

Karabagh Lawmakers Call For Release of Hayrapetian

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

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

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

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

They said they considered what happened to the Armenian businessman as a "regrettable misunderstanding," expressing their conviction that Russian law-enforcement bodies will be able to carry out an

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Aram Arkun Returns To *Mirror-Spectator* As Assistant Editor

WATERTOWN — Aram Arkun has begun working as assistant editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. He worked for a number of years as associate editor while he was living in New York City and more recently, Henrico, Va. His move to the Boston area now allows him to work in person at the newspaper's headquarters.

Arkun is a specialist in modern Armenian history who has published a number of articles on the Armenians of Cilicia, including on the 1909 massacres and the beginning of the Genocide. His research interests include the post World War I repatriation of the Armenians of the sancaks of Kozan (Sis) and Marash, and the ensuing conflicts.

Formerly the coordinator of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and editor of the English-language Armenian quarterly *Ararat* published by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, he has also worked as an independent editor and translator. He has published articles and annotated translations on Ottoman and Iranian Armenian topics, as well as contemporary

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Nazaret Manoogian (played by Tahar Rahim) and his daughters in "The Cut"

Fatih Akin's 'The Cut' Starring Tahar Rahim to Be Shown at Venice Film Festival

LOS ANGELES (IndieWire) — Some slight waves were made earlier this year when Fatih Akin pulled his forthcoming "The Cut" from the Cannes Film Festival citing "personal reasons." So we figured the movie would wind up somewhere else on the 2014 fall festival slate, and indeed, it's now at Venice and the first trailer has arrived.

Starring Tahar Rahim, details about the plot had largely been kept under the wraps, with only the only hint that Rahim plays a Charlie Chaplin-esque character, in the movie that caps off the director's "Love, Death and the Devil" trilogy. But not only does the promo open a window onto the movie, so too does the official extended synopsis and a brief director's statement.

Mardin, 1915: one night, the Turkish police round up all the Armenian men in the city, including the young blacksmith, Nazaret Manoogian, who is separated from his family. Years later, after managing to survive the horrors of the genocide, he hears that his two daughters are also still alive. He becomes fixated on the idea of finding them and sets off to track them down. His search takes him from the Mesopotamian deserts and Havana to the barren and desolate prairies of North Dakota. On this odyssey, he encounters a range of very different people: angelic and kind-hearted characters, but also the devil incarnate.

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Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Centennial Planned in the Nation's Capital

WASHINGTON — Leaders of the Armenian Church in the United States have joined together to plan a special remembrance of the Armenian Genocide next year. Commemorating the passage of 100 years since the start of the first genocide of the 20th century, a schedule of events including an ecumenical prayer service at the National Cathedral, a memorial concert, public exhibitions and a Pontifical Divine Liturgy will take place from May 7 to 10, 2015, in Washington.

Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, and Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, will both journey to the United States to lead and participate in the commemorative events.

A National Centennial Committee has been formed under the auspices of the Diocese and the Prelacy to oversee and guide the commemorative activities. The Committee, chaired by Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Boston-based entrepreneur and philanthropist, includes leaders from Armenian religious, political, and civic organizations from across the United States. The Committee includes Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America; Archbishop Hovnan Derderian,

Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America; Archbishop Oshagan Cholyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America; Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Legate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

"We are organizing these events in the nation's capital in order to involve the country's political leaders, raise awareness in the non-Armenian community, and honor countries and individuals that have helped Armenians during and after the Genocide," said committee chair Afeyan. "We are honored that Catholicos Karekin II and Catholicos Aram I will be among us, blessing the occasion, as together we stand up for the Armenian presence in America and in the world," he added.

The National Centennial Committee has met several times and is working together with Washington D.C.-based subcommittees to plan the various events and activities. The Committee is working closely with the Central Commemorative Committees for the United States and Armenia to coordinate the activities.

Taron Margaryan Meets With Nor Jugha Head

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Mayor Taron Margaryan met with the head of the Iranian city of Isfahan 5th District (Nor Jugha) Hamid Asarzadegan this week. Attaching special importance to the current high level of the Armenian-Iranian friendship and cooperation, Margaryan pointed out that the friendly ties between Yerevan and the partner cities of Iran are warm, the interaction of the local self-government bodies is effective.

He stressed the importance of cooperation with the Iranian cities Isfahan, Tehran, Tabriz and Shiraz. Margaryan said Yerevan and Nor Jugha became sister cities in 1995.

Oracle to Open Office In Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The entry of Oracle Corporation, the world's second largest software company to Armenia may be an important precondition for the economic development of the country, announced Deputy Minister of Economy Emil Tarasyan, in a conversation with reporters.

On July 29, the first conference of the Armenian group of Oracle users was held, which was attended by the Oracle DB and Java Armenian User Group Chairman Richard Bezjian, US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern.

Tarasyan noted that a cooperation agreement was signed between the government of the Republic of Armenia and Oracle Corporation. The first step will be the opening of a representative office in Armenia, which is expected in the near future.

Komitas Museum to Open in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — The Armenian government has decided to establish a Komitas Museum and Institute to honor the Armenian composer, and for studying, preserving and popularizing his legacy.

Komitas' legacy and personal belongings are dispersed in two different organizations: the Yeghishe Charents Literature and Art Museum and the archives of the Art Institute of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences.

The Armenian president suggested creating a Komitas Museum and Institute at the sitting of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund on May 30, 2013. The museum will be built in the park named after Komitas, and the Pyunik All-Armenian Relief Fund will cover the expenses with the support of Syrian-Armenian benefactor Gabriel Zemberjian. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of the current year.

The initiative is a priority this year since 2014 has been proclaimed the year of Komitas. This year marks the 145th anniversary of his birth.

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Tribute to Ashikian

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

NKR Assembly Chair Praises Diasporan Youth Visits to Artsakh

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – On July 29, the NKR National Assembly Chairman Ashot Ghoulyan received a group of youth of the Armenian General Gymnastic Union (AGGU) of Great Britain.

The NKR NA Press Service, welcoming the participants of the meeting, Ghoulyan said the visits of youth groups from the Armenian Diaspora organizations to Artsakh create an opportunity to strengthen ties with the Motherland.

Then he introduced the topics related to the NKR's role in the regional, especially security processes, its political, public and socio-economic life, the projects implemented in the frames of All-Armenian programs, as well as the NKR's international recognition process. At the end of the meeting, Ghoulyan answered the questions of the young compatriots.

Mediators Voice Concern Over 'Targeted Killings of Civilians'

STEPANAKERT (RFE/RL) – International mediators in the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict have voiced "serious concern" over the increase in tensions and violence in the region, including "the targeted killings of civilians."

Russian, French and US representatives of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group held separate meetings earlier this week with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Brussels, Eduard Nalbandian and Elmar Mammadyarov.

The Minsk Group is trying to mediate a settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabagh.

On July 23, the mediators issued a statement from Vienna, saying that during the meetings they urged the parties "to commit themselves to avoiding casualties" and "rejected the deliberate targeting of villages and the civilian population."

Armenia Warns Azerbaijan against Escalating Tensions

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Armenia has warned Azerbaijan against carrying out more sabotage activities and planning aggression as the situation continues to remain tense around the Nagorno Karabagh conflict zone.

A Red Cross vehicle became a target for shooting as Azerbaijani troops continued violating the ceasefire at the border with Armenia in the recent days. The Armenia delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) confirmed on Monday the information about the incident that was first reported by the mayor of one of the Armenian communities situated near the restive border with Azerbaijan in the northeast of the country.

Samvel Saghoyan, the head of the village of Chinari, had told media that the Azeri side had also shot at a combine harvester working in the field despite an earlier agreement mediated through the ICRC to let the farmers do their agricultural work. No victims were reported in either incident.

The intensified cross-border fire near Armenia's Tavush province followed another major attempt by an Azerbaijani sabotage group to infiltrate into the territory of Nagorno Karabagh in the northern and north-eastern directions. The Defense Army reported one dead among its servicemen, saying that the attack had been successfully repulsed. It said the enemy fled, "sustaining losses and losing a large amount of technical means and ammunition." Meanwhile, over the weekend President Serge Sargsian warned Azerbaijan against further encroachments against the Armenian lands. Speaking at an event marking the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Vazgen Sargsian Military Institute in Yerevan on Saturday, Sargsian, addressing his words to those in Azerbaijan "who plan large-scale military operations," said: "You'd better watch out. This is Armenian land – you will find your death here."

Meet HIVE, the Armenian LinkedIn with a Twist

YEREVAN – HIVE is the first virtual network designed specifically to accelerate the inception and growth of Armenian (and even part-Armenian) Internet startups. It enables them to pitch their ideas; matches them with advisors, mentors, and investors; and gives them opportunities to secure major funding.

HIVE also encourages emerging companies to hire tech talent from Armenia. The goals are to help create jobs in Armenia, thereby boosting the republic's promising tech sector and the economy as a whole; to help stem the tide of



HIVE co-founders Nina Kouyoumdjian, Laura Bilazarian, Hrag Hamalian



migration from the homeland, especially of talented youths; to build bridges between the diaspora and Armenia through professional and creative synergies; and to help proliferate Armenian web entrepreneurship on an international scale.

HIVE is similar to LinkedIn, with a set of advantages, including opportunities to form teams; connect with men-

tors, mentees, and advisors; pitch ideas; and secure seed funding. In short, the things that can be done through the site are far less impersonal, and potentially much more immediately engaging, as the platform is nothing less than the global Armenian community.

To date, the HIVE portfolio includes five startups, and momentum is building. Following launch-and-pitch parties in New York and Yerevan's Tumo Center, and others planned for San Francisco, Boston, and Los Angeles, HIVE has seen an explosion of new membership.

A Hovnanian Foundation project, HIVE's architects are a small team of young, dynamic professionals whose collective accomplishments – in education, finance, community development, and entrepreneurship – is impressive.

HIVE's creative team, comprised of Nina Kouyoumdjian, Laura Bilazarian, and Hrag Hamalian as well as HIVE director Glen Dalakian II, recently presented the following information on its work. HIVE was founded by diasporan Armenians while in Armenia, and quickly won the support of the Hovnanian Foundation. HIVE's launch in New York was successful and its membership continues to grow.

According to the creative team, the

talent in Armenia is on par if not better than many other places around the world. However, resources, networks and exposure are limited. The team explained, "That's where HIVE is stepping in. It is creating an avenue for



HIVE director Glen Dalakian II

Armenians around the world to support one another, utilizing our collective experience and talents to help each other rise above the rest."

In addition to the New York launch, HIVE had one in Yerevan in July and is planning events in August in San Francisco and Boston (see

Tumo-AGBU NKR Program

STEPANAKERT – The Tumo-AGBU Nagorno-Karabagh Republic (NKR) Program for Creative Technologies will open this fall. The program is the latest addition to the public education initiative funded and developed by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) in NKR in partnership with the NKR government, the American University of Armenia (AUA) and Tumo.

The Tumo-AGBU NKR Program for Creative Technologies will build on the success of the AUA-AGBU Extension Program, which has expanded by popular demand with AGBU's financial underwriting. This Continuing Education Program offers certificate courses in Public Policy and Administration, Strategic Management, Tourism and Hospitality Management, as well as English language and standardized test preparation. With additional seminars in career development, resume writing and interviewing, it is helping to strengthen the NKR workforce, one of AGBU's key goals for the project.

Details for the new Tumo-AGBU NKR Program were discussed at a recent Stepanakert meeting attended by representatives of the NKR government, AGBU and Tumo. AGBU Central Board member Vasken Yacoubian, who was present, remarked on the progress of their collaboration. "The curricula we've developed with NKR officials and AUA administrators are preparing students to pursue higher education and exciting careers in public service," he stated. "With the forthcoming Tumo-AGBU NKR Program for Creative Technologies, we look forward to helping even more young leaders advance in the fields of IT, communication and the arts, as we continue to encourage local

development."

Like the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies in Yerevan, the Tumo-AGBU NKR Program will offer state-of-the-art computers, design labs, courses with industry leaders and, above all, an environment where young Armenians can reach their full potential. A direct fiber optic connection will link to Tumo's central servers, allowing staff

NKR are eager to connect with global networks without having to emigrate. That need, combined with the NKR government's active support, makes Stepanakert a natural choice for the next Tumo location."

During the Stepanakert meeting, NKR Prime Minister Ara Harutyunyan reaffirmed the government's commitment to the project and expressed gratitude for AGBU's financial backing. Prime Minister Harutyunyan, Mr. Yacoubian and Ms. Papazian were



TUMO-AGBU: NKR Prime Minister Ara Harutyunyan discusses plans for the forthcoming Tumo-AGBU NKR Program for Creative Technologies with AGBU Central Board member Vasken Yacoubian to his left, and to his right Chief of Staff of the NKR Government Levon Grigoryan and Tumo Managing Director Marie Lou Papazian. AGBU NKR Representative Sassoun Baghdasaryan and Tumo Board member Pegor Papazian were also present.

in both cities to share information, while interactive workshops will draw from Tumo's satellite program in Dilijan.

Tumo Managing Director Marie Lou Papazian welcomed AGBU's plans, stating, "From day one, Tumo was designed to be replicable, with the goal of making its educational programs available to youth everywhere. Young people in

joined in Stepanakert by Chief of Staff of the NKR Government Levon Grigoryan, AGBU NKR Representative Sassoun Baghdasaryan and Tumo Board member Pegor Papazian.

The Tumo-AGBU NKR Program for Creative Technologies expects to enroll 240 students ages 12-18 in its first year, with a goal of serving over 1,000 students by 2020.

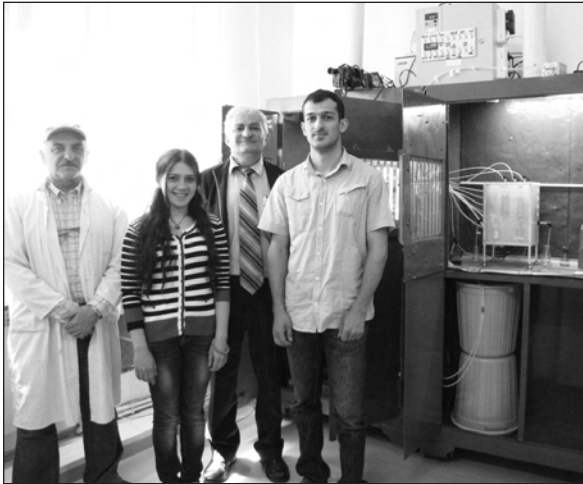


ARMENIA

IAEA Supports Medical Isotope Production in Armenia

YEREVAN — The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has indicated its support for the Technetium 99m Medical Isotope Production Project at the newly formed Medical Isotope Production Division of the Yerevan Physics Institute (YPI). The research and production program will use an 18 MeV (million electron-volt) proton beam of an IBA C18 cyclotron particle accelerator to be installed at a newly renovated facility of the physics institute by the end of 2014. The technetium is produced by irradiating molybdenum with a proton beam from the cyclotron.

