all. By her last treatment in July, we're optimistic that she will be on her way to becoming fully cured."

The family gathered around her more as a celebration than a birthday bash. That was one party. Two others followed at other venues, thrown by a restaurant owner who endeared herself to the girl, and cousins embracing a sports theme.

A Boston Bruins jersey cake with the number "10" was perfect.

Over the past several weeks, she has returned to school and conquering the Motocross world on her dirt bike. She even tried out for a local hockey league and made the team.

She was paired up with a runner in the Boston Marathon in its Patient-Partner program at MGH. She took part in a dinner the day before.

On the day of the marathon, she and her mother went to the home of a doctor living at Mile 20 along the route to cheer on the runners.

Kids around the playground where she lives call her "Sporty Spice" because she is so athletic. She plays ice hockey, soccer, basketball, baseball and tennis, and in addition bowls and swims. She was about to join the flag football team when the brain tumor was discovered.

"Through the combined efforts of the MGH hospital staff, our family and friends, community, church, school, even strangers, it has made an unbearable part of our lives somewhat tolerable," said her mother. "The positive energy that was expressed and the many prayers, all worked their blessing."

It was a vigilant fight that involved 31 treatments over the six weeks, brightened by visits from Bruins and Celtics players. People from Rhode Island to Boston brought food and gifts during Christmas week.

"It was painful watching my daughter go through all that," revealed Deanna.

see ANI, page 6



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Genocide Featured at the 44th Annual Scholars' Conference

LOS ANGELES — On the eve of the Armenian Genocide Centennial, the 44th Annual Scholars' Conference (ASC) on the Holocaust and the Churches featured the first genocide of the 20th century, adopting the theme, Remembering for the Future: Armenia, Auschwitz and Beyond. Rev. Dr. Henry Knight (Professor, Keene State University), President of the Annual Scholars' Conference commented, "Our theme for this year's ASC invited us to examine the Genocide of the Armenian people while continuing to sustain our four decades of examining questions and issues raised by the Holocaust. By having more than an occasional

By Doris Melkonian and Arda Melkonian

implications of these tragedies, the impact on subsequent generations, and the necessity of genocide and holocaust education and prevention.

Dr. Marcia Sachs Littell (professor, Stockton College), vice president of the Annual Scholars' Conference, and wife of the late Rev. Dr. Franklin Littell (co-founder of the conference), emphasized the historical significance of the Armenian Genocide in relation to the

professor, American Jewish University) provided unique perspectives to the question posed. Dr. Pawlikowski explained that while a new sensitivity to and awareness of many issues within the Christian community has developed, there has yet to be a movement from awareness to genocide prevention. Hovannisian shared that increased knowledge and awareness has not led to prevention since governments have not found it in their self-perceived national interest to implement punishment for genocide. Knight added that the world has become complex and the tools for detecting signals of genocide have also become complex. He underscored the need to spot genocide signposts early in order to effectively prevent killings. Berenbaum explained that governmental inaction to prevent genocide is not related to matters of conscience but to a lack of political will.

Several papers, presented by Armenian and non-Armenian scholars, focused on the Armenian Genocide, addressing topics such as religion, literature, trauma, altruism, denial, reconciliation and risk analysis. Armenian scholars from Armenia, Germany, Italy, and various US universities and centers participated in the conference: Ishkhan Chiftjian (Leipzig University & Hamburg University), Richard Dekmejian (professor, USC), Khachatur Gasparyan (Professor, Yerevan State Medical University), Sona Haroutyunian (professor, Ca' Foscari University of Venice), Marc Mamigonian (academic affairs director, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research), Arda Melkonian (Graduate Student, UCLA), Doris Melkonian (Graduate Student, UCLA), Garabet Moumdjian (UCLA), Rubina Perroomian (UCLA), and Vahram Shemmassian (professor, CSUN).

The religious dimension of the Armenian Genocide was addressed by Ishkhan Chiftjian, Arda Melkonian and Doris Melkonian. Chiftjian's paper, "A Theological Approach to the Armenian Genocide," asserted that survivors experienced faith as one of the reasons and the instruments of the crime. He discussed several examples of religious repression of Armenians; plundering and desecration of churches, monasteries and holy objects; and brutal attacks on clergymen. As victims experienced the Genocide, their faith was challenged, leading them to formulate their own responses to the question of theodicy. Many invoked the suffering of Christ on the cross, convinced that

Some lost their faith entirely, rejecting a God who chose to forsake them. While for others, their genocidal experiences drew them closer to God, reinforcing their belief in Him.

On another panel, Arda Melkonian presented "Armenian Evangelical Clergy Responses to the Genocide." She explained that the Genocide has radically altered Armenian Christianity, changing Armenians' understanding of God and their faith in Him. However, Armenian theologians have failed to acknowledge the damage caused by this tragic event and have yet to grapple with the profound religious impact it has had on the faith of the Armenian community. Her paper presented pastoral responses to this tragedy, and underscored the need to develop an Armenian theology that can make sense of the suffering and death of innocent Armenian victims. She explained that Armenian clergy must find a way to respond to those who are alienated from God and are asking, "How is it possible to believe in God after the Genocide?" They must speak about God to those who are struggling to understand His absence during the Genocide.

Presentations by Shemmassian and Haroutyunian examined literature about the Armenian Genocide. Shemmassian presented a paper, "The Musa Dagh Resistance to the Armenian Genocide, Franz Werfel's novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, and Their Impact on the Present" showcasing the heroic resistance of Armenians living on Musa Dagh (Mountain of Moses), and addressing the issue of international press coverage and world readership reaction to the resistance. Shemmassian spoke about the impact of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* on the world, and Turkish reaction to the MGM movie project. He posed the question: "What is the relevance of Musa Dagh today in our collective memory on the 80th anniversary of the novel's publication (1933-2013)?"

Sona Haroutyunian's paper, "Translation and Representation of the Armenian Genocide in Literature and Film," analyzed the limitations of each medium (literature, translation, cinema) and the effect of each on reader and audience experiences. Focusing on renowned Italian-Armenian novelist, Antonia Arslan's Genocide narrative, *Skylark Farm*, she discussed the power of translation as a means of cultural, historical and linguistic interaction.

Perroomian, in her paper, "The Symbiotic Relationship between Turks and Armenians: A 100-year-old Obstacle against Healing and Reconciliation," explained that the relationship between Turks and Armenians has been shaped by governmental policies, societal behaviors



Dr. Richard Hovannisian, center, with Dr. Stephen Smith (Executive Director of the USC Shoah Foundation) and Dr. Michael Berenbaum

session devoted to their distinctive traumas, each of the communities represented at this year's gathering grew in their grasp of the issues uniquely at stake in their respective histories."

The historic event, hosted by the American Jewish University, Los Angeles, on March 8-11, brought together scholars of the Armenian Genocide and Jewish Holocaust in an interdisciplinary, international, interfaith and intergenerational conference. It provided a unique forum for scholars to highlight the events of the Genocide and Holocaust, and to discuss the

Holocaust. "The Armenian Genocide, the first Genocide of the 20th century, sent a message to Adolf Hitler, that he could do anything he wanted and the world would not protest."

The opening plenary session, "A Century of Genocide: What Have We Learned?" allowed for a conversation among clergy and scholars from diverse backgrounds. The panelists, representing different denominations and ethnic groups, Rev. Dr. John Pawlikowski (professor, Catholic Theological Union), Dr. Richard Hovannisian (Professor Emeritus, UCLA), Rev. Dr. Henry Knight, and Rabbi Dr. Michael Berenbaum (pro-



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Henry B. Morgenthau IV with some of the panelists

they suffer with Him and for Him. Their suffering does not call into question the nature of God, but instead leads them on a search for a God who has been absent during the Genocide.

Doris Melkonian, in her presentation, "Crisis Within: Faith and the Armenian Genocide" used survivor testimonies from the UCLA Armenian Oral History Collection to examine responses of Genocide survivors as they attempted to reconcile the catastrophic occurrence with their faith and belief in God. This inward reflection, often involving a re-examination of their faith in God, has resulted in various types of religious responses. For some survivors, this catastrophe led them to question the existence of a loving, omnipotent God.

and stereotyping of each other, with Turks viewing Armenians as gavers, unbelievers, and "rejects of the sword," with Armenians viewing Turks as evildoers, perpetrators and deniers of the Armenian Genocide. She concluded that as long as this grim symbiosis between Turks and Armenians exists, artificial interventions and joint events will be ineffective in altering the attitudes of the masses. She added, "Healing and reconciliation, if ever possible after an inflicted catastrophe of that magnitude, are plausible only if Turks face their own history, confront and acknowledge the past."

In "Academic Denial of the Armenian Genocide in American Scholarship: Denialism see CONFERENCE, page 7



COMMUNITY NEWS

Coalition of Armenian Women's Organizations Formed in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES – On the initiative of AGBU Hye Geen, 13 women organizations were invited to partner and work together to commemorate the Centennial Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide as well as to celebrate the triumph of the Armenians who have been struggling for survival since the Vartanants War of 451 AD.

It was truly an exceptionally historical day when the delegates of each organization sat around the table and faced each other. Immediately a common bond was created in memory of all those who perished at the hands of the Turkish murderers – a proud day, March 24, when the women set to work together to honor their ancestors. Armenian women have always been the caretakers of their heritage by selectively prolonging and enriching the best in all of us.

The following Committee delegates were present:

Armenian Democratic Liberals, Armenian Educational Benevolent Union, Arpa Foundation for Film, Music & Art, AGBU/ Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Center Ladies, Armenian International Women's Association, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Relief Society, Armenian Society of Los Angeles, Catholic Church Ladies, Organization of Istanbul Armenians, Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Ladies and AGBU Hye Geen.

The ladies of St. Gregory Armenian Catholic Church in Glendale host the monthly meetings.

The first event of the coalition is scheduled in January 2015.

– Sona Yacoubian

Handling Obstacles with Grace, Ani Ayanyan Leads By Example

ANI, from page 4

"Imagine what it must have been like for her. She persevered through it."

Deanna lost her mom to a rare form of stomach cancer nine years ago. The side effects from treatment continue to remain vivid in her mind, especially now that the disease has tormented her own daughter.

"To see an innocent girl so full of energy going through such trauma makes you wonder," she said. "Both my children have been very positive through this."

Deanna has a younger son, Hagop, who was being cared for by friends while she remained by her daughter's side throughout the duration of the treatment.

