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Sargisian Completes Tour of South America

Breaks Ground for Armenian Genocide Museum in Buenos Aires

BUENOS AIRES – President Serge Sargisian completed a weeklong tour of South America, visiting Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. While in Argentina, he took part in the takes part in groundbreaking ceremony of the Armenian Genocide Museum in Buenos Aires on July 8, on the second day of his official visit to Argentina. He was accompanied by Chief of Staff of the Government of City of Buenos Aires Horacio Larreta and the representatives of local self-government bodies and the Armenian community of Argentina, attended the groundbreaking ceremony of an Armenian Genocide museum at the neighborhood of Palermo in Buenos Aires. After the consecration of the memorial plaque, Chief of Staff of the Government of City of Buenos Aires Horacio Larreta and Chief of the RA Presidential Administration Vigen Sargsyan opened it. On the occasion of the groundbreaking ceremony the president made a speech before the participants.

He said at the ceremony, "I consider it a great honor to be present here today, at the heart of Buenos Aires, and lay the first brick on the foundation of the Armenian Genocide museum together with you. This museum is being built in order to fill up the ranks of the numerous monuments dedicated to the Armenian Genocide which extend from East to West and from North to South as a vivid testimony to the fact that no matter how much time has passed we will keep on remembering and demanding. Human memory is a sort of a historical sieve which with special gratitude keeps those names and place names, which always sow seeds of justice and push forward the noblest universal values."

He praised the country of Argentina for being home to many Armenians forced into exile after the Armenian Genocide.

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President Serge Sargisian greets compatriots in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Passes Turkey Churches Accountability Act

WASHINGTON – The House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) adopted H.R. 4347, the Turkey Christian Churches Accountability Act, in June. The legislation was approved by voice vote, with amendments.

Introduced by HFAC Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) in March, H.R. 4347 requires that the Secretary of State, on an annual basis, "submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on the status and return of stolen, confiscated, or otherwise unreturned Christian churches, places of worship, and other properties in or from the



HFAC Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA)

Republic of Turkey and in northern Cyprus," until the year 2021.

"We commend Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel for their strong see ACCOUNTABILITY, page 16

Sargisian Statements Seen as Rejection of Russian Demands

By Naira Hayrumyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – While on his tour of South America last week, Armenian President Serge Sargisian gave an interview to the Argentine newspaper *La Nacion*, in which he stated that "the people of Armenia are concerned over the sale of Russian weapons to Azerbaijan."

At the same time, the Armenian leader expressed hope that Russia would help Armenia at this difficult moment. Nevertheless, Sargisian's statement was regarded by some analysts as an attempted stand over the latest Russian demands.

During the same time, Armenian Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan paid a visit to Russia. He met with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev in Sochi on July 11. Despite expectations, the meeting did not bring clarity into the terms of Armenia's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union see DEMANDS, page 3



Tigran Sargisian Is New US Ambassador

WASHINGTON (Armenpress) – President Barack Obama on July 14 met the new ambassadors appointed to the US and accepted their credentials, including Tigran Sargisian, who is serving as Armenia's new ambassador to the US. Sargisian resigned his position as prime minister of Armenia on April 3 and was appointed ambassador to the US on June 26. He replaces Ambassador Tatoul Markarian. Above, Ambassador Sargisian is pictured with President Barack Obama.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Presbyterian Church Recognizes Genocide

DETROIT – On Friday, June 20, the 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) adopted a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

This historic resolution, the first of its kind for a major American church body, was adopted by the 1.8 million-member church. It originated in the presbyteries of Los Ranchos (Anaheim, Ca), Chicago and Palisades (New Jersey), and then sent on to the national body for adoption. Two advocates who played a vital role were the Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian (Chicago Presbytery), and the Rev. Dr. Vartkes Kassouni (Los Ranchos Presbytery). Central to the development and writing of the resolution was the staff of the Jinishian Memorial Program (Eliza Minassian, director, and Cara Taylor coordinator), and the World Mission Agency of the PC (USA). Assisting was the Rev. Garabed Kochakian, pastor of St. John's Armenian Church, Southfield.

The measure includes four key points: it urges member congregations to recognize the Armenian Genocide; supports the designation of "genocide" for the death of 1.5 million Armenians; directs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to call on the President and the Congress of the United States to recognize and condemn the death and expulsion of the Armenians and directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to encourage appropriate observance of the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in Presbyterian churches, with accompanying educational and cultural forms of remembrance.

House, Senate Adopt Armenia, NKR Funding

WASHINGTON – In June the House Appropriations Committee approved its Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) Appropriations Bill, which covers US economic, humanitarian and military assistance to the South Caucasus. Specific funding levels to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Nagorno Karabagh were not delineated in the bill.

The House bill was similar to the Senate version, which was approved earlier. Both bills maintained Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, restating the six customary exemptions for humanitarian and other assistance to Azerbaijan. Section 907 was enacted in 1992 and requires the Government of Azerbaijan to take "demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force" against Armenia and Artsakh.

The Administration's budget calls for \$1.7 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and \$600,000 in International Military Education Training (IMET) for Armenia and Azerbaijan. This is a reduction of \$1 million for FMF from last year's budget request, however IMET funding is consistent with past years and military parity is maintained.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

NATO Rep Ignores Turkey Blockade Topic

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – NATO's coordinator for Southern Caucasus Despina Afentouli ignored the issue of the Armenian-Turkish relations and the two-decades-long blockade of Armenia by Turkey, giving no answer to the question whether the blockade of the border of the neighboring state corresponds to the principles guided by the alliance during a recent visit to Armenia.

On July 10, during a meeting held in Yerevan, Afentouli said that the alliance builds its relations based on the needs of each country. Accordingly, each country defines itself the degree of integration and the level of relations. The Alliance respects all countries, their territorial integrity and independence. Moreover, the allied countries are not obliged at all to subject their decisions to the NATO opinion. At the same time, the country's foreign policy should not contradict NATO general principles," she said.

Asked whether imposing blockade on the borders of the neighboring countries, as well as the fact that Turkey supports Azerbaijan in preparing for a new war against Armenia, is in line with NATO principles, she noted that NATO is aware of the disagreement between Turkey and Armenia, and has contributed to attempts to find reconciliation.

President Mourns Death Of Shevardnadze

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – On July 8, the President Serge Sargsian sent a letter of condolence to President Giorgi Margvelashvili on the occasion of the Georgian and Soviet prominent political and public figure Eduard Shevardnadze's death.

The President's office reported that in his letter he said, "Eduard Shevardnadze really had a significant role not only in the establishment and strengthening of independent Georgia, but also in the formation of the new world-order. The role of Eduard Shevardnadze is also great in the strengthening of the Armenian-Georgian various relations. I express my deepest condolences to you and the friendly people of Georgia, as well as words of comfort and support to the relatives and friends of Eduard Shevardnadze."

NKR Foreign Minister Receives AGBU Interns

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – On July 12, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nagorno-Karabagh Republic Karen Mirzoyan received interns from the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) who had arrived in the NKR within the frameworks of the Yerevan Summer Internship Program.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that Mirzoyan welcomed the initiative of the AGBU to organize such visits to Artsakh, and highlighted the importance of their becoming acquainted with the political, educational, cultural and social life of Artsakh.

He briefed the interns on the main priorities of the foreign policy of the NKR as well as the peace process between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabagh.

President Receives Patriarch of Jerusalem

YEREVAN – On June 23, President Serge Sargsian received the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Archbishop Nourhan Manougian.

Sargsian and Manougian talked about national and ecclesiastical issues, the close cooperation between Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Church, the activities of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as well as about the role and significance of the Armenian church for the Armenian diaspora spread across the world.

Sargsian attached great importance to the activities of the Apostolic See of St. James in Jerusalem with its centuries-old role in preserving the Armenian spiritual and cultural heritage and passing on it to next generations.

AUA Campaign Launched to Raise Funds For Syrian-Armenian Assistance Program

YEREVAN – On June 30, the American University of Armenia (AUA) launched the first phase of the "AUA for Syrian Armenians" campaign, which aims to raise money to provide valuable educational resources to the displaced Syrian-Armenian population in Armenia through the AUA Extension program.

In 2012, AUA launched this assistance program, which allows Syrian-Armenian refugees to take up to two AUA Extension courses free of charge. The program's popularity has since grown at an unprecedented rate, proving that it provides a valuable resource to the Syrian-Armenian population in Armenia. Since the program's inception, AUA has already offered more than 1,000 course slots free of charge to more than 500 Syrian Armenians. Many of these individuals have referred others to the program, returned to take additional courses or enrolled in AUA's degree programs. However, due to a

lack of financial resources, the program has been put on hold until enough money is raised to continue it.

AUA President Dr. Bruce M. Boghosian shares, "It is both a moral and humanitarian imperative at this juncture to do everything we can to ensure that Syrian-Armenian refugees feel welcomed in Armenia, and that their resettlement be facilitated to the greatest extent possible. The American University of Armenia is proud to offer assistance in the form of courses specially designed to help with the resettlement process, to provide training for Syrian-Armenian professionals, and to enable Syrian-Armenian students to apply for university admission in Armenia."

Through the assistance program, all courses in AUA Extension are open to Syrian Armenians who arrived in Armenia in or after April 2012, when the crisis in Syria escalated. Course offerings include language instruction, professional trainings, and preparatory

courses for the standardized tests that are necessary for applying to many universities, including AUA.

The director of AUA Extension, Dr. Arpie Balian, explains, "Supporting the AUA for Syrian Armenians campaign means contributing to something that has been proven useful. This is an investment in a Syrian Armenian's future. Our program is particularly helpful for those Syrian Armenians who have chosen to stay here in Armenia. For those who will eventually return to their homes in Syria or go elsewhere, the program helps alleviate anxiety while teaching them English language skills and other knowledge and skills in management that will be beneficial wherever they go. It appears that most of the Syrian Armenians that have come to AUA Extension are those who will stay in Armenia. We are helping them get back on their feet through courses that will contribute to building their future here."

Armenian Officer Dies Fighting Another Azerbaijani Incursion

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Nagorno Karabagh Republic defense army special units completed an operation to curb the Azeri sabotage attempt. According to the NKR Defense Ministry, all members of the Azeri commando group have been either arrested or eliminated.

On July 10, Armenian forces curbed an incursion attempt as Azeris tried to infiltrate the border in the Nagorno Karabagh Republic's Karvachar area, the army press service reported. As a result of prompt actions, Azeri diversion group was discovered, with several saboteurs arrested, while the others fled.

Armenian soldiers repelled another attack during the liquidation of the Azerbaijani subversive group in the territory of Karvachar on July 11, but an Armenian officer was killed during the exchange of fire and a female civilian was injured.

"Unwilling to accept reality, Azerbaijani propaganda denies any information that reveals its true face. Since reliability of the photos we had released was disputed, we also present the photos of Guliyev Shahbaz Jalaloglu, a captured member of the subversive group, which we have taken ourselves," a statement by

the NKR Defense Ministry said.

Armenian military serviceman Movses Gasparyan, 20, received a fatal bullet wound in an Azeri sniper attack on July 11.

Gasparyan was fatally wounded at a military base stationed in the south-eastern region of the line of contact between Artsakh and Azerbaijani armed forces. An investigation is being carried out to find details of the incident, the Karabagh Defense Ministry said.

"An Azeri saboteur was killed during an attempt to cross into Karabagh in the Karvachar area," Defence Minister stated during a military parade to mark the 17th anniversary the 4th army corps formation.

According to Seyran Ohanyan, an Armenian officer and a woman were killed during the shootout.

In addition, Arvid Danielyan, a citizen of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic was killed on Monday, July 14, during another Azeri sniper attack. The incident took place around 2 p.m. in Askeran region.

According to the NKR Prosecutor's Office, Danielyan was driving a tractor when he was shot in the face.

A criminal case has been instigated under Article 103 part 2 point 14 of the NKR Criminal Code.

Armenia, France to Assist Switzerland In Perinçek's Case before ECHR

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Government of the Republic of Armenia intends to engage in the case of the Turkish nationalist Dogu Perinçek in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) as a third party, the Prosecutor General of Armenia, Representative of Armenia to the ECHR Gevorg Kostanyan said. Armenia will officially apply to the court on August 26 to be engaged as a third party.

Kostanyan did not go into details about the actions that should be carried out by the Armenian side.

France will support Switzerland to appeal the verdict. French Ambassador to Armenia Henri Reynaud on July 11 said he hopes that the positive decision of the ECHR will be a crucial step and France would also adopt a law that criminalizes the denial of the Genocide. Switzerland fined Perinçek in 2007,

after he denied the 1915 Armenian Genocide in a speech in Lausanne. The case eventually ended up at the European Court of Human Rights in 2013, where it was ruled that Switzerland had violated the ex-head of the left-wing Turkish Workers' Party's right to free speech.

The Swiss Justice Ministry appealed the decision and referred it to the Grand Chamber of the Court of Human Rights.

Obama Nominates New Ambassador To Armenia

WASHINGTON – The Obama Administration has announced Richard M. Mills, Jr. as the nominee for the position of US Ambassador to Armenia.

In a statement released this month Obama said, "I am grateful that these impressive individuals have chosen to dedicate their talents to serving the American people at this important time for our country. I look forward to working with them in the months and years ahead."

If confirmed by the Senate, he will replace the current ambassador in Yerevan, John Heffern, who has held the position since 2011. Mills' nomination will first be considered in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee under Chairman Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ). A date has not yet been announced for the Senate confirmation hearings.

A career diplomat, Richard M. Mills, Jr., has held numerous diplomatic positions. Currently, he is the Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon.

He has also had diplomatic experience with Armenia in the past. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, he was the desk officer at the State Department for the newly independent Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mills has also held positions in Malta, Paris, St. Petersburg and Dublin among others.

He is a graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. He also holds a law degree from the University Of Texas School Of Law as well as a Masters Degree in International Security Affairs from the National Defense University.

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INTERNATIONAL

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He spoke about the commemoration of the centennial next year. "The 100th anniversary of Mets Yeghern is not an endpoint; it is just a unique destination. The centenary will sum up a historical period and will herald a new phase of fighting for the restoration of justice which will be supplemented with new methods of fighting against denialism. We are going to be more powerful, powerful together with the international community since the secret of power and the victory of justice is unity."

Ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, on May 6, the government of the city of Buenos Aires allocated a free area for construction of an Armenian Genocide museum in capital's Palermo district. On June 10, with the participation of the Armenian embassy in Argentina and under the patronage of Hay center and the Armenian diocese of Argentina the official ceremony of handing the legal documents of the area allocated by the city authorities of Buenos Aires for the purpose of building an Armenian Genocide museum took place.

Sargisian also visited Saint Grigor Lusavorich Church. The Armenian president laid a wreath at the memorial to the victims of the Armenian Genocide located in the yard of the church and paid tribute to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims. In addition, the president placed flowers at the monument dedicated to the memory of the Artsakh freedom fighters.

In addition, he visited the local organizations of the Armenian parties and entities – the ARF, the AGBU and the ADL – and familiarized with the cultur-

al, charitable and sports activities of those organizations, as well as with the works carried out by the local Armenian periodicals.

During the reception at the center of Armenia Cultural Association after Edward Seferian the president thanked for the activities carried out by the center and for the warm hospitality extended to the Armenian delegation. At the reception the representatives of the cen-



On July 7, President Serge Sargisian, who arrived in Argentina for an official visit, held a press conference along with his delegation, which included Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, among others.

ter handed a present carrying the note "We are honest soldiers" to the Armenian President.

Sargisian said, "These words impose a high responsibility because everyone of us is a soldier; a soldier within the framework of his duties, a soldier within the framework of his responsibility, a soldier for his ideal, and I am very delighted that our national organiza-

tions and our national parties make us to be proud and this is by what we are distinguished from others. I perfectly understand that our opponents try to be active not only in this part of the world, but also in other parts. They try to pursue their interests, and we do not have the right to accuse them of that since it is their duty to do it. Our goal is to reinvigorate efforts at keeping this fire burning in the coming generation

thereby reinforcing the Armenian statehood on one hand and strengthening the Diaspora and our organizations on the other hand. We can make each other stronger. Together we can do a lot. I perfectly understand the aim of their activities in South America – Argentina, Uruguay – and in other places. They also put their efforts in places where we are stronger. Nevertheless, if we are to lose this battle, after a long period of time we will be substituted by others. I am confident that this will never happen. On the contrary, I am confident that the number of our buildings and our supporters will continue to grow. Indeed, owing to this ideal, we are all soldiers, yes, we are soldiers, and we will continue to be soldiers. This is the only way to strengthen Armenia. I am very grateful for your warm reception. Thank you. Together we can do a lot."

At the AGBU center, he presented his appreciation for the warm reception. "What I saw here is impressive and promising. I wish the AGBU Center of Buenos Aires to keep on carrying out its patriotic mission with the same zeal and devotion in the name of the rise and long life of our people."

At the editorial office of the Sardarapat newspaper of the ADL, the president stressed that he is very proud of compatriots who have found such an "impressive national institution thousand of kilometers away from our historical homeland and continue to carry out with credit the mission of keeping the Armenian spirit alive." He wished everybody strength in order to keep on working with the same devotion in the name of the rise and long life of our people. Moreover, the president wrote down the same words in the honorary guest book of the editorial office.

He also met with representatives of the Armenian organizations in Argentina and benefactors. At the request of the president the meeting took place in a question-and-answer format during which he answered the questions of the participants related to national preservation issues, the Armenia-Diaspora ties, regional challenges, Armenia's internal and foreign policy, and its economic priorities, development opportunities and a number of other topics.

The community presented a presidential scepter symbolizing the state authority to Sargisian. It was delivered see SARGISIAN, page 4

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(EEU). Moreover, Minister of Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission Andrew Slepnyov said that one of the main "stumbling blocks" in Armenia's entry into the EEU are the differences in obligations to the World Trade Organization (WTO) that Armenia and Russia have. In this connection, some transitional period will be set and during this period accession to the Customs Union of a WTO member with different obligations will be settled, said Slepnyov. The Armenian side has not made any statements about the "transitional period."

For his part, Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Galust Sahakyan, who visited Moscow last week, stated that "even the press has noticed" the contradictions among the three members of the emerging EEU, hinting at the fact that it was the position of Belarus and Kazakhstan that does not allow Armenia to be a member of the EEU sooner. At the same time, he officially stated that there can be no customs checkpoints between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh – something that Customs Union member-countries demand.

Besides, earlier this month Yerevan hosted a conference of the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), during which a Russian proposal on the introduction of peacekeeping troops into Karabagh was clearly expressed. But Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan stated that the Armenian forces themselves maintain the truce in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict zone and that there is no need for third forces.

In fact, last week Armenia rejected three proposals of Russia – on the introduction of peacekeepers, on the rejection of the OSCE Minsk Group format and on the installation of customs check points between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh. Also at the level of the president, Armenia expressed its discontent with the Russian arms sales to Azerbaijan. This looks like hardening of the position and willingness to reconsider the basis of Russian-Armenian relations that have so far been built on Russia's expansionist policy and Armenia's constant concessions.

Political analyst Richard Giragosian described the statement by Sargisian as "somewhat belated." Russia has already sold a large amount of weapons to Azerbaijan, besides, escalation is growing along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border – there are more frequent sabotage raids and shooting incidents, the number of victims has increased. Armenian analysts speculate about a possible deal between Russia and Azerbaijan on the following scenario – Baku provokes a "creeping war of sabotage raids," Armenia appeals to Russia for help and Russia introduces its peacekeepers without the mandate of the OSCE and the UN and stations them so that some of the territories controlled by Karabagh today get under Azeri control.

In one of the points of his joint statement with the president of Uruguay, Armenian President Sargisian emphasized, however, that the Karabagh settlement should take place "only and only within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group."

International News

Arthur Abraham's Next Fight on September 27

BERLIN (Armenpress) – Armenian professional boxer, WBO Super Middleweight Champion Arthur Abraham will hold his next bout on September 27 in Germany facing British contender Paul Smith.

Abraham was born on February 20, 1980, in Yerevan, Armenia. His younger brother, Alexander, is also a professional boxer. He moved to Germany with his parents and brothers at the age of 15. He became a citizen of Germany in August 2006. Abraham started his professional career in 2003.

Turkey Presidential Candidate Meets with Armenian Reps

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Presidential candidate Selahattin Demirtas, nominated by the People's Democracy Party of Turkey, who is an ethnic Kurd, met with the representatives of the Armenian, Assyrian, Greek and Jewish community.

During the meeting Demirtas said that if in Turkey a Muslim cannot call a Jew "brother," a Turk cannot call an Armenian or an Assyrian "brother," then life is getting more difficult in the country.

The agency notes that the meeting of the presidential candidate with the Turkish national minorities has been closed for the media. After the meeting Demirtas told the reporters that although there were some identity and religious differences between them, there were many topics to be discussed with the participants of the meeting, such as freedom, democracy and brotherhood. "It was an extremely useful and instructive meeting for me," he said.

Armenian Soldiers Take Part in Bastille Day Military Parade

PARIS (Armenpress) – Armenian soldiers took part in the military parade in honor of the French National Holiday, Bastille Day, here, hoisting the Armenian flag during the march. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman Tigran Balayan posted a photo of the Armenian soldiers on his Twitter account with the following note: "Armenian flag at Champs-Élysées at July 14 military parade."

On the occasion of the holiday, President Serge Sargisian visited the French Embassy in Armenia. He congratulated Ambassador Henri Reynaud, the Embassy staff and on their behalf the entire French nation.

Armenian Clergy Attend WCC Meeting in Geneva

GENEVA (Armenpress) – The World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee convened their 64th meeting on July 2. With the blessings of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Officer of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America and Paula Der Matoian, director of Internet Development and Social Media at the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, are serving as members of the Central Committee, representing the Armenian Church. Bishop Nareg Alemezian, and Teny Perri-Simonian are members representing the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia.

At the 10th Assembly of the WCC, held in Busan, Korea, in November 2013, Karekin II was elected as one of the eight world presidents of the WCC.

During the Opening Prayer, the late Archbishop Aghan Baliozian was recalled in memoriam.

One of the first agenda items of the week-long session was the approval of the leadership for the standing committees for the next eight years, as well as the designation of membership. By unanimous consensus, Aykazian will serve as the Moderator of the Finance Policy Committee, and Der Matoian will serve as a member of the Governance and Nominations Committee.



INTERNATIONAL

Dissident Writer Sevan Nishanian Moved to Yenipazar Prison

ISTANBUL (*Demokrat Haber*) – Linguist, tourism pioneer and dissident writer Sevan Nishanian is being moved from the “maximum-security” Sakran Prison in Aliaga to Yenipazar Prison in Aydin.

This will be the fourth prison stop for Nishanian, who started his sentence at Torbali Prison on January 2 of this year. Nishanian had been tried and convicted of “illegal construction”; the building activity in question was the construction of a 40-square-meter cottage on his own property, which was deemed “unauthorized” and “against code.”

Nishanian’s first move from Torbali, an open (roughly equivalent to minimum-security) prison to Buca, a closed (roughly equivalent to maximum-security) prison on February 26, had come about as a result of whistleblowing: Nishanian publicized theft by a prison guard, which led to an investigation, which led to the prison administration’s decision to banish him.

That Nishanian had started serving his sentence in an open prison was in line with the nature of the nonviolent crime he was alleged to have committed; his move to Buca’s maxi-

mum-security environment, by contrast, was widely condemned as unjust punishment and exile. In addition, the haste with which the transfer was ordered, without a court ruling in place, had been referred to as a miscarriage of justice by commentators.

At Buca, Sevan Nishanian was made to sleep on the cold concrete floor for several days—prison officials claimed that no cot was available – and was not allowed to shower. When there was a public outcry about the conditions, Nishanian was moved a second time, this time to Sakran, in Izmir province’s Aliaga district. This time the stated reason was that Nishanian’s life was at risk.

At Sakran, Nishanian was put in the same cellblock with inmates on trial for murder, facing life without possibility of parole. Soon thereafter, he was put in solitary, once again because his life was in danger. On May 27, Nishanian petitioned the prison administration, stating that he was unjustly being kept in isolation, the risk of bodily harm serving as a convenient excuse; he asked to be moved out of Sakran. The administration, having reviewed the petition, ordered this week that



Sevan Nishanian

Nishanian be moved to Yenipazar Closed Penal Facility in Aydin.

Sait Çetinoglu, a member of the International Committee for Freedom and Justice for Sevan Nishanian, pointed out that while this latest prison move may technically

qualify as an improvement, it is still incarceration in a maximum-security prison and a continuation of the pressure and restrictions facing one of the most prominent dissidents in Turkey. Çetinoglu called for a reversal of Nishanian’s conviction and urged authorities to free him.

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to the president by the leader of the Argentine diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church Archbishop Gisak Muradyan.

During his talk with the community members, he also discussed the state of the Armenians of Syria, urging his compatriots to help them. “Presently, this is our major concern. We are doing our best and will continue our efforts at providing respectable existence for them. I am confident that the geographic distance is not an obstacle for you and the sufferings of our Armenian brothers and sisters of Syria find a response in your hearts. I am sure that be it in the whole world or in Argentina the heart of each Armenian feels pain for sufferings and tears of every Armenian.”

He singled out businessman and benefactor Eduardo Eurnekian. “Born in the remote country of Argentina, he is endowed with the spirit of a real Armenian. Achieving a great success with his diligence and devotion, he has won recognition not only for himself, but also for the Armenian people. The image of this businessman and benefactor should inspire our compatriots from all over the world.”

Earlier he had met with Buenos Aires Mayor Mauricio Macri. At the meeting Sargisian emphasized Macri’s visit to Yerevan in 2012 during which the ceremony of transferring the title of international capital of books from Buenos Aires to Yerevan took place. The president noted that the visit gave a new momentum to the cooperation between the two capitals and expressed hope that such visits and mutual contacts will be regular and will embrace an inclusive agenda geared toward promoting mutual collaboration.

President Serzh Sargsyan also congratulated the mayor of Buenos Aires and the friendly people of Argentina on the occasion of the country’s Independence Day to be marked on July 9 and wished peace, prosperity and further achievements.

At the end of the meeting, Macri handed the key to Buenos Aires and the Honorary Visitor Diploma to the Armenian president.

Sargisian also met with the President of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies Julian Andres Dominguez.

Taking into account that President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner of Argentina has postponed all the official events due to health problems, including the events to be held on the occasion of the country’s public holiday on June 9, the negotiations were conducted with an Argentine high-ranking delegation led by the Vice President of the Argentine Republic and the President of the Senate Amado Boudou. Particularly, the Chief of the Cabinet of Minister of Argentina Jorge Capitanich, the President of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies Julian Andres Dominguez, the Minister of Social

Development Alicia Kirchner, the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovative Production Lino Baranao, the Head of the State Revenue Department Ricardo Daniel Echegaray and other officials took part in the meeting.

At the meeting Sargisian also expressed his gratitude for the Law on the Recognition of the Armenian Genocide passed with the direct involvement of the previous President of Argentina Nestor Kirchner. The president stressed that next year is the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, and events are to take place not only in Armenia but also in different countries of the world, including Argentina.

On behalf of our people and on his own behalf Sargisian expressed his gratitude to the Argentine authorities and the Argentine people for recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

On July 9, Sargisian started his state visit to Uruguay.

Prior to meeting President Jose Mujica, Sargisian visited Independence Square, laid a wreath at the Monument to General Jose Artigas.

The presidents of Armenia and Uruguay discussed a wide range of issues aimed at strengthening the interstate ties and promoting cooperation. The presidents of the two countries were glad to note that Armenia and Uruguay have managed to establish friendly relations based on mutual respect and trust. According to the presidents of Armenia and Uruguay, the nature of those relations is displayed through their mutual commitment to collaboration and a special attitude toward each other’s concerns. At the meeting, Sargisian stressed that Armenia is interested in promoting a comprehensive agenda in the spheres of policy, trade and economy, culture, as well as in other mutually beneficial spheres. The president expressed readiness to put a lot of effort into reaching that goal.

In order to stimulate the Armenian-Uruguayan cooperation, the interlocutors emphasized the need for making reciprocal visits and bringing the two countries’ foreign affairs ministries into regular contact, which gives the opportunity to effectively deal with the issues of reciprocal concern both in bilateral and multilateral formats. In that context Sargisian placed special emphasis on Uruguayan Foreign Affairs Minister Luis Almagro’s visit in May 2012 and the President of the House of Representatives Jorge Orrico’s visit in November of the same year, as well as on last November’s visit of Uruguayan Minister of Tourism and Sport Lilian Keshishyan.

