

Two Armenians Killed in Syria

ALEPPO, Syria (Tert.am, PanArmenian.net) – Two Syrian-Armenians have been killed in Damascus and Aleppo in recent days as a result of clashes between Syria’s governmental forces and rebels.

A 76-year-old woman, Adelina Khacheryan, was shot dead accidentally on August 17, while on August 18, a 38-year-old Armenian was killed in Damascus.

A spokesman for the Diocese of the Armenian Church there, Zhirayr Reysian, said their deaths were not a result of targeted activities against the Armenian community.

“I am not aware of the details of the Damascus incident, but yesterday’s incident that killed an Armenian woman was the result of occasional shooting,” Reysian said.

He said a young Armenian has been

wounded as a result of blast in Aleppo.

Representative of the Armenian community of Aleppo said the situation during recent days has not changed and the conflict continues in the same way though the governmental forces have managed to take control of certain neighborhoods, but the fighting still continues.

“In spite of the problems with Internet and phone communications, the situation in Aleppo has comparatively improved,” Reysian said.

He said though the clashes are far from Armenian districts sometimes the fights occur there as well.

On August 16, Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, met with the representatives of the new regional department of Armenian Relief Cross in Lebanon. He was briefed on the organization’s further programs, with scholar-

ship for Armenian college students, aid to vulnerable families and to the elderly among priorities. The catholicos praised the humanitarian assistance extended by Armenian Red Cross, stressing the importance of offering support to Syrian Armenians.

Meanwhile, the Armenian national carrier, Armavia, continues operating regular and extra flights to Syria. The company carried out the second Yerevan-Aleppo-Yerevan extra flight on Wednesday. Five people left for Syria, while 104 arrived in Armenia. An additional 90 persons arrived by the regular Aleppo-Yerevan flight on Monday, Armavia reports.

Armavia, with help from the Armenian government, operates special flights for children. Armenian children are coming from Aleppo to spend their vacations in local summer camps.

Armenian Bar Assoc. Petitions US Supreme Court in Genocide Recovery Lawsuit

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Bar Association (ArmenBar) has prepared and filed written legal arguments with the United States Supreme Court in an effort to reverse an appellate court decision in Movsesian v. Versicherung AG, which nullified a California statute allowing for the pursuit of Genocide-related life insurance recoveries.

Earlier this year, in the Movsesian case, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a California law which extended the statute of limitations for Genocide-era life insurance claims on the grounds that the United States’ alleged position of non-recognition trumped California’s efforts to allow for the legal redress of these insurance claims. ArmenBar urged the Supreme Court to reconsider the decision and to allow for the enforcement of the California insurance-oriented law which pertains to an area of fundamental state sovereignty.

Joining ArmenBar on its amicus brief, which was written and assembled on a pro bono basis by a team of lawyers from the law firm of Bingham McCutchen and helmed by the Armenian Bar’s founding chairman, David Balabanian, are the attorneys general of the states of California, Michigan, Nevada and Rhode Island, as well as several federal and state legislators.

Edvin Minassian, the two-term immediate past chairman of the Armenian Bar Association, has been an active participation in the joint efforts to serve and protect the legal interests of the Armenian community, this time all the way to the doors of the highest court in the land. With Minassian and Balabanian, the organization has, for the first time, weighed in with the Supreme Court asking that it uphold the rights of the Armenian Genocide’s victims and their heirs.

Claims for unpaid life insurance policies dating back to the Armenian Genocide were first brought by plaintiffs’ attorney Vartkes Yeghiayan, a lifetime honorary member of ArmenBar.

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Armenia, Philippines Sign Agreements To Expand Bilateral Relations

MANILA, Philippines (*Manila Inquirer*) – Foreign Secretary Albert Del Rosario and Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian on Wednesday, August 22, signed two bilateral agreements, which were meant to expand bilateral relations between the two countries.

The agreement between the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Armenia established a mechanism on political consultation meant to monitor Philippine-Armenia relations, the DFA said in a statement.

It also said the agreement included the establishment of the Waiver on Visa for Diplomatic and Official Passport Holders, meant to increase people-to-people contacts and “expand the levels of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.” The purpose of the agreement was to facilitate visiting Philippine and Armenian government officials.

Nalbandian’s visit to the DFA Wednesday morning was the first visit to the Philippines by a high-ranking official from Armenia.

The statement noted that Del Rosario, during his meeting with Nalbandian, said the official’s visit marked this year’s 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. It said Del Rosario welcomed the European country’s interest to engage in the Asia Pacific region.

In a separate interview with reporters, Del Rosario noted that the meeting was good for the countries since “nothing has moved between us for about 20 years.” He said that for 20 years, trade between the Philippines and Armenia was “miniscule” and that there were no investments.

Del Rosario added that the two countries were working on signing other important agreements when he visits Armenia early next year.

He said that they were looking at a number of opportunities to boost trade and investments, particularly in the agriculture and construction sectors.

He said they were also trying to get Armenia to look at the Business Process and Outsourcing (BPO) sectors, particular-

ly in engineering and architectural design.

He also said that economic and science and technology agreements, as well as cultural and educational agreements between the two countries, were also discussed.

He added that the Armenian ambassador was particularly surprised with the country’s investments and productions of bananas.

“They are keen on looking if they could obtain bananas from us,” Del Rosario said.

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Former US Envoy Joins Think Tank

ANKARA (*Hürriyet Daily News*) – Matthew Bryza, the former US ambassador to Azerbaijan, who was never confirmed by the Senate for the job, has joined the Jamestown Foundation in Washington, a think tank specializing in terrorism matters, the foundation said in a statement on August 16.



Matthew Bryza

US President Barack Obama chose Bryza in late 2009 to head the embassy in Baku, but the Senate blocked the confirmation, accusing Bryza, who has a Turkish wife, of being too pro-Turkish on Armenian and Azerbaijani matters.

According to US law, Bryza, who had failed to win the Senate’s confirmation for two successive years, had to leave his post as ambassador to Baku.

Currently Bryza resides in Istanbul, where he also works as a consultant on business and democratic development and is a board member of several private companies.

Israeli Minister Pays Tribute to Victims of Armenian Genocide

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A delegation headed by the Israeli Minister of Information Yuli Edelstein was scheduled to arrive in Armenia on August 23.

On the same day, an Israeli cultural delegation featuring singers, Vladi Blayberg and Mikhail Brikman, participated in a concert to be organized on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Jewish community in Armenia.

The Israeli Minister of Information was scheduled to visit Tsitsernakaberd on August 24 to pay tribute to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. A bilateral agreement on cultural exchange was expected to be signed between the ministries of the culture of the two nations.

Armenia Ranks Higher In Health Survey Than Russia, Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Media giant Bloomberg conducted an international health index. Among the 145 countries, Armenia ranks 79th.

In the South Caucasus region, Georgia is the leader and occupies the 71st position. Azerbaijan, which has the 87th position, is the most unhealthy in the region. The Russian Federation is 97th and Ukraine 99th in the rating table.

The healthiest nation in the world, according to this survey, is Singapore. It is followed by Italy, Australia, Switzerland, Japan, Israel, Spain, Netherlands, Sweden and Germany, rounding the top 10.

The unhealthiest living conditions were recorded in Swaziland, Lesotho and Congo.

Brazil Donates \$100K To UNICEF Branch in Armenia

YEREVAN – In an effort to help the Armenian government improve the welfare of children in the country, the Brazilian government announced this week that it had decided to make a donation in the amount of \$100,000 to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) office in Armenia.

The donation is aimed to support the activities undertaken by UNICEF in Armenia within the framework of the long-term humanitarian and development assistance to the most vulnerable groups, such as youth, pregnant women and mothers, in partnership with civic organizations.

The government of Brazil believes that the welfare of children all over the world is essential for a better future with equal opportunities for all.

The symbolic Ceremony of Donation took place at the UNICEF office in Yerevan on August 24.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

British Airways to Stop Flights between Yerevan And London in October

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – British Airways will stop flights between London and Yerevan starting October 13, the Armenian Office of British Airways reported.

The airline will continue daily flights between the two cities until late September, and between October 1 and 12, the flights will be reduced to five times a week.

British Airways has decided to suspend its activity in Armenia starting in October due to the low profitability of the specified flights, which were launched in 1997. Over the past few years British Airways planes did not come to Armenia. Instead, the flights were made by another British company, namely British Midland International (BMI). BMI has recently been acquired by British Airways, and the latter considered the flights to Armenia to be commercially unprofitable.

Prosperous Armenia Member's Son Detained After Shots Fired

YEREVAN (tert.am) – On August 14, police in the city of Masis got a report regarding a dispute between two young men, one of whom is the son of a member of the Prosperous Armenia Party (PAP) late on Tuesday evening.

Police detained 28-year-old Volodya Dallakyan and 22-year-old Hambartsum Hovhannisyan.

Dallakyan is director of the Ani Luis Ltd., and his father, Avetik Dallakyan, is a candidate for the post of mayor in Masis and a member of PAP.

Police said that at about 11 p.m. on August 13, Hovhannisyan used a knife to puncture a tire on a car parked in front of Dallakyan's house. On seeing that, Dallakyan fired at Hovhannisyan. Hovhannisyan fled and later returned to Dallakyan's house with a pistol only to shoot at the car several times. Police confiscated both firearms.

The car is used by Smbat Saribekyan, director of the Water Sewerage Company, who is also Volodya Dallakyan's uncle.

Tourism Grows in Artsakh

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – According to data from the Nagorno-Karabagh (Artsakh) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, more than 10,000 foreign citizens have visited the republic as of August 21.

In July, 3,000 visited the republic.

The number is higher than the corresponding time last year by almost 30 percent.

Despite the obstacles created by the Azerbaijani authorities, the flow of tourists in Artsakh from all the continents continues to grow every year. It is no coincidence that the region is being more often included into the ratings of the most attractive tourist corners of the world.

Russian Company May Provide Oil Products to Armenia

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – The Rosneft Company, based in Russia, is expected to enter the Armenian market of oil products. Rosneft is more likely to create a joint venture with a local oil vendor, the head of a major oil-importing firm said.

The source reported that Rosneft needs the Armenian partner for mutual benefit of the existing petrol stations. The Russian company may modernize and expand the network of petrol stations in Armenia offering its brand and new mechanisms of fuel delivery to Armenia via Georgia. Thus far, Russia has had strained relations with Georgia.

The Armenian oil market is estimated to be 340,000-360,000 tons per year, all imported from Romania and Russia.

Growing Old in Armenia: The Trouble with Pensions

By Sigrid Lupieri

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – The tinny noise of silverware and clatter of plates mingles with the sound of muffled voices and the smell of freshly cooked pasta at the Shengavit Soup Kitchen in Yerevan. The imposing cafeteria, with its ornate stucco ceilings, feels stifling in the summer heat as more than a hundred elderly line up for food and crowd around the makeshift plastic tables to eat.

While life expectancy and healthcare have improved in recent years, the throngs of pensioners waiting for a hot meal bear witness to Armenia's lingering economic woes. With pensions as low as 31,000 drams (\$75) a month, in a country where inflation has been steadily driving up prices, almost half a million elderly struggle to make ends meet.

Sona Hovakimyan, a 25-year-old social worker at Mission Armenia, the non-governmental organization running the Shengavit Soup Kitchen, is well aware of how harsh life can be for her clients. As the sole caretaker of almost 150 pensioners, she says her job description is sometimes overwhelming.

"Old people need information because they don't know how to protect their rights or they have no skills to do the things they need," she says, sitting in her cramped but sunny office as some of her clients shuffle in from the hallway. She greets them warmly. "We try to make their life more positive and help them solve their problems," she says.

For some elderly, conditions are particularly dire. Hripsime Kirakosyan, president and co-founder of Mission Armenia, says soaring prices still make utilities inaccessible.

One hundred-year-old Yelena Abrahamyan is one of the more than 4,000 beneficiaries of Mission Armenia. According to Nurik Dag Hunts, the head of the Social and Healthcare Services Department at the organization, Abrahamyan was destitute and alone. "She was a talented artist," Dag Hunts says. "But we found her with frozen fingers because she couldn't pay for heating."

Today, Abrahamyan has resumed painting and has written her memoirs as a survivor of the Armenian Genocide. Dag Hunts points to a painting hanging on the wall at Mission Armenia's headquarters. A vase filled with delicate white and lilac flowers fills the frame. "She gave it to us as a sign of her gratitude," Dag Hunts says.

Sixteen percent of Armenia's population has already reached retirement age. And, despite the support of non-governmental organizations, programs such as the Armenian General Benevolent Union's soup kitchens for elderly and other charities, a rapidly aging population will soon be affected by the country's pension problem.

Though most working adults pay as much as 26 percent of their salary in pension-related taxes, the average pension hovers below the official minimum amount required for subsistence of 33,500 drams (\$81).

"We inherited the pay-as-you-go system from the Soviet Union where each generation pays for the next," says Arman Udumyan, a partnership development and fundraising officer at the Pension System Awareness Foundation.

According to Udumyan, whose organization is partly funded by the government to increase awareness about an upcoming pension reform, the old system is no longer sustainable. With an aging society, high unemployment and the steady emigration of younger generations, overall taxable income has greatly decreased. The problem is further exacerbated by what Armenians call a

"shadow economy" where a certain number of employers, with the acquiescence of their employees, underreport their actual income to avoid taxation.

While the situation is difficult, not all news is gloomy. A new mandatory pension reform allows 16 to 40-year-olds to create their own personal pension accounts and to plan for retirement. These workers can monitor their accounts and choose how they would like to invest their savings.

While many remain skeptical of the new reform, Udumyan says the recent changes carry some advantages. From increased control over personal pension plans and stricter tax surveillance, to the development of information and communication technologies, Udumyan says the system will become more transparent.

But even the reform won't solve the urgent pension problem any time soon. Armenians will only begin to see the changes in 2037, when the first age group under the new pension system is expected to retire. "The reforms will not affect this generation of pensioners," Udumyan says. "Only the next generation will be better off."

Anahit Gevorgyan, the deputy head of the Department for Disabled and Elderly Issues at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, agrees that the reform will bring little relief to seniors today. "I won't be able to benefit either – I will have a low pension," she says.

But despite an inadequate government budget, Gevorgyan says the situation is improving. "Just 20 years ago, Armenia didn't have any structures to support the elderly" she says. "Now we have 5,000 beneficiaries of personal care in their homes, 1,250 nursing homes and 2,500 day care centers."

The government is also working on a long-term strategic action plan to improve the situation. The objectives of

the project include training gerontologists, building apartments for homeless older adults, creating Armenia's first hospice and opening five additional day care centers for seniors.

"I hope the strategic plan will be approved," Gevorgyan says. "Even if only 20 percent of [the plan] is actually financed and implemented, there will be big changes in the quality of life for the elderly."

Back at the Shengavit Soup Kitchen, the seniors who have finished their meal are eager to share their stories. Svetlana Ghazarian, 71, sits in a rickety chair in the center's spartan but comfortable counseling room.

Like many others at the soup kitchen, Ghazarian is not only living on her pension, but supporting her family as well. With a 32-year-old disabled daughter and a 4-year-old grandson, the small family is left to survive on 50,000 drams (\$120) a month.

"When we pay for gas and electricity there is nothing left for anything. Ten days before the end of the month our only help is Mission Armenia," she says.

But while reforms may be long in coming, Ghazarian and the others agree that non-governmental organizations such as Mission Armenia have changed their lives. And in some cases, things are already improving.

"I'm very satisfied because many years ago there wasn't all the help we have now," says 74-year-old Rosa Hakobyan, who also cares for a disabled daughter while surviving on her meager pension. "Before, we didn't even have shoes to wear."

Sitting with her back to the wall, wearing a bright pink T-shirt, Ghazarian conveys a sense of stoic acceptance. When asked about her hopes for the future, she answers simply "I need something to eat and something to wear – nothing more."

Dilijan Increases Flow of Tourists

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – This year the resort town of Dilijan has marked considerable growth in the number of tourists, Armen Santosyan, the mayor of Dilijan, said at press conference this week.

