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Five Nobel Laureates to Lecture in Yerevan

By Ekaterina Poghosyan

YEREVAN (Mediamax) – For the first time, Armenia will host five Nobel Prize laureates, who will give open lectures on biochemistry, physics and medicine this April in Yerevan.

The “Nobel Days in Yerevan” event, unprecedented in Southern Caucasus, will be held on April 11-16 at Yerevan State Medical University.

“Be inspired and create” slogan will unite beneath the same roof those who want to get inspiration from world-renowned scientists and work to obtain scientific achievements, thus, returning see YEREVAN, page 4

REUTERS/ANDERS WIKLUND /SCANPIX



Nobel laureate in medicine Robin Warren of Australia receives his Nobel Prize from Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf, December 10, 2005.



NORMARMARA.COM PHOTO

Editor and writer Robert Haddejian blows out the candles on his birthday cake

Turkish-Armenian Newspaper Editor Haddejian's 90th Birthday Celebrated

ISTANBUL – Armenian Minister of the Diaspora Hranoush Hakobyan and many writers in Armenia, Turkey and other parts of the world sent author and journalist Robert Haddejian letters of congratulations on the occasion of his 90th birthday on January 26, while in Holy Trinity Church of Beyoglu, Istanbul, an intimate banquet attended by some 80 guests celebrated the life and works of this author in his presence. Haddejian (also written Haddeler or Haddedjian) is the longtime editor of the Istanbul Armenian-language daily newspaper *Nor Marmara* (originally called *Marmara*).

Born in Istanbul, Haddejian graduated from the Pangalti Armenian Mkhitarist see 90TH, page 16



Barsamian Works to Revitalize Armenian Assembly

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – Anthony J. Barsamian has become a prominent figure represent-



Armenian Assembly new co-chairmen: Van Krikorian at left with Anthony Barsamian in front of White House

ing Armenian-Americans today through his work with the Armenian Assembly of America. As a new co-chairman of its board of trustees, he is leading efforts to revitalize the Assembly. As an active member of the Armenian Church, he also has just become the first member of this church to be elected as head of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. (See accompanying article on page 8.)

Barsamian has always been proud of his background. He said, “Members of my family came here to the US both before and after the Armenian Genocide. We are from the Worcester community. We lived on Laurel Street, which is where the first Armenian church in the US was located. My grandfather worked in

one of the wire mill factories. I feel that I understand the community in many aspects from its origins, though of course these took place at an earlier period, and how Armenians had to deal with many hardships when they first came to the US.”

After graduating from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Barsamian went to Suffolk Law School in Boston. He began working at a law firm after graduating, but soon started his own firm, now called Hutchings Barsamian Mandelcorn and Robinson, where he is managing partner, with 10 attorneys in the firm and two locations.

Barsamian's long history of involvement with the Assembly started after his graduation from law school. His working in George Keveryan's office during law school led to being asked to help with President Levon Ter-Petrosian of Armenia's visit to Boston in 1994. In the process, Barsamian got to know Robert Aram Kaloosdian, one of the founding members of the Assembly, and Carolyn G. Mugar, then (and now) its president. He later became a member of the see BARSAMIAN, page 9

NEWS IN BRIEF

Businessman Offers \$5,000 for Every Fourth Artsakh Child

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – Businessman Samvel Karapetyan, now based in Russia, will grant \$5,000 for every fourth baby born to an Artsakh family, President Bako Sahakyan announced during a government session of Artsakh Republic.

Artak Beglaryan, spokesperson for the prime minister, added that Hayastan All Armenian Fund and the Government of Artsakh will grant an apartment to those families with five children.

“Therefore, at least after the third child it is worth to resettle in Artsakh, dear friends living away from Artsakh,” Beglaryan wrote on the Artsakh government facebook page.

Another Elderly Armenian Killed in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (*Hurriyet*) – Three robbers who last week broke into the house of an elderly Armenian couple in Istanbul's Sisli district, first ransacked the house before tying up the elderly couple and leaving.

A housecleaner who arrived at the couple's house the next day alerted the couple's relatives when no one would open the door. They, in turn, called the police.

The firefighters who arrived at the scene went in from the window and saw the couples tied up. As it turned out, the 85-year-old husband had suffocated, while the 79-year-old woman was in critical condition and is recovering at a local hospital.

MP Paylan Continues to Raise Issue of Turkey-Armenia Border

ISTANBUL (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Turkish Parliament's Commission on Planning and Budget has discussed the issue of increasing the number of large trade centers, Ermenihaber.am reports.

Addressing the Commission, MP Garo Paylan, who is of Armenian descent, referred to the closed border between Armenia and Turkey, noting that had the border been open, Armenia would do most of its trade with Turkey.

According to the Turkish *Sondakika* website, Paylan said: “The border with Armenia has been closed for 23 years now. Had the border been open, Armenia would do three-fourth of its trade with Turkey. People would come here, relations would develop.”

Paylan added, “this could help solve the Karabagh issue as well. The development of relations would benefit both parties.”

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Russia Lifts Duties on Oil, Gas Supplies

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Armenia to Russia Oleg Yesayan signed a protocol providing for indefinite exemption from export duties on petroleum products and natural gas, supplied from Russia to Armenia, RIA Novosti reports.

On December 2, 2013 Russia and Armenia signed an intergovernmental agreement on the abolition of export duties on deliveries of natural gas, petroleum products and rough diamonds to Armenia. The agreement was signed following talks between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Serge Sargsian.

Earlier, the Armenian government approved a set of amendments to the agreement. Energy and Natural Resources Minister Yervand Zakharyan reminded that the agreement concerns supply of Russian natural gas, petroleum products and raw diamonds to Armenia.

Zakharyan said the changes will specify the procedures for calculation and payment of customs duties for delivery of oil products and gas. He added also that the amended agreement would create favorable conditions for the development of economic ties between the two countries.

Azeri Forces Fire 1,500 Shots in Ceasefire Violations over Weekend

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Azerbaijani armed forces fired around 1,500 shots from various caliber weapons in ceasefire violations on February 6-7, the Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh) Defense Army reported.

Artsakh troops continue controlling the situation on the contact line, retaliating only in case of extreme necessity.

Despite the international community's urgent calls to establish mechanisms for investigating border attacks and Armenia's continuing support for the idea, Baku keeps stirring up tensions, the Artsakh Defense Army spokesman said in an earlier statement.

Armenian-Born Athletes Named as Top German Boxers

BERLIN (Armenpress) – Arthur Abraham was recognized the best boxer of the year in Germany by the readers of BoxSport magazine.

The seven-time WBO Super Middleweight Boxing Champion collected the highest number of votes during the voting.

Women's boxing champion Susi Kentikian was named the best in WBA version.

Arthur Abraham's coach Uli Wegner was named the coach of the year winning this nomination for the 13th time.

Abraham's next fight will take place on April 9 in Las Vegas. His opponent will be 24-year old Gilberto Ramirez.

Prime Minister Receives New UK Ambassador

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan received Judith Margaret Farnworth, Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on February 5.

Abrahamyan congratulated Farnworth on receiving the post and expressed confidence that with her help Armenian-British relations will further strengthen.

Abrahamyan praised the economic and political cooperation between Armenia and the UK, including the further development of trade and business ties.

Farnworth expressed her gratitude for the warm reception and emphasized that the UK is interested in developing multilateral cooperation with Armenia. She assured Abrahamyan that she is ready to promote the further development of relations.

Abrahamyan and Farnworth also touched upon the development of Armenia-EU relations, regional developments and other issues of mutual interest.

Swedish FM Visits Armenia, Urges Peaceful Solution to Artsakh Conflict

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The dynamic development of ties with Sweden is of special significance to Armenia, Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian said at a press conference on Tuesday, February 9.

Following a Yerevan-hosted meeting with his Swedish counterpart, Margot Wallström, Nalbandian said the parties discussed possibilities of further cooperation in economic, educational, scientific, cultural and health sectors.

"Also, we agreed to improve the legal framework and promote investments," Nalbandian noted, adding that an agreement on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion was signed shortly before.

"During our meeting, we dwelled upon Armenia-EU relations focusing on dialogue on the new framework agreement, current reforms in Armenia and Sweden's readiness to support their implementation. We discussed Armenia and the [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs' efforts aimed at the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict," Nalbandian said.

Wallström expressed her country's support for peaceful negotiations, ruling out any military solution.

Addressing reporters, Wallström described her current visit to Armenia as a good opportunity to get an insight into the country's perceptions of the long-lasting land dispute. She emphasized the need to exert maximum efforts to avoid further escalation, expressing hope that a lasting peace will be achieved under the aegis of the Minsk Group.

Wallström elaborated on the European Union (EU) Eastern Partnership (EaP) project, noting that Sweden was among the countries calling for strong efforts for giv-



Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström lays a wreath at the Tsitsernakabert memorial in Yerevan.

ing the EaP member states a high status in the EU family.

The minister also promised individualized approaches to separate member states to adjust different perspectives to specific needs and to develop the dialogue based upon the "more-for-more" principle.

Diplomatic relations between the Armenia and Sweden were established on July 10, 1992.

During her visit, Wallström also met with President Serge Sargsian.

The two discussed opportunities for the further development of relations both in bilateral and multilateral formats, as well as the negotiation process of Nagorno Karabagh.

Sargsian said Sweden is among Armenia's reliable partners in Europe. Wallström stated that a good platform has been established for further developing and deepening relations between the two friendly states, and expressed readiness on behalf of her country to assist Armenia in conducting reforms.

Catholicos of All Armenians Receives President of The Serbian National Assembly

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – On February 9, in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, received Deputy Maya Goykovich, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia and her delegation. She was accompanied by Eduard Sharmazanov, the vice president of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia.

The catholicos welcomed the guests and noted with satisfaction that due to reciprocal visits at a high level, the friendly relations between the two nations are becoming increasingly closer. Karekin II reflected on the Armenian community in Serbia since

ancient times and the historical Armenian-Serbian ties.

He expressed his appreciation to the Serbian people, for the assistance provided to the Armenians during the disastrous earthquake of 1988.

His Holiness also reflected on the existing warm relations and cooperation between the Armenian Apostolic and Serbian Orthodox Churches.

Deputy Goykovich spoke about the historical past and current cooperation between the two nations. She also stressed the importance of ecumenical relations between the two churches, noting that the church plays an important role in the life of society.

During the meeting, the participants also spoke about the challenges facing the countries and the support of the churches in overcoming them. In this regard, His Holiness affirmed that the Armenian and Serbian peoples, who profess the same Christian values, have survived all the trials during the centuries with hope and faith, and have realized their wishes and cherished dreams through the spirit of optimism.

The catholicos also conveyed his fraternal greetings to Patriarch Irineos of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Attended the meeting was Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisyan, Director of the External Relations and Protocol Department.



Deputy Maya Goykovich, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia and her delegation meet with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.



INTERNATIONAL

Turkey's Erdogan Issues Ultimatum to US

By Dorian Jones

ISTANBUL (Voice of America) – Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has issued an ultimatum to the United States to choose between Turkey and Syrian Kurds. US forces have been working closely with the Syrian Kurdish group the PYD in the battle against Islamic State.

The ultimatum followed a visit by the head of the anti-IS coalition, Bret McGurk, a week earlier to the Syrian town of Kobani, where he met with members of the PYD and its militia, the YPG.

US forces have been supporting the YPG in its battle against Islamic State, but Ankara accuses the Syrian Kurdish group of being a terrorist organization connected to the Kurdish rebel group, the PKK, which Turkish forces are fighting in southeastern Turkey.

US Ambassador to NATO Douglas Lute is playing down the Turkish president's ultimatum, while underlining the importance of the Syrian Kurdish groups.

"These are not new concerns with regard to US contact and US support for the Syrian Kurdish groups," he said. "And of course the visit that you are referring took place into the town of



Kobani, which of course was largely freed from ISIL control because of the effective fighting of those Syrian Kurdish groups."

With Ankara providing airbases for US-led operations against Islamic State, Washington is having to perform a delicate balancing act over its support for Syrian Kurdish groups.

Moscow Courting Kurds

Analysts say Moscow is courting the Syrian Kurds' allegiance. Russia strongly backed the PYD's presence, which Ankara successfully blocked, in last month's Geneva peace talks.

Moscow has also reportedly supplied arms to the Syrian Kurds.

US Presidential Envoy to the Anti-Islamic State Coalition Brett McGurk arrived in Kobani over the weekend, officials said on February 1.

Political columnist Kadri Gursel for Al Monitor website says envoy McGurk's visit to Kobani was strategically impor-

tant for the United States.

"It is a very important gesture; it's a provocative gesture, but a legitimate one. It was a move destined to confirm the United States' position vis-a-vis Syria Kurds, and also a message to Ankara," he said. "And the United States is not wishing to see PYD Kurds being pushed to the Russians, this is what Ankara is doing, exactly."

With Turkish political leaders designating the PYD and PKK as greater threats than Islamic State, analysts says relations between Ankara and Washington, are becoming increasingly strained.

Gursel says those tensions have led to a redefining of the relationship.

"Washington sees Ankara as a friend, but in the eyes of Washington, Ankara is an untrustworthy, unreliable, unpredictable friend," he said. "Believe me, Ankara and Washington are not on the same page, in terms of the Middle East."

Washington, for its part, continues to call Turkey a key partner in its fight against Islamic State. But observers say with Washington's priority being the defeat of IS, and with Syrian Kurds one of the most effective anti-IS forces in Syria, Turkish-US relations appear destined to remain strained for some time to come.



Yet another historical church has been unearthed in the Cappadocia region of Central Anatolia and experts are excited about its frescoes, which depict scenes hitherto unseen. (AA Photo)

Historic Church Discovered in Turkey's Nevsehir 'Could Change History of Orthodoxy'

NEVSEHIR, Turkey (Anadolu Agency) – Another historical church has been discovered underground during excavations in Turkey's Cappadocia region, with experts saying the frescoes inside could change the history of Orthodoxy.

The church was uncovered by archaeologists during excavation and cleaning work in an underground city discovered as part of the Nevsehir Castle Urban Transformation Project, implemented by the Nevsehir Municipality and Turkey's Housing Development Administration (TOKI).

The rock-carved underground church is located within a castle in the center of Nevsehir that spreads over an area of 360,000 square meters, within a third-degree archaeological site that includes 11 neighborhoods in the city center.

Nevsehir Mayor Hasan Ünver said the frescoes in the church showed the rise of Jesus the Christ into the sky.

"We know that such frescoes have so far never been seen in any other

church," Ünver said, adding that preliminary studies show the church might date back to the 5th century AD.

"This place is even bigger than the other historical churches in Cappadocia. It was built underground and has original frescoes that have survived to this day," he said.

"We didn't even think of finding such a structure when we first started works. But excavations and cleaning work are continuing and we hope to find new data relating to the history of Cappadocia," the mayor said.

"It is reported that some of the frescoes here are unique. There are exciting depictions like fish falling from the hand of Jesus Christ, him rising up into the sky, and the bad souls being killed. When the church is completely revealed, Cappadocia could become an even bigger pilgrimage center of Orthodoxy," Ünver added.

Archaeologist Semih Istanbuluoglu, who heads the works in the underground city and the church, said the

thin walls of the church collapsed because of snow and rain but they would be fixed during restorations.

Istanbuluoglu said the church was filled with earth and the pieces of the frescoes had to be collected one by one.

"The structure was found a short time ago. The frescoes on the walls will return to their original look after restoration and cleaning work," he added.

