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NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia Stuns Czechs with Last-Minute Win

PRAGUE (Reuters) – Armenia scored in injury time to beat the Czech Republic 2-1 in their World Cup Group B qualifier on Friday, severely denting the home side's chances of making the finals.

The Czechs looked like they had salvaged a draw when Tomas Rosicky's long-range shot deflected into the net off a defender to level at 1-1 in the 70th minute.

But Gevorg Ghazaryan latched onto a pass deep in Czech territory in injury time and found the net with a shot that bounced off keeper Petr Cech and past a sprawling Michal Kadlec who was unable to clear his lines.

"We had a good start and a bad end," Czech coach Michal Bilek told reporters.

The Czechs dominated possession but paid the price for squandering a clutch of quality chances in a match that highlighted the home side's inability to finish.

see SOCCER, page 4



Czech Republic's Libor Kozak (L) fights for the ball with Armenia's Varazdat Haroyan during their 2014 World Cup qualifying soccer match in Prague September 6, 2013. (REUTERS/David W Cerny)

Human Rights Group Condemns Police Corruption

YEREVAN (Hetq) – Levon Nersisyan, who heads the Andrei Sakharov Human Rights Center in Armenia, has written an open letter to Armenian Police Chief Valery Gasparyan, calling on him to either discipline individual police officers found guilty of using inappropriate force against peaceful protesters, or else to resign.

The letter comes on the heels of recent incidents in which police officers have been accused of employing heavy-handed tactics, including outright intimidation and beating, against activists.

Nersisyan wrote that in Armenia the police continue to be used as a "club" by authorities to intimidate citizens engaged in peaceful protest.

The human rights defender also accuses Gasparyan of failing to deliver on his promise to make qualitative changes within the ranks of the police, adding that recent events give the impression that police officers are being trained to be more aggressive and hostile when it comes to dealing with the public.

Nersisyan asked how Gasparyan intends to create more public confidence towards the police given the behavior of police over the course of the past few weeks.

Armenia to Continue Cooperation with European Union

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia's decision to join Customs Union was made for the benefit of the country, according to the president of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of Armenian National Assembly Artak Zakaryan. "Of course, there will be some political scopes which will express their surprise but nothing extraordinary happened," said Zakaryan. He spoke about the longtime cooperation between Armenia and Russia in many spheres.

Zakaryan said that by joining the Customs Union, Armenia does not suspend relations with European Union. "Armenia will develop relations with European Union in all directions as much as it will be "possible" by European Union and will not be contrary to Armenia's decision to join Customs Union," said Zakaryan highlighting that Armenia can not forget those achievements which were made during cooperation with European Union.

On September 3 in Moscow President of the Republic of Armenia Serge Sargisian announced Armenia's decision to join the Customs Union headed by Russia and the implementation of steps toward that goal. At the same time Sargisian said that the decision to join Customs Union does not mean that dialogue with European organizations. The president's chief of staff, Vigen Sargisian, on September 4 announced that a pre-signing of the Association Agreement remains in Armenia's agenda.

Geneva Exhibition Raises Awareness Of Armenian Genocide

GENEVA (Public Radio of Armenia) – The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Armenian Apostolic Church are hosting a one-month exhibition on the Armenian Genocide.

It displays information on the history of genocidal events in the Ottoman Empire, which killed more than a million Armenians between 1915 and 1923.

Open to the public until September 30, the exhibition is being held at the Ecumenical Centre, addressing the theme, "Because I live, you too shall live" (St John 14.19, New Testament).

The exhibition is organized by the Armenia Inter-Church Round Table Foundation.

At the opening of the exhibition, Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, vicar general of the South from the Armenian Diocese of France, declared, "People need to know what happened."

"Knowing the history of the Armenian Genocide is one way to make sure that such atrocities never happen again. There is still a need for churches, communities and governments to recognize the Armenian Genocide, and condemn these events in order to pave the way for reconciliation and healing of the scars from the past," said Parsamyan.

Parsamyan went on to say that the "exhibition on Armenian Genocide is timely" given the theme of the WCC 10th Assembly, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace." The WCC assembly is set to take place from October 30 to November 8 in Busan, Republic of Korea.

"The God of life has let Armenians carry on their journeys for justice and peace," he said. The WCC assembly theme is important for the Armenians who are demanding condemnation of the Armenian Genocide
see GENEVA, page 4

Pasadena Council Unanimously Approves Armenian Genocide Memorial In Memorial Park

By Lauren Gold

PASADENA, Calif. (*Pasadena Star-News*) – In front of dozens of supporters from the local Armenian community, the City Council on Monday, September 9, unanimously approved a proposal for a memorial dedicated to the 1915 Armenian Genocide, which will be erected in Memorial Park.

Thirty-six people submitted comment cards to speak before the council Monday night, the majority of whom spoke in favor of the project, which would be completed by April 24, 2015 to mark the 100th anniversary of the slaying of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Turks. In addition, 93 others in attendance signed a petition of support submitted to the council.

More than 1,000 other community members had signed an earlier petition in support of the project submitted to the city.

Former Pasadena Police Chief Barney Melekian, who is also on the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial Committee, said the monument is an important commemoration of an event in Armenian history that many, including the US government, do not recognize as a genocide.

"Most people have no idea of the significance of April 24, part of this is because the Turkish government continues to deny that this event ever happened," Melekian said. "This memorial should not only be a memorial to the past but it should serve as a beacon for future generations to ensure they do not forget not just the Armenians but all victims of injustice."

Much of the discussion among the public and council members Monday night centered on the memorial's location.

A handful of military veterans and other speakers said staff's recommendation of Memorial Park was inappropriate, see MEMORIAL, page 16

Argentina Armenians Protested Istanbul Candidacy for Summer 2020 Games

Tokyo Named Winner of Bid

BUENOS AIRES (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Armenian community of Argentina rallied on Saturday, September 7, against the visit of Prime Minister of Turkey Recep

Tayyip Erdogan, who had traveled to Buenos Aires to bid for the 2020 Summer Olympic Games.

Razmig Nalpatian, president of Armenian Youth Federation of South America, said
see PROTEST, page 3



Protestors in Argentina held up signs honoring Hrant Dink.

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Planting Success

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Parliament Discusses Customs Union

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia's parliament is currently discussing President Serge Sargisian's announcement last week that Armenia intends to join the Russia-led Customs Union.

Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian has been invited to explain why the decision to join the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan was made without any consultation with parliament.

The session on September 10, which will be held behind closed doors, was initiated by opposition lawmakers.

On September 6, the European Union's (EU) commissioner for enlargement and neighborhood policy, Stefan Fuele, said Armenia's obligations to the Customs Union would not be compatible with an EU Association Agreement that had been scheduled to be discussed and initiated in November at a summit in Vilnius.

Opposition activists are planning a march.

Son of Former Syunik Governor Released

KAPAN, Armenia (Hetq) – The Investigative Unit of the Ministry of Defense has dropped all criminal proceedings against the son of the former Syunik Governor Surik Khachatryan and his bodyguard regarding their involvement in a shoot-out that occurred near the house of Khachatryan on the night of June 1.

The Investigative Unit announced that based on a comprehensive examination of the evidence, Tigran Khachatryan and the governor's bodyguard, Zarzand Nikoghosyan, had acted in self-defense and within the bounds of the law.

A former candidate for Goris mayor, Avetik Budaghyan, was killed in the shoot-out and his brother Artak Budaghyan, an Artsakh military base commander, was injured.

President Meets New Montenegrin Ambassador

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Newly appointed Montenegrin Ambassador to Armenia Lubomir Mishurovich delivered his credentials to President Serge Sargisian last week.

According to the president's press secretary, Sargisian congratulated the ambassador and said that he hopes that during Mishurovich's mission in Armenia cooperation will be strengthened and new achievements will be recorded.

Both diplomats said that there is great potential for strengthening the friendship between the nations as well as improved cooperation in political, economic, humanitarian and other fields.

Danish Parliamentarians Visit Artsakh

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Chairman of Nagorno-Karabagh Republic National Assembly Ashot Ghulyan on September 9 hosted deputies of Danish Parliament Eva Kier Hansen and Moller Mary Crarup and a delegation accompanying them, including Danish public figures for a one-day introductory visit.

During the conversation issues relating to Nagorno-Karabagh conflict settlement, structure of the National Assembly, legislative activities, etc. were discussed.

Later, representatives of the Danish delegation took part in a wide-ranging meeting. They were interested the similarities and diversities of ideologies of parties represented in the National Assembly, their positions in various issues and spheres from foreign policy to human rights and liberties, social and economic policy, etc.

On the same day the delegation left Stepanakert and held a meeting in Shushi with the leader of Artsakh Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Church Pargev Archbishop Martirosyan.

Opening of the Ruben Sevak Museum at Echmiadzin

ECHMIADZIN – On September 10, under the auspices of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, the opening ceremony of the Ruben Sevak Museum was convened in the Mother See.

In the museum, located in the 18th-century building called Ghazarapat and renovated by the sponsorship of Hovhannes Chilingaryan, around 200 unique and valuable paintings will be displayed, donated by Chilingaryan himself. There were also charcoal drawings, belonging to the renowned intellectual, the late Ruben Sevak, personal effects and documents, sacred historical items, valuable Armenian art works and pieces by Western artists.

Present at the opening ceremony were the members of the brotherhood of the Mother See; Archbishop Rafael Minsayan, spiritual leader of the Armenian Catholic Church in Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Eastern Europe; Haskim Poghosyan, minister of culture; Hranush Hakobyan, minister of diaspora and education and cultural workers.

After the Catholicos of All Armenians and Chilingaryan cut the ribbon, the guests entered the newly-renovated building. A blessing service was then performed.

At the conclusion of the blessing service, Rev. Asoghik Karapetyan, director of the Museums and Archives of the Mother See, gave the opening remarks. Karapetyan presented the valuable collection displayed at the museum. Ruben Mirzakhanyan, dean of the Armenian State Khachatur Abovyan Pedagogical University, expressed his appreciation, thanking the Catholicos of All Armenians and Chilingaryan for their efforts in opening the museum. Mirzakhanyan also noted that the museum would become one of the most important cultural centers in the lives

of Armenians.

Chilingarian, benefactor of the museum, and nephew of Sevak, also spoke. "Today we witness a miracle, as the memory of the martyr of the Great Armenian Genocide of 1915, renowned poet Ruben Sevak was resurrected and immortalized on this sacred land," he stated in part, expressing his gratitude to Karekin II for implementing the pro-

ject of the museum. Chilingaryan extended to the Catholicos the appreciation and warm greetings from Sevak's daughter, Shamiram Sevak.



Karekin II presides over the opening of the museum.

become a perpetually ringing bell tower, which will be heard all over the world and fulfill the efforts in achieving worldwide recognition of the Armenian Genocide," he said.

Karekin II went on to add, "This museum becomes the immortal voice of the past, present and future, reborn from the dead, rising once again and attaining a path through life. Today in

rebuttal to the crimes committed, we answer with immortalization of the memory of the honest son and martyr of our nation; for the demolition – reparation; for the destruction – reconstruction and for death – life."

He then expressed his appreciation to the Chilingaryan for his sincere commitment, ardent spirit and honest philanthropy. "Honorable Mr. Chilingaryan, your dream of many years came true in the Spiritual Centre of All Armenians, Holy Echmiadzin. The Ruben Sevak Museum, founded in the historical Ghazarapat building, together with the Armenian Genocide Memorial founded by Catholicos Vazgen I, will eternally keep the memory of the Genocide victims shining and embolden the spirit to protect our fair trial and the message of immortality of our nation," he said.

Nazani Teaches Art to Artsakh Schoolchildren

By Kristine Aghalaryan

MIJNAVAN, Artsakh (Hetq) – Herkinaz Avetisyan, 27-year-old student at Yerevan's Art Institute, recently made a life-changing decision. She decided to interrupt her studies and move a town in the extreme southwest of Artsakh on the banks of the Arax River.

The reason was simple. Herkinaz wanted to teach fine arts to the pupils at the local branch of the Berdzor Art School.

The young woman made her decision to move in February, after meeting with the director of the school. Nazani, as she is called by the locals, toured the area, liked what she saw and decided to stay.

"Now, all the war ruins are covered with greenery. In February, when I first visited, they stood out in stark contrast. The impression they left was terrible. I had visited the museum in Stepanakert and saw the photos of the Armenians who gave their lives. Artsakh needs many things. I simply decided to do my share," Avetisyan said.

The young woman comes from the town of Ashtarak in Armenia. Her decision to move and live by herself in Artsakh did not go over well with her



Herkinaz Avetisyan

family of traditionalists. Her father was so upset that he did not speak to her for a long time. Her mother, naturally concerned about her daughter moving to a place where she knew no one, tried to talk her out of it. But their efforts were to no avail.

The authorities in Artsakh are attempting to resettle Minjnavan with Armenians. Avetisyan thus contacted Robert Matevosyan, who heads the government's resettlement program for the Kashatagh administrative province. She did not receive much in the way of assistance.

"He said he had no transportation or fuel. So he asked the director of the arts school to help. The director came and picked me up," said Avetisyan, adding that the local authorities focus

more on families than individuals.

She eventually took up residence in an unoccupied house there. The school gave her a wood stove and some firewood to get through the winter.

Even though Avetisyan hadn't graduated from the State Academy of Fine Arts, she had completed her studies at the Terlemezian Fine Arts School and was confident that she possessed the skills and knowledge to teach the children of the resettled fami-

lies.

The young woman has been teaching for the past seven months and says her desire to stay grows stronger by the day. And she has started to pick up the painter's brush once again.

"The natural beauty of the place gets by creative juices flowing. It has been quite a while since I've painted," Avetisyan.

For the moment, Avetisyan is focused on her work and hardly thinks about her personal life. She and the director of the art school have been exploring ways to combine her artistic work and teaching.