He said that in all of 2011, 15,000 tourists visited Dilijan, adding that this number has already been surpassed this year. Santosyan added that 70 percent of the tourists in Dilijan are residents of Yerevan and that the other 30 percent are foreigners or representatives from the Armenian Diaspora.

"Many tourists have come from Europe, the United States, even Japan and China," he said.

Santosyan said that the policy of Dilijan's tour operators allows receiving the representatives of many social groups and meeting the demands of



A view of Dilijan

tourists interested in a variety of activities.

The mayor stressed that the flow of tourists to Dilijan has increased thanks to improvements, including fixing the highway to Dilijan. The private sector has also made big investments in the construction of new rest houses, hotels, cottages, restaurants, cafes and other facilities for leisure and entertainment. For its part, the community finances the rehabilitation of roads and water supply systems and also improves the architectural appearance of the town. The construction of the Central Bank's branch will be completed in 2013.

The State Revenue Committee of Armenia is financing the construction of a large health and education center. The mayor also said one major problem facing the town has been landslides, but that improved drainage systems have eliminated that problem.



INTERNATIONAL

Girl Dies of Wounds in Turkey Bomb Attack, amid Fears Kurd Rebels Emboldened by Syria Chaos

ISTANBUL (AP) — A 12-year-old girl became the ninth victim Tuesday of a bomb blast in Turkey's southeast, which has highlighted fears that Kurdish rebels seeking self-rule are becoming emboldened by moves toward autonomy by the Kurdish minority in war-torn Syria.

Interior Minister Beshir Atalay said the girl had died of her wounds and three other children were among

within and outside of Turkey."

Turkey has conducted periodic air strikes against Kurdish rebel bases in the mountains of northern Iraq, but is now concerned that the guerrillas are organizing in Kurdish-dominated parts of Syria sympathetic to their cause, and where regime forces have pulled back as they struggle to quell a national uprising. Fighters from a Syrian Kurd group have set up checkpoints and

escalate their own campaign for self-rule in its southeast.

Within its borders, the Turkish state has granted more cultural rights to Kurds, who make up some 20 percent of Turkey's population of 75 million, but there is still a great deal of distrust between Ankara and many Kurds, who say they are treated poorly and remain a target of prosecution. Iran also has a large Kurdish minority, and Iraqi Kurds have carved out their own mini-state in northern Iraq.

Political analyst Wladimir van Wilgenburg said it would be difficult for the PKK to conduct attacks on Turkish targets from bases inside Syria because the border area is flat and relatively easy to control, unlike the rugged region between Turkey and Iraq. In addition, the border between Turkey and Syria is heavily mined and monitored.

"The PKK cannot use the Syrian Kurdish areas as a launching pad against Turkey and only controls limited areas where Syrian security forces are still present to some degree," van Wilgenburg wrote in an analysis published this month by The Jamestown Foundation, a US-based research center. "The PKK may aim to gain more legitimacy by playing a role in Syria, but not to use their presence there against Turkey militarily."

In a meeting with Turkish journalists last week, Francis J. Ricciardone, the US ambassador to Turkey, expressed concern about reports of arms shipments by Iran to the Syrian regime, an ally, and referred to the traditionally "good relations" between the Assad regime and the PKK. He described recent US sanctions against the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah as an attempt to prevent the Syrian regime "or its fellow travelers like the PKK" from getting aid in the form of arms, logistical support and intelligence.



(IHA/ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO)

Firefighters and police officers seen after an explosion near a police station in southern Turkish city of Gaziantep, Turkey, late Monday, August 20, 2012.

those killed when a bomb concealed in a vehicle exploded Monday night near a police station in the city of Gaziantep, near the Syrian border, where tens of thousands of refugees are sheltering in Turkish camps.

Dozens more were wounded in the blast, which occurred on a Muslim holiday and came amid an increase in fighting in recent weeks between Turkish forces and Kurdish rebels who took up arms in 1984.

There was no claim of responsibility, and Firat, a pro-Kurdish news agency, cited militants as saying they were not involved and guerrilla forces would not attack civilians. However, Turkish Interior Minister Idris Naim Sahin said any disavowal by the rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, was not credible, according to Turkey's NTV television. Kurdish militants have previously targeted civilians, and the PKK is deemed a terrorist group by Turkey and its Western allies.

"The fact that the PKK has not claimed the attack does not mean that it didn't do it," Sahin said during a visit to Gaziantep. "The attack has links

hoisted Kurdish flags in some areas near Turkey, and Turkish forces have staged several drills on their side of the border in a show of force.

The complexity of the situation partly explains Turkish reservations about using troops to establish a buffer zone inside Syria to protect civilians fleeing attacks by forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar Assad. Turkey nearly went to war with Syria over its support for the PKK when the rebel group was much more powerful in the 1990s, and it worries that Syrian Kurd moves toward autonomy could encourage Turkish Kurds to

Catholicos Visits Romania, Ukraine

BUCHAREST, Romania (Armenpress) — Karekin II, supreme patriarch and catholicos of All Armenians, left for the Armenian Diocese of Romania to reconsecrate the Holy Virgin Monastery on its 500th anniversary.

The Holy See Information Department reported that among the patriarchal delegation were patriarchal delegate of Western Europe and Prelate Norvan Zakaryan of the Armenian Diocese in France, Prelate Khajag Barsamian of the Armenian Eastern Diocese in the US, Primate Ezras Nersisian of the Armenian Diocese of New Nakhijevan and Russia, and monks from the Holy See.

On occasion of the catholicos' visit, a welcoming ceremony was held in the Soorp Hreshtakapetats Church, which was also attended by representatives of diplomatic missions of different countries; former president of the Republic of Romania Emil Constantinescu; minister of religion; the general secretary of the Ministry of Culture and high-ranked representatives of sister churches. Opening of the exhibition dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Armenian book was held in the museum branch of the Dudyan Cultural Center, where Armenian antique books and the ones published in Romania were presented.

In the city of Chernovets the catholi-

cos sent his blessings and best wishes to a great number of pilgrims who had arrived from all over Ukraine. The Romanian Minister of Culture Mikhail Kulinyak and the president of the Armenian community in Ukraine, Vilen Shatvoyan, greeted the Armenian patriarch in Chernovets. During the visit the catholicos met with the head of the state, Mikhail Papiev.

The state of the Sts. Paul and Peter Armenian Church in Chernovets was discussed, which belongs to the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture as a community hall and is provided to the Armenian Church only two hours a day for religious ceremonies. The catholicos appealed to the authorities to renovate the church sacristy and return it to the Armenian community.

The catholicos met with the Romanian Vice President Crin Antonescu on August 13. The latter welcomed the supreme patriarch and his delegation and attached importance to the warm relations between the two nations noting that the Armenians have contributed greatly to the Romanian economic development and cultural life. The catholicos expressed his gratitude to the Romanian authorities for their concern towards the Armenian Church.

He returned to the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin on August 15.

International News

Armenian Citizen Reported to Be among Victims of Sudan Air Crash

KHARTOUM, Sudan (PanARMENIAN.Net) — An Armenian citizen is reported to be among the victims of a plane crash on Sunday, April 19, the Russian Foreign Ministry press service reported.

The plane went down in mountains around Talodi, a town in the border state of South Kordofan, while taking a delegation there to celebrate the Eid al-Fitr festival marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

"According to Russian Embassy in Sudan, crew members including Russian citizen G.V. Semenova, as well as citizens of Armenia and Tajikistan died in the crash," the Russian Foreign Ministry's website reported.

The country's Guidance and Endowments (religious affairs) Minister Ghazi al-Sadeq was killed in the crash, along with Mahjoub Abdel Raheem Toutou, state minister for youth and sports, and Eissa Daifallah, state minister for tourism, antiquities and wildlife.

Armenia's Foreign Ministry is currently investigating the claim from their Russian counterparts.

Armenian Church in Malatya to Be Renovated

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) — Turkey's Malatya Gov. Ulvi Saran announced four historical monuments are scheduled to be renovated aimed at making Malatya attractive for tourists, including the Armenian Church in Tashoron.

Citing Turkish Jihan news agency, Saran stated the Tashoron church is set to be repaired first among the local landmarks.

Malatya is a city in southeastern Turkey and the capital of its eponymous province.

Request for Education in Aramean Mother Tongue Rejected

ISTANBUL (*Today's Zaman*) — The Education Ministry has recently rejected a request by Turkey's Aramean (Syriac) community to open its own kindergarten and deliver education in their mother tongue on the grounds that the community is not designated a minority in the Constitution.

The request marked a first in the history of the Turkish Republic. In remarks appearing in the *Vatan* daily last week, Sait Susin, a representative from the Aramean community in Turkey, said the Istanbul-based Syriac Kadim Community Foundation was planning to open a kindergarten, which would also offer Syriac language lessons. The community submitted a petition to the Istanbul branch of the Education Ministry on June 6 and they received a response rejecting their request on July 26.

Susin talked about the community's experience to the deputy chairman of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party), Hüseyin Çelik, during an *iftar* (fast-breaking dinner) event last week. Çelik disagreed with the education authorities and said the Istanbul head of the Education Ministry must have misunderstood the request.

"Our government will meet this demand. We are open to requests by minorities' foundations," Susin quoted Çelik as saying.

There are roughly 25,000 Arameans in Turkey and 85 percent live in Istanbul. Susin said the Syriac language dates back 5,000 years and the language was named as such after Arameans were converted to Christianity. The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the main agreement regulating minorities in Turkey, recognized only Jewish, Armenian and Greek Orthodox communities as minorities. These groups were given legal rights to establish foundations and deliver education in their languages.

Armenia, Philippines Sign Agreements To Expand Bilateral Relations

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Nalbandian, for his part, said that his country's foreign policy decision to stir up activities in the region was consistent with the country's need to tap external markets, and modernize its production processes and infrastructure.

The statement also noted that the two leaders also discussed regional issues and reaffirmed their commitment to contributing to global and regional peace and security.

Nalbandian also paid a courtesy call on President Benigno S. Aquino III Tuesday.



INTERNATIONAL

Iran Looks to Armenia to Skirt Bank Sanctions

By Louis Charbonneau

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) – With international sanctions squeezing Iran, the Islamic Republic is seeking to expand its banking foothold in the Caucasus nation of Armenia to make up for difficulties in countries it used to rely on to do business, according to diplomats and documents.

Iran's growing interest in its neighbor Armenia, a mountainous, landlocked country of about 3.3 million people, comes at a time of rising international isolation for Tehran and increasing scrutiny by Western governments and intelligence agencies of Iranian banking ties worldwide as they attempt to stifle the country's nuclear program.

The most recent example is British bank Standard Chartered, which has been in the spotlight due to US charges that it hid from US regulators and shareholders some \$250 billion of transactions tied to Iran.

An expanded local-currency foothold in a neighbor like Armenia, a former Soviet republic which has close trade ties to Iran and is working hard to forge closer links to the European Union, could make it easier for Tehran to obfuscate payments to and from foreign clients and deceive Western intelligence agencies trying to prevent it from expanding its nuclear and missile programs.

Armenian officials denied illicit banking links to Iran.

While the four rounds of UN sanctions remain limited, with only two Iran banks blacklisted by the Security Council, the United States and European Union have implemented much tougher restrictions, sanctioning dozens of banks and other firms and making it increasingly difficult for Tehran to conduct business in US dollars and euros.

A UN panel of experts that monitors compliance with the sanctions against Tehran recently submitted a report to the UN Security Council's Iran sanctions committee that concluded Iran was constantly searching for ways to skirt restrictions on its banking sector.

"One state bordering Iran informed the Panel of requests from Iran to open new financial institutions," the report said. "The requests were not pursued apparently because of that country's burdensome legislation."

Several UN diplomats familiar with the panel's work confirmed that the unnamed state was Armenia, where Iran already has banking ties.

Despite Armenia's denials of illegal banking arrangements, Iran has not given up trying to

expand in the country, the diplomats said, and US officials have repeatedly cautioned Armenian colleagues to tighten financial controls.

Iran's trade with Armenia, including an oil pipeline that Armenian news reports say should be finished in 2014, requires some form of cross-border banking. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said that Iran's annual trade with Armenia is around \$1 billion, according to Iranian news reports.

Engaging in transactions with Iranian banks is not a violation of international sanctions as long as it is not linked to Iran's nuclear or missile programs or companies or individuals under US, EU or UN sanctions.

Iran insists its nuclear program is peaceful and refuses to shut it down. It says the sanctions are illegal.

But Washington has made clear to governments around the world that trading with Iranian firms that are sanctioned by the United States could lead to a US blacklisting.

A Western intelligence report shown to Reuters, and dated May 2012, said that Iran was searching for "convenient" locations to develop alternative banking relationships away from spy agencies and other international monitoring bodies. It said an expanded presence in Armenia was one of Iran's goals.

"The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has been operating for years to establish and develop concealed infrastructures to enable Iran to continue trading with foreign countries, particularly in countries convenient for Iranian activity, such as the UAE (United Arab Emirates) and Turkey," the report said.

"The increasing pressure on the banks in some of these countries has forced CBI economists to seek financial alternatives in countries that do not work according to the dictates of the West," it said, naming Armenia as a target.

In addition to Turkey and UAE, diplomats say Iran has been trying to develop financial channels elsewhere to avoid sanctions, focusing on countries like Malaysia, China, India, Brazil and, according to a report in the New York Times last weekend, Iraq.

Iran has used Iraqi banks to move large amounts of cash into the international banking system, prompting private US protests to Baghdad, the Times reported.

Regarding Armenia, the Western intelligence report cited Armenian bank ACBA Credit Agricole Bank, a full-service institution that does business with individuals and companies and had some \$574 million in assets last year, as one of Iran's principal targets.

A Western UN diplomat who closely follows

the sanctions on Tehran confirmed that ACBA was "a bank that has come up in connection with Iran." He declined to provide details of any potentially illicit ACBA transactions linked to Iran.

Ashot Osipyan, chairman of the Union of Armenia's Banks, said it was impossible ACBA had any ties with Iran. "Armenian banks are financing only Armenia's economy," he said.

ACBA Chief Executive Officer Stepan Gishian was similarly categorical in his denial of helping Iran skirt sanctions.

"We finance exclusively the economy of Armenia," he said. "We don't have any relationship with Iran. We never have, we don't now and furthermore we don't plan on becoming a channel for financing Iran. What you're saying is complete nonsense."

Washington recently raised its concerns with Armenian officials about the possibility that Iran could exploit Armenia to bypass sanctions. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton discussed the issue with President Serge Sargsian during a June meeting in Yerevan, a senior State Department official said.

The precise content of the discussions and the outcome were unclear.

Diplomats and intelligence officials told Reuters that Turkey and the UAE remain Iran's principal banking connections, while China and India are becoming areas of concern as Tehran now finds it difficult to conduct transactions in US dollars and euros. As a result, it has turned increasingly to doing business in less-traceable local currencies.

But Turkey and the UAE, they say, are not as welcoming these days. The two countries are under intense pressure from Washington and the European Union to clamp down on illicit Iranian commerce connected to a nuclear program that the Western powers and their allies suspect is for producing weapons - a charge Iran denies.

Another bank that has long concerned Western powers is the Armenian branch of Iran's Bank Mellat, which has been under US sanctions since 2007. While Mellat is not under UN sanctions, the Security Council cited it as a problematic bank in the text of its fourth sanctions resolution, passed in June 2010.

"Over the last seven years, Bank Mellat has facilitated hundreds of millions of dollars in transactions for Iranian nuclear, missile, and defense entities," the resolution said.

Mellat is still functioning in Yerevan, though its activities have drastically decreased due to US and EU sanctions, according to Arakel Meliksetyan, deputy head of the financial intelligence unit at Armenia's central bank.

Meliksetyan, citing the bank's annual published reports, said its Armenian assets decreased more than 50 percent from December 31, 2010 to July 1, 2012.

