

Austrian President Visits Armenia, Discusses Karabagh Issue

YEREVAN (Hetq and Armenpress) – Visiting Austrian President Heinz Fischer this week declared in Yerevan that the Karabagh issue cannot be solved through force and violence.

Fischer made the statement at a joint press conference with Armenian President Serge Sargisian after the two leaders met at the Presidential Palace.

“We see no alternative to the peaceful talks within the scope of the OSCE Minsk Group,” Sargisian said, adding that “Azerbaijan’s recent bellicose statements create tension both at the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijan and at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.”

“The provocations of the past weeks have claimed the lives of servicemen, and the situation remains tense,” the Armenian presi-



President Serge Sargisian, right, with Austrian President Heinz Fischer

dent noted.

Sargisian recalled the Los Cabos statement issued by the presidents of the OSCE

Minsk Group co-chairing countries, urging the parties to maintain the ceasefire regime and underlining that the conflict should be settled on the basis of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, namely non-use of force or the threat of force, the right of peoples to self-determination and territorial integrity.

“We are ready to move forward on the basis of those principles, and the sooner the issue is settled, the better. The rapid resolution of the issue stems from the interests of the peoples of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh. I think the international

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Turkey to Drop Sanctions on France over Genocide

ANKARA (AFP) – Turkey this week praised the positive attitude adopted by the new French president toward relations with Ankara, saying that sanctions imposed on Paris would no longer be implemented.

“Sanctions will drop from the agenda thanks to this new stance adopted by France,” Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said in a televised interview, adding that he would be visiting Paris next month.

Newly-elected French President Francois Hollande promised to open a “new page” in

relations, which hit a low over French objections to Turkey’s bid to join the European Union and legislation in France seeking to make it a crime to deny the Armenian Genocide.

Turkish-French relations deteriorated under Hollande’s predecessor, Nicolas Sarkozy, who angered Ankara when he pushed ahead with a bill to criminalize denial of the Armenian Genocide in 1915.

After the contentious bill passed in the National Assembly in December, Turkey

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Senate Foreign Relations Committee Approves Morningstar As Ambassador to Azerbaijan

Sen. Boxer Expresses Concerns Over Azerbaijan’s Hostile Actions

WASHINGTON – This week, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted to approve a number of ambassadorial nominees, including Richard Morningstar, whom the Barack Obama administration designated to serve as ambassador to Azerbaijan, reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

Morningstar’s nomination comes amid Azerbaijan’s June 4 cease-fire violation. Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) stated this week that it was “absolutely critical that Ambassador Morningstar use his position to respond to and counter the Government of Azerbaijan’s escalating acts of aggression and threats against Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.” Responding to Boxer’s question submitted for the record, Morningstar pledged that “if confirmed, I will make the case that irresponsible rhetoric is unacceptable and undermines our efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict. I will urge the Azerbaijani government to show restraint in its rhetoric and to prepare its people for peace, not war.”

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Samuel Wurzelbacher, better known as “Joe the Plumber”

‘Joe the Plumber’ Links Deaths of Holocaust, Genocide to Gun Control, in Campaign Video

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) – The Ohio congressional candidate known as “Joe the Plumber” is running a campaign video in which he suggests that Nazi gun control contributed to deaths during the Holocaust because Jews didn’t have firearms to defend themselves.

The ad drew strong rebukes from Democrats and Jewish organizations.

In the video, Samuel Wurzelbacher loads a shotgun and fires at lemons and tomatoes placed on wooden posts. “In 1939, Germany established gun control,” he says. “From 1939 to 1945, 6 million Jews and 7 million others, unable to defend themselves, were exterminated,” he said before ending the video by saying “I love America.”

Gun control opponents have long held that Adolf Hitler was able to seize power in Germany in part because of controls on firearms.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Mirror-Spectator to Close for Holiday

WATERTOWN, Mass. – The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for two weeks in July for its annual summer holiday.

The issue of June 30 will be the last before the summer break. The issue of July 21 will be the first upon return.

IMF to Lend Armenia \$50.7-Million Loan for ‘Solid Growth’

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – The International Monetary Fund (IMF) offered a cautiously-positive economic outlook for Armenia as it announced the release of \$50.7 million in fresh loan tranches to the authorities last week.

The two installments are part of a three-year lending program for the country worth \$404 million that was launched by the IMF in June 2010. Their disbursement raised to almost \$270 million of the total amount of low-interest funds allocated to the Armenian government and Central Bank under that scheme.

In a written statement, the IMF praised the Armenian authorities for adhering to macroeconomic policies favored by the Washington-based fund. It said that they have translated into “solid growth” and falling inflation.

“The outlook for 2012 and the medium-term is positive, but not without risks, particularly stemming from Europe and affecting Armenia via Russia,” read the statement.

Armenia’s Ambassador To UN Raises Issue of Azerbaijani Occupation

NEW YORK (Hetq) – Armenia’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), Garen Nazarian, raised the issue of the Azerbaijani occupation of Artzavashen, Shahoumyan and Getashen during his speech this week at the Security Council.

UN Secretary General Ban-Ki moon and more than 50 representatives of UN member-states were present at the discussion regarding the protection of civilian populations in conflict zones.

Nazarian also underscored the responsibility of Azerbaijan in violating the ceasefire and shooting civilians in the Karabagh conflict, as well as trampling the rights of hundreds of thousands of Armenian refugees.

Nazarian said that as a result of the conflict, entire Armenian communities had been destroyed, including Artzavashen and the northern Artsakh Republic communities of Shahoumyan, Getashen and 18 other villages which remain under Azerbaijani occupation.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Lithuania Interested in Closer Ties

YEREVAN (News.am) – Armenian-Lithuanian political relations should be used to boost economic ties, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Aubalis said.

Nalbandian welcomed his Lithuanian counterpart stressing that positive relations are developing.

During last week's meeting the ministers discussed regional and bilateral issues, talks on the association agreement and strengthening of Armenia-EU relations.

Nalbandian underscored Lithuania was the first to recognize Armenia's independence and the first Baltic state to open an embassy in Yerevan.

In his turn, Aubalis stressed that political relations must serve a basis to promote economic ties adding several Lithuanian companies intend to work in Armenia.

Other fields of concern are education and culture.

Lake Sevan Fish Species On Verge of Extinction

SEVAN (Arminfo) – Due to illegal fishing, the native fish species of Lake Sevan are on the verge of extinction, Bardukh Gabrielyan, director of the Institute of Hydroecology and Ichthyology of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences, said at a press conference this week.

Gabrielyan said that in the 1980s, the total fish reserves in Lake Sevan was approximately 28-30,000 tons, whereas now it is below 20 tons. Gabrielyan said that due to illegal fishing, fish such as the barbel and khramulya, which are included in the Red Book, are at risk for extinction. Meanwhile, the whitefish, whose numbers are critically low, are still openly sold in the markets.

For four years, experts have suggested to the government to forbid the catching of all fish, except crucian carp, he said. "After long efforts, the government has finally paid attention to this problem and has taken measures to restore the trout population in the lake. However, the problem is evident: the state allocates money, purchases juvenile fish, releases them into the lake, however, the fish do not manage to grow because of illegal fishery," Gabrielyan said.

He said that it is necessary to implement a program consisting of both environmental and socio-economic components to preserve the fish reserves in the lake.

Expedition Hosts French Ambassador

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – French Ambassador Henri Reynaud earlier this month visited the ancient Erebuni Fortress located in Armenia's capital.

The Armenian-French archeological excavation, which resumed at the fortress on June 5, is funded by the Erebuni Historical and Archaeological Museum-Reserve and the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Culture.

The ambassador toured the excavation site, according to the Museum-Reserve.

Speaking with reporters, Reynaud said that thus far he is only familiar with Erebuni due to the wealth of Armenia's ancient settlements, but he said that he is planning on visiting other monuments in the near future.

The French expedition team leader, Stéphane Deschamps, noted that the Erebuni Fortress is an interesting ancient settlement, both in terms of architecture and archaeological objects. He considered Erebuni as an important archaeological monument for the entire Middle East.

During her talk with the French ambassador, Armenia's Deputy Minister of Culture Arev Samuelyan underscored Erebuni's importance.

Erebuni Historical and Archaeological Museum-Reserve Director Gagik Gyurjyan informed the ambassador that they are already working with their French partners toward holding a joint exhibition.

President of Mer Doon Receives Medal From Minister of Labor and Social Affairs

ECHMIADZIN – On Monday, April 4, Tigranuhi Karapetyan, president of Our Home-Mer Doon, received a gold medal from the Republic of Armenia's minister of labor and social affairs, Artur Grigoryan. This recognition is the highest award of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and honored Karapetyan as an outstanding example for her many years of service to the orphaned and disadvantaged children in Armenia during an event organized by Mer Doon, titled "You Are A Mother, A Woman, A Creator."

Special guests included the head of the Department of Family, Women, and

doors in Echmiadzin, in October 2006. Mer Doon provides a loving and compassionate family environment for disadvantaged young women who have outgrown their orphanage. Sadly, most emancipated orphans in Armenia end up living on the streets, unskilled, minimally educated and unprepared for adulthood. Many fall prey to lowly opportunists who offer them some form of shelter, claim ownership over them and exploit them. Mer Doon offers these young adults a chance at an education, a home and a much brighter future. For many of these young adults,



From left, Nonna Sargsyan, Ani Qochar, Nune Yesayan, Lala Ghazaryan and Tigranuhi Karapetyan with the young women of Mer Doon

Children Issues of the Armenian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Lala Ghazaryan, singer Nune Yesayan, Yes Magazine editor-in-chief, Ani Qochar, and friend of Mer Doon, Nonna Sargsyan. The Mer Doon Board of Directors congratulated Karapetyan for this honor and thanked her for her steadfast commitment and dedication to the organization.

Established in 2005 by Karapetyan and US-based co-founder Julie Ashegian, Mer Doon first opened its

Mer Doon is the first family they have ever known.

Mer Doon is currently providing for 10 young women, each furthering their education and pursuing a useful skill or vocation. In addition, the girls receive a religious education, learn French, Russian and English languages in-house and are trained by staff in personal and social skills.

To learn more about Our Home-Mer Doon, visit www.mer-doon.com.

– Noushig Hovhannesian



Tigranuhi Karapetyan accepting the Golden Medal from Artur Grigoryan

Controversial Former Yerevan Mayor Gets Position in New Government

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Gagik Beglarian, the controversial former mayor of Yerevan, has been appointed to Armenia's government as minister of transport and communications, more than 18 months after being forced to resign because of reportedly violent conduct.

Beglarian stepped down as mayor in December 2010 after President Serge Sargsian effectively confirmed Beglarian's involvement in an assault on an official at the presidential administration's protocol unit.

According to media reports, an official, Aram Kandayan, incurred Beglarian's ire after asking the latter's wife not to sit next to the president during the November 2010 concert of Spanish tenor Plácido Domingo, in Yerevan. Such seats have traditionally been reserved for Armenia's prime minister, parliament speaker and the supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Beglarian, who did not attend the concert, allegedly drove Kandayan to one of his properties in Yerevan and beat up the young official there the next day. He was never prosecuted for what a presidential spokesman condemned as an "unacceptable and intolerable" behavior.

Beglarian, who is also a wealthy businessman, remained a senior member of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK). He was reelected to the HHK's 20-member executive body during a party congress held in March.

Sargsian appointed Beglarian as transport minister on Saturday as part of a cabinet reshuffle resulting from the May 6 parliamentary elections. Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian introduced him to senior officials at the Ministry of Transport and Communications on Monday.

"I want to congratulate Mr. Beglarian on his ministerial appointment and express confidence that he will manage to smoothly ensure continuity in the [ministry's] work," the premier said. "The projects that we have launched will be brought to a logical conclusion."