The presidents agreed that the Armenian community settled in Uruguay has certainly made a major contribution to developing the Armenian-Uruguayan relations and has been actively engaged in the country’s social and political life; it has also provided a modest input into the development of the friendly country of Uruguay.

Sargisian noted that Uruguay was the first



President Serge Sargisian, right, visited the Armenian Cultural Center, with Archbishop Kissag Mouradian, head of the Armenian Diocese of Argentina, based in Buenos Aires, and other dignitaries during his recent trip to that country. At the gathering, he met with members of different Armenian political parties.

country to recognize the Armenian Genocide in 1965 and praised the country for its approach.

Sargisian also met with Vice President Danilo Astori. At the outset the Armenian President presented his appreciation for the warm reception and stressed that he considered it a great honor to arrive in the friendly state of Uruguay on a state visit.

At the meeting the parties touched upon the promotion of the inter-parliamentary ties between Armenia and Uruguay and attached great weight to the role of parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening the interstate relations.

On behalf of his country Astori suggested that Armenia use Uruguay as a gate to develop trade and economic ties with other countries of South America.

On his state visit the Armenian President visited Armenia Square in Montevideo. He paid tribute at the khatchkar dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide installed next to the square.

In the morning of the first day of his visit to Uruguay Sargisian visited Conaprole cooperative which has great agricultural potential. Here the Armenian President was introduced the factory’s entire range of products the 70 percent of which is exported to different countries of the world and familiarized with the production potential.

During a state dinner, the presidents of the two countries exchanged toasts, touched upon

the history of the Armenian-Uruguayan friendly relations, the Armenian community of Uruguay which plays a major role in strengthening the ties between the two countries, the development potential of the interstate relations and the need for making efforts at realizing their full potential for the benefit of the two countries.

Sargisian visited Saint Nerses Shnorhali Church in Montevideo. After the welcome speech of the leader of the Uruguayan Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Hakob Glnjyan, in his address to the representatives of the Armenian community of Uruguay, Sargisian noted that he was glad and proud to find out that there was such an influential and organized community in the remote country of Uruguay. “I am proud that you have managed not only to ensure a patriotic atmosphere, not only to tell your children that despite being Uruguayan citizens they are Armenians, but also to win the respect of all the rest of Uruguayan citizens. Together we make each other stronger and only together we can fulfill our national goals,” he said.

The Armenian President laid a wreath at the memorial to the victims of the Armenian Genocide located at the church yard and paid tribute to their memory.

Later on, President Serzh Sargsyan held a meeting with the representatives of Uruguay’s Armenian organizations and benefactors at the AGBU’s Nubaryan College. By the decree of the RA President the representative of the ARF and Uruguay’s Armenian Cause office Arpi Hochachanyan, the benefactor Karapet Pilavjyan, the Uruguayan Minister of Tourism and Sport Lilian Keshishyan were awarded the Movses Khorenatsi Medal for strengthening the Motherland-Diaspora ties and making a significant contribution to the preservation of the Armenian identity. The president awarded the Mkhitar Gosh Medal to Senator Rafael Michelini and the member of the Uruguayan parliament Ruben Martinez Huelmo for making a significant contribution to the process of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Sargisian went on to Chile, where he met with President Michelle Bachelet. The two presidents discussed a wide range of issues on strengthening the Armenian-Chilean interstate ties and making joint efforts in a row of spheres, which have a prospect for the development of cooperation.

Sargisian laid a wreath at the monument to the National Hero of Chile General Bernardo O’Higgins and paid tribute to his memory.

Following the official welcoming ceremony of the President of the Republic of Armenia, the meeting between Sargisian and Bachelet was held in La Moneda – the seat of the president.

Sargisian also met with them of the Chilean capital city of Santiago, Carolina Tohá, who handed the city’s key and certificate of honorable visitor to the Armenian President.

Community News

A Century of Light, Hope, and Faith: Providence Parish Celebrates Centennial

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence, one of the oldest churches in the Eastern Diocese, turned 100 this month and parishioners there observed the milestone with a jubilant weekend of events and services.

The three-day commemoration culminated on Sunday, June 15, when Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy and consecrated a new khatchkar on church grounds.

“In this city of Providence – a name drawn from the Christian faith itself – our ancestors planted the seed of the Armenian Church, nourished it with their dedication and love, and allowed this parish to grow and blossom,” Archbishop Barsamian said. “This faith has been the light of our path as a people...and it guides the Armenian people to this day.”

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, parishioner and artist Artur Ovanesyan unveiled two icons of the archangels Michael and Gabriel that he painted for the sanctuary. Archbishop Barsamian consecrated the icons, which will be installed above the altar.

The Primate, Rev. Shnorh Souin, parish pastor, and Rev. Mardiros Chevian led a procession to the church courtyard where a



Clergy at the new centennial khatchkar in the church courtyard.

new khatchkar was recently installed in honor of the centennial. The khatchkar – a project made possible thanks to the generosity of the entire parish – was crafted in Armenia. At its base is a carved relief of the church's patron saints, Sahag and Mesrob, holding up an open book bearing the Armenian alphabet. The parish's centennial anniversary theme is inscribed above the carving: “In God's Providence – a Year at a Time – a Century of Light, Hope, and Faith.” Parishioner Paul Surabian designed and planted a garden around the new monument. He also erected the khatchkar.

“This khatchkar is a great symbol to the memory of faith-filled generations who have left so great a legacy to our church,” Souin said. “The faithful of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church look forward with hope to a bright future filled with a profound commitment to Christ and a collective life of light, hope, and faith.”

On the previous morning, Saturday, June 14, Barsamian had met with young parishioners, including altar servers, choir members, and recent Sunday School graduates. The informal gathering gave the group an opportunity to share their involvement at their home parish,

see CENTENNIAL, page 10



Ambassador Markarian delivers his farewell address in New York.

New York Community Honors Armenia's Outgoing Ambassador to the US

NEW YORK – It was a bittersweet occasion as diplomats, organization representatives, leaders in the arts and professions and friends paid tribute to Armenia's Ambassador to the United States Tatoul Markarian on Tuesday, June 24. The event, which was sponsored and hosted by Armenia Fund, took place in the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

By Florence Avakian

Markarian served in this post for nine years and is departing to take up another high position for the Republic of Armenia. During this period, he also served as Armenia's representative in the Organization of American States.

At the reception, the ambassador and his wife, Anna, were honored by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Dr. Movses Abelian and Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanian. Also present were executives of Armenia Fund and the Fund for Armenian Relief, and philanthropists Nazar and Artemis Nazarian, and Aso Tavitian.

Armenia Fund Executive Director Khoren Bandazian served as the master of ceremonies, launching the evening by relating the background of Markarian, who was born in Kapan, Armenia, and holds advanced degrees from Johns Hopkins University and the London School of Economics.

Before being appointed ambassador to the United States in March 2005 by President Robert Kocharian, he served as deputy minister of foreign affairs, coordinator for the US-Armenian Strategic Dialogue and the special representative for Nagorno-Karabagh.

Archbishop Barsamian, speaking in English, paid tribute “to a friend who has earned the respect of the diplomatic community and the affection of us all – as a dedicated church-goer, and as an approachable and compassionate member of the community.” Barsamian spoke of Markarian's “talent, integrity and dedication to the advancement of our still-young homeland.”

see MARKARIAN, page 7



Nazar Nazarian speaks with Ambassador Markarian.

CYSCA Dental Instruments Project in Armenia

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) announced recently the establishment of a new Preventive Dentistry Program that has recently been approved and adopted into the curriculum at the Yerevan State Medical University's Therapeutic and Family Dentistry Department. The public's support of this project – Armenia's first class of dental school graduates that are trained in preventive dentistry – will be critical to its success.

Residents of Armenia, a country with an ancient and rich cultural history, have long been without access to preventive dentistry. Over the past several years, CYSCA has been working with the University to institute a preventive dentistry/dental hygiene course in Yerevan. The course, which is the first of its kind in Armenia, begins in September 2014, teaching both the theoretical and clinical components of the American dental hygiene program to dental students. Karina Matevosyan, MA, RDH, an experienced clinician from Cambridge, will be relocating to Yerevan for a three-year term to spearhead this program on CYSCA's behalf. She has taught at dental clinics at the Forsyth School of Dental Hygiene and Palm Beach State College in Florida.

Currently, there are 50 students enrolled in the course and each student requires two sets of instruments to complete the practical component of their studies. In addition, upon graduating and joining the workforce, these students will require the instruments to begin practicing preventive dentistry in Armenia. The total cost of the necessary instruments for each student is \$500.

A donation in any amount will help to ensure that each student has the tools to complete his/her studies and begin the practice of preventive dentistry. CYSCA will match up to 100 percent of each donation received through July 2014. Contributions are tax-deductible. Checks can be made out to “CYSCA.” Note in Memo: Dental Instruments Project and sent to CYSCA, P.O. Box 382591, Cambridge, MA 02238.

Scholarships Distributed In Watertown

WATERTOWN – On Sunday, June 15, St. James Armenian Apostolic Church held its annual Scholarship Sunday event, presenting 25 scholarships totaling more than \$21,000 to St. James members who are college students.

Following the Divine Liturgy, the Rev. Arakel Aljalian presented the scholarships to the recipients and congratulated them on their achievements. “Work hard this year, and don't forget that St. James is always your home,” he said to the college students. “We support you and wish you success in your studies.”

This year's scholarship recipients are: Alina Bazarian, Karina Bekelian, Liana Bekelian, John Bogosian Trocchi, Alex Bresnee, Arlin Cimen, Kevin Eskici, Natalie Eskici, Ari Kazanjian, Aram Gurekian, Ava Gurekian, Shane Madden, William Musserian, Paul Pirundini, Alec Seferian, Ari Shirinian, Simon Tacvorian, and Hagop Toghramadjian. The scholarships are made possible thanks to various endowment funds at St. James Church.



College students at St. James who received scholarships from the church



OBITUARY

Mezzo-Soprano and Scholar Arpinee Sanoukian Berberian

BROOKINGS, S.D. — Operatic Mezzo-Soprano Arpinee Sanoukian Berberian died in her sleep on Saturday, June 28. She was 83.

She was born on November 26, 1930 to Armenian parents in Beirut, Lebanon. She attended college and earned a diploma in education from the Armenian Evangelical College in Beirut. Shortly after graduation, she decided to pursue a career in music and began her musical training at the Conservatoire National de Musique du Liban and studied voice with Professor Karnaoukoff. Soon after, she attended the Gomidan National Conservatory of Music in Yerevan, Armenia and earned a degree in vocal performance as a mezzo soprano, with emphasis in opera and voice pedagogy. After graduation, Arpinee continued her operatic training at the Conservatoire National de Musique and the Ecole Normal de Musique in Paris, France under the tutelage of Professor Girodeau. She was the recipient of many musical scholarships throughout her education. In 1967, she came to the United States where she briefly settled in Boston. There, she met her future husband, concert violinist Hratch Berberian. They were married on December 24,

1967 in Cambridge, Mass.

In the same year, she and her husband were both offered faculty positions to teach in the Department of Music at South Dakota State University (SDSU) in Brookings. At SDSU, she taught applied voice, vocal pedagogy, interpretation of Russian and French art songs, and opera. From 1976-1977, she continued advanced musical studies at the University of Iowa, studying voice with Professor Harvey. She also received a grant to study opera workshop with Boris Goldoski at Southeastern Massachusetts University.

Throughout her career, she gave many solo recitals, joint recitals, chamber music performances and has been a guest soloist with orchestras and choral groups in oratorios, masses and requiems in the US and abroad. She sang in more than seven languages and has also appeared in several operas, such as "Carmen," "Aida," "Werther," "Rigoletto," "Il Trovatore" and "Dido and Aeneas." Her varied recital repertoire has included Armenian, English, French, Russian, German, Spanish and Italian art songs and arias in their original languages.

She was an ardent advocate and promoter of

Armenian composers' art songs. She sang and recorded a majority of the Armenian art songs, including songs composed by her father-in-law, the esteemed composer, Hampartzoum Berberian. Her voice has been described by many as beautiful, rich, dominating and powerful. Her interpretation of arts songs has been described as unique, lush and expressive, always exhibiting her full quality, exquisite pitch and lively communication with her audience.

In 1985, she appeared as a guest soloist for the Silver Jubilee Concert of the KNAR Armenian Choral Society in Philadelphia. Five years later, she and her husband, Hratch, were invited by the Saint Mesrob Armenian Church in Racine, Wis. as guest soloists with the Racine Symphony Orchestra, on the occasion of the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

In addition to teaching, she served as an adjudicator, clinician and lecturer for the National Federation of Music Clubs and as a guest on "Commentary on the Classics" on South Dakota Public Radio. In 1992, she received the Bronze Staff Recognition Award for 25 Years of Distinguished Service to Young People and Devotion to Music Education from the South Dakota Educators Association.

She retired from SDSU in 1996. After retirement, she stayed active in numerous projects, such as creating compilation recordings of her past performances. She loved taking photographs, cooking and was a master seamstress. She was generous and caring and had a deep love for nature and animals.

She is survived by her husband of 47 years, Hratch; her two daughters, Ani Berberian of



Arpinee Sanoukian Berberian

Alexandria, Va. and Shoghig Berberian of Minneapolis, Minn.; her sisters, Lillian and Sylvie of Watertown, Mass.; her brother, Harout Sanoukian of Paris, France; nieces and a nephew. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ohannes and Araxie Sanoukian, and her older brother, Mardiros Sanoukian.

Visitation took place on Tuesday, July 1st Rude's Funeral Home in Brookings. The funeral service was held on Wednesday, July 2 at the funeral home chapel. The Very Rev. Aren Jebejian from St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church in Chicago presided over the funeral service, and her daughter, clarinetist Ani Berberian, performed Oror by Hampartzoum Berberian.

Samuel 'Sam' Mirakian

CLEVELAND, Ohio — Samuel "Sam" Mirakian, 84, died in June.

