

Obama Refers to 'Meds Yeghern' On April 24

WASHINGTON — On April 24, President Barack Obama commemorated the victims of the Armenian Genocide by reiterating his position that his views on the Armenian Genocide have not changed, stating that “a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all of our interests,” reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

As he did last year, the President also acknowledged that the “Meds Yeghern” is commemorated in the United States “by our states, institutions, communities, and families.”

Said Obama, “I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view has not changed. A full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all of our interests. Nations grow stronger by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past, thereby building a foundation for a more just and tolerant future. We appreciate this lesson in the United States, as we strive to reconcile some of the darkest moments in our own history. We recognize those courageous Armenians and Turks who have already taken this path, and see OBAMA, page 2



Ruslan Tsarni Apologizes to Armenian Community

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — On April 30, Ruslan Tsarni, the uncle of alleged terror suspects, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, contacted the *Mirror-Spectator* directly to issue an apology to the Armenian community for his recent statements referencing Armenians in his discussions of the Boston Marathon bombings.

“Armenia has a very strong culture, therefore, I want to stress that his [Misha’s] ethnicity has nothing to do with it,” Tsarni said. “I wish I had



Ruslan Tsarni

never said it.”

Tsarni added, “I felt for you [Armenians] and wish I had never done it.”

He once again apologized for connecting the Armenian community “to this evil event.”

In previous media statements, Tsarni had discussed a recent con-

vert to Islam named “Misha” — now reported as Mikhail Allakhverdiv — stressing that he was of “Armenian descent” while implicating the man in the possible “brainwashing” of Tamerlan Tsarnaev with notions of violence against non-Muslims.

Tsarni spoke briefly on the matter via phone, but said he was unable to comment further or answer additional questions. A reverse phone number search traced and confirmed that the phone call came from a Maryland cell phone issued to Tsarni.

‘Misha’ Speaks: An Interview with Alleged Boston Bomber’s ‘Svengali’

NEW YORK (New York Review of Book Blog) — As the investigation of the Boston Marathon bombings continues, one of the more clouded aspects is the tale of “Misha,” a mysterious US-based Islamist who has been accused by members of the Tsarnaev family of radicalizing Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the elder of the two alleged bombers. “It started in 2009. And it started right there, in Cambridge,” Tamerlan’s uncle, Ruslan Tsarni, told CNN after the attacks. “This person just took his brain. He just brainwashed him completely.” These accusations set off a frenzied search for what some reports have called an Islamic Svengali, and over the past few days, the FBI has said it has located and has been talking to “Misha,” though his identity has remained unknown.

Today I was able to meet “Misha,” whose real name is Mikhail Allakhverdiv. Having been referred by a family in Boston that was close to the Tsarnaevs, I found Allakhverdiv at his home in Rhode Island, in a lower middle class neighborhood, where he lives in modest, tidy apartment with his elderly parents. He confirmed he was a convert to Islam and that he had known Tamerlan Tsarnaev, but he flatly denied any part in the

see MISHA, page 16

DC Buildings Linked to Armenian Genocide Museum to Be Razed

By Michael Neibauer

WASHINGTON (*Washington Business Journal*) — The owner of three vacant commercial buildings in the heart of downtown DC, all tied inexorably to the sputtering Armenian Genocide Museum project, has applied to knock them down.

What’s better, a 5,700-square-foot vacant lot or three vacant buildings? Pick your poison.

The Cafesjian Family Foundation of Minneapolis has submitted a request to raze 1338, 1340 and 1342 G St. NW, all of which back up to the historic but vacant National Bank of Washington building at 14th and G, which it also owns.

Representatives of the foundation, recorded as the owner of the properties in July 2011, did not return calls for comment. All three buildings were briefly classified by the District in 2012 as blighted, until the foundation successfully appealed.

The properties to be razed are worth a combined \$8.2 million, according to DC assessors, but the value is entirely in the land. I’m not aware of any proposals to build anew.

The bank building has long been planned as the future home of the Armenian Genocide Museum, a memorial to 1.5 million Armenians killed in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. The G Street

see MUSEUM, page 16



NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenian Envoy Vows To Contribute to Stronger Ties with Vatican

VATICAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The newly-appointed Armenian ambassador to the Vatican Michel Minasyan presented his credentials to the Vatican Assessor for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State Peter Wells.

Welcoming the envoy, Wells hailed Armenia’s decision to open an embassy in Vatican. The ambassador further pledged to contribute to the development of friendly ties between Armenia and the Vatican.

A meeting with a number of Vatican officials was also on the envoy’s agenda, the Foreign Ministry press service reported.

State Department: No Military Solution to NKR Conflict

WASHINGTON (PanARMENIAN.Net) — There cannot be a military solution to the Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh) conflict, Acting Deputy Spokesperson Patrick Ventrell said during a briefing in Washington.

“Only a lasting and peaceful settlement can bring stability, prosperity, and reconciliation to the region,” he said.

“The United States is a co-chair of the [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk Group, and we remain firmly committed to working with both sides to achieve peace,” Trend News quoted him as saying.

California Court Turns Down Armenians’ Suit On Inçirlik

SAN FRANCISCO (PanARMENIAN.Net) — California Court has turned down the US Armenians’ suit over the territory of the current US military base in Inçirlik, Turkey, CNN Türk TV channel reported.

In December 2010, a group of Armenians living in the United States filed a suit against the Turkish government. The claimants demanded compensation of \$100 million from the Turkish government for the loss of property of their ancestors. According to the suit, the claimants’ grandfathers owned 49.5 hectares of lands in Adana, including the territory of the current US military base in Inçirlik.

The judicial proceedings, which lasted about three years, ended by the Court’s verdict calling the issue “political rather than judicial,” Turkish media said citing the TV channel.

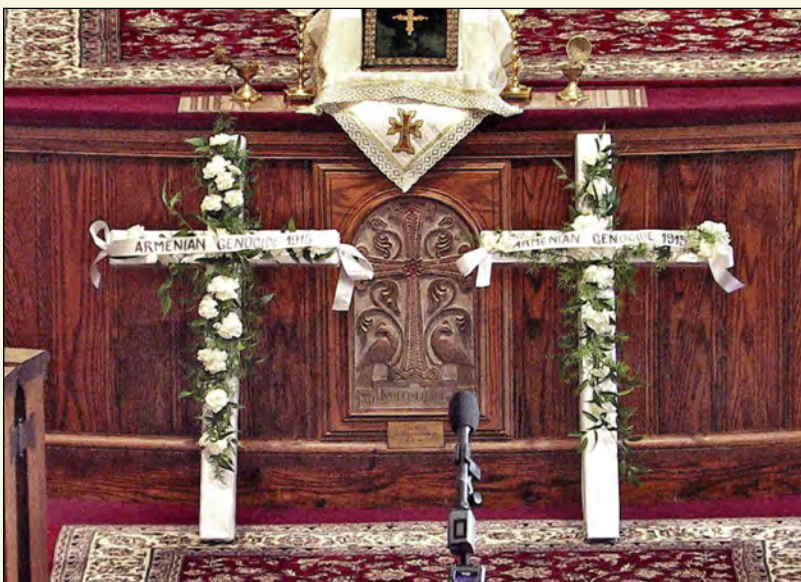
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April 24 Commemorated by Somber Joint Program

WATERTOWN — The Hovnanian Hall of the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC) was packed with hundreds of people who wanted to hear Armenia’s Ambassador to the United Nations Garen Nazarian on April 24, the day of the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, around the world.

Before the start of the program at 7 p.m., many had gathered at St. James Armenian Church on Mount Auburn Street for a requiem service, before heading to St. Stephen’s Armenian Apostolic Church in a procession to lay a wreath, led by the members of the clergy from several churches, including St. James, St. Stephen’s, Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Watertown, Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church in Belmont and First Armenian Church, also in Belmont and Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown.

The somber procession included members of the Homenetmen Scouts Boston Chapter carrying flags.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

European Parliament Deputies Visit Tsitsernakaberd Memorial

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A delegation from the European Parliament visited the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial on April 30 and laid a wreath in memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

The members of the delegation also visited the Genocide Museum and reviewed historical documentation of the Armenian Genocide.

The head of the delegation, Martin Callanan, wrote the following inscription in the museum's memorial book, "It is very important that we, [as] political figures, do so that such tragedies never happen again. They who forget the history are condemned to make such mistakes again."

During a press conference, Callanan said, "Horrible things happened. It is quite important for the modern policy to get lessons from all those things which happened in the past to prevent their repetition in the future."

Sargisian Welcomes Iranian Pros. General

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Serge Sargisian hosted the Prosecutor General of Iran Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Eje'i in Armenia this week.

An agreement was signed between the two nations on Tuesday with the purpose of strengthening Armenian-Iranian relations in the judicial sphere.

Sargisian noted the need for frequent and mutual visits between Iranian and Armenian government officials. He also stressed that cooperation with Iran in political, economic, cultural and other spheres is of vital importance to Armenia's future.

Old Zvartnots Buildings May Be Demolished

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – The concessionary of Zvartnots Airport, Armenia International Airports, wants to demolish the airport's old building.

"They say it is in a bad condition but it has a high architectural value as an example of Soviet modernism," President of the Union of Architects of Armenia Mkrtich Minasyan told journalists on Monday. He said that Yerevan's Municipality is also against this plan. "They better repair it than pull it down," Minasyan said.

The building was constructed in 1980. In 2002 the airport went under the aegis of Armenia International Airports, a company owned by Argentinean businessman Eduardo Eurnekian.

Armavia Approaches State With 'Rehab' Plan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Experts from Armavia air company, Armenia's national carrier that declared bankruptcy on April 1, have submitted a "rehabilitation" plan to the Public Council (PC) with the hope of overcoming stagnation in Armenia's civil aviation.

The rehab plan request that a 10,000 drams (\$25) air tax be taken from the ticket price, independence be granted to air companies in acquisition of aviation gasoline and Armavia's debts to the state budget be rearranged.

PC Chairman Vazgen Manukyan said he believes this plan can also help rehabilitate Armavia and spoke of the possibility of having several national carriers in the country.

Armavia had sold advanced tickets for flights through October 26 and has been returning tickets to those passengers since early April.

It is the second national carrier to go bankrupt. The first was Armenian Airways. Armavia owner Mika Limited Company, belonging to Michael Baghdasarov, is registered in Jersey Island.

Armavia owes the state 24.2 billion drams (around \$58 million). Its total debt to local banks is \$35 million, bringing the company's overall debt to around \$93 million.

Karabagh Leader Urges Action on Azeri Threats

PARIS (ArmeniaNow) – The international community must take Azerbaijan's threats of regaining the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabagh seriously and condemn Baku's ongoing arms-buying spree, Nagorno-Karabagh Republic (NKR) President Bako Sahakyan said in a recent interview with AFP.

Sahakyan, who was in France on a three-day visit last week, said he saw no signs of a breakthrough in peace talks and warned that Azerbaijan was stoking tensions with enormous arms purchases.

"We can only be worried by the policy of militarization and over-arming undertaken by Azerbaijan, because there are also clear and explicit threats against our country," he said. "The international community must react to this situation."

Sahakyan said that while the talks have at least been useful in preventing another war, to have a real and serious progress the NKR should become a party to the negotiation process.

"It is a complex conflict, you cannot expect a solution from one day to the next. But there is no alternative to

peace and dialogue," said Sahakyan in the interview.

The Karabagh leader also said he expected progress soon on the resumption of commercial flights into a revamped airport near the NKR capital of Stepanakert.

"This initiative must not be linked with resolving the conflict or be seen in this context," explained Sahakyan. "Civil flights that will be established between Yerevan and Stepanakert are aimed simply at helping us emerge from the isolation that has been imposed on us."

American-Armenian Man Dies in Nubarashen Jail

Family Alleges Prosecutor Had Demanded 10 Million Drams in Bribe

YEREVAN (Hetq) – George Baghoumian, 65, an American-Armenian businessman, died in the Nubarashen Detention Facility on April 25.

Baghoumian, who was charged with tax evasion and possession of an illegal weapon, had been in pre-trial detention in Nubarashen since October 27, 2012.

The Baghoumian family, originally from Iran, had relocated to the United States. Levon Baghoumian, George's father, had moved to Armenia in the early 1990s and supplied material assistance to Armenians fighting in the Artsakh War. He had set up an electrical battery factory and supplied the army with the devices. After his death in 1997, George Baghoumian took over the family business.

Serzho Baghoumian, George's brother, told Hetq that he had serious health problems. In 2004, he suffered a heart attack, and in addition suffered from hypertension and diabetes.

There are still no findings as to the specific cause of George's death.

Lawyer Moushegh Shoushanyan took on his defense in February of this year. By that time the courts had examined motions to prolong his pre-trial detention. On February 22, 2012, Shoushanyan argued that there was no legal justification to keep holding his client and that such a move went against all international norms.

The lawyer also argued that Armenian detention facilities could not guarantee the health of inmates.

Nevertheless, the courts approved motions to extend Baghoumian's detention in February and again in April.

"I stated that if the courts approve the motion, they would simply be writing his death certificate, because George's health was getting worse," Shoushanyan told a press conference today in Yerevan.

