



## Coach Adam Krikorian Leads US Women's Water Polo Team to Golden Finish

LONDON (Reuters) – The US won the country's first gold medal in women's water polo, going one better than they did in Beijing to finally claim the sport's top prize and end 12 years of painful near-misses for four-



Adam Krikorian was wearing all the gold medals of the team.

time Olympians Brenda Villa and Heather Petri.

They were coached by University of California Los Angeles' (UCLA's) Adam Krikorian.

The Americans beat Spain 8-5 in the Olympic final last Thursday to claim what is the country's first Olympic water polo title since 1904 when they won the men's event, while the Spanish secured the country's first medal in the sport since 1996.

American goal-scoring ace Maggie Steffens, 19, put away five to cement her status as the tournament's top scorer and a new force to be reckoned with in the women's sport.

The youngster's dazzling display in her first Olympics enabled her teammates Villa and Petri to bask in the golden glow at the top of the podium after their three previous Games yielded two silvers and a bronze.

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## Boxer David Hayrapetyan Wins Bronze for Russia

LONDON (PanARMENIAN.Net) – On August 10, David Hayrapetyan of Russia won the bronze medal, after losing to Thailand's Kaew Pongprayoon in the Olympic men's 49 kilogram boxing semifinals.



David Hayrapetyan

## Visa, Passport Requirements Eased for Syrian Armenians

### Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Sets up Account for Aid Donations

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – The government of Armenia has once again addressed the issue of Syrian-Armenians who are suffering as a result of the civil war in Syria.

Under a new decree issued on Thursday, the government gives an opportunity to all Armenians who are citizens of a number of countries (including Syria) to get an entrance visa at border checkpoints of Armenia. Previously citizens of other countries with Armenian origin could get an entrance visa only in official Armenian diplomatic representations and consulates in foreign countries and only based on an invitation from Armenia.

The government has also referred to the concerns voiced by Syrian-Armenians, saying that in order to get an Armenian passport they have to come back and forth to Armenia several times. The government has approved a list of countries the citizens of which in some cases (especially during wartime) can get an Armenian passport for the first time in diplomatic representations and consulates of Armenia in foreign countries. Lebanon and Syria are on the list of those countries.

At the same time, negotiations are underway between the government and Armavia Airlines to increase flights between Aleppo-Yerevan to twice weekly. A weekly flight also is carried out by Syrian Airlines. Both have sold out all tickets up until September. Armavia has been repeatedly criticized for having a limited number of flights and raising the ticket prices. The aviation company stated that the criticism is baseless, because unlike many European

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## Armenian Assembly Welcomes Adoption of Artsakh Resolution by Massachusetts House

BOSTON – The Armenian Assembly of America recently issued a statement commending Massachusetts state Rep. Jonathan Hecht (D-29th Middlesex) for introducing a resolution titled "Supporting Nagorno-Karabakh's Right to Self-Determination and Efforts to Develop its Democracy," which was unanimously adopted by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts last week.

Hecht, who was elected state representative in November 2008, was preceded in office by Armenian Assembly Board member Rachel Kaprielian. Hecht, a graduate of Harvard Law School, currently serves as

vice chair of the Elder Affairs Committee and is also a member of the House Committee on Post Audit and Oversight and the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

"We appreciate the leadership of Representative Hecht," stated long-time Assembly Trustee James Kalustian, who

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State Rep. John Hecht



Delegations from Cairo, Buenos Aires, Cordoba and Montevideo wave their flags at the AGBU 2012 World Games Opening Ceremony.

## Young Athletes Make AGBU History at the 19th World Games in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES – In its almost 60-year history, the AGBU World Games has brought international youth to various global cities with the goal of reinforcing their commitment to the organization and lifelong friendships with peers, through good sportsmanship and teamwork. This July, more than 500 young athletes from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, France, Uruguay and the US gathered in Los Angeles. There, for one week that began on Saturday, July 28, they engaged in sports competitions, social events and excursions, all made possible by the AGBU 2012 World Games Committee and a network of more than 200 volunteers who had been working on the plans for nearly a year.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Armenian President Sends Letter of Condolence to Iran

YEREVAN (news.am) – President Serge Sargsian sent a condolence letter to his Iranian counterpart, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, after a destructive quake in Iran last week. The quake killed 306 and injured more than 3,000.

"I am deeply sorry for the destructive quake that jolted Iran and claimed hundreds of human lives, numerous injuries and destruction. We are with the Iranians on this sorrowful moment and will be ready to support and overcome consequences of the quake," the letter read.

Four quakes measuring 6.2 to 6.6 on the Richter scale jolted north-west Iran near the Armenian border on August 11. The quakes were followed by aftershocks.

The tremors were felt also in Armenia and Artsakh. A 4.5-magnitude tremor was registered in Armenia's south and 3-4 magnitude in Yerevan. No casualties or destruction was reported.

### Medieval Bridge of Garni Restoration Complete by November

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The bridge of Garni, built in the 11th century, will be operating by autumn. The restoration started on July 2. The work is anticipated to be completed by November. The basis of reconstruction of this historical and cultural monument was put in September of last year by the memorandum "Keeping cultural values by ambassadors" signed by Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosian and US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern. The US Embassy has dedicated \$110,00 for the project.

### Russia, Armenia Agree Gas Price Deal

MOSCOW (Ria Novosti) – Russia and Armenia have agreed on prices for natural gas supplies to Yerevan, Armenian President Serge Sargsian said last week.

"I think we have come to an agreement about pricing for gas supplies. The price should be based on actual market price of gas taking into account ... regional tariffs for the Armenian economy to maintain its efficient position," Sargsian told reporters after talks with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin.

Armenian media reported in early July that Russian gas giant Gazprom would raise prices for gas supplies to Armenia from the current \$180 per 1,000 cubic meters to \$280 from October 2012 and to \$320 from 2013. Armenian Energy and Natural Resources Minister Armen Movsisyan subsequently denied there would be gas price increases.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Shamshadin Honey to Be Exported

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – Honey from Shamshadin will soon be exported to Europe, the United States and Russia, said Hayk Chobanyan, founder of the Spiritual Revival of Tavush Foundation, the organizer of a festival of honey and berries, at press conference this week.

He said that the foundation has already signed several agreements with influential foreign companies engaged in beekeeping. “However, the most significant agreements will be signed in autumn 2012,” Chobanyan said.

On August 18 the town of Berd, Tavush province, will host a festival of honey and berries for the first time. The organizers of the festival are the Spiritual Revival of Tavush Foundation, as well as two non-governmental organizations, Serund and Development and Preservation of Armenian Culinary Traditions. The goal is to provide an opportunity to the participants and the guests to familiarize themselves with the honey and berries of Tavush region, to stimulate the development of beekeeping in the region, as well as to contribute to the development of tourism.

## Truth Coercion Is Open Letter to World About Armenia, Artsakh

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Armenian Genocide, massacres against the Armenian people, violence and the Artsakh war are summed up in Angela Sahakyan’s work, Truth Coercion. The book presentation took place in the Armenian Writers’ Union on August 14.

“Angela represents a serious claim in the modern Armenian literature by this book, the book is another stone to the Genocide recognition “wall,” which everyone should put, stated the president of the Armenian Writers’ Union Levon Ananyan.

Ananyan noted that the testimonies of the eyewitnesses, the testimony of diplomats, excerpts from newspapers and the emotional responses from writers give the book a deep value.

“This book is meaningful to a wide range of readers, it can have continuation, as many foreign authors wrote and write about the Armenian Genocide. It may be the first volume of future editions,” the editor of Truth Coercion, Arevshat Avagyan, stated.

The book will be translated into French, English, German, Russian and Turkish.

## Giragosian: US Interested in NKR

YEREVAN (ArmInfo) – The recognition of Artsakh’s independence by the state of Massachusetts demonstrates the importance of Nagorno-Karabagh to Washington, the head of the Regional Studies Center Richard Giragosian said at a press conference this week.

He said that in June the state of Rhode Island adopted a similar resolution. These two resolutions are the evidence of Washington’s interest in the Karabagh issue, he said. He stressed that the conflict is of more interest to the United States than the other frozen conflicts.

When speaking of possible developments in the Artsakh peace process, Giragosian said that Azerbaijan’s aggression and the increasing of its military spending create additional tension in the zone. Giragosian added that the relations between Ankara and Baku, which have recently worsened, also make the situation tenser in the region. In this context, he said he thought that military actions in the Karabagh conflict zone are more than probable.

Giragosian said he thought the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group was at a deadlock. He said the group’s only function is to maintain a diplomatic aspect to the peace process and to prevent the possible unleashing of military action and not necessarily to solve the conflict.

## Armenia Struggles to Cut Nicotine Habit

By Sara Khojayan

YEREVAN (IWPR) – Armenian health officials say they have made some progress towards reducing the current high rates of smoking, but critics say hard-hitting legislation is slow in coming. Men are far worse offenders than women, and according to one survey done in 2010, more than 60 percent of males between the ages of 15 and 47 smoke.

“Smoking among men in particular is a public health problem,” said Arusyak Harutyunyan of the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Armenia.

In 2010, the government set up a special commission to coordinate efforts to reduce smoking. It has also produced public health advertisements and trained doctors in how to get patients to quit. Although ministers have submitted half a dozen bills to the parliament, legislators have yet to pass a law aimed at restricting tobacco consumption. The latest edition of the American Cancer Society’s Tobacco Atlas ranks Armenia third in the world for the proportion of deaths caused by smoking-related conditions.

“About 3,000 to 4,000 people die of tobacco-related illnesses every year,” said Alexander Bazarchyan, who heads the Health Ministry’s public health department and coordinates of its Tobacco Control Program. Bazarchyan said 50 percent of all deaths in the country are caused by heart disease and another 20 percent by cancer.

He said efforts made so far are already producing results. “The campaign is generally considered effective if the annual decline in the number of smokers is between 1 and 1.5 percent. On that basis, we can say the numbers have been cut by 4 percent in the last four years,” he said. “Ten years ago, no one would complain if people smoked in buses or in high-end shops and restaurants. But the mindset of a certain section of society has changed.” What was needed now, Bazarchyan said, was tougher legislation. “There has to be a 100 percent price increase and tight restrictions on advertising.

Distribution and availability of tobacco must be limited as well,” he said.

The government has already instructed the Justice Ministry to draft a new bill placing greater restrictions on the sale and consumption of tobacco, removing them from display in supermarkets and requiring restaurants and cafes to set aside non-smoking areas.

An earlier version of this bill went before parliament for debate in October, but was withdrawn the same day. According to Narine Movsisyan of the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Armenia, “At 11 in the morning, Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan announced that the bill would be on parliament’s agenda, but at four in the afternoon the same day, he said the government had withdrawn the bill. One can only guess at what happened between 11 and 4.”

Justice Ministry Spokesperson Karine Kalantaryan said the bill had been withdrawn for further amendment, but declined to give any information about these changes.

The anti-smoking activists were concerned that the bill’s hasty withdrawal coincided lobbying from the tobacco industry, which includes two of the top-10 taxpayers in Armenia.

“We are entirely convinced that the tobacco businesses were against the bill,” Movsisyan said. “The public interest must be kept clearly separate from business interests.”

Tobacco companies deny lobbying against the bill. Vahram Brutyan, who works as spokesman for both Grand Tobacco and International Masis Tabak, said that the two companies would support all the restrictions currently being considered.

“Local manufacturers support the idea of separate rooms for smokers and banning cigarette advertising in supermarkets. We’re even in favor of removing tobacco products from public view – a practice common in many European countries, the United States and Canada,” he said.

The Armenian president’s office funds a number of non-government organizations to run anti-smoking pro-

grams, using the Development and Integration group as intermediary. Fourteen NGOs received funding between 2008 and 2011, although there are questions about their visibility and effectiveness. IWPR tried to contact them, but none was listed in the phone directory or on the Internet. Movsisyan said her coalition had repeatedly contacted the president’s office for further information, but found it “impossible to find out what kind of projects had been carried out with the funding.”

A spokesman for the presidential administration was unable to tell IWPR how projects were supervised or how effectively the money had been spent. Lia Khachatryan, head of Development and Integration, said one of the groups now being funded, Healthcare Forum, was expected to launch an education program in September. The NGO itself was only set up in January. “We usually offer grants to start-up NGOs so as to give them a chance to launch their activities,” she said.

(Sara Khojayan is a freelance journalist in Armenia.)

## Mini Hydro Plants Belonging to Bishop And MP are Inspected and Fined

YEREVAN (Hetq) – Readers will not be surprised to learn that in the past two years Armenia’s Environmental Inspectorate has only managed to inspect two of the small-scale hydro-plants that are popping up in Armenia.

What is even more surprising is that the two plants the Inspectorate “inspected” were fined for various violations.

The Elegis hydro-plant, owned by Vayots Dzor Primate Bishop Abraham Mkrtchyan was fined 50,000 drams (about \$120) for not having a water permit license.

The plant operated by Bazenk CJSC, owned by Member of Parliament Hakob Hakobyan, who also presides over the Standing Committee for Social Issues, was fined 150,000 drams (about \$365) for the same violation.

Hetq was only able to obtain this information from the Ministry of Nature Protection after submitting

two written requests.

Some argue that such plants provide renewable energy to Armenia and in



Hakob Hakobyan, left, and Bishop Abraham Mkrtchyan

fact financing has been provided by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) based on similar environmental justifications.

It would appear that such plants, operating as they do without necessary water permits and in an unsupervised manner, do more harm to the environment of Armenia than good.

## Visas to Armenia Eased, while Flights from Aleppo Are Increased

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countries Armavia continues carrying out flights in the war zone, and it is connected with high insurance risks and substantial expenses.

Armavia has officially stated that it will be able to add one more flight a week if the government supports them, providing the company with subsidies (the government did it in 2006 during the Lebanon-Israel conflict).

“According to the international aviation legislation, the frequency of flights is increased only in case governments agree; that is to say, Armavia cannot increase the flights independently,” an Armavia representative said.

The World Armenian Congress (WAC) provided \$43,000 to Armavia for a special flight to Aleppo on August 14, which transported 149 children from Syria to Armenia.

Earlier, on August 9, a total of 120 children were transported to Armenia

via chartered flights. Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian promised assistance for another two Yerevan-Aleppo-Yerevan flights to transport 300 more children to Armenia on August 23.

At present, the children who have already arrived from Syria are at various resorts in Armenia.

In related news, the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund has opened bank accounts for those who wish to make contributions to assist the Armenian community in Syria. All donations will be transferred to the national leadership of the community on the ground in Syria and a special coordinating committee will earmark funds when and where it deems necessary.

The accounts are:

HSBC Bank Armenia, 9, V. Sargsyan St., Yerevan Armenia, SWIFT: MIDLAM22 account number, 001-002195-102 (dollars); account number, 001-002195-104 (euros); and account number, 001-002195-001 (drams).

