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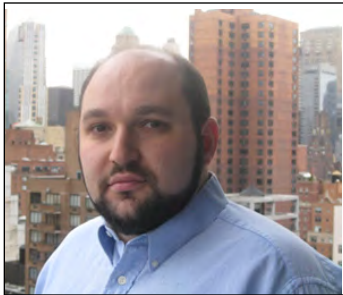
The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States



NEWS IN BRIEF

Collective Amnesia in Wake of Genocide Topic of New Book

By Taleen Babayan and Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff



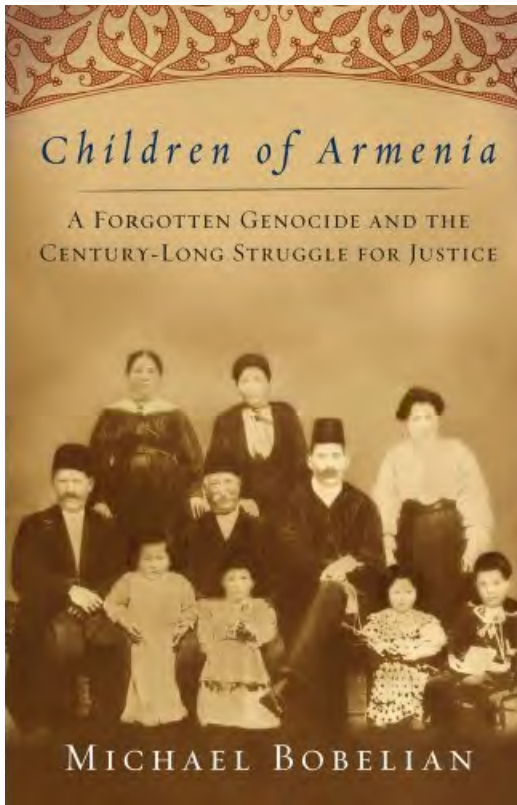
NEW YORK – Author Michael Bobelian's first book, *Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-Long Struggle for Justice*, which focuses on the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide, was recently published by Simon & Schuster.

Bobelian spoke this week about his book, the thrust of

which, he said, is finding out why the world forgot about the Armenian Genocide very soon after the events.

"Most of my book focuses on the aftermath of the Genocide. That is an era no one has written about, neither in historical nor journalistic circles, so it made it very challenging because I had no books to rely upon to act as a guidepost. But it also made it fascinating because no one had written about it. I got to see original material and look at it in a way no one has before. I covered comprehensively the legislative battles, the [Kourken] Yanikian trial and its impact, and the 1965 demonstrations that began the modern Armenian campaign for justice."

see BOBELIAN, page 15



ADL Welcomes New Armenian Ambassador at United Nations

NEW YORK – A delegation of ADL District Committee of US and Canada visited the newly-appointed Ambassador of

Ilandjian, vice chairman of the chapter.

On behalf of the Ramgavar Party, Megerian welcomed the ambassador and offered the party's help and services to the embassy. Vartivarian expressed the good wishes of all ADL news media of the world, especially in these tumultuous days, when there are discussions about the relations of Turkey and Armenia. Vartivarian spoke also about the factions inside the party and gave



Krikor Salbashian, Vartan Ilandjian, Ambassador Garen Nazarian, Papken Megerian and Hagop Vartivarian,

Armenia at the United Nations, Garen Nazarian, on Wednesday, September 11, at the headquarters in Midtown Manhattan.

The delegation was headed by Papken Megerian, co-chairman, Hagop Vartivarian, chairman of Press Committee, Krikor Salbashian, chairman of Armenagan-Hovsepian chapter of New York, and Vartan

Nazarian an account of the situation.

Nazarian thanked the delegation for this visit and reiterated that the ADL has been a supporter of successive governments in Armenia, no matter who is in power. He said that he is happy to see that the ADL press is very supportive of the initiation of the dialogue between Armenia and Turkey.