On the last day of her proton treatment, applause rang out as tears of joy were being shed throughout the room. Ani was given a bell to ring three times, along with balloons, gifts, even sparkling cider or "kids' champagne" as she calls it. The bell tolling remains a symbol of victory.

"The staff was amazed at how she appeared daily with a smile on her face and joked with them, talking about the latest sports news with such a nonchalant demeanor," said Deanna. "She even mentored a 7-year-old boy who was having a hard time. They soon became friends and eventually helped to mentor another child."

A cancer benefit called Ani's Angels took

place at PJ's Pub in Johnston. The family is closely associated with St. Vartanantz Church. The Rhode Island Armenian community stood behind the family every step of the way.



Ani Ayanyan celebrates her 10th birthday with her favorite sports motif.

"I believe my Mom has been her guardian angel and will continue looking down from heaven and always keep her safe," Deanna said. "With love, positivity and the power of prayer, all things are possible, including a cure for cancer. When I see people complain about the petty things in life, I give them my daughter's battle as an example. I tell them not to sweat the small stuff."

Rhode Island Commemorates Genocide, Celebrates Culture

PROVIDENCE, from page 4

The Armenian Martyrs' Committee also sponsored its 17th Annual Armenian Youth Day on April 22, at Egavian Cultural Center during school vacation week. The day was filled with information from the Genocide Education committee, power point presentations about trips to Armenia and Javakhk, cooking and crafts class-

es, a hands-on demonstration of drumming and Armenian drumming and finally an Armenian dance class. Lunch was also provided. Thanks go to the Ararat Association for their donation in help funding this program.

– Joyce Yeremian,

Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Committee of RI



Standing from left, Terrance Martiesian, Kenneth Kalajian, guest speaker Sheriff Peter Koutoujian; in front Alexander Azar, second place, essay winner, Joyce Yeremian, Mayor Vincent Cianci, Lori Simonian, 1st place essay winner, and Steven Zarogian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

St. John's Holds 19th Lenten Seminar

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. – This year three speakers were featured in a multi-media presentation which took place at St. John Armenian Church on Saturday, March 29. Dr. Vigen Guroian, Rev. Garabed Kochakian and Deacon Rubik Mailian each spoke on their area of expertise. Kochakian, the pastor of St. John's, welcomed the guests speaker and participants by saying that everything in life has its own rhythm and so does the Resurrection story of Christ.

The retreat focused on our Lord's death, his descent into Hades and how we as faithful celebrate this feast of feasts in word, art and music.

Dr. Vigen Guroian, a professor of religious studies in Orthodox Christianity at the University of Virginia, began by drawing attention to a most significant time frame after Christ's crucifixion with his entering Hell and destroying death on Saturday, giving the message of mankind's bodily resurrection when He will come again. He descended into Hades emerging triumphant, rescuing Adam and Eve restoring paradise lost by sin and disobedience.

Guroian showed several Armenian miniatures to illustrate the connection of the baptism of Christ with His descent into Hades and then the Resurrection in a rhythmical pattern. He did this by telling a compelling story of despair, disbelief, hope and faith from his most recent publication *The Melody of Faith: Theology in an Orthodox Key*. It was a personal experience, his pastoring a father who had just lost his son in the devastating 1988 earthquake in Armenia. Biblical references were presented to substantiate orthodox theology's teachings about bodily resurrection and the immortality of the soul.

Following his presentation, Kochakian took the same message of Christian doctrine and dogma into the direction of art. A specialist in Armenian Church art and theology in a unique rhythm, he began his presentation speaking about the images of Resurrection story in the Armenian Christian tradition, showing several examples. He spoke of Sheol, Hades and the Harrowing (breaking up) Hell and this image as a very old one dating from the third century. He then focused on explaining in detail the image of Christ's descent into Hades often found in Armenian iconography. He compared this prototype of the resurrection story in form, color and

various mediums with those of western interpretation that we less faithful to the resurrection



Left to right, Dr. Vigen Guroian, Professor of Religious Studies in Orthodox Christianity, University of Virginia; Rev. Garabed Kochakian; Deacon Rubik Mailian, Director of Sacred Music, St. John Armenian Church

story with inclusions of graphic components that went beyond what the Holy Scriptures described in the Gospel. Every inclusion in this traditional icon of faith was explained with symbolic and scriptural reference.

Bible discussion followed with participants discussing two of the following passages read in our liturgical commemorations of funerals, and the Easter Sunday celebrations.

To conclude the day's gathering, St. John's Choir Master, Deacon Rubik Mailian, spoke about the music of the Resurrection and its rhythmical application in worship. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in vocal performance and choral conducting and is the current chairman of the Sacred Music Council at the Eastern Diocese. He explained how rhythm, the particular succession of sounds and creating tempo, is likened to the rhythm of a metronome. He said how early musicians used the human heartbeat as a medium or base noting how the Rhythm of the Resurrection is the heart beat – of eternal life and the rhythm of life. He played several Armenian hymns dedicated to the story of the Resurrection, and a favorite one called *Ov Bardeesban* (O, Gardener). He pointed out how scriptures served as the base for all the lyrics of festal hymns, engaging the participants, teaching them to sing the Easter Introit *Krisdos Haryav ee Merelotz*, yet another dimension of the Rhythm of the Easter story as it is experienced by all Christians.

A concluding panel discussion with participants ensued with various questions regarding each of the participant's presentations.

– Charlene Apigian

Armenian Genocide Featured at the 44th Annual Scholars' Conference

CONFERENCE, from page 5
as *Manufactured Controversy* Mamigonian explained, "Although it is well known that denial of the Armenian Genocide began concurrently with the genocide itself, and for decades Turkey and those who support it have ignored, minimized, or denied the Armenian Genocide, the growing body of critical scholarship and documentation of the Armenian Genocide has rendered traditional strategies of silencing and denial increasingly untenable." He argued that supporters of the "Turkish position" seek to construct denialism as a legitimate intellectual debate. After presenting several examples of denialist rhetoric (e.g., the link between smoking and cancer, between carbon emissions and climate change, or the evolution vs. intelligent design "contro-

versy"), and specific cases of "academic denial," emanating from American universities, he discussed the fundamental challenges of denialism and the quest for intellectual legitimacy.

Dekmejian, in "Utility of Pre-Genocidal Risk Assessment: From the Armenian Genocide and Jewish Holocaust to the Present," discussed risk assessment of pre-genocidal situations, and the foresight of political thinkers and activists who attempted to prevent the Armenian Genocide and Holocaust. He presented a critical analysis of modern-day Early Warning Systems, explaining their ineffectiveness to prevent genocide in up to 15 Middle Eastern, African and Asian countries.

In the final session of the conference, Moumdjian presented "Ottoman Official Resistance to the Armenian Genocide in the

Southern Theater of War." Moumdjian discussed examples of Ottoman officials who refused to obey orders from Constantinople to exterminate Armenians. The altruism demonstrated by officials who defied Talaat Pasha's orders despite the potential risk to their careers, should be further studied. Moumdjian analyzed the political, social, and military reasons motivating Jemal Pasha and others to rescue Armenian deportees. He suggested that Jemal's motivation may have stemmed from his ambitions of creating and ruling an Arab state, populated by Armenian survivors who would form its new middle class.

A special guest, Henry B. Morgenthau IV, great-grandson of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, addressed the gathering as a luncheon keynote speaker. He shared with the attendees his great-grandfather's legacy as ambassador to Turkey during the Armenian Genocide.

The plenary session on "Survival and Self-Actualization – Managing Memory, Identity and Social Conditions after Genocide has Occurred," featured Khachatur Gasparyan, who spoke about "Psychotraumatic Elements of Armenian Identity: One Hundred Years of Surviving." During another plenary session, Rabbi Dr. Richard Rubenstein (former president, University of Bridgeport), spoke about "The Armenian Genocide as Holy War," and David Patterson (professor, University of Texas at Dallas) presented "From Hitler to Jihadist Jew Hatred: Influences and Parallels."

The public lecture, "Armenia, Auschwitz and Beyond" featured Dr. Richard Hovannisian, Dr. Stephen Smith (executive director of the USC Shoah Foundation), and Dr. Michael Berenbaum, who provided suggestions for future action. Berenbaum urged the community to transform the memory of tragedy into a warning system to prevent future genocides. Hovannisian challenged the Armenian community to "find ways and means to universalize their experience and make it part of world history as the Jews have done." Lastly, Smith alerted the audience to the dangers of obfuscation, stressing that the appropriate response must be to inform it. The evening concluded with the presentation of the Eternal Flame Award to Smith in recognition of his efforts to remember the victims of the Holocaust and to build a better future for all humanity.

Hovannisian remarked, "This conference reinforced my view that the comparative study of genocide is the most useful and effective way of confronting the problem. One can be knowledgeable about various cases of genocide, their antecedents, processes, and aftermath without losing sight of the specific factors at play in each individual case...The conference demonstrated that there is much need for such an approach."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Sunday School Graduates Four on April 6

Two Graduate with Perfect Attendance Awards

By Seta A. Buchter

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Sunday, April 6, was a day of joyous celebration and tremendous pride in the life of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. On this day, four Grade 12 students, having successfully completed the required course of Christian Education as set forth by the Department of Youth and Education at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), graduated from the Sunday School in a ceremony in church at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

This year's graduates were Gregory Dorian, son of David and Liza Dorian of Watertown; Alexander Colvin Ensign, son of Mark and Jennifer Davagian Ensign of Sudbury; Ani

awarded to Gregory Dorian and Haig Torosian.

Each graduate received his/her Sunday School diploma from Kouzouian and a gift of the book, *Armenia: A Journey through History*, by Arra Avakian. Each graduate then shared with the congregation "What Sunday School and/or Church Means to Me."

For Gregory Dorian, "The Sunday School and ACYOA have done so much for me throughout the years and have brought me closer to my Christian faith." Church has taught Alexander Ensign "a lot about not only life, but about who I am as a person and who I aspire to be." For Ani Soultanian, who served as a kindergarten assistant teacher for her 12th grade service project this year, "it has been a truly rewarding experience." Haig Torosian said he felt that "if my parents never pushed me to keep coming to church at a young age, especially with my mother having been my pre-school teacher, I can't know if I would be here today."

Ensign then presented this year's class gift to Kouzouian, which was eight copies of the Holy Bible, Armenian Church edition, for the pews in the church sanctuary. Dorian offered the Bible reading of the day from the Book of Proverbs, chapter 1, verses 1-5 ". . . to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity . . ." while Torosian read the Gospel reading from John, chapter 20, verses 19-23.

