CyArk Uses 21st Century Technology to Preserve Ancient Armenian Monuments

By Isabelle Kapoian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, accessible online models of Armenian cultural sites can transport Armenians to the Motherland from the safety of their homes. These 3-D models are available online via CyArk, a nonprofit organization committed to "digitally record, archive and share the world’s most significant cultural heritage and ensure that these places continue to inspire wonder and curiosity for decades to come." The global breadth of their digital database has been used to educate on a multitude of histories and cultures, document the existence of threatened monuments, inform on-ground preservation work of ancient sites, and tell the stories of the people who still use them today.

CyArk has worked with the My Armenia Program at the Smithsonian Institution for their “Armenia: Creating Home Folklife Festival” in 2018, the United States Agency for International Development, the Ministry of Culture for the Armenian government, and trained many Armenian students from the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies in Armenia to document sites such as the Geghard Monastery, churches in Ani, the Areni-1 cave complex, and the Noravank Monastery.

I had the opportunity to sit down with Kacey Hadick, CyArk’s Director of Project Development, to hear firsthand about the ways in which these technological advancements are being used to preserve the world's most significant cultural heritage.

Using a light scanner in Geghard Monastery

Bishop Daniel Findikyan Elected to Appeal of Conscience Foundation Board of Directors

NEW YORK — Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, was elected by unanimous vote to the board of directors of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, the New York-based humanitarian organization that has advocated throughout the world on behalf of human rights and religious freedom.

Findikyan received the welcome news on the evening of Thursday, September 9, 2019, at the annual Appeal of Conscience Foundation Annual Awards Dinner, scheduled to go forward as a virtual event on the evening of Thursday, September 24. The hour-long program will involve special guests and honors, as announced in a statement by the Foundation.

Findikyan in 2019

The respective decision was made by the City Council during the City Council session the councilors held a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the unrest. Earlier the government had allocated 2 million drams to the Yerevan City Hall for the designing works. The design of artist Albert Vardanyan was awarded the project in an open tender.

March 1 colloquially refers to the 2008 post-election unrest in Yerevan, when 10 people — including two police officers — died in clashes between protesters and security forces.

Gyumri Gifts 1 Million Drams to Lebanon

Gyumri Mayor Samvel Balasanyan said the city had the opportunity to sit down with Kacey Hadick, CyArk’s Director of Project Development, to hear firsthand about the ways in which these technological advancements are being used to preserve the world’s most significant cultural heritage.

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In a statement, the Russian Defense Ministry cited General Gerasimov as calling Armenia Russia’s “ally and key partner in the Transcaucasus.” For his part, Gasparyan described Russia as his country’s “strategic ally.”

By Aram Arkun

New COVID Cases in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — A total of 108 new cases of COVID-19 were registered in Armenia last week, bringing the cumulative total number of confirmed cases to 44953, the Armenian Center For Disease Control reported. 471 patients recovered, raising the number of total recoveries to 46592.

The people died from COVID-19, increasing the death toll to 903. This number doesn’t include the deaths of 276 (1 in the last 24 hours) other people infected with the virus who died from other pre-existing conditions, according to health authorities.

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Memorial to March 1 Victims Will Be Installed in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Yerevan City Council this week approved the installation of a memorial in honor of the 2008 March 1 victims. The memorial will be installed at the Children’s Park near the St. Gregory the Illuminator and Zakarian intersection.

During the City Council session the councilors held a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the unrest.

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The decision was made by the City Council after the money was to be provided to the Hayastan All Armenian Fund as a donation which in turn will direct those funds for that purpose.

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Dr. Noubar Afeyan and Bishop Daniel Findikyan in 2019

Russian, Armenian Army Chiefs Meet Amid Drills

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) — Russia’s and Armenia’s top army generals met in Moscow over the weekend as troops from the two countries began a joint military exercise near the Armenian-Turkish border.

Lieutenant-General Onik Gasparyan, the chief of the Armenian army’s General Staff, held talks with his Russian opposite number, General Valery Gerasimov, after attend-ing the closing ceremony of the annual International Army Games organized by the Russian Defense Ministry.

Official Armenian and Russian sources said the two men discussed close military ties between their nations but gave very few details.

In a statement, the Russian Defense Ministry cited Gerasimov as calling Armenia Russia’s “ally and key partner in the Transcaucasus.” For his part, Gasparyan described Russia as his country’s “strategic ally.”
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Justice Srbuhi Galyan was appointed as Deputy
and Tigran Davtyan will serve as prosecutor.
Gevorg Kocharyan will serve as Senior Prosecutors,
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be Amirkhanyan’s deputy, while Ani Sargsyan and
Georg Kocharyan will serve as Senior Prosecutors,
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Another Former Armenian Official Indicted

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A law enforce-
ment agency brought on September 1
ruption charges against a notorious for-
mer lawmaker and influential mem-
er of former President Serzh
Sargsyan’s Republican Party of
Armenia (HHK).
The Investigative Committee said
Mher Sedrakyan abused his powers to
sell a large part of a public park to his
son and brother when he ran Yerevan’s
Erebuni district from 1999 to
2008. He denied the
“absolutely impar-
tinality, principled work and resoluteness to be
guided exclusively by the letter of the law” from the
team.
The law, officially known as the Law on
Confiscation of Assets of Illicit Origin, was adopted
by parliament earlier in 2020.

Russian, Armenian Army Chiefs Meet Amid Drills

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Armenian govern-
ment adopted a decision on September 3 according
to which hospitals operating in the provinces will be
provided with modern ambulances within the frames
of the 2020 state budget.

During the Cabinet meeting first deputy minister of
healthcare Anahit Avanesyan said five ambulances
would be provided to Tavush province, three to
Syunik and two to Aragatsotn provinces.
The deputy minister said that a total of 21 ambu-
lances have been purchased.

National Archives Director Dismissed

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Director of the National Archive of Armenia SNCO Amatuni
Virabyan has been relieved from the position by the decree of Prosecutor General Rustam Badasyan, the
minister’s spokesperson Lusine Martirosyan said on
Facebook.

“AS I receive inquiries from media outlets about
the grounds for Mr. Virabyan’s dismissal, I would like
to inform that based on a number of appeals the
Justice Ministry has started at checking the legal
activity by him. He submitted an inquiry to the State Revenue Committee for getting information about the tax inspections
conducted by the department connected with such violations which caused tax default as a result of which the tax liability
was not made on time”, the spokesperson said.

Virabyan had been serving as director since 2003.

Tainted Vodka Kills 11

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Lab tests of the bootleg
vodka which left 14 people dead from poisoning in
the town of Ararat confirmed that the drink con-
mained methanol.
The Food Safety Inspection Agency said the methanol levels in the samples taken from the con-
fiscated bottles were “multiple times” higher than the
maximum admissible.

A total of 38 alcohol poisoning cases were regis-
tered in Armenia from August 31 to September 3.
A total of 25 poisoning cases were registered in
Armenia from Yerevan and Ararat Province.

A man from Ararat is under arrest on suspicion of
running the bootleg business. Two other suspects
are also under arrest.

Asset Recovery in High Gear

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The General
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Earlier on September 1, former Deputy Minister of
Justice Srbuhi Galanyan was appointed as Deputy
Prosecutor General in charge of the stolen asset
recovery functions.

As the required number of prosecutors of the
department are officially appointed, the department
is formally considered launched and the stolen asset
recovery law is fully initiated.

Prosecutor General Artur Davtyan commented that
the department will implement functions of
unprecedented nature for the country, and
noted that the mission requires greater respon-
sibility, high professionalism, integrity, team work
and accountability.

He added that “the biggest threat is
political influences, corruption and resoluteness to
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More than 1,000 Emigrate to Armenia

YEVIAN (RFE/RL) – More than a thousand ethnic Armenian citizens of Lebanon have immigrated to Armenia since last month’s devastating explosion at Beirut port warehouses, according to a government agency in Yerevan.

The official Zarik Simanyan, the Armenian government's high commissioner for Diaspora affairs, says that the vast majority of them have expressed a desire to stay in their ancestral homeland for good.

According to various estimates, there are between 80,000 and 120,000 Armenians living in Lebanon. The once thriving community struggled to cope with Lebanon’s ongoing economic crisis even before the August 4 explosion which killed 181 people and left tens of thousands of other Beirut residents homeless.

Following the blast the Armenian government faced growing calls to facilitate the “repatriation” of Lebanese Armenians. Government officials stressed that they are free to immigrate to Armenia, pointing to twice-a-week Beirut-Yerevan flights carried out despite coronavirus-related restrictions imposed in both countries.

Aline Galemkerian, an Armenian woman from Beirut, arrived in Yerevan with her two young sons two weeks ago. One of the boys is already taking piano lessons there.

Galemkerian said she and her husband had decided to relocate to Armenia and try to start a new life there even before the Beirut blast that seriously damaged their apartment.

“I wish we had not seen [the blast] and come here much earlier because it affected us a lot in many ways,” she told RFE/RL’s Armenian service.

She kept crying. “ Tears in my eyes would not dry up for days. We lost many Armenian and Arab friends.”

Galemkerian’s husband will join the family soon. “If my husband finds a job here we will stay here for [good],” said the young woman. “I feel good here. I don’t know if we can have the same [living] standards if we live and work here.”

Another Beirut Armenian, Elias Kajaljan, owned and ran a small company manufacturing furniture in the Lebanese capital until moving to Armenia last week.

“I arrived alone. My son and his wife are coming here on Monday,” he said, adding that his other son plans to join them later on.

Kajaljan said that he would like to set up a similar furniture firm in Yerevan and has already asked the Armenian Ministry of Economy to help him find and rent premises for his small factory. The ministry has promised to explore the possibility of such assistance.

While being mindful of Armenia’s own economic problems aggravated by the pandemic, Kajaljan seemed upbeat about doing business in the country. “I must definitely try to work and succeed here,” he said.

