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NEWS IN BRIEF

Nearly 50 Killed in Missile Strikes on Hospitals And Schools in Syria

By Loveday Morris and Erin Cunningham

BAGHDAD (*Washington Post*) – Nearly 50 civilians were killed in missile strikes on hospitals and two schools in northern Syria on Monday, the United Nations said, deepening the country's humanitarian crisis despite plans for a temporary cease-fire later this week.

Doctors Without Borders said that at least seven people were killed early Monday when rockets hit a clinic that it supports in Idlib province. The group also said eight people were missing in what it called a "deliberate attack" on its facilities.

Doctors Without Borders did not say which group or military had fired the rockets; rights groups have documented numerous Russian and Syrian government strikes on hospitals and medical facilities across the country. In total, at least five medical facilities and two schools in Idlib and neighboring Aleppo province were attacked Monday, a U.N. spokesman said.

State Department spokesman John Kirby said Monday's carnage "casts doubt on Russia's willingness and/or ability" to stop the Syrian government from carrying

out strikes on civilian targets.

In a statement Monday, Kirby urged "the cessation of hostilities that the Syrian people desperately need."

The fresh fighting comes after Syrian regime forces – backed by Russian warplanes, Iranian troops and Iraqi militia fighters – have made significant gains against rebel forces in northern Syria in recent weeks. The advances have raised the stakes of the nearly five-year-long conflict, which already has transformed into a proxy war.

Last week, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, which have supported the Syrian rebels, said that they planned to intensify strikes on the Islamic State in Syria and that they were also considering deploying ground troops to the country. Turkish and Saudi officials walked back those statements on Monday after US diplomats called for calm.

"It's not true," Turkish Defense Minister
see SYRIA, page 3

Three Arrested over Murder of Armenian Man in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (Dogan News Agency) – An Istanbul court arrested three suspects on February 14 over the murder of an elderly Armenian man recently found hogtied in an apartment in Istanbul's Sisli district.

Hagop Yakup Demirci, 85, was found dead in his apartment on Feb. 6. Burglars had left him and his wife Seta Ayda Demirci, 79, hogtied inside their apartment stealing some 100,000 Turkish Liras.

An Istanbul prosecutor demanded the arrest of 15 suspects on 13 different criminal charges including homicide and looting. Some of the suspects are reported to be holding Armenian citizenship.

The court ruled for the arrest of three ethnic Armenian men, identified only as Artur A., Aram E. and Serge B., on charges of "homicide," "looting," "seizure," and "violation of dwelling immunity." Twelve women were released from detention upon a judicial control decision.

Homicide detectives captured three of the 15 initial suspects in the Black Seaprovince of Trabzon late on Feb. 9, while five other suspects who are reported to have helped commit the burglary, were captured in Istanbul on the same day.

Turkey Summons US Envoy Over Comments On Kurdish PYD

ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkey summoned the US ambassador to express its displeasure on Tuesday, February 9, after a State Department spokesman said Washington did not regard Syria's Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) as a terrorist organization, a Turkish foreign ministry official said.

Tensions between the two NATO allies have flared over the PYD, which Washington supports in its struggle against ISIS militants in Syria.

Ankara sees it as a sister of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), with which it has been embroiled in fierce fighting in southeast Turkey since their decades-old conflict reignited last July. The PKK is classed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union.

Asked about the difference in opinion with Turkey, State Department Spokesman John Kirby said: "This is not a new concern, as I said, that the Turks have proffered. And we don't, as you know, recognize the PYD as a terrorist organization."

Turkey fears advances by Kurdish YPG militia, backed by the PYD, on the Syrian side of the two countries' 900 km (560-mile) border will fuel separatist ambitions among its own Kurds.

It has been conducting a violent crackdown on the PKK in the southeast, with hundreds of militants, security force members and civilians killed.

Papasian Is Trying to Put Armenian Opera on International Stage

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

ANN ARBOR, Mich. – Gerald Papasian lives to act, direct and entertain. He has been in movies, television shows and more often, plays and light operas. He has done it for many years around the world.

Now, this Egypt-born, multi-talented and multicultural artist, is putting his focus on bringing world attention to Dikran Tchouhadjian (Tchouhadjian), the first composer of operas in the Ottoman Empire, who has been relegated to the forgotten pile.

The Paris-based Papasian, who founded the Dikran Tchouhadjian International Institute there, is spending two months as an artist-in-residence at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, as part of the Armenian Studies Department. He is lecturing on Armenian theater and opera in the 19th century, under Ottoman rule, in essence, lecturing on Tchouhadjian. While there, he is also continuing his research on him.

Papasian produced the integral version of Tchouhadjian's opera "Gariné" in France, which was performed in Paris, London and New York. He has received noteworthy directorial credits in Detroit that include the Western world premier of the
see PAPANIAN, page 16



ARSHAK II in 2001 at SAN FRANCISCO OPERA Restored from original by GERALD PAPANIAN

ADL Leader Avoyan Describes Activities in Armenia, Aids Gumri Reconstruction

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WASHINGTON – Varazdat Avoyan joined the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) in 1991, and soon became one of its most prominent leaders in the Armenian parliament. A native son of Shirak province, he personally suffered a tragic loss during the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. Afterwards he dedicated much of his life to remedying the destruction in his native region.

Avoyan was born in Medz Sarian village of Shirak province, Armenia, in 1947. He graduated from the Mikayel Nalbandian Pedagogical Institute of Gumri (called Leninakan in the Soviet period) in 1969, specializing in teaching and psychology. From 1970, he worked as a journalist, secretary of the Communist Youth League of the Pedagogical Institute,
see AVOYAN, page 8



Varazdat Avoyan

Armenian Assembly Seeks Key Priorities for Armenia And Artsakh from White House Budget

WASHINGTON – As President Barack Obama sent his budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) to Congress this week, leaders of the Armenian Assembly of America met with State Department officials and reiterated their concerns over Azerbaijan's ongoing cease-fire violations, including the targeting of a kindergarten, and the dual blockade of Armenia by Turkey and Azerbaijan.

In addition, the Assembly also expressed its concerns for the safety and well-being of Christians at risk in the Middle East, including those fleeing Iraq and Syria who are taking refuge in Armenia.

The FY17 budget request includes \$22.4 million in economic support funds for Armenia, an increase from FY16. The President's budget also maintains military parity between Armenia and

Azerbaijan, at \$1 million for Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and \$600,000 for International Military Education and Training (IMET), a decrease from last year. In addition, the Administration proposed \$1.7 million in international narcotics control and law enforcement, which is the same as last year. The Administration's budget also maintains Section 907 of the Freedom Support
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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Jordan Stress Close Ties

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – On February 12, Eduard Nalbandian, Foreign Minister of Armenia, who is participating in the Munich Security Conference, met with Nasser Judeh, the Foreign Minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Nalbandian asked his counterpart to convey the greetings of Armenia's President Serge Sargsian to King Abdullah II.

Nalbandian stressed, that the agreements signed during the visit of the President of Armenia serve as a solid basis for promoting the development of bilateral relations. The sides discussed issues concerning the development of political dialogue, trade and economic cooperation. The negotiation agenda also included issues of holding regular consultations between the two ministries of foreign affairs, deepening of cooperation within the international organizations.

A number of international and regional issues, as well as the ways to resolve them were discussed. The sides exchanged views on the steps being undertaken by the international community towards the settlement of the Syrian crisis, the need to consolidate efforts in the fight against terrorism.

Armenian Ambassador, Canadian FM Minister Hail Political Dialogue

OTTAWA (Public Radio of Armenia) – On February 15, Armen Yeghanyan, the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Canada, met Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada.

The sides outlined with satisfaction the intensification of political dialogue between the two countries. Yeghanyan stated that in 2015 Yervand Zakharyan, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and Hranush Hakobyan, Minister of Diaspora, had visited Canada; the official visit of Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia Galust Sahakyan took place in May. At the same time, the ambassador welcomed the visits of two Canadian official delegations to Armenia during last year, headed by Minister Chris Alexander and Minister Christian Paradis.

The progress achieved in bilateral trade and economic relations during the recent years was emphasized, and the visit of the first Canadian trade mission to Armenia in 2015 is the proof of that progress. The Ambassador mentioned that Canadian companies are interested in the different branches of Armenian industry, especially in the mining sector.

Upon the request of Dion, Yeghanyan briefed him on the commemoration events dedicated to the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, held in different countries, including Canada.

The sides also discussed the results of the 31st Ministerial Conference of the International Organization of La Francophonie, which took place last October in Yerevan. They agreed to continue efforts towards the further enhancement of bilateral political dialogue and deepening of trade and economic ties.

Armenian-British Defense Cooperation Occurring at High Level

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – First Deputy Defense Minister of Armenia David Tonoyan received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom to the Republic of Armenia Judith Farnworth on February 11. The results of the visit of the delegation led by Tonoyan to the UK in January of this year, as well as the current process and prospects of bilateral defense cooperation were discussed at the meeting. Tonoyan noted that the current cooperation is taking place at a high level, including both the military-political dialogue and the practical process of the cooperation. According to the press service of the Armenian Defense Ministry, Farnworth stated that the UK will pursue further multidimensional cooperation. Issues referring to regional security were discussed at the meeting.

New Freeze? Latest Rhetoric on Karabakh Opens No Immediate Prospect for Solution

By Naira Hayrumyan

MUNICH (ArmeniaNow) – The Karabakh settlement is, apparently, entering another frozen phase, but observers say the situation is tense enough that one careless step could reignite the conflict.

On the margins of an international security conference in Munich, Germany, on February 13, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian met with the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group

Regarding the negotiation process on the Karabakh settlement, Foreign Minister Nalbandian again accused Azerbaijan of grossly violating the Russian-brokered tripartite ceasefire agreement that also included Nagorno-Karabakh as a party. "Azerbaijan continues to refuse to form trust mechanisms, is making efforts to shift the discussions on to other formats, criticizing the format of the Minsk Group co-chair-

Official reports do not make particularly clear what Aliyev's message to Steinmeier was. Nor there is any clarity on whether the meeting between Aliyev and his Armenian counterpart, President Serge Sargsian, will be held on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC, on April 1.

Probably, much will depend on the visit to Azerbaijan by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on February 18. Against the background of the events taking place in Syria, Turkey's apparent intention to send troops to Syria and defeat the Kurdish movement, many experts believe that Ankara wants to enlist the support of Azerbaijan. But instead, Baku is likely to require Turkish support in the Karabakh issue.

Armenian President Sargsian, meanwhile, has stated about the actual lack of progress in the Karabakh negotiations.

"Negotiations on the Artsakh issue will continue. Our position is unchanged: the Artsakh issue can be resolved through the free self-determination of the people of Artsakh. All

definitive solution to the conflict, but measures to stabilize the situation, which will not allow the conflict to flare up again. Azerbaijan rejects these proposals, which, according to many experts, may, at some point, lead to Baku's being recognized as a destabilizing factor in the region.

Azerbaijani Aspirations to Expand Sovereignty over Artsakh Groundless, Ambassador Says

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Head of the Armenian Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Ambassador Arman Kirakosian, delivered a speech at the session of the Permanent Council on February 11.

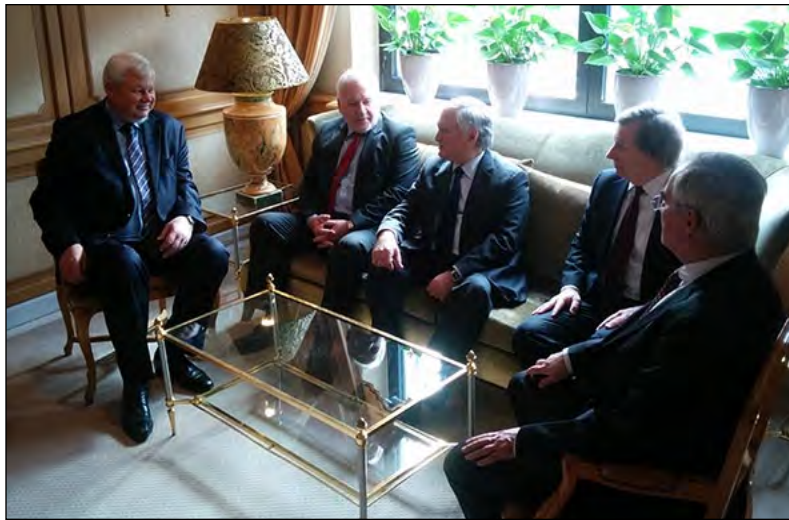
He said that the anti-Armenian policy by Azerbaijan has not changed for the last 25 years. Azerbaijan denies recognizing the right of Nagorno Karabagh people to self-determination, which has been acknowledged by the heads of OSCE Minsk Group Co-chair states as one of the basic principles for the conflict settlement and is enshrined in the OSCE Athens ministerial announcement.

He mentioned that the people of Nagorno Karabagh gained de-facto independence making use of its inalienable right of self-determination in conformity with USSR legislation and international norms of right.

Azerbaijani aspirations to expand its sovereignty over Nagorno Karabagh are groundless. He expressed concern that Azerbaijan puts under doubt the years long of experience and efforts of the co-chair states to find a peaceful solution to the issue.

The regular attacks against the Minsk Group are directed against peaceful settlement of the conflict and aim to justify Azerbaijan's refusals of the proposals of the co-chairs, Kirakosian said. Armenian Ambassador was concerned by the recent announcement of the president of Azerbaijan, speculating the religious factor. The Armenian Ambassador stated that Azerbaijani demands to expand the format of the Minsk Group are un-constructive and negatively impact the peace process.

He praised the coordinated efforts of the Minsk Group mediator states, Russia, France and the US, and added that Turkey, as a Minsk Group member, has adopted a contrary approach, speculating the Nagorno Karabakh issue in favor of its geopolitical interests. The Armenian side recorded that Azerbaijani policy is the main obstacle for the conflict settlement, which tries to enforce its will on Armenia and Artsakh relying on Baku's economic and military capacities.



On the margins of an international security conference in Munich, Germany, on February 13, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian with the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

manship. All this proves that Baku is doing everything to disrupt the settlement process. Moreover, these actions of the Azerbaijani side, as well as a public rejection of the meeting with the co-chairs add to the preservation of the status quo, against which the co-chairing countries and Armenia have constantly spoken," Nalbandian stated.

While in Munich, the top Armenian diplomat also met with US Deputy Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and discussed with her the process of settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov did not meet with the Minsk Group co-chairs. Instead, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met with Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

other issues are subordinate to that and will find their logical and fair solution parallel to the resolution of the problem. As long as the main problem remains, as long as the status of Artsakh remains undetermined, the problem will not find its solution...

"... We should get used to the idea that to the East from Martakert and Martuni and to the West from Gyumri and Armavir we don't have real partners. We have lived without them until now, maintaining more or less our rate of development. Let's think that there is nothing there but a bottomless and unsurpassable swamp," Sargsian stated at a meeting with representatives of the country's executive, legislative and judicial authorities on February 12.

Meanwhile, at the current stage, the mediators are trying to offer not a

Armenian Assembly Seeks Armenia Priorities for White House Budget

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Act, which restricts assistance to Azerbaijan until it ceases its hostile actions against Armenia.