Two attendance awards were then presented and those present bore witness to history being made within our Diocese. Kouzouian spoke about Grace Emily Torosian, who was an active member of the Holy Trinity Church and who passed away in August 2013, at the age of 50, after a lengthy illness. She was a woman of deep-abiding faith, hope and love and, along with her husband, Kaspar, raised their three sons. They devoted themselves to their sons' Christian upbringing.

When Haig Torosian started Sunday School at the age of 3, she began assisting in the pre-school class of the Sunday School and did so for many years until illness made it difficult for her to continue. Kouzouian then announced that the Diocese of



"Grace Emily Torosian Sunday School Perfect Attendance Award" recipients, from left to right, Haig Torosian and Gregory Dorian, with Fr. Vasken and Seta Buchter

Soultanian, daughter of Dean Soultanian and Arlene Kasarjian of Westwood; and Haig Zakary Torosian, son of Kaspar Torosian of Belmont and the late Grace Emily Torosian.

Serving as ushers and participating in the Graduation Ceremony were Grade 11 students Andrew and Mark Gregory, Michelle Sahagian, Olivia Thayer and Emily Zeytoonjian.

The Graduation Ceremony, which was presided over by Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, began with opening remarks by Seta A. Buchter, Sunday School Superintendent. She stated, "We have watched our graduates, over the years, grow and develop into the wonderful young adults they are today. For each of them, their years attending Sunday School has been a journey in discovering who they are as Armenian Christians. During this journey, it has been extremely gratifying to witness our graduates' strengthening of their faith, their greater appreciation and understanding of their religion, culture and heritage, and their growing dedication and commitment to the Armenian Church, especially Holy Trinity Armenian Church."

All of them were ordained as acolytes in April 2007 by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern), and three continue to serve on the altar. They have assisted at Trinity Kids' Place (the church's summer program for 3-9 year olds), attended St. Vartan Camp, and are involved in the ACYOA Juniors where they have served in leadership positions.

Buchter also congratulated the graduates' parents and families thanking them for their commitment, encouragement and support throughout the years.

The Bagdasar and Elmas Garabedian Award, which recognizes two graduating students of the Holy Trinity Sunday School who have maintained an exemplary record throughout their years as a student of the Sunday School, was



Holy Trinity Sunday School Graduates with Fr. Vasken and Seta Buchter

the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) has established an Award in Grace Torosian's memory – the Grace Emily Torosian Sunday School Perfect Attendance Award – and presented the first Award to Haig Torosian for graduating with 15 years of consecutive perfect attendance. He follows his two older brothers who graduated with the same distinction, Gregory in May 2008 with 12 years of consecutive perfect attendance, and Mark, in May 2010, with 14 years of consecutive perfect attendance. Haig Torosian is the fourth Sunday School student to achieve this distinction within the Holy Trinity parish and the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern); the first was Heather Surabian in May 2002 who graduated with 12 years of consecutive perfect attendance.

On this day, Gregory Dorian became the second recipient of the Grace Emily Torosian Sunday School Perfect Attendance Award, with

consecutive perfect attendance for the past 10 years.

The ceremony concluded with the Graduating Class, in a symbolic gesture, passing a lit candle to the students of Grade 11. The candle was passed from Ani Soultanian to Olivia Thayer.

In offering the closing remarks, Kouzouian congratulated the graduates for their commitment to learning about their faith since they were young children. As Graduation was held on the last Sunday of Great Lent, called the Sunday of Advent, he explained that "it's a day that our Church Fathers have set aside for us to consider how prepared we feel – if Christ returned today. It's a day to focus on our preparation."

Following church services, the graduates, their families and invited guests were honored at a luncheon held in Johnson Hall.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Arshag Dickranian Students Win in Earth Day Poster Contest

LOS ANGELES – After participating, for the first time in the school’s history, in the Earth Day Poster Contest titled “Green Cities”, Tekeyan Cultural Association’s (TCA) Arshag Dickranian School’s fifth-grade student Julianna Mkrtychyan and ninth-grade student Ani Sarafian were announced as First Place Winners of the Elementary and High School Categories respectively. The winners

of the contest were declared by Assembly Member Richard Bloom of California’s 50th Assembly District on Thursday, April 24.

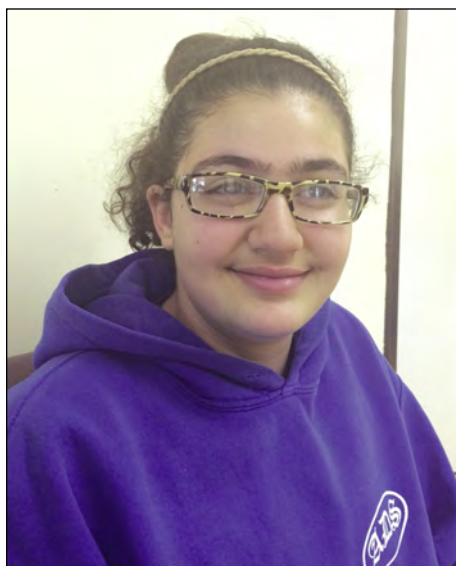
Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22. The Earth Day Poster Contest aimed to encourage children of different ages to take care of the planet and its environment. The contest was open to students ranging from 1st through 12th grade levels, attending a school located in the 50th Assembly District. More than 100 entries were submitted to participate in the contest by its deadline. To enter the contest, students were asked to submit an 8 1/2” by 11” poster made of recycled paper, using various forms of media such as photos and drawings to illustrate an idea that reflects awareness of the importance of taking care of planet earth and its environment. Mkrtychyan’s poster illustrated planet earth’s beauty with the ocean, land and city

life in harmony, whereas Sarafian’s poster depicted a multi-colored flower with a city painted in green on the flower. Bloom was impressed by the students’ interest and creativity in their artwork that they submitted.

The posters of the winners will be on display at Bloom’s District Office where constituents and other visitors will be able to see them.

The School will soon receive an official congratulatory letter and the winners’ certificates, which will be granted to our winner students, Julianna Mkrtychyan and Ani Sarafian, during a special occasion and ceremony.

The TCA ADS administration and staff, students, parents and teachers congratulate the two students for their achievement.



Ninth grade student Ani Sarafian. ABOVE: Artwork of Ani Sarafian depicting a multi-colored flower with a city painted in green at the flower’s carpel, reflecting the importance of “Going Green”

Fifth grade student Julianna Mkrtychyan ABOVE: Artwork of Julianna Mkrtychyan illustrating earth’s beauty with the ocean, land and city life in harmony

True Missionary for Armenia

HARVARD, Mass. – Once again my friend Joe Dagdigian left for Armenia with a problem on his hands. How do you visit every village and town from Yerevan to the extreme borders and not help the destitute?

It is a problem Dagdigian has encountered over the past two decades, ever since he bought a home on Bargamian Street and returns each May through August.

By Tom Vartabedian

There are only so many computers he can deliver, so many resources to distribute. Only so much good that can be done without feeling strapped.

It is what a missionary does – putting the cause before the effect. In this case, it is the country before himself. Were it not for his family and two grandkids, he would stay there permanently.

“You visit some of these places and see the necessities, wondering how you can help,” he said. “Many of these villagers would give you the shirt off their backs if you needed it.”

You may have caught his latest piece for the Armenian papers titled “Angeghakot and its Poet,” about life in a rural district in Southern Armenia with a population of 2,000 to 3,000 residents. Figures vary here for obvious reasons. People go elsewhere to find work.

God knows what it took to get there, only dirt roads and detours that would discourage the ordinary traveler. Not Dagdigian, especially if it came down to finding the resting place of Vartan Mamikonian.

There is evidence the famous general of the Battle of Vartanantz is buried in the valley below, which is the very reason for Dagdigian to meander those grounds.

Who would ever stop at a place called “Degh?” Just the name alone would strike up some curiosity for this adventurer. Translated, it means simply, “Place.” It is a lot like combing the countryside and seeing a town which reads “Population 98 – with two cats and a dog.”

I was with him the day he ordered his driver to halt on a dime. “Degh? Sounds interesting,” he mused.

So here we were in some desolate village near Goris in southern Armenia. Upon further investigation, we found a hamlet which was subjected to armed assaults from the Azeris.

Degh gained some prominence in 2010 for a United Nations photo of a 106-year-old woman sitting in front of her home and guarding her property with a rifle.

Mention the Cosmic Ray Division and Dagdigian is all ears – and all voice. He cannot say enough about the work those scientists are doing on Mount Aragats.

The money from the calendars he sells go toward supporting their world-class work studying the explosions on the sun’s surface, with some of the photographs he has taken throughout the land. A portion of his time in Armenia is spent doing CRD work and meeting with people like the head of the CRD, Prof. Ashot Chilingirian.

A while back, Dagdigian saw a dire need for the Shengavit Historical and Archaeological Cultural Preserve in Armenia. To put it bluntly, the agency was in dire straits. Therefore, he launched a course at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) titled “A Visual Journey Through Armenian History” and turned a portion of the proceeds to Shengavit.

If it is a dolma festival in Sardarabat, he is there. Or a water ceremony called “vartavar” and pagan ritual at Garni. The ancient capitals of Artashat and Yervantashat have received their share of exposure.

“Sometimes you have to travel off the beaten path to find Armenia is true culture and heritage,” said Dagdigian. “Interacting with these villagers becomes a more genuine sense of history you don’t always find in books and films.”

Each year Dagdigian offers programs on “Unknown Sites of Armenia.” As a former chairman of the Merrimack Valley Armenian National Committee chapter, Dagdigian created inroads with legislators and helped mobilize the community he has known his entire life.

Nothing, however, replaces his love of family with wife Lisa and daughter Shakeh, along with two granddaughters. Lisa Dagdigian is just as much the missionary as her husband, joining him on many an excursion with an affinity toward ARS work.

For both of them, it is a marriage that has evolved here and extends itself to Haiastan. It is a life they have chosen to share with others from both worlds.

Even during his working days while shifting from one job to another, he made it clear to his employers that Armenia would not take a back seat to his jobsite – unless the company transferred him to Armenia.

Now that he is retired, he can devote even more to his homeland.



