

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXX, NO. 38, Issue 4631

\$ 2.00

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

NEWS IN BRIEF

Isabel Bayrakdarian Is Experiencing a Renaissance

By Alin K. Gregorian, *Mirror-Spectator* Staff

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. – Soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian is thrilled to be teaching, singing and performing. She has just released a new CD featuring the music of three composers about King Tigran the Great.

The CD, titled “The Other Cleopatra: Queen of Armenia, Il Tigrane Arias,” features the music of Johann Hasse, Antonio Vivaldi and Christoph Gluck. The Kaunas City Orchestra of Kaunas, Lithuania, led by Russian-American-Armenian conductor Konstantin Orbelian, accompanies her.

Armenians forget at times that Tigran the Great, born in 140 BC, created an empire that challenged Rome from the east. He ruled from 95 to 55 BC, and acquired and ruled through military prowess and clever alliances, including marrying the daughter of the king of Pontus, Mithridates VI, named Cleopatra.

It is this Cleopatra who is being celebrated on this new CD.

see ISABEL, page 12



Runner-Up Calls For Karabakh Election Boycott

STEPANAKERT (RFE/RL) – Citing the coronavirus pandemic, the candidate who finished second in the first round of presidential election in Karabakh (Artsakh) has called on supporters to boycott a runoff vote scheduled for April 14.

Masis Mayilyan has at the same time refrained from withdrawing from the race.

Official results of the March 31 election showed Ara Harutiunyan, a wealthy businessman and Artsakh’s former prime minister, winning over 49 percent of the vote. Mayilyan garnered 26.4 percent, leading to a runoff. (See related editorial on page 14.)

The vote went ahead despite serious concerns about the spread of coronavirus in Karabakh. Mayilyan and several other presidential candidates demanded its postponement during the election campaign. The authorities in Stepanakert countered that precautionary measures taken by them helped to prevent any coronavirus cases in Artsakh so far.

In a weekend statement, Mayilyan, who is also Artsakh outgoing foreign minister, said his supporters should stay away from polling stations on April 14 because of the “growing danger of coronavirus.”

He also criticized the authorities’ handling of the polls, saying it was “very far” from Artsakh residents’ expectations of democratization. He cited in that regard the findings of election observers from Armenia that reported voter irregularities.

Still, Mayilyan “took note” of the official results and stopped short of explicitly rejecting them as fraudulent.

see BOYCOTT, page 3

Russia’s Putin, Armenia’s Pashinyan Speak on Situation

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Russian President Vladimir Putin and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held a telephone conversation on Monday, April 6.

According to a statement released by Kremlin, the measures to curb the spread of coronavirus were discussed during the phone call. In that context, Pashinyan expressed deep gratitude to Putin for the support provided by Russia.

The officials also discussed issues related to bilateral cooperation, as well as cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) framework.

The schedule of upcoming contacts was agreed.

It is noteworthy that the official statement of the Kremlin makes no mention of the price of Russian natural gas supplied to Armenia.

Later on Monday, Pashinyan’s office also released a statement, which read:

“The parties discussed issues related to natural gas supplies to Armenia. Information was exchanged on the steps taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The two leaders noted that the situation is under control in both countries.

Prime Minister Pashinyan thanked the Russian side for facilitating cargo transportations from Russia to Armenia and for the ongoing effective cooperation with Rospotrebnadzor.

The parties supported the idea of convening a special session of the Eurasian Supreme Council via video conference. The interlocutors stressed the need to keep in close touch in both bilateral format and within the EAEU framework.”

World Chess Champ Carlsen Launches Online Tournament

OSLO, Norway (Armenpress) – World Chess Champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway is launching an online chess super-tournament amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The Magnus Carlsen Invitational sees the World Chess Champion challenge seven of his biggest rivals to a two-week, \$250,000 battle. Every move will be streamed live on chess24.

“Chess is unique in the sports world as the moves are the same whether played on a wooden board or a computer screen,” Carlsen commented to chess24.

“This is a historic moment for chess, and given that it’s possible to continue top professional play in an online environment, we have not only the opportunity but the responsibility to players and fans around the world who need a distraction when no other live, competitive sport is being played,” he said.

INSIDE

Pharmacists to The Rescue

Page 4

INDEX

Arts and Living	10
Armenia	2
Community News.	4
Editorial	14
International	3

Glendale Confronts Coronavirus Disease

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

GLENDALE – As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic rages through the United States, the city of Glendale with its large Armenian community have geared up to take protective measures.

As of April 7, Glendale had 142 known cases of infection, which is the third largest number of cases in municipalities in Los Angeles County after Los Angeles itself, Long Beach and Melrose (<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/locations.htm>). This is roughly in line with its overall population, as it was ranked as the third largest city in the county according to the 2010 US census.

Glendale’s mayor, Ara James Najarian, pointed out that three levels of government are involved with the preparation in addition to federal guidelines. The governor provides general orders and Los Angeles County, of which Glendale is a part, gets more specific, as it has its

see GLENDALE, page 8



Ara James Najarian
Mayor of Glendale

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Numbers of COVID-19 in Armenia Seem to Stay Stable

YEREVAN (RFE/RL and Armenpress) – Armenia has banned virtually all foreign nationals from entering the country due to the continuing coronavirus pandemic, it was announced on April 7.

The Armenian government imposed last month such a ban only on the citizens of a few dozen states, notably China, Iran, Italy and Spain, that were hit hardest by coronavirus.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday, April 7, that the government decided to extend the travel ban to the entire world because virtually all countries have recorded coronavirus cases in recent weeks.

In a statement, the ministry said that the ban will not cover those foreigners who are married to Armenians or have Armenian residency permits as well as foreign diplomats and representatives of international organizations. But it cautioned that they all will have to self-isolate or be put in quarantine immediately after entering the country.

Armenia’s land borders with neighboring Georgia and Iran were closed for travel in March, and virtually all airlines stopped flying to Yerevan and Gyumri by the beginning of this month. The latest government measure may therefore change little in practice.

see STABILIZED, page 2



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Kocharyan Files Defamation Suit against PM Pashinyan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenia's former President Robert Kocharyan filed a defamation lawsuit against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Tuesday, April 7. In the legal claim published on DataLex judicial information system, the ex-president demands 'protection of his dignity and honor from public slander.'

The lawsuit has been assigned to judge Tigran Grigoryan of Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction.

Kocharyan's lawyer Hovhannes Khudoyan clarified that during the recent campaign of the Constitutional referendum Pashinyan had voiced number of statement about the former president 'that have no touch with reality'.

"Those are defamatory statements, and my colleague, Mr Alumyan, has filed a lawsuit. It remains vital for us to prove the statements made Mr. Pashinyan have nothing in common with Robert Kocharyan," Khudoyan told reporters at a briefing.

Sargsyan to Attend Session On 2016 War

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Former President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan's Office has said that he will make an appearance at the parliamentary ad hoc committee session investigating the 2016 April War on April 16.

"Although it is perplexing that the parliamentary committee has decided to hold a session amid the situation which is created as a result of the pandemic, even if the government were to extend the state of emergency the Third President of Armenia is ready to visit the committee on April 16th, at 14:00," Sargsyan's Office said.

Sargsyan's Office said that "he doesn't have any problems in presenting details" of the April War to the committee.

The ex-president's office has asked the parliamentary committee to clarify whether or not the session will be recorded and archived. Sargsyan has asked the committee to ensure a recording opportunity and provide him with a copy of it.

First COVID-19 Case Reported in Artsakh

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The first case of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has been confirmed in the Republic of Artsakh, Artsakh's information center announced on Facebook on April 7.

"The Artsakh healthcare ministry informed that the results of the tests of two suspected cases sent to Armenia were received today, one tested positive, and the other negative. As for the confirmed case we want to remind that the citizen was transported to Kashatagh's hospital on April 2 via an ambulance and has been put into isolation because he has returned to Artsakh from the settlement of Armenia that is considered "center of the infection." The second citizen is the neighbor of the first citizen," the Information Center said.

Given the fact that the citizen has stayed in Mirik village of Kashatagh region upon his arrival from Armenia to Artsakh, 17 citizens who directly contacted him have been self-quarantined in advance and do not have any symptoms at this moment. The settlement has been under control after the isolation of the citizen.

More than 400 Return From Russia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — More than 400 Armenian citizens returned from Russia by 2 charter flights conducted by Red Wings Airlines on April 6 and 7, the Foreign Ministry of Armenia announced.

"Considering the financial situation of some of the citizens, 150 free tickets were provided to them. We are thankful to all our compatriots who contributed to the purchase of the tickets for the our citizens," reads the statement, adding that all of them will be quarantined for 14 days.

Numbers of COVID-19 in Armenia Seem to Stay Stable

STABILIZED, from page 1

According to the Foreign Ministry statement, the government expanded the travel ban on April 3 just before the spread of coronavirus in Armenia began slowing down.

The Armenian Ministry of Health reported on Tuesday that 20 people tested positive for the virus in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of COVID-19 cases to 853. Twenty-five other Armenians recovered from the virus in the same period, according to the ministry.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan seized upon these figures to express "cautious optimism" about the government's efforts to contain the epidemic. He again said that the government will consider easing a nationwide lockdown if the downward trend continues in the coming days.

Armenia has reported eight coronavirus-related deaths so far.

Pashinyan on Monday reported a significant drop in new cases of coronavirus in Armenia and said his government will consider easing a nationwide lockdown if a downward trend continues in the coming days.

"And if our theory materializes, it will mean that starting from next Monday we will be able to think about easing the [quarantine] regime," added the premier. Armenia had only 249 confirmed coronavirus cases when its government issued stay-at-home orders and forced the closure of nonessential businesses on March 24. The number of infections continued to rise by over 10 percent per day in the following days, leading the author-

ities to impose more transport restrictions.

In particular, they suspended public transport in Yerevan and restricted travel between the Armenian capital and the rest of the country. Official statistics show that the daily infection rate began falling on April 3.

Health authorities are setting up hundreds of additional hospital beds to cope with a continuing rise in coronavirus cases in Armenia.

The Armenian Ministry of Health added the country's largest hospital, the Grigor Lusavorich Medical Center, to the list of hospitals that are currently treating only people infected with coronavirus.

Dozens of ambulances began transporting its patients suffering from other diseases to three other hospitals also located in Yerevan.

"We will finish [the evacuation] today and be ready to admit [coronavirus] patients starting from tomorrow," Grigorich Lusavorich's deputy director, Petros Manukyan, told RFE/RL's Armenian service.

Manukyan said that around 400 hospital beds, including those of an intensive care unit, will be made available for that purpose.

Eight other hospitals located in Yerevan and four other cities were turned into COVID-19 clinics last month. According Health Minister Arsen Torosyan, a total of 16 medical centers across the country are currently treating coronavirus patients.

Torosyan said on Thursday that the authorities are also making contingency plans to convert indoor sports arenas

into makeshift hospitals that would accommodate hundreds and possibly thousands of more patients. "We must be prepared for any scenario," he told a news conference.

More than a hundred beds have already been placed at Yerevan's Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concert Complex, Armenia's largest concert hall. Torosyan also informed Pashinyan and fellow cabinet members that the health authorities will sharply increase the number of coronavirus tests which have reportedly averaged over 200 a day in the past week.

"Very soon 400-500 tests will be conducted on a daily basis," he said. "This number will reach 1,500 after we acquire new equipment."

Argentine-Armenian businessman, Eduardo Eurnekian on Monday pledged that he will provide \$250,000 in aid to the government of Armenia for fighting the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), PR manager at the Zvartnots international airport Satenik Hovhannisyanyan reported.

The Armenian Parliament will re-direct 500,000,000 drams from its annual budget to the government budget for the coronavirus response, Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan said on social media.

The funds were meant for the annual bonuses of 700 administrative employees and lawmakers, representative spending and other various budgetary expenditures.

In addition, the European Union will provide Armenia with 51 million euro in assistance to fight against coronavirus.

City Life Has Its Charms, But Fresh Air and Silence of Armenian Village Life Soothes the Soul

YEREVAN — Three Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) SMART Center instructors, Maggie Ghulinyan, Ara Harutyunyan, and Liza Yepremyan, decided to leave the ways of the big city behind and move to the smallish village of Dsegh in Lori province to teach and excel with the youth of SMART.

Ghulinyan is the Chinese Program Instructor. Her ancestral roots are right from where she lives now. "Since childhood, I dreamed of becoming a military surgeon and working in borderline villages," confesses Maggie. "Then I got married, and my husband and I moved to Shanghai and lived there for 3 years." When they returned to Yerevan, Maggie persuaded her husband to have a sweet escape from the messy and noisy traffic of city life. The decision didn't come easy but eventually, they moved hoping to establish quality living standards in their preferred environment.

Having water only three hours a day might not be the best amenity one could wish for. That is part of Maggie's new reality, where she has to wash the plates, do the laundry, take a shower, all from 9 a.m. to noon, as it's the only time they have water. Still, she forgets about all the difficulties as soon as she's on her way to her workplace staring at the picturesque scenes given to her as a gift from nature.

"People meditate and spend money on therapy. Here in the village, all that is free," says Maggie. "Every time I admire the views around me, I think everyone would long to see what I see every day," she believes. While many friends were first skeptical about her decision to move, when visiting Maggie in Dsegh, they often extend their stay.

Another old and experienced "migrant" is Ara Harutyunyan, the COAF SMART Mechanics Instructor, who has lived in the villages of Artsakh before settling in Lori. "City population has an 'artificial' life, while villagers live a pure and natural lifestyle," affirms the long-time advocate of rural living.

"Cranes are migrating birds, and you can gaze at that unique scene only in a village. In the cities, we do not notice such things, whereas, villagers foresee

together. Even when they are silent, their silence speaks," Harutyunyan tells with delight.

Mother Nature seems to be a fantastic place for a young musician like Liza Yepremyan to create and surpass. Moving to Dsegh to work as the vocal instructor at the SMART center has been an interesting challenge both for her and her family who live in Yerevan. "The village life is twice or thrice as tough as the urban life, but I am a flex-



A light moment at the SMART Center

the weather based on their knowledge of nature and wildlife," explains Harutyunyan. Living in the suburbs has taught him to hear the sound of silence and rejoice in it.

In Dsegh, he sublets an apartment from an elderly couple whose relationship has become an inspiration to him. "They get up every morning, go to the barn to feed the animals, then break some wood, and work in the kitchen

ible person and know how to adapt," she says.

Here she is surrounded by many things worth appreciating, and her workplace is one of them. "The rural kids need professionals to learn from, and I am sure they will value the center and its impact more as they grow up. I do my best to develop their taste in music and learn from them at the same time," she adds.



INTERNATIONAL



George Dzavaryan and Alex Dzavaryan

Brothers Launch Production of Protective Equipment in London amid COVID-19 Crisis

LONDON (Panorama.am) – An A-level Armenian student and two former pupils have turned their school into a factory to produce protective equipment to help the NHS during the COVID-19 crisis.