"If I had to decide between teaching and working, I would remain and continue with my artistic work," said Avetisyan.



INTERNATIONAL

Argentina Armenians Protested Istanbul Candidacy for Summer 2020 Games

PROTEST, from page 1

that Erdogan, who still denies the Armenian Genocide and recently repressed his people in Taksim Square and has jailed dozens of journalists, should recognize the rights of the Kurdish people and end its aggressive foreign policy that destabilizes the region if he wants to nominate Turkey again as the Olympic Games host."

In voting Saturday in Buenos Aires, the International Olympic Committee picked Tokyo over the two other finalists, Madrid and Istanbul.

The Japanese capital previously had hosted the Summer Games in 1964.

Japan's bid for 2020 billed the city as the safe choice — despite radiation leaking from the Fukushima nuclear plant. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe personally made a presentation to the committee and promised an effective cleanup.

"I am so happy, I am overjoyed," Abe told reporters at the post-announcement press conference, according to CNN "I would like to share this joy with the people back home. We've received so much support from the people of the IOC and I would also like to express my support to them. And to the people around the world. A safe and secure Olympic Games will be staged by us — I think that was another hope for their support. I would like to pledge that we

will be discharging this responsibility."

Abe said Tokyo would try to stage successful Games to thank the world for its support after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that devastated parts of Japan.

"Sport has the power to unite people," he said. "We experienced that after the earthquake and tsunami in 2011, when athletes came to our country and helped us. Japan needs the power of sport, we need hopes and dreams."

Tokyo's bid came in at \$5 billion to \$6 billion, compared to \$19 billion pledged by Istanbul, said Ed Hula, editor and founder of aroundtherings.com, which covers the business and politics of the Olympic movement.

But Tokyo's government has already amassed a \$4.9-billion Olympic fund to pay to prepare for the Games, Hula said. And a \$1 billion national stadium that will be used for the athletic events and the Opening Ceremonies will already have been built for the rugby World Cup in 2017 and is not considered an Olympic expense.

Turkey would have been the first Muslim country to host the games, and with a median age of less than 30, one of the youngest. However, it missed out for the fifth time.

Istanbul would have been "a more emotional choice," Hula said. But its

huge bid would have been needed to fund infrastructure improvements, including modernization of its transportation system.

Turkey's border with Syria also might have troubled some committee members, he said.

And this summer, the image of Turkish sport took a hit when about three dozen athletes tested positive for drugs, he said.

June's rioting in Istanbul's Taksim Square may also have tainted the city's hopes, though Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan tried to persuade IOC members ahead of Saturday's vote.

"We live at a time when our region and the world crave for peace," Erdogan said as part of Istanbul's final presentation. "And at this critical moment, we would like to send a strong message of peace to the whole world from Istanbul, the city of friendship and brotherhood."

Tokyo led after a first round of voting Saturday but fell short of a majority, with 42. Istanbul and Madrid tied for second on 26 votes each, and a 49-45 tiebreaker vote put the Turkish city in the final runoff with Tokyo, which won the deciding vote, 60 to Istanbul's 36.

The 2016 Summer Olympics will be in Brazil. The Winter Olympics will be held in Russia in 2014 and South Korea in 2018.

Amsterdam Names Passageway 'Armenian Bridge'

AMSTERDAM (Public Radio of Armenia) — An ancient bridge, which was a frequent passageway for Armenian merchants in the 17th century, has been named the "Armenian Bridge," thanks to the efforts of one man, 60-year-old Nikolai Romashuk.

Jerusalem-born Romashuk, whose mother was Armenian, emigrated to Holland in 1976 and settled in the northern city of Assen. Since then he has been an active member of the Dutch-Armenian community.

He said that he spent years researching the history of the Julfa Armenian merchants at the Dutch National Archives at the University of Amsterdam. And after that several more years to convince the Amsterdam municipality that naming the old bridge after the Armenian merchants was a worthwhile idea.

To help get the green light from city hall, Romashuk also pointed out that he had discovered the graves of a number of Armenian priests and merchants in the Old Church in the heart of Amsterdam. One such grave bears the number 444. To further buttress his case of the long-time and Armenian-Dutch relations, he added that Soviet Armenian soldiers, veterans of the Second World War, are buried in the Dutch city of Leusden.

This is not the first time Romashuk has raised the Armenian profile in his adopted country. Some years ago,



"Armenian Bridge" in Amsterdam

Romashuk — founder and chairman of the Armenian Social and Cultural Foundation — helped bring to Assen a huge *khachkar* from Armenia. Now every year, on April 24, Assen Armenians commemorate, in front of the *khachkar*, the Genocide of the Armenians by Turkey in 1915. There are 300 to 400 Armenians in the city, most-

ly from Armenia, Iraq, Iran and Turkey.

Romashuk has also helped establish an Armenian cemetery in his town — the only one in Holland. It is named after Hrant Dink. Time and funds permitting, he also publishes *Parev Tsez*, the only Armenian journal in Holland. Married to a Dutch woman, Romashuk has three children and two grandchildren.

Argentinian VP Hosts Ambassador Melikyan

BUENOS AIRES (Prensa) — Vice President of Argentina Amado Boudou welcomed Armenian Ambassador to Argentina Vahagn Melikyan during an August 27 visit to discuss cooperation agreements between parliaments of both countries.

"We are aware of the importance of parliamentary diplomacy, so we want to strengthen our relationship with Argentina," said Melikyan after the meeting that took place in the Grey Hall of the Senate. "We attach special importance to direct relationship between members of the legislative bodies of both countries," he added.

Boudou was accompanied by General Director of International Relations of the Senate Sabino Vaca Narvaja and General Director of Corporate Image and Information Technology Sergio Poggi. The diplomats began preparation on a partnership agreement and technical cooperation for co-production of

audiovisual content to be broadcasted in Argentina and Armenia.

During that trip, Boudou highlighted the "important relationships between Argentina and the Armenian community," stressing that the "Armenian community in our country is very important and is deeply involved in the issues of Argentina."



Ambassador Vahagn Melikyan, left, with Vice President Amado Boudou of Argentina

International News

French Armenians Protest Turkish Airlines/ Soccer Team Partnership

MARSEILLE (Public Radio of Armenia) — French-Armenians of Marseille protest against a sponsorship deal between Olympique de Marseille (OM) and the Turkish Airlines, journalist Jean Eckian reported from France.

The prestigious French soccer club Olympique de Marseille (OM), signed on August 30 a partnership agreement with Turkish Airlines.

In a statement issued by Coordination Council of Armenian Organizations in France (CCAF-South), representatives of the Armenian community of France noted that this partnership "between the Turkish national carrier Turkish Airlines and Olympique de Marseille raised the anger of the French-Armenians, all supporters of the good image of Marseille."

"They don't understand that this alliance representing the denialist Turkish state, the successor of the perpetrator of the Armenian Genocide, is unbearable. We all love Olympique de Marseille, and therefore we feel like it's a betrayal. It is an affront to the memory of the genocide victims and the dignity of the descendants of genocide survivors on the eve of the centenary of the genocide," the statement reads.

In addition, many supporters of the OM Club have announced boycott to the 2013-2014 season.

This deal signed for the 2013/2014 season will promote the arrival of the Turkish company on the Marseille airport. Recall that Turkish Airlines has inaugurated on June 4 a new direct service between Istanbul and Marseille.

The CEO of Marseille Turkish Airlines, Ebran Ipeck, said he was satisfied with the agreement reached with OM.

Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister to Visit Yerevan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Deputy foreign affairs minister of Azerbaijan Mahmud Mamedkuliev and head of Azerbaijani representation in European Union Fuad Iskenderov was scheduled to arrive in Yerevan this past week.

According to the press service of Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry, the aim of the meeting is participation in the third non-formal meeting of Eastern Partnership countries' foreign ministers, which will be held in Yerevan on September 12-13.

It is the last preparation event before the "Eastern Partnership" summit, which will take place in November in Vilnius.

New OSCE US Co-chair Determined to Settle Karabagh Conflict

BAKU (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The new US co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group James Warlick seems to be determined to settle the Karabagh conflict, indenting to "pursue his activities in line with principles of realism and pragmatism."

At a Baku-hosted briefing, Warlick urged to find a way to achieve piece and prosperity in the region on the threshold of the 20th anniversary of ceasefire.

"It's time for the Minsk Group, Azerbaijan, Armenia and other countries in the region to take necessary steps to achieve a lasting peace in Karabagh," Azeri media quoted the co-chair as saying.

"I'm here to better understand the situation. I'm not here for the past, I'm here to help build a conflict-free future," the co-chair said, expressing hope for the conflicting parties to realize that the settlement will be to everyone's benefit.

Upon completion of his Baku visit, Warlick will further travel to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh. This is the first visit of Warlick, who assumed the post last month, in the capacity of the OSCE MG co-chair.

Earlier, Warlick passed President Barack Obama's message to his Azeri counterpart Ilham Aliyev.

In the statement, the US leader urges for new effort to achieve compromise in the Nagorno Karabagh conflict settlement.

Correction

The editorial titled "Anarchy in the Hierarchy," which started on the front page of the August 29 issue of the *Mirror-Spectator*, incorrectly stated that Patriarch Mesrob Moutafian has passed away. Indeed, he is incapacitated but alive and the day-to-day operation of the Patriarchate is being handled by Archbishop Aram Ateshian. We sincerely regret the error.



INTERNATIONAL

Kashatagh Receives Influx of Syrian Armenian Families

By Kristine Aghalaryan

KASHATAGH, Artsakh (Hetq) – The following is an interview with the governor of the Kashatagh (Lachin) Administrative District, Souren Khachatryan, about the resettlement efforts there.

Kristine Aghalaryan (KA): Mr. Khachatryan, how is the resettlement project going in Kashatagh?

Souren Khachatryan (SK): I can only speak about the last three years since I became administrator of the district. Prior to my coming on board the district had a population of some 8,000. Today, we have 10,000. So far this year, 43 families have moved here. That translates to 144 individuals. Seven families, 22 individuals, have left, which is only natural. People leave because they get a better job somewhere else or

for family reasons.

KA: Where do you resettle the newcomers; in the towns or villages, or in Berdzor, the district capital?

SK: We're focusing on resettling people in the south. The government allocates building materials donated by various benefactors. We want the newcomers to settle down and work, and we are doing what we can to facilitate this.

KA: How many Syrian Armenian families reside in Kashatagh?

SK: Currently, there are 29 families living here and another 40 families are on our waiting list, as we have no place to put them right now. Five of the families stay in our guest houses. The Assist Your Brother organization has funded the construction of a 12-unit apartment building in Kovsakan. It will be finished next month. We are also finishing a nine unit building in Ishkhanadzor with funds from the Kashatagh Benevolent Fund.

KA: Has the government found work for these Syrian Armenians?

SK: We have done our best to find them jobs in the public sector and with various organizations. Our goal is to have each family earning at least 40-50,000 dram to cover the basics. Indeed, a few of the locals have complained that these newcomers are getting preferential treatment, but the majority understand that they are our brothers and sisters and need our help.

KA: Will most Syrian Armenians stay permanently or are they just temporary residents?

SK: I really can't say for sure. Some will definitely stay, but what the rest will do if peace returns to Syria is something I can't predict. We can't keep them here against their will but, as I've said, we are doing what we can to make the move easier.

KA: What's the job situation like in Kashatagh? What skills are in demand here?

SK: We're forthcoming with people looking

for jobs here. If someone drives a tractor or is a mechanic, we tell that person to go south and get involved in the agricultural sector. We tell others that animal husbandry and bee-keeping are jobs up north. Berdzor only offers public sector jobs and there are long waiting lists for those. Because of this, we want to get people resettled out in the countryside, working the land.

We need teachers and medical professionals in the villages. There is a surplus in the towns. But life in a village isn't easy, especially for someone from town. They want hot and cold running water round the clock. That's not the reality.

KA: What is the total yearly budget of Kashatagh?

SK: It is five billion dram. This includes various assistance packages for large families and relatives of those who died in the war. Some 150 million goes towards the distribution of building materials.

KA: How much of the land is currently being cultivated?

SK: Today, around 20,000 hectares is farmed. Most of the crop – wheat, barley and corn – is sold over the border in Syunik. There are vast expanses of good land on the banks of the Arax not being farmed.

As Syria's War Rages, Region's Christians Hold their Breath

By Christa Case Bryant

DAMASCUS (*Christian Science Monitor*) – Syrian rebels linked with Al Qaeda have reportedly taken over the historic Christian town of Maaloula, deepening concerns that without the protection of President Bashar al-Assad, Syria's Christians, roughly 10 percent of the population, could be left vulnerable to mass emigration or persecution.

"I want [Assad] to stay in power because he was very good to Christians," said Athraa, a young Syrian mother who recently fled from her village on the Syria-Iraq border to Jordan with her husband and two sons.

"There was religious freedom for Christians with Bashar. We were not missing anything," she said, speaking several days before Maaloula fell in her simple Amman apartment, with suitcases teetering atop a rundown armoire. "We are expecting what has happened in Iraq to happen in Syria as well."

Indeed, from Egypt to Lebanon to Syria, many Christians are worried that the rise of political Islam and heightened militancy could have a disproportionate impact on already beleaguered Christian minorities – just as in Iraq over the past decade. Roughly half of Iraq's one million Christians left the country, constituting at times 20 percent of Iraqi refugees though they made up only 5 percent of the overall population.

At a conference on challenges facing Arab Christians hosted by Jordan last week, more than 50 prominent Christian leaders as well as a handful of top Islamic scholars pushed for interfaith dialog to help quell rising sectarianism. They emphasized the key role Christians have played in Arab societies for 2,000 years, including well before the advent of Islam, and the danger not only to Christian individuals but to the societies as a whole if Christians were to be pushed out altogether.

