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NEWS IN BRIEF

Events Dedicated to Barton at Genocide Museum-Institute

YEREVAN (Hetq) – On May 23, upon the initiative of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) and with the support of the US Embassy, events dedicated to Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, took place at the museum.

Hayk Demoyan, the director of the AGMI, John Heffern, the US ambassador to Armenia, and Kevin Patti, an American historian, spoke at the event.

The program included the presentation of the English and Armenian editions of Clara Barton's *American Relief Expedition to Asia Minor under the Red Cross* report. The translation and publication of the Armenian edition of the report was made possible through the US Embassy.

The AGMI will also house a temporary exhibition in honor of Barton.

The event concluded with a ceremonial burial of soil from Barton's grave and placing of the plaque at the Memorial Wall of the complex.

Armenian Church, School Attacked in Syria

DAMASCUS, Syria (PanARMENIAN.Net) – An Armenian church and school were attacked in the Syrian city of Homs on Saturday, May 19, by members of the Syrian opposition, *Asbarez* reported.

The representative of the local Armenian community, Nazareth Elmadjian, said the Isahakian School attacked by the opposition works under the auspices of Armenian Apostolic Church's Syrian Prelacy.

The school is located in Hamidia district of Homs, which is mainly populated by Arab Christians. The opposition forces seized the school and church, which will be used by them as a hospital and convalescence center.

Serge Avetikian to Portray Paradjanov

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – More than dozen documentary films have been made about artist, writer and film director Sergey Paradjanov. However, a new film based on his life is being made, starring French-Armenian actor and filmmaker Serge Avetikian.

Titled "Paradjanov, Lover of Beauty," the film is currently shooting, with Avetikian playing Paradjanov.

The actor said this is a hard project, as he has been a fan of the late filmmaker and had met him several times.

The film, like many of Paradjanov's films, will contain dialogue in Russian, Armenian, Georgian, Farsi, Georgian and Ukrainian.

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Armenia Boycotts NATO Summit

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia boycotted a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Chicago this weekend in protest against a declaration adopted by the leaders of the alliance's 28 member-states referring to the unresolved conflicts in Nagorno-Karabagh as well as Georgia and Moldova in a long list of security challenges facing the West. It seems to single out territorial integrity of internationally-recognized states as the guiding principle for their peaceful resolution.

"We remain committed in our support of the territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova, and will also continue to support efforts towards a peaceful settlement of these regional conflicts, based upon these principles and the norms of international law, the United Nations Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act," it says.

The document makes no references to people's right to self-determination, which has been championed by the Armenian side in the long-running international efforts to resolve the Karabagh conflict. A combination of this principle and territorial integrity see SUMMIT, page 2

Papken Megerian Receives Ellis Island Medal of Honor

By Florence Avakian
 Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ELLIS ISLAND, N.Y. – With his family watching proudly, entrepreneur and philanthropist Papken Megerian was one of 104 distinguished recipients, (including eight other Armenian-Americans) of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor on Saturday, May 12 at Ellis Island at its 26th annual ceremony. This award is given yearly to individuals



Papken and Anahid Megerian

who "represent the very essence of the American way of life, having greatly contributed to its national identity while preserving the distinct values and heritage of their ancestors, individuals who took the American dream from just a hope and made it a reality."

see MEDAL, page 20



The abstract sculpture at the heart of the Armenian Heritage Park (Jirair Hovsepian photo)

Heritage Park Dedicated

By Alin K. Gregorian
 Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – The almost decade and a half of work for a park dedicated to the Armenian people culminated with a one-two punch celebration on Tuesday, May 22, which marked the dedication and official unveiling of the Armenian Heritage Park. The event featured dignitaries from both the US and Armenia and speakers that repre-

sented the city and the state as well as the Armenian community. Finally, the abstract sculpture, a split dodecahedron designed by architect Donald Tellalian, the labyrinth and the reflecting pool all had come together at their permanent home on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway.

Under rainy skies, surrounded by colorful bobbing umbrellas, a plethora of dignitaries spoke or were present to lend their support. Originally, Armenia's president, Serge Sargsisian, see DEDICATION, page 11

Banquet Kicks off Heritage Park Opening Celebration

By Alin K. Gregorian
 Mirror-Spectator Staff

which the community and dignitaries from Armenia and the US came together in a show of support and gratitude. The event was hosted by the Armenian Embassy in Washington, the Armenian Heritage Foundation and the local Armenian community.

The sold-out gala was emceed by Registrar of Motor Vehicles Rachel Kaprielian, who as a former state representative, was actively involved in helping pave the way for the creation of the park along the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway.

Her former colleague, Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, see BANQUET, page 10

BOSTON – A reception at the Renaissance Hotel on Monday, May 22, kicked off the celebration of the opening of the Armenian Heritage Park, during



Nubar Berberian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian (Jirair Hovsepian Photo)



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Armenia Ranked 59 in World Economic Forum's Global Trade Report

YEREVAN (News.am) – Armenia is ranked 59th in the World Economic Forum's Global Enabling Trade Report 2012. Armenia registered regress as compared with the report issued in 2010 when it was 52nd.

The report on 132 states focuses on measuring whether economies have in place the necessary attributes for enabling trade and where improvements are most needed.

Enabling Trade Index is calculated based on four factors: market access, border administration, transport and communications infrastructure, and business environment.

The most problematic factors for Armenia's trade are burdensome import procedures, corruption at the border and others.

Singapore topped the index, followed by Hong Kong SAR, Denmark and Sweden, placing third and fourth, respectively, showing excellent performance based on their strong business environments, efficient border administrations and highly-developed infrastructures.

Armenia left behind many Commonwealth of Independent States, including Azerbaijan, which is ranked 81st and Russia, 112th. Georgia is ranked 38.

Fire Extinguished in Republican Party Central Office Building

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – The fire was extinguished in the central office building of Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) at 6:40 p.m., the Emergency Channel Information Center of Ministry of Emergency Situations said.

Parliament speaker, Republican Samvel Nikoyan, watched firefighters extinguishing the fire.

It was reported at 5:45 p.m. that the roof of the RPA central office building in Yerevan had caught fire. Ten fire brigades and an ambulance rushed to the site.

Author Antonia Arslan Attends Book Reading in Yerevan

YEREVAN – On April 24, Italian-Armenian novelist Antonia Arslan met with readers at the Zangak bookstore. Arslan's first novel, whose name translates into *Lark Farm*, concerns the Armenian Genocide and has been translated into 20 languages. In Italy alone, where the Armenian community only has 2,000 members, it has sold more than 300,000 copies. In 2012, the Zangak publishing company released the Armenian translation of the sequel to *La Masseria delle Allodole, La Strada di Smirne* (The Road to Smyrna), and reissued the Armenian translation of *Lark Farm* (translator Sona Harutyunyan, editor Sona Seferian), which was first released in 2007.

The event was attended by experts in the field of literature (Vazgen Gabrielian, Zhenya Kalantaryan, Ludwig Karapetyan, Abgar Apinyan and Aelita Dolukhinyan), historians (Nikolay Hovhannisyann and Clement Harutyunyan), linguists (Sona Seferian and Laliq Khachatrian), the president of the Fridtjof Nansen Foundation, Felix Bakhchinyan and other cultural figures. Bakhchinyan spoke about the role of Nansen in the rescue of the Armenian people during the Genocide, thanked Arslan for the mission that she assigned to herself and awarded her with the Fridtjof Nansen Foundation gold medal. Masha Mnatsakanyan of Zangak presented her with the *History of Armenian Art*.

The Zangak meeting was just one of the many events that took place during Arslan's visit to Armenia. Hours before the meeting, the novelist received the Movses Khorenatsi Medal from President Serge Sargsian for her outstanding contributions to Armenian culture. On April 23, Arslan presented her works at the Cafesjian Center of the Arts.

This was Arslan's fifth trip to Armenia, but her first on April 24.

Recent Seismic Activity Worries Public

By Gohar Abrahamyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Dozens of relatively strong quakes and aftershocks that have hit the region in general and Armenia in particular in the past several months have caused anxiety among the population here where many remember the devastation and massive loss of life brought about by a powerful tremor more than two decades ago.

Seismic protection agency specialists, however, do not see a cause for panic, discarding all short-term predictions of a powerful earthquake as false.

Earthquakes in the region (Georgia, Azerbaijan, northern Iran, eastern Turkey) have been more frequent and intense since last October when a magnitude-7.1 earthquake occurred near the city of Van, now within the borders of Turkey. In May alone, seismic monitoring agencies have so far registered about two dozen earthquakes in the region, with seven in Armenia.

Some of the most powerful of the tremors were registered in Azerbaijan, where panic started among the population of some western areas in recent days amid vast destruction caused by the quakes. The most powerful of the tremors, measuring 7 at the epicenter, occurred near the Azeri town of Zakatala last Friday.

In Armenia, a number of tremors occurred in the small hours of May 21. A magnitude 3.2 earthquake hit Armenia's second largest city of Gumri, and then magnitude 2.7 quakes followed in the Shirak region's Ashotsk and Amasia areas, raising concerns about a possible heavy strike similar to the one that razed whole towns and villages to the ground in northern Armenian provinces in 1988. About 25,000 people were killed then in Gumri (then named Leninakan), Spitak, Vanadzor (then named Kirovakan) and other towns and villages of Armenia. The devastation caused then still remains a social concern in Armenia as some who lost their homes in that earthquake still have to live in makeshift housing today.

"It was at 3.10 in the morning [Monday], we felt a strong shake that woke us up. The glass of the bookcase was trembling and the chandelier hanging from the ceiling started swinging and went on swinging for

a while," recalled 21-year-old Gumri resident Naira Gevorgyan. "We were very scared, but we couldn't go outside at that hour."

At a press conference in Yerevan on Monday Director of the National Service of Seismic Protection (NSSP) Hrachya Petrosyan said that their analysis shows the entire region is now in the seismic regime activation phase.

"We have a certain deficit in seismic energy release, which may recover with one magnitude 7-8 earthquake or through a series of weaker seismic shocks that are more likely to occur in the territory of Azerbaijan in the zone of recent tremors," said Petrosyan, adding that weak tremors typical of recent days are not excluded in the time to come.

According to Petrosyan, the NSSP works in a 24-hour mode to study in detail the data received from seismic stations located in the territory of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh and monitoring the changes in underground waters, the geophysical magnetic field and others, as well as other phenomena that could predetermine earthquakes so as to take appropriate preventive measures.

A few days ago one of the local seismologists told media that "a strong earthquake is expected in Armenia". That word spread quickly among the population, causing great concerns and even panic. The Ministry of Emergency Situations, however, refuted the information, urging the public to "keep calm and pay no attention to false statements made by panic-mongers."

"Different types of disasters have different timeframes for forecast. No seismic station in the world, no scientist or agency can yet make a grounded short-term forecast of earthquakes. Only long-term forecasts of seismic activity are possible," said deputy head of the Emergency Situations Ministry's Rescue Service Nikolay Grigoryan. He added that as part of a program being jointly implemented with Japanese specialists, citizens in Armenia will soon be informed through text messages to their mobile phones about earthquakes in their area within minutes after their occurrence.

"Thus, being aware of the situation, members of the public will be less likely to fall victim to misinformation and unnecessary panic," said Grigoryan.

YSU to Raise Level of Caucasus Studies

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Yerevan State University (YSU) officials say that in the next academic year Caucasus studies will become available for undergraduate students. In launching the course the Caucasus Studies Department of the Faculty of History at YSU considers the importance of studying the language, history and culture of Armenia's neighboring countries, including Azerbaijan.

Dean of the Faculty of History Edik Minasyan said this week that in 2011 the faculty admitted eight students for the new specialty. Beginning next September, 50 slots will be allocated for bachelor's degree studies, with five students to attend the courses without a fee and an additional place to become available for a demobilized army conscript.

"Today, in conditions of independence, it is very important not only to

prepare researchers, but also diplomats who could work in the countries of the Caucasus region and withstand competition. This is particularly important given that our neighbors, particularly Georgia and Azerbaijan, keep committing large-scale falsifications of history," said Minasyan.

Doctor of historical sciences, Prof. Hayrapet Margaryan thinks that although great efforts have been made in Armenia to set up a Caucasus studies school, the Armenian side is still far behind its neighbors in this field. According to the scholar, it is very difficult to find professionals in Armenia who could also give lectures in this field of study. Therefore, he said, "the need for specialists in Caucasus studies is obvious."

"The multitude of political problems that exist in the region makes it a necessity to pay more attention to

the study of the language and culture of neighbors. Today there is a problem in Armenia in terms of preparing specialists in Georgian studies, as the average age of existing specialists today is above 60," said Margaryan, adding that the study of the Armenian language at the Tbilisi State University has always been at a very high level and the establishment also has the Armenian studies chair.

Margaryan said that Azerbaijan has had more resources for organizing Armenian studies as many ethnic Azeris who moved to Azerbaijan from Armenia during the years of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict had an excellent command of the Armenian language. Meanwhile, those who moved to Armenia from Azerbaijan in the 1990s could only speak the basic Azeri and, therefore, could not teach the language.

Although it has been four years since the Azeri language has been taught at YSU's Department of Oriental Studies as a separate subject for third and fourth year students at the Turkish Studies Chair, specialists say more attention will be paid to it as part of the Caucasus Studies Department.

The Azeri language will be taught with the aid of a textbook that was recently published by the Turkish Studies Chair of YSU's Department of Oriental Studies. The author of the textbook, Lilit Movsisyan, who teaches at the same department, said at the presentation of the textbook last week that they avoided political issues in drawing up the texts.

Armenia Boycotts NATO Summit

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has been at the heart of Karabagh peace proposals made by mediating powers, notably the United States and France, over the past decade.

Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, who represented Armenia at the summit, said the NATO summit aims for the adoption of a common assessment of conflicts in Moldova and the South Caucasus that "run counter to the principles of international mediation mandate on Nagorno Karabagh conflict set-

tlement in [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] OSCE Minsk Group format."

"Apart from harming Karabagh peace talks, this may pose a threat to the precarious stability in the South Caucasus region in view of the unprecedented boosting of military spending and aggressive statements by Azerbaijani authorities. Considering this, Armenian President resolved not to participate in Chicago meeting," Nalbandian said, according to the Foreign Ministry statement.



ARMENIA

AUA Announces Dean and Associate Dean Appointments

YEREVAN – Interim Provost Armen Der Kiureghian announced three senior academic appointments to coincide with the Armenian University of America's (AUA's) new academic restructuring into three colleges: Dr. Aram Hajian, dean of the College of Science and Engineering, Dr. Thomas J. Samuelian, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dr. Catherine Buon, associate dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences for General Education.

Hajian received his PhD in engineering sciences from Harvard University in and a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from Stanford University. He joined AUA in the summer of 2007 as the assistant dean of the College of Engineering, becoming interim dean in 2008 and dean of the same college in 2010. He has served as chair of the Faculty Senate and of the Undergraduate Task Force and as member of several other academic governance bodies, including the Curriculum Committee and the WASC Steering Committee. The author of a number of publications on mechanical models of human grasp, Hajian has taught several courses to students in both industrial engineering and systems management and computer and information science programs of the college of engineering. He has also served as a technical reviewer and member of several Armenian Government-appointed committees related to large-scale national engineering development projects, including the prime minister's Committee for the North-South Road Corridor Investment Program. Hajian is a co-founder and member of the Board of Directors of the Chess Academy of Armenia and has organized several international chess tournaments, including the Grand Prix Events in Jermuk (2008, 2009), the Karabagh International tournaments (2004, 2005) and in 2004 the first elite-level Internet-based team tournament. He is a member of the Armenian Chess Federation, heading its Computer/IT committee.

Samuelian has been in academia for more than three decades, beginning his teaching career at the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his PhD in linguistics in 1981. He has also taught at Columbia University and St. Nersess Seminary. In 1991 he earned his juris doctorate from Harvard Law School. After serving as a clerk in US federal court, he practiced



From left, Dr. Thomas J. Samuelian, Dr. Catherine Buon and Dr. Aram Hajian

international law in Washington, DC, Almaty and Moscow. He is founder and managing partner of Arlex International CJSC, which has handled many of Armenia's largest complex investment transactions and contributed to legal reform and the development of the legal profession. He is a licensed member of the Armenian bar. He joined the AUA Law faculty in 1998 and has served as the Dean of the AUA Law Department since 2006. In 2011, he was appointed Accreditation Liaison Officer, guiding AUA's strategic planning, re-accreditation and new program accreditation process. Samuelian is the author of a number of books, articles, reviews and translations in the field of Armenian language, literature and history, including an English translation of St. Gregory of Narek's *Book of Prayers: Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart* (www.stgregory-ofnarek.am), a two-volume *Course in Modern Western Armenian, Dictionary of Armenian in Transliteration and Cultural Ecology* and *Gorbachev's Restructured Union*, 32 Harv. Intl. L.J. 159 (1991). At the Arak-29 Foundation, a Yerevan-based foundation dedicated to Armenian cultural and economic renewal,

Samuelian is team leader for the award-winning, www.arak29.am portal. Arak-29 features free Armenian language learning and linguistic tools, Armenian language-learning software programs, spell-checkers, Armenian cultural literacy educational software, Genocide reparations databases, translations and articles on economic, literary, cultural policy and environmental issues. He has served as president of the US-based Armenian Bar Association, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia and as one of two international experts for Armenia's Anti-corruption Strategy. He also headed the Ministry of Education Committee for the 2011 English Language Olympiad.

