

## Obama Asks Supreme Court Not to Hear Insurance Claims Case

WASHINGTON — The Obama Administration urged the Supreme Court not to hear the appeal of the Ninth Circuit's 2012 decision striking down a California law extending the statute of limitations on Armenian Genocide-era life insurance claims, reported the Armenian National Committee of America.

"President Obama, rather than filing a brief based on the merits of this case, chose instead — on the eve of Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to Washington, DC — to send Ankara a political gift by both deepening his administration's complicity in the denial of the Armenian Genocide and also obstructing justice for American citizens seeking redress through the US courts," said Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) Executive Director Aram Hamparian. "We will, despite the president's retreat from principle, persevere in pursuit of the justice owed the Armenian nation."

In a 27-page brief submitted to the Supreme Court last week, the US Solicitor General argues that the California law improperly allows courts "to issue judgments based on politically contentious events that occurred in the Ottoman Empire nearly a century ago, with no substantial basis to claim that it is regulating in an area of its traditional authority."

It also makes reference to selective Executive branch opposition to Armenian Genocide legislation, but not the US record of recognition of the Armenian Genocide as a crime of genocide, including:

1. The US government's May 28, 1951 written statement to the International Court of Justice regarding the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, in which the "Turkish massacres of Armenians" is cited among other "outstanding examples of the crime of genocide"

see INSURANCE, page 16



## Genocide Survivor Siran Kassabian Receives State House Proclamation

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Community of Massachusetts, with the sponsorship of several state senators and representatives, has organized the Armenian Genocide commemoration at the Massachusetts State House for the last 28 years. At the commemoration, survivors receive proclamations. This year's commemoration was scheduled to take place on April 19 but was scrapped due to the tragic events in Boston and Watertown on that day. On Sunday, May 12, Mother's Day, after the Divine Liturgy, state Rep. Jonathan Hecht (D-Watertown) and state Sen. Will Brownsberger (D-Belmont), presented the first State House proclamation to St. James Armenian Church parishioner, Siran Kassabian, 93, signed by Gov. Deval Patrick. In the photo, from left, are, Fr. Arakel Aljalian, Brownsberger, Hecht, Kassabian and her daughter, Hrip Parsekian.

## Mark Geragos Speaks at St. James Men's Club

By Nancy Kalajian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WATERTOWN — Attorney Mark Geragos, the featured speaker on Monday, May 6, at the monthly dinner meeting of the Men's Club of St. James Armenian Church, drew an audience of more than 500 men and women. The noted criminal defense attorney spoke about his new book, Armenian heritage, current events and the successful lawsuits against New York Life Insurance and AXA Corp. for claims on insurance poli-



From left, Bob Semonian, Mark Geragos and Peter Koutoujian

cies issued to Armenians before the Armenian Genocide.

see GERAGOS, page 7

## Holy Trinity Armenian Church Hosts CNN's Peter Bergen

CAMBRIDGE — CNN national security analyst and journalist, Peter Bergen,

By Gabriella Gage  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

shared his first-hand experience of meeting Osama Bin Laden, during his May 7 talk as part of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston's Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian Distinguished Speaker Series.

Bergen, best-selling author of *Manhunt: The Ten-Year Search for Osama Bin Laden — From 9/11 to Abbottabad*, gave a talk titled "The Awakening: The Remaking of the Middle East" to an audience of more than 120 people in the church's Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall.

see BERGEN, page 16



## Banquet Honors Nazar and Artemis Nazarian

NEW YORK — About 400 friends and family members attended a banquet, jointly sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, honoring Nazar and Artemis Nazarian for their lifetime of service and philanthropy, on Friday May 10, at the Plaza Hotel. Presiding over the event was the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, who had traveled from Armenia specially for this occasion. At the end of the program, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian invited the catholicos to present the Nazarians with the Knight of Holy Echmiadzin Medal.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Speier Tackles Increase In Military Sexual Assaults

WASHINGTON (*San Francisco Chronicle*) — One day after a Pentagon report revealed a jump in military sexual assaults, more evidence has emerged of disturbing behavior directed towards female service members.

Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) issued a letter last week to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, Marine Commandant James Amos and Inspector General Lynne Halbrooks, alerting them to a Facebook page displaying content degrading female members of the US Marine Corps. She urged that action be taken.

The background wallpaper for one particular page shows a woman's breasts, and includes numerous pictures depicting women in various forms of nudity and being verbally and sometimes physically abused. The page also includes images of women taken without their permission, inviting commenters to add their own captions. Many of the pictures imply women only advance professionally by performing sexual favors and otherwise promote the idea that women are inferior and only useful as sexual objects and sandwich makers.

Speier added that the sexual assault numbers show reforms to be "woefully insufficient" thus far.

"The military cannot eradicate this problem without fundamentally changing its approach, including its tolerance of participation in these kinds of websites," she wrote.

According to reports, a whistleblower alerted Speier to the site. The Facebook page in question has since been taken down, but contained more than 10,000 likes and hundreds of comments on various photos.

### Armenia's PM Hosts Outgoing Swiss Ambassador

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian hosted the Ambassador of Switzerland to Armenia Konstantin Obolensky last week, who is finishing his diplomatic mission in the country.

The government press agency reported that Sargsian praised the activity of the ambassador for improving relations between the two nations.

"A steadfast foundation for the expansion of the Armenian-Swiss ties has been laid during these years. The experience of Switzerland in the development of various spheres is a good example for us; hence, the strengthening of bilateral cooperation is of a certain importance to us."

The two also discussed joint projects, including developing rural communities and cattle breeding in the province of Syunik, which is more agricultural in nature.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Montenegro Deputy Prime Minister Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro Igor Luksic paid a visit to the Tzitzernakaberd memorial on May 7 as part of his diplomatic tour of the country.

After commemorating the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims, Luksic visited the Genocide Museum, where the director of the Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide, Hayk Demoyan, introduced the history and artifacts of the museum to the guest.

Luksic made a note in the memorial book of official visits.

Luksic paid an official visit to Armenia on the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Eduard Nalbandian. The President of Armenia Serge Sargsian, the chairman of the National Assembly Hovik Abrahamian and Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian met with Luksic as well.

“Armenia and Montenegro are in good relations, but we have agreed to get involved in closer political negotiations to develop our cooperation in the forthcoming future,” stated Luksic. “In this case it is quite important to encourage the ministries, tour agents and air companies to organize charter flights between the two countries,” he added.

Nalbandian stated that during his meeting with Luksic, they discussed the development of the commercial and economic, education and scientific and cultural relations.

## Armenian President Marks Victory Day In Nagorno-Karabagh

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenian President Serge Sargsian last week visited Nagorno Karabagh to mark the 68th anniversary of the end of World War II.

He took part in celebrations of Victory Day, which is also marked on the same day as the Day of Nagorno-Karabagh's Army and the anniversary of the liberation of Shushi.

The history-laden town came under Armenia's control on May 9, 1992.

## List of Newly-Elected Yerevan Council of Aldermen Published

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Armenia considered the applications for withdrawal submitted by the candidates of the Yerevan Council of Aldermen and invalidated the registrations of 21 candidates from the ruling Republican Party of Armenia and 113 candidates from the Prosperous Armenia Party.

The press service of the Central Election Commission reported that the registration of Mesrop L. Movsisyan from the “Hello, Yerevan” bloc was also nullified.

## Newly-Built St. Johannes Mkrtich Church of Abovyan Consecrated

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians, consecrated the newly-built St. Johannes Mkrtich Church in Abovyan. The church was built by the leader of the Prosperous Armenia Party, Gagik Tsarukyan. The opening ceremony of the church was attended by the president of Armenia, Serge Sargsian, the former president, Robert Kocharian, as well as the president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, who had arrived in Armenia for an official visit.

During the ceremonies, Tsarukyan expressed his gratitude to all those present as well as the team who implemented the works.

Architect Artak Ghulyan spoke briefly, adding that the work spoke for itself.

The church construction had started in 2006.

# ‘Armenia in My Eyes’ Photo Exhibit Opens

YEREVAN – The “Armenia in My Eyes” photo exhibit sponsored by the Tekeyan Centre Fund, opened on May 4.

The art show included works by eight photographers: Armen Yengoyan, Aram Arekhtsyan, Armen Tsulikyan, Norayr Abgaryan, Andranik Keshishyan, Hovhannes Badalyan, Alexander Khanbekyan and Harutyun Khachatryan. Not all of them are professional photographers, some are just lovers of nature and broad-minded travelers who were inspired by the picturesque landscape of Armenia.

All the photos at the exhibition were taken after the year 2000; the geography included areas from Western Armenia to Karabagh. The goal of the exhibition was to reveal undiscovered corners of the motherland and to con-



The opening of the exhibit



From left, Harutyun Khachatryan, Vartan Ouzounian, Hovhannes Badalyan, Norayr Abgaryan, Alexander Khanbekyan, Andranik Keshishyan and Armen Tsulikyan

vey its beauty to public. The exhibition also raised the issue of environmental protection.

The Director of Tekeyan Centre Fund Armen Tsulikyan, who was also one of the participants at the exhibit, said the Fund tried to contribute to the preservation of nature and the environment which is a global issue all over the world, and hoped to draw the attention of the society to the environment problems that threaten the planet.

At the opening, Tsulikyan promised to continue the range of programs and said he hoped to find more photographers and nature lovers in Armenia to participate in future exhibits.

## Sex Imbalances at Birth Threaten Armenia's Demography

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – The United Nations Population Fund of Armenia (UNFPA) held a press conference this week to present the findings of the 2012-2013 study, “Sex Imbalances at Birth in Armenia: Demographic Evidence and Analysis.”

The purpose of the study was an in-depth analysis of sex-at-birth imbalances in Armenia and projecting the possible consequences of the skewed sex ratio for the country. The study was conducted by Christophe Z Guilmoto, senior fellow at the French Institut de recherche pour le developement (IRD, Research Institute for Development) based at Center for Population and Development (CEPED) in Paris and a leading expert on the issue of prenatal sex selection, at the request of UNFPA Armenia Country Office.

Guilmoto, together with Dr. Zahidul Huque, UNFPA representative for Turkey and country director for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and Garik Hayrapetyan, UNFPA Armenia assistant representative spoke at the press conference.

As the speakers indicated, the sex ratio at birth in Armenia rose after early 90s and today remains at a very high level of 114-115 of male births per 100 female births. This corresponds to one of the highest levels of birth masculinity observed anywhere in the world, surpassed only by China (118) and Azerbaijan (116).

According to the study, if the adverse practice of preventing girls from being born for the sake of having a boy is continued, almost 93,000 women will “go missing” and Armenia's population will reduce by an additional 80,000 inhabitants (it corresponds to the annual number of births over two years) by 2060, constituting, ceteris paribus, 2.60 million.

As the speakers noted, in Armenia, male children born after 1996 already outnumber female children by almost 39,000. “If we fail to prevent this

process, part of men of the most active age in terms of entering marriage, 20-39 year olds, will relatively soon face problems, and being unable to find a pair will be forced either to migrate or to look for wives from abroad”, said Hayrapetyan.

The press conference was followed by a conference, where the representatives of different stakeholders were greeted by Arayik Petrosyan, first deputy minister of labor and social issues and Huque.

At the conference, Guilmoto presented the study findings in deeper detail. In addition, a number of presentations were given to shed light on the phenomenon of sex imbalances at birth from a variety of perspectives including those of demographic, health, social and gender equality.

UNFPA is an international development agency aimed at fostering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person's potential is fulfilled.



## Young Armenian-American Couple Dies in Georgia

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – Allen Yekikian, the director of communications at the American University of Armenia (AUA), and his wife, Sose Thomassian, died in a car accident on May 10 in Georgia. Yekikian was the former assistant editor for the English-language section of *Asbarez* newspaper.

Messages of condolence were posted in the *Asbarez* website and civilnet.am, a site he had been designing and developing, as well as social media sites, with many readers stunned by the news of the young newlyweds' deaths.

A candlelight vigil was held outside the AUA's main building on Saturday, May 11.





## INTERNATIONAL

## Turkish PM Condemns Israeli Air Strikes in Syria

ANKARA (*Hurriyet Turkish Daily News*) – Both Israel and its arch-foe Iran received their share of criticism from Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan this week for their policies regarding Syria, as he broke his silence on Israeli strikes in Syria.

In his condemnation of “international policy” on Syria, Erdogan singled out the two regional rivals. He also lamented that the UN Security Council would suffer the consequences if it continued to remain silent in the face of atrocities committed in Syria.

“The air strike that Israel carried out on Damascus is completely unacceptable. There is no rationale, no pretext that can excuse this operation,” Erdogan said, addressing a parliamentary meeting of his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

“These attacks are chances, opportunities offered on a golden plate to al-Assad and to the illegitimate Syrian regime. Using the Israel attack as an excuse, he is trying to cover up the genocide in Baniyas,” Erdogan said, referring to a Syrian coastal town where anti-Assad activists said at least 62 people were killed by government fighters over the weekend.

“Al-Assad, who has not sweated a single drop against Israel for the [occupation of the] Golan Heights is now using the Israeli attack to cover up the Baniyas massacre,” he said. Israeli officials said the air strikes on May 3 and May 5 were not intended to influence its neighbor’s civil war, but only at stopping Iranian missiles reaching Lebanese Hezbollah militants for possible use against the country. Erdogan likened the mass killings of civilians in the town of Baniyas to the Battle of Karbala. He also likened the perpetrators to Caliph Yazid.

After the Hama massacre in 1982, Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini had distanced himself from then-Syrian President Hafez al-Assad and accepted him into his office only months after the massacre, Erdogan said. “Fine, now I ask those who are now running the same office: I wonder how long you will turn a blind eye to this massacre? The organizations that lend support to Syria’s illegitimate regime, the states that back Syria’s illegitimate regime, particularly the UN and the [UN] Security Council, will suffer the consequences,” he said.

Expressing outrage at the killing of children by the regime, which he said he had seen pictures of, Erdogan blasted the international community for its failure to act.

“I wonder how long you will turn a blind eye to this massacre,” Erdogan said. “Damn your international policies!” he yelled, while urging the UN Security Council to “urgently convene” over the Baniyas killings, which have sent residents fleeing.

Over the weekend, Erdogan had called the Syrian president a “butcher,” in his harshest attack in recent months.

## Photos of Jailed Azerbaijani Activists Cleaning Toilets Spark Outcry

BAKU (RFE/RL) – Photos posted online showing three detained opposition activists cleaning toilets and performing other manual work at a prison have sparked anger in Azerbaijan.