"This [Christian] presence throughout these

ages is [now] aced with so many challenges that shake the pillars and the foundation of Arab culture and the Christian component within it – especially with the rise in emigration, which negatively affects Arab Christians," said Armenian Patriarch Nurhan Mannougian of Jerusalem.

Jordan's King Abdullah, who invited the conference participants to lunch in the Royal Court, said in a short address beforehand that Jordan stands as a model of coexistence and fraternity between Muslims and Christians – not out of benevolence, but necessity.

"We also believe that the protection of the rights of Christians is a duty rather than a favor," said the king. "Christians have always played a key role in building our societies and defending our nations."

In a hilly neighborhood of Amman, a final hymn wafts out of the softly lit windows of the Jesuit Fathers church as the evening breeze picks up. After the service, dozens of Iraqi refugees file out between the simple blue chairs, touching or kissing the cross on their way out.

Among them is Mofed, who owned a photo shop in Baghdad. One day, he said, some men came to his shop and gave him three options: become Muslim; pay \$70,000 as a tax levied on non-Muslims, known as *ajizya*; or be killed along with his family.

So nine months ago he and his wife fled to Jordan, and have found refuge in this church, run by Father Raymond Moussalli of the Chaldean Catholic church.

Androus from Mosul, Iraq, and another member of Moussalli's congregation, said he received a similar demand via telephone.

"Because you are infidels, you have to pay *jizya*," he recalled being told over the phone. "Either you pay *jizya*, or we will kill you or your son."

Mofed and Androus, together with their families, are awaiting visas, hoping to start a new life in the West.

In the nearby neighborhood of Germana, Ridda and Shafiq are also waiting – to go home to Syria. They sit on a few thin mattresses and plastic chairs. A small calendar on the bare walls proclaims, "I the Lord do not change."

Anas, their son, said he got threatening messages back in Syria: "Your money is for us to take, your wife is for us to sleep with, and your children are for killing. This is all halal," or permissible under Islamic law. He escaped with his wife and children to Jordan, but not before his liquor store had been burned down.

Ridda, the husband, was kidnapped by rebels for a week until the Syrian Army got close, prompting the rebels to flee. He went home to Damascus to pack his bags and discovered that during his captivity, his house had been hit in a rocket attack. He packed his bags for Amman, where his family was already waiting.

They have been here for a year now, but are hoping to return as soon as there is security –

no matter who is in power. But they are clearly concerned by the examples of other countries, where Islamist forces gained power after the secular regime was toppled.

"We see the countries in front of us – Iraq, Libya, Egypt – the Brotherhood took charge and look what happened in one year," said Ridda. Egypt's Copts, which comprise roughly 10 percent of Egypt's 90 million citizens, have faced escalated kidnappings, killings, and church burnings since the 2011 uprising that ousted President Hosni Mubarak.

"If the Brotherhood took over in Syria, it would not be the same," adds Ridda. "We would be like Lebanon, living in cantons – every sect with its own area."

Indeed, one of the most pressing questions is where Christians would fit in a state that draws more heavily on Islamic law. Arab Christian leaders at last week's conference repeatedly emphasized the need for equal citizenship rights and fear some Islamist interpretations of the concept of the *ummah* – a global nation of Muslims across political borders – would preclude that. "Ummah would cancel the concept of a home country and the pluralistic nature of a country," said Gregorios III Laham, Melkite Greek Patriarch of Antioch, in a panel on Syria.

Bishop Munib Younan of the evangelical Lutheran church in Jordan and the Holy Land encouraged his fellow Christians to "battle with political Islam and not to be afraid of it," emphasizing the need for engagement with all Muslims not just for religious understanding but to discuss the "proper relation of religion and state."

As both Muslims and Christians grapple with the tremendous upheaval in the region, Sheikh Ali Gomaa, grand mufti emeritus of Egypt and one of four senior Muslim scholars who attended last week's conference, condemned the attacks, church burnings and humiliation of Christians in Egypt.

"This is a huge violation not only on the humanitarian level but on the Islamic level as well," he said, contrasting the heightened bitterness with the calmer days of his youth, when he would play soccer with Christian boys and share food with their families. "It is incumbent upon us to eliminate this bitterness and tension which is victimizing our brethren in Egypt."

He said Friday sermons pose a key challenge for Islamic leaders espousing better relations between Muslims and Christians. "Sometimes our Islamic colleagues would curse Christians and that would be transmitted to Christian neighbors," he said. "Muslims need to change their Islamic discourse."

Amid all the upheaval, the same faith that has made Christians something of a target has also provided comfort for some.

"I believe in Christ. The peace of Jesus is in my heart," said Athraa, the young mother of two, wearing pink Crocs and hot-pink nail polish. "Always the Bible is open. What else will give me power? The Word of God gives me power."

Geneva Exhibition Raises Awareness of Armenian Genocide

GENEVA, from page 1

from the international community, added Parsamyan.

Dr. Isabel Apawo Phiri of the WCC voiced appreciation for the exhibition project and affirmed the WCC's support of the initiative.

"We acknowledge and recognize the injustice faced by Armenian Christians during the genocide," said Phiri. "It is a pity that after so many years the Armenian Genocide is still not acknowledged. This is why initiatives like this exhibition are important," she added.

Phiri also mentioned the WCC's efforts in the past toward recognition and condemnation of the Armenian genocide.

The WCC sixth Assembly at Vancouver, Canada in 1983 issued a report focusing on the historic realities of the Armenian massacre and its aftermath, while the WCC member churches have commemorated an annual remembrance day of the Armenian Genocide for several years.

The exhibition displays banners in English and French, attracting the local and international community in Geneva, and will travel to other countries.

Simon Barrow, co-director of the religion and society think-tank Ekklesia, which has been helping to raise awareness of the Armenian Genocide since 2007, has welcomed the initiative.

"Facing up to crimes of the history with honesty and addressing the pain of the past with hope is essential to negotiating a better future for us all in a still-divided world," he said.

"This ecumenically supported exhibition will help in the task of recovering a proper memory of what the Armenian people endured during the first genocide of the twentieth century, in addition to developing an understanding of how and why it has resonated down the ensuing decades. It will also assist with the healing of memories and the encouragement of a common quest for justice."

Ekklesia associate Dr. Harry Hagopian, an ecumenical, legal and political consultant and commentator on Middle East and interfaith issues, is also an adviser to the Primate of the Armenian Church in UK & Ireland, and author of *The Armenian Church in the Holy Land*. He has worked closely with the Campaign for Recognition of the Armenian Genocide (UK).

Armenia Stuns Czechs With Injury-Time Win

SOCCER, from page 1

Armenia took an early lead when a defensive error gave the visitors possession in front of the goal and Karlen Mkrtchyan's fierce drive into the top corner gave a diving Cech no chance.

The home side started the game brightly with midfielder Petr Jiracek firing over the bar with only the keeper to beat.

Armenia goalkeeper Roman Berezovski, who was forced off through injury in the second half, also had to punch away a Tomas Sivok header later in the first half.

Armenia has moved level with the Czechs in third on nine points after seven games.

Community News

Managing Director Tom Garabedian Continues ATP's Mission

By Gabriella Gage
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – In early 2012, Tom Garabedian was named the new managing director of the Armenian Tree Project (ATP), a non-profit organization founded to promote Armenia's reforestation and subsequent socioeconomic developments.

For Garabedian, a former actuary consultant, the decision to get involved was an easy one. "There is no question that more emphasis needs to be focused on Armenia's environment. The Tree Project is one of the key organizations whose sole focus is on Armenia's environment, and that is personally motivating," he said.

Prior to joining the ATP team, Garabedian had worked at Aon Hewitt, retiring in early 2011. He first joined ATP as a management consultant for its



ATP Managing Director Tom Garabedian

Executive Committee. "I had an opportunity to interview management and staff both in Watertown and Yerevan and was able to develop a sense of ATP's strengths and to identify areas needing improvement," said Garabedian. From there, he took his skills managing both people and projects and his newly acquired intimate knowledge of the organization into his new role as managing director of ATP in early 2012, taking over for Jeff Masarjian.

Garabedian is responsible for all of the operations of ATP both here and in Armenia. He oversees the finances of the organization including fundraising and expense perspectives, the programs underway in Armenia and staff assessment and development. While he has far-reaching responsibilities, Garabedian is quick to credit his fellow ATP staffers with aiding him in these endeavors. "We have very competent managers both in Watertown and in Armenia, so that relieves some of the pressure on the Managing Director," said Garabedian.

While he does help to oversee operations in Armenia, his managerial focus is in the US and Director of ATP Armenia Operations Areg Maghakian has day-to-day control of activities there. "I usually plan three trips to Armenia each year to meet with our managers, review our

see ATP, page 16



AGBU Vice President and Chair of the AGBU Schools of Southern California Sinan Sinanian congratulates AGBU Eagle Scout Arek Shirvanian, who oversaw the construction of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School's new locker room. From right, Diocesan Primate Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, MDS Board of Trustees member Dr. Silva Karayan, Principal Hagop Hagopian and Father Shnorh Demirjian look on at the athletic room's ribbon cutting ceremony.

AGBU Scout Unveils New Athletic Room for Manoogian-Demirdjian School

LOS ANGELES – "I left MDS after the eighth grade, but my heart has been there ever since. I'm really proud I was able to realize my goal as an AGBU Scout while supporting my alma mater." These are the words of Arek Shirvanian, a long-time AGBU Scout, attended the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School (MDS) through middle school.

Last year, when the 17-year-old decided to earn his Eagle Scout badge by developing a community service project, he knew it was the perfect opportunity to return to his old campus.

As Shirvanian recalls, "I wanted not only to achieve my Eagle Scout title, but at the same time to give back to my AGBU school." Because of him, when MDS students headed back to their classrooms last month, something special awaited them: a brand-new locker room, which Shirvanian made possible.

For Shirvanian, turning his goal into reality meant managing every phase of the project from start to finish. He began by making door-to-door solicitations and petitioning local vendors to donate materials. Soon, support was secured, plans were in place, and he had assembled a team of adults and students who shared his passion. Shirvanian's friends from MDS, the AGBU Scouts group, as well as his current high school joined forces to overhaul the space. Together, they worked on the demolitions, woodwork, painting and varnishing, all under Shirvanian's supervision.

see SCOUT, page 7



AGBU Eagle Scout Arek Shirvanian presents the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School's new locker room, which he built with support from the community.

Evening Under the Stars at St. Nersess Seminary

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. – St. Nersess Armenian Seminary will host its final Evening Under the Stars Benefit Reception and Silent Auction on its current New Rochelle campus, before moving to its new Armonk campus in mid-2014. Guests will gather on Saturday, September 28, under an elegant candlelit tent, enjoy hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, live music and warm camaraderie, all while supporting the mission and operation of the seminary, including youth programming.

Now in its sixth year, the event will be the biggest one yet. According to Anoush Givelekian, this year's Stars chairperson, who assumed the role from Yeretgin Paulette Doudoukjian, the event founder, "Guests will reconnect with old friends, meet new ones and celebrate the successes of the seminary." There will also be an extensive silent auction which will be available to all on the seminary website, and to those in attendance. "We have amazing supporters of the seminary who have donated sports tickets, camp sessions, incredible food,



St. Nersess Board Members conversing

travel and entertainment items, home furnishings, gifts, and services, and more," says Alyssa Keleshian Bonomo, this year's silent auction chairperson. Bidding will open online at www.stnersess.edu starting September 20 and will remain open for both reception attendees and those from afar on home computers until bidding closes promptly at 10 p.m. the evening of September 28. The highest bidders for each item will be announced near the conclusion of the reception.

"This reception has become a highly-anticipated and important fundraiser for the Seminary," said board member, Suzanne Akian, adding, "It is an outstanding way for anyone whose life has been positively impacted by St. Nersess, to give back to this most valuable institution to the Armenian Church here in America."

The reception will begin at 7:30 p.m., after an evening vesper service in the chapel starting at 7 p.m. Past St. Nersess Summer Conference volunteers will greet and serve guests, adding to the long standing connection everyone shares with the seminary. Those enjoying the evening can hear from these young adults as they, as well as the seminary dean, Rev. Mardiros Chevian, and board members, speak about the past achievements, ongoing successes, and exciting future of the seminary.

Reservations may be made online at stnersess.edu or by calling the seminary.



Rev. Mardiros Chevian reminiscing with former summer conference attendees.



COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU Pasadena Day Camp Doubles Enrollment in Second Year

PASADENA, Calif. — The AGBU Pasadena Summer Day Camp is celebrating the end of another successful season, one that was marked by record-breaking enrollment. More than 140 campers participated in this summer's program, more than twice the number that registered in 2012, its pilot year. For six fun-filled weeks, from June 24 to August 2, they enjoyed meeting new friends, playing sports, making crafts, cooking kid-friendly recipes and mastering computer skills.

The AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Center offered the perfect venue for campers to create and learn with a team of experienced counselors. The participants took full advantage of the building's gymnasium, customized dance and music rooms, commercially equipped kitchen, computer classroom outfitted with the latest digital technology, and a stage for musical

and theatrical performances, all of which is surrounded by vast outdoor space. When they weren't at the center, the campers, who ranged in age from 3 to 13, were exploring some of Southern California's most popular attractions.

Camp Director Garine Seuylemezian credits this summer's soar in attendance to the open communication between parents and staff, which allowed the camp to cater to each child's interests. As Seuylemezian commented, "We made a point of asking for feedback from last year's families and we listened. By popular demand, we added chess and martial arts as new activities this year, and we opened the camp up to kids younger than six years old with a specialized program for toddlers." If anyone could successfully integrate parents' suggestions into a new curriculum, it is Seuylemezian. She has been at the helm of the AGBU Pasadena Summer Day Camp



Campers and counselors at the Pasadena camp



Children spent the day at the Long Beach Aquarium.

since its inception and brings to the position a strong background in Education and Child Development along with years of involvement with AGBU.