Speaking to RFE/RL’s Armenian service late last month, Simanyan said that his office is now working on a “social, economic, educational and healthcare package” aimed at facilitating the immigration of Lebanese Armenians.

“We want to bring them to Armenia,” said the official. “We do not want them to move to another country.”

Kajaljan confirmed that more Lebanese Armenians are now thinking about settling in Armenia. “Many friends told me: ‘You go there and we’ll follow you,’” he said. “They want to see what we can achieve here before they decide to come here. If they are encouraged they too will come.”

“I do like it, me, their families, children and grandchildren,” added the businessman. “Everyone wants to come. But they need a bit of encouragement.”

Armenian Health Ministry Details COVID-19 Spending

YEVIAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian Ministry of Health said on Thursday, September 3, that it has spent almost 115 billion drams ($25.6 million) since March on treatment of people infected with the novel coronavirus and preventive measures against the spread of the disease.

The figure is equivalent to more than 10 percent of overall public spending on healthcare projected by Armenia’s 2020 state budget. The budget was drafted by the government and approved by the parliament last year before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A report released by the ministry says that more than a quarter of the sum has financed the current expenditures of Armenian hospitals treating COVID-19 patients. Another 2.9 billion drams have been spent on the purchase of medical equipment for those hospitals and medical labs.

According to the report, the ministry has also bought 1.8 billion drams worth of medication as well as protective medical personal worth 876 million drams. Bonuses paid to Armenian healthcare workers at the frontline of the fight against the pandemic have cost the state an additional 826 million drams.

“Everyone wants to come. But they need a bit of encouragement.”
New Dutch Ambassador Presents Credentials

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The new Ambassador of the Netherlands to Armenia Nico Schermers presented his credentials to Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on September 4.

Mnatsakanyan congratulated the ambassador on assuming office and expressed hope that Schermers’ activities will contribute to further strengthening Armenian-Netherlands relations and boost dialogue on different levels, the foreign ministry said in a news release. In this context both sides attached importance to the establishment of the Dutch diplomatic representation in Yerevan.

Mnatsakanyan and Schermers exchanges ideas regarding a bilateral agenda, the multi-sector cooperation and partnership in international arenas.

Artsakh Official Says Turkey’s Provocations Make it Unsuitable as Minsk Group Member

YEREVAN (Arka) — A statement by the Turkish government in support of the provocations and violations of the ceasefire regime by Azerbaijan is unacceptable, Artsakh Foreign Minister Masis Mayilyan said in an interview with Barcelona-based Nationalia news agency.

“The only country that has not only publicly voiced its support for the brotherly Azerbaijan but also has backed the Azerbaijani blockade of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh. It is not a secret that Turkey also helps Azerbaijan in army-building, considering that many Azerbaijani officers are trained in Turkey and Turkish military consultants advise the Azerbaijani military leadership,” Mayilyan said.

He said that the South Caucasus is a region with a very complex geopolitics and multiple players; both regional and outside with varying levels of interests.

And it is not by chance that the Minsk Group co-chair countries dealing with the conflict are Russia, France and the United States.

The Group’s permanent members are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, and Turkey, as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan. On a rotating basis, also the OSCE Troika is a permanent member.

Macron Awards Astrid Panosyan France’s National Order of Merit

PARIS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – French-Armenian politician Astrid Panosyan has received France’s National Order of Merit – the second highest national order after the Legion of Honor in the country – from President Emmanuel Macron, Armenian ambassador to Paris Hasmir Tolkmajian said in a Facebook post on Tuesday, September 8.

“A well-deserved honor for this woman of conviction and heart!” Tolmajian wrote in a tweet about the Interfax news agency.

Read more: Under threat from authorities, Belarusians go into exile

Lukashenko said he would refuse to hold talks with opposition politicians after EU governments called for “dialogue.”

Interfax reported that Lukashenko told a Moscow radio station that he would not negotiate with the opposition Coordination Council “because I do not know who these people are.”

Lukashenko also suggested that Russia would be next if his regime falls in the face of a wave of mass protests.

“You know what we concluded with the Russian establishment and leadership? If Belarus falls, Russia will be next,” state news agency RIA Novosti quoted Lukashenko as saying after he spoke to reporters from numerous Russian media outlets.

Lukashenko’s rival from the disputed August 9 election, the exiled opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, has called for sanctions against the president and his aides.

“My country, my nation, my people now need help,” Tikhanovskaya said in a speech via videolink on Tuesday to the Council of Europe, a European human rights watchdog based in Strasbourg, France, separate from the EU.

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Turkey, he said, has never been neutral in its stance on the conflict despite its membership in the OSCE Minsk Group that through its tripartite co-chairmanship mediates the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

“This is the only country that has not only publicly voiced its support for the brotherly Azerbaijan but also has backed the Azerbaijani blockade of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh. It is not a secret that Turkey also helps Azerbaijan in army-building, considering that many Azerbaijani officers are trained in Turkey and Turkish military consultants advise the Azerbaijani military leadership,” Mayilyan said.

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“We need international pressure on this regime, on this one individual desperately clinging into power,” she said. “We need sanctions on individuals who issue and execute criminal orders that violate international norms and human rights.”

Tikhanovskaya, 37, fled Belarus for Lithuania after the contested election in August, fearing for her safety.

Last month, the European Union said the election was neither free nor fair. Beginning last week from the 27 countries agreed to introduce sanctions against those responsible for the violence and alleged electoral fraud.

The bloc’s foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, has called for the “immediate release” of protesters and political prisoners.

Belarus Protests: Lukashenko Raises Prospect of Fresh Elections

MINSK, Belarus (JW) — On Tuesday, September 8, President Alexander Lukashenko acknowledged that he may have overstayed his time in office, but said he was the only person capable of protecting Belarus for now.

The 66-year-old, who has been in power since 1994, said a rerun of a disputed presidential vote could only be held after constitutional changes, with out giving further details.

“We are ready to carry out the reform of the constitution,” Lukashenko was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency. “After that I do not exclude early presidential elections.”

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Receding Waters of Lake Van Yield Armenian Fortress

The remains of an ancient Armenian fortress have emerged due to declining water level in Lake Van, Ermenihaber.am reported on September 7.

The fortress used to be part of the city of Old Archesh, which was gradually abandoned and went underwater due to the rising water level of Lake Van.

Years ago, when the water level dropped due to the drought, the sunken city emerged once again, but many of its buildings were seriously damaged in the 2011 earthquake.

The building is now visible again, and according to researcher Selahattin Kosar, a section of the fortress will be restored to become a tourist center.

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The building is now visible again, and according to researcher Selahattin Kosar, a section of the fortress will be restored to become a tourist center.
CyArk Uses 21st Century Technology to Preserve Ancient Armenian Monuments

CyArk, a non-profit organization focused on the digital preservation of cultural heritage sites, has employed 3-D laser scanning technology to digitize Armenian cultural sites. These sites include the Noravank Monastery, the Areni-1 cave complex, and the Surp Khach Monastery. The 3-D visualizations provided by CyArk can serve as a medium for storytelling, just like a photo or a video can be used, like how a documentary film can provide a really powerful view and give a voice to the people who have a connection to that place… who populate it. I think virtual reconstructions of places can also serve that same purpose of providing a medium or a canvas, through which one can tell the stories of the people who have formed relationships with the sites who “remember that place and put it in context in the long history of times,” breathing life into them.

The power in these digital reconstructions is their ability to connect people during this time of such disconnection to the art historians, their ability to connect people during this time of isolation. These cultural heritage sites are sitting in CyArk’s digital database to welcome us with open arms. Especially now when travel is less accessible, we exist at our fingertips to be seen, enjoyed and celebrated wherever we may be – a taste of Armenia from the safety of our homes.

The digital models of Ani, the Geghard Monastery, the Areni-1 cave complex, and the Noravank Monastery can be accessed on the CyArk website at https://www.cyark.org/explore/, and virtual tours of the Areni-1 cave complex and the Noravank Monastery with information from local archaeologists and priests can be accessed through the My Virtual Armenia application which can be found on Google Play or the App Store.

Syrian Olive Trees Put Down Roots in Kurdistan Region

Syrian olive trees have been planted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as part of a project to assist Syrian refugees. The trees have been grown in large numbers and are being used to produce olive oil, which is a source of income for farmers. The project is supported by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the European Union (EU), and is expected to create jobs and improve the livelihoods of Syrian refugees in the region.

The project has been led by the Syrian National Council, which is working in partnership with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The aim is to plant 100,000 olive trees in the region over the next five years, with the hope that they will provide a sustainable source of income for local farmers. The project is expected to create 5,000 jobs and provide a valuable resource for the local economy.

The olive trees are being grown on land that has been cleared of mines and other debris from the war in Syria. The trees are being planted in areas that are suitable for olive growing, such as areas with good soil and climate conditions. The trees are being watered regularly and are being protected from pests and diseases.

The project has been welcomed by local farmers, who see it as an opportunity to diversify their crops and improve their livelihoods. The olive oil produced from the trees will be processed and sold under the brand name “Syrian Olive Oil.” The project will also provide training for local farmers on how to grow and sell olive oil.
USA Gymnastics Places Restrictions on Azarian Coaches amid Abuse Allegations

By Scott M. Reid

ALISO VIEJO, Calif. (Orange County Register) — USA Gymnastics has placed interim basis restrictions on three coaches at Azarian Gymnastics, an Orange County club owned and operated by former Olympic champion Edard Azarian, after the national governing body received multiple allegations of physical, verbal and emotional abuse against the coaches, according to a USA Gymnastics letter obtained by the Southern California News Group.

USA Gymnastics was scheduled to announce the measures Tuesday, September 8, according to the letter written by Mark Busby, the organization’s general counsel.

One of the coaches, Perry Davies, said USA Gymnastics informed him he was suspended Friday, September 4.

According to seven confidential formal complaints filed with USA Gymnastics, emails, letters obtained by SCNG and interviews with 12 Azarian gymnasts and parents, USA Gymnastics has received multiple formal complaints against:

• Vanessa Gonzalez, Azarian’s excel program director and a girls team coach, alleging physical, verbal, and emotional abuse, bullying and pressuring athletes to train and compete while injured.

