

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXIV, NO. 6, Issue 4300 \$ 2.00

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

## Foundation Set up in Memory of California Couple Killed in Georgia Crash

By **Brittany Levine**

GLENDALE (*Glendale News Press*) – Last August, Vaché Thomassian celebrated his sister’s whirlwind wedding – complete with a traditional church ceremony and a tour of the bride and groom’s favorite locations in Armenia.

The two were so in love and their friends and families beamed with joy.

Sunday, August 18, would have been Sosé Thomassian and Allen Yekikian’s first anniversary. That milestone, tragically, will never occur as the two, who had strong ties to the Armenian community in Glendale, died in a car crash while on a weekend getaway in May.

The difference in emotion from the emotions we felt last year during the wedding and now are worlds apart,” said Thomassian, who visited the church in Armenia where the wedding was held with his mother last week.

The past three months have been nightmarish for Thomassian, but he said a desire

to honor his sister and her husband’s memories sustains him. He sees Sosé Thomassian and Yekikian as symbols of young Armenian Americans striving to improve their ancestors’ homeland and he wants to continue their work.

Vaché Thomassian and some close friends launched the Sosé and Allen Foundation, a charity aimed at supporting the couple’s core values: education, repatriation, volunteerism and democratic development.

The 29-year-old Columbia University graduate student timed the launch of a website for the foundation, [www.roseandallen.com](http://www.roseandallen.com), with the couple’s anniversary. He pulled together photos, videos and stories for the website, a cathartic exercise that he said made his sister and brother-in-law seem more alive than ever.

“They did a lot in a short time, they left a lot left to be done, which I hope to continue, but most importantly, they did every-

Young newlywed couple, Sosé Thomassian and Allen Yekikian, died in May in a car crash in the country of Georgia. The two, well-known in the Armenian community locally and abroad, moved to Armenia earlier this year. (Courtesy of Arek Santikian / September 29, 2012)



thing with love, love for their families, love for [Armenia], their communities in California and love for each other,” he said.

The couple met at the La Crescenta chapter of the Armenian Youth Federation, and after hosting a destination wedding in see FOUNDATION, page 16



Nora Armani (Photo credit: Yannis Nivault)

## Armani Brings Rated SR - Socially Relevant Film Festival to Life

By **Gabriella Gage**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

SR – Socially Relevant Film Festival New York, while attending this year’s Cannes Film Festival, but for Armani the makings of the festival have been present throughout her career as an actor, filmmaker and thinker.

According to its website, the Rated SR – Socially Relevant Film Festival New York is “devoted specifically to filmmakers and fans of entertaining and commercially viable movies that achieve box office success without resorting to gratuitous violence, vices and sensationalism.”

The multilayered festival will take place concurrently in Manhattan and in upstate New York at the Carey Center for Global Good/ The Carey Institute. Manhattan events will include screenings, red carpet, Q&A with the selected filmmakers and various panels. Upstate, the Filmmakers’ Lab will run with various panels with industry guests, networking opportunities, sessions and receptions as well as some screenings. Transportation will be offered between the two sites and accommodations will be available at the upstate location. Camoin, alongside Carol Ash, president of the Carey Center for Global Good, will be leading the festival activities at the Carey Center.

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## Suny Named Winner of 2013 Distinguished Contributions Award

BOSTON – The Distinguished Contributions to Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies Award (SEES), which honors senior scholars who have helped to build and develop the field through scholarship, training and service to the profession, is presented annually, with the prize going this year to Ronald Grigor Suny, the Charles Tilly collegiate professor of social and political history and director of the Eisenberg Institute of Historical Studies at the University of Michigan and emeritus professor of political science and history at the University of Chicago.



Prof. Ronald Grigor Suny

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## 95th Convocation of Knights of Vartan



Mark Geragos and his wife Paulette attended the KoV Convocation. See full coverage on pages 8 and 9.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Rumors Suggest Egypt May Recognize Armenian Genocide

CAIRO – A news report began circulating this week suggesting that Egypt is going to recognize the Armenian Genocide. The Russian news agency Regnum suggested that Adli Mansur, the present president of Egypt, suggested as much on his Twitter feed.

“An international document is to be signed by the representatives of Egypt in the UN, which recognizes the genocide of one million Armenians implemented by the Turkish army,” Regnum said.

Our sources in Cairo report that during a recent press conference, the foreign minister of Egypt, Nabil Fahmy, was asked directly by a journalist about the veracity of this particular news item. His answer was “not to my knowledge, but if someone in the government has done something unbeknownst to me,” he said, then he has not heard about it yet.

### Sargisian Sends Condolences to Lebanese President

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian President Serge Sargisian sent a letter of condolences to Lebanese President Michel Suleiman in response to the terrorist act that took place on August 15 in Beirut, which resulted in 10 deaths and several injuries.

According to the president’s staff, Sargisian expressed his condolences to the Lebanese president, the relatives those killed and entire nation of Lebanon, wishing them “endurance and valor and to the wounded,” as well as a speedy recovery.

### Elderly Armenian Woman Attacked in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Markirit Camkosoglu, 80, was attacked by an unknown person in the Ferikooy neighborhood of the Sisli District.

According to reports, Camkosoglu noted a suspicious person at her building when she returned from the store on August 17. “When I opened the door, he assaulted me from behind. As I fell down, he tried to kill me. My bag, with 70 Turkish liras inside, was on the table; he took it and ran away. I have lived here for 50 years now, but nothing like this happened to me ever before,” Camkosoglu said.

This is the latest in a string of attacks on elderly Armenian women in the city. One of the assaulted women, 87-year-old Turfanda Asik, lost an eye, while another woman was robbed and severely injured. On December 28, 2012, Maritsa Kucuk was murdered at her home in Samatya. Two other attacks were carried out in the same month. Most recently, 83-year-old Sultan Akyar was attacked in Samatya, after which she underwent eye surgery.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Artsakh President Visits Shushi Museum Site

SHUSHI, Artsakh (Armenpress) – On August 17, Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan visited the construction site of a geological museum being built and got acquainted with the progress of construction. The Central Information Department of the Artsakh President's Office reported that Sahakyan considered important the existence of such an establishment in Artsakh.

On the same day he attended a concert by the pupils of Hadout region's Togh village, at the Shushi State Museum of Fine Arts. He noted that such initiatives would greatly contribute to the restoration of Shushi's glory as Artsakh's cultural center.

## Tavush Governor Hosts US Ambassador

LJEVAN, Armenia (Armenpress) – Tavush Province Governor Armen Ghularyan hosted US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern on August 19. During the meeting, Ghularyan introduced the regional centers of the province and possibilities for development.

Dilijan was noted for its development as a top health resort and relatively advanced infrastructures. The city of Berd was also noted for its abundant nature, fertile soil and its Honey and Berries Festival, which began on August 18.

Heffern expressed his gratitude for the reception and stated that he spent a wonderful day in Berd at the Honey and Berries Festival.

## Rare Plants Survive Botanical Garden Fire

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – According to reports, the August 19 fire in Botanical Garden did not harm any exclusive plant species housed there.

"A territory of about 7,000 square meters has been burnt, 90 percent of which was grass-covered. About 10 bushes and aboriginal trees were damaged, but will recover by the next year," said Botanical Garden Deputy Director Gagik Movsisyan. The cause of the fire remains unknown.

## Joint Armenian-Russian Military Exercises Begin

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian and Russian armed forces are holding tactical exercises in the Alagyaz mountainous military college. The press service of the Southern military district of Russian Federation reported that the joint military exercises will last until August 24.

During the exercises, Mi-8 planes, T-72B tanks, artillery systems "Giachint" and "Gvozdika" and other modern weapons will be showcased.

## Armenia Says It Is Committed to Human Rights

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Regardless of the decision of Azerbaijani authorities, Armenia will remain loyal to its commitments to international human rights and humanitarian law, said Armenian Defense Ministry press secretary Artsrun Hovhannisyan. He was responding to a question on whether Armenian authorities are awaiting Azerbaijan's decision on the Armenian citizen detained recently in Azerbaijan, to proceed accordingly with the Azerbaijani prisoner of war.

Hovhannisyan said, "Regardless of decision of Azerbaijani authorities we will stay loyal to Armenia's commitments in the spheres of Human Rights and Humanitarian law and will act in compliance with assumed responsibilities set out in all agreements and documents signed with respective international organizations and no less important the free, unhindered and informed decision of the Azerbaijani POW [prisoner of war] on his future status."

# International Scientists Convene at AUA for Conference

YEREVAN, Armenia – On July 15-19, guests from 17 different countries gathered at the American University of Armenia (AUA) for the 22nd International Conference on the Discrete Simulation of Fluid Dynamics (DSFD).

Over 60 participants from all over the world traveled to Armenia to partake in the conference. The DSFD Conference gave participants the opportunity not only to exchange ideas, but also to experience Armenia. AUA President Dr. Bruce M. Boghosian explains, "these scientists came from North and South America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and it was very good for them to see Armenia and hear talks from leading Armenian scientists. It was also good to see Armenian students in the audience, from local departments of mathematics, science and engineering."

The five-day program featured daily lecture series, which allowed participants and members of the AUA community to share their own work in the field of fluid dynamics. Dr. Alexander Wagner from North Dakota State University shares, "the importance of

conferences like these is that scientists can meet each other, and discuss and exchange ideas. Indeed, scientists can always publish articles in magazines, but it's quite different to meet and share our ideas. Such forums are also a good opportunity to meet Armenian scientists, particularly because we don't often have the opportunity to be in contact with them."

Participant Dr. Peter Love from

Haverford College also noted the value of meeting AUA students: "I had a long discussion with a masters student about a research problem of mutual interest in quantum information that was very interesting. In fact, we are continuing our discussion and I hope we can work together on this problem via email."

The DSFD Conference takes place every year in a different part of the world. Says Dr. Boghosian, "The DSFD conference is one of the leading annual international conferences on the computer simulation of fluids. This kind of simulation is very important in many industries. The most obvious examples are the automotive, aerospace and ship construction industries, where air flow and water flow play an important role."

Because many participants had never visited Armenia, the conference also had a cultural component, including visits to cultural attractions both inside and outside of Yerevan. Dr. Sauro Succi from L'Istituto Applicazioni del Calcolo says, "the outdoor tours offered another face of Armenia, the ancient monasteries, precious churches and the heart of Armenia's culture. Last but not least the beauty and natural elegance of Mount Ararat. All, very, very impressive."



DSFD Conference participants with AUA President Dr. Bruce M. Boghosian in front of AUA's Paramaz Avedisian Building



AUA President Dr. Bruce M. Boghosian addresses DSFD Conference participants at the American University of Armenia

# Fresh, Organic and on the Border

YEREVAN – On August 7, ONEArmenia launched its fourth campaign to help build sustainable greenhouses for over 500 residents in the border village of Berkaber, located in the Tavush region of northeastern Armenia.

For the past 20 years, the farmers in Berkaber have not been able to farm because their land, located on the other side of the village's reservoir, is under the occupation of Azeri military forces. Thankfully, there is a solution. With the partnership of Sahman NGO, ONEArmenia will build four greenhouses in the backyards of four homes in Berkaber, creating not only a regular source of food but also a pathway to steady income for each family, as produce can be sold and traded at market rates for three seasons out of the year. Each greenhouse will measure 100 square meters and can yield up to 50 kilograms of produce per day. The produce grown inside the greenhouses is all-organic, and water is dispersed throughout the structure using an eco-friendly drip system.

According to Sahman NGO, this type



A young girl in Berkaber

of farming is new to Berkaber. However, a team of agriculturists will visit the village regularly to train farmers on how to maintain and expand their greenhouses. Once built, the greenhouses will consistently produce organically-grown fruits and vegetables that the farmers can then sell to neighboring villages and as part of a co-op at the bazaar in nearby Ijevan.

Agriculture is the economic foundation of most countries, and for developing countries the most likely source of

economic growth. As you can see, the impact that four greenhouses can make on this tiny village is quite significant. The creation of greenhouses thus alleviates poverty by empowering the community to grow its own food.

ONEArmenia was founded in September 2012 to stand side-by-side with the change-making individuals and the organizations they represent, using social media and crowd-funding to involve anyone with an Internet connection in boosting projects that are geared toward making tangible change in Armenia. The non-profit is based on its commitment to global collaboration, freshness and transparency. This means that the ONEArmenia network makes it possible to not only raise money for a project based in Armenia as a worldwide community, but to also track the progress of said project with complete access to financial information.

For more information on the organization, visit [www.onearmenia.org/projects](http://www.onearmenia.org/projects). To help with its current fundraising campaign online on Indiegogo, visit <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/b-ring-sustainable-farming-to-armenia>.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Putting Rivalries Aside, All Main Kurdish Parties to Meet for First Time

By Ron Synovitz

BAGHDAD (RFE/RL) – Across the four countries where most of the world's Kurds live, competing ideologies and rivalries have prevented the emergence of a single unified Kurdish movement.

That has suited the governments of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, which have fanned Kurdish rivalries in the past because they don't want an independent Kurdish state carved out of their territories.

Now, with an eye toward improving their relations, 600 delegates from more than 40 Kurdish parties in all four countries are coming together for the first time.

Kamal Kirkuki, former speaker of the Kurdish regional parliament in northern Iraq, is a key organizer of the September 15-17 event. He says Syria's civil war and Middle East uprisings have made the gathering in Irbil necessary.

"We want to send a message of peace from all the participants in this event to all corners of the world," Kirkuki says. "We want [Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Iran] not to be misunderstood by the world. We want this conference to complement the previous attempts made by Kurdish leaders [to bridge their differences]. We feel that conditions are now appropriate."