## Correction

Due to an editing error, the name of an organization in a story, which appeared last week, by Sevag Hagopian on a young woman from Lebanon climbing Mount Ararat, was changed. The correct name is Rotaract.

We regret the error.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Iran Government Criticized Over Earthquake Response

By Yeganeh Torbati

DUBAI (Reuters) – Iran's government faced criticism on Monday over its response to two earthquakes that killed 306 people, with complaints of a lack of tents and about President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's decision to go ahead with an overseas trip.

Although officials announced on Sunday, less than 24 hours after disaster struck, that search and rescue operations had finished and all survivors had been freed from the rubble, some locals expressed disbelief that authorities could have reached the most remote villages so soon.

"I know the area well. There are some regions where there are villages that you can't even reach by car," one doctor in the city of Tabriz said by telephone on Monday, declining to give his name because of the sensitivity of the issue. "It's not possible for them to have finished so soon."

The doctor said he had worked for 24 hours non-stop, treating patients from villages rushed to Tabriz.

"In the first hours after the quake, it was ordinary people and volunteers in their own cars going to the affected areas," the doctor said. "It was more ordinary people helping out than official crisis staff."

Members of parliament representing the affected areas complained about a shortage of tents, parliamentary news agency ICANA said.

"The crisis management headquarters must take broader steps to alleviate these concerns," said speaker Ali Larijani, a frequent critic of Ahmadinejad and possible candidate to succeed him in elections next year.

Vice-President Mohammad Reza Rahimi said after a visit to the quake-hit areas on Monday that Iran was ready to accept international aid.

"In different situations, our country has helped those in need in other countries and under the current conditions, is ready to receive aid ... from different countries," he said, according to IRNA, without giving further details.

In the aftermath of the quake, the United States, Russia, Turkey and a host of other nations offered their condolences and said they were ready to offer assistance.

The moderate conservative newspaper Asre Iran reported that a full 24 hours after the earthquake, some villages had not yet been visited by relief teams.

"(Residents) say that most of the villages have been destroyed and still no tents have been sent, nor has any help been sent for the victims," the paper said.

Three days after the twin quakes struck, most villages still had no electricity and drinking water, the official IRNA news agency reported.

The quakes, with magnitudes of 6.4 and 6.3, struck East Azerbaijan province on Saturday afternoon, flattening villages and injuring thousands of people around the towns of Ahar, Varzaghan and Harees, near the provincial capital Tabriz.

The first situation report from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) quoted Iranian officials as saying that up to 17,000 people had been displaced and were in need of shelter.

"We've offered assistance to Iran through the UN resident coordinator. The (Iranian) Red Crescent is a very strong organization and the National Disaster Management Organization have told us for now that they are fine," OCHA spokesman Jens Laerke said in Geneva.

Iranian officials said the emergency

response was rapid.

"We will rebuild these areas before the start of the winter," Hassan Ghadami, an emergency management official in the Interior Ministry, told parliament, the IRNA new agency said.

The mud-brick construction of many village buildings was to blame for the wide destruction, Ghadami said.

Regional Gov. Alireza Beigi said the government had plans to build 20,000 quake-proof houses in the affected areas, the Mehr news agency reported.

Reza Sheibani, a Tabriz resident who owns a 24-hour pharmacy in Ahar, said by telephone that the government had acted well in deploying security forces to ensure public order in the panicked hours after the quakes.

Ahmadinejad left, as planned, on Monday morning for Saudi Arabia to attend a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) expected to focus on the crisis in Syria.

But his overseas trip exposed him to criticism at home that he was not showing empathy with the disaster victims.

In an editorial titled, "Mr. Ahmadinejad, where have you gone?," Asre Iran criticized his decision to leave the country with his closest advisers less than two days after the quakes.

"In every other part of the world, the tradition is that when natural disasters happen, leaders will change their plans and visit the affected areas in order to show their compassion ... and observe rescue efforts," Asre Iran wrote.

Upon arrival in Tabriz airport earlier on Monday, Rahimi said he was there to show his sympathy for those affected by the quakes and that the government "shares their pain."

"Most cabinet members are here with me ... and we will try to observe issues and problems," he said, according to the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA).

Tabriz residents and legislators also criticized state television's early coverage of the disaster, saying it did not reflect the extent of the damage, adding to a sense that the government did not care much about the people of northwest Iran, most of whom are Azeri Turks, the biggest ethnic minority.

"Even though (on Saturday night) hundreds of people were under the rubble, on the television broadcasts ... there was no mention of the disaster," said Alireza Manadi Safidan, a legislator representing Tabriz, according to ISNA.

"(State television) was busy counting how many medals Iran won" in the Olympics, the doctor in Tabriz said. "They didn't have any reaction to this event."

A representative from state television present in parliament on Monday apologized for the broadcast of a popular comedy show on Sunday night, IRNA reported.

## Third Volume of Indian Armenians Is Published

KOLKATA – On August 8, the third volume of the bilingual yearbook of the Armenian Church of India and Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy, *Indian Armenians - 2011*, was published.

The founder of the yearbook, Very Rev. Khoren Hovhannisyan, pastor of Armenians in India and manager of Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy has commented in his opening message of the yearbook; "In 2012, Armenians, all over the world, will celebrate the 500th anniversary of Armenian Typography.

The 2012 will be marked also with two more anniversaries in the life of Indian Armenians and both are connected with Madras (Chennai). The first one is the 300th anniversary of establishment of Saint Mary Armenian Church, the second one is the 240th anniversary of origination of Armenian Publication in Madras."

This encyclopedic volume records the yearlong events in the Armenian Church and the Armenian community in India. The book also presents the yearly activities, progress and achievements of the Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy.

This yearbook, which contains articles about the rich heritage of the Indian Armenians, was sponsored by the Church Committee of Holy Nazareth, Kolkata.

## Coach Adam Krikorian Leads US Women's Water Polo Team to Golden Finish

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"I think that's something that's bonded our team a lot throughout our journey is getting them the gold," said American defensive player Jessica Steffens, elder sister of Maggie, referring to Villa and Petri.

The Americans, who drew 9-9 in the group stages with Spain, narrowly avoided an exit earlier in the tournament when a coaching mishap in the semi-finals cost them their lead and sent the match to extra time.



Adam Krikorian with his team

## International News

### Armenia to Take Part in CSTO Peacekeeping Exercises

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The joint peacekeeping military exercises of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) member countries will take place in October in Kazakhstan. Russian armed forces, lieutenant colonel Nikolay Donyushkin said that the military exercises, titled "Indestructible Brotherhood-2012," will take place in Kazakhstan October 8-17 and will be directed the preparation of peace establishment actions in the region.

He said about 1,000 officers from the armed forces of Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan with partake in the exercises.

### Ukrainians Can Travel to Armenia without Visas

KIEV (news.am) – Ukrainians can now travel to Armenia without visas. Similarly, they do not need visas for visiting other post-Soviet states: Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Belarus. Starting from August 1, Ukrainians will not need visas for visiting Turkey for 30 days. The list of countries which Ukrainian citizens can visit without obtaining visas is extended to 37, Analitika.at.ua reports.

### Ukraine Foreign Ministry Refutes Azeri Mass Media Info on Arms Sale to Armenia

KIEV, Ukraine (ArmInfo) – The Foreign Ministry of Ukraine has refuted the Azerbaijani mass media's information on the sale of multiple rocket launch systems and air defense missile systems to Armenia by Kiev, Alexander Dikusarov, spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine, said at a briefing on Tuesday.

He pointed out that in the matter of development of military and technical cooperation with both Armenia and Azerbaijan, Ukraine follows the international commitments it assumed when joining the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Dikusarov said that official Kiev exerts all possible efforts to reinforce the security and stability in the region, especially as it will assume the OSCE chairmanship in 2013.

An Azerbaijani media source cited a certain letter from the head of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry, Maj.-Gen. Sergei Gmyza to President Viktor Yanukovich on arms supplies to Armenia under a contract between Ukrspetsexport and DG Arms Corporation (the mediator of Armenian Defense Ministry). The letter allegedly offers to use front companies registered in EU and CIS for supplies.

The Armenian Defense Ministry Spokesperson Artsrun Hovhannisyan said that the Armenian Defense Ministry regularly publishes arms procurement reports and any information on such "shady deals" is part of Azerbaijan's anti-Armenian propaganda.

### Liturgies in Memory of Slain Armenian Military Doctor Held in Europe

VIENNA, Austria (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe (FAAE) organized candlelight vigils and church services in several European countries in memory of slain military doctor Maj. Vahe Avetyan.

On August 5, a liturgy took place in Vienna's Armenian church, with candle lighting ceremonies held in Prague, Brussels, London, Paris, Frankfurt and Berlin.

Avetyan, head of the Ear, Nose and Throat Department of the Yerevan Garrison Hospital, was severely beaten in Harsnakar restaurant and died on June 29.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Foreign Minister Visits Australia

CANBERRA, Australia (Public Radio of Armenia) – On August 12-13 Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian paid an official visit to Australia. He held talks with his Australian counterpart, Bob Carr, on August 13.

Welcoming Nalbandian, the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs said that the visit provides a good opportunity to give a new content to the bilateral relations and that he is committed to taking efficient steps towards that direction. “There is particular warmth between our two countries, which has been developed due to the efforts of the Armenians settled in Australia and brought their significant contribution to the development of our country. We are looking forward to intensify the further deepening of our relations,” stressed Carr.

Expressing gratitude for the invitation to visit Australia and for the warm reception, and pointing out that there were around dozen meetings between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Australia in the recent years, Nalbandian noted that the political dialogue between the two countries is at a high level and that his visit's main goal is to reach efficient agreements over the expansion of cooperation in various spheres.

In the course of the discussions over an international agenda, Carr and Nalbandian confirmed that the two countries' visions over many issues are similar. They exchanged views on the participation of Armenia and Australia in peacekeeping operations in crisis points.

Carr presented the developments in the Asia-Pacific region and Australia's role in those processes.

Upon Carr's request, Nalbandian discussed the negotiations over the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabagh (Artsakh) issue.

Nalbandian expressed his gratitude to Carr for his activities aimed at the recognition of the Armenian Genocide when he was premier of New South Wales.

After the meeting, the ministers signed the first bilateral agreement between Armenia and Australia, a memorandum on consultations between the two nations' foreign affairs ministries.

Accepting Nalbandian's invitation to pay a visit to Yerevan, Carr expressed his intention to visit Armenia in the first half of the following year.

The negotiations were continued in the presence of the members of the Australian Parliament and the representatives of the Armenian community in Australia during an official dinner hosted by Carr.

On the same day, Nalbandian met with Peter Slipper, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Australia.

The two exchanged views on the promotion of inter-parliamentary cooperation format. In this context, Nalbandian noted that Armenia attaches great importance to the inter-parliamentary interaction as an important format for the development of relations between countries and welcomed Australia's commitment to intensify cooperation in that sphere.

He presented Slipper with the main points of Armenia's foreign policy and the steps undertaken towards the resolution of regional issues.

Nalbandian had a meeting with the members of the Armenia-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group, as well. The chairman of the group, Geoff Lyons, and vice chairman, Joe Hockey, presented their activities aimed at the development of bilateral relations of the two countries, and the works of the Group towards the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Minister Nalbandian expressed gratitude to the Australian MPs for their activities support-

ing Armenia and briefed on Armenia's policy in the Caucasus region.

In Canberra Minister Edward Nalbandian was also hosted by the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA), where in front of Australian leading politicians and analysts delivered a speech on Armenia's foreign policy. The speech was followed by numerous questions and answers on the developments in the Caucasus region, Middle East and international agenda.

On August 12, in Sydney, Nalbandian visited the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection and attended the liturgy of Holy Virgin Mary Day of transformation.

In the evening of August 12, the Armenian Foreign Minister held a meeting with around 400 representatives of the Armenian community in Australia during which he presented the main directions of Armenia's foreign policy and answered numerous questions of the attendees.

## Armenia and New Zealand Will Have Ambassadors at Large

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (Armenpress) – Armenia's Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian arrived in New Zealand on August 9 on a state visit.

Nalbandian met with New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully. Welcoming his Armenian counterpart, McCully said, “You took a great step accepting my invitation and traveling this huge distance which shows the readiness of Armenia to give a new quality to our bilateral relations.”

Nalbandian mentioned that this was the first visit by an Armenian foreign minister to New Zealand since diplomatic ties were established 20 years ago.

During bilateral talks, the two men agreed that embassies need to be established in their respective countries in order to further cooperation.

The two also discussed international issues.

Nalbandian spoke about Armenia's security policy in the Caucasus. In this context he praised the balanced position of New Zealand towards the



From left, New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully with his Armenian counterpart, Eduard Nalbandian

## Book on Armenian Genocide Published in Brazil

SAO PAULO – *It Must Not Be Forgotten: Memoirs of Pedro Baidarian – A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide*, by Mariam Baidarian retells the history of the 1915 massacre of more than one million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire. This tragic events, which took place during World War I, remains unknown to much of the world. In this deeply affecting memoir, Baidarian recreates the epoch through the memories of her father, who survived the carnage.

Baidarian begins by describing the atmosphere of ethnic hatred and government persecution under which Armenians lived in the former Ottoman Empire. She describes the hostile nature in order to transport readers to a time they might not be familiar with. “The Turks started by persecuting the Armenians. They levied heavy taxes and demanded all their animals and their wagons. Then they began to plunder the textile stores, saying they needed material for army uniforms,” writes Baidarian. “The Armenians were simply dragged from their homes and led to certain death. They gave the final farewell to the house where they were born and where they grew, as had their children and parents.”

*It Must Not be Forgotten* includes an instructive history of how the Armenians were conquered by the Ottoman Empire in the Middle

Ages yet continued to preserve their unique culture, language and customs. Baidarian describes the successive waves of repression and deportation that Turks waged against Armenians, fearing that the despised minority would unite to take their ancestral homelands back. She shows how the massacres of Armenians began in the late 19th century, culminating in the genocidal events of World War I that would end up killing over one million of her family's people.

Above all, she shows how her proud father survived the horrendous ordeal to continue on the family line against the threats of bigotry and intolerance. Profound, moving and deeply educational, *It Must Not Be Forgotten* is a highly personal introduction to one of the major, if underreported, events of 20th-century history.

*It Must Not Be Forgotten: Memoirs of Pedro Baidarian – A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide* is available for sale online at Amazon.com.

Like many other Armenians, Baidarian's family moved to Brazil in 1926 to escape persecution. Her work has appeared in the book, *We Women of the 21st Century – Challenges and Achievements of Modern Times*. She has also received an award from Euro American Women Writers, Inc.

## Olympic Boxing Referee Ejected for Comically One-Sided Rulings

By Justin Burke

LONDON (*The Atlantic*) – Turkmenistan's referee would not be the first official from his country accused of corruption.

