

# ICARE's Agribusiness Research and Education In Armenia Expanding with Ecofarm

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education (ICARE) director Arthur Grigoryan was in the United States recently, during July, on a fundraising trip. ICARE (<http://icare.am/>), he explained, has expanded greatly since its establishment in 2005 from education in agribusiness and marketing to encompass training in wine production, greenhouse crop production and soon, an ecofarm. It also conducts various types of research, going as far afield as aquaculture.

It all began as a joint project with Texas A&M University to provide a certificate program in agrobusiness and marketing in Armenia. The graduates would use their newly acquired knowledge in applied economics and business to further Armenia's food and agriculture production. Grigoryan said, "I am a graduate of that program too, so I grew from being a student and faculty member, to doing development at ICARE, to being a director. That program was and is very successful."

Today there are about 100 students at ICARE, and many of them are enrolled in this program. ICARE expanded, Grigoryan said, from providing education at the undergraduate level to including the master's level. It initiated various practical certificate courses.



Working in the vineyards

## Vinification and Teaching Skills For Employment

Grigoryan said, "We realized some years ago that as the wine sector was beginning to grow in the mid-2000s, we need to prepare good winemakers, and wine businessmen and business women." Diasporan and local Armenians were establishing modern wineries but needed winemakers with the requisite modern knowledge. These were not available locally so they had to bring them

from France, Italy and elsewhere, which was very expensive. Instead, ICARE founded EVN (like Yerevan's airport code) Wine Academy, which by now has 60 graduates.

Three of them, Grigoryan said, have established their own wineries, including one called Alluria (<http://alluria.wine/>). He said, "I am especially proud of it because it produces non-mainstream wines. It is something similar to biodynamic — it is not really biodynamic but it is wild fermentation. Alluria is trying to move towards wild dynamic wine production."

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## Amulsar Mining Risks 'Manageable,' Insists Top Investigator

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A major gold mining project launched in Armenia by a Western company poses only "manageable" environmental risks, a senior law-enforcement official who has investigated it insisted on Monday.

The official, Yura Ivanyan, also stood by the investigators' conclusion that the Armenian Ministry of Environment Protection did not break any laws or regulations when it formally allowed the company, Lydian International, in 2016 to develop the Amulsar gold deposit.

"The assessment of the environmental and social impact on the mine's exploitation received a positive conclusion from the Ministry of Environment Protection without any violation of the law," Ivanyan told a news conference.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told Armenia's Investigative Committee to look into the legality of Lydian's mining license

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Yura Ivanyan, a senior official from the Investigative Committee, at a news conference in Yerevan, August 26, 2019.



Gegashen pupils perform a work by Tumanyan.

## Tumanyan in the Land of The Brothers Grimm

BERLIN/YEREVAN — This year Armenians in the Republic and in the diaspora are celebrating the 150th birthday of Hovhannes Tumanyan (1869-1923), a beloved national poet. Known for his vast literary output including ballads, poems, fables and essays, he is best remembered for his fairy tales. One

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

first encounters such magical stories in childhood, but the vivid memories remain through adulthood, and in later years may be shared with children and grandchildren.

Tumanyan searched through the legends and sagas, fables, humorous tales, allegories and anecdotes of his native Armenia and unearthed an immense literary treasure. But he looked into the traditions of other cultures as well, and translated Russian, Indian, Japanese, Irish, Italian and Persian fairy tales into Armenian. The genre of fairy tales thus became a vehicle for cultural dialogue.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Petition against Istanbul Convention Reaches Echmiadzin

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The initiative group "Kamq" which is sponsoring a petition campaign named "No to Istanbul Convention" arrived on Monday in Echmiadzin, Armenia's Armavir region. "Our campaign continues in Echmiadzin, at central square near Komitas Vardapet statue. Join us through signing the petition," the group posted on Facebook, calling on the citizens to leave signatures in support of their cause.

The Istanbul Convention, which is subject to ratification by Armenia, protects women against violence and obliges the state to prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. However, the document has triggered a debate in Armenia over what some say are controversial concepts which jeopardize the national identity, according to the critics of the bill.

### Germany Completes Ratification of Armenia-EU Agreement

BERLIN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Germany has completed the ratification of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement signed between Armenia and the European Union (EU) in November 2017, the spokesperson for the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anna Naghdalyan revealed on Monday, August 26.

"On August 23, 2019, Germany notified the EU Council on the completion of its internal procedures necessary for the ratification of the Armenia-EU deal," Naghdalyan said in a Facebook post.

The European Parliament, Cyprus, Slovakia, Sweden, Finland, Hungary, Germany, Luxembourg, Great Britain, Romania, Denmark, Bulgaria, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Malta, as well as the Czech Chamber of Deputies and the French Chamber of Deputies have so far ratified the CEPA.

The agreement will enter into force once all the 28 members of the EU ratify it.

### Museum Visitors in Armenia Up 31%

YEREVAN (Arka) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reported on August 26 on his Facebook page that the number of visitors of the country's museums has grown 31 percent from January to June. He said 607,797 people visited the Armenia's museums in the first half of this year against the 463,908 of the same period a year before.

He said a significant growth was recorded in tourist visits from Germany, China, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, Russia, Sweden and the United States.

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### Art of Dance in Dutch

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Ex Finance Minister Charged with Fraud

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — National Security Service (NSS) Director Artur Vanetsyan disclosed this week a few details from the criminal investigation into misuse of particularly large amounts of funds and official misconduct where ex-Minister of Finance Gagik Khachatryan is a person of interest.

Vanetsyan told reporters that they have gathered evidence and carried out large-scale work which eventually led to searching Khachatryan's residence and offices.

"Before that Gagik Khachatryan was summoned for several times to the investigations department and was questioned as a witness. The combination of the evidence gave us grounds to carry out today's actions," he said, referring to the search.

Vanetsyan said that together with Khachatryan they will also detain Karen Khachatryan, a former State Revenue Committee staffer affiliated with the former finance minister. He said that the investigators will determine the statuses of both men in the investigation.

No charges have been pressed against Khachatryan so far.

## Moody's Raises Armenia Rating

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Moody's International Rating Organization has raised Armenia's rating making it "Ba3" from "B1," Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan wrote on his Facebook page on August 27.

He noted that the decision of Moody's is based on the factor that Armenia diversifies its economy, as well as on the macroeconomic stability that has been retained for a long period, which raises Armenia's economic immunity. "Moody's noted in its report that real GDP growth in Armenia will remain high in the mid-term period," Pashinyan wrote, adding that the development of IT sector is of particular importance, which is the main condition for a knowledge-based economy.

According to Pashinyan, this rating raises the international confidence towards the Armenian economy and significantly improves the investment attractiveness of the country.

## Pixar Senior Vice President Sarafian to Attend WCIT 2019

YEREVAN (news.am) — Senior Vice President at Pixar Katherine Sarafian will be one of the panelists at the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) 2019.

The animated film "Brave," produced by Sarafian, won the Academy Award for the Best Animated Feature Film.

WCIT 2019 will be held in Yerevan on October 6-9. The Congress is hosted by Armenia with the support and under the high patronage of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) was established by the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA). Its main organizing body is the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE).

## Malatia Mall Burns

YEREVAN (Arka) — A fire in Malatia Mall in Yerevan on August 24 destroyed goods there. The fire was put out on Sunday at 13:53. As many as 19 crews made up of 434 firefighters rushed to the scene.

The emergency ministry said Monday that the blaze ignited in the household and electronics devices section, where furniture and textile were stored and sold. Emergency Minister Felix Tsolakyan told journalists that the firefighting was hobbled by the presence of flammable substances there.

"Violation of urban planning norms is dangerously commonplace in Yerevan," he said.

The minister said he was happy about the job the firefighters have done.

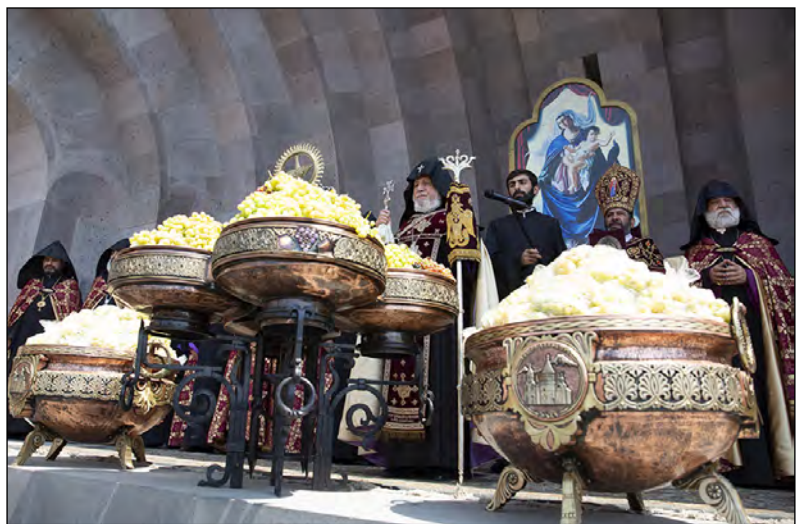
Ten people were injured in the fire and taken to area hospitals.

# Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin Celebrates Feast of Assumption, Blesses Grapes

ECHMIDZIN — On August 18, Armenian Apostolic Church celebrated the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, attended the Divine Liturgy in Gayane Monastery. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the Director of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin. Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan.

Mirzakhanyan noted that the story of the Transfiguration is of unique educational significance in family life, in the relationships of parents and children, conveying maternal love and caring, faithfulness and holiness, responsibility, gratitude, and humility.

The catholicos also touched upon the significance and tradition of the Blessing of the Church in the Armenian Church, noting in particular: "Jesus is presented in the Gospel as a vine, and the wine as the blood of the Lord for the council of the Holy Communion. Today, the fields and orchards are blessed for abundant productivity. And again, Glory to the Father of our faith, Gregory the Illuminator, who united and blended folk traditions and cus-



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II behind the vats of blessed grapes

toms on religious holidays, making them national festivals, such as Ascension, Zangyulum, Transfiguration, Vardavar, and today the Blessing of Grapes.

After the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the solemn order of the "Blessing of the Grapes" was performed

in the open altar of Trdat.

At the end, the blessed bunches of grapes were distributed to the faithful.

## Press Freedom Groups Object to Armenian Government Bill

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenian media freedom groups expressed concern on Thursday, August 22, about a government bill that would make it a crime to publicly call for or justify violence in the country.

Under the bill involving amendments to the Armenian Criminal Code drafted by the Justice Ministry, such statements would be punishable by fines and up to three years in prison. The ministry called for a public debate on the proposed amendments when it publicized them last week.

In their written objections submitted to the ministry, civic groups dealing with mass media said the bill is too vague and could place unjustified restrictions on the freedom of expression.

Shushan Doydoyan, who leads one of those organizations, the Center for Freedom of Information, said the Justice Ministry should have specifically defined and criminalized instead "hate speech" targeting ethnic, religious and sexual minorities and other categories of the population.

"Criminal liability is a very exceptional restriction of the right to freely express oneself and it must therefore be applied only in exceptional circumstances," Doydoyan told RFE/RL's Armenian service. "In our view, the exceptional circumstances are only hate speech against which the state can take action. But that intervention must have clearly defined grounds."

Yeghishe Kirakosian, a senior legal aide to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, insisted earlier that the bill is aimed at doing just that. "This bill is aimed at preventing hate speech and any propaganda of violence," he said.

The bill appears to stem from angry remarks made by Pashinyan at a June 6 cabinet meeting in Yerevan. The prime minister ordered law-enforcement authorities to clamp down on groups which he said are advocating political violence as part of a "hybrid war" waged against his government.

Pashinyan did not name those groups or individuals linked to them. He only spoke of "forces directly or indirectly connected to the former corrupt system." The remarks prompted sarcastic reactions from several prominent members of the former ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) and other bitter critics of the current government.



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II blesses soldiers.

## Ter-Petrosian Ally Critical of Armenian Gov.

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A senior member of former President Levon Ter-Petrosian's Armenian National Congress (HAK) party on Friday, August 23, criticized the current government's domestic and foreign policies, saying that they are not "clear" enough.

Aram Manukyan also claimed that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's administration is too slow in implementing major reforms they have promised.

"The current authorities do not clearly express their positions on the Karabakh issue, foreign policy, and relations with Russia," Manukyan told a news conference. "[Their policies] are not clear."

"That may have been justified during the first few months [of Pashinyan's] rule when there was a revolutionary euphoria," he said. "That was only natural. But that wave has gone away and the authorities must express their position on these issues in a clear and understandable way and without tricky terms."

Pashinyan ruled out any changes in Armenia's traditional foreign policy and, in particular, close relationship with Russia when he swept to power in last year's "Velvet Revolution." Ter-Petrosian and his party, which is not represented in the current Armenian parliament, also support the alliance with Russia.

Manukyan also complained he sees no "revolutionary steps" in the Pashinyan government's handling of the domestic economy and justice system. "The longer they delay reforms,

especially painful reforms, the fewer possibilities of implementing those reforms they will have," he said.

Pashinyan played a prominent role in Ter-Petrosian's opposition movement that nearly brought the latter back to power after a disputed presidential election held in February 2008. The former journalist spent about two years in prison as a result of a post-election government crackdown on the Ter-Petrosian-led opposition.

Pashinyan fell out with Ter-Petrosian after being released from prison in 2011. In February 2018, the HAK's deputy chairman, Levon Zurabyan, scoffed at Pashinyan's plans to try to stop then President Serzh Sargsyan from extending his decade-long rule.

Even so, the HAK welcomed the subsequent Pashinyan-led protests that led to Sarkisian's resignation. Ter-Petrosian, who had served as Armenia's first president from 1991-1998, and Pashinyan met in July 2018 for the first time in years.

Senior HAK representatives also hailed criminal charges that were brought against former President Robert Kocharyan and other former Armenian officials shortly after the "Velvet Revolution." The charges stem from the March 2008 breakup of the post-election protests in Yerevan which left eight protesters and two policemen dead.

In February this year, Ter-Petrosian defended Pashinyan against the country's former "kleptocratic regime" which he said is waging a smear campaign against the new government.





## ARMENIA

# ICARE's Agribusiness Expanding with Ecofarm

ECOFARM, from page 1

A second one is called Aparteni (<https://www.facebook.com/aparteny/>), and the third was established by ICARE itself to allow its students to practice and learn to prepare their own wine. Later this month, the third batch of 1,300 bottles of EVN wines will be bottled and then sold in Armenia. Eventually, Grigoryan hopes that they will produce enough quantities to export too. One of the EVN graduates is an experienced winemaker who supervises the work of the students. After studying, during the evening hours, the students press the grapes and participate in all the consequent processes.

Grigoryan pointed to this as a good example of ICARE's work, exclaiming: "So the greatest impact of ICARE on Armenia is that we help Armenian youth to develop their knowledge



Arthur Grigoryan (Aram Arkun photo)

and skills so that they can find good employment in Armenia. Thus, they don't have to leave to find a comfortable living for their families. With the education that we provide, they are able to take the jobs that otherwise would taken by the international experts who would be invited to Armenia. That is our greatest achievement."

Statistically, more than 80 percent of ICARE graduates now work in Armenia and over 90 percent of graduates find work within two months. Furthermore, many who leave to other countries for higher degrees later return and teach at ICARE, while many who went to banks and other parts of the financial sector after graduation returned to agribusiness two to three years after graduation, according to Grigoryan.



Students working in a greenhouse

tinctive.

The greenhouse crop production and management certificate course, an eight-month program, is mostly for practitioners already in the field. Classes are organized after 6:30 p.m. so that, as in the EVN Wine Academy, it does not interfere with daytime jobs. A similar certificate program is also offered in geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing (RS), jointly with Texas A&M University, which integrates technological innovations with agricul-

ture, so that students can analyze satellite imagery and use the necessary software. For example, Grigoryan said, they can create maps of vineyards and understand problematic areas, so that the data can be used by the manager to find solutions.

## Ecofarm and Agribusiness

The newest effort to give students hands-on

and establish an orchard to employ the local population.

Grigoryan added that only investments in agriculture could keep villagers where they are. Once they go to urban centers for work, it is hard to get them to go back.

When asked whether the scale of agriculture now being practiced was a problem in Armenia, he agreed, but only for industrial agriculture, where big plots of land allow synergies to reduce costs. It is not that big an obstacle for high value agriculture and family businesses, because you can focus, he said, on a specific market, like herbs such as mint or basil. A small plot of one hectare could supply the entire Yerevan market for these herbs. Similarly, the preparation of dried fruits can be conducted in a small production facility and the fruits bought from various farmers.

