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Nalbandian Attends Erdogan Inauguration, Hands Invitation on Behalf of President

ANKARA (RFE/RL) – Turkey’s new President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was formally invited to visit Armenia in April and commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, after being sworn in for a five-year term on August 28.

Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian presented to Erdogan a letter from President Serge Sargisian as the two men briefly spoke at a reception that followed the inauguration. Nalbandian’s press office reported no other details of the conversation.

Sargisian first publicly extended the invitation in May, three months before the Turkish presidential election. In televised remarks, he urged the winner of the ballot to visit Yerevan on April 24, 2015 and “face up to telling testimonies of the



Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian gives Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan a letter from his Armenian counterpart, Serge Sargisian, at his inauguration in Ankara on August 28.



Sargisian said on August 23 that Nalbandian “will learn” on the sidelines of

history of the Armenian genocide.”

the inauguration ceremony whether Erdogan will accept the invitation. A statement on Nalbandian’s trip to Ankara see INVITATION, page 2

California Senate Recognizes Nagorno-Karabagh Republic

SACRAMENTO (ARKA/Armenpress) – The California State Senate, led by incoming Senate President Pro Tem Kevin De Leon, has passed Assembly member Mike Gatto’s Joint Resolution (AJR) 32 by an overwhelming majority of votes. The resolution recognizes the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic (NKR) and calls upon the US Congress and president to also do so. It encourages NKR’s continuing efforts to develop as a free and independent nation. The state of California has become the

fifth US state after Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine and Louisiana to adopt legislation supporting the independence of Artsakh.

Armenia’s Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian welcomed this resolution, stating that “the more Azerbaijan hampers the efforts of Armenia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group co-chairs to settle the Karabagh issue, the see CALIFORNIA, page 16

Former Principal, Community Leader Kevork Marashlian and Wife Visit Buenos Aires

By Diana Der Garabedian

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina – At the invitation of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Marie Manoogian Educational Institute, former principal Kevork Marashlian and his wife, Vartiter, who used to teach there, visited from Washington, DC, where they live now.

The Marashlians’ visit to the Marie Manoogian Institute, where they initiated many innovative programs, such as the graduating class trip to Armenia, and strengthened its national identity, provided an opportunity for the board members, teachers, graduates and students to speak with them.

Kevork Marashlian participated in the 40th anniversary celebration on August 18 by giving a fiery speech and a message in which he declared that the Marie Manoogian School is the best school in the Armenian Diaspora. During the last 40 years, more than 800 young boys and girls, all born in Argentina, have graduated. Ten percent of the graduates work as teachers and principals in Marie Manoogian School and in the six other Armenian schools of the community.

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Kevork and Vartiter Marashlian With Nahabet Nahabetian at TCA entrance

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey Reiterates Support For Azerbaijan

ANKARA (RFE/RL) – Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says Ankara will continue supporting Baku in efforts to resolve the Azerbaijani-Armenian dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh territory.

Erdogan said after talks with Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev in Baku on September 3 that “Azerbaijan’s rights have to be taken into consideration” in finding a resolution to the conflict.

Erdogan added, “if the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia [over Karabagh] is resolved, then the problems between Turkey and Armenia will also be solved.”

Erdogan and Aliyev discussed the planned natural gas pipeline which would bring Azerbaijani gas to Europe via Turkey’s Antalya region.

Erdogan called Turkey and Azerbaijan “two nations from one stem.”

Hayrapetyan Back to Prison

MOSCOW (ArmeniaNow) – Russian-Armenian businessman and benefactor Levon Hayrapetyan, who is imprisoned in Moscow on charges of money laundering, was transferred to a civic hospital for a one-day medical examination, his lawyer told media on Tuesday.

The group campaigning for the release of Hayrapetyan later said that the 65-year-old had again been taken to the Matrosskaya Tishina prison following the procedure. Hayrapetyan was detained on July 15 and a court in Moscow subsequently allowed for him to remain in custody despite protests from his legal representatives that he qualifies at least for house arrest as a person suffering from a number of serious diseases. On July 24, the Investigation Committee brought formal embezzlement and money laundering charges against Hayrapetyan.

Many believe that the case against Hayrapetyan is politically motivated. In an interview with ArmNews TV channel aired on August 11 Armenian President Serge Sargisian said he had raised the issue of Hayrapetyan’s arrest during his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi. “The president of Russia promised to examine the matter,” Sargisian said.

IOC President to Visit Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The President of the International Olympic Committee Thomas Bach will pay a visit to Armenia in October, announced the Secretary General of the Olympic Committee of Armenia Hrachya Rostomyan at a press conference on September 2.

Rostomyan reflected upon the European Games 2015, which are due to be held in Baku.

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Designer Karen Petrossian holds one of the Hermès scarves.

Hermès Armenian Alphabet Scarf Raises Funds for Charity

PARIS – On September 1, to mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Protestant-France-Armenia Solidarity (SFPA) charity association, Pierre-Alexis Dumas, artistic director of Hermès, presented to the Petrossian restaurant the new square

Hermès silk on the topic of the Armenian alphabet, Lettres de Erevan.

Designed by Karen Pétrossian, the scarf honors Mesrop Mashtots, creator of the Armenian alphabet. see SCARF, page 16?

By Jean Eckian



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Karabagh President Meets with AUA President

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – On September 3, Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakian received the president of the American University of Armenia, Prof. Armen Der Kiureghian and Vice President Ashot Ghazaryan.

The Office of the Artsakh Republic President reported that Sahakian congratulated Der Kiureghian on his appointment as the AUA president expressing hope that he would continue the policy of developing the institution and deepening ties with Artsakh, adding that it was a necessary institution for the residents of Karabagh.

Armenia Hands \$100,000 to Assist Iraqi Yezidis

YEREVAN (Hetq) – Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian this past week handed a note to Christoph Bierwirth, the Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) confirming the transfer of US\$100,000 to the account of the UNHCR Geneva Headquarters for humanitarian support to the Yezidis of Iraq.

On hand at the ceremony were Bradley Busetto, the UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia; Aziz Tamoyan, president of the National Union of Yezidis; and Shaikh Bro Hasanyan, the religious leader of the Yezidis of Armenia. Addressing the assembled guests, Foreign Minister Nalbandian said: “During recent weeks the world’s attention has been focused on the massive crimes committed by extremists in Iraq against religious and ethnic minorities. As a result of the violence, thousands have been displaced from their homes, amongst them Yezidis, Christians, and Muslims. As a result of the atrocities there have been many victims.”

President of the National Union of Yezidis Aziz Tamoyan expressed gratitude to the government.

Opera in Shushi Marks Independence

STEPANAKERT (Hetq) – To mark the 23rd anniversary of Artsakh’s independence, the Alexander Spendarian Opera and Ballet Theater staged an open-air performance of Avet Terteryan’s “Ring of Fire” opera in the ancient citadel of Shushi.

Artsakh Minister of Culture Narineh Aghabalyan said that staging open-air operas at the citadel to mark the country’s independence has become a tradition.

Generation Surpasses Its Predecessors, Says Artsakh Primate

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Armenian border today is watched by a brilliant generation that surpasses its predecessors, which is a sign of progress. This is how the head of the Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Archbishop Pargev Martirosyan, described the Armenian soldier in a conversation with the journalists who arrived in the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic from Yerevan. “During the war, our volunteer detachments that later developed into a united army fulfilled their duty towards their motherland in a glorious way. Today, when I often leave to the front line and see their eyes, bold voices, their way of thinking and consciousness, frankly I am astonished – our young people are more than I expected. We have a brilliant generation,” said the archbishop, who during the years of Artsakh’s battles held a cross in the one hand and a weapon in the other.

According to Martirosyan, recently the current generation proved this fully, as witnessed by the generals and colonels of the Armenian armed forces, and Artsakh war heroes. “We have a glorious generation, exceptional young people, and I’m proud of them. I would call on them to remain the same as they are today,” he said.

VivaCell-MTS and Fuller Center for Housing Armenia Continue Partnership

By Alla Asatryan

YERVANDASHAT, Armenia – A long-awaited housewarming was celebrated in the village of Yervandashat. A second family is also close to the realization of its dream. VivaCell-Mobile Telesystems (MTS) General Manager Ralph Yirikian, volunteer staff members, Fuller Center for Housing Armenia team and the Global Builders volunteer team from the USA joined forces to help the Muradyan family complete the construction of their half-built home. The construction of one family’s house was followed by another family’s, with the Ghazaryans’ home blessing ceremony.

“We are grateful to you for always standing firm next to the families keeping the country’s borders. There is no greater happiness than to acknowledge that you are not alone, that there are caring people next to you who have willingly helped to finish the construction of a long-awaited house. Soon we will also move to our new and comfortable home. We are very glad that today one of our village’s already completed houses is going to be blessed,” said the Muradyan family father, Hakob.

The Muradyans have been living in Yervandashat for 64 years. Their large family has lived in a building that used to serve as a kindergarten and needed renovation. As the political and economic situation in the country worsened their



VivaCell’s Ralph Yirikian helped out with the construction.

The Ghazaryans, who were already celebrating a home blessing, have tried to build their own house for 25 years. They have put stones on stones, but have been unable to finish the construction due to the lack of financial means. The family has lived in a half-built house for 15 years without basic necessities. Finally, all the difficulties are left behind.

Today the housing project implemented through the financial investment of VivaCell-MTS has given its first result. The first achievement of the project launched a few months ago in this region was marked through a home blessing ceremony.

The Ghazaryan family mother, Gohar,

home of our own. We have dreamed for so long that one day our sons would have a strong roof over their heads, but we couldn’t do it... We express our gratefulness to VivaCell-MTS and the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia for being supportive toward the people living on the border and sharing our infinite happiness by being present at our home-blessing ceremony.”

“Every single stone here was laid with love and that love carries a belief in a bright future. It is particularly important that the villagers living in the borderland villages feel that they are not alone when facing hardships and that people from various organizations have united to help their families stand solidly on the soil of the homeland. That feeling is the guarantee for success,” said VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian.

“The home for an Armenian is not just a place to live in. It’s the soul of the family, the warranty and the cornerstone of a secure and decent life. The project implemented in the border villages of Armenia through the financial investment of VivaCell-MTS is aimed at creating decent conditions for each family. It will give them an opportunity to live, work and create on their own land in their own homes,” said Fuller Center for Housing Armenia president, Ashot Yeghiazaryan.

VivaCell-MTS has invested 55 million Armenian drams (AMD) for the housing project in the borderland villages of Armenia and Fuller Center for Housing Armenia has undertaken the implementation of the project. Thanks to this partnership 25 families from borderland villages of Armenia will enjoy living in homes by the end of the year.



The beaming Ghazaryan family in front of their new house

dream of having their own home remained unaccomplished. In 2005 they started the construction of the new house but were unable to finish it.

expressed her gratefulness: “Words can’t describe the happiness we feel today. We have longed for this day. We have worked very hard to one day have a

Nalbandian Attends Erdogan Inauguration

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released by the Armenian Foreign Ministry said nothing about that. Turkish officials have given no indications as to whether or not the new Turkish president is ready for what would be a historic trip to Armenia.

Sargisian’s decision to dispatch his foreign minister to Erdogan’s swearing-in prompted criticism from Armenia’s main opposition parties. Hovannes Sahakian, a senior lawmaker from Sargisian’s ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), defended the move on Friday, saying that Armenia needs to keep channels of communication with its big neighbor open.

“We are at the same time showing that we have not forgotten and will not let others forget the 1915 Armenian Genocide,” Sahakian said. “The handing of the letter [to Erdogan] should be looked at from this standpoint.”

“We don’t pin much hope on Turkey’s president,” he said. “There has

to be international pressure [over Genocide recognition.] Or maybe Turkey will evolve so much that it will do what Germany did about the Holocaust.”

In a further softening of Turkey’s decades-long policy of aggressive genocide denial, Erdogan offered last April first-ever Turkish condolences to the descendants of some 1.5 million Armenians massacred by the Ottoman Turks. The move was hailed by the West. Official Yerevan dismissed Erdogan’s statement, however, saying that Ankara continues to deny that the mass killings constituted genocide.

Photographs of the Ankara reception released by the Foreign Ministry show Nalbandian also chatting with Turkey’s newly appointed Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who until now served as foreign minister. The two men most recently held talks when Davutoglu visited Yerevan in December 2013 for an inter-

national ministerial conference. They made no progress towards the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, which Ankara continues to link to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

Another photograph shows Nalbandian sitting next to Mevlut Cavusoglu, Turkey’s incoming new foreign minister, at an official dinner in Ankara. Cavusoglu had a tense rapport with the Armenian authorities when he served as president of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) from 2010-2012.

Cavusoglu faced allegations of anti-Armenian bias after he tried to revive an Azerbaijan-backed PACE “subcommittee” dealing the Karabakh dispute. Armenian members of the PACE claimed at the time that their Turkish and Azerbaijani colleagues want to use the panel for lobbying for a pro-Azerbaijani solution to the dispute. Cavusoglu rejected those allegations during a May 2010 visit to Yerevan.



ARMENIA

Levon Aronian Shares Point with Nakamura in Saint Louis

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The leader of the Armenian men's chess team Levon Aronian shared a point at the Saint Louis tournament. Aronian faced Hikaru Nakamura representing the United States in the sixth round of this major chess tournament. Aronian played with blacks and the GMs shared a point on the 45th move.