Technetium (99mTc) is the most widely used isotope for medical imaging today with over 30 million diagnostic medical imaging scans every year worldwide. When injected into patients it produces radiation similar to x-rays which are used to image internal organs. This isotope has a half-life of 6 hours, meaning that half of the remaining isotope decays every 6 hours. Thus 94% of the technetium injected into a patient decays within 24 hours resulting in minimal radiation



Isotope laboratory, left to right, electronics engineer Vladislav Eganov, PhD student Hripsime Mkrtchyan, YPI's Medical Isotope Laboratory leader Dr. Albert Avedisyan, scientist Rupen Dalakyan

exposure. Exposure is about the same as from an x-ray.

According to the Scientific Center of Radiation Medicine and Burns of the Armenian Ministry of Health,



Gevorg Harutunyan performing isotope analysis on gamma ray scanner

the need in Armenia for the isotope 99mTc is 5,000 doses per year. Due to its rapid decay, and due to the fact that currently this isotope must be shipped from abroad, there is in Armenia only enough of this isotope to treat 1,000 patients per year. Thus 80 percent of Armenian patients have no access to this medical imaging technology. Consequently, in Armenia there is a need for a non-stop supply of the isotope 99mTc.

The goal of the Isotope Production Division of YPI is to

develop the technology of direct 99mTc production in order to cover the need of Armenian clinics and their patients. Senior scientists at YPI, together with recent physics and engineering graduates and graduate students, are preparing the facilities for the manufacture, purification, and testing of this isotope in a newly equipped laboratory at the institute's facilities in Yerevan. Special efforts are being implemented to assure quality and safety. This project is one of many bringing the benefits of science to the Armenian public.

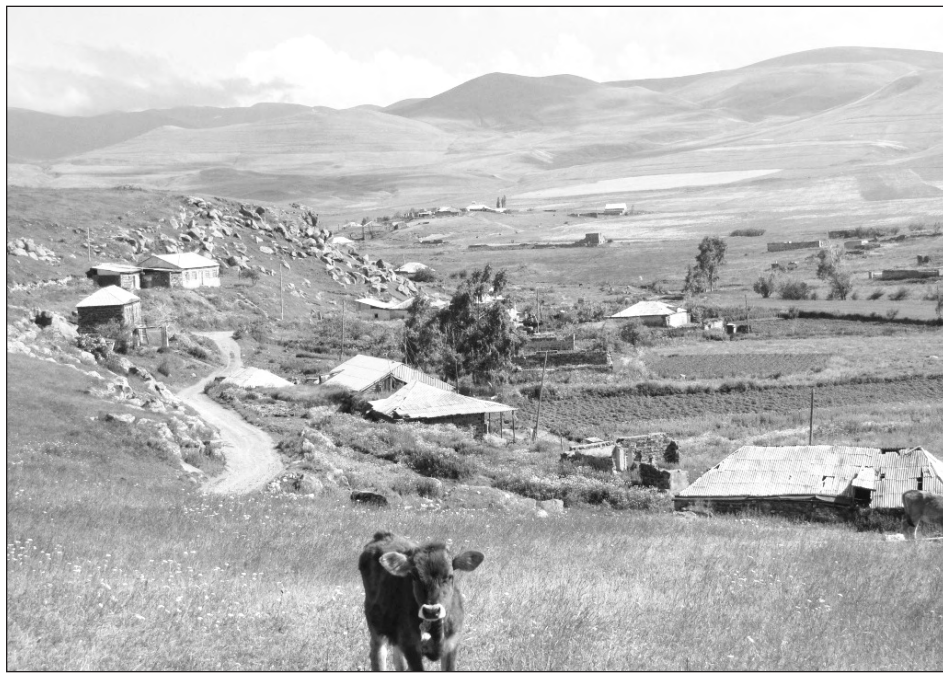
Unseen Armenia Ayrk

By Hovsep Daghdigian

AYRK, Armenia — Ayrk, in Gegharkunik Marz, is a village of about 50 households about 30 km. south of Vartenis, to the south-east of Lake Sevan. It is reachable from Vartenis by a bad but passable road.

The origin of the village is unknown but in the cemetery next to its two small churches, Soorp Grigor and Soorp Astvatsatsin, some of the khachkars (stone crosses) are dated to the 7-10 centuries, indicating that the village was in existence at that time.

Approaching the village, a few roofs over the scattered houses were visible in the distance,



Village of Ayrk in the distance

together with some destroyed buildings. We wondered if there was really anything there and if continuing on would be worthwhile. An approaching driver assured us that there were two churches in the village, so we proceeded.

The village is poor; most of its young people leave for work in Russia. Current villagers are primarily refugees from Azerbaijan, with a few descendants of survivors of the Armenian Genocide in western Armenia. The primary economic activity is raising animals, and farming grain and potatoes. The climate

is too cold to grow fruit. In the valley below Ayrk is a milk-processing facility which processes and delivers the village's milk to market.

We arrived at the two churches, about 100 yards apart, in mid-afternoon with a bright sun, a cool breeze, and a few beautiful white fluffy clouds floating overhead. The two churches are small, simple rectangular buildings, about the size of my kitchen, and are not ornate apart from the interesting khachkars embedded in their walls. The ground is rocky with bright short green grass speckled with very small bright blue flowers. The green grass extends to the surrounding mountains and the shallow valley below. The field stones and khachkars in the cemetery are covered with fluorescent orange-colored lichen. It is one of the most beautiful, spectacular scenes I've seen in Armenia, or anywhere else for that matter. One of the villagers, an elderly gentleman, was seated on a nearby

rock watching his flock of sheep. After a few words of greeting, it was as if we had known each other all our lives. He was a refugee from Baku.

The old Armenian name for the village was "Karakert," meaning "stone built." Sometime around the 15th century Turks settled in the area, renaming the village Dashkert (meaning "stone built" – the same meaning as its previous Armenian name). Many, if not most, of the Armenians had left. After the Armenian Genocide some refugees from western Armenia resettled there, perhaps during the first Armenian Republic established in 1918. During the first republic and the subsequent Soviet era, though the village remained within Armenia's borders, it retained its Turkish name due to the presence of its Turkish/Azeri inhabitants. As this was still part of Armenia the Turkish residents, as far as I understand, left the churches and cemetery undisturbed. Around 1988, during the Karabagh conflict, the Turks left. Armenian refugees arriving from Azerbaijan used the abandoned Turkish houses as sources of building material to build or repair their own homes. The village youth erected the khachkars, which over the centuries had fallen, placing them on solid cement bases. The current Armenian government renamed the village Ayrk.

This is a beautiful site, well worth visiting if one is a bit adventuresome. It's about a 2 – 2 ½ hour drive from Yerevan, depending on the driver and car. The road to Ayrk runs along the south shore of Lake Sevan, passing the beautiful 9th c Ayrevank monastery which is right off the highway, and the Noraduz Cemetery with its spectacular medieval khachkars. The Noraduz cemetery is a 10-minute diversion from the main highway along Lake Sevan's south coast and has visitor amenities.

Ayrk could become a tourist attraction providing at least some help for its economy. This superb and unvisited site should be promoted and, moreover, protected as a cultural preserve, perhaps under UNESCO auspices.



Ayrk, Soorp Gevorg church, 19th c.



International News

Jerusalem Patriarchate Condemns Attack on Clergy in Georgia

JERUSALEM — The Patriarchate of Jerusalem issued a statement condemning the attack on Armenian priests in Tbilisi. According to the statement of Patriarch Nourhan Manougian, based upon information from the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia, on July 19, a premeditated attack took place against the Armenian Church of Holy Echmiadzin outside Tbilisi.

“The Armenian clergy, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem and the members of St. James Brotherhood vehemently condemn this unethical and unchristian behavior acted by the Georgian Church affiliated individuals. Considering the political uneasy situation in the world, at least the Christian should be careful not to flare up or worsen the Christian relationship between people. We call upon the Georgian government and the Georgian Church to take immediate action and punish the responsible individuals who created such unnecessary disturbing accident,” the statement noted.

Armenian Candidate Runs for Mayor of Sochi

SOCHI, Russia (Armenpress) — “A Just Russia” (“Spravedlivaya Rossiya”) party has nominated Ishkhan Zakaryan’s candidacy in the pre-election campaign for the post of mayor of Sochi.

Yerkramas periodical reported that Zakaryan was born in 1977 in Gumburdo village in Akhalkalaki region. Currently he is living in Sochi and is the General Director of Toros Stroy LLC.

Georgian Advisor Condemns Attack on Armenian Church

TBILISI (Armenpress) — The Prelate of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia, Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan, met with Georgian presidential advisor on ethnic minorities Sophio Shamanidi and discussed the incident that happened in the yard of St. Etchmiadzin Church in Tbilisi earlier this month.

The head of the Press Service of the Georgian-Armenian Diocese Susanna Khachatryan said that the sides discussed both the incident in the churchyard and the problems and the issues related to the rights of national minorities in Georgia.

“The incident that took place in the yard of the church is in the center of attention of the government of Georgia and, in this respect, it is very important that the president’s advisor on ethnic minorities was the one who met with the bishop. It is very important that Sophio Shamanidi officially condemned the incident and considered violence unacceptable,” said Khachatryan.

Moscow Police Detain ‘Psychics’ From Armenia, Central Asia

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) — Moscow police have detained more than two dozen “false psychics” from Central Asia and Armenia.

Moscow’s Interior Affairs Department said on July 28 that 27 suspects, mainly from Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, have been detained in Moscow and suburbs.

The suspects, led by a 48-years-old man and a 45-year-old woman from Moscow whose names were not revealed, are suspected in a mass fraud.

Investigators say the group has been cheating ordinary people, “forecasting their future” and organizing “ceremonies to cure their health problems” and to solve other personal issues.

The group has been active in Moscow for a long time and received up to 100 phone calls per day from potential “clients.”

According to police, the group has illegally obtained more than 800 million rubles (\$22,800,000) from Moscow residents.

Italy Festival to Honor Armenia’s Musical Heritage

UMBRIA, Italy (Hetq) — On the eve of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the Festival delle Nazioni will pay homage to Armenia with a musical program running from August 27 to September 6 in Città di Castello, a town of some 40,000 inhabitants in the province of Perugia in Umbria, Italy.

The 47th edition of the annual festival will feature Armenian symphonic, chamber and folk music, with sacred and profane, choral and curative, medieval and premiere compositions.

“With the choice of Armenia, we go out of European borders,” says festival president Giuliano Giubilei, to “a country that has had its tormented history and strong relations with our continent.”

“It was, for instance, the first country

to convert to the Christian religion. But we did not choose it for that reason. First of all, we did it because of its rich musical tradition. Then, we would like to focus on this country and its people, as we are getting close to the centenary of the Genocide of the Armenians, one of the greatest tragedies of the twentieth century,” adds Giubilei.

“This land,” says Festival Artistic Director Aldo Sisillo, “was for centuries the road linking East and West, and Armenian music is the proof of that. It contains stylistic elements that belong to Western culture as well as to Middle Eastern ones. The homage to Armenia is a chance to discover different aspects of this fascinating culture, from the language of classical music to the traditional [folk] one, with its bards and duduk players.”

On opening night, the stage will host the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra led by conductor Eduard Topchjyan. The program will include the famous Concerto for Violin and Orchestra by Khachaturian, which Anush Nikoghosyan will perform as a soloist, and two masterpieces of Russian music, A Night on Bald Mountain by Mussorgsky and Schéhérazade by Rimsky-Korsakov.

The duduk, the kamancha and other traditional instruments will be featured in Armenian Spirit (August 28), a musical journey of classical and popular music with Jordi Savall, his ensemble Hespèrion XXI and the Armenian musicians Aram Movsisyan, Georgi Minassyan and Haig Sarikouyoumdjian. Visit festivalnazioni.com for a full program and tickets.

Turkish PM Erdogan Returning Jewish-American Award

ANKARA (AP) — Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is returning an award given to him by a Jewish-American group in 2004, after the group asked for it back because of comments he made regarding the conflict in Gaza.

Turkey’s ambassador to the US, Serdar Kilic, wrote to Jack Rosen, president of the American Jewish Congress, on Erdogan’s behalf. Kilic said Erdogan would be glad to return the award because of Israel’s actions in Gaza and “the regrettable stance adopted by the present leadership of the American Jewish Congress vis-a-vis the recent attacks on the innocent civilians in Gaza.”

The letter, dated July 27, was made available Tuesday.

In an open letter to Erdogan last week, Rosen described the Turkish leader as “arguably the most virulent anti-Israel leader in the world.” He said Erdogan was given the Profile of Courage award in 2004 for working for a peaceful solution in the Middle East and for his commitment to protecting Turkey’s Jewish citizens.

Erdogan, who is campaigning to be elected president next month, has spoken out strongly against Israel’s operations in Gaza, accusing it of committing genocide.

In his letter, Kilic stressed that Erdogan’s “strong determination in fighting against terrorism, preventing all forms of extremism, bringing a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through peaceful means as well as ensuring the safety and well-being of the Jewish community in Turkey still remains as strong as ever.”

However, he said, the Turkish leader “should not be expected to turn a blind eye to the policies of occupation, blockade and destruction that the Israeli government has been implementing against the Palestinians in

the West Bank and Gaza,” and said the killing of civilians and the bombing of hospitals and UN schools in Gaza “constitute a grave violation of not only the international law, but also the most fundamental human values.”

Turkey’s Erdogan Compares Israel Gaza Offensive to Hitler

ISTANBUL (Bloomberg) — Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Israel’s military offensive in the Gaza Strip dwarfs the atrocities Hitler committed during World War II.

“They curse Hitler morning and night,” Erdogan tells thousands of supporters in the Black Sea city of Ordu in video footage carried by the IHA news agency. “However, now their barbarism has surpassed even Hitler’s.”

Israeli government officials weren’t available for comment. The Ha’aretz newspaper said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slammed Erdogan’s “anti-Semitic” remarks in a phone conversation with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, saying they desecrated the Holocaust, in which 6 million Jews died.

Erdogan had already invoked the Nazi leader to criticize an Israeli lawmaker on July 15. On July 18, he accused Israel of attempted “genocide” in Gaza. Israel ordered the withdrawal of diplomats’ families from Turkey last week after anti-Israel protests there.