Mellat is cut off from the US, European and other financial markets and has virtually no business with other Armenian banks, Meliksetyan said. Since it was disconnected from the SWIFT system earlier this year, Mellat Armenia is no longer able to send or receive international wire transfers, he added.

He said the bank's small customers were mainly Iranians doing business in Armenia, Armenians exporting to Iran, Iranians with Armenian backgrounds and students.

The Mellat Armenian branch's website (www.mellatbank.am) has photos of a brightly lit, ordinary-looking bank with the words "Accuracy, Courtesy, Efficiency" at the top. It lists two men with Iranian names as the general manager and deputy general manager and gives a P.O. box for an address.

Reuters contacted the bank for responses to questions about its activities. After initially agreeing to a face-to-face discussion, the officials said they wanted written questions and have not provided further comment.

Turkey was in a similar position to Armenia's once. Reuters reported in 2010 that Turkey was becoming a safe haven for Iranian banks. In response to heavy US pressure to cut banking ties with Tehran, Western envoys say, Turkish banks have become much more cautious about doing business with Iranian clients.

US concerns about Armenia's commitment to implementing sanctions against Iranian banks are not new, according to previously secret US diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks.

A May 2007 cable from the US embassy in Yerevan, titled "Armenia Slow To Implement Bank Sepah Asset Freeze," said that Sepah, an Iranian bank which has been under UN sanctions since March 2007, maintained correspondent accounts with the Armenian branch of Mellat in breach of UN restrictions.

Another cable from 2008 made clear Washington was still worried: "Poloff (Political Office) requested that the Armenian MFA (ministry of foreign affairs) advise the Central Bank of Armenia to employ extra vigilance in monitoring the financial transaction of the Iranian-owned Bank Mellat in Yerevan."

(Additional reporting by Thomas Grove, Steve Gutterman and Nastassia Astrasheuskaya in Moscow, Andrew Quinn in Washington, Hasmik Mkrtchyan in Yerevan and Andrei Makhovsky in Minsk. Editing by Warren Strobel and Jim Loney)

Armenian Ambassador Presents Legal Argument for Recognition of Artsakh

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – An article titled "The Inevitability of Nagorno Karabagh Republic independence international recognition," written by Armenian Ambassador to Italy Ruben Karapetyan was published in *Geopolitica* magazine issued by the Italian Institute for Research and Related Sciences.

There is a brief 20th-century historical overview on realization mechanisms of people's

self-determination and on political, legal, cultural and other factors and general directions of historical dynamics as a basis of "the emergence of new state units in world political map."

Karapetyan presented the consistent ethnic discriminatory policy pursued by Azerbaijani authorities during the Soviet period aimed at threatening the physical existence of Armenian making up the majority of the population in

Artsakh.

He explored the existence of invulnerable legal basis for the international recognition of Nagorno-Karabagh Republic's independence. He considered unpromising the rejection of independence acquired 20 years before as a result of Artsakh people's struggle simultaneously underscoring "the balanced approach adopted by international community."

Karapetyan notes that recognition of Artsakh by the international community is inevitable, as it is ridiculous to defend human rights on the



Ambassador Ruben Karapetyan

UNHCR: Fridtjof Nansen's Legacy Lives on in Hearts of Armenians

GENEVA (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) released the third in a six-part series celebrating the life of the father of the UNHC, Armenian cause advocate Fridtjof Nansen.

The tract read in part, "By the end of the First World War, the Armenian people had long been vying for an independent state. Although members of the League of Nations had agreed to assume state-like responsibility for Armenians and an initiative had been proposed

by President Woodrow Wilson, these obligations were not fulfilled. At the same time, Armenia was facing a number of challenges including drought, outbreaks of malaria and tuberculosis, and threats along the Turkish border which made it difficult to provide assistance to the growing number of refugees. The refugee crisis at the end of the war had devastated Armenia, with an estimated 1.5 million lives lost and thousands more displaced and stateless, living in refugee camps, orphanages and shantytowns.

"Outraged by the international community's lack of response to this growing crisis, Nansen orchestrated international aid for the Armenian people. Witnessing firsthand the devastation in Armenia in 1925, Nansen later wrote an influential book, Armenia and the Near East, in addition to numerous articles and speeches advocating the Armenian cause.

"Nansen provided hope for thousands of Armenians in need of urgent assistance," the article reads.

one hand and stand for Artsakh attaching itself back to Azerbaijan.

In the words of Karapetyan, it is impossible to "preach democracy on one hand and to place upon an equal scale the rights of "small yet democratic NKR people and the interests of energy-rich but dictatorial Azerbaijan."



Community News

LA Court Clerk Accused of Revealing Raids To Gang Members

By Andrew Blankstein

LOS ANGELES (*Los Angeles Times*) – A federal court employee in Los Angeles has been charged with leaking confidential court files, the FBI said on August 15.

Nune Gevorkyan, 35, was accused of accessing sealed court documents and giving the information to defendants before they were arrested, officials said. Gevorkyan and her husband, Oganesh Koshkaryan, were arrested Tuesday. They are charged with conspiring to obstruct justice.

Federal authorities said they believe Gevorkyan looked at sealed indictments before raids across Southern California in February 2011 that led to the arrests of more than 70 people associated with the Armenian Power gang. Most of the charges filed in those cases dealt with white-collar crimes.

One of the defendants, who is seeking a reduced sentence, told FBI agents that information about the takedown was known to some of those arrested.

“The cooperating defendant said that, as a result of this information, he/she fled his/her home the night before the arrests and stayed with family in another city,” according to court documents. The defendant later surrendered.

Officials said an individual “working in an undercover capacity approached Koshkaryan about getting leaked information from the court.”

“Following this conversation, on two separate occasions, the undercover provided Koshkaryan with the names of individuals who were actual defendants in a criminal case filed under seal in federal court. On both occasions, Koshkaryan then delivered to the undercover confidential information that had been obtained from the sealed court records,” according to a statement by the FBI.

“Checks of electronic court records confirmed that that Gevorkyan, who was employed as a clerk in the criminal intake area of the district court’s clerk’s office, had accessed the sealed court records pertaining to the named individuals shortly after the undercover had delivered the names to Koshkaryan,” the statement added.

(The Associated Press contributed to this report.)

Assembly’s Deukmejian Award and Distinguished Humanitarian Award to Be Presented at LA Gala

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America will hold its 40th anniversary gala on September 22, in Los Angeles.

Founded in 1972 as a Washington-based organization dedicated to promoting Armenian-American interests with the federal and state level government, the Armenian Assembly has served as the community’s advocate with Congress and the administration on the central issues of the past four decades: Armenia’s and Artsakh’s independence; strong US-Armenia relations; humanitarian assistance and economic development for Armenia’s earthquake-ravaged regions, a just and fair resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict, and US affirmation of the Armenian Genocide.

The gala is being held in Los Angeles in tribute to former two-term California Gov. George see GALA, page 7



Youth practice archery during the Generation Next camping retreat in June 2012.

Youth and Mentors Strengthen Their Bonds on AGBU Generation Next Camping Trip

LOS ANGELES – Every adolescent can benefit from a positive role model, and the AGBU Generation Next (GenNext) Mentorship Program of Southern California is ensuring that Armenian teens have not only one mentor but an extensive support network – one that was made even stronger on a recent camping retreat.

On Friday, June 22, more than 40 mentees, mentors and GenNext staffers packed their bags and headed to The Oaks Camp in Lake Hughes for a two-day trip that brought all the participants closer and advanced the program’s mission to positively influence youth and introduce them to new experiences and alternatives that will enable them to become responsible, self-sufficient and independent adults.

Together, mentors and mentees made their cabins their home for the weekend and took full advantage of the Oaks’ vast grounds and facilities. Throughout the day, they played various sports, including archery, basketball and soccer, and cooled off in the swimming pool, enjoying being out in the fresh air and surrounded by mountains. When the evenings arrived, everyone gathered around the campfire, as old friends reminisced and new friendships were initiated. Seventeen-year old Arthur, a young man who has benefited from GenNext for years, gushed over the trip, declaring, “Camp was great! It was a weekend to remember for life. The AGBU GenNext program has helped me a lot over the past five years – it’s an amazing program and these were an amazing two days. I’ll never forget how reluctant we were to go to sleep those two nights, the nicknames we gave each other and the time we spent together. I’m already looking forward to our next camping trip!”

see AGBU, page 7



AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program participants gather in Lake Hughes, Calif., which sits in the foothills of the Sierra Pelona Mountains, for a weekend spent outdoors playing sports and bonding.

Armenian National Institute Announces Major Expansion of its Website on Armenian Genocide

WASHINGTON – The Armenian National Institute (ANI) announced this week a major expansion of its website on the Armenian Genocide. A new section, titled Contemporary Press Coverage, consists of a compilation of more than 170 articles from some 50 mainstream media sources discussing the Armenian Genocide.

The ANI website is one of the most frequently visited Internet resources on the Armenian Genocide.

The Contemporary Press Section demonstrates the growing public and international awareness of the Armenian Genocide with coverage spanning the globe, but especially from countries with English-language sources, including the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Israel. The new section contains articles focusing on the historical, political, legal and moral significance of the Armenian



Genocide. For instance, readers will find a series of articles tracing the evolution of the US discussion in the media and the ongoing effort for affirmation.

The section also conveys the world’s onetime awareness of the events and the facts of the Armenians Genocide and how the intervening decades of silence, followed by growing attention to human rights issues, reshaped that discourse on the meaning of the events of 1915.

The compilation provides 10 categories of coverage: Book Review, Editorial, Education, Feature Story, Film Review, Memorials, Opinion, Genocide Remembrance Day, Reporting and Restitution, demonstrating the scope and type of coverage garnered by this subject.

While WWI dominated the daily news bulletins, given the scale of the atrocities committed in 1915 against the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire resulting in large numbers of victims, international media coverage of these crimes became regular news. A sampling of articles from 1915 is posted on the ANI website. Media attention to the plight of the Armenians diminished with the end of the war and went mostly silent for the better part of the 20th century.

Public attention to the historical significance of the Armenian Genocide resumed in the last quarter of the 20th century. Broader attention to human rights issues prompted by the recurrence of mass killings around the world redefined the Armenian Genocide as a precedent to the series of genocides that punctuated the 20th century. The media discourse on the Armenian Genocide has expanded in the 21st century as reflected in the Contemporary Press Coverage section which documents such media interest from the year 2000 onward.



OBITUARY

Harry Aram Keolelian

Detroit Community Leader

DETROIT — Harry Aram Keolelian died on August 14. He was born to Charles and Sarah Keolelian. His father, Charles, immigrated to the US from the village of Everek and his mother Sara, born in 1905, née Sahakian, was from the village of Yozgat. They were married in 1922 in New York City.

Harry Keolelian was born in Troy, NY, the first of three children. The Keolelian family, including Harry's grandmother, Altoun, eventually settled in Dearborn, Mich. Their home on Orchard Street was a haven for family and friends and a garden paradise with pear, plum, apple, cherry, fig and peach trees, raspberries and grapes and roses.

He married his wife, Mary Hovnanian, on April 28, 1956. They raised three children: Gregory, Laurie and Charles, first in the Garden City and then moved to their home in Farmington Hills.

He graduated from Fordson High School in 1944 and served in the US Army in Japan, at the end of World War II. He graduated from Wayne State University with a bachelor's in business administration in 1954, and also received a certificate in accountancy and financial administration from the Walsh Institute of Accountancy in 1955. He was a certified public accountant and worked for several large accounting firms and companies such as Ford Motor and Hughes & Hatcher. He built a successful practice and never retired from his most recent partnership, Keolelian, Massimilla and Associates.

He was dedicated to the Armenian Church and taught Sunday school for more than 50 years and was beloved by generations of students. His strong faith not only guided his day to day interactions with others, but also was a source of strength during his cancer.

He contributed his time and energy to many charitable organizations. He served on many



Harry Aram Keolelian

committees and boards including the AGBU Manoogian School, Camp Ararat, the Armenian Old Age Home and Focus Armenia.

He was a jazz and classical music enthusiast. He was an avid reader of newspapers (he never missed an issue of the *Mirror-Spectator*) and loved spirited discussions.

He is survived by his wife, Mary; children and spouses Greg (Liz), Laurie Reizian and Charles (Audrey); grandchildren, Margeaux, Paulina, Spencer and Samuel; brothers, Souren (Virginia) and Ron (Adrian); brother-in-law of Harry and Alice Terzian, the late Armen and Sue Hovnanian, and Christine Chu.

Funeral services were held at St. John's Armenian Church, Southfield, on August 17. He was buried at Woodlawn Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be sent to St. John's or to Focus Armenia.

Ruth M. Aroian

WORCESTER — Ruth M. Aroian, 94, died on Saturday, August 11, at the Willows Healthcare Center.

She was born in Sterling, Mass., on July 7, 1918, the daughter of Krekor and Maritza (Vartabedian) Aroian.

She graduated from Classical High School and attended the Worcester Art Museum School.

She worked at Worcester Taper Pin Co. for 20 years as a World War II government-trained inspector of machine parts.



Ruth M. Aroian

ter," she sent to the needy children of Armenia more than 1,000 winter hats in the past six years. At her Willows home, she wrote more than 100 poems for her fellow residents.

She leaves among others, cousins, Van and Mary Aroian of Worcester. In addition to her parents, Aroian was predeceased by her siblings, Zabel, Zaven and Roger.

The funeral service was held on Tuesday, August 14, at Armenian Church of Our Saviour, 87 Salisbury St., with Father Aved Terzian officiating. Interment was in Hillside Cemetery, Sterling.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, 87 Salisbury St., Worcester, MA 01609.

Arrangements made by Callahan & Fay Brothers Funeral Home.

Memorial Dance to Benefit Children of Late, Beloved Pastor

By Tom Vartabedian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — It is being called an event with an extreme purpose.

Members of the Greater Boston community and beyond will gather on September 22 at 7 p.m. at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., to dance while raising money to help the children of Rev. Haroutiun (Randy) Dagley and his wife, Yeretskin Patty (Sarkisian).

A cadre of 12 musicians, including some of the finest performers in New England, will come together and donate their services — the proceeds of which will benefit the well-being and future education of the Dagley children.

A general fund was established on their behalf at the time of Rev. Haroutiun Dagley's death in 2002. His wife, Patty, died seven years after him.

Their two children, Sarkis and Sona, are now 14 and 18, respectively.

Among those volunteering their time are the Arzigian brothers (Bobby and Johnny), Jay Baronian, Mark DerMugrditchian, Leon Janikian, Greg Krikorian, Kenny Kalajian, Joe Kouyoumjian, Kevin Margarian, Leon Manoogian, Bobby Raphaelian and Greg Takvorian.

The idea for such an all-out benefit was conceived by Becky Megerdichian following her brother's death. When Dagley's wife died seven years later, she became more determined than ever.

This year, marking the 10-year anniversary of the reverend's death, seemed like an opportune time. "I started talking to some of the band members who have been close to me over the past 30 years and all were receptive," said Megerdichian. "They were also dear friends with my brother."

The children are living with an aunt (Sharon Dardarian) in Michigan. Sona Dagley is starting classes at Michigan State University while Sarkis Dagley is beginning his first year of high school.

"Both are doing as well as can be expected under the circumstances," added Megerdichian. "There is a very large group of friends, family and clergy who care deeply for the welfare of these children."

Sona Dagley played in the band at South Lyon East High School. She was a member of the varsity softball team, a National Honor Society member and attended Armenian School and Sunday School classes. Since the age of 13, she has been a member of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) and won an overall women's sportsmanship award at a sports weekend.

Her younger brother also plays in the school band, travel basketball team, baseball, tennis, swimming and cross country.