Fellow archaeologist Ali Aydin said only the roof of the church could be seen, so information about the height of the structure would only be understood after the cleaning work.

Aydin said the humidity in the church had to be dried up slowly in order to prevent the frescoes from losing their features.

"We have stopped work in order to protect the wall paintings and the church. When the weather gets warmer in the spring, we will wait for humidity to evaporate and then we will start removing the earth," he said.

International News

Aram I receives Ambassador of Armenia To Lebanon

BEIRUT, Lebanon (Armenpress) – Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, received Ambassador of Armenia to Lebanon Ashot Kocharyan on February 5.

The catholicos and the ambassador discussed issues referring to Armenia-Diaspora relations, as well as issues regarding the Armenian community in Lebanon.

Book about Massacres of Dersim-Armenians Published in Turkey

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Historian, writer, social scientist Kazim Gundogan's book titled *Grandchildren of the Priest: Dersim Armenians*, was recently published in Turkey, the presentation of which took place recently, *Evrensel* newspaper reported.

The book is about the Armenian massacres that took place in Turkey in 1895 and the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The book illustrates the attempts to eliminate the Armenian language, religion and culture and the homeland of Dersim-Armenians and their deportation from Motherland.

The book notes that during the Armenian Genocide a great number of Dersim-Armenians were forced to abandon their religion as well as their material goods in order to survive.

Armenian Figure Skaters To Take Part in Bavarian Open 2016

OBERSTDORF, Germany (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Figure skaters Tina Karapetyan and Simon Senekal will participate in the Bavarian Open international tournament, Armenia's National Olympic Committee said in a statement.

According to the report, the duo will compete against 17 other pairs.

Set to kick off on February 17, the international competition will run through February 21.

Karapetyan and Senekal won a bronze medal at the Golden Spin of Zagreb 2015 in Croatia.

President Sargisian Meets with Chairman of European Parliament's Conservatives, Reformists

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – President Serge Sargisian this week met with the visiting Chairman of the European Parliament's Conservatives and Reformists Group Jan Zahradil.

At the meeting, the parties discussed the Armenia-European Union cooperation, including EU parliamentary cooperation, reforms carried out in Armenia with the assistance of the European Union, as well as a number of issues of mutual interest.

Sargisian stressed that Armenia is ready to move forward with EU cooperation in the areas of reform, mobility, efficient governance, democracy, human rights, trade and other areas. According to the him, in this process cooperation with the partners from the European Parliament plays an important role.

Sargisian noted that Armenia-EU active interaction, including high-level visits, will further strengthen cooperative ties.

At the request of the guest, Sargisian spoke about Armenia's internal and foreign policies, presented his views on the current international problems and regional challenges, and informed Zahradil on the recent developments in the NK peace process.

Zahradil presented the history of his party, its priorities and activities and stressed that the party is interested in developing relations with Armenia in the interparty as well as Armenia-EU formats.



Moscow Lawmakers Suggest Annuling 1921 Treaty of Friendship between Russia, Turkey

MOSCOW (ArmeniaNow) – Two Communist lawmakers at the Russian State Duma have appealed to President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to revoke a 1921 treaty with Turkey on “friendship and fraternity,” Russian media reported on Monday.

According to Russia’s Izvestia daily, Sergei Obukhov and Valery Rashkin said in their letter that Turkey was turning increasingly “aggressive” toward Russia, Izvestia reported, citing a copy of the letter.

“We should consider a possibility of legal review of all Russian-Turkish agreements that are unfavorable for our country and its allies. Ankara must understand what the escalation of the conflict could be fraught with for it. Only this can bring it to earth and prevent it from carrying out new provocations,” Obukhov told Izvestia.

The initiative has been supported by another minority faction, Spravedlivaya Rossiya. According to State Duma member Oleg Pakholkov, the Moscow treaty was signed to the detriment of Russia’s interests.

Obukhov noted that “two of the three South Caucasian republics – Georgia and Armenia – did not recognize the terms of the treaty, considering it unfair.”

“One should realize that in 1921 the Bolshevik (Soviet) government was literally hanging by a single thread: the foreign intervention and civil war continued. Under those circumstances Soviet Russia could not speak from a position of strength and impose more

favorable terms of the treaty on Turkey,” the parliamentarian said, as quoted by Asbarez.com.

The newspaper notes that under the treaty “the former Kars region and the southern part of the former Batumi region that were part of the Russian Empire since 1878 as well as former Surmalin district of Erivan Governorate that was part of the Russian Empire since 1828 with Mount Ararat were ceded to Turkey.”

Moscow’s relations with Ankara have been tense over Russia’s handling of its air campaign in Syria, and turned bitter after Turkey shot down a Russian bomber plane near the border with Syria on November 24, accusing it of violating Turkish airspace.

Moscow claims that its air strikes are aimed against Islamic terrorists, but Turkey and Western governments accuse Russia of targeting political opponents of Syrian President Bashar Assad in an attempt to prop up his regime.

Putin called Turkey’s shooting down of its warplane a “stab in the back by accomplices of terrorists,” and his government sharply curtailed Russia’s trade and tourism ties with Turkey.

Russia deploys some 3,000 troops in Armenia in a military base that guards the South Caucasus nation’s border with Turkey.

The initiative has been supported by the Just Russia faction. According to State Duma member Oleg Pakholkov, the Moscow treaty was signed to the detriment of Russia’s interests.

YP Toronto Joins Forces with Armenian Community To Hold Job Fair for Syrian-Armenian Refugees

TORONTO – On January 27, the AGBU Young Professionals of Toronto (YP Toronto) organized a job fair for more than 200 Syrian-Armenian refugees at the AGBU Centre in Toronto. Canada has been in the spotlight over the past few months with the resettlement of over 20,000 refugees from Syria, among them many Armenians. The Armenian community in Canada, most notably those in Toronto and Montreal, have quickly mobilized resources to sponsor hundreds of Armenian families.

for this cause.

Reflecting on the ongoing crisis in Syria, YP Toronto chair Mihran Egavian noted that “the hardships inflicted upon so many people are of historical proportions. There is a real urgency for the community to come together and respond. This is our moment of humanity and solidarity and YP Toronto, like other Armenian groups, is determined to do its part.”

YP Toronto was quick in identifying the resources it could make available to Syrian Armenians already in Canada.

Utilizing its professional networks and in cooperation with a number of Toronto-based organizations, YP Toronto helped organize the first in a series of job fairs, which attracted a number of potential agencies and employers. These initiatives are designed not only to connect prospective jobseekers with employers but also to create an intimate, informal space where refugees, through small on-site workshops, can receive practical advice on resumes, cover letters and the effective use of professional networking sites. Ancillary services, such as banking advice and opening new accounts, are also provided.

Christine Kavazanjian, YP Toronto treasurer and branch manager with one of Canada’s largest banks, explained that “many newcomers lack basic understanding of Canadian banking system. It is amazing to see what basic yet critical support YPs can provide – the kind of resources we otherwise may have taken for granted.”

In light of growing demand for resources to adequately address the plight of Syrian Armenians, YP Toronto has committed to expanding its activities in support of the AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Syrian Armenians and will intensify collaboration with local entities to assist newcomers on the ground.

To learn more about YP Toronto’s local programs email ypto@gmail.com.



In January, YP Toronto, in partnership with the AGBU Sports and Youth Committee, raised thousands of dollars for the AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Syrian Armenians.

Sponsorship of refugees entails commitments from temporary housing to providing basic assistance with paperwork, job searches and a range of settlement issues.

The coordinated efforts of Canadian Armenians were positively and widely covered in local and international media. Since the unfolding of the crisis in Syria, YP Toronto has organized a number of fundraising activities and provided support to refugees settling in Canada. Over the past three years, it has dedicated its annual Christmas fundraiser to helping Syrian Armenians. In January, YP Toronto, in partnership with the AGBU Sports and Youth Committee, raised thousands of dollars

Five Nobel Laureates to Lecture in Yerevan

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Armenia into the international club of advanced countries.

The idea to invite Nobel Prize winners in Medicine, Biology and Physics belongs to Professor Konstantin Yenkovyan, Vice-Rector for Science and Research at Mkhitar Heratsi Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU).

He worked with Israeli biologist, 2004 Nobel laureate in chemistry Aaron Ciechanover in 2004-2005. Their close cooperation resulted in Israeli scientist’s visit to Armenia, where he delivered lectures at the invitation of YSMU in 2010. Ciechanover is one of the scientists visiting Armenia this April.

“The idea to invite other famous Nobel Prize winners to Armenia was born in late 2014. We began practical steps in this direction and sent invitations to the scientists in 2015. I didn’t believe it would be possible to organize the event so soon, in 2016. During negotiations with people of this magnitude, you should keep in mind that their schedule is very busy. When we received five positive answers, we decided we could stop there and “be satisfied” with 5 Nobel laureates for now,” told Konstantin Yenkovyan, whose idea found support from the administration of his native University.

Biologists Aaron Ciechanover (Israel) and Ada Yonath (Israel), chemist and physicist Dan Shechman (Israel), pathologist John Warren (Australia) and chemist Ei-ichi Negishi (Japan) will give lectures in Yerevan in April.

Aaron Ciechanover: Born in 1947 in Haifa, to a family of Jewish emigrants from Poland, he received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2004 along with Irwin Rose and Avram Hershko. He is a member of Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Pontifical Academy of Sciences (Vatican), and a foreign associate of the United States National Academy of Sciences.

Ada E. Yonath: Born in 1939 in Jerusalem, she is a pioneer of ribosome study. She cooperated with NASA and received a Nobel Prize in chemistry in 2009.

Dan Shechtman: The Israeli physicist and chemist received the Nobel Prize in 2011 “For the discovery of quasicrystals.”

Robin J. Warren: The Australian scientist received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2005 for re-discovering the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* in 1979.

Ei-ichi Negishi: The Japanese chemist was born in 1935. He is noted for the discovery of the so-called Negishi reaction. He received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2010.

Konstantin Yenkovyan observes that the main goal of holding “Nobel Days” in Yerevan is to invite leading international scientists to Armenia, who will seek to motivate Armenian youth and show them how tangible science is today.

“We have great human potential, but honestly we cannot surprise the guests with the state of Armenian science. Certainly, we have brilliant individual scientists, however our science is not competitive at present. Science requires huge investments. A country is presentable by its culture, sport, and science. Our big goal is to have world-renowned Armenian scientists in future, who will represent Armenia herself and not other states,” says the main organizer of the event.

The event organizers emphasize that even though the main audience of the “Nobel Days” event are professionals and students in the fields of Medicine, Chemistry and Physics, nevertheless, the lectures will be open the public.

“Our guests will spend a week in Armenia and give nine lectures of public and professional nature. The content of public lectures will be comprehensible to everyone. You don’t have to be a doctor, a chemist, a physicist or a biologist to attend them,” says professor Yenkovyan.

To participate in “Nobel Days”, you should register on the official website of the event <http://www.nobeldays.am/>. The participation is free for Armenian residents who register until February 29. Those who apply later than the appointed date should pay EUR 20 for registration.

All lectures will be held at Yerevan State Medical University. The scientists will also participate in round table discussions, meet Armenian high school students, and visit Echmiadzin and other places of interest in Armenia. The organizers wish the worldwide known scientists to see the real Armenia - with its people and colors.

Istanbul-Based Former Armenian Summer Camp under Repair

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Camp Armen, the former Armenian summer camp located in the Tuzla district of Istanbul, is currently under repair, Agos reported.

Representatives of a number of Armenian organizations and funds and organizations will participate in the reconstruction activities.

According to one of the activists, a camp meeting the highest international standards will reportedly be built for children from Turkey and abroad.

Camp Armen was returned to the Gedikpasha Armenian Protestant Church Foundation on October 27.

The foundation’s lawyer, Sebu Aslangil, announced that the return process had been finalized. The camp was returned after 175 days of resistance by the Nor Zartonk Armenian movement of Istanbul.

Nor Zartonk had led a campaign to occupy the grounds of the camp since bulldozers arrived to demolish it in early May. After weeks of protest, the owner of the campground, Fatih Ulusoy, said he would sign the transfer of the property over to the Gedikpasha Armenian

Evangelical Church Foundation.

“On the 175th day of resistance, Camp Armen was returned to the Armenian people. Our thanks to all of you,” said Nor Zartonk activist Sayat Tekir in a video message posted on the Camp Armen Facebook page. The group also posted videos of activists celebrating the return of the camp, congratulating one another and line-dancing in celebration.

In early June, Nor Zartonk activist Sayat Tekir said that negotiations were ongoing between the government and Ulusoy to agree on a price for the “donation” by the owner to the Gedikpasha Foundation. Tekir said the Turkish government was in favor of resolving the issue outside of the courts, as a trial would set a precedent for other confiscated properties.

Tekir explained the significance of Camp Armen, noting that the confiscation of the camp was in essence an assault on Armenian identity. “Taking these properties from us also means taking our identity from us. It’s not a small matter – it’s not only an issue of property, but also identity,” he said.

Community News

AAHPO Reveals Advances in Medical Projects in Armenia, Artsakh

By Florence Avakian

It was a joyous meeting of colleagues and friends, as well as a fascinating meeting with doctors from Armenia informing their American-Armenian colleagues of medical progress in both Armenia and Artsakh.

Recently, at a New Jersey restaurant, leaders and members of the Armenian-American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) who have been working pro bono in both Armenia and Artsakh, as well as in the United States for more than 10 years, heard from three prominent doctors from Armenia.

AAHPO President Dr. Larry Najarian warmly welcomed the attendees, and introduced the doctors from Armenia: cardiologist Dr. Hmayak Sisakyan, Yerevan State Medical University Vice-Administrator Dr. Armen Minasyan and internist and pediatrician Dr. Hambarzum Simonyan.

AAHPO's founding member, Dr. Raffi Hovanessian, paid tribute to philanthropists Nazar and Artemis Nazarian who have been generous donors to the AAHPO programs in Armenia and Artsakh, as well as in America.

Their son, Dr. Levon Nazarian, professor of radiology at Jefferson University, has traveled to Armenia five times, establishing the Ultrasound Training Centre of Armenia, and Artsakh, sending 25 ultrasound machines to Armenia and Artsakh, and most recently donating an MRI to Yerevan State Medical University, all with the help of his father. For 15 years, Levon has been responsible for overseeing the training of hundreds of doctors in the Ultrasound Centre. Future plans include live video conferences, research projects, visiting professorships, and exchange of students in collaboration with Thomas Jefferson University.

With great pride, Hovanessian announced that AAHPO has helped train almost half of the doctors in Artsakh, with the help of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), and introduced FAR Executive Director Garnik Nanagoulian.

Expressing deep gratitude to Nazar and Artemis Nazarian for their immense contributions to AAHPO and FAR, Nanagoulian called it "a great responsibility for FAR to be a partner with AAHPO, an organization which under the able and creative leadership of Dr. Larry Najarian is becoming one of the most effective organizations of the Diaspora working on healthcare issues." This is because of FAR's "multilayer accountability system, regular reporting, beneficiary accounts, impeccable integrity, and high dedication and high discipline" of the project's implementers such as Simonyan, who like the other doctors in the project, volunteer their medical services.

AAHPO's doctors are vetted from the best in Armenia, Nanagoulian continued, helping them to develop into leaders and vocal voices in shaping Armenia's healthcare future, advocating for "evidence-based medicine, providing them with a fund of medical information, and the continuation of self-education." Equally important, he related, is AAHPO's building of connections between doctors in Armenia's provinces, their Armenian mentors, and outstanding doctors from the US, Canada and Europe. "It's about creating waves of change throughout Armenia and Artsakh which add up to large-scale, concrete transformations."