The proposed budget also envisions nearly \$3 billion for migration and refugee assistance, highlighting that "the world is struggling with humanitarian crises that are unprecedented, both in severity and duration. Through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)'s global programs, the US government seeks to protect and assist the world's most vulnerable people including refugees, conflict victims, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless persons, and vulnera-

ble migrants."

"The Assembly will continue to advance key priorities for the benefit of the Armenian people and the strengthening of US-Armenia relations, as it did last year with its testimony before the House and Senate Appropriations Committees," stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "We must ensure that Armenia has the resources to address the compelling humanitarian needs as a result of the crisis in Syria and the influx of refugees going to Armenia," Ardouny added.

Armenia is also slated to receive funding through a renewable energy pilot project known as the Program for

Scaling Up Renewable Energy (SREP). SREP helps demonstrate the economic, social and environmental viability of low-carbon development pathways. The overall value of currently planned SREP investments is \$604 million for 18 countries, including Armenia.

The Administration's proposal comes as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are considering a \$4 billion bailout for Azerbaijan, which the Assembly strongly opposed in a January 29 letter to Secretary of State John Kerry and Treasury Secretary Jack Lew. The Assembly will continue to oppose any bailout of Azerbaijan, especially if it includes US taxpayer dollars.



INTERNATIONAL

Turkey Still Governed by Young Turk Mentality, Ternon Says

PARIS (*Agos*)— “The victims of genocide or crimes against humanity are as aggrieved as the ones who died in a war, car crash or natural disaster. Denying this fact is to perpetuate the crime,” historian Yves Ternon said in an interview with *Agos*.

Asked whether it's proper to make a comparison between Holocaust and Armenian genocide, he said: “Of course we can and in fact, we should. All genocide studies complement each other. Though there are some differences between these two genocides, there are also a lot of similarities. First of all, both of them were based on an ideology. Holocaust was grounded on racist ideology, which is based on anti-Semitism, or colloquially, on “hate of Jews”. A similar ideology was prevalent among the Young Turks: Turkism, meaning Turkish nationalism and pan-Turkism. At the end, these ideologies went so far that the idea of getting rid of everyone who is not Turk prevailed. I mean, getting rid of Christians, for instance, Armenians.”

“On the other hand, there is an important difference between two genocides. One of them was a pure racist ideology; this is what happened in Holocaust. Comparing the Armenians in Ottoman Empire and Jews in Germany, Jews hadn't been constituting

a problem; I mean, there wasn't any religious-ethnic problems or territorial issues. However, Armenians had an autonomy problem in Anatolia and they had always been subjected to discrimination, because they are Christians. In this sense, Armenians constituted a “threat” in Anatolia. They had to eliminate it, but how? By annihilating the Armenians. The frameworks of these two genocides is different, but both of them were based on an ideology and resulted in a genocide,” he said.

Speaking about the denial of the Armenian Genocide, the historian said “it is more than denial, it is an ignoring policy.” “Today, Turkey doesn't only deny the annihilation of Armenians, but also ignores their existence. As Taner Akçam said, Turkish identity is based on the non-existence of Armenians. If Turkey accepts the genocide, it would also accept their existence. This means that Turkish identity would be harmed in part. This is of course really hard. Thus, I think that the denial will go on for years. Turkey also denies the existence of Kurds. Turkish identity doesn't accept Kurds with their Kurdish identity; they want to see them as Turkish, which is not true. We have to acknowledge that Turkish identity is problematic and it constitutes the foundations of Turkish Republic. Unsettling these founda-

tions is not easy; it requires efforts that will last for years. Thankfully, there are a lot of scientists who work on this issue and some of them in Turkey, which is a good thing.”

Referring to the perspectives of social transformation in Turkey, Ternon said: “Turkey is still being governed by the Young Turks mentality. Unionist policies remain. I mean, there is change, but it is not enough. In short, there are three reasons why I think that the denial of Armenian Genocide will continue. First reason is the impossibility of reconstitution of Turkish identity. Second one is the problem of compensation and the third one is the impossibility of a transformation in Kemalist or slamist political ideology. Thus, if there is no democracy in Turkey and a radical change, a social transformation is difficult. On the other hand, there are political parties like HDP which are ready to accept the Armenian Genocide. There are minority, but they are there. There might be a change, if the number of such parties increase.”

(Via Public Radio of Armenia)

HDP Leader Accuses Government of 'Hiding Killings of Civilians'

ANKARA (*Hurriyet Daily News*) — Ankara has been deliberately obscuring events going on in the restive southeastern district of Cizre, Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Co-Chair Selahattin Demirtas has said, following reports that scores of civilians were killed in an operation against militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

“Here is the situation in Cizre: There were 70-90 people in total in a few buildings around a cellar. There were no clashes but there was artillery fired [by the military],” Demirtas said on February 9.

“They committed a massacre in Cizre but they cannot announce it. They are scattering the dead bodies into side streets and ruined houses as if the dead bodies were already there,” he added.

Cizre, in the province of Sirnak, has been under a punishing curfew for six weeks as Turkish security forces pursue a relentless campaign against PKK militants. Reports have claimed that security forces raided a building in Cizre, killing up to 60 wounded people who had been sheltering there.

However, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on February 8 dismissed claims that civilians were targeted.

HDP deputies had said dozens of wounded civilians were trapped in the cellar of the ruined building in Cizre, alleging that ambulances were being blocked from accessing the building and seven people had already died.

Davutoglu claimed ambulances had been sent to the building but were unable to reach the wounded due to ongoing clashes.

Meanwhile, the HDP announced on February 9 that two HDP deputies have been holding talks in Washington, while another has been in Moscow in order to attend the opening of a representation office of Syrian Kurds.

Urfa deputy Osman Baydemir and Bingol deputy Hisyar Ozsoy, who also serves as the party's deputy co-chair in charge of external affairs, are in Washington to hold “a series of diplomatic meetings,” the HDP said in a written statement.

International News

Berj Fazlian Dies

BEIRUT — Director and actor Berj Fazlian passed away in Beirut on February 15. Born in Istanbul, Fazlian was considered one of the important founders of the Lebanese theater. Through his work in particular with the Rahbani brothers and Feyrouz, he succeeded in creating a golden age for the theater.

He appeared in dozens of films and produced numerous plays. He played a prominent role in Armenian as well as Lebanese theater.

He was a respected lecturer on theater.

He was married to the artist Sirvart Fazlian (née Gregorian). He also leaves his children, Harout Fazlian, conductor of the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra.

Armenian Dies in Aleppo Bombing

ALEPPO (*Armenpress*) — Late in the evening of February 13 armed terrorist groups bombed several districts of Aleppo, and there ere casualties, the Aleppo-based *Gandzasar* newspaper reported.

Viken Voskerichian, 33, was among the victims.

Kessab Residents Receive Humanitarian Aid from Russia

KESSAB (*Armenpress*) — The Syrian town of Kessab, which borders Turkey, received humanitarian aid from Russia and Syria.

Two Russian planes delivered some 50 metric tons of Russian humanitarian aid for residents of conflict-torn Syria. The cargo includes food, medicine, clothing, school supplies, as well as toys and treats for children.

It is being distributed among residents of cities blocked by militants from terrorist organizations.

Earlier, a new batch of humanitarian aid prepared jointly by Russia and Syria was delivered to the Syrian city of Deir el Zour (ez-Zor), besieged by Daesh militants.

Historic Armenian Home In Malatya Razed

ISTANBUL (*Public Radio of Armenia*) — A historic Armenian building in Darende, Malatya has been destroyed, *Ermenihaber.am* reports, quoting the Turkish *Sondakika* website.

According to the source, the mayor of Darende decided to dismantle all dilapidated buildings in the city.

The 200-year-old Armenian house, known as “Demircilerin evi” (Blacksmith's house), has also been razed. The historic house had been empty for 20 years.

Its current owner, Hacı Ahmet Söylemez, has said: “Our house was the oldest one in Darende. The doors and windows were made by Armenian woodworkers. It was a cultural heritage that was abandoned and then destroyed.”

Azeri Court Prohibits Couple from Traveling Abroad for Treatment

BAKU (*Armenpress*) — Baku's Yasamal Court did not allow Leila and Arif Yunus to travel abroad for treatment, said their lawyer Elchin Sadigov. According to Sadigov, Leyla Yunus is suffering from chronic hepatitis, hypertension, diabetes, and a stone in the gallbladder, causing excruciating pain. She needs urgent surgery. Arif Yunus suffers from life-threatening hypertension and severe pain in the neck. According to the opinion of medical experts, the treatment of the couple requires highly specialized medical treatment. The lawyer said the court decision is illegal so that he will appeal. Leyla and Arif Yunus were first meted out eight-and-a-half- and seven-year prison sentences respectively. The Baku Court of Appeal gave them suspended sentences with a probation period of 5 years. The two human rights defenders were arrested for criticizing the government and their social activities.



During the seminar, Armenian, Assyrian, Jewish and Roma participants from around Europe discussed how education can better address the needs of diasporas.

Seminar in Bulgaria Seeks Common Advocacy in Europe

SOFIA, Bulgaria — On January 15-17, AGBU Europe, the European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS) and Phiren Amenca hosted a seminar titled “Education and Empowerment” in Sofia, Bulgaria. It was the third seminar in the “A Europe of Diasporas” project, which aims to promote exchange, solidarity and common advocacy in a Europe of rising tension and prejudice.

During the seminar, Armenian, Assyrian, Jewish and Roma participants from around Europe discussed how education can better address the needs of diasporas. Among other ideas, the participants agreed that schools should give an opportunity to children of diasporas to learn about their heritage, including their language. They agreed to support inclusive education that also features the contribution of diasporas to European society as well as youth movements and informal education programs.

During a public conference entitled “United in Diversity: Educating Europe's Diasporas” at Sofia University, Robert Djerassi, advisor to the Minister of Education and Science of Bulgaria and Deyan Kolev, chairman of the Roma educational organization Centre Amalipe, explored the Bulgarian experience of providing education to children and young people who belong to diasporas. “Intercultural education, educating for tolerance are important not only for minorities. They're also important for the entire society. If you don't invest in forming tolerance you can't achieve sustainable growth in the Bulgarian economy and society as well as in European society,” said Deyan Kolev.

Over the course of the seminar, the participants visited AGBU Sofia, the Armenian community center and church, and the Jewish community center in Sofia. The next milestone in the “A Europe of Diasporas” project will be a conference at the European Parliament in May, where the proposals and results developed over the course of the project will be presented.

Community News

Knights and Daughters of Vartan Team up with Facing History for Essay Competition

NEW YORK – High School and College students are invited to participate in an essay contest to actively support the 101st Anniversary Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide that will be held in Times Square (43th St/Broadway) on Sunday, April 24, 2-4 p.m. Co-sponsors of the contest include the Knights & Daughters of Vartan, www.kofv.org, an international Armenian fraternal organization with headquarters in the US, and Facing History and Ourselves, www.facinghistory.org, an international educational and professional development organization.

One winner and two runners-up will be selected by a panel of judges. The winner will receive \$300, second place \$200 and third place \$100. The winners will also be recognized at the Armenian Genocide Commemoration at Times Square and depending on time constraints, may read their essays.

Deadline for submissions is Friday, April 1.

Students need to answer the question: When did you first learn about the Armenian Genocide? What actions need to be taken globally to help increase genocide awareness and prevent history from repeating itself?

There is an 800-word limit. The essay should be double-spaced, 12 point Arial type. Include student's full name, age, teacher's full name and subject area, name of high school or college, year in school, hometown/state, phone #, and email address at the top of each page of the essay.)

The three winners will be contacted directly and announced to the mainstream and Armenian media the week of Monday, April 11.

Email essays by Friday, April 1 to Taleen at april24nyc@gmail.com.

ANCIS Holds Fundraiser In Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES – On January 16, more than 100 guests gathered in the home of Mardik and Aleen Oruncakciel to express their support to the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS), a think tank in Armenia.

After welcoming remarks by the hosts, the participants took in a report about ACNIS's mission and activities by its founder, Raffi K. Hovannisian, who detailed both the favorable progress and the contemporary challenges facing Armenia and its people the world over. He thanked the Oruncakciel family for its steadfast solidarity in trailblazing initiatives which strengthen the Armenian nation, and shared his vision of a new Hayastan as the source and inspiration for present and future generations of compatriots across the globe. "We all must assume responsibility for a piece of our holy rock, and become stakeholders in the empowerment of the land we so love," he said.

Upon viewing a brief video summary of the Center's record of public service during the past two decades (available at www.acnis.am), the guests cheered two visiting high-school exchange students from Armenia, Anna Minassian and Armine Gasparyan, who offered their thoughts and sentiments about the homeland's future and highlighted the role of the youth in making the Armenian dream come true.

Ara Dabandjian of the Element Band enchanted the evening with creative renditions of Armenian songs and melodies.

"Aleen and I are pleased to have hosted this informative gathering for the Diaspora's critical thinkers and to encourage others to stand behind ACNIS and similarly-worthwhile endeavors in Armenia. We are grateful to those who accepted our invitation and helped raise spirits and resources for this noble purpose," concluded Mardik Oruncakciel.



Karine Tshgnavoryan was identified as a matched stem cell donor for a patient in Australia, her own brother.

Matched Donor's Stem Cells Harvested in Yerevan for Her Brother in Australia

LOS ANGELES – Karine Tshgnavoryan would have never known that only she could have helped save the life of her brother in Australia, if a month ago the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry had not started to look for a stem cell donor match in Armenia.

"In this case, since the patient in Australia is of Armenian descent, the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry at once contacted us, requesting that we try to find a local donor match," said Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan, the medical director of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

As soon as Nazaretyan and his staff identified a matched donor in Armenia, namely Karine Tshgnavoryan, they notified their colleagues in Australia and went on to collect stem cells from her. The non-invasive harvesting procedure, which takes only four hours, was performed at the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry's Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, on February 9. Since the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry is a member of Bone Marrow Donors Worldwide, the process of shipping the harvested stem cells to Australia was implemented immediately.

"Our registry is linked with 67 national registries across the globe, which means that once a matched donor is identified, the process of shipping out the harvested stem cells for the patient suffering from a life-threatening blood-related illness is performed with absolutely no delay," said Dr. Sevak Avagyan, the executive director of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. "To date, matched donors in our registry have saved the lives of 25 patients worldwide, including non-Armenians. Karine Tshgnavoryan is our latest matched donor. Days like this make our work all the more worthwhile."

To date, the registry has recruited more than 28,000 donors in 28 countries across four continents, identified more than 3,500 patients, and facilitated 25 bone marrow transplants. For more information, visit abmdr.am.



Dr. Andranik Mshetsyan and a lab assistant administer the stem cell harvesting.

Armenian Assembly Of America Urges Action on Azerbaijan Cease-Fire Violations

WASHINGTON – This week, the Armenian Assembly of America submitted written testimony to the Helsinki Commission's hearing entitled: "Update on the OSCE: Religious Freedom, Anti-Semitism, and Rule of Law," citing Azerbaijan's escalating and deadly cease-fire violations and urging additional action.

