

THE ARMENIAN
Mirror-Spectator
Volume LXXXV, NO. 2, Issue 4345 \$ 2.00

The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

Christians Flee Mosul en Masse

BAGHDAD (AP) – The message played over loudspeakers gave the Christians of Iraq’s second-largest city until midday Saturday to make a choice: convert to Islam, pay a tax or face death.

By the time the deadline imposed by the Islamic State extremist group expired, the vast majority of Christians in Mosul had made their decision. They fled.

They clambered into cars – children, parents and grandparents – and headed for the largely autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq or other areas protected by the Kurdish security forces. Their departure marks the latest – and perhaps final – exodus of Christians from the city, emptying out communities that date back to the first centuries of Christianity, including Chaldean, Assyrian and Armenian churches.

Iraq was home to an estimated 1 million Christians before the 2003 US-led invasion that ousted Saddam Hussein. Since then, militants have frequently targeted Christians across the country, bombing their churches and killing clergymen. Under such pressures, many Christians have left the country. Church officials now put the community at around 450,000.

Most of Mosul’s remaining Christians fled when the Islamic State group and an

array of other Sunni militants captured the city on June 10 – the opening move in the insurgents’ blitz across northern and western Iraq. As a religious minority, Christians were wary of how they would be treated by hardline Islamic militants.

Most of Mosul’s remaining Christians fled when the Islamic State group and an array of other Sunni militants captured the city on June 10 – the opening move in the insurgents’ blitz across northern and western Iraq.

For those Christians who remained in the city, the order first made over loudspeakers on Thursday and later in leaflets passed out on the streets made clear their status under the extremist group’s rule.

“When the Islamic State people took over Mosul weeks ago, they were nice to us at first and they used to knock our door and tell us that they mean no harm to the Christians in Mosul and they even gave us

a mobile number just in case we are offended by anybody,” Sahir Yahya, a Christian and government employee from Mosul, said Saturday. “This changed two days ago. The Islamic State people revealed their true savage nature and intention.”

Yahya fled with her husband and two sons on Friday morning to the town of Qaraqoush, where they have found temporary lodging at a monastery.

“I know a lot of Christian families that left Mosul. We will always want to return to our houses and pray in our churches in Mosul, and eventually we will return, but not under the rule of the terrorist Islamic State,” she said.

In Mosul, the Islamic State group has see MOSUL, page 3

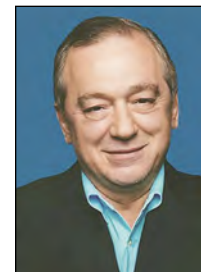
Karabagh Lawmakers Call For Release of Arrested Armenian Businessman

STEPANAKERT (RFE/RL) – Members of Nagorno-Karabagh’s legislature have called for an immediate release of an ethnic Armenian businessman who was arrested in Russia last week on suspicion of having ties with an organized criminal group.

All factions and groups of the self-proclaimed republic’s 33-member National Assembly on Tuesday issued a statement in which they described Levon Hayrapetian, a native of Nagorno-Karabagh, as a great patriot who has for years implemented numerous charity projects in his homeland, contributing to its social and economic development.

“We are guided by the presumption of innocence, abstaining from political evaluations,” the Nagorno-Karabagh lawmakers emphasized. “We consider that the body conducting the investigation should urgently change the measure of restraint [used against Hayrapetian] and release him, considering Hayrapetian’s health problems.”

The Karabagh politicians expressed their conviction that “as a law-abiding citizen and a highly educated person, Levon Hayrapetian, while being out of prison, will provide comprehensive assistance to the investigation and will be useful in clarifying the issues of interest to the Russian Investigative Committee.”



Levon Hayrapetian

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Echmiadzin Condemns Attack On Armenian Clerics in Georgia

TBILISI (RFE/RL) – Church officials in Armenia have expressed their concern over a violent incident in an Armenian church in Tbilisi this week that left several clergymen injured.



Surb (Holy) Echmiadzin Church in Tbilisi

In a statement disseminated on Sunday the Georgian Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church (AAC) described the previous day’s altercation and subsequent violence against Armenian clerics, Diocese employees and a group of Christian Armenians in the yard of the Holy Echmiadzin Church in the Georgian capital as a “pre-planned attack” committed on the grounds of “ethnic and religious hatred.”

It said as many as 50 men, some of whom were armed, committed the violence that was prompted by an earlier argument over parking space involving a Georgian woman and an Armenian priest.

see ATTACK, page 3

Court Ends Armenian Genocide Museum Challenge

By Michael Doyle

WASHINGTON (*Fresno Bee*) – A federal appeals court may have ended, once and for all, an extraordinarily protracted legal fight over a proposed Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial.

In a 37-page decision, on July 15, the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit

unanimously upheld a 2011 trial judge’s order awarding the property intended for the museum to the Cafesjian Family Foundation.

The three-judge panel’s decision rejected competing claims by the Armenian Assembly of America, which had sought a new trial. Most poignantly, though, the appeals court voiced dismay over what it called the “morass of litigation” that has entangled museum plans.

“More than seven years and millions of dollars in legal fees later, much of the parties’ work to achieve their dream of a museum appears to have been for naught, which is regrettable,” Judge Robert L. Wilkins wrote. “Whatever happens next, hopefully our decision today can at least serve as the last word on this dispute’s protracted journey through the courts.”

see MUSEUM, page 16

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia Inaugurates AREAL Linear Accelerator

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Advanced Research Electron Accelerator Laboratory (AREAL) linear accelerator was inaugurated this week at the Center for the Advancement of Natural Discoveries using Light Emission (CANDLE) Synchrotron Research Institute in Yerevan.

The modern accelerator is an exceptional and huge asset, CANDLE’s Executive Director Vasily Tsakanov and President of the State Committee on Science Samvel Harutyunyan said at the opening ceremony.

They explained that Armenia will become a member of Europe’s accelerator network in the near future, which means the country will enter the European scientific space and that part of the European programs will be executed in Armenia.

The CANDLE international research center was established in Armenia in line with the government decision adopted in 2008.

The AREAL project is the first phase of CANDLE synchrotron light source creation in Armenia. Speaking about the successful completion of the first phase, Vasily Tsakanov noted that “Armenia has built a modern accelerator, which is unprecedented not only in the region.”

The construction of the accelerator became possible thanks to the state-of-the art technologies provided Germany and Switzerland.

The total cost of the project is estimated at 20 million euros.

NKR Police Present Details of Karvachar Murder

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – Karabagh police issued a statement regarding the Karvachar incursion and murder and introduced the details of the incident. The Department of Information and Public Relations of the NKR police reported that on July 19, Shahumyan Police regional department got information from the NKR National Security Service that on June 29, upon the assignment of the Azerbaijani intelligence, the citizens of that country Dilham Gardashkhanoglu Askerov (born 1960), Shahbaz Jalaloglu Guliyev (born 1968) and an unidentified person, wearing ammunition and firearms, illegally crossed the state border of the Nagorno Karabagh, entered Shahumyan.

On July 4, near “Chumen” located in the administrative territory of Havsatagh community, using a weapon, they kidnapped Smbat M. Tsakanyan, 17, living in Nor Erkej village, in Shahumyan district. His body, riddled with gunshot wounds, was found on July 15 in the forest neighboring Karvachar and Manashid communities of Shahumyan region.

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News From Armenia

Artsakh Minister Receives ICRC Mission Head

STEPANAKERT (Hetq) – On July 22, Artsakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Karen Mirzoyan received Thomas Hallier, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mission in Artsakh.

During the meeting, the two discussed a number of issues related to the activities of the ICRC Office in Artsakh.

The parties also touched upon the issue of the neutralized Azeri subversive group in the territory of Artsakh, and the cooperation established in this regard between the ICRC Office in Artsakh and local appropriate structures, in particular, the Artsakh State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons.

Official Wounded by Mine Explosion

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – The mayor of Armenia's town of Armavir was injured in a mine explosion in Nagorno-Karabagh, according to reports in the media.

The Armenian Ministry of Emergency Situations confirmed that a Toyota Prado blew up near the village of Vaghazin in the Kashatagh district of the NKR early on Tuesday. Reports say one person was killed in the incident, while three others, including Armavir Mayor Ruben Khlgatsyan, were injured. All were transported to hospital in Yerevan and their injuries do not appear to be life-threatening.

Archery Championship Kicks off in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia is currently hosting the European Archery Championship. President of the International Archery Federation Ugur Erdener and President of the European Archery Association Mario Scarzella announced that they are satisfied with the level of organization of the European Championship.

The Presidents of the Federations told about this during the solemn opening ceremony of the Championship in Armavir region, which was attended by President Serge Sargisian.

"All of the participants of the European Championship are happy to have the opportunity to meet each other in Armenia and compete for tournament prizes," said Erdener, welcoming the participants and guests.

About 300 athletes and 450 guests from 38 countries are participating in the tournament, including the Turkish and Azerbaijani delegates.

Aronian to Participate in Grand Slam

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Grandmaster Levon Aronian is going to participate in the Grand Slam Masters Final to be held on September 14-20, in Bilbao, Spain. His rivals will be Viswanathan Anand, Ruslan Ponomarev and Francisco Vallejo Pons, the Chess Federation of Armenia reported.

On the May 2012 FIDE list, Aronian was ranked number two in the world and had an Elo rating of 2825, making him the third highest rated player in history.

Aronian won the Chess World Cup 2005. He led the Armenian national team to the Gold medals in the 2006 (Turin), 2008 (Dresden) and 2012 (Istanbul) Chess Olympics and at the World Team Chess Championship in Ningbo 2011. He won the FIDE Grand Prix 2008-2010, qualifying him for the Candidates tournament for the World Chess Championship 2012, where he was knocked out in the first round. He was also World Chess960 Champion in 2006 and 2007, World Rapid Chess Champion in 2009, and World Blitz Chess Champion in 2010.

Aronian was declared the best sportsman of Armenia in 2005 and was awarded the title of "Honored Master of Sport of the Republic of Armenia" in 2009.

Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's Launches Telemedicine Program Initiative

YEREVAN – The Telemedicine Program was presented and launched at the Medical Science Library of Armenia in Yerevan on May 27. The opening ceremony was attended by the leaders of the Telemedicine Program, Hayastan All-Armenian Fund US Eastern Region Affiliate's board of directors chairman Khoren Bandazian, its executive director Irina Lazarian and a member of its board of directors Dr. Gevorg Yaghjian, as well as the director of the Medical Science Library of Armenia Anahit Shirinyan, the CEO of Rostelecom Armenia Hayk Faramazyan and various media representatives.

In his opening speech, Bandazian expressed his thanks and briefly presented the Fund's initiatives in support of Armenia and Karabagh. He noted that since the Fund's inception in 1992, it had developed and implemented

numerous projects in various fields ranging from education to construction. In his opinion, some of the most remarkable moments were the opening of the Stepanakert Polyclinic in 2004 and following medical training of its staff, implementation of various education projects involving the expertise of foreign specialists (mainly from the professional network of Dr. Gevorg Yaghjian), as well as the on-line medical diagnostic session held in New York in 2009.

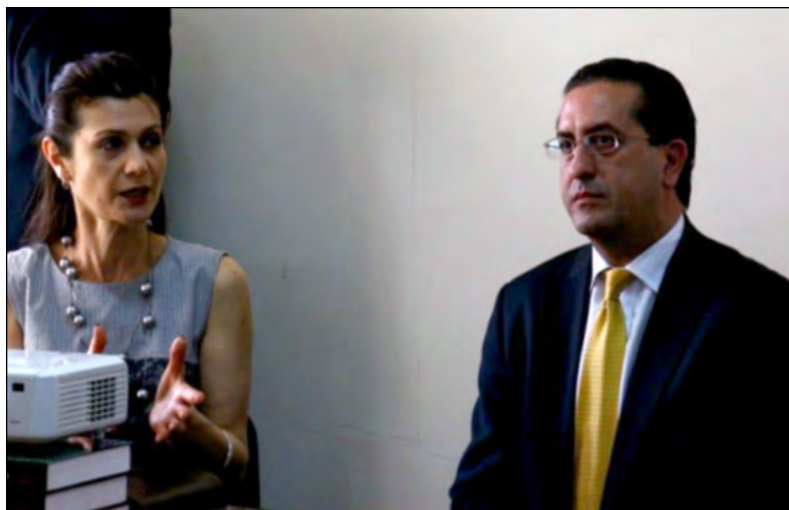
Yaghjian, a member of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's US Eastern Affiliate based in New York and also the project manager of the Armenian Fund's US Eastern Affiliate's "Hyebridge Telehealth" program, added that Telemedicine Program had been operating in Karabakh

since 2007. According to Yaghjian, the treatment of cardio-vascular system diseases and cancer, which are the main causes of mortality in Armenia, were going to be the primary focus of the web conferences. The program is expected to involve leading Armenian doctors from Russia and the United States.

Utilizing the Rostelecom's "Video Call" service, the event was concluded with a web conference with the Medical Center of Kapan, which was the first teleconference of the program. Modern treatment methods of cerebral palsy were the major topic of the conference. It was conducted by the Chief Neurological Surgeon of Armenia, PhD, professor, Dr. Ruben Fanariyan.



The web conference starts.



From right, Khoren Bandazian, Chairman, Hayastan All-Armenian Fund US Eastern region affiliate and Irina Lazarian, Executive Director Hayastan All-Armenian Fund US Eastern region affiliate



Dr. Gevorg Yaghjian

Karabagh Lawmakers Call For Release of Arrested Businessman

ARREST, from page 1

"They said they considered what happened to the Armenian businessman as a 'regrettable misunderstanding,' expressing their conviction that Russian law-enforcement bodies will be able to carry out an "objective and comprehensive investigation that will prove Hayrapetian's innocence."

Nagorno-Karabagh Prime Minister Ara Harutiunian also told reporters in Stepanakert that they expect Hayrapetian to be released soon. He said that Karabagh authorities are "dealing with the case" and expressed his conviction that the businessman is not responsible for the crimes he is accused of.

Hayrapetian, 65, was arrested by Russian Federal Security Service officials on July 15. Last Thursday, a Moscow court allowed the businessman's two-month imprisonment while investigators conduct a probe into his alleged criminal connections and involvement in some illegal financial dealings. Official charges against Hayrapetian are expected to be brought on July 24.