In the next round of the tournament, the Armenian GM will have to face with Veselin

Topalov. After the six rounds Fabiano Caruana tops the ranking list of the tournament. He has 6 points.

Reigning World Champion Magnus Carlsen returned to Saint Louis to defend his crown at the second annual Sinquefeld Cup, scheduled to be held August 27 through September 7.

Last year's event was the strongest chess tournament ever held on US soil. This year, the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis are bringing the strongest tournament in the history of chess. Six of the top nine players in the world compete in a 10-round, double round robin for the \$100,000 top prize and the right to hoist the coveted Sinquefeld Cup.

The 2014 installment of the Sinquefeld Cup once again features live play-by-play and analysis from three different teams of grandmaster commentators. Spectators have the option to watch the players in the tournament hall or to enjoy commentary at Lester's sports bar, adjacent to the club, and also to the World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF), located directly across the street.

Aronian was ranked number two in the world and had an Elo rating of 2825, making him the third highest rated player in history.



Levon Aronian



YEREVAN (Photolure) – A procession for “Peace, Unity and Solidarity” organized upon the initiative of the Youth Non-Governmental Organization was held in central Yerevan on Tuesday. The participants, along with Defense Ministry orchestra musicians, peacekeepers and priests, marched from Liberty Square to St. Sargis Church to remember the victims of the August clashes in the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict zone as well as the Yezidis slain by Islamic State militants in continuing atrocities in northern Iraq.

Cory Welt: Azerbaijan's Military Success Is Unlikely

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – On Azerbaijani recent military aggression against the Nagorno Karabagh Republic and the RA, the security issue of the people of Nagorno Karabagh as well as the prospects of the Customs Union Panorama.am has spoken to Associate Director and Associate Research Professor of International Affairs at the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies Dr. Cory Welt.

- Dr. Welt, recently there has been a marked escalation of hostilities in the Nagorno Karabagh conflict zone while Azerbaijan's president has openly threatened Armenia with war. What do you think this is preconditioned by?

- It is always difficult to say exactly why a new outbreak of hostilities occurs along the line of contact. With each summer's violence worse than the last, the risk of escalation spinning out of control is very high. Unfortunately, as hostilities die down each year, we tend to forget this risk.

It is also hard to understand exactly what the intentions of President Aliyev are, but his speech about war did not seem to be a direct threat. It sounded more like a warning that Azerbaijan has not given up on its lost territories and does not intend to, while serving as a rhetorical way for Aliyev to end this latest round of hostilities.

At the same time, Aliyev saw this summer how much the West supported Ukraine in its efforts to fight externally-supported separatism in the Donbas, as well as Israel's use of force in Gaza. He is surely convinced that Azerbaijan, too, has the legitimate right to use force; it is only a question of whether he can succeed. For now, Azerbaijan's military success remains a very big question mark, which fortunately helps put a brake on escalation to full-scale war.

- Can we say that Europe would be more interested to stop Azerbaijan from waging a war now than it was in 1991 (when no one stopped the Azeri aggression), given the fact that Azerbaijan is now an exporter of gas and oil to Europe, with BP having big shares in the Caspian, which will be endangered in case of the resumption of military hostilities? To what extent can this factor actually constitute a deterrent against possible Azerbaijani aggression?

- I would like to think that Europeans worry more about the human cost of a full-scale war in the Caucasus than they do about the potential risk to the pipelines, which for now supply relatively little energy to Europe and would, in the worst case, only be down temporarily. I also don't think the potential European reaction to an attack on the pipeline is a deterrent to Azerbaijan, if it was truly determined to wage war. Those concerned about the fate of the pipeline would likely blame whichever side

directly attacked the pipeline, not who started the conflict.

- The recent Azerbaijani attacks on Nagorno Karabagh and Armenia, growing anti-Armenianism in Azerbaijan (most vividly demonstrated by the Safarov case), complete refusal to accept NKR as a reality as well as official statements to use of force to retake the NK constitute direct existential threats to the population of Nagorno Karabagh. Under these circumstances, how should the security of the population of NK be guaranteed even if a peace agreement is signed between the sides? What confidence building measures should Azerbaijan undertake to reassure that it poses no threat to Armenians?

- Regrettably, we're not at a moment in time when Azerbaijan is able to credibly offer security guarantees to the population of Nagorno-Karabagh. This is one of the major obstacles to a resolution of the conflict, together with the unwillingness of Nagorno-Karabagh to relinquish occupied territories around the former NKAO. If there were a peace agreement, it would have to include an international peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabagh that Azerbaijan would not have the right to evict, as well as at least unarmed observers in neighbouring territories that would themselves have to constitute a demilitarized zone. We are far away from such a solution, however. In the meantime, confidence-building measures that could be implemented are simple, on both sides, if there were only political will – a lessening of war rhetoric, a drawdown of snipers, safe treatment and return of detainees, and at least par-

tial demining.

- Dr. Welt, what future do you see for the Russia-led Customs Union and the Eurasian Union? How can the current confrontation between Russia and the West over Ukraine impact this project and its members?

- I suspect that these integration projects will ultimately be successful only to the extent that they reflect the genuine interests of their members and prospective members. We have already seen significant signs of pushback from Kazakhstan and Belarus against the most ambitious forms of these projects, which their leaders do not view to be in their national interests.

The current confrontation in Ukraine is not between Russia and the West. It is between Moscow and Kyiv. I do not think this confrontation itself is key to the success of failure of Moscow-led integration projects. You'll notice that it really hasn't changed any country's position, even Ukraine's – those opposed to membership continue to oppose, those who supported membership continue to support (even if they are unhappy about it). Unless Moscow genuinely has the power to force integration on its neighbors, Soviet-style (which I doubt), the fate of these projects depends on their economic attractiveness as compared to the attractiveness of alternative models such as those the EU offers. The greatest opportunity for the Customs Union/Eurasian Union is if greater integration with the EU fails to provide the anticipated economic benefits. Disillusionment in Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine would be the greatest stimulus for the success of these Russia-led projects.

One Caucasus Festival Uses Music to Bring Youth Closer

TSERAVKI, Georgia (ArmeniaNow) – From August 28 to 31, the One Caucasus Festival took place in the Tseravki District of Georgia bordering both Armenia and Azerbaijan. The site was strategically chosen by the organizers of the initiative that seeks to create an inspirational and safe space for young people of the Caucasus to meet. Musicians from several European and African countries, including the United Kingdom, Senegal and Ukraine, performed to an audience that was mostly made up of residents from the nearby Armenian village of Shahoumyan. The region hasn't seen an event of such scope since the break-up of the Soviet Union.

One Caucasus is a bottom-up initiative created by art managers, culture activists and artists

from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Poland, Ukraine and other countries.

For the four festival days, the One Caucasus Main Stage hosted new international music projects including: Clive Brown (UK/Jamaica) and the First Caucasus Gospel Choir (Caucasus); Julian Chambers (UK/Jamaica/Barbados) and Marneli (Georgia); Pako Sarr (Senegal) and Gordela (Georgia); Volosi (Poland) and Chvneburebi (Georgia); Natural Born Lovers (Georgia) and some of the best jazz/blues musicians of the region (Caucasus); Folkery (Ukraine) and Caucasus Folk/Reggae/Ska Vibrations (Caucasus).

The project was co-funded by Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

Archaeologist 'Digs' Using Drones

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A Purdue University archaeologist is utilizing drone technology to capture details and data from Bronze Age field sites in Armenia, according to Imperial Valley News in Indiana.

“Drones are a new tool in archaeologists' toolkits,” said Ian Lindsay, an associate professor of anthropology who has been excavating in the South Caucasus region for 15 years. “It's a good alternative to kites, balloons or sitting in the bucket of a crane with a camera trying to visually document these ancient sites. Drones offer a detailed aerial perspective that we've never had before, and by leveraging this technology archaeologists can be more efficient in the field as drones give us an immediate sense of spatial science scale useful for planning excavation.”

Lindsay's 3:49 minute video of various field Armenian sites from this summer is available online. The drone, flying 300 meters from the ground, navigated the valleys and mountains of the Tsaghkahovit Plain and Mt. Aragats region to provide a view that is better quality and less

expensive than images captured by satellite or mapping imagery. Lindsay is co-director of Project ArAGATS (Archaeology and Geography of Ancient Transcaucasian Societies), that focuses on the exploration of southern Caucasia's rich past and the preservation of modern Armenia's diverse cultural heritage.

Funds from Purdue's College of Liberal Arts and Office of Executive Vice President for Research and Partnerships supported the new drone technology. Lindsay also is collaborating with Adam T. Smith, Cornell University professor and co-director of the Project ArAGATS, and the Aragats Foundation, which encourages and supports archaeological tourism, education and development in Armenia.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Pedro Mouratian Elected President of Anti-Discrimination Group

BUENOS AIRES (Agencia Prensa Armenia) – Pedro Mouratian, chairman of the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI) and one of the sponsors of the National Law 26,199 that declared April 24 as “Day of Action for tolerance and respect between peoples” in Argentina, was elected president of the Latin American Network of Organizations and Discrimination (RIOOD) at a meeting held in the Argentinean Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 27.

Mouratian stated that “in the last 10 years there has been a clear and firm policy in Argentina to address the issue of discrimination and human rights” and stressed that the importance of the RIOOD would be to “take the public policy on non-discrimination in Argentina to other international bodies.”

Civilians Killed in Bus Attack in Eastern Syria

DAMASCUS (Panorama.am) – A Syrian government airstrike hit a bus carrying civilians in eastern Syria on Wednesday, killing at least 13 people, most of them children, opposition activists said, The Associated Press reported.

But the government in the capital, Damascus, blamed the Islamic State group for the incident, describing it as “yet another massacre” committed by the extremist group.

Activists said the aircraft-fired missile struck the bus in the village of Shoula as it was traveling to Damascus from the eastern Deir el-Zour province.

The civilians on the bus were the latest victims in Syria’s civil war, which is now in its fourth year and which has killed more than 190,000 people, according to the United Nations.

Bartholomew I to Attend Komotini Armenian Church Anniversary

ATHENS (Armenpress) – During his visit to Thrace, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople will meet with the local Armenian community and the Armenian clergymen of the Komotini’s Armenian church on September 23. Armenian National Committee of Greece member Kerob Eskiazian stated that both social and religious issues will be discussed with the Patriarch.

Eskiazian noted, “The relations between the Armenian and Greek Churches have always been on a high level and in this regard it should be noted that the meeting will be held on a fraternal soil. The Armenian community will celebrate the 180th anniversary of construction of Komotini’s St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, which is the oldest Armenian church in Greece. We are happy that the Patriarch kindly agreed to participate in the celebrations.”

Georgian PM Highlights Cooperation

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – On August 22, Chairman of the National Assembly of Armenia Galust Sahakyan received the delegation led by the Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili, who was paying an official visit to the country. The Deputy of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia Eduard Sharmazanov, the Secretary General of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia Hrayr Tovmasyan, parliament members from the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the ambassadors of the two countries attended the meeting. The National Assembly press office reported that the chairman of the National Assembly of Armenia, Galust Sahakyan, welcomed the guests and stated that this visit proves once again the willingness of the two countries to strengthen and expand the comprehensive cooperation.

The Last Armenians of Myanmar

By Andrew Whitehead

YANGON (BBC World Service) – One of the oldest churches in Myanmar, also known as Burma, is struggling to keep going – its congregation only occasionally reaches double figures. But the opening up of the country to outside investment and tourism is offering new hope.

Reverend John Felix, priest at the Armenian church in Yangon, also known

now Iran. From there, many travelled on in later years to form a commercial network which stretched from Amsterdam to Manila.

Their influence in the British Raj reached its peak in the late 19th Century, when census records suggest that about 1,300 Armenians were living principally in Calcutta, Dhaka and Rangoon.

Their closeness to the Burmese royal court gave them a particularly privileged status in Rangoon’s trading community. The land on which the church stands is

Orthodox tradition.

That Orthodox lineage could be key to the survival of the church – as a spiritual home to all the various forms of Orthodox Christianity as well as a last vestige of an almost-gone Armenian community.

Already diplomats, business visitors and tourists from a range of Orthodox countries and churches – Russian, Greek, Serbian – occasionally swell the numbers at St John the Baptist, the only Orthodox church in Myanmar’s biggest city.

A new worshipper here, Ramona Tarta, is Romanian, a globetrotting businesswoman, publisher and events organizer who has lived in Yangon for the last few months.

“My faith is very important to me. Wherever I am in the world, I seek out an Orthodox church. But I was about to give up on Yangon. I thought it was the only city I’d ever lived in which had no Orthodox place of worship,” she complains.

She chanced across the Armenian church when driving past, and believes



The Armenian Church in Chennai

as Rangoon, can’t speak Armenian – but then neither can his congregation. Not that there is much of a congregation these days – just seven, myself included, on a recent Sunday morning.

The 150-year-old church enjoys an imposing location, at a street corner in downtown Yangon. It’s a beautiful building, a patch of calm in a bustling city. The Armenian Orthodox church of St John the Baptist – standing, suitably, on Merchant Street – is almost all that’s left of what was one of the city’s main trading communities.