"As the Commission is aware, the Assembly remains deeply concerned about the authoritarian regime in Azerbaijan, its jailing of journalists and abandonment of democratic values, particularly for America's ally Armenia," Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny's testimony stated.

Chairman Smith opened the hearing by stating his concern for human rights crises in Europe and Eurasia. Smith described repression in Azerbaijan as "rife," especially in regards to freedom of the press. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Azerbaijan is the leading nation in Eurasia for jailing journalists. The Human Rights Watch 2016 World Report states that "the [Azerbaijan] government's unrelenting crackdown decimated independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and media," resulting in imprisonment, criminal investigations, harassment, or travel bans.

The Assembly, for its part, highlighted Azerbaijan's continued ceasefire violations in 2014 and 2015, which have been marked by an unprecedented increase in civilian casualties, including the targeting of a kindergarten in Armenia's Tavush region. There have been over 54,000 cease-fire violations committed by Azerbaijan on the line of contact from 2014 through 2015, with an estimated total of nearly 1 million shots fired.

"These violations constitute a clear disregard for the rule of law and pose a direct threat to fundamental freedoms," Ardouny said.

During the hearing, Chairman Smith noted that members of the Commission recently traveled to Baku twice, where they met with President Aliyev in rather lengthy meetings on human rights issues on both occasions. As a result of these discussions, Chairman Smith introduced the Azerbaijan Democracy Act of 2015. Chairman Smith said the reaction by the Aliyev government and parliament was "startling." "They claimed the Armenians put me, Chris Smith, up to it. The Armenians had absolutely no input, advance notice, or anything else about the bill," according to Smith. "So when I hear this coming from the parliament, and coming from major media and presidential spokesmen, I wonder about their credibility on other things," he said.

The Assembly also welcomed the Royce-Engel initiative to US Ambassador James Warlick, US Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, calling for: (1) an agreement from all sides not to deploy snipers along the line of contact; (2) the placement of OSCE-monitored, advanced gunfire-locator systems and sound-ranging equipment to determine the source of attacks along the line of contact; and (3) the deployment of additional OSCE observers along the line of contact to better monitor cease-fire violations.

"We strongly urge the Commission to support this important initiative by convening a special hearing to examine the scope and nature of these violations as well as review steps needed to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict," stated Ardouny.

Below is the full text of Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny's testimony, which was submitted to the Helsinki Commission on February 11.

Chairman Smith, Co-Chairman Wicker, distinguished Commissioners, the Armenian Assembly of America welcomes today's impor



COMMUNITY NEWS

Fresno County Supervisor Debbie Poochigian Won't Seek Third Term

By Marc Benjamin and John Ellis

FRESNO (*Fresno Bee*) – Debbie Poochigian, the longtime behind-the-scenes political activist who stepped into the spotlight to make a successful Fresno County supervisor run, said in January that she won't seek a third term this year.

Don't think, however, that this is the end of her political life.

"There are a lot of opportunities in 2018 – and I want to be in the mix," Poochigian said in an interview.

The 63-year-old Fresno Republican sent a letter to constituents on Tuesday saying she wouldn't seek re-election. Her reasons for stepping down weren't specific, other than she said it was time for the new generation of supervisors to move the county forward.

With Poochigian's departure, only Supervisor Henry R. Perea will remain from the five members who were on the dais as recently as late 2012. And with Perea's possible Fresno mayoral run this year, the likelihood exists that the entire Fresno County Board of Supervisors will have turned over in just four years.

As for Poochigian's next step, the most obvious would be a run for the state's 8th Senate District seat currently held by Twain Harte Republican Tom Berryhill. That's the seat once held by Poochigian's husband, Chuck, up until he reached his term limit in 2006. He now is a state appellate court justice.

"I don't know about the state Senate, but I really am not closing the door on elective office in the future," Poochigian said.

She mentioned that current Assembly Member Jim Patterson has said he will run for Berryhill's seat, which would open up the Fresno Republican's state Assembly seat. Poochigian lives in that Assembly district.

She also mentioned "down-ticket" races, a hint at a possible statewide run for one of the

offices below governor that will be up for grabs in 2018. Another possibility is the state Board of Equalization, where George Runner – whose district covers the Fresno area – reaches his term limit in 2018.

Poochigian is a scion of the Koligian political family. Her father, Deran Koligian, was a five-term Fresno County supervisor. But Poochigian spent many years supporting the political career of her husband, Chuck, and then was a driving organizational force in local Republican politics. She shepherded local fundraisers and rallies for major politicians, including President George W. Bush.

In 2008, she became a politician in her own right, beating Clovis City Council Member Nathan Magsig to replace Bob Waterston in eastern Fresno County's District 5.

Poochigian said that when she joined the board, Fresno County "really was in a fiscal crisis." That board, with Phil Larson, Judy Case McNairy, Susan Anderson and Perea joining Poochigian, "made good decisions," Poochigian said. "We turned this county around."

In her seven years on the board, Poochigian has been a strong fiscal conservative, often questioning financial aspects that other supervisors didn't think were significant. She said she considered her work on finance issues among her major accomplishments.

"I've had a pretty good run," she said. "I worked really hard at this job for seven years, and I plan to continue to do that for the next 11 months. I'm not committing to anybody or anything else. I will finish this out with the same hard work and energy I've had the last seven years."

But Poochigian also could be tough and partisan – and didn't back down from political fights while on the board.

One of the most memorable clashes pitted



Fresno County Supervisor Debbie Poochigian Fresno

her against then-First 5 Executive Director Kendra Rogers over the direction of the agency – which uses state tobacco tax funds to bolster health and education programs for families and their children from birth to age 5 – and its controversial \$15 million headquarters in downtown Fresno. Poochigian, along with Larson and Case McNairy, called the building an unnecessary extravagance.

But there also seemed to be a political battle of wills at work as the controversy stretched over an entire year, starting when Rogers talked of challenging Poochigian this year. Now, Rogers is gone and the new building is finished and occupied.

Political allies Larson and Case McNairy also are gone, and with it Poochigian's place in a solid board majority with common political goals.

Poochigian said she is not frustrated with the new board, which has seen her go from a position of power in the majority to the losing end of several votes – some of them 4-1 against her.

She said the new board already has accomplished some good things and she plans to continue to contribute for the remainder of this year.

"I'm not done yet," she said. "I have loved every single minute of this job, and I still enjoy it, and I know I'm going to miss it."

Poochigian's announcement – done via a

constituent letter and news release – caught many by surprise, including some of her board colleagues.

Fresno County Board of Supervisors Chairman Buddy Mendes said he "was very surprised" by the announcement.

"Debbie is probably one of the smartest people I ever worked with," he said. "She also is one of the most principled people I've ever known."

Her announcement created a major political vacancy just less than five months before the June 7 primary election.

And one elected official – Magsig – wasted no time in saying he would run to replace her.

"With Debbie Poochigian's decision not to run, I will be seeking that seat," Magsig said. He took out papers in January to collect signatures that will allow him to have a reduced filing fee.

Magsig, 39, who has served on the Clovis City Council since 2001, works for Fresno Equal Opportunity Commission.

Clovis City Council Member Lynne Ashbeck also could consider seeking the seat. On Tuesday, she said she was not ready to make a commitment to run.

If they do, Clovis could have its first City Council election since 2009. The past three have been canceled because none of the incumbents were challenged.

Others could jump into the supervisor race as well, but the district's geography and tight timeline could limit those seeking to replace Poochigian.

Both Magsig and Ashbeck already have a built-in constituency in Clovis – which makes up a good chunk of the district – and that gives them an early advantage if either decides to run. Besides Clovis east of Highway 168 and Minnewawa Avenue, the district also takes in a chunk of central Fresno, the Sunnyside area of southeast Fresno, the northern fringes of Sanger and all of the foothill and mountain parts of the county.

"I've announced early enough to give everyone an opportunity if they are interested," Poochigian said. "We'll see who wants to step forward."

Will she endorse? She said she is a voter, taxpayer and resident of the 5th supervisor district, and as such will study the candidates and decide who to support. She may – or may not – make that an official endorsement.

If it comes, it likely won't be for Magsig.

Asked about his candidacy, she offered a curt response: "That's nice."

Virginia D. Bandazian Scholarship Fund Applications Available for 2016

WASHINGTON – Grant applications are being accepted from prospective candidates of the Virginia D. Bandazian Scholarship Fund for 2016. Her children established the Fund after the 1997 passing of Virginia D. Bandazian. The goal of this fund is for the education of Armenian Women whose legal residence is in the Communities of Virginia, Maryland and/or Washington, DC area.

A new board has been created for the Virginia D. Bandazian Scholarship Fund, and now includes her grandchildren: Ani T. Khatchadourian of Watertown, Mass., Managing Trustee; Raffi Bandazian of Richmond, Va. and Sona K. Pomfret of Richmond, Va. They look forward to moving forward with their grandmother's vision of education for Armenian women.

The scholarship is an open grant awarded to full-time female Armenian students on the basis of merit and need, an undergraduate or graduate student and who is a student of an accredited university or college in the United States of America. At least two letters of rec-

ommendation must be received from Armenian Organizations and/or Armenian Community Leaders or Parish Priest of the Virginia, Maryland and/or Washington, DC area verifying the involvement of the applicant in Armenian activities and good standing.


The application can be found and printed from the official webpage, virginiabandazianfund.squarespace.com. The current grants are \$1,000 and will be awarded prior to June 1, 2016. Applications must be filed before April 30 with all information, picture, documents and transcripts.

For additional information and application forms, contact Ani T. Khatchadourian at ani.jerikian@gmail.com, Raffi Bandazian at raffi@bandazian.com or Sona Pomfret at sonapom@aol.com; or visit www.virginiabandazianfund.squarespace.com.

Virginia D. Bandazian was an advocate for the education of Armenian Women and believed "Without its Women being educated, a society cannot advance."

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OBITUARY

Charles Garabedian Dies at 92

Artist's Colorful Paintings Belied Dark Themes

By Jill Leovy

LOS ANGELES (*Los Angeles Times*) — Charles Garabedian, modern artist of mythological themes, who was raised in East L.A., fought Air Force missions in World War II and studied history before his late-bloomer drift into painting, died last week at his Santa Monica home from prostate cancer, said his wife, Gwendolyn. He was 92.

Garabedian was known for bright, cannily cartoonish oil paintings in which scenes from Greek epics, even savage ones, were awash in cheerful color.

His work married wisdom with childlike innocence. The colors were pretty, the themes often dark.

The figures in his paintings wore enigmatic smiles. Dreamily entwined, or braced in

his influence; he was known for his independence.

"He makes no compromises," said his longtime friend and fellow artist Ed Moses said of him in 2003. "He is just into the painting as painting."

Garabedian quietly rejected the role of artist-as-salesman. Talking of mainstream art, he once said, "I just can't do it."

He spoke of painting for himself, and his children and grandchildren. "You want to know who you are," he said in a 2003 interview. "You look over the body of your work, and say, 'That's who I was, and who I may become.'"

This internal drive won him a passionate following in West Coast art circles, where critics and fellow painters saw him as an artist's artist. Among them, he gained a kind of anti-fame for not being famous — "notoriously under-recognized," is how one gallery director put it.

Garabedian was born December 29, 1923, in Detroit, the youngest of three children of Verkin and Eglia Garabedian, Armenians who had fled the Genocide. When he was 2, his mother died. His father, an autoworker disabled from by accident at work, sent the children to live in an orphanage where they remained until an uncle retrieved them seven years later.

The uncle took them to East L.A., where Garabedian went to Garfield High School, then the Air Force. Stationed in England during the war, he served 30 missions as a waist gunner on a B-24, his wife said.

Afterward, he studied literature on the GI Bill at UC Santa Barbara and got a degree in history from the University of Southern California. He worked in a factory and at odd jobs, including as a Union Pacific night yard man. Garabedian met the artist Moses, a neighbor, who took him to an art class, his wife said. He took to it. He was 31.

He earned a master's degree at UCLA and was in his early 40s when his first gallery show finally came in 1965. He followed the advice of one of his teachers, Elliot Elgart, who had told him, "You're too old for technique, go for the poetry," Gwendolyn Garabedian said. A solo show at the Whitney Museum in 1976 established his national profile.

Over the years, he was neglected and rediscovered — and appeared unfazed either way. He taught at UCLA and elsewhere, and toiled at his sunlit Westside studio on Washington Boulevard.

A reporter once found him there, at work on a painting he'd been perfecting for 13 years.

Sales were "not important as a sign of success," he said, but they were "important to buy groceries."

Claremont Graduate University professor



Charles Garabedian

ambiguous postures, their attitudes reflected Garabedian's: "There are no absolutes," he told a *Times* writer in 2011. "There is nothing you can really count on. And I think it's better that way."

The UCLA-trained Garabedian won a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship in 1977 and a Guggenheim fellowship three years later, and his work is included in numerous collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

Yet despite honors, Garabedian never gained a large public following. His career was marked by long periods of obscurity.

Admirers occasionally sought to place him with John Baldessari, Mike Kelley and other late 20th-century artists who tested East Coast constraints and injected an imaginative California sensibility into contemporary art.

But mostly, Garabedian was not known for



Charles Garabedian in front of some of his creations

and critic David Pagel, writing for *The Times*, has characterized Garabedian's work as "user-friendly pictures" of "archetypal stories." He sometimes used plaster, cardboard and other materials. But most of his work consisted of paintings on canvas, nearly always of human beings, at the edge of caricature.

"He was trying to make something beautiful," said his wife. Of his figures, she said, "on first look sometimes they look a little homely or gangly, but they resonate."

His early work was informed by crime and television. "Daytime TV," which Pagel called "riveting," is a comical yet curiously poignant swirl of images — a gun, a disembodied hand — alongside characters who appear appalled to find themselves trapped inside a television set.

In later years, he returned repeatedly to his favorite themes, Greek mythology, and especially "The Iliad," which his wife said he loved for its operatic quality. Broken Greek temples and red-brick walls distinguish these paintings.

He painted Agamemnon, ridiculous and cursed, as he prepared to slay his writhing daughter, and Dido lolling on the beach, locking eyes with Aeneas.

He rendered mythological characters as pink and vulnerable, yet also tragic — at once childish, knowing and self-aware. "There is no escaping from his wily art," Pagel wrote.

Besides his wife, whom he married in 1963, Garabedian is survived by his daughters Claire Garabedian and Sophia Oceau, and three grandchildren.

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Kevork Der Alexanian to Give Illustrated Talk on Genocide Orphans

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — On Sunday, February 21 at 4 p.m., the Ararat-Eskijian Museum will host a program titled "The Pain of Armenian Genocide Orphans as Told Through Family Stories and Arabic & Turkish Literature by Kevork Der Alexanian."

Growing up in the Syrian-Armenian community, Kevork Der Alexanian witnessed the unbearable pain endured by those who had survived the Armenian Genocide. The silence they kept and the hope they lived became part of their destiny and was reflected in the character of the community and in family units. His father was among the countless orphans, and his grandmother was one of many who were widowed by the atrocities. He spent many years on a personal journey discovering their stories along with those of many others. He compiled a collection of vintage photographs of genocide orphans and articles about them appearing in Syrian and Arabic literature and print. He will be presenting his findings in an illustrated talk.