• Amanda Hensley, an Azarian girls coach, alleging verbal and emotional abuse.

• USA Gymnastics is issuing interim measures related to reports received regarding coaches Davies, Gonzalez and Hensley.” Busby wrote in the letter: “In addition to the measures Tuesday, September 8 in accordance with our publication protocol.”

Davies said he is unaware of the allegations against him.

“They told me I was suspended,” Davies said. “That’s all I’ve received. I don’t know what I’ve been accused of. (USA Gymnastics) didn’t even talk to me.”

“Really right now I’m in complete shock,” Davies said. “They told me I was suspended,” said Davies. “I’ve always tried my very best to take care of the kids, to make sure they were in a safe environment. “I would never do anything to hurt a kid. So I’m just completely baffled and I categorically deny doing anything harmful to a kid.”

Davies said he retired from coaching 3½ months ago. He coached nearly 200 state champions during a 25-year career.

Gonzalez and Hensley did not respond to requests for comment. Azarian management also did not respond to a request for comment.

“We anticipate at least one of the restricted coaches will file a request for a hearing panel, and are scheduling a panel for Tuesday, September 15,” Busby wrote in the letter. “Please email me directly ... if you wish to remain anonymous and/or do not want to speak to the hearing panel regarding your experiences.

“We will be reaching out to all witnesses in this matter to gauge willingness to participate in the safe sport hearing panel process. This panel will be used exclusively for the interim measure assessment, if requested, but we will need to begin sharing the information we have gathered prior to any requested hearing.

“For any person who has filed a report in this matter will be given an opportunity to address the panel, if they so choose. We will honor our commitment to protect your anonymity should you wish to withdraw from the process, or ask that we withhold your information.”

Davies said he was also unaware of the September 15 hearing.

Busby added in the letter: “In addition to the measures Tuesday, September 8, according to the letter written by Mark Busby, the organization’s general counsel.

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Armenian Wine Festival Going Online Before the Wine Is Poured

WINER, from page 6

“If the [California state] government allows us to do 3 sets of time with 300 people in each, then we can do it, but if they allow us to have only 50 people at a time, then it’s not possible. Since we are doing it in the restaurant, we have to comply with all the rules and regulations during the public gatherings,” Anush Ghahrian O’Connor, the director of Ginifest shares the inconvenience of making the festival happen during this pandemic. During all three Ginifests, she and Stepan Partamian, the founder of the festival, helped bring the spotlight to Armenian winemakers in the USA. They could not just let the current circumstances hinder all the hard work. So they came up with the unprecedented idea of holding the festival virtually, with the slogan “Before the actual enjoy the virtual.” On August 23, Ginifest went online on Horizon TV and social media platforms with 14 wineries joining live, representing 20 wines and engaging more than 20,000 viewers/guests.

Three years ago Anush was preparing her podcast for “ArmeniaProud–A Toast to Armenia Show,” looking for Armenian producers and businesses to interview and share their stories. She learned that Stepan was organizing an Armenian wine festival. Anush reached out to Stepan to interview him for her podcast. But Stepan had a better idea. Even though he told her that it was just an idea, two weeks later Stepan called Anush and they started to work in realizing the first-ever Armenian wine festival. “I was reaching the winemakers in Armenia, since I already knew almost all of them through my podcasts. Stepan was working on logistics, talking to the local distributors,” remembers Anush. The first Ginifest took place in 2018 at the Chevy Chase Country Club in Glendale, California. The festival hosted 10 wineries from Armenia and South America. With 350 guests, cognac (brandy) educational classes, and a dinner with a pairing wine at the end, the festival became a significant event not only for the Armenian community, but also introduced the rapidly developing wine business to local wine enthusiasts and professionals.

During our interview Anush was sipping Apris, a wine from Artsakh, and giving me a real masterclass about the specifics of Armenian wine. “There are several reasons which make Armenian wine special. First, the majority of it is being produced from the indigenous varieties. These are the varieties that originated in Armenia. For red wine, the most popular variety is Areni, which grows in Yeghegnadzor. From the whites, it’s Voskehat. The second reason is the terroir: the climate, the soil and the topography. Armenia is at such a high elevation, and grapes that are grown at such elevations are different: the grapes ripen slowly and preserve their fruit quality, their acidity and mature elegantly. The third reason is the usage of an ancient vessel or karas. Clay gives different qualities characteristic to the wine. It gives a little microoxygenation that helps with the very slowly maturing of the wine. It’s a very tricky and a risky thing to do. Not everybody can work with karas. After the wine maker makes the wine in the concrete or stainless-steel tank, he puts it in the karas to age. Zorah was the first winemaker who reintroduced the technique by the other Armenian winemakers and soon, other wineries, like Voskevaz and Kars, started to use karas’s in their production.”

Next is the usage of the Caucasian oak. “Almost all the expensive wines in the world have been aged in oak at some point, or fermented in it. Oak is very important for both red and white wine. In Artsakh we have our own species of oak that adds its native qualities to the native varieties in the wine.” Anush is sharing all her knowledge as a sommelier. “The volcanic soil is another advantage of the Armenian wine. And let’s not forget the history of being the oldest wine producers in the world.” Anush concludes the masterclass.

The newly developing wine industry in Armenia is heavily influenced by the Diasporan Armenian expatriates from the Diaspora who return to the motherland with their education, knowledge, and experience. However, wine making is mostly a passion, not a profitable business. “If you’re deciding to establish a winery with the prospect of earning money, you are losing something in between. Even the small vineyards are making profits, but they are not billionaires. If you are going there to make a fortune, you should find some other way.” Anush is giving her realistic assessment of the Armenian wine industry.

Anush thinks that the success of all the Armenian winemakers lies in being united. She remembers the rather recent unpleasant events when the Karas company trademarked the name Karas and later sued Zorah (whose 2010 Karasi Areni Noir made it to Bloomberg Businessweek’s top ten of the world’s best wines) for using the word on its labels. Marked the name Karas and later sued Zorah. She remembers the rather recent unpleasant events when the Karas company trademarked the name Karas and later sued Zorah. She remembers the rather recent unpleasant events when the Karas company trademarked the name Karas and later sued Zorah for using the word on its labels. Anush herself owns a small vineyard (about 100 vines) with her friend in Santa Ana, California, growing mostly Cabarnet and Merlot. “It’s our seventh year already. Actually this weekend I need to go there for the harvest,” says Anush.

For now, they are producing wine only for home consumption, “just for fun.” But it’s time to consider the labeling: Anush Ghahrian O’Connors means business.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Tekayan Cultural Association, Inc.
Dr. Nubar Berberian Annual 2020 Awards

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

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

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

Tekayan Cultural Association, Inc.
Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund
755 Mt. Auburn Street
Watertown, MA 02472
(Electronic application is preferred.)

8) The deadline of receiving the applications is September 15, 2020.
9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in October 2020
10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in November, 2020
11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, July 15, 2020
Pioneering University of Minnesota Transplant Surgeon Dr. John S. Najarian Dies at 92

By Joe Carlson

MINNEAPOLIS (Star Tribune) – Dr. John S. Najarian, a pioneering transplant surgeon who served for decades as head of surgery at the University of Minnesota and whose career was marked by achievement and controversy, has died.

Najarian died of natural causes on August 31 at a memory care center where he lived in Stillwater, his sons Dave and Pete said on September 1. He was 92.

Najarian leaves a complex legacy. He spearheaded experimental lifesaving transplants for adults and children, and he used his immense knowledge of immunology and surgery to create a drug called ALG that prevented organ rejection in many cases.

Yet the Food and Drug Administration shut down the ALG program at the U in 1992, citing dozens of violations of federal drug-testing rules. For two decades, the university received millions of dollars from improper sales of the drug, according to Star Tribune reporting on public records.

Najarian was later indicted on charges of illegally distributing ALG, costing him his job as chairman of the U’s surgery department. A judge dismissed six of the 21 charges against him and jurors acquitted him of the remaining changes in 1996.

After the courtroom ordeal, Najarian chose to keep operating on patients.

“I think any one of us, going through something like that, would have been extremely bitter,” said Pete Najarian, an options trader who appears frequently on CNBC. “He didn’t ever think about that. Even though he was approached to sue back into the courtroom, he didn’t want to do that. I think any one of us, going through something like that, would have been extremely bitter, but he didn’t even think about it. Even though he was approached to sue back into the courtroom, he didn’t want to do that.”

Najarian was known for his dual rigor in both immunological science and surgery, which is what allowed him to innovate.

“John — Dr. Najarian — was equally proficient as a surgeon and as an immunologist. And that was incredibly important. Because he was the one who pushed the boundaries in what you could do with transplant,” said Dr. Jakub Tolar, a bone-marrow transplant doctor who is dean of the U’s Medical School today.

Dr. Niyedimoccadimer, the current chair of surgery at the U, said Najarian was known for pioneering islet cell transplants and kidney transplants for diabetes, and pediatric transplants, among many other things.

In 1999, following a series of investigative reports in the Star Tribune, Najarian was indicted on charges of fraud, theft, and tax evasion related to allegations that under his watch, the Medical School had taken millions in illegal profits from sales of ALG, which was unapproved.

After Najarian was acquitted, the university eventually paid a $32-million settlement to the federal government.

Through no longer head of surgery, Najarian went back to work doing transplants. Dave Najarian said the experience didn’t seem to change his father’s personality.

Charles F. Debono
Engineer, Businessman, Lifelong Learner

NEW YORK — Charles F. Debono, lifelong citizen of New York City, born on July 17, 1927, the son of Armenian immigrants. After growing up in the Flatbush, he played college football at an offensively skilled for the University of California, Berkeley, joining the team in its 1949 Rose Bowl loss to Northwestern.