As Sky News reports, the trio are using 3D printers from their classroom to make face-visors for A&E workers and other health staff.

They are providing the equipment for free and using crowdfunding to pay for the raw materials and delivery costs with orders coming in thick and fast.

George Dzavaryan, 22, technical director at Augment Bionics and former pupil at Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith, west London, had the idea when he realized there was a shortage of protective equipment, and the capability to make it on 3D printers at his old school. He recruited his brother Alex, who is an A-level student at the City of London School.

They were joined by another former pupil from Latymer Upper School, Finlay White, 19, an engineering student at Newcastle University, who answered an ad on social media.

They started work on Monday, April 6, and have already created and delivered 90 visors to a hospital in Wales and have orders for 500 units from GP surgeries and hospitals in London, Liverpool and parts of Scotland.

Runner-Up Calls For Karabakh Election Boycott

BOYCOTT, from page 1

The election runner-up has avoided any contacts with the media since March 31.

The chairwoman of Artsakh's Central Election Commission (CEC), Sruhi Arzumanyan, said it has received no formal notifications from Mayilyan about his withdrawal from the race. This means, she said, that his name will be on the ballot on April 14.

Meanwhile, Harutiunyan signaled support for the holding of the second round. "There are only several days to go [before the runoff,] and we should ... finish the elections," he told RFE/RL's Armenian service from Stepanakert.

Asked whether he is urging supporters to again go to the polls, Harutiunyan said: "Let the CEC announce the final results [of the first round] first and I will appeal to my compatriots after that."

Karabakh Armenians also elected on March 31 their new parliament. Harutiunyan's Free Fatherland party won more than 40 percent of those votes and will have the largest number of parliament seats.

Chair of the Central Electoral Commission of Artsakh Sruhi Arzumanyan said at a press conference, according to Armenpress, that the 5 political parties which will be represented in the newly-elected Parliament of Artsakh, are the Free Fatherland bloc, United Fatherland, Justice, Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) and Democratic parties of Artsakh.

Twelve parties and blocs were taking part in the parliamentary election. Here is the list of parties with the respective votes received:

- National Revival – 2,360 votes or 3.2%
- United Fatherland – 17,365 or 23.63%
- Independence Generation – 656 or 0.9%
- ARF – 4,717 or 6.4%
- Revolutionary Party of Artsakh – 1,660 or 2.26%
- Free Fatherland bloc – 29,688 or 40.4%
- Justice Party – 5,865 or 7.9%
- Democratic Party of Artsakh – 4,269 or 5.81%
- Unified Armenia Party – 958 or 1.3%
- Conservative Party of Artsakh – 2,108 or 2.87%
- Communist Party of Nagorno Karabakh – 480 or 0.65%
- New Artsakh bloc – 3,305 or 4.5%

UN Chief Calls for Global Ceasefire

NEW YORK – Seventy countries have joined the call for global ceasefire conditioned by the coronavirus crisis, United Nations Secretary General António Guterres said in a briefing this week.

"So far 70 countries, regional partners, public figures and civil society organizations have joined the call," he said.

He noted that the pandemic will be followed by deep social, economic and political consequences, including related with international peace and security.

In late March, Guterres called for global ceasefire conditioned by the spread of coronavirus. Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan tweeted that Armenia joins the call of the UN secretary-general.



United Nations Secretary General António Guterres

International News

Russian Specialists Come to Help Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Russian Armed Forces specialists arrived in Armenia on April 7 to help with coronavirus prevention measures, Ministry of Defense Spokesperson Shushan Stepanyan announced on Facebook on April 7.

"In the sidelines of the bilateral cooperation between the Armed Forces of Armenia and Russia, according to the agreement between the Defense Ministers of Armenia and Russia Davit Tonoyan and Sergey Shoygu, the specialists of the Russian Armed Forces have just arrived in Armenia for assisting the measures of preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus," Stepanyan wrote.

The spokesperson noted that the team has the possibility of conducting COVID-19 infection research with mobile laboratory and disinfection system, adding that those measures will greatly foster the effectiveness of anti-epidemic measures.

Russian-Armenian Physicist Dies from COVID-19 Complications

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Celebrated Russian physicist of Armenian descent Mishik Kazaryan died in a hospital in Moscow shortly after the death of his wife, epidemiologist Arpik Asratyan, RBC reports citing a family member, on April 7.

According to the person familiar with the matter, the couple developed bilateral pneumonia caused by the novel coronavirus.

Kazaryan was 72. The source said the scientist and his wife were both hospitalized on March 23 and had no symptoms other than a high fever.

Arpik Asratyan, a doctor of medical sciences and a prominent voice in the treatment of viral hepatitis, died in a Moscow medical center on March 27.

Turkey to Curb Troop Movement in Syria as Coronavirus Cases Jump

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – Turkey said on Sunday, April 5, that it would minimize its troop movements in operation zones in neighbouring Syria in response to the coronavirus outbreak as the Turkish death toll and infections in the country rose.

Turkey's death toll from the COVID-19 disease has risen by 73 to 574 in the last 24 hours, with new confirmed cases jumping by 3,135 to total 27,069, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said.

Turkey, which is ninth globally in coronavirus cases, has curbed much social movement, mostly sealed its borders and shuttered businesses. In the latest step, the defense ministry said it had set up a new unit to battle the spread of the disease.

Troops deployed in Syria will now enter and exit operation areas only with the permission of the head of the army, the ministry said. "Thus, the movement of staff and troops is minimized, unless it is mandatory," it added.

Turkey's military backs Syrian rebels in the north-western Idlib region where it ramped up a deployment earlier this year. Fighting has calmed since Ankara agreed a ceasefire with Moscow, which backs Syrian government forces, a month ago.

In Idlib, where about a million people have been displaced by the conflict in recent months, doctors fear the worst if the coronavirus hits, given hospitals lie in ruins and camps overflow with people devastated by nine years of war.

Turkey's defense ministry said doctors had been sent to operation areas in part to conduct training related to the severe respiratory disease. The Turkish military also oversees Syrian border regions to the east of Idlib.

At home, Turkey's outbreak has surged in the last few weeks. On Friday the government issued a stay-at-home order for most Turks under 20, on top of the existing order for over-65s, plus one for mandatory mask use in crowded public places, shops and workplaces.

Community News

Flagship Raises \$1.1B To Create Post-Pandemic Biotechs

by Nick Paul Taylor

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (*Fierce Biotech*) – Flagship Pioneering has raised \$1.1 billion to create another batch of biotechs. The timing of the fund has Flagship peering into an uncertain future, trying to discern what opportunities will be attractive and impactful in the world that emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

When Flagship began raising its seventh Origination Fund in January, the novel coronavirus outbreak was low on the agenda.

Noubar Afeyan expects the pandemic to affect the kinds of things his VC shop focuses on, setting the stage for the seventh fund to spawn businesses designed to thrive in a changed world.

“We will have the capital, we already have the people and we think we have the ideas to generate a new generation of companies, say maybe 25 of them over the next three years, that will be born out of this next period,” Afeyan, the founder and CEO of Flagship, said.

With the world still in a state of flux, the answers to the questions posed by Afeyan are still coming into focus. But Afeyan is already convinced that some of the lasting effects of the pandemic will be in line with thinking Flagship fleshed out well before COVID-19.



Noubar Afeyan

Last fall, Flagship revealed Health Security as one of three new focus areas, the others being artificial intelligence and the development of new ideas from its existing companies' platforms. Flagship made Health Security a priority after identifying an opportunity to use molecular technologies and other tools to delay and prevent disease, rather than just wait until people get sick and then treat them.

In the world envisaged by Afeyan, people won't think of “vaccines as a money-losing proposition the way they do today, broadly, but rather as an armamentarium that reduces the need for many of the expensive therapies we have.”

Flagship is actively building companies in the Health Security area that it thinks have the technology to create the world foreseen by Afeyan. However, the shift from treatment to prevention will need more than technology; it will take a significant change in how healthcare is practiced, regulated and reimbursed. The case for those changes may have been hard to make. Then, as Afeyan sees things, COVID-19 exposed exactly why those changes are needed.

“The reason our healthcare system is being overrun is that it is a sick-care system. There's nothing we can do before people get sick. And so we're scrambling to come up with a vaccine or using social isolation, but the reality is we don't even have treatments for the scale of the problem that we have, and the hospitals cannot cope with the simultaneous needs that we have,” Afeyan said.

Afeyan compared the current healthcare system to a military that fails to try to detect and mitigate threats, choosing instead to wait until enemy combatants are attacking and then bombing them. In the more proactive system Flagship wants to help create, SARS-CoV-2 would have been detected, tracked and neutralized long before the outbreak spiraled out of control. In that way, the pandemic is a global analog for the sort of detection and prevention Afeyan wants to see happen in individuals.



Salpy Yeterian, Director of Activities at the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, left, with President Sossy Yogurtian of AAPA

Armenian Pharmacists' Association Donates Masks to Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

WALTHAM, Mass. – The Armenian American Pharmacists' Association (AAPA) of New England donated 160 face masks at the end of March to the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) in Jamaica Plain.

On March 26, it came to the attention of the AAPA that the nursing center was running out of masks. The AAPA president, Sossy Yogurtian, contacted Vice President Ripsime Guyumdzhyan and asked her to set aside 160 masks at the pharmacy where she

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

works, Union Pharmacy in Newton Centre. The next day AAPA paid for these masks and delivered them in person as a donation.

Yogurtian stated, “We decided to donate the face masks from AAPA as an example of how our organization cares for our elderly and how during difficult times it does what it can to help the community.”

AAPA then informed its members about the availability of masks at the Union Pharmacy. The Armenian American Medical Association in the Boston area was also informed and some of its members bought them for personal protection. AAPA also spread the word that if anybody needs this or other personal protection equipment to contact Yogurtian (syogurtian@comcast.net).

Yogurtian declared, “First and foremost, our hearts go out to anyone who's been impacted by the virus, either directly or indirectly. Our thoughts are especially with those who are sick, to whom we extend our heartfelt wishes for a full recovery. And while we recognize how difficult these times are, we feel blessed for having such a strong support system in each other. We're all in this together. And we will pull through together.”



From left, Sossy Yogurtian, Xiaoyan Qin (owner of Union pharmacy), Anna Sedova, Aileen Diaz

Pasadena Unified To Offer Armenian Dual Language Immersion Program In 2020-2021

PASADENA, Calif. – In response to community interest, the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) Board of Education has approved a new Armenian Dual Language Immersion high school program for the 2020-2021 school year. The 9-12th grade program will be located at Blair High School, home of the District's International Baccalaureate secondary school programs; students will have access to IB courses. Blair serves students in middle and high school and is composed of three adjacent campuses. Registration for the Armenian Dual Language Immersion Program begins April 6, 2020, at openenrollment.info

“This is a unique opportunity to expand PUSD's bilingual and biliteracy academic options that now include our district's first high school Armenian Dual Language Immersion Program,” said Superintendent Brian McDonald. “The commitment that the parents and community have demonstrated by establishing a program that encourages families to remain in PUSD is remarkable, and I am pleased to welcome them to PUSD.”

PUSD currently offers Dual Language Immersion Programs in French, Mandarin, and Spanish.

To register, current PUSD students must submit an application between April 6 - 20, 2020, to enroll in the program. New-to-PUSD resident students and out-of-district students may apply online between April 6 through August 6, 2020. Additional details are posted on PUSD's Open Enrollment website at openenrollment.info

Classes, including language immersion, will be taught by fully-credentialed bilingual teachers who have additional preparation and expertise in teaching Armenian. The program will be located at Blair School, which serves students in grades 6-12 and has vibrant International Baccalaureate programmes, an International Academy, a Health Careers Academy, and a Spanish Dual Language program.

Armenian DLIP will be open for students in grades 9-12. The model would be consistent with other DLIP high school programs in PUSD by offering one class per grade level when fully implemented at the high school level. The instructional model will follow the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education. Staff will conduct additional planning and outreach to determine the selected program model for possible middle school and elementary school options, should the program expand in future years.

The new Armenian Immersion Program will offer the following classes in 2020-21: Armenian I, Armenian II, Armenian III, and Armenian IV (subject to minimum student enrollment). As the program expands, PUSD plans to offer additional courses including Armenian Literature and Armenian History and Culture.

Language course placement will be determined by the student's ability in the target language as well as prior course completion.

“This was the finest example of collaboration and partnership between the Armenian community and the Pasadena Unified School District,” said Maro Yacoubian, a community member who advocated for the creation of the program. “With the unwavering commitment from parents and community members, we have not only filled a void in the community but have also created a groundbreaking educational opportunity.”

“By establishing this academy, PUSD will have the distinct honor of having created the first Armenian Dual language, history/culture, with IB program in the nation,” said community member Goldie Gastjan. “This unique



COMMUNITY NEWS



Participants in the Lenten Retreat

Altar Servers Lenten Retreat and Visit to the Western Diocese

ARMONK, N.Y. – On March 6-8, Fr. Mardiros Chevian, dean, and Deacon Timothy Aznavourian, seminarian at St. Nersess Seminary, traveled to St. Peter Armenian Church in Van Nuys, Calif., and visited the diocesan headquarters and St. Leon Armenian Cathedral in Burbank. This was Aznavourian's first visit to the Western Diocese.

On Friday evening, Chevian and Aznavourian participated in the Lenten Service at St. Peter with Fr. Shnork Demirjian, pastor and alumnus of St. Nersess.

The next morning, Chevian and Demirjian conducted a one-day Lenten Retreat entitled, "Do This in Remembrance of Me: The altar servers sacred role in the Badarak," for altar servers and deacons from five parishes. They were assisted by Aznavourian.

Chevian led the first session of the retreat which asked participants to speak about their personal spiritual experiences serving at the altar. Aznavourian led the second session to explore the Biblical and Patristic understanding of the diaconate within the Armenian Church. After lunch, Chevian led the last session, encouraging the altar servers to make a commitment to expanding their service to the Church, whatever that might be. The retreat concluded with an Evening Service in the newly renovated sanctuary of St. Peter Armenian Church.

On Sunday, Chevian served as the guest celebrant and preacher at St. Peter's. Following the Divine Liturgy, he gave a presentation on St. Nersess Seminary, its history, purpose and future.

Holy Week in the Time of Pandemic: April 5-12

NEW YORK – Ordinarily, Holy Week signals the end of the Lenten period of separation, and a return to the full life of the church. The coming Holy Week will be unlike any other, with faithful Armenians physically isolated, but joining spiritually with the aid of various media.

While St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral is closed to the public due to the pandemic crisis, the cathedral will observe Holy Week, April 5 through 11, with a series of special services culminating in the Easter Sunday celebration on April 12, 2020. Plans call for these services to be broadcast to the public over the St. Vartan Cathedral Facebook page.