Kevork Der Alexanian was born in Latakia, Syria. Except for his parents, two uncles and paternal grandmother, his family was annihilated in the Adana Massacres. He attended the local St. Jacobs Elementary School and then Aleppo College. While there, he developed an appreciation for art and an interest in studying history and began accumulating his collection. Kevork has always been active in the community. He established two branches of the Armenian Cultural Chapter, one in Latakia and the other in Orange County, California. He remains involved in church activities Serving on the Board of Trustees.

Sunday February 21, 2016, 4PM, Ararat-Eskijian Museum Sheen Memorial Chapel 15105 Mission Hills Road, Mission Hills, Calif. 91345

Open to the public, free admission.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Assembly Of America Urges Action on Azerbaijan Cease-Fire Violations

ASSEMBLY, from page 4

tant hearing. We share the concerns of the Commission with respect to threats to religious freedom and the rule of law as well as the specter of anti-Semitism, whether in Europe or beyond.

The Assembly especially appreciates the Commission's ongoing vigilance in shining a bright light on human rights violations in an effort to bring about much needed change and to protect religious and minority communities. In particular, we remain deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of Christians and other minorities at risk in the Middle East and elsewhere. As ISIS continues its brutal targeting of innocent civilians, images of which evoke the horrors of the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, and other crimes against humanity, it reminds us all about the urgent challenges before us and the need to redouble our efforts to prevent atrocities from occurring.

We also appreciate the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), as well as the OSCE Minsk Group which seeks to find a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. We welcome the introduction of the Azerbaijan Democracy Act of 2015 by Chairman Smith, which sends a strong message that the United States takes the defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms seriously.

As the Commission is aware, the Assembly remains deeply concerned about the authoritarian regime in Azerbaijan, its jailing of journalists and abandonment of democratic values, and the impact it has on the region, particularly for America's ally Armenia. Unfortunately, these authoritarian trends have spilled over into the OSCE-mediated Nagorno Karabakh peace process wherein the Azerbaijani government continues to violate the 1994 cease-fire agreement at an alarming rate and with more powerful weaponry.

According to reports filed with the United Nations (UN) and the OSCE, there were over 11,500 cross-border violations committed by Azerbaijan against Armenia from 2014 through 2015, constituting an estimate of more than 200,000 shots fired. In Armenia's Tavush region, a kindergarten has been the repeated target of sniper fire. This is an outrageous violation. The targeting of innocent civilians and children must end.

With respect to the line of contact between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan, there have been over 54,000 cease-fire violations committed by Azerbaijan during the same period. These violations constitute an estimated total of nearly 1 million shots fired.

Some of the weapons used by Azerbaijan in its attacks against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh in 2014-2015 include: grenade launchers, large

caliber machine guns, large caliber sniper weapons, mortars, and howitzers. Not surprisingly 2014 and 2015 have been marked by increased civilian deaths and casualties. The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs in a Joint Statement in December 2015 said "there is no justification for the death and injury of innocent civilians." "We especially condemn the use of mortars and other heavy weaponry," the joint statement highlighted "and regret deeply the civilian casualties these weapons have caused."

These violations constitute a clear disregard for the rule of law and pose a direct threat to fundamental freedoms. Given these egregious violations, the Assembly welcomed last year's initiative by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce and Ranking Member Eliot Engel to address the dramatic increase of deadly cease-fire violations. In their letter to Ambassador James Warlick, U.S. Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, they called for three concrete steps to be taken. These include: (1) an agreement from all sides not to deploy snipers along the line of contact; (2) the placement of OSCE-monitored, advanced gunfire-locator systems and sound-ranging equipment to determine the source of attacks along the line of contact; and (3) the deployment of additional OSCE observers along the line of contact to better monitor cease-fire violations. The letter was signed by 85 Members of Congress.

We hope that these recommendations are implemented to help ensure the safety and security of the people of Armenia and Karabakh. Further, we strongly urge the Commission to support this important initiative by convening a special hearing to examine the scope and nature of these violations as well as review steps needed to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The United States has a vested interest in advancing peace and bringing stability to the region - and a key to stability is respect and adherence to the fundamental tenets of the rule of law and human rights.

Chairman Smith and Co-Chairman Wicker, we commend you for holding this hearing and look forward to working with the Helsinki Commission on these and other pressing issues as we pursue shared values in promoting democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law.

Boyamian to Discuss Father's Memoir of Surviving Genocide

WATERTOWN - On Monday, March, 7, Houry Boyamian, principal of St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, will be the speaker at the St. James Men's Club. The topic will be the memoirs of her father, Karnig Panian, which were published last year, titled *Goodbye Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*.

Boyamian has been the principal of St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School since 1988. She has served the school with determination, bringing a sense of identity coupled with a dedication to the best education possible. Under her administration, in 2003, St. Stephen's became the first Armenian day school in New England to be fully accredited by the Association of Independent Schools in New England.

In 2011, she introduced the STEM Initiative, putting a special emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. She has also played an important role in the realization of the expansion projects of the school. Boyamian is fluent in four languages: Armenian, English, French and Arabic. She is a graduate of Nishan Palanjian Jemaran/Academy. She holds a French Baccalaureate in Literature and Philosophy from College Protestant Francais, a BS in pharmacy from St. Joseph University and a Master's Degree in education from the University of Massachusetts.

For her dedication to the mission of the school and for her leadership role in the community, she has received in 2005 the Mesrob Mashdots medal from the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia and in 2008 the Queen Zabel medal from the Armenian Prelacy, as well as a Proclamation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

The social hour starts with Mezza at 6:15 p.m. followed by a complete Lenten dinner at 7 p.m. The cost is \$15 per person. The dinner meeting will be at the St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall.

The program is open to the public and ladies are welcome.



Houry Boyamian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Ervine to Present Series on Selected Armenian Thinkers

FRESNO – Dr. Roberta Ervine of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, the 12th Henry K. Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies at California State University, Fresno, will give three public lectures on the general theme of “In the Harsh Light of Genocide: Insights of Selected Armenian Thinkers” in the Spring semester.

The first lecture in the series, “Armenians on Immortality,” will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, February 29, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191, on the Fresno State campus. A reception will take place from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the University Business Center Gallery, just prior to the lecture.

The Genocide forced Armenians to reconsider their human experience in the light of mass

death and dislocation. In an insecure and threatening world, what can one depend on? Is there a life after death, and if so, who is in charge of it? Where does it happen? What is it like? What qualities make a person, a community, or an ethnic group immortal? This lecture will explore writers of the new, post-Genocide thinking on the topic of immortality, and look at where Armenians turned to find inspiration and consolation in the decades immediately following the Genocide.

The Armenian Genocide restructured Armenian thinking in many ways. On an almost week-by-week basis, Armenian periodical literature from the 1920’s and 1930’s records the process by which these changes worked themselves out in the minds of survivors and Diaspora Armenians alike. What was essential

going forward? How would the worldwide Diaspora remain Armenian? How should Armenians greet the founding of an Armenian state? What can be said concerning the fundamental values of humanity in the face of widespread and wanton death and destruction?

None of these questions found an easy answer in the mind of Armenian thinkers. This series of lectures will focus on questions from the Genocide period that are as relevant now as they were a century ago. The spectrum of thinking about these deep, human and Armenian matters reveals a range of experience and willingness to engage with difficult issues that will surely resonate with the Armenians of today.

Lecture II in the series, on Wednesday, March 30, will be on the topic of “Armenians on What Matters Most.” Lecture III, on Wednesday, April

27, will be on “Holy Vengeance: Three Hierarchs of the Genocide Speak to America’s Armenians.”

Ervine earned her PhD in classical Armenian Studies from Columbia University and has done extensive research on topics related to medieval Armenian studies. She pursues topics related to the history of Armenians in Jerusalem and the intellectual tradition of the Armenian Middle Ages (particularly the thinking of Vanakan Vardapet, Vardan the Great and Hovhann s of Erznka).

She has taught at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has conducted post-doctoral study in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and has been a visiting lecturer at Columbia University.

The lectures and reception are free and open to the public.

Avoyan Describes Activities in Armenia, Aids Gumri Reconstruction

AVOYAN, from page 1

agent of the City Committee of the Communist Party and director of the Gumri city council’s culture department. He rose high in the political system in Gumri, which is the second largest city in Armenia. One of its major sections is called Moskovyan. From 1985 to 1990 Avoyan served as the Second and then the First Secretary of the Moskovyan District Committee of the Armenian Communist Party.

In 1988 he lost his wife to the terrible earthquake of December 7, and henceforth raised his sole daughter alone. Avoyan said during a recent visit to Washington, DC that “the events of the 1980s and our most important movement, the Karabagh movement, brought a new spirit to our national ideology. At the same time, the main figures in the former order shared the common concern that during the general collapse of the Soviet Union Armenia should not fall underneath the rubble. Very careful and precise policies were necessary to get Armenia safely through this period, and generally this was accomplished.”

During elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Armenia in 1990, which was to become the first parliament of an independent Armenian republic, Avoyan’s candidacy was proposed by his colleagues. He won a seat from Gumri’s Veratsnund (“Renaissance”) 91st Electoral District. Avoyan was one of the first parliament deputies to join the ADL once it became an officially registered political party.

Avoyan explained that he learned about the “traditional” Armenian political parties of Western Armenia initially through his father and grandfather. His family immigrated from Kars after the Russo-Turkish war of 1829. He learned about Armenian self-defense in Van and elsewhere during 1915, during which the Armenians, called Constitutional Democrats at that time, played an important role. Unofficially teachers even in schools during the Soviet period cautiously told their students about such historic events. Repatriates to Soviet Armenia, especially after World War II, provided more information, as did some writers and intellectuals like Karlen Dallakyan, who sympathized with the ADL to an extent even in the Soviet period.

Once it was possible to freely discuss politics in the Armenian parliament, factions formed. former Writers Union of Armenia president Vardges Petrosyan and Avoyan took their oaths to join the ADL together. The ADL faction in parliament soon had 10 representatives, and at its peak, Avoyan said, it reached a number of 18 deputies. Avoyan declared: “In about one year, the ADL became the second most important political force in the first parliament. It was active in the economic, political and social fields. This was the successful period of the ADL. It had of course behind it 130 years of experience.” He said, “The ADL’s ideology is that Armenia should be a free country, with a free market, free economy, and individual rights.”

Avoyan soon became a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Armenia, while Armenia was charting its course of independence. Among other things, in this capacity, he accompanied the president of Armenia during his first visit to Syria in 1991. He represented the ADL too, and said, “I was proud that Diaspora Armenians in Syria received the deputies and the president of

Armenia with great enthusiasm. We had meetings with Ramgavars there, and in Egypt and Beirut. I appeared as the representative of our state and gave information on conditions in Armenia and how to strengthen our ties.”

In 1992, Avoyan was elected as secretary of the parliament, still called the Supreme Soviet, and served in this high position until 1995, which marked the close of the first parliamentary session. Avoyan said, “In the first parliament, we had to make laws to run society..The ADL had a serious influence during discussions and the preparation of specific laws which dealt with economy and freedoms or rights. We, the ADL, prepared drafts of certain laws ourselves. Also as a party, we were in relations with political parties with liberal ideology in different parts of the world, and participated in various assemblies on parliamentary progress.”

Avoyan was reelected to the second session (when the elected body was renamed as the National Assembly), which ended in 1999. During this second session, Avoyan was the only ADL representative in parliament. The reason, he said, was that “unfortunately, due to internal dissensions and external interventions, the party split apart, and slowly lost its authority.” He rejoined the Committee on Foreign Relations.

In 1998, Avoyan left parliament and worked for the Armenian state, administering programs to improve Yerevan’s water distribution system until 2012. For example, he was manager of the World Bank funded Municipal Development Project’s Project Management Unit.

He continued to be a member of the ADL, and today is a member of the central executive committee of the ADL of the Republic of Armenia. Efforts to reassemble and revitalize the party there led five years ago to a convention which united the Armenakan and Ramgavar Azatakan parties in Armenia. In October 2015, the 23rd representative assembly of the ADL of Armenia, the second after the reform of the party, was held in order to clarify its goals for the future. Avoyan was elected as chairman of the assembly. Members of the ADL from the diaspora were present and gave advice. The party is preparing to participate actively in local elections of government bodies, with the goal of winning positions in the 2017 parliamentary elections, according to Avoyan.

He said, “Our success depends on several factors necessary to strengthen the party in Armenia.” The party must organize events and participate in elections. He said it is important for all parts of the party to work in unison. For this reason, he exhorted the ranks of the party to unite, both in Armenia and abroad, and focus on Armenia, increasing its membership. He said, “I believe we are facing new realities, and the party that correctly preaches these realities will be the one to achieve success.”

Avoyan said that the ADL stands at the side of the state and homeland, though not necessarily the authorities in power. In general, for this reason, it approves of the foreign policy of the state, and supports it domestically and in the diaspora, though it might express some concerns periodically. When constitutional reforms were proposed, the party, he said, was concerned in particular with provisions which might affect the security of the country, such as the appointment of the commander during wartime. This led to changes being adopted in the reforms. Avoyan was part of an

ADL delegation to meet with Armenian President Serge Sargisian to discuss the reforms on September 17, 2015.

In the sphere of the domestic economy, Avoyan said, “the reality is that we cannot say that economic relations in Armenia are truly free. Monopoly strangles small businesses. Personal interest is given preference to equality among all economically. The defense of the law, the middle class and small businesses must be implemented in the Republic of Armenia without obstruction.” The ADL, he said, must always voice this concern loudly. He said, “This is one of our most important issues. We must pursue this as a political force, even if marginalized.”

Avoyan declared, “If the other political parties in Armenia are largely run based on individuals, the ADL, in my opinion, must be intellectual, with its leaders enjoying great authority because of their abilities. It had such leaders in the early period in the present Republic.”

The party’s ideology is particularly important now, he said, since in general parties without ideology are dominant in Armenia. Avoyan said, “Liberal ideology was difficult to accept in newly independent Armenia since the psychological influence of the former social order created many difficulties for the ideology of the free market. All parties resorted to socialist methods to solve social problems, but the ADL did not retreat in its views. At present, 25 years have passed and a new generation exists in Armenia. This is the right time now to preach liberal ideas.” The ADL needs to expand its reach further through television, internet and the press.

In general, Avoyan said, a very complicated socioeconomic situation exists now in Armenia, with little economic progress. The blockade is a major problem. It is difficult to trade with outside markets, like Europe, while the Eurasian Economic Union is newly formed. Armenia’s customs and laws cause difficulties for trade, and, Avoyan continued, monopolies and corruption do not allow for increasing prosperity. Unemployment is very high – at least 30 percent in general, and 40-45 per cent in Gumri. Supporting the defense of Artsakh, he said, is important for Armenia’s safety, but also affects the economy.

Beginning in 2012, after leaving his state job, Avoyan turned his undivided attention to the problems of Shirak province. He was elected that year as president of the Shirak Compatriotic Association (SCA).

This nonprofit organization was founded in November 2000, with member of the Armenian and Russian Academies of Science Sergei Hambardzumyan serving as its first president. It formed over 10 commissions and soon over 1,000 people joined. Avoyan declared, “We speak about the issues and concerns of the people of Shirak. New types of compatriotic unions can try to unite all the people from one region, like the Western Armenian ones did in the past. We want to involve our compatriots.”