Drawing from that experience, this year Seuylemezian oversaw a staff of 27 activity leaders and counselors as well as more than 15 volunteers. Together, they created a safe and nurturing environment where youth could develop an appreciation for their cultural heritage and form lasting friendships with their Armenian peers. It was a sense of community that many

of the staffers knew well, having participated in AGBU programs themselves from a young age. "We pride ourselves in the fact that most of our counselors and activity leaders are alumni of AGBU schools and programs who have chosen to dedicate part of their summer to give back," stated AGBU Western District Chair Krekor Karageuzian. "The dedication and attention to detail that they offer campers is unparalleled." It is that level of commitment that is sure to bring many more campers back to the AGBU Pasadena Summer Day Camp for years to come.

St. Nersess Student Body Grows to Nine Seminarians

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — Following the Labor Day weekend, on September 3, St. Nersess welcomed three new seminarians to its student body, bringing its total to nine seminarians. "It is exciting to begin our new school year with nine students," remarked Rev. Mardiros Chevian, seminary dean. "To help them get better acquainted with each other and with St. Nersess, all the students enjoyed an orientation retreat at the Ararat Center led by the Rev. Yeprem Kelegian," he added.

One of the new seminarians, Deacon Narek Garabedian, was born in Canada and is a graduate of the Armenian Seminary of Jerusalem. He recently married his wife, Nune, in Armenia and joined the student body at St. Nersess to pursue his Master of Divinity degree. Also joining the student body are two women, Kathryn Ashbahian of New Jersey and Arpi Nakashian of Jerusalem. They will be pursuing Master of Arts degrees, with concentrations in youth ministry and Christian education. The remaining seminarians who are continuing their studies from last year, are: Deacon Vahe Bagdasarian, Deacon Aram Kaberjian, Saro Kalayjian, Edgar Gevorgyan, Eric Vozzy and Levon Asdourian.

As the only Armenian seminary in the western world, St. Nersess is committed to preparing priests and lay leaders for the Armenian Church in North America, whose education, competence and leadership ability bring honor and vigor to the Armenian Church. The seminarians and staff look forward to relocating to the seminary's new campus in Armonk, NY, in mid-2014.

DIRAN JEBEJIAN PHOTO



Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean, with nine St. Nersess seminarians

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COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU Scout Unveils New Athletic Room for Manoogian-Demirdjian School

JESSICA ASSATOURIAN PHOTO



Members of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School's Booster Club and Parent Teacher Organization gather on the school's new soccer field, made possible with over \$120,000 they fundraised.

SCOUT, from page 5

sion. The result, after close to 1,000 hours of work: a new and welcomed addition to the MDS gymnasium.

As the school year kicks off, the MDS students have a new opportunity to show the same dedication that Shirvanian has, to both their school and their community. Keeping with the annual MDS tradition, at the opening ceremony, AGBU Vice President and Chairman of AGBU Schools in Southern California Sinan Sinanian formally announced the opening of the school year. MDS Principal Hagop Hagopian also addressed the student body, stating, "Our expectations are not confined to your academic outcomes only, but also to the character traits you should be developing under the caring and nurturing guidance of your teachers in order to become honorable, well-rounded and truly successful future citizens." The students and the faculty are already up to the challenge; Vice Principal of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian High School Anahid Nalbandian shared that MDS has been accredited, for a six-year term, with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The speakers were joined by Diocesan Primate Archbishop

Hovnan Derderian, who delivered his own encouraging remarks.

Students wasted no time rushing out of the locker room and onto the new MDS soccer field, which was the product of fundraising by the Alumni Association, Booster Club, Parent Teacher Organization and Soccer Field Task Force. Those groups brought in a total of \$120,000 to revamp the grounds. They were among the 1,000 students, faculty members, family and friends to attend the annual MDS opening ceremony. As they watched the students score the first of many goals on their new arena, they knew it marked the start of another successful year to come.

George Arut Interns at Florida Supreme Court

By John Brooks

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — George Arut, a young Armenian student, served as an intern for Chief Justice Ricky Polston this past summer.

His family moved to the US in January 1991 and Arut was born later that year. After spending most of his childhood in Cleveland, Ohio, Arut moved with his family to Florida in 2001.

After going to public school from kindergarten through the fifth grade, Arut was homeschooled from middle school onwards, teaching himself via computer, since his parents were working hard to achieve their own version of the American Dream. A straight "A" student, he skipped grades and finishing high school at the age of 16. Arut was then accepted to the University of North Florida (UNF) with a Bright Futures Scholarship. Within three years he graduated Summa Cum Laude at the age of 19, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy.

From an early age Arut had told his parents that he would someday be an attorney. He applied to several law schools in his final year of college. Arut chose Florida Coastal School of Law and was offered a school scholarship. Currently, he is entering his final year of law school and will be graduating next year. At this rate, Arut will have a Juris Doctorate at age 22.

Because he was ranked the top student out of more than 500 students at his school, Arut was chosen to do a summer internship at the Florida Supreme Court in Tallahassee under Chief Justice Ricky Polston. Of this honor, Arut said, "Being at the Court has been a truly awesome, and certainly humbling, experience. Getting to see how the highest appellate court in the state operates is something that many people do not get to see, and I feel honored that I had the chance to do just that. Not to mention the fact that I got to meet some of the Justices, staff attorneys, and other employees of the Court in person, and see a few oral argument sessions live, too."

He added, "I even had the chance to help out high school students from Girls State in their mock oral arguments at the Court when they were in town, and to educate them on what law school is like. Then, to top it off, I met and interacted with several law students from across the state who were also interning at the Court. Overall, it was an experience that I will definitely take with me going forward."



Following the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School's opening ceremony, students play on their brand-new soccer field, the product of support from school committees, families and friends.

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New York METRO

Tekeyan Cultural Association Presents 'Perils of Politeness'

By Yeghishe Hajakian

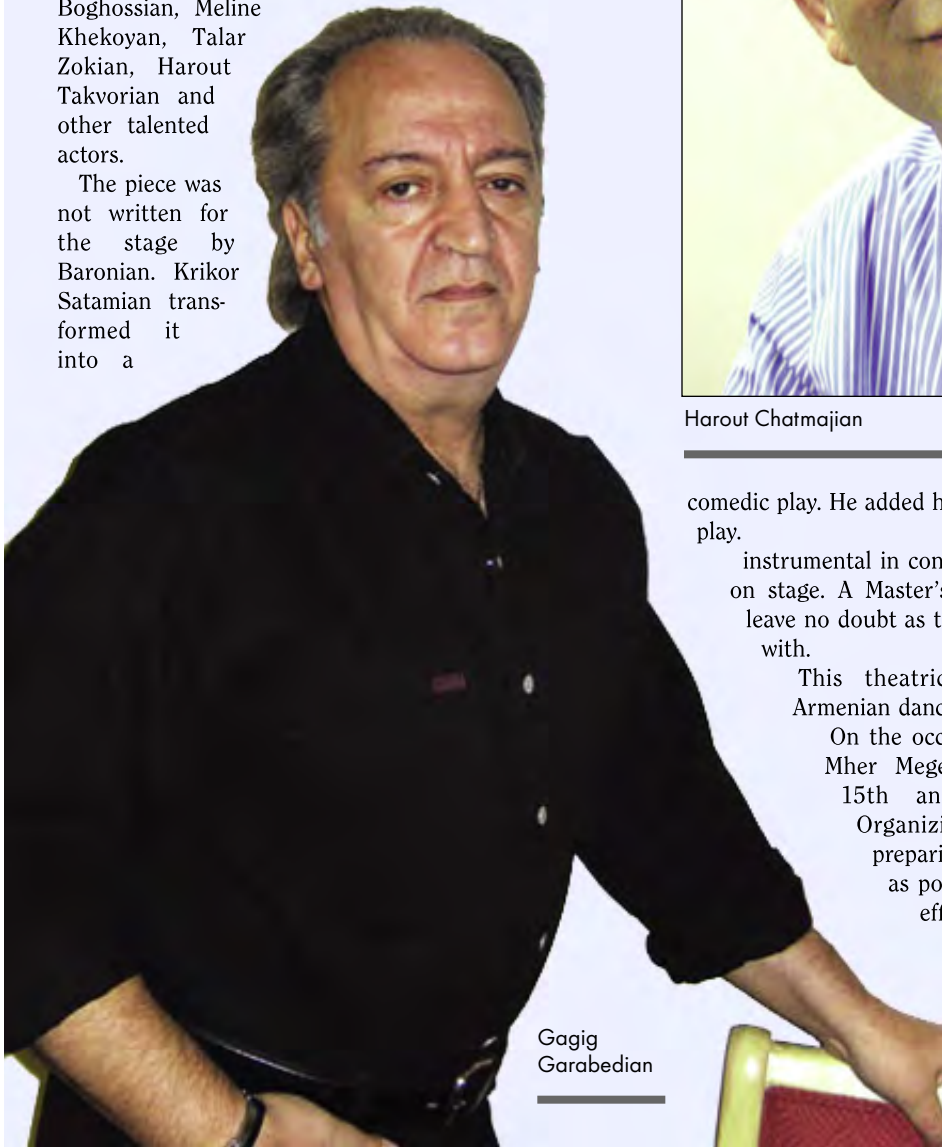
ENGLEWOOD, N.J. – The Greater New York Armenians have a rendezvous once again on November 23 and 24 this year with the Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) at the Dwight Englewood School.

A lot of laughs by Hagop Baronian again.

Gagik Garabedian has been invited from Armenia as the director of this comedy

“Perils of Politeness” (Kaghakavaroutian Venasneruh) is starring many veteran actors, including Harout Chatmajian, Missak Boghossian, Meline Khekoyan, Talar Zokian, Harout Takvorian and other talented actors.

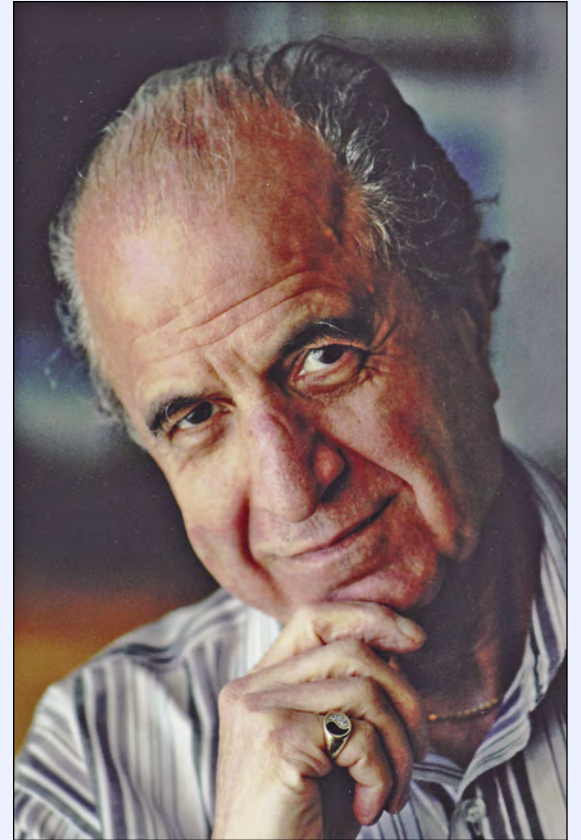
The piece was not written for the stage by Baronian. Krikor Satamian transformed it into a



Gagik
Garabedian



Harout Chatmajian



Missak Boghossian

comedic play. He added his own clever wordplay to the play.

instrumental in converting it to a comedic script on stage. A Master's touch by Satamian should leave no doubt as to how well this script is dealt with.

This theatrical piece has music and Armenian dance accompanying it.

On the occasion of the founding of the Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group's 15th anniversary this year, the Organizing Committee has been preparing this affair as meticulously as possible without sacrificing any efforts towards its successful achievement.

The Mher Megerdchian company has presented 18 works on stage with much acclaim in the last

15 years. It has been one of the few groups that have lasted so long on the shores of this country presenting the Armenian theater in the Armenian language.

It has to be mentioned that the formation of this group was the brainchild of Hagop Vartivarian who has also been the chairman of the Mher Megerdchian Group since its inception. Vartivarian has invested much time and energy along with financial support. His greatest desire has been to see the group flourish.

Among the plays performed have been “Once again Baronian” by Baronian, “My Heart's in the Highlands” by William Saroyan, “Servant of two Masters” by Carlo Goldoni, “The Eastern Dentist” by Baronian, “The Trap” by Robert Thomas, “Comedy of Errors” by Shakespeare, “Love and Laughter” by Yervant Odian and many more.

Call Marie Zokian at 201-745-8850 or Missak Boghossian at 212-819-0097 for tickets, which are priced at \$50, \$35 and \$25.

St. Thomas Food Festival and Bazaar on October 26-27

TENAFLY, N.J. – The St. Thomas Armenian Church announces that its annual food festival and bazaar will take place this year on Saturday, October 26, from noon to 9 p.m., and Sunday, October 27, from noon to 6 p.m. The Food Festival and Bazaar will take place on the church premises. The Bazaar is held indoors and admission and parking are free.

Authentic Armenian and Middle Eastern foods will be available continuously. In addition, the gourmet booth will offer homemade delicacies and pastries. All foods may be enjoyed on the premises or packaged for take-out. Those interested can dine in the church halls while listening or dancing to music provided by the DJ.

A variety of vendor booths, including jewelry, toys, books, handcrafts and boutique gift items for pre-Christmas shopping will present a selection of exciting merchandise. For interested vendors, some booths are still available by calling the church office.

Children's Fun activities will include the performance by a children's entertainer, as well as a clown with face painting, bouncer, cotton candy, games and more.