Joe Dagdigian

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Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York

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(Հրահրուած Թորոնթոյէն)

Concert
Charles AZNAVOUR in ARMENIAN
Dedicated to Aznavour’s 90th birthday
Translated and performed by
BERGE TURABIAN
&
ARMENIA SARKISSIAN
(Guest singer from Toronto)

Friday, May 30, 2014
Ուրբաթ, Մայիս 30, 2014
St. Thomas Armenian Church
Corner of E. Clinton Ave. & Rt. 9W
Tenafly, NJ 07670

Wine and appetizers will be served from 8:00pm Գինի եւ խորտիկներ
Concert starts at 9:00pm Համերգի Ակիզք
Tickets \$35

Contact Shoghig Chalian: 201.803.0240 | Vaghenag Tarpinian: 610.823.8611
Anahit: 646.339.6869 anahitdt@gmail.com



Arts & Living

Sammy Andonian To Be Featured Soloist with Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra

By Ara Arakelian

BOSTON – Sammy Andonian has done it again. Having won the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra's concerto competition in 2009 as a cellist at the age of 12, the extraordinarily-talented 10th grader from Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School has won the orchestra's 2013 coveted prize again – this time as a violinist. As part of the prize, he will appear with the orchestra in a performance of Felix Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* in their concert on May 18 at 6 p.m., at MIT's Kresge Auditorium. The concert will be conducted by the Federico Cortese and will also feature Beethoven's *8th Symphony*.

Andonian began his musical studies playing the cello at age 4, but soon after, at age 7, took an interest in studying the violin as well. As a young musician, Andonian won the 2013 Walden Chamber Players' Young Artists Competition, the New England Philharmonic's Young Artists Competition, the Wellesley Symphony Orchestra's Young Soloist Competition and Brockton Symphony's Feinberg Youth Competition. He has been a member of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras since 2008, and is now both a concertmaster and a principal cellist for the Boston Youth Symphony.

Andonian has also been performing as a member of the Boston Children's Chorus' Premier Choir for four years. His time there included an annual nationally televised performance in New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall celebrating the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as a concert tour of Jordan upon the request of King Abdullah II. He has been featured as a vocal soloist with the Cantata Singers and both the Dartmouth College



Sammy Andonian

and MIT chorus and orchestra. In fall 2011, he played the role of Amahl in MIT's production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors." And this past fall, Andonian began piano lessons with Angel Ramon Rivera, the artistic director and piano chair at the Rivers Music School in Weston.

Serving nearly 500 young musicians through the New England, the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra (BYSO) is a multi-ensemble institution which offers a wide spectrum of orchestral training opportunities for K-12 students in various configurations: three full orchestras, two young string training orchestras, six chamber orchestras, a preparatory wind ensemble.

BYSO has been in residence at Boston University's College of Fine Arts since 1985 and has also recently formed a partnership with the Boston Symphony Orchestra to jointly develop training programs to foster the future of classical music. Under the leadership of Cortese, BYSO occasionally dabbles with semi-staged opera performances also, collaborating with professional singers of international renown (The tenor Yeghishe Manucharyan was one of the prominent collaborating singers in a recent performance of Puccini's "Tosca" at Harvard's Sanders Theatre by BYSO.)



Siroun and her nemesis, Maro, compare choeregs.

Finding a Proper Husband On the West Coast

'Where Is Your Groom? Pesad Oor eh' to Make Debut in Pasadena

PASADENA, Calif. – In one particular scene of "Where Is Your Groom? (Pesad Oor Eh)," the matriarch of the Keshishian family tells her daughter she needs to marry an Armenian, "for the sake of our humanity!" While the words, layered with sweet guilt, seem dramatic, it's a familiar phrase that has floated around many Armenian homes in the Diaspora, prompting parents to ask their daughter – where is your groom?

The cast of "Where Is Your Groom? (Pesad Oor Eh)" is ready to bring their comedic spin to this commonly heard question to South Pasadena High School on Sunday, May 18.

Throughout this culturally relevant play, the American-born daughter of Armenian parents finds herself set up on dates with everyone ranging from a childhood friend from Armenian school to the priest's relative to someone Medz Mayrig (grandmother) found on Facebook – all in a parents' vain attempt for their daughter, Lara, to marry an Armenian, blissfully unaware of their daughter's thoughts and preferences.

"The characters are archetypes of the overbearing, loving, irrational, complicated, and human Armenians we all know and love," said Raffi Wartanian, an actor and musician who is a graduate student at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

Written and directed by Taleen Babayan, the play's storyline has resonated with thousands of audience members who have connected with the endearing characters.

"You have the arrogant hot shot young guy whose cologne use might only be matched by the size of his ego. You have the parents convinced that cultural preservation happens primarily through procreation," said Wartanian, who plays the role of the parish priest, who is also called upon to find Lara a "pesa." "The characters are true to the universal experience of Armenians in the Diaspora who consciously or unconsciously imbibe predetermined roles that reckon with timeless questions of identity, preservation, displacement and choreg."

The 16 cast members, who represent various Diasporan communities, including Australia, United States, Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon, have forged new friendships during the year long rehearsals and performances.

"The opportunity to be involved in a comedy around every day Armenian cultural dynamics was something that really appealed to me at first," said Edwin

see GROOM, page 11



Siroun and Medz Mayrig discuss potential suitors for Lara.

Vahik Pirhamzei Presents First English-Language Play 'Unusual Heroes'

GLENDALE – Acclaimed playwright and director Vahik Pirhamzei is finally bringing his flair and vision to an English-language play about an unlikely hero who delights the audience with his spot-on wit and clever observations about the "normal" people around him.

"Unusual Heroes" is a 90-minute, fast-paced, one-act play that incorporates new media into the traditional theatrical comedy setting. With on-screen news coverage introducing multiple characters to the primary storyline, the audience is taken into a dynamic world of comedic mishaps and mix-ups.

After completing two English-language full-length feature films, "My Uncle Rafael" and "Guardian Angels," this is Pirhamzei's first English-language play which introduces a wider audience to the often humorous nuances of being a multicultural community. The comedy takes the audience into the misunderstandings and enlightenment that follow the



Vahik Pirhamzei

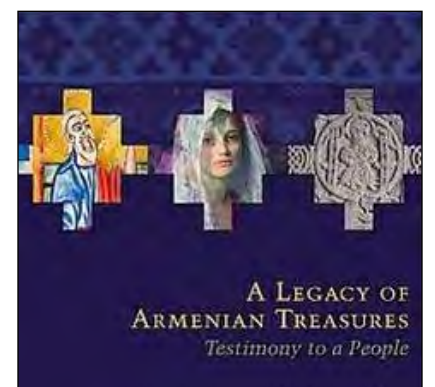
main character, an underestimated and misunderstood young man, who finds himself in a situation that seems to be spiraling out of control. Pirhamzei, who plays the title character, takes the audience on a journey of possibilities as he encounters four beautiful women who are not only physically trapped in a beauty salon but also emotionally trapped by their own limited perception of their lives.

The play stars Pirhamzei, Anahid Avanesian, Narine Avakian, Helen Kalognomos and Paola Kassabian.

The play will take place at Beyond the Stars Palace, 417 1/2 N. Brand Blvd, Glendale.

For tickets visit itsmyseat.com/Vahik.

It premieres Saturday May 17 at 8 p.m., with another show on Sunday May 18 at 7 p.m.



A Legacy of Armenian Treasures Recognized

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. – *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures: Testimony to a People*, an expanded catalog of the artifacts of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, published in 2013, received the Gold Award from the Detroit Craftsmen's Gallery of Superb Printing.

A review published in *Choice*, stated: "This richly illustrated book . . . makes a significant contribution to an understanding of Armenian culture and history. . . Highly recommended."

Another review also appeared in *Library Journal*: "This beautiful work provides an excellent introduction to the art practices of the Armenian people. Artists, historians, and those interested in the culture of the Caucasus will enjoy reading this coffee table book."

The book retails for \$75 and may be ordered from Indiana University Press at www.iupress.indiana.edu.



ARTS & LIVING

'Where Is Your Groom? Pesad Oor eh' to Make Debut in Pasadena

GROOM, from page 10

Baghdasaryan, a native of Australia who is an international tax accountant with PricewaterhouseCoopers in New York. "But throughout this extraordinary journey, we have had a chance to develop deep friendships across the group."

The play, following three successful performances on the East Coast, from its debut at New York City's Players Theatre to stops in Oradell, NJ and Watertown, was born out of conversations by the writer with friends about the responsibilities that come with being a Diasporan Armenian and reconciling the inherent desire to continue the Armenian lineage, while finding a suitable partner in the melting pot of many Diasporan communities.

"Since birth our parents have instilled in us to have pride in being Armenian and have passed on that distinct duty to us," said Babayan, a journalist. "This is our group's way of contributing to our cultural fabric and showcasing that while we are spread across the globe, within us lies an undeniable fiber of our heritage."

That pride translates to the stage, through the cast's portrayal of an important social issue in the Armenian Diaspora, delivered in an entertaining and lively manner, appealing to all generations. The group has managed to maintain their independence through the support of ticket sales for their performances.

"It is no secret that Armenian arts have suffered in their support over the years," said Wartanian. "It's my hope that this play and the many projects promulgated by today's Armenian artists enjoy the financial and moral support of audiences near and far of our global village."

Aside from performing an entertaining and energetic show for audience members, the cast and crew of "Where Is Your Groom? (Pesad Oor Eh)" believes in social responsibility and have donated proceeds from each show to noteworthy organizations benefiting the Armenian people, including Friends of Warm Hearth, an Armenia-based organization that provides housing and care for orphans with disabilities, Tekeyan Cultural Association's Sponsor a Teacher



The "der hayr" is called upon by the Keshishians to help find a suitor for their daughter, Lara

Program, which provides salaries for teachers in remote areas of Armenia, and to the Armenians suffering in Syria through the Armenian Relief Society.

"As Diasporan Armenians, we understand the importance of not only preserving our cultural heritage but aiding our homeland as well," said Babayan. "Through this play, we are able to do both."

"This play is raw, funny and truthful," said Aleen Vartkessian, who plays the role of Mayreni who attempts to set her son up with Lara. "I can see everyone from my young cousin laughing as hard as my grandmother."

"Where Is Your Groom?" will be performed on Sunday, May 18, at 4 p.m. at the South Pasadena High School Performing Arts Auditorium, 1401 Fremont Ave. Visit www.wherisyourgroom.com for more information, photos and video clips.



Matriarch Siroun convinces her son to take a look at the "hars" list she has prepared for him to help him find a wife.

TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP
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ALL RISE,
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IS NOW
IN SESSION

JUSTICE WILL BE SERVED
OCTOBER 2014

FRIDAY, JUNE 13TH AT 8:00 PM
AT SYMPHONY HALL, BOSTON

63rd
ARMENIAN NIGHT
AT THE POPS

Friends of Armenian Culture Society

Featuring
Hayrapet Arakelyan
Saxophone

Boston Pops Orchestra
Keith Lockhart
Conductor

FOR TICKETS AND INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.FACSBOSTON.ORG



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 10 — The Armenian Churches of Worcester County (Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic, Armenian Church of Our Saviour and Soorp Asdvadzadin) present the Third annual benefit dance, 7 p.m. to midnight, Armenian Church of Our Saviour Cultural Center, 34 Boynton St., Worcester. Live music featuring Der Mugrditchian Ensemble with special guest appearance by Miss Massachusetts Outstanding Teen Kristina Ayanian. Music, Mezza, cash bar, raffle. Donation \$30, students \$25. All proceeds to Mrgashen Village School, Akhourian Mother and Child Clinic and Armenians in Syria. For tickets contact Dr. Robert Babigian (508) 842-7231.

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

MAY 16 & 17 — "The Golden Door," a new musical play about Boston's immigrants, past and present, set in an Armenian grocery store. By Joyce Van Dyke, produced by In Good Company. 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge YMCA Theater, 820 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square, Cambridge. Adults \$20, Seniors/students \$15, Children \$5. Tickets available at <http://goldendoor.bpt.me>.

MAY 21 — Chefs Party for Our Park! Benefit for the Armenian Heritage Park's Ongoing Care., Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston, Cambridge. Celebrate with Boston's Top Chefs presenting signature dishes inspired by parents, grandparents or mentors for you to taste while you mix, mingle and enjoy. Advanced Reservations required. To receive the einvite, email info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

MAY 24 — 96th anniversary celebration of Armenian Independence sponsored by Lowell "Aharonian" ARF, 6 p.m., St. Gregory Church, 158 Main St., North Andover; dinner, entertainment and speaker, Baku pogrom survivor Anna Turcotte, author, Nowhere, a Story of Exile. \$20 adults, \$10 students.

MAY 29 — Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club Spring Dinner and Drawing, 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Everyone is invited to a losh kebab and pilaf dinner followed by the monthly drawing at 8 p.m., plus five additional cash prizes. "One-time" numbers will be sold the night of the dinner. Special offer: purchase five "One-time" numbers for \$20 and save \$5. Chance to win a One-Year 1000 Club Membership for those attending dinner. Dinner tickets on sale at the door; donation, \$7.99. For further information, contact the Church Office at 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

JUNE 6, 7 — Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair, open Friday from 5 to 8 p.m., serving kebab meals, entire fair open Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Armenian meals served all day. Armenian delicacies bake sale, silent auction, craft fair, indoor yard sale. Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, wheelchair accessible. Admission free. For information, call 617-923-0498.

JUNE 12 — "Finding Zabel Yessayan," the documentary that inspired the translation of two books by groundbreaking Ottoman Armenian author, Zabel Yessayan, will be shown at the Watertown Public Library, 123 Main St., 7 p.m. For more information, contact info@aivainternational.org or call 617-926-0171.

JUNE 16 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church at Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough; 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., "Shot Gun." Join us for a day of golf - player's fee: \$175 (includes hospitality, lunch, dinner, green & cart fees, prizes and gifts) or just dinner and a social evening (\$50 per person). Limited to 128 players. Tournament and tee sponsorships avail-



On May 16 and 17, "The Golden Door," a new musical play about Boston's immigrants, past and present, set in an Armenian grocery store, will be presented. The play is written by Joyce Van Dyke and produced by In Good Company. It will be performed on both nights at 7:30 p.m., at the Cambridge YMCA Theater, 820 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square, Cambridge. Tickets for adults \$20, seniors/students \$15, Children \$5. Tickets are available at <http://goldendoor.bpt.me>

able. RSVP deadline, June 9. To register or for further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org

SEPTEMBER 26, 27 — Armenians and Progressive Politics Conference returns to Boston. Keynote speaker will be Noam Chomsky. Details to follow.

NOVEMBER 8 — Armenia Tree Project's 20th Anniversary Celebration. Reception and dinner at the Grand Atrium of the John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse overlooking the Boston Harbor. Reserve the date, additional details to follow. For information about ATP's programs, visit www.ArmeniaTree.org

RHODE ISLAND

JUNE 13 — 100 Anniversary of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, under the auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), 7 p.m. Concert in celebration of a century of faith, hope and faith, featuring soloists from Armenia, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, the Amrenian Chorale and Orchestra of Rhode Island, under the direction of Maestro Konstantin Petrossian at the new Saint Mary and Saint Mena Coptic Orthodox Cathedral, 2433 Scituate Ave., Cranston. Spiritual and traditional Armenian music, also, premier of songs composed especially for this event. Free and open to the public.

Chefs Party for Our Park!

Benefit for the Ongoing Care of the Armenian Heritage Park, Greenway

Boston Chefs present signature dishes inspired by parents, mentors grandparents for you to enjoy!

Ana Sortun, Oleana, Sofra, Sarma
Andrew Hebert, Trade
Andrew Yeo, Nathan Kibarian
The Ritz-Carlton

Brian Dandro, ArtBar, Royal Sonesta
Brian Poe, Poe's Kitchen, Tip Tap Room, Estelle's

Dante de Magistris, Dante il Casale

Gerard Tice, Parker's, Omni Parker
Jeffrey P. Fournier, 51 Lincoln Waban Kitchen

Jody Adams, Rialto, Trade
Julia Brant, North 26, Millennium Bostonian

Seta Dakessian, Seta's
Vicki Lee Boyajian, Jason Reed Vicki Lee's

WITH Mark E. Mooradian
MEM Tea Imports, Karnak Farms
Bob Lobel, Master of Ceremonies

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston
Michael Medeiros, General Manager
Jim Anello, Director of Catering

RSVP

Advance Reservations required.
Online: ArmenianHeritagePark.org
By mail: For Sponsor Form, email Info@armenianheritagepark.org or call 617 803.8785

Grateful appreciation to the Royal Sonesta Hotel and the Chefs for hosting the Benefit



Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway Boston, Massachusetts

Local Writer Pays Tribute to Grandmother's Story on Surviving Genocide

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — On Saturday, April 19, the Hagopian family hosted a book signing for local author and attorney Mark Kadian in their Birmingham showroom. Kadian introduced his book, *Anahid Played Soorp, the Finding of Aran Prian*, a novel about the Armenian Genocide, based on a short story told to him at age 10 by his grandmother. He explained that she was unable to finish the story because she became so emotional in trying to relate it that she just stopped, telling him "that's enough" we'll talk later. They never did, realizing his grandmother's pain, he never asked.

Years later he decided he had to tell her story for her so he used the little bit of information she was able to give him to build his novel. He explained that developing and writing the novel was a labor of love dedicated to his parents and grandparents and that the impetus behind it was to tell a story they could not because the memories were too painful — the mass murder of 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Turks, 1915-1923.

Guests were moved by passages read by Kadian and by his devotion to the project.

After the reading, he offered the books for sale

with all proceeds to be donated to the Armenian Orphans Fund.

Lingering to speak to the author, guests enjoyed a reception.

Kadian graduated from the University of Michigan and received his law degree from Case Western University. He practices law in the Detroit area where he lives with his wife and four daughters.

The event was free and open to the public, part of the Hagopian Family educational and cultural outreach in the metro Detroit community.



Author Mark Kadian



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

History Lessons from Mr. Davutoglu

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Ever since Ahmed Davutoglu moved from academia to serve as Turkey's foreign minister, he has been repackaging Turkey's bloody history and has become an apostle of Prime Minister Erdogan's denialist policy on the topic of the Armenian Genocide.

He is more of a sidekick to Mr. Erdogan in the eyes of Genocide scholars who have long passed their verdicts on the facts of the Armenian Genocide.

The excuses enumerated by the Turkish leaders can hardly be used for domestic consumption and perhaps only for a short while, because in today's globalized world, the Turkish society itself is undergoing an intense process of instruction, learning the undeniable facts of the Armenian Genocide. Mr. Erdogan is trying to intercept the process by declaring a war against the media.

Less than a year ago, Mr. Erdogan was challenging Armenians to "come up with one single proof that Turkey has committed [genocide] against Armenians."

The Turkish leader's statements on April 23 were also meant to provide a cop out to other politicians who are ready to jump on the Turkish bandwagon. No wonder that our Secretary of State John Kerry was "stunned" into silence.

But, on the eve of the Genocide centennial, Turkey is anticipating a tsunami of events unmasking long buried ugly truths in Turkey. In anticipation of that tidal wave, Turkey has hired high-powered PR firms to soften the blow or to deflect similar statements recently made by French President Francois Hollande. The current goodwill campaign is certainly devised by those PR firms.

In a backdoor understanding with the White House, Prime Minister Erdogan undertook the initiative to get President Obama off the hook.

In less than a week, Mr. Erdogan offset the goodwill – if any – generated by offering his condolences to the grandchildren of the Armenian martyrs.

He indeed denied that Turkey had perpetrated any genocide against the Armenians when he was interviewed by Charlie Rose on PBS.

In the meantime, another interview given to the German *Der Spiegel* surfaced, although this one seems to have been published prior to the April 23 condolences, in which the Turkish leader continued to spout the same "there can be no talk of genocide" line.

With all those contradictory statements, Foreign Minister Davutoglu published an opinion piece in the *Guardian* on May 2, ostensibly with an olive branch in his hand, inviting the Armenians to "follow Erdogan's lead."

After some sugarcoated statements about the contributions of the Armenian musicians and architects to Ottoman history, he resorts to the same diversionary tactics that Turkey has been using to duck the issue. He tries to equate the suffering of the Genocide victims with those of Turkish military losses during World War I.

"The power of the Ottoman empire declined continuously in the 19th century. The loss of the Balkan provinces was a striking defeat which resulted in mass atrocities, expulsion and the deportation of Ottoman Muslims. ... Approximately 5 million Ottoman citizens were driven away from their ancestral homes in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Anatolia. While much of western history tells of the suf-

fering of the dispossessed and dead Ottoman Christians, the colossal sufferings of Ottoman Muslims remains largely unknown outside of Turkey," Davutoglu writes.

The murderers' arithmetic is not compatible with the historic truth. The historians have taken into account and evaluated objectively the Ottoman losses, which were the result of a tyrant losing his grip on his victims and suffering the consequences. For more than four centuries, Ottoman sultans ruled the Balkans with iron and blood. And when the empire began crumbling, those lands claimed their independence and they sent back their torturers to Anatolia.