The lawyer added that Nubarashen officials failed to move his client to a hospital, which was their obligation. He says there is only one medical staffer at Nubarashen for 1,200 inmates.

The weapon that law enforcement found in George's house had been obtained by his father. It was for self-defense purposes after the family's property in Etchmiadzin had been robbed. The gun was given to the guards.

Lawyer Shoushanyan stated that while the gun was illegal, no crimes had been committed with it.

As to the tax evasion charges, the 16

million drams (\$39,000) in question involved the operations of Gold Energy, a company owned by George Baghoumian. Along with penalties and interest, the entire amount allegedly not paid was 41 million drams.

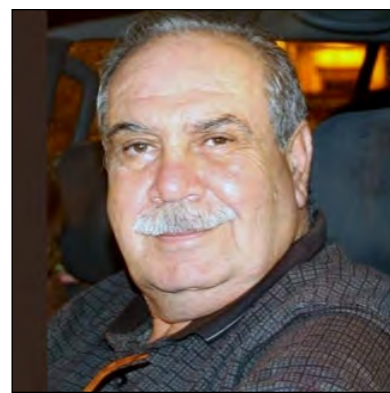
Shoushanyan stated that he had requested credible substantiation from officials, but that nothing was ever produced.

The lawyer argues that George Baghoumian was detained as "punishment" and that the rest was a smoke-screen.

Serzho Baghoumian, who just arrived from the US, claims that Edgar Antonyan, an inspector with Armenia's State Revenue Commission, demanded a 10 million-dram (\$25,000) bribe to drop the tax evasion charges.

"I didn't have the money to pay him," Serzho Baghoumian said.

Antonyan told Hetq that Serzho Baghoumian had only visited him the one time. Antonyan alleges that he promised to pay the taxes owed by his brother. "I never demanded a bribe and



George Baghoumian

I could never do so," said Antonyan.

Shoushanyan said that George Baghoumian never got involved in the accounting for the business and that it was handled by Vahan Amiryan, a former member of the Ashtarak Tax Department. Tax evasion charges were brought about on the basis of Amiryan's testimony.

Obama Refers to 'Meds Yeghern' on April 24

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encourage more to do so, with the backing of their governments, and mine.

"The history and legacy of the Armenian people is marked by an indomitable spirit, and a great resiliency in the face of tremendous adversity and suffering. The United States is stronger for the contributions Armenian-Americans have made to our society, our culture, and our communities. In small measure we return that contribution by supporting the Armenian people as they work toward building a nation that would make their ancestors proud: one that cherishes democracy and respect for human liberty and dignity.

Today we stand with Armenians everywhere in recalling the horror of the *Meds Yeghern*, honoring the memory of those lost, and affirming our enduring commitment to the people of Armenia."

The Assembly also expressed its appreciation about the statement of US Ambassador to Armenia, John Heffern, and the fact that the Administration sent officials to the Armenian Genocide Commemorations held in Yerevan and Istanbul.

"The cause of genocide affirmation and prevention is a fundamental issue for all of humanity," stated Assembly

Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "While President Obama's statement builds upon last year's remarks, only by squarely acknowledging the Armenian Genocide, and confronting Turkey's denial, can the promise of prevention be realized and truly give meaning to the words 'never again.'"

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) expressed its dissatisfaction with the president's refusal to use the word "genocide."

"Sadly, President Obama chose today not to lead, but rather to follow Ankara's gag-rule on his Administration's condemnation and commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. His public retreat, under Turkish pressure, comes despite his own pledges to acknowledge this crime and our government's record, dating back more than half a century, of having recognized the Armenian Genocide as a clear case of genocide," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. "Our president's complicity in Turkey's denial of truth and its ongoing obstruction of justice will not derail our progress toward a truthful, fair, and comprehensive international resolution of Turkey's still unpunished crime against the Armenian nation."



INTERNATIONAL

Toronto Commemorates 98th Anniversary of Armenian Genocide

TORONTO – In commemoration of the 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, more than 600 members of the Canadian-Armenian community of Toronto, joined by a number of promi-

nent political and community guests, gathered at the Armenian Community Centre on Sunday. The commemorative event was organized by the United Committee of Toronto for the 98th

message to the community. Toronto City Councillor for Ward 33-Don Valley East Shelley Carroll, as well as Deputy Mayor of the City of Markham and Regional Councillor Jack Heath also spoke.

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Trustee for Ward 17-Don Valley East, Harout Manougian, provided details about the passing of a motion at the TDSB on March 6, which declared April as “Genocide Awareness Month.”

During the commemoration, guests were also treated to an exhibit, put on by the newly established Sara Corning Centre for Genocide Education. Titled “90 years: The Arrival of the Georgetown Boys,” the exhibit was dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the arrival of the Georgetown Boys to Canada, and was one of the several initiatives planned for the occasion.

Yeganian was the keynote speaker for the event. During his address, Yeganian said that the denial of the Armenian Genocide is unacceptable in Canada and that Turkey has no right to intimidate the government of Canada to reverse its recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Master of Ceremony Varak Babian offered closing remarks and then members of the clergy lead the dignitaries, guests and all in attendance to the “Revival” monument dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. A prayer was conducted for the souls of the victims of the Armenian Genocide



Members of the clergy of the Armenian churches of Toronto lead those in attendance in prayer as the Toronto Armenian community prepares to lay carnations at the “Revival” monument, dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide

Armenian Patriarch Of Jerusalem Calls For Genocide Recognition

JERUSALEM (Pan ARMENIAN.Net) – Armenian Patriarch Nourhan Manougian wrote in a missive read on Sunday, April 28, at a conference here that he cannot understand Israel’s ongoing refusal to recognize the Armenian Genocide, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Manougian’s message was read at the Hebrew University, where Prof. Michael Stone, the founder of the Armenian Studies program there, annually conducts a symposium and commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

In his message to Israeli Armenians and Jews at the event, Manougian wrote, “For 98 years, so many efforts have been invested in getting the Turks to admit that they committed genocide and the Turks continue to deny.” Each year, the message continued, people repeat “never again,” and each year human rights organizations repeat the same report about human rights abuses, genocide, hunger and torture.

At the start of his message, Manougian quoted Napoleon Bonaparte as saying, “The world suffers not because of the violence of bad people but because of the silence of good people.”

Tsolag Momjian, the honorary Armenian consul in Jerusalem, whose grandparents and uncles were slaughtered by the Turks, took exception to a remark made last week by Deputy Minister for Liaison with the Knesset Ofir Akunis, in which he said that the State of Israel has never denied the massacre, but that the decision to label it a genocide should be made through open debate.

Former MK Yair Tzaban, who was the keynote speaker at the Hebrew University event, was praised by Stone and Momjian as being the first lawmaker and government minister to take up the Armenian cause.

Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

In attendance were Armen Yeganian, Armenian ambassador to Canada; Iacovos Giragosian, consul-general of Cyprus, representatives from all three levels of government, as well as former politicians and representatives of sever-



Chungsen Leung, MP for Willowdale, Wladyslaw Lizon, MP for Mississauga East-Cooksville, and Costas Menegakis, MP for Richmond Hill, present Master of Ceremonies Varak Babian greetings from the Stephen Harper and Canada’s Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Jason Kenney.

al Armenian and Canadian organizations. Chungsen Leung, parliamentary secretary for multiculturalism and member of parliament for Willowdale, conveyed the message of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, to the Armenian community of Toronto. Costas Menegakis, member of parliament for Richmond Hill, relayed the message of Canada’s Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney.

During the event, Brad Duguid, minister of training, colleges and universities labor, and MPP for Scarborough Centre relayed the message from Premier of Ontario Kathleen Wynne, while Frank Klees, member of Provincial Parliament for Newmarket, delivered the message of Tim Hudak, the leader of the official opposition. Jim Karygiannis, MP for Scarborough-Agincourt, also delivered his personal

and carnations were laid in their memory.

The Armenian National Committee of Toronto is a chapter of the Armenian



Armen Yeganian, Armenia’s ambassador to Canada delivers his keynote address.

National Committee of Canada, a grassroots human rights organization that was founded in 1965 to address the concerns of the Canadian Armenian community on a broad range of issues.

International News

Armenian Genocide Commemorated in Lebanon

BEIRUT (Armenpress) – A memorial concert dedicated to 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was held at the Armenian Embassy on April 29.

Representatives from the Lebanese government and parliament, members of the Armenian community, as well as foreign ambassadors to Lebanon attended the event.

Armenian Ambassador to Lebanon Ashot Kocharyan delivered the opening speech. Kocharyan stressed that crimes committed against humanity have no time limitation, saying that denial of the Genocide is a continuation of that crime.

Kocharyan also expressed gratitude to all the countries and organizations that have recognized the Genocide, especially Lebanon. She said that the Armenian nation would continue to fight for the elimination of all forms of genocide all over the world.

As part of the commemoration, a number of Armenian compositions were performed at the concert.

Istanbul’s ‘Saturday Mothers’ Commemorate 1915 Intellectuals

ISTANBUL (Hetq) – A group called the “Saturday Mothers of Turkey, which has been gathering in Istanbul since 1995 to seek information regarding their sons’ disappearances under police protection, commemorated some 220 Armenian intellectuals detained by Ottoman officials in April 1915.

This past Saturday, the mothers, who had assembled in Galatasary Square for the 422nd time, held aloft photos of their lost sons along with black-and-white photos of the Armenian intellectuals.

Hanife Yildiz, one of the mothers, said his son’s disappearance is due to the lack of facing the truth behind the Union and Progress mentality that led to the disappearance of Armenians in 1915.

Archbishop Ateshian Discusses Hidden Armenians of Turkey

ISTANTBUL (Armenpress) – The Vicar General of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, Archbishop Aram Ateshian, gave an interview to the Turkish Bugun TV channel, where he discussed the existence of hidden Armenians living in Turkey.

Ateshian explained that these individuals were forced to conceal their nationality and convert to Islam during World War I because of persecution in Ottoman Turkey.

Ateshian said, “There are about 100,000 people in the present generation in Turkey whose parents are Armenians and they are Muslims. They speak Armenian and wear a cross secretly... They do not want to attend church, as it will reveal their identity. The liturgy held in the Saint Kirakos Church in Diyarbakir was attended by more than 400 people, half of which had Armenian roots. My family as well lives in Diyarbakir as Muslims. The sons of my elder sister also live in Diyarbakir. They accepted Islam under pressure in 1950.”

“I was born in 1954. When I was 4 or 5, my sister became a Muslim. Their children became Muslims as well. My sister wore her cross secretly and spoke Armenian. I lost them, as they did not attend our church and I could not christen them. Many of the concealed Armenians talked about their being Armenians only before the death,” he continued.

Ateshian also shared other first-hand experiences, saying, “A 30-year-old man came to me and asked [me] to christen him. I told him to prove his being Armenian and he could not. Then his father called me and asked to accept his son. He said that he worked in the municipality and when he retires, he will return to his roots. According to his son, 90 percent of the population of Tunceli are Armenians and now he is a member of our church.”



Community News

Diocese Helps Mark 50th Anniversary Of 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'

WASHINGTON — It was a letter written by a young pastor, at a time of trial, 50 years ago. And this month it received a special response.

Leaders of the ecumenical group Christian Churches Together gathered in Alabama on April 14-15 to formally respond to the "Letter from Birmingham Jail" — one of the most important documents written by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Very Rev. Aren Jebejian, pastor of the St. Gregory Armenian Church of Chicago, took part in the ecumenical event, speaking on behalf of Orthodox Christian communities.

He attended on behalf of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, and its ecumenical director Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, who is a founding member of CCT and its newly-elected president.

Dr. Martin Luther King was incarcerated in a jail cell in Birmingham in 1963, when he penned the letter challenging church leaders to confront the injustices of racial segregation. King had been jailed for holding protests of non-violent civil disobedience, and he wrote in reply to an open letter in a local newspaper, wherein eight clergymen had called on the civil rights movement to opt for negotiations rather than demonstrations.

The letter itself, scribbled by King in the margins of a newspaper — the only paper he had at hand — was smuggled out of the jail and published, becoming one of the most celebrated documents of the civil rights movement. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," the young Baptist preacher wrote in one of the letter's most famous passages.

At the 2013 gathering, church leaders from throughout the US, representing a variety of denominations, offered a response to their fellow departed clergyman. Christian Churches Together (CCT) had crafted the response letter over the past two years, unveiling it on April 15 at Birmingham's St. Paul United Methodist Church.

In the CCT document, the five ecclesiastical groups that form the CCT — Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Roman Catholics, Historic Protestant churches and the Orthodox family — affirm the truths presented in King's letter. But each group also confessed to have fallen short of living the gospel message they profess.

A two-day conference to mark the 50th anniversary of the Letter included addresses from King's colleagues, co-workers and religious leaders. Among them were US Rep. John Lewis and Rev. James Wallis.

A highlight of the conference was an address by Dr. Bernice King, Martin Luther King's daughter, who is herself a pastor. She emphasized the pastoral quality of her father, and how his efforts were a ministry to Christ — a theme, she said, which was too often forgotten in the celebrations of his achievement.