“To judge from church records, there were once a few hundred Armenian families in Burma but the last ‘full’ Armenian died last year. Across the country, there are no more than 10 or 20 families who are part Armenian – and just a handful still come to the church,” says Felix.

Rachel Minus, in her mid-30s, can sing in Armenian – and does with reverence – but can’t speak the language. She attends on Sundays with her father, who also tolls the church bells.

“My grandfather was full Armenian and our family name is derived from the Armenian surname of Minossian. We’re part Armenian and this church and its services mean a lot to us,” she says.

On that Sunday, just one other worshipper was of Armenian descent. Percy Everard has been coming to the church



Percy Everard

for decades. His wedding, the priest believes, was the last to be conducted at the church – but it’s so distant no one is quite sure how long ago it took place.

In the early 17th Century, large numbers of Armenians fled the Ottoman Empire and settled in Isfahan in what’s



Yangon’s Armenian church at the end of WWII

said to have been presented to the Armenians by Burma’s king.

The region’s most prestigious hotels – including The Strand a short walk from the church in downtown Yangon and the even more famous Raffles in Singapore – were established by Armenians.

But bit-by-bit over the past century many in these small Armenian outposts, worried by political and economic instability, have looked for a new home – with Australia the most favoured destination.

John Felix – whose bishop is based thousands of miles away in Sydney – is a welcoming and enthusiastic clergyman, proud of his church and unbowed by the difficulties of keeping going as the congregation steadily shrinks.

Felix took over as priest of the Yangon church from his father, who died three years ago after more than 30 years as minister. Like his father, he was initially ordained into the Anglican communion and then re-ordained as an Orthodox priest.

He was born in Myanmar, speaks Burmese – but is of south Indian origin, and so has his roots in another of the migrant communities which once made Yangon such a thriving commercial hub.

He worries about the upkeep of the building. “There are three spots in the roof where the water’s coming in, and we need to get them fixed.”

But this is by any standards a neat, well-kept church, and an important part of Yangon’s rich colonial-era architectural heritage which is increasingly attracting tourists and international attention.

Sunday worship has all the hallmarks of an Orthodox church service – icons, incense and, in spite of the slender attendance, entrancing hymn singing. Felix doesn’t wear the ornate priestly robes in which his father once conducted ceremonies, but he remains firmly part of the

that with a little promotion, this historic building – and the tradition to which it bears testimony – could have a more secure future.

If the church reached out more actively to all strands of Orthodoxy then, she argues, it could attract more worshippers and find a renewed purpose. She’s set up a Facebook page for the church as a first step towards getting more attention.

Myanmar has had more than its share of troubles and upheaval over the last century. The country was occupied by the Japanese during World War Two, and suffered greater privation and damage to its infrastructure than almost anywhere else in the region.

Japanese Field Artillery on the march in Burma circa 1940

Many Armenians were among those who embarked on the arduous wartime trek north through jungle and forest to the relative safety of British India – a memorial in the church lists the 13 members of one Armenian family who died during the journey.

Burma gained independence from Britain in 1948, several months after India and Pakistan. Within a few years, it had a military-backed government which made little effort to develop commercial links beyond the country’s borders. The army’s violent suppression in 1988 of the democracy movement further heightened the country’s international isolation.

Over the past few years, Myanmar has been edging towards greater democracy, and has started to open its doors more widely to foreign business and investment. What was one of Asia’s most international cities is again starting to develop a more global aspect.

And a church which has its roots in an earlier era of international commerce may find fresh succor from a new bout of globalization.



Community News

Consecration of St. Hovhanness Church In Berd to Take Place On September 14

FRESNO – The faithful in the town of Berd, the center of 16 villages of the Shamshadeen Region of the Tavoush Marz, Armenia, await the consecration on September 14 of the new St. Hovhanness Church, which will replace the St. Gevork Church destroyed by the Soviets in the 1920s. The newly completed church was made possible by the generous financial support of late benefactor from Fresno, California, John D. Stephens. It has enabled the spiritual revival of this major center in Northeastern Armenia. Karekin II, Catholicos of all Armenians, in recognition of the generosity of its major benefactor, decided to rename the Church St. Hovhanness in his honor.

The late benefactor John Stephens (Stepanian) was born on August 28, 1928 in Fresno, to Dickran and Ardem Stepanian, who immigrated to the United States from the Western Armenia cities of Kharpert and Ordu, respectively, prior to the Genocide of 1915. Stephens lived in Fresno his entire life and died on April 19, 2007, at the age of 78.

Rev. Aram Mirzoyan is the pastor of the new church as well as the spiritual leader of the entire Shamshadeen region, population 31,000. Born in the Shamshadeen village of Chinari on the border of Azerbaijan, he is youthful, charismatic, energetic and dedi-



The late John Stephens

Construction Sponsored by Benefactor John Stephens of Fresno

cated to the revival and survival of the region's strategic border communities. He is concerned with not only restoring the Christian faith of the population, but also helping solve the social, economic and security issues of the region, endangered by continuous sniper attacks from bordering Azeri snipers. Mirzoyan commented, "Without the generosity of Mr. Stephens the building of our St. Hovhanness Church would have remained only a dream. Now that we will again have a church in the center of Berd, we can fulfill our God-given duty to revive and enrich the Christian spirit of our population, which was dormant for 70 years during Soviet rule."

A close acquaintance of Stephens, Deacon Allan Yeghia Jendian of Fresno, said, "Mr. Stephens was a kind and generous individual, see CONSECRATION, page 6



The St. Hovhanness Church in Berd



The vital signs station

AMAA's 6th Medical Mission Trip to Armenia

PARAMUS, N.J. – For the sixth year in a row, Dr. Al and Sue Phillips have led a group of medical professionals and volunteers on a 10 day Medical Mission trip to Armenia. This year the group was quite large with 40 volunteers and six Armenian translators. The team consisted of three physicians, one physician's assistant, four nurses, one dentist, one lab technician and many willing workers. The majority of the team members arrived in Yerevan on June 19, and spent the weekend touring the city and outlying areas. They also attended the Sunday Worship Service at the Evangelical Church of Armenia on Baghranyan Street in Yerevan.

The first two days the clinic was set up in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Vanadzor, where patients came from Tumanyan, Spitak, Shirakamut, Gumri, Dilijan, Ijevan and Alaverdi.

Following Vanadzor, the team travelled to Stepanavan and set up the clinic in the Social Services Center of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and Evangelical Church in Stepanavan.

Each patient that came through the clinic entered through the triage section. First the patient's vital signs were obtained and urine screened for diabetes and kidney disorders. The patient's medical history was obtained by our nurses and medical students. If necessary, an EKG or lab work was obtained. From triage, the patient was sent to the physicians. Here each was examined and medications prescribed. They then went to the pharmacy where their prescriptions were filled and were consulted on how to properly take the medication. While the patients waited, lectures on medical topics were given by our nurse educator and they were educated on smoking cessation, diabetes and proper eating. This year we had with us a dentist who educated and treated with fluoride the children and young adults. As in the past, reading glasses were also distributed to those with poor vision. This year the Team reached an all-time high record for number of patients seen by physicians: 1,005. If included those seen by the dentist



Dr. Al Phillips in consultation with a patient in Vanadzor

and those who just wanted glasses, over 1,250 patients were impacted in one week.

At the conclusion of the week, the team returned to Yerevan via Lake Sevan and went to Echmiadzin and Khor Virap and had a celebration banquet, recounting the miraculous ways how God worked among the people the Team members saw and how God touched the team members personally as they served those seen.

This year there were some advances in the team's ability to care for the patients. First, a donation was received to purchase an EKG machine and two professional-quality blood pressure machines. Second, over the last year, the AMAA staff in Armenia had scanned all the medical records of patients seen during the past five years. Surveying these records it was surprising to know that up until this year over 2,500 people had received medical treatment. With this year's mission, that number exceeds 3,500.

The Medical Mission Team has an operating budget from the AMAA to purchase medications to provide a one-year supply to the patients.

The team will return to Armenia in June 2015 for their seventh mission trip. To get more information and an application, visit amaa.org.

Information Technology in Armenia and Diaspora Topic Of AESA Talk

PASADENA, Calif. – Three entrepreneurs, Harmik Baghdasarian, Al Eisaian and Aram Ter-Martirosyan, from Los Angeles, who have established various successful information technology (IT) related businesses in Armenia will present their stories, successes, and difficulties. They will address how to be profit-driven and not philanthropy-driven, establish and maintain high standards, how to compete and operate in Armenia, and most importantly how to commit time and resources. This lecture, hosted by the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (AESA), will be held on Tuesday, September 16, at 7:30 pm at Parson Corporation, 100 West Walnut St.

"This will be a great opportunity for people who are thinking to establish businesses in high tech in Armenia to hear how these three entrepreneurs have succeeded" stated AESA President Vasken Yardemian. "It will provide us with great opportunities to learn from their experiences and share their entrepreneurial insights on how to create something that people want."

Baghdasarian has a BS in computer science from London University, England. He has been involved in implementation of large-scale ERP systems for various global organizations, such as Epson Inc., Sony Enterprises and Able Freight in the US. He has been an active member of the community and has been actively involved in working with Armenia in pursue of creating IT-related jobs. In October 1997, he started outsourcing software development projects to Armenia and has been continuing it since then. His current organization, Ogma Inc., has been officially working in Yerevan as a software development company and has been able to complete a large number of successful projects in areas of web and mobile development.

Eisaian is an entrepreneur, technology investor and advisor. He has an MBA from Pepperdine University and a BSEE from Oklahoma State University. His most recent company, IconApps, Inc., where he served as founder, chairman and CEO, was acquired by Science Inc. He has served as the global head of Product Strategy and Marketing for Opera Solutions, a Big-Data analytics company from 2010-2011. In 2005, he co-founded and served as executive chairman of Integrien Corporation in Armenia until its acquisition by VMware in 2010 for \$103 million. He co-founded and served as CEO of CreationPoint Systems, a systems management software and services company from 2001-2005. He served as the SVP and General Manager of LowerMyBills, Inc. acquired by Experian Corporation (for \$400 million) from 2000-2001.

Ter-Martirosyan holds a BS from UCLA in computer science and engineering and an MBA from Pepperdine University. He started his professional career in 1993 at Lexi International, a telecommunications company, as a software engineer and rapidly advanced to senior software engineer, project manager and ultimately, software architect. In 1999, he joined Hi-Tech Gateway, Inc. as cofounder and CIO. Hi-Tech is a software development company in Armenia involved in developing telecommunications related programs that have extensive experience in developing web-based and mobile applications. Ter-Martirosyan cofounded ConnectTo Communications, Inc., which provides an array of telecommunications services for consumers and businesses including telephone, Internet, wireless, security and IPTV services.

The lecture series presented by the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America are open to the public and free of admission charge. The space is limited and an RSVP by e-mail to Areg.gharabegian@parsons.com is requested.



COMMUNITY NEWS

James G. Sahagian Appointed Associate Trustee of ACAA Endowment Funds

RICHMOND, Va. – At their official meeting on June 30, the Armenian Cultural Association of America, Inc. (AACAA) Board of Directors appointed James G. Sahagian of New Jersey as associate trustee of the ACAA Endowment Funds.

Sahagian has been a financial advisor with Wells Fargo Advisors since 2009. His professional work is with individuals and institutional clients on wealth and risk management, and wealth transfer strategies. He has over 15 years of professional experience in this field. Sahagian earned his BS in accounting from Rutgers University and has a MBA from the Rutgers Graduate School of Management.

Sahagian was involved in establishing and promoting the Armenian Studies Program at Rutgers University while a student, and has continued to lead this effort for more than 20 years. This program has sponsored Armenian language and history courses and has recently partnered with the University's Center for Genocide Studies and Human Rights.

Sahagian is married to the former Maral Halajian and they have two children, Ari and

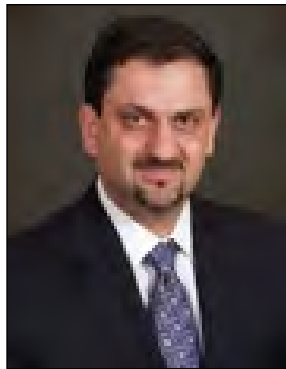
Seta.

They are members of St. Leon Armenian Church in New Jersey and reside in Airmont, NY.

This wealth of experience and knowledge which Sahagian brings to the ACAA

Endowment Funds will enhance the continuing growth from humble beginnings of under \$195,000 in 1997 to more than several million to date. The ACAA provides grants to further Armenian-language newspapers, academic studies, Armenian internships, Armenian cultural programs and other endeavors to "foster a better relationship for the Armenian nation."

– Bedros Bandazian



James G. Sahagian

Consecration of St. Hovhanness Church in Berd to Take Place On September 14

CONSECRATION, from page 5

always ready to assist his church and worthy causes in the community."

Stephens was a grape grower for 47 years in Kerman, a rural area outside of Fresno. He was an active and dedicated member of St. Paul Armenian Church, serving on the Parish Council several terms, as its Chairman in 1989, and on numerous other church committees. His life was spent worshipping God and giving of himself to his church.