Buon was born and raised in Northern France. She earned a bachelor's in the English language and literature at the Université d'Angers, France, where she also obtained a bachelor's in teaching French as a foreign language. After moving to the US, she earned a master's in French and Francophone Literatures and a PhD in applied linguistics from Louisiana State University. Her research interests lie primarily in the areas of foreign lan-

guage reading and writing, curriculum design and teaching methods.

After teaching French as a foreign language and English as a second language at the undergraduate and graduate levels for many years in US universities, Buon's professional career took her around the world teaching English as a foreign language in the Middle East and Cyprus; training EFL teachers in Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia; and now in Armenia. She joined the AUA faculty in 2010 as assistant dean in the Department of English Programs and has served as interim dean since January 2012.

The promotions of Hajian, Samuelian and Buon will become effective with the university's new academic structure on July 1.

The American University of Armenia (AUA) is a private, nonsectarian, independent university located in Yerevan, Armenia. Founded in 1991, AUA is affiliated with the University of California. Through teaching, research, and public service, AUA serves Armenia and the region by supplying high-quality education in seven different major fields, encouraging civic engagement and promoting democratic values.

Bredolab Spammer Author Sentenced to Four Years in Prison

YEREVAN (IDG-NewsService) – The creator of the Bredolab malware received a four-year prison sentence in Armenia on Monday for using his botnet to launch DDoS (distributed denial-of-service) attacks that damaged multiple computer systems owned by private individuals and organizations.

G. Avanesov was sentenced by the Court of First Instance of Armenia's Arabkir and Kanaker-Zeytun administrative districts for offenses under Part 3 of the Article 253 of the country's Criminal Code – intentionally causing damage to a computer system with severe consequences, the Office of Armenia's Prosecutor General said.

According to local media reports, Avanesov's full name is Georgy Avanesov, sometimes spelled as Georgi Avanesov, and he is a 27-year-old Russian citizen of Armenian descent.

Avanesov was arrested in October 2010 at Zvartnots airport in Yerevan, a day after the Dutch High Tech Crime Unit disrupted the Bredolab botnet and seized 143 servers that were used to control it.

The Bredolab botnet was primarily used to send spam emails and launch DDoS attacks. The Dutch authorities estimated that over 30 million computers had been infected with the malware.

During pretrial questioning, Avanesov reportedly admitted having created the Bredolab malware, but claimed that he passed it on to an unknown individual without knowledge of the latter's criminal intentions, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) said.

Avanesov was also initially charged with altering information stored on a computer system through means of unauthorized access, stealing computer data, creating hacking software with

the intention of selling it and distributing malicious software.

However, all of those charges were dropped because of a decree of "General Amnesty on the Occasion of the 20th anniversary of the independence declaration of the Republic of Armenia" that was adopted by Armenia's

National Assembly on May 26, 2011, the prosecutor's general office said.

One of the attacks that Avanesov was found guilty of took place on October 1, 2010, and targeted a Russian telecommunication company called Macomnet. Avanesov instructed 25 percent of his botnet to hit a Macomnet IP address,

which resulted in damage to the company's networking equipment and service downtime for around 192 of its customers, the prosecutor's general office said.

Avanesov is the first person to be jailed in Armenia for offenses related to cyber crime, RFE/RL reported.

Plastic Waste Collecting, Recycling Program Launched in Armenia

YEREVAN (News.am) – Dafina Gercheva, resident coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Dr. Jatinder Cheema, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Armenia mission director, visited the city of Ararat last month to tour the waste collecting and recycling activities of the USAID-UNDP plastic recycling program, which recently installed 60 plastic waste bins in the town.

Gercheva and Cheema also launched the local public awareness campaign that featured lessons on environmental protection in two central schools of Ararat.

In order to address Armenia's environmental challenges, USAID and UNDP launched a joint initiative in March 2011 – the Collection and Reuse of Plastic Refuse (CRPR) project – to improve potable water sources in Armenia. The program also sought to spur private sector investment in the recycling of plastic waste. As of December 2011, a total of 600 special bins were installed in Vanadzor,

Hrazdan, Alaverdi, Sevan, Tsakhkadzor, Ararat, Charentsavan and Dilijan, resulting in the recycling of nearly 30 tons of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) waste. The project will install 300 additional bins in the towns of Ararat, Artashat, Ashtarak, Echmiadzin and Armavir by June.

"One of the main objectives of this initiative is to create stimulating conditions for Armenian private sector to invest in high level recycling of PET waste. Proper management and recycling of this toxic material is not only urgent from the environmental point of view, but it also carries an essential potential for delivering currently unrealized economic benefits," said Gercheva.

During the initial phase of the project, UNDP provided special bins for PET waste, balers and compactors in the target communities for separation of PET bottles and plastic products at the first stage of the waste collection cycle. The project then helped design and implement partnerships between the

local authorities responsible for solid waste management and private companies with capacities to buy and recycle PET waste.

"Armenia has begun to develop new projects and strategies to foster industrial growth, national competitiveness and to address environmental concerns with particular attention to municipal solid waste. It is time when urgent action for improvement and modernization is required to ensure sustainable and eco-friendly performance in the future. This project will have direct impact on raising awareness of the need to reduce pollution, will improve public health and will engage local communities in ensuring a cleaner and less polluted environment," Cheema said.

Based on the results and proved interest and support of the authorities and community residents, the project plans to expand to other towns of Armenia, including Yerevan, where around 3,000 tons PET waste is still thrown in landfills each year.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Eurovision Row Escalates As Iran Withdraws Ambassador

BAKU (Reuters) – Iran has withdrawn its ambassador from Azerbaijan in a row about the Eurovision Song Contest.

Iran's withdrew its envoy for consultations in Tehran after the two countries accused each other of meddling in each other's affairs, as secular Azerbaijan prepares to host the hugely popular international talent show in Baku.

The annual song contest has been condemned by some Iranian clerics and MPs who referred to it as rife with homosexuals.

One senior Iranian cleric, Ayatollah Sobhani, has urged Muslims in the region to protest against what he called anti-Islamic behavior by Azerbaijan's government.

Armenian Envoy in Japan Meets Deputy Foreign Minister

TOKYO (PanARMENIAN.Net) – On May 21, Armenia's newly-appointed ambassador to Japan, Hrant Poghosyan, handed his credentials to Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Kenichiro Sasae.

Sasae congratulated the envoy on his appointment, voicing hope for further strengthening and expansion of Armenian-Japanese ties during his term of office.

Poghosyan expressed his appreciation for the warm welcome, noting that Armenia has always considered Japan a friend.

Charles Aznavour Celebrates 88th Birthday

PARIS (Arminfo) – World-renowned French Armenian singer Charles Aznavour celebrated his 88th birthday on May 22.

Aznavour is known for his unique tenor voice: clear and ringing in its upper reaches, with gravelly and profound low notes. He has appeared in more than 60 movies, composed about a thousand songs (including 150 at least in English, 100 in Italian, 70 in Spanish and 50 in German) and sold well over 100 million records.

In 1998, Aznavour was named Entertainer of the Century by CNN and users of Time Online from around the globe. He was recognized as the century's outstanding performer, with nearly 18 percent of the total vote, edging out Elvis Presley and Bob Dylan. He has sung for presidents, popes and royalty, as well as at humanitarian events, and is the founder of the charitable organization Aznavour for Armenia along with his long-time friend impresario Levon Sayan.

In 2009 he was appointed ambassador of Armenia to Switzerland, as well as Armenia's permanent delegate to the United Nations at Geneva. He started his new Aznavour en Toute Intimite tour in 2011.

Estonia to Support Armenia in European Integration

TALLINN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – On May 22, Armenian Ambassador Ara Ayvazian handed his credentials to Estonia's President Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

A discussion of development prospects, as well as cooperation between the two countries toward international organizations were the focus of the meeting, the Armenian Foreign Ministry press service reported.

Stressing the importance of progress in Armenia-EU relations, Estonia's leader voiced his country's readiness to further extend necessary assistance.

Regarding the Nagorno Karabagh conflict settlement, Ilves noted that official Tallinn sees the problem resolution exclusively through peace talks.

Story of Armenian Jerusalem to Come to Life in Feature Film

JERUSALEM – The story of the Armenians of Jerusalem, a fascinating tale of courage, hope and endurance, sprinkled with the inevitable grains of turmoil and tragedy, is planned to be told, for the first time in a feature film.

While there have been previous attempts to tell part of the story in a book or a film, the focus has always been too narrow to encompass the whole gamut of the Armenian presence in this city regarded by many as the center of the world.

Countless newspaper and magazine articles have been written about this dynamic community, which gave the land its first photographic studio and printing press and the great musician Ohan Dorian. But, again, these essays touched only the periphery or pinpointed only passing or intriguing milestones along the journey.

Those who hold Jerusalem dear to the heart are fond of saying this is where history is said to have begun: for the Armenians of Jerusalem, their story began more than 2,000 years ago, before the advent of the Christian era.

Australian-Armenian journalist/foreign correspondent Arthur Hagopian, the former press officer of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, who has been acting as consultant on a 3D IMAX film currently being shot in Jerusalem (www.jerusalemthemovie.com), is heading the project to bring the story of the Armenians of Jerusalem to the big screen.

"I have already had talks with leading film production companies and key players in the motion pictures industry, and they are ready to jump on board," Hagopian says. "They have the chutzpah, connections and expertise necessary to bring this project to life."

A few years ago, Hagopian launched a website project (<http://arthur-hagopian.com/Armenians/Kaghakatzi/index.htm>) aimed at preserving and maintaining the history, culture and traditions of the "Kaghakatzi" (native/city dweller) Armenians of Jerusalem, one of the three groupings of Armenians in the city. The "Kaghakatzi" bear the distinction of being the first Armenians to settle in Jerusalem, staking out the Armenian Quarter of the Old City as their choice of domicile. The other major grouping are known as the "Vanketzi." They are mainly Genocide survivors or their descendants and live within the confines of the convent ("vank") of St James, seat of the Armenian Patriarchate.

The "Kaghakatzi" project is also tracing and cataloging the ancestry of the denizens of the Armenian Quarter, a community that is a genealogist's dream: every single "Kaghakatzi" is related to every other "Kaghakatzi," either directly or indirectly, in an unbroken chain that goes back centuries, according to Hagopian.

The "Kaghakatzi" enterprise has so far netted more than 3,000 names, culled from the official "domar" (records) of the Armenian Patriarchate, personal recollections and the odd document or two: but at its peak, the whole Armenian contingent in Jerusalem, the "Kaghakatzi," "Vanketzi" and the small number of Catholic converts, totaled more than 15,000.

That number has shrunk alarmingly over the years, the first major loss depletion occurring in 1948 in the wake of a mass reverse exodus to Armenia.

Historical records are scant, but some scholars trace back the beginnings of the Armenian presence in Jerusalem to the days of the empire of Tigranes II, whose armies had swept into the region

circa 100-150 BCE.

It is unclear whether Tigranes did actually seize Jerusalem, with the argument weighted heavily against the assumption that he did not. However, when the main body of his great army left on its mission of further conquests, he left behind sizeable garrisons and colonists some of whom eventually made their way to the provincial Judean city.

They settled in the land of milk and honey and prospered. When some four centuries later Armenia became the first nation in the world to accept Christianity as its state religion, their numbers were augmented by the throngs of pilgrims who made the arduous journey from the mountains of the motherland, to come and pray at the birthplace and tomb of Jesus.

The newcomers built churches and monasteries, embellishing them with breathtakingly-crafted mosaics, some of which still survive, resplendent in their undying colors. The latest, fortuitous, discovery was only made a few years ago, in the Musrara quarter outside the Old City, when workmen stumbled upon the ruins of another Armenian monastery.

On a medallion, (the archaeological term for a circular mosaic), installed at its entrance, the artist priest had inscribed a humble plea:

"I, Yevsdat (Eustacius) the priest, built this mosaic. You who enter here, remember me and my brother Ghougas (Lucas) to Christ."

"Armenians have left an indelible mark on the annals of the golden city of Jerusalem," Hagopian remarks. "Their history is one of unbridled vigor and depthless vitality as manifested, for example, in the monuments they erected and the art they produced. The Cathedral of St James is unarguably the most magnificent Christian edifice in Jerusalem while their ceramics and pottery are incomparable in their artistry."

"We are planning to tell our story through the medium of a feature film that will delve deep into the soul of this unique segment of humanity and

answer the question: what makes the Armenians of Jerusalem tick?" Hagopian states.

Hagopian will be writing the script and is thinking of directing the film.

"I don't think we will aim at an armchair travelogue," he confides. "We will be telling a story that compels the audience and holds it spellbound."

But before the first frame is shot, Hagopian must secure the funds necessary to cover the cost of production.

"We are confident there is sufficient interest not only in the Armenian or Christian world, but everywhere else where this enchanting city is revered, for sponsors and backers to come forward and provide the finance for the film," Hagopian says.

Hagopian imparts a sense of urgency to the project because of the relentless attrition in the number of Jerusalem Armenians, particularly the elderly who know and have lived the stories.

"A few years ago, we lost the last of the Armenian matriarchs of Jerusalem. There are so few of them left now, there is a real and perceived danger that if we do not tap the bank of memories of these living chronicles now, then when they are gone, we will be left with precious little," Hagopian warns.

"If we don't tell our story now, it will be too late later," Hagopian worries. "For who will be left to tell it? Besides, Jerusalem is changing in more ways than one: architecturally, demographically, politically."

"In the cobble-stoned Armenian Quarter of the Old City, every tile has a tale to tell. We plan to cajole those tales out of the past, relive halcyon days of innocence and simplicity," he adds.

Hagopian says it is still early days to venture an estimate of the costs involved. The project, code-named "Cobblestones," will be administered by a new company to be incorporated in Sydney.

"Who knows? We might even get an offer from a leading Hollywood studio, or actor, eager to take an active role in the project."

Foreign Minister Nalbandian Meets Representatives of the Zoryan Institute

TORONTO – On April 25, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Nalbandian met with the president of the Canadian Zoryan Institute, Greg Sarkissian, and Executive Director George Shirinian.

Welcoming the guests, Nalbandian stressed the importance of the Zoryan Institute's decades-long activities and its input in raising awareness of the international community on the Armenian Genocide and the

Nagorno-Karabagh issue.

Nalbandian also mentioned the positive reviews the Institute is receiving from renowned academic institutions and media outlets.

The representatives of the Zoryan Institute presented the foreign minister with the activities of the institute and their future projects.

Possibilities of further cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Zoryan Institute were discussed in detail.



From left, George Shirinian, Greg Sarkissian, Edward Nalbandyan, Tigran Mkrtchyan and Tigran Balayan



INTERNATIONAL

Montevideo Chapter Looks Back On Decades of Work in Uruguay

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay – This April, in celebration of AGBU's 106th anniversary, the AGBU Montevideo Chapter brought together several distinguished guests to its center's Cristal Hall. There, they looked back on decades of the organization's work in Uruguay, enjoying first-hand accounts of its history as told by Verquine Bedikian, an Honorary Member and former chapter chair, whose book, *Memories of AGBU in Uruguay: 1938-1998*, was the central focus of the evening.

The event, which took place on Friday, April 20, was attended by Lilian Kechichian, Uruguay's Minister of Tourism and Sports; Ruben Aprahamian, the honorary consul of the Republic of Armenia; Archbishop Hagop Kelendjian, Primate of the Diocese of Uruguay; and Ruben Kechichian, AGBU Central Board member and chairman of the AGBU Buenos Aires Chapter, who was in town for the occasion.

Guests were welcomed by AGBU Montevideo Chapter Chairman Haigazun Moundjian, who highlighted AGBU's programs both worldwide and locally, before distributing grants from the AGBU Scholarship Program to the local AGBU Alex Manoogian High School alumni pursuing their college degrees. Following his remarks, Ruben Kechichian addressed the audience of friends and supporters, describing the warm relationship that the neighboring Chapters have always shared.



Haigazun Moundjian, AGBU Montevideo Chapter chairman, addresses supporters and friends at the chapter's 106th anniversary celebration.

Verquine Bedikian's publication was the main attraction of the event. In a special presentation, Cristina Takessian, the

English coordinator of the local AGBU Nubarian School and an active member of both the AGBU Youth Committee and scouts program, spoke of Verquine Bedikian's various accomplishments, and roles she played in the Armenian community as the daughter of immigrants, a mother, and a working professional who contributed greatly to AGBU's growth over the years. Carlos Hergatacorzian, the former chairman and honorary member of the Montevideo Chapter, then spoke, praising Bedikian's publication for extensively



Verquine Bedikian (left), who was honored at the AGBU Montevideo Chapter anniversary event, gathers with Ruben Kechichian, AGBU Central Board member and Chairman of the AGBU Buenos Aires Chapter and Cristina Takessian, coordinator at the local AGBU Nubarian School.



Carlos Hergatacorzian spoke at the banquet.

17 Turkish Soldiers Accused of Executing PKK Rebels

ISTANBUL (PanArmenian.Net) – Seventeen Turkish soldiers, including three officers, were arrested May 23 on charges of summarily executing two militants and one civilian in a military operation, Hurriyet Daily News reported.

Two militants from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and one civilian, whom the militants had taken hostage after taking shelter in his house, were killed in a shootout with soldiers near Bugulukaynak village in the eastern province of Van in 2009.