Sargisian to Meet Armenian Party Leaders On Turkey

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – President Serge Sargisian will meet leaders of dozens of Armenian political parties on Thursday to discuss his controversial fence-mending agreements with Turkey, a spokesman said on Monday.

The meeting will be part of "internal political consultations" which Ankara and Yerevan have agreed to undertake before signing two protocols on the normalization of bilateral relations next month.

According to Samvel Farmanian, the presidential press secretary, formal invitations to discuss "the current stage of the normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations" with the head of state have been extended to the heads of all political parties active in the country. "This will be the third thematic consultation convened by President Sargisian in this format," he said in a statement.

The previous two meetings, held in November and March, focused on the Nagorno Karabagh peace process and the Armenian government's efforts to cope with the effects of the global financial crisis respectively. They were attended by nearly 50 party leaders mostly loyal to Sargisian.

Both meetings were boycotted by the main opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK). Farmanian said that the presidential administration has again sent out invitations only to the leaders of the parties making up the alliance. The HAK's top leader, Levon Ter-Petrosian does not formally head any of those parties.

see LEADERS, page 20

Hrant Dink Birthday Marked

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The birthday of the assassinated founding editor of Agos weekly, Hrant Dink, was marked on September 15. He would have turned 55.

Dink was assassinated on January 27, 2007, as he was walking out of his office here, by a Turkish national. Several people have gone on trial for the murder, yet no one has been convicted of it. More details are emerging however, making it clear the murder was not a random act by a fanatic, but possibly with the complicity of some persons in power.

After Dink's assassination, Nobel Prize laureate, novelist Orhan Pamuk, left Turkey.

According to the Istanbul city administration, one of the streets adjacent to the newspaper office will be named after Dink.

Israeli Authorities Rescind Deportation Move

JERUSALEM – The Israeli Ministry of Interior has rescinded its decision to deport two Armenian seminarians at St. James Seminary involved in a fracas with a Jewish youth who had spat on them.

The seminarians, who had been held by the Israeli police, were set free "without any prior conditions" and allowed to return to the Armenian Patriarchate, St. James sources said.

The seminarians, Narek Hovannesian and David Harutunian, had arrived in Jerusalem a year ago to enroll at St. James and prepare for the priesthood.

The decision to deport the two seminarians evoked sharp protests not only among the city's Christians but abroad as well.

The police had initially arrested the two seminarians and detained them pending an appearance in court, but had changed track the next day and informed the Patriarchate that the matter had been referred to the Interior Ministry, which had decided to deport the two.

Azerbaijan Violates NKR Ceasefire

STEPANAKERT (ArmInfo) – Azerbaijan violated the ceasefire on the contact line with the armed forces of Nagorno Karabagh (NKR) on September 14 and 15, the NKR Defense Ministry reported.

Azerbaijan fired from small caliber weapons and sniper rifles at the positions of the NKR Defense Army in the southeastern, eastern and northeastern directions, the Defense Ministry said. After the Karabagh divisions returned fire, the shooting stopped, the ministry spokesperson said.

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Levon Aronian Wins Chess 'Grand Slam'



BILBAO, Spain (Panorama.am) – Armenian Grand Master Levon Aronian won the Grand Slam Masters Chess tournament here, last week. In the final round, Aronian and opponent Sergey Karjakin ended in a draw.

Aronian led the tournament with 13 points; Alexander Grishchuk had 8 points and occupied the second horizontal, Karjakin had 7 points and Aleksey Shirov, 3 points.



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

'Yes Em' International Film Festival Coming in September

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) The "Yes em" (It's me) International Film Festival will begin here on September 26.

Out of the 224 applications submitted this year, the contest jury selected 135 candidates, Chair of Armenian Cinematographers' Union Ruben Gevorgyants said at a recent press conference.

Gevorgyants said he was surprised by the low quality of many of the entries.