Relations between Turkey and Israel, former regional allies, frayed after Israel raided a Turkish flotilla that tried to breach Israel’s blockade of Gaza. Nine Turks died on board and a 10th recently died of his wounds.

Erdogan’s comments are likely to indefinitely push back efforts at reconciliation, which had gained momentum last year after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu apologized for the 2010 killings. Erdogan also denounced Israel repeatedly during its last ground offensive in Gaza in 2009, stomping off a stage with Israeli President Shimon Peres at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Israel’s military offensive, meant to quell rocket fire and destroy infiltration tunnels, has killed more than 400 Palestinians since it started last week. At least seven Israelis have been killed.

Karabagh Lawmakers Call For Release of Hayrapetian

HAYRAPETIAN, from page 1

“objective and comprehensive investigation that will prove Hayrapetian’s innocence.”

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

Hayrapetian, 65, was arrested by Russian Federal Security Service officials on July 15. Last Thursday, a Moscow court allowed the businessman’s two-month imprisonment while investigators conduct a probe into his alleged criminal connections and involvement in some illegal financial

dealings.

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

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

Martakert.

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

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



Community News

Women in Business:

**Diana Madison,
Founder of Shandy
Media**

By Laura Dunn

LOS ANGELES (Huffington Post) — Diana Madison is one of the founders of Shandy Media and overlooks production and marketing. She is also the supervising producer and host for the syndicated television news magazine show Hollyscoop. Madison began her career twelve years ago, producing and hosting a local TV show in Los Angeles at age 18. While pursuing an education in communication and political science at UC Santa Barbara, she interned at E! and "Entertainment Tonight." She later worked for "ET" straight out of college and helped launch the TV show "The Insider." Diana's expertise in entertainment and creativity has helped grow Shandy Media. With her



Diana Madison

strong connections in Hollywood, this insider has become a influential scenester. Following the success of her entertainment site Hollyscoop.com, Diana Madison has expanded her empire and is now host of "Hollyscoop TV" and "The Lowdown" with Diana Madison, you can see her on the "Wendy Williams Show," "The Talk," "Showbiz Tonight" and on every red carpet including the Golden Globes.

Q: How has your life experience made you the leader you are today?

A: Being first generation Armenian American, my immigrant parents always taught me to pursue "The American Dream." Both my parents fled the Soviet Union in the late 1970s, where they had limited opportunities to make their personal dreams come true. In America, they were able to create a life for themselves and their family that would not have been possible to create back in Armenia. My parents have always taught me that in a country like America, everything is possible as long as you work hard for it. Although my conservative Armenian parents thought my dreams to make it in Hollywood were outrageous, they were very supportive. My mother taught me to never take no as an answer and to be a leader, not a follower. My father always taught me that it's possible to make money from whatever I wanted to do, as long as I was passionate about my work. Unfortunately my father passed away three years ago, but until this day I hear his voice in my head saying, break those doors down, make it happen!

Q: How did your previous employment experience aided your position at Hollyscoop?

see DIANA, page 10



Musicians performing at Armenia Fest

Seventh Annual Armenia Fest Wows Metro Detroiters

ROYAL OAK, Mich. — Armenia Fest 2014, Oakland County's largest ethnic festival was held for the third year at the Royal Oak Farmers Market and brought to metro Detroit by the Armenia Fest 2014 Committee under the auspices of the Detroit Chapter Knights of Vartan. Attendance on July 12 exceeded all expectations.

A year in the planning, the event featured a rich collage of Armenian culture. Local vendors lined the busy market offering home-made Armenian food including a wide assortment of breads, pastries, kebabs, and other delicacies to enjoy at the Fest or take home for later, Armenian crafts, jewelry and cultural exhibits. Flutterby the Clown was present to entertain the children.

The festival opened with introductions by co-chairs, David Terzibashian and Edward Bedikian. The American and Armenian Anthems were soulfully performed by talented local Armenian youth, Araxie Tossounian.

A highlight of the evening were two performances by the Hamazkayin Dance Troupe comprising local Armenian youth trained in the art of Armenian folk dance.

Their beautiful costuming, enthusiasm and virtually flawless dance routines brought the crowd to their feet.

Music provided by Vaughn Masropian and the Armenia Fest All Star Band ensemble rang out through the warm night enticing guests to dance and dance they did. Everyone enjoyed the Oud Fantasy number put together by Masropian.

Proceeds from the Fest are earmarked for humanitarian causes. The 2014 committee included Edward Bedikian, Co-Chair, David Terzibashian, Co-Chair, Hagop Alexanian, Ray Boujoulian, Ken Khezarjian, Paul Kulhanjian, Shirley Sarkisian, Angela Hagopian Snow, Madeline Thomasian and Pam Coultis.



Friends gather at Armenia Fest.



Volunteer workers set up.

Acopian Engineering Center at Lafayette College Marks Decade

EASTON, Penn. — The Acopian family and the Lafayette College community celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the Acopian Engineering Center during Lafayette College's Annual Reunion Weekend, June 6 through 8. The Acopian Engineering Center was built with funds donated by the late Sarkis Acopian, who graduated from Lafayette College in 1951 with a BS in mechanical engineering, and his wife, Bobbye.

The 90,000-square-foot Acopian Engineering Center houses laboratories intended for student-faculty collaborative research, classrooms equipped with state-of-the-art instructional technology, and student learning centers customized to the specific requirements of each engineering program and department. Included are learning centers focusing on chemical and biomolecular engineering, civil and environmental engineering, computer science, electrical and computer engineering, and mechanical engineering.

In addition to the festivities commemorating the Acopian Engineering Center's tenth anniversary, Alex Karapetian, a '04 government and law graduate of Lafayette College, and nephew of the late Sarkis Acopian, was named president of the college's Alumni Association.



Alex Karapetian

He is a third-generation Lafayette legacy, joining the late Sarkis Acopian '51, uncles Greg Acopian '70 and Jeff Acopian '75, and cousin Ezra Acopian '03.

Karapetian was president-elect of the Alumni Association just prior to becoming president and served as co-chair of the Young Alumni Committee from 2008 to 2011, and chair since 2011. A Marquis Society member, he co-founded the college's Wine 3/9 Event and spearheaded the establishment of the 2004 Kappa Delta Rho Fraternity Scholarship. He currently serves on the boards of the Acopian Center for the Environment, Armenian Assembly of America and Armenia Fund. Karapetian is the director of sales and marketing for Acopian Power Supplies.



The Acopian family, left to right: Irma Karapetian, Jeff Acopian, Helen Acopian, Greg Acopian, Bobbye Acopian, Leslie Karapetian, Alex Karapetian.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Sunday School Superintendents Gather for Summit

DOVER, Mass. — Sunday School superintendents from parishes across the Eastern Diocese gathered for the first-ever National Sunday School Superintendents Summit held last weekend in New England.

The three-day event, from July 18 to 20, was organized and sponsored by the Diocese's Department of Christian Education. Sessions were facilitated by department director Elise Antreassian, staff member Eric Vozzy and Nancy Basmajian, director of Adult Christian

Education at Holy Trinity Church of Cheltenham, Penn.

The goal of the summit was to develop concrete paradigm shifts in how educators teach, worship, witness and live as the church in today's world. Each session included discussions on perceptions of the Armenian Church, the difference between managing and leading, assessment of the status quo and visioning exercises.

Interspersed throughout the weekend were

reflections, faith-building activities, and prayer experiences. The proposals that emerged will influence local programming, as well as the priorities of both the Department of Christian Education and the Diocese overall.

The weekend concluded at the Holy Translators Church of Framingham, Mass., with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy by parish pastor Rev. Krikor Sabounjian. Superintendents offered the Kiss of Peace, read Scripture, delivered a message and shared prayers that the group had composed during its meetings.

"Our superintendents have never before gathered as a common body. As a result of this summit, participants discovered they had common concerns, expectations, and hopes for improving the ministry of Christian education within the broader mission of the Armenian Church," said Antreassian.

Participants said they were inspired by the weekend's program and looked forward to implementing new ideas.

"Typically, one might consider management and leadership as synonymous in the practical sense, but during the summit I learned that may not be true. Most importantly, I learned different ways to lead rather than just simply manage the Sunday School, which will make me a better leader in the church and in my Christian life," said first-year superintendent Mallory

Maslar of St. Hagop Church of Petersburg, Fla.

Veteran superintendent Tom Daw of St. Gregory the Enlightener Church of White Plains, NY, added: "Our vision would be one of parents and Sunday School children working together with the teachers to provide an environment where all are getting a solid Christian upbringing, which includes church and a full understanding of the badarak."



National Sunday School Superintendents Summit attendees pose for a group photo.

OBITUARY

Anahid Yacoubian

WATERTOWN — Anahid Yacoubian died after a brief illness on July 18. She was 81.

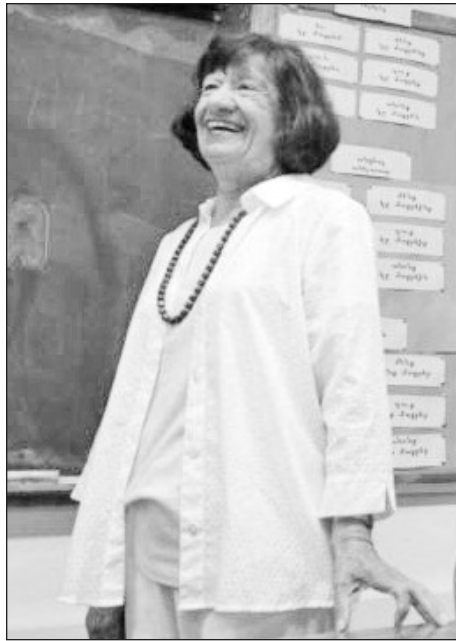
For nearly four decades, the language program at Watertown High School was operated and taught almost entirely by Yacoubian, who came to Watertown High in 1970. She was the school's Armenian heart and soul — organizing annual cultural festivals, bake sales, and scholarships for college-bound students.

She was born in Aleppo, Syria, to parents who were survivors of the Armenian Genocide. As survivors of the genocide of 1915 who fled to the Middle East, Europe and the United States, Armenian descendants have found keeping that culture alive is considered the most sacred of obligations. She continued to instill this in her students as they pass through their education at Watertown High School.

Despite her retirement from Watertown High School, she remained a frequent sight in Watertown High's Room 333, where maps of Armenia and the former Soviet Union line the walls, and the classroom computer is equipped with a hard-to-find Armenian font.

After her retirement from Watertown public schools, she continued her quest for the continuation of the Armenian language with night classes at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). Here she was able to reach a generation of American-Armenians who had a desire to learn or re-learn their Armenian language and to interact with fellow Armenians.

She is survived by sister-in-law Marie Yacoubian (Chicago); nephew Norayr Yacoubian and his family Annie, Nareg and Sevag Yacoubian (Chicago); nephew Hratch Yacoubian and his family Sylvia, Nathalie and Robert Yacoubian (Chicago); nephew Shahe Yacoubian and his family Erika, Nina and Gina Yacoubian (Chicago); niece Nazig Karamanoukian and her family, Diran and Taline Karamanoukian (France); niece Sossi



Anahid Yacoubian

Yerissian and her family, Nerces and Sirvart Yerissian (UK); niece Maria Shehirian and her family, Antranik, Salpi and Haig Shehirian (Syria); niece Silva and Lea Harms (Germany); and her lifelong friend and companion Edward Zides, Revere.

A memorial service will be held on September 20, at 5 p.m. at the Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown.

Memorial contributions may be made in her memory to the Armenian Women's Educational Club (AWEC), c/o Arpy Halebian, Treasurer, 32 Oak Ave., Belmont, MA 02478 OR to the Armenian Heritage Foundation, c/o Charles Guleserian, 25 Flanders Road, Belmont, MA 02478.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

Jasmine Chobanian

NATICK, Mass. — Jasmine Chobanian, of Natick, died on Friday, July 25, after a brief illness. She was the wife of 59 years of Dr. Aram V. Chobanian, and the mother of Karin Chobanian Torrice of Natick, Lisa Chobanian Ramboeck of Bronville, NY, and Aram Chobanian Jr., of Brookline, Mass. She also leaves her grandchildren, Marc and Vanessa Torrice.



Jasmine Chobanian

She was born in Pawtucket, RI, the daughter of the late Charles and Zabel (Russian) Goorigian.

She leaves her sisters Nectar Lennox of Cumberland, RI, and Marie Vartanian of Agawam, Mass., her sister-in-law, Ruth Chobanian of Cambridge, Mass., as well as a large number of nieces, nephews and friends.

She graduated from Brown University (Pembroke College) and was a hematology research technician at Harvard's Thorndike Memorial Laboratories.

She was a talented portrait painter who attended the Boston Museum School and studied under the late artist, Conger Metcalfe.

A patron of the arts, she had served as a member of the board of trustees of the Boston

Ballet Company.

She was known for her unique exuberance, gaiety, infectious spirit and loving nature. Chobanian was considered by many as the "first lady" of Boston University and its medical campus during her husband's period of leadership there. Boston University honored her in 2006 for her contributions with a gala dinner and arts program.

She had many hobbies and interests and was an avid reader, storyteller, nature lover, bird watcher and sports fan. She traveled extensively internationally. She was also very active in humanitarian efforts to provide assistance to Armenia.

Funeral arrangements are made through the Bedrosian Funeral Home, 558 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. A wake was held at St. Stephen's Armenian Church, Watertown, on Tuesday, July 29. Funeral services took place from the same church on Wednesday, July 30.

Burial services were private.

Contributions may be made in lieu of flowers to the Chobanian Scholarship Fund at Boston University School of Medicine, c/o development office, 720 Albany St., Boston, MA 02118; St. Stephen's Armenian Church; or the Fund for Armenian Relief, 630 Second Ave., New York, NY. A memorial service to celebrate her life will be held in September on a date and place to be announced.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Pennsylvania Adopts Cyber Scorecards

By Nicole Blake Johnson

PHILADELPHIA (*State Tech Magazine*) – What if your agency's website was down for two weeks because of a distributed denial-of-service attack?

How would you maintain operations? How would you communicate to citizens that critical online services were temporarily unavailable?

Erik Avakian, Pennsylvania's chief information security officer, posed those questions to CIOs and security professionals across the state's agencies, but he didn't stop there. Avakian, along with Pennsylvania's CIO and secretary of administration, has had similar conversations with state agencies' deputy secretaries for administration and the governor's staff.

His message: "Yes, a cyberattack can impact your business," Avakian also told attendees recently at CyberSecureGov 2014, a conference hosted by information security organization ISC2. He said CISOs have to speak the language of those who aren't security professionals and tie cybersecurity to business continuity.