Hayrapetian's case also elicited mixed

reactions in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh last week. While officials in Yerevan provided terse comments and would not be drawn into speculations about any political motives behind the arrest, some opposition figures, families and friends of the businessman spoke openly about such a possibility.

Hayrapetian is considered to be one of the wealthiest Armenians in the world. He is known to have invested millions of dollars into developing Nagorno-Karabagh's infrastructure and renovating the area's historical-cultural monuments. His charity included a mass wedding for 700 Karabagh couples in 2008 and sponsorship of the construction of a military college in Martakert.

Some of the businessman's friends, such as Major-General Arkady Ter-Tadevosian, one of the Armenian commanders in the 1992-1994 war in Nagorno-Karabagh nicknamed Komandos, have even alleged an "Azerbaijani scheme" behind the arrest, saying that its aim is to harm Nagorno-Karabagh and the Armenian-Russian relations.

Ter-Tadevosian, other retired military men as well as public figures staged an action in support of Hayrapetian in Yerevan on Tuesday. They said they believed that Russia's political leadership was not connected with what they considered to be a case fabricated against the Armenian businessman by Russian and Azerbaijani special services.

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INTERNATIONAL

Christians Flee Mosul en Masse

MOSUL, from page 1

gradually imposed its strict interpretation of Shariah law. The militants banned alcohol and painted over street advertisements showing women's faces, for example, but have held off on strict punishments. More recently, the group began seizing the houses of Christian and Shiite Muslim families who fled Mosul and gave some of them to Sunni families uprooted from other areas, residents said.

Still, the edict calling on Christians to convert, pay tax or face death took many in the community by surprise.

"I went to the Islamic State religious court to make sure that the statement is authentic, and the man there told me that I should leave my house, car, money and properties behind," said Maan Abou, a 45-year-old retired army officer.

On Friday, Abou left his home and washing machine repair shop in Mosul behind and headed for Kirkuk with his wife and four children, as well as his own parents and his sister's family.

"My wife and daughters wore the Islamic headscarf in order to deceive the Islamic State people at the checkpoints and make sure that our money and mobiles were not confiscated," he said. "All that I want is to return to the city that I grew up in and that I still have nice memories of. I have strong faith

that we will return sooner or later because the cruel rule of Islamic State will not last forever."

The Islamic State group has vowed to continue its offensive on to Baghdad, although it appears to have crested for now after overrunning Iraq's predominantly Sunni areas. But the capital, while largely calm after a few weeks of panic, has not remained immune from the crisis.

On Saturday, a series of bombings, including three over a span of less than 10 minutes, killed at least 27 people, police officials said. The attacks, which hit the neighborhoods of Abu Dahir, Baiyaa, Jihad and Khazimiyah, are among the most significant in the capital since the militant campaign began.

Hospital officials in Baghdad confirmed the casualty figures. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

The Iraqi military's only major effort to roll back the militant gains has targeted the city of Tikrit, some 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of Baghdad. That campaign has sputtered, however, and the city remains in insurgent hands.

Northwest of Tikrit, heavy fighting has raged around an air base that previously served as a US military facility known as Camp Speicher.

On Saturday, Iraqi military spokesman Lt. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi

denied reports that militants had captured the base, saying government troops repelled an attack on Friday and the air field remains under government control.

A resident of Tikrit, Ahmed Jassim, said by telephone that clashes were taking place around Speicher on Saturday, but "the gunmen are outside the camp." The center of Tikrit is still under insurgent control, and is being shelled by the Iraqi military, he said.

Meanwhile in the northern city of Sulaimaniyah, Iraq's ailing president, Jalal Talabani, returned to the country after more than 18 months abroad, state television said.

Talabani is wrapping up his second consecutive term as president, and is not eligible to run again. He suffered a stroke in late 2012, and was flown to Germany shortly afterwards for treatment and rehabilitation.

With Talabani's term set to expire, Iraqi political leaders are in talks to decide on a new president as part of broader negotiations over forming a new government. Parliament is expected to meet Wednesday to discuss potential candidates.

Two names have emerged as front-runners to succeed Talabani — former deputy prime minister Barham Saleh and the Kirkuk provincial governor Najimuddin Karim.

Echmiadzin Condemns Attack on Armenian Clerics

ATTACK, from page 1

Some people attending an Armenian christening ceremony inside the church at the moment reportedly came out into the yard and were also attacked by the men.

"Women and children, shocked by what they had seen, hid in the church," the statement reads. "We must note that a group of nicely dressed people were watching the incident."

According to the statement, clerics and employees of the Armenian Diocese got physical injuries and one of the attacking men tore a cross off the neck of one priest and took it with him. The Armenian Diocese called on Georgian law-enforcement bodies to investigate what happened as a crime committed on ethnic and religious grounds. But in a statement issued later the Georgian Interior Ministry said that it saw no eth-

nic motives behind the violence.

Meanwhile, the Mother See of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Echmiadzin issued a separate statement on Monday, insisting that the actions of the men who attacked the Armenian church in Tbilisi "incited ethnic hatred and religious intolerance."

"This provocative infringement is a regrettable consequence of anti-Armenian sentiments being spread by different organizations and individuals in Georgia, including by certain Georgian clerics," the AAC said, stressing that such "manifestations of extremism" contradict "the spirit of friendly relations" between the Armenian and Georgian peoples.

"The Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin expects the Georgian authorities to bring all those who committed the infringement upon the Armenian

Church to responsibility and to ensure the security and normal life for the Armenian Church and Armenian community in Georgia," it emphasized.

Armenpress reported that the head of the Foreign Department of the Georgian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Gerasim of Zugdidi and Tsaishi, on July 22 met with Prelate of the Georgian-Armenian Diocese, Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan and discussed the attack. "The attack on the Armenian Church of Holy Echmiadzin is unacceptable and the Georgian Orthodox Church condemns that incident and calls on the parties for peace and tranquility. Besides, the Georgian Church will try to contribute to the settlement of the problem and the peaceful coexistence of all religions," according to a statement by the Georgian Church.

Candidate for Turkey Presidency Woos Armenians

ISTANBUL (armradio) — An Armenian organization, Nor Zartonk (Renaissance), calling itself the organization of the Armenian community in Turkey, has declared its support for Selahattin Demirtas in the presidential elections to be held on August 10, Firat News reports.

Nor Zartonk issued a written statement, saying: "The people, workers and all the excluded have an alternative in these elections against the conservative, nationalist and statist tradition" pointing to Demirtas.

Nor Zartonk emphasized that the candidate of the ruling party, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has been a person continuing to pursue a century-old state policy of denial, adding that the joint candidate of CHP-MHP Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu is "a candidate to be the new face of the moderate Islam project."

Nor Zartonk added: "The people of Turkey are not condemned to these two right-wing candidates, one being

an exact copy of the other despite their being promoted in that way. The candidate of the People's Democratic Party, Selahattin Demirtas, as 'the candidate of the people and of change' is the hope of all the working



Selahattin Demirtas

people in the August elections.

Against the two self-same candidates who are in favor of the continuation of the statist policies and the

policies of denial, our presidential candidate is Selahattin Demirtas, who marches hand in hand with the people from Sivas to Lice, who exclaims the reality of the Armenian Genocide in parliament, has struggled

against all kinds of discrimination throughout his life and who defends the rights of the workers, the LGBTI individuals and all the oppressed.

International News

Argentine Football Club Rejects Azerbaijan Sponsorship

BUENOS AIRES (Agencia Prensa Armenia) — Sources close to San Lorenzo de Almagro reported that the football club rejected the sponsorship of Azerbaijan.

According to the information, a delegation from Azerbaijan contacted the club's leadership when they were negotiating the transfer of midfielder Angel Correa to Atletico Madrid, a team that is currently sponsored by Azerbaijan.

One of the conditions they imposed on San Lorenzo was that "there couldn't be ethnic Armenians" in future executive committees of the club.

The news raised concerns in the Armenian community as there are many fans of the club, famous for being Pope Francis team. Azerbaijan is currently looking for a new football club to sponsor, and they already had contacts with teams of Colombia and Uruguay. Colombian teams Independiente Santa Fe and Atletico Junior, as well as Peñarol from Uruguay, are the ones they are looking for.

Armenia Has New Consulate in Lyon

LYON, France (Armenpress) — The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Eduard Nalbandian, the Prefect of Rhône-Alpes Jean-François Carencio, the Mayor of Lyon Senator Gérard Collomb, and the President of the General Council of Rhône Danielle Chuzeville participated in the ceremony of opening of the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia in Lyon on July 21.

Charles Aznavour, French members of parliament, political, public and cultural figures, as well as heads of the Armenian community organizations and mass media representatives attended the event.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia reported that Nalbandian spoke at the event and highlighted the importance of the establishment of the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia in Lyon and noted that Lyon and the Rhône-Alpes region play a significant role in the development of the Armenian-French ties and cooperation.

What About the Armenian Genocide, Israeli Minister Asks Erdogan

TEL AVIV (Israel National News) — Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz (Likud) hit back at Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday, after the latter accused Israel of attempting a "systematic genocide" of Palestinian Arabs in Gaza, in his strongest attack yet on the Jewish state over self-defense campaign Operation Protective Edge.

In a post on his Facebook page, Katz reminded Erdogan of the Armenian Genocide, when in 1915 more than a million Armenians were murdered by Ottoman troops.

"In 1915 the Turks massacred a million and a half Armenians and he accuses us, who are fighting his friends in the Islamic movement, of genocide? Who wants a relationship with such a person?" wrote Katz.

In Thursday's remarks, Erdogan said, "We are witnessing this systematic genocide every Ramadan. The Western world remains silent; so does the Islamic world."

"Because those who lost their lives are Palestinian, you can't hear their voices," he added. Erdogan has become increasingly vocal over the operation, and threatened to end the normalization process with Israel over "state terrorism."

He has also accused Israel of "lies" because "not enough" Israeli Jews have died in the conflict and has compared Jewish Home MK Ayelet Shaked to Adolf Hitler.

In April, Erdogan offered condolences to the grandchildren of the Armenians who were murdered by Ottoman troops.

Community News

Denial of the Genocide Raised During Congressional Hearing on Future of Turkish Democracy

By Peter Kechichian

WASHINGTON – This week, Turkey's 99-year campaign of Armenian Genocide denial and other significant Armenian American issues were raised at a special subcommittee hearing by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

The hearing, held on Tuesday, July 15th, at the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats, was entitled "The Future of Turkish Democracy," under the direction of Subcommittee Chairman Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA). House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Congressman Ed Royce (R-CA) was also present to deliver introductory remarks.

Royce repeatedly criticized the increased consolidation of power by the Erdogan government as well as further restrictions on human rights in Turkey. Royce stated that "I am very concerned by recent events that indicate a shift by Prime Minister Erdogan away from democratic ideals and reverting to more authoritarian rule," further adding that Erdogan has "consistently chosen to use strong-arm tactics against opponents."

The committee heard testimony from several experts on Turkey. These included Nate Schenkkan, Program Officer at Freedom House; Dr. Elizabeth H. Prodromou, visiting associate professor of conflict resolution at Tufts University; Dr. Soner Cagaptay, Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; Dr. Kilic Kanat, Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research and Hakan Tasci, executive director, Tuskon-US.

Chairman Royce began the hearing by reiterating his support for HR 4347, the Turkey Christian Churches Accountability Act, which requires the US State Department to issue an annual report on the fate of Christian properties in Turkey and the status of their return to their rightful owners. HR 4347 was overwhelmingly adopted by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs late last month.

Turkey's state-sponsored campaign to deny the Armenian Genocide was also referenced several times during the hearing. Congressman Albio Sires (D-NJ) stated that Turkey appeared to be "very sensitive" about discussion of the Armenian Genocide in the US. He also referred to some Turkish officials as "thugs" and referenced Turkish pressure on Members of Congress. "When you vote here, you feel like you're voting with a Turkish sword over your head," Sires said.

Turkey Caucus Co-Chair Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-VA), who last month vigorously opposed the passage of HR 4347, also indirectly referenced the Armenian Genocide. He stated "Turkey has to come to acknowledgment with some of its past... But so do others. And we need to deal with the Turkey of here and now. Not of the Turkey of a hundred years ago or two hundred years ago or 500 years ago for that matter," Connolly said. "Some of us are still hung up on Constantinople," he said, as he attempted to humorously portray the death of 1.5 million men, women, and children.

Only two of the five witnesses at the subcommittee hearing made reference to issues of concern to the Armenian American community. Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou spoke in depth about Christian minorities in Turkey, the persecution they continue to face, and the destruction of Anatolia's Christian heritage. She not only

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Former Chairpersons of the Armenian Bar Association at the landmark New York Bar Association Building, Standing, left to right, Edvin Minassian, Garo Ghazarian, Frank Zerunyan, Sonya Nersessian, Armen K. Hovannisian, Gary Moomjian, David Balabanian, Robert Cannuscio, James Derian

Celebrating 25 Years of Breaking Ground with Armenian Bar Association

NEW YORK – "We have an unrelenting commitment to our common heritage. So, too, are we united in our mission of service and in our vision of justice. And

By Florence Avakian

at the group's 25th annual national meeting recently.

"Our organization is a bridge between the legal profession and the needs and aspirations of the Armenian nation. Our desire is to bring the rule of law and the respect of rights to all our communities," he said proudly in a telephone conversation with this writer. "It is my blood line that defines, drives and motivates me, not merely my profession. We see and feel ourselves as Armenians who also are legal professionals," he emphasized.

Born in Fresno, Hovannisian, now 51, moved with his family to Los Angeles at a young age, and graduated from UC Berkeley, and the UCLA Law School. He served as ArmenBar chairman in the early 1990s, and has been a member of the board since the inception of the organization. He and his wife Elizabeth (nee Aranosian), have two daughters and two sons.



Armen K. Hovannisian, Chairman, Armenian Bar Association

Among his family members are his father, UCLA Professor Emeritus Richard Hovannisian, his mother Dr. Vartiter (nee Kotcholosian), and brother Raffi who was Armenia's first foreign minister, and founder of both Armenia's Heritage Party, and also the Armenian Bar Association 25 years ago.

"We have a singular loyalty to our own, and to providing legal resources to our communities in the *spiurk* [diaspora] and also for the people in Armenia and Artsakh. In our 25-year journey, we have now come to the time for reflection and forward-looking milestones," he said.

