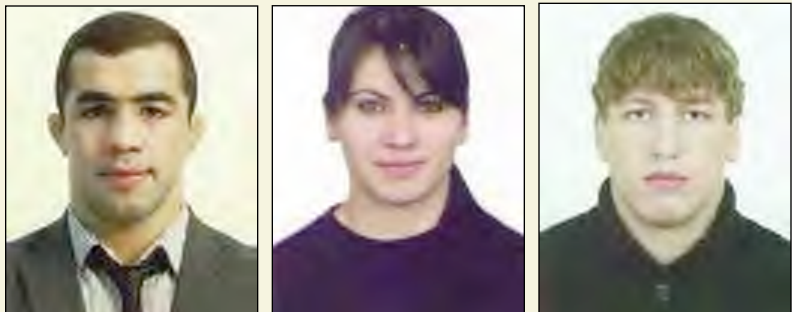




## Armenia Wins Three Medals In London



From left, Arsen Julfalakyan, Hripsime Khurshudyan and Arthur Aleksanyan

LONDON – Three athletes from Armenia medaled at the Olympic Games this week, winning one silver and two bronze medals. The silver medal was won on August 6 by Arsen Julfalakyan in the 74-kilogram Greco-Roman wrestling category. Winning a bronze medal in the same category, in the 96-kilogram division on August 7 was Arthur Aleksanyan, 20.

Winning another bronze was weightlifter Hripsime Khurshudyan, in the women's 75-kilogram category. She lifeted 128 kilograms in snatch and 166 in the clean-and-jerk.

Aleksanyan, 20, and Julfalakyan, 25, hail from Gumri. Khurshudyan, 25, is from Kasakh.

## Rwanda Hosts Groundbreaking Conference On Armenian, Jewish and Tutsi Genocides

KIGALI, Rwanda – A groundbreaking conference titled “Genocide and Denial: The Armenian, Jewish and Tutsi

Genocide” was hosted by and held at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in conjunction with the National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG), on July 17 and 18.

The center houses a museum that includes exhibits on the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, as well as genoices in Cambodia, Bosnia and Darfur. The two-day conference featured papers by scholars from the US, Europe and Rwanda. Its primary focus was the analysis of denial in the aftermath of genocide.

The Rwandan media covered the conference

see RWANDA, page 4



From left, Donald Miller, (unknown), John Bosco Siboyintore, Wendy Lower, Peter Balakian, Bianca Bagatourian, Deborah Lipstadt and Hadley Rose; second row, (unknown), Tom Nhadiro, Jean-Pierre Karegeye, Glen Ford, Solange Umulisa and Jose Kagabo

## AGBU Board Sets Aside \$1 Million For Assistance to Syrian Armenians

NEW YORK – The ongoing and expanding militarized conflict in Syria has created a humanitarian crisis for the population and is threatening, among others, residential areas where concentrations of the Armenian community and institutions are situated, particularly in Aleppo, Damascus and Kamishli. Several families have already been dislodged as a result of the fighting among government and opposition forces and the use of heavy artillery involved.

In preparation for the imminent need for humanitarian assistance that is emerging as a result of the unfolding political crisis in Syria, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) is committed to taking action to help the Armenian community in distress, this time in Syria.

The Central Board of Directors moved to set aside an AGBU Emergency Fund for Humanitarian Assistance to the Armenian community in Syria, in the amount of \$1 million.

A special task force, in cooperation with the District Committee of Syria, is in the process of assessing the emerging needs, to create the appropriate logistics in compliance with federal and international guidelines, to help and support the Armenian community there. Necessary arrangements are also underway in AGBU's centers locally in Aleppo, Damascus and Kamishli, to make them operational hubs for coordinating the relief efforts, extending help to families in other locations as well, wherever the need arises. They will also be prepared to accommodate those who may have to be temporarily moved out of their homes. The possibility of making AGBU facilities in Cyprus available as temporary shelter for families, who may need to move out of the country, is under consideration.

AGBU is in close communication with officials in Armenia to be appraised of the diplomatic efforts and social and organizational initiatives being taken to address the situation.

AGBU President Berge Setrakian sent out an urgent appeal to the union's membership worldwide to join forces and use their resources to help the Syrian community that has symbolized historically the ultimate humanitarian refuge for the survivors of the Genocide.

For more information, visit [www.agbu.org](http://www.agbu.org).

## French-Armenians Slam Proposal for Azeri Center in Paris

PARIS (Tert.am) – The Coordination Council of Armenian Organizations of France (CCAF) has condemned a proposed bill on establishing an Azerbaijan cultural center in the French capital.

According to *Nouvelles d'Armenie*, the opponents have issued a statement regarding the bill. “On July 25, [Prime Minister] Jean-Marc Ayrault and [Foreign Minister] Laurent Fabius submitted to the Council of Ministers a draft that would allow the Azerbaijani dictatorship to found a cultural center in Paris. The CCAF is very surprised that France's new government is rushing the draft, including it in the agenda. Are there no other priorities in France?” reads the statement. The members of the council note that international human rights organizations constantly slam the regime of President Ilham Aliyev for violation of human rights and racist and non-democratic policies.

## Buenos Aires Suburb Adopts Armenian Genocide Resolution

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina – The City Council of San Isidro adopted a resolution recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide. The city is an affluent municipality in the province of Buenos Aires.

Argentina's Senate on December 13, 2006 declared April 24 as the Day of Tolerance and Respect between nations.

According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, Armenia's Ambassador to Argentina Vahagn Melikyan, Primate of the Argentina and Chili Diocese of the Armenian Church Archbishop Gisal Muradian, representatives of the Armenian community and organizations in Argentina attended the council's session.

## Sargisian Congratulates Obama on His Birthday

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – On, August 4, Armenian President Serge Sargisian sent a congratulatory letter to the president of the United States of America, Barack Obama, on his birthday.

The letter states, in part, “Your Excellency, I warmly congratulate you on your birthday. I wish you and your family endless happiness and the successful implementation of your projects and initiatives. We, in Armenia, highly appreciate your efforts towards strengthening our interstate relations. The multi-faceted cooperation and strong partnership ties between our countries have seen an unprecedented growth. This has given new impetus to our collaboration and drawn closer our friendly peoples.”

## Nazar Nazarian Celebrates His 88th Birthday

ENGLEWOOD, NJ. – Community benefactor Nazar Nazarian celebrated his 88th birthday on Thursday, August 2, with friends.

Nazarian has touched and brightened the lives of many individuals and Armenian institutions. He has been an Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Central Board member for 33 years and has served the organization as vice chairman as well as treasurer of the Central Board of Directors.

see NAZARIAN, page 16



Nazar Nazarian, seated, third from left, celebrates with friends.

## INSIDE

### Expanding SSAES

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Yerevan Subway to Get \$15 Million Investment

YEREVAN (News.am) – The Yerevan City Hall, the Armenian Ministry of Finance and the Yerevan subway system have finalized a contract with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) for a \$5-million grant to secure the subway's reconstruction.

Also investing in the project for \$5 million each will be the European Investment Bank with \$5 million and the European Union in the same amount, as an investment grant. "The underground of the capital city is one of the main means of communication and it is in the focus of the city hall. We pay huge importance to the project realization as we settle our citizens' security," Mayor Taron Margarian said.

## Number of Titled Chess Players Growing in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The International Chess Federation (FIDE) awarded chess player Davit Zakaryan with the title of FIDE master. According to the Armenian Chess Federation, Zakaryan won this title for his success in chess tournaments. The number of grandmasters, international masters and FIDE masters is one of the international rating criteria in the country. Armenia is currently ranked fourth in world chess; each Armenian chess player's new title strengthens Armenia's position in world chess.

## More than 1,200 Shots Fired at Armenian Peacekeepers

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Azeri armed forces violated the cease-fire agreement at the contact line between Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijan more than 25 times on August 4. As the Nagorno Karabagh Defense Army media and propaganda department reported, 1,200 shots have been fired at Armenian positions.

Defense units refrained from retaliation and continued with their military duties.

Defense Minister of the Republic of Armenia Seyran Ohanyan, in an earlier interview with Armenpress, said, "[Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] OSCE Minsk group co-chair states relevant international organizations and international agencies should take overall control of cease-fire violations. It is obvious that the violations and subversion attempts are provoked by Azerbaijanis. It is unacceptable that the Azerbaijani side, ignoring the strong control exercised by strong states, continue border infiltration attempts. The control should be made tenser."

## Armenian and Georgian Actors Working on a New Joint Movie

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Several actors from Georgia have arrived in Armenia to begin work on a comedy, titled "Love Poker."

Izabella Manasaryan, who is handling public relations for the production company, said the movie takes place in Armenia and Georgia.

"During the shooting breaks, some of the actors sing Georgian songs. They are very pleased with the Yerevan warm reception, and some even expressed concern that they will leave at least seven kilograms heavier," said Manasaryan.

Internationally-recognized Georgian model and well-known actress Shorena Begashvili is also in Yerevan. Begashvili is not only acting in the film but singing on the soundtrack.

After finishing shooting in Yerevan and other Armenian localities, the production will leave for Georgia.

The director is David Babakhanyan, the producer is Ruben Jaghinyan, and executive producer is Armen Hambardzumyan.

# US Ambassador Visits Shengavit Preserve

By Joseph Dagdigian

YEREVAN – On Wednesday, July 25, a delegation from the US Embassy in Armenia visited the Shengavit Historical and Archaeological Culture Preserve, located across Yerevan Lake from the embassy. Visitors included Ambassador John Heffern and his wife, Libby, as well as Cultural Affairs officer Sean O'Hara. Greeting the US delegation was Vladimir Tshagharyan, director of the Shengavit Preserve; Gagik Gurdjyan, director of the Erebuni Historical and Archaeological Culture Preserve, which oversees Shengavit; Dr. Hakob Simonyan, director of Armenia's Research Center for Historical and Cultural Heritage (RCHCH), and Dr. Mitchell Rothman, head of the anthropology department at Widener University in Pennsylvania. Rothman and Simonyan are both conducting



From left, Director Vladimir Tshagharyan, Libby Heffern, Embassy Cultural Affairs officer Sean O'Hara, Ambassador John Heffern and Armenian archaeologist Armine Hayrapetyan examining a model of a fourth millennium Shengavit man



Shengavit Director Vladimir Tshagharyan describes Shengavit museum's artifacts.

excavations at Shengavit.

While examining excavations dating to the fourth millennium BC, Gurdjyan explained why the study of the Shengavit site was important not only for understanding the development of civilization in Armenia, but for the study of the entire region as cultural developments occurred alongside developments in Mesopotamia, the Middle East and elsewhere. The visitors viewed ongoing

excavations by Rothman and Simonyan who both discussed the significance of their finds.

Following examinations of the excavations, Tshagharyan led the group to the museum in which a number of Shengavit artifacts are on display, including stone, bone and metal tools, as well as pottery, a hearth and jewelry. Of special interest to Heffern was a forensic reconstruction of a human head based on skeletal remains found at

the site. The reconstruction illustrates what fourth millennium-BC inhabitants looked like. Of particular interest was the fact that the forensic reconstruction was done by noted doctor Antranig Tshagharyan, the father of Shengavit's director. Heffern expressed amazement that Yerevan's history goes back not 3,000 years, as is often cited, but 6,000 years. Comparing this with the brief history of the United States, he stated that he would encourage all the staff members of the embassy to visit Shengavit while expressing hope that the embassy and the Shengavit preserve could work together to further develop the site.

The Cambridge Yerevan Sister City



From left, Ambassador John Heffern, Shengavit Director Vladimir Tshagharyan and American archaeologist Dr. Mitchell Rothman

Association (CYSCA) is currently working with the Shengavit Historical and Archaeological Culture Preserve director to provide amenities for visitors, preserve the aging museum building and its artifacts and enhance the security of the site.

Before archaeological excavations are conducted, however, it is crucial that both government authorities and the participating archaeologists agree on a detailed plan for the preservation of the excavations and that adequate financing for preservation efforts be allocated. Currently there appears to be no firm plan for the preservation of the excavations and no available financing. Once exposed to the elements, the archaeological structures can quickly deteriorate, preventing further scientific research.

Details of CYSCA's project may be found at [www.cysca.org](http://www.cysca.org). More information on Shengavit is also available on the Erebuni Museum website at [www.erebuni.am](http://www.erebuni.am).



From left, Libby Heffern, Shengavit Director Vladimir Tshagharyan, Ambassador John Heffern, Armenian archaeologist Armine Hayrapetyan, Erebuni Director Gagik Gurdjyan and RCHCH Director Dr. Hakob Simonyan





## ARMENIA

# Women Struggle to Find Employment in Gumri

By Nelly Shishmany, Roza Hovhannisyan, Lusine Avagyan

GUMRI (IWPR) – Single mothers in Armenia often find it hard to escape poverty because they are paid very little, if they can get a job at all. But those living in Gumri, the country's second-largest city, have a particularly hard time.

The northwestern city still lives in the shadow of the massive Shirak earthquake of 1988, which devastated this part of what was then Soviet Armenia. Today, women make up 60 per cent of the town's 360,000 inhabitants, because so many men have left to find work in Russia as migrant laborers.

The hostel used to accommodate workers at Gumri's LenTextile factory was badly damaged

in the earthquake. The plant is long closed, but 20 or so families still live in the hostel many of them without men or a wageearner. The gloomy, decrepit building lacks basic amenities and almost all the staircases are damaged.

Most of the women living there rely on state benefits. Edward Baghramyan, head of the local social services department, said families living at the hostel received basic monthly benefits of 16,000 drams, the equivalent of \$39, as well as an additional 6,000 drams, or \$15, for each child.

Ani Koretsky, 19, lives in the hostel together with her mother, brother and daughter Alvard, who is one-and-a-half. After two years of marriage, Ani's husband abandoned his wife and daughter and left for Russia.

"Every night I fall asleep, and wake up terrified at the thought that this ramshackle building will fall down," she said.

Her family's total income comes to 26,000 drams, or \$63, including the benefits received by her brother and child.

Ani doubts she will ever find a job.

According to the Shirak provincial department for family, women's and children's affairs, 72 per cent of women in the region are unemployed, a far higher rate than among men.

In Gumri, job adverts often specify that female applicants must be good-looking, young and have a university degree.