Souren "Sam" Mirakian was born at home in Cleveland, Ohio on October 5, 1929, the youngest of three children of Hovanes Tarkanian Mirakian originally from Malatia, Turkey and Loosaper Pilibosian originally from Afion-Karahissar, Turkey. His siblings are his sister, Shakay Mooradian and his brother, the late Nazar "Nat" Mirakian. Sam grew up on the east side of Cleveland and graduated from South High School in 1948.

He joined the US Army during the Korean War in 1950 and served as a photographer, documenting conditions and activities in post-war Germany, before being honorably discharged in 1952.

He returned home to Cleveland where he attended Cleveland State University for two years.

While attending college, he worked in an office, eventually becoming the office manager. He could have stayed on in that capacity, but Sam's always independent spirit and high energy, coupled with his dream of being self-employed, spurred him on to open his first business, Pandy's, a small restaurant and lunch counter. He and his partner operated this business for a few years before moving on to other endeavors.

Ever the independent entrepreneur, Mirakian established a janitorial service business, John's Maintenance, where his brother Nat later joined him as a partner. In addition they formed another maintenance company, Alert Maintenance. In time, the businesses grew to the point where they employed several cleaning crews. John's Maintenance was responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of several downtown Cleveland skyscrapers as well as a number of suburban properties.

For many years, his focus was on his work, but in 1967 he met the equally energetic Sirpouhie "Sue" Khanjian and in 1968 she became his wife and life-long helpmate. Nine months later their daughter, Victoria Lee "Vicky", was born. The following year Sam and Sue had their second child, Sam, Jr., and their family was complete. Family meant a great deal to Sam and he was a devoted husband and father.

In 1964, he was the founder of the Sons of Malatia, the longest-lasting Armenian organization in greater Cleveland, which is still in operation today, 50 years later. In addition to being a

social group, the Sons of Malatia raised thousands of dollars over the years, which were then used to fund charitable activities in Armenia.

Mirakian's service to the church was long and varied. He served as both a member and president of the Parish Council, as a member of the building committee for the hall, and with his wife Sue and his "buddy" Ann Abdalian, founded the Saturday Armenian School.

He was also a longtime and active member of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and the Armenian Democratic League.

His interest and community involvement was not limited to Armenian activities and organizations; he was a 32nd degree Mason and a Silver Leader of the Disabled American Veterans.

His commitment to his Armenian heritage and his pride in being an American came together in two activities that typify how he combined these two very important aspects of his life. First was his involvement as producer and host for more than 25 years of the Armenian Radio Hour, which was broadcast every Sunday on WJCU. Sam and his wife Sue worked tirelessly on each week's program, preparing from international news sources relevant and timely reports and recaps of the news that pertained to Armenia and Armenians. The program also contained a cultural component which included Armenian music, literary readings and human interest stories. Upon his retirement from the Armenian Radio Hour the staff had this to say about Mirakian:

"The show gave local Armenians, and most importantly non-Armenians, great exposure to Armenian music, news and culture. Besides giving Armenians a voice on the airwaves, Sam was instrumental in raising thousands of dollars for WJCU... Sam's dedication, hard work and positive attitude will be difficult to replicate."

Second was the community outreach that husband and wife did by going to schools and giving presentations about the Armenian genocide. They spoke to students about a chapter of Armenian history that could possibly be seen by these students as boring or too ancient to matter. Sam and Sue personalized and put a face on what otherwise might have been an ignored or forgotten lesson. But the students to whom they spoke forgot neither them nor their history lesson. They were asked to return year after year.

In addition to his wife, he leaves his children, Vicky and Sam Jr.; siblings Shakay Mooradian (Cross) and Nazar Mirakian (Lucine).

His memorial service took place on Saturday, July 12 at St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to: St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church, 678 Richmond Road, Richmond Heights, Ohio 44143 or Armenian General Benevolent Union, 55 E. 59th St., New York, NY 10022.



Samuel "Sam" Mirakian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Arshag Dickranian School Holds Its 2014 Commencement

LOS ANGELES – In an air of celebration, the Tekeyan Cultural Association's (TCA) Arshag Dickranian School (ADS) held its 33rd Commencement Ceremony for its 12th, eighth and fifth grades on Saturday, June 21, at the Walter and Laurel Karabian Hall. Guests included Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the Primate of the Armenian Church of America, Western Diocese, school benefactresses Cindy Norian and Laurel Karabian, benefactor Hmayak Baltayan, Board Members and parents.

The commencement ceremony began with the Processional of the students, followed by the school choir's rendition of the American and Armenian National Anthems and the Arshag Dickranian School hymn.

Third-grade teacher and 1997 ADS alumna Violet Tatoian acted as MC. Tatoian greeted the students, the guests and teachers in her opening remarks and gave a heartening speech about her experiences at the school. She then invited Board Chairman George K. Mandossian to deliver his remarks on behalf of the School Board of Trustees. Mandossian stressed the vital curriculum and student achievements attained during the academic year under the school's new leadership and ended his remarks by thanking the parents, the organizations and benefactors for their support.

The MC next called upon the Senior Valedictorians Nerses Bogosyan and Zhanna Khnkoyan and Senior Salutatorian Lilit Demirtchian to deliver their speeches. The three thanked their parents for the sacrifices they have made for them and the school for giving them the opportunity to learn valuable lessons in life. The students also talked about their most fond memories at the school and of their classmates, moving their classmates and attendants with their touching words.

Next, Principal Dr. Manoug Seraydarian conducted the Presentation of the Awards by handing prizes to the achieving students.

The keynote speakers of the ceremony were 1994 ADS alumna, Astghik Pilosyan, D. Phar., and 2004 ADS alumnus, Hovsep Yepremian, Esq. In her speech, Pilosyan urged Armenians to continue sending their children to Armenian schools, highlighting the safe environment they offer and expressing how grateful she is for attending Arshag Dickranian School. On the other hand, Yepremian discussed about life after graduating from ADS. Yepremian advised stu-

CLASS OF 2014 2014-Ի ՇՐՋԱՆԱԲԱՐՏՆԵՐԸ

12th GRADE 12-րդ ԳՐԱՅԻՐԱՆ



Vahe Arevshatian * Վահե Արևշատյան
Nerses Bogosyan * Ներսես Բոգոսյան
Lilit Demirtchian * Լիլիթ Դեմիրժիան
Christine Dzhulfayan * Կրիստինե Զախլաֆյան



Gayana Khachikian * Գայանա Խաչիկյան
Zhanna Khnkoyan * Ժաննա Խհնկոյան
Narek Mamikonyan * Նարեկ Մամիկոնյան
Arthur Mazloumian * Արթուր Մազլումյան
Hakop Mkhsian * Հակոբ Մխչյան



Johnny Odabashyan * Ջոնի Օդաբաշյան
Hakob Seropian * Հակոբ Տերոփյան
David Sulian * Դավիթ Տուլյան
Mary Sultanyan * Մարի Տուլանյան
Mariana Toutoundjian * Մարիանա Թութունժյան

dents to work towards their goals but to also learn from their mistakes and utilize that knowledge to move ahead with their endeavors.

Next, Tatoian invited fifth-grade homeroom teacher Lusine Asatryan and Seraydarian to present the fifth-grade diplomas, which was followed by presenting the eighth grade with their diplomas and finally the Class of 2014. Seraydarian invited school Baltayan to join him in presenting the diplomas to the fifth-grade students and Noryan in presenting the diplomas to eighth-grade students.

Seraydarian then invited Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and Mandossian to present the diplomas to the Class of 2014.

Students Vahe Arevshatian, Nerses Bogosyan, Lilit Demirtchian, Christine Dzhulfayan, Gayana Khachikian, Zhanna Khnkoyan, Narek Mamikonyan, Arthur Mazloumian, Hakop Mkhsian, Johnny Odabashyan, Hakob Seropian, David Sulian, Mary Sultanyan and Mariana Toutoundjian stood up when their names were called and walked across the stage to receive their high school diplomas amid cheers and applause.

Seraydarian bid farewell to the graduating students and congratulated them and their parents for their memorable achievement.

For more information visit www.dickranianschool.org.

New York Honors Outgoing Ambassador

MARKKARIAN, from page 7

"He has expressed the vitality and vigor of Armenia's new generation," he added, "and shown our homeland to be a modern, forward-looking nation, eager to take its place in the family of nations."

Archbishop Choloyan, speaking in Armenian, said, "We say farewell, but we send our warm greetings and wishes for your dedicated service."

Addressing the ambassador, Choloyan added: "Your experience and wisdom have greatly helped our people."

In his message of appreciation to the event organizers and benefactors, Markarian paid special tribute to the devotion and hard work of the diaspora. With evident emotion, he said: "We in Armenia, together with you in the diaspora, are the protectors of our homeland. I look forward to our future relations, and I know we will meet in the future at the crossroads of life."

A standing ovation greeted his words.



Archbishop Barsamian and Amb. Markarian

Congressmen Commend Ambassador Markarian

By Mariam Pashayan

WASHINGTON – On Thursday, July 3, Armenian Caucus Co-chair Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) submitted a statement into the Congressional Record of the US House of Representatives in dedication to outgoing Armenian Ambassador Tatoul Markarian. Markarian has been Armenia's Ambassador in Washington since 2005. Before his appointment as Ambassador, Markarian was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2000-2005.

"Ambassador Markarian has dedicated his life to public service and the people of Armenia," said Congressman Pallone. Pallone also mentioned their close working relationship in advocating Armenian issues stating, "Together, we have fought together for Congressional Recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and foreign aid assistance to both the Nagorno Karabagh Republic and Armenia."

Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) also submitted a statement into the record to pay tribute to the outgoing Ambassador stating, "Dr. Markarian has been a crucial figure in fostering relations between Armenia and the United States." Congressmen Pallone and Sherman praised the ambassador for being such a strong advocate for Armenia in the United States. Sherman also applauded Ambassador Markarian for his tireless efforts in securing a brighter future for Armenia and Artsakh stating, "He has been instrumental in securing increased humanitarian assistance from the US. to both Armenia and Artsakh, two struggling economies that are in great need of economic support."

Pallone co-founded the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues in 1995 and serves as its co-chairman. Congressman Pallone has been to Armenia and the Nagorno Karabagh Republic numerous times and continues to advocate for US reaffirmation of the Armenian Genocide. Sherman has represented California's San Fernando Valley in the US House of Representatives since 1997. Sherman is an outspoken defender of America's ally Armenia and the independence of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Young Pilgrims Grow in Faith, Imbibe Armenian Spirit of the Holy Land

By Maria Derderian

NEW YORK — In early June, a group of young adults from parishes across the Eastern Diocese came together to journey halfway across the world, to a place they had only heard about.

Ten days later, the 29 young pilgrims returned as a family, changed by their experiences and brought together by their spiritual journey in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The fourth annual Youth Leadership Pilgrimage to the Holy Land was led by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern). The Primate was assisted by the Rev. Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan, pastor of St. Mary Church of Washington, DC; Maria Derderian, youth minister at St. James Church of Watertown, MA; and Arpi Nakashian, a student at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.

At the start of their pilgrimage, the young people traveled to Bethlehem where they took part in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Nativity of Christ. They descended into the Holy Grotto and knelt before the silver star that marks the place where Christ was born. As they would do at other points throughout the trip, they served on the altar and sang the sacred hymns of the Divine Liturgy.

“We begin our pilgrimage in the birthplace of our Lord,” said Karapetyan in his sermon that morning. “It was in this humble setting that Christ was born, and humility was a lesson he taught throughout his earthly ministry. We must remember this lesson, and start our journey with open hearts.”

At the conclusion of the service, the group proceeded to the Armenian monastery and later gathered for Bible study at Shepherds’ Field, where the angels announced the joyous news of Christ’s birth.

“It was moving to read and reflect about Jesus’ birth and life right after being at his birthplace,” said Lucine Kionoian of St. Leon Church of Fair Lawn, NJ. “We discussed and reflected on the life and teachings of Jesus as they relate to our lives and modern society, and shared our personal experiences with each other.”

Learning through scripture

On another day, the pilgrims traveled to the Church of the Tomb of the Blessed Virgin, where Barsamian celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Armenians hold services daily at this church, which marks the site where Mary was buried by the apostles before her assumption into heaven.

“We are on a journey that has the power to shape us, and direct us, throughout our lives,” Archbishop Barsamian said to the young people. “As we learn more about our Lord, we will also learn more about ourselves, and we will recognize the great potential that lives within each of us — which Christ wants to draw out of our hearts.”

At the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations, the pilgrims prayed before the rock upon which Jesus prayed on the night of his arrest. During a Bible study session, they discussed the importance of both individual and communal prayer.

“Our Bible studies were a highlight of the trip,” said Christine Hovsepian of Holy Trinity Church of Cambridge. “The fact that we all opened our hearts to each other and had such in-depth conversations about our faith made our time here even more meaningful.”

Later they visited the Pater Noster Church and found the Lord’s Prayer inscribed in Armenian, as well as in more than 130 other languages.

Traveling outside Jerusalem, the group headed to the region of Galilee, where they visited



A Bible study session at the Pater Noster Church

the Church of the Beatitudes. During a Bible study there, they reviewed the Beatitudes of Jesus and considered how these teachings can help them become better leaders in their parishes.

A boat ride took the group across the Sea of Galilee. Karapetyan encouraged the group to pause in quiet meditation, and later everyone enjoyed fellowship and dancing to traditional Armenian music.

“Fr. Hovsep’s reflection was particularly meaningful for me,” said Karina Bekelian of St. James Church of Watertown. “After highlighting the significance of the Sea of Galilee in Jesus’ journey, he invited us to reflect on God’s love, reminding us that love is stronger than fear. It’s important to remember that our daily struggles and the things that frighten us will not prevail as long as we have faith in God’s love for us.”

The group also saw the site where Jesus multiplied the fish and bread to feed a crowd of 5,000 people, and they traveled to Nazareth to visit the Church of the Annunciation, built over the well at which Mary received the news that she would conceive a child. At Mt. Tabor, they saw where Jesus was transfigured before the disciples Peter, James, and John.

Another highlight of the pilgrimage was the group’s visit to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The young people were welcomed by His Beatitude Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, who spoke to them about the importance of preserving the ancient Armenian presence in the Holy Land.

ACYOA members Krikor Javardian and

Karina Bekelian presented Archbishop Manougian with a check for \$1,000 on behalf of the ACYOA Central Council, as part of the organization’s annual contribution to the Armenian Patriarchate.