By doing so, the state's Office of Administration was able to roll out a new initiative that will allow executives to see what security risks each agency is grappling with, compare risks among agencies and see how quickly issues are remediated. Think of it like a scorecard that the governor or CIO can view on a dashboard and use to monitor progress as new information comes into the system.

Currently, the scorecards are paper-based, and they indicate how well agencies are managing their risks. For example, the scorecards show what portion of the workforce has completed security awareness training, which critical applications are at risk and what vulnerabilities need to be fixed. So far, Avakian has met with 15 state agencies to discuss their risk assessment scores, but he expects Pennsylvania will automate this process in the next three to four months.

Using the RSA Archer enterprise governance,

risk and compliance (eGRC) platform, state officials will have a more dynamic view of their security posture, and so will their fellow executives at other agencies. In the past, Avakian received little feedback from agencies in response to automated security scan reports from his office. Now, there will be more pressure on agencies to address deficiencies, as more data are accessible on the dashboard for their colleagues and heads of agencies to view.

The new system is like a workflow tool for security, and it will empower agencies to improve compliance with policies and mitigate risks – and to do so in a timely manner.

For agencies, turning data into action is key, said Dan Waddell, director of government affairs for ISC2. Information from the dashboard can help agencies direct what limited funding they have to address their greatest needs.

But some CIOs may find it challenging to secure funding for automated tools or other security technologies. On average, security spending across states is about 1.5 percent of the entire budget, Avakian said.

He recommends that CISOs explain to their senior leaders how and why they are aligning their strategy with their CIOs' vision and federal initiatives like the cybersecurity framework, which the National Institute of Standards and Technology developed with industry. From there, security professionals can explain what is needed to align with those efforts.

"You're going to get them to listen a lot more because they see this as something we need, and they are more apt to give funding," Avakian said.

When an investment is made, senior leaders also want to know how it benefits the agency. "That's business talk: year over year reductions and increasing operating income," Peter Gouldmann, director of information risk programs for the State Department's Office of Information Assurance, said at the ISC2 conference.

"It's just very difficult to see that return on insurance policies, and that's essentially what information security has been presented as," Gouldmann said

ASA Awards Silver and Gold Medals

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Armenian Students' Association (ASA) Silver Medal Award Committee selected seven high school seniors to receive the Silver Medal Award. The Silver Medal Awards are given annually to high school seniors who have demonstrated outstanding scholastic ability.

The following students were selected to receive the award: Michael C. D'Antuono, Ardemis P. Kassabian, Tyler J. Mantaian, Andrew F. Miner, Ariana Michael, Christopher Noubar Selverian and Justin Tramonti.

The ASA Gold Medal Award is recognized as the highest Scholastic Award within the ASA. Any member of the ASA who is an undergraduate student and is at least a sophomore in an accredited college or university within the United States is eligible for consideration for this award.

The following students were selected to receive the Gold Medal: Matthew R. D'Antuono and Mariam Grigoryan.

ASA Scholarship applications are available, please contact the ASA National Office, 333 Atlantic Avenue, Warwick, RI 02888, or e-mail: headaasa@aol.com, or download applications – www.asainc.org. Deadline for scholarship applications to be submitted is March 15, 2015.

ASA Silver and Gold Medal Applications are available, and the deadline for applying for the awards is May 1, 2015.

Irina Lazarian Named to Armenia Fund USA Board

NEW YORK – Having served as executive director of Armenia Fund USA (US Eastern Region Affiliate) for more than a decade, Irina Lazarian will become a member of the Board of Directors and assume a new position as managing director of the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation.

During her tenure at Armenia Fund USA, Lazarian presided over the launches of many far-reaching nation-building programs on numerous fronts, including education and health care delivery, infrastructure, humanitarian aid and socio-economic development. She had overseen all fundraising and charitable operations and worked hand in hand with the Board: organized ten telethons, three phone-a-thons and planned three anniversary galas. So it should come as no surprise that the board of directors of Armenia Fund USA sought her as their newest member.

Lazarian, who began working at Armenia Fund USA in 1998, explained why she accepted the invitation to join the Armenia Fund USA board. "It will always feel like home to me," she said. "I have had the privilege of coming to know so many wonderful donors and supporters along the way, not to mention the many talented and fascinating board members past and present. It would be sad to break those longstanding relationships after all these years. Fortunately, as a board member, I can enjoy the best of both worlds."

Armenia Fund Chairman Khoren Bandazian expressed similar sentiments. "While we understand that Irina deserves to expand her professional horizons to communities outside of Armenia, we are happy to know that she will make the time to serve on our Board. Irina possesses a unique perspective gained through many years of managing the day-to-day operations of all facets of our organization. As a highly skilled non-profit specialist, Irina will continue to provide the practical insights, strategies and know-how that helps inform our board's decisions. Only

now, she also gets to vote on them."

"Considering Irina's accomplishments during her tenure at Armenia Fund USA, especially in the field of healthcare and education, she will bring a wealth of fresh ideas and expertise to her new position," said Armenia Fund treasurer Aram Pehlivanian. As an example, Irina singlehandedly spearheaded the introduction of telemedicine to Armenia, which has grown into its own international physicians' network under the banner of HyeBridge Telehealth. Using digital, videoconferencing and satellite-driven technologies, the system connects doctors from remote locations in Armenia and Karabagh to practitioners of Western medicine – in real time.

Another important project of Irina's is the Norman Miller Scholarship program for budding engineers and designers in Armenia. Leveraging her own engineering background, she will continue as a mentor and advisor to the scholarship recipients. Other projects include Meal and Meds program launched with Meline Tufenkcyian for the TB hospital in Gumri as well as the Neurosciences and Neurosurgical training program for the regional stroke center in Yerevan.

Lazarian is a graduate of the State Engineering University of Armenia (SEUA) with a degree in computer science. She also holds a master's degree from the American University of Armenia (AUA) in industrial engineering. She moved to the United States in 1998 and became a US citizen.

Her prior work experience includes the roles of teacher and researcher at SEUA as well as customer services and human resources manager at HSBC/Armenia. Lazarian is also a member of various professional membership organizations as well as representative to the United Nations for Armenia Fund USA. She resides in Hoboken, NJ.

AMAA's Boston Area Committee Gala to Benefit Children in Crisis

WELLESLEY HILLS, Mass. – The Boston Area Child and Orphan Care Committee of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) announces "The Spirit of Giving Gala," a wine and dine fundraising event, to take place on Friday, September 26, 7 p.m., at the Wellesley Country Club. The dinner will feature a live auction, wine pull and bling raffle which will be hosted by a celebrity auctioneer.

Musical entertainment will be provided by The John Baboian Trio.

All proceeds from the event will be donated to the AMAA to benefit children in crisis.

Individuals or businesses wishing to donate

goods or services, or those wishing to purchase tickets for the event may do so by contacting Dianne Chilingirian.

Founded in 1918, the AMAA is a non-profit, charitable organization that provides services to underprivileged youth through education, relief and mission ministries. AMAA is a nonsectarian Christian organization that renders its services to those in need without discrimination. AMAA operates in 24 countries and often partners with other relief agencies to aid disaster stricken areas throughout the world.

For additional information, visit amaa.org.

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

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COMMUNITY NEWS

HONORING A GUARDIAN ANGEL ON EARTH

Remembering the Legacy of Julie G. Asheskian

Submitted by Mer Doon USA Board of Directors

HARTFORD, Conn. — There are few individuals who have the passion for the less fortunate of Armenia and the wisdom to navigate the landscape to accomplish great things on their behalf; thankfully Julie Asheskian had both. Her mission was clear; her conviction was strong: she was to make a difference for the young

bricks and mortar but in life skills, preventing the unthinkable — homelessness, prostitution and even human trafficking.

Now entering its ninth year of operation this fall, the Mer Doon program continues to thrive, accepting new residents and visiting with “graduates” of the program who have gone on to have careers and have families of their own. The difference this year is that our beloved Julie Asheskian is guiding the program not from this earth but from above.

Julie Asheskian’s death on May 12, 2014 was felt by many because she touched so many. The heartfelt sentiments poured in from members of the clergy, fellow parishioners, friends and neighbors, all reflecting her courage over the years as she battled her own illness, always secondary to devotion to family, church and Mer Doon. Just a sampling of quotes gives one of the sense for the magnitude

of the impact but words cannot describe how it felt to sit through the services with her picture and presence so clearly felt. One also cannot begin to appreciate what it means when a young orphan woman says, “When Julie hugged you, it felt like a hug from a parent,” until one has seen the desperation in these young women’s eyes first hand trying to understand how they came to be abandoned and wanting so badly to belong to a caring family.

Yes, this is a challenging time for Mer Doon but also a time of great hope and promise for a bright future. As a remembrance of the strong mission and support led by Asheskian and now taken up by the Mer Doon family at large, the US Board of Directors provided a memorial garden on site at Mer Doon with a statue of a beautiful guardian angel overlooking its cherubs, the garden and home.

The beautiful garden is a place of solace for the Mer Doon residents and staff where her spirit lives on and provides comfort that her legacy means the good work has only just begun.

The members of the board thank the many friends and supporters who have stepped up with donations as their way to honor her legacy and make their personal statement that this important work must continue.

Some of the quotes sent to Mer Doon and the

Asheskian family include the following:

• Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Eastern: “Julie Asheskian was a grace-filled woman, with a kind and generous heart, whose love for our Lord and his children reached all the way around the world. She was a woman who answered the call to ‘feed my lambs.’ Her example inspired others across the Diaspora to join her.”

• St. George Armenian Church Parish Council: “Julie was an incredible woman and inspiration to all that knew her. What she has done for the Armenian people will never be forgotten.”

• Sharon A. Foley, chairwoman, St. Peter Armenian Church Women’s Guild, Watervliet, NY: “I find it only fitting that I begin this correspondence with giving great thanks to the memory and legacy of Julie Asheskian who understood the cycle of dependence and hopelessness and saw fit to become the founding

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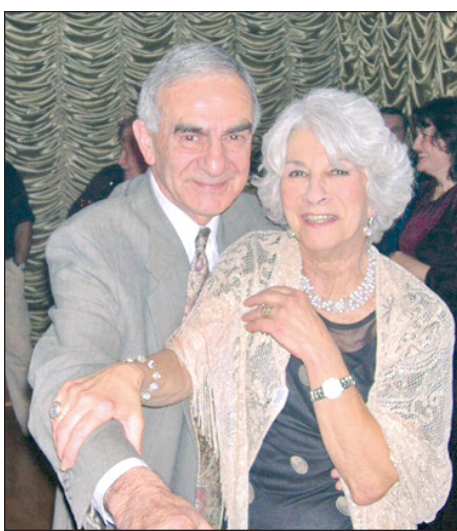
Julie’s spiritual presence was felt by so many



Mer Doon Director, Tigranoohi Karapetyan (center) with staff and residents at the doorstep of Mer Doon.

women of Armenia as they transitioned from orphanage life to adulthood.

In 2006, Mer Doon (Our Home) opened its doors to the first group of young women. Mer Doon would provide shelter and guidance avoiding a life of hope and shelter not just in



Julie and her beloved husband Clement who was of great emotional support to Julie and the backbone of Mer Doon’s operations since its founding



Julie the ultimate godmother at Mer Doon with the young residents of Mer Doon

Gala Dance to Benefit Mer Doon, Remember Co-Founder Julie Asheskian

WATERTOWN — A gala dance will be held to benefit Mer Doon (“Our Home”), a residence for young women in Armenia who have outgrown their childhood home in Armenian orphanages, or who come from seriously disadvantaged backgrounds. This year’s dance will be held on Saturday, November 1, at St James Armenian Church’s Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mount Auburn St.

The committee is dedicating this year’s dance in loving memory and honor of the homes co-founder Julie Asheskian. The Armenian earthquake of 1988 left in its wake thousands of Armenian orphans. Julie Asheskian, along with her husband, Clem, worked with several orphanages in Armenia which went on to care for several thousand children. She quickly realized that once leaving the orphanages, these now young adults, would be at risk in the world. Thus, following in the success of their work, she then went on to be co-founder of Mer Doon-Our Home.

The evening will feature Onnik Dinkjian, John Berberian, Leon Janikian, Bruce Gigarjian and Ron Tutunjian and an Armenian DJ playing some of Armenia’s local pop sensations. There will be dancing, mezza, a dessert table and refreshments.

Established in 2006 in Echmiadzin, Armenia, Mer Doon provides a home and family environment for up to 14 young women at a time. Each young women living at Mer Doon is required to further their education and pursue a skill or vocation that will enable them to enter the workforce. In addition, residents receive a religious education, learn French, Russian and English languages and are trained by staff in personal and social skills.

“After having just visited Mer Doon in Armenia in June, it is essential that we continue to support and fund the important work of Mer Doon in Armenia. I am proud of the accomplishments of all of the young women that have experienced life at Mer Doon. Our record is flawless and our success stories continue” said board member and event co-chairperson, Mark Kashgegian.

The dance is being sponsored by Our Home-Mer Doon, Inc., the US-based fundraising organization for Mer Doon, which is a non-governmental organization and is dependent on outside contributions.

For tickets, visit the Mer Doon website after September 1. For additional information about Mer Doon, visit www.mer-doon.com.



Julie’s Memorial Garden on site at Mer Doon (special guests Mark Kashgegian USA board member with his church youth group from Armenian Church of the Holy Translators of Framingham, wearing yellow tee-shirts bearing Julie’s photo)



Baseball Gloves Get New Life with Megerdichian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Robert Megerdichian is giving baseball a new lease on life — at least the glove part of it.

Bats are swinging. Balls are being hit out of the park. Runners are stealing bases. Teams are celebrating championships.

But what do you do with a dilapidated mitt that has seen better days? You could give it the last rites or simply hand it over to Megerdichian for repair.

By Tom Vartabedian

The 60-year-old re-laces, repairs and reconditions baseball gloves as a hobby. It is quite a diversion from his regular job as principal at Robert Megerdichian & Associates, where he measures and draws floor plans, converting blueprints to computer-aided designs for accurate measurements of buildings.

It all started accidentally a few years ago while watching his adult son, Greg, play baseball in a men's league. Megerdichian noticed some of the players were using gloves that required attention.

Without any formal training, he started breathing new life into the old equipment. On his own, he picked up the art of re-lacing, beginning with old gloves he still had from his softball-playing days.

"The best clients are older guys because they have a glove that they love and it is usually all beaten up," he says. "But they don't have the heart to throw it away and are more willing to pay getting it fixed. The younger guys want it done really cheap or they will just buy a new one."