Vahan Tumasyan, head of the Centre for Political Culture and Accord in Gumri, singled out a few such adverts – "company looking for a good-looking girl aged up to 28 to work as a cleaner"; "store looking for women aged up to 30 to work as shop assistants"; "restaurant looking for a well-educated woman aged up to 30 for waitressing work".

Tumasyan said women's wages in Gumri averaged only 35,000 to 40,000 drams, roughly 85-100 dollars a month, and that many women preferred to stay at home and live on benefits.

Yepraxia Kirakosyan, 24, worked as a hairdresser for eight months but left because of the low pay.

"I was earning next to nothing for a whole month's work. Once I earned 40,000 drams, but the next month I only got 10,000. You can't live on that, of course. Everything is expensive," she said.

Women's rights activists say traditional attitudes towards gender roles contribute to especially high rates of female unemployment.

Vahe Tagvoryan, deputy director of the NGO Ajakits, which helps women and vulnerable



Staff from the American University of Armenia's Garo Meghriyan Institute administered eye exams to young orphans.

## AUA Conducts Eye Screenings For Orphaned Children

YEREVAN – In June and July, the American University of Armenia's Garo Meghriyan Institute for Preventive Ophthalmology (Meghriyan Institute) College of Health Sciences continued its annual eye screenings among socially vulnerable and orphaned children. This time doctors went to the Mary Ismirlyan Orphanage, which currently houses 90 children. Sixty-six children were available for a detailed eye screening. Among them, 23 were found to suffer from various types of refractive errors such as nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. Twelve were prescribed eyeglasses, which were distributed to them for free by Meghriyan Institute. Forty-four were diagnosed with more serious eye conditions; all received medical assistance from the institute.



Dr. Kevin Frick

tions correcting refractive errors. Frick is a professor in the Departments of Health Policy and Management and International Health at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, Md. He has joint appointments in the Schools of Medicine and Nursing at Johns Hopkins University.

Frick is an internationally-respected health economist who visited the American University of Armenia (AUA) to teach the course "Economic Evaluation Methods in Healthcare – Understanding Cost-Effectiveness." He combines his knowledge of economic analysis with clinical and epidemiological insights from his colleagues to produce cost-effectiveness analyses that bring the tools of economic decision making to policy-makers. He has been extensively involved in estimating the burden of different forms of visual impairment in different regions in the world and has collaborated in a group that outlined state-of-the-art methods for calculating the costs of blindness in populations. He has published more than 100 peer-reviewed publications, including several international cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness studies and framework papers on blinding trachoma, and is extending his work to include vision care services in the United States.

AUA students, graduates, researchers and faculty and ophthalmologists from different organizations attended the public seminar.

older people, said many men do not believe wives should work.

"There are many impoverished families in Gumri, but still men would never allow their wives to work because they think it's disreputable to work as a waitress or shop assistant," Tagvoryan said. "They believe this kind of work could harm their reputation. Public opinion is very important here, since the society condemns women who take up such jobs."

Liana Muradyan, 26, lives in the hostel with her five children. Her family's monthly income is 53,000 drams, or 130 dollars. Despite their hardship, Liana's husband Gevorg Mangasaryan, 22, refuses to let her work.

"I work, and that's enough. She could only work at a cafe where there's lots of people coming and going. Why would I allow her to work there?" he said. "Besides, we have five kids. She should stay at home and take care of them."

Psychologist Manushak Karapetyan argues that social conditions harden existing attitudes, explaining that "unemployment makes men in Gumri insecure, aggressive and despotic. They fear if women start working, they will get ahead of them."

Lusine Ginosyan, head of the regional department for the family, women and children said local government was trying hard to get more women into work through job-creation schemes and business loans for women in rural communities.

"It's impossible to provide all women with work, but it's clear that programs are being implemented and that some progress has been made in this area," she said.

(Roza Hovhannisyan is a reporter for the *Hayatsk* daily, Nelly Shishmany is a freelance photojournalist and Lusine Avagyan is a freelance journalist in Armenia.)

## Avan Shushi Plaza Hotel Holds First Annual Poetry Festival

SHUSHI, Artsakh – Avan Shushi Plaza Hotel held its first Poetry Festival in Shushi on Friday, July 6 and Saturday, July 7.

More than 50 students ranging in age from 9 to 16 took part. These students represented winners of poetry contests organized by the Artsakh's Ministry of Education; schools from all Artsakh regions had taken part in the contest. This year's festival was dedicated to the great Armenian poet Yeghishe Charentz in honor of the 150th anniversary of his birth. Students from Artsakh schools were broken into three age groups and competed for prizes in each age group. Winners of Yerevan State University's Poetry contest and students from dance and singing academy took part in the festival as presenters.

The organizing committee consisted of Alec Baghdasaryan, president of Avan Ishkhan Partnership Group; Dr. Gourgen Melikyan, dean of Eastern Armenian Studies and Dr. Artsron Avakyan, dean of language, Yerevan State University; as well as Armenian poetry stars, Lala Mnacakanyan and Samvel Baghimian, who along with Naira Martirosyan, Education Ministry of Artsakh, acted as the jury for the contest.

A video of festival can be viewed on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) keyword "Avan Shushi Plaza". For Inquiries regarding taking part in future festivals please contact Alec Baghdasaryan or Sargis Galstyan via [avanishkhan@hotmail.com](mailto:avanishkhan@hotmail.com).



One of the young participants recites a poem.





## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Aznavour to Perform in Akhalskhe on August 16

AKHALSKHE, Georgia (Tert.am) – French-Armenian singer and song-writer Charles Aznavour will sing in Georgia's Armenian-populated city, Akhalskhe, on August 16 as part of a concert dedicated to the opening of the Rabat fortress.

Citing Georgia's Rustavi 2 TV Channel, Gruzia Online reports that Aznavour will appear on stage with a 25-member band, performing his hits for about an hour and 30 minutes.

The Georgian authorities have fully restored the fortress, which had been reduced to ruins. The activities reportedly lasted 10 month. The amphitheatre where Aznavour is to sing will be completed soon.

Aznavour's parents hail from Akhalskhe.

## Turkish-Owned Firm Gets \$212.5 Million From NASA

ISTANBUL (Hurriyet) – The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has granted \$212.5 million to the Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), owned by Turkish couple, Eren and Fatih Azmen, to support the firm's space-taxi project, "Dream Chaser." Sierra Nevada is one of three companies NASA has chosen to support with a total funding of \$1.1 billion. The other two companies are airplane manufacturer Boeing and SpaceX (Space Exploration Technologies Corporation). NASA allocated \$440 million to SpaceX and \$460 million to Boeing.

SNC has signed a deal with NASA to develop a reliable and safe spaceship to transport astronauts and cargo to the International Space Station, Eren Azmen said. "SNC Space System Group signed the deal with NASA to continue the testing process of the Dream Chaser Space Systems," he said. SNC has received \$100 million for the project from NASA. The company aims to develop NASA's next-generation space shuttle for manned spaceflights.

The Dream Chaser, a vertical-takeoff spaceship, is planned to carry up to seven people. NASA plans to initiate space missions in five years with one of the projects it supports.

## Aleppo Consulate General of the Republic Of Armenia Moved

ALEPPO (Armenpress) – The Consulate of the Republic of Armenia, located in the second largest city of Syria, has been temporarily moved to a district heavily populated by Armenians. Armenian Foreign Affairs Minister Press Secretary Tigran Balayan said, "I confirm the news."

Clashes are continuing in Aleppo between Assad loyalists and rebel forces, and the city has been left without telephone communication and Internet, which was restored on August 3. Arabian sources state, the clashes are mainly in the Muslim districts. Syrian-Armenian community representatives note, Aleppo Armenians have not suffered from the shelling.

According to the Syrian Human Rights Defense Organization, ongoing clashes have resulted in the death of more than 17,192 people. Among the victims there were seven Armenians, two of whom were in the Syrian Army military.

Because of ongoing disturbances in Syria, a number of people are leaving the country, getting refugee status in other countries. The applications submitted from Syria by Armenians are being expedited.

In a related development, the owner and operator of Nairi Hotel in Stepanakert, Karabagh, Hakob Abulakyan, announced this week that he will take in Armenians leaving Syria for the duration of instability in Syria, as long as they pay for utilities. He noted he has talked with the Foreign Ministries of Armenia and Karabagh, who have expressed their support.

Abulakyan, currently a resident of Australia, originally hails from Aleppo.

# Armavia Gives Superjet-100 the Boot

MOSCOW (Russia Times) – The first customer of the Sukhoi Superjet-100 (SSJ-100) airliner has decided it is no longer going to fly it. Armenian airline Armavia became the launch customer of the 100-seat aircraft, taking delivery of a plane in 2011.

Armavia has refused to go through with the purchase of a second plane and both are now at the Sukhoi civil aircraft test facility in Zhukovsky outside Moscow.

Armavia spokesman Andrei Muraviev said, "So far we haven't received any official request to cancel the purchase. We are trying to resolve all issues arising in relations with Armavia."

Another source familiar with the situation said that Armavia owes Sukhoi money for servicing of the first plane and refuses to pay. Armavia reportedly used a loan from an Armenian bank to acquire the plane.

Sukhoi Civil Aircraft has reportedly already offered to restructure the deal with the Armenian airline and arrange delivery of both Sukhoi aircrafts through a leasing company.

"The plane is not bad, but not perfect. Airbuses and Boeings fly 330-350 hours per month, while the Sukhoi spent only 150 hours flying," a source close to Armavia said. "The last straw was it spent

four days clearing customs in Russia to have a two-day service. But Armavia warned Sukhoi in July that it will under no circumstances use the plane," says the source. "Armavia is a small company and cannot afford experimenting and Sukhoi has already returned the money paid for the plane excluding the \$1 million servicing fee," concludes the source.

Armavia started operating the first Sukhoi Superjet plane in April 2011. The second plane was expected to be handed to the carrier last year, but it delayed delivery. In early July 2012 representatives of the Armenian airline said the airline had decided to give up the

second Sukhoi SuperJet to buy aircraft from Boeing and Airbus, which offer cheaper servicing and spare parts.

According to Armavia President Mikhail Bagdasarov, Russia has also not worked out a scheme of financing the supply of equipment to foreign companies by providing government guarantees such as lower rates for loans.

Branded as the first civilian aircraft developed from scratch in modern Russia, the SSJ-100 consists of more than 60 percent internationally-produced components. Sukhoi however claims the jet has relatively low service costs and a fuel consumption

\$1.3 billion has already been spent on the SSJ-100 and is more than it was spent on the development of similar jets by Canada's Bombardier and Brazil's Embraer, which required around \$600 million each and \$100 million spent on the Tupolev TU-334 since 1992.

The Sukhoi Superjet-100 has suffered a series of setbacks in the past few months after a tragic crash during a demonstration flight in Indonesia on May 9 that killed 45 people on board. The crash, however, was attributed to human error.

A Sukhoi Superjet-100 airliner with 64 passengers and six crew members on



advantage over its competitors, which would potentially bring Sukhoi new contracts, particularly after the Russian Accounting Chamber reported that the Sukhoi project has been severely underfunded through state-run programs.

Another headache is that commercial loans cannot fill in the gap as the manufacturer, Sukhoi Civil Aircraft, has too large a debt portfolio to take any out. In 2003-2010, the federal government spent a total of \$518 million on the SSJ-100 project through the aircraft development program, while Sukhoi drew another \$842 million in off-budget investment. This means that more than

board had to make an emergency landing at Sheremetyevo Airport last week due to a technical problem, RIA-Novosti reported on Friday.

At the recent Farnborough Air Show, many potential customers were reluctant to commit after the Indonesian accident, suspending orders until the results of the investigation are announced. Sukhoi did not conclude any contracts, only announcing that Mexico's Interjet's option has been turned into an order, and that the company plans to bring the number of jets on its portfolio to 210 over the next few months, signing contracts with three Asian airlines.

## Rwanda Hosts Conference on Armenian, Jewish and Tutsi Genocides

RWANDA, from page 1  
and the *Rwandan New Times* ran a feature article on the program.

The master of ceremonies and conference co-organizer, playwright Bianca Bagaturian, called the conference to order on July 17, noting that many things, including "the legacies of denial perpetrated by the Turkish state, anti-Semitic groups and Hutu nationalists, connect the three unambiguous cases of genocide in the 20th century." Because denial is always an issue following genocide, Jean-Pierre Karegeye, Tom Ndahiro, Jose Kagabo and Hadley Rose, all discussed various dimensions of denial in Rwanda today. Rose discussed the problems that arise in drafting genocide ideology laws.

Noted Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt emphasized at the conference that: "Denial of genocide, whether that of the Turks against the Armenians, or the Nazis against the Jews, or the Hutu against the Tutsi, is not an act of historical reinterpretation. Rather, the deniers sow confusion by appearing to be engaged in a genuine scholarly effort. The abundance of documents and testimonies that confirm the genocide are dismissed as contrived, coerced, or forgeries and falsehoods... Denial of genocide strives to reshape history in order to demonize the victims and rehabilitate

the perpetrators."

Conference co-organizer Peter Balakian later stated that "denialism is the final stage of genocide, as it attempts to falsify history and create a counterfeit universe for the survivors and their legacies, and it must be studied and analyzed in order to be exposed for the ethical problems it creates."

The conference included a combination of lectures and presentations that dealt with facets of genocide and dimensions of denial. Among the speakers and their lectures were Balakian, of Colgate University, who spoke about "The Armenian Genocide and Modernity" and "A Fetishized Foreign Policy: Turkish State Denial of the Armenian Genocide;" Dr. José Kagabo, of Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, "On Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda: Different Forms of Denial," Dr. Deborah Lipstadt, of Emory University, on "To Debate or Not To Debate: Strategies for Addressing Genocide Denial – Like Trying To Nail a Blob of Jelly to the Wall;" Dr. Donald Miller of the University of Southern California on "The Role of Survivor Testimony in Countering Genocide Denial: Comparing Oral History Testimony of Armenian and Tutsi Genocide Survivors;" and Dr. Gregory Stanton of George Mason University on "Tactics of

Denial: A Comparison of Denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Turkish State and Denial of the Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda by Hutu Power Genocidaires."

Among the other speakers were Dr. Wendy Lower of Claremont McKenna College and Tom Ndahiro, researcher, Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies Center (IGSC), Rwanda.