Following lunch with members of the St. James Brotherhood, the group took part in an evening service at Sts. James Cathedral, where



Pilgrims in prayer at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

they witnessed young seminarians ordained to the rank of acolyte. They received a formal tour of the Patriarchate — with stops at the Sts. Tarkmanchatz School, the Calouste Gulbenkian

Library, and the 13th-century Church of the Holy Archangels. In the evening, they enjoyed a volleyball game and fellowship with local Armenian youth.

“One of my most memorable experiences was interacting with the Armenian community in Jerusalem,” said Krikor Paylan of St. James Church of Evanston, Ill. “They were so welcoming, and showed me how strong Armenian fellowship can be, even halfway across the globe. This trip also brought to light the importance of preserving the Armenian presence and culture in Jerusalem.”

Rising before 2 a.m. on Sunday, June 8, the young pilgrims made their way through the Old City to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the site of Christ’s crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Karapetyan celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the empty tomb of Christ, and the pilgrims had an opportunity to pray at one of the holiest sites in the Christian faith.

“We all felt proud to see how many Armenian influences were present throughout the Church of the Holy Sepulcher,” said Valerie Gideon of St. Gregory of Narek Church of Cleveland. “It was moving to reflect on all the Armenian pilgrims who have prayed here before us for centuries, and the future generations of Armenians who will make pilgrimages to this holy place.”

The pilgrims also traveled to the Jordan River, where Archbishop Barsamian and Fr. Karapetyan performed the “Blessing of Water” ceremony. The olive wood crosses that were used during the ceremony were presented to three pilgrims whose birthdays were closest to the date of the visit: Christine Hovsepian of Holy Trinity Church of Cambridge, Mass.; Krikor Javardian of Holy Trinity Church of Cheltenham, Penn. and Maral Sivaslian of St. Mary Church of Washington, DC.

“I can’t put into words the feeling that overcame me as I watched Archbishop Barsamian dip the cross into the Jordan River,” said Christine Hovsepian. “Later we had a chance to walk into the river where Christ was baptized — it was an unforgettable experience.”

Other sites the pilgrims visited were the Mount of Temptation, Pool of Bethesda, Jericho, the Qumran Caves, and the Dead Sea. They also saw sites sacred to other faiths present in the Holy Land, including the Wailing Wall.

Their journey came to a close in the Upper

Room, the site of the last supper, and the place where the disciples gathered and felt the presence of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. There the

continued on next page



COMMUNITY NEWS

COAF Annual Summer Soiree Raises more Than \$50K in Support of School Auditorium

NEW YORK – The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), a non-profit organization committed to improving the lives of children in rural Armenia, held its fourth annual summer soiree on June 24 at the PH-D Rooftop Lounge of the Dream Hotel Downtown. Close to 300 COAF friends and supporters gathered to celebrate the organization's recent accomplishments and raise funds for the renovation of a school auditorium in the village of Aragatsavan located in the Aragatsotn region of Armenia.

The school's auditorium is currently in a dilapidated state with most of the 350 schoolchildren being forced to assemble in the school's hallways for special events and recitals. Having received numerous appeals from the children of Aragatsavan, COAF will now begin the renovation process of the auditorium and provide them with a safe and comfortable platform where they can freely express themselves and stage various performances, as well as school assemblies.

COAF Founder and Chairman Dr. Garo H. Armen welcomed guests and addressed the important role Diasporans play in contributing toward the overall progress and development of the new generation in Armenia. COAF Board Member Michael Aram spoke of his recent trip to Armenia and how inspired he was during a gathering with teenagers in the village of Karakert. Michael recalled how sitting on the ground and engaging with the students and answering their various questions was the highlight of his visit last month. Final remarks were made by Haig Boyadjian, head of marketing from the COAF office in Yerevan. Haig touched upon his experience as an Armenian-American living in Armenia for three years and the critical work he is engaged in with beneficiary children living in COAF-sponsored villages.

The evening was sponsored by Michael Aram, Fancy Face Photobooth, The Squeeze, Cupcakes by Sonia, Baked by Melissa, Gourmet Dourmé and Armoir Fashion.

The school auditorium in Aragatsavan will be renovated over the summer and ready for use when the children are back from vacation in the fall. Thus far, COAF has built a technology-enhanced Creativity Lab at the school in Aragatsavan (sponsored by Ameriabank). A playground will also be built this summer. A recent joint campaign with ONEArmenia will also feature a brand new cafeteria and dental station (brushodrome) at the school in September.

For more information, visit coafkids.org.



COAF Marketing Manager Haig Boyadjian, Founder and Chairman Garo Armen, Board Member Michael Aram



Caroline Curtis, Board Member Larry Feinberg, Samantha Feinberg



Scout Tufankjian, COAF Founder and Chairman Garo Armen, Board Member Nicole Vartanian



Patricia Field

from previous page

pilgrims joined their voices in signing the Armenian hymn *Krisdos ee mech mer haydnet-sav*. They reflected on how the pilgrimage had changed them, and shared what it meant for them to walk in the footsteps of Christ.

"I developed an even greater sense of my Armenian identity after seeing all of the Armenian influences in the Holy Land," said Krikor Javardian of Holy Trinity Church of Cheltenham, Penn. "I grew in my faith and in my understanding of the great sacrifice Christ made, and of the immense love he has for each of us."

On their final day in Jerusalem the group celebrated their new friendships during a festive farewell dinner at a local Armenian restaurant. Later that evening they met with benefactor Aso Tavitian, who from the inception of this annual pilgrimage has been a major supporter of the Primate's vision to take promising young

adults to the Holy Land.

Tavitian had traveled from New York to Jerusalem to meet with the pilgrims and discuss how the trip had helped shape their identity as Armenian Christians. The pilgrims also brainstormed ideas about how they might keep alive the spirit of Armenian Jerusalem in their home parishes.

"It's inspirational for me to spend time with such young people in this setting each year," said Barsamian. "With this group once again I observed their communication with each other, their graciousness to others, and the deep religious feeling they showed among the holy sites."

"Our people should know how blessed we are to have such a generation," concluded the Primate. "They're an inspiration to me personally. And they are our assurance that the mission of the Armenian Church will continue in the future."



Pilgrims with Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, and Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.



COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School Holds 2014 Graduation Ceremonies

WATERTOWN – In June, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) completed its 30th academic year. The Graduation Ceremonies were held on June 19 for the kindergarten and June 20 for elementary students.

On both days, in her speech Principal Houry Boyamian focused on the school's achievements, especially on its STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Initiative and the annual graduating class trip to Armenia. She thanked the faculty, the administrative staff, the PTO, the parent volunteers, the school board and committees, the St. Stephen's Church board of trustees, Rev. Antranig Baljian, as well as all the organizations and individuals that contribute to the



Principal Houry Boyamian and Heather Krafian honor Ardemis Megerdichian for her 15 years of service the Armenian teacher for grades 1-5.

advancement of the school.

On June 19, Boyamian honored three educators mentioning their special strengths and their contribution to the school. Preschool Director Maral Orchanian and Nursery I teacher Anna Kupelian received the Golden Logo of the school for their 15 years of service.

Araxie Poladian, who is retiring after 21 years of dedicated service as Nursery II teacher at SSAES with a total of 44 years of teaching in Armenian schools, received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Armenian Prelacy signed by Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, and a proclamation from Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick. The school has established the Araxie Poladian Scholarship Fund. Those who would like to express their appreciation to Poladian,

Gassia Minassian, Nareg Minassian, Nicholas Nalbandyan, Arin Nazarian, Vicken Panian, Alla Petrosyan, Lory Simon, Arinne Stepanian, Sophia Tinkjian and Armen Vartanian.

On June 20, Boyamian honored Ardemis Megerdichian with the school's Golden Logo for her 15 years of service as Armenian teacher for grades 1-5. Boyamian focused on Megerdichian's role in developing the students' sense of national identity and pride in their heritage.

On June 20, 10 students graduated from the elementary school. They are: Antranig Atinizian, Isabella Balian, Berj Chekijian, Lori Ganjian, Shant Karamousayan, Knar Krafian, Elizabeth Krmzian, Ani Ourfalian, Garen Sahakian and Gacia Vosbigian.

The elementary graduation program was dedicated to "Our Elders," as Catholicos Aram I of the See of Cilicia has proclaimed 2014 "The Year of our Elders." The second part of the program was dedicated to Armenia. The elementary students presented both themes with poetry and chorale songs, followed by a video presentation of the trip to Armenia coordinated with great expertise by Megerdichian.

On both days, Baljian expressed his appreciation to the administration and faculty for their dedication and effort.

Awards 2014

I- Gr. 5 Awards for Excellence in Armenian Studies

Prelacy Award: Isabella Balian, Lori Ganjian, Gacia Vosbigian and Shant Karamousayan
Armenian Relief Society Award: Berj Chekijian

St. Stephen's School Award: Elizabeth Krmzian, Garen Sahakian, Ani Ourfalian, Knar Krafian, Antranig Atinizian

II- President's Education Award

Presidential Award for Academic Excellence: Isabella Balian, Knar Krafian
Presidential Award for Academic Achievement: Lori Ganjian, Gacia Vosbigian

III- American Citizenship Award: Antranig Atinizian

Gr. 5 students with Special Strengths in the following subjects:

Achievements in Mathematics: Berj Chekijian, Ani Ourfalian and Shant Karamousayan

Achievements in Writing Composition: Elizabeth Krmzian

Achievements in Social Studies: Garen Sahakian

Achievements in Science: Antranig Atinizian

IV- ARS Essay Contest:

-2nd Place: Elizabeth Krmzian

-3rd Place: Ani Ourfalian and Lori Ganjian

V-Nishan and Arshalouys Scholarship Fund for Music and Art:

Art: Talar Panossian and Music: Nareg Minassian (\$200 each) (Gr. 4)

VI- Anahid Kazazian Scholarship (\$100 each)

Chris Ashjian and Benjamin Surenian

VII- Perfect Attendance Award

Grade 2: Aren Panian



SSAES 2014 Gr. 5 Graduates with, from left, Ardemis Megerdichian, Principal Houry Boyamian, Rev. Antranig Baljian and Mark Boylan

may send their contribution to the school address, attention: Araxie Poladian Scholarship Fund. Three former students, Serena Hajjar, Armine Afeyan (on June 19) and Nairi Krafian (on June 20) presented their memories about their experience in Poladian's NII classroom.

On June 19, 27 students graduated from the kindergarten: Vartan Arakelian, Andre Bashirians, Frieda Bilezikian, Julia Chapian, Lara Chekijian, Jake Gobbi, Sonya Haleblan, Gacia Haserjian, Saro Iskenderian, Anais Kahvejian, Lea Karapetian, Harout Keledjian, Michael Mahtesyan, Samuel Makarian, Narineh Mardiros, Sarine Markarian, Zulal Merdinoglu,

A Century of Light, Hope and Faith: Providence Parish Celebrates Centennial

CENTENNIAL, from page 5

and to hear from the Primate about youth programs that could strengthen their participation in the Armenian Church.

In the evening, 250 people gathered at the Providence Marriott for a gala banquet celebrating the church's centennial.

Katherine Kazarian, an active parishioner and the youngest woman to be elected to the Rhode Island House of Representatives, served as the mistress of ceremonies. She opened the evening's program with a reflection on a historic photograph of the church's founders and their farsighted plan for the Armenian community of Rhode Island.

Parish council chair John Kazarian welcomed guests, and a toast was made by the banquet committee chair Nathalie Yaghoobian. Yn. Julie Souin and Stephanie Masoian sang the national anthems of the United States and the Republic of Armenia.

The Rev. Fr. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Nersess Seminary and a native of Rhode Island, spoke about growing up at Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church. He said that the church's founders laid the groundwork for what would become a vibrant Armenian center in New England, and encouraged the young generation of parishioners to look to their example for inspiration as they prepare to embark on the next stage of the parish's journey.

Fr. Souin expressed his appreciation to all the parishioners who worked hard to organize



Archbishop Barsamian consecrates two icons of the archangels Michael and Gabriel.

the centennial events. He emphasized the importance of working together in accomplishing the goals the parish has set for the coming years. One of the projects the parish hopes to take up in the near future is the renovation of its educational facilities – an initiative that will encourage young Armenians to continue learning about their faith and heritage.

U.S. Congressmen David Cicilline and James Langevin presented Fr. Souin with congressional citations and delivered remarks highlighting the contributions of the Armenian community to the state of Rhode Island. Scott Avedesian, mayor of Warwick, RI, and Alan Fung, mayor of Cranston, RI, were also in attendance.

A musical performance was made by parishioners David Alexander and conductor Konstantin Petrossian.

In his closing remarks, Barsamian spoke about the sacrifices made by the church's founders, many of whom had come to America seeking a new life in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide.

"Because of the solid foundation of our heritage, and the great inner strength of the Armenian people, they were able to weather the storms and begin anew in this blessed land," Archbishop Barsamian said. "In this church, they have created a legacy for future generations: a blessing that has grown – and will continue to grow – in years to come. You have built a stage on which your children can be inspired, encouraged and trained, to take up their own places in the leadership of this parish, and in the service of God."

A legacy continued

On Friday, June 13, a concert was held at the St. Mary and St. Mena Coptic Orthodox Church in Hope, RI. Some 550 people gathered to hear soloists from Armenia, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York, as well as the Armenian chorale and orchestra of Rhode Island. The concert went forward under the direction of Petrossian.

At the conclusion of the evening's program, Barsamian presented Petrossian with the "St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Medal" and Pontifical Encyclical, bestowed by Karekin II, in honor of Petrossian's contributions to the Armenian Church.

Also as part of the anniversary events, the parish published a booklet titled "Reflections of Light, Hope and Faith in God's Providence." The full-color publication features an article on the church's history, as well as photographs and explanations about the stained glass windows and icons found in the sanctuary. The booklet is available for purchase from the church office.

Armenians began to settle in Providence in the late 19th century, with large waves of immigrants arriving after the Hamidian massacres of 1895-96 and the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The current building on Jefferson Street was purchased in 1913, and the church was consecrated on June 7, 1914, by Bishop Moushegh Seropian.