Simonyan, a dedicated doctor, spends his weekends volunteering at the hospital in his native town of Martuni, helping poor families and their children. Under the guidance of Columbia University experts, Doctors Deckelbaum, Bilezikian and Kim Hekimian, he

see MEDICINE, page 7



Melanya Sarukhanyan is an active member of ATP's eco-club in Margahovit, a village in the northern region of Lori

A Record Breaking Year for Environmental Education In Armenia

YEREVAN and WATERTOWN – Environmental education has been one of the strategic priorities of the Armenia Tree Project (ATP) since 2005, with trainings and workshops conducted all over Armenia. Thousands of schoolchildren visit ATP's two education centers sponsored by the Ohanian Family of Boston. The centers – one located on the grounds of the Karin Nursery and another in Margahovit Village – provide interactive lessons focused on all aspects of the environment.

The year 2015 was a record-breaking year as more students visited the centers than ever before. Sixty four school groups (1,646 students) from Yerevan, Kotayk and Armavir attended classes at the Michael and Virginia Ohanian Environmental Education Center in Karin, which significantly exceeds the number from previous years. In Margahovit, 74 school groups (1,971 students) visited the Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies from Lori, Tavush, Gegharkunik and Shirak.

By Ani Melkonian

"Our approach is that planting trees is not enough when there is limited awareness about environmental issues in the country," explains education manager Alla Sahakyan. "Through our environmental education program, ATP aims to raise a responsible generation of Armenians that will take on their roles as caretakers and protectors of the environment. To support that goal, our team works hard to instill respect, care and understanding towards nature in the youth."

Melanya Sarukhanyan is a 13-year-old schoolgirl from Margahovit and a regular at the Ohanian Center. She's a member of ATP's eco-club, the inauguration of which in 2012 was cause for great excitement in the village. Sarukhanyan was introduced to the club at school by her biology teacher Gayane Markaryan, who also happens to be the eco-club trainer. The club has 35 members in two age groups – middle and high school students – and they meet three times a week. "Making the extra effort after school is no inconvenience for the students because they enjoy learning new things in a stimulating and peaceful environment," says Sahakyan.

The Ohanian Center is like an illustration straight out of a children's book. The building itself is camouflaged to reflect the surrounding green rolling mountains, with the Hrant Dink Memorial Forest in the background and the Mirak Family Reforestation Nursery within sight of the gardens. The front yard is a beautifully laid out garden and an exhibition of the children's projects. The delicate flowers, plants and vegetables are a result of all that the children are learning in the eco-club.

Here Melanya Sarukhanyan has learned how to make compost, how to graft fruit trees and how to plant and care for trees. She's also learned about organic insect control and growing organic vegetables. ATP has introduced broccoli and Brussels sprouts to the village, where only cabbage and potatoes were grown in the past.

Students also study the importance of bees in an ecosystem, the damage of pesticides and herbicides to bee colonies, bee care and honey production.

"The goal is to connect children with the environment. We want them to value their natural heritage," adds Sahakyan.

see ATP, page 8

Armenian General Benevolent Union Announces Initial Steps towards Transformation

NEW YORK – Encouraged by the strength and support shown by Armenians worldwide during the Armenian Genocide centenary commemorations in 2015, and following two years of detailed analysis, consideration and preparation, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) announced today its plan to launch a bold program to transform and expand its mission.

Since its founding 110 years ago, this global institution has acted as the largest philanthropic entity to protect and preserve Armenian identity and heritage throughout the diaspora and has a presence in over 30 countries. Following the independence of Armenia in 1991, AGBU's mission expanded with philanthropic initiatives in Armenia, including major cultural and educational programs. Aiming to reconstitute the Armenian nation, which was forcibly shattered and dispersed to form the current Armenian diaspora, AGBU's transformation initiative will build on the organization's successes across the diaspora and in Armenia to begin a new era for the organization and Armenians the world over.

The year 2015 marked the centenary of the tragic genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenian nation. With the momentous genocide centenary commemorations throughout the year, Armenians across the world are leaving a painful century behind with dignity and supportive attention from the whole world. Bolstered by the heroic efforts of many institutions throughout the diaspora, Armenians succeeded in surviving, recovering and reviving, finding themselves now at a historic juncture.

A century after receiving a second chance at life, Armenians have committed "to remember and demand," the official motto of the centenary commemorative events. They are also confronting what it means to "be alive" as a nation, evaluating how the memory of victims and the generosity of those who helped many survivors would be best served in the future.

Building on its illustrious legacy, AGBU has decided to boldly move forward to address the special challenges of the 21st century in order to ensure a sustainable future for the Armenian nation worldwide with the state of Armenia at its core. Specifically, AGBU will engage with initiatives aimed at enabling a prosperous future for Armenia while continuing to preserve and enrich the Armenian identity worldwide.

To achieve this ambitious goal, AGBU will (1) reenergize the Armenian diaspora with a new aspiration to reconstitute the widespread Armenian nation, (2) enlarge its scope to include economic development of the homeland in addition to its historic socio-cultural mission, (3) further professionalize its governance, structures and functioning, (4) significantly expand its access to resources through fundraising and partnerships, (5) enlarge and reinvigorate its global networks of volunteer members and affiliates, and (6) leverage synergies with other organizations in order to rapidly gain critical mass in program execution.

In pursuing these strategic goals, AGBU is returning to the original intentions of its founders in the early 20th century, which were forcibly altered by the Armenian Genocide and its aftermath.

As a first step in this process, AGBU is proud to announce the election of Ruben Vardanyan to its Central Board of Directors. Vardanyan is a highly successful Armenian-born entrepreneur, an internationally recognized expert in the economy of Russia and emerging markets, and an international philanthropist. Among his

see TRANSFORMATION, page 6



COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU Announces Initial Steps towards Transformation

TRANSFORMATION, from page 5

major business achievements is the prominent Troika Dialog investment bank in Russia, which Vardanyan built in the period 1991 to 2012, and sold to Sberbank, the largest bank in Russia.

In 2001, Vardanyan co-founded the Armenia 2020 national development think-tank project working together with AGBU board member, Dr. Noubar Afeyan. This led to the creation of the private-public partnership, the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia, in 2007 and subsequently the IDEa Foundation. Founded in 2013 and operating out of Armenia, the IDEa Foundation is a 300-professional strong philanthropic organization that identifies, develops and implements socio-economic programs in Armenia. The foundation has successfully invested more than 300 million USD over the last years in prominent programs like the Tatev Revival program, the UWC Dilijan International School and the Dilijan Urban Renewal program. In 2015, together with co-founders Dr. Vartan Gregorian of the Carnegie Foundation and Afeyan, Mr. Vardanyan launched the 100 Lives project and its accompanying global humanitarian award, the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity. This annual prize, which will be awarded for

the first time in Yerevan on April 24, 2016, will donate one million USD towards courageous world citizens who have put their own lives in danger to save others facing tragedy. The Aurora Prize was established in 2015 on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide as an expression of gratitude to those who saved Armenian lives, and in order to bring the world's attention to ongoing humanitarian injustice around the world as well as to recognize modern acts of heroism.

"As part of our new initiatives, I am particularly proud and excited to welcome Ruben Vardanyan to the Central Board of AGBU. Having known Ruben for over 20 years, I consider him a true role model of a successful Armenian through his many achievements and unwavering personal integrity. Through his work, Ruben demonstrates a combination of vision, passion and devotion towards the future of the Armenian nation. As a modern, entrepreneurial philanthropist he brings exciting innovative ideas and strong synergies through the IDEa Foundation, with whom AGBU has already been collaborating through the UWC Dilijan College. Finally, as a citizen of Russia, he helps us reach out to the important Armenian communities in Russia and Eastern Europe. We are very much looking forward to

his contributions to our new strategic aspiration," commented Berge Setrakian, President of the AGBU Central Board of Directors.

On this occasion, AGBU also announced its intention to initiate a broader set of collaborations with Armenia-based IDEa Foundation. Accordingly, Berge Setrakian and Vasken Yacoubian have been elected to the Board of Trustees of the IDEa Foundation, joining current board member Noubar Afeyan.

Vardanyan said: "I feel privileged and honored to join the AGBU Central Board. This institution has been one of the most significant drivers of the survival of Armenians in the last century through its sustained and fine work in service of the Armenian nation and its many communities across the world. AGBU is in a great position to influence future prosperity in the homeland and redefine what it is to be Armenian in the 21st century. I am deeply committed to contributing my energy, know-how, philanthropic capabilities and network to this fine institution. I also look forward to the budding collaboration between AGBU and the IDEa Foundation as well as to our planned steps towards creating a powerful force for the advancement of Armenians throughout the world."

On the occasion of this announcement,

AGBU Central Board member Noubar Afeyan commented: "Since joining the AGBU over two years ago, I have had the pleasure to work closely with President Berge Setrakian and many members of the central board to expand the vision for AGBU's future. We have worked closely with Ruben and his team at IDEa Foundation to develop a roadmap for AGBU 2.0. During this time, we have also forged a growing and successful strategic collaboration with the pioneering TUMO Centers initiative founded and led by long-time AGBU board member and philanthropist, Sam Simonian. With my longtime partner Ruben now joining the AGBU board, we all look forward to engaging in the next phase of transformation. Buoyed by the energy and strength Armenians showed during the centenary, we remain cognizant of the opportunities and challenges we will face."

"This marks an exciting phase of advancement and partnership for AGBU," commented Sam Simonian, Vice President of the AGBU Central Board. "I especially look forward to strengthening AGBU's educational offerings by leveraging TUMO Centers, IDEa's UWC Dilijan International School, American University of Armenia, and many other new initiatives," he added.

Sts. Vartanantz Church Dedicates Lenten Program to Church's Centennial

CHELMFORD, Mass. — For the 47th consecutive Lenten Season, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church in Chelmsford will sponsor a series of six fellowship evenings designed to promote spiritual renewal through prayer and thought provoking discussion.

Each Friday evening of Lent, beginning February 12, parishioners will gather at 6:30 p.m. to participate in the Peace and Rest Services, which feature many eloquent penitential prayers and hymns. The faithful will then enjoy a meal prepared according to the church's Lenten dietary guidelines. With this year marking the 100th Anniversary of the Sts. Vartanantz Parish, the focus of the Lenten Program will be on the faith and legacy of

those who established and expanded the parish over the past one hundred years. The brave men and women, who escaped the horrors of the Armenian Genocide and immigrated to the US, left an incredible legacy of sacrifice and dedication, which has inspired growth of our orthodox faith and spirituality for some five generations in the Greater Lowell community. The Lenten Fellowship program is dedicated to the memory of a former pastor of Sts. Vartanantz, Very Rev. Ghevont Samoorian, who initiated this opportunity for the parish faithful to worship, share a Lenten meal, and encourage spiritual examination and renewal. For further information, contact the church office.

OBITUARY

Arpinee 'Arpi' (Kazanjian) Kazanjian

METHUEN, Mass. — Arpinee "Arpi" (Kazanjian) Kazanjian, 89, of Methuen passed away on Saturday January 16, at Merrimack Valley Hospice House in Haverhill surrounded by her family.

She was born in Arlington and was the daughter of the late Nishan & Veronica



(Gorgodian) Kazanjian, and the widow of Joseph "Saco" Kazanjian.

After receiving her associate's degree from Burdett College she went on to work at the New England Telephone Company, was a volunteer at Bon Secours Hospital in Methuen

and a member of the Holy Cross/Hye Pointe Armenian Church Women's Guild.

She also worked with her late husband and sons to build the family business, Whirlaway Golf, Running & Sports Center.

She enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandsons.

She had a strong faith and touched the lives of many people who knew her. She was a very generous person. She was selfless and always had a positive outlook on life.

She is survived by her sons Harold, Mark and David, grandchildren Elyse (Kazanjian) Abraham and her husband Kevin, Casey, Mark Angelo, and Laurel Kazanjian, and great-grandsons Ethan and Chase Abraham; daughter-in-law Robin (Gulezian) Kazanjian, Dr. Lisa Solomon and family, and Knar Felegian and family.

She also leaves her brother-in-law Casey Menas Kazanjian and his wife Bella of Rockville, MD, and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brother Herach Kazanjian.

In lieu of flowers at the request of the family, Memorial contribution checks should be made to: "The Saco & Arpi Kazanjian Church Building Fund", P.O. Box 8069, Bradford, MA, 01835. All donations will benefit the building fund for the New Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe in Bradford, Ma.

Donations

The Ajemian Foundation (adminisered by Peter Sarkesian, Esq.) of Troy, Mich., donated \$2,000 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

Arax Balakian of New Jersey donated \$50 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

AMAA Helps Family of Armenian Hero Soldier

PARAMUS, N.J. and TAVUSH, Armenia – In September 2015, Haik Tevosyan, a soldier guarding the borders of Armenia in the Tavush Province was killed by an Azeri sniper.

Armenia's President Serge Sargsisian posthumously awarded the Military Medal to Haik Tevosyan for protecting the borders of the Motherland courageously.

Tevosyan's family lives in vulnerable conditions in the village of Norashen, in the Aragatsotn Province of Armenia. Their income is at the minimum poverty wage. He leaves five children, three of whom are minors.

When the Armenian Missionary Association (AMAA) became aware of the situation of the Tevosyan family, the poor condition of their half-built home, and the fact that they do not own enough cattle to provide nutrition and income (in addition to a few sheep, which are kept in the yard), embarked on the renovation and repair of their home.

During the renovation, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, who was in Armenia at the time, visited the Tevosyan family with other AMAA representatives, and brought some urgent necessities for the family members. After examining the dilapidated home and the condition of the family, Khanjian said. "The AMAA will keep the warmth of this hearth. We will do our utmost to offer to Haik's wife and his children hope for a better future."

The AMAA recognizes the daily struggle of

border village life in Armenia. Constantly bombarded by sniper fire, the people in border villages face life and death decisions among their daily routines. In order to help these people, the AMAA has been actively involved in bettering the quality of life in border villages. Among many other projects, last year, with the cooper-



The Tevosyan home under construction



Visiting the family of the late Haik Tevosyan,

ation of the AMA-Australia, the AMAA also helped build a new playground in Choratan, a border village. Projects such as these, help improve the quality of life in such a difficult situation.

Meet French Actor/Director *Gerald Papasian*

At the screening of his stage Opera Buffo
Gariné

A musical based on Dikran Tchouhadjian's
"Leblebiji Horhor Agha"

In French with English subtitles

Following the film showing:

A traditional chicken dinner will be served with coffee and dessert.

Mr. Papasian will make a presentation on Dikran Tchouhadjian, the inspiration and research to produce a new version of "Gariné" including his discovery of scores in Paris in French translation while originals have never been found, and a general discussion on the current state of the Armenian Culture in Diaspora.

The presentation will be in English.

Cash Bar will also be available.

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Proceeds to benefit Dikran Tchouhadjian Research Center, a non-profit registered in France and US,
Jirair Papasian, Artistic Director

Sunday March 6, 2016
3 PM

AGBU Center
247 Mt Auburn Street, Watertown, MA

About Papasian: born in Cairo to a renowned musical family who established the first major music stores in the Near East: "Les Magasins Generaux de Musique Papasian," he is a graduate of the Melkonian Institute, Cyprus and the State Dramatic Arts Institute, Armenia. A cosmopolitan and multilingual professional, he has worked in Armenia, UK, USA and Canada, directing, translating, adapting plays and operas. He lives in Paris where he is founder/director of the Dikran Tchouhadjian International Institute. In France Papasian works primarily with internationally acclaimed stage actress, director and producer Irina Brook; he is a founding member of her company. Under her direction, Papasian performs in Paris and on international tours in several productions including the role of Sancho Panza (best actor nomination) in *Somewhere La Mancha*. He is currently a visiting lecturer at the University of Michigan's Armenian Studies program in Ann Arbor. His translations of Vahan Tekeyan poems were recently published by The Press - California State University Fresno.