An investigation was launched after a soldier who took part in the operation claimed that the militants and the civilian were not killed in a firefight but were summarily executed by the soldiers.

A prosecutor questioned 17 soldiers related to the incident, including the commander of the Van Provincial Gendarmerie Regiment at the time, retired Col. Vecihi Halil Iyigün, Maj. Hakan Basakligil, Lt. Mulus Çolak, one non-commissioned officer and 13 specialist sergeants.

The suspects were then sent to a courthouse in Van's Ercis district, where they were arrested on charges of voluntary manslaughter.

documenting the history of the Chapter. His words were echoed by Kelendjian, who wrote the book's prologue and commended Bedikian for her commitment to AGBU.

Ruben Topalian, the chapter's secretary, brought the event to a close. He discussed the ways in which, since its founding, AGBU has strengthened the Armenian diaspora, and how it continues to remain flexible to meet the changing needs of its members today, while anticipating changes it will experience in the years to come.

'Complementary' Maneuver: Armenia Trying to Get Security from Russia, while Economically Integrating with Europe

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – The conflict between Russia and the West is apparently becoming the main dividing line in the domestic politics of Armenia. The split along this line occurs both within the opposition and pro-government forces.

Aram Sargisian, the leader of the Hanrapetutyun party, who was number three on the proportional list of the opposition Armenian National Congress (ANC), gave up his mandate in parliament and announced its departure from the ANC. As it turned out later, the main disagreement with the ANC was around the relations between Armenia and Russia.

In an interview with RFE/RL, Sargisian said that only pro-Russian forces now remain within the ANC. "I consider myself a citizen of Armenia. I see the future of my country linked to Western standards. I do not see anything we can learn from Russia," said Sargisian.

Hovhannes Hovhannissyan, the leader of the Liberal Party of Armenia that also left the ANC, is also known to be an advocate of Armenia's pro-Western orientation.

Experts believe that the ruling coalition in Armenia is also being formed in accordance with the attitudes of political forces towards Russia and the West. Immediately after the May 6 parliamentary elections President Serge Sargisian left for Moscow where he attended the summits of the CIS and the Russia-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). However, he stopped short of making statements about the intention of Armenia to join the Eurasian Union, an emerging reintegration alliance proposed by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Moreover, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian simultaneously published an article in one of Russia's leading periodicals, arguing that while joining the Eurasian Union would give Armenia some benefit, a qualitative change for the nation's economy was only possible with European integration.

And on April 27, before the elections in Armenia, the Russian Rossiyskaya Gazeta published an interview with the leader of the Prosperous Armenia Party (PAP) Gagik Tsarukyan. In that interview Tsarukyan clearly pronounced in favor of the Putin idea of the Eurasian Union. "We have already stated that we are ready to work actively towards the dissemination of the idea of a Eurasian Union. The evidence of this is the international forum "The Role of NGOs in the formation of a Eurasian Union" that we are holding in Yerevan these days jointly with the Russian Eurasian Cooperation Development Fund," he said then.

The fact that while in Moscow President Sargisian was not received by President Putin was also evaluated by experts as the sign of Russia's discontent with the results of the Armenian elections that gave a landslide victory to Sargisian's Republican Party. In fact, in the May 6 elections Moscow supported the PAP and the second president of Armenia, Robert Kocharian, who is believed to stand behind the PAP. Moreover, according to media reports, Kocharian is in Moscow these days. It is not clear whether his current visit to Moscow is connected to politics or his business interests.

However, not everything is as straightforward as it might seem at first glance. Unlike Georgia, which sharply terminated its relationship with Russia and made a turn towards the West, Armenia is trying to get security guarantees as part of its relations with Russia and within the CSTO, while relying on the European direction for economic integration. It is not yet clear whether such a "complementary" maneuver will work, but it is now patently clear that Armenia does not want to mix economy and security.

Community News

Former State Dept. Diplomat Asks for Justice for Armenians at Southfield Talk

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. – Dr. Sandra Bunn-Livingstone, international lawyer and former diplomat at the US State Department, was keynote speaker on the 97th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at St. John Armenian Church. The church hall was filled with local Armenian Americans including scholars and writers, eager to hear Livingstone present a new approach for US recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Livingstone's credentials include nine years as a professor at Cambridge University in international law. She received a PhD in law from Cambridge University. She participated in a presentation at Pepperdine University on genocide and religion as part of a panel including Israel Charny and Richard Hovannisian. As a former member of the US State Department she was informed on the Nagorno-Karabagh peace talks and is well-versed on the history of the region.

She began her presentation with the moving statement, "Make them responsible," and then segued into how she felt that the court of international law does offer solutions for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. She outlined existing in-depth historical evidence of the Armenian Genocide and referred to the Hague Convention of 1899 as well as the Treaty of Sevres 1920 that cite "crimes against humanity" as cause for action against Turkey. Based on her experience in the international court she suggested ways to approach the court for action and recommended pursuing an advisory opinion. Ending her remarks with a reminder that "while justice can be slow, it is within reach and that all Armenian Americans living today should demand from Turkey, the four r's: recognition, responsibility, reparations and remembrance."

Livingstone stayed overnight in the metro Detroit area to be hosted at a breakfast on April 25 to meet with local scholars and representatives from the legal community for further discussion on how action could be taken in the International Court of Law. The breakfast held at the St. John Armenian Church was put

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Dr. Sandra Bunn-Livingstone at the podium



From left, board members, Lynn Kojamian, Rich Apkarian, Gary Reizian, Greg Jamian, Norm Messelian, Dr. Gary Assarian, Edmond Azadian and Digran Haidostian

Manoogian Manor to Expands its Memory Care Units, Begin General Renovations

LIVONIA, Mich. – For more than 40 years, Manoogian Manor, an assisted living facility, has been serving the needs of the Armenian community of greater Detroit. This year, the facility will begin a major renovation and expansion to better serve the needs of seniors and their families, Manoogian Manor Board Vice President Greg Jamian said.

The assisted-living facility accepts residents 60 years and older and is for people who need additional help in day-to-day living. Three meals a day are prepared; house keeping services are provided and there is a medical staff, said Norman Messelian, board president.

The current facility was built through the support of Alex Manoogian, the founder of Masco Corp., headquartered in Taylor. The facility is not only expanding, but also receiving a renovation of the current common areas. "The style of assisted-living facilities have changed since Manoogian Manor was built years ago. Our goal is to give the facility new and modern amenities while expanding the living area to accommodate the additional needs of residents who are challenged with dementia and or Alzheimer's conditions," said Jamian, a healthcare executive in Michigan and also the lead project manager.

Plans for the renovation include a new entry and reception area that will be welcoming while maintaining a rich, traditional look. The dining and lounge



An artist's rendering of a proposed new renovation

areas are scheduled to be renovated, including vaulted ceilings and more natural lighting. The new addition to the Manoogian Manor will include the first of two wings specifically designed to accommodate memory care, one of the fastest growing segments in the health care industry. Board member Edmond Azadian stated, "As our society ages, we must keep up with the new trends in senior residential care including better programming and updating our older facilities to meet the needs of our growing elder population."

Jamian said, "We are grateful for the generosity of the Richard Manoogian family as they saw the need to underwrite this new and exciting project while working closely with the board members who have spent countless hours making this community gem a reality!"

After interviewing many architectural firms to head up the design and plans of the building project, the board unanimously approved and contracted with Edmund London & Associates a firm that specializes in the design and consulting of Senior Assisted Care Facilities, said Messelian.

Groundbreaking should take place in early summer with the project set to be completed by late fall. To arrange a site visit or for general inquiries, call Manoogian Manor.

Armenia Fund USA Meets Growing Demand for Western-Style Physician Training

WINCHESTER, Mass. – Exposing Armenia's physicians to Western-style practice of medicine has quickly become a favorite project for many Armenia Fund USA donors. They recognize that quality health care starts with well-trained professional staff. They have seen how the fund's initiatives in health care are already saving the lives of stroke victims through its neurosurgeon training program. And they understand that helping talented, dedicated doctors gain direct access to some of the top hospitals and doctors in America will pay many dividends for communities in the homeland for years to come.

Building on the success of the neurosurgeon training program organized by Armenia Fund USA board member Dr. Arthur Grigorian, Armenia Fund USA is now facilitating training in emergency medicine. At present, patients without access to an ER are treated at a polyclinic. If they are victims of trauma, they go directly into surgery without the benefit of diagnostic tests. Or, they are sent to another hospital, using up precious time critical in emergency care.

Emergency medicine is one specialty particularly urgent in Karabagh and, all the more so, when doors open to new health care facilities, such as the Martuni regional hospital, which will boast a state-of-the-art emergency room.

"What good is all that new technology, if there isn't the skilled, properly-trained medical team on hand to use it?" asked Irina Lazarian, executive director of Armenia Fund USA.

The recipient of the first such "observership" in emergency medicine is Dr. Mher Musaelian of the National Health Center in Stepanakert, the capital of Karabagh. Thanks to the efforts of another Armenia Fund USA board member, Dr. Armen Arslanian, Musaelian is now visiting Winchester Hospital in Winchester, for a four-week observership program.

Dr. Gregg Ciotto, chief of disaster medicine of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), visited Armenia years ago and came back with many fond memories. Therefore, he helped arrange for Musaelian to shadow hospital physicians for various shifts at the BIDMC ER for trauma exposure. Musaelian will have ample opportunities to observe procedures, surgeries, patient histories and physical exams. He will also attend patient rounds, teaching conferences and have use of the hospital's medical research library.

While the program itself is free of charge, Armenia Fund USA helped facilitate the visa process with an official letter of invitation as well as reached out to the community for in-kind support. The family of Albert Hovannessian of Winchester is hosting Musaelian while he is in the program.

Upon arriving in the US a short time ago, Musaelian, said: "The medical community in Karabagh has been very eager to adopt the standards used in the US and Europe. Our goal is to produce better outcomes for our emergency patients. New diagnostic equipment in the ER, such as a CT scan, is a big step forward. But we also need to upgrade the administrative side. I look forward to learning how a quality ER service should be organized and equipped to run efficiently and effectively. Everything I learn here, I will share with my colleagues back in Karabagh."

Lazarian also pointed out that, "Most patients from these struggling communities usually wait until their symptoms or chronic condition become a health crisis. While we are trying to change that behavior, we are challenged to give them the best possible emergency care. Our hope is that with Western

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Bar's Annual Meeting Makes Rousing Return to Glendale

GLENDALÉ — The Armenian Bar Association 23rd Annual Meeting and Weekend took place May 18-20, at the Glendale Hilton. The hotel's appointments and accommodations were the setting for a series of thought-provoking and galvanizing presentations on legal and civil rights issues both in the United States and the Republic of Armenia.

These interactive discussions were complemented by activities culminating in a lavish dinner banquet on Saturday, May 19, which featured local and state jurists, lawyers and politicians. The keynote speaker at the gala banquet was Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti.

Annual meeting weekends are known and remembered as much for their camaraderie and friendliness as they are for their interesting topics of discussion.

That warmth and good cheer got an early start on Friday night at Phoenicia Restaurant in

the heart of Glendale, featuring classic Armenian dishes.

The Saturday panel discussions was reflective of two of the organization's cornerstones, with each topic allotted two hours for in-depth discussion and dialog. The first dealt with initiatives to embed the respect and rule of law in the Republic of Armenia and the second concerned efforts to protect and uphold constitutional rights in the United States.

Since its inception more than 20 years ago, a primary focus of Armenian Bar's work efforts has been the establishment and institutionalization of the rule of law and the respect of individual rights in Armenia.

To that end, the organization has partnered with Armenia's governmental, professional and educational sectors in bringing to fruition on-the-ground projects aimed at helping to build and maintain civil society.

"The mission of this organization, which I

have had the honor of leading for the last two years, includes the rededication of our talents and expertise to our Homeland and its citizens. But, in fact, it is we — the volunteer lawyers and judges of the Armenian Bar Association — who are the real beneficiaries of our outreach efforts. Little compares to the satisfaction that comes from knowing that our programs have touched even a single life and have opened new possibilities for a better collective future," stated Armenian Bar Chairman Edwin Minassian.

The Saturday morning panel, titled "Human Rights, Civil Liberties and Social Movements in Armenia," featured investigative journalist Edik Baghdasaryan, who is best known for his stories exposing government corruption in Armenia.

Former US Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch recently bestowed the Defender of Armenia Freedom award on Baghdasaryan, who serves as Hetq Online's chief editor and as president of the Investigative Journalists NGO. Yovanovitch noted, "Due to the unprecedented work of Edik Baghdasaryan, it has been possible to uncover cases of corruption, human rights violations and human trafficking, today's version of slavery."

Receiving the award, Baghdasaryan commented that he would have preferred not to have earned it and would like, instead, to see a world where such awards didn't exist "since it is extremely difficult to sit and ponder the fact that people are being persecuted and arrested in your own country merely for their political convictions, when you reflect that 30 percent of children are malnourished and go to bed hungry. ... Sadly, in Armenia today, the same situation holds true when it comes to other rights as well, starting from environmental rights to the right to a decent education."

Joining Baghdasaryan on the morning panel was Sara Anjargolian, a Los Angeles-based attorney and photographer who has lived and worked in Armenia and has been engaged in civic activism, including those addressing unaccounted for killings of young conscripts in Armenia's armed forces and the ruination of forests and the resulting environmental disasters; Ursula Kazarian, Esq., president and founder of Armenian Environmental Network, who for nearly 10 years has worked to increase public awareness and to encourage civil discourse about urgent environmental issues, and Dr. Antranig Kasbarian, executive director of the Tufenkian Foundation, which works in

Armenia to combat poverty, foster education, protect the natural environment and renew national, civic, cultural and religious values and works in Karabagh to promote resettlement, infrastructure, health care and other development projects to repopulate these areas.

The second discussion harkens back to another of Armenian Bar's central and defining characteristics: the protection of the interests of Diasporan communities, by providing pro bono and educational services and, more recently, by weighing in on federal and state proceedings in which Genocide-related rights and interests have been seriously, and unfortunately sometimes successfully, challenged.

Armenian Bar Vice Chair Garo Ghazarian, who has been at the forefront of the association's efforts to safeguard the civil liberties of the local community and its members, underscored the importance of legal activism to protect fundamental rights. He said, "The deepening of our relationships and influence with various law enforcement and public agencies has helped to turn back the tide of the disparate and disparaging treatment of Armenians."

Ghazarian added, "And when the esteemed courts of our own country sometimes get it wrong and issue decisions denying the descendants of Genocide victims a United States judicial forum to pursue rightful claims against insurance companies, we will be prepared to think and act intelligently and effectively, pooling our considerable resources and legal wherewithal."

The afternoon panel explored as a case study the recent Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in *Movsesian v. Victoria Versicherung AG*, which declared unconstitutional a California statute that had allowed for the filing of lawsuits for unpaid life insurance claims brought by the descendants of victims of the Armenian Genocide. Leading the discussion was trial attorney David Balabanian of Bingham McCutchen, which filed, on a pro bono basis, amicus curiae briefs on behalf of the Armenian Bar Association.

Balabanian guided a candid examination of the potentially negative consequences of the continuing and largely unsuccessful pursuit of Genocide recognition, of missed and misunderstood legal arguments and a realistic assessment of the decision's broader ramifications. The panel was composed of, among others, Armenian National Committee of America Government Affairs Director Kate Nahapetian.



Parishioners gather for the blessing of the new khachkar at St. Mary Church.

New Khachkar Unveiled at St. Mary Church

WASHINGTON — Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), visited St. Mary Church of Washington, DC, on Sunday, May 13, where he ordained altar servers and blessed the church's new *khachkar*.

During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the Primate ordained Alexander Calikyan as a sub-deacon. Armen Chubukian, Haik Hakobyan, Virab Khachatryan, Aras Mermer, Ruben Turner and Edwin Tilimian were ordained acolytes. Parish pastor the Rev. Hovsep Karapetyan assisted the Primate during the ordinations.

Also during the service, Andre Alexandrian, Ashot Hovhannisyan, Jirair Kalayjian, Ruben Karapetyan and Hovsep Seferian received special blessings from Barsamian.

At the conclusion of *badarak*, Barsamian presented the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob medal and pontifical encyclical to parishioner Arsen Sayan, founder and conductor of the church's Ani Armenian Choral Group. The group sang the hymns of the Divine Liturgy that day, and later took part in the afternoon program.

Archbishop Barsamian led a procession to the newly-installed *khachkar* on church grounds. The *khachkar* was carved and donated by Armenian artist Ruben Nalbandian. It is dedicated to the memory of the deceased parishioners of the community.

Costs involved in transporting the *khachkar* to St. Mary Church were covered by donations made in memory of the late Vartkess Balian, a longtime parishioner and benefactor of the church.

"Our new *khachkar* is a witness to our heritage and faith," said Karapetyan. "Having this beautiful memorial in our nation's capital makes us very proud."

The artist, who is on a visit to St. Mary Church, received a certificate of appreciation from Barsamian on this occasion.

An afternoon reception concluded the day's program. Some 400 people took part in the events, including Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Diocese's ecumenical director; the Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian, the parish's former pastor; Robert Avetisyan, permanent representative of Nagorno Karabagh to the United States; Col. Mesrop Nazarian, Armenia's defense attaché in Washington and other embassy officials.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presents the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob medal and pontifical encyclical to parishioner Arsen Sayan.