Now, three years and many gloves later, his family is amazed at how he has doggedly pursued players who have cherished their gloves for decades and brought them back to peak condition.

The talk around the dinner table these days with his wife Becky (nee Dagley) isn't so much about new clients for her husband's day job but what glove he will work on next. She has her own catcher's mitt from when she played catch with her son.

Megerdichian lives in the same home he was raised in Cambridge. In addition to his regular work and glove business, he has remained very active with the Armenian community. He has served as an officer of the Tufts University Armenian Club, and as a trustee of both the Armenian Museum of America and St. Stephen's Armenian Church.

A younger son, Eddie, is a member of the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Greater Boston and a professional ballroom and Zumba instructor.

The Dagleys were instrumental in organizing one of the largest benefit dances ever seen in the Greater Boston Area last September as hundreds showed up in Watertown for the event. Proceeds went toward educational costs for their niece and nephew, Sona and Sarkis Dagley, who lost both parents at a young age. Both children will be spending time in Armenia this summer.

Megerdichian jokes that someday he'll slow down measuring buildings and pick up more gloves to revive.



Robert Megerdichian is ready to catch a sinking glove.

"There's no greater satisfaction than meeting a soldier who needs a glove in good working order for use at his military base," he noted. "Or putting a restored glove into the hands of a kid who might otherwise not have a glove to use."

Those interested in reviving their gloves can find Megerdichian at www.glovesredone.com.

Remembering the Legacy of Julie G. Ashesjian

from previous page

visionary of Mer Doon which turned into a life-long commitment. Many of us were honored to

be in her company during various Women's Guild Assemblies or to have just heard her name repeatedly linked to the success of a once emerging program to what it is today. How proud we are for the great accomplishments being achieved by these young women who have not had the fortunate upbringing or safety of a loving home as others have had. Again, thank you to everyone who strives for the betterment of these young women and lays the groundwork for a more enriched life and freedom to be who they are."

• Fr. Vartan D. Joulfayan, St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church, Hollywood, Fla.: "I have personally been to Mer Doon and know the remarkable founders, Julie and Clement Ashesjian. It is most rewarding to reach out to the young ladies of Our Home and support this wonderful place that gives love, care, education and security to the beautiful residents. It is a privilege to give, and in return, receive a warm

reward in our hearts cherishing the good deeds you and the Board are performing. Thank you for all your efforts, time and dedication."

• Mer Doon Residents:

Lilit Avetisyan: "Writing this letter I become very sad as written above is only memories about my dearest Julie *Tatik*. My memories are very positive and light and kind. I remember the day when Julie *Tatik* came to 'Mer Doon' and from the door the house filled with great joy. I remember how she hugged and kissed us like a parent. I'll miss the days spent together my Julie *Tatik jan*. You'll stay in my heart and in my memories forever as a good person, a kind woman who devoted her life helping me and for giving me best future."

• Ani Araqelyan: "You have given me everything — home, education, I learn cooking, crafts, I learn how to communicate with people, I become polite, etc. Julie *Tatik jan* due to you

now I feel myself as a complete person. And during my whole life I'll prove to everybody by my behavior that your efforts weren't in vain, that they gave results. And you'll see from heaven and will be proud for me."

MerDoon Board

• Jane Mahakian, Mer Doon BOD President and Mark Kashkegian, Board Director: "On behalf of Mer Doon USA Board of Directors, Tigranoohi and Stephan Karapetyan, the staff of Mer Doon and our girls of Mer Doon: Julie Ashesjian's life was something more than an ordinary life. She is a grand figure, whose influence and effect is so deeply felt in all of our lives- is now in her eternal rest. Julie was a supreme human being who touched many, many people by her great generosity of spirit and caring."

Donations and further testimonial letters can be sent to: Dr. Jane L. Mahakian, Mer Doon USA Board President, 561 Avenida del Verdor, San Clemente, CA 92672.

(Submitted by Mer Doon USA Board of Directors: Jane Mahakian, president; Rose Maljanian, director; Rachel Boloyan, treasurer; Mark Kashkegian, director and fundraising chair; and directors Tanya Paretchan, Guy Simonian, Robert Karanian, Christine Parseghian and Nancy DerSimonian)

Donation

Apet Torosian of Watertown and Arek Torosian of Cleveland, Ohio, donate \$100 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in honor of their friend and ADL member Sam Mirakian, who died on July 4 in Cleveland.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Women in Business: Diana Madison, Founder of Shandy Media

DIANA, from page 25

A: When I was a student at the University of California, Santa Barbara, I interned for “E! Entertainment” for school credit. At “E! News,” I got to work with the amazing Giuliana Rancic. She gave me valuable advice that I use until this day. “Learn how to do everything,” is what she told me. When I co-founded Hollyscoop with my two friends Ani Esmailian, Nora Gasparian and my husband Raymond Attipa seven years ago, her tip came in very handy. There were times when I was an editor, camera operator, red carpet interviewer, publicist and the list goes on. My partners and I would alternate roles and looking back I realize how we had no clue what we were doing. However we did it anyway to get the job done! As a boss, when you own a company, it is vital to know how every branch of your business works. If I see trash on the floor, I will clean it up and not wait for the person in charge of cleaning the floors to handle it. I take matters in my own hands at all times. I also was very fortunate to work at “Entertainment Tonight” and “The Insider” right after I graduated college. I worked alongside the Executive Producer Linda Bell Blue, Brad Bessey, Janet Annino and DJ Petrero. Working with the dream team of Entertainment news, I learned how important it was to get the story first. Time is crucial and you must beat your competitors with getting the best content that can’t be found anywhere else. I wouldn’t be able to do what I do today if it wasn’t for my two-year tenure working for one of the best and longest running entertainment news organization in the world. No school textbook could teach you the things I learned with my working experience at “ET/ The Insider.”

Q: What have the highlights and challenges been during your tenure at Hollyscoop?

The biggest challenge I have had at Hollyscoop is getting brand recognition among Hollywood’s power publicist, studios and celebrities. Once there is brand recognition, the next challenge is trust. Once you have built the trust among your peers in Hollywood, the next step is working together to create amazing content. Hollywood is one of the toughest industries in the world. A big lesson I have learned is to have thick skin and not take things personal. When Angelina Jolie passes up an interview with me in order to speak to CNN on the red carpet, I can’t shed tears, I can not be upset...I have learned to be optimistic that she will grant me an interview on the next red carpet. It has taken me seven years to not get offended when a celebrity disses me in order to talk to my competitors, I have learned to just accept it for what it is and hope for a better tomorrow or a better interview. Highlights with “Hollyscoop” is when I am at a remote location around the world and people recognize “Hollyscoop” and the brand, this makes me realize that we are doing something right. It’s also exciting when celebrities on the red carpet want to talk to me, because they know “Hollyscoop” and myself. And the biggest reward so far has been getting our own national syndicated half hour entertainment news show, “Hollyscoop.”

Q: How has “Hollyscoop” changed the entertainment industry?

When my partners and I created Hollyscoop over seven years ago, we were one of the first entertainment website to have video content. We would do a daily online video talking about the news stories of the day. Today, most news websites have online content, daily news video reports. This has become mandatory for most outlets. When we started doing these videos, we were the only ones doing it. One of our daily reports actually ended up in the Joaquin Phoenix film, “I’m Still Here.” Along with that, we were the first online outlet to cover red carpets with a video crew. Most publicists for movie premieres, big Hollywood events hadn’t heard of an online video outlet. Many times publicists would tell us, how confused they were because they didn’t know where to place us on the red carpet. Today, when I walk on the red carpet there are over 20-50 online video outlets. I get excited and emotional knowing that we were the ones who were at the forefront of this online revolution.

Q: What advice would you give to women who are looking to start their own business?

My advice is to anyone out there who wants

to pursue his or her dreams is to know that you can do it! Never let age, gender or your ethnicity deter you from starting your own business. The only thing that matters is having a victorious mentality. When people wouldn’t hire me to do on camera reports for their TV shows, I cre-

The biggest challenge I have in my life is trying to balance my work and personal life. Most times, I am so tired from my work life, that all I want to do is rest on the weekends. I felt so out of my social circle in 2013, that I made a new years resolution to make more time for my fam-

wait too long to have a child, then I will have problems conceiving a baby. I know there are a lot of woman who are in the same position as I am. I do believe that women are multi-taskers and when the time comes for me to be a mother, I will be able to handle it well! Until then, the pressure is on!

Q: How has mentorship made a difference in your professional and personal life?

My mother has been a mentor in my life. To this day she tells me when I look bad on camera and when I look good. Her opinions are honest and I value them. I know she wants the best for me. My husband Raymond Attipa is also my mentor. He pushes me to believe in myself at times when I lose all hope. I am human and I go through ups and downs and when I am down on the floor, he is there to pick me up and dust the dirt off my shoulders. In recent years, I have become close to eyebrow guru/entrepreneur Anastasia Soare who has created an empire off eyebrows. She is an inspirational woman who always gives me the best business advice. I also consider my childhood friends Ani Kitsinian, Lucy Movsessian and Lucy Egho as mentors. They are real women, with real opinions. They are not connected with the entertainment industry and it’s always refreshing getting their insight and takes on situations that I get stuck in.

Q: Which other female leaders do you admire and why?

I admire woman who have overcome obstacles in their careers and opened doors for people like myself. Barbara Walters has opened doors for many woman in the world to pursue a career in journalism. She has overcome many obstacles to get to where she is and I admire that. I also admire Oprah Winfrey for being able to not just have a TV show that was on air for over 25 years, but to build an empire off of her name. As a minority, it is inspiring to know that Oprah was able to beat all odds and open the doors for girls like myself. I also admire Anna Wintour, who is a force in the fashion world. She is a powerful woman who has inspired and helped to create some of the biggest fashion houses in the world. She’s the type of woman who knows what she wants and has no fear of what people think about her. I admire that quality in any woman. Someone who is not afraid to follow their vision and stick with their ideals, no matter what the critics have to say.

Q: What are your hopes for the future of “Hollyscoop” and your other digital ventures?

I hope that “Hollyscoop” can be the destination of all things related to pop culture. I want people to be entertained by our content and also take away something each day.



Diana Madison

ated that avenue for myself. I wasn’t thinking about creating a business and making money, I just wanted my face out there. When you have a good product, people respond to it. We are currently in an age of entrepreneurship. In my opinion, as long as you are passionate and determined then success and money will follow. I truly believe if there is a will, then there is a way. That type of spirit will get you going through hard times that many business owners frequently face in the early years. I am not going to lie, it’s a lot of stress having your own business, but the positive outcomes outweigh all negative. At the end of the day, you are working for yourself! It is also important to surround yourself with a staff that has the same work values as yourself. The work culture is important to have a striving business.

Q: How do you maintain a work/life balance?

ily and friends. For 2014, I decided to not spread myself too thin. Being a workaholic, it’s a big challenge not to work all the time, but I am learning to take it day by day. I started meditating which is helping me rest on my downtime and gain some energy to be able to deal with my chaotic life.

Q: What do you think is the biggest issue for women in the workplace?

A lot of women these days are having a tough time balancing work and a family. I am one of those women. I am 31 years old and I feel like I am at the prime of my career. Yet, I feel the urge to start a family, my body wants it at this point, I can feel it. I am not ashamed to admit that I am scared to start a family in fear of losing opportunities with my work. I have worked so hard to get to the point where I am and there is no turning back. I am also terrified that if I

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Arts & Living

AIWA Chicago Features Artist Jackie Kazarian At Its Annual Event

CHICAGO – The Chicago affiliate of Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) held its second annual event on Saturday, June 28, featuring artist Jackie Kazarian and musician Sima Cunningham. More than 50 members and guests gathered for an evening filled with art and music, including a special preview of Kazarian's project for the 100th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

The event began with a reception at the contemporary furniture showroom of Pauline Grace, located in the popular River North area of Downtown Chicago. Later in the evening, the attendees moved upstairs to the Kazarian Art Studio for the program. President Greta Doumanian-Harley introduced the history of AIWA and the organization's mission. AIWA is dedicated to promoting and enriching the socio-economic and personal advancement of Armenian women worldwide. This is done through education and communal programs that unite Armenian women, promote equality,



From left, Armine Kazarian, Sima Cunningham and Jackie Kazarian

and emphasize the Armenian cultural heritage.

In a compelling presentation, Kazarian shared details of her journey to claim her artistic identity and talent. She explored the relationship between emotions and visual perception through her work. Kazarian also discussed the diverse subjects that have influenced her work: survival strategies found in nature, traditional Chinese and Japanese painting, Abstract Expressionism, and Baroque art. For her centennial commemoration project, Kazarian gave the audience an exclusive opportunity to see the studies of this important work. The lace-work of Kazarian's grandmother has inspired some of the elements of these early studies. This project explores the possibility of healing.

The program continued with an exciting performance by Kazarian's daughter, singer-songwriter, and activist, Sima Cunningham. She performed two songs from her newly released album, "The Wolf that Eats the Sheep." From the first note, the beauty of her voice moved the audience.

In addition to raising awareness about the organization and its activities, the evening was an opportunity to connect, inspire, and explore in visual and creative ways. It was an evening of camaraderie and remembering Armenian roots.

Besides President Greta Doumanian-Harley, the current board of AIWA Chicago includes the following women: Sonya Doumanian, Founder of AIWA - Chicago and Adviser, Dr. Tamar Wasoian, Vice President, Hourie Gueyikian, Treasurer, Ruzanna Tantushyan, Corresponding Secretary, Christina Markarian, Samantha Kyrkostas, Svetlana Arakelyan and Danielle Galian.

Making contributions toward the event were: Dr. John Doumanian, Dr. Heratch and Sonya Doumanian, Keith and Greta Harley, Dr. Edward and Mary Paloyan and Oscar Tatosian.



Mapping memories with fabric, paper and movement

Mapping Memories in Yerevan

YEREVAN – The Franco-Hungarian visual artist Anna Ádám and the Swedish-American dancer-choreographer Sally O'Neill have this summer been invited by the Armenian Art and Cultural Studies Laboratory, directed by Susanna Gyulamiryan, to conduct a visual- and performing-art project, titled Mapping Memories. During their six week long stay in Yerevan, they will study the urban transformations of the Armenian capital, since the independence until 2014, through subjective (hi)stories, personal narratives, and anecdotes of the inhabitants. Their artist-in-residency program will be concluded in an exhibition at the Modern Art Museum in Yerevan from the 1st till the 8th of August, in which they will be showing an embroidered textile map and a series of short performances.

In Mapping Memories you study the transformations and the movements of the urban environment of post-communist capitals since the independence till current day. Anna, you were quite young during the Soviet era. Do you have any specific memories that you want to share?