Any person in his right mind – let alone historians – will ask: what responsibility do the Armenians bear in the collapse of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans? After begging for some sympathy for Ottoman losses, the smart diplomat tries to draw parallels with the Armenian victims of the Genocide, hoping to create a fictitious "common pain."

Yes, indeed, Armenians suffered and died, but also some Turks died, therefore the Armenian martyrs must bear some responsibility for the Turkish losses and the Diaspora has to use some "just memory" that the Turks also suffered because they could no longer exploit the subject nations in the Balkans.

The next building block of Mr. Davutoglu's sympathy campaign is the old story of commissioning a joint committee of historians "to discover" the truth. The same discredited proposal was also made by Erdogan in his *Der Spiegel* interview. That proposal comes also with a challenge: "Turkey has opened its archives, let Armenia open its own archives."

Serious historians have long established that Turkey has sanitized its archives from any incriminating evidence. Also, the Ottoman archives are not open to serious scholars. They are open only to some hired guns that defend the Turkish government's official line. Adding insult to injury, Erdogan and Davutoglu have been proposing to bring those discredited scholars in the same room with established and respected scholars who have already "discovered" what the Turkish leaders cannot seem to do.

At the conclusion of his column, Davutoglu ceremoniously invites the world to a reconciliation charade: "The statement by Prime Minister Erdogan is an unprecedented and courageous step taken in this direction. I believe now is the time to invest in this relationship. But we can only succeed if this endeavor is embraced by a wider constituency intent on reconciliation. Turkey stands ready."

If Turkey is ready, it has to demonstrate its willingness for reconciliation by taking some concrete steps. During the discussions leading to the signing of the Protocols, Mr. Davutoglu asked Armenians to relinquish three regions under Karabagh forces in order to break up the logjam and to create goodwill on the Turkish-Azerbaijani side. Now we would like to ask the same from Turkey. Let the Turks lift the blockade, which will benefit both sides. Let Turkey repeal Article 301 from its Penal Code punishing anyone who insults Turkishness. Let Turkey come up with a plan to preserve Armenian architectural heritage in historic Armenia. And let the Turks come up with a compensation package.

That "Turkey is ready" will sound hollow without any such accompanying steps.

Mr. Davutoglu proposes: "Let's bury the common pain."

But before burying the pain, let us properly bury the 1.5 million victims. That way, history lessons will find their rightful place.

LETTERS

Just Say No, Senator Markey!

To The Editor:

Is US Sen. Edward Markey of Massachusetts truly a friend of the Armenian-American community?

Suffolk Law School in Boston has invited Markey to speak and receive an award at its commencement on May 17. The problem is that Senator Markey will sit alongside Abraham Foxman, director of the Armenian Genocide-denying Anti-Defamation League. Foxman will address the law school's graduates and receive an honorary law degree, even though his statement of August 21, 2007 twisted the facts of the Armenian Genocide so that the latter could not legally qualify as genocide under the official United Nations Genocide law of 1948.

Honoring Foxman makes a mockery of the principles for which a law school should stand. One wonders if Suffolk has invited Foxman as revenge against Armenian-Americans and others because the Massachusetts Governor's Council recently rejected attorney Joseph Berman – an ADL national commissioner – to be a judge.

The National Lawyers Guild student chapter at Suffolk University and a thousand others have demanded that Suffolk President James McCarthy withdraw his invitation to Foxman. Their reasons include Foxman's anti-Armenian bias and his hypocritical opposition to the U.S. Congress's Armenian Genocide Resolution. Markey's sharing the stage with Foxman would be an insult to

international law. Then again, Markey has never criticized Foxman and the ADL's genocide denials. Markey's commitment to genocide recognition and prevention is in serious doubt.

Senator Markey should tell the Suffolk's president that he will not attend the commencement unless the invitation to Foxman is withdrawn. I suggest readers call Markey's office in Boston (617-565-8519) or Washington, DC (202-224-2742) or email him at <http://www.markey.senate.gov/contact>. Please say that sharing the stage with Abe Foxman is unacceptable.

Berge Jololian
Watertown, MA

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COMMENTARY

Willful Blindness: Abraham Foxman and the Armenian Genocide

By Pierce Nahigyan

Few would expect a survivor of the Holocaust to be the face of genocide denial. Imagine the surprise of Suffolk Law School's student body when its administration's chosen commencement speaker turned out to be just that.

Abraham Foxman, the long-time director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), an organization dedicated to eradicating anti-Semitism and bigotry and protecting civil rights, seems a figure beyond reproach. Yet Foxman has invited controversy to Suffolk University for his unwillingness to recognize the 1915 Armenian Genocide and his campaign to defeat Congressional acknowledgement of said genocide.

Criticism of Foxman has centered on this disconnect, that a man who lived through the attempted extermination of an entire race now denies that truth of another. Many at Suffolk are unwilling to participate in that hypocrisy.

Shortly after Foxman was announced as their 2014 speaker, Suffolk Law students rejected the decision. Amy Willis, president of the university's National Lawyers Guild chapter, told the Boston Globe that "Suffolk claims to embody diversity and be a place for all people, but this clearly is a speaker who does not embody those values."

This stance was reflected in a petition to remove Foxman as the keynote speaker, as well as to deny him the honorary Juris Doctorate he is slated to receive. The petition states that Foxman's presence "not only insults students and their families, but also insults the very foundation of Suffolk Law as a safe place of diversity and acceptance." As arguments for his removal, the petition enumerates Foxman's refusal to explicitly label the Armenian Genocide as a genocide as well as his support for racial profiling of Muslim-Americans in the interest of "national security."

Raphael Lemkin coined the term "genocide" in 1944 to describe the magnitude of premeditated racial extermination, citing what happened to the Armenians as the prime example. After the war, the United Nations approved the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, establishing genocide as an international crime.

In the Convention, genocide is defined as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group," which includes "killing members of the group" and "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

The mention of "intent" is significant in this definition. Foxman's 2007 statement (described below) would go out of its way to avoid labeling the Turkish pogrom as intentional, admitting only that its "consequences" were "tantamount" to genocide. To the casual observer, it is perhaps a negligible distinction. From a legal standpoint, it is strategically evasive.

This definition applies to the systematic slaughter of Armenians by the Turkish government that began in 1915. To understand how this genocide came to be, a brief summary of the two nations' history is required.

Existing in various forms for approximately 3,000 years of recorded history, Armenia was

the first nation to declare Christianity its national religion. It remained Christian under the several empires that conquered it, including the Muslim caliphate of the Ottoman Turks. From the 15th century onward, Armenians and their fellow "infidels" were allowed to continue their religious practices, though subjected to higher taxes, fewer rights and ethnic discrimination. For the Armenians, this culminated in the Hamidian Massacres of 1894-1897. This state-sponsored pogrom was instituted by Sultan Abdul Hamid II in retaliation for Armenians' attempts to win civil rights.

By the start of World War I, political tensions between Armenians and a new Turkish government were even more strained. Armenia itself had been divided by warring empires, with Russia claiming the east and Turkey claiming the west. Duty-bound, both sides fought for their respective empires.

This dichotomy of loyalty enabled the Turks to concoct a pretext that veiled their ultimate goal of an ethnically and religiously uniform empire. A purge would enable them to "liquidate" the "Christian element" and seize the wealth and property of suspected insurgents. On April 24, 1915, the Turkish government authorized the arrest and execution of several hundred Armenian intellectuals. From that point, the executions would continue for eight years, shrouded under the fog of the Great War.

Turkish soldiers and mercenaries acting under the general outfit of "Special Operations" murdered hundreds of thousands of Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks, marching them through the Anatolian and Syrian deserts without food, water or clothing. "Infidels" not sentenced to hard labor camps were drowned in rivers, thrown off cliffs, crucified and burned alive. Property was seized, women were raped and dispatched to Turkish harems, and many children were kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam.

The number of survivors is a matter of debate, but of a population of 2 million indigenous Armenians, it is estimated that upwards of 1.5 million were slaughtered. Even today, almost a century later, the Euphrates River is filled with the bones of dead Armenians, as author Peter Balakian, writing for the New York Times magazine, can attest.

Stark, horrific images exist to document the savagery of the Armenian massacre. Yet still Turkey denies its own legacy.

Article 301 of the Turkish penal code makes it illegal to insult Turkey, the Turkish nation or the Turkish government. To acknowledge an "Armenian Genocide" is the most egregious insult possible.

Because Turkey was the first nation in the Middle East to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and remains an instrumental ally of the West, the United States is unwilling to rock that political boat. Even when a resolution was proposed by the 110th Congress to recognize the Armenian Genocide, then President George W. Bush publicly opposed the measure. He was not the first, and current President Barack Obama's silence on the issue suggests he will not be the last.

And this has been Foxman's dilemma. His public opposition to Armenian recognition has been out of loyalty to Israel. "Our focus is Israel," he has said. "If helping Turkey helps Israel, then that's what we're in the business of

doing." It seems absurd to the point of tragedy that a man who lived under Nazi oppression can answer the question of Armenian genocide with, "It was wartime. Things get messy."

But in 2007, Foxman tried to pacify his critics. Speaking for himself and the ADL, he stated that, "We have never negated but have always described the painful events of 1915-1918 perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against Armenians as massacres and atrocities," ending with decision that "the consequences of those actions were indeed tantamount to genocide."

But "tantamount to genocide" without intent is not genocide. This calculated elision of "intent," its palpable absence, is an insult to the Armenian community. The ADL's defenders decry this as splitting hairs, but they overlook the importance of legacy and how powerfully a single word can affect it. It was important enough to prompt a dozen Massachusetts cities to pull out of the ADL's "No Place for Hate" anti-bias program. It was important enough that when Andrew H. Tarsy, a regional director for the ADL, acknowledged the Genocide as such, he was promptly fired from the organiza-

tion.

Unfortunately for Suffolk Law School, and all those who expect the ADL to uphold its own morality, Abraham Foxman represents a willful blindness – to look the other way on a century-old crime – for the sake of political expediency.

It is the opinion of Suffolk University President James McCarthy that Foxman, despite students' protests, "is well deserving of recognition." Moreover, it is the University's hope that Foxman's "life of public service will inspire our graduates as they embark on their professional careers."

This does beg the question of what recognition the Syrian desert's uncounted dead deserve, or what their lives may have inspired, but the answers are unlikely to be found in Foxman's commencement speech.

(Pierce Nahigyan is a freelance journalist living in Long Beach, Calif. His work has appeared in several publications, including NationofChange, the Los Angeles Post-Examiner and SHK Magazine. A graduate of Northwestern University, he holds a BA in sociology and history.)