Grigoryan explained also that the reason why vegetables are imported from Turkey and Iran which also are grown in Armenia was lacking of proper planning by Armenian producers and greenhouse owners. Gaps in harvests for items like tomatoes and peppers allow importers to take advantage, though their imports are not particularly cheap. Grigoryan said this situation can be rectified in the future.

## Research and Fisheries

ICARE in addition to education and training provides economic research, such as the seasonal price analysis of different crops, value chain analysis, qualitative and quantitative assessments, feasibility analysis, and due diligence. It produces papers and publications which are openly accessible on its website to the public.

ICARE has carried out one successful research program somewhat outside its strictly agricultural focus, thanks to a USAID Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research grant. It is called Sustainable Fisheries to Enhance Water Resources in Armenia, and its goal was to support fish farms in the Ararat valley, primarily Armavir and Ararat. Underground water resources in the Ararat valley are being depleted, largely due to the inefficient use of water by fish farms, which are growing rapidly in Armenia. ICARE analyzed their operations, said Grigoryan, developed a special water recirculation system model, and applied it at one fish farm. This project was so successful that a presentation was made to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who liked it and asked to see the final report with its recommendations.

## Fundraising and Institutional Relations

ICARE began with US Department of Agriculture financing, which the US Agency for International Development continued. Grigoryan declared, "Our goal is to shift to the model of modern academic institutions which depend on an endowment fund. We would like to develop an endowment fund for ICARE and we would like to see a commercial component so that we can produce certain products that we can sell. ICARE itself of course is a non-profit foundation established in Armenia and governed by its own board."

Many Armenians in the US and elsewhere in the diaspora already have become firm financial supporters of ICARE, and Grigoryan is hopeful that further funding will be raised for endowments to provide ongoing support for ICARE's various projects, like the ecofarm.

ICARE maintains its academic relationship with Texas A&M University, which provides certificates for graduates of undergraduate or graduate programs. As the latter cannot provide diplomas outside of the state of Texas, ICARE has a joint agreement with the Armenian National Agrarian University, which provides Armenian state diplomas. Certain programs are conducted jointly with other institutions. For example, the wine program is done together with Geisenheim University in Germany, so joint certification is given to graduates from both institutions, while food safety programs with Pennsylvania State University and Virginia Tech follow a similar protocol.



Students studying food safety

## Other Certificate Programs

ICARE graduates have been trained to try to differentiate their products, innovate, and find a competitive advantage. One graduate, for example, established dried fruit production, and began to produce dried apples with cinnamon. Everyone already produces dried apples, Grigoryan noted, but it is the cinnamon and presentation that helps make the product dis-

ture, so that students can analyze satellite imagery and use the necessary software. For example, Grigoryan said, they can create maps of vineyards and understand problematic areas, so that the data can be used by the manager to find solutions.

Grigoryan worked at an American farm school in Thessaloniki, Greece, for five years, which had different production units, for dairy and milk, lettuce, greenhouses, etc. He said this model of adding production and commercial activities was a good one. This way, students will not only learn production, but also design packaging, do promotion, and in general attain the skills to be an entrepreneur by the time they graduate. The ecofarm can also serve as an agribusiness business incubation center for novel ideas.

Grigoryan pictures the ecofarm as an agricultural TUMO. Unlike the TUMO Center, providing free afterschool lessons in digital media in Armenia and elsewhere, the ecofarm has a commercial component so that students will be able to sell whatever they can produce.

There is a second reason for locating the ecofarm near Yerevan besides closeness to the ICARE downtown center. As Grigoryan explains it, Armenian is a one-city country in reality, and the people in that city, Yerevan, who have money think of the IT sector first when they are looking to invest money. Grigoryan said, "What we want to show to those who live in Yerevan and have the money to invest is that agriculture organized in the right way, if you grow the right varieties and prune correctly, can be highly profitable." Youth from rural areas will be brought too, but for the ones from Yerevan, he said, "We want to show them that when they grow up they should use their family capital to invest in agriculture." They can then go to rural areas





## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## French Ambassador Supports UNESCO Preservation of Gyumri

GYMRI (Panorama.am) — On August 25, Armenia's second largest city Gyumri marked its day with festive events and celebrations. French Ambassador to Armenia Jonathan Lacote describes Gyumri as the capital of Armenia historical and cultural heritage. On the occasion of the Day of Gyumri the ambassador posted a congratulatory message on his Facebook page.

"While active and vibrant Yerevan is the capital of Armenia, Gyumri is undoubtedly is the capital of Armenian heritage that carries the memories of the old civilization with its streets and architecture. Gyumri is often referred as Leninakan that was the name of the town during the 1988 disastrous earthquake that resulted in losses every family suffered and the wounds are still open. after 31 years. Today, like the rest of Armenia, Gyumri has attained its image, improves the streets, sees rise in new businesses and welcomes new tourists," the Ambassador was wrote.

Lacote added that the embassy, along with the state and the town authorities, supports Gyumri's bid to include its heritage in the list of UNESCO Cultural Heritage.

## Vietnam Ambassador Meets with Official

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenia's Ambassador to Vietnam Vahram Kazhoyan on August 22 met with co-chair of the Armenia-Vietnam Inter-governmental commission, deputy minister of industry and trade Hoang Quoc Vuong, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said.

During the meeting the officials discussed issues relating to the development agenda of the Armenian-Vietnamese relations, as well as the organization of the second session of the Inter-governmental commission to be held in Yerevan in October and the business forum.

## Yerevan Medical U Named Best Foreign Institution For Indian Students

DELHI (Panorama.am) — Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) has been named the best foreign university for Indian students. The university was chosen the winner of the respective nomination at the award-giving ceremony of the annual Global Education Excellence Awards held in Delhi days ago.

As the University said in a released statement, the award was handed over to the University provost on foreign relations Yervand Sahakyan and the head of YSMU Indian Alumni Association Daljit Sing Chauhan by noted Indian actor Jackie Shroff.

"The award demonstrates the appreciation of the long and hard work implemented in the sphere of medical education which will further strengthen the Armenian-Indian cooperation in the sphere of education," the statement added.

## FM: Turkey's Support for Azerbaijan Is a Threat

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Turkey's unconditional and overt support to Azerbaijan in the Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) conflict is creating serious security threat for Armenia, Minister of Foreign Affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said during the assembly of Armenian ambassadors and the foreign ministry's central body in Yerevan on August 27.

Mnatsakanyan also spoke about Turkey's steps aimed at disrupting Armenia's security.

"Turkey's refusal to establish relations with Armenia, economic blockade of Armenia, continuous denial of the Armenian Genocide, and lately even the justification of genocidal acts, unconditional and overt support to Azerbaijan within the framework of the Karabakh conflict are creating a serious security threat to Armenia, with the need to continuously withstand this conditioning Armenia's policy directed for the maintenance of regional security including in terms of foreign policy priorities," Mnatsakanyan said.

# Government Eyes Phased Payment Of Heavy Court Fine

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — The Armenian government will pay an elderly resident of Yerevan 1.6 million euros (\$1.8 million) in compensation ordered by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), a senior official said on Friday, August 23.

Yeghishe Kirakosyan, Armenia's representative to the ECHR, said the government at the same time hopes that the massive payment resulting from a property dispute can be made in several installments.

The ECHR set the amount of "just satisfaction" for the 83-year-old Yuri Vartanyan last month nearly three years after ruling that Armenian authorities violated his rights to property ownership and a fair hearing in court.

Vartanyan and his family used to own a house and a plot of land in an old district in the center of Yerevan which was slated for demolition in the early 2000s as part of redevelopment projects initiated by then President Robert Kocharyan. A real estate agency authorized by the state estimated the market value of the 1,400 square-meter property at more than \$700,000 in May 2005.

A few months later, Yerevan's municipal administration and, Vizkon, a pri-

vate developer cooperating with it, challenged Vartanyan's land ownership rights in court. The claim was accepted by a district court but rejected by Armenia's Court of Appeals.

According to ECHR documents, the municipality and Vizkon expressed readiness to settle the case when it reached the higher Court of Cassation in 2006. They offered to give Vartanyan \$390,000 in cash as well as a 160-square-meter apartment and 40-square-meter office premises in the city center.

Vartanyan rejected the offer before a panel of three Court of Cassation judges ruled against him. He appealed to the ECHR in 2007.

The resulting compensation ordered by the Strasbourg-based court exceeds the total amount of damages awarded by the ECHR to all other Armenian plaintiffs combined.

Kirakosyan confirmed that the current government will pay Vartanyan the large sum when the ECHR verdict comes into force in October. "This is the kind of obligation which the Republic of Armenia must fulfill immediately," he told RFE/RL's Armenian service. "It's an unconditional obligation."

"As it stands, various variants of eas-

ing that heavy [financial] burden on the state budget are being discussed in the government. Maybe it could be paid in parts over a certain period of time," he said, adding that government officials intend to negotiate with Vartanyan for that purpose.

Kirakosyan admitted that the government will have no choice but to pay the sum at once if Vartanyan refuses a phased payment.

The ECHR has previously also ruled in favor of nine other Yerevan residents who had lost their properties in similar circumstances. The former Armenian government had to pay them a total of 324,581 euros in damages.

The hefty fines have for years triggered calls in Armenia for administrative or financial penalties against those government officials and judges whose decisions fall foul of the ECHR. In Kirakosyan's words, the authorities in Yerevan are now "thinking" about the possibility of putting in place legal mechanisms for such sanctions.

"This is a complex and multi-layered issue because I don't think that only one, two or three individuals are to blame [for ECHR verdicts against Armenia,] said the official. "It's a systemic problem that requires a comprehensive examination."



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II with the visiting members of the Echmiadzin Ladies' Association of Lebanon and their families.

## Catholicos of All Armenians Hosts Members Of Echmiadzin Women Union in Lebanon

ECHMIADZIN — On August 25, Karekin II His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, hosted about 40 members of the Echmiadzin Ladies' Association of Lebanon at the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

At the beginning of the meeting, Anahit Tandzikyan, the chairwoman of the Union, on behalf of the members of the Union, expressed gratitude to the catholicos for hosting them in the Mother See on the occasion of the Union's 60th anniversary, noting that such an invitation to visit St. Echmiadzin is the best assessment of the Union's sixty-year activity.

Tandzikyan presented to the members of the Union numerous plans and initiatives implemented during the reign of Karekin II, and also reflected on the activities and mission of the Union.

Catholicos Karekin II noted that the Echmiadzin Ladies'

Union of Lebanon had its great role and support in healing the wounds inflicted on the Mother See during the Soviet Union and the Soviet era, which testifies to the great love and devotion to the spiritual center of all Armenians. Underscoring the continuing important mission of the union, the Armenian Pontiff extended his private appreciation and blessing to the Tandzikian family and union members for their zealous work and continued support.

He expressed the hope that the 60-year anniversary, as well as this visit to Armenia with families, will be an opportunity to be spiritually restored, recharged, and to gain new strength from the homeland for the future activity of the union.

The catholicos also answered the questions of the members of the union, particularly touching upon the process of restoration and major renovation of the Mother Cathedral.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Swedish Parliament President Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan received on August 26 President of Swedish Riksdag Andreas Norlén, who was in Armenia at the invitation of Mirzoyan.

Greeting his colleague, Mirzoyan noted that he still has fresh impressions of his official visit to Sweden in June, during which he held a number of meetings that opened a new page of Armenian-Swedish bilateral relations. The Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia added that it is a great honor to receive the delegation of his Swedish colleague.

Thanking for the warm reception, Andreas Norlén noted that the Swedish side greatly highlights its relations with Armenia. He expressed an opinion that the relations between the two countries have entered into a stage of rapid development with a very ambitious agenda.

According to the President of the National

Assembly of Armenia, the sincere interest that Sweden shows towards the democratic transformations in Armenia following the velvet revolution is very evident, which is proved by the high level mutual visits, as well as the significant rise of the financial support provided by Sweden to Armenia.

Ararat Mirzoyan noted that Armenia is deeply interested in cooperation with Sweden in the spheres of IT, renewable energy, management of water and forest resources, management of mining waste, as well as other spheres of mutual interest.

The Head of the Swedish parliament again reaffirmed the readiness of the Swedish side to support the democratic changes in Armenia and the process aimed at establishing a stable free market.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Norlén later met for lunch.

Pashinyan and Norlen initially met privately,



President of Swedish Riksdag Andreas Norlén visits the Armenian Genocide Museum and Monument.



President of Swedish Riksdag Andreas Norlén, left, with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

followed by an expanded format luncheon with members of the Swedish Parliament Speaker's delegation, which included Deputy Speakers and leaders of all factions of the Swedish parliament, also known as the Riksdag.

Issues related to the agenda and development of the Armenia-Sweden relationship were discussed. Both bilateral and multilateral cooperation was discussed, including prospects of deepening ties within the framework of the European Union.

Pashinyan and the Swedish parliamentary delegation exchanged views over the ongoing reforms in Armenia in various sectors, strengthening of democracy and the development of the Armenia-EU relations.

The Swedish delegation then visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial, the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute said on Facebook.

The delegation members were accompanied by Armenia's Vice Speaker of Parliament Lena

Nazaryan and Ambassador to Sweden Alexander Arzumanyan.

Director of the Museum-Institute Harutyun Marutyan introduced the guests on the history of the construction of the Memorial and its meaning.

The Speaker of Swedish Riksdag laid a wreath at the Memorial. The delegation members laid flowers at the Eternal Flame and paid tribute to the memory of the innocent victims with a moment of silence. The delegation also visited the Armenian Genocide Museum, got acquainted with the exhibits and the details relating to the history of the Armenian Genocide.

At the end of the visit Norlén wrote in the guest book: "Thank you for helping us not to forget what should never be forgotten."

The Swedish Parliament adopted a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide on March 11, 2010.

## Ryanair Confirms Plans to Fly to Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A senior executive of Ryanair on Wednesday, August 21, reportedly confirmed the Irish budget airline's plans to launch regular flights between Europe and Armenia.



Senior Ryanair executives, David O'Brien (R) and Kate Sherry, meet with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Yerevan, August 21

Minister Tigran Avinian and Tatevik Revazian, the head of the Armenian government's Civil Aviation Committee. Revazian negotiated with Ryanair representatives in Dublin early this year before announcing in March that the Irish carrier is planning to fly to Armenia.

Revazian, who was also present at Pashinyan's meeting the visiting Ryanair executives, announced in July that Ryanair as well as another Western low-cost airline, Wizz Air, are ready to launch flight services next year if they are granted financial concessions.

She said the Civil Aviation Committee is already drafting a bill that would exempt them from a fixed \$21 tax levied from every air ticket sold in the country. The government agency also hopes to convince an Argentine company managing Yerevan's Zvartnots airport to offer them discounts for airport ground services, she added.

The cost of air travel to and from Armenia has already decreased since the liberalization in 2013 of the domestic civil aviation sector. This has contributed to a steady growth of the country's international air traffic. The total number of passengers processed by the international airports in Yerevan and Gyumri rose by around 10 percent in the first half of this year.



Tatevik Revazian, head of the Civil Aviation Committee, at a news conference in Yerevan, July 15, 2019.



Ryanair's chief commercial officer, David O'Brien, and director of route development, Kate Sherry, discussed the matter with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan during a visit to Yerevan.

An Armenian government statement cited O'Brien as telling Pashinyan that Ryanair "intends to enter the Armenian aviation market soon" and is now negotiating with Armenia's civil aviation authority and main airport operator for that purpose. He presented concrete flights planned by the airline and its "tariff policy" for them, said the statement.

Pashinyan welcomed those plans, saying that Ryanair flights to and from Armenia would benefit the country's tourism industry. He expressed hope that the two sides will work out a "concrete variant of mutually beneficial cooperation."

O'Brien and Sherry held a separate dinner meeting on Tuesday with Deputy Prime





# Community News

## Historian Hilmar Kaiser to Present Lecture Sponsored By AMAA on Humanitarian Resistance to Genocide

By Florence Avakian

PARAMUS, N.J. — German historian Dr. Hilmar Kaiser will present a lecture on his extensive research into humanitarian resistance to the Armenian Genocide.

The event, sponsored by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), will take place at the Armenian Presbyterian Church, 140 Forest Avenue, Paramus, on September 6, starting at 7:30 p.m. A reception will follow the lecture.

Kaiser was one of the first German historians to delve intimately into the historical facts of the Armenian Genocide. He also was one of the few who did critical research in the Ottoman archives between 1991 and 1995.

In 1996, for political reasons, he was banned from the archives by the Turkish government for 10 years. His research into this material had uncovered crucial details on key points of the Genocide.