The photos were posted May 10 on Haqqin.az, a news website run by former jailed Azerbaijani journalist Eynulla Fatullayev.

The activists, two of whom have already been released, have called the photos a “provocation” and an act aimed at discrediting them.

The three are Abulfaz Qurbanli, head of the opposition Azerbaijani Popular Front Party’s youth wing; Turgut Gambar, a member of NIDA, a youth opposition movement active on social media and son of opposition Musavat party leader Isa Gambar and Ilkin Rustamzadeh, a member of the Free Youth organization.

Qurbanli and Gambar were released on May 10. Rustamzadeh is still serving his 15-day sentence and was scheduled to be released on May 15.

In a statement on May 13, more than 30 civil society activists expressed their objections to the photos’ publication, decrying the violation of the detained activists’ rights. They say that the photos were posted online with the intent of discrediting the activists.

Qurbanli said they were not aware they were being photographed.

Haqqin.az claims the photos were initially published on pro-government websites that had “mocked” the activists, but RFE/RL’s Azerbaijani Service could not find the photos posted on any other websites.

Vugar Mammadov, a spokesman for Azerbaijan’s ombudsman, has appealed to the Interior Ministry for an explanation.

“These pictures could not have been taken by someone from outside,” Mammadov said.

The youth activists were detained on April 30 at a protest marking the fourth anniversary of a shooting spree at Azerbaijan’s State Oil Academy.

The photos’ publication sparked an outcry on Facebook, though many users also pointed out that there is nothing shameful about cleaning toilets. Some users shared photos of themselves cleaning their own toilets.

Fatullayev, who runs Haqqin.az, spent four years in jail on charges his supporters



Activists are shown cleaning toilets and performing other manual work around the prison in Baku

say were related to his journalistic work before he was released from prison by a presidential pardon in 2011.

Earlier this year, Amnesty International cut ties with Fatullayev after he “misled the organization about the source of funding for a project.”

Fatullayev has increasingly been siding with the Azerbaijani government. In a March 10 article, he accused the head of the US-funded National Democratic Institute’s (NDI), Alex Grigoriev, of aiming to fund a “Facebook revolution” in Azerbaijan. His article went viral on pro-government media sites.

Azerbaijan has stepped up its crackdown on activists and NGOs ahead of the October presidential election. On May 10, four local residents were sentenced to 10 days in prison for participating in an unsanctioned protest in Azerbaijan’s northeastern town of Xudat.

## AGBU Raises \$5,000 in Plovdiv

PLOVDIV, Bulgaria – The AGBU Plovdiv Chapter celebrated its 103rd anniversary with a charity gala, “Children and Youth – Our Future,” to raise funds for the participation of Bulgarian-Armenian children and youth at AGBU and Diaspora Ministry summer programs in Armenia. The AGBU Plovdiv Young Professionals played a pivotal role in organizing the successful evening, which raised more than \$5,000, including proceeds from an auction, at the city’s exclusive Viennese Pavilion.

The gala was attended by more than 220 guests from five different cities in Bulgaria, including Armenian Ambassador to Bulgaria Arsen Shoyan, Vicar General of the Armenian Diocese in Bulgaria Archimandrite Abgar Hovakimian, Honorary Consul of Armenia in Plovdiv Ehiazar Uzunyan, former mayors Garabed Tomasyan and Spas Garnevski, AGBU Plovdiv Chapter

Chair Roupen Chavoushian, as well as a number of prominent city council members and politicians.

The gala guests enjoyed a program with the participation of the AGBU Vocal and Instrumental Band Ereboundi, the Armenian Dance Group Nayiri and the Bulgarian Dance Ensemble Rachenitsa. They also watched video presentations on programs targeted by the fundraising efforts, including AGBU’s Discover Armenia, Yerevan Summer Internship Program, Antranik Scout Camp, as well as the Diaspora Ministry’s Ari Tun program.

The main event of the evening was the auction titled, “For the Children by the Children.” All the items up for auction came from Armenia, including a duduk, a mother-of-pearl khachkar and four works of art made by the youth at AGBU’s Children’s Centers in Armenia, which became the object of a heated bidding war.

## Azeri Mercenaries May Be Fighting in Syria

DAMASCUS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – A report on Azerbaijani terrorists fighting in Syria along the side of the rebels aired on the Azeri ANS TV channel.

Gafgazregion.az quoted the father of one such reported mercenary, Rashad, who had reportedly joined the Syrian rebels. Zakaria Mamedov, the father, was quoted as saying, “that is my son, he’s doing Jihad in the name of Allah for the protection of Muslims.” In an online

chat with his son, Mamedov was told there were a number of Azeris within the Syrian rebel ranks.

The mother of another Azeri, Rizvan Suleymanov, said that she had recently discovered that her son is fighting in Syria. “They’re not fighting against Muslims, they are protecting Muslims against Armenians, the enemies of Muslims. That’s all there is to it,” she said.

## International News

### Armenia Seeks French Investors

PARIS (Arminfo) – Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian met with his French counterpart Laurent Fabius on May 13 during his visit to France.

The ministers welcomed the high level of cooperation between the two countries and said they hoped to work towards the enhancement of economic cooperation. In this context, Nalbandian said that Armenia welcomed the growth of French investments in economy of Armenia and new initiatives.

The ministers discussed Karabagh peace process, with Nalbandian stressing Armenia’s willingness to contribute to the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

### ICC to Examine Gaza Flotilla Raid

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (PanArmenian.net) – The International Criminal Court’s (ICC) prosecutor said on Tuesday, May 14, that she would open a preliminary examination into the events surrounding the 2010 Israeli raid on a humanitarian aid flotilla bound from Turkey to the Gaza strip in which nine people died.

Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said in a statement that she was obliged to open a preliminary examination following a referral from the Indian Ocean island nation of Comoros, to which one of the vessels raided was registered. Few preliminary examinations ever lead to a full investigation, let alone a trial.

“My office will be conducting a preliminary examination in order to establish whether the criteria for opening an investigation are met,” she said in response to the referral, which was transmitted by a Turkish law firm.

### Azerbaijan Starts Military Exercises Near Karabagh

BAKU (RFE/RL) – Azerbaijan has started military exercises near its mainly Armenian-populated breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabagh.

The Defense Ministry announced on May 14 that Defense Minister Safar Abiyev was personally leading the maneuvers.

Azerbaijan’s land and air forces are taking part in the exercises, which are expected to last until the end of the week.

### Dorians Seek Eurovision Win for Armenia

MALMO, Sweden (ArmeniaNow) – Armenia’s Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan has called on all ethnic Armenians living in Europe to support the Dorians, a rock band representing Armenia at this year’s Eurovision contest.

The first semifinal in the Eurovision 2013 Song Contest began this week. The Dorians, led by vocalist Gor Sujyan, will perform in the second semifinal on May 16. The grand finale of the contest, in which the winner is decided by a combination of jury and audience televoting, will take place on May 18.

In a statement released on Monday, Hakobyan urged all Armenians in Europe to vote for the Armenian representative.

“I ask all those whose souls are filled with Armenianness, who are ready to have a contribution to keeping Armenia’s name high at an international contest... if our compatriots living in Europe find some time to support our singer, our victory will be assured,” said Hakobyan.

What are often called “ethnic votes” have long been a factor in Eurovision contests. Such votes are also believed to have helped Armenians win high places in the competition in the past.

This year Armenia may have another major boost as co-author of Sujyan’s song, *Lonely Planet*, legendary Black Sabbath guitarist Toni Iommi has recorded a video asking his European fans to vote for the Dorians at Eurovision.





# Community News

## Detroit St. John's Commemorates Dual Remembrances

By Julia Papyants

DETROIT – The clouds loomed above, gray and heavy with rain. It was a Wednesday. “I had hoped for great weather today,” said Father Garabed Kochakian on April 24, the day Armenians worldwide gather to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. The April 24 Commemoration was different this time around at St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit, the church Father Garabed has presided over for more than a decade. This year, a new monument stood adjacent to the 1915 Martyr’s Monument, and with it, a new tradition of remembrance emerged.

The new monument was a project that spanned several years and remembered the pogroms of 1988-1991 of Armenians in Azerbaijan. Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet government, thousands of Armenians suffered this smaller-scale genocide. Eventually, those who survived found refuge across the globe and many settled in metropolises like Brooklyn, Detroit and Los Angeles, to name but a few.

The brainchild of Kochakian, the memorial project, dedicated to survivors of these tragic events, was led by Ed Korkoian, lovingly called “Haigy” at the St. John Parish. Korkoian has been a member of the Church for more than 50 years, committing himself to various Armenian causes. Naturally, this monument was no exception. The vision also could not have been exe-



The new monument dedicated to the victims and survivors of the Azeri pogroms of Armenians

cutted without the time and talent of Arthur Lazaryan, the architect of this project.

Fast forward several years and the vision finally became a reality. The church sanctuary was filled with solemn music and prayers as the evening began with a requiem. Once the church ceremony was over, parishioners and visitors shifted outside. “And then,” Kochakian says with a smile, “It was as if God pushed the clouds aside and let the sun peek out.”

The change of venue from ambient lighting to bright surroundings revealed a record-breaking number of people. Some were faces Father Garabed sees every Sunday, like Deacon and Mrs. Mihran Hoplamazian, while others like Mr. and Mrs. Karen Der Boghossian came from Grand Rapids, a journey that takes three hours each way. After Father Garabed read a prayer for the 1915 Martyr’s Monument, he moved on to bless the new Baku-Sumgait-Kirovobad Memorial. On April 24, 2013, a much overdue unification occurred. Tears were shed as those who lost family in the Armenian Genocide were

see DETROIT, page 5



Senior students reciting poetry during the commemoration event

## TCA Arshag Dickranian School Commemorates Armenian Genocide

LOS ANGELES – The TCA Arshag Dickranian School held several programs dedicated to the memory of the Armenian Genocide during April. Students participated in events that addressed both the Armenian Genocide and the ongoing aftermath of the tragedy.

On April 23, TCA Arshag Dickranian School commemorated the victims of the Armenian Genocide and paid tribute to the school’s founding benefactor, Arshag Dickranian, who died on April 24, 1996. The event was attended by members of the Dickranian family, guests, board members, PTO members, students, teachers and parents.

The event began at 7 p.m. with a candle light vigil, which was held at the school’s courtyard, at which time Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian and Rev. Manoug Markarian conducted the requiem service with the participation of the school choir.

After the requiem service, congregates gathered at the Walter and Laurel Karabian Hall, which had been decorated with pictures of the Genocide and Armenia, as part of the program dedicated to the martyrs of the Genocide and the life of the late Arshag Dickranian.

A video about Armenian orphans called “The Children of Antoura” was presented by Missak Keletchian and was followed by a documentary about the life of Dickranian. The presentations were intermediated by poetry recitations about the Genocide – both in Armenian and English – and songs by the school choir.

The event concluded with the closing remarks and prayers by Hovsepian who asked students to always remember their identity and work hard to achieve success. After the program, coffee and sweets were served while guests mingled.

see DICKRANIAN, page 5



Rapper R-Mean performing at TCA ADS

## Rhode Island Commemorates Armenian Genocide

PROVIDENCE – On Sunday, April 28, under a bright sun and deep blue sky, the Armenian Martyrs’ Memorial Committee of Rhode Island commemorated the 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide at the Armenian Martyrs’ Memorial Monument at the entrance to North Burial Ground, something the community has done for 36 years.

The program opened with the presentation of the flags by the Homenetmen Scouts and placing of wreaths in front of the monument. Archpriest Rev. Gomidas Baghsarian from Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church; Rev. Shnorik Souin, Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church and Rev. Dr. Ara Heghinian, Armenian Evangelical Church performed a requiem service in memory of the 1.5 million martyrs. The combined choirs from the Armenian churches sang our Armenian hymns. The elected officials present and gave their messages were, US Representatives Jim Langevin and David Cicilline, Lt. Gov. Elizabeth Roberts and Providence Mayor Angel Tavares, who pledged their unwavering support to the Armenian community.

State Rep. Katherine Kazarian was also present. Former lawmaker and great supporter of Armenian causes, Aram Garabedian, spoke a few words. Nearly 400 hundred Armenians were present to pay homage to the martyrs.

Pauline Getzoyan and Esther Kalajian, who represent the Genocide Education Project, Rhode Island Branch, announced their 2013 Genocide Educator of the Year, Lindsay Grant



A group of clergy from Armenian churches in the state at the commemoration

Aromin of North Smithfield High School. This award includes a \$500 stipend, which is made possible through the support of the Armenian Martyrs’ Memorial Committee of Rhode Island and the Armenian National Committee of Rhode Island. Aromin has designed her classes about the Armenian Genocide and they are well attended by the students in her school. Her great-grandmother was a Genocide Survivor.

Guest speaker this year was Robert C. Petrucci Jr., who is a graduate of Rhode Island College and is a social studies teacher at East Greenwich High School. Petrucci has written three courses for the high school including “Genocide of the 20th Century” (2006). His method of teaching the Genocide is done in a very unique way and now holds 5 weekly sessions in the school. The class is very popular with the students and they get to learn not only about the Armenian Genocide, but by opening his students’ minds to see and recognize what genocide means and what they can do to help educate students and adults. He is one of two teachers involved with 75 students who meet annually at the State House to discuss global issues. His remarks were very interesting and educational and he received a standing ovation.

Six wreaths were placed by the following organizations, Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, Armenian Relief Society Arax Chapter, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Armenian Youth Federation, Homenetmen Chapter and the Knights and Daughters of Vartan. The Honor Guards included the Armenian Masonic Degree Team, the Knights of Vartan and the Homenetmen Scouts.

– Joyce Yeremian





## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Armenian Sisters' Academy Holds Commemorative Planting Ceremony

RADNOR, Penn. — Students of the Armenian Sisters' Academy (ASA) planted a garden together as part of their annual April 24 commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

The event was led by Principal Sister Emma Moussayan, Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgolian and Rev. Nishan Bakalian. Following the planting, the students sang *Hye Enk Menk*, accompanied by assembled parents, grandparents and guests.

Sister Emma announced the unveiling of a countdown clock, which will track and tick away the 730 days leading up to the 100th anniversary of the Genocide on April 24, 2015.

Gulgolian blessed the endeavor, encouraging everyone to do his or her part by spreading the message of the nearly century-old

tragedy and speaking Armenian to keep the culture alive. He challenged the students to make a difference during the next two years.