There is also a “White Elephant” booth for those who like exploring vintage and non-vintage treasures and value-priced merchandise.

A variety of valuable raffle prizes such as hand-made Oriental rug, 32” TV's, Notebook Computer, Apple iPod, etc., will add to the excitement of the two-day event. The winners will be announced at the raffle drawing on

Sunday afternoon during the bazaar.

For more information or directions, call the church office or visit the church website at www.stthomasarmenianchurch.com.

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New York
METRO

Family-Style Gathering Launches TCA Center Events

ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J. – The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of Greater New York held its first “Agoumpi Or” gathering at its brand-new, renovated center, on Friday, September 6.



From left, Irma Der Stepanian, Shoghig Chalian and Nver Gulekjian

A total of 70 guests enjoyed the homemade food, Armenian music and family atmosphere.

This was the first event of many such planned gatherings to come. The guests from New York and New Jersey were enjoying their social interactions and engaged in many interesting subjects of interest.

The ladies’ committee was instrumental in the success of the evening. They provided the homemade dishes, decorated the hall and planned the program.

The current chairman, Hagop Vartivarian, welcomed the guests and spoke of the upcoming events that would take place at the TCA hall. He had special remarks, about the effort and work that were displayed by the ladies’ committee members Helen Misk, Hilda Hartounian, Diana Mekhitarian, Marie Zokian and Shoghig Chalian.

Overall, this event was reminiscent of the traditional Tekeyan Cultural Association of yesteryear.

Other anticipated programs at the center will include musical performances, poetry nights, book readings, art shows and other enriching events.

– Shoghig Chalian



From left, Shoghig Ilanjan, Vartan Ilanjan, Garo Minassian, Melik Markarian and Talar Zokian



From left, Norair Megerditchian, Harout Chatmajian, Hagop Vartivarian, Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian, Yeghishe Hajakian, Rose Tanashian and Sarkis Pasklaian

Eighth Consecutive Year of Sts. Tarkmanchatz Students Attending St. Nersess Summer Conferences

By Florence Avakian

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. – In the bucolic surroundings of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, two outstanding students from the Sts. Tarkmanchatz Armenian Secondary School in Jerusalem’s Armenian Patriarchate enjoyed the Armenian Christian spirit with fellow students in the summer conference there. This is the eighth consecutive year that students from Jerusalem have participated.

“We’re here for one purpose – for our Armenian heritage,” said 17-year-old Layan Najarian. “We pray in the same language, sing songs and dance together, and have a special communication.” For 16-year-old Talar Hagopian, “It’s like finding our lost brothers and sisters. We had heard of St. Nersess, but living the experience is 10 times better.”

Najarian and Hagopian were selected by the Sts. Tarkmanchatz school faculty for their academic achievements.

The program was initiated eight years ago by Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, who enthusiastically directs the project. It has been in effect through the support of several benefactors.

This year’s main benefactors were Russell and Susan Kashian of Wisconsin, and Neil and Renee Ferraro of Massachusetts. Also supporting the program were Glen and Kristin Dabaghian of New Jersey, Keith and Karyn Bilezerian of Massachusetts, Greg and Meline Toufayan of New Jersey, Stepan and Kristi Findikyan of New York and Gabriel and Sophia Ovanessian of New York.

The two students’ stay at St. Nersess was not only a learning experience, where they took part in Bible studies, lectures, group discussions, and daily worship in the St. Nersess chapel, it also included singing, dancing and a day at the New Jersey shore Najarian said, “We will share many memories of St. Nersess and take them with us to the grave.”

The two students also had the opportunity to meet with the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) Archbishop Khajag Barsamian during his visit to the high school summer session in which they both participated.

Through the 84 years of its existence, Sts. Tarkmanchatz Armenian School has been known for its academic excellence. Its diverse curriculum includes Armenian history, language, culture, as well as a full list of studies in

mathematics, physical and social sciences, history, and languages – Armenian, Arabic, English and Hebrew. “Religion is also very important,” explained Najarian. “We always have prayers in the morning before going to our classes.”

Both are graduating next year, and will leave with memories that will last a lifetime. “Sts. Tarkmanchatz is like a huge family of about 140 students, including about a dozen Christian Arab students. It’s a wonderful place with great education, and a peaceful atmosphere with strong discipline, no bullying, and no enemies,” noted Najarian. Hagopian added, “It’s like a warm and inviting home, but on the other hand, there’s no privacy. Everyone knows



From left, Layan Najarian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Talar Hagopian

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TRANSLATION:
CHRISTINE DIRTADIAN KOUYOUMDJIAN



Arts & Living

Photographer 'Hawk' Khatcherian Wows ALMA Crowd

By Tom Vartabedian

WATERTOWN – Two qualities become evident whenever photographer Hrair “Hawk” Khatcherian puts on a demonstration.

His pictures are indelible – and he travels the extra mile to capture them.

A book launching on September 4 at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) of his 10th work brought out the very best his work has to offer. The museum has been a familiar stomping ground for the photographer.

“The door is always open for me here,” he acknowledged.

Titled, *One Church, One Nation*, the latest volume is a compilation of Armenian churches around the globe, a mission that was as exhausting as it was rewarding. It has been a work in progress ever since the outset in 1993.

What you may know about the 52-year-old artist is that doctors gave him 10 days to live as he lay in a hospital bed, suffering from terminable lung cancer.

What may not be so obvious was the fact his mother-in-law Araxie was diagnosed with breast cancer at the same time. It is to her that this book is dedicated.

“She died holding my hand and passed along the rest of her life to me,” Khatcherian revealed. “I had 10 days to live, not 10 days to die. That was 20 years ago and I’m still around.”

So are his cameras and books, along with an insatiable desire to put his unbridled energy to work preserving Armenian culture and history. He had made an extraordinary vow in 1993 on what appeared to be his deathbed.

He promised God that if He allowed to him to live, he would photograph every Armenian church in every country of the world. Twenty years later, that vow has been maintained, living only for and by Armenia, Artsakh and all the fundamental references, values and benchmarks of the Armenian world.

Born in Lebanon, Khatcherian moved to Canada in 1984, working out of the Armenian community center in Montreal. He has participated in activities related to the movement of Artsakh, becoming profoundly aware of his roots, origins and Armenian national identity.

“Hawk represents the Indiana Jones of the camera world,” said museum curator Gary Lind-Sinanian, in his introduction. “He looked death in the face and walked away from it.”

Khatcherian was working all cylinders at ALMA in his approach to cover every church he documented. Many of the images on the screen were shown in multiple sequences with short commentaries, just enough to whet the appetite and give viewers an international glimpse.

Pictures taken in rain and under a scorching sun, dangling from cliffs and cupolas or threading his way into uncharted and prohibited areas to get the desired shot. A picture of a worshipper passing through a ray of sunlight at Gandzasar and another of children lighting a candle, glowing with incandescence. Churches in ruins and intact, silhouetted by the moon and basking in the sun.

“Photography is about planning and patience,” he says. “Sometimes it’s luck. You wait for the right moment.”

From Armenia to Karabagh, Jerusalem and Lebanon, he traveled, as well as North and South America and the Far East in his mission. It took him two years to secure a visa for Kuwait.

Dressed like he would be on Mount Aragats, Khatcherian spoke with no notes and without hesitation. He begged some indulgence at elaborating a bit on such favorite places as Ani, Aghtamar and Noravank.

The photographer is also a man of deep-rooted conviction who speaks his mind.

see “HAWK,” page 12



Mezzo-soprano “container” concert

A Blüthner Grand Piano for Gumri

POTSDAM, Germany – On September 20, the Gumri music school (“Octet”) will officially celebrate its reopening. And, if all goes as planned, a brand new grand piano will arrive from Germany for its new concert hall, a gift from the Mirak-Weissbach-Stiftung, a recently established foundation.

As co-founder with my husband, I had the opportunity to present the foundation and its project on September 7 at the Lepsiushaus in Potsdam, outside Berlin. The question I addressed was: why should a new foundation choose this as its first big project? Why a grand piano? Why Gumri? And why a Blüthner grand piano?

The idea to set up a new foundation has a family background: both my parents were orphans who survived the Genocide and made it to America. Although economic conditions in the Depression prevented them from attending college, they understood the importance of education and urged us to study hard. As a successful businessman, John Mirak sponsored youth education both in the Boston area and abroad. He supported the Armenian Cultural Foundation in Arlington and set up the John Mirak Foundation, which is active in Armenia sponsoring kindergarten playgrounds or school projects, as well as reforestation efforts.

When my husband and I first visited Armenia in 2008 with my brother Bob (who has taken over direction of both foundations), we visited several of the projects. We also went to Gumri, which along with nearby Spitak, had been almost obliterated in the 1988 earthquake. We had the chance to visit the music school and to meet

see GUMRI, page 11

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator



Director Asatryan, staff and guests in front of container, Gumri, including author and benefactor Muriel Mirak-Weissbach (center)

Armenian Pop Singer Emmy Performs in Providence

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – In an exclusive one-time only performance in New England, Armenian pop star Emmy wowed the crowd at the Egavian Cultural Center on Wednesday, September 4.

Sponsored by Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church Cultural Committee, under the direction of Konstantin Petrossian, the concert attracted all ages, especially local Armenian youth. Emmy’s concert subcommittee members took turns introducing her during the evening’s festivities.

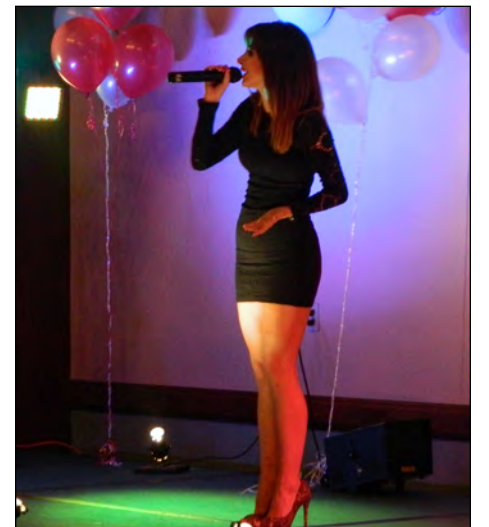
Emmy (born Emma Bejanyan) is considered to be one of Armenia’s most popular and influential singers, being labeled as a “pop princess” and “Armenian pop icon.” With her amazing vocal range, Emmy sang popular Armenian songs, ballads and American tunes against a backdrop of flickering colored lights and balloons. Especially moving was her rendition of Komitas’ *Loosnag Keesher*.

Emmy engaged her audience to start moving and clapping to the song *Boom-Boom*, which she performed at the Eurovision Song Contest in Dusseldorf, Germany in 2011.

A mini-flash mob took place on the dance floor in front of the stage when she belted out one of her recent Armenian pop hits which led to lively Armenian dancing.

During a brief intermission, the audience was entertained by Mher Saribekian on *dhol* and David Gevorkian playing the *duduk*.

In a change of pace, she sang the American



Singer Emmy on stage

ballad from the 1930s, written by Gus Kahn, *Dream a Little Dream of Me*, which prompted couples to get up and dance.

When asked why she chose this number Emmy said this was a piece her father used to play on the piano when she was a young girl and she learned the lyrics and now uses it in her repertoire.

The concert ended with more Armenian pop music and dancing. Emmy expressed her deep appreciation to the organizers of the event and expressed her delight in meeting so many new “friends” in the Greater Providence area and hopes to return again.

The crowd was invited to line up on the red carpet for pictures with Emmy in a specially-designed VIP space.

Emmy left for a brief trip to Los Angeles and will return to Armenia for a concert on September 21 in Republic Square.

Emmy grew up in a family where music and art has always played a key role. She was famous at a very young age and became an idol for many children. She studied music professionally at the Sayat-Nova Musical School,

see PROVIDENCE, page 13



ARTS & LIVING

A Blüthner Grand Piano for Gumri

GUMRI, from page 10

Director Harytun Asatryan and his staff. The structure they had been using for classes was a metal shack, a domik. The teachers told us proudly that classes had been suspended only for two weeks after the catastrophe, and that, first in private homes, then in this “temporary” building, they continued to graduate students

through ideal and financial backing; especially individuals in and from Armenia as well as individuals of Armenian descent who have lost their parents or who have been abandoned by their parents (orphans, street children) should be supported.” This includes sponsoring material aid, such as equipment for kindergartens, orphanages and schools; educational opportunities, through scholarships, or providing living expenses for students; enhancing educational facilities, for example, by contributing instruments to music schools, and the like.

In late 2012 we learned that a group of rock

sum raised, and work began on the new construction. The Gumri optimism was well-founded. What was missing were instruments. Provided with a list by Asatryan, we began collecting both donations and instruments.

Shortly before leaving for Armenia last May, I learned from the FAR office in New York that they were just organizing the shipment of a large gift of new instruments from Canada; in short, Gumri did not need our violins and flutes. On arrival in Yerevan we contacted FAR’s Deputy Country Director Margarit Piliposyan, who arranged for us to take our gift to the new music school in Oshagan, which FAR had helped finance. Naturally, we were treated to a concert by the students, featuring piano music and a kanon ensemble.

We arrived in Gumri empty-handed but shared the excitement of Asatryan and his staff with the progress on the building. Not yet completed, the structure appeared very sturdy with thick, earthquake-proof walls, numerous single rooms for private instruction and small ensembles, as well as a large hall for recitals and concerts. Here too we enjoyed a wonderful concert, performed in very tight quarters – a container being used for classes during the construction phase. Then, seated around a table with chocolates, coffee and Armenian cognac, we began to discuss future plans. Asatryan was delighted with the large contribution coming from Canada, but added that the school also needed a grand piano, suitable for concerts. He put it this way: Gumri, though not the political capital of Armenia, is its cultural capital. Then he and his colleagues began to tick off the names of famous poets, composers, musicians, artists and so forth from Gumri. “We want to educate world-class musicians,” he said, “and we would like the best instruments.” The piano he hoped for was a German brand, Blüthner.