In the summer 2006, he fulfilled a dream by visiting Armenia and meeting with Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, and pledging his financial support to fund the building of two new churches in Armenia, approximately \$1 million of which went towards the construction of Berd's St. Hovhanness Church. The Very Rev. Sasoon Zumrookdian, the Vicar of the Tavoush Region at the time of Stephens' visit, was his pastor in Fresno from 1990-1999. Stephens was honored in Armenia during this first and only visit.

Jack Medzorion of Winchester, Mass., who has visited Berd annually for the past 25 years commented, "We are delighted that Mr. Stephens decided to help build the new St. Hovhanness Church, especially in this important regional center of Armenia. I was privileged to participate in the ground-breaking/blessing of the church foundation in the spring of 2012, and honored to become one of its godfathers. Mr. Stephens made a wise decision in selecting this location, as the new Church will help

restore hope and the Christian spirit of the faithful in Berd and surrounding villages, threatened daily by Azeri aggression."

Mr. Stephens' legacy of service to the Armenian Church and the Armenian nation will remain for years to come as a major benefactor to Holy Echmiadzin, the Western Diocese of the USA, St. Paul Parish of Fresno, and now, the St. Hovhanness Church in Berd. His memory is a shining example of a truly dedicated Armenian who not only cherished his Armenian heritage but gave generously of his energy and resources to perpetuate it.

He was preceded in death by his parents Dickran and Ardem Stepanian. He cared for them with love and kindness into their later years. He was survived by his sister Isabel Torosian, now deceased, and two nephews, Harry and Richard Torosian, niece, Dorothy Nugent, and seven great-nieces and great-nephews. Funeral services were held at St. Paul Armenian Church on April 27, 2007, followed by interment at the Ararat Armenian Cemetery of Fresno.

Diaspora Armenians, though not called upon to make the sacrifices of the heroic folks who defend the frontiers in this strategic area of Armenia, may help by supporting this project by making a tax-deductible donation. Checks may be made payable to the Diocese of the Armenian Church, memo "Spiritual Revival Fund St. Hovhanness Church-Berd," and mailed to: Diocese of the Armenian Church, 630 Second Avenue, New York, NY 100016.

OBITUARY

Armenine (Markarian) Sapah-Gulian

FAIR LAWN, N.J. – Armenine (Markarian) Sapah-Gulian, who died at the age of 94, leaves behind a strong legacy of inspiration, unmatched memories and life. She will always be remembered by the many people that she influenced around the world with her great charm, wit and caring attitude.



Armenine (Markarian) Sapah-Gulian

Born September 11, 1919, to Aghavni and Karnig Markarian, she was active in all things Armenian.

She was the wife of Vart Sapah-Gulian and mother to Randolph Sapah-Gulian.

She was active in the Armenian General Benevolent Union, eventually rising to the role of vice chairman of the Central Committee of America. She was noted for her work in developing the organization's youth programs in theatre, dance and sports. She was par-

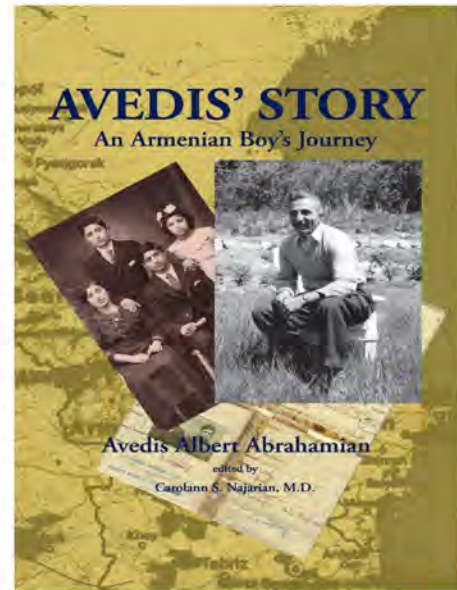
ticularly focused on creating a forum for young Armenians to share in and be proud of their culture through dance. She and her husband had been Arthur Murray Ballroom Dancers and had competed and won many awards in international dance competitions at such noted halls as Carnegie Hall. The intersection of their strong Armenian culture and their love of dance spawned five Armenian dance groups across the United States. Her involvement in not only the organization, but in the lives of the youth on a personal level, earned her the loving title of "Auntie Armenine."

She is survived by her son, Randolph, and wife Corinne, along with her three granddaughters, Alexa, Olivia and Gabrielle. She is also survived by her brother, Albert Markarian.

Services were held at Saint Leon Armenian Church, Fair Lawn, NJ on Friday, August 29.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to AGBU Antranig Dance Ensemble, 79 White Beeches Drive; Dumont, NJ 07628.

St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church
Hosted by Knights of Vartan Ani Lodge
Saturday, September 27, 2014 4:00 - 6:00 PM
Wine and cheese reception
Presentation by Avedis' daughter, Carolann Najarian, M.D



Avedis' Story is a captivating story about an Armenian boy's experiences growing up in a rural village in Turkey, surviving the genocide, escaping to Russia, and then being caught in the middle of the Communist revolution. The author, Carolann Najarian, M.D. is a retired medical doctor who spent years researching and editing Avedis's Story before deciding to publish this book, her father's memoir. Book sale and signing following the event.

Contact Jake Boumazian for further info. Email: jboumazian@verizon.net 202-380-6948

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Trinity Family Festival and Opening of Church Schools to Be Held on September 14

By Seta A. Buchter

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston is preparing for its annual Trinity Family Festival, which will be held on Sunday, September 14, beginning at noon, on the grounds of the church at 145 Brattle St.

Co-chairing the Festival Committee, again this year, are David Dorian and Jack Ekchian who invite everyone to attend the event. "Our Trinity Family Festival is always a wonderful afternoon as parishioners and friends come together to kick off the fall season with deli-



Dave Dorian and Jack Ekchian (left to right)

cious food, great music, and especially the camaraderie that day offers as we reconnect with family and friends after the summer hiatus," stated Dorian and Ekchian.

Traditional Armenian food, beverages and pastries will be available throughout the afternoon for eating on site as well as take-out. Children will be able to enjoy the "Moonwalk" all afternoon, and balloon animals and face-painting with "Jo-Jo the Clown," from 1 to 3 p.m. The Greg Krikorian Ensemble featuring Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals; Leon Janikian, clarinet; George Righellis, guitar and vocals; Charles Dermenjian, dumbeg; Steve Surabian, tambourine; and Michael Sabounjian, keyboard



Chefs at the Grill

and vocals will perform. And anyone interested can bring in their tavloo board to play the champions in the Tavloo Challenge.

The ancient tradition of the Blessing of the Madagh will take place at 4 p.m., followed by the raffle drawing for cash prizes. This year's raffle prizes include \$1,000 cash, first prize; \$5 each, 6 for \$25 or 12 for \$50 and \$300, second prize; and \$200, third prize. Tickets can be obtained by calling the Holy Trinity Church office, emailing office@htaac.org, or buying on the day of the Festival.

The morning will begin with the Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m., celebrated by Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church. On this morning, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the last major Feast Day (Daghavar) of the calendar year, will be commemorated. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the Antasdan Service (Blessing of the Four Corners) and Basil (Rahan)

Blessing will take place. According to the canons of the Armenian Church, no Requiem Service (Hokehankisd) will be held.

Holy Trinity Church's Armenian and Sunday Schools will kick-off the 2014-2015 year on the morning of Sunday, September 14, with registration for both schools at 10:15 a.m., in the Peter Adamian Hall of the church complex.

Sunday School classes, which will start on September 14, meet weekly from 10:30 a.m. to noon, in the Peter Adamian Hall. The Sunday School program, which ranges in grades from Pre-School through 12, is open to all children and youth, ages 3 to 17. To be eligible for Sunday School, a child must be 3 years of age by September 1, and toilet-trained. Parents must register their child(ren) as a parental signature is required. For information regarding the Sunday School program, contact Seta A. Buchter, Sunday School Superintendent, at seta@htaac.org, or call the Church office.

The Armenian School program is for children ages 5 through 18, and meets weekly on Sunday mornings from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., for students registered in the Sunday School, and from 9:30 to 11 a.m., for students registered in the Armenian School only. Classes are taught in Eastern Armenian in three grade levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. Armenian School classes will begin on Sunday, September 21. For further information about the Armenian School program, contact Naira Balagyozyan, Armenian School Coordinator, at nairab3@gmail.com., or call the church office.

Hye Pointe Church Picnic Draws 600

By Robert Serabian

HAVERTHILL, Mass. — On Sunday, August 24, 600 people attended the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe annual picnic on the grounds of the American Legion Farm. The fine weather drew crowds from five New England states. The picnic began with a Jashou service on the picnic grounds followed by a Requiem service in memory of departed members of the Hye Pointe Parish. Picnic attendees enjoyed excellent Armenian cuisine prepared by the church's cooking crew.

Music for the event was provided by Hye Pointe's own seven-piece Jason Naroian Ensemble, with Mal Barsamian on his saxophone. There was a surprise visit from Jay Baronian who sang and played a few songs. The church raffle had prizes totaling \$1,000, as well as gift certificates to area restaurants and boutiques. Representatives from area clergy and city government were in attendance to meet the crowd, sample the cuisine, and enjoy the day.



An assembly line served food at the picnic

The Parish Council had an informational table on upcoming church activities, as well as plans for the new church complex.

The picnic drew attendees from the Merrimack Valley, North Shore, Metro Boston, New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island and even a few from New York! The Hye Pointe church picnic reflects a tradition when picnics were held in wooded areas or parks outside of the cities. Each year the picnic attracts a larger following. The picnic provided an opportunity for friends, family and Armenians in the Merrimack Valley to come together and connect for the love of their church, culture, and community.

During the past year, the church has held a number of dinners which have been well attended by the community. These dinners will be held periodically throughout the year. For further information on the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, visit our new website at www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Arshag Dickranian School Starts 2014-2015 Academic Year

LOS ANGELES – With the pomp and circumstance of its traditional opening ceremony, Tekeyan Cultural Association's (TCA) Arshag Dickranian School (ADS) re-opened its doors for its 34th consecutive scholastic year to its students on Monday, August 25.

The guests of the event included Archpriest Manoug Markarian, pastor of St. John Church, school benefactor Hmayak Baltayan, TCA LA Chapter Member and former ADS teacher Vatche Semerdjian and TCA Beshguetourian Center Chairman Kevork Keushkerian. Among the

Liaison Shirley Kandalyan and Alumni Liaison Dr. Lisa Meneshian.

The Opening Ceremony took place at the school courtyard, where students ranging from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade gathered under the supervision of their teachers, along with the presence of dedicated parents.

Meneshian, who was the MC of the event, welcomed everyone to the program. She then invited Markarian to the podium, who conveyed the blessings of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese, and then started the ceremony with his prayers, blessing the attendants and the new scholastic year. Next, Meneshian, who was the first student to register at TCA Arshag Dickranian School when it was founded in 1981, shared the memory of her registration at the school, where she first met Mandossian, and had a picture taken with him. She proceeded by inviting Mandossian to deliver



Tenth grade students Lily and Ani Sarafian recite poetry.

his message on behalf of the Board. Board Members attending were Chairman George K. Mandossian, Vice Chair Parsegh Kartalian, Treasurer Angine Garibyan, PTO



First grade students release balloons with the colors of the Armenian flag as a part of the Opening Ceremony

Mandossian greeted the students, parents, teachers and guests, and noted the developments that had taken place at the school during the summer vacation, such as the installation of a security surveillance system throughout the campus to ensure efficient safety measures and upgrading teachers' kitchen to a brand new one, which was a donation from parent Gagik Kniazian and the labor Andy Asatryan of Apple Home Developer Inc. Another highlight of Mandossian's speech was thanking high school art history teacher, Polet Zargarian, and middle and elementary school art teacher, Ani Vardanyan, for adding a mural to the walls of the courtyard with the help of students from 5th through 9th grades. He invited to the podium students who had dedicated their time to painting the mural. Mandossian concluded his speech by wishing everyone a productive year.

Next, the principal, Dr. Manoug Seraydarian,



Dr. Seraydarian delivers his speech.

greeted the attendants and welcomed the students to the new academic year and reminded all of the importance of the roles knowledge, education and discipline play in our lives. He introduced the new teachers, the new addition of a dean of students and the shift the school has made in the textbooks to be used this academic year, in compliance with new standards of education. Following Dr. Seraydarian's speech, tenth grade students Lily and Ani Sarafian recited the poems "Hayots Lezoun" and "Keechenk Payts Hayenk" by Barooyr Sevag. The first grade students then released balloons with the colors of the Armenian flag and sounded the first bell of the school day.

At the conclusion of the program, Meneshian wished everyone a fruitful new scholastic year and asked parents and guests to enjoy the refreshments served by the PTO, while students headed to their classrooms.

(See related editorial on Armenian day schools in America on Page 14.)



Elementary students opening letters with wise advice in them



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The brilliant Armenian violinist Ani Batikian plays a varied and challenging repertoire of much-loved violin virtuoso pieces, accompanied by the internationally-acclaimed pianist Benjamin Frith. To mark the 111th anniversary of the great composer Aram Khachaturian, the programme includes some of his outstanding works, as well as pieces by Debussy, Brahms, Saint-Saens, Chopin, Baghdasarian and Roberts.