We are shocked, shocked that Turkmenistan finds itself embroiled in an international corruption scandal.

On August 2, the International Boxing Association (AIBA) announced that Turkmen referee Ishanguly Meretnyyazov had been banished from the London Olympic Games after he presided over a bout in which Azerbaijani boxer Magomed Abdulhamidov was knocked down six – yes, that is not a typo – six times in one round, yet somehow managed to walk away with a decision on points.

Thankfully, justice was served and the outcome of the bout was overturned on appeal, giving Japanese bantamweight Satoshi Shimizu the victory over Abdulhamidov. According to international amateur boxing rules, three knock-downs in one round should prompt the referee to stop the fight.

The one-sidedness of the refereeing in the bout is raising questions in boxing circles of whether money was involved. The British Broadcasting Corp. in late 2011 aired a report about a suspicious payment made by Azerbaijani officials. The payment could be construed as an apparent bribe attempt designed to promote the interests of Azerbaijani boxers at the Olympics.

Funnily enough, the same day it announced that Meretnyyazov had been sent home, the AIBA also said it had expelled an Azerbaijani technical official, Aghajan Abiyev. The association did not elaborate on the move.

That a Turkmen ref might be on the take would be in keeping with Turkmenistan's reputation as one of the most corrupt places on earth.

It is not surprising that Turkmen media outlets have ignored the incident. Readers might recall that earlier this year, state media went dark on coverage of the national under-21 football team when it finished last in a CIS tournament.

Regardless of the media *omerta*, it is easy to guess what President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov's going to do: he will probably round up the usual suspects.

(This article originally appeared at EurasiaNet.org, an Atlantic partner site.)

Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh) conflict.

McCully spoke about developments in the Asian Pacific region and the approaches of his country in these issues.

Nalbandian invited McCully to visit Yerevan.

During his stay there, he visited the Museum of the Second World War in Auckland and laid a wreath at the monument to victims of war. He also met with the representatives of the Armenian community in New Zealand.

## Pianist Raffi Bedrosyan to Give Concert at Diyarbakir Surp Giragos Church,

ISTANBUL – Pianist Raffi Bedrosyan will give a concert on September 10 at 7 p.m. at the Surp Giragos Armenian Church in Diyarbakir.

Surp Giragos Armenian Church dates back to the 15th century and is the largest Armenian church in the Middle East, with an attendance capacity of 3,000. After the Armenian population of Diyarbakir was deported and mostly massacred outside the City walls in 1915, the church bell tower was destroyed by Ottoman cannon fire, and the church building was taken over as military headquarters and for warehousing of Armenian possessions. In later years, it was used as a fabric warehouse for state industries, then eventually abandoned and destroyed.

In 2009, its restoration was started by the Surp Giragos Armenian Church Foundation under the jurisdiction of the Istanbul Armenian Patriarchate, the first Armenian church to be restored to serve its original purpose in Anatolia since 1915, with funds from

Armenians in Turkey and Diaspora, as well as by support of the local Diyarbakir and Sur municipal governments.

Restoration of the church was completed, and it was consecrated and opened to the public in October 2011. At present, additional funds are sought for the budget shortfall and the bell tower, which is still under construction.

Bedrosyan is a Canadian-Armenian pianist and civil engineer, originally from Istanbul. He has donated proceeds from his numerous concerts in Canada/US and two CDs to road, school and water pipeline construction projects in Armenia, in which he has also participated as a civil engineer. In recent years, he has published several articles about the need to restore and reclaim Armenian churches and schools in Turkey lost since 1915, has promoted the significance of the Surp Giragos Church restoration project and has helped with the worldwide fundraising efforts for it.





# Community News

## AGBU Young Professionals Of Chicago Raise \$5,000 For Hye Camp Scholarships

CHICAGO — On Saturday, July 28, members of the AGBU Young Professionals (YP) of Chicago's steering committee presented a check for \$5,000 to the Very Rev. Aren Jebejian, director of Hye Camp, to assist youth in the Midwest to attend Hye Camp.

Hye Camp is a unique, week long, Christian-based youth camp for Armenian children 8 to 15 years of age who want to learn more about their heritage and the teachings of the Armenian Church. The program includes a variety of educational and fun activities. Every year dozens of families apply for scholarships, and there are always a few parishes that struggle to raise enough money for the kids.

Throughout the year, the YP held a series of events with proceeds benefiting the fund. The culminating event was the annual YP participation in a local 5K where a dozen members of the Armenian community took part, including a young camper, Peter Boyajian, who not only helped to raise funds for his fellow campers, but also was awarded a medal in the 5K for his blistering time. In addition, donations were received from the community at large and from places as far as Texas and California.

"We are thrilled that Hye Camp continues to thrive and brings together Armenian youth from all over the Midwest, and to contribute to the development of the future leaders of our community," said Harry Madanyan, AGBU YP of Chicago's senior advisor. Presenting the check were current YP steering committee members who are also Alumni of Hye Camp.

YP Chicago is part of a growing network of YP groups and supporters around the world who are committed to preserving and promoting the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs for young Armenians between the ages of 22 to 40.

## Ararat Association of Rhode Island to Host 25th Annual Golf Tournament

PROVIDENCE — During the winter of 1983, six Rhode Island professionals, all from Armenian descent, came together to form what is now known as The Ararat Association of Rhode Island. It was decided that this organization was to be non-sectarian and was to operate on a not-for-profit basis. Its main purpose and focus was to cultivate professional, social and cultural interaction amongst its members and the Rhode Island Armenian community.

In early spring of 1988, in keeping with the original objectives of the organization, it was decided that the group would create, run and sponsor an annual golf tournament in order to promote sportsmanship, fellowship and social interaction within the Armenian community. An equally important aspect of the new tournament was to raise funds to be donated to various local and regional Armenian organizations.

This tournament quickly sells out and accommodates approximately 128 golfers each year. It has become the highlight of the summer for many participants as they look forward to a round of golf and camaraderie.

The 2012 Ararat Open will be held at the Quidnessett Country Club in North Kingstown, on Monday, August 27. A luncheon buffet, cocktail hour and traditional Armenian dinner is served throughout the day's festivities. Prizes are donated by both individuals and companies and are awarded at the end of the evening to golfers who have shot the best scores for the tournament.

Over the past 25 years, this event has raised more than \$300,000 in net proceeds, all of which have been donated to the Rhode Island Armenian community.



Middlesex Deputy Sheriff Peter Koutoujian talks with Tosie Collin, right, at the Soldiers' Home annual cookout.

## Lawman Adds Heart to Grit

BOSTON (*Boston Herald*) — This state places three fundamental objectives on all of its county sheriffs. Each is responsible for the care, custody and control of their inmate populations.

Strictly speaking, what Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian did early Friday morning was not part of his job description.

By Peter Gelzinis

At 7:45 a.m., Koutoujian did not have to be sweating through his gray suit in the heat and silence of Lowell's Westlawn Cemetery. Nothing required him

to join two priests and an undertaker who gathered by an open grave in the cemetery's public, or "pauper's," section.

Nevertheless, there he was, standing over a pale blue coffin that held the remains of a 56-year-old inmate Koutoujian described as a "broken jail man," a pre-trial detainee who had succumbed to a long illness two weeks earlier in a bed at Shattuck Hospital.

"We were presented with the unusual situation of having an inmate die," Koutoujian said, "and no one stepping forward to claim the body."

"After some discussion during a staff meeting, I don't know, it was just sort of a gut reaction on my part I guess, but I just said, 'I'm going, I'll be there.'"

"Look," he said, pulling out a handkerchief to mop the perspiration from his brow, "it's bad enough to die alone. But I couldn't abide the thought of this man being buried alone."

At virtually the last minute, Koutoujian's office did hear back from a relative who came to the grave and listened to the Rev. Richard Deshaies, SJ, the chaplain for the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office, quote from the *Gospel of St. Matthew*, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

The inmate's relative softly thanked the chaplain and the sheriff for the gift of a proper burial. That gratitude came at a time when Koutoujian has recently been confronted with the death of one of his corrections officers by suicide.

Koutoujian said he realized some of his corrections officers might well ask, what the hell was the sheriff doing burying an inmate? What he wanted them to know is that the humanity he showed to a deceased inmate is also imbedded in the deep concern he has for the health and well-being of those same corrections officers, the men and women he calls "the silent guardians nobody knows."

"I've been at this job for little more than a year," Koutoujian said, "but I can tell you that one of my main concerns is not only to recognize the difficult work they do every day, but also to be even more sensitive and alert to the emotional toll this job can exert on them and their families."

"When some nefarious person gets charged with a crime that brings out the Klieg lights and the full force of the media," he said, "our (corrections) officers occupy a bit of that limelight."

"But the story isn't over when the lights go off," the sheriff added. "What the public doesn't see, or know and probably doesn't care about is that the supervision of that nefarious defendant becomes the responsibility of those silent guardians. All too often it is both a deadening and thankless challenge."

On a steamy Friday morning, the sheriff of Middlesex County took a couple of hours to commit one "broken" inmate into eternity, just days after he bid farewell to one of his corrections officers. If there was a thread that bound these two moments together, perhaps it was a sense of compassion that transcended mere care, custody and control.

## Armenia Fund USA Finalizes Plans for 20th Anniversary Gala

NEW YORK — Armenia Fund USA has formally announced its gala celebration to be held in midtown Manhattan at Gotham Hall on September 29 at 7 p.m.

"It's an ideal location for a grand celebration such as the one we are planning, complete with sumptuous dining and ballroom dancing," stated 20th Anniversary Gala Chairperson Vesna Markarian.

At the top of the roster of participants is Mark Geragos. Widely recognized as one of the top defense attorneys in the US, Geragos has been on the Board of Trustees of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund since 2006. As such, for the past 10 years, he has taken time to host the 12-hour long Armenia Fund Thanksgiving Day Telethon, broadcast live from Los Angeles. He will preside over the festivities in New York.

The keynote speaker will be Eduard Nalbandian, the foreign minister of the Republic of Armenia.

In an homage to the 22 worldwide affiliates that have been established over the past two decades, the entertainment will be provided by French-Armenian pop singer Patrick Fiori, making his New York debut.

"Our geographically diverse participants reflect the worldwide unity that Armenia Fund has come to stand for," explained Khoren Bandazian, chairman of the board of directors of Armenia Fund USA eastern region.

"Over these two decades, we have proven that Armenians from different parts of the world can work together for a noble cause worthy of our ancient and great nation. Our constructive relationships with the governments of Armenia and Karabagh as well as diaspora affiliates are essential to bringing Armenia and Karabagh into the 21st century," Bandazian stated.

Building on the theme of the 15th anniversary celebration, "Building Armenia's Tomorrow Today," the slogan of the 20-year milestone is "Building a Homeland Built to Last." Irina Lazarian, executive director of Armenia Fund USA, described the evolution of the message this way: "When we refer to 'a homeland built to last', we are acknowledging that nation-building is an ongoing process. We must continue to challenge ourselves to work smarter, act faster, and think bigger. For example, despite all our successes in modernizing the physical infrastructure of rural Armenia, there are still too many people leaving towns and villages in search of jobs and a better life. "This trend puts national security at risk. So in addition to infrastructure projects, we are focusing on education, health care delivery and community life," said Lazarian. "These are the four building blocks that will make it possible to live, work, raise a family and most of all, raise hope."

On the 20th Anniversary Steering Committee, Vesna Markarian is managing a fully-engaged team of volunteers including Alex Karapetian, Aline Markarian and Kristine Toufayan Casali.

Bandazian, who served as chairperson for the 15th anniversary gala, is also on the committee. Honorary chairs are Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Karen Nazarian and his wife, Nana.

Tickets can be ordered online at [www.armenianfundusa.org](http://www.armenianfundusa.org).





## OBITUARY

## Anahid Janjigian

### Prominent Armenian-American Artist

NEW YORK — The well-known American-born Armenian painter Anahid Janjigian died on July 25, after a brief illness.

Born in Roxbury, Mass., in 1923, Janjigian grew up in Queens with her parents Jenev and Hagop Janjigian and sister, Shaké. Hagop Janjigian was a tailor by profession but had been a master potter in Arabkir, descending from a long line of artisans. He filled their Flushing home with a museum-worthy collec-



Anahid Janjigian

tion of pots and bowls which his daughter, Anahid, had painted.

Anahid Janjigian began her career in the 1940s at the Art Students League under a scholarship in recognition of her artistic merit. She studied with Yasuo Kuniyoshi, George Grosz and John Groth.

A one-person show in 1947 at the Bonestell Galleries introduced her to the New York art scene as the protégé of the late Dikran Kelekian, an art dealer, collector and connoisseur. Kelekian considered her one of the five greatest artists in the world at the time and eventually added 30 of her paintings to his personal collection. In November 1951, a second one-person show at the Argent Galleries was hailed as a great success by New York critics.

In addition to numerous group shows in the metropolitan area, Janjigian's paintings have been on exhibition at the National Academy of Design, the Whitney Museum, the American Watercolor Society, Audubon Artists, the New York City Center and the Hecksher Museum, among others, to glowing reviews celebrating her figurative-expressionistic style, the "opulence of her oils," the "iridescent grace of her watercolors," all reminiscent of the "rich, jewel-like tones of Oriental tapestry." She also exhib-

ited at the respective New York City headquarters of the AGBU and the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. Her paintings are included in important private collections throughout the United States.

For many years, Janjigian owned a studio in Flushing where she worked and held classes. These eventually continued in a home studio where hundreds of adults and children benefited from her talents as artist and teacher. Art school students often sought her help in preparing their graduate portfolios. Although she taught people of all ages, the children's classes were especially dear to her; she delighted in the children's work, citing the fresh and pure way they could see the world, a way of seeing that adult artists struggled to achieve.

She is survived by her daughter, Adrienne, who took care of her in recent years, and is consoled in knowing that her mother "loved art and loved teaching, and always said that she had spent her whole life doing both, doing exactly what she loved and wanted to do."



"Tabby Cat," by Anahid Janjigian

## Andrea Pampanini

### Proud Armenian by Choice

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — Andrea Pampanini lost his long fight with heart disease on July 5. Services were held at St. Illuminators Armenian Cathedral in New York with burial at Cedar Grove Cemetery. Surviving him are his wife Annie (née Sandrik), daughter, Taline, son-in-law, Mark Batsyan, and several relatives around the world.

Born in Europe to an Italian father and English mother, Pampanini was both an international personality as well as a proud Armenian by choice. He was educated at Cambridge University, studying physics and other sciences, and then at the Harvard University Business School.

A roommate at Harvard remembers, "When I checked into my room, Andrea was already there and scooped me up and said, 'We are going to Revere Beach. By the time the afternoon excursion was over we had bonded, something that was easy to do with this jovial character with the wide grin and quick wit.' And this is how many who knew Pampanini remember him — a charming personality who could uniquely and warmly interact with people of all cultures and backgrounds.