All main Kurdish factions in the region have expressed the desire for Kurds to eventually be unified within an independent Kurdish state they call Kurdistan. But partisan rivalries keep them apart.

In Turkey, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) was founded in 1978 upon an ideology of Marxism with Kurdish nationalism.

It has renounced Marxist ideology since Turkey imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999. But those Marxist roots still raise suspicions among Kurds in areas where conservative Muslim values are the norm.

The presence of female militants in the PKK also has not rested well with Kurds in areas with male-dominated tribal structures.

Kurds in Iraq have a history of bitter

fighting during much of the past 40 years. Iraq's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) is led by Masud Barzani, the current president of northern Iraq's semiautonomous Kurdish regional government. Its main rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), is led by Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.

During the 1980s, Barzani's KDP was supported by Iran while Talabani's PUK was backed by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. They fought a full-fledged civil war in 1994 after the creation of the Kurdish regional government.

The toppling of Hussein's regime in 2003 brought a tenuous KDP-PUK alliance that has held for a decade. But further divisions emerged in 2009 when a third Iraqi Kurdish party, Gorran, was formed by disenfranchised members of both the PUK and the KDP.

In Syria, Kurdish leaders attained de facto autonomy in their areas last year when Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces withdrew, leaving Kurdish councils in charge of local administrations.

Syrian Kurds' autonomy plans have evolved since then with calls for their own constitution and a "temporary autonomous state" proposed by the Democratic Union Party, an affiliate of the PKK.

"The [Irbil] conference is the dream of all Kurds everywhere and is going to bring us closer as parties across the region," says Salih Muslim, the leader of the Syrian Kurds' Democratic Union Party. "Kurds within Syria already are in basic agreement under the umbrella of the Supreme High Kurdish Commission. We are looking forward to a transparent political path for the Kurdish people, ensuring understanding and coordination between us all so that Kurds become part of the democratic outlook in the Middle East."

The Kurdish autonomy agenda, however, has been stalled in Syria by recent battles between Kurdish militias and Al-Qaeda-linked anti-Assad Islamists. The fighting has sent more than 35,000 Syrian Kurds since August 15 into northern Iraq, where they have joined more than 150,000 other Syrian-Kurdish refugees.

Meanwhile, Islamist rebels in Syria

have been recruiting Kurdish Islamists from northern Iraq, further complicating matters.

Only in Iran have the fortunes of Kurds remained relatively unchanged by Syria's civil war and the Arab Spring uprisings.

Iran's Kurdish parties have been weakened by assassinations of their leaders. They remain divided over issues beyond the call for greater autonomy.

The organizers of September's Irbil conference assure Baghdad and Iraq's neighbors they are not trying to create an independent Kurdish state.

In Turkey, opposition to that development has driven Ankara's Kurdish policies for decades.

Bulent Azaria, director of the Turkey program at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, says Ankara's position is now complicated by the need to deal with Kurds caught up in Syria's civil war while also moving toward a peace deal with the PKK.

At the same time, Ankara has been engaging with Barzani, the Kurdish regional government president.

Barzani has pan-Kurdish aspirations. But he has recently developed closer relations with Ankara that have resulted in deals on oil deliveries from northern Iraq directly into Turkey. Azaria says Barzani's evolving relationship with Ankara could motivate him to try to temper autonomy aspirations of other Kurdish leaders.

"You're getting three different processes influencing each other – the Turkish opening to the Kurds in general, the Turkish involvement with the Iraqi Kurds in the hope that they would influence the others, and, of course, the Turkish involvement in the Syrian civil war with all the Kurdish complications," Azaria says. "Put them all together and you've got yourself a real mess."

Even without a breakthrough agreement in Irbil, the organization of the event could boost the popularity of Barzani's KDP among Kurdish voters in northern Iraq who dream of Kurdish unity.

Elections for northern Iraq's Kurdish regional parliament are scheduled for September 21, just four days after the conclusion of the Irbil conference.

## International News

### Armenian Districts of Cairo, Alexandria Calm

CAIRO (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Armenian-populated districts of violence-ridden Cairo are calm, due to a curfew imposed in the Egyptian capital, newspaper editor Suren Parsamian said.

All the Christian churches in the city are protected by security forces; however, in other cities, some churches were attacked, he added.

An Alexandria resident, Perch Alajia, further noted the situation in the city to be calm, with no attacks on churches reported. A curfew was imposed on Alexandria as well.

### Turkey's Pledge to Protect Historic Church Unrealized

TOKACLI, Turkey (Armenpress) – Yilmaz Yamac, the owner of the Armenian Pasvask church, announced that the Turkish government has failed to act on its pledge to take the Armenian church under its protection.

Yamac turned to the Ministry of Culture of Turkey in 2012 to protect the site as a place of cultural heritage. According to Yamac, villagers still use the church as a stable and keep their animals there.

He said, "Whenever I go to the village, I see the European tourists interested in the church. They get angry with the Turks and ask: 'Do you keep cattle in your mosques?' I am willing to give the certificate of ownership to the Armenian community. I do not want such an exquisite historical monument to disappear."

### Armenian Wrestler Wins Bronze in Sofia

SOFIA, Bulgaria (Armenpress) – Armenian freestyle wrestler Artak Hovhannisyan (55 kg) won a bronze medal at the Junior Wrestling World Championships held August 13-18. Hovhannisyan defeated Azerbaijani athlete Ruslan Surkhayev with a final score of nine versus seven.

Armenian Greco-Roman wrestlers, Karen Aslanyan (60 kg) and Karapet Chalyan (74 kg), won two gold medals during the tournament.

A total of 14 wrestlers represented Armenia, competing in three Olympic styles – Greco-Roman, men's freestyle and women's freestyle.

### Blessing of Grapes Service at Armenian Village in Turkey

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – The Feast Day of the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God and the Blessing of the Grapes Service were offered at the sole Armenian village of Turkey, Vakif, in Hatay Province. The Deputy Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Aram Ateshian presided over the Divine Liturgy served in the aforesaid village. A number of Armenians visited the village from the various parts of Turkey, Russia, France, Germany and Syria.

The Grape Blessing ceremony is conducted on the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God (on the nearest Sunday to August 15th) after the celebration of Divine Liturgy. Led by the presiding clergyman, the procession ascends to the Holy Altar.

The Blessing of the Grapes begins with the hymn Glory to Your Holy Cross, which is followed by readings from the Holy Bible.

Although St. Gregory the Illuminator didn't establish a specific service for offering the first fruit of the harvest, his followers kept this tradition. St. Sahag of Partev canonized it as a rule and St. Nerses the Graceful turned this tradition into a formal service.

According to the tradition the choice of grapes over other fruits is usually explained by the season, however some disagree. In the Bible there are frequent references to grapes and vines and the symbolic mission of the grape vines in the life of the church.

# Erdogan Sees Israel's Hand in Egyptian Overthrow

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan accused Israel on Tuesday of having a hand in the Egyptian military's overthrow of President Mohamed Mursi, making comments likely to further undermine efforts to restore Ankara's strained ties with Israel.

Erdogan, who has become one of the fiercest critics of the Islamist leader's removal last month, also said he feared "autocratic regimes" would take root if the West failed to respect election results.

Almost 900 people have died in the past week since the military-backed Egyptian government cracked down on supporters of Mursi's Muslim Brotherhood, who want the country's first freely-elected president reinstated.

"What do they say in Egypt? Democracy is not the ballot box. What is behind it? Israel. We have in our hands documentation," Erdogan told provincial leaders of his AK Party.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry declined to respond to Erdogan's allegation. "This is a statement well worth not commenting on," said ministry spokesman

Yigal Palmor.

Mursi was the most prominent Islamist to gain power through the ballot box after the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings and ruled for a year until his removal on July 3. Erdogan's AK party, which has won the last three Turkish general elections, traces its roots to a banned Islamist movement.

Erdogan did not say what documentation he had, but referred to comments he said an Israeli cabinet minister had made before Egyptian parliamentary elections held after a popular uprising pushed President Hosni Mubarak from power.

"Before the 2011 elections, during a session in France, the justice minister and an intellectual from France - he's Jewish too - they used exactly this comment: 'Even if the Muslim Brotherhood wins the election, they will not win because democracy is not the ballot box,'" Erdogan said.

"That is exactly what happened," he said in the comments aired live by state broadcaster TRT, without naming either the minister or the French intellectual.

Turkey's relations with Israel have

soured in recent years and hit a low in May 2010 when Israeli commandos killed nine Turkish activists while storming the Mavi Marmara, a ship in a convoy seeking to break an Israeli naval blockade of Gaza.

Earlier this year, Erdogan called Zionism "a crime against humanity", prompting objections from US Secretary of State John Kerry. President Barack Obama subsequently orchestrated an Israeli apology for the Mavi Marmara raid.

At least two senior AK Party officials have suggested there was Jewish involvement in anti-government protests that rocked Turkey in late May and June.

Erdogan repeatedly blamed unnamed foreign circles for those protests, in what he deemed an anti-democratic effort to undo Turkey's last three elections, in which the AK Party increased its share of the vote each time.

"The West needs to learn the definition of democracy," Erdogan said. "If it cannot ... these clashes will carry the world towards a different place. What is that? It will take it towards autocratic regimes. That is our concern."

# Community News

## Montreal TCA, ADL Delegations Discuss Church Crisis with Bishop Hovhannisyian

MONTREAL (*Abaka*) – More than 40 Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) and Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL) activists were received by Bishop Nathan Hovhannisyian on July 24 at St. Gregory Cathedral. Hovhannisyian was recently assigned by Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, as interim vicar general of the Diocese of the Armenian church of Canada. The bishop's main mission has been to resolve the recent turmoil in the Canadian-Armenian community and to hold elections for a new Primate for the Diocese of Canada at the next Diocesan General Assembly, which will be held at the end of May.

The TCA and ADL representatives briefly presented their organizations' past and future activities and projects. Hovhannisyian enjoyed conversing with the Armenagan youth, especially about their expectations from the church and the community.

The representatives also expressed their deep concerns about the events that developed following the elections held two months ago for the Primate of the Canadian Diocese. The representatives believed that the disturbances created immediately after the election produced an unhealthy atmosphere of division, animosity and mistrust in the community. The TCA and ADL representatives assured their full and unconditional support to the church as well as to all community organizations.

The attendees adamantly condemned all acts of boycott promoted by some community members. Finally, the members also emphasized that they were deeply concerned and hurt about the insults propagated in the social media about their institutions and leaders. It was unanimously requested that such acts be condemned.

The meeting lasted more than two hours and ended with words of thanks addressed by parish priest Rev. Vazken Boyadjian.

## Medical Program Coming To Armenian Heritage Cruise XVII 2014

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – On January 18, 2014, Armenian Heritage Cruise (AHC) will sail for the Caribbean on its 17th anniversary cruise. This year for the first time, AHC is introducing medical programs for physicians and AHC guests giving them the opportunity to hear the medical issues that affect children and Adults in Armenia and Karabagh. Dr. Raffi Hovanesian, Dr. Haig Minassian, Dr. Kim Hekimian and Maro Mateosian will participate and discuss various issues concerning health care in Armenia and Karabagh.

Hekimian is an assistant professor at the Institute of Human Nutrition at Columbia University and at the American University of Armenia's Master's of Public Health (MPH) program. She is a consultant for international health projects and has worked for USAID, UNICEF, World Vision and the World Bank among others.

She received her PhD from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and Hygiene in the department of Health Policy, division of Behavioral Sciences and Health Education. Her research has focused on determinants of infant feeding practices and nutrition during pregnancy and lactation. Her dissertation involved conducting the first national survey of infant nutrition practices in the newly independent nation of Armenia. The findings from this study led to a four year nation-wide breastfeeding promotion program, and she was involved in all aspects of the design and evaluation of the program which was funded by USAID, UNICEF, see CRUISE, page 6



Asdghig Alemian

## A True Star in the Armenian Community

### Survivor Looks Back on a Scary Childhood That Led to a Happy Life

WATERTOWN – In March of this year, family and friends held a birthday party for Asdghig Tetezian Alemian, known to her American friends as Starrie. Then, as today, if you ask Asdghig about her childhood, she will turn the clock back 103 years to where she was born, Keghi Kaghak, the central city of Keghi county, province of Garin (Erzerum), under Ottoman rule. With a soft smile, she will tell you about her sister Anna, her brothers Sarkis and Kourken, their mother Sirpouhi (Nahabedian) Tetezian, her father Shemavon, a skilled boot maker, and their modest home perched halfway up a mountain, overlooking a beautiful valley and year-round river. She'll tell you, when she became older (4 or 5?), she enjoyed walking in the fields, and one day how she fearfully escaped a bear attack by dropping into a hole, and was missing so long that her father came to her rescue. She will joke about a stream emerging from the mountain next to her home, across from which stood the home of her mother's aunt, and how that aunt who would lean from her window to chat with Sirpouhi about everyday things.

And Asdghig will also tell you of things which others had told her about, for example at age 12 upon arriving in the United States, when she learned from her paternal uncle, Garabed Tetezian about the 1910 photo taken by a roving photographer who had called out to her father, "Come on, Shemavon, gather your family in front of your house for a photo to send to your brother in the United States!"