Former State Dept. Diplomat Asks for Justice for Armenians at Southfield Talk

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together by local Armenian activists Paul Kulhanjian, Edward Korkoian and John Yavruian, included an informative question and answer session.

The Armenian Diaspora has worked tirelessly for US recognition but progress has been slow and Livingstone's presentation injected new

hope for a resolution that could bring about recognition of the Armenian Genocide — a genocide that is not reflected in history books and 97 years later, even though 43 states and numerous foreign governments have recognized it, remains unacknowledged by the US government and the successors to the Ottoman Turk perpetrators.



From left, Fr. Garabed Kochakian and Dr. Sandra Bunn-Livingstone with members from the metro-Detroit legal community



COMMUNITY NEWS



From left, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Chookasian, her Yale University singing protégé, then 19-year-old Kimako Trotman and the Rev. Garabed Kochakian at "A Night at the Opera," at the Armenian Diocese, on May 7, 1993.

Remembering Lili Chookasian (1921-2012)

NEW YORK – Lili Chookasian, the Metropolitan Opera contralto, who died April 10, at age 90, made one of her last New York onstage appearances at the Armenian Diocese's presentation of "A Night at the Opera," on May 7, 1993, in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral.

Appearing with her on the stage of Kavookjian Auditorium were fellow Met Opera stars, soprano Lucine Amara and tenor Vahan Khanzadian, with Loren Toolajian, as host-interviewer. The show was produced by George Maksian.



From left, Vahan Khanzadian, Lili Chookasian and soprano Lucine Amara being interviewed by Loren Toolajian at "A Night at the Opera," at the Armenian Diocese, on May 7, 1993.

"Lili," as she was affectionately called by her many fans and colleagues, retired from the Met after almost 25 years in 1986, and spent another quarter of a century as professor of music at Yale University.

She died at her home in Branford, Conn., on April 10, 2012. Her husband of many years, George Gavejian, died in 1987.

Before moving to Branford, Chookasian and her family (the couple had three children: John, Paul and Valerie), were longtime residents of Tenafly, NJ.

Chookasian was a great lady and a great talent. She will be sorely missed.

– George Maksian

OBITUARY

Isabel Torigian Bedrosian

NEW YORK – Isabel Torigian Bedrosian died on May 16 at New York University's Langone Medical Center, where she had been hospitalized for pneumonia.

Born in Watervliet, NY, on July 1, 1921, she was the youngest of four children born to Aghavni (née Postoian) Torigian and Hayrabed Torigian.

After graduating from Watervliet High School, where she was fashion editor of the school's newspaper, she worked for the department store Montgomery Ward as a typist.

On May 4, 1941, she married Alvin (Askanaz Der) Bedrosian of Troy and the couple moved to Port au Peck, NJ, where they both worked at Fort Monmouth – Isabel Bedrosian as a secretary and Alvin Bedrosian as an engineer in the US Army Strategic Research and Development Laboratory. After the birth of their daughter, Karen, in 1946 and son, Robert, in 1949, the family moved to Long Branch, NJ, where they lived until 1954.

Upon Alvin Bedrosian's appointment as liaison officer for the US Army's Scientific Liaison Office at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Mass., the family moved to Belmont, Mass.

There, Isabel Bedrosian worked part-time as a secretary for the head of the Nutrition Department at MIT and served as den mother for her son's cub scout group.

After Alvin Bedrosian retired in 1975, the couple moved back to Long Branch, NJ, where Isabel Bedrosian joined the Armenian Relief

Society, was secretary of the Parish Council of St. Stepanos Church in Elberon and was voted Mother of the Year by the church.

The couple were members of the Armenian Studies Advisory Council, established in 1977 by the Trustees of Columbia University, which raised the funds required to establish a chair of Armenian Studies in the (then) Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures. Several years later, their son, Robert, received his PhD from this program.

She was pre-deceased by her husband in 1985 and for the next 15 years she managed a book company, Sources of the Armenian Tradition, which published English translations of Classical Armenian historical texts translated by her son, Robert.

In 2000, Isabel Bedrosian was diagnosed with dementia and eagerly participated in various cognitive remediation programs and arts/therapeutic programs available for people with dementia and their caregivers, living the last 10 years of her life with her daughter. Despite the increasing limitations imposed by her condition, she never stopped trying and was eager to please and to show her appreciation and affection for those who helped her, which made her beloved by all.

She is survived by her children, Karen Bedrosian-Richardson and Robert G. Bedrosian.

Funeral services will be held at St. Peter Armenian Apostolic Church in Watervliet, NY (100 Troy-Schenectady Road) on May 30 at 1 p.m.

Armenia Fund USA Meets Growing Demand For Western-Style Physician Training

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-trained physicians, patients and families will feel comfortable about seeking treatment. They will have all the right elements in place: a clean, safe environment, the latest diagnostic testing and doctors and nurses up-to-speed on quality health care delivery."

With so many established Armenian-American medical specialists, Armenia Fund USA benefits not only from their professional connections but also their generosity.

"Doctors at the top of their game like Dr. Grigorian and Dr. Arslanian are demonstrating their dedication to the Armenian homeland by so generously giving of their time, knowledge, expertise and networks to the next generation of health professionals" stated Khoren Bandazian, chairman of Armenia Fund USA. "It has often been said, that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation," he said. "Our physician training programs can help bring our homeland ever closer to that ideal."



Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Armen Arslanian, Dr. Mher Musaelian is visiting Winchester Hospital in Winchester, Mass. for a four-week observership program.

Giragosian

FUNERAL HOME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC
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Prof. Richard Hovannisian Lectures in New Jersey

FAIR LAWN, N.J. — On the occasion of the 1,050th anniversary of the proclamation of Ani as the capital of Armenia, Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian prepared an illustrated presentation, titled “The Changing Landscape of Historic Western Armenia: Reflections on a Journey into the Past.” On May 11, Hovannisian was invited to give this lecture to the community at St. Leon Armenian Church.

On behalf of the organizing committee, Ara Araz welcomed the audience of more than 200 attendants and invited Dr. Dennis R. Papazian to introduce Hovannisian.

Papazian, who taught history at the University of Michigan-Dearborn for more than 40 years, was named professor emeritus by the U-M Regents, and retired from active faculty status in 2006, proved to be the right person to



Prof. Richard Hovannisian addresses the audience.



Prof. Richard Hovannisian

draw a brief professional sketch of Hovannisian. He admitted that Hovannisian did not need much introduction, but he stressed the fact that 50 years ago, the study of Armenian history had been dismal and Hovannisian has initiated the explosion of scholarly research in that field. A native of Tulare, Calif., he has been professor of

Armenian and Near-Eastern history at the University of California, Los Angeles since 1962. He has organized the undergraduate and graduate programs in Armenian and Caucasian history. Hovannisian was appointed the first holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Endowed Chair in modern Armenian history at UCLA. Throughout his career, he has continuously produced an overwhelming amount of scholarly works on Armenian history and culture.

Referring to his three trips to historic Armenia, Hovannisian said, “The knowledge that Ani was not lost a thousand years ago, but within the last century by the invasion of Turkish forces led by Mustafa Kemal in 1920, has been very painful.” He reminded that the region encompassing Ani, Kars, Ighdir and Mount Ararat was within the borders of the First Armenian Republic (1918-1920).

During his introduction before the

PowerPoint presentation, he said although he had never been to Turkey before, as soon as he landed in Istanbul on his first visit, everything was familiar to him: the food, the smells, the drinks, the sounds, the music, the movements, the culture.

The order of the photographs shown followed the order of his three trips: starting from the Black Sea to Erzurum, Bayburt, Erzincan, Kharpert, Mush and Van. He said his group was masochistically compelled to follow the same deportation routes of the Armenians in 1915 and go to the places where mass murders were committed. It created an eerie feeling when he showed the photograph of the gorge of Kemaliye on the upper Euphrates River where women and children marching from Trabzon and other eastern provinces, surrounded by Kurdish mobs and the Turkish Special Organization (Teskilati Mahsusa), were thrown into that gorge.

While showing the photographs of the ruins of Ani, he stressed the fact that a millennium ago Ani, known as the City of 1,001 Churches, was the capital of the Armenian Bakratuni Kingdom and it was the largest city in the world of its period with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Moreover, churches, fortresses, palaces and public buildings of Ani were among the most technically- and artistically-advanced structures in the world at that time. In fact, he suggested that the Cathedral of Ani built by architect Trdat was a masterpiece, which served as a prototype to the European Gothic architecture.

With brief explanations, he allowed the audience to take glimpses of photographs taken in Sebastia, Amasya, Agn, Elazig, Palu, Dersim, Bitlis, Merzifon, Malatya, Gurun, Diyarbakir (Dikranagerd), Igdir, Kars and Sarikamis. Finally, he covered Cappadocia and Cilicia, Kayseri (Gesaria), Everek, Hajin, Adana, Mersin, Kolikos, Dortyol, Musa Dag, Kolikos, Vakif, Antep, Zeyton and Marash.

He said he has been teaching history for 50 years, but he had not realized the full magnitude of the loss of the Western Armenian civilization until he worked for the publication of the books about those provinces. Along with the destruction of churches, there were schools, dramatic art groups, orchestras, fine arts, publishing houses, libraries, little school children with their white-collared uniform. No one can put a price on the loss of that advanced civilization.

Hovannisian concluded his presentation, “The first time I went to Istanbul, I saw Hrant Dink in person at his office. This time I went back to Istanbul, I could only hold his sculptured marble head placed on his grave.”

This function was co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Armenian Human Rights Advocates, Armenian National Committee of NJ, Knights of Vartan, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, New York Armenian Students Association, St. Leon Armenian Church and Tekeyan Cultural Association.

Picnic Kicks off St. Nersess Summer Programs

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — Dancing to traditional Armenian music, feasting on Armenian food, hearing the laughter of children enjoying games and activities and purchasing great finds at an attic treasures sale — that is what one can expect on Saturday, June 16 by attending the St. Nersess Picnic.

This annual event to begin the summer season will be held from 12-7 p.m. on the grounds of the Seminary's New Rochelle campus. Meals are available throughout the day, with activities offered in the afternoon for the whole family.

The John Berberian Ensemble will provide hours of musical entertainment combined with DJ Sayat's talents between sets. Activities for children and teens will be offered throughout the day, including a magician and face painting, as well as a mid-afternoon book reading by children's author, Talene Dadian White. She will read from one of her rewritten takes on a classical fairy tale with an Armenian twist. Her books will also be on hand to purchase.

Baykar Dervishian, better known as “The Armenian Vendor,” will be selling his goods



A team of young volunteers assist at the picnic.



The St. Nersess Picnic has become a family tradition to kick off the summer season.

ranging from CDs to jewelry, artwork and general giftware.

“The St. Nersess Picnic is the perfect family day out activity. There is so much to do for all ages in one place,” said Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, seminary dean. “Plus, you will be supporting the seminary and its efforts to prepare church leaders all while enjoying an afternoon filled with fellowship, fun and the peaceful beauty of our seminary.”

General sponsorships are being secured to help underwrite the cost of this event so that all proceeds on the day of the picnic will

directly benefit the ongoing mission of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, which is to prepare leaders in ordained and lay ministries through graduate degree and continuing education programs.

Also, the seminary has again launched a Super Raffle with winners being announced the day of the picnic. Only 300 tickets are available for this raffle, with each ticket costing \$50. The three cash prizes awarded will be \$3,000, \$1,500 and \$500. To purchase tickets, call the seminary office.

For information about the St. Nersess Summer Picnic, visit www.stnersess.edu.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Banquet Kicks off Heritage Park Celebration

BANQUET, from page 1

who was honorary chairman of the project, brought forth the Middlesex County Color Guard, who opened the banquet carrying the flags of Armenia, the US and Massachusetts.

The program highlighted both the unity of the Armenian community in working through the tortuous road to creation and execution and the ties between Armenia and the diaspora.

The theme of unity came up again and again. Koutoujian said the park was a great example of how the community can work together. He also thanked some of the many non-Armenians in the community who helped the project



A group shot of the party

All Photos by Jirair Hovsepian

tant enough to warrant the presence of the top leadership of the republic. The ancient tree that is the republic can now see the effect of the young branches in countries around the world, he said.

Afeyan, the founder, CEO and managing partner of Flagship Ventures, as well as a senior lecturer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management,



Anahid, Aurelian and Vartan Mardiros

Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, on behalf of President Serge Sargisian: James Kalustian, the president of the Armenian Heritage Foundation, who has helmed the park project for a decade; playwright Dr. Hrant Markarian, founder of the Hamazkayin theater

ly inappropriate for our interests," he said, praising the president for not attending the NATO summit in Chicago.

He said he had been disappointed about the absence of the president from other scheduled



Barbara Tellalian, left, with Carolann Najarian

along, including the Massachusetts Council of Churches, the Boston-American Jewish Committee and the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, as well as the residents of the North End.

During the program, three persons who have made great contributions to the community received the Movses Khorenatsi medal from

group in New York, and editor and Tekeyan Cultural Association stalwart Dr. Nubar Berberian.

In his remarks, Dr. Noubar Afeyan referred to the reason for the absence of the guest of honor, Armenian President Serge Sargisian. "In international diplomacy, Turkey and Azerbaijan put pressure on Nagorno Karabagh. It is whol-



Rev. Arakel Aljalian, standing, with Rev. Antranik Baljian



Registrar Rachel Kaprielian, left, and Conservancy Executive Director Nancy Brennan

events in the US, on the heels of the Chicago summit. But, he said, once he started thinking about the chain of events, he saw the silver lining. He said it takes strength for Sargisian and

paid tribute to Boston, a city he first arrived in to study. He praised the city – as well as the state as a whole – as a center for business, education, politics and innovation, noting that in the race for the president of the US, a former governor of the state is running against a sitting president who attended law school here.

Afeyan also spoke enthusiastically about the changes in Armenia, saying it is slowly but surely aiming to compete in the region, Europe and the rest of the world in terms of tourism, health-care and information technologies. He praised the government and the Luys Foundation for sending about 100 top students annually to some of the top-10 schools in the world to study and return to their homeland.

He characterized all Armenians as "originals," people who will not be stifled or silenced



Architect Donald Tellalian, right, with Hasmig and Gary Mardiros



From left, Eduard Nalbandian, Houry Boyamian and Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan

Armenia to take such a stance. Afeyan noted that the park is a "beautiful way of saying thank you" to Boston by the local Armenian-American community. The project also "will usher in a new movement in our community," he said, one in which the past will be remembered, while channeling that pain into creating positive, forward-thinking projects. The park, he said, is impor-



Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian Jr. (right) with Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA)



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Heritage Park Dedicated



Nigoghos Atinizian and Rev. Krikor Sabounjian

and who really come into their own in times of crisis. Referring to the paramount place of Ararat in the hearts of many Armenians, he said the story of Noah's Ark is more than one about pairs of animals on a ship; that it is about tenacity and survival. "We're damn good survivors," he said.

He said, in fact, he was so delighted with the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston that he thinks the 10 million or so people that are fully or part Armenian around the world should come together and help build a similar heritage park in Armenia, tying it to communities of Armenians worldwide.

Among the dignitaries representing Armenia were Nalbandian, Ambassador to the US Tatoul Markarian and Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan. The latter offered words on behalf of the president. She praised the local Armenian



Nishan Atinizian and Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian



Ruth Thomasian and Peter Koutoujian Sr.

community, saying "for us, the community of Boston is one of the most organized in the US. We are proud that in the heart of Boston, there will be an Armenian Heritage Park."

She spoke about the advances in Armenia, thanking the Armenian Diaspora for its consistent support. "The roots are in Armenia and the branches spreading over the world are bearing fruit," she said.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), offered the invocation. He said he was proud to see a show of support

see KICK-OFF, page 12

DEDICATION, from page 1

was slated to be the main speaker, but international politics intervened. (See story on page 1.)

The tone was two-fold: celebrating immigrants and their success by making this \$6-million gift to the City of Boston, while remembering the victims of the Armenian Genocide. Mention was made that the site is behind the North End neighborhood of Boston, which in the last century in particular was home to working-class Italian immigrants, as well as a statue of Christopher Columbus. The theme of the community's unity was also stressed again and again.

The theme was referenced again and again throughout the day, during which both the participants and the audience were clearly touched.

Master of Ceremonies Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, the project's honorary co-chair along with current



The abstract monument at the Armenian Heritage Park



James Kalustian

Registrar of Motor Vehicles Rachel Kaprielian, who has been involved with the project in one way or another for the entire length of its gestation, was clearly touched, even getting choked up toward the end. He stressed that it is immigrant families that are celebrated by the project, as part of the Armenian and American experiences in this historic city. He credited Misak Barsoumian with getting the ball rolling, talking to a state official on creating a park for Armenians in the late 1990s, and James Kalustian, the Armenian Heritage Foundation president, for seeing the project through. He noted that the foundation has 38 board members representing practically every Armenian organization in the state, all of whom saw the big picture and collaborated fully.

Kalustian, who could barely contain his joy, stressed that the park is a "gift from our community" to the city of Boston, and has a value exceeding \$6 million, including an endowment for maintaining it. He referred to his grandparents, who escaped the Armenian Genocide, and praised the "triumphant spirit" of the Armenians who made Massachusetts their home, including Arshile Gorky, Alan Hovhannes, Yousuf Karsh and Moves Gulezian.