This most likely led to him to receive a lifetime ban by the Turkish authorities. It also resulted in international scholars, politicians and Armenians around the globe demanding his readmission to the archives.

The ban against Kaiser was eventually lifted, and the archives have officially been reopened. However, some collections of the Turkish



Dr. Hilmar Kaiser

Prime Minister's Ottoman archives still remain closed.

Hilmar Kaiser has referred to himself as an "archive digger."

A noted scholar at Yerevan State University for Armenian Studies, he completed his PhD at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, with his focus on Ottoman Social and Economic History, and Ottoman-German relations.

Regarded as a scholar of the Armenian Genocide, he has conducted research in more than 60 archives, including the Turkish-Ottoman Archives in Istanbul.

Kaiser was born in Germany to a Protestant family who owned a bakery. One of the employees "was an elderly woman who had worked in hospitals in the Middle East and "was a part of the wider household. In other words, [Johannes] Lepsius and Armenians were known to me way before my 10th birthday," he said in a short interview.

Living across from a multi-apartment house where most of the apartments were occupied by migrants from Greece and Turkey, he grew up with Middle Eastern food, and often wandered "into the kitchens of the friendly neighbors. It also meant that my familiarity with Muslims and to some extent Turks, became a given," he recalled.

"Since 1982, I have visited Turkey and my neighbors there in their hometowns. I saw Van and other formerly Armenian places, including villages with pillaged graveyards, destroyed or converted churches, Armenian irrigation systems, and the like. By that time, I had studied history, and slowly changed to Turkish history," he added.

see KAISER, page 8



Panelists during the Nerouj Entrepreneur Series on Turpanjian Plaza of the Western Diocese

## Entrepreneurs Engage And Motivate the Next Generation

LOS ANGELES — The visionary platform of Nerouj, an organization that uplifts and inspires Armenian youth in Los Angeles in a tangible and practical manner, presented its Entrepreneurial Series on Wednesday, August 21, 2019, at the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of North America, under the auspices of its Primate, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian.

In an ever-evolving world where individuals, particularly the youth, are increasingly charting new territories and embracing unconventional paths, panels such as these are both relevant and necessary to provide guidance and support.

The Executive Committee of Nerouj (literally translated as "inner strength") seeks to create a community for Armenian youth to connect and network with one another while gain-

ing insight and securing their foothold in the professional world through mentorship and events. The Entrepreneurial Series - where self-made businessmen and women share their journeys of striking out on their own in various fields, including in technology, beauty, design and apparel - comes on the heels of past successful programs including Nerouj Connect and a Chef's Series that opened new horizons for Armenian youth.

The members of the entrepreneur panel included Tatevik Gevorgyan, co-founder of Beauty on Wheels; Ani Torosyan, CEO and co-founder of DishDivvy; Arpi Krikorian, designer and founder of Arpi Krikorian Products and Paul Garibian, founder of the Classic T-Shirt Company. Lusine Daglian, Nerouj Team Member, served as the evening's moderator, asking pragmatic questions in a conversational style so the audience could gain a clear understanding of the inner workings of launching a business.

see ENTREPRENEURS, page 9



From left, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Tatevik Gevorgyan, Silvana Vartanian, Lusine Daglian, Ani Torosyan, Arpi Krikorian and Paul Garibian

## Park Gala Benefit Celebrates Immigrants' Contributions the US

BOSTON — Celebrating Contributions of Our Nation's Immigrants, a gala benefit on Wednesday, September 18, at the InterContinental Hotel Boston, will raise funds for the Endowed Fund for Care of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway. Dr. Noubar Afeyan, founder and CEO of Flagship Pioneering, is the evening's honoree.

An extraordinary gift to the City of Boston and Commonwealth of Massachusetts from the Armenian-American community, the park is "gem of The Greenway" (*Boston Globe*, 2012) engaging people from all nations, all ethnicities, all ages, to unite and come together on common ground.

The benefit celebrates the immigrant experience and all who have come to Massachusetts, reestablishing themselves in new and different ways.

Afeyan is a remarkable leader and philanthropist, whose life journey has positively impacted individuals, businesses and cultures in the US, in Armenia and around the world.

Benefactors of the park from the outset, Noubar Afeyan and his wife, Anna, have endowed the park's Fund for Public



Dr. Noubar Afeyan (Photo Courtesy of Flagship Pioneering)

Programs, which annually supports the Genocide Commemoration and the Welcome Reception for New Citizens at the Park following their Naturalization Ceremony at Faneuil Hall.

The evening will also shine a light on the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, the philanthropic vision of founders Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Dr. Vartan Gregorian and Ruben Vardanyan, and its Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, given to an individual for the exceptional impact their actions have had on preserving human life and advancing humanitarian causes.

During the evening, at Afeyan's suggestion, organizations serving immigrants and refugees will be recognized. These organizations include the Greater Boston Immigrant Defense Fund, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, International Institute of New England, Irish International Immigrant Center and RefugePoint.

Afeyan has dedicated his career to improving the human condition by systematically creating science-based innovations that serve as the foundation for startup companies. At Flagship Pioneering, which he founded in 1999, Noubar has created an enterprise where entrepreneurially minded scientists invent seemingly unreasonable solutions to challenges facing human health and sustainability. They begin by asking "What if?" and iterate toward the unexpected answer "It see GALA, page 7





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Park Gala Benefit Celebrates Immigrants' Contributions the US

GALA, from page 6

turns out," resulting in the creation of first-in-category companies with significant impact. "The entrepreneurial scientists and professionals who work at Flagship Pioneering are at the heart of everything we invent and build," said Afeyan. "Innovation is a team activity, and life-changing companies are built by creative collaborators."

Flagship has fostered the development of more than 100 scientific ventures resulting in \$30 billion in aggregate value, thousands of patents and patent applications, and more than 50 drugs in clinical development.

During his career as inventor, entrepreneur, and CEO, Noubar has cofounded and helped build more than 40 life science and technology startups. Prior to founding Flagship Pioneering, he was the founder and CEO of PerSeptive Biosystems, a leader in bio-instrumentation that grew to \$100 million in annual revenues. After PerSeptive's acquisition by Perkin Elmer/Applera Corporation in 1998, he became senior vice president and chief business officer of Applera, where he initiated and oversaw the creation of Celera Genomics.

He serves on the boards of a number of public and private Flagship companies, including Moderna and Evelo Biosciences, where he is chairman, Rubius Therapeutics, Seres Therapeutics, and Kaleido Biosciences. Previously, he was a member of the founding team, director, and investor in highly successful

ventures including Chemgenics Pharmaceuticals (acquired by Millennium Pharmaceuticals), Color Kinetics (acquired by Philips), Adnexus Therapeutics (acquired by Bristol-Myers Squibb), and Affinova (acquired by AC Nielsen).

He entered biotechnology during its emergence as an academic field and industry, completing his doctoral work in biochemical engineering at MIT in 1987. He has written numerous scientific publications and is the inventor of more than 80 patents. He is a lecturer at Harvard Business School and from 2000 to 2016 was a senior lecturer at MIT's Sloan School of Management. He teaches and speaks around the world on topics ranging from entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development to biological engineering, new medicines, and renewable energy.

Noubar's commitment to improving the human condition through science and business goes hand in hand with social investments and a global humanitarian initiative. Together with his partners, he has launched philanthropic projects including the IDEa Foundation, UWC Dilijan School, 100 LIVES, and the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity to raise awareness of the world's most pressing humanitarian problems. He is a member of the Corporation of MIT (the Institute's governing body) and a member of the board of trustees of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Afeyan was born in Beirut to Armenian parents in 1962, did his undergraduate work at McGill University in Montreal, and completed his PhD in



The Armenian Heritage Park

biochemical engineering at MIT in 1987. A passionate advocate of the contributions of immigrants to economic and scientific progress, he received the Golden Door Award in 2017 from the International Institute of New England, in honor of his outstanding contributions to

American society as a US citizen of foreign birth. He was also awarded a Great Immigrant honor from the Carnegie Corporation in 2016, received a Technology Pioneer award from the World Economic Forum in 2012, and was presented with the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2008.

Advance reservations for Celebrating Contributions are required. Reservations may be made at [ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support](http://ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support).

## Bishop Daniel to Lead 'Khatchveratz' Service at St. Vartan Cathedral

NEW YORK — New York's St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral will hold a special service on the evening of Sunday, September 15, to honor the major feast day known as Khatchveratz, or the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Beginning at 6:30 p.m., Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, will preside over a Medz Antasdan ("Blessing of the World") service. Clergy and deacons from the throughout the region will participate in the service, which involves moving in procession through the cathedral sanctuary, to invoke God's blessings over the "four corners" of the earth.

"In former times, our church would perform the antasdan ceremony several times during the year," the Primate explains, "and the one on the evening of Khatchveratz would be the grandest and most comprehensive. We think of the antasdan as the 'Blessing of Fields,' but in fact it's a blessing over the entire world: on all of its varied people and their leaders."

This will be the second year that the cathedral is observing the Feast of the Exaltation — one of the five major feast days of the Armenian Church calendar — with an evening service. Once again this year, the Primate will unveil a rarely-seen treasure of St. Vartan Cathedral: an actual relic of the True Cross of Jesus Christ, contained in a magnificent cross-shaped reliquary.

The relic will be led in procession through the cathedral, and worshippers will have a chance to approach and venerate it. "It's a remarkable piece of our heritage: just a small shard of wood, but holding such meaning for us," the Primate says. "It originated on the mound of Golgotha in Jerusalem, was brought to Armenia, and from there was transmitted to the safe-keeping of this Diocese."

All are welcome to join in this uplifting evening service, which Bishop Daniel describes as "a kind of Bible study in motion; a reflection on the miracle of our Lord's cross."

The Divine Liturgy on September 15 will go forward as is customary at the cathedral, starting at 10:30 a.m. Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director, will be the celebrant.

The Khatchveratz Medz Antasdan service will start at 6:30 p.m., with a duration of about 90 minutes. A reception on the cathedral plaza will follow. St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral is located at 630 Second Avenue (at 34th Street), in New York City.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS



## Ambassador Baibourtian Pays Tribute to Chamlians

FRESNO — On August 10, Ambassador Armen Baibourtian, Consul General of Armenia in Los Angeles, accompanied with his wife Yvette Baibourtian, presented an Appreciation Award to Armenian-American philanthropists Vahan and Anoush Chamlian at a ceremony in Fresno. This token of appreciation was given to them on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of establishment of the Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles. The Chamlians provided significant support to the Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles in its stage of founding as well as to the Motherland through the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund and numerous other programs in the mid-1990s. Above, Ambassador and Mrs. Baibourtian are with the members of the Chamlian family.

## Historian Hilmar Kaiser to Present Lecture Sponsored by AMAA on Humanitarian Resistance to Genocide

KAISER, from page 6

During his lecture on September 6, Kaiser will highlight aspects of the relief work and its importance that go beyond the work in Aleppo, Syria. “Once again, I will emphasize its Armenian character which has been lost in discussions of missionary work and the Near East Relief.” In addition, his talk will deal with the Ottoman context.

He has written several books including *At the Crossroads of Der Zor: Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo*,

*1915-1917 and The Extermination of Armenians in the Diarbekir Region*.

“In a certain sense, it is setting the record straight, and re-appropriating a piece of Armenian history during the Genocide that has been lost,” he revealed.

Kaiser pointed out that the AMAA “is the most suitable host for the September 6 talk, as it stands in the tradition of the 1915-1918 humanitarian resistance, and carries on the work in our days which is most needed.”

## OBITUARY

### Fr. Yeghia Hairabedian Longtime Pastor

FRESNO — Fr. Yeghia Hairabedian died on Thursday, August 8, at the age of 66.

Following in his parents’ footsteps, he dedicated his life to serving the church.

Born as Daniel Kerukian on April 13, 1953 in Beirut, Lebanon, Daniel and his family moved to America and changed their family name to Hairabedian in 1959. Before entering the priesthood, he and his family organized bible study and prayer groups in their communities while living in the Midwest and Los Angeles.

He attended L.I.F.E. Christian College in Los Angeles and received a BA in religious education in 1981.

On August 4, 1984, he married Roberta Adams at the St. Paul Armenian Church in Fresno, CA, and had two children, Rakel Ani and Daniel Russell. After marriage, Fr. Yeghia and Yeretzgin (Yn.) Roberta moved to Chicago to enter the Seabury Western Theological Seminary where he graduated with a Master of Theological Studies in 1988. In the same year he was ordained as a priest of the Armenian Apostolic Church by then-primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian.

Hairabedian’s parishes include Holy Martyrs in Bayside, NY; St. Stepanos in Elberon, NJ; St. James in Sacramento, CA; and St. Gregory in Fowler, CA. Fr. Yeghia’s pastoral works were a continuation of the ministry he led with both of his parents. Fr. Yeghia continued the Renewal in Christ family ministry which his father had founded in 1968. Fr. Yeghia wrote and distributed hundreds of thousands of booklets across the United States and Armenia in the Renewal in Christ name.



He was preceded in death by his parents, Archpriest Krikor and Yn. Sara Hairabedian; and brothers-in-law, Valer Oganessian and Gregory Megurian.

He leaves his wife, Yn. Roberta; daughter, Rakel; son, Daniel and his wife, Mikelle; sisters, Claire, Rose, Maral, Ruth and her husband, Tony Markarian, and their families. Services were held at St. Paul Armenian Church, Fresno, on Monday, August 19, with a Knights of Vartan Service. A Funeral Service was held on Tuesday, August 20 with interment following at Masis Ararat Cemetery, Fresno.

## Boston Armenian Community Gears up For ABMDR Walkathon in Watertown

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) New England announced this week that it will hold the eighth annual Walk of Life fundraiser on September 28.

Participants will gather at the Armenian Educational and Cultural Center (ACEC), 47 Nichols Ave., and walk 2.2 miles to Saltonstall Park in Watertown Square to raise money for the ABMDR.

On-site registration and sign-in will take place from 10:30 to 11 a.m., and the walk will begin promptly at 11 a.m. Once all walkers have reached the final destination, top fundraisers will be honored and a raffle drawing will be held. Each participant is given one entry ticket to the raffle upon registration is encouraged to buy more tickets before the walk or during check-in. Any money raised during this walkathon will go towards costs that ABMDR incurs with the purchase of reagents for molecular testing of donors, donor recruitments, harvesting of donors, patient testing in Yerevan and more.

The Walk of Life is a fundraising and awareness-raising event in support of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) whose mission is to save lives. By joining us in this walkathon, you will support the organizations mission to help those in our global community

with life-threatening diseases increase their chances of hope and possibly even a second chance at life. All of our participants are heroes, no matter their age.

Established in 1999, ABMDR, a nonprofit organization, helps Armenians and non-Armenians worldwide survive life-threatening blood-related illnesses by recruiting and matching donors to those requiring bone marrow stem cell transplants. To date, the Registry has recruited over 29,000 donors in 29 countries across four continents, identified 4,482 patients, and facilitated 31 bone marrow transplants.

Sign up to participate. Once registered, a walker can login to their account to customize their personal donation page; send emails; manage offline pledges.

Small donations from many people add up quickly. All funds are used for finding matches for patients.

Corporate sponsors of Walk of Life New England include Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, PROMETRIKA, the Armenian-American

Pharmacists’ Association, and Watertown Savings Bank.

For more information: NE@abmdr.am

Online Registration closes on September 27th at 3 p.m.

For more information, visit <http://www.abmdr.am/ne-walk/>



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## Donations

Nayiri K. Berberian of Watertown donated \$20 to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator.

The Cherchian Family Foundation of Hartland, Wi. donated \$500 to the Tekeyan Cultural Association.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Entrepreneurs Engage and Motivate the Next Generation

ENTREPRENEURS, from page 6

The overarching theme among the panelists as to why they founded their own businesses was that they sought to fulfill a need and provide a larger purpose for the community - whether it was creating fair trade t-shirts, offering cooks the chance to earn an income in their kitchens, designing artwork that reflected culture and heritage or making beauty more mobile and accessible.

After 15 years in the technology industry, Garibian decided to branch out by manufacturing a product that would address environmental issues. His line of t-shirts at the Classic T-Shirt Company uses organic materials, recycled packaging and gives back to environmental causes with every purchase.

"My goal is to be ethical while creating a high-quality and profitable product," said Garibian, a product and business development leader and a graduate of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

A homemade dinner of dolma at her mother-in-law's flickered a lightbulb in Torosyan's head when she noticed the large quantity of food that could feed the entire block. Eighteen months later she launched the online platform DishDivvy that connects approved home cooks with nearby neighbors who want to consume sustainable and healthy meals. She fused her background in engineering, utilizing her 18 years of experience in product management and digital technologies, with her passion for cooking in order to propel her business venture.