In Yerevan, at the Aram Khatchaturian museum, there is a concert grand with the Blüthner-Leipzig logo on it – Khatchaturian was one of many great modern musicians who composed on this piano.

Back in Germany, my husband contacted the firm and Dr. Christian Blüthner, the descendant of founder Julius Blüthner, who runs the firm, immediately grasped the importance of the initiative and proceeded swiftly to cooperate. Part of the costs were covered by donations, including a contribution from the John Mirak Foundation, and many small and large gifts; the rest has been financed through a loan to be repaid through donations over two years.

Blüthner is one of the oldest piano manufacturers in the world. It was founded in Leipzig in 1853 and can look back over a successful, mov-

have raised the question, whether such a project is appropriate. Isn’t it a luxury item? And if they need a piano, why a Blüthner grand? Why not a less expensive model from China? The answer lies in the role music has always played in Armenian culture. The saying goes that there are more pianos in Yerevan than TV sets and anyone strolling through the city can hear music from open windows. Even a small hotel my husband discovered had a piano in the dining room and employees would go to play it whenever they had time. In the Diaspora too: even my parents, who had no musical education, took it for granted that the children should learn to play an instrument. Without knowledge of the theories by Friedrich Schiller or Wilhelm von Humboldt, they knew that musical education was an important element in the aesthetic and moral development of character.

For Armenians, music, language and religion



Musikschule : Gumri music school in 2008

every year. The young musicians treated us to a concert, performed with seriousness and passion. We were struck by the warm hospitality shown us, and the optimism the teachers exuded. Somehow, sometime – they were confident – the school would be rebuilt.

Last year my husband and I started a small private foundation to help Armenian youth and deliberately formulated the statute to allow flexibility: its purpose is to provide “support and promotion of children, youth and adults

musicians, among others Ian Gillan (Deep Purple), David Gilmour (Pink Floyd) and the former Australian tennis champion Pat Cash had launched a Rock Aid Armenia campaign to raise funds for a new school in Gumri, through benefit concerts and special CD’s. Mediamax, the Australian organization “Do Something” and the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) contributed significantly to the effort. The Mardigian family, which has sponsored music education programs in Armenia, tripled the



Gumri students playing *duduks* and drum



Oshagan *kanon* ensemble, May 2013

have always played a central role in society and in shaping the national character – a theme discussed at the Lepsiushaus event. Scientific Director Dr. Rolf Hosfeld had invited two special guests to participate: Prof. Ashot Hayruni, from the Yerevan State University, currently on a lecture tour in Berlin, and Anna Maria Pammer, a renowned Austrian soprano living and working in Berlin. Hayruni spoke of the “magical power” of music for Armenians, with reference to the impact of Armenian songs on orphans in Aleppo

after the Genocide. Pammer, who has performed in the leading concert halls and opera houses of Europe, as well as in music festivals, is the co-founder and artistic director of the Austro-Armenian Music Festival. On the basis of her experience in Yerevan, Gumri and Vanadzor (in 2009-2010), she could confirm the importance of quality instruments for students. Only the biggest concert halls or opera house had excellent grand pianos, and some in need of repair had been sent to Germany. A piano donated from Japan was so highly appreciated, it was kept under lock and key, “treated like a sacred object.” She also stressed the importance of new buildings for

music schools, to ensure control over air quality and temperature, crucial to preserving instruments. Pammer, who has a repertoire stretching from Medieval works to contemporary pieces, underlined the wide variety of genres in Armenian compositions (including contemporary), generated by an extremely old continuous musical tradition and Hayruni explained the special role of Komitas.

For more information, visit <http://www.m-w-stiftung.org>

Armenian International Women’s Association, New Jersey Affiliate

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Nancy Kricorian

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All The Light There Was

The story of an Armenian family’s struggle to survive the Nazi occupation of Paris in the 1940s

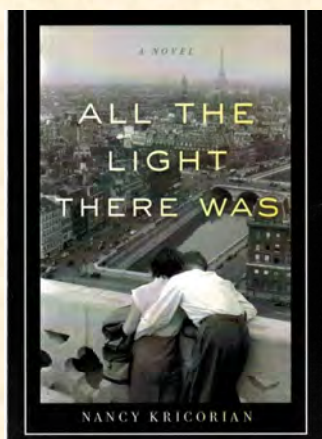
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“Nancy Kricorian is a gem, her work subtle and nuanced and moving. *All the Light There Was* brings Nazi-occupied Paris vividly, tragically, and heroically to life.”

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

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



Michael Weissbach presenting violin to Director of Oshagan music school, with Margarit Piliposyan (FAR), May 2013

ing history. By 1903 the company had earned several awards and received prizes at 12 world exhibits, gaining international renown. In 1943 a bombing raid destroyed all but the foundation walls. In the post-war period, as part of East Germany, the firm was expropriated and expanded especially into countries of the Soviet bloc. Contact with China remained intact even after German reunification in 1990 when the family was able to repossess it.

Now the piano is on its way to Gumri. Some



ARTS & LIVING

ALMA to Hold Exhibit of Armenian Art from the Post-Soviet Period

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Last year the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) acquired eight paintings from the Norton T. Dodge Collection.

These works will go on display at ALMA for the first time in an exhibit titled “Armenian Art from the Post-Soviet Period (1988-2005),” with an opening reception scheduled for Sunday, September 22, 5 to 7 p.m.

The eight paintings were donated to ALMA by the Homer Dodge Foundation, through the efforts of Nancy Ruyle Dodge, Prof. Norton



Collector Norton Dodge with Philip Ketchian at the opening of The Arts of Subversion at the Davis Center, Harvard University, 2008

Dodge’s widow. The artists represented are Armen Adikhanian, Felix Eghiazarian, Vartan Gabrielian, Sarkis Hamalbashian, Ashot Kazarian and Samuel Khachikian.

Dodge will be the guest of honor at the opening reception.

The paintings date from the momentous peri-

od spanning the last years of the Soviet Union and the early years of the Armenian Republic, from 1988 to 2005. These critical years began with the 1988 earthquake, continued with the exciting time of the establishment of Armenia’s independence in 1991, and on to the bleak days of hardship during the Karabagh war and blockade of Armenia.

The Norton Dodge Collection of Soviet Nonconformist Art is one of the largest collections of its kind, consisting of some 20,000 works, the bulk of them now housed at the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

The Norton T. Dodge Collection of Soviet Nonconformist Art is remarkable not only because of its immense size and scope, but also because it resulted from the almost single-handed efforts of its founder.

Dodge began to visit the Soviet Union in 1955, soon after Nikita Khrushchev’s rise to power, to conduct scholarly research in his academic field, Soviet economics. Contact with one or two of the nonconformist artists there aroused his interest and led him to explore the movement more comprehensively and to purchase paintings.

This was not easy in the Soviet Union of the time, when Socialist Realism was the only accepted form of art, and nonconformist artists had to work clandestinely, making it difficult for them to earn a living.

Dodge’s crusade to contact these artists without the knowledge of the authorities and without endangering the artists themselves, as well as his ingenious means devised to purchase

paintings, many of them very large in size, and ship them to the United States, makes a fascinating story. It has been described in publications such as John McPhee’s *New Yorker* article, subsequently expanded into the book, titled *The Ransom of Russian Art* (1994).

Though generally categorized as “non-conformist,” the art work produced during this period was rich and eclectic, encompassing different historical, philosophical, religious, and national roots and exhibiting aspects of Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, and other avant-garde movements.

The collection eventually grew to over 20,000 works representing more than 2,000 artists. Over 1,000 works by more than 100 artists from Armenia are included.

The collection is described in the book *From Gulag to Glasnost: Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union*, edited by Alla Rosenfeld and Norton T. Dodge, and includes a section on the Armenian artists by Vartoug Basjmajian titled



A painting from the collection by Vartan Gabrielian

“Light in Darkness: The Spirit of Armenian Nonconformist Art.”

Although the heart of the collection lies in the Soviet period, Dodge could not stop collecting and many works were acquired in the post-Soviet period.

The public is invited to attend the opening reception of “Armenian Art from the Post-Soviet Period on September 22,” free of charge.

The exhibit continues on the second-floor Simourian Gallery through January 14, 2014.

The Devil’s Knot that Bound the West Memphis Three

By Atom Egoyan

TORONTO (Huffington Post Canada) — When I was sent the script for “Devil’s Knot,” I was immediately struck by the complexity of this true story. Twenty years ago, three young boys were found murdered in a forest. The crime scene was appalling and — most mysteriously — there was no hard evidence. Who could have committed these horrors?

In posing this unanswered question, the film hopefully gets at something much deeper. It becomes an exploration of how we live with evil, how we deal with issues of revenge, how we cope with the moral injury of a community and — most hauntingly — how we deal with unimaginable loss. “Devil’s Knot” shows how legal systems in a town were deployed to simulate retribution, as two characters — a grieving mother and an idealistic private investigator — begin to sense that something is deeply wrong.

In following these two characters, the film does not point to a culprit. The answer to the crime may never be found. Mistakes were made, “evidence” was constructed and important threads were lost. What remains is the infinitely more complex question of how we deal with the unknown. What happened in West Memphis was

an unimaginable act of evil, yet the process that followed was determined by the human need to make the “unimaginable” into something tangible and explicit.

If the evil force that killed three young boys in an Arkansas forest could not be found, then a comprehensible solution needed to be conjured. For all the talk of Satanic ritual and blood sacrifices discussed in the case, it is my firm belief that the only real act of magic was performed by the prosecution team as they convinced a jury to find three young men guilty in the complete absence of any physical proof.

As a filmmaker, I was of course aware of the four documentaries that had been made about the case, each determining the innocence of the West Memphis Three and each pointing to another possible culprit. In making the first dramatic treatment of the subject, I was not concerned with finding

actors who looked like the real figures, much as I was not interested in finding the actual locations. My concern was to amplify and present the story in a way that allows the viewer to ask the deeper question of how we construct realities to fulfill communal agendas, often at tremendous costs to personal liberties.

My editor Susan Shipton and I worked on shaping this film for many months. At the end of the process, she wrote me a note, which said that the film is ultimately about how and why people adhere to their own versions of an event, to the actions they take when confronted with tragedy even when faced with their own flawed response to it. I’ve worked with Shipton for more than 20 years, and her words seem to sum up the feeling of the film.

She said, “It is the knot we are all tied up in and mostly it is just life, until tragedy strikes and

a series of events unfold and our responses are bound as if by endless bits of rope of who we are. We make predictable choices with terrible consequences, as if the devil held the strings and knew exactly where to pull. But as the film shows us, there is no Satanic conspiracy, there is no devil at the root of it, just people doing what they do, making assumptions, being lazy, desperately trying to understand the brutal deaths of three children, judges and lawyers showing off. It is us in all our weak and fallible glory.”

This film has provoked many such discussions. From the writers who worked on the scenario, to the producers who were so committed to putting together this challenging project, to the brilliant cast I got to work with, to my entire creative team. All of us have tried to reveal this knot, and are now excited to bring it to the world.

(Director Atom Egoyan’s film “Devil’s Knot” premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival 2013, and was screened on Sunday, September 8 and Monday, September 9.)

Photographer ‘Hawk’ Khatcherian Wows ALMA Crowd

“HAWK,” from page 10

“Our jeweled churches are being left to decay while we build new places of spiritual worship,” he pointed out. “Many of them are not being attended. We must make every attempt to preserve the old.”

Of the 50 Armenian churches he encountered in Turkey, 30 of them were active, he said. Khatcherian photographed them all in his litany. He’s been to Ani 25 times.

“I’ve seen every rock imaginable,” he notes. “Every time I visit there, I find something different to shoot. I want the new generation to continue my journey. We cannot do it alone.”

The next day, Khatcherian was off to Chicago, then back to Armenia and Turkey by mid-September. His itinerary may be filled with detours but knows no end.



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Since its inception in 2001, TCA’s ‘Sponsor a Teacher’ program has raised over \$563,000 and reached out to 4,440 teachers and school workers in Armenia and Karabagh.



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ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

OCTOBER 26-27 — St. Mary Armenian Church Armenian Food & Music Fest 2013, Saturday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. and Sunday, 12 noon- 7 p.m. Armenian food and pastries including Mediterranean specialties, arts & crafts vendors, live music and children's area; 4050 NW 100 Ave., Cooper City. For info, call (954)-450-5578 or email: stmaryfl@aol.com

MASSACHUSETTS

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

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

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

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

SEPTEMBER 22 — Norton Dodge Collection Exhibit Opening: Armenian Art from the Post-Soviet Period, including art by Vartan Gabrielian and Ashot Kazarian; 5 p.m., Guest Nancy Dodge; reception to follow; ALMA's second floor, 65 Main St., Watertown.

SEPTEMBER 26 — Annual Fall Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club, 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Join us for a delicious losh kebab and kheyma dinner, \$7.99 per person; tickets on sale at the door. Regular monthly raffle drawing at 8 p.m. "One-time" numbers will be sold on the night of dinner; special offer: purchase five "one-time" numbers for \$20, saving \$5. First time ever — chance to win a One-Year Club Membership for those attending the dinner. For further info, contact the church office, 617.354.0632.

SEPTEMBER 28 — Story SLAM workshop with Nora Dooley of Massmouth. 4-6 p.m. at ALMA, 65 Main St., Watertown. Learn to tell a story! Topic will be objects that have special meaning in our lives, so bring an object or heirloom to discuss. \$5 donation appreciated.

SEPTEMBER 28 — Smithsonian Magazine's Annual Museum Day: Free Admission to ALMA. Admission tickets available for download on the Museum Day Live! Website. One ticket admits one person, plus a guest; 65 Main St., Watertown.