“The two weeks leading up to the Rose Bowl were when my med school classmates spent their time studying for finals, which were very important and very difficult in the first year,” Najarian was quoted as saying in Cal Sports Quarterly. “So I went to the Rose Bowl with a suitcase full of books, which I never opened, needless to say.”

He quickly became a successful organ-transplant surgeon and was recruited by many colleagues, ultimately choosing the University of Minnesota Department of Surgery, where then-chief of surgery Dr. Owen Wangensteen was building an academic medicine program known internationally for surgical innovation and a tolerance for unconventional approaches.

Najarian took over as head of surgery there in 1967, after Wangensteen retired. He was 39 at the time.

“My son was always a man of principle,” said his wife, Lisa Kashish Najarian. “He knew he was right,” Dave Najarian said. “He was never yelling about it or making a fuss about it. He was just happy that the drug he developed saved so many lives.”

John Najarian was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Margarette, who died last year, and his son Paul, who died in 2014. He’s survived by sons Jon, Dave and Pete, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. No services have yet been announced.
2021 Creative Armenia-AGBU Fellowships for Cutting-Edge Artists to Forefront of Armenia’s Cultural future

NEW YORK — Creative Armenia and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) are now accepting applications for the 2021 Creative Armenia-AGBU Fellowships. Open to filmmakers, musicians, writers, and artists across all creative fields, the Fellowships are a package of funding, mentorship, promotion, and strategic support. Applications will be accepted until October 31.

“In times of crisis, visionary thinking becomes impossible to ignore,” said Alec Moussian, Vice President of Creative Armenia. “The next class of Creative Armenia-AGBU Fellows will have a singular opportunity to shape Armenia’s artistic landscape for years to come.”

The current 2020 Fellows are: composer and musician Armen Bazarian; visual artist and curator Nvard Yerkanian; theatre director and dancer Tsolak Mlke-Galstyan; composer and conductor Alexandr IрядIAN; composer and pianist Zela Margossian, and film-maker Vahagn Khachatryan.

“Our Fellows have shown diversity in their creativity and expression over the past few years putting Armenian culture on the map in their unique ways,” said AGBU Central Board Member Ani Manoukian. “We are proud of the achievements of this partnership and of the talents supported. We look forward to the third cohorts setting the bar even higher.”

For more information on the Fellowships and to submit your application by October 31, please visit creativemirrors.org/fellowships and agbu.org/creativearmenia.

Now in its third term, the Fellowships are a collaboration of Creative Armenia and AGBU, which entered into a strategic partnership in May 2018. Creative Armenia, a global arts foundation for the Armenian people, pursues a mandate to discover, develop, produce, and promote innovative talent. AGBU, a trusted name and leader across the diaspora for over a century, has opened many doors for talented Armenians.

Applications are now accepting applications for the 2021 Creative Armenia-AGBU Fellowships. Open to filmmakers, musicians, writers, and artists across all creative fields, the Fellowships are a package of funding, mentorship, promotion, and strategic support. Applications will be accepted until October 31. Please visit creativearmenia.org/fellowships and agbu.org/creativearmenia. Thank you to all our sponsors and partners.

Dr. Tamar M. Boyadjian to Speak on "The City Lament: Jerusalem Across the Medieval Mediterranean"

FRESNO — Dr. Tamar M. Boyadjian will give a virtual presentation on “The City Lament: Jerusalem Across the Medieval Mediterranean” on Thursday, September 24, at 7 p.m. The present- ation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is sup- ported by the Clarie Bosian Bedrosian Fund. All Lecture Series events will take place online, and not face-to-face, through the Fall 2020 semester.

In “The City Lament: Jerusalem Across the Medieval Mediterranean,” Boyadjian examines how various ethnoreligious cultures across the medieval Mediterranean world lamented the loss of the city of Jerusalem, and in what ways these lamentations are informed by reinscribing models from the ancient world.

The critical objective of Boyadjian’s work is to expose cross-cultural exchange and interaction across the medieval Mediterranean through an examination of the lament tradition across Arabo-Islamic, Cilician Armenian, and Western European literary sources. She demonstr- ates how each of these cultures share similar modes of lamenting cities, all of which also com- ing from ancient prototypes. By understanding the loss of the city, each tradition further its political objectives of reconquering Jerusalem by simultaneously envisaging their own Jerusalems to live anew, through this textually surrogate geography of the city, also informed by the theolog- ical and spiritual tradition of the significance of the city for that particular faith. It is through these city laments that these cultures allow for their own Jerusalems to live anew, through this very paradoxical mourning of its loss and destruction.

Boyadjian is an associate professor of medieval literature and teaches creative writing (poetry) and translation courses in the Department of English at Michigan State University. Her academic research and publica- tions primarily focus on the intersections between Europe and the Middle East across the Medieval Mediterranean, with a focus also on the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. Further research interests include: representation of women across medieval Mediterranean litera- ture; women and representation; Jerusalem and representations of space in literature; and queer studies and the medieval Mediterranean. She is the author of the award-winning book, The City Lament: Jerusalem Across the Medieval Mediterranean (Cornell UP, 2018), and her current book project is Eastern Pentecost, Complynt, Conquest, & Conversion in Late Medieval English Literature.

The presentation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Clarie Bosian Bedrosian Fund. All Lecture Series events will take place online, and not face-to-face, through the Fall 2020 semester. The presentation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Clarie Bosian Bedrosian Fund. All Lecture Series events will take place online, and not face-to-face, through the Fall 2020 semester. The presentation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Clarie Bosian Bedrosian Fund. All Lecture Series events will take place online, and not face-to-face, through the Fall 2020 semester. The presentation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Clarie Bosian Bedrosian Fund. All Lecture Series events will take place online, and not face-to-face, through the Fall 2020 semester. The presentation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Clarie Bosian Bedrosian Fund. All Lecture Series events will take place online, and not face-to-face, through the Fall 2020 semester. The presentation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Clarie Bosian Bedrosian Fund. All Lecture Series events will take place online, and not face-to-face, through the Fall 2020 semester.
The Coded Message from the Orphans In Second Corinthians, 1:8-11

By Charles N. Mazadoorian Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The photograph above of a scriptural message formation which was taken in the Greek City of Corinth in 1923 has always fascinated me. The words “Second Corinthians” and the numerical reference “1:8-11” were formed by the Armenian children who were being cared for by the Near East Relief Foundation at an orphanage site in Corinth. My mother remembered being in the orphanage in the summer of 1923 and she does not remember of which letter or numeral she was a part. It appears that the children were arranged at the foot of a steep hill or mountain so that the photographer was able to look down upon them and get far enough away to take in the whole formation. Perhaps he even had a wide-angle lens.

This photograph of course was not the only such photo taken at Near East Relief orphanages throughout the region. These photographs were likely used for many purposes, including fundraising, brochures and acknowledgment letters of thanks to those in America who so generously contributed and raised money for the orphans and Genocide survivors. One such photograph simply displayed a very straightforward message from the orphans spelling out the words “America We Thank You.”

The picture shown here was also likely intended to express the appreciation of everyone who worked on behalf of the Near East Foundation in the Middle East, as well as especially of the children to themselves, to their benefactors in the western world. Significantly, it also sought to express a spirit of gratitude and hope and to seek further prayers for the orphans and thanks to God in the sense of using that scriptural reference as a message in code, so to speak; a code not in the sense of being a shorthand method of saying something as powerful and as secret but, in the sense of using that scriptural reference as a message from the Armenian orphans to those people in the western world, and in particular America, who had contributed to the financial and spiritual support of the Near East Relief.

It was a unique and appropriate – indeed brilliant – idea for the Near East Relief Foundation leaders to have these orphans and survivors form the letters and numerals of this particular scriptural reference. It was a photograph intended to send a message in code, so to speak; a code not in the sense of being a secret but, in the sense of using that scriptural reference as a shorthand method of saying something as powerful and as moving as only the great Apostle Paul himself could say it. What follows is my favorite version of Paul’s words. It is used for the most part upon a translation found in the New Testament in Modern English by J.B. Phillips. However, I have also added some words here and there to paraphrase the translation. Although this particular combination of phraseology and translation was not available in 1923 (The King James version was and still is the only widely read English translation), it does nonetheless accurately and powerfully convey the spirit of the message in the photograph.

In a larger sense, it was a message from all Armenians who survived the Genocide. By all the laws of man and nature, no Armenian should have survived that brutal slaughter. If they were not directly killed by Turkish guns or knives or beaten to death or drowned or perished from starvation or disease, they should surely have died of despair and hopelessness. One could almost say that the Armenians had no business surviving, as they had no possibility of surviving. The odds against the Armenians surviving, including the tragic European political rivalry, expediency and moral acquiescence in the actions of the Ottoman government and the powerful forces against them were simply too overwhelming. First the government rounded up all the adult males in a village and disposed of them and then returned to finish off the defenseless women and children. The Turks were too determined, too efficient, and too ruthless in their mass annihilation for any Armenian to have survived by accident or chance. The government itself did what it was good at – destruction.

It was the unbearable brutality of the Turks left any vestige of physical life in the body of the Armenian nation, it should be said, but whatever spirit remained in the Armenian soul. Against such vicious malevolence, the spirit of the Armenian soul should have given up any will to survive. Why struggle or even want to survive when the powers intent upon your destruction were so overwhelming and no government in England, France or Near East Relief Foundation as among the happiest of her life.

She and her companions were sheltered from the events following the end of the war; they led a regimented life and were provided a keen sense of purpose and direction. The education they received laid down a solid spiritual and moral foundation. The children developed a strong sense of belonging, self-sufficiency and a deep commitment and loyalty to each other and to their teachers and caregivers, who were incredibly loving, thoughtful, dedicated and skilled – all representative of the heroic humanitarian efforts of the Near East Relief effort itself.

My mother’s miraculous return to what was left of her family in the village of Yeghelli in Kharput after years of complete loss of identity (none of relatives even knew that she was still alive) was representative of the miracle of the survival of the Armenian identity despite the enormous scope and scale of the destructions and killings.