"Despite the modernity and fast pace of today's world, people still have difficulty finding home-cooked meals and healthy options," said Ani, who received her Bachelor's of Science degree in biomedical and electrical engineering from the University of Southern California. "We're building technology to decentralize homemade food operations."

An illustrator specializing in the Armenian cultural arts, Krikorian's foray into her own business occurred thanks to social media - a Facebook post of an Armenian dancer generated positive feedback and she began to manufacture her designs on a variety of products from home decor to stationery, many of which were recently sold at the "Armenial" exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

"My whole goal has been to bring happy Armenian art to everyone's homes because I am a very passionate and proud Armenian," said Krikorian, who has a BA in Illustration from the Art Center College of Design and has worked at Nickelodeon Animation Studios.

The inconvenience of lugging around her equipment to homes, photo shoots and video shoots spurred the idea of creating a mobile

salon for hair and makeup artist Tatevik.

"We didn't want to invade people's privacy so we decided to have a van where people could come for their beauty services," said Tatevik, who launched Beauty on Wheels eight years ago. "We now have five franchises and an app launching at the end of the year where clients can request services that will come straight in front of their doors."

It's natural for tradeoffs to occur when single handedly starting a business from scratch, and all the panelists agreed that the biggest sacrifices were reduced family time and financial restraints.

"We used up our savings account for our first mass production," said Arpi, while an essential challenge for Paul was sacrificing his ego and accepting the fact that not every business move will be successful. Instead, he now embraces every challenge as a "learning opportunity."

Added Torosyan, "Entrepreneurship is 99.9 percent grit, hard work and sacrifice and .1 percent glory, so make sure you're ready for that."

What motivated the panelists to push forward in the face of adversity was the positive feedback they received for their products. Krikorian, who has sold her pieces to Armenians around the Diaspora, asserts that "focus is everything" and hearing how her designs have touched her clients' lives reminds her why she started her own business.

How an entrepreneur responds to challenges can spark change throughout an industry, which is what happened to Ani, who was a force behind the AB 626 Homemade Food Act in the State of California, legislation that allows home cooks to sell foods prepared at home that will ultimately help small businesses grow.

"My ability to impact legislation helped provide economic opportunity to every Californian who can now earn up to \$50,000 in their own kitchens, benefiting those who have the culinary skills, but not the resources, to open up their own restaurants."

Establishing a strong foundation of clients can be one of the most difficult aspects of building a business and the panelists shared how they cultivated their clientele.

"Friends and family initially supported us and spread the word before we even launched our mobile salon and our van," said Tatevik Gevorgyan. "Our first clients were influencers on Instagram and from there word continued to spread through referrals and social media."

For Ani Torosyan, it was about education and necessitating a "behavioral shift by educating people that restaurants aren't the only option and home cooked meals can be accessible."

She informed panelists that testing is impor-

tant when launching a business and encouraged them to be "scrappy" and use "growth hacking methods" by organically gaining traffic and customers without spending a dime.

"In the beginning I knew we had a commodity product but that we didn't know the language," said Paul Garibian. "Something we did well was launch our t-shirts on Amazon and our own website so we were digitally native."

Personal contact with clients is also impor-

Concluding the panel, Lusine asked the panelists to comment on the keys to success.

"Dig deep to see what drives you beyond the monetary component," said Ani Torosyan. "For me success is defined as a sense of achievement and impacting community in a scalable way."

Following an interactive question and answer section, Derderian shared his remarks and reflections on the evening.

"It's challenging for our youth today to



Audience members during the Nerouj Entrepreneur Series

tant, according to Krikorian, who takes the time to answer all of her Instagram and Facebook posts in order to maintain communication with her customers.

Panelists also shared tips on how to navigate setbacks and negative responses while growing their businesses.

"You need tough skin," said Torosyan. "Some people will love your product and other won't get it." Instead, she suggested having a target audience and making sure they remain pleased because it is through customer interaction that important issues may come to light that were previously overlooked.

Paul noted that the process "gets easier over time as you build your confidence."

As experienced businessmen and women in their respective fields, the panelists offered words of wisdom and advice rooted in resilience and dedication.

"Follow your passion and never give up," said Gevorgyan. "There are a lot of challenges when opening a business, but if you work hard it will all be worth it in the end."

Ani highlighted the importance of commitment and stimulation when pursuing a new venture and encouraged the audience to "pick something that is challenging and brings out a passion" otherwise it's likely to be abandoned.

"Always stay open to learning and be purposeful when starting a business," said Krikorian. "Do it because you love it and because it will impact people."

"Have patience," advised Garibian. "Have a financial runway and get a buy-in from spouse or partner who will go on that journey with you."

become successful, but I feel it is in your blood to fight and succeed," said Derderian. "Wherever you may be around the world, what is important is that you know how to create."

"Every single day we need to make sure we are creative and that we are living a purposeful life because that is what makes you successful," he said.

"Even though we are few in number, our dreams never died," concluded Derderian. "We never gave up and we will never give up."

Fellow Nerouj Committee member Stepan Khzrtian, Esq., underscored the significance of "opening the minds of and the doors for our youth, who are the holders of awesome potential and the creators of tomorrow's opportunities."

"Entrepreneurship is the secret sauce that turns potential into opportunities, and so this panel made a whole lot of sense," said Stepan. "We gathered the youth of the community and involved them in a conversation with four young entrepreneurs just like them, who have turned their potential into opportunities for themselves and for others."

Nerouj provides a platform through the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church for Armenian Young Professionals to network with one another while also paying it forward by mentoring the next generation. Through Nerouj, under the guidance of Chair Silvana Vartanian, the future generations of Armenians will know that the Armenian Church is their home for both spiritual and personal growth and achievement. For more information visit [www.nerouj.com](http://www.nerouj.com).

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada Meeting Announces November Convention

ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J. — The Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of the United States and Canada held one of its regular meetings at the center of the TCA Greater New York chapter on Saturday, August 17. The board reviewed budget and administrative issues, conditions in various TCA chapters and at its West Coast office in Altadena, California and relations with various TCA bodies in other countries, along with plans for various publications, including a forthcoming volume of articles of the recently deceased TCA leader Dr. Nubar Berberian.

The Central Board approved the progress of extensive renovations of the offices of its headquarters at the Baikar Building in Watertown and determined that the next TCA Representative Assembly will be held in Watertown on November 23-24, together with an inauguration of the newly renovated space.

Furthermore, the Central Board decided to establish as of January 1, 2020 an office with an executive secretary for its West Coast region, working out of the TCA office located at the Beshgeturian Center in Altadena, Calif.

Inasmuch as since the inception of the



Front row, from left, Edmond Azadian, Maro Bedrosian, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, Hilda Hartounian; back row, from left, Aram Arkun, Mihran Minassian, Hratch Torikian, Hagop Vartivarian, Kevork Marashlian and Arto Berdge Manoukian



## Knights and Daughters of Vartan

**28<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Armenia**

### GUEST SPEAKER



**H.E. Varuzhan Nersesyan**

**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of the Republic of Armenia to the United States of America**

**Tuesday, September 10, 2019, 7:00 PM**

St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural hall  
4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

**Open to the Public**

Vahan Tekeyan School in Beirut, Lebanon, the TCA of the US and Canada, and its predecessor bodies, like the Tekeyan School Auxiliary Committee, have continually supported and financed the school, the Central Board of the TCA of the US and Canada determined to continue its financial support to this educational institution.

#### Sponsor a Teacher and Tekeyan Schools in Armenia and Artsakh

The continued success of the TCA Sponsor a Teacher program in Armenia and Artsakh was reviewed, with Program Director Maro Bedrosian. The five supported Tekeyan schools are successful and the program seeks new donors to help support teachers and staff there. For more information, email [m\\_bedrosian@yahoo.com](mailto:m_bedrosian@yahoo.com).

In addition, Central Board member Arto Berdge Manoukian provided information on renovations of the TCA Berdzor school, located in the strategic Lachin corridor linking Armenia and Artsakh. The Saro Manoukian fund three years ago funded renovations of classrooms, with the help of Gayane Muradyan, representative of TCA of the US and Canada in Armenia.

Manoukian explained that the roof was leaking so renovations were first done of second floor classrooms. The positive results inspired other donors to renovate classrooms one after the other, including one through fundraising which was named after Monte Melkonian. Soon the entire second floor was renovated.

This fall, a Tekeyan Armenia trip organized by Manoukian, in addition to allowing for extensive tourism and enjoyment, will bring visitors and donors to the site to participate in the ceremonial opening of this floor on September 30. The school started with 25 students and now serves 200. In order to start renovating the third floor, the local government was asked to repair the roof. This has also been accomplished so third floor work will start soon, with two classrooms already having Canadian donors. Approximately three to four thousand US dollars are necessary to renovate a classroom, which may be dedicated to loved ones or Armenian popular figures. Tax receipt donations can be provided. For more information, email [manoukb@yahoo.com](mailto:manoukb@yahoo.com).

Board members present at the New Jersey meeting included President Edmond Azadian, Vice President Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, Secretary Hagop Vartivarian, Treasurer Maro Bedrosian, Assistant Treasurer Kevork Marashlian, Hilda Hartounian, Arto Berdge Manoukian, Mihran Minassian and Hratch Torikian, along with Executive Director Aram Arkun. Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Kevork Keushkerian and Vatche Semerdjian were unable to attend.





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# Arts & Living

## Society for Armenian Studies Establishes Nina G. Garsoïan Graduate Research Grant

FRESNO – The Society for Armenian Studies is pleased to announce the establishment of “The Nina G. Garsoïan Graduate Research Grant for Ancient and Early Mediaeval Armenian History.” The grant of \$500.00 will be awarded on an annual basis to a graduate student in the field of Ancient and Medieval Armenian History.

The grant is funded by Dr. Levon Avdoyan, who recently retired as the area specialist for Armenia and Georgia at the African and Middle Eastern Division of the Library of Congress. Avdoyan received his PhD from Columbia University in New York in ancient and Armenian history under the supervision of Garsoïan.

Avdoyan commented on the importance of the grant, saying: “Nina Garsoïan’s passion for the ancient and early mediaeval periods of Armenian history and culture led not only to many brilliant publications but also to the preparation of an entire generation of young Armenists. With her retirement from the Chair at Columbia, the study of the Armenian pre-Christian past went into eclipse in the United States, yielding to more modern studies. I intend, with this modest grant, to support the research activities of those young scholars who have rediscovered or are in the process of redis-



Nina G. Garsoïan

covering the allure and intrigue of that past to restore the balance that Garsoïan’s generation worked hard to establish.”

The grant will constitute part of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) Graduate Research and Conference Grant for MA and PhD students awarded on semi-annual basis.

“The Society for Armenian Studies highly appreciates Dr. Avdoyan’s initiative of establishing the Nina G. Garsoïan Graduate Research Grant. I hope other scholars and individuals will follow in Dr. Avdoyan’s footsteps and establish named grants to support graduate and post-graduate members of the Society. Students who pursue graduate studies in the field of Armenian Studies usually have limited access to grants. One of the major objectives of the Society for the coming years is to increase the size of grants so it can help a larger pool of applicants,” stated SAS President Prof. Bedross Der Matossian.

Nina G. Garsoïan is a world renowned Byzantinist and Armenologist and author of multiple groundbreaking books and articles. She was the dean of the Princeton University Graduate School and the first holder of the Gevorg M. Avedissian Chair in Armenian History and Civilization at Columbia University. She retired in 1993 and is currently Professor Emerita of Armenian History and Civilization. After her retirement, the Avedissian Chair has never been filled and still remains vacant.

For more information on how to establish named grants for graduate and post-graduate students, contact the president of the Society for Armenian Studies at bdermatossian2@unl.edu.



Tineke van Geel teaches a class in Taiwan.

## Tineke van Geel

### The Ambassador of Armenian Dance in the World

YEREVAN – Tineke van Geel is a Dutch dance teacher who specializes in Armenian traditional and folk dances and teaches them throughout the world. She has frequently taught with her husband Maurits van Geel, also a folk dance teacher, who for 24 years headed the International Dance Theater in the Netherlands, a professional dance company.

According to Tineke van Geel’s official website, she taught her first folk dance classes in 1973. It was this debut that led to her getting her official diploma in 1977. Years later she developed a particular interest in Armenian dances and decided to travel to Armenia to do research. She remains actively involved in dance research in Armenia which has made

her a world-renowned specialist of Armenian dance, working with eminent choreographers Azat Gharibyan and Artusha Karapetyan. Since 1985, she has regularly visited Armenia to study folklore at the Pedagogic Institute and Choreographic School in Yerevan.

Part of each research trip is devoted to working with several amateur groups in Armenia and doing research on costumes. Two research trips were funded by scholarships of the Dutch government. A number of times Tineke van Geel visited the United States to observe the dances performed by the Armenian communities there. In January 1986 she published a book in Dutch on Armenian history, culture, dance and costumes (it is currently out of print). In 1987 she took a special exam which enabled her to acquire a degree as graduate of the Dance Academy without formally completing the course work and other requirements.



Tineke van Geel

Besides giving workshops in European countries, she has taught in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Far East. Her classes include workshops for students of various levels, from beginners to professionals, and she has taught classes in International Folk Dance, Dutch and Armenian dances. In addition to teaching, Tineke has taught and choreographed for the professional group in Amsterdam Het Internationaal Danstheater and appeared as a guest teacher at the dance academy in Kuopio (Finland). A lot of dances that she researched in Armenia had never been recorded. Therefore, groups from Armenia were invited to the Netherlands which led to the production of CDs with Armenian music on the Van Geel Records label. Recently these programs have also become available on DVD.

I met her during her last visit to Armenia, with a group of amateur dancers... She does not remember how many times she traveled to Armenia, but it was her 25th dance and culture tour...

**Tineke, how did your interest for Armenian dances started?**

I got my education as an international dance teacher at National dance organization of The Netherlands, teaching dances from Romania, Bulgaria, etc. But

see DANCE, page 14

## Exhibit on French Fashion, Women And World War I At Bard Graduate Center Gallery in NYC

NEW YORK – “French Fashion, Women, and the First World War,” on view at Bard Graduate Center Gallery, 18 West 86th Street, New York City, from September 5 through January 5, 2020, is an unprecedented examination of the fraught and dynamic relationship between fashion, war, and gender politics in France during World War I. Women mobilized to keep the French economy afloat, as did the clothing industry (the second largest economic driver in France at the time). The fashion press promoted Paris’ leading female designers – Jeanne Paquin, Jeanne Lanvin, and Jenny Sacerdote – intensively. Paquin, Lanvin and Sacerdote were smart businesswomen prior to 1914, and the war only enhanced their dominance on the international scene. Among Paris’ rising couturiers was Gabrielle Chanel, whose simple, elegant designs helped her rise to prominence during the war and whose jersey skirt suits captured the zeitgeist of this new era.

With its diverse range of clothing and ephemera, from the exquisite to the quotidian, this exhibition brings into sharp focus the relationship between fashion and war, and how fashion reflected social change and became the locus of male anxiety in the face of rapid social upheaval. What role did fashion play in the disjunction between the horrors of the front experienced by French soldiers, resulting in almost 1.5 million dead, and the reality of life in wartime, in which women worked valiantly to provide for their families and contribute to the war effort? Can the endless critical discourse around what women wore, how they wore it, and the anxieties it provoked explain the stilted progress of women’s emancipation in postwar France, where women did not gain the right to vote until 1944?

Through detailed research and loans from major fashion houses and museums, curators Maude Bass-Krueger and Sophie Kurkdjian have amassed a collection of wartime skirt suits, nurses’ and ambulance attendants’ uniforms, mourning dresses, and “military-style” hats that will be exhibited alongside fashions by Chanel and Lanvin that are making their first appearance in the United States. In addition, printed documents – postcards, commercial catalogues, fashion magazines, advertising posters, and photographs – that have rarely, if ever, been previously exhibited – will be on view.

In addition to the carefully selected garments and the range of documentation on view, French Fashion, Women, and the First World War provides rich contextual material illustrating tensions within the couture industry during the period, notably the major strike of 1917 by fashion house workers; the idealization and criticism of nurses and their uniforms; changes in

see FASHION, page 15



Sophie Kurkdjian, left, and Maude Bass-Krueger





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Four Worcester Churches Hold Fundraiser for Syrian, Armenian Relief

WORCESTER — On Saturday, September 29, the Armenian churches of Worcester County will hold their eighth annual Benefit Dance. Guests can enjoy Armenian, Arabic and Greek dance music from 7.30 p.m. to 1 a.m. All funds raised will be dedicated to Syrian Armenian resettlement in North America and the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).