Hovannisian related that it took several generations for the Armenian community to heal, recover and reconstitute itself after the Genocide, revealing that his grandfathers and grandmothers worked for many years in the mills of Massachusetts, and in the fields of California's San Joaquin Valley. "That first generation, after suffering so much loss and trauma, kept it together by not often sharing its nightmarish past with their children, and making sure their lives of hope and promise would be restored in their new country."

Today Armenians in America "are no longer the 'tired, hungry, poor, huddled' masses. The public success stories back then were few because the focus was on rebuilding life itself. Now that it's been rebuilt, we are currently a dispersed, vibrant, confident, well-to-do people holding our heads high, and completely fluent in the ways of the world. For the future, we need to make it the success story of the Diasporan community."

The generation of "our parents and grandparents made progress and moved forward on an individual or micro level," he noted. "Now we need to do it on a group level, on a diasporan level, using every forum in the courts, arts, sciences, media,

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Bedrosyan Sheds Light on Hidden Armenians of Turkey

By Jirair Tutunjian

TORONTO – Islamized, Turkified, Kurdified and Hamshen Armenians have peaked the interest of Armenians, particularly since the late Hrant Dink stated that there are millions of hidden or lost Armenians in Anatolia. Subsequently, Dink's revelation expanded the Armenian campaign for the return of Armenian lands and properties to include Armenians who were forcibly taken away from the Armenian nation.

Raffi Bedrosyan, a Toronto engineer, musician, journalist, and activist, who frequently visits Turkey and was deeply involved in the recovery and reconstruction of Surp Giragos Cathedral in Diyarbakir, delivered a speech about the dual topics – people and property – at the Tekeyan Cultural Centre on June 12.

Bedrosyan's talk was peppered with amazing – and often unknown to the audience – facts and statistics:

- There are more than 1 million hidden Armenians in Turkey; nearly half as many Armenians as in Republic of Armenia.

- General Karabekir Turkified 60,000 Armenian orphan boys and enlisted the healthiest among them in the army. These orphan soldiers were raised as Armenian-hating Turkish racists who were among the leaders of the young officers who brought down the government of Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes and executed the two Turkish leaders in 1961.

- Enslaved Armenian girls were sold for as little as 10 "ghroosh" (piasters). Girls who came from wealthy families fetched a higher price at the slave bazaar because buyers speculated that someday they could inherit the wealth of their Armenian slaves' slain families. They were tattooed on their foreheads and bodies to identify them as Armenian slaves.

- About 25,000 Armenians sought sanctuary in Alevi-inhabited Dersim. Twenty years later, during the Alevi Revolt there, Sabiha Gokcen, the first Turkish female military pilot, was among the Turkish forces which bombed Dersim and thus inadvertently killed her fellow Armenians (Gokcen was an orphan whose name was Khatoun Sebiljan. She was adopted by Ataturk who gave her the Turkish name. It's believed that Dink's revelation of Gokcen's origins led to his assassination by Turkish nationalists.)

- Diyarbakir experienced the highest percentage of deaths during the Genocide. About 97 percent of the city's Armenians were slain in their hometown.

- About one-third of Kurdish families have Armenian grandmothers. Now their grandchildren are asking about their roots and writing books and articles about their origins.

- Before the Genocide there were about 4,000 Armenian churches (Apostolic, Catholic and Protestant) and more than 800 Apostolic schools across the Ottoman Empire. Most were razed in 1915 and some which survived were destroyed in the 1950s and the 1960s. Some Armenian churches were used by Turkish army cannons for target practice. A significant number of the churches dated from the 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries. Of the many which still stand most are stables and warehouses.

- In Aintab, St. Mary's Armenian Cathedral was sold by Ataturk to a Turkish industrialist in 1930. The price? 425 liras. It became a factory and is now a community center. Its architects were the famous Balyans of Istanbul.

- Kars, an economically depressed city across from the Republic of Armenia, boasts a

see HIDDEN, page 5



COMMUNITY NEWS

Bedrosyan Sheds Light on Hidden Armenians of Turkey

HIDDEN, from page 4

half-wrecked hut which is priced at a cool \$3 million because the owner has learned that it was the home of Armenian poet Yeghishe Charents.

•The Sanasarian Building in Istanbul, which supported the Sanasarian School in Garin (Erzerum) before the Genocide, became one of the most notorious torture prisons in Turkey in the '70s and '80s. The school was the site of Ataturk's First Congress.

•One-third of the budget to reconstruct

•Outside Istanbul there are only five functioning Armenian churches (from the pre-Genocide 4,000) in Turkey.

Bedrosyan's talk was accompanied by a slide show of the various Armenian churches and monasteries, including the famed Surp Varaka Vank. The historic monastery, where Khrimian Hayrig was abbot in the 1860s, is now owned by an Armenophobe journalist and TV personality. Negotiations are underway, said Bedrosyan, to purchase the badly damaged monastery.

•Throughout Anatolia, Armenian historic

waves of emigration/conversion which conformed to become today's Hamshens in the south, east, and northern shores of the Black Seas. He said the Hamshen name derives from a Medieval prince called Ham who took his people away from the Seljuk-ravaged Armenia and headed northeast, close to the southern shores of the Black Sea. The "shen" part of Hamshen derives from the Armenian word for building.

He also told a fascinating story about how, in the 1980s, many Hamshens in Turkey learned that they were Armenian and not an obscure Turkish tribe from Central Asia, as they had been told by the Turkish government. The revelation occurred thanks to an ASALA fighter on trial in Turkey. During his trial, the fighter gave testimony only in Armenian. Hamshens watching the trial on television understood what the fighter was saying and thus realized that the language they spoke was Armenian and not a Turkic dialect. With that realization came their awakening to their Armenian identity.

Bedrosyan said the solution to Armenian Cause lies in Turkey. To signal its good intentions towards Armenia and Armenians, Ankara should:

- Open the border and call it Hrant Dink Gate
- Grant citizenship to the descendants of the Genocide survivors
- Clean up Turkish textbooks and tell the truth
- Return and restore 2,000 Armenian churches
- Return Ararat and Ani as symbolic apology

Open Ottoman property deeds, liquidation, deportation records.

Bedrosyan, who was born and raised in Istanbul, said the return of Armenian properties in Turkey has become his mission in life. The master of ceremonies was Kevork Tutunjian, chairman of Tekeyan Cultural Centre of Toronto. Bedrosyan's speech included a slide show featuring rare photos of Varaka Vank, Charents' home, immense groups of Armenian orphans and tattooed slave girls.



From left, Jirair Pederian, Raffi Bedrossian and Kevork Tutundjian

Surp Giragos Cathedral was contributed by the Diyarbakir municipality.

•Four thousand people attended the opening of the cathedral, although there are no Christians left in the area.

•Since the opening of the cathedral (2012) hundreds of local people – hidden Armenians – have come forward to be taught Armenian at the cathedral. Many of the Islamized Armenians have since been baptized there or got married.

sites are identified as Turkic, Georgian, Urartian and even Russian, although Armenian inscriptions and alphabet are clearly legible on any of them.

•Some years ago Turkish guides would tell tourists that the magnificent Istanbul palaces built by the members of the Balyan Family were the work of the Italian architect Baliani. Now they admit the true origin of the architects.

Bedrosyan also talked about the three

Ani Garmiryan Joins Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

LISBON, Portugal – The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation announced recently the appointment of Ani Garmiryan as senior program officer. She will be responsible for the promotion of Western Armenian, a priority for the Department as highlighted in its recent Five-Year Programming Plan.

Garmiryan will be in charge of managing diasporan school grants, the teacher preparation program and other projects aimed at strengthening the Western Armenian language.

She will join the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation on September 1, bringing with her years of experience working in multilingual education and developing innovative pedagogical approaches.

Garmiryan has written and lectured extensively on the subject of language preservation through education, with particular focus on Western Armenian.

"We are very privileged to have Ms. Garmiryan join us," said Razmik Panossian, director of the Armenian Communities Department. "Her superb knowledge and experience set her apart from a strong field of candidates and she will undoubtedly be an asset to the Department as it continues to support students, teachers, schools and other organizations to help safeguard a strong Armenian language and culture."

Martin Essayan, the trustee responsible for the Armenian Communities Department added: "The appointment is an important step forward for the Department in securing the expertise to carry out its mission: to create a viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued."

Garmiryan was born and raised in Istanbul and has lived in Italy, Germany, England, France and most recently in the United States. She received a Master of Arts in linguistics



Ani Garmiryan

and pedagogy from the University of Heidelberg, Germany, where she also worked as a research assistant in second language acquisition. Subsequently, she earned a Master of Education in the field of educational leadership from the Bank Street College, New York, known for its progressive educational approach.

She is the founder of MGNIC, an educational bilingual (Armenian-French) workshop in Paris, and has been a lecturer in Methodology of Second Language Acquisition at the University of Paris III since 1994. She officiated at the Hovnanian School in New Jersey since 1997, first as a curriculum coordinator for the Armenian language, and later as the Principal of the school since 2000. She has published numerous articles on bilingual education.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Celebrating 25 Years of Breaking Ground with Armenian Bar Association

ARMENBAR, from page 4

literature, film, dance, education, etc., in both the white and blue collar worlds, in order to embrace and exult in our Armenianness, and to show that we represent the best, both for our heritage and for America. The challenge now is how to express what we want," stated Hovannisian.

With half of the ArmenBar members located in California with its large Armenian population, the organization in its 25-year history has created mentorships, group and panel discussions, as well as receptions in California and many other states, most recently in New York, with judges and legal experts. Besides its thriving student program, it has also provided pro bono clinics, mostly for the newly arrived Armenian immigrants, informing them of their duties and responsibilities.

One of its strong points is the Armenian Bar Association's activism through its Armenian Rights Watch arm, which flexes its muscle when the rights and entitlements of Armenians are compromised.

"We are the Diaspora's legal voice and legal representatives when our rights are violated which happens more often than one can imagine," he declared. This activism involves filing lawsuits, meeting with employers, and sending letters to schools urging the teaching of the Armenian Genocide. "We take action for teachers who have been restricted in teaching this issue with their students, such as the recent case of an Armenian-American teacher in Arizona who was terminated for mentioning the Armenian Genocide in his math class."

In Armenia, with the republic beginning down the road to independence in 1991, and starting to "breathe on its own," the Armenian Bar Association began its relationship with the emerging independent country by sponsoring a legal exchange program with the country's Supreme Court and universities. Dozens of legal exchanges were started bringing their counterparts to the US for study, with Armenia returning the favor. "We offered the opportunity. We didn't impose on our counterparts, but rather allowed them to evaluate what's best for their society. Armenia kept many of the legal procedures, but they have since incorporated several of our initiatives."

From 2013 to 2014, the Armenian Bar representatives in Armenia concentrated on bringing reform "to a largely oligarchic ruling regime, and transparency in efforts to combat the prevailing corruption. We have reached out to communities to educate them and partner with various charitable groups, by giving counsel and advice to both practitioners and the citizenry, in such fields as domestic violence, and human and civil rights."

Citing one of the Armenian republic's gravest problems, he said that the massive emigration of people leaving Armenia due to lack of hope and opportunity must be addressed. In Armenia today, there is the continuing danger of a brain drain from one of the former Soviet Union's



Armenian Bar's Board Meeting at the Republic of Armenia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Seated, left to right, Saro Kerkonian (Glendale, CA), Sara Bedirian (Glendale, CA), Garo Ghazarian (Encino, CA), Armen K. Hovannisian (Los Angeles, CA), Judge Amy Hoogasian (San Francisco, CA), Gary Moomjian (Jericho, NY), Nigol Manoukian (Glendale, CA); Standing, left to right, Kathy Ossian (Detroit, MI), Sonya Nersessian (Boston, MA), Jacqueline Boyadjian (Los Angeles, CA), Harry Dikranian (Montreal, Canada), Robert Cannuscio (Philadelphia, PA), Edwin Minassian (Glendale, CA), Ray Aghaian (Los Angeles, CA), Denise Darmanian (New York, NY)

most educated and advanced republics. "It is necessary to make Armenia attractive for students and the youth, by creating a secure environment based on the rule of law and democratic values."

Armenian Bar Mirrors Community

"And in the US, ArmenBar is a reflection of our community. Our parents and grandparents came here for hope, a safe haven and the promise of peace. Because of their heroic

efforts, the true identity of the Armenian was not lost. At the same time that our culture was being preserved in our homes, we became part of our local communities across this country. Now is our opportunity to keep our Armenian traits of respect and courtesy, and not to always be conciliatory in the face of wrongdoing. It is necessary to talk respectfully, and reclaim what belongs to us without having a chip on our shoulders."

In the past, "our ancestors preserved our posterity with our churches, picnics, social gather-

ings. Now we must move forward outside of the protective walls of self-preservation," Hovannisian continued. "We have paid our dues. We are now fluent outside of those walls, and we are walking proudly into the future."

ArmenBar member Denise Darmanian who co-chaired the New York national meeting, paid tribute to the "astute foresight and keen intellect" of both ABA founder Raffi Hovannisian and current Chairman Armen Hovannisian. "To attend one of the annual or mid-year meetings of ArmenBar is akin to attending a family reunion," she commented. "Our membership amply epitomizes the best among the Armenians. In our midst are many attorneys who are first generation sons and daughters of immigrant families, and still others who are immigrants themselves who have risen through the ranks of American academia and jurisprudence to reach the pinnacle of success in law firms, law schools and the judiciary."

When ArmenBar first began, "it was comprised of a handful of lawyers," she continued. "Today, we have several hundred members from around the world. On the horizon, we see the next generation of Armenian lawyers, bright, capable, well-equipped to serve the diaspora and the homeland."

Calling the Armenian Bar a "pan-Armenian organization," 2012-2014 ABA Chairman Garo Ghazarian who has made numerous trips to Armenia, Artsakh and the Middle East, including Kessab, Syria where he met with the displaced Armenian refugees, explained that the ABA, regardless of our respective specialties in law have diligently striven to make it function as a voice against injustice suffered by our people."

As a "hub of diverse opinions, the Armenian Bar Association has been demanding justice when called for, and being blunt when necessary, from Yerevan to Ankara to Washington, DC," Ghazarian stated. "Together, as lawyers, judges, law professors and law students, we shall continue to always reach farther in the future for our people."