"Ani controls the violin with very strong technique, possesses a very beautiful tone and expresses her music with very good sense of style and personal sensitivity." - Pierre Amoyal, Concert Violinist

"Player of great stature and powerful personality... A real performer of the highest level." - David Strange, Head of String Department Royal Academy of Music, London

"...a wonderful violinist despite her youth." - Michael Tumelty, The Herald

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Wisconsin Golf Fundraiser Raises \$35,000 for Armenian Orphans in Syria

DELAFIELD, Wis. – The Wisconsin chapter of the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) raised more than \$35,000 at its golf outing fundraiser on behalf of needy Armenian orphans in Syria and Armenia.

The fifth annual Armenian orphanage fundraiser in Wisconsin was held this year at Meadowbrook Country Club, Racine, on June 22. The weather was perfect for the 80-plus golfers who registered. Following the tournament, over 125 local Armenians and friends gathered at the country club for a banquet catered by Di Carlo's.

This was the fifth annual Wisconsin orphanage benefit event, and by far the most successful to date. Since 2010, the committee has raised more than \$85,000 within Wisconsin.

Guest of honor at the banquet was George Yacoubian Jr., of Philadelphia, executive director of SOAR, who commended the local organizing committee for its humanitarian spirit. The program was emceed Dr. Chuck Hajinian, co-president of the Wisconsin SOAR chapter, who gave additional insight on the needs of orphans in Syria and Armenia. This year's



Wisconsin golf legends, from left, Chuck Pehlivanian, Kay Mikaelian, Archie Dadian honored by Wisconsin SOAR

event honored famous Wisconsin Armenian golfers Archie Dadian, Chuck Pehlivanian, and Kay Mikaelian. A silent auction included a number of exceptional donated items,

including golf and condo vacations, gift baskets, medieval Armenian coins, original artwork and handmade lace, sports memorabilia, fine jewelry, Armenian brandy and more. Mike Bode also ran a vigorous live auction for a few highly desirable items.

"Given the enormous humanitarian crisis facing the Armenian community in Syria, the great majority of the funds raised this year will be allocated to aiding three orphanages in Syria where Armenian children reside," said Dr. Hajinian. "Damages to these facilities has been extensive and basic items are in short supply. Donations received will go a long way toward alleviating those needs."

Sadly, a few days before the golf outing, Wisconsin SOAR Co-president Terry Hadjinian Peterson passed away after a long battle with cancer, and the event was dedicated to her memory. "Terry was a dedicated and energetic member of our board," said Dr. Levon Saryan, treasurer of the Wisconsin SOAR chapter. "Her absence will be deeply felt. But we know she would have wanted the event to go forward."

Numerous worthwhile projects have been funded by Wisconsin SOAR in recent years, including rebuilding a fire-damaged orphanage in Yerevan, establishing a functioning dental clinic, providing warm clothes and bedding, and supporting orphan summer camps to provide physical and social enrichment for children during the summer months.

When asked why he was organizing this effort, Hajinian replied: "Look into the eyes of these orphan children. These were the eyes of my grandmother who grew up in an orphanage along with a hundred thousand others from 1915. Today, we Armenians now party with a purpose. Join us next year, we are looking for helpers, or for more information, send an email to Hajinian@yahoo.com." Prior to the outing the Racine Journal Times published an extensive feature article focusing on the orphans from 1915 and the present.

Headquartered in Philadelphia, SOAR now has dozens of chapters across the US and in many countries around the world. SOAR provides financial and moral support for Armenian orphans and helps to address their unique needs.



Racine newspaper article features orphans of 1915



SOAR golf outing volunteers, from left, Sona Mikaelian, Kari Hajinian D'Acquisto, Dr. Ani Saryan and Dr. Victoria White

The Wisconsin organizing committee consisted of Dr. Chuck and Mary Kay Hajinian, Terry Hadjinian Peterson, Dr. David and Eddi Schmitt, Harold and Kathleen Aghjian and family, Levon and Shirley Saryan, Dr. Gary, Nancy and William Seabrook, Mike and Lori Bode (who together organized the tournament and the auctions), Kathy Lestina, Jason, Anne and Sam Samuelian, AJ and Sarah Bianchi, and Vahan and Dawn Kamalian. Substantial support was also provided Ara Cherkian, Dr. Stacy and Steve Michels, and Danny and Kari D'Acquisto. The event could not have been a success without help from numerous volunteers, including William Seabrook, Sona Mikaelian, Dr. Ani Saryan, Armen Saryan, John Palmar and Victoria White. The golf event itself was organized by golf pro Jason Samuelian and his staff at Meadowbrook CC.

Contributions to SOAR-Wisconsin are still being accepted. Checks may be mailed to SOAR-Wisconsin, c/o Dr. Levon Saryan, PO Box 210313, Milwaukee, WI 53221-8006.

Former Principal, Community Leader Kevork Marashlian and His Wife Visit Buenos Aires

VISIT, from page 1

Nearly 20 percent of graduates are active members in different committees in the local AGBU chapter and in other Armenian establishments of the community; 58 percent have married Armenians and 90 percent of all married graduates have sent their children to Marie Manoogian Educational Institute.

Unfortunately, eight graduates have passed away, either through accidents or illnesses.

During their visit, the Marashlians had the opportunity to reunite with former members of the Board of Directors of the AGBU, alumni of the Marie Institute Manoogian, with whom they shared trips to Armenia, members of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party and personal friends.



Kevork Marashlian speaking to the audience



40th Anniversary celebration attendance at AGBU Nazari and Artemis Nazarian Hall

In the secondary section of the Marie Manoogian Institute, accompanied by their former student and now Rector, Prof. Lilian Krapijian, the Marashlians spent time with the 2014 graduates. Kevork Marashlian spoke to them about their graduating trip to Armenia and the need to transmit their experiences either in writing in local newspapers or orally for the rest of the students to understand the importance of touring Armenia to benefit them educationally and personally.

In a rich exchange of questions and responses, students asked about the Armenian community of Boston, where the Marashlians lived and worked for 25 years, and about the Armenian day schools in the United States. The talk concluded

with a promise that the graduates who already completed their studies, soon join the Armenian community life according to their areas of interest.

The Marashlians then continued touring the facilities of the school and witnessed the classes of students of primary and kindergarten sections, where some of their former students are now are teaching. They had also the opportunity to meet and have lunch with Artoun Hamalian, director of the Educational Department of the AGBU Central Board of Directors; Ruben Kechichian and his wife, member of AGBU Central Board of Directors; and Nahabet Nahabetian, honorary member of the AGBU Buenos Aires.

During their stay in Buenos Aires, every time they came to the Armenia Street, Kevork and Vartiter Marashlian visited



The Marashlians meeting with the graduating students



Meeting with AGBU leaders

Sardarabad newspaper and the offices of the Tekeyan Cultural Association and encouraged their labor. Besides teaching and community work, Marashlian was also the editor of the Armenian section of *Sardarabad* while living in Argentina.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Archbishop Barsamian Visits Kansas City Parish

By Anita Zakarian and Bill Rinck

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – After months of planning and weeks of preparation, the Armenian Church community of Kansas City hosted a three-day visit by the Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, on August 8-10. This was the Primate's first trip to Kansas City, and the entire community worked diligently to make it special and memorable.

Fr. Tateos Abdalian, the Diocese's director of Mission Parishes, arrived on Thursday to meet with the local parish council to go over last-minute details.

On Friday afternoon, the Primate arrived and was greeted at the airport by 20 community members who expressed their excitement and joy. Tigran Topchian, a young parishioner and altar server, dressed in Armenian costume, greeted the Primate with the traditional tray bearing salt and bread.

After spending time greeting each person, a limousine took the Primate, Abdalian and Parish Council Chair Gary Hatutian to the Marriott Plaza hotel, where later that evening the council hosted a reception for council members, their spouses and community leaders.

During dinner the parishioners felt at home with Barsamian, as he welcomed each person to offer questions, comments and suggestions. He was especially interested in how the Diocese could be more helpful to the Kansas City community.

Saturday afternoon, a picnic at a local park brought out 70 parishioners to meet the Primate.

The khorovadz was prepared in the traditional Armenian "village-style" by the men of the community. They invited the Primate to sit with them and play a few games of *tavloo*.

After the picnic, members of the choir had an electrifying rehearsal with Khoren Mekanejian, the Diocesan director of Music Ministry. The hours flew by as choir members learned how to bring the music of the *badarak* to life.

Sunday morning saw the community's St. Garabed Armenian Church filled with parishioners awaiting the procession of the Primate into the sanctuary. Most had never seen a *badarak* with a complement of clergy and altar servers in their splendid vestments walking in procession. Barsamian was assisted by Fr.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian congratulates Zaven Hatutian and Armen Hovsepian, recipients of the St. Vartan Award.



Parishioners play *tavloo* with Archbishop Barsamian.

Abdalian, deacons Vrej Minassian and Vahe Bagdasarian; altar servers Gary Hatutian, Tigran Topchian and Michael Marifian (who was visiting from Bellville, Ill.). Mekanejian demonstrated that even with a small choir, beautiful sounds can be produced.

During the Primate's sermon, he congratulated the community for their resolve to bring the presence of the Armenian Church to Kansas City. He also committed himself to returning next year to consecrate the entire

church sanctuary.

Two of the founding members of the community – Zaven Hatutian and Armen Hovsepian – were granted the St. Vartan Award for their many years of service to the St. Garabed Armenian Church of Kansas City. Both were moved by this honor.

Following a requiem service, the Primate moved to the newly installed baptismal font, which he proceeded to consecrate. Assisted by Abdalian, who first washed the font with water and wine, the Primate sealed the four corners and the center of the font with holy chrism. He placed priestly vestments on it, along with six candlesticks.

With his final blessing, the community gathered in the church hall to share a meal once again with the Primate. Armenian songs were sung led by Tatev Amiryanyan, Mekanejian and Njeh Asisian.

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2014



Since its inception in 2001, TCA's 'Sponsor a Teacher' program has raised over \$596,000 and reached out to 4,864 teachers and school workers in Armenia and Karabagh.



Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them to educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.

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Arts & Living

Rep. Clark Tours Armenian Museum

WATERTOWN – On August 21, Rep. Katherine Clark (D-Fifth District) and her two aides, Natalie Kaufman (Watertown liaison) and David Bond, (legislative director, Washington DC) visited the Armenian Museum of America. The museum tour was one of several Watertown stops the representative made, including the Watertown Public Library.

Vice president of the Board of Trustees, Barbara Merguerian, together with Curator Gary Lind-Sinianian and Assistant Director Howayda Abu Affan, led a two-hour tour through the museum. The tour explored current exhibitions, including, “Who Are The Armenians,” “The Armenian Genocide” and “Karsh: Celebrating Humanity,” which was followed by a discussion of the events and topics that helped shape Armenian identity and culture.

Clark and her aides were impressed by the museum’s collections and the poignant stories told by the artifacts, especially the rugs in the



Rep. Katherine Clark and Gary Lind-Sinianian

exhibition “Orphan Rugs: Handworks of Armenian Orphans & Widows of the Near East Relief refugee camps.”

They viewed the empty space reserved for the famous Coolidge Rug, woven by the Armenian orphans and sent to President Calvin Coolidge in 1925, which the museum had requested to borrow from the White House for this exhibition.

The museum also announced that Clark has nominated the museum for the 2015 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services to community anchor institutions.

AWC-LA Creates Memorial Book for Genocide Centennial

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Women’s Coalition of Los Angeles (AWC-LA), a group of Armenian women representing 13 different organizations, will commemorate the centennial of the Armenian Genocide with an educational event on January 17, 2015 at Woodbury University, Burbank.

As part of the effort to honor and preserve the legacy of Armenian Women Ancestors, a memorial book is being prepared to coincide with this event. This memorial book will include a compilation of the profound stories of the Armenian women who faced the horrors of the Genocide yet were able to find a way to survive and help the family live on. There are many stories that remain private among individual families. Unfortunately, as the years pass, these unbelievable stories will fade into obscurity. The AWC-LA seeks to preserve and record as many stories as possible for future generations. Members are calling upon the community to contribute the amazing stories of survival, in order to preserve the tragic, yet heroic actions of our women ancestors.

They are seeking the involvement of the children and grandchildren of these women.

To fill out their questionnaire, visit their facebook page www.facebook.com/pages/Save-Our-Past-Memorial-Book/1451136551830664.



Jason Basmajian, Gieves & Hawkes' new chief creative officer

Savile Row Tailor Sets Up Shop in the US

By Alexa Brazilian

NEW YORK (*Wall Street Journal*) – Gieves & Hawkes, the 243-year-old Savile Row tailor, has dressed every British sovereign since George III. While the menswear brand’s heritage in the U.K. is thoroughly distinguished, its presence this side of the

Atlantic has been almost nonexistent. However, this month, American men will be able to share a tailor with Prince William without a trip to London, thanks to Bergdorf Goodman, which will be the brand’s exclusive retailer in the U.S. The New York department store will offer off-the-rack suits, separates and outerwear from the label along with access to its bespoke and made-to-measure services. “In the last 10 to 15 years, the brand had fallen a bit quiet,” said Jason Basmajian, Gieves’s new chief creative officer, who was poached from Brioni last year to expand its horizons geographically and aesthetically. “We want to embrace our heritage but dust it off and bring it forward.” That meant slimming down suits, branching into casual knitwear and outerwear and playing with the house’s beginnings as an outfitter to the British army, navy and landed gentry. “For fall we were inspired by the Scottish highlands but with a sophisticated perspective,” he said. “The collection doesn’t read, ‘Here’s my drooling dog and gun.’”