Beglarian became Yerevan's first elected mayor in more than a decade after leading the HHK to a landslide victory in disputed municipal elections held in May 2009.

Beglarian has long held sway in a largely blue-collar section of the district notorious for election-related violence against opposition activists.

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community has had an opportunity to get convinced of this," the president stated.

"While formally agreeing to the three above-mentioned principles, Azerbaijan actually only accepts one of them – territorial integrity, rejecting the principles of the right of peoples to self-determination and the peaceful settlement of conflicts," Sargsian said, emphasizing that the conflict will be solved only when the parties are ready to accept all of the above-mentioned principles.

Fischer accompanied with Armenian Foreign affairs minister Eduard Nalbandian and Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan on June 26 visited the Memorial to the Armenian Genocide victims Tsitsernakaberd.

Armenpress reports that he put flowers at the memorial and with a minute of silence stood to honor the memory of the victims of the Genocide. Then Fischer visited the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute of National Academy of Science of Armenia where he got acquainted with the documents about the Armenian Genocide. He signed the guest book, "I don't find words to describe the great human tragedy which happened to the Armenian nation."

The president of Austria planted a fir tree in the memorial park. Austria is among the countries which have not recognized Armenian Genocide yet but

the Armenian community there seeks to achieve recognition of the Genocide.

In addition to discussing the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict and the Genocide, the two presidents discussed ways to expand cultural ties. Fischer said that Armenia's rich history makes it a natural partner for Austria.

"Armenia has more than two millennia of history. It was the first country that adopted Christianity as its state religion, which paved the way for the development of Christianity throughout the world" Fischer noted.

Fischer also presented his country's history through the ages, telling them how Vienna was originally a township in the Roman Empire, which later became a major capital.

Sargsian thanked Fischer for the assistance of Austrian government during 1988 earthquake, as well as for the establishment of Austrian Children's Hospital and the construction of an Austrian district in Gumri.

"We are also grateful for the launch of development programs under the auspices of Austria, in the context of which the signing of intergovernmental agreement of development programs. Armenia appreciates the support and attention shown towards the Armenian community and Armenian cultural heritage in Austria, including the maintenance of the Mkhitarist Congregation in Vienna," said the Armenian president.



INTERNATIONAL

AGBU Young Professionals of Toronto Seminar Draws Large Crowd

TORONTO — Aspiring entrepreneurs here are now armed with expert advice and critical insights into the business world thanks to a dynamic panel discussion on Entrepreneurship and Innovation hosted by the AGBU Young Professionals of Toronto (YPTO). Sponsored by the Toronto-based specialty store Dolce & Gourmando, the event, part of a popular series of professional development seminars being organized this year by YPTO, featured a range of speakers with diverse backgrounds, which attracted 75 young attendees to the AGBU Toronto Center on June 3.

The panel's four speakers, each accomplished entrepreneurs in their respective fields, delivered interactive presentations, including Simon Aznavour, president of Aznavour Ventures Inc.; Ari Balabanian, president of Data Document Solutions; Seta Danielian, founder of Dolce & Gourmando, and Shant Mardirosian, owner of The Burger's Priest. Drawing from their varied experiences in direct marketing, food services, investment,



From left, Simon Aznavour, president of Aznavour Ventures Inc.; Seta Danielian, founder of Dolce & Gourmando; Shant Mardirosian, owner of The Burger's Priest; Ari Balabanian, president of Data Document Solutions, and Talar Sahsuvaroglu, YPTO Co-director of Educational Outreach, at the AGBU Young Professionals of Toronto entrepreneurship and innovation seminar

retail and venture capital, each speaker addressed fundamental questions on the nature of entrepreneurship, debunking the myths commonly associated with business ownership and delving into the

realities of how to launching a business. Amidst the economic slowdown and a competitive job market that increasingly values innovation, the timing of the event could not have been more appropriate. As YPTO chair, Karen Papazian, explained, "Entrepreneurs are creative forces in society, and young and ambitious minds are the most cognizant of the potential opportunities that can be developed in any economy. In order to for them to succeed, it is most important that they first have a strong understanding of the risks and challenges of business ownership. No one could be more qualified to share that knowledge and wisdom than those who have been through it all," highlighting the decades of experience between the participants.

In addition to value creation, risk management, and competition, the speakers also explored themes of business psychology and the mindset of entrepreneurs, prompting audience members to reflect on different approaches to pursuing their career paths. Talar Sahsuvaroglu, the YPTO co-director of Educational Outreach who moderated the evening, noted, "What makes these seminars relevant and meaningful for our constituency is that it gives them the chance to connect not only with the guest speakers but with their inner selves. Our discussion themes often cross industries and professions, and our aim is to ensure that no one leaves the room without a good piece of advice," which proved true of this event, given the positive feedback from all who attended.

The YPTO Entrepreneurship and Innovation panel was one of many that Sahsuvaroglu, in collaboration with YPTO Co-director of Educational Outreach Aren Sarikyan, will continue to organize in the coming months. In addition to seminars, YPTO is launching industry-specific networking events to create support structures for those seeking advice and guidance in their fields.

To learn more about YP Toronto and its upcoming events, visit www.ypto.ca.

Dink Family Lawyer Addresses Letter to CoE Ministers

ANKARA (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The lawyer representing Hrant Dink's family, Fethiye Çetin, wrote a letter to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, arguing that the Turkish government had failed to implement any serious or concrete steps to execute the verdict issued by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and that it instead rewarded the responsible parties rather than trying them in a court of law, Bianet reports.

The Turkish government updated its action plan from June 27, 2011 once again on October 19, 2011, due to the finalization of the European Court's verdict on December 14, 2010, she said, adding that both action plans included contemporary developments under the titles of independent and general measures and ongoing trials rather than the verdict's execution.

"The written [contents] of the government's action plan clearly indicate [they] took no concrete or serious steps to execute the verdict. The government did not attempt anything positive since the time of the last action plan either," Çetin said.

Turkish-Armenian journalist Dink, the chief editor of the weekly *Agos*, was shot dead on January 19, 2007 in broad daylight before his office in Istanbul's Sisli district.

"The [action] plan elucidated at length over measures allegedly

taken, ongoing trials and investigations not yet complete, but [it] divulged no concrete information over the execution of the [European Court's] verdict on Dink or a renewal of the trial," Çetin said in her letter.

"The government did not choose to opt for remission to execute the verdict, failed to bring those responsible before justice and continued its rhetoric and actions [intended] to pave the way for new violations by reproducing the [same] structure that spawned the violations [in the first place]," she said.

The ECHR had convicted Turkey of violating the second article of the European Convention on Human Rights over the right to life, the 10th article on the freedom of speech and the 13th article over the right to an effective remedy in the lawsuit filed by the Dink family.

A court had sentenced Dink's murderer Ogün Samast to a total of 22 years and 10 months in prison on charges of "premeditated murder" and "possession of unlicensed weapons."

Yasin Hayal also received a life sentence, while Erhan Tuncel was acquitted. All the defendants, however, were acquitted of charges of membership in an illegal organization due to lack of evidence and a number of officials implicated in the affair also received promotions.

Turkey to Drop Sanctions on France over Armenia

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retaliated by suspending military and political cooperation with Paris.

But France's top constitutional court struck down the bill in February, saying it violated freedom of expression, in a ruling welcomed by Ankara. Sarkozy vowed to launch new legislation but was defeated at the polls first.

During the interview, Davutoglu said he soon would pay an official visit to Paris for talks with French officials.

"After the talks on July 5, this stagnation in bilateral ties will hopefully be over," he added.

A Turkish foreign ministry diplomat said that whether sanctions against France would be dropped would depend on the upcoming meeting.

Davutoglu will stay an extra day in Paris where he will participate in the third "Friends of Syria" meeting on July 6, noted the diplomat speaking on condition of anonymity.

Turkey and France have the strength to overcome problems in their bilateral relationship, said Davutoglu.

"We have a clear attitude. The Turkish republic respects all nations if it is respected by all," he said. "But if it is

disrespected, it takes necessary steps in return to protect its nation's honor and national interests."

On Wednesday, Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with Hollande on the sidelines of a UN meeting in Brazil, when the two leaders agreed to turn a "new page" in relations, the Anatolia news agency reported.

Erdogan also invited Hollande to make the first official visit to Turkey by a French president in 20 years and received a positive response, Anatolia said.

International News

PACE Committee Accepts Report on Political Prisoners in Azerbaijan

STRASBOURG (Armenpress) — The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) had a full agenda on June 26, especially in the committees, member of the Armenian delegation to PACE, Naira Zohrabyan said.

According to her, two reports were under discussion in the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights from the morning, first of which concerned the formulation of "political prisoner," and the second concerned the presence of political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

"The Azerbaijani delegation exerted unprecedented efforts to unite its lobbyist MPs at PACE, to bring them to the committee, so that the two reports were thrown down and especially the second one. They had brought a great number of lobbyists, who shamelessly lied," said Zohrabyan. She also noted that both reports were accepted at the committee.

Madras Church Bells Ring Every Sunday

MADRAS, India (Hetq) — Not a single day passes without Trevor Alexander lighting a candle at the altar of the Armenian Church in Chennai (Madras) India.

As caretaker, Alexander lives on the premises of the church in the busy streets of George Town in the city.

Unfortunately, the church is left without a priest and there has been no Sunday service in the last six decades as there are no Armenians in the city. Alexander, however, makes it a point to ring the church's huge bells every Sunday.

The Armenian Church is funded by the Armenian Apostolic Church and maintained by the Armenian Church Committee of Kolkata. Also called the Armenian Church of Virgin Mary, it was built by Armenians from Persia and is considered to be one of the oldest churches in India.

The church was built in 1712 by Armenians who arrived here as traders. It was reconstructed in 1772.

The bodies of 350 Armenians are buried at the church's cemetery. Rev. Haroutiun Shmavonian, who founded the world's first Armenian periodical *Azdarar*, is buried here.

The church is famous for its belfry adjacent to the main church. The six large bells are rung every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. by the caretaker.

Iran Urges Calm over Downed Turkish Jet

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran urged Ankara and Damascus to show "restraint" over Syria's shooting down of a Turkish fighter jet, Iranian state media reported on Tuesday, June 26.

Tehran "asks both sides to show calm and restraint and hopes that with tact and tolerance and dialogue, this issue will be evaluated and through a peaceful resolution, tranquility and stability will be preserved in the region," Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi was quoted as saying.

Iran is the staunchest ally of Syria, which is embroiled in a 15-month conflict UN officials fear has become a civil war.

Turkey, a NATO member, sits on the other side as a critic of Syrian President Bashar al Assad's crack-down on the unrest.

A Syrian anti-aircraft battery near the Turkish border on Friday shot down a Turkish Phantom warplane that Damascus said violated its airspace by flying in low and fast from the Mediterranean.

Turkey has taken care not to inflame the sensitive incident by admitting that its aircraft may have entered Syrian territory, though it suggested it could have been unintentional.

Still, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Ankara would "announce its final position and take necessary steps with determination after the incident is entirely clarified."

Syria and Turkey said their navies were coordinating a search for the Phantom's two pilots.



INTERNATIONAL

AGBU Swiss Chapter Annual Fundraising Gala Dinner

GENEVA, Switzerland – On Saturday, June 2, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Swiss Chapter held its yearly fundraising dinner at the Restaurant Parc des Eaux Vives, a mansion in a park overlooking Lake Geneva.

During the past 20 years, the Swiss Chapter has been active in cultural and educational activities in Switzerland and also has helped other projects all over the world be it for AGBU or others where it thought help was necessary.

For a number of years, funds were raised for the Armenian Social Investment Fund projects as the community contribution of 10 percent, required by the World Bank, in many villages all over Armenia, helps to bring water and refurbish schools and community centers.