Once in the auditorium, the academy's youngest students recited "Abril Meeshd Abril" and sang *Artyok Ovker Yen*.

The sixth through eighth grade classes then presented the play, "God's Power is Great," which tells the story of the Turks' mistreatment of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

The program concluded with a requiem service and the symbolic pinning of red bows on a black cross.

That evening, academy students participated in the Philadelphia area Inter-Communal Genocide Program at St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church in Wynnewood, Penn.



Principal Sister Emma Moussayan and the Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgolian sing and pray with Academy students during the Academy's planting ceremony.

## Peabody Commemorates Armenian Genocide

PEABODY, Mass. — On Thursday, April 25, in front of the Peabody City Hall, a flag-raising ceremony was held in honor of the 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, led by Mayor Edward A. Bettencourt.

Jackie Torigian, the widow of the former mayor, Peter Torigian, and his sister, Mary Foley, were present. After the Armenian National Anthem, the Peabody Veterans Memorial High School (PVMHS) Chorale sang the American National Anthem.

Bettencourt said, "The Armenian Genocide Ceremony has been held in Peabody for the past 25 years. I remember one day during my senior year at Peabody High School, Mayor Peter Torigian came and spoke to my history class. It was the first time I had heard about the Armenian

Genocide. His stories of family tragedy and incredible courage in the face of such evil were so moving, and he spoke with such passion and emotion. It left a mark on me."

Father Vasken A. Kouzouian of Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge, and Deacon Avedis Garavanian, of North Andover's St. Gregory Armenian Church, performed the blessing and requiem service.

Kouzouian said, "more three weeks ago, Armenians celebrated the miracle of Easter and now we gather here in the heart of the City of Peabody to remember Armenian

Martyrs' Day." He compared two completely opposite occasions and concluded, "It's the promise that misery, and sorrow and death itself, are not the end. The Armenian people have brought into this promise for generations. And because of that Promise, we see ourselves as followers of the Risen Lord, and not as vic-



The members of the Peabody High School Chorale, with Mayor Edward Bettencourt in front of them

tims of death."

He continued, "So it's important to us, as Armenians, to let our faith shine through, in the cities and towns where we live; to let our faith shine through in front of all of you; to let our faith shine in front of our elected officials; and to let it shine when we stand in line on Election Day to vote, and when we serve on our local PTO's, or coach our children in Little League, or serve in local soup kitchens, or help keep our Cities and Towns green; and it's important to us to let our faith shine when we stand with our Jewish neighbors, and our

Cambodian neighbors, and Rwandan neighbors, and when we stand with all our neighbors who have suffered Genocides in their pasts; it's important to us because that's who we are.... And we are a people of faith."

Patrice Tierney represented her husband, Rep. John Tierney (D-MA), who was in Washington. "The Armenian Genocide was premeditated, deliberate, systematic murder of 1.5 million innocent people which created fear and intimidation with the intent to destroy generations of Armenian families. This was not a war, but an armed government. This was not an overblown incident; this was a brutal crime against humanity."

The main speaker was Sudi Smoller, the library teacher at the local middle school, who has developed a curriculum about tolerance that is inclusive of the history of the Armenian Genocide.

Smoller said, "When I was asked to speak, I thought, 'What could an Irish woman say about what it means to be Armenian?' Then she decided before accepting to speak, she watch recordings of the Armenian Genocide ceremony, including from 2001, which was the last time Mayor Peter Torigian hosted this event. 'His words seemed to speak directly to me. He said: 'It doesn't have to be an Armenian standing here to do this. If we are good at what we do, it could be anybody who would stand up here, understand our cause,

and do the things that are necessary to convince people that if we turn our backs on genocide and holocaust, then down the road, we are short-changing our children and grandchildren because the ugly head of genocide and holocaust will rise again and I think we have a responsibility to see that it doesn't happen again.' So, I have Peter's permission to be here addressing you and that makes me feel better. It was Peter who opened my eyes to your history."

"Denial has consequences. Deniers are accessories after the fact of genocide who have so far prevented an international political and legal process affirming the Genocide and that does not require appropriate restitution or curb further Turkish mistreatment of Armenians," she said.

She touched upon the Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan conflicts also.

The speaker ended her speech by remembering that on April 10, the state of Maine joined Massachusetts and Rhode Island and adopted legislation to support the democratic independence of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic. "Some believe these small steps are being made now with two years before the 100th anniversary. Now, more than ever, is the time to forge more inroads to normalize relations." After the ceremony, a light luncheon was served in the Wiggin Auditorium. Peabody Vocational Director Maria Ferri and Culinary Arts Students assisted at lunch, which was sponsored by Aurelian and Anahid Mardiros.

— Ani Babaian

## Dickranian School Commemorates Armenian Genocide

DICKRANIAN, from page 4

The school was closed on April 24 while students visited the Armenian Genocide Martyrs' Monument in Montebello, accompanied by Principal Dr. Maral Yeranossian, AP art history teacher Adam Ocampo and Armenian teacher Anahit Nasoyan, where they attended the annual program and placed a wreath at the monument.

On April 23, eighth and ninth grade students went on a five-day educational trip to visit historical sites in New York, Philadelphia and Washington DC. On April 24, the students visited St. Vartan Armenian Church and attended a service dedicated to the commemoration of the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

On April 19, Dr. Minas Kojayan visited TCA Arshag Dickranian School to talk to students about historical lands that were lost to Turkey during the Armenian Genocide in 1915. Kojayan visited the area in the summer of 2011 and 2012 and created a portfolio of his pilgrimage there, which he presented to the students in a slideshow. The purpose of his visit to the school was to give students the opportunity to see what historic Armenian lands.

During the morning assembly on April 15, head of English department Ricardo Rocha, English teacher Pascal Nittis and AP art histo-

ry teacher Adam Ocampo spoke about their experience at the school and the role the Armenian culture has played in their lives. The teachers talked about the similarities and differences between the Armenian culture and the Columbian, Mexican and Greek cultures.

Rapper and songwriter R-Mean visited the school on April 12, where he performed a few songs from his album "The Rising Son." Students gathered at the Walter and Laurel Karabian Hall waiting for R-Mean to take the stage. A highlight of R-Mean's performance was *Open Wounds* — a song he wrote about the Armenian Genocide, which corresponded with the purpose of the event being a part of programs this month dedicated to commemorate this tragedy in our history.

On April 9, Stepan B. Partamian visited TCA Arshag Dickranian School where he met with students ranging from 6th to 12th grade levels to educate students about the role and life of Armenians in the US. Partamian presented his book *Armenians in America* and a slide show about the accomplishments of Armenian-Americans in the areas of science, literature and art.

TCA Arshag Dickranian Armenian School is a federally tax-exempt, Pre-K to 12th grade private educational institution. For more information visit [www.dickranianschool.org](http://www.dickranianschool.org).

## Detroit St. John's Commemorates Dual Remembrances

DETROIT, from page 4

reminded that the struggle for survival continues into the present.

After the flowers were laid, a traditional madagh dinner was served inside the Cultural Hall. It was here that guest speaker author Chris Bohjalian spoke of his most recent publication. He explored his personal journey that led to writing *The Sandcastle Girls*, a sweeping historical love story deeply steeped in his own ethnic Armenian roots. Eyes were glued to the podium as Mr. Bohjalian eloquently narrated his journeys to Armenia and the inspiration that led pen to paper. Later in the evening, Bohjalian signed copies of both *The Sandcastle Girls* and *Midwives*. The line of people waiting for a book signing wrapped around the



Chris Bohjalian

church's hallway, and snippets of conversations between folks was certainly telling of the entire evening. "I want it signed for my daughter, Angelina, so she reads and knows how strong her people are," said Sam Antonyan as he patiently anticipated speaking with Bohjalian.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# South Florida Armenian Community Commemorates Genocide

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. —On Wednesday April 24, several hundred members of the South Florida Armenian American Community gathered at St Mary Armenian Church to commemorate the 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

The evening began with a *hokehankist* (memorial service), which was offered for the victims of the Armenian Genocide by the Rev. Nareg Berberian of St. David Armenian Church



FIU Professor Hannibal Travis presents his studies on the Armenian Genocide.

the deportation of women, children, the elderly and infirm on death marches to the Syrian Desert. The total number of Christian Armenians who perished as a result between 1915 and 1923 has been estimated at around 1.5 million. The Turkish government has yet to formally acknowledge the Genocide.

Raffy Yaghdjian, member of the St Mary Armenian Church parish council, served as master of ceremonies. In Yaghdjian's opening words he stated, "We are gathered here today to remind ourselves that the struggle is not over. The world did not learn. There were many more genocides following ours. The Assyrians, the Greeks, the Jews, the Cambodians, Rwandans and those in Darfur. So we continue with the struggle. We must continue to educate. We must continue to publicize. We must continue to publish books and write papers. We must continue to make the effort. We must continue to be creative in how we do it. After all, and I quote, 'all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.'"

As the program continued, Harry Pilafian, a survivor of the Genocide who was in attendance, was recognized with standing applause. Lilit Mnatsakanyan and Tanya Lusararian read papers they had composed regarding their perspectives on the Genocide, and Rita Vartanian of St David Armenian Church presented Armenian poetry.

Guest speaker Prof. Hannibal Travis of the Florida International University (FIU) College of Law addressed the audience about his ongoing study of the Armenian Genocide, particularly how it has been addressed by the US. Travis is the author of the first comprehensive history of physical and cultural genocide in the Middle East and North Africa, titled *Genocide in the Middle East: The Ottoman Empire, Iraq and Sudan*.

and Rev. Vartan Joulfayan of St. Mary Armenian Church.

After the service, a cross-cultural, multimedia program delved into the history surrounding the Armenian Genocide, as well as the emotions experienced by not only the survivors and descendants of survivors, but also the survivors of many of the numerous other genocides of the 20th century.

Armenians worldwide commemorate the Genocide on April 24 of each year, the day when, in 1915, Ottoman authorities arrested 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in Constantinople. Soon after, the Ottoman military took Armenians from their homes and began a systematic extermination of Armenians which was implemented in two phases: the killing of the able-bodied male population through massacre and forced labor, and



Armenian Genocide survivor Harry Pilafian was recognized by South Florida Armenian American community.

A short screening from the documentary "Orphans of the Genocide" was also presented by south Florida film producer Bared Maronian. A musical interlude followed, with Alique Mazmanian performing *Karouna* by Komitas on piano, Audrey Pilafian performing *Manoushak* and *Yeraz* on cello, Joseph Yenikomshian playing *Lord Have Mercy* on clarinet and Sage McBride performing *Krounk* by Komitas, on violin.

Before the conclusion of the program, Yaghdjian unexpectedly once more approached the podium to say, "I was just given a note that the Florida State Senate just passed a resolution recognizing April 24 as Armenian Martyrs

Remembrance Day for the first time in Florida history," to a round of applause.

Joulfayan offered in closing, "Many thanks to you, dear South Floridians, families, youth, and children, but, in a way, I should not be thanking you. We do not thank each other on this day. Today, we simply come to remember and never forget."

The South Florida Armenian Genocide commemoration was held under the auspices of St. David Armenian Church of Boca Raton, St. Mary Armenian Church of Hollywood and Florida Armenians, together with the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian National Committee and the Knights of Vartan.

## ACHT to Host Annual Golf Tournament

WAYLAND, Mass. — The Armenian Church of the Holy Translators (ACHT) of Framingham will host its 13th Annual Golf Tournament at the Sandy Burr Country Club on Monday, June 10.

Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m., and tee-off is at 10 a.m. This year's tournament will feature more than 40 ways to win. There will be three prize categories: men's, ladies' and co-ed, with first, second and third place for each as well as longest drive and closest to the pin.

Longtime Boston sportscaster, Bob Lobel, will be MC-ing the day and other sports personalities have been invited to attend.

Funds raised by the ACHT Golf Tournament will help enhance the religious education and cultural programs sponsored by the Sunday School, Armenian School and youth groups. Additional proceeds will help pay off damages sustained from last year's flood to the historic building. Donations will also be made to help

fund the parish's local community outreach programs, such as the Salvation Army Miracle Kitchen.

The church is offering several sponsorship opportunities for supporting as an individual, family or business at various levels. They are also accepting raffle and silent auction donations. Donations may include sports tickets or equipment, clothing, memorabilia and gift certificates for goods or services.

The cost per golfer includes golf, continental breakfast with choreg, lunch and authentic Armenian appetizers and dinner provided by a local Armenian caterer. For an additional cost, participants can receive 50 raffle tickets with many raffle prizes. For those who do not golf, dinner reservations are also available.

Reservations and a full list of sponsorship opportunities and ticket prices can be viewed at [www.holytranslators.org](http://www.holytranslators.org) or by emailing [acht-golf@gmail.net](mailto:acht-golf@gmail.net).

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## Detroit SOAR Chapter Holds First Fundraiser

DETROIT — The Detroit Chapter of SOAR (Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief) held its first fundraiser at St. John Armenian Church on Wednesday, May 8.

Chapter Chairman Drew Zamanigian welcomed 125 parishioners and other attendees. Zamanigian and Vice President Arlen Boyajian discussed SOAR's work in Armenia. SOAR's mission is to provide Armenian orphans around the world with humanitarian relief, which includes the essentials of food, medicine and clothing.

Zamanigian informed those present that guest-speakers, attorneys Mark Geragos and Pat Harris, had a flight delay from California and would not be able to attend. Geragos and Harris were scheduled to discuss their newly published book, *Mistrial: An Inside Look at How the Criminal Justice System Works ... and Sometimes Doesn't*.

In the absence of the guest-speakers, local writer George Mouradian was asked to speak about his works and gave a brief description of each, *Evils of the World*, *Time to Die*, *Armenian Sayings and Family Relations*, *Armenian InfoText* and several books for children.

During the reception which followed, copies of *Mistrial* were available for purchase with a portion of the proceeds designated to aid SOAR.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Mark Geragos Speaks at St. James Men's Club

GERAGOS, from page 1

To help raise funds for their non-profit group, SOAR (the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief) volunteers set up an informational booth and sold scores of copies of *Mistrial: An Inside Look at How the Criminal Justice System Works...and Sometimes Doesn't*, a new book co-authored by Mark Geragos and Pat Harris. Accommodating to guests queued up to have him autograph their books and pose for pictures, it looked as though Geragos was with his extended family and friends as he smiled, hugged, and warmly shook hands with an admiring fan club.

Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian served as the master of ceremonies during the program and in his introduction reflected on the recent Marathon bombings saying, "We

were Boston, Watertown and Armenian strong." He described SOAR as a group that provides humanitarian relief to orphan children in Armenia, and introduced George Yacubian, SOAR founder and National President, who spoke about its mission, accomplishments and growth from its creation in 2006 to current 37 chapters mainly in the USA but even reaching out to Yerevan, Moscow and Berlin. Garo Arakelian of the SOAR Boston chapter also spoke.

After Koutoujian's introduction, the audience stood up to cheer Mark Geragos who quickly took to the podium giving credit to "Watertown as the original Glendale" and deflating self-interest, humorously wondering if the \$12 dinner deal promoted by Bob Semonian (chairman of the Speaker's



From left, Dick Janjigian, Garo Arakelian, Mark Geragos, Bob Semonian and Peter Koutoujian



Mark Geragos signed copies of his book after his talk at the St. James' Men's Club.

Committee of the St. James Men's Club) was what attracted so many people to the Monday night dinner. From covering current events ranging from the Boston-Watertown area to those in California, he covered a lot of ground. He shared his thoughts on the mysterious Misha – described by a relative of Marathon bombing suspects as an Armenian (Christian) who converted to Islam – and the insensitivity of such a statement coming to light during a time when Armenians commemorate the Armenian Genocide, and where so many Armenians live in Watertown where the bombing suspects were caught.

As he grew up, Geragos was surprised how little people knew about the Genocide. Geragos shared the influence of William Saroyan's meaningful words about Armenians that are printed in a poster in his office. On a personal level, he shared that his dad was also a lawyer. Seeming pretty down to earth and frank, he shared that on one occasion, he received a call

to represent a certain person and came home and mentioned it to his daughter who explained who that well-known person was. He said it drives him crazy to be called a "celebrity lawyer."

Regarding recent lawsuits relating to insurance policies issued to Armenians before the Armenian Genocide, he described the great



More than 500 people attended Mark Geragos' talk at the meeting of St. James' Men's Club.

effort and steps involved in documenting the insured, finding heirs, and how one insurance company marketed to Armenians and Syrians; his research found that about 40 percent of policies issued to Armenians had no claims at all since no descendants were left.

The word "genocide" is controversial, Gergaos stated, and he spoke about the importance of reparations. As he completed his talk, audience members gave him another standing ovation. During the question-and-answer period, he suggested a few ideas for creating awareness of Armenians and issues of importance: developing candidates for political office, and engaging the media.

Many guests stayed long after the official program was over to engage in conversation and share their impressions of the night's guest speaker. "Mark Geragos is a leading advocate of the Armenian ethnic group. I don't think there's a finer representation of what our agenda should be on a larger scale; reparations should be our priority issue," said Bob Avakian.

George Khorikian concurred, "I feel proud to be an Armenian. It's good there is someone backing Armenian causes."

At 18, Ani Hollisian may have been one of the youngest people in the audience but as an aspiring lawyer, she was greatly impressed. "I loved his speech. It was short and to the point. He didn't use lawyer jargon so it was easy to follow him. He fights for Armenian causes." Attorney Richard Tarvezian agreed. "I was thoroughly impressed. He was entertaining, knowledgeable, and extremely competent. I'm proud to have him representing us."

Not only did this meeting have the largest attendance of any Men's Club dinner meeting ever held but the design of many food stations helped ensure that most guests didn't have to wait too long to eat a tasty traditional homemade *losh* and *kheyma* dinner with pilaf and salad.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# St. David Church Hosts 111th Diocesan Assembly

BOCA RATON, Fla. — During the 111th Diocesan Assembly, hosted by the St. David Church from May 2 to 4, delegates heard reports from the Diocesan organizations, including the Diocesan Council, Legate's Committee, Fund for Armenian Relief, Armenian Church Endowment Fund, Ararat Center, and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), presided over the meeting of clergy and lay delegates, representing parishes from across the Eastern Diocese.

The assembly opened on Thursday, May 2, with a reading of the message of Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians Karekin II. Rev. Narek Avagyan, a visiting priest from Holy Echmiadzin, read the message.

"It gives us great joy to see that under the shadow of the all-powerful arm of the Lord, the children of our nation in the diaspora keep Armenian life strong," His Holiness wrote. "With God-pleasing undertakings, they strengthen the Diocese that is under the Lord's care, and reinforce national institutions, as a testimonial to the splendor of their faith and for the preservation of their identity."

The assembly was chaired by Raffi Balian, of St. Mary Church of Washington, DC, with Michael Yapchaian, of St. James Church of Watertown, Mass., serving as vice chair. Terry Peterson, of St. Mesrob Church of Racine, Wis., served as the English secretary, and Rev. Hratch Sargsyan, pastor of St. Gregory of Narek Church of Cleveland, Ohio, served as Armenian secretary.

Outgoing Diocesan Council Chair Oscar Tatosian gave the Diocesan Council report. Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Diocesan Vicar, outlined the activities of the Armenian Studies, Christian Education and Youth Outreach sec-

Central Council addressed the Assembly, thanking delegates for their continued support of ACYOA programs.

Dn. Rubik Malian, chair of the Sacred Music Council, noted that the council will continue its

distributed to beneficiaries in March 2013. ACEF Board of Directors chair Bruce Ballard said the endowment fund has helped diverse Diocesan and parish programs, from St. Vartan and Hye camps to St. Nersess Armenian

Manoogian, gave a touching reminiscence. "As an honorable prince of the Armenian Church, he carried himself with grace and dignity, always," Terzian recalled. "He was a leader, a teacher, an inspiration."

Before adjourning, Barsamian thanked the assembly officers and expressed his appreciation to the Boca Raton parish for hosting the Assembly. He expressed special gratitude to the host parish's pastor, the Very Rev. Narek Berberian, and its organizing committee chair Carol Norigian.

Next year, the Diocesan Assembly will be hosted at the Diocesan Center in New York City.

Below are the names of individuals elected to Diocesan boards and positions during the 111th Diocesan Assembly.

• Board of Trustees: Dr. Raffi Hovanessian;

• Diocesan Council: Very Rev. Aren Jebejian; Rev. Fr. Aved Terzian; Thomas Ashbaian; Antranig Garibian; James Kalustian; Richard Norsigian

• Proposals Committee: Rev. Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan; Bruce Ashbaian; Karen Dederyan; Jay Kapur and Van Krikorian

• Nominating Committee: Rev. Stepanos Doudoukjian; Ed Brewster; Dn. Ara Jeknavorian; Michael Mamishian and Dr. Gary Zamanigian

• Auditing Committee: Ara Araz



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Primate, addresses delegates.

parish workshops for choir members throughout 2013, and host the Boyajian Youth Choir Directors Program for young participants in August. The organization also offers scholarships for deacons training and music study programs.

The Women's Guild Central Council looks forward to supporting the Fund for Armenian Relief's Vanadzor Old Age Home in Armenia, said Central Council Chair Charlotte Sevazlian. The Women's Guild also will continue its successful Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program, and plan retreats for parish chapters to explore the Diocese's new theme, "Living the Gospel of Christ."

Outgoing Diocesan Council Treasurer Papken Megerian and the Diocese's director of Finance and Administration Bill Casey presented the 2013 revised budget and the 2014 proposed budget. Both budgets, which were approved by the assembly, reflect efforts to minimize expenses. The Diocese will continue to seek new sources of revenue through its facilities rentals, bookstore and other avenues. The assembly was introduced to the new Development Director Lou Ann Matossian, who will start later in the year.

Antranig Garibian, a member of the Legate's Committee, presented the activities of 2012. Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Diocese's ecumenical director, continued to meet with officials of the US government at the State Department, and in the Senate and House, to discuss the status of Christian minorities in the Middle East, including the Christian community in Syria.

Aykazian has also worked to bring attention to issues concerning Armenians in Jerusalem, Georgia, and the Middle East. In January 2013, he was elected president of Christian Churches Together. Garibian encouraged parishes to follow the legate's activities and to engage in ecumenical efforts on a local level.

The Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) saw a successful year in 2012, when it exceeded projected revenue by 54 percent, said FAR Board of Directors Chair Randy Sapah-Gulian. He went on to describe some of FAR's existing projects, such as the Homeless Children's Center in Yerevan, the Octet Music School and Information Technology Center in Gumri, and several soup kitchens throughout Armenia.

Thanks to a generous donation from Edward and Janet Mardigian — who were honored as "Armenian Church Members of the Year" at the Diocesan Assembly banquet — FAR will launch a new initiative aimed at reducing poverty in the Tavush region. Called "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty, Developing Thriving Communities," the project will be implemented over a five-year period.

The Armenian Church Endowment Fund reported that its portfolio saw a return of 11.3 percent in 2012, and a total of \$3.5 million was

Seminary and FAR's Vanadzor Old Age Home in Armenia. He asked parishes to consider taking advantage of the opportunity to invest with ACEF.

Jay Kapur, a member of the Ararat Center Board of Directors, gave an overview of the history of the 65-acre camping, retreat, and conference facility, and encouraged parishes to make use of the center for retreats and meetings.

Rev. Mardiros Chevia, dean of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, and Stephen Mekenian, seminary board member, spoke about plans to relocate the seminary to a new campus in Armonk, NY. The seminary is also working to increase enrollment and strengthen its relationship with the hierarchical sees of the Armenian Church. They stressed that the community's support would be critical for the success of the seminary's mission in North America.

Diocesan Council member Paul Mardoian gave a presentation on parish membership. He noted that in 2012, close to 20 parishes were able to attract new members, but added that more parishes need to continue to increase dues-paid membership. St. James Church of Watertown, Mass., was cited as a model in this endeavor, and the parish was invited to share the steps it took to reach out to potential members. These included building personal relationships with community members and developing marketing materials to highlight the benefits of membership.

Diocesan Council member Lisa Esayan and Richard Norsigian presented the results of a sub-committee appointed by the Diocesan Council to review the "Guidelines for Diocesan Bylaws of the Armenian Church" — a proposed constitutional framework for all Armenian Church dioceses, worked out during meetings of a five-member committee at Holy Echmiadzin. Delegates voted to amend the existing Diocesan bylaws to incorporate changes to two of its provisions (a second vote at next year's assembly is needed to ratify these into Diocesan bylaws).

Additional proposals approved by the assembly include a recommendation to reduce annual parish member dues for parishioners between the ages of 18 and 24, and a clarification on what constitutes a quorum at Parish Assemblies.

The assembly also voted in favor of establishing guidelines by which parishes can move, alter, or discard gifts made for capital improvement, and called on the Diocesan Council, Primate, and Legate to work together to establish a Diocesan plan to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 2015.

On Saturday morning, a requiem service was held for Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, the late 96th Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, and long-serving former Primate of the Eastern Diocese. Rev. Aved Terzian, a former student of

## Diocesan Assembly Introduces New Theme for 2013

BOCA RATON — "What the realities of the modern world have not changed — what they will never change — is the human need to draw close to Jesus Christ," said Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), in his address at the 111th Diocesan Assembly last week.

"We still need his healing, and we still need his words to guide and inspire us. We still need his life within our hearts, within our communities. We will always need to 'Live the Gospel of Christ.'"

The 111th Diocesan Assembly introduced the Diocese's theme for 2013: "Living the Gospel of Christ" — a theme which will be explored across the parishes through diverse resources, which include retreats, Bible studies, print materials, and a new series of interactive iBooks for the iPad.

The second general session opened on Friday morning, May 3, with an address by guest speaker, Rev. Mark Leondis, pastor of St. Mark Greek Orthodox Church of West Palm Beach, Fla. He spoke about the biblical phrase "beloved children of God," and stressed its importance to applying the teachings of the Gospel to daily life.

"We are the beloved of God," he said. "Being the beloved is an important phrase. These words allow us to understand who we are in relation to God and in relation to each other."

He went on to describe ways through which the message of the Gospels can be incorporated into daily living. "Understand what it means to be the beloved of God, and your life will be fulfilled," Leondis concluded. "We all have a calling to enter a life with Christ — a life of love, service, and action."

Following the inspiring address, clergy and delegates had an opportunity for Bible study.

In his address to the Assembly, Barsamian outlined the significance of the Diocese's new theme.

"The words of our Lord were not only meant to be heard — whether two thousand years ago, continued on next page



Carol Norigian, chair of the St. David Church organizing committee for the Assembly, and Very Rev. Fr. Narek Berberian, pastor of St. David Church.

tions, as well as the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center and Communications Department. Each of the departments shared resources currently available to parishes.

Dr. Sam Mikaelian, coordinator of development at the Diocese, spoke about the success of the 2012 Annual Appeal: the Diocese raised \$726, 577. He also noted that the 2013 Diocesan calendar, "The Stones Cry Out," was a particularly successful fundraiser.

Rev. Tateos Abdalian, director of the Diocese's Mission Parish program, shared updates from the mission parish of Jacksonville, Fla., which completed the renovation of its new parish hall. Abdalian also highlighted the mission parishes in Atlanta and elsewhere.

Karen Derderian, Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) Central Council vice chair, said the organization is continuing its work to increase the number of chapters across the Diocese. Later the entire ACYOA





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Mardigians Continue Family Tradition

BOCA RATON, Fla. — When Edward and Janet Mardigian made a magnanimous gift to the Fund for Armenian Relief earlier this year — one of the largest donations ever contributed to FAR — it wasn't simply a one-time benefaction to the Armenian community.

Rather, it was the continuation of a pioneering family legacy — reaching back well over half a century — to support the advancement of the Armenian Church and nation in a variety of creative, innovative ways.

“My parents taught us to want to give back; they communicated that this country had been good to them, and so they wanted to give back to the community,” says Edward Mardigian. “My father focused on the Armenian community, but he wanted to serve everyone.”

That attitude was impressed upon Ed from his earliest days. He was born into one of the most active Armenian communities in America, into of one of our “first families.” His father, Edward Mardigian, Sr., was one of our community's greatest leaders in business and philanthropy. His mother, Helen, was a woman of rare piety and sweetness. The parents enjoyed a beautiful, tender marriage — a true partnership, in which husband and wife brought out the best in each other.

Via their parents, Edward Jr. and his late sister and brother, Marilyn and Robert, learned by example the virtues of kindness, generosity of spirit, optimism, and hope. They also witnessed the power of their parents' imagination and industry, and how these qualities could shape whole communities, and lead them forward.