"It mostly results from youth's poor knowledge of literature, as dramaturgy and film production require a rich background in literature," he said.

The selected films will be screened in the Moscow Cinema House, as the Armenian National Cinema Center is undergoing repairs.

Parliament Approves Tax Package

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The sixth session of the parliament kicked off this week, with an agenda which included more than 110 issues. The first four-day session includes 80 issues, 12 agreements are presented for ratification.

In the first reading, parliament approved with 73 for, 23 against and one abstention, the tax package presented by the government, and discussed at the previous session and criticized by all the factions.

Before the voting deputy finance minister Suren Karayan presented the implemented changes which were done as a result of many discussions.

The bill clarifies the commitments of the tax representative: the latter will have a right only during the delivery of ready-made product to control the physical volume of the product, the sale price and only documents connected with sale.

"That is to say the tax representative will not enter the production process, he will not know production secrets and neither production process. This is the main change over which we have come into agreement," the deputy minister said.

Armenian President Serge Sargsian Receives Composer Michel Legrand

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian President Serge Sargsian received this week composer and pianist Michel Legrand, who performed in Yerevan.

The presidential press office said that upon greeting the renowned composer, Sargsian said: "For me it is a great honor to meet you – one of the beloved sons of our nation, who has a great investment in the world music of the second half of the 20th century. It is thanks to individuals like you that our nation has become more recognized in the world. Armenians love you and are proud of you."

Legrand told the president about his impressions from the visit to Armenia.

"Every time when there is an occasion to visit Armenia it seems I return to my ethnic roots. Armenian music is close to my heart and it flows in my veins," Legrand said.

The President of the Republic awarded Legrand with Armenian Medal of Honor.

Yerevan Brandy Company Maintains Last Year's Output

YEREVAN (Arka) – The Yerevan Brandy Company managed to maintain last year's production output of 4 million liters and to increase its profit by 14 percent up to 17 billion drams during FY 2009 despite the global economic crisis, executive director of the company Ara Grigoryan said recently.

Grigoryan said export activities have also been maintained from the last year and even a small increase has been recorded.

The increase in profits along with unchanged production activities was recorded mainly because of changes in foreign currency rates.

Dashnaks Stage More Protests Against Turkey-Armenia Deal

By Hasmik Smbatian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Carrying banners and chanting "No concession to Turkey!" the protesters also demanded that the Armenian government accept specific amendments to the two protocols put forward by the nationalist party.

Fifty of them camped outside the Armenian prime minister's office in Yerevan's largest square, while 24 others began a collective hunger strike outside the nearby Foreign Ministry building. The hunger strike will have a largely symbolic character, with participants saying that they and other Dashnaksutyun members will take turns in refusing food for two days.

"We demand that the government abandon plans to sign the Turkish-

Armenian protocols," one of the protesters said. "We hope that our authorities have retained a little common sense."

"We demand our lost homeland," said another. "We demand that they don't betray our feelings for the lost homeland."

It was an apparent reference to a key provision one of the protocols that commits Armenia to explicitly recognizing its existing border with Turkey. Dashnaksutyun is also strongly opposed to the planned formation of a Turkish-Armenian panel tasked with studying the 1915-1918 mass killings and deportations of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

Police officers at the scene did not attempt to impede or end the protest which Dashnaksutyun leaders said will last until the end of a six-week period set by the authorities in Ankara and

Yerevan for "internal political consultations" on the highly sensitive matter. Vahan Hovannisian, a Dashnaksutyun leader, claimed that unlike their Turkish counterparts, Armenia's leaders have still not initiated such discussions in earnest.

"Unfortunately what is happening in Turkey is not happening in Armenia," Hovannisian told journalists. "There has been no [official] discussion at any level. That certainly arouses our discontent. We are concerned that they are trying to keep the society away from politics." President Serge Sargsian had scheduled to meet with the leaders of dozens of Armenian political parties and discuss with them his policy towards Turkey on Thursday (after Mirror-Spectator press time). Hovannisian confirmed that he and other Dashnaksutyun leaders were planning to attend the meeting.