In the last couple of years, the funds raised from the annual dinner were to help AGBU schools in Beirut, the Armenian school in Baghdad; this year's funds will be donated to the Tufenkian Foundation's Women's Shelter Project in Yerevan.

Along with all these contributions, the chapter often is solicited for scholarships, mainly from Armenian students from Armenia, studying in Switzerland.

The chapter also participates in or organizes other annual events, including the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, as well as independence day celebrations.



From left, AGBU Board members Jilda Demiryany, singer Leyla Saribekyan, Taline Avakian, Seta Essade Seraydarian and Viken and Zela Bayramian



From left, Irma Khanjian, Ara and Silva Aharonian from Paris, Taline Avakian and Ethiopian Ambassador to the UN Mission Minelik Alemu Getahun

Historic Armenian School Building in Istanbul to Become Hotel

ISTANBUL (*Hurriyet Daily News*) – An historic Armenian school, Mesrobyan School in the Gedikpasa district, is being transformed into a hotel.

Gedikpasa Surp Hovhannes Church Foundation head Harutyun Sanli, who is also the general secretary of the Armenian Foundations Solidarity Platform, said the main reason they took this step with courage was the moderate policies the government had adopted in recent years.

"Before 2008, we could not even hammer a nail on the property we owned, but since 2008, everything has changed. With the new Foundation Law passed last year, we can reclaim our property and have the ownership returned to us," he said.

The building that is to be transformed into a hotel dated back to the early 1900s, said Sanli, adding that the building served as a school until 1983 but had to be closed down because there were no students left. It is located in the historic district of Istanbul and was used as a shoe manufacturing shop for years.

The revenue generated by the hotel will be transferred to Armenian establishments in Istanbul and will be used to support people in need.

Sanli said they believed the hotel would be in high demand because of its location.

"I hope that the administration will soon decide also about the Tokatliyan Hotel in Beyoglu which is in ruins so that this hotel is transformed back into the glorious hotel it used to be."

If Tokatliyan is also renovated like the hotel in Gedikpasa, then the Armenian community would be free of financial problems, Sanli said.

"Now, we have difficulty raising funds for our churches, schools and families in need. We are trying to make ends meet with donations and funds raised at certain events," he said.

Tokatliyan Hotel on Istiklal Street in Beyoglu hosted several leaders when it operated, first and foremost Atatürk, and many prominent international figures.

Because the administration of the Tokatliyan Foundation, which is the richest foundation of the Armenian community, has not changed for the past 30 years and because they have rejected all projects, the community has sued the administration of the foundation.

US, Russia, France Urge New Push for Karabagh Peace

LOS CABOS, Mexico (RFE/RL) – The presidents of the United States, France and Russia last week promised more joint efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict and urged Armenia and Azerbaijan to iron out their differences on a framework peace accord drafted by the three mediating powers.

"The parties to the conflict should not further delay making the important decisions necessary to reach a lasting and peaceful settlement," Presidents Barack Obama, Francois Hollande and Vladimir Putin said in a joint statement issued during a G20 summit in Los

Cabos.

"We regret that the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia did not take the decisive steps that our countries called for in the joint statement at Deauville on May 26, 2011," they said.

The Deauville statement was issued by Obama and his then-Russian and French counterparts, Dmitry Medvedev and Nicolas Sarkozy, ahead of a key summit held by Presidents Serge Sargisian of Armenia and Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan in Kazan, Russia. Sargisian and Aliyev were close to agreeing on the latest version of the Basic Principles.

The summit did not produce a breakthrough, however, with Armenian officials blaming the fiasco on last-minute changes in the text of the peace agreement demanded by Aliyev. The Azerbaijani side did not explicitly deny this.

Aliyev and Sargisian pledged to accelerate the search for a mutually acceptable peace formula last January when they held fresh talks hosted by Medvedev in another Russian city, Sochi. However, prospects for an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace deal have not increased since then and there are growing ceasefire violations in the conflict zone.

"We call upon the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to fulfill the commitment in their January 23, 2012 joint statement at Sochi to 'accelerate' reaching agreement on the Basic Principles for a Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabagh Conflict," Obama, Hollande and Putin said. "As evidence of their political will, they should refrain from maximalist positions in the negotiations, respect the 1994 ceasefire agreement and abstain from hostile rhetoric that increases tension."

The three leaders added that their nations, which co-chair the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, "will continue to work closely with the sides" in trying to broker a peaceful settlement. "However, peace will depend ultimately upon the parties' willingness to seek an agreement based on mutual understanding, rather than one-sided advantage," they warned.

Both Baku and Yerevan welcomed the statement, saying that it is in tune with their positions on the Karabagh dispute.

"Armenia is united and determined with the co-chairing countries in seeking a solely peaceful solution to the conflict," Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian said in a statement. He insisted that the Kazan summit ended in failure because of Azerbaijan's "destructive and maximalist position."

Nalbandian also said that Baku continues to reject mediators' proposals aimed at bolstering the ceasefire regime. Those include the withdrawal of snipers from the frontlines and the adoption of a mechanism for joint investigations of truce violations.

Assyrian, Greek, Armenian Genocide Monument Unveiled in South Australia

SALISBURY, Australia (Assyrian International News Agency) – Sunday, May 20, marked the official unveiling of the Armenian, Assyrian and Pontian Greeks genocide monument in South Australia.

The memorial was conducted by three brother organizations: the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia, the Armenian Cultural Association of South Australia and the Assyrian Universal Alliance-Australian Chapter.

The genocide perpetrated against the Christian population of Anatolia claimed the lives of 1.5 million Armenians, half a million Pontian Greeks and 750,000 Assyrians, a shameful act by the Ottoman Empire in its final years.

Commemoration began with a mass in memory of victims of the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian genocide, which was held at St. Dimitrios Greek Orthodox Church of Salisbury. Conducted by Bishop Nikandros of Doryleion and Rev. Christos Tsoraklidis and Silouan Fotineas, the event was attended by more than 20 representatives from the local, state and federal government.

The formal proceedings began with the Australian, Greek, Armenian and the Assyrian national anthems, followed by speeches. Finally, the monument was unveiled by representatives

of the three organizations.

Hermiz Shahen, deputy secretary general of the Assyrian Universal Alliance, thanked members of the Monument Project Committee who worked hard to bring the project to reality.

"Today's unveiling of this extraordinary monument, which honors the victims of the Greeks, Assyrian and Armenian genocide, is a significant event in the life of the three nations and our communities in Australia and abroad; communities that have been established as a direct result of the continuous assaults on their nation," he said.

Elena Harrison, president of the Armenian Cultural Association of South Australia in her address, made reference to the dramatic story behind the construction of the Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, Armenia and how patriotism and pain united people. When the Kremlin finally agreed to have a Genocide Memorial built, the Soviet Union allotted minimal financial assistance and a short time to build such a large memorial.

People came from different regions and cities of Armenia in order to help. Most of them were descendants of Armenians who had lived in different regions of Turkish Western Armenia.

'Joe the Plumber' Links Deaths of Holocaust, Genocide to Gun Control

GUNS, from page 1

Ohio Democratic Party Chairman Chris Redfern said the video was "incredibly offensive." He called on Republicans and Democrats to condemn "the despicable actions of this very desperate man."

"Using the memories of the 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust to make a political point is never appropriate, under any circumstances," said David A. Harris, president of the National Jewish Democratic Council.

Wurzelbacher also said in the video that gun control laws in Turkey preceded the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians from 1915 to 1917.

He defended his statements last week, saying that he did not say that gun control caused the Holocaust. He accused liberals of twisting his words for political gain.

Wurzelbacher, running as a Republican in Ohio's 9th district, became known as "Joe the Plumber" after questioning Barack Obama about his economic policies during the 2008 presidential campaign.

Community News

Free Legal Workshop Held for Armenian-Owned Businesses In New England

WATERTOWN — On June 19, the Armenian Business Network (ABN), in association with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Economic Justice, Mintz Levin and the Northeast Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel, hosted a free workshop and clinic where business attorneys provided an overview of legal issues many small businesses face today. Following the presentation, the attorneys met one-on-one with individual Armenian business owners to assist them with their specific issues. In addition, if an individual met predetermined criteria and qualified, they were referred to a law firm for pro bono, formal, legal representation.

The event was held at the Armenian-American Social Club — Papken Suni Agoump — and was well attended by Armenian, small and large business owners representing a diverse group of businesses.

ABN's charter is to provide a platform, resources and the inspiration for Armenians to support Armenians, first. The online group (on LinkedIn and Facebook) provides its members with programs that promote community networking in an effort to facilitate sharing of knowledge and contacts.

For more information on upcoming ABN workshops, networking events, online forums and support programs, visit http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3685798&trk=hb_side_g or <https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/277101062320644/>.

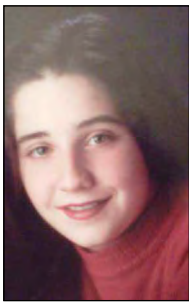
To join ABN (membership is free) contact: jantounian@gmail.com or arlette.yegumians@gmail.com.

PhD Candidate Kristin Allukian Receives Awards for Excellence

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Kristin Felice Allukian, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Myron Allukian Jr., recently received two honors as a PhD candidate in English literature at the University of Florida. She won the 2012 Association for Academic Women Lockhart Dissertation Fellowship competition for her comprehensive dissertation on women's literature and for her achievements and promise in her field. The award was presented during the Women's History Month celebration at the home of the University of Florida president.

Allukian also received the O. Ruth McQuown Scholarship, given to an outstanding graduate student on a competitive basis for exemplifying high values, achievements and a commitment to social issues, including fostering opportunities for women, minorities and those with a low socioeconomic background.

Allukian's major academic research and interests include 19th-century American literature, women's literature and feminist theory. Allukian is a graduate of Boston Latin School and has a bachelor's degree from Mount Holyoke College, a master's degree in English from Trinity College and a graduate certificate in women's studies from the University of Florida.



Kristin Felice Allukian



2012 Assembly interns with Armenian Caucus Co-chair Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ).

Assembly Interns Discuss US Foreign Policy, Funding with Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Frank Pallone

WASHINGTON — Last week, as part of the Armenian Assembly of America's Terjenian-Thomas Internship Program, the 2012 intern class met with Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ).

In providing an overview of US policy in the South Caucasus region, Pallone shared his concern regarding the recent ceasefire violations on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and expressed his disappointment that the State Department did not do more publicly to condemn Azerbaijan's latest assault.

Pallone also discussed the Nagorno Karabagh peace process, noting that such acts of aggression by Azerbaijan did not help facilitate a peaceful settlement but rather served to undermine the mediation efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs.

Turning to current legislative items, in addition to the Armenian Genocide resolution, Pallone also discussed his ongoing concerns with H.R. 2362, the Indian Tribal Trade and Investment Demonstration Act.

The bill aims to give Turkey preferential access to tribal lands and give Turkish enterprises an unfair advantage here in the United States. "While there is no disagreement that the United States government should seek measures to invigorate the economy and promote economic development in Indian Country, providing monopoly access to Turkey only gives them a pass on their actions which run counter to US interests," stated Pallone.

Pallone encouraged those present to continue to remain involved in the Assembly's advocacy efforts and also to help educate others on the issues facing Armenia and Karabagh.

"The Armenian Caucus plays an important role in helping to strengthen the US-Armenia relationship," stated Alissa Tabirian, a Russian and East European Studies major at Emory University in Atlanta, Ga. "The meeting was insightful and we appreciated the fact that the Congressman not only addressed current issues, but also helped us to better understand the actions that we must take in order to aid future progress in Armenia," added Tabirian.