Rep. Edward Markey, Gov. Deval Patrick and Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian

Even more importantly, he said in Armenian, for this project the community spoke with "one voice, one body." In turn, he praised Koutoujian, as well as project architect Tellalian, and his wife, Barbara, with advancing the project, Aurelian Mardiros and his family who fabricated the statue, as well as the residents of the North End and Wharf District.

Special praise was reserved for Gov. Deval Patrick. "He is one of



From left, Barbara Tellalian, Donald Tellalian and Ani Hovsepian

the few senior elected officials who has backed his words in deeds," and has had a "courageous commitment" to get recognition for the Armenian Genocide, Kalustian said.

Patrick soon got the crowd swooning when he said, "brothers and sisters, we are all Armenians today." He noted, "This is a tribute to the resilience of the Armenian spirit, the immigrant spirit and the human spirit. ... This shows the triumph of the idea of America." He said America is unique in that its population is not united in ethnicity, but around the ideals of opportunity, equality and fair play.



Members of the Knights of Vartan pose with Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian and Ambassador to the US Tatoul Markarian, standing in the first row, fourth and fifth from the left.



Mayor Thomas Menino of Boston and Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian

In Koutoujian's words, Patrick is a "khenami" or in-law, of the Armenians.

Boston Mayor Tom Menino paid tribute to his city, saying it is a city of immigrants. He also praised Koutoujian and the rest of the activists for "staying the course," as well as the residents of the North End. "They wanted a 'heritage' park," he said, because like the Armenians, "they fought to come here."

Referring to the dismal weather, he said, "God upstairs is sending holy water. I didn't think they would have this much holy water."

Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA), who represents the heavily-Armenian-populated Watertown, instead characterized the rain as "tears of joy" from ancestors looking on from above. Markey said he could relate to the sentiments expressed, as he himself was the grandchild of Irish immigrants who came to Boston at the turn of the century, with a total net worth of \$10.

see PARK, page 12

COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Heritage Park Dedicated

PARK, from page 11

He then recited Hitler's quote about remembering Armenians and said, "We remember the Armenians. With this monument, we will never forget."

As for the Genocide resolution, which year after year fails to get passed, because "it is not the right time," as he said opponents say, he



From left, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, with Aurelian Mardiros, Dr. Mary Papzian, and Prof. Dennis Papazian



From left, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian and Rev. Arakel Aljalian



Anahid Mardiros watches in the rain.

is a member of the House Caucus on Armenian Issues and is a regular supporter of issues facing the community.

A blessing service was jointly performed by Archbishops Khajag Barsamian (Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Easters); Oshagan Choloyan (Prelate, Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America, Easter) and Vicken Aykazian (Legate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Eastern).

Representing Sargisian was Armenia's minister of foreign affairs, Eduard Nalbandian. He recalled seeing the site in 2010 when he had come to Boston and said he was "proud to see the project come to life." He said such a visceral representation of the experience of the Armenians made the case of the Armenians stronger globally when it came to Genocide recognition. He also said that in Turkey "our efforts are yielding results" in creating an internal dialogue with regard to the Genocide, noting that on April 24, commemorations had



Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan with Rep. Edward Markey



Avak Deirmenjian

suggested, "It is always the right time for the truth and this congress must pass this resolution." He noted that the US cannot condemn contemporary genocides in Darfur and Rwanda and then ignore the Armenian Genocide because of political expedience. Markey himself

taken place in Istanbul and several other cities. "I would like to express the hope that this will become the place for pilgrimage for all who are fighting to recognize genocides," Nalbandian said.

A reception for donors followed at the Millennium Hotel.

(All Photos by Jirair Hovsepian)

Banquet Kicks off Heritage Park Celebration

KICK-OFF, from page 11

from Armenia, as "for Armenians around the world, a free and independent homeland is a dream come true." He likened the nation to a phoenix that has risen out of the ashes of death and destruction.

In a tremendous mood of unity, Barsamian said that as Armenians we should be as one. "This achievement [the park] belongs to all of us," just like the Holy Sees of Echmiadzin and Antelias, to the applause of the audience.

"Our spiritual and national heritage belong to all of us," he said. "Our divisions are far less important that the qualities that unite us. We should embrace the great maturity and advances in the course of the Armenian nation."

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, the Prelate of the Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America

(Eastern) gave the benediction. "In this setting, my heart is filled with pride," he said. "Our heritage is wealth that belongs to all our people."

He praised all the groups in the community that help foster pride in Armenian identity and keep the young people tethered to the community, be they schools, churches, social or sports organizations.

"We are showing our heritage to Boston. It was built with the sweat of our people. I am proud that we are Armenian Americans and we gave back what they gave us," he said. Echoing Barsamian's comments about Armenia, he said, "We grew up without seeing our land. We receive and give our present. It is our wish that Armenian grows stronger and stronger."

The evening was sponsored by Nishan Atinizian and family, Carolyn Mugar, Noubar and Anna Afeyan and Kalustian.



From left, Prof. Taner Akcam with Marianne and Robert Aram Kaloosdian



Jirair and Ani Hovsepian



Genocide survivor Areka Der Kazarian, 100, and her son, Ed



Kevork Atinizian



COMMUNITY NEWS

Clergy Gather for Annual Conference

WEST HARTFORD, Conn. — In the days prior to the 110th Diocesan Assembly, clergy gathered at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, for the annual Clergy Conference, held from April 30 to May 3. During the four-day meeting, clergy prayed together, shared advice and discussed important issues related to the mission of the Armenian Church.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), presided over the meeting, which was attended by 44 clergy. Through daily prayer and fellowship they strengthened their interpersonal connections and gained fresh perspectives on their ministry.

The conference was co-chaired by the Very Rev. Vazken Karayan and the Rev. Aved Terzian.

Terzian introduced the Rev. Sahag Kaishian, interim pastor of St. Mark Church of Springfield, Mass., which hosted this year's Diocesan Assembly. Also welcoming the clergy was Edward Garabedian of St. Mark Church, who oversaw the arrangements for the Clergy Conference.

Clergy welcomed a guest from the Mother See of Holy Echiadzin, the Rev. Markos Mangasaryan, who made a presentation on two programs developed by the Mother See for the faithful in Armenia. The first program, titled "One Day in a Diocese," brings together clergy in Armenia for a series of home blessings in local communities. The second program, titled "Manna," offers young people ages 18 to 35

sessions on the faith and practices of the Armenian Church. A discussion followed the presentation.

The second day of the conference opened with the reading of a message from Karekin II, the supreme patriarch and catholicos of All Armenians, by Mangasaryan. "Remain tireless in your dedication to your ministry and become stronger with new accomplishments in your parishes," Karekin II wrote. "You have to be the spiritual father, the educator, and the source of comfort to our people. May our Lord keep you steadfast in your calling."

Clergy took part in small-group Bible study on a passage from John 15:12-16, in which Christ calls upon his disciples to love one another and to serve each other selflessly. Clergy reflected on their fraternal bond and how it nourishes their ministry. Later, again working in small groups, clergy shared the successes and challenges of their pastoral ministry.

In his message to the clergy, Barsamian expressed his appreciation for their dedication. He reflected on their intergenerational cooperation, highlighting the ways in which young clergy are learning from their senior brothers, and more experienced clergy are guiding and supporting the newly ordained.

The Primate spoke on two issues related to ensuring the success of the mission of the Armenian Church in the Eastern Diocese: the proper celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the importance of educating parishioners on the teachings of the Armenian Church.

Barsamian stressed that the badarak unites all who take part in its celebration, and brings them closer to Christ. He said that all parts of the service — from the hymns and prayers to the readings and litanies — are essential in creating a connection among the faithful, and between the faithful and God. To that end, he encouraged clergy to pay special attention to the Sunday service and to take advantage of Diocesan staff to help train altar servers and choir members.

Turning to education, Barsamian outlined the many programs offered by the Diocese, including summer camps, Armenian and Sunday School resources, ACYOA retreats and initiatives, St. Nersess conferences and lectures, and other activities. He urged clergy to promote these programs in their parishes and to recommend parishioners who might benefit from enrolling. The Primate also underlined the availability of Diocesan staff to lead workshops and training sessions at the parish level, and to train teachers of Armenian and Sunday Schools.

The floor was opened to suggestions about ways clergy could achieve these goals and encourage greater involvement and participation in church life.

The Primate asked clergy to continue praying for Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, the Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem and Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan, the Armenian patriarch of Constantinople.

Later in the afternoon, Dr. John Madonna

and Dr. Carl Fulwiler spoke about the priest's role in counseling and outlined resources available to clergy in addressing youth, marital, and bereavement issues.

On Wednesday, May 2, diocesan vicar, Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, spoke about discipline in the church and the importance of maintaining church traditions with deep reverence. He also spoke about several ancient ceremonies observed by the Armenian Church, such as the blessing of madagh and the Oil Bearing Service.

Talar Ishkhanian, a New York-based lawyer, gave an overview of immigration law and answered questions on the topic. Ishkhanian has worked with the Eastern Diocese to serve the immigration needs of clergy arriving in the United States from Armenia.

The Rev. Hratch Sargsyan made an appeal to the clergy on behalf of the children of the late Rev. Haroutiun Dagley and the late Yn. Patricia Dagley. The clergy collectively pledged \$7,500 to assist with the college tuition fund of Dagley's children.

On Wednesday evening the clergy gathered at St. Mark Church of Springfield, Mass., for vespers. Diocesan Council members and parishioners of St. Mark Church also took part in the service. A dinner and conversation followed.

On Thursday, May 3, the Rev. Tadeos Barseghyan celebrated the Divine Liturgy. All the clergy at the conference took part in the service — standing in prayer with each other and again strengthening their fraternal bond.

Kazarosian among Boston's Top-rated Lawyers

By Tom Vartabedian

HAVERTHILL, Mass. — When it comes to the field of law, the Kazarosians keep the family cycle intact.

First came the father, Paul Kazarosian, who maintained a venerable practice for 53 years in the city and was considered by many to be the dean of lawyers in the Haverhill Bar Association.

He aptly handed over the reins to his daughter Marsha Kazarosian, now into her third decade as a successful attorney passionately advocating for clients affected by injury, abuse or oppression.

With much of her father's skills, along with her own intuition, she has built a national practice handling complex cases involving personal injury, police brutality, family law and civil litigation.

Joining the firm is her son, Marc Moccia, who appears to be a chip off his grandfather's block and certainly a mother's son who's bent on keeping the family heritage intact.

The latest issue of Boston's top-rated lawyers has the Kazarosians prominently listed among the best in the business — a role Marsha and her staff has aptly personified.

Just last year, Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly honored her as one of the "Top Women of Law."

The publication also recognized her in 1999 as one of Massachusetts' top 10 lawyers, noting that she obtained one of the 10 highest jury verdicts in the Commonwealth that year.

In recognition of her skillful advocacy, Kazarosian has been recognized by the Massachusetts Super Lawyers annually since 2006.

To put it succinctly, success keeps knocking on this Armenian's door and she answers the call with fervor. Joining the practice are two other associates, Linda Little and Janet Dutcher.

"I think my dad would be very proud of the way this law firm has evolved, especially with his 'little grandson' entering the business," said

Kazarosian. "We are selective in the cases we accept because we want to be able to concentrate our energy and resources into getting the results our clients deserve."

When asked what sets her apart from others, her colleagues say that if she feels she can right a wrong, she is like "a dog with a bone."

"Maybe it's because I'm stubborn and not easily intimidated," Kazarosian said.

The list of Top Rated Lawyers was created by LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell, the company that has long set the standard for peer review ratings, sharing its list of local lawyers who have reached the highest levels of ethical standards and professional excellence.

Like her dad before her, she has remained vibrant in the pursuit of truth and justice, often taking giant steps in meeting the needs of her clients with high-profile representation.

Her handling of a gender discrimination case in 1999 involving Haverhill Golf and Country Club brought her national recognition. More importantly, it became a landmark case throughout the country in protecting the rights of women and minorities in membership-based club settings, affirming her stature as a leading litigator in discrimination suits.

Kazarosian represented one of the teenaged defendants in the 1990 murder of a young husband by his wife Pamela Smart, who conspired with her teenaged lover to murder her husband for insurance money. The story became the basis of a subsequent television movie starring Helen Hunt.

She also represented clients in a number of high-profile criminal cases, once defending a member of Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club in multiple federal criminal indictments.

Her legal skill was the subject of a cover story titled "The Power of Marsha Kazarosian" in a publication geared toward the legal community.

Away from the office and courtroom, she is an excellent racquetball player who, like her three sons, has held rank against some of the best players in the country. She shares her commitment to youth and the law by acting as a Mock Trial Judge for high school, college and law school students.

She is the daughter of Margaret Kazarosian, a retired music teacher in the city who has remained an advocate for many years with the local library.

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**New York
METRO**

Nine Armenian-Americans Receive 2012 Ellis Island Award

By Florence Avakian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ELLIS ISLAND, N.Y. — Under an azure sunny sky, 104 distinguished Americans and their family and friends boarded ferries from Battery Park in Manhattan to historic Ellis Island on Saturday afternoon, May 12, to receive the coveted Ellis Island Medal of Honor. The celebration for this coveted award, which is given to individuals who have “greatly contributed to the American national identity while preserving the distinct values and heritage of their ancestors,” had started the night before at a reception at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian at Battery Park.

Among the honorees were nine well-known Armenian-Americans who “took the American dream and made it a reality.” They included from the East Coast, Papken Megerian (CEO of Advanced MRI Center, LLC); Dr. Ohannes Nercessian (associate clinical professor of orthopedic surgery at the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Columbia University); Dr. Nishan Goudsouzian (professor of anesthesia at the Harvard School of Medicine) and, Helene Irma der Stepanian (economic consultant, cultural activist and NECO founding and board member), who was unaware that she was receiving this honor and received sustained applause

when her name was announced.

From California, the recipients were Joyce Philibosian Stein (chair and trustee of the Stephen Philibosian Foundation, which supports cultural, educational and humanitarian projects); Nancy Arabian (co-owner of ARMS Providers, Inc.); Dalida Keuroghlian (CEO of MK Designers, Inc.); Kevork Karajerjian, AIA (chief architect and CFO of Karabuild Development, Inc.) and Alice Petrossian (president of the Association of California School Administrators).

Armenian Greeters

Landing on Ellis Island, the honorees and their guests were greeted by several ethnic bands, including an enthusiastic group of young students from the Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School of Bayside, NY, dressed in colorful Armenian costumes and carrying welcoming signs. Guests of honor Armenia’s Ambassador to the United Nations Garen Nazarian and his wife, Nana, spent several minutes encouraging the animated youngsters in their studies and took photos taken with them.

As the thousands of guests took their seats under a huge white tent, the military band performed as the honorees marched down the center aisle to their seats on the platform. For the next three hours, the hall turned into a pageantry of pomp and circumstance with patriotic anthems, many national flags hanging from

the ceiling and members of the American armed forces marching in precision.

“This is hallowed ground, the ‘Isle of Tears,’” said master of ceremonies, local TV reporter Marvin Scott. “Today celebrates the dreams of our forefathers, and today’s recipients of the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor represent a tapestry of America, comprising 17 different nationalities. As each name was called, the recipient came forward and was decorated with the Ellis Island medal hung on a red, white and blue ribbon. Following the impressive ceremony, the awardees and their guests – more than 2,000 strong, celebrated with dinner in a cavernous hall decorated with chandeliers and flower-bedecked tables.

Lessons Reinforced

Megerian, whose philanthropy has benefited many cultural and humanitarian organizations in America, Armenia and Artsakh (Karabagh) was “very honored to be one of the recipients of this award. Hopefully, I will continue, and my contributions to the Armenian nation and the many organizations. This honor has given me the inspiration to do even more,” he pledged.

For Stein, who with her husband, Joseph, has been a longtime supporter of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, as well as of many artistic and humanitarian programs, the event reinforced the lessons she has learned from her father and her determination to con-

tinue her philanthropy. “I think of how my parents would have been so thrilled that their daughter is the recipient of this award. I learned from my father to serve others in need, and I know my children will follow in our footsteps.”

Nercessian, who has donated his service to many people in America and in Armenia, has “always shied from recognition and honors. It has been my responsibility to do whatever I have done, and I will continue to do more for my people, my community, my church and my nation. I believe strongly that the more you do, the more you receive,” he said quoting a well-known phrase.

Gousouzian who said he is “proud to be an Armenian,” said he is “especially happy to be one of the nine Armenian-Americans receiving this award. I admire the contributions the honorees have given in their professions, making a dent in the life of other people, without forgetting their roots.”

Arabian considers it “an achievement that so many Armenian-American women were receiving the award this year.” And for Keuroghlian, whatever talents she has, “have come from God and my parents. I will continue to make a difference in the life of people.”

On the ferry ride back to New York at midnight, the sky lit up with fireworks, illuminating the lady with the lamp who symbolically greeted all newcomers to this land – the Statue of Liberty.

Deacon Ordained At Holy Martyrs Church

BAYSIDE, N.Y. — On Sunday, April 29, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Martyrs, where he ordained Krikor Ghazarian to the diaconate.

The ordination to the diaconate was the first such service to take place at the parish in 35 years, and the entire community gathered to congratulate the young altar server. The Rev. Abraham Malkhasyan assisted the Primate in the ordination.

A banquet in honor of the newly-ordained deacon took place in the church’s Kalustyan Hall following services. A special program went forward under the direction of Dr. Lynn Cetin. After some heartfelt personal remarks and a thank you to Ghazarian’s parents, Hrair and Margaret Ghazarian, Cetin introduced a video highlighting the young man’s path to the diaconate.