This notion can be seen in gray suits constructed of cashmere and wool, a smoky-colored top coat made from an alpaca blend and a lean indigo duffel coat. “It’s a modern interpretation of British style,” said Bill Cournoyer, Bergdorf’s vice president of men’s clothing and furnishings. “Jason’s given the brand an international look.” The company headquarters, in London, is also getting a face-lift for September, with renovations and an updated archive room that is available to visit by appointment. Next on Basmajian’s to-do list: a free-standing Gieves & Hawkes store in the US.



Gieves & Hawkes suit, Bergdorf Goodman, Styling by Anne Cardenas

Society for Armenian Studies Publishes *Journal Of the Society for Armenian Studies*

FRESNO, Calif. – The Society for Armenian Studies announces the publication of volume 22 (2013) of the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* (JSAS). Edited by Dr. Sergio La Porta (California State University, Fresno), it contains several articles and communications from new contributors to the Journal. Not only are the names new, but also their contributions provide insight into material that has heretofore received inadequate attention. The appearance of fresh scholars and scholarship bodes well for the future of the field.

Eight articles on various aspects of classical and modern Armenian studies, including one in Armenian, comprise Volume 22. Also included are six communications, and a revised version of a talk delivered at National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in Belmont, MA; three review essays and three book reviews.

Volume 22 begins with two articles on issues in Classical Armenian Studies. The first, by Robert Hewsen, clarifies the relationship between four seemingly independent, yet inter-related, territories mentioned in early Armenian texts. David Zakarian’s essay focuses on the description of the reigns of the Arshakuni queens, Parandzem and Zarmandukht, in the fourth century, in order to arrive at an analysis of the institution of queenship during the Arshakuni period.

Following these two articles are six essays on various topics of modern Armenian history and culture. The section commences with a detailed examination by Sebouh Aslanian on the book publishing trade that originated at the Armenian Mkhitarist Monastery in Venice.

Next are three contributions that address different aspects of the Armenian Genocide. In the first study, Jonas Kauffelt brings to light the work of the Danish Lutheran Christian missionary, Karen Jeppe (1876-1935), who joined the De Danske Armeniervenner (DDA, the Danish Friends of Armenia) in 1903.

Vahram Shemmashian, on the other hand, looks at the role the Armenian Prelacy of Aleppo played in providing help to refugees arriving in the early months of the Genocide. Based upon an examination of two files found in the Prelacy archives, the author sheds important light on the humanitarian activities of the Refugee Committee formed for the purpose of alleviating the plight of the new arrivals.

The final essay concerning the Armenian Genocide is by Stefan Ihrig who examines the reception of the assassination of Talât Pasha by Soghomon Tehlirian in 1921 in the German public sphere. He concludes that the German media came to accept that something akin to genocide (the word not yet having been invented) had occurred, clearly describing the killing of the Armenians as the annihilation or extermination of a people.

The final two articles of this volume concern themselves with modern Armenian literature. In her study of Leonardo Alishan’s poetics, Alina Gharabegian suggests that an examination of affective cultural difference presented in the Armenian literary tradition can potentially collapse categories of East and West that are often strictly defined through religious lines in Western scholarship.

And finally, Alvard Semirdjyan-Bek’mezian explores the development and modification of linguistic features of modern and post-modern Eastern Armenian prose fiction.

The communications included in this volume similarly address a wide range of topics, including the interpretation of a passage in Movses Xorenaci’s History of the Armenians concerning the construction of Artashat; corrections to Bedoukian’s study of Artashesian coins; the therapeutic application of music in medieval Armenia; an analysis of a Mamluk inscription

see JOURNAL, page 13



ARTS & LIVING

Avedis' Story: An Armenian Boy's Journey

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

These memoirs are an edited transcribed version of a recorded narration made in 1969 by a survivor of the Armenian Genocide. Avedis Albert Abrahamian, the survivor, had spent decades pondering the events he and his people endured. Finally, after much time elapsed his daughter, Dr. Carolann Najarian, made the effort to prepare and publish her father's account with the help of other family members and in-laws. Najarian was motivated also to travel with tour guide Armen Aroyan to her father's native village of Sheykh Hadji (today named Yukaribag) in Kharpert (Harput) province, part of the historically Armenian territory ruled by the Ottoman Empire in the past and Turkey at present.

Abrahamian's story in its broad outlines is similar to that of many other Genocide survivors, while the details are useful to add to our understanding of village life and Genocide in the context of other contemporary sources. It also is another example of the thoughts and reactions of a man who went through horrific events but managed to come out alive.

The volume, published in 2014, is a brief work of 111 pages, including the editor's introduction and acknowledgments, and an appendix with a family tree and notes on the fate of each family described in the memoir. There are a number of family pictures and documents reproduced. The volume reads well, with interesting anecdotes about daily life and Abrahamian's family.

Abrahamian was born in 1906. He recalls his childhood as happy, and describes various aspects of village life. There were two separate quarters in the village, one Armenian and the other Turkish. The Armenians spoke Armenian

and had their own Armenian and Armenian Protestant schools and churches. In all, they were some 150 families. The men worked primarily as craftsmen, and also kept bees and vegetables for its own use. The males in Abrahamian's family interestingly were thought to have inherited the power of faith healing.

Little information is given on the daily life of Turkish neighbors in Sheykh Hadji, who enter the story primarily with the description of the Genocide. Many terrible events are related, until the author and surviving members of his family escape via the Kurdish-populated mountainous area of Dersim to the zone occupied by Russian troops who had controlled some of the eastern territories of the Ottoman Empire by 1916. The family goes from Erzingan (Erzincan) to Trebizond and then to Tiflis (Tbilisi), Georgia, via Batumi. The author describes the chaos of those days due to rapidly changing political circumstances. Meanwhile, the Armenian refugees had to scramble to earn their livings. After the Russian Revolution the author and many other Armenians fled on foot toward Russia, fearing what would happen in Tiflis without the Russian army as protection.

Abrahamian felt that it was the Turks forcing the Armenians into exile, and wrote, evidently with hindsight that "for the generation that was to follow them, their offspring would be forced into distant lands and eventually to be assimilated and forever lost to the Armenian nation" (p. 57). He feels that the Armenians, or at least he himself, survived out of sheer stubbornness to thwart an enemy who wanted to exterminate them, and were inspired by pride in their resistance fighters like General Antranig, Sebouh and Mourad.

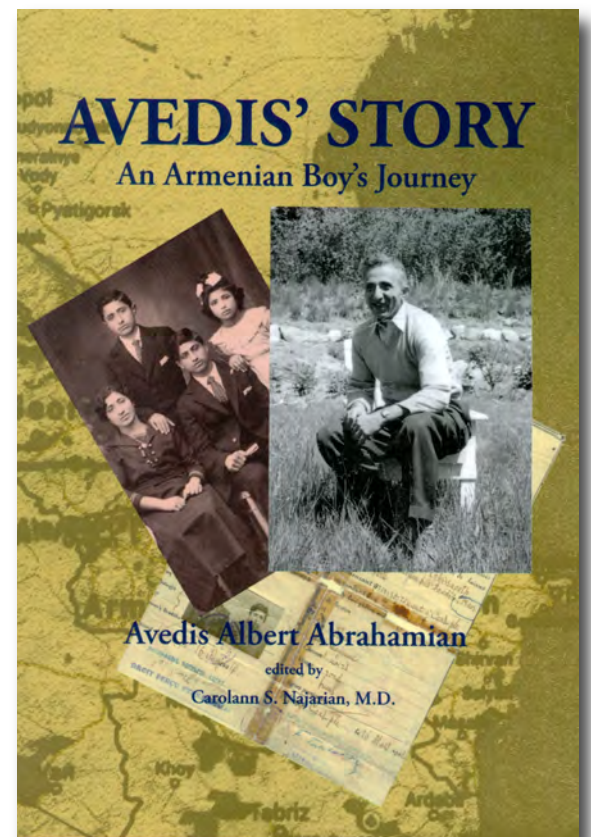
By the end of 1920, the family made it to Constantinople as the start of their journey to the United States, where Abrahamian's father had come prior to the war for employment.

When his father learned they were alive and in Constantinople, he sent money through the Near East Relief organization to help them come. By June 1921 Abrahamian and his mother reached Providence, RI, and finally reunited with his father moved to New York, joining other members of the family already in the US. The book ends with a brief description of the rejuvenated life of the survivors, which according to Abrahamian seems to have generally been happy again despite the recent period of traumas. Abrahamian and his circle also began to take an interest in the broader world politically, and was sensitive to social injustice against others.

When the author reflects on his acts during the Genocide and immediate post-war period, he regrets two incidents in which he beat up Turks when he had a chance. He found these to be "blind acts of hatred." As a boy, he also fantasized about wiping out the Turks entirely from the earth, or at least entire cities, but as a mature man "I realized that it would be a very cruel act because many innocent people would suffer who had absolutely nothing to do with the real guilty persons. Cruelty breeds cruelty and therefore it has to stop at some point." In other words, Armenians must not seek vengeance. They need to ask for justice for past misdeeds not just for Armenians but as "the cause of the human race" (p. 77).

Abrahamian aptly summarizes the vicissitudes of his life at the book's conclusion: "the joy of those years helped bury the sadness we had all experienced. The past was buried but could not be forgotten" (p. 100).

With so many memoirs and published histories of villages in the Kharpert plain, it would be interesting for newly published works to cross-



reference the older ones and provide some comparative analysis in a forward or afterward. This would require the involvement of a specialist.

(Avedis' Story: An Armenian Boy's Journey

By Avedis Albert Abrahamian
Edited by Dr. Carolann Najarian
Gomidas Institute, London
ISBN 978-1-909382-13-8



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Detroit *an Evening of Poetry*

the presentation of two books of poetry by Vahan Tekeyan
Armenian and English translations, edited by Edmond Azadian—books will be available for purchase

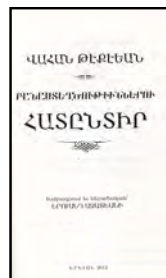


"Selected Poems" in Armenian
to be introduced by
Professor Kevork B Bardakjian

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Professor Bardakjian received his first degrees in Armenian studies from the University of Yerevan and his D.Phil. from Oxford University, UK. As a Senior Lecturer and Armenian

Bibliographer he taught Armenian literature, language, culture and history at Harvard University and at the Harvard Extension from 1974 to 1987. In 1987, he became the first holder of the newly established Marie Manoogian Chair of Armenian Language and Literature at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. From 1995 to 2007, he was Director of the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Professor Bardakjian has lectured extensively in the US, Europe and the Middle East. He is the recipient of many prizes, two honorary doctorates, and The Ellis Island Medal of Honor. He is a Fellow of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences and is currently President of the Society for Armenian Studies. His latest major publications are: *A Reference Guide to Modern Armenian Literature, 1500 -1920, with an introductory history*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000. A Turkish translation of this volume (*Modern Ermeni Edebiyatı*) appeared in Istanbul in 2013. Jointly with Professor Sergio La Porta, Professor Bardakjian edited a groundbreaking volume on a hitherto inadequately explored topic: *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition: a comparative perspective* (Brill, SVTP series, 2014).

Armenian recitation by Nora Azadian



Airea D. Matthews, Poet & Performer
will present the bi-lingual volume
and offer dramatic readings in English



Airea D. Matthews, a Cave Canem and Callaloo fellow, is a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee and a former Zell Postgraduate Poetry Fellow at the University of Michigan where she earned her MFA in Poetry and was awarded the 2011 Michael R. Gutterman Prize. She also holds a BA in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania and an MPA from The Ford School of Public Policy. A two-time Women of the World Poetry Slam finalist and producer of the one-woman performance collection, *Venus Disrobed*, her performance work was adapted and screened at the 2014 Cannes Lions Festival. Her short fiction and essay work have



appeared in *SLAB* literary magazine, *Vida: Her Kind* and *Michigan Quarterly Review*. Her poetry and prose have appeared in *Callaloo*, *The Missouri Review*, *The Indiana Review*, *WSQ*, *The Baffle*, *Vinyl*, *Muzzle* and elsewhere. She is the associate editor for *shuffpoetry.com*, a lecturer at the University of Michigan and is currently at work on her first full-length poetry collection. She lives in Detroit with her husband and four children.

*The evening will conclude with a recitation by
Airea D. Mathews from her own poetry.*

Dr. Raffi Belian, Emcee

Friday, September 12th at 7:30 pm
Hagopian World of Rugs Birmingham Showroom
850 S. Old Woodward, Birmingham, MI
Wine Reception to follow

Open to the Public



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 15 — AMAA-Haigazian University Celebratory Banquet in honor of Dr. Mihran Agbajian and George Phillips, Sr., Esq.; Saturday, November 15, Reception 6 p.m., Dinner 7 p.m., Beverly Hills Hotel, \$150; Information: Julie Aharonian 818-368-5266; Katia Kermoyan 818-242-5064.

