

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXVI, NO. 49, Issue 4443

\$ 2.00

The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

## Progress Reported in NKR Mediation Talks

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (Combined Sources) – Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian has described as “quite useful” the latest meeting of Armenia’s and Azerbaijan’s presidents, saying that it might help to break the deadlock in the Nagorno-Karabagh peace process.

Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev as well as their foreign ministers will continue to meet on a regular basis in the months ahead.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov similarly described the talks as “constructive” and “positive.”

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group observers periodically deployed in the conflict zone with the aim of preventing ceasefire violations there.

The expansion of the OSCE’s small observer mission for Karabagh is one of the confidence-building measures advocated by Russia, the United States and France. The three mediating powers also want the see MEDIATION, page 5



Russian President Vladimir Putin (front) walks with Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev (R) and Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan (L) during their meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia

“With certain caution, I can say that it took place in a constructive atmosphere,” Nalbandian told Armenian reporters shortly after the summit hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin in Saint Petersburg on Monday, June 20.

“On some issues, the presidents reached an understanding that if there is agreement on them it will be possible to move the negotiation process towards the [Nagorno-Karabagh] conflict’s resolution,” he said without going into details.

Nalbandian added only that Presidents

In a joint statement with Putin, Aliyev and Sargsyan said vaguely that they reached an “understanding on a number of issues solutions to which would help to create conditions for progress in the Nagorno-Karabagh settlement.” They also agreed to have more Organization for Security and

## Turekian Mixes Science, Diplomacy for State

By Florence Avakian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK – Dr. Vaughan Turekian, science and technology advisor to US Secretary of State John Kerry, attended an all-day forum at the United Nations on Monday June 6, on “Science, Technology and Development for Sustainable Development Goals.” The focus of the event was to discuss the ways these goals can be made available to the millions around the world who are in desperate need of these resources.

In an interview following a UN press conference, Turekian, 44, explained that his father, Dr. Karl Turekian, an eminent and well-known professor of geochemistry for 57 years at Yale University, and a member see TUREKIAN, page 13



Governor Michael Dukakis speaking on May 26. (Aram Arkun photo)

## Governor Dukakis Speaks at CYSCA Event on Armenia Trip

BELMONT, Mass. – Former Massachusetts governor Michael S. Dukakis made a guest appearance at a Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) panel discussion called Disabilities and Social Inclusion in Armenia held with the co-sponsorship of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research at the latter’s headquarters on May 26 (see accompanying article on page

12 of this issue). His remarks focused largely on a trip to Armenia that he and his wife Kitty made in April of this year upon the invitation of the American University of Armenia (AUA).

The longest serving governor of Massachusetts, and the second Greek-American governor in US history, Dukakis was the 1988 Democratic see CYSCA, page 13

## Noubar Afeyan Elected to MIT Board of Trustees

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – On June 2, Noubar Afeyan was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Afeyan, along with the nine other term members elected this year, will serve for five years, effective July 1. He will add his expertise to the 76 distinguished leaders in education, science, engineering and industry already serving the MIT Board of Trustees.

see AFEYAN, page 20



Dr. Noubar Afeyan

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mirror-Spectator Annual Summer Break

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for two weeks in July, for its annual summer vacation break. The last issue before vacation will be that of July 2, while the first issue after the break will be that of July 23.

The office will close on Friday, July 1, and reopen on Monday, July 18. All press releases or calendar items can be sent to editor@mirrorspectator.com.

### Turkish Justice Ministry Rejects Sis Return Discussions

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – The Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia says the Ministry of Justice of Turkey has rejected discussing the demand for the return of the Catholicosate of Sis.

In 2015, the Great House of Cilicia issued a claim at the Constitutional Court of Turkey, demanding the return of the historical Catholicosate of Sis. Taking into consideration the importance of the lawsuit, the Constitutional Court of Turkey announced it would seek further advice from the Justice Ministry. The ministry rejected discussing the claim, and the Constitutional Court told the Catholicosate to respond to the rejection within 15 days.

On May 26 the Great House of Cilicia rejected the Justice Ministry’s contradictory reasons and reiterated its demand. The Constitutional Court’s verdict is expected.

### Armenia Condemns Attacks on Aleppo Christian Areas

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Armenia is concerned about al-Nusra Front’s latest attacks on Aleppo that have claimed many lives among the civilian population, Ambassador of Armenia to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Arman Kirakossian said on June 16.

Addressing the OSCE Permanent Council, Kirakossian said Armenia condemns the targeted attacks on the Christian neighborhoods of Aleppo, with dozens of people having been wounded and killed in Armenian-inhabited districts alone.

The Holy Trinity (Zvartnots) Church, the Armenian maternity hospital, as well as historical and cultural buildings have been damaged during the offensives.

He added that minorities, including the Armenian community, are a key target for militants.

“The survivors of the Armenian Genocide established the Armenian community of Aleppo. And 100 years later, their descendants struggle for their existence.”

## INSIDE

### Berlin Art Explosion

Pages 10-11

#### INDEX

Arts and Living . . . . .	14
Armenia . . . . .	2,3
Community News. . . . .	6
Editorial . . . . .	18
International . . . . .	4,5





## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Tax Breaks Spur Armenian IT Startups

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – More than a hundred new information technology (IT) firms have been set up in Armenia since the government introduced tax breaks for them in January 2015, Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamian said on Friday, June 17.

Abrahamian said that the measure has thus given a further boost to Armenia's burgeoning IT industry.

Under a government bill passed by the Armenian parliament in late 2014, startups employing up to 30 people can be exempt from profit tax until 2020. They are also eligible for a preferential income tax rate for their employees, equivalent to 10 percent of their gross wages. The minimum payroll tax rate in Armenia is set at 24.4 percent.

The tax breaks are granted on a case-by-case basis by a special commission comprising not only government officials but also representatives of the IT sector. Startups can apply for them by December 2017.

"I am very pleased to note that within one year 111 new companies have been created in the sector and 98 of them have qualified for the tax privileges, creating a total of 470 jobs," Abrahamian said.

Only 16 such firms were reportedly registered in 2014, suggesting that the tax breaks have indeed had a tangible impact on the sector. Deputy Economy Minister Emil Tarasian said in March that the government will likely ask the parliament to extend them.

IT is the fastest growing sector of Armenia's economy, having expanded by 20 percent annually in the past decade. According to the Armenian Economy Ministry, around 15,000 people currently work for 400 or so IT firms operating in the country.

## Three Healthcare Officials Arrested for Corruption

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The head of the State Health Agency of the Healthcare Ministry of Armenia Saro Tsururyan, the head of the Yerevan Municipal Center Arsen Sedrakyan and the former purchasing chief of medical services and information department of the agency Samvel Kharazyan were arrested on June 13 on charges of a criminal case investigated by the General Department of Investigation of Particularly Important Cases of Republic of Armenia Investigative Committee.

Those arrested are accused of abusing their official positions. In particular, they are charged with preparing false medical vacation packages and selling them.

## France Plans New Armenian Genocide Denial Law

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – France plans to enact a new law that will make it a crime to deny the Armenian Genocide, French ambassador to Armenia Jean-Francois Charpentier said on June 21.

"The text is practically ready," Charpentier said at a news conference in Yerevan.

Charpentier said that President Francois Hollande is behind the bill drafted by French government officials and legal experts. He stressed that the bill would criminalize the denial of not only the Armenian genocide but also other genocides officially recognized by France.

The two houses of France's parliament already passed a law against Armenian genocide denial in December 2011 and January 2012. The move, hailed by Armenia but condemned by Turkey, was orchestrated by Hollande's predecessor Nicholas Sarkozy.

France's constitutional court subsequently struck down the law, however, saying that it runs counter to freedom of speech.

Hollande pledged to ban genocide denial when he ran for president in 2012. He told leaders of France's Armenian community at the time that a new corresponding bill should be drafted with "utmost legal security" so that it satisfies the French Constitutional Council.

Hollande, 61, is expected to run for a second term in presidential elections slated for April-May 2017.



Zhirayr Sefilian speaks to supporters.

## Oppositionist Arrested Over 'Coup Plot'

By Artak Hambardzumian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenian law-enforcement authorities arrested Zhirayr Sefilian, a radical opposition leader, on Monday, June 20, saying that he plotted to overthrow the government through an armed revolt.

Armenia's Investigative Committee also announced the arrest of six other men accused of being part of an armed group formed by Sefilian. It claimed to have confiscated large amounts of weapons from them.

"Together with a group of other individuals, Zhirayr Sefilian planned to seize, through the use of firearms, buildings and communications facilities, including Yerevan's television tower," the committee charged in a statement. "For that purpose, he organized the illegal acquisition and transport by a group of individuals of weapons and ammunition and their storage in various locations."

The statement added that eight unidentified persons have already been charged with illegal arms possession. No such charges were formally levelled against Sefilian as of Monday afternoon.

Sefilian's associates said he was taken into custody shortly after law-enforcement officers began searching the offices of his New Armenia Public

Salvation Front, a radical opposition grouping. They said the officers looked for weapons but did not find any, confiscating instead five computers as well as some documents.

The investigators also spent several hours searching Sefilian's Yerevan apartment. They refused to allow his lawyer Tigran Hayrapetian to watch the search. Hayrapetian protested against the "illegal" refusal.

"Of course, they didn't find anything," Sefilian's wife Nanor said afterwards.

Varuzhan Avetisyan, a senior New Armenia member, claimed that the opposition leader was arrested because he planned to campaign against Armenian territorial concessions to Azerbaijan.

"Serzh Sargsyan is now pursuing a policy of return of the liberated territories and he decided to isolate his main political rival in order to prevent anyone from getting the people to rise up against his treacherous activities," said Avetisyan.

New Armenia held a series of anti-government rallies in Yerevan last December in an attempt to force President Serzh Sargsyan to step down. The campaign fizzled out due to poor attendance of those rallies.

Early this year New Armenia tried in vain to make another push for regime change. It again failed to win over mainstream opposition parties represented

in Armenia's parliament.

As recently as on June 11, Sefilian announced plans to set up a new opposition movement called the National Resistance Committee. "We have a treacherous government, and must create an alternative [to it] and take over the function of governing the country with the help of the people and the army as soon as possible," he declared.

The Lebanese-born oppositionist did not specify just how the new group will strive to topple the president.

A vocal critic of both the current and previous Armenian governments, Sefilian also campaigned against former President Robert Kocharian. In 2006, he was arrested after setting up an anti-government union of fellow war veterans of the Nagorno-Karabagh war.

The Armenian authorities claimed that they planned to mount an armed uprising against the Kocharian government. Sefilian was cleared of the coup charge during his subsequent trial. Still, he spent 18 months in prison for allegedly illegal arms possession.

Sefilian, 48, was again detained along with his four associates a year ago, ahead of a series of anti-government rallies planned by them. They were charged with plotting "mass disturbances" in Yerevan but were all set free a month later.

"As long as Zhirayr breathes, he will fight against them, whether in prison or outside it," said his wife.

## Ban Ki-moon Praises Armenia's HIV Statistics

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A high-level meeting on ending AIDS/HIV took place at the United Nation (UN)'s General Assembly in New York. Armen Muradyan, Healthcare Minister of Armenia, took part in the meeting as did different high-level officials from around the world, including UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

The latter said: "We have made enormous progress. Since 2000 the global total of people receiving antiretroviral treatment doubled every three to four years, thanks to cheaper drugs, increased competition and new funding. Today, more than 17 billion people are being treated, saving millions of lives and billions of dollars."

Furthermore, the world has achieved Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 6 – which included halting and reversing the AIDS epidemic. New HIV infections have declined by 35 per cent since 2000, the UN chief said. Noting that he was particularly happy that new HIV infections among children were down by 56 per cent in the past 15 years, the

secretary-general said that four countries had eliminated them completely: Armenia, Belarus, Cuba and Thailand.

"None of this could have happened without the leadership of people living with HIV, and civil society partners on the ground around the world. They believed that more equitable treatment and access was possible, and they made sure that we responded," Ban said. "They broke the silence and shone a light on discrimination, intolerance and stigma. They brought their passion to their fight, and that passion will make the end of AIDS a reality," he added.

Armenian Healthcare Minister Muradyan delivered a speech at the meeting and noted that the obligations

which Armenia has undertaken have fundamentally changed the conceptual approach of countering AIDS/HIV. UN



Ban Ki-moon

member states adopted a new political declaration that includes a set of time-bound targets to fast-track the pace of progress towards combating the worldwide scourge of HIV and AIDS over the next five years and end the epidemic as a public health threat by 2030.





## ARMENIA

# New Armenian Smartphone Debuts

By Raffi Elliott

Special to the Mirror-Spectator



YEREVAN – Armenia made headlines in the tech world again in early June with the Yerevan-based firm Technology and Sciences Dynamics (TSD) announcing the sale of its newest product, the Armphone. The launch of this device, the first entirely Armenian-produced smartphone follows the success which the company's previous product, the Armtab (sold to the North American market as the Minno Tablet) saw two years ago.

The Armphone, which went on sale the first weekend of June, is only the second local-built smartphone hailing from the former Soviet Union following the Russian Yotaphone 2, which was widely considered to be a flop. The five available models sell for between 150 to 300 USD.

With its basic model retailing at about 150 USD, the Armphone hopes to compete as a low-cost alternative to higher-end Android-compatible phones like average Samsungs or HTC's in the CIS and other developing markets. The company has already announced plans to expand into the Russian, Kazakhstani, Ukrainian, Belarusian and Georgian markets, as well as further expansion into the European Union. According to the CEO, plans are already afoot to open an Armphone store in Moscow.

Indeed, TSD's American-Armenian founder, Vahan Shakaryan, has favorably compared the Armphone 5

which runs Android 5.1 and features a 5.2 inch full HD screen, with 3 GBs of ram and an 8.0 MP front camera as well as 4G and Wi-Fi connectivity with some of the more expensive Galaxy series Samsungs. The phone has been customized for native Armenian apps, and smoothly runs Armenian keyboards and other software. Users can also customize their screens with high-quality backgrounds depicting Armenian scenes, or install unique Armenian ringtones.

The company will be facing some notable challenges in the near-future, however. The Armphone's international marketability has been criticized as some users have taken to social media claiming that the phone's modest performance does not justify its price.

Facebook user Baykar Sepoyan posted a comparison chart between the Armphone 5 and its Chinese competitor, the LEAGOO Elite 1 which retails at 160 USD, noting

with frustration that despite identical stats, the Armphone 5 costs almost twice as much as the latter.

Others have also picked at the branding, which some had criticized for being an unimaginative "armeno-centric" marketing strategy, potentially hurting the product's scalability when marketing to non-Armenian consumers.

Foreign observers have questioned whether the entire project was anything but a gimmick echoing Soviet-era pride in autarchy reminiscent of locally made ErAz cars, and Nairi computers in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Armphone's pricing issues may have more to do with economies of scale, as the unit price would certainly go down when the company begins exporting in larger numbers. Other social media users have signaled their interest in buying the phone despite the availability of cheaper alternatives because while still performing admirably, the fact that the phone is assembled entirely in Armenia, and sustains high-skilled tech careers in Armenia is attractive enough to consumers.

Shakaryan isn't content with banking on consumer's sense of Armenian pride alone, however, insisting that the Armphone is a well-engineered smartphone. "It is important to note that our product is high quality and we stand behind and take responsibility for the quality of our product," he said in a statement; "We produce in Armenia, we are with our consumers and take full responsibility for every step, from production to customer service."

Armenian customers seem to be content with this, as the phone's launch has generated a lot of interest, both in Armenia and abroad. Large queues reminiscent of iPhone launches have been forming around the Armphone's store in Yerevan's Rossya Mall since its launch as many scramble to get their hands on the new smartphone.

Mariam, who bought one of the first units since the phone launched is very happy with her purchase. She has already installed some of her favorite Armenian apps like menu.am, and GG Taxi (a sort of Armenian Uber). Though she is very proud of this Armenian design, she is genuinely satisfied with the phone's performance, saying "I love this phone, it works so smoothly, it looks beautiful, AND it's Armenian."

# Finnish Monk Writes on Armenian Culture and Genocide

By Nvard Chalikyan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Finnish monk and professor of theology Fr. Serafim Seppälä has for years been studying Armenian culture and history and has a number of publications in this realm, including a 500-page book on Armenian art and culture. He is currently working on another book on the topic of the Armenian Genocide. He says Armenia is the last corner of the Middle Eastern cultures where the old Christian tradition is still preserved and he calls it his spiritual home.

He has been engaged in Armenian studies for years. When asked how he, as a Finnish Orthodox monk, first got interested in Armenia, and what topics he studied, he replied as follows: "I was interested in Armenia before I became Orthodox, but it is a long story. As a young student in the '90s, I wanted to become a Christian but I did not know what kind of Christian I should be. There were dozens of different denominations in Helsinki and I visited all of them. The Orthodox church was the last one on my list! Before that I already visited an Armenian church in Istanbul.

"I was studying Oriental studies and Semitic languages in Helsinki, and also reading a lot of books on the history of Christianity. I became convinced that Christianity by its spirit is an eastern religion, and the Oriental Churches are the closest to the original. Then I went to Jerusalem for a year and experienced them all: the Syrian Orthodox, Copts, Ethiopians and Armenians. I lived in the Armenian quarter, in a tiny hut on the roof of an Armenian house.

"So it was for me a personal and academic pursuit. I translated spiritual literature from Syriac (Aramaic) into Finnish, but I never had a chance to study Armenian. Then I became Orthodox, and some years after that I went to a monastery. The monastic years were very busy. Each day was 14 hours of church and work, and in the nights I was preparing a PhD. Then by surprise, I got a job from the university and the Church blessed me to go. Only then I was able to fulfill my dream and go deeper with Armenia."

When asked what interesting discoveries had he made, he responded: "For me everything Armenian surviving from pre-Genocide times is a revelation of supreme beauty. Vaspurakan miniatures, duduk tunes, folk dances, sharakans, Sayat Nova, Artsakh carpets, even reminiscences of tight rope dances! I never encountered such beauty anywhere. Combining this with the history of massacres and bloodshed, the combination is absolutely unique.

"These things are the home of my soul. It hurts me every time when I see or hear these precious pearls being replaced by Western rubbish in Yerevan.

"I am not blind to the practical problems of Armenia, but there are practical problems in all countries. An ultimate example: people commit many more suicides in well-to-do Finnish villages than in the poorest Armenian villages. Why? Could it be that there is still something precious in poor Armenian villages, something that the Finns lack?"

**You have studied the philosophy of the Armenian Genocide as well as the Armenian art of the post-genocide period. Could you share some of your findings and ideas in this regard?**

"Yes, I did a study on the cultural aftermath of the genocide: how Armenian art, paintings, movies, literature and the whole identity has been affected and constructed by the genocide and its denial. It felt like the deeper I dug the more painful it was.

"The term genocide is nowadays used very lightly. When a few thousand die in the Middle East conflicts, even politicians immediately label it as genocide. In an actual genocide, even the deaths are a secondary problem, whether thousands or millions.

"I see genocide basically as an ontological event, a systematical attack against existence in all levels: past, present and future. The past of Armenians was and still is being destroyed by Turkey. The present was taken away from those 1.5 million. And the future, the whole way of life, this is the true problem of genocide. To sit and chat in a churchyard in LA is not the same as to sit and chat in Aghtamar. The know-how

of thousands of years of traditions in prayers, folk songs, carpet-making etc. went to ashes. This is the essence of genocide.