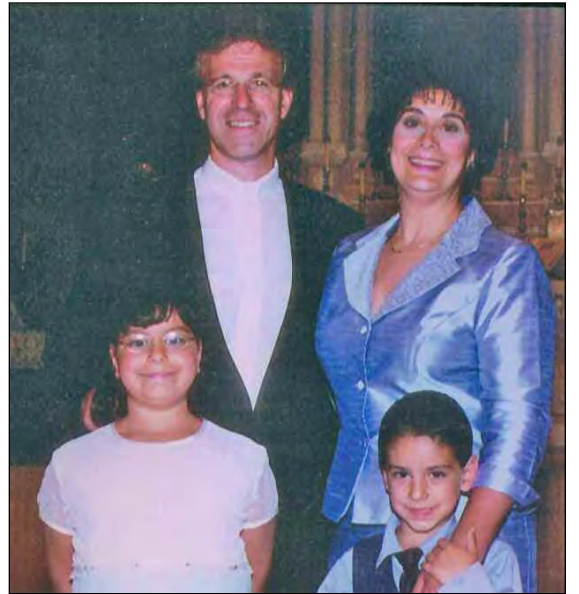
He has been on the honor roll every year and already has a college in mind when he graduates in four years: the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Both children would have made their parents proud, especially their roles on the altar with Sarkis Dagley as an ordained thir and his sister in the choir.

Rev. Haroutiun Dagley grew up attending Baptist and Congregational Church Sunday Schools but became involved in the Armenian Church at age 19 when the ACYOA seniors of Sts. Vartanantz Church in Chelmsford were seeking help with a sports weekend. Later, he took part in counseling ACYOA retreats and coached high school track and field.

Ultimately, he made a decision to go to an Armenian Church and began working at St. James Church in Watertown as youth director. In 1989, he married Patricia Ann Anahid Sarkisian.

After four years at St. James, he proceeded to study at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, after which he served as assistant pastor of Church of Our Savior in Worcester, launching a career that lasted just over a decade



The late Rev. Haroutiun (Randy) Dagley and his wife, Yeretzgin Patty (Sarkisian) Dagley, with their two children, Sona and Sarkis

before his untimely demise.

His wife had graduated magna cum laude from Western Michigan University in 1982 with a degree in occupational therapy. Her professional career took her to Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston, following a stint in Chicago and on to various school systems in Cleveland.

After being assigned to St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church in Richmond Heights, Ohio, she became active in the choir, organized a Women's Guild, taught Sunday School and Armenian dancing and took tremendous pride in being the wife of a priest.

His brother, Nishan, followed briefly in his brother's steps by becoming a sub-deacon at St. Gregory Church in North Andover.

Tickets are \$35 and may be purchased in advance or at the door. For further details, call Becky Megerdichian at (617) 576-3398 or e-mail her at dagleymemorial-dance@gmail.com.

Life

By RUTH AROIAN

What is Life?

Only a passing of time

From birth to death

We try to be a better person than he or she

Piercing poisoned arrows

Fly from which I try to flee

Got me in the heart you see

Suffering pain and fear

Caused me only to die

And join the circle of my family

As I am the missing link

That makes the circle

Complete at last.

(Editor's note: The *Mirror-Spectator* ran several of Ruth Aroian's poems in the past decade. We will run this poem as a tribute to her.)

A feisty, sharp, intellectual and talented writer, Aroian published *Northerly 12 Miles* about farm life in bucolic Sterling. She also published many poems in Armenian-American publications and constantly sought justice for the Armenian Genocide. (See her poem above.)

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Bone Marrow Registry Drive September 2 In Newton

BOSTON — There are several Armenians who have been diagnosed with cancer and are seeking help from the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR).

Debby Margosian Chapman has been diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia and needs a stem cell transplant.

Because she is Armenian, her doctors believe her best chances of finding a match is within the Armenian community. It is easy to become a donor. The screening test is a simple cheek swab. Donating stem cells 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 pain, no surgery, no anesthesia and no cost to the donor.

Anyone in good health between ages 18 to 60 is asked to take a cheek swab and have their data entered in the ABMDR. A free cheek swab kit is available from Be the Match, sponsored by the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

There will be a free screening held in Chapman's behalf on Sunday, September 2, at 9 a.m. at the Armenian Youth Federation Olympics Track and Field event held at Newton North High School, 457 Walnut St., Newton, Mass.

Her family is willing to pay \$25,000 to the person who is a match for Chapman.

There are about 200 Armenians in need of a stem cell donor. Armenian American Healthcare Professionals' Organization has publicized two other cases, Irene Katrandjian and young Charlotte Conybear of Philadelphia, who also desperately need to find a match.

Holy Trinity Family Festival and Opening of Church Schools on September 9

By Seta A. Buchter

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston is preparing for its annual Trinity Family Festival which will be held on Sunday, September 9, beginning at noon on the grounds of the church at 145 Brattle St.

Co-chairing this year's Festival Committee are David Dorian and Gregory A. Kolligian Jr., vice chairman of the Parish Council, who invite everyone to come for a day of fun and fellowship. "Our Trinity Family Festival is always a great afternoon as parishioners and friends come together to kick off the fall season with delicious food, great music and especially the camaraderie that day offers as we reconnect with family and friends after the summer hiatus," states Dorian.

Armenian food and Kevork's Doener Kebab

St. Gregory Church Plans Joint Picnic

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. — In the spirit of fellowship and unity, St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church will join hands with the neighboring St. Michael's Catholic Church in sponsoring a joint picnic for the fourth year in a row, on Sunday, September 9, from 1 to 6 p.m. at the North Andover Town Common.

The partnership proved so successful in previous years that officials from both churches have decided to continue the joint picnic.

Both congregations will offer separate food tables and instead collaborate in other ways.

St. Gregory's menu will include *shish*, *losh* and chicken *kebab*, along with rice *pilaf*, salad and Armenian pastries. Other Armenian delicacies such as *kheyma* dinners will also be served. St. Michael's will offer hamburgers, hot dogs, pasta salad, slush and American pastries.

Armenian-American music and dancing will be featured, along with games and activities for the entire family.

For further details, visit www.saintgregory.org.

will be available throughout the afternoon as well as take-out meals, beverages, Armenian coffee and a variety of pastries and desserts. Children's and Family Games will begin at 1:30 p.m., and will include relay races, face painting and a watermelon-eating contest. There will be Moonwalk for Kids from noon to 5 p.m. and Armenian music by the Greg Krikorian Ensemble featuring Greg Krikorian, *oud* and vocals; George Righellis, guitar and vocals; Stephan Hovnanian, saxophone; Charles Dermenjian, *dumbeg*; and Michael Sabounjian on the keyboard.

The ancient tradition of the Blessing of the "Madagh" will take place at 4 p.m., followed by the raffle drawing for cash prizes. This year's raffle prizes include \$1,000 cash, first prize; \$300, second prize; and \$200, third prize. Tickets can be obtained by calling the Holy Trinity Church office, emailing office@htaac.org or buying them on the day of the Festival.

Holy Trinity Church's Armenian and Sunday Schools will kick-off the 2012-2013 year on the morning of Sunday, September 9, with registration for the Armenian School at 10:45 a.m., and for the Sunday School at 11 a.m., in the Peter Adamian Hall of the church complex. Sunday School classes will start on September 9 and be held from 11 a.m. to noon.

The Sunday School program, which ranges in grades from pre-school through 12th grade, is open to all children and youth, ages 3 to 17. To be eligible for Sunday School, a child must be 3 by September 1, and toilet-trained. Parents must register their child(ren) as a parental signature is required. Classes meet weekly, as of September 16, from 10:30 a.m. to noon in the



Kevork Atinjian prepares Kevork's Doener Kebab, which will be available at the picnic on September 9.

Peter Adamian Hall. For information regarding the Sunday School program, contact Seta A. Buchter, Sunday School superintendent, at seta@htaac.org or the church office.

The Armenian School program is for children ages 5 through 16, and meets on Sundays from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Armenian School classes will begin on Sunday, September 16, at 9:30 a.m.

For further information about the Armenian School program, contact Naira Balagyozyan, Armenian School Administrator, at nairab@verizon.net or the church office.

Youth and Mentors Strengthen Their Bonds On AGBU Generation Next Camping Trip

AGBU, from page 5

A range of team-building exercises, ice-breakers and open discussions gave mentors the opportunity to do what they do best: direct the youth toward a promising future. In particular, the mentors impressed upon the teens the importance of maintaining healthy relationships that are based on mutual respect. As always, mentors drew from the extensive training they've received through GenNext, which has been key to the program's success since its pilot year in 1998. Seminars and joint meetings with parents and case managers give the mentors the resources they need to help build the youths' confidence and self-esteem. Reflecting on the trip, AGBU GenNext Program Manager Abraham Chaparian commented, "It was nice to be able to be in a beautiful, relaxing environment and to talk to the teens and learn more about them... I love helping my community and hope others will join us in touching the lives of

our youth. We welcome more volunteer mentors who will serve as role models, and I encourage anyone who is willing to make a positive difference to contact us, so that we may work hand in hand in order to — as our slogan states — reach new heights together."

Though everyone was disappointed when the weekend came to an end, GenNext has planned a number of activities to keep the students and mentors busy through the summer and upcoming fall. In July, mentors and mentees came together for their monthly group activity in Huntington Beach and in August for a trip to the Gene Autry Museum of Western Heritage. This September, they will have another outdoor excursion, hiking the trails of the Eaton Canyon Park in Pasadena.

To learn more about the AGBU Generation Next Program, email Generation Next Program Manager Abraham Chaparian: abraham@agbugennext.org.

Assembly's Deukmejian Award and Distinguished Humanitarian Award to Be Presented at LA Gala

GALA, from page 5

Deukmejian and his wife, Gloria. As the highest elected official of Armenian parentage in the United States, George Deukmejian has served as a role model for succeeding generations of Armenian-Americans who have emulated his example of public service.

The former governor will personally award the Armenian Assembly's George Deukmejian Public Service Award to Chuck and Debbie Poochigian, who together exemplify the Armenian-American power couple continuing the tradition of public service in California's legislative and judicial branches of government. Chuck Poochigian began his career in politics as an appointee of Deukmejian, was elected to the California State Assembly and State Senate, and is presently an associate justice of the California Court of Appeals. Debbie Poochigian,

who serves on the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, comes from a prominent Armenian-American family long active in local politics. She was preceded to the Fresno Country Board of Supervisors by her late father Deran Koligian.

The Armenian Assembly will also be recognizing the contributions of three members of the California community who have participated in innumerable activities and programs of the Assembly and have been longtime and very active supporters of the organization. The Assembly's Distinguished Humanitarian Award will be presented to Elizabeth Agabian, Flora Dunaian and Savey Tufenkian.

To attend the gala, contact Aline Maksoudian at amaksoudian@aaa-inc.org. For additional information, call the Assembly Washington office.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Cambridge Mayor Henrietta Davis Addresses CYSCA Annual Meeting

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On June 28, the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) held its 26th annual meeting at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Greater Boston. The keynote speaker was Mayor Henrietta Davis of Cambridge, who saluted the group for continuing to evolve and grow over the years since 1986-87, when the relationship was founded. At that time the hope was that in the atmosphere of the Cold War, cross-cultural exchange would foster better understanding, dialogue and friendship. From meeting with CYSCA's delegations and reviewing its programs over the years, Davis said she sees CYSCA as an example to others. She noted, "In my time as city counselor here in Cambridge, and now as mayor, I have seen just how beneficial cross-cultural and international exchange is. I've learned to set my sights higher, learning by examples from cities and nations outside these shores."

One of her priorities is to make Cambridge a national leader in climate protection and sustainability. "Over the past two years I have been fortunate to travel to parts of Europe to see the latest in energy efficiency and green building. Just this week, Cambridge hosted DasHaus from Germany, which is a traveling demonstration of advanced technology in energy efficient home construction and solar energy use."

She added, "In 2009, we became one of the first communities in the state to require high standards for energy efficiency in new buildings. ... And we were recently named America's Most Walkable City. Our public transit and bike-friendly streets help us in becoming a city of green commuters."

She acknowledged CYSCA's programs to educate seventh and eighth graders in Cambridge and Yerevan about energy use and production; to educate the public about the reforestation work of the Armenia Tree Project in Armenia; and, in 2010, to bring environmental and energy experts to the Cambridge Science Festival.

She concluded, "It's inspiring to see the power



From left, CYSCA Board members Brad Rice, Eva Medzorian, Mayor Henrietta Davis, City Councilor Leland Cheung and CYSCA President Cheryl Shushan (Nancy Kalajian photo)

of collaboration when it comes to tackling the pressing concerns of today. So, as we enter the next 25 years, I look forward to seeing our cities continue to collaborate and engage about these issues that face us as members of the global community."

Also attending the meeting were City Councilor Leland Cheung; Fred Fantini, vice chair of the School Committee; attorney David Wylie, former city councilor and one of the founders of CYSCA; and Brian Corr, director of the Cambridge Peace Commission.

Davis was asked whether she had plans to visit Yerevan and was urged to do so. Board member Suzanne Pearce posed a question about whether climate change might be a compelling global issue, relevant to CYSCA's work in 2012, comparable to the threat of nuclear war which was perceived to be great in the mid 1980s when CYSCA was founded. Davis suggested that CYSCA might be helpful in a triangular way with Armenia and

Western European countries like Germany and Austria.

Nancy Kalajian proposed that air quality and walkability could be topics of mutual interest in both cities. Davis responded that Cambridge had been told by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to improve its air quality and therefore created programs to improve biking and walking in the city, in order to reduce the use of cars. Now the programs have many advocates.

At the brief business meeting preceding the talk, President Cheryl Shushan and several board members shared updates from the past year and upcoming plans. The Armenia School Aid Program in its 18th year with five sponsors assisted eight schools. Donations totaling \$5,000 were used to replace windows, acquire computers and fund general maintenance for school buildings. In the village of Berd, the biology and anatomy lab at the college was renovated, special glass windows provided to the high

school and a small fridge given to the kindergarten. In November, the Community Connections program supported the publication of the new Armenia Marketing and Management Journal, the first of its kind for Armenia, published by CC alumni Aram Navasardyan and colleagues. Continuing its work in linking schools, CYSCA has helped to set up a student and teacher exchange between the Pingree School in South Hamilton, MA with School #114 in Yerevan. In a brand new program established this year with the leadership of Board member Joe Dagdigian, CYSCA is supporting infrastructure improvements at an important archaeological site, the Shengavit Preserve, on the outskirts of Yerevan, where artifacts from the "Kura-Arax" culture dating back to the fourth millennium BC are being excavated. The site's director, Vladimir Tshagharyan, was a participant in the 2003 Community Connections program for cultural and historic preservation experts. Finally, last September, CYSCA spearheaded a major event in Cambridge together with a number of other groups to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia. Shushan announced that in 2013 CYSCA will celebrate 25 years of activity with local events and an exchange of official delegations led by the mayors of both cities to plan future programs.

After Shushan thanked departing Board members, Arax Badalian, Richard Boyajian and Peggy Hovanessian, for their work for many years, members voted in the 2012-13 Board of Directors, including one new member, Brad Rice, who came from Indiana to the Boston area to study at the Boston University School of Theology then Harvard Divinity School. He currently works as associate editor of Contexticon Learn and Research, a nonprofit research institute involved in producing a reference work for the ancient Greek of the New Testament. This work has led him to study classical and modern Armenian, travel to Armenia and become immersed in the local Armenian culture.

THE ORIGINAL

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Sun.	At sea	-	-
Mon.	Cozumel, Mexico	8:00 AM	5:00 AM
Tue.	Isla De Roatan	8:00 AM	2:00 AM
Wed.	Cayman Islands	10:30 AM	6:30 AM
Thu.	Montego Bay, Jamaica	8:00 AM	3:00 AM
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New York METRO

Chris Hedges to Speak at APP Conference on Armenia

NEW YORK — Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and war correspondent Chris Hedges will speak at the opening panel of the “Armenians and Progressive Politics” conference to be held at Columbia University on September 28 and 29.