Other memories of her family members remain frozen in time, such as that late



State Rep. Jonathan Hecht (D-Watertown), second from right, with Asdghig Alemian and family

spring evening in 1915 when she found women solemnly seated in a circle at her home, one being veiled and dressed entirely in black, and when Asdghig peeked under that veil sadly she found her mother in tears mourning the loss of her 9-year-old son and beloved husband Shemavon. Both had been among the Armenians rounded up earlier that day by Ottoman soldiers who massacred them after escorting them to the outskirts of the city, under the pretense of safe food distribution.

see SURVIVOR, page 5

## Day-care Center Facing Pot Allegations after Toddler Tests Positive for Pot

By Veronica Rocha

LA CRESCENTA, Calif. (*Los Angeles Times*) – The La Crescenta day-care center where, authorities allege, a 2-year-old girl consumed marijuana, has a history of being cited for maintaining filthy conditions and other violations that date back years.

Roubena Hartounian, operator of Bina's Family Child Care, was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of child neglect and endangerment after the girl tested positive for THC, an active ingredient of marijuana, at a local hospital.

The parents told police they believed their daughter "consumed" the marijuana at the residential day care in the 3200 block of Orange Avenue because she appeared to be lethargic when they picked her up.

The incident triggered an investigation Wednesday that prompted inspectors to close the facility after they reported finding rat and mouse droppings throughout the indoor areas. Officials also determined that power to the facility had been turned off in late July.

But over the course of half a dozen unannounced visits since 2008, state inspectors logged numerous violations, according to records from the California Department of Social Services, which licenses day-care centers. In one visit, they discovered feces on a toilet seat and noted the strong odor of urine indoors. The kitchen was also filthy and strewn with knives in reach of children, and there were no working smoke detectors, according to the records.

One child told investigators that Hartounian pushed another child in the kitchen for not asking for permission to go to the restroom.

In April 2005, Hartounian obtained a license for the small child-care center for a maximum of eight children, said Michael Weston, spokesman for the California Department of Social Services.

Someone is required to reside at the home as a condition of the license, but Hartounian reportedly told Glendale police she used the home for day-care services only.

Neil Zanville, a spokesman for Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, said the last time one of the department's clients used Bina's Family Child Care was in January 2012.

He added that the department provides clients with only a toll-free number to call for services and does not refer specific facilities.

"The fact is, we just haven't been using this facility," Zanville said.

Hartounian, who did not respond to requests for comment, was released Wednesday on \$100,000 bail and is scheduled to appear in court September 26.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Survivor Looks Back on a Scary Childhood but One with a Happy Ending

SURVIVOR, from page 4

Also frozen in her memory was the forced deportation of her family – herself, her sister Anna and brothers Sarkis and Kourken, and her mother Sirpouhi – who were among the thousands of Keghi Armenian women, children and elderly who were marched southward into the Syrian Desert. At the time, Sirpouhi was only 24 years of age, Anna and Asdghig were 7 and 5, Sarkis was 9, and Kourken was only 3. The long route would cover 150 miles to Dikranagerd (Diyarbakir), another 50 miles to Mardin, and yet another 210 miles into the Syrian desert as far as Deir ez-Zor. Food and water were severely lacking.

For Asdghig her memories are still vivid, her sadness about the forced departure, and her confusion many nights later when her mother and a gendarme were secretly placing her and Anna into the bottom of two separate sacks, each hung on either side of a donkey, and the space at the top of the sacks covered with plums. Asdghig's younger brother, Kourken, had already died in the arms of his mother. Her mother had been whispering "s-h-i-s-s-h" that she had to cut off any noise she might make. Asdghig will tell you that it was several years later when she eventually learned from Anna that their mother had trusted that gendarme because he was partly Armenian and she had good reason to hope that he would deliver them to his sister in Mardin, where she would provide food and shelter while the girls helped with housecleaning, laundry and the like.

And Asdghig will tell you what she learned much later about another condition their mother placed on the gendarme, that he require his sister to swear on her holy book that she will release Anna and Asdghig only to someone who can bring an Armenian priest to prove that he or she is a blood relation. To this day, Asdghig wonders about what happened to her mother and her older brother, praying that they were not harmed and somehow reached a safe haven elsewhere.

Although the gendarme's sister in Mardin provided them reasonable care, she sometimes assigned demanding chores and required them to speak Turkish at all times, bringing out the hot pepper, rubbing it onto their lips, and requiring them to sit on the roof top under the open sun for an entire day without food or water each time they were caught speaking to each other in Armenian.

After about one year, that family transferred Asdghig to their relative living in Aleppo, requiring the Aleppo family to swear the same oath. Being separated from Anna was traumatic for Asdghig. But, in time she found her Aleppo fami-



With friends and family

ly to be much more caring than the first, creating a bond with the adults and their baby boy. And, when Asdghig sometime later responded to a knock on the door, and came face to face with a woman named Dilbert, little did she know that she would soon be making a decision of pivotal importance to her future.

Having gone house-to-house looking for a job, Dilbert found herself drawn to the little girl answering the door. Dilbert exclaimed in Turkish, "You are Armenian, aren't you!" Instinctively, Asdghig replied "No." After all, she took comfort in the "Fico" nickname assigned by her Khanem (Mrs. or lady of the house), meaning bright and clever. And, why would a stranger asking about her identity? But Dilbert persisted and after several assurances, won Asdghig's trust along with the first names of herself, her father and mother, no family name, but yes, that she is Armenian.

Also being from Keghi and living in an apartment occupied by several Keghetzi women, Dilbert when she returned home promptly shared what she had learned. One roommate, Haiganoush Tetezian, immediately rejoiced, "That's my cousin!" The next day, when Haiganoush visited the household, she was told



Asdghig at age 12

by the husband that they could release Asdghig to her care only when she returned with an Armenian priest attesting to the blood relationship. And when Asdghig shared her resistance to move away from the family to whom she had become so attached, the Khanem's husband encouraged her to take advantage of the better care it would provide than his family could offer, adding that Asdghig could visit their house any weekend that the orphanage would allow.

That was enough for Asdghig. She took up both offers and, upon the priest's testimony of blood relation, she moved to the Aharon Badveli Shiradjian Orphanage supported by the



**Family photo from 1910.** In the 1910 Keghi family photo, Shemavon Tetezian sits in the front center. In the upper right, his wife Sirpouhi is holding Asdghig who is about six months of age. The small, shy girl standing to the far right is their daughter, Anna. The small boy with the long robe and large hat to the left of center is their son, Sarkis. In the center directly behind Shemavon stands his cousin Hazarkhan (Baitzar) Tetezian. Standing with headscarf at the back left is Garabed's first wife, Pambugh, next to whom is her daughter. Even today, each time Asdghig Alemian looks at this photo, she will voice her immense appreciation for the photographer capturing her parents. She has no other photos of them.

Armenian Evangelical Church. Later, Anna would miraculously reunite there with Asdghig, and together they would relearn their Armenian language skills, receive good health and nutrition care, and benefit from the religious and academic education. To Asdghig, without a doubt, she and many other children had their lives saved by that orphanage.

Five years later in 1922, Asdghig and her sister received funds from their uncle to travel from Aleppo to Providence, RI. She arrived in Providence in October and her sister arrived in November. Upon arriving, Asdghig, for a short time, lived first with her uncle in East Weymouth, and was then taken by her aunt, Baitzar Hatzakourtzian, to Worcester to work as a house cleaner. In 1924, Asdghig returned to Weymouth where she began sewing women's slippers at the George E. Keith Shoe Factory. By that time, her sister Anna had married and moved to Canada. Asdghig soon met Edward Sarkis Alemian, also from Keghi. After his father Mardiros had been killed during the Genocide, he with his mother Hanem and other family members escaped Keghi, traveling four years through Georgia and Russia, and across the Pacific Ocean, to eventually reach Massachusetts in 1919. In 1926, Asdghig and Sarkis married. She was 16 and he was 26. They remained married until he passed away in 1982.

Before their marriage, Sarkis had started a variety store on Broad Street in East Weymouth, which he and Asdghig grew into a successful grocery store named Alemian's Delicatessen. There, Asdghig worked long hours alongside her husband. Together they raised seven children: Edward II, Sylvia, Haig, Alan, Susan, Stephan and Claire. At times their home housed others, including Sarkis' mother, Hanem, who lived with them until her death in 1937, his nephew, Arsham, during his high school, college and medical education, and Asdghig's niece, Satenig, for several decades after her father's passing in 1932.

In the early 1950s, Sarkis Alemian received town approval for a liquor story, thus he sold the grocery business and Alemian's Package Store was opened in nearby Central Square where it operated until his retirement in 1964.

Throughout the years, Asdghig and Sarkis Alemian inspired a strong sense of family and Armenian identity in their children, and full allegiance to the country of their safe haven, America. They extended those values through their children to newer generations consisting of 12 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren.

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## Community News

## Medical Program Coming to Armenian Heritage Cruise

CRUISE, from page 4

and the Ministry of Health of Armenia. At the end of the promotion program, breastfeeding rates tripled and post-neonatal mortality declined.

Currently, she is working on programs to reduce in infant and child malnutrition in Armenia.

Hekimian received a BA in liberal arts from the University of Pennsylvania and is a graduate of Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. An active member of the Armenian National Committee (ANC) and the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO), she currently resides in New Jersey and travels frequently to Armenia.

Hekimian will be presenting two topics on AHC XVII 2014, Public Health in Armenia – Progress and Needs and Infant and Child Nutrition – the Double Burden of Under and Over-Nutrition. Following the presentation there will be a question-and-answer period.

Hekimian will also participate in a roundtable discussion with her fellow colleagues, Dr. Raffi Hovanesian, Dr. Haig Minassian and Maro Matosian discussing Health care and Social Welfare in Armenia – How can the Diaspora be more effective.

Maro Matosian is a devout activist for social justice in Armenia and assists various civil movements dealing with environmental protection, cultural heritage preservation, and non-combat deaths in the army, and women's rights. A trip to Armenia in 1981 changed Maro



Dr. Kim Hekimian, left, and Maro Matosian

Matosian's life. She rediscovered her ancestral roots and dedicated herself to extensive work in the Armenian communities of New York and Paris before moving to Armenia in the 1990s, she put her methodical research and organizational skills to work as a director of "Aznavour pour Armenie, implementing grants from the European Union's Humanitarian Commission. She joined Tufenkian Foundation in 2006 and serves as Country Director, splitting her time between NY, Armenia and Karabagh. Presently, Matosian is also running the Women's Support Center NGO, which is an extension program of the Tufenkian Foundation assisting victims of domestic violence in Armenia. On AHC XVII she will discuss public healthcare in Karabagh.

For more information and how to participate for future cruises, send an email to maria.tavitian@yahoo.com, AHC medical program director.

## OBITUARY

## Mary Mooradian

NAPLES, Fla. – Mary (Nahabedian) Mooradian, 89, formerly of Providence, RI, died on August 11. She was the wife of the late David Mooradian.

Born in Providence, she was the daughter of the late Sarkis and Vartig "Rose" (Mesrobian) Nahabedian.

Mary Mooradian was a secretary in the insurance industry for many years and later at Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church before retiring.

She was the mother of Rosanne E. Bowen of Naples, Arthur H. Mooradian and his wife Sonja of New York City and Fort Myers, Fla. and David S. Mooradian and his wife Nancy of Lutz, Florida; grandmother of Elizabeth A. Bowen and her husband Jonathan, Gregory S. Bowen, Serj Mooradian and his wife Tasha, Aram Mooradian and Nicole M. Mooradian; great-grandmother of Graham, twins Daphne and Lucy and Maxwell and sister of Nuvart Nahabedian and the late Gladys Shoemaker and Sahag Nahabedian.

Her funeral service was held on August 19 at Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, followed by interment at North Burial



Mary Mooradian

Ground, Providence.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to: Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Church, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI 02908.

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Community News

# Armenian Bone Marrow Registration To Take Place at AYF Olympics in DC

By Lawrence V. Najarian, MD

WASHINGTON – On Saturday, August 31 and Sunday September 1, Armenian Americans in the Washington DC area and those attending the AYF Olympics have the opportunity to help Armenians in need by participating in a painless cheek swab screening.

On August 31 and September 1, volunteer health care professionals will be on hand at the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) Olympics to perform the simple screening test, which will generate data for the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR).

The screening event is being co-sponsored by ABMDR, Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) of NY-NJ-CT, and Armenian American Health Association (AAHA) of Greater Washington, DC.

The ABMDR data are used to match Armenians in need of a genetic match for a stem cell or bone marrow transplant. About 200 Armenians are known to be in need of a match that could save their lives.

At this year's event, the sponsors are featuring the case of Cici. After 17 years of battling cancer, Cici's body is no longer responding to chemotherapy and she is in need of a stem cell bone marrow transplant. In the past, AAHPO has publicized the cases of Debbi Margosian Chapman, Irene Katrandjian and young Charlotte Conybear.

Armenian DNA is distinct and this becomes an issue when a genetic match is needed. Armenian patients will find their best chance for a match in the Armenian community. Health professionals are striving to motivate Armenians to participate in simple screening tests that will place their genetic data in a registry of possible donors.

Every year, thousands of patients are diag-

nosed with leukemia and other life-threatening blood diseases. On any given day, more than 6000 patients worldwide are searching for a donor. Many people erroneously believe that a genetic match usually comes from a family member.

"Only 25 percent of patients afflicted with leukemia or other life-threatening blood disorders find donors within their families. The other 75 percent of patients' lives depend on finding a perfectly matched unrelated donor, usually from their own ethnic community," noted Frieda Jordan, MD, who heads ABMDR.

Another stumbling block is that many Armenian people don't know that the screening test is a painless cheek swab. And when a genetic match is identified, it's easy to become a donor. Recent advances in transplantation technology that use peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) collection – a safe and non-invasive way of collecting life-saving stem cells from a donor.

PBSC collection is similar to giving blood; a donor's stem cells are removed and the blood is returned to the donor. Within a couple of weeks, donor stem cells are replenished. There is no surgery, no anesthesia, and no cost to the donor. Those with questions are invited to call the AAHPO hotline at 201-546-6166.