A congratulatory toast was offered by Parish Council Chair Bruce Ashbahian. Nune Melikyan and Filip Petkov offered performances on the violin and piano. Yn. Karine Malkhasyan, accompanied by Armine Vardanyan on the piano, sang *Ambeetz Gorar*.

Congratulatory remarks by Arek Nisanyan on behalf of the Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School board followed. Ghazarian, a 2005 alumnus of the school, was presented with a certificate in honor of his continuing service to the Armenian community.

Four young altar servers – Ara Arsenian, Armen Arsenian, Nicholas Calikyan and Vahe Gemdzian – approached the podium and spoke about their “big brother” Krikor Ghazarian. In Armenian and English, they thanked him for being a mentor to them.

Senior Deacon Garbis Martayan spoke about Ghazarian and his service to the church. He added that the Holy Martyrs community is grateful to all the clergy, altar servers and choir members who have been instrumental in his preparation for the diaconate.

Karine Kocharyan, a family friend and producer of the “Voice of Armenia” television program, recited a poem in honor of Ghazarian. Hasmik Meikhanedjian, soprano, accompanied by Janet Marcarian on the piano, sang a selection of songs. Members of the Shnorhali Choir also performed, as did Samvel Nersisyan and Armine Vardanyan.

A letter of congratulations was read from

Bishop Vahan Hovhannessian, the Primate of the Armenian Church of Great Britain and Ireland and the former pastor of Holy Martyrs Church. Ghazarian was then presented with gifts from the parish council.

In addition to thanking his grandmother and parents, Ghazarian spoke about the “brotherhood” of altar servers at the church and reflected on his new role as deacon. “As a newly ordained deacon, I have the honor and responsibility to serve not only God, but the people of our church,” Ghazarian said. “I embrace this responsibility and I look forward to assuming the new role with humility.”

The program concluded with remarks from Barsamian, who congratulated Ghazarian and presented him with a wooden cross. He spoke about lay ministry and encouraged the younger altar servers to continue their training.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian ordains Krikor Ghazarian to the diaconate.

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Arts & Living

Egoyan Film to Explore Human Drama behind Murder Case that Sent Innocent Teens to Prison

VICTORIA, Canada (*Victoria Times-Colonist*) – No wonder Atom Egoyan breathed a sigh of relief when he learned “Devil’s Knot” got the green light.

The Victoria-raised filmmaker has been having such a busy year that early uncertainty about the shooting schedule for his West Memphis Three project starring Reese Witherspoon and Colin Firth made him consider resorting to desperate measures.

When he realized he might be filming in New Orleans the same time he was to stage Guo Wenjing’s Chinese opera “Feng Yi Ting” for the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC, he thought he might have to direct the singers via Skype from the Big Easy.

“Thank God that didn’t happen,” said Egoyan, laughing. “I don’t know what I was thinking. That would have been ridiculous. It was the first time I was double-booked,” recalled Egoyan, whose opera will move to New York’s Lincoln Center for its summer arts festival after its North American premiere May 20. The Oscar-nominated director was also recently showcased in his production of British playwright Martin Crimp’s “Cruel and Tender” for the Canadian Stage Company.

Thanks to delays in securing financing for “Devil’s Knot,” which now begins shooting June 25 in Atlanta, Egoyan was able to direct his Chinese opera stars live in Charleston.

“I found it to be such a creative playground and I really wanted to be there,” said Egoyan, now in pre-production on his film, based on Mara Leveritt’s 2002 bestseller about the murder of three 8-year-old boys in Arkansas in 1993.

It is being financed by Worldview Entertainment, and shopped to foreign buyers at Cannes by the Weinstein Co.

Two of the three teenagers released from prison 18 years after being wrongly convicted – Jessie Misskelley Jr. and Jason Baldwin – are executive producers on the film, which explores the human drama behind the case, fraught with legal complications.

“It’s a really powerful piece of American mythology,” said Egoyan, who helped rework the screen adaptation by Paul Boardman and Scott Derrickson (“The Exorcism of Emily Rose”).

“It’s so interesting that two documentaries have come out [Joe Berlinger’s and Bruce Sinofsky’s ‘Paradise Lost’ film] and so great I get to do my dramatic take. It’s about a community that loses three of its young sons and sacrifices its other children in the name of justice. It could happen in any community, so I’m trying to make it seem as tangible and real as possible.”

“Devil’s Knot” will be a reunion of sorts, since Egoyan will reconnect with British actor Colin Firth, his “Where the Truth Lies” star. Firth plays Ron Lax, the private investigator who works pro bono for the defendants. He also reunites with longtime cinematographer Paul Sarossy, who the day after they wrap flies to Hungary to continue as director of photography on Neil Jordan’s TV series, “The Borgias.”

Witherspoon, who plays Pam Hobbs, the devastated mother of one of the victims who begins to believe the teenagers were wrongly convicted, is also reuniting with Firth a decade after they did “The Importance of Being Earnest.”

“She’s very interested in this role as a southern person,” said Egoyan, noting the New Orleans-born actress spent a lot of time with her character’s family. “She has a very clear idea of who this person is.”

Because of delays, Egoyan has pushed filming of his next project to 2013.

Titled “Queen of the Night,” it is a psychological thriller about two detectives and a couple whose child has gone missing.

“It’s about the relationships between these four characters as the missing child re-emerges in a mysterious way.”



“Ordination of the diaconate of Kalfayan nun Mother Mariam, November 2, 1955, (From Prof. Roberta Ervine’s article with photos)

Shepherds of the Nation

CHICAGO – I remember the first time I entered the Armenian All Saints Apostolic Church in Chicago. My parents, brother and I had recently immigrated to the United States of America. As Displaced Persons (DPs) from Europe, we came

By **Knarik O. Meneshian**

on a battleship used for transporting immigrants. Church members introduced us to the community and other DPs. I was a kindergartener and, therefore, “old enough to sit through church service,” my parents had said to me before we entered the church. I sat between my mother, who was cradling my brother in her arms, and my father. There were rows and rows of pews and so many people sitting in them – ladies, with scarves on their heads, some with hats, dressed in their Sunday best, men in suits and children all dressed up. Some ladies, like my mother, were also cradling babies in their arms.

I gazed with wonder at the large, stained-glass windows that were on the right and left sides of the church. With the sun shimmering through them at different times, the windows were magical to me. I stared at the flickering candles slowly melting in the sand-candle-stands. I looked intently at the (Raphael) painting of the Madonna and Child above the altar. It was large and hauntingly beautiful. I glanced at the paintings hanging on the walls just past the side altars, and asked my father who the men depicted in them were. He pointed to the painting on the left wall and whispered, “He is Saint Sahag Barteve.” Pointing then to the one on the right wall, he whispered, “And he is Saint Mesrop Mashdots.” Although the priest spoke in Armenian, I didn’t always understand what he was saying, what the other men at the altar assisting him were chanting or what the choir was singing. I only knew that I liked the sights and sounds and scent inside this lovely place that made me feel so good. Although we lived far from the church, I liked coming whenever my parents were able to attend. Sometimes we walked, which took such a long time that I would get tired, so my father would carry me the rest of the way. Other times, particularly in inclement weather, we took the bus, and then it was just a short walk to the church.

Eventually, when I was old enough and could walk or take the bus to church on my own, I would attend service by myself. Then one day, I joined the choir. I marveled at the sequined cape and slippers, the lace veil and the robe, the first time I put them on. With hymnbook in hand, I was now a member of the choir and remained so for a few years. Over the years, our church and community experienced a number of changes, such as the church’s move from Chicago to Glenview, Ill., new clergymen and more use of English to accommodate parishioners who did not speak Armenian. Women were no longer required to cover their heads in church, except when they took communion. There were the periodic arrivals of new immigrants and newcomers to the city and some who left. However, there were things that remained the same, such as the church rituals and hymns, the paintings of the Madonna and Child and the two saints, the sand candle stands and stained-glass windows.

Until I was older, and had a family of my own, I did not give much thought to the importance of the clergyman’s role in the community other than he performed church service and other church-related duties. At times, I wondered what it was that prompted these men to become clerics, because I had come to see that the path they chose was not an easy one, whether serving in a city, a town or a village. When I asked a few of them how it was that they chose to become clerics, one said that he felt the calling to serve God when he was an altar boy; another said it came to

see MENESHIAN, page 16

Newest Bohjalian Novel Addresses Armenian History

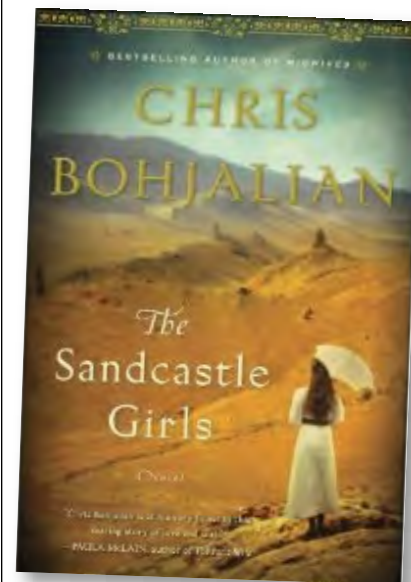
By **Daphne Abeel**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Chris Bohjalian’s newest novel, *The Sandcastle Girls*, represents a departure from his recent books. He has barely touched the subject of his Armenian heritage in most of his novels, but he has now produced an historical novel, which deals, in large part with the lives of his grandparents, his Boston Brahmin grandmother, portrayed in the novel as Elizabeth Endicott, and his Armenian grandfather, Armen Petrosian, an Armenian soldier, who joins the British army during the fateful year of 1915.

The novel has a double focus. One point of view is in the first person, that of Laura Petrosian, a New York writer, who, with the death of her Armenian grandfather, has begun to look into her family’s past. The other vantage point is the story she discovers of Elizabeth and Armen, who met in Aleppo, during the time of the deportations and death marches forced upon the Armenians by the Ottoman Turks.

Elizabeth has come to Aleppo with her



father, Silas Endicott, a wealthy Boston philanthropist, who is intent on bringing aid, under the auspices of Friends of Armenia, to the refugees, who have arrived in the Syrian city, starving and dying. She is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College with a bit of training as a nurse and is intent on helping the people she finds in the most desperate straits.

Almost immediately upon arrival in Aleppo, Elizabeth is faced with the sight of a crowd of naked, skeletal women in the city’s main square. One who catches her particular attention is Nevart, a woman in her 30s who has taken under her wing Hatoun, an 8-year-old orphaned girl. Eventually, Elizabeth is able to arrange for lodging for the two at the American consul’s house.

Bohjalian, who conducted a great deal of research on the period, is able to sketch in the background the other characters who make up his story with convincing detail. There are the German soldiers, one of whom is clearly modeled on the German photographer, Armin Wegner, who try to document the sufferings of the Armenians, although their camera is ultimately confiscated by the Turks. Most important is the Armenian soldier, Armen Petrosian, who has managed to arrive in

see BOHJALIAN, page 16



Shepherds of the Nation

MENESHIAN, from page 15

him in a recurrent dream he had had when he was little and another, who was of a higher ranking, pensively explained that it came about because of the poverty into which he was born. A celibate priest who had been working under extremely difficult and harsh conditions in a remote and primitive Armenian village had explained to me in his home there – a dank, dim, spartan hut, “My brother, whom I loved deeply, became gravely ill one day. We were children at the time and he was my best friend and playmate. As I fearfully watched my brother growing weaker and weaker by the hour, despite the efforts of the doctor, and as I watched my grief-stricken parents and the whole family wailing and moaning at his bedside day and night, I became terribly frightened. Wanting to do something, but not knowing what, I began praying. I prayed with all my heart to God, beseeching Him to restore my beloved brother to health. After many, many days of praying, God at last heard my prayers. And so, in profound thankfulness, I offered my life to serving Him.” The priest had smiled as he had joyfully uttered the last sentence.

During my early, formative years, and even in subsequent years, some of the clergymen who served our church, and some who served the other Armenian churches in the Chicago area, left deep and indelible impressions on me. As a result, they led me to understand better the importance of the Armenian clergyman’s role. In our church, one such priest was the late Rev. Sahag Vertanessian, who had a reflective and congenial manner. Another priest was the late Rev. Smpad Der Mekhsian, who possessed a welcoming and sunny disposition, gave exceptionally moving sermons and had a smile and warm handshake for everyone. His home-blessing visits were always beautiful and extra-special occasions for our family.

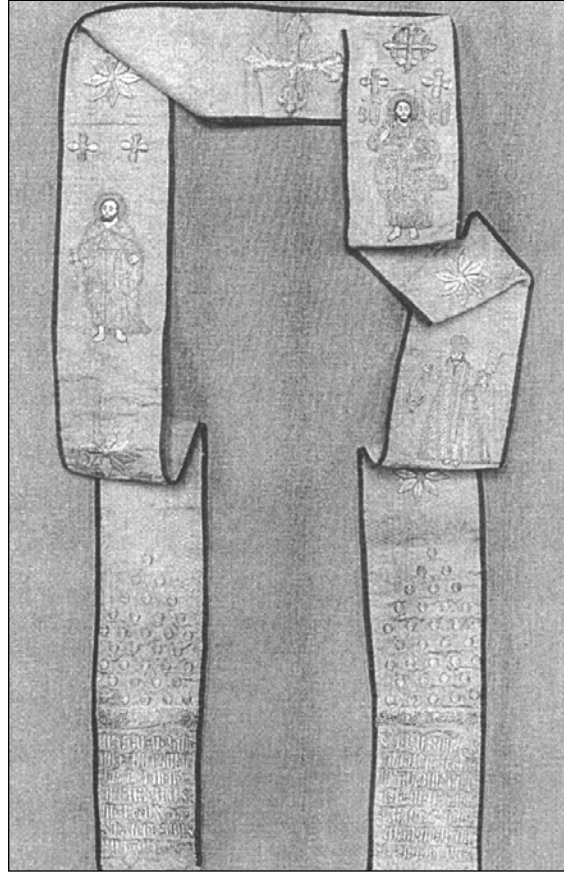
At the Armenian Evangelical Church, the retired Rev. Barkev Darakjian was inspirational with his gracious and amiable manner towards both his parishioners and non-parishioners alike, and his promotion of Armenian cultural and educational events.

At the Saint James Armenian Church in Evanston, the late Very Rev. Varoujan Kabarajian left a deep impression on me with his kind and encouraging manner, particularly toward the youth – even those who were not members of his congregation. I was a high school student at the time when I had mentioned to the Hayr Soorp one day during a casual conversation at a community affair that, although I knew how to read and write in Armenian, I wanted to improve my skills. He nodded and then said with a smile, “You are welcome to attend my Armenian language class.”

The late Mkhitarist Fathers Luke (Arakelian), George and Gregory happily and enthusiastically performed their duties at the summer camp for boys and girls they ran years ago in Falmouth, Mass. One other person was the Armenian Catholic priest, Very Rev. Yeghia,

who worked tirelessly, along with the Armenian Catholic nuns (the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception Order) in the villages in Javakhk, Georgia. These humble and dedicated clerics, and nuns, all had two qualities in common – inspiration and guidance.

The reflective and poignant homilies that were given in the Chicago Armenian community over the years by the Prelacy’s Archbishop Karekin Sarkissian, later Karekin II, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, then Karekin I (of blessed memory) Catholicos of All Armenians, Aram I, Catholicos of The Great House of Cilicia, the Diocese’s Archbishop Khajag



Stole of Deaconess Anna Mnacakanian, Astrakhan. (From Prof. Roberta R. Ervine’s article with photos)

Barsamian and the late Rev. Movses Janbazian, director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) filled me with an even greater reverence for my Armenian heritage. All of these spiritual leaders spoke and interacted with the people in a humble, warm and attentive manner.

Years have come and gone, and with them many changes, but always one thing has remained constant – the unassuming splendor of the Armenian Church. As I entered our church in Glenview one Sunday, I took a seat behind a young immigrant family. The father was motioning to his little boy and girl to sit quietly, while the mother was cradling their infant in her arms – what a familiar, heart-warming scene it was! As the choir sang *Khorhoort khorin, anhas anusgispán...* (O profound mystery, incomprehensible and without

beginning...), I began reflecting upon the meaning of the ancient hymn – *The Hymn of Vesting*. Suddenly, I was distracted by a dull thump that came from the direction of the stained-glass windows so iridescent and luminous in the light of the morning sun. As prayers and incense, chants and hymns, filled the church, I recalled my first visit to Armenia. It was during the days when God was banned from that part of the world. One of my relatives there had cautiously explained to me, after my visit to Holy Echmiadzin, that despite the dire consequences for non-compliance, there were those devout souls who, in the refuge of their

minds, still prayed and sang the *sharagans* (hymns). One of those devout souls, who had expressed his religious feelings through some of his art, had been Vazgen Surenyantz.

My thoughts now turned to the elderly woman who was sitting in the pew a couple of rows in front of me. After painstakingly adjusting her headscarf, she struggled to her feet and laboriously walked down the aisle to receive communion. She reminded me of one of the Genocide survivors I had interviewed years earlier. Then, as the choir sang the *Aghotk Deroonagan* (Lord’s Prayer), I wondered, as I looked about me at the congregation, many of whom were descendants of Genocide survivors, how such a downtrodden, Christian people, who had suffered great tragedies through the centuries – invasion, domination, persecution, slavery, mass murder and destruction – continued, and continues still, to maintain not only their identity, but their religion as well. What is it that gave them, and still gives them, the fortitude to uphold the heritage of their forefathers?