Irina Lazarian Joins Howard Karaghuesian Commemorative Corporation

NEW YORK – The Howard Karaghuesian Foundation announces the appointment of Irina Lazarian as its new managing director. The foundation, formally known as the Howard Karaghuesian Commemorative Corp (HKCC), was founded in 1921 in New York City by Mihran and Zabel Karaghuesian in memory of their 14-year-old son Howard, who died of an illness.

With the arrival of Lazarian, the foundation begins a new chapter in its history of coming to the aid of needy Armenian children and families throughout the world. "Irina brings new vitality and energy to the Karaghuesian programs as we face increasing challenges in Armenia, Syria and Lebanon, where the Foundation is current-

ly operating," said its president, Michael Haratunian.

Lazarian is the former executive director of Armenia Fund USA. Born in Yerevan, she relocated to the US in 1998. She is expected to lead the foundation in new directions to fulfill the vision of the Karaghuesian family.

The foundation recognizes that the Armenians in the Middle East face enormous challenges, especially now with the war in Syria, and it is providing substantial assistance to the Karaghuesian operations in Aleppo and Beirut.



Irina Lazarian

In Armenia, ever since the earthquake in 1988 and following independence, Karaghuesian operates major programs in the health and social fields for the needy. It operates six health clinics throughout Armenia and Karabagh representing the major portion of its annual budget.

The future of the Karaghuesian foundation will now be in good hands as its new managing director working with its board of directors, dedicated to serve the needs of the next generation of Armenian children throughout the world.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Nersess Deacons' Training Program Concludes Successful Session in Jerusalem

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. – Thirteen altar servers returned from a two week Deacons' Training Program in Jerusalem on July 7. Representing 10 parishes from our dioceses, the young men age 18 and over participated in the first-ever St. Nersess conference in the Holy Land. Under the leadership of Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan and Fr. Daniel Karadjian, the participants were the personal guests of Jerusalem Patriarch Archbishop Nourhan Manougian and stayed in the Armenian monastery. The program was subsidized through a generous gift from Dr. Garo and Cece Garibian of Philadelphia in memory of former patriarch, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, former Patriarch of Jerusalem and former Primate of the Eastern Diocese.

During their two weeks in Jerusalem, the young men participated in daily worship with the clergy and seminarians of the Patriarchate. They also assisted at Divine Liturgies celebrated at the tomb of Christ in the Holy Sepulchre, the tomb of Mary in the Garden of Gethsemane, the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem, the altar of the apostle James of Zebedee within the magnificent Armenian Church of Saints James, and the Holy Archangels Church deep in the Armenian Quarter.

The altar servers made pilgrimages to Holy Land sites, praying and singing at the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish on the Sea of Galilee, the Mount of Jesus' Temptation in Jericho, the Church of St. Peter's Denial, the Jordan River, and other sacred places. Participants also led daily Bible

Studies at many of the holy places.

At the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, participant Alex Calikyan recalled the incredible experience of the group filling the large church with their voices as they sang hymns and prayers to St. Mary. "It was very spontaneous...one of us would start singing and then we all joined in. We didn't just take in the historical significance of standing in the place where St. Mary learned she was to become the mother of the Son of God. We fully comprehended Her importance of motherhood through song and prayers. It was inspiring and placed us in the right state of mind."

The participants also paid their respects at the Armenian cemetery on Mount Zion, where they prayed for the souls of Abp. Torkom Manoogian, Abp. Tiran Nersoyan, Abp. Yeghishe Derderian, Abp. Norayr Bogharian, Abp. Guregh Kapikian and all of the deceased patriarchs, clergy and faithful of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The conference and pilgrimage differed from other recent trips to the Holy Land in that the participants resided within the walls of the Armenian monastery, interacting every day with the clergy and youth of the Armenian Quarter, and sharing all their meals with the Armenian seminarians. Most memorable were the soccer games and a rousing musical evening where the deacons and seminarians joined in singing songs from the St. Nersess Song Book.

"Living with the seminarians in Jerusalem was an unbelievable, enriching experience," recalled participant Samuel DeBlois. "We



Participants join Armenian clergy and seminarians in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre early in the morning after celebrating the Divine Liturgy at the tomb of Jesus.

Donation

Sue Mirakian of Cleveland, Ohio, donates \$500 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in memory of her beloved husband, Sam Mirakian, who passed away on July 4. He was the founder and longtime chairman of local ADL and Tekeyan chapters and director of the Tekeyan Voice weekly radio program.

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Vahag and Lusine Baghdasaryan and little Carlos
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THE BAGHDASARYANS moved to Aghavnavank in 1988 from Dagestan, Russia, and have been planting seedlings with Armenia Tree Project (ATP) since 2011. With six members in the family, grandfather Karlen notes that this backyard nursery program has been crucial in helping to pay off debt, and keep the two small grandchildren Carlos and Hasmik fed. This ATP micro-enterprise initiative provides 10 Aghavnavank families a steady source of income and is one of many programs we conduct in Armenia to provide jobs and environmental assistance.

SINCE 1994, we have planted and restored more than 4.5 million trees and created hundreds of jobs for Armenians in seasonal tree-related programs and backyard nursery programs.

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taught each other during the time we were together. We followed their routine, and learned how to serve with humility, be a better deacon. I knew what it was to be an Armenian Christian in America, but they taught us how to live and be an Armenian Christian in the monastery. Our foundation from previous Deacons' Training Programs at St. Nersess was enhanced by this new experience."

"Our extraordinary St. Nersess Deacons' Training Program in Jerusalem met all of my hopes and expectations," said Findikyan, who has directed the program for more than 15 years. "There is no better place to deepen our knowledge and appreciation for our church's worship than Jerusalem, which is truly the cradle of the Armenian Church's liturgical tradition. If that weren't enough, our Deacons' Training Program served to cultivate friendships with our brothers and sisters in Jerusalem, an historic and endangered Armenian community that is of inestimable importance for all Armenians." He continued, "Most important of all, Jerusalem challenged each one of us to follow Jesus Christ in our daily lives, to become ever more loving, forgiving and compassionate human beings."

St. Nersess remains the only Armenian seminary that not only prepares men as priests but also lay leaders for administrative roles within the Armenian Church. Over the past year, con-

struction has continued on the new St. Nersess campus in Armonk, NY, which when completed, will offer state of the art learning and living facilities for St. Nersess seminarians.



Participants Andrew Kahiayan and Alex Calikyan with Archbishop Nourhan Manougian and V. Rev. Daniel Findikyan.

Genocide Denial Raised During Congressional Hearing

DENIAL, from page 4
mentioned the Armenian Genocide in her prepared remarks but also strongly criticized the treatment of Christian Armenians in Turkey, as well as the status of Armenian and Greek holy sites in Turkey and Cyprus.

Prodromou referred to the status of religious minority rights in Turkey as revealing a "sobering picture of no substantive change," further adding that "if one uses religious freedom for Turkey's minority communities as a metric for the overall robustness and quality of democracy in Turkey, there is cause for grave concern." She also implored the U.S. to hold Turkey to "international

standards and to the expectations of a US partner and NATO ally."

In his prepared statement, Dr. Soner Cagaptay made reference to the re-opening of the Armenian Akhtamar Church in Eastern Turkey as an example of "improvements in terms of religious freedoms." However, he failed to mention that the very same church officially functions as a museum and only allows a liturgical service once a year.

The subcommittee hearing dealt with various issues relating to the status of democracy in Turkey. Some other areas covered include restrictions on religion, internet censorship, and the rise of authoritarianism in Turkey.



COMMUNITY NEWS

AAHPO Spring and Summer Programs

By Lawrence V. Najarian, MD

Now in the summer of its 20th year, the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) has brought its mission to life with an unusual number of initiatives that serve Armenians of all ages, laypersons and health care professionals alike, and in expanding service areas in the eastern US and abroad.

Mentoring Community Forum

Even as the region struggled through a brutal winter, AAHPO members, the Armenian Scientists and Engineers and the Armenian Bar Association collaborated in February to host the fourth annual Mentoring Community Forum at Fordham University.

Armenian professionals representing medicine, dentistry, engineering, law, science, finance and many other professions were on hand to provide short presentations and meet with students and young professionals. The program addressed questions about higher education, career development and internship opportunities.

"This was an exceptional opportunity for students and young professionals to connect with mentors in their chosen field of study, gain inside knowledge of the industry, guidance and support in professional development and access to industry resources," said Garbis Baydar, MD, AAHPO treasurer and one of the event leaders.

Educational meetings for members

AAHPO held two educational dinner meetings for health care professionals, the first one on March 21 at Sevan Restaurant in Bayside, NY. This event was well-attended by medical specialists, friends and spouses. Three dental experts updated attendees on "New Trends in Dental Care." The distinguished presenters were: Elphida Ayvazian, DMD who spoke on "Advanced Procedures in Restorative Dentistry;" Edmond Demirdjan, DDS who spoke on "Managing Some Common Medical Conditions in a Dental Setting" and Alex Meneshian, DDS, MD, who spoke on



Dr. Ani Kalayjian

Trauma: Global Perspective in Post Disaster Mental Health Management.

Free Public Medical Workshop

Twice this spring, AAHPO reached out to the public with free Medical Workshops that provide medical information and access to leading health care experts. On April 25, AAHPO brought six distinguished health care specialists to a Medical Workshop on Conquering Cancer at St. Leon Armenian Church, Fair Lawn, NJ.

The distinguished presenters included: Anise Kachadourian Boudoughian, MD, Medical Oncology; Robert Kinoian, DMD, Oral Lesions & Cancer; Knarig Khatchadurian Meyer, PhD - Nutrition: Boost Your Immune System; Carol Livingstone, MS - Health & Fitness: Living Strong, Living Well; Hourig Karalian, MS, RN - Coping Strategies; Noyemi Isnar, MD - Elder Care & Hospice. Following the presentation, the specialists were available to answer questions. St. Leon Men's Fellowship served refreshments.

"Were very proud of the access to top experts that these Medical Forums provide. Dozens of Armenians attended the April 25 forum, and felt comfortable enough to ask questions and discuss their concerns. The Medical Forums are not a substitute for personal medical care, but wonderful adjuncts to it," said event organizer

AAHPO Medical Forum at St. Mary Armenian Church," said St. Mary Pastor Rev. Father Arakel Vardazaryan.

Clergy Conference Honor

AAHPO Board Member Raffy Hovanessian, MD was honored as "Armenian of the Year" at the 2014 Diocesan Banquet held May 2 at the Diocesan Center in New York City. The nearly 400 guests in attendance included delegates from every Diocesan parish along with leaders of the local and national Armenian community.

It was no surprise to AAHPO members that Hovanessian should be honored in this way. He is an exceptionally accomplished individual who has led a life of exemplary service, and his commitment to medical education in Armenia has directly influenced AAHPO missions in Armenia. By his own count, Hovanessian has visited Armenia 27 times to assist physicians and improve medical education.

When accepting the award, Hovanessian paid heartfelt tribute to his wife, Shoghag, "who has been a full partner in all our endeavors. We always consult each other. She has always been



Dr. Raffy Hovanessian, flanked by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and James Kalustian

there beside me, behind me, and most of the time ahead of me. She deserves this credit as much as I do," he said. He also paid homage to his parents, orphans of the Genocide who "over-

colleagues from Columbia University: "With this conference, we hope we will all gain new knowledge that will enrich our understanding of the field and that this knowledge will serve as a catalyst for future initiatives and collaborations in improving nutrition and health of the Armenian population."

The two-day international symposium was titled "Nutrition as a Key to Economic Development: The Case for Armenia," which over 180 health professionals, program planners, and policy makers attended to increase their awareness on malnutrition in Armenia today. The event had five sessions which covered childhood malnutrition, current assessments in childhood nutrition in Armenia, current nutrition interventions in Armenia, nutrition and non-communicable diseases, nutrition education, training, and capacity, and clinical issues in nutrition.

AMIC Connection

AAHPO was represented at the June meeting of Armenian Medical International Committee (AMIC) held in Miami. The fundamental mission of AMIC was fulfilled by the fact that so many young health care providers, including many individuals new to the organization, travelled to Miami from all over the world.

AAHPO was honored to be offered a seat on the AMIC Executive Committee. We reiterated our commitment to AMIC as an important global connection for Armenian health care professionals. AAHPO members are already making plans to travel to the next AMIC meeting, which will coincide with the CME meeting July 2-4, 2015 (the theme is "Together in Health" www.4imca.am).

Delaware Valley Health Professionals Organization

Late last year, AAHPO leadership got wind of a January 2014 event for Armenian health professionals in Philadelphia, and believed it was important to support this new organization. Since that event, with AAHPOs encouragement, the Delaware Valley Armenian Health Professionals Organization (DVAHPO) was formed, and two dinner meetings have been held, in early April and on June 13.

"My wife and I are very excited about the interest being shown here. We are looking forward to building relationships with our Armenian colleagues and, in general, fostering fellowship in the Delaware Valley Armenian community," noted Levon Nazarian, MD, an AAHPO honoree and now a member of the DVAHPO Organizing Committee.

"We are very grateful for the support that AAHPO has shown to DVAHPO. Our purpose right now is to establish warm relationships with one another as we build the organization," said Karl Doghramji, MD, another Organizing Committee member.

At the June 13 meeting, Doghramji, a recognized expert on sleep disorders, presented "Q&A on Insomnia and Sleep Disorders."

The group will meet again on September 26, and may organize a summer visit to the Barnes Foundation Museum in Philadelphia.

Help Save Lives!

During this busy time period, physicians in Armenia were being trained through AAHPOs "Help Save Lives" physician training program. These doctors from remote villages have not had access to Continuing Medical Education, and have taken their increased knowledge and renewed skills back to their villages to serve their patients. Just since January 2014, a total of 18 Armenian physicians have been trained through the Help Save Lives! Program.

What's Next

Two public medical workshops are scheduled for September 7 at St. Stepanos Armenian Church and September 28 at St. Thomas Armenian Church.

Two dinner meetings and presentations are scheduled for AAHPO on September 12 and DVAHPO on September 26.

This year culminates on November 21 at the New York Athletic Club and the 20th Anniversary Gala and Fundraiser.



The Delaware Valley Armenian Health Professionals Organization (DVAHPO)

"Innovative Approaches to Bone Reconstruction."

"We are very fortunate to have in the AAHPO membership these highly renowned dental experts who updated us on a number of new procedures and prosthetics in dental care," noted Arthur Kubikian, DDS, AAHPO vice president and organizer of the March 21 event.