It was miraculous that the Turkish plan to completely destroy and eliminate every vestige of Armenian identity did not succeed. Despite the widespread scale of the atrocities planned and executed by the Ottoman government, the complete defenselessness of the Armenian population and the failure of the international community to intervene when the government’s plan were laid bare (even after urgent pleas, warnings and graphic description of the brutality and destruction of the Armenian people from respected and credible eye witnesses such as US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau), the Armenian identity not only survived the attempted eradication but grew stronger and flourished.

The spirit of the young orphans pictured in the photograph and the message they sent but powerfully conveyed to the world says all that needs to be said about the courage and resilience and strength of the Armenian identity.

(Charles N. Mazadoorian | 1934-1998) was born in Whitinsville, MA to Vago and Mary Mazadoorian. He attended Brown University (1952-1957) and Nakhichevan Mazadoorian (1904-1997), both Genocide survivors who lived in various Near East Relief and other orphanages before coming to America. Charles lived most of his life in New Britain CT where he attended local schools before earning a BA in English Literature from Yale University. He was an ordained deacon in the Armenian Church and served at The Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection in New Britain. He was a committed student of the Bible and of the Armenian Genocide and used his knowledge of both to write this article. Minor edits and some minor additional materials have been made to this article by Charles’ younger brother Attorney Harry Mazadoorian.)
Istanbul Pogroms of 1955 Not Forgotten: Sirapian Publishes French-Language Book

The book relies on three major sources, the massive academic study by Spero Vronis, Jr., The Mechanism of Catastrophe (New York: Greenwood, 2005), Gönem Döküm’s analysis in 6-7 Eylül Olayları (Turk Vakfı, 2005), and the collection of photographs and documents of the Fahri Çöker archive (6-7 Eylül Olayları: Fotograflar-Belgeler, Tarih Vakfı, 2005), as well as a variety of articles and authors. More than half of the 176-page book consists of photographs of the violence and its aftermath, along with reproductions of articles in newspapers and some of the documents from Çöker’s archives.

Sirapian said he had been planning his publication for some 10 years. Among the causes for this long delay was the need to obtain permission from Turkish publisher Türk Vakfı to reproduce materials from the two aforementioned key books.

This is a work of outline and summation, not of original research, intended for a broad audience, but it does add several personal anecdotes as new source material. One such example concerns the author himself, who as an almost-10-year-old boy was jolted into realizing that the story about what happened in 1915 and earlier to the Armenians was not just ancient history, but events that could recur. It made him realize that he had to leave his native country, but it took him 10 more years to become an adult and find the means to do so, and settle in France.

This story is similar to that of many other Armenians of varying ages. I can attest that my own father, already an adult at the time, after witnessing the destruction of the pogroms and pillaging, like the author, decided that Turkey was not a country in which one could form a family and raise a new generation of children safely.

Sirapian, based on his sources, reports that the events of September 6-7 were organized and deliberate. A manufactured incident, a false flag attack on the revered Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s home in Thessaloniki, Greece, served as a spark for protests in non-Muslim neighborhoods of Istanbul which then turned into lootings, rioting and violence. There were similar incidents in Izmır and smaller events in a few other parts of Turkey. Sirapian enumerates facts establishing that the riots were planned beforehand.

Postmaster Adnan Mendres and his Democratic Party were complicit, and tried to counter the declining popularity of his government by recourse to extreme nationalism. It also allowed Turkey to play a stronger role in the London Tripartite Conference on Cyprus which was taking place at this same time.

Internationally, Great Britain benefited from the latter. Sirapian concludes, this Turkish ultranationalism in alliance with Islamism is not just dangerous for Armenians, but threatens the foundations of the French republic and European values.

The Author

Author Sirapian has had an interesting and varied career. He studied at the Mehterian School in Istanbul as a youth and gained a degree from Robert College, an American institution. He studied Byzantine history at Istanbul Edebiyat University [Literature University] from 1966 to 1970. Sirapian also performed as a guitarist and record in a band and recorded several records.

Emigrating to Paris in 1970, for the first five years he worked as a translator in an automobile factory (Simca). He then opened a photography store in 1975 or 1976 which lasted till 1980. Sirapian then went to live in France where extremists Turks can strike more easily than elsewhere. Armenians only recently have started treating this situation seriously, according to Sirapian.

Sirapian concluded, “Other incidents are going to start occurring, which will be far more serious than the ones that took place, and we must give an answer to them.”

Further Work on the 1955 Events and Turkish Ultranationalism

In an interview, Sirapian considered his book only a first step to call attention to the 1955 events, and hoped that other younger writers might prepare more detailed works in French.

As far as the dangers of Turkish ultranationalism spreading its influence, Sirapian exclaimed that France is the soft underbelly of Europe where extremist Turks can strike more easily than elsewhere. Armenians only recently have started treating this situation seriously, according to Sirapian.

Most recently, at the end of August, a monument to the composer Gomidas in Paris which commemorates the Armenian Genocide was defaced with the words “It is false.” Sirapian said, “Armenians have woken up finally. We have to follow events closely.”

He pointed out that it is a positive development that Armenian Genocide denier Maxime Gauin for the ninth consecutive year defaced the monument to the composer Gomidas in Paris which commemorates the Armenian Genocide. Sirapian concluded. “Other incidents are going to take place, and we must give an answer to every step they take.” At the same time, he emphasized that what is most important is to attempt to keep Armenia and Artsakh safe.
The Artifactuals
New Online Publication Examines Contemporary Culture and Politics in America

By Christopher Atamian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK — In early August, the Preston-based writer and thinker Aris Janigian founded The Artifactuals.com, a new and welcome addition to the sometimes-paralyzingly-simplistic discourse on culture in contemporary America. Race, class, politics and free speech are some of the topics that have already graced its pages and which promise to encourage debate and often provoke. Janigian is best-known as the author of five novels, including Riverbig (2009), This Angelic Land (2012) and most recently, Waiting for Sophia at Shutters on the Beach (2019). The latter may be seen as a take on his current undertaking, as it wittily deconstructs the world of politically correct academia.

Janigian’s most recent essay in the Los Angeles Review of Books, A History of My White Privilege, looks at the term “white privilege” through the lens of his own Armenian immigrant family history. The piece garnered kudos in many circles and also angered some who see it as a concession to the right. Janigian wrote recently about the cancellation of this year’s James Beard Awards. I sat down with Janigian recently to discuss his new publication, the aforementioned essay and his desire to move the conversation in America past the present status quo.

Atamian: Your mission statement partly reads “The Artifical[tuals] is a group of writers — and artists who believe that illiberality and hate mentally menace our democracy and Western Civilization itself. In the spirit of the Large Hadron Collider our aim is to create a ‘collision space’ (as opposed to a ‘safe space’) for critical thought and artistic expression.” Can you comment on this?

Janigian: I think the mission statement is pretty self-explanatory, but I would encourage people to read our Manifesto in order to get a richer sense of our project.

Atamian: Artifactuals — artifacts — are defined as “denoting or relating to an object made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest,” as in items found see JANIGIAN, page 15

Arts & Living

Ara Dinkjian Outdoes Himself With ‘Live At Princeton University’

When I was living in Chicago I went to a restaurant one evening where a local Armenian band was playing. It was a typical kef-lineup: oud, gujar, dombeg and clarinet. As the boys started to tune up, they were asked what number they would begin with. One of the musicians suggested something, and the oudist played the first few notes of the melody to confirm the tune they were speaking about. They nodded at each other and then, instead of going into one of the typical Armenian or Turkish songs one would hear in such a venue...they launched into a heartfelt rendition of Ara Dinkjian’s composition, Picture.

At what point does an artist become a phenomenon? At what point, a legend? At what point do we stop discussing who influenced that artist, and start to discuss whom he himself has influenced? Although I am certainly not the first to realize or write about this fact, I want to note that in the case of composer and oudist Ara Dinkjian, it is certainly a fait accompli. Ara Dinkjian is a legend in Armenian music and has been for many years now.

His compositions, almost all instrumental when done by him, have become international hits. (We might also ask, at what point does a song become a “classic”?) They have then been given lyrics in Turkish and Greek, and the resulting songs have also become international hits. Why in Turkish and Greek? In his early career (1980s) it seemed Ara’s music was gaining the most popularity in those countries, though he himself was born and raised in New Jersey, where he still lives. Perhaps the Armenian community was not ready for him in those days.

He was ahead of his time. When it came to listening music, concert music, our community still could not think past Gomidas Vartabed and the classical school. The oud was proper in dance music where it had to battle for dinner-dance and wedding reception supremacy with the keyboards and modern pop styles that became popular in the 1950s and 1960s. The primary artist who did play the oud in a concert setting, George Migdichian, essentially made his fame by using that instrument to play the works of Komitas Vartabed.

I will not attempt to explain here the somewhat circuitous route by which Ara Dinkjian eventually became acclaimed by the Armenian public, but acclaimed he is, and in addition to the Turkish, Greek and Hebrew lyrics, his songs are now being given Armenian lyrics by the likes of Istanbul-Armenian singer Mural Ayvaz.

What is it that speaks to the hearts of all three peoples? Very simply, Ara grew up in the atmosphere of Armenian-American kef music, based as it is on the Anatolian Silk music of Western Armenian regions like Sepastia, Kharpert, Dikranagerd and Cilicia, where Armenian, Assyrian, Kurdish and Turkish traditions came together and on the other hand, the urban cafe music of Istanbul and Izmir, a style that was composed, performed, and propagated by generations of Greeks, Armenians, Sephardic Jews, Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish artists, in the mostly Greek-owned tavernas and gunozis (cabarets) of the city.