As the days and weeks passed, I continued to consider the question I had that day in church. Then one evening, while sitting at my desk

and looking through a collection of books, booklets pamphlets and articles, I realized that the answer lay in our historical figures and their contributions, which through the ages have, knowingly and unknowingly, impacted us as a people and nation. Some of these historical figures were: Krikor Barte Bahlavuni, known as Saint Gregory the Illuminator (circa 239-326), was instrumental in converting pagan Armenia to Christianity and the first Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church; Saint Sahag Barte (348-439) was Catholicos during Armenia’s Golden Age of Literature (fifth century) and encouraged the creation of the Armenian alphabet by Mesrop Mashdots; Saint Mesrop Mashdots (361-440) was the inventor of the Armenian alphabet in AD 404 and opened the first Armenian school; Ghevont Yerets (fifth century) was the valiant priest, who not only preached the *Gospel* and translated holy writings, but fought and was martyred in the Battle of Avarair – a struggle for religious freedom; Yeghisheh (fifth century) was a historian and celibate priest who authored the *History of Vartanank*, a book on the Battle of Avarair; Movses Khorenatsi was a bishop and historian, author of *The Genealogical Account of Great Armenia*, also known as *The History of Armenia*; Ananiah Shirakatsi (seventh century), referred to as Vartabet (celibate clergyman) by Archbishop M. Ormanian, was an astronomer, mathematician, scientific researcher and author (among his works are the *Book on Arithmetic and Astronomy and Calendar*); Saint Grigor Naregatsi (950-1010) was a clergyman and author and among his greatest of works is *The Book of Lamentations*, also known as *The Book of Prayers of Narek*; Saint Nerses Glayetsi, known as Nerses Shnorhali (1100-1173), was a clergyman, composer, author of “*sharagans* (hymns), canticles and lyrics...” His prayer, *Havadov Khosdovanim* (I Confess with Faith)

has been translated into “thirty-six languages;” Mekhitar Kosh (1130-1213) was a celibate priest and “compiler of the first Armenian Corpus Juris or the Code of Civil and Canon Laws;” Mugrditch Khrimian, (1820-1907), Catholicos, known endearingly as Khrimian Hayrig (Father), was a revered religious leader of the Armenian Revolutionary Movement, teacher, publisher and author; Karekin Servantzdiantz (1840-1892), a student of Khrimian Hayrig, became a bishop, and was a writer, preacher, patriot and collector and compiler of Armenian allegories, anecdotes, fables and folk-tales, thus rescuing them from oblivion; Maghaka Ormanian (1841-1918) was a clergyman, patriarch of Constantinople, scholar, teacher, writer, lecturer, and Komitas Vartabed (1869-1935) was a renowned clergyman, teacher, vocalist, musician, composer and musicologist.

Then, opening one of my folders to look through some notes I had taken on the topic of the Armenian Church, I came across a fragile, yellowed copy of an article I had saved titled “Women in the Armenian Church,” by Yedvard Gulbekian, and published in the Armenian paper *Hye Sharzhoom* in April, 1982.

Wanting to know more about this intriguing topic, I contacted St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New Rochelle, NY. Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian (now at St. Peter Armenian Church in Watervliet, NY), answered my questions and provided me with a copy of Fr. Abel Oghlukian’s book, titled *The Deaconess In The Armenian Church – A Brief Survey*. Seminary faculty member Prof. Roberta R. Ervine sent me a copy of her article published in the *St. Nersess Theological Review*, titled “The Armenian Church’s Women Deacons.”

In his book, Oghlukian writes: “The development of the office of deaconess in the Armenian Church can be divided into four historical periods: 1) Greater Armenia in the fourth to eighth centuries. There are uncertain references in the canons to women who have a claim to be present at baptisms. 2) Eastern and Cilician Armenia in the ninth to 11th centuries. There the term deaconess is employed in ritual texts (mastoc) of ordination. 3) From the 12th century there are literary references and rites for the ordination of deaconesses in liturgical texts, first in Cilicia and then in Eastern Armenia. 4) The renewal of the female diaconate in the 17th century.”

In her article, Ervine includes the names of 23 deaconesses of the Armenian Apostolic Church and details the religious communities and various locations the deaconesses have served the Armenian Church from the 17th century, and, in some places, where they continue to serve the church in the 21st century. The names of the religious communities or localities are: St. Catherine’s Nunnery, New Julfa, Iran (founded 1623 and closed in 1954); St. Stephen/Saint Stepanos of the Holy Virgins Church, Tiflis, Georgia; the Kalfayan Sisterhood, Istanbul, Turkey, founded in 1866, “the ‘last’ currently in service, Sister Hripsime Sasunian, was ordained by Patriarch Snorhk Galustean in 1982”; Byblos, Lebanon; the Cathedral of Holy Theotokos, Astrakhan, Russia; the village of Seoleoz, Diocese of Bursa, Turkey; the Armenian community in Jazlowiec, Poland/Ukraine, and the Armenian community in Argentina.

“For some of the women deacons,” Ervine writes, “we have descriptions of the activities in which they were engaged; for some, there are data concerning their ordination; for others, the fact of their presence in a given moment or situation is merely mentioned as something taken for granted and requiring no elaboration... Armenian women in the deaconate have offered centuries of service both illustrious and humble – and certainly various.”

Both the Armenian Deaconesses and the Armenian Catholic Sisters promoted education, ran schools and orphanages and tended to the needs of the poor. The Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception continue to serve the Armenian people.

As I put away the books and material I had been reading and looking through, I began thinking about the words Bishop Karekin Servantzdiantz had written: “Patriotism is a measureless and sublime virtue, and the real root of genuine goodness... It is a kind of virtue that prepares a man to become the most eager defender of the land, water, and traditions of his fatherland.”

Bohjalian’s Newest Novel Addresses Armenian History

BOHJALIAN, from page 15

Aleppo, although he believes that both his wife, Karine, and their baby daughter have been killed or have died during the forced march from Van, their home. And then there is the Turkish doctor at the local hospital, who befriends Elizabeth and treats his Armenian patients, without regard for official rules.

Elizabeth and Armen meet and although her father is mildly disapproving of the relationship, romance ultimately blossoms, despite the fact that Armen decides to join the British army and goes off to fight in the trenches where many are shot and killed. While their love affair takes flight, Armen is tragically unaware that his wife, Karine, has also survived, and it is only through her self-sacrifice that the pair are able to reunite.

Laura, in her efforts to recover her grandparents’ past, even visits familiar institutions such

as the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) to track down documents and photographs that will affirm their history.

Much of the strength of the novel comes from Bohjalian’s ability to sketch the historical background, to portray the reluctance of Laura’s grandparents to ever discuss their dramatic and tragic past and her determination to discover the truth.

This could be the story of so many Armenian families that the novel is bound to attract a readership amongst the Armenian community that many of his other novels might not claim. The story depends less on the intricate plotting and thematic thrust that are familiar hallmarks of Bohjalian’s previous books. The Sandcastle Girls is a novel that presents the tragedies and successes of believable human beings and may prove to be one of this prolific author’s most popular titles.



ARTS & LIVING

Prof. Russell's Lecture on May 31 at ALMA Will Commemorate Armenian Printed Book

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Dr. James Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, will lecture on poet Yeghishe Charents' publication, *Book of the Way*, on May 31 at 7:30 p.m. at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA).

The lecture is part of the community's celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Armenian book publication and is offered in conjunction with the exhibit, "The Armenians and the Book," sponsored by the Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies and displayed at Harvard University's Lamont Library during the first three weeks in April. The exhibit has

been re-mounted on ALMA's third floor gallery and opened there on Sunday, May 20.

"The Armenians and the Book" contains items drawn from various Harvard libraries, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), ALMA, the Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF) and local private collections. It features Armenian prayer scrolls and magical manuscripts, the first Armenian printed Bible, illustrated editions of Classical texts and rare literary works, as well as conversation manuals, cook books and printed ephemera reflecting the Armenian immigrant experience in New England. It is sponsored by the Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and

Civilizations at Harvard and the above organizations, with the support also of the Armenian Studies programs of Boston University and Tufts University.

The title of Russell's lecture, "Charents' *Book of the Way*: Text and Icon of a Soviet Armenian Apocalypse," reflects the significance of this book published in 1933, shortly before the brilliant and popular Armenian poet was arrested by the Soviet police. Charents died in prison in 1937, one of the victims of Josef Stalin's Great Purge.

"*The Book of the Way* (Girk' chana-parhi) was the last book of Yeghishe Charents, his greatest, and a book that was burnt and became dangerous to own," Russell explained. "It is also the most extraordinary work of graphic art in modern Armenian: Hakob Kojoyan and the poet collaborated closely on the design, which encodes an extraordinary message of transformation and apocalypse that is in plain sight, but has perhaps not been deciphered hitherto."

The Charents lecture is sponsored jointly by ALMA, NAASR and the ACF.

Russell has written widely on Armenian literature, ancient, medieval and modern. He has been the Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard since 1992. His books include *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*,



Mashtots Prof. James Russell in St. Petersburg, Russia

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.

The May 31 lecture is open to the public free of charge and will be followed by a reception. In addition to the exhibit, attendees will be able view ALMA's own exhibit, "Bound for Glory: 500 Years of Armenian Printing from ALMA's Collection," on ALMA's second-floor gallery.

Further information is available by contacting ALMA, NAASR or ACF.

The Armenian Library and Museum of America is located at 65 Main St.



Title page of poet Yeghishe Charents' *The Book of the Way*, which is the subject of a presentation by Harvard Prof. James Russell at ALMA on May 31.

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JUNE 1-2 — Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair (rain or shine); open Friday from 5-8 p.m., serving Armenian kebab meals; entire Fair open Saturday 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Armenian meals served all day, Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; take out available; also Armenian vegetarian meals; Armenian delicacies table featuring paklava and more; silent auction of valuable gift certificates; sale of new gift and household merchandise; Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown (off Coolidge Square) take Watertown bus from Harvard Square; admission free, wheelchair accessible; for more info, (617) 484-3176.

NEW JERSEY

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

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 29 — Save the date. Armenia Fund 20th Anniversary Gala, 7 p.m. at Gotham Hall in New York City.

RHODE ISLAND

JUNE 2 — The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church presents the 18th Annual Children's Talent Show "Reflections of Armenian Youth" on Saturday. Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. Donation: \$5 at the door. Children under 16 no charge.



The Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair will take place, rain or shine, June 1 and 2, Friday from 5 to 8 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., with Armenian meals served all day, Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. The event featuring, games, raffles and more, will be at the church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, Mass. For more info, call (617) 484-3176.



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror- Spectator

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An ADL Publication

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COMMENTARY

Eight Decades on the Mission

By Edmond Y. Azadian

As readers and friends of the *Mirror-Spectator* gather this week to celebrate the 80th anniversary of this publication, it is appropriate to pause for a moment and, with a retrospective flashback, review the achievements of a journey extending over 80 years.

We can perfectly understand the dilemma of the founding fathers of the paper – Prof. Elisha Chrakian, Bedros Norehad and others – who had a solid command of the Armenian language, along with a mastery of English, to launch a weekly in English, reading the tides of the future and bracing the youth for that future.

It was a watershed departure from the past tradition, since the Armenian language media existed for more than 50 years in this country and the community conducted its business in Armenian.

The youth were peeling away from the Armenian language and traditions. Therefore, the intellectual elite was at a crossroads; they had to give up the language to retain the spirit. It was not a rupture with the past, it was rather a step to preserve and project that past into the future; in fact, it was a process to have that spirit survive in a new context.

The initiative sounded like a dramatic departure from the past but the impact was not as painful yet because next to the publication of the *Mirror* in English its twin brother, the *Baikar* daily, was well and alive and it survived many more years after the emergence of the *Mirror* in 1932.

In a way, the *Mirror* was a trendsetter in the Armenian media; later other publications followed through.

Had the leaders of the parent organization, the Baikar Association, hesitated, or had refused to move forward, with a misconstrued sense of patriotism and traditionalism, a generation or two would have been lost. They would be denied of the resources constituting the philosophy or the mission of the ADL, which

were the pursuit of Genocide recognition and maintaining the coherence of the community in the new world.

Individuals may come up with lively publications, which will fizzle out with their demise, but publications undertaken by an organization have a longer lifespan and may continue serving the posterity.

However, there is a stigma attached to the publications sponsored by political parties. And sometimes the criticism may be justified as the publication becomes self-serving. Yet, throughout successive administrations and editors of ADL publications, and particularly the *Mirror-Spectator*, have tried hard to serve as an open forum for many views and ideas, sometimes even in conflicting patterns.

On the other hand, that stigma has not been reserved for publications sponsored by our religious, charitable and social organizations, which serve very narrow interests.

At one time, the *Mirror* was considered as an East Coast publication, and to be more specific, a New England publication, although almost half of its subscription base was in New York/New Jersey area. Thanks to new developments in information technologies the scope of the readership has broadened and today we can proudly say that this publication has a global appeal.

Its news coverage and analyses reach instantaneously to its readers around the world.

Fortunately, readers react and the editors find out the diversity and the geographic profile of its global readership.

Professional excellence has been the hallmark of this publication and to continue to maintain that professional level needs the continued support of its readers, friends and benefactors.

Thus far, the support has been very rewarding. The 80th anniversary celebration is an opportunity to sensitize our friends and readers about the challenges laying ahead and hopefully with their continued support carry the vision and mission many more decades into the future.

Armenia: A Blurry Line in Yerevan Between Hate Crime and Defense of 'National Interests'

By Gayane Abrahamyan

Reactions to a recent arson attack on a gay-friendly bar in Yerevan are raising concerns among civil liberties advocates that Armenia's political establishment is indirectly encouraging intolerance and violence toward lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals.

The DIY (Do It Yourself) Rock Pub, a hangout owned by musician Tsomak (a play on the Armenian word for "mosquito"), went up in flames in the early morning of May 8, when three young men smashed a bar window and tossed a Molotov cocktail inside. Two of the three, brothers identified only by their first names (Arameh, 20, and Hambik, 19), were detained on charges of premeditated arson. The third suspect has not yet been apprehended.

The pair in custody, reportedly the grandsons of an Iranian diaspora member of the nationalist Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutiun party, was released after ARF parliamentarians Artsvik Minasian and Hrayr Karapetian came up with 1 million drams (\$2,530) for bail.

The accused face a fine of 50,000-100,000 drams (\$125 - \$253) in addition to compensation for the damage, or a prison term ranging from two months to two years. A trial date has not been set.

Rights activists say the maximum potential punishment is too mild for what they see as a hate crime against a sexual minority, an act not covered under Armenia's criminal code. Amnesty International condemned the government's response to the attack as "utterly shocking" and a violation of Armenia's commitments "under international law."

In remarks to reporters, Minasian asserted that the young men "acted in accordance with our society's values and national ideology, and in an appropriate manner." "It was wrong to cause material damage, of course, and it will be compensated, but I have repeatedly said

that Tsomak and her ilk are destructive for our society," he added.

A majority of Armenians most likely agree. A 2011 survey by the Public Information and Need for Knowledge (PINK) organization, a human rights group working primarily on LGBT and other minority issues, in Yerevan, along with the regional towns of Gyumri and Vanadzor, found that 72 percent of the 1,189 respondents believe that the state should take measures to "fight against homosexuals."

Many Facebook users in Armenia have turned the three alleged arsonists into heroes, calling the trio's actions "the only true way of fighting against homosexuals." Some users of the social network have also posted photos of Armine Oganezova – the real name of Tsomak.

Perhaps the show of popular support on Facebook explains why senior members of the governing Republican Party of Armenia have sided with the alleged arsonists. MP Eduard Sharmazanov, the party's longtime spokesperson, called the attack "completely right and justified," and claimed that those who support the rights of LGBT Armenians "are perverting our society, are defaming the Armenian national identity." He dismissed human rights activists as "trying to earn cheap dividends" from the attack, the gay-rights blog Unzipped reported.

Lara Aharonian, the director of Yerevan's Women's Resource Center, which addresses women's rights issues, warns that such declarations might have a destructive backlash.

"The indifference and silence of society and state bodies [toward displays of hatred against LGBT Armenians] is giving a green light to such groups and it's extremely dangerous," Aharonian charged. "They think they can do whatever they want and get away with it unpunished."

PINK project coordinator Marine Margarian noted that the attack on DIY was not the first in Yerevan. "Other clubs and pubs that are open to people of other nationalities and representatives of different cultures have been

subjected to minor attacks such as breaking bottles, throwing eggs at the doors," Margarian said.

For the past several years, one nationalist organization, Meg Azzg (One Nation), has posted posters on apartment buildings and bus stops in Yerevan urging Armenians to "fight against homosexuals," warning that "homosexuals are leading our country to destruction." In 2011, PINK petitioned the Ministry of Justice to remove the posters; ministry representatives responded that the posters are an expression of freedom of speech, Margarian said. "This means that such fascist, fanatical and nationalistic extremist propaganda is acceptable on an institutional level," she alleged. The ministry has responded that it can take no action against the posters since, it claims, they do not violate the law.

PINK and the Women's Resource Center co-sponsored what was billed as a Diversity March on May 21 in Yerevan. The marchers were met by roughly 100 counter-demonstrators, some carrying placards with slogans like "Send Gays to Baku" and "Armenia without Gays." At one point, counter-demonstrators attempted to disrupt the march and scuffling broke out. Some marchers suffered minor injuries before police intervened.