During both days, audiences, which included Rwandans, Europeans and Americans, showed great interest in the presentations at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, which is now central to the cultural life of the city and is also visited by thousands of tourists annually. The Kigali Memorial Centre was established by the Aegis Trust, founded by Dr. James Smith, who also created the Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre in the UK.

The staff, led by Solange Umulisa, deputy director, did a superb job of making the conference a groundbreaking international event. "Having a scholarly symposium on Armenian, Jewish, and Tutsi genocides and their aftermaths," Balakian said, "in an important sub-Saharan African country like Rwanda opens up new pathways for intellectual work."

– Jean-Pierre Karegeye





# Community News

## Tribute Banquet for Hirant Gulian To Take Place In October

*Harry and Suzanne Toufayan to Serve as Honorary Co-chairs*

FAIRLAWN, N.J. — The Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, headed by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, will honor Hirant Gulian at a tribute banquet on October 5, for his outstanding lifelong service to the Armenian Church and people. Harry and Suzanne Toufayan will serve as honorary co-chairs of the event.

When Harry Toufayan was asked about his role as honorary chairman of the banquet in honor of a “national soldier,” he said: “Hirant Gulian is not a ‘soldier,’ he is a ‘general.’” Similar accolades are echoed within the metropolitan New York-Armenian community.

“The response, so far, has been extremely positive,” said Toufayan. “The spirit of cooperation has been equally impressive. Everyone wants to help out. Everyone wants to make this tribute a special one. The invitations and flyers are almost ready to be mailed out and a lot of work is being put into planning the special event. We expect a stellar array of community leaders from all over the United States, as well as from overseas, to join us in honoring Hirant.”

The banquet will be held at the St. Leon Armenian Church, Abajian Hall in Fairlawn. “Abajian Hall has a capacity of around 325 people,” said Toufayan. “If we have more than 325 people, the banquet will be held at St. Leon’s George and Shake Shahinian Gymnasium, which can hold over 600 people.”

Proceeds from the banquet will benefit the



Harry Toufayan, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, and Hirant Gulian

Armenian Genocide Centennial Commemoration. For many years Gulian has been involved with the Armenian Genocide Commemoration in New York Times Square. He was a founding member and co-chairman of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan Times Square Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee, which was founded in 1984. Since 2007 he has served as chairman of that committee.

Over the years, Gulian was involved with many organizations and chaired and co-chaired numerous events: chairman of the 1,700th anniversary of the Pontifical Banquet (2001); chairman of the Knights of Vartan 87th Convocation (2005); co-chairman of the AGBU Nork Children Center from Armenia, which toured six major cities (2005); chairman of Armenian American Support and Educational Center (2012) and more.

“Hirant’s service to Armenia and Armenians cannot be measured by hours, days, weeks, months or years. His service has been lifelong, unwavering and passionate,” said Toufayan.

On October 5, The Diocese of the Armenian Church of America will honor Gulian in a special way, beginning with the tribute banquet.



An architect’s rendering of the project

## St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School Expands to Accommodate Growing Student Body

WATERTOWN — By mid-September, St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) will throw open the doors of its new 6,000-square-foot addition, built to accommodate its growing student body as well as provide more instructional and recreational spaces for current students.

The projected cost of the construction is \$1.3 million; through a variety of fundraising activities, the school is on target with the project’s funding. Creative means for raising money have included a phone drive by recent graduates and selling bricks with students’ names, which will pave the walkway in front of the building.

Avak Kahvejian, the president of the Board of Directors of SSAES, said the project is timely.

The bulk of the SSAES campus — kindergarten through fifth grade — is located inside the Armenian Educational and Cultural Center (ACEC) on Nichols Avenue. Under the plan, the existing nursery building on Elton Avenue housing pre-nursery through two nursery grades — will expand into the site of a now-demolished house next to it, which St. Stephen’s Armenian Church, the parent organization of the school, had bought long ago, with a future expansion in mind.

Construction of the addition to the nursery building began immediately upon the conclusion of the school term in June. The school will open on time in early September, but the kindergarten classes will relocate to their new home in the new addition later in the month.

Houry Boyamian, the principal of SSAES, praised the expansion effort. “The expansion will give us the opportunity to breathe here. It is so congested. There is no room for growth. This solves our capacity issues and also give us the opportunity to participate in new programs,” she explained.

When the expansion is completed, the building will accomodate about 60 students, roomy enough to add more nursery classes as well as be the new building for kindergarten classes. There will be four new classrooms and on the basement level, a large activities area for flexible use by all students.

“The idea isn’t to add classes, but to relieve student density and prevent overcrowding at the ACEC building,” Kahvejian said. “Spreading out students will allow us to split classrooms. The demand is there. We have had to put some students on a waiting list.”

The expanded facilities, Kahvejian added, will also help create necessary space for elementary students to participate in the programs for the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Initiative, for which the school has received a \$10,000 planning grant from the Gelfand Family Charitable Trust. The new additional space will allow the elementary division to have a science lab.

With the new lab, “The kids can experiment, collect data, and analyze them,” Boyamian said, thus meeting STEM criteria. In addition, the additional space can help with the increasing number of toddlers participating in the Mayrig and Me and Manoog and Me music programs.

Currently the school has almost 180 students. The incoming kindergarten class will have 26 students, first grade 20 and second grade 21 students, making it the first year there will be two classes for the second graders.

“The trend is that at the elementary level, every grade will have two classes,” Boyamian explained. “I’m very excited. I’m very happy. This shows growth.”

Noted Kahvejian, “These projects are very important. The diaspora is an important part of the Armenian community. Half of the Armenian population lives outside Armenia. We are one nation and spread out. It is imperative to support the

see EXPANSION, page 8

## LA Armenians Demand New General Consul

LOS ANGELES (Hetq) — Hetq has received a letter signed by a group of Diaspora Armenians, taking Grigor Hovhannisyan, the Armenian general consul here, to task for three years of failure to perform his assigned duties.

So frustrated is the group that in their letter they call on Armavia Airlines to give Hovhannisyan a one-way ticket back to Yerevan and to charge the All Armenian Fund for the cost of the ticket.

The group charges Hovhannisyan with neglecting Armenian citizens residing in the Los Angeles area.

They say that the location of the Armenian Consulate has changed several times over the years and despite the fact that it has moved closer to the densely-populated Armenian community of Glendale, nothing has changed in terms of community outreach.

The letter writers claim that Hovhannisyan has avoided contact with the community, its youth, reporters and writers’ union, and has only made one appearance on local Armenian TV during his three-year tenure as consul.

During that appearance, Hovhannisyan is said to have urged the community not to stage protests outside the consulate.

They also accuse Hovhannisyan of failing to meet with community members at a July 13 protest regarding the murder of military physician Vahe Avetyan.

The protestors wanted to hand a letter to the consul, but he refused to come outside and instead sent an underling to discuss terms. The staffer told protestors that only one person would be allowed in to hand the letter to Hovhannisyan.

As a result, they call on Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian to recall Hovhannisyan and replace him with another diplomat.

## St. Paul Church Holds ‘Blessing of the Grapes’

FRESNO, Calif. (*Fresno Bee*) — The Rev. Arshen Aivazian of Saint Paul Armenian Church blessed boxes of table grapes at the California Armenian Home during the annual “Blessing of the Grapes,” Sunday, August 5. The “Blessing of the Grapes” is an annual event that is performed on the Sunday closest to August 15 and signifies the feast for the assumption of the Virgin Mary. Armenians consider grapes to be the queen of all fruit since wine comes from it, and wine to Christians signifies the blood of Christ. The event is one of two blessings, with a second by Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church at the same location a week later, on August 12. Saint Paul’s blessing took place after Divine Liturgy service and was followed by a picnic on the California Armenian Home’s grounds.

## Holy Translators to Hold Church Festival

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — The Armenian Church of the Holy Translators, will host its Annual Armenian Food Festival at the New England Laborers Training Center, 37 East St., Hopkinton, on Saturday, September 8, from noon to 5 p.m.

Those attending can enjoy traditional Armenian food and homemade baked goods. In addition, they can listen and dance to traditional live Armenian music. Baked goods and food will be available to go.

There will be children’s entertainment from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. There will also be vendors and raffles.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Sheriff Koutoujian Holds Graduation Ceremony for Local Youngsters

BILLERICA, Mass. — Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian recognized 218 graduates of the 2012 Middlesex Sheriff's Office Youth Public Safety Academy (YPSA) on Friday, July 27.

The ceremony, which recognized children ages 9 through 11, was held at the Middlesex Training Academy in Billerica. It was the fourth week of the eight-week free summer academy. Each week children from two to four communities participate in the program.

Among those who graduated at the conclusion of the fourth week of the academy were more than 20 cadets from the local Armenian community including Koutoujian's sons, Peter and Christian.

During the graduation ceremony, Koutoujian

addressed the cadets about the importance of using what they learned during the weeklong camp to help keep themselves and others safe. He also talked to them about teamwork, self-esteem and role models, pointing to their parents, as well as the police officers, fire fighters and sheriff's department personnel they met during the week.

Over the course of the week cadets were taught basic first aid skills and fire safety, participated in team-building exercises, were able to tour their local police and fire departments and took part in a series of demonstrations.

More than 1,700 children from Middlesex County communities are expected to participate in this year's Middlesex Sheriff's Office YPSA program.



Young students at the Middlesex Sheriff's Office Youth Public Safety Academy with Sheriff Peter Koutoujian

## Assembly Interns Meet with Markey, Dean of Armenian Congressional Delegation

WASHINGTON — Last week, as part of the Terjenian-Thomas Internship Program, the 2012 Armenian Assembly summer intern class met with Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA), reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

Markey, an active member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, is also the dean of the Massachusetts delegation and serves as the ranking member on the

House Natural Resources Committee. The Natural Resources Committee has jurisdiction over H.R. 2362, the Indian Tribal Trade and Investment Demonstration Project Act of 2011.

In his role as ranking member of the Natural Resources Committee, Markey played a leadership role in opposing H.R. 2362. In his "Dear Colleague" letter to all members of the House, Markey stated that H.R. 2362 "affords unde-

serving preferential status to the Republic of Turkey to engage in economic development on tribal lands...the bottom line is that H.R. 2362 would reward a country whose history of human rights and religious freedom violations have earned it a place on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's 'watch list' for three consecutive years."

In addition to the joint opposition of the Armenian and Hellenic Caucuses, Markey's efforts were reinforced by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) who voted against the measure. The Bill, as reported last week, failed to receive the support required for passage.

During the meeting, in addition to Armenian issues, other subjects including, online privacy and related Internet issues were also discussed. For example, Markey has introduced legislation, the "Do Not Track Kids Act of 2011" to afford greater protection of minors and limit the amount of information tracked online by companies.

"On behalf of the Armenian Assembly, I would like to extend my gratitude to Congressman Ed Markey for his leadership in defeating H.R. 2362," said Lori Ayanian of Massachusetts, an economics and psychology double-major at Colby College interning at Markey's office.



Assembly Interns meet with Rep. Ed Markey (right)

### OBITUARY

## Laura Dabanian Sarkesian

DETROIT — Laura Dabanian Sarkesian was born on March 6, 1919 to Hagop and Hranoush Dabanian, who were founding members of St. John's Armenian Church.

She had an older sister, Rose, and a younger brother, Karnig, who both predeceased her. She was particularly close to her sister.

She graduated from Central High School in 1937 and went to Detroit Business College to become a secretary. In the early 1940s, she worked for Ordinance in the War Department. She also worked for the Parson's Company before her marriage. In 1941, she met Ed Sarkesian at an Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Junior League dance. Her husband told her he felt she was the most beautiful girl he had ever met with her peaches and cream complexion and beautiful smile.

The couple dated for five years and married at St. John's Armenian Church on Oakman Boulevard on May 5, 1946. During their 60 years of marriage, they raised three children, Cathy, Peter and Jon.

She was able to travel a great deal with her husband, and together, they went around the world. She was fascinated by computers and various search engines and had an email account with which she communicated with her grandchildren, Alex, Lauren, Chris, Katie and Danny.

She made sure her children went to Sunday School and understood the importance and value of their Armenian community. She was soft-spoken, private, kind, strong, intelligent, gracious and committed to her family.



Laura Dabanian Sarkesian

Throughout her life, whenever people met her, they felt her sweetness. She made sure everyone else was cared for before she worried about herself. She loved her heritage, her parents, her siblings, her husband, Ed, her children, Cathy, Peter and Jon, their spouses, Ed, Marilyn, and Suzanne, her five grandchildren, Alex, Lauren, Chris, Katie and Danny, her adopted great-grandchildren, Tatev and Mane, her extended family, her friends and, last but certainly not least, Sophie, the family dog.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Prof. Anahid Gharakhanian Appointed Vice Dean for Academic Affairs at Southwestern Law School

LOS ANGELES — Prof. Anahid Gharakhanian, a longtime member of the Armenian Bar Association (ABA), has been appointed as vice dean for Academic Affairs at Southwestern Law School, where she has served since 2002. In her new capacity, she will be in charge of the overall academic program, faculty appointments, faculty development and Southwestern's self-study process, and will continue to serve as director of the Externship Program.

As a member of the faculty for more than a decade, Gharakhanian has taught legal research and writing, and a course on correctional education was instrumental in the redevelopment of Southwestern's unique Legal Analysis, Writing and Skills (LAWS) program, which greatly expanded the Externship Program to be one of the largest in the country. She served as faculty advisor to the Part-time Legal Education at Southwestern (PLEAS) program. She is also faculty advisor to the Armenian Law Students Association and recently spearheaded efforts to create the new Southwestern Armenia Fellowship with the Ministry of Justice in Armenia.

Garos Ghazarian, chairman of the Armenian Bar Association, remarked, "On behalf of the Armenian Bar Association, I congratulate Prof. Anahid Gharakhanian on her appointment and I applaud Southwestern Law School for her selection. Professor Gharakhanian's contributions to the legal community and to our association are invaluable and wide-ranging. Her mentoring of so many of our new attorney members as well as our law student members is unparalleled and has been unheralded for too long."