In June 1960, during his historic first visit to the Eastern Diocese, Vasken I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, blessed the cornerstone of the church's Egavian Auditorium. Classrooms were built in 1963, and renovations and expansions ensued in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s. Most recently, the parish upgraded its kitchen storage facilities and installed an audio visual system in the church hall. In May 2014, Providence Mayor Angel Taveras renamed Jefferson Street as "Mesrob Mashdots Boulevard."

Arts & Living

Kansas City Symphony Takes its Game Outside To the Hills

By Travis Gillespie

WICHITA, Kansas (*Emporia Gazette*) – The ninth annual Symphony in the Flint Hills made a big impression on Rosalia Township in June, overcoming challenging winds and rising costs to raise awareness of the tallgrass prairie and treat visitors to another performance by the Kansas City Symphony.

An enthusiastic crowd of more than 7,000 people bet against a shaky weather forecast and traveled to Rosalia Ranch, the 10,000-acre venue 16 miles east of El Dorado chosen to host this year's concert. They were rewarded with reasonable temperatures, soaring music and a blazing sunset. According to Associate Conductor Aram Demirjian, this is one of the symphony's biggest performances every year.

"Not many people get the opportunity to play in a place like this," Demirjian said.

Karen Hall of Independence, Mo., said that many people who don't know the prairie think of it as fly-over country, but she called it a jewel.

"I think that when people have a chance to experience this openness – and this cultural openness – it contributes to efforts to preserve it."

Rosalia Ranch's vibrant, rolling hills inspired the symphony's musical selections, which played on the relationship between land, sky and people. The symphony's performance, however, was trumped by a more important aspect of the event – education about the prairie, Symphony in the Flint Hills Executive Director Christy Davis said.

Many of Saturday's activities focused on education, including expert speakers on topics ranging from the area's wild mustangs to oil exploration to the Native Americans who once inhabited the land. Those lectures were a highlight for husband and wife Darrel and Wanda Unruh of Newton, who have been volunteering for eight years.

"I just love the Flint Hills," Wanda said. "People need to understand how important this land is. There's something magical about it."

Nature walk guide and grass management expert Tom Eddy, Emporia State University professor of biological sciences, agreed.

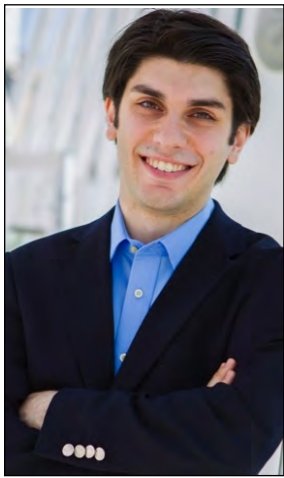
"It's probably the most interesting site we've had yet," he said. "People come here and learn that these plants have value to them and the first year the concert didn't sell out on the first day of ticket sales. Another factor was the increase to their lives. This is worth preserving."

As the "front porch" to the Flint Hills, conservation of the Kansas Prairie is an important issue for Emporia. When the symphony event took place nearby in Lyon County in 2011, an estimated \$450,000 came into the local economy.

This year, the event was held the farthest south it's ever been, in Butler County, which the event director said contributed to this being in ticket price to \$90, which Davis attributed to the rising costs of organizing the event and the fact that sales of general admission tickets only cover one-third of the organization's expenses.

However, for many who did attend, including first-time volunteer Jesse Jones, 18, of Cottonwood Falls, the cost of not raising awareness of the threats to the Flint Hills is even greater.

"Everybody wants to be a cowboy when they come here," she said. "This event is very important because it puts that awareness in people – it helps preserve all this for future generations."



Aram Demirjian



Dr. Raffi Kantian

1914-2014 100 Years of the German-Armenian Society

POTSDAM, Germany – Johannes Lepsius is known for his work as a pastor and humanitarian who intervened on behalf of the Ottoman Armenians in the late 19th century. When the Genocide began he returned to Constantinople from Berlin and tried in vain to dissuade the Young Turk leaders from their extermination project. His

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

report on the systematic elimination of the Armenians through murder and deportation raised the alarm in Germany.

What is less well known about Lepsius, the "German exception," is that he established the German-Armenian Society, an organization which has just celebrated its 100th jubilee. Together with journalist Paul Rohrbach and the Armenian writer Avetik Issahakyan, Lepsius founded the "Deutsch-Armenische Gesellschaft" (DAG) in June 1914, whose aim was to promote understanding between Germans and Armenians as well as to cater to the needs of Armenians living in Germany. In addition, the DAG intervened to protect the interests of Armenian minorities in Turkey and other countries of the region.

On June 14 of this year, the DAG and the Lepsiushaus (the research and meeting center located in Lepsius's family estate in Potsdam) together celebrated the centenary with a conference and commemorative ceremony – at a time when events recollecting the outbreak of the catastrophic World War I are being organized internationally. In addition to Dr. Rolf Hoffeld, director of the Lepsiushaus, and Dr. Raffi Kantian, president of the DAG and publisher of its quarterly journal, the *Armenisch-Deutsche Korrespondenz*, were political, intellectual and religious figures in attendance.

Hoffeld said in his remarks, "The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* referred to Johannes Lepsius recently as a representative of the politics of law in a period in which international relations were characterized by anything but principles of law. Implementing such principles of law in the Armenian question served the lobbying of the German-Armenian Society in its foundation before World War I, and these principles characterize its successors' work still today...."

"Johannes Lepsius was a German exception. This is the title of a book that we published last year, with the acts of a scientific conference held at Potsdam University. A free conscience and the resulting responsibility for human rights for him always stood above national claims to power, also and especially in times of violence and war...The Lepsiushaus sees itself in his tradition and in this spirit as an institution for scientific research and debate as well as political education and dialogue with civil society aims."

He added, "The common aims and activities of the Lepsiushaus and German-Armenian Society have come about as an expression of their similar traditions and tasks. On this occasion, I would like to thank Raffi Kantian, who has participated in several conferences we have organized at the Lepsiushaus since its opening."

Following opening remarks by Hoffeld and Kantian was Prof. Manfred Aschke, president of the Constitutional Court in Thuringia, as well as member of the Lepsiushaus board. Aschke, who is the grandson of Johannes Lepsius, spoke about the period between the Armenian reforms of 1913 and the Genocide, and the corresponding changes in the tasks of the DAG. Prof. Hacik Gazer, an Armenian from Istanbul, who is professor of Oriental Church History at Erlangen, illustrated German-Armenian cultural cooperation during the 19th century, taking the example of Armenian students.

How Germany has dealt with the Genocide became a focus of discussion in a lecture given by Dr. Christoph Bergner. A member of the German parliament see GERMANY, page 13

MENK, Amaras Art Keep Tatoul Badalian Going

By Tom Vartabedian

WATERTOWN – Whether it is posting your calendar item or promoting a cultural venue, look no further than Tatoul Badalian.

He is a community catalyst who works in more ways than an Energizer bunny.

The calendar started in 2001, aptly named "MENK," which denotes togetherness and unity in a super-modified way. Anything you want posted can be found here under one convenient take. It has brought our splinter groups together and put us all together on more solid ground.

Badalian's MENK keeps track of dozens of Armenian activities and passes them along to a readership of thousands.

"There was a time when we used to have one or two public events per week," Badalian recalled. "Now, there are days where the options are far more abundant. As times change, so have we."

Getting everybody's notice any which way it comes and disseminating it into a more readable format each week takes organization when one considers all the churches and organizations in New England and the multifaceted roles they each play.

"You might say the calendar was a natural extension of my involvement in different com-



Tatoul Badalian

munity projects," Badalian pointed out. "I think this is where the real fun is where you drive a sense of belonging."

Badalian says our organizations are doing a great job of adding bells and whistles to their events, which keeps the calendar lively.

The on-line service he is using was recently enhanced with a new address: <http://www.brownbears.com/cal/menk> or you can Google it as "MENK Calendar." It continues to be published each Wednesday and remains under the umbrella of Hamazkayin-Boston.

"Volunteer work has always excited me and I've been involved with it ever since my high school days," he tells us. "In the 1980s, we were raising children so I was not so involved. When I went back in the '90s, things had changed."

In 1990, on came Amaras Art Alliance, which will soon celebrate its 25th anniversary.

Aside from supporting aspiring performers to achieve their potential, Amaras creates opportunities to observe, get involved and enjoy the traditions and customs of our diverse culture – from folk to fine art.

"To fulfill our mission, we organize events, activities and programs in the sphere of arts and education," Badalian confirms. "The core remains dedicated to see BADALIAN, page 12



ARTS & LIVING

AGBU NYSIP Intern Curates Concert in New York

NEW YORK – AGBU New York Summer Internship Program intern Joseph Bohigian is curating a concert on July 27 for the Composer's Voice Concert Series here. Composer's Voice is a collaboration between Jan Hus Church and Vox Novus, where Bohigian is an intern this summer. Performances are short chamber concerts held at Jan Hus Church and are an opportunity for contemporary composers to express their aesthetic and personal voice.

The July 27 concert will take place at 1 p.m. at Jan Hus Church, 351 East 74th Street, New York, NY 10021. It will feature the work of a wide variety of composers and performers from across the world.

Bohigian is a composer and performer from Fresno, whose music has been performed across the US, Europe and Armenia. He currently attends California State University Fresno where he performs with the New Music Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra and Percussion Ensemble and serves as president of the Composers' Guild and the New Music Club. At his concert on July 27th, Joseph will be performing two of his own works on piano. One of these, Dzirani Dzar, was written and premiered in Yerevan, Armenia in the summer 2012 while Bohigian was participating in the AGBU

Musical Armenia Program. For this piece, he will be joined in performance by composer and pianist Anna Aidinian.

Bohigian's internship with Vox Novus is sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union New York Summer Internship Program. The Internship Program provides career opportunities in New York City for Armenian university students from around the world. Through the program, he will be an intern with Vox Novus from mid June to mid August.

Founded in 2001 by Robert Voisey, the Composer's Voice Concert Series has had more than 100 concerts in New York City. Works are chosen from a wide range of contemporary composers and performed by dedicated musicians devoted to new music. The series has presented the works of hundreds of living composers from around the world. Concerts are held two times a month in the afternoon on the second and last Sundays of most months. The performances are recorded and archived to further promote the new music, performers, and composers. Audio, video, scores, and programs can be found on the Composer's Voice website. www.ComposersVoice.com

The Composer's Voice Concert Series, listed as "one of the premier showcases for promising composers" by Time Out New York, will pre-

sent works from a unique set of composers: Benjamin Boone, Kenneth Froelich, Joshua Marquez, Rain Worthington, Octavio Vazquez, Anna Aidinian, and Joseph Bohigian, which reflect the curator's aesthetic and experiences.

These composers' works have been performed around the world at such prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Aram Khachaturian Museum Hall by such ensembles as the JACK Quartet, American Composers Orchestra, Pacific Serenades, Empyrean Ensemble, Akropolis Reed Quintet, and California E.A.R. Unit.

The concert will feature performances by violinist Eva Ingolf, soprano Beth Griffith, oboist Anne Goldberg, flutist Sarah Carrier, and pianists Joseph Bohigian and Anna Aidinian. They have performed around the world in the United States, Europe, Russia, Armenia, Japan; in venues including: Carnegie Hall, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music, the Institute and Festival for Contemporary Performance at Mannes, Gaudeamus Vertolkers Concours, and Avery Fisher Hall. They are champions of contemporary music and frequent Composer's Voice concerts often.

Admission is free.



New Bedford Hills Are Alive ...

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. – Crosby Goshgarian Jr., pictured above, founder and managing director of the Canton Choral Society will be performing this summer with the New Bedford Festival Theatre in Rodgers & Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music," as Franz, the Von Trapp family butler and leading the choral ensembles. Performances will be on July 25-27 and July 31-August 3 at the historic Zeiterion Theatre in New Bedford. For further information or to order tickets, visit www.nbfestivaltheatre.com

MENK, Amaras Art Keep Tatoul Badalian Going

BADALIAN, from page 11

the performing arts with a keen focus on children. While we embrace the beauty and charm of all cultures, our spotlight is on the heritage of the Armenian and American people."

Over the past decade alone, more than 50 programs have been organized under the Amaras name. Badalian calls it a "microcosm" of the community's cultural life. The name is derived from an old Armenian monastery in Nagorno-Karabagh where Mesrob Mashtots founded Armenia's first school.

Today, Amaras works with professional artists and musicians in getting them established and entrenched into everyday life. Badalian remains the webmaster running AmarasOnline.com and invites readers to take a peek.

A huge concentration is placed upon Erebound Dance School for children with a dynamic direc-

tor, Arman Mnatsakanyan, who yearns to build this into one of the country's finest ensembles.

Recently, there was a concert performed by talented children at Longy School of Music in Cambridge, followed a week later by an evening of songs and poems. Featured was talented singer Margar Yeghiazarian, composer Gegham Margarian, poet Avik Derents and Ani Avakian Arakelian, noted for her interpretation of Armenian poems.

"There was a time when you could not keep me from participating in a good picnic, both as a worker and one who enjoyed the delicious food," said Badalian. "Today, I'm working on a more serious area although I still go and have my shish kebobs at fairs and bazaars."

The more serious side is the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry, for which Badalian has become a true crusader.

Right now, his priority is the Walk of Life on September 27 in Watertown to help the Armenian Bone Marrow Registry. For the third year, Badalian has taken an initiative to sound the call for help.

"I call this serious because blood-related disorders such as leukemia have devastating effects upon families and entire communities," he says. "This particular cause fights to find stem cell matches for those in need. Being an Armenian actually helps because it is easier to find a match among your ethnic group. ABMDR is a global player. It is one of the unique organizations where Armenians and Diaspora meet on equal footing and represent all Armenians of the world."

Badalian has the unbridled support of his wife Varteni and daughter Narini. Both have done their share over the years and have been an inte-

gral component of these endeavors.

"We've come a long way since those days we went around putting flyers on car windshields in getting the word out to people," he reflects. "And it is only getting bigger and better in this age of technology."

Badalian also makes available his personal e-mail address – tbadalian@aol.com – because it lets him respond quickly to requests and questions.

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 OCTOBER 2014



ARTS & LIVING

George Avakian Receives Honorary Doctorate from Colgate University

HAMILTON, N.Y. – George Avakian, the legendary jazz producer, recording industry innovator, music historian received an honorary Doctor of Letters from Colgate University at Colgate's 2014 commencement on May 18.