CONNECTICUT

SEPTEMBER 9 — Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, Conn., will host a screening of the film "Orphans of the Genocide," followed by a question-and-answer session with the film's writer and director, Bared Maronian, on Tuesday, at 7 p.m. "Orphans of the Genocide" is a documentary created by the Armenoid Team that brings to life secret documents pertaining to the systematic Turkification campaigns of hundreds of thousands of Armenian orphans by the Ottoman Empire. It includes an interview with Maurice Missak Kelechian, whose findings unveiled the secrets of an orphanage in Antoura near Beirut, Lebanon, where 1,000 Armenian Genocide orphans were being turkified. For more information, including a film trailer, visit: <http://calendar.southernct.edu/index.php?eID=909>

ILLINOIS

SEPTEMBER 19 — "Hit The Road India" documentary will be screened, Friday, 6:30 p.m., at the Showplace Icon, 150 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago. The film follows two friends as they race from Mumbai to Chennai. This 12-day adventure encompasses over 2000 kilometers. This film recounts the challenges that the team faced racing through this foreign land. Monsoons, police detentions, vehicle crashes and the notorious Indian traffic are part of this epic adventure.

MASSACHUSETTS

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

SEPTEMBER 8 — St. James Men's Club, Monday, featuring speaker Dr. Nancy Ann Simonian, CEO, Syros Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Topic: "Building Great Biotech Companies." Dinner features Losh Kebab and Kheyra Dinner, Social Hour (mezza) 6:15 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. \$14 per person, St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Ladies welcome.

SEPTEMBER 12 — COMEDY NIGHT - An invitation to attend and enjoy a fantastic night of fun, laughter, food, music and dancing. The Siroun Dance Company of Boston presents the world-renowned Armenian Comedian, Kev Orkian, direct from the UK. The first time in Boston. Finalist in "Britain's Got Talent" and having performed for Britain's royal family, he is now ready to wow his audience in Boston.



Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven will host a screening of the documentary "Orphans of the Genocide" on Tuesday, September 9, at 7 p.m. The screening will be followed by a discussion session with director Bared Maronian (above). The film brings to life the plight of the Armenian children in the Antoura orphanage near Beirut, where the children were forced to surrender their identity.

Friday, at 8 p.m. at St. James Cultural Center, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Please reserve your tickets now and save. \$40 if reserved by 9/1; otherwise, \$45. Call 617-852-1816 or 508-397-7977 ASAP. First come, first served. Tables of 10 recommended. For more details and flyer, visit www.sayatnova.com.

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

SEPTEMBER 20 — Celebration of the New Independent Republic by the Lowell "Aharonian" Gomideh, 6 p.m., ARS Community Center, 142 Liberty St., Lowell. Dinner, program and entertainment by The Dynamic Duo featuring Greg Krikorian on oud & vocals and Michael Sabounjian on keyboard & vocals. "Why Western Armenia?" a visual presentation by Historian George Aghjayan following his recent 10-day pilgrimage to that region. Admission, \$20 adults, \$10 students.

SEPTEMBER 21 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families & Friends! 2-4 p.m. Armenian Heritage Park on

the Greenway, Boston between Faneuil Hall Marketplace and Christopher Columbus Park. Enjoy the music of Mal Barsamian, oud; Leon Janikian, clarinet; Kenny Kalajian, guitar and Jay Baronian, dumbeg. Game for the Kids at 2:30pm. Bob Lobel, Emcee. www.ArmenianHeritagePark.org

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

SEPTEMBER 29 — Party for Our Park! Friends of Armenian Heritage Park September Social. Hosted by Abby Lane, 253 Tremont Street, Boston. 7-10 p.m. Shake it Up with Great Friends and Cool Drinks while supporting the ongoing care of Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. For details and tickets, visit www.ArmenianHeritagePark.org. Advance Tickets only.

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

OCTOBER 11 — Armenian Friends of America presents Hye Kef 5, 7:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., Michael's Function Hall, 12 Alpha St., Haverhill; tickets, \$50, students 21 & under, \$40, proceeds to benefit Armenian churches of Merrimack Valley; individually served mezza platters and pastries; musicians, Mal Barsamian (clarinet), John Berberian (oud), Bob Raphaelian (violin), Bruce Jigarjian (guitar), Jason Naroian (dumbag & vocals); tickets, call either John Arzigian, 603-560-3826; Lucy Sirmaian, 978-683-9121; Peter Gulezian, 978-375-1616, or Sandy Boroyan, 978-251-8687. No tickets sold at the door.

OCTOBER 23 — Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall, Boston. 7:30 p.m. An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Foundation, sponsor of Armenian Heritage Park on Greenway. Details forthcoming. www.ArmenianHeritagePark.org

OCTOBER 25 — Ararat Center Boston Harbor Cruise on the Odyssey, Boston, Rowe's Wharf. Embarkation 7 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres, dinner, live Kef, premium complimentary bar. Adults 21 and over - \$175; Under 21 - \$100; For more information contact Pam at 617-645-2781 or pamtalmc@aol.com.

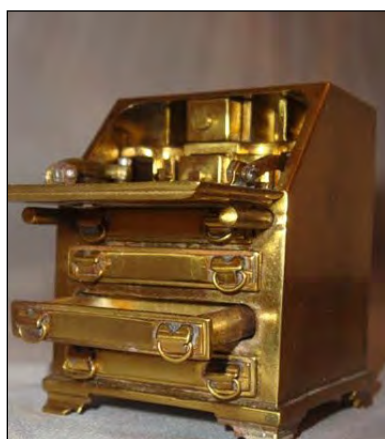
OCTOBER 26, 2014 — Fr. Vasken Kouzouian's 20-Year Pastoral Journey — Join us as we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our Pastor's Ordination, immediately following church services, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Charles and Nevert Talianian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Details to follow.

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

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

DECEMBER 14 — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, Christmas Holiday Concert, 7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

ATTLEBORO, Mass. — More than 30 years ago, Abraham Megerdichian created metal miniatures of everyday objects. His pieces are on exhibition through summer 2014 at the Attleboro Area Industrial Museum, 42 Union St. Museum hours are Thursdays and Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The closing reception with a special presentation will take place on Saturday, October 4, 2 to 4 p.m. For more information, visit the museum's website at industrialmuseum.com/. Photo is the Drop Leaf Desk, from 1975.



Society for Armenian Studies Publishes *Journal of The Society for Armenian Studies*

JOURNAL, from page 11

dating to the year 1450 found in the Armenian Monastery of St. James, Jerusalem; Nader Shah's relations with the Armenians of Iran; a report on the political lobbying efforts behind the erection of two statues to Heydar Aliyev and the Khojaly massacres in Mexico City; and a reflection on Raphael Lemkin's discourse on the Armenian Genocide. The three review essays contained in this volume address recent works on the region of Artsakh, the Azeri appropriation of George Bournoutian's work for political purposes, and the many publications issued in coordination with the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing.

The JSAS is available for purchase by contacting the Society for Armenian Studies Secretariat by telephone at 559-278-2669 or by email at barlowd@csufresno.edu. Back issues of the JSAS are also available for purchase.



COMMENTARY

Mirror Spectator



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COMMENTARY

In Search of Community Priorities

By Edmond Y. Azadian

“The true test of civilization is not the census, nor the size of the cities, nor the crops – no, but the kind of man the country turns out.”

The quote above is from Ralph Waldo Emerson, who issued the challenge to all leaders in charge of running countries or organizations or guiding communities.

Almost a century after being uprooted from our homeland, have we ever asked what kind of man or woman our community would turn out? Maybe the question has weighed heavily on the minds of some leaders but it does not seem that it has bothered us collectively, as we are paddling down the stream without concern about our destination.

To say the least, our community has its priorities backwards, yet we still hope for a positive outcome.

It was quite appropriate for the first Armenian settlers in America to build churches; the churches have played their role in preserving our faith and also our identity. However, ironically, the focus on church building has accelerated, even as the number of potential parishioners has dwindled. We continue building churches that have empty pews on Sundays, until we find another role for our houses of worship. Most have already become centers of civic activities, unrelated to the faith of the worshippers.

The Armenian Church in America has mostly abandoned its traditional responsibility of running schools, except for the Prelacy, in both California and Massachusetts. (The Armenian Catholic Church still follows the Catholic church’s tradition of founding schools, and in the US, it has schools in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and California.)

The Armenian day school movement began fairly recently in America and it has already lost steam for a variety of reasons; some of the factors affecting the schools are beyond the reach of the community, whereas others can be helped. The important question is where to draw the line – to face the manageable factors intelligently and then claim that we did our best to keep the Armenian schools in operation, leaving the rest to the course of society’s irreversible currents.

It will be foolhardy to believe that to run an Armenian school in a globalized society is an easy task. But by the same token, to surrender responsibility because the challenges are great is not a choice, either.

The Armenian language is the fundamental ingredient of our identity. Some highly-motivated individuals will resort to virtual books or virtual colleges to learn the language, but the rest need to have access to Armenian schools, where language, history and culture are taught, but above all, provide an atmosphere that can awaken and strengthen Armenian consciousness.

In that sense, there is no alternative to the Armenian school; the alternative is only self-delusion.

To start an Armenian day school can only be done through vision. No matter how much an Armenian school spends on the material aspects of education, it will not match nor surpass private or public schools in the same neighborhood. The Armenian community in the US is affluent enough to meet the challenges, if it learns to set its priorities in the right order.

One of those visionaries was Gabriel Injeikian who opened the

first Armenian school in America, to the amazement of the majority of the Armenians. Many organizations followed suit and today an entire network of schools is in operation from coast to coast. Most of the graduates have come to prove that in terms of professional success, they do not lag behind the graduates of public or private institutions, despite the scarcity of educational resources in their respective schools.

Most of the Armenian schools have fallen on hard times. Enrollments at some schools are declining and in some cases, the quality of the education is being compromised because of a lack of funds. One of those schools is the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Arshag Dickranian School in Hollywood, Calif., which this September began its 34th academic year.

The Dickranian School has played a pivotal role in integrating generations of immigrant Armenians who have become successful citizens of the US. The school still plays an essential role in the growing community on the West Coast.

The eponymous late benefactor and his family have generously provided substantial funding. However, as the school’s enrollment continues to grow, more resources will be needed to meet basic needs.

Kirk Kerkorian’s Dream Fund today remains the major benefactor of Armenian schools in California. Kerkorian, a man who did not have the benefit of attending an Armenian school, believes in the role of that institution in preserving our heritage.

The same conviction has driven other benefactors to contribute to Armenian schools because they know they have a stake in building and preserving Armenian identity.

The Dickranian School is owned and operated by the Tekeyan Cultural Association. Since its founding, dedicated cadres of educational leaders and innovators have been running it.

As times get tough, the community has to be sensitized about the needs and challenges of the school. In the first place, the mobilization of Tekeyan members and friends will be required to set the pace for the rest of the community to help the school survive.

As the demographic profile of the community undergoes changes and as educational tools and methods become more sophisticated and expensive, they pose new challenges for the leaders who believe in Armenian education. Instead of giving up, they look to new alternatives. One such alternative is to have more community involvement in the public schools, where substantial numbers of Armenian students are enrolled. That can keep in place the instruction of the Armenian language at the state’s expense.

The other alternative is to explore the feasibility of charter schools. The Turks have been ahead of the Armenians by taking advantage of the possibilities in American educational system and they have already a network of charter schools founded by Fatullah Gulen in many states. Although they have abused the system and many Gulenist charter schools are under investigation in California, Illinois, and Arizona and in other states, making it harder for other groups to obtain licensing for new charter schools.

One exemplary school seems to be the Ararat Charter School in the Valley and others may be on the drawing board. It is embarrassing to admit that we need to learn from the Turks how to use the system to our advantage.

When we soberly prioritize our community needs, we see that the school and language remain at the top of the list, but not at the expense of dropping other priorities, which have their essential role in consolidating the Armenian identity.

Homecoming Part Three: Bringing Hidden Armenians Home

By Raffi Bedrosyan

The historic first trip of the Diyarbakir hidden Armenians to Armenia is now over and it is time for us to assess the impact, consequences and next steps.

At the end of the first week, we organized a Dikranagerd Night at a beautiful location called HyeLandz Eco Village in the village of Keghatir. We invited government officials, academicians and researchers following our group, as well as some of the new-found relatives of the Diyarbakir hidden Armenians whose ancestors had managed to move to Armenia after 1915. The re-union of the Christian Armenian relatives with the Islamicized Armenians of Diyarbakir was another special moment. Needless to say, the dancing and singing kept the whole village awake until the early hours of the morning. In the last few days the group visited Lake Sevan. Moslem or Christian, they all reinforced their “Armenianness” by dipping into the holy waters of Sevan, some their toes, some their

entire bodies... Then they were off to a government camping facility in Tsakhgadzor for a few days, where they had a chance to rest after a whirlwind tour of Armenia, as well as learn more Armenian lessons, songs and dances. They all enjoyed the camp, except for the morning gym classes and the “beds from the Stalin era”...