The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program was created by the Memorial Fund established by Aram Terjenian, Annie Thomas and Florence Terjenian of Belmont, Mass. Additional support comes from the Richard Tufenkian Memorial Fund, the John Hanessian Scholarship Fund, the Armen Astarjian Scholarship Fund, the Ohanian Memorial Fund, James and Connie Melikian and the Knights of Vartan.

"...we appreciated the fact that the Congressman not only addressed current issues, but also helped us to better understand the actions that we must take in order to aid future progress in Armenia"

—Alissa Tabirian

ABMDR President Dr. Frieda Jordan to Receive St. Nerses The Graceful Medal

LOS ANGELES — Dr. Frieda Jordan, president of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR), will be honored with the St. Nerses the Graceful (St. Nerses Shnorhali) Medal, which was bestowed on her by Karekin II, supreme patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

The medal, accompanied by a pontifical encyclical, will be presented by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, on Sunday, July 8, upon the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy at St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, in Burbank.

The St. Nerses the Graceful Medal is being conferred on Jordan in recognition of her outstanding service to the Armenian nation since 1999. That year, Jordan co-founded the ABMDR, in order to help Armenians worldwide survive life-threatening blood-related illnesses by recruiting potential bone marrow donors, matching donors to those who require bone marrow transplants and raising public awareness of critical health issues.

Derderian, who had recommended to the catholicosate to confer the St. Nerses the Graceful Medal on Jordan, said, "Dr. Jordan, along with ABMDR's corps of selfless volunteers, has helped mobilize Armenian communities throughout the globe to advance the life-saving mission of the registry. Moreover, thanks to Jordan's persistent efforts, the registry was able to establish a

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARMENIAN BONE MARROW DONOR REGISTRY



Dr. Frieda Jordan addressing the European Federation of Immunogenetics conference in Yerevan, November 2011

first-of-its-kind Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, and last year Armenia became the first country in the Caucasus Region to host an international meeting of the European Federation of Immunogenetics. Given these accomplishments and the fact that she tirelessly helps expand the ranks of ABMDR, Jordan personifies the highest ideals of humanitarian service."

After the Western Diocese announced that Jordan was to receive the St. Nerses the Graceful Medal, she stated, "This is an extraordinary honor, and one that I will cherish with the entire ABMDR family of volunteers and supporters."

Jordan continued: "I convey my profound gratitude to His Holiness Karekin II as well as Archbishop Derderian, whose exceptional support of the registry is an ongoing source of inspiration for our entire community. By informing congregations about the ABMDR mission, highlighting our work during special Days of Prayer, encouraging us to make presentations before the public, and facilitating our recruitment efforts at Diocese churches, Archbishop Derderian continues to be a genuine pillar of our cause."

The Divine Liturgy, which starts at 10:30 a.m., will be celebrated by Rev. Khajag Shahbazyan, pastor of St. Leon Cathedral, located at 3325 N. Glenoaks Blvd., Burbank.



COMMUNITY NEWS

St. James Armenian Church Sunday School Graduates 18 Students

WATERTOWN – St. James Armenian Church celebrated the graduation of 18 young adults from the St. James Sunday School on Sunday, June 3. This year's graduates were: Zachary Abdalian, Armen Andonian, Garni Aroyan, Christine Bahtirian, Matthew Bejian, John Bogosian, Aaron Campbell, Ani Chilingirian, Natalie Eskici, Matthew Kapilian, Amanda Luniewicz, Suzanne MacMillan, Rebecca Minasian, Vartkes Moushigian, Jonathan Raposo, Ari Shirinian, Lauren Trimble and Chloe Zeytoonian.

In the church sanctuary, at the end of Divine Liturgy, the graduates received their diplomas from the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church. Rev. Arakel Aljalian, pastor of St. James, offered words of congratulations and encouragement to the graduates. A pro-

gram and reception followed, during which guests listened to addresses by Valedictorian Aaron Campbell, Salutatorians Aroyan and Minassian, Superintendent Marsha Alabachian and Graduating Class teacher Yn. Natasha Aljalian.

The graduates have grown through the years and been enriched through the St. James program and curriculum, which focuses on the teaching of and application of faith, on outreach, service and fellowship. The graduates also participated in the parish's Junior Parish Trustee program, in which the students of the Sunday School serve the role of Parish Council members on the last Sunday of each month. The graduates will return for their service year to St. James during the 2012-2013 Sunday School year.



The graduates of the St. James Sunday School with Rev. Arakel Aljalian

Azarian Scholarship Fund Extends Deadline

MIDLAND PARK, N.J. – The John M. Azarian Memorial Armenian Youth Scholarship Fund has extended the deadline to submit applications for the 2012-2013 academic year to July 13. To download an application and all other necessary forms, visit azarian-group.com/scholarship.html.

The John M. Azarian Memorial Armenian Youth Scholarship Fund was formed in 1976 following the death of John M. Azarian Sr. by his wife, Barbara. The purpose of the fund is to award scholarships to students of Armenian descent who demonstrate compelling financial need, academic achievement, Armenian Church-related activities and are attending a college or university in the United States in pursuit of an undergraduate degree.

It is the goal of the fund to assist deserving students with the hope that they will one day return something beneficial to the Armenian community.

From Philly to Chicago

By George S. Yacoubian Sr.

CHICAGO – On May 19, I traveled to Chicago to attend a banquet honoring the president of Armenia, sponsored by both the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to America and the Chicago-Armenian community.

Grouped at a table reserved for The Society for Orphaned Armenians (SOAR) and the Knights of Vartan were Ashod Baboorian; Mr. and Mrs. David Baboorian; Cometos Dilanjan and his fiancé Deborah McAlister; Mr. and Mrs. David Galovich and Dr. and Mrs. Levon Saryan.

Due to a diplomatic demarche, guest of honor President Serge Sargisian (along with President Vladimir Putin of Russia) did not attend the scheduled NATO conference and thus was absent as well at the banquet. And while regrettable, the entire evening, shared by almost 300 friends at the prestigious Union League, was memorable. The program included

comments by the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern), Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and prelate of the Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, while Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian provided a comprehensive review of issues germane to the security and economy of the Republic. The entire evening was orchestrated by the soft-spoken Ambassador to the United States Tatoul Markarian.

Much to my surprise and pleasure, upon first entering the league, I saw and spoke with Papken Megerian and Hagop Vartivarian, two self-sacrificing patriots, on the road, far from home, encouraging functions such as this (and later in Boston as well) with their attendance.

This is perhaps the fourth time I have visited Chicago in one capacity or another. And I must say I have always been well received – a tribute to the hospitality and graciousness of the local community.

(George Yacoubian Sr. is a longtime contributor to and supporter of the *Mirror-Spectator*, who sometimes writes a column titled, "Tongue in Cheek.")

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Approves Morningstar as Ambassador to Azerbaijan

BOXER, from page 1

During last week's confirmation hearing, Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) also raised serious concerns about Azerbaijan's cease-fire violations that coincided with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's June visit to the South Caucasus region, and asked the ambassador-designate a series of pointed questions about the resulting escalation of tensions and US policy to restrain Azerbaijan's bellicosity.

Morningstar stated in response that there is no higher US priority in the region than "the peaceful solution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict." In addition, the nominee pledged: "I will do everything that I can to discourage" inflammatory language or any "actions that bring about loss of life," and create increased tensions or instability.

Other senators have also expressed concerns whether US policy is tilted toward Azerbaijan in view of its oil resources, which finances its

mounting purchases of offensive weapons. Both Morningstar and his predecessor designee, Matthew Bryza, have been active in facilitating negotiations over pipeline deals transporting Caspian oil to the West.

"The Armenian Assembly continues to be deeply troubled by Azerbaijan's incessant war-mongering, including reports by RFE-RL that a kindergarten in the village of Chinari was peppered with bullets by Azerbaijan's June cross-border incursion," stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "This is simply unacceptable," Ardouny added.

In the Assembly's letter to all members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as well as its June 4 letter to Clinton, the Assembly urged that the aggression by Azerbaijan be "roundly condemned" and stated that all options must be on the table, including "fully enforcing Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act" as well as "ceasing all US military assistance to Azerbaijan."

Responding to the Assembly's letter on behalf of Clinton, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Gordon stated that "the United States has urged the parties to refrain from the use or threat of force, [and] as a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk-Group, we remain committed to working with the sides to achieve a peaceful settlement." In addition, the letter stated that US "security assistance to the region is carefully considered to ensure it does not undermine efforts for a peaceful settlement in Nagorno-Karabagh."

Having cleared the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the next step in the nomination process is for the full Senate to approve Morningstar's nomination.

Dave Cowens Signed Basketball Donated

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – During the 85th anniversary gala of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* on May 24, Gary and Hasmig Mardiros donated a basketball autographed by Celtics Hall of Famer Dave Cowens for bidding.

The highest bidder was 12-year-old Kevorg Atinikian II.

The proceeds will help the *Mirror-Spectator*.

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Holy Trinity Golden Jubilee Gala

An Evening Like No Other!

CAMBRIDGE—It was an evening like no other! Four hundred parishioners and friends, spanning three generations from ages 13 and up, came together to party on Brattle Street on Saturday, May 12, to celebrate, in grand style, the 50th Anniversary of Holy Trinity Armenian Church on historic Brattle Street.

The Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall was transformed into an exquisitely decorated, elegant and magical setting that set the stage for a fabulous evening that was enjoyed by all and will be remembered in the years to come as a celebration like no other!

Holy Trinity's year-long 50th Anniversary celebration, which began on September 18, 2011, will culminate on September 30, at a Commemorative Banquet celebrating Holy Trinity's glorious past and its visions for the future.





COMMUNITY NEWS

Diocesan Women's Guilds Gather for 26th Annual Assembly

WINDSOR, Conn. — During the 26th annual Women's Guild Assembly, held here last month, the organization held elections, approved a budget for the coming year and honored a long-time member. Some 30 delegates representing 17 chapters across the Diocese attended the

expressed his appreciation to the Women's Guild for their dedication to the Armenian Church and for the many programs they organize across the Diocese throughout the year.

The Women's Guild assembly was chaired by Cynthia Messikian of St. George Church of Hartford, Conn. Zita Butler of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence, RI, served as vice chair, and Nancy Kassabian of St. James Church of Watertown, Mass., served as secretary.

On Saturday afternoon, the Women's Guild sponsored its third annual Woman of Wonder (WOW) Appreciation Luncheon. The day's honoree was Julie Ashekian of St. George Church of Hartford, Conn., who was recognized for her dedication to the Armenian Church and for her work in helping the children of Armenia through CASP and Mer Doon programs.

A founding member of both endeavors, Ashekian is also an active member of the St. George Church Women's Guild and has served on the Women's Guild Central Council, as well



More than 30 parish guild members came together for the two-day meeting, which went forward concurrently with the 110th Diocesan Assembly, hosted by the St. Mark Church of Springfield, Mass.



As part of its business, the Women's Guild Assembly elected a new Central Council, to guide the organization's Diocesan-wide activities in the coming year.

assembly, which was held concurrently with the 110th Diocesan Assembly, hosted by St. Mark Church of Springfield, Mass., May 3-5.

The meeting opened on Friday, May 4, with the Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, diocesan vicar, presiding. Reports were presented by the Women's Guild Central Council (WGCC) and representatives of the organization's Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program (CASP). Meline Grigorian gave a report on the Saintly Women's Day activities of the previous year.

Elections were held for the Central Council, Nominating Committee, Proposals Committee, and Auditing Committee. Also on Friday, Women's Guild delegates took part in the Diocesan Assembly session on lay ministry and joined diocesan delegates in roundtable discussions.

On Saturday, May 5, the Rev. Sahak Kaishian, interim pastor of St. Mark Church of Springfield, Mass. led the opening prayer. Anna Garabedian, also of the host parish, delivered welcoming remarks.