Since the start of the crisis in 2011, thousands of Armenian families have fled to other countries to avoid the atrocities of the ongoing war. In most cases, these families have spent all their money to reach a safe haven. Once they make it out, they hardly have any funds left.

Since 2015, the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal has helped hundreds to acclimate to their new lives in Canada. Last year's dance helped more than 300 families start a new life in Canada and that number is expected to be matched this year.

There are currently 8.4 million Syrian children residing as refugees in neighboring countries. That is 80 percent of Syria's children. And now, more than 22,000 Syrian-Armenians

have resettled in the Republic of Armenia.

Talented local musicians led by Mark Der Mugrditchian, will entertain guests.

Ticket purchase will include a cash bar, mezze selection, dessert and coffee.

The dance will take place at the Armenian Church of Our Saviour Cultural Center, 34 Boynton St., Worcester. Tickets are \$35 in advance, \$45 at the door. Teen tickets are \$20 while children 12 and under can attend for free.

For tickets contact Jay Kapur at 508-740-4464 or jkapur@aimtek.com or Eva Kopoyan at 508-757-6195 or Henri Bahnan at 508-740-0948.

Additional volunteer and giving opportunities exist.

The four participating churches are the Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church and Soorp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Apostolic Church.

To learn more about the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal, visit hayavedmontreal.com



Young dancers enjoy themselves at one of the earlier fundraising dances in Worcester.



## Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

### Dr. Nubar Berberian Annual Awards

Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years passed away at the age of 94 in November 23, 2016. In his Will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students of Armenian descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

#### ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from [Tcadirector@Aol.com](mailto:Tcadirector@Aol.com).
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: [Tcadirector@Aol.com](mailto:Tcadirector@Aol.com), The Paper submissions will be accepted by the deadline at:

**Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.**  
**Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund**  
**755 Mt. Auburn Street**  
**Watertown, MA 02472**  
**USA**

but electronic application is preferred.

- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 15, 2019**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2019** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2019**
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

**Watertown, MA, July 15, 2019**

## Grooving with the Vosbikian Band in Merrimack Valley

ANDOVER, Mass. — The Vosbikian Band is coming to the Merrimack Valley on Saturday, October 19 at 7 p.m. They will be playing at the DoubleTree in Andover.

Every year the Armenian Friends of America (AFA) bring amazing musical talent to the Merrimack Valley and the Greater Boston area. This year will be a show-stopper with the Vosbikian Band, based out of New Jersey and Philadelphia, has not been hosted in Boston for many decades. This is a tremendous opportunity to listen, dance and meet friends, while enjoying this talented group with such rich, family musical history.

"One of the most influential groups in the history of Armenian dance music in America. It can be said that without this group the music as we know it today would not exist anymore," as posted by Harry Kezelian, an Armenian music blogger and correspondent for the Armenian Mirror-Spectator (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2019/08/22/with-passing-of-mike-vosbikian-original-member-of-pioneer-dance-band-an-era-ends/>). The Fabulous" Vosbikian Band is the longest running Armenian band in America. Founded in 1939, they are a family band still going strong today with second and third generation members.

"For decades, we have been listening to the Fabulous Vosbikian Band on media ranging from Albums, Cassettes, CD's and now of course, their downloads. But even more significant, for those 5 or 6 decades of listening, few of us have ever seen them live. I am honored they accepted our invitation to play for our seventh Annual Hye Kef 5 dance this year," said John Arzigian, chairperson and founder of the Armenian Friends of America. "The AFA is extremely proud to bring them to the Merrimack Valley and New England for this very special evening."

The band was founded originally by three brothers, Samuel, Manuel (Mike), and Joseph Vosbikian, born to Armenian immigrant parents from Malatya, Turkey, just after WWI. They were typical members of the "Greatest Generation", grew up during the Depression, served in WWII, and listened to Big Band music of the time like any other American kids.

For more information, contact [janigian@comcast.net](mailto:janigian@comcast.net)



The Fabulous Vosbikian Band



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# The Ambassador of Armenian Dances in the World

DANCE, from page 12

Armenian dances were unknown – I am talking about the end of the 1970s. At that time there was no dance academy in the Netherlands for folk dance teachers, only part-time educational training set up by the National Folk Dance Society. After finishing my education, I started to teach at clubs in Amsterdam, as in the Netherlands we have many recreational groups meaning that people joining these groups are amateurs. They dance just for fun as a hobby once or twice a week. Then I became acquainted with Armenian dance teachers such as Thom Bozigian from the US and Eddie Djololian from France, who came to teach Armenian dances. So I thought it will be interesting to learn Armenian dances, because, I think, the other styles (Bulgarian, Romanian) don't have as many arm movements, as Armenian dances. When I was a child, I was educated in ballet, that's why these arm movements appealed to me a lot. The other thing is I like Armenian music, as well as the extreme differences between female and male styles of dancing – macho, very masculine male dances and very lyrical, graceful women dances. Yet when I saw those two teachers, they were so different in their teaching, the reason for which I did not know at that time. So in the beginning of '80s I decided that if I am going to teach Armenian dances I should go to Armenia. In 1983, I found the "Abovyan" Armenian club in Den Haag; they offered history and language classes. I started to take those classes once a week, and later I was asked to teach the Armenians in Den Haag Armenian dances! Then I met Gregory Badalyan, who was working at the Soviet embassy in the Netherlands. He offered me his help in going to Armenia to take dance classes. In 1985 I applied for a scholarship through the Dutch Ministry of Culture, and I was granted permission to go to Armenia. So I traveled there with my husband Maurits van Geel; we were received by the AOKS (Armenian Society for Cultural Cooperation with Foreign Countries) association. I told them I came only for three weeks so I would like to take dance classes every day and every night! I recorded some music; my husband filmed what I was studying. I also needed to speak Armenian...

## So do you speak some Armenian?

Yes, I do speak, it is a bit difficult, because I have no regular practice although I visit Armenia for half a month to one month every year. Thirty years ago I also learned to write in Armenian, but now I cannot, it is difficult. In 1988 I lived here for five months, so I was speaking very well. Now I live in a very small village in Holland and there are not Armenians there. I returned to the Netherlands, with the knowledge that with visiting Armenia once, you do not become a specialized Armenian dance teacher. I wanted to go back as soon as possible. So I started to travel again and again, but every time it was so short, so I decided to apply for a scholarship again, but this time to the Dutch Ministry of Education. At that time Netherlands had a treaty with Soviet Union for student exchange in all fields. I was granted a scholarship for five months, so I came to Armenia again in 1988 and was assigned to the Pedagogical Institute. It was a difficult time – the Soviet army was in Yerevan, curfew, then the earthquake, after which I started to take private classes from different teachers along with two Armenians from Lebanon. Because all the classes had live music, I faced a problem teaching them in the Netherlands. In the beginning of 1990s I invited several Armenian musicians to the Netherlands – Hrachik Muradyan, Ludwig Gharibyan and we made an ensemble. I rented a studio and we made professional recordings of the music for my dances. I established my own CD label, "Van Geel Records," and also organized concerts for our Armenian band in eight cities of Netherlands.

I do not have my own dance group, I teach classes as a guest teacher. Since 1995 I do not even hold weekly classes, as I tour often.

## In how many countries have you taught Armenian dance? How they learn about the classes?

Actually I taught in 14 European countries. Sometimes in one country you have participants from neighboring countries, so after visiting a workshop they invite me. Actually I am

not advertising as a teacher. Once I went to the United States as a participant in a big dance

the Armenian Genocide victims. Finally this CD was produced in Turkey, with Armenian titles, but with subtitle "In commemorations of the victims of the Great Catastrophe." It happened; you can say "We don't want that," but you can also say: "That it is an important step."

## In your opinion, what is typical in Armenian dances?

It is hard to say in one word. You have, of course, different directions; there are groups doing traditional dances and others do more choreographed dances. I know these two separate worlds are not together. In my opinion – because I worked in both worlds – they crossed over and they both have very interesting aspects. It is very good to keep traditional dances, on the other hand, they are still very much alive, and they are being changed. I, as a researcher, see that the traditional dances are not like a museum; people like to do their own interpretation, which is natural. I

respect the fact that traditional dances frequently came from Western Armenia but I am also very interested in the other direction, which includes maybe a little bit more theater or choreography, but still there are traditional elements in the steps. If you look at the character of Armenian dances and you look just at the people in restaurants, you see that every woman can dance with hand movements. Foreign peoples are not used to dancing with hand movements; this is very far from our cultures. So to be able to teach foreign peoples

how to work with hand movements you more or less have to offer them the basic dance. I think it is also an interesting component, as everybody from a young age is being taught that; young girls see the dances at the parties and they naturally copy them. I think there is also a place for choreographed dances because they can teach the foreigners at least how to do that. So I can see very down to earth movements, the Western Armenian material, mixed dances a lot, but I also see there is spot for very macho, very powerful male dances and lyrical women's dances. I want to crossover to both worlds.

## Some years ago the Ministry of Education of Armenia gave you a special diploma for your 25 years of promoting Armenian dance, music and culture.

It was in 2006. I felt very honored to receive it. You see, after teaching dance I always provide the participants information about Armenia and its culture. Sometimes I feel myself as the dancing ambassador of Armenia in the world: being non-Armenian I try to promote this culture as much as possible. With this purpose, since 2005, I have organized tours to Armenia as well. Despite of all difficult circumstances I have encountered living in Armenia, I think that the country is worth becoming a destination. Part of the tour includes dance classes from local teachers, and of course we go sightseeing and have meetings with dance groups. Here I cooperate with skilled choreographers from Yerevan, Ludwig Poghosyan and Gagik Ginosyan for more traditional material and Paylak Sargsyan, who also worked several times in Netherlands. We went, for example, to Sasnashen village to meet and dance with the people from Sasun, and visit Zolakar, where Alashkert dances have been preserved, to Yeghegnadzor, etc. I incorporate dance and meeting people in this format. I traveled a lot throughout Armenia; tourism is gaining ground but they want to do too many things with tourists in one day. The program is very packed; some tourists see four-five churches in one day, they make the long trip to Artsakh, so I decided to do something different, setting up cultural tours to Armenia with a more relaxed program combining hiking and culture. At the moment I am only offering combined dance and culture tours

see AMBASSADOR, page 15



Tineke van Geel teaching "Kochari"

camp, and when they discovered that I am a dance teacher, they invited me the following year as a teacher. Thus, I made a tour in the US and Canada. In the US I met people from Japan, so I was invited there too. I made seven tours of Japan teaching Armenian dances. Then I was invited to Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore and Malaysia. And I have some contacts in Australia, so I was also invited to teach there and in New Zealand.

So, you are invited to various places because people know you or they have learned some of your dances through other teachers, and also because the music I have is of good quality. I have also dance notations, so people who study, later can pass dances to their students. Currently I work in three directions: I teach Armenian dances as a guest teacher, I produce CDs and I organize dance and culture tours to Armenia.

## You produce CDs only with Armenian music?

-Yes! Their titles are "Hayastan," "Anoush," "Garni," "Shoror," "Ararat," "Barev," "Muradian Ensemble" album I and II, "Spirit of the morning wind." Each CD contains 18 dances – Tamzara, Papuri, Tars par, Lorke etc., mainly traditional, but also some choreographed dances. For instance, I bought the rights of Khachatur Avetisyan's two dances, producing them on my CDs. I met Khachatur in 1988, and at that time he has written a beautiful oratorio in commemoration of the victims of the Armenian genocide. It was the earthquake time, so he asked me if I could take the studio tapes of this oratorio to the Netherlands and produce them on CD, which I have done. The idea was to allocate the income of the CD to the earthquake victims, so Avetisyan's oratory was produced in the Netherlands and later released in Paris. By the way, about two years ago my husband was in Istanbul on a jury of a major dance festival and he got in touch with Kalan production. This is a big folk music company, that also emphasizes the music of non-Turkish groups. My husband Maurits met the director, who showed him Khachatur Avetisyan's CD and asked if he knew about it. Maurits answered that actually his wife had produced it. The producer said he would like to produce the same music in Turkey in memory of Hrant Dink. Both myself and Khachatur Avetisyan's son, conductor Mikayel Avetisyan, were ready to cooperate, but it was quite problematic because, as I said, that piece commemorates

TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Exhibit on French Fashion, Women and World War I at Bard Graduate Center Gallery in NYC

FASHION, from page 12

mourning etiquette; the efforts of the couturiers, during wartime disorder, to protect and promote their interests abroad; and the suffrage movement, which advanced in the United States and Britain immediately following 1918, but stalled in France, where women did not gain the right to vote until 1944.

French Fashion, Women, and the First World War will be accompanied by a lavishly illustrated catalogue published by Yale University Press

in collaboration with Bard Graduate Center. In addition to Maude Bass-Krueger and Sophie Kurkdjian, editors of the volume, contributors include Margaret Darrow (Dartmouth College),

Michele Majer (Bard Graduate Center), Jérémie Brucker (Université d'Angers), Susan Grayzel (Utah State University), and Johanne Berlemont and Anaïs Raynaud (Musée de la

Grande Guerre de Pays de Meaux). The 375-page book will be available in the Gallery and at [store.bgc.bard.edu](https://store.bgc.bard.edu).

<https://resnicow.com>

## The Ambassador of Armenian Dance in The World

AMBASSADOR, from page 14

and do not advertise the standard touristic tours anymore.

**You work mainly with amateurs?**

At the moment, yes. I did teach at my husband's company, once a week teaching basic folklore. I choreographed Armenian pieces for them, also in Finland and Taiwan. The Armenian TV broadcast videos of my dance classes "Sasouni razmakan par" (Battle Dance of Sasun) and "Tsaghkats baleni" ("Blossomed Cherry-Tree") in Taiwan. Everybody was surprised to see how Chinese people successfully execute the Armenian dances.

**I was present at your training. Who are the participants?**

They are a variety of people. For instance, this year there are three people from New Zealand, two of them are teachers. I am sure they will keep some of the material, that's why I make DVDs of the trainings, so they have a backup with the dance details and music and can take them home. Other people just want to see Armenia; dance is their hobby, so they combine these two.

**And most of them were of middle age. Is that something common?**

A very interesting question. That is different in each country. For example, in Western Europe, the age of people attending folk dance classes as a hobby is over 30, while in other countries it can be even 40 plus. In the US, it is frequently higher. In the Netherlands we are very active in folk dances, as we have many good folk dance teachers and a lot of amateur groups. The present development is that we draw more teenagers. For my generation it was so amazing to see so many teenagers dancing traditional dances every last Friday of the month here at the Cascade in the summertime. By the way, the same was in Taiwan, because they do folk dances at the universities, which we don't have in Europe. We have to be careful do not lose the youth; otherwise we would die out as a folk dance community.