The schedule of services is as follows:
 • Palm Sunday, the commemoration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, falls on April 5. Fr. Davit Karamyan (Vicar of St. Vartan Cathedral) will be the celebrant for the services, which will begin streaming over Facebook at 10:30 a.m.

• April 9 is Great and Holy Thursday, and the day's services memorialize the Last Supper, Jesus' vigil in the Garden of Gethsemane, his arrest and trial. In the evening, the Khavaroom or Vigil Service will begin broadcasting at 8 p.m.

• The crucifixion and death of Christ will be marked on April 10— Great and Holy Friday—and two services will take place. The Order of the Crucifixion of Christ will begin at 12:30 p.m. That same evening, at 5:30 p.m., the Order of the Entombment of the Lord, or Taghoom Service, will take place. Both will be streamed on Facebook.

• On Great and Holy Saturday, April 11, the scripture-reading ceremony will begin at 6 p.m., followed by the Jrakalouyts ("Lamp-Lighting") service.

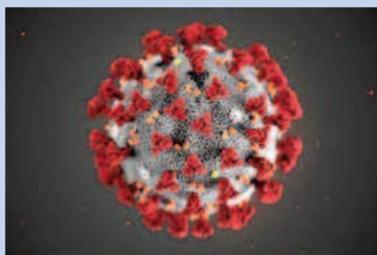
Finally, the drama of Holy Week will culminate on Easter Sunday, April 12: the central holy day of the Christian calendar, commemorating the discovery of Christ's empty tomb and the news of his resurrection. The Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:30 a.m., with Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, celebrating the liturgy and delivering the homily.

All of these services at St. Vartan Cathedral will take place behind closed doors, without participation of the public. All are planned to be broadcast over the Internet. Parishes around the Eastern Diocese may have their own schedule of online services; contact your local parish for details.

All services will be closed to the public due to the pandemic.

Plans call for them to be broadcast over the St. Vartan Cathedral Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stvartancathedral>



COVID-19 INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR FOR OUR ARMENIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

[CLICK HERE TO PARTICIPATE](#)

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2020 @ 4:00-5:00PM (EST)

PANELIST



Armen Arslanian, MD
 Internal and Geriatric Medicine
 Stoneham Medical Group
 Winchester Hospital

PANELIST



Armineh Mirzabegian, MD
 Internal Medicine
 Reliant Medical Group, Part of
 OptumCare
 Metrowest Medical Center

PANELIST



Sally S. Vanerian, MD
 Primary Care
 VA Boston Healthcare System
 Asst. Clinical Professor, Boston
 University School of Medicine

MODERATOR



Vatche Minassian, MD, MPH
 Chief of Urogynecology
 Brigham and Women's Hospital
 Associate Professor, Harvard
 Medical School

Presented By:

ARMENIAN AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Pasadena Unified to Offer Armenian Immersion

EMERSION, from page 4 program will present the opportunity for students beyond Pasadena to attend this school. Our community families are anxiously waiting, and we see a very bright future."

"I am thrilled with the Pasadena Unified School District's vote of approval to establish an Armenian Dual Language Immersion program at Blair School, the first of its kind in the US," said Arsine Shirvanian, a community member who advocated for the program.

A welcome and program event will be planned once schools reopen. The first day of school for PUSD students is August 17.

The approval is conditional upon enrollment in the program of 150 students who are new to PUSD and is expected to draw interest from Pasadena-area families, including students who were previously enrolled at a soon-to-close private high school. The program will be capped at 250 students in the first year. If the program does not meet enrollment projections, course offerings and the program location are subject to change.



OBITUARIES

Jack Marshall Medzorian

Dedicated to Knights of Vartan, Armenia

WINCHESTER, Mass. — Jack Marshall Medzorian, the former Sbarabed of Ararat Lodge No. 1 in Boston, passed away on April 2, 2020 at the age of 93.

Medzorian was born in Boston on November 15, 1926. He was the son of Marshall Hagop Medzorian and Skynig Marderosian Medzorian.

He was predeceased by one sister, Alma Rose Medzorian, who passed away in 2003.

He attended Arlington High School, where he was editor of the school newspaper. He was the commencement speaker at his graduation, which occurred on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

Following his graduation, he enlisted in the United States Army where he served until his discharge in 1946. On April 13, 1945, he served as an honor guard as the funeral train of President Franklin D. Roosevelt passed through Spartanburg, South Carolina.

He attended Norwich University in Vermont, the University of North Carolina and Boston University, from which he graduated with a Master's Degree in Business Administration.

In 1951, Medzorian joined Baird-Atomic of Cambridge as a junior accountant. In 1965, he became vice-president and treasurer and remained with the company as an executive until his retirement in 1991.

His later years were spent in the humanitarian service of Armenia, the land of his ancestors, and the Armenian community in America. He was the last founding member and past commander of the Armenian-American Veterans of Greater Boston, formerly known as AMVETS Post No. 41.

NS Jack was also the longest serving Sunday School Superintendent of the Saint James Armenian Apostolic Church Sunday School and helped to develop the school's curriculum. He was a member of the Counsel of Armenian Executives and a past member of the Armenian General Benevolent Union New England Executive Committee.



In 1984, he was named Chairman of the AGBU National Convention.

He joined the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) in the late 1980s and became the first vice-president of the Board of Trustees, later becoming president. With CYSCA, he and his wife, Eva, directed the State Department Armenia Youth Exchange / School Partnership Program and brought twelve groups of students to the United States. They also co-founded the Armenia School Aid Project in 1994 and directed 20 U.S. Government training programs for professionals from Armenia.

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) also benefitted from Medzorian's expertise. A member since 1995, he spent the last years of his life on NAASR'S Executive Board, coordinating investments in the NAASR Endowment Fund. Most recently, he represented the Knights of Vartan in its partnership with NAASR in awarding grants to qualified scholars.

Medzorian's service to the Knights of Vartan began in 1986 when he was recruited by his friend Ardashes Der Ananian of Ararat Lodge No. 1. One year later, he became Grand Treasurer during the tenure of Grand

Commander Martin Martinian. He twice served as Commander of Ararat Lodge during the 1990s. He directed the Armenia Medical Aid Program and also founded the Knights of Vartan School Support Program. Medzorian also served as chair of the Board of Trustees for the Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies and most recently gave his support to the Women's Resource Center of Armenia, which works for equal rights for women in Armenia and the promotion of women's issues.

Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Steven Adams described NS Jack as "THE example of a Knight of Vartan".

Along with his wife, Medzorian made over 100 trips to Armenia since 1972 and brought with them medical equipment, school supplies and other materials to help support hospitals and schools in the border regions of the country. His last trip to Armenia was in September of 2018, when he and Eva joined their fellow Knights and Daughters of Vartan during their pilgrimage to the motherland.

Jack's love and dedication to The Knights of Vartan was inspiring, so inspiring that both his son David and daughter Ruth joined the Knights and Daughters of Vartan respectively.

On November 17, 2019, Medzorian was honored for his lifetime of service to the Armenian community with a gala celebration banquet at the Saint James Cultural Center in Watertown and hosted by Ararat Lodge and Arpie Otyag. In his remarks at the con-

clusion of the gala, NS Jack said with all humility, "You are my village because it has taken a whole village to do the things that I've done. My accomplishments were the result of working with great folks. I have not been alone, there was always a team that I worked with."

When it came to being part of a great team, Jack and Eva Medzorian were a tough act to follow. The two met while he was Superintendent of the Saint James Sunday School and she was a choir member. They married in 1955 and had four children and five grandchildren. Eva was as committed to helping the Armenian people as Jack was, and together they undertook efforts and forged new programs that continue to bear fruit.

Medzorian had a life-long love of tennis. He began playing at the age of thirteen and continued to play into his eighties. He became an avid Red Sox fan late in life and always wanted to be kept up to date on a game's score, even if he could not watch or listen.

Medzorian is survived by his wife, Naghkin Dirouhie Eva Medzorian and their four children, David Medzorian, Ruth Falletti, John Medzorian, and Mark Medzorian; his five grandchildren, Alexander Medzorian, Jack Medzorian, Eva Maria Medzorian, Kevin Medzorian and Angelina Falletti.

Funeral services will be private. The family says a "Celebration of Life" in honor of Jack Medzorian will be held when the current crisis is over.



Jack Marshall Medzorian with Rep. David Mouradian

Karney Boyajian

Founding Member of Sts. Joachim and Anne Church

CHICAGO — Karney Boyajian, 95, born in the West Pullman neighborhood of Chicago, died on Sunday, March 29. He was a man of great energy, compassion, joy and resolute will, who deeply loved all his family, church and community with selfless passion.

The oldest son of Garabed and Aghavney Boyajian, Karney was born on November 22, 1924. He enjoyed an imaginative and somewhat mischievous childhood with his younger brother Sarkis and cousins Harch and Coke, who remained inextricably linked throughout their entire lives.



While in the Army during WWII he was sent to Stanford University to study electrical engineering. After the war he received his engineering degree from Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago.

He headed the research and development laboratory at Delta Star for several years. He then, with his brother Sarkis, purchased Kleen Towne Cleaners, a laundromat with two self-serve dry cleaning machines. Together, they built the business into one of Chicago's largest full-service dry

cleaners that was loved and supported by the Roseland community for over 40 years. He was a founding member, trustee and integral part of Sts. Joachim and Anne Church, centrally involved in establishing and building the Armenian churches in both the Roseland and Palos Heights communities. Singing in the choir with his friends and family was one of his great joys which he did each Sunday with his clear and rich bass voice.

In 1954 Karney married Lucy Kurnalian, and they had two children together: Garo and Christine. In 1958, Lucy died of ovarian cancer. In 1962, Karney married Jill. They were married 57 years having one son together, Eric.

Along with family and friends they regularly attended the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera, Goodman Theater, Art Institute and many smaller independent institutions.

He is survived by his wife, Jill, brother Sarkis (Alice), children: Garo, Christine and Eric; son-in-law, Scott; daughter-in-law, Liz; and grandchildren, Greg and Laura.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions there will be no public service. Burial will be attended by immediate family only.

On a date yet to be determined, a memorial service and dinner will be held in Karney's memory.

INSURANCE FOUNDATION FOR SERVICEMEN

A not-for-profit insurance foundation meant to serve military families recover from the loss or injury of their sons.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Share:
Help spread the word in your community by sharing our story on social media.



Donate:
No amount is too small. Please consider contributing to the Foundation at www.1000plus.am



Learn:
Visit our website at www.1000plus.am to gain a deeper understanding of who we are and what we do.

WWW.1000PLUS.AM



OBITUARIES

Charles J. Tateosian

Past Knights of Vartan Grand Commander

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — Charles J. Tateosian of Walnut Creek, California died on March 31. He was 97.

He was born in Reedley, Calif. on July 21, 1922 and grew up on the family farm at the base of Mt. Campbell, later moving to Selma, Calif.

The son of John and Rebecca Tateosian, Charlie was the second of three children. Charlie passed away on March 31, 2020 and was preceded in death by his parents and older sister Virginia Tateosian. He is survived by his wife Mary Tateosian, sister Ruby Topoozian and her husband Joe of Selma, children Cathy Tateosian of Arcata, Lisa Tateosian of Oakland, and David Tateosian and his wife Mae Go and their son Harrison Tateosian of Martinez.

When World War II broke out in 1941, Charlie interrupted his college education and enlisted in the US Navy in 1942, serving as a lieutenant first in the Atlantic and then the

Pacific fronts. After graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1947 and joining the ranks of the Cal Bear Alumni, he then began a 40-year career with Pacific Gas & Electric playing a key role in one of PG&E's great endeavors - bringing natural gas from the Southwest and Canada to serve a growing California.

After retiring in 1987 as the manager of Gas Systems Design, Tateosian started his second career as a consultant through Gas System Engineering.

He was a California Registered Professional Engineer (Mechanical) and served on the American Society of Mechanical Engineers B31.8 Code Committee for natural gas piping systems, retiring a few years ago as their longest serving member.

Tateosian was heavily involved in the Bay Area and California Armenian community, serving on the Building Committee and Parish



Council for St. John's Armenian Apostolic Church in San Francisco, as well as the Western Diocese Diocesan Council and Foundation.

He was also very active in the Knights of Vartan. He joined the Knights of Vartan Inc. Daron Lodge in 1953. Being an active member

he served as the Commander of Daron lodge in 1959-1960, Grand Recorder in 1993-1995, Grand Commander in 1995-1997, and Grand Recorder again in 1999-2000. He was chosen as the Man of the Year of the Knights of Vartan in 2005.

Charlie and his wife Mary undertook many trips to Armenia to support the Knights and Daughters of Vartan school projects, the Bay Area Friends of Armenia soup kitchens, as well as advising on the development of Armenia's own natural gas infrastructure.

In April 7, 1995 then Grand Recorder Charlie Tateosian joined Past Grand Commanders Everett Berberian and Ara Avakian to the event of renaming the Knights of Vartan school #106 (then #1).

The couple also traveled throughout the United States, Mexico, Europe, Japan, and South America.

A private graveside service took place on April 8 at Massis Ararat Cemetery in Fresno. To protect family and friends from the coronavirus, there will be no viewing and the service will be restricted to immediate family only. A memorial service will be held in the future when conditions allow.

Leonard Kaprielian

Stanford Football Star, Pub Owner, Dedicated to Sausalito Arts Festival

SAUSALITO, Calif. — Leonard Kaprielian passed away in the middle of the night on March 18, 2020, at home after an 11-year battle with Parkinson's Disease and the complications the disease presented as the years wore on.

Leonard Levon Kaprielian was the youngest of the four children of Jake and Rose Kaprielian. He was predeceased by Edward, Louise and Robert Kaprielian.

He was the son-in-law of the late John and Julia Dervishian, who considered him their third son. Leonard was an inquisitive and energetic child from a very young age and at times mischievous as well. As most children who lived on a farm do, he created his own fun and entertainment.

Leonard graduated from Sanger High School, where he was a regular on the football team as well as a band member and speech and

drama club member. He was courted by the USC football program as well as the Stanford football program. He chose Stanford and never regretted it. At Stanford, he was the biggest player on the team, weighing in at 258 pounds.

It was an unusual lining up of the stars when five players of Armenian descent found themselves all on the football team all from various parts of California. Members included: Chuck Essegian, Norm Manoogian, Harry Hugasian and Gary Krikorian. They remained friends for the rest of their lives.

While at Stanford, he became a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity, often serving as social chairman which involved organizing parties at various Palo Alto venues, as well as the frat house.

Following graduation from Stanford, Leonard entered the retail business as a member of the

Firestone Tires "Riot Squad" that traveled throughout the state promoting Firestone Tires.

Along the way, while still living in Fresno, Leonard met Agnes Dervishian at a party, and while the chemistry was instant, they remained friends until the friendship developed into courtship and marriage.