AAHPO Reveals Advances in Medical Projects in Armenia, Artsakh

MEDICINE, from page 5

is currently running one of the most sophisticated projects in Armenia, combatting child malnutrition. He is also overseeing the distribution of Diasporan healthcare humanitarian assistance.

Simonyan opened with a heartfelt tribute to the more than 10 years of pro bono dedicated volunteer service to Armenia and Artsakh by AAHPO founding member, the late Dr. Edgar Housepian, and other AAHPO doctors. He explained FAR's medical program. "We have already trained 155 physicians, and two years ago, we organized seminars," he said, adding that FAR is advancing the program in Artsakh, especially in the rural villages.

In 2015, Armenia hosted the 4th International Medical Congress, and this year saw every rural village receiving care by doctors, Simonyan said proudly, to which ophthalmologist Dr. Larry Najarian revealed the greatly advanced mission on the treatment of cataracts in Armenia and Artsakh.

Noted cardiologist Dr. Hmayak Sisakyan, who ranks as the first doctor from Armenia to be admitted as a Fellow to the American Academy of Cardiology, revealed that it was nine years ago that the project to bring 20 machines in Yerevan, as well as the border regions of Armenia, was started.

Dr. Armen Minasyan presented a history of the medical program in Armenia, starting in 1914, when the first hospital was opened in Yerevan, as a military hospital. In 1922, the first medical facility was organized at Yerevan State University, with "many outstanding doctors." By the start of World War II, the hospital had become a leader in its medical practices in the Soviet Union, and in 2002 it received the status of a University hospital.

Today, Minasyan continued, the hospital has many specialties, especially in neo-natal care. The year 2014 marked the 100th anniversary of the University Hospital Clinic. He expressed appreciation to the AGBU, Berge Setrakian and Nazar and Artemis Nazarian for establishing the Radiology Center.

During the question and answer session, Artemis Nazarian revealed that when the AGBU went to Washington D.C. during the time of President Jimmy Carter's leadership, they were informed by the head of the Ethics Department that in the United States, Armenians as an ethnic group have the largest percentage of doctors according to their population.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Record Breaking Year For Environmental Education in Armenia

ATP, from page 5

When asked what she likes about the eco-club, Sarukhanyan says they put into practice things they learn in theory. "We use modern and at the same time eco-friendly technology, which we don't have at school," she says. "We watch slideshows and videos together...It's more fun that way. I've learned that nature gives us life, so we must care for it."

A vital part of ATP's education program is for students to make a connection between what they learn and what occurs in their daily lives. They apply their knowledge by making compost in their gardens and by recycling paper and plastic bottles. "I get a lot of phone calls from parents complaining because their kids won't allow them to throw trash away," jokes Sahakyan. "That's how I know our work is paying off."

In addition to hosting local students, ATP hosts diasporan youth as part of the Building Bridges program in the USA. Students from Armenia meet their peers from the diaspora and together learn about their natural heritage and a little bit about each other. In 2015, ATP hosted six school visits from the diaspora which included tree plantings at historical locations like Sardarabad. The environmental education



ATP's Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies is a "living laboratory" for environmental education in northern Armenia

program also includes the training of teachers to use the "Plant an Idea, Plant a Tree" manual published by ATP and approved by the Ministry of Education, and conducting lessons at a number of workshops and summer camps.

Since its inception in 1994, ATP has planted more than 4.9 million trees, established three

nurseries and two environmental education centers, and has greened villages, churches, parks, and open spaces throughout Armenia. In the process, the organization has provided employment for hundreds of people and provided vital resources to thousands of villagers. For more information, visit www.armeniatree.org.

Anthony Barsamian Becomes First Armenian Head of Massachusetts Council of Churches

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — Armenian-American lawyer and political activist Anthony Barsamian is heavily involved in the life of the Armenian Church of the Holy Translators here. He and his wife Nancy were among its founders, and he remains a member of its Parish Council.

"I grew up in the Armenian Church and with the church community," he said. He was involved with the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), and before going to law school, he went to work at the Department of Youth Ministry at the Diocese in New York while interning for a congressman in Washington, DC.

Barsamian said, "I came up to New York to do work there on weekends, and shuttled back and forth between Washington and New York. People say don't get involved in politics and religion, but I happened to get involved in both."

In the 1990s, he was asked to participate in the National Council of Churches. He served on its board for 12 years, and for two years was the chairman of its constitutional bylaws committee. After moving back to the Boston area, he continued to work with ecumenical groups, and was invited to participate in the leadership of the Massachusetts Council of Churches (MCC), an interdenominational body which the Armenian Church



Rev. Laura Everett, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches, congratulates Anthony Barsamian at his inauguration

joined in 2002. He served as its vice president for the last two years.

The MCC supports its member denominations. Most recently, a number of its leaders and clergy came to participate in the celebration of Armenian Christmas at St. James Armenian Church in Watertown. Barsamian said, "[MCC executive director] Rev. Laura Everett designed the service to meet the requirements of our church with great sensitivity, and was inclusive of all faith groups there, Christians, Jews and Muslims." Last year, the MCC together with the Armenian clergy in the region organized the well-attended ecumenical service on April 23, 1915 at Trinity Church of Copley Square, commemorating the centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

On February 6, the MCC held its annual meeting at Holy Translators and installed Barsamian as its president. Rev. Arakel Aljalian of St. James Armenian Church and Rev. Dajad Davidian attended.

Barsamian will not only be the first member of the Church of Armenia to be president, but also the first Oriental or Eastern Orthodox. The president works with the board and the executive director for Christian outreach and programs that impact the various local Christian communions.

Barsamian was enthusiastic about the work of the MCC. He said, "In the past everybody was divided among their different denominations. We are now starting to see new generations of Christians in America trying to create one family through the unity of the Christian churches." He said that the MCC today is very interested in the Middle East and many of its members advocate for Middle Eastern Christians. The MCC is planning to travel to Armenia. Another focus will be the prevention of opioid addiction.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Barsamian Works to Revitalize Armenian Assembly

BARSAMIAN, from page 1

Assembly board of directors, in the early 2000s, and from 2004 to 2006 was the chairman of that board (the board of directors was merged with the board of trustees at the end of his term). Barsamian recalled that in those years the Assembly had expanded, and had a large staff in Washington DC, Los Angeles and Armenia. Among its accomplishments during those years was to help regularize US-Armenian economic relations. An act of Congress, signed into law by the US president, granted Armenia normal trade partner status in 2004 and lowered trade duties on Armenian goods entering the US.

After this period, Barsamian spent more time on specific projects in Armenia. He joined the board of the Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan. Around the same time, in 2007 or 2008, he joined the Armenian Tree Project (ATP), which was founded by Mugar in 1994 and affiliated with the Armenian Assembly.

Barsamian said, "What I really like about ATP is that it is built around the education of the younger generations."

He found its work in Armenia to be extremely significant. He said, "It is probably the most symbolic gesture we can make for the country. Putting a shovel in the soil and planting trees, helping rural development in the villages, and reminding the country about sustainability is probably one of the most noble things we can do. It shows we are there for the future and want to protect village life."

Barsamian serves on ATP's executive committee at present.

Barsamian traveled a lot to Armenia for these kinds of projects, and had some fun serendipitous encounters. Last year, while he attended an ATP meeting in October Yerevan with Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Garen Nazarian, Conan O'Brien happened to be staying at the Marriott Armenia Hotel while preparing a special episode of his late night talk show about Armenia. Barsamian said, "Knowing he was from Brookline [Mass.], we said hello, and asked if we could have a picture. Later we spoke with Sona Movsesian, his assistant."

Barsamian became more directly involved in the administration of the Assembly in 2015, as part of an ambitious reorganizational effort. In a recent interview, Barsamian said, "The Assembly founders, people like Hrair Hovnanian and Aram Kaloosdian, asked that a new generation come into leadership. We are bringing that new generation into the Armenian Assembly."

Barsamian and Van Z. Krikorian were elected in February 2015 as co-chairmen of the board of trustees, while on May 1, 2015 key Assembly leader Hrair Hovnanian assumed the title of chairman emeritus. Barsamian pointed out that Krikorian is experienced, as he has been with the Assembly since the 1970s. He sued the State Department over its incorrect characterization of the Armenian Genocide, and was one of the chief architects of Section 907, which restricted aid to Azerbaijan because of its blockade of Armenia. The position of chairman is being shared because of the heavy responsibility and burden of work, as well as the opportunity to draw on the different realms of expertise of the co-chairmen.

Talin Yacoubian, a Los Angeles lawyer who was co-chair of the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of the Western US (which organized a 160,000-person march) and chair of the Armenian General Benevolent Union Western District Committee of the US, was recently inducted as the newest Assembly trustee. Other experienced board members like Kaloosdian and Mugar remain involved.

A series of changes in staff has been underway. The four-member fulltime staff at the Assembly's Washington, DC headquarters was expanded to five, when Danielle Saroyan was hired as an associate in the Communications/Press department in September. This number does not include the affiliated Armenian National Institute (ANI), founded in 1997. More new Washington hires are in the works, he said.

Bryan Ardouny remains as the Assembly's executive director after over a decade in the position.

The Assembly has an office in Yerevan, which used to be headed by a Country Director. In April 2015, the position of Regional Director was created, and Arpi Vartanian, who had worked for the Assembly in various posts in the past, was appointed to it. The office deals with all the countries in the area, as well as Armenia, and has four staff members besides the director.

In January 2016, Mihran Toumajan was appointed as Western Region Director at the Assembly's Glendale, California offices. The Armenian Tree Project, affiliated with the Assembly, and established in 1993, has an office in Watertown and one in Yerevan. Jeanmarie Papelian was hired as its executive director in May 2015 to replace managing director Tom Garabedian.

The Washington headquarters itself has just been moved to a more spacious location on 15th Street, only a few blocks away from the White House. This will, among other things, allow the showcasing of materials from the Armenian National Institute's archives pertaining to the Armenian Genocide, including the Morgenthau Library. The headquarters also hosts the offices of the Legate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and the Permanent Representative of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic in the US.

Barsamian spoke about the nature and mission of the Assembly. "The Armenian Assembly is an Armenian-American

organization. I am most proud of the fact that it is nonpartisan and not aligned with any US or Armenian political party. We cannot endorse candidates for any election in the US, as we are a 501(c)3," he said. "It is an inclusive organization, not exclusive, so that you can belong to the Assembly, and still, for example, be a part of the Armenian National Committee of America."

People should understand, Barsamian declared, that it is not a community-based organization, and is not involved in arts or culture per se. Instead, he said, "We believe that the Armenian Assembly will be a strong conduit for US-Armenian relations both at the state and federal level. We are now bringing in leaders who understand that this is the mission of the organization."

Barsamian continued, "We are investing in Armenia, trying to raise the standard of living in Armenia, and security is a big part of that. We are asking the United States, which can help with security, to work with Russia and France as part of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to make sure that the region does not become destabilized."

"Right now," he said, "we are focused on Karabagh and the ceasefire violations of the Azeris." The Assembly, said Barsamian, "talks to both the Administration and the US mediator of the OSCE about the ceasefire violations caused by Azerbaijan on a daily basis. Azerbaijan needs to be held accountable for those violations." He added, "We have the ear



Anthony Barsamian, Assembly Regional Director Arpi Vartanian, Conan O'Brien, Assembly Board of Trustees President Carolyn Mugar and Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Garen Nazarian at the Marriott Armenia Hotel

of Congress. Unlike Azerbaijan and Turkey, which have aligned and spent millions of dollars on paid lobbyists, we use our network of Armenian-American citizens who live in this country."

The Assembly on January 29 sent a letter to US Secretary of State John Kerry and Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew opposing a potential bailout of Azerbaijan by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

"That the US is even considering a package of this magnitude for a rogue nation, with its human rights record and lack of regard for its neighbors, shows the power of the Azeri lobby, and why the Armenian Assembly needs to exist. If Azerbaijan is rewarded with a bailout package, it will send the wrong message — that dictators can get away with egregious violations with no repercussions. The Azeris have been scored at the absolute bottom [of human rights country listings] by Human Rights Watch, yet the US has been reluctant to criticize the Azeris for across-the-board violations until just recently, after direct protest from the Assembly in DC," Barsamian said.

Now, the US mediator has been very critical of Azerbaijan.

Armenia's relations with Turkey and the ongoing denial of the Armenian Genocide by the latter constitute another set of ongoing major concerns for the Armenian Assembly. Barsamian said, "At this time, more and more people in Turkey openly acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. The question is how will the government of Turkey respond to calls for open acknowledgement and account for this dark chapter in their history." He stressed that, "There has to be full accounting for what was done. Lives were lost, properties taken and churches confiscated and demolished. Just like we need to hold ISIS accountable, the inheritors of the Ottomans need to account for this to the Armenian people."

Barsamian added that the Assembly would want to be part of any legal case that is brought against Turkey in this connection.

While Barsamian said that the Assembly would love for Turkey to be a member of the European Union (EU), in order for this to happen, it has to act more like Europeans. In other words, he said, "Instead of being more multicultural, Turkey has started conflicts with the Kurds again. It talks about a good neighbor policy, but I am not sure how many of its neighbors consider Turkey to be a good neighbor." Turkey has to open its borders fully with Armenia and its other neighbors if it is to enter the EU, he added.

Barsamian said that the US relationship with Turkey is not going in a good direction and US attitudes are changing. He declared, "Turkey has not a good job of sealing its porous borders and seems to be supporting ISIS according to some

reports." He noted that many world leaders, including US Vice President Joseph Biden, are confirming that ISIS is selling oil to or through Turkey.

Barsamian declared that the Assembly has not given up on building an Armenian Genocide museum in Washington despite its clashes with the Cafesjian Family Foundation. ANI already has an online museum, and, according to Barsamian, ANI's informational website last year had more hits than any other genocide site in the US, with over 4 million hits.

While parts of its collection will be accessible to readers in the new Assembly offices, the organization is still looking at other potential properties for a museum. Barsamian said that "it would take a few strong new donors along with the ones we already have. It is a big project and somebody must be deeply passionate about the project. We, the Armenian Assembly, are passionate about it. We need to regroup around a new leadership for the museum project. We need both the resources and leadership to move it forward."

Barsamian was co-chairman of the Massachusetts Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee last year, which organized four major events in Boston with great attendance. He said, "The significant take-away [lesson] was that people took us very seriously. The effort we made was professional and serious. All organizations worked together flawlessly. It gives me hope and pride that we can indeed work together as Armenians in a very professional manner."

He was optimistic about the impact of the centennial commemorative events. Barsamian declared, "Nothing went without notice. Having 15,000 people in Times Square in New York City was noticed, with the entire United Nations ambassador corps at St. Vartan Cathedral. Having the Massachusetts Congressional delegation with us, and the governor, senators and all high level officials, and having around 160,000 people in Los Angeles for the largest demonstration ever in the history of that city did not go without notice. And all the while countries continued to recognize the Armenian Genocide throughout the world."