**Are Armenian dance teachers not jealous that a non-Armenian teaches Armenian dances?**

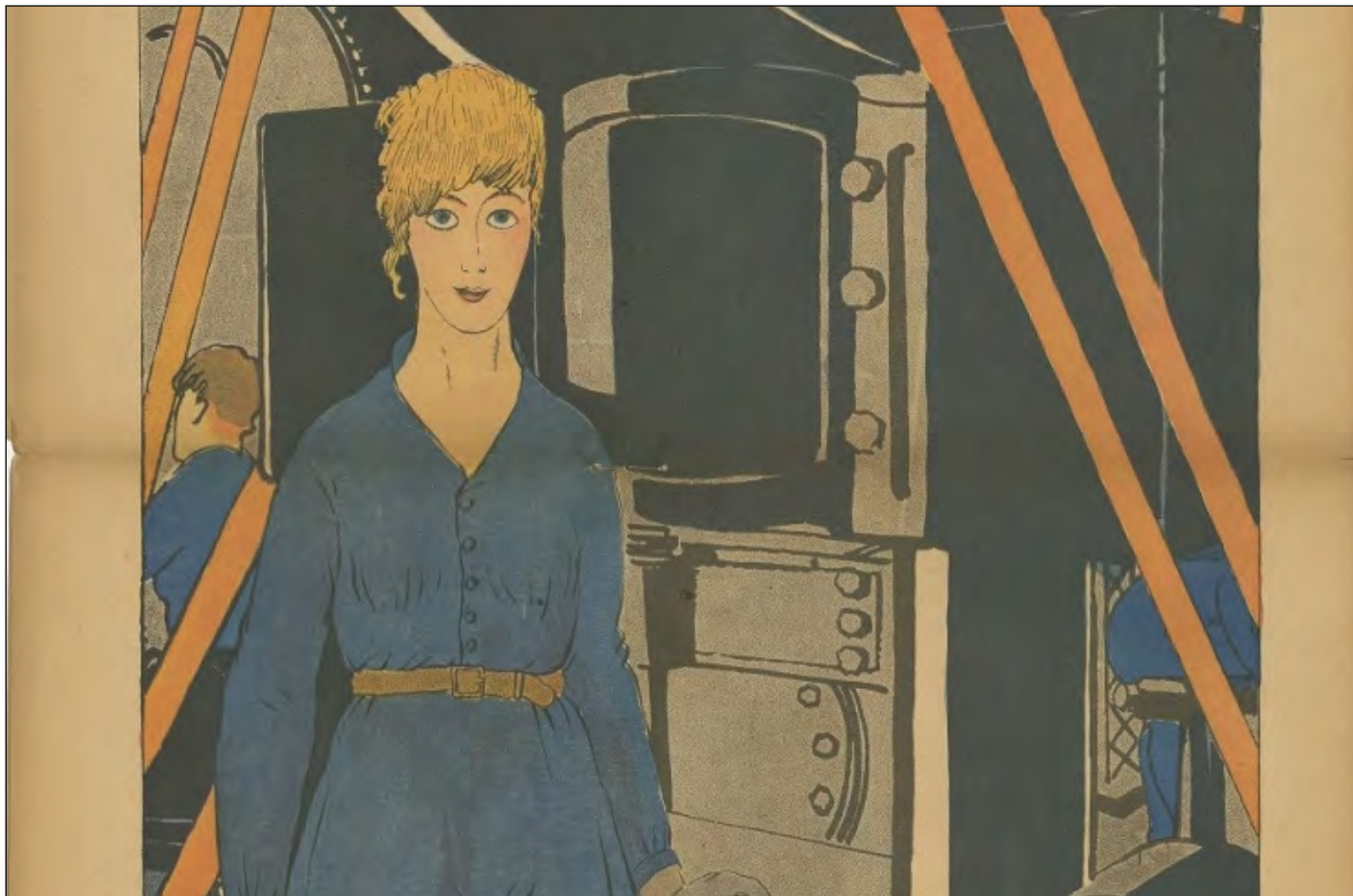
Sometimes for me it is also a bit strange that me, a Dutch woman, teaches Armenian dances. So that is also a reason I invite Paylak Sargsyan to Netherlands for teaching and directing, as he is a valuable source for materials, as our other teachers. As about jealousy, I felt it by some dance teachers, but not in Armenia...

**Instead of being happy that their culture is being spread...**

Yes, I wish to give credit to people here. Also when I teach in some country I always give credit to the person from whom I learned... Recently I started to produce DVDs along with CDs that I dance alone. It is important to keep material that is there, for teachers. In some countries, for instance, in the US, it is common to learn from DVDs, which I think is wrong, because you first should experience the dance, to have it in your body, hear the voice of the teacher, who tells you about the details.

**And what are your current plans?**

They are pretty much unchanged – I still travel and teach and continue to organize dance and culture tours to Armenia and promote to visit the country. I really feel it as my second homeland. Besides I have lifelong Armenian friends and I am lucky that my visits to Armenia offer me the chance to meet them again. I am Dutch but I feel very connected to Armenia and it is amazing to think this all started researching dance.



Paul Iribe. La Baïonnette, October 4, 1917, n°118. Lithograph. Association Pour l'Histoire de la Mode, FIL.2016.24.

## Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian Tatian

## Chorag

**INGREDIENTS**

5 eggs  
1 small can evaporated milk  
1 small can water  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 yeast cakes (2-1/4 oz. packets of active dry yeast) dissolved in 1/2 cup of warm water  
8 cups sifted flour  
8 grains whole mahleb seeds, crushed, optional  
Melt together 2 sticks or 1 cup butter and 1 cup shortening  
1 beaten egg  
Sesame seeds

**PREPARATION**

In a large bowl, mix together the butter and shortening, milk, water, sugar, salt, yeast, and eggs. Add the crushed mahleb. Gradually add sifted flour and mix to form a soft dough.

Cover and let rise for two hours or until double in size. Roll out and cut to desired shapes. Let rise again on cookie sheets for about one hour.

Brush on a beaten egg, and sprinkle on sesame seeds. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until golden brown. Makes 2-3 dozen.



For more recipes, go to: <https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/2011/12/christine-datians-red-lentil-soup.html> or <https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/2009/09/todays-lesson-islentils.html>

The cost is \$20.00 each to purchase the Trinity Guild's Armenian and Selected Favorite Recipes Cookbook. Include \$5.00 for shipping. If paying by check, please make payable to Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church:

Nazik Arisian  
Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church  
2226 Ventura Street  
Fresno, CA 93721  
(559) 486-1141 (office)





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

ARIZONA

**NOVEMBER 2-3 — ARMENIAFest at St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church.** Weekend food and cultural festival featuring traditional Armenian foods, beverages, exhibits, music and dance performances. 8849 E. Cholla St., Scottsdale.

CALIFORNIA

**NOVEMBER 23 — Armenian EyeCare Project Gala. Join the Armenian EyeCare Project for its annual Gala** celebrating another year of great accomplishments in Armenia. Held at the beautiful Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach, CA at 6:30pm. Evening begins with stunning cocktail reception and silent auction followed by an exquisite five-course dinner, live Armenian music by the Hosharian Brothers Band, an exciting live auction and more! Tickets are \$450/person if reserved by Oct. 10; \$500/person after Oct. 10; and \$250/person for those age 35 & under. All proceeds to benefit the AECF’s many sight-saving programs in Armenia. To RSVP or for more information, call 949-933-4069, email info@eyecareproject.com or visit eyecareproject.com/gala

MASSACHUSETTS

**SEPTEMBER 9 — Trinity Men’s Union and St. James Men’s Club Joint Dinner Meeting, hosted by the Trinity Men’s** Union, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Monday; 6 p.m., Social Hour, 7 p.m. Dinner. Guest Speaker: Duncan White, “Writers on the Front Line of the Cold War.” All are welcome to attend. Donation for Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner is \$15; RSVP requested by September 6 to David Dorian, tmuhtaac@gmail.com, or the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, office@htaac.org. For further information, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/721/.

**SEPTEMBER 15 — Armenian Church of the Holy Translators will hosts its annual Armenian Food Festival.** Come and enjoy a day filled with traditional Armenian food, music, dancing and fun children’s activities. Sunday. Noon to 5 p.m. The Armenian Church of Holy Translators, 38 Franklin St, Framingham. For further info, contact the church office at 5-8-875-0868.

**SEPTEMBER 15 — Trinity Annual Picnic, 12-5 pm, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St.,** Cambridge. Delicious Armenian food – shish, losh, and chicken kebab - paklava, khadaif, and more with take-out available. Armenian music for listening and dancing, featuring the Greg Krikorian Ensemble with Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals, Mark Der Mugrditchian, clarinet, Kevin Magarian, guitar and vocals, Arthur Chingris, dumbeg, and Steve Surabian, tambourine. Activities for children including the Moonwalk. Blessing of the Madagh at 4 p.m., followed by raffle drawing for cash prizes. For information, www.htaac.org/calendar/event/716/, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

**SEPTEMBER 16 — Registration is now open for the 2019-2020 sessions of the Abaka Dance Academy,** 101 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, MA. Principal/director Apo Ashjian. Classes begin September 16 for grades Nursery II - Grade 10 students. Check the schedule and enroll at www.abakadanceacademy.com. For info, email abakadanceacademy@gmail.com or call 617-283-2010.

**SEPTEMBER 18 — Celebrating Contributions of Our Nation’s Immigrants – Gala Benefit for the Endowed Fund for Care of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway** Honoring Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Leader & Philanthropist Recognizing Organizations Serving Immigrants & Refugees InterContinental Hotel Boston. Advance Reservations only. For information, hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

**SEPTEMBER 20 – St. James Hye Café. Friday. Join us for delicious food and fellowship – with LIVE ARMENIAN MUSIC!** Kebab, Falafel, Imam Bayeldi, and more. Doors open at 6:15pm. For more information visit www.stjameswatertown.org. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

**SEPTEMBER 22 — Sunday Afternoon for Families and Friends.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. 2-4 pm. Wonderful afternoon with The Hye GuysEnsemble featuring Ron Sahatjian and Joe Kouyoumjian. Hoodsies, Face Painting and more RSVP

appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

**SEPTEMBER 29 — Sunday, 6 p.m., the screening of “The Stateless Diplomat,” a documentary by Mimi Malayan** on the heroic life and legacy of Diana A. Apar (1859-1937), Armenia’s Honorary Consul to Japan in 1920 at Mosesian Center for Arts, Watertown. Organized by the Armenian Cultural Foundation and co-sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance, Arlington International Film Festival, co-Armenian International Women’s Association, Armenian Museum of America, Armenian Women’s Welfare Association, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, and Tekeyan Cultural Association. The tickets will be available in the Dorothy and Charles Mosesian Center for the Arts through the following link: https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pe/10450012

**OCTOBER 2 —Joint Sts. Vartanantz – Hye Point Golf Outing at the beautiful Butter Brook Golf Club in Westford.** Proceeds to benefit scholarships to Diocesan youth programs. 10 a.m. Shotgun start. Golfers with all skill levels most welcome. Single players will be grouped into foursomes. \$150 for Golf, lunch, and Dinner. \$165 will include 25 raffle tickets. Awards dinner to follow golf outing at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. For registration and sponsorship information, please contact Steve Sarkisian at 978-808-2820, Stsgolf@earthlink.net.

**OCTOBER 18-19 — St. James 72nd Annual Bazaar, Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction,** Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Raffles, Children’s Activities, and more. Friday and Saturday. Details to follow. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or info@stthagop.com or visit www.stjameswatertown.org.

**OCTOBER 19 — The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) 100th Annual Meeting Banuqet** celebrating the Armenian Evangelical Church. Westin Hotel, Waltham, 70 Third Ave., Waltham. 6 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. Dinner, \$125. RSVP by October 5. Tickets and sponsorships available online at amaa.org. Checks payable to the Armenian Missionary Association of America, and mail to 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652

**OCTOBER 19 — The Vosbikians are coming to the Merrimack Valley.** The Armenian Friends of America proudly present their Annual HYE KEF 5 Dance, featuring The Vosbikians. The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Andover, MA. Tickets Purchased before 9/13/19 will include the Great Venue, Outstanding Buffet, The Vosbikian Band and 5 Free Raffle Tickets Adults \$75.00 & Students 21 & under \$65 Specially priced AFA Rooms available through 9/17/19. For Tickets and more information, Contact: Lu Sirmaian 978-683-9121 or Sharke’ Der Apkarian at 978-808-0598 Visit www.Armenia-FriendsofAmerica.org

**OCTOBER 20 — Annual Banquet of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston,** Celebrating the 58th Anniversary of the Consecration of Holy Trinity and honoring Bruce Newell as the “Parishioner of the Year,” 12:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

**NOVEMBER 1,2 — NAASR Grand Opening and Gala. Friday, November 1 – Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting,** NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, at NAASR’s new world headquarters, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA. Saturday, November 2 – NAASR 65th Anniversary Gala, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge. 6 pm Reception, 7 pm Dinner and Program. Honoree Dr. Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Master of Ceremonies David Ignatius, columnist for the *Washington Post* and novelist; Featuring renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, accompanied by the Borromeo String Quartet, performing a program of songs by Komitas. Further details to follow.

**NOVEMBER 16 — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School 35th Anniversary Celebration.** Keynote speaker: Dr. Diran Apelian, Professor of Engineering & Former Provost, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Distinguished Professor, UC Irvine. Entertainment: singer Artur Hakobyan (Mister X). Emcee: Lisa Gulesserian, Ph.D., Harvard’s Preceptor on Armenian Language & Culture.@ The Westin Hotel Waltham-Boston. 6:30pm Cocktails / 7:30pm Dinner and program. More to follow...

**DECEMBER 6 and 7 — Friday and Saturday, Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.;** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater

Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

**DECEMBER 15 — Christmas Holiday Concert – Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra,** 3:00 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, call the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

MICHIGAN

**OCTOBER 26 — Kef Time Keghi IV 6:30 p.m. Saturday, at St John Armenian Cultural Hall, Southfield,** headlined with Traditional Keghetzi Pagharch feast, full buffet dinner with dancing, music by the Keghi All-Star Armenian Band. Reservations call Laura Negosian Lucassian at 248-376-3794 or email at Lluccassian@TBEonline.org. Donation: Adults \$45, Children under 17, \$20. Cash Bar. Mail checks to Karen Nigosian , 21919 Michigan Ave, Dearborn. MI 48124 Checks payable to Nor Keghi Association. Proceeds to support continuing renovations at public schools and community projects in Nor Keghi, Armenia. Supported by parishioners of the four Armenian churches in Greater Detroit.

**NOVEMBER 16 — The Knights of Vartan, Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge #6 and the Daughters of Vartan,** Zabelle Otyag #12 will celebrate their respective 100th and 70th organization anniversaries. Featuring: Kevork Artinian and his All Star Band at St. Mary’s Cultural Hall, 18100 Merriman Rd, Livonia. This is a fundraiser Dinner/Kef Dance to celebrate Knights and Daughters as well as a chance for future members to observe how our community puts our heritage on display. All proceeds to fund renovation of school gymnasium, Knights of Vartan #106, Elementary School, Yerevan, Armenia. For Reservations Contact: Laura Lucassian, (248) 376-3794, Cost \$75 per person, \$40 after 9:30 pm

NEW JERSEY

**SEPTEMBER 22 – Annual Picnic, Sunday, 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. St. Stepanos Armenian Apostolic Church,** 1184 Ocean Avenue, Long Branch. Louleh and Shish Kebab, Dolma Dinners. Armenian Cuisine featuring Cheese Boereg, Pastries, Baklava and more. Armenian Music and Children’s Games.

**OCTOBER 25 — Banquet Honoring Dr. Taner Akcam Abajian Hall St. Leon complex Fair Lawn,** NJ Sponsored by Knights & Daughters of Vartan- Under the Auspices of His Grace Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate. For Reservations please call Sona Manuelian 551-427-8763. \$125 p.p. early reservations recommended.

NEW YORK

**SEPTEMBER 17 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father’s memoir** Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army. Luncheon at 12:00 noon (\$45) sponsored by the WNRC Foundation located at 3 West 51st. St., New York City. Book sale/signing following the presentation. All proceeds to be donated to the foundation RSVP: anna@snapandstyle.com or (615) 934 – 3873.

**SEPTEMBER 26 – A GREEN Evening Celebrating Armenia Tree Project’s 25th Anniversary.** Wine, hors d’oeuvres, and a brief update from Executive Director Jeanmarie Papelian. Proceeds will support ATP’s new Forestry Fund. 7:00 to 9:30 pm at Affirmation Arts, 523 West 37th Street, New York. A minimum donation of \$100 is requested. Please RSVP via www. getrooted-nyc.eventbrite.com or call (617) 926-TREE.

RHODE ISLAND

**SEPTEMBER 20 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church,** Providence will host a book presentation, “The World of Konstantin Petrossian” (English and Armenian), Published by Institute of Arts National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, and Composers Union of Armenia. Friday at 7 p.m., Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson street, Providence. Details to follow.

**SEPTEMBER 22 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church,** Providence Presents Meet With The Doctors - Questions & Answers. We invite everyone to avail themselves of this opportunity

*continued on next page*





ARTS & LIVING

# Tumanyan in the Land of the Brothers Grimm

TUMANYAN, from page 1

His relationship to German literature was very special. In the Tumanyan Museum in Yerevan one can find works by the Grimm brothers, Jakob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859), the groundbreaking philologists who assembled and published the authoritative collection of German folklore, as well as works collected by Ludwig Bechstein. Tumanyan not only translated several of Grimms' fairy tales, but also picked up themes from them that he developed in his own works; for example, the sly fox in "King Chach-Chah" is a kindred spir-

it of the "Puss in Boots," "The Girl without Arms" reminds us of Grimm's "Girl without Hands," and in "Kadj Nazar" we recall "The Valiant Little Tailor."

Now a new volume of 20 fairy tales has appeared in German translation by writer and translator Agapi Mkrtchian and professor Helmuth R. Malonek. The book, *Armenische Märchen - Howhannes Tumanjan*, was released in May, published by the Wolfgang-Hager-Verlag in Austria. It is 100 pages long and contains 20 color illustrations, paintings done by Armenian and German schoolchildren on themes from the fairy tales.

## Why Fairy Tales?

The translators chose to issue a new edition of the fairy tales because it represents a genre that knows no borders, whether geographical or political. The themes treated are universal, even though each language culture may elaborate them in utterly different forms.