Opposition Leader Still Silent on Party Turmoil

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Opposition leader Raffi Hovannisian continued to avoid on Monday any public statements on bitter infighting within his Zharangutyun (Heritage) party that flared up a week ago following his mysterious decision to resign his parliament seat.

Three senior Zharangutyun figures were expelled from the party ranks September 9 after they accused the party's nominal chairman, Armen

deepening rift within his party. The two rival camps made conflicting claims about further details of the letter.

According to Zoya Tadevosian, one of the expelled board members, the US-born popular politician wrote that he is "tendering the last resignation of my political life and leaving the party." But Hovsep Khurshudian, the Zharangutyun spokesman allied to Martirosian, described that as "disinformation."

"Raffi Hovannisian remains a member of Zharangutyun," Khurshudian said. He at the same time refused to disclose the content of the letter, saying that it was meant for the party leadership and is therefore "not subject to publication."

Hovannisian, 50, relocated to Armenia from California with his family in 1990 and served as the newly independent country's first foreign minister in 1992. He founded Zharangutyun in 2002 and remains its de facto top leader despite holding no formal positions in the party leadership at present.

Tadevosian said Hovannisian's letter has made her and other expelled members reconsider their initial decision to collect signatures in support of an emergency congress of the party. She said they will now urge supporters to leave Zharangutyun "en masse."

Tadevosian, who makes no secret of her warm rapport with Ter-Petrosian's Armenian National Congress (HAK), also reiterated on Monday that she will not step down as a member of the Central Election Commission (CEC) representing Zharangutyun. Under Armenian law, the party is entitled to naming one member of the CEC and all other lower-level electoral bodies by virtue of being represented in the National Assembly. However, it can not recall and replace those election officials at will.

"Those who will sit on district election commissions are my friends," claimed Tadevosian. "They are not going to obey the party called Zharangutyun."

Khurshudian insisted, however, that most of those commission members are loyal to the current party leadership. Stepan Safarian, another party figure close to Martirosian, said Zharangutyun will initiate legal amendments that would enable it to sack Tadevosian.

The infighting is also likely to lose Zharangutyun two of its seven seats in the 131-member parliament. One of the

ousted dissidents, Vartan Khachatryan, is a parliament deputy, while another, Movses Aristakesian, is next in line for taking up the seat left vacant by Hovannisian.

Armenian Central Bank Again Cuts Key Lending Rate

YEREVAN (Reuters) – Armenia's Central Bank cut its refinancing rate by 25 basis points to 5 percent on Tuesday, as stabilizing inflationary pressures enable it to focus on helping the country weather the global financial crisis.

"The Central Bank board has decided to cut the refinancing rate in line with financial market trends which will promote economic activity without threatening price stability," the bank said in a statement.

Armenia is feeling the impact of recession in its close economic ally Russia. Lower inflation has allowed Armenia to pursue a policy of monetary easing from April. Prior to that, the central bank floated the dram currency to secure a \$540 million standby loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in March, at the time raising the refinancing rate by 100 basis points to 7.75 percent.

The Central Bank says it sees annual inflation at 4 percent plus/minus 1.5 percentage points. In August, consumer prices rose 3.5 percent year-on-year, at the lower end of the regulator's forecast range.

Central Bank governor Artur Javadian told Reuters in July that Armenia's economy would likely contract 7-8 percent in 2009. The forecast was between the bank's previous estimate of a 5.8 percent contraction and the 9.5 percent slump forecast by the IMF in late June.

GDP contracted 18.5 percent in January-July in comparison with 10.6 percent growth in the same period last year.