He returned to Fresno to be an associate tire sales person at Ace Firestone sales and service. He formed lifelong friendships with the people he worked with, yet always planning for his own future in the hospitality field. Nine years later he finally decided the time was right to learn the business from the ground up. He met Sam Zakessian, proprietor of Zack's By The Bay in Sausalito. They became fast friends that melded into a lifelong journey of brotherhood. In 1963 they opened the Jolly Friars in San Francisco. The Friars was fashioned after an old English pub. It soon caught on and became a gathering place for locals, and transplants from other areas.

Nine years after being a partner in the Jolly Friars Pub and Grille, Leonard took total ownership and continued to operate it until he decided to sell and retire in 1984.

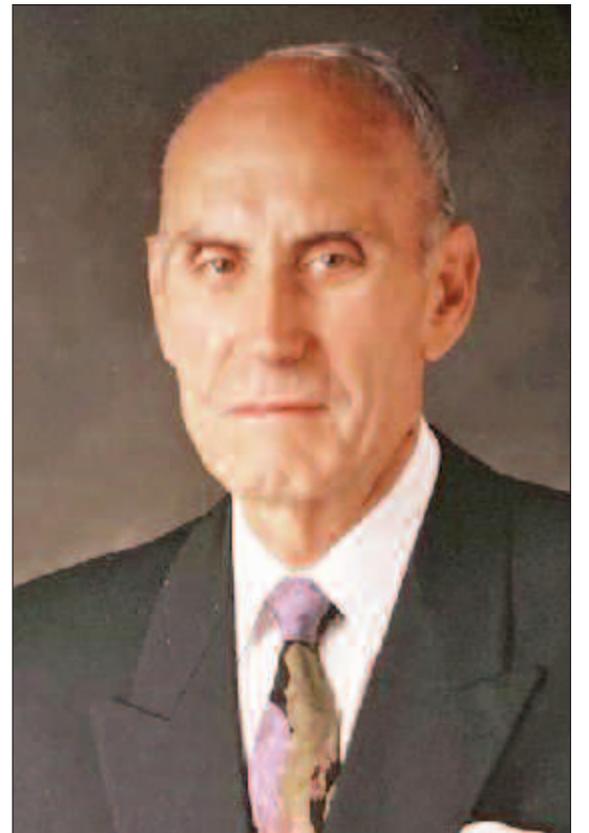
Leonard treasured his relationship with his Armenian-American brothers of the Triple X Fraternity, a non-profit charitable organization. He first became a Trexman in 1948 when he joined the newly-formed Selma junior chapter, which received its charter in 1949. He was instrumental in the growth of the chapter from eight charter members to 25 brothers.

After college, Leonard transferred to the Selma senior chapter, then to the Golden Gate chapter when he moved to Sausalito in 1963. He maintained his proud membership in the Golden Gate chapter through his many years of illness. His brothers will always revere and remember him.

After retirement Leonard became involved with his community. While he had a set of golf clubs, he never had the time to play. He was asked to be on the Chamber of Commerce which he found to be fun and creative. One year he single-handedly cleaned up and restored the vacant police station to be used as a chamber office while the town was planning to build a new police station in the same location. He also served on the Waste and Recycling Committee as the town began recycling in earnest.

Perhaps his greatest and most enjoyed involvement was the Sausalito Arts Festival, held every Labor Day weekend. He was in charge of all beverage booths and under his direction and hard work he increased the number of booths from five to over a dozen.

He was honored with the Volunteer of the Year award as well as the Spirit of Marin award



in 1999, a countywide recognition of those who gave back to their community. He was selected to be the Grand Marshall in the Fourth of July parade as well in recognition of his outstanding service to the community. He would receive the Volunteer of the Year award twice.

In 2005, the grant committee honored Leonard by naming the grants the Leonard Kaprielian Community Grants, in recognition of his efforts and devotion to the Sausalito Art Festival Foundation and the community.

Having been a car/racing enthusiast from an early age, Leonard and Agnes would be annual attendees at "Hot August Nights" in Reno, enjoying viewing custom cars, unusual cars and by-gone era cars. Retirement also enabled travel to international countries: France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain were enjoyed, as well as Asia and the Caribbean countries.

Leonard is survived by his wife of 49 and a half years, Agnes; sister-in-law Miriam Kaprielian; brother-in-law Bill Dervishian; sister-in-law Nancy Petrillo; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Visitation was held at Chapel of the Light Funeral Home, 1620 W. Belmont Avenue, Fresno, on April 10. A Memorial Service and lunch will be scheduled when the current crisis is over, at the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church in Fresno, where Leonard and Agnes were married. A Celebration of his Life will be held at the Spinnaker Restaurant in Sausalito, also when the current crisis is over.

He will be entombed in the Garden of Solace Mausoleum at the historic Chapel of the Light Mausoleum in Fresno.

(Published in *Marin Independent Journal* on April 5.)

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

Giragosian

F UNERAL HOME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC
Mark J. Giragosian
Funeral Counselors

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

Nardolillo Funeral Home

Est. 1906

John K. Najarian, Jr.

Rhode Island's Only Licensed Armenian Funeral Director

1278 Park Ave. Cranston, RI 02910 (401) 942-1220
1111 Boston Neck Rd. Narragansett, RI 02882 (401) 789-6300

www.nardolillo.com



COMMUNITY NEWS

Glendale Confronts Coronavirus Disease

GLENDALE, from page 1

own public health department. Finally, there is the city of Glendale.

Najarian said, "The city for the most part is adopting and ratifying the orders of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. We have a bit of leeway on how we do things and how it is enforced, but generally everyone wants to be parallel with their ordinances. They don't want one city to be more lenient than any other. We are all trying to be at the same level."

On March 16, Glendale proclaimed a state of emergency, which the city council on March 24 extended until the end of April. This means that nonessential businesses have closed, while residents are only supposedly to leave their houses for essential needs. Schools, libraries, universities and churches are all physically closed down, though many are maintaining communications via the Internet. Recreational facilities and parks were shut down on March 24 after officials noticed crowds in these places. Gatherings of more than 10 people in enclosed spaces are prohibited. On April 3, the wearing of face coverings (not masks), was recommended by the City Council when people are outside for any reason.

Glendale Prepares

Najarian said that an emergency task force, consisting of the city manager, police chief, fire chief and the chief executive officers of the three hospitals in Glendale, meets daily. It has a plan. While he said he was not privy to the details, much of it involves keeping first responders healthy.

At present, Glendale is not running out of hospital beds or ventilators, the mayor said. A good proportion of the confirmed cases are being sent to shelter at home after diagnosis if they do not need the extra medical attention provided by hospitals. Najarian said that as elsewhere, Glendale is desperately trying to "flatten the curve" by getting people to stay at home, while those infected recover.

Despite these efforts, if an overflow stage were to be reached, Najarian said discussions would have to take place with Los Angeles County concerning a unified response.

Meanwhile, Glendale's core services, such as garbage pickup, water and electricity delivery and police and fire departments, are operating at full capacity, Najarian said, stressing, "There is no impact on those services in any way." Roadwork is limited to essential things like new water lines while the transit system is on a limited schedule. The Parks and Recreation Department only serves senior meals at present.

If the people providing the core services get sick, however, this would lead to what Najarian called "our doomsday scenario." He said, "That is when things will become very difficult to maintain social order. Imagine if you have to call the police and no one shows up; if you call an ambulance and no one shows up; if your electricity goes off."

Newly-elected City Council member Ardashes ("Ardy") Kassakhian, like Najarian, did not foresee a situation of riots and disorder. He said that as long as accurate information is provided to the public in a timely manner, the supply chain for resources remains unbroken and people have access to programs or services that they need to survive, there will be order. If people feel their lives are in danger and they are unable to provide for their loved ones, only then, Kassakhian said, will they not be able to make smart decisions and disorder may result.

The good thing is that at present, Najarian related, calls for services are reduced because most people are at home.

City hall itself is closed. The municipal departments that are still open keep the majority of employees working from home. Skeleton crews keep the city attorney's office functioning for legal issues that emerge.

Kassakhian said that the council has not yet instituted any new protocols for operations, but that its members primarily work from home and use Cisco's Webex program to allow teleconference calls. One advantage to this situation is that the conference call can be picked up through the television feed and members of the general public can call in and express their views through telephone. The first council meeting in this format was held on March 24. Only the mayor was physically present with the other council members joining from their homes.

Kassakhian commented: "This is an opportunity that has arisen through this crisis."

In addition, people are still contacting the city as the council members work from home. The latter still are trying to provide constituent services,



Ardashes Kassakhian, newly elected Glendale City Council member (photo Aram Arkun)

Kassakhian said, but it takes much longer to respond because of the skeleton crews at work.

Enforcement of Distancing and Order

Najarian said that he receives emails and calls from residents asking the city to look into certain stores that remain open, though they should not be operating, or other stores that have permission to operate but are packed full of people waiting in line. In response, the city sends out police to inform the store owners how they are violating the emergency orders. Najarian said this has been a fairly successful way of educating the business community. Ideally, he said, the city would prefer to educate them prior to doing enforcement. The final step in case of noncompliance would be to cut off the business's utilities. The city of Los Angeles has had a dozen businesses by April 2 that had to be targeted, but in Glendale, Najarian said, education is leading to compliance.

There have been cases of young people congregating. In such cases, again a police unit is sent to inform them to disperse. The current restrictions are particularly hard on students who were planning to celebrate their graduations from high school or college, Najarian said.

On April 6, Najarian declared that he was still not happy with social distancing compliance in Glendale. While there are some families taking the situation very seriously, he still saw others coming together. Friends saw the situation as an opportunity to have a beer in their garage or to sneak away with a special someone, without masks.

Consequently, Najarian said it would be necessary to warn people that the city will deploy policy more actively to enforce these rules of social distancing. He concluded, "I would not give us a good grade. I would give us a C- in taking active steps to do this."

Meanwhile, in general crime has greatly decreased, according to the mayor, though domestic violence cases are the exception. They are on an upswing among all ethnicities. As people are cooped up under pressure financially and facing health concerns, tensions increase.

The two gun stores in Glendale have been extremely busy recently, Najarian reported. These stores are listed as essential businesses according to federal government recommendations, perhaps due to the constitutional issues with the Second Amendment. The problem with this at present is that there cannot be too many people congregating. To counter this, the stores now are serving customers only by appointment.

It should be noted that the City of Los Angeles has taken a different approach. It shut down gun stores and on April 6, a California federal judge refused to block this action (<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-04-06/us-judge-wont-block-gun-store-closures-in-los-angeles>).

Kassakhian noted that there initially were shortages of supplies in the markets, like anywhere else in the US. Armenians may have been involved in this, as they have experience in other countries in the Middle East or Soviet Armenia of such crisis circumstances, but since then people seem to have calmed down.

Aside from Easter and religious holidays, which have now been largely transferred to the virtual realm, another major public occasion in April is the traditional Armenian Genocide commemorative events. Najarian reported that the City Council decided on April 1 to cancel its April 24 live event and work on a virtual commemoration, using a compilation of the best of prior events over the past 16 years or so in video form to be aired on local television and cable channels.

Measures to Help Those in Difficulty

Najarian noted several measures to help those who are financial in difficult straits. The City Council passed a freeze on rent increases. Secondly, there is an anti-eviction ordinance which says that anyone impacted by the virus, whether losing a job, having increased childcare costs or facing great medical expenses, will be given a rent forbearance until the state of emergency is lifted. Afterwards, Najarian said, they will have between 6 and 12 months to pay back that rent.

Najarian says this balances the interests of landlords, many of whom have their own mortgages to pay, and tenants. He notes that many of the landlords as well as the tenants are Armenians.

If the crisis is turned around by April 30, the city will keep the 6-month period for repayment, but the longer the emergency period lasts, and the larger the amount of unpaid rent accrues, Najarian said the longer that the city will have to give people to pay the rent back.

There is a freeze on shutoffs. Utility bill late fees are being waived so that if people cannot pay, their electricity or water will not be cut off. The city has loosened parking restrictions.

Kassakhian noted that he called early on for a moratorium on parking citations since the city asked people to shelter at home, especially for the days when there would be street sweeping.

There are also certain new or expanded services being provided. Those who cannot leave their homes for various reasons can call the Glendale Fire Department

(see <https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2020/03/25/glendale-fire-dept-delivery-essential-items-elam-btc-pkg-vpx.cnn>). Off-duty firemen will shop and then deliver the food to homes, where the people pay for the items. This service also covers medications from pharmacies.

If one cannot afford meals, the city has a meal delivery program. The meals are prepared and brought to the resident's door. It is primarily targeted at senior citizens. Najarian said that while it is too early to say how many are taking advantage of the abovementioned two programs, but it is safe to say that it is in the thousands.

To facilitate more assistance from private citizens, Kassakhian proposes formalizing collection procedures, by having drop-off centers for supplies to share with health care professionals or neighbors, or even picking up such items in front of homes.

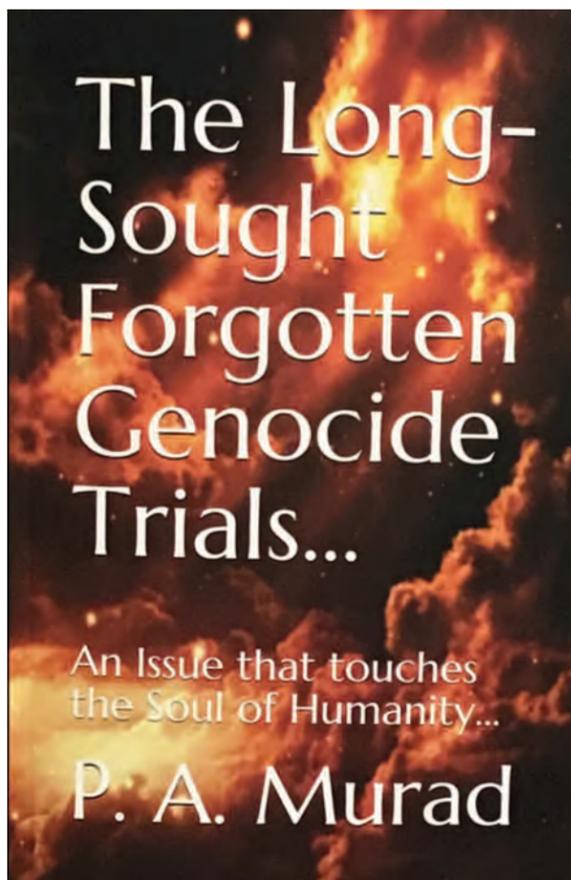
Kassakhian said that he also has tried to reach out to all Armenian organizations to get them to coordinate and find ways to help businesses applying for federal funding. Small mom-and-pop stores or businesses may have difficulties in understanding the language of the necessary but at times complicated forms and filling them out.