Fluent in several languages, and with an uncanny understanding of world affairs, he joined the International Basic Economy Corporation with David Lilienthal and Rodman Rockefeller as a consultant and plunged into the world of public works, especially in the Middle East.

His consulting expertise was sought by Booz Allen Hamilton, where as a partner he opened offices in several countries, including a special program for the Saudi royal family. There he oversaw the work of the international construction giant, Bechtel Corporation. He led this project which involved the building of two large industrial cities, Yanbu and Jubail, centers of petroleum refining.

His success in Saudi Arabia led to many consulting assignments with high-ranking members of the Saudi hierarchy. Concerned with the issue of water resources in Saudi

Arabia, he worked on this problem in the last several years and authored seven books on this and other challenges there. During this period, Pampanini also created his own consulting firm, Turnaround Associates which had clients in New York, Europe and Iran.

Though thoroughly ensconced in his business, he was equally involved in Armenian projects with his wife, Annie, who holds two master's degrees from Columbia University. He was with her while she worked on the Board of the Armenian Assembly of America and as a National Committee of America member, then as the executive director of the Armenia Fund helping Armenia recover after the earthquake. A risk taker, he went to Armenia alone



Andrea Pampanini

during the very difficult time where there were no lights and no fuel, doing what he could do to help.

When the National Philharmonic Orchestra was created after Armenia's independence, both Annie and Andrea Pampanini worked as board members, raising funds and awareness for this endeavor, even buying instruments for the musicians. His love of music and culture also led him to serve on committees to increase interest in music in New York City's public schools.

He also went to Karabagh three times. Understanding the desperate need in Karabagh for agricultural advancements and animal husbandry, he brought American and Italian members of his team from the International Basic Economic Group IBEC and reorganized the agricultural system with sponsorship from The Armenia Fund. He also generously brought his business skills to the St. Illuminator Armenian Cathedral.

A charismatic and dedicated personality who lit up a room the minute he entered, he will be deeply missed by his family, and his many friends and business associates around the world.

## Harry J. Tashjian

### Pioneer of Small Computers

MINNEAPOLIS (*Star Tribune*) — Harry J. Tashjian lived his life on the border between the worlds of data and imagination. A mechanical engineer by training, he valued hard facts and numbers, but he also saw the value of imagining a future that didn't yet exist. His forward thinking helped bring about the democratization of computers as he led teams that developed midsize computers — desktop models much smaller than the room-size contraptions they replaced.

Tashjian, 90, worked at IBM in Rochester for more than 40 years. He died July 27 after complications from a stroke.

Tashjian's new powerful but cheaper models were "a major technological achievement," said Jeffrey Yost, associate director of the Charles Babbage Institute at the University of Minnesota. Two computer families Tashjian helped create, System/3 and System/38, brought computers into new settings such as small businesses and science laboratories, Yost said. The System/3 was the first computer system developed completely in-house at Rochester, a feat possible because Tashjian was savvy enough to call the technology a "unit record system" instead of a computer. Before that, computer design was entrusted to IBM's New York location.

Tashjian was a trusted leader who motivated his peers to live up to their full potential, said his son, Edward. He had a knack for organizing people and for getting things done right. But "he hated public speaking. He could hardly sleep the night before," his son said.

He remembers his dad best for his laughter and unrelenting optimism. He donated to charities, funded scholarships, served in World War II and was an active member of St. Luke's

Episcopal Church in Rochester, where he served as senior warden from 1974 to 1976.

Tashjian played violin and loved classical music. He woke up every day by 5:30 a.m. and filled the house with recordings of Mozart, Bach and Beethoven.

Tashjian valued education highly, his son said. Sports were not high on his list of priorities, although he often joked that he couldn't die until the Vikings won the Super Bowl.

Tashjian and Alice, his wife of 62 years, met as children in Johnson City, NY, and married in their late 20s after finishing college and



Harry J. Tashjian

graduate school. Their families emigrated to the United States after the Armenian holocaust.

Tashjian donated his body to science so medical students and researchers could learn from it. "My dad hated the idea of his body being taxidermied like a stuffed fish," Edward said. "To the very end, he was giving himself away."

Tashjian is survived by his wife, three sons, Joseph, Edward and Christopher; daughter, Francine, and 11 grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at 1201 Yale Place, Minneapolis, from 3 to 4 p.m. on August 24, Tashjian's birthday.

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## OBITUARY

# Capt. Matt Manoukian

## Son of Santa Clara County Judge Killed in Action in Afghanistan

By Tracey Kaplan

LOS ALTOS HILLS, Calif. (*San Jose Mercury News*)— Five years ago, a blast from an improvised explosive device (IED) slammed into Capt. Matt Manoukian. Even with a debilitating concussion, the Marine leader scrambled to the aid of one of his men, quickly applying a tourniquet to his leg that saved the soldier's life. But Manoukian's bravery and resourcefulness couldn't save him this week from a surprise attack in southern Afghanistan by an insurgent disguised as an Afghan policeman.

Manoukian, the 29-year-old son of a Santa Clara County judge and state appellate court justice, and two other Marines were fatally shot after a pre-dawn meal and security meeting at a police checkpoint. It was the third attack on coalition forces by their Afghan counterparts in a week.

The meal took place before dawn because of Ramadan, the month in which Muslims abstain from food during daylight hours.

Manoukian's father, Judge Socrates "Pete" Manoukian, said Friday that his son was observing the holiday out of profound respect for the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, whom he made a point to get to know during his four tours of duty.

"He was very into their culture," the judge said. "He managed to learn Arabic and worked on opening up a school and setting up a police station and got a courthouse running with some of his people. He even taught little kids to play baseball after one of our friends sent baseballs and bats. "Who knows, one of the these days, maybe little Abdul will be the leadoff batter for the Giants because of Matt."

Notice of Matt Manoukian's death came Thursday night with a knock on the door of the



Capt. Matt Manoukian

family's Los Altos Hills home while the judge was preparing *fattoush*, a Lebanese salad. When he first opened the door, the porch light wasn't on and all he saw in the gloom were four figures. "I thought they were Jehovah's witnesses," the judge said, his voice cracking. "Then I saw the insignia and I thought, 'oh, this isn't good.'"

His mother, Associate Justice Patricia Bamattre-Manoukian, was returning home from Southern California and couldn't be reached for comment.

Matt Manoukian had dreamed of becoming a Marine since he was 10 years old.

After making the dean's list, he graduated from the University of Arizona in 2005 with a degree in political science. A year later, he attended officer candidate school in Quantico, Va., and then

infantry school in 2007.

As a platoon commander in Iraq, he was supposed to patrol in a Humvee. But he didn't want to be cut off from the locals.

"He didn't believe in that," his father said. "So he always walked into town with his guys and talked to little kids and shopkeepers."

He was checking out an abandoned building in 2007 in hopes of opening a sub-station there when the IED went off. He received a Purple Heart, just one of several commendations over the years.

He joined Camp Pendleton's 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion after enduring a grueling training program which only 40 out of 100 men passed, his father said. He was in the top five. Among other tests of fortitude, the men had to stay awake for four days.

After seven years of service, he was looking forward to leaving the Marines at the end of the year. He was planning to attend law school in the fall of 2013, possibly at Golden Gate University where he had already been accepted.

He wanted to be a public defender, his father said.

"Matt said he wanted to be one because he was always accused in school of something he didn't do," Judge Manoukian said.

His father said he definitely had the chops, recalling how his son stood up to him once after returning home with a detention slip. A teacher had told the young Matt to throw away his soda. Matt had capped the bottle and complied. But then he had a friend retrieve it and was drinking it again when he ran back into the teacher, who was livid. So was his father, who as a judge is accustomed to having the last word. But Matt Manoukian deftly argued his case by bringing up his grandfather, who had nearly starved to death as a victim of the Turkish genocide of Armenians. His grandfather wouldn't

approve of wasting food, even soda, the young man insisted, disarming his dad.

He displayed that same pluck in combat, winning a reputation in special ops as "just fearless," his father said.

To his younger brothers, Martin and Michael, the tall handsome Marine was their hero.

"Matt was the man," his brother Martin said. "Everybody looked up to him."

Arrangements for services will be announced at a later time.

## An Evening to Remember

By Yeghishe Hajakian

PARAMUS, N.J. — July 20, 2012 was meaningful to this writer due the fact that we were witnessing a representative of the younger generation delivering a speech concerning the Armenian Diaspora. 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.

We did succeed in implementing this heroic task, we did survive and we did thrive as Armenians constantly remembering that we do have a fatherland called Armenia, always loving it, caring about it under any condition and any 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 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 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 young 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 speaker I am referring to is Baydzig Kalayjian, the editor of the Armenian daily *Zartonk*, in Beirut, Lebanon. A person who has replaced my beloved high school teacher Kersam Aharonian from the days of yore. A lady truly deserving the seat of Kersam with the dedication she has manifested for the last five years of the publication of this newspaper.

Kalayjian belongs to a generation of diaspora Armenians who is still idealistic vis a vis our community's future and the visibility of our culture of the face of this planet. Hence her unswerving belief of disseminating it through the pages of *Zartonk* in the very language that was created and developed.

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 as so-called opposite party's organ. Answer?

Baydzig is so convincing, devoted to Armenia, Armenian issues and the Armenian nation — and she is so charming — that he just could not refuse her request to contribute articles to *Zartonk*.

That's what she did on Friday July 20, 2012. She charmed her audience and she truly moved them to such an extent that there were many monetary donations to *Zartonk* along with a lot of admiration toward the work she has been doing.

(Because of an editing error, we are reprinting this article, which had run last week, in full. We regret the error.)

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Discovering The Homeland Through Service

By Maral Firkatian Wozniak

NEW YORK — Thin, gray tendrils of smoke twist up towards the towering dome of the cathedral, floating over the heads of the group of young Armenians who have gathered to pray there. The murmur of voices drifting from behind them comes from tourists who have traveled from all over the world to see the ancient Cathedral of Holy Echmiadzin.

The young Armenians praying in Holy Echmiadzin had come to Armenia with the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America's (ACYOA's) Armenia Service Program (ASP). This year the ACYOA sent 20 young people from the Eastern Diocese to Armenia from June 29 to July 19. Not only did the group attend the Divine Liturgy at Holy Echmiadzin that first Sunday of their trip, July 1, but some of the members served on the altar.

The trip, led by the Rev. Hakob Gevorgyan, pastor of Holy Trinity Church of Cheltenham, Penn., provided an opportunity for young adults from parishes across the Diocese to travel to the homeland together. They visited Armenia's greatest religious and cultural sites, learned more about the history and developed deeper connections to the Armenian Church. They also spent time serving the homeland through projects of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).

On the Feast of the Transfiguration, July 15, the group returned to Holy Echmiadzin and were honored to meet with Karekin II, the supreme patriarch and catholicos of All Armenians. He impressed upon the travelers how important their

trip was by explaining the difference between learning about Armenia at home and actually traveling to Armenia to experience it firsthand.

The catholicos' lesson would resonate with the participants throughout their trip. For many of them, this was their first time traveling to Armenia. While they had learned about the culture and history from their respective communities in the United States, seeing it in person created a stronger connection to the homeland.

"You read about Armenia and you learn about it in church and Sunday School and camp, but actually going there changes you. There is a connection which grows stronger when you visit," said Melissa Mardoian of Palos Heights, Ill.

### Serving with FAR

Alongside developing a spiritual relationship with the country, the participants helped serve its people by working in conjunction with FAR. For the ASP group, working with FAR was one of the most rewarding aspects of the trip.

"It just felt natural," said Greg Boyajian of Palos Heights, Ill., who explained that being able to give back to Armenia made them feel closer to their culture and heritage.

For the service portion of the trip, the group spent a week in Gumri. Upon arrival, they met the Primate of the Shirak Diocese, Bishop Mikayel Ajapahian. They later met with FAR's Gumri office director, Marina Bazayeva, who introduced them to the programs where the ASP participants would be volunteering: the Octet Music School and the FAR soup kitchen.

The soup kitchen brought the group face-to-face with the elder generations that benefit from FAR's efforts. They were able to see how much this work meant for the elderly and how happy the latter were to have the young people among them.

"They loved the fact that young Armenians from America came to help out their country," said Karen Kaltakdjian of Baton Rouge, La. She remembered fondly the words of encouragement she received from the elders: "They told me never to forget where I came from and not to let the Armenian language fall apart."



ASP participants volunteered at FAR projects in Gumri.

In addition to preparing food, ASP participants took it upon themselves to strip the wallpaper from one of the rooms in the soup kitchen and repaint the walls.

The Octet Music School is in the process of being renovated and the ASP group was there to start the work. The children put on a concert for the group as a final performance before the renovations began.

"After having seen the condition of their buildings, many of us were caught off-guard when the students performed for us. They were incredibly talented," said trip co-leader Jaqueline Baydar of White Plains, NY. After the performance, the group began to dismantle the building in preparation for the reconstruction.

"All the members of the ACYOA group worked with enthusiasm and vigor to produce the best possible results," said Bazaeva. "They showed a real dedication to their work and a desire to serve their homeland and make tangible changes."

Back in Yerevan, the group visited the FAR

Children's Center, which provides shelter and counseling to children who have been orphaned or abused until a safe home can be found for them. After speaking with the center's director, Dr. Mira Antonyan, the ASP group was able to meet the children and play with them.

### Discovering Armenia

When they weren't serving Armenia through FAR, the group traveled across the homeland. They took in the breathtaking scenery, including a leisurely day on the banks of Lake Sevan and visited historic sites along the way.

They saw how landscape and architecture can become one in the form of the 13th-century monastery Geghard, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is carved out of the side of the mountain. In nearby Garni, the group visited a pagan temple dating back to the first century. Another UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Haghbat monastery in the Lori region, was a striking example of Armenia's magnificent architecture.

The group walked beneath the towering red cliffs surrounding Noravank, a monastery from the 13th century. They also visited the churches of St. Hripsime and St. Gayane near Holy Echmiadzin.

But perhaps the most memorable stop was at the Khor Virab monastery. Here the group descended into the pit in which St. Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned for 13 years. They prayed and considered the incredible strength and faith of Armenia's patron saint. After the visit to Khor Virab, the group was invited by Gevorgyan's family to their home in Ararat.

During a tour of Yerevan the group visited several museums, Armenia's Genocide Memorial and Museum at Dzidzernagapert.

As they prepared to depart Armenia, the ASP group as a whole wished that they could do even more for their homeland. One week of volunteer work had sparked a desire to return and many plan to do so in the future.

"Every Armenian-American should experience something like this at least once in their lifetime," said Kaltakdjian. "You will come out as a better person."