Armen K. Hovannissian, vice chair of ABA, a former colleague of Gharakhanian's at Chadbourne & Parke LLP and ABA's represen-

tative to the Southwestern Armenia Fellowship with the Ministry of Justice in Armenia, added, "Anahid is so many good things all rolled into one, most certainly a wonderful model for not only the student body of Southwestern, but to all women and men who aspire to combine positive meaning and purpose with the legal profession."

Edvin Minassian, chairman ex-officio of the ABA, credited Gharakhanian with heeding the call to service and with playing a key role in bringing to life the vision of the Armenian Bar's commitment to the rule of law in Armenia. "We look forward to many more collaborative efforts

with Southwestern and, naturally, with Dean Gharakhanian, who we wish much success in her new and deserving position at the law school."

In announcing the appointment, Dean Austen Parrish said, "Dean Gharakhanian is a very talented and dedicated teacher and administrator, and I am delighted that she has agreed to expand her administrative role, as we have a very busy year ahead."

Gharakhanian earned her bachelor's, magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, in philosophy at the University of California, Los Angeles. She completed her juris doctorate, cum laude, at

Harvard Law School and is a member of the California State Bar. Upon graduation from law school, she joined the firm of Chadbourne & Parke LLP in Los Angeles. During her six-year tenure there, she handled the pre-trial phases of a variety of civil litigation matters as well as arbitration proceedings. Subsequently, she was appointed vice president of E-commerce Development for an online retailer. She has also served as a temporary judge in the Los Angeles Superior Court's Small Claims Court and has worked on a pro bono basis in the areas of domestic violence and other family law matters.

## Industry Expert Nahigian Giving Series of Talks at Real Estate Events

NEWTON, Mass. — During the first half of 2012, Rob Nahigian — whose qualifications include Fellow Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (FRICS), Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR), Commercial Real Estate (CRE) and Master of Corporate Real Estate (MCR) — of Auburndale Realty Co., spoke at a number of regional and national commercial real estate events throughout the US as an industry expert. On February 3, he spoke to the SIOR chapter of AL/LA/MS/NW FL in Point Clear, Ala. on the "The Art of Negotiating." This regional event was held at the Grand Hotel Marriott Resort that attracted SIORs exclusively from four states. The event was sponsored by Johnson Development Company. On February 9, the SIOR Northern California chapter invited Nahigian as the keynote speaker to its "Mini-Convention" in San Jose, Calif. on the "Trends and Repositioning of Vacant Commercial

Buildings to a BTS Development Process." More than 95 attendees from California were presented at the Hotel Valencia located on the Santana Row in downtown San Jose.

The Rhode Island Association of Realtors had Nahigian speak on March 9 on the "Art of Negotiating Skills" and "Synergistic Sales Skills." This event was held at the Board offices in Providence. On March 14, the SIOR Oregon chapter invited Nahigian to speak in Portland, Ore. on "The Opportunities of Build-to-Suit Development Pro Forma," at the private Portland University Club. On March 23, the Greater Hartford Association of Realtors had Nahigian as its featured speaker to speak on the "Opportunities of Build-To-Suit" and the "Art of Negotiation Skills." Approximately 50 people attended the event held at the Board Offices in West Hartford. The Ohio Association of Realtors in conjunction with the SIOR Ohio chapter had Nahigian as its speaker on April 26 in Columbus for a full-day program. The event was sponsored with a NAR Commercial grant and held at the Board offices.

The New Hampshire Commercial Board of Realtors invited Nahigian as its featured speaker on June 8 in Bedford, NH on "Liquidity and Commercial Real Estate: Where We've Been, Where We are at and Where we are headed; Connecting the Dots Back to the Future." This program was sponsored with a grant from NAR Commercial. The SIOR chapter again invited Nahigian to speak at its regional convention for a second time during 2012 at the Sandestin Resort in Sandestin, Fla. Nahigian then taught

the national Graduate Realtor Institute (GRI) program on July 18 for the Massachusetts Association of Realtors in Lexington, on the topics of industrial real estate, international real estate and brokerage, commercial real estate fundamentals and marketing.

Finally, on July 26, the SIOR Houston Gulf Coast chapter invited Nahigian to speak on the "Ethics of Commercial Real Estate" and "Opportunities of Build-To-Suit."

On July 27, Boston's Commercial Broker's Association had Nahigian speak on "Advanced Industrial Real Estate: Logistics and Supply Chain." The program was held at the board's offices in Boston.

For the fall, Nahigian has been asked to be the featured speaker at a number of events. On September 18, Nahigian will speak for the Cincinnati Association of Realtors on "Liquidity and Commercial Real Estate." This program is sponsored by a grant from NAR Commercial. Nahigian will speak as the State Convention of Massachusetts Association of Realtors on September 20 on "Commercial Buyers Brokerage, Commercial Brokerage Due Diligence in the Sale of Real Estate, and International Real Estate Challenges." The State Convention will be held at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence. On September 24, Nahigian has been invited by the SIOR E. Canada chapter to speak at its regional event in Montreal. Nahigian will teach the SIOR designation course for the SIOR accreditation in Dallas on October 3. The topics are "Synergistic Sales Skills" and "The Art of Negotiating."

Lastly, Nahigian has been invited to the national faculty of CoreNet Global for its MCR accreditation and to develop a new industrial course. The new course titled, "The New Survival Tools of Industrial Operations and Real Estate Decisions," will be offered for the first time in Chicago on November 8 and 9 at the headquarters of MillerCoors Company. Nahigian is the instructor both days, with Adam Meek of Chicago.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

LA Will Offer Election Info, but Not Ballots In Armenian, Russian And Farsi

LOS ANGELES (Daily News) – The Los Angeles City Council on Wednesday, August 1, agreed to develop a phased-in approach to include Armenian, Russian and Farsi as official languages for city elections.

While it will not include ballots printed in those languages because of the cost, the city will reach out to the different communities, seek poll workers who speak the languages and offer election information in those languages.

City Clerk June Lagmay said the March 2013 election is too close to put the new language options into effect, but the city would have such a program in place by 2015.

Councilman Paul Krekorian said Armenian is the most widely used language in the city after English, Spanish and Korean.

“Some of the greatest debates this nation has had has involved expansion of voting rights,” Krekorian said. “Whether it was the right for women to vote or the Civil Rights Act, it has done more to make government accessible.”

Councilman Eric Garcetti said the city can increase voter turnout by providing election information and assistance in more languages.

“We found in recent elections that we were able to increase turnout by 2,000 just by having people speak Armenian,” Garcetti said.

St. Stephen’s Armenian School Expands

EXPANSION, from page 5

schools” in order to prevent the loss of Armenian identity in the diaspora.

Kahvejian is happy with the pace of the construction as well as the execution of the expansion. “Many people thought we couldn’t be successful. There was a lot of skepticism.”

Boyamian said the school has produced 236 graduates. “When we started, all the students in grades nursery to fifth were in this building [the ACEC]. Then, when it wasn’t feasible, the church gave us a building and we added five classes” for the nursery students, moving them out of the ACEC. “Some asked if we could fill it. Within two to three years, we had to add another classroom,” she explained. Now, again, the school has reached a similar situation.

The private, pre-nursery-Grade 5 elementary school, which was founded in 1984 with a handful of students, received an award from Armenia’s Ministry of Diaspora in 2010 as “Best Armenian School” in the diaspora. It is the only Armenian day school to be fully accredited by the Association of Independent Schools in New England, the accrediting body for independent elementary schools in the region.

For more information about the school, visit [ssaes.org](http://ssaes.org).



The new building is close to completion.



An architect’s rendering of the project

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Sun.	At sea	-	-
Mon.	Cozumel, Mexico	8:00 AM	5:00 AM
Tue.	Isla De Roatan	8:00 AM	2:00 AM
Wed.	Cayman Islands	10:30 AM	6:30 AM
Thu.	Montego Bay, Jamaica	8:00 AM	3:00 AM
Fri.	At sea	-	-
Sat.	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	7:00 AM	-

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# An Evening to Remember for a Long Time

By Yeghishe Hajakian

PARAMUS, N.J. — July 20 was meaningful to this writer due to the fact that we were witnessing a representative of the younger generation, Baydzig Kalaydjian, deliver a speech concerning the Armenian Diaspora and the formation of many communities in the Middle East and Europe, subsequent to the Genocide and the preparation of leadership and the efforts of survival as a community.

Kalaydjian is the editor of the Armenian daily newspaper, *Zartonk*, in Beirut, Lebanon. She has replaced my beloved high school teacher, Kersam Aharonian, from the days of yore. Kalaydjian is truly deserving of Aharonian's mantle, with the dedication she has manifested for the last five years of the publication of the paper.

Kalaydjian belongs to a generation who are still idealistic concerning the Armenian community's future and their visibility in this world. Hence her unswerving belief in disseminating it through the pages of *Zartonk* in the very language in which it was created and developed.

Kalaydjian supports the notion that Armenians succeeded in implementing a heroic drive for survival. Armenians have thrived by constantly remembering that we do have a fatherland called Armenia, always

loving it, caring about it under any condition or circumstance.

Why is this phenomenon of utmost importance to us? The land that was there in the Caucasus has always been a magnet attracting Armenians from every corner of our planet for more than 4,000 years. Our language, our church and our culture was originated on this land and summoned us like a lighthouse from all over the world. I do not care who the king has been, who the president has been, what party has dominated on the land of Armenia; it was there as a symbol of a nation called Armenia throughout the ages. Loving our fatherland has always been without any conditions — without any regard to who is governing it.

Recently though I came across a book written for the younger generation by a member of a certain Armenian political faction whereby 1918 and 1992 were mentioned as the only two dates that we had governments in the 20th century. A whole period of 70 years in between was erased from the history of Armenia. Soviet Armenia did not exist between 1922 to 1992. The writer of this book is Kalaydjian.

Garbis Kazanjian of the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey has been contributing articles to *Zartonk* recently on a regular basis. Knowing his political background, I asked him once how on earth he has been contributing articles to a so-called opposite



From left, Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian, Zarmine Boghosian, Baydzig Kalaydjian, Mr. and Mrs. Yeghishe Hajakian and Shoghig Chalian

party's organ. Answer?

Kalaydjian is so convincing, devoted to Armenia, Armenian issues, the Armenian nation and she has such a charming personality that he just could not refuse her request of contributing articles in *Zartonk*, he explained.

That is what she displayed on Friday, July 20, charming her audience and moving them to such an extent where many monetary donations to *Zartonk* were given along with much admiration toward the work Kalaydjian has been doing.

## FAR Young Professionals Visit Armenia, Historic Armenia

By Maral Firkatian Wozniak

NEW YORK — The desolate landscape bears few traces of the sprawling, illustrious Armenian capital that once dominated the area. Ani was once known as the “city of a thousand and one churches.” Now the haggard skeletons of a few structures remain — the last reminders of what was once the center of Armenian civilization.

Ani was one of the stops on this year's Young Professionals trip sponsored by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), the humanitarian organization of the Eastern Diocese. A group of 15 young people ages 23 to 40, led by FAR's Project Director Arto Vorperian took part in the program of travel and cultural immersion, June 17 to 30.

For the second time in the trip's 18-year history, the itinerary included a visit to Historic Armenian lands in eastern Turkey, where participants explored the ruins of Ani, visited the glorious Church of the Holy Cross on Akhtamar Island and saw the immense fortress at Tushba. The trip included a visit to the Republic of Armenia, where the group toured some of FAR's many projects and learned how they

could get involved in strengthening their homeland. It also stopped in the historic Armenian region of Javakhhk, Georgia.

Departing from Gumri, the group traveled to Historic Armenia by way of Javakhhk, Georgia. In Javakhhk, they stopped at St. Kevork Armenian Church, where the local priest invited them for coffee and *gata*, and presented Vorperian with incense and a blessed Armenian flag, which the group would take with them on the excursion to Historic Armenia.

Arriving in Ani, the group unfurled the flag before the altar of the Sourp Asdvadzadzin Cathedral, and burned incense in memory of the Armenians who once worshiped there.

The trip's itinerary broadened the perspective of the participants, as they explored the lands of their ancestors and witnessed the remnants of Armenian influence lingering in the region. Vorperian pointed out that seeing the ruins firsthand helps build a better understanding of the rich contributions made by Armenians.

“You know about the Genocide, but you don't know about the country itself, the land we lost.

When you see it, it really is sad,” he said. “It also speaks to the skill and artistry of the Armenian people.”

Group member Vahagn Yeranossian of Cleveland, Ohio, said that the trip to eastern Turkey elicited conflicting emotions in him. It was exciting to see sites like the Tushba Fortress and Aghtamar Island, but he found himself upset, too, because “this land was taken [from us] and it's not being cared for.”

When visiting the Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Akhtamar Island on Lake Van, FAR's communication's officer

Tamar Gasparian was taken aback that the local signs bore no mention of the fact that this was an Armenian Church and the work of Armenian architects.

“For an Armenian like me, with a background in art history, it really doesn't matter what they wrote on the signs because art speaks for itself,” she said. “All those reliefs and frescos on the churches are so obviously Armenian, and most of them have Armenian inscriptions as well. But still, complete and accurate signs are important, and I am hoping this will change one day.”

The FAR Young Professionals visited some of the oldest and best examples of Armenian architecture. Even as the structures deteriorate with age and abuse, their beauty shows through the crumbling stones. From the delicate bas-relief carvings depicting scenes from the Bible on the walls of Holy Cross Church to the brightly-colored frescos on the life of Christ at St.

Gregory the Illuminator Church, the ancient artwork is stunning in its beauty and resilience.

In Armenia, the group visited FAR's programs, including its Children's Center, soup kitchen, Octet Music School and Gumri Information Technology Center. Visiting such uplifting projects was an opportunity for the participants to see FAR's work and to learn about how they could make a difference in Armenia.

At the Children's Center in Yerevan, which provides shelter and counseling to children who have been orphaned or abused, the group met with the young residents and learned about the center's services. Participants said that while it was painful to see children who had suffered abuse or abandonment, it was reassuring to know that FAR had been able to do so much to

help them. “I was happy to see the work that FAR is doing,” said Sedda Antekelian of Los Angeles, Calif.

Alexander Jahani of Green Brook, NJ, was so moved by the work of the center that he decided to remain in Armenia at the conclusion of the trip and volunteer at the facility. He has been working with the center's staff to further develop its media center.

While witnessing how Armenia is being rejuvenated through the efforts of FAR, the Young Professionals were also able to visit several sites, which serve as a testament to the country's rich history.