"The Armenian American Health Association of Greater Washington, DC is very excited to collaborate with AAHPO and ABMDR. By working together, we will raise regional awareness of this pressing medical need," noted Grigor Khachikian, MD, AAHA president.

All Armenians ages 18 to 50 and in good health are urged to be screened and have their data entered in the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry ([www.abmdr.am](http://www.abmdr.am))

(Lawrence V. Najarian, MD, is the president of Armenian American Health Professionals Organization [AAHPO].)

Armenian DNA is distinct and this becomes an issue when a genetic match is needed.



Boston Bruins announcer on NESN Jack Edwards drawing the winning tickets during the final inning reception and Raffle Committee Chairman Dan Dorian

## ALMA Sports Raffle Raises Funds

WATERTOWN – The eighth annual Spring Sports Raffle at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) ended with celebrations on July 16, bringing in a record amount to support the museum's exhibitions, programs and running costs.

This year the raffle also made a contribution to One Fund Boston, with 5 percent of ticket sales going to help support victims of the Marathon bombing. A reception on ALMA's third floor concluded the event, with Fenway Park-style refreshments served.

Dan Dorian, chairman of the ALMA Sports Raffle Committee, introduced Bruins announcer Jack Edwards who kindly returned this year to pick the lucky winners' names again. On behalf of ALMA, Dorian also thanked the many contributors for their generous support in making the 2013 Raffle such a success. The prizes this year included a Grand Prize of 22 seats in a Fenway Park Luxury Box watching the Red Sox play the Chicago White Sox as well as 11 other sets of tickets to see the Patriots, the Bruins, the Celtics and more Red Sox games.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Knights of Vartan Holds 95th Convocation

LAS VEGAS – On July 10-13, the members of the Knights of Vartan delegates from all over United State and Canada gathered here for their 95th annual convocation.

The convocation of the Knights of Vartan took place at Harrah's Hotel, organized by Yeprad Tahlij and Alidz Otyag of Fresno, Calif.

During the convocation, which also marked the gathering of the Daughters of Vartan, a new tivan or Grand Council was elected. The

grams of the lodge.”

Atinizian noted that he has been a Knight for 13 years and relishes the “positive outlook” of the organization.

Many programs and activities were planned for the visiting Knights and Daughters, including tours of the Hoover Dam and the Mob Museum.

There was also a Kef Night Las Vegas on Friday night, with music by Richard Hagopian



Registration Desk

members are Grand Commander Nigoghos Atinizian II, Nelson Stepanian, Armen Mahserjian, Michael Guleserian, Robert Avakian, Kevork Marashlian and Jean-Jacques Hajjar.

Since its founding in 1916, the brotherhood has donated millions of dollars to various Armenian organizations in the diaspora, as well as specific programs in Armenia and Karabagh and its members have been mentors in, leaders of and volunteers at all Armenian churches, charities and organizations, working in a unified fashion for the benefit of the greater community all over United States.

The members of the Fresno brotherhood organized the four-day convocation in Las Vegas.

The flagship event of the convocation was the establishment of a new lodge in Las Vegas, Artsakh Lodge #45. There is a growing Armenian community in that city, with three churches and several organizations starting chapters there.

The convocation re-elected Nigoghos Atinizian II as commander of Knights of Vartan. During his speeches at the convocation, Atinizian stressed the importance of the role the Knights and Daughters play in the community and urged for the recruitment of young members to fully serve its mission.

Said Atinizian, “I have found an overwhelming commitment to the mission and purposes to the Knights of Vartan – putting territorial issues aside – most of the lodges are having a unique impact on their community and making their presence known and respected. However, much work needs to be done. We must be more ambitious in selecting members of our community to join the Knights. The Knights must be perceived as a cadre of focused men of high integrity and dedication to the Armenian cause. While making the Knights more inclusive and recruiting new members, regardless of their social or economic standing in the community, we must also be first in raising the bar and selecting men of high character and integrity, who understand not only the privileges of membership but also the responsibilities inherent in that membership.”

He continued, “We must be more astute in reaching out to members that have perhaps not been consulted and have not been called to participate and we must use the modern methods of electronic communications and social media to communicate with all members, so that these members immediately know what their lodges are up to and what specific time commitments and resources are required to implement the projects and pro-

grams of the lodge.”

and a grand banquet on Saturday night featuring the Knights' Man of the Year, Mark Geragos.

In addition to the lighthearted activities, the



At the Saturday Gala Banquet

Knights and Daughters held workshops on how to maximize their effectiveness through online outreach as well as specific subcommittees that had been formed. One of them had been formed earlier in the year, called ALIP or Armenian Leadership Project, which will help college and university students to find jobs in their specialties. Hajjar is going to be the point person for this effort.

“At its core it is a youth development program with a national scope. The objective is to engage the youth in the community, namely the 17 to 27 year olds, through a variety of programs and services,” explained Hajjar. “These include but are not limited to the following programs: home away from home [welcome out of town youth into local Armenian

community], academic/professional counseling as well as networking and mentorship initiatives. These may originate at the local Knights of Vartan and Daughters of Vartan Tahlijes and Otyags, respectively, but broadened nationwide through the extended national membership.”

He continued, “There is consensus among the brothers and sisters that the only way to preserve the community is to invest in its youth. This, we trust, will be driving force behind this project.”



Avak Sbarabed Nigoghos Atinizian II with his wife, Rosette



Lucine Zirekyants performs.



Avak Dirouhie Lisa Kradjian with her husband NS Steve Kradjian

Hajjar was happy with the convocation. “The Grand Convocation was very well attended. Two days of meeting saw a lot of debates on both the internal operations of the organization as well as its community outreach mission. There was an additional day spend on workshops which were focused on new programs and also improvement initiatives. The venue, which as you well know was Las Vegas, added to the excitement and vigor of all the participants.”

Knight Ken Nahigian was delighted with the direction of the convocation and said it was well-organized. “I thought the meetings were very well done. We are working toward finding a new purpose for the Knights,” Nahigian said. He explained that for the past 95 years or so since the founding of the Knights of Vartan in the US, the goal has been solidifying the Armenian-American community. “We have achieved that,” he said. “Now we are focused and energized on new ways of serving the Armenian community.”

Among those new ways, he said, is helping  
*continued on next page*





**COMMUNITY NEWS**



The new Daughters of Vartan Grand Council at the Grand Convocation, from left, Naira Serobyan, Sonia Serpekian, Marilou Gostanian, Lisa Kradjian (Chair), Tanya Yerevanian. (Not pictured: Renata Sahagian, Anahit Antonyan)



Avak Dirouhie Lisa Kradjian and NS Steve Kradjian brought their daughters Ani and Mari to the convocation; they enjoyed themselves, dancing at Friday's Armenian Kef Time.

from previous page

the Armenian-Americans get together socially and "helping them in any way possible."

One of the organizations that the Knights and Daughters are supporting is Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program (CASP), based in Connecticut. The program supports orphans in Armenia. Nahigian's chapter, Arax Lodge #11, in Providence, has supported a child through CASP for many years. In fact, the child just reached the age of 18 and the lodge is supporting a new child in an orphanage.

Nahigian said that the organization is not only initiating programs for the betterment of Armenians in the US, Armenia and Artsakh, but also encouraged individual members to "supply the people power to support other organizations as well. We can be the unsung heroes of the Armenian community, even if we don't get the recognition."

Nahigian is a third-generation Knight. His grandfather, the late Thomas Nahigian, was a Knight in the Arax chapter, as is his father, Leon Nahigian.

**New Daughters of Vartan Board**

Lisa Kradjian, the newly-elected Avak Dirouhie, or the leader of the Daughters of Vartan, replacing Agnes Sahagian, was thrilled with her experience.

"I have attended the convocations for 10 years now, and they are always an opportunity to create lifelong friendships, to hear the ideas and activities of fellow members and chapters across the county and to be reinvigorated culturally, spiritually, emotionally. We look forward to it every year," she said.

The new members of Avak Khorhourt or Grand Council of the Daughters of Vartan in addition to Kradjian are Naira Serobyan, Sonia Serpekian, Marilou Gostanian, Tanya Yerevanian, Renata Sahagian and Anahit Antonyan, from Talar Otyag, San Diego.

There are 22 Daughters of Vartan chapters around the US and most of them had representation at the convocation, Kradjian noted.

Kradjian is excited about the organization

and exhorts all Armenian men and women to consider joining the Knights or Daughters. Among her many reasons for joining, she said, are that it is a thrill "to be part of an organization that is passionate about developing leaders, sustaining our heritage, cultivating friendships and assisting our people in the US, Armenia and around the world. Some might say that many Armenian organizations do this, but none do it with the mix of educational, spiritual and cultural activity that the Knights and Daughters of Vartan offer. And it is still the only Armenian organization I know where I have experienced true Armenian unity – Armenians from all the different church and political backgrounds, all ages from 20s to 80s, and from all countries of origin, and also some non-Armenians, all participating."

**Mark Geragos Speaks**

Famed attorney Mark Geragos was the speaker at the main banquet on Saturday night, at which time he received the Knights' Man of the Year Award. Geragos spoke about his involvement in community affairs, such as the annual Armenia Fund telethon. He also discussed his rebuttal to the claims about the involvement of Armenians made by the alleged Boston Marathon bombers' uncle on CNN.

His talk was a hit with the Knights and Daughters. Atinizian said he was "a great speaker who really inspired the people attending the convocation with his wit and wonderful stories."

Added Kradjian, "He is always an engaging speaker and person. My family has known him for many years. He has a myriad of stories from his professional experience that are not only compelling but speak to his ethics and



Avak Ter Sbarabed Nelson Stepanian

passion for defending an individual [or a nation like Armenia] from attack. He was well deserving of the Knights' Man of the Year Award."

One of the areas that the Knights are going to focus on is Armenian border towns and impoverished areas. Said Kradjian, "During this year's convocation I heard my first presentation on the situation in the Tavush region and what is being done there. Eva Medzorjian's film on the region's challenges was also quite moving. The Knights and Daughters are passionate about supporting Armenian charities – our members make contributions in the amount of seven figures to a variety of charities around the world."

devotion to the brotherhood: Grand District Representative Vicken Mouradian; Sbarabed of Mamigonian Lodge Ari Minnetian and Nakhgin Sbarabed Gary Baboian of the newly-formed Artsakh Lodge.

At the banquet, music was performed by Lucine Zirekyants, soprano and violinist, and her sister, pianist Rouzan Vanesian.

While the latest convocation may just be over, plans are already underway for next year's convocation, which will be held July 2-6, 2014 in San Diego.

"The San Diego Knights and Daughters of Vartan promises a wonderful convocation at the Grand Hyatt downtown with some special new additions: a Mixer for Young



2013 Grand Convocation Committee Members

At the dinner, the invocation was given by Rev. Yeghia Hairabedian of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Fowler, Calif.

Introductions at the dinner were made by convocation co-chairs Steve Adams and Kevork Oflazian was master of ceremonies. Welcoming remarks were made by co-chair Mark Der Matoian and Roberta Hairabedian.

Avak Ter Sbarabed Nelson Stepanian gave the scholarships awards.

Atinizian recognized and gave special rewards to the following for their outstanding

Professionals, and the first-ever national Armenian Art Event to support the Armenian School Support Project (to rebuild schools in Armenia with a World Bank 95/5 match) and to feature Armenian artists from around the world," said Kradjian, whose chapter will co-host the 2014 Convocation.

The Knights of Vartan, along with its sister organization, the Daughters of Vartan, is a non-political, non-denominational Armenian fraternal organization founded in 1916. For more information, visit [www.kofv.org](http://www.kofv.org).



Group photo during Friday Armenian Kef Time



Group photo during Friday Armenian Kef Time

# Arts & Living

## Review of Vasily Grossman's *An Armenian Sketchbook*

By Ian Thomson

**An Armenian Sketchbook Vasily Grossman**, translated by Robert and Elizabeth Chandler. MacLehose Press, pp.221, £12, ISBN: 9780857052353

LONDON (*The Spectator*) – Vasily Grossman, a Ukrainian-born Jew, was a war correspondent for the Soviet army newspaper *Red Star*. His dispatches from the front between 1941 and 1945 combined emotional engagement with independent-minded commentary. A solitary, questioning spirit, Grossman set out always to document truthfully what he saw and heard. His report on the vile workings of the Treblinka death camp, "The Hell of Treblinka," remains a masterpiece of controlled rage and unsparing lucidity.

Unsurprisingly, Grossman was mortified when the man who had prevented Hitler's annihilation of Jewry was suddenly set on their extinction. In early 1953, Stalin announced in the pages of Pravda that a plot to murder Kremlin members had been unmasked among Jewish doctors and intellectuals. Jews like Grossman were now condemned as a self-regarding, supra-national sect, inimical to the interests of Mother Russia. It made no difference to Stalin that Grossman had fought courageously against Hitler; he was reduced to the status of a non-person. But worse was to come.

In 1960, Grossman's great novel of Russia during the Hitler war, *Life and Fate*, was confiscated in typescript by the KGB. This was done at the height of the Khrushchev "thaw," when a new political tolerance was supposedly in the air. Grossman's crime had been to draw parallels between Nazism and Soviet Communism. The Hitler and Stalin regimes (as Trotsky had pointed out as long ago as 1936) were totalitarian twins that bore a "deadly similarity." Grossman had been dead for 24 years when, in 1988, *Life and Fate* was finally published in the Soviet Union.