THE ORIGINAL

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| DAY  | PORT                 | ARRIVE   | DEPART  |
|------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| Sat. | Ft. Lauderdale, FL   | -        | 7:00 PM |
| 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  | -       |

| CATEGORY                                       | RATES  |
|--|--------|
| INSIDE   |        |
| 1  | \$799  |
| 2  | \$849  |
| 3  | \$899  |
| OCEANVIEW                                      |        |
| 4 - Obstructed                                 | \$969  |
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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Young Athletes Make AGBU History at the 19th World Games in Los Angeles

## More than 1,700 Gather for Week of Athletic, Cultural and Social Events

GAMES, from page 1

The countdown for the AGBU World Games had been ongoing for months. While the marching band, the majority of them AGBU Scouts, began to circle the track of the Pasadena City College Stadium on July 29, the bleachers filled with an excited crowd. They soon put their hands together for the members of the Vartan and Siranush Gevorkyan Academy who performed on the field, the local John Muir High School drummer group and the procession of AGBU athletes that followed, waving their respective flags proudly. The guests' attention was then turned to the welcoming remarks delivered by AGBU Vice President Sinan Sinanian, World Games Chairman Shahe Seuylemezian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, and veteran AYA athlete Hratch Manoukian, who made the sportsmanship pledge.

Among the spectators were a host of dignitaries and representatives, including Armenia's Consul General to Los Angeles, Grigor Hovhannisyian; Glendale Mayor Frank Quintero; Glendale Councilmen Rafi Manoukian and Ara Najarian; former Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian; minister with the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), Rev. Joseph D. Matossian;

talents and skills in an array of team and individual sports. Competitions included basketball, chess, futsal, swimming, table tennis, tennis, track and field, and volleyball, all of which drew hundreds of enthusiastic spectators. A buzz of excitement filled the air at each of the matches'

were at the beach volleyball court for a friendly co-ed game. When the weekend approached, everyone was invited to view an encore performance of the AGBU Ardavazt Theater Company's hit comedy, "Ser Yev Dzidzagh" ("Love & Laughter") at the AGBU Pasadena

preparation that went into both the collection and all the World Games' activities, stating, "The workload was immense and not without its share of difficulties and hurdles. However, the initiative that came from all the volunteers who eagerly reached out to lend us a hand was key. For without their dedication, tenacity and allegiance, the success we had could simply not have been achieved."

For the volunteers, the World Games were a labor of love. As volunteer Carine Imasdonian remarked, "We knew since the Volunteer kick-off event in April that we were committing to a project that was larger than life, but incredibly worthwhile. I have so enjoyed being part of such a passionate and devoted team. Watching the Games unfold over the past few months until this week has been very rewarding. As volunteers, a huge number of us spent countless hours at this week's different events, and I only wish we could have spent countless more."

After the final games wrapped up on the afternoon of Saturday, August 4, the athletes were ready to change out of their AGBU uniforms and into more formal attire for that evening's Victory Ball. At 6 p.m. on the dot, more than 1,700 guests began streaming into the Universal Studios Backlot. It was on the Studios' legendary "New York Avenue" set that they were greeted by the Special Events Committee chairwoman, Aline Patatian, who delivered the opening remarks. The microphone was then passed to London-based entertainer Kev Orkian, and later singers Armenchik and Joseph Krikorian and members of the Vartan and Siranush Gevorkyan Dance Academy, whose performances inspired everyone to stay on the dance floor well into the night.

Those present at the Victory Ball included AGBU Vice President Sinan Sinanian, AGBU Western District Committee Chairman Haig Messerlian, and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian. Sinanian was full of praise for the World Games' athletes and the organizers as he stat-



AGBU's international teams vie for the basketball championship titles at the 2012 World Games.

venues, the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Center and High School, the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School and the Pasadena Public High School, with fans continuously shouting encouraging words and cheers. As they progressed from the preliminary games to the finals rounds, the players always demonstrated good sportsmanship and support for one another, ensuring that the games were more fun than competitive. As coach Kev Dertadian of Sydney, Australia commented, "Year round, we watch the players on our teams learn and grow, and it's been a huge thrill to watch them apply all the skills they've developed back at home here at the World Games with their global peers." The youth shared that enthusiasm, and the athlete Josephine Sayegh of Montevideo stated, "This week has been incredible. It's so amazing to be surrounded by so many young Armenians like myself from around the world who love the same sports I do — I already can't wait to reunite in a new city in 2016."

Day in and day out, the World Games attendees were on the fields or in the stands, but in the evening they had the opportunity to relax and enjoy many planned social and cultural events. On Saturday, July 28, all athletes and guests gathered at the AGBU Pasadena Center for a "Meet and Greet," where they caught up with old friends and sparked conversation with new ones. On Tuesday night, a summer soiree organized by the Young Professional of Los Angeles (YPLA) brought together AGBU World Games athletes with their local YP counterparts to the rooftop of the Sheraton Universal Hotel, where they enjoyed views of the Hollywood Hills and Universal Studios.

Halfway through the week, participants were ready for some fun in the sun and on Wednesday, they got just that with a private party on Huntington Beach, which was organized by the AGBU World Games Committee and managed by the women within the World Games Special Events Committee. When they weren't cooling off in the Pacific Ocean, guests

Center. For over three decades, the theatrical ensemble's productions have drawn critical acclaim, and their show on Friday night was no exception.

As they watched the Games unfold, each of



Fans cheer on the futsal leagues at one of the 2012 World Games' many exciting matches.



AGBU Vice President Sinan Sinanian and Angele Sinanian celebrate the 19th AGBU World Games during the Victory Ball in Los Angeles.

Police Chief of Pasadena Phillip L. Sanchez; clergymen representing the Western Prelacy and Western Diocese and the Armenian Catholic Church; and official leaders and representatives from the major Armenian political parties.

The entertainment portion of the night then got underway, as David Foster, the 16-time Grammy-award winning musician who has helped produce some of the world's most successful artists, including Madonna, Andrea Bocelli and Celine Dion, took the stage. The popular group Element Band and singer Hovhannes Shahbazyan also performed. Foster even invited a few members of the audience on stage to sing along with them, while across the stadium everyone rose to their feet to dance. Off to a festive start, the athletes returned to the Universal City Hilton Hotel, where they stayed throughout the week, ready to carry their energy onto the field the following day.

Throughout the week, youth displayed their

the athletes knew that they were part not only of a series of events spanning that week, but of a great, long-standing AGBU tradition six decades in the making. A special collection of photos and keepsakes from World Games past, put together by the youth group AGBU Impact, was unveiled on the evening of the "Meet and Greet" and remained on exhibit at the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Center's Boyajian Hall over the next few days. Young athletes admired old team banners and jerseys, spotting their parents and even grandparents in the black and white photographs that filled the display. World Games Chairman Shahe Seuylemezian reflected on the tremendous

ed, "I have never seen so many people, of all ages and from so many countries around the world, come together and have an unforgettably positive and impactful experience as they did here in Los Angeles during the AGBU World Games. An occasion such as this is truly an incredible and rare opportunity for our youth to gather and meet other Armenians from places such as Alexandria, Cairo, Montevideo, Montreal, Paris, Sao Paulo, Sydney and Toronto, and create special memories and lifelong friendships. Everyone kept telling me they had the best week of their lives. I only wish we could have more occasions for our AGBU

see AGBU, page 16





# Arts & Living

## Symposium on 'Armenians and The Book' at ALMA On September 15

WATERTOWN — The Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies at Harvard University, the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA), the Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF) and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will present "The Armenians and the Book," a one-day symposium, on Saturday, September 15, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. The symposium will be held in ALMA's Contemporary Art Gallery, 65 Main St.

The symposium will feature presentations by Prof. Sebouh Aslanian (UCLA); Marc A. Mamigonian (NAASR); Prof. Christina Maranci (Tufts University); Dr. Barbara Merguerian (Armenian International Women's Association); Prof. Simon Payaslian



Visitors browse through "The Armenians and the Book" exhibit at ALMA.

(Boston University) and Prof. James R. Russell (Harvard University). The conference is free and open to the general public.

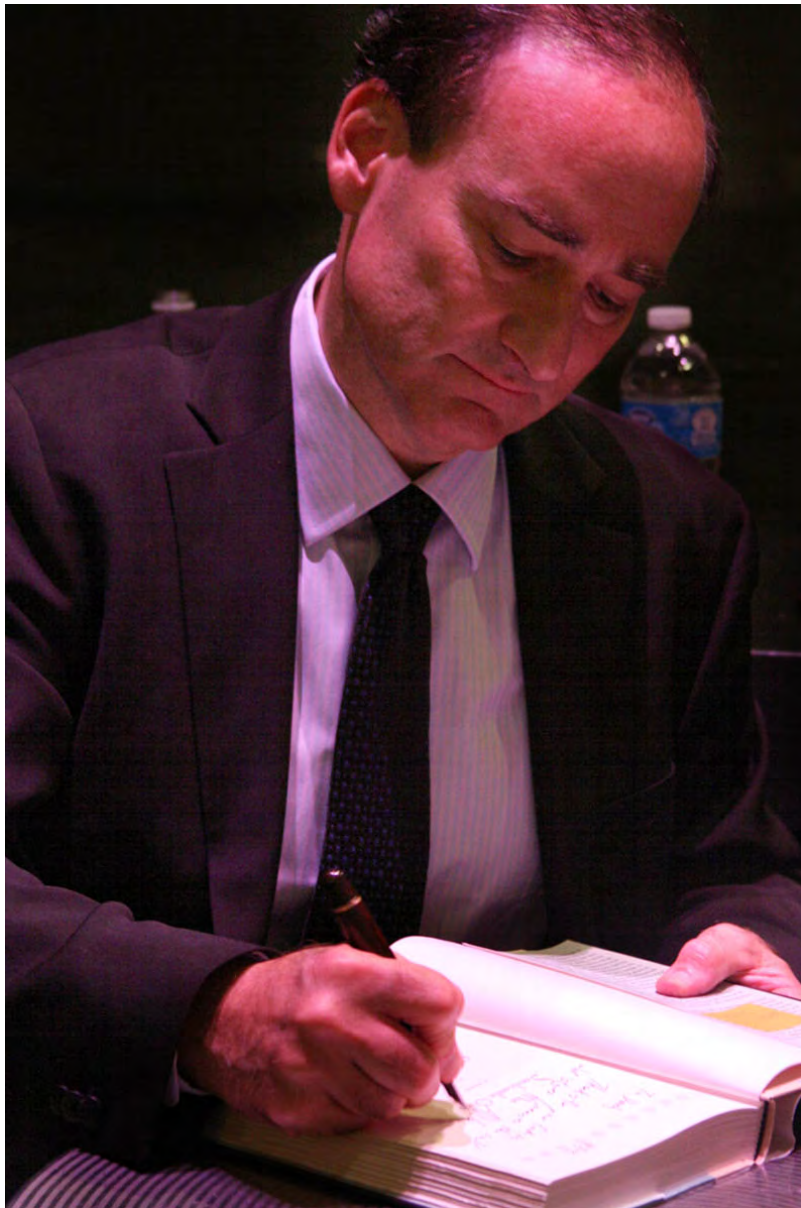
The symposium is being held in conjunction with the ongoing exhibition, "The Armenians and the Book," organized and sponsored by Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies and the above-listed organizations as well as the Armenian programs of Tufts University and Boston University. The exhibition was first displayed at Harvard University's Lamont Library during the first three weeks of April and was re-mounted on ALMA's third floor gallery in May.

"The Armenians and the Book" contains items drawn from the collections of the participating organizations as well as local private collections.

In addition to the Harvard Book Exhibit, attendees will be able view ALMA's own exhibit, "Bound for Glory: 500 Years of Armenian Printing from ALMA's Collection," now on exhibit in the second-floor gallery.



The exhibit at ALMA



Chris Bohjalian signing copies of his novel *The Sandcastle Girls* in New York

## Fans Come to See Best-Selling Author Chris Bohjalian on National Book Tour

NEW YORK — At first glance, the Armenian Genocide would be an unlikely context for a compelling love story. Yet, one author has proved it cannot only be done, but done extraordinarily well — and is quickly captivating readers across the country. In his latest publication, *The Sandcastle Girls* (Doubleday), award-winning novelist and grandson of survivors Chris Bohjalian draws inspiration from his own family's plight, putting their story, and countless others, in the national spotlight. Released just last month, the book has already risen to the top of the *New York Times* best-sellers list and appeared as a "Book of the Week" on Oprah.com, continuing to gain attention through two book tour stops co-sponsored by AGBU.

On the evening of Friday, August 3, Bohjalian drew a crowd of more than 200 guests to the Academy Theater at Lighthouse International for a book presentation and signing. The event was presented by the Armenian National Committee (ANC) — New York and Doubleday Publishing, hosted by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Ararat and co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Young Professionals of Greater New York (YPGNY), the Armenia Network, New York Region, Armenian Youth Federation-Youth Organization of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (AYF-YOARF) New York "Hyortik" chapter and Hamazkayin of New York. Hard covers in hand, audience members were first welcomed by AGBU Associate Director of Education Natalie Gabrelian, who spoke on behalf of Ararat, YPGNY and their partners. She then passed the podium to Ani Tchaghlasian from the ANC, who said that no introduction could do Bohjalian adequate justice and that the great success of *The Sandcastle Girls* speaks for itself; since debuting as a *New York Times* bestseller, the novel has also become the top seller at the Harvard Book Store. As Tchaghlasian said, the book "brings the Armenian Genocide to the public, making the stories — as well as the pursuit of justice — tangible and real," an authenticity that

see TOUR, page 11



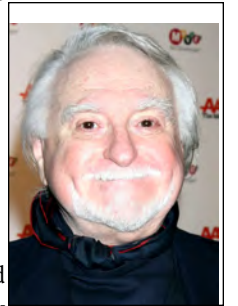
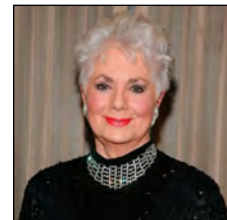
A crowd of more than 200 fans listen to Chris Bohjalian speak about his bestselling book, *The Sandcastle Girls*.

## Lorraine Seymourian Looking to 'Giggle'

NEWTON, Mass. — Local playwright, television and radio personality and seniors' advocate Lorraine Seymourian is putting the finishing touches on her latest play, "Giggle." The play, a romantic musical comedy written entirely by Seymourian, will feature Shirley Jones and her husband, Marty Ingels in the lead roles.

Jones was the star of the hit television show "The Partridge Family" and the musicals "Oklahoma," "Carousel" and "The Music Man." In addition, she won an Academy Award for her role in "Elmer Gantry."

Ingels, a comic, has



acted in many films and television series, including Shirley Jones and Marty Ingels

ing "I'm Dickens, He's Fenster," "The Dick Van Dyke Show" and more recently, "CSI."