"At the moment I am already writing a third book for the 100 year anniversary. This time my idea is to portray Western Armenian village life, with all of its feasts and so on, and to present an overview of a few martyrdoms based on survivor memoirs.

I never write about politics or diplomats and such. For me, they are marginal. What is important is the actual people and their spirit – in spirituality and in arts."

**Father Serafim, you are the author of a 500-page book titled East of Ararat on Armenian culture, history, art and religion. Could you say in a few words what the book is about and what its message is?**

"For 15 years I waited for someone to prepare a book about Armenian culture in Finnish, and no one did. So I understood that I needed to do it myself. It is a cultural history introducing the twelve most important chapters of Armenian history. I tried to make it so that it is not a dry catalogue of empires and rulers and power relations, but rather a historical exposition of Armenian identity. Why and how things like Avarayr, the Catholicos, alphabet, Narekatsi, Aznavour, etc. are constituents of modern Armenian identity."

**Is this book going to be translated into English or Armenian?**

"I am afraid not. It is meant for a Finnish audience. To my great joy, there are already hundreds of Finns who have travelled to Armenia with this 'brick' in their hand. They say that in Armenia they see things and perhaps experience them deeply, then they read and understand.

In fact, it seems that I have contributed to the emergence of a curious sub-culture in Finland: we have dozens of people who love Armenia deeply, with all of its shortcomings, and even can feel the authentic karot. Most of my friends have been to Armenia like 5 times, and the more they go, the crazier they turn! At the moment one of them is riding a horse from Jermuk to Sevan!"

**It is really great to discover that we have**

**such amazing Finnish friends who love Armenia like this! You have visited Armenia for a number of times; when are you planning to visit again?**

"Well, twice a year I bring a group from Finland. In October to Northern Armenia, and then in May we'll go to Artsakh and Siunik. I hope to spend Christmas time in Armenia, too. I cannot stand many months outside."

## New Ambassador of India Presents Credentials to President

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India Yogeshwar Sangwan presented his credentials to President Serzh Sargsyan on June 17.

Sargsyan congratulated the ambassador on his appointment and expressed hope that he will make the maximum effort during his tenure toward strengthening the friendship of the two states and peoples, and the development of cooperation.

Sargsyan noted that next year is an anniversary for the Armenian-Indian modern relations: the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. The president said with satisfaction that over the years Armenian-Indian relations have developed in conditions of mutual trust and understanding, which are also displayed in similar approaches to regional and international issues.

Both the president and the ambassador agreed that there is great potential in all areas – political, economic and humanitarian.

Sangwan assured Sargsyan that during his diplomatic mission he will do everything possible to contribute to the development and deepening of Armenian-Indian relations.





## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Wolfgang Gust: 'Genocide Recognition May Open eyes of Germans and Turks'

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Former Editor in Chief of Der Spiegel, historian Wolfgang Gust, said in an interview with Agos weekly that Germany was the most important ally of the Ottoman Empire during the years of WWI.

Germany was well aware of the Genocide against Armenians through the reports of its consuls. According to the historian, during the Genocide years the German diplomats were sending weak letters to the Ottoman Government, in order to create an impression as if they are trying to help Armenians. However the response of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs was different. The then Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg said during those years: "Our only goal is to keep Turkey at our side until the end of the war, during this the being or non being of Armenians is not important."

According to Gust, the role of German military in Turkey should not be overlooked in the Armenian Genocide issue. In several parts of the Empire they personally led the attacks on Armenian-populated areas.

"The German Parliament's resolution resembles the resolutions of other Parliaments, which, to say the least is surprising, and in my personal opinion – scandalous, because the Germans were not the witnesses of the tragedy, but acting figures," Gust said. "This resolution, which officially calls the Armenian Genocide as "genocide" might open the eyes of many Germans, including the ones with Turkish origins," he said.

## Levon Aronian Comes in 3rd at Grand Chess Tour

LEUVEN, Belgium (PanArmenian.net) – Armenian grandmaster Levon Aronian took the third spot in the second round of the Grand Chess Tour in Leuven. The reigning World Chess Champion Magnus Carlsen won the tournament, while Filipino chess grandmaster Wesley So came in second.

The Armenian player scored 20 points out of the possible 36, Armsport.am says.

## German Court Blocks Erdogan's Attempt to Silence Top Media Boss

BERLIN (PanArmenian.net) – Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lost a German court battle against a top media boss on June 21 when his appeal in a bitter row over free speech was thrown out, The Local reports.

Erdogan had sought a court order to stop the Axel Springermedia group's chief Mathias Döpfner from repeating support for a TV satirist who insulted the Turkish leader in a now infamous "smear poem."

After failing to get an injunction from a lower court last month, Erdogan also lost an appeal before the higher regional court in the western German city of Cologne.

The judges said in a statement that they considered Döpfner's letter of support "a permissible expression of opinion as protected under Article 5" of Germany's constitution.

Erdogan could still seek recourse before Germany's top tribunal, the Federal Constitutional Court.

The legal action came after Döpfner published in April an open letter in one of the Springer group's newspapers, in which he backed Jan Böhmermann – the satirist who in a poem accused Erdogan of bestiality and watching child pornography.

Böhmermann's recital of his so-called "Defamatory Poem" on national television in late March this year sparked a diplomatic firestorm and a row over freedom of expression.

During the broadcast Böhmermann gleefully admitted his poem flouted Germany's legal limits to free speech and was intended as a provocation, according to The Local.

In his letter, Döpfner took the comedian's side, declaring: "For me, your poem worked. I laughed out loud."

## Israeli Parliament Prepares New Bill to Stop Arms Sales to Human Rights Violators

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Knesset members from nearly every political party were set to propose a new law to halt arms sales to "gross human rights violators" around the world, according to the *Times of Israel*. Meretz Member of the Knesset (MK) Tamar Zandberg has been leading the charge on that front, with help from activist attorney Eitay Mack and Professor Yair Auron of Israel's Open University. Their proposals, however, have rarely gained traction, as Zandberg's left-wing party is in the opposition, putting a majority out of reach.

To help raise this issue out of the mire of partisan politics, freshman MK Yehudah Glick of the Likud party stepped into the fray, bringing with him another 16 members of the Knesset. According to an advance copy of the bill seen by the *Times of Israel*, it will be sponsored by 18 members of the Knesset from the Likud, Meretz, Yesh Atid, Zionist Union, Jewish Home, Joint List and Kulanu parties. The only parties without a single Knesset member sponsoring the bill are the plenary's ultra-Orthodox parties – United Torah

Judaism and Shas – and Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman's Yisrael Beytenu party.

The proposal was written by Mack, but is based on a similar American law, Zandberg told the *Times of Israel* on June 14. It is an amendment to the existing law that would require the Defense Ministry to reject export licenses for Israeli companies selling technology or services to human rights violators.

Behind Glick's push, there's a self-described "concerned citizen" named Eli Joseph, who joined the fight to halt arms sales to human rights violators over a year ago. For decades, Israel has been accused of selling weapons and services to human rights violators around the world, including to Rwanda during the genocide there in the 1990s, though the extent has been largely unknown as those transactions have largely remain sealed – due to national security concerns, the government maintains – despite attempts by Mack to have them opened to the public.

Most recently, Israel has been accused of supplying South Sudan with advanced weaponry and training,

despite a near universal arms embargo in light of a bloody civil war there, in which both sides have been accused of human rights violations, including systemic rape, ethnic cleansing, and the recruitment of child soldiers. Israel has since promised not to sell "attack" weapons to South Sudan, though the United Nations found in January that it had provided the African nation with surveillance technology.

Israel's current law on defense exports requires "considerations regarding the end-user or the end-use," but does not expressly forbid arms sales to human rights violators. To address that, Zandberg and Meretz party leader Zehava Galon proposed new legislation in May 2015 that would require the Defense Ministry to reject an arms manufacturer's export license to countries that commit "gross human rights violations," including torture, inhumane punishment, kidnapping and "rape for belonging to a political, ethnic or religious group," Zandberg told the *Times of Israel* last year. The proposal to be presented soon is virtually identical to the one put forth by Zandberg last year.

## Armenia, Iran 'Agree' on Closer Defense Ties

TEHRAN (RFE/RL) – An Armenian deputy defense minister in charge of arms and other procurements has reportedly reached agreements on closer military cooperation between Armenia and Iran during a visit to Tehran.

The official, Gen. Movses Hakobian, is the recently appointed head of the Armenian Defense Ministry's on Department Material-Technical Procurements. The department is tasked with supplying Armenia's Armed Forces with weapons, ammunition, food and other provisions.

The ministry said over the weekend that a delegation headed by Hakobian was in Iran from June 14-17, holding talks with Iranian Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan and Mohammad Mehdi Karbala, the chief executive of the state-run ETKA corporation, a leading supplier of food, clothing and other non-lethal items to the Iranian military.

A ministry statement said the Armenian delegation also "visited various factories and stores and acquainted itself with the full range of their products."

"During the meeting [with Dehqan,] questions concerning long-term prospects for Armenian-Iranian cooperation in the area of defense were discussed," it said.

"As a result of the visit, agreements were reached with regard to the advancement of cooperation in a number of areas. A memorandum of understanding was signed," the statement added without elaborating.

Karbala and other senior ETKA executives visited Armenia and met with Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian in

break of heavy fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces deployed around Nagorno-Karabagh. The escalation apparently dominated the talks, with Dehqan reiterating Tehran's calls for the conflicting parties to stick to the ceasefire regime.

A week later, Ohanian briefed Iran's ambassador to Armenia on his "agree-



The Iranian and Armenian delegations meet in Tehran.

February. The Defense Ministry in Yerevan said at the time that they also held talks with "the management of a number of Armenian industrial enterprises."

Ohanian and Dehqan met in Moscow on April 27 just weeks after the out-

ments" reached with his Iranian counterpart and, according to his press office, "expressed confidence that they will be put into practice soon." The ambassador, Seyyed Kazem Sajjad, was reported to hail closer defense ties between the two neighboring states.

## ISIS Suicide Bomber Targets Armenian, Assyrian Genocide Commemoration ceremony

QAMISHLI, Syria (Public Radio of Armenia) – A suicide bomber from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) blew off his explosive belt when attempting to sneak into a religious ceremony held by the city's Assyrians, killing at least 3 guards and injuring dozens of civilians, Al-Masdar News reports.

The bloody attack comes as

Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, the patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church, was holding a special ceremony commemorating the 101 anniversary of Ottoman genocide against Armenians and Assyrians of Qamishli.

Local sources said that government troops securing the event had stopped the suspected bomber

and prevented him from entering the ceremony before he detonated his explosive belt, killing all three guards and wounding dozens.

The northeastern city of Qamishli, populated mostly by Christians, was targeted by ISIS suicide attacks at least three times before, where dozens of civilians have been killed and wounded.





# Progress Reported in NKR Mediation Talks

MEDIATION, from page 1

conflicting parties to allow independent investigations of truce violations that would be conducted by the OSCE.

Aliyev and Sargsyan pledged to accept these safeguards at their previous meeting held in Vienna on May 16. They reaffirmed those pledges in Monday's statement.

"Unfortunately, it has to be said that until now Azerbaijan did not demonstrate a constructive approach to this issue," complained Nalbandian. He claimed that Aliyev had walked away in the past from similar agreements designed to strengthen the ceasefire regime on the Karabagh "line of contact" and the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

As recently as in March, Aliyev lambasted the mediators for insisting on the safeguards against armed incidents, saying that they would only "freeze the conflict" and thus benefit the Armenian side.

"The presidents noted major importance of their regular contacts on the Nagorno-Karabagh problems and agreed to continue them in this format to supplement the work of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs who were invited to the final part of the St. Petersburg meeting," the document says.

The leaders have "stated that they reached mutual understanding on a number of issues the settlement of which will make it possible to create conditions for progress in the Nagorno-Karabagh settlement."

"The presidents reiterated their commitment to the agreements reached at the latest Armenian-Azerbaijani summit in Vienna on May 16 that are geared towards stabilization of the situation in the conflict zone and creating of the atmosphere capable of promoting the peace process. For these ends, they agreed, in particular, to increase the number of monitors in the conflict zone. They expressed satisfaction of the observance of the ceasefire along the line of engagement in the recent time," the presidents said in the statement.

Creating a mechanism to investigate truce violations would lay a good basis for talks on a settlement of the Karabagh conflict, Sargsyan said at a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday.

"Our position on the Karabagh issue is known to all. We wish this issue to be settled exclusively by peaceful means. And I would like to thank Russia as a co-chair of the Minsk Group for the understanding and efforts it pays to this issue," Sargsyan said.



President Ilham Aliyev, left, with President Serzh Sargsyan

"Regrettably, such conflicts are never settled at the wish of one party. We would be glad if we managed to make progress today towards the implementation of the agreements that we have achieved, in other words, to create mechanisms of investigating truce violations. This would cre-

ate a good working climate for talks," Sargsyan said.

For his part Putin agreed to discuss all these issues.

(Stories from RFE/RL and Tass were used to compile this report.)

# Turkey's Arrest of Prominent Activists Stirs Protest

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – Supporters of a pro-Kurdish newspaper on Tuesday, June 21, protested against the arrest of three prominent activists facing terrorism charges in Turkey and said the government was tightening its grip on independent media in a case being watched by the European Union.

About 200 people chanted "The free press cannot be silenced" as riot police stood by outside daily *Ozgur Gundem*, a day after a court arrested Reporters Without Borders (RSF) representative Erol Onderoglu, author Ahmet Nesin and Sebnem Korur Fincanci, president of Turkey's Human Rights Foundation.

The three had joined a "solidarity campaign" with nearly 50 other journalists to guest-edit the paper for a day each. *Ozgur Gundem* focuses on the Kurdish conflict and has faced dozens of investigations, fines and the arrest of a dozen correspondents since 2014. Other guest editors are also being investigated or prosecuted on terrorism-related charges.

"The court, directed by the palace and acting on its orders, once again has signed its name to a shameful decision and arrested our three friends," editor Inan Kizilkaya said, referring to President Tayyip Erdogan's office.

The presidency said it would not comment on court cases.

The arrests are a headache for the European Union, trying to keep a deal with Turkey on track to stop the flow of migrants to Europe, despite criticism from rights groups and concern from some European leaders about Turkey's record on rights.

The EU, which Turkey seeks to join, said the arrests violated Ankara's commitment to fundamental rights.

Turkey ranks 151 out of 180 nations on RSF's World Press Freedom Index. It accuses Erdogan, Turkey's most popular leader in a half-century, of an "offensive against Turkey's media" that includes censorship and harassment.

"The jailing of Onderoglu and (Fincanci), two of Turkey's most respected rights defenders, is a chilling sign human rights groups are the next target," said Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

Fincanci, 57, a professor of forensic medicine, is particularly well-known, having won the first International Medical Peace Award for helping establish U.N. principles for detecting and documenting torture.

Erdogan has vowed to stamp out a three-decade insurgency by Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants that flared anew a year ago after peace talks he spearheaded collapsed.

Left-wing *Ozgur Gundem*, which has a circulation of 7,500, has featured the writings of Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK's jailed leader, and has published columns by senior rebel commanders. Turkey, the U.S. and EU list the PKK as a terrorist group.

The Index on Censorship says 20 journalists have been detained in Turkey this year. Most are Kurds working in the strife-hit southeast.

"The West, with its entire focus on the refugee crisis, has paved the way for Erdogan's authoritarianism," said Garo Paylan, a lawmak-

er in the Democratic Peoples' Party (HDP), which has Kurdish roots and is the third biggest party in parliament.

Can Dundar, editor-in-chief of the secularist *Cumhuriyet* newspaper which is often at odds with *Ozgur Gundem's* pro-Kurdish stance, on Tuesday took on the symbolic role of editor-in-chief.

Dundar was jailed for five years last month

over coverage of alleged Turkish arms shipments to Syrian rebels, but is free pending appeal. He is aware he could be prosecuted again after his stint at the helm of *Ozgur Gundem*.

"If we don't stand together, we will all lose. The time is now to support each other," he told Reuters.

## Program of Pope Francis' Armenia Visit Announced

VATICAN (Vatican Radio) – The official program for Pope Francis' three-day visit to Armenia, from June 24 to 26 (all times are local) was just released by the Vatican. It appears below.

### Friday June 24

09.00 Departure from Rome's Fiumicino Airport for Yerevan  
15.00 Arrival at Yerevan's Zvartnots Airport with welcome ceremony there.  
15.35 Visit to pray at Echmiadzin Cathedral (greetings given by Catholicos of All Armenia Karekin II and by Pope Francis)  
18.00 Courtesy visit to Armenia's president in the Presidential Palace.  
18.30 Meeting with civil authorities and the diplomatic corps in the Presidential Palace (speech by the Pope)  
19.30 Private meeting with Catholicos in the Apostolic Palace

### Saturday June 25

08.45 Visit to Tzitzernakaberd Memorial Complex  
10.00 Journey by plane to Gumri  
11.00 Holy Mass in Gumri's Vartanants Square (homily by the Pope and greeting by Catholicos)  
16.45 Visit to the Armenian Apostolic Cathedral of the Seven Wounds  
17.15 Visit to the Holy Martyrs Armenian Catholic Cathedral in Gumri  
18.00 Journey by plane back to Yerevan  
19.00 Ecumenical Encounter and Prayer for Peace in Yerevan's Republic Square

### Sunday June 26

09.15 Meeting with Catholic Bishops of Armenia in the Apostolic Palace at Echmiadzin  
10.00 Participation in Divine Liturgy in the Armenian Apostolic Cathedral (homily by Catholicos and greeting by the Pope)  
Ecumenical Lunch with the Catholicos, archbishops and bishops of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Catholic bishops of Armenia and cardinals and bishops from the papal entourage in the Apostolic Palace.  
15.00 Meeting with delegates and benefactors of the Apostolic Armenian Church in the Apostolic Palace  
16.05 Signing of Joint Declaration in the Apostolic Palace  
17.00 Prayer at Khor Virap Monastery  
18.15 Farewell Ceremony at airport  
18.30 Departure by plane for Rome  
20.40 Arrival at Rome's Ciampino Airport

## US, Armenia Review Joint Efforts Against Nuclear Smuggling

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – US and Armenian officials met in Yerevan on June 13, to review ongoing efforts to prevent smuggling of radioactive materials through Armenia's territory that have for years been supported by the United States.

The US Embassy in Yerevan said they two sides reaffirmed their "commitment to continuing these efforts and identified opportunities for further collaboration."

An embassy statement quoted US Ambassador Richard Mills as saying that Washington will continue to "enhance Armenia's ability to investigate nuclear smuggling incidents."

"This review reflects Armenia's commitment to proper stewardship of nuclear materials under its control and continued willingness to work to prevent the smuggling of nuclear materials across its borders," added Mills.

Mills took part in the review along with experts from the US State Department's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation. The Armenian participants included representatives the Foreign Ministry, the National Security Service as well as the customs and immigration agencies.

The US-Armenian efforts against nonproliferation stem from a joint action plan that was signed in 2008 by then-US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian.