Markey Urged to Boycott Foxman at Suffolk

(Editor's Note: The following is an abridged version of a letter that has been sent to the office of Sen. Edward Markey.)

Dear Senator Markey:

I am writing on behalf of the Armenian National Committee of America, Merrimack Valley.

You are a friend of the Armenian-American community, particularly of Massachusetts. On April 11, for example, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved Resolution 410, which you co-sponsored, calling upon Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide.

You are also a lawyer and a long-serving public servant who is scheduled to speak and receive a public service award at the Suffolk Law School commencement in Boston on May 17, 2014.

You deserve this honor and much more.

We ask that you tell Suffolk University President James McCarthy that you will not attend its law school's commencement unless he first withdraws the invitation to Anti-Defamation League National Director Abraham Foxman to speak and receive an honorary law degree.

While you deserve the honor that Suffolk Law intends to bestow on you, Mr. Foxman does not.

Mr. Foxman is the head of an organization that claims to support the civil and human rights of all people, regardless of ethnicity or religion. Under Mr. Foxman, however, the ADL has not lived up to that ideal in important respects. On the contrary, for decades the ADL has denied the reality of the Armenian Genocide.

Moreover, the ADL has long worked directly with the Turkish government, which is a well-known human rights violator, to defeat resolutions brought before the US Congress that recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Indeed, he and the national ADL oppose the very Armenian Genocide resolution that you are co-sponsoring.

Denying the horrific murder of 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children from 1915-23 as well as the attempt to erase 3,000 years of Armenian civilization from Asia Minor clearly parallels denial of the Jewish Holocaust.

No person or organization that truly upholds universal human rights would do such a thing.

On August 21, 2007, Mr. Foxman issued an infamous statement that described the Armenian deaths as "consequences" of wartime action.

As you and other lawyers know, under the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, a perpetrator must show specific "intent" in order for an act to be considered genocide. Mr. Foxman's use of the word "consequences" was clearly meant to ensure that the murders could not be described as "intentional."

It is contradictory for a law school and lawyers to honor a man who sidesteps international law on a proven genocide, Armenian or otherwise.

The Massachusetts Municipal Association and a dozen Massachusetts cities, including Arlington, Belmont, Medford, Newton, Needham and Somerville, recognized Mr. Foxman's August 21 statement as an attempt to skirt international law. In 2007-2008, they all severed ties with the ADL's "No Place for Hate" program.

During Mr. Foxman's tenure, the ADL has also been widely reported to have engaged in illegal domestic surveillance. In 2007, the police chief of Arlington stated that he could obtain intelligence information from the ADL that his police department could not otherwise obtain legally on its own.

President McCarthy has stated that he is honoring Mr. Foxman for his "body of work." Much of that work, as you can see, is unworthy of being honored by Suffolk Law.

Again, we respectfully ask that you not attend the Suffolk Law commencement.

Ar A. Jeknavorian, Ph.D.

Notice to Contributors

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

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

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

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

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

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



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Erdogan Claims it's not Genocide Because not All Armenians Were Killed

Within days of releasing a shrewdly-worded statement on April 23, misleading some into thinking that he was acknowledging the Armenian Genocide, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan reversed course on a major American TV program, claiming that the 1915 mass killings of Armenians was not genocide.

When asked by veteran reporter Charlie Rose if it would be possible for the Turkish Prime Minister to characterize these killings as genocide, Erdogan became the laughing stock of TV viewers worldwide by declaring: "It would not be possible, because if such a genocide occurred, would there have been any Armenians living in this country [Turkey]?"

It is greatly embarrassing that the leader of a major country like Turkey is clueless about the universally-accepted definition of genocide. Foreign Minister Davutoglu (a former professor) and other learned Turks must have cringed watching their prime minister expose his ignorance before millions of TV viewers.

Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and

Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 9, 1948, defines genocide as "acts committed with the intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such."

One does not have to be a genocide scholar to comprehend that it is not necessary to wipe out every single member of a particular group to be accused of committing genocide. Did Hitler manage to kill all German Jews? Would Erdogan dare to go on American Television and make a similarly outrageous remark about the Jewish Holocaust, claiming that it is not genocide because some Jews are living in Germany today? In a fitting response to Erdogan, Armenia's Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian urged him to follow Germany's example of Holocaust acknowledgment through "recognition, condemnation, and apology." Nalbandian should have also added "restitution," an imperative demand, without which the rest are hollow words.

Erdogan should be reminded that only a few days earlier he had called for a joint commission to study the "historical facts." What is the point of asking for a study, if he has already concluded that there was no genocide? The prime minister cannot be serious and he definitely is not sincere.

At the end of his interview with Charlie Rose, Erdogan made additional contradictory statements, shifting the blame for the Genocide to the Ottomans: "This is not something that happened during the Republic of Turkey. This was during the Ottoman Empire.... If the documents show that our ancestors made a mistake...if the historians can show that, then we would pay whatever consequence of that is."

While no one in Armenia and Diaspora was fooled by Erdogan's deceptive statements, the reaction of some Armenians in Turkey was understandably more accommodating. Archbishop Aram Ateshian, vicar general of the

Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, rushed to Ankara with his entourage for a "pleasant" chat with the Turkish prime minister and a congenial lunch with Foreign Minister Davutoglu. Archbishop Ateshian thanked the Turkish leaders for their expression of "shared pain" in reference to Armenians and Turks who died during World War I.

Such laudatory words are not surprising, given the Armenians' status in Turkey as hostages of an authoritarian and brutal regime, as journalist Hrant Dink found out by paying with his life for bearing witness to the truth of the Genocide. Some Turkish Armenians, however, have learned to manipulate the country's oligarchic system for their personal gain. They are willing to go along with Turkish genocide denialism to enrich themselves through covert business deals with government officials and/or secure their leadership positions in the local Armenian community. Indeed, several prominent Turkish-Armenians have suggested that Erdogan be nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for his April 23rd statement. Two Armenian businessmen have even placed self-deprecating ads in Turkish newspapers thanking the prime minister and offering apologies for the Turkish "deaths" during World War I!

At the end of the day, it matters not what Erdogan's statement or Davutoglu's op-ed in The Guardian say or don't say about the Armenian Genocide. The more fundamental question is: are Turkish officials willing to atone for the crimes committed by their ancestors against the Armenian people? What matters most for Armenians is restitution and justice, not empty rhetoric. Erdogan's words are too little and too late. His statement is simply a clever ploy at damage control given the growing sentiments and calls worldwide to accept responsibility for the Armenian Genocide, and to deflect attention away from the scandals swirling around Turkey and its prime minister.

A Reply to Mr. Erdogan

By Raffi Bedrosyan

ON APRIL 23, 2014, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan sent a message of condolence to the Armenians worldwide, in eight languages, for their forefathers who lost their lives in 1915. As this was an unprecedented and unexpected gesture by a Turkish statesman, Armenians in Armenia, Diaspora and within Turkey reacted with a wide range of emotions and opinions. Some dismissed it as a cynical move and a new version of continued denial of the Genocide; some saw it as a smart political move and an effective delay tactic to avert the pressures of the upcoming centennial of the genocide next year; others optimistically saw it as a change in direction by Turkey in facing its history, hoping for increased dialogue and resolution of issues, and a few sycophants went as far as taking out newspaper ads thanking the prime minister, or suggesting that he be made a candidate for Nobel Peace Prize. I would like to share my thoughts about his message, and more importantly try to deal with the question: Where do we go from here?

One can find many faults with Erdogan's message. One can interpret it as a message addressed to the "dead" victims of a natural disaster such as an earthquake or flood, or a man-made accident such as a train accident, instead of "murdered" victims of a state-planned annihilation of an entire people that has disappeared from its four thousand year old historic homeland. One can speculate about the reasons for Erdogan to send such a message – whether cynical, calculated, insincere or even perhaps pressured by the US to send it, so that President Obama will not start using the "g" word. But at the end of the day, no matter what the motive, whether genuine or not, one must acknowledge that this is the first time a Turkish leader has said something mildly humane about the Armenian Genocide victims of 1915, instead of complete denial or insults that was the norm for the past 99 years. More significantly, certain terms used in the message are really encouraging, welcome and irreversible, such as acknowledging the historic significance of April 24 for all the Armenians around the world, or acknowledging the inhumane consequences of the "relocation." And therefore, the message must be recognized as a step in the right direction provided that it is followed immediately by real, concrete action and further evidence of change of direction toward facing history, justice and restitution. The next 12 months will tell if this is the case or not.

It is not easy for a statesman to suddenly reverse a century-old course of complete denial of the truth, brainwashing of its citizens for four generations, threats against anyone or any state

who disagrees with its lies about 1915. But every journey of ten thousand miles starts with a small step. In a previous article I had suggested eight steps that can be taken by Turkey within the next year, immediately and without even acknowledging the genocide, if indeed there is goodwill toward resolving historical wrongs, which are the following:

- Open the border with Armenia without any preconditions. Rename the Alican border-crossing the Hrant Dink Gate, in honor of the heroic advocate for dialogue.
- Grant citizenship to all living descendants of the deported Ottoman-Armenian citizens.
- Clean up the textbooks at all levels of the educational system by eliminating the falsifications, hatemongering, and discrimination against the Armenians, and start teaching the correct facts about 1915.
- Initiate a state program by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to reconstruct or restore more than 2,000 destroyed or deteriorating Armenian monasteries and churches, and return them to their rightful owner, the Armenian Church (Istanbul Armenian Patriarchate).
- Offer a symbolic but meaningful apology to the Armenian people for all the crimes of 1915, by returning Mount Ararat and Ani to Armenia, perhaps as part of a minor border revision and territorial exchange based on equivalent land area.
- Open up to the public the archival documents related to the deportation/liquidation records and the Ottoman property deeds related to the deported Armenians.
- Allow the compensation cases by descendants of Ottoman-Armenian citizens to proceed in Turkish and international courts.
- Offer free transit and duty-free port facilities for Armenia at a Black Sea city such as Trabzon and Rize, as partial compensation for the economic losses of Ottoman-Armenian citizens.