Proceedings continued with the Proposals Committee report given by Yn. Patricia Buttero. Kathy Mekjian gave the Central



This year's honoree at the "Woman of Wonder" luncheon was Julie Ashekian, of the St. George Church of Hartford, Conn., with Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.

Council's financial report and Manooshak Penrose presented the Women's Guild dues report.

Rita Oscherician gave an overview of the fall symposium held at the Diocesan Center in New York in October 2011. Titled "God's Call, Your Response: Lay Leadership Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," the daylong gathering featured presentations, an art exhibit and a luncheon.

Auditing Committee members Adrienne Damian, Mary Connors and Julie Ashekian shared their findings for the WGCC and the CASP.

Before closing the meeting, Odabashian

as on other Diocesan committees.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Primate, presided over the luncheon. He congratulated Ashekian for her longtime pioneering service to the Women's Guild and for her commitment to improving the lives of children and young adults in Armenia.

The luncheon was co-chaired by Charlotte Sevazlian, Zita Butler and Meline Grigorian. The Women's Guild will make a donation to Mer Doon in Ashekian's honor.

The election results were the following:

- Women's Guild Central Council: Barbara Haroutunian (St. John Church, Southfield, Mich.); Rita Oscherician (St. Leon Church, Fair Lawn, NJ); Manooshak Penrose (St. Kevork Church, Houston, Texas); Charlotte Sevazlian (St. Peter Church, Watervliet, NY) and Janice Kavjian (alternate, St. James Church, Watertown, Mass.)
- Nominating Committee: Elizabeth Orsi

continued on next page

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**NOTICE OF MEETING OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The Central Board of Directors of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (the "Union") hereby gives notice to all the members of the Union qualified to attend, that the 87th General Assembly will be held on Saturday, October 20, 2012 at 11 A.M. at Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia in the Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Madenataran.

This is the only notice which will be given for the meeting of the General Assembly. We therefore request the qualified members of the Union to attend the Assembly in person at the address and on the date given above, or, deliver or submit, on or before September 14, 2012 their respective proxies duly executed and certified according to the provisions of the By-Laws, to the Secretary of the Central Board at the following address:

Armenian General Benevolent Union
Central Board of Directors
55 East 59th Street
New York, NY 10022-1112, U.S.A.

AGENDA OF THE MEETING

1. Consideration and approval of the Report on the Activities of the Union for the years 2010 and 2011.
2. Consideration and approval of the Union's Financial Reports for the years 2010 and 2011.
3. Election of Directors.
4. Election of a member of the Auditing Committee.
5. Consideration and action upon any matters incidental to the foregoing and any matters which may properly come before the meeting or any adjournments thereof, including amendments to the bylaws.
6. Consideration of any recommendation and resolution of the General Assembly.

ARMENIAN GENERAL BENEVOLENT UNION
CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Berge Papazian
Secretary

Berge Setrakian
President

June 20, 2012

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IN MEMORIAM - BOGHOS NUBAR, Founder; ALEX MANOOGIAN, Honorary Life President.

One Sunday, Three Priests: A Family Celebration at St. John

By David Lührssen

MILWAUKEE, Wisc. – One of the founding families of St. John the Baptist Armenian Church, the Kaishians, had a two-part reunion which began with participation in the church

resurrection. Movsesian added that God has already given us the ultimate miracle, life, along with general instructions on how to lead it.

Addressing the long list of names from the morning's requiem service, Movsesian was reminded of how those individuals accepted the challenges of life and how the Armenian



From left, Rev. Vazken Movsesian, Rev. Sahag Kashian and Rev. Nareg Keutelian of St. John the Baptist Armenian Church with deacons at the church

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service and later a celebration, on Sunday, June 24. Joining parish pastor, Rev. Nareg Keutelian, during the service, was Rev. Sahag Kashian, and a Kaishian by marriage, Rev. Vazken Movsesian, of St. Peter Armenian Church in Glendale, Calif. Movsesian's three sons were also on the altar as deacons.

In his sermon, Movsesian focused on the morning's Gospel reading from *Matthew*, the story of the Pharisees asking Jesus for a sign. "Jesus tolerated everything but hypocrisy," he said, explaining Christ's terse response to their request: there will be no sign but the

people overcame the ultimate threat to existence: genocide. He referred to a Turkish official who boasted that one day there will be only one Armenian in the world and he will be in a museum. The survival of the Armenian faithful is a miracle, a sign. "The families that the mothers and fathers of the Genocide created in the New World – isn't this a miracle?"

In keeping with the meaning of family at St. John the Baptist Armenian Church, those attending the service were invited to join the Kaishians for their reunion that afternoon.

Diocesan Women's Guilds Gather for Annual Assembly

from previous page

(Church of Our Saviour, Worcester, Mass.); Dolly Shamlian (St. Peter Church, Watervliet, NY); Merle Santerian (Holy Trinity Church, Cheltenham, Penn.); Naomi Zeytoonian (St. Mesrob Church, Racine, Wis.); Lucy Morton (St. Peter Church, Watervliet, NY) and Karen Hovsepian (alternate, Sts. Vartanantz Church, Chelmsford, Mass.)

• Proposals Committee: Milka Jeknavorian (Sts. Vartanantz Church, Chelmsford, Mass.);

Leslie Movsesian (Holy Trinity Church, Cheltenham, Penn.); Yn. Patricia Buttero (Church of the Holy Resurrection, New Britain) and Beatrice Babgouni (alternate, St. David Church, Boca Raton, Fla.)

• Auditing Committee: Connie Alchian (St. David Church, Boca Raton); Linda Keljik (St. David Church); Judy Khachadourian (St. David Church); Rose Killian (alternate, St. David Church) and Rose Reynolds (alternate, St. David Church).



Delegates pose with Diocesan Armenian Studies coordinator Gilda Kupelian (seated, center), who spoke to the assembly on great figures of Armenian history

ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR



Arts & Living

Atom Egoyan on The West Memphis Three and 'The Devil's Knot'

By Barbara Chai

NEW YORK (*Wall Street Journal Speakeasy Blog*) – Atom Egoyan is straddling the worlds of opera and film these days.

The director is bringing his Chinese opera, “Feng Yi Ting,” to the Lincoln Center Festival in New York next month, after it premiered to critical acclaim at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston earlier this summer. But he won’t actually be in New York when it comes: he will be on set for his new film, “The Devil’s Knot,” about the West Memphis Three case, which begins production soon.

“I was just doing camera tests with Reese [Witherspoon] this morning and looking at all the locations and the last-minute casting. That swirl which is filmmaking,” Egoyan said recently in an interview. “I was doing ‘Salome’ around the time I was finishing ‘The Sweet Hereafter,’ so that was the last time the two worlds kind of collided, but that was a long time ago. Normally there’s some sort of a buffer.”

In “The Devil’s Knot,” Egoyan will reinterpret the story of the West Memphis Three – the famous case of three Arkansas teenagers who were convicted in 1994 of killing three boys. They claimed innocence while spending 18 years in prison, but were set free last August after agreeing to an Alford Plea – when a party accepts a guilty verdict while maintaining innocence. The stunning turn-of-events came after new DNA evidence found at the crime scene excluded the three men as the source.

Egoyan says his film will be a work of fiction based on these true events, and that “The Devil’s Knot” will focus on two other characters: the mother of one of the murdered boys, played by Reese Witherspoon, and the private investigator who worked for the teens’ defense team, played by Colin Firth.

There have been many recent documentaries on the extraordinary case, drawing support for the West Memphis Three from celebrities including Johnny Depp, Metallica, Pearl Jam’s Eddie Vedder and Natalie Maines of the Dixie Chicks. But Egoyan takes on the first feature film on the subject, calling the West Memphis Three “a piece of American mythology now.”

Speakeasy caught up with the director to discuss the film – his first since “Chloe” in 2009.

What follows is a question-and-answer session with Egoyan.

Speakeasy: You cast relative unknowns to play the teenagers in the West Memphis Three, see EGOYAN, page 11



Atom Egoyan



From left, Lola Koundakjian, Nora Armani, Lucine Kasbarian and Aida Zilelian-Silak

Contemporary Armenian Women Writers Read their Works in New York

WOODSIDE, N.Y. – On Thursday, April 12, at the Armenian Center here, four female writers of the diaspora presented their works at Literary Gems and Wine – a program sponsored by the New York Chapter of the Hamazkayin Cultural Association.

Nora Armani, Lucine Kasbarian, Lola Koundakjian and Aida Zilelian-Silak shared writings that explored the rich complexities of the human condition. The collective result was an eclectic compilation of vocal pieces that reflected a poignant and contemplative look at life in the diaspora.

In her introduction, program organizer, rare book librarian and literary devotee Arevik Caprielian expressed her satisfaction in showcasing accomplished Armenian “creatives.” “These writers need not be heralded beyond the Armenian milieu in order to be recognized as credits to the global Armenian nation,” she said. “While Hamazkayin remains true to its mission of preserving and disseminating Armenian traditional literature and arts, it also moves forward with the times and inevitable changes in diaspora,” she continued. “Therefore, it embraces contemporary authors writing in various languages, considering them contributors to the body of Armenian literature.” Caprielian concluded by affirming, “A nation maintains its distinction through arts and literature.”

Actress and storyteller Armani read, in English, the opening chapter from an untitled novel-in-progress. She also read an excerpt from her unpublished novel, *The Armoire*, about four Armenian sisters flung to the four corners of the earth, and a short story, “Waiting to Arrive,” about journeys, memories and being, published in an anthology called *In Our Own Words: A Generation Defining Itself*. To close, she played a musical recording whose lyrics contained her poem about exile. Armani acted in, directed and co-produced the award-winning play, “Sojourn at Ararat.” This year, Armani co-stars in the CBS television pilot program, “Golden Boy,” and her film, “Moving Stories,” was screened in the Short Film Corner at the Cannes Film Festival.

Writer and political cartoonist Kasbarian read, in English, two short stories. The first, “A Subway Tautology,” explored the social and philosophical underpinnings of an absurd train travel incident. The second, “Elixir in Exile,” chronicled her suspenseful quest to locate an ancestral family recipe, and will be published in *r.kv.ry Literary Journal*. Her latest published work is an illustrated children’s book, *The Greedy Sparrow*, an Armenian folktale retold which will be performed at children’s literature workshops and a children’s book festival.

Poet and artist Koundakjian read several works in Armenian and English, including “Kalov Antsyalin” and “Mazerut,” describing times spent with loved ones. She then read a thought piece called, “In search of Rilke at the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” and “Anonk Meran,” memorializing those lost to mass murder. Her tribute, “Three Armenian Artists in New York City” recalled Arshile Gorky, Reuben Nakian and Marcos Gregorian. And her inspiring, lyrical prose poem, “Khurad Hay Panasdeghdzin,” counseled writers struggling to find their muse. Koundakjian’s latest published work is a collection of poems called *The Accidental Observer*. Founder of the Dead Armenian Poets Society, she is also the curator of the Armenian Poetry Project, which presents classic and contemporary Armenian poetry and other writings on Armenian topics.

New York writer and editor Zilelian-Silak read, in English, her short story, “He’s the One For Her.” This narrative piece deconstructed the ambitions of a young Armenian woman searching for an elusive, Armenian-speaking mate, and first

see WRITERS, page 11

The Writer as Benefactor

YEREVAN – Dr. Diana Hambardzumyan is best known in Armenian circles for her translations of Kurt Vonnegut and William Faulkner. The author of a number of short stories and novels, Hambardzumyan is a member of the Writer’s Union of Armenia. She currently works as a professor of English at the Yerevan State Linguistics University named after Valeri Brusov.

Dr. Lusine Mueller is a literary critic best known for her work with the texts of Michael Arlen. Her first book, *Michael Arlen and His Artistic World* (Yerevan: Zangak-97, 2012), was hailed as one of the best literary critiques of the year. Mueller currently works as an adjunct professor of literature at Mount St. Mary’s University and at Penn State Mont Alto. Recently the two sat down together, where Mueller asked Hambardzumyan about her life and the contributions of writers.