Hedges is a senior fellow at the Nation Institute in New York. His career in journalism has taken him to the Middle East, the Balkans, Central America and Africa, working for such media outlets as the *New York Times*, National Public Radio and the *Christian Science Monitor*. In 2002, he received the Amnesty International Global Award for Human Rights Journalism. A best-selling author, his works include *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (2002), *Death of the Liberal Class* (2010) and, most recently, *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (2012). He has taught at Columbia University, New York University, Princeton University and the University of Toronto.

The plenary session will also feature Sarah Leah Whitson, director of the Middle East and North Africa division of Human Rights Watch, and Arpine Galfayan, president of the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights in Armenia. The panel, which will take place on September 28 at 7:30 p.m., will consider the Occupy movement and the revolutions in the Arab world with their relevance for Armenia.

This year’s conference will focus on “Armenia at 21,” and will address topics on the environment, foreign policy, economy, civil society development and



Chris Hedges

rule of law. Approximately 30 experts, activists and academics from Armenia, Europe, South America and the United States will participate.

Panelists include Larisa Minasyan, executive director of the Open Society Institute; Lara Aharonian, founder and chairperson of the Women’s Resource Center in Yerevan and Shushi; Mamikon Hovsepian, president of PINK Armenia; Sona Ayvazyan, project director at Transparency International (Armenia); Khatchik Der Ghougassian, professor of international relations at the Universidad de San Andres in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Markar Melkonian, teacher, writer and founder of the Monte Melkonian Fund; Kirk Wallace, program director at the Armenian Environmental Network and Armand Grigoryan, visiting professor of international relations at Lehigh University. There will also be a number of speakers from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) leadership in Armenia.

The event is organized by the ARF Central Committee-Eastern Region and co-sponsored by the Armenian Society of Columbia University and the ARF-Western Region.

The conference will travel to Los Angeles on October 5 and 6.

For more information, visit www.ArmeniansAndTheLeft.com, follow updates on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ArmeniansAndTheLeft or e-mail APP@ArmeniansAndTheLeft.com

St. Nersess Seminary to Hold Reception to Culminate 50th Anniversary Celebration

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — For the past four years, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary has organized a benefit reception and silent auction, titled “Evening Under the Stars,” on the grounds of the New Rochelle campus. Attendees gather under a candlelit tent to feast on hors d’oeuvres, sip cocktails and enjoy music, while supporting the only Armenian seminary in North America serving the Armenian Church.

This year’s event, scheduled for Saturday, September 22, will be the same with an added bonus. The two-year 50th anniversary celebrations of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary — established in 1961 with first classes held in 1962 — will culminate at this reception.

“I look forward to attending this year’s event to re-connect with old friends, meet new ones and to celebrate the many new changes that will be taking place soon with the seminary,” shared Jonathan Najarian, 50th anniversary co-chair. He explained that St. Nersess has been a part of his life for more than 25 years and will always hold a special place in his heart.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), will also be in attendance to celebrate this seminary milestone and to help unveil the plans for relocation of the institution in order to continue effectively educating future priests and lay leaders, inspiring young people and providing resources to the greater Armenian Church.

This fifth annual benefit reception will begin at 7:30 p.m. with guests being greeted and served by college-aged and young professional volunteers who have attended recent St. Nersess Summer Conferences. The Primate, seminary dean and board



Guests will be able to enjoy the beauty of the grounds while enjoying the company of friends.

members will speak about the importance of the seminary.

Reservations may be made by visiting www.stnersess.edu.

All proceeds from this event will directly benefit the seminary’s youth and vocations programs, including those from the silent auction that will coincide with this reception. Several unique items will be available for bidding on September 10 via the seminary website at www.stnersess.edu. The online auction will continue through the Evening Under the Stars event on September 22 and remain open for both reception attendees and those at home on

their computers to participate in the auction until bidding closes promptly at 9:30 p.m. that evening. The highest bidders for each item will then be announced near the conclusion of the reception.

“This reception has become a highly-anticipated and important fundraiser for the seminary,” said board member, Suzanne Akian, adding, “It is an outstanding way for anyone whose life has been positively impacted by St. Nersess, to give back to this most valuable institution to the Armenian Church here in America, and all while having a wonderful evening under the stars with good friends.”

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Arts & Living

53rd Young Concert Artists Series Open October 30 at Merkin Hall

NEW YORK – The 2012-2013 Young Concert Artists Series (YCA) presents nine events, including the debuts of the three winners of the 2011 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, the inaugural season of a newly-formed ensemble, one “encore” concert, the annual Gala Concert presenting three YCA concerto soloists with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s at Lincoln Center and three recitals at the Morgan Library and Museum.

The series opens on Tuesday, October 30, with the New York debut of violinist, Paul Huang, at Merkin Concert Hall.

On Tuesday, December 11, the series presents the debut of miXt, the new ensemble led by clarinetist, Jose Franch-Ballester, with violinist, Bella Hristova, and pianist, Ran Dank, and the premiere of a work by YCA’s new composer-in-residence, David Hertzberg.

On Tuesday, January 22, 2013 the YCA Series presents the New York debut of pianist, Andrew Tyson.

On Tuesday, February 12, 2013 violist, Veit Hertenstein, makes his debut.

On Tuesday, April 16, 2013 the series presents an encore recital by soprano, Jeanine De Bique.

YCA’s annual Gala Concert takes place at Alice Tully Hall on Wednesday, May 16, presenting three YCA soloists in concertos with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, conducted by Alexander Mielke. The soloists are: violinist, Bella Hristova; pianist, Benjamin Moser (*Liszt No. 1*), and pianist, Louis Schwizgebel, (*Beethoven No. 1*).

The YCA Series also presents three recitals in collaboration with the Morgan Library and Museum: Hristova, on Wednesday, February 20, 2013; clarinetist, Narek Arutyunian, on Wednesday, March 20, 2013 and pianist, George Li, on Wednesday, April 24, 2013.

Young Concert Artists, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1961, dedicated to launching the careers of exceptional young musicians. Among the well-known artists who made their debuts in this series are: soprano, Dawn Upshaw; pianists, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Emanuel Ax, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Jeremy Denk and Richard Goode; violinist, Tim Fain, and the Borromeo and St. Lawrence String Quartets.

Richard Hovannisian to Lecture on Smyrna at Chapman University

ORANGE, Calif. – Prof. Richard Hovannisian will lead off the Fall Lecture Series at Chapman University on Wednesday, September 5, at 7 p.m., with an illustrated presentation, titled “War and Ethnic Cleansing: Smyrna 1922-2012.” The program coincides with the 90th anniversary of Great Fire and the end of its thriving Greek and Armenian communities in Western Asia Minor in September 1922.

The event is sponsored by Chapman University’s Rodgers Center for Holocaust Education; Stern Chair in Holocaust Education and Sala and Aron Samuelli Holocaust Memorial Library, under the Direction of Dr. Marilyn Harran. The lecture will be held in Beckman Hall, Room 404, of the Bush Conference Center.

Hovannisian has been invited to serve as the first distinguished Chancellor’s Fellow in the Department of History for the fall semester, during which he will offer a 15-week course for history majors on the Armenian Genocide and its historiography.



Armenian Assembly and ANCA interns, with intern coordinators Simon Shahinian and Raffi Karakashian, respectively, seated on both sides of Rita Balian, the hostess, was taken at the Balian residence in front of Dicran Berberian’s “Khatchkar” oil painting in abstract format.

Armenian Assembly, ANCA Interns Visit Balian Armenian Art Collection at World Bank, Residence

WASHINGTON – As part of the Terjenian-Thomas Internship Program, the 2012 Armenian Assembly of America summer intern class, together with the 2012 Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) interns, met with long-time Assembly Trustee Rita Balian, whose late husband Vartkess served on the Assembly’s Board of Directors as Treasurer for six years from 1978 to 1984, according to the Armenian Assembly of America.

The Assembly interns joined the ANCA interns as they toured the Armenian art exhibit at the World Bank, which features paintings and sculptures from the Balian Art Collection on loan to the Bank since 2007. The exhibit includes paintings by Vahram Tavtarian, Mais Mkhitarian, Vakhtang Sirunyan, Martin Petrossian, Ararat Sarkissian, Alber Hakobian and Roudolf Kharatian and others from Armenia, as well as sculptures by Reuben Nakian, Arto Tchakmakchian, Gagik Arutunian and Emil Kazaz. Balian is also co-sponsoring the spectacular exhibit for the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing at the Library of Congress, titled *The Armenian Literary Tradition*, which the Assembly interns visited the same morning on July 24. The exhibit is a must see for every Armenian to be feel proud of their amazing history and rich culture.

After the World Bank, the interns went to the Balian residence to see the extensive art collection by major Armenian artists. Balian gave the interns an educational tour, introducing them to the artwork by many artists, among them Ardash, Ayvazovsky, Janssen, Minas, Pushman, Sarian, Hakop Hakopian, Ashot Zorian, Paul Guirakosian, Arshile Gorky, Reuben Nakian and others. Following the tour, Balian addressed the interns, emphasizing the importance of each intern to bring their active participation and contribute as much as possible to the advancement of Armenia and the communities in the diaspora.

Balian also discussed the work of the Armenian American Cultural Association (AACA), which she founded in 1995, through which the Armenian American Wellness Center was established in Yerevan, Armenia in 1997. The mission of this state-of-the-art Wellness Center is to save lives of women and mothers through early detection of their diseases. To date, over 3,000 lives have been saved through accurate and early detection. In recognition of her humanitarian and volunteer efforts in Armenia, Balian was the first to receive the “USAID Outstanding Citizen Achievement Award” in January 2003, and in September 2011, on the 20th anniversary of Armenia’s independence, the “Mkhitar Heratzi Award” was presented to her by President Serge Sargsian in New York City for her medical achievements for the women of Armenia.

“Mrs. Balian is a wonderful example of the power of unwavering commitment to one’s own country and people. Whether it is her support of Armenian artists, the propagation of Armenian culture or her life-saving work to ensure the health of the Armenian people, Mrs. Balian has given us all the hope that we too will be able to make such a difference for our people,” said Lusine Stepanyan, an Assembly intern from Yerevan Armenia and a graduate of the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University in Yerevan, who interned this summer at AACA.

“We were pleased to accept the gracious hospitality of Mrs. Balian and to join with our friends in the Assembly’s internship program, both in enjoying the Balian family’s wonderful art collection and also in exchanging views about the exciting role that an energetic new generation of Armenian-Americans is already playing in reinventing Armenia and revolutionizing the pursuit of the Armenian Cause,” said Raffi Karakashian, a former Armenian Assembly intern who directs the ANCA internship program in addition to his role as the legislative affairs director.

“We would like to thank Mrs. Balian for being such a wonderful hostess and providing us the opportunity to experience and appreciate the magnificent Balian Art Collection, as well as discuss our role as young Armenian-Americans in shaping the future of the Armenian community with someone who has already done so much to promote the welfare of Armenians around the world. In many ways, it was a fitting conclusion to the internship program,” stated Simon Shahinian, the Assembly’s intern coordinator.

The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program was made possible by the Memorial Fund established through Aram Terjenian, Annie Thomas and Florence Terjenian of Belmont, Mass. Additional support comes from the Richard Tufenkian Memorial Fund, the John Hanessian Scholarship Fund, the Armen Astarjian Scholarship Fund, the Ohanian Memorial Fund, James and Connie Melikian and the Knights of Vartan.

Jamie Kennedy Loved Making ‘Lost and Found In Armenia’

By Rick Bentley

LOS ANGELES (*Fresno Bee*) – Don’t be surprised if you happen to see comedian Jamie Kennedy strolling through Fresno in the near future.

“I get stopped all the time by Armenians who ask me when my movie is coming out. I want to come to Fresno and promote my movie,” Kennedy says during a CW Network event to talk about his new prime-time competition series, “Oh Sit!”

Kennedy is talking about the film “Lost and Found in Armenia,” which was produced by Roosevelt High School graduate Valerie McCaffrey. McCaffrey, who is of Armenian descent, was also the casting director for the feature film shot last year almost entirely in Armenia.

Kennedy plays an American tourist who vacations in Turkey to get his mind off a bad break up. He ends up in a small Armenian village where he is accused of being a Turkish spy. His co-star is Angela Sarafyan, who can be seen later this year in “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2.”



Jamie Kennedy

“I want to have a whole screening about Armenia because making the movie was an awesome experience,” Kennedy says. “It’s a comedy, but it’s also moving. I get to have moments where I’m a leading man. There’s the love scene. It’s funny and farcical.”

“Lost and Found in Armenia” is the latest film credit for Kennedy, who also appears in “Scream,” “Malibu’s Most Wanted” and “Son of the Mask.” His TV work ranges from “The Jamie Kennedy Experiment” to “Ghost Whisperer.”

Kennedy had worked overseas before, but he says all the remote locations made the shoot in Armenia different from anything he had done before. The production was in such an isolated location, there were times when Kennedy felt like he was getting “island fever.”

The movie is in the final stages of production and McCaffrey expects the film to be in theaters in October.

As for his new hosting gig, Kennedy will provide commentary as 12 contestants race head to head through five physically demanding obstacle course-style eliminations as they compete for the grand prize. Think of the show as musical chairs meets “American Gladiator.”

“This show is strangely compelling,” Kennedy says. “There are a lot of people who fall down. It’s hard to get from the track to the chair with all the bridges that people actually fall off.”

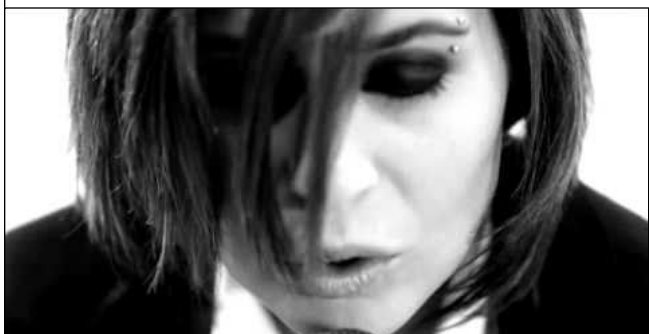
Kennedy enjoys his place on the sidelines and has no desire to test the course himself.



ARTS & LIVING

When Komitas Rocks out

Lebanese-Armenian Singer Brings New Life to Old Music



By Serena Hajjar

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BEIRUT — Imagine your favorite traditional Armenian song. Now, set it to a rock tune. Finally, add an Armenian woman to sing it. This is the combination on which Armenian rock singer, Eileen Khatchadourian, has built her signature style.

The intense rock persona depicted in her music videos is only one aspect of her; in person, she is cheerful, feisty and brutally honest.

Born in Beirut and raised there as well as in Cyprus and Montreal, Khatchadourian grew up in a traditional Armenian family. She attended the St. Hripsimantz Armenian College (high school) in Lebanon and was a member of the Armenian Catholic Scouts. Her artistic family instilled a love of music in their daughter at an early age — she started singing at 4. At age 7, while singing onstage, she decided she would become a singer — correction, a rock star. And she has certainly reached her dream in her home country, all while holding down a day job as a freelance wardrobe stylist for TV commercials. Now, she is looking to expand into the US.

Khatchadourian's top musical influences cover a wide spectrum, including the likes of Michael Jackson, Bjork, Tory Amos, Nina Simone, Jeff Buckley and opera composer Richard Wagner. Her favorite Armenian musicians are System of a Down and Datevik.

Her first CD, "Midan" ("My Home"), won the "Best Rock Album" award at the Armenian Music Awards in Los Angeles in 2009.

Khatchadourian said she overcomes cultural and political barriers through music. She said she believes the universal language of music — and, specifically rock music — enables her to connect with her non-Armenian audience.

"Rock is very old. It's an institution; it's a school. [I]t's very easy to reach people through rock because you have many styles and all generations have listened to it," she said. "I love rock."