The organization’s goal is to revive industry and commerce in Shirak province and its capital of the city of Gumri, as well as to better organize agricultural production and in general improve the socioeconomic state of the population. Several decades after the 1988 earthquake, Shirak still has a very high level of unemployment, homelessness, and poverty, with poor health and continuing emi-

gration as consequences. The local government does not have the means to deal with these issues on its own.

Emigration has led to Shirak Armenians being scattered across the globe, from the United States to Europe and Russia. Avoyan declared to those who have left Shirak, “If you leave your homeland or your birthplace, you do not have the right to forget it. Financial aid is not the main goal. It is not to collect money, as the diaspora is not just a ‘bag of money’. If you have the ability to help your birthplace’s school, help it. If you can help your compatriots, do it. If you can’t, then once a year, have your child, or somebody else, come visit the homeland and in this way make it stronger. I ask for all people originally from Shirak to do this.”

He felt that the perception of a sad or desperate situation existing in Armenia today is wrong. He wanted diasporan Armenians to know, he said, that “Armenia is living. Despite all difficulties healthy forces are so great that they will slowly strengthen the homeland. We should be optimistic. I am the first proponent of criticizing, but this must be done in conjunction with participation in the development of your country.”

The SCA coordinates with Shirak emigres who donate supplies for the needy from abroad. It sponsors cultural events in Shirak, and is supporting the preparation of a CD of the famous minstrel of Gumri, Sherm (Grigor Talian). It has a Facebook page and other media outlets. It has prominent members throughout the world. In California, for example, they include the translator and literary critic Maro Madoyan-Alajajian and Saro Gyodakyan, the editor of *Hamaynapatker* magazine.

The SCA has prepared plans for the economic revitalization of Shirak and presented them to the central government periodically. In July 2014, for example, its delegation, including Avoyan, met with Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan for this purpose. It has participated in meetings with various international organizations and banks, and sent open letters to the government to call its attention to the crisis in Gumri and the province in general.

Most recently, upon the initiative of Gumri’s mayor, Samvel Balasanyan, a special meeting was held on February 11 to initiate a new effort called “Gumri without Shacks.” Bishop Mikayel Ajapahian, Primate of the Diocese of Shirak of the Church of Armenia, was unanimously elected president of its board of trustees, which include a core of 21 journalists, artists and political leaders. The goal of the movement is to help those families still living in shacks, or “domiks,” which were created as temporary housing after the 1988 earthquake, as well as the homeless. Avoyan estimates some 1000 families are completely without shelter. In addition, according to Balasanyan, over 3,500 shacks are still being used. SCA is a supporter of this effort.

Avoyan said that, “As SCA president, and as a leader of the ADL, I urge Armenians to support this worthy effort. Not only compatriots from Shirak throughout the world, but philanthropic organizations, Armenian political organizations like the ADL, and the broader Armenian public can help remedy this longstanding problem and improve people’s lives.” Avoyan also encouraged outside investment for profit in the Shirak plain.

Arts & Living

Pianist Lilit Karapetian-Shougarian Shines in Jordan Hall Debut

By Ara Arakelian

BOSTON – On February 9 when most eyes were glued to TV sets to follow the New Hampshire primaries, many listeners huddled at the Jordan Hall of the New England Conservatory (NEC) to treat their ears to much more dulcet tones. Pianist Lilit Karapetian-Shougarian was the performer, appearing at her first major recital as part of NEC's Prep school's faculty recital series.

Since taking up residence in the Boston area seven years ago, Karapetian-Shougarian has quickly established herself as a sought-after piano teacher. In addition to the NEC, she has teaching commitments at the Sharon Conservatory and the Rivers School of Music in Weston. She is also a formidable concert pianist of exquisite taste as her carefully chosen recital program showed. A sparkling Haydn sonata at the opening was followed by the monumental Schumann *Fantasy in C-Major*, with the second half offering a set of familiar folk songs by Komitas newly arranged for solo piano by Armenian composer and pianist Villy Sargsyan, and a selection of works by Chopin to end the evening.

Having studied with such legends as Lev Vlassenko and Mikhail Pletnev at the Moscow



Pianist Lilit Karapetian-Shougarian

Conservatory, Karapetian-Shougarian possesses the supple touch that affords her facility in tonal production. She also has technique to burn; rapid octave runs can seem effortless yet are always masterfully shaped.

These assets served the pianist well in the Schumann *Fantasy*, one of the central works of the piano repertory. The rhapsodic first movement with its signature episodic mood swings were delivered with aplomb and the slow last movement was breathtaking for its emotional content – a musical portrayal of a young composer's yearnings and agony.

The Haydn *Sonata in F-Major* (Hob. XVI, No. 23) was performed with spontaneity and zest. Karapetian-Shougarian highlighted the characteristic humor of the Austrian composer which came through in the dynamic rhythms and motifs in the outer movements; the melancholic slow (Adagio) movement with its siciliano rhythm was simply mesmerizing.

Villy Sargsyan's arrangements of the Komitas songs, being performed for the first time, were strikingly novel in that they retained the simplicity and purity of the original songs. In contrast to other transcriptions, for example the thickly textured rendition of "the Apricot Tree" by Robert Andreassian, Sargsyan's version is see DEBUT, page 10



The late Yenovk Der Hagopian working on a carving

Armenian Museum Hosts Exhibit of Works by Yenovk Der Hagopian

WATERTOWN – On Saturday, March 12, at 2 p.m., the Armenian Museum of America (ALMA) will host the opening of a touring exhibition displaying the works of Yenovk Der Hagopian titled "Untold Story of an Armenian-American Artist." The opening will include a reception in the Adele & Haig Der Manuelian Galleries on the third floor of the museum. The event is free and open to the public, and light refreshments will be served at the reception.

"The Untold Story" will display more than 20 works, including paintings on canvas, metal engravings, wood carvings and an album. The global tour of the exhibition was launched in Brooklyn, NY by the Bishop Gallery and the estate of the late artist. In addition to the stop at ALMA, the tour will also travel to Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Miami, and Toronto, with a conclusion in Paris. The exhibition will be on display at ALMA until May 24, Der Hagopian's 116th birthday.

Der Hagopian's work, which serves as a history lesson on Armenian culture, will be displayed thanks to Bishop Gallery owners Erwin John and Stevenson Dunn, who insist, "no longer will his pieces be condemned to a storage closet. His work speaks to the history and legacy of a people. A history deeply rooted in pain; a pain that served as a catalyst for his creativity. After learning about this artwork through artist and historian Carlos Pinto, we thought it was imperative for the work to be shown, particularly because the arts play a significant role in preserving cultures that were completely or nearly extinct due to genocide."

ALMA is no stranger to Der Hagopian's work. Before his death in 1966, Yenovk constructed seven large wooden replicas of ancient Armenian churches, each several feet high. These were to be a part of a larger installation on a four-acre parcel of land he bought in Connecticut. However, Yenovk suffered a heart attack a week before they were to be moved and the seventh church, based on the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, was never finished. The churches have been displayed in an exhibition at the Armenian Museum of America and are currently part of the museum collections.

Born on May 24, 1900, in Ishkhanikom, Western Armenia, Der Hagopian was the son of an ordained priest and lifelong confidante to the famed "Father of Abstract Expressionism," Arshile Gorky. The Armenian Benevolent Union stated, "There is an honesty and deep emotional feeling in these early carvings of mourners, immigrants and survivors of the massacre of the Armenians." Yenovk was said to have created his pieces of Armenia in its exactness from memory, and even recreated an Armenian landscape, complete with lakes and mountains, in his own backyard.

Proud to be an American, Yenovk migrated to Massachusetts in 1923 to live in Watertown, where he reunited with Gorky and continued his art studies. It was also in America that he recorded Armenian folk songs and started a family. He married Nevert Kalarchian on August 28, 1948. Der Hagopian's artwork was discovered by his wife's granddaughter, after her family decided to renovate their home. She was intrigued by the musings held in storage for decades, and decided to explore the life of this artist. On learning more about his work she explains, "I was connecting with a country I knew little about, while educating myself and my family on the greatest American art movement of the 20th century."

The discovery of Yenovk's work has inspired the Kalarchian family to start a fund in his name. Aimed at preserving the works found in their grandmother's storage, the family also hopes they can raise enough funds to continue to have Der Hagopian's art teach about Armenia's rich culture around the world. To donate, supporters can visit <http://www.yenovkderhagopian.com/donations>.

Oh, the Horror....

By Tom Vartabedian

NORTH SMITHFIELD, R.I. – Contrary to public speculation Armen Harootian is alive and well, still making noise at his long-time home in Reading, Mass.

But one would never know it after watching the horror flick his daughter Amy (Harootian) Wade, wrote, co-produced and directed called "Condo Hell."

In the film, which co-stars her dad, the man dies a terrible death. Not the type of thing you might expect of someone who was inducted into two Athletic Halls-of-Fame (track & soccer) at Fitchburg State College.

Not someone who's been revered and treasured by the Armenian community for his athleticism in the AYF Olympic Games during his prime. The same Armen Harootian who served with the United States Coast Guard Search and Rescue Team – a stint that extended eight years working out of a lifeboat station off Cape Ann.

Yet, his acting was so realistic, you might have taken him for Vincent Price or Boris Karloff – two of the greatest actors of their generation when it comes to the macabre.

"Well, that's show business for you," said Armen. "My daughter approached me with this film idea and I couldn't resist. It sold out a Rhode Island theater and it is now off to a Hollywood film festival. Glad I'm alive [in real life] to watch its success."

A packed house at the Stadium Theater in nearby Woonsocket January 31 still has the



Amy (Harootian) Wade stands by a billboard promoting her new film "Condo Hell" which premiered in Rhode Island and headed for the Hollywood Reel Independent Film Festival in California.

shivers, we are told. From here, it's en route to the Beverly Hills Music Hall where it will appear February 25 in the Hollywood Reel Independent Film Festival. Should it succeed, look for it at other theaters nationwide.

Making this 77-minute horror film was the real terror for Amy. She had a long and winding road to reach "Condo Hell."

The film was shot at the old Tupperware Mill in North Smithfield, which is now Hard Rocks Condominiums. She chose this site, not only for its setting, but because it is where her father is one of the developers.

Amy took one look at the mill and thought it would make a perfect movie set. She compares it very favorably to "The Shining," which starred a youthful Jack Nicholson.

The 43-year-old grew up in Reading. She left home at 17 to pursue an acting career in Los Angeles.

"Talk about pounding the pavement; it's a cut-throat industry saturated with people," she noted. see HORROR, page 10

AGBU Creating a Rich Online Repository of Knowledge For Learners and Armenian Enthusiasts of All Ages

NEW YORK – The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) is proud to launch its latest in Education Innovation, the AGBU WebTalks online video series. AGBU WebTalks aims to capture and preserve the insights of engaging, dynamic thinkers from around the world, speaking on a wide range of Armenian topics.

With these short videos, AGBU WebTalks seeks to create a rich repository of knowledge and provide easy access to reliable information to meet the demands of an increasingly connected and visual world. This new platform will bring together expertise on Armenian topics in one easily accessible online resource.

“Every generation has its own approach to dealing with questions of identity and community. This multigenerational sharing and learning platform focuses on access, dissemination and preservation of the knowledge and insight of scholars, intellectuals, artists and many others on topics pertaining to the Armenian reality. The curated content allows individuals to navigate and explore their

Armenianness through different perspectives shared by leading experts and opinion makers,” says Lena Sarkissian, AGBU Central Board Member and Director of Program Development at the Zoryan Institute’s International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights.

AGBU WebTalks debuts with five videos, produced in partnership with the Zoryan Institute, an international academic and scholarly center devoted to the documentation, study and dissemination of material related to issues of universal human rights, genocide, diasporas and Armenia. The videos were filmed during the “Responsibility 2015” international conference held in New York in March 2015 as part of the centennial commemorations of the Armenian Genocide and feature interviews with journalists Laure Marchand and Guillaume Perrier; human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson; historian Raymond Kévorkian; psychologist Israel Charny; and professor of history Richard Hovannisian. The themes of the aforementioned videos revolve around politics and the

Armenian Genocide. The videos currently in production explore a diverse array of topics from art and architecture to classical, jazz and folk music.

“AGBU remains committed to enhancing education with innovation. With high quality, accessible content, we can not only ensure that Armenians have an archive of our history, but we can utilize these tools to further our mission by promoting Armenian subjects to be used in non-Armenian universities and schools. Now, with AGBU WebTalks, we can encourage professors of art, architecture, history and linguistics to incorporate the Armenian story into their syllabi, giving us a new platform for integrating our heritage in classrooms around the world,” added Ani Manoukian, AGBU Central Board Member.

AGBU WebTalks is part of a larger multimedia platform currently in development. Set to launch later this year, this online platform is a global access point offering innovative multimedia educational tools to foster and promote the learning of Armenian language, history and culture. “As part of this larger

platform,” added Lena Sarkissian, “the WebTalks series provides a living repository of our distinguished minds as well as a living archive of our community activities. It is all about making connections – to knowledge, to leading experts, to one’s history, to one’s culture, to one’s identity, to being Armenian. Thus, AGBU provides one more opportunity to help forge the future of the Armenian world.”

Pianist Lilit Shougarian In Jordan Hall Debut

DEBUT, from page 9

lean, with nary a flourish. In the hands of Karapetian-Shougarian, these songs without words sounded refreshingly familiar. Performing them as a group with no interruption also proved effective.

Sargsyan has creatively combined the voice and the piano parts of the original songs, occasionally shifting the melodic line to different registers to sustain the listener’s attention. In the program notes, the composer explains his approach: “The problem of the repetition of musical passages connected with the sequence of verses demanded special attention: The specific development of musical images in songs occurs due to the new interpretive colors prompted by the poetic idea of each new verse.”

Born in 1930, Sargsyan is an Armenian pianist and professor at the Yerevan State Conservatory. He is considered a direct descendant of the traditions and the school of the famous Russian pianist Konstantin Igumnov and his student Ketty Malkhasyan.

Karapetian-Shougarian followed the Armenian portion with a *Nocturne* and four *Mazurkas* (Op. 33). She performed them with utmost sensitivity, character and élan. The concert ended with a passionate and powerful performance of the *Andante Spianato* and *Grand Polonaise Brillante* by Chopin.

Oh, the Horror....

HORROR, from page 9

Amy returned to New England six years ago and went to work for her father at High Rocks Condominiums. Acting in a movie you’ve produced and directed with your dad has to be a special undertaking.

Although Amy prefers comedy over terror, she believes it’s horror flicks that are taking Hollywood by storm this days.

Picture “Friday the 13th and “Halloween” and you get the idea.

The movie was shot on a tight \$35,000 budget and Amy learned the ropes as she went along. It was baptism by fire as many scenes were shot twice before approval. A Kickstarter campaign brought in about \$5,000, only for her to lose it to a charlatan.