To conclude the gathering, the leaders of each of the CCT's five "families" of churches came forward to sign the response letter. Jebejian signed on behalf of Archbishop Aykazian, and read a reflection on the "Letter from Birmingham Jail" from the Orthodox family of churches.



Arman Serebrakian is full speed ahead in his quest to bring Armenia a skiing medal in the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia.

Blazing New Trails For Armenia's Olympic Ski Team

PHILADELPHIA — The road to Sochi may be difficult but Arman Serebrakian is prepared to take his leaps and bounds.

His passion is skiing. His intent? To bring Armenia a skiing medal in the 2014 World Olympic Games in Russia — or the very least, some credibility in the sport.

The 26-year-old aspirant has not competed for two years because of injuries, but Serebrakian has the talent and the drive to go for it.

By Tom Vartabedian

Over the past seven years, he has been the top-ranked Armenian alpine ski racer in the world, even during his time out. As of April, he was listed at the summit. He's had four top-10 NCAA finishes while competing for the University of Colorado, where he made the All-Academic Ski Team, served twice as captain and one year as an assistant coach.

A dual citizen, Serebrakian is currently a medical student at Temple University School of Medicine, having just completed his second year and waiting to go into surgery medicine.

Serebrakian immediately fell in love with the sport at the age of 2, when his father took him down his first slope. Growing up, his Armenian parents continuously took him and his sister Ani, who participated in the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, to the mountains in Lake Tahoe, Calif., every weekend in high school.

Arman Serebrakian decided to graduate early to focus solely on skiing with the goal of pursuing his lifelong dreams — making it into the World Cup circuit and eventually the Olympics.

"My father was the biggest influence of my life," he says. "He has skied his entire life. My grandfather was one of the first to ever ski in Iran. Many role models inspired me along the way, including Italy's Alberto Tomba. My sister and I were always on the same club teams. Even though we would never admit it, there was always an unspoken sibling rivalry there. We traveled together, stayed together, skied together."

Ani Serebrakian did her collegiate skiing at the University of San Francisco and was one of four athletes to represent Armenia 2010 in Washington, along with Sergei Mikaelian, Kristine Khachatryan and Arsen Nersisyan. Don't be surprised to see her in Sochi.

"Realistically, there is a very good chance," said Arman Serebrakian. "I need to be ranked among the top 500 in the world, which is where I was at the end of my collegiate career by January 24. Many people have asked me why I'm doing this. I still have my deep passion for the sport and I've continued to train. I grew up as one of the top-ranked junior skiers in America and want to give it my best shot."

Not making the 2010 Olympic team devastated him.

"Getting that call to say I wasn't going to Vancouver was one of the worse moments of my life," Serebrakian recalled. "I've learned from that. I'm trying everything in my power to avoid a situation like that again."

He spends five to six days a week in the gym, in addition to a heavy academic load on the road to becoming a surgeon. He needs to do a month-and-a-half in New Zealand starting in mid-July. Then comes the international race circuit with trips to Europe and North America in pursuit of a higher world rank.

"I've been doing this my whole life," he says. "I'm so proud of my Armenian heritage and I cannot think of a better way to express myself than to go out there and compete at the highest level on the world's biggest stages. It's my dream and that of the Armenian Ski Federation to increase the popularity of winter sports in

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New Jersey Affiliate Will Host AIWA Annual Meeting on May 18

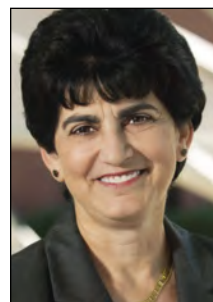
BOSTON — Dr. Mary A. Papazian, president of Southern Connecticut State University, will be the featured luncheon speaker at the Annual Meeting of the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA), to be held this year at the Sheraton Lincoln Harbor Hotel in Weehawken, NJ, on May 18.

An educator, administrator and scholar of English literature, Papazian will speak on the topic "The Empowerment of Women Through Education."

Special Guest at the luncheon will be Maro Matossian, director of the Women's Support Center in Yerevan, whose mission is to further the rights of women and protect those who have been victims of domestic violence. Funded partly by AIWA, the Center is a member of the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, a group of non-profit organizations formed in 2010 in Armenia to raise awareness of the issue and to pressure authorities to adopt legislation specifically dealing with the problem.

Also at the luncheon, the Distinguished Service Award will be presented to Ruth Bedevian, winners of AIWA scholarship awards for the 2013-2014 academic year will be announced and violinist Diana Vasilyan will provide a short musical program.

Lisa Stepanian, president of AIWA's New Jersey Affiliate, has been working with her committee to host the Annual Meeting and Luncheon. The meeting, which is open to



Dr. Mary A. Papazian

members and friends free of charge, will begin at 9:30 a.m. On the agenda will be a review of activities during the past year, including the Women's Entrepreneurship Program and the Women's Support Center in Yerevan, as well as a discussion of future plans, such as AIWA's seventh international conference in 2014. The luncheon, at \$55 per person, is scheduled for 12:30 p.m. at the hotel. Weekend activities will include a tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan on Sunday, May 19.

Papazian was appointed Southern Connecticut State University's 11th president in December 2011. She oversees an institution of 11,100 students, 434 full-time faculty, 1,100 staff and an operating budget of \$190 million. Previously she served as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Lehman College in the Bronx, which is part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system. She has also taught and held senior administrative positions at Montclair State University in Montclair, NJ, and Oakland University in Rochester, Mich.

A native Californian, Papazian completed her graduate and undergraduate education at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she received her BA, MA and PhD in English literature. Her publications include *John Donne and the Protestant Reformation: New Perspectives* (2003) and *The Sacred and Profane in English Renaissance Literature* (2008). Recently she was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Armenian State Pedagogical University in Yerevan.

AIWA was established in 1990 as an independent, non-profit, non-sectarian organization designed to advance the visibility of Armenian women. Open to all who share its goals, AIWA has organized six international conferences, supported health, educational, and social programs in Armenia, held numerous lectures, workshops, and programs dealing with issues of concern to Armenian women, instituted a scholarship program, published several books, and established a network of Armenian women.

Further information about AIWA or about the annual meeting is available by writing to aiwainc@aol.com.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Heritage Cruise Turns into Love Boat for Kurumlans

By Tom Vartabedian

Guess who attended a wedding reception for newlyweds Garo and Zepure Kurumlian aboard the ACAA Heritage Cruise XVI?

All 800 Armenian guests onboard the luxury MSC cruise liner Poesia, along with the captain and a host of personnel.

It was a page out of a wedding songbook for the couple who first met in Aleppo 22 years ago and finally tied the knot.

And they couldn't think of a better way to celebrate the grand occasion than with a boatfull of Armenians sailing the Caribbean in January.

It was the talk of the cruise as scuttlebutt travels fast aboard a ship full of Armenians. At first, people thought they would exchange nuptials before Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian but that wasn't the case.

Proper protocol in the Armenian Church had the couple exchanging vows at St. Stephen's Armenian Church in Watertown the Friday before departure, then receive their blessings while afloat.

The Armenian Prelacy vicar cherished the sacred moment as much as the jubilant couple and all those witnessing the ceremony as the music played on. What a sight to belong as people chanted religious hymns.

A steady wave of umbrella drinks were served up complimentary, thanks to the ACAA organizers, who left no stone unturned with their hospitality.

"We were a little nervous by all the attention," admitted Zepure Kurumlian. "We didn't know how it would be received

by the people. As we got to know our guests, people said, 'Here comes the bride and groom,' and greeted us warmly. We became somewhat of a celebrity couple."

The two met for the first time in 1990 through mutual family relationships. Garo Kurumlian was born in Antelias and educated there. He became a professional photographer/videographer and was running the family studio by age 24. Currently, he has established himself in the photography circuit locally while working at Mount Auburn Hospital as an orderly until business picks up.

Zepure Kurumlian is employed as a pharmacy technician at Massachusetts Veterinary Referral Hospital. She also tutors at Bunker Hill Community College and serves as an advisor for various health departments. They live in Reading.

"We were both attracted to the honesty and wholesomeness we had for one another," they agreed. "We didn't approach one another as a potential life partner, just long-lost friends after years of being apart by the worlds in which we lived. There were many sleepless nights in front of Skype."

Certain privileges were granted to these newlyweds. While moored at the Caymans, they were led out to a lifeboat for transportation inland, bypassing the long lines waiting. A dinner table drew frequent well-wishers.

They toured the island of Jamaica, went snorkeling with the stingrays, toured the shops with their parents and godparents (Hagop and Lisa Khorozian), and booked once more for next year's cruise aboard the new and expansive MSC Divina.

"As the news started traveling that there



Newlyweds Garo and Zepure (Ajoyan) Kurumlian make their way along the stairway to paradise aboard the ACAA Heritage Cruise. (Bedo Der-Bedrosian photo)

was to be an Armenia wedding this year, the women especially became extremely supportive and began actively planning an agenda," said Zepure Kurumlian. "At first, the date and time was kept a secret which made the whole ordeal irresistibly more gossip-worthy."

The Armenian dance group (Akh'tamar) was quickly recruited along with the musicians onboard. And in they came, dancing

to *Hars oo Pesa*. A big, red apple was placed on a tray of wine as an added complement.

A quick change of clothes and the bride reappeared in a dazzling red dress to dance the night away. The clapping and singing and toasting and nibbling on a vast array of appetizers left an indelible imprint.

"This memorable moment will be revisited in years to come," said the couple.

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Knights of Vartan Sponsors Dance to Benefit Mer Doon

PHILADELPHIA – On Saturday, May 18, at 8 p.m., a dance to benefit Mer Doon located in Echmiadzin, Armenia, will take place at Holy Trinity Armenia Church, 101 Ashmead Road, Cheltenham.

Proceeds from this event will help to continue this unique program.

More than six years ago, Mer Doon embarked upon a mission of providing a home for young Armenian women who have outgrown their childhood home in Armenian orphanages. It is now a proven and sustainable permanent solution for vulnerable young women between ages of 18 and 22. The structured program with 24-hour adult supervision and mentoring has made the difference between a life of despera-

tion on the streets and a life as an educated and skilled contributor to their homeland. Mer Doon provides a modest residence for 14 young women living in a family atmosphere with a common room where the girls study, play music, learn computer skills etc. They share all household duties and pursue professional careers.

In December 2012, a double wedding for two of the young women took place.

This fundraiser will help Mer Doon to expand and take on new horizons for the residents which will help promote job training internships and opportunities for future employment.

To reserve advance tickets for \$15 (at door \$20), contact Bryan Peckjian or Tanya Paretchan.

Blazing New Trails for Armenia's Olympic Ski Team

SEREBRAKIAN, from page 4

Armenia. They have incredible mountains there and a great resort in Tzakhkadzor. What is left is to build upon the culture and get athletes started at a young age. My goal is to put Armenian skiing on the map."

If anyone can swing the pendulum Armenia's way, maybe he can. He helped design the Armenia ski team uniforms a couple years ago. Through his connections and performances on the slope, he has made a noticeable mark.

He received the Dr. Prentice Gautt Postgraduate Scholarship from the Big XII Conference, which is awarded to a student-athlete matriculating into graduate school at the end of their eligibility.

Ask him who his Armenian role models are and he will quickly tell you Joe Almasian and Kenny Topalian who competed for Armenia in the bobsled during the 1994 Olympics in Lillehammer. Another happens to be tennis great Andre Agassi, who now devotes much of his time these days to charity.

The burning question is why anyone with aspirations of becoming a surgeon and dependent upon his hands risk everything to ski. It has never

crossed his mind.

"I'm a big proponent of living in the here and now," he admits. "If the doctor feels so passionately about stepping into a ring with a professional boxer, then I'm sure he has good reason and his patients will surely understand. I'm very lucky to have the family around me that I do."

While at Colorado, Serebrakian made the decision to pursue his other quest in becoming a physician. He graduated with a master's degree in integrative physiology and was accepted to Temple University School of Medicine where he took out loans and began his studies in 2011.

As his second year of medical school comes to an end, the intensity of his training program increases even more. He is committed to taking the year off from college and postponing his graduation to pursue this goal.

Although the Armenia Ski Federation has guaranteed full support for Arman, they are unable to financially assist him. With the high cost of ski racing and the increased demand for world class equipment, training and coaching, he's seeking outside help. For further details, log onto his website at: armanserebrakian.com.



OBITUARY

Helen Anahid Sahagian

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Helen Sahagian died on March 28. Born in Boston, in 1920, Helen Anahid Sahagian was the youngest child of Nevart Artemis Zartarian and Sahag Krikor Sahagian of Sebastia, Historic Armenia.

After graduating from Arlington High School, she worked as a secretary while attending evening classes at Harvard University Extension School to earn a Bachelor of Arts Degree in modern languages. In 1976, she was awarded a Master of Arts Degree in Armenian Studies from Columbia University, under the professorship of Dr. Nina Garsoian.

She wrote many scholarly articles on ancient and modern Armenian History and recorded the oral histories of survivors (some of whom were close family members) of the Hamidian Massacres in 1894-1896 and the Armenian Genocide of 1915. She was especially interested in the work of American missionaries in the Sebastia region of central Anatolia, in particular Mary Graffam and Ernest Partridge.