The US government has supplied Armenian border guard and customs services with US-made radio-communication systems, border sensors, metal detectors, cargo truck scales, and X-ray devices.

It also donated modern equipment to a special laboratory that was inaugurated at Armenia's Metsamor nuclear plant in 2013.



# Community News

## Struggle Over Haverhill Church

Armenians to Sell, Historians Fear Losing Building

By Mike LaBella

HAVERHILL, Mass. (*Lawrence Eagle-Tribune*) – A tug of war is brewing over the future of a church built in 1848.

Members of the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe are preparing to sell their old church – St. Gregory the Illuminator Church – but local historians are clamoring to prevent St. Gregory from being demolished.

Church leaders said they have a purchase-and-sale agreement with a local pizza business that wants the old church property. They said they will continue to welcome offers on the building, but the bottom line is they must sell it so they can pay for construction of a new church.

The new church is planned for 1280 Boston Road in Bradford, on Route 125 near the North Andover line.

Church leaders are seeking support through an online petition to stop the city from approving a “demolition delay” ordinance for the Main Street Historic District, which contains the historic St. Gregory church across from City Hall. The church leaders said the ordinance would interfere with their plans to sell the building.

The petition can be found online at [www.change.org](http://www.change.org) by searching for “Armenian Community in Merrimack Valley.”

The City Council was expected on Tuesday, June 21 (after press time) to vote on the proposed demolition delay for the Main Street Historic District. If approved, the order would require an extensive evaluation of any historic property in the district before a demolition permit is granted.

That evaluation process would include research into alternatives to demolition, including efforts to find a buyer interested in preserving, restoring or moving a historic property such as the church. It would also require a detailed plan for reuse of the property.

Church officials said their congregation supports building a new church and selling the St. Gregory church, even if it means seeing the building torn down. The move to a new church also has the blessing of Armenians throughout the region and that of the supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, his Holiness Catholicos Karekin II who blessed the new church property in Bradford in 2007.

The Rev. Vart Gyoalyan, pastor of Hye Pointe, said he would not be happy to see the old church demolished, but that it no longer meets the needs of the congregation.

“There is a feeling of sadness ... We are not barbarians,” he said. “This is our church. But beyond the building, we see our future needs and we are not leaving Haverhill.

“What’s important, the building or the people?” he said. “If the community dies and this building becomes abandoned and the archdiocese can’t care for it ... is that what people want? The people are the church, and the people want to move forward.”

Gyoalyan said the plan is to sell the old church to the owner of the Domino’s Pizza shop in Dudley Plaza on Main Street. City officials have said the Domino’s owner is interested in moving the business to the site of the church, which would likely have to be demolished first.

William Pillsbury, the city’s economic development director, said a formal, complete application from the pizza business has not yet been submitted to the city for review.

Gyoalyan said regardless of what happens, see HAVERHILL, page 7



Arpi Hamalian

## Arpi Hamalian: Multilingual Champion for Learning

MONTREAL, Quebec (*Concordia*) – On Sunday, May 29, Arpi Hamalian received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE) during the 2016 Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences.

By Elisabeth Faure

She was nominated for the award by students in the adult education programs in Concordia’s Department of Education.

“Seeing the torch successfully passed to the new generation of scholars and practitioners in adult education is really a sign that Concordia is at the forefront of the field in Canada,” says Hamalian.

She first came to Concordia in 1974 to develop the MA program in Educational Studies, having begun her career in 1969 teaching medical and rural anthropology at the American University of Beirut and sociology at Haigazian University.

“Hamalian is a multilingual champion for life-long learning, an educator, practitioner, academic leader and scholar,” said Maurice Taylor, chair of the awards committee, when he presented Hamalian with the award.

Hamalian is also a mentor, and internship, thesis and dissertation supervisor to over 300 graduate students in adult education.

Her work in all these areas has been recognized with dozens of honors and awards locally, nationally and internationally.

Hamalian brought in the certificate, minor and BA in adult education in 1979 and later developed the Graduate Diploma in Adult Education, as well as the MA and doctoral concentrations.

She has been recognized nationally and internationally for her research on women’s rotating savings associations, and rural and refugee education programs.

In addition to serving as chair of the Department of Education from 1978 to 1981, Hamalian was director of the Educational Studies program on many occasions. She led the successful certification campaign for the Concordia University Faculty Association, for which she served as president. She also served two terms as president of the Fédération québécoise des professeurs et professeuses d’université.

Hamalian was principal of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute from 1986 to 1991, achieving departmental recognition for Women’s Studies within the institute, of which she is a lifetime member.

“I have pursued interdisciplinary approaches and methods in all my work: in my scholarship, publications and practice in the field and the community, and in validating narrative enquiry and story-telling,” Hamalian says.

She praises André Roy, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, for his commitment to this approach.

Hamalian has done extensive work in the wider community – with women prisoners in transition houses through the Elizabeth Fry Society and as president of the Thérèse F. Casgrain Foundation.

She has worked with different UNESCO committees to protect intangible heritage and indigenous languages, and to negotiate the establishment of see HAMALIAN, page 7

## Teacher Uses Settlement Proceeds to Fund Activists, Organizations

By Chris B. Bennett

SEATTLE, Wash. (*The Seattle Medium*) – Jesse Hagopian, a community activist and history teacher at Garfield High School, recently reached a \$100,000 settlement with the City of Seattle for an incident in which he was pepper-sprayed, without provocation, by a Seattle Police officer after he gave a speech at a community rally on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in 2015.

At the time of the incident, Hagopian was on the phone with his mother – arranging plans for a ride to his 2-year-old son’s birthday party – when Seattle police officer Sandra Delafuente assaulted him with pepper-spray.

“That day was deeply painful, and not only because of the burning in my ears, nostrils and swollen eyes,” said Hagopian. “What hurt the most was the fear that I brought to my two sons who were deeply troubled watching me writhe in pain and pour milk on my face to try to sooth the burning.”

The pepper-spray assault was caught on video and garnered millions of views online and was the subject of national and international news stories. As a result of the video, Hagopian was able to show that the incident was unwarranted.

“It is deeply disappointing that we are in this place again that we see how protestors and peaceful marchers are treated by the Seattle Police Department,” said Attorney James Bible, whose law firm represented Hagopian in his claim against the city. “I think the question that should be posed by many is what would



Jesse Hagopian

happen if there, in fact, was no video in this particular case. We’d be stuck with nothing but the narrative of law enforcement and what we know now is that the narrative of the law enforcement rarely, if ever, matches the video that we’re able to capture and gather on occasion.”

Hagopian, to his credit, has turned the incident into an opportunity to support people who are making a difference in the Seattle area, as he is providing money from the settlement to support the work of groups and individuals to improve the plight of people of color.

At a press conference held Monday at the NAACP office, Hagopian announced the establishment of his Black Education Matters Scholarship for student activist. Hagopian presented three high school students – Marcelas Owens, Ifrah Abshir and Ahlaam Ibrahim – with \$1,000 to use in order to continue their work in the community.

Marcelas Owens has been on the recognized for her work both locally and nationally on healthcare and transgender issues. see SEATTLE, page 9





## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Artsakh MP Meets with Massachusetts House Speaker

BOSTON – Lernik Hovhannisyan, a member of the ARF parliamentary faction in the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic, met with the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, Robert A. DeLeo, to thank the legislature for recognizing the independence of the Republic of Mountainous Karabagh.

Hovhannisyan briefed the speaker about the causes for Azerbaijan's border invasion in April and detailed the attacks on the civilian population of Artsakh by Azeri troops. DeLeo and Hovhannisyan exchanged gifts and discussed measures under consideration in Washington to increase security along the line of contact.

Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, Dikran Kaligian of the

Armenian National Committee of Eastern Massachusetts, and Rep. Jonathan Hecht of Watertown also took part in the meeting. Hecht introduced the 2011 resolution that called on the United States to support the self-determination and independence of Karabagh, which made Massachusetts the second state to do so.

Hovhannisyan later briefed the Armenian community of Greater Boston about the large-scale military aggression by Azerbaijan in an event held at St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church Hall in Watertown. Hovhannisyan's visit to Boston was part of his Eastern United States speaking tour organized by the Artsakh Fund of the Eastern US and the Hairenik Association.



From left, Dikran Kaligian, Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, Lernik Hovhannisyan, Speaker Robert A. DeLeo and state Rep. Jonathan Hecht

## Armenians to Sell Church, Historians Fear Losing Building

HAVERTHILL, from page 6

construction of the new church will begin in the near future.

"Either way, we are still planning to move into the new building, which should be done in January," he said. "We are growing and currently have 110 paid members. But we are serving more people than that. We serve the northern part of Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire and as far as Portland, Maine."

Gozalyan said the new church is estimated to cost \$2.7 million for phase one, a cultural and family life cultural center that will include classrooms and offices and a 370-person function hall. Phase two is construction of the sanc-

tuary at a cost of between \$1.5 million and \$1.9 million.

"When we open the family life and cultural center, we will have services in that building temporarily while the sanctuary is under construction," he said. "We are going to start as we've never been this close before. I don't see anything that will stop us from moving forward."

Until the first phase of the new church is completed, the congregation would hold worship services at Sacred Hearts Catholic Church in Bradford, which has offered to share its building.

Mayor James Fiorentini said the design plans

he has seen for a Domino's Pizza shop at the site of the old church do not appeal to him in terms of aesthetics for the Main Street Historic District. But he said the city is limited in its power to stop the church from being sold.

"We don't have regulatory authority, but we do have influence over the design," Fiorentini said. "The design (of the pizza shop) did not appeal to me, but I do not have the authority to say, 'I do not like this.'"

Fiorentini said he recognizes the right of the church congregation to sell the St. Gregory property. The old church has been on the market for at least 15 years.

Gozalyan said St. Gregory church does not

have enough room for Sunday school classes, and that its function hall is limited to 61 people, which prevents holding big events such as church dinners and festivals.

He said a local realtor has faithfully tried to sell the building to another church, but has been unsuccessful.

"Since 2002, there have been several churches interested, but the number-one issue was the price, as they did not want to meet our asking price," Gozalyan said. "And when they found out what the needs are in repairs, it scared them ... They don't want to move in and have to put money into the building."

He said a woman proposed turning the building into a theater, but when she found out about its needs, she changed her mind.

Gozalyan estimated the St. Gregory building would require about \$1.5 million in repairs and renovations. He said that money is better spent on a new church.

"There is no handicap access and if you begin making renovations, you will have to meet current codes," Gozalyan said. "We have lead paint issues as it is an old building. When we have children there, we have to be very careful with them."

He said the building's foundation is old and must be strengthened, and there is water running beneath the building, which caused problems with the boiler this past winter.

In November 2010, the city's Board of Appeals unanimously rejected a proposal to build a Burger King with a drive-thru lane at the site of the church.

In rejecting the Burger King, board members cited worries about increased traffic at Winter and Main streets, deemed one of the most dangerous intersections in the state, according to Pillsbury.

The historical commission, lamenting the demolition of a historic church, urged that another use for the property be found.

"A long time ago, CVS wanted to buy the location and tear it down," Gozalyan said. "No one was against the idea but the proposal did not go forward."

At recent forum, the sale of the old church was discussed. Gozalyan was asked if there was something that can stop the process of selling the church to the owner of the Domino's Pizza.

"The building committee's response was that the purchase-and-sale has been signed and we don't see anything that will kill this deal," Gozalyan said. "The Burger King issue was different as they wanted a drive-through. Domino's is not asking for this (a drive-thru lane). So we don't believe the city will say no."

Gozalyan told his members that the altar, pews, stained glass windows, holy icons, kitchen appliances and furniture will all be moved from St. Gregory to the new church.

"The monument to the Armenian Genocide will come with us to the new property as well," he said.

## Arpi Hamalian: Multilingual Champion for Learning

HAMALIAN, from page 6

biosphere reserves in Quebec and the implementation of the Belém Framework for Action.

She has also served as a long-time champion of libraries, from the Carnegie libraries established throughout North America, to the Atwater Library here in Montreal, as well as projects in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

"The CASAE recognition opens a door to the international associations to which CASAE belongs and with which I have been associated," says Hamalian.

She continues her participation on three axes of the Centre interdisciplinaire de recherche en développement international et société at UQAM

and helped organize the meetings of the International Council of Adult Education in Montreal in June 2015, led by the Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes.

Both CASAE and the Carold Institute participated, and 12 adult-education students from Concordia served as volunteers. "These events highlighted internationally Concordia's contributions to the field and practice of adult education and life-long learning," she says.

### A mentor like no other

Despite all her accolades, Hamalian is most proud of the accomplishments of the more than 300 graduate students she has supervised at the diploma, MA and PhD levels at Concordia and other universities.

"They have become stars in their own practice – achieving national and international awards, and becoming members of the Order of Canada as well as receiving multiple honorary doctorates," she says.

A dozen of those students were on hand to participate in the conference and fête their mentor. They included Audrey Dahl and Constanza Silva, doctoral students and two of the members of CASAE who nominated Hamalian.

Even with this most recent recognition, Hamalian does not intend to slow down.

"Learning and creating and researching are life-long endeavours, and I am convinced the best is yet to come for adult education programs at Concordia."

## Mirror Spectator Seeks Summer Intern

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is seeking an intern for a six-week program this summer (mid-July through August). The intern will receive a \$150 weekly stipend provided through the Armenian Students' Association of America's Internship Program.

The intern should be in college or graduate school. If interested, please contact Aram Arkun at [tcadirector.com](http://tcadirector.com) or call 617 924-4420.



## OBITUARY

# Acclaimed Violinist Anahid Ajemian Avakian Dies

NEW YORK — Anahid Ajemian was born in New York, in 1924. She began her music studies early at the Institute of Musical Art, which later merged with the Juilliard School. After graduating from the Lincoln School, Ajemian continued her education at Juilliard, studying violin with Edouard Dethier, chamber music with Hans Letz and Felix Salmon, and played in and with the Juilliard orchestra under Albert Stoessel and Edgar Shenkman.

In 1946, while still a student of Edouard Dethier at the Juilliard Graduate School of Music, she won the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation Award. In the same year, she made her debut at Town Hall and received the Distinguished Achievement Medal from *Mademoiselle* magazine as the Young Woman of the Year in Music. Among the many honors that have followed, the Order of St. James

cal repertoire. A unique feature of the many television programs they taped for NBC's "Recital Hall" and the National Educational Television Network was their series of programs comprising the complete cycle of all 10 Beethoven *Sonatas for Violin and Piano*. They appeared as soloists under the batons of Dmitri Mitropoulos, Leopold Stokowski and Izler Solomon, and recorded with the latter two.

Also during the 1940s, Ajemian co-founded the New York City-based organization "Friends of Armenian Music Committee," which did much to launch the career of fellow Armenian-American composer Alan Hovhaness, via a series of well-received New York concerts of his music. These concerts were repeated in Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

In the mid 1960s, Ajemian and her fellow violinist Matthew Raimondi founded the



With Duke Ellington and Dmitri Mitropoulos in April 1957

appointed her a Knight of Malta for her lifelong support of contemporary classical music.

With her pianist sister, Maro, she concertized in Europe, Canada and throughout the United States in a wide repertoire including works which for written for them by such distinguished composers as John Cage, Henry Cowell, Lou Harrison, Alan Hovhaness, Ernst Krenek, Wallingford Riegger, Carlos Surinach and Ben Weber, among many others. Together and separately, the Ajemians recorded extensively for Columbia, RCA Victor, MGM and Composers Records Inc. They were the first musicians to receive the Laurel Leaf Award of the Composers Alliance for Distinguished Service to American Music.

Ajemian and her sister were equally known for their interpretations of the standard classi-

cal repertoire. A unique feature of the many television programs they taped for NBC's "Recital Hall" and the National Educational Television Network was their series of programs comprising the complete cycle of all 10 Beethoven *Sonatas for Violin and Piano*. They appeared as soloists under the batons of Dmitri Mitropoulos, Leopold Stokowski and Izler Solomon, and recorded with the latter two. Also during the 1940s, Ajemian co-founded the New York City-based organization "Friends of Armenian Music Committee," which did much to launch the career of fellow Armenian-American composer Alan Hovhaness, via a series of well-received New York concerts of his music. These concerts were repeated in Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles. In the mid 1960s, Ajemian and her fellow violinist Matthew Raimondi founded the



ANAHID and MARO AJEMIAN  
*Violin-Piano Duo*

Anahid Ajemian Avakian with her sister, Maro, in a promotional photo for a performance

unique achievement."

The quartet was in residence at Columbia University in New York and The New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. For many years, they were the primary performers at the Mt. Desert Festival of Chamber Music in Northeast Harbor, Maine.

For many years, Ajemian was a long-time member of the Columbia University music fac-

ulty and served as a judge for several music organizations, including the annual Naumburg Foundation Awards.

She is survived by her husband of 68 years, recording executive George Avakian, their daughters Maro and Anahid (Gregg), son Gregory, and two grandchildren. Services were held Friday, June 17 at St. Vartan's Armenian Cathedral, 630 2nd Ave, New York.

## Sally Zartar (Simonian) Avakian

CRANSTON, R.I. — Sally Zartar (Simonian) Avakian died on Sunday, June 12.

She was the daughter of Armenian Genocide survivors from Sepastia, Armenia, Kazar and Mariam Simonian.

She was the wife of the late Robert Avakian of Cranston for 65 years. She leaves two children, Marian and Robert M. and his wife Carine, and four grandchildren, Michael, Robert III, Alexander and Christina of Bedford, Mass. She is also survived by her brother Samuel Simonian and his wife Mary of Cranston.

She was a lifelong member of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church. Her mother Mariam was known for her selfless devotion to helping others from their community and Sally was raised with this tradition.

She was a lifelong seeker of knowledge and worked at the Rhode Island Economic Development Council, in the Warwick school system and as a pioneering nutrition counselor

to low-income families through the University of Rhode Island.

She studied philosophy, psychology and English at Brown University and was accomplished at tatting, knitting and crochet. She was a member of the Providence Handicraft Club where she completed prayer rugs, Russian icons and portraiture.

Her early aspirations included couture design.

She was a lover of the theatre, poetry, art and waltzing.

She was a member of the Daughters of Vartan, Quidnessett CC and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Her life is a testament to the daily practice of service, Christian faith, family values, intellectual curiosity and elegance therein was her beauty.

Her funeral service was held on Saturday, June 18 in Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence, followed by burial at North Burial Ground, Providence.

Arrangements were by the Nardolillo Funeral Home in Cranston.



## Giragosian

FUNERAL HOME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC

Mark J. Giragosian

Funeral Counselors

576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606

www.giragosianfuneralhome.com

Telephone (617) 924-7400

## Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET  
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN  
PAUL BEDROSIAN  
LARRY BEDROSIAN

## DENNIS M. DEVENEY & SONS

Cemetery Monuments

Specializing in  
Armenian Designs and Lettering

701 Moody St. Waltham, MA 02543  
(781) 891-9876 www.NEMonuments.com





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Assembly Intern Program Celebrates International Children's Day

By Mariam Khaloyan

WASHINGTON — On June 3, Armenian Assembly of America Terjenian-Thomas intern Joann Manugh-Khaloyan and intern coordinator Mariam Khaloyan attended the Armenian American Cultural Association's (AACA) International Children's Day event at the Armenian Embassy.