The play is a comedy of errors, featuring amorous — and glamorous — seniors playing a game of romantic deception.

Seymourian presented "Giggle" at the Turtle Lane Playhouse last year in Newton for three days, featuring amateur performers. She got raves from the audiences.

Two of the people who saw the performance, Dr. Helene Day, the former consul of Monaco, and Dr. William Wheeler, past president of the Rotary, loved the musical so much that they agreed to become backers of the show.

In October, Seymourian is going to host a party for sponsors, featuring professional actors who are going to give a performance of "Giggle." Jones and Ingels are expected to attend. She is raising funds to stage a run of "Giggle" in Boston and if all goes well, in New York.

Seymourian has interviewed many celebrities for her radio program and television program on ION Media, including Sarah, the Duchess of York, Joan Rivers, Regis Philbin and Michael Douglas. She will soon launched her "Giggle Your Way to Glamour" program on METV locally.

Those interested in attending the party or helping Seymourian to stage "Giggle" can contact m.meagher@verizon.net.



Lorraine Seymourian





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Fans Come to See Best-Selling Author Chris Bohjalian on National Book Tour

TOUR, from page 10

comes from years of Bohjalian researching official records and looking back through his family history.

Deftly balancing humor with the book's tragic themes, Bohjalian took the beginning of his presentation to entertain the crowd with funny stories of life on the road during a national book tour. He soon transitioned, though, from those personal anecdotes to tales from his childhood, recounting memories of weekends spent

in his grandparents' house, where the walls were lined with Armenian books and the furniture covered with intricate Armenian lacework. His father, he explained, entered kindergarten unable to speak a word of English, but like so many in the diaspora's first generation, reinvented himself and as an adult joined the most iconic American industry of the time: advertising. It was not until 2009, when his father's health began to deteriorate and the two spent more and more time together, often looking

through old family photos, that Bohjalian began to put together some pieces of his family's puzzle. Directing the audience's attention to a screen of several black-and-white snapshots, he pointed to one dating back to the late 19th century in Constantinople, and another of his grandparents and father from 1934, which sat on his desk and inspired him the entire time he wrote *The Sandcastle Girls*.

As Bohjalian described, the book had been a work in progress for almost his entire life, and in 1993 he wrote a complete manuscript on the Armenian Genocide before deciding it needed to be shelved. Seventeen years later, motivated in part by his father's death and the desire to carry on his family's legacy, Bohjalian revisited the idea, for two reasons. The first, he told the crowd, being that the story of the Armenians is so profound and has a direct link with all other genocides unfolding around the world today. And moreover, he said, quoting from the book, because it is "the slaughter we know next to nothing about," the story that appeared on the front pages of newspapers regularly through the early 20th century before "the news cycle moved on."

As he revisited the idea of a novel set at that particular time and place in history, Bohjalian knew that in order for his second attempt to succeed, he needed a "personal way in," one that was grounded in his ancestor's experience. And while he would never know the fate of his three great-uncles, who disappeared in Egypt in

1915, he did know how he felt growing up in his grandparents' house. Bohjalian explained, "make no mistake, there is a lot of me in Laura throughout that book," referring to *The Sandcastle Girls*' protagonist, a modern-day Armenian American whose story is interwoven with that of her grandparents.

Throughout the presentation and the question-and-answer portion of the evening, Bohjalian discussed the scholarly research that went into the book, as well as his own recent pilgrimage to Armenia. He showed the audience photos from his journey from Beirut to Yerevan, where, he said, any doubts he may have had about the novel were immediately dispelled. It was important to him, he said, to visit historical landmarks and memorials, and above all, Mount Ararat, which he described as "the geography of the Armenian soul...and the geography of my soul." Looking at the mountain from the airport upon his departure, Bohjalian recalled, he began weeping for his family, knowing that *The Sandcastle Girls* was the most important book he would write in his life.

## Bohjalian Book Talk Attracts Full House at ALMA

WATERTOWN — More than 250 people attended the book presentation by author Chris Bohjalian on July 26 at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA).

The talk was part of a nationwide book tour, dubbed "*The Sandcastle Girls* Rock and Roll Book Tour," which currently takes the author across the country, from Los Angeles and San Francisco to New England, New Jersey and to Capitol Hill.

Bohjalian's 15th book, *The Sandcastle Girls*, is considered his most personal novel, as he describes the narrator, Laura Petrosian, as a fictional version of himself. The story, which draws the reader from Aleppo, Syria in 1915 to Bronxville, NY in 2012, takes roots in the author's Armenian heritage. Bohjalian said he previously wrote a novel in the early 1990s about the Armenian Genocide, but in the end didn't want to publish the manuscript, which he called an "apprentice" work rather than a novel.



Chris Bohjalian during the book talk at ALMA

Bohjalian exhibited his talent in public storytelling, showing photos of his family and of his trips to Syria and Armenia, and giving away T-shirts in the end of his presentation. More than 100 copies were sold at the book signing session.

On July 23, Oprah Winfrey's Blog declared *The Sandcastle Girls* the must-read "Book of the Week." The novel was also chosen as an Indie Next selection for August and Everyday eBook cited it as one of "8 Summer Books for Beach and Beyond." It received stellar appraisals from the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Boston Globe*, *Entertainment Weekly* and *People Magazine*.

As Aram Hamparian, executive director of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) said, "*The Sandcastle Girls* represents — in addition to a great literary work — a great contribution to the American and global public awareness that will be required to end, forever, the cycle of genocide and denial."

To learn more about Bohjalian's upcoming tour stops and to purchase copies of *The Sandcastle Girls*, visit this website: [http://www.chrisbohjalian.com/the\\_sandcastle\\_girls](http://www.chrisbohjalian.com/the_sandcastle_girls).



From left, *Armenian Weekly* editor Khatchig Mouradian; Board advisor to the Armenian Network NY Region Elizabeth Akian; Armenian Network New York Region President Talene Kachadourian; Ani Tchaghlasian from the ANC; Chris Bohjalian and AGBU Central Board Programs Director Anita Ayvazyan at Bohjalian's presentation of *The Sandcastle Girls* in New York. (Photo credit: Naira Ayvazyan of [www.NairaStudios.com](http://www.NairaStudios.com))

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Book Review:

## Working through the Past to Embrace the Future

***The Armenian Genocide in Literature: Perceptions of Those Who Lived Through the Calamity***, by Rubina Peroomian, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, 2012.

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Reading Rubina Peroomian's new book is not easy, nor is it pleasant. But it is necessary, and highly rewarding. This, her third volume on the subject, deals with the reflections in literature of the Armenian Genocide.

Her first book on the theme was *Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and the Jewish Experience* (1993) and the second was *And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915: The Metamorphosis of the Post-Genocide Armenian Identity as Reflected in Artistic Literature* (2008, just republished with a foreword by Richard Hovannissian).

Her aim is not to prove that the Genocide occurred; that has already been documented by historians. Rather, her powerful work, which she characterizes as "an outcry against man's inhumanity to man" (p. 14), aims to "expose the

human dimension of the crime" (p. xv) and, in so doing, to help second- and third-generation Armenians deal psychologically with the trauma passed down to them from their forefathers. She includes herself most directly in this category. At the tender age of 6, she suffered the loss of her father, a chemistry teacher in Tabriz, who was whisked away one night by the Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) as a leader of the Armenian nationalist opposition. It was that experience which contributed to her decision to learn about the tragedy that had struck the Armenian people. And reading through the voluminous literature

was a painful experience, which left its mark on her psyche.

"I want to believe," she writes, "that the result that I will produce with my work will cure me of my psychological tumult. I pray for a swift recovery, that is the soon-to-come completion of my work" (p. 16).

Why literature? one might ask. The author explains that she chose this focus "because I believe literary art to be the form of cultural representation that provides the place where the making and remaking of the relationship of the self and the social can be recognized" (p. 2). It is her hope that, in completing her task with an upcoming volume, she will achieve her "lifelong endeavor to shed light on this unspeakable and unforgettable collective trauma that is transformed into the struggle to confront the past, to liberate the generations of survivors of their debilitating victim psychology, and to survive as a proud, forward-looking, and free nation" (p. 6).

As she examines the novels, poetry and memoirs and tells us about their authors, she is also sketching a history of the Armenian experience. Thus, in dealing with the legacy of the first generation, she shows how, following the Hamidian massacres of 1894-96, the 1908 Young Turk revolution generated hope in possible cohabitation, only to be dashed by the 1909 Adana massacres. After hitting a "dead end," that hope turned into a response articulated in the "language of violence."

When, in 1915, the unthinkable occurred, it signified for Armenians the loss of their homeland, which even the brief episode of Armenian independence could not recover; and the transformation into a Soviet republic only finalized the loss by erecting an iron curtain between Armenians living there and those who had found refuge abroad. The central theme dominating the literature thereafter was the question of national and ethnic identity: how should Armenians preserve their identity? How should they deal with the pressures of assimilation? In this context, Peroomian highlights the role played by *Hairenik* (founded in 1922) and other publications in keeping the memory of the homeland alive.

Especially in the 1920s and 1930s, *Hairenik* educated the new generation about its past by issuing biographies and memoirs. Among the authors of such writing were, in addition to established names from before 1915 and the later "orphans of the desert," also ordinary people who simply wrote down their recollections. This literature of the survivors, which described the atrocities often in brutal detail, raised the fundamental question, "why?" — why had it occurred? The literary responses include concentration on the perpetrator, often characterized as "the Turk," and, understandably, also the search for a violent reaction. Armed resistance appeared as a means of wreaking vengeance, or, as in the works of Shahan Natalie, as an attempt to restore the nation's honor.

One of the most painful responses encountered in the works of Natalie and also Vahan Tekeyan, for example, is the existential despair of the victim, who even goes so far as to doubt the existence of God, or who challenges God for having permitted such injustice. Alternatively, the victim may turn despair inward and even blame himself. Summarizing the spectrum of psychological reactions, Peroomian writes, "In their futile search for an answer or for the meaning of what happened, they turned to God,

*continued on next page*

# ARMENIANS IN THE NEWS

In the June 7 issue of the *Christian Science Monitor*, by Peter Grier, is an article which discusses how Rush Limbaugh considers President Barack Obama out of touch with ordinary people since he mingles with celebrities such as *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour and actress Sarah Jessica Parker at political fundraisers. Limbaugh called the president "Barack Hussein Kardashian," comparing the president to **Kim Kardashian**, suggesting he is a lightweight, not fit for his job. Grier said that the Republicans should shy away from comparing Obama to celebrities and tackle the real issues.

Growing up in Istanbul, fashion designer **Nirva Derbekyan** recalls how Oriental rugs played a part in her childhood and are now an inspiration for her spring/summer line, she said, in an interview in the June 5 issue of *Stuff*. Oriental rugs are still a part of her life as they adorn not only her home



Nirva Derbekyan

but her studio in Lexington. She used the patterns and colors for her new line this year, which intentionally has no theme. "The theme is feeling! It's all pure emotion," she explained.

*Boston Globe* writers shared fond mem-

ories of their fathers in the June 17 issue of the paper. For **Paul E. Kandarian**, what struck him most about his traveling salesman father, **Everett Kandarian Jr.**, was his zest for life, on-the-go mentality and a cigar frequently clenched between his teeth. Once, when the younger Kandarian worked as a flight attendant, he ran into his father in Munich for Oktoberfest, and father and son both enjoyed beers and cigars. A picture of this fond moment adorns his wall at home. In the same issue of the paper is a story by **Ellen Ishkanian** about Chestnut Hill's Temple Emeth trying to create a traditional Jewish cemetery. While there are interfaith Jewish cemeteries, some believe a more traditional burial ground is needed to give some practitioners a sense of peace.

In the same issue is a story by **Ishkanian** about the new Wellesley High School building, which cost \$115 million and was built on the parking lot of the old school. The opening of the school unfortunately came soon after a freshman was killed in a skiing accident. Upon entering the new school, students were greeted by members of classes from 1939, 1940 and 1941, according to Ishkanian.

**Kandarian** wrote an article just one week earlier in the *Globe*, on June 10, about students with learning disabilities working at Café Riverview, on Route 6A. The café is part of the Riverview School, which is the first special-needs boarding school in the state. The café, which opened in March, also includes a thrift store, where students work as well.

Empty nesters who live in the suburbs are starting a trend of home renovation versus downgrading their accommodations to living in condos in the city, due to a desire to avoid the higher cost of living and lack of parking, according to a February 26 article in the *Boston Globe*. **Paul Apkarian**, founder of Apkarian Architects, Inc. in Wayland, says his primary business of late is helping empty nesters first make upgrades to the exterior of their homes, such as new gutters, siding and roofs, and then tackle interior remodeling and changing kid-friendly rooms into more adult-themed rooms, such as home offices and

media entertainment centers.

In the February 19 issue of the *Globe* is a story about beachfront property in Ipswich called LittleNeck, whose history dates back to 1660 when an English settler, William Paine, wrote in his will that the property should never be sold and that the rents benefit Ipswich schoolchildren. In December 2011, **Judge Mary Ann Sahagian** approved the sale of the land for \$32.5 million, which residents feel is a rip-off. The decade-long legal battle continues as residents continue to fight, with an injunction to stop the sale.

**Susan Kupelian** is pictured with two friends, at *Stuff Magazine's* Cocktail Caravan Launch Party at Descent, according to the February 14 issue of the magazine. On the same page is **Anny Deirmenjian Deese**, also pictured with two of her friends.

**Stella Takian** on June 15 was the grand prizewinner of a new 2012 Chevrolet Cruze Eco in Shaw's Spring Cleaning Sweepstakes, in Cranston, RI, according to the *Cranston Herald*. What is more is that the car was filled with free Shaws' products.

In *Wesleyan Today*, **Andrew Boyajian** recalls the summer 50 years ago when he decided to ride his bike from the campus of Dakota Wesleyan University, in Mitchell, SD, to his home in New Jersey. Along the way, he encountered kind strangers who offered him meals and support, and said that the public back in the '60's was more supportive of personal ambition as opposed to the public today, trying to share in one's limelight, but mostly he recalls his trip as arduous and long and has since given up riding a bike. The university holds his epic trip in esteem and houses the famed bicycle in their archives.

The July 6 issue of the *Boston Phoenix* has an article about the brother-in-law of Rep. John Tierney (D-MA), **Daniel Eremian**, who said that Tierney was aware of his illegal gambling operation. Tierney called the claims "bizarre." Eremian accused Tierney at a federal courtroom before he was sentenced to three years in prison. In addition, Eremian's brother, Robert, a fugitive, made similar accusations in a telephone interview with the *Globe*. Currently, Richard Tisei, Tierney's Republican opponent in this year's election, has questioned whether Tierney knew more than he is admitting about the Internet gambling business

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# Working through the Past To Embrace the Future

from previous page

prayed, catechized, anatomized, defied and expressed doubt in His oneness or even His very existence. These writers became introspective, seeking the source of the calamity in the Armenian psyche whose flaws and weaknesses they pinpointed as they internalized the tragedy. In a state of utter frustration, they preached vengeance” (p. 75).