A testament to the universal power of music is when she sees people crying with emotion while she sings, "especially the ones who don't understand Armenian." By converting traditional Armenian songs into rock, she gives the familiar tunes a revamp. Your ears may be accustomed to hearing the peaceful *Sari Siroun Yar* with the trilling *kanon* and the soothing *duduk*. However, Khatchadourian updates the song with electric guitar and upbeat drums in her version, while keeping true to the gentle nature of the melody. "My greatest wish is to help non-Armenian people and young Armenians discover their Armenian heritage through my music," she said.

For Khatchadourian, a singing career is not about personal gain. The singer chose to donate proceeds from her debut album to the Khatchig Babikian Foundation, which helps Armenian students in Lebanon earn scholarships to universities throughout the country.

Khatchadourian acknowledges the fact that she would not be where she is without her producers, her family and her band. When talking about her producers — Carole Babikian Kokoni and Nadim Farhad — she said, "I'm lucky to have two people who believe in me because without them I would-



Eileen Khatchadourian

n't have done this album. I wouldn't have been here."

Khatchadourian's videos for *Zartir Vortvag* and Komitas' *Karouna*, both from her first album, can be found on YouTube. The video for *Zartir Vortvag* was banned by the Lebanese General Security because of its references to the Armenian Genocide, which the government deemed damaging to the relations between Lebanon and Turkey. She said, "We wanted [the song] to be a kind of testimonial. We're bringing the idea of a mother sending her son to fight," a recurring theme throughout Armenian history.

Khatchadourian aims to release her second album by March 2013. It will include some songs in English along with the song *Sardarabad* and a few of her own original compositions. However, the focus of the album will remain her Armenian identity. In the meantime, the singer is looking to stage concerts in Armenia, Europe and the US.

Khatchadourian is satisfied with the path her musical career has taken. "I feel fulfilled when I'm on stage. And this is where I want to be. I don't need anything else."

Khatchadourian's CD, "Midan," is available on iTunes, Amazon and CDRama.com. Khatchadourian can be found on Facebook, MySpace (myspace.com/khatchadourianeileen) and Twitter (@eileenkatch). For more information, visit www.eileenkhatchadourian.com.

Review: Serj Tankian – 'Harakiri'

TORONTO (BlindedbySound.com) — The multi-talented Serj Tankian's third solo record, "Harakiri," is a diverse musical journey that carries an awful lot of philosophical weight on its back. The lead vocalist of System of a Down brings his distinctive singing style and peculiar songwriting capabilities to the table, unveiling a veritable abundance of punk-rock-tinged goodness with a melodic edge.

"Harakiri" is actually one of four new albums set to be released by Tankian in the near future. There is also the orchestral "Orca," the jazz-kissed and hilariously-titled "Jazz-Iz-Christ" and an electronic music collaboration with Mindless Self Indulgence's Jimmy Urine.

If "Harakiri" is any indication of Tankian's larger musical vision, the next three discs will be a treat.

Fans of his work in System of a Down will dig the clever darkness he employs, gushing eagerly as he sometimes does through issues like animal rights, corruption, environmentalism, reality television and foreign policy.

What really helps "Harakiri," though, is its pop sensibility. Tankian plays to what works and serves the melody, orchestrating songs that are catchy and suited to his vocal range. The scowling, grating growl that peppered much of System of a Down's

early work has altered naturally to the more organic, more melodic tone he exhibits here.

Tankian's sense for the sweet, demonstrated in pieces such as the stunning title track and the proggy *Deafening Silence*, really elevates the record in a musical sense and moves the force of the message beyond his usual fan base.

The punk-rock influences take off on the first single, *Figure It Out*, and the frenetic grind of *Uneducated Democracy*. The latter is off like a freight train, underscored by The F.C.C.'s Troy Zeigler on drums and Dan Monti's guitar enhancements.

Butterfly keeps the pace up with its lashing pace and guitar crunch.

There is also the piano-led *Forget Me Knot*, a graceful track that makes great use of the capricious forces Tankian's exceptional voice carries. His diction is on-point and the slightly derisive upturn in his vocals makes for some gripping listening as he prays for God to absolve the subject of the song.

While the future of System of a Down may be up in the air, Tankian's solo career appears to be rolling along nicely. "Harakiri" is a good record and the fragments on the horizon point to what should be a relatively rousing next few records.





ARTS & LIVING

Sandcastle Girls: A Vital Book

By George S. Yacoubian Sr.

The Sandcastle Girls by Chris Bohjalian, New York Times bestselling author of The Double Bind and Midwives, is not for the faint-hearted.

Indeed, all those who complete this 293-page novel (trying to put it down once begun can not be done!), will recoil from the carnage – vividly depicted – perpetrated upon our hallowed martyrs.

Granted, its genre is fictional; but it is also historical in that it depicts agencies (Friends of Armenia, still active today) and events – Gallipoli – while mentioning cities and towns, i.e., Adana, Aintab and Van, among others, that frame World War I as well as the Armenian Genocide.

Not unlike Mark T. Mustian and his masterpiece, The Gendarme, Bohjalian successfully employs flashbacks to provide his readership with clarity and context. (I don't particularly enjoy flashbacks; I find it distracting, but somehow both authors make it work.)

This gripping tale focuses on Aleppo, in 1915, the terminus of the deportations before Der-el-Zor and the experiences of a proper Bostonian Brahmin, Elizabeth Endicott, portrayed as a graduate of Mount Holyoke College, (no fictional school here, Mount Holyoke is located in South Hadley, Mass. and, coincidentally, today offers a Hagop Bogigian Scholarship for Armenians.)

Her exposure to the atrocities and its aftermath, including her relationship with Armen, an Armenian engineer – whom she later marries – provides the impetus that propels this intriguing chronicle of love and war.

This riveting tale concludes with Elizabeth's granddaughter, Laura Petrosian, who –despite the indifference, if not cynicism of her husband – journeys to Boston to become acquainted with the travails of her grandparents, Armen and Elizabeth Petrosian.

Bohjalian, a resident of Vermont, is the author of 15 books. His works have not only been translated into more than 25 languages, but three of them (Secrets of Eden, Midwives and Past the Bleachers) have become movies. This book, as Midwives before it, has been endorsed by Oprah's Book Club.

For those interested in purchasing the book, visit www.doubleday.com.

Jennifer Lopez Seeks \$20 Million for Blackmail

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) – Jennifer “J. Lo” Lopez has filed a lawsuit against her former driver, Hakob Manoukian, for blackmail.

The lawsuit alleges that Manoukian demanded \$2.8 million from Lopez in exchange for not disclosing “sensitive and personal” information he supposedly heard while driving J. Lo around. The driver also made other “ominous threats” to report Lopez to authorities if his demands were not met, reported CNN.

Lopez is seeking \$20 million in damages.

The battle between Lopez and Manoukian appears to have begun earlier this year when Manoukian handled Lopez's security and arranged for several people to work as Lopez's security detail. However, the night before they were supposed to report to work, Lopez reportedly told Manoukian they were not needed and that he would no longer head her security.

Manoukian reportedly lost out on a chance to profit off of the security and became enraged, reports CNN. In Jennifer Lopez's

lawsuit, J. Lo claims Manoukian became very “hostile and angry.” As a result, Manoukian filed a breach of employment contract lawsuit against Lopez last April. Apparently the lawsuit did not satisfy his anger, as Manoukian then allegedly tried to blackmail Lopez.

If the blackmail allegations are true, Manoukian could be on the hook for monetary damages. But unless the chauffeur was involved in some other line of business, he probably doesn't have \$20 million to pay. Instead, Manoukian should be more concerned about the criminal implications of blackmail.

In most states, it is a felony to use force or threats to compel someone to give you money. For example, a person convicted of blackmail in California could go to jail for up to four years.

For Lopez, her lawsuit for \$20 million against her driver may not be so shocking considering that she just lost out on \$17 million from leaving the show, “American Idol.”



Jennifer Lopez

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

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

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

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

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

NEW HAMPSHIRE

SEPTEMBER 29 – Ararat Armenian Congregational Church of Salem NH Annual Shish Kebab Supper. 4:30 to 7 p.m. 2 Salem St., Salem.

NEW JERSEY

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

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

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

NOVEMBER 18 – TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group Cast



On August 26, the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe will hold a picnic at American Legion Farm, 1314 Main St., Haverhill, Mass. from noon to 5 p.m., featuring the Jason Naroian Ensemble, pictured here, as well as Armenian cuisine, raffles and gift certificates. Bring your own lawn chairs. For more info, visit www.hyepointechurch.org or call (978) 372-9227.

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

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 22 – “Evening Under the Stars,” benefit reception and silent auction, at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary. Enjoy cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and music under an elegant candlelit tent on the scenic grounds of the seminary campus at 150 Stratton Road, New Rochelle, while reminiscing on 50 years of St. Nersess past, celebrating the present and launching an exciting future for generations to come. Donation, \$75 per person. Register at www.stnersess.edu or call (914) 636-2003. Auction items go live online September 10.

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

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COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror- Spectator

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EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

COPY EDITOR

Dilani Yogaratnam

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:

Edmond Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

Florence Avakian, Elizabeth Aprahamian, Daphne Abeel, Dr. Haroutiune Arzoumanian, Taleen Babayan, Prof. Vahakn N. Dadrian, Diana Der Hovanessian, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Sonia Kailian-Placido, Harut Sassounian, Mary Terzian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:**Armenia** - Hagop Avedikian**Boston** - Nancy Kalajian**Philadelphia** - Lisa Manookian**Contributing Photographers:**

Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian, Jirair Hovsepien

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755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

COMMENTARY

‘Waiting for Godot’*

By Edmond Y. Azadian

In an election year all news channels are supersaturated with electioneering, most of the time oblivious to the fact that many other newsworthy events and developments are happening around the world which may affect our livelihood and even the future of the country.

Two wars that the Bush administration began – Iraq and Afghanistan – are continuing with the same ferocity and draining our economy. The Clinton Administration concluded its second term with a surplus in the budget. The Bush-Cheney administration left behind an abysmal deficit, on top of depleting the surplus.

Since President Barack Obama was elected, every legislative initiative has been opposed by Republicans – even at the cost of hurting the country – just to hamper his reelection chances. That, of course, will give ammunition to the Republican camp that the Obama administration failed to improve the economy, which on the surface may sound true, if they can discount the Bush-era debacle.

Republican president candidate Mitt Romney began his campaign at the height of the economic crisis, giving a positive spin to the campaign as a successful businessman who could inject some hope in the gloomy business climate. But as his campaign has progressed and his credentials have been placed under rigorous scrutiny, his reputation as an able and honest business leader has been dented, especially when his opponents began digging into the scandal of the Bain Capital, which had netted him \$473 million.

Any president or presidential candidate may promise the sky to the public, but if they don't have the backing of the legislature, they cannot deliver on their promises. That, in itself, is a built-in defense mechanism. In case of failure, blame the Congress.

There is a plethora of issues in this presidential campaign that each camp will dissect to discredit its opponents.

Now, enter Paul Ryan, a youthful and dynamic Republican vice presidential candidate on a crusade to dismantle the Obama health care plan. Initially, the Romney and Ryan healthcare plans looked different from each other and even sounded contradictory. The two candidates quickly have been reconciling their differences, because healthcare will become – or, already has become – one of the hottest campaign issues.

Foreign policy is hardly mentioned in the campaign debates, because the assumption is that the US can and will resolve those issues at the butt of the gun. Yet defense remains a major issue, as the Obama administration tries to wind down the foreign wars and cut out unnecessary spending.

The US is not only a super power but a super-super power that can out-gun any potential adversary with its stockpile of state-of-the-art weaponry. Yet, security and the strong posture of America have become euphemisms for fueling the military-industrial complex, something President Dwight Eisenhower had warned against in the waning days of his administration.

Americans vote with their pocketbooks, except some ideological zealots in both camps. If the economy shows some signs of improvement in the remaining days of the campaign, that will favor the incumbent administration. If it deteriorates, citizens will look for change, for saviors, regardless of the outcome of their choice.

Interest groups have their own agendas to pursue in this election year. Leniency advocated by the Obama administration with regards to the 11 million illegal aliens here will certainly have a positive impact in the Hispanic community. On the other hand, leniency towards Cuba's new ruler may jeopardize the Florida vote, a key battleground in this campaign. Therefore, the administration has to calibrate its policy to the tune of the public sentiment to assure a second term for President Obama.

The Jewish vote is crucial for any candidate; wooing the Israeli lobby is not enough – Benjamin Netanyahu will not settle for anything less than complete surrender. The two-state solution for the Palestinian issue advocated by President Obama did not jibe well with the friends of Israel. Despite his solid commitment to Israel's security, Mr. Obama may end up receiving a cold shoulder from his Jewish constituency.

On the other hand, the Republican hopeful offered the maximum, by visiting Israel and making an outright play for the Jewish vote. He declared Jerusalem as Israel's capital, pre-empting the traditional US policy of recognizing Tel Aviv as the capital. That would bias any future settlement of the conflict, as Palestinians have been vying for East Jerusalem to become their own capital.

Considering the Arab world is in enough turmoil for any retaliation, Mr. Romney threw another incendiary barb, comparing unfavorably the accomplishment of the Palestinians versus the Israelis. He suggested that the Palestinians have not prospered as well as Israelis because of cultural differences, i.e., inferiority, neglecting to mention a chokehold on them by the Israeli government, while praising the thriving Israeli economy, again neglecting to mention that US taxpayers are pouring money into its economy. That laughable statement drew wincing even from the Israeli hosts, not to mention riled up Palestinians, who justifiably called Romney a racist.

Since every ethnic or interest group is guided by its own interest, Armenians are also entitled to the same rights. For us at issue are the Genocide, the US assistance to Armenia and the thorny problem of the Karabagh (Artsakh) conflict.

Thus far, neither camp has addressed those issues and time is running out. Republican vice presidential-hopeful Rep. Paul Ryan is on record as having co-sponsored the latest House Resolution acknowledging the Armenian Genocide. But that does not mean too much, since President Obama and Vice President Joe Biden have been vocally supportive of the Genocide issue until their election. Since their election, they have been dancing around the G-word, as they have become captives of the political system. In all fairness, we need to be mindful that President Obama came closest in defining the Armenian Genocide and he dared to remind Turks to come to terms with their grizzly history, in a speech delivered in Ankara, at the Turkish parliament. Yet that does not match his official written commitment made before his election. Once elected, even the most moralistic candidate seems to compromise his or her moral compass for political expediency.

However, Armenians have learned the convoluted course of political machinations and will never give up on this critical issue. We are reminded of the French precedent, when the parliament had almost criminalized the denial of the Armenian Genocide similar to the Gayssot Law, which has criminalized the denial of the Jewish Shoah. Yet, despite then-President Nicolas Sarkozy's passionate speech at an Armenian rally, he let the time elapse and failed to sign the resolution, allowing the opponents of the resolution to muster enough votes to claim the resolution unconstitutional.

The new president, Francois Hollande, has made the same pledge, but a recent interview by his foreign minister casts some doubt on his commitment; indeed, in an interview conducted by the French weekly *L'Express*, Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius was asked how the president is will make good on his pledge to pass the Genocide resolution without offending Ankara, when France needs Turkey's support on its Syrian policy. The minister answered in an equivocal fashion: "We are seeking ways to reconcile the two issues." If we have learned enough history we can safely assume that is also another betrayal in the making.

Coming back to the US elections, neither camp yet has addressed the Armenian concerns. That does not allow the Armenian voters to take a stand.

In President Obama's case, any pledge is worth less, since he could – and he still can – deliver on his pledge while in office. Mitt Romney can sway some Armenian votes if he comes up with a last-minute positive statement.

Contrary to our beliefs and our campaigns, not all Armenians take the Genocide issue seriously in voting.

Currently, there is a vicious campaign against President Obama, with racial overtones, and many Armenians are shamefully taken in; the president's skin color and his advocacy for the middle class seem to have alienated those Armenians.

At this time, there is no decision for Armenians – we are waiting for Godot.

* "Waiting for Godot" is the title of an absurdist play by Samuel Beckett, in which the characters hopelessly wait for a savior.