Her articles have been published in the *Journal of Armenian Studies*, *Ararat* and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and in the book *Armenian Sebastia/Sivas and Lesser Armenia*. She also participated in the work of the Sepastatsi Compatriotic Union and the Historical Commission of Arlington, Mass.

Reflecting her long-standing interest in Armenian studies, she was a founder and incor-

porator in 1955 of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in Cambridge, Mass.



Helen Anahid Sahagian

After 83 years of being a proud Bostonian, Sahagian moved to Albuquerque to be with family; however, her memories held fast of Colonial New England history — the people, places and literature — and of the area's art museums, concert halls, beaches, Cape Cod, boiled lobster and fried clams, the Boston Public Garden Swan Boats, Filene's Basement, and most of all, her favorite hangouts in Harvard Square.

She is survived by her niece Artemis Chakerian, her nephews Armen and Gerald Chakerian, many loving members of the extended family, and her beloved cat Sean (a red-haired Irish boy from Boston). She was preceded in death by her brother Edward Sahagian, and her sister Florence Chakerian. Her ashes will be interred next to her brother in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

Vahan Najarian

TENAFLY, N.J. — Vahan "Vay" Najarian, a pillar of the Armenian-American community, and early owner of Shop Rite supermarkets in Bergen County, died on April 10, surrounded by his family.

A survivor of Hodgkin's disease (1958) and metastatic prostate cancer (1987), he was 97.

He leaves his wife of 59 years, Mary Najarian, sons Robert and Lawrence, daughter in law Magda and grandchildren Carolyn, Christina and Gregory.

He was born in 1916 in Union City, NJ, to parents who fled systemic persecution in the Ottoman Empire. They were fortunate to have escaped before the Genocide of 1915-23 during which 1.5 million of their countrymen were massacred. The Najarians started out with a small grocery store that became a forerunner of today's giant supermarkets. At a young age, Vahan accompanied his father to New York in a horse-drawn cart to shop the wholesale food markets that proliferated Manhattan at the time. They left home at the crack of dawn, crossed the Hudson on a ferry, and returned laden with goods to stock the shelves. The sights and smells were a grand adventure, never forgotten by a child who carried the memory forever.

Vahan's success epitomizes the American dream, but its measure extends far beyond material achievement. His legacy is one of love, generosity and humility that not only encompassed his family, but also included his friends, employees, and most particularly the Armenian community. As chairman of St. Thomas Parish Council, he was instrumental in the planning and construction of the first Armenian Church in Tenafly. He sponsored the building of the church altar, and is memorialized as the "Godfather" of the altar on a plaque that reads "Vahan Najarian for Faithful and Devoted Service to God and His Church."

He was also a major contributor to St. Vartan Cathedral in Manhattan where he is similarly recognized as a "Godfather" on a plaque bearing his name. In 2008, he received the St. Vartan Award from the church. Additionally, he served as Trustee for the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and during his tenure, supported the establishment and

became a founder of Camp Nubar in the Catskills.

Although he was often recognized for his good deeds, there were countless other acts of kindness that were done quietly. They included an endless stream of food donations to local organizations and a promise of employment at one of his stores to Armenian immigrants and students in need of a job. He also promoted the products of Armenian vendors, waiving the "shelf space" fee that is standard in the industry. Columbo yogurt, Near East rice, Alpine bread and Toufayan pita bread are a few of the brands that benefited from his generosity.

Biographies of American leaders were among his favorite books, among them that of Henry Morgenthau Sr., who was the American ambassador to Turkey from 1913 to 1916. *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* was printed in 1918 and included a chapter called "Murder of a Nation," his chilling first-hand account of the Armenian Genocide. The memoir was out of print, but along with others, Najarian succeeded in reissuing the book, "Murder of a Nation" as a testament to events that are denied by the Turkish government to this day.

Although he cherished his Armenian heritage, he was equally proud to be an American. As an all star-all county right guard for Emerson High School in Union City, he was recruited by NYU football, the powerhouse team of the day. He might have been a professional if not for his father who needed his help in their store.

Before WWII officially started, Najarian decided to enlist. His first try was unsuccessful because of high blood pressure from drinking too much coffee. He returned later in the day and was accepted by the US Navy. He served until 1945, flying reconnaissance and rescue missions for the Naval Air Force. A military career was tempting, but family ties prevailed and it was the grocery business as usual when he returned to New Jersey.

Throughout his long life, Najarian maintained the fundamentals of his character. Family was all-important, especially his wife Mary, whom he met in 1953, eight years after his return from WWII. He knew he wanted to marry her from the moment he saw her, and the attraction was mutual. They were wed in 1954, and had two sons, Robert in 1961 and Lawrence in 1956.

The funeral took place Saturday, April 20, with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Armenian Diocese (Eastern), and the Very Rev. Papken Anoushian, officiating. Donations in lieu of flowers can be sent to St. Thomas Armenian Church, 174 Essex Drive, Tenafly, NJ 07670.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

April 24 Commemorated by Somber Joint Program

COMMEMORATION, from page 1

During his talk, Nazarian alternated his comments between English and Armenian. He opened his remarks by conveying the condolences of the Armenian government over the events of April 15, adding that the nation of Armenia wishes a speedy recovery for the surviving victims of the bomb attacks.

Regarding the Genocide, he said, "Let's make this day and these events an act of remembrance, but remember to act."

JIRAIR HOVSEPIAN PHOTO



Ambassador Nazarian and his wife speak to attendees.

He said he was glad to see so many younger people participate.

Nazarian said that for the government of Armenia, the recognition of the Armenian Genocide was a part of its foreign policy. As



A mass at St. James Armenian Church preceded the lecture.

Armenians, he said, the Genocide plays a large role in "shaping our identity."

He said, "April 1915 is the dividing line: before and after Genocide."

After praising the spirit of the Armenian escapees who miraculously survived the forced marches and went on to start new lives elsewhere, Nazarian spoke about the more recent

pogroms in Azerbaijan and the victory on the battlefield in Artsakh.

He praised the host community, noting, "The

Armenian-American community is one of the most ardent catalysts for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide."

In addition to the Armenian-American community, he praised "Turkish citizens, intellectuals and journalists" who frequently speak up about the Armenian Genocide.

Nazarian noted that in the upcoming months, meetings were to take place to plan the commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. It was the lack of official recognition of the Armenian Genocide that led to the subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Azerbaijan and Sudan."

Nazarian noted that the United Nations Human Rights Council recently adopted a resolution initiated by Armenia, and co-spon-



Homenetmen Scouts carry memorial crosses.

sored by almost 60 member states of the international body, which "stresses the importance of truth, justice, reparation and that perpetrators should be held criminally responsible on the national or international level."

"Sooner or later," he said, "Turkey will be compelled to accept the truth."

After Nazarian's speech, the film "April" by

JIRAIR HOVSEPIAN PHOTO



Homenetmen Scouts led the marchers.



Outside St. Stephen's Armenian Church

Vigen Chaldrazyan was shown.

Before Nazarian's speech, the young members of Zangakner sang two songs in Armenian.

Acting as emcees were the Armenian Youth Federation's Tsoler Avedissian, who spoke in Armenian, and George Barmakian, who spoke in English.

— Alin K. Gregorian

NAASR to Host 59th Annual Assembly in May

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will hold its 59th annual assembly of members on Saturday, May 18, at the NAASR headquarters, 395 Concord Ave. The assembly will convene at 12 p.m. and lunch will be served at 12:15 p.m.

Following lunch, there will be a lecture by Dr. Christina Maranci, the Arthur A. Dadian and Ara T. Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art at Tufts University. Maranci will speak on "The Extraordinary and Endangered Outdoor Sculpture of Medieval Armenia."

After this presentation, NAASR will give members an update on the organization's ongoing efforts to further Armenian studies, research and publication. Reports will be presented by the board of directors on organizational, informational, academic and financial matters. An election of directors will also be held. In addition, there will be reports by the assembly's special committees on nominations, constitution and rules, new business and resolutions and auditing.

The assembly will be chaired by NAASR Board Chairman Raffi P. Yeghiayan of Lexington and Stephen Kurkjian of Manomet.

The assembly sessions are open to all NAASR members in good standing (with dues paid for the current calendar year) and they will "have the right to attend, be heard and vote." Non-members may attend as observers.

The luncheon and subsequent program are open to the general public. However, luncheon reservations must be made by May 15. For ticket prices and reservations, email hq@naasr.org. Parking is available.

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New York METRO

Armenian Bible Church Supports Dorcas Aid America

HACKENSACK, NJ. — More than 80 guests gathered at the Armenian Bible Church on Sunday, April 14, 2013, to support a mission project of Dorcas Aid America (DorAid) in Armenia. During a dinner organized jointly by DorAid and the church, the project of renovating the Vahagni Medical Clinic in Armenia was presented.

Vahagni is a small and poor village of 1,400 inhabitants north of Vanadzor in Armenia. A medical clinic (the only one in the area) was built in 1989 to serve eight surrounding villages. DorAid received an urgent appeal from the mayor of the village to help renovate this clinic, which has been operating under very dismal conditions. The



Vahagni Village Medical Clinic, Armenia

building is old and damaged. There are several areas of leaking water from walls or windows. Mold is growing on the walls. There are no toilet facilities and no running water due to old and severely damaged pipes. Electric wires are dangerously exposed. The clinic also

lacks heating except for a portable electric heater. Within such very limited conveniences, Dr. Ashot Hagopian, the only serving physician in the area, faithfully continues to serve and cares for the medical needs of a very poor community.

The clinic however cannot continue to operate unless some modest renovations are made. DorAid put together a team of volunteers who will travel to Armenia on their own expense and spend 15 days to renovate the clinic. The team will be led by two veteran volunteers, David Shahbazian of Kingston, NY and Vicken Keshishian of Broomall, Penn. These two skillful volunteers have been in Armenia several times in the past on similar missions. A group of local volunteers from Vanadzor and Vahagni will also join.

The cost of this project is \$24,000, a modest investment which includes travel expenses that the volunteers will pay. However funds are needed to purchase the building supplies.

During the dinner at the Church, Pastor Dikran Youmshakian who also heads DorAid America, made an appeal to those who were present to participate with their gifts. Appeals were also made to the members and friends of DorAid through mail and email. The response was encouraging. However the goal has not yet been reached and DorAid will appreciate any support from concerned individuals. The volunteers will travel to Armenia in late June.

DorAid America is a Christian organization dedicated to relief and development. It is an affiliate of Dorcas Aid International, which is based in the Netherlands. Dorcas Aid operates in poor countries in Africa, Eastern Europe, former Soviet Republics and the Middle East. Dorcas strives to create a world without poverty and injustice where people enjoy God's love and live in peace with dignity.

Donations to DorAid America are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. For further information on this project visit www.doraidamerica.org.



Volunteers that will participate in the renovation



Dinner at Armenian Bible Church

Gregory Melikian to Receive Ellis Island Medal

NEW YORK — Gregory J. Melikian of Phoenix, Ariz. will be awarded the 2013 Ellis Island Medal of Honor award given by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO), sponsor of the Ellis Island Medals of Honor.

The 27th Annual Ellis Island Medals Of Honor ceremony will take place on Saturday, May 11, on Ellis Island, honoring leaders of entertainment, business, government, military, education, sports, media, healthcare and other dignitaries. The Ellis Island Medals of Honor ceremony pays tribute to American citizens of diverse ethnic origins whose influence and achievements inspire and touch the lives of people everywhere.

Melikian follows a history of commitment to his community and nation. In WWII, he was a 20-year-old sergeant with Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) headquartered in Versailles and Reims, France, in 1944-1945. He was a telegraph radio operator under the command of Supreme Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower. At 3:30 a.m. on May 7, 1945, it was Melikian who was chosen to announce to all military forces and world leaders, the unconditional surrender of Germany and the end of WWII in Europe.

After obtaining a law degree in 1948, he established a successful practice in New York City, specializing in real estate law. Melikian would eventually become a New York City Courts arbitration judge, but his true joy became the purchase and restoration of historic buildings. After buying his first building in 1951, he went on to amass 32 properties by the time he retired from real estate in 1979.

After moving to Arizona in 1969, Gregory and his wife, Emma Ordjanian Melikian, helped the then small Armenian community build and establish the Armenian Community Center Melikian Hall of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Arizona.

Melikian has been a supporter of education and the arts in Arizona, serving as a board member of the Phoenix Symphony and President of the Arizona Opera Company in the 1980s.

In 2007, the couple established The Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian & East European Studies at Arizona State University (ASU). The Melikian Center programming includes the internationally recognized Critical Languages Institute, which offers intensive instruction in the less commonly taught languages of Eastern Europe and Eurasia, including Albanian, Armenian, Russian, Persian, Polish, Tatar, Ukrainian, Uzbek, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Pashto and Hebrew.

In 2008 ASU President Michael Crow presented them with the University Medal of Excellence for their leadership and civic engagement.

Gregory Melikian served as honorary commander of the 56th Fighter Wing and 944th Fighter Wing of the Air Force Reserve at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, from which he is now retired.