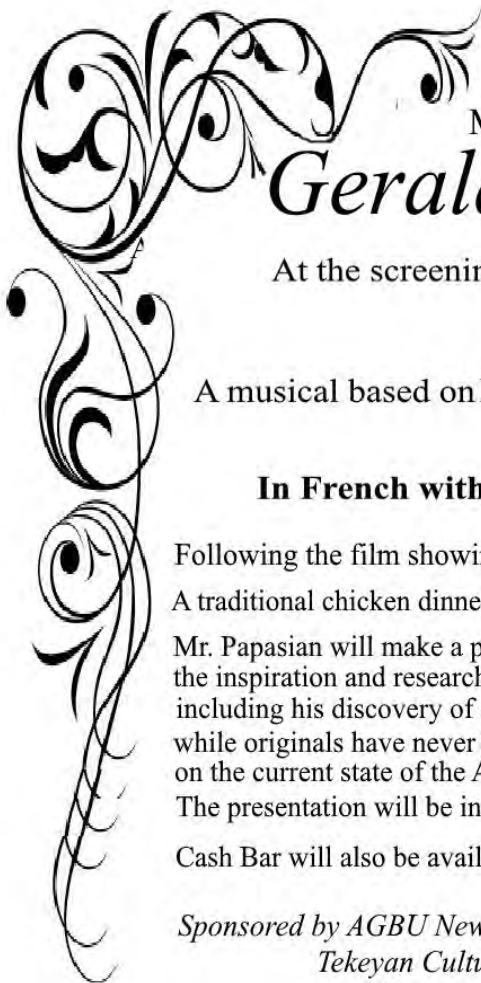
Amy learned a valuable lesson: don’t trust someone with your money until they finish the job. Running out of cash, she started selling her possessions on Craigslist. Then, the unexpected occurred. Fellow residents at High Rocks where Amy resides knew about the movie. Soon, they were leaving items outside her condo door to help support the project.

The gesture brought tears to Armen’s eyes. According to Amy’s dad, 300 people reside inside those condos. Many of them were downsizing and had lots of stuff to donate. Out of it came \$10,000, enough to ensure the project.

“It was a long process,” said Amy, “I went through depression and almost had a nervous breakdown. But I was always able to climb out of that hole.”

The filmmaker also believes that “fright makes right.”

“It’s very scary,” she admits. “If people walk out of the film really horrified, I’ll be very happy.”



Meet French Actor/Director Gerald Papasian

At the screening of his stage Opera Buffa
Gariné

A musical based on Dikran Tchouhadjian's
“Lelebiji 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.

Sponsored by AGBU New England District Chapter
Tekeyan Cultural Association
Amaras Art Alliance

\$35 tickets and info AmarasOnline.com
tcadirector@aol.com, (617) 944-4420 (617) 331-0426

Proceeds benefit the Dikran Tchouhadjian International Institute, a non-profit organisation registered in France and the US, Gerald 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 which 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.





ARTS & LIVING

St. Matthew's Passion Performed by Lark Musical Society

By Joyce Abdulian

GLENDALE – On Sunday, March 13 at 5 p.m., Lark Musical Society, under the auspices of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, will perform Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. The piece sets to music the story of Christ's last days on earth, leading to his crucifixion and death on the cross. His work, first performed in Leipzig, Germany on Good Friday, April 11, 1727, continues to move audiences nearly three centuries after it was first heard at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig. Standing as one of the pillars of Western sacred music, it is at once monumental and intimate, deeply sorrowful and powerful.

Vatsche Barsoumian's personal, intimate love of this major work is reflected in the enthusiasm evident in the varied soloists, orchestra and choirs. The characters are Evangelist (tenor), Jesus (bass), Judas (bass), Peter (bass), Pilate (bass), etc. were all chosen by Barsoumian not only for the beauty of their voices, but to reflect the Biblical characters with integrity.

The first of many collaborations with the Lark Musical Society and the Armenian Missionary Association of America, was initiated in 1996 by the late Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, the then Executive Director of the AMAA, when the Lark Choir was invited to Paris, France to perform during the 150th celebration of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church. This historic event was celebrated by over 1000 guests, visiting from various parts of the world.

Barsoumian invites all to "Join us this Lenten Season and abandon yourself to the music of Bach; to his depiction of Christ on the cross, arms outstretched, ready to embrace His flock in their own spiritual ascent."

The Biblical text, for Bach's inspiration, is the *Gospel of St. Mathew* chapters 26-27. Barsoumian's said, "Bach creates a



Conductor Vatsche Barsoumian

vivid portrait of the Passion of Christ. He weaves text and music together in such a way as to transport the listener to those very moments: to see Christ with his disciples, smell and taste along with them their last meal, hear the cries of the condemning crowds, and feel each wound he receives."

PowerPoint translations will be in German, English, and Armenian.

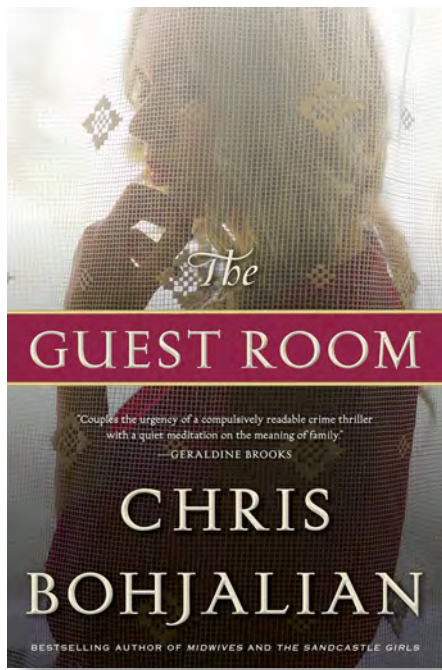
During the intermission, a Lenten Meal will be served. TICKET \$50 (includes Lenten Meal). \$250-\$500-\$1,000-\$2,500-\$5,000-\$10,000. All donations will receive Complimentary/Honorary tickets.

For information call the Lark Office.

The performance will take place at Glendale Mehtodist Church, 130 N. Kenwood St.

The Guest Room Explores Trafficking of Two Armenian Women in the US

NEW YORK – On January 15, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Central Office welcomed *New York Times* bestselling author Chris Bohjalian for a discussion of his new novel, *The Guest Room*. The event was co-sponsored by the AGBU New York Special Events Committee (NYSEC), the Armenian Network-Greater New York Region, Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society of New York, the New York Armenian Students' Association, St. Leon's Armenian Church and the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York.



Chris Bohjalian

paying off the bellman to go upstairs at the hotel. This was heartbreaking for me as a father, because she was so young and it was in Armenia. I began to wonder: is there a story in a young woman such as this? My books always begin with characters. Never a social issue."

This encounter led Bohjalian to research prostitution and human trafficking in the Caucasus and the Middle East. He came to understand the economics of human trafficking and sexual slavery and the billion-dollar industry it composes. In the Caucasus, the rise of human trafficking coincided with the fall of the Soviet Union when the economies of the republics were in disrepair.

Bohjalian is the author of eighteen books, including *Close Your Eyes, Hold Hands, The Sandcastle Girls, Skeletons at the Feast, The Double Bind, and Midwives*. His novel *Midwives* was a number one *New York Times* bestseller and a selection of Oprah's Book Club. His work has been translated into more than 30 languages, and three of his novels have been made into feature films.

Bohjalian began the talk by explaining the impetus for the novel, a literary thriller that explores the trafficking of two Armenian women in the United States. The idea came to him while he was in Armenia with his wife and daughter: "I was waiting to take my daughter's friend to the airport at 3:30 am and saw a young woman – maybe 17 years old – who was clearly an escort and clearly



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Mashed Potato and Leek Soup

INGREDIENTS

4 large baking potatoes, washed, peeled and diced into 1/2 inch cubes
5 large leeks, white parts only, sliced in 1/4 inch slices and thoroughly washed
2-3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 large white onion, finely chopped
Kosher or sea salt to taste
Fresh black or white pepper to taste
1/2 teaspoon dried lavender
Dash of nutmeg
6-8 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 1/2 cups heavy cream (more to taste)
1 cup finely chopped parsley, as garnish
1/2 cup finely chopped scallions and chives, as garnish
Crumbled cooked bacon, as garnish
Parmesan or Romano cheese, as garnish
1 cube unsalted butter
Olive oil, about 1/4 cup

PREPARATION:

In a large soup pot, combine the butter and olive oil over medium heat and stir until the butter slightly boils. Sauté the leeks and the garlic until they are softened. Add the onions and sauté until the onions are translucent. Add the salt, pepper, lavender, nutmeg, potatoes, and the cream, stir, and cook for 5-8 minutes longer.

Add the broth and bring all ingredients to a full boil; simmer (uncovered) until the potatoes are softened. Using a masher or a submersion blender, mash some of the potatoes at this time, leaving some lumps if you like.

Toss in half the parsley and adjust the seasonings, adding more cream or broth for the desired consistency. Cover and cook on medium low heat until the potatoes are fully cooked and soup is blended. Serve soup garnished with crumbled bacon, parsley, scallions or chives. Top with fresh Parmesan or Romano cheese and a drizzle of olive oil, if desired.

Serves 4.

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>

An Artist's Journey Along The Trail of Tears

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOCHUM, Germany – Thousands of Armenian descendants of Genocide survivors, especially from the United States, have had the opportunity to travel through eastern Anatolia, in the search for the villages and towns their ancestors lost, many of them guided on pilgrimages organized by the indefatigable Armen Aroyan. In Germany over the past year large numbers of people have been able to make a similar trip, albeit vicariously, through the unique medium of art. Starting in 2015 in commemoration of the centenary of the genocide, Lisa Stybor, a German artist and art professor, launched a series of exhibits of works she composed during a six-week trek through those same lands. After having presented the show in Bochum in the context of Armenian cultural events, on February 5 she concluded an exhibit in Chemnitz, a city in the former Communist East Germany.

Titled “AGHET, The Trail of Tears,” the exhibit presents 20 works, abstract in form but very concrete in depicting the drama of the deportations and the genocide. As the artist explained during the reception marking the end of the show at the Chemnitz Artists Union gallery, her own voyage to Armenia as a subject was a long one that had its conceptual beginnings in 1986.

At that time, while studying as a Fulbright scholar in Oklahoma, she became acquainted with the tragic history of the native Americans, whose expulsion, she learned, was known as the “trail of tears.” This led her to pose the question of her own cultural identity and its history. As a student she had traversed the history of European art, from the Renaissance to Bauhaus, and had from an early age taken up pencil and brush. “Drawing and painting for me were like eating and drinking, something I did every day as part of my normal activities,” she explained. In search of her cultural identity, she travelled backward in time, visiting cities first in Germany and Italy, then in Sicily and North Africa, with their rich Greek heritage; from there she went to Greece itself, and further back in time, to Egypt. In the course of this cultural voyage into the past, she was exploring concepts of space, agricultural space in landscapes, and also architectonic space. In the early 1990s, as a professor at Dessau University, she expanded her search for spatial concepts through architecture, but also through literature and music. Especially significant was her encounter with Johann Sebastian Bach and his Art of the Fugue, which opened up an entirely new understanding of spatial and temporal relations.

“I then looked at myself, through time,” she explained, “reviewing my development from child, to girl, to woman,” and did drawings on this theme, as well as landscapes, especially from Italy. While exploring this organic development process, she was also posing questions of possible simultaneity of temporal phases.

As a European, she had to recognize the tragedy of war as part of her personal history, and consideration of the violence of man against man in that process led her back to the earlier world war. “In my youth,” she recalled, “I often heard the phrase, ‘something like that must never happen again.’ This sentence referred to the Second World War, to the Shoah. The time before that,” she went on, “the First World War, was actually never dealt with. Only in recent years have we begun slowly to deal with this.”

After learning about the genocide, she travelled to Yerevan and began to work on the theme in earnest. In the course of her extensive reading, she learned about the German involvement and the questions raised as to its extent: the Germans, as wartime allies of the Ottoman Empire, knew what was being done to the Armenians; they have been accused of neglecting to intervene in their behalf, even of being complicit. “I do not understand this,” she wrote

in 2014, “and am upset that the question of guilt and responsibility has not yet been clarified in this respect.”

She found it most difficult to define an appropriate way to deal with such a difficult theme, and turned to biographies of genocide survivors for inspiration. She decided to strike out on her own, to travel to those places where the genocide occurred. Armed with a map of Turkey and accounts, both biographical and historical, of



Lisa Stybor during her trip to Turkey

the deportations, she went to Turkey in 2014, and moved from one city to another, all sites along the deportation routes of 1915. At each location, she sought out representative monuments – places traversed by the deportees on the death marches, or sites of mass executions, and literally lifted the image of the historic space onto paper. In some areas, like Ankara, where there had been an Armenian church, she did a rubbing of the bronze door. In another place, in Istanbul (then Constantinople), the Haydarpasa station (built by German architects) was the place where Armenians were sent on trains to the interior whence they would not return. She would reproduce a piece of the pavement or a wall, with pencil rubbings of the surface. The single images resulting from the rubbings are abstract in form, though some, like the one from Istanbul, seem to reproduce in stylized form an actual place, or event, like the railway lines.

With each work in the exhibit, framed and hanging against a white wall, there is another frame, containing a photograph of the site, and/or a depiction in words of the subject. This may be a quote from literature of the genocide, for example, the description of the Armenian carnage in Ankara given by Grigoris Balakian in *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1918*. Or, an account of how Armenians were rounded up and packed into railway cars, as published in a German collection of eyewitness reports. Other accounts come from Pailadzo Captanian, from Johannes Lepsius, and others. She brings images and citations from Ankara and Konya, Samsun and Sivas, Malatya and Kayseri, as well as Harput, Adana and Diyarbakir.

In one particularly painful episode, it is the artist herself who provides the verbal narrative. This refers to her journey along the road from Kemah to Erzincan. She writes: “After having arrived at the railway station I heard that the train to Kemah would not leave until the evening. A very friendly railway official took me in his car to the next bus stop, but the bus had already left. A short time later a taxi stopped and drove me to Kemah. The taxi driver did not speak English or any other language I understood. So we drove about fifty kilometers along the Euphrates in total silence, along a road without cars or people through an idyllic landscape. It must have been here on this road that

the deportees were sent a hundred years ago. All of a sudden I saw through the silence these human beings, tattered and ill, continuing their way in pain, or falling down, collapsing. I heard their screaming and moaning. And they did not stop; the crying and suffering accompanied me till the taxi driver arrived at Kemah.”

When describing the experience to attendants at the finissage, Stybor said she tried in vain to convince the taxi driver to take her up to the heights of the Kemah gorge, that is, to the place from which, she knew from written accounts, Armenian men had been bound two by two, stabbed and then thrust to their death in the river hundreds of meters below. The taxi driver did not know, or feigned ignorance. The only sign of demarcation was a plaque on the road they travelled, which commemorated a number of Turkish soldiers who had reportedly perished there in an automobile accident some years earlier.

Significantly, this is the only work of art in the show which is accompanied by a photograph of the artist herself on the site. Taken by the taxi driver who could not find the road to the perilous heights, it shows her seated on the ground, making a rubbing of the stones, the very same ground along which those men must have walked.