Specific Risk Factors

Najarian pointed out some potential risk factors for the local Armenian community. If we look at pre-existing health conditions, many Armenians are smokers, or practice vaping, and that may have compromised their lungs and put them at risk for severe symptoms. Furthermore, many have heart conditions, perhaps due to diet, sedentary lifestyle, or advanced age, which put them further at risk.

There are further factors at play. Najarian said that many of the health care workers, including doctors, nurses and administrators, in local hospitals are Armenians, which is one source of greater than usual potential exposure to the virus. Second, a large number of residents do not speak English and may not get the message as often and forcefully as

continued on next page



The Long-Sought Forgotten Genocide Trials...

Is there any justice after death? This unusual tale offers redemption for victims murdered by genocides. Genocide is an uncontrollable beast that devours all with no reverence for any religions, no respect for poverty, wealth, or the different colors of mankind's skin. What about these evildoers from Enver Pasha, Stalin, Saddam Hussein and many others that created havoc prematurely terminating victims by no fault of their own. Was justice measured? How would these evildoers seek redemption during their judgment? These are interesting questions....

Available from Amazon.com

P.A. Murad is an engineer and scientist. The author has found a star, and was part of the Apollo lunar explorations and written "The Demon's Gate" trilogy, "A Magnificent Odyssey" and "America at Armageddon".



COMMUNITY NEWS

Boston's Armenian Nursing And Rehabilitation Center Reports Illnesses

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

JAMAICA PLAIN, Mass. – The Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center on April 3 informed that a food service employee fell sick with COVID-19 at the end of March, tested positive on April 1, and is now in quarantine. While no residents had fevers or any symptoms on March 30, on April 3, eight residents with fevers and respiratory symptoms had to be moved into an isolation section of the center.

Stewart Goff, chief executive officer of the center, wrote in the April 3 report, “Our primary goal is to remain as COVID-19 free as possible. We still do not accept active COVID-19 referrals from the acute care hospitals. However, we have long understood that it is unlikely we can remain virus free.”

Consequently, the special second floor isolation suite was created as a precaution on March 30. Tests for COVID-19 were requested from the Massachusetts National Guard, which has been mobilized for this purpose. Goff stated that they were successfully drawn on April 3 at about 5 p.m. The results were expected back within 24 to 48 hours but as of the afternoon of April 7, they still had not been provided.



Isolation suite, top, with views of the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, below



Glendale City Confronts Coronavirus Disease

from previous page

English speakers do through the media, despite the good efforts of the Armenian-language media and the multilingual broadcasts and warnings of the city of Glendale itself.

Third, he said that a lot of the local markets were Armenian-run and the mom-and-pop outlets may not enforce social distancing rules as strictly as some of the larger commercial outlets.

Finally, Armenians are a family-oriented community, which, Najarian explained, implies extended families and closer interactions. Under the current circumstances, Najarian said, “it is paradoxical that coming together makes the risk greater than staying apart.”

However, Najarian also speculated that “maybe it is just human nature to come together, not just for Armenians, that is proving difficult.” He said that Glendale was not that far above the curve of the average or per capita infection rate and that a part of the problem is that we don’t know the demographics of the people infected. They could be 90 percent Latin Americans or Armenian Americans, but due to privacy rules this information is not released.

Indeed, others argue that it is unclear whether the Armenian community is more susceptible than others. Kassakhian declared, “I don’t think there is anything unique about Armenians that makes them more susceptible. If there is anything we have learned from this pandemic, it is that the spread of this virus does not heed ethnicity.”

In particular, Kassakhian criticized the following statement reported by Glendale News-Press writer Lila Seidman on March 31: “Najarian said the local rise could be tied in part to its large population of Armenian Americans and Iranian Americans, who are used to greeting each other with hugs and kisses” (<https://www.latimes.com/socal/glendale-news-press/news/story/2020-03-31/glendale-coronavirus-62-cases-third-highest-in-county>).

Kassakhian said the statement in the Glendale News-Press is tantamount to calling the coronavirus illness the Chinese flu or telling black people to stay at home because they are more social and therefore susceptible to the virus. Such statements potentially put the Armenian community in jeopardy of adverse reactions from others, Kassakhian said.

The issue of reporting of ethnic and racial figures of coronavirus victims has been of broader concern in the United States. In certain cities and areas, disparities have been reported. Consequently, Los Angeles County’s Public Health Department, fearing that black and Native American patients in the county faced higher rates of infection and death than others, is now trying to assemble this information for all death records, according to an April 6 *Los Angeles Times* article (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-04-06/missing-racial-data-coronavirus-deaths-worries-los-angeles-county-officials>). It is unclear whether this would also include Armenians as a category.

Testing in general for COVID-19 is expanding and

being made free for all Los Angeles County residents (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-04-07/la-county-tell-residents-to-stay-inside-this-week-as-coronavirus-hits-new-milestone>).

The Road to Recovery

Najarian declared on April 2 that “I am hoping that we can ride this out, that our social distancing will at least slow down the new cases.” If a vaccine is at least 8-9 months away, he hoped, he said, that perhaps there are other types of treatments that in the meanwhile can get people through it.

Najarian continued: “I am hoping that by Memorial Day we will be back on our feet again. I am hoping that the restrictions on businesses are lifted and they can open, and our lives return to a more normal level.” He said that it would not be back to a totally normal level at first and that expert medical advice would be necessary to know when the city could start easing up on restrictions gradually.

Kassakhian too emphasized that life needs to return to normal at a measured pace. He said, “We need to figure out ways to bring back the economy in phases and steps whereby we can control the rate of infection and exposure to the virus. We are going to change a lot of our physical practices.”

He said that government will have a responsibility to intervene and restart the economy, in part through various types of loans to businesses and people. He said, “I can’t imagine the recession is going to be that deep. A part of what is so affected is the service sectors of the economy. Once we are

through this virus, it is hard to imagine that Disneyland, for example, is not going to operate again. The problem right now is that we are at a place where the economy and industry are pretty much frozen.”

Furthermore, he said that the situation for people living paycheck to paycheck has become serious as they potentially are missing two months of pay, if not more. This could lead to long-lasting implications.

Kassakhian noted that the city has reserves built up by taxpayer funds from its businesses and residents, and said, “It is the right thing to do to use those funds to help the community. If bridges and roads had collapsed previously, right now people’s lives have collapsed. We are going to have our budget study session soon and have a better idea, but Glendale has roughly a 30 percent budget reserve at present.”

On another positive note, he said that one of Glendale’s unique features is that it was a relatively small community where everyone knows one another. People were already trying to help out. One example was the local free libraries which have been converted to food pantries where people can donate or pick up nourishment.

As far as the Armenians of Glendale were concerned, Najarian declared: “We are a strong people. We have been through worse than this in our history. We will be here next month and next year, and I think in the context of what we have gone through, this does not rank in the top ten of threats to our community.”

Arts & Living

Arsak Yasar Kurt: Heritage Re-Found

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/ISTANBUL - Arsak (Arshak) Yasar Kurt (born August 16, 1968) is a Turkish-Armenian rock musician. He was enrolled at the Faculty of Economics of Eskisehir Osmangazi University but did not graduate.

He founded the alternative musical group Beyaz Yunus (White Dolphin), in 1993, made his first studio recording in Germany and in 1994, released the album "Sokak Sarkıları" (Street Songs) recorded in Cologne, Germany. The album, released on the Ada Müzik label, became very popular in Turkey, and a series of concerts followed throughout Turkey.

He returned in 1996 to Turkey to continue his musical career. His album "Göndermeler" (Referrals) was released in 1997 on Aks Müzik and Bogaziçi Müzik labels. After one-and-a-half years, Yasar Kurt released "Reflex" on Agdas Müzik production, with nine songs



Arsak Yasar (Photo by: Tolga Mercan)

stretching in the period 1990-2000 as well as 3 cover versions. In 2003, he released a collection album "Anne" under his own music label. In 2003 he was one of the founders of "Bari arock," a major rock event in Turkey. In 2004, he wrote the music for ATV television's popular series "Sevda Tepesi." In 2011, Kurt released the album "Güne Kokusu" (Smell of Sun) including a hit song called *Ver Bana Dülerimi* (Give Me My Dreams).

In 2007, at the age of 40, Yasar Kurt learned from his father that he is not an ethnic Turk, but Armenian, after which he began to learn the Armenian language. In May of the same year, with Arto Tunçboyacıyan, he embarked on a project dedicated to the memory of the famous Armenian journalist Hrant Dink.

Dear Arsak, as a dedicated pacifist and political dissident, how do you react to the current situation in our troublesome region?

See YASAR on Page 11



Daron Yacoubian

Daron Yacoubian Advances on Disney + Shop Class Competition Show

GLENDALÉ - Daron Yacoubian, 14, has advanced with his team to the semifinals of "Shop Class," the Disney + competition show series.

This show, hosted by actor Justin Long, features teams of young builders, who are tasked with designing, building and testing unique creations. In each episode, a panel of experts will evaluate and test their work based on design creativity and build functionality.

Yacoubian was selected from more than 5,000 students nationwide to compete in this show. He, along with his partner Marco and Coach Kim, are one of 6 semi-final teams vying for a spot in the finals. They will be building and launching spacecraft capable of transporting egg payloads.

Episode 107 "Ready to Launch" will air on Friday, April 10 on the Disney + streaming service (<https://www.disneyplus.com/series/shop-class/6codHiKh9o59>).

Daron is the son of Dr. Stephan and Maro Yacoubian of Glendale.

Watching a launch behind a protective barrier: from left, the 3 judges, the host Justin Long, and Daron's team (Daron, Marco and Coach Kim)



Zakarian and His Daughters Make Breakfast Tacos

By Erica Chayes Wida

NEW YORK (Today Show) - When it comes to making breakfast, Geoffrey Zakarian is a pro. And it turns out that the cooking gene runs in the family.

This week, the Food Network host and chef/partner at The Lambs Club in New York City, whipped up a versatile morning meal with the help of his two daughters, Madeline and Anna. For those who have seen @TheZakarianSisters on Instagram, you may be familiar with these young ladies' cooking demos and undeniably cute style.

Since Zakarian loves cooking with his girls, they got together in their home kitchen to have, as Zakarian called it, "a taco pah-ty."

"We're all at home. We're in the same boat. I'm at home with three children under the ages of 12," the chef said. "And it's tough, because you need activities. The great thing about this breakfast dish is it's an activity, and it's a yummy breakfast."

One of Zakarian's favorite things about breakfast tacos is that you can use just about anything you have in the fridge or pantry.

"Crisping the corn tortillas on the stove is one of the most important steps," she said. "People just sometimes eat it raw but it really (gets that) flavor when you crisp them. So you want to make it like 45 seconds on each side, depending how crispy you like it."

Once all the hot ingredients were prepared and the tortillas were toasted on an open flame, it was taco time.

"So this is where the fun comes in," Zakarian said. "You can just do what you want and everyone has their own way of building a taco. I like mine with as much on it as possible and finished with a big chunk of cilantro."

Geoffrey Zakarian's Breakfast Tacos

INGREDIENTS

PICO DE GALLO

- 1 cup finely diced tomato
- 2 jalapeños, diced
- 1/2 cup red onion, finely diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped, plus extra sprigs for garnish

SALT and freshly ground black pepper

TACOS

- 6 eggs
- 4 strips bacon, cooked and chopped
- Eight 6-inch corn tortillas
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup Mexican crema or sour cream
- 1/2 cup cotija cheese
- 1/2 cup hot sauce
- 1/2 cup salsa verde, store-bought
- Lime wedges

PREPARATION

For the pico de gallo:

In a bowl, mix the chopped tomatoes, jalapeño and red onion, and mix all together. Add the olive oil, lime juice, chopped cilantro and salt and pepper to taste. Stir to combine well. Set aside.

For the tacos:

1. Crack eggs into a bowl and whisk until white and yolk are mixed well.

2. Heat a nonstick pan over medium heat. Add the whisked eggs to the pan along with the chopped bacon. Mix together by using a rubber spatula and cook them until soft.

3. Warm the tortillas on a griddle or pan with a dash of oil for 10 seconds on each side.

4. Place the tortillas on the plate, top with eggs, crema or sour cream, pico de gallo, cotija cheese and a few leaves of cilantro.

5. Place hot sauce and salsa verde in two separate bowls and serve the tacos with wedges of lime to garnish.



ARTS & LIVING

see YASAR from Page 10

The chaos in the region shatters the hope of people who try making peace, and that shows the failure of the things being done by these people without peace. The hatred should be kept far away from the humanity's ideology. My political position keeps the ways to live together open.

Why are rock musicians so interested in social issues?

Rock music is a kind of reaction. Rock music has been searching for a new view in the post-war world and it takes its esthetic power from that situation. And I am walking on this path.

I assume you are annoyed about being questioned about your national identity and how upon discovering your Armenian roots. You baptized yourself as an Armenian Apostolic Christian and have adopted a new Armenian name, Arsak. I will not ask about the circumstances, but my question is whether after about 15 years what impact has it had on you as a person and as an artist?

The fact that I have explored my Armenian roots led me to know more about this subject. I have started to learn about Armenian musical influences and I have recognized in this period Gomidas had a musical treasure trove. Certainly that period has changed my view on music and other things in many ways.

Have you discovered the real family name of your ancestors?



Arsak Yasar (Photo by: Tolga Mercan)

My family name in the Black Sea region is Kosenogullari, but before the name Murad was used in Van. But I still could not find it in official documents.

Your colleague and compatriot Arto Tunçboyacıyan is considered a Turkish-Armenian musician. Are you also using this

definition?

There is no such definition for me in Turkey. And also other Armenian and Greek artists were not mentioned as such.

Do you continue your concerts with "Yash-Ar," the band you formed with Arto?

Yes, we do. We recorded two songs in Yerevan in summer 2019. We had a concert in February in Istanbul. Besides, during the past years I have participated in several album anthologies and covered several songs from other artists for these albums. I had many performances around Turkey and Europe, and some of these performances were with Arto Tunçboyacıyan.

I wrote in a musical called "İstiklal" in which I played the main character and played music, with the Gunesh Theater which has been active in Frankfurt for past two years.

As you said once, Gomidas is your Armenian idol, whose music you also perform. What happened to your plan to make a musical film about him?

I have been working on this idea recently, but as a producer it is not easy to find funding for this biographical story. I have also made field research related to Hemshin music. I played myself as Yasar Kurt in a TV series which was shot in Hemshin in 2013-2014 and covered regional songs for this series. These songs were released on an album called "Hemshin Yaylaları, 2015." In 2014, I was one of the main characters in a biographical documentary called "The Silent Heritage of Turkey," and I recorded the music for this documentary.

How would you characterize Gomidas' music?

Actually Gomidas' music explains his philosophy. His philosophy was searching for truth without prejudice. His philosophy has regard for the common benefits of humanity. His philosophy is that it takes courage to see all the naked pain. So it is very powerful and fragile.