The same music was transported to these shores and performed at New England Armenian picnics and Manhattan’s Greenwich nightclubs alike, and engendered generations of Armenian-American performers in whom came to know as the kef style. In the atmosphere of giants of the music like his father, vocalist Omik Dinkjian, and Omik’s oft-times handmaides, oud master Johnny Berberian and clarinet virtuoso Hachig Kazarian, Ara grew up and absorbed sounds that

By Harry Kezelian III
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Les Marsden
‘Veracity and Passion Are Strong In Most Armenians’

YEREVAN/MARIPOSA, Calif. — Actor, director, playwright and musician Les Marsden was born on February 26, 1957, in Fresno. He began piano lessons at age 4 and was an accredited piano teacher by age 11 and composed his first symphony at 13. As a teen, he played principal trumpet in several ensembles including the California Honor Orchestra and the Fresno Junior Philharmonic (FJP) and under Maestro Gay Tucker’s tutelage, he conducted the FJP in performances of his own works. As a teen he acted in local theatre; upon entering college (CSU Fresno) Marsden settled on a theatre career.

As a college student he wrote, produced and starred in his one-man show, "A Night at Harpo’s," with the cooperation of Harpo Marx’s widow, Susan, and their children. Well acquainted with the elderly Grachio Marx, he performed as that Marx Brother for years in various theatrical presentations. Grachio’s son Arthur Marx wrote the play "Gracioso: A Life in Revue" and it created the dual role of Harpo and Chico Marx specifically for Marsden who in addition to playing both brothers in and out of their well-known film personas also starred audiences by actually playing lengthy piano and harp solos in each brother’s distinctive style.

The show had successful runs in New York and London; Marsden was nominated in the U.K. for London’s prestigious Laurence Olivier Award for ”Comedy Performance of the Year” – the equivalent of Broadway’s Tony Awards. He also received the London Critics Award and many others for his work on the London stage.

Marsden was seen nationally and internationally in innumerable dramas, comedies and musicals, with countless appearances on film, TV and commercials. While starting in a role in the famed Arena Stage in Washington, DC in 1999, Marsden had an on-stage accident which resulted in a career-ending permanent injury to his left leg. Disabled, he retired at age 42. With no further need to maintain an East Coast professional base, Marsden, his wife Diane and son Maxfield moved back to their native California to live near their beloved Yosemite National Park.

In 2001 he established the Mariposa Symphony Orchestra, offering his Acting in the Mariposa (AIM) program. see MARSDEN, page 14
Ara Dinkjian Outdoes Himself With ‘Live at Princeton University’

Dinkjian, from page 12

he would recreate in his own compositions – compositions that speak to hearts of Greeks, Turks, Kurds, Israelis, Arabs, and Armenians alike. This has followed in the footsteps of the famed Armenian composers of Middle Eastern music in the Ottoman era, like Tarasset Edmon (1878-1935) and Bekir Efendi Efendi (1858-1913) and who was interestingly born exactly one hundred years before Ara Dinkjian and who both composed as well as performed extensively in the waltz. When someone like Richard Hagopian, or even a Turkish or Arab oud player, performs the first half of this live 2017 concert, it is a Dinkjian composition, begins with Ara playing an exotic, dark, introductory taksim in the main theme of the song and closing out, this number gets an audible huge round of applause from the live audience, captured on the recording.

The second half of the half features Dinkjian with a group known as the New York Gypsy All Stars. Pablo Vergara (keyboard), Pasquale Andreu Basho and Engin Kansu (percussion) play this band along with Pinarbasi and Lumanovski.

The first song in this part of the album, a new composition entitled American Gypsy, is dedicated to Ara’s good friend, the late Haig Hagopian. Hagopian was a clarinet player in American-Armenian kef music for many years dedicated to the togetherness and peace between the world’s ethnicities and religions. The heartfelt melody gets the message across in something that sounds like it could be a pop ballad, a patriotic song, or a hymn. Dinkjian takes several great, brief oud solos in this one that have all the marks of his style but quicks return to a unified “common” expression with the other melodies. The melody seems to cry out for lyrics, but it would take a truly great lyricist to do it justice.

For Alexis, written for one of Dinkjian’s students, is an instrumental workout in a fast version of the 9/8 meter common in Anatolia and the Balkans. Lumanovski takes a clarinet solo

The set opens with the now-classic Picture. Like all the songs on this album, it is a Dinkjian composition. Ara, playing oud, begins the first half of this live concert with his group, The Secret Trio. The other members of the trio are Tamer Pinarbasi, a Turkish kanun player, and Ismail Lumanovski, a Macedonian Roma (Gypsy) clarinetist. The trio are based out of the New York area. All three musicians comport themselves well on this music, which is included by Lumanovski.

Still, the reference with Pinarbasi’s innova-
tive kanun playing imitating (to this critic’s ear) waterfalls or waves in the ocean. Anatolian Armenian line dance). Lumanovski executes a number of glides and gypsy-like techniques, however his technique is used to create more of a jazz “sound” than a gypsy one. Both instrumentalists take solo turns, play off each other. Lumanovski plays a jazz-inflected variation on the melody while Pinarbasi harmonizes (or rather, creates counter-melodies) to amazing effect, and they play off each other; Lumanovski plays a jazz-inflected variation on the melody while Pinarbasi harmonizes (or rather, creates counter-melodies) to amazing effect, and they play off each other; Lumanovski plays a jazz-inflected variation on the melody while Pinarbasi harmonizes (or rather, creates counter-melodies) to amazing effect, and they play off each other; Lumanovski plays a jazz-inflected variation on the melody while Pinarbasi harmonizes (or rather, creates counter-melodies) to amazing effect, and they play off each other; Lumanovski plays a jazz-inflected variation on the melody while Pinarbasi harmonizes (or rather, creates counter-melodies) to amazing effect, and they play off each other.
The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

Dear Les, I have read about you in the 4th volume of Contemporary Television and Film Art and I am excited to interview you. I was wondering if you could tell me a little about your journey as an actor and how you got started in the industry.

I was actually quite surprised that you are an author and director. It's not something I would have expected from an actor. How do you manage to juggle these different roles?

Your approach to acting is quite unique. You mentioned that you try to bring something personal to every role. How does that manifest in your performances?

You have also worked extensively in theater and opera. What is it about these arts that you find so compelling?

Do you have any advice for aspiring actors or directors?

I am curious about your thoughts on the current state of the entertainment industry. How do you think technology is changing the way we consume and create art?

Thank you so much for your time. I am really looking forward to our interview.

Sincerely,
Anne

Les Marsden: "Veracity and Passion Are Strong in Most Armenians' Hearts"

Les Marsden conducting the Mariposa Symphony Orchestra

Music is another art form that you were in even before entering the acting world. Your biography says that you were already a piano teacher at the age of 11.

There was always a piano in our home and my parents later told me that when I was only 3 or so, I'd go over to the piano and play out a tune I had just heard on the TV, even though I could barely reach the keyboard! I first started piano lessons at the age of 4, and by age 11, I received a teaching credential from the California Music Teachers Association. I then took on a few beginning piano students who were even younger than me. By then I had also played the trumpet for a few years, and had my own trumpet students.

So after suffering an onstage accident, because of which you forced to retire at age 42, you went back to your starting point -- music...

Yes, my wife and I realized that if we managed our money carefully, we could retire at that time. I had a very hectic, physically-demanding life -- with about 3,000 performances a year. A great deal of the effort and energy I put into the acting came with an enormous amount of demand and pressure of constantly working. What's happening now is that there's no pressure or demand, and I have it all to myself. I've worked as a conductor, and could compose and arrange to perform concerts wherever I was performing -- even film and TV. But it's completely different now. I've been able to pick and choose the music I want to play, and I can do it in my own style. I can do things that I've always wanted to do.

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New Online Publication Examines Contemporary Culture and Politics in America

JANIGIAN, from page 12
perhaps in a time capsule by our descendants
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Atamian: For the record, does The Artifa\[ctuals\] lean left, right or center? Janigian: The only things the founders have in common is our commitment to bringing together visual and performing artists, and so our tone is more ironic, playful, and learned more about their early lives.

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Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian

Ultracreamy Hummus with Baharat-Spiced Beef Topping

“This hummus is velvety-smooth and creamy, with a satisfyingly rich, balanced flavor,” says senior editor Andrew Janjigian. “To achieve a perfectly smooth texture, we simmered canned chickpeas with water and baking soda for 20 minutes, and then quickly removed their grainy skins by gently swishing them under a few changes of water. Baharat is a warm, savory Middle Eastern spice blend. Our favorite tahini, Ziyad Tahini Pure Sesame Paste, is made with gently roasted sesame seeds, which give it a light color and a mild flavor. If Ziyad is unavailable, please look for a similarly light tahini such as Roland Tahini Pure Sesame Paste or Revala Organics Sesame Tahini. This hummus will thicken slightly over time; add warm water, 1 tablespoon at a time, as needed to restore its creamy consistency. Serve with crackers and pita bread or crackers.”

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 1/2 cups rinsed canned chickpeas
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled
- 3/4 cup lemon juice (2 lemons), plus extra for seasoning
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/3 cup tahini, stirred well
- 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
- 2 (15-ounce) cans chickpeas, rinsed
- 1/3 cup pine nuts, toasted, divided
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon hot smoked paprika
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon hot smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/3 cup pine nuts, toasted, divided
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley

PREPARATION FOR HUMMUS:

Combine chickpeas, baking soda, and 6 cups water in medium saucepan and bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until chickpeas begin to float to surface and chickpeas are creamy and very soft, 20 to 25 minutes.

While chickpeas cook, mix garlic with garlic press or râpe-style grater. Measure out 1 tablespoon garlic and set aside; discard remains of garlic. Whisk lemon juice, salt, and reserved garlic together in small bowl and let sit for 10 minutes.

Strain garlic-lemon mixture of bowl as needed. Add tahini and oil and process until hummus is smooth, creamy, and light, about 1 minute, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Add tahini and oil and process until hummus is smooth, creamy, and light, about 1 minute, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Hummus should have pourable consistency similar to yogurt. If too thick, loosen with water, adding 1 teaspoon at a time. Season with salt and lemon juice to taste. (Hummus can be refrigerated for up to 5 days. Let sit, covered, at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving.) Transfer to wide, shallow serving bowl. Using back of spoon, make a 1-inch deep well in center of hummus, leaving 1-inch border.