The elder Mardigians were pillars of Armenian life in their native Michigan, throughout the Diocese and indeed on the world stage. Holy Echmiadzin and the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem are among the institutions that benefitted from their support. Churches, museums, hospitals, universities, and institutions like the AGBU and Armenian Assembly all came to bear the stamp of their generosity.

Inspired by Helen Mardigian's love of teaching, they made extraordinary contributions — financial as well as personal — to ensure that younger generations would be educated in the ancient, holy traditions of the Armenian Christian heritage. The long-running Helen and Edward Mardigian Institute, the Diocese's groundbreaking training program for Sunday School educators, is one fruit of this mission.

Today they support the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) and the Diocese is clearly a piece with the Mardigian family legacy.

The gift to FAR will allow the humanitarian organization to launch a new initiative, Breaking the Cycle of Poverty, Developing Thriving Communities, aimed at relieving poverty and diminishing its effect on children and families in Armenia's Tavush province. A portion of the gift will also support the FAR Children's Center in

Yerevan, increasing and extending a commitment the family has already made to support the center.

Another generous recent gift to the Diocese will serve to endow programs and activities of the Diocesan Department of Youth and Education (DYE).

And a new music school in the Armenian city of Gumri is being built thanks to the vision and generosity of the family foundation. The entire Mardigian family — Edward, Janet, and sons Matthew and Grant — traveled to Gumri for the start of construction on the new school, which will serve a city still laboring under the shattering



Edward and Janet Mardigian, with sons Matthew and Grant, receive the “Armenian Church Members of the Year” award.

effects of the 1988 earthquake.

Their involvement in Armenia was the inspiration of Janet Mardigian, who visited Armenia several years ago as a member of the Diocesan Council. “She came home and said, ‘We have to do something over there. There's so much need’” recalls Edward. In short order, in collaboration with FAR, they conceived the ambitious Tavush project.

Janet's strong convictions, her can-do attitude, and enthusiasm for reaching out in many directions are qualities well-known in the family's native community, the St. John Church of Southfield, Mich., where she is a longtime leader of the parish council.

And Ed has taken up a role on the Board of Directors of the Fund for Armenian Relief, using the vast experience and knowledge of his successful business career to help steer FAR to even greater heights of achievement.

Meanwhile, the family's Helen and Edward Mardigian Foundation has become a true family enterprise, with sons Grant and Matthew adding their ideas and concerns to its list of worthy beneficiaries.

## Gov. Jeb Bush Honored As ‘Friend of Armenians’ At Assembly Banquet

BOCA RATON — As the son and brother to two US Presidents, and the successful two-term governor of Florida, John Ellis “Jeb” Bush is certainly one of the most influential figures in America today. He's a proven trailblazer on the national scene, an innovator in policy and governance, and a voice of wise counsel on issues facing our country and the world.

But it was an act of compassion in a time of desperate need that drew Jeb Bush into the hearts of the Armenian people, in America and in Armenia.

It was in the earliest days after the Armenian earthquake — mere weeks after the cataclysm of December 1988 — that Jeb Bush announced he had volunteered to travel to the stricken country to deliver supplies to the victims. He would make the trip in the company of his 12-year-old son, George.

The fact that the son of the new president-elect would travel on such a mission to one of the Soviet republics drew international headlines. But Jeb Bush's response was that it was merely an example of the “thousand points of light” his father had spoken about during the recent presidential campaign.

Even so, the reality that greeted the Bushes on the ground in Armenia was even more desperate than what they had expected. “Just about every structure was off its foundation,” a family member would recall. “There were people literally walking through the street with very little clothes on and starving.” In a television interview, Jeb Bush described a hospital visit to children injured in the tragedy as “something that'll be with me and my son for the rest of our lives.”

A newspaper account painted a touching portrait of the trip. “With tears in his eyes, the son of President-elect George Bush presented food and gifts today to brighten the Christmas of children injured in Armenia's earthquake,” it read. And then the article added this poignant quote from Jeb Bush: “This is probably the greatest Christmas gift I could give myself or my son.”

In later years, President George H. W. Bush would tell how his son's act of compassion had even larger repercussions. He recalled Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev “telling me afterwards that when Jeb went to church in Armenia and shed a tear there, it did more for the US-Russia relationship than anything I could possibly imagine.”

That theme of the power of outreach at a time of need would later drive Jeb Bush's approach to executive governance. During his eight years as governor, from 1999 to 2007, he was widely applauded for leading improvements in Florida's economy, environment and health care, as well as for reforming its education system.

And his experience among the Armenian people, viewing their suffering as well as their will to survive, likewise left a strong impression — as shown in Governor Bush's proclamations designating April 24 as Armenian Martyrs Day. He called on “the people of the United States to observe [the date] as a day of remembrance for all the victims of genocide, especially those of Armenian ancestry,” in the conviction that “recognition of this tragedy [would] educate people about genocide and may prevent future occurrences of genocides.”

In choosing Jeb Bush as the “Friend of the Armenians” for 2013, the Diocese cited his record as the governor of Florida, and also recalled with great fondness that trip to Armenia after the earthquake. “Your expressions of compassion at that time — and the images of you and your son standing side-by-side with the Armenian people — truly fortified the friendship between America and what would shortly become the free Republic of Armenia.”

Marta Batmasian, a member of the Fund for Armenian Relief Board of Directors, accepted the award on behalf of Governor Bush at the Grand Banquet of the 111th Diocesan Assembly on Friday, May 3.

## Diocesan Assembly Introduces New Theme for 2013

from previous page

or today. His Gospel was — and is — meant to be acted upon,” Archbishop Barsamian said. “The words of Jesus are alive, and that life needs to be expressed through us: through the way we

focus will be on the five tabernacle feasts of the Armenian Church: Christmas, Easter, Transfiguration, Assumption and Exaltation. By exploring each of these feast days in depth, parishioners across the Diocese will have an opportunity to “live alongside” Christ through each of the great celebrations of his ministry, and to gain a richer understanding of their role in continuing his ministry today.

The Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Diocesan Vicar, introduced the resources developed by Diocesan departments to aid parishes in realizing the theme on a local level. These include articles on the feasts in English and Armenian, Bible study guides, sermon outlines for pastors, and illustrated presentations from the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center. Also planned are retreats for ACYOA Juniors and Seniors, Women's Guild chapters, and parishes at large.

Lastly, the Diocese will offer a series of free eBooks — new interactive publications that will reach a wide audience and help users

learn more about each of the five tabernacle feasts. The Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan encouraged parish leaders to share this innovative resource with their parishes, and to make use of the eBooks in the coming year.

Chris Zakian, director of the Diocese's Communications Department, walked clergy and delegates through the first eBook in the series, which focuses on the Feast of the Transfiguration. The new eBook features video, audio, and other multimedia, such as photo galleries, touch-activated text, and a quiz. A virtual sanctuary allows users to listen to the hymns sung on the Transfiguration, while a mini dictionary helps teach key Armenian words related to the feast day.

Delegates then had an opportunity to brainstorm ways in which they might introduce the new theme in their parishes. Ideas included hosting presentations following services, making resources available to parishioners via the web, and organizing workshops and retreats.

“We are excited about the resources introduced by our Diocesan departments,” said the Rev. Hratch Sargsyan, pastor of St. Gregory of Narek Church of Cleveland, Ohio. “These tools will help us reach parishioners across generations, and even initiate dialogue with other Christian communities.”

The Rev. Vasken Kouzouian concluded the morning session with a summary of the materials presented to the delegates. “As ordained and lay ministers, we are continuing the mission of the Apostles,” he said. “Our work will succeed only if we commit to ‘Living the Gospel of Christ.’”



Very Rev. Fr. Simeon Odabashian, Diocesan Vicar, introduces the resources developed by Diocesan departments to aid parishes in realizing the 2013 theme, “Living the Gospel of Christ.”

live, through our families, and our community.”

“Living the Gospel” means understanding Christ's mission, and recognizing that we have to play a role in this mission, he said. For Armenian Christians, that understanding begins at the doors of the Armenian Church.

The Primate then explained that this year's





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Shengavit Director Hosted by Knights and Daughters of Vartan in Worcester

WORCESTER – On Monday, April 29, Vladimir Tshagharyan, the director of the Shengavit Historical and Archaeological Culture Preserve in Yerevan, was hosted at a joint dinner meeting of Knights Of Vartan Arshavir Lodge No. 2 and the Daughters Of Vartan Santoukht Otyag No. 5. About 100 people attended the illustrated talk at the Armenian Church Of Our Saviour in Worcester. Dr. Tigran Dolukhanyan translated Tshagharyan’s comments, which were in Armenian.

Prior to the talk, Worcester’s Mayor Joseph Petty presented the key to the city to Tshagharyan and praised Tshagharyan’s effort at preserving Armenia’s historical heritage and cultural legacy. In return, Tshagharyan presented the mayor with a book on Yerevan (in English) together with a desktop Armenian flag and a flag with Yerevan’s insignia. He invited the mayor to visit Yerevan as his guest.

The oldest layer of the Shengavit archaeological site is a Neolithic settlement (late Stone Age) with remains of buildings and artifacts from the daily living of its inhabitants dating to 3500-4000 BC. Since that time the site has been continuously inhabited, later becoming part of the Urartun Empire, and then part of the early Armenian kingdoms. The site has



Vladimir Tshagharyan receiving the key to the city of Worcester from Worcester Mayor Joseph Petty

revealed ancient homes of the inhabitants, tools, animal bones, gravesites and flour, which amazingly have been preserved to this date.

Tshagharyan described the history of the site and its importance for the study of regional civilization as Shengavit had cultural and trade

relations over a wide area. Tshagharyan has been director of the site for about three years and has extensive experience in managing Armenia’s ancient historic monuments. Shengavit was originally excavated in the 1930 but most recently has been largely ignored with zero funding by both the Armenia and Yerevan governments. During the last few years excavations have resumed there but with no funding for maintaining the site, including its small but interesting museum. About two years ago the Cambridge Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) initiated a plan to financially help with site preservation and renovation. Since that time much progress has been made but much more needs to be done to make the site visitor friendly. Following the formal part of the talk, a long and lively question and answer session ensued, after which both the Knights and Daughters of Vartan presented details of many programs they help fund. Both the Avak Sbarabed of the Knights, Nighogos Artinizian and the Avak Dirouhie of the Daughters of Vartan, Agnes Sahagian, gave reports on recent activities and accomplishments. The Knights of Vartan concluded with a generous donation to Shengavit through the Cambridge Yerevan Sister City Association.

# TCA Arshag Dickranian School Juniors Visit New York, Washington and Philadelphia

LOS ANGELES – On April 23, eighth and ninth grade students went on a five-day educational trip to visit historical sites around the United States escorted by their English teacher Pascal Nittis and eight parents. The trip was organized by school parent Shoushan Vanoyan from Econo Travel.

The students made their first stop in New

York where they spent two days visiting the famous Time Square, Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, the Financial District and 5th Avenue. On the following day, April 24, the students visited St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, where they attended a service dedicated to the commemoration of the victims of the Armenian Genocide. Following service,

students visited Ground Zero where they also paid their respects to the victims of 9/11. On April 25, students boarded a tour bus and headed to Philadelphia, where they spent the hours of the morning visiting the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall and Benjamin Franklin’s grave. They then stopped by a restaurant and enjoyed a hearty meal of Philly steak sandwich. The students then boarded their buses again to continue their trip to Washington, DC, where they spent

three days visiting sites. Moreover, the students visited the site preserved for The Armenian Genocide Museum of America. The students also got the opportunity to visit Georgetown, which allowed them to acquaint themselves with the possibility of attending Georgetown University some day. They returned to Los Angeles on Sunday, April 28. For more information about the school, visit [www.dickranianschool.org](http://www.dickranianschool.org).

# Armenian Festival in Upstate NY to Feature John Berberian Ensemble

WATERVLIET, N.Y. – The John Berberian Ensemble will be featured at this year’s St. Peter Armenian Church’s Festival, providing traditional live Armenian music for the two-day event. The Armenian Festival on June 8 from 12 to 8 p.m. and June 9 from 12 to 5 p.m., will be held on the scenic grounds of the church property located in upstate New York.

The parish community – known for their delicious cooking– will have plenty of traditional Armenian foods on hand to enjoy throughout the weekend. Of course, other traditional favorites will also be available for purchase, including both savory and sweet dishes.

The John Berberian Ensemble – featuring John himself on *oud*, Mal Barsamian on the clarinet, Harry Bedrossian on keyboard and vocals, and Charles Dermenjian on the *dumbeg* – will provide hours of live musical entertainment for both days of the festival. Additionally, there will be carnival games for the children as well as a bounce house throughout the weekend. On Sunday afternoon, a *tavloo* tournament will take place and Victor the Clown will be on hand to provide amazing balloon art while Bumble Bee will offer face painting.

This year will also include a special “Apple Raffle” to win one of five apple-related items,



John Berberian

including a MacBook, iPad, an iPod, or a gift card to eat at Applebees Restaurant. Vendors will be on hand selling an array of items, including St. Peter’s very own Armenian Bookstore. FREE admission and parking, rain or shine with tent and hall coverage. For more festival information, to become an event sponsor or to purchase your raffle ticket, contact the church office.

# Jenike & Johanson Named Business of the Year

LOWELL – During Enterprise Bank’s “Celebration of Excellence” award ceremony at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium, bulk material engineering company, Jenike & Johanson, received the award for “Business of the Year.” President John W. Carson and CEO of the company and St. James Armenian Church deacon, Herman Purutyan, took the stage before a crowd of more than 1,800 business and community leaders to accept the award on behalf of the company. This award “recognizes and honors successful, local businesses for their financial achievement, positive workplace environment, and continued communi-


ty impact.” Sixty years ago, a 39-year-old, Polish-born engineer named Andrew Jenike founded the company with the idea of applying science and engineering to analyze the storage, flow and processing of particles. Industries from mining to chemicals, food, pharmaceuticals and everything in between still depend on Jenike & Johanson for a reliable, consistent flow of particles on demand, at the required rate and consistency. Jenike & Johanson have more than 70 employees spread over three offices in the US and one each in Canada, Chile and Australia.

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# Arts & Living

## Lifetime Achievement Award Given to Artist Seeroon Yeretzian

GLENDALÉ — Artist Seeroon Yeretzian received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2013 Diamond Awards for Achievement in the Arts. The award was given by the City of Glendale, Library Arts & Culture Department and the Arts & Culture Commission on April 29, 2013 at a lavish ceremony held at the Glendale Central Library Auditorium.