LETTERS

Our Wealth Is Our People's Intellect

To the Editor:

Mr. Edmond Azadian (MS, Aug.18) paints a rather bleak picture for Armenia's future as a result of economic forces that are causing the only place that Armenians can call home to ironically become depleted of Armenians.

Recently, presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, in visiting various consequential for-

eign countries in order to demonstrate his proficiency in international affairs, made a controversial statement in Israel, saying that its success relative to its Arab neighbors was due to its superior culture. There is no denying that Israel, in spite of its inferiority in natural resources and population, is a dominant force in the Middle East. Israel owes this success to the intellectual talents of its people. I'm not saying that Israelis are inherently smarter than Arabs, but that Israelis are generally more educated.

Armenia is in the same situation as Israel. We too are poor in physical resources and population relative to our enemies. But we too can make up for this by an emphasis on our brain power. The generosity of people like Edward Avedisian, who is unselfishly funding educational facilities in Armenia, represents the kind of benefaction that can ultimately make a big difference for Armenia's future. Armenia's solution to its poverty lies in the fields of science and technology, products of education.

–Berge Tatian



COMMENTARY

Has History Time To Wait?

IT is time to remember that Armenians across the heavens raised independent Armenia's flag to full mast. We filled our homes, churches, mountains, valleys and forests with voices of gratitude for giving us the chance to use our minds, hearts and talents to insure all the promises of independence. The Armenian was now ready to prove its mettle, character, intelligence and ability to make and create a proud Armenian nation. Along with homeland

Armenians, the diaspora was determined and most anxious to offer all help, all treasure and all talent possible to keep the flag of Armenia flying high, tall and proud.

Then, something went wrong. Diaspora

Armenians witnessed with dismay, disappointment and grief the beginning of division and disunity. At first we thought it was the usual growing pains. We continued to hope with our determination, love and patriotism that the homeland would see progress, the spread of happiness and security. Unfortunately confusion, helplessness, bribery and unemployment reigned supreme and drove millions of Armenians to leave their homes, churches, mountains and monuments to seek their fortunes in other countries. The Armenian flag was at half mast: a symbol of grief, sadness and helplessness. Now we seem to accept hopelessness, which is the worst calamity of all!

The questions which Diaspora Armenians have a right to ask are: "Will the flag of Armenia always fly half mast?"; "Will disunity, division, disagreement, dissent in Armenia be permanent press and will not wash out?"; "Will some two dozen plus political parties realize it is impossible to expect discipline, order and security with so many loud, incoherent voices?"; "Will havoc, confusion and insecurity ever end?" and "When will the Diaspora Armenian expect sanity to reign in Armenia?"

One truism of politics is the impossibility of governance with political parties who fight for prominence, power and popularity. With more than a dozen political parties at work in the homeland, majority vote becomes almost meaningless. Political party platforms become so complicated and confusing that "winners" do not command the respect of the governed, and with deep care and unlimited patience, Diaspora Armenians have made every possible sacrifice, demonstrated passion and love for the homeland. It seems regrettable that the government of Armenia has taken for granted this continued love, caring, attachment and in addition to offering medals, banquets and honors to wealthy donors, no effort has ever been made to seek diasporan advice.

Two Armenian Diaspora conferences were initiated with thousands in attendance. These two conferences were ill-prepared, ill-advised, almost silly, to say the least. It was a comedy and a farce and the result was absolutely zero.

It is no surprise and no wonder that grief, tears, unemployment and hopelessness force hundreds of thousands of good, talented, patriotic Armenians to flee their homeland. Unable to live and believe in future hope they were forced to seek livelihood, security and some happiness elsewhere. Evidently this tragedy drastically reduced homeland talent, which is its treasure. This obviously created disappointment outside of all acceptable margins. This was a total calamity and the Diaspora could do absolutely nothing to stop it. Both homeland and Diaspora Armenians hoped that Armenian Mardi Gras days would finally arrive. How wrong we were! We continue saying goodbye to Mardi Gras and hello Lent! Lent continues to dominate the homeland while Mardi Gras remains elusive.

What has troubled, shaken and frustrated Diaspora Armenians is the tragedy of hopelessness that pervades all of Armenia today. The hopes, thankfulness and joy when independence was declared have disappeared and this situation has disappointed the diaspora. How can anyone be proud or happy to learn of cursed emigration that may take thousands more to join the diasporan ranks?

It is almost unbelievable that so many parties are still unable or unwilling to accept the situation and continue to fight for power, supremacy and unquestionably, independence of Armenia was a true blessing and heavenly gift. The diaspora truly and fully embraced the homeland more firmly and more lovingly than ever before and did all that was possible to help Armenia become a true haven for Armenians. We now witness, most unfortunately, the opposite has happened in the two-plus decades since our declaration of independence.

It is extremely dangerous for Armenia's leadership to assume that Diaspora Armenians will continue their love and largesse in view of what is happening in the homeland. Diaspora Armenians expect and demand better governance from the homeland leadership. One such effort is for the Armenian leadership to seriously consider a true and practical arrangement of a conference consisting not of hordes of Armenians, but one from each serious Diaspora Armenian organization. This highest level international Armenia-Diaspora conference would carry a great deal of weight and will ask all Armenians to respect its decisions, thus bringing about new hope, perspective and comfort worldwide.

After some 20 years of an independent Armenia it is quite apparent that we have to seriously think of correcting all past mistakes, eliminate so many parties and "come to our senses." We need real harmony, understanding and respect. We must agree that we need new order, new direction and new thinking to bring about calm and security and happiness to our homeland. This can happen only when leadership of the homeland understands full well that advice of the Diaspora Armenians must be sought and there must be more consultation in order to strengthen our beloved homeland. It must be our hope that God will give us more inspiration, deeper love of unity and harder work than ever before to change direction.

After all, isn't it true that to find a diamond, tons and tons of digging soil and dirt to find that shiny diamond which is one of the most valuable treasures we humans cherish must occur. We must start digging together to find that precious diamond.

(Nubar Dorian is a resident of Cliffside, NJ. He is active in the community, including as a Diocesan Delegate.)

Thoughts about God's Existence

"The heavens declare the glory of God,
the skies proclaim the work of his hands."
— Psalm 19.1

By Fr. Bedros Shetilian

God's intervention in the lives of human beings has its different aspects. People may ask different questions. Why did God create the universe and us? And if God created the universe and humans, then why did he create them to be imperfect? How can God, who created imperfect human beings, be perfect? If God is almighty and the most good being, why there is so much evil in the world?

Before going forward, we have to understand that it is impossible to find complete answers to these questions, because God is beyond the limited capability of our minds to comprehend. Exactly like the arts. Can we explain everything in arts? No. We can feel and live the beauty of the arts, we can be inspired by the tremendous power that comes from masterpieces of arts, but we cannot explain completely why we are having these feelings. The same thing can be said when we talk about religion. It is not a coincidence that some scholars recognized arts as a junior brother to religion (Shahan Berberian). We can feel and live God's presence, but we cannot explain that completely, because, like the arts, God is connected to our hearts and souls more than being connected to our minds. God is reality which is connected to the metaphysical world, in other words to the reality that is not materialized.

The fact that it is impossible to explain God completely is one side of the truth. The other side of the truth is that we have to try to explain God to the best of our ability. The pillar of Catholic theology, St. Thomas Aquinas, said: "Faith needs explanation." And especially today as people ask many questions, we have to try to answer them as best as we can.

This series of articles is aimed at explaining some of God's works, in other words to try to understand God's will.

God's existence. There is no one who can avoid this issue; there is no one who can be indifferent to this issue. From the first day of its existence, mankind directly or indirectly has always been dealing with this issue. If we look to the Bible, we see that mankind at the beginning had the understanding and awareness of God's existence, but then lost it up to that moment when God started to reveal Himself to us, at first to Noah and then to Abraham. After Abraham and until today God never stopped revealing Himself in different ways.

When I think about God existence, I always remember the words that say, "It is as difficult to prove God's non-existence as to prove His existence." Both are difficult. There is paradox when we want to prove God's existence. If we insist on proving that God exists, in reality we don't have God in our minds, because God is not a material reality to be proved or not. God is a metaphysical reality; we can only feel and live God's existence.

In this article I won't write about the literature and theories that exist about this issue, because they can be obtained through books and the Internet. This article is about my personal experience considering this issue.

I lived in Soviet Armenia, then Soviet Russia and then in free Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This transformative time was full of discussions about God and religion. I got the opportunity to know some educated and morally pure people, who were saying that they were atheists. This was understandable, because such people lived and were educated under the Soviet system. I had discussions with such people about God. The interesting thing was that all these discussions started by them saying that there is no God and ended up by them accepting the idea that there is a supreme being, even though they refused to call it God. I recognized the same thing here in the United States. Truly, it is very difficult to neglect God. I believe that every person understands this. It is a different issue what role this understanding plays in the life of each one of us. Sometimes the understanding of God's existence is too little in the consciousness of some people, that we don't see it.

Einstein was not a religious man, but believed in the existence of the transcendent God — The

Creator, in other words in "scientists' God." Einstein called that God a soul or spirit, which is closer to the understanding of the personalized, religious God. Why did he say this? Was it a coincidence? Or did the truth come out of his mouth unwittingly?

Another great scientist and Nobel Prize winner, Enrico Fermi, who was one of the creators of the nuclear bomb, on a summer night, was amazed by the beauty of the sky and the stars. He said, "I can't understand how some people after seeing this beauty cannot believe in God." By saying this he referred to the Psalms passage that says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

On the opposite side there are some scientists who don't believe in God at all, like the most famous and still living cosmologist, Stephen Hawking, who last year proposed a theory which says that the universe could have been created and continues to exist without God.

All these show that the saying "science neglects God" is wrong, because scientists have different ideas about God's existence. Some of them are atheists like Hawking; some of them are believers in the transcendent God like Einstein; and some of them are deeply religious like the famous American scientist Francis Collins who said, "I am a scientist and a believer, and I find no conflict between those world views." And what can we say about the fact that the founder of the Big Bang theory, which is about the beginning of the universe, is no other than a Belgian Catholic Jesuit priest, Fr. George Lemaitre (1894-1966). So it is true when they say that little knowledge keeps man away from God, but the perfect knowledge makes him closer Him. I think that is what happened in the 19th century when many discoveries in science took place, it looked like it was working against God. But in the 20th century, with more progress taking place in science, it caused religion and science to become closer.

Coming to the arts, we can see that this issue is clearer and more obvious. We know that all great composers believed in God, even though not all of them were religious. Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Joseph Haydn, George Frideric Handel, Johannes Brahms, Anton Bruckner and Gustav Mahler all believed in God in different ways. Beethoven, who opposed the church, presents a very interesting case. It is difficult to call him an orthodox Christian, but he had a personal and unique relationship with God. He had many words about God like, "Music is the language of God" or "No friend have I. I must live by myself, but I know well that God is nearer to me than others in my art, so I will walk fearlessly with Him."

Coming into the 20th century, we can see that Aram Khachaturian, in spite of Soviet atheistic doctrine, had faith in God. Especially in his last years he often visited Holy Echmiadzin and the Catholics of All Armenians. Composer Dikran Mansourian once asked the great composer whether or not he believed in Christ. Khachaturian said nothing, just looked out of the window and made a sign of the cross...

Once, as I was talking with a college professor who is an atheist, he said that he wasn't given the grace to have a spiritual experience. It is interesting that by using the words "given the grace" that individual recognized that for him faith is something higher that needs to be achieved. The professor's words also bring us to the most important issue of faith; in order to have faith, personal spiritual experience is a crucial factor. I also remember a conversation that I had when I was still living in Russia with a former fan of rock music, who later became someone who appreciated the beauty of classical music. During that conversation, that person confirmed to me that he couldn't imagine how big the differences between rock and classical music were, until that day when he was able to experience the artistic and esthetical high qualities of classical music. The same thing can be said about faith. Once a person experiences spiritual life — once he "tastes" it — he will always like to have that grace again. This is just like Apostle Peter, who during the Transfiguration of Jesus when he had the real experience of divine reality, didn't want to leave it and he asked Jesus to stay there forever by saying, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," Matthew 17:4.

For me personally, besides living a spiritual life, which is almost impossible to describe, there is

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Fatwa on Armenian Massacres Attracts World Attention Despite Turkish Denials

Last week's column on the 1909 *Fatwa* issued by Egypt's top Islamic cleric condemning Turks for massacring Armenians in Adana drew widespread attention. The article was posted on websites in many countries, including Pakistan, India, Israel, France, Russia, Lebanon, Armenia and the United States.

Although my columns are often translated and reprinted in the Turkish media, last week's article broke all records. It appeared in summary form in dozens of Turkish newspapers and websites. In addition, prominent syndicated columnist, Taha Akyol, wrote a lengthy rebuttal published in *Hurriyet*, CNN-Turk and others publications. Akyol is a right-wing journalist who switched his allegiance from the ultra-nationalist Alpaslan Turkes, leader of the Grey Wolves, to President Abdullah Gul and his ruling Islamist AKP party.

Akyol describes me as "one of the Armenian Diaspora's fiercest leaders," and "a Tashnak militant." To prove to his Turkish readers that I am a "radical" Armenian, Akyol quotes from an earlier column in which I had stated that Armenians could regain Western Armenia someday when

unexpected developments take place in that region, creating a power vacuum. Akyol was joined by former Turkish Ambassador Omer Engin Lutem in denouncing my views on Western Armenia. While calling me an "extreme nationalist," Ambassador Lutem depicted me as someone "highly admired and frequently read by Diaspora Armenians. In addition to the value of his writings, he is a person that must be taken seriously because of his influence over the Armenian Diaspora."

In his article, Akyol uses standard denialist tactics by reducing the number of Armenian victims in Adana and mischaracterizing the killings as a clash between Armenians and Turks. In reality, 30,000 Armenians were killed by Turkish mobs which had been whipped into frenzy by Ismail Hakke, the Mufti of Bahce, a town near Adana. Akyol's gross misrepresentation of the facts is contradicted by the July 31, 1909 decree of the Council of Ministers of Ottoman Turkey which placed sole responsibility for the massacres on the shoulders of provincial Turkish officials. In a vain attempt to make his distorted views more credible, Akyol reports that he consulted Prof. Kemal Cicek, director of the discredited Turkish Historical Society, who "had published a book last month, titled, The Adana Incidents of 1909 Revisited." In fact, the book was published a year ago and Cicek is not the author, but editor of a volume consisting of papers presented at a 2009 Ankara conference. In response to Akyol's question as to whether the Turkish Mufti had issued a *Fatwa*, Cicek reportedly stated: "I studied the Adana court records. Armenians had made such claims at the time, but no such documents or witnesses were found. There is absolutely no such *Fatwa*."

Contrary to Cicek's claims, there are a number of references confirming that Ismail Hakke, the Turkish Mufti, did issue a *Fatwa* to legitimize the atrocities. Dr. Ali Osman Ozturk, professor at Canakkale's March 18 University, wrote the following in the Milli Folklor Journal (2009):

"The government hanged the Mufti of Bahce in Dortyol because of the *Fatwa* he had issued, stating that 'Armenian blood and property are helal [religiously sanctioned].'" Historian Raymond Kevorkian also mentions the Turkish *Fatwa* in his monumental book, *The Armenian Genocide, a Complete History*, by referencing two sources: Z. Duckett Ferriman's *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana, in Asia Minor, During April, 1909*, and the Turkish parliamentary commission's report by Judges Fayk Bey and Haroutioun Mosdichian. Dr. Vahakn Dadrian also refers to several *Fatwas* issued by Muftis in various Turkish towns, including the Mufti of Bahce, who "surpassed in intensity and scope the atrociousness of the rest of his colleagues." Dadrian then quotes the German newspaper Berliner Tageblatt which reported the eyewitness account of German engineers: "The Mufti had excited and agitated the fanatical and criminal rabble of Bahce and its environs."