Internationally, he said, "What we learned last year is that the world fully understands and affirms the Armenian Genocide, so it is now an issue for Turkey and its government to deal with and understand its recent past." With more and more countries recognizing the Armenian Genocide, Barsamian said, "my hope is that the US does not end up becoming one of the last in the tiers of countries to formally and unequivocally reaffirm its recognition of the Armenian Genocide."

He said that in a different sense, the Washington DC commemoration was the most significant event of the year, because it brought together the Armenian Church's hierarchy and people. He said, "To have our entire community together with catholicoi and all the bishops with full unity of our church is not something we can now walk back from."

Barsamian issued a challenge for the church hierarchy, proclaiming, "It is truly time to unite our church. It is not something the people can do. It is something the leadership can do...That will be the true legacy of these two catholicoi and the bishops."

Current developments in the Middle East have created a third set of issues that the Assembly must urgently deal with today, Barsamian pointed out. He said, "As Armenian Americans, we should reflect back 100 years to a time when we could not ourselves do anything about the situation of Armenians and Christians in the Middle East. There is a call for action now. We need to redouble our efforts and help those, whether Christian, Yezidi or Muslim, in the Middle East, to get safe passage to Armenia."

Barsamian suggested that all Armenian organizations should develop a "come to home" policy for assistance and resettlement for all Armenians. In addition, he said, non-Armenian victims of Middle Eastern turmoil should be assisted to resettle in Armenia. Barsamian said that the Assembly is working with the Near East Foundation and others on such issues when it meets with the US National Security Council and State Department in Washington DC in closed-door meetings. The Assembly is also talking with all Armenian organizational leaders regularly, he said, so that the voice of the Armenians is heard in Washington.

Barsamian said, "Armenians have been leaving the major urban centers to settle all around the country. Our goal is to have organizations in all 50 states. We have them in around 25 states now." These state organizations work on the Congressional and state level on issues relevant to Armenians. Barsamian said that it was largely due to the Assembly's work that some 43 states now recognize the Armenian Genocide.

The Assembly is going to be represented at both Democratic and Republican presidential national conventions this year, Barsamian revealed. He said, "We usually get involved in a lot of the subcommittee meetings, and we meet with members and leadership." It has also been present during some primaries, such as in New Hampshire this year.

The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program offers another route for people to become involved in Armenian affairs. It is the oldest and largest such Armenian program, dating back to 1977 in Washington DC. The Assembly also started a second program for internships in Armenia.

Arts & Living

Goodbye, Antoura Memoir to Be Presented at Armenian Society Of Los Angeles

GLENDALE – The noteworthy memoir, *Goodbye, Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (Stanford Univ. Press, 2015), by the late Karnig Panian, will be the focus of a program on Thursday, February 18, at 7:30 p.m., at the Armenian Society of Los Angeles Main Hall, 117 S. Louise St.

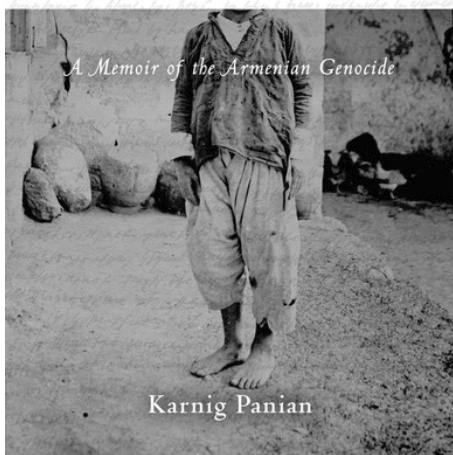
The event is organized by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and co-sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society, Hamazkayin Jemaran Association, Nor Serount Cultural Association and Tekeyan Cultural Association.

Featuring remarks by the author's daughter, Houry Panian Boyamian, Principal of St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown, the event will also include presentations by Dr. Richard G. Hovannissian, professor emeritus of Modern Armenian and Near Eastern History, UCLA, and Adjunct Professor of history, UCLA, as well as independent researcher Maurice Missak Kelechian. Dr. Keith David Watenpaugh of the University of California, Davis, will provide comments via video, and Dr. Viken Yacoubian of Woodbury University and the Hamazkayin Central Executive Board will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

Born in the Anatolian village of Gurin, Karnig Panian was only five years old when World War I began. Four years later, American aid workers found him at an orphanage in Antoura, Lebanon. He was among nearly 1,000 Armenian and 400 Kurdish children who had been abandoned by the Turkish administrators, left to survive at the orphanage without adult care. He grew up to become an educator and vice principal at Djemaran, the Armenian



GOODBYE, ANTOURA

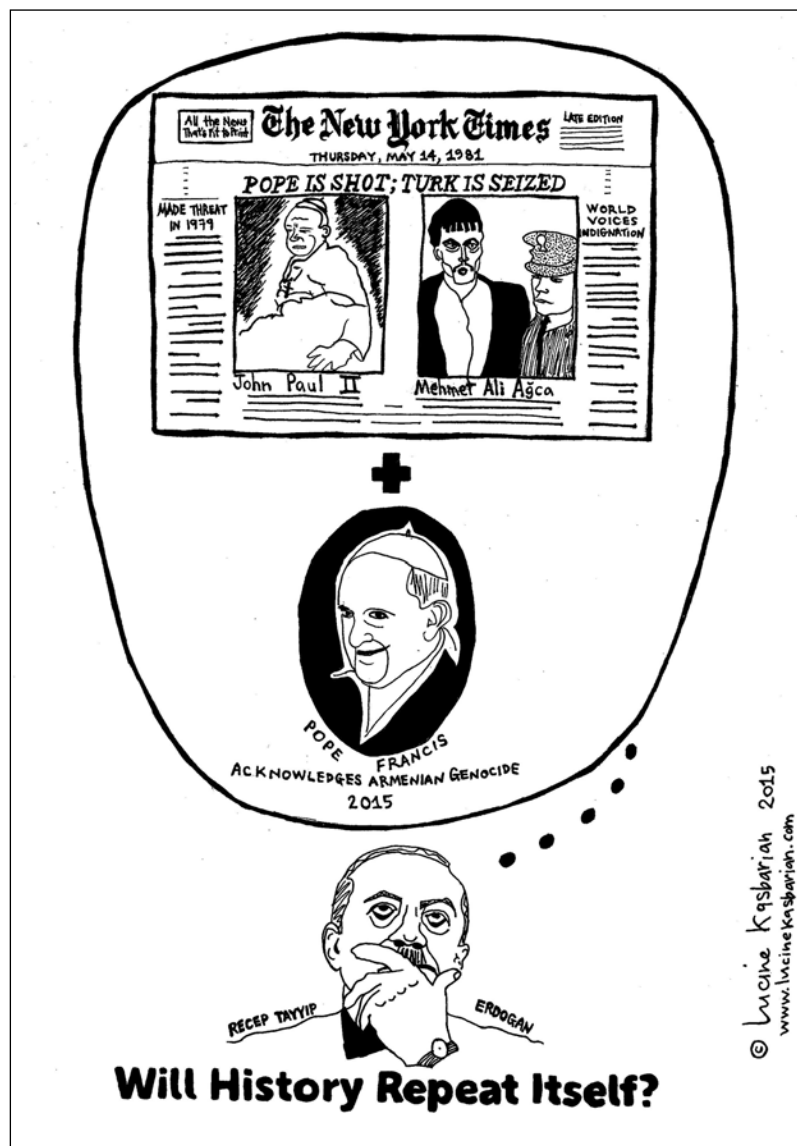


Karnig Panian

Lyceum, based in Beirut, Lebanon.

His memoir, *Goodbye, Antoura*, offers the extraordinary story of what he endured in those years – as his people were deported from their Armenian community, as his family died in a refugee camp in the deserts of Syria, as he survived hunger and mistreatment in the orphanage. The Antoura orphanage was another project of the Armenian Genocide: its administrators, some benign and some cruel, sought to transform the children into Turks by changing their Armenian names, forcing them to speak Turkish, and erasing their history.

Goodbye, Antoura was translated by Simon Beugekian and edited by Aram Goudsouzian. It includes a foreword by Dr. Vartan Gregorian see MEMOIR, page 11



"Threaten the Pope" by Lucine Kasbarian

Cartoons Worth a Thousand Words

WESTON, Mass. (Keghart) – The centennial of the Armenian Genocide last year brought forth a welcome avalanche of political activism, books, scholarly and journalistic reports, conferences, community projects, music, theatrical performances, visual arts presentations, and civic and religious commemorations.

By Jirair Tutunjian

One such event was the multi-exhibition series "Kiss the Ground" (Yergurbakootyoon), which featured *Perspectives from Exile*—22 political cartoons by author, journalist, activist, and cartoonist Lucine Kasbarian of New Jersey and Massachusetts.

Fourteen other Armenian-American creative people participated in the "Kiss the Ground" exhibition, which explored memory, loss and culture, and was held at the Cambridge School of Weston.

An offshoot of the exhibition is Kasbarian's *Perspectives from Exile*, a 110-page illustrated volume that includes a foreword by Curator Todd Bartel, a visual arts teacher and the director of the Cambridge School's Thompson Gallery.

The volume's incisive political cartoons explore topics such as Armenian Genocide denial, reparations, Turkish and Azeri belligerence and NATO indifference to the Armenian Cause.

One of Kasbarian's cartoons produced during the Genocide centennial year, titled "Threaten the Pope," spotlighted Turkish President Erdogan dreaming about the fate of Pope Francis after Erdogan threatened the latter for acknowledging the Armenian Genocide. The cartoon depicts Erdogan recalling yesteryear's attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II by Turkish citizen Mehmet Ali Ağca.

Also included in *Perspectives from Exile* are an interview see CARTOONS, page 11



Lucine Kasbarian

A Date with Destiny — 55 Years Later

By Tom Vartabedian

Time has a habit of keeping us connected to the past.

After 55 years, I am returning home – not literally but in a very special way.

An Armenian Catholic Monastery in Vienna, Austria, where the Benedictine monks donned long, black robes and sported white flowing beards that extended below the neckline.

They were the Mekhitarist Fathers – a 290-year-old monastic order dedicated to spirituality and literature. All of them were erudite but humble, celibate of course, and ritualistically austere as demanded by the order.

I was the first American student to invade their premises for any duration of time – a baptism by fire that would hopefully open doors for subsequent students of my generation.

My mission was a worthy one: to study the Armenian language, learn more about your culture and heritage, and above all, make a firm impression.

It was a tall order. I was a 19-year-old journalism major at Boston University, born to Genocide survivors, and deeply involved with my church and community. On the social side, you could call me a whirling dervish, attending dances and carousing until the wee house of morning.

For one year, I minded my manners and applied myself to their rules of decorum. I spoke their language, ate their food, observed their tenets and played by their rules. I grew my own beard and often donned a robe, particularly when it came to serving Mass for the Archbishop and Abbot General of this monastery.

I found myself inside a coterie of 15 priests and three older seminarians about to be ordained. Each priest was an entity unto its own. I often wondered how a group of men, personalities diverse, could bond the way they did.

And how, despite their advanced ages, could they maintain such a diligent literary pace. I was grounded once for not meeting curfew and disciplined another time for not having my lessons prepared. Obedience, chastity and poverty were permanent vows with no exception.

I came out a new man, resolved toward maturity, and about to embrace the university with a new and serious frame of mind. No. The idea of being ordained into priesthood never entered my mind. My parents thought otherwise, fearful of any last-minute decisions. They wanted marriage, grandchildren, a son with a career other than the church.

After a year, I vowed to return. The year was 1960. Elvis was singing the blues. "Ben Hur" was rocking the big screen. John F. Kennedy was on his way to becoming our 35th president. And I had just smashed up my father's Buick.

Things weren't going particularly well on the home front. I had broken up with a girlfriend and could tolerate the family's luncheonette business no longer after being weaned into it.

To put it bluntly, I needed a change in see DESTINY, page 12



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Brandy and Winston Churchill

LONDON – October 29, 2015 was a special day for Sotheby's Auction House. Under the auspices and with the participation of Albert, the Crown Prince of Monaco, an auction was organised on the occasion of the 50th Death Anniversary of Winston Churchill.

The main organizers of the event were Prince Albert of Monaco, the British Ambassador to Monaco and the former Prime Minister and current Ambassador of Armenia Dr. Armen Sarkissian. The entire proceeds of the auction was allocated to Prince Albert's charities related to climatic changes.

Items being auctioned were the drinks, cigars and menswear of renowned brands and others objects favoured by Churchill.

During the auction the main attention was focused on the statue of Churchill by the well-known sculptor Oscar Nemon and a decades old bottle of "Ararat" Armenian brandy with an interesting background history. Many years ago, this unique bottle of Armenian brandy was sold at an auction by Christy's for more than GBP15, 000. According to the documents provided the bottle was filled from the same barrels from which for many years Stalin supplied Churchill with "Ararat" Armenian brandy.

The exclusive bottle of brandy was donated to the auction by former Prime Minister and current Ambassador of Armenia Dr. Armen Sarkissian.

Sotheby's auction house was filled with many high class aristocrats. What happened at the auction next, surpassed everyone's expectation; The 70-year-old "Ararat" was sold for \$120,000!

The participants to the auction with amazement and admiration spoke about Armenia and the Armenians. Hopefully

the unprecedented success of the Armenian brandy in misty Albion will help to promote the fame of "Ararat" brand.

When and where did Churchill first drink the Armenian brandy?

My wife Vivienne and I had the pleasure of enjoying the friendship of Winston Churchill's daughter Sara for many years, starting from late 1960s. When for the first time she was invited to dinner, she noticed in our sitting room on the piano, a bottle of "Ararat" Armenian brandy. She looked at the bottle with amazement and said,

"From 1945 until his death, my father used to drink this brandy."

Then Sara told us when and where Churchill first drank "Ararat."

During the Yalta Conference In 1945 February, after the dinner Stalin asks Churchill

if he wishes to have a drink.

"I would like a brandy with my cigar," answers the British Prime Minister.

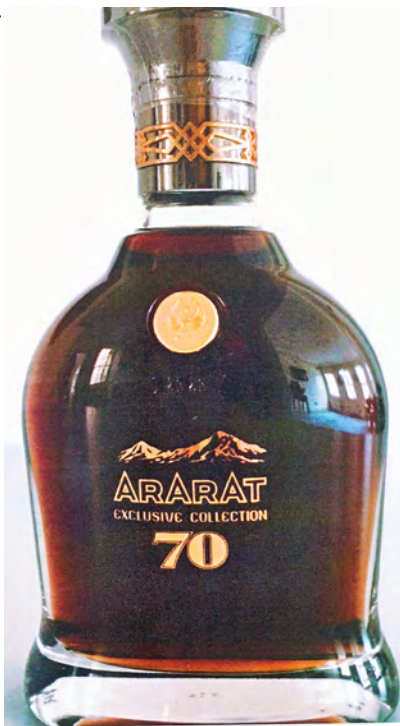
The host offers Churchill "Ararat," the best Armenian brandy.

According to Sara, Churchill "falls in love" with "Ararat" Armenian brandy and asks Stalin, "Where can I purchase few bottles of this brandy?"

Stalin instructs the Soviet ambassador to the UK to present Churchill with a case (12 bottles) of "Ararat" every month.