Turning to the “orphan generation,” the author reviews the abundant accounts left by those robbed of their families in the Genocide; these are the street children in Damascus, reduced to filthy beggars, or the little ones fortunate enough to be housed in primitive conditions in the orphanages of Aleppo or Constantinople. Again, Peroomian delves into the psychological dimension of the tragedy. In the autobiographical work of Musegh Ishkhan, who was orphaned twice, at the ages of 1 and 5, Peroomian identifies the victim’s apparent detachment from horrifying events. The memory of those traumatic experiences however returns in nightmares, in what psychologists call “hypermnnesia.” Another psychological phenomenon observed in victims who had experienced the trauma of losing their mother is the “separation anxiety disorder” (p. 132), whereby the victim experiences profound fears of separation from loved ones. In the literary response, such emotions are expressed in the yearning for the lost homeland or for the mother.

This generation of writers also related how their despair could lead to total psychological

breakdown, self-destructive tendencies and the annihilation of the moral order, as in the works of Vazgan Shushanian. “The Turkish atrocity did not end with the destruction and murder alone,” she writes; “it completely subverted the survivors’ world of moral order and robbed them of their ability to conduct normal human relationships” (pp. 170-171). Thus, Shushanian took up the theme of incest, while he and others also treated unconventional brother-sister relationships. Often men who had suffered the humiliation of deportation and witnessed the rapes and murders of female relatives tended to view all women as “sisters.” As for the identity dilemma, the “orphan generation” of writers offered two different approaches: either assimilation or a flight into the past.

In her third chapter Peroomian considers in detail the plethora of personal memoirs produced over the past 30 years, the “stories of blood and tears” (p. 232). The 12 authors she considers in depth were motivated often by a sense of duty to set the record straight; John Minassian, for example, had been told by targeted Armenians that, if he survived, he had an “obligation to tell the whole world how it happened and why....” (p. 243). Others, like Dirouhi Kouymjian and Bertha (Berjouhi) Nakshian K’etchian, were urged by their children to record their experiences.

Often their children were engaged in the second generation’s efforts to fight denial and the survivors thus saw their eyewitness testimonies as an effective tool in that effort. A few survivors, like Hrant Sarian, had even kept diaries which only decades later appeared in print. Significantly, it was the act of putting their recollections into words on a page that served a



Prof. Rubina Peroomian

quasi-therapeutic function, “exorcising the trauma” (p. 336). Many survivors carried the burden of guilt and shame in their hearts in total silence for the rest of their lives, guilt for having had to leave behind a family member, or for having been forced to submit to humiliations they would never ever reveal. Typical of such personal recollections are descriptions of the home town in the Old Country and of the extended family members. Then come the accounts of the slaughter: how the men were taken away and killed, how the deportation orders came, how townspeople were herded like cattle into the death marches, how women in despair chose suicide rather than slavery while others were

abducted, how women clinging to the bodies of their starved children went insane and so on. All the stories are different, yet they all bear similarities and Peroomian points out that “these commonalities testify to the truth of the Genocide” (p. 330). Furthermore, the detailed descriptions of the Armenian homeland prior to 1915 provide precious testimony to the extensive civilian infrastructure of Armenian communities, with schools, churches, agricultural and industrial activity.

The “happy ending” – if one can dare to call it that – appeared for the few lucky ones in the form of survival, considered a “miracle,” and migration to America, which they experienced as “a dream come true.” In these stories, the figure of “the good Turk” may appear, the discreet individual who intervened despite all odds and perceivable danger to save Armenians. In her final remarks, “in lieu of a conclusion,” the author speaks with bold candor of her own experience with the subject.

“I tried to study the Armenian literature of atrocity,” she writes, “as much as I could, to read as many stories as my nerves could tolerate. No, it is not easy to read these stories. These macabre scenes of cold-blooded murder and rape, starving children and unspeakable orgies of Turkish officers feasting on Armenian maidens, can leave the reader depressed and bewildered for a long time” (p. 394).

Although her readers encounter the stories at a certain distance, so to speak once removed from the totality of the narratives, still the emotional and psychological impact is weighty. It is, as I said at the onset, not easy nor pleasant to read this book. Yet it is extremely important as a means of liberation, and therein lies the reward. It is not only a personal experience, but also a political message. As Peroomian redefines it, “I see this literature, responses to the Armenian Genocide, as a monument erected to the memory of that Genocide, to the Armenian aspiration to become a nation again, not a nation of victims but one with a tragic past that has been acknowledged and duly redressed. That is the way to resolve the burden of the past in order to make national survival and perpetuation possible” (pp. 394-395).

We can only be grateful to Peroomian for having assumed the painful task and the burden of working through the extensive literature of atrocity and facing the emotional and psychological challenge it represents. She has succeeded in mediating the struggle of Armenian authors to deal with the Genocide, and in transmitting the substance and tenor of their struggle, with courage, honesty and that special quality of insight accessible only to those who have engaged in the same struggle on a personal level. Thus, in completing her book, the reader is neither depressed nor overwhelmed, but, on the contrary, experiences a certain sense of therapeutic relief, and hope in the future.

(Muriel Mirak-Weissbach is the author of *Through the Wall of Fire: Armenia – Iraq – Palestine: From Wrath to Reconciliation*, 2009, and *Madness at the Helm: Pathology and Politics in the Arab Spring*, 2012. She can be reached at mirak.weissbach@googlemail.com and www.mirak-weissbach.de.)

# CALENDAR

## MASSACHUSETTS

**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 or 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; Juliyet 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.

**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



**Ambassador Edward P. Djerjian, the featured speaker of the K. George and Carolann S. Najarian Endowed Lecture on Human Rights, will give a talk at The Great Hall, in Faneuil Hall, Boston, Mass., on Thursday, October 25, at 7 p.m. The program is an endowed program of the Armenian Heritage Park and is free and open to the public.**

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.

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COMMENTARY

# For Once, Aliyev May Be Right

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Any objective analysis must seek a rational solution to intractable problems. News media and some government agencies may become more alarmist to dramatize certain critical situations. However, there are historic moments where the distinction between rationality and alarmism is blurred. That is the situation in Armenia today.

Recently, in this column, we quoted a statement from the president of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, which sounded a death knell for Armenia.

He specifically said that Armenia's population is dwindling while Azerbaijan's armed forces are growing. "We can wait until Armenia's population is reduced to one million and then we can take over its territory," he had said.

In that scenario, Azerbaijan does not need to use its recently-acquired modern weaponry, estimated to be worth \$1.6 billion. Nor does it need to use the military drones supplied by Israel. Instead, the leadership in Baku is counting on a waiting game which is working in its favor.

The situation is similar to the demise of the Soviet Union. The nuclear arsenal of the US and all the western countries were unable to dismantle the Soviet empire, but internal decay caused that seemingly impervious empire to implode, without a single shot fired by the West.

In their unabashed statements, the Azeri leaders have claimed not only Karabagh (or Artsakh) as part of their territory, but also the entire territory of Armenia, as recently stated by President Aliyev himself, characterizing Armenians as "recent settlers on Azerbaijani territory."

Any student of history can turn the tables and state as a historic fact that the opposite claim has historical veracity, that in fact, Azeris are the recent settlers in the region.

Aliyev is not the only leader entertaining such dreams; before him, another president, Abulfaz Elchibey, threatened to occupy Armenia, wash his feet in Lake Sevan and drink tea on its shores. Incidentally, he also threatened to occupy "northern Azerbaijan" in Iran and annex it to the modern Republic of Azerbaijan.

If during Elchibey's administration such designs were dismissed as pipe dreams, today they have become – and must become – serious issues of concern.

The fact is Armenia is being depopulated and Aliyev's waiting-game policy can no longer be considered a far-fetched plan.

For two decades, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as well as regional and major governments, have been negotiating to find a solution to the Karabagh conflict. (Actually, they are spinning their wheels.) The fact that no solution has been found indicates that it is not in the interests of the parties involved to solve the problem. That keeps Karabagh's future in limbo, with the population facing a paralyzing uncertainty. Even Armenia's only strategic partner, Russia, has a policy of duplicity.

During the Soviet era, Moscow's foreign policy was driven by ideology. No more. Today it is driven by interest, sometimes marked with ironies. For example, the only Russian military base outside its territory is in Armenia, ostensibly to defend

Armenia against any perceived threat from Turkey. Yet the foreign policy establishment in Moscow finds it perfectly compatible with its policy to sell \$100 million worth of weapons to Turkey.

The West is interested in winning over the Azeri leadership to have access to that country's energy resources and to wean it away from Moscow. This is the same policy Britain exercised in 1919, trying to convince Armenians in Karabagh to accept Azeri rule "temporarily," until the status of the territory was determined at the Paris Peace Conference. The Armenian National Council of Karabagh refused the British *diktat*, risking the destruction of the region by Sultanov's forces, a "governor" handpicked and imposed on the locals by Britain.

The population in Armenia is dwindling and it certainly is not increasing in Karabagh. Any solution to the Karabagh problem will surely include a popular referendum on the status of the territory. Baku's leadership may wait out and when Armenians lose the critical mass in the territory, they may agree to a referendum, after having calculated the outcome.

Foreign investments in Armenia and Karabagh are very slow, hampering job creation and economic recovery. The dysfunctional legal system also does not encourage foreign investments. Even local oligarchs have moved some of their businesses outside the country.

There are some bright spots and valiant undertakings in a rather gloomy background. For example, recently a local benefactor, Levon Hayrabetyan, financed the weddings of 700 couples in Karabagh, also pledging to set up trust funds for children born out of those marriages. That was an individual initiative, which can only go so far. A similar national program must be adopted and implemented by both governments.

Another investor from the diaspora established a meat processing plant in Karabagh, spending \$1 million. When asked by a journalist what he would do with his investment if we lose Karabagh, he responded: "I will not cry over my one million, as I will have a bigger loss to cry about."

These are acts of courage few and far in between. A more massive program is needed to stop the hemorrhage and to put Armenia and Karabagh back on the path towards revitalization.

Unfortunately, a rudderless diaspora is no help, either. We are fragmented and trivialized like never before. Lay and religious leaders of national prominence who commanded respect ironically disappeared from the scene just when they were most needed, as Armenia attained independence.

There is a national emergency but we don't seem to feel a sense of urgency.

Armenia's depopulation will mean a catastrophe of historic magnitude. We must not let Aliyev's design come true. We waited for six centuries to finally have an independent homeland. Can we survive another six centuries if we lose this opportunity?

In view of the gravity of this situation, all of our current priorities pale and should thus receive corresponding importance; they lose their significance completely should Armenia fail. This traumatic situation must move all Armenians with a passion in order to stop the downfall. It is a nightmarish prospect – and obsession will be forgiven in pursuit of a solution.

We need to disprove Aliyev and all the enemies of Armenia. Is any one listening?

## Let Us Extend a Hand as a Nation to the Syrian Armenians

By Panos Titizian

The revolutionary winds of the "Arab Spring" which began in Tunisia and continued in Algeria, Yemen, Libya and Egypt for 17 months have now turned Syria's capital, Damascus, and its large cities of Aleppo and Kamishli, into scenes of bloody battles. Over 80 percent of the Syrian Armenians live in these three cities.

Bloody and destructive struggles in any Arab country due to political, religious or ethnic reasons can only cause sorrow for the Armenian people. The Armenian people is not only forever grateful to the Arab countries for opening widely their doors and hearts on the morrow of the Genocide to the children of the exiled Armenian people, accepting them and providing them with the possibility of earning their livelihood through work – and especially the humane and noble behavior of the hospitable people of Syria. It is also profoundly in commiseration with them as a result of the terrible crisis which they are now experiencing. Our hope and desire is that a positive solu-

tion is found as soon as possible to this crisis, which is of a destructive nature for all parties, and the guns and bombs fall silent. By carrying out an acceptable solution for all sides, peace and calm will reign once more throughout Syria's territory.

At the same time, we are aware that hopes and desires without real, practical steps remain solely wishes and dreams, especially in our case, if we Armenians do not help by all possible means and do not take tangible initial steps to extend financial, physical, spiritual and moral aid to our Syrian-Armenian brothers and sisters.

In this vein, the communiqué of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) several days ago in the Armenian press is very encouraging and comforting. Among other things, it said:

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.

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## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Leading Muslim Cleric Issued *Fatwa*, Condemning Turks for Killing Armenians

I recently came across an extremely significant Islamic document that severely criticizes Turks for using religion as a cover to killing Armenian Christians.

This rarely-seen document is a *Fatwa* or religious decree issued in May 1909 by Grand Sheikh Salim al-Bishri of Egypt, condemning Turkish Muslims for massacring 30,000 Armenians in Adana, a major city in the Ottoman Empire.

Sheikh al-Bishri of Al-Azhar Mosque, leader of the Muslim world's preeminent center of Islamic studies in Cairo, issued this *Fatwa* in order to counter the decree issued in April 1909 by a Turkish Mufti (religious leader), urging Turks to kill Armenians because "they were against Muslims and God."

Upon seeing a passing reference to the Egyptian *Fatwa* on the Internet, I contacted Prof. Mohammed Rifaat al-Emam, an expert on Armenian history, whom I had met during a recent visit to Cairo. Dr. al-Emam kindly sent me the original Arabic text of this important religious document, excerpts of which are presented below in English

translation for the first time:

"We have seen in local newspapers agonizing news and vile reports about Muslims of some Anatolian provinces of the Ottoman Empire attacking Christians and killing them brutally. We could not believe these reports and hoped that they were false, because Islam forbids aggression, oppression, bloodshed and harming human beings – Muslims, Christians and Jews alike.

"Oh Muslims living in that region and elsewhere beware of actions prohibited by Allah in His Sharia [Islamic law] and spare the blood that Allah prohibited to spill and do not transgress on anyone since Allah does not like aggressors....

"Your duty towards those who are allied with you, who entrusted their safety to you and who reside among you and next to you from Ahlul Dhimma [Jewish and Christian minorities protected under Islam], as imposed by Allah, is to uplift them as you would uplift yourselves, prevent them from what you prevent yourselves and your kinsfolk, make your strength their strength, make pride and prosperity out of your strength, and protect their monasteries and churches the way you protect your mosques and temples.

"Whoever abuses their women, draws the sword on them, and oppresses them contradicts Muslims' pledge to Allah, which is the obligation of Muslims.

"Be informed that if what the public is hearing is true, then you have angered your Allah and did not satisfy your Prophet and the Sharia. You kept your Muslim brothers away from their religion, whose rejection became hideous by this heinous act, violating what is forbidden, and you let loose tongues of people ignorant of your religion to pronounce hideous words against all Muslims.