In 2012, for his unique role as "The Man Who Ended WWII" in Europe, Melikian was inducted and bestowed as Chevalier (Knight) into the French Legion of Honor. He was recommended for this award, the highest decoration in France, by French President Francois Hollande.

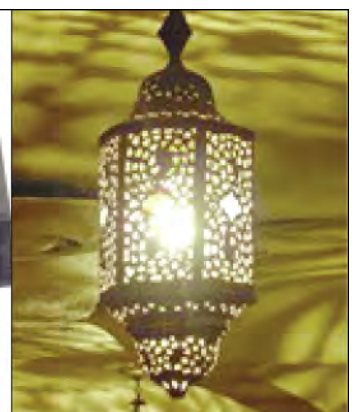
"I am delighted and honored to receive this award," said Melikian of the announcement that he will be one of the 2013 Ellis Island Medals of Honor recipients. "It's a testament to my Armenian immigrant parents who fled the massacre of Christians in the Ottoman Empire and arrived on Ellis Island to start a new life for their family."



Gregory Melikian



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New York METRO

Continuing Medical Education: Essential for Patients and Doctors

By Lawrence V. Najarian, MD

ENGLEWOOD, N.J. — At a meeting in March, Armenian American Healthcare Professionals (AAHPO) learned about Continuing Medical Education (CME) in Armenia from Gevorg Yaghjian, MD, PhD.



Dr. Raffy Hovanesian, his wife, Vicky, and Dr. Gevorg Yaghjian

Yaghjian currently is a Fulbright Scholar at Boston University Medical School. In Armenia, he is director of the Isotope Production Center LLC in Yerevan, and head of HealthCare Programs, National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia. Yaghjian was vice dean of Yerevan State Medical University until 2011, and still serves as an associate professor in the

Department of Plastic Reconstructive Microsurgery.

More than 70 AAHPO members, colleagues, and spouses attended the presentation at Rose's of Englewood.

"What a privilege to hear firsthand from Dr. Yaghjian, who has worked tirelessly to improve CME in Armenia. This is a very high priority for AAHPO, and particularly for our very own Dr. Raffy Hovanesian," noted Arthur Kubikian, DDS, vice president of AAHPO.

Currently, AAHPO is funding a private program of CME for physicians from the remote villages of Karabagh, called Help Save Lives! Support the Continuing Medical Education of Doctors in Armenia. The program brings the physicians to Yerevan for a month and pays for their living expenses and medical training.

In December 2012, AAHPO held a major fund-raising event that raised more than \$30,000 and ensured that Help Save Lives! will continue for another year.

In Yaghjian's talk, titled "A Journey to the Creation of an Armenian Center of Excellence in Oncology: The Critical Role of Continuing Medical Education," he noted: CME is essential to optimum patient care, as it enhances the health care provider's knowledge and ensures the use of the most current techniques. The CME system in Armenia was approved in 1994 and reaffirmed in 2004. These regulations define the post-graduate education crediting system of physicians, pharmacologists, paramedical personnel and pharmacists.

According to these regulations, every medical professional should get some training at least once every five years in order to earn the necessary credits.

In the mid-1990s, Armenia introduced health care reforms focused on strengthening Primary Health Care with rapid, high quality retraining to assure safe, comprehensive, cost-effective, evidence-based care.

Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) leading specialists created a CME program that was recognized by the MoH decree of July 7, 2008.

The CME program of YSMU includes a curriculum for two months of CME courses in 42 specialties. The average duration of each course is 240 hours. The participants present a thesis, pass an oral examination and post-test for successful completion of the course.

The CME courses offered by YSMU are paid by

the participant or by his employer, cost is 60,000 drams. Exceptions are made for Karabagh physicians or for particular physicians from remote areas.

Since December 2008, 268 participants have completed the course and currently 20 physicians are in CME trainings.

YSMU is seeking funding to improve its training programs, making it possible for more physicians to update their knowledge and skills.

Yaghjian identified these challenges to sustaining the CME program in Armenia:

An application was made to the European Union of Medical Specialists to convert European and US credits into local credits, but no progress has been made in this area.

Funding for the CME system is impossible to find, given Armenia's very low health expendi-



Dr. Gevorg Yaghjian, Dr. Heripsime Ohanian, Dr. Lawrence V. Najarian, Dr. Mary Swajian and Matt Leonard

to the delivery of quality medical care. Continuing to educate physicians beyond medical school and medical specialty training and nurses beyond nursing school requires a coordinated lifelong learning process of timely and effective CME with measurable outcomes," Yaghjian told the AAHPO members.

(Lawrence Najarian is the president of AAHPO.)



Dr. Edgar Housepian and Dr. Kim Hekimian

tures (total expenditure on health per capita is \$272 and total expenditure on health as percent of GDP is 4.7 percent according to WHO 2006 data, with approximately 1.6 percent of GDP being the percentage of public sector spending on health)

"A system of quality CME is a cornerstone of continuing professional development and is key

St. Nersess Seminary Receives Gift of Liturgical Music Library

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — St. Nersess Armenian Seminary has recently been gifted a vast collection of recorded Armenian liturgical music now available to the public. The collection, believed to be the largest of its kind, contains more than 150 albums (or playlists) of recorded Armenian sacred music from the 1950s to the present day. The library contains over 12,000 minutes of church music, digitized and archived from records, audio cassette, MP3s and CDs and stored on a single iPod. The entire collection is now conveniently available in a searchable, organized and indexed format for use by the general public, seminarians, scholars or researchers.

In addition to several recorded versions of familiar Yeghmalian and Komitas Divine Liturgies, the Danielian Library features hundreds of sharagans or hymns from seasonal and special services of the Armenian Church. Also included are tracks suitable for training clergy, altar servers, deacons and choirs serving parishes in the United States and abroad as well as live recording from around the world including Echmiadzin, Antelias, Constantinople, Venice, Jerusalem, Europe and the Americas. Currently, over 2,000 songs comprise the music library.

"St. Nersess already stands out as a unique place of learning and scholarship within the Armenian Church, and with the addition of the Danielian Liturgical Music Library, the seminary has even more to offer its students and the public at large," stated Saro Kalayjian speaking on behalf of the Kalayjian Family who donated the collection. "My father had started the collection decades ago. I was happy to continue the process and make it available to the general public in a format that any student, music lover or researcher can utilize in an edifying and enriching manner."

The collection aims to be exhaustive and will be expanded over the coming years as more music is released and as obscure albums of the past are acquired and digitized. Parishes and community members who have live recordings of sacred music are encouraged to contribute copies of the music for inclusion in the library. The Danielian Liturgical Music Library is available for exploration and listening by appointment at St. Nersess Seminary in New Rochelle, NY. Gradually, portions of the library will be available on-line. A comprehensive discography will be made available on the St. Nersess website: www.stnersess.edu. For more information about the library, email sharagan@stnersess.edu.

AGBU

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Arts & Living

Hoy Lari Concert On May 18 Will Benefit Armenian Milk Fund

By Tom Vartabedian

WOBURN, Mass. — As first cousins and young Armenian parents, Janet Yetenekian and Paola Kassabian share another passion — their love for children and entertainment through music and dance.

Together, they call themselves Hoy Lari and they have performed numerous concerts coast-to-coast and released four CDs.

“We hope our music encourages children to sing, dance and express themselves while bringing them closer to their heritage and beautiful Armenian language,” they say. “As Armenian parents, we want to merge our language into this very basic art form.”

Children have a natural love for music, they agree, and with its innate ability to stimulate independent expression and imagination, music creates strong bonds



Hoy Lari will stage a children's concert Saturday, May 18, at 2:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church, Woburn, MA, to benefit the Armenian Children's Milk Fund.

which are shared together.

The two will perform Saturday, May 18, at 2:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church, 3 Winn St. Proceeds will benefit the Armenian Children's Milk Fund.

A Hoy Lari concert is filled with buoyant Armenian song and dance inside a fun-filled, colorful hall with an interactive and educational persona. Parents can be seen sharing the same lyrics with their children.

Both women were born in Beirut before immigrating to Los Angeles with their families. Armed with a business degree, Yetenekian proceeded to open two ventures.

Kassabian continued her education at Ferrahian High School before pursuing a career as a pharmacist.

The idea for such a venue actually gained impetus 15 years ago. Only when Paola's eldest son turned 1 did Hoy Lari become a reality.

“My son started enjoying both Armenian and American songs and we decided it was time to combine our talents,” noted Kassabian. “Our intent is to put everyone into a happy mood through music.”

The entertainers are reaching out to benefit the Armenian Children's Milk Fund, which has supplied formula to thousands of Armenian infants over the past 24 years.

Tickets and other information are available by contacting drokanayan@gmail.com.



Nubar and Abby Alexanian during a recent trip to Historic Armenia, credit Sona Gevorkian

Alexanians Produce Father-Daughter Film On Genocide

GLOUCESTER, Mass. — Nubar Alexanian, 62, has spent the past 35 years working as a photojournalist and filmmaker. He's traveled to more than 40 countries shooting for magazines such as *Life*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *National Geographic*, *Fortune* and *Geo*.

He has published five books and rubbed elbows with some of the most influential people throughout the musical world like Paul Simon, Wynton Marsalis and Garth Brooks.

Alexanian's daughter, Abby, 24, is a recent graduate of Vassar College. Over the past decade, she has spent summers and vacations working on her dad's still photography and film sets.

By Tom Vartabedian

The Alexanians' film is titled, “Journey to Armenia: Three Generations from Genocide.” It is the story of how a young woman's curiosity propels her reluctant father to join her in finally confronting their family's dark past and discovering how the denial of the 1915 Armenian Genocide affects them today.

The Alexanians explain that the film is different than other films of a similar variety. “There are no others I have seen about the effects of denial and the silence that has incurred over three generations,” said Nubar Alexanian. “It's a feature length documentary about the scars of silence and how a staggering act of inhumanity has forever changed what it means to be Armenian.”

The Alexanians have set a release date of December 2014. The film will run 55-75 minutes and they have added Errol Morris to their production team. Morris' film, “The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara,” won the Academy Award in 2004 for Best Documentary Feature.

The Alexanians toured historic Armenia last year, exploring the land of their ancestors. Armen Aroyan served as their tour guide, along with frequent visitors to Armenia, Steve and Angele Dulgarian. Dr. Louis Najarian accompanied the group, playing clarinet throughout the tour.

Nubar Alexanian hopes to share not only his own family's perspective, but also the shared experiences of those of Armenian heritage.

“The film tells a story that is deeply personal but also reflects the intergenerational experiences of immigrant families in America,” he said. “It explores larger questions about the devastating effects of denial, the scars of silence and the healing power of curiosity. It echoes the story of families all over the world who suffer tragedies, flee, create new lives with old traditions and search for their place and search for their place in a heritage they only half understand.”

Being a half-Armenian 20-something, Abby Alexanian has spent her life wanting to feel more connected to her heritage, but at times says she has felt removed. The issue of Genocide had never been discussed in family confines.

“Her determination to uncover the truth finally forced me and my parents to confront the trauma that had been avoided for decades,” said Nubar Alexanian.

The film will include panoramic scenes of Eastern Turkey that will be used to juxtapose the majesty of this ancient and fertile land with stories of what happened there.

see FILM, page 11

Balakian Speaks at Illinois Holocaust Museum, Inaugurates Center's Project for 2015

SKOKIE, Ill. — Peter Balakian spoke Sunday, April 20, to an audience of more than 250 people at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie, a suburb of Chicago, and a town that is still remembered for the controversial march of neo-Nazi groups there in 1979. The museum is the second largest of its kind after the US Holocaust Museum and Memorial in Washington, DC.

Balakian lectured for the occasion of the 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. He also commenced his work with the museum as senior scholar for the Armenian Genocide exhibit it will mount in 2015 for the genocide's 100th anniversary.

In his opening remarks, Museum Executive Director Rick Hirschhaut said: “Our young people — our future — must be a bridge to the future, and ensure that we realize the lessons that were set forth by us, by the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, and all such terrible atrocities. We must speak for those whose voices were silenced and for those who survived so we may remember and pledge never to forget. Today,” Hirschhaut continued, “at this gathering, we are reminded of a history that must be recognized, and remembered, and calls to the importance of lighting the torch of truth for the world community.”

Naire Hagopian of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) then introduced Balakian and expressed her gratitude to the Museum for initiating such an important and timely project.

Balakian thanked Hirschhaut and the Illinois Holocaust Museum for their leadership in partnering with the ANCA to build an Armenian genocide exhibit for the 2015 anniversary, “a project,” he said, “that will serve as a model for others to come.”

Balakian also noted how crucial the ongoing support and intellectual work of the Jewish community has been, and continues to be, “from Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Franz Werfel, and Raphael Lemkin to the work and



Peter Balakian

support of so many superb scholars in our time including Elie Wiesel, Deborah Lipstadt, Robert Melson, Robert Jay Lifton, Andrew Goldberg, and many others, Jews who have made a decisive difference in clarifying our understanding of what happened to the Armenians in 1915.”