The AACA event commemorated International Children's Day by exhibiting a group of paintings produced by the children of Gumri, Armenia, in the years following the disastrous earthquake that occurred in December 1988. The art was painted from 2000 to 2003, by children between the ages of 5 to 14 years old, born into the repercussions of the earthquake. In spite of all the pain, the children were inspired by the rich culture and nature to reproduce exquisite art depicting the beauty of Armenia and its history.

"It was a sight to see. The incredible paintings by the children of Gumri were memories of

the culture in Armenia," Assembly intern Joann Khaloyan said. "I look forward to attending other cultural events during the Armenian Assembly intern program associated with the culture depicting our Armenian heritage and upbringing."

Proceeds of the children's paintings were sent to AAWC to benefit the women and mothers of Gumri and the surrounding region to receive free-of-charge quality health care services.

The AACA is a co-sponsor of the Armenian American Wellness Center (AAWC) in Yerevan, Armenia. The purpose of the Wellness Center was to introduce mammography screening with Western technology and expertise, as well as American principles, practices, and standards, by creating a corruption-free environment, to ensure high-quality healthcare services to women in Armenia.

Today, the AAWC is a state-of-the-art medical facility, which was created with the collaboration of 16 US medical advisory board members. It has provided more than 420,000 services to 330,000 patients and has nine departments.



(L-R): (Back Row) Van Araxie, Maria Princi, Seda Gelenian, Takuhi Hallajian, Eva Shafakian, Margie Satian, Clara Adnonian, H.E. Ambassador Grigor Hovhannessian, Louisa Baghdasaryan, Carolyn Rapkievian, Sandra Goshgarian, Akabi Atamian, Armenian Assembly Intern Coordinator Mariam Khaloyan (Front Row) Anahid Ghazarian, AACA President Rita Balian, Armenian Assembly Board Member Annie Totah, Doris George.

ԹԵՔԵՅԱՆ ՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ՄԻՈՒԹԻՒՆ



Tekeyan Cultural Association  
of the United States and Canada

**TCA FUNDRAISING DRIVE  
FOR THE FAMILIES OF  
WOUNDED AND  
MARTYRED SOLDIERS**

OF

**Artsakh and Armenia**

**DONATIONS DIRECTLY DELIVERED TO THE  
FAMILIES WITH RECEIPTS OBTAINED**

All Donations Should Be Made Out To:

Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Memo: Artsakh Fund

755 Mount Auburn Street

Watertown, MA 02472

For more information, contact: 617 924-4455 or tcadirector@aol.co

## Teacher Uses Settlement Proceeds to Fund Activists, Organizations

SEATTLE, from page 6

Ahlaam Ibrahim hosts an annual event to educate people who may be afraid of Muslim people due to media bias. In addition, she also uses social media to address bad things that are happening in schools and has been instrumental in getting building improvements at some schools through her use of social media.

Ifrah Abshir helped lead the Transportation Justice Movement for Orca Cards in Seattle Public Schools. This started off as a quest to secure Orca Cards for Rainier Beach students that lived more than a mile from school and were getting to school late or missing school because they did not have the financial means to pay for bus transportation. The two-year battle culminated in the City of Seattle providing Orca Cards to low-income high school students in Seattle.

"I'm really excited to say that the real heroes in our community are the young people who are making big change and getting ready to make even bigger change," said Hagopian. "We are going to turn all this pain into positive movement forward and into action."

"Already you've transformed Seattle Schools," he said of the recipients. "I can't wait to see what you guys do moving forward."

In addition, Hagopian also announced funding for the Africatown Center for Education and Innovation, and Families of Color Seattle — two community-based organizations that are also helping to make a difference in the community.

Hagopian says that the awards are not one time gestures and that he plans to establish a fund so he can give out funds to deserving people each year.

"We're going to put thousands of dollars into this fund, so people can get it," he said.

As it relates to the pepper-spray incident, the outcome is bittersweet for both Hagopian and the NAACP.

"This is a victory in that it has received an outcome," said Sheley Secrest, vice president of the Seattle King County NAACP. "But this is a lesson that Seattle has already had the opportunity to learn. SPD should be ashamed because they know that they have a problem when it comes to policing these types of protests."

"We've told them over and over again and the fact this it has cost them over \$100,000 for their failure to learn from their mistakes is a lesson that as taxpayers we cannot afford," Secrest concluded.

With the settlement the City of Seattle did not admit to any wrongdoing. The Office of Professional Accountability recommended that officer Delafuente be suspended for one-day without pay for her actions. However, Seattle Police Chief Kathleen O'Toole, reportedly, choose to give Delafuente an oral reprimand instead of suspending her.





## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Artistic Journeys through National Destinies

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – This is a most rare art exhibition. Not focused on one artist or even a school, it presents the works of distinct individuals joined through family ties, whose creative endeavors trace out a multifaceted cultural itinerary across vast geographical expanses through decades of turbulent political and social developments. The show that opened in Berlin on May 14, entitled “Four Life Paths: Two Artist Couples in the Armenian Tradition,” is indeed something very special. The works displayed are by four artists whose lives span a century, from before the First World War to the present. Two are Genocide survivors from Western Armenia, who made their way across the Middle East to Yerevan, whereas the other two were born and raised in Armenia, studied and worked there and in Russia. Through their personal and artistic histories, one encounters life in the diaspora, struggles in the Soviet period and the challenges of the independent Republic of Armenia.

The artists are Mariam Aslamazyan (1907 – 2006) and her brother-in-law Nikolai Nikogosyan (born 1918); Harutyun Kalentz (1912 – 1967) and his wife Armine Kalentz (1920 – 2007). Three of the four continued even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and their artistic endeavors provide rare insights especially for the younger generation into these two crucial epochs in modern Armenian art. For many young artists active 25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it is difficult to conceive what life at that time was like.

The exhibition at the Kulturhaus Karlshorst, which runs until July 3, is part of the German-Armenian Cultural Days, an initiative taking place this year for the second time, which aims at strengthening the bonds of friendship between the two communities. Among the sponsors are the Association of European and Armenian Experts e.V. (AEAE), the Berlin Lichtenberg Department of Education, Culture, Social Affairs and Sports as well as the InteriorDasein/Berlin artist run space. Curators are Dr. Peter Michel, a leading expert in Soviet art, and Archi Galentz, artist and creator of InteriorDasein, which houses many of the 30 works on display.

Perhaps Archi Galentz is the only person who could have put together such an exhibition. All four artists are his ancestors, and most of the works come from his collection, which he



Mariam Aslamazyan. “Astern in a green glass” 2002. (Photo by Archi Galentz)

received as memoirs, or as pieces to be restored, or to put on display. But it would be wrong to reduce this to a family affair. Certainly, due to his personal relationship to the artists, he has been able to afford the visitor a privileged insight into their careers as well as their personalities. But his aim in presenting these works, shown here together for the first time, is to explore the question raised, not only by them, but by the younger generation that came after, the generation to which Archi Galentz belongs: how should we evaluate that period in art?

The catalogue for the exhibition, itself a little masterpiece, opens with a rich exchange of views between Michel and Galentz on this central theme. In their dialogue on “The Destiny of Artists and History,” art critic Michel noted that “before 1990 in Armenia and in East Germany there were in fact similar developments in the arts.” Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, “it was not a matter of chasing after some nebulous ideas of freedom, but rather of uniting artistic awareness of responsibility with the actually contradictory reality,



Archi Galentz, Nikolai Nikogosyan and Gougen in “Niko” cultural center. Moscow 2016. (Photo by Oleg Tzerbaev)

not to throw grand human ideals overboard, but rather to preserve them and at the same time make people aware of the failures.” Artists in communist East Germany and those in Armenia adopted different means to this end; the former explored “the language of myths” whereas the latter became “conscious of the power of national traditions.” For Galentz, it is important in evaluating the Soviet experience to avoid “simplistic half truths,” for example, by pitting “communism” against “experimentation,” or “freedom” against some “party line” approach. In his view, the value of artistic expression cannot be reduced to formalistic criteria: “Soviet art was ... involved in continuing a certain humanistic project, with the question, what kind of society one should live in, and how this sort of man should be, and so forth.”

Michel recalled an observation made by German painter Bernhard Heisig, who said, “The artist’s position in society – even in a socialist society – does not necessarily have to be negative. His significance does not have to lie exclusively in protest against his surroundings.” Such a negative approach in fact has given rise to ridiculous excesses, for example, among those, he said, “who confuse avant-gardism with the progressively creative,” that is, those who think anything “new” is necessarily creative or, that to be creative one has to seek novelty.

The four artists featured in the exhibition found themselves in a historical framework following the collapse of the Soviet Union in which, as Galentz put it, they had to “rediscover painting as their art form and field of interest.” The main theme of the exhibition is “the interconnection of two schools of realism” represented by these four classical artists: concentration in the traditional form of representation was developed by Mariam Aslamazyan and Nikolai Nikogosyan, both born in Armenia, after their education in Russia. As for Harutyun Kalentz and Armine Kalentz, who moved from the diaspora in Lebanon to Soviet Armenia, “it unfolded from the yearning to develop their own national ‘artistic language’ in great variety” in which paint functions as “a means to achieve depth in the canvas.”

## Related through Art

Mariam Aslamazyan and Nikolai Nikogosyan are considered an artistic “pair” here, not because they were joined in matrimony, but because they worked together in art and had close family ties. Aslamazyan, Archi’s great-aunt, came from Bar-Shirak, a village near Gumri (formerly Leninikan) and had childhood memories of Turkish occupiers in 1918-1920. She studied art there and in Yerevan, as well as Leningrad, where she met fellow art student Nikolai Nikogosyan in 1938. She exhibited in Yerevan and Moscow in the 1930s, and moved to the Russian capital after the war at the same time that Nikogosyan did. In 1944 or 1945, he married a younger sister of hers (there were six girls in the family), and as a result of the close family relationship that developed, “one can consider the two,” Archi says, “as an artist couple. They lived and worked side by side for 60 years.”

Aslamazyan received wide recognition for her work. She was named a member of the board of Armenian Artists Association, was honored for her antifascist stance in the war and in 1990 received the title Peoples Artist of the USSR, but her fame extended beyond the Soviet Union. Her works were

exhibited across Europe, in Mexico, Africa, and the Far East; she met world famous personalities like Indira Gandhi and she received prizes in India and Egypt. She loved to travel, and everywhere she went portrayed individuals from different cultural worlds, especially, but not exclusively, women: mothers and grandmothers, peasant women as well as ballerinas and actresses. With an energetic use of bold, bright colors, she also explored architectures and landscapes, be it cloisters in Armenia or city scenes from places like Calcutta and Bombay, Madras and Cairo. “I sought for my language in art,” she wrote. “I drew everything very thick, the color was extremely intensive; I wanted my pictures to make people happy.”

Whereas she was “active in painting, graphic arts and ceramics,” we read in the catalogue, her artist companion Nikogosyan “is known above all as a sculptor who also paints and draws.” Or, as he so aptly put it, “Sculpture is my wife and painting is my mistress.” Born in 1918, Nikogosyan, who is Archi’s maternal grandfather, is still active at 97 and has every intention of continuing. Truly a “living legend of Armenian and Soviet art history,” he left his native village Shagar in 1930 for Yerevan, then studied in Leningrad at the Institute for Painting, Plastic Arts and Architecture of the Academy of Arts. He exhibited as a member of the Soviet Artists Association, won numerous prizes, was named Peoples Artist of the USSR, appeared in 1956 at the Biennale of Venice, and continued to exhibit widely with personal shows. Armenians and foreign visitors know him for his monumental statues, crafted out of a variety of materials – bronze, plaster, wood, marble or granite – portraying, for example Avetik Ishakyan in Gumri and Mikayel Nalbandyan in Yerevan, or the sculpted portraits of Louis Aragon, Aram Khachaturian, Dmitry Shostakovich, the monuments to Komitas Vardapet and the fifth-century historian Moses of Choren, Vladimir Mayakovsky and Yuri Gagarin, among others. Among the pieces on display in Berlin is a profoundly moving piece, a study for a monument to Paruyr Sevak, seated in a pensive attitude.

No less impressive are the countless drawings and sketches by this extremely prolific artist, portraits which capture the psychological essence with great empathy. Among them his self-portraits, from 2006 and after, occupy a special place. They are, we learn, not designed to be ambitious representations of himself, but rather works in which the artist poses questions to himself, sometimes “ruthless, or thoughtful, sometimes bitter or angry...” They are the self-reflections of someone who, at that age, “loses his vanity in the self-consciousness of his life’s achievements and is at peace with himself.”

Harutyun and Armine Kalentz were more properly speaking a couple from the diaspora, Galentz told Michel. Archi’s paternal grandfather Harutyun was born in 1910 in Gürün, in central Turkey, into a family that traced its origins back to princely beginnings in the ancient Armenian capital of Ani. Armine Baronyan was 10 years younger, and came from Adabazari near Istanbul. Both Harutyun and Armine lost their fathers in the Genocide. Armine fled with her mother and siblings across the Syrian border to Damascus. After the death of his mother in an Aleppo hospital, Harutyun and his siblings ended up in an orphanage. It was there that the young boy’s artistic talent was discovered and encouraged. After studying with Armenian artists, he travelled through Syria and Lebanon, and in 1931 started working in Beirut in the atelier of French impression-





## SPECIAL FEATURE

ist Claude Michelet.

It was in Beirut that Armine, who had discovered her own love for art while visiting Italy in the 1930s, met Harutyun and became his student. She worked with him on the Lebanon pavilion for the world exhibition in New York in 1939-40 and in 1943 the two married. Three years later they moved to Armenia, where they held exhibitions together and with other artists who had also returned, and won honors. In 1963, Harutyun was named Outstanding Artist of the Soviet Republic of Armenia and only four years later died young of a heart attack. Armine had begun to exhibit in personal shows internationally in 1963, with repeated appearances in the 1990s in the United States. She died in 2007.

### Other Times, Other Places

How has the work of these four artists, in their particular artistic and personal itineraries been received? As Armenian artists active during the Soviet period, how should they be considered? How were their works received, aside from official honors and titles? And how did they assess this experience? Archi Galentz, who has been in Germany for more than 25 years, says one cannot forget that Armenia was once part of the USSR. The men and women whose works he has put on display “were pillars of Armenian national art but also highly revered personalities in Moscow’s greatest museums.” For example, there are 26 works by Nikogosyan in the Tretyakov Gallery and a “Niko” Cultural Foundation is in the process of coming into being in the Russian capital.

It was often said that his grandfather Harutyun Kalentz, though acknowledged as a great artist, had not been truly appreciated. But Archi points out that, after his premature death in 1967, the Yerevan city authorities decided to turn his home into a museum. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were those who wanted to present him as an opponent of “the communist regime,” but if that were the case, Archi wonders, why was he spared in the 1940s and 1950s? His grandfather was certainly not a Russophobe, Archi can say for certain, and he must have realized the security for Armenia that Russia could provide at the time. He may have been an opponent but he cannot be classified as an enemy. In the catalogue both aspects of his political personality are reflected: in a brief account of his dismay at learning that the son of an artist colleague had died of starvation, one may see the opponent; yet he crafted a magnificent portrait of a Russian soldier in uniform in 1964 (a work which has curiously disappeared). His grandfather, Archi remembers, managed to walk a fine line, maintaining his independence and integrity. He succeeded in raising two sons and giving them higher education. Blessed with a patron, who purchased his works and introduced them to a circle of connoisseurs, one might think that compared to today, Kalentz lived the life of “a prince of painters in paradise,” says Archi. Living in his own house with a garden, he could paint whenever and whatever he liked, had adequate materials, could entertain guests, drink coffee with them or play his beloved game *nardi* (backgammon). In 2010, on the centenary of his birth, the Galentz Museum opened in Yerevan, and in Armenia a commemorative stamp was issued. For his wife, Armine, life in the Soviet Union after 1946 was



Harutyun Kalentz. “Spring in the Garden” early 1950s (Photo by Archi Galentz)



Mariam Aslamazyan. “Chamomiles by the River Bank” 1953 (Photo by Archi Galentz)

not easy. But she said she had no regrets about having moved there, since only there could she, as an Armenian woman, find fulfillment as an artist.

As for Nikogosyan’s fame in Russia, there are a number of statues he was commissioned to create as a young sculptor, commemorative plaques, and critical studies of the period feature his activity. Aslamazyan, who lived to be almost 100 years old, died in Moscow and rests in the pantheon in Yerevan. In her native Gumri, an Aslamazyan Sisters Museum houses works by her and her sister, Eranuhi. At the same time, as Archi points out, they are also part of the Moscow cultural landscape.

### Distinct Personalities

These four artists, who have shared a common, though differentiated journey through turbulent times in life and art, emerge in the exhibition as highly individualized talents. The curators have taken special care to provide a glimpse of each as a singular personality, by including short passages from their writings. Thus, we read Nikogosyan’s account of a chance encounter with a man who bore a remarkable resemblance to Vincent Van Gogh, and whom he joined in a moving tribute to a deceased poet. We read of how Aslamazyan continued drawing literally up to her dying day. “I don’t get out of the house now,” she wrote in her nineties, “but in any case I get up at eight o’clock every morning and do my exercises, have breakfast and sit down in front of my drawing board. I draw 3 to 4 hours a day, otherwise I cannot live.” In this special collection of thoughts, entitled “Davtar of My Life” (2001), she concluded, “That is all; what comes next, I do not know.” In the same work, she philosophized: “What would happen if one had no dreams? A dream is the beginning of creativity. A dream is the future.”

Armine Kalentz, who exerted a profound influence on her grandson, also recorded her thoughts in a volume entitled, *Longing ... Valuable Recollections*. Armine Kalentz about Herself. In one entry she reflects on the role of the creative person: “An artist is a lucky mediator between God and humanity. He finds the meaning of life in beauty, in that he reflects it in the soul and abandons himself unreservedly to this cause. This striving can also be hard however, when every time, disappointed, it uncovers a truth, and communicates incessantly with death.”

### A Curse and a Blessing

When Nikogosyan’s daughter and Kalentz’s son met as art students in Yerevan, they fell in love and married. Their son Archi Galentz is not surprisingly also an artist, who has studied in Russia, Armenia and Germany, his current home. This “artist family dynasty,” as critic Michel puts it, recalls similar families, like the Brueghels, Cranachs and Giacomettis. Was this, he asked, a problem for the younger scion of the family?

Archi quoted the farmer’s adage that says: ‘Under a mighty tree no grass grows.’ Born into such a family he had to discover himself, find what was truly his own. Through extensive travel, he was exposed to a variety of artistic experiences, yet “the interest in the intellectual heritage of my grandparents stayed with me.” He had to

come to terms with this past, in a spirit of respect although not without a critical approach. His heritage he considers both “a curse and a blessing”: a curse, “because some saw me as privileged, as one who could not rebel against the achievements of his forefathers. Most young people do not know the influence exerted by the generation of my grandparents, who lived and worked in a state in which there was injustice.” As for the blessing, this “lay in the fact that already as a teenager I was excited about the euphoria about change taking place in the Soviet Union. And when, from Berlin, I witnessed the collapse, that did not correspond at all to what I had seen in the life and work of my grandparents. So I have been forced to erect my own edifice of ideas, the way archaeologists put together a picture from the pieces of a puzzle.”