"My father passed

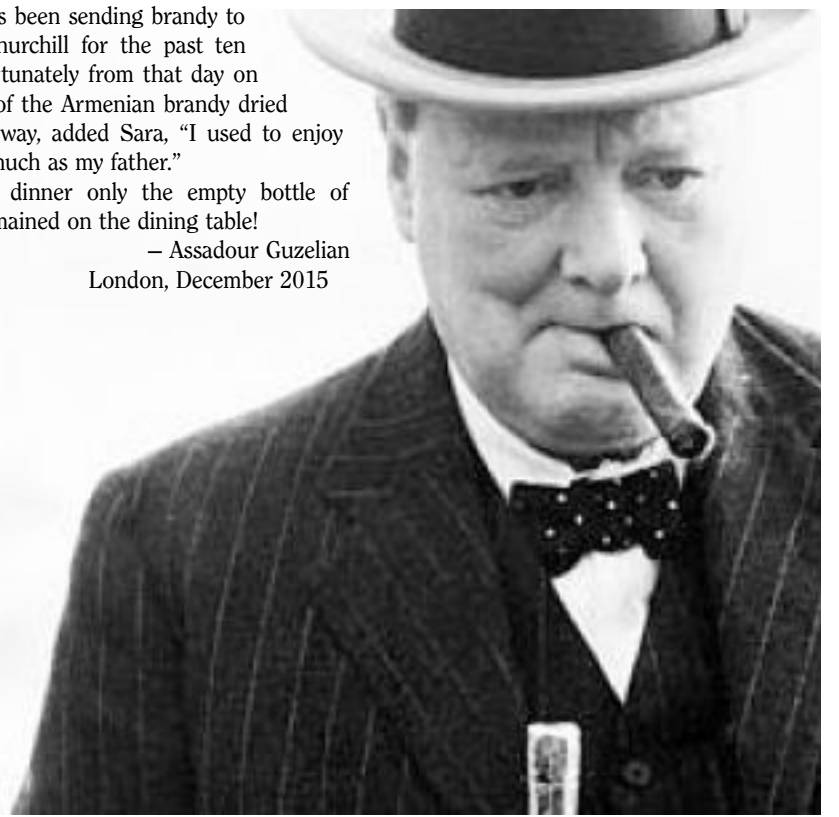
away, but we continued receiving every month a case of "Ararat." Many years later, someone realises that the



Embassy has been sending brandy to a "dead" Churchill for the past ten years! Unfortunately from that day on our source of the Armenian brandy dried up! By the way, added Sara, "I used to enjoy 'Ararat' as much as my father."

After the dinner only the empty bottle of "Ararat" remained on the dining table!

– Assadour Guzelian
London, December 2015



Winston Churchill

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Eggplant, Tomato and Kale Moussaka

What are you to do if you love the luscious Greek eggplant dish moussaka but are a confirmed vegetarian? Don't fret – read below.

INGREDIENTS

2 medium eggplants, washed, sliced 1/4" thick (eggplant may be peeled, if desired)
2 medium tomatoes, sliced thinly
2-3 cups fresh kale, cleaned and roughly chopped
2 medium onions, finely chopped
1 green bell pepper or 2 Anaheim peppers, seeded and diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 1/2 cups marinara sauce or tomato puree
2 eggs, beaten
Chopped flat-leaf parsley and mint, about 1/4 cup each
1 teaspoon sea salt or Kosher salt and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon dried crushed oregano
1/2 teaspoon each crushed red pepper flakes and paprika
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
Olive oil and unsalted butter
2 tablespoons each chopped walnuts and pine nuts
2 cups shredded or grated fresh Parmesan, Jack, Mozzarella or mizithra cheese
Greek yogurt, lebne, or ricotta cheese for garnish
Lemon zest and juice of one lemon for garnish

PREPARATION:

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, combine the cheese with the eggs, parsley, mint, salt, pepper, oregano, red pepper flakes, paprika, and nutmeg; mix and set aside.

Sauté the kale, onions, bell pepper, and garlic in a few tablespoons of olive oil until the onions are translucent, about 3-5 minutes.

Spread a half cup of the marinara sauce or puree on the bottom of a 9 X 13 glass baking dish. Arrange the eggplant slices on top of the sauce, cutting slices, if necessary, to fit spacing; repeat and alternate in layers with the sliced tomatoes, sautéed onion mixture, and the remaining sauce, and finish with the eggplant slices on top.

Pour the cheese and egg mixture over the top of the moussaka and spread evenly; drizzle with olive oil and top with chopped walnuts and pine nuts. Add a few dabs of butter on the top and bake (on a cooking sheet) for one hour or until the eggplant is tender.

Remove moussaka from oven and let rest for 10 minutes before cutting into squares. Top each square with a dollop of Greek yogurt, lebne, or ricotta cheese, and garnish with lemon zest or lemon juice, if desired.

Serves 6-8.

Christine's recipes have been published in the Fresno Bee, Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>.

For Christine's recipes that have been published in Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, go to:
<<http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>><http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>.

Cartoons Worth a Thousand Words

CARTOONS, from page 10

with Kasbarian conducted by Bartel, photos of the exhibition, highly informative articles by Kasbarian about the history and consequences of the Genocide and its denial, and the artist's statement.

Kasbarian's cartoons have appeared in more than twenty-five Armenian and non-Armenian publications and websites, including *Foreign Policy Journal*, *Zartonk*, *Women's International Perspective*, *Massis Weekly*, *Veterans Today* and *Keghart.com*.

Kasbarian's political cartoons reaffirm the validity of the opinion of many critics of "modern" Turkey that the rulers' mindset has not changed from that of the Ottomans and the Young Turks.

In a year which saw Turkey's continued oppression of its indigenous minorities and

journalists; its shooting down of a Russian military jet; Ankara's continued denial of the Armenian Genocide; its president's support of ISIS and aggression into Syria and Iraq, not to mention his numerous inane pronouncements, Kasbarian's *Perspectives from Exile* provides some much-needed relief from the oppressive insanity and criminality pouring out of Ankara.

This publication deserves wide distribution as it is undoubtedly a significant contribution to the published observances of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

To order *Perspectives from Exile* (\$24 USD), visit: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/todd-bartel-and-lucine-kasbarian/lucine-kasbarianperspectives-from-exile/paperback/product-22477813.html> or place an order with Armenian booksellers.

Goodbye, Antoura To Be Presented in Los Angeles

MEMOIR, from page 10

and an introduction and afterword by Prof. Keith David Watenpaugh.

Panian paints a painfully rich and detailed picture of the lives and agency of Armenian orphans during the darkest days of World War I. Ultimately, Karnig Panian survived the Armenian Genocide and the deprivations that followed. Goodbye, Antoura assures us of how humanity, once denied, can be again reclaimed.

Copies of Goodbye, Antoura will be available the night of the lecture through a partnership with Abril Bookstore of Glendale.

For more information about this program contact NAASR or hq@naasr.org.



Houry Panian Boyamian



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

MARCH 6 — Author Dawn Anahid Mackeen to sign copies of her book *The Hundred-Year-Walk: An Armenian Odyssey*. St. Vartan Armenian Church, Sunday, Lecture/Book Presentation at St. Vartan Armenian Church. Sponsored by the AGBU, UC Berkeley Armenian Studies Department, and St. Vartan. 650 Spruce St, Oakland, CA.

MARCH 16 — **Abril Books, Wednesday, Book reading and signing**, Author Dawn Anahid Mackeen *The Hundred-Year-Walk: An Armenian Odyssey*. 415 E. Broadway, Suite 102, Glendale, CA

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 13 – May 21 — Multiple dates, authors E. Philip Brown and Tom Vartabedian will speak about their book, *Armenians of the Merrimack Valley*. February 13, Book launch and presentation, 10 a.m. to noon, Haverhill Public Library, 99 Summer St.; February 18, Book-signing and presentation, 7 pm, Tewksbury Public Library, 300 Chandler St.; March 31, book-signing and presentation, 7 p.m., Buttonwoods Museum, 240 Water St., Haverhill and May 21, book-signing, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Vermette's Market, 6 Pond St., Amesbury.

FEBRUARY 18 — **Thursday, 6 p.m., Hrant Dink Memorial Peace and Justice Lecture**, "Complex Truths in Trials of Conflicts," Knafel Center, formerly Radcliffe Gym, 10 Garden St., Rakel Dink, Hrant Dink Foundation – Istanbul and Cemal Kafadar, Vehbi Koç Professor of Turkish Studies, Harvard University. Main speaker, Sir Geoffrey Nice, Gresham College Professor of Law. This event will be live streamed. Free and open to the public. Seating is limited. MAHINDRA HUMANITIES CENTER / HARVARD - mahindra.fas.harvard.edu

FEBRUARY 20 — **Armenian Business Network Career Day** for Armenian high school seniors and college students, Saturday, 1-6 p.m., Microsoft N.E.R.D. Center in Cambridge, MA. Meet prominent mentors from many professions. Don't miss out on this great opportunity! Registration required, Feb. 1 deadline. No charge. For details: www.armenianbusinessnetwork.com.

FEBRUARY 24 — **Resilient Women Series: Armenian Women in Iran**, Wednesday, 7 p.m. reception, 8 p.m. presentation. Speaker: Ani Babaian-Khachikian. Co-sponsored by AIWA New England Affiliate and NAASR at Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street, Arlington, MA. RSVP at aiwanewengland@aol.com or 617.501.1215

MARCH 6 — **Book Launch, commemorating International Women's Day: In the Ruins** by Zabel Yessayan. Sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association. 2 p.m., Watertown Free Public Library.



On Monday, March 7, Houry Panian Boyamian, pictured above, will be the guest speaker at St. James Armenian Church's Men's Club. Boyamian will speak about her father Karnig Panian's book, *Goodbye Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*. The program will begin at 6:15 p.m., with a full Lenten dinner served at 7 p.m., at St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown.

MARCH 6 — **Actor and director Jirair Papasian of Paris, France** will speak and present a screening of his production of the musical "Garine" at the AGBU Center, 247 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Proceeds will support the Dikran Tchouhadjian International Institute. The event is cosponsored by the AGBU New England District Chapter, Amaras Art Alliance, and the Tekeyan Cultural Association. More details to come shortly.

MARCH 6 — **St. Stephen's Armenian Church in Watertown will host a Lenten Dinner**, sponsored by the St. Stephen's Ladies' Guild. Begins at 1 p.m. in the church hall, 38 Elton Ave. Board Member Raffi Manjikian will speak on the "Cultural Traditions of Armenian Carpets." Donation: \$25. For more information, call Deanne Nahabedian, (781) 891-7249 or the church office at (617) 924-7562.

MARCH 7 — **St. James Armenian Church's Men's Club will host Houry Panian Boyamian**, principal of St.

Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, who will speak about her father, Karnig Panian's memoir, *Goodbye Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*. Complete Lenten dinner. Social hour and mezza at 6.15 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. \$15 per person. St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown.

MAY 12 — **Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston Presents** the Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian Distinguished Speaker Series, with John Prendergast, founder of "The Enough Project," an initiative to end genocide and crimes against humanity, co-founder "The Sentry," a new investigative initiative focused on dismantling the networks financing conflict and atrocities. 7 p.m. Thursday at Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA Info: 617.354.0632

MAY 27 — **65th Annual Armenian Night at the Pops**, Featuring Boston Pops Orchestra, Keith Lockhart, Conductor; presenting Edvard Poghossian, cello. Presented by Friends of Armenian Culture Society. Symphony Hall, 301 Massachusetts Ave., Boston. For tickets and information, visit facsboston.org

SEPTEMBER 30 – OCTOBER 2 — **25th Anniversary Celebration**, Armenian International Women's Association. Charles Hotel, Cambridge.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

MARCH 19 — **Book-signing and presentation**, 1-4 p.m., Barnes and Noble, Salem, NH by authors E. Philip Brown and Tom Vartabedian will speak about their book, *Armenians of the Merrimack Valley*.

NEW JERSEY

MARCH 18 — **Cultural Committee of St. Thomas Armenian Church presents A Night at the Opera**, Anoush by Tigranian, HD Opera with K. Kasbarian, D. Levonian, A. Garabedian, M. Andonian. Friday, 7:30 p.m., Atrium, 174 Essex Drive, Tenafly, NJ 07670. Wine and cheese reception. Donation \$10 adults & children. For reservations, please contact: Talar Sesetyan Sarafian: (201) 240 – 8541 or Church Office: (201) 567 – 5446.

NEW YORK

APRIL 5 — **Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) presents Sahan Arzruni in Benefit Concert** "Together for Armenia," Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. An evening of solo piano music to benefit the Vanadzor Old Age Home administered by FAR. Merkin Concert Hall - Kaufman Music Center, 129 West 67th Street, New York. Tickets \$35, will go on sale in February 2016. Please contact FAR for more info: noune@farusa.org or 212.889.5150.

A Date with
Destiny —
55 Years Later

DESTINY, from page 10
life. It came one Sunday after church when my pastor proposed the idea of a pilot program.

The decades trickled by. Each Christmas for 25 years, my wife and I made it a point to send the seminarians gifts at Christmas, mailed well before Thanksgiving. Six years ago, I met a man in Armenia who remembered the "Santa Claus from America" who brightened the day with presents.

I did not recognize him in his adulthood. He remembered me like a true brother. And suddenly, just like that, sentiment sent me soaring to the skies. At 70, time was running out on my promise to revisit.

This past September, a trip to Turkey was postponed, due to the unrest in that country. Istanbul was under siege and other points of interest on our itinerary were being compromised.

In order to preserve our airlines tickets, we



Armenian Catholic Mekhitarist Fathers of Vienna, Austria, with whom the writer (back row) studied in 1960 as a 19-year-old.

had a year to recalculate. After some serious thought, we decided upon Munich, Salzburg and Vienna. It was now or never. Our sojourn will take place March 8-16. Just the two of us, my wife and me.

The mere thought puts a tear in my eye.

The city of Strauss and a coterie of priests awaiting my arrival. The church where I enjoyed my altar duties. The distillery where I helped to prepare the greatest cordials and cognacs throughout Europe during work-study. The chess games at sidewalk cafes. I

learned my backgammon here and seldom prevailed.

Ironic, isn't it, the way serendipity has chosen to play its idyllic course. We'll soon meet again at the crossroads of destiny and I will have fulfilled a vow of my own.

COMMENTARY

Robert Haddejian: Dean of Armenian Journalists at 90

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Robert Haddejian may not be a household name on the western shores of the Atlantic, but his literary and journalistic achievements place him among the major icons of Armenian cultural history. (See related story on Page 1.)

January 2016 marked a watershed in his life, as he stepped into his ninth decade, still going strong, still producing and creating relentlessly with an unstoppable zeal.

The Istanbul Armenians celebrated the 90th birthday of this phenomenal man. Armenia and the Diasporan Armenians have also been joining that celebration. Although his literary output is confined to Armenian, his creative life has impacted not only the Istanbul Armenian community, but also the entire diaspora.

Haddejian's prodigious output can be categorized under literature or journalism. The combination of his literary and journalistic talents have rendered him into a wise community leader who has guided the Armenian community through many trials and tribulations in that historic and inclement landscape. First and foremost, he is a prominent writer, having produced pioneering works in prose. Almost 70 years of his life have been dedicated to Armenian journalism, 50 as the editor-in-chief of *Marmara* daily newspaper.

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey by Ataturk, the country has experienced many political upheavals — each change impacting the Armenian community life. Haddejian has proven to be one of the more prudent leaders, safeguarding the community's physical presence while preserving its cultural identity.

Despite the stipulations of the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 which guarantees linguistic, cultural and religious freedoms for the Christian minorities in Turkey, Armenian community life had become a suffocating experience in the early days of the new republic. Following the Genocide, a decimated Armenian community survived in Istanbul, under the watchful eyes of the vengeful Turkish authorities who enforced rigorous restrictions, including literary and press censorship. Armenians were made to feel almost apologetic that they had not shared the fate of their martyred brethren and “disappeared” from the face of the earth.