"Then, hear some of what your Prophet said about conditions similar to what you are in today. He said: 'He who kills an allied person [person joined with Islam by an agree-

ment in order to give help and support] will not smell the fragrance of Paradise and if he smells it, that would be at a distance of 40 years.' He also said: 'A person who rejects a dhimmi [a person from Jewish and Christian minorities] will be whipped with flagella of fire on Judgment Day.'"

This document makes it amply clear that the Armenian massacres of 1909 and the subsequent Genocide of 1915 were not the result of religious conflict between Muslim Turks and Christian Armenians. The Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar rightly condemned the Turks for the mass murder of Armenians, which was committed for racist Pan-Turkic – not Pan-Islamic – reasons, along with the intent of capturing Armenian lands and properties. The various *Fatwas* issued by Turkish Muftis (clerics) were intended to provoke fanatical Turkish mobs to attack and massacre innocent Armenians.

Sheikh al-Bishri's 1909 *Fatwa* was further reinforced by the decree issued in 1917 by Al-Husayn Ibn Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, ordering all Muslims to defend Armenians and "provide everything they might need ... because they are the Protected People of the Muslims about whom the Prophet Muhammad said: 'Whoever takes from them even a rope, I will be his adversary on the day of Judgment.'"

In 2009, when Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan stated "Muslims don't commit genocide," he was only partly right. He should have said: "Good Muslims don't commit genocide." The leaders of the Young Turk Party who masterminded the Armenian Genocide in 1915 were not faithful Muslims, judging by the teachings of the Quran – the holy book of Islam. They were simply criminals who used Islam as a convenient cover to carry out mass murder. The compassionate *Fatwa* of the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar still rings true today as the Muslim world celebrates the end of Ramadan.

## Let Us Extend a Hand As a Nation to the Syrian Armenians

SYRIA, from page 14

As we see, this great Union, born from the sorrows of the Armenian people, brought to life by Boghos Nubar Pasha and his friends in Cairo 106 years ago with the noble patriotic and humanitarian ideas of taking care of the needs of the Armenian people, which without discrimination has come to the aid of all the children of our people uprooted from its historic lands and wandering the five continents of the world – the orphan and the widow, the sick and needy, the victim of earthquake, the seeker of education, and those who need basic sustenance and shelter in order to live – again carries out its historical and honorable role.

It is not amazing that the AGBU, which enlisted in the holy mission of patriotism, philanthropy and dedication in the life of our people, had successive presidents imbued with clear-sightedness and patriotism, Mihran Karagheuzian, Calouste Gulbenkian, Alex Manoogian and his daughter, Louise Manoogian Simone, and the present energetic, idealist president Berge Setrakian, Esq., who, taking the torch passed on from Boghos Nubar Pasha, served with the same resolve of will, spirit and dedication, and continue to serve today. The proof is the reassuring press release which we have mentioned above.

Consequently, it is necessary not to leave the AGBU alone in its service to the nation. The pain of the Syrian Armenians, the demand to become its remedy, must become an imperative for all Armenians, both in Armenia and the diaspora, including all our political, religious, philanthropic, social and youth organizations and institutions. Without a doubt when the challenge is of a pan-Armenian nature, the assistance, the response, must also be of a pan-Armenian resonance and magnitude.

In this sense, we are sure that all the children of our people, whatever ideal, creed or conviction they may have, spurred on by the historical imperative of the moment, hand in hand with the Central Executive of the Armenian General Benevolent Union and its energetic president, encouraging one another, will provide the necessary assistance to one of the most vital, steadfast citadels of our diaspora, worthy of gratitude – the glorious Syrian Armenians.

(Panos Titizian is an ADL leader. This article was translated into English from the original Armenian.)

## The Mystery of Competitive Caucasus Elections

By Thomas de Waal

A curious election took place recently in the Caucasus. It attracted very little notice but deserved more. In the tiny, unrecognized territory of Nagorno Karabagh – entirely Armenian but still regarded by the world as de jure part of Azerbaijan – an opposition candidate for president did extremely well.

With no support from any political party and in a place with a strong tradition of government control, Vitaly Balasanian collected 32 percent of the vote against the incumbent Bako Sahakian, who was reelected president. According to local statistics, about 70,000 people voted. Balasanian's was an impressive performance by any standards. In most of the former Soviet Union, opposition candidates do not get a third of the vote. The result was even more striking in the limited conditions of Nagorno Karabagh. In Armenia's last – disputed – presidential election, former president and head of the opposition Levon Ter-Petrosian was awarded 21 percent of the vote. The Armenian opposition may now take heart ahead of the next presidential election there, due in February 2013.

This was not an election fought primarily over foreign or security policy. There was consensus on the issue of Karabagh's status, with both main candidates maintaining that the territory should be an independent state, separate from Azerbaijan. Having been a leading military commander in the conflict of 1991–1994, Balasanian's patriotic credentials were unimpeachable, and he actually took a harder-line position than his rival: he said that Karabagh should insist on being represented at the negotiating table and unequivocally rejected the return of the occupied territories around Karabagh to Azerbaijan (a central part of the peace deal currently on the table, accepted by Yerevan).

The differences were over domestic policy, with the discontent of voters perhaps more directed against the controversial prime minister, Arayik Harutyunyan, than against the president. The opposition candidate picked up his strongest support in three rural regions, Askeran, Martakert and Martuni, where socio-economic problems are greatest.

The Karabagh election conforms to a curious trend whereby some of the most competitive elections in the post-Soviet space are in unrecognized or partially-recognized territories.

Separatist Transnistria recently chose as its new leader a young parliamentarian Yevgeny Shevchuk, who defeated the candidates more favored by the old guard and by Moscow. Abkhazia has had two fiercely competitive elections in 2004 and 2011, in which the candidate positioning himself as the outsider prevailed both times. Even South Ossetia, whose current population is estimated at no more than 40,000 and whose budget is 99 percent supported by Russia, managed to hold a dramatic semifarcical election last year in which the opposition candidate, Alla Jiyoeva, won. The results of that ballot were then annulled, but the eventual winner, Leonid Tibilov, was by local standards a fairly independent candidate who has appointed Jiyoeva to his cabinet.

What is going on here? If I have an explanation it is that, para-

doxically, because statehood is weaker in these territories, ordinary members of society are more self-reliant and less susceptible to pressure. There is more politics from below. But I would use the word "competitive" advisedly. These are not regular elections. There is a democratic deficit in part because these territories are not recognized sovereign states (although this should not disqualify them from having democratic aspirations.)

More problematic is the issue of the "missing populations," Azerbaijani and Georgian, that cannot take part in the vote because they were displaced by war. In the last Soviet census of 1988, 23 percent of the population of Nagorno Karabagh was Azerbaijani. All of those people are now refugees inside their own country.

What is a proper international verdict on a poll such as this one? International observers continue to tie themselves in knots, satisfying neither the Armenian side ("Why do you ignore us if we hold a good democratic election?") nor the Azerbaijanis ("Don't give any credence to a territory that no one, not even Armenia, has recognized as sovereign.") Freedom House has begun to give democracy ratings to the breakaway territories but has almost no direct presence on the ground to make its judgment.

At the very least, there is a political judgment that the citizens of these lands have a crucial stake in the eventual peace settlements of the conflicts and that it is desirable for them to have legitimate leaders who can speak on their behalf.

In March 1992, making plans for a peace conference on the Karabagh conflict (that has still not been held 20 years on), the then Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, now the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), first tried to square this circle by stating that "elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabagh [ie Armenians and Azerbaijanis respectively] will be invited to the Conference."

The current OSCE mediators did their best to continue this line in their latest statement, saying "The co-chairs acknowledge the need for the de facto authorities in NK to try to organize democratically the public life of their population with such a procedure. However, the co-chairs note that none of their three countries, nor any other country, recognizes Nagorno-Karabagh as an independent and sovereign state."

Along the same lines, the EU Foreign Policy Chief Baroness Ashton issued a statement, criticizing the basis for the election but not the election itself: "I would like to reiterate that the European Union does not recognize the constitutional and legal framework in which they will be held. These 'elections' should not prejudice the determination of the future status of Nagorno-Karabagh in the negotiated general framework of the peaceful settlement of the conflict."

The rather tortured language of these statements reflects an underlying discomfort. The longer these protracted post-Soviet conflicts remain unresolved, these elections pose an international challenge which is growing, not diminishing.

(Thomas de Waal is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. This opinion piece appeared in the August 9 edition of *The National Interest*.)



# Young Athletes Make AGBU History at the 19th World Games in Los Angeles

AGBU, from page 9

members to come together like this. I salute all the volunteers who have worked tirelessly to make these unparalleled AGBU World Games an enormous success.”

During the evening, Athletic Coordinator of the World Games, Jano Baghdanian invited former AYA athletes to the stage to present the 1st place winners with their trophies. They were followed by former AGBU Southern California District Chairman Vahe Imasdounian, who handed the Sportsmanship Award to Toronto, as well as longtime athletics supporter Albert Boyajian, who presented the Friendship Award to Montevideo. The team leader of the Montevideo delegation, Jose Handalian, commented, “Every minute of this week’s World Games, I felt at home. It was a great pleasure, and a gratifying experience, for all of us from Uruguay to participate in the Games and meet the other delegations. This is a brilliant organization, a brilliant event, and most importantly, brilliant people who are behind the games.”

No one went home from the Games empty



World Games Chairman Shahe Seuylemezian addresses more than 1,000 AGBU athletes and supporters at the 2012 World Games Opening Ceremony on July 29, 2012.



Over 1,700 guests gather at the traditional AGBU World Games Victory Ball at Universal Studios’ “New York” set.

handed, and on Saturday, August 4, at the Trophy Ceremony in Pasadena High School, all the athletes received cups, medals and recognition for their participation in AGBU’s 19th World Games.

The words of AGBU Western District Committee Chairman Haig Messerlian captured the feelings of all participants at the ceremony, as they reflected on the week that had passed. He said, “The AGBU World Games 2012 in Los Angeles was an event that marked AGBU’s commitment to our youth, its power, popularity and prestige among the participants, our AGBU membership and the community in general, perfectly in line with AGBU’s slogan, “Unity is Strength.”

As the players and teams congratulated each other on the matches they had completed, they were already looking forward to the next time they would play together. With the next World Games scheduled for 2016, they still have time, but will no doubt keep in touch until then, not letting distance weaken the strong bonds that were formed both on and off the courts.

The AGBU 2012 World Games World Games Committee included: Chairman Shahe Seuylemezian, Honorary Chairman Hratch Manoukian, Vice Chairman Hagop Sepejian, Treasurer Hagop Jazmadarian, Recording Secretary and Volunteer Coordinator Aleen Khanjian, English Corresponding Secretary Aline K. Yeterian, Armenian Corresponding Secretary Kevork Keushkerian, Fundraising Committee Chairman Vahe Imasdounian, Sports Committee Chairman Jano Baghdanian, Special Events Committee Chairwoman Aline Patatian, Opening Ceremony Committee Chairwoman Sonia Babayan, Protocol Committee Chairwoman Hermie Janoyan, Security Committee Chairman Garo Babian, Facilities Manager Ara Manoukian, Registration Committee Chairwoman Cynthia Simonian, Information Technology Committee Chairman Jack Svadian, Committee member at large Ara Yessaian, Committee member at large Bared Gosdanian, and Production Manager Stepan Partamian.

## Armenian Assembly Welcomes Adoption of Artsakh Resolution by Massachusetts House

RESOLUTION, from page 1

worked closely with Hecht and other leaders of the House. “Adoption of this resolution is in keeping with American values of promoting democracy and respect for the fundamental rights of all peoples.”

The resolution reads in part: “Whereas, for decades, Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, having arbitrarily been severed from Armenia and forced under Soviet Azerbaijani administration, peacefully demonstrated for self-determination and individual freedom and against Soviet Azerbaijani repression and discrimination...were met with acts of violent repression by Soviet Azerbaijani forces, resulting in the killings of ethnic Armenians in Sumgait (February 1988), Kirovabad (November 1988), and Baku (January 1990) and the forcible deportation of over 350,000 Armenians from Azerbaijan.”

In addition, the resolution also recalled the adoption of Nagorno-Karabakh’s declaration of independence on January 6, 1992, by its freely elected parliament, and also congratulated Arstakh on its presidential election held last month “in which 74 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in a peaceful and competitive election that international observers found to be free and fair.”

Further, the resolution also respectfully urged “the president and Congress of the United States of America to support the self-determination and democratic independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and to encourage nations neighboring Nagorno-Karabakh to foster and maintain peaceful relations with it” and urged “our country’s leaders to continue promoting the humanitarian and economic rehabilitation of Nagorno-Karabakh.”

## Karekin II Extends Condolences on Death of Actress Galya Novents

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Acclaimed actress of Armenian cinema and theater Galya Novents died at 75 in late July.

One of the leading Armenian actresses, Novents graduated from Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts and Theatre in 1958 to star in numerous Armenian theatres.

Novents received Venice Film Festival’s best actress prize for her role of Siranush in 1986’s “Mer Mankutyun Tangon.” Other notable films included, “Hello, It’s Me!,” “We Are Our Mountains,” “At This Crossroad,” “Old Days’ Song,” “Nahapet (Patriarch),” “Gikor,” “White Dreams,” “A Piece of Sky” and many others.

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II issued a statement expressing his condolences.

“On behalf of the Supreme Spiritual Council and the Brotherhood of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, we express our deepest condolences to the relatives, friends and colleagues of the deceased and all those who mourn the death of Galya Novents.

“Many Armenians and foreigners both in Armenia and abroad admired the high level of her artistic mastery. The talented actress deserved the warm love and respect of an art-loving audience. The original artistic images and roles Galya Novents of blessed memory played were the embodiment of an Armenian woman with her sufferings; outbursts of soul; insight; and strive for what is good and brings happiness.”



From left, Fr. Mesrob Ash, Charles Tateosian, Mary Tateosian and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian

## Charles Tateosian Celebrates 90th Birthday, Receives Pontifical Encyclical

SAN FRANCISCO — Long time supporter of and contributor to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator Charles Tateosian, celebrated his 90th birthday on Sunday, August 5.

Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, after celebrating the Divine Liturgy at St. John Armenian Apostolic Church, conferred upon Tateosian a Pontifical Encyclical from Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, for his outstanding service to St. John Armenian Church and the Western Diocese. In the Encyclical wrote His Holiness in part, “We commend your invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered to St. John Armenian Apostolic Church in San Francisco and to the community as a whole. You have been an instrumental figure in the construction of the parish and have taken on many administrative roles in the life of St. John Armenian Apostolic Church. You have served with grace and humility, for your kind deeds are exemplary and spiritually enriching, indeed.”

Tateosian is the founder of the St. John Armenian Apostolic Church and has been a long time member and former Grand Commander of the Knights of Vartan brotherhood.