Anna Ádám (A. Á.): Yes. One I remember quite clearly happened during an afternoon in our apartment where I was living during my childhood in Budapest, Hungary. I was about 6 or 7 years old. I was in the hall, listening to a conversation between my grandmother and a plumber who was repairing something. I remember him clearly telling my grandmother: "They have already taken down the Star." Of course I didn't know who had done it or why. I was too young to know that a star could also be a political symbol and that it could even shine on buildings. However, I really enjoyed the idea that taking down stars from the sky – as I understood it – was possible and obviously a common affair.

Sally O'Neill (S. O.): Rather than on the communist era in general, in Mapping Memories we are focusing on the transitional

period, composed of a series of fast and radical transformations, which have left an impact on the personal and collective sphere as well. The Mapping Memories' starting point is the day of Independence, different in each country we study, and stories, narratives, anecdotes we collect that happened after the Soviet era, not during.

The 15 post-USSR countries' capitals together with the seven Soviet satellite states in Europe make 22 capitals to study. Do you expect to conduct the Mapping Memories project in each of them?

see MAPPING, page 13

An Islamized Armenian Family In Marzovan: A Story of Courage And Sacrifice

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – It was a few months after the start of the Armenian Genocide in 1915. Tsolag Dildilian and his family converted to Islam in order to remain in their town of Marzovan. Outside their home, they assumed a Turkish identity; but at home they lived as Armenian Christians.

With this posture, they were also able to hide and save a large number of Armenians during the Genocide.

The mystery of this extraordinary family was related by Dr. Armen Marsoobian, chairman of the Philosophy Department at Southern Connecticut State University, during a lecture on Thursday, May 29. He was introduced by the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), which sponsored the lecture.

Marsoobian whose parents were Genocide survivors, opened his revealing talk by noting that he had grown up in a home where the story of this colossal tragedy was related as "black and white: Turks were the perpetrators and Armenians the victims."

But his family's story was different. His maternal grandfather Tsolag, a professional photographer needed by the Ottoman military, was spared, and he could thus save his immediate family in Marzovan. But other relatives in Sivas, Amasya, Samsun, Vezirkopru and Trabzon all perished. Following the end of World War I, due to Mustafa Kemal's nationalists, his family was forced to leave Turkey, settling first in Greece, then America.

The story took a strange turn when Marsoobian learned that his grandfather had emigrated to America before World War I, but the latter's wife and children remained behind near Palu, surviving due to the protection of an Islamized uncle who had converted so he could be released from prison. Eventually, his grandmother and father came to America.

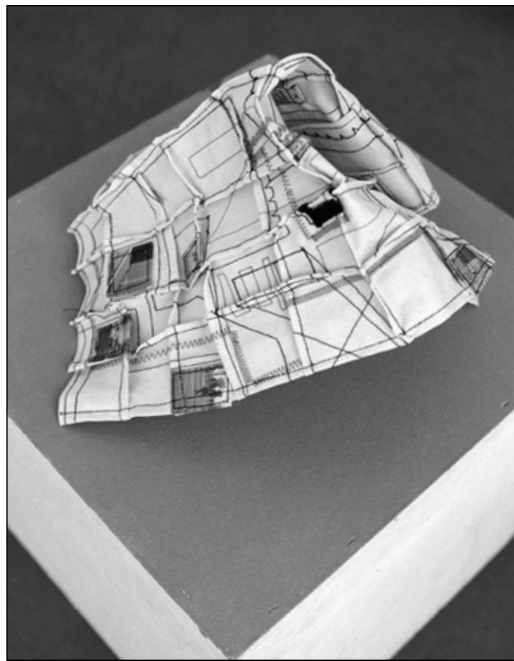
Who was this relative who had saved Marsoobian's father from certain death?

Showing rare photographs and written records he had acquired, Marsoobian explained that his grandfather Tsolag Dildilian and his brother Aram were photographers with studios in Marzovan, Samson, Konya and Amasya.

"I was shocked to learn that their family had converted to Islam on August 10, 1915, and adopted Turkish identities," revealed Marsoobian. "This was not a voluntary conversion, for it was done under the coercive pressure of a violent and, in most cases, fatal deportation. Why was this crucial information kept secret from me?"

As he delved deeper into the mystery, he learned that August 10, 1915, was also the day that the Armenian professors, staff and students and their families who had sought sanctuary on the campus of Anatolia College where his grandfather worked as a photographer, were rounded up and marched to their deaths.

see ISLAMIZED, page 12



An exhibit from Mapping Memories



ARTS & LIVING

An Islamized Armenian Family in Marzovan: A Story of Courage and Sacrifice

ISLAMIZED, from page 11

The genocide process in Marzovan began on April 29, 1915, with more than 1,200 Armenian males arrested, jailed and eventually executed in the next two months. One of the detainees, Garabed Kiremidjian, with personal and financial relationships with local government officials, persuaded a Mahir Bey to accept 50 liras from anyone who so desired to convert to Islam to escape deportation to Aleppo. The first mass conversions in Marzovan took place in June and early July 1915.

“Ironically, Interior Minister Taalat Pasha had ordered a halt to most conversions when he realized that too many Armenians were willing to convert to escape death, thus undermining the Committee of Union and Progress’ plan to reduce the number of Armenians to under 10 percent of each province’s population.”

About 3,000 women, elders and children were converted, according to Kiremidjian who also reported that the 10 percent rule was implemented, with 1200 who had paid the bribe allowed to stay, while 1,800 converts were deported. Kiremidjian also reported that “a large number of Protestant Armenians were converted, while most Catholic and Orthodox Armenians refused to do so.

By August 1915, “the only non-converted Armenians were those in Anatolia College, including my family the Dildilians and the Haroutiounians,” said the speaker. The leaders of Anatolia College “had successfully bribed local officials to protect their Armenian staff and their families. However, on August 10, the gendarmes entered the campus, and deported the Armenians.

Marsoobian’s grandfather Tsolag was informed that his protection would only continue if he converted. “After much argument within the family and with the encouragement of Kiremidjian, the family converted on the afternoon of August 10, 1915.”

Using a series of rare photographs in his multi-media presentation, Marsoobian showed the Haroutiunian family of his great aunt Haiganouch (Tsolag’s sister), secretly celebrating Armenian Christmas 1916. Among the five young men, Aram, Tsolag’s younger brother had an amputated leg, Aram, thus exempting him from military service. But the other young males would have been considered deserters, said the lecturer, and would have been subject to immediate arrest and execution.

Flag of Resistance

These four young men had been hidden in the family’s house since summer of 1915. The photo showed a sacramental candlestick, wafer and incense holder on the table, as well as a flag with three horizontal stripes, two oblique bands and three stars in each. “This resembles the flag of the Society of Armenian Students of Geneva, Geneva being the center of diasporan Armenian nationalist activity in the 1890s.”

Both the Social Democratic Hunchakian Party, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation or Dashnaksutun were active in Geneva, with the former founded by Armenian university students. “This is a statement of resistance—spiritually and in the name of the

nascent Armenian nation,” stated Marsoobian with understandable pride.

Meanwhile, the deportations continued from late June into July 1915. The day of reckoning came as the gendarmes descended on Anatolia College, and all the professors, teachers with their families, as well as students and workers were loaded onto ox carts and driven out.

“The survival of the nation’s cream” motivated

escape into the mountains. Tragically the mother and sister of one of the young men also on the caravan could not join them, and the parting was heartrending.

Meanwhile, the winter in the mountains is severe, and the young men returned to Haiganouch’s home where Aram enlarged the hiding place making it permanent with two sections with mirrors for a lookout, “so that if one part is found, the back section will be safe. More easily detectable hiding places were made around the property, so that if police searches found these ‘fake’ hiding places empty, they would then assume that no one was hidden in the house.”

Soon six young men were hiding in the house, which increased to ten men, too many and too dangerous to keep in one place. Another eight young women joined them, and with Haiganouch and her five children, a total of 23 were living in the household at one point.

At this time, there were also an unknown number of young people hidden in Tsolag’s house. “Neither Tsolag nor Haiganouch knew the details of each other’s activities in hiding these young people. A mutual ignorance may well have been a safety strategy. The less one knew of each other’s activities, the less the likelihood of a coerced betrayal of each.”

And in the larger picture of one and a half million innocent victims of genocidal horror, this was the story of three courageous siblings, Tsolag, Aram and Haiganouch “who risked their lives to save their fellow human beings” and whose heroism played an important role during this darkest chapter in Armenian history, noted Marsoobian.



Armen Marsoobian speaks about an Islamized Armenian family in Marzovan.

ed the Dildilian family to rescue the few Armenians who avoided or escaped the deportations. These educated young men and women of Anatolia College who were hidden by the family for two years, provided the hope that the nation would be reborn once the war ended,” stated Marsoobian.

Aram had devised a plan for his three college friends to escape from the deportation caravan, return to his family home, and provision them with supplies, medicine and arms, so they could

Vahan Tekeyan Once More in the World of the English-Speakers

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Sooner or later anybody attending Armenian events comes across Vahan Tekeyan’s poems, for they are recitation favorites. In his carefully structured poems, he crystallized an Armenian post-Genocide cultural attitude combining pride in survival and an ancient culture, with a bitter determination to strive for justice. An introvert by nature, Tekeyan powerfully treats personal sorrow and love. Unfortunately, like much of Armenian literature, his work is not known in the broader English-speaking world. There have been several attempts to translate many of his best-known poems into English, including anthologies by Diana Der-

enjoys a direct personal connection to Tekeyan. One of the translators, Gerald Papasian, is the son of Nora Ipekian Azadian. Ipekian came to know Tekeyan through her grandfather, the revolutionary Mihran Damadian, who like Tekeyan was a leader of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party. Tekeyan would often come to the Ipekian residence. He coached Ipekian on how to recite his poetry, which she has continued to do throughout her life. She has written a chapter for this book recounting her encounters with Tekeyan.

Papasian, an actor, director and translator, had translated and presented many Armenian poems in English in the past. When his uncle, John Papasian, a painter and poet born in Egypt, became interested in Tekeyan’s poetry, as Edmond Azadian notes, Gerald “guided” his translations. After John’s death in 1989, Gerald Papasian revised these translations and added some others of his own to form the present volume. The younger Papasian, in his Translator’s Note, writes that his uncle, though unable to read literary Armenian, possessed a musical ear that served him well in English, along with an older 1930s or 1940s style that seemed to Gerald to better suit Tekeyan’s works than the styles of previous translations.

Nora Ipekian Azadian’s husband, Edmond Y. Azadian, contributes a chapter on the making of the present volume. He also is the author of the introduction of this work, in which Tekeyan’s life and work are presented. Azadian points out that Tekeyan managed to carefully control his emotions to write about his personal issues, the destiny of the Armenians, and many universal themes. This disciplined approach evidently was necessary for him to process the effects of the Armenian Genocide and two world wars, as well as to work in the stormy world of Armenian politics and organizations in parallel with his creative life as a poet and short story writer. Though he was not fully understood by his contemporaries, Tekeyan helped shape a school of Armenian symbolism in poetry, and preferred to write sonnets.

Azadian feels that Tekeyan’s talent was hampered by the obligations he undertook as a political leader forced to deal with the tragedies of his people, as well as his financial constraints. He compares Tekeyan with the similarly talented Greek poet Constantine Cavafy, who did not experience such difficulties, and perhaps as a result managed to become a major figure in European literature.

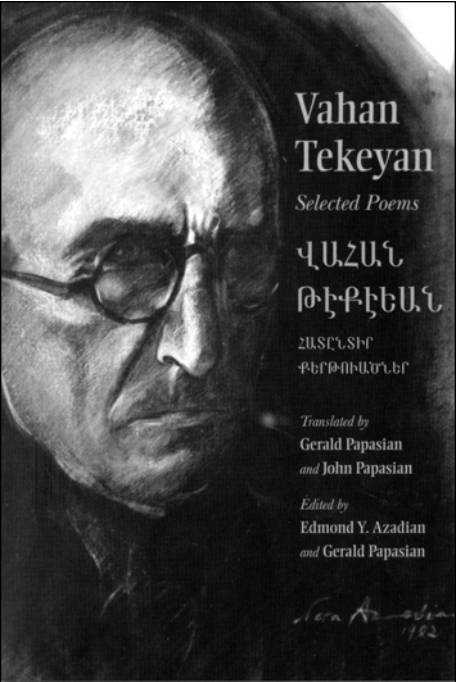
The 23 poems in this volume cover the range of Tekeyan’s repertoire, and include many of the most familiar of his poems. The translators have managed to keep the sonnet format in English, so that all except one rhyme as do the originals. This is a difficult task, which can lead to some awkwardness, but the translators attempted to remain as faithful as they could to the originals. As this is a bilingual edition, readers who understand or are learning Armenian can also benefit from the

original texts, which are laid out facing their translations.

Every new translation offers new insights into the views and emotions shaping Tekeyan’s world, and has its unique value. Consequently, this is a most welcome work.


The volume contains a brief preface by Barlow Der Mugrdchian of the Armenian Studies Program at California State University in Fresno. A second edition would present an opportunity for minor editing of the prose chapters.

Books



Hovanessian and Marzbed Margossian, and by Garig Basmadjian. Some 30 years after the last such effort, a new volume, *Vahan Tekeyan: Selected Poems*, appears to reintroduce Tekeyan to a new generation of English-language readers.

This volume bears interesting credentials: it

**ՄԵՐ ՄԿՐՏՁԵԱՆ ԹԱՏԵՐԱՆՈՒԲ**
TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP

presents

Ardavazt Best Actor Award Winner **KALUSD JENSEZIAN** of Buenos Aires, Argentina


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ARTS & LIVING

Mapping Memories in Yerevan

MAPPING, from page 11

S. O: For the moment we have mostly focused on capitals in which changes have been much more radical than in rural territories, starting with European ones (e.g. Budapest). The reason why we go to Armenia this summer is because we want to enlarge the geographical territory of our research. It would be ideal to visit all 22 post-communist capitals and then collect the created spatio-temporal maps into one single subjective “Atlas of souvenirs.” Now we are just at the beginning and we will do what we can to reach our goal.

What does your working process look like? What are your methods?

A. Á: The first part of the project is about collecting and recording stories and anecdotes of Yerevanians concerning their relationship with the city. During the interviews we will focus on how the landscape has changed since the independence and in what way these urban modifications (e.g. demolished buildings) have had an impact on the inhabitants; emotionally, for example. After that we will “translate” these narratives into a visual form. The outcome of that will be an embroidered textile map, which we, in the end, will “activate” within the frames of a performance.

It seems like a question of “translation” and “interpretation” is in the heart of your work.