I am aware that some of these steps are already taken or being considered by the Turkish government officials. Discussions about granting of citizenship and restoration of a few of the churches and monasteries have started – albeit as museums, or without even mentioning the Armenian origins of them. Opening the border with Armenia without being held hostage by third countries would be a win-win for both states. A sure sign whether Erdogan's message is sincere or not would be eliminating the names of streets, schools, mosques and neighborhoods, named after Ittihad Terakki leaders Talat, Enver or Djemal. But we know there are still Turkish "deep state" leaders recently released from jail by Erdogan, who have formed Talat Pasha Committees, or erected statues of noted murderers such as Topal (Lame) Osman, famous for throwing Armenians overboard from boats into the Black Sea, or for throwing Pontic Greeks into the boiler rooms of ships through the funnels. Another indication whether Erdogan is serious in changing direction would be to stop the ridiculous publications and conferences of the state-financed Turkish Historic Society. Their latest publication had the number of Armenians perished during 1915 reduced down to 8,000, who had all "died due to illness." Their latest conference in Van in April 2014 where 35 so-called professors presented papers, was attended by only 7 persons; one of the papers in all seriousness claimed that the 235 intellectuals arrested on April 24, 1915 were all very well treated, well fed and cared for in Ayas and Cankiri, and all returned to Istanbul within a few

months, "without even a tiny scratch on their bodies." Finally, Erdogan must understand that there is no need to assemble an international historic commission to prove the veracity of the 1915 events – this has already been done for him by scholars worldwide from Ottoman Turkish and international archives. If the Turkish objective of the historic commission is to prove that Armenians were indeed fomenting rebellion, and thereby to justify the decision of relocation and wholesale massacres, these are already documented and open in Armenian and international archives. And yes, there have been localized revenge massacres of Moslems by Armenian volunteer troops entering Anatolia with the Russian army in 1916, but after the 1915 Genocide had already taken place. He can assemble a commission within Turkey, as there are now enough credible and serious Turkish scholars who can overcome the lies spread by the state sponsored lackeys at the Turkish Historical Society. Instead, he must understand that there are still critical Ottoman Turkish archives are not open, and authorize opening still hidden 1915 deportation/liquidation records from 33 Ottoman provinces, as well as the Ottoman property deed records, still banned by the Turkish Army Chief of Staff. Yes, there is a need for an international commission, not to establish the truths of 1915 but to deal with the consequences of the 1915 truths and restitution of justice.

Of course it is essential for Erdogan and the Turkish state to deal correctly with the trauma and pain of the "murdered" and not "dead" victims of 1915 as he referred to in his message. But the issue is much more than that. There is the bigger issue of a massive plunder, transfer of wealth, land and assets resulting from the murder of these victims. If the Turkish or Kurdish grandfathers in Turkey are guilty of murder, the leaders today, their grandchildren, are guilty of not only the denial of the murders, but more importantly, guilty of enjoying from the proceeds of the crimes, benefitting from the continued possession of the stolen wealth, land and assets. The president of the Turkish State today resides in the home of the Kasapyan family. A well-known Turkish newspaper editor owns the historic Varakavank Monastery near Van, and the entire village where Armenians lived until 1915. The Turkish state now owns the land and whatever is left standing on it, belonging to more than 4,000 Armenian churches and schools active before 1915. The Turkish and Kurdish notables have seized and still possess hundreds of thousands of houses, shops, stores, farms, orchards, vineyards, factories, warehouses and mines owned by the Armenians before 1915. This massive plunder is not the result of a state invading and conquering a foreign state during a war, but it is because a state decided to murder its own citizens and take possession of these citizens' assets, followed by a series of legislation to legalize the robbery. This issue has nothing to do whether the murders are defined as "genocide" or not, and must be addressed by the Turkish State regardless, through revised legislation and return of the assets to the rightful owners and heirs.

While Erdogan and Turkish leaders have a lot of work to do to clean up the past, Armenians cannot afford just to meet among themselves or expect third-country politicians to take up their cause for them. As an advocate of direct dialogue with our adversaries, I suggest increased contact with Turks, Kurds and the new emerging reality of hidden Armenians, toward building trust, understanding and a common "body of knowledge."

see ERDOGAN, page 16



ACF Releases Second Edition of Orphan Rug Book

BOOK, from page 1

several decades in the possession of the Coolidges and its return again to the White House in the mid-1980s, where it is stored to this day.

The first edition, published in 2013, was warmly welcomed by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, where the rug was supposed to be displayed and where its story was to be told. Deranian was supposed to be the keynote speaker at the opening of the one day exhibition, on December 16, 2013. Then, to great surprise and regret, just as the details of the exhibition were being finalized, the White House informed the collaborating organizations of its decision not to lend out the rug. This abrupt decision resulted in the cancellation of the exhibit, and spread deep disappointment and heartbreak among the organizers; the Armenian American community at large was outraged.

A comprehensive article then appeared in the October 21, 2013 issue of the *Washington Post* by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Philip Kennicott, which highlighted the history of the rug and explored the reasons behind the curious decision. A barrage of critical articles, essays, reports, press conferences, and discussions as well as television and radio programs dedicated to the controversy, followed in the Armenian and American media. The excuse the White House gave for not lending out the rug was that it would be "inappropriate" to do so for

an event including a book launch.

Appeals by Armenian advocacy groups, supported by congressional figures sympathetic to the Armenian causes, then launched a campaign of their own, asking the White House and President Barak Obama to release the rug in honor of the legacy of the Near East Relief Foundation and the memory of the orphans of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. This issue is still unresolved.

The importance of the rug was recognized early in its history.

"The beautiful rug woven by the [Armenian] children in the [Ghazir] orphanage in the Lebanon has been received. This, their expression of gratitude for what we have been able to do in this country for their aid, is accepted by me as a token of their goodwill to the people of the United States. ... The rug has a place of honor in the White House, where it will be a daily symbol of good-will on earth." These words of President Calvin Coolidge on December 4, 1925, were made in response to Dr. John H. Finley, Vice-Chairman of the Near East Relief Executive Committee, who presented the rug for the Armenian orphans who "have tied into it the gratitude of tens of thousands of children to you and to America. And what they have tied into it will never be untied. ... It is sent to adorn the dearest of our temples, the White House of our President."

Born in Worcester, in 1922, the author, Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian was born to

Genocide survivors from the town of Hussenig, Kharpert Province. He was named Hagop in honor of Hagop Bogigian, his mother's uncle, who was a pioneer rug merchant in America and benefactor of education for Armenian young women. His mother, born Varter Bogigian, who died in 1929, was a survivor of the genocide, having lost six children, her first husband, and parents. His father, Marderos, who died in 1957, arrived in America in 1900 and operated a grocery store in Worcester. His father raised him from the age of 7.

Deranian, a graduate of Clark University and the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine, served as lieutenant (junior grade) in the United States Navy (1951-53) and has been engaged in the private practice of dentistry while at the same time serving on the faculty of the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine.

His translation of his father's memoir, *Hussenig, The Origin, History and Destruction of an Armenian Town*, was published in 1996; an earlier bilingual edition appeared in 1981. His second book, *Worcester Is America, the Story of Worcester's Armenians*, appeared in 1995 followed by *Miracle Man of the Western Front: Dr. Varaztad H. Kazanjian, Pioneer Plastic Surgeon*, which was published in 2007.

In light of the great demand and interest internationally, the Armenian Cultural Foundation has welcomed considered the publication of *President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug* in several languages, including German, Russian and Armenian. To obtain the copies of the new edition, contact the ACF.

A Reply to Mr. Erdogan

ERDOGAN, from page 15

Armenian opinion-makers, media, academia, lawyers, artists, filmmakers, engineers and architects, NGOs and organizations must make contact with their counterparts in Turkey through conferences, cultural events, media and student exchanges, reconstruction projects and jointly organized April 24 commemorations within Turkey. Thanks to the continuing efforts of a few of these individuals and initiatives, the number of opinion makers and democratically open-minded people who have become aware of the truths of 1915 in Turkey is growing dramatically. We are all aware that the problem is within Turkey but we should all realize that the solution will also be within Turkey. It is our hope that Erdogan's message is a real step in the right direction, to be proven only if immediate deeds as described above follow the words.

(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer and concert pianist, living in Toronto, Canada. He has donated concert and CD proceedings to infrastructure projects in Armenia and Karabagh, in which he has also participated as an engineer. He helped organize the reconstruction of the Surp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church and the first Armenian reclaim of church properties in Anatolia after 1915. He gave the first piano concert in the Surp Giragos Church since 1915.)

Orphan Rug to Go on Display at White House in Near Future

RUG, from page 1

members, sent a letter to President Obama in 2013 urging the administration to allow exhibition of the rug.

The Armenian Assembly of America welcomed the development.

News reports surfaced about Turkish pressure on the White House last year and the cancellation of the event, which led to an outcry by Members of Congress, including Sen. Edward Markey (D-MA), along with Representatives Schiff (D-CA) and David Valadao (R-CA) who spearheaded a letter to Obama, signed by more than 30 Members of Congress, calling on him to release the rug.

With the Coolidge rug unavailable, the

Assembly launched a campaign to display the Armenian Orphan "Sister Rug." Since then, that rug has been displayed in Boston and Boca Raton, Fla., and was planned to be displayed at an event on Capitol Hill with Schiff in March, but was postponed due to a snow-storm.

"I'm extremely touched," Deranian said upon learning the news. "I have faith in the American government, that it will do the right thing in the end," he said.

"The display of this tangible expression of gratitude for America's humanitarian intervention to save the survivors of the Armenian Genocide is a positive development," stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

Ground Consecrated for Pasadena Memorial

MONUMENT, from page 1

There were musical performances by choirs from the Sahag Mesrob Armenian Christian School in Altadena and the Armenian General Benevolent Union High School in Pasadena.

Student speakers included Alex Berberian, a senior at Pasadena High School, and Daniel Mouradian, a freshman at AGBU High School.

Tagoui Arzoumanian recited the poem "Menk and the Dance" and Eric Chilingazyan, a young child, recited the poem "My Armenia."

Federal, state and local elected officials as well as dignitaries from community organizations, churches and schools participated in the event as well.

The Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial, approved by the Pasadena City Council in September 2013, will be completed and dedicated at the north side of Memorial Park in April 2015 to mark the 100th anniversary of



Other members of the clergy and dignitaries at the ceremony

the killing of 1.5 million Armenians over a three-year period beginning in 1915. It will commemorate the Armenian Genocide and condemn all crimes against humanity

For more information about the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial visit www.PASAGMC.org or PASAGMC on Facebook.

Special New Subscriber Offer for the Mirror-Spectator

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* is offering a special deal this spring to new readers. The offer, valid now through May 31, 2014, will give new subscribers a chance to get the newspaper for the reduced price of \$60 for one year, instead of the regular \$80. If a new subscriber gets two new subscriptions, the price for one year will be reduced to \$55 for each new subscription.

All payments (by credit card or check) should be received by May 31, 2014.

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