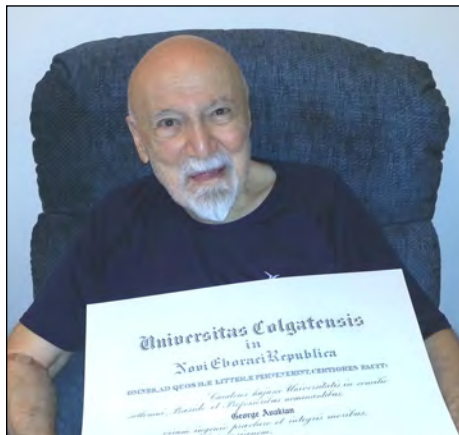
Colgate's President Jeffrey Herbst made the following remarks about Avakian's career: "George Avakian has provided the soundtrack for generations of jazz listeners and enthusiasts. He introduced listeners to new ways to enjoy and understand music, and assured a great legacy for some of the world's greatest creators and performers including Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis and Mahalia Jackson.

"George's love of jazz began as boy listening to late-night broadcasts of Fats Waller and Duke Ellington and he began writing about jazz as a student for the Horace Mann School newspaper. As a sophomore at Yale, he convinced Decca Records to let him create the world's first reissue album, 'Chicago Jazz.' It wasn't long before Columbia Records invited him to produce Hot Jazz Classics, which became a revolutionary retrospective LP for listeners across the globe.

"After serving his country in World War II, George became a music industry executive, a writer and commentator, educator, manager, and a pioneer of new technology. He brought us the 33 1/3 LP that remains the format audio aficionados prefer to this day.

"He is an inspiration and role model to people of any age who are determined to turn their artistic passion into not only a gratifying life, but also a service to the world."

Peter Balakian, Donald M and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities, presented Avakian with the honor.



Jazz producer extraordinaire George Avakian

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 10 – Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Road, Chelmsford, will hold its annual picnic from noon to 6 p.m., with Jason Naroian and his ensemble. Admission, \$1 per person. For more information, visit www.stsvartanantz.com or call the church office at 978-256-7234.

AUGUST 24 – Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic to be held at American Legion Farm, 1314 Main St., Haverhill MA (take Rte. 495 to Exit 51 B onto Rte. 125 N), noon to 5 p.m. Music by the Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Shish, Losh, & Chicken Kebab Dinners, Kheyma, Pastries, & Beverages. Raffles for Cash prizes & Gift Certificates. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs. For more info visit www.hyepointechurch.org or call (978) 372-9227

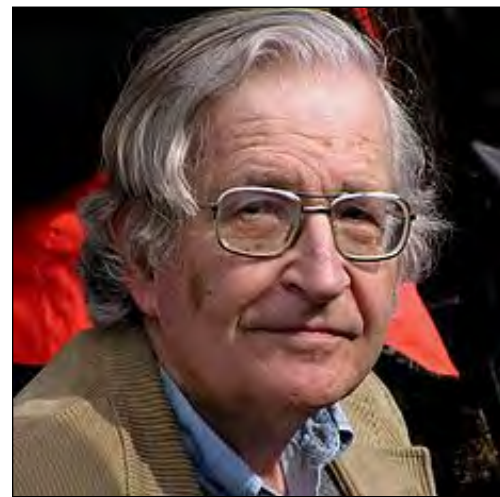
SEPTEMBER 7 – Picnic Festival, sponsored by St. Gregory Armenian Church of Merrimack Valley, 158 Main St., North Andover, featuring musicians Leon Janikian, Jason Naroian, Johnny Berberian and John Arzigian; appearance by Siroun Dance Ensemble of Central Mass.; 12:30-5:30 p.m., church grounds; shish, losh & chicken kebab dinners, veggie plates, Armenian pastries; family games and activities.

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

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

RHODE ISLAND

JULY 19 – SAVE THE DATE. 7 p.m. – 12 a.m. The Providence ARS "Ani" Chapter and the Ladies' Guild of Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church will hold its – "A HYE SUMMER NIGHT # 9" dinner dance at the beautiful Alpine Country Club, Pippen Orchard Road, Cranston, RI featuring the sensational music of Hachig Kazarian- clarinet, John Berberian – oud, Ken Kalajian – guitar and Jason Naroian vocals and dumbeg. The dinner-dance is \$50. Dance only after 8:30 p.m. is \$35. Students dance



The Armenians and Progressive Politics Conference will take place on September 26 and 27, in Cambridge, Mass. This year's theme will be Armeno-Turkish relations, including a number of panels covering Armenian Genocide denial, reparations, media, Turkish-Armenian exchanges, and Turkish civil society. The opening plenary features a discussion between David Barsamian of Alternative Radio and Noam Chomsky. All activities will take place at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), with the plenary to be held at MIT's Kresge Auditorium.

only \$25. ID required. RSVP by June 30. Call Joyce Yeremian at 401- 354-8770, joycey41@cox.net or Joyce Bagdasarian at 401- 434-4467, sweetano6@aol.com. Cash raffle will be held.

100 Years of the German-Armenian Society

GERMANY, from page 11

(Bundestag), Bergner talked about the resolution on the massacre and expulsion of the Armenians which that body voted up in 2005. The resolution urged the government to support efforts in Germany towards reconciliation, but, as he pointed out, the problems addressed in the initiative had still not been resolved. Prof. Armenuhi Drost-Abarjan, the leading Armenologist in Germany, presented the cultural-political collaboration between the federal state of Saxon-Anhalt and the Republic of Armenia.

A round table discussion brought together several political figures, including Bundestag members. Under Kantian's moderation, the participants assessed the current situation of relations among Armenia, Germany and Europe, with a view to the future.

The festive celebration in the evening opened with music by tenor Artak Kirakosyan and baritone Asatur Baljyan. An ecumenical prayer for the founders of the DAG and those they protected was offered by Archbishop Karekin Bekdjian, Bishop Markus Dröge and Ecumenical Episcopal Vicar Father Matthias Fenski. This was followed by greetings presented by Gunter Fritsch, President of the State Parliament of Brandenburg, Hasmik Poghosian, Cultural Minister of Armenia, Stephan Dorgerloh, Cultural Minister of



Archbishop Karekin Bekjian (second from right) with German church leaders, and tenor Artak Kirakosyan (seated).

Saxon-Anhalt, Martin Gorholt from the Brandenburg State government, and Jann Jakobs, Mayor of Potsdam, which is the capital of Brandenburg.

After another musical interlude by the vocalists, Prof. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, President of the Humboldt University, delivered the keynote address. A former cultural minister of Saxon-

Anhalt, he spoke about the cultural cooperation between that federal state and Armenia.

The evening celebration took place in the Brandenburg State Parliament, housed in a magnificent castle, which, torn down in the 1960s, was rebuilt and has just recently reopened. Attending the conference and reception were more than 250 guests.

Donation

Nazar and Artemis Nazarian of Englewood, NJ, have donated \$5,000 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in appreciation of the newspaper's coverage of community news.

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COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

Armenia Trapped Politically

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Two decades after the collapse of the Soviet empire, global political realignments continue.

Caught in the drift are small nations such as Armenia, struggling to define their policies and pursue their national interests, most of the time navigating against the tides.

Although for some Armenia-bashing has become an interesting pastime, what Armenia's government needs is a sober assessment of the situation in the region to be able to reorient its policies in line with its true national interests. Nor is the local media helpful in contributing to that kind of atmosphere as it is either financed by Western agencies or Russia, leaving almost no room for independent thinking and true policy analysis.

Although unreserved support could contribute to the adoption of sound policies by the government, it does not absolve its inadequate approach to counter the dangerous levels of depopulation or the plundering of the country by oligarchs.

One of the focal points of global political realignments is the Caucasus, where Armenia is located.

Overt US policy to contain Russia has had repercussions in Europe and especially in the Caucasus. The lip service by NATO that it does not intend to threaten Russia has already lost its luster. The Maidan Revolution in Kiev was engineered by the State Department to overthrow the Yanukovich regime which had refused to join the European Union, afraid of Russia's reaction. Indeed, during the Ukrainian turmoil, the Cold War relic of the State Department Victoria Nuland was distributing cookies to the revolutionaries and discussing docile candidates to replace Yanukovich.

Recently the representative of the NATO's public diplomacy division, Despina Afentouli, visited Armenia and stated bluntly, "NATO is now increasing its military presence in all countries having a shared border with Russia and declaring that Russia should reconsider its foreign policy."

The US has long been prodding its allies in Europe and South East Asia to assume a heavier burden of the global defense budget. In Europe, except for Poland, which has a robust economy, the prodding did not yield any significant results. But it brought hefty dividends in Japan with the rise of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is revisiting Japan's pacifist constitution – designed by General MacArthur at the conclusion of World War II – to pave the way for a revanchist militaristic policy.

For the US itself, President Obama's cautious international policy is very uncharacteristic and the military-industrial complex may return with a vengeance. Hillary Clinton is gearing up to wear Cheney-McCain macho mantle in her bid for the presidency. Although no one questions America's world power, for the hawks in the US, power resides in going around and slaughtering people, as exemplified by the Bush II administration.

The Caucasus and the Middle East are changing rapidly. Turkey has exhausted its capital as a trusted US ally by antagonizing Israel and using that capital entirely for self-aggrandizement. In that scenario, Iran becomes a major player as it cuts its nuclear deal with the US, eliminating a preemptive unilateral strike by Israel, and emerging as an economic powerhouse in the Middle East.

Although Iran and the US are on opposing sides in Syria, ironically, they have become unwilling partners and allies in Iraq, in the face of the rising group ISIS and its so-called caliphate.

The US tried to bomb captured territories of Iraq, but now, they

have enticed Tehran to overstretch in Iraq through attacks there by its Quds forces that will satisfy two US goals in the Middle East: getting rid of ISIS and having an over-committed Iran possibly be more amenable to a favorable deal with the US.

Lifting sanctions on Iran will result in lower oil prices worldwide. Before the sanctions, Iran produced four million barrels of oil daily, more than half of which was exported. Since the sanctions, Iran is producing one million barrels a day.

Declining oil prices have hit the Russian budget, which depends heavily on oil exports. Recently, Moscow forbid Armenia from buying cheaper gas from Iran, because that could lead Iran to compete with Russia not only in the Caucasus, but also in Europe, which is one of Tehran's targets.

Although Russia and Iran have common goals in Syria, they remain competitors for dominating the region and exporting energy to Europe. The rise of Iranian oil will hurt Russia, which may be one of the unintended benefits of the US regional policy also.

Armenia has become Russia's captive. After abandoning its European Union negotiations last September, it has been languishing at the door of the Eurasian Union, where the shots are called by Kazakhstan, at the behest of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev.

On July 11, Armenia's Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamian met his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, in Sochi, but the meeting did not bring clarity into the terms of Armenia's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union. Additionally, Minister of Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission Andrew Slepnyov has indicated that one of the "stumbling blocks" in Armenia's entry into the EEU is the difference in its obligations to the World Trade Organization. On the other hand, Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Galust Sahakyan, who visited Moscow, indicated that "the position of Belarus and Kazakhstan does not allow Armenia to be a member of the EEU sooner."

Therefore, after forcing Armenia away from the European Union, Moscow has allowed it to languish in limbo at the door of the Eurasian Union indefinitely.

Adding insult to injury, Moscow is arming Azerbaijan at an alarming rate. A total of \$700 million worth of military hardware has already been delivered to Baku and \$4 billion worth more are in the pipeline to be delivered gradually.

Most of the armaments are not defensive; they are meant for offensive purpose. That support has rendered Aliyev's regime more aggressive and arrogant. Azerbaijan is not only breaking the ceasefire regime on Karabagh's point of contact, but it has been bombing Armenia in the Tavoush region and from Nakhichevan. Armenia's strategic ally, Russia, is still silent after the numerous incursions.

After Nazarbayev insulted Armenia in Moscow, it took several days for Armenia's president to complain at a youth rally in Tzaghgadzor. Now he has gone further to raise concerns in an interview given to Argentina's La Nacion newspaper, to complain about Azerbaijan's military build-up with Russia's help.

Armenia is at the point of no return. It cannot take refuge in NATO, given the Georgian precedent in which it was attacked and handily defeated. It can only complain louder to Moscow, the latter having its own priorities to keep Baku at bay.

Economic relations with the US and France may be one way to alleviate the situation and utilize the political maneuvering space with Iran, a country which has gone out of its way to accommodate Armenia, driven by its own conflict with Azerbaijan.

Other options are limited and Armenia remains trapped politically.

LETTERS

Armenian Artists Thrill in Cultural Program

To the Editor:

I wish to congratulate Amaras and the Armenian Cultural Foundation for recently co-hosting an outstanding cultural Evening of Armenian Songs and Poems, which featured

vocalist Margar Yeghiazaryan, pianist Gegham Margarian and recitations by Avik Derents and Ani Arakelians Avakian. All the artists provided a truly enjoyable and entertaining evening. Given the many critical issues facing our

young Armenian Republic, the highly artistic presentations by the performers, the majority of whom hailed from Armenia, helped to create a positive and nostalgic connection to our cherished homeland.

Ara Jeknavorian
Chelmsford, MA

Notice to Contributors

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

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

daytime telephone number.

- Deadline for submission of all articles and advertising is 12 noon on Monday of the week of publication.
- Photos will be published without charge at the discretion of the editors and art director. Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is included.
- The *MS* will publish only one article about an upcoming organizational event. For major special events, exceptions may be made only by special arrangement with the editors.
- Telephone numbers, ticket prices and other details (at the discretion of the editors) will not be included in press releases, but should be reserved for calendar listings and advertisements.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Turkish Counter-Efforts Help Publicize Genocide Centennial

Armenians in the US and around the world were needlessly alarmed by a recent article in the Turkish Hurriyet newspaper, titled: Turkish Americans prepare 'master plan' for 2015."

No one should be surprised that the Turkish government and affiliated organizations worldwide have been earnestly planning to counter commemorative activities being organized by the Armenian government and the Diaspora for the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide on April 24, 2015.

Tolga Tanis reported in Hurriyet's July 5 issue that the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA) will invite Turkish-American groups to Washington in September to plan "proactive and active responses" to Armenian Centennial events.