A. Á: Yes, definitely. In Mapping Memories there are three languages that are translated from one form to the other. First, we collect and record stories that we translate from spoken Armenian to written English. Then we translate, transpose, transform this oral language into a visual language, which is finally translated into a corporal, choreographical language. Of course we can also talk about “interpretation” since each part of the project corresponds to a new subjectivity, but also because it is all about questioning the possibility of bringing a, so-called, objective geo-political tool – the map – to a subjective level.

S. O: To change from one language to another, from the oral to the visual and from the visual to the corporal, corresponds to changing form of expression; to moving from one discipline to the other. Therefore, in Mapping Memories, languages, disciplines, subjects, the topic, the object, and the performer, they are all in movement. The Map also changes its shape after each performance.

Different languages, spoken words, are recurrent in your personal work, Sally, let’s take the example of your solo: “What do you do?” Could one say that the use of oral sounds is one of your main choreographic tools?

S. O: I wouldn’t call it my main choreographic tool. It is recurring in many things I do but not by conscious choice. Even though I am an educated contemporary dancer and choreographer I don’t like to limit myself to only dance. When there is something, a message, an image, I want to share, I use any means to share it. To add voice or theatricality adds another layer. It can, for example, clarify the message when I want the message to be clear. It can also make it easier for the audience to relate to rather than bodies moving in an abstract way. I like it when dancers are human.

The use of textile and embroidery appears in other projects of yours as well, Anna. In “Re-Play!” you embroider on vintage photographs, in “Les Dévisagées” you embroider after monotyping. What is your relationship to thread and textile in the project “Mapping Memories”?

A. Á: The language of embroidery and the process of sewing represent the passage of time, the exploration of the archaic ruins of history, memory and nostalgia. In Mapping Memories I use thread as ink in a process of

words-to-forms “translation.” On the other hand, the textile is a support for “visual-writing”, a surface for projecting – mentally and physically – as well as a flexible, supple material to model, to sculpt forms in-situ, directly on the wall of the exhibition space. For Mapping Memories we wanted to use a material that we could easily manipulate during the physicalization part of the process; quickly change its shape and function (e.g. from a costume to a prop, from scenery set to a dance partner). The textile, combined with sewing and embroidering techniques, seems to favor both of us.

What are your plans for this Map, that you will elaborate in and on Yerevan, during your stay, and what are your next destinations?

S. O: The textile map together with my performance will be shown at the Modern Art Museum in Yerevan from the 1st till the 8th of August, but our ambition is to show it abroad as well. We have plans with an art gallery in Budapest, Hungary, and hopefully with Armenian institutions in London and New York as well. As for our next destination after Yerevan, we have been invited to the GlogauAIR artistic structure in Berlin starting in October 2014. But first thing’s first. Now, full focus on Yerevan!

C A L E N D A R

MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 10 — Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Road, Chelmsford, will hold its annual picnic from noon to 6 p.m., with Jason Naroian and his ensemble. Admission, \$1 per person. For more information, visit www.stsvartanantz.com or call the church office at 978-256-7234.

AUGUST 24 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic to be held at American Legion Farm, 1314 Main St., Haverhill MA (take Rte. 495 to Exit 51 B onto Rte. 125 N), noon to 5 p.m. Music by the Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Shish, Losh, & Chicken Kebab Dinners, Kheyima, Pastries, & Beverages. Raffles for Cash prizes & Gift Certificates. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs. For more info visit www.hypointechurch.org or call (978) 372-9227

SEPTEMBER 7 — Picnic Festival, sponsored by St. Gregory Armenian Church of Merrimack Valley, 158 Main St., North Andover, featuring musicians Leon Janikian, Jason Naroian, Johnny Berberian and John Arzigian; appearance by Siroun Dance Ensemble of Central Mass.; 12:30-5:30 p.m., church grounds; shish, losh & chicken kebab dinners, veggie plates, Armenian pastries; family games and activities.

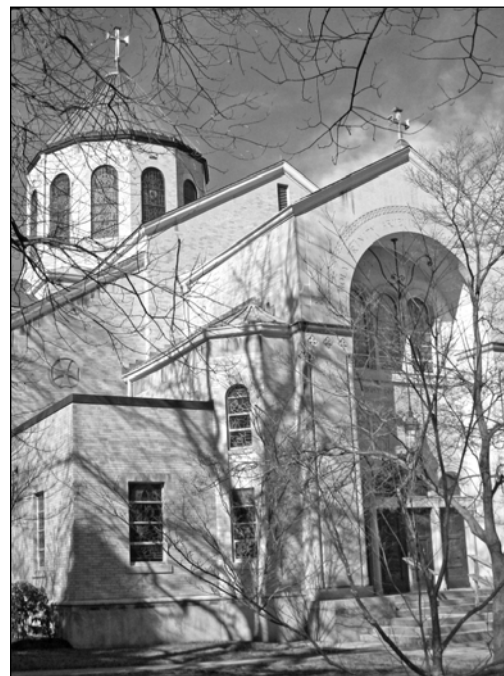
SEPTEMBER 14 — Trinity Family Festival, 12-5 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Delicious Armenian food; Armenian music by the Greg Krikorian Ensemble featuring Greg Krikorian, oud & vocals, Leon Janikian, clarinet, George Righellis, guitar & vocals, Michael Sabounjian, keyboard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

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

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

NOVEMBER 8 — Armenia Tree Project’s 20th Anniversary Celebration. Reception and dinner at the Grand Atrium of the John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse overlooking the Boston Harbor. Reserve the date, additional details to follow. For information about ATP’s programs, visit www.ArmeniaTree.org

NOVEMBER 15 — The 39th Annual Luncheon/Auction of the Armenian Women’s Welfare Association will be held at the Burlington Marriott Hotel. Funds raised will support programs at the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain, Mass and Hanganak NGO Health Clinic in Stepanakert, Karabagh, for senior women in need. For more information, call Karen Hovsepan at 617-898-8619.



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

NEW YORK

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



One of the exhibits



COMMENTARY

Mirror Spectator



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COMMENTARY

Armenia in Search of Its Next President

By Edmond Y. Azadian

More than two and a half years remain but the US news media has begun to portray the Obama administration as lame duck. A similar heat has begun to plague Armenia's political scene, although the current president, Serge Sargsian, still has three years left to serve.

Although the two case scenarios are completely different, presidential hopefuls in both countries have already been positioning themselves for the great challenge.

Before dealing with the potentials of individual candidates in Armenia, a general observation is warranted. Since its last independence, Armenia has been ruled by authoritarian presidents, a case which will continue to confuse human rights activists around the world. But a review of Armenia's history will reveal the entire irony that Armenia's survival depends on more authoritarianism than less. It is not the wish nor the recommendation of this writer to see a more ruthless ruler at the helm of power but that seems to be a historic necessity.

Thus, Armenians fared well under the Byzantine Empire; they even rose to power in the hierarchy of that empire (General Nerses and Pilardos, to name a few). Their contribution was historically significant in the Ottoman Empire, even acknowledged recently – albeit grudgingly – by the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. A National Constitution was drafted in 1860 and ratified by the Sultan in 1863, providing a mechanism for self-rule for the Armenian millet. Literature, music and culture flourished, not because of tolerance of the Ottoman rulers, as Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu would have it, but in defiance of the intolerance.

A similar picture emerges during the Soviet era, when Armenia achieved a second golden age in culture, scholarship and science, despite the demonic nature of that empire. Additionally, Armenians proved their prowess in the military and statecraft. (Generals Baghramian, Safarian, Issakov, Khanberyants and Stepanian, and statesmen Mikoyan, Tevossian and others, serve as examples).

The Soviet Empire was also a huge prison for the nations trapped in it. That proved to be a blessing in disguise, because Armenia's population rose to 4 million, an unprecedented mark after the Genocide. Today's freedom of travel amounts to the depopulation of Armenia.

Now, turning the page to the situation when Armenians are left to their own devices, and we see that a self-destructive bug has been activated every time to disrupt the course of their history. The kingdom of Ani was brought down in the 11th century because of internal bickering; Cilicia fell victim to the Mameluks in 1375 for the same reason. Atrocious divisions brought also the end of the First Republic in 1920 and today the picture of self-flagellation is no different. Once a ruler of their own is in power, they all gang up to bring that power down, although they may live to regret it for another six centuries.

One thing Armenians have failed to learn over the centuries is that the way they perform under foreign or authoritarian rule is to apply for themselves when a historic opportunity has granted independence.

In view of the above observations, it is important to find out who can lead Armenia unscathed through the political turmoil of the 21st century.

A political commentator at *Azg* weekly in Yerevan, Marietta Khachatryan, a sharp political analyst, has taken up the case of each candidate, in a way fantasizing about the potential of each one. Often outlining her comments, it is important to draw our own conclusions.

The current prime minister, **Hovik Abrahamian**, seems to be very active these days, visiting regions, kissing babies and applying some kind of homemade populism. When the ruling coalition replaced the sophisticated and articulate **Tigran Sargsian** with Hovik Abrahamian, the latter looked almost like a ruffian at the time, but during his tenure as speaker of parliament, he developed a reputation as a problem solver.

Arthur Baghdasarian, the head of the Land of Laws (Orinants

Yerkir) party, is positioning himself by criticizing his former allies in the current administration. During the last parliamentary elections, he had posed as an opposition candidate, only to drink champagne at the victory party of the coalition which rewarded him with the position of national security advisor. But the voters will not be duped another time.

Vigen Sargsian, the president's chief of staff, may be able to run a European country with his sophistication and experience, but having no position in the oligarchic system reduces his chances for a run.

Robert Kocharian is Armenia's modern-day Talleyrand. He served as Karabagh's president, then Armenia's prime minister and president. He is behind the shift of the ruling coalition pitting the Republican Party against Zaroukian's Prosperous Armenia Party. When he ushered Serge Sargsian to power, he believed that he had already a deal like the Putin-Medvedev musical chair system. But once the current president took the power, he would not relinquish his position, betting on a possible amendment of the constitution to return at the helm of the government as a strong prime minister. Kocharian has more liabilities than assets. He is accused of the March 1 violence against the opposition demonstrators, he is suspected of engineering the October massacre in the parliament, plus his family's wealth is in the billions of dollars. The most unsophisticated citizen can make the calculation that his presidential salary would not amount to those figures.

Hrant Bagratyan, a dour-faced former prime minister and an economist who threw his hat in the presidential race last time with insignificant impact, may try again, probably faring the same, especially when people have little understanding of the statistics which he spews at each speech.

Voters in Armenia will never understand the sacrifices sustained by former US citizens **Vartan Oskanian** and **Raffi Hovannisian**. The promise of a western-style democracy which they would introduce does not amount to much. The main factor against their candidacies remain the fact that their current organizations are perceived to have been financed by western agencies, which make them suspect. And secondly, after so many years in Armenia, they have not earned a piece of the oligarchic pie. Their status as foreign-born Armenians is a handicap, as well.

Nikol Pashinian is the opposition's dark horse. As the editor of the *Haykakan Jamanak* newspaper, he has earned the distinction of lowering Armenian journalism to the level of yellow journalism. As a member of parliament, he is an articulate politician with a populist following. He has given up his rabblousing street fighter status to adopt a more presidential air.

Levon Ter-Petrosian remains the most presidential candidate. But the opposition, headed by his Armenian National Congress party, lost steam and that loss is blamed on him and he many never recover from his decline. Many major figures defected from the Congress party.

Gagik Zaroukian is a shrewd businessman. He can manipulate other candidates and factions but ruling a country is another game. His opulent lifestyle in a poor country does not jibe well internationally.

After all, Khachatryan believes that only money will determine the outcome of the race. And indeed, when the voters are kept at subsistence levels, they will support any candidate that will put food on the table today, oblivious of tomorrow's misery.

In July, Indonesia elected its new president, Joko Widodo, known as Jokowi, who defeated Prabowo Subianto, the son-in-law of former dictator, General Suharto, a member of the powerful establishment.

Jokowi is a former carpenter and furniture salesman who rose from humble beginnings, sharing the plight of the common people. He will be holding together and ruling a nation of 246.9 million living on 13,466 islands.

Maybe Armenian also needs a carpenter as its next president.

(Footnote: Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord, 1754-1838, served as foreign minister for King Louis XVI, the French Revolution, Napoleon Bonaparte, Louis XVIII and Louis Phillip. In 1815, he represented France at the Vienna Conference. Talleyrand is synonymous with crafty, cynical diplomacy.)

Notice to Contributors

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* welcomes articles, commentaries and community news from our readers. In order to assure the accurate and timely publication of articles submitted, please note the following policies:

- All articles submitted should be typed, double (or triple) spaced and printed in a type size large enough to be clearly legible (10 point or larger). Submissions that do not conform to these specifications will be assigned lowest priority.
- Articles sent by fax are acceptable, and e-mail submissions are encouraged.
- All submissions should include the name of a contact person and a

daytime telephone number.

– Deadline for submission of all articles and advertising is 12 noon on Monday of the week of publication.

– Photos will be published without charge at the discretion of the editors and art director. Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is included.

– The *MS* will publish only one article about an upcoming organizational event. For major special events, exceptions may be made only by special arrangement with the editors.

– Telephone numbers, ticket prices and other details (at the discretion of the editors) will not be included in press releases, but should be reserved for calendar listings and advertisements.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Australia Must Dismiss Foreign Minister For Denying the Armenian Genocide

The Turkish Sabah newspaper published last week the following disturbing news: “Australian FM: Armenian Case not Genocide.”

Sabah described the events that led to its nefarious headline. Gunay Evinch, board member and past president of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), had recently visited Australia to brief local Turkish groups on the Movsesian lawsuit. He told them that “the United States Supreme Court let stand a 9th Circuit Court of Appeals’ decision invalidating a California law that had defined the Armenian case as genocide, because it was US federal policy not to define the Armenian case as genocide.”

Sabah also reported that Evinch’s visit was “a part of a broader Anglo-Turkish Diaspora Cooperation Program in which Turks in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and New Jersey (sic) share best practices based on a common jurisprudential and political heritage.”

Following Evinch’s advice, Ertunc Ozen, President of Australian Turkish Advocacy Alliance, wrote to Australia’s Foreign Minister Julie Bishop on May 5, “expressing con-

cern at motions passed by the parliament of New South Wales in May 2013 regarding Turkey and the fate of various communities of the Ottoman Empire during and after World War I.”