*An Armenian Sketchbook* displays all the humanity and candor of Grossman's *Red Star* journalism, but with a difference. Grossman was in the early stages of cancer when he wrote the book in 1962 and the prose has acquired a death-haunted tone. In Soviet Armenia, the Moscow authorities had hoped that Grossman would meet new people, consume lots of cognac and life-giving pomegranates and, most important, forget about the censorship inflicted on *Life and Fate*. But Grossman had taken ten long years to write his epic, Tolstoyan novel; whatever else it might be, *An Armenian Sketchbook* was hardly going to be a paean to Soviet idealism.

Instead, the book is Grossman's attempt to give his life and politics meaning and justification. Beneath the hawk-eyed observations on Armenian religion and the Turkish genocide of Armenians is an old-fashioned belief in "human dignity and human freedom." When Ottoman officials had stood by as Kurds bestially slaughtered Armenian Christians in

see REVIEW, page 11



Wartanian at his Tanzatap show performing for Vahan the blind village elder in May

## Young Armenian-American Completes Fulbright; Experience Enhances Music

BALTIMORE, Md. – When Raffi Wartanian had to decide on his next step post-college, the choice was clear for the Johns Hopkins graduate: He wanted to spend a year in Armenia as a Fulbright research fellow focusing on the role of volunteerism and the arts in the development of Armenia's civil society.

By Taleen Babayan

"Music is a means to explore this subject," said Wartanian, a native of Baltimore, who completed his Fulbright in July. "Performance, be it theatrical, musical, literary or academic, builds communities and spreads ideas."

It was in fact an earlier visit to Armenia that had inspired his debut album, "Pushkin Street." While there, he had the unexpected opportunity to perform live on the street named after the Russian literary great, which Wartanian describes as "a thoroughfare of music, culture, and exquisite cuisine."

The experience further sparked Wartanian's musical desires and he spent the next six months recording, mixing and mastering the album, although the "seedlings of certain songs took root years before." Once he structured the songs through lyrics, chords and melodies, he worked with friends and collaborators in Baltimore to record bass, drums and keyboards.

Wartanian's vision and hard work culminated in an eclectic and unique sound, filled with rich and distinct musical compositions, a reflection of the diverse musical roots instilled in him by his family members from a young age.

His mother, brother, sister and father each played a significant role in shaping his musical tastes. While his siblings exposed him to Latin and rock music – The Beatles, Yo La Tengo, Guns N Roses and Paco Pena – his parents influenced the more traditional musical elements that are evident in "Pushkin Street." Wartanian's mother played Greek rembetika music, classic rock and Armenian folk songs for him, while his father, once a student at Echmiadzin, had a deep affection for Armenian liturgical music as well as "Anoush" opera. Tying that in with his own interests certainly laid the groundwork for a creative and fresh music style he would nurture over the years.

"Most of my upbringing was spent in Baltimore – a land of the blues, folk, bluegrass, rap, punk rock, and funk – and Beirut – a land of the ancient music of the orient," said Wartanian. "I would say all of these influences make an appearance, sometimes in subtle ways, and that each song has its own character both musically and lyrically."

The diversity of his musical upbringing is evident in each song on his album. *Pelican Sunset* is a love song and *Electronic Flirtation* is a statement on the digitization of romance. Each has a meaning behind it and is reflective of Wartanian's experiences over the past few years. *Millard County Jail* and *Gluten Free Blues*, for example, were written as wedding gifts for friends with whom he bicycled across America on a cancer fundraiser ride. The songs, "have got some stories from the road and the sense of excitement that comes with bicycling 80 miles per day."

see FULBRIGHT, page 11

## Labyrinth Theater Company to Present Bogosian Monologues

NEW YORK (Broadway.com) – The Labyrinth Theater Company has announced its fall 2013 season, which will include Obie and Drama Desk Award winner Eric Bogosian performing 100 monologues from his one-man shows from the 1980s and 1990s, a new play by Dominique Morisseau (Detroit '67) and a new series of "artist salons," featuring performances and conversations with company members.

The season will kick off with the "artist salons," which will feature poet Craig "muMs" Grant (HBO's "Oz"), Tony nominee Daphne Rubin-Vega and Emmy nominee David Bar Katz. Grant will perform September 9 through 10, Rubin-Vega on September 16 and 17 and Katz on September 23 through 24 at Labyrinth's Bank Street Theater.

Bogosian will read and perform selections from his new book, *100*, which features monologues originally performed as part of his six off-Broadway solo shows. The selections will differ at each performance, and will include monologues from "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll," "Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead," "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee" and more. "100 Monologues" will run from October 1 through 20.

Written by Morisseau, *Sunset Baby* tells the story of a former black revolutionary and political prisoner who decides to connect with his estranged daughter. He quickly discovers that fatherhood might be the most challenging revolution of all. *Sunset Baby* will begin performances November 6.

## Robert Chilingirian to Perform in China

HAHHOT, China – As a singer and performer, Robert Chilingirian has toured the world throughout his three-decade career and most recently has been invited to China to participate at the World Music Essence 2013, which will take place from September 20-22.

The three-day festival will draw more than 200,000 music fans and top Chinese government officials will attend.

Chilingirian will sing in eight different languages and play the guitar and bouzouki. His repertoire, of course, will include Armenian songs as well.

"They loved my Armenian music [when they first heard it] and asked me to sing several songs in Armenian during the festival," said Chilingirian. "They said that they have never had an Armenian artist perform for them and they love the language and melodies."



Robert Chilingirian

China will be the last stop on a six-month worldwide tour for Chilingirian that included performances in South America, Australia, Sweden and the US. With the release of his 21st studio album earlier this year, he is planning on doing a major South American tour in the upcoming months.

Aside from touring the world, Chilingirian is still creating new music and is also involved in other creative projects. He recently released a new single, *Hay Dghakner Shood Yegek*, which has been re-arranged, re-produced and re-recorded in Chilingirian's signature style.

Chilingirian was invited to make a special appearance in the play, "Where Is Your Groom?" (Pesad Oor Eh), written and directed by Taleen Babayan, in New York.

"I consider myself very lucky to perform my music around the world and receive invitations from both the Armenian and international communities," he said.



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Young Armenian-American Completes Fulbright; Experience Enhances Music

FULBRIGHT, from page 10

During his Fulbright year, which began in August 2012, Wartanian had the opportunity to perform his music throughout Armenia. From clubs to village schools to community centers, Wartanian embraced the audiences that came with each venue that “wouldn’t otherwise have access to singer-songwriter-troubadour types.”

The broad ranging environments also provided Wartanian with experiences he otherwise wouldn’t have seen if his music hadn’t led the way. He preferred the small, isolated communities in Armenia, like the villages of Tanzatap (population 60) and Shvanidzor (population 390).

“It’s super interesting to bring something new into a remote village and see the reaction music evokes,” said Wartanian. “Walking down unpaved roads into run down schools where I hear students, teachers, and researchers share stories of local economic and social woes has been painful and enlightening, compelling me to give 110 percent to each and every performance.”

Aside from taking the time to perform, Wartanian continued to improve his technique by studying the oud and flamenco guitar with masterful teachers from Yerevan’s Komitas Conservatory of Music.

“Growing as a musician under their guidance has been humbling and grown my hunger to continue improving as a player,” he said.

Living in Armenia also thrust him further into the music and arts scene and allowed him to collaborate with other artists and musicians, including Arik Grigoryan, a flutist from the Bambir; Alexy Yeghiakian, from Los Angeles; and Syrian-born Sarkis Atamian and Harch Macoushian. He also worked with filmmaker Oksana Mirzoyan on a music video for Electronic Flirtation and Anahid Yahjian on an experimental music film.

Wartanian played his music outside Armenia as well, most recently in Prague and Beirut. His performances in Beirut touched him on an even more personal level when he played at the opening of the formerly abandoned mansion of his great-grandfather Mardiros Baloumian, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide. Once occupied by militias during Lebanon’s civil war, a British painter discovered the space, contacted the new property owner, and they agreed to hold an exhibition along with a lecture by the painter’s



Wartanian performing at the Music Factory Show in Yerevan

father, a retired judge, now pursuing a doctorate from Oxford University about a British explorer who witnessed the Genocide.

“I performed at the opening as the nearest descendent of Mardiros,” said Wartanian, who was invited the following day to perform at Badguér, an Armenian cultural center in Bourj Hammoud.

“Both of these events were simply special on many levels, particularly at my great-grandfather’s home where his old typewriter, photographs and other mementos were on display,” said Wartanian. “He was a man who was never supposed to exist, a man who died three years before I was born, yet like many others that night, I could feel his presence.”

Although Wartanian has received plenty of training and experience over the years – he has studied classical piano since the age of 8 and classes at the Peabody Conservatory while in

college – he continues to strive to become an even better musician and performer.

“Playing and learning music is like a climbing a glorious mountain that has no summit,” he said. “I constantly strive to improve and

develop my technique, the stylistic pallet from which I draw, and learn new songs I find beautiful.”

Music also serves as an avenue for Wartanian to express himself and to question and explore the environment and world around him. As an inhabitant of Armenia for a year, he was able to see his homeland through a different lens and convey that to others through his art.

“I have witnessed first-hand environmental degradation, vote rigging, xenophobia, homophobia, hopelessness, egotism and more alongside inspiring activism, civic engagement, and optimism for the future,” said Wartanian. “I’m not saying these issues or dynamics do not exist in other countries in the world – they absolutely do. But, sometimes the nature of living in a diaspora, specifically through distance, mitigates the severity of these issues. So at this stage I am driven by shining a light on some of these issues through performance, songwriting and collaborations, and I am driven, on the more technical side, to get better.”

Wartanian recently returned to the Baltimore-DC Metropolitan Area and is working on his second album, but his memories and experiences in Armenia remain with him.

“Beyond music, this [Fulbright] grant has presented opportunities to work with some incredible movers and shakers working for environmental, economic, electoral, media and social reform. Their dedication and efforts have simply been an inspiration,” he explained.

For updates on Wartanian and his music, visit [www.raffijoemusic.com](http://www.raffijoemusic.com). His music video for Electronic Flirtation can be seen at [http://youtu.be/\\_T2u-NY1Fdu](http://youtu.be/_T2u-NY1Fdu).

## Review of Vasily Grossman’s *An Armenian Sketchbook*

REVIEW, from page 10

present-day Turkey in 1915, a new age of atrocity had got under way, from which it was a short step to Hitler and Stalin, Grossman believed.

In the ancient Armenian capital of Ani (now in Turkey), images of Christ can be seen in abandoned churches with their eyes drilled out. The persecution of minority peoples by a superior power was anathema to the tolerant-minded Grossman. In the course of his two-month tour of Armenia he encountered a 75-year-old man who had “lost his mind during the genocide” when his family was murdered before his eyes.

Along the way, Grossman reports on the anti-

Stalinist sentiments he encountered. The dictator is “an ignoramus, a boaster, an upstart”, Armenians tell him. Not surprisingly, given its anti-Soviet animus, *An Armenian Sketchbook* was bowdlerized on its posthumous publication in the Soviet Union in 1965. All references to nationalism, anti-Semitism and Stalin were removed; Khrushchev had been deposed, and any talk against Stalin was no longer acceptable. The book was not published in Russian in its entirety until the late 1980s; Robert Chandler (who translated *Life and Fate*) has rendered it into exquisite English with the help of his wife Elizabeth. The result is a book wonderful in every way.

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Armani Brings Rated SR – Socially Relevant Film Festival to Life

ARMANI, from page 1

While the festival is the first of its kind and size, Armani has spent much of her life dedicated to acting, directing and festival organization.

Armani grew up in Cairo, Egypt, the daughter of Armenian parents. From an early age she showed an interest in the arts, staging plays and performances with cousins and her brother during holidays. “Growing up in the Armenian community [in Egypt] there were cultural clubs, theater companies and an appreciation for the arts,” Armani recalled. Despite her interests, Armani was shy until she finally found her voice reciting poetry on stage.

She credits Gerald Papasian, creative collaborator and former husband, for being the first person to inspire her to take more of a role in the arts. Together with Papasian, Armani created one of her favorite works, “Sojourn at Ararat,” a love story connecting Armenian poetry and literature throughout the ages with the essence of what it is to be Armenian. “We were able to introduce Armenian culture to non-

Armani, and discovered they both shared an interest in responsible filmmaking in terms of both raising funds and subject matter. “From there, it immediately took shape,” Armani recalled. Both were troubled by the prevalence of gratuitous violence and the Hollywood culture that goes for big-budget, explosion-packed films that often don’t return expected profits while dismissing socially-relevant films.

“In today’s world we are exposed to films edited to be constantly yelling at us – not speaking to us at a normal vocal level,” said Armani.

And what do the creators behind the festival deem socially relevant? “Something that touches humanity,” says Armani. Stories with a relevant message or cause, this could be anything from documentary on human trafficking to a rom-com that appeals to our compassion by dealing with a social issue.

The festival is not about censorship or even about critiquing existing films – it’s about providing a venue for important socially conscious, but often-neglected narratives in film. “We are not

activists. It’s first and foremost about entertainment and production value [...] because I am a filmmaker, I want to say this through the film medium,” she added.

For Armani, the festival represents the culmination of her years of passionate interests and experiences. “It satisfies the actor in me, the director, my interest in social responsibility, my film organizing experience. ... I’m really very happy to be doing it,” said Armani.

Rated SR – Socially Relevant Film Festival New York is accepting applications and downloadable forms are available via their website. They will also begin

accepting submissions in September via Withoutabox.com. Founders encourage applicants of SR films in the feature, documentary and short film categories. Festival organizers also welcome volunteer applications and nominations for the selection committee members. Armani noted that they hope to feature an audience-curated section on their website in order to allow for suggestions of SR films (only films not currently in distribution should be recommended.)