ATAA reportedly will form Turkish "activist committees" to visit "lawmakers in each state, conduct social media campaigns, keep in touch with traditional media outlets, prepare online courses and organize countrywide networking meetings for Americans." Hurriyet also reported that ATAA will organize "at least 20 day-long conferences in partnership with local universities and with the participation of

famous Turkish-Americans like Dr. Mehmet Oz and Coca Cola CEO Muhtar Kent."

As part of its "reactive responses," ATAA allegedly plans to counter:

- Articles, books and films on the Armenian Genocide;
- Panels, conferences and exhibitions organized by Armenians;
- "Anti-Turkish bills" in Congress.

Before Armenians get too excited about these purported Turkish schemes, the following questions must be asked:

- Is Hurriyet accurately reporting ATAA's plans? The Turkish media is notorious for distorting facts and making up stories. Interestingly, no such announcement is found on ATAA's website;
- If Hurriyet's article is fully or even partly true, is it certain that ATAA will actually carry out any of its announced plans or is this simply a propaganda ploy or fundraising effort?

As a starter, it has come to our attention that at least one critical part of Hurriyet's story is a falsehood! Ara Khachatourian, English editor of Asbarez newspaper, reported that a spokesman for the prominent TV personality has denied that Dr. Oz is involved in any way in Turkish denialist activities. Likewise, I am trying to confirm if the alleged report about Coca Cola CEO Muhtar Kent's involvement in Genocide denial is accurate. It is noteworthy that Hurriyet has already amended its initial report, adding a disclaimer, possibly after complaints from Dr. Oz and Mr. Kent about the unauthorized and inaccurate use of their names: "The two individuals whose names are mentioned in the article above [Dr. Mehmet Oz and Coca-Cola CEO Muhtar Kent] are two prominent figures on a long list of accomplished Turkish Americans who will be invited to speak at community events. They have no knowledge of or involvement in ATAA's plans."

I wish Dr. Oz and Mr. Kent were actually involved in Turkish denialist efforts, which would have triggered a worldwide boycott of Dr. Oz's TV show and Coca Cola products. This would have provided Armenians a golden opportunity for publicity on the Armenian Genocide Centennial that no amount of money could buy!

Moreover, my fervent hope is that Hurriyet's article would turn out to be totally accurate and that ATAA would carry out fully all of the promised activities. The more often Turkish denialists raise the Armenian Genocide issue trying to counteract the established historical facts, the more they would be inadvertently publicizing the Genocide Centennial, and thereby disgrace themselves in the eyes of the world!

While Armenians are unable to make their voices heard loudly in the international arena, in an ironic twist, Turkey's influential public relations firms in Washington would be of tremendous assistance! Equally helpful are the public pronouncements of Turkish leaders, such as the one by Prime Minister Erdogan on April 23, 2014, despite their denialist content. As an unintended consequence, ATAA's anti-Centennial efforts would prompt the international media to pay ever-greater attention to the continuing injustice suffered by Armenians, by providing more coverage to the planned Armenian commemorations.

Although Turkish counter-strategies should receive adequate scrutiny, Armenians should pay more critical attention as to whether they are preparing themselves appropriately to observe the Centennial in the global arena, given the immense loss of the 1.5 million martyrs of the Armenian Genocide. By being overly obsessed with the sinister actions of Turkish denialists, Armenians may not be focusing sufficiently on their own obligation to honor the sacred memory of the victims and demand justice.

Ahead of Genocide Centenary: Armenian Leaders Raise Recognition Issues during Visits Abroad

By Naira Hayrumyan

Armenian President Serge Sargsian, who was recently on a tour of South America, visited Argentina where the main subject of his speeches and meetings was the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Both houses of the Argentine Parliament recognized the Armenian Genocide in 1993, in different cities in Argentina there are monuments to the victims of the 1915 Genocide, and the Armenian community in this country is considered to be one of the most influential.

The Genocide subject ahead of the 100th anniversary of the tragedy becomes a major one in the rhetoric of Armenian leaders. Armenian Parliament Speaker Galust Sahakyan, who paid a visit to Moscow, invited the leaders of both houses of the Russian parliament, Valentina Matvienko and Sergei Naryshkin, to attend an international parliamentary conference in Yerevan that will be held in April 2015. The conference is part of the approved schedule of activities for the centennial of the genocide.

The visits to Yerevan by Pope Francis and French President Francois Hollande have already been unofficially announced for April 24, 1915. The arrival of other world leaders is also expected.

Armenia is also preparing a legal filing in connection with the Genocide, deportations of Armenians and the seizure of their property in what is now Turkey. Materials have appeared in the press challenging the legal basis of Turkey's ownership of Western Armenia. In particular, the Russian-Armenian newspaper, Yerkramas, published an article by the late Armenian diplomat Levon Eyradjyants in which he gives irrefutable evidence that the 1921 Moscow Treaty was concluded only for 25 years, until 1946. It is this treaty that divided the Armenian lands between Turkey and Bolshevik Russia.

In Armenia there are already articles in which authors demand the revision of the Moscow Treaty.

At the beginning of this year a state commission was set up in Turkey with the aim of developing measures against the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Apparently, the

Commission advised that Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan issue a message to the Armenian people on April 23, 2013. Among the steps may also be the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border as a Turkish gesture towards Armenia. However, analysts argue that the Armenian Question was and still is part of bigger regional geopolitics and enacting it is possible within the framework of geopolitical shifts expected in the region. In

particular, the probable creation of a Kurdish state, in the territories of Iraq and Syria, may lead to the revision of the Treaty of Lausanne and the return to the Treaty of Sevres, under which Armenia was to have been united. The fact that Armenia is making the Genocide subject "topical", including during President Sargsian's latest visits, proves that Yerevan agrees to participate in these geopolitical developments that could deprive Turkey of the

grounds for its territorial integrity. The replacement of the Treaty of Sevres by the Treaty of Lausanne took Armenia out of the context of the redistribution of the Ottoman Empire lands. The question is whether Armenia will again remain outside the possible changes now.

(This analysis originally appeared in the website ArmeniaNow.)

Analysis: Lavrov's Absence Clouds Iran Nuke Talks

By George Jahn

Decisions by the foreign ministers of Russia and China to skip talks on Iran's nuclear program this weekend are further denting expectations that the stalled negotiations will produce a deal by July 20.

The US – which is sending Secretary of State John Kerry to join three other ministers – is putting on a good face. State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf says the six powers talking with Iran remain "united in the negotiating room, as we always have."

But the absence of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is noteworthy, in light of suggestions by France that Moscow is deviating from joint negotiating stances with Iran. It may also reflect recognition that the two sides are too far apart, and the talks will have to be extended.

The most important disputes over how deeply Iran must cut its nuclear program to gain sanctions relief are between Washington and Tehran, so Kerry's presence is important. He will be able to talk directly to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who is already at the Vienna negotiations.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius and German Foreign Minister Walter Steinmeier are also attending. But the absence of Lavrov and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi could be detrimental – it took foreign ministers or their deputies of all six nations to negotiate a preliminary deal with Tehran in November.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi spoke Saturday of "huge and deep" differences. But he told Iranian TV that "if no breakthrough is achieved, it doesn't mean that (the) talks have failed."

Lavrov is on a Latin American tour culminating with a July 15 Brazil summit of emerging major economic nations, including China. Still, his no-show comes at a troubling moment – just days

after Fabius criticized Moscow for having "differences of approach" with the mainstream at the negotiations.

Fabius didn't elaborate. But comments by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov appeared to support the French foreign minister's remarks.

Ryabkov, Moscow's chief nuclear negotiator, told Russia's Ria Novosti news agency Saturday that his country was ready to cooperate with the others at the talks only "as long as nothing is happening that would endanger our interests." Russia has strong business ties with Iran, and is discussing a deal with Tehran to build up to eight nuclear reactors.

Kremlin-backed analysts blame the US for stalling the talks by pushing unrealistic demands.

Vladimir Evseyev of the Russian state-run CIS institute says Washington's insistence that Iran shut down uranium enrichment facilities and negotiate on its missile program violates the accords outlining the scope of the talks. The US, he said, wants negotiations to "to be lengthy and painful," to keep sanctions in place for its own political agenda.

Diplomats familiar with the talks say Moscow shares Washington's desire for a deal. But while the US wants deep cuts in Iranian programs that could be used to make nuclear arms, Russia would settle for pervasive monitoring, they say.

Former US State Department official Mark Fitzpatrick says the Russian absence might simply indicate that Moscow doesn't anticipate agreement by July 20.

But "if a deal does appear to emerge, I wouldn't be surprised to see Lavrov on the next plane to Vienna," says Fitzpatrick, now with the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

(Associated Press Vienna Bureau Chief George Jahn has covered Iran's nuclear program for 11 years. Associated Press writer Natalya Vasilyeva in Moscow and AP video journalist Omid Khazani in Tehran contributed.)



House Foreign Affairs Committee Passes Turkey Christian Churches Accountability Act

ACCOUNTABILITY, from page 1
 support of Armenian-American issues and their vigilance in standing up for religious minorities in Turkey,” stated Armenian Assembly of America Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “It’s not that more should be done. More must be done to protect Armenian, Greek, Assyrian and other Christian minorities, their properties, and their right to practice their religion in their



Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ).

ancestral home,” Ardouny said.
 “I have long been concerned that Christian heritage sites in Turkey have been deteriorating and disappearing in the face of hostile govern-

ment policies,”
 Royce said. “Despite optimistic claims by Turkish leaders, a majority of religious properties remain unreturned. There is even legislation before the Turkish Parliament to convert the landmark Hagia Sophia in Istanbul from a museum to a mosque. The US must hold Turkish leaders to their promises. By passing this legislation, the US sends a message to Turkey that it must return church properties to their rightful owners, while providing an objective measure of their progress each year.”

In his opening remarks, Engel recognized Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and Eastern Prelacy Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, who were both on hand to witness the committee vote.

In addition to Royce and Engel, Representatives Chris Smith (R-NJ), Brad Sherman (D-CA), Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), David Cicilline (D-RI), Albio Sires (R-NJ) and Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) also spoke in favor of H.R. 4347.

However, the bill was heavily opposed before and during the committee vote. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) issued a letter calling on his colleagues to oppose H.R. 4347. After days of working with committee members to address their concerns, Royce offered an amended version of H.R. 4347 at the beginning of the vote, which includes 15 new findings and a new sec-



HFAC Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY).

tion that recognizes “some positive decisions last year by the Turkish government.” Connolly proposed an amendment during the vote that would have stripped the bill of virtually all of its findings. “I am fearful,” Connolly said, restating the false adage that “now is not the time” and indicating that “we need Turkey.” Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-NY) voiced his support for the Connolly amendment and his strong opposition to H.R. 4347.

In response, Royce emphasized that previous attempts to find a solution, “have not resulted in progress,” and that Turkey has been “haphazard” in returning confiscated religious prop-

erty. Ranking Member Engel, as well as Cicilline and Lowenthal, also spoke in opposition to the Connolly amendment and voiced their strong support for H.R. 4347.

Smith rebuked those opposing the bill, saying “we should not be fearful” of Turkey, reminding his colleagues that fear “invites impunity.” “If we have the inability to speak out against human rights abuses then shame on us,” Smith said. “Friends don’t let friends commit human rights abuses,” he added. If you mention the Armenian Genocide in Turkey “the Gulag will be at your door,” Smith exclaimed, as he banged his fist on the desk. “The sword of Damocles hangs over churches in Turkey,” Smith said.

Sherman also spoke passionately in support of H.R. 4347, recalling that after the Turkish government threatened to curtail its trade relations with France for recognizing the Armenian Genocide, trade between the two countries increased three-fold.

The Connolly amendment was defeated in a voice vote.

Following the Connolly amendment, Rep. Alan Grayson (D-FL) and Rep. George Holding (R-NC) offered amendments to H.R. 4347 that were adopted by voice vote. These amendments added language further diluting the spirit of the bill while simultaneously affording greater acclaim to the Turkish government for half-measures taken after a century of abuses.

St. James Holds Graduation for Sunday School Students

WATERTOWN – On June 1, Saint James Armenian Church celebrated the graduation of 15 Sunday School students. Following Divine Liturgy, the graduates received diplomas from Fr. Arakel Aljalian and Superintendent Marsha Alabachian.

The class, taught by Julie Cristello, focused on the importance of service and emphasized that faith without action is dead faith. Students spent the year organizing and completing various service projects in the area, including Holiday Mail for Heroes through the American Red Cross, a volleyball game fundraiser to benefit the Pine Street Inn, a homeless shelter in Boston, and served brunch at the men’s and women’s shelter. By participating in service, students were able to mature, develop stronger relationships with their classmates and grow in their faith.

Alyssa Bogosian, the salutatorian of the graduating class, reflected on her time as a student in Sunday School. “The first few years focused on learning the basis of our faith. When we received our own Bibles, we began studying these stories and lessons for ourselves. As we entered high school and began facing the challenges of the real world, we learned about how our faith can guide us in all aspects of life.”

Emma Kaloostian, the valedictorian of this year’s graduating class, spoke on the importance of participating in service during her last year of Sunday School. “This past year of Sunday

School has changed my outlook; I want to be a better person, for myself, for society, in the eyes of our church I hope we all never forget that we are capable of making a difference, even if it is one small act at a time; they all add up.” Julie, this year’s eleventh grade teacher, left the students and their families with an important message. “Don’t let our world be a world where we ignore things that matter. A world where we are too caught up in our iPhones to realize that someone is lying on the street right in front of us. Make sure that as you all head out into the real world you speak up about things that matter, about issues that matter. Remember that you can make a difference, and that you already have. And remember, when the world gets overwhelming or you feel like you’ve lost God too, you can always return home to Saint James.”

The members of the 2014 Graduating Class are: Adam Assarian, Anais Astarjian, Alyssa Bogosian, David Boloyan, Shant DerTorossian, Amanda Dodd, Grant Gilbert, Isabelle Gyulakian, Emma Kaloostian, Kathryn Kapilian, Dylan Madden, Alexander Medzorjian, Tatiana Nalbandian, Nicholas Ohannesian and Nareg Ostayan.

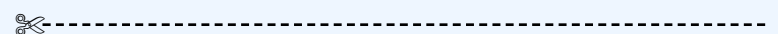


The St. James Armenian Church graduates

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