At Khor Virab monastery, they descended into the pit where St. Gregory the Illuminator



The Young Professionals in Ani



The group at Holy Cross in Akhtamar

was imprisoned for 13 years. To stand on that ground is perhaps the closest one can come to the origins of Christianity in Armenia. The group also visited the 13th-century monastery of Geghard, the churches of St. Hripsime and St. Gayane and the Cathedral of Holy Echmiadzin.

Before leaving Armenia, the Young Professionals group met with Deputy Minister of the Diaspora Vardan Marashlyan, who spoke about the ministry's responsibilities and goals, and answered questions.

“I am very proud of Armenia,” said Chris Kesici of Asbury Park, NJ. “Despite all of the difficulties Armenia has had since independence, it is a wonderful place.”

To learn more about FAR, visit [www.farusa.org](http://www.farusa.org).





# Arts & Living

## Zybas Launches Armenian Learning Software for iPads

YEREVAN — The creative team Zybas has developed the first ever iPad software for people wishing to learn the Armenian language. The idea was proposed by two Armenian designers, David Margaryan and Samvel Hovhannisyan. The software provides a key to learning the Armenian alphabet, in addition to more than 230 words and 38 poems. It consists of three sections, of which the first is very comprehensive and multi-functional. It teaches learners to read, write and pronounce the Armenian letters, as well as master the words and the poems. A special subsection behind each letter allows users to see and hear the letter and a corresponding image, as well as write or draw the letter and learn five words beginning with it. It also offers learners an opportunity to hear and read a poem corresponding to the given letter. The last two sections are simpler. They are designed for browsing letters and seeing the images of animals and objects. The two have paid special attention to the aesthetic design, creating colorful images. It is not yet clear when and where the software will be available for sale.

## ADAA Announces Saroyan Prize Finalists, Event

LOS ANGELES — The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA) announced the three finalists as well as an upcoming event for its third biennial \$10,000 William Saroyan Prize for Playwriting Award. The finalists are: “Doon,” by Sevan Kaloustian Greene; “Night Over Erzinga,” by Adriana Sevahn Nichols; and “Belonging to the Sky,” by Kelly Stuart. Greene is a New York-based Lebanese-Armenian/Pakistani actor and playwright. He is a member of The Public Theater’s 2011 Emerging Writers Group, Rising Circle Theatre Collective’s 2010 InkTANK Writer’s Lab, a NYTW 2011/2012 Teaching Artist at the Khalil Gibran Academy and a previous William Saroyan Playwriting Prize Finalist in 2010. “Doon” takes the familiar genre of the kitchen sink family drama and focuses it through the lens of four generations of an Armenian family living in Cliffside Park, NJ. Nichols is a native New Yorker and award-winning actress and playwright. She received the 2008 Middle East America Distinguished Playwright Award to research and write “Night Over Erzinga,” inspired by her Armenian grandparent’s survival of the Genocide in 1915. The play has been produced by The Lark Play Development Center in New York, Silk Road Theatre Project in Chicago, and Golden Thread in San Francisco. Her one-woman show about friendship and 9/11, “Taking Flight,” had its world premiere in May 2006 by Center Theater Group in Los Angeles, and she has performed it at several theaters nationwide. Stuart is an American playwright based in New York. She currently teaches in the playwriting program and Columbia University. Her plays include “Shadow Language,” (Oberon Press), which was presented by Theatre 503 in London and originally commissioned by the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis; “Mayhem,” which played at Manchester’s Royal Exchange in the UK as well as The Evidence Room in Los Angeles (with Megan Mullally), and “Demonology” at Playwrights Horizons in New York and the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. “Belonging to the Sky” is a lyrical intertwining of two monologues by Sabiha Gökçen and Hrant Dink and their tragic historical connection.

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Arzoumanian atop Ararat

## ‘Ararat Reminded Me of Who I Am,’ Says Lebanese-Armenian Mountaineer

BEIRUT — A young Armenian-Lebanese woman, Christine Gabriel Arzoumanian, reached the summit of Mount Ararat on July 18. Accompanied by friends with the same mountaineering passion, she had made it all the way up to the 5,137-meter-high peak in four days. Arzoumanian is the managing partner of Korea Merchandise Center International and is an alumna of the AGBU Tarouhi Hagopian School in Beirut. She holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the American University of Beirut and a master’s degree in international affairs from Lebanese American University. She also actively contributes in designing and promoting health campaigns — a World Health Organization awardee for anti-smoking contributions who plays a significant role in youth development and community service. She is a Rotary district representative elected to represent, lead and actively contribute in nine countries, Armenia, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan and United Arab Emirates. This year, she became one of only a handful of Armenian-Lebanese mountaineers (especially as a female mountaineer) to reach the summit of Mount Ararat. Arzoumanian, the daughter of a former Lebanese champion in cycling and a certified International Olympic Committee (IOC) instructor, had become interested in extreme sports, especially mountaineering, since adolescence and had achieved many summits in Lebanon and abroad. She had also ranked the second in the women’s category of the “Raid of the Cedars” 18-kilometer snowshoeing competition organized by the Lebanese Army in 2009. She granted an exclusive interview upon her return. **Sevag Hagopian:** What made you think and dare to achieve Ararat’s summit? **Christine Arzoumanian:** Climbing a mountain is tricky really, yet very real and solid. Only on the mountain one can reveal the truth of climbing that it is much taller than it seemed, farther than and harder than it looked. Nature can be very cruel if you do not know how to embrace it or walk with it. Some people say they climb mountains to get enlightened, I climb mountains because I am an enlightened person by God, and I thank Him to be blessed to reflect, relate, be aware and thank every circumstance I face during those moments including the hard and painful ones. To reach any summit, both summits of life or mountains, I believe one should train

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## Tufts’ Ina Baghdiantz McCabe Explores Heritage

By Katrina Stanislav

MEDFORD, Mass. — The following is an interview with Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Tufts Professor of History and Darakjian and Jafarian Chair in Armenian History, regarding her studies of diasporas and her insight on the formation of identities. It appeared in the newsletter of The Fletcher School’s Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies. **Katrina Stanislav:** Your childhood was uniquely international: raised in eight countries and educated in six languages before the age of 18. How did this exposure influence your passion for history? **Ina Baghdiantz McCabe:** Living in many cultures makes you realize that



Ina Baghdiantz McCabe

most people are the same despite their cultural differences. Pain and suffering are universal, as is the hope people hold for happiness and a better future. Revolutions have happened on the force of this promise for happiness and equality, but they always fail because some people never believe it should be allowed. To put it simplistically, people believe they are better than “other” people. The idea that some people are better than others, taken to its extreme logic, is what led to the Holocaust. Of all the places I have lived I feel most at home here in the United States; it remains the best democratic experiment, despite some scary episodes. Unfortunately, that experiment also has a very painful beginning with the annihilation of many native groups. As a historian it helps you avoid the trap of exceptionalism; you realize that many problems are universal. **KS:** Did any of the countries and cultures you experienced in your childhood have a particularly profound impact on the development of your academic interests? **IM:** My passion for history stems from the many cultures that I have made my own and to me they are all profoundly

see McCABE, page 13



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Newton Jeweler to Make Earrings for US Women's Olympic Gymnastics Team

NEWTON, Mass. (*Boston Globe*) – Those red, white and blue earrings that have brought Needham Olympian Aly Raisman so much luck will soon be sparkling on the ears of her teammates: Adamas Fine Jewelry of Newton has promised all the girls on the US Olympic Team their very own pair, after they crushed the Russians to win the gold medal in the team competition on Tuesday, July 31.

**By Evan Allen**

brother Anto Aboyan wished her good luck by crafting her a pair of ruby, diamond and sapphire studs.

"I love the patriotic look," Raisman told Channel 7 news.

Raisman has scarcely taken them off – she even wore them on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*.

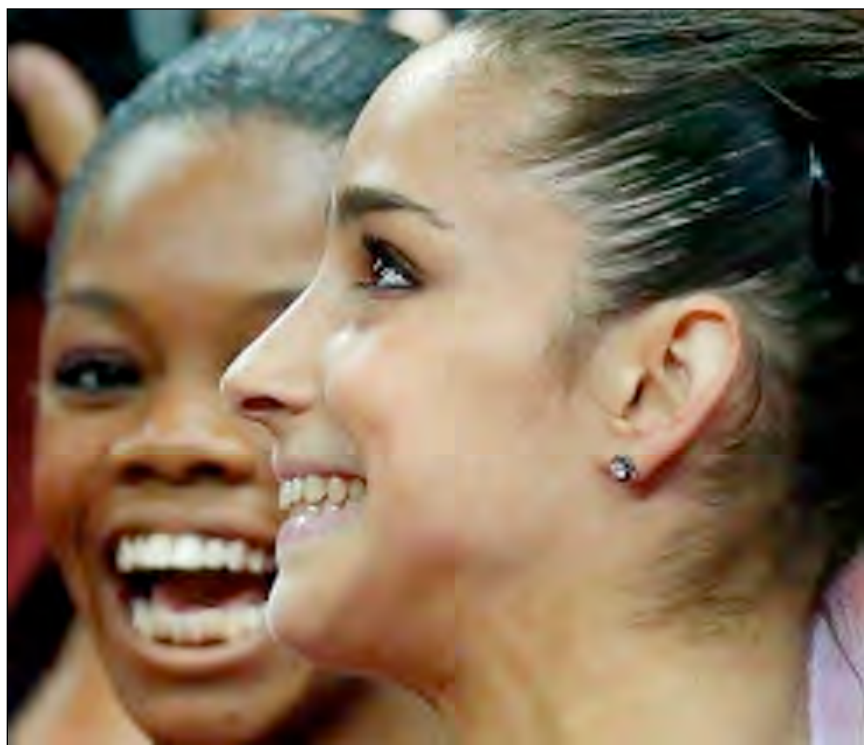
"We had no expectations whatsoever, we just gave her a nice gift," said Sagherian. "Honestly, we didn't even know if she was allowed to wear them in competition. But we've seen them everywhere. Every time there's a picture of her, there are the earrings."

Sagherian said she missed the streaming video of Raisman and her team flipping their way to gold on July 31 because she was working, but she turned on her TV as soon as she got home on Tuesday night.

"I've never been so committed to watching the Olympics. It's nice to have that connection," she said. "It's nice to see that person you're connected to is doing so well."

Calls and emails, she said, have begun pouring in to the store: everybody wants a pair of earrings like Raisman's. But the earrings are off-limits until after the competition is over – Sagherian is not going to fool around with something as delicate as a lucky streak.

"I feel like, if she's looking at this as her lucky earrings, I'm not going to mess with that," said Sagherian.



Aly Raisman wearing her earrings from Adamas, with her teammate Gabby Douglas

## Ararat Reminded Me of Who I Am'

ARARAT, from page 10

the mind first to be clear, clean, positive and willful or let the purity of the soul give the necessary push to the mind to move with determination and love despite many challenges. Consequently, imagine if you have both, a beautiful mind and a pure soul, only then every difficulty will look so small and every dare an invitation and an opportunity to inspire goodness in this world. So before working on our muscles to climb mountains, we should work continuously on our mind and keeping our souls clean. Physical fitness and the right diet are the fundamentals of survival but it is the mind in collaboration with the soul that will take you to the summit.

**SH:** Is there any professional tourism or guiding companies to make you reach there? Are there any tests regarding fitness or eligibility it is required to pass in order to be selected for a high altitude climb?

**CA:** There are many tourism and guiding companies. One can browse to find them on the net. Mine was a Kurdish company. There were no major physical tests required. Unless one chooses to have one as general check-up especially for the heart condition and blood pressure.

**SH:** Do you have to get prepared for a while, for both fitness and logistics? What do you take with you?

**CA:** The expedition agency takes care of your



Christine Arzoumanian and fellow climbers at a base camp

food, logistics like tents and crampons. Mountaineers just get their gear (outfit, boots, hiking sticks) and personal needs. It is also recommended to intake carbohydrates a week prior to the hike along with altitude pills if necessary.

**SH:** How much did you hydrate during your climb? Did you drink more fluids the higher you climbed?

**CA:** You should drink a lot of water all the way even if small sips. If one learns to listen and

gives the necessities to the body s/he will be fine. You should not listen to the pain and the headache and the nausea while approaching to the summit ... and not think so much while walking, just walk.

**SH:** Are you more secure climbing with people you know and trust or do you on occasion like to climb with random people of same passion?

**CA:** It is all same for me. In climbing you are your own master first; you should be in full control and trust of yourself first.

**SH:** Can you briefly describe the climbing stages? What were conditions like on the mountain?

**CA:** On day one of the expedition, we started climbing from 2,200 meters until 3,100 meters where there was camp 1. On day two we climbed from camp 1 to camp 2; 4,100 meters, then went down and slept in camp 1 (this is mainly done so the body gets use to the altitude). Day 3 was dedicated to going up back to camp 2 again and sleep there. Day 4 was for the summiting journey! Fortunately, there was no need for supplemental oxygen for Ararat, some other higher summits they do need though. The last 800 hundred meters was all covered in beautiful snow and it was too cold!

We were extremely happy by reaching the summit where we all celebrated, then I realized, climbing up to a mountain is optional; really you can decide not to continue, but going down a mountain after summiting is a must, you have no other way! So we did that on the same day.

**SH:** What was the scariest or maybe most memorable part of your journey up the moun-

tain and did you ever feel like going back down and giving up?

My prime experience is when I was around 300 meters away from the summit... I stopped...

The altitude was kicking in, my fingers were frozen, my face and lips were all blue according to the guide. I had no energy to move a muscle. Our Kurdish guide stopped a Turkish mountaineer – a medical person whom we met by coincidence – to check on me. He checked my eyes and advised me to go down. He was worried that I still have another 1.5 hours to reach the summit- having in mind the wind, the altitude, the temperature and that according to his fast tempo, with the way I was trekking I may need another two to three hours. I smiled and asked him "how are you" in his language... He smiled back and answered "I'm good" ... I asked my mountaineering partner to see if he is good to go. He said: "I'm very tired" with no further implications. I paused. I knew if I stopped I will be messing up the group tempo and even be a source of discouragement. I looked at my partners in this mission. I looked at the beautiful summit and I looked at the sky. I shouted and tears rolled down my eyes and a divine strength filled me up and I started running ... it took me 30 minutes to reach the summit. I was full of emotions and determination. I was already there within my mind until I made it to the summit and other groups welcomed me with claps, hugs and cognac. I went on my knees and thanked God and prayed. I was on top of Mount Ararat. I saw Armenia. I saw our Massis Sar and waited impatiently for my group to arrive. I wasn't able to see them from the fog and the weather was getting really bad... until they all came. It was freezing cold up there.... heavenly feeling will cherish forever.