Archi did not know his grandfather and namesake Harutyun, who died young, but had the advantage of close relations with the others. Grandmother Armine impressed upon him the need to abide by one’s own convictions. And he enjoys the invigorating company of grandfather Nikolai Nikogosyan — “still, at an advanced age, a very vigorous person to converse with.”



Nikolai Nikogosyan. “Smiling Lady” 2005 (Photo by Archi Galentz)

As Kerstin Beurich, District Councilor for Education, Culture, Social Affairs and Sports, noted, “Armenian painting is less well known in Germany than Armenian music.” This is certainly the case, and not only in Berlin. All the more reason then for such shows to travel to faraway places. It is to be hoped that this exhibition will be invited to other lands, especially those where the artists worked and exhibited, and where there is a large Armenian diaspora community. Would it not be wonderful to host this exhibition in New York and Boston or Los Angeles?

(Note: Quotes have been translated from the German catalogue text by the author.)





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# CYSCA Presents Panel on Disabilities with Professionals from Armenia with Special Guest Governor Michael Dukakis

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. — The Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) organized a panel discussion called Disabilities and Social Inclusion in Armenia: Challenges and Opportunities, which was held with the cosponsorship of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research at the latter's headquarters last month, on May 26. Five female specialists in disabilities visiting from Armenia spoke. Former Massachusetts governor Michael S. Dukakis was a special guest at the program. (See story on Page 1.)

CYSCA Program Director Alisa Stepanian, who served as moderator that evening, provided the background to the visit of Armenian panelists. They were invited to the US as part of the Congressionally-sponsored Open World program, which is the only Federal exchange program working with former Soviet countries. It chooses timely themes and identifies candidates likely to benefit from a working visit to the US, who then are approved by the US embassy in Yerevan. Meanwhile, local organizations in the US bid to host groups. This was the third time that CYSCA has bid and won.

The Armenian group came for one week, May 22 to 29, and CYSCA found five local Armenian families to host the specialists. CYSCA helped organize visits with US government officials at various levels as well as organizations and universities involved in disabilities work, including the Perkins School for the Blind, the MA Disability Law Center, Boston Center for Independent Living, Arc of MA, and Cambridge City Disabilities Commission. The theme for the



Armenian educators and administrators specializing in the disabled, from left, Sofi Nersisyan, Satenik Papyan, and Lusine Saghumyan, with trip facilitator Rinat Isajyan of the US embassy in Yerevan (photo Aram Arkun)

could not achieve any progress, since a long time was needed to implement the program.”

She said that there were students who had never gone to school because of their disabilities, while parents resisted and were difficult to work with. To deal with these obstacles, the school began training courses for children, teachers and parents. It attempted to explain to them that all people were equal. Now there are 10 students included in the program in this school with 167 students.

Hakobyan said that seeing how Americans have overcome many problems over the years,

world for them here, and said that she returns to Armenia with great impressions, as well as useful information and experiences.

Sofi Nersisyan, project developer for the Children's Assistance Fund, a nongovernmental organization working in Hrazdan, related that she has been working for this organization for nearly ten years. This fund was able to establish a daycare center for children with disabilities almost two years ago with support from three different international organizations. The US embassy in Yerevan gave a grant to expand programming; USAID provided money to furnish the center; and the Polish embassy provided funding to renovate the second floor of the center and to expand the program. There are 80 clients who use the center. Most have psychological or intellectual disabilities. Psychologists, therapists, social workers and a special education teacher work at the center. Special classes in art, chess, theater and other fields are offered. Some of the children developed to the point that they do not need to come there any longer.

Nersisyan declared that “When I came here [to the US], I did not imagine that I could take so many things back to Armenia, but whatever I saw was incredible, just amazing. I have seen so many innovative things that we can use in Armenia without having large sums of money.”

Satenik Papyan works at World Vision in Stepanavan, a small town in Lori Province 35 minutes by car from Vanadzor. Her office serves the entire province, and she works as the child protection and education coordinator. World Vision International is an Evangelical Christian humanitarian aid, development and advocacy organization with its headquarters in California. Its goal is to support the most vulnerable children so that they can be raised in a non-abusive inclusive environment and have a better life.

Papyan also is involved in the Full Life NGO, a smaller organization in Stepanavan which works to assure the full integration of people with disabilities in society. It runs a daycare center for children with the inclusive approach, so that there are children with and without disabilities together. Children from economically vulnerable families are accepted so they get to have access to some afterschool programs. Full Life also runs an inclusive summer camp program for 200 children every summer who learn life skills and the independence to spend time without their families.

Full Life runs in partnership with Save the Children and other organizations an employment improvement program called Life Project for adults. It helps them prepare for job interviews, provides coaching, and helps adults find jobs. It did some social entrepreneurship with its partner organizations so that people with disabilities can be hired. It also does some advocacy to ensure quality services for people with disabilities as much as possible considering the limitations in Armenia.

Lusine Saghumyan, project coordinator of the Child Development Foundation in Yerevan ([www.cdf.am](http://www.cdf.am)), said that she works both in the

capital and in the provinces. Her organization, she said, provides specialized services to children with developmental disabilities such as psychological help, speech therapy, social worker support, art therapy and a communication club for adults with disabilities, as well as preschool projects. Parents and teachers are given training by specialists in the field, and the organization tries to defend the human rights of people with disabilities.

It offers an inclusive theater group to encourage self-awareness and self-expression. Their performances are given in the provinces. It designs and produces developmental toys and games for children, while the parents of children with disabilities do craft work that the foundation sells. The profit is used to support families with disabilities.

The panelists listed a number of things they learned from the trip. They were amazed at how in some places, like the Perkins School for the Blind, ordinary cardboard or cartons that would be thrown away are used to build useful items. Programming in schools like that of the Understanding Our Differences NGO based in Newton, Mass. giving presentations to children with speakers and showing examples of different disabilities would be a good educational tool for Armenian society. They saw for the first time outside of television shows a sign language interpreter for the deaf at Stonehill College, which would be another great service to emulate in Armenia. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, they saw that students all engage in practical or applied work. This is more useful than just learning primarily theoretical knowledge, as is the case now in Armenia, especially when this knowledge also is often an outdated remnant of Soviet times.

Perhaps, wondered one panelist, it would be possible to create an industry in Armenia to produce the special aids needed by the handicapped, such as wheelchairs. This would hopefully make these items more accessible financially, and also create more jobs for Armenians.

Several of the panelists declared that one of the great benefits of the US trip was that they got to know one another, and they might try to pursue some collaborative projects upon their return. One noted that fully accessible group homes for the disabled providing multiple services do not exist at present in Armenia, but collaborative efforts at creating them could provide examples for the country as to what the infrastructure for people with disabilities should look like.

The visitors did have some worries. For example, when comparing Armenia to the US, aside from the disparity in resources in general, even if the Armenian state were to place more priority on education, many who become educated emigrate. This is a great blow to Armenia, as human resources are the main advantages that this country enjoys at present.

On a more specific topic, Saghumyan noted that during the trip, the Armenians met many parents and specialists who supported maintain specialized schools to provide a better education for the disabled, while continuing the inclusive approach. In Armenia, reforms aim at converting the specialized schools by 2022 into resource centers. Saghumyan returns to Armenia wondering, she said, “whether we need to eliminate all the specialized schools [in Armenia].”

When one speaker expressed concern that strategic planning for the disabled is lacking in Armenia, and in general the Armenian state and society do not have resources available to accomplish what Americans have done, Governor Dukakis hastened to encourage the visitors. He said, “Forty years ago things in this state [Massachusetts] were terrible, so believe me, it was not always this way. It is so much better now. Don't be discouraged.” The governor also offered to put Armenians in touch with the New England Center for Children, on whose board he serves, as it is a model for working with autistic children.

For more information on the Open World program and CYSCA contact Alisa Stepanian at [asteoanian@aol.com](mailto:asteoanian@aol.com) or Jack Medzorjian at [jmedzorjian@aol.com](mailto:jmedzorjian@aol.com) or see [www.cysca.org](http://www.cysca.org).



Program Director Alisa Stepanian of CYSCA speaking, with, seated from left, Meri Hakobyan, Anahit Flanagan (interpreter) and Mariana Matosyan (photo Aram Arkun)

visit was expanding social inclusion in Armenia for the disabled, in education, work and other spheres of life.

Prior to the panel discussion, Stepanian introduced Governor Dukakis to the audience and gave him the opportunity to say a few words (see accompanying article). He also participated in the discussion at the end of the program.

After the governor's brief presentation, the five visiting Armenians each introduced themselves and spoke about their work. Three were able to speak in fluent English, while the two who could not benefited from the use of an interpreter, Anahit Flanagan. Rinat Isajyan, who works in the US embassy in Yerevan, accompanied the group to the US to facilitate its trip. She told the audience that one of the priorities of the US embassy is social inclusion, which is why it supported the trip and the activities of the organizations for which the Armenian visitors worked.

Meri Hakobyan, principal of one of the two middle schools in the city of Meghri, in the southernmost part of Armenia, bordering Iran, said that her school was the first in the region to begin an inclusion program in 2005. She said, “Everyone feared when we first began that we

“gave me great hope that we will also overcome a lot of obstacles, and succeed in educating the public so that they all view each other as equals.” She said that she hoped that one day the strong state support for programs for the handicapped in the US would be replicated in Armenia.

Mariana Matosyan, a teacher of disabled children in High School No. 1 in Gumri, said that her school also implements the inclusive educational approach, so that out of 200 children, 35 have psychological, physical and mental disabilities. The children without disabilities must be psychologically prepared to study together with the disabled, so preparatory work took place in stages for the teachers, students and the parents. There are afterschool programs till 5 p.m., and a day camp during vacations. Both are run by volunteers.

Matosyan exclaimed, “During the visits we made [in the US], nearly all organizations were dissatisfied with at least something that was lacking in their work, but when I compare this with the work in our field in Armenia, it is actually incomparable since even elementary means are lacking with us.” She thanked the Open World program for truly providing an open





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Dr. Turekian Advises Secretary of State on Science

TUREKIAN, from page 1

of the US Academy of Sciences, instilled in him as a youngster that science was “part of the global enterprise. My father studied things like the processes that led to the transport of air from one place to another. Science was his laboratory. And that was part of my academic background.”

Growing up, Vaughan Turekian saw prominent names that came from all over the world.

International Officer for the American Association for Advancement of Science, and the director of its Center for Scientific Diplomacy from 2006 to 2015, publishing several articles on international scientific policy.

Following his studies, he worked as the program director for the Committee on Global Change Research at the National Academy of Sciences from 2000 to 2002, and at the State Department as the special assistant and advisor

Turekian, in 2015, became the fifth Advisor in this prestigious position. He was chosen through a vetting process in which the U.S. Academy of Sciences and other scientific organizations identify a roster of people who are good candidates. It then goes through another process until a final candidate is chosen.

The reason for his interest in this position, he said, is that the job was a combination of “science and foreign policy,” he said. “My own academic background was interested in things like how aerosols and dust get transported around the world. Another part was being around academic backgrounds, and seeing the important mixtures of cultures and knowledge that came from those environments. And another part was interest in climate change. Science can help inform policy. You not only need excellent scientists, but you need those people who are able to translate the science into the policy they can communicate.” He gives credit to the “great teachers who inspired me and kept me on the straight and narrow.”

Turekian could have made big money in the science business world, but he emphasized that he was interested in applying science to things outside of the laboratory. He had many opportunities in the academic community but he wanted to be a scientist “in a different community.”

He still has one month and four months left in his current post, he said. And what will he do after his position ends? “I think if I could answer that, my mother would be happy,” he responded with a round of chuckles.

Turekian visited Armenia for the second time a month ago. In 2000, he was a guest professor at the American University of Armenia working in the Environmental Chemistry Department. What was striking to him on this visit was that in the 16 years since his first trip, “there has been so much growth in certain areas, especially in the IT (information, technology and computer) fields. “Despite other things, he saw optimism in those important areas, especially among the young people using their vitality to connect to the world, in things like programming, computing, design and a whole range of issues.”

The most important goal he hopes to achieve

during his tenure in this position is “to do my little part to insure that I’m doing what I can do to demonstrate the value of having someone of my background, working with an amazing team of eight to ten incredibly talented scientists and engineers (out of 300 working in the State Department) and apply them to the issues the State Department has to deal with, and all foreign ministries have to deal with.”

## Great-Grandson of Genocide Survivors

Turekian, an engaging, affable individual with a warm quick smile, was born in New Haven, Conn. to Armenian parents born in the US. His father passed away three years ago, and his mother, originally a schoolteacher, continues to work as an assistant headmaster in a small day school in New Haven.

His grandfather was the only child of Armenian parents who were survivors of the Armenian Genocides of 1896, and 1915. (When I asked his thoughts on the continued non-acceptance of the Armenian Genocide by the American government, understandably, because of his position, he chose not to answer.)

Growing up, Vaughan and his sister used to hear their parents speaking Armenian “to make sure my sister and I couldn’t understand them. By their tone we knew certain words were not so good.” Though Turekian didn’t speak Armenian growing up, he is now interested in learning the language. When he was in Armenia in 2000, he picked up some words to make sure he got the food he ordered, “especially *kufte*.”

He added, in a serious vein, “I think growing up in a place like New Haven with an academic background, you saw people of all these different traditions, and thought about how much their experiences were shaped at home and how they could interact with each other. From both his parents, he received the “value of education, and engaging with people of all ages.”

Turekian and his wife have two children. He adds that it is important for them in this country to recognize that on one side their grandparents are from one part of the world, and their other grandparents came from another, a special enrichment.”



Dr. Vaughan Turekian

“I thought Turekian was a normal name. I would go to my father’s laboratory and see that science was something that brought people together. The laboratory was a microcosm of a global community and that was very important to me as I grew up. When you understand what’s going on in the world, you have a better understanding of who you are in the world.”

Before achieving this coveted position, Turekian, who graduated from Yale University (1993) with a BS in geology and earth science, and from the University of Virginia (2000) with a PhD in philosophy, was the Chief

to the under-secretary for global affairs from 2002-2006.

The position of the science and technology advisor to the US Secretary of State has existed for 16 years, he explained. It was created when the US National Academy of Sciences provided a report to the State Department to then-Secretary of State Madeline Albright. At the time, he said Albright had asked a “very simple question. How did the State Department prepare itself for the challenges of the 21st century given the central role that science, technology and innovation will play?”

## Governor Dukakis Speaks at CYSCA Event on Armenia Trip

CYSCA, from page 1

presidential nominee. He is now a professor in the Department of Political Science at Northeastern University (Boston) and a visiting professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

The governor, an engaging and relaxed speaker, began by pointing out that “the Greek and Armenian communities are close in many ways. They are part of the same clan.” He explained that he and his wife happened to visit Armenia because of a very close friend, Lorraine Alexander. He first met Alexander when she worked at the Massachusetts State House. She was recruited to UCLA to become the first Director of Development for the School of Public Policy there, where they became fast friends. She went on to Stanford University and other jobs, but now is the new Vice President of Development of AUA.

She introduced the governor to the president of AUA, Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, while he was in the US, and the latter invited Dukakis to visit the university in Yerevan. The governor said, “I find the students to be very impressive—they are quite political in the best sense of the word. They are aware of things.”

As his wife Kitty already had been friends with Caroline Mugar, this led the couple to visit a tree farm of the Armenian Tree Project. They were able to be present during the awarding of the first Aurora Prizes,

which Dukakis found quite interesting. His wife Kitty has been quite active on genocide-related issues over the years. Among other things, as a member of the President’s Commission on the Holocaust and the Holocaust Memorial Council, she pushed to have the Armenian Genocide included in the US Holocaust Museum in Washington DC despite some resistance.

He encountered some 15 Syrian Armenian youth at the university whose families were driven out of Aleppo. They were supportive of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad as a protector of the Christian community and described their pre-war life in Syria as almost idyllic. Dukakis said, “This makes you pause a little bit.” He wondered whether the attempts to create change in Syria were worth the humanitarian catastrophe that displaced and killed so many. He answered himself, saying he did not think so. He concluded, “We [the US] have to be a lot more careful about what we do, and how we do it.”

The governor said that “we had a great time” in Armenia and hoped that he could go there again. He was surprised to see a number of Armenians from the Watertown area, both on the AUA faculty and at various events. One was Fr. Dajad Davidian, about whom he related a charming anecdote. Dukakis said that he and his wife would try to support a young student they met from Yerevan who wants to go to Northeastern.

## Armenian EyeCare Project Gears Up For 52nd Medical Mission to Armenia

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. – From June 25 through July 5, the Armenian EyeCare Project (AECPP) is embarking on its 52nd Medical Mission to Armenia. The Project is urging everyone who is interested to join them on their journey – friends and supporters of the EyeCare Project; writers, photographers and videographers; and, of course, ophthalmologists, optometrists and others in the medical field.

This year’s Medical Mission includes trips to the organization’s Mobile Eye Hospital, which will be stationed in the Vayots Dzor province on June 25 and outside of a nursing home in Yerevan on June 28; the unveiling and grand opening of the Project’s second Regional Eye Clinic, the John and Hasmik Mgrdichian Eye Clinic, in Spitak, Lori on June 27; and a visit to the Project’s first Regional Eye Clinic, the Haig Boyadjian Eye Clinic, in Ijevan, Tavush, which had its grand opening last year, on July 5.

Those who have supported the EyeCare Project, or who wish to learn more about the organization and its various medical programs in Armenia, are invited to join AECPP Founder Dr. Roger Ohanesian and the rest of the team on one or all of the Project’s activities – either by booking a trip to the country or joining the activities if already in Armenia at this time.

“This is an opportunity for people to really see where their donations to the AECPP have gone and how the Project has changed the landscape of ophthalmology in Armenia with a powerful and life-changing program,” Ohanesian said.

Tours will be led by Rostom Sarkissian, the AECPP’s new Director of Development, and the local AECPP team.

During the Project’s 52nd Medical Mission, Ohanesian, along with his American colleagues, will train Armenian ophthalmologists, examine their special cases at several of the organization’s facilities and participate in an Ophthalmology Conference and a Neonatal Conference. The Laguna Hills ophthalmologist will be joined by US doctors Thomas Lee, Richard Hill and Khodam Rostomian, who have long been involved with the EyeCare Project, and medical students Armen Ghazaryan, Ana Ter-Zakarian, Nairi Rostomian and Lilit Shahinian.

Armenia’s chief ophthalmologist, Dr. Alexander Malayan, expressed enthusiasm about the EyeCare Project’s upcoming trip to the country.

“We appreciate the support that the Armenian EyeCare Project has rendered to Armenia for nearly 24 years,” Dr. Malayan said. “The activities of the AECPP, in cooperation with the efforts of many players, have improved eye care in our country and have enabled thousands of Armenians to regain their eyesight and obtain quality medical care.”

Of course, a trip to Armenia would not be complete without experiencing the sights, sounds and the wonderful cuisine of the country, which is why there are several social events planned for the trip, including a welcome party for the group, as well as dinners and cocktail hours.

To learn more about the trip and how to be a part of this experience in Armenia, or to RSVP, visit <http://www.itsmyseat.com/AECP/>.