On May 16, AAHPO members, spouses and guests met again for dinner, a special presentation, and great fellowship at Roses of Englewood, NJ. Ani Kalayjian, PhD, gave a presentation on "Psychosocial and Spiritual Well-Being." Kalayjian is a board-certified expert in traumatic stress, a Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine, and has published a world-renowned book, Disaster & Mass

and AAHPO Board Member Knarig Khatchadurian Meyer, PhD.

On June 8, AAHPO presented another five health care specialists for a Medical Forum at St. Mary Armenian Church in Livingston, NJ. Speakers included: Lena L. Merjanian, MD, a board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist; Joyce S. Kurdian, DMD, a cosmetic dentist; Ara Z. Apelian, MD, an endocrinologist and diabetologist; Pierre D. Maldjian, MD, a radiologist; Lawrence V. Najarian, MD, a board-certified ophthalmologist and eye surgeon.

"Our parishioners attended enthusiastically, and very much appreciated how generously the medical presenters shared with them. The room was filled with a positive vibe and I'm sure there will be great interest in holding another

came the perpetrators by bringing into the world six children, 12 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren."

AUA conference in Armenia

AAHPO was a co-sponsor of the Conference on Nutrition held in May at American University of Armenia (AUA) in Yerevan, and organized by Columbia University, AUA, the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) and World Vision. The Armenian Medical Fund also was a co-sponsor.

AAHPO Board Member Kim Hekimian, PhD, from the Columbia University Institute of Human Nutrition and AUA School of Public Health opened the International Symposium, introducing the organizers, sponsors, and her



Young Deacons Ordained in White Plains

Three young men at St. Gregory the Enlightener Church of White Plains, NY, began a new journey in their service to the Armenian Church when they were ordained to the diaconate on Sunday, June 22.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), visited St. Gregory the Enlightener Church, where he celebrated the Divine Liturgy and performed the ordination service this month. The Primate was assisted by the Rev. Karekin Kasparian, the longtime pastor of the White Plains parish.

The ordination service began with the three candidates – Peter Derderian, Michael Givelekian, and Gregory Guroian – kneeling in prayer before the holy altar. Kasparian then led the young men up to the altar and formally presented them to Barsamian.

The Primate placed his right hand upon each candidate, and bestowed each with a stole signifying their elevation from the sub-diaconate and their new role as first assistants to the priest. The newly ordained deacons then served on the altar during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

“Today, as we observe the Feast of Holy Echmiadzin, we commemorate St. Gregory the Illuminator’s vision in which Christ struck the ground with a golden hammer and instructed Gregory to erect a church on the site,” said Barsamian. “The Armenian Church has faced many trials since St. Gregory’s time, but it has endured because of the commitment of countless clergy and lay people.”

“Here in America,” the Primate went on, “this legacy has been passed from generation to generation since the earliest Armenian immigrants arrived here in the late 19th century. And today we are witness to this ‘passing of the torch’ as these fine young men step forward to serve our church.”

Following services, the Women’s Guild hosted a brunch in the church’s Tutak Hall. The entire parish gathered to congratulate the three on their accomplishment. Also present



The candidates face the congregation during the ordination service.

were members of the ACYOA Central Council, as well as the deacons’ friends and family members.

“I am very proud of our new deacons,” said Kasparian. “They are hard-working and dedicated, and they serve their church with love and joy. Peter, Michael, and Greg set an example for our Sunday School and Armenian School students, and I know how much our community respects them and appreciates their commitment.”

Peter, Michael, and Greg have been involved in the life of the Armenian Church since childhood. All three are graduates of Sunday School, and have been active in the ACYOA, attended summer camps, and participated in St. Nersess Seminary summer conferences, among other Diocesan programs.

“I have been preparing to serve on the altar for as long as I can remember,” said Peter Derderian. “It is an honor to be trusted with such a responsibility, and I pray that I am able to continue to serve the church to the best of my ability.”

The deacons credit Kasparian for inspiring them and guiding

them in their path to the diaconate.

“Der Karekin has been with all three of us on our entire spiritual journey, and it is only fitting that he is here with us today,” said Gregory Guroian in remarks at the luncheon. “He has been working in the foreground and in the background to help teach the three of us everything that we know today. He has spent countless hours encouraging us, lecturing us, mentoring us, and laughing with us.”

The young men say they are also grateful to other clergy, family members, and experienced deacons at St. Gregory the Enlightener Church for their patience and encouragement.

“I am thankful for this community and everyone in it,” Guroian added. “We are excited and eager to begin our new roles, and we look forward to continuing to serve the Armenian Church and the St. Gregory community, so that future generations can share in the same love and fellowship that we have been fortunate enough to share in.”

Michael points out that there is still much for the new deacons to absorb. “The preparation of becoming a deacon has been very long and it still continues,” he said. “One can never stop learning.”

Barsamian expressed his appreciation to Kasparian and the St. Gregory community for instilling Armenian Christian values in the young generation of parishioners.

“Der Karekin is a tireless servant of the Lord, who has inspired so many young people across our Diocese,” Barsamian said. “We are blessed to have such leaders in our midst. It is thanks to Der Karekin – and to all of you – that the light of St. Gregory will continue to shine brightly in this blessed land of America.”



Altar servers pose for a group photo with Archbishop Barsamian and Fr. Kasparian.

Zaven Khanjian Appointed New Executive Director/CEO of AMAA

PARAMUS, N.J. – Dr. Joseph Zeronian, president of the Board of Directors of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), announced the appointment of Zaven Khanjian as the new executive director/CEO of the association effective September 1.

Khanjian was born and raised in Aleppo, Syria. He grew up in the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church and was an active member of its youth group.

After his graduation from Aleppo College, Khanjian attended the American University of Beirut, Lebanon and in 1967 earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration. Soon after his graduation he moved to the Persian Gulf and for 13 years worked in his profession assuming top positions in prestigious companies, while creating “Little Armenias” together with like-minded Armenians in the area.

In 1979, Khanjian moved with his family to California and after working for a few years

in his profession, went into the real estate business starting his own successful company, Kanjyan Realty in Glendale, in 1987.

Over the years, Khanjian has been an active member of the Greater Los Angeles Community serving in leadership capacities at the Armenia Fund, The Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, The Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School, The United Armenian Congregational Church, Haigazian University of Beirut, the Glendale Family YMCA, The Salvation Army-Glendale Corps, Americans for Artsakh, The Armenian American Real Estate Association and lately as the Chairman of the Syrian Armenian Relief Fund, raising more than \$1,000,000.

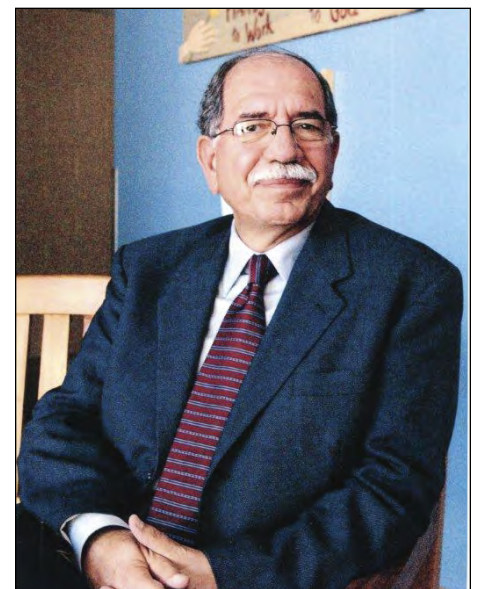
Khanjian has contributed volumes of bilingual articles to American Armenian media and is the author of three Armenian books.

He is married to Sona Kelligian and is the father of three children, Vasken, Hrag and Vana, and grandfather of five boys.

Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, will continue in his current role as interim Executive director/CEO of the AMAA through October 2014 to facilitate a smooth transition. Melkonian will resume his responsibility as Pastor to Pastors in Armenia, giving leadership and assistance to AMAA ministers in Armenia for half of the year and on assignments as Field Director in the United States and Canada for the remaining half year.

“The Board of Directors of the AMAA is pleased to appoint Mr. Zaven Khanjian, as he has demonstrated his devotion and worked tirelessly to enhance the well-being of our Armenian people,” said Zeronian. “We know that his management experience will help advance the work of the AMAA in the 24 countries we service around the world.”

Founded in 1918, the AMAA is a non-profit charitable organization whose purpose is to serve the physical and spiritual needs of people everywhere, both at home and overseas.



Zaven Khanjian

Arts & Living

Concerts Bring Modern Armenian Chamber Music to New England

WATERTOWN – Lately, a few concerts have featured the music of contemporary Armenian composers in Boston and Providence. The Armenian Museum of America and the Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence, RI, together with the Union of the Composers of Armenia, prepared and presented a concert of contemporary composers' music. The pieces were chosen by the Union of the Armenian Composers, and were performed for the first time in the US.

The program included pieces written by composers Alexanyan, Babayan, Garsoyan, Ghazaryan, Hakobjanyan, Karapetyan, Kostanyan, Markaryan, Mavisakalyan, Mikaelyan, Sadoyan, Satian, Shahrimanyan,



All soloists with Chorale and Orchestra.



Soprano Nune Karapetyan with pianist Nune Hakobyan

Sukiasyan, Zarifyan for voice, piano and violin, which were performed by the very talented pianist, Nune Hakobyan, singer Nune Karapetyan and violinist Sargis Karapetyan.

As the director of the museum, Berge Chekidjian, and Rev. Shnork Souin, pastor of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church said this concert did wonders for the cultural life of the community. The beautiful music and the talent of the performers were received with much enthusiasm by the audience, even though some of them were non-Armenians.

The success of this concert makes the community believe that it can present more programs of this kind, which include choral and orchestral pieces, written by the contemporary composers.

Due to the leadership of the new president of the composers' union, Aram Satyan, it was possible, for the first time, to present such a program on the East Coast. The Union of the Composers of Armenia worked hard to make Armenian music known to important colleges, conservatories, libraries and soloists. The Armenian professional art is, always, on a high level, starting with Komitas, Tchukhajyan to Spendiaryan, Khachaturyan, Babajanyan, Harutyunyan, Hovanessian, and today's contemporary composers. Now there is a better possibility to present the works of contemporary composers.

— Eliza Suvajian



Archbishop Barsamian presents Maestro Konstantin Petrossian with the "Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Medal." Rev. Fr. Shnork Souin, pastor of the Providence parish, looks on.

Konstantin Petrossian Honored in Providence

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – It was a festive occasion for those celebrating the centennial of the Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church with a gala concert on Friday, June 13.

And as it turned out, the day held a special surprise for the concert conductor, Konstantin Petrossian.

With more than 600 in attendance at the St. Mary and St. Mena Coptic Orthodox

Cathedral, Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian rose to read the encyclical from the Catholicos of all Armenians, His Holiness Karekin II, which bestowed Maestro Petrossian with the "Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Medal" – one of the lofty honors of the Armenian Church, given to recognize distinguished achievement in the arts and culture.

In his remarks to the large crowd, the Primate congratulated Maestro Konstantin on receiving "this well-deserved honor from our Mother See."

"Maestro is a true example of how our cultural identity can flourish and expand on the shores of this great country of America," Archbishop Barsamian said.

In a subsequent phone conversation, Petrossian admitted: "It was a great surprise. I knew nothing about it. I was preparing to conduct the last musical selection which was scheduled to follow the Primate's benediction. Then all of a sudden, this announcement came."

see PETROSSIAN, page 11



During the concert

Dr. Helen Evans Appointed Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor at Columbia

NEW YORK – Dr. Helen C. Evans, the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, has been appointed the Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University for fall 2014. She will teach a seminar-style course titled "Origins of Armenian Art: Creating An Identity," beginning September 5.

The course, which will be held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Fridays from 11 a.m. to 12:50 p.m., will use the objects in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum's Medieval Department to explore how the Armenian people, at the levels of elite and popular culture, used architecture, manuscript illumination, coins, stone carvings, ceramics, textiles and other media to identify and position themselves in relation to neighboring or dominating cultures. Focusing on how to arrive at a definition of Armenian art and how to relate Armenia to the larger cultural context of early and medieval periods and later revivals, the course will also examine the reasons for scholarly interest in a definition of Armenian art over the last century.

Registration for this course (# MDES G4327) begins August 14 and ends August 29 and is open to auditors as well as matriculating students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The tuition for auditors is \$2,400 and for Lifelong Learners (those over the age of 65) is \$750. Registration may be done online at www.ce.columbia.edu/auditing or by calling (212) 854-9666.

The Visiting Professorship program, part of the Armenian Studies Program in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia, is made possible by an endowment established by the late Dr. Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian in 1998. Previous Ordjanian



Dr. Helen Evans

Visiting Professors have included Levon Abrahamian, Vardan Azatyan, Peter Balakian, Melissa Bilal, George Bournoutian, Seta Dadoyan, Roberta Ervine, Helen Evans, Rachel Goshgarian, Arman Grigoryan, Robert Hewsen, Armen Marsoobian, Ara Sarafian and Khachig Tololyan.

The Ordjanian Visiting Professorship is one of several programs of the Armenian Center at Columbia, the organization that raised the initial funds to establish a Chair of Armenian Studies at Columbia in 1979 and which continues to provide funds for scholarships, library acquisitions, academic publications, lectures, conferences and symposia.

For information about the Armenian Center at Columbia, call Karen Bedrosian Richardson.

For information about this course, email helen.evans@metmuseum.org



ARTS & LIVING

A True Inspiring Story

By Kevork Keushkerian

PASADENA, Calif. – The theme of the 126th Tournament of Roses Parade on January 1, 2015, is “Inspiring Stories.” It pays tribute to those who have loved unconditionally, preserved courageously, endured patiently and accomplished on behalf of others.

The American Armenian Rose Float Association, which spearheaded the first-ever Armenian float to participate in the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, had a successful fund raising event on Saturday, June 21. During this event, more than \$100,000 was raised for this cause, but much more is needed as the estimate for the float is about \$300,000. The float is designed and being constructed by the Phoenix Decorating Company.

A Pasadena resident, Manoug Tabakian, approached the president of the American Armenian Rose Float Association Chris Chahinian and informed him that his grandson, Shant Bashdjian, has collected \$100 from his friends and relatives and wanted to donate it to the Armenian Rose Float.