How would you describe Armenian music?

Dance, sadness, beauty.

What is the common trait for Armenian musicians you have met?

During my first visit I had opportunity to meet such wonderful Armenian musicians, like Vahagn Hayrapetyan, Artiom Manoukyan and Tigran Suchyan. I also met Ara Dinkjian in 2010 in New York. The common points of the Armenian musicians I met were that they were open-minded and paying attention for creativity.

What are your connections with Istanbul Armenians?

Well, sometimes I met people at holy mass ceremony.

You speak the Hemshin dialect. Have you ever studied literary Armenian?

I speak Hemshin dialect very little. There are not so many people who speak that dialect in our region. But I am thinking on to stay in Armenia for a while to learn Armenian, yet I am not sure when will it become.

I remember Arto's concert in Yerevan in 2008 with your participation. When you were in Armenia last?

In September 2019. I stayed for 3 weeks on Hin Yerevantsi Street. I saw museums, ate delicious food and listened to great Armenian music and returned to Turkey happily.

Well, Arsak, you are always welcome home - with concerts or without!

For sure, I will come back soon. Thanks for your kind interest!

Tekeyan Cultural Association

SPONSOR



20th



ANNIVERSARY

a TEACHER

IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH



SINCE ITS
INCEPTION
IN 2001, THE
TCA SPONSOR
A TEACHER
PROGRAM HAS
RAISED \$734,590
AND REACHED
OUT TO 6,829
TEACHERS AND
SCHOOL STAFF
IN ARMENIA
AND ARTSAKH







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

\$200 \$400 \$600 other _____

Name _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Make check payable to
Tekeyan Cultural Association—Memo: Sponsor a Teacher

Make your check payable to:
TCA Sponsor a Teacher
5326 Val Verde, Houston, TX 77056
Your donation is Tax Deductable





ARTS & LIVING

from previous page

not at the right place to teach then. Time went on and I realized that I have so much and the moment came that I saw this is the time for me to teach."

For Bayrakdarian, teaching is akin to spiritual nurturing. Being a mother also helps with things like being nurturing and setting limits. (Bayrakdarian has two children, ages 12 and 7.)

Her stage experiences, also, come in handy for her students. "I bring relevant experience to help them. I am happy with their successes. And I teach them solid technique."

She values individuality, she stressed. "You

should have something to say. If you are regurgitating, find out what is it you really, really want to say."

By learning solid technique, their "instrument is free to express itself."

"Intrinsically it is so important that you have a unique voice and naturally stand apart," she said.

She also expressed her happiness with UCSB.

"God has placed me in a perfect place, with the freedom to follow my passion," she noted. "I am in a creative renaissance. There are a lot of dreams that I want to accomplish."

"I have a very curious mind. I tend to get

bored quickly," she said. That is the reason for her widely diverse discography, ranging from classical Italian and French operas to Spanish tangos and Armenian hymns, not to mention pop.

But, she cautioned, "I am not going to do something for the sake of diversity."

Armenian music, does speak to her on a deep level. "Armenian music, especially if it is sacred music or art songs, has a power to unlock a special part of my soul. There is an immense spiritual strength that comes over me. It's supremely special to me."

She added, "There is a confidence in knowing that I own this. It's me. It's just knowing

who you are and embracing it."

What comes second after Armenian music is the Spanish repertoire. "It lights another kind of fire within me," she noted. "I've always been drawn to it and feel so at home with it."

Of course, she often sings in French and Italian, too. "I love the taste of French in my mouth."

Every project, however, has to make an intrinsic sort of sense to her. "I don't do a lot of crossover. If I am able to be authentic [I will.] I still need to see Isabel in it."

She recalled one of the best compliments she got from a relative who had come to see her perform in Rossini's "Barber of Seville" opera as Rosina. "They said 'That was Isabel on stage.' The clothes had to fit me" figuratively, she noted.

From Lebanon to Canada

Bayrakdarian was born in Lebanon and moved with her family to Canada when she was 14. The experience was a positive one for her, she recalled. "There were so many opportunities. It was a great, great change for me."

She got a full scholarship to the University of Toronto and received a bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering. Her family encouraged her to finish her degree so that she could have a secure future. Fortunately for her, the subject was one that was easy for her.

"We are not just one passion. We are all given so many different talents. Being exposed to different opportunities unlocks them," she said.

"We all have more than one talent. I could do analytical equations and also sing," she said. "No one is born with a script. You are the only one who knows what you are here to do. The answer is inside all of us. Do it fearlessly."

Even now, she said, she is "techy."

At the same time, she was singing in church, but without any formal vocal training. However, she relished the experience as "communicating with God. Armenian hymns are in krapar. The essence is condensed in each word. I wanted to communicate with God in full words. I wanted to finish the phrase in one breath, so I was doing breath control."

While studying, she started taking voice lessons to be able to better control the high notes and to sing the phrases seamlessly. "I know that when you have this kind of beautiful singing, you encourage others to communicate with God. Music helps communication channels."

Little did she think that she would go into the field professionally. It is not an easy one. "If you don't have a strong backbone, you can get destroyed by people's opinions, both good and bad."

Then, she saw her first opera, and she was hooked. "I didn't know this world existed," she recalled with wonder.

She entered the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions the same year she graduated from the University of Toronto cum laude and she won.

Bayrakdarian takes the same spiritual, practical and dedicated approach to her children. "I feel I am a guardian to those children. I plant as many seeds in those children as possible. Eventually they will choose what seems should blossom and grow. They have to make that choice," she said. "We are only given our children for a short time. I am there to guide them to make good choices in life and to be good human beings."

She called her children "great teachers."

With the coronavirus lockdown, all promotional concerts and appearance for her new record has been cancelled through July. "Let's see what September brings," she said.

She expressed the universal frustration at the virus crisis. "It is truly surreal. Our sense of reality has turned upside down. I am taking it one day at a time. I am still working toward my future projects."

Concerts that are still not cancelled include on September 12, in Saskatoon, Canada, and September 25 in Boston, with the Odyssey Opera, at Jordan Hall.

Moving forward, she said she is working on two projects, one that is more scholarly in nature and another that is connected to her Armenian heritage.

"The Other Cleopatra: Queen of Armenia, Il Tigrane Arias" is available everywhere on the Delos label. To hear snippets of her new CD, visit www.Bayrakdarian.com.

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian

Zucchini Caviar

Photo and recipe courtesy of Robyn Kalajian, a retired culinary teacher and food blogger at thearmeniankitchen.com, the essential Armenian recipe and cooking blog that has become an Armenian-American treasure. Robyn adapted this delicious recipe from one that appeared on <https://www.gastrosenses.com>.

INGREDIENTS:

4 medium zucchini, peeled and shredded
2 medium carrots, shredded
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 cup canned, diced tomatoes, drained
2 tablespoons tomato paste (or red pepper paste)
2 to 3 bay leaves
1 teaspoon Aleppo pepper (or substitute 1 teaspoon paprika and 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Makes about 2 cups.

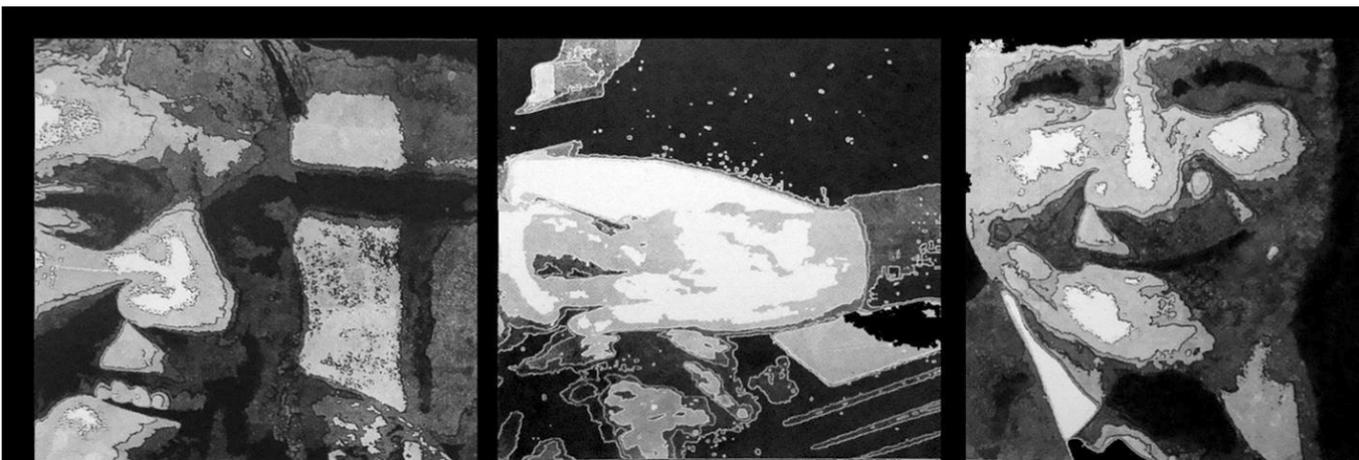
BRINE:

3 cups of boiled water that has returned to room temperature
1 cup white vinegar
2 tablespoons pickling salt
1/2 teaspoon citric acid
3/4 teaspoon sugar

PREPARATION:

Place zucchini in a large, clean, kitchen towel. Roll up the towel and squeeze out the excess liquid. In a large, heavy pot, heat olive oil on medium. Add strained zucchini, onions and carrots; sauté for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Next, add diced tomatoes, tomato paste (or red pepper paste), garlic, bay leaves, sugar, and salt and pepper. Reduce heat to low and simmer for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Mixture should not be watery. If it is, continue to cook until almost all of the excess liquid is evaporated. Remove and discard bay leaves. Place mixture in a bowl and allow to cool slightly. Add the mixture into a blender or food processor. (You may have to do this in batches). Puree until a thick, creamy texture is achieved. Spread zucchini caviar on toasted baguettes or serve with crackers, chips, bread such as pita and lavash, and fresh vegetable sticks.

Go to: <https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/search?q=Zucchini+Caviar>



Isabel Bayrakdarian Is Experiencing a Renaissance

ISABEL, from page 1

"The whole thing has been truly serendipitous," Bayrakdarian said. "Life is brining me full circle. [She is] My Cleopatra, her DNA is still in me! He [Tigranes] is our king of kings."

"The Other Cleopatra" marks the first time that she and Orbelian, also the artistic director of Armenia's Yerevan Opera Theatre, had worked together, she said during a recent interview.

"In summer of 2017 he invited me to be on the jury of the Aram Khachaturian [International Competition]" in Armenia, she said. "We kept in touch about what kind of interesting project we could do. We were brainstorming ideas while looking over the scenic hills of Sonoma, since we both live in California. He said casually that there are a lot of operas written about King Tigran," she recalled him saying.

And that started off their artistic journey.

Among composers who have written about

the listener.

She also stressed that artists have to give something new to the audience, almost like an education, rather than just a performance.

Bayrakdarian's list of awards is long. She has won four consecutive Juno Awards for Best Classical Album, and her previous recording, "Mother of Light," was nominated for a 2018 Juno Award.

Her recordings with orchestra include Henryk Górecki's *Symphony No. 3* with John Axelrod conducting the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*, with Michael Tilson-Thomas conducting the San Francisco Symphony, and Respighi's *Il Tramonto* with Orchestre Symphonique de Laval.

She has also been on the Grammy-award winning soundtrack of "The Two Towers" from "The Lord of The Rings" trilogy and on the soundtrack of Atom Egoyan's "Ararat." Even more left field, she collaborated with the elec-



Tigran or Tigranes as he is also known, is Alessandro Scarlatti, the score and libretto of whose opera were published but never recorded. And only the second act of a Vivaldi opera dedicated to Tigran was recorded.

The project created a spark, "which completely took over my life. And I didn't mind it. From inception to research and recording, she said, it took two years, "which is incredibly fast."

"So many people were at the right time and right place for this to go to the next level," she added. "The music is wonderful."

Born to Perform

Bayrakdarian's conversation is marked by frequent detours to music and opera history, which she clearly savors, as well as a singularly optimistic and mystical outlook, often accompanied by a throaty laugh.

Like Orbelian, she is a multi-hyphenate – Lebanese-Canadian-Armenian-American – who now calls California home, where she is an associate professor of voice at University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB).

Performing is a love for her and one she has approached both as an artist and a teacher. When asked what venue is her favorite for performance, she said, "There is no one place or one thing I favor over other. First and foremost, it is about the listener. Every single time I walk on stage, whether it is a huge, prestigious hall or a little church hall, I do not take that honor for granted. It is a gift. I receive a gift from the audience. It is a beautiful communion that happens. It is one of the most humbling experiences."

She explained that listening to a live performance gives the feeling of *veranal*, or soaring to

tronica band Delerium, and nabbed garnered yet another Grammy nomination. She can be heard on the BBC's short film, "Holocaust - A Music Memorial Film from Auschwitz," as well as her Gemini-nominated film "Long Journey Home," documenting her first visit to Armenia.

She has also won the Marilyn Horne Foundation Competition Award, Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee and the Diamond Jubilee Medals, the Arbor Award from the University of Toronto, the George London Foundation Award, Canada Council's Virginia Parker Prize, and the Republic Of Armenia Komitas Medal. Most recently, she was awarded the Movses Khorenatsi medal, the Republic of Armenia's highest cultural award.