# Arts & Living

## Visions of Joan Quinn at Fresno Museum

FRESNO – The Fresno Art Museum presents the exhibition “Rendering Homage: Portraits of a Patron” featuring Los Angeles art patron, collector, and arts advocate, Joan Agajanian Quinn. Quinn has been depicted in portraiture for more than five decades by world-renowned artists at the forefront of their era, medium, and impact upon the contemporary art scene.

The exhibit opened on May 20th to an overflow crowd of local arts enthusiasts

who enjoyed the music by a trio, an Armenian buffet and red and white wine from the Agajanian vineyards.

The exhibition consists of selection of art-



Opening at the Fresno Art Museum: Carole Boyajian Soldner, Joan Agajanian Quinn, artist Nancy Youdelman

works depicting the Joan Quinn visage, created for her by artists she has championed over time. Approximately 50, two- and three-dimensional pieces from Quinn’s collection of over 300 portraits tell the story of her passion for cutting edge American artists through their portrayals of her as their Valkyrie.

Bay Area painter Mel Ramos describes Joan as “a living work of art.” This exhibition serves to herald her in this light, in addition to revealing her treasured artist friendships and her instinctual certainty of their relevance to 20th and 21st century contemporary art history, and pays homage to an art patron, sincerely appreciated.

The exhibited portraits are realized in all mediums, spanning four decades of Quinn’s relationships with artists she has believed in and supported. The exhibition includes works by Peter Alexander, Charles Arnoldi, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Laddie John Dill, Claire Falkenstein, Sophia Gasparian, Frank Gehry, Robert Graham, David Hockney, George Hurrell, E.F. Kitchen, Marie Lalanne, Robert Mapplethorpe, Ed Moses, Mel Ramos, Zandra Rhodes, Ed Ruscha, Alexis Smith, and Beatrice Wood, among others.

Nationally and internationally known artists portray their patron as a powerful art-world personage: an advocate who is true to herself, the artists, and the art she loves.

Curated by Michele Ellis Pracy and Kristina Hornback

Major sponsors for the exhibit include Lynda and Stewart Resnick, Larry Balakian, Joyce Kierejczyk, Gary Agajanian, Carol Tikijian and Larry Gagosian.

The exhibit runs through August.



FAM board member Larry Balakian at the opening.



An example of Karen Chekerdjian’s design work at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris. Credit Ian Abela

## Lebanese Designer Brings Traditional Materials into Modern Age

PARIS (*New York Times*) – The designer Karen Chekerdjian is known in her native Lebanon for modernist objects made with traditional materials and techniques. Now, two exhibitions in Paris – at the Institut du Monde Arabe and at the private Dutko Gallery – offer a close look at an artist who addresses the divide between art and function, and the wider gap between Western and Arab cultures.

The show at the Institut du Monde Arabe, “Respiration,” opened on May 30 and runs until August 28. The exhibition at the Dutko with the same title closed on Sunday, with pieces offered for sale through August.

“The idea was to show the positive elements of the Arab world,” said Philippe Castro, the chief adviser to Jack Lang, the president of the institute and a former French culture minister. “Today, that can only be shown through Arab art. There is real creativity coming out of the Arab world, especially Lebanon. Given the geopolitical context, we felt it was important to give a voice to this narrative.”

Chekerdjian, 45, who is of Armenian descent, was raised in Lebanon, the region’s most diverse society, a land unsettled by decades of conflict and turmoil, most recently by fallout from the Syrian war. She began her artistic career in film, then moved on to graphic design before earning a master’s degree in industrial design from the Domus Academy in Milan, where, she said in an interview in Paris, she learned to “think rather than design.”

“My objects do not have a traditional ‘Arab’ feel, in that they are not folkloric or ornamental,” she said. “They have emotion, ambiguity and search for meaning beyond their function. Mine is not a structured, rigid approach to objects.”

“I guess this ambiguity is typically Lebanese,” Chekerdjian said. “Beirut is a place that is both fragile and violent. My objects represent Beirut.”

At the institute show, Chekerdjian’s pieces are interspersed among objects from the permanent collection, an effort to “confirm her place within Arab heritage,” said Castro, whose visit to her studio in Beirut three years ago led to an invitation to exhibit her work.

Her “Spaceship” stools and tables are organic shapes with geometric angles threatening to take flight; arched light fixtures bisect the space they occupy; and plates carved with Arabic calligraphy are displayed alongside pieces representing the birth of Arabic writing.

Her use of traditional materials, namely gold and copper, fabricated with local smithing techniques, places her work within its regional provenance.

“There is always a Lebanese element, but I push further,” she said. “I do not reinterpret.”

Scott Longfellow, the director of D’Days, an annual design festival in Paris, said, “What is interesting is Karen’s relationship to Lebanese savoir-faire.”

“Her pieces are exceptionally well-made,” he added, noting that her designs reference a wide range of eras, including midcentury Italian and 1960s Brazil.

Ms. Chekerdjian’s show at the Institut du Monde Arabe is the first solo exhibition for a designer there, Mr. Castro said. In a low-key way, he said, her work embodies a modern, progressive edge within Arab tradition.

“Despite her orientalism, Karen is a universal artist,” Castro said. “Arab artists like her are the fresh breath that will shape the future of the region.”

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/14/arts/design/lebanese-designer-brings-traditional-materials-into-modern-age.html?mwrsm=Email>)

## 100 Years Strong: The Armenian Genocide in Posters 1915-2015 by Dicran Y. Kassouny

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles-based art director and first-time author Dicran Y. Kassouny has published an elegant and important volume, *100 Years Strong: The Armenian Genocide in Posters 1915-2015*. The book is a visual compilation and analysis of Genocide and post-Genocide era posters produced in the United States and Great Britain in the 1910s and 1920s, and by diaspora Armenian organizations starting in the 1970s through 2015.

Kassouny showcases close to 90 Genocide posters, some never-before-seen, categorizing them chronologically under four headings: Near East Relief and Foreign Charity, National Identity, Struggle and Sacrifice, and Commemoration and Recognition. The book includes a comprehensive section, titled “The Evolution of the Armenian Question,” penned by Kassouny’s father, Yervant H. Kassouny, PhD. The article provides a lucid narrative of the political, geopolitical, social and economic dimensions of the injustices inflicted on the Armenian nation since the 19th century.



Under the heading Near East Relief and Foreign Charity, Kassouny discusses the importance of the posters produced by the American Near East Relief Committee and by the British Lord Mayor’s Fund in collecting charitable funds in support of the stricken victims of the Near East during and after World War I. In doing so, the posters bear witness to the brutal atrocities committed against the native Armenian population of the region, which endured genocide, famine and forced deportations. They also enrich our knowledge of the massive international humanitarian and charitable efforts which, at the time, succeeded in raising close to \$117 million in US humanitarian assistance to the region, while the Lord Mayor’s Fund raised tens of thousands of British pounds.

Not unlike the American and European Genocide posters, the posters produced in different corners of the Armenian diaspora, such as in the Armenian communities of Lebanon, Iran, Canada, Cyprus, and the United States, draw attention to the calamity with the aim of commemorating the memory of the victims, mourning the loss of homeland, demanding justice, reparations and the return of the homeland, appealing to the world for justice and recognition, and recognizing the heroes of the armed struggle for justice.

Kassouny’s *100 Years Strong* is a fitting and visually rich tribute to the victims and survivors of the Armenian genocide. Its collection of historically important posters marks the different stages of the on-going development of the Armenian nation, in particular the growth of its diaspora since the tragedy that befell the nation one hundred years ago.

*100 Years Strong: The Armenian Genocide in Posters 1915-2015* is available on Amazon.com at <http://goo.gl/mzaTjw>.





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Folk Guitar Trio of Armenian Public Radio to Perform in Washington, D.C.

BETHESDA, Md. – The Folk Guitar Trio of the Armenian Pubic Radio will perform on Friday, July 8, at 8 p.m. at Soorp Khatch Armenian Apostolic Church located in Bethesda, Md. at the invitation of the Armenian Community Event Planners (ACEP).

The folk guitar trio of Mher Vahakn Ajamian, Ryan Demirjian and Saro Kajakian's performance of sentimental Armenian folk tunes blends with a wide genre of music from the '60s to the '90s with traces of their own rhythmic interpretations. Since the band came together in 2010, they have performed in venues such as the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Getty Center in L.A. While in Washington, the Armenian Public Radio will also take the stage at the Smithsonian Institution's annual Folklife Festival.

"We are very excited to welcome the Armenian Public Radio to perform for the very first time for the Armenian community of the Greater Washington, D.C.," said Dr. Teny Abrahamian, President of ACEP. "It is going to be a unique event and an evening not to be missed."

The tickets for the July 8th concert are available for purchase on Sundays after Badarak at ticketing desks, St. Mary and Soorp Khatch Armenian Apostolic Churches or by calling the following committee members: Dr. Teny Abrahamian (301) 502-5988, Gabo Afarian (202) 270-0324 and Jack Guiragossian (301) 537-3741.

The Armenian Community Event Planners (ACEP) created in the aftermath of the Centennial Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, held in 2015, is comprised of members of Soorp Khatch and St. Mary. The committee continues their work, in harmony with one of the themes of the Commemoration – "Unity."



## New Play by Lisa Kirazian to Be Produced in San Diego

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – Scripps Ranch Theatre, located on the campus of Alliant International University, presents their fifth Annual Out on a Limb – New Plays from America's Finest City, for two weekends, July 14-17 and July 21-24.

Scripps Ranch Theatre is a leader in the Southern California Arts Community in developing and producing new plays. The festival features all new, world premiere plays written by

area playwrights.

One featured play at this year's festival is "On Air," written by Armenian American playwright, Lisa Kirazian. In "On Air," a young Armenian-American professor at a San Diego community college navigates his family obligations and professional ambitions against the backdrop of a campus in crisis from the Vietnam War.

San Diego Critics Circle Award-winning

Equity actor, Jeffrey Jones, also of Armenian heritage, will appear in "On Air," in the leading role.

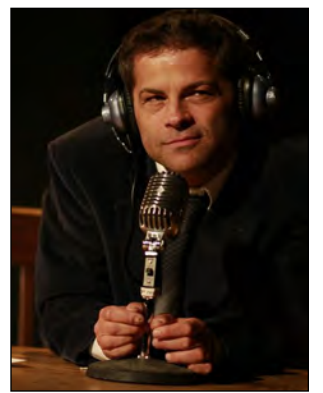
In addition to "On Air," Kirazian's plays include "The Blackstone Sessions," "Switch," "The Visitor," "Soul Fire," "Six Views" and "Armenian Voices," with productions in Los Angeles, San Diego and New York. Her publications include pieces in *Audition Monologues for Young Women*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Diego Union Tribune*, *Performing Arts Magazine* and *The Dramatist*. Kirazian is a San Diego native and Stanford graduate. She blogs about writing at [lisakirazian.wordpress.com](http://lisakirazian.wordpress.com) and her website is [www.lisakirazian.com](http://www.lisakirazian.com).

"On Air" will be directed by Liz Shipman, a nationally recognized director, choreographer, acting teacher and co-artistic director of the Meisner/Chekhov Integrated Training (MCIT) Studio in San Diego.

Founder and Director of the festival, Robert May shared, "We are excited to be gearing up for our fifth Annual Festival of New Plays. At Scripps Ranch Theatre we continue to look for



Lisa Kirazian



Jeffrey Jones

ways to encourage development of new works from our diverse community that reflect the San Diego experience. This year, three of the four winning scripts are written (and directed by) women. Historically, women playwrights are under-represented and produced. The abundance of female talent in this festival is incredible and reflects a shift in that paradigm. We are also excited to watch the growth of Lisa's play, 'On Air,' from its original one-act production in the first Out on a Limb Festival in 2012 – to a full length production in 2016."

"On Air" runs from Thursday to Saturday, July 21-24, at 8 p.m. For more information visit [www.Scrippsranctheatre.org](http://www.Scrippsranctheatre.org)



### Administrative Director Position

Manoogian Manor, Livonia, MI

The Manoogian Manor is currently taking resumes for the position of Administrative Director to head up our premier assisted care program. Founded by Alex and Marie Manoogian, we are a fully licensed non-profit 90 bed facility, providing assisted living and personal care services to seniors. With our recent multi-million dollar renovation we are an industry leader known for our outstanding resident care programs. Potential candidates should have extensive experience in the industry. An Assisted Living Administrator's License will be required. Knowledge of the Armenian language is a plus. Interested candidates should email resumé with cover letter to: Manoogian Manor, Attn: Gregory Jamian at [jamiang@americaremedical.com](mailto:jamiang@americaremedical.com)

## Balakian to Be Honored by Prelacy For Pulitzer Prize on June 27

NEW YORK – Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan and the Executive Council of the Prelacy of the Armenian Church will hold a reading and reception in honor of Prof. Peter Balakian, acclaimed writer and winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for poetry, on Monday, June 27, at 7 pm, at Pashalian Hall, St. Illuminator's Cathedral, 221 East 27th St.

Prof. Khachig Tololyan, professor of English and comparative literature at Wesleyan University, will introduce the honoree's work and comment on his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Ozone Journal*, from which Balakian will read.

A Reception will follow the presentation. Signed copies of *Ozone Journal* will be available.

Writing in *Tikkun*, the poet David Wojahn wrote: "Few American poets of the boomer generation have explored the interstices of public and personal history as deeply and urgently as has Balakian. . . . his project of 'writing horizontal' attempts to find within the pitiless hubbub of contemporary consciousness those essential recollections (what Wordsworth termed 'spots of time') that are the sources of selfhood and to devise a new method for meaningfully confronting and memorializing the past."



Peter Balakian

Balakian is the author of seven books of poems and four books of prose as well as two collaborative translations. He holds the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Chair in the Humanities at Colgate University.

RSVPs to the Prelacy are welcome .



# Tigran Arakelyan Reaches For Musical Heights

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

SEATTLE, Wash. — Conductor Tigran Arakelyan may be young, but you would not know it from talking to him.

Arakelyan's love affair with music started through a difficult situation. Arakelyan said that during his childhood, he suffered from bad asthma. "It was pretty intense," he said.

His parents took him to a homeopathic doctor, who suggested that to strengthen his lungs, he should take up a wind instrument. This being Armenia, he suggested *duduk* or *zurna*. Eventually, young Tigran picked the flute and he found himself totally enamored.

Not only did the use of the instrument help his asthma, but also the music itself became a balm for his ailment.

Born in Yerevan, Armenia, Arakelyan and his family moved to California when Tigran was 11 years old.

Music was on his mind from a young age, Arakelyan said. He said his parents have a family video of kids, in which someone asks each child what they want to be when they grow up. At age 10, Arakelyan's answer was "musician."

"It was the right time and also gave me something to do," he said from his Seattle home.

Arakelyan currently is the music director of Bainbridge Island Youth Orchestras and Federal Way Youth Symphony Orchestra, both in Washington. He is also associate conductor of the Rainer Symphony.

Arakelyan has held various associate and assistant conducting positions with the California

Philharmonic, Los Angeles Youth Orchestra, Whatcom Symphony Orchestra, Rainier Symphony, Northridge Youth Philharmonic, University of Washington Symphony, and CSU Northridge Symphony.

Arakelyan praised his mother, Gohar, for her constant presence during his practices and said that she was able to give him feedback in such a way as to constantly take up his playing by degrees.

In addition to his parents, Arakelyan gives much credit to the Lark Musical Society, a Glendale-based organization that offers music lessons as well as performances of Armenian and non-Armenian music by Armenian performers throughout greater Los Angeles.

There, he said, he learned about various aspects of performance, including chamber music, musical history and much more.

"It is a great, great environment. They invite amazing and inspirational people" to give performances and talks too, Arakelyan added.

He credits Vatsche Barsoumian, the founder of Lark, with launching his career.

"Vatsche really inspired me. Watching him, I thought this is really sweet. He has some kind of passionate and great people skills. It is amazing to see him work with an orchestra," Arakelyan said.

Arakelyan attended California State University Northridge and started work with the Youth Orchestra there. "There were a lot of great opportunities at the school," he said.

More importantly for Arakelyan, he is also the uncle of Bahrig, who is the young conductor's fiancée.

Thus he changed from flute to conducting.

By chance, Arakelyan met conductor David Rahbee, the senior artist in residence at the University of Washington School of Music in Seattle, three years ago. Rahbee is director of orchestral activities and teaches conducting. The chance meeting led to an email from Rahbee in April 2013, putting him in touch with Ludovic Morlot, the conductor of Seattle Symphony, who also happens to be the chair of orchestral conducting at the University of Washington. As a result of

that subsequent contact, Arakelyan received a full scholarship to pursue his doctorate in conducting at the University of Washington.

Arakelyan has just finished his school work. Only a day or two before this interview was conducted in early June, he had formally submitted his doctoral dissertation in writing, which he had defended about a month ago.

While Arakelyan explained that he reveres traditions in classical music, he said he wants to forge a path in a new direction when it comes to music. When he arrived in Seattle, he founded an orchestra comprising 30 musicians with the intention of getting more practice conducting.

"It has been a great experience for me. I wanted to get some videos of me conducting," he said.

However, while working with the orchestra, he hit upon the idea of preaching the gospel of classical music where it might not traditionally be heard. Thus, he explained, he led the orchestra when they

performed Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony, Ode to Joy*, at a bar in downtown Seattle. This audacious choice of venue merited a small write-up in the Seattle papers. The orchestra has also played a coffee shop on Capitol Hill in Seattle.

The reactions, he says, are almost always positive. "There have been so many reactions. A lot of people said things like this should happen more. I think people don't have access to it and a lot of people, once they have experienced it, like it. I just think this is a great idea."

The subject of Arakelyan's dissertation is the orchestral music of Armenian composers. To backtrack, he explained that all classical works —

including movements, instrumentation and publication information — are compiled in David Daniels' *Orchestral Music*, a sort of *Bible* for classical music. Very few Armenian composers and their works are in the book, with the exception of the major ones such as Aram Khachaturian and Alan Hovhannes.

"I want to make the same version of the book on Armenian composers," he said. Thus far, he has collected about 300 pieces from 30 composers. He also wants to make available the works online.

"There are so many great Armenian composers that are unknown here," he said. "I love Armenian composers. They always put something in there that is Armenian."

In addition, he has led several youth orchestras, including the Bainbridge Island Youth Orchestras and the Federal Way Youth Orchestra, both near Seattle.

"Those kids are super talented," he said.

He took the Federal Way players to Korea for a tour of Seoul and Bussan. "There was a tremendous turnout. Thousands of people came. It was very, very encouraging."

A strong advocate of new music, he has performed regional and world premieres by Iosif Andriasov, Stepan Rostomyan, Jeff Bowen, Jon Brenner, Arshak Andriasov, Felipe Rossi, and Eleanor Aversa among others. Arakelyan conducted the Pacific Northwest premiere of Paul Hindemith *Kammermusik Nr. 1*.

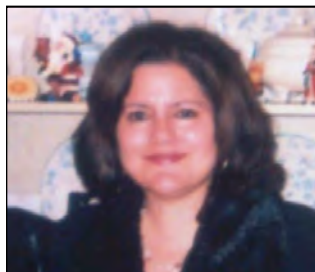
He is a recipient of numerous awards including: Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Performing Arts Fellowship (2013, 2014, 2015), Nellie Cornish, Welland Jordan, Edward Hosharian Award, Cornish College of the Arts Performance Grant, and the Armenian Allied Arts Competition (1st place).