**SH:** I would like to know what it was like upon the summit. Is it like any other summit you have achieved?

**CA:** For me it was a holy summit. It is the summit of my roots. My summit.

**SH:** Would you recommend our readers, especially women, to try climbing Mount Ararat?

**CA:** It's a wonderful experience besides being a national commitment. Noah's Ark had landed there! Our great Khatchadour Apovian was there! You just do sports regularly, maintain a healthy diet, do as many hikes as you can and especially on high altitudes, and a big must to work on the mind, attitude and the spirit.

**SH:** Do you want to add anything here Christine about your great experience?

**CA:** The whole journey reminded me of who I am as a person, my roots, my strength, my weaknesses, the qualities of my soul, how lightly I deal with difficulties and with a smile and loving heart towards all. I thank all who were part of my journey, before, during, and after.

**SH:** Thank you Christine and congratulations!



Christine Arzoumanian at the summit with the Lebanese flag



## ACYO-WD to Present Musical Exploring Armenian History and Identity

GLENDALÉ — The Armenian Church Youth Organization of the Western Diocese (ACYO-WD) is producing a groundbreaking new musical, titled “Polors Nuyn Hyen Enk,” meaning “We are all Armenian,” with a one-night engagement on Saturday, September 15, at 7 p.m., at the Beyond The Stars Place.

“Polors Nuyn Hyen Enk” is written and directed by Arpi Nakashian, current ACYO-WD Central Council event coordinator and member of St. Vartan, Oakland ACYO, who developed the concept of the musical at age 13. Now, nearly a decade later, Nakashian is bringing the musical to life, presented as the annual benefit event for the ACYO-WD.

The musical emphasizes the importance of the Armenian identity, culture, language and how Christianity shaped the Armenian nation throughout the years. This original work



Arpi Nakashian gives direction.

youth discuss that despite the challenges they face today being Armenian, they are willing to face any obstacle to protect their identity.

“One of the messages of the documentary musical is that we should be united and even though there might be differences between us, the basis of who we are is the same,” Nakashian said.

One of Nakashian’s inspirations was well-known Armenian singer Robert Chilingirian’s titled single by the same name, *Polors Nuyn Hyen Enk*. In support of the musical, Chilingirian posted his praise of the musical on his Facebook page.

“...I am so happy that the message is getting through and slowly but surely being practiced! Bravo Arpi, the Cast, and ACYO for taking this to the next level,” Chilingirian said.

“Polors Nuyn Hyen Enk” will be performed in Armenian, with English narration. The musical stars ACYO-WD members and alumni from across the Western Diocese, with some of the cast members learning Armenian dialogue, songs and dance for the musical.

Tickets are on sale at Beyond the Stars Place. For tickets and information, visit <http://www.acyo-wd.org/>.



Arpi Nakashian directs the cast in a first read-through.

covers significant eras in Armenian history, putting emphasis on the importance of unity. Through the story of the musical, Armenian

## ADAA Saroyan Prize Finalists and Event Announced

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The \$10,000 Saroyan grand prizewinner will be announced at an invitation-only awards event on Saturday, December 8, 6 p.m., at the Pasadena Playhouse VIP Room.

Three finalist plays were selected by a first-round panel of theater professionals, from a pool of submissions from around the world. The winner will be selected by this year’s honorary jury of theater artists: playwright Catherine Filloux, playwright/screenwriter Eduardo Machado and actress/producer Gates McFadden.

ADAA’s annual Armenian Star Award will also be presented at the event. The award recognizes an individual who has reached high artistic achievement in their career or has assisted Armenians in the arts. This year’s recipient is David Kherdian, the poet, novelist and memoirist, whose work has been published in 13 languages, including his acclaimed *Root River Cycle. The Road From Home*, the biography of his mother who survived the Armenian Genocide, has been in print for more than 30 years. He is also the editor of the volume *Forgotten Bread: First Generation Armenian American Writers*.

ADAA’s William Saroyan Prize for Playwriting, for plays on Armenian themes, is made possible by a grant from the William Saroyan Foundation, which established the award at the ADAA in 2007-08 in conjunction with the William Saroyan Centennial. The foundation’s chairman is Haig Mardikian. Additional funding for the prize was provided by Gagosian Galleries.

For more information, visit [www.armeniandrama.org](http://www.armeniandrama.org).

## Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2012



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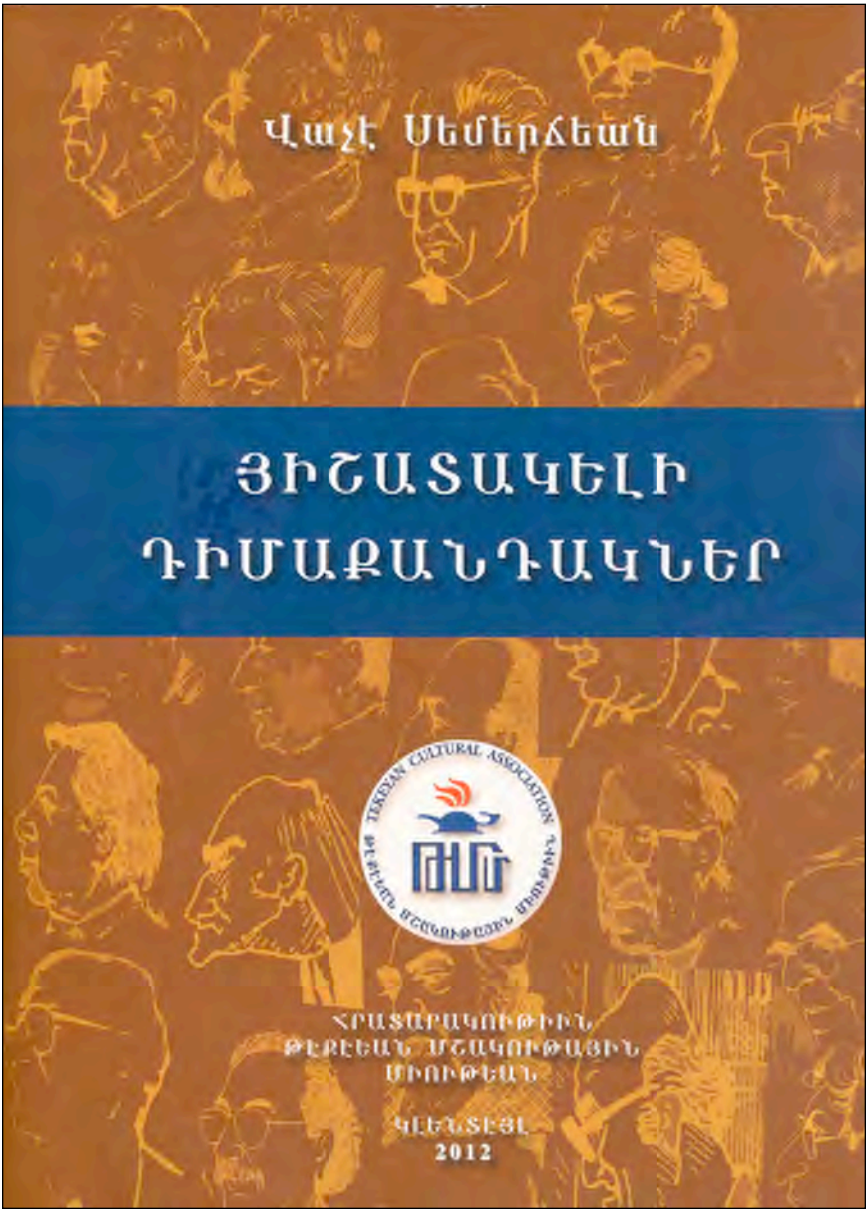
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Memorable Profiles by Vatche Semerdjian

## Tekeyan Cultural Association Publishes New Book

GLENDALÉ — Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA), Glendale Chapter, recently published a new book in Armenian by writer and journalist Vatche Semerdjian, titled *Memorable Profiles*. The book is the 14th publication of the TCA and contains 30 articles about personalities in culture and education within the Armenian communities of the Middle East and the Americas, who have been friends and acquaintances of Semerdjian during the last 50 years.

The introduction is written by Edmond Azadian and the book can be acquired from the author, 912 E. Harvard St., Glendale, CA 91205.



ARTS & LIVING

Tufts' Ina Baghdiantz McCabe Explores Heritage

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connected. I have read most deeply in French and so the ideas of some very interesting thinkers such as Bourdieu, Bataille and the very old-fashioned Fernand Braudel have marked me. As a historian I shy away from jargon and theory but I have read a lot of theory, as most of it started in France. Only in the United States could I have become a historian, so of all of the cultures I know, the largest impact has been that of the place I have had the privilege of choosing as my country. I consider the state of Vermont, where my family lives, my home.

My own travels have forged a strong interest in cross-cultural exchanges, in travel writing, in diasporas, in trade and in intellectual exchanges. My Flemish mother and my Armenian father were both born in strong patriarchal cultures that were not inclined to accept women as intellectual or artists. Although there have been some, including my mother, they succeeded with great difficulty. I was born with a strong personality and a lot of drive, but even in the countries where I have lived in Europe I certainly would have not had the opportunities I have had here in the United States.

**KS:** In your writing, research and teaching you focus on the role of diasporas, specifically the Armenian diaspora, and merchant networks. What is it about diasporas that piques your academic interest?

**IM:** In a film by Bertrand Tavernier a history

teacher enters his high school class, opens a suitcase and takes out a knife and a large sausage, which he proceeds to hack into pieces as he exclaims, "this is history."

History departments are cut up into national histories — we have inherited this artificial classification from 19th-century nationalist views. The worlds was not always made up of nation-states, nor will it be in the future. In this national classification, diaspora communities were an invisible group. Luckily, things are changing and many departments are now designated in terms of regions or in transregional terms, but most hiring is still done according to national histories.

I have worked on the global silk and silver trade of a small group of Armenians — the New Julfans — since 1987 and wrote my first book about their trade in 1999. They were the same group Philip Curtin used to define the terms "trade diaspora" in 1984 and his work on cross-cultural trade sparked my own. My native Armenian and my knowledge of Persian were important to this research, as the New Julfans lived in Iran after 1604. I wanted to look at theoretical problems and definitions of a deported, wealthy diaspora community, as well as into the actual trade of the Armenians. I collaborated with many people interested in the same issues.

Phillip Curtin was also a pioneer in a second issue that fascinates me; in his discussion of trade networks in 1984 he includes the

European militarized diaspora in the same category as the Armenians, the Jews, the Banians and the Fukein Chinese. This remains a contested issue as the term diaspora has rarely been applied to Europeans abroad. I agree with Curtin that his classifications offers a clearer picture of reality. It is very hard to reconstruct the past — all honest historians will accept that — but if networks, cross cultural contacts and exchanges, travel and movement, cosmopolitanism and transnational histories are not part of the quest, the quest will not yield fruitful results.

**KS:** Your work estimates the importance of understanding the intersection of material and intellectual exchanges and how these two elements of history viewed together can create a more complete historical pictures. Can you describe the link between these two elements and provide an example of how they can be viewed together?

**IM:** A striking example is the creation of the café, a public space in 17th-century Paris, in imitation of the coffee houses in Constantinople, Cairo or Isfahan. I have three chapters on the arrival of coffee in France in my latest book. According to several French sources, the Armenians opened the first five Parisian cafés.

The transfer of ideas is often linked to goods, although few historians study it that way. Many ideas about health, digestion and even morality were transferred with imported coffee, a commodity. Views about coffee vary tremendously

and could fluctuate within the same decade.

Today the café is seen as a Parisian institution, a marker of French identity, and the French think of coffee as a national drink, its "oriental" roots forgotten. This very slow cycle of cultural integration would also be the fate of many luxury goods imported from Asia. Initially viewed as foreign or exotic, the same product some few years later is viewed as representing France and French habits. This transformation fascinates me. Most people imagine that there are some objective properties that are intrinsic to the nature of things. In the case of coffee I could show how views about coffee changed according to who was importing it and whether it profited France or not at that point in history. Views regarding its properties varied from nefarious enough to cause impotence to excellent for your health.

I also showed how a glorious heroic tale about the arrival of coffee in Martinique — due to one French officer — served to create total silence about the use of slaves on French plantations, making France the main European exporter of coffee to the rest of Europe by the 18th century. In analyzing the discourse about goods you can find variations in the discourse about the same good that prove how fickle and changing our perception of reality can be. We constantly construct categories and change them to suit our interests. As Louis XIV used the sale of coffee to raise money for his wars, court doctors advocated that coffee was better for your health than wine. Because an object or good is inanimate, it is easier to show how terribly subjective we are according to our self-interests. A social scientist can study material goods to show that values are not intrinsic to objects themselves, but rather are projected onto goods by society. This goes against objectivism, a view that there is one reality that exists independent of the human mind, a truth with a big T.

**KS:** History is an essential part of understanding contemporary culture. Are there any dynamics or patterns you have found in your research that you feel are particularly relevant when looking at current and future interactions between different countries and cultures?

**IM:** A study of constantly changing ideas about the "foreign," the "exotic," diaspora, refugees and cross-cultural exchanges and encounters permeates my work. Our false categories can be a huge obstacle to peace and mutual understanding. Categorizing something as foreign or exotic leads to an "us and them" view of the world. The same holds true of the traditional view of diaspora; it is seen as a group that does not really belong to its host country. I have argued for a different view in my work. This "us and them" view is very politically potent. I can give you a vivid example to clarify: when you hear someone argue that our current president is a foreigner and was not born in the United States, despite ample proof that he was, he is being described as "exotic," and you are encountering this phenomenon of arbitrary "othering." History is supposed to be about facts; our president's American birth certificate is the kind of document historians use, but what people do with facts makes the historian's job complex. My concern with the past gives me hope that we can understand that we built this world both materially and ideologically and that we are responsible for the many skewed systems of beliefs that cause us so much trouble.