Lusine Mueller: When I think of writers from the past, from the 19th and 20th centuries, I think of people who defined national identities, created genres and advanced culture. But I also think of people who were often unappreciated in their own time. So I am curious, in your opinion, who is a writer?

Diana Hambardzumyan: I am. (Laughs.) No, that sounds a bit immodest. Let me see, how does one measure the volume, which you call a writer? I use the word “volume” on purpose because, for me, a writer is somebody very much like an encyclopedia, with one difference: the writer knows not only a huge amount of things but also knows how to share his or her knowledge with those in need of it. The writer is the greatest benefactor in the world. I’ve made great use of that benevolence in my life, since it is the only benevolence in the whole world that one can take advantage of without first or simultaneously needing a friend, money, a dealer or high-level connections.

LM: Some people write because they are moved by love or sorrow or some other passion. Others write because they are following their dreams. Still others write out of compulsion or need. Why do you write?

DH: For a long time, I have been thinking about this question, “Why do I write?” Particularly, I have been thinking about the trinity of writing-printing-reading and the stickiness peculiar to them, which is so fascinating, especially for us Armenians. Today in Armenia almost everybody – the old and the young, everyone able or unable to write – manages to write and publish books. Years ago, I happened to say in one of my interviews: “Everyone who does not become someone famous in another area of life makes literature a shelter in which to hide and write without stopping.” Later I thought it over and came to the conclusion that, unfortunately, even those who have become somebody suffer from this ailment, too. Nonetheless, there is a limit, a portion of fanaticism beyond which writing becomes a disaster for the writer, let alone the reader. It’s a pity that the limit is defined by the writer; that is why the disastrous cases are so innumerable. As for me, I write with the slightest hope that whatever I say through writing will do a favor to somebody. I don’t know when, for whom, or how it will do good, I just hope it will, or else I wouldn’t write.

see INTERVIEW, page 13



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Author Recalls Journey From Azerbaijan to the US

LEXINGTON, Mass. — A newly-established publisher specializing in the publication of electronic books, hybooksonline.com, released *Nowhere, a Story of Exile*, by Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte as an ebook on June 17.

The author lost her childhood to ethnic cleansing. In 1988, as a 10-year-old girl living in Baku, Azerbaijan, she had childhood aspirations, crushes and dreams. That entire life was

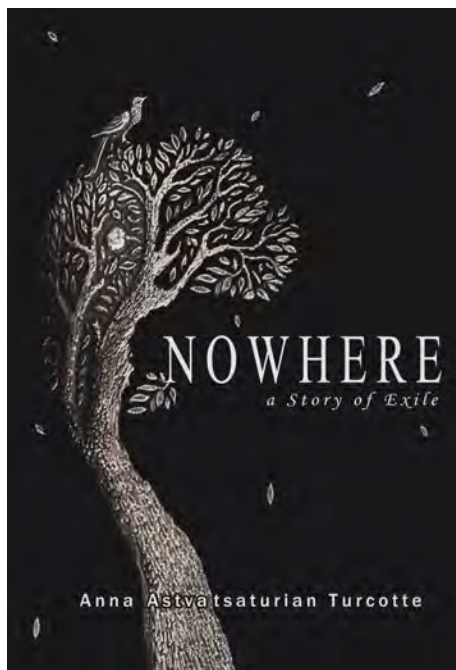


Author Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte

swept away as the majority Muslim Azeri population drove the minority Christian Armenians out of the country using terror and violence. Her family was forced to flee for their lives to Armenia, a neighboring republic still reeling from a massive earthquake and unprepared for the hundreds of thousands of

refugees fleeing Azeri-orchestrated pogroms. Once there, she found herself an outsider — a stateless girl surviving in an unheated basement and facing discrimination again, this time by her own people.

Nowhere, a Story of Exile is a riveting, heart-wrenching story told through a personal medium, the diary entries of a young girl documenting the organized terror in Baku, her life as a refugee and her struggle to find herself, all



Cover of *Nowhere, a Story of Exile*

against the backdrop of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Turcotte came to the United States as an Armenian refugee from Baku, in 1992. She became a US citizen in 1997. She holds a law degree and was one of the very first Americans to clerk at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, after observing its creation at the United Nations.

Turcotte currently lives in the United States and works in the financial industry. She is married and has two children.

Copies of the book can be purchased on Amazon.com or hybooksonline.com.



NEW YORK — Belmont, Mass. resident Paul Boghosian, who produced "Tonya & Nancy: The Rock Opera," recently attended the Tony Awards, including a pre-Tony cocktail party and a post-Tony celebration for "The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess." In the picture on right, Boghosian congratulates the Tony Award winner for best actress in a musical, Audra McDonald. In the top photo, playwright Elizabeth Searle ("Tonya & Nancy: The Rock Opera") and Boghosian celebrate "Porgy and Bess" receiving the Tony for best musical revival, with director Diane Paulus, center, of the American Repertory Theatre.



Atom Egoyan on the West Memphis Three and 'The Devil's Knot'

EGOYAN, from page 10 compared with Colin Firth and Reese Witherspoon. Why?

Atom Egoyan: It'll be an interesting mix, right? I was looking at a lot of people in their 20s and there was just a really different feeling than actual teenagers. That was an important part of the choice, to preserve. It was an intense search.

Speakeasy: Did you look at well-known actors to play the teens?

AE: Yeah. And they're really prized roles, we had the major agencies all presenting actors. There was sort of another way to go with the casting, but we made this decision and I'm excited about it.

Speakeasy: Jessie Misskelley and Jason Baldwin (two of the real-life West Memphis Three) are co-producers. What will be their

level of involvement?

AE: I think it's really just to give their blessing to it. They read the script and they're prepared. I just think it's a really important spiritual connection and also allows them to own some of their own story.

Speakeasy: There have been documentaries about the West Memphis Three recently but this is the first feature film.

AE: They're part of the story. I mean what we're focusing on is the two other characters — the mother of one of the boys who was killed and this private investigator who was working for the boys' defense team. It is a fiction based on reality of course, but I consider the West Memphis Three story a piece of American mythology now. After four documentaries and the way that story has persisted, it has become a story that I think will be looked at and reinterpreted because it is one of the most exhaustively examined pieces of crime and certainly a murder story outside of a celebrity of president. I can't think of any other story that's been unsolved, which remains at some level mysterious, and also which has been subject to such scrutiny. You go on the Internet, and it's kind of amazing, these sites that are devoted to every piece of testimony, every piece of evidence. It has lingered in the American consciousness in a certain way, and I think it's ripe for dramatic retelling, a reinvestigation that's not bound by the orthodoxies of documentary.

Speakeasy: It's been a few years since your last feature film. Why have you stayed away?

AE: It has been time with opera, theater. I've also written a new film of my own which I'm planning to shoot right after this. On a personal level, our son — it was our last year with him before he went to university, so I just wanted to have that time. When you plunge into a film, as I am now, you really do leave your life behind. I wanted to enjoy that last window with him.

Contemporary Armenian Women Writers Read their Works in New York

WRITERS, from page 2 appeared in Ararat. Her stories have been featured in journals such as Pen Pusher, Slushpile and Wilderness House Literary Review. Her novel, *The Hollowing Moon*, was one of five finalists for the 2011 Mercer Street Books Fiction Prize. Aida organizes an ongoing reading series she established in Queens, NY called Boundless Tales.

The writers can be reached at: noraarmani.com, lucinekasbarian.com, lolakoundakjian.com and aidazilelian.com.

In the future, the New York Chapter of Hamazkayin hopes to launch an ongoing reading series spotlighting contemporary Armenian writers.

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ARTS & LIVING

Spilling The Beans

Seta's Rules to Cook by

By Rebecca Hansen

Use no more than five ingredients to make a dish
Buy from local farmers
Eat and cook within the season

BOSTON (*EdibleBoston*) — These are Seta Dakessian's "Rules to Cook By," and they apply to every dish she creates at Seta's Mediterranean Foods. "It's the way I eat it. It's the way we ate at home when I was younger," says Dakessian. "We always ate what was available in season."

Indeed, Dakessian grew up in an environment rich with both cooking and grow-your-own traditions. Her parents, who ran an Armenian café and bakery in Worcester for 25 years, also had a vegetable garden and canned produce to use during the winter months. "Nothing ever went to waste," she says. "If my father went to Sterling to buy two lambs, we'd use the wool for comforters. Every part of the animal was used."

Dakessian also grew up in a kitchen without recipes. "My mother still cooks and she doesn't have a recipe. We don't even use measurements for baking." Her father, who worked as a baker in the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem, did everything without a measuring cup. "When I was little I learned how to make dough by touching it. If I touched it I knew if it was going to be a good batch or a bad batch."

She uses this same intuitive sense of "touch" in creating dishes for Seta's Mediterranean Foods, including market favorites like *hummus* and *baba ganoush*. "If the *tahini* is roasted a little darker than usual I know it's going to be a little bitter and I have to modify what I do. You just know."

Such a sixth sense can be difficult to pass along to a novice

hummus maker, but she does her best for loyal customers who try to replicate her *hummus* at home. "People will come to me and say, 'Seta, I tried making *hummus* like yours but it didn't come out.'" She'll walk them through the steps and they'll try again. "Sometimes it just doesn't work," she says. "For me it's easy because I make hundreds of pounds. It's finding the right balance with all the ingredients. You want one to complement another."

Dakessian's five-ingredient rule makes it easier to achieve that balance, and since she began selling at farmers' markets two years ago, the positive response from customers has assured her that she's doing something right. "You can buy *hummus* in 10 different flavors made by seven or eight different companies anywhere you go. But I've chosen to make my *hummus* without any preservatives and in very small batches." This means both a shorter shelf life and a higher price tag, but people keep coming back. Dakessian sees this as a clear indication that people are looking for fresh, whole foods. "They want to know who's making it, what's being put in it, and where the ingredients are coming from."

Keeping it local is also important to the average farmer's market customer, and to Dakessian. After finishing culinary school at Johnson & Wales, she worked in the kitchen at Rialto under chef Jody Adams. "Working there really taught me the value of locally sourcing your food," says Dakessian. In Adams' kitchen, there was a strong emphasis on knowing where an ingredient came from, respecting the people who grew it and being careful in the cooking.

These ideals built upon the values that she learned growing up, and when the time came to start her own food business, she knew that farmers' markets were the place. "I didn't have the capital to get a brick-and-mortar location, and it was also the right environment because I very much believe in sourcing as many local ingredients as you can. Where else can you do that better than a farmers' market?"

Now, everything that Dakessian makes has at least one local ingredient, often many more. Even her grape leaves are local. "We pick them anywhere we can find them," she says, including people's backyards — after asking, of course. "People aren't going to do anything with them so we go and grab them." Dakessian got plenty of practice growing up, when she would pick grape leaves by the bag full as a Sunday chore. Her mother still helps her to prepare the grape leaves over the summer. Together, they can roll about 1,200 in five hours. "Your hands hurt and your neck hurts, but it's rewarding because they are the best grape leaves. And again it goes back

to knowing where your ingredients are from."

Being at the market also allows Dakessian to keep her finger on the pulse, not just in terms of what is in season but how well things are growing in a given year. She can walk around and see what farmers have to offer, and she orders most of her veggies through the farmers around her. "Mother Nature sometimes dictates what I can do and cannot do. This past year was a great year for eggplant so I made a lot of bruschetta and there was always a very large supply of *baba ganoush*."