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



On October 5, ALMA will present "Inheriting the Light:" In Conversation with Diana Der Hovanessian and Nancy Kricorian, 5-7 p.m. Poet Der Hovanessian and novelist Kricorian will engage in a dialogue about how family and communal history have inspired and shaped their writings. A \$5 donation appreciated. ALMA is located at 65 Main St. Watertown, MA.

OCTOBER 5 — "Inheriting the Light:" In Conversation with Diana Der Hovanessian and Nancy Kricorian, 5-7 p.m., ALMA, 65 Main St., Watertown. Poet Der Hovanessian and novelist Kricorian will engage in a dialogue about how family and communal history have inspired and shaped their writings. \$5 donation appreciated.

OCTOBER 18 and 19 — St. James Annual Bazaar! Delicious shish, losh, kheyma and more! Fabulous pastries, manti, kufte and toorshi! Children's activities, vendors galore, farmer's market - Fun! Friends! Family! 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

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

OCTOBER 24 — K. George and Carolann S. Najarian, MD Lecture on Human Rights: In Our Midst: Slavery Unmasked; 7 p.m., Faneuil Hall, Boston, with keynote speaker Siddharth Kara, fellow at the Carr Center Program on Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery, Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Contact Barbara Tellalian for more info: 617-332-1880.

OCTOBER 26 — Fall Harvest Bazaar, First Armenian

Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont. Noon — 8 p.m. Armenian delicacies - manti, choreg, kufte and more. Enjoy kebab dinners (lamb, beef or chicken with pilaf and salad,) losh, boreg, paklava, pastries and more in our festive hall or takeout. 617-484-4779, or www.firstarmenianchurch.org. Handicapped and MBTA accessible.

NOVEMBER 16 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) 38th Annual Luncheon/Auction, 11 a.m. at the Burlington Marriot, 1 Burlington Mall Road. Event kicks off with a silent auction and bidding; Visa and MasterCard accepted, tickets \$60. For reservations, contact awwauction@gmail.com.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

SEPTEMBER 28 — Shish Kebab Supper at the Ararat Armenian Congregational Church, 4:30-7:30 p.m.; tickets at the door; 2 Salem St., Salem.

NOVEMBER 3 — Ararat Armenian Congregational Church Celebrates 100 Years: 1913-2013. Join the historic Armenian American community of Southern NH for a celebration lunch at Tuscan Kitchen restaurant, 67 Main St., Salem; 1 p.m. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, contact janigian@comcast.net.

NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 14 — Richard Kalinoski's Play "Beast on the Moon," presented by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York, adapted by Nancy Issa Torosian. Tickets: \$50, \$35, \$25; English subtitles. For info and tickets call Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Helen Misk (347) 368-6993 or Shemavon Atamian (718) 344-7489; Oradell Elementary School, 350 Prospect Ave., Oradell

SEPTEMBER 22 — The Armenian Relief Society of Eastern United States, Agnoui, Pergen, Shake and Spitak Chapters, presents Poet and author Vahan Zanoian, as he launches a tour of the US and Canada for his new book, *A Place Far Away*, 2 p.m., Sts. Vartanatz Church, 461 Bergen Blvd., Ridgfield. Refreshments will be served.

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 26 — Vahan Zanoian will speak and sign copies of his new book, A Place Far Away, his new novel on human trafficking in Armenia, 7 p.m., at the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, 630 Second Ave. Jointly sponsored by the Armenian Studies program of the Department of Youth and Education, the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and the Fund for Armenian Relief. All Proceeds from the book are being donated to organizations devoted to protecting children.

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

Armenian Pop Singer Emmy Performs in Providence

PROVIDENCE, from page 10

"Emmy B" Producer Center's Vocal Studio and Yerevan State Conservatory in Jazz-Vocal Department.

As a solo singer, and as a past member of the group Hayer, Emmy has toured the world and won many, many awards. At the age of 10 she won the Best Singer Award for the song Funny Rain in the Asup Song Competition. Emmy is a record breaker with her collection of first-place prizes in international music contests and festivals in Armenia, Cyprus, Russia, Syria, Germany, Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia and the Czech Republic. Emmy also runs the Emmy-B Production Center, which is aimed at

discovering new talents in Armenia.

She has released three albums, 20 music videos, more than 60 songs and hosted several popular TV shows. Recently Emmy had a solo concert in Yerevan and released her new album.

Fr. Snork Souin, the pastor of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, desiring to make the church a friendly and appealing place of assembly for young people, saw this concert as a wonderful opportunity to bring youth together, not only to enjoy the talents of the young Armenian pop star, but to organize the event with Konstantin Petrossian. He saw this as another great opportunity to connect

American-Armenian youth with the culture and talent of Armenia within the safe and wholesome confines of the church community.

Souin says that he was "impressed by the humility and sweet charm that Emmy showed, as well as the warmth and grace with which she interacted with the young organizing committee and the young people of the community."

The concert subcommittee members were David Gevorkian, Mher Saribekian, Narine Amroyan, Hasmik Gevorkian, Mariam Saribekian and Shahane Manukian. Daniel Ayriyan and Osheen Emdjian assisted with the sound system and stage setup.

— Marilyn J. Woloohojian



Emmy with a young fan



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror Spectator

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EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Gabriella Gage

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:

Edmond Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

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

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
Philadelphia - Lisa Manookian
Berlin - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:

Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian, Jirair Hovsepian

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

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E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

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COMMENTARY

Armenia's U-turn – for Better or Worse

By Edmond Y. Azadian

For the last three and a half years, Armenia had been negotiating with the European Union (EU) to sign the Association Agreement, yet on September 3, at the conclusion of the meeting between Presidents Serge Sargisian and Vladimir Putin in Moscow, Armenia's president announced that his country had decided to join the Customs Union with Russia. Polls in Armenia were indicating that 72 percent of the population preferred joining the EU, in anticipation of internal reforms bringing the country up to European norms, in terms of economic development, democratic processes and rule of law. But the president's announcement caught everyone by surprise, since there had been no debate in parliament, nor was a public referendum held.

The negotiations of the EU Association Agreement (including a deep and comprehensive free-trade area) with Armenia were finalized in July. Upon learning about Armenia's U-turn, the European Commission issued a memo, stating, "This agreement would allow Armenia EU support, to drive forward a program of comprehensive modernization and reform based upon shared values, political association and economic integration."

Although the European Union has not expressed forcefully its disappointment with Yerevan's decision, Western media has. The Wall Street Journal normally does not dwell much on what goes on in Armenia, but it published an article in its September 5 issue with the following headline: "Armenia Jilts Europe, Ties Trade Knot with Moscow."

Commenting further, the Journal writes, "European diplomats were stunned this week by word that Armenia, which had been heading toward strengthening ties with the European Union, will instead join a Customs Union led by Russia – handing the Kremlin a victory in its tug of war with Brussels for influence in the region."

The EU commission had limited its remarks to a wait-and-see position, announcing that it will wait for clarifications from Yerevan. One thing was clear – the two sides' agreements were mutually exclusive. A few apologists with the current administration had announced that Armenia's shift towards Russia would not take place at the expense of severing its ties with the EU. But the latter does not see the situation that way. European officials say that countries in the Moscow-led Customs Union cannot be integrated into the EU because they have effectively ceded their sovereignty over trade issues to Russia.

In terms of its economic clout, Armenia does not weigh significantly on either side of the fence given the size of its gross domestic product – \$10 billion. The issue hinges more on politics – the West has been trying to increase its influence in the region by luring Azerbaijan and Georgia, while Russia has been trying to develop a counter-weight through its economic associations. Therefore, Armenia's shift is symbolized as a political victory in this tug of war.

Thus far, only Belarus and Kazakhstan have joined Russia's

Customs Union because Belarus economically depends on Russia. As for Kazakhstan, its demographic balance tilts it towards Russia since the country's population is composed of 63 percent Kazakhs and 24 percent Russians. Moscow can easily manipulate that population to influence the country's orientation.

Ukraine has joined the Customs Union as an observer member, after President Putin closed Russia's borders for a while against the Ukrainian imports.

Georgia is sending mixed signs, after Moscow began importing Georgian wines and holding the carrot for more economic benefits. Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili announced that Georgia will study the terms of the agreement and may join the Customs Union if it finds the terms beneficial. That remark was rebuked publicly by the lame-duck President Mikheil Saakashvili.

Thus Armenia is firmly in Moscow's quarter because the EU officials believe Russia has exerted irresistible pressure on President Sargisian.

It was very apparent at the outset, when President Putin visited Baku and Russia's \$4-billion arms shipment to Azerbaijan coincided with that trip.

Friendship with powerful countries does not yield much benefits, but absence of that friendship may cost them dearly.

It is believed that Putin may have used two pressure points against Armenia: the Karabagh issue and the delivery of energy. No one believes that Russia will side with Armenia in resolving the Karabagh problem. But it can use it as leverage to extract concessions, like in the case of the Customs Union.

No one knows yet what is in that agreement, except its political implications. One analyst has used the metaphor of a man stepping out of a window into the fog.

The current administration and its supporters have been defending the president's decision, while others criticize it harshly. When Russia itself is in dire need of economic reform, how will that impact its partners?

Former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, who refrains from making public commentaries since the last presidential election, has lambasted President Sargisian's handling of the issue, always mindful that Armenia should never antagonize Russia.

Former Prime Minister Hrant Bagratian has called for a referendum on the agreement. The ARF has issued an unusually-mild statement, saying that the initiative was not wrong but was not handled properly.

There is lively public debate in Armenia. One burning question is: How does Armenia join the Customs Union, with or without Karabagh? The answer to that question makes a whole world of difference. In the case of military treaty it has not been properly defined whether Russia will defend Armenia if attacked. But does the defense also cover Karabagh?

There are many unanswered questions regarding Armenia's adherence to the Customs Union and Armenian-Russian relations in general.

When the dust settles, people in Armenia will find out if the U-turn was for better or worse.

September 6-7, 1955: A Commonplace Story of Nationalism

By Varoujan Sirapian

I was almost 10-years-old when what we call chastely "the events of September 6-7," in reality a pogrom, took place in Istanbul.

During a period of nine hours, wild troops, farmers, workers and jobless men transported by cars from the distant villages situated around Istanbul, all equipped with identical sticks which we would have said were produced in a factory, crossed the streets of Istanbul. At the beginning they were supervised by ultranationalist students, fervent activists of kemalism. But quickly they became uncontrollable. Law enforcement remained passive, even sometimes they were collusive, as shown in several photos.

Everything had begun with a misinformation, or a half-truth, published in Istanbul Ekspres with an incendiary title: "A bomb was thrown at Atatürk's home." In fact it was home-made machine launched by an agent of the Turkish secret services who caused in reality very little damages to the house in Thessalonica where Mustafa Kemal had lived in its youth. The associate editor who took the decision of an extra edition of the news-

paper, in the afternoon of September 6, was Göksin Sipahioglu.

The "spontaneous" demonstrations quickly took the appearance of a pogrom, a Turkish version of "crystal night."

Sixteen citizens of Greek origin, among whom two priests and an Armenian were killed. Thirty-two citizens of Greek origin were seriously hurt. About 4348 stores belonging to citizens of Greek, Armenian and Jewish origins were looted or wrecked. At least 110 hotels, 27 pharmacies, 23 schools, 21 factories, 70 churches, three cemeteries and very numerous houses belonging to the non-Muslim minorities were seriously damaged. The rapes, numerous, could not officially be recorded, because families did not want to add the shame to the offense. But little by little, mouths opened and we learned that a woman of a very known Jewish jeweler was among the victims.

There was a bakery in my district, Sisli, held by an Albanian (Arnavut). The baker, a nice guy, offered some çörek (brioche) to the policemen at the Police station every afternoon, which was just on the other side of the street. In the evening of September 6, a group of aggressors, thinking that he was a

Greek, began to break his shop window. He went to complain to police captain. The answer of the officer was, "Sorry but I can do nothing. Today I am not a policeman. I am a Turk!"

Many citizens belonging to minorities who had experienced these attacks preferred to leave Turkey in the following months and years. Probably because this unexpected savagery showed that, 40 years after the Armenian Genocide, the mentalities had not changed in supposedly modern and republican Turkey.

The later inquiries confirmed the implication of the agent belonging to the Turkish secret services in "the attack" against Atatürk's house. But instead of being convicted, he obtained a promotion as an expression of gratitude.

As for Sipahioglu, whose newspaper had sparked everything, he settled down, not long after, in Paris and founded (with unknown funds) the SIPA news agency. He even received the Legion of Honor towards the end of his life on behalf of President Chirac.

(Varoujan Sirapian is the director of the Europe and Orient publication.)



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Millions Watch Popular Egyptian Talk Show on the Armenian Genocide

Ever since Egypt's President Mohamed Morsi was removed from office, Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been harshly critical of the new government, strongly advocating his fellow Islamist Morsi's return to power.

Given Erdogan's unwelcome meddling in Egypt's internal affairs, millions of Egyptians have expressed anger and resentment against Turkey and its prime minister. Egyptian newspapers have been replete with anti-Turkish reports and commentaries. Dozens of articles have been published condemning Turkish denials of the Armenian Genocide and urging Egypt's new leaders to recognize it. There have also been calls for erecting a monument for the Armenian Genocide in Cairo and demands that Turkey pay restitution for the Armenian victims. In an unprecedented move, attorney Muhammad Saad Khairallah, head of the Institute of the Popular Front in Egypt, filed a lawsuit accusing Turkey of committing genocide against Armenians.

On September 4, Khairallah and Dr. Ayman Salama, professor of International Law at Cairo University, appeared

on Lilian Daoud's highly popular talk show, "Al-Soura al-Kamila" ("The Complete Picture") on ONtv, watched by millions in Egypt and throughout the Arab world. Participating in the show by phone were Resul Tosun, former Turkish Parliament member from Erdogan's Islamist AK Party, and Harut Sassounian, Publisher of *The California Courier*. The 36-minute TV program was conducted in Arabic, a language I have rarely used since childhood.