Yeretzian, recently diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease), has spent the last 30 years creating and promoting art. She is the founder and director of Roslin Art Gallery, which exhibits the work of Armenian artists from around the world. She is well-known for her art inspired by the Medieval Armenian illuminated manuscripts, especially for her recreations of the Armenian alphabet in colorful ornate initials. Her art album



Teri Deaver presents the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2013 Diamond Awards for Achievement in the Arts to Seeroon Yeretzian.

and poetry book were recently published by the Abril Publishing Company.

The ceremony included a dinner reception and a piano performance by Arman Keyvanian. Awards were also presented to Ruben Avoian for Young Artist, Srboohie Abajian for Artist, and the Xpress Art Center for Community Partner, among others.

Teri Deaver, the chair of the Arts and Culture Commission, made the opening remarks and personally presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Yeretzian.

"I am deeply honored to have this opportunity to present the Lifetime Achievement Award to Seeroon Yeretzian. ... Seeroon has an exceptional body of work and an unrelenting passion for social justice that cries out from the canvas, her sculptures and her written works. She illuminates and celebrates her heritage and culture in all its variations and complexity. Her works, draw us in, break down barriers and give us the opportunity to become a better people," Deaver said.

"Thank you Seeroon for sharing your art and yourself with us so passionately over these many years. And for contributing to and enhancing the City of Glendale through your clarity of vision, your depth of creative work, your personal investment and your commitment to the community. It is my honor to present you with the Diamond Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts," she concluded.



Dog and Wolf by Talleen Hacikyan

## Talleen Hacikyan Exhibit Opens At ALMA

WATERTOWN — Talleen Hacikyan, an illustrator and printmaker, will give an informal talk about her work at the opening of her exhibit at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) on Wednesday, May 22, at 7 p.m. The exhibit will include prints and illustrations, including monotype, woodcut and linocut printing. Collagraphy is Hacikyan's "medium of choice" as she notes that the flexible and direct nature of the technique allows for a more intuitive approach. She writes, "Working on the cardboard plate that will be inked and printed onto paper becomes an act of play. Etching and tearing the plate, gluing materials onto it and building it up with plaster lets me create fluidly. Images and episodes of an unconscious narrative are revealed to me as I work. Through symbols and textures that echo indigenous art and the memory of childhood I explore various themes that deal with our primordial connection to the natural world."

Parallel to her printmaking practice, Hacikyan also illustrates children's books. The exhibition features the original illustrations for *Tork Angegh* (Gomidas Institute, London, UK, 2007) and *Aesop's Fables* retold by children's author, Michael Rosen (Tradewind Press, Vancouver, BC, 2013). The illustrations for both books were created with acrylic paint, combined with hand printing and collage. For the hand-printed textures, she used objects ranging from woodblocks designed for textile printing, to leaves, onions, cabbage and broccoli.

Born in Montreal in 1959, Hacikyan is a visual artist, art educator and fiction writer. She has bachelor's in anthropology from McGill University and a BA in fine arts and fine arts education from Université du Québec à Montréal. Awards include the Loto-Quebec Printmaking Prize, the Pierre Henry Prize from Pratt and Whitney Canada, and in 2012, a residency at Atelier de l'Île in Val David, Quebec.

Hacikyan has held many solo exhibitions and has participated in more than 70 juried group exhibitions in North America, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, France, Spain, Portugal, Taiwan and Australia.

Her website is [www.talleen.net](http://www.talleen.net)

Admission is free and open to the public. Refreshments will follow.



Talleen Hacikyan

## Nerkararyan Featured in Rachmaninoff Opera

By Tom Vartabedian

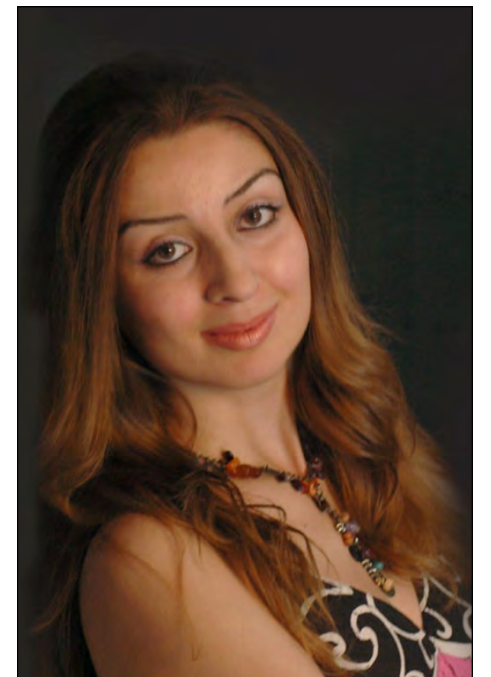
BRIGHTON, Mass. — In celebration of the 140th anniversary of composer Sergei Rachmaninoff, the Commonwealth Lyric Theater will perform his opera, "Aleko: The Gypsies" June 9-13 at Center Makor.

Appearing in the lead female role will be popular Armenian soprano Knarik Nerkararyan, who has performed frequently throughout Greater Boston and the North Shore.

The soloist will appear twice in the challenging role of Zemphira, Sunday, June 9, at 3 p.m. and again on Thursday, June 13, at 8 p.m.

The theater is located at 1845 Commonwealth Ave., site of the former Boston Vocal Arts Studio.

A month ago, Nerkararyan electrified a



Knarik Nerkararyan

Merrimack Valley audience during the 98th anniversary commemoration concert of The Armenian Genocide. She was joined there by mezzo-soprano Victoria Avetisyan and tenor Yeghishe Manucharyan.

Nerkararyan is the winner of American Educators of Italian Origin United 41st Opera Auditions and was runner-up in the Los Angeles International Liszt Competition for Vocalists. She also won first place in both the 2007 and 2010 Concerto Competition at Azusa Pacific University.

Highlights of her operatic roles are Mimi in "La Boheme" and more recently as Kupava in the American premier of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, "The Snow Maiden," with the Lowell House Opera Society where she gained rave reviews. She has also appeared with Opera Boston and Boston Lyric Opera.

Nerkararyan currently serves as choir director for St. Gregory Church in North Andover.

The libretto itself is an exciting story about gypsies: love, betrayal, jealousy and a crime of passion. Written in 1892 when Rachmaninoff was still a teenager, "Aleko" became his most-performed opera in Europe. The last time it was performed publicly was in 1916.





ARTS & LIVING

# Gerald Papasian Featured in Hit Movie, TV Series in France

PARIS – The thriller “Mohamed Dubois” was released in French cinemas on May 1 and has received great critical acclaim, featuring French-Armenian actor Gerald Papasian.

In the lead role is actor Eric Judor, a film and television star known for his hit TV series, “Eric et Ramzy.” In the film, Papasian plays the lead character’s uncle.

The film is directed by Ernesto Ona and produced by Manuel Munz.

In addition to the film, Papasian has joined the team of the hit TV series, “Braquo,” now in its third season. The series was created by Olivier Marchal and airs not only in France, but also in Quebec, Canada and Australia. Papasian plays the recur-



Geoffroy Thiebaut and Gerald Papasian in “Braquo”

ring role of a dangerous Turkish gangster called Baba Aroudj in the series. His character is introduced in the series towards the end of the third season in 2013 and will also continue in its fourth season in 2014. In this TV series Gerald is in the company of a group of celebrated actors of international reputation, like Jean-Hugues Anglade, Nicolas Duvenchelle, Karole Rocheret and Joseph Malerba. The series is directed by Manuel Boursinhac.

While fully engaged in the French movie and TV films, Papasian has never abandoned his love for the Armenian operas and plays, especially his passion to present them to international audiences. His production of opera buffa “Gariné” (Leblebiji Horhor Agha) by Dikran Tchouhadjian which was successfully staged in Paris and Marseille in 2010, has been invited again by the Odeon Theater in Marseille for two nights in November.



Gerald Papasian, with the star of “Braquo” Jean-Hugues Anglade and two of Papsian’s bodyguards

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ARTS & LIVING

James Russell to Speak At NAASR on ‘The Animal Style in Art: From Scythia to Aghtamar to Modern Russian Literature’

BELMONT, Mass. — Dr. James R. Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, will give an illustrated lecture titled “The Animal Style in Art: From Scythia to Aght’amar to Modern Russian Literature,” on Thursday, May 30, at 7:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), 395 Concord Ave. The lecture will be given in honor of the 90th birthday of Prof. Nina G. Garsoian.

The Church of the Holy Cross on Aght’amar island in Lake Van, Armenia, built in 920 AD, famously features a spectacular bas-relief sculptural program on its outer walls, where we find antic animals strikingly reminiscent of images from Scythian art, wrought in gold, of the ancient world. The impression one takes away of Scythian art is of the pleasure of movement, the beauty of the kinetic body. And if one recalls that much of this art was meant to be portable, often to adorn a rider and his mount, it is understandable that it celebrated the galloping horse, the swooping falcon, the hare or stag in full flight.

If the Animal Style, which endured for many centuries past the Classical age, found its way from gold to stone, with perhaps a quick stopover in Sasanian Iran, it is surely at home in Armenia. Tracing the imagery of Scythia and Aght’amar’s Church of the Holy Cross and following it into Russian art and literature, Prof. James R. Russell will pursue the meanings and repercussions of this pattern of animal imagery, in visual art and in the written word.

Russell has been the Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University since 1992. His books include *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*, *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, *The Book of Flowers*, *An Armenian Epic: The Heroes of Kasht*, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* and *Hovhannes Tlkurantsi and the Medieval Armenian Lyric Tradition*.

This lecture is presented in honor of the 90th birthday of Prof. Nina G. Garsoian. Garsoian received her BA from Bryn Mawr College 1943 and her MA and PhD from Columbia University in 1946 and 1958 in Byzantine, Near Eastern and Armenian History. Garsoian was the first female dean of the Graduate School at Princeton University and a two-term trustee of the Ford Foundation. Currently, she is Avedissian Professor Emerita of Armenian History and Civilization at Columbia University and is the director of the Revue des Etudes Armeniennes in Paris.

More information about this program may be had by e-mailing [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org), or writing to NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478.

Balakian’s Article on Lemkin to Appear in Holocaust and Genocide Studies

WASHINGTON — Peter Balakian’s essay in the Spring 2013 issue of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, published by Oxford University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, explores Raphael Lemkin’s overlooked concept of cultural destruction in the case of the Armenian Genocide.

Using Lemkin’s soon-to-be published memoir, *Totally Unofficial*, and various other archival documents, Balakian shows how Lemkin’s thinking was significantly shaped by the Armenian Genocide.

Balakian focuses on the Ottoman government’s vandalism and destruction of Armenian cultural monuments, especially churches, the mass killing of Armenian intellectuals, the use of crucifixes as weapons of torture and forced conversions to Islam. In conclusion, Balakian assesses the long-term impact cultural destruction has had on Armenians. Among the 20 images in the article, 15 are in color — many of them images of ruined churches in Turkey today.

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Kurdish peasants use ruins of St. Arakelots Monastery, near Muh, as barn ca. 2000 (Courtesy Hrair Hawk Khatcherian)

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

**MAY 19 — “Re-population Efforts in Nagorno-Karabagh,” 2 p.m., talk by Dr. Arshak Balayan**, assistant professor of philosophy at Yerevan State University, about his research into the re-population of New Shahumyan (Karvachar) and Kashatagh Regions of Nagorno-Karabakh; free event hosted by ALMA, 65 Main St., Watertown, MA.

**MAY 31 and JUNE 1— Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair (rain or shine)**; open Friday from 5 to 8 p.m. serving Armenian kebab meals; entire Fair open Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Armenian meals served all day Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Beef, chicken or losh (ground beef) kebab dinners with sauce, pilaf, salad, pita bread; take out available; also Armenian vegetarian meals; Armenian delicacies table featuring paklava, kadayif, cheoreg, mante, koufte and other baked specialties; silent auction of exciting items and gift certificates; craft fair; 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, take Watertown bus from Harvard Square; admission free. Wheelchair accessible; for more information, call 617-923-0498.

**JUNE 1 — Armenian Night at the Pops, 8 p.m., featuring young violinist Emmanuel Tjeknavorian** from Vienna and the Boston Pops Orchestra at Symphony Hall, Boston. Presented by Friends of Armenian Culture Society. For tickets and information, visit <http://www.facsboston.org>.

**JUNE 9 and JUNE 13 — Soprano Knarik Nerkararyan** appearing in the lead female role of Sergei Rachmaninoff opera “Aleko” by Commonwealth Lyric Theater, 1845 Commonwealth Ave., Brighton; two appearances June 9, 3 p.m., and June 13 at 8 p.m. For tickets, visit [www.CommonwealthLyricTheater.com](http://www.CommonwealthLyricTheater.com).

**JUNE 13 — St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley Men’s Club Fourth Annual Cigar Night & Dinner**, in memory of Fr. Vartan Kassabian; surf & turf dinner, open bar, cigars, live & silent auctions, raffles; tickets \$150, contact Greg Minasian @gminasian@verizon.net, or 978-470-3075; 158 Main Street, No. Andover, 01845.

**JUNE 17 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament**, this year remembering Dan Dorian, sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough.



**On June 9 at 3 p.m. and June 13 at 8 p.m., soprano Knarik Nerkararyan will appear as the female lead in Sergei Rachmaninoff opera “Aleko,” presented by the Commonwealth Lyric Theater, 1845 Commonwealth Ave., Brighton, MA. For tickets, visit .CommonwealthLyricTheater.com.**

**JUNE 15 — St. Nersess Seminary annual Summer Picnic**, noon to 7 p.m., John Beberian Ensemble, kebab, super raffle, children’s entertainment, tavloo tournament; free parking and admission, rain or shine; 150 Stratton Road, New Rochelle.