Shant Bashdjian with American Armenian Rose Float Assoc. Chairman Chris Chahinian. In the background, the Armenian Rose Float under construction.

Amazingly, Shant is a 9 and a fourth grader at Sahag Mesrob Armenian Christian School in Pasadena. He had heard about the Armenian Rose Float from his grandfather, wholeheartedly believed in the project and felt obligated to do his share for this once in a lifetime adventure. This reminds me of the story of the Widow in the Bible, who gave all she had.

Bravo Shant. Let your example be a shining guide for the

rest of the skeptics among us who although are financially well enough to contribute generously, but begrudge the Armenians all over the world from telling our “Inspiring Stories” and sharing our rich cultural heritage with millions of people in over 90 countries worldwide.

We would also like to congratulate Dickran and Zenna Bashdjians, Shant’s parents, for raising their son in the spirit of their Christian faith and Armenian heritage.

Konstantin Petrossian Honored in Providence

PETROSSIAN, from page 10

The three-day centennial celebration had begun with the Friday concert, continued with a banquet on Saturday, June 14, and culminated on Sunday, June 15 with the Divine Liturgy and a khatchkar-blessing ceremony, celebrated by the Primate.

The centennial celebration had been initiated by the church pastor, the Rev. Shnork Souin, who had also traveled to Armenia to bring back

the specially-ordered khatchkar. Souin had also secretly requested that the Primate honor Petrossian with this award.

“I felt so emotional,” related Petrossian. “And to have been honored by the Vehapar, and Archbishop Khajag whom I respect so much, makes me very proud. This was the most important honor I have ever received.”

The concert, titled “A Century of Light, Hope and Faith,” was attended by a number of digni-

taries, including nine clerics from the Rhode Island Orthodox Clergy Fellowship, as well as clergy from regional Armenian churches. Also attending were representatives of the Rhode Island state government.

The musical performance – involving 26 instrumentalists and the 50-voice Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island – featured Armenian spiritual, folk, classical, and national music by Gomidas, Yegmalian, Chaushian, Bedelian, Balyan, Avedisian, and Konstantin Petrossian himself. It began with the majestic *Hrashapar*, *Oorakh Ler* and *Etchmiadzin*, and ended with Babajanian’s powerful *Azg Parabantz* and Hovannesian’s *Erevan Erebuni*.

“The concert was a bouquet of sacred, folk, and patriotic pieces,” noted the honoree. “We wanted to demonstrate the rich heritage of our nation by this performance which was set to the highest standards. It is my belief that the nation gains its strength from the preservation and enrichment of its cultural and sacred heritage.”

At the conclusion of the celebratory occasion, Souin paid tribute to Petrossian, stating: “We are so proud that this prestigious award by His Holiness could be delivered by our Primate on the glorious occasion of this magnificent concert in honor of our church centennial. Maestro’s talents and services to this church



During the banquet: US Rep. David Cicilini, RI Rep. Jacqueline Kazarian

shall forever be memorialized with this award.”

Petrossian is an acclaimed Armenian composer who has created symphonic, choral, chamber, instrumental, and vocal compositions, as well as soundtracks and theatrical selections. His works have been performed, recorded and published worldwide. He is a member of the Armenian Union of Composers and Musicologists; the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), the American Music Center and the Armenian Musical Assembly.

He has served as Cultural and Music Director of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church in Providence, and is artistic director and conductor of the Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island. A co-founder of the Armenian Chorale of Greater Worcester, Mass., he has been Music Director and Conductor of the Erevan Choral Society since 2009.

Among the venues he has performed in are New York’s Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. At the United Nations he gave an Armenian concert on the historic occasion of the Republic of Armenia becoming a member of that international organization.

In May 2013, Petrossian was honored with the Armenian Republic’s highest cultural award, the “Movses Khorenatsi Medal,” bestowed by President Serge Sargsian.



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ARTS & LIVING

From Street Child to Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Conductor

By Laura Mowat

LONDON (Getbucks.co.uk) – For street children like Vartan Melkonian growing up in Beirut, sunset was the most terrifying time of the day, when he had to face the daily tango of reality as a street boy and find shelter for the



Vartan Melkonian, who was a street child in Lebanon, is now a conductor for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

that is your life and that is what you do. It is only when you look at it from an intellectual point of view now that it might seem scary of course. You have to make decisions crucial to your existence and that comes naturally.”

Vartan became a street child when he left an orphanage just outside of Beirut when he was 8. His parents were Armenian and came to Lebanon as refugees when there was the Armenian Genocide in 1915, which left 1.5 million people dead. Melkonian spent his first four years in the refugee camp with his parents.

The father-of-two sought solace in music; he could write music before he wrote words and when he walked, he would walk in tempo rhythm. He gathered other street boys, taught them harmony and they would hum hymns together. They would hum as the solution to the fact they all spoke different languages. The band of street boys became

quite well known in the city and they were particularly popular among American sailors.

He said: “It was about dedication and not giving up on the case.”

Through a random encounter on the street, a band member from Inotorni took an interest in the young talent and asked Melkonian to join his band. This X-factor like meeting played a big role in giving him a ticket for success; it helped him to afford to buy a property in Beirut when he was 18.

He said: “It was a sensation that one can not

describe easily to have your own place. I had never sat on a chair. I had never been into someone’s house. I didn’t know how to tie shoelaces. If no one tells you these things then you don’t know it at all.”

When he was a street child, the conductor would often get shooed on by smart hotels.

When I asked Melkonian whether he is surprised about how far he has come, from a boy with nothing to a conductor for one of the most successful orchestras in the world, he said that he always knew his fantasies would become his reality.

His response, which simply demonstrates the underlying optimism he always had, was: “If you want to, you will finish a race, not necessarily first, but you will get there if you aim for it. They weren’t fantasies that I never thought I could achieve.”

Melkonian, as a spokesman for the United Nations, now gives speeches about street children and explains that children on the streets do give back if given the chance. He is a patron for the Consortium of Street Children, which Sir John Major set up when he was the prime minister. He has given speeches in Westminster as well as Colombia where he met the president and called for more to be done to help homeless children.

He said: “If we invest in children and give children a chance, you will be saving children like me.”

Having his unique experience, the musician said: “Too many people in the world think ‘what is my right rather than what can I give?’”

He came to England when he was a young adult and he worked in the north of the country as well as in the East End singing and producing music. He brought up his children in London and in Chenies where he is grateful they could have a different start to life than his own.

The father-of-two spoke about a time his daughter, when probed about what her father did, proudly said: “My daddy is an orphan.”

He said: “When I used to see the children coming home from school and saying to me ‘What’s for dinner?’ that is something so alien to me. I am so pleased they are able to do that and not look through the rubbish bins for their next meal.”

When we finish talking in the Amersham cafe, a waitress, who I hadn’t realized was also engrossed in his words, approached the table and thanked Melkonian for sharing his tale. I



A few months ago, in his role as patron for the Consortium of Street Children, he gave Prince William a prize at a polo competition.

night.

“People take moments of pleasure by looking at the sunset. For us, for me, it was the worst time of the day, there was nowhere to go. I had to find any alcove to sleep in,” the former street child said.

The musician worked different jobs, such as shoe shining, selling chewing gum and shoveling sand onto lorries. He would earn ten pence a day, which was enough to buy some bread and he was thankful for the fertility of Lebanon as finding food in dustbins was never an issue.

He said: “You don’t notice that it is scary as

couldn’t agree with her more.

His daughter, Veronica, has threatened to write a book of her father’s intoxicating life, I do hope this materializes.

Melkonian is a patron of the Consortium for Street Children www.stretchildren.org.

Gary Goshgarian Honored by WPI Alumni Association for Remarkable Career

WORCESTER, Mass. – Gary Goshgarian, a 1964 graduate of Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), received the Robert H. Goddard Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement for his impressive career as an accomplished novelist. Goshgarian accepted the award at WPI on Friday, May 30, during his 50th reunion celebration.

Goshgarian, who earned a bachelor’s degree

in physics at WPI, is the author of eight critically acclaimed bestselling novels: *Atlantis Fire*, *Rough Beast*, *The Stone Circle* (under the name Gary Goshgarian), *Elixir*, *Gray Matter*, *Flashback*, *Skin Deep* and *Tunnel Vision* (all published under his pen name, Gary Braver). His work has been praised by the likes of Stephen King and Tess Gerritsen, and his novel *Flashback* won the 2006 Massachusetts Honor

Book Award.

Goshgarian is also a pioneering and dedicated teacher. After earning a master’s degree in English from the University of Connecticut and a PhD in English from the University of Wisconsin, he took a teaching position at Northeastern University in 1969. There he introduced one of the first science fiction courses in the country and soon introduced two other pop-

ular culture courses in horror fiction and modern bestsellers. All three courses are going



Gary Goshgarian receives the WPI Alumni Association award.

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strong after 35 years. Northeastern has recognized Goshgarian’s contributions with its Excellence in Teaching Award. Goshgarian is also the author of five popular college writing textbooks, including *Exploring Language*, now in its 14th edition. He also teaches fiction writing workshops, including thriller-writing at the Cape Cod Writers Conference this coming August.

The Robert H. Goddard Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement is presented by the WPI Alumni Association to WPI alumni who have become masters of their field or who have gone above and beyond the normal career path. Innovation, dedication, and creative problem solving techniques in the industrial world distinguish Goddard Award recipients. The award was named for Robert H. Goddard, the father of modern rocketry and a famous WPI alumnus.



ARTS & LIVING

New Documentary Focuses on Plight Of Armenians along Northern Border

WINCHESTER, Mass. — A new documentary video, “Armenia: Ancient Nation Endangered,” produced by Eva Medzorian, was released July 15 on YouTube. This documentary exposes the escalating danger confronting Armenians residing in the villages bordering the Northeast corner of Armenia and Azerbaijan four hours northeast of Yerevan in the Shamshadeen region of the Tavush, clustered around the central town of Berd.

Portrayed by first-hand documentary videos coupled with a brief history of Armenia over the past 2,000 years, Medzorian tells a compelling story of Armenia, an ancient nation with a rich Christian heritage, constantly under persecution by its neighbors, yet through the tenacity of its people, surviving throughout centuries, only to now be confronted by yet another threat of annihilation, this time by its hawkish neighbor Azerbaijan encouraged and supported by prime ally Turkey. Tragically, most of the civilized world knows little about Armenia and what news does surface is distorted.

Medzorian commented, “Over the past four decades I have visited Armenia over 60 times



Eva Medzorian

and witnessed the country during the Soviet period and post-independence. I have travelled to border villages and seen the hardships and dangers confronting our people, especially on the hostile Azerbaijan border. I felt it was time to tell the story as it is, not only to Armenians but also non-Armenians, so I incorporated a brief overview of milestone events in Armenia’s rich history of the past 2,000 years coupled with my documentary of the dangerous situation on the borders. Furthermore, to ensure accuracy of the historical aspects of my video, I consulted with noted Yerevan historian Eduard Danielyan, an expert on ancient Armenian history.”

The video can be accessed free on YouTube by clicking on www.tinyurl.com/pzgo9b3 or by ordering a DVD from Eva Medzorian, 8 Berkshire Drive, Winchester, MA 01890, e-mail <evamedzorian@gmail.com> for \$20 inclusive of postage. Net proceeds will go to the Berd Spiritual Revival Fund in Armenia.

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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.hypeointechurch.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 14 — Trinity Family Festival, 12-5 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Delicious Armenian food; Armenian music by the Greg Krikorian Ensemble featuring Greg Krikorian, oud & vocals, Leon Janikian, clarinet, George Righellis, guitar & vocals, Michael Sabounjian, keyboard & vocals, Charlie Dermenjian, dumbeg and Steve Surabian, tambourine; fun games and activities for children; Blessing of Madagh at 4 pm, raffle drawing and more. For further information, contact the church office, 617.354.0632 or email office@htaac.org.

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

OCTOBER 4 — YerazArt, a group committed to young musicians from Armenia, will hold a dinner and benefit concert. Belmont. Venue, time and ticket prices to be announced soon.

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



Holy Trinity Armenian Church will present Trinity Family Festival, September 14, 12-5 p.m., 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Among the attractions will be the delicious Armenian food; music by the Greg Krikorian Ensemble; fun games and activities for children; Blessing of Madagh at 4 p.m., raffle drawing and more. For information, contact the church office, 617.354.0632 or email office@htaac.org.

NEW YORK

AUGUST 8-10 — Return to Asbury Park, Friday Night: Happy Hour at Watermark Lounge, Saturday 11AM: Tavloo Tournament, Saturday 12PM: Meet us at the 7th Avenue Beach, Saturday 4PM-6PM: Poolside Happy Hour with live Armenian music, Saturday 8 p.m., Berkeley Oceanfront Hotel, Kingsley Ballroom, live music, mezze, and cash bar, featuring the Michael Gostanian Ensemble and Kevork Artinian Band.

‘Capturing Joan Quinn’ at Brand

GLENDALE — Joan Agajanian Quinn has been referred to as the “Culture Queen” and the “Gertrude Stein of her day” amongst the artist satellites of Los Angeles, New York and London. Through the 1970s to the 1990s, Quinn’s Los Angeles home base became the nucleus of a pivotal artist interchange. Amongst this milieu, artists were drawn to capture the enigmatic and mysterious Joan Quinn; showcasing their singular style in portraiture while embellishing the mythology she had built in the contemporary art world. It is quite possible this unique portrait collection of nearly 300 pieces of art by renowned artists is the largest of a singular portrait subject in the contemporary art world: “Joan Quinn Captured,” through August 1.

Since 1997 she has served as an NGO representative to the United Nations, board member of the Armenian Rug Society (1997-present), The Armenian International Women’s Association International & Los Angeles Board and representative of the Armenian Pavilion, International Art Biennale of Venice and acting chairman of the ‘Friends of the Armenian Pavilion (1997-2003), a member of the International Press Academy (1997-present) and the Armenian Professional Society 2002-present. As West Coast editor of Andy Warhol’s *Interview* magazine, her constant snapshot taking for the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* of emerging and established artists and her current “Joan Quinn Profiles” cable television show has created an ongoing archive of those making waves in the art world.

Joan and her husband Jack Quinn have together created a legacy of one of the most important aspects of the world of art; the momentum of the

alliances and influences made through friendships which she still continues to this day. This critical aspect of friendship provided an interchange of ideas in a creative community.