Upcoming performances include Music Works Orchestra Jam Camp June 27-July 1, and Chamber Music Club Summer String Orchestra (University of Washington) on Thursday, July 21, at Brechemin Auditorium, the University of Washington.

For more information on this rising star, visit his website at <http://www.tigranarakelyan.com/>



Conductor Tigran Arakelyan



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Avocado, Eggplant, Shrimp and Feta Tacos With Garlic Lemon Tahini

#### INGREDIENTS

3 or 4 medium avocados, sliced  
1 medium eggplant, sliced,  
1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined  
2-3 cloves garlic, minced  
Diced feta cheese  
Juice of one lemon or lime  
8-10 corn, flour or whole wheat tortillas  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/2 teaspoon dried ancho peppers or 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes  
Sea salt, black or white pepper, cayenne pepper or chili powder to taste

Olive oil, diced tomatoes, sliced white, green or red onions, chopped cilantro, chopped green or red cabbage, chopped jalapeno peppers, chopped radishes, and sliced black or green olives as garnish  
Lemon or lime wedges as garnish  
Choice of hot sauce as garnish

#### PREPARATION

Wash and slice the eggplant and lightly sprinkle slices with sea salt; place slices in a colander and let sit for 10-20 minutes. Pat with a paper towel to remove excess liquid. In a few tablespoons of olive oil, sauté the eggplant (in batches) until medium brown on both sides, for 3-5 minutes. Remove eggplant and drain on paper towels. (Eggplant may also be grilled for this recipe.)

In a large skillet or pan, sauté the shrimp in a few tablespoons of olive oil and the garlic until translucent. Do not overcook. Lightly sprinkle shrimp with cumin, oregano, ancho peppers or red pepper flakes. Toss with the lemon or lime juice and a dash of cayenne or chili powder. Remove shrimp to a serving plate and keep warm. (Shrimp may also be grilled, brush them with a little olive oil and some crushed garlic and minced parsley until done.)

Warm the tortillas in a microwave with paper towels for 20-35 seconds, grill, or warm the tortillas in a skillet on both sides in a few tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat until lightly browned, for 30-40 seconds.

Fill tortillas with choice of sliced avocado, eggplant, shrimp, tomatoes, onions, cilantro, cabbage, jalapeno peppers, radishes, and olives; garnish with feta cheese. Plate and serve tacos with lemon or lime wedges and hot sauce with the Garlic Lemon Tahini on the side.

### Garlic Lemon Tahini

2-3 cups canned garbanzo beans, washed and drained (reserve about 1/4 cup of liquid)  
3 tablespoons tahini  
2-3 cloves minced garlic  
Olive oil and the juice and zest of 2 lemons  
Dash of sea salt  
Chopped cilantro or parsley  
Cayenne pepper, Aleppo pepper or paprika to taste

In a blender or processor, slowly combine the garbanzo beans, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, lemon zest and dash of sea salt; add the reserve liquid a little at a time, and blend a minute or two longer; drizzle in the olive oil to the desired consistency. Taste and adjust seasonings. Add more lemon juice or olive oil, if desired.

With a small spatula spread tahini on a plate or platter and garnish with olive oil and chopped cilantro or parsley; sprinkle with cayenne pepper, Aleppo pepper or paprika. 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>

## Armenian Stamps Take Second Place at International Competition

NEW YORK — A few days ago HayPost, the body in Armenia in charge of issuing stamps, took part in the New York-2016 world philately expo.

The Armenian collection with stamps from 2013, 2014 and 2015, presented by HayPost took second place at the competition organized under the auspices of the Universal Postal Union within the framework of the expo.

The collection consists from 29 stamps and souvenir sheets, dedicated to the Armenian culture, history, the nature of Armenia, etc.

The exhibition of HayPost in the great international philately expo of New York, organized once a decade, awoke high interest among the experts.

Special attention was attached to the models of stamps and S-sheets dedicated to Pope

Francis, developed and designed by the experts of HayPost. These stamps and S-sheets are already printed and shall be cancelled in a solemn ceremony during the visit of the Pope to Armenia.

The expo counted with participants from more than 120 philately unions and organizations of different countries, National Operators of Postal Communication from more than 50 countries. This was the first time HayPost presented an individual pavilion in an exposition of such a high range, making Armenia more visible to the philately world.

Two S-sheets, dedicated to New York-2016 expo and Rio-2016 Summer Olympics, were cancelled by HayPost during this event.



# CALENDAR

## MASSACHUSETTS

**JUNE 25 — Armenian Food fair, sponsored by St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church** of Merrimack Valley, 158 Main St., North Andover, MA, 11 am.-7pm; losh and chicken kebab; kheyma; vegetarian plate; pastries; dine in or take out. Further information, Sossy Jeknavorian, (978) 256-2538 or Ann Apovian, (978) 521-2245.

**JUNE 25 — The Armenian Church Of Our Saviour is presenting a new edition of ARMENIANS GOT TALENT!** Saturday, 6 pm, in its Cultural Center at 34 Boynton Street, Worcester. The talent show features parishioners of all ages performing various musical and dance numbers with fun for the whole family. Following the program there is a buffet with a variety of Armenian foods. Tickets are \$10.00 for adults and teens and \$5.00 for children under 12. For reservations and additional information, call 508-320-1232 or 508-835-9277. No Tickets will be sold at the door.

**JUNE 27 — Knights of Vartan Arshavir Lodge No. 2 invites everyone** to the 36th annual Armenian-American High School Graduates Night, Monday, 7 p.m. Armenian Church of Our Saviour Church Hall, 87 Salisbury St., Worcester. A City Proclamation By Mayor Joseph Petty, Recognition Of Graduates And Gifts Presentation with Guest Speaker: Anthony Barsamian, Attorney and Massachusetts Council Of Churches President. Admission is free. Buffet. Limited seating. Reservations required. Contact Charles Sharigian at 774-261-0108 OR chazz2404@yahoo.com. Call 508-752-5892 or 1-508-962-1031 with information on an Armenian-Armenian High School 2016 graduate for an invitation to be honored at Recognition Night.

**JULY 19 — ALMA's Final Inning Sports Raffle Party And Drawing.** The concluding celebration and raffle drawing for the Armenian Museum's 11th Annual Sports Raffle Fundraiser will be held in the Adele & Haig Der Manuelian Galleries at 6:00 PM. The Grand Prize for this year's Raffle is a Fenway Park Luxury Box for the winner and 21 guests. To purchase tickets, call 617-926-2562 x4.

**JULY 31 — Sunday, St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, Annual Church Picnic,** 12 pm to 5 p.m., Camp Haiastan, 722 Summer St., Franklin.

**SEPTEMBER 10 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston 30th anniversary gala.**

**SEPTEMBER 11 — Trinity Family Festival,** 12-5 pm, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Delicious Armenian food with take-out available; Armenian music for your listening and dancing



**The Knights of Vartan Arshavir Lodge No. 2 will host the 36th annual Armenian-American High School Graduates Night, on Monday, June 27, 7 p.m., Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Worcester. Speaker will be Anthony Barsamian, co-chair of the Armenian Assembly and president of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. Admission is free. A city proclamation by Worcester Mayor Joseph Petty will be handed out in recognition of the graduates.**

pleasure; fun activities for children. Blessing of the Madagh, raffle drawing and more. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, contact the church office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

**SEPTEMBER 18 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park.** For families and friends. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. Boston. 2-4 p.m. All are invited.

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

**OCTOBER 1 — 35th anniversary of Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston.** Celebration at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACED), 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Details to follow. **OCTOBER 22 — Armenian Friends of America presents Hye Kef 5,** a 5-hour dance, 7 p.m. to midnight with buffet; Andover Windham, 123 Old River Road, featuring musicians Onnik and Ara Dinkjian, Johnny Berberian, Mal

Barsamian, Jason Naroian and Paul Mooradian, with proceeds benefiting area churches. Advance tickets before Sept. 1 @ \$55, call either John Arzigian, (603) 560-3826; Sharke Der Apkarian, (978) 808-0598; Lucy Sirmaian, (978) 683-9121, or Peter Gulezian, (978) 375-1616.

**OCTOBER 23 — Save the Date. YerazArt** will celebrate its 10th anniversary. Concert followed by reception, Cambridge.

**NOVEMBER 3 — K. George and Carolann S. Najarian, M.D. Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall, 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 6:45 p.m., "Justice & Equality: My Life as an Activist."** Speaker: Harry Belafonte, Activist & Entertainer. Reception follows at Bostonian Hotel. All are invited; free and open to the public. Further information: ArmenianHeritagePark.org

**NOVEMBER 15 — Thank You Reception for All Supporters of Armenian Heritage Park.** Armenian Cultural and Educational Center. Watertown. 7:30 p.m. During the evening, supporters will receive the Armenian Heritage Park Commemorative Book, which will acknowledge all supporters in the category of giving that combines all their contributions since the campaign's inception. Deadline for first time supporters and for supporters to increase their contribution is September 22. Contributors are tax-deductible as allowed by law. All supporters are invited.

**NOVEMBER 19 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association will hold its 40th annual luncheon/auction.** Oakley Country Club, 410 Belmont St., Watertown. Details to follow.

**DECEMBER 18 — Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk,** Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston. 5-6:30 p.m. All are invited.

**DECEMBER 2 and DECEMBER 3 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar,** Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

## RHODE ISLAND

**JULY 16 — 6 p.m. — 12 a.m. — A HYE SUMMER NIGHT # 10** sponsored by the Ladies' Guild, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church and the Providence ARS "Ani" Chapter. The dinner dance will be held at the Alpine Country Club, 251 Pippin Orchard Road, Cranston, RI featuring Hachig Kazarian, John Berberian, Ken Kalajian, Jason Naroian and vocals, Khatchig Jingirian from CA. The dinner-dance is \$55. Dance only after 8:00pm is \$35. Students dance only \$30. ID required. Buy your tickets early. R.S.V.P. by June 30, 2016. Call Joyce Yeremian at 401-354-8770, joycey41@cox.net or Joyce Bagdasarian at 401-434-4467.

## Montreal Real Estate Agent Gets Big Break in "X-Men: Apocalypse"

MONTREAL (CTV) — There aren't too many real estate agents out there who have also tried to bring an end to the world as a part-time job.

Yet film audiences across the world were able to see Berdj Garabedian do just that in the recent blockbuster "X-Men: Apocalypse," in which he played the older version of the titular villain seen at the beginning (after transferring his essence to a younger man,

"Apocalypse" is played by Oscar Isaac).

The "Apocalypse" costume and makeup required hours of preparation to put on, but made playing the role of a God-like figure with devastating powers easier to play.

"It gives you a personality, like you walk and you feel like you're a king or something," said Garabedian.

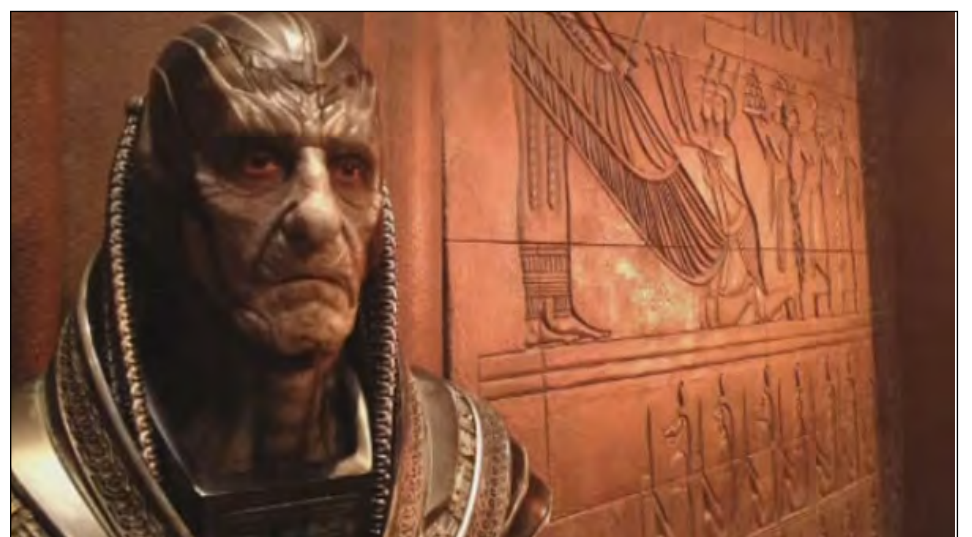
Of course, what comes on must come off. That made using the men's room a bit of an ordeal that required lots of advance warning.

"I wasn't going to hold up production," said Garabedian. "Maybe 20 minutes, a half hour of advance notice. You know, it's a big thing to take off everything."

While the 70-year-old Garabedian has worked as an extra for years, his role as one of the greatest comic-book villains of all time was by far his largest.

He had originally auditioned for the part of an Egyptian holy man, a role he thought he would be perfect for given he was born in that country.

After waiting weeks for a callback, it finally came through — albeit, for a different part entirely. "When I went in for the second



Berdj Garabedian as "Apocalypse" in "X-Men"

audition, I didn't know what role it was for," he said. "They told me they were considering me to be the old Apocalypse."

While Garabedian didn't have any lines, his scenes still had a tremendous visual impact.

"When the golden mask comes off and you see yourself, I mean, it's incredible the feeling you get," he said.

It was a lot of work to achieve the desired

effect. On his first day on set, he woke up at 10:00 a.m. and worked until midnight, after which he still had to sit for 45 minutes while his makeup was removed.

The next week followed a similar grueling schedule.

Still, Garabedian hopes audiences haven't seen the last of him. Of his big break, he laughed and said, "I hope it's not the last one."



Berdj Garabedian as he usually looks



## COMMENTARY

## Genocide Continues for Aleppo Armenians

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The bloodbath in Syria cannot be called a civil war, no matter how much the news media continues to promote that misnomer. What has happened was part of a Neocon plan of creating a domino effect to destroy stable regimes in the Middle East, beginning with Iraq, then Libya and Syria, with the end target being Iran.

The Bush-Cheney Administration did not have time to complete its plan, into which new life will be breathed after President Obama's term expires in January, no matter which candidate wins.

Just as the Clinton Administration drew a line in the sand for Europe, by dismantling Yugoslavia and curtailing Russia's influence on that continent Moscow tried to do the same in Syria, despite the fact that it had conceded that it was no longer a superpower.

Many interests and policies collide on the Syrian battlefield, with sometimes shifting allegiances – Al Nusra Front, Free Syrian Army, Ahrar El-Sham, ISIS, al Qaeda, etc. New factions with new names appear on the map and sometimes they disappear when funds and arms are cut off as most of these groups are composed of foreign mercenaries, disqualifying the strife from being called a “civil war.”

Despite pressure from the State Department and Neocons, President Obama thus far has been paying only lip service to the idea of regime change in Syria, because it is obvious to any informed observer what could happen when a strongman is removed: devastation and destabilization have been well-documented in Iraq, Libya and Yemen in the wake of this very action.

In the first two cases, there has been no tears shed in Israel, despite one million civilian deaths, 4,500 US war victims and an equal number of suicides among the US veterans of the Iraq war, because two major strongmen with hostile intentions have been removed.

A different picture is emerging in Syria's case. First, confrontation with Russia is a real prospect and second (and ironically) all of the parties, except perhaps Ankara, openly and tacitly agree that the removal of the Assad regime will create a political vacuum and thus lead to an open invitation to Islamic extremists. Even Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu of Israel can see that a weakened President Assad in place is a surer guarantee for Israel's security than a fragmented Syria where disparate militias are fighting on its border.

Another component of the irony is the warming up of relations between Israel and Russia. The recent appointment of Avigdor Lieberman was criticized severely in the West. Even the New York Times dedicated a scathing editorial characterizing the move as a further defeat of the two-state solution for the Palestinian Problem.

Only the Kremlin was discretely pleased by the promotion of a Russian-speaking politician in Israel. And that sentiment was expressed when Netanyahu visited Moscow last week to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

In the Syrian war theater, the scenario may change if Hillary Clinton succeeds President Obama, because she has been advocating the creation of a no-fly zone in Syria to escalate tensions with Russia and to please Turkey.

Contrary to the Turkish sultan's wishes, President Obama refused to create a no-fly zone and continued supporting Kurdish forces in Syria. However, any US move in the Middle East takes Israeli concerns into consideration and thus, that picture may

change if it helps the latter.

Turkey was not able to convince Washington to establish the no-fly zone on its border with Syria, to prevent the formation of a Kurdish enclave, yet President Erdogan has not given up hope and his surrogates and mercenaries are continuing his policy, which incidentally includes the destruction of Armenian settlements in Syria.

The once-prosperous Armenian community in Aleppo is overwhelmingly composed of descendants of Armenian Genocide survivors. Because of Turkey's hostile intentions, Aleppo Armenians once again have become refugees. Armenians in Kessab are still recovering from the devastation brought by mercenaries operating under the direct order of the Turkish secret service, MIT.

Pitched battles are still raging in Aleppo, which is divided between government and rebel forces. The latter have been deliberately targeting the Armenian quarter, which has suffered numerous casualties.

Similar to the way an attack was planned to destroy the Armenian Martyrs' Memorial in Deir Zor on the eve of the Genocide centennial, recently a bloody attack was directed at the Syriac Orthodox Church in Qamishli while Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, the patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church, was holding a special ceremony commemorating the 101st anniversary of the Assyrian Genocide by Turkey.

Aleppo was once the largest city in Syria, as well as its center for commerce, with a pre-war population of 2.3 million; now that figure has been reduced to one million. The Armenian community there once numbered 60,000 and now only 8,000 remain in the ruins of that devastated city. During a recent offensive against Holy Trinity (Zvartnots) Church, the Armenian maternity hospital and many historic and cultural buildings have been damaged.

Armenia's ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Arman Kirakossian, has lodged a protest at the 105th session of the OSCE permanent council, strongly condemning the targeted attacks on Christian neighborhoods in Aleppo which have killed many Armenians.

According to Kirakossian, ethnic and religious minorities, including the Armenians, are key targets for militant groups such as Islamic State or Al Nusra, as well as al Qaeda. “The actions of these groups seriously threaten the OSCE regional security,” he said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's hands are full: he is waging a war against the Kurds and has already displaced more than 500,000 civilians in the region. Only in the last month, he has killed 6,000 young Kurds, under the guise of combatting terrorism. Because of this carnage, he has become a pariah in the West. The Turkish economy and tourism, once popular with Europeans, now are mostly dependent on extreme Muslim nations such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Azerbaijan.

A tenuous cease-fire is still being observed in Syria, while war in Aleppo continues to rage with the Russian air force pounding Turkish surrogates there.

Recent territorial gains have emboldened President Assad, who has vowed to recover the country's territory “inch by inch.” But above all, he has proclaimed, “Erdogan's Ottoman dreams will find their graves in Aleppo.”

This rhetoric is no big consolation to the 8,000 Armenians trapped in Aleppo's ruins. This five-year-long tragedy may extend another five years, which means the certain extinction of this once-vibrant Armenian community.

Syria's neighbors and their overlords can change the course and the destiny of this beleaguered country if they can find a common cause. Meanwhile, the Genocide continues for Aleppo Armenians.