For the April 24 commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, Balakian then gave a lecture, “Raphael Lemkin, Cultural Destruction and the Armenian Genocide.” He discussed Lemkin's deep thinking about what happened to the Armenians in 1915 as a seminal case of genocide, noting how Lemkin's intellectual commitment to what he came to call genocide was heavily influenced by his study of the

see BALAKIAN, page 13



ARTS & LIVING

LA Honors AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program

LOS ANGELES – The AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program (GenNext) was honored by the city of Los Angeles at its annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration ceremony, held at the LA city council chamber on April 19. Both AGBU GenNext and the Ararat Home were recognized for their contributions to the Armenian and the greater community of Los Angeles.

Councilmembers Paul Krekorian and Eric Garcetti, a former City Council president, jointly led the commemoration of the 98th anniversary of the Genocide. Representing AGBU GenNext were former Committee Chair Hagop Jazmadarian and Treasurer Maida Tchaprazian, along with GenNext case manager Alfred Bedrossian and AGBU Western District Executive Director, Yasmin



From left, councilmember Paul Koretz, Chairman of the Armenian Council of America Sevak Khatchadorian, former Chairman of the AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program Hagop Jazmadarian, AGBU Western District Executive Director Yasmin Alpay, Chairman of Ararat Home Board of Trustees Joseph Kanimian, Councilman Eric Garcetti, Rose Garjian and councilmember Paul Krekorian.



From left, assembly member Adrin Nazarian, council member Paul Krekorian, former Treasurer Maida Tchaprazian, AGBU Western District Executive Director Yasmin Alpay, former Chairman Hagop Jazmadarian and AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program case manager Alfred Bedrossian.

Alpay.

Jazmadarian took the podium to thank the city council for recognizing the AGBU GenNext program and its volunteer mentors, and emphasized the role mentors play in the lives of Armenian youth in Los Angeles. "Our youth are matched one-to-one with successful and caring mentors, who become guiding forces in their young lives," he said.

For his part, Krekorian discussed the role he played in the genesis of AGBU GenNext. As part of the Young Professionals of Los Angeles in the 1990s, Krekorian was one of

the program's founding members and has been a supporter ever since.

Alongside AGBU, Ararat Home and its 104-year-old resident and Genocide survivor, Rose Garjian, were also recognized. Ararat Home was honored for its contribution to the elderly Armenian-American community of Southern California.

In their speeches, Krekorian and Garcetti remembered the 1.5 million Armenian martyrs, invoking the memory of the Genocide to prevent such crimes against humanity in the future.

Alexanians Produce Genocide Film

FILM, from page 10

Nubar Alexanian spent much of his career traveling the world as a documentary photographer, but never once traveled to Armenia or Eastern Turkey where his family lived for centuries.

Although he was raised Armenian, he drifted from his roots, until one day when Abby surprised him by asking if they could visit historic Armenia together.

"My grandmother was among the few survivors of the longest death march in the Genocide era," said Nubar Alexanian. "After witnessing the massacre of her parents, husband and three daughters, she was forced to walk over 800 kilometers across the scorching desert from Yalova, Turkey, to Aleppo, Syria."

Unlike other documentaries, the Alexanians do not argue in the film about whether a Genocide occurred or not. Their film assumes the historical fact and begins there. Because of their treatment of the Genocide as fact, the Alexanians have already received harsh criticism.

"We have received some death threats from Turkish lobbyists," said Nubar Alexanian. "It only heightens the desire to proceed with it," he added.

The film incorporates DVD home video footage of Armenians visiting their ancestral lands, shown over the past decade by Aroyan, who has been guiding tour groups for more than 20 years.

The Alexanians have big plans for the film and hope to show it in movie theaters, film festivals, television and international broadcasts. The International Istanbul Film Festival has already expressed an interest.

"Beyond that, we plan to market our film for home viewing with a special emphasis on

educational venues," Nubar Alexanian said.

Both father and daughter have undertaken a huge personal investment in the project, including 18 months of planning and preparation marked by an aggressive fund-raising campaign. A successful Kick-starter campaign brought in \$30,000 online. Nubar and wife, Rebecca, are the primary investors with more than \$100,000 committed to the project. The couple has lived in Gloucester for many years and enjoys the history and traditions of this seacoast community.

"This spring and summer, we will be shooting interviews throughout the United States," Nubar Alexanian explained.

"Our final shooting trip will be a three-week excursion to Eastern Turkey later this year. Final editing and packaging will take place next July and we will be ready for broadcast in August or September of 2014," he added.

Nubar Alexanian recently spent two days speaking to 350 students at Pingree School in Hamilton about his film. He was joined by Ruth Thomasian, executive director of Project SAVE.

"The response was deeply moving," he said. "We are committed to engaging both the Armenian and non-Armenian communities in this way."

As the centennial of the Armenian Genocide approaches in 2015, Nubar Alexanian said he hopes his documentary will address many issues on the international stage, answer the "Armenian Question" once and for all and help work towards justice for Armenians.

For more information on the film and the Alexanians' production company, Walker Creek Media, email info@walker creek media.com.

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Photo Credit: Stu Rosner



Kricorian Captures The Armenian Experience

By Gabriella Gage
Mirror-Spectator Staff

For poet and novelist Nancy Kricorian, writing has always been an integral part of her life. “I started writing poems as soon as I began writing sentences in the first grade. By the time I was in the third grade, my poems were hanging on the classroom bulletin board, which at the time felt to me like being a published poet,” said Kricorian.

Growing up in Watertown’s burgeoning Armenian community, Kricorian served as the Watertown High School literary magazine editor. While she would later explore the history and heritage of her Armenian family, like some of the characters in her novel, there were times when her own relationship with her Armenian identity was complicated, even strained.

“I desperately wanted to be American, particularly in middle school when I witnessed the very rough treatment meted out to ‘off the boat’ Armenian kids from Beirut. A few times I was called a ‘camel driver’ and ‘Armo rugbeater,’ which I found painful. When I was in high school, I desperately wanted out of East Watertown, but once I was had left, I became almost nostalgic for the community I had grown up in.”

Kricorian would come to realize that her heritage and its history were just as integral to her life as the pen and paper. “In my writing, my imagination pulls me inexorably back to the Armenian community,” said Kricorian.

Kricorian continued to write poetry and studied comparative literature at Dartmouth College. She was awarded a Dartmouth Senior Fellowship in poetry for her manuscript, *Asking Everything, or Off Balance in Red Tutu*. As an MFA student at Columbia University, she began publishing her poems in literary journals.

After the death of her grandmother, Kricorian transitioned to longer prose, shifting her focus from poetry to fiction, with her grandmother’s life serving as the inspiration for a series of short stories. These stories eventually evolved into her first novel, *Zabelle* — a fictionalized account of her grandmother’s experiences as a Genocide survivor and young immigrant to the US. In the novel, protagonist Zabelle Chahasbanian faces the challenges of an arranged marriage, assimilation and discovering a new life in Watertown, Mass. — far away from her ancestral home.



In her second novel, *Dreams of Bread and Fire*, Kricorian continued her own exploration of the post-Genocide Diaspora experience by tackling the issues that face women of her own generation who grew up in the shadow of the atrocities of the Genocide. The book’s protagonist witnesses the affects it had on the older generations and goes on her own journey of discovery of these tragic events.

With each novel, Kricorian has explored a new aspect of Armenian identity and the relationship between history and memory, as well as revisited themes from previous her works. “I grew up in the Armenian community Watertown, and since I left to make my way in the broader world, the history of the Armenian people, particularly the post-Genocide Diaspora experience, has fascinated me,” said Kricorian.

Kricorian’s latest book, *All the Light There Was*, is a coming-of-age story of an Armenian family living in Paris during the Nazi Occupation and is centered around a teenage girl, Maral. “*All the Light There Was* required a vast amount of research, much more than I had done for the first two books, which

were more closely based on family history. I loved the research, especially interviewing Armenians in their 70s, 80s and 90s who had lived in Paris during the war,” Kricorian explained.

As Kricorian conducted historical research, she said she “started wondering what it must have been like for Genocide survivors who had made their way to France and had rebuilt their lives and communities to see the Nazis marching into Paris. I didn’t want to write a novel about

extreme heroics, but rather hoped to write about an ordinary Armenian family’s experience.”

Kricorian says she will continue to explore these themes in future works. “The book I am currently researching, which will be an Armenian family in Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon, that lives five years of the Civil War before immigrating to the States. It will also be told from a woman’s point of view.”

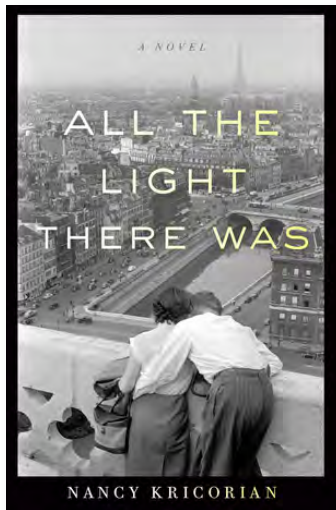
Kricorian has received several awards for both her poetry and critically-acclaimed novels, including the Anahid Literary Award from Columbia University.

In addition to her creative explorations of identity, Kricorian has taken on the role of activist and social justice advocate. For 10 years, Kricorian has served on the national staff of CODEPINK, the women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement. Kricorian, explaining her initial involvement, said, “I joined in March 2003 weeks before the launch of the Iraq War, which we hoped to avert. I was the campaign manager for Listen Hillary (an effort to push Senator and then Presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton into more progressive stands on war and national security.”

“My commitment to dignity, equality and justice for all people inspires the grassroots political work that I do. It is my hope that it suffuses my writing as well. My goal in both is to amplify the voices of women and to promote the humane in the human,” said Kricorian.

Kricorian currently resides in New York City with her husband, James Schamus, CEO of Focus Features. Together they have two children and two dogs. In her spare time, Kricorian enjoys baking, knitting, traveling and bird-watching.

But even during “spare time,” a writer can find inspiration. “I’m currently taking an Audubon Society bird-watching class that meets in Central Park. This is partly out of interest and partly as research for my new novel in which birds will be a central theme,” said Kricorian.



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ARTS & LIVING

AGBU Pasadena/Glendale Hosts Contemporary Armenian Art 2013 Exhibit

PASADENA – The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Pasadena/Glendale chapter displayed an array of artwork at “Contemporary Armenian Art 2013,” an exhibition held at the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Center February 22-24.

The exhibit featured 14 Armenian artists, who presented works in oil, mixed media, photography and sculpture. Several of the artists hailing from Armenia, Lebanon, Mexico as well as the US were in attendance, mingling with the nearly 1,000 attendees and discussing the inspiration behind their creations.

The art catalog available to the public and designed by Contemporary Armenian Art 2013 Committee Chairman Haig Messerlian, displayed some of the artwork and provided biographies of the artists, highlighting the individuality of their creations. The art show included works by painters Hermine Demirtshyan-Demiro, Felix Eghiazarian, Gagik Ghazanchyan, Ruben Grigorian, Manuella Guiragossian, Sarkis Hamalbashian, Suren Khorenyan, Marat Margarian, Tigran Matulian, Carlos Sayadian, Lilit Soghomonian and Kayts Vanikian, as well as sculptor Dikran Ekizian and photographer Peter Carapetian. More than 40 pieces of art were purchased by the public.

AGBU Pasadena/Glendale Chapter Chairperson Aleen L. Khanjian said the goal for the exhibit was twofold. “Not only did we want our fellow Angelenos to have the opportunity to own one of these unique pieces, but my committee and I were also enthusiastic to fundraise for the 350 youth that our Chapter serves on a weekly basis,” Khanjian said. “We will ensure that every penny of the \$20,000 we raised at this event goes toward our active athletics and scouting programs in the Pasadena/Glendale area.” She also recognized Messerlian’s contribution in coordinat-

ing the exhibit.

Some of the artists are promoted by Kevork Zakoyan of Armenia and Hovik Abramyan of the Arame Art Gallery, with offices in Beirut, Yerevan and Los Angeles. The Art Exhibition Committee, chaired by Messerlian, included Ani Aivazian, Ani Boyajian, Benjamin Charchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Aleen Khanjian, Asdghig Khanjian, Lora Kuyumjian, Avedis Markarian, Krikor Satamian, Cynthia Simonian, Shake Toumayan and Aline Yeterian.

The AGBU Pasadena/Glendale Chapter offers educational, cultural and social programs that serve the young and old alike such as lectures, concerts, art exhibits, theatrical plays, weekly Bardez” dinners and various special events. For more information about the AGBU Pasadena/Glendale Chapter, visit www.facebook.com/AGBUPasadenaChapter.



Guests mingle during the opening of the Contemporary Armenian Art exhibition, featuring works from Armenian artists from Armenia, the US, Lebanon and Mexico.

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 6 – St. James Armenian Church Men’s Club Dinner Meeting, Speaker, Mark Geragos. Topic is *Mistrial: An Insider’s Look*. Losh Kebab and Kheyman dinner, 12. Social hour (mezza) 6:15 p.m., dinner 7 p.m. Reservations requested at 617-923-8860. Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljiak Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Ladies welcome.