Organizers are currently asking for financial support to make their vision of the festival a reality and an annual event. They will also launch an Indiegogo campaign in the upcoming weeks, asking for donations as small as \$6 (“the price of a latte”) and offering executive producer spots for major donors of \$25,000 or more.

For more festival information on submissions, volunteering, donating through the Indiegogo campaign and much more, visit <http://ratedsrfilms.wix.com/ratedsrfilmfestival>



Nora Armani, left, with Mike Camoin at Cannes

Armenians,” noted Armani.

Her stage work includes “The Lover” (Los Angeles), “Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising” (London), “The King and I” (Cairo), to name a few. Splitting time between Paris and New York, Armani is known for her global voice and ability to communicate across cultures and continents with performances in English, Armenian, French, Arabic, Italian and an ever-increasing list. She has a host of film and television credits including CBS’ “Golden Boy” and BBC’s “Casualty” in addition to a number of feature and short films (list on IMDB).

Armani has won numerous awards for her work including four Drama-Logue awards, Best Actress Award at Russian Film Festival in Siunik for “Labyrinth” and been named an honorary member of the National Theatre of Armenia.

But Armani is no stranger to the social consciousness aspect of the festival either. In addition to her degree from American University in Cairo, Armani holds a master’s degree in sociology from London School of Economics. Armani says she takes the oversaturation of violence in various mediums as an important issue in society. “Images are very powerful – they impress upon people. Violence in [film] normalizes and desensitizes death and killing.”

Armani had a fair amount of experience organizing film festivals, often working to bring Armenian narratives to a global audience.

“I had been organizing film festivals and curating films for years,” said Armani, who had been involved with events such as a 1992 tribute to Armenian cinema for the American Film Institute (AFI), an Armenian Cinema Month at the Pompidou Centre, weeks of Armenian cinema at the London Institute of Contemporary Art and Ciné Lumière London, and a 2006 sidebar at the Silver Lake Film Festival showing solely Armenian films made in the diaspora. She was appointed a representative to the Ministry of Culture of Armenia for film between 1991-1993. Armani felt that some vital stories were still being neglected in mainstream Hollywood.

An opportunity to change that came this past January, when Armani attended a panel in Rotterdam at the Film Festival where she met

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And her new novel

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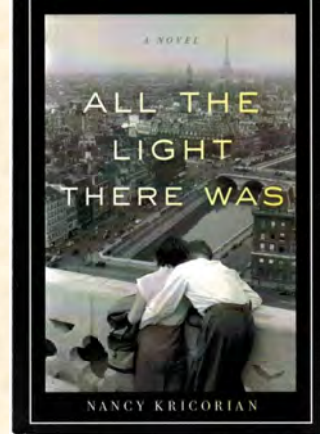
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“Nancy Kricorian is a gem, her work subtle and nuanced and moving. *All the Light There Was* brings Nazi-occupied Paris vividly, tragically, and heroically to life.”

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Nancy Kricorian is the author of the novels *Zabelle* and *Dreams of Bread and Fire*

For more information, please call Ani Chatmajian at (201) 965-7785 or Talar Sarafian at 201-240-8541

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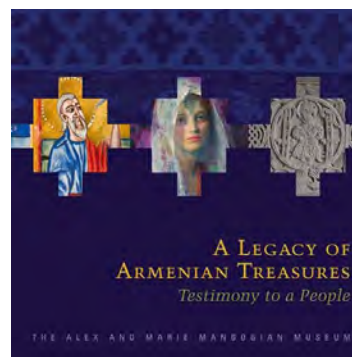
A LEGACY OF ARMENIAN TREASURES:  
*THE ALEX AND MARIE  
MANOOGIAN MUSEUM*

with

Edmond Y. Azadian

Executive Editor, *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures*  
Advisor to the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum

Saturday, August 24, 2013, 7:30 p.m.,  
at the NAASR Center  
395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA



The Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Southfield, Michigan, is home to a large and rich collection of Armenian art and artifacts, including illuminated manuscripts, early printed books, rugs and carpets, sacred vessels and vestments, textiles and embroidery, ceramics, metalwork, paintings, coins, and objects from the ancient kingdom of Urartu.

The newly published volume *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures* features more than 160 of the museum’s most vital and beautiful pieces, each reproduced in full color and accompanied by a detailed entry. The book features a Foreword by Thomas F. Mathews of New York University and an Introduction by Edmond Y. Azadian; Sylvie Merian of the Pierpont Morgan Library served as the Editorial Coordinator and museum director Lucy Ardash was the General Coordinator. Essays by nine renowned scholars of Armenian art and artifacts shed light not only on the artistic significance of these objects but on their cultural context as well.

At this book launch event, Edmond Azadian will provide background information on the development of the Manoogian Museum and the creation of *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures*. Introductory remarks will be given by Alin Gregorian, Editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, and Marc Mamigonian, Director of Academic Affairs, NAASR.

Admission is free (donations appreciated). A reception will follow the program.

The NAASR Bookstore will open at 7:00 p.m. *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures* will be available for one night only at a special sale price of \$ 60 including sales tax (regular price \$75.00 plus tax).

Parking is available around the NAASR building and in adjacent areas.

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## CALIFORNIA

**AUGUST 25 — Third Annual Arpa Foundation for Film Music and Art (AFFMA) Comedy Night** at the world-famous Comedy Store (8433 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles). AFFMA is going back to their roots for this show with Comics of Middle Eastern descent hosted by Armenian funnyman Ara Basil. Resident DJ Hye FX will be spinning tunes before, during and after the show. The event will be limited to comedy fans 21 years and older.

Tickets are tax deductible to the full extent of the law, and proceeds benefit the AFFMA and the upcoming Arpa International Film Festival which will take place September 26-29, 2013 at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood. General tickets are \$25, VIP \$45. Tickets can be purchased at <http://www.itsmyseat.com/events/366568.html>

## MASSACHUSETTS

**AUGUST 24 — Book presentation of A Legacy of Armenian Treasures: The Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum**, 7:30 p.m., NAASR, 395 Concord Ave, Belmont. Featured speaker will be book Executive Editor Edmond Azadian, introductory remarks provided by *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* Editor Alin Gregorian and NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc Mamigonian. Free event, for more info contact [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).

**AUGUST 25 — 2013 Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic** at American Legion Farm, 1314 Main St., Haverhill (RTE 495 to Exit 51B onto RTE 125N), 12 noon to 5 p.m. Music by Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu of shish, losh, chicken kebab dinners, kheyma, pastries and beverages; raffles for cash prizes & gift certificates. Air conditioned functional hall; bring your own chairs; for info: [www.hypointearmenianchurch.org](http://www.hypointearmenianchurch.org) or (978) 372-9227.

**AUGUST 27 — Gourgen Manoukian Paintings Exhibit "Celebrating 50 Years in Art"** at 7 p.m., ALMA, 65 Main St., Watertown. From the Soviet Union to the US, Manoukian's works include a broad range of media painting sea and landscapes, still-life and architectural renderings.

**SEPTEMBER 8 — Greater Worcester Armenian Chorale 13th Anniversary Gala** concert and dinner, 12:30 p.m., Cultural Center of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, 34 Boynton Street, Worcester. Led by conductor Konstantin Petrossian, soloist Narine Ojakhyan, "Arevig" Armenian Children's Dance Group. Reservations call Elizabeth Orsi 508-865-9432. Tickets \$25.00, \$12.00 children; for program donations call Charles Der Kazarian 508-963-2076.

**SEPTEMBER 8 — Annual Husenig Foundation PICNIC.** at Husenig Grove, Simmons St., Rehoboth, featuring live music by Gary Kashmanian's New England All Star Band. Delicious Husenig-style shish kebab, losh kebab, kheyma, chicken, pilaf. Also bake table and raffle. Starts at noon. For more information contact Marc Janigian, 401-942-3477.

**SEPTEMBER 8 — Sayat Nova Dance Company** performs at Peabody International Festival with favorite dances from their repertory; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Members of the Dance Company manning dessert booth featuring homemade delicacies; Peabody Square on Lowell Street. For details, call Peabody Town Hall.



**On August 24, NAASR will host a book presentation of A Legacy of Armenian Treasures: The Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum at 7:30 p.m. The featured speaker will be book Executive Editor Edmond Azadian and introductory remarks will be provided by Armenian Mirror-Spectator Editor Alin Gregorian and NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc Mamigonian. The event is free and open to the public; for more info contact [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org). NAASR is located at 395 Concord Ave, Belmont, MA.**

**SEPTEMBER 8 — Picnic Festival, St. Gregory Armenian Church**, 158 Main St., North Andover, 12:30-5:30 p.m., featuring Armenian music by Leon Janikian, Jason Naroian, Joe Kouyoumjian, John Arzigian, along with Siroun Dance Group; Armenian food and pastries. For more info, visit [www.saintgregory.org](http://www.saintgregory.org).

**SEPTEMBER 10 — Staged reading of Joyce Van Dyke's "Deported/ A Dream Play," 7 p.m. at Clark University**, Little Center, 950 Main Street, Worcester. The play tells the story of two friends, the playwright's grandmother and the mother of Dr. H. Martin Deranian during the Armenian Genocide; directed by Judy Braha, featuring a cast from the recent Boston production; Q&A to follow; free. For reservations, email [charkarts@clarku.edu](mailto:charkarts@clarku.edu).

**SEPTEMBER 15 — Talk by Tom Vartabedian titled, "A 50-year Retrospective into Journalism;" 7 p.m., ALMA**, 65 Main St., Watertown. Vartabedian, award-winning writer and photographer, will kick off the fall season at ALMA with a talk about his 50-year career with The Haverhill Gazette and his work as a correspondent with the Armenian Press since the early 1960s.

**SEPTEMBER 15 — Trinity Family Festival**, 12-5 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Delicious food, Armenian music, Children's games, Blessing of Madagh at 4 p.m., raffle drawing and more.

**SEPTEMBER 16 — Armenian Church of Our Saviour hosts 20th Annual Golf Tournament** at the Sterling Country Club, Sterling, 8:30 a.m. registration, 10 a.m. start; sponsorships and golf registrations still available; contact the church office at 508-756-2931.

**SEPTEMBER 21 — Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston presents Avik Deirmenjian's newly published book of poems, Khachardzan**, 5 p.m. MC Dr. Ara Ghazarian, book presentation by Khajag Mkrtichian, cultural program and reception to follow; free admission; Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington.

**SEPTEMBER 28 — Annual "Walk of Life" Walk-a-thon**, New England Chapter of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR), in Watertown. To register or donate, visit <http://www.abmdr.am>.

**OCTOBER 18 and 19 — Come enjoy the St. James Armenian Church's Annual Bazaar!** Delicious shish, losh, kheyma and more! Fabulous pastries, manti, kufte and toorshi. Children's activities, vendors galore, farmer's market. Fun! Friends! Family! 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. both days, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown.

**OCTOBER 19 — Hye Kef 5** featuring Leon Janikian, Joe Kouyoumjian, Greg Takvorian, Ken Kalajian, Bob Raphaelian and Jay Baronian, Haverhill, MA, 7:30 p.m., Michael's Function Hall- 12 Alpha Street, Tickets: \$40.00 Each Students \$30, includes individually-served mezza platters. Proceeds to benefit all Armenian churches in Merrimack Valley and New Hampshire. Call either John Arzigian, 603-560-3826; Sandy Boroyan, 978-251-8687; Scott Sahagian, 617-699-3581, or Peter Gulezian, 978-375-1616. Organized by Armenian Friends of America.

**NOVEMBER 16 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA)** celebrates 38th Annual Luncheon-Auction at the Burlington Marriott. Silent Auction and Bidding at 11 a.m.; Door Prizes for early bird bidding. \$60 per person; Visa and MasterCard accepted. For reservation information contact [awwaauction@gmail.com](mailto:awwaauction@gmail.com).

## MICHIGAN

**SEPTEMBER 6 — Detroit Chapter Tekeyan Cultural Association** hosts Soiree Musicale, featuring violinist Henrik Karapetyan and pianist Ken Hakobyan, 7:30 p.m., at the Birmingham Unitarian Church, 38651 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Program is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Garabed Belian; reception to follow, \$20 donation For reservations, call Diana Alexanian at 248-334-3636 or Karen Koundakjian at (248) 761-9844.

## NEW YORK

**NOVEMBER 23-24 — TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group** celebrates 15th Anniversary with production of Hagop Baronian's "The Perils of Politeness" (Kaghakavaroutyan Vnasneruh) directed by Gagik Karapetyan from Armenia; Dwight Englewood High School, 315 E. Palisade Ave., Englewood, NJ. Nov. 23, Saturday at 8 p.m. and Nov. 24, Sunday at 4 p.m. For tickets; \$50, \$35, \$25; call Marie Zokian (201)745-8850 or Missak Boghosian at (212)819-0097 or (347)365-6985.

## RHODE ISLAND

**SEPTEMBER 4 — Singer Emmy**, one of Armenia's most popular singers, who previously represented Armenia at the Eurovision Song Contest, will perform at 7 p.m. at Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, her first-ever performance in New England. Tickets are \$20. A portion of the proceeds will be given to the Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Committee.

## Karen Wray Fine Art Gallery in Los Alamos to Host Exhibit of Works by Richard Tashjian

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. — The Karen Wray Fine Art Gallery is exhibiting several paintings by Richard H. Tashjian, spotlighting the majestic scenery of New Mexico. His paintings have consistently been acclaimed in local galleries since his relocation to the area from Watertown, Mass., in 1978.

