

## Priest Found Dead at Church in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM (AFP) — A 34-year-old priest was found dead on Tuesday at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where most Christians believe Jesus was crucified and buried, officials said.

The cleric, thought to be an Armenian, was found at the bottom of a flight of stairs and appears to have fallen, a police spokesperson said.

“The priest fell down and passed away,” Micky Rosenfeld said. “His death was not the result of a criminal act.”

The Holy Sepulchre, considered by most Christians to be their faith’s holiest site, is uneasily shared by six denominations, including Greek Orthodox, Armenians and Roman Catholics.

“The Armenians are in a state of shock,” said Father Fergus Clarke, the senior Franciscan monk at the church, who spoke with the dead man’s colleagues shortly after the incident.

“They tried to revive him but unfortunately it was too late,” he said.

Tensions among the various denominations are not uncommon, erupting most recently last November when a brawl broke out between Greek and Armenian monks after a mass at the church.

## MORE THAN SPORTS AT ACYOA SPORTS WEEKEND



Members of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) gathered in Palisades, NY, May 21 to 25 for a weekend of sports, fun and spiritual awareness. See pages 10 and 11 for complete coverage.

## Journalist Faces 28 Years for Dink Book

By Emine Ozcan

ISTANBUL (BIA News Center) — Nedim Sener, a reporter for the daily *Milliyet* newspaper who published a book about journalist Hrant Dink’s murder, faces up to 28 years in jail after police officers filed complaints against him.

The book, titled *The Dink Murder and Intelligence Lies*, deals with the police and national intelligence officers who have been accused of negligence in Dink’s 2007

murder. They are accused both of having prior knowledge of murder plans and of preventing the solving of the case with misleading evidence and fake documents.

“I published the incidents of negligence of these three important intelligence institutions of the state in the Dink murder case, giving names,” Sener said. “I have proven that fake documents were prepared. Documents marked as classified and containing lies were published in the book.”

Following the publication of the book, several police officers who filed criminal complaints against the writer: Ramazan

Akyürek, then chief of police in Trabzon and still in office as police intelligence unit chief, Ali Fuat Yilmazer, then police intelli see DINK, page 4

## Van Dyke’s ‘Deported’ Has First Reading in Watertown

By Nancy Kalajian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WATERTOWN, Mass. — The first public reading of Joyce Van Dyke’s new play, “Deported,” a dream play, took place recently at the new Charles Mosesian Theater at the Arsenal Center for the Arts. Some audience members noted the appropriateness of holding this special event in Watertown, a community that for years has welcomed immigrants, especially Armenians who were deported from the Ottoman Empire around the turn of the century.

see VAN DYKE page 14

## Clinton, Turkish FM Discuss ‘Road Map’ in Washington

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu last week at the Department of State for a “comprehensive discussion” that included the proposed “road map” for establishing relations between Turkey and Armenia.

“I have been very encouraged by the progress that has been made and by the commitment of the governments involved,” Clinton said during a joint press conference.

“We are supportive, but it is up to the Turkish and Armenian governments and people to realize the great opportunity this poses,” she added. “The normalization of relations not only continues what I have seen from the Turkish Government, which is a desire to actually solve problems, and I

applaud that, but we think it will bring great benefits to the region.”

Clinton also addressed the Nagorno Karabagh peace talks, which continued this week, saying, “We believe that a lot of progress has been made in a relatively short period of time to resolve issues that are of long standing.”

Davutoglu expressed similar hope that the talks would yield results.

“We are very optimistic,” he said. “We want to achieve a prosperous, peaceful Caucasus. And in that sense, we are fully committed to our normalization process with Armenia, and also, we are fully committed and we are ready to work together with the United States and other co-chairs of Minsk Group for the resolution of Armenian-Azeri issues.”



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Baroness Caroline Cox Visits Nagorno Karabagh Republic

STEPANAKERT (Arminfo) — A delegation led by Vice Speaker of the House of Lords of the British Parliament, Baroness Caroline Cox, recently visited Nagorno Karabagh.

This is Cox’s 67th humanitarian visit to Karabagh.

President Bako Sahakian received the guests on June 8. Cox said that she was impressed with the progress in Karabagh, asking Sahakian to tell her about the present situation.

Sahakian reportedly told Cox that the international recognition of the independence of Karabagh was just a matter time and the sustainable development of democratic values is ongoing.

### Swedish Foreign Minister Rejects Claim For Recognizing Armenian Genocide

STOCKHOLM (PanArmenian.Net) — Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt has once again rejected the Liberal People’s Party parliamentarian’s request to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

“Politicians do not face the task of adopting decisions that may change the course of historical developments,” CNN Turk quoted the Swedish diplomat as saying.

Bildt added using the term would impede the activities of the group dealing with the study of “historical developments.”

### French MP Visit Nagorno Karabagh

STEPANAKERT (Radiolur) — Chairman of the French-Armenian Friendship Group Francois Rochebloine visited Nagorno Karabagh last week at the invitation of the Speaker of NKR National Assembly, Ashot Ghulyan.

Greeting the French Deputy at the National Assembly, Ghulyan noted that Rochebloine had always been a friend of Karabagh and supported their struggle for independence.

Rochebloine, who was paying the third visit to NKR, said he was pleased by the progress the country is making, emphasizing the necessity of sharing information about Nagorno Karabagh with the international community.

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### Composer Honored

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Water Prices to Rise in Armenia

YEREVAN (Arka) — On July 8, the Yerevan Water Company will raise the price for one cubic meter of water by 8.2 drams up to 181 drams.

The Public Services Regulatory Commission Tariff Policy Department spokesperson Armen Arshakyan reported that the price for 1,000 cubic meters of drinking water will be 153,850 AMD. The price for drainage will be 12, 670 AMD for 1,000 cubic meters, with purification costing 14,480 AMD.

Inflation and higher electric-power prices necessitate the raised prices, Arshakyan said.

The company serves 332,750 customers.

## Jessie Norman to Perform In Yerevan

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) — American opera singer Jessie Norman will perform at the Perspectives XXI 10th International Music Festival.

Festival Chairman Stepan Rostomyan said the deal was worked out during a June 4 concert in Moscow, with details to emerge later.

## Yerevan Honors Karabagh Volunteer Soldiers

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) — The volunteer soldiers who died fighting for Karabagh independence were recently honored in Yerevan.

High-ranking Defense Ministry officials and Shengavit Municipality Social Organizations' representatives participated in the commemorative event.

Participants visited Yerablur, the pantheon of Armenian warriors, to lay wreaths at graves, and commemorated soldiers at the Shengavit memorial.

During the combat at one of Karabagh's villages, on the night of April 21, 1994, 14 soldiers from the Shengavit Detachment were killed while repelling an Azeri attack. They were buried in June of that year after lengthy negotiations to have their bodies returned.

## US Assistant Secretary of State Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) — Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian recently met with Philip Gordon, US Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasian Affairs, during his first trip to Armenia this past week.

Gordon said the US attaches much importance to the extension of Armenian-American ties, adding that his visit would address the Millennium Challenge funding project.

He also stressed the importance of Armenian-Turkish tie and said he hoped for a "speedy conflict settlement" in Nagorno Karabagh.

## Armenian Habitat Changes Affiliation, Name

YEREVAN — Earlier this month, Armenian Habitat and Habitat for Humanity International signed a settlement agreement, the result of which cooperation between the two organizations was terminated.

After nine years of activities, Armenian Habitat is changing its name to "Katsaran." The Charitable NGO Katsaran will remain dedicated to the mission of Armenian Habitat NGO, and will continue to work with its 408 beneficiary families and will also implement new programs with Fuller Center for Housing Armenia Charitable NGO which aims to eliminate housing poverty

in Armenia as well by providing long-term interest-free loans to low-income families to improve their housing conditions.

Since 2008 Fuller Center for Housing Armenia, in cooperation with the international organization Fuller Center for Housing, has supported 50 low-income families in Armenia. Twenty-eight families have completed their half-built houses, 16 have built new houses in the result of cooperation with ARDA(Armenian Relief Development Association) and Vanadzor Municipality, and six families have renovated their apartments.

# Vahagn Dadrian and Wolfgang Gust Among Winners of President's Prize

YEREVAN — The Hayastan All Armenian Fund recently congratulated all the winners of the 2008 President's Prize, including academics Vahagn Dadrian and Wolfgang Gust, who were awarded the prestigious prize for their contributions to the study of the Armenian Genocide as well as efforts to secure its worldwide recognition.

Gust received the President's Prize for his groundbreaking research of German state archives pertaining to the 1915 Genocide. His landmark 2005 study, *The Armenian Genocide During the First World War: Documents from German State Archives*, reveals the deep-rooted relations between imperial Germany and the Ottoman Empire during the first part of the 20th century, particularly as documented in the secret correspondence of the German consul and ambassador in Istanbul with the Turkish government.

Gust's 675-page volume includes 218 secret and top-secret telegrams, letters and communiqués, most of which have never been published previously.

A renowned journalist and scholar, Gust has long been dedicated to the study of the Genocide. An Armenian translation of his first work related to the subject, 1993's *The Armenian Genocide: The Tragedy of the Oldest Christian Nation*, was published in Armenia in 2002. In recognition of Gust's achievement, Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, bestowed

on him the St. Sahag and St. Mashtots medal in 2001.

Dadrian, who has devoted his entire career to the study of the Genocide, received the President's Prize not only for his past achievements but ongoing research within his field. Currently serving as director of genocide research at the Zoryan Institute, Dadrian is the author of numerous pioneering studies on the Genocide, German complicity, Turkish denial, parallels between the Genocide and the Holocaust and related topics.

The special category of the President's Prize, Valuable Contribution to the Recognition of the Genocide, was instituted in 2005. The prize includes a certificate of achievement, a medal and a monetary award in the amount of \$10,000. To date, nine scholars and public figures, including four Armenians, have received the President's Prize in this category.

Ara Vardanyan, executive director of the Hayastan All Armenian Fund, said, "It's a great honor to acknowledge some of the most accomplished scientists, scholars and artist of our time, and especially to be able to express our gratitude to those who have contributed so much to the field of Genocide recognition. The Hayastan All Armenian Fund is extremely proud of its role as organizer and coordinator of the President's Prize competitions and awards ceremonies. We look forward to continuing to build on this tradition, thanks to the support of the Boghossian Foundation."

Established in 2000 by the Boghossian Foundation, the President's Prize promotes excellence in the Armenian arts, sciences and Genocide-



Vahagn Dadrian



Wolfgang Gust

recognition efforts. It also includes the President's Youth Prize, which awards young talents in various fields. Administered by the Hayastan All Armenian Fund, the juried annual prize is bestowed on recipients by the president of the Republic of Armenia, during a rewards ceremony held at the presidential residence. This year the prize was awarded to 21 individuals, for achievements in one of nine categories.

## Nearly 600 Matenadaran Manuscripts Digitized

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — About 600 manuscripts kept at the Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, have been digitalized, according to Director of Matenadaran Hrachya Tamrazyan.

"Digitalization of manuscripts requires long-lasting work, but we did it with great speed," Tamrazyan said.

Tamrazyan added the plan is to put the project on the Internet. A new department of the school is also in the works, which will be four times larger than the present building.

## Sargisian Deems Unrest Probe a Failure

By Karine Kalantarian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — President Serge Sargisian considers a supposedly independent inquiry into the March 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan, which he helped to launch last fall, to have been a failure, his spokesman said last week.

The Fact-Finding Group of Experts has been effectively paralyzed for the past month by mounting tensions between its pro-government and pro-opposition members. Its non-partisan chairman, Vahe Stepanian stepped down last week, citing the wrangling. Two other group members chosen by Armenia's governing coalition have also effectively terminated their involvement in the inquiry.

The five-member group was set up by Sargisian last October with the aim of collecting information that would shed more light on the causes of the March 1, 2008 clashes between opposition protesters and security forces. The opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) and Zharangutyun party each named one member of the group. The state human rights ombudsman, Armen Harutunian, picked the fifth member, Stepanian.

Stepanian and the group's two pro-government members caused a stir in early May when they went on a two-week vacation, forcing a temporary suspension of the Western-backed inquiry. The group resumed its work on May 17 only to suspend it again two days later.

Its rival members have publicly traded bitter recriminations since then.

"Time has shown that having been nominated by political forces, members of the Fact-Finding Group have unfortunately failed to rid themselves of their political agendas and to act as truly independent experts," Sargisian's press secretary, Samvel Farmanian said. He said this fact has in effect led to "the failure of the group's activities" and makes its existence "controversial." He did not specify whether that means it will be formally disbanded by the president soon.

The Armenian opposition has already accused the authorities of deliberately sabotaging the probe to prevent further embarrassing revelations about their bloody suppression of opposition demonstrations sparked by the disputed presidential election of February 2008. In its first and so far only report submitted to parliament in late April, the Fact-Finding Group disputed the official version of the death of Captain Hamlet Tadevosian, one of the two police servicemen killed in pitched battles with opposition protesters who barricaded themselves in central Yerevan.

Tadevosian was apparently the first casualty of the fierce clashes that also left eight civilians dead. According to the Armenian law-enforcement authorities, he was killed by an explosive device thrown by one of the protesters. The group's report, signed only by Stepanian and the two pro-opposition members, cast doubt on this assertion, saying that investigators failed to properly examine the officer's body, clothes and flak jacket.

## Corrections

Two errors appeared in a review of a new book by Teryl Asher, *The Peoples of Ararat*.

In the story, which appeared in the May 23rd edition of the *Mirror-Spectator*, Mae Derdarian, the author of a review on the book, was mistakenly referred to as the author of the book in one sentence. Also, in another sentence, she was incorrectly referred to as Mary, not Mae.

In addition, an article that appeared in the May 30 edition of the *Mirror-Spectator* incorrectly identified the hometown of violin contest runner-up Haig Hovsepian as Needham. Hovsepian is from Belmont, Mass.

We regret the errors.





ARMENIA

# ‘Emo’ Yerevan Teens Challenge Society

By Siranuysh Gevorgyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – When Argam Babayan and Nelly Movsisyan walk the street together, many passers-by turn around to check them out. The teenagers dressed in black and pink attract attention with their haircuts with a front fringe closing one of their eyes and eyes heavily painted in black.

Babayan and Movsisyan, both 18, are representatives of emo (short for “emotional”) culture – a popular youth movement mainly in the United States and Europe, with a wide Internet community.

“Emos,” as some refer to themselves, initially used to be defined as fans of emo rock, but the term has been adapted to a wider cultural lifestyle. Emos are usually 12-18-year-olds; they wear either black or pink clothes, tight jeans, fingernails painted in black and listen to groups such as Tokyo Hotel, AFI and Avril Lavine. Emo began to take hold in Yerevan in 2007.

“The real emo must have a very expressive appearance and only a few would dare to dress emo style here,” Babayan explained.

Babayan, 18, is believed to be the only “emo boy” in Yerevan. He does not contend that there aren’t other emo boys in the city, too, but he has yet to see one because he says others are afraid to go out dressed in emo fashion.

“I am not afraid; I dress like this all the time, and I do not want to change myself,” Babayan said. “However, when I walk in the street folks can insult me any time. They point at me, they say that I am a girl, or they ask whether I am a boy or if I am gay.”

Emo teenagers say that there are about 20-25 emos in Yerevan; however only five of them present themselves as such in public.

Besides emos, there are small groups of goths, punks, Satanists and other youth movements in Yerevan.

Those opposed to the lifestyle claim emo teenagers believe they must commit suicide once they are 18-years old. There have been no such deaths reported in Armenia.



Argam Babayan and Nelly Movsisyan are happy to find “somebody who understands.”

“Sometimes we are simply very, very sad, and then we may become unruly,” said Nelly Movsisyan, who adopted the culture at 16, but whose family disapproves.

Babayan, who has problems especially with his father, once took an overdose of aspirin after fighting with him, but woke

up the next morning healthy.

“I do not understand why my father does not accept me the way I am,” he said. “I do not do anything wrong, I do not smoke, I do not drink alcohol, I do not take narcotics.”

“Now he does not live with us, he lives with his second wife in Echmiadzin after my moth-

“I worked in a supermarket, and one day my boss came and told me to cut my hair the next day and only then come to work. And without saying anything I simply quit the job,” Babayan said.

Movsisyan’s father is more tolerant. She says her father works in Russia and some of

er’s death. But when he comes to Yerevan, he always provokes (fights) with me. And then I want to leave home,” he added.

Now Babayan lives with his two sisters. He works nightshift at a plastic bottle production plant. Babayan said he got the job with great difficulty.

his friend’s kids are also emos.

The two meet often, going for walks in downtown Yerevan.

“When nobody understands you, you try to find someone who would entirely understand you,” Babayan said. “I am very happy that we met.”

# Gumri Music School Recovers after Earthquake

By Tom Vartabedian

GUMRI, Armenia – The sound of music is alive and well inside the Tigranyan Institute.

Talented children are playing their instruments behind closed doors while parents gather, wait, listen and hope.

Inside the main auditorium, a young diva is exercising her voice before an audience that includes Sebouh Apkarian, artistic director and conductor of the famed KOHAR Symphony Orchestra and Choir.

He’s there like he always is, scouting new talent and lending encouragement. You can’t miss him. He’s the gentleman in the front row with snow-white hair listening attentively and taking notes.

Obviously, he likes what he sees in this young nightingale.

“He’s very supportive to the youngsters who know that being in a program with KOHAR and traveling around the world to

TOM VARTABEDIAN PHOTO



Principal Kayane Manougian takes charge of 390 students and 75 instructors in addition to being concertmaster with the KOHAR Symphony Orchestra.

perform would be the ultimate,” said Kayane Manougian. “They all want to make a big impression.”

Twenty-one years ago, a devastating earthquake sent tremors and shock waves through Gumri and Spitak, claiming some 58,000 lives.

The children here are too young to remember but continuously hear the stories, not like Manougian who experienced the tragedy first-hand and lived to tell about it.

“I was at home with a newborn child when the earthquake struck,” she recalls. “I ran out into the street and saw buildings toppling over. Two minutes can lead to a lifetime of tragedy and hardship. Many of my closest friends were lost. Every time I think about it, I’m devastated.”

Like so many others, Manougian pitched in, helping those in need and rebuilding her city in the aftermath.

The 80-year-old Tigranyan Institute was among the casualties, left in ruins. Life was uncertain and recovery slow. But they were determined. Trailers served as temporary classrooms amid the rubble along Abovian Street.

“For six years, we worked out of a fallout shelter, then moved into a building with no heat,” Manougian traced back. “Winters were severe. For 15 years, the school operated like that. People were poor. Homes were devastated. The ultimate sacrifice was always being made.”

Today, the institute boasts some 390 students between the ages of 7-15 and 75 instructors, housed in an adjacent building that once served as a factory. The lyrical sounds of young soloists are mingled with instruments that conserve the Armenian heritage and sustain its national character.

Not all are traditional pieces. A certain emphasis is placed on such Armenian instruments as the kanoun, duduk and tar. Choreography is another staple.

As concertmaster and first violinist of the KOHAR Orchestra, the 49-year-old Manougian also serves as a role model for these students. It’s more than music here but a way of life. Through performance, careers are established and money is earned – resources that are currently scarce in Armenia.

A nominal tuition is assessed for those who can afford it. Assistance is also met through government circles. The faculty is paid, however slight. Instruments are provided.

Students attend normal school elsewhere, then matriculate here for further education. It makes for a long, but productive day.

Among the notable groups is YerezhArt, a troupe of young singers who have visited the US and will do so again this fall.

TOM VARTABEDIAN PHOTO



N. Tigranyan Music Institute is enjoying a renaissance after being destroyed by an earthquake 21 years ago in Gumri.

“We prepare them for the conservatory,” said Manougian. “Many have succeeded and carried the name of Gumri to prominence. That we like to see. My students mean the world to me. Without them, I am very lonely.”





## International News

### Films about Tango Shown Through Embassy of Armenia in Argentina

YEREVAN — The National Gallery of Arts will be showing nearly 10 films dedicated to Argentinean tango until June 28.

Dance film fans will be able to watch the tango on the screen at the gallery. The films are artistic films and documentaries in Spanish with subtitles in English.

The films will be shown on Saturdays and Sundays at 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.

The month of tango kicked off on June 5. This initiative is supported by the Embassy of Armenia in Argentina.

### Saakashvili to Visit Armenia to Discuss High Price of Cargo Transit

TBILISI (Azg) — According to the Georgian news agencies, Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili is going to visit Armenia. The preparatory works to the visit were discussed during the meeting of the Armenian and Georgian Foreign Ministers on Monday, June 8.

Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, who left for Georgia Sunday, June 7 to pay a working visit, discussed issues of Armenian-Georgian relations with his Georgian counterpart.

According to the Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze, the Georgian President's working visit to Armenia is anticipated on June 24-25.

The foreign ministers discussed also Armenian-Georgian economic relations, especially the Armenian cargo transit through Georgia.

Before the visit of the Armenian Foreign Minister, the Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian announced that Georgia enjoys the transit monopoly on Armenia. He also mentioned that in case of opening of the Armenian-Turkish border, the transit monopoly of Georgia would grow weak. At present, 2/3 of the Armenian freight turnover is carried out through Georgia. The Armenian Prime Minister mentioned that the Armenian dependence on Georgia is negative and the neighboring country makes use of it fixing transit high prices for Armenia. The Prime Minister detailed that the freight transportation prices from any point of the world to Poti or Batumi are twice lower than from Poti or Batumi to Armenia.

Touching upon the issue in Tbilisi, Nalbandian stressed that the issue of the cargo transit prices through Georgia is raised by the businessmen. By the same token, businessmen may look for alternative ways of transportation to organize the freight transportation more advantageously.

Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze said that the issue is outside of his purview at the same time assuring that the issue would be studied by the relevant bodies.

### Year of Bulgarian Culture Opens in Yerevan

SOFIA (BTA) — Deputy Culture Minister Ivan Tokadjiev led a Bulgarian delegation to Armenia on May 29 to June 4 for the official opening of the Year of Bulgarian Culture in Armenia, the Culture Ministry said in a press release last Friday.

The two countries' culture ministries agreed on the convention, adding that the Year of Armenian Culture in Bulgaria would be marked in 2010. The memorandum was signed on December 10, 2008 by the two culture ministers, Stefan Danailov of Bulgaria and Hasmik Poghosyan of Armenia.

The Bulgarian delegation to Yerevan included Member of Parliament Roupen Krikoryan, Chairman of the Eparchial Council of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Bulgaria.

The Year of Bulgarian Culture in Armenia opened with a festival of Bulgarian culture. The events included concerts of the Sofia Soloists Chamber Ensemble led by Conductor Plamen Djourov, performances by the Arabesque ballet troupe, Bulgarian folk art performances, etc. A photo exhibition on "Bulgarian Monasteries and Holy Places" by Tosho Peikov was on display in the House of Architecture in Yerevan.

## Armenia, Azerbaijan Satisfied With Fresh Summit

By Aza Babayan

ST. PETERSBURG (RFE/RL) — Armenia and Azerbaijan reported further progress towards the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict after a meeting of their presidents held here June 4.

Presidents Serge Sargsian and Ilham Aliyev spoke one on one for about two-and-a-half hours before and after being joined by their foreign ministers and the US, Russian and French mediators co-chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group. It was their fifth face-to-face encounter in one year.

Neither president made any public statements after the talks. Sargsian's office issued only a written statement saying that the meeting took place "in a constructive atmosphere."

"The parties agreed to move forward in the negotiating process," the statement said. It added that they instructed their top diplomats and the mediators to continue their efforts to narrow Yerevan's and Baku's disagreements and to prepare for yet another Armenian-Azerbaijani summit.

"Although we cannot talk about a breakthrough or substantial progress today, the parties are moving forward and have agreed to continue negotiations," Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian told journalists. Nalbandian's Azerbaijani counterpart, Elmar Mammadyarov, gave a similarly positive assessment of the talks.

"What we heard today [from the presidents] is creating a basis for the continuation of our work," Mammadyarov said. He said he believes that the Saint Petersburg talks were more productive than the previous Aliyev-Sargsian meeting held in Prague a month ago.

According to the mediators, during that meeting Aliyev and Sargsian bridged some of their differences on basic principles of a Nagorno Karabagh settlement proposed by the troika. The Minsk Group's US co-chair, Matthew Bryza, has repeatedly spoken of "significant progress" made in Prague.

Bryza said last week that the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders are unlikely to iron out all of their disagreements on "a handful of remaining principles" in Saint Petersburg and will therefore need to hold more talks "relatively quickly." "Based on their conversation in Prague, I do believe that a breakthrough can happen at Saint Petersburg and/or shortly thereafter," he said.

## Monument to Sayat Nova Unveiled in Tbilisi

TBILISI (PanArmenian.net) — For more than a century, Tbilisi has been holding the Rose Festival dedicated to Armenian poet and bard Sayat Nova.

This year, the festival was celebrated in June. The ceremony was attended by Armenian and Georgian Foreign Ministers.

Within the frameworks of celebrations, a monument to the poet was opened near Sourb Gevorg (St. George) Armenian Church, not far from his grave.

The monument was created by Gia Djapridze and Kakha Koridze.

Haroutyun Sayadyan was born in Tbilisi in 1712 to a family of a poor immigrant from Aleppo. At age 20, he set out to travel and did so for seven years. As to what countries exactly he visited, it remains a mystery. He returned to Tbilisi with the pseudonym Sayat Nova, which in the Hindu language means "king of psalms" or "lord of music" (according to Hovhannes Toumanyan). Rumors about the talented musician were immediately spread all over the town. For more than 10 years, Sayat Nova was a court musician and conductor of a court ensemble. However, later in life, he fell victim to a royal intrigue. The king ordered him to enter into a religious order. Sayat Nova was renamed Stepanos and joined Haghpats Monastery's fraternity (on the Georgian border). He stayed there till the end of the war, together with a fierce eunuch Aga-Mohammed-khan from the Turkish Kadjara royal house, which ruled the Persian throne. In 1795, the 83-year-old monk was found murdered in Sourb Gevorg Armenian Cathedral. Sayat Nova was buried below the northern wall of the church.



The monument dedicated to Sayat Nova

## Kocharian Set to Sit on Russian Company Board

By Aza Babayan

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) — Former President Robert Kocharian is poised to be appointed to the board of directors of a leading Russian corporation that controls Armenia's largest mobile phone operator.

The Moscow-based holding company AFK Sistema said in a statement last Thursday that Kocharian is among 13 individuals nominated to its new governing board to be elected by shareholders on June 27. Vladimir Yevtushenkov, the current board chairman who holds a controlling stake in the company, was quoted as voicing support for Kocharian's candidacy, suggesting that its endorsement by the shareholders is a foregone conclusion.

A spokeswoman for Sistema, Yulia Belous, said last Friday that the company management took into account Kocharian's extensive experience in international relations and his "good knowledge of CIS markets." She said the former Armenian leader is also respected by the Russian business community.

Belous made clear that Kocharian, who ruled Armenia from 1998-2008,

will not have to relocate to Moscow as the Sistema board normally meets only twice a year. Nor will the new position place any limitations on his political activities at home, she said.

Kocharian's office in Yerevan could not be reached for comment.

With a market capitalization of \$29 billion, Sistema is Russia's leading publicly-listed financial corporation with extensive interests in telecommunications, energy, banking, mass media and other spheres. Its key asset is Mobile TeleSystems (MTS), Russia's largest mobile phone company.

MTS paid in September 2007 \$430 million to buy a 80 percent stake in the Lebanese-owned company K-Telecom that founded and runs Armenia's largest wireless network, VivaCell. K-Telecom had won its operating license in an essentially confidential tender held by the Kocharian-led government in late 2006.

Opposition politicians and media have for years alleged that Kocharian and members of his family have a major stake in VivaCell. But they have not offered any documentary proof of the claim.

According to Belous, the Sistema spokeswoman, Kocharian does not own any shares in the Russian giant.

## Journalist Faces 28 Years for Dink Book

DINK, from page 1

gence unit manager and now Istanbul intelligence unit chief and Muhittin Zenit, the police officer who was responsible for police informant Erhan Tuncel, who is now accused of encouraging Ogün Samast to kill Hrant Dink.

Sener faces 28 years imprisonment. He stands accused of "targeting people involved in anti-terrorism campaigns, revealing classified information, obtaining classified information, violating the secrecy of these communications, and attempting to influence the judiciary,"

according to court documents.

"What they are trying to punish is the basic procedure of journalism, finding and publishing documents, finding out who are the public officials who have responsibility in Hrant Dink's murder," Sener said.

"It is very strange that the Trabzon gendarmerie command's staff accused of negligence is facing up to two years imprisonment in a trial at the Trabzon 2nd Criminal Court of Peace, while no one from the Trabzon police force, which has also been described as negli-

gent, is being tried," he added.

The Istanbul 11th Heavy Penal Court is dealing with one of the cases against the journalists, in which he faces up to twenty years imprisonment. The court hearing is on 26 June. The Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance is dealing with a second case, where a sentence of up to 8 years is being demanded. The hearing was scheduled for June 10.

The 28 years that Sener faces are eight years more than the possible term for Samast, who is being tried for Dink's murder.





## NATIONAL NEWS

# Harwich High Students Testify on Beacon Hill about Genocide Education

BOSTON (CapeCodNews.com) — Two Harwich High School students testified before the Joint Committee on Education Tuesday in support of H.S 463, an Act concerning genocide education. MacKenzie Hamilton and Andie Ramirez, members of Harwich STAND (Students Taking Action Now Darfur), argued why the state needs to increase its commitment to genocide education, in order to help prevent future catastrophes.

About a dozen members of STAND traveled to the State House in Boston to support the cause and to lobby their representatives.

Below are the statements of MacKenzie Hamilton and Andie Ramirez, and the statement of Emily Cunningham of Cardinal Spellman, delivered as a panel before the Joint Committee on Education Tuesday afternoon at 1 p.m.

## Testimony of MacKenzie Hamilton:

Good afternoon, my name is MacKenzie Hamilton and I'm a recent graduate of Harwich High School here to testify in favor of HR 463.

As Elie Wiesel, genocide survivor and author of Night once said, "Education in the key to preventing the cycle of violence and hatred that marred the 20th century from repeating itself in the 21st century."

Time and time again, we hear quotes like, "Never Again," but more and more, victims not so much of the Holocaust, but of Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur are being forgotten. People do not realize that during the three and a half month Rwandan genocide that the number 800,000 stands for real people: 333 per hour, five per minute slaughtered, tortured, raped, and hacked apart. People do not realize that 400,000 dead and 2.5 million driven from their homes represents a majority of the pre-genocide population of Darfur. In schools, we are neglecting human rights issues to prepare students for standardized tests. Testing may be important, but the lives of innocent civilians also need to hold importance in our society. As Samantha Power stated so eloquently in her book, A Problem from Hell, "Time and again, decent men and women choose to look away. We have all been bystanders to genocide." It is time for you to make your own decision. Will you look away, or will you do what you can for our mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters in Darfur?

Children are the most valuable resource we have. The only way we can end such atrocities is to educate our children, and teach them to care, and that what they think matters. We need to teach them to act politically, socially, and stand up for what is right.

Three years ago, my school formed a chapter of Students Taking Action Now: Darfur, the student-led division of the Genocide Intervention Network. Dozens of students in my school have worked to raise money in any way they could. We've held numerous concerts to generate funds for relief, fasted to raise money for refugee protection, made presentations teaching the conflict in history classes, and helped start a school for refugee students in Chad. Their students have something to teach us. They wish to teach us how fortunate we are. They wish to teach us courage in the face of hardships, starvation, and sorrow. They wish to teach us that as we sit in these cushioned seats with our Sunday Best on, and shoes on our feet, that there are millions out there that are starving and without any semblance of schooling. With all of our resources, we have our own responsibility. Not only do we have a responsibility to protect, but we have a responsibility to teach our own students to think

beyond themselves.

We've been to Washington, DC, and lobbied our representatives. We've been here in Boston, to lobby our legislators to divest from Sudan. We've organized ourselves to combat genocide. We've set our list of priorities. Human life first. I've witnessed children in my school as young as 14 calling Representative Delahunt to ask for his help. We've done our part, and will continue to do so, but now it is time for you to act. No bickering over a couple of dollars for materials for schools, no arguing over whether this atrocity is or is not genocide, no looking away, because Africa is too far away, and we don't



STAND members speak in favor of an increased commitment to genocide education Harwich High student, Andie Ramirez, seated in the center at the microphone, addresses the Joint Committee on Education in Boston Tuesday. The committee is chaired by Cape Cod's State Senator Rob O'Leary on right with hand on his cheek. (Photo courtesy of John Dickson.)

think we can help. As I speak, women are being raped, men are being killed, and children are dying of hunger in Darfur. This is real, and this must be addressed now.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have done our part, and now it's time that you do yours. What you can do as legislators is to pass HR 463. To date, only 9 out of our 50 states have any semblance of Genocide Education in their curriculums, and only California and New Jersey have funded mandates. We cannot let children finish their high school careers with only a warped view of the Holocaust and blank stares at the words, "Armenia," "Bosnia," and, "Rwanda." I can think of few things more important to teach than humanity and 'good will to men.' We need to tell our children the truth—the world is not a perfect place, and there is so much that we take for granted; we hate doctor's appointments, while millions around the world would do anything for adequate medical care; we won't eat our mother's aparagus, while millions more are malnourished starving around the world; we cry over a three week relationship, while there are a hundred thousand women being raped in Sudan.

These children have the capacity and right to learn. We cannot close their eyes any longer and shelter them from what is truth to hundreds of millions of people around the world. We also cannot teach just the Holocaust and leave it at that. We need to give the children the material and resources with which they can educate themselves and fight for what is right.

## Testimony of Andie Ramirez:

Hi, my name is Andie Ramirez I'm a junior at Harwich high school. I've been a member of STAND for two years and I became interested in STAND my sophomore year after hearing two genocide survivors speak. Their stories made me realize that we need to help, and we need to take action.

In my remarks I'd like to focus on the amendment we are proposing to HR 463. We are proposing that in Section 1, paragraph one, to replace the words "any one such genocide may" with "at least two genocides should" so that the sentence will read: "Case studies of at least two genocides should be used to demonstrate the concept of genocide."

"Genocide isn't just an awful thing that hap-

pened once, it's something that has happened, and is still continuing to happen to this present day. Through the education of not one, but multiple genocides, children will realize that genocide is a current issue, and one that must be stopped." - Andie Ramirez

As the bill stands now, it only requires that schools teach one instance of genocide, and that is not likely to change anything. This is because every high school in Massachusetts most likely teaches about the Holocaust, but that is certainly not enough. For current and future generations to understand the gravity of genocide, they must be educated on present day

being committed under the complacent eye of the world's most powerful governments, at the ignorance and indifference of my friends and family toward the situation, but mostly at my own ignorance when I began to learn more about the genocide in Darfur and realized that it was not an isolated incident, nor was it the first genocide that had taken place since the Nazi Holocaust. Where had my history teachers failed me?

I began to research and develop an addition to the current curriculum framework that would integrate genocide education in an effective way. In my research, I came across a similar effort

made over ten years ago. The Massachusetts Legislature and Governor enacted Chapter 276 of the Acts of 1998, a law directing the Department of Education to make recommendations on curricular materials and resources related to teaching about genocide and human rights. The result was The Massachusetts Guide to Choosing and Using Curricular Materials on Genocide and Human Rights.

Said Commissioner of Education David Driscoll, "It is important that students acquire knowledge about genocide and human rights issues to deepen their understanding of both past and current events."

Why then is this document hidden within the depths of the Department of Primary and Secondary Education's website? Why have several high school teachers I have interviewed

with a vested interest in genocide and human rights education had no idea of its existence? Why do we continue to inadequately teach our youth about one of the most gravely important issues facing humanity today? This guide is a first step in recognizing the need for genocide education in schools, but I am here from the perspective of a student to tell you that your work is not done.

I have identified five improvements that could be made to the existing frameworks which I believe this bill will help to implement.

1. Curricular materials need to be genocide specific. In the existing frameworks and supplements, there is no mention of the definition of genocide, or the Genocide Convention. Slavery, human rights issues, war casualties, and genocide are lumped into a single document, but in order to address each topic correctly, they must be acknowledged, approached, and taught differently.

2. There is no mention of US involvement or lack of involvement in any curriculum framework or supplement.

3. There is a strong tendency of teachers to rely on the chronology, dates, facts, and figures rather than to address the underlying causes of genocide and the common threads which connect such atrocities of the past and present.

4. Curricular recommendations and materials must be kept up to date. There is no mention of Cambodian genocide, the Kurdish Genocide, the Darfuri genocide or the slaughter of the Karen people of Burma.

5. Finally, this bill needs funding. Though it may be difficult in a time of economic crisis, I urge you to think of the money spent on teacher trainings, conferences, and outside curricular materials in terms of an investment in our future. In fact, our request is a drop in bucket of the Department of Education's near five billion dollar budget.

The lessons, stories, and common threads among the Holocaust, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Burma, and Sudan should echo from the blackboards and lecterns of every middle and high school across our Commonwealth. If not, for what have these millions upon millions of innocent mothers, fathers, and children died over the past century?

The members of STAND raised more than \$2,000 in December for genocide relief.

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# Community News

## In Downtown Amesbury, New Business Is Booming

By Pamela Canning

AMESBURY, Mass. (*Amesbury News*) – A period of reduced economic activity. That is the definition of recession, which we are reminded of daily. But the country's current financial woes don't appear to be scaring new businesses from opening up in downtown Amesbury. Whether it's jewelry, clothing or a coffee shop, new ideas and new energy are becoming a reality in this eclectic town.

Just ask Aram Zemanian of Zemanian Jewelers.

In January 2008, Zemanian moved his business from the Jewelers Building in Boston to 40 Main St. here. Asked why he chose Amesbury, he responds with enthusiasm.

"I began thinking of the North Shore and started checking out Amesbury, which is an up-and-coming town," he says. "The town is simply beautiful."

A grandson of two grandfathers who survived the Armenian Genocide, his work ethic is simple.

"Honesty and trust is needed in my business. I do all of my work in house and have built a work area enclosed in glass so that the customer can see what I am doing," he said. "I understand that it takes a while to build up trust."

"Many of my Boston clients have followed me to Amesbury and they enjoy coming here and walking around," he adds. "A playground is needed in the town. I see many mothers walking with their children and it would be nice to have a central place to meet."

Another new business owner, Nancy White of Real Bodies Clothing from Bali, started her business in 1998 in Milford, NH, and moved it to Amesbury in December 2008.

Real Bodies Clothing from Bali is just that: the designs are made for a normal-sized woman and they are made in Bali. White frequents Bali at least once a year to check on her crew.

"We make all of our clothes and have even made fabrics when needed," White said.

"We batik many of our creations, and each image on our pieces symbolizes something significant," she adds. (Batik is a fabric design process using wax and dyes.)

"As soon as I drove into Amesbury I realized what an amazing town it was," White said.

"Amesbury has really chosen me. I was told Amesbury was looking for a women's clothing shop and I was just drawn here," she added.

White believes strongly that businesses cannot only survive but can thrive collectively during this time.

"I stand by the motto, 'Live Free or Die.' Working together, supporting each other in a collaborative way, is what I am all about," White said.

Deb Pagley, owner of the gift shop Park Place and also president of the Amesbury Downtown Business Association, makes it very clear why businesses are opening up in Amesbury.

"The owners of the buildings, being rented, are offering fair and reasonable rents," she says. "I left Newburyport three years ago because the rents became too high and it was clear I was being pushed out."

"Businesses also feel they are on the fringe of something big here in Amesbury," Pagley adds. "We are a family and we are not being smothered by chain stores."

Pagley notes that if a consumer spends 10 percent of his or her annual total budget in their hometown, the businesses will be able to sustain themselves.



Lilit in the kitchen at the Mer Doon facility

## Mer Doon Continues its Mission of Hope

ECHMIADZIN – "I often ask myself how my future looks, growing up with no family and not knowing where I will live. I studied carpet weaving while in the orphanage, quickly falling in love with it and becoming an expert. With this I will be able to work and earn a living, but still I have no place to live. I would like to be one of your children at Mer Doon and feel the warmth of family love."

By Julie Ashikian

The aforementioned words were expressed by Ani, who, before becoming a member of the Mer Doon family, grew up in Gamo (Gavar Orphanage). Today, three years later, she shares her feelings of hope for the future and appreciation for her newly-found family. To quote Ani, "I am so happy to be in Mer Doon. I came here November 11, 2006. Here I feel love and attention. I lack free time because I am busy learning English, French and Russian, studying at a local university, and of course, weaving beautiful rugs. I would like to thank you all."

see MER DOON, page 9



A break during gardening

## AIWA to Honor Olga Proudian

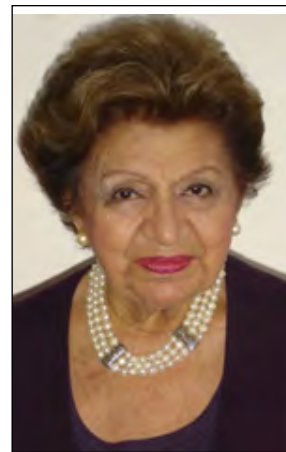
BELMONT, Mass. – The life of Olga Proudian will be celebrated, "Roasted and Toasted" Friday, June 26 at 7 p.m. at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church.

Proudian is one of the three founders of the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) who teamed up with Eva Medzorian and Barbara Merguerian in 1991 to form an organization aimed at addressing the critical concerns of Armenian women worldwide. They visualized an organization that would work independently from political and religious affiliations and they were successful in solidifying their vision.

Proudian served as past president of the AIWA board of directors and vice-president in charge of fundraising.

She was born in Bucharest, Romania, and raised in central Europe and the Middle East, raising four children.

As founder and president of the Portland, Maine Alliance Française, she entertained dignitaries and artists from the French ambassador to Charles Aznavour. Proudian has served on the board of directors of the Armenian Children's Milk Fund and the Cambridge/Yerevan Sister City Association. AIWA is establishing the Olga Proudian Scholarship Fund to honor her as a founding member of AIWA. The event, on June 26, will feature food and entertainment, with reservations available through AIWA.



Olga Proudian

## Panel on Social Service In Armenia at NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. – Ten professional social workers from Armenia will participate in a panel discussion on "Social Services in Armenia: Challenges and Opportunities," on Thursday, June 25, at 7:30 p.m., at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave. The event will be co-sponsored by the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) and NAASR.

The visiting Armenian social workers, in the US on a training program sponsored by the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), will reflect on conditions in their field in Armenia. Social services are relatively new in Armenia, begun only since independence, having been virtually non-existent during Soviet times. The participants will discuss social needs in Armenia, how they are addressed by the government, the role performed by NGOs and challenges they face in the future.

The panel discussion will be in English with portions in Armenian with English translation.

Admission to the event is free (donations appreciated). The NAASR bookstore will open at 7 p.m.

More information about the panel discussion is available by e-mailing [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# A Diasporan in Armenia: Jason Paul Kazarian of Texas Discovers Gumri

DALLAS and GUMRI – Life in Gumri is a far cry from Texas for Jason Paul Kazarian. But when the opportunity arose to fill the vacant executive director position at the Gumri Information Technologies Center (GITC/GTech), he accepted it without hesitation. Moving 5,000 miles away from his home country provided quite the lifestyle change for Kazarian, both professionally and personally. But the vision and goals he had for GITC prompted his move and have remained his priority. Each day for him at GITC – a competitive post-graduate IT institution – varies.

On Mondays, he teaches a class for students working on their thesis projects and helps them with the organization of their papers including the format, thesis, thesis chapters, and gives overall guidance to the 20 students so they can graduate on July 14. Kazarian also makes it a point for himself to travel out of Gumri into Yerevan to do development work and build partnerships between the IT industry and GITC. There he frequently visits the FAR office. He also spends his time writing grant proposals and finding sources of revenue, in addition to supervising GITC's employees.

Founded in August 2005, GITC promotes the IT industry, drives the formation of an IT infrastructure and promotes employment opportunities in this area devastated by the major earthquake in 1988. GITC has graduated about 50 young adults. In exchange for nearly free training, students commit to

remain in the Gumri region for two years following graduation.

The cultural differences between Armenia and the United States are ones Kazarian has observed while living in Gumri. "The way women and men engage with each other is similar to the US in the 1950s," said Kazarian. "The women's lib movement hasn't taken full effect, although it seems it's going to happen with the current generation who are 25 and under. I'm seeing a modern mindset in some of them," he said, noting that Gumri is a mix of eastern and western cultures. "It's interesting to look at our students because they have a provincial mindset."

"Gumri has a population of 150,000 people and there's a prevailing village mentality," said Kazarian, who has a bachelor's and a master's degree in computer science.

Moving across the world naturally poses many challenges and obstacles to complete even the simplest tasks. "There's not an open market for rental property," said Kazarian, who had to hunt for a place to live when he first moved to Gumri.

"Something as simple as finding a place to live is basically done by word of mouth."

He compared Gumri to most European cities where it's very compact. Kazarian walks 20 minutes to work every day and doesn't need a car to get around, as it's easy to get everywhere on foot. Originally from California, Kazarian lived the last 14 years in Texas. He has been in software development for about 25 years and spent three years in industrial education in technical topics such as telecommunications and software development.

Prior to joining GITC, he worked six years as an independent contractor for multiple customers and owned a boutique IT company.

Kazarian's vision for GITC is three-fold. He wants to modify the curriculum so that there are no prerequisites to complete before enrolling in GITC, other than earning a degree from a public institution. He would also like to hire local Gumri-based full time faculty, which both reduces expenses and improves the quality of student life. "Now we have instructors who commute from Yerevan and come once a week," said Kazarian. "There is no opportunity for students to

interact with their teachers. Having our own faculty will also make it easier for students to get help on projects and homework assignments during the week."

He sees GITC moving from an academic model to a vocational and certification model of training, which is more job-focused and will be more beneficial to students who don't want a college degree but want to work in a technical discipline. "The vision is going towards that direction. We are targeting people that don't have those kind of resources and are being ignored by the rest of the educational community," said Kazarian.

In addition, Kazarian wants GITC to engage with more Americans, in particular, American-Armenian companies and have GITC students perform outsourcing and off shoring work for them. "We need to build bridges with these companies who are moving in that [off shoring] direction, especially with the recession we have going on in the US," said Kazarian.

"Armenia is an optimum market for generating wealth through intellectual property. Salaries paid for talented technical specialists are reasonable, even when compared with Chinese and Indian markets. Dozens of companies are engaged in hardware and software product development for export, including National Instruments and Virage Logic. Some organizations, Epygi and Synopsys to name just two, are betting the entire company's future on Armenian based talent – and winning. GITC is becoming a bridge to Gumri for companies like this and many others. I would love to see this opportunity - GITC, explored and supported by, especially, young generation of Armenians from Diaspora."

Kazarian is indeed enjoying his position at GITC and living in Gumri. Two of his favorite things in Gumri are the weather, which he said is comparable to Denver, and the healthier food, including the locally grown organic fruits and vegetables.

Gumri, located 75 miles outside of Yerevan, is the second largest city in Armenia, and has made substantial progress since it was hard hit with the earthquake in 1988. The calamity took the lives of 50,000 people and injured scores of others. "One of the big changes is the amount of construction since I was here in December 2006 to today. There

are buildings popping up everywhere. I've seen three or four multi-story buildings go up in spaces that were vacant in a little over two years. Earthquake-wise, they're rebuilding the original Armenian Church, and the project is coming along. There have been a lot of changes. It doesn't look anything like it did, five, or even two years ago."

There are many things Kazarian wants to accomplish as executive director of GITC, including starting a full-time faculty, hopefully with the participation of Diasporan Armenians. "I wish I could encourage people in the IT industry who want to become educators to come and teach at GITC," said Kazarian. "If we had half a dozen people who would be willing to move here for a year or two, we would have a cutting edge educational institution. We would like to have people from the diaspora to come here and do something different than a typical nine-to-five job."

Kazarian's friend from Texas, Ken Maranian, participated in FAR's Young Professional's Trip to Armenia in the summer of 2006 and had an incredible experience that he shared with Kazarian once he returned to Texas. Kazarian was interested in Maranian's experience with GITC and contacted FAR to start volunteering and teaching part time. "When I came back and told my parish about the trip and how wonderful and promising it was, Jason got in touch with FAR and started teaching there," said Maranian. "We're really proud of him."

Patrick Sarkissian, one of the founders of GITC, said he is proud of having Jason Kazarian as the executive director of GITC. "As a fellow American-Armenian, I am amazed by Jason's sacrifice and dedication. As a colleague from the IT industry – I am impressed with his talents and capabilities," said Sarkissian. "He is bringing western business ethics and culture to GITC."

While there may have been no hesitance on Kazarian's part when he assumed the executive director position at GITC, the staff was concerned whether he would be able to adjust to the realities of life and culture in Gumri. Those concerns, however, eventually faded. "We thank God Jason is with GITC," said Amalya Yeghoyan, deputy executive director of GITC. "Students admire him, even though he is a tough and very demanding teacher, and the staff owes him a lot for an incredible learning curve we have gone through under his leadership. Jason is an excellent example of what a Diasporan-Armenian could do in Armenia."

"Jason is helping the young talents in an area devastated by the earthquake to regain hope for a better future," said Sarkissian.

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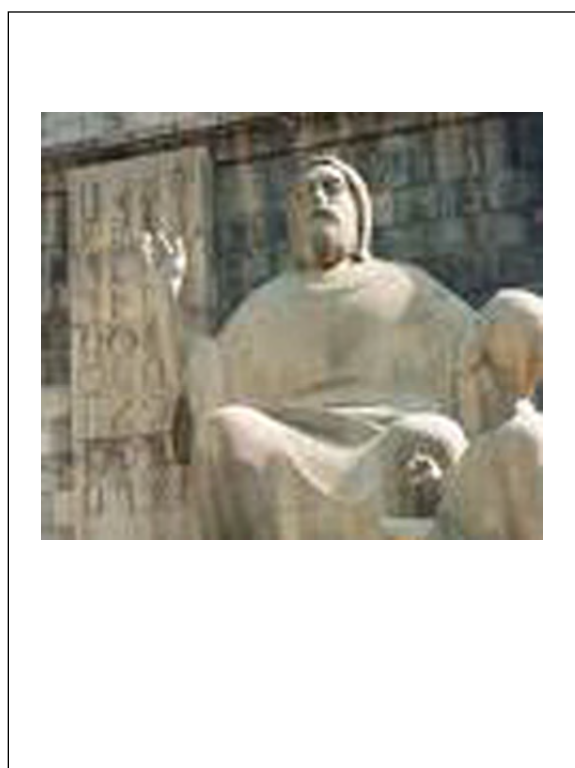
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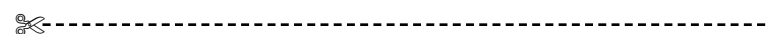
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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Children's Hospital Boston Opens Door of New Yawkey Family Inn

## From Festive Fraternity House To Peaceful Home-Away-from-Home for Patient Families

BOSTON — Children's Hospital Boston will soon be welcoming patient families into its new patient family home, The Yawkey Family Inn at Children's Hospital Boston, located at 241 Kent

Today, the hospital offered a first glimpse into the new home and celebrated with the individuals, foundations and companies that contributed donations and in-kind gifts for the home's renovation.

"Safe and convenient housing that provides a home-like environment helps families focus on what's most important: nursing their sick children back to good health," said James Mandell,

The renovated home will feature 22 bedrooms, shared bathrooms, common areas, kitchen, dining area, playroom, garden as well as space for staff.

Gifts from two organizations will offer families a comforting place to stay during their children's hospitalization. The Yawkey Foundations awarded a \$3 million gift to support the new home. The Family Inn Foundation, a long-term partner of the Yawkey Foundations, whose mission is to provide grants that impact youth, families and the underserved, donated its independently-operated Family Inn patient family home property on Sewall Avenue in Brookline to the hospital. Created 25 years ago with the support of Jean Yawkey, who was dedicated to helping those most in need, the Family Inn has provided much needed accommodation for out-of-town patient families. To honor the legacy of the Inn and its founders, the organizations have been designated named sponsors of the new Yawkey Family Inn at Children's Hospital Boston.

The Next Generation Developers Task Force, a group of young real estate developers and businesspeople, rolled up their sleeves and used

their talents and social and professional networks to move the renovation forward and fundraise for the project and endowment. Each committee member brought his or her own expertise to the project.

"Our Task Force members have shown tremendous commitment and passion for this home," says Douglass Karp, Task Force chairman. "We've worked on all aspects of the project including contractor negotiations, landscaping, permitting, marketing and fundraising. We hope our work inspires young professionals and others to make a contribution to this wonderful and comforting place for families."

The hospital continues to fundraise to cover the renovation costs and future endowment for the home. For more information or to donate, visit [www.kentst.org](http://www.kentst.org).

Children's Hospital Boston Next Generation Developers Task Force Members include: Paul Bernon, Jeff Bilezikian, Ben Fischman, Dave Gerzof, Douglass Karp, Alex Leventhal, Michael Lorber, Roy MacDowell III, Todd MacDowell, Susan Mulder, Daniel Rottenberg, Kathleen and Pat Scanlon, Jason Weissman and Robert Zuker.



Jeff and Nancy Bilezikian

St. in Brookline. For more than a year, Children's Hospital has been transforming an old Victorian, former fraternity house into home-away-from-home for patient families.

MD, Children's Hospital CEO. "We're grateful to the generous benefactors and companies who helped make this home a reality for our patient families."

## Armenian Program Nears 40th Year

WATERTOWN (*Watertown Tab*) — On Tuesday, students in Anahid Yacoubian's Armenian class translated a document about a memorial ceremony for Alan Hovhanness, a renowned composer who had Armenian roots.

Yacoubian was pleased with the translation junior Hagop Keshishyan read aloud.

"That was good," she said. "There weren't any mistakes, but I probably have to check the spelling."

As the Armenian language program prepares to mark its 40th anniversary in the Watertown school district next school year, its teachers hope that it will continue for many more years.

They said the public school program — which is one of a kind in New England — is a valuable resource to students of Armenian heritage as well as other students interested in learning a language and culture of importance to the town.

"It teaches culture, it teaches history and pride in your ethnicity," said Siran Tamakian, who teaches an Armenian class for levels 1 and 2.

An estimated 30 percent of Watertown residents are Armenian or of Armenian heritage, said Sharistan Melkonian, chairperson of the Watertown-based Armenian National Committee of Massachusetts. In the most recent Census, 8.2 percent of residents claimed Armenian ancestry.

Students in Yacoubian's class, which consists of levels three and four, confirm the class is worthwhile.

All of those in attendance Tuesday were brought up speaking Armenian at home. But they didn't necessarily learn how to speak it perfectly, or to read and write it.

"It's my main language and I want to know how to speak it, and I want to write it correctly," said sophomore Meghri Ishakian.

Junior Ani Moushigian, president of the school's Armenian Club, said she fears she would forget the language without the class.

There are 13 students in Yacoubian's class, and 15 students in Tamakian's class. The number of students taking Armenian is lower

than it was decades ago, with the program no longer at the middle school level, said Yacoubian, who has taught Armenian in the school district since the program's inception and is now semi-retired.

The language used to be taught in the East Junior High and the West Junior High.

Also, the school district no longer has a bilingual Armenian/English program that includes social studies instruction, and there hasn't been a recent influx of Armenians as was the case in the 1970s, for example.

But the program is still popular enough for it to merit inclusion in next year's budget. About the same number of students has signed up for the two classes for next year as this year.

"We've got smaller classes for other courses," said School Committee Chairperson Tony Paolillo. "As long as we maintain some semblance of interest in it, we'll continue to provide it."

But according to Superintendent Steven Hiersche, interest might not be enough to sustain the program in future years.

"There's not any intention I see in the future to get rid of the program, but the reality is if the school's fiscal state doesn't get better, almost anything is on the table [for cuts]," he said.

The program's main cost is the two teachers' salaries, he said.

Yacoubian was not asked to return next year in an effort to save the district some money, he said. Hiersche wasn't sure how much that would save. Another reason she, and other semi-retired teachers are not being asked to return next year because of the state retirement system "clamping down on a lot of opportunities that retirees can do," Hiersche said.

Yacoubian said she hopes her replacement will help keep the Armenian program strong. She emphasized that the Armenian Club is similarly valuable. It holds bake sales of Armenian food to raise money for senior scholarships, and introduces students outside the Armenian classes to Armenian culture.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Mer Doon Continues its Mission of Hope

MER DOON, from page ?

Growing up in an orphanage in Armenia while approaching the age of 18 can create serious concerns for a young person. At the age of 18, children are required to leave their orphanage home, there is no place to live and nowhere to call home. One can imagine the fear and anxiety caused by this uncertainty.

Originally 11 young women made up the Mer Doon family. Four of those young ladies

have married and the entire Mer Doon family was witness to each beautiful Armenian wedding. Two of the young women are now mothers and raising their own family. We look forward to the addition of four young ladies leaving orphanages, and who will soon join the Mer Doon family.

Located in Echmiadzin, Mer Doon has earned the reputation of being a respectable and well-organized program and often enjoys visitations from guests worldwide. The visitors enjoy spend-

ing quality time with the girls, and on occasion enjoy a delicious meal prepared by them. Sam Chapootian and his mother of New York recently visited Mer Doon. Sam Chapootian expressed the following heartwarming and emotional experiences while at Mer Doon:

"This place was incredible for me because without this facility, where would these girls be, where would they have gone and how would they have done it? Ticko Karapetyan, (president of Mer Doon NGO) is such a dynamic individual. She keeps the girls intact making sure they do the best they can on an educational level. Mer Doon is impeccably clean. This program is really, really important. Mer Doon allows these young women to experience life. We spend money on everything else... I believe we have to start with the youth."

Springtime is a busy time at Mer Doon. The building has a large garden, which produces vegetables, herbs, fruits and nearly everything necessary to prepare meals. Because the garden is so valuable, the girls have become expert gardeners and cooks. In addition to maintaining the garden, the girls display a myriad of other talents such as making jewelry, crocheting, baking, creating arrangements using fruits and vegetables, and



Trees are attended to by Ani at Mer Doon.



A newly-married couple plants a tree at the Mer Doon yard.

making beautiful greeting cards.

Collectively, the girls, along with the Mer Doon staff, created their own Christmas decorations which adorned Mer Doon inside and out. In fact, the Municipality of Echmiadzin thought they were so beautiful that they awarded them the first prize in their competition for the third consecutive year.

Mer Doon has accomplished much during its short existence. Its mission has proven that these beautiful young ladies have achieved the NGO's goal (and theirs) of becoming healthy, mature and productive members in their homeland of Armenia. They realize living at Mer

## The Armenian Cultural Foundation presents



## Her Excellency Marie L. Yovanovitch United States Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia Community Meeting

**Friday, June 19, 2009**

**7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

**Armenian Cultural Foundation**

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**Email: acf.hmh@verison.net • mail to: acf.hmh@verison.net**

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Lucine in the Mer Doon garden

Doon is only possible because of individuals who truly want to help Armenia's less fortunate youth by affording them a chance for a meaningful life.

The following comments were received from a donor. "All those individuals involved in the establishment and ongoing maintenance of the Mer Doon program deserve kudos for the selfless devotion to the needs and welfare of the young women living in the beautiful Mer Doon facility. The loving care and concern being extended to these individuals serve as shining examples of what can be accomplished when Armenians of goodwill put their minds and souls to filling a void that is not being adequately filled by a nation that is beset with so many pressing problems and needs. Time is of the essence. It's up to Armenians in the diaspora to render the financial support the Mer Doon program must have for the continuation of its good works, and to maintain its viability. Should we lend our financial support? Of course we must."

Tax deductible donations may be made to: Our Home-Mer Doon, Inc, c/o Julie Ashekan, President, 84 Ellsworth Blvd., Kensington, CT 06037-2728.





## New York METRO

# ACYOA Members Discuss Vocations in Church at Annual Assembly in NY

NEW YORK – The Eastern Diocese members of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA), gathered Memorial Day weekend, May 21-25, at the IBM Dolce Palisades Center in Palisades, NY, to take part in the organization's 64th annual General Assembly and Sports Weekend.

As part of this year's Diocesan theme of "Vocations: The Call to Serve," young people learned about steps they can take to help strengthen the ranks of the priesthood in the Armenian Church.

A total of 80 delegates and observers – including close to 20 members of the clergy – attended the General Assembly, on May 21-22.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), shared with delegates his personal story of entering the seminary at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and encouraged young people to think about ways they can serve their church and people.

"The priests and the pastors among us are one way that God makes his presence known to his children," he said. "Time and again, through courage and moral conviction, priests made the difference in ensuring the survival and advancement of our people."

The Primate also thanked the ACYOA Central Council and members of the youth organization for their continued involvement in the Armenian Church.

"Our church is blessed by your faithful pres-

The Rev. Stepanos Doudoukjian, director of vocations at St. Nersess Seminary, introduced a group exercise in which delegates discussed how they might encourage their friends, relatives, and each other to find their vocation, and what steps can be taken to encourage potential seminarians.

Among the suggestions were proposals to establish a shadow program for young men to work with priests across the Eastern Diocese and to increase training options for acolytes and deacons at the parishes.

"I think the breakout session on vocations was extremely effective," said Talin Hitik, vice chair of the ACYOA Central Council. "It was interesting to hear in those small group sessions what other young men had to say on their thoughts about entering the priesthood."

### Six New Chapters This Year

During the remainder of the meeting, members of the ACYOA Central Council delivered an organization-wide report, highlighting the success of activities such as the Armenia Service Program, the summer pilgrimage to the Holy Land, participation in the international ACYO meeting at the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, the blood drives organized at local chapters to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia and the Pan-North American Retreat held in the fall with the Western and Canadian Dioceses.

Other accomplishments include the continued expansion of the Young Adult Leadership Conference, which marked

its 10th anniversary last March, and the launching of the Mission Service Project, which gives ACYOA members the opportunity to assist with the training of altar servers and choir singers at the mission parishes.

In the past year, the ACYOA saw the addition of six new chapters, bringing the Diocesan-wide total to 23 chapters.

Delegates at the assembly also heard Jennifer Morris, youth outreach coordinator at the Diocese, speak about Diocesan Summer Camp programs, where many ACYOA members serve as counselors. Julie Hoplamazian, College Ministry facilitator at the Diocese, highlighted resources available to college students and young professionals.

Delegates reviewed the findings of the auditing committee, approved a new budget for 2010, and passed a proposal to publish and distribute an annual report prior to future assemblies. They thanked the Primate and the ACYOA Executive Secretary Nancy Basmajian for their support of the organization's initiatives.

During the traditional Primate's Luncheon on Friday, Barsamian presented all delegates with a personalized copy of the Diocese's newly published *Armenian Canon Bible*, which contains the entire canon of scriptural books considered authoritative in the Armenian Church, in English translation.

Central Council members also announced the

recipients of five service awards.

Deacon Sarkis Altunian, of St. Sarkis Church in Dallas, received the "Fr. Haroutiun Dagley Award" in recognition of his many contributions to various ACYOA programs.

The Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, dean of St. Nersess Seminary, was presented with the "Fr. Haigazoun Melkonian Award" in honor of his leadership and dedication to the youth of the Armenian Church.

Laurie Odabashian received the "Sam Nersessian Award," given to individuals who display the Christian values of love, patience, humility, and understanding.

Lydia Kurkjian received the "Gregory Arpajian Award" for her leadership and contributions to the Armenian Church.

"The Chapter 'A' Award," given to the best all-

Racine, Wis., as treasurer; Danielle DerAsadourian, of St. James Church in Evanston, Ill., as chapter relations coordinator; Gervork Vartanian, of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence, RI, as programming coordinator; and Ara Janigian, also of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob in Providence, as public relations coordinator.

Elected to the Nominating Committee were: Jonathan Dadekian (Watervliet, NY), Harry Kezelian (Detroit, Mich.) and Arthur Sabounjian (Framingham, Mass.). Arpi Paylan (Evanston, Ill.) will serve as the alternate.

Elected to the Auditing Committee were: Raffi Gulbenk (Trumbull, Conn.), George Macarian (Boca Raton, Fla.) and Andrew Piligian (Framingham, Mass.). Nick Bazarian (Washington, DC) will serve as the alternate.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, addresses ACYOA delegates at the General Assembly.



Delegates vote on a proposal to publish and distribute an annual report prior to future assemblies

ence and active embrace," Barsamian said. "Tomorrow you are going to take the leadership role in our Diocese."

Also addressing the assembly was the Rev. Hovnan Demerjian, pastor of St. Hagop Armenian Church in St. Petersburg, Fla. Demerjian spoke about the importance of remaining open to God's call and working with others to respond to it.



A delegate at the ACYOA General Assembly reviews the auditing.

"Calling is a bit like falling in love," he said, explaining that everyone has the potential to "fall in love with God."

"As Christians, we are called more to a way of life than a job," he added. "A way of life which overrides all jobs and relationships, and underpins those."



Delegates work in small groups to brainstorm vocations ideas.

around chapter, went out to St. John's Church of Detroit, Mich.

### Annual Elections

Delegates elected members to the Central Council, and the Nominating and Auditing committees.

Danny Mantis, Lydia Kurkjian, and Ara Janigian were elected to the Central Council, and Danielle DerAsadourian was re-elected to the organization's governing body.

The new Central Council was blessed by the Primate after Sunday's Divine Liturgy.

Alex Derderian, of St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Church in Wynnewood, Pa., will serve as chair; Talin Hitik, of St. Gregory Church in Chicago, as vice chair; Lydia Kurkjian, of St. Gregory the Enlightener Church in White Plain, NY, as secretary; Danny Mantis, of St. Mesrob Church in

"This year's General Assembly was a great success," said incoming Central Council chair Alex Derderian. "It's always inspiring to see youth who are this dedicated that they are willing to take time out of their personal schedule, to take time away from school, and to come and help run the organization that is so important to all of us."

The General Assembly was chaired by Danny Mantis, with Arthur Sabounjian serving as vice chair. Lorie Odabashian served as secretary, and Ara Janigian and Krikor Javardian were appointed the sergeants-at-arms. Rev. Tateos Abdalian and Rev. Yeprem Kelegian assisted as parliamentarians.

Next year's General Assembly and Sports Weekend will take place in Watertown, Mass. The assembly voted to hold the 2011 gathering in Charlotte, NC.





## New York METRO



The newly-built Education and Recreation Center at St. Leon Armenian Church in Fair Lawn, NJ, welcomed Sports Weekend participants.

# More than Sports at ACYOA Sports Weekend

NEW YORK — More than 250 participants arrived at the IBM Dolce Palisades Center in Palisades, NY on the evening of Friday, May 22 for the launch of this year's ACYOA Sports Weekend.

In addition to athletic competitions, which were held at the nearby St. Lawrence Community Center and at the newly-built Education and Recreation Center at St. Leon Armenian Church in Fair Lawn, NJ, the program featured a film festival, guest speakers, dance workshops conducted by the Antranig Dance Ensemble and a virtual athletics tournament using the Wii videogame technology.

On Saturday, May 23, Eric Hachikian spoke



A dance workshop conducted by the Antranig Dance Ensemble

to participants about his documentary, "Voyage to Amasia," which was inspired by the life of his late grandmother, Helen Shushan. The film tells the story of Hachikian's family during the Armenian Genocide and incorporates a piano trio composition Hachikian performed at Carnegie Hall in 2005.

Linda Yepoyan, executive director of Birthright Armenia, encouraged young peo-



A chess competition underway at the ACYOA Sports Weekend.

ple to volunteer in Armenia, describing the opportunities available at various business, government, and cultural centers throughout the country.

On Saturday evening, ACYOA members traveled to Manhattan to hear the music of Robert Chilingirian at the Hudson Terrace.

On Sunday, May 24, the Rev. Stepanos Doudoukjian celebrated the Divine Liturgy, with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presiding.

The Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, dean of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, delivered the day's sermon, reminding participants of Christ's love and forgiveness and asking them to help share the Good News with other Armenians.

"Too many people just have not heard the word of God," Findikyan said, stressing that

it's all the more critical to ensure the preservation of the Armenian Church by training a new generation of young men to serve as priests in the Armenian-American community.

As sports competitions drew to a close on Sunday, ACYOA members gathered for a banquet to honor the weekend's champions and to applaud the many people who worked hard to organize this year's events.

Following a farewell brunch on Monday, May 25, ACYOA members departed for their home parishes.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian delivers his blessings to the young participants.

The weekend was organized by a regional committee, co-chaired by Alex Derderian and Lydia Kurkjian. Other committee members include Deanna Cachoian-Schanz, Talar Camcikyan, Michael Givlekian, Jim Ishkhanian, Anita Jayawant, Alex Lerian, Jon Pelaez, Vrej Pilavdjian, Christine Royland, and Aleen Tovmasian. The Rev. Fr. Shnork Souin served as the spiritual advisor, and Maria Derderian as the advisor-at-large.

## Armenian Medical World Congress to Take Place in New York July 1-4

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — Several notable Armenian leaders in the medical field will participate in the Armenian Medical World Congress at New York's Hilton Hotel, July 1-4.

Dr. Raymond Damadian, who captured world attention as the inventor of the MRI, is among the speakers on Friday, July 3, detailing current MRI innovations. His work also involved collaborating in the development of an MRI-compatible pacemaker. He has won numerous awards, including induction into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 1989. Many world experts and scientists believe that he should have won a Nobel Prize in 2003 for his invention of the MRI.

Lord Ara W. Darzi, Minister of Health of Great Britain, is one of the world's leading surgeons at the Imperial College London where he holds the Hamlyn Chair of Surgery. He specializes in minimally invasive and robot-assisted surgery, and has pioneered many new techniques and technologies. He was awarded a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II for his service to medicine and surgery, and subsequently elevated to a peer in 2007. He will speak at the Congress on health care delivery in Great Britain on Thursday, July 2, and on robotic surgery on Friday, July 3.

Dr. Hagop S. Akiskal, a noted psychiatrist, is best known for his research on temperament and bipolar disorder (manic depression). He served as the senior science advisor at the Institute of Mental Health from 1990 to 1994, before going to the University of California San Diego where he currently is a professor of psychiatry. He is regarded as one of the current leading conceptual thinkers in the area of bipolar sub-typing. He is scheduled to speak at a morning symposium on Saturday, July 4.

Dr. Vicken Pamoukian, a prominent vascular surgeon at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, is experienced in all areas of complex endovascular surgery, including thoracic, abdominal aneurysms, as well as carotid, peripheral and renal stenting. He will be among the speakers in a group discussion on Friday afternoon, July 3, covering various topics on surgical subspecialties.

These medical professionals are among the many doctors, their families and interested laymen who will attend the Armenian Medical World Congress July 1-4, hosted by the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO), at New York's elegant Hilton Hotel.

Scheduled are plenary sessions on Comparative Health Care Systems, Innovations in Medicine, and symposia on Tele-Medicine, and Diaspora Issues, as well as a Sub-Specialty day on July 1 covering such topics as anesthesia, dentistry, mental health, nursing, ophthalmology, pediatrics, and physical therapy.

Notable attendees include the health ministers of Armenia and Karabagh, the rector of Yerevan State Medical University, the director of the National Medical Library of Armenia, as well as Armenia's Minister of the Diaspora, and co-chairman of the Armenian Congressional Caucus, Rep. Frank Pallone, among many others.

In addition to the medical symposia and meetings, the four-day special event will feature a dinner cruise on a luxurious yacht on Thursday, July 2, and a gala banquet in the Hilton Hotel's main ballroom on July 4 where Darzi, and the father and son humanitarian and Medical Outreach team of Nazar Nazarian and Dr. Levon Nazarian will be honored. Also of great interest will be a bus trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to view a magnificent Khachkar on loan from Armenia.

Reservations must be made. For additional information and reservations, visit [www.aahpo.org/amwc09](http://www.aahpo.org/amwc09)



Participants play table tennis as part of Sports Weekend activities.





# Arts & Living

## Atom Egoyan Explores Genocide in New Exhibit

TORONTO (CTV Toronto) — Atom Egoyan has two Oscar nominations and a Cannes Film Festival award.

But his latest project, “Remains to Be Seen,” was a new art exhibition showing in Toronto.

Produced under the umbrella of the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies in Toronto, the multi-media show, which ran through the first week of June, aimed to raise the public’s awareness about genocide.

Featuring work from 16 artists across North America, Egoyan said the show at Toronto’s Lennox Contemporary got to the core of what human genocide really means.

“It’s one thing that a journalist’s piece can do. But an artist’s work can pierce the heart in a different way,” says Egoyan, 48.

“In the case of genocide there’s been such a history of denial about that,” the Canadian director said.

Delving into the subject matter in 2002’s “Ararat,” Egoyan’s movie was loosely based on the Siege of Van during the Armenian Genocide of the early 20th century, an event that is denied by the government of Turkey.

That film explored the specific impact of that historical event. It also examined the nature of truth and its representation through art.

As Egoyan says of “Ararat,” “I wasn’t so much talking about the historic event, but rather how that denial had created a transmission of trauma from one generation to another.”

That tragedy holds deep personal meaning for Egoyan and his wife, actress Arsinée Khanjian.

The pair are supporters of The Zoryan Institute of Canada.

Together with The Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation in Cambridge, Mass., this non-profit research institute is devoted to scholarly research that documents, studies and disseminates material related to the life of the Armenian people in the recent past and the present within the context of larger world affairs.

In 2003, the couple launched the “Atom Egoyan and Arsinée Khanjian Fund” to support the Zoryan Institute’s Genocide and Human Rights University Program.

The after-effects of genocide are clearly evidenced in the works by Ulysses Castellanos, Joyce Lau, Steven Loft, Katie Pretti, Shannon Scully, Veronika Szkudlarek, Bill Wolff and Arie Galles.

“It’s a non-propagandistic kind of show,” said artist and educator Galles, who was born in 1944 in Uzbekistan and raised in Poland.

Galles’s contributions to this show are based on aerial photography taken during the Second World War. But each artist’s entry, he said, explores the intensity of what it is to be involved or witness a genocide.

“These works have incredible strength,” says Galles, who appeared with Egoyan on Canada AM. “Any genocide does not happen in a Martian landscape. It happens on this earth. The horror is that humanity can perpetrate it on this incredibly beautiful blue marble we are flying on.”



A troubadour plays his douduk in front of Soorp Katoghike Church in Yerevan.

## An Armenian Troubadour in Yerevan

YEREVAN — His name is simply Samuel, and he ekes out a living as a modern-day troubadour in Armenia.

He roams the streets of Yerevan, performing a variety of instruments and playing to a crowd. Rich or poor, young or old, it doesn’t matter. The city is his audience — and it isn’t always kind. Like Sayat Nova, the music comes from his heart and lends a certain credence to the heritage. Samuel takes a lot of pride in that.

Unlike Sayat Nova, he gets bounced around from one street corner to the next by the police who constantly interrogate him for a license. He has none.

He can be found almost every afternoon strumming a tune in front of a tiny chapel called Soorp Katoghike at — of all places — Sayat Nova Street. One moment he’s playing the saxophone and clarinet. Then the duduk and zourna. Often, he’ll bring out an accordion or guitar and sing along with the music. About the only instrument he doesn’t play is Sayat’s lute.

Despite the constant rigmarole, and adverse weather conditions occasionally, Samuel would have it no other way.

“Those who have jobs work all day and are not always happy,” the 53-year-old said. “I bring pleasure to myself and others, not so much for the money as the art. But the money helps.”

Though the streets are his business, he doesn’t live there. Samuel is married with four children and rents a modest apartment. He served as a major in the military and fought in Karabagh before retiring with 25 years service.

A graduate of Moscow University, he holds a degree in business. He’s been a wandering minstrel since 1996.

“My father is God,” he’s quick to say, when pressed for a surname. “Every day is a new experience on the streets but music speaks everybody’s language. I communicate with every listener without ever saying a word. It’s universal.”

Pedestrians stop and lend an ear. Others scamper along without paying notice. Cameras click. One or two have the audacity to stand beside him for a photo.

A day’s offering brings in about 3,000 drams (\$10). But it’s a full day and blowing into an instrument for eight hours at a time can raise havoc with your heart. People drop in coins but once in awhile, Samuel gets lucky.

Some unconscious tourist with one drink too many may mistake a 10,000-dram note for 1,000. Then, he strikes it rich and earns as much as a professional would make in one week at the Yerevan Opera House.

A 19-year-old daughter belongs to the Tatoul Altounian Song and Dance Ensemble. She performs as a diva and does 15 difference dances each concert. According to Samuel, she earns under \$100 a month.

see TROUBADOUR, page 13

## Alan Hovhaness Honored in Arlington

By Anahit Tokatlyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ARLINGTON, Mass. — On Sunday May 17, the Alan Hovhaness Commemorative Committee, friends and fans of the late composer gathered together at Whittemore Park to honor his successful life and unveil a memorial placed in there in his honor. The memorial had brought forward many distinguished guests to speak about Hovhaness, some residents of Arlington that had known him for years, musician friends and members of the clergy that had worked with him.

The unveiling ceremony began in the late afternoon. The first speaker was Robert Mirak, the chair of the committee. Mirak spoke about the efforts toward a commemoration for Hovhaness. It began about a decade ago, in 2000, when Hovhaness died. This Commemorative Committee was put together with the sole aim of finding a way to honor Hovhaness for all his philanthropic and artistic works.

Hovhaness was born and raised in Arlington; he was 4 when he wrote his first composition. He went on to study at the New England Conservatory of Music in the 1930s and during this time he studied the music of Armenia, Greece, Egypt and India. He continued his education in this genre by playing the organ at St. James Armenian Church in Watertown.

Following Mirak’s opening speech there were a slew of other speakers who had worked with Hovhaness or were close friends with him. Rev.



Robert Mirak speaks. (Anahit Tokatlyan photo)

Nicholas M. Kastanas from the St. Athanasius Greek Orthodox Church in Arlington thanked all the people in the community as well as the town of Arlington for helping make the monument become a reality. He gave his blessing to Hovhaness’s memory and for those who were involved in these efforts. There was a proclamation made by Kevin Greeley of the Arlington Board of Selectmen, who talked about how he had planned the logistics of the monument and spoke of Hovhaness’s past, ending with “We were blessed to have this superlative artist as our own.”

In the midst of many great speakers was a good friend of Hovhaness’ Martin Berkofsky, a great pianist that knew Hovhaness professionally see HOVHANESS, page 14





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## National Library of Armenia Calls for Donations of Books Published outside Armenia

YEREVAN — The National Library of Armenia, the largest and most important library in the Republic of Armenia, has issued a call for donations of all recent books published in the diaspora. In 2012 it will be cele-

equivalent of the Library of Congress in the United States. It is the storehouse of the wealth of the Armenian people's knowledge and creativity. It holds copies of books published worldwide from 1515 until the present,

mational and educational activities. By donating books to the National Library, this allows Armenians not only in Armenia but also in other countries to become aware of and have access to authors. It will allow study of these works and will contribute to the international reputation of their authors.

The Armenian National Library enjoys good working relations with the great libraries of the world, as well as with many organizations, Armenological centers and individuals. This gives it the opportunity to introduce Armenian books and culture around the globe, and of course, in exchange, receive many valuable publications from many countries. Nonetheless, Armenian or foreign language Armenological publications

dealing with Armenian history, literature, culture and other relevant topics are issued in so many different countries and places that they do not always reach the homeland. This is a serious shortcoming for the library, its readers, and of course, for publishers and authors. Therefore, the National Library asks for donations.

The library is looking for any publications, whether they might be books, magazines, newspapers, maps or albums. The address is: National Library of Armenia, Yerevan 375009, Teryan 72, Director Davit Sargsyan. For further information, see [www.nla.am](http://www.nla.am), which has an English language variant, or email Alisa Adamian, director of exchanges and foreign relations, at [armnatlib@mail.ru](mailto:armnatlib@mail.ru).



brating 500 years of printing in Armenian, and will be preparing many different programs and exhibitions. For this purpose, it hopes to fill in gaps in its collections.

The National Library of Armenia is the

as well as periodicals, works of music, art and other items. At present, its holdings number 6.5 million items. Thus, it is the largest library of Armenian works in the world. It also is a center for scientific, cultural, infor-

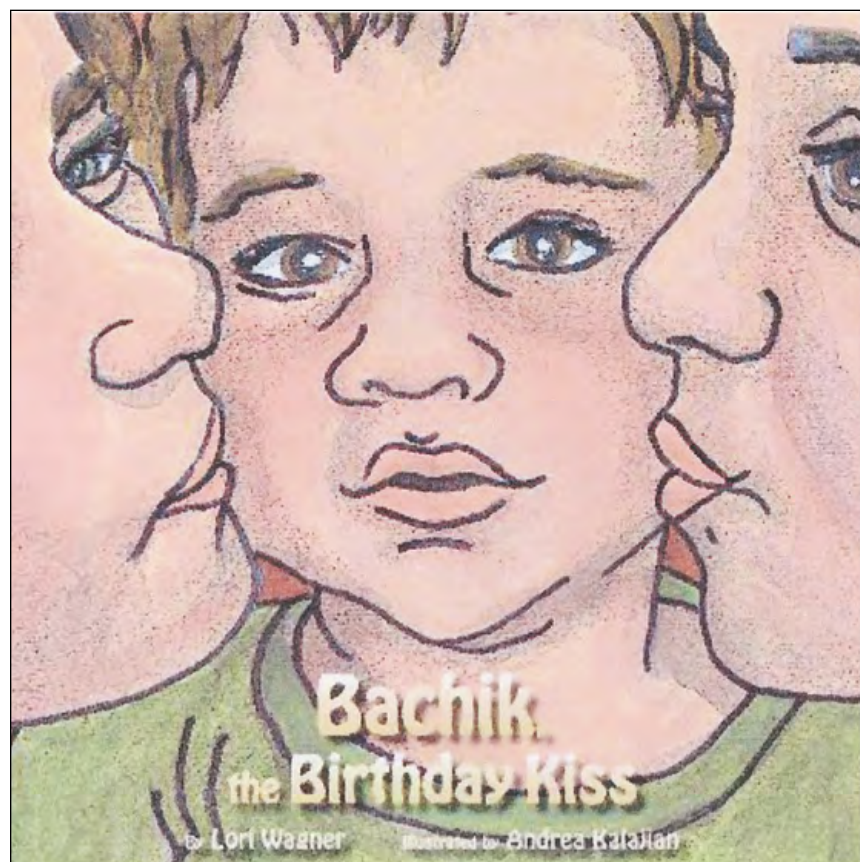
## Datevik Concert to Benefit Bone Marrow Registry

ARLINGTON, Mass. — Jazz singer Datevik Hovanessian and her trio from New York will be performing a benefit concert for the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) June 27 at the Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF).

The concert, titled "Jazz for Life," will celebrate the launch of the registry's Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, which opened

officially on April 28. The only center of its kind in the region, the ABMDR Stem Cell Harvesting Center recently passed the second phase of inspections by the European Federation of Immunogenetics and will soon be the only accredited facility in the area.

A pre-concert wine reception will be hosted by Rubina and Kegham Varjabedian. For tickets, visit [www.amarasonline.com](http://www.amarasonline.com).



**BIRMINGHAM, Mich. — Hagopian World of Rugs branch in Birmingham will host a book release on Friday, June 19 at 7 p.m. The public is invited to meet local author Lori (Kalajian) Wagner at the official launch of her newest book, *Bachik, the Birthday Kiss*, pictured above.**

***Bachik, the Birthday Kiss* is a one-of-a-kind Armenian/English book, featuring rich original paintings. It is an interactive book that engages young and old in its self-translating mingling of the two languages. Wagner will be reading from this children's book that affirms Armenian culture and family as well as signing limited edition copies available for sale at the event. An Armenian blessing is part of the evening's activities and refreshments will be served. More information on the book is available at [www.affirmingfaith.com](http://www.affirmingfaith.com).**

## An Armenian Troubadour in Yerevan

TROUBADOR, from page 12

"Dancers don't make that much money in Armenia," he said. "They do it for the art. I hurt very much inside because I'm a street musician and earn more than a professional dancer."

Although his favorite pieces are classical Armenian and folk, Samuel offers a diverse range. He'll alternate works by Gomidas and Khatchaturian with Louis Armstrong and Bennie Goodman. You can't miss him. He's the one with the big, puffy moustache, red sweatshirt and jeans — and that look of Armenia etched across his face.

It reminds you somewhat of Saroyan's "My Heart is in the Highlands," in which an aging bugler shows up at the front steps of an Armenian home and performs for the local crowd. In return, the bugler receives food.

"God spared me in the war," he says. "I feel I owe Him my life and my purpose. Being a strong Christian, this chapel is my favorite stop. I feel close to God here. My music brings joy to others. It reaches the heart — mine and theirs."

The way Samuel sees it, he's helping the economy of Armenia. On weekends when he canvasses Vernisage — the popular outdoor

shopping district — he switches to Armenian instruments and plays where they're being sold. He'll explain the dukuk to curious outsiders who might make a purchase.

He'll take requests. You want *Groong*, he'll play that. Or *Stranger on the Shore*. No translation needed here. The toe-tapping is part of his ritual.

There are times when two or three of these musicians will come together and perform a mini-concert on the streets. Of course, that attracts the authorities even greater.

Once, they approached Samuel and took away his instrument. He begged for it back. They finally showed some compassion and returned it, but only after he threatened to report them to Serge Sargsian.

"Listen," he said. "The president is my good friend and I'll take this matter up with him. If you don't want a reprimand, please give back my clarinet."

They returned it with a grumble.

What will tomorrow bring for the Armenian troubadour?

"I'll wait to see what God brings," he says. "A good day? A bad day? But a day of music always makes a better day."

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Composer Alan Hovhaness Honored in Arlington, Mass.

HOVHANESS, from page 12

and personally. Berkofsky spoke about what kind of person Hovhaness was, describing him as “steadfast, innovative, dependable and reliable.” He recounted their trips up Mount Monadnock together and used mountains as a metaphor in describing the different milestones in his life. Berkofsky spoke about Hovhaness’s life in Seattle with his wife and that is where his

breakthrough *Mysterious Mountain Symphony* was written. In addition, from 1966 to 2000, when he died, he was the composer for the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. Berkofsky finished with thanking the town of Arlington for allowing the monument to be erected.

The last speakers were clergymen from St. James’s Armenian Apostolic Church. Father Arsen Barsamian and Rev. Arakel Aljalian

JIRAIR HOVSEPIAN PHOTO



The Alan Hovhaness Commemorative Committee members unveil the memorial plaque.



The Arlington High School Honors String Orchestra

spoke about all the great help Hovhaness had given the church, and about his great talents. Hovhaness wrote a composition just for St. James which is played every year during Lent. They were both thankful for having Hovhaness be a part of the church in such a memorable way.

When the time came to unveil the monument, everyone gathered round. Aljalian gave a blessing and then they unveiled the bronze plaque that was placed on rock in the

Whittemore Park. The plaque read: “In Honor of Alan Hovhaness 1911-2000 World renowned prolific 20th century Armenian American composer, Arlington Public Schools Alumnus ‘Of all the arts, Music is the art to raise the soul above all earthly storms.’”

The unveiling was followed by a concert at the Arlington Town Hall. The concert had different musical acts, such as the Arlington High School Madrigal Singers, the Arlington High School Honors String Orchestra, pianists Berkofsky and Ani Hovsepian and a few others. Most of the pieces played were compositions done by Hovhaness and some were by other artists that composed music in the same genre as Hovhaness. The played famous pieces by Hovhaness, including *Symphony Number 11*, *Opera 186*, *Dawn on Mountain of Initiation* and *Armenian Rhapsody Number 3*. The performances were exceptional and would have made Hovhaness proud.

Hovhaness was a wonderful composer, good friend and community role model. He had a wonderful talent that he honed and perfected with education and experience. The unveiling of the monument brought together friends and fans of his from Arlington and Watertown to celebrate his achievements. His friends spoke great words of him; his life was full of many good people, different places and lots of music. The monument is a great way to remember all he had done, and now everyone that passes by will be able to learn of him and his memory will be passed on forever.

## Van Dyke’s ‘Deported’ Has First Public Reading in Watertown

VAN DYKE, from page 1

The staged reading was part of the New Voices @ New Rep, a program of staged readings through the New Repertory Theatre that introduces audiences to emerging playwrights and new works by established writers. “Deported” is based on the story of two women friends, Van Dyke’s maternal grandmother Elmas Boyajian, and Martin Deranian’s mother, Varter Nazarian Deranian, who were deported together from Mezireh.

The process into writing the script was made clearer after sitting down for a chat one afternoon with Van Dyke and director Judy Braha. “It’s been over two years (in the making). The play started in the past in the 1900’s and goes into the future,” Van Dyke shared of the play’s growth over the past two years. Judy Braha continued, “We worked over two years with 10

NANCY KALAJIAN PHOTO



From left, Joyce Van Dyke and Judy Braha taking a quick break after public viewing of *Deported*/ a dream play.

ed...it’s epic theatre covering over 100 years,” shared Van Dyke. Improvisational actors’ workshops were held that would eventually affect the characters’ development and script, influenced by stories they experienced from Armenian genocide survivors as documented by photographs, documents, memoirs, conversations and personal memories. Deranian was a treasured resource, providing an enormous amount of information affecting the play.

After a workshop performance at Boston University in February, the play was revised. After this most recent reading in Watertown, the play will undergo another revision.

Following the reading in Watertown, a panel discussion ensued featuring director Judy Braha, Dr. Martin Deranian (author, dentist and faculty member of Tufts University School of Dental Medicine), Mariam Stepanyan, (executive director of ALMA), Ruth Thomasian (executive director of Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives) and Tina Sajonian (Boston University student and president of the BU Armenian Students Association). “You allowed us to be witnesses,” said Deranian. “What value does it have to keep it for myself?” he stated.

“Unless we can pass them on to the next generation, the stories will be lost,” said Thomasian.

Audience members interacted with the panelists after the public reading. Some expressed a desire to continue the dialogue and share the connections they felt the play had with their own stories and memories, including, surprisingly, those with non-Armenian roots.

Thomasian said she feels the play encompasses “a reflection of memory that was quite astounding...there’s a powerful message about the effects of genocide on relationships.”

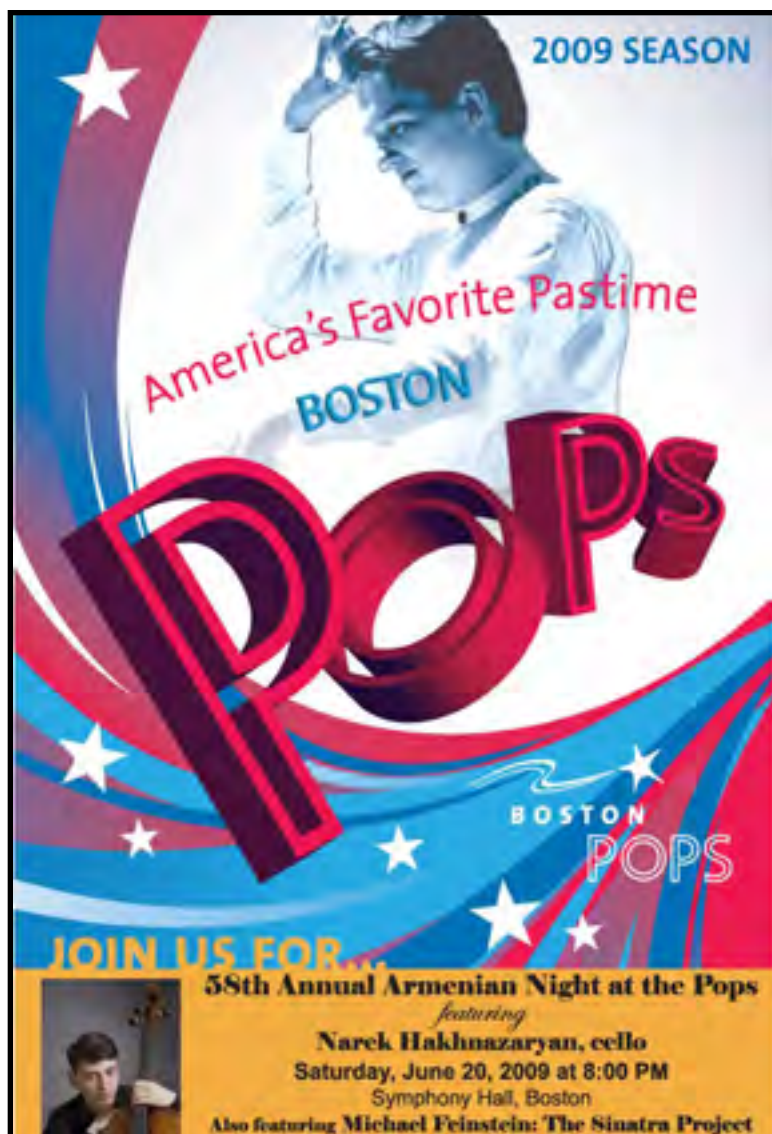
Braha said she feels the play brings up hopes and dreams of reconciliation and recognition. “The Turkish diplomat in the play is one of my favorite characters; he’s a contemporary man who wants to bring communities together. Characters of every stripe are in this play – Kurds, Turks, Armenians, Americans, Jews, Christians, Muslims – (with the) possibility of a better world,” remarked Braha. “We didn’t want to depress everyone with a play about genocides but with the resiliency of cultures and thriving. Instead of staying in separate corners, people can get together.”

There’s some dancing in the play, including an authentic Mezirah village dance as researched and choreographed by Apo Ashjian, founder and artistic director of the Sayat Nova Dance Company. “Apo was great and put a lot of thought in it to making it historically cor-

rect,” said Van Dyke.

Van Dyke said she is thrilled that the play will be included in the Breaking Ground Festival of New Play Readings at the Huntington Theatre in Boston on the evening of August 3. A website will soon be created as a way to reach out to friends of the project.

A graduate of BU’s playwriting program, Van Dyke is currently a Huntington Theatre Company Playwriting Fellow and a MacDowell Colony Fellow. Her play, “The Oil Thief,” performed last year at the Boston Playwright’s Theatre, just won a prize for Outstanding New Script at the recent 27th annual Eliot Norton Awards Ceremony held in Boston. “A Girls’ War,” her first play, had a recent extended run in San Francisco.



actors with no script and no story at first. We knew it was going to be about the Armenian Genocide and survivor stories. Questions came up such as, ‘Why do people choose to tell or withhold their stories?’ How does this choice affect the community?’ After listening to oral histories (mostly those collected by Bethel Charkoudian and in the archives of the Armenian Library and Museum of America [ALMA]), the actors took on their character. The actors were fascinated with the interviews and what they were going through.”

Playwright Van Dyke gives credit to Charkoudian. “She put a buzz in my ear to do a play based on the perspective of an interviewer...People tell their stories. I’m very excit-





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## C A L E N D A R

## CONNECTICUT

**SEPTEMBER 26** — Richard Hagopian, Hachig Kazarian, Jack Chalikian, Mal Barsamian, Ron Tutunjian and Paul Mooradian will play in West Hartford, on Saturday. Details will follow. Dance will start at 6 p.m. and end at midnight. The event has been moved to a smaller venue. Make reservations.

## FLORIDA

**JANUARY 16-23, 2010** — Join Armenians worldwide on the **Armenian Heritage Cruise XIII 2010**. Sailing on Saturday. To San Juan, PR, St. Thomas and Grand Caicos Islands on the Costa Atlantica. Prices start at \$679 per person. Contact TravelGroup International 1-866-447-0750, ext 102 or 108. Westcoast: Mary Papazian (818) 407-1401; Eastcoast: Antranik Boudakian (718) 575-0142.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**JUNE 14** — **St. James Armenian Festival/Annual Picnic.** Save the date.

**JUNE 15** — **The Gregory Hintilian Memorial Golf Tournament;** This year remembering Jane Talanian. Sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough. Golfers limited to 128 players. Player's fee is \$175, which includes hospitality, lunch, dinner, green and cart fees and prizes/gifts. Tournament and tee sponsorships available. New this year: beginner's golf clinic at \$75 per person, includes one-hour clinic teaching golf basics, dinner and gift; golf clubs available. Deadline for tournament and clinic registration: June 3. For further info., contact the church office at (617) 354-0632 or e-mail office @htaac.org. For a registration form, log onto [www.htaac.org/announcements](http://www.htaac.org/announcements).

**JUNE 17** — **Vartan Oskanian: "Speaking to Be Heard: A Statesman Looks Back,"** at Bentley University's LaCava Center in Waltham. Co-sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Bentley Department of Global Studies. Contact NAASR at (617) 489-1610 or [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org) for more info.

**JUNE 20** — **Friends of Armenian Culture Society** presents the 58th Annual Armenian Night at the Pops, featuring the young, award-winning cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan. Symphony Hall, Boston. For more information, call (617) 484-0125 or visit [www.FACSBoston.org](http://www.FACSBoston.org).

**JUNE 25** — **Panel Discussion, "Social Services in Armenia: Challenges and Opportunities,"** with visiting professionals from Armenia. Co-sponsored by the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association and NAASR. At the NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Contact NAASR at (617) 489-1610 or [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org) for more info.

**JUNE 26** — **Armenian International Women's Association honors co-founder Olga Proudian with a "Toast and Roast"** on Friday, 7 p.m., at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, Atinizian Hall, 200 Lexington St., Belmont. For more info. and reservations, contact Alisa Stepanian at [asteoanian@aol.com](mailto:asteoanian@aol.com) or (617) 501-1215.

**JUNE 27** — **Armenian Youth Foundation 35th Anniversary Dinner-Dance,** featuring John Berberian Ensemble. Crowne Plaza, 1360 Worcester St., Natick. Cocktails, 6:30 p.m. Dinner, 7:30 p.m. Donation, \$100. Silent auction. For reservations, call Shooshan (508) 842-3562 or Susan (781) 449-1412.

**JUNE 27** — **Armenian Church at Hye Point, Women's Guild** presents a fashion show with original designs by Farrah Derderian and fellow graduates of Laselle College. Also featuring Vintage Wedding Gowns. Saturday, 1-4 p.m. at the Rose Ballroom, Days Hotel, 159 Pelham St., (Exit 47 off Route 93), Methuen. Refreshments will be served. Donation, \$20. Contact Barbara (978) 685-4945 or Bea (978) 686-3715.

**JULY 13** — **ALMA's Fifth Annual Sports Raffle Hosts "Final Inning" Reception.** The Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) will host a "Final Inning" Reception prior to the prize drawing for the fifth annual sports raffle. Raffle participants will have the opportunity to meet Boston Globe sportswriter Tony Massarotti, meet a surprise sports celebrity, enjoy ballpark snacks and beverages, purchase last-minute raffle tickets and watch the prize drawing, which will be done by Massarotti and the surprise sports celebrity, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in ALMA's Contemporary Art Gallery. To purchase raffle tickets or to see a detailed list of the packages that are offered this year, visit [www.almainc.org](http://www.almainc.org).

**JULY 20-24** — **St. James Armenian Church Vacation Bible School.** The Armenian Church Around the World. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Arts and crafts, music, activities, games and sports. Learn more about the Bible and the Armenian Church by traveling with us around the world to Jerusalem, Armenia, New York and more. For children entering grades K-5.



**On Friday, June 19, US Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, Marie L. Yovanovitch, pictured here, will take part in a "Community Meeting" at the Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington, Mass., from 7-9 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. For more info., contact Ara Ghazarian at [act.hmh@verison.net](mailto:act.hmh@verison.net) or call (781) 646-3090.**

Deadline to register is July 1. Space is limited. For registration forms or info., e-mail [info@stthagop.com](mailto:info@stthagop.com) or call Yeretzgin Natasha Aljalian at (617) 923-8990.

**AUGUST 8** — **Save the Date. The Armenian Church of Cape Cod** presents their annual dinner and dance at St. George's Greek Cultural Hall, Route 28, Centerville. Music by George Righellis. For more info., call (508) 477-1725.

**AUGUST 20-31** — **St. James Armenian Church Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.** Itinerary will include visits to Biblical and Historical Sites, including the Armenian Quarter, St. James Armenian Monastery, Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Tomb of Christ, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Garden of Gethsemane, Mount of Olives, Galilee, Dead Sea, Jericho, Jordan River and Masada. For more information about the trip, call the St. James church office at (617) 923-8860 or e-mail [info@stthagop.com](mailto:info@stthagop.com).

**SEPTEMBER 1-15** — **Armenian Heritage Tours 2009.** Fully-escorted tour to Armenia flying with Air France from Washington, New York and Boston. Marriott Armenia Hotel, from \$2,890 plus tax per person based on double occupancy. Visiting sites: Yerevan City tour, museums, Khor Virap, Noravank, Areni, Haghat, Sanahin, Lake Sevan, Dilijan, Echmiadzin Cathedral, Sardarabad, Tsaghkadzor, Garni and Geghart and more. Optional excursion: Karabagh tour — three days and two nights. For info, contact Maro Asatoorian, ACAA representative at (301) 340-1011, e-mail [asatoorian@msn.com](mailto:asatoorian@msn.com) visit [www.AcaaArmenianTours.com](http://www.AcaaArmenianTours.com).

**SEPTEMBER 18** — **St. James Hye Café.** Delicious Armenian food and fellowship. Children's activities will be provided. 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Friday, 6:30 p.m. Parties of six or more are encouraged to make reservations by calling the St. James church office at (617) 923-8860, no later than 5 p.m. on September 17.

**OCTOBER 3** — **Second St. James Parish Reunion and kef,** hosted by the St. James ACYOA Seniors. Saturday, 8 p.m.-1 a.m. at St. James Armenian Church. Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall. 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Featuring Bob Raphaelian (oud), Leon Janikian (clarinet), Harry Bedrossian (keyboard and vocals), Kenny Kalajian (guitar) and Leon Manoogian (dumbeg). \$25 per person. Tables of 10 may be reserved with advance payment. For tickets, contact Melanie Khederian at (617) 694-1057 or at [mkhederian@gmail.com](mailto:mkhederian@gmail.com). All proceeds to benefit the 2010 ACYOA General Assembly and National Sports Weekend hosted by St. James ACYOA.

**OCTOBER 9, 2010** — **30th Anniversary celebration of the Armenian Independent Radio of Boston.** Please mark your calendar. Details to follow.

## NEW JERSEY

**OCTOBER 10** — **Tekeyan Cultural Association — Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group Presents "Who Killed The Eastern Dentist?"** A Masquerade Party in Baronian's 1860s Istanbul. A Murder Mystery Dinner Theater prepared by Harout Chatmajian. Assyrian Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary, 644 Paramus Road, Paramus. Saturday, at 8 p.m. Donation, \$60; BYOB; dress code (optional); 1860s attire and mask. For tickets, call Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Noushig Atamian (718) 894-5878, Maro Hajakian (201) 934-3427 or Missak Boghosian (212) 819-0097.

**NOVEMBER 7 and 8** — **Tekeyan Cultural Association Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group presents William Saroyan's "My Heart's in the Highlands."** A Bilingual Play in Three Parts. Original direction by Tamar Hovanissian. Reenactment directed by Harout Chatmajian. Details to follow.

## NEW YORK

**JUNE 18** — **The St. Vartan Young Professionals will host their first Wine and Cheese reception** of the summer on Thursday, at 6 p.m. Entrance is \$10 with advance reservation and \$15 at the door. The event will take place on the plaza of St. Vartan Cathedral, located at 630 Second Ave. For more info., contact Rachel Goshgarian at [rachelg@zohrabcenter.org](mailto:rachelg@zohrabcenter.org) or Taleen Babayan at [taleenb@zohrabcenter.org](mailto:taleenb@zohrabcenter.org) or (212) 686-0710.

## RHODE ISLAND

**JUNE 14** — **Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Annual Picnic.** 70 Jefferson St., Providence. Noon-dusk. Armenian foods: losh kebab, shish kebab, chicken kebab and kheyima. Music, featuring Jason Naroian and his Ensemble.

**JUNE 20** — **Armenian Students' Association of America, Inc. 99th Annual Convention Meeting,** Saturday, 11 a.m. ASA National Office, 333 Atlantic Ave., Warwick. Tel.: (401) 461-6114; Fax: (401) 461-6112 or e-mail [headasa@aol.com](mailto:headasa@aol.com).

**The Mirror-Spectator has a new Calendar Policy: The Mirror-Spectator is now accepting all calendar items for free. All items may be sent to [mirro-rads@aol.com](mailto:mirro-rads@aol.com). Due to the anticipated shortage of space, items may be edited to fit the space.**





## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Limits of Obama Bashing

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Since April 24 of this year, Obama bashing has become a national sport in the Armenian press worldwide. President Obama had pledged to the American-Armenian community to recognize the Genocide, upon his election as president of the United States, yet on his first Martyrs' Day statement he failed to fulfill his pledge. Adding insult to injury, he reduced aid to Armenia, although as a continuing policy of reduction that was working its way for many years during the Bush administration.

The big guns in the Armenian press turned against the president. Our respected columnists resorted to extremes in characterizing this non-fulfillment of his pledge. Some groups on the West Coast even picketed fundraising banquets featuring as keynote speaker President Obama.

The condemnation is in unison and uniform throughout the country, and beyond, so much so that any opposite view or an analytical approach could be interpreted as a sacrilege.

However, I would like to stop and ponder, because political processes are not football games, whose conclusion is instantaneous and black and white.

Having said that, I do not intend to play the devil's advocate either, because the jury is still out on the Obama pledge and performance, and rash conclusions could prove to be unwise.

A political game involves give and take; Mr. Obama promised to recognize the Armenian Genocide, in return, perhaps, for our support for his candidacy. Now that we know President Obama thus far has not kept his pledge, we need to analyze our side of the bargain.

To question Mr. Obama's morality would not be fair as he stated in Ankara, in the presence of the Turkish leadership, that he is on record on his Genocide stand and that he has not changed his position. He further took the Turkish leadership to task, when he gave a speech at the Turkish parliament calling the Turkish government to come to terms with its ugly history. There was no dearth of topics or problems for the president to choose; but he took the opportunity to remind us of his moral stand on this complex and painful issue. So much for his morality in politics; we know that the two always don't mix, like oil and water.

Coming back to the use or non-use of the word "genocide," we may detect in that speech Samantha Power's handwriting, who most probably had crafted the president's speech, which had not avoided all the facts around the act of genocide. She had tried to hide behind a precedent, created by Pope John Paul II, when he visited Armenia. He was the one to first transliterate the phrase "Medz Yeghern" to avoid using the word "genocide"; while he was not a politician, he was supposed to have the moral courage to call a spade a spade.

Samantha Power is too valuable to be lost to the Armenians, with all apologies to our friend David Boyajian, who called for her resignation. Ms. Powers was in Obama's inner circle, during the election campaign, when she had a public fall out with Hillary Clinton and resigned as a result of pressure. Obama's firm hand brought her back into the center of power, and it is too early to count her out as a person who reneges on her principles.

We still have three more years of the Obama administration to push him to deliver on his pledge, and all the reminders, all the prodding, albeit, sometimes very harsh and naïve, will have their role to play.

We still have an uphill battle to have HR252 Resolution pass. It is very apparent that the president will keep his moral high ground, making us believe that he will sign the resolution when it hits his desk, yet the dirty work will be carried out by the legislators who will fail to garner enough votes to approve the resolution, saving the president another show down with the Armenian lobby.

When we come to judge the president for his action or inac-

tion, we must consider the political context of the issues, and the concrete factors determining his conduct.

It is more the rule than exception that pledges of candidates are always different from the pledges of elected officials. President Reagan may be counted among the exceptions.

When a president is elected, cabinet members are replaced, political favors are dispensed to the supporters. But rank and file, analysts, career diplomats remain in place to analyze political situations and to chart a course on every single issue of importance to the country. Of course, in our case, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's past dealings with the Turkish lobbying groups may have played their role too in the Genocide issue.

Our press and our lobbying groups boast of a 1.5 million-strong American-Armenian community. Yet Obama's well-calibrated election machinery knew better than we did, that what percentage of that force we could mobilize and what portion of that mobilization could be translated into actual votes. Besides all niceties, they knew the exact weight of our political clout in the country.

Let us be honest and acknowledge that a large group of Armenians are not politicized. We also may hate to admit that some Armenians are so bigoted that the skin color of the candidate was enough for them to vote against him. Others failed to lend their support dogmatically, not to tarnish their Republican credentials. Therefore, in the political arena, we may bark but we can seldom bite.

On the policy balance of the US government, the Armenian factor is weighed against Turkey's strategic importance, at a time when a policy change was charted to bring the war in Iraq to end and withdraw the US forces out to Afghanistan through the Turkish territory. At that very delicate point, when Ankara was exerting tremendous pressure on the Genocide issue, the president had to choose between his strategic priorities and some domestic concerns. Of course, the balance tipped in favor of Turkey, which in its turn, had snared the Yerevan government to sign on a fictitious "Road Map," which reinforced Ankara's hand.

As far as foreign aid is concerned, the US administration will derive its conclusions, based on relative importance of Armenia versus Turkey's strategic value, as well as Baku's oil wells. We should not forget that today Turkey has more leverage on the West than during the Cold War period because it can count on Moscow's support and the solidarity of the Islamic world. Therefore, we may draw our own conclusion – what does Armenia represent in the strategic balance of the region versus Turkey and Azerbaijan and then swallow the bitter pill that our voices are not heard in Washington or elsewhere, in the major capitals of the world.

Therefore, the conclusion is that we have to politicize the masses, to be able to deliver them to the highest bidder, at any given election. Could any candidate in the US renege on his/her commitment to any Jewish lobby?

Armenia, on the other hand, is divided internally. It lacks natural resources, and its strategic importance does not measure up to that of its neighbors. We cannot do too much to enhance Armenia's strategic relevance, but we can work harder to become a relatively important political factor in this country to make our voices heard. It is absurd in the realm of politics to believe that any power will support us because our cause is just. Power talks, as money talks.

Before making assumptions, and raising our hopes, we need to figure out our strengths and our assets, so that we may have the true assessment of our potentials, which will eventually determine our realistic expectations.

Unfortunately, besides our desires, there are other political factors, which will shape our cause. Mr. Obama was elected to run this country, based on its priorities. In the course, he may have to scrap many of his pledges, which he made to different groups during his election campaign. One casualty may also be our cause.

But we cannot rush to judgment. There are three more years to mobilize and to muster clout, to make an impact on Washington politics.

In the meantime, Obama bashing is not politics.

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By Rev. Arsen Barsamian

Fire destroys when it is out of control, but when placed under proper restraint, it can be very beneficial such as its usage in a blowtorch for welding of metal objects, in the purifying of metals such as gold, for cooking, etc.

Down through the centuries, Armenian homes were destroyed and family life terribly disrupted by the ravaging fires caused by conquerors and evil-doers, but the people learned to put the fires of life to good use for their survival by rebuilding while continuing to contribute towards the advancement of the human race and civilization by their intellectual inquisitive nature in seeking better ways and methods to

do things. Together with this came the need for restraint in the budgeting of time, wealth and energy by a resolute will that formed a remarkable character that persevered by the mercy of God.

During my priestly ministry there was a need to further my knowledge in regard to our story, the story of the people of Armenian see HISTORY, page 20

## April 24: Through the Fires of History





## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## High-Ranking Obama Official Refuses to Acknowledge the Genocide

President Obama continues to disappoint the Armenian-American community. After breaking two promises in a row on key Armenian issues – not acknowledging the Armenian Genocide and proposing reduced US aid levels to Armenia – he appoints Philip Gordon Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs.

Dr. Gordon, a former Director of the Brookings Institution – a think-tank partially funded by Turkish sources – has written several pro-Turkish books and articles. He has been an opponent of congressional acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide and a critic of Greek Cypriot leaders rather than the occupying Turkish forces. Gordon served in the Clinton administration as Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council. During the last presidential campaign, he served as head of the Europe team in Obama's group of foreign policy advisers.

During his confirmation hearing by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the end of March, Gordon was grilled by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) on his views on Armenian and Cypriot issues. Several senators pointed out that Gordon's answers contradicted President Obama's

campaign promises. Little did the senators know that a few weeks later the president himself would not keep his word on these issues! Senator Menendez submitted over two-dozen questions, which were to be answered by the nominee in writing after the hearing.

Sen. John Ensign (R-Nev.) wrote a scathing letter to Gordon on April 7, expressing his dismay that the nominee, during his confirmation hearing, had used the word "tragedy" to refer to the Armenian Genocide. Senator Ensign demanded to know if Gordon's position on the Armenian Genocide was consistent with those of President Obama, Vice President Biden and Secretary of State Clinton all of whom, as senators and presidential candidates, had strongly acknowledged the Armenian Genocide. Furthermore, referring to the early termination of the career of US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans for saying Armenian Genocide, Senator Ensign asked if Gordon would "discourage ambassadors or other Foreign Service personnel from using the term 'Armenian Genocide.'"

Senator Ensign, not satisfied with Gordon's answers, surprised everyone by placing a hold on his nomination, temporarily blocking his approval by the full Senate. However, just as surprisingly, Senator Ensign lifted his hold, paving the way for Gordon's Senate confirmation.

In the meantime, Gordon answered in writing all 28 questions sent to him by Sen. Menendez, even though his responses were evasive and non-responsive. Regardless of the nature of the question, he mindlessly repeated the same answer over and over again, using just about every word in the dictionary, except "Armenian Genocide," to describe the mass killings of Armenians.

Only one of Gordon's answers was particularly revealing, as he put the blame for the Armenian Genocide on the "officials and soldiers of the Ottoman Empire," thus inadvertently acknowledging that it was a state-sponsored genocide. Here is the verbatim text of that particular exchange:

Senator Menendez: "Who was responsible for the death of

over 1.5 million Armenians during WWI?"

Philip Gordon: "This administration, like those before it, does not deny the facts – 1.5 million Armenians were murdered, starved, or deported by civilian officials and soldiers of the Ottoman Empire, some of whom were sentenced to death for committing these crimes. The United States mourns this terrible chapter of history and recognizes that it remains a source of pain for the people of Armenia and of Armenian descent, and all those who believe in the dignity and value of every human life."

Gordon also disclosed to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the Brookings Institute had received a total of \$700,000 from the following Turkish sources 2006-2008:

- \$200,000 from the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association;
- \$190,000 from Sabanci University;
- \$150,000 from the Eksiogullari Group (construction company);
- \$100,000 from the Dogan Yayin Holding Company (media-entertainment conglomerate);
- \$30,000 from Nuro Construction and Trading Company;
- \$30,000 from Hedef-Alliance Holding (pharmaceutical company).

A large number of pro-Turkish officials, such as Philip Gordon, can be found throughout the American government. Some of these Turkophiles are leftovers from the cold war era. Others, motivated by personal gain, serve in the government for a while, and then go to work at Washington Think Tanks, some partially funded from Turkish sources, or end up as lobbyists for Turkey.

Armenian-Americans will continue to face great resistance in their lobbying efforts from pro-Turkish elements in Washington – regardless of which party is in power and who is president – unless they can expand their political influence beyond Congress into the Executive Branch, Think Tanks and the media.

## Ethno-Political Specifics of Azerbaijan and the Karabagh Conflict Settlement

By David Babayan

The Nagorno Karabagh conflict is indeed one of the most difficult conflicts to settle in modern history. It touches upon a bunch of political, legal, economic, ecological and other issues that hinder settlement prospects. The most difficult hindrance, however, is ethno-political specifics of Azerbaijan, a factor that penetrates all spheres of life cementing impossibility of coming to a common denominator both for the parties to the conflict and for the involved and interested actors.

Azerbaijan consists of three closely intertwined layers: historical, ethnic and political. Let us briefly consider them.

The historical layer touches upon historical aspects of creation, formation and development of the Azerbaijani state. The present-day Azerbaijan appeared on the world map only at the end of May 1918, following the collapse of the Russian Empire. For the first several days of its existence it was called the East Caucasus Muslim Democratic Republic. The name itself signified the creation of the first democratic Muslim state in the world. However, several days later the authorities of this new state followed the advice of the Ottoman Empire and changed the name Azerbaijan.

Nobody knows how this state and the entire Caucasian region would have developed had the advice been rejected. The name "Azerbaijan" was never applied to any part of the Southern Caucasus. Azerbaijan was a historical and administrative region in Iran bordering South Caucasus. The Ottoman Turks wanted to create a Pan-Turkish state, and the Southern Caucasus, together with northern Iran, became the most strategic link to connect the Ottoman Empire with Central Asia, the cradle of Turkish civilization.

To make their claims more legitimate, the Ottomans created a second Azerbaijan, so that if there were two entities with the same name then logically they should unite. Moreover, the Ottomans wanted to have a common bor-

der with their new surrogate state and Azerbaijan started to claim as much territory as possible, including Karabagh, Zangezur, the Sevan Region, Ararat valley together with Yerevan and large portions of Georgian territories. The Karabagh issue emerged exactly as a result of this process.

But the Turks were defeated during the First World War and the Bolsheviks who gained control over the South Caucasian region decided to preserve the name "Azerbaijan" for multi-purpose geopolitical usage. Azerbaijan was the first and, until the 1930s, the only Muslim republic in the Soviet State and the Kremlin used this fact to debilitate positions of imperial powers such as Great Britain and France in their Muslim colonies from the Middle East to India. This is why Soviet authorities satisfied Azerbaijani territorial claims to the maximum possible extent and gave it Karabagh and Nakhichevan in their entirety, more than half of Zangezur and some territories of Georgia.

From the Bolshevik perspective it was geopolitically expedient, since Azerbaijan became the banner of Communist revolution in the Muslim world. Azerbaijan was also a very convenient leverage for exercising pressure on Iran.

In the 1930s, the international geopolitical situation changed and Azerbaijan as an offensive component of Soviet geopolitics became one of the most vulnerable segments of the Communist state, especially in the strategic region of Southern Caucasus. Azerbaijan was the only republic in the former USSR whose name was not derivative from an ethnic group. For example, Armenia was derivative from Armenians, Ukraine from Ukrainians, etc. In contrast to other Soviet republics, Azerbaijan was made up of dozens of ethnic groups of Turkish, Caucasian, Iranian peoples as well as Armenians, Russians, Georgians and Jews. Around 55 percent of the population was made up of Turkish-speaking peoples who were officially called the Turks of Soviet Azerbaijan.

In 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany and it became clear that global war was imminent. Taking into considera-

tion traditionally close ties between Germany and Turkey and the 1918 events in the South Caucasus, the Soviet Union decided to form a new Azerbaijani nation since it was very dangerous to have an ethnic group called Turks of Azerbaijan who could easily ally themselves with Turks of Turkey.

The logic was simple and geopolitically expedient. The new nation – the Azerbaijanis became a melting pot digesting different ethnic Muslim groups with an aim to generate a sense of distinct historical, cultural and political background from the Turks of Turkey. This was another crucial transformation both in the Caucasus and in the history of the Karabagh issue. As a result, many ethnic groups suddenly evaporated in Azerbaijan. The Kurds, the Talishes, the Tats, the Avars, the Lezgins and many others together with Turkish people formed a single nation – the Azerbaijanis.

This transformation had rampant political consequences. The Soviet Union solved several geopolitical issues, even though it faced new challenges. The most important was swapping internationalism with nationalism. In Soviet Azerbaijan, a multi-ethnic state, a micro Soviet Union in the Caucasus, people of different ethnic backgrounds lived together on the basis of internationalism. But they suddenly found themselves in a state that renounced this ideology and switched to nationalism.

The Kremlin, nevertheless, gained geopolitical dividends. First of all, it formed a new nation distinct from the Turks of Turkey. The new nation was totally dependent on the central Soviet authorities. This new nation had to somehow legitimize its existence, so history started to be re-written, with any sign of interest in the history or culture of any ethnic minority and any signs of non-Azerbaijani national self-awareness suppressed.

The process of forming a new distinct Azerbaijani nation has not been completed. Of course, some ethnic groups, such as Iranian Tats, whose number is estimated to be close to two million people, were successfully assimilated into a single Azerbaijani nation. Especially since the

collapse of the Soviet Union, they started to be perceived as belonging to the Turkish national identity. Other ethnic groups which have not been completely assimilated border their brethren in neighboring countries. These groups are Caucasian-speaking Lezgins and Avars in northern areas of present-day Azerbaijan, who border their compatriots in Russian Dagestan and Iranian-speaking Talishes who live in southern parts of Azerbaijan and border their brethren in Iran.

The combined territory of these three nations constitutes almost 22 percent of Azerbaijan and around a quarter of its population. Azerbaijan lives in a situation of permanent fear that at any moment these groups may embark on a path of self-determination, thus disintegrating Azerbaijan as a state.

Moreover, historical, ethnic and political factors generated a new mentality in the elite political circles of Azerbaijan. For them, the only way to preserve their state integrity is suppression. Compromise and cooperation in such states are replaced by conflict and confrontation. They perceive Nagorno Karabagh as the main threat to their existence.

Azerbaijan cannot recognize the independence of Nagorno Karabagh because other nations may embark on the same path. Autonomy is even more dangerous to Azerbaijan than independence, because other ethnic groups may claim autonomy too, which is pregnant not only with its possible evolution to independence, but also officially tears apart the Azerbaijanis as a nation. This is why for Azerbaijan there is only one solution to the Nagorno Karabagh conflict – Karabagh without Armenians.

Then what is the way out? There is only one solution: continuous development and strengthening of the Armenian statehood both in Armenia and in Karabagh. Any gap in Karabagh's present-day security and strategic balance with Azerbaijan may have unpredictable consequences for the entire Armenian people.

(David Babayan is a Stepanakert-based political analyst.)





## COMMENTARY

# Parliamentary Elections in Lebanon And the Armenian Community

Unlike any other country, Armenians are important players in the Lebanese parliamentary elections. It is true that Armenians have taken representation in the legislatures of Argentina, Cyprus, Hungary and Russia, but nowhere are they as important as in Lebanon. Because of the sectarian makeup of the electorate and the legislature, the Armenian community in Lebanon becomes a major political factor in Lebanon.

Pre-election campaign had started almost two years ago, and finally it came to its conclusion on Saturday, June 7. All the precincts voted the same day, breaking away from the traditional staggered dates. The Lebanese president, Gen. Michel Sleiman, had vowed free, fair and transparent elections.

During the election, two major power blocs were facing each other. On one hand, was the “March 14” coalition, headed by billionaire Saad Hariri. This bloc is a moderate political grouping with Westward orientation. Opposing this group was the “March 8” coalition headed by Hezbollah, supported by Iran and Syria.

The Armenian political parties were also allied with these two blocs, thus the ADL (Ramgavar) and Hunchak parties joined the March 14 coalition headed by Hariri’s Moustakbad party. The coalition also included “Lebanese forces” and the Phalangist party. All these groups stood for Lebanese sovereignty and independence. On the other hand the ARF (Dashnak) party allied itself with March 8 group, which included the Hezbollah party, Amal movement and General Edmond Aoun’s party.

It was an open secret that this election campaign was fueled by huge amounts of cash supplied, on the one hand, joined by Iran and Syria to, Hezbollah, and on the other hand by Saudi Arabia through Hariri. Every election in any country involves money, with the sole difference that in the Lebanese case, the neighboring countries pour in the cash.

It was apparent early on that the Armenian community would have a major role. Even the New York Times acknowledges that fact. Indeed in the May 26 issue of the Times, the Middle East correspondent Robert Worth had played up the ARF role in the elections. Also, on the very last day, polls predicted a slight edge for the Hezbollah coalition, which included the ARF. However, the election results disproved all predictions.

To justify hopes pinned on the ARF, the leadership exerted mighty efforts, and worked on many fronts. Thus to involve the participation of the Lebanese expatriates in the election, the party dispatched its candidates to the US to recruit potential voters. Centers and churches under ARF control became election-buying concession stands. Many Armenian expatriates, who had not seen Lebanon since their departure, fell to the temptation of free rides and accommodation and they jumped on the ARF bandwagon to vote for the Hezbollah coalition. On this occasion the principal of the Ferrahian School in Los Angeles John Kossakian announced: “The participation of the worldwide Lebanese-Armenians reveals a new world system, which in itself is a victory.”

Little did he care that philosophy could not apply to a citizen who had abandoned his country and had never returned there for any reason.

Here, there is also a delicate issue, which cannot be overlooked. This initiative to lure US residents or citizens to Lebanon to vote for the Hezbollah coalition could not jibe well with the policies of this country. At worst, this was a political adventure that the ARF took, regardless of the consequences to the individuals involved or to the Armenian community as a whole.

All factors within Lebanon were used and abused by the ARF leadership. Even the church was not spared and the Holy See at Antillias became a willing partner to the ARF drive, undermining its stature as the spiritual center of the entire community.

Under the pretense of forming the “Armenian Parliamentary bloc” the ARF leadership tried to lure other Armenian political parties to come under its sway. But the ADL and the Hunchak parties were prudent enough to avoid that trap. That was a blow to the Dashnag presumptions to represent the entire Armenian community. That presumption was particularly crucial for the party leadership to impress Armenia, where the ARF Ministers had quit the ruling coalition and the ARF had lost in the Yerevan Municipal elections.

There were some sad casualties to the Dashnag ploys in Lebanon. One of the casualties was Mr. Arthur Nazarian, a member of the Nazarian clan, bulwark of the AGBU community in Lebanon, since that organization was established in Lebanon in the early 20th century. It is rumored that Nazarian had spent \$1 million to buy his seat on the ARF slate. He was the first one to break the family tradition politically. By luring a political ham, like Nazarian, the ARF leadership believed falsely that it could win over the AGBU camp in Lebanon. Fortunately, the AGBU leadership in that country kept itself away from that political deal.

In an effort to sow discord in ADL ranks in Lebanon, the ARF leadership used one Mike Kharabian, a self-anointed “ADL leader.” For reasons known only to himself, Kharabian tried to switch the ADL parliamentary candidate from the Hariri bloc to the Dashnak Hezbollah bloc. Thanks to the vigilance of the ADL District Committee in Lebanon, Kharabian’s solo game failed. Otherwise, today the ADL would have been in the defeated camp of Dashnak Hezbollah. We cannot overemphasize the leadership and prudence of Dr. Avedis Dakessian, the chairman of the ADL District Committee, in steering the party in the proper course and away from the Kharabian-Dashnak adventure. On the other hand, Kharabian’s betrayal of the local party policy lead to Hagop Kassandjian’s resignation as the ADL candidate. Kassandjian had represented eminently the ADL and the Armenian community during his last two terms as a member of the Lebanese parliament. He was replaced by Jean Oghassapian, while continuing to conduct the election campaign successfully.

It is a sad commentary that the campaign rhetoric was not kept on a dignified level. The speeches by the ARF leaders and especially its candidate Hagop Pakraduni were sometimes below the belt, reminiscent of the Cold War-era. The ARF exhorts the slogan “one nation, one homeland,” but most of the times it confines itself to “one nation” in scope.

If we discount the outside bribes and money lavishly spent on the elections, Lebanon witnessed the most open and transparent election in its history. The Armenian ghetto in Bourdj Hammoud and the community in the capital breathed a sigh of relief after these elections.

Here below is the picture of the election results:

In Beirut’s Second Precinct Sebouh Kalpakian (Hunchak) and Arthur Nazarian, were elected without opposition, as per Doha agreement.

In Beirut’s First Precinct the “March 14 coalition” representative Jean Oghassapian (ADL) and Serge Toursarkissian (Armenian Catholic Community) were elected.

Hagop Pakradouni (ARF) was elected from the Metn precinct, without opposition.

Shant Chinchinian was elected from the Zahle precinct representing the “March 14” coalition.

Thus, four Armenian members of the parliament were elected on March 14 state and two Armenian members were elected on the ARF Hezbollah state.

Perhaps it is most opportune to borrow some statements that appeared in the Aztag daily, the ARF organ, about these elections.

“On June 7, the Lebanese Armenians earned their rights through their ballot.

“All our citizen participated, because our struggle is for them to have a strong presence in Lebanon.

“We will vote for the future generations, so that they may live in free and sovereign Lebanon.”

## LETTERS

## Looking in Our Own Backyard

To the Editor:

My good friend Nubar Dorian asked whether church unity has been “forgotten, abandoned and totally petrified” in his column “Still Time to Doctor Wounded Church” in the June 8 issue of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. Unfortunately, this is in fact the case in most church communities in North America. We seem to have fallen asleep and become tired of the issue.

The real question to be asked is the reason why. We seem to be more interested in what is happening everywhere else in the world rather than what exists in our own backyard. Sure, the future of Armenia is important. So is the Genocide issue, to mention just two of the subjects that fill the pages of our newspapers and hours of conversation. But nowhere do we hear any more of the scandal within our own midst. Two overlapping and competing churches, schools, bishops, dioceses (prelacies), resulting in the spending of millions of dollars in waste and duplication. And it is not only the money that is important. There is also the small matter of church canons and traditions that absolutely forbid dual jurisdictions in the same geographical location.

But unfortunately we go on accepting this without complaint or even notice. The new generation has no idea why the situation exists. They just assume it is the normal practice. Well, someone must take responsibility for this – us. You and I together have the duty to speak up. First and foremost, it is the duty of the church leadership, laypersons and clergy together. Church Assemblies take place and not a single minute is spent on the outrageous division in the church structure. In fact, the opposite is true. We invite representatives of the Diocese and Prelacy to each other’s Assemblies and exchange meaningless and dishonest greetings to each other like strangers from separate worlds.

How scandalous this really is. Thanks to Nubar Dorian and a few others, the unity of the church in America will not be buried or otherwise forgotten. Someday people will wake up and demand action. Let us hope we will see it soon.

– Michael Haratunian

Former Chairman of the Prelacy  
Unity Committee  
Glen Head, NY

## Obama Weighed the Consequences

To the Editor:

Our feeling of being guilty of naiveté in expecting President Obama to do what he knew to be the right thing hurts us as much as our disappointment in the result. What did we expect? Obama is, after all, a politician who by definition is a person dedicated to expediency. When the time came to fulfill his promise of calling the fate of the Armenians of Turkey genocide he weighed the consequences.

On one side, he would cause prob-

lems with an important ally, while, on the other hand, he would only be disappointing a minor ethnic group, who, he figured, should be used to it by now.

Going forward, our best strategy is to get the Congressional resolution passed, which is more likely to happen because members of congress are not as hung up on geopolitical considerations as the president. And, once the ice is broken, the president’s declaration will have less impact and not as controversial.

–Berge Tatian

## Power Should Resign for Her Part In Obama Not Using ‘G’ Word

To the Editor:

I am one of the many US citizens demanding that President Obama’s genocide specialist, Samantha Power, resign her National Security Council post.

Last year, Power told us to trust her – that Obama would definitely fulfill his campaign promise to explicitly acknowledge the Armenian genocide on April 24. He did not. Americans’ trust in both Power and Obama was clearly misplaced.

I would like to believe that Power did advise the President to use the ‘G’ word; but since he didn’t keep his promise, her only option is to transparently resign by publicly declaring to the press that the president’s policy is totally contrary to the truth, to her convictions, to her belief, and will harm her moral reputation and authority as a historian if she were to stay as the president’s advisor.

Short of resignation, Power is not to be trusted any more as an honest writer and should be considered a hypocrite not deserving the prize she received for her book A Problem from Hell, America and the Age of Genocide. Notice, too, that Power has not given the American nation and specifically the Armenian nation the courtesy of an explanation since April 24.

To express our outrage with Obama and Power, all Americans and those citizens of Armenian descent should send a barrage of letters, e-mails and make phone calls constantly.

I know that a diligent, conscientious and enormous work is being done by Armenian Organizations – this is not enough. We need to put on much more pressure, each and everyone of us. By staying passive, we are telling Obama and Power that it’s fine for them to break their promise to acknowledge the Genocide.

Armenian Americans are also, in effect, saying that it’s fine for the administration to oppose the Congressional Genocide resolution, whose prospects are worse than at any previous time.

If Power does not resign, she is complicit in Obama’s refusal to properly characterize the Armenian genocide. What will her excuse be? That, like a concentration camp guard, she is just following orders?

The right thing for Samantha Power is to resign and return to academic life where she may once again speak freely and honestly on the Armenian Genocide and all genocides.

– Kamer Minassian

Watertown, Mass.

**WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR**





## COMMENTARY

# Details of the Armenian Genocide Are Necessary

By Helene Pilibosian

In order to visualize what a genocide is like, notably the Armenian Genocide and denial thereof by responsible or irresponsible parties, verbal images as pictures that will describe the situation can help. It is said to be impossible to convey the particulars of the tortures and murders that took place to exterminate the Armenians in 1915 on the pretext that they were traitors to the Turkish state.

A few typical excerpts from what has been written by people who went through this deportation as children and were haunted by those memories for the rest of their lives will suffice. The following is an excerpt from the book *Bloody Desert* by Hagop Kouyoumjian, who lived in Philadelphia until his death in 1961. It was translated from the Armenian by Hagop Sarkissian for the 50th anniversary special issue of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, which I edited:

Many starved people fainted and were a hindrance to the soldiers walking in the tent city. One day they gathered such persons and, though they were not dead, threw them into a ditch especially dug for the purpose.

Sometimes when passing by that ditch, I stopped and looked at live bodies of adults and children piled upon each other. I watched them bring new half-dead bodies and throw them upon the bodies still living and breathing. Shaken by the blows of the thrown bodies, some opened their eyes and tried to free bare arms or feet from beneath a fallen body, but they did not have the strength... When the ditch was filled, the soldiers covered it with the soil and opened a new ditch for victims fallen every day. But those who died were the lucky ones...

The tired and exhausted caravan was ready to sleep when screams and cries were heard. The Turks had come out to hunt in the light of the moon with their beastly passions and were searching for the freshness looking of a body, no matter how young it was. They plunged their claws into tender brides and young girls. The rest was blood and death.

The victims cried and resisted; some clung to their parents, but the iron fists separated mother and daughter. Many were dragged away by the hair. And the hellish feast started.

The soldiers dismounted and one of them grabbed the beard of a clergyman and drew him away. The second soldier helped to throw him on the ground with his rifle butt and sat on him. At the same time he drew a dagger and holding the beard, cut one side of the face and threw it in the air. The other soldier, following the example of his friend, did the same to the other side of the face. Surprisingly, the clergyman did not utter a word as a sign of pain; only the word 'God' could be heard through his teeth.

"Now call your God as much as you want," said one of the soldiers with a diabolical laugh. The other soldier fired his gun. The skull of the clergyman turned to pieces of bone and scattered through the air like broken glass.

"The soldiers gave permission to the crowd following us to start the massacre. Thousands of them fell upon us. Some used their swords and, holding the hair of their victims, cut their heads off and threw them away. Others used iron-headed sticks to crush the skulls and smashed bones. Some came with axes and hit all around them, cutting an arm here, a leg there. Any ingenious one placed children in a row and passed his spear through their bellies. Some saved their guns and ended the lives of their victims by stabbing and kicking them. Others tied a woman's hands and feet and cut her to pieces. Other beasts slept with dead women and satisfied their souls. If there were no more of living, many killed the dead once more, and again and again tortured them, seeking some life in them. Those who were not satisfied with death, drank the blood of the wounded.

By a miracle I was buried beneath a pile of

bodies and thus saved from the massacre.

The following excerpt is from the book *They Called Me Mustafa: Memoir of an Immigrant* by Khachador Pilibosian, my father's autobiography and translations of some of his writings, which I co-authored and edited. A brief excerpt of his experiences during the deportation and his subsequent slavery to Kurds who had kidnapped him gives an indication of his sufferings.

Some of these Turks forced themselves into Armenian homes to capture any male over 15-years old. These acts lasted until late at night. Then the Turks arrested these males and imprisoned them in the Armenian church. They also went to the homes and arrested the males they found there, though there were not too many because a large number of them had already been called to serve in the Turkish Army. Those who resisted were taken to the church after being severely beaten.

The husbands of my two aunts and two young sons of one of them were in the church. That night I took bread and cheese to them. The stern-faced guard scolded me saying, "Those inside do not need bread." I returned home crying. [The church was burned with the prisoners inside.]

I can never forget going through a valley with a group one day and seeing hundreds of human bodies scattered all around. They must have been killed no more than a day or two before. Among them were many teenage boys.

The gendarme ordered us to follow him. In a little while we reached a place where dead bodies were scattered, and he handed us the rope and told us to pull the bodies into the river. While doing what we were ordered to do, one of the tortured young boys said softly, "Boys, take it easy. I am not dead yet." It was too dark to notice his wounds or his condition, so we left him alone and pulled some of others away. After pulling about 15 bodies to the river, we were exhausted and could not do any more.

As I approached one of the merchants and ate a couple of bunches of grapes, I felt two heavy arms winding around my body. I was then picked up and carried away from the crowd. My kidnappers started to climb the hills as I screamed, trying everything to get away without success as my kidnapper warned me that he would kill me if I did not behave. I cried loudly and often, thinking that my sisters still were waiting for something to eat and would probably starve to death.

And he lived among the Kurds for four years during which time he was often beaten and almost killed. When he heard the World War I had ended, he took off and walked from those mountains to Aleppo, where he received help.

Aurora Mardiganian wrote about the deportation and especially about the sufferings of women in her book, *The Auction of Souls*, after she was safely in America. Below are brief excerpts from this book:

I think there were more than 200 women whose minds gave way under this sudden impulse, stirred by the crazed widow of the pastor.

Those who were in charge of us could not understand at first. They thought there was a revolt. They charged among us, swinging their swords and guns right and left, even shooting point blank. Many were killed or wounded hopelessly before they understood. Then the guards were greatly amused, and laughed. "See," they said, "that is what your God is — He is crazy." We could only bow our heads and submit to the taunt. Some of the women recovered their senses and were very sorry. Those who remained crazed the zapatiehs turned on to the plains to starve to death. They would not kill an insane person, as it was against their religion.

I tried to conceal myself when the little party of Kurds came near. But I was too late. They took me away, with a dozen of the girls and young wives this band had caught. They carried us on their horses across the valley, over the hills, and into the desert beyond.

There they stripped us of what clothes still were on our bodies. With their long sticks they subdued girls who were screaming, or if they resisted — beat them until their flesh was purple with flowing blood... When the Kurds were tired of mistreating us they hobbled us, still naked, to their horses. Each girl, with her hands tied behind her back, was tied by the feet to the end of a rope fastened around the horse's neck. Thus they left us — neither we nor the horses could escape.

As the regiment closed in, thousands of the women, with their babies and children in their arms, scrambled up the cliffs on either side of the narrow pass, helped by their men folk, who remained on the road to fight with their hands and sticks against the armed soldiers.

But the zapatiehs accompanying the party surrounded the base of the cliffs and kept the women from escaping. Then the Kasab Tabouri killed men until there were not enough left to resist them. Scores of men feigned death among the bodies of their friends, and thus escaped with their lives.

Part of the soldiers then scaled the cliffs to where the women were huddled. They took babies from the arms of the mothers and threw them over the cliffs to comrades below, who caught as many as they could on their bayonets. When the babies and little girls were all disposed of this way, the soldiers amused themselves awhile making women jump — prodding them with bayonets, or beating them with gun barrels until the women, in desperation, jumped to save themselves. As they rolled down the base of the cliff, the soldiers below hit them with stones or held their bayonets so they would roll on them. Many women scrambled to their feet after falling, and these the soldiers forced to climb the cliffs again, only to be pushed back over.

The Kasab Tabouri kept up this sport until it was dark.

The women and girls who were left were to be sold into Turkish harems for the highest prices on condition they would accept Islam. It seemed then that civilization was totally absent, except in the minds of the defenseless Armenians... Word from Talaat Pasha: "Anything you do to the Armenians will amuse me."

Four Armenian towns were able to withstand the onslaught of the Turks with ammunition that had been smuggled in to them. These were in Zeitoun, in Deurt Yol, villages on the mountain of Musa Dag in Alexandretta, of which Franz Werfel wrote his great novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dag*, and in the city of Van in the province of Van, of which Dr. Clarence D. Ussher wrote his eyewitness account *An American Physician in Turkey*. The battles were clever and heroic, but the Armenians ultimately lost, though the people who fought them were rescued. An excerpt from Dr. Ussher's book follows:

Why had not the Armenians emigrated in greater numbers to escape this oppression and fear of massacre? The Turkish government would not permit them to emigrate without first renouncing their citizenship and inheritance rights in Turkey, selling all their possessions and promising not to

return. Passports would not be issued to men trying to return. Armenians are passionately attached to their native lands and to their ancient traditions. Property has passed from father to son for generations.

The supply of ammunition was small. Jewelers, tinsmiths, coppersmiths and blacksmiths set to work to increase it, turning out with the primitive tools at their command 2,000 cartridges and case bullets day. An Armenian professor, graduate of an American university, made smokeless powder. Unskilled labor built walls and dug trenches, often under fire. Women made uniforms and other garments for the soldiers and cooked for them. The normal school band marched about the city playing military airs when the fighting was heaviest. Even young boys did their bit, and a big bit it was, too.

The following is an excerpt from an article I wrote as part of a series titled "ADL — The Living Ideology" published in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* of June 15, 1963. It is only a summary of the vast and complicated story of the Armenians in historic Armenia.

From 1375 to 1920 the Armenian people were subjected to the tyranny of the Turkish Empire. It was not until the latter part of the 19th century when the ideas of freedom infiltrated from Europe, that the Armenians made an organized attempt at liberation. Conditions were unbearable in Turkish Armenia. An Armenian could expect no justice by law, he was treated with utmost contempt and derision by the Turkish people, and if he tried to gain freedom by any revolutionary activity or even possessed a gun, he was instantly and without question killed.

The Armenian Democratic Liberal Party was formed under those conditions with inspiration from the minds of men such as Mgrditch Portukalian, who preached liberation from France in his newspaper *Armenia*. In Van, Mgrditch Terlemezian-Avedisian led the Armenagan Party, the first branch of the present ADL, in the preparation for democratic ideals and the use of arms to defend those ideals. He led the resistance to the massacre of 1896, but was killed later in an ambush as he and others were leaving the country under a promise of safe conduct.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation was formed under the same circumstances and for the same purposes but with somewhat different views of actions that were necessary. These groups produced heroes and martyrs and were the beginning of the present Armenian political organizations.

In the present Armenian diaspora, formed after the tragedy of 1915, there are active and thriving communities of Armenians with many outstanding individuals and achievements, proud of national heritage, but not forgetting the painful history that brought them to where they are and tried to dispose of their ancient civilization.

(Helene Pilibosian is a prize-winning poet and former editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. She is now working on her memoir.)

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# Lebanese Voters Prevent Hezbollah Takeover

By Robert Fisk

There will be no Islamic Republic of Lebanon. Nor will there be a pro-Western Lebanese republic. There will, after yesterday's vote – for the Hezbollah-Christian coalition and for the secular Sunni-Christian alliance – be a government of “national salvation” in Beirut, run by an ex-army general-president with ever-increasing powers.

Washington would have preferred that Saad Hariri, son of the assassinated ex-prime minister, came out with a clear win. But out of the shadows will come the same crippled, un-healable

Lebanon; delightful, unworkable, poor old Lebanon, corrupt, beautiful, vanity-prone, intelligent, democratic – yes, definitely, democratic – and absolutely outside our powers to reform.

The electoral system – a crazed mixture of sectarianism, proportional representation and “list” fixing – means that no one ever really “wins” elections in Lebanon, and yesterday was no different. The “anti-Syrian” parties – the Sunnis, the Druze, half of the Christian community – made sure that their votes prevented a Hezbollah takeover, while the huge Shia vote “for Hezbollah and the Amal party and the Christians who follow the lead of the raving Christian ex-general20Michael Aoun” made certain there

would be no clear win for America's friends in the country.

But the president, who under Lebanon's unwritten constitution must be a Christian Maronite, will be able to fashion some kind of “central bloc” by midday today – or so all Lebanon hopes – which will include Hezbollah, the forces of anti-Syrian Sunni Islam, the Druze and even the Christians. The latter, always their own worst enemies in Lebanon, albeit a minority, will ironically be more powerful than ever because their president is one of them.

Lebanon deployed up to 60,000 troops and armed police to control the ballot boxes and, to their considerable credit, not a single gun-battle appears to have broken out. Given the personal nature of some of the contests – this is a highly tribal society whatever the modernity of Beirut and its suburbs – this was quite an achievement. Driving around the capital, I found only good-natured checkpoints, handing me papers of candidates' names for whom I should vote, both Christians and Muslims, in the same list. If they wore blue hats, they were for Hariri. If they wore yellow hats – and there were conservative Shia Muslim women without scarves – they were for Hezbollah. If they dressed in orange, they were trying to win votes for Aoun.

The Lebanese, a very shrewd people, have been reading the foreign press and listening to the BBC, Al-Jazeera, even Fox News. They knew that for foreigners “the ajnabi” there was only one story: Lebanon becomes a finger of Iran or Syria or it remains in America's hands. More dangerously, the Israelis would be able to claim it

was a “terrorist” state if Hezbollah won. But then the Israelis would claim it was a “terrorist” state if even one minister was a member of Hezbollah. They will have their way.

By last night, it looked as if the spread of parties would win a share of the vote equal to their numbers; that the Shia Muslims would have the largest group of MPs but without a majority, thus allowing Lebanon's power-sharing system to settle back into its old ways. Why should we worry? Yes, it is corrupt. Tens of thousands of Lebanese flew home to vote – you can't vote abroad in Lebanese elections – so who paid their fare? Who has \$30 million to spend on air fare?

To be a modern state, Lebanon must de-confessionalize. Its president – currently the ex-general Michel Sleiman – should be elected on merit rather than religion. Its prime minister, who must be a Sunni Muslim, should be elected on merit. But the moment you take away these privileges, Lebanon will cease to be Lebanon – because its very identity is sectarian.

Lebanon is a tiny country, just over 4,000 square miles in size, and it is very definitely Muslim (60 per cent of its four million population are Muslim), but it has 18 religious sects which include the descendants of the poor Armenian Christians who, naked and beaten, dragged themselves here after their genocide at the hands of the Turks in 1915. The Assyrians came this way. So did the Persians, Romans, Crusaders, Mamlukes, Arabs and Ottomans. And the Americans, of course, And the Israelis.

The election will probably have “united” the poor old Lebanese yet again. In what cauldron, we can only wait to find out.

(This article originally appeared in the *Independent*)

## April 24: Through the Fires of History

HISTORY, from page 16  
ancestry. In this story I found a remarkable relationship between them and their God that enabled them to persist despite unbearable hardships. Like a magnetic force, I kept being drawn, to the date, April 24, 1915, a date similar to the phrase President Franklin D. Roosevelt said of December 7, 1941 at the onset of World War II, as being a “day of infamy.” This may be due to the fact of my being a first-generation offspring of parents who were survivors of that horrific tragedy known to us all as the Armenian Genocide. At first it was the day and year, April 24, 1915 and the period of World War I, 1914-18. Then I began to envision it as part of the overall diplomacy of the geopolitical world from 1850-1922. Years later it expanded to being a part of the larger picture covering our entire ancient past beginning in the epic era of legendary figures until the present day. All of our history seemed woven around, not so much on the year 1915, but condensed to one single day in our long and illustrious history...April 24, a day that embraced within it the entire history of the Armenian people. There were exceptions, such as the conquests of Dikran (Tigranes) the Great and also the eras of the Bakraduni and later the Reubenian dynasty of Cilicia Armenia, but on the whole, Armenians were not masters of their political destiny. They had to learn out of necessity to accommodate themselves to given situations of the day be it under the reign of one or another foreign ruler. Some such as the Arshakuni of the Parthian dynasty in ancient Persia became Armenianized and played a crucial role in the shaping of the Armenian character during their control for nearly 400 years (AD 66-AD 421) especially in regard to our acceptance of Christianity as a state religion. Armenians survived while others passed on into oblivion. I believe the reason for their survival can be seen in the stories taught at first by traveling troubadours and later to the children as part of their education. In these stories, some folklore and others historic, a deeply-hidden secret was kept. As the saying goes, one needs “to read between the lines” to understand how this came about. Consistently there appears a high moral standard based on helping the underprivileged and also a desire for freedom to determine one's own destiny; a freedom that required a need to sacrifice for it to be continually enjoyed. These emanated from a marriage the people had with their Supreme Being, a marriage that even the forces of nature and the immediate environment participated.

The stories begin with two legendary figures Hayk Nahabed (Patriarch) and Torq Ankegh (ugly/or from the province of Ankegh). With these two the stage was set for the others to follow. Directly or indirectly, the importance of the family unit underlies the unity of all of these stories. It should be understood that the centerpiece of the family is the husband and wife and also the parent and children relationship but enlarges to include the church and fellow-members of one's faith, relatives and friends, co-workers and classmates, fellow citizens and those sharing a common nationality and last but not least, all members of the human race regardless of who they may be. The implication was that a sacred bond, a marriage between God and man extended to include all humans everywhere with each other. The crystallization of this process culminated with the apostolic preaching of the Good News of salvation in the

name of Jesus Christ. Armenians were ready for this evangelical message which brought them to a full spiritual maturity with their acceptance of the Christian faith.

In the stories of Hayk, the great-grandson of Noah, he and his family, the Haykazouns were living in bondage in the land of Chaldea under the hand of a tyrant, named Bel who is mentioned in the Old Testament (Is. 46:1; Jer. 50:2 where he is referred to as Nebo; and Bar. 6:40; Dn. 14:2-21). He is regarded there also as a tyrant. Hayk yearns for a freer life for himself and his family and leads the Haykazouns up the Mesopotamian Valley to the land of his forefathers known as Urartu or Ararat. Bel follows in pursuit with his giants with the intent of bringing them back to Chaldea to serve him. Hayk and the Haykazouns resist and win a great battle over the forces of Bel killing him during the conflict.

The story of Torq Ankegh, (regarded by some historians as the great-grandson of Hayk) is about a man possessing supernatural powers, such as that of a god in human form. Torq was the defender of the oppressed and victims of injustices. When he heard of the sufferings of those living in the regions of Pontus by a band of plundering marauders, he rushed to their defense. When the marauders heard of Torq's coming, they immediately took flight in boats over the open sea. When Torq arrived he began to pluck huge boulders from the side of nearby mountains and hurled them in the direction of the fleeing ships causing a great sea storm. Many of the ships sunk with only a few of the marauders able to escape allowing a grateful people to return to their homes to live a more normal life once more.

Whether or not, these stories are true, they do manifest the character of the Armenian people and the value they held in regard to home and family life. Every succeeding generation learned from them as how to conduct their lives in making the most of their God-given talents to escape entrapment by the temptations and allurements of life. The past taught them to invest their limited but precious resources and time for the essential aspects of life centered on family life, that heartbeat of a nation's existence.

As we near the centennial commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in 2015, the disciple demonstrated by our most recent forefathers can serve as guidelines for us in our preparations in remembrance of this tragic historical event to reveal not only to our own people but to the public-at-large of the positive contributions Armenians have made to civilizations from earliest of times to the present even during times of great hardship. All of this is attested by proven archeological discoveries. In addition to the efforts presently pursued for recognition of the Armenian Genocide, a new avenue should begin to enlighten all of these positive contributions and accomplishments. Their message is as relevant today as it was in ancient times: a message of survival of the home and family. Like the celebration of Vartanantz when an historic event is still celebrated despite the defeat on the battlefield because of the victory found in its moral message, the lessons surrounding the tragedies of April 24 can lead the present and future generations to a higher and more productive life as we continue to live through the ongoing fires of history.

To learn more of Reverend Barsamian's works (DVDs and writings) go to the website at [armenianexperience.net](http://armenianexperience.net).

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