MAY 7 – Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston presents The Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian Distinguished Speaker Series, Peter Bergen, CNN National Security Analyst, “The Awakening: The Remaking of the Middle East,” 7 p.m., Charles & Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Reception and book signing follows talk; open and free to the public.

MAY 12 – Book Presentation, The Immortals: A Pictorial Anthology of Historiographic Works by Alice Navasargian, 2:30 p.m. Free event co-sponsored by ALMA, NAASR and the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA). ALMA Contemporary Arts Gallery, 65 Main St., Watertown.

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

MAY 18 – Hoy Lari in Concert to benefit the Armenian Children’s Milk Fund, returning to New England by popular demand, 2:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church in Woburn. Janet and Paola will entertain kids of all ages with songs in Armenian and English; tickets \$15, family 4-pack \$50, available at the door. For more info, contact Dro at drokanayan@gmail.com.

MAY 31 and JUNE 1 – Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair, Friday 5-8 p.m. serving Armenian kebab meals, entire Fair open Saturday 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Armenian meals from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Armenian delicacies bake sale, exciting silent auction, craft fair; 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown; wheelchair accessible, free admission; for info, call (617) 923-0498.

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

NEW JERSEY

MAY 18 – Annual Meeting and Luncheon, Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA), Sheraton Lincoln Harbor Hotel; Weehawken, meeting, 9:30 a.m., luncheon, 12:30 p.m., speaker will be Dr. Mary Papazian, president of Southern Connecticut State University; special guest, Maro Matossian, director of the Yerevan Women’s Support Center; distinguished service award, Ruth Bedevian. For reservations, call (201) 927-9072, or email aiwainc@aol.com.

NEW YORK

JUNE 7 – The Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural Association of NY presents a concert dedicated to the 300th jubilee of Sayat



On May 12 at 2:30 p.m., ALMA’s Contemporary Arts Gallery will host a book presentation for *Immortals: a Pictorial Anthology of Historiographic Works* by Alice Navasargian. This free event is co-sponsored by ALMA, NAASR and the Armenian Women’s International Association (AIWA). ALMA is located at 65, Main St., Watertown, Mass.

Nova, 8 p.m. featuring Elie Berberian (Canada) and his band performing songs by Sayat Nova and other favorite minstrels, suggested donation \$25 post-concert reception included at the Armenian Center, 69-23 47th Ave., Woodside. Contact gradaranik@gmail.com or call (212) 689-5880 for tickets.

PENNSYLVANIA

MAY 18 – Mer Doon Armenian Dance, 8 p.m., Santerian Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, 101 Ashmead Road, Cheltenham. Sponsored by the Knights of Vartan Ardashes Lodge. All proceeds will support the Mer Doon home in Echmiadzin, which provides women over 18 years of age a loving home and a solid education. Advance tickets are \$15. For tickets or info, call Vick Bazarbashian, 610-389-4633.

Free Calendar Submissions

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

Balakian Speaks at Illinois Holocaust Museum

BALAKIAN, from page 10

Turkish mass killing of Armenians. It was Lemkin, he said, who first coined the term Armenian genocide in the 1940s, and explained the concept on a special CBS Television broadcast about the UN Genocide Convention, in February 1949. Balakian also explored how the destruction of Armenian culture (intellectuals and artists, churches, schools, libraries, forced conversions to Islam, etc.) constituted a key component of genocide.

In an extensive PowerPoint presentation, Balakian showed arresting images of magnificent, thriving Armenian churches before 1915, and those same churches, in Turkey, that are in ruins today. He concluded by observing that this kind of cultural destruction still has complex reverberations, and impacts on Armenians in Armenia, in the diaspora, and in Turkey.

A reception and book signing followed.

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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

The Mystery Deepens

By Edmond Y. Azadian

While Armenians around the country were grieving the loss of four victims and 200 wounded as a result of the Boston Marathon bombings – a story which ended in the Armenian neck of the woods of Watertown, Mass. – suddenly a bomb was also hurled in the news media using Armenians for cover.

While investigations were continuing relentlessly and the events leading to the bombing were evolving, Armenians had to focus on the unexpected turn of events, when the bombers' uncle, Ruslan Tsarni, interjected the name of a shadowy character called, "Misha," who had "taken the brain" of the bombers and supposedly "brainwashed completely" the elder brother, Tamerlan. And this character is supposed to be of "Armenian descent," converted to Islam – a rare concoction of a character, indeed.

As the authorities were after the criminal aspects of the case, Armenians had to tend to their own wounds, right on the eve of the April 24 commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

The surviving younger bombers has confessed that the next target was Times Square in New York City. No one has yet asked the question: why was that particular target selected? Was there any connection with the Armenian Genocide commemoration to take place at that very same location a few days later?

As Armenians began to wonder and look into the implications of Uncle Tsarni's statement, the mystery turned even darker and more complex looking like the characterization of Soviet Russia by Winston Churchill who said, "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key."

When, finally that key was found, it turned out to be a big lie. And as soon as that lie was discovered, the Soviet Empire collapsed.

Now the question is who will be able to find the key to this new mystery. As the characters of this drama are revealed the mystery gets even thicker. Only investigative journalists with connections to the darker alleys of the intelligence community may be able to get to the bottom of this "Armenian connection."

Prominent lawyer, Mark Geragos, set the record straight with CNN's Anderson Cooper, who was harping continuously on the Armenian ancestry of the character Misha who suddenly had become a major player. Had he known the background of the characters, as we now know, he would have certainly made more of an in depth case on the issue.

Of course, on Tuesday, April 30, Tsarni contacted the Armenian Mirror-Spectator to apologize to the Armenian community. (See story on page 1.) What is the reason for the change of heart at this juncture?

As journalists investigate this event and its aftermath, they publish more facts and information about the players in this game. Of particular interest for us here, is the character of Ruslan Tsarni who threw the "Armenian bomb" at the media. He does not seem to be a simple by-stander. His involvement and activities are entwined with oil politics and covert operations.

Ruslan Tsarni turns out to be an oil executive serving a company active in the Caspian region. He served for two years (1999-2001) as the head of the legal department of the oil company, Golden Eagle. Earlier he was a Halliburton contractor and for two years he was a consultant to USAID in Kazakhstan.

In light of the furtive lobbying campaign of the oil companies, against the passage of the Armenian Genocide resolution in Congress, Mr. Tsarni's Armenian reference cannot be construed as coincidental. It must be deliberate especially given his legal background.

Besides his business relations, his family ties are even muddier, and he cannot extricate himself from the family web that drags him further into the shady world of covert activities.

In a revelation published in Boiling Frogs by Sibel Edmonds (April 27, 2013), it turns out that Mr. Tsarni was married to the daughter of Graham Fuller. Who is Graham Fuller? The publication writes, "A major break in the Boston terror CIA connection took place last night when I came across a post outing CIA opera-

tive Graham Fuller as the father of a woman married to the Boston terror suspects' infamous uncle, Ruslan Tsarni. Further confirmation of this bombshell was received via mainstream reporter, Laura Rozen."

We further read in the Boiling Frog exposé: "On a more ominous note, Graham Fuller was listed as one of the American Deep State rogues on Sibel Edmonds' State Secrets Privilege Gallery. Edmonds explained it featured subjects of FBI investigations she became aware of during her time as an FBI translator.

"Criminal activities were being protected by claims of State Secrets, she asserted. After Attorney General John Ashcroft went all the way to the Supreme Court to muzzle her under a little-used doctrine of State Secrets, she put up 21 photos, with no names. One of them was Graham Fuller."

A more revealing testimony by Edmonds brings Mr. Fuller's activities and goals closer home to Caucasus and consequently to Armenia: "You may remember one of these foreign policy makers from my State Secrets Privilege Gallery and my under oath testimony in the Krikorian case. Here is a quote from Graham A. Fuller, former Deputy Director of the CIA's National Council on Intelligence: 'The policy of guiding the evolution of Islam and of helping them against our adversaries worked marvelously well in Afghanistan against the Red Army. The same doctrines can still be used to destabilize what remains of Russian power, and especially to counter the Chinese influence in Central Asia.'"

Mr. Fuller's activities do not necessarily reflect on Mr. Ruslan Tsarni, but his place in the tangle of oil politics and covert operations shed light on his statements and his intent to drag the Armenian name into this mess.

Also special attention must be focused on Mr. Fuller's "doctrinal" ideas; while the West and specially the US are fighting radical Islam, on the other hand, that same weapon is being used to "destabilize what remains of Russian power." That certainly implicates Armenia, where one of the last power bases of Russia is located.

Therefore, it is no surprise that Russia recently expelled most of the foreign NGOs operating in its territory. But they are still active in Armenia. And in conjunction with the infiltration of religious sects they are intent on undermining the foundations of the country. None of the foreign organizations may entertain altogether altruistic goals. They are all self-serving at Armenia's expense.

Returning to Misha, he seems to be the remotest person to be connected with anything Armenian. But Uncle Ruslan implicates him as the main culprit in misguiding his "innocent" nephews. Misha also seems to be a shady character. Interviewed in his Rhode Island home by New York Review of Books, Misha turns out to be Mikhail Allakhverdov, a person of mixed Armenian and Ukrainian parentage. Certainly he has inherited his red beard from his Ukrainian Then why is his Armenian parentage thrust into the news media and not the Ukrainian? What is inconceivable with Misha is that his family was persecuted as Christians in Muslim Azerbaijan and he seems to be among the 400,000 Armenians who were either murdered or deported from Baku and Sumgait. And then, one needs a psychologist's genius to understand that after arriving in a free country, he decided to convert to the Islamic religion of his persecutors. And as if that was not enough, he acquired the power to radicalize actual, practicing Muslims.

All these incredible factors are being used to cover his main purpose and activity. Indeed, Walter Katz in The Week suggests that Misha may have been "an FBI informant" who started grooming Tamerlan for a sting operation before giving up [prematurely]. As we can see, Misha is also a character in the shadowy underworld, pursuing a mischievous mission turned sour. We can speculate on any potential goal; perhaps Tamerlan was being groomed to be involved in one of the Mr. Fuller's operations in the Caucasus, and like Osama Bin Laden before him, he turned against his handlers. That is one of the possibilities.

As bombing victims and their families suffer, no one has an interest in digging further to find where the network of conspiracy against Armenians leads.

As Armenians we may air our anger for being hurled into this tragedy, but our resources are limited for damage control. Therefore, beyond saving the Armenian name, must we also worry about Armenia caught in the complex crossfire?

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– Articles sent by fax are acceptable, and e-mail submissions are encouraged.

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Moles, Informants and Double Agents In Boston Marathon Bombings

The bizarre circumstances and dubious names in the Boston Marathon bombings have raised many questions that have yet to be answered by government officials and journalists.

The most mysterious character is “Misha” whom Ruslan Tsarni, uncle of the Boston bombers, described as an Armenian convert to Islam who had supposedly brainwashed and radicalized Tamerlan, the elder of the suspected Tsarnaev brothers. Ruslan described “Misha” as a heavy-set bald exorcist with a long reddish beard!

Initially, no one could find ‘Misha.’ While his alleged affiliation with Tamerlan and Armenian origin was prominently and repeatedly mentioned in the media, it took the authorities 10 days to announce that they knew who “Misha” was and that he had no connection to the terrorist acts!

Last Sunday, Christian Caryl of the *New York Review of Books*, was finally able to locate and interview the elusive “Misha” in his Rhode Island home. Even though Caryl disclosed that ‘Misha,’ a native of Baku,

Azerbaijan, is the son of an Armenian father and a Ukrainian mother, and that his last name is Allakhverdiv, the media continues to refer to him as an “Armenian.” Notably, neither Caryl nor anyone else mentions the fact that “Misha” or “Mikayel” – a common Christian name – cannot be the name of a Muslim! Moreover, after the break up of the Soviet Union, many Muslim Azerbaijanis applied for asylum in Europe and the United States, under the pretext that they were persecuted Christian Armenians! It is odd that ‘Misha,’ supposedly a Christian, would flee from Islamic persecution in Baku, only to convert to Islam in America!

Interestingly, Caryl reports that “Misha” had nothing to do with the Boston bombings, which is exactly what government investigators had earlier announced. Could it be that US officials had put Caryl in contact with “Misha” in order to confirm their declaration of his innocence, leading some analysts to speculate that “Misha” may have been an FBI informant whose cover is now being meticulously protected!

The next suspicious character is Uncle Ruslan who has accused “Misha the Armenian” of having a powerful influence over Tamerlan. Ruslan himself has had a checkered past, having worked for USAID and several Caspian Sea energy companies, while married to Samantha Ankara Fuller, daughter of Graham Fuller, a retired top CIA official. Because of Ruslan’s close relationship to the bombers’ family, his employment with Central Asian oil companies including Halliburton, and marriage to the daughter of a high-ranking CIA official, some analysts have suggested that the enigmatic uncle warrants a closer look.

Last week, prominent Armenian-American attorney Mark Geragos blasted Ruslan Tsarni on CNN, suggesting that “somebody needs to give this uncle a field sobriety test, because I think this guy is under the influence of some-

thing.” Geragos was furious that Ruslan had linked the Boston bombers to the “Armenian Misha,” while Armenians worldwide were commemorating the 98th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide! Ruslan then tried to reach Geragos by telephone, seeking “to clarify” his earlier statement. Geragos refused to take his call.