RHODE ISLAND

**MAY 23-27 — ACYOA 2013 General Assembly & Senior Sports Weekend.** Providence host chapter. Sporting Events to be held at Providence Career and Technical Institute Sports Facility. All are welcome to attend. Kef Time dance featuring John Berberian, Richard Hagopian and Onnik Dinkjian, on Saturday, May 25, Crowne Plaza, Warwick. For more information or reservations email [KevorkVartanian@gmail.com](mailto:KevorkVartanian@gmail.com), [Durgarian@gmail.com](mailto:Durgarian@gmail.com) or [Jackiekaz@gmail.com](mailto:Jackiekaz@gmail.com)

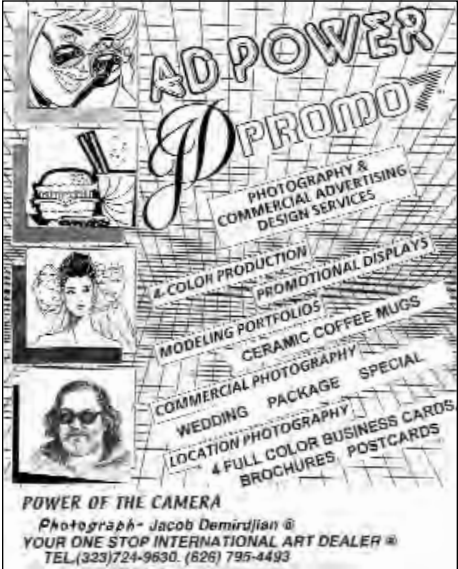
Free Calendar Submissions

The *Mirror-Spectator* accepts calendar submissions free of charge. Calendar entries of a maximum of five lines can be submitted to [mirrorads@aol.com](mailto:mirrorads@aol.com); entries exceeding five lines will be subject to charge. We encourage readers and community members to submit their events so that we may provide readers with a comprehensive calendar of events.

NEW YORK

**JUNE 7 — The Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural Association of NY** presents a concert dedicated to the 300th jubilee of Sayat Nova, 8 p.m. featuring Elie Berberian (Canada) and his band performing songs by Sayat Nova and other favorite minstrels, suggested donation \$25 post-concert reception included at the Armenian Center, 69-23 47th Ave., Woodside. Contact [gradaranik@gmail.com](mailto:gradaranik@gmail.com) or call (212) 689-5880 for tickets.

**JUNE 8 and JUNE 9 — The John Berberian Ensemble will entertain at St. Peter Church Festival in Watervliet.** Weekend includes kebab, games, raffle, vendors. Free parking and admission. Weekend room block rates available at Hampton Inn Albany Airport 518-782-7500. For more info, call the church at 518-274-3673.







## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Turkish Prime Minister's Triumphant Visit to Washington

By Edmond Y. Azadian

It is well said by English historian and writer Lord Acton that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. There can be no better example to demonstrated the veracity of the above adage then citing the names of a political duo at the top of the power pyramid in Washington DC: President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry.

On the eve of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Washington, they have already sacrificed the most dispensable issues in honor of the visiting dignitary: Armenians and the Armenian Genocide. Obama and Kerry seemed to be espousing the most humanistic and moral causes while serving in the senate. Mr. Kerry is extremely knowledgeable on the Armenian Genocide and at times he has made the most stirring remarks in favor of its official recognition. Yet during his recent shuttle diplomacy between Washington and Ankara, he praises Turkey's position as a positive one in resolving the Karabagh conflict. And he makes the statement with a straight face, showing little concern with this political about face. He has no comments on the continuing illegal blockade of Armenia.

As to Mr. Obama, he has already repeated his "Medz Yeghern" charade on April 24 and continues to keep Guantanamo Bay gulag, which had given a black eye to the US human rights position during the Bush-Cheney era and continues the stigma on the Obama administration's rhetoric on democracy and human rights.

Mr. Obama has given more to Turkey than the latter even expected, because on the political market, Armenian rights and issues have proven to be the most disposable ones.

He had already reduced US aid to Armenia dramatically and now presents a legal gift to Mr. Erdogan on a silver platter. Indeed the Obama administration has urged the Supreme Court not to hear the appeal of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' 2012 striking down of a California law extending the statute of limitations on the Armenian Genocide-era life insurance claims. This is a third-world practice of exerting political pressure on the judiciary to abort justice. Had this been undertaken by a private citizen, it would be labeled as obstruction of justice. Rather than leaving the Supreme Court to determine the merits of the case, the administration has already intervened to block the adjudication of the case.

It is reported that Prime Minister Erdogan will receive the highest state welcome during his visit to the US on May 16-17. He will receive two full military honors, one at the airport and the other at the White House, as the formal guest of US President Barack Obama.

The agenda of their discussion will comprise a full plate, Syria being the most dominant issue. The other items on that agenda will certainly include Ankara's initiative to open a dialog with the Kurdish minority, relations between Israel and Turkey, which have always constituted the centerpiece of US Middle East policy under any administration, because, Israel, using the US muscle can continue its hegemony in the entire region, with the tacit collusion of medieval potentates ("moderate Arab nations" in Washington's lexicon.)

Iran and Iraq have been viewed by divergent views at their respective capitals. Despite US sanctions against Iran, Turkey is continuing its policy of business as usual, and in the case of Iraq, Turkey was scared of that country's position of Kurdistan emerg-

ing as an independent state. But ironically at this time, Ankara has embraced Iraqi Kurdistan, at the expense of destabilizing Iraqi Premier Maliki's central government, because Erdogan's administration believes they have contained Kurdish aspirations in their own country, eliminating any spillover of Kurdish irredentism from Iraqi Kurdistan.

As the political agenda is reviewed, we certainly doubt that Mr. Obama will ask Mr. Erdogan whether he has given any thought to his suggestions at the Turkish Parliament during his first term; meaning modern Turkey would make peace with its ugly Ottoman history.

Mr. Erdogan is being accorded all these accolades because he is coming with bloody hands as the front man in destabilizing a sovereign country – Syria – which has refused thus far to bow down on Palestinian rights and continues to make claims on its confiscated territories by Turkey in 1939, the Sanjak of Alexandretta and Golan Heights in 1967 by Israel.

The recent bombs that killed 46 people and injured more than 100 in Reyhanli, which is located in the Hatay region mostly populated by Arabs and Alevis, may have been a warning by the restless Arab populace, agitating against Erdogan's shipment of mercenaries and armaments in Syria. But for Mr. Davutoglu and for the West, it is most convenient to point the finger at the Assad regime in Syria. That accusation, compounded by the orchestration of "the use of chemical weapons" constitutes a concoction for *casus belli*.

By serving as a proxy for the West in the Middle East, Turkey has acquired the status of a regional power, and an independent one at that. That status renders Armenia's maneuvering room very limited. That is why during Erdogan's visit to Washington no one will give him a slap on the wrist to lift the blockade of Armenia.

The Turks have also planned their version of a Genocide centennial in 2015, as quoted in an article by Robert Fisk in London's *Independent* (May 12, 2013, see it reproduced below). The announcement by Turkey's Foreign Minister Davutoglu is most revealing: "We are going to make the year of 1915 known to the world over, not as the anniversary of a genocide, as some people claimed and slandered [sic] but we shall make it known as a glorious resistance of a nation in our defense of Gallipoli."

There is no conciliation or repentance in Davutoglu's tone. Turkey intends to drown calls for Armenian Genocide recognition in the drumbeat of a dubious victory in Gallipoli that was one of history's mysteries as to how a crumbling Ottoman army defeated French and British forces under Winston Churchill's command, while troops from Australia and New Zealand were slaughtered by Mustafa Kemal. The jury is out on the issue because suspicion lingers that Britain betrayed its own army to deny access to its World War I ally, Russia, access to the warm waters of the Mediterranean and the strategic Strait of Bosphorus.

Armenians could counter Mr. Erdogan's triumphant march on the red carpet in Washington by a massive rally (not just 50-100 youth, which can prove to be counterproductive), with slogans such as "Recognize the Genocide," "Lift the Blockade" and "Bloody hands off Syria." But we have opted for the more comfortable position of armchair diplomats, additionally sacrificing the completion of the Genocide Museum in Washington.

Mr. Erdogan will think "If this is the political clout of one million plus American Armenians, then I can walk triumphantly – not only on the red carpet but also over the bones of 1.5 million Armenian martyrs."

## The Armenian Hero Turkey Would Prefer to Forget

By Robert Fisk

Think Captain Terossian. Confronted by the chilling 100th anniversary of the Genocide of 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children at the hands of the Ottoman Turks in 1915, Turkey's government is planning to swamp memories of the Armenian massacres with ceremonies commemorating the Turkish victory over the Allies at the battle of Gallipoli in the same year. Already, loyalist academics have done their best to ignore the presence of thousands of Arab troops among the 1915 Turkish armies at Gallipoli – and are now even branding an Armenian Turkish artillery officer who was decorated for his bravery at Gallipoli as a liar who fabricated his own biography.

In fact, Captain Sarkis Torossian was personally awarded medals for his courage by

Enver Pasha, Turkey's war minister and the most powerful man in the Ottoman hierarchy. The greatest hero of Gallipoli was Mustafa Kemal who, as Atatürk, founded the modern Turkish state. But in view of the desire of some of Turkey's most prominent historians to brand Torossian a fraud, the word 'modern' should perhaps be used in inverted commas.

Now these academics are even claiming that the Armenian army captain invented his two medals from the Enver. Yet one of the most outspoken Turkish historians to have fully acknowledged the 1915 Genocide, Taner Akçam, has tracked down Torossian's family in America, met his granddaughter and inspected the two Ottoman medal records and one of them bears Enver Pasha's original signature.

Turkey, as we all know, wants to join the European Union. I also, by chance, happen to

think it should join the EU. How can we Europeans claim that the Muslim world wishes to stay 'apart' from our 'values' when an entire Muslim country wants to share our European society? We are hypocrites indeed. Yet how can Turkey still hope to join the EU when it still refuses to acknowledge the truth of the Armenian Genocide – and symbolizes this denial by a scandalous attack on a long dead Ottoman officer? Does Dreyfus' phantom hover over such a moment? For however much the Turkish government bangs the drum at Gallipoli in 2015, Torossian's ghost is going to haunt those 1915 battlefields.

His memoirs, *From Dardanelles to Palestine*, were first published in Boston in 1947. Ayhan Aktar, professor of social sciences at Istanbul Bilgi University, first came across a copy of the book 20 years ago and was amazed to learn – see HERO, page 16

## THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## White House Files Politically-Motivated, Anti-Armenian Brief To US Supreme Court

The US Supreme Court asked the Obama Administration last October if it should review a Federal Appeals Court decision that had struck down a California law (Section 354.4) extending the statute of limitations on Armenian Genocide-era life insurance claims.

The US Solicitor General, the lawyer representing the US government before the Supreme Court, filed a response last week. He urged the Supreme Court not to hear the appeal, and let stand the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that the California law “impermissibly” intruded into the federal government’s foreign relations powers.

Given President Obama’s disappointing record of kowtowing to Turkey, particularly on Armenian Genocide issues, it is not surprising that the administration’s brief went far beyond the question whether the Supreme Court should hear the appeal.

The US Solicitor General erroneously claimed that:

- Contrary to the assertion of Armenian litigants, “California was not acting within an area of its traditional competence,” i.e., insurance regulation.

- The California law “intrudes upon substantial foreign affairs powers” of the federal government and leads to judgments “based on politically contentious events that occurred in the Ottoman Empire nearly a century ago.”

- Beyond simply intruding, this law would “disturb foreign relations” with Turkey. Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush had opposed congressional resolutions on

the Armenian Genocide, alleging that such measures would “undermine efforts to encourage improved relations between Armenia and Turkey.”

- Section 354.4 “would impermissibly intrude upon the federal foreign affairs power” in an area where the US “acted in the post-World War I era to resolve certain claims by American citizens” through the Ankara Agreement (October 25, 1934), American Treaty of Lausanne (August 6, 1923), and Treaty of Berlin and Claims Agreement (August 10, 1922).

Several rebuttals are in order to the Solicitor’s General’s misguided and politically-motivated arguments:

- The California law does not intrude on the federal government’s foreign affairs powers as it simply attempts to regulate the obligations of insurance companies, an area of state competence and jurisdiction. This law provides an opportunity to right a historic wrong by forcing insurance companies to make long overdue payments to heirs of their deceased clients.

- German insurance companies are the defendants in this case, not Turkey, even though the latter filed a brief opposing the lawsuit. Remarkably, the Solicitor General’s brief mirrors some of the arguments advanced by Turkey.

- The Solicitor General selectively cites the opposition of Clinton and Bush administrations to congressional resolutions on the Armenian Genocide, ignoring the long-standing US record on genocide recognition, including resolutions adopted by the House of Representatives in 1975 and 1984, President Reagan’s Presidential Proclamation of 1981, and US Government’s 1951 written statement to the International Court of Justice (World Court) acknowledging the Armenian Genocide.

- All three treaties/agreements cited by the Solicitor General are unrelated to the subject matter of this lawsuit. The Ankara Agreement and the American Treaty of Lausanne involve the Republic of Turkey, not German insurance companies. Also, the American Treaty of Lausanne lacks any legal standing as a non-ratified treaty. The Solicitor General undermines his own position by acknowledging that the California law “does not expressly conflict with the Ankara Agreement, the American Treaty of Lausanne, or the Treaty of Berlin and Claims

Agreement,” which “addressed only the claims of those who were US citizens at the time of World War I, not those who became US citizens after the war had concluded.”

The Solicitor General’s “legal opinion,” besides being flawed on all counts, is more of a political statement that deprives American citizens of their right to insurance claims.

One would hope that the Supreme Court will ignore the Solicitor General’s brief, and agree to hear the case, even though the chances are slim, because the Court accepts only a small percentage of cases submitted to it.

The Solicitor General’s overreaching arguments, if unchallenged, would have a chilling effect on all future genocide restitution efforts, particularly on the eve of the Armenian Genocide Centennial.

Armenian-American community leaders should take all possible measures to counter the Solicitor General’s politically-motivated arguments, by cutting all ties with the Obama Administration, organizing protests at presidential appearances, seeking congressional intervention to establish a federal commission for genocide restitution similar to that of the Holocaust, and amending Section 354.4 of the California law to circumvent the presented objections, no matter how flimsy. Moreover, the Armenian government should immediately withdraw its signature from the Armenia-Turkey Protocols which are repeatedly cited by the White House and US courts as a pretext for opposing Armenian Genocide-related efforts, under the guise of wanting not to undermine Armenia-Turkey relations, which are non-existent.

It is now crystal clear that President Obama’s deceptive use of “Meds Yeghern” in his annual commemorative statements does not amount to an acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide, contrary to the gleeful pronouncements of some gullible souls.