Among the paintings on view is one on Coyote Canyon. Gallery owner Karen Wray praised how the painting captured the breathtaking view of the canyon. In the painting one can see the canyon from a high level of elevation.

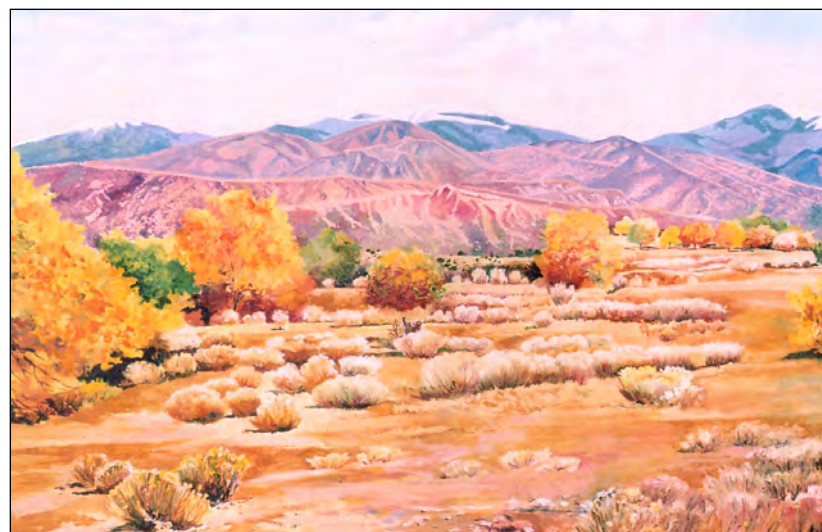
The balance of the paintings on exhibit are of neighboring villages of Taos and Nambe and the Rio Grande River. Tashjian said that he always remembers his past trips to Armenia in the 1980s and 1990s on location painting.

Now at 87, Tashjian has been painting for more than 75 years, and several of his paintings are of skies and red cliffs of the Southwest.

A US Navy veteran of World War II, he was a photographer.

He graduated from the Museum School of Fine Arts in Boston.

His works are in museum in Yerevan and Gumri, Armenia, as well as the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA), and most recently, they became a part of the permanent collection at the University of Los Alamos, NM.



"Autumn Splendor, Nambe, N.M.," oil on canvas



## COMMENTARY

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror- Spectator

Established 1932

An ADL Publication

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July, by:

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www.mirrorspectator.com

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For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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

© 2011 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, P.O. Box 302, Watertown, MA 02471-0302

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## COMMENTARY

## Putin in Oil Land

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Russia's President Vladimir Putin recently paid a state visit to Azerbaijan on his way to Iran. Azerbaijan being an oil-rich land, represents a slippery territory, figuratively and literally. That visit triggered a plethora of interpretations, both in Russia and in the Western news media. As Armenia is Russia's strategic ally in the region, it was glaring that the first visit after his election would take Mr. Putin to Azerbaijan and not Armenia, despite Yerevan's standing invitation.

Observed within the context of recent developments in the region, this trip was a cause for concern in Armenia.

Moscow had recently delivered sophisticated deadly weapons to Azerbaijan, initially estimated to be worth \$1.5 billion, but it turns out during Putin-Aliyev negotiation that the actual value of those weapons was \$4 billion.

Azerbaijan also buys arms from Ukraine, Belarus and Israel.

The Armenian public was rightfully alarmed for two reasons: the arms shipments and Putin's timing of his visit to Azerbaijan. Although in some official circles these moves were dismissed as normal business contacts, the fears that something more sinister was going on were not assuaged.

As we observe the arms deal and the visit against the backdrop of recent Russian-Azerbaijan relations, the developments become more intriguing.

Indeed tensions were building up between the two neighbors after the failure of negotiations to extend the lease of the Russian listening post in Gabala. Upon arriving in Baku, Mr. Putin was accorded a very cool reception. Contrary to the accepted norms of international protocol, the deputy prime minister of Azerbaijan was sent to the airport to greet the Russian president. Further, at a state dinner, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was insulted, something passed off to be a slip of the tongue, but many believe the insult to be deliberate.

A large delegation accompanied the Russian president with the hopes of cutting major deals, especially in the oil sector. However, in the end, only symbolic contracts were signed.

Despite all these negative signals, Mr. Putin took the initiative and swallowed the indignities. He even had a valuable gift in his pocket: on the eve of presidential elections, Ilham Aliyev could use any international support in view of some criticism of his authoritarian rule. He had already manipulated his rubber-stamp parliament to change the constitution to allow him to run for a third term extending his dynastic reign. Putin's visit was thus a deliberate boost to Aliyev's election prospects.

Additionally, there are four nominal candidates in the Azeri presidential campaign, obviously planted by the Aliyev administration. But the entire opposition has rallied around Roustam Ibrahimov, a political activist living in Moscow with dual citizenship. He has asked the Russian authorities to revoke his Russian citizenship to make him eligible to register in Azerbaijan as a presidential candidate. At this writing, the Russian authorities had not taken any action, much to Mr. Aliyev's delight and comfort.

Mr. Putin, thus, has made plain his choice for Azerbaijan's presidency.

Another endorsement came from the most improbable quarter, from President Serge Sargsian, who has stated that from Armenia's standpoint, Aliyev remains the preferred choice since he is known to be a familiar interlocutor with the Armenian side with regard to solving the Artsakh standoff, basically suggesting the devil one knows is preferable. This endorsement

has baffled political analysts and the news media. The statement was either an echo of his master's voice in the Kremlin, or it is an unbelievably sophisticated political move to dent Aliyev's popularity. Indeed, there is so much anti-Armenian hysteria in Azerbaijan that any endorsement from Armenia may generate a backlash.

In the vast ocean of the Russian politics, Armenia is a small fish. Therefore, Putin's visit must not have been motivated by the desire to spite Armenia. Mr. Putin was after broader strategic goals, although he did not mind sending a signal of displeasure to Yerevan, where plans are in the works to sign (or initiate) the Association Agreement at the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, while at the same time contemplating joining a customs union agreement steered by Russia.

It is Mr. Putin's political style to send blunt messages to his neighbors as he sent one recently to Ukraine, which was veering towards joining the European Union. The Kremlin blocked customs between the two countries to halt the flow of goods and services from Ukraine to Russia. That placed President Viktor Yanukovich in a difficult spot, since he had to perform a balancing act between pro-Russian and Pro-European Ukrainian voters who are almost evenly divided.

There is certainly a discomfort in Armenia over the arms deliveries to Azerbaijan and the almost enigmatic nature of Mr. Putin's visit to Baku. Friendly voices in Moscow are consoling Armenia's confused population with the idea that the Kremlin is seeking military parity between the two adversaries. But given Mr. Aliyev's bellicose rhetoric, parity cannot reassure Armenia — only military superiority can.

Political analysts believe that the Russian president took his Baku trip within his strategy of preserving Russian dominance in the Caucasus: Mr. Putin believes Armenia to be safely in his pocket as a strategic ally. Therefore he has to pursue other stray sheep. Georgia's leader, Mikheil Saakashvili, lacked prudence and openly challenged Russia and he was badly burnt. Incidentally, Saakashvili and Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili openly clashed during a reception aboard a US navy ship on a visit to Batumi, insulting each other in front of their American hosts. It looks like disrespect towards heads of state is not solely an Armenian disease.

Coming to Azerbaijan, its leaders are veering towards the US discretely under the tutelage of their Turkish brethren. Israel and Turkey have set up shop on Azeri territory and despite official declarations to the contrary Israel has a military base in preparation for an attack against Iran. Some time ago, Aliyev confessed that nine-tenth of his country's relationship with Israel was below the surface. The rapprochement seems to have been initiated and pursued by the US administration. This strategic build-up will undermine Russian and Iranian influence in the region.

Iran is very wary and prepared for the consequences of this strategic drive but it has limited resources to counter it. Russian and Iranian interests coincide in this political chess game and Mr. Putin's trip is part of that mission.

While in Azerbaijan, Putin has countered Aliyev's aggressive posture with an emphatic statement that the Karabagh conflict has only a political solution, not a military one.

Political analyst Alexander Iskandarian believes that Mr. Putin has a two-prong policy vis-à-vis the Karabagh conflict: not to solve the problem and not to allow a war. Indeed, Karabagh is a handy political tool for Mr. Putin to pressure Baku at the opportune moment.

Only time will tell if Mr. Putin left the slippery oil land of Azerbaijan unscathed or empty-handed.

## The Definition of Justice for the Armenians in Turkey

By Garen Kazanc

Many Armenians around the world think in unison when it comes to their demands and goals in regard to the Armenian Genocide. It is often understood that recognition and reparations of the genocide have been the motto of many Armenian organizations throughout the world who have sought justice. This has provided the international community a suitable understanding of what justice means in regards to the Armenian Genocide and what it may entail.

However, as we will soon discover, justice for one community may not be the same for another. The diaspora has become an ever-changing entity with a mixture of different opinions and ideas regarding this issue.

New to the mix is the Armenian community of Turkey. This community, which has been historically isolated from not only the diaspora but the Republic of Armenia as well, has recently offered its own take over what the definition of justice should be. Many diasporans may not know however, that this definition is a far cry from their conventional understanding of justice. This gap of knowledge is critical, and, over time, it will inevitably cause a very big disappointment for the diaspora and the

recognition of the Armenian Genocide at large.

In the past decade, Turkey has made some significant reforms when it comes to free speech and basic democratic rights. The Armenian Genocide has since been an open topic of discussion and Armenian newspapers have openly used the term 'Genocide' to describe the events that occurred in 1915. People are not being penalized under Article 301 anymore, and commemorations at the Taksim square that take place every year on April 24 have become an annual routine.

As a culmination of this, the Armenian discourse in Turkey has become increasingly assertive and demanding; often times, this has led to discussions about justice and reparations and whether or not the community agrees with the diasporan notions of recognition. The Armenian leaders in Turkey have made it very clear that they confute the diaspora's model of justice and that their community should not be considered a diaspora by all means.

The Armenian community of Turkey continues to live on the lands their forefathers have been living in for thousands of years. Many in the see JUSTICE, page 15



## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Egypt Floats Genocide Recognition As Trial Balloon to Warn Turkey

The Arab Spring in Egypt has turned into a hellish summer with countless casualties.

Ever since the Egyptian military deposed President Mohamed Morsi, one particular foreign leader has been screaming the loudest, demanding his immediate reinstatement. That bellicose leader is Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Prime Minister of Turkey, a staunch supporter of his fellow Islamist Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Egypt's new leaders, backed by large segments of the population, were infuriated especially after Erdogan severely criticized the overthrow of President Morsi and the killing of hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood protesters. Using extremely harsh language, the Turkish Prime Minister condemned the Egyptian military for "carrying out a massacre with its soldiers, police officers, [and] heavy artillery." Ironically, Erdogan called anyone who keeps silent in the face of injustice, "a voiceless devil."

There is no question that a human tragedy is unfolding in Egypt and becoming more critical with each passing day. While no one can remain indifferent to the killing and maiming of civilians, the Prime Minister of Turkey is the

last person on earth who should be taking such a self-righteous attitude. Anyone who has blood on his hands has no right to demonize others! One does not have to go back into history and recall the genocides committed by Erdogan's forefathers against Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks. Just a couple of months ago, the Turkish prime minister's own hands were soaked in blood when he proudly acknowledged that he ordered the police to open fire on unarmed demonstrators in Istanbul, killing five people, blinding 11 and injuring 8,000 others. Thus, Erdogan has been stripped of all moral authority to lecture anyone else on democracy and civil rights.

Erdogan's repeated meddling in Egypt's internal affairs and his staunch support for President Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood escalated the hostilities between the two countries to such a degree that Egypt and Turkey ended up recalling their respective Ambassadors, further disrupting their diplomatic relations. The worsening tension has jeopardized the \$2 billion Turkish investment in Egypt and frozen the activities of 300 Turkish businesses in that country.

What a difference a year makes! In May of 2012, when I was visiting Egypt on a lecture tour, a local newspaper refused to publish that part of my interview dealing with the Armenian Genocide. I was informed that given the close relationship between the two Islamist nations, it would be impossible to print anything against Turkey.

Curiously, after President Morsi's unceremonious departure from power, a series of articles appeared in scores of Egyptian newspapers, detailing the history of the Armenian Genocide, demanding that Turkey pay restitution to the survivors and calling on Erdogan to acknowledge his country's criminal past.

To top it all, a surprising twitter message was posted on

August 17 by Adly Mansour, Egypt's Interim President, announcing that his country's "UN representative tomorrow will sign the international document recognizing the Armenian massacres which were committed by the Turkish army, causing the deaths of one million people."

Even though Egyptian and Turkish newspapers widely reported the twitter message attributed to the Egyptian President, we were unable to independently confirm its authenticity. However, it is clear that the current Egyptian government and media are intent on using the Armenian Genocide as a way of getting back at Erdogan's heavy-handed interference in their domestic affairs.

Understandably, most Armenians would be displeased that the victimization of their ancestors is being exploited in a political tug of war between the two countries. Yet, unfortunately, this is politics as usual. If Egypt's new leaders find it expedient to recognize the Armenian Genocide, this would be a welcome change. It is better to recognize the Genocide, regardless of political motives, than not to recognize it for all the wrong reasons! After all, no one can expect the Egyptian government to take a position on an issue, if it is contrary to its own national interests. In this regard, Egypt is no different from other countries, including the United States and Israel, which periodically dangle acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide as a Damoclean Sword over the heads of Turkish leaders.

The final decision on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide depends on whatever concessions Cairo is expecting from Ankara. If Egypt, the most populous Arab state, recognizes the Armenian Genocide, that would deal a devastating blow to the Turkish government's frantic efforts to counter the worldwide commemorations of the Genocide Centennial in 2015.