PREPARATION FOR THE TOPPING:

Combine water, salt, and baking soda in large bowl. Add beef and toss to combine ingredients. Let sit for 5 minutes.

Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add onions and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions is softened, 3 to 4 minutes. Add paprika, cumin, pepper, coriander, cloves, cinnamon and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add beef and coat, breaking up meat with wooden spoon, until beef is no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Add 1/4 cup pine nuts and lemon juice and toss to combine. Spoon topping into well in hummus. Sprinkle with parsley and remaining pine nuts and serve. Serves 12 to 14 minutes.

For these recipes, go to


Calendar

SEPTEMBER 19 — Armenian Open 2020, Saturday, 11 a.m. Tallwood Country Club is the home of the Armenian Open which provides a unique, traditional experience for this golf tournament. The three churches of St. George, St. Mark and Holy Resurrection have combined their efforts to continue on the tradition, at the original site of where it all started. The committee is working diligently to ensure a memorable experience while adhering to COVID-19 guidelines. Register to play and become a sponsor at https://www.armenianopen.com/register. To learn more visit our Facebook page: https://facebook.com/events/5136204327509372/16?id= or https://www.armenianopen.com/.

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 13 — Trinity’s On-The-Go Picnic, Sunday, Noon – 3 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Pre-Orders Only! Place your orders online or download the mail-in order form to place your order by Wednesday, September 9.

SEPTEMBER 20 — St. James Fall Kick-Off To-Go! Hosted by the St. James Men’s Club and Hye Café groups, in lieu of in-person September events. 12:30 – 2:30pm. Meals will be available for pre-order curb-side pickup only. Online ordering will be available starting on September 1st at http://stjameswatertown.square.site. St. James Armenian Church - 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Please contact info@stjachurch.com with any questions.

SEPTEMBER 17 — Celebrating What Unites Us A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. BREADS! Andrew Janjigian, America’s Test Kitchen Bread Expert. Editor, Cooks Illustrated. To register email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

OCTOBER 7 — Celebrating What Unites Us A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. NATIVE AMERICAN CUISINE Chef Sean Sherman member of the Oglala Lakota tribe Cookbook author, The Sioux Chief Indigenous Kitchen - 2018 James Beard Award for Best American Cookbook; co-founder, The Sioux Chef.com - 2019 James Beard Leadership Award. To register via Zoom, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

RHODE ISLAND

SEPTEMBER 11 – Friday, September 11 at 7:30 pm an exceptional, as we must bring your attention to the “Berlin Liturgy” of Komitas. For some it may come as a surprise, but I must say that many people do not know that the great Komitas wrote many Badaraks. Yes, those liturgies were written on different occasions, for example, on the occasion of the death of Catholics of All Armenians Khoren, Hakob, and others. On upcoming Friday we have a premier presentation to the Armenians of the world, the Komitas Berlin Liturgy. He wrote this in the 1899 year as a diploma thesis of the Berlin Conservatory. The piece is written in German; the material presented in Friday’s evening contains hymns that should be performed during various church’s holidays. At my request the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Yerevan State Chamber Choir Harutyun Topikyan, will tell you about it beginning of program. Livestream on the faceook page of the St. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence.
LIVING WITH AN OTTOMAN ERDOGAN

By Edmund Y. Azadian

In a recent outburst in Ankara, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: “They’re either going to understand the language of politics and diplomacy, or [learn] in the field with painful experiences.”

He continued, “Turkey possesses sufficient political, economic and military power to tear up the immoral maps and documents imposed on it.”

This was a threat to fellow NATO member Greece, whose territorial waters are being overrun by Turkey. Indeed, it has sent gas explorers within the continental shelf of Greece, escorted by its warships. Efforts to mediate the escalating crisis have failed because Greece is refusing to sit at the negotiation table before Turkey ceases its illegal drilling operations in the former’s territorial waters.

Turkey has also claimed the Cypriot exclusive economic zone, citing the “legal rights” of the illegally-occupied northern Cyprus, which Turkey calls the Republic of Northern Cyprus and whose sovereignty it alone recognizes.

NATO and its European members are divided over this stand-off, creating a perfect confusing scenario for Mr. Erdogan to exploit.

President Emmanuel Macron of France is pushing for sanctions against Turkey because he believes Turkey will not heed a command but only respond to actions. Earlier, he had described NATO as “brain dead,” which is being proven now with the current litigation by the pact’s leadership.

Some quarters argue that NATO was founded to defend its members from foreign threats and does not have the power or mechanism in place to mediate internal disputes. Although a European Council meeting is planned to take place in Berlin on September 24-25, with this dispute serving as its main agenda, a definitive outcome may be in doubt, given the division among the member states.

The United States has assumed a hands-off position, having delegated the mediation to Germany. France is almost alone in its steadfast support for Greece.

Italy and Spain have been leaning towards Turkey while Germany is keeping a neutral position to enhance its role as mediator.

International law is definitely on the side of Greece, counterbalanced by Turkey’s aggressive bullying, leading mediators to seek a position between law and intransigence. In the adjudication, Greece is the underdog.

The politicians in Armenia who are cheerleaders for joining the NATO structure must draw their own conclusions from Greece’s predicament.

Judy Dempsey of Carnegie Europe stated: “What we are witnessing is a regional example of what happens in a multipolar world in the absence of firm U.S. leadership. Nor is this merely a passing moment linked to the capture of US Vice President Donald Trump. The former U.S. President Barack Obama’s refusal to abide by his own red lines in Syria in August 2013 was arguably the defining moment.”

President Erdogan is taking advantage of the stalemate by imposing a fait accompli on the group, which will be impossible to undo. One of those initiatives is an agreement signed with Haithi El-Sarrai, the head of the National Accord government in Libya, while the international community is trying to achieve a peace agreement between that faction (which has international recognition) and that of General Haftar. That agreement has angered Egypt, which was ready to resort to military action.

To its credit, the Trump administration has also refused to recognize the agreement, which gives unilateral rights to Turkey and to the Libyan side.

As Libya was part of the Ottoman Empire, there are some groups there who claim Turkish heritage. Turkey has been offering citizenship to those Libyans. Mr. Sarraj is among them and he is grateful to his patron, who helped him militarily to consolidate his rule.

Turkey has been transplanting its communities in different countries, like it did recently in Lebanon. Those communities are time-bomb and will be deployed against any country that encounters a problem with Turkey. We have to remember that Turkey once threatened to use its huge communities in Germany and Holland against those countries.

Some in Armenia are suggesting that since Armenians are scattered in countries all over the world, they can emulate this action. However, that policy can be implemented and activated to mobilize and politicize satellite communities only when the ambitions by using a full range of destructive approach fueled by an expansionist ideology.”

To counter Turkey’s dangerous moves in the region, Tonoyan added, “The Russian presence in the region, as well as the deepening of military-political cooperation between Armenia and Russia are the most important deterrents contributing to the preservation of regional stability and security.”

It was politically expedient in that forum for Armenia’s minister of defense to say that. However, back home, this policy does not enjoy much support in the pro-government press, which has become vociferously anti-Russian, and many analysts gleefully foretell the collapse of the Russian Federation.

Hopefully, Mr. Tonoyan will return home with a more realistic message for that segment of the press to ponder.

Turkey is on Armenia’s border, threatening its very existence through its Ottomanist designs, which entail the occupation of neighboring territories.

Prof. Alan Mikhail of Yale University, describing Erdogan’s ambitions, states that while the Turkish president has been trying to entice Sultân Selim in his quest to controvert the Mandate of Egypt, doubled the territories of the Ottoman Empire, also tak- ing over Mecca and Medina to assume the title of Caliph in 1519. To counter Turkey’s move, Armenian and Russian forces are instal- lables emerge when a country tries to impose its regional geopolitical powers in the region.

To conclude, Erdogan has been building war games in the Eastern Mediterranean with the joint forces of Turkey and Northern Cyprus. Simultaneously, Turkey is orga- nizing military drills in Nakhichevan, which for all practical pur- poses has become a Turkish military base. Ankara just complet- ed war games in August with the joint forces of Turkey and Azerbaijan.

To counter Turkey’s move, Armenian and Russian forces are currently engaged in military drills.

As Erdogan’s administration is using a heavy-handed policy in Azerbaijan, the ruling Aliev clan is confused whether it is losing its sovereignty and has become handicapped in its balancing act between Ankara and Baku.

Recent outbursts in Ankara, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: “They’re either going to understand the language of politics and diplomacy, or [learn] in the field with painful experiences.”

He continued, “Turkey possesses sufficient political, economic and military power to tear up the immoral maps and documents imposed on it.”

This was a threat to fellow NATO member Greece, whose territorial waters are being overrun by Turkey. Indeed, it has sent gas explorers within the continental shelf of Greece, escorted by its warships. Efforts to mediate the escalating crisis have failed because Greece is refusing to sit at the negotiation table before Turkey ceases its illegal drilling operations in the former’s territorial waters.

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Remembering Garo

By Doug Swift

“You want the greatest immigrant story? For my money, it’s the little Armenian guy in my locker room. If you love America, you gotta love Garo Yepremian.”

— Don Shula, Head Coach, Miami Dolphins

He looked good. His bald hemispHEREd, his little hands were folded neatly over his chest, a snappy tie was attached to his neck. Making snappy ties was among the many Yepremian family businesses, and leave it to Garo to give the tie business one last plug. Garo was at peace with the angels, but right away I could see something was missing. Why wasn’t he wearing his Super Bowl VII and VIII rings? Could he have sold them? Garo was always looking for ways to make a buck.