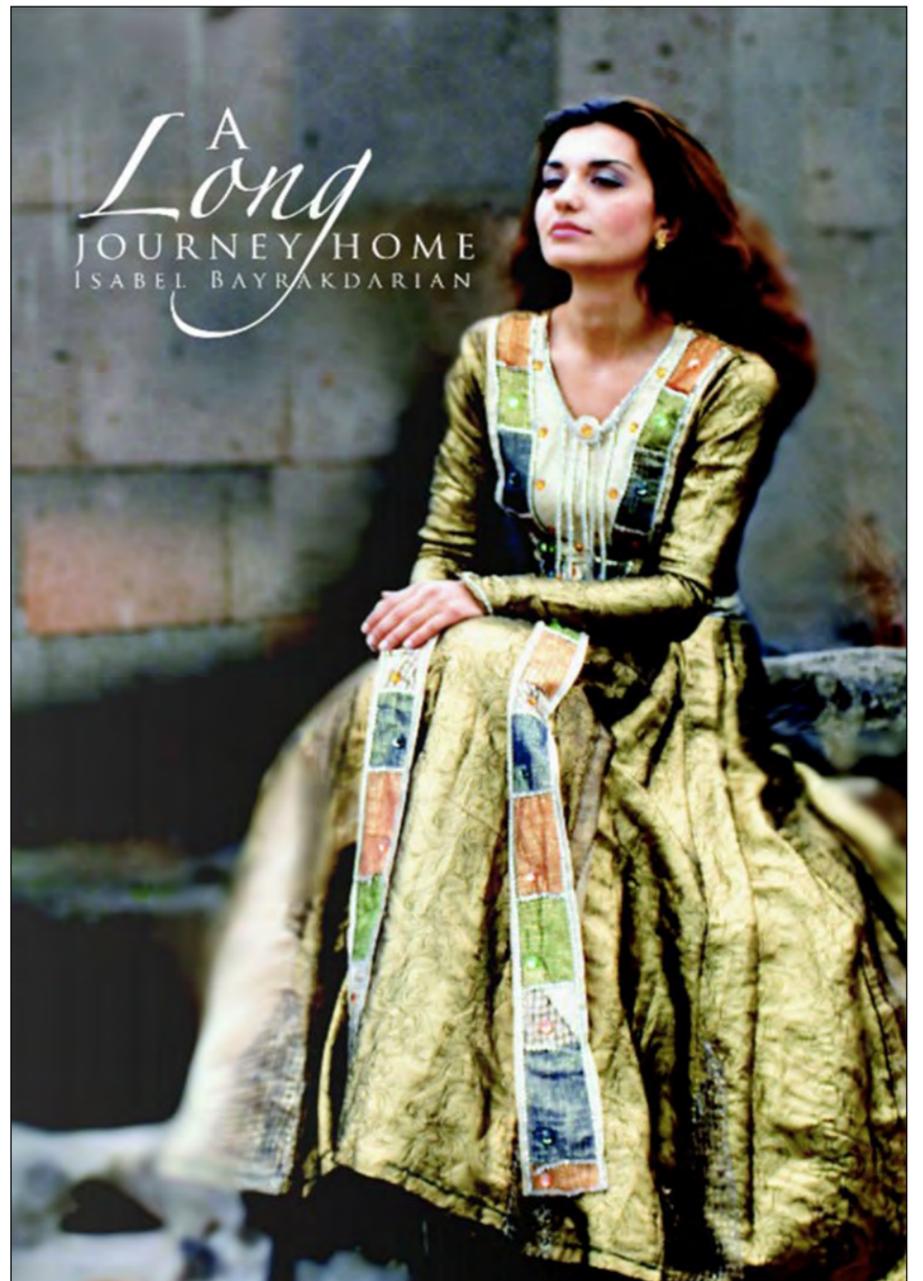
She has performed with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera and Metropolitan Opera, Toronto's Canadian Opera Company and halls in New York, Florence, and the Saito Kinen Festival in Matsumoto, Japan.

She holds an Honorary Doctorate from Canada's Wilfrid Laurier University, and an Honorary Fellowship from the Royal Conservatory of Music.

History and Serendipity

Orbelian sent a long set of research about the Tigran the Great project in Russian to Bayrakdarian, but before she had a chance to translate them, she got the score of the opera "Il Tigrane" by Hasse, a composer, she said, who is not as well known as his contemporaries Handel, or Vivaldi, but who coincidentally is a composer she has always loved.

"I have sung a lot of his repertoire. He is a singer's composer," she explained. "He really knew how to write for the voice because he was married to a soprano."



She added, "I did not know he had written about Tigran the Great," which made the discovery that much sweeter.

The next step was listening to some of the old music that they had found. Fortunately, the French and Italian departments at UCSB have specialists in baroque Italian translating, and they were able to fact check and copy the manuscript form to notation to "find out what the heck it sounds like," she added. "Is it actually beautiful?"

But why the interest in Tigran? In the late 17th century, Bayrakdarian explained, the exotic east beckoned musicians and Abate Francesco Silvani wrote a libretto about Tigran. "Everyone was looking for exotic kings to put in operas," she said. "I don't know how he came to know about Tigran."

"They [Gluck, Vivaldi and Hasse] are three very different composers. They offer such a diverse palate of interpretation," she said. "My curiosity was peaked."

She added, "The whole project resonated with me on so many different levels. It came together so beautifully," she said. She praised the musicology librarian at the UCSB for help with the project.

The stylistic diversity, the theme as well as the subject matter came together as just the right fit for her. "I wanted to do something, to add something, not the same repertoire," she said.

Aside from the different approach of the three composers, each wrote for a specific type of voice; Hasse wrote for a contralto, Vivaldi for a high soprano and Gluck for soprano, which is her forte.

Right Time to Teach

Teaching and performing are very similar, she noted. However, the time has to be right. "One should teach when they are ready to teach. You teach because you want to pass on, you want to genuinely bring [the students'] dreams alive,"



Isabel Bayrakdarian and Constantine Orbelian

Bayrakdarian said. "Only do it when you are so satisfied with your own dreams and want to give naturally."

She noted that the first time the opportunity to teach came along was 10 years ago. "I was

continued next page

EDITORIAL

Democracy on the Move in Karabakh

By Edmond Y. Azadian

After much hesitation, pondering and debate, the elections were finally held in Artsakh (Karabakh) on March 31. These marked the sixth presidential and seventh parliamentary elections there.

The hesitations were fully justified, given the pandemic plaguing the globe. Miraculously, no case of coronavirus had officially been reported there until a week after the elections, with a first case on April 7.

Karabakh is a small disputed territory between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but it is located in one of the world's political hotspots. Therefore, any action in that tiny enclave has an impact on the Armenian world, as well as on the regional and global spectrum. As a result, reactions from all quarters need to be brought into consideration to assess the significance of those elections. (See related story on Page 1.)

There were 14 presidential candidates, 10 political parties and two alliances.

The numbers and the fragmentation of political groups were unprecedented. However, they indicated that democracy is on the move in Karabakh. The electorate was highly motivated, given the tense military situation in the region, compounded by the fear of the pandemic.

Many pundits had predicated a low turnout. They were all disproved as more than 73 percent of registered voters participated in the exercise of their political will.

For the first time, the presidential candidates participated in a debate, in another sign of democratic progress. The debate, although a welcome sign of democratic progress, was on a primitive level.

By contrast, during the recent fraudulent and unfair parliamentary elections in neighboring Azerbaijan, many of the opposition leaders and dissidents remained behind bars.

Many political quarters, which routinely refuse to recognize Karabakh elections, certainly took mental notes about the contrasting scenarios.

As a result of the elections, five political parties and two alliances have won seats in the 35-seat parliament. The Free Fatherland party, headed by Arayik Harutyunyan, won 16 seats and the United Fatherland party, led by Samuel Babayan, won 9 seats. Incidentally, Babayan was banned from running as a presidential candidate because of not meeting legal residency requirements.

The Justice Party, headed by Vitali Balasanyan received 3 seats, as did the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, while the Democratic Party, headed by the former speaker of parliament, obtained 2 seats. The alliance headed by Masis Mayilyan, the former foreign minister, did not win any seats in the parliament, although he was the second highest vote getter, netting 26 percent, to qualify for the run-off against Harutyunyan.

Apparently, there was some horse-trading behind the scenes between Mayilyan and Babayan to help each other in the presidential and parliamentary elections, respectively. Now that the first phase of the elections is over, with no seat for Mayilyan in the parliament, he is left out in the cold. As far as Babayan is concerned, that deal has outlived its usefulness.

The complexion of politics around Karabakh is manifested in the reaction of election monitors, the government of Armenia, regional and major nations and international political entities.

The international monitors, who had planned to participate, could not travel. Instead, there were 90 monitors representing two NGOs, the Union of Informed Citizens and Transparency International. There was much debate in the press as to why the government had funded those two groups and not others. Particularly, the participation of Daniel Ianissyan was questioned as he is regarded as a polarizing political figure with his own agenda. He has been accused in the media of being one of the known "grant eaters." One needs to be aware that foreign philanthropic groups investing in Armenia and Artsakh have their own interests, which may not line up with those of the recipients.

Following the elections, the monitors confirmed that the vote

was held under free and fair conditions; only minor violations were observed, which were not enough to influence the outcome of the elections.

Armenia's Foreign Ministry qualified the elections as "free and fair, in line with high democratic standards."

For Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, the elections similarly were of "high quality."

By contrast, Turkey's Foreign Ministry criticized the elections even before Azerbaijan and called on the international community to refuse to recognize the results.

Azerbaijan, in its turn, termed the elections as illegal, additionally resorting to a military incursion, on the very day of the elections, in the Tavoush region of Armenia, injuring several Armenian soldiers as well as a 14-year-old boy.

The European Union issued a special statement criticizing the elections. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) followed suit, stating that the "so-called general elections cannot predetermine the outcome of Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks mediated by the OSCE."

The statement by OSCE is ironic, to say the least, because when its representatives visit Karabakh, they have no other party to negotiate with but the official leadership elected by those same elections.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry had a milder reaction, emphasizing the peaceful negotiations.

Armenia's ally, Russia, was also critical. In addition, the Collective Security Treaty Organization headed by Moscow, through its General Secretary Stanislav Zas, reprimanded both



Armenia and Azerbaijan, for the latter's military incursion into Armenia.

In view of this kind of equivocating politics by Russia and its sponsored entities, many in Armenia question the usefulness of that alliance for Armenia.

By contrast, the NATO alliance has a firmer and more partisan politics, defending its members under any condition. A case in point was Turkey's recent aggression against Syria, which was criticized by most of NATO member countries. Yet, during the confrontation between Turkish and Russian forces in Idlib, Syria, resulting in 33 Turkish casualties, NATO stood by its member officially and condemned Russia unequivocally.

Following the elections on March 31, Armenia's President Armen Sarkissian congratulated both presidential candidates who are to participate in the runoff election on April 14. Arayik Harutyunyan had almost received 50 percent of the vote to be elected outright but some ballots were qualified as invalid. Therefore he received 49.26 percent of the vote, requiring a runoff.

During the election campaign, the Pashinyan administration had adopted a hands-off policy, although it had every right to wield influence toward the outcome of the elections as the military guarantor of Karabakh's security and major contributor to its economy.

That stance was dictated by the prudent policy of preserving Karabakh's stability. Indeed, with Baku's bellicose policy, the pandemic and Armenia's regional isolation, Artsakh can little afford political upheavals.

But the less velvety wing of the revolution in Armenia imprudently continued its rhetoric of advocating for the elimination of the old guard in Artsakh. The targets were Vitali Balasanyan and to a lesser extent, Harutyunyan. Both had collaborated

continued on next page

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, Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:
Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
Los Angeles - Taleen Babayan
Berlin - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:
Jirair Hovsepiyan

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

Baika Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509
Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: 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:

Baika Association, Inc.

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



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

US Indicts Turkish Halkbank for Illegal Transfer of Billions of Dollars to Iran

Halkbank, whose majority shareholder is the Turkish government, pleaded not guilty in New York on March 31, 2020, to criminal charges that it helped Iran illicitly transfer tens of billions in dollars and gold, wrote Aykan Erdemir and Philip Kowalski in an essay published on April 3 by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a policy institute based in Washington, D.C.

On October 15, 2019, the Federal Southern District Court of New York accused Halkbank of “fraud, money-laundering and sanctions offenses,” alleging that Halkbank and its executives aided Iranian-Turkish gold trader Reza Zarrab in a “multi-billion dollar scheme to circumvent US sanctions on Iran.”

Initially, Halkbank refused to appear in court “claiming that the criminal charges are beyond the US court’s jurisdiction,” Erdemir and Kowalski wrote. However, when “prosecutors proposed escalating contempt fines which could have totaled \$1.8 billion after eight weeks,” the bank agreed to respond to the court charges.

Originally, the Turkish and Iranian officials had concocted a scheme to exchange gas for gold to circumvent the US sanctions, by claiming that the gold was headed not to Iranian government entities but to Iran’s “private sector.” Erdemir and Kowalski stated that “the scheme ultimately yielded the

Iranian regime some \$13 billion in Turkish gold between 2012 and 2013. Once the US Congress introduced legislation to close the ‘golden loophole’ in 2013, Iran used Turkish front companies to issue invoices for fake transactions of food and medicine that fall under the humanitarian exception to US sanctions. In one infamous case of over-invoicing, a Turkey-based luxury yacht company used Halkbank to sell nearly 5.2 tons of brown sugar to Iran’s Bank Pasargad at the price of approximately \$240 per pound.”

This scheme was first exposed in December 2013 by Turkish investigators who implicated then Prime-Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, several of his ministers and other senior officials, including Halkbank’s managers. Erdogan shut down the probe by firing the police officials, prosecutors and judges!

The scandal resurfaced in March 2016 when Iranian-Turkish ring-leader Reza Zarrab was arrested in Miami after he flew to Florida to visit Disney World with his family.

In March 2017, US authorities arrested Halkbank Deputy CEO Mehmet Hakan Atilla upon his arrival in New York. Zarrab pleaded guilty and agreed to testify in court against Atilla. Zarrab confessed that he had bribed senior Turkish ministers and top Halkbank executives. He even implicated Erdogan in the corruption scheme, stating that Erdogan had personally approved the illegal actions.

“Halkbank’s Atilla received a 32-month prison sentence in May 2018, a significantly shorter one than prosecutors had originally sought,” according to Erdemir and Kowalski. “After Atilla’s return to Turkey, Erdogan rewarded the convicted sanctions buster by appointing him CEO of the Istanbul stock exchange, following the president’s established pattern of rewarding other senior accomplices of Zarrab with cushy appointments.”

Erdogan personally appealed to President Trump and other senior officials to block the court case of Halkbank, claiming that US courts have no right to try Turkish citizens. The Courthouse News Service reported that “One of Zarrab’s shell companies, Royal Holding A.S., listed its address as a 35th floor unit in Trump Towers Istanbul. Before pleading

guilty to money laundering, sanctions evasions and bribery, Zarrab retained Trump’s personal attorney Rudy Giuliani to lead a campaign of shadow diplomacy that echoed the one in Ukraine. Shuttling between Turkey’s capital of Ankara and the White House, Giuliani met with Erdogan, Trump, former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and other senior US and Turkish officials in an attempt to negotiate a prisoner swap. The New York Times reported that Tillerson resisted the White House pressure for a deal that would have effectively killed the Zarrab case.”

Erdogan’s and Giuliani’s efforts succeeded in stalling the prosecution for almost two years, but ultimately failed when the US Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York went forward with the charges last October.”

Senator Ron Wyden, the Senate Finance Committee’s top Democrat, told Courthouse News Service: “It sure looked like Donald Trump was doing the bidding of Erdogan and Giuliani, and there were real questions about whether this was about getting Halkbank off the hook, even though there were allegations that they were orchestrating the largest sanctions evasion scheme in history.”

During President Trump’s Senate impeachment inquiry earlier in 2020, Senators Wyden, Robert Menendez and Sherrod Brown asked a joint question which was read aloud in the Senate by Chief Justice John Roberts: “Has the president engaged in a pattern of conduct in which he places his personal and political interests on top of the national security interests of the United States?”