## Mirror Spectator



Established 1932  
An ADL Publication

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

**SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:**  
Edmond Y. Azadian

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Taleen Babayan, Diana Der Hovanessian, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

**CORRESPONDENTS:**

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

**Contributing Photographers:**

Jacob Demirdjian and Jirair Hovsepian

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

**Baikar Association, Inc.**

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

[www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com)

E-Mail: [editor@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:editor@mirrorspectator.com)

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

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:**

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

Other than the editorial, views and opinions expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the policies of the publisher.

Copying for other than personal use or internal reference is prohibited without express permission of the copyright owner. Address requests for reprints or back issues to:

**Baikar Association, Inc.**

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

## US Diplomats Are Right on Syria

By Robert Ford

The former US ambassador to Syria agrees that President Obama has lost the plot.

In response to the State Department dissent memo signed by 51 officials who have worked on Syria in recent years, the White House probably won't change its approach to the broad Syrian conflict. After nearly two years of American military operations in Syria, after an estimated 400,000 or more dead in Syria, and after Syrian refugee flows have raised questions about European unity itself—the unity that was a goal of American foreign policy dating back to Truman—the memo is right to urge we review how can we achieve

secure our strategic objective in Syria. The discussion is all the more urgent since there are no sure-fire solutions and no options without risks.

The dissent memo supports the administration's goal of ending the conflict by having Syrians negotiate the establishment of a new government that could rally Syrians to fight extremists like the Islamic State. The memo doesn't call for regime change; it doesn't say that Bashar al-Assad has to go. That's an issue for Syrians to negotiate in what surely would be very hard talks.

Those talks have never really started mainly because of constant Syrian government violations of the ceasefire. In a reminder of Richard Holbrooke's use of NATO air power to change the calculations of Serbia and its Bosnian Serbian allies, the memo urges deterring the Syrian government from further violations by destroying some Syrian military assets with stand-off strikes. Once Assad understands the ceasefire is for real, and he can't win militarily, the memo reasons that

real political talks about Syria's future can finally begin.

Some critics of a more muscular American approach warn that this is a recipe for Iraq 2003 redux or a replay of Libya 2011 when regimes fell and chaos ensued. George W. Bush didn't seek a transition negotiation with Saddam. Qadhafi had an ICC indictment waiting for him; Assad doesn't. The future of Assad and his inner circle is an issue for Syrians to negotiate. The Syrian opposition even hinted once that it might drop the issue of holding Assad accountable if he steps down. The larger point is that the majority of the armed opposition is willing to negotiate a new government but the Syrian government isn't.

Other critics of greater American involvement warn that it is naïve to think Assad will ever negotiate. Like the Fuhrer he'd rather go down in a fiery Gotterdamernung if abandoned by his allies (presumably his inner circle all would agree). Since the Russians and Iranians won't abandon Assad, the Americans and

see SYRIA, page 19





## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## President Erdogan May Have to Resign If his College Diploma is Fake

As if Turkish President Recep Erdogan did not have enough headaches, he now faces a new accusation that he may have forged his college diploma. If true, he would be forced to resign from his presidential seat and possibly go to jail or into exile.

Rumors have been circulating for some time that Erdogan may not have a college degree which would disqualify him from his presidential position according to Article 101 of the Turkish constitution which requires that presidential candidates “have completed higher education.”

Journalist Cengiz Candar, in an Al-Monitor.com June 15 article titled: “Is Erdogan’s university diploma forged?” exposes the serious suspicions regarding the validity of the Turkish President’s college diploma.

As Candar explains, “Erdogan went to an imam-hatip school, a high school-level institution that educates religious preachers. During the 1970’s and 1980’s, graduates of those schools could pursue their higher education only in theolo-

gy.” Nonetheless, when Erdogan ran for President in August 2014, he presented to the Higher Electoral Board a photocopy of his diploma claiming to have received a college degree in 1981 from the Dept. of Economic and Administrative Sciences of Marmara University.

The problem here is that Marmara University was founded only in 1982, making it impossible for Erdogan to have graduated a year before the University came into existence. Since the Dept. of Economics was established only in 1983, Erdogan could not have graduated from that department in 1981, as he claimed. Unfortunately, none of these suspected allegations can be thoroughly investigated in Turkey by the media or civil society in view of the dictatorial nature of the Erdogan regime which routinely shuts down newspapers and prosecutes all opponents.

The President’s aides are adamant that the accusations against Erdogan are not valid, as they emanate from members of opposition parties. The first complaint came from former judge Omer Faruk Eminagaoglu who presented to the Higher Electoral Board his suspicion that Erdogan did have a college degree because of the existing discrepancies in the photocopy of his diploma. The Electoral Board promptly rejected the judge’s appeal.

A second challenge was mounted by extreme Turkish nationalist Gokce Firat who presented detailed arguments to support the claim that Erdogan’s diploma is a forgery. Firat demanded to see Erdogan’s original diploma rather than the photocopy he had submitted to the Higher Electoral Board. The Turkish nationalist accused the President and Dean of Marmara University of aiding and abetting in the crime of forging Erdogan’s diploma. He claimed that the signatures of the President and Dean of Marmara University seen on the copy of Erdogan’s diploma do not match the ones on Firat’s

own diploma from the same university. He also questioned the validity of the sequence of the number found on Erdogan’s diploma. Finally, Firat claimed that even the design of the Turkish President’s diploma is different from the ones held by other graduates.

Earlier this month, the pro-Kurdish HDP Party submitted an official parliamentary inquiry, asking Education Minister Ismet Yilmaz “to clarify the mystery surrounding the validity” of Erdogan’s university diploma. In response to a similar request to the Higher Electoral Board, the HDP received a notarized copy of the Turkish President’s diploma. However, the HDP announced that it will continue to challenge the validity of the diploma.

In his article, Cengiz Candar raised serious concerns about Erdogan’s legitimacy as President of Turkey should it be proven that his diploma is forged: “If taken seriously, the follow-up to the controversy could create monumental legal questions in Turkey. If it turns out Erdogan was never qualified to be elected president, whatever he has signed or implemented would have to be considered null and void from a purely legal point of view. Politically, it would provide an armory of ammunition to his critics whose numbers abroad are rapidly increasing. And if Erdogan’s university diploma proves to be a forgery, that would naturally provide ammunition to his international opponents to bring up the argument of whether his title is legitimate.”

While President Erdogan is demanding a DNA test to verify the ethnic origins of the 11 Turkish members of the German Parliament who voted to recognize the Armenian Genocide, it may be more appropriate to carry out a chemical analysis of his diploma. Erdogan should also undergo a psychological examination to evaluate his persistently irrational psychotic behavior!

## US Diplomats Are Right on Syria

SYRIA, from page 18

their regional friends must instead abandon the opposition. These analysts haven’t explained why regional actors like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, or even Turkey, as uncomfortable as it is with Syrian Kurdish expansionism, would find this change to be in their interest.

More importantly, these analysts haven’t explained how millions of Syrians would be reconciled to an unrepentant Assad government and if, as likely, they cannot reconcile, and how much larger numbers of Syrians would rally around Assad to fight the many extremists in their midst. The State Department dissent memo warns that if local Sunni Arab communities don’t rally to fight the Islamic State and al-Qaida, then we will not contain the extremists over the long-term, and American military operations will never end. The question is how to get that local Sunni Arab support. The memo rightly asserts that stopping the Assad government attacks on civilian communities and resolving the larger Syrian conflict are key. The Obama administration focus on the Islamic State, and not the larger civil war, is misplaced.

Moreover, those wanting to accept Assad say international funding should appear, like magic, to rebuild Syria, but they don’t explain where it would come from. Is it realistic to think that the international community would rally around Assad to raise the absolutely enormous sums required for a reconstruction program his bloody, corrupt government would direct? Without national reconciliation and without national reconstruction, how will the millions of Syrian refugees go home and how will pressure on our European friends be eased? Proponents of accepting the Assad government as it is are really just saying there is no chance to stabilize Syria or address our broader interests. The dissent memo should receive credit for at least trying to figure out a better way forward.

Finally, some reject even limited US military strikes because of the risk of direct confrontation with Russia. Striking Russian military assets in Syria would create such a risk. Hitting Syrian government targets is different; the Israelis appear to have hit targets in Syria with no vigorous Russian response. Moreover, the Russians have hit American-backed opposition groups. They set the precedent. If presented with an American military fait accompli, might the Russians respond by escalating with more bombing, more military aid to Damascus or even troops? Very likely they would. That would pose questions then about additional US strikes if Damascus, counting on Russian backing, continues its violations. We could expect multiple rounds of Syrian, American and Russian tits for tats before any serious political talks—a riskier, less tantalizing proposition.

Other analysts, myself included, argue that before using still more American military force in Syria, we should first figure out how to boost the moderate opposition. The dissent memo itself urges empowering the moderate opposition. However, Defense Department and CIA efforts now are separate and have distinct goals. We should consider program resources, how to structure programs so that they are not blank checks to opposition groups but rather are part of a broader political opposition outreach effort, and how to channel our efforts in a mutually reinforcing manner. What is more absurd than Pentagon-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters attacking CIA-backed Syrian Arab fighters or a NATO ally shelling fighters (linked to a terrorist group) whom the Pentagon is arming? That suggests incoherence in Washington aggravating, not resolving, contentious agendas in Syria. We can do better.

Attaining the US objective of a negotiated new government in Syria needs cooperation from Russia and Iran who must understand that they and Assad won’t be able to impose a political deal with only cosmetic changes that the majority of the Syrian opposition cannot and will not accept. That’s not an American dictate—it’s a Syrian one. The dissent memo should wake us up that the current approach ensures we will not secure our national interest in Syria, that broader US interests will suffer as a consequence, and we need to reconsider our approach.

(Robert Ford is the former US ambassador to Syria. The commentary above first appeared in the Daily Beast on June 20.)

## The Armenian Genocide: 101 Years Later

By Raffi Wartanian

Turkish authorities patted down mourners who gathered in Istanbul on April 24 to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and once again call on Turkey’s government to acknowledge the crime.

Last year’s centennial anniversary took place on Istiklal Avenue, Istanbul’s busiest pedestrian thoroughfare—a sight hard to ignore. But after a terrorist attack struck the same location in March 2016, security officials could not assure safety for this year’s ceremony. So the commemoration relocated to a more modest plaza while the world echoed the crowd’s demand for justice and the government, again, turned a deaf ear.

One year ago, however, the hope for change was palpable. Activists, artists, intellectuals, and supporters from around the world convened in Istanbul to demand recognition. It marked the first time such major public demonstrations took place in Turkey, extending a decades-long movement forged by descendants of the genocide’s survivors scattered around the world.

Renowned Armenian American composer Ara Dinkjian traveled there to perform in a landmark commemoration concert permitted by Turkey’s government despite its official stance denying that the crime was a genocide and punishing those who suggest otherwise. Under tight security, the concert featured celebrated performers Jordi Savall, Kardes Türküler, and Dinkjian himself, a master of the oud, a fretless pear-shaped lute considered the “king of instruments” throughout the Middle East.

The concert launched a series of public actions throughout Turkey. With riot police looking on, protesters held candlelight vigils in cemeteries, organized sit-ins at deportation sites, and shut down Istiklal, where they sang requiems, prayed, and delivered speeches. They hoisted placards depicting leading cultural and intellectual figures of the Ottoman Armenian community killed a century ago, and of Hrant Dink, an Armenian journalist gunned down in 2007 by an ultra-nationalist in front of his newspaper’s Istanbul office.

After Dink’s assassination, Armenians, Turks, Kurds, and others in Turkey’s civil society coalesced around a campaign to recognize the Armenian Genocide and reconcile Turkey’s bilateral relationship with the Republic of Armenia. They contextualized their cause within a greater strug-

gle to defend the fundamental rights of Turkey’s numerous ethnic, religious, political, and sexual minorities.

Outside Turkey, Armenians gathered in April 2015 to commemorate the centennial anniversary in their own communities. In Los Angeles, 130,000 individuals marched to the Turkish consulate demanding recognition. In Paris, the Eiffel Tower went dark in honor of the 1.5 million killed. Russia’s Vladimir Putin traveled to Yerevan, Armenia to lay a wreath at the genocide memorial. Pope Francis, German President Joachim Gauck, and the European Parliament all called on Turkey to recognize the crime.

The global groundswell convinced many that the Turkish state would, at the very least, soften its stance. Following a June 2015 election, it seemed that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) might have to share power with the country’s more liberal factions, but a follow-up snap election in November erased such hopes as the AKP consolidated control over the parliament and presidency.

Since November, state aggression toward minorities has grown with the prosecution of pro-Kurdish academics, attacks on opposition newspapers and journalists, and expropriation of Surp Giragos (St. Gregory), the largest Armenian church in Turkey (and the Middle East). A church foundation raised money to buy the title to Surp Giragos’ property, which dates back to the 14th century, and invested millions of dollars into restoring the space as a house of worship and Armenian museum. Its revival stirred hope for normalized relations between the Turkish state, its Armenian community, and the Republic of Armenia. But in late March, the state authorized legislation facilitating an “urgent expropriation of the Sur district” where the church is located in the province of Diyarbakir, a predominantly Kurdish region where Armenians had lived before the genocide. The measure allows Turkey’s government to seize properties throughout the region, including the church, and has escalated resentment from Kurds and Armenians toward the state. Many fear that the government’s long-term intentions toward its Kurdish community involve a gradual dismantling akin to the fate of Armenians a century ago.

At the beginning of April 2016, President Erdogan supported his counterpart in Azerbaijan, President Ilham Aliyev, who ordered shellings that claimed the lives of non-combatant Armenian villagers living in Nagorno-Karabagh. Erdogan’s stance indicates a willingness to support an excessively hawkish Azerbaijan in an already fragile region while overlooking Aliyev’s notorious affinity for corruption and human rights abuses. And with the resignation on May 5 of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, a party loyalist who sometimes questioned the president’s autocratic tendencies, Erdogan’s pursuit of expanded powers will make

see GENOCIDE, page 20





# GOP Taps Tarkanian over Roberson in 3rd Congressional District primary

By Ben Botkin

LAS VEGAS (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*) – Republican voters tapped Danny Tarkanian in the Tuesday, June 14 primaries to advance to the November general election in the open 3rd Congressional District race.

They passed over a GOP establishment contender, state Senate Majority Leader Michael Roberson, who had the endorsement of Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval.

Democratic voters, meanwhile, stayed close to the recommendations of party elders. They picked Jacky Rosen in the CD-3 race and nominated state Sen. Ruben Kihuen for a run against incumbent U.S. Rep. Crescent Hardy, R-



Danny Tarkanian

ning to replace Reid, who is retiring.

Tarkanian took 32 percent of the Republican vote in a seven-way GOP primary fight for the open 3rd Congressional District seat, according to returns with 100 percent of precincts reporting.

“We’re thrilled,” Tarkanian said. Tarkanian credited his volunteers and team.

“What the difference was we had a ton of people talking door-to-door,” he said, adding that his campaign withstood almost \$2 million in attack ads from outside groups.

The Republican race saw a blitz of ads from state Senate Majority Leader Michael Roberson and Tarkanian, a businessman and the son of the late UNLV basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian. Roberson got 24 percent of the vote.

## Noubar Afeyan Elected to MIT Board of Trustees

AFEYAN, from page 1

Afeyan earned his PhD in biochemical engineering from MIT, and has authored numerous scientific publications and patents. He is the founder and CEO of Flagship Ventures, a leading early-stage, life-science venture firm managing funds exceeding \$1.4 billion. In his 30-year career, Afeyan has co-founded more than 38 life science and technology startups, and is currently director or chair of several private and public company boards. Additionally, he co-founded the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia, the UWC Dilijan International School, the Noubar and Anna Afeyan Foundation, and the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity. He also served as chair of the World Economic Forum’s Global Agenda Council on Chemicals and Biotechnology and its Emerging Technologies Council. Since 2000, Afeyan has been a senior lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

He has been a member of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Central Board Member since 2012.

Afeyan is founder, senior managing partner and CEO of Flagship Ventures, a leading early stage venture capital firm. He also leads the firm’s VentureLabs unit that invents and launches transformative startups.

He is a senior lecturer at MIT’s Sloan School of Management where he has taught courses on technology-entrepreneurship, innovation, and leadership since 2000.

NeV., in the 4th Congressional District. Both Rosen and Kihuen had support from powerful players within Nevada’s Democratic establishment, including U.S. Sen. Harry Reid, D-NeV., and the culinary union.

As expected in the U.S. Senate race, GOP voters picked U.S. Rep. Joe Heck, R-NeV., and Democrats backed Catherine Cortez Masto, a former Nevada attorney general. They’re run-

## Switzerland Simplifies Visa Procedure for Armenian Citizens

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Citizens of Armenia will be able to acquire visas to travel to Switzerland by means of a simplified procedure. The Armenian parliament is discussing the ratification issue of the agreement on this process. Armenian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Shavarsh Kocharyan said about the scope of the agreement that “this concerns representatives of local administration structures, school students, political figures and entrepreneurs. In short, the circle is quite wide.”

## The Armenian Genocide: 101 Years Later

GENOCIDE, from page 19

the possibility of forming an inclusive, representative government even slimmer.

Yet the potency of the performances and demonstrations in April 2015 resonates. Activists in Turkey and their sympathizers continue pushing for change despite the palpable tensions. After the government seized a historic Armenian orphanage and supported its demolition, protesters occupied the property for 175 days before the government agreed in October to turn it over to a local Armenian church foundation. To honor the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Armenian parliamentarian Garo Paylan of the Peoples’ Democratic Party called on the Turkish state to come to terms with its history during a speech to the Grand National Assembly. Two weeks later, conservative politicians shouted racial slurs at Paylan before physically assaulting him.

Dinkjian continues to give concerts in Turkey, and his compositions are sung widely by those who hear in his dynamic musicianship an aural reimagining of history and the hope of unity for a fractured land. As the descendent of Armenian Genocide survivors, Dinkjian acknowledges the freedoms he enjoys as an American citizen. Yet through his artistry, he remains intimately engaged with the conversation about the legacy and status of minorities in Turkey. He credits music with teaching him invaluable lessons about compassion, understanding, and forgiveness, “elements that are sorely missing in the world today,” he says.

The international spotlight highlighting the 100th anniversary of the genocide has faded. One year later, however, Turkey still denies the Armenian Genocide and oppresses its minority groups as activists continue clamoring for change. For Dinkjian, music has served as a tool for love and hope.

“Did the concert have an impact?” he asks. “We’ll see.”

Watch the documentary at:  
[https://youtu.be/7fOrwr\\_4-w8](https://youtu.be/7fOrwr_4-w8)

(Raffi Wartanian is a writer whose work has appeared in *World Policy Journal*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and *JazzTimes*. The above article first appeared in World Policy Blog.)



# Sponsor A Teacher

In Armenia and Karabagh

# 16th Anniversary

Since its inception in 2001, TCA's Sponsor a Teacher program has raised over \$563,000 and reached out to 5,627 teachers and school workers in Armenia & Karabagh.

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

\$160  \$320  \$480  other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: Tekeyan Cultural Association -Memo: Sponsor a Teacher  
Mail your check with this form to:

TCA Sponsor a Teacher  
5326 Valverde, Houston, TX 77056

Your donation is Tax Deductible.