Salama informed the audience that the Turkish Military Tribunal in 1919 indicted the criminals responsible for the Armenian Genocide. Seventeen Turkish officials were found guilty, and three were hanged. Salama indicated that France, Great Britain and Russia had issued a joint Declaration in 1915, warning that they would hold Turkish leaders responsible for massacring Armenians and committing "crimes against humanity and civilization."

Attorney Khairallah insisted that raising the Armenian Genocide issue in Egypt is long overdue and does not have any political undertones. He hoped that his lawsuit will force Egypt, "the largest Sunni country in the Middle East," to serve as an example for other Arab countries to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. Khairallah announced that his lawsuit will be considered by the Egyptian Court on November 5. He hoped that the Court would make a historic decision regarding this critical "human rights issue."

When the hostess of the TV show asked for my opinion on the Egyptian lawsuit, I expressed my great satisfaction, hoping for a positive verdict on the eve of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, and looking forward to its recognition by the Egyptian government.

I also commented that Erdogan had anointed himself as the new Sultan of the Middle East, and sole defender of all Muslims, Arabs and Palestinians. However, Erdogan's mis-

representation was finally exposed when the Arab world realized that he was simply trying to dominate the region, pursuing Turkey's self-interest rather than that of Arabs and Muslims.

Former Turkish parliament member Resul Tosun, joining the show by phone, quickly antagonized the viewers by claiming that "the current Egyptian government that came to power after the military coup is not legitimate, therefore, the filed lawsuit cannot be considered legitimate." Tosun then went on to parrot his Turkish bosses' baseless denials of the Armenian Genocide.

Salama, incensed by Tosun's remarks, called Erdogan "the successor of the Ottoman butchers who committed the Armenian Genocide."

The TV hostess then asked for my reaction to Tosun's perverted views on the Armenian Genocide. I reminded the viewers that Kemal Ataturk, in an interview published in the Los Angeles Examiner on August 1, 1926, had demanded that the Young Turks be "made to account for the lives of millions of our Christian subjects who were ruthlessly driven en masse and massacred." I also recalled that the Sheikh of Al-Azhar, leader of the globally preeminent center of Islamic studies in Cairo, had issued a Fatwa (religious decree) in 1909 chastising Turkish officials for massacring 30,000 Armenians in Adana, Cilicia.

At the end of the show, Khairallah announced that rallies will be held shortly to demonstrate that his group's lawsuit emanates from a popular demand – Egyptians asking their government "to recognize that Armenians were massacred at the hands of Turkish criminals."

So far, Lebanon is the only Arab country to have recognized the Armenian Genocide. If Egypt follows suit, can Syria and the rest of the Arab world be far behind?

The link to the show: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teAKr6PsyI0&sns=em>

Opposite Extremes Advance Armenian Heritage

By Tom Vartabedian

How is it possible, you may ask, for two siblings from the same family to become such polar opposites?

Time and again, I see such an extreme, whether it is two brothers, two sisters or one of each. The reference I wish to make is regarding their Armenian heritage.

How one can become so active and the other so inert is well beyond me. Same parents. Same home. Similar upbringing. Yet, varied personalities and interests.

I know two brothers who are such exact opposites, I often marvel at their dissimilarities. While one attends and is involved with the Armenian church, the other attends an American house of worship.

The Armenian activist married amongst his race; his brother did not. The same could be said about the organizational level. One belongs to multiple associations and contributes heavily to the welfare of his people, traveling to Armenia regularly and taking a deep-rooted interest in the population while his brother has only sporadic involvement in any such endeavor.

They appear as distinct as oil and vinegar.

I could very well reiterate my own family experience with regard to discord. We were raised in part by the same grandmother who spoke the language fluently in our home. I picked it up. My brother did not.

While I attended Armenian School, my brother balked, despite my mother's insistence. I enhanced my Armenian at the Mekhitarist School in Vienna. My brother bade me farewell and took over my room.

I introduced him to a nice Armenian girl in the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF). They dated once or twice then broke up. He claimed she was too conceited. Same with music. While I cherished Armenian, he favored American rock.

I look at the Bulgars. You have William Bulger holding an honorable position as a Democratic Party guru, lawyer and educator while brother James Bulger reigns as America's most notorious crime boss.

You would never think they were cut from the same family cloth. They could make a movie out of this to complement the books that have been written on the subject. It could be a subplot to a sitcom called "Brawl in the Family."

Much as I tried, I was unsuccessful in getting my brother involved internally. We did attend the same Armenian church and served as altar boys. But that is where the similarities ended. I trust he gained something from that experience, though it never showed on the outside.

Consequently, his children never became involved in Armenian affairs while mine went through the AYF ranks and attended Armenian School through their teenage years.

My cousins were the same way. While one was distinct, the other became extinct. We were all raised by Genocide survivors with strong ethnic origins. Sad as it seems, I see none of my relations in church and community circles.

The thing most needed in the Armenian home today is the family which remains homogeneous, particularly when it comes to the welfare of our people.

As parents, we do our best to involve our children. We may introduce them to certain stabilities in their lives, hoping it may make a difference. Some turn out all the wiser by their experience. Others tend to rebel.

There are no simple answers or quick remedies. I've also seen American born siblings who speak the Armenian language fluently and are more ethnically fertile than their parents who planted the seed.

The children I have taught in Armenian school for the most part have no knowledge about the language. They get very little ethnic upbringing at home and have isolated themselves over time. They come from good Armenian homes where the culture remains quite evident.

But there are exceptions. In the case of two cousins, the one who was totally immersed in the Armenian mainstream wound up drifting away. The other, who was segregated from his nationality, became the one who returned to his roots.

He went off to college, joined an Armenian club, met an Armenian girl, and wound up marrying her. Together, they brought three children into the world who remain emissaries for their kind.

You never would have guessed that someone so ignoble would have become that immersed. I happened to ask him about that one day.

He gave the credit to the woman he wed. It was a revelation for him, attending lectures and concerts he never patronized, learning the language of his ancestors he once rebuked, and visiting the country he never dreamed about.

The trip turned into a Utopia for the man, introducing him to a side he never could identify with. Maybe it comes down to being fortuitous in a world that offers so much spontaneity.

I have heard it said that being part of a family tree is like riding a train backwards. It shows you where you came from but not where you are going.

President: Students Are Future of Armenia

YEREVAN (Hetq) – President Serge Sargsian in August received at the Presidential Palace medal winners who were graduates of the republic's secondary education establishments for the academic year 2012-2013. They included medal winners of the international scientific Olympiads for schoolchildren conducted this year both in Armenia and abroad.

Sargsian congratulated all the students, wished them success and answered their questions.

He said, "After being elected President of the Republic of Armenia in 2008, I promised to hold meetings with the medal winner graduates of the schools and medals winners of the international science Olympiads. Please be assured that no matter how busy I am and regardless of the number of small and large problems to be addressed, I will keep my word and every year I will be meeting with the young people."

He continued, "In this hall, we hold meetings with foreign dignitaries. We hold receptions for them right here but trust me, today's meeting is no less important. You are the future of our country, you are the heroes of our times, and our country needs such heroes."

He praised the number of medals the students have won, compared to other nations. "You have already won 11 medals at the science Olympiads – one silver and 10 bronze, which is exactly as many as your peers from Georgia and Azerbaijan combined. I am confident that we are yet to register success in the area of astronomy, and I want us together to wish success to our young people."

"Well done! Thank you, trust me you've made a great job; last year as well as this year, we have registered outstanding results."

He thanked the students that had participated in the Kazan Student Games, winning 10 medals. "Never before in our modern history have we been able to win so many medals at the Student Games," he said.

He praised the education standard in Armenia. "It is gratifying that secondary education in Armenia is developing not only in Yerevan, as many would say, but also in our provinces. It is testified to by the increased number of the medal recipients not only in Yerevan but also in Goris, Sisian, Hrazdan, Gumri."

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 noon on the 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 M-S 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.



Tom Garabedian Continues ATP's Mission

ATP, from page 5

projects both in the office and out in the field, discuss strategy and manager development and handle any people issues that arise," Garabedian said.

A knack for producing results and a passion for ATP's cause made the position an ideal one for Garabedian. "My involvement stemmed from a desire to be engaged in a pursuit that was both challenging and interesting mentally and that was producing meaningful results in Armenia, he said.

ATP was founded by Carolyn Mugar in 1994, and its primary mission at the outset was to plant trees in urban and rural sites as a way of overcoming the tree cutting that had occurred during the energy blockade that Armenia experienced. According to Garabedian, that mission led to the development of two nurseries within a short distance of Yerevan and employment of a full-time staff in Armenia of nearly 40 people. Since its founding, ATP has broadened its mission to include environmental education which it accomplished by developing a curriculum which is now in use throughout Armenia's public schools.

New developments are always on the horizon for the organization, which continues to evolve. Garabedian noted, "Within the past 10 years,

we established the Mirak Family Reforestation Nursery in Margahovit to develop seedlings for large scale reforestation efforts and two Environmental Education Centers sponsored by Michael and Virginia Ohanian."

There are now 60 full-time staffers in Armenia and hundreds of seasonal and part-time workers engaged in forestry work. "As far as new projects, we are evaluating the need for a fourth nursery in the southern part of the country and considering ways that tree planting could become an integral part of an expanded environmental curriculum in every public school," said Garabedian.

The actual planning and continued upkeep of trees after planting are both essential to the process. One of the primary responsibilities of planting managers is site selection. According to Garabedian, planting managers "review potential planting sites to ensure that there is proper soil and water and that the community is committed to maintain trees once they've been planted." He added, "We need to ensure that our sites are protected from livestock who view our seedlings as a tasty addition to their diets, and that often means that we need to fence areas that are planted. Generally, we will return to communities for a three-year period following planting to ensure that maintenance

is being handled properly." As far as large-scale reforestation efforts, ATP hires seasonal workers for a similar period to cut grass around the planting sites to improve the likelihood that seedlings will survive. "In community planting, we expect a three-year survival rate of 85 percent or better; in forestry, the threshold is somewhat lower because we're at the mercy of the weather to produce an adequate amount of water. These are expensive commitments but you must undertake the maintenance. Otherwise you're just wasting your nursery stock," he explained.

In addition to proper planning and maintenance, there are many challenges that ATP faces in its pursuit of reforestation. Garabedian explained, "The first challenge is recognition by the Armenian government that deforestation and illegal logging will threaten the country's long-term survival. Trees deliver an abundance of benefits to a country; they serve as a food supply, they protect against erosion, they clean the air and protect the water supply. They are a renewable resource and should be used, but only in a sustainable way. He added, "We would like the government to devote more resources to restore Armenia's historic forest cover and to enforce existing laws against illegal logging." Another daunting challenge that ATP faces is that it is one of the few organizations undertaking large scale reforestation in Armenia. "We con-

stantly need money in order to support our reforestation activities," explained Garabedian.

Their education efforts are primarily directed to children through the environmental curriculum that we've prepared for Armenia's public schools and through classes taught at the Ohanian Environmental Education Centers. "We have conducted a few agricultural classes at our new Ohanian Center in Margahovit specifically for the region's farmers. These classes are extended without cost to the participants," he noted.

With Garabedian at the helm, ATP is currently in the midst of a sustainable forest management project in Margahovit. "Working with Hayantar, the Armenian forestry agency and the village, we are developing a pilot plan to manage a 200 hectare forest in a sustainable way," he said, adding, "If the pilot is successful, we hope that the model can be spread to other communities throughout Armenia."

ATP has worked with several other organizations, most recently partnering with the Norwegian government which provided a four-year, \$1.2 million grant to support reforestation activities and with the Acopian Center for the Environment at the American University of Armenia on "Regardening of Eden" activities in Margahovit.

For more information on ATP, to donate or to get involved, visit www.armeniatree.org.

Pasadena Council Approves Armenian Genocide Memorial

MEMORIAL, from page 1

as the park should be reserved for American military casualties.

"If this memorial is as successful as I think we hope it is I fear it will come at the cost of changing the meaning of Memorial Park," veteran David Alexander said. "The memorial is fantastic, I think it merits its own park."

Many veterans spoke in support of building the monument at the centrally located park. Councilman Victor Gordo agreed, arguing that the Armenian community's strong integration within the Pasadena community should merit the memorial's inclusion in Memorial Park.

"I think it's important as people go to Memorial Park to honor the men and women who have served in the armed forces it's an important reminder to young people and our community why it's important to have an armed force ... to in many ways prevent atrocities such as this," Gordo said.

The city has officially recognized the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide for 30 years. In May 2012, a group of local Armenian leaders came together to form the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial Committee (PASAGMC) and submitted an application for the memorial in May 2012. The final design, by Pasadena Art Center Environmental Design student Catherine Menard, was chosen from 17 proposals submitted. The design consists of a sculptural tripod from which a drop of water would fall every 21 seconds into a basin beneath it. Approximately 1.5 million drops will fall over the course of a year.

The proposed memorial became a controversy earlier this year within the local Armenian community after two different groups said they planned to submit competing designs. However, members of the Pasadena-based Armenian Community Coalition, did not attend the council meeting to express opposition.

Kevork Keushkerian, of the Armenian Community Coalition, said though his group would still like to see its design incorporated into the one submitted to the council, its members decided to step back so the monument can move forward.

"We decided not to go and object to the proposal because we thought the monument would represent all Armenians," Keushkerian said. "It doesn't matter as to who is behind it as long as it is done."

Board member Bill Papanian said the PASAGMC has already raised \$40,000 to build the memorial, which will be funded and maintained entirely by donations and after council approval, he said, there is still a ways to go to reach the monument's "high-six figure" price tag.

Peter Koutoujian

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