# One Man's Opinion

As reported by *USA Armenian Life*, Aghvan Hovsepyan, prosecutor general of Armenia, at a recent international conference of Armenian lawyers in Yerevan, advocated the cession of historic Armenia (including, presumably the six provinces) to the Republic of Armenia, a proposition endorsed by Harut Sassounian, publisher of *The California Courier* and an erudite columnist for *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, [see *Mirror-Spectator* dated July 20, 2013.]

Given the power structure in Armenia and the hegemony of the RPA, it is a reasonable assumption that Hovsepyan spoke with the knowledge and tacit consent of the nation's prime minister and/or foreign minister, a supposition enforced with comparable remarks by, among others, Gagik Haroutyunyan president of the Constitutional Court and Hrair Tovmasyan, minister of justice. For good measure, the present-day status of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan comprising 5,5000 square miles with a population of almost 400,000, was also challenged.

It would seem that the International Court of Justice (World Court) is the anticipated venue for redress, and with the 100th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide on the horizon, this approach appears to represent an opening gambit by Armenia to induce Turkey to open a dialogue with Armenia, acknowledge the Genocide while providing reparations and restitution.

But, of course, while the former is within the realm of possibility, the latter is beyond the pale. What country, and given its history, Turkey, in particular, would agree to its truncation? Even if, in our wildest imagination, the political parties in Turkey and a majority of its citizens were amenable, the military would surely intervene.

Armenia today comprises about 11,484 square miles with a relatively stable population of 2,500,000. Historic Armenia (the six provinces) measures perhaps 70,000 square miles with a population that exceeds 4,000,000, predominantly restless Kurds with a predisposition for violence. Coupled with Agri, Kars and Ardahan, the numbers inflate to 75,000 square miles and 5,000,000. Thus, not only does the Muslim population today surpass that of Armenia, but their higher birth rate assures a continuing and growing majority.

Given that Armenia requires Russian assistance to guarantee its sovereignty, an expansion of its borders would require Russian acquiescence and cooperation, (as if the USA not to mention NATO would countenance Russians within spitting distance of Mediterranean and a stone's throw from the Middle East.) Another disconcertment should be that Armenia lacks the infrastructure as well as the resource to govern a seven-fold expansion of its landmass.

All this gives credence to a theory that the threat of legal redress is simply a means to diplomatically engage Turkey and suggest that acknowledging the Genocide is in their best interest and, in a good-faith gesture, retrocede Agri (home to Mount Ararat), Kars and Ardahan to the Republic. And while the Muslim population in these areas exceeds 1,000,000, emigration fueled by financial inducements might produce a more palatable number.

However, diplomacy is an art form requiring tact, a command of the nebulous, patience and precision, both complex and fraught with contradictions. It begins, absent ultimatums, between adversaries with official positions which will only be rebutted with counterarguments and proposals that require a recognition of national prerogatives, while fostering the spirit of compromise.

Perhaps the greatest impediment to this process, not unlike TARP, is its public disclosure. Generally, when sensitive matters are to be negotiated, the appropriate practice is to engage in what is known as back-channel or back-door diplomacy, if only because back-channel negotiations not only provide the participants with deniability, but it permits a pragmatic discussion devoid of partisan scrutiny; it allows for creative maneuvering while reaching an agreement, without recriminations, on issues both critical and delicate.

The ability to practice back-channel diplomacy requires a great deal of discretion, expertise and flexibility. That spokesman in Armenia harboring these attributes remains to be seen.

By George S. Yacoubian, Sr.

## Justice for the Armenians in Turkey

JUSTICE, from page 14

community today sees their lives in Turkey as a continuation of this heritage, while the diaspora sees their own lives on Turkish soil as a remnant of a tumultuous past.

Understandably enough, the Armenian community in Turkey already has what the diaspora wants: reparations. This means that the community is able to live on the lands of their ancestors and reap any sort of benefit from it. This contrasts the situation of the Armenian communities outside of Turkey and Armenia. Though not entirely their fault, the communities in the diaspora have long been outside of their historical homelands and have subsequently forgotten what it means to live on them. The underlining demands the diaspora has placed forth are intended to reconnect with all that has been forgotten and receive a certain compensation for the pain and suffering that went along with it.

However, the diaspora's push for this agenda has made the Turkish Armenians reluctant to join the broader scope of Armenian genocide recognition. Nevertheless, the diaspora is inclined to believe that this fermentation of genocide discourse in Turkey will ultimately yield the results they aspire.

So what do the leaders of the Armenian community in Turkey actually want?

Let us begin with the late Hrant Dink, who considered Turkey, rather than Armenia, his sacred homeland. Dink notoriously believed that issues concerning the Genocide would be solved through internal rather than external pressure. However, contrary to popular belief, Dink never believed in Genocide recognition and has never made a statement alluding towards anything of that nature. He was especially critical of the strategy deployed by the Armenian diaspora of pressuring Western governments into its recognition.

Furthermore, when asked during a conference held in Burbank shortly before his death about reinstating the Treaty of Sevres, Dink responded whimsically by saying that he already lives on those territories anyways. He often celebrated the notion of Armenians remaining in Turkey by stating, "Yes we're Armenians, we do want this land, but not to take it away, just to be buried deep inside."

Dink, being the optimist he was, saw reparations as a process of rebuilding. He believed rebuilding not only came in the form of renovating churches and schools, but renovating the damaged ties between the two

communities due to history and politics.

This model of thinking has been reasserted by writer and etymologist Sevan Nisanyan, who picked up where Dink left off. Nisanyan was the only Turkish Armenian that spoke during one of the most important conferences regarding reparations and justice pertaining to the Armenian Genocide. The conference, which is considered the first of its kind in Turkey, has been extremely important for Turkish and Armenian scholars alike in determining the exact nature of reparations and what its assessment necessitates.

Nisanyan was quick to object to any sort of reparations, and any sort of talk appeared to disgruntle him. Nisanyan considered reparations as a dead-end, and noted that such an approach is unjust, unacceptable, and would open the door for further conflict between Armenians and Turks. Additionally, Nisanyan stated that it is useless for a tax-paying citizen of Turkey such as himself. He concluded by saying that reparations should be more of a moral or symbolic gesture rather than financial reimbursement. He argued that sponsoring a unilateral approach favoring solely the Armenian community would be damaging to Turkish-Armenian relations at large.

Other leading Genocide historians such as Taner Akcam have also objected to such demands of reparations. Akcam, a leading Turkish scholar on the Armenian Genocide, believes that the losses during the genocide can never be fully reprimanded. In a 2013 speech held in Toronto, he categorically ruled out full reparations for the genocide. However, Akcam did outline various procedures the Turkish government may utilize in order to compensate the loss for the Genocide.

"There are several ways to compensate," he said. "Turkey, for example, can open the port of Trabzon for Armenian exports and imports without any taxation." Ultimately, Akcam believes that reparations should not come in the form of land grants, but in making the current boundaries "meaningless." Additionally, in a recent interview with the *Zaman* newspaper, Akcam asserted that reparations may come in the form of granting Turkish citizenship to Armenians who have roots in Anatolia and restoring some of the churches.

It is very difficult for the Armenian diaspora to work jointly with these movements that see TURKEY, page 16



## Foundation Set up in Memory of Couple Killed in Georgia Crash

FOUNDATION, from page 1

Armenia, they moved there five months later. They were barely settled in their new home before they died.

The couple, along with Vaché Thomassian, helped run a youth camp in Armenia during the summers. The goal was to connect youth from the country and those from the Armenian Diaspora.

Armenians have put down roots in many countries since the 1915 genocide at the hands of the Ottoman Empire, but the couple decided to move back to help revitalize a struggling country.

"What they started cannot end on a tragic note,

it has to be turned into something positive and constructive," Vaché Thomassian said. "They lived for bringing positive change to Armenia."

While there is still much to do to get the foundation off the ground, including completing nonprofit paperwork both here and in Armenia, other events have taken place to remember the couple.

After hearing of their story, Fuller Center, an organization that develops homes for the needy in Armenia, dedicated a "build day" to the couple. The center plans to dedicate one construction day a year to their memory.

"It was very symbolic to help a family in the creation of their home, something that Sosé &

Allen were only beginning to do themselves," Vaché Thomassian said.

Two cedar trees have also been planted in Lovers Park in Yerevan, a green space that features a waterfall. Yekikian and Sosé Thomassian, who were 28 and 30 when they died, often walked through the park on their way to the American University of Armenia, where Yekikian worked as the director of communications and his wife took classes.

"I chose the cedar trees because they are evergreen; through cold snowy winter and hot summer, they will grow together, just like Sosé and Allen were meant to," Vaché Thomassian said.

## Suny Named Winner of 2013 Distinguished Contributions Award

SUNY, from page 1

Suny is a renowned historian and political scientist interested across the Eurasian field in both spatial and temporal terms. He is particularly noted for his studies of the Caucasus in the Soviet and post-Soviet period: he was the first holder of the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History at the University of Michigan (1981-1995), and the founder and director of the Armenian Studies Program there. He is the author of seven scholarly monographs, including *The Baku Commune 1917-1918* (Princeton University Press, 1972); *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Indiana University Press, 1988, 1994); *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Indiana University Press, 1993); *The Revenge of the Past* (Stanford University Press, 1993) and *The Soviet Experiment* (Oxford University Press, 1998). He is also the editor of many collections of essays, including *Making Workers Soviet* (Cornell University Press, 1994); *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford University Press, 2001) and *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Suny's provocative and pioneering work on nationalism is an obligatory citation not just across the Eurasian studies field, but also beyond, and he has recently also made contributions to the developing field of history of emotions.

Suny has served as chairman of the Society for Armenian Studies. He has also served on the editorial boards of *Slavic Review*, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *The Armenian Review*, *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, *Armenian Forum* and *Ab Imperio*. He was elected president of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies for the year 2006.

Regarded with affection by former students and colleagues alike, he is a model of collegiality, and an exemplum, in the truly international scope of his interests, for the Association of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies in its post-Soviet and post-Cold War present.

The Award will be presented on November 23, at the ASEES 45th Annual Convention, in Boston.

## Justice for the Armenians in Turkey

TURKEY, from page 15

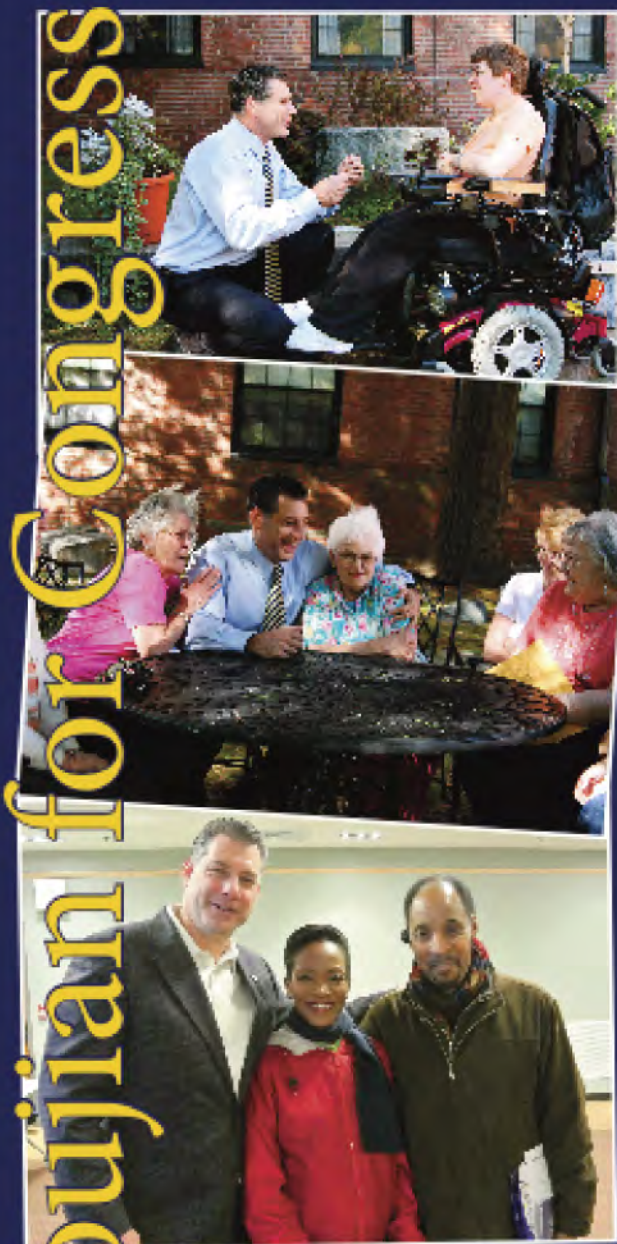
may or may not favor recognition, but more importantly, categorically oppose reparations. The diaspora is now developing an illusive understanding of recognition movements in Turkey and the repercussions of this can be disappointing to say the least.

To better understand the needs and desires of those in Turkey is to better understand where the movement is heading in its entirety. As time goes by, the Armenian Genocide is being approached in a more pluralistic interpretation. The unilateral approach of recognition, reparations, and restitution is now diversifying into many different branches which more often than not have become antagonistic. But, regardless of the different viewpoints and conceptualizations, one thing remains certain: "Justice," as Dink famously wrote, "will be the water that will find its crack for us all."

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They taught me that when you listen to people, empower people, and help them take action – you can change lives for the better.



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Fighting for the families of the 5th Congressional District on the issues that matter most...

- Providing affordable health care for all residents
- Creating high-paying jobs
- Banning assault weapons