Infinite Dimensions in Art

In her many years of study, teaching and creative artistic activity, Lisa Stybor has struggled with the concept of temporal-spatial relations. If, through the development of the science of perspective, European renaissance art mastered the means of projecting onto a two-dimensional canvas

the illusion of three-dimensional space, that is not the end of the story. For Stybor, space is not only visual but historical, not only geometrical but emotional.

Wandering through the halls of her exhibition, I had a chance to experience what this is all about. Looking at a rubbing, be it of a facade of some church, or of the stones along a path, I saw at first the geometrical design of the work, itself a pleasing image, with a certain symmetry

and rhythm. Then came the awareness of the subject matter: this is not an abstract motif, but the replica of a real, that is, physical existence, a building or pathway in an existing geographical locality. And then came the recognition that this is not only an image of a physical object today, in the here and now, so to speak; it is the memory of what occurred, a hundred years ago, there and then. The art object – which embodied the physical action of the artist who produced it – the photographic document of the site and the verbal account of the event that took place there, appeared to me as multiple spatial-temporal dimensions of a reality that is rooted in history, itself political, geographical and personal.

Stybor embarked on this adventure in Turkey – and it must be termed an adventure: she was a European woman, travelling alone, with no knowledge of the language, and extremely sensitive to the human tragedy she was documenting – with full awareness of the importance it bears in the process of Germany’s coming to terms with its history. “The rubbing shows the traces of my own confrontation with the past,” she has said, and that is not only a personal statement.





“My trip,” she wrote at the conclusion, “became a voyage through time, first through today’s Turkey and then from there back to the Ottoman Empire. I sought out witnesses, stones and walls, which existed in those locations I visited already a hundred years ago. When that was not possible, I chose in their stead paths and walls belonging to a later time.”

Her experience with people she met was meaningful. “During the trip, I met with hospitality and openness, beauty and spirituality, and I am very thankful for the insight into daily life I gained there, into its culture and landscape. I would have liked to talk to my hosts about what happened at that time, and discuss it, but that was forbidden and so not possible.”

But, she concludes, “keeping silent does not help us further. Only when we together acknowledge what our forefathers did, will the doors to reconciliation open. People who live today are not guilty for what happened then, but we carry responsibility for our future.”

Her unique artistic approach to the story of the genocide promises to enable Germans to experience what occurred a century ago, not only factually but also emotionally, and thus to find the route to reconciliation.


Muriel Mirak-Weissbach can be reached at mirak.weissbach@googlemail.com







present

AIDA ZILELIAN

and her new novel





Wednesday, March 2, 2016

6:30 p.m.

AGBU Central Office
55 East 59th Street, 7th Floor • New York City

Aida Zilelian's breathtaking debut novel follows three generations of a family of Armenian immigrants living in the United States, as they struggle with one another and against the Old World expectations of their community. When Araxi, the oldest daughter of the desperately unhappy Levon and Tamar, goes missing, the remaining family members are forced to confront their painful histories together, and the role each of them has played in driving Araxi away.

Free Admission • Space is Limited
To RSVP please email your full name to rsvp@agbu.org or call (212) 319-6383
Book available for purchase and signing by author



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

APRIL 15 - DEADLINE. If you are looking to embark on the educational adventure of a lifetime, then consider the American University of Armenia's Summer Program 2016. The program combines unique academic offerings with the benefits of a safe, welcoming, and exciting environment. Participants will also experience the authentic sights, sounds, and flavors of Armenia through the Discover Armenia Educational Tours. Apply at im.aua.am by April 15.

MASSACHUSETTS

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 3 — A Town Hall Meeting with Richard M. Mills, Jr., US Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, who would like to meet with the Greater Boston Armenian community to discuss US priorities in Armenia and opportunities for partnership; 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m., hosted by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Cambridge. Thursday. The ambassador is visiting the area as part of a general effort to get to know, and be known by the Armenian-American community. Open to all. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632 or log onto <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/233/>.

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.

MARCH 6 — Actor and director Gerald Papisian 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.

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 Hourly 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



On Thursday, March 3, Holy Trinity Armenian Church will host a Town Hall Meeting with Richard M. Mills, Jr., US Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, who would like to meet with the Greater Boston Armenian community to discuss US priorities in Armenia and opportunities for partnership. The program will take place 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m., at the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Cambridge. The program is open to all. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632 or log onto <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/233/>.

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 Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA Info: 617.354.0632

MARCH 12 — "Untold Story of an Armenian-American Artist" *The Work of Yenovk der Hagopian* — exhibition opening and reception, Adele & Haig Der Manueelian Galleries (3rd Floor), Armenian Museum of America, Watertown. The event is free and open to the public and light refreshments will be served at the reception. Saturday, 2-4 p.m.

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

APRIL 2 — Swing into Spring Dinner-Dance. Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Chelmsford, Kazanjian Ballroom, 180 Old Westford Rd. Chelmsford. Dinner at 6 p.m. followed by non-stop Armenian and Middle East music by the Jason Naroian Ensemble featuring Jason Naroian, dumbeg and vocals; Brian Anisbigian, oud; Ara Jeknavorian, clarinet; and Dave Anisbigian, guitar. Paid in advance tickets (received by March 27) are \$25 for adults, \$10 for children (6-12), and 5 & under, free. At-the-door, \$35 for adults and \$15 for children. For reservations, please contact Maria at ria.tk@verizon.net (617-240-3686).

APRIL 2 — Back by popular demand — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston (SNDC) proudly presents the return of renowned entertainer/comedian/pianist Kev Orkian to Boston, with his brand new show "Little Fingers." Saturday, 8 p.m. (doors open at 7:30) in Shaw Auditorium, Watertown High School, 50 Columbia St., Watertown. Reserved seating only. Tickets are available by 617-852-1816. VIP tickets (limited amount avail-

able) are \$65 and include reserved priority seating and pre-show private reception with Kev. General show tickets are \$50, includes reserved seating. Visit www.sayatnova.com for the seating chart and see attached flyer for more details.

APRIL 9 — Sayat Nova Dance Company 30th anniversary Alumni Reunion. Saturday, 7:30 p.m. in Cambridge. Calling all SNDC Alumni and members for an evening of fun and surprises. Come eat, socialize, reminisce.... Please RSVP by March 20, at sn/dc_info@sayatnova.com or call 617-923-4455.

APRIL 17 — Erevan Choral Society Spring Concert, "In Commemoration of Our Sainted Martyrs of 1915." Sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 2:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. The concert is under the direction of Composer Konstantin Petrossian, Music Director and Conductor. Guest Soloists are David Ayriyan (Kamancha) and Gohar Manjelikian (Mezzo Soprano), with Nune Hakobyan on the organ and piano. The Armenian and non-Armenian community is invited to commemorate through music the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide. The concert is a gift to the community.

APRIL 22 — Save the date. The annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at the Massachusetts State House. Friday, 10:30 a.m., State House Chamber, Catered Reception at 12 noon in the Great Hall. Keynote speaker will be announced at a later date.

MAY 14 - Sayat Nova Dance Company continues its 30th anniversary celebrations with a night of song and dance with beloved singer Arabo Ispiryan from Armenia. Don't miss out on this night of pure Armenian entertainment. Appetizers (mezze) will be provided. Doors open at 8 p.m. St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Donation: \$65, available by calling Apo Ashjian at 339-222-2410. VIP tickets will also be available. Reserve your tickets early.

SEPTEMBER 10 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston 30th Anniversary Gala. Details to follow.

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*.

MICHIGAN

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.

Readers can submit items for inclusion in the calendar of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. Calendar items are free. Entries should not be longer than 5 lines. Items will be edited to fit the space, if need be. Feel free to send a photo with the listing. Items should be sent no later than Mondays at noon. Listings should include contact information. Send items to editor@mirror-spectator.com.



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COMMENTARY

Syria Focus of Global Conflicts

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The Syrian crisis has devolved into a global disaster fanning the flames of a new cold war. Armenians are affected by this crisis wherever they live, as citizens of the world. But moreover, the war has impacted the Armenians as a collective group; first it has uprooted one of the strongest Armenian communities in the Middle East, staunchly attached to its language and culture.

Secondly, the fallout of the war has touched Armenian lives as families scramble to seek safe haven in Armenia, Lebanon, Canada and elsewhere and their resettlement problem becomes a community concern as well.

But the most dangerous outcome of the war so far is rising tensions between Russia and Turkey, their confrontation line running through the border between Armenia and Turkey. Although the command of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the eastern counterpart to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), reassures everyone that none of its divisions will participate in a potential conflict between the two fronts, the recent concentration of Russian forces in Armenia does not seem very comforting.

To understand every facet of the Syrian war and its many actors within and without its borders with their specific conflicting interests is a daunting task for any analyst or journalist. There exists one layer of participants in the conflict overseeing their proxies on another level; Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the US represent one coalition – one front – in the war, while there are internal conflicts within their goals and political interests.

The most conspicuous conflict is between the US and Turkey, both NATO allies, yet the first supports the Syrian Kurdish fighters of Kurdish YPG militant group, while the latter bombs their position in Northern Syria to prevent the formation of an autonomous Kurdish enclave on the Syrian side of the border, which may encourage the PKK which is fighting a war of liberation within Turkey. A full circle, which seems to contain an awful lot of back and forth.

Turkey also openly supports ISIS and Al-Nusra Front, paying only lip service to its coalition partners fighting these very same terrorists. Turkey's behavior and intent run contrary to the US goals, yet Washington looks the other way. President Obama offered the most disingenuous statement when he said that Turkey has its right to defend itself, after the latter, in a gesture of grand bravado and provocation, in November shot down a Russian warplane across the border in Turkey, which alarmed many other NATO allies.

Now this fragmented coalition is facing the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad, which is supported by Russia, Iran and Hezbollah forces from Lebanon.

More than 250,000 people have been killed in Syria and 7 million have been displaced, flooding the European shores and creating tensions within the European Union.

Russia's direct involvement in the conflict and its air campaign have turned the tide of the war and the fortunes of the embattled Assad government.

What the Russian air campaign did was to destroy Turkey's plans to create a no-fly zone inhabited by Syria's Turkmen citizens armed and trained by Turkey, to create a mini separatist state on the ground like Northern Cyprus. At this writing, the dreams of the Turkmen tribes have dissipated and the recapture of Aleppo is within the grasp of the government.

At the annual Munich Security Conference on February 13, US Secretary of State John Kerry announced that an agreement to send humanitarian relief supplies to the besieged Syrian cities and a "cessation of hostilities" has been reached while Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov sarcastically stated that there is a 49-percent chance of success.

Within other angry exchanges, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said that "the world has slipped into a new era of Cold War."

All the warring factions have not yet signed the agreement and Russia and the US coalition will be allowed to continue bombing the terrorist positions. Since Saudi Arabia and Turkey have been supporting ISIS forces, the agreement, at best, seems to be very tenuous. However, encouraged by the agreement, the United Nations mediator for Syria Steffan de Mistura is working diligently to resume the Geneva talks, by the end of February. That will be another forum in which opposing forces will clash espe-

cially when it comes to determining which parties will participate; Turkey is dead set against the participation of Syrian Kurds, which Russia supports.

Another issue which is undermining the Geneva talks is the reality on the battleground. The US and its coalition members are objecting to the power engendered by the recent advances of Russia for the Assad government.

But most ominously, in view of the battleground successes of the Syrian government, Turkey and Saudi Arabia have threatened to invade Syria with their ground forces and Saudi Arabia has already moved some of its assets to the Incirlik base in Turkey.

While Turkish Defense Minister Ismet Yilmaz has announced on the state-run Andalou Agency that Ankara was not considering sending troops to Syria, his Saudi counterpart, Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud, has clarified his government's stance, noting that their plan is to fight ISIS and their intent is to topple President Assad. Two contradictory and incoherent goals which can only be uttered by a medieval potentate.

Should this latter plan be implemented, the Turkish and Saudi governments will face off Russia in Syria.

Commenting on this plan in the February 13 edition of *Ha'aretz* in Israel, Svi Barel writes: "Saudi intervention in a war without any guaranteed military or diplomatic gains for the kingdom – without a clear exit strategy – may be a dangerous gamble."

Turkey, an ally of Saudi, is itching to confront Russia, although thus far it has bombed Syrian positions from the Turkish territory and only set its fighters within the ranks of terrorists which continue to infiltrate Syria from the Turkish border.

Come to see that shooting down the Russian warplane was only the tip of the iceberg of Turkey's strategic plans, which run deeper. As far as Turkey's Ottoman ambitions are concerned, Ankara is matching its words to the facts on the ground. Wayne Madsen reports the following on an online journal, *Strategic Culture Foundation*: "The plans by Adolf Hitler praising Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to build military bases in Qatar, Somalia, the Republic of Georgia and Azerbaijan are in keeping

with Turkey's more aggressive and neo-Ottoman foreign and military policies. Turkey is also building its first aircraft carrier that will extend Turkey's naval presence into the Red Sea and Indian Ocean."

But what is more dangerous is Turkey's plan to undermine Russia's influence in the Caucasus, with its nefarious fall-out landing on Armenia. It is well-known that by now, Turkey has been inciting Tartars in Crimea against Moscow. Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has announced that "we will stand by our Tartar brothers in Crimea."

But Turkey's initiatives in the Caucasus will impact Armenia

more immediately. Thus, continuing to write in *Strategic Culture Foundation*, Madsen reports: "The plans for a Turkish military base in Georgia and potential future Turkish base in Azerbaijan, perhaps in the Nakhichevan exclave, between Armenia and Turkey, has prompted the mainly Armenian population of the Georgian regions of Javakhk and Tsolka to contemplate secession from Georgia and incorporation with Armenia. Armenians throughout the region have long memories about the Turkish Genocide of the Armenian people in the early part of the 20th century."

Turkey plans to destabilize Russia's underbelly has alarmed the Russian legislators who recently came up in the Duma with proposals to abrogate the Kars Treaty of 1921, whose signatories also include Russia and Armenia. The treaty not only finalized the border between Armenia and Turkey, which is still in dispute, but also defined the status of Nakhichevan. If the abrogation is realized, Turkey's legal leg, as a defender of Nakhichevan's status, will be amputated, so to speak.

The other repercussion of the Turkish plan was the recent visit of Georgia's Defense Minister Tinatin Khidasheli to Armenia. Every time Armenians are agitated in Javakhk, Georgia's government appeals to Yerevan to calm down the situation. And because of Armenia's fragile relations with Georgia (the only major transit land with the rest of the world) the Armenian government has no choice but to keep the lid of the aspirations of the Javakhk Armenians.

As we can see in the interconnected web of world politics, many seemingly unrelated issues have strategic links.

The conflict in Syria and its global repercussions impact Armenia on many levels and many ways. We may not be able to cope with some of those impacts but being aware of those dangers, we can at least be armed.

The most conspicuous conflict is between the US and Turkey, both NATO allies, yet the first supports the Syrian Kurdish fighters of Kurdish YPG militant group, while the latter bombs their position in Northern Syria to prevent the formation of an autonomous Kurdish enclave on the Syrian side of the border...



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Tight US Presidential Race: Good News for Armenian Americans

Now that the two major political parties have begun holding primaries to select their nominees for this fall's presidential elections, Armenian Americans are weighing the merits of the eight remaining candidates. I would like to propose that from now on Armenians refrain from asking presidential candidates whether they would recognize the Armenian Genocide once elected.