Dakessian's menu is ever changing based on the dynamic interaction between her improvisational style, the variability of the season and the inspiration and feedback that she gets from her customers. "One said, 'You know Seta, I love your three bean salad but I would love it if you added a grain to it.'" And so, the spicy bulgur and chickpea salad was born, made with Swiss chard, onion, red pepper and a spicy mint dressing.

"I take bits and pieces of what I find at the market and what my customers say and put it all together," she says. "I'm always trying to come up with new and creative ideas."

Indeed, for Dakessian, it's the relationships that have been the most gratifying thing about running her own business. Meeting her customers face to face and seeing them come back every week has made her grateful for the support of the community. "They have the opportunity to go to hundreds of stores but they choose to keep coming back and supporting what I do." Working with the local farmers has also given her a new appreciation for the challenges of the trade. "I do the best I can with whatever ingredients they give me because I realize the amount of work and labor that has gone into growing these vegetables."

Dakessian hopes that the connections formed between customers, farmers and vendors like herself will continue to grow the local food movement, and that they will help people to reconnect with the simple joys of cooking.

"I feel like the whole country has gravitated toward fast foods and things that are really easy, and suddenly cooking has become this difficult task. It doesn't have to be." She points to resources like the Internet, but again it comes back to the market. "I think that best resource is talking to any of the farmers or any of the vendors at the farmers market and you'll come up with a week's meal plan." If you're not sure where to begin, just find Dakessian. She'll be happy to get you started.

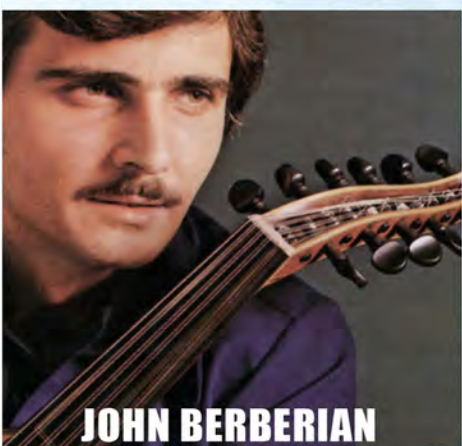
To find out where you can find Dakessian at markets this season, visit www.setasmediterraneanfoods.com.



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ARTS & LIVING

The Writer as Benefactor

INTERVIEW, from page 10

LM: How do you see life and literature connected?

DH: Life squats in the center of the circle of our knowledge and cognition. We enjoy it as much as our senses allow and feel it moving far beyond the horizon, going to and fro and producing the narrowest delight. Who knows whether life has the slightest connection with anything that germinates in a person's mind that later becomes writing, embracing the page in a thousand and one seductive ways? These

ties can be put side by side with the help of a literary critic's skills.

LM: In the 20th century, writers helped to change the cultures in which they lived in very positive ways.

DH: As the saying goes: "No sooner said than done." Every time people have changed the world, they started the task with a word and ended it very often with a word, whether that word was "Eureka," "Cheers," "Bravo" or "Victory"! As long as we have such a powerful weapon as the word, we can't be defeated.

LM: If that is true, why are Armenians so apt to leave their country, instead of staying and struggling for the country they dream of?

DH: The Armenians' eagerness for wandering all over the world is not a new thing. Today Armenians leave their country first and foremost because they believe blindly that "the grass is greener on the other side" and look for justice "on foreign and deserted roads." They hurry to sell their houses and possessions to become servants to the foreigner, considering it the only way in which they can jump over the ravine lying between their lives and the life they dream of living as dignified citizens. Then people start leaving their motherland in flocks. And it's all within the state officials' interests, as well as the interests of small and big mafia clans, the illiterate and the untalented. They don't leave our country for anywhere else; they stay here.

LM: Would you like to change your life?

DH: I would like to. For me, life itself is already a change. I don't mean the path leading us from nowhere to life and death. I mean the everyday life of ours. A new idea, a new story and a new friend are changes in my life, and I live with them. Unfortunately, a new suffering, a new burden and a new failure are changes that I live with, too. But I'd like to change my life so that I could steal a bit more time and I believe I will live it by writing.

Providence Church Committee Recognizes Priest's First Anniversary at Summer Dance

PROVIDENCE — Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church's Cultural Committee held a Summer Dance Fest on Saturday evening, June 23, at the Egavian Cultural Center.

The featured attractions were two renowned musical groups — the Steven Tashjian Classic Groove Band, with vocalist Karen Raneiri, and John Berberian's oud playing with his ensemble.

In addition, local comedian TJ Curran provided the comic relief.

The audience was treated to a variety of Armenian and American appetizers accompanied by bottles of wine at each table, which were served by members of the Cultural Committee. A selection of desserts and coffee rounded out the evening's fare.

The dance floor was crowded with both the Armenian and American bands alternately playing throughout the evening.

A surprise presentation of a cake honoring Rev. Shnork Souin's first anniversary as pastor of the church was met with a standing ovation by the appreciative crowd.

Cultural Committee Director Konstantin

Petrosian thanked Souin for his avid support of all the committee's events the past year.

After the cake-cutting ceremony, Souin expressed his gratitude to the Cultural Committee and remarked how quickly his first year had passed and how pleased he



Fr. Shnork Souin flanked by Shirley Ventrone, left, and Jean Ricci

was with the warm welcome given to him and his family by the Greater Providence Armenian Community.

The Summer Dance Fest Co-chairpersons were Liz Kooloian, Jean Ricci and Shirley Ventrone, working with the other Cultural Committee members, leading to a successful and memorable evening.

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NEW JERSEY

AUGUST 10-12 — Return to Asbury, Armenian Kef Weekend at the Beach. For tickets and information, visit returntoasbury.eventbrite.com. The event is sponsored by the ASA.

OCTOBER 5 — Save the date. His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, Diocese of Armenian Church, invites everyone to attend a tribute banquet in honor of Hrant Gulian. Details to follow.

OCTOBER 21 — The Armenian American Support and Educational Center, the Hye Doon, celebrates its 35th anniversary. Bergen County Academies, 200 Hackensack Ave., Hackensack, with the participation of Akh'Tamar Dance Ensemble of the Hye Doon, Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble of Hamazkayin of Boston and other talented guest performers.


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

NOVEMBER 17-18 — Musical theater presentation by TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group, Yervant Odian's "Love and Laughter" (Ser yev Dzidzaghi), directed by Krikor Satamian, with more than 20 actors participating. Dwight Englewood High School, Englewood Cliffs, 8 p.m., Saturday and 4 p.m., Sunday. \$25, \$35, \$50. For tickets, call Marie Zokian or Noushig Atamian.

NOVEMBER 18 — TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group Cast Party and tribute to Karnig Nercessian on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the group. Special program and dinner, with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Armenian Diocese of the Armenian Church, presiding. St. Thomas Armenian Church, Tenafly. Donation, \$30. For tickets, call Marie Zokian or Noushig Atamian.

NEW YORK

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



On October 21, the Armenian American Support and Education Center, the Hye Doon, will celebrate its 35th anniversary at Bergen County Academies, 200 Hackensack Ave., Hackensack, NJ, featuring performances by Akh'Tamar Dance Ensemble (pictured here) of the Hye Doon, Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble of Hamzkayin of Boston and more.



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror- Spectator

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COMMENTARY

What Does Syrian Crisis Promise?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

While the US news media is lulling the public with a profusion of coverage in the case of sexual abuse by assistant football coach of Pennsylvania State University, Jerry Sandusky, another blood bath is in the making in the Middle East.

An artificial crisis has been concocted to topple the government in Syria. Recently, the US ambassador to Syria, Robert Ford, visited Detroit, a major hub of the Arab community in the US, to give an overview of the American government policy regarding the Syrian crisis. He outlined the US goals under the following four points: 1) stop the violence; 2) start political transition; 3) produce a representative government with respect for human rights and 4) make sure the Assad family leaves. "We are preparing a war crimes trial," he said.

What is the guilt of the Syrian government or, for that matter, its president, Bashar al-Assad?

Syria is one of the last bastions of Palestinian support, as Libya and Iraq are now out of the equation in supporting the rights of the Palestinian people.

The other fault that the Syrian government has is its legitimate demand for a portion of its sovereign territory, namely the Golan Heights, which was occupied and annexed by Israel. Those who are planning to topple the Syrian government overlook these issues while shedding crocodile tears for the lack of human rights of the Syrian people. Turkey has no better record on human rights as the slaughter of Kurds continues, but selective justice is the order of the day in world politics.

Despite the partial withdrawal of the US troops from Iraq, the bloodbath there is continuing and the country is split in three ways; Kurdistan is semi-independent, Nouri al-Maliki's Shia regime is veering towards Iran, while a revenge policy of repression is in place in the Sunni section of the country. The Maliki regime, like Hamid Karzai's in Afghanistan, survives on the tips of US bayonets. Two million Iraqis were killed during the war, many more refugees fled the country, 4,500 US troops lost their lives and 50,000 veterans have been maimed and still, democracy is nowhere to be found. The Christian churches are routinely bombed and the Christian minority has been decimated. This is the outcome of the Cheney-Bush policy. President Bush, who claimed that he coordinated his policies with his Lord, most certainly will need to do a lot of explaining to his Lord.

Libya is doing no better and is on the brink of territorial disintegration, with rampant killings abounding.

These two cases are enough to figure out what can and will happen in Syria, where Christian communities – and especially

Armenians – have been enjoying a prosperous and secure life.

Ambassador Ford admitted that arms are flowing into Syria and armed bands are being trained in the US and elsewhere to invade a sovereign country under the banner of democracy and human rights. In neighboring Turkey, when Kurds resort to arms to defend their dignity and human rights, they are labeled terrorists.

This is the irony of the situation.

The ambassador further elaborated on the US-Syrian policy, adding that should Russia and China continue vetoing the proposed resolutions against the Syrian government at the UN Security Council, the US has no choice but to act outside the UN. Any other country resorting to that option could be labeled an international outlaw.

Since all the outside interventions have not yet resulted in the downfall of the Assad regime, Turkey has been assigned to provoke a border war with Syria by sending a warplane in Syrian territorial waters.

Now the shooting down of that warplane will constitute an attack on a NATO ally to justify an armed response.

Russia is concerned the Arab spring is closing in on its borders and its only naval base outside its territory is in Tartous, Syria, which is being endangered. Moscow also already sees the writing on the wall that this Western thrust towards its borders will have a domino effect, because next in line will be Iran, which is a tough nut to crack, with unforeseen ramifications in the region.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, in turn, has outlined his country's policy in an article which appeared in the June 20 issue of Huntington Post. Russia's policy consists of the following demands: 1) there should be a political transition, and Russia is not committed to this regime; 2) this is not simple and no option is perfect; 3) human rights issues are of grave concern and Christian minorities are at risk if the regime changes the wrong way; 4) a civil war will be a catastrophe and 5) Russia does not trust the UN resolutions, because they are used as pretexts for armed intervention. In other words, he said, Russia is looking for a transition which will not result in destabilization.

During the recent G-20 Summit in Mexico, the Syrian crisis was a hot-button issue agitating the leaders of the participant countries. It looks like Russia will initiate a conference, inviting Turkey and the permanent members of the Security Council.

Meanwhile blood is flowing in many Syrian cities. Armed gangs are involved in the mass murder of the innocent people to create panic among the civilian population.

Armenians have been seeking refuge in neighboring Lebanon and Armenia, and the last stable and culturally-organized diaspora community in the region is being dismantled.

Meanwhile, "human rights" and "democracy" are marching over the pools of blood.

Generations Educate Youth about Armenian Genocide

By Dro Kanayan

For those people who feel that our elders and the youth cannot work together, you may want to stop and read this article.