Oganezova, the DIY club owner, claims that since the May 8 attack various groups of youngsters have warned her that such a bar will never reopen in Yerevan. Since the bar's opening a year ago, the suspects themselves, whom she believes to be members of a small underground nationalist group (seen on Facebook wearing t-shirts bearing the name "The Black Ravens of Armenia" and "The Dark Forces of Armenia"), frequently pestered her, she recounted.

After Oganezova's band, the all-female punk rock group Pincet, staged a concert in Istanbul and took part in a gay pride parade there, "they [the young nationalists] took it as high treason against our country and decided to punish me for it," she claimed.

see HATE CRIME, page 20



COMMENTARY

Azerbaijani Government Awarded Gold-Field Rights to President's Family

Novruz Allahverdiyev, 40, lives in a mud house in the village of Chovdar, a small mining town in the mountainous region near the border with Armenia. He is one of 800,000 internally-displaced persons from the war with Armenia that battered his native Nagorno-Karabagh region in the early 1990s.

Allahverdiyev and members of 60 other displaced families found shelter and a place to farm in the mountains around Chovdar. Like many in his predicament, Allahverdiyev is patriotic, and the walls of his poor home are plastered with pages from an aging calendar featuring portraits of President Ilham Aliyev and his late father, former President Heydar Aliyev.

Allahverdiyev's family now faces yet another problem. A British mining company has taken over some of his land and has blocked one of the two streams his village relies on for water. Allahverdiyev is sure President Aliyev will help him and his community.

But his faith may be misplaced. What Allahverdiyev doesn't know is that the president and his family own a stake in the new mine. The UK company is actually a front for the first family.

In two 2007 decrees, the state assigned the right to develop the Chovdar gold field and five other sites to a company called Azerbaijan International Mineral Resources Operating Company, Ltd. (AIMROC). AIMROC – which controls a 70 percent stake in the mines, while the Azerbaijan government controls 30 percent – has been building the infrastructure for the Chovdar mine and is expected to begin production this year.

But sorting out AIMROC's structure is a daunting task. While Chovdar locals blame the "ingilis" (English) for their woes, the truth is quite different. AIMROC is a joint venture of four companies: Londex Resources SA, Willy and Meyris S.A., Fargate Mining Corporation and Globex International LLP. All four are shell companies that, according to Azerbaijani officials, were set up specifically for this deal. It is unclear if any of them have any mining experience or other mining projects.

A fifth company – Mitsui Mineral Development Engineering Co Ltd (MINDECO), a mining-engineering company owned

By Nushabe Fatullayeva, Khadija Ismayilova

by Japan's Mitsui Mining and Smelting Company – is listed as the official project supervisor, but has no ownership.

Of the four AIMROC owners, the only UK-based company is Globex International, which has an 11 percent stake, worth about \$200 million. But Globex is actually owned by three companies registered in Panama: Hising Management SA, Lynden Management Group, Inc. and Arblor Management Corporation. According to Panamanian registration records, all three firms list President Aliyev's two daughters – Leyla and Arzu Aliyeva – and Swiss businessman Olivier Mestelan as senior managers.

Mestelan has long had close ties to the Aliyev family. He has organized artistic events with them and, together with Leyla and Arzu, appears in the records of other Panamanian companies being used as fronts for businesses in Azerbaijan, including the Azerfon cellular-services provider. Mestelan declined to be interviewed for this story.

Aliyev's office refused to answer questions about his family's business interests in the gold fields. Presidential spokesman Azer Gasimov did not return phone calls and did not respond to questions submitted in writing.

AIMROC has been controversial from its beginning. The consortium was formed by a 2006 presidential decree that identified Globex as part of the consortium. In 2007, AIMROC was awarded 30-year leases on the mineral fields.

Chovdar alone is a lucrative parcel. According to the Azerbaijani Environment Ministry, it contains reserves of 44 tons of gold and 164 tons of silver, worth about \$2.5 billion at current prices.

The contracts were awarded to AIMROC hastily and over the objections expressed by many members of parliament during hearings held in June 2007. Lawmakers complained that the consortium's ownership was opaque; that the contract was awarded in violation of bidding procedures; that none of

the companies had any history of mining and that the deal was contrary to Azerbaijan's national interests.

During the hearings, deputy Valeh Aleskerov, chairman of the parliamentary Natural Resources Committee, defended the deal. He said the creation of offshore companies was "a common practice around the world" and that no tender was issued because of the uncertainty about how much mineral wealth there was. Instead, he said, the government held talks directly with potential investors.

The Environment Ministry's chief geologist, Agamahmud Samedov, told RFE/RL that the estimates of the other five fields are classified. He also declined to comment on AIMROC's ownership or its lack of mining experience.

When asked last month about AIMROC's ownership, Aleskerov said, "Do you think the Azerbaijani government would contract with someone unknown, with just anyone from the street?" When asked if the Aliyev family has any financial interest in the project, Aleskerov said only "Shame on you!" and hung up.

Parsing the rest of AIMROC's structure is more difficult. Londex Resources and Fargate Mining are registered in Panama, according to documents obtained from the Panama Registry of Companies.

The documents indicate that the companies are interrelated through a complicated chain of company directorships. All three are or were at one time owned by two companies registered at the same address on the tiny Caribbean island of Nevis: Casal Management and Tagiva Management.

Casal and Tagiva act or acted as the director for at least 20 companies in the United Kingdom, the United States and Panama. It is likely that the companies are professional proxies used to hide actual ownership.

According to a document of the Tax Registry of Azerbaijan, Willy and Meyris SA (listed in some documents as Will and Meyris SA) is represented by a Czech geolo-

gist, Mirko Vanecek, the executive editor of The Journal of Geosciences in Prague.

Meanwhile, back in Chovdar, locals are looking forward to a rumored visit by President Aliyev to mark the opening of an ore refinery the consortium has built.

"We have heard that president will come to the opening ceremony of this factory," villager Paneh Huseynov says. "Please tell our president to come and visit us. Tell him we support his policies. We will not be allowed to approach him. Please, we ask him to come and ask about our living conditions. Then he'll see how we live and how we suffer."

Villagers had no idea that the president's family owns part of the mine operator. "How can the president be benefiting from this production? ... All of the companies here are foreign. Englishmen are running the business here," says one local who refuses to give his name.

Teacher Nureddin Ramazanov lost some land to AIMROC. With a salary of just \$130 per month, Ramazanov says his family is starving.

"The company destroyed our road," he says. "Geologists took our land. They paid us only 2,000 manats [\$2,500] per hectare.... Now I don't know how we'll survive."

Meanwhile, Karabagh exile Allahverdiyev says he is hoping to get a job at the mine. Locals say mining jobs pay the equivalent of \$12 a day. So far, the mining site has hired very few locals.

Despite grinding poverty and the problems with the mine, most locals remain firm in their faith in Aliyev, whose omnipresent portrait gazes out over the people of Chovdar from the walls of shops and schools.

"The president knows nothing about this," says teacher Ramazanov. "Local officials say the president ordered that our land be taken, but I don't believe it. He is a good person."

(This report was produced by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project [OCCRP] in cooperation with RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service. OCCRP project coordinator Paul Cristian Radu contributed from Bucharest, and RFE/RL correspondent Robert Coalson contributed from Prague.)



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

How Should the Diaspora React To New Turkish Overtures?

I have been informed by reliable sources that Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu is continuing his efforts to initiate a personal 'dialog' with the Diaspora on Armenian-Turkish issues. Earlier this month, Davutoglu met with Armenian-Americans, as follow up to the meetings he held in Washington last March.

During their conversation in May, the Armenian interlocutors frankly advised the Turkish Foreign Minister that Ankara must address Armenian demands for genocide recognition and restitution before any 'reconciliation' could be achieved. The Turkish side reportedly indicated a willingness to discuss these thorny issues with Diasporan representatives.

Despite the seeming openness of Foreign Minister Davutoglu, Armenians have well-founded reasons to mistrust such overtures, given Turkey's decades-long denial of the Armenian Genocide and its antagonistic policies toward the Diaspora, Armenia and Artsakh. Armenians also suspect that Turkish officials may exploit meetings with the Diaspora to score propaganda points with world public opinion.

Nonetheless, one wonders why the very busy Turkish Foreign Minister has invested so much of his precious time

and effort to hold a series of private meetings with Armenians in recent weeks.

One possible explanation is that Turkish leaders are seriously concerned about the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Ankara may have realized that unless it took proactive measures, it could not stem the tide of anti-Turkish publicity generated in 2015 by Armenian commemorative activities worldwide.

The second likely reason why the Turkish government may want to talk with Diaspora Armenians is its long-standing interest in joining the European Union. As the newly-elected French President François Hollande warned, unless Turkey recognizes the Armenian Genocide, France will reject its application for EU membership.

The third possible explanation for the Turkish overtures is that Prime Minister Recep Erdogan has a freer hand in tackling Armenian-Turkish issues at a time when his ruling party controls the Parliament and many of his hard-line military adversaries are under arrest.

Regardless of why Turkey is reaching out to the Diaspora at this time, Armenians have to make their decisions based solely on their own national interest, as to whether this is an opportune moment to test Turkey's resolve to deal with the disastrous consequences of the Armenian Genocide.

However, before the diaspora's leaders react to Davutoglu's persistent efforts for "dialog," they should ask Turkish officials to clarify their true intentions by making some positive gestures, starting with the return of the Holy Cross Church on Akhtamar Island to the Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey. This historic church is currently designated as a museum belonging to the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Furthermore, the Turkish government has to do much more than renovating a couple of churches for touristic purposes and returning a handful of properties to the Armenian community in Istanbul. There are thousands of confiscated churches and community

properties throughout Turkey that must be returned to their rightful Armenian owners.

An initial test of Turkish sincerity in pursuing 'reconciliation' with Armenians would be putting an immediate halt to genocide denial, eliminating Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, and ending all adversarial behavior toward Armenia and Artsakh.

In view of the fact that the Turkish government will not willingly and unconditionally meet Armenian demands, and that all outstanding issues would have to be resolved someday through direct negotiations, Diasporan organizational leaders should prepare for such an eventuality. In this regard, it is important to review the records of the 1977 meeting in Zurich, Switzerland, between Turkish Foreign Minister Sabri Caglayanil and representatives of the three Armenian political parties.

Here are some preliminary thoughts to consider before any further meetings or discussions are held between Turkish leaders and Diaspora representatives:

In the absence of an elected Diasporan representative body, major Armenian organizations, with assistance from experts in diplomacy and the art of negotiation, should start drafting a common strategy and a list of demands from Turkey. No Armenian organization or individual should be involved in separate negotiations with Turkey, to deny Ankara the opportunity to create disunity in the Diaspora.

It is imperative that Diasporan representatives coordinate their negotiating positions with leaders in Armenia and Artsakh to assure a common stand vis-à-vis Turkey.

In normal circumstances, Turkish diplomats would have dealt with Armenian issues in direct negotiations with their counterparts in Armenia. However, given Azerbaijan's obstruction of the Armenia-Turkey Protocols, pending the resolution of the Karabagh (Artsakh) conflict, Turkish leaders are left with no choice but to reach out to the Diaspora and address its legitimate demands.



Papken Megerian Receives Ellis Island Medal of Honor

MEDAL, from page 1

As his wife, Anahid, and son, Dr. Garo Megerian, watched, Papken Megerian's joy was palpable. "I feel so deeply honored, and am so proud of my fellow recipients. They all deserve this honor. It has given me the inspiration to contribute even more to the Armenian nation, the Armenian community and organizations," he said.

Megerian's distinguished record speaks for itself. A prominent businessman and CEO of the Advanced MRI Center, he came with his wife in 1978 to the United States from Aleppo, Syria, where he was born to Armenian parents who escaped the Armenian Genocide. In his new land, he quickly rose in the financial field, becoming vice president of Philadelphia's Fidelity Bank, managing the international banking department. In 1978, he launched an independent career, which included owning and operating several businesses. He is the managing partner of a real estate investment company, 3 MB Partnership L.P., as well as a shareholder and treasurer of Four Meg Inc.

Devotion to Church, Community And Nation

His record of service to his people is just as exemplary. Megerian and his wife are co-founders of the Papken and Anahid Megerian Family Foundation, which supports causes in the US, Armenia, Artsakh, Echmiadzin, the



Papken Megerian and several of the Armenian greeters outside the ceremony

Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Diocesan Center in Javakhk, Georgia and Our Lady of Armenia Boghossian Educational Center in Gumri. He is also a contributor to the international children's anoph-

thalmia/microphtalmia network, the Philadelphia Art Museum and the Armenian Mirror-Spectator.

Currently the treasurer of the Diocesan Council, he has been a diocesan delegate to

the Diocesan Assembly for the past 24 years. A 44-year member with his wife in the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Church of Wynnewood, Penn., he has served as chairman and treasurer.

Megerian's active leadership in many Armenian organizations is well known. He is the co-chair of the ADL (Ramgavar) District Committee of the eastern US and Canada, and serves on the Central Committee of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada. He is also a trustee of the Society of Orphaned Armenia Relief and a longtime member of the AGBU and the Knights of Vartan.

Papken and Anahid Megerian have donated as well as raised funds for countless cultural, educational and religious purposes, including Birthright Armenia and the Guiliguan Educational Association, frequently hosting events in their home.

In the last 10 years, Megerian has visited Armenia 25 times for purposes of business, philanthropy and culture. In recognition of Megerian's support, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin I decorated him with the St. Nerses Shnorhali Medal with a pontifical encyclical in 1998. This was followed in 2009 with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II awarding him with the St. Gregory the Illuminator Medal and encyclical, the highest honor of the Armenian Church.

Vladimir Putin Inaugurated as Russian President

MOSCOW (AP) – Vladimir Putin took the oath of office in a brief but regal Kremlin ceremony earlier this month, while on the streets outside thousands of helmeted riot police prevented hundreds of demonstrators from protesting his return to the presidency.

Putin, 59, has ruled Russia since 2000, first as prime minister. The new, now six-year term will keep him in power until 2018, with the option of running for a fourth term.

"I consider serving the fatherland and our people to be the meaning of my whole life and my duty," Putin said, addressing 3,000 guests in the Kremlin.

Sunday's protest turned violent when some demonstrators tried to march toward the Kremlin and riot police beat back the crowds with batons and detained more than 400 people. More than 100 of those detained Sunday were men under the age of 27, and thus eligible for military conscription, and at least 70 of them were ordered to report to draft offices.

After taking the oath of office with his right hand on a red-bound copy of Russia's constitution, Putin stated his commitment to democracy.

"We want to live and we will live in a democratic country where everyone has the freedom and opportunity to apply their talent and labor, their energy. We want to live and we will live in

a successful Russia, which is respected in the world as a reliable, open, honest and predictable partner."

During his time in office, Putin has overseen dramatic economic growth and restored a sense of national pride after the instability and humiliations that followed the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. He also has retreated from the democratic achievements of the 1990s and imposed a political system that has stifled dissent.

Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov, who leads the largest opposition faction in parliament, warned that the government is radicalizing the protesters by refusing to take them seriously.

"The government must understand that the split in society is getting wider, and the anger over unfair elections and the lack of normal dialogue is growing. In this situation, radicalism is inevitable," Zyuganov said. "Any attempts to shut people's mouths with the help of a police baton are senseless and extremely dangerous."

Putin has dismissed the Moscow protesters as ungrateful, pampered urbanites and agents of the West.

Dmitry Medvedev, who served as Russia's president for the past four years as Putin's junior partner, wrapped up his term with a short speech at the inauguration ceremony.

"I worked as I promised in taking the oath of

office: openly and honestly in the interests of the people, doing everything I could so that they would be free and would look toward the future with confidence," Medvedev said.

Putin, as promised, began his new presidential term by formally nominating Medvedev as his prime minister. The parliament, where the Kremlin party holds a majority, was to vote on his nomination on Tuesday.

Putin's wife, Lyudmila, who has rarely been

seen in public in recent years, attended the inauguration ceremony. She was seated between Medvedev's wife and the widow of Boris Yeltsin, who chose Putin as his successor in 1999.

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev also was in the audience, along with two former European leaders who have developed personal friendships with Putin: Silvio Berlusconi of Italy and Gerhard Schroeder of Germany.

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"They would show up periodically and spit on the door, make fascist remarks, say that we have no right to live, that we are perverting the nation," Oganezova said in reference to the suspects.

Because ARF-Dashnak representatives provided bail money for the accused, the political party has come under suspicion of having some sort of political connection to the incident. ARF members, however, have denied any involvement with the Black Ravens, or any other such splinter group. "Dashnaksutun has no underground groupings. If and when we have things to say or do, we do that explicitly, without hiding behind anything," declared Vahan Hovhannisian, a former presidential candidate and parliamentary speaker.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation's Central Committee in the US has condemned the violence, calling the attack's "root impetus of homophobia and intolerance" to be "reprehensible." Meanwhile, leader of the opposition Heritage Party, Raffi Hovannisian, who attended a May 11 concert to raise money for rebuilding DIY, also asserted that "such things cannot be done for the national interest."


The mother of the two young men detained in the attack has similarly condemned the violence. "Their regretful act brought no honor to us," she said, giving her name only as Ani. "We are really sorry."

(Gayane Abrahamyan is a reporter for ArmeniaNow.com in Yerevan. This commentary originally was published by Eurasianet.org.)



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