As they drive back home to Diyarbakir to resume their lives, perhaps a bit apprehensive about their emerging new identities, I would like to share some of the life stories of these no more hidden Armenians. There is enough material for a book or a movie for each of the 50 members of the group. Through interviews by media or Ministry of Diaspora officials, Armenians of Armenia have started finding out about them. The most interesting responses were to the question of when they realized they had Armenian roots. Some of them found out they were Armenian when they were already adults, at the deathbed of their parents or grandparents. Some discovered when they were in compulsory military service in the Turkish Army, when their commanders told them they can’t be trusted because of their

“background.” Some were told as little kids, when other kids shouted at them as “Armenian” in the street or at school as a swear word, without knowing the meaning of the word. As they rushed home crying that other kids swore at them, their parents had to explain that Armenian is not a swear word, but their own identity. Some hidden Armenians tried hard to appear as devout Moslems; one even became Imam, a Moslem religious leader, while still keeping his hidden identity. However, most hidden Armenians tried to ensure that their children married into other hidden Armenian families, even the Imam giving his daughter to another Islamicized Armenian boy, raising questions among his Moslem followers. No matter how much these people tried to hide their Armenian roots, it seems that the neighbors or the government officials knew about their origins. During disagreements between business people, shopkeepers, neighboring women or kids at school, the insults of “gavur/infidel” or “devil rooted Armenian” easily came out, no matter how devout Moslems they appeared to be. One

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Azerbaijan Calls California Resolution On Artsakh a Mere Piece of Paper

Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry harshly condemned the California Legislature last week after the State Senate adopted resolution AJR 32 that "encourages and supports the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic's continuing efforts to develop as a free and independent nation" and "urges the President and Congress of the United States to support the self-determination and democratic independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic." The resolution also acknowledged that Karabagh (Artsakh) "has historically been Armenian territory... and yet was illegally severed from Armenia by the Soviet Union in 1921 and placed under the newly created Soviet Azerbaijani administration."

Both Houses of the California Legislature overwhelmingly supported the Artsakh resolution – the State Senate by a vote of 24-0 on August 27, and the State Assembly with a vote of 72-1 on May 8. Thus, California joins Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island in passing such pro-Artsakh resolutions.

The actions of the California Legislature infuriated the

Government of Azerbaijan and its diplomats in the US Elman Abdullayev, spokesman of Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry, dismissed the Artsakh resolution, calling it "nothing more than a piece of paper." The Consul General of Azerbaijan in Los Angeles blasted the local Armenian community, the State of California and AJR 32. To justify his failure to block the resolution, he alleged that California Senators received "massive financial contributions for their election campaigns" from the "Armenian lobby." Forgetting that he represents one of the most autocratic regimes in the world, the Consul General of Azerbaijan had the audacity to lecture US officials on the "serious flaw in America's political system that needs an urgent fixing."

Before making such baseless accusations, the Azeri Consul General should have searched the Internet to see how much money, if any, the 24 Senators who voted for the Artsakh resolution had received from Armenian-Americans. Campaign contributions are a public record in the United States, unlike Azerbaijan where visiting politicians are wined and dined and sent home with stacks of cash, cans of caviar, and gold ingots!

The Consul General also credited the passage of AJR to the "inordinate amount of effort by the Armenian lobby in California, where around one million Armenians reside." The one million number is yet another exaggeration by the Azeri diplomat who went on to falsely claim that the Armenian "ethnic lobby" resorted to "threats, blackmail and other means" against California Senators.

The Azeri Consul General then bragged about his efforts against AJR 32, claiming that he and his Consulate undertook a number of "serious measures," including "letters of protest to all Senators [and] holding numerous meetings with them..." Despite his frantic activities, not a single Senator voted against the Artsakh bill! Incredibly, the

Consul claims he scored a major victory because the final vote was 24-0 in favor of Artsakh, and not 40-0, as some Senators were either absent or abstained!

Conveniently, the Consul General forgets to mention his biggest supporters in opposing the Artsakh bill: the powerful lobbying firms that Azerbaijan has hired in Washington and Los Angeles, at great expense. One of these firms, JCI Worldwide, led by Seth Jacobson, sent to all 40 California Senators a letter signed by Rabbi Dov Newman, Chabad of Beverlywood; Rabbi Mendy Cohen, Chabad of Sacramento; and Rabbi Yonah Bookstein, Pico Shul. The three Rabbis told the Senators that they "strongly oppose AJR 32.... Azerbaijan is an important ally to Israel and Jewish people. Jews live free and protected in Azerbaijan for thousands of years.... As Rabbis and leaders of Jewish communities across California, we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Azerbaijan and demand that you vote No on AJR 32." These Rabbis clearly embarrassed themselves by sending such a ridiculous letter, since they failed to convince a single Senator to vote against the Artsakh resolution. Furthermore, their circulated letter was a big waste of Azerbaijan's petrodollars, as JCI's expensive lobbying proved to be worthless.

One wonders if President Aliyev is aware that Azerbaijan's Consulate in Los Angeles and Embassy in Washington are wasting millions of dollars on useless lobbying firms. Do the citizens of Azerbaijan, who mostly live in abject poverty, know that their leaders are wasting their country's resources on political activities overseas just to counter a "piece of paper"? Indeed, if the California Senate resolution was a meaningless "piece of paper," as the Azeri foreign ministry official claims, why did Azerbaijan spend so much time, effort and money trying to block its passage?

Homecoming Part Three: Bringing Hidden Armenians Home

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tragicomic incident was the story of three Moslem Kurdish boys about 8-9 years old, one of them being from a hidden Armenian family but unaware of his roots at the time. They stole some of those famous Diyarbakir watermelons from the orchard of a hidden Armenian Islamicized man. The man caught the three little thieves, but let go the two real Moslem Kurdish boys and gave a good beating to the hidden Armenian boy. I leave it to the psychologists to ponder the reasons for this man's actions. Years later, this hidden Armenian boy finds out his real identity and still thinks about this incident.

Another interesting fact that came out during the interviews was the special place of Yerevan Radio in all Kurdish families' lives, including our hidden Armenians group. As Kurdish language was banned and even possessing a Kurdish music tape was a punishable crime in Turkey for several decades, all Kurds tuned in to Yerevan Radio which broadcast Kurdish news and music a couple of hours each day. The group members all remembered how, when they were growing up, everyone would stop work at home or at shops to gather around the radio to hear Yerevan Radio Kurdish news...

I am confident the groundbreaking nature of this historic first trip will open the road for other hidden Armenians to follow, but I would like to report on three additional successful outcomes resulting from this trip.

Firstly, two university graduates in our group who wanted to further their graduate studies in Armenia will be able to fulfill their dreams. In discussion with the Armenian government officials, we reached agreement that they will be able to attend Armenian universities with free tuition, master the Armenian language for a year and then continue into their desired field of study.

Secondly, some of the group members inquired about obtaining Armenian citizenship, perhaps toward future plans of retirement in Armenia. As per the existing citizenship requirements, Armenian government demands documents and proof of Armenian ethnic origin but of course no such documents exist among our hidden Armenians, except their memories from their parents and grandparents. In discussion with the government officials, I proposed the possibility of a baptism document as proof of Armenian origin. I suggested that if a hidden Armenian comes out and gets baptized in Armenia, sim-

ilar to our two members who got baptized in Echmiadzin (see previous article), then this should be sufficient proof to apply for Armenian citizenship. The proposal was received favorably and will now be discussed in cabinet, hopefully leading to approval by the government.

Thirdly, learning the Armenian language, history and culture is essential to re-discovering Armenian roots. The Virtual University run by AGBU in Yerevan is offering online courses in these subjects. The administrators have now agreed to offer these courses for free to all applicants from Turkey. This will have a huge impact on the hidden Armenians of Turkey wherever they are, in Dersim, Van, Mush or Diyarbakir, as they can start learning on their own, in their own homes, even in the absence of organized language courses.

Although this trip is the start of a new reality within the Armenian world and received with great enthusiasm by both government officials and public in Armenia, I must admit that not everyone is on board. There are still quite a few Armenians disapproving of the time and effort in bringing out the hidden Armenians. Perhaps it is untimely to air our dirty laundry, but I believe the arguments put forth by these disapproving Armenians must be discussed, as some of these people hold important posts within the Armenian church and political organizations in Diaspora and in Istanbul. These disapprovers argue that Moslem Armenians are not really Armenian, until they convert to Christianity by getting baptized; but then, they go on arguing that they cannot get baptized unless they show proof and documents of Armenian origins, until they speak fluent Armenian and "pass tests of being a good Armenian". I

believe it is shortsightedness and totally unrealistic to have such requirements for hidden Armenians living in Van or Dersim, surrounded by Moslem Turks/Kurds, working in government jobs. The other argument I find incomprehensible is that the emergence of hidden Armenians in large numbers lessens the claims of the 1915 genocide, and that it is tantamount to strengthening Turkish cases of denial. I have even received comments that Turks will now use the hidden Armenians as proof that genocide never happened, and therefore, I should stick to engineering or music, instead of getting involved in these issues... These comments can be dismissed, were it not for the fact that they come from some individuals in undeservedly responsible positions in Diaspora and in Istanbul.

Regardless, we will keep on expanding our efforts in Diyarbakir and other regions of Turkey, continuously pushing the envelope on rules and regulations in order to facilitate the "coming out" of our hidden Armenian brothers and sisters, the grandchildren of the "living" victims of the genocide. There is a Turkish term for these hapless survivors – "kilic artigi," meaning "remnants of the sword." The attempted murder of a nation and the total confiscation of its wealth took place within Turkey, but as we approach the centennial of these problems, we must realize that the resolution of these problems will also take place within Turkey. No matter how many events we organize in the diaspora or Armenia, no matter how many third-country parliaments and politicians appear to sympathize with our cause, at the end of the day, the only change will come from within Turkey when the peoples of Turkey realize the truth about 1915 and force their govern-

ment also to stop the denial and deal with the consequences. One of the key components toward this goal will be to re-create an Armenian presence within Turkey. The continuing dialogue of Armenian and Turkish civil societies and opinion makers, combined with the emergence of hidden Armenians within Turkey are essential toward eliminating the past and present barriers.

I will conclude this series of articles with a tribute to the courage and determination of our hidden Armenians, and a few questions for you to ponder. How will they be received back in Turkey? How will their families, neighbors, employers, employees react to their new identity? Just consider Stepan's case, the newly baptized man who works as a teacher at a government school. All his students are Moslems. He told me he knows there are several kids in his class who come from hidden Armenian Islamicized families, but he doesn't know if the kids know about their roots. How will the Moslem kids (or their parents) react to him coming out? How will the hidden Armenian kids (or their parents) react? How will his own kids react? We are in uncharted waters, but sooner or later, truth and justice will prevail.

(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer and concert pianist, living in Toronto, Canada. He has donated concert and CD proceedings to infrastructure projects in Armenia and Karabagh, in which he has also participated as an engineer. He helped organize the reconstruction of the Surp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church and the first Armenian reclaim of church properties in Anatolia after 1915. He gave the first piano concert in the Surp Giragos Church since 1915.)

Notice to Contributors

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

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

daytime telephone number.

- Deadline for submission of all articles and advertising is 12 noon on Monday of the week of publication.
- Photos will be published without charge at the discretion of the editors and art director. Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is included.
- The *MS* will publish only one article about an upcoming organizational event. For major special events, exceptions may be made only by special arrangement with the editors.
- Telephone numbers, ticket prices and other details (at the discretion of the editors) will not be included in press releases, but should be reserved for calendar listings and advertisements.



California Senate Recognizes Karabagh Republic

CALIFORNIA, from page 1

more we can expect such resolutions, paving the way for the international recognition of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic," according to RIA Novosti.

Political scientist Levon Melik-Shahnazaryan said that the recognition of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic by the State of California can have serious economic and political consequences, if the foreign diplomacies of the Republic of Armenia and the Nagorno Karabagh Republic provide practical steps. As reports "Armenpress", the political scientist stated about this at the course of the press conference held on September 3.

Among other things, Melik-Shahnazaryan underscored: "The US is a federation of states and each state has its own laws. Karabagh has a right to open its representation in California and respectively California can have its representation in Stepanakert. Karabagh can also export its good with the 'Made in Karabagh' country of origin label."

Previously it was reported that the California State Senate approved a measure recognizing the independence and self-determination of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

Wednesday's vote on AJR32 also called for U.S. recognition of the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh, marking a major milestone in the growing American movement supporting the national and democratic aspirations of the citizens of this independent and historically Armenian country.

The historic vote specifically voiced encouragement for Artsakh's continuing efforts to develop as a free and independent nation, and formally called upon the President and Congress of the United States to support the self-determination and democratic independence of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic.

Hermes Armenian Alphabet Scarf Raises Funds for Charity

SCARF, from page 1

The proceeds from the sale of this exclusive, limited edition creation, will go toward humanitarian and cultural activities of SFFA in Armenia.

Janik Manissian, president of SFFA, warmly thanked Hermès and designer Karen Petrossian for the realization of this unique artistic work that will contribute to "support an ever more urgent and essential humanitarian action."

Many personalities and representatives of the French press attended the presentation, including Armenia's Ambassador to France Vigen Tchitetchian, NKR representative Hovhannes Guevorguian Bishop Norvan Zakarian, Valerie Toranian, managing editor of Elle magazine, etc.

SFFA was founded in April 1990, in the wake of the devastating 1988 quake in Armenia.

following the earthquake that befell Armenia December 7, 1988.



Pierre-Alexis Dumas, artistic director of Hermès, presented to the Petrossian restaurant the new square Hermès silk, on the topic of the Armenian alphabet Lettres de Erevan.



Details of the scarf



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