Wyden told Courthouse News Service: “Donald Trump has significant financial interest in Turkey,” referring to Trump Towers Istanbul. “We read regularly that his family has forged personal relationships with important Turkish officials. And so, you have to ask – which is what is part of our inquiry – whether the Trump policy toward Turkey is in a significant way colored by his personal and political interests and not the national security of the country.”

If Halkbank is found guilty of violating US sanctions, the court could impose a hefty penalty, regardless of the wishes of President Trump.

from previous page

with the previous regime in Armenia but continued to enjoy popularity in Armenia.

Harutyunyan is considered to be an oligarch and painted with the same brush as some of his counterparts in Armenia who had plundered the country. Harutyunyan, however, is an entrepreneur who has contributed significantly to Karabakh’s economy and he maintains close relations with Pashinyan’s administration.

The vocal critics of the recent elections are members of the Sasna Tserer radical party, with its most notable supporter historian and statesman Ara Papyan and of course, the losers of these elections. The Revolutionary Party of Artsakh recently organized a rally in Stepanakert, demanding to annul the results of the elections.

For Masis Mayilyan, who expected to fare better at the ballot box, the results became a cause for sour grapes. He has called on his followers to boycott the runoff elections, but has not officially informed the Central Election Commission that he is dropping out of the race. Mayilyan, who had not expressed any concern about the coronavirus before the elections, all of a sudden has resorted to smear tactics, warning the voters about the dangers of the virus.

Interestingly, Iannisyman has changed his tune and has become more critical of the government’s positive assessment of the election results, stating: “I am afraid they could not make any other statement because of the international situation.”

Yes, indeed, the international situation must be a legitimate concern for any prudent statesman, worried about Artsakh’s future.

Mayilyan is fishing in muddy waters. His ban on entering Russia is already defining his politics, which in this case is converging with that of Iannisyman. His vanity and personal ambitions are blurring his vision, leading him to ignore the dangers of instability for Karabakh.

As Armenia’s enemies and even friends have joined in a chorus to criticize the elections, any destabilization domestically will play into the hands of the enclave’s enemies.

As of this writing, with only one proven case of coronavirus in Karabakh, and those villagers who were in contact with the latter placed into isolation, it appears that the path for the runoff still is clear.

This is an opportunity for the people of Artsakh to demonstrate to friends and foes that they are determined to build a democratic society and for the historic day it can join Armenia, de facto and de jure.

Race to Find a Coronavirus Treatment Has One Major Obstacle: Big Pharma

By Lord Ara Darzi

The past few weeks have revealed the worst and the best in human responses to the coronavirus crisis – from the supermarket hoarders clearing the shelves to the neighborhood groups organizing help for elderly and vulnerable people.

When it comes to the pharmaceutical companies, how should we judge their response? They, after all, hold the key to ending the pandemic. Yet in one vital respect their behavior has more in common with the supermarket hoarders than the neighborhood groups.

Our exit strategy from the global lockdown depends on the development of an effective vaccine, as is well-known. A huge effort is under way to find such a vaccine, but we cannot afford to wait the 18 months it might take.

Coronavirus vaccine: when will it be ready?

In the meantime, as the death toll increases, doctors desperately for treatments that would lessen the impact of the virus, by shortening the infection, reducing its severity and in that way saving lives. There is now a global hunt for a coronavirus drug. But it is a fight against time. The focus is therefore on existing treatments already proved to be safe for other diseases which will need less testing and be easier and quicker to manufacture in quantity.

Scores of trials are under way around the world. The World Health Organization has identified four of the most promising therapies – including an HIV combination treatment, an anti-malarial and a drug developed but never used against Ebola – for testing in a global trial launched last month. But we cannot pause the search while waiting for the results. The need for new effective agents is too great.

The best way to identify candidate drugs is to use artificial intelligence (AI) to crunch huge quantities of data to find the ones that might work. Major AI companies are putting their immense computing power at the service of scientists engaged in this hunt.

But they are being hampered: because some pharmaceutical companies are failing to share all of the data on potential candidate treatments that they hold. Like toilet roll profiteers, they are keep-

ing it stashed in their digital attics and cellars where others cannot get at it, on the grounds that it is commercially confidential.

It was the open sharing of data around the world that allowed scientists to map the genome of the SARS-CoV-2 virus at unprecedented speed, working across institutional, commercial and international boundaries in a unique collective effort against a common global enemy. We now urgently need all pharmaceutical companies to set aside their individual commercial ambitions and join a similar collective effort to identify, test, develop and manufacture treatments to curb the disease.

There is a precedent. Last June, 10 of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies – including Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca and GlaxoSmithKline – announced they would pool data for an AI-based search for new antibiotics, which are urgently needed as antibiotic-resistant bacteria have proliferated across the world, threatening the growth of untreatable disease.

That historic agreement was made possible by the development of a secure, blockchain-based system that allows an algorithm to search rival companies’ data with full traceability – but without revealing commercial secrets to competitors. The advantage of using blockchain is that companies can trust the code rather than their partners.

AI researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s J-Clinic, who trained a neural network to predict which molecules will have antibiotic properties, announced in February that they had found a new compound which works against 35 different types of bacteria. They named it halicin, after the AI system in 2001: A Space Odyssey.

AI is now being harnessed across the globe in the hunt for a coronavirus treatment, from Hong Kong to Israel to the UK and US. Last month the world’s fastest supercomputer, the IBM Summit, identified 77 compounds as potential candidates. Last week an AI platform run by Gero, based in Singapore, identified six drugs already approved for human use in other conditions which could help combat Covid-19. Meanwhile, Thomas Siebel, the billionaire head of C3.ai, a Californian artificial intelligence company, announced a public-private consortium including Princeton, Carnegie Mellon University, MIT, the Universities of California, Illinois and Chicago, as well as C3.ai and Microsoft, which will provide scientists with funding and access to some of the world’s most advanced supercomputers in the search for solutions to the pandemic.

However, no matter how great the computing power or how advanced the software design, results from these initiatives will depend ultimately on the data fed into them. Without full access to comprehensive data, the scientists will be fighting with one hand tied behind their backs.

All pharmaceutical companies must unlock their chemical libraries so candidate drugs can be identified, and trials to test the most promising treatments begin as soon as humanly possible. We cannot wait. Lives depend on it.

(Prof. Ara Darzi is a surgeon and director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London. He is a former Labour health minister. This opinion piece originally appeared in *The Guardian* newspaper on April 2.)



Covid-19: There's No Pilot in The Cockpit

By Vicken Cheterian

Did you hear what Antonio Guterres – the head of the UN – had to say about the Corona epidemic? And did you see the measures taken by Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) to stop the pandemic from killing more people?

Both international administrators were busy of late with the Covid-19, but apart from declarations of general character, I am not aware of what they did, or how they might lead us out of the crisis. The UN system is running after the pandemic with declarations – and even then paying much care not to anger its members, the nation-states.

One of the interesting disclosures of Covid-19 is that our global political system is without leadership. Not that we did not know this – it is the case at least since the demise of the League of Nations, but the epidemic made what is known graphically visible: that humanity after creating a globalized economy, integrated finances, global transportation system, instant communication, etc., urgently needs a global system of governance, at its peril.

The center of global humanitarianism is Geneva, a small town in Switzerland. There you can find the World Health Organization headquarters, as well as UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the International Red Cross movement and many other international bureaucracies. Yet, Geneva is not the place where multilateral political decisions are taken. For that there is New York, which is the UN's political center. Once decisions are taken in New York, it does not mean much until some capitals – such as Washington DC, Brussels, Beijing, London, New Delhi and others, decide to finance it. After political decisions are taken, and money is made available, Geneva as a technical humanitarian centre can implement them. In other words, we have a large number of humanitarian organizations, but they do not take neither political nor financial decisions. They have simply no power. They implement decisions taken elsewhere, and therefore the ceiling of their strategic thinking is limited to “project cycles.”

We do not have global governance capable of facing global threats. From January 10 on, when the cases of Covid-19 became public information in China, the UN and the WHO made suggestions and calls through press conferences. But these were short of coordinated policies to stop the spread of the pandemic. The UN including WHO are not even part of the conversation about what happened, and what to do next.

Instead of globalized response – for which we lack the instruments – what happened is that nation-states took over the decision making process. And they behaved like nation-states: closing borders as the instinctive response. In many cases the epidemic was not spreading through international borders, but within cities, provinces, regions, and across mountains and rivers within nation-states. By the time international air traffic came to halt

it was already too late to stop the spread of the virus. Nation-states are continuing the fight like generals fighting the last war, not the future one.

Within the nation-states, we did not see the emergence of a global leader: The president of the most populous nation, Xi Jinping, fought the epidemic with censorship: he kept the Covid-19 secret long enough that it is endangering today the entire planet. Now, there are growing doubts about the daily statistics announced by Chinese officials. Iran did something similar: its leaders privileged holding parliamentary elections at the price of keeping the epidemic secret, with catastrophic consequences. Other “strong” leaders, such as Putin of Russia, Sisi of Egypt – you can name many others here – still follow the policy of censorship, while South Korea showed that the only efficient fight against the epidemic is extreme transparency and carrying out massive tests to record where the epidemic stands, and how to stop it. The leader of the biggest economy, Donald Trump, who could never think in more than sound bites, is more concerned about the short-term economic performance of Wall Street over the long-term consequences of a pandemic. Boris Johnson, the leader of a nation that not long ago dominated the world, was in a hospital where he proudly “shook hands with everybody” until he tested positive for the virus.

Although we do not have global political leadership, it does not mean that we do not have a global system. We do. It is based on profit-making capitalism. Our entire global system is organized through financial gain. That explains why some parts of the Covid-19 tests were produced on one continent, and other segments on another continent. Like that profit margins are bigger, any accountant would tell you. That is why few weeks after the pandemic there were shortages of such banal things as face-masks, disinfecting gels, etc. In the last three decades – since the collapse of the Soviet Union – the same financial logic has cut public services to a bare minimum and that is why our hospitals are already overcrowded and unable to face the pandemic. Hospitals have to make a choice between one patient and another, and patients who are not severely suffering from Covid-19 are simply sent back home without testing. A global system based on financial calculations is evidently not the way to save our human souls. But this capitalist system looks today so fragile, powerless. The market did not produce a leader who can take us to safer shores.

Moreover, politicians suddenly panicking decided to bring the economy to a stop. The managers of multi-nationals did not have a word to say now. The pandemic took their power away, and now they are watching their screens like everyone else.

Then there is the media, the space where we seek our information and participate in debates. Our communication system, based on Twitter, Facebook and the others, encourages rumors rather than factual reporting, speculation rather than lucid debate. Today, social media celebrities are running the show and not experts and scientists. Funding for journalism and investigation, just like funding for public health, has been in free fall for the last two decades. Without precise information about what challenges humanity faces, and what are the possible solutions we cannot have democratic deliberation to decide which way to go, and what to give up while the fight against this epidemic – or the next – goes on. Our global social media has left us with celebrities and rumours, and it is undermining our wisdom and decision-making capacity.

Covid-19, which is only slightly more mortal than seasonal influenza, has brought our global system into standstill. It could give us a moment of reflection, a chance to reorganize our house, to think about the massive pollution we produced, destruction of our ecosystem and our natural resources, the melting of the polar ice, the rising sea levels, and the rapidly changing climate. Corona might give us the time to rethink of a common management of a world that has become too small to leave it to profit-makers. Because after Covid-19 there are so many other risks for which we are not prepared yet, and the lessons learned from the management of the epidemic – if we ever learn those lessons – might not be enough.

(This column originally appeared in the newspaper *Agos* on April 1.)

OPINION

Armenian Educational Benevolent Union Hosts Red Cross Blood Drive

PASADENA – Armenian Educational Benevolent Union will host a community blood drive with the American Red Cross on April 24, 2020 from 2:00pm to 8:00pm at the AEBU Center, 1060 N. Allen Ave., Pasadena, CA 91104.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, the American Red Cross has frequently expressed its concern of having to deal with blood shortage due to the multiple cancellations of already scheduled blood drives and called on all of us to step up to the challenge. And we, at AEBU, decided to heed to the call and assist at this time of need. The Red Cross was one of the first organizations to help Genocide survivors more than 105 years ago and it is our time to give back.

“Hosting this blood drive coincides with the 105th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide,” said Katia Kermoyan, coordinator of the drive. “What a gratifying way to honor the memory of the victims who perished during this dark period in our history and those who were displaced but survived thanks to the efforts of charitable organizations like the Red Cross!”

According to the Red Cross, blood is routinely transfused to patients with cancer and other diseases, premature babies, organ transplant recipients and trauma victims. “The short amount of time it takes to donate can mean a lifetime to a patient with a serious medical condition. We urge eligible donors to join us in the selfless act of giving blood.”

On its website, the American Red Cross states that this is the time to take care of one

another. And is calling on all those who are healthy and are feeling well to donate blood. They also address the public's concern saying that there is no evidence and there are no reported cases of the coronavirus – or any res-

piratory virus – being transmitted by a blood transfusion. In addition, the Red Cross assured all potential donors that it has implemented additional precautionary measures out of an abundance of caution.

To schedule your appointment, visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor code AEBU.

For more information you may call AEBU at (626) 344-7321, or call/text Blood Drive Coordinator at (818) 281-0351.

Aurora's AraratChallenge Movement Donates \$120,000 to Armenia's Health Ministry

YEREVAN – The AraratChallenge movement launched by the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative made a \$120,000 donation this week to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia to buy lung ventilation devices.

“This is truly an outstanding act of support and humanity on behalf of Aurora. As soon as the pandemic broke out, all healthcare systems in the world including Armenia were forced to mobilize quickly and use whatever resources they had to make sure people get access to treatment in a timely manner. Our nation's response to the health crisis has been adequate. However, the importance of proper equipment could not be overemphasized, and we are very grateful to the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative,” said Arsen Torosyan, Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia.

Earlier, the Initiative released a statement reflecting its concern with the current outbreak of COVID-19 and detailing Aurora's intention to help fight the pandemic and assist the world in dealing with this crisis. To that end, the Initiative has pledged to direct part of the funds raised with the #AraratChallenge campaign to support Armenian health professionals on the front lines with ten lung ventilation devices. Based on the donation agreement, at least one of the acquired devices will be transferred to one of the hospitals in Artsakh.

On March 28, 2020, Noubar Afeyan and Ruben Vardanyan, co-founders of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative; Lord Ara Darzi, Chair of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee; Arsen Torosyan, Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia; Dr. David Nabarro, the World Health Organization Special Envoy for COVID-19; and André Andonian, Board Member of McKinsey & Company Inc. Global, participated in a special webinar dedicated to the global outbreak of COVID-19 and organized on the Futures Studio discussion platform. Panelists shared their thoughts on how the ongoing pandemic affects various aspects of our lives and discussed the actions that are or can be taken in order to properly contain the situation.