Some analysts suggest that Tamerlan may have been recruited by the Russian secret services (FSB) to spy on Chechen extremists during his six-month stay in Chechnya and Dagestan last year. Having informed the FBI and CIA of Tamerlan’s links to radical Islamist groups, and not receiving a satisfactory response from US officials, it could be that the FSB took matters into its own hands and recruited the unemployed and penniless young Chechen during his lengthy stay in Russia.

Other analysts speculate that Tamerlan may have been an informant for the US government. Such a supposition is much more credible than assuming that the FBI and CIA were too incompetent or too busy to conduct a thorough investigation of Tamerlan’s background after the Russian FSB brought his name to their attention. It could be that US authorities knew Tamerlan only too well and may have even encouraged him to travel to Russia as their mole in Jihadist circles.

Finally, there are those who believe that Tamerlan ended up betraying both the Russian and American intelligence services, deciding instead to support radical Islamic groups, “out of anger over US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan,” according to his younger brother Dzhokhar’s jailhouse confession.

Of course, these speculations are advanced by various analysts based on preliminary information, pending a thorough Congressional investigation to uncover the true facts. Americans killed and maimed in the Boston bombings deserve an honest answer!

Schiff Honors Armenians On Genocide Anniversary

WASHINGTON – The following speech was delivered by Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) on the floor of the House of Representatives on April 24:

“My Armenian friends, here and around the world, today on the 98th anniversary of the [genocide day], I speak to you from the floor of the House of Representatives in the language of your grandparents and your great grandparents – the language they used to speak of their hopes, their dreams, their lives and their loves in the years before 1915.

“Throughout the Ottoman Empire, tens of thousands were to be killed outright.

“I speak to you in the language of the sons who watched their fathers’ murdered.

“Women were raped by the thousands.

“I speak to you in the language of the girls begging the gendarmes for mercy.

“Families were force marched through desert heat as the Ottoman government sought to destroy a people.

“I speak you in the language of the children begging for a drop of water.

“By the time it was over in 1923, more than 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children were dead. It was the first genocide of the 20th Century.

“I speak to you in the language of the mothers who died with their babies in their arms.

“A nation was scattered around the world... To the Middle East, to Europe and to America.

“I speak to you in the language of the survivors who came to America for freedom and made a new life.

“For almost a century, Turkey has denied the genocide. In the face of overwhelming evidence – much of it from American diplomats and journalists – Ankara has denied that the genocide ever happened. They want the world to forget.

“I speak to you in the language of those who were lost. Their voices drift across the decades – begging us to remember.

“I am not a descendant of the fallen, but I speak to you in their beautiful language because on this day, we are all Armenian. And not just on this day. Whenever we speak out against mass murder, whenever we refuse to be cowed into silence, we are all Armenian.

“For many years I have sat with you and listened – to the stories of those who were lost in the genocide and those who survived.

“I speak to you in their language to thank you for sharing your history with me. And I speak to you from this place, this House, because Americans have always shown the courage to look horror in the eye and speak its name, and I look forward to the day when its leaders will do the same.

“And because I know that day will come. May it come soon, so the last of the survivors may hear its awesome sound.

“May God hear our voices.

“Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield back.”

A Concern Regarding the 100th Anniversary of the Genocide

By Fr. Bedros Shetilian

The hundredth anniversary of the Genocide is starting to be a top subject in the nation. Besides the central committee, which was formed in Armenia, other bodies are being organized in different parts of the Diaspora. There are people who think that there will be great progress for the Armenian Cause in 2015. My opinion is that by the 2015 there will not be big changes in the geopolitical situation in the world and particularly in the Middle East. In 2015 the United States will not be ready yet to recognize the Genocide officially. I hope unexpected things happen, but it doesn’t look like that today.

Regardless of this, there are some that have already started to work. For example, our most prominent composer Tigran Mansurian composed a Requiem dedicated to the victims of the Genocide. That is a smart choice, because he used the famous Catholic Church’s Latin text, which was used by the other famous composers which makes it easier to be understood by non-Armenians. In addition, that it is a valuable musical piece and was composed according to the traditions of Armenian music. It has already been performed in Germany. Will we be able to understand the importance of such a masterpiece and will we promote it internationally?

I have hesitations, because in spite of the fact that we talk a lot about such issues, but taken widely and as a national idea, we often show a narrow vision and will, when it comes to important issues. Our international achievements in culture and arts are a result of individual efforts, more than being a result of a well-planned project. Even though our worldly renowned artists like Saroyan, Khachaturian, Aznavour, etc. are proof of the Armenian genius and are rooted in the Armenian culture, but they are mainly the result of their individual efforts and opportunities given to them by non-Armenian cultures. Until today we don’t have a good professional plan to help Armenians who are talented and to put them in the international arena. The reason for this is our narrow vision and the jealousy towards each other. Unfortunately, there are many examples. St. Petersburg Palaces International Classical Music Festival in Russia, which has an Armenian leadership and pursues an Armenian policy, has no single Armenian sponsor, in spite of several attempts. Several years ago when I asked a notable and capable Armenian about his/her opinion regarding a fundraising for the “Beast on the Moon” play, his/her respond was, “They are begging for money”... We may have lost an opportunity by not supporting enough that beautiful play about the survivals of the Genocide. We could make a Hollywood movie, which could contribute significantly to the propaganda of our cause.

During the last years there has been an exception and that is the achievements of Armenian chess players. There is a good plan in Armenia to support these kinds of intellectual sports, mainly because the president, Serge Sargisian, is a big fan of that game and actually he is the head of the Armenian Chess Federation. Here is a clear example. A field, which got the psychological and financial support it needed, started in a short time to show great achievements on the world level. We are a very talented nation and if there is support where needed, I am sure that we will see victories in many other fields.

Coming back to the hundredth anniversary of the Genocide and knowing what the plans are being made through the internet and the media, I am concerned that the hundredth anniversary will end up by the world talking about it for one week instead of one day and some secondary countries or some states here or there recognizing the Genocide. There are only two years left for the anniversary and still I don’t see a plan that could shake the world. It looks like that the hundredth anniversary will be for us and for our friends who already know about the Genocide and not for the whole world.

If we want to commemorate the hundredth anniversary appropriately, we have to do something to shake the world. Politically we do not have enough power to do that. But there is another field where we might be able to shake the world’s conscience. That field is the arts, to be more correct the movie industry - Hollywood. It is well known how big an impact the movie industry has on people. Actually its impact goes far beyond what we can imagine. Actually government officials, scholars and knowledgeable people know about the Genocide. That’s became very clear during the last discussion in the Congress for the Genocide bill a couple years ago, when almost every congressman, even those who voted against the Genocide bill, said that they know about it, and I believe when the time comes they will vote for it. The Genocide became well known for many people, and we had great achievements in order to tell the world about it. But it is not yet a widely known and wide spread issue for the people around the globe. We have to focus on this; to make the Genocide recognized by the masses – to make it a top issue. Here the movie industry and to be more correctly, Hollywood, can do the job. We all remember what role “Schindler’s List” movie played for the recognition of the Holocaust by the large masses. We need an Armenian “Schindler’s List.” It is a big project and instead of doing things here or there we have to concentrate our power, connections, finance, etc. in order to make an Armenian “Schindler’s List” in 2015. It is understandable that big names in Hollywood should be involved, otherwise it won’t have the impact that we need.

see ANNIVERSARY, PAGE 16



'Misha' Speaks: An Interview with Alleged Boston Bomber's 'Svengali'

MISHA, from page 1

bombings. "I wasn't his teacher. If I had been his teacher, I would have made sure he never

did anything like this," Allakhverdiv said.

A 39-year-old man of Armenian-Ukrainian descent, Allakhverdiv is of medium height and has a thin, reddish-blond beard. When I arrived he was wearing a green and white short-sleeve football jersey and pajama pants. Along with his parents, his American girlfriend was there, and we sat together in a tiny living room that abuts the family kitchen.

Allakhverdiv said he had known Tamerlan in Boston, where he lived until about three years ago, and has not had any contact with him since. He declined to describe the nature of his acquaintance with Tamerlan or the Tsarnaev family, but said he had never met the family members who are now accusing him of radicalizing Tamerlan. He also confirmed he

had been interviewed by the FBI and that he has cooperated with the investigation:

"I've been cooperating entirely with the FBI. I gave them my computer and my phone and everything I wanted to show I haven't done anything. And they said they are about to return them to me. And the agents who talked told me they are about to close my case."

An FBI spokesman in Boston declined to comment on an ongoing case. Allakhverdiv's statements, however, seemed to bear out recent reports that the FBI have not found any connection between "Misha" and the bomb plot.

One question is why members of the Tsarnaev family have made accusations about Allakhverdiv. A close friend of the family in

Boston said that Misha was not known to have visited Tamerlan at home. I interviewed Allakhverdiv in Russian and it seems likely that in whatever contact the two men had, they would have spoken Russian.

In many ways, Allakhverdiv's parents seem typical former-Soviet émigrés who had embraced middle class life in the United States. His father is an Armenian Christian and his mother is an ethnic Ukrainian. The family had lived in Baku, Azerbaijan, but had left in the early 1990s for the United States to escape growing persecution of Armenian Christians there. The family was welcoming to me but very nervous. "We love this country. We never expected anything like this to happen to us," his father said.

A Concern Regarding the 100th Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY, from page 15

People may say that there have been some movies about the Genocide and mostly were done by Armenians, such as "Ararat" and "Mayrig." Unfortunately these movies didn't have great success internationally. We need a successful Hollywood movie, which is not necessarily directed by Armenians. During the past years we have been hearing periodically on the Internet and in the media that some Hollywood celebrities agreed to take part in such a movie. Then we hear that it is not true. It is obvious, there is a war going on behind the scenes in order to block that from happening and up to today we are losing that war. Our enemies know what impact a Hollywood movie can have on the recognition of the Genocide, they know that will be terrible for them to have a movie which will be watched by the billions and will impact them emotionally and intellectually. For that reason they are watching and blocking it.

In recent years we heard about "The Genex," a movie project about the Genocide initiated by Armenian artists.

It is a big challenge to have a Genocide movie in Hollywood in 2015. But we can do it. We have the financial resources to make it happen. What we need is awareness within the nation, in Armenia and in the Diaspora about the importance of such an idea. We need a group of people who believe in the idea, who can work together, who have the energy, talent and organizational skills to do it. That's how we can shake the world in 2015.

(Fr. Bedros Shetilian serves at Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Church in Troy, NY, and St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church in Springfield, Mass.)

DC Buildings Linked to Armenian Genocide Museum to Be Razed

MUSEUM, from page 1

properties, too, were to be part of the project.

But the foundation and the nonprofit Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial are tied up in prolonged litigation (another appeal was filed March 25 in the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit) over a relationship and donation gone bad, a lawsuit a federal judge once described as "very bitter and very unfortunate."

The bank building was acquired by the Armenian Assembly of America early in 2000 for \$7.25 million, using funds provided by multiple donors, most notably \$4 million from the Cafesjian Family Foundation, according to court documents.

Gerard Cafesjian, a wealthy former publisher and Armenian philanthropist, separately purchased the G Street properties the same year for about \$5.5 million, with the idea of turning them into a contemporary art museum to complement the genocide museum. But the art museum was built in the Armenian capital of Yerevan instead, and Cafesjian conditionally agreed to donate the G Street buildings to the

Assembly for an expansion of the genocide museum.

The grant agreement between Cafesjian and the Armenian Genocide Museum nonprofit, an arm of the Armenian Assembly, set Dec. 31, 2010, as the point at which the properties would be returned if they weren't developed. And that's exactly what happened.

Between 2002 and 2007, when the first of many lawsuits was filed, the relationships between the various parties soured, badly. Fundraising efforts for the estimated \$100 million museum project stalled, as did attempts to hire an architect or develop a business plan, according to a 190-page federal court ruling issued Jan. 26, 2011.

"The Court sincerely hopes that after years of fighting legal battles, the parties can put aside their differences and accomplish the laudable goal of creating an Armenian Genocide museum and memorial," US District Court Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly wrote in her exhaustive opinion.

It's certainly not looking that way.

The 50,000-square-foot museum complex is in

limbo, and based on a brief conversation I had with a museum representative, I'm less confident than ever that a museum will open in the bank building on 14th Street, two blocks from the White House.

The raze, as I understand it, has little to do with the museum. More likely, it is related to the District's attempted "blight" classification, which would come with a property tax rate six times the standard commercial rate. Get rid of the building, get rid of the tax bill.

The permit applications are under review by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. Workers were inside 1340 G on Friday clearing it of asbestos in preparation for the demolition.

(Editor's note: The Armenian Assembly has appealed the ruling by Kollar-Kotelly. In the meantime, Assembly officials are looking for alternative venues to house a museum, in order to meet the 2015 deadline for the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. All persons interviewed spoke off the record. Calls to the Cafesjian Family Foundation's office were not returned by press time.)

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