Finally, the Armenian-American community should reconsider its strategy of seeking genocide acknowledgment through congressional resolutions which are not only unnecessary, but counter-productive, as these unsuccessful attempts undermine previously adopted resolutions and cast doubt on the long-established US record of Armenian Genocide recognition.

## Turkey’s 2015 Plan: Avoid the Word ‘Genocide’ at All Costs

By Orhan Kemal Cengiz

The groups that call the 1915 events in Turkey “genocide” filled Istanbul Taksim Square on April 24, along with Armenians who came from abroad to remember millions of Armenians who lost their lives and suffered untold agony on this land. Only five or six years ago, it was unthinkable that such an observance could be held in Turkey. These developments encourage optimism, but even as democratic and forward-looking Turkish faces were displayed in Istanbul, we also noticed that the Turkish Foreign Ministry was still repeating the clichés of the last 98 years that we all know so well.

The Foreign Ministry criticized the April 24 statement of US President Barack Obama with a tone bordering on condemnation: “We find this statement that ignores historic realities troubling in all its aspects, and regret it.” What led to this critical tone was Obama’s saying that the Armenians were mercilessly massacred and forced on a death march in the last days of the Ottoman Empire.

On one hand, Turkey has erased a years-long taboo and is now debating 1915 freely as never before. In addition to the April 24 observances, people are openly expressing their views by referring to 1915 as “genocide” in print and visual media.

But on the other hand, looking at the official reactions of the Turkish government, you can’t find the slightest change. Why? Why is Turkey trying to keep the world from debating an issue that is freely discussed in Turkey itself? Why was Obama’s statement received with such a stiff reaction, even though there was no mention of genocide? Why is Turkey, while taking serious steps to solve major questions such as the Kurdish issue, still repeating its century-old clichés on the Armenian issue?

All these appear to be part of Turkey’s strategy for 2015. While Armenia and the

Armenian Diaspora promote 2015 as a milestone for global recognition of genocide, the Turkish state, mobilized by defensive instincts, continues denying everything, just as it has been doing all these years.

It was known that the Turkish Foreign Ministry was preparing to counter the Armenian diaspora’s 2015 strategy.

Haberturk, in a report by Sibel Hurtas in September 2011, titled “Foreign Ministry sends coded message to raise 2015 alarm,” said that in a secret message to Turkish embassies worldwide, Turkish diplomats were asked to monitor and prevent Armenian activities related to 2015.

In an incident in Denmark in December 2012, we noted that the secret message had served its purpose and Turkish ambassadors were acting in accordance with the official strategy. In response to an Armenian genocide exhibit at Copenhagen University in December 2012, the Turkish Embassy immediately opened an alternative exhibit. As you can easily surmise, according to the Turkish Embassy exhibit, the Armenian genocide never happened.

Barcin Yinanc of *Hurriyet Daily News* wrote on April 23, probably on information provided by the Foreign Ministry, that Turkey will not stop at developing counter arguments to Armenian Genocide claims, but will also make efforts to normalize relations with Armenia before 2015.

Keeping all this in mind and rereading Turkey’s reaction to Obama’s message, it could be understood that Turkey’s message was not for today, but rather forward looking. It appears that Turkey, by reacting strongly today, was trying to ensure that the US president will not mention genocide in 2015.

Why is Turkey so worried by the use of this word? Because Ankara thinks that there could be legal ramifications of the US and European countries recognizing genocide.

From the international-law angle, whether Turkey’s acknowledgement of genocide has legally binding implications is open to debate.

Even organizations such as the Elie Wiesel Foundation, which persistently says what happened in 1915 was unquestionably genocide, are saying that international conventions cannot be retroactive, and that is why there cannot be demands for land or compensation from Turkey. But while it looks difficult for the Armenians to win in international courts, that doesn’t rule out the possibility of individual countries taking legal action on their own.

For example, the cases brought against German insurance company Munich Re in California in 2003 within the framework of the 2000 Poochigan law should make one think. Pursuant to this law, German insurance companies that had insured Armenians in 1915 but did not pay damages were sued in California. The cases were dismissed because a federal appeals court in San Francisco abrogated the law. But the court’s opinion on *Movsesian v. Victoria Versicherung AG* may make it easier to understand why Turkey is fighting so desperately. The court, while abrogating the law, mentioned that Obama had refrained from using the term “Armenian genocide” and indicated that the law might not be in harmony with US foreign policy. This conceivably could mean that should Obama and the US administration label the events of 1915 as genocide, the judicial system could change its mind accordingly.

We see that the Turkish government, fearing future sanctions, is continuing with the policy of denial, and this will not change before 2015. Whether Turkey will develop humane and rational policies once the fear of 2015 is past remains to be seen.

(Orhan Kemal Cengiz is a human rights lawyer, columnist and former president of the Human Rights Agenda Association, a Turkish NGO that works on human rights issues ranging from the prevention of torture to the rights of the mentally disabled. This column originally appeared in *Al-Monitor* on April 30.)

## LETTERS

## A New Word For Genocide

To the Editor:

Well, President Obama did it to us again — he did not use the G word, though the dozen or so words he used in his statement were pretty much the dictionary definition of genocide. What is so special about the word genocide anyway? It was not even a word until the 20th century. The Jews, who also suffered a genocide, are content to call their tragedy a holocaust, which in meaning is closer to medz yeghern than to genocide.

Significantly, however, holocaust is uniquely attached to the Jewish tragedy, whereas the word genocide has become an almost generic term meaning the mass killing of a race of people.

However, thanks to the obstinacy of the Turks, almost everyone is pretty much aware that its primary reference is to the crime against the Armenians. But maybe, we should follow the Jewish example, and coin our own word for what happened to us. Such a word could be, Armenocide, Haiashanoutiun. This might not break the deadlock we have with the Turks, but, at least, it would be a change of tactic. According to Albert Einstein, insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

— Berge Tatian  
Stoneham, Mass.





# Holy Trinity Armenian Church Hosts CNN’s Peter Bergen

BERGEN, from page 1

Bergen’s previous books include, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (2001), *The Osama bin Laden I Know* (2006) and *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict Between America and al-Qaeda* (2011).

Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian provided opening remarks and thanked Bergen for his presence. “Through his work he [Bergen] brings about truth and awareness from places far removed from our everyday life.” Kouzouian then welcomed the daughter of Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian, Valerie Kolligian Thayer, to the podium to welcome Bergen. Thayer noted the unexpectedly timely nature of Bergen’s visit to Cambridge, given the recent Boston Marathon bombings and subsequent police chase and manhunt in Cambridge and Watertown. She then introduced Bergen as “one of the few westerners to ever interview Osama Bin Laden.”

Bergen began by recounting his 1997 meeting with Bin Laden in Afghanistan after a long process of negotiations, during which he described Bin Laden as “intelligent” and revered as a cleric by those around him.

Bergen then discussed the inherent weaknesses of al-Qaeda groups, stating that, “Coded in their DNA are the seeds of their own destruction.” These inherent flaws include their willingness to kill Muslim civilians during their terrorist attacks, a tendency to make enemies over allies, a desire to restore a Taliban empire severely restrictive on individual liberties and their unwillingness to engage in politics or elections. Bergen cautioned that although these flaws should reassure the public to a degree, he believed the real legacy of Bin Laden is one of ideas – ideas that occasionally inspire others.

Specifically referencing the recent Boston Marathon bombings, Bergen said, “His [Bin Laden’s] ideas can live on. His ideas can be very deadly [...] Bin Laden’s most toxic legacy is that he supplied an ideology.” Bergen said Bin Laden’s fundamental philosophy was, “Islam is under attack by the West, an attack led by the

US.” By this logic, Bergen said, Bin Laden could argue that all wars were “wars against Islam.” Bergen also stated that according to the media, one of the Boston Marathon bombing suspects, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, said that one of his principal motivations for the attacks was “the wars in Iraq and in Afghanistan.” He further noted that many of the violent ideologies found in these regions were “created in authoritarian prison systems in the Middle East.”

Given the magnitude of the 9/11 attacks, Bergen argued that the Boston Bombings should be contextualized and that US citizens should be encouraged by the decrease in frequency and magnitude of terrorist attacks on its people. He also called the “absence of Bin Laden’s ideology” from most of the Arab Spring “good news.”

Bergen explained the decrease in attacks as partially a result of several factors, including the US’s highly-integrated and educated Muslim population, the effectiveness of US Task Forces, the increase since 9/11 in CIA/FBI collaboration and information-sharing, other precautions such as the 20,000 names on the “no-fly list” at US airports and finally, improvements in public understanding and awareness which have prevented several attacks on US soil.

As for ongoing military actions in Afghanistan, Bergen said, “I am optimistic about the future of Afghanistan.”

The discussion was followed by a brief question-and-answer period. During the questions, there were a few observable moments of tension in the audience, particularly when Bergen was asked about possible ties between Ruslan Tsarni, the uncle of the Boston Marathon Bombing suspects, and former top CIA official and acquaintance of Bergen, Graham Fuller, whose daughter was previously married to Tsarni. Bergen quickly dismissed the question, saying he did not understand the reason for the question, which sparked a verbal outcry of disapproval by an audience member.

Bergen also fielded questions on subjects such as Sunni-Shiite relations, inaction by the

US in Syria, the 2012 Benghazi attack and the effectiveness of modern media journalists as “watchdogs” of the world.

The discussion concluded with closing remarks by Kouzouian during which he once again thanked Bergen and the Kolligian family for making the event possible. Copies of Bergen’s book were available for purchase and signing, and refreshments were served.

This was the fourth lecture in the Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian Distinguished Speaker Series, which was established in 2000 by Joyce

Kolligian and her family in memory of her husband, Dr. Michael Kolligian, with the purpose of “providing high-quality, educational and cultural programs to enhance knowledge and provide enjoyment to the members of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, as well as the community at large.” Previous speakers have included Dr. Bob Arnot in 2004; Immaculée Ilibagiza, survivor and author of *Left to Tell, Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*, in 2007; and Mia Farrow speaking on the Darfur crisis, in 2010.

# The Armenian Hero Turkey Would Prefer to Forget

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given Turkey’s attempt to annihilate its entire Armenian population in 1915 – that there were officers of Armenian descent fighting for the Ottomans.

The eight month battle for Gallipoli – an Allied landing on the Dardanelles straits dreamed up by Winston Churchill in the hope of capturing the Ottoman capital of Constantinople (today’s Istanbul) and breaking the trench deadlock on the Western Front – was a disaster for the British and French, and the mass of Australian and New Zealand troops (the ANZAC forces) fighting with them. They abandoned the beach-heads in January of 1916.

In his book, Torossian recounts the ferocious fighting at Gallipoli and other battles in which he participated – until, towards the end of the Great War, he found his sister among the Armenian refugees on the death convoys to Syria and Palestine. He then turned himself over to the Allied forces, meeting but not liking TE Lawrence of Arabia – he called him a mere “paymaster” – and re-entered Turkey with French forces. He eventually traveled to the US where he died.

Aktar, however – noticing his colleagues’ unwillingness to acknowledge that Arabs and Armenians fought in the Ottoman Army – decided to publish Terossian’s book in the Turkish language. Initial reviews were favorable until two historians from Sabanci University took exception to Aktar’s work. Dr. Halil Berktag, for example, wrote 13 newspaper columns in *Taraf* to declare the entire book a fiction and Torossian a liar, a view that came close to what Aktar called “character assassination.” He said, “It is a ‘trauma document’ of an integrationist Armenian officer who fought in the first world war,” Aktar said. “But his family was deported to the Syrian deserts in spite of the fact that Enver Pasha (the Turkish war

minister and the most powerful man in the Ottoman hierarchy) had clear orders to the local governors not to deport officers’ families.”

Lower-ranking Armenians in the Ottoman army were disarmed and later massacred amid the Genocide, in which women were routinely raped by Turkish soldiers, gendarmerie and their Circassian and Kurdish militias. Churchill referred to the massacres as a “holocaust.”

Aktar, the Turkish historian who discovered Torossian’s granddaughter, was stunned by the reaction to the Turkish edition of the book. One critic, Akcam said, even claimed that the Armenian officer did not exist. “This book, along with Aktar’s introduction, pokes a hole in the dominant narrative in Turkey about the Gallipoli war being a war of the Turks. As Aktar shows in his introduction, not only Torossian and other Christians played an important role in Gallipoli, but some of the military units were also composed of Arabs,” said Akcam.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu spoke at Gallipoli two years ago and gave a frank account of how Turkey planned to define the Armenian Genocide on its hundredth anniversary. “We are going to make the year of 1915 known the whole world over,” he said, “not as an anniversary of a Genocide as some people claimed and slandered [sic], but we shall make it known as a glorious resistance of a nation – in other words, a commemoration of our defense of Gallipoli.”

So Turkish nationalism is supposed to win out over history in a couple of years’ time. Descendants of those who died in the ANZAC troops at Gallipoli, however, might ask their Turkish hosts in 2015 why they do not honor those brave Arabs and Armenians – including Torossian – who fought alongside the Ottoman Empire.

(This column originally appeared in the May 12 edition of *The Independent*)

## ARMENIAN HERITAGE CRUISE® XVII

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# Obama Asks Supreme Court Not to Hear Insurance Claims Case

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2. President Ronald Reagan’s April 22, 1981 Proclamation number 4838; in which he stated, in part, “like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians, which followed it – and like too many other persecutions of too many other people – the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten.”

The Supreme Court, which had requested the Administration’s brief in October of 2012, will consider the Solicitor General’s position, along with several “friend of the court” briefs defending the California Armenian Genocide-era life insurance law, including one filed by California Attorney General Kamala Harris, Nevada Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto, Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette and Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Kilmartin.

The case has traveled a long and complex legal path, which has included three separate and conflicting opinions from the Ninth Circuit

Court of Appeals, the most recent on February 23, 2012. That decision struck down the California law extending the statute of limitations for certain life insurance claims based on an unprecedented expansion of the rarely invoked doctrine of foreign affairs field pre-emption. In its ruling, the Ninth Circuit invalidated the California law, which was unanimously passed by the legislature, because of Turkish government threats aimed at silencing discussion of the Armenian Genocide in the United States.

Plaintiffs’ petition to the Supreme Court to hear the case was filed by Igor Timofeyev of Paul Hastings, LLP. Claims for unpaid life insurance policies dating back to the Armenian Genocide were first brought by plaintiffs’ attorney Vartkes Yeghiayan. Attorneys who have been representing plaintiffs include Lee Crawford Boyd, Rajika Shah, Mark Geragos and Brian Kabateck.