Although selections of the Quinn portrait collection have been previously shown in Southern California, the exhibition, “Joan Quinn Captured” takes on a new approach, showcasing the works of her artist friends that are exemplary of their legacies to inform an engaging dialogue with their selected unique portraits of Joan.

A work by David Hockney will be represented in “Captured” and may include a new portrait of Quinn for his upcoming retrospective at a major museum. Street artists Shepard Fairey and Krebs will be given an alcove to present their portraits along with the ethnographic sculptures of Dora Delarios. The exhibition proposes to show new commissions by the works of the sculptor Woods Davy along with John Krawczyk in the sculpture garden. The Brand Library entrance courtyard may also be given an outdoor sculpture. A new generation of artists, including the painter Eric Pederson who has been considered an adherent to the school of Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud will also be included.

The Brand Art Center entrance will feature Robert Graham’s drawings and sculptures commemorating the human figure along with Claire Falkenstein and the Armenian artist Lucie Abdalian who will open the show. Just beyond the entrance the gallery guest will find a Neo Dada arena including assemblage works by George Herms and the deconstructions of Roberto Lizano, Mattia Biaggi and Susi Sielski. Beatrice Wood, the long-time partner of Marcel Duchamp

and co-founder of the early Dada journal *Blind Man* will also be included. Figurative painting and drawing masters include Don Bachardy, Kevin Whitney, Mel Ramos, and Chaz Guest (Guest was recently commissioned by the White House) and the legendary creator of *Interview*’s 1980’s covers, Richard Bernstein.

The hallway leading into the library will feature Neo Surrealism artists Steven Arnold, who is recently having his renowned film, “Luminous Procureess,” re-mastered by the Walker Center in Minneapolis, together with the Armenian artist Zareh. This section portrays the worlds of fashion: portraits by Helmut Newton, Robert Mapplethorpe, June Newton, George Hurrell Paul Jasmin and Matthew Rolston. The renowned illustrator Antonio Lopez will be presented with Luciana Martinez de la Rosa, whose portraits of women have undergone a recent revival of interest perpetuating a cult following amongst the recent revision of London’s underground club culture from the 1970s through the 1980s. Also present in this area of the art center a few of the photographers’ well-known still life works will be displayed. Portraits of Joan in the costumes of the legendary designers Issey Miyake and Zandra Rhodes take on a sculptural quality.

“Captured” provides a narrative of Los Angeles’ emerging art world and some of the most critical influences which arrived from New York and Europe. Through the interplay captured by the artists in portraits and Joan Quinn herself in the documentation of these artists, the exhibition showcases a collision through the networking of one woman and her family that altered the secular journey of Los Angeles on a new course that now resides as the grand horizon it has achieved today.

More information can be found at joanquinn-captured.com.



COMMENTARY

Mirror Spectator



Established 1932
An ADL Publication

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

Baikar Association, Inc.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

U.S.A.	\$80 a year
Canada	\$125 a year
Other Countries	\$190 a year

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA
and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472

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COMMENTARY

The Political Football Continues

By Edmond Y. Azadian

As soon as the World Cup was over in Rio, the political version of the game resumed in Armenia's backyard, with the ball being the Armenian Genocide.

Of course, eventually the issue of the Genocide appearing in the political and international news is beneficial, especially on the eve of the centennial. But we need to sort out who is taking advantage of the complex situation of world politics and how that can impact Armenia's standing on the issue.

With Armenia wrapped up in its local politics as well as its hardening relations with Iran and Russia, it does not seem to have the global reach to take part in the Middle East discourse.

It is not the first time that the Armenian Genocide has been rendered into a political football; of all possible quarters, Ankara is becoming the "defender" of people against whom genocide is perpetrated. And, of course, this gives an opportunity to Turkey's adversaries to point out Turkey's own skeletons in the closet, meaning the Armenian Genocide.

Under Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey rose to the position of an international political player, albeit, some of its feats were based on rhetoric and cheap populism. Especially, the Arab street throughout the Middle East was hungry for the feast of bravura Mr. Erdogan was providing. He converted his popularity not only into political dividends but also economic opportunities.

"Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wins accolades among hawks with Israel's assault on Gaza," said Mahir Zeynalov, a journalist at the English-language Turkish daily, Today's Zaman. "There is another leader who benefits from the tragedy in Gaza: Turkey's prime minister who is skilled at exploiting Arab causes for his own political ambitions. Now, it is time for Arabs to reject another leader who only makes empty promises for political ends."

Indeed, Erdogan's "heroic" march in the Arabic popular imagination began in Davos in 2009, when he had a fallout with Israel's President Shimon Peres and walked off the stage, accusing Israel of committing Genocide against the Palestinians. His popularity skyrocketed in the Muslim world with the Mavi Marmara raid, which incurred 10 casualties at the hands of Israeli forces.

While Erdogan was duping the Arab public, Turkish-Israeli military contracts remained intact and the trade volume increased from \$3.4 billion in 2008 to \$4.4 billion in 2011 and exceeded \$4 billion in 2012. It is reported that foreign trade between Turkey and Israel has increased 27.6 percent in the first half of 2014 compared to the same period in 2013.

In the meantime, Erdogan's son was continuing his lucrative business in Israel. And Kurdish oil, running illegally from Iraq to Turkey, was being sold to Israel.

With the Israeli raids on Gaza raging, Mr. Erdogan has, once again, resorted to his mantle as the defender of the Palestinian cause. "They curse Hitler morning and night," Erdogan told thousands of supporters in the Black Sea city of Ordu. "However, now their barbarism has surpassed even Hitler's."

Erdogan had already invoked Hitler on July 15 to criticize an Israeli lawmaker. On July 18, he accused Israel of attempted "genocide" in Gaza. Israel ordered the withdrawal of diplomats' families from Turkey last week after anti-Israel demonstrations there.

Even if Erdogan's rhetoric has lost its luster in the Arab world, it continues to retain its value as domestic currency in his electoral campaign.

The Israeli government has retaliated against Erdogan's accusations by invoking the Armenian Genocide. Indeed, Arutz Sheva (IsraelNationalnews.com) reports that "Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz of the Likud Party hit back at Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, after the latter accused Israel of attempting 'systematic genocide' of Palestinians in Gaza." In 1915 the Turks massacred a million and a half Armenians and he accuses us, who are fighting his friends in Islamic movement, of genocide? Who wants a relationship with such a person?"

Of course, this is a necessary quote for all journalists and historians who deviously often characterize 1915 as "what Armenians call a genocide." But Mr. Katz' statement will remain a self-serving disingenuous sound bite if he does not go further by bringing the Armenian Genocide issue before the Israeli parliament.

For Mr. Erdogan, the time of reckoning has also come in the Arab world. He was the darling of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. During former president Mohammed Morsi's administration, and even before, Turkey had built inroads in Egyptian society and had permeated academia to produce a number of articles in the news media and books in scholarly circles promoting Turkish views on the issue of the Armenian Genocide. Now, the tables have turned; not only are newspaper articles being published but scholarly debates are conducted on TV screens providing objective documentation on the Armenian Genocide. And Mr. Erdogan has been demonstrating his genius in provoking such rebuttals to his statements. Last week, he lambasted Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi as an "illegitimate tyrant" and said Cairo could not be relied upon to negotiate a truce with Israel.

A news item on Tahrirnews.com responds to Erdogan's statement once again, referring to the Armenian Genocide: "Dr. Ayman Salama, professor of law and member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs said that Turkey's prime minister has made clumsy statements blaming the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and insulting the Egyptian political system. He further pointed out that it is surprising that Erdogan speaks of tyranny in Egypt, forgetting the centennial of the horrible genocide of the Armenians in the 20th century, committed by Erdogan's Ottoman grandparents."

As we can see, the issue of the Armenian Genocide has become a political currency in the turmoil of the Middle East and Armenians have no way of capitalizing on it.

The war in Gaza and the crash of the Malaysian airliner in Ukraine are two major events dominating the news and the Genocide issue is popping out of nowhere when politicians need to settle scores. However, it has become a marginal issue rather than one that can stand on its own in the global landscape.

If we had a strong and organized diaspora, serving as an extension of Armenia's foreign policy establishment, we could bank all these developments and derive dividends for the Armenian cause.

At this crucial junction of history, the diaspora remains rudderless and Armenia can hardly deal with its own challenges, much less right a historic wrong. And thus we are allowing history to bypass us yet again.

Meanwhile, the political football continues.

LETTERS

Let Down by Republicans in Penn.

To the Editor:

The Republican-controlled legislature of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania voted into law a Genocide Education measure which specifically ignores the Armenian Genocide.

The law, sadly, goes into effect in the Commonwealth's high schools in 2015 – the year of the centenary of the start of the Armenian Genocide – and is designed to teach the youngsters the evil and the horrors of genocides.

Reference to the Armenian Genocide was in

the original draft, but was eliminated after a campaign by the Turks. Efforts to get the reference to the Armenian Genocide back into the bill received promises from many sides – including the leader of the Republican Party. However, when it came to the crunch, the reference to the Armenian Genocide was not included in the final measure which did include constant references to the Holocaust and "other genocides" and which specifically also included the Rwandan genocide.

Therefore, I urge all readers to vote against

the Republican Party in the forthcoming elections. This is not to say that the Democrat Party candidate is the better candidate, but it is to say that the Republican Party candidate is the inferior.

I urge all your readers who are not residents of Pennsylvania but who have relatives and friends in the Commonwealth to contact them and spread this message.

The lesson the politicians must be taught is that the Turks may have the money but the Armenians have the votes.

Avedis Kevorkian
Philadelphia, PA

Ottoman Arabs Supported Armenians after Genocide

To the Editor:

Since we are thinking about the run-up to World War I, and the catastrophe of the Armenian Genocide that occurred during that conflict, it seemed to me that it was worth remembering a much-overlooked detail, in which Armenians figure, which occurred just over a year before August 4, 1914.

I refer to the Congress of Ottoman Arabs, held in Paris in June 1913. Like the Armenians, the Arabs (mostly Syrian, with a couple of Iraqi delegates) were disillusioned by the chauvinism and racism of the ruling Young Turks, in power in the Ottoman capital since July 1908. Like the Armenians, they wanted a measure of freedom – not necessarily full inde-

pendence, but something with a wide degree of local self-rule. The participants in the Paris congress were equally Christian and Muslim.

What surprised me, though (and which as new to me) was Resolution no. 8 of the final text. It read, "The Congress affirms it favors the reformist and decentralizing demands of see WALKER, page 15



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Now that the Lawsuits are Settled, Let's Build the Genocide Memorial

On July 15, a Federal Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's 2011 decision, ordering the return to the Cafesjian Family Foundation (CFF) the properties intended for the construction of an Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial in Washington, DC.

Here is how Appeals Court Judges Garland, Wilkins, and Ginsburg summarized the series of lawsuits and counter-suits filed by the contending parties in the past seven years:

Armenian Assembly of America officials, including Hirair Hovnanian and Gerard Cafesjian, "secured sizeable funding contributions, and formed a nonprofit corporation, the Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial (AGM&M). They also agreed on and purchased a historic building for the museum's site, just a few blocks from the White House. But as the years wore on, they were unable to agree on much else. Progress staggered. Tensions mounted. Little true headway was made. Eventually, one of the project's principal founders and benefactors, the late Gerard

Cafesjian, chose to part ways with the group and resigned his post as President of AGM&M. The split was far from amicable. And so began a chain of events culminating in this tangle of litigation. After several years of legal wrangling, the parties' claims ultimately proceeded to a bench trial before the District Court. Save for a single cause of action, all of the claims were found unproven. Post-trial proceedings ensued on a multitude of issues, and, after many of the District Court's decisions were appealed on a piecemeal basis, the assorted cases on appeal were consolidated and presented to us for resolution."

In the last page of their ruling, the Appeals Court Judges voiced their frustration and dismay at the wasteful series of lawsuits. In utter exasperation, they wrote:

"This legal saga has been long-lived. What began as a single lawsuit to collect on an unpaid promissory note quickly escalated into a morass of litigation. More than seven years and millions of dollars in legal fees later, much of the parties' work to achieve their dream of a museum appears to have been for naught, which is regrettable. Whatever happens next, hopefully our decision today can at least serve as the last word on this dispute's protracted journey through the courts."

I received scores of e-mails from many readers last week deploring the fact that two prominent Armenian organizations wasted millions of dollars in suing each other instead of settling their dispute out of court and building a Genocide Museum, scheduled for completion long before the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide. Unfortunately, the inauguration of the museum, located just two blocks from the White House, may not take place at all.

It is deeply regrettable that both sides had rejected all offers by third parties to mediate their dispute. The millions

of dollars spent on litigation would have helped fund the Genocide Museum. This is yet another sorrowful example of Armenians acting against their own interests.

A miracle could still happen. Even though Mr. Cafesjian passed away last September, he had repeatedly declared that it was his fervent desire to build a Genocide Museum and Memorial in the nation's Capital. Armenians worldwide ardently wish that his heirs and CFF trustees honor Mr. Cafesjian's commitment to this revered project and bring his undying dream to fruition.

Armenia's leaders, heads of Diaspora organizations, and community members should notify CFF trustees that they are fully ready and prepared to provide all possible support to make Mr. Cafesjian's dream a reality. This museum shall be a lasting tribute to Gerard Cafesjian who donated tens of millions of dollars for humanitarian projects in Armenia and the United States.

Now that this acrimonious lawsuit is behind us, it is high time for the Armenian American community, with the consent of CFF trustees, to come together and form a pan-Armenian committee, including the Armenian Assembly, to begin planning the building of this important landmark in Washington.

The Genocide Museum would be a lasting reminder to millions of visitors not only of the terrible tragedy that befell Armenians in 1915, but more importantly, the story of their indomitable spirit to survive and thrive. The Museum, therefore, could more properly be called, "Memorial to Armenian Survival from Genocide."

Should CFF trustees and the Armenian-American community share this miraculous vision, the groundbreaking ceremony could be held on the future site of the Armenian Memorial on April 24, 2015.

No Reservations

By Lia Parisyan

Those who know me well, know that I cannot stay still in one place for too long. I have a nomadic soul, and despite frequently being typecast as "a lost soul," I continue exploring the world, taking solace and gaining motivation through Tolkien's famous words: "Not all those who wander are lost."