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

**AUGUST 26 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic** to be held at American Legion Farm, 1314 Main St., Haverhill. 12-5 p.m. Music by Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Armenian cuisine, pastries and beverages. Raffles for cash prizes and gift certificates. Air-conditioned function hall. Bring your own lawn chairs. For more info, visit [www.hypointchurch.org](http://www.hypointchurch.org) or call (978) 372-9227.

**SEPTEMBER 9 — Trinity Family Festival**, 12-5 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Delicious dinners; Moonwalk for kids; children and family games, starting at 1:30 p.m., Armenian music by the Greg Krikorian Ensemble. Blessing of Madagh, 4 p.m., followed by raffle drawing for cash prizes. Bring your tavloo board. For info, contact the church office, (617) 354-0632, e-mail [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org) or [www.htaac.org](http://www.htaac.org).

**SEPTEMBER 30 — Holy Trinity 50th Anniversary Grand Finale Banquet**, following church services, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

**OCTOBER 25 — K. George and Carolann S. Najarian Endowed Lecture on Human Rights. Speaker: Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian**, founding director, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University and former US ambassador to Israel (1992-1994) and the Syrian Arab Republic (1988-1991). Faneuil Hall, Boston. Thursday, 7 p.m. An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Park. Free and open to the public.

NEW JERSEY

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

**OCTOBER 21 — Hye Doon (Armenian American Support and Educational Center), 35th Anniversary Celebration**, with the participation of Akh'Tamar Dance Ensemble of the Hye Doon, Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble of Hamazkayin of Boston, Sunday, 3:45 p.m. Bergen County Academics, 200 Hackensack, NJ 07601. All net proceeds to benefit the Hovnanian Armenian School. Tickets: \$50, \$35 and \$25. For tickets, call Sonya Bekarian, (201) 315-5916; Juliet Tabibian, (201) 233-0326; Nivart Arslan, (201) 475-0224; Maral Kalishian, (845) 729-1888; Maral Kaprielian, (201) 289-6486; Lina Bakhtiarian, (732) 299-1120; Linda Gezdir, (201) 394-6310 or the school, (201) 967-5940.

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

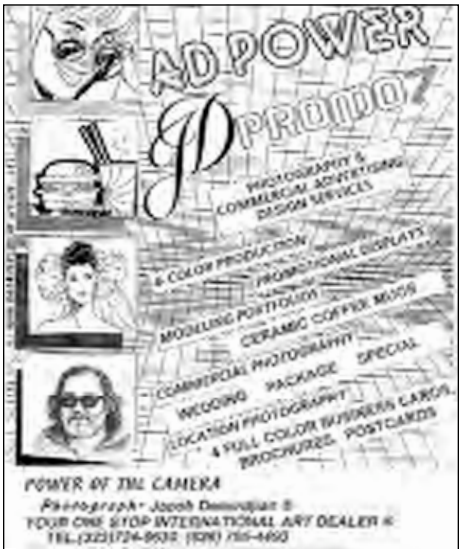


**On September 9, the Trinity Family Festival will be held from 12 to 5 p.m., at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass., featuring Armenian food, children and family games and Armenian music by the Greg Krikorian Ensemble. For info, contact the church office, (617) 354-0632, e-mail [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org) or visit [www.htaac.org](http://www.htaac.org).**

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

NEW YORK

**SEPTEMBER 29 — Armenia Fund's 20th Anniversary Gala**, at Gotham Hall, New York City. Celebrity lawyer Mark Geragos, as master of ceremonies, entertainment by French-Armenian pop singer Patrcik Fiori; keynote speaker, Eduard Nalbandian. Details to follow.





COMMENTARY

# Sayat Nova at 300: Epitome of Multiculturalism

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Multiculturalism seems to be the fad of modern times. For centuries, dominant nations would impose their own will and culture on subject nations, even if that meant eventual assimilation of weaker nations. But as the world became a global village, mass migration became the trend of the times and different people – even through osmosis – came to learn more of other cultures, began to tolerate them and even appreciate them.

The United States, which at one time was considered a melting pot, became a trendsetter in multiculturalism, especially in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement.

Many nations in Europe and the Americas have even established ministries of multiculturalism as they began facing the need of absorbing masses of immigrants.

When we think of multiculturalism in the Armenian world, one name stands out – that of the Armenian troubadour Sayat Nova, who lived his prolific life in the 18th-century Caucasus.

In 2012, Armenia celebrates the 300th anniversary of the birth of the legendary minstrel in cooperation with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The bard is believed to have been born in the year 1712, however that date is hotly debated. In a recent interview, the former director of the Charentz Museum, Dr.

Henrik Bakhchinyan, stated that Armenia has jumped the gun on the celebration by almost a decade. During the current year, Armenians also celebrate the 500th anniversary of printing; this time, because documents are extent and there are books imprinted with the date of 1512, we know we have the right year. In Sayat Nova's case, no definitive documents are available to fix the exact date of his birth.

Harutyun Sayatyan, who only later became known by the penname Sayat Nova, was born in Tbilisi (Tiflis at the time), Georgia. His father was born either in Cilicia (Adana) or Aleppo and migrated to Sanahin to marry a local girl, Sara. Sayat Nova became a monumental cultural figure even in his own time and became a legend in Armenian history. There is a tremendous body of academic work on his life and literary legacy that would defy any writer to come up with a complete and comprehensive study. Therefore, we will avoid delving into that ocean of literature, concentrating on the symbolism for which he is known.

Two hundred and twenty poems credited to him have survived but scholars believe an equal number of poems and songs have been lost. Morouss Hasratian, who is the author of an exhaustive work on the bard, makes a succinct analogy. He says, "If we picture the Medieval Armenian *goussans* as a mountain chain, Sayat Nova undoubtedly represents the summit."

He was one of the most charismatic figures of his time, with attractive features, an equally charming voice and a supreme intellect. After winning many contests among the *ashooghs* or *goussans* (both meaning troubadours), he was invited to perform in the court of the Georgian King Erekle II. While in the court, he also worked as a diplomat forging an alliance between Georgia, Armenia and Shirvan against the Persian Empire.

There is speculation that he lost his position at the court after he fell in love with the king's sister, Anna. He then led an itinerant life until 1759, when he was ordained a priest to serve at the Monastery of Haghbat. It was there that he was martyred in 1795 when Mohammad Khan Qajar, the Shah of Iran, invaded the area. There is a legend about his martyrdom. He was asked to come out of the monastery and he refused by saying: "I don't leave the church and I don't abandon Christ," reminiscent of the response Vartan Mamigonian and his entourage had given the Persian King some 1,200 years ago, when they defied the king. The historian Yeghishe wrote, "No one can shake us in the faith of our ancestors. We are ready – your sword to our necks," (translated loosely.)

There was a mixture of races living in the Caucasus at the time and they were dominated by the Ottomans, Persians and Russians. They all shared the same fate when their overlords changed hands and they lived together.

Sayat Nova began writing his lyric in Azerbaijani (the language of the Tatars). He also performed in that language. In the second

period of his creative career, he began writing in the Georgian language. His Armenian poems appear after age 30. (He has a poem stating that date.) He was gifted in many more languages, like Persian and Arabic. His mastery of the Persian language helped him to introduce some Persian poetic forms and traditions in Georgia. He has a few songs that are written in all four languages at the same time.

He was a wordsmith; he crafted with simple words songs expressing philosophical thoughts or great human passions.

Through his multi-disciplined art, he explored all the dimensions of the human experience: religious, social and sensual by advocating: "love the lord, love the soul, love the sweetheart."

When Lord Byron went to Venice to learn the Armenian language from the Mkhitarist fathers, he wrote to his friends that he had found the Armenian language to be a tough nut to crack.

The same can be said about Sayat Nova's language, which is the 18th-century Tiflis-Armenian vernacular, spiced with Turkish, Persian, Georgian and sometimes even Cilician Armenian words. His songs would have been locked behind the language barrier had it not been for the interpretation and translation of some scholars.

Many modern singers who soulfully perform Sayat Nova's songs seldom comprehend the words.

The literary historian Mourouss Hasratian has translated the bard's poems from Azerbaijani and Georgian languages into the 18th-century Tiflis-Armenian vernacular; a very authentic job, as if the poet himself had written in his own time. He has also converted samples from the bard's 18th-century poems into modern Eastern Armenian vernacular to render them more comprehensible.

There are significant studies on Sayat Nova by literary historians including Nigol Aghbalian and Baruyr Sevak, as well as others. Sayat Nova's poetry and music have captured the imagination of many scholars and there are studies on him in Georgian, Azerbaijani and Russian.

What propelled Sayat Nova's name and the legacy into the international stage were a few scholarly and artistic works. Prof. Charles Dawcett published his academic work in London under the title, "Sayat Nova, an 18th-Century Troubadour." Sergei Paradjanov's movie, titled "The Color of Pomegranates," marked not only a new era in filmmaking but also popularized Sayat Nova's life story and artistic legacy. One of his earliest translators was the Londoner Alice Stone Blackwell. The composer Alexander Haroutiounian wrote an opera based on the bard's life, using his music in a pastiche format. Sayat Nova's works have also been translated into French by Elizabeth Mouradian and French poet Serge Venturini.

Back in Armenia and in the Caucasus, Sayat Nova has always been a very popular figure for all the nationalities. The reason Azeris and Georgians have not tried to claim as their own is that the bard, throughout his poetry has identified himself as a Christian Armenian, using his baptismal name as Aroutin and referring to his father as Karabet.

The poet Hovhannes Toumanian had started a tradition in the early 20th century, which still continues to this day.

He began a festival, which he called Vartadon (Feast of flowers) during which poets, writers, singers performers and the general public are invited to Sayat Nova's Mausoleum in the Armenian Quarter of Tbilisi, called Havlabar, and speeches and performances are given in memory of the great bard.

During the Soviet period, the Sayat Nova Troubadour's Ensemble was created to perform and perpetuate Sayat Nova's artistic legacy, under the leadership of Vagharshak Sahakian.

Today, the same ensemble is reinforced by new musicians and performers under a more erudite scholar and singer, Thomas Pogossyan.

As crude and cruel the Soviet regime was, it had a forced cohabitation between constituent nationalities. Sayat Nova's Vartadon was celebrated by all the nations and the bard symbolized brotherhood among those nations, who have since become mortal enemies, fighting and murdering each other.

Sayat Nova's genuine and natural multiculturalism is needed today to bring peace and harmony to the region.

The day all three nations join again to sing Sayat Nova's music in unison the martyred soul of the bard will find its peace and the region will head towards a more prosperous and promising future.

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## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Frequently-Asked Questions on Armenian Demands from Turkey

The approaching Centennial of the Armenian Genocide in 2015 raises some fundamental questions, particularly on Armenian territorial demands from Turkey. In the weeks and months ahead, this column will address these issues by presenting the rationale for these demands and provide answers to frequently-asked questions.

**Question 1:** Is it true that all claims arising from the crime of genocide become invalid after 100 years?

**Answer:** Not true! On November 26, 1968, the UN General Assembly adopted “The Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity,” which includes the crime of genocide. Article 1 of this Convention states that “No statutory limitation shall apply to [these crimes] ... irrespective of the date of their commission.” Therefore, no matter how much time has elapsed, war crimes and crimes against humanity, including genocide, can still be prosecuted. However, for logistical reasons, it would be wise to refer

such crimes to the courts as quickly as possible.

**Question 2:** Isn't it a fantasy to expect that Armenians will ever regain Western Armenia?

**Answer:** No one should be under the illusion that Turkish leaders would voluntarily hand over to Armenians a single inch of land, let alone the territories of Western Armenia. Peaceful transfers of land are extremely rare in the practice of international relations. All too often, land is taken by force. Since Armenia is not militarily more powerful than Turkey, and is not expected to be so anytime soon, Armenians have to wait for unforeseen developments to occur in and around Turkey, such as civil war, global or regional conflict, revolution, Kurdish insurrection, natural disaster or nuclear catastrophe, to bring about a power vacuum and possible border changes in that part of the world. Meanwhile, Armenians have to keep alive and transmit their territorial demands to future generations until the opportune moment when they can claim their lawful rights.

In the meantime, it is unwise for Armenians to make minimalist demands from Turkey. Since Turkish leaders are not willing to make even the smallest territorial concession, there is no point in telling them that Armenians would be satisfied by the return of only Ararat or Ani. Armenians should ask for nothing less than “Armenia from sea to shining sea” (dsove-dsov Hayastan)! Rather than minimizing their demands, Armenians should claim the maximum, so that they can end up getting a portion of what is rightfully theirs. As all good Armenian businessmen know, you don't start negotiating from your bottom price!

**Question 3:** If Western Armenia is freed, wouldn't the overwhelming majority of the population and elected officials be Kurds and Turks, making Armenians a small minority in their own homeland?

**Answer:** Yes, that would be true if Western Armenia was handed to Armenians today! However, this is not likely to happen. As explained earlier, before Armenians have the opportunity to regain their historic lands, calamitous events must first occur in that part of the world. No one knows the impact of such developments on the local population. Demographic changes resulting from unforeseen circumstances in the region shall determine how many Kurds, Turks or even Armenians remain in the area. One cannot simply assume that the status quo will remain unchanged forever. Therefore, one cannot automatically conclude that Armenians would become a minority in Western Armenia.

**Question 4:** If someday Western Armenia is liberated, would Armenians be willing to leave their comfortable homes in the West and resettle on those inhospitable lands?

**Answer:** The issue here is the right of Armenians to settle in their historic homeland. Once these lands are returned, it is up to each Armenian to decide whether to relocate. This should not be a Turkish concern! Do all Jews live in Israel? Since most Lebanese, like Armenians, live outside of their homeland, do people question the reason for the existence of Lebanon as a state? Someday, when Western Armenia is freed, most Armenians who live in nearby Middle Eastern countries will probably choose to relocate there. However, there is no problem if every single Armenian from around the world does not head for the homeland. Those who remain in the diaspora will surely play a critical role in strengthening the newly-established country economically and politically, just as Armenians worldwide are currently assisting their compatriots in the Republic of Armenia.