There are two problems in posing such a question: 1) Armenians should know from previous disappointing experiences that they cannot trust promises made by most politicians. 2) There is no need to ask for such a promise since the Armenian Genocide has been repeatedly recognized by the various branches of the US government for many years: a) Document submitted by the US government to the World Court in 1951; b) Resolutions adopted by the House of Representatives in 1975 and 1984; c) Pres. Reagan's Proclamation referring to the Armenian Genocide on April 22, 1981.

Furthermore, the continued pursuit of genocide recognition – when it has been already recognized – would simply undermine its acknowledgment and cast doubt on its veracity.

Instead, Armenian Americans should ask presidential candidates for their positions on more pressing issues such as: 1) Allocating more foreign aid to Armenia and Artsakh (Karabagh); 2) Promoting US trade with Armenia; 3)

Pressuring Turkey to lift its blockade of Armenia; 4) Demanding that Turkey return the confiscated Armenian churches to the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul; 5) Condemning Azerbaijan for its repeated threats and attacks on Armenia and Artsakh; 6) Supporting the independence of Artsakh.

Once elected, officials would want to satisfy some of these demands in order to maintain the support of the Armenian community during their future campaign for reelection.

Here are the records of all six Republican presidential candidates on Armenian issues.

Gov. Jeb Bush (Florida) travelled with his son on a humanitarian mission to Armenia on December 24, 1988, shortly after the Armenian earthquake; issued an Armenian Genocide proclamation on April 7, 2006; and received the Friend of Armenians Award in 2013 from the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church.

Gov. John Kasich (Ohio) received ratings of C, D, and F from ANCA during most of his tenure in the House of Representatives, 1983-2001; cosigned letters to Pres. Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev supporting Artsakh's independence in 1991; cosponsored the Armenian Genocide Resolution in 2000; and, as governor, issued a proclamation in 2012 to celebrate Armenian Independence Day.

Sen. Ted Cruz (Texas) received a C rating from ANCA in 2014, and in 2015, issued a statement on the Armenian Genocide and cosponsored the Armenian Genocide Resolution.

Sen. Marco Rubio (Florida) received a C rating in 2012 and B in 2014 from ANCA; voted for passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2014; cosponsored the Armenian Genocide Resolution in 2015; and cosigned letter to Pres. Obama urging him to recognize the Armenian Genocide in 2015.

Neurosurgeon Ben Carson (Michigan) has made no statements on Armenian issues.

Businessman Donald Trump (New York) has made no

statements on Armenian issues.

Here are the records of the two Democratic presidential candidates on Armenian issues.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (New York) as senator, cosigned letters to Pres. Bush urging him to recognize the Armenian Genocide in 2005 and 2006; cosponsored resolutions on the Armenian Genocide in 2006 and 2007; as Presidential candidate in 2008, made a promise to recognize the Armenian Genocide; later in 2008, spoke at a Turkish Cultural Center banquet in New York City in the presence of then Prime Minister Erdogan; during an official visit to Yerevan in 2010, placed a wreath at the Genocide Monument, which the US Embassy in Armenia called a "private" act, even though the ribbon on the wreath carried the inscription: "From Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton"; and in 2012, as Secretary of State, referred to the Armenian Genocide as "a matter of historical debate," contradicting her earlier clear stand on this important issue.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (Vermont) received an A+ rating in 2012 and C in 2014 from the ANCA; during his tenure in the House of Representatives (1991-2007), he supported a variety of Armenian issues, including the Genocide Resolution, in 1996, 1997, and 2000; cosigned letters to President Bush urging him to recognize the Armenian Genocide in 2002, 2003, and 2004; and as senator, he cosponsored in 2012 two resolutions on the Armenian Genocide and Return of Armenian Churches by Turkey.

The polls and results of the early primary elections indicate that no candidate in either party is likely to have an overwhelming majority in the primaries and the November elections, which would encourage the candidates to be more accommodating to all voters, including Armenian Americans. Under these circumstances, my suggestion to the Armenian-American community is to refrain from making an early commitment to any candidate. The decision as to whom to support can be made later as the presidential race gets tighter and the candidates get more desperate for votes!

Zaha Hadid and the Japanese Architect's Club for Men

By Garo Gumusyan

QUIETLY, IN LATE DECEMBER, the Japanese government plucked Kengo Kuma out of architectural obscurity to replace Zaha Hadid to design the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Stadium. In choosing Kuma's so-called "hamburger" design, Japan's Olympic overseers showed their lack of appetite for anything bold, daring, or inspiring. Kuma's stale retread of a stadium will be a loss for global architecture, the Tokyo Olympics, Hadid, and even Kuma himself, as Hadid's firm is now said to be probing whether Kuma's plan borrows a bit too heavily from hers.

There's a lesson for architects here, and for all those whose livelihoods rely on the purses of capricious men, and it dates back to the very land that birthed the Olympics. In Ancient Greece, on the island of Crete, King Minos' wayward wife had a bizarre affair with a raging bull. When she then gave birth to a terrifying half-man half-bull Minotaur, King Minos faced an unappealing dilemma many fathers will sympathize with - where to house this ravenous stepson? So he commissioned the famed Athenian architect Daedalus and his son Icarus to design an elaborate maze, called labyrinthos, to imprison the beast.

But Daedalus suffered a fate far worse than an unpaid invoice when an enraged King Minos threw father and son into their very own labyrinth for daring to help his daughter's lover both escape and slay the Minotaur. From here the story becomes more familiar as Icarus infamously flew too close to the sun during their escape. This Greek myth is the O.G. lesson about hubris, but for architects and all those who are self-employed, the message is far different - beware of kings and powerful people bearing grand commissions, for they are fickle and cruel.

And now Zaha Hadid has learned the hard way that nothing is different in modern Japan. In 1994, Haruki Murakami published his masterpiece, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, where, as one New York Times critic proclaimed, "East meets West." Yet Murakami's Japan is still being run by powerful men, and men only, who, while modern in appearance, don't behave all that differently than good ol' King Minos. Similarities to ancient Crete abound. Dark, inescapable wells have replaced labyrinths. Even one of the heroines, Creta Kano, "the prostitute of the mind," is named after Daedalus' island of doom.

In 2012, Hadid won the fiercely fought design competition for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Stadium. Her stadium would have been a sinuous voluptuous beauty. It would easily have been one of the most dynamic and triumphant stadiums in an Olympic lineage that too often has veered to retrograde and utilitarian bowls like Kuma's low-energy "winner." Her selection was stunning for such a conservative country and offered hope that its establishment was indeed changing. But, suddenly last summer last summer, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe smugly announced that he was scrapping Zaha Hadid's design because of its supposed high price tag. Under any other circumstance this would have been a reasonable and sincere concern – if Hadid had been told first and given a chance to address the cost.

Sadly, few rallied around Hadid – the most influential architect of our time and probably the most important female architect of all time. On the contrary, high-profile politicians, architects and designers – all men – rushed to form a pig-pile of scorn and snobbery. Arata Isozaki, the prominent Japanese architect, in a poor attempt at humor, likened her design to "...a turtle waiting for Japan to sink so that it can swim away." Pritzker Prize-winning Fumihiko Maki organized a group of fellow small-minded architects and designers to decry Hadid's plan and even held a symposium called "Re-thinking the New National Olympic Stadium." Even the head of the committee that originally chose Hadid's design, former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, joined the conga line of contempt by saying "It looks like an oyster. I've always hated it."

It's apparent that the "Japanese Architects Club For Men," along with the nation's political elite, so well understood by Murakami, achieved what they had set out to do in their feudal misogyny and killed two wind-up birds at the same time, an architect who was both a foreigner and a woman.

But then again, this would come as no surprise to Creta Kano.

(Garo Gumusyan, AIA, is the principal of GGA Architecture, PLLC. He is registered in the states of New York and New Jersey. His professional experience in Architecture, Planning, Zoning, Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse is guided with an international perspective and commitment to an advanced level of professional practice. He holds a Master's Degree in Architecture from McGill University, Canada. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects. This commentary originally appeared on Huffington Post.)

Azerbaijan and Hungary Answerable Over Case Of Ramil Safarov

STRASBOURG (Armenpress) – The governments of Azerbaijan and Hungary have been asked by the European Court of Human Rights to respond formally to a case brought by the relatives of Armenian army officer Gurgen Margaryan, who was murdered by Azerbaijani officer Ramil Safarov in Budapest in 2004.

Margaryan's relatives are represented by European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (based in Middlesex University), Legal Guide (Armenian NGO) and Nazeli Vardanyan.

Both men were attending a NATO-sponsored English-language course in Budapest. On February 19, 2004, Safarov murdered Margaryan by decapitating him with an axe. In April 2006 Safarov was found guilty of murder by the Budapest City Court, and was sentenced to life imprisonment, with the possibility of conditional release after 30 years. The court found that Safarov had intended to kill two Armenian participants at the course on the anniversary of the beginning of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

After the Court of Appeal upheld this judgment in February 2007, Safarov began serving his sentence in a Hungarian prison. In August 2012 the Hungarian Minister of Justice approved Safarov's transfer to Azerbaijan with a view to his serving his sentence there (under the Council of Europe Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Prisoners 1983). However, a few hours after Safarov was transferred on August 31, 2012, he was granted a pardon by the Azerbaijani President and set free. He was also promoted to major, awarded eight years' salary arrears and offered a flat.

In a report published in December 2012, the Hungarian Ombudsman criticized the Hungarian Government for approving the transfer before any assurances about the treatment of Safarov had been received from the Azerbaijani authorities. The victim's family argue that Gurgen Margaryan's right to life (Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights) has been violated by Azerbaijan – both because of his murder, and also because Ramil Safarov's pardon has prevented the full enforcement of his sentence.

They also argue that Margaryan was the victim of an ethnically-motivated hate crime, which was later endorsed by Safarov's pardon and release (in breach of Article 14 together with Article 2 of the Convention). In addition, they argue that Hungary has breached Article 2 of the Convention because it allowed Safarov to be transferred to Azerbaijan, without having obtained assurances that he would be required to complete his prison sentence in Azerbaijan.

The case is also brought by Hayk Makuchyan, an Armenian military officer whom Ramil Safarov was convicted of intending to murder during the same incident in Budapest. Both governments are required to lodge their responses with the Strasbourg Court by May. The court has also invited the Armenian Government to submit its comments, given Margaryan's nationality.



Papasian Is Trying to Put Armenian Opera on International Stage

PAPASIAN, from page 1

Opera "Anoush" at the Michigan Opera Theatre, in 1981 and 2001. "Anoush" was considered the "best production of the season" by the American press. His restored version of Tchouhadjian's opera "Arshak II" was performed by the San Francisco Opera House in 2001 as a world premiere 133 years after its creation.

Papasian next tackled Tchouhadjian's lighter opera buffa "Leblebeji Horhor Agha," literally Horhor the Chickpea Vendor, also known as "Gariné" in Armenian.

Papasian wants not only to bring these operas to a wider global audience but also make sure that they are intact. For Papasian, the continued polishing of the Tchouhadjian operas until they reach their original luster is a labor of love.

"The quality of his music is of universal interest," he said. "There is a sense of injustice or frustration because of how much he was kept in the dark. He is unjustly unknown. That is the fate of a lot of our Armenian artists," Papasian said this week.

On Sunday, March 6, at 3 p.m., Papasian will bring the filmed version of "Gariné" to the AGBU Center in Watertown. The program will include, in addition to the showing of the opera, a traditional chicken dinner and a presentation by Papasian on his research for a new version of Gariné. (See ad on page 9 For further details)

"The *Independent* classified it as Critic's Choice of the week when it came out. I attribute this to the universal genius of Tchouhadjian because with all the magic of stage direction and performance," Papasian said.

Papasian added that it isn't just the world at large that has neglected Tchouhadjian, but the

country of Armenia as well, as sometimes Constantinople-born writers can be regarded as inferior.

While this opera was performed in Armenia, he said, professionals in Armenia felt entitled to

manuscripts in Paris belonging to the opera. Now he has the "complete, complete, complete integral version."

In the case of "Arshak II," he said, it is a more serious opera and for two years, he worked with Haik Avakian, a Tchouhadjian expert in Yerevan, between 1998 and 2000, to complete it. The end result was published in book form in Egypt by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Egypt chapter running up to around 2,500 pages, including the score and the libretto by Tomasso Tersian (Terzian), a "very famous, erudite poet" of the era.

Papasian lamented the exorbitant cost of putting on an opera, one which so often the Armenian community cannot oblige.

"My ultimate aim is to encourage, inspire non-Armenian companies to produce these works," he said, "at such a level that is top quality in London, Paris or New York."

Papasian has been in front of the camera and on the stage, as well as behind the camera and off state.

"As a director I have a particular interest in a certain style, certain authors," he said. "As an actor, I would not necessarily choose roles but accept any interesting part offered."

For Papasian, the play's the thing.

"Theater gives you the opportunity to express yourself from beginning to end. Every night is a new adventure. Theater is what it is all about," he said. "Filmmaking is a very technical job. Actors wait for hours to do work."

Papasian was born in Egypt into a family deeply involved with the world of music and art. His grandfather, Jules Papasian, was a well-known tuner and piano builder (Papasian Pianos). He was also a music impresario. Papasian studied piano beginning at age 4 with

his great-aunt Nevert Damadian, a graduate of the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris and a renowned piano teacher.

His mother, Nora, is a noted painter, now living with her husband, Edmond Azadian, in Michigan. She is heavily involved with the Tekeyan Cultural Association Detroit chapter.

Papasian studied acting and directing in Armenia, landing internships at the State Fine and Dramatic Arts Institute in Soviet Armenia. Internship during his studies included assistant directing at the National Opera of Armenia and later in Leningrad (St. Petersburg).

After graduating from Armenia, his US debut as a stage director was the Western premiere of the opera "Anoush" in 1981 at the Michigan Opera Theatre in his own English singing translation (Wayne State University Press, 1981).

Papasian is a citizen of the world, at ease performing in English, French, Armenian or Arabic. "French was the language of minorities in Egypt. I learned it by ear and it has been a great help for me."

Papasian left Egypt at age 13 to study first at the Melkonian Educational Institute in Cyprus and then in Armenia. "For the next 10 years, I came back for holidays," he said. After that, he lived first in Michigan, later in Los Angeles before finally making his home in France.

He joked that in France, he has been exceedingly lucky to land as many parts in television, movies and theater, since "France was not eagerly awaiting Gerald Papasian to go there."

He added, "I cannot complain."

While in the US this year, he has worked with the Tekeyan Cultural Association New York/New Jersey Chapter to put on "All Rise, the Court Is in Session," the play about Soghomon Tehlirian assassination of Talaat Pasha in Berlin.

Papasian has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Armenia in 2011, in recognition of his propagation of the Armenian heritage internationally for over 30 years.



Gerald Papasian & Amelie Robins

"improve" the score by making changes.

"In the case of 'Gariné,' it is a light opera and not that serious and one can be quite free with it," he said.

Papasian produced a highly successful version of "Gariné" in Paris and London, but always, he said, one or two songs were missing. They are now all collected.

He noted that he discovered long lost



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