Foreign Minister Bishop wrote to Ozen on June 4: “The Australian Government acknowledges the devastating effects which the tragic events at the end of the Ottoman Empire have had on later generations, and on their identity, heritage and culture.” Astonishingly, she added: “We do not, however, recognize these events as ‘genocide.’ Australian states and territories have no constitutional role in the formulation of Australian foreign policy. While respecting the rights of individuals and groups to have strong views on the matter, the long-standing and clear approach of the Australian Government has been not to become involved in this sensitive debate.”

The foreign minister is wrong on three counts: 1) She erred in stating that Australia does not recognize the Armenian Genocide. While the Australian government prefers not to use the term genocide in order not to antagonize Turkey, no other official has ever stated that it was not genocide; 2) She incorrectly wrote that the Australian states that recognized the Armenian Genocide were formulating foreign policy. These states had simply acknowledged a historical fact; and 3) She contradicted herself by stating that the Australian government does not get involved “in this sensitive debate,” yet she did permit herself to get involved by stating that it was not genocide!

Vache Kahramanian, executive director of the Armenian National Committee of Australia, immediately dispatched a strongly-worded letter to the Foreign Minister, calling her “misguided statement” “deeply insulting and hurtful to the Armenian-Australian community.” He also characterized Bishop’s views as “intolerable,” “inexcusable,” “a grave offense” and “a disservice to all Australians.” Kahramanian

justifiably wondered, “How can Australia’s moral conscience become so corrupted?”

ANC-Australia’s executive director reminded the foreign minister that her statement was in stark contrast to “the views held by many senior ministers in the current government. As recently as April 2014, Australia’s Treasurer Joe Hockey MP, issued an official statement on the 99th anniversary commemoration of the Armenian Genocide marking April 24 as the day “we gather to remember the 1.5 million people who perished in the genocide.” Ministers Turnbull, Morrison, along with ranking members from Labor, the Greens, minor parties and Independents have called on the Australian Parliament to officially recognise the events of 1915 as genocide. Australia’s Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, during his years as Opposition Leader, issued an annual statement referring to the Armenian Genocide with no qualifiers or euphemisms.”

Kahramanian also told the foreign minister: “By denying the Armenian Genocide you are also denying Australia’s very own history. Located within Australia’s National Archives are countless numbers of testimonies by ANZAC prisoners of war who were held captive in the Ottoman Empire.... These testimonies vividly recall the suffering and annihilation of the Armenian people.”

ANC-Australia Chairman Greg Sghomonian urged the Foreign Minister to “immediately reverse this critical error of judgment,” and requested a meeting with her.

I suggest that Australian-Armenians ask Prime Minister Tony Abbott whether the Foreign minister had cleared her deeply offensive letter with him beforehand. If she had not, the ANC-Australia should demand her immediate dismissal. ANC should ask all three Australian state parliaments that have recognized the Armenian Genocide to adopt a new resolution condemning Foreign Minister Bishop’s denialist stand and urging the prime minister to fire her.

Armenia Mulling over Energy Deals

Armenia’s energy sector is facing a crucial choice. At its July 24 sitting the Armenian government considered, but not yet approved several major deals concerning the sphere. As it turned out, the ArmRosgazprom company, which owns almost the entire domestic gas distribution network in Armenia and earlier this year was renamed Gazprom-Armenia, has considerable debts. In particular, the company owes to Vorotan HPP Cascade CJSC, which is to be sold to an American company, Contour Global, although the deal is not completed yet.

By Naira Hayrumyan

The government is considering the possibility of transferring the assets of Gazprom in Armenia on account of settling part of the debts to Vorotan HPP and the Armenian government. In particular, it is planned to transfer 53.3 percent of the assets of Nairit-2 and 3.6 percent of the assets Nairit Plant to Vorotan HPP Cascade CJSC. The budget loans and other liabilities of Armgazprom to the Ministry of Finance of Armenia will be repaid through the transfer of the Tegh-Stepanakert gas pipeline, as well as 46.73 percent of the assets of Nairit-2.

These planned deals have raised a number of questions in Armenia, first of all, whether Vorotan HPP, already together with over half of the shares of Nairit-2 (which is an operating chloroprene rubber production shop), will finally be sold to an American company. The thing is that the deal, which was concluded last November, has not been finalized yet. Moreover, Russian energy giant Rosneft also aspired to get Nairit, but it apparently set the condition that it would buy Nairit only with Vorotan HPP.

The Armenian government does not yet specify who will get the two major energy enterprises — an American company or a Russian one. U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern believes that the transfer of Vorotan HPP to an American firm will be a powerful message for Western investors that Armenia is ready to work with them.

Meanwhile, if Armenia reconsiders the deal and sells debt-free Nairit and Vorotan to a Russian company, it will be another powerful message that Armenia has finally “surrendered” to Russian companies.

Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan gave the government several days to “think” about what to do.

But there is also another aspect here — the transfer of the Tegh-Stepanakert pipeline from Gazprom to the Armenian government. This is the only pipeline through which Nagorno-Karabakh receives natural gas. It is possible that Gazprom has given up this asset at the request of Azerbaijan, which is doing everything for foreign companies not to work in Karabakh officially.

On the other hand, there is an opinion that Rosneft is simply ousting Gazprom also in Armenia. As is known, in Russia these two giants are engaged in tough competition, and Rosneft is aggressively trying to acquire the assets of Gazprom.

The deal on the sale of Vorotan HPP, already with Nairit, may be an indicator of Armenia’s foreign-policy orientation. Armenia will either diversify its energy system by letting Americans to its mostly Russian-dominated market or will admit that it has completely lost the sovereign right to take even economic decisions.

If Armenia takes a step towards Americans it may be followed by a visit of the energy minister to Iran, where he can negotiate about the transit of Iranian gas to Europe via Armenia and Georgia, buying cheap Iranian gas and, accordingly, refusing to buy more expensive gas from Gazprom. If Armenia chooses the Russian company, however, it will have to forget, for a long time, about its being a political entity even on the regional scale.

(This column was written for ArmeniaNow.)

In Toronto, Armenian Genocide Curriculum Survives Turkish Challenge

By Tessa Manuella

MONTREAL, Canada — An effort by Canadian Turks to abolish curriculum on the Armenian Genocide in Toronto schools has failed, with education officials telling Rudaw that the Genocide will continue to be taught for years to come.

Canadian Turks earlier this year submitted over 2,200 signatures from an online petition calling for the Armenian Genocide module to be removed from the Toronto District School Board’s educational curriculum.

The petition demanded that Canada’s largest school board remove any references to the Armenian Genocide on the basis that it “unremittingly discredits one community’s narrative over the other” and “adversely affects the students with Turkish and Turkic heritages.”

The Armenian Genocide has been taught since 2008 in a secondary school course called Genocide and Crimes against Humanity. The district told Rudaw that the class “is offered in some of our high schools where there is enough interest” and is “in line with not only the Canadian government but scholars who have looked into this specific issue.”

The Toronto District School Board “has no intention to have it removed in the years ahead,” a district spokesperson said.

Toronto is the largest and one of the most diverse school districts in Canada, serving approximately 232,000 students, including international students, in almost 600 schools.

The online petition was the latest attempt by Turkish Canadians to counter recognition of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. Turkey acknowledges that Armenians and other minorities were killed and deported during World War I but denies that they were genocidal acts. Twenty-one nations including Canada officially recognize the Armenian Genocide, which is commemorated annually around the world on April 25.

Although the Canadian Parliament recognized the Armenian Genocide in 2004, the recognition remains a major point of contention between Turks and Armenians in Canada. Upwards of 500 pro-Turkish protesters showed up at a rally to commemorate the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in

Ottawa in April, with police setting up barricades to separate the groups who were taunting one another.

The Federation of Turkish Canadian Associations, which championed the online petition and tried to stop the Armenian Genocide curriculum from being introduced in 2008, also in April lobbied against a monument recognizing the Armenian Genocide in Toronto.

The petition garnered 2,255 signatures from around the world. The Federation of Turkish Canadian Associations reports that there are 50,000 Canadians of Turkish origin.

Robert Kouyoumdjian, head of the political chapter at the Armenian National Committee of Canada, lobbied for the Toronto district’s Armenian Genocide curriculum. Frank Chalk, director of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, endorsed it.

The online petition was launched by Turkish parents of students attending Toronto schools who stated in the petition that they were “deeply concerned about the negative impact of the current curriculum module on ‘Armenian Genocide,’” claiming it “would often result in ridiculing, intimidating, and bullying of our innocent children while causing injury to them physically and psychologically.”

However, Jim Karygiannis, a former MP based in Toronto, told Rudaw there is no evidence of Turkish children having been intimidated at schools. He said teaching high school students about the Armenian and other Genocides could help prevent future atrocities.

Some scholars argue that if the killing of approximately 1.5 million Armenians in 1915 had been recognized and justice served, subsequent Genocides may not have occurred. Adolf Hitler referenced the Armenian Genocide as Nazi Germany killed six million Jews and other minorities during World War II.

Many human rights advocates maintain that that recognizing the Armenian Genocide could pave the way for other atrocities, such as the 1988 chemical attack that killed 5,000 people in Halabja, to receive international recognition.

Karygiannis also warned that removing references to the Armenian Genocide from textbooks could call into question curricula from other Genocides, such as the Holocaust, the Ukrainian famine and Genocide from 1932-1933, the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 and the

see TOTONTO, page 16



Tahar Rahim, as Nazaret Manoogian

Fatih Akin's 'The Cut' Starring Tahar Rahim to Be Shown at Venice Film Festival

FILM, from page 1

"The Cut" is an epic film, a drama, an adventure movie and a western all rolled into one. The film may be set a hundred years ago, but it could not be more topical: it tells a tale of war and displacement, as well as portraying the power of love and hope, which enables us to achieve the unimaginable.

"The Cut" is the conclusion of Fatih Akin's Love, Death and the Devil trilogy. In "Head-On" (2004) we see a young German-Turkish woman's furious struggle to live her own life and learn how quickly love can turn into pain. "The Edge of Heaven" (2007) tells the tale of six people whose paths cross without meeting each other; it is death that brings them together in the end. "The Cut" now explores the theme of "the devil", examining evil and the harm we are capable of inflicting on others – both unwittingly and deliberately, showing the fine line that often separates good from evil. Fatih Akin's view on the world also has a defining influence on the final part of the trilogy: "The Cut" has become a very personal film. Thematically, it explores my conscience and formally it expresses my passion for the medium of film."

"The Cut" will screen in Competition, and the film runs 138 minutes long.



Another scene from "The Cut"

A Trip to a Kindergarten

By Hovsep Daghdigian

YEREVAN – I met a friend at the Baghramyan metro station. We were heading to the Sasuntsi Tavit station to catch the bus to Ararat (the city, not the mountain, near and yet so far). After a bumpy bus ride to Ararat (estimated population 11,000–12,000), we stopped at a children's "café" for a cup of coffee. One of the local grade schools was having a noisy celebration with the children having a great time. When I asked to pay for our two coffees, I was told it was "on the house." We then took a *marshutka* (minibus) to Ararat's Zod suburb. This district hosts an Armenian army base, including an armored contingent, which guards the border with Nakhichevan (Azerbaijan) and is situated to protect Yerevan. As we approached we could hear distant cannon fire, presuming it to be practice. Troops there have lately been under high alert. The border is very close and Azeri snipers are active.

We proceeded to the kindergarten, hearing it was in very bad shape. The kindergarten is in a two-story building designed to accommodate about 360 children. Currently there are about 75 children enrolled, with a staff of 21, at a cost of 3,500 dram/month (about \$8.50). Not all parents can afford the fee so some children do not attend.

Since the building's construction 25 years ago, we were told, there has not been one iota of renovation done. I estimate that less than 10 percent of the building is habitable. We met some of the staff. Most of the teachers were busy with the children, many of whom who dressed in the same colorful t-shirts that our children in the US wear. The building's roof leaks in many places. Moreover there is water only on the first floor, apart from the water leaking from the roof. The staff carries buckets of water up to the second floor where the classrooms are. There are one or two usable toilets – not enough for the children there. Moreover there is no sewage connection. Wastewater and

sewage simply drains into the ground around the kindergarten, some of it seeping into the basement. In unused areas of the building parts of the ceiling are coming down, there are cracks in the wall, and the floors are a mess. There is no gas for cooking lunch for the children in the antiquated kitchen. Cooking is done on an old electric stove, and there is an old refrigerator that, amazingly, still works. There is no heat in the building. Children come to school with scraps of wood, and any other trash that can burn such as cloth, paper, plastic bottles, etc. In one room downstairs are some sacks of trash ... stuff to burn this winter.

Though our visit to the kindergarten was unannounced, the staff was very welcoming. When we suggested that we may be able to find help for renovation of the school, one woman had tears in her eyes. We stressed that we cannot promise anything, but that we'd see what we can do. But the school needs to come up with a detailed renovation plan in coordination with the city.

After a partial tour of the facilities, we were treated to some ice cream, some pastry which the cook prepared in the old, antiquated kitchen, and coffee. Then one of the women revealed some sobering news. Two young Armenian soldiers at the nearby border with Nakhichevan (Azerbaijan) were just killed, apparently by sniper fire.

All during this process I took photographs. As we left we were shown the small part of the school yard where the children are allowed to play.

Back in parts of Yerevan workers are planting flowers, watering trees. Great legislative progress is being made. A recent law prohibits smoking while driving a car, same with using a cell phone. But there are some things that are intolerable. We can't give up, there's no second chance. The kids at the school were wonderful, you just cannot imagine how wonderful.

In Toronto, Armenian Genocide Curriculum Survives Turkish Challenge

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1980s Anfal genocidal campaign in Iraqi Kurdistan.

"You can't change history, and history should not be altered. We should learn from history and move forward so we don't make the mistakes again," Karygiannis said.

A Kurdish attorney based in Toronto, Hadyat Nazami, wrote a letter to Change.org officials, expressing serious concerns about the petition, which he deemed hate speech. In his letter, Nazami described the Turks' petition as "essentially demanding that books and school curriculum be censored, in line with the one century old official ideology of the Turkish state to deny Armenian Genocide ever took place in that country."

Nazami's vocal opposition has led to discussions among scholars and NGOs about adequate measures to protect freedom of speech while paying respect to the sufferings of survivors.

(This column was distributed by Rudaw.)

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Aram Arkun Returns to Mirror-Spectator as Assistant Editor

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Armenian events, in scholarly journals, encyclopedias and books. He is a Princeton University graduate (B.A.), with a master's degree in international relations (University of Pennsylvania), and a C.Phil. from UCLA. He has taught at New York University, UCLA and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

Mirror-Spectator editor Alin K. Gregorian said, "Clearly, the addition of someone like Aram to our staff is terrific. He has an incredible mind and is a talented writer. We are happy that circumstances have brought Aram and his family to the Boston area."