Garo was my best pal among the Armenian family. We met at the first Dolphins training camp under the new head coach, Don Shula. As a rookie prospect, I’d already been in camp for two weeks of practices when the Players’ Association strike against the NFL collapsed and the veterans reported. Garo came in with the veterans. I knew nothing of Garo Yepremian and seemed nobody else did, either. We thought maybe Garo was a neighbor of one of the coaching staff and had been invited to join in the first day activities for a lark. When the veterans reported, the rookies, as was expected, were all moved to the bottom tier of the depth chart while the coaches started working with the veterans. Garo, as a place kicker, had little to do so he too hung around on the periphery of the practice sessions. That hanging around gave us a chance to become acquainted.

Garo was entertaining. He spoke a hybrid language of accented English, Armenian, Greek and French. He did a credible imitation of Ray Charles. After his brief stint with the Detroit Lions in 66 and 67, Garo enlisted in the National Guard to improve his chances for citizenship. During his training with the Guard, Garo picked up an interesting speech mannerism from his drill instructor. Before bellowing any orders to his recruits, the D.I. would announce, “I want to thank you!” then order fifty pushups; or, “I want to thank you! - Miami is a very hot place to hold a train- ing camp;” or when a linebacker from Ole Miss named Jimmy ‘Cadillac’ Keyes asked in a southern drawl, “Say, Gayro, you’re my recruits, the D.I. would announce, “I want to thank you!” or to the sidelines. Unfortunately, this strategy on several occasions put Garo on the wrong side of the field in the midst of a gleefully jeering opponent’s bench. Despite being a constant target, during that year Garo became one of the League’s most reliable kickers and set two NFL records. The first was in the Lions last game of the season when he hit six consecutive field goals against the Minnesota Vikings, but that wasn’t the record Garo was most proud of. The one he really liked was that he was the last player in the NFL ever to play a game without a facemask.

Since Garo and I definitely didn’t reach the appearance-threshold of what a professional football player should be, many of our teammates good-naturedly had cast us as a pair of oddballs. I represented a longhaired hippy from a Division III college somewhere up north and Garo was the diminutive for- eigner who didn’t know much about football. Unlike tradition- al American place kickers such as Pat Summerall, Lou ‘The Toe’ Groza, George Blanda, Don Chandler, Paul Hornung, even Tom Dempsey with a bad foot was occasionally stuck in the defensive line. Garo never had a down of football before he signed with the Lions. He’d never served in the trenches. He’d never been part of the fight. In fact, the team never had to wash his uniform. Why bother, there was never a speck of dirt on it.

As I pondered Garo at rest, I couldn’t help think if that were me posed in the casket, I also wouldn’t be looking up at any

[Continued...]

"just kick the ball!" Parkeetah! Maybe not.

I had some sympathy for Garo. When it was announced that Garo was becoming a Lion, Alex Karras reluctantly allowed that it was okay for Garo to be on the team as long as he didn’t try to go above us. For a warm welcome from his new teammates, Garo had been signed on a Thursday afternoon just before the Lions third game of the season and after kicking that amount of football, Garo was a couple of days at practice, he was issued his first football uniform ever just before the game on Sunday. Garo must have been struggling just to get into his uniform with no teammates willing to help him. I can remember my introduction to organized football when I was ten and trying to figure out the equipment, shoulder pads, hip pads, helmet, and the cleats that had to be shoved into floppy pants that made my arms and legs seem disconnected from my head. However, once sidelined, all I had to do was wait for the field in front of the row of parents and neighborhood well-wishers. Garo, took the field accompanied by his skeptical teammates in front of a lusty, big league crowd of 60,000. As he said, "I was a stranger in a strange land; I want to thank you!

Wanting a clear view of the ball and being just a kicker, Garo decided there was no need for him to wear a facemask. That was a big mistake. At 5’7” and 165 lbs., Garo had no idea that once he walked onto the field for his first game he had no place for FOREIGNER, he was the first to oblige. Nitschke nearly took Garo’s head off, and he was just one of many players who felt foreigners had no place on a profes- sional football field and went out of their way to let Garo know it. After watching Garo on TV, even President Lyndon Johnson claimed I had told the press, "I don’t like the fact that a little foreigner who’d never made a block or a tackle in his life could decide the outcome of a game hard fought by American boys in the trenches."

Realizing he’d become a marked man, Garo made some adjustments. After the Nitschke hit, he had a single-bar mounted onto his helmet, and Harry Gilmer, not wanting to lose his new kicker, told him that after every kick he should run as fast as he could to the sidelines. Unfortunately, this strategy on sev- eral occasions put Garo on the wrong side of the field in the midst of a gleefully jeering opponent’s bench. Despite being a constant target, during that year Garo became one of the League’s most reliable kickers and set two NFL records. The first was in the Lions last game of the season when he hit six consecutive field goals against the Minnesota Vikings, but that wasn’t the record Garo was most proud of. The one he really liked was that he was the last player in the NFL ever to play a game without a facemask.

When Garo died in the spring of 2015, it was the only Dolphins at his funeral. It was my honor to be there, and a greater honor to have been his friend of 40 years and a part of his extended family. Still, from a statistical point of view, Garo deserved a bigger, more portentious sendoff. He was after all, one of the greatest Dolphins ever. Not only was he the leading scorer for the Dolphins in 1971, but that year he also was the leading scorer for the entire NFL. One of those scores occurred on a cold, muddy Christmas Day in Kansas City when Garo hit a 37-yard field goal in double overtime to end what still counts as the longest game in the history of the NFL. Plus, it was that kick that clinched the Dolphins to the AFC Championship game, and subsequently to its first Super Bowl. Then in ’72, Garo once again the leading scorer for the Dolphins and there is no question that without his right foot, ‘The Perfect Season’ never would have happened.

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Why Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Love Affair with the Ottoman Empire Should Worry The World

By Alan Mikhail

At the end of August, Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan celebrated the Islamic New Year with apocalyptic visions of his rule. He vowed to emulate the Ottomans, who for five centuries ruled a vast empire stretching from the Mediterranean to the borders of Persia. Erdogan spoke of a gargantuan global empire. For Erdogan, this time that the Ottoman Empire grew from a strong region in the 16th century under the rule of Selim I.

We should be wary of Erdogan's embrace of Selim's expansionist vision of Turkish political power. It represents a strategy of strongmen politics that led to regional wars, the attempted annihilation of religious minorities, and the monopolization of global economic competition. Additionally, Erdogan's use of a military/natural gas reservoirs around the world underscores this: today the state of Selim's foreign military ventures in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. At home, he has set his sights on the White Church Country, Kurds, intellectuals, Christians, women, and Kurds. Erdogan cultivates his own Sunni religiosity to position Islam at the center of Turkey's domestic agenda, with the church's conversion the most potent symbol of this. Erdogan represents a political logic of zero-sum competition that pits Turkey against Saudi Arabia and Iran for control of the region and over claims of global Islamic leadership.

Erdogan's vision is a return to the Ottoman Empire as a model of strong rule. Erdogan speaks of a grand plan using the power of the state. The agenda is a mix of economic ambition and political will. Erdogan's vision is not just about domestic affairs, but also about foreign policy. He seeks to emulate the Ottomans, who for five centuries ruled a vast empire stretching from the Mediterranean to the borders of Persia.

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Erdogan’s Love Affair with The Ottoman Empire Should Worry the World

ERDOGAN, from page 19
in its history, after over two hundred years of being a state whose popula-
tion was mostly Greek Orthodox. With this victory, Selim became the first Ottoman sultan to rule Mecca and Medina, Islam’s holiest cities, thus earning the title of caliph and cementing the empire’s glob-
al Islamic credentials. If Selim was the first Ottoman to be both sultan and caliph, Erdogan is the first republican leader to profess to pos-
sessing both titles.
Like President Donald Trump’s purposeful deployment of the sym-
bolism of Andrew Jackson — prominently displaying his portrait in the
Oval Office and defending his statues — Erdogan has trafficked publicly
and specifically in the symbolic politics of Selim in Turkey. His most
striking act was to name the recently constructed third bridge over the
famous Bosphorus Strait after Selim. Erdogan has also lavished enor-
mous resources on Selim’s tomb and tur-
ban that had been stolen years before. This far-from-subtle first act after
winning a referendum that gave him near-limitless power made clear
who Erdogan’s role model is.
Erdogan and his Islamist party colleagues regularly describe them-
selves as the “grandchildren” of the Ottomans. In this very pointed
genealogy, Erdogan purposefully skips a generation — that of Turkey’s
republican fathers since 1923 — to leapfrog back in time to when the
Ottomans ruled the globe with their particular brand of Turkish Sunni
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For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or call 617 924-4455.

Dr. Ohannes Kiliçdağ to speak on Conscription Of Armenians into Ottoman Army

FRESNO — Dr. Ohannes Kiliçdağ, Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies at Fresno State, will give a Zoom presentation on “Living Together Requires Dying Together”: Conscription of Armenians into the Ottoman Army after the 1908 Revolution” at 7 p.m. on Friday, September 18. The presentation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation. All Lecture Series events will take place online, and not face-to-face, through the Fall 2020 semester.

After three decades of Hamidian despotism, the July 1908 revolution that restored the constitution and par-
lament was greeted with joy and hope as people, espe-
cially Armenians, regarded it as the end of oppression
and the beginning of a new era where different ethno-
confessional groups would live freely as equal citizens.
One of the most essential indicators and necessities of the
equal citizenship was the conscription of Christians
and Jews who had been exempted from military service in
exchange for paying a special tax until that date. As a
matter of fact, after the revolution conscription of
Christians and Jews became one of the hot debates in
the newly formed parliament as well as in the press.
Eventually, in July 1909 the Ottoman parliament abol-
ished all exemptions and military service became com-
pulsory for all males. This talk focuses on these debates
and how different Armenian circles, including Armenian
MPs, reacted to this idea, what they said and did before
and after the promulgation of the conscription law.
Archaeological remains and the beginning of a new era where different ethno-
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Archaeological remains

Dr. Ohannes Kiliçdağ

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For information about Dr. Kiliçdağ’s lectures please follow Armenian Studies at Fresno State or at the Program web-
site, www. fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies.