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Sochi Meeting: Russian Leader Hosts Sargsisian-Aliyev Talks

SOCHI, Russia (Itar Tass) – The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Serge Sargsisian and Ilham Aliyev, have held their first meeting this year in southern Russia initiated and hosted by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

The meeting on Monday early afternoon in the Krasnaya Polyana ski resort near Sochi reportedly focused on prospects of the Karabagh settlement.

The Sochi meeting was the fifth between Sargsisian and Aliyev hosted by the Russian leader. After the first one in November 2008, Moscow, Yerevan and Baku signed a joint declaration that reiterated support and approval of the peace efforts conducted see SOCHI, page 4



From left, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia and President Serge Sargsisian of Armenia, met in Sochi on Monday.

Peace Deal under Threat

YEREVAN (Reuters) – Armenia accused Turkey on Friday of trying to block a deal to establish diplomatic ties and open their border and warned their bid to overcome a century of hostility could collapse.

The comments by Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian cast fresh



Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian

doubt on the future of the rapprochement, after Turkey accused Armenia's Constitutional Court of trying to re-write the text of the deal with a court ruling last week.

Faced with a backlash from Turkish ally Azerbaijan, the rhetoric in both countries has grown increasingly bitter since they inked accords in October designed to overcome the legacy of the

World War I mass killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks.

The deal stands to burnish Turkey's credentials as a potential EU entry state and boost its clout in the Caucasus. It would bring big economic benefits to poor, landlocked Armenia.

But asked on Friday if the process was in danger of collapsing, Nalbandian said:

"If Turkey is not ready to ratify the protocols, if it continues to speak in the language of preconditions and to block the process, then I don't exclude it."

But he added: "I hope Turkey will ratify the documents."

The two protocols require parliamentary ratification in both countries before they enter into force.

Turkey, stung by the backlash from oil-producing Azerbaijan, says it first wants Christian Armenia to make concessions in the festering conflict with Muslim Azerbaijan over the mainly Armenian breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabagh.

Turkey closed its border with Armenia in 1993 in solidarity with Azerbaijan during the war.

Armenia rejects any link between the two issues, but diplomats say international mediators have stepped up efforts to squeeze at least some sign of progress out of negotiations on Nagorno-Karabagh – which resume on Monday in Russia.

Turkey is anxious to keep Azerbaijan on see PROTOCOLS, page 2

Armenia, Karabagh 'Ready' for Another War

By Sargis Harutyunyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian warned Azerbaijan on Monday against attempting to win back Nagorno Karabagh by force, saying that Armenian troops have significantly beefed up defense fortifications around the territory and are prepared for another war.

"As defense minister, I'm always getting ready for that," Ohanian said when asked about chances of renewed fighting for Karabagh at a meeting with students and the faculty of Yerevan State University.

"Both the entire army personnel and all of our veteran guys, mobilization resources know that the army command, including the defense minister, would be personally engaged in all hot and tough spots that might, God forbid, emerge on the borders of our republic and Artsakh (Karabagh) in order to defend our people," he told them.

Ohanian says the Karabagh Armenian army backed by Armenia proper has in recent years further fortified its positions east and north of the territory in a way that precludes the success of any Azerbaijani offensive. "The Defense Army of the

see WAR, page 3

Armenian Community Welcomes New Armenian Ambassador to the UN



Ambassador Garen Nazarian and Military Attaché Lt. Col. Mesrob Nazarian are surrounded by members of the TCA New York/New Jersey Chapter Executive committee. (Missing from photo is Vartan Ilandjian) See story and photos pages 11-13.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia to Send Aid To Haiti

YEREVAN (Radiolur) – The Armenian government announced it will allocate \$100,000 in humanitarian aid to Haiti.

"Armenia was ready to extend a helping hand just a few hours after the earthquake," Prime Minister Tigran Sargsisian stated.

Fifty rescuers were ready to leave and help the casualties of the earthquake. However, the volunteers did not depart for Haiti because of a number of technical reasons. Instead, the Armenian government decided to help Haiti financially.

Four Athletes to Represent Armenia at Vancouver Olympics

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – The International Olympic Committee has confirmed the participation of four skiers to represent Armenia in the upcoming Winter Olympics to be held in Vancouver, Canada, February 12-March 1.

Sergey Mikaelyan from Ashotsk and Kristine Khachatryan of Gumri, will compete in sprint and cross country events. American-Armenian Ani-Matilda Serebrakian of California and Arsen Nersisyan of Tsakhkadzor will compete in the alpine skiing slalom events.

Armenian figure skaters, who represented Armenia in the 2006 Winter Games, failed to qualify this year.

The Vancouver Games will be the fifth for Team Armenia in the Winter Olympics. Since 1994 Armenia has fielded a small team, but has failed to produce any medal winners.

At the last winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, in 2006, Armenia was represented by five athletes, none of whom had unsuccessful performances, especially the cross-country skiers.

Armenia had its largest delegation – nine – at the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah.

More updates on Team Armenia's preparations for the Winter Olympics will be available on the NOCA's official website www.armnoc.am.

Moscow Mayor to Visit Yerevan

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – On January 29-30, a delegation headed by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov will officially visit Yerevan. The delegation was invited by Yerevan Mayor Gagik Beglaryan, his press service reported.

During the visit, the parties will discuss cooperation programs for 2010-2011, the agreement on cooperation between the government of Moscow and the mayor's office of Yerevan in trade, scientific-technical and humanitarian spheres.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Armenia and Austria Sign Educational, Cultural Pact

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian Education and Science Minister Armen Ashotyan and Culture Minister Hasmik Poghosyan paid an official visit to Vienna January 25 to 28.

An official from the Education and Science Ministry said that a memorandum of mutual understanding on “cooperation in arts, education and culture” was signed between the Federal Ministry for Science, Art and Culture of the Republic of Austria and Republic of Armenia Education and Science Ministry and Culture Ministry.

Ashotyan and Claudia Schmidt, Federal Minister for Science, Art and Culture of the Republic of Austria, discussed issues on autonomy of universities, mutual cooperation between the universities of the two nations.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki Arrives in Armenia

YEREVAN (News.am) – A delegation headed by Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki arrived in Armenia to participate in the ninth session of Armenian-Iranian intergovernmental commission.

In the course of the visit Mottaki is scheduled to meet with President Serge Sargsian, Premier Tigran Sargsian, Parliament Speaker Hovik Abrahamian, National Security Council Secretary Artur Baghdasarian and Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian.

In the course of the talks the parties were going to exchange views on bilateral cooperation issues, as well as international and regional developments, ISNA reports. Under the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs annual report, bilateral economic cooperation between Armenia and Iran implies expansion of collaboration in oil and petrochemical spheres, including building of liquid fuel unit in Armenia.

Italy, Armenia Develop IT Cooperation

YEREVAN (Aysor.am) – At the invitation of Armenia’s Minister of Economy Nerses Yeritsian, Italian Deputy Minister of Economic Development Paolo Romani and Italian delegation of TV, Internet, software and other technologies’ specialists are paying a visit to Armenia. The Italian delegation is reported to stay in Armenia until January 27.

On the visit, Italian guests will meet with Armenia’s Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, Minister of Economy Nerses Yeritsian, Minister of Transport and Communications Gurgun Sargsian, Public Services Committee chairman Robert Nazarian, and Deputy Director-General of the Presidential Administration of Armenia Mikael Minasian. In addition, the guests visited Gumri to learn about starting IT programs there.

Armenia-EU Relations Developing

YEREVAN (armradio.am) – On January 21 Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian received the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby.

Summing up the achievements of Armenia’s European integration policy in 2009, the parties noted with appreciation that the dynamic development of the Armenian-EU relations continues both in multilateral and bilateral formats.

Nalbandian underlined that “Armenia will continue taking active steps towards further reinforcement of relations with the European Union.”

The parties exchanged views on the Eastern Partnership Program, attaching importance to the full utilization of the existing potential – the development of the Associated agreement and the easing of the visa regime.

Peace Deal under Threat

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side, with the former Soviet republic courted by the West and Russia for its energy reserves in the Caspian Sea and as a potential supplier for Europe’s planned Nabucco gas pipeline.

Turkey said the Armenian court ruling, which endorsed the protocols, could derail the process by reaffirming the state’s obligation to pursue international recognition of the World War I killings as genocide, a term Turkey vehemently rejects.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Friday it was “contradictory to the letter and spirit of the protocols,” but added that talks would continue.

Nalbandian played down hope of an imminent breakthrough on Nagorno-Karabagh, which broke away from Azerbaijan with Armenian backing in the early 1990s in a war that killed 30,000 people.

The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan hold the latest round of talks on Monday in Russia’s Black Sea city of Sochi.

“If the Azeri side takes a more constructive approach, there might be movement,” Nalbandian said. “But that there might be some kind of breakthrough in the near future, I can’t say that.”

(Additional reporting by Thomas Grove in Istanbul; writing by Matt



Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian

Robinson in Tbilisi; editing by Charles Dick.)

PACE Approves Change in Armenian Delegation

STRASBOURG, France (RFE/RL) – The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) on Tuesday effectively validated the controversial removal of an outspoken opposition parliamentarian from the Armenian delegation in the Strasbourg-based body.

Zaruhi Postanjian of the opposition Zharangutyun (Heritage) party has represented Armenia in the PACE along with three other lawmakers affiliated with the ruling Republican and Prosperous Armenia parties as well as the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun).

Parliament speaker Hovik Abrahamian decided earlier this month to replace Postanjian by a pro-government deputy on the grounds that Dashnaksutyun left the country’s governing coalition in April and is now in opposition to President Serge Sargsian. Abrahamian argued that the presence of two opposition deputies in the delegation does not reflect the balance of forces in the National Assembly.

Postanjian rejected the explanation, saying that the authorities are simply keen to prevent more criticism of their policies in the Council of Europe. She claimed that Dashnaksutyun mainly disagrees with the Sarkisian administration’s foreign policy and is therefore not a genuine opposition force.

Despite being excluded from the delegation, Postanjian traveled to Strasbourg to attend the PACE’s winter session that began its work on Monday. Her allegations of serious procedural violations in the change of the delegation make-up were swiftly picked up by the European People’s Party (EPP), one of the largest PACE factions.

“On behalf of the EPP group, I wish to challenge the credentials of the Armenian delegation,” Christos Pourgourides, a PACE member from Cyprus, declared at the start of the session. “We have received information that the Armenian parliament manipulated the internal rules in order to exclude a member from our group.”

In accordance with the PACE statutes, the matter was immediately referred to the assembly’s Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs. The committee discussed it and found no violations on the part of the Armenian parliament leadership on Tuesday. According to David Harutiunian, head of the Armenian delegation, the decision amounted to an automatic confirmation of the delegation’s credentials by the PACE.

Speaking to RFE/RL by phone, Harutiunian blamed the controversy on the PACE Monitoring Committee’s failure to hold a planned discussion of Armenia’s compliance with PACE resolutions on the lingering fallout from the March 2008 unrest in Yerevan.

The delay appears to have further

reduced chances of its inclusion on the agenda of the weeklong PACE session. Pro-government members of the Armenian delegation see no need for such a debate, saying that the Armenian authorities have mostly complied with the resolutions urging an independent inquiry into the delay unrest and the release of opposition members arrested on “seemingly artificial or politically motivated charges.”

The main opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) claimed the

opposite in a 7-page note sent to the Monitoring Committee. It said the authorities are still holding 15 “political prisoners” and failed to conduct an “impartial and credible” investigation into the post-election violence that left ten people dead. The HAK cited the dissolution of a bipartisan body formed for that purpose in late 2008.

“We think that the events of March 1 [2008] have still not been solved,” Levon Zurabian, a leading member of the opposition alliance, said on Tuesday.

US Praises Armenian Court Ruling on Turkey

By Emil Danielyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The United States welcomed a ruling by Armenia’s Constitutional Court late on Friday, effectively dismissing Turkey’s claims that it runs counter to the Turkish-Armenian fence-mending agreements.

“We view the court decision as a positive step forward in the ratification process of the normalization protocols between Turkey and Armenia,”

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. The Anatolia news agency quoted an unnamed Turkish Foreign Ministry official as saying that Davutoglu reiterated Ankara’s claims that the Armenian court’s interpretation of the protocols’ implications contradicts their “essence and substance.” Davutoglu said earlier on Friday that he will urge his US and Swiss counterparts to put pressure on the Armenian leadership.

Washington’s reaction to the Turkish claims represents a significant boost to



Philip Gordon

Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon said in written comments sent to RFE/RL. “The court decision permits the protocols, as they were negotiated and signed, to move forward towards parliamentary ratification, and does not appear to limit or qualify them in any way.”

“We are confident that both Turkey and Armenia take their commitment to the protocols seriously, and we urge timely ratification of the protocols by both countries,” added Gordon.

The comments followed a reported phone conversation between US

Yerevan’s position in the row, which has raised more questions about the success of the US-backed normalization process. US officials have repeatedly urged Armenia and Turkey to implement the landmark agreements without preconditions and within a “reasonable” period of time.

“Our position remains the same,” said Gordon. “We support the normalization process, which we believe contributes to peace and stability in the Caucasus. What is critical is to keep the parties focused on the vital importance of moving ahead.”



ARMENIA

Restoring 'Piti' among Delicacies

By Nazik Armenakyan and Gayane Mkrtchyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Finding someone to prepare an Armenian ethnic dish called “piti” for this column proved harder than expected, as those approached most often said they knew how to prepare the dish, but insisted that it could only be made in a stone oven.

When others fail, turn to mama.

“Of course I can do that, I invite you to our house to eat ‘piti’ tomorrow,” said my 60-year-old mother, Anahit Harutyunyan.

“Piti” (from the Armenian word for “crock”) is a traditional Armenian dish made of chickpeas and mutton, dried plums and okra and is cooked in a pot for some three hours until all ingredients mix – a sort of Armenian chili, maybe.

We arrive at my mom’s house early to follow the cooking process and find all necessary ingredients on the kitchen table: mutton, peas, onion, potato, okra (sometimes referred to as “gumbo”), butter, plums, tomato paste, cayenne and black paper, salt.

The cooked peas and mutton (browned, with bones removed) are already on the table in the kitchen.

Mother chops onion into small pieces, then fries in butter, adds two tablespoons tomato paste, cayenne and black pepper. In a few minutes she adds the broth, the peas, and the mutton. (Peas should be soaked at least two hours prior to cooking.)

“After cooking the meat, it is necessary to remove the bones before adding it to the broth. It is very important for the pea to be properly cooked, almost melted. During my childhood, when we used to live in our village (Geghard), I remember how my mother was preparing ‘piti’ in a clay pot. The whole mass

was put into a clay pot and hung it in a *tonir* (an oven prepared in a hole in the ground, usually used for baking bread). ‘Piti’ was cooked in stone ovens in many provinces of Armenia. Restaurants still use this (stone oven) method,” she says. “Now housewives can use either electric ovens or cook it on a gas stove.”

Mom says that, of course, the “piti” cooked in a *tonir* tastes differently. But she also agrees with the adage that any dish will be delicious if the cook puts her soul into it.

In 15 minutes she adds potato, sliced into small cubes, to the boiling mixture, and when they (cubes) are cooked, she adds dried plums and two cloves of garlic.

“In a few minutes we add okra. Dried plumps are cooked longer than okra that is why we add it later, and then we add some chopped parsley, and wait for about 10 minutes,” she says.

My mother’s spices are resting in one corner of the kitchen. It seems that the secret of her delicious dishes lies here. And while “piti” is being cooked, she says, “Smell it – it smells nice, doesn’t it? This spice is especially for potato, this one – for fish, this one I use only while cooking chicken, and we will add this mixture of seven types of spices (common caraway, cayenne pepper, black pepper, coriander seed, garlic powder, cinnamon, ground all-spice) to our ‘piti.’”

The smell of “piti” wafts in the whole house. And while she lays the table, mom says that “piti” has also come to mean “everything mixed with each other.”

And with “everything mixed together” the “piti” is ready. The yellow pea and green okra make a colorful display together in the pot;



Piti as it should be

black dried plums are shining in the background.

My mother fills plates with “piti” and says, “‘Piti’ has special fans. It is necessary to love this dish in order to be able to eat it. So, try it, and I wish you good appetite.”

The following ingredients are necessary for cooking “piti:”

- 1 kg of mutton
- ½ kg chickpeas
- 2 medium-sized onions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 medium-sized potatoes
- 200 grams okra
- 200 grams butter
- 5-6 dried black plums
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- Cayenne and black pepper to taste

How to cook “piti:”

1. Cook 1kg mutton and ½ kg peas adding salt (soak peas before cooking)
2. Chop two onions into small pieces and fry in butter
3. Add two tablespoons tomato paste, cayenne and black pepper
4. Add the broth and mutton (previously removing the bones) and peas
5. Cook for 15 minutes, add potatoes (cut into cubes)
6. Add plums.
7. In 15 minutes, add two cloves of garlic, parsley and okra
8. Cook until all ingredients are well mixed

Total process should take two to three hours. It is preferable to cook “piti” in earthenware pots.

Economic Recovery Seen to Be Accelerating

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia’s economic recession eased further last month, resulting a full-year Gross Domestic Production fall of 14.4 percent, according to official statistics released on Monday.

The rate of economic contraction reported by the National Statistical Service (NSS) is significantly down from the peak decline of 18.5 percent registered during the first seven months of 2009. It essentially matches government forecasts made in recent months.

The country’s macroeconomic performance began slowly improving in September, with GDP decreasing by 16 percent year on year in January-November. This has been due, in large measure, to the fact that the Armenian economy was already adversely affected by the global financial crisis in the fourth quarter of 2008 after nine months of double-digit expansion.

The Armenian government says economic growth will get back into positive territory but will make up a modest 1.2 percent this year. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank

have made similar forecasts. According to IMF projections, Armenian growth will accelerate to 3 percent in 2011 and gradually reach 4.5 percent in 2014. The Armenian economy expanded by an average of 12 percent from 2002 through 2007.

The GDP fall in 2009 was primarily attributable to a nearly 37-percent slump in construction registered by the NSS. The once-booming construction sector, which accounted for about one fifth of GDP, has been hit hardest by the recession and the resulting reduction in external cash inflows to Armenia.

A more than 8-percent fall in industrial output also significantly contributed to the decline. By contrast, the NSS recorded a 1 percent increase in retail trade and other services. Armenia’s agricultural output, another major source of GDP, was flat in 2009 mainly because of the decreased production of meat and dairy products.

Despite the recession, the Armenian authorities have failed to keep inflation below a maximum target rate of 5.5 percent. Consumer prices in the country rose by 2 percent in December alone, pushing up the annual inflation rate to 6.5 percent.



Construction workers in Armenia

Armenia to Spend \$120M on North-South Highway

YEREVAN (Arka) – Armenia is planning to spend \$120 million in 2010 for construction of North-South highway, Armenian Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsyan said on Thursday.

At its Thursday meeting, the cabinet ministers approved the investment program of North-South highway construction and the preliminary agreement between Armenia and Asian Development Bank on a \$500-million loan.

Yeritsyan said that the investment program will be implemented over the period between 2010 and 2017.

On August 6, 2009, the Armenian government approved the decision to construct North-South highway.

The highway will give Armenia a chance to mitigate the consequences of the long-years blockade by Azerbaijan and Turkey in the future.

Armenia, Karabagh ‘Ready’ for Another War

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Nagorno-Karabagh Republic has created such a system of fortifications which the enemy can not attack and overcome in a classical style,” he said.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev regularly states that Baku will “liberate” Karabagh and Armenian-controlled territories surrounding it if the long-running peace talks with Armenia end in failure. International mediators disapprove of such threats, saying that the Karabagh conflict can not be resolved by military means.

Armenian leaders have repeatedly denounced the war rhetoric. “Such statements show that

Azerbaijan is not prepared for mutual concessions in 2010 as well,” Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian said on January 17. He said they also “can not make any impact on or intimidate Armenia or Artsakh.”

Ohanian, who was a senior Karabagh Armenian commander and lost a leg during the 1991-1994 war, likewise insisted that the Azerbaijani leadership would fail to solve the conflict “unilaterally.” He also said Yerevan will never accept a settlement that would place Karabagh back under Azerbaijani rule and strip it of a “common border” with Armenia.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Oleg Yesayan Appointed Ambassador to Russia

YEREVAN (armradio.am) – Last year the Armenian Ambassador to Russia Armen Smbatyan was elected executive director of the Humanitarian Cooperation Council of the CIS countries. Therefore, the government of Armenia needed to replace him.

President Serge Sargsisian signed a decree this week releasing Smbatyan from the duties of Armenia's ambassador to the Russian Federation.

According to another presidential decree, he appointed Oleg Yesayan Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the Russian Federation (based in Moscow).

Armenia Not to Participate in Davos Economic Forum

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Armenia will not attend Davos Economic Forum this year. Armenian President Serge Sargsisian will not take part in the forum, President's press secretary Samvel Farmanyan said.

Ministry of Foreign Ministry Tigran Balayan also confirmed Armenia's non-participation.

Tbilisi Destroys Traces Of Armenian Culture

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) – “To achieve any significant results in the preservation of Armenian historical and architectural monuments within and outside the country the state should manifest a consistent and rigid position. However, neither the state nor the public reveals any position in this regard, so we ourselves become complicit in the destruction of our creative heritage,” Samvel Karapetyan, head of the “Study of Armenian Architecture” NGO said at a press conference on January 22.

“Armenian historical and architectural heritage is a significant part of world cultural heritage,” he said, adding that the Georgian authorities pursue the policy of elimination of the Armenian culture in the territory of Georgia.

Mass Arrests Registered In Nakhijevan

BAKU (PanArmenian.Net) – Mass arrests and beatings are reported to take place in Benanyar village of Nakhijevan Autonomous Republic, Azerbaijan.

According to Azeri media reports, the situation escalated in December 2009, when two dozens of the village elders were arrested and tortured. On January 5, police cordoned off the village and arrested most of men there, Lenta.ru said.

The local authorities label the reports as “fiction.” Meanwhile, Nakhijevani outpost in Baku confirmed a conflict between the local law enforcers are villagers.

An Armenian territory until 1923, Nakhijevan was transferred to Azerbaijan, whose leadership eliminated the Armenian historical and cultural heritage in the area.

French Court Fines Turkish Woman for Denying Genocide

LYONS, France (armradio.am) – A court in Lyons has fined Turkish Sirma Oran for denying the Armenian Genocide.

She was found guilty under a provision in French law which makes Genocide denial punishable. She was fined 1,500 euros.

Oran said she intends to appeal the decision of the court to the French Supreme Court and if she is again unsuccessful, to take her case to the European Court.

Oran is the first Turkish woman punished in France for rejecting the Armenian Genocide.

Ogun Samast's Presence in Istanbul Was Known Two Days Prior to Dink Murder

ISTANBUL (PanArmenian.Net) – A new document that may deepen the investigation into the Hrant Dink assassination has been submitted to court by Trabzon's former police chief and current head of intelligence for the Police Department, the Turkish newspaper, Radikal, reported.

The document, sent by Ramazan Akyurek, features an intelligence report on assassination suspect Ogun Samast, that

shows he was under surveillance when he arrived in Istanbul. The document reads: “His friends greeted Ogun Samast when he came to Istanbul.”

If the document is genuine, it proves that Samast's presence in Istanbul was known two days prior to the murder.

The existence of the document was revealed to the public by Bahri Belen, one of the Dink family's lawyers, on CNN

Turk's show, “Tarafsiz Bolge” (Neutral Zone), Tuesday night. Another guest of the show was Nedim Sener, author of the book Hrant Dink Cinayeti ve Istihbarat Yalanlar (The Hrant Dink Murder and Intelligence Lies). Sener reminded that in the report, Akyurek was blamed by the Prime Ministry's investigation committee for neglecting his duty, and responded to new questions on this recent development.

Sener said security forces were confessing their guilt and continued, “If they knew he met with his friends, which branch of the intelligence was following [him]? What type of data does Ramazan Akyurek have to be able to know this?”

Journalist Oral Calislar, another guest of the show, said this was an important document and added, “If you knew when the man who would commit the murder arrived in Istanbul, met with his friends, you actually knew about the murder. If a government knew of a murder [before] the murder was committed, then how can you put this to words?”

Dink was best known for advocating Turkish-Armenian reconciliation and human and minority rights in Turkey. Charged under the notorious article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code, Dink stood a trial for insulting Turkishness. After numerous death threats, Hrant Dink was assassinated in Istanbul in January 2007, by Samast, a 17-year-old Turkish ultranationalist.

140th Anniversary of Komitas Marked in Berlin

BERLIN (PanArmenian.Net) – The 140th anniversary of Komitas' birth was marked in Kaiser-Wilhelm Church in Berlin last week. The event started with a service offered by Archbishop Yeghishe, the spiritual leader of the Armenian community of Berlin.

“Such events are important for preservation of national identity. They help the young generation know their culture,” chairman of the Armenian Church and cultural community of Berlin Petros Tikichian said in his opening remarks.

Community member Sona Aiber-Chukaszyan gave a report on Komitas' life.

On April 24, 1915, Komitas was arrested and put on a train the next day together with 180 other Armenian notables and sent to the city of Cank in northern Central Anatolia, at a distance

of some 300 miles. His good friend, Turkish nationalist poet Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, the authoress Halide Edip, and the US ambassador Henry Morgenthau intervened with the government and, by special orders from Talat Pasha, Komitas was dispatched back to the capital alongside eight other Armenians who had been deported. As of autumn 1916, he was taken to a Turkish military hospital and he moved to Paris in 1919 where he died in a psychiatric clinic Villejuif in 1935.

Next year his ashes were transferred to Yerevan and buried in the Pantheon.

The Armenian community of Germany was founded by Armenian students, who arrived in Leipzig in 1885 and formed a Union there.

Presently, 40,000-42,000 Armenians are reported to live in Germany.

Russian President Meets Catholicos of All Armenians

MOSCOW (PanArmenian.Net) – Russian President Dmitry Medvedev held a meeting with Catholicos of All Armenians, Karekin II and Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill, prior to the awarding ceremony of the International Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations.

Russian-Armenian ties and inter-confessional relations were in focus, RIA Novosti reported.

Karekin II was born in 1951 in the village of Voskehat, near Echmiadzin, and baptized Ktrij Nersissian.

He entered the seminary of Holy Echmiadzin in 1965, graduating with honors in 1971. For a year after graduation, he taught at the seminary.

He was ordained as a deacon in 1970

and a monk (celibate priest) in 1972, at which time he received the priestly name Karekin. Shortly thereafter, Vasken I (Catholicos of All Armenians, 1956-1994) sent the new priest to Vienna to study theology. In 1975, Nersissian moved to Germany, where he studied and graduated from Bonn University while serving as pastor to the local Armenian community. Following a brief return to Armenia, he enrolled in postgraduate studies at the Russian Orthodox Academy in Zagorsk, Russia, from which he graduated in 1979.

In March 1980, he entered the service of the Araratian Pontifical Diocese, the Armenian Church's most populous diocesan jurisdiction, which incorporates the capital, Yerevan, and the vicin-

ity of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin. Appointed head of that diocese in June 1983, he was elevated to the rank of bishop on October 23 of that year, by the hand of Vasken I. Catholicos Vasken granted him the title of Archbishop in November 1992.

During the past decade, Nersissian has been a prominent figure in Armenia's religious, social and cultural life. The charitable missions he has launched have helped his flock in their struggle to build a free and decent society from the physical ruins of the 1988 earth quake, and from the spiritual debris of Armenia's Soviet period. He has been notable for using technology, especially television broadcasts, as a tool of evangelism and outreach. Following the death of Catholicos Vasken I, Nersissian was a candidate for the pontifical throne during the National Ecclesiastical Assembly of April 1995, but conceded victory to Karekin Sarkissian, who thereafter became Catholicos Karekin I (Catholicos of All Armenians, 1995-1999). The latter, being treated for cancer in New York, appointed Nersissian as the vicar general of Holy Echmiadzin in November 1998, in which capacity Nersissian served until the late catholicos' death in June 1999.

He was elected the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians on October 27, 1999, when more than 450 delegates from Armenian Church jurisdictions around the world met in a National Ecclesiastical Assembly at Holy Echmiadzin, the Church's Mother See, located in the Republic of Armenia. His consecration and enthronement followed on November 4. As the 132nd in a continuous line of Catholicos dating back to the fourth century, Catholicos Karekin II presides over the Supreme Spiritual Council (the Armenian Church's governing college of bishops), and is the chief shepherd of the world's 7 million Armenian Apostolic Christians.

Russian Leader Hosts Sargsisian-Aliyev Talks

SOCHI, from page 1

as part of the OSCE Minsk Group process and called for abstaining from the use of force in settling the protracted Nagorno-Karabagh process. (The second, third and fourth Medvedev-Sargsisian-Aliyev meetings were held during 2009 in St. Petersburg (on the sidelines of an international economic forum), Moscow (on the sidelines of horse racing events) and Chisinau (as part of the CIS summit), with no documents issued after those talks.)

The document signed and released in 2008 in Meindorf, near Moscow, did not, however, prevent Aliyev from repeatedly making war threats against Nagorno-Karabagh. The latest statement implying that Azerbaijan was not ruling out any option, including a military one, to regain Nagorno-Karabagh was issued by one of Aliyev's senior aides only hours before the Sochi meeting. (Armenia routinely discards this war rhetoric as populism directed for domestic consumption and has repeatedly downplayed Azerbaijan's military capability to win back Karabagh or areas surrounding it now controlled by

Armenian troops).

The parties meeting in Sochi did not publish any document after their discussions. According to media reports, instead the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan were expected to come up with statements. After meeting with Medvedev, later during the day, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan were expected to meet with the Minsk Group cochairmen.

After the negotiations that lasted for two hours and were held behind closed doors, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told journalists that the parties considered the concrete proposals that had been submitted by the Minsk Group cochairmen.

“There is a general understanding on the preamble to this document. All agreed that it is useful that such a document exists, because it makes it possible to talk not abstractly, but in linkage to concrete formulations,” he said. “The main result today is the arrangement that while there are parts on which the sides disagree, they are preparing their concrete ideas and formulations that will be introduced into this text.”



INTERNATIONAL

Hrant Dink Day in the UK Parliament

LONDON – Hrant Dink Day was marked in London with a solemn gathering outside the Turkish Embassy at 1 p.m. and a three-hour sequence of well-attended meetings in The House of Commons and the House of Lords, where “Friends of Belge” was launched. Sponsors of the events were Nia Griffith, MP, Dr. Bob Spink MP and Baroness Finlay of Llandaff. Speakers included the Istanbul publisher Ragip Zarakolu, the genocide scholar Desmond Fernandes, Ruth Barnett from the Holocaust Educational Trust, Prof. Khatchatur I. Pilikian, historian Vardan Tadevossian, Kasim Agpak from the Kurdish Federation of the UK (FEDBIR), Haçi Ozdemir from the International Committee Against Disappearances (British Section) and Saad Tokatly from Iraqi Christians in the UK.

Zarakolu spoke about Dink: “We had dreams together for a different Turkey, we had dreams together for a different world.” He went on to describe the philosophy underpinning the Turkish ‘deep state,’ in which the ‘minorities’ are viewed as interior enemies and a permanent threat to national security. This idea is described in the National Security Document, referred to as the “Red Book,” which goes on to state that it is the army’s responsibility to fight against this “threat.” This concept of the minorities being interior enemies has deep roots in Turkey going back to 1915. Zarakolu emphasized the manner in which “the Turkish State has a double structure, the open structure of the state apparatus and the ‘deep structure,’ which is hidden. The ‘deep’ part in 1915 comprised the special committees who organized the mass killings during the Genocide. Hrant was open about the reality of the Genocide, and encouraged Armenians in Turkey, for the first time since the founding of the Republic, to speak openly about their Armenian identity. He wanted to show Armenian identi-

ty to Turkish society as a base for peaceful co-existence. [But] even though the Turkish State well knew that Hrant’s life became endangered from the time that” he was placed “on a ‘black-list,’ they made no effort to prevent his murder. By killing Hrant, they were killing themselves. Nothing can be the same again after Hrant’s murder. Turkey has to change or face ending in a much worse situation.”

Barnett presented a moving account of “The shared Jewish and Armenian experience.”

Fernandes observed the manner in which “it is clear that there is a crisis in Turkey as far as human rights are concerned – human rights, here, in an individual and collective sense as far as ‘Others,’ ‘Armenians,’ ‘Kurds,’ ‘Assyrians,’ ‘Greeks,’ ‘Roma,’ ‘Turkish or Kurdish Alevi,’ ‘Christian Others,’ ‘human rights campaigners,’ ‘people from the targeted left,’ ‘trade unionist and student/others asking for collective bargaining rights,’ ‘publishers and journalists working on topics relating to the deep state and/or the plight and acknowledged identity of the Other in Turkey’ – are concerned. One can, unfortunately, observe that the specter – and the reality – of genocide remains, as defined by Raphael Lemkin, the UN Genocide Convention and by several distinguished genocide scholars.”

He also detailed specific genocidal concerns that had been raised by Abdullah Oçalan, Theoharis Kekis and KCK Executive Council members Bozan Tekin and Cemil Bayik.

Disturbingly, he noted that several state initiatives seem to have been designed to politically derail any lasting or meaningful peace processes with the KCK(Koma Civaken Kurdistan) or PKK (which had initiated a cease-fire and peace process), or with the Democratic Society Party (DTP), the mass based pro-Kurdish party which was constitutionally

closed down in December 2009, with criminal proceedings initiated against its sitting members of parliament. People even from the newly formed but mass based pro-Kurdish BDP (Peace and Democracy Party), as well as sitting and former Kurdish mayors and human rights campaigners were being targeted.

Kasim Agpak spoke about the nature of state terror in Turkey and the murder and significance of Hrant Dink’s assassination. Vardan Tadevossian’s presentation emphasized the nature of the ongoing genocide of Armenians and the extent of destruction of Armenia’s heritage. Saad Tokatly examined the “Consequences of the Genocide for Assyrians in Turkey and Iraq” and “The current problems of Assyrians and other Middle East Christians.”

With the launch of ‘Friends of Belge’ [Please refer to the launch appeal - below], Ragip Zarakolu explained the context in which publishers like Belge – together with writers and journalists – were still being subject to criminalisation, targeting and intimidation. In answering questions from the floor, it became all too evident that Article 301 was - and is - still being used to curb freedom of expression, despite denials by certain Turkish officials in this matter. Haçi Ozdemir from the International Committee Against Disappearances (British Section) detailed the extensive manner in which ongoing Turkish state terror and criminalization of writers, journalists and publishers is evident. He also explained the relevance of holding the International Committee Against Disappearances’ international conference in London in May this year.

Pilikian’s moving presentation (“Problems with the terms from Holocaust to Genocide”) and conclusion provided much food for thought:

“Poor old Raphael Lemkin! Latter-day sophists are trying to ‘by-pass’ him, particularly now that concepts such

as Democracy, Socialism, Freedom, Human Rights, and what not, are made to lose their essential meanings, nay even are made to ‘act’ as their antinomies in real life through their post-modernist, neo-con and neo-liberal abuse. Yes, even language is experiencing a collateral damage indeed. To top it all, the recent and most popular President of the US since J.F. Kennedy, Barak Obama, chose to use the Armenian term *Medz Yeghern*=Big Crime in his April 24, 2009 commemorative speech in remembrance of the Genocide of the Armenians, without ever mentioning the word ‘Genocide,’ let alone its modern and precise equivalent in Armenian: Tseghsbanoutyoum.

“When addressing the American-Armenian voters during his presidential campaigns, the word the distinguished Sen. Barack Obama always used, was Genocide. Naturally, he got most of the American Armenian votes. [But] as President of US, Barak Obama chose to ‘balkanize’ Lemkin’s coinage of the word, singling out one of its national culture dictated pre-Lemkinian usage, as if unwittingly emulating Prof. Haim Bresheeth’s advice, ... thus avoiding the word Genocide. The question remains: Why President Obama’s archaic choice?”

“Although the answer is not hard to decipher from the history of the last century, our turbulent times too will soon teach us new lessons, granted we are willing to learn and act upon it. As the Preamble of the Verdict of the prestigious Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal of April 16, 1984 concludes: “Indeed, acknowledging genocide itself is a fundamental means of struggling against genocide. The acknowledgement is itself an affirmation of the right of a people under international law to a safeguarded existence”. Let’s pray to God to let this grace of acknowledgement befall our brethren and sisters of denial, including those among our own UK Parliamentarians.”

AGBU YP of Buenos Aires Conclude ‘What Did I Do For Armenia?’ Lecture Series

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina – On November 27, 2009, the AGBU Young Professionals of Buenos Aires (YP Buenos Aires) closed out the year by hosting their final in a series of four highly successful talks titled “What Did I Do For Armenia?” All events were organized as a forum for young Armenians to speak about – and discuss as a group – their experiences volunteering in Armenia.

The four-part lecture and discussion series started in May, and during each event different volunteers gathered to share stories and discuss topics of

and get to know one another.

The lectures and gatherings were appealing because they were directly related to the experiences that young professionals had in Armenia. Besides gaining personal and professional growth, individuals learned a great deal about Armenia’s current status, its people and its culture. Many young professionals were eager to volunteer their time and get involved in the lecture series to share their experiences and thoughts. Interaction between the audience and the speakers was informal, seamless, and very interactive. Moreover, there was an overall incentive for the young people attending each of the discussions to go out and do something similar to their peers.

The November 27 event included a panel of volunteers, Anabela Avedisian, Geraldine Guner Eretzian, Dalila Eujanian and Juan Baptist Karagueuzian, all of whom participated in the Birthright Armenia program. Avedisian traveled to Yerevan in October 2008 for two months to work as a volunteer English teacher in the local schools. She discussed the vastly different teaching model used in Armenia in comparison to the model used in Argentina and elsewhere around the world. Despite differences and some



On November 27, 2009, four Argentine-Armenian volunteers speak at a YP Buenos Aires event designed to educate local Armenians about the experience of working and living in Armenia.



AGBU YP Buenos Aires Chair Ignacio Balassanian introduces the panel for the final “What Did I Do For Armenia?” lecture series.

relevance to young Armenians. While three of the events were set up as more formal panel discussions, one of the events was organized more informally as a social gathering, where young professionals came together to share stories, play games,

disadvantages to the system applied in the Yerevan schools, Avedisian emphasized the remarkable capacity and willingness to learn by the children at the local schools.

Industrial engineer Geraldine Eretzian, who stayed in Gumri for two months, spoke about his experience working with local Armenians at Kevork & Vahagn Textile Factory and Shirak Competitiveness Center, as well as offering specialized classes in graphic design. Eretzian spent an extra month in Yerevan, settling in at the Arti Garassi Furniture Factory, and initiating a management quality project.

The third speaker was Dalila Eujanian, who volunteered in Armenia in 2008. She worked in the phonaudiology departments at the Pediatric Rehabilitation Clinic and Erebuni Hospital, both located in Yerevan. She spoke at

great length about patient care in the hospitals and the patient-doctor relationship.

The fourth and final speaker was Juan Baptist Karagueuzian, a graduate student in history. In the summer of 2009, he volunteered for Birthright Armenia and the Armenian Volunteers Corps. He spent his time at the Children’s Home in Gumri. During his presentation, he discussed the needs of the children in Armenia and the great impact that volunteering has on the lives of individuals in places like Armenia.

The series, organized by YP Buenos Aires, was well received by Argentine-Armenian young professionals. All the featured panelists communicated their enthusiasm for volunteerism and expressed a deep gratitude for having the opportunity to spend time in Armenia.

Community News

Edward Costikyan: A 5'3" Giant

By Frank Nahigian

NEW YORK — On December 28 I interviewed a delight of a man, 85-year-old Edward N. Costikyan, here, his former home and kingdom. He exuded idealism, honesty, integrity and candor. How could you not like it?

I interviewed him because I'm on a personal mission owing to the belief that the world and our beloved country in particular are going to Hell in a Hurry (capitalized because everything in the press is exaggerated these days, probably for the sake of selling the printed word). He had been a prominent attorney for over 40 years at the firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind et. al., an author and political authority, and so active in politics that he became the county Democratic Party Leader (aka Boss of Tammany Hall) from 1962-64. He was appointed to the position with a mandate to reorganize Tammany and cleanse it of what had become traditional corruption (my words, not his). I wanted to learn and disseminate what the man thought of the world today and what advices he would give his children for their future welfare and prosperity,

so this isn't a bio of the man, it's a status report from a maven who's no longer an authority figure except to those who know who he was and what he did, and those who love him.



Ed Costikyan

In the interest of journalistic integrity I'm reporting his opinions about virtually everything I asked of him, even though I disagree with some of it in spite of the fact that, he's the expert. He was optimistic about the future of the economy and country, and thought very favorably of President Obama and the policies he's implementing to raise the economy.

The single common thread throughout the interview was the importance of every voter being involved in the governing process by being active and involved. He opined that his greatest accomplishment was surviving the schisms and tensions in the operation and leadership of Tammany and bringing the party back together again, but he eventually resigned because effective representation of the average voter was no longer operative. "The old system whereby the voters have a direct relationship with the party leaders is gone. They don't do it any more because it's hard work." Do you think the party leaders (at the ward/district level) are out of touch, isolate themselves from the voters? "Yes, that was one reason I resigned; you couldn't get anything done."

What did he think caused the American economy to deteriorate so abysmally? "Greed. The business community and the banks did all kinds of cockeyed things."

see COSTIKYAN, page 9



Dr. Taner Akcam

Tribute Paid to Hrant Dink by Friends Group

WATERTOWN, Mass. — On Sunday, January 24, the Friends of Hrant Dink organization marked the third anniversary of the assassination of Dink, the Turkish-Armenian editor of *Agos* newspaper in Istanbul, Turkey, with a memorial luncheon after church services in which prayers were offered for him at St. James Armenian Church.

After the Requiem service, the Association hosted a fellowship Hour at the church hall, during which, Dr. Taner Akcam, director of the Armenian Studies program at Clark University and a friend of Hrant Dink, said the following: "During one of my meetings with Hrant, I told him that he should be appointed the Honorary Ambassador of Turkey in Armenia, when the border opens. He replied by saying that he is really doing the ambassador's job by introducing the Armenian Genocide to the Turkish people and convincing Armenians to have relations with the Turks."

Akcam then said when and if the borders of Armenia and Turkey are opened, the gate of the first crossing should be named Hrant Dink Gate.

At the end spoke the president of the Association, Harry Parsekian, who was present in Istanbul in front of the *Agos* newspaper building on January 19, during the third anniversary rally that took place that day and the son of Hrant, Arad Dink spoke from the balcony to the crowd.



Members of the Friends of Hrant Dink Association

High School Dedicates Science Wing to Haig Varadian

By Tom Vartabedian

CRANSTON, R.I. — Throughout his 41 years in education, Haig Varadian never wasted an opportunity to assist a student.

Over that time, he served as a teacher, guidance counselor, coach, secondary school administrator and principal before death interceded in 2007.

It was only fitting that Cranston High School East dedicate its newly-constructed science wing to the "Mr. Chips" of the Armenian community, as he was so aptly known.

Family and friends turned out for a dedication recently during which an appropriate plaque was placed at the site to memorialize and honor the man who brought so much attention and leadership to the schoolchildren of Cranston.

"Dad dedicated his life to family, education, sports and community service," said his daughter Diana Varadian. "He never ran for political office nor did he come from any financial means but in his own modest and quiet way, he touched the lives of many and left behind a legacy that will never be forgotten. Many of his former students are thankful for the guidance they received from my father."

Two years before his death, Varadian was inducted into the Rhode Island Interscholastic League High School Hall of Fame.

Referred to by many as "the father of Rhode Island wrestling," he devoted more than 50 years to the sport in addition to his four decades on the Council of the New England Secondary Schools Principals' Association, the last 25 as its executive director.

In that supreme role, he governed all New England High School athletic tournaments as well as regional drama festivals, programs on drug prevention, computer leagues and other regional high school activities through 2004.

At one time, he helped initiate a special program through the Providence Rotary Club for handicapped children to attend summer camp.

Whether it was academics or athletics, Varadian never relented in his capacity to promote a better environment for its constituents. The word "student-athlete" placed priorities where they should stand, especially with his own family.

A graduate of Cranston High School in 1944, Varadian was an All-State wrestler for two years and also participated in track. He was inducted into the US Army, serving as a staff sergeant in the Third Division Combat Infantry Unit during World War II.

He was the recipient of the Combat Infantryman's Medal with two battle stars and other awards for valor, including the Bronze Star.

While at Brown University graduating in 1950, Varadian participated on its wrestling team. He coached the sport from 1950-1961 at Cranston High School, winning many state titles. He was named Rhode Island Wrestling Coach of the Year five times, producing a host of state and New England champions, many of whom distinguished themselves on higher levels.

He was chosen by the US Olympics Wrestling Committee as an alternate official for the 1960 Olympic Games held in Japan.

His professional career in the Cranston School System found him as a secondary school principal at Cranston High School East and West and as principal of Park View Junior High School until his retirement in 1990. The track at Park View is also named in his behalf.

see VARADIAN, page 10



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Sisters Academy Junior Girl Scouts Get First-Hand Look at Careers in Law

RADNOR, Penn. — Exploring Law Careers at the Delaware County Courthouse in Media, the girls of the Junior Girl Scout Troop #35421 of the Armenian Sisters Academy in Radnor, enjoyed a first-hand account of the legal profession, compliments of Judge Ann A. Osborne. In a personal conversation with Osborne, the girls were not shy in inquiring how they could follow in her career footsteps: “What’s on the bar exam?” they asked curiously, and “How do you become a judge?”

Earlier, Deputy Sheriff Debbie O’Berg walked the girls through a mock trial, allowing them to take seats on the jury and witness stands, as Assistant District Attorney Sharon McKenna described how she prosecutes. Finally, Treatment Court Coordinator Linda Barbera and Probation Officer Katherine Linehan spoke about their work helping drug abusers and the importance of saying “no” to drugs. Girls Scout mother and Delaware County attorney Anna Marie Murphy arranged the memorable afternoon in December, which was captured in photographs by courthouse Video Technical Coordinator Donna Garchinsky.



Judge Ann A. Osborne explains the finer points of the law to the ASA Junior Girl Scouts.

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The Dickranian Lions Win Third Place in CIF Tournament Division 6A

LOS ANGELES — The basketball team of the TCA Arshag Dickranian School won third place in Division 6A of the Californian Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Tournament on January 2, 2010.

The Dickranian Lions have been training for two years in order to participate in the CIF Tournament. Their hard work and perseverance paid off as they took the other teams by storm gaining praise and due recognition from the officials of the federation.

“I am very happy and proud of our basketball team,” said Rudolph Rameh, the athletic

director of the school, “Our students have been training real hard and I am glad their hard work paid off by participating and winning third place in the tournament of their division.”

The Dickranian Lions joined the CIF Tournament during the 2009-2010 scholastic year. Their achievement deserves special praise because the team won its standing by competing against high schools with student bodies more than tenfold that of Arshag Dickranian School.

For more information about the school, visit www.dickranianschool.org.



The Dickranian Lions with Coach Rudolph Rameh



COMMUNITY NEWS

Conference to Focus on Treatment of Armenian Genocide in National and International Law

MINNEAPOLIS — The *Journal of Law and Public Policy* at the University of St. Thomas and the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (a division of the Zoryan Institute) are jointly organizing and sponsoring a conference on the “Treatment of the Armenian Genocide in National and International Law.” The conference will bring together legal specialists with a variety of expertise in national (Turkey, US, Britain) and international law and genocide.

The event will take place on February 5, at the University of St. Thomas with the participation of the Cafesjian Family Foundation and the Minneapolis Foundation.

Despite various tribunals to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity since WWII, Nuremberg, Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Cambodia and the establishment of the International Criminal Court in 2002, little progress has been made on the punishment and prevention of the crime of genocide. It has been argued that this relative ineffectiveness has contributed over the years to the emboldening of those who would consider perpetrating genocide. Darfur is one example that is still ongoing and there are no guarantees that others will not follow.

This situation will only worsen with the tripling of the world’s population since

WWII. The shrinking of the resources to sustain life, and the chasm between the few that have and the many that have not, will increase the risk of intra-national and international conflict, including genocide.

This conference will draw attention to how one case of genocide — the Armenian case — has been treated in national and international law, and how its manipulation strengthens the hands of deniers and undermines the international legal regime intended to prevent genocide.

The conference hopes to raise awareness among policy makers to strengthen the legal framework so that all cases of genocide are

treated with justice and that politics do not obstruct the application of the law nationally and internationally.

The conference will take place from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the Schulze Grand Atrium at the School of Law at the University of St. Thomas.

The International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies is dedicated to the study and dissemination of knowledge regarding the phenomenon of genocide in all of its aspects to create an awareness of it as an ongoing scourge and promote the necessity of preventing it.

Obituary

John Giragos, Founder of Lake Worth Landmark Restaurant John G’s

By Willie Howard

LAKE WORTH, Fla. (*Palm Beach Post*) — John Giragos took a big risk when he closed his dry cleaning business in Detroit and moved to South Florida looking for a warmer, safer place for his wife and five children.



John Giragos

The year was 1972. While visiting friends in Palm Beach County, Giragos drove to Lake Worth Beach, where a for-lease sign in the Ocean View Restaurant caught

his eye.

He signed the lease, unplugged the jukebox and opened for business in December 1973.

The family-run restaurant has served breakfast and lunch seven days a week in that location at the Lake Worth Casino ever since.

Giragos eventually changed the name to John

G’s on the Beach — a name recognized by generations of oceanside diners who often line up outside the door waiting for a chance to eat breakfast or lunch in the wood-paneled restaurant known for simple, well-presented food. Among the offerings: cinnamon nut French toast, Hawaiian omelettes, salads and fish-and-chips.

Giragos died Wednesday while surrounded by his family at JFK Medical Center after suffering a stroke Saturday. He was 81.

Sons Jay and Keith Giragos and daughter Wendy Yarbrough have worked at John G’s since they were teenagers. They own the restaurant now and have no intention of closing it — except on Tuesday for their father’s funeral.

“We’re not going anywhere,” Yarbrough said today as a crowd of lunch customers lined up on the sidewalk outside the entrance. “Look what he’s left us.”

The son of Armenian immigrants who landed at Ellis Island and found their way to Detroit, Giragos grew up working in the dry cleaning business. Cold weather and crime that required bars on windows of the Lynn Ferry Cleaners eventually spurred him to move to South Florida

with five children and an Irish setter in tow.

Regular customer John Lang said Giragos always made him feel important — even when he was a long-haired surfer coming in from the beach. “He treated everybody with respect,” Lang said. “He was a true gentleman.”

“John was a natural,” John G’s fan Mark Scheinbaum wrote in a short tribute sent to Lake Worth City Hall. “He knew how to connect with people and turn good products — be they dry-cleaned sweaters in gift boxes or a little restaurant — into great landmark brands.”

Lake Worth City Commissioner Suzanne Mulvehill said she has met people from all over the world standing in line outside John G’s. (Giragos was known for serving coffee and chocolate-dipped fruit to customers waiting in line on Sunday mornings.)

“He created a landmark,” Mulvehill said. “People have moved to Lake Worth because they came to John G’s.”

Yarbrough said her father’s careful attention

to customers and food led to his success.

“If there wasn’t a lid on that cup of soup, the waitress was in trouble,” she said. “Those little details all add up.”

After retiring 16 years ago, Giragos enjoyed dining out, traveling with his wife and golf — though he rarely missed the opportunity to drop by John G’s to spend a few hours talking with customers at the cash register.

“He appreciated the customers,” Keith Giragos said. “He was proud of his family. We all worked for him, and the team came together.”

In addition to his three children who run the restaurant, Giragos is survived by his wife, Tess Giragos of Lake Worth; daughters Ann Grippo of Fairlawn, NJ, and Sheila Soileau of Merritt Island; as well as 10 grandchildren.

A funeral mass took place at St. Luke Catholic Church in Palm Springs.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that donations be made in Giragos’ name to Hospice of Palm Beach County.

David Sarkisyan

Champion of Moscow Architecture, Dies at 62

MOSCOW (*New York Times*) — David Sarkisyan, a former physiologist and film director who became famous as the director of the Shchusev State Museum of Architecture here and for his campaigns to preserve architectural monuments against rampant post-Soviet development, died on January 7 in Munich, where he had been hospitalized. He was 62.

The cause was lymphoma, said Joseph Backstein, the commissioner of the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art and a friend of Sarkisyan.

Under Sarkisyan the museum, in a pre-revolutionary compound around the corner from the Kremlin, became a center of efforts to halt the destruction of everything from centuries-old mansions to modernist masterpieces and even the Central House of Artists, constructed under Leonid Brezhnev in the late Soviet era, a period that has few architectural defenders.

Sarkisyan, who was appointed the museum’s director in 2000, warned of a “cultural catastrophe,” saying that Moscow was losing its face and character. He was highly critical of Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and his wife, Yelena Baturina, a billionaire real estate magnate.

His battles were hard fought but often futile. Thousands of signatures collected by the museum and vocal protests were not enough to save Voentorg, an early-20th-century department store located directly across the street from the museum’s main building. It was replaced by a new building that many regarded as a poor imitation of the old structure.

Moscow developers and city officials often argue that old or poorly maintained buildings are too damaged or too costly to save. Sarkisyan had proof in the courtyard of his museum of how such buildings could be put to worthy use.

The museum was short of money to restore one of its wings, so Sarkisyan turned it into a

conceptual exhibition space called the Ruins. The uncovered brick walls and crumbling floors and ceilings of the unheated space effectively became part of each show.

Hundreds of Moscow architects and cultural figures attended his funeral in the museum’s halls on Friday. Funeral organizers said city officials blocked plans to bury Sarkisyan, who was born in Yerevan, Armenia, at the Armenian cemetery in central Moscow. He was buried at a cemetery on the edge of the city.

The work of the museum became Sarkisyan’s passion and the last of what he called his “four lives.”

David Sarkisyan was born on September 23, 1947, and had careers as a physiologist; as a pharmacologist, who helped develop a drug for treating Alzheimer’s disease; and as a film and television director.

He lived for a time in France, where he walked with the actress Jeanne Moreau on the red carpet at the 1991 Cannes Film Festival.

Sarkisyan was assistant director on the film “Anna Karamazoff,” which was in competition in 1991 and starred Moreau.

He is survived by a sister, Osanna, of Yerevan. Sarkisyan, who could speak eruditely and passionately on virtually any topic, fielded an endless stream of visitors in his museum office, which, packed from floor to ceiling with books, art, photos, souvenirs, sculptures and toys, was regarded by artists and critics as a work of art in itself.

Grigory Revzin, architecture critic for the Moscow newspaper *Kommersant*, wrote last week that the office was a magnet for international celebrities.

“And all of these foreigners,” he said, “told each other that there are several landmarks in Moscow: the Kremlin, the Mausoleum, St. Basil’s Cathedral and David Sarkisyan’s office.”

—Sophia Kishkovsky

Donations

The following donations to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* were received: Mr. and Mrs. Ohannes Meguerian, \$100, Phoenixville, Penn.; Ardo Besnlian, \$100, Newtown Square, Penn.; and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sarkisian, \$80, Newtown Square, Penn.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Electric Excitement at Sisters Academy

RADNOR, Penn. – Fourth graders at the Armenian Sisters Academy, learned about electricity, specifically series circuits, by working with it. Their teacher, Michele Ciaramello, explained how electricity flows, the necessity of everything being connected to allow the electricity to flow, and the attraction between opposite (positive and negative) forces. She then paired up the 16 students and each group received a D-cell battery, two rubber-coated copper wires, a miniature light bulb and some pieces of rubber-coated electrical tape.

Their mission was simple: to work together in their pairs to light the bulb. They completed lab sheets, made predictions and drew conclusions about how things should be connected. By the end of two class periods, all eight pairs of students had lit bulbs.

Next on their list? Parallel circuits.



Fourth graders at the Armenian Sisters Academy, Radnor, Penn.



The Armenian Genocide through Art

By Naomi Kuromiya

PROVIDENCE, RI – This year, to mark the 95th anniversary of the atrocities, Gallery Z director Bérge Ara Zobian will curate a historically and artistically important show: “The Armenian Genocide – 95 Years Later, In Remembrance.” Carol Scavotto and the extensive staff of Gallery Z will assist Zobian in coordinating this informative, academic exhibition.

Zobian was invited to produce this show in collaboration with The Urban Arts and Culture Program of the University of Rhode Island. The show will be displayed in Campus Gallery at the URI Feinstein Campus, a prominent location that guarantees a large viewing audience. In the month that it is displayed, from April 1st through April 30th, the show is expected to have over 30,000 visitors, including many who don't typically frequent galleries and museums.

Both Zobian and URI coordinators have wanted for some time to celebrate Providence's Armenian Community by sharing various aspects of Armenian culture and history: they are interested in acquiring artwork, artifacts, posters, objects and photographs that illustrate

home life, community life, religious and political life in order to provide a comprehensive representation of the Armenian Genocide.

Submissions to this show are open to any and all artists, from the US or abroad, and all mediums, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, photos, and videos, will be accepted. To receive submissions forms, artists should contact Scavotto at zcarol@cox.net. Pieces that reflect the artist's impressions and understanding of the genocide are important, but the show aims equally to showcase the survival, achievements, and contributions of the Armenian culture. The exhibition will commemorate deaths but also celebrate life.

Due to the enormous production and operation costs, any and all financial donation and support is solicited from the community. Any donations made can be sent to Zobian at 17 Amherst St., Providence, RI, 02909, memo: Genocide Exhibition.

As the first genocide of the 20th century, the Armenian Genocide is a critical event to affirm, and the surviving culture is essential to celebrate and spread with as large an audience as possible. This show promises to accomplish both of these tasks with your submissions and support.

Ed Costikyan: A 5'3" Giant

COSTIKYAN, from page 6

Absent from his resume is any apparent involvement in the Armenian community, therefore I asked him about it. His father, three aunts and four uncles all had married non-Armenians but his father read the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* all his life. Costikyan didn't attend an Armenian church but always felt very strongly about Armenian politics. He once enlisted the support of the Diocese in an effort to politic to extract an admission to the Genocide by the Turkish government, but the attempt failed due to a lack of critical mass for support. “How do you feel about your Armenian heritage?,” I asked. “I'm very proud of it.” Spread too thin, he just didn't have time to allocate to it, and a chance remark by his daughter reinforced that spirit. I asked her how tall her father was, for the title to this article: “Five feet two or three.” A slight pause and, “We Armenians aren't particularly known for our tall stature.” I was impressed and pleased that this young woman, one of whose grandfathers was Armenian and her father, half, thought of herself as an Armenian American, just as do those of us with

all grandparents and parents of Armenian descent.

There are two pieces of advice he would leave as a legacy to his children and his children's generation. One is, “I want you to find an occupation you enjoy.” Both his son and daughter did. The second, he would do his best to sell them on their obligation to participate in the political system. “The government of this country is in their hands and can be a disaster or it can be a great solution. Politics is an important part of American life and if they don't participate, their interests in the process are going to get lost. That's what happened eventually with Tammany.”

I asked if a Republican Armenian and a Democrat non-Armenian were competing for office and he were to vote, would he vote for the Armenian or the Democrat? “I'd give them both a good look. The fact that a guy is the Democratic candidate doesn't lead me to believe he's the right person. I'd give the Armenian candidate a good look, too. I expect the Democrat candidate to be good. If he isn't good, I don't need to vote for him.” He gave me examples of Republicans for whom he did vote, in the past.

His closing comment summed up the man: “I look at government as something that's everybody's obligation.”

(Frank Nahigian, a resident of Massachusetts is a new, regular contributor to the Mirror-Spectator.)

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2010



Since its inception in 2001, TCA's 'Sponsor a Teacher' program has raised over \$395,000 and reached out to 3,078 teachers and school workers in Armenia and Karabagh.



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

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COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU Camp Nubar Reunites for Mid-Year Celebration

FAIR LAWN, N.J. — Sometimes it feels like summer is ages away, therefore AGBU Camp Nubar counselors, campers and alumni welcomed the New Year with a Camp Reunion at St. Leon Armenian Church on Saturday, January 9. It was a wintry day filled with fun, friends and food. More than 100 campers and counselors came from as far away as New

York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Canada to attend the celebration and reconnect with friends and colleagues from Camp Nubar.

As part of the day's activities, reunited campers took part in two classic Camp Nubar activities: "Dragon's Mouth," during which time campers run around a gymnasium try-

ing to avoid being tagged by a chain of people and "Knock-Out," a variation of basketball.

"We receive requests each year for events that will reunite campers while they anxiously await the start of camp. When campers and counselors greeted one another, you could see their excitement and the same spirit they

exhibit during the summer months," says Jennifer Omartian, director of Camp Nubar.

Founded in 1963, AGBU Camp Nubar is a modern facility that has been highly ranked by the American Camp Association, American Red Cross and American Academy of Pediatrics. For more information about AGBU Camp Nubar, visit www.campnubar.org.



Camp Nubar campers and counselors at the winter reunion



Over 100 campers and counselors took part in the Camp Nubar reunion.

AGBU Young Professionals in Chicago Holds Kick-off Event

CHICAGO — The newly-formed AGBU Young Professionals of Chicago (YP Chicago) held its

inaugural event on November 21, 2009, at NAHA restaurant, owned by the Nahabedian

family. With over 50 people in attendance, the gathering galvanized the city's Armenian young professional community.

During the evening, guests mingled while enjoying hors d'œuvre prepared by NAHA. Attendees were inspired by AGBU YP liaison Kim Yacoubian, who attended the event and offered an overview of AGBU's mission and vision for Armenian communities across the globe. The evening also featured a raffle, which included prizes donated by local businesses, including NAHA, Great Business Websites, Chicago Apartment Seekers, Sayat Nova, TommyGun Motorsports, Edward Simonian, Inc. and V & O Style Jewelers. The committee chair, Arina Babajanian, addressed the guests and spoke about the group's plans for 2010.

This past July, the biennial AGBU Focus networking weekend touched down in the Windy City and attracted hundreds of young Armenian professionals from across the globe. The excitement surrounding the Focus 2009 events encouraged several local Chicagoans to come together to form a local chapter of AGBU Young Professionals. The

new YP Chicago committee met for the first time last August and began planning for a year of activities. YP Chicago committee members are Arina Babajanian, Susan Cholakian, Yuliya Dosova, Talin Hitik, Lorena Kurtjian, Harry Madanyan, Danny Mantis, Avo Mavilian, Arpi Paylan, Linda Sultanian and Georganna Yessaian.

YP Chicago is part of a growing network of YP groups and supporters around the world who are committed to preserving and promoting the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs for Armenians between the ages of 22 and 40. For additional information or to join YP Chicago's e-mail list, visit yp.agbuchicago.org.



Guests at the AGBU YP Chicago kick-off event on November 21, 2009

Armenian-American Cops Allege Discrimination in Glendale

GLENDAL (KTLA News) — In a city with a population that's nearly half Armenian-American, four current law enforcers and one former officer with Armenian heritage are suing the Glendale Police Department for discrimination.

The suit was filed in federal court last week by officers John Balian and Robert Parseghian, sergeants Vahak Mardikian and Tigran Topadzhikyan, and former officer Benny Simonzad, who was once the department's spokesman.

The cops allege that they were subjected to ethnic epithets, harsher reprimands and closer scrutiny as a result of their heritage.

Simonzad was demoted from his position as spokesman and then fired in 2008. He's also suing to get his job back.

City Attorney Scott Howard calls allegations of discrimination in the Glendale department "utterly false."

The cops' attorney, Carney Shegerian, noted that officers of Armenian heritage are under-represented on the force in relation to Armenian-Americans' population numbers in Glendale.

High School Dedicates Science Wing to Haig Varadian

VARADIAN, from page 6

In 1999, Varadian was inducted into the prestigious Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame.

As a former member and athlete of the Armenian Youth Federation, Varadian is credited with establishing their Governing Body which oversees the Olympic Games each Labor Day Weekend. The organization honored him with an Olympic King Award as named him an honorary member of the local Providence "Varantian" Chapter.

"As a youth, Haig served his country and never stopped," said Richard Magarian, assistant executive director, Rhode Island Interscholastic League. "He served youth in his capacity as a teacher, coach and administrator. All were done with truth and honor."

The science wing bears a bronze plaque with Varadian's photo. Underneath the photo lies

the inscription: "Educating the youth to meet the challenges of the future and become the leaders of tomorrow." A concise biographical sketch of the man is also included.

"If dad knew this dedication was taking place, he would have been humbled by it for sure," said his daughter, Diana. "But he would have approved. My only wish is that students take the time to read the plaque and become inspired to follow their dreams, contribute to society, and make the world a better place. Dad's life was not about recognition. It was about the self-rewarding contributions he made."

Judge Haiganoush Bedrosian, who was also Varadian's student, characterized the man's Armenian heritage at the ceremony and reminisced about the close relationships their families shared.

She credits his personal advice and guiding

her toward Brown University that ultimately led to law school. Currently, Bedrosian is considered a highly-respected judge of the Rhode Island Family Court.

Michael Traficante, School Committee chairman and former Cranston mayor, delighted guests with personal anecdotes about his long-time friend and mentor. Both go back to their wrestling days at Cranston High School.

"Coach Varadian led us to many state and New England titles," Traficante recalled.

Among those steeped in pride by the tribute were Varadian's wife, Anahid, son Paul, and another daughter, Christine, along with grandchildren Sonig and Nevart Varadian, and Erik, Andre, Aleksander and Kristian Johnsen.

"There aren't too many Armenians who have a public building named after them," said his wife. "It memorializes my husband in the best possible way he could have imagined."


New York
METRO

Armenian Community Welcomes New Armenian Ambassador to the UN

By Taleen Babayan and Florence Avakian

CLIFFSIDE PARK, N.J. — With the beautiful Manhattan skyline serving as the backdrop, the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) hosted a welcoming reception for Ambassador Garen Nazarian, the new ambassador of Armenia to the United Nations at the Palisadeum Banquet Hall in on Friday, January 22.

The evening also served as a commemoration for the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia.

Present for this special recognition was Armenia's Defense Attache in Washington, DC Lt. Col. Mesrop Nazarian, and his wife Rusanna Nazarian.

Cultural segments were infused into the pro-

gram throughout the evening, consisting of singing by Ani Djirdjirian, Jenny Sarian and Diana Sarian, as well as poetry readings by Nora Armani and Jirayr Papazian. The Akhtamar Dance Ensemble of St. Thomas performed their signature "flag dance" adorned in red, blue and orange costumes while proudly waving the Armenian flag.

ter, said that during the first days of independence of Armenia in 1991, the TCA established itself there and that many Armenians joined the TCA there. "The TCA continues to strengthen the Armenian cultural framework," he said.

Other special guests included Dr. Edgar and Marian Housepian, AGBU Central Board Vice Chairman Nazar and Ardemis Nazarian, Edward and Carmen Gulbenkian, Vahram and Lucienne Aynilian, Vice Chairman of Diocesan Council Dr. Raffi and Vicki Hovanessian, TCA Central Board Director Papken and Anahid Megerian, Armenian Assembly Trustee Van and Priscilla Krikorian, TCA Central Board Director Antoine and Rose Bazarbashian, AGBU Central Board member Sarkis and Maral Jebejian, and Knights of Vartan Commander Dr. Jaques Gulekjian.

Guests present at the head table were Karabagh Representative in Washington Robert Avedisian, Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Committee Vice Chairman Edmond Azadian, and benefactor Andreas Roubian with Priya Katragadda.

"The Tekeyan Cultural Association is a truly cultural organization. More than any other group, it preserves the Armenian language. This event is for all of us," noted Hagop Vartivarian with obvious pride. "Armenia has 15 provinces in historic Armenia, of which four have been liberated. The Armenian army during the coming decades will liberate all of them," he declared with emphasis to lengthy applause.

The guest speaker was Andreas Roubian, president of FDS International, a software development company, who has dedicated himself to causes relating to the betterment Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh. Roubian spoke about the Karabagh Committee formed in the late 1980s, which provided humanitarian aid to Karabagh.



Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Housepian with Edmond Azadian

"We believe in the Armenian language and the Armenian culture," said Master of Ceremonies Hagop Vartivarian. "We try our best to maintain and preserve it."

Welcoming guests to the dinner reception, Vartan Ilanjian, a member of TCA NY/NJ chap-



Edmond Azadian with Ambassador Garen and Nana Nazarian and Hagop Vartivarian



Ambassador Garen Nazarian

He noted the attendance of other committee members at the event that evening, including Hirant Gulian, Paul Shahinian and Sam Azadian.

"The Armenian army went hand in hand with the liberation movement in Artsakh," said Roubian. "The lesson we learned is that we

should all stay united: Armenia, Artsakh and the diaspora."

Roubian, in his remarks, recalled that many Diasporans opposed him for starting the group at the time. However, the liberation of Kelbajar, see NAZARIAN, page 12



Antoine and Rose Bazarbashian, Papken and Anahid Megerian, and Sarkis and Maral Jebejian



From left, Krikor Salbashian, Nana and Ambassador Garen Nazarian, Hagop Vartivarian and Betty Salbashian


New York
METRO

The Armenian Community Welcomes New

NAZARIAN, from page 11

a historic Armenian region sandwiched between Armenia and Karabagh changed their opposition. "This victory was a phenomenon, because the Karabagh army was a group of irregulars," Roubian said. "As it was transformed into a regular army, it proved that if Armenia, Karabagh and the diaspora are united, we will win. We will always stay united," Roubian declared to thunderous applause.

A professional video demonstrating the mili-

tary might of Armenia was shown, emphasizing its enviable position of being the strongest army in the Caucasus, ready to defend the homeland at all costs.

Garen Nazarian, a seasoned diplomat who has served with distinction in Russia, Geneva, and for the last six years as Armenia's Ambassador in Iran, was presented with a crystal memento by TCA Central Committee Vice Chairman Edmond Y. Azadian who praised him as a "consummate diplomat."

"Our people have fought many enemies throughout our long history to preserve our freedom," stated the Vicar General. "In Karabagh, all Armenians from every station in life through their strong spirit and faith, brought our struggle to successful conclusion. When we celebrate our military might, it gives us confidence for our future. Wars are not only fought militarily, but on every level, including diplomatically. Now at the United Nations, we are fortunate to have Ambassador Garen Nazarian carrying on this important struggle, and we wish him

every success."

In his remarks, Nazarian praised the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, which was formed 18 years ago.

"The Armenian fighters presented shining examples of valor and lessons of patriotism for the coming generation," said Ambassador Nazarian. "Today the Armenian Army is rightfully viewed as a victorious and liberating army. Our whole nation trusts and believes in our Army. ... Let us congratulate all those brothers and sisters in the Armenian-American community who have made their valuable contributions to the establishment and strengthening of the Armenian victorious Army and we pay our profound tribute to all those who participated in the army-building mission."

Nazarian thanked the TCA for the initiative of celebrating, for the first time, the Armenian Armed Forces Day.

"May God protect our army, glory to the Armenian soldiers, to the Armenian homeland, and long live the Armenian Diaspora," he said.

Concluding the program, Very Rev. Haigazoun Najarian, vicar general of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), who himself went to Karabagh as early as 1973, said it is a proud moment to have the unique opportunity to celebrate Armenia's Armed Forces Day for the "military leaders who fought and struggled and had the strength and faith to build our right."

"We need to protect our borders. We can't be beggars or cry-babies," said Najarian. "We need to join our voices."

Dr. Svetlana Amirkhanian made a symbolic toast to all mothers whose sons are fighting in Armenia's army, as well as for those who have been killed defending the Armenian homeland.



From left, Sam Azadian, Antoine Bazarbashian, Vicar General of the Armenian Diocese Very Rev. Haigazoun Najarian, Papken Megerian, Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgulian and Rev. Haroutiun Tachejian



From left, Andreas Roubian, Priva Katragadda, Nana Nazarian, Ambassador Garen Nazarian, Vicar General Very Rev. Haigazoun Najarian, Lt. Col. Mesrob Nazarian, Rusanna Nazarian, Robert Avedisian and Edmond Y. Azadian



Armenian Military attaché Lieutenant Colonel Mesrob Nazarian is interviewed by the Armenian Public TV H1.



From left, Harout Diratsouian, Nana and Garen Nazarian, Hagop Vartivarian and Olympia and Shahe Jebejian



From left, Dr. Raffi Hovanesian, Nana and Garen Nazarian, Hagop Vartivarian, Araxi Varjabedian and Vicky Hovanesian


New York
METRO

Armenian Ambassador to United Nations

The event was represented by leaders of other Armenian organizations including the Armenian Assembly, the ADL, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the Armenian Church, the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the Knights of Vartan.

Throughout the evening, the rich Armenian culture was evidenced by several performers,

Azadian also paid tribute to Vartivarian. "Hagop is one of the movers and shakers of the US Armenian community."

Many left the event feeling energized. "I wanted to drop a note and congratulate you on a most successful celebration of honoring our Armenian Army and welcoming our ambassador to the US. You were a great host and a great emcee. The program was also handled properly and the Tenafly Akhtamar dance group was a great hit. You know how much we love Andreas and he was just great talking from his heart. *Varstket Gadar*. Thank you for including us in this celebration," wrote Shoghag and Raffy Hovhannesian to Vartivarian.

Said Edgar Housepian, "My wife and I so much enjoyed being at the Tekeyan affair honoring Garen Nazarian. We met so many good friends and the occasion to honor the Armenian Armed Forces was outstanding. Thank you for inviting us."

The members of the New York/New Jersey branch of the Tekeyan Cultural Association who planned and organized this event include Chairman Hagop Vartivarian, Vice Chairman Harout Chatmajian, Secretary Betty Salbashian, Treasurer Sirvart Demirjian, Advisors Dr. Svetlana Amirkhanian, Shemavon Atamian, Shoghig Chalian, Lucyn Djerdjarian, Vartan Ilanjian, Meline Khekoyan and Krikor Markarian.



Members of the Akhtamar Dance Group performed



Edmond Azadian, center, congratulates the ambassador and TCA Chairman Hagop Vartivarian



Silva Der Stepanian, right, with Garen and Nana Nazarian and Hagop Vartivarian



From left, Priva Katragadda, Nana and Garen Nazarian, Hagop Vartivarian and Andreas Roubian



From left, Nazar Nazarian, Nana and Garen Nazarian, Hagop Vartivarian, and Artemis Nazarian



Arts & Living

A Toast to Armenia

By Jeff Dunn

SAN FRANCISCO (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) – The Armenian proverb “We learn more from a clever rival than a stupid ally” was much in evidence in the second half of Friday’s Oakland East Bay Symphony concert.

During that segment, the music of three little-known Armenian composers proved that derivative music can nevertheless be persuasive. In what might be termed an “affinity” concert, which was themed “Notes From Armenia,” Music Director Michael Morgan preceded this programmatic path with the trodden one of Mozart’s *Prague* symphony and Aram Khachaturian’s *Violin Concerto*, greatly pleasing attendees.

Still unrivaled for the crown of greatest classical Armenian composer, Khachaturian (1903-1978) cannot fail to engage listeners with his multitude of dance rhythms, lyrical outpourings, unexpected harmonies and fervent arabesques. Violin soloist Mikhail Simonyan, born in Siberia to Russian and Armenian parents, now resident of New York City (and an avid skydiver), was more than up for the high-flying technical challenges of the music. The 24-year-old impressed most with his confidence, emotional maturity, rapidity and poise, though slightly less so with his volume and intonation.

Why the non sequitur of a Mozart symphony began the program is a mystery, especially when there are so many colorful and original pieces available by the greatest Armenian-American composer, Alan Hovhaness. Nor did the holding-pattern rendition by Morgan and the orchestra help matters.

Thankfully, however, the orchestra came alive with a stirring performance after intermission of the *Symphony for Timpani and String Orchestra*, by Edvard Mirzoyan (b. 1921). Over half an hour in length and full of tricky contrapuntal writing and precise accents, the 1962 symphony could have sent many a less-well-prepared band into a muddled tailspin. For me, this was one of the Oakland Symphony’s most impressive performances of a single work.

Mirzoyan’s symphony is abstract and indebted to Shostakovich in style, but, aside from a few reminiscences of the “whirlwind” movement of the Russian master’s *Tenth*, Mirzoyan does not suffer by comparison. His music is consistently engaging and dramatic. I particularly enjoyed the several fugal sections, ominous themes in the cellos and basses, the wry take on Chopin’s *Minute* waltz in the second movement, and the Rossinian energy of the fourth-movement finale. The only structural flaw was the abrupt ending of the first movement, which put the piece off-balance.

If Hovhaness couldn’t have been brought in to replace Mozart, how about more of Gahzaros Saryan (1920-1998)? The two of four movements performed from his *Armenia: Symphonic Panels*, which followed next, were quite lovely. What do the other two sound like?

The evening concluded spectacularly with two short but spirited choral works. Composed by Edgar Hovhannissyan (1930-1998), they were the anthem *Yerevan Erebooni*, honoring Armenia’s present and past citadels, and the martial *Sardarapat*, lauding the battle on May 22, 1918, that reversed the Turkish advance on the Armenian capital in World War I. The Seemorgh Ensemble and “select singers from various Bay Area choral groups” sang lustily.

Morgan whipped out, to great acclaim, an encore of Khachaturian’s *Sabre Dance* from his “Gayane” ballet.

(Jeff Dunn is a freelance critic. A composer of piano and vocal music, he is a member of the National Association of Composers, USA, and serves on the board of New Music Bay Area.)



A view of the Emil Kazaz exhibition at the AGBU Pasadena Center

Emil Kazaz Celebrated At AGBU Reception

PASADENA, Calif. – On Saturday, November 7, 2009, the Armenian community gathered to attend a tribute event dedicated to world-renowned sculptor and painter, Emil Kazaz. The event was held at the AGBU’s Alex Manoogian Center here. The AGBU Kazaz Tribute, along with a three-day exhibition event that took place from November 6-8, 2009, was organized by the AGBU Southern California District Committee. More than 1,500 people attended the exhibition and the tribute, coming from near and far to view the artist’s work and meet him.

The AGBU Kazaz Tribute Committee was headed by Haig Messerlian and was vice-chaired by Ani Aivazian. Other committee members who worked tirelessly to put the successful tribute together included: Ara Arzumanyan, Ara Babayan, Sonia Babayan, Ani Babian, Nairie Balian, Houry Boghossian, Eada Bourian, Ani Boyadjian, Benjamin Charchian, Vahe Imasdounian, Maral Ghazarian, Ivan Kesian, Aleen Khanjian, Vartouhy Kojayan, Yeva Manucharyan, Avedis Markarian, Maral Moukhtarian, Nazareth Moukhtarian, Silva Nazaretian, Siran Oknayan, Krikor Satamian, Shaghig Sepetjian, Garine Seuylemezian, Cynthia Simonian, Tamar



A view of the audience that attended the special night honoring the work of Emil Kazaz on November 7, 2009, at the AGBU Pasadena Center

Sinianian, Maida Tchaprastian, Shake Toumayan and Aline Yeterian. Cooperation for the exhibition was provided by Monet Airian, director of the Airian Dome of Fine Art, who represents Emil Kazaz worldwide.

Many distinguished guests attended Saturday evening’s tribute event, including
see KAZAZ, page 16

Flautist Musayelyan Leads Armenian Representation on Jazz Scene

BOSTON (Blue Music Group) – New original-minded artists on the international jazz scene are a necessity for the development of this now global music. Ethnic influences from around the world have been popular for some time. Some of these influences, Latin music in particular, have become so common that they have in fact been included to the center of the jazz vocabulary. Armenian flautist Yulia Musayelyan’s debut album, “Caminos,” incorporates Latin music successfully with her native roots. She has teamed up with fellow Armenian pianist, Vardan Ovsepiyan, and a top Argentinean rhythm section, bassist Fernando Huergo and drummer Franco Pinna. Musayelyan utilizes the rhythm section in her favor, she directs the band commendably, and grooves as if she were a dual-native, balancing somewhere between Armenia and Argentina.



Yulia Musayelyan’s latest CD, “Caminos”

Musayelyan’s sound has strong classical inflections; she was trained at the Moscow Conservatory and New England Conservatory in Boston, but she also possesses a strong sense for harmonic improvisation, although her foundation is based on roots other than traditional jazz. This is a subtle but welcome detail. Huergo and Pinna are known from the bands of Marta Gómez, Julio Santillán and Grupo Nuevo, and – as always – they render sparkling and tight duo work. Musayelyan’s virtuosity is highlighted on Heraclio Fernandez’ *El Diablo Suelto*.

ADAA’s \$10,000 Saroyan Playwriting Prize Submission Deadline Is Feb. 15

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA) welcomes submissions for its 2010 William Saroyan Prize for Playwriting, made possible by a grant from the William Saroyan Foundation. The deadline is February 15, for full-length plays on Armenian themes.

The top prize is \$10,000, with other prizes awarded to the top three finalists. Electronic submissions should be sent to adaa@armeniandrama.org. Complete guidelines are available at armeniandrama.org/Saroyan_Award_2010.php

The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance’s mission is to make the Armenian voice heard on the world stage through the dramatic arts of theater and film. The organization accomplishes this mission by supporting playwrights and screenwriters with production opportunities, annual industry events, networking resources, film festivals and writing awards. Visit www.armeniandrama.org for more information.

Submissions for the prize must be post-marked or time-stamped by February 15.

For questions, contact adaa@armeniandrama.org.



ARTS & LIVING

Talks at Ararat-Eskjian Museum Highlight Archaeology

MISSION HILLS, Calif. – Dr. Pavel Avetisyan, director of Armenia's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, and Dr. Gregory Areshian of the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, presented illustrated lectures on Sunday, December 6, at the Ararat-Eskjian Museum. The event was cosponsored by the museum, the Friends of UCLA Armenian Language and Culture Studies and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

Avetisyan spoke in Armenian, with English translation provided by Areshian, on the subject "International Academic Cooperation and Its Importance for Studies in Armenian History and Civilization."

He explained that a major transformation of Armenian studies has taken place during the last two decades since Armenia gained independence from the Soviet Union. Besides traditional areas such as the study of the Armenian past based on written historical records and Armenian literature, "younger" areas of inquiry more focused on the Armenian material cultural heritage, long-term processes in Armenian history, anthropological and sociological researches and others started gaining momentum.

Stating that "it is not surprising that the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia has become the world's fastest growing institution of Armenian studies," he elaborated that the institute focuses on previously unexplored or poorly understood areas of Armenian life and civilization: from the appearance of first humans on the Armenian Highland to the process of formation of values and transformation of national identities in the contemporary Armenian society at the threshold of the new millennium.

What propels this growth, said Avetisyan, is the exponential expansion of international cooperation. Currently the institute is the senior partner in two dozen international collaborative projects, the largest 11 of which are

concerned with the study and documentation of the Ancient and Medieval Armenian material cultural heritage. In the last six to seven years, these projects have made amazing discoveries, some of which Avetisyan presented.

In Avetisyan's view, the most significant impli-

tribute to a better understanding of significant stages in the development of human civilization in general; (4) a major improvement in the training of students in Armenia has been achieved; (5) the Armenian society has been enriched by a large number of new sites, monuments, and

Joint Project of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia and the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The Arpa River Valley is a little-explored area, despite having the highest concentration of karstic caves in Armenia and such outstanding monuments of Armenian medieval architecture as Noravank Monastery. The project identified more than three-dozen inhabited caves in that region and other important sites dating from the Stone Age to the 17th-century AD. In the summer of 2010, the project will start a systematic survey of the region.

However, for Areshian, the most exciting and sensational discoveries were made at the cave known as Areni-1, where a small-scale excavation started in 2007. The explorations carried out thus far attest to a very large cave site with cultural remains in three interconnected cave galleries, each up to 40 meters long, and also under the rock shelter in front of the galleries and on the slope descending toward the river. In the uppermost layer, fragments of a Medieval Armenian manuscript were found. Beneath, a carbonated, hard, natural crust covered more than 15-foot-thick cultural layers.

The crust, together with extreme dryness and stable temperatures inside, created unique conditions that preserved artifacts and various organic remains not found in other earlier excavations. Non-burnt wooden artifacts, seeds, rope, cloth, straw, grass, reeds and even dried fruits (grapes and prunes) were found in the top three layers dating back to the Copper Age (Chalcolithic), circa 4000 BC. Various remains may indicate the presence of a full cycle of wine making in the cave.

Areshian explained that a human brain found in a ritually deposited head is the most astounding discovery from that period. This is the oldest human brain ever found in the Old World. He stated that the newly-discovered cave society will prompt a major revision of our knowledge concerning the early civilizations of the Middle East and Southeastern Europe.



From left, NAASR Board Member Bruce W. Roat, Ararat-Eskjian Museum Director Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin, Dr. Pavel Avetisyan, Dr. Gregory Areshian, Effie Eskjian and Museum Chairman Martin Eskjian

cations of the international collaboration are: (1) that the most recent advancements in social theory developed in the West are applied to the social researches in Armenia; (2) the Armenian cultural heritage is brought to the attention of the scholarly audiences and the general public in the US and Europe; (3) new discoveries not only make major corrections and fill gaps in our knowledge of Armenian history, but also con-

tribute to a better understanding of significant stages in the development of human civilization in general; (4) a major improvement in the training of students in Armenia has been achieved; (5) the Armenian society has been enriched by a large number of new sites, monuments, and

finds of outstanding cultural and historical value, all of which are kept in different museums in Armenia; and (6) the scientific data obtained during those explorations are processed and studied in the best laboratories of Europe and North America.

Areshian, in a talk in English titled "The Discovery of a 6,000-Year-Old Cave Civilization in Armenia," presented information connected with discoveries made during 2007-2009 in the Vayots-Dzor Province by the Arpa River Valley

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Anna Kasyan relaxes off stage.

Anna Kasyan Nominated for French Classical Music Awards

PARIS – For first time in the history of the prestigious Classical Music Awards (Victoires de la Musique classique), an ethnic Armenian of Georgia has been nominated in France in the category of new lyric artist. The show will be broadcast live in France, on France 3 and Radio France Inter on February 8.

To help Kasyan win the Revelation Prize in her category, fans were able to vote on the website until January 29 (at <http://www.lesvictoires.com/classique/>).

Kasyan, born October 7, 1981 in Tbilisi, is a rising star in the world of lyric opera singing. She has been based in France since 2003.

– Jean Eckian



Emil Kazaz Celebrated at AGBU Reception

KAZAZ, from page 14

Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America Archbishop Hovnan Derderian; California State Assembly member Paul Krekorian; nationally-known artist, author, educator and newly-appointed dean of the Art Department at the University of California Irvine, Joe Lewis; internationally-known art historian and director of the Arshile Gorky Museum in Echmiadzin, Shahen Khachatryan, renowned concert pianist Vatche Mankerian; operatic tenor Bakur Kalantaryan; and representatives from the Armenian media and leaders of the community.

Messerlian served as the master of ceremonies. In his opening remarks, he emphasized the importance of cultural figures such as Kazaz, who inspire people by enriching and promoting the culture of our nation for the entire world. He stated, "While we recognize our cultural heroes who are no longer with us, as we should, we also need to recognize and honor our heroes while they are alive and actually weaving the thread of our culture, taking it to new heights – men and women who make our culture a living one, the kind that doesn't just rely on the laurels of the past but makes itself grow and flourish." He continued, "And it doesn't matter in what style or language; Aivazovsky painted seascapes, Saroyan expressed himself in English, Aznavour sings in French, Kazaz sculpts and paints in his own unique style. What matters are the quality, universality and harmonious beauty of the words, the music, the shapes and the colors."

The event featured remarks by the special guests. Joe Lewis presented a brief background of the honored guest and an analogy of his work and style. Derderian offered his remarks, and relayed the blessings of Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, inviting the honoree to the podium to receive the St.



A view of the Emil Kazaz exhibition at the AGBU Pasadena Center

Along with the speeches, the attendees enjoyed musical entertainment by pianist Vatche Mankerian, who performed several selected musical pieces by Chaconne, Bach, and Busoni, Operatic tenor Kalantarian, who is greatly admired by Kazaz, also performed a number of songs. On behalf of AGBU President Berge Setrakian, Sinan Sinanian, a member of the AGBU Central Board of Directors, and Berj Shahbazian, chairman of

Orange County, San Diego and San Fernando, AGBU SCDC (www.agbuca.org) oversees a host of cultural, youth and educational programs in Southern California that include the Generation Next Mentorship

SCDC carries on AGBU's mission and maintains a prominent role in one of the largest and most vibrant Armenian communities in the world. Southern California is also home to two of AGBU's leading day schools, the



Artist Emil Kazaz receives awards for his accomplishments from SCDC Chair Berge Shahbazian (left) and from AGBU Central Board member Sinan Sinanian (right).

Sahag and St. Mesrob Medal.

Art historian Shahen Khachatryan also spoke, reflecting on the significance of the evening. "Emil Kazaz has earned the prestigious Lorenzo Medici Medal in 2003 from the Florence Biennale and the Grande Lorenzo II Magnifico (Medici) Prize in sculpture in 2007. His artistic achievement is a source of national pride. I am privileged and pleased to join you this evening and express a heartfelt thanks to AGBU for organizing this wonderful event."

the AGBU Southern California District Committee, provided the highlight of the evening when they presented Kazaz with the AGBU President's Award, followed by the SCDC Award, honoring his outstanding talent, lifetime cultural and artistic achievements and contribution to Armenian and international culture. The exhibit and tribute successfully reflected AGBU's goal of promoting and preserving the Armenian heritage and culture through the arts.

With chapters in Glendale, Pasadena,



AGBU Central Board Member Sinan Sinanian, AGBU Southern California District Committee Chair Berj Shahbazian, and artist Emil Kazaz are surrounded by the members of the AGBU Kazaz Committee volunteers, including committee chair Haig Messerlian, and other local AGBU leaders at the AGBU Pasadena Center during the Emil Kazaz Tribute Event on November 7, 2009.

Program, the Ardavazt Theater Group, Sardarabad Dance Ensemble, the Hye Geen movement, Asbeds, Young Professionals (Orange County & Los Angeles), scouts, athletic teams and a local Ladies' Committee.

Manoogian-Demirdjian School (MDS) in Canoga Park and the AGBU Pasadena High School, which is the first new day school to have been established in the Armenian diaspora during the last decade.

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ARTS & LIVING

Author Bobelian Promotes Book in a Series of Readings Hosted By AGBU

NEW YORK – Throughout the fall of 2009, author Michael Bobelian traveled around cities in the US and Canada for a series of book readings hosted by various AGBU chapters. He was on tour promoting his new book, *Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-Long Struggle for Justice*. The book explores the events of 1915 and the social and political issues that followed. The author discusses the struggles for justice and what he believes has caused the Armenian Genocide to fade from public consciousness and often go unrecognized. Michael Bobelian is a lawyer and journalist by training, and is the grandson of Genocide survivors.

Bobelian toured around California, visiting chapters in Glendale, Pasadena, Fresno and San Francisco. He also gave book readings in Chicago and Toronto. Each of the informative readings and lectures was followed by a question-and-answer session, book signing and a reception for the author and attendees. The crowds at most of the readings were made up of a mixed but mostly older audience, while the San Francisco reading attracted a significantly younger and more diverse group of attendees.

The author has been emphasizing the importance his younger audience has on the Genocide's acknowledgement and the future of Armenia. "For Armenian readers, I want them to learn about a history that we're largely ignorant about. Young Armenians, born after the 1960s, don't really know how the recognition movement began and how this campaign for justice began. We have inherited not only the scars of the Genocide but a campaign for justice from previous generations. We deserve to know the origins and evolution of this campaign," he said in an October interview. Bobelian also talked about the importance of non-Armenians starting to take an interest in this issue. "A lot of people I ran into while writing this book would ask me why

Armenians still persist since it's been almost one hundred years since the genocide took place. I want them [non-Armenians] to understand and appreciate that it still matters. Even today, these issues of denial and impunity resonate not only for Armenians but for genocides across the world."

The book had already generated positive reviews on its own since its release in September, though the book readings at the various chapters greatly helped in getting more people interested. The author was humbled by not only the successful turnouts at each book reading but also by the overall enthusiasm for the book. He thanked AGBU and its chapters for working so hard to put these events together. "I am extremely grateful that the AGBU chapters were willing to host me. People made a big effort to get the word out and to give me a platform to speak and share my work. It's very challenging to reach a broad audience, and AGBU did an excellent job of bringing people in, particularly with the younger generation." He added, "It's very difficult for a young author to get the word out about a new book, and publishers don't really help with marketing. AGBU and the local organizations really did a superb job with that."



Michael Bobelian with members of the AGBU Young Professionals of Northern California during the book reading event in

New Issue of *Journal of Society for Armenian Studies*

FRESNO, Calif. – The latest issue of the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, has been released and includes eight original essays covering a range of subjects as well as a most interesting research note and a commentary article.

Robert W. Thomson's contribution, "Armenian Biblical Commentaries: The State of Research," which was first delivered at the SAS 35th Anniversary Conference at UCLA in

March, is accompanied by a detailed bibliography that will greatly facilitate additional research on this critical topic. Another paper first delivered at the Anniversary Conference is by Tamara Tonoyan on "HIV/AIDS in Armenia: Migration as a Socio-Economic and Cultural Component of Women's Risk Settings," which incorporates fresh materials seldom available in print. Both Ohannes Geukjian, with an essay titled "Armenian Political Parties in Lebanon

After the 1989 Ta'if Accord," and Kari Neely with her "Lebanese Literary Reflections of Soviet Armenian Repatriation," add to your knowledge of Armenian political parties in Lebanon and how literary reflections of Soviet Armenian repatriation were perceived in that Middle Eastern state.

This issue of the JSAS includes the four remaining papers of the project, "A Century of Armenians in America: New Social Science Research," a collection that is the result of Anny Bakalian's initiative. Previously-published papers in the series by Knarik Avakian, Claudia Der-Martirosian, Margaret Manooogian, Ani Yazedjian and Ben Alexander are now supplemented by critical essays by Ani C. Moughamian, "Talking About our Culture: Understanding Traditions, Identity, Community, and Schooling Through Armenian-American Children's Narratives; Matthew Ari Jendian, "Intermarriage Among Armenian-Americans: Implications for Armenian-American Communities and Churches;" Talin Sesetyan, "Intermarriage Among Armenian-Americans in New York City and Northern New Jersey (1995-2005)" and Tara Yaralian, Aghop Der-Karabetian and Tomas Martinez, "Acculturation, Ethnic Identity, and Psychological Functioning Among Armenian-American Young Adults."

Together these contributions shed light on the state of Armenians in the United States as raise important questions to ponder. The journal also includes a research note by Editor Joseph Kechichian on the enigmatic figure of TE Lawrence and his mixed vies of Armenians with several excerpts from his extensive writings.

This issue of JSAS also inaugurates a commentary section, which includes a think piece by Bedros Der Matossian titled "Looming Dangers. Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders" that will become a trailblazer. Such short reflective pieces on issues of current concern will add value to ongoing academic debates.

Starting with this issue of the JSAS, the Society for Armenian Studies adopts a semi-annual schedule, to further facilitate the dissemination of its work. JSAS 18:2 is scheduled for publication in the next few weeks. Such a pace will allow for a more regular publication schedule that should further encourage authors to accelerate their research and see their work in print in a refereed publication. Edited by Dr. Joseph A. Kechichian, the journal follows a straightforward policy with respect to submitted essays, as each is read by three referees; two outside experts who are not given the author's name, as well as by the editor.

Subscriptions to JSAS may be placed with the SAS Secretariat: Barlow Der Mugrdchian, at barlowd@csufresno.edu.

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

MARCH 5-6 – Armenian Assembly of America's Annual Members Weekend, Quail Ridge country Club, Boynton Beach. March 5: Runway 2010 Fashion Show and luncheon, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; March 6: Annual Members Meeting and book presentation with Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Reception and banquet dinner with Armenian music, 6-10 p.m. For more info., including hotel and to RSVP, contact Carol Norigian at cnorigian@aol.com or (561) 734-0133 by February 19.

MARCH 20 – "The Royal Armenian Divorce," sequel to "The Royal Armenian Wedding," a two-act comedy written, directed and produced by Ida Boodakian will take place in Mardigian Hall sponsored by St. David Armenian Church Women's Guild. Tickets \$35/person. Reserved tables of eight and 10 must be prepaid. All other seating is open. For tickets and info., call Connie Aichian, (561) 734-6030 or church office (561) 994-2335.

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 8 – Trinity Men's Union – Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cambridge; guest speaker, Philip Dardeno, CPA, "The 2010 Tax Season." Open to the public. 6 p.m.; dinner, \$12. RSVP Armen Skenderian, (978) 337-4892 or askenderian@totalcomsolutions.com.

OCTOBER 9 – The Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston Celebrates its 30th Anniversary, ACEC, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Details to follow.

NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 4 – Musician, writer and poet Alan Semerdjian will present his new collection of poems, *In the Architecture of Bone*, on Thursday, at 7 p.m. in G-Hall of the Armenian Diocese, 630 Second Ave. Question-and-answer session and wine-and-cheese reception to follow. This event is hosted by the Zohrab Center and the Armenian Students' Association. For more information, call (212) 686-0710 or e-mail Taleen Babayan at taleen@zohrabcenter.org.



On Monday, February 8, the Trinity Men's Union will host a lecture at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church, in Cambridge, Mass., picture above, featuring guest speaker, Philip Dardeno, CPA, who will discuss the "The 2010 Tax Season." The event is open to the public. Lecture, 6 p.m.; dinner, \$12. For more info., contact Armen Skenderian at askenderian@totalcomsolutions.com.

Calendar Fees

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is going to start charging for calendar entries, starting with the first issue of the New Year. The fee will be \$5 per line, with discounts for multiple insertions: four times will receive a 10 percent discount; five times or more, a 20 percent discount and 10 or more entries, a 40-percent discount. Entries can be e-mailed to mirrords@aol.com or to editor@mirrorspectator.com.



COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

When Earthquake Hits Home

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Haiti: 200,000 victims and counting. A devastating human tragedy beyond comprehension. It seems that nature has its way of hitting the most vulnerable nations. *Time* magazine (the January 25 issue) defined succinctly the ironic state of affairs in its Haiti earthquake coverage writing: "Tragedy has a way of visiting those who can bear it least."

In recent history, catastrophic earthquakes hit Iran, Mexico, Turkey, Indonesia, Peru, Armenia among other countries. Only industrialized nations like the US and Japan seem to be well-equipped enough to contain the large-scale carnage.

Day in and day out, the horrifying footage of the earthquake destruction unfolds on our screens to bring home the pain and suffering experienced by one of the poorest nations on earth. Yet many people watch the footage on their TV sets and go on with their daily lives, switching to their favorite sports or entertainment channels, munching their potato chips and gulping cold beer.

This brings to mind our own tragedies – be it earthquake or the Genocide – which many people cannot find relevant in their daily lives or able to feel empathy for.

As the mass graves are being dug, humanitarian aid is pouring in from many countries, Armenia included, as our people empathize most, having suffered the same fate in 1988.

It was reported that dozens of French rappers and pop stars are joining Charles Aznavour and Youssou N'Dour to record a song to raise funds for quake stricken Haiti. The song is titled, *A Gesture for Dear Haiti*.

Many countries helping Haiti victims have motivations that go beyond humanitarian concerns. Of course, all help must be welcomed and appreciated. But some countries try to score political gains. Cuba was one of the first countries to send a team of doctors, yet that was hardly covered in the US news media. On the other hand, there was disproportionate coverage of the Israeli team. And on this occasion, it was very interesting to read about the debate going on in the Israeli press. Most of the concern was focused on improving the country's image after the carnage brought about in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli Defense forces.

The observers believe that devastation has been so overwhelming that the country must not only figure out how to recover but also try to rebuild its sense of self.

Parallels with Armenia seem unavoidable. Haiti was occupied by US forces from 1915 to 1934 and then it was misruled by Francois Duvalier and his son, Jean-Claude, Papa Doc and Baby

Doc, respectively. These two repressive dictators plundered the country from 1957 to 1986.

Armenia similarly experienced a repressive regime for almost 70 years, and at the very moment of emancipation, the Soviet Union collapsed and war broke out with Azerbaijan. The death toll in Gumri after the 1988 quake was reported to be 25,000, but the figure is most assuredly higher.

We cannot deny the help received from the international community. A city with a population of 175,000 population was leveled. Despite all the grumblings, the recovery changed entirely Gumri's face. Aznavour's charity, the Lincy Foundation and Armenia's government spearheaded the reconstruction efforts.

Criticizing the government has become a national sport in Armenia. The government's reconstruction efforts are seldom appreciated, but it plays a most significant role.

However, there are still 7,000 families in Gumri living in "domics," the make-shift homes which remain as a gaping wound for all Armenians.

Many Armenians shrug their shoulders at Haiti's tragedy. We can only ask these indifferent people who, if not us, should contribute to Haiti. What would we think if people were indifferent to our tragedy?

The world is so interconnected today that every event has global reverberations. In the past, an earthquake in Haiti would hardly be reported in Armenia and people would learn about it years later, feeling no obligation to help. But today, we live in a global village and any important and unimportant event is brought instantly into our living rooms, thereby becoming part of our lives.

The US government is heavily involved in rescue and recovery efforts, although it is accused by some quarters that it has reoccupied Haiti, a country poor in natural resources and devoid of any strategic value. Helping Haiti could only be motivated by humanitarian goals.

The outpouring of charity by the American people has been phenomenal. Governments may or may not entertain a political agenda in helping a country in distress, but people, by and large, contribute because they empathize with the victims stricken with tragedy.

Armenians, at times, are at a loss to see the relevance. Many believe that it is someone else's business to help the needy and the victim. And then, we are surprised to find out that other people are not aware of the story of our Genocide, nor do they care to consider it as an issue. Once we are able to place our tragedy on a universal human level, we have a better chance of having other people care and share our plight.

Today Haiti is our wound; it is the wound of all humanity.

The Never-Ending Exodus of Christians from Middle East

By Robert Fisk

Was I the only one to react with a total lack of surprise to the news that Muslim Afghan soldiers are fighting Muslim Taliban fighters with a coded inscription on their rifle sights from the Bible's Book of John?

Could Holman Hunt have imagined that his Light of the World (Jesus, no less, painted in 1854)

would be guiding the path of American as well as Afghan army bullets into the hearts of the Muslim Taliban?

Possibly. So it turns out that another bunch of religious nutters, the makers of Trijicon rifle sights in the US, believe the inscription is "part of our faith and our belief in service to our country."

Not since the Serbs and Lebanese Phalangists set off to massacre and rape their Muslim enemies over the past three decades with pictures of the Virgin Mary on their rifle butts has there been anything so preposterous. Indeed, 'twas I who first spotted two American M1A1 Abrams tanks parked in central Baghdad in 2003 with "Crusader 1" and "Crusader 2" painted on their barrels. Don't tell me no one in the Pentagon (or the Ministry of Defesen (MoD), which has an order in for another 400 Trijicon sites) didn't query

that weird "JN8:12" on the equipment.

No wonder then – and here's a real tragedy – that Christians are in a state of perpetual exodus from the Middle East. In Egypt, six Coptic Christians were killed at Christmas, along with a Muslim policeman, when local Muslims attacked them.

The Copts are maybe 10 percent of their country's 80 million people but they are heading in droves for America. One problem they have is seeking official permission to build churches in Egypt – and if they get this permission, sure enough, up will pop a mosque right next door.

Courtesy of that great *Bible*-reader George W. Bush, the Christians of post-invasion Iraq are still fleeing sectarian violence for the West.

They've been murdered and burned out of their homes. Why, even the head of the superior Islamic council of Iraq, Ammar al-Hakim, turned up in Beirut this week to tell the Maronite Catholic patriarch of Lebanon that he was doing "all he could" for his Iraqi Christian brothers and sisters. Algerian Islamists have just burned a Protestant church in an apartment in Tizi Ouzou.

There's not much point, of course, in looking for the last known resting place of one and a half million Christian Armenians, because they were mass-slaughtered by the Turks in 1915 – although neither Bush nor his successor will call it a genocide because they are frightened of Muslim Turkey.

But I was heartened to read a fine article

by Jihad Zein in the Lebanese newspaper *An Nahar* last week. He believes that governments in the Muslim world have been repressing societies but – and I hope I have grasped his complex argument correctly – repressed societies are now repressing minorities.

The Zein thesis is that Middle East rulers have abandoned the idea of cultural authority in the interests of safeguarding the security of their political society.

The Fisk thesis is that minorities don't count any more.

But don't bet on it. Was it not the army of Israel which named its 1996 bombardment of Lebanon "Grapes of Wrath," an operation which included the atrocity at Qana, when 106 Lebanese civilians were torn to bits by Israeli shells? And did not Grapes of Wrath take its name from chapter 32, verse 25 of the *Book of Deuteronomy* in which it is said that "the sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of grey hairs."

All in all, a good description of the massacre at Qana.

Or of those innocent Afghan villagers torn to bits in NATO's heroic air strikes. Indeed, I wouldn't be surprised to hear that DY32:2 is inscribed on NATO's bombs. Work that one out.

(This article originally appeared in the January 25 issue of the [London] *Independent*)



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

The Show is Over... The Protocols are Dead!

The show is finally over! The international community is no longer buying the endless Turkish excuses for refusing to ratify the Protocols. Armenian officials, who naively believed that Turkey would open its border and establish diplomatic relations with Armenia, are beginning to question the Turks' sincerity and contemplating the possibility of the Protocols' collapse.

Now the blame game starts. Whose fault is it that the Protocols are not being ratified? In my view, the Turks are the ones to be blamed for deceiving the international community all along. It was never the intention of the Turkish leaders to carry out their publicly-stated plans to normalize relations with Armenia. They were simply engaged in a ploy to obstruct what they believed to be President Obama's solemn pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide, and to facilitate Turkey's admission to the European Union (EU), since open borders are one of the key prerequisites for EU membership.

Without taking a single positive step, Turkey created the false impression of reconciling with Armenia, thereby dissuading President Obama from using the term "Genocide" in his April 24 statement. Turkish leaders also succeeded in exploiting the Protocols to generate favorable worldwide publicity for their country.

During long and difficult negotiations, Turkey demanded that in return for opening the border and establishing diplomatic relations, Armenia withdraw from Karabagh (Artsakh), set up an international commission to study the facts of the Genocide, and acknowledge the territorial

integrity of Turkey.

After Russia, the United States and Europe applied intense pressure on both sides, Armenia and Turkey made a series of compromises. Armenia reluctantly agreed to establish an ambiguous "historical commission," which was not explicitly linked to the Genocide. Armenia also had to accept a reference in the Protocols to prior international treaties that confirmed Armenian territorial concessions to Turkey, but did not specifically mention the capitulatory Treaty of Kars. Furthermore, the Protocols included a clause that called for non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states, implying that Armenia could no longer support Artsakh, because that would be construed as interference in Azerbaijan's domestic issues.

Since the Protocols signed on October 10 did not fulfill all of Turkey's demands, its leaders started threatening not to ratify the Protocols or open the border with Armenia until the Artsakh conflict is resolved in Azerbaijan's favor. In other words, Turkey was trying to make up for any deficiencies in the Protocols by holding their ratification hostage to its precondition on Artsakh.

The ratification of the Protocols became even more complicated when Azerbaijan began to threaten its "Big Brother" Turkey for considering the opening of the border with its archenemy – Armenia. The Azeris wanted the Turkish blockade to continue until Armenia is forced to acknowledge Azerbaijan's jurisdiction over Artsakh. The Azeri threat of raising natural gas prices to Turkey and redirecting some of its oil to Russia made Turkish leaders even more reticent to consummate their agreement with Armenia.

To appease Azerbaijan, Turkey demanded that Russia, Europe and the United States pressure Armenia into making concessions on Artsakh. This Turkish request, however, fell on deaf ears. The international community realized that the attempt to simultaneously resolve two thorny issues – the Artsakh conflict and Armenia-Turkey Protocols – would lead to solving neither one!

Realizing that hardly anyone outside Turkey and Azerbaijan was supporting their demands on Artsakh, Turkish leaders set their sights on another convenient scapegoat: The Constitutional Court of Armenia. Although

the Court decided on January 12 that the obligations stipulated in the Protocols complied with the constitution, it also issued several clarifications and limitations that restricted the Turkish government's loose interpretation of the Protocols.

Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu brazenly threatened to abandon the Protocols outright, unless the Armenian Constitutional Court "corrected" its decision – an impossible task under Armenian laws! The State Department quickly sided with Armenia, rejecting the Turkish claim that the Constitutional Court's ruling contradicted the "letter and spirit" of the agreement. Of course, the State Department's true intent was to forestall the Armenian Parliament from adding any reservations on the Protocols at the time of ratification.

Since the Chairman of the Armenian Parliament had already announced that he would not take any action until the Turkish Parliament ratified the Protocols first, the ball is now in Turkey's court. The Protocols have been collecting dust in Ankara ever since they were submitted to the Parliament on October 21, 2009. The Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Turkey had stated in their joint announcement of last August that the Protocols should be ratified "within a reasonable timeframe." Armenian officials recently reminded Turkey of that loose deadline, adding that Armenia would be forced to take unspecified counteractions should Turkey not ratify the Protocols by February or March, at the latest!

At this juncture, neither Armenia nor Turkey is willing to back down from its recalcitrant position. Should Turkey's leaders remove Artsakh and the Constitutional Court as preconditions, they would risk not only losing Azerbaijan as an ally, but seriously jeopardize their party's majority in next year's parliamentary election. Similarly, Armenia's leaders can neither give up Artsakh nor "correct" the ruling of the Constitutional Court. No amount of outside pressure can therefore force the two governments to reverse course. That is why I believe the Protocols cannot be resuscitated.

Turkey came very close to deceiving Armenia and the rest of the world with these infamous Protocols. Fortunately, they failed before causing lasting damage to Armenia's national interests.

Countdown to the Next War over Artsakh

By David Boyajian

Meeting at the White House with a group of Armenian Americans, the chief US negotiator for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) peace talks on Artsakh (Karabagh) announced that the United States would be satisfied if a peace agreement were to last for only 10 years.

The official was Joseph A. Presel. It was 1996, and Bill Clinton was president. I happened to be at that meeting.

With Presel were Richard Morningstar, US special envoy to the newly independent states of the Caucasus, Caspian and Central Asia, Nancy Soderberg of the National Security Council and others. A key US objective, Soderberg declared, was to pump the region's oil and gas resources west through US sponsored pipelines.

While commenting on the OSCE negotiations, Presel made an astonishing remark, which I paraphrase: "Even if a peace agreement between Armenians and Azerbaijan over Karabagh were to last just 10 years, that would be sufficient."

Did Presel mean that Washington would risk a quick fix for Artsakh even if it were likely to result in a medium-term renewal of violence? I believe so, and the reasons are clear.

The Armenian Corridor

Like Georgia, Armenia sits in a strategic position between energy-rich Azerbaijan (and the Caspian Sea) and NATO member Turkey.

An Artsakh peace accord would lead Azerbaijan, and probably Turkey, to reopen their borders with Armenia. That, the US State Department hopes, would eventually result in Armenia's serving American interests as a land, air and gas and oil pipeline corridor between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

None of that will happen without an Artsakh peace accord. But it need last just long enough for the US to gain an economic and political foothold in Armenia. Such a foothold would take several years, which explains Presel's 10-

year timeframe.

Why did Presel, an experienced diplomat who had served in Turkey and Russia and was soon to be the ambassador to Uzbekistan, make such a damning disclosure about State Department strategy?

I don't know. It was early in the morning, and Presel looked very tired. Perhaps fatigue caused him to let his guard down.

With Presel's 10-year timeframe in mind, consider the OSCE peace plan for Artsakh that Washington, Paris and Moscow have proposed.

Recipe for Disaster

The plan would, for instance, allow thousands of Azeris to resettle in Artsakh. Even Armenia has apparently fallen for this pseudo-humanitarian proposal.

Azerbaijan will ensure that the resettlers include plenty of spies, saboteurs and provocateurs. Their job? To sow discord over property rights, school curricula, military service, alleged discrimination and any other pretext they can dream up. The resulting disorder or civil war would give the OSCE and Azerbaijan an excuse to cancel the referendum that would supposedly decide Artsakh's final legal status.

Claiming that Armenians were brutalizing its kin, Azerbaijan – armed with advanced weapons bought with billions in oil and gas revenue – could well launch a massive assault. Azerbaijan has always preferred reconquest over peace.

Even if the resettled Azeris lived peacefully, their higher birth rate would ensure their eventually outnumbering Armenians.

Under either scenario, Armenians could lose Artsakh permanently.

Major power plays

Would the United States (and Europe) really be unconcerned if an Artsakh peace fell apart after 10 years or so? It depends.

If western-bound pipelines passed through Armenia, or if a new war jeopardized the existing Azeri pipelines that lie just north of Artsakh, Washington and Europe would oppose a new war by Azerbaijan. It's unclear, however,

that they would have sufficient leverage over Baku to enforce their will.

Conversely, if their interests were not threatened, the U.S. and Europe might not particularly care if Azerbaijan reconquered Artsakh. Russia might actually welcome a new war by Azerbaijan if it concluded that an Armenian counterattack would damage western-bound pipelines.

The major powers could prove to be greater enemies of Artsakh than is Azerbaijan.

Treachery and Betrayal

Would Armenia ever agree to a deeply flawed peace plan for Artsakh designed by the US, France, Europe, and Russia, all of whom have historically lied to and betrayed Armenians? Probably.

Inexplicably, Armenian governments have rarely, if ever, publicly reminded these countries of their treachery. Brought up in the denationalized Soviet educational system, Armenian leaders may be largely unaware of the details of that treachery.

Moreover, Armenia's recent accord with Turkey – the so-called "protocols" which tend to cast aside Armenian historical rights and may make the factuality of the genocide debatable – demonstrates that its leaders are poor negotiators and more concerned with lining their pockets than heeding the views of their people.

State Department Doubletalk

Despite Presel's eye-opening revelation, unintentional or otherwise, about a short-term fix for Artsakh, Armenians should know that he also reflects the State Department's doubletalk about the Armenian Genocide.

At the White House, Presel referred directly to the Armenian Genocide, saying, "I don't know why Turkey doesn't just acknowledge it." The statement was strangely disingenuous. Presel had, after all, served in Turkey and certainly knew of Ankara's fear that Genocide acknowledgment could advance long-standing Armenian claims to territory and reparations.

Fast forward to several years ago. Presel was see COUNTDOWN, page 20

LETTERS

The Legacy of Our Late, Beloved Generation; *The 70-year-old Fine Tradition*

To the Editor:

The Philadelphia Tekeyan's traditional New Year's Eve Celebration Banquet – to benefit the ADL-Tekeyan press – has been a rewarding success, thanks to the endless devotion of our forever-youthful Ladies' Guild, and thanks to the generous support of our members and friends.

As in the past, the major part of the process is allocated for gift-subscriptions of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator and Abaka Armenian weekly (Montreal) to the four Armenian churches of Philadelphia, the Armenian Sisters Academy, the honorable Armenian Clergy, as well as some select Armenian cultural activists.

Fourteen gift subscriptions of the Mirror-Spectator and 11 gift subscriptions of Abaka were given.

– TCA Philadelphia Executive Committee

A Big Thank You

To the Editor:

Prior our permanent departure from Philadelphia, we would like to thank all community organizations, especially the members of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the Knights of Vartan and the Armenian Church for their unconditional cooperation with us, being members, active members, or being committee members of them for more than 30 years.

We will cherish this vibrant community in our hearts and minds when we settle in Florida for good, and remember every moment of our good days.

We wish every organization and every person successful future and good luck to their endeavors.

–David and Armenouhi Nalbantian
Newtown Square, Penn.



Yerevan Says Kocharian Visit to Iran 'Private'

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Former President of Armenia Robert Kocharian visited Iran this week in a private capacity, even though he was invited by the Iranian government, official Yerevan said on Friday.

A spokesman for Kocharian similarly stated that the two-day trip had a “friendly and unofficial” character. Victor Soghomonian said that the invitation to Kocharian had been extended by Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki.

“The former president certainly went there on a private visit but at the invitation of the Islamic Republic’s leadership,” Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian told reporters earlier in the day.

Nalbandian seemed to downplay the significance of the trip as well as statements that were attributed to Kocharian by Iranian media outlets. They quoted him as telling Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Mottaki that Armenia remains committed to deepening its political and economic ties with Iran.

“I have heard about statements saying that Armenia is in favor of expanding relations with

Iran,” said Nalbandian. “Was that a secret? This was said when Mr. Kocharian was president of the Republic of Armenia and this is being said today. I see nothing extraordinary there.”

“Were any statements contradicting what Armenia wants now made? No. I think there is no need to create artificial problems,” added the minister.

Soghomonian claimed, however, that Kocharian made no political statements in Tehran. “In all likelihood, what happened is the result of a misunderstanding or incorrect translation by media,” he said, referring to the Iranian news reports.

According to the official IRNA news agency, Kocharian told Ahmadinejad that the two neighboring states “enjoy ample untapped capacities to increase current level of mutual and regional relations and cooperation.” Another Iranian news agency cited the former Armenian leader as criticizing “foreign powers’ prescriptions for resolving crises in the Caucasus region” during the meeting with Mottaki.



Former Armenian President Robert Kocharian with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Hambardzumyan Wins Medal in Russia

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – An Armenian craftsman, master of sculpting Armenian *khachkars* (cross stones) was awarded with the “Talent and Title” medal at an international art exhibition in Moscow. More than 100 artists and sculptors from 70 countries participated.

Khachkar carver Varazdat Hambardzumyan aims to show Armenian “national values to the whole world.”

Hambardzumyan, along with TV, cinematography, theatre, sport, literature and music figures was awarded the honor at the “World Cultural Dialogue through Art” exhibition.

Hambardzumyan, 50, has been a *khachkar* artist for more than 20 years, and says that “*khachkars* are God’s stamp on the Armenian land, and it is possible to make them only in Armenia.” The master has four students who assist in his work.

“We must be able to show our national values to the whole world in a more contemporary way,” Hambardzumyan said at a press conference on January 18. Folk craftsman Hambardzumyan is creator of more than 400 *Khachkars*. His sculptors are placed throughout Armenia, as well as in Greece, Switzerland, Russia, the US, Canada and even in Turkey.



One of the Khachkars by Varazdat Hambardzumyan

Istanbul Named a Culture Capital

ISTANBUL (BBC News) – Spectacular fireworks displays and cultural performances will mark the launch of Istanbul’s year as one of three European Capitals of Culture.

The prestigious title gives cities the opportunity and funding to showcase and enrich their cultural life.

For Turkey, which is struggling to fulfill its longstanding aim of becoming a member of the European Union, the title has particular significance.

But Istanbul’s celebration is not without its problems.

Istanbul competed fiercely with the Ukrainian capital Kiev to win this title, the last time it will be offered to a non-EU member.

The two other winners were Pecs, Hungary and Essen, Germany.

With its rich heritage of Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman history and its pulsating contemporary urban life, Istanbul is already recognized as one of the world’s great cultural capitals.

But the title means a great deal in a country, which has for decades aspired to membership of the European Union.

The opening celebrations will be marked by a spectacular fireworks display choreographed by the French pyrotechnician Cristophe Berthonneau.

And by a series of cultural performances set against the backdrop of some of Istanbul’s greatest landmarks.

But big questions hang over how effective the rest of the year’s program will be.

The organizing committee has been rocked by conflict between NGOs and government bureaucrats, with mass resignations last year.

There have been persistent allegations of corruption.

Critics say there has been too much focus on restoring well-known historical sites, and too little on contemporary culture.

And very little effort has been devoted to confronting the painful 20th century legacy left by the mass expulsion (and massacre) of the Greek and Armenian communities, whose buildings, many of them derelict, still litter the city.

Countdown to the Next War over Artsakh

COUNTDOWN, from page 19 on a panel that discussed Armenian-Turkish relations. He reportedly endorsed Turkey’s denialist stance that the 1915 killings were not genocide but rather were caused by Armenian rebellions.

Regardless, Armenians must take Presel’s “10-year” warning seriously. There is no reason to believe that the State Department’s policy is any different now than when he said it.

When a “peace” agreement on Artsakh is signed, start counting.

(David Boyajian is a freelance writer. Many of his articles and interviews are archived on Armeniapedia.org.)

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Tekeyan Cultural Association & ADL
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Valentine's Masquerade Ball

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\$80 dinner • \$35 after 10 pm
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St. John's Cultural Hall
2200 1 Northwestern Hwy
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reservations:
Pam Coultis (248)646-7847
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Your Tekeyan contributions at work 2009

These photos were taken in 2009 at the Tekeyan Karabagh School. Thanks for your support





Thank you Detroit!
Teachers accepting a donation from Detroit (shown at right Maro Bedrosian)