As in all the tales by Tumanyan, those selected by Mkrtchian and Malonek display a clear moral; they show the triumph of Good and Justice, and were written at a time, on the eve of World War I,



A performance at the Tumanyan Museum in Yerevan



The priest at Hajordats Tun in Tbilisi (Tiflis).

when animosity, violence and oppression ruled. Tumanyan's tales are intended here to continue building a bridge between the people of Germany and Armenia. In the translators' view, "strength and weakness, honesty and cunning, cleverness and stupidity as well as the yearning for requited love and esteem — none of these acknowledges any borders or nationalities. They are universal human characteristics and desires; this implies, however, that we are the ones responsible for determining which of these characteristics and desires in and around us shape our actions and deeds."

Fairy tales teach morality, just as they provide the material for children to learn to read. And they have the ability to stimulate the imagination and nourish artistic talent.

The illustrations reproduced in the book are the creations of school children in Germany and Armenia who have read Tumanyan's tales and been inspired. A traveling exhibition of their works has been accompanying presentations of the new volume in Armenia and Georgia. In early July, the book was presented in the Tumanyan Museum in Yerevan, in Gyumri, in Tumanyan's birthplace in Dsegh and in the Gegashen junior high school, as well as in Hajordats Tun in Tiflis. The pupils in Dsegh and Gegashen performed some of the tales as complete theatrical pieces, and in fluent German. Several German and Austrian cities will host further presentations of the book and the travelling exhibition over the coming months.

## 'America Plays' at Mount Auburn Cemetery to Feature Work by Thomas Amirian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The world premiere of "The America Plays," the second series of site-specific short plays by Mount Auburn Cemetery's Artist-in-Residence, playwright Patrick Gabridge, will take place this fall, from September 12 to 22, 2019, for 11 performances at Mount Auburn Cemetery, 580 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA.

These five plays present a journey through the American experience, highlighting the drama and philosophies of the men and women who struggled to find their place in this nation as the American identity was being formed. Hear the voices of sculptors Edmonia Lewis and Martin Milmore; strong women like Harriot Kezia Hunt, Charlotte Cushman and Harriet Hosmer who sought new opportunities beyond the social norms of their time; and an immigrant story highlighting some

of Mount Auburn's Armenian "residents" and the community concentrated in Watertown.

Audiences will experience the performances outdoors, at various spots across the grounds, surrounded by the sights and sounds of the natural world. Seating is provided and free on-site parking is available. Tickets for The America Plays are \$35 per person (\$30 for members) at [www.mountauburn.org/the-america-plays](http://www.mountauburn.org/the-america-plays).

"The America Plays" will run for 11 performances over two weekends: Two shows on Thursday, September 12 at 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm; two shows on Saturday, Sept 14 and 21 at 1:00 and 5:00 pm (plus a post-show discussion on Armenian Independence Day following the 5:00 pm show, free for ticket-holders); Sunday, Sept 15 and 22 at 1:00 and 5:00 pm, and one show on Thursday, September 19 at 5:00 pm. The entire performance will run for approxi-

mately 90 minutes and will include walking within the Cemetery on paved and unpaved surfaces and steep inclines; total walking distance approx. 2 miles. Shows will run rain or shine. After each performance is an optional moderated discussion with the playwright, director, actors or an expert on a person or topic explored in the plays.

"The America Plays raise questions about American identity and who we include and who we don't include in our story," said Gabridge. "These are stories of race, gender identity, immigration, and how they play out in America in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. I hope audiences will take away a new sense of understanding of who we are as Americans and how we continue to write our collective story today."

All plays will be fully staged outdoors on the Cemetery grounds, Directed by Courtney

O'Connor. The cast of "The America Plays" includes professional actors from Boston and beyond featuring: Ken Baltin\*, Amanda Collins\*, Karen MacDonald\*, Robert Najarian\*, Sarah Newhouse\*, Mathew C. Ryan, and Cheryl Singleton\*. (\*Denotes member of Actor's Equity Association). Costume design by Amanda Mujica, Sound design by Arshan Gailus. Produced by Plays In Place.

Mount Auburn's Artist-in-Residence program was created in 2014 by the Friends of Mount Auburn with a grant/support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (MA-30-13-0533-13). Mount Auburn's resident artists have included Roberto Mighty, MFA, who created "earth.sky": a site-specific, multi-screen digital multimedia installation, and singer/musician/composer Mary Bichner. One of the plays will be by Thomas (Tzolag) Amirian, an architectural Engineer, Armenian-American advocate who escaped genocide and immigrated to the US with members of the Amirian family.

Thomas (Tzolag) Amirian was an Armenian-born architectural engineer, co-founder of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), and a prominent member of the Armenian American community. He was five years old in 1915 when his family fled to the Armenian city of Van, at the height of the Armenian Genocide at the hands of the Turks. A million Armenians died on forced marches and in camps, but the Amirians escaped. During the next 6 years of exile, Thomas lost his father and baby brother while waiting for safe passage. Then, in 1921, surviving members of his family boarded a ship to America and moved to Boston where his Uncle Garabed had settled years earlier. Through struggle, loss and hard work the Amirian family built a life in the US. Thomas eventually studied architectural engineering at MIT and was involved in construction of several New England museums and college campuses, as well as buildings for the Manhattan Project during WW II. He was a prominent member of the Armenian American community until his death in 1993.

Thomas' aunt Azniv (Amirian) Kaloosd is buried with her baby on Spelman Road; the young mother died during childbirth in 1923, shortly after arriving in America. Thomas Amirian and other members of his family are buried on Magnolia Avenue

## CALENDAR

### RHODE ISLAND

from previous page

and "Meet with our Armenian Doctors" Dr. Martin Papazian, ear, nose and throat specialist. Steven Zaroogian, Moderator. Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson St., Providence.

**OCTOBER 20 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church,** Providence Presents Meet With The Doctors - Questions & Answers. We invite everyone to avail themselves of this opportunity and "Meet with our Armenian Doctors" Dr. Herman Ayvazyan Internal Medicine. Topic: New Trends in Primary Care Medicine. Ara Boghigian, Moderator. Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson St., Providence.

### WASHINGTON, DC

**SEPTEMBER 16-17 — Armenian Assembly of America's National Advocacy Conference and Gala** will take place. It will

include the Conference, Gala honoring Armenian American Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, and a Congressional Reception celebrating U.S.-Armenia relations. Special room rates available at The Wharf InterContinental Hotel. Visit [www.aimhye.com](http://www.aimhye.com) for tickets, sponsorships, special hotel room rates, and more information.

**Calendar items are free. Entries should not be longer than 5 lines. Listings should include contact information. Items will be edited to fit the space, if need be. A photo may be sent with the listing no later than Mondays at noon.**





## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Amulsar Gold Mine Decision: Blessing or Blunder?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

In most countries, an environmental dispute would have local dimensions, but not in Armenia.

Because of the country's size, the dispute regarding the continuation of the mining operation has been amplified to become a part of the national discourse. At issue are 31 million tons of ore and 40 tons of pure gold to be extracted by the Lydian Armenia mining company, based in Toronto, Canada.

The company released a report on August 9, 2019, on the environmental audit conducted by Earth Link and Advanced Resources Development (ELARD) on the progress of Amulsar.

Lydian announced that "the investigative body had analyzed the information and findings provided by the international audit report and found there were no grounds for criminal proceedings against the company."

There is an uproar in Armenia; environmentalists are up in arms protesting the potential hazards that the Amulsar mining operation poses to Jermuk waters, thermal springs located 10 kilometers from the mines. It will also contaminate the Sevan Lake basin, the environmentalists claim, drawing a picture of doom-and-gloom for the entire country.

However, the ELARD report has concluded that "there is no direct connection between the underground waters located on the territory of the Amulsar project and the thermal hot springs of Jermuk. There is also no connection between the waters of Sevan basin."

The previous government of Armenia had signed a contract

ment, Sophia Hovsepyan, aired her public discontent. Others may follow her soon. This rift in the party has become a topic of lively discussions in the media. Pashinyan's partisans interpret the public disagreements as democracy in action, while others believe the move may accelerate the founding of a Green party in a European style.

Many parties and political commentators have been expressing their views.

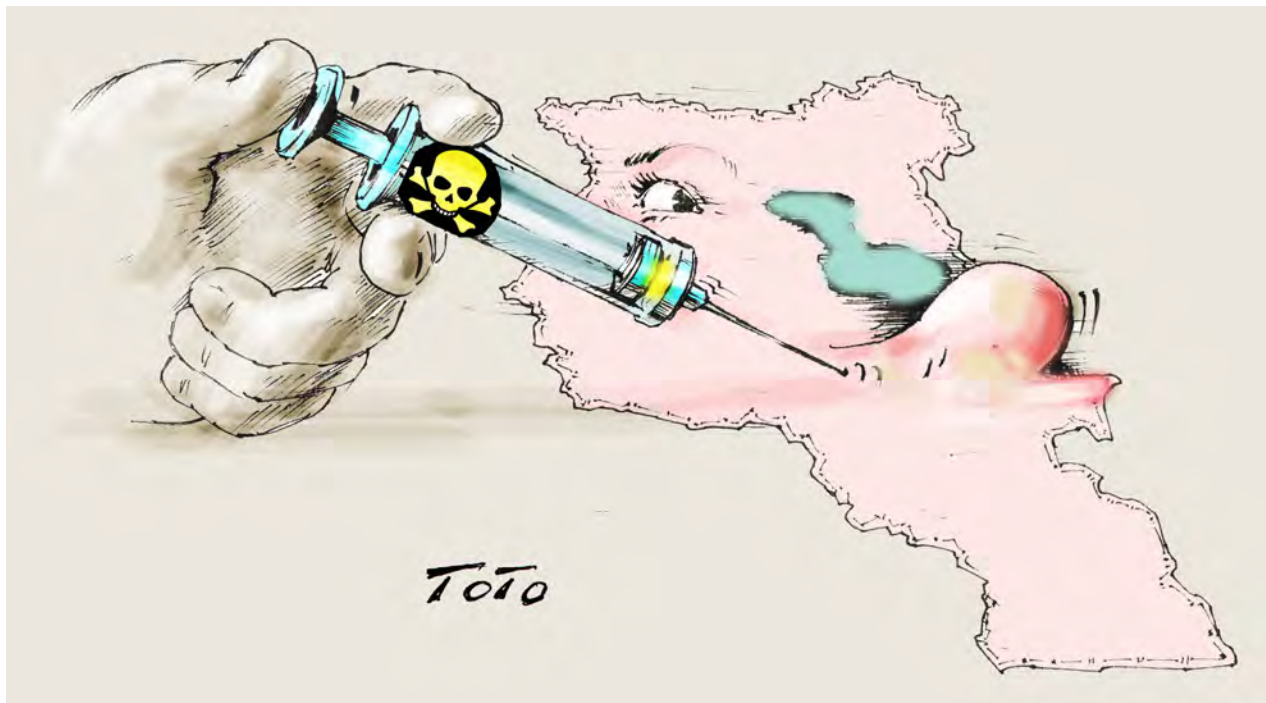
There is a trend veering towards solving the issue through a referendum. Indeed, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF, Dashnaksutyun), taking Pashinyan at his word, has come up with the proposal to have a referendum. Pashinyan had indicated that any problem or crisis of national dimensions would be resolved by the people, right on Republic Square. That, of course, was a statement beyond populism, bordering on demagoguery.

The Prosperous Armenia Party has offered yet another alternative, recommending a plebiscite which will not have the force of law.

While Pashinyan's supporters maintain that the people have given a full mandate to the prime minister through their landslide support (80 percent of the vote) to allow him to take responsibility for crucial decisions, to hold a referendum on an issue with such serious consequences is to gamble with Armenia's future.

In this case, the people are not armed with the scientific data to cast intelligent votes. We just need to remember that the last referendum held on the constitution was almost a farce.

To misdirect the public opinion against the people's interest is not new. The danger has existed since the days of playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), who wrote "An Enemy of the



with Lydian Armenia in 2014 based on the environment impact report of 2005.

The issue has been amplified to generate not only a scientific debate on the findings of the report but has caused political ramifications which are threatening to split the ruling My Step party and to provide ammunition to the opposition outside the parliament.

Some people believe that a defining moment is in the offing for Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's political future.

"The government does not obviously share a unanimous position on Amulsar. The scenario is threatening a deepening crisis in the country's political circles," Narine Dilbaryan, deputy leader of the Heritage Party said, commenting on the ongoing debate over the controversial mine exploitation prospect.

Pashinyan was facing an excruciatingly difficult choice; he had to weigh on the one hand the prospect of the \$17 billion of income to be pumped into Armenia's economy, along with the \$700 million compensation the country would have to make to Lydian, in case the mining operation was halted, as well as consider the potential environmental hazards to the underground water supplies and to Jermuk and Sevan. Pashinyan finally decided to allow Lydian the permit to resume operations, which had been halted since 2018.

The decision angered many and it looks like it will trigger a backlash.

"Pashinyan just placed a landmine under his feet, which may explode at any time," wrote Garbis Pashayan, a political pundit.

In addition, one of his fellow My Step party allies in parlia-

ment, Sophia Hovsepyan, aired her public discontent. Others may follow her soon. This rift in the party has become a topic of lively discussions in the media. Pashinyan's partisans interpret the public disagreements as democracy in action, while others believe the move may accelerate the founding of a Green party in a European style.

Technology and social media are challenges to democracy as we know it. Today, the technology of mass media is so advanced that it can shape public opinion. The results of a referendum may end up anywhere. A pot of gold is hanging over Armenia. People have been wondering whether the gold deposits in Amulsar will prove to be an economic blessing or ecological blunder.

Armenia has faced this dilemma before. During the demonstrations leading to Armenia's independence, at the breakup of the Soviet Union. The fate of Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant was politicized and by public demand its operation was halted, adding more misery to the plight of the citizens who were already freezing in the dark. Later on, the power plant was certified as operational and continued to supply much-needed energy to the country. Although Metsamor is one of the oldest nuclear power plant models, it continues to operate because the resumption of its operation was supported with scientific data.

Granted, scientific fact-finding in the Amulsar case is not comparable to the case of the atomic power plant, but it remains the only plausible solution to the problem.

Political debates, patriotic speeches, referenda and plebiscites cannot guarantee the right answer.

Only the proper use of scientific data can help citizens reach the correct conclusion.

# Mirror Spectator

Established 1932

An ADL Publication

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

**Baikar Association, Inc.**

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

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For advertising: [mirrorads@aol.com](mailto:mirrorads@aol.com)

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator  
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA  
and additional mailing offices.

**ISSN 0004-234X**

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472

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## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## 'Pan Armenian Council of Western USA' Or Council of Armenian Organizations?

A coalition of 20 Armenian-American organizations announced the formation of a "Pan Armenian Council of Western USA" on August 15, 2019.

The coalition members are:

Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America

Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America

Armenian Catholic Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg of North America

Armenian Evangelical Union of North America

Armenian Revolutionary Federation of Western USA

Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Western District

Armenian Relief Society of Western USA

Armenian General Benevolent Union, Western District

Armenian Missionary Association of America

Homenetmen Western USA

Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society of the Western USA

Armenian Youth Federation of Western USA

Unified Young Armenians

Armenian National Committee of America Western Region

Armenian Assembly of America Western Region Office

Armenian Bar Association

Organization of Istanbul Armenians

Armenian Youth Association of California

Armenian Society of Los Angeles

Iraki Armenian Family Association of Los Angeles

These are respectable organizations that have carried out

admirable work in the Armenian-American community.

The Council announced that "other community organizations which desire to be part of this collective effort and have a minimum of 300 active members are hereby invited to become members of the Council."

Furthermore, the Council explained that "the advisory nature of this Council and its decisions are not binding on any of its member organizations. Thus, the Council's existence does not confer upon the Council any authority over the activities of its member organizations."

The Council stated that its mission is:

- "To implement and realize projects of a pan-community nature.

- To encourage and assist projects which advance the collective interests and the rights of Armenian communities across the Western United States.

- To undertake steps to resist actions and efforts which are contrary to the collective interests and rights of Armenians.

- To gather and apply the Armenian Community's resources for the benefit of the Community's interests as well as the welfare of the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh.

- To always be mindful of the collective welfare and security of the Armenian Community."

These are all worthwhile goals for the benefit of the local community as well as the interests of Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora. Anytime Armenians of all walks of life join hands, it is a good thing. As we all know, unity is strength. The more Armenians get organized and speak in one voice, the more powerful they become as a global nation.

The member organizations of the Pan Armenian Council met on August 16, 2019, at the Western Diocese in Burbank, California, and signed a joint statement. Even though the event was publicized as a press conference, no opportunity was provided to the attending journalists to ask questions and clarify certain important issues.