It was in this atmosphere and within these parameters that the Armenian community had to shape its collective life and develop its literature. If anything, that led to a literature of sublimation and displaced alienation.

Until World War I, Istanbul had been the hub of Armenian literature and culture, where the Armenian spirit soared through the genius of Varoujan, Siamanto, Tekeyan, Zohrab and others. But the new era, with its restrictions, generated a new atmosphere where symbolism and surrealism could only survive unscathed.

The human and social frustrations of the Armenian writers had to be channeled through universal themes.

European literature, filtered through the poetry of Turkish writers such as Nazim Hikmet and Orhan Vali, came to dominate the budding Armenian literature: Henri Bergson, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre and T.S. Eliot became role models for the young Armenian writers. Robert Haddejian was one of those young talents. Other promising talents, such as Haigazn Kalousdian,

Garbis Janjikian, Zaven Biberian and Antan Ozer saw their lives cut short because of illness or sufferings they experienced as participants in the left-wing political movement.

Haddejian, Zareh Kharkhouni and Zahrad were lucky to survive and to continue contributing significantly to the development of Istanbul Armenian literature, which eventually also impacted literature in the diaspora and Armenia, with Varteres Karageuzian and Garig Basmadjian serving as a bridge between those communities.

Despite the daily responsibilities of being an editor, Haddejian has proved to be one of the most prolific writers of his generation. Additionally, he turned a daily paper into a literary forum, where prominent writers gathered and younger talents were nurtured.

Haddejian published his first play in 1960 under the title of “Three Sundays in a Life,” and he received the Anahid Literary Prize.

“Intimately with Hagop Baronian” reveals the famous satirist's life, talent and sadness. This work seems to have been inspired by and fashioned on the famous biographies of Henri Troyat, in which the profile of a celebrity's life (Turgenev, Tolstoy, etc.) also covers the burning issues of contemporary life. *Errors in Words* is the collection of short stories published in 1972. “Sunday Closing” and “Vastak” (Achievements) are two plays, the first dealing with love and marriage and the latter with aging.

Fifteen Days of My Diary, published in 1977, a travelogue written in a brisk journalistic style, contains the pages of enduring beauty and literary lure. His award-winning collection of short stories, *On the Greatness and Wretchedness of Man*, was published in 1977. It delves into the analysis of two opposite poles of the human condition and is endowed with modern style and a fresh outlook.

The Ceiling is a novel published in 1983 and is considered to be his masterpiece. His hero is an invalid, confined to his bed for the remainder of his life, watching the ceiling, which allegorically becomes a screen where he watches the lives of his children, far away in Canada, subjected to an alien culture and assimilation. Here Armenian nostalgia emanates through his humanity.

ty.

The above-listed literary output is only a fraction of Haddejian's creations.

Haddejian is a phenomenal writer; he is a natural. His pen flows easily. His style is simple yet in his simplicity, he captures human nature, thus achieving greatness.

In addition to editing *Marmara*, a respected daily, Haddejian has his trademark daily “Notebook” (Houshadedr) where he focuses on the mundane chores of daily life while often meandering into philosophical thoughts. For example, a simple description of a bird gradually flows into the mysteries of nature, with sensitive beauty.

Readers are fortunate that the daily “Notebooks” eventually become volumes. At last count, the volumes had hit number 70. And his pen is still writing.

As we ponder the life and the deeds of this man, we discover that he is more than an individual. He is larger than life, and he is an institution in and of himself.

Haddejian has made writing the focus of his life and not wasted a single moment in that endeavor. Thus, he has given back to his community as well as to humanity and served as a role model for an exemplary creative life.



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My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Talaat's Personal Account of The Armenian Massacres

In my column last week, I reported that Talaat Pasha, the mastermind of the Armenian Genocide, had told British intelligence officer Aubrey Herbert in 1921 that he had written "a memorandum on the Armenian massacres."

I would like now to present brief excerpts from Talaat's lengthy account published in the November 1921 issue of Current History, the monthly magazine of the New York Times, titled: "Posthumous Memoirs of Talaat Pasha," and subtitled: "The former Grand Vizier's own account, written shortly before his assassination, of why and how Turkey entered the war – Secret alliance that preceded the conflict – Causes of the Armenian massacres as stated by the man who ordered them."

In an introductory note, Current History editors explain how they obtained a copy of this revealing report: "...After Talaat's death, the manuscript passed into the possession of his wife, who remained in Germany; she has not yet published the whole of it, but after the acquittal of her husband's assassin she permitted the Paris correspondent of Vakit, a lib-

eral Turkish newspaper published in Constantinople, to reproduce the most interesting portions of it. These have been translated from Turkish for Current History by M. Zekeria, a native of Constantinople. They represent about fifty pages of the original manuscript, the opening sentence of which, 'I do not tell all the truth, but all I tell is truth,' aroused a great sensation in Turkey."

In his memoirs, as in his interview with Aubrey Herbert, Talaat tries to exonerate himself by blaming everyone else – Armenians, Russians, even Turks – for the Armenian massacres. He does not deny "the deportations of the Armenians, in some localities of the Greeks, and in Syria of some of the Arabs," but claims that such reports "were exceedingly exaggerated." Talaat then adds: "in saying this, I do not mean to deny the facts. I desire only to eliminate the exaggerations and to relate the facts as they occurred."

The former Grand Vizier confesses: "I admit that we deported many Armenians from our eastern provinces, but we never acted in this matter upon a previously prepared scheme. The responsibility for these acts falls first of all upon the deported people themselves. Russia, in order to lay hand on our eastern provinces, had armed and equipped the Armenian inhabitants of this district, and had organized strong Armenian bandit forces in the said area."

Attempting to repair his tarnished image, Talaat acknowledges the Turkish brutalities against Armenians: "I admit also that the deportation was not carried out lawfully everywhere. In some places unlawful acts were committed.... Some of the officials abused their authority, and in many places people took preventive measures into their own hands and innocent people were molested. I confess it."

Continuing his face-saving rhetoric, Talaat concedes: "I

confess, also, that the duty of the Government was to prevent these abuses and atrocities or at least to hunt down and punish their perpetrators severely. In many places, where the property and goods of the deported people were looted, and the Armenians molested, we did arrest those who were responsible and punished them according to the law. I confess, however, that we ought to have acted more sternly, opened up a general investigation for the purpose of finding out all the promoters and looters and punished them severely. But we could not do that. Although we punished many of the guilty, most of them were untouched."

Talaat proceeds to provide excuses for not pursuing perpetrators of the Armenian massacres who "were short-sighted, fanatic, and yet sincere in their belief. The public encouraged them, and they had general approval behind them. They were numerous and strong. Their open and immediate punishment would have aroused great discontent among the people, who favored their acts. An endeavor to arrest and to punish all these promoters would have created anarchy in Anatolia at a time when we greatly needed unity."

To set the record straight, Talaat's claims that Armenians stabbed Turkey in the back during WWI are completely false. Minister of War Enver Pasha, Commander-in-Chief of the Ottoman Armed Forces, in a letter to the Bishop of Konya, praised the bravery of Turkish-Armenian soldiers fighting against the Russian Army in the winter of 1914-1915.

Ironically, Talaat's assertion that his government would have taken brutal actions against Armenians even at "a time of peace" reconfirms long-standing Turkish genocidal practices as previously demonstrated by the Hamidian and Adana massacres of Armenians which were carried out when there were no wars.

LETTERS

Azadian Paints Too Rosy a Picture of Hollande

(The following letter by international and human rights attorney Philippe Raffi Kalfayan is a response to the editorial by Edmond Y. Azadian, "President Hollande's Second Coming," which appeared in last week's edition.)

To The Editor:

Based out of Europe, I am a regular reader of your editorials dispatched through the press digest of Mr. Mihran Keheyian, and I appreciate most of them, especially the pertinence of your analysis about Armenian cause or the situation of Armenia. One can read wise and balanced opinions.

However, in your last column titled "President Hollande's Second Coming," with all the respect due to you, I must make a few comments. The assessment, although cautious, is rather euphoric about Hollande and his announcement. Secondly, but this is another issue that I won't address at length here, you seem rather tough with the lobbying activities in the United States, while many people, including myself, are rather appreciative of what is done on the other side of the Atlantic. Lobbying is practiced very professionally in your country, while we are very amateur in France and Europe in general.

It is true that five years ago, there was no dinner and no president appearing in the Armenian community. Sarkozy and Hollande are probably sincere in their sentiments toward the Armenians

and the respect of their memory. But, unfortunately, this is pure hypocrisy when it comes to serious steps and there is nothing to expect other than words. The "deep State" of France (every State has its own, not only Turkey its "derin devlet") is not favorable to Armenian new claims and is currently totally dependent on its political and economic interests with Turkey and Azerbaijan (don't forget that France sold in the last years a few high-tech military satellites that help in killing Armenian soldiers in Artsakh!).

Secondly, President Hollande may be even more cynical than previous ones, because he keeps making promises for four years without ever delivering, with the exception of his visit to Dzizernagapert on April 24, 2015. He is continuously laughed at for this very reason.

It is also unjust to say that the law passed early 2012 criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide was not proclaimed because Sarkozy did not sign the promulgation of the law in the legal time-window. He had 15 days to do it. Since more than 60 deputies and more than 60 senators were going to oppose the law by referring it to the Constitutional Court, it would have been a rather undemocratic and explosive move to speed up the process and sign the law before the registration of their challenging petition.

Now let's come to the announcement. What did Hollande announce exactly? He announced that he has missioned a lawyer (former President of

the European Court of Human Rights) to start a new study about a legally indisputable project (which is an inconceivable idea in law; fortunately a law is always disputable and interpretable). He did not assign him the mission to draft a law!

Further, you should be informed of many other elements and analyze the announcement in the light of them. I bring those to your appreciation:

1) The first government of Hollande stopped a new draft law criminalizing the Armenian Genocide during a Government meeting in September 2012; the foreign affairs minister strongly opposed it.

2) The same foreign minister is going to leave the Government and join the Constitutional Council shortly, as his president.

3) The former secretary general of the Constitutional Council, who formed the opinion back in February 2012, is now the Secretary General of the Government, and he has no intention to change his mind.

4) The lawyer designated by President Hollande has been "missioned" on the eve of the dinner!

5) His mission is almost impossible, and he is perfectly aware of it due to the limits put by the European Court of Human Rights' Grand Chamber decision in the Perinçek vs. Switzerland case on October 15, 2015 and the later decision of the French Constitutional Council decision on January 8, 2016, which stranglehold any future draft law. That point deserves a too long and technical presentation and I may demonstrate it comprehensively.

6) President Hollande, who claims not to be an opportunist, is lying and is looking to gain time before the Armenian community. There are so many other hot draft laws and legal controversies coming at the Parliament that the chance of seeing such a law adopted is almost negligible. In any case, it will face the same fate as the 2012 law.

7) Even some socialist dignitaries say cryptically: "Be satisfied with what you got in 2015!"

8) The economic and social crisis is so tense that none of the parties or the public opinion will accept the resurgence of a new debate about a law criminalizing the denial of Armenian genocide.

All in all, what will remain from those nice pictures and very "popular" dinners for the Armenian cause? Just words from President Hollande and lies from the Armenian community representatives (CCAF), which know perfectly well the reality.

Raffi Kalfayan
Paris, France

Analysis: Karabagh Likely to Be Part of Putin-Erdogan Talks

By Naira Hayrumyan

The presidents of Russia and Turkey, Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, are expected to meet in Moscow on Wednesday, and many Armenian experts expect from this meeting agreements that may be a challenge for Armenia.

Erdogan, along with a number of Middle East leaders, will attend the opening of the reconstructed mosque in Moscow. This will happen on the day when U.S. President Barack Obama will host Pope Francis in Washington. Experts see this as a kind of message of Putin that Russia is on the side of the Sunni countries, while the United States is trying to improve relations with the Shi'a, including Iran.

However, Armenian experts will rather watch whether Erdogan and Putin manage to agree on a number of issues, among which may be those related to Nagorno-Karabakh. There is information that Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev may also visit Moscow and the three presidents will talk about the terms of settlement of the Karabagh issue with the introduction of Russian peacekeepers.

Western and Azerbaijani media actively write about the existence of such a plan. Pentagon spokesman Evelyn Farkas, according to Russian news agency Interfax, visiting Baku recently, said that Russia is part of the Minsk process on the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict and cannot introduce troops without the consent of the United States and France. At this stage Armenian officials also deny the probability of the entry of peacekeepers into the conflict zone.

However, as former head of the National Security Service of Armenia David Shahnazaryan said in an interview with lin.am, formally and legally Karabagh is part of Azerbaijan, and the issue of the entry of peacekeepers, if it emerges, will be discussed with Azerbaijan rather than Armenia. And Armenia will be offered only to withdraw from the territories, where peacemakers may be introduced.

It is not clear whether these issues will eventually be discussed during the Moscow meetings, but many experts agree that the

see PUTIN, page 16





COMMENTARY

With Regime Gains, Fight in Syria Turns Against Turkey

Backed by relentless airstrikes by Russia, government forces and allied Shiite militia may have altered the course of Syria's five-year civil war over the past week, delivering a series of blows to rebel factions that have also managed to challenge Turkey's core strategic interests.

Days after virtually encircling Aleppo, where rebels have controlled the eastern portion of the city since 2012, the regime and allied Hezbollah and Iranian forces have advanced to within 25 kilometers (15 miles) of Syria's border with Turkey and the key rebel-held logistical hub of Azaz.

Ankara has been one of the main external backers of the armed opposition centered in Idlib and Aleppo provinces, acting as a conduit for weapons, supplies and fighters as well as a safe haven for opposition forces.

The regime's advance effectively cuts off rebel-controlled eastern Aleppo from supply lines running north to the Turkish border crossing at Bab al-Salama/Oncupinar, but the border crossing at Reyhanli/Bab al-Hawa remains open west of Aleppo and under the control of Turkey's preferred Islamist group, Ahrar al-Sham, thus keeping rebel supply lines in Idlib open.

The narrow sliver of contested rebel territory running north from Aleppo to the border is under Russian and regime assault from the south and by the "Islamic State" (IS) from the east.

From Syria's western canton of Afrin, the YPG Kurdish militia, which have ties to Kurdish rebels in Turkey, are advancing on Azaz, a further blow to Turkish-backed rebels.

The Kurds - who on and off have fought against Turkmen and Islamist rebel groups backed by Turkey - are benefiting from the airstrikes by Russia and appear to have reached a tactical understanding with Russia and the regime.

For Turkey, the section of territory controlled by IS along the border between Azaz and Jarabulus is vital because it separates the noncontiguous Kurdish-controlled cantons of Afrin from territories in northeast Syria.

The regime advance in the northern Aleppo countryside adds to a string of successes on the back of four months of Russian airstrikes in the south, Latakia and Idlib that helped to scuttle UN-backed peace talks in Geneva last week.

Now in a position of strength, Russia and the regime appear to be trying to divide and crush the opposition and, in some cases, negotiate the withdrawal of rebels and the restoration of regime control in certain towns and neighborhoods.

Otherwise, the regime will continue with a strategy of siege, starvation and bombardment.

Hossam Abouzahr, the editor of Syria Source at the Atlantic Council, told DW that the balance of power has shifted so dramatically that the armed opposition faces an existential struggle for survival.

"The asymmetrical balance is so much in favor of the regime," he said. "It is the beginning of the end for the opposition. They are not able to hold out against the Russian air force."