I came to Armenia through the Birthright Armenia program, which I discovered by entering the keyword "Armenia" into Google's search engine. I read about the program, its requirements and quietly entertained the thought of volunteering for a few months during my time as a Web & New Media consultant in the drab and soul-sucking offices of the corporation where I worked.

I knew I was at an important crossroads: I could continue to climb the rungs of the corporate ladder in a job that provided me with virtually zero satisfaction or, I could take some time out to discover my roots, explore my identity and culture, and experience a country, while most people around me (many of whom had actually never set foot in the country) were only too eager to share their opinions and prejudices, and engage in impassioned tirades to try to convince me that I was making a grave mistake by taking another "unnecessary" detour.

Yet, it wasn't all negative; I had some friends, family and familiars who lauded the virtues of an architecturally rich capital, nostalgically recounted wondering in miles of scenic countryside and reminisced, painting vignettes of their encounters with hospitable locals residing in villages that were as picturesque as they were poor.

I took all of these thoughts, opinions and experiences into account, and while I formed a loose idea of what Armenia could or would be like, I never internalized any of these descriptions as

unequivocal truths, having done a considerable bit of traveling in the past, I knew that often what people said doesn't align with the reality of place. As the departure date neared, I approached my journey with Anthony Bourdain's philosophy: "No Reservations."

I arrived on April Fool's Day, on a surprisingly cold and damp night. It was dark, so I didn't really get to experience Yerevan through a set of well-rested eyes or appreciate the many points of interest my driver and I passed en route to where I would be staying in the city. I had booked my apartment stateside, and as I became more familiar with the districts of Yerevan, I learned how I had accidentally chosen to live in one of the most posh portions of town complete with an incredible square full of modern art, chic cafes you'd might see across Europe, Soho and Williamsburg, and a centralized, anchoring Caucasian take on what reminded me of Rome's Spanish Steps.

I was often and happily surprised by Armenians, but also, as a Diaspora Armenian who had attended St. Illuminator's Armenian Day School in Woodside, and had fortunately learned to read and write, to wear the traditional dance costumes, and recite the words of famous Armenian poets, I did not feel like a complete outsider. Still, there was so much information that I was shockingly ignorant of, in particular the details of what locals referred to as "Moot Dariener" or Dark Years, which they had lived through even as I in New York was studying a brighter parallel reality, learning about the past: Armenia's notable kingdoms, fearless national heroes, and cultural achievements. Hearing people of all walks of life describe a period where food was scarce and, electricity was virtually non-existent, made me appreciate the level and scope of how a person's basic quality of life could be so dramatically disrupted and persist for years. I thought about Hurricane Sandy, and how I lost power for two weeks, and was ready to

tear my hair out, but living in darkness for a whole winter, or several years, the thought alone was mind-blowing and made me appreciate Armenians' resiliency despite being dealt an unfortunate hand.

I couldn't imagine how the café I was sitting in, enjoying a perfectly brewed Americano, was the Armenia that had survived a devastating earthquake, territorial war with neighboring Azerbaijan, food and power shortages, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the growing pains of a new and inexperienced "democratic" government.

Prior to my Armenia trip, I knew virtually nothing about the country's contemporary history. Sure, there was the catastrophic 1988 Spitak earthquake, but I was three-years-old at the time, and other than remembering church drives and Diaspora aid, it was a tragic, but distant reality.

What Birthright Armenia gave me was an opportunity to experience the country as a living, utterly current reality, and the best way to describe the value of the experience is that the Birthright Armenia program helps shape you into a traveler rather than a tourist. It opened my eyes, and gave me the guidance to discovering my own truths through immersion in various facets of everyday Armenian life, beginning with my volunteering post at Yerevan State University (YSU).

Firstly, I am thankful for Birthright Armenia's flexibility, and its willingness to help volunteers make the most of their experience; it gave me the opportunity to switch posts, and find a better fit for my work experience and skill set. And, while I was nervous and didn't know what to expect, working with YSU's brilliant faculty and post-doctoral students, I began to see the "huys" or "hope" that's characterized this nation's tenacious resiliency through catastrophes, darkness, the fall of empires, and uncertain transfers of power.

If I had to compare Armenia to a historical precedent, the closest analogy is America in the 1970s. The country is rapidly developing, has the resources, passionate people, a strong system of community networks and the drive to move forward and improve people's quality of life. What Armenia is missing are the intermediaries or the bridges between desire and results; it needs excellent communicators, business planners, strategists, project managers and leaders to guide future growth. Many changes are already manifesting – when I boarded that plane in April, I never imagined I would help create the country's first Bioscience Center, formal business plan and five-year strategic roadmap. I never imagined I would meet such a diverse range of personalities within a predominately homogeneous culture. Had it not been for my curiosity, and

Birthright Armenia's ability to find a practical application for my explorer's spirit, I would have never discovered many of my latent gifts or seen the great potential of an underdog nation that's somehow miraculously defeated all odds.

Despite having to leave Yerevan, I will continue to work as a remote business analyst for YSU, and support my team in Armenia. And, like the swallows that return each year to rebuild their nests, I, too will journey back to a place that I can proudly call home.

(Lia Parisyan is a New York-based writer and content strategist, who graduated from Hunter College with a degree in creative writing. Her greatest passions are travel, philanthropy, photography and finding unconventional solutions to problems. She served at Yerevan State University's Biology Department for three months as a Birthright Armenia volunteer this spring/summer.)

Ottoman Arabs Supported Armenians after Genocide

WALKER, from page 14

the Armenian Ottomans." Thus there was in 1913 what one might call a harmony of political aspirations between the Arabs of Greater Syria and Iraq, and the Western Armenians – something that was seen again in the decades after 1918, when the cities of the region played host to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, despite the fact that those lands of safety for Armenians had endured the divisive betrayals and explicit lack of freedom engineered by the British and French in the Sykes-Picot agreement, and the imposition of hypocritical "mandates" by those powers on the lands, many of whose inhabitants were more civilized than the military bureaucracies which were now ruling them.

(You'll find Resolution no. 8 in J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, Princeton, 1965, vol. 1, p. 269. Further material on the 1913 Congress is found in George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, London, 1913, pp. 114-118.)

So next time you go to Beirut, spare a thought, amid their political difficulties, for your Arab hosts, who – Christian and Muslim – even in 1913 were voicing support for you.

Christopher Walker
London, England

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NATO and Azerbaijan: An Unbalanced Partnership

By Peter Kechichian and Gevorg Shahbazyan

WASHINGTON – Last week, Azerbaijan was again the focus of a US foreign policy discussion. On July 1, the Atlantic Council hosted a forum here titled, “NATO in the Caucasus: The Case of Azerbaijan.”

Moderated by David Koranyi, the deputy director of the Atlantic Council’s Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center, the panel featured influential analysts who cover this strategic region. These included Ambassador Khazar Ibrahim, the head

of the Azerbaijani mission to NATO; Eric Ruben, the deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the US State Department and Dr. Brenda Shaffer, a visiting researcher at Georgetown University.

The forum was introduced by Frederick Kempe, the president and CEO of the Atlantic Council.

Kempe noted in his opening address that the Atlantic Council is a “strong supporter for inde-

pendent Azerbaijan,” while Ibrahim praised the group for “promoting the agenda of Azerbaijan.”

The forum represented a new chapter in the public discussion on Azerbaijan and the wider region. It focused on US foreign policy in the South Caucasus, possible NATO expansion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova, and European energy security in general. Although NATO has had a footprint in the region since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the increased expansion by NATO in the area is almost unprecedented and will have a major impact on the geopolitics of the wider region. This has become increasingly relevant, particularly in light of major examples of Russian aggression in Georgia in 2008, and Russia’s recent annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. The Caucasus, due to its strategic location, has always fallen under the firm influence of larger powers, such as Russia, Iran and Turkey. Hence, the expansion of NATO in the region causes a direct challenge to Russian influence in the South Caucasus.

The forum represented a wide-ranging discussion touching on many differing aspects of NATO’s relationship with Azerbaijan, which developed as a NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) member since 1994. Chief among these was energy security, energy infrastructure protection, and ensuring future and reliable energy flow to European markets. Ambassador Ibrahim emphasized that Azerbaijan is an “energy provider to many NATO members,” highlighting its importance to NATO while painting Azerbaijan as a “very strong, active partner.”

A common theme among the energy security discussion was about lowering Europe’s dependence on the Russian dominated gas supply system and diversifying Europe’s energy sources. Ruben was clear about this, proclaiming that some countries “are dependent on Russian gas,” while Shaffer declared that energy security should not be thought of as separate from security in general.

The Southern Gas Corridor is a major European energy project that will bring Caspian oil and gas into Europe via Turkey. It is a “highly strategic choice” and one that “we talk about... a lot in Washington, D.C.,” Shaffer said. Other areas mentioned include Azerbaijan’s relationship with Israel, its support in the US war effort in Afghanistan, and combating human trafficking, counter-terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and land mine clearance.

There was very little mention of Azerbaijan’s bilateral relationship with Russia. Interestingly, there was absolutely no mention of Azerbaijan’s acquisition of \$4 billion worth of modern weaponry from Russia, including some technologically advanced offensive weapons. The influx of Russian weapons has resulted in a regional arms race which has further fueled instability in a region already rife with daily cross-border attacks that have left at least 18 soldiers dead on both sides of the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict, this year. These actions run counter to Russia’s repeated claims of maintaining military parity and balance in the region towards both Azerbaijan and Armenia. This is in addition to the numerous trade and energy projects that Azerbaijan continues to enjoy with Russia.

Just last month, high-level Russian officials traveled to Baku, such as Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, Economic Minister Alexei Ulyukaev, and Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin, to name a few. The

sheer size of the delegation and the number of trips taken highlight Moscow’s intention to deepen its relationship with Azerbaijan.

An Armenian Embassy representative, Deputy Chief of Mission Andranik Hovhannisyian, was present at the forum and noted the extensive relationship that Armenia also enjoys with NATO. For example, Armenia, which has also developed relations with NATO since 1994 as a PfP member, continues to maintain a significant peace keeping mission in Kosovo, while Azerbaijan withdrew its peace keeping force from Kosovo in 2008, he said. Ibrahim referred to this withdrawal during the conference as a “political decision,” due to his government’s stance against the internationally recognized principle of self-determination. It is also worth noting that Armenia has contributed significantly to NATO-led operations in Afghanistan, most notably with the deployment of over one hundred combat soldiers. In addition, Armenia assisted the coalition’s combat operations during the Iraq war.

Incidentally, the Azerbaijani government’s pardon, promotion and glorification of an Azerbaijani soldier, Ramil Safarov, who was convicted in Hungary of the 2004 murder of an Armenian officer, Gurgen Margaryan, was not mentioned at the discussion. Margaryan was murdered in his sleep by an ax-wielding Safarov during a NATO PfP English language training course.

Air Route Changed for Sole Link Between Ukraine and Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The new route of the flights by Ukraine International Airlines bypasses the eastern part of Ukraine. Instead, the airline announced, the flights will be carried out 200 kilometers far from the zone of hostilities in the south of Ukraine.

“To secure the safety of the passengers the company has changed the air route through the territory of Ukraine. At present “Ukraine International Airlines” carries out all internal and external, regular and charter flights as scheduled. The company undertakes all its obligations towards passengers. Air routes change, however, can lead to minor delays,” reports the company.

Earlier, the Deputy Head of the General Department of Civil Aviation of the Republic of Armenia Arsen Poghosyan, said many international air carriers have cancelled flights over the territory of Ukraine, adding that the Armenian carrier Air Armenia does not have flights over the territory of Ukraine.

On July 17 Boeing-777 Malaysia Airlines, flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, crashed near the village of Grabovo in the Donetsk region of Ukraine, killing all 298 people aboard. After the incident, it was announced that Ukraine may close air corridors for civil aviation on the territory of hostilities. Later, some air companies announced that they would suspend flights over the territory of Ukraine.



Sipan Hakobyan

Classically Speaking in London

LONDON – On June 20, the Armenian House, London, was the venue for a talk by opera singer and conductor Sipan Hakobyan. He presented a lecture titled “The Development of the Armenian Classical Music Tradition Before and After the Genocide” to an audience of representatives of Armenian organizations, musicians and other guests.

By Garo Boyadjian

Organized by TCA London after an idea by chairman Garo Boyadjian, it was the first in a series of three “A Night to Remember” events focusing on the impact of the Genocide.

The lecture contained more than 34 music recordings and centered on nine different composers, with 30 documentary photographs, all compiled by Hakobyan. The presentation explored in detail the connections between these composers and the 1915 Genocide.

This provided some fresh insights into the culture of the era and was highly educational for both Armenians in the Diaspora and the British audience.

The presentation was concluded with the words of the poet Hamo Sahyan regarding Aram Khachaturyan the most renowned Armenian composer of the 20th century as “a global testimony to the civilisation of the Armenian nation.”

Hakobyan is artistic director of Tekeyan Cultural Association as well as artistic director and conductor of the “Komitas” Choir of the Tekeyan Trust in London.

Johan Michael Katz, a conductor, wrote after the program, “Having conducted Armenian compositions by Mirzoyan, Arutiunian, Hovhannessian not to mention Khachaturian and Komitas in the England and Russia and also having spent time chatting to the first two composers personally, it was important to be present at Sipan’s most interesting lecture recently. He was able to fill in many of the important historical gaps in my knowledge.”



The organizing committee

Court Ends Armenian Genocide Museum Challenge

MUSEUM, from page 1

Hirair Hovnanian, chairman of the Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial, said in a statement following release of the ruling Tuesday that “we hope the Cafesjian heirs keep the promise Gerry [Cafesjian] made to the courts, which was to use this property to build a museum.”

At one time, the late Cafesjian Family Foundation founder Gerald Cafesjian was a benefactor of the Armenian Assembly. Together, they planned the museum and memorial marking the period from 1915 to 1923, when by some estimates upward of 1.5 million Armenians died at the hands of the Ottoman Empire.

In downtown Washington, project supporters bought a four-story National Bank of Washington building in 2000. Cafesjian provided funding and bought adjacent properties, with a clause that the properties would revert to his control if the project was not finished by December 31, 2010.

Cafesjian and the Armenian Assembly subsequently had a falling out, leading to the seemingly endless court battles over control of the property.

“With the benefit of hindsight, [the Armenian Assembly] may now think this deal improvident, but no sense of buyer’s remorse can empower us to rewrite the plain terms of the contract to which they agreed,” Wilkins wrote.