Here are some of the questions I would have liked to raise at that conference:

1) What prompted these organizations to establish such a Council at this time?

2) Prior to the creation or recreation of such a Council, a similar coalition with almost identical membership existed from 2013 to 2015, under the banner of "the Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee - Western USA." Why was

the latter disbanded in 2015 and reconstituted now, losing the opportunity for four years of collaborative efforts? As one of the co-chairmen of the Centennial Committee I had repeatedly urged the group not to disband it after the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide in 2015. Furthermore, as I reported in my October 8, 2015 editorial, during the Sept. 26, 2015 worldwide conference of the Armenian Genocide Centennial State Committee in Yerevan, Armenia, with the participation of representatives of Armenian Genocide Committees in 40 countries, a resolution was adopted to form a "Pan Armenian Council" which would supersede the Centennial Committee. An organizing committee was appointed composed of high-ranking Armenian government officials and major Diaspora organizations. Unfortunately, the envisaged Pan Armenian Council did not materialize and the 40 chapters of the Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee were disbanded.

3) If the purpose of the newly formed Pan Armenian Council is to establish a coalition of Armenian organizations in Western USA, the community already has had such a coalition for a decade, functioning under the banner of "United Armenian Council of Los Angeles" composed of 39 Armenian organizations.

4) The name of the new Pan Armenian Council should have been something like "Coalition of Armenian Organizations of Western USA." Pan Armenian means that all Armenians in Western USA are members of this Council, whereas only members of certain organizations are represented in it. The great majority of Armenians, who are not members of any organization, are not represented in this Council.

5) Even though two of the three traditional Armenian political parties are in the Council, the third one, the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party, for some unknown reason, is not represented in the Council. There are other major Armenian organizations that are not members of the Council, such as the Armenian Professional Society, and Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America. More importantly, the huge community of immigrants from Armenia is not adequately represented in the Council.

Finally, the true Pan Armenian Council or an entity with a similar name should be elected by the votes of all Armenians in the Western USA or throughout the Diaspora, not just by members of several organizations. Only such a democratic entity can claim to represent all Armenians and speak in their name.

# Significance of Hidden Armenians and Project Rebirth Objectives

By Raffi Bedrosyan

**H**IDDEN ARMENIANS are the present descendants of Armenian orphans left behind in Turkey after the 1915 Armenian Genocide. These orphans, the living victims of the Genocide, were forcibly assimilated, Islamized, Turkified and Kurdified in state orphanages, military schools, Turkish and Kurdish homes. In recent years, it has become apparent that they did not forget their Armenian roots and secretly passed them on to the next generations. In the early 2010's, almost a century after the Genocide, certain events in Turkey triggered the hidden Armenians to have the courage to openly reveal their original Armenian identity in large numbers and return to their Armenian roots, language and culture. The most significant event triggering this new phenomenon was the 2011 reconstruction of the Surp Giragos Church in Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd, which acted like a magnet bringing the hidden Armenians together from various regions of Turkey. The planning, fundraising and the actual reconstruction of the church were followed by other events, such as piano concerts at the church, Armenian language classes, cultural events and conferences, Centenary Genocide Commemoration, and more critically, several organized trips to Armenia for hidden Armenians from Diyarbakir, Dersim, Van, Mush, Sasun, Urfa, Gaziantep, Istanbul and Hamshen regions of Turkey. In cooperation with the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora, hundreds of hidden Armenians were taken to cultural and historic sites in Armenia further encouraging their return to Armenian roots, language and culture, and in some cases also to get baptized into Christianity. All these activities were organized under the umbrella of the Project Rebirth initiative, which helped create a vast network of thousands of hidden Armenians, connected to me and more importantly to one another. For the past few years, I tried to explain the significance of the re-awakening of the hidden Armenians and Project Rebirth in numerous articles, and also a new book, to the Armenians in Armenia and Diaspora.

Once the hidden Armenians come out and openly declare their Armenian identity, they face many difficulties, dangers and threats in Turkey, surrounded by a hostile state, neighbors, employers and sometimes even their own families who wish to remain Islam Turks or Kurds. Their situation has become even more precarious in the last three years due to the military clashes between the Turkish state and Kurdish militants who demand increased rights. The Turkish government forces occu-

pied the newly reconstructed Surp Giragos Church and started using it as an army base, resulting in much damage to the altars and the interior of the church. In 2016, the government also expropriated the deeds of the church and more than 200 other properties belonging to it. The Surp Giragos Church Foundation immediately appealed the expropriation legislation to higher Turkish courts and was successful in reversing the expropriations and is now again the legal, rightful owner of the church and its properties. After numerous meetings with Turkish government officials, the Church Foundation also convinced the state officials to repair all the damages done to the church during the military occupation of the church, at state expense. In March 2019, the government called tenders for the repair work and the reconstruction of the church has now resumed. During these clashes in southeastern and eastern Turkey, along with the local Kurdish population, thousands of hidden Armenians also lost their homes and jobs. However, the hidden Armenians have survived despite all the risks. Instead of organizing Armenian classes, cultural events and trips to Armenia, Project Rebirth has tried to help by providing legal, financial, relocation, resettlement support to the suffering hidden Armenians.

### Numbers Unknown

The numbers of hidden Armenians aware of their Armenian roots is unknown. The numbers of hidden Armenians aware of their Armenian roots and willing to return to Armenian roots are also unknown. But independent research and studies indicate that Armenian orphans left behind in Turkey and Armenians in certain regions allowed to convert to Islam in order to avoid massacres and deportation during the 1915 Armenian Genocide, add up to about 300,000. Since the population of Turkey increased seven times since 1915, the descendants of these forcibly Islamized hidden Armenians would number more than 2 million. Although there are no reliable figures about Armenian conversions to Islam during the 1894-96 massacres, the numbers are even larger than in 1915. The Hamshen Armenians, who were converted to Islam earlier in the 16th century but still speak a dialect of Armenian, number more than 200,000. It is difficult to arrive at numbers with certainty, but it can be stated that potentially there exists a genetically Armenian population in Turkey which may even exceed the current population of the Republic of Armenia, although these people are at present Islamized Turks or Kurds. There have been 35 Armenian baptisms of hidden Armenians at Surp Giragos Church, the first two baptisms in Armenia during Project Rebirth trips and several dozen in Europe. One can con-

clude that hidden Armenians returning to Armenian roots and Christianity are in the hundreds, returning to Armenian roots without converting to Christianity are in tens of thousands, remaining as hidden Armenians and aware of their Armenian roots are in hundreds of thousands, possessing Armenian genes or blood partially are in the millions.

### Voting and Political Power of Hidden Armenians

The hidden Armenians generally live within Kurdish populated regions and usually vote for the pro-Kurdish party (HDP). Although Kurds have historically participated in the massacre and plunder of Armenians, the present generation of Kurds has started to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and the Kurdish role in it. The HDP party mandate recognizes the Armenian genocide and pledges to bring legislation to the Turkish Parliament for official state recognition. The hidden Armenians, whether still hidden or openly declared no more hidden Armenians, continue voting as a bloc for increased democratization, human rights, citizen rights, language rights, freedom of speech as promoted by HDP. Once the current repressive and dictatorial government regime starts losing momentum, the HDP and the hidden Armenian vote would become increasingly more effective. One must also consider that there are significant numbers of hidden but undeclared Armenians actively involved in politics. The voting power of the see REBIRTH, page 20

## LETTERS

### The Full Story about Dadrian

To The Editor:

I just finished reading your front page story on the passing of Vahakn Dadrian ("Genocide Studies Pioneer Vahakn Dadrian Dies," August 3, page 1). The article makes him sound like a saint. However, in 1981, when he was teaching at State University of New York College at Geneseo, he was found guilty of four charges of sexual harassment. As a woman, this should not be swept under the rug.

**Marjorie K. Nanian, J.D.**

Former Political Science Professor  
at Schoolcraft College and Attorney





# Significance of Hidden Armenians and Project Rebirth Objectives

REBIRTH, from page 19

hidden Armenians increasingly would help pass legislations friendly to Armenia or Armenians. Once organized, political decisions taken by hidden Armenians within Turkey would be much more effective than any initiative from outside Turkey.

### Potential Repatriation to Armenia

Among the hidden Armenians who participated in the Armenia trips organized by Project Rebirth, several people expressed interest in obtaining citizenship in Armenia, move permanently to Armenia for retirement, and more significantly, to invest in Armenia. Project Rebirth has made contacts with several wealthy hidden Armenian entrepreneurs, businessmen, industrialists and investors who have established successful enterprises in Turkey, expanded to other countries such as Russia and Europe, and would be interested in starting trade or investments in Armenia. There have already been a few confidential donations from wealthy hidden Armenians in Turkey for infrastructure and church projects in Armenia.

The hidden Armenians of Turkey can act as liaison and bridge between Armenians and Turks, and eventually between Armenia and Turkey in overcoming discrimination, hatred and bias so prevalent because of historic wrongs.

There are more than 4,000 Armenian churches and schools left behind in Turkey after the Armenian population was murdered or deported during 1915. If not destroyed or burnt out-right, these buildings were converted to Turkish mosques, government buildings, schools, banks, community centers or private residences. There are also hundreds of abandoned Armenian cemeteries, and thousands of cross-stones, fountains and monuments. The hidden Armenians still living in the Armenian homeland have started and can increasingly organize the protection, restoration and return of these Armenian buildings and cultural heritage to Armenian ownership, once they become more effective politically, financially and legally.

### Project Rebirth

Project Rebirth has already started the link between Armenia and the hidden Armenians of Turkey by organizing several trips for them to Armenia. These trips are now temporarily suspended due to the political difficulties and still dictatorial military situation in Turkey, but they are expected to resume once the conditions improve.

Cultural exchanges between Armenia and the hidden Armenians of Turkey should be planned. If hidden Armenians cannot travel to Armenia, cultural, musical, dance groups from

Armenia should travel to Turkey to regions populated by hidden Armenians.

Armenian language classes for hidden Armenians should be planned by providing teachers from Armenia to live and teach eastern/western Armenian for a few months at a time in regions populated by hidden Armenians.

Project Rebirth will continue to act as a support and network mechanism connecting hidden Armenians to one another and to Armenia. It must be emphasized that its mission is not to pressure hidden Armenians to openly declare their Armenian identity, but instead, to support and encourage those hidden Armenians who have already decided to return to their roots. Support for them will continue one person at a time. Support for preserving or reconstructing any remaining Armenian churches or buildings in homeland Armenia will continue one stone at a time.

The long-term, ultimate objective of Project Rebirth is to delete the word 'hidden' from the term 'hidden Armenians', until all hidden Armenians in Turkey return to their roots. This can only be achieved with cooperation and support from the Republic of Armenia, Diaspora Armenian cultural organizations and NGOs, instead of being attempted by single individuals. There are encouraging signs that senior policy makers and planners within the government

of Armenia have recognized this new reality. Unlike the perpetrators of the Jewish Holocaust who carefully prevented any mixing of Jews with the German Aryan race, the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide actively encouraged converting thousands of Armenian orphans into Islam Turks. One of the perpetrators, Cemal Pasha, was even quoted when visiting Turkish orphanages where Armenian children were kept: 'Armenians are intelligent and hard-working people, mixing them with our people will help us Turks'. The Armenian Genocide was not only the destruction of the oppressed people by the oppressor state, but at the same time the construction of the oppressor state. The return of the hidden Armenians to their Armenian roots and Project Rebirth is now the reconstruction of the oppressed people.

(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 Karabakh, 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.)

# Amulsar Mining Risks 'Manageable,' Insists Top Investigator

MINING, from page 1

shortly after he came to power in May last year. The law-enforcement agency was specifically supposed to find out whether ministry officials misled people living near Amulsar about "dangerous risks" posed by the project.

The Investigative Committee chief, Hayk Grigoryan, said on August 15 that it has no grounds to indict anyone as a result of its inquiry led by Ivanyan. Grigoryan cited the findings of an environmental audit of the Amulsar project commissioned by the Armenian government and conducted by a Lebanese consulting firm, ELARD.

In its final report submitted to the investigators, ELARD concluded that toxic waste from the would-be mine is extremely unlikely to contaminate mineral water sources in the nearby resort town of Jermuk or rivers and canals flowing into Lake Sevan.

The 200-page report says that gold mining poses greater environmental risks for other rivers in the area. But it says they can be minimized if Lydian takes 16 "mitigating measures" recommended by ELARD.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan pointed to these conclusions when he indicated on August 19 his intention to enable Lydian to the restart the multimillion-dollar project disrupted by protesters more than a year ago.

Armenian environmental activists denounced that statement. They said that in fact ELARD gave a negative assessment of the project's impact on the environment.

This led Pashinyan to announce on August 23 that he will seek additional explanations from the ELARD at a video conference that will be held this week. Visiting communities surrounding Amulsar, said he will press the Lebanese environmental consultants to give "clear-cut answers" to lingering questions about the safety of Lydian's operations.

"Although the [ELARD] audit refers to a number of shortcomings and omissions [in the Lydian's project] its overall conclusion must be put into context," said Ivanyan.

The investigator stressed the importance of the 16 safety measures recommended by ELARD and essentially accepted by Lydian. "The mitigating measures are reasonable and adequate, and if they are implemented along with additional measures the environmental risks will be manageable," he said.

Asked what will happen if those risks turn out to be serious after the start of open-pit mining at Amulsar, Ivanyan said Armenia's laws allow authorities to monitor and ensure Lydian's compliance with environmental regulations.

### Pashinyan Tours Communities Close to Blocked Mining Site

Pashinyan sought to reassure residents of the resort town of Jermuk and two villages located close to the Amulsar gold deposit in southeastern Armenia as he visited their communities on Friday.

Pashinyan told them that the British-registered company Lydian International will not be allowed to launch mining operations there if they are deemed to pose a serious threat to the environment.

ELARD's final report says that gold mining poses greater environmental risks for other rivers in the area.

Pashinyan cited these conclusions when he indicated on Monday his intention to enable Lydian the restart the multimillion-dollar mining project disrupted by protesters more than a year ago. Yerevan-based environmental activists denounced that statement. Some of them claimed that in fact ELARD gave a negative assessment of the project's impact on the environment.

Pashinyan cited the conflicting interpretations of the ELARD report when he addressed about 200 people who gathered in a Jermuk square to voice their strong opposition to gold mining at Amulsar.

"I have decided that next Thursday or Friday we will hold a video conference with ELARD's team of experts during which we will say that 'there is a big debate in Armenia over what you wrote [in the report] and that you yourself must now present your conclusions,' he said. "All that conversation will be filmed and made public."

Pashinyan said he will press the Lebanese environmental consultants to give "clear-cut answers" to lingering questions about the safety of Lydian's project.

"If it emerges that our water, our air, our soil and our grass will indeed be polluted then the mine will not be allowed to operate," he declared. "But if it emerges that the only problem is that one will see some rooftop from their window then it will be a different situation which we will discuss."

Several dozen protesters have blocked all roads leading to Amulsar since June 2018, disrupting the construction of Lydian's mining facilities which was due to be completed by the end of last year. The protesters say that gold mining and smelting operations would severely damage the local ecosystem.

While in Jermuk, Pashinyan also discussed the Amulsar issue with other ordinary residents of Armenia's most famous mineral water resort. In particular, we went into the

apartment of a middle-aged woman who claimed to have lived in the United States for about 27 years and returned to her hometown recently. She urged Pashinyan to pull the plug on the mining project.

"I came back to live in an ecologically clean place," she said. "I want this clean and untouched nature to be really preserved. Watching this nature gives me great pleasure."

After meeting separately with a group of local activists campaigning against the project, Pashinyan headed to the nearby villages of Gorayk and Saravan.

In Gorayk, the prime minister inspected a Lydian lab designed for water analysis and recycling and held an indoor meeting with village residents.

Many of the villagers voiced support for the project, saying that they trust in Lydian's environment-related assurances and are eager to work for the company due to a lack of other employment opportunities in the area.

"Mr. Prime Minister, the mine must definitely work," said one man. "It's good for the economy. We are a country at war. Our budget needs revenues. We are all young and need jobs."

Lydian and its Armenian building contractors employed more than 1,000 people until the start of the Amulsar blockade. Many of them were residents of the surrounding communities.

(See related editorial on page 18.)

# THE STATELESS DIPLOMAT

ダイアナ・アプカー  
ステートレス外交官

## Diana Apcar's Heroic Life

A Documentary by  
**Mimi Malayan**

Organized by The Armenian Cultural Foundation and co-sponsored by  
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