## LETTERS

## Remembering Manoog Young

To the Editor:

Regrettably I failed to mark the date of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* issue that included an article, which carried the title, “AYA Officials Meet to Plan Conference.” I surmise it was late in the summer of 1942. The article included a picture of Committee Chairman Manoog S. Young alongside the following individuals who at the time were members of the Armenian Youth of America organization: Harry S. Sarkisian of Watertown, administrative secretary; Haig Garabedian of New Britain, Conn., regional vice chairman of Western New England; and Sooren Zamanigian of Worcester, treasurer. Together with other National Committee officials the group was engaged in considering ways and means of bringing the contribution of Armenian youth to the nation's war effort in a more effective and direct manner. The conference was slated to take place “over the Labor Day weekend in Boston.” Manoog Young's leadership and involvement in the conference were, in my opinion, harbingers of greater accomplishments to come in his future.

During the fall of '42, I maintained close ties with Manoog who, together with his parents, harbored much love for Mother Armenia, its rich history, language and cultural values — even though Armenia at the time was under Soviet rule. I frequently visited the Malyemezian home where Manoog tutored me in the subject of algebra. It was due to his mastery of the subject and his tutorial skills that I later succeeded in erasing a condition of my enrollment at Boston University in 1942.

Even though World War II came along and interrupted many lives Manoog Young was not deterred from quickly embarking and moving forward with the task of creating and bringing into fruition the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) an organization that has and continues so much of the perpetuation and enrichment of our cultural heritage. Upon his death the enormity and importance of Manoog's endeavors were duly acknowledged by a host of his peers and by organizations that played key roles in NAASR's development.

May memories of Manoog Young forever burn brightly in our mind's eyes and rest warmly in the deepest recesses of the hearts of the Armenian people and nation.

— Haig Garabedian  
East Hartford, Conn.

## Turks Counter High School Genocide Classes

By Tom Vartabedian

Just when you think life has dealt you a pat hand, along comes a conniver to steal your pot.

For the past four years, members of our Armenian Genocide Education Committee of Merrimack Valley have filtered in and out of high schools north of Boston.

We have also expanded our reach to include schools around Greater Boston, like Newton South. Scores of children have benefited by our lessons. In most every case, instructors have been overwhelmed by the impact being made for them, too, come out learning a valuable lesson in history.

There hasn't been one repercussion, not even a grunt from a naysayer — until now. A vile and vindictive article from a pro-Turkish website ([www.historyoftruth.com](http://www.historyoftruth.com)) enraged me, bearing the headline: “Armenians Spreading Their Lies at High Schools.”

The gutless piece failed to carry a by-line, thus making it more intolerable. What's more, a photograph of Wilmington High students holding samples of postage stamps they had designed carried the inscription: “Their Lies Reached Schools.”

The group photo also had the two presenters that day — myself and Albert S. Movsesian. The event was to generate ideas for a postage stamp to be sent to the Postmaster General of the United States in an effort to get a commemorative stamp for the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 2015.

A completely harmless project meant to both elucidate and arouse our younger non-Armenian population was slurred with malice.

The rebuttal was generated in response to an all-encompassing piece written by Chairman Dro Kanayan, giving readers a fairly detailed account of the progress made in schools this year. How effective has it been?

While attending a grand-niece's Chelmsford High graduation party the week before, I approached a table occupied by students who had been addressed during a genocide class taught by Jennifer Doak.

“Hey, you look familiar. Aren't you the guy who spoke to us about the Armenian Genocide?” a co-ed remarked.

“Yes, that's me,” I replied. “What do you

remember most about the class?”

“How difficult it was for your race to be slaughtered like that,” she replied. “We loved the story about the Calvin Coolidge Orphan Rug and how it found its way to the White House.”

The article goes go to say that the “Armenian Diaspora is spreading its lies by telling them at high schools.”

The next paragraph quoted Kanayan's story:

“Armenian researcher Dro Kanayan said for those people who feel that our elders and the youth cannot work together, don't worry.

“Kanayan and both of his peers, Albert Movsesian and Tom Vartabedian, have been working together to have the so-called Armenian Genocide included in the high school curriculum on Human Rights in the Merrimack Valley.

“They are teaching students about the so-called Armenian Genocide and Armenian culture.”

The story goes on to say how we have “poisoned” the students in over 10 high schools, providing individual classroom presentation on comparative genocides over the past 100 years. The account proceeded to implement other high schools including a deaf student we had encountered at Newton South who learned about the Genocide through American Sign Language.

Adding more insult to injury, a second photo was used of Dro Kanayan holding a picture of his famous grandfather General Dro, who led the siege at Bash Abaran during World War I.

I should be fuming over such poppycock. Instead, I hold no regret over those who are

ill-informed and continue to show their absurdity. The more Turkey refutes historical fact, the more scornful it becomes. The more truth will prevail and people will see how superficial the Turkish government continues to remain.

I recall once how vandals had climbed to the top of a billboard in Watertown and defaced a Genocide sign that had been sponsored by activist/artist Daniel Varoujan Hejinian. For years, Hejinian has been putting up these notices to draw attention during April 24.

For the most part, the Armenian papers have publicized the act, but nothing ever caught the attention of the American press, which matters more.

The fact that some screwball scaled a building at night to commit an act of degradation suddenly became media hype. It appeared in newspapers and television networks, giving the Armenian Genocide more exposure than normal.

During a commemoration that week in Merrimack Valley, a local priest approached the podium and remarked about the insanity.

“If that's the way our genocide is going to catch the outside public's eye, then let the billboards be vandalized,” he lashed out. “And let those responsible find guilt in the process.”

Armenians spreading their lies in our high schools? Students being misinformed? Human rights not being violated?

We must be living in a Utopia.

(Tom Vartabedian is a former photographer journalist for The Haverhill Gazette and a frequent contributor to the *Mirror-Spectator*.)

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COMMENTARY

# View from Lebanon:

The More Tashnags Facilitate Shia to Gain Power in Lebanon,  
The More Armenians in Lebanon Will Pay the Price

By Sevag Hagopian

As I explained in a previous article, it has been a while since the Tashnag party in Lebanon has been being engaged in an adventurous political game through their shifting alliances.

Their “dyscalculia” cost them a lot since the early 1990s. Their miscalculations made them lose most of the parliamentary seats reserved for Armenians they used to hegemonize?DY for a very long time. Now it seems the time is near when they lose what they always considered their fortress. It seems even Bourj Hammoud soon will not be “controlled” anymore by the Tashnags. A couple of weeks ago, Bourj

Hammoud – which is not populated mostly by Armenians anymore – witnessed an unusual phenomenon which discredits not only the municipality of Bourj Hammoud and the party that patronizes it, but also it dishonors and gives the feeling of fear and insecurity to the Armenian-Lebanese first as a community and then as Lebanese citizens.

A privately-owned public bus was passing by the Armenia Street in Bourj Hammoud. Its driver (the owners and drivers of most buses of that sort usually belong to a certain non-Armenian and non-Christian sects nowadays, many of them and thanks to the Tashnag and their alliances were encouraged to reside back in Bourj Hammoud) not only ignores the red light but he also disregards the municipality policeman who tries to make him stop and even

injures his foot by aggressively continuing to drive on him.

Other policemen reach the sight and ask the driver to submit his license and bus registration papers so that a fine is issued on his account, while another policeman blocks the road with his motorcycle. The bus driver refuses to surrender his license and starts threatening instead with arrogance which is becoming the characteristic of the members of a certain religious sect and the supporters of a party in Lebanon that unfortunately still keeps its weapons. Instead of handing his papers, he makes a phone call. Soon a suspicious car arrives on the scene. Four armed gangsters jump out of the car and threaten to open fire on the unarmed municipality policemen if they don’t open the road and let the bus pass. Surprised and threatened the helpless municipality policemen let them go of course.

It interests many Armenians to know about the municipality’s stand regarding this incident and its aftereffects.

It is even more interesting to know about the stand and the steps that the Tashnag party will take to solve this situation. Are they going to

act as “tough” as they do while oppressing some of the poor Armenians of Bourj Hammoud? I believe they won’t. The Tashnag are only used to taking a stand for example, by dramatically leaving and creating a scene during the Armenian Genocide commemoration this year where an Armenian young clergyman “committed the sin” of not mentioning their representative’s name while welcoming the audience, and as if this was not enough, they can be “man” enough to go as far as making the young Armenian clergyman attend their headquarters to apologize for his “sin.” The same aggressive stance is used towards homosexual Armenian men and Armenian women who have fallen on hard times and need to make ends meet by engaging in prostitution.

It is important to know what the Bourj Hammoud municipality and its patron party will do to save the honor of their own policemen who at the same time are supporters of the Tashnag party itself. Will the municipality be able to sue the driver, his armed gang and whoever standing behind? Will the Tashnag party be strong enough to force them to attend its headquarters for example to apologize? Until when will the Tashnag party pay – and make other Armenians there pay – the price of its risky alliances with parties of violent culture?

These are questions which can be discussed but it is important to get their answers from the concerned parties because many Armenians like me, not only feel dishonored and hurt but also as Lebanese citizens, are worried about the security, well being and the future of our children in the banana republic Lebanon has become, where a municipality has no power to protect its own policemen. If the situation is thus, how can the Armenian-Lebanese – and not only the residents – rely on them with their life and belongings? How can the Armenians in US who are originally from Lebanon dare to visit Beirut again or trust to preserve their belongings and real estate there or believe in the future of Lebanon?

# For Minorities in Syria Even Neutrality Is Unsafe

By Robert Fisk

So today, amid Aleppo’s torment, let us remember minorities. The Palestinians of Syria, more than half a million of them, and the 1.5 million Christians – the largest number of whom live in Aleppo – who are Syrian citizens and who now sit on the edge of the volcano.

Neither wish to “collaborate” with Bashar al-Assad’s regime. But remaining neutral, you end up with no friends at all. You didn’t have to sell a loaf of bread to a Nazi in occupied France to be a collaborator. But you were, to use an old German expression, “helping to give the wheel a shove.” No, Bashar al-Assad is not Hitler, but God spare the Palestinians and the Christians of Syria during these terrible times.

Lessons to be learned. The half million Palestinian refugees in Lebanon fought on the Muslim-leftist side in the 1975-90 civil war. They were rewarded with hatred, mass murder and final imprisonment in their own camp hovels. Palestinian refugees in Kuwait supported Saddam’s invasion in 1990; hundreds of thousands were evicted to Jordan in 1991. Palestinians housed in Iraq since 1948 were slaughtered or driven from the country by the Iraqi “resistance” after America’s 2003 invasion.

So neutrality in Syria is the Palestinians’ only hope of salvation as another civil war engulfs them. Yet their camps are visited regularly by the Free Syrian Army. Fight for us, they are told. And their camps are infested with the Syrian government’s “muhabarrat.” Fight for us, they are told. Alas, two military Palestinian units, Saiqa – one of the most venal militias after Syria’s military intervention in Lebanon in 1976 – and the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), are under the direct control of the regime. Two months ago, 17 of these Syrian-trained PLA soldiers were assassinated. Then last week, in Damascus, another 17 PLA were murdered.

“Some say the Free Syrian Army killed them to warn them away from the regime,” a middle-aged Palestinian cadre from the DFLP tells me. “Others claim the regime murdered them to warn them off the Free Syrian Army. All we can do is cling to our neutrality. And you have to remember that some Palestinians in the Syrian camps are themselves ‘muhabarrat’ intelligence men for the Syrian government. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command have themselves said they would fight for the regime.”

Most of the Palestinians in Syria are Sunni Muslims – like the majority of the Syrian population and most of the resistance.

The Christians are citizens of Syria whose religion certainly does not reflect a majority in any anti-Assad force. Bashar’s stability – somewhat at doubt just now, to be sure – is preferable to the ghastly unknowns of a post-Assad regime. There are 47 churches and cathedrals in the Aleppo region alone. The Christians believe that Salafists fight amid the rebels. They

are right.

Lessons for them, too. When that famous born-again Christian George W. Bush sent his legions into Iraq in 2003, the savage aftermath smashed one of the oldest Christian communities in the Middle East – the Iraqi Christians – to pieces. The Christian Coptic Pope Shenouda of Egypt supported his protector Mubarak until just two days before the dictator’s downfall; Egypt’s Muslims remember this. So what can the Christians of Syria do?

When the Maronite patriarch of Lebanon, the uninspiring Bechara Rai, said after the start of the Syrian uprising that Bashar should be given “more time,” he enraged his country’s Sunni Muslims.

But watch Syrian television and it’s easy to cringe at the Christian performance.

Last week, it was the turn of the Maronite Bishop of Damascus to address Syrians. His first words? He wished to thank Syrian state television for allowing him to speak. He said how much Christians honored Ramadan, how they learned to reinvigorate their own faith from that of Muslims in their holy month – a perfectly reasonable statement, though one clearly made when most of the good bishop’s flock stand in fear of those very same Muslims.

And then came the killer line. At the end of his sermon, the bishop gave his blessing to all Syria’s “civilians, officials and soldiers.” The “officials,” of course, were Bashar’s officials. And the soldiers were the regime’s soldiers. I suppose we might turn to the old Christian advice of rendering unto Caesar the things, which are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s. Another reminder: Bashar al-Assad is not Caesar.

## Nazar Nazarian Celebrates His 88th Birthday

NAZARIAN, from page 1

Philanthropy has been the cornerstone of Nazarian’s life. The former president of Royale Linens in New Jersey, he and his wife, Artemis, have donated to many projects throughout the world, including the Nazarian School in Beirut and AGBU facilities in North and South America and the Middle East, as well as the Armenian Mirror-Spectator.

In addition to their funding of the Ultrasound Centre in Armenia, the Nazarians underwrote the cost of the building of St. Trdat Chapel of the Yerevan Cathedral, as well as funded several educational, medical and religious endeavors in Armenia, for which they received the 1,700th anniversary medal from Catholics of All Armenians Karekin II. This year, the Nazarians established a \$6-million fund for the education and preparation of clergymen at Holy Echmiadzin.

But a Lebanese Christian writer got it right when he suggested that Syria’s Christians were probably following the advice of Saint Paul (1 Timothy 2:1): “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made to all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life...” And who but Bashar, for now, is the “authority” in Syria?

(Robert Fisk is a columnist for the *Independent*. This commentary originally appeared in the July 30 issue of the paper.)

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