Abouzahr said that once Aleppo is surrounded, the question will be whether the regime will leave the city trapped and conserve resources to go after other rebel-controlled areas one by one or fully lay siege and retake the city.

The regime offensive in Aleppo city and province has sent tens of thousands of civilians fleeing to the border with Turkey as fear mounts that Syria's largest city and former commercial hub could face a sustained siege.

Turkish officials have warned that hundreds of thousands of people could ultimately be forced to the border.

Aaron Stein, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, told DW that recent events in Aleppo have undermined Turkish interests but the country still has options.

"Ankara still has a lot of cards to play," Stein said. "Turkey is the most important external backer of the Syrian opposition and will not simply look on as Russian, regime and Iranian forces surround Aleppo."

Stein said Ankara's options included increasing support to the opposition in Idlib through the Bab al-Hawa border crossing or demanding that Syrians displaced from Aleppo be protected inside Syria opposite the border crossing at Oncupinar.

The idea of a safe zone has been floated by Turkey since the early days of the conflict but has garnered little international support.

(This analysis by the German news site Deutsche Welle was originally published on Feb. 8.)

The Last Burning Candle

Dear Arab World,

Things change, people change, politics changes, geopolitics changes, but the lies do not change; they remain. A lie is a lie. A dog's

By Rachel Melikian

curling tail will not be straightened even when it's placed under a hard-pressed iron for an entire century. The lies will remain and they will not be straightened under the pressure of our truth. Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt along with other Middle Eastern countries have looked up to Armenians and have taken pride in accepting and representing Armenians to other cultures.

When the Armenian Genocide was deliberately forgotten, you knew where we came from, as you were witnesses when we marched the death marches and knocked on your door. You knew how the few survivors arrived at your shore through the death marches of the Syrian desert of Der Zor, or through Port Said (Egypt) after our heroic resistance in the mountains of Musa Dagh. (Forty Days of Musa Dagh, Franz Werfel describes Armenians heroic resistance against the Armenian Genocide). You knew why we came and you knew what happened to us. It was the Armenian Genocide.

You were witnesses when the enemy wanted to kill so why did we come to your land? You have recorded history with your open arms and you hold records of the Armenian Genocide. Who came? The Armenians! Why did we come? Due to genocide and forced deportations from our ancestral lands. Who led the Armenian Genocide? The Turkish and Ottomans who systematically massacred us. What was the aftermath? The survivors left their homes and found a new home with you. Why are Armenians scattered worldwide? This is proof that Turkey sought to wipeout our entire civilization. Please dear Arab nation, wake up, don't let the devil deceive you. It is not too late to make things right, step away from the deniers of the Armenian Genocide.

Many Arab scholars have studied Armenian history and have become experts in this field of discussion. Please don't get trapped in the winds of the enemy.

What the enemy seeks from you is to ruin every trace of our civilization. You were deceived by Turkey to let them through your borders, thus, Turkey claimed Aleppo to be their "fiancée" after the Armenian Genocide. Now all we can do is chant for you to save Aleppo and Kessab. We Armenians are currently fighting to not bomb Syria and organizing relief aids for Syrians. Save Syria!

Iraq, Mosul, Egypt, and Libya, what can we save? What can we do? We can ask US Congress to help prevent the bombing in Aleppo; however, they are duped to believe there are terrorists in Arab countries, although the US Vice President Joseph Biden spoke the truth of ISIS. After the enemy infiltrated Syria, ISIS was created, and now Congress is led to believe terrorism is occurring. The enemy is lying left and right, yet no one is wise enough to see the truth. They sought to annihilate every Christian Armenian church in the Middle East and on the Eve of our Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, the enemy attacked Kessab and desecrated our churches in Kessab, followed by the relentless bombing of the rest of our churches.

The Middle East is under attack by the enemy, who mask themselves before the world and continues their cultural genocide upon Armenians. Turkey's goal is to "mess up" the Armenian Genocide Centennial Commemoration as they publicly announced it. Our Centennial on 2015 was implicitly desecrated and the enemy took away our heart of diaspora from the Middle East by destroying any traces of Genocide evidence and obliterating the memory of our martyrs.

"To serve civilization is to serve Armenia." - William Gladstone, British Prime Minister.

Yet, if you destroy Armenians, you are destroying civilization, per the enemy's request. Was it the influence of the French and British colonization in the Middle East who kept law, order, and respect for the Armenians, or was it you and your genuine hospitality? Credit is given where credit is deserved; are you afraid to accept your credit? How has the enemy threatened you if you don't remain silent?

Dear Arab world, do not fall into the enemy's trap; nothing remains hidden forever. The world has eyes and God sees everything. Behave with dignity and don't be blamed for the enemy's crimes. This century in which you distanced yourselves from Turkey's crime against humanity and civilization, yet, Turkey has been able to cause your embedment with their lies. You insisted that the Armenian Genocide is not a religious issue neither a Christian and Muslim problem, rather it's the rapacious barbarity of Turkish.

Muhammad believed the Armenian churches were divine, so is the first Caliphate and Salaheddin Ayoubi. This is Muhammad's legacy to you; follow your prophet's words. The enemy has burned us to ashes in our churches during the genocide, and they want you to repeat

their sins on our Centennial. Their evil crimes should not be written under your name. We have the faith in God and we believe our prayers will work.

Both missionaries and European Great Powers apprehended the perpetrators before the Armenian Genocide and confronted them with the Armenian Question. Thus, ground negotiation was created causing extreme discomfort upon the enemy seeing as they only used their brutal barbaric might. The possibility that European powers were trying to solve the Armenian Question in a civil manner did not help, nor did it end the Armenian Genocide.

Turkey deliberately lied to the Armenians about having "brotherhood" with one another and later committed the Hamidian (1894-1896) and Adana (1909) massacres, followed by the Armenian Genocide (1915-1923). They used the same "brotherhood" lies with you, Middle East, as they did with the world to enter your countries with a "zero problems with neighbors" policy. Now the enemy is trying to clear their sins, desecrate their sins, and hide their fingerprints under your name.

Turkey is typically known for denying the Armenian Genocide and lying about their crimes to the world; the world diplomats witnessed their crimes and the world press covered extensively the news of the Armenian Genocide. Turkey now has told the world that not a single Armenian would be alive if the Armenian Genocide took place.

Before the uprisings, for the last two years, Turkey entered your countries preaching unity and secretly observed the Syrian lifestyle and locations of Armenian churches and Armenian neighborhoods in preparation for attack and bombing.

In retrospect, you know the Turkish nation was a nation of genocidal people. You know they were inhumane but you still believed their lies and gave the enemy differential treatment, opening your doors to them. They have the animal instinct to rule. Genocidal people never change. After a century of lies, a beast remains a beast, just like a dog's curling tail will not be straightened even when it's placed under a hard-pressed iron for an entire century. All these years Turkey has lied to you and you believe them as they continue to deceive you.

"Simply with us [Armenians], death had fallen in love. Yet we willingly did not give ourselves And we were forced to leave our own land. Where ever we reached, wherever we went, Everywhere we [Armenians] left an indelible trace. We have joined efforts for everyone, always We plowed everywhere, we built bridges, and we tied arches. We plowed everywhere and we brought forth crops. We gave everyone mind, proverbs, and songs. In other words, we defended them from Spiritual coldness. Everywhere we left our eyes reflection."

Help Syria now: make every action count, make every silence count. You believed what Paruyr Sevak said about Armenians and took us in (in your countries) with pride. How did you allow the enemy to lurk into your country, knowing they were the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide? Rid the enemy from your lives and take credit for taking Armenians in with open arms. We will not betray you as Turkey has been doing for we have humanity. Throughout history, Armenians are known to be hardworking and peaceful loving people. Tell the truth. Our survivors arrived in Syria and you helped us situate in Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, and your other neighboring countries. Dear Arab world, please speak the truth as to why the Armenians came and the occurrence of the Armenian Genocide.

"We are few, yes, but we are Armenians And we know how to sigh from yet unhealed wounds. We know how to lend a helping hand to our friends, And how to repay goodness to those who helped us. We compensate to any goodness by ten And the benefit of it is just with the sun. We are few but we are called Armenians."

You claimed to have adopted the Armenian aesthetics of beauty, virtue, kindness, nobility and goodness. You said this with great honor and pride when we were few, with no country, with no government, no power, and no ambassadors. Armenians, better yet, the ancient Armenians the first Christians, the cradle of civilization, were unknown. Armenian history and Genocide documentation has been removed from history books and when no one knew of us.

"Yet over no one have we become tyrants. And if we [Armenians] have ruled, only with our books. If we have prevailed, only with our talents."

Thousands of Armenians from Syria and neighboring countries gathered at the Armenian Genocide Memorial Church in Der Zhor every year on April 24th to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. On the Eve of our Centennial and on Armenia's Independence Day, Turkey destroyed our martyrs memorial, which housed the remains of the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

On August 3, 2004 His Highness Prince Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan extended his condolences and support to His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Armenia of the Great House of Cilicia, in Antelias, Lebanon, on the eve of the brutal church bombings that rocked Iraq. "The destruction of God's homes disturbed us all. The mischievous acts targeted not only Iraq-but also every single one of us. May God grant peace unto the souls of the innocent victims and immediate physical and spiritual recovery to the injured."

"Yet if they desire to rule us with force, We know how to smoke and how to quench their fire. And if it is needed to disperse darkness, We [Armenians] can turn into ashes like burning candles. We are, we shall be, and become many." - Paruyr Sevak (Baruyr Sevak)

So when the enemy wants you to burn our churches and bomb our people, are we, Armenians going to disappear with the last spark fire of the candle? Will we become pilgrims once again and leave behind the last fire burning in your darkness? Perhaps you might see the light of the candle that offers truth, just as Muhammad saw the divinity of the Armenian Church.

(Rachel Melikian, former GCC Woman of the Year, lives in California.)



Armenian Studies Proliferate at UCLA

LOS ANGELES — The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Narekatsi Chair in Armenian Studies organized two events in February and one in March.

The Graduate Student Workshop on the Contemporary Construction of Armenian Identity is organized by Dr. S. Peter Cowe, Narekatsi Chair of Armenian Studies at UCLA, and co-sponsored by AUA. The conference will be held during March 23-25 at the American

University of Armenia (AUA) campus. Workshop presenters will comprise graduate and postdoctoral students from UCLA, AUA and other universities in Yerevan.

“With this workshop, we’re eliciting the involvement of students from a wide variety of perspectives and disciplinary backgrounds so as to encourage a rich, multidimensional exchange,” Cowe said.

The announcement of the forthcoming colloquia and workshop came on the heels of the UCLA Conference on Armeno-Persian Relations and the Persarmenian Community throughout the Ages, organized by Cowe on November 14, 2015, at Royce Hall. The Hampartzoum and Ovsanna Chitjian Conference on Armenian Studies, the second in a series inaugurated in 2013 by Zaruhi Sara Chitjian in memory of her parents, was co-sponsored by the recently renewed Salmast Heritage Committee.

After opening remarks by Prof. Charles Stanish, director of the UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology and Prof. Alessandro Duranti, Dean of the UCLA Division of Social Sciences, Cowe offered a moving tribute to the recently departed Archbishop Gorun Babian (1941-2015), the longtime Prelate of New Julfa, to whose memory the conference was dedicated.

The first speaker, Dr. Marco Brambilla, an architectural historian specializing in the history of Armenian and Islamic architecture, discussed the significance of 17th-century Armenian merchants for the Iranian economy as well as international trade and diplomacy before transitioning to the construction and embellishment of the 20 blocks of *khoja* houses in New Julfa.

The next speaker was Dr. Touraj Daryaei, professor of history and director of the Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture at the University of California, Irvine. A specialist on ancient and medieval Iranian history, Daryaei discussed the historical legacies of Arshakuni Armenia and Arsacid Iran, emphasizing their close ties during the period they were governed by the same dynasty.

Next, Kristine Martirosyan-Olshansky, a doctoral candidate in archaeology at UCLA, delivered a talk on prehistoric connections between the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands and the Iranian Plateau.

The final speaker was Dr. Bert Vaux, university reader in phonology and Morphology at the University of Cambridge, and Fellow and Director of Studies in Linguistics at King’s College. A foremost expert on Armenia’s her-

itage of dialects, Vaux is well-known to audiences in Southern California from his many appearances in Prof. Richard Hovannisian’s conference series on Cities and Provinces of Historic Armenia. On this occasion, Dr. Vaux provided a lively overview of the characteristics of the dialect of Salmast, to the delight of its speakers in attendance. As part of the presentation, Edward Hayrapetian recited a poem in the Salmast dialect, while many other audience members responded to Dr. Vaux’s questions regarding its phonetics and lexicon, as he demonstrated how distinct the dialect is from the close counterparts of Khoy, Maragha and Tabriz.

On his part, Sarkis Barkhoudarian, president of the Salmast Heritage Committee, expressed appreciation for the UCLA Armenian Studies Program’s spearheading of conferences of this scope and caliber. “The Salmasttsis in attendance were very proud to have professors and PhD candidates at two world-class universities, namely UCLA and Cambridge, show serious interest in the history, language, archeology, and culture of Salmast, the historic Armenian province,” he said. “Members of the Salmasttsi community are excited to hear about their heritage. They are eager to learn about their ancestors, history, and culture. Their goal is to have academic-level studies and publications to document their culture for future generations.”

Analysis: Karabagh Likely to Be Part of Putin-Erdogan Talks

PUTIN, from page 14

Karabagh issue has always been a subject of bargaining between Russia and Turkey, and the bargaining between these two nations has now intensified. The matter primarily concerns Russia’s controversial actions in Syria, which, despite their being controversial, coincide with the interests of Turkey. As Turkish Foreign Minister Firidun Sirinlioglu, who recently visited Moscow, said, Ankara’s and Moscow’s positions coincide on the inadmissibility of the collapse of Syria.

The disintegration of Syria and the redistribution of boundaries in the Middle East will lead to a denunciation of international treaties, according to which 100 years ago the Ottoman Empire was divided. Part of the Empire, in particular, the Armenian lands were divided under the Russian-Turkish agreements. The Karabagh issue is certain to be in the context of the current post-Ottoman territorial integrity. Both Russia and Turkey are interested in preventing changes of this integrity.

(Naira Hayrumyan is a correspondent for ArmeniaNow in Armenia.)

Turkish-Armenian Newspaper Editor Haddejian’s 90th Birthday Celebrated

90TH, from page 1

High School in 1944, and then graduated from Istanbul University with a degree in philosophy and psychology. He began his association with *Marmara* by editing its literary and cultural section. He took over the full editorship of the newspaper in October 1967.

His editorials, commentary and translations enriched the paper greatly, while in 1976 he began to print the newspaper through an offset press, which was a technological advance at

that time for Armenian periodicals in Turkey. He and his newspaper played and continues to play an important role in the community life of Istanbul Armenians, and is a rich resource for Armenians anywhere wishing to follow news about Turkish-Armenians, Turkey and Armenia.

Haddejian was the recipient of the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s first annual Vartkess and Rita Balian Press Award, established in 1986. In 2002, he received the Movses Khorenatsi Medal from Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian. In

later year he also was awarded the Armenian Ministry of Culture’s gold medal. In 2011, he received the Mesrob Mashtots Medal from Armenian President Serge Sargisian for his literary and cultural achievements. He has published dozens of books and is the author of numerous published and unpublished novels, short stories, plays, poems and translations in Armenian.

(Please see Edmond Y. Azadian’s editorial column this week, on page 14, which is dedicated to Haddejian.)

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