To his credit, Akyol does not deny the *Fatwa* issued by the noble Egyptian Grand Sheikh Salim al-Bishri of al-Azhar. Akyol admits the possibility that the Arab Sheikh had issued such a *Fatwa*. I can assure him that such a *Fatwa* exists, since I have in my possession a photocopy of the document, excerpts of which were published in translation in my last week's column. Akyol also acknowledges that the Turkish Mufti of Bahce was in fact hanged for his crimes in Adana!

Over a 100 years later, the *Fatwa* of Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar remains a most valuable document, particularly in these turbulent times. Copies of this righteous *Fatwa* along with the compassionate decree issued in 1917 by the Sharif of Mecca should be disseminated by the Armenian Republic, church leaders and civic groups to all Muslim states, their ambassadors, media and mosques worldwide, particularly in Turkey, Azerbaijan and the Arab world.

God's Existence

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something else that is connected to my faith besides being a clergyman, I am also a musician. This is something that I thought about a lot, and it has impacted my faith in a very strong way.

As I lived for years in the former Soviet Union, I saw thousands of works of art dedicated to Lenin, like paintings, portraits, sculptors, poems, novels, songs, monumental symphonic works, movies, etc. Every artist was obliged to dedicate at least one work to Vladimir Lenin. Even artists and poets like Hovhannes Shiraz who later became anti-regime advocates, dedicated poems to Lenin when they were young. And, I was amazed by the fact that there were no masterpieces among these thousands of works, not even a single one. Even when genius artists had a work dedicated to Lenin, they were far from being masterpieces. For example, the great Soviet composer Dmitry Shostakovich, who justifiably by many is considered to be the Beethoven of the 20th century, has a symphony (#12) about the 1917 Bolshevik revolution dedicated to Lenin. Being the creation of a genius composer, this work has some valuable sections and sometimes it is performed today, but it is far from being a masterpiece like other great creations of the same composer.

In contrast I have always been able to appreciate the quality and the masterpieces of spiritual and sacred art, whose subject as we know is God and no one can doubt its quality. I have also known many atheists who value that kind of art.

By comparing these two realities, I asked myself why there weren't any masterpieces dedicated to Lenin, who was a real person; and why there are many great masterpieces dedicated to God, who is invisible. Where does logic take us as we contemplate these facts? If the source of spiritual art, which is God, did not exist, would it be possible to create all these masterpieces? If God did not exist, would it be possible from nothing or only by imagination, to create the works of St. Naregatsi or Michelangelo, the works of J. S. Bach or our sacred music? It is a well-known fact that one of the first conditions to create a work of art is the existence of a real subject. If that subject does not exist, it is impossible to create not only a masterpiece, but also even a successful work of art. This is one of the crucial and fundamental rules of art. The biggest enemy of art is dishonesty and fabrication. For this reason there are no masterpieces dedicated to Lenin, and there are many, many spiritual and sacred masterpieces, because the source of these works is God who is real. For this reason anyone who appreciates sacred art, must accept the fact that the source of that art is God, who is real and exists. Otherwise it doesn't make any sense.

Here I have presented my personal experience, which is a powerful way to show the truth, rather than obtain it from books and theories. This may help others to understand life's biggest truth, which is the existence of a good, wise and perfect creation, the existence of God.

(Fr. Bedros Shetilian lives in Springfield, Mass.)

Aznavour's Detractors: When All You Can Do Is Look for Scapegoats

By Armen Arakelyan

Charles Aznavour, our much beloved singer and Armenian goodwill ambassador to the world, participated at the opening ceremonies of the newly restored Rabat fortress complex in Akhaltska on August 16.

Many Armenians advised him not to take part, but the singer went and gave a concert anyway. After all, his father was born in Akhaltska and he received a personal invitation from Saakashvili.

Those Armenian circles who advised him to gracefully bow out point to the fact that even though the mosque, synagogue and orthodox Christian church at the site were renovated, the Georgian authorities overlooked the Armenian Catholic Church that stands in ruin.

And because Turkey also donated a portion of the renovation funds, certain Armenians declared that Aznavour shouldn't participate in the opening of a cultural complex that openly rejects a regional Armenian presence.

No one can deny that the Armenian Catholic Church can fall as the next victim of Georgian state policy of assimilation and seizure of the cultural inheritance of minorities, especially the Armenians. This isn't the first case or the last.

But Aznavour isn't to blame.

Renovations to Rabat began back in 2007. Alarms were being raised as early as 2010 that demolition work was being carried out in the immediate vicinity of the Armenian Catholic Church that has inscriptions dating to then 12th century.

To verify these reports, the RA Ministry of Culture even dispatched the Director of the Scientific Research Center for Cultural Inheritance. He went and confirmed that the church was in real danger.

Afterwards, the lid was shut on this issue. The matter wasn't even brought up for discussion when Catholicos Karekin II paid a six day pontifical visit to Georgia, even though renovation work was going on at the time. The Armenian catholicos basically displayed inaction regarding the fate of the church.

For Aznavour to have refused to participate, given this attitude of the Armenian government and Church, wouldn't have been the wisest of choices. How could he have justified his bowing out under such circumstances? Aznavour couldn't have shouldered the burden personally when Armenia's government shed itself of such responsibility.

Despite the methods employed by Georgia to renovate that historical-cultural site, it perfectly symbolizes tolerance and

mutual understanding as evidenced by the fact that the spiritual values of the three religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — coexist side by side.

Had Aznavour refused to participate in the opening of a memorial site with such meaning, it couldn't have been viewed as a manifestation of narrow nationalism; something which Aznavour has always been distanced himself from. On the contrary, even if we view his action from the same nationalist prism, by his presence and concert, Aznavour was simply confirming that the region, with its ethnic structure and its historical architectural profile, has historically been Armenian. In reality, this isn't the issue.

Rabat is a truly wonderful business venture; both from the perspective of preserving and serving up Georgian cultural values and developing the tourist trade on top. Even if the project contains aggressive cultural elements, Georgia is carrying it out with a finely crafted technology and very delicately; by aligning the beneficial with the pleasant and the necessary. This is something that Armenia has never been able to do.

Aznavour can't be blamed that in Armenia there isn't the desire or the ability to carry out such extensive projects. The singer is not guilty because we can't even preserve that which we have, and are only adept at building places to fill our stomachs. The little we have worthy of preserving has been swallowed up with a network of infrastructure that is crass and laughable. We are so provincial

at times that we make "Evro" renovations to our cultural sites, and have turned them into garbage dumps, both inside and out.

Aznavour isn't to blame that Rabat is located in neighboring Georgia, where his father's roots are from. Rabat painfully reminds us that noting on such a scale has been done in Armenia during that past twenty years. And we constantly point out that tourism is a leading sector of the Armenian economy. Who are we kidding?

The only achievement we can look to with some sense of pride is the aerial cable car at Tatev; but it only operates six months out of the year.

Those who criticize Aznavour have nothing to say about all this. They are trying to turn him into a scapegoat for all the inadequacies and faults of the nation at large. These people want to conveniently rid themselves of accountability and find blame with others; not themselves.

But the, it is always been easier to find fault in others and not within oneself.

(This commentary originally appeared in Hetq online.)

AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School Announces New Vice Principal at Elementary School

LOS ANGELES — On Tuesday, August 14, the Board of Trustees and the administration of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Manoogian-Demirdjian School (MDS) in Canoga Park announced the appointment of Marie Stuart as the new vice principal of the elementary division. In her new capacity, Stuart will oversee kindergarten through fifth grade.

Stuart has spent more than 30 years of her professional career as an educator. Her background includes teaching and administrative experience ranging from elementary to high school. Stuart has also served as a director at the San Gabriel Unified School District. For the past five years, she has acted as the assistant superintendent/principal for the Bullis Charter School in Los Altos (K-8), where she was well respected by students, staff, parents and colleagues as an administrator.

Stuart received her bachelor's and teaching

credential from Southwest Texas State University, with a focus in drama and English. She holds a master's from the University of Texas, where she specialized in English-as-a-second language/bi-lingual/bi-cultural studies. She also earned education administration credentials from Azusa Pacific University and California State University, Los Angeles. Stuart has mentored teachers and initiated a long list of innovative programs for students. They include project-based learning, peer counseling and the character pillar program. She has also directed school plays, speech and debate teams, mock trials and history day at the various schools in which she has worked.

Stuart has expressed her enthusiasm for joining the AGBU School, stating, "I am very pleased to have the opportunity to work with the students and staff of AGBU MDS, and I look forward to a positive and productive experience at this exceptional school."



Marie Stuart, the new vice principal of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School elementary division

Helping Women ‘Get Everything out of Life’: That’s the Helen Gurley Brown Effect

By Donna Kalajian Lagani

The coverage surrounding Helen Gurley Brown’s passing last week covered many aspects of her life: how she was a self-described “mouseburger” from Arkansas who became the highest-paid woman in advertising on the West Coast. How she was the author of a best-selling book — *Sex and the Single Girl* — that fanned the flames of the sexual revolution. How she became the founder of a magazine — *Cosmopolitan* — that launched an empire, with over 64 editions sold in over 100 countries. How, according to the *New York Times*, if all the global readers of *Cosmo* came together, they would form the 12th-largest country.

But what was missing from most of the coverage was that Helen was the ultimate girlfriend, a woman who would kick off her stilettos, curl up on the couch and ask you questions about everything from your career to your marriage to your new red lipstick. She passionately believed that every woman had the power to achieve whatever she wanted in life — and that *Cosmo* could help her do it. The relationship Helen had with *Cosmo*’s readers was profound. At a time when women were stuck in very traditional roles, Helen said they deserved to have it all — and more: the MBA, the manicure and the man. She was the original “Fun Fearless Female.”

Even as we mourn her loss, the impact of her message cannot be overstated. When a woman walks into a business meeting wearing a killer pair of high heels — that’s the *Cosmo* Effect. When a girl asks her doctor about something she read in the pages of *Cosmo* and it saves her life — that’s the *Cosmo* Effect. When young women take it for granted that they can decide the path their lives will take — that’s the *Cosmo* Effect.

In speaking to women like their closest girlfriend, Helen — and *Cosmo* — helped women everywhere “get everything out of life.” That’s the *Cosmo* Effect.

It was a joy and privilege to know Helen. To think that she revolutionized generations of women is humbling. She was a dearly loved friend whose life lessons will resonate both personally and professionally forever.

(Donna Kalajian Lagani is senior vice president and publishing director at *Cosmopolitan* and *Cosmopolitan* for Latinas. This tribute originally ran in *Advertising Age*.)

After Russian Band’s Conviction, Artists Need to Stand for Each Other, Everywhere

By Mark LeVine

It’s impossible to know yet whether the wave of international support received by the Russian punk collective Pussy Riot during their just-completed trial affected the verdict in any way. But it’s clear that the plight of the three young women who each now face the remainder of two years’ imprisonment has ignited the passion of US and European artists, from Sting to Madonna, who have publicly called for their freedom.

Western artists can and should support their Russian comrades. But the support received by this group is sadly an aberration. As a rule, European and US artists have been strangely silent when it comes to recognizing the plights suffered by their fellow musicians and performers around the world, where freedom of expression receives little protection, censorship is prevalent and artists routinely face the threat of prosecution and jail from their governments, and more dangerously, threats to their physical

safety and even lives by conservative social forces.

Ole Reitov, of the international NGO Freemuse, which advocates on behalf of freedom of expression for musicians and composers believes the problem is rooted in the reluctance of managers and lawyers to encourage political engagement by their A-list artists. “But even when you reach them, a lot of ‘great names’ have a blind spot in terms of freedom of expression for fellow artists, which was in fact one of the motivations for creating Freemuse.”

System of a Down frontman Serj Tankian agrees, declaring that “too few organizations organize just around musicians.” In his view, “Artists should boycott performing in countries that do not allow free expression of their opinions. This is one reason System of a Down has never played in Turkey. If we can’t use the word genocide on stage without threats of arrest or worse, it is not a conducive venue for artistic expression.”

Certainly, the right to artistic freedom is one of the most basic human rights, enshrined in Articles 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declare in part: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers... Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.”

Well-known artists, including Bono, Adam Yauch, Bruce Springsteen and others, have long lent their name to human rights organizations and campaigns such as Amnesty International and the Campaign to Free Tibet. But many have generally remained silent when it comes to supporting fellow artists under threat.

And so even now, as artists — most recently, including Madonna — are flocking to support Pussy Riot, they continue to ignore the plight of other artists presently in jail. If you go to the Freemuse website, you can see how many artists are under threat and how broad the range of countries is in which their rights are repressed. According to their latest estimate, violations are occurring in some 120 countries, with Afghanistan, Cameroon, China, Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia and Turkey among the most repressive.

We can compare the lack of uniform support for fellow musical artists to the far more developed and coherent support for writers worldwide by fellow members of their craft — as embodied in the organization PEN, the world-

wide association of writers. PEN is run by journalists and writers, who are generally more articulate and well connected to their writing colleagues than musicians.

At the level of the music business, it’s even harder to get people involved, since, as a “business” — especially one whose century-old model is crumbling beneath it — music industries in most countries need airplay on government-controlled radio stations and support to fight against piracy, to stay afloat. This situation provides little incentive to rock the political boat.

As one activist put it, rarely you might get a music executive such as Richard Branson who will sign the Sex Pistols and use their political “infamy” to help sell records and brand his company as hip and cutting edge, but such figures are increasingly rare these days in the mega corporate-dominated music industry.

The problem is that, as long as long as artists, and the music industry more broadly, don’t take this seriously at the organizational and institutional levels, musicians will continue to face the same and even graver threats to their freedoms, without anyone in the wider world taking notice or helping to publicize their plight.

In order to change the dynamics, musical artists, singers, composers, producers, arrangers, engineers, DJs, managers and music industry professionals need to together adopt a universal code of conduct that will ensure that they are aware of the situation in all countries in which they work, perform and sell their products and provide a standard set of guidelines and references for behavior to prevent the continuation of the present situation.

Such a code could include:

- A declaration of support for all artists who engage politically. As Madonna put it, “art should be political” and even artists who aren’t willing to put themselves on the line benefit when there is greater freedom for their colleagues to do so. The musical community must no longer sit idly by and allow fellow musicians to face such challenges and threats alone.
- Artists need to stay abreast of developments affecting fellow artists and music industry professionals around the world and use their often-extensive social media, concert and other appearances to help publicize specific threats or actions as they arise.
- They should develop much more coordinated relations with organizations, such as Freemuse, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, to ensure that they are aware of threats to artists in countries in which they are touring, recording or otherwise appearing professionally.

Armenian Bar Assoc. Petitions US Supreme Court in Genocide Recovery Lawsuit

PETITION, from page 1

Attorneys who have also been representing plaintiffs include Armenian Bar members Mark Geragos and Brian Kabateck and Lee Crawford Boyd. Igor Timofeyev of the law firm of Paul Hastings filed the original appeal on behalf of plaintiffs, urging the high court to overturn the Ninth Circuit’s en banc ruling.

Also lending support to the Supreme Court petition are the association’s partners, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), the Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation, Inc., Genocide Education Project, Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action, the Center for the Study of Law & Genocide and the International Human Rights Clinic of the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. The ANCA, through the crucial efforts of its Legislative Director Kate Nahabetian, also an ArmenBar member, played a critical role in securing the on-the-record support of the aforementioned states’ attorneys general.

- Artists need to encourage their fans to become more involved in the plight of musicians globally and in their own countries, and educate them about the dangers of censorship and how to fight it.

Most important, artists need to support all artists who are being persecuted because of their race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, political affiliations, non-violent social and political activities, or expression of personal, social or political views.

Particularly today, when the Internet and social media have made it so much easier to spread the word about oppression to fans and the broader public, it’s no longer excusable for artists to remain silent most of the time, and only lend their support when the world is already watching.

Globally, there are hundreds of artists under far greater threat to their freedom and lives who deserve the same attention.

(Historian Mark LeVine is editor of *Twilight of Empire: Responses to Occupation*. This commentary originally appeared in www.HuffingtonPost.com. It was edited here for space.)