For five years, myself and two of my peers (Albert Movsesian and Tom Vartabedian) have been working together to have the Armenian Genocide included in the high school curriculums on Human Rights in the Merrimack Valley. We are 41 years old, 71 years old, and 84 years old, and we have continued pushing forward with our efforts. We work well together as we have a mutual respect for our thoughts, actions and personal lives. We come from different churches, political backgrounds and age groups, yet have one mission: teach students about the Armenian Genocide and our culture. And we are succeeding.

We have been to more than 10 schools, providing individual classroom presentation and panel discussions on comparative genocides over the last 100 years. If anyone questions if we're making a difference, here are some highlights:

- Wilmington High School: The students began a letter writing and stamp-designing campaign to the Postmaster General for a commemorative stamp recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. They also wrote their congressmen about supporting the Genocide resolution. Also when the French bill on criminalizing the denial of the Genocide came about, a former student who graduated two years ago and heard our lecture, emailed

her teacher and said she hoped this would go through for all Armenians throughout the world.

- Chelmsford High School: Students were so moved about the presentation we made, that they all made in donation to a charity in the name of our cause.

- Haverhill High School: A student was so moved by the panel discussion on comparative genocides, that he asked his history professor to start a Human Rights Club, and the club is going to a Third World country to build homes with Habitat for Humanity.
- Newton High School: Deaf students learned about the Armenian Genocide and our culture through sign language.

This is an endeavor that the entire Merrimack Valley has come together to support. All three local clergy have attended and participated in our events. Rev. Khachatur Kessablian from St. Vartanantz spoke at Chelmsford High School and as the high school was up the road from St. Vartanantz church, invited the students to come to the school and view the *Khachkar* and tour the church. The students were thrilled.

Rev. Karekin Bedourian from St. Illuminator's in North Andover spoke at Austin Preparatory School, reinforcing the religious issues surrounding the Armenian Genocide and other crimes against humanity, and Rev. Vart Gyoazian from the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe spoke at Northern Essex Community College about the effects on our culture.

This year we have extended our educational process to universities, colleges and middle schools.

Our efforts can only reach so far due to limited resources and manpower. Genocide education should not be done in pockets of the country. It should be a national movement. As Armenians, we have been very fortunate to have organizations like the Armenian National Committee and the Armenian Assembly pushing our issues through Washington and governments. However, we all need to take ownership of our cause. All it takes is a little sacrifice of our time, personal lives and learning how to work together.

The development of Armenian Genocide teaching programs through Facing History & Ourselves and the GenEd project out of California, as well as legislative rulings allowing the formalizing of a curriculum, provides us the tools to push this through. However, tools are only great if they are used, and we need to begin using them.

In some parts of the country the movement is greater than others. In August 2011, the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction appointed Murad Minasian to serve as the office's liaison to the Armenian American community.

We can all learn from each other. I am sure that Murad, myself, Tom, Al and any other person who is working with the school districts would be happy to provide a guiding hand to people who need help in starting this endeavor. All that has to be done is to ask.

People will only know what they learn, and if our cause is to continue to be moved in the right direction, then we all need to be out there educating the students and public about our cause.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Congress May Cut off Aid to Turkey For Hosting Sudan's Genocidal President

A congressional committee adopted an amendment last month that would suspend US foreign aid to any country hosting a visit by Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir. Members of Congress intend to isolate this brutal leader and help bring him to court for his crimes in Darfur.

Congress decided to take this action after several countries, including Turkey and Egypt, ignored the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court in March 2009, charging the Sudanese President with genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in Darfur. In contravention of their international obligations, these countries hosted visits by al-Bashir, instead of capturing him and dispatching him to the ICC for prosecution.

In November 2009, when the President of Sudan was about to visit Ankara, Amnesty International warned: "It would be a disgrace for Turkey to offer him safe haven. If the Turkish authorities fail to arrest President Omar al-Bashir and hand him over to the ICC, this would be inconsistent with Turkey's international obligations. It would not

only amount to obstruction of justice, but just as offering shelter to a fleeing bank robber constitutes a crime under national law, so, too, would sheltering a fugitive from international justice be complicity in crime."

Four US non-governmental organizations issued a joint statement in November 2009, criticizing the Obama administration for refusing to protest the Sudanese President's visit to Turkey. The NGO's sought to ensure that "a wanted war criminal does not continue to travel with impunity."

Meanwhile, the Turkish prime minister not only allowed the Sudanese President to visit Turkey, but tried to absolve him of any wrongdoing by claiming that "Muslims don't commit genocide!" Making matters worse, Turkey continues to sell lethal weapons to Sudan, helping al-Bashir kill more innocent people!

To put an end to such irresponsible behavior by Turkey and many other countries, the House Appropriations Committee adopted on May 17, 2012, an amendment to a State Department funding bill that would cut off non-humanitarian aid to countries that do not comply with ICC's directive. The amendment sponsored by Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) states that no economic assistance would be provided by the United States "to any country that admits President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan."

After reports began circulating that the Obama administration is trying to block this proposed law, 70 leading Holocaust and genocide scholars signed a joint letter on June 14, urging the White House to support the congressional amendment that would stop providing assistance to countries hosting Sudan's President. Among the signatories of the letter are Dr. Israel Charny of Jerusalem, Dr. Irving Greenberg, former chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and Dr. Deborah Dwork of Clark University.

The scholars' letter, organized by the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies in Washington, DC, was sent to presidential advisor Dr. Samantha Power, who heads the recently-established Atrocities Prevention Board. The scholars reminded Power that in her Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, she had urged the US government to adopt "economic sanctions" to counter genocidal actions. Since the proposed bill "does exactly that," the 70 signatories expressed the hope that Power and the White House would support Wolf's amendment, particularly when it is brought up for reconciliation between the House and Senate.

It is doubtful, however, that Samantha Power would speak out in favor of this amendment. Since joining the White House staff, she has distanced herself from the issues she had boldly advocated in her book. She has also remained eerily silent on President Obama's unfulfilled pledges regarding the Armenian Genocide. Power had issued several appeals during the last presidential campaign, seeking the Armenian-American community's support for Barack Obama's candidacy. She had solemnly pledged that as president, Obama would acknowledge the Armenian Genocide after the election.

So far, Armenian-Americans have not gotten involved in lobbying for the adoption of this important bill, most probably because they were unaware of its introduction in Congress. Armenian scholars were also left out of this issue, since no one had approached them to obtain their support.

An aide to Wolf advised this writer that the Congressman would appreciate the Armenian-American community's support for this bill which would discourage Turkey and other countries from wining and dining al-Bashir and would help bring this indicted criminal to justice.

New Perspectives for Armenian Genocide Studies in Germany

On June 6, two important cultural institutions in Germany signed an agreement that may break new ground in research on the 1915 Genocide against the Armenians. The contract signed by University of Potsdam's Philosophy Department and the Lepsiushaus for enhanced cooperation was anything but a bureaucratic act. If the two partners fully exploit the potential in the deal, they could create the conditions for significantly enhancing Genocide studies, which would include the Armenian case. The Lepsiushaus ("House of Lepsius") in Potsdam is a museum and research center located in the former home of Dr. Johannes Lepsius, the renowned theologian and scholar who documented the 1915 Armenian Genocide. It was there that Prof. Johann Hafner, dean of the philosophy faculty and Dr. Rolf Hosfeld, scientific managing director of the Lepsius House, held the official signing ceremony.

Professor Hafner, speaking for the university, said, "With cooperation in 'Genocide Studies,' the Philosophy Department is making its mark with a further special feature (or selling point) on the German research and landscape."

He went on to explain that students will be able to make use of the Lepsiushaus facilities, including rooms, archives and library. In addition, they "will be able to complete scientific internships there, receive assistance with their thesis work and participate in research projects, conferences and publications." Finally, there are plans for the Human Rights Center, also located at the Philosophy Faculty, to gain new momentum as a result of this cooperation, with a chair from "Cultural History of Violence." This is the new name for a chair instituted by the Military Historical Research Office, formerly known as the Chair for Military History. When a professor is named to occupy the newly-named chair next year, it is expected to work together with the Lepsiushaus and the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies, for example, in comparative studies of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. This is not a chair for Armenian Genocide studies as such, but the subject will be a point of emphasis in research.

When Dr. Hafner spoke of a "special feature" he was referring to the new focus that the Philosophy Department in Potsdam will place on research on the Armenian Genocide. The Halle-Wittenberg University, which has

hosted the MESROP Center since 1998, also established a chair for Armenian studies (Armenologie), which deals with the Armenian history, culture and philosophy. And, the Ruhr University in Bochum also has an Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Research, headed by Prof. Mihran Dabag. For the Lepsiushaus, as Dr. Hosfeld declared, the new level of cooperation will contribute to "anchoring [it] in the scientific landscape." The institutions plan to expand research on Lepsius's work and more broadly the history of the 1915 genocide.

The Lepsiushaus already has a working agreement with Moses Mendelssohn Center, also located in Potsdam. This fall, they plan a conference dedicated to Franz Werfel, the Jewish writer who in 1933 published *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, a renowned saga on the genocide. Now, with the new arrangement such activities will multiply. As Dr. Hosfeld put it, "We have achieved a lot, but we are not yet what we can be." There is already a full calendar of seminars, workshops, conferences, political podium discussions, lectures and book presentations prepared for the next three years.

Prof. Hafner said the university was "extraordinarily delighted that the house will be full of life." The university, for its part, lends professional and institutional support to the work of the Lepsiushaus, cooperates on projects and makes available rooms for conferences. At the end of September 2012, a joint

scientific conference with international participation is planned on the subject, "Johannes Lepsius, a German Exception."

Dr. Johannes Lepsius, as the university's press release notes, was a "German Protestant theologian, Orientalist, philosopher, mathematician and historian" who lived from 1908 to 1926 in the house, which is now a museum and research center. It was in Potsdam in 1916 that he wrote his Report on the Situation of the Armenian People in Turkey. He was co-founder in 1914 of the German-Armenian Society. Lepsius had founded a relief organization in Urfa to aid Armenian victims of the 1890s Hamidian massacres, and he tried to travel to Anatolia again in 1915 upon learning of the renewed persecutions. He was prevented from traveling inland by the Young Turk leadership, but did manage to collect hundreds of eyewitness accounts in Constantinople from Armenian survivors, diplomats and humanitarian aid workers. The Report, though banned by the censors and partially suppressed, was distributed to political, ecclesiastical and media circles in Germany and became a cause-celebre.

The Lepsiushaus was officially opened in May of last year, despite longstanding resistance of the part of certain Turkish circles in Germany. State and city funds as well as private contributions served to finance the complete restoration of the magnificent building, which had fallen into decay under the East German regime. It should be added that

Brandenburg, where Potsdam is located, is the only federal state where the historic curriculum and textbooks at schools include the Armenian Genocide among state-organized mass murders.

Dr. Hosfeld, who succeeded Prof. Hermann Goltz after his death, studied German literature, history, political science and philosophy in Frankfurt and Berlin. As editor and author he has published numerous articles and more than 20 books. Among them is *Operation Nemesis: Die Türkei, Deutschland und der Völkermord an den Armeiern* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2005/2009), whose title refers to the Armenian underground organization which pursued and executed Turkish leaders responsible for the mass murder. As the California Courier wrote, "Hosfeld painstakingly describes the emergence of an aggressive Turkish nationalism and its systematic annihilation policies against the Armenians, which were protected under Turkey's alliance with Germany during World War I."

Professor Hafner studied theology and philosophy in Augsburg, Munich and in the Philippines. From 1998 to 2001 he was visiting lecturer at the University of Dayton in Ohio, and has been professor of religion at Potsdam since 2004. In 2010 he became dean of the Philosophy Department.

(Muriel Mirak-Weissbach is the author of *Through the Wall of Fire: Armenia-Iraq-Palestine: From Wrath to Reconciliation*.

Her new book, *Madness at the Helm: Pathology and Politics in the Arab Spring*, should appear soon.)

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