Raffi Hovannisian

Martirosian, of foul play and secret collaboration with the Armenian authorities. Martirosian and his allies, which dominate Zharangutyun's decision-making board, have rejected the accusations. They also claim that the dissidents acted on orders issued by both the government and the country's largest opposition alliance led by former President Levon Ter-Petrosian.

The turmoil broke out two days after the announcement of Hovannisian's decision to quit the National Assembly. Neither he, nor other party officials have given a clear explanation for the surprise move yet. A party spokesman said on September 7 that the Zharangutyun leader will explain his motives in the coming days.

Hovannisian did not return to Armenia from a trip abroad as of Monday evening, according to some individuals close to him. Just when he will be available for comment remained unclear.

It emerged over the weekend that Hovannisian sent on September 9 a letter to the board members in which he is said to have expressed dismay at the



ARMENIA

AGBU President Visits Armenia, Meets President Sargisian

YEREVAN – Berge Setrakian, president of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), visited Armenia in early September to meet several Armenian officials.

While there, Setrakian met with Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, Armenian President Serge Sargisian, Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan.

On September 4, Setrakian met with Sargisian at the presidential office, with issues raised regarding the proposed protocols between Armenia and Turkey.

“We know that the authorities in Armenia face a difficult path as they endeavor to build new relations with Turkey without imposed preconditions,” Setrakian said. “We also believe the government of Armenia shares our serious concerns about the sincerity of Turkey, given its historic anti-Armenian policy that has continued to the present time.”

Setrakian reportedly reiterated AGBU’s fundamental stand that international recognition of the Armenian Genocide should transcend and not be sacrificed for any immediate diplomatic consideration. He also said that no protocol should precondition normalization of relations by any terms of concession involving the Karabagh conflict.



AGBU President Berge Setrakian met with Armenian President Serge Sargisian at the presidential office on September 4.

Earlier in the week, Setrakian met with Diaspora Minister Hakobyan, discussing upcoming meetings and events that aim to bring together the diaspora and homeland,

including a global Armenian leadership assembly slated to take place in Yerevan next year and an initiative to assemble Armenian intellectuals.

Boxhead Challenge: Sour Reaction to Avant-Garde Ensemble’s Gig in Yerevan

By Karine Ionesyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – An avant-garde ensemble was met with mixed reaction Monday night in the latest installment of Open Music Fest, the seven-week series of open-air concerts that has brought together a wide variety of styles to the Armenian stage.

More accustomed to intimate settings inside, Boxhead Ensemble, from the US, performed its first outdoor concert in its 15-year history.

Boxhead had come to Armenia to compose and record film score for the first American movie “Here” that has been shot in Armenia, concluding production last week. The movie is a love story of an American cartographer visiting Armenia and a Canadian-Armenian painter, an undiscovered country for both the American and the Armenian.

Aware of this planned visit, Open Music Festival, launched on July 30, decided to invite Boxhead also to perform as part of the festival.

“We are sure that both during the concert and during the few days that this ensemble will be here, they will manage to get to know Armenia so that they can make the right music for my film,” said “Here” director Braden King before the concert.

A documentary lasting about two hours was shown during the concert. The film presented Armenia the way it is seen by an American. It was also a film about the shooting of “Here.” Simultaneously, the improvisational performance was a fusion of avant-garde, with Armenian folk music – Armenian tar, violin, guitar, drums.

Boxhead singer Jessica Kenney accompanied the film with vocals: “We were creating right on the stage, creating one single music that knows no specific ethnicity; it belongs to everyone.”

But a majority of the audience appeared unsatisfied with the concert and the video. OMF creator and National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia principal conductor Aram Gharabekian described the concert as a “blue-print.”

One spectator was heard complaining that

Armenia was presented (in the documentary) only as poor children and elderly people. But the author of the documentary, Ava Berkovsky, said: “I don’t think that I presented the country only with negative stuff. I simply showed the people I had dealt with.”

The director of “Here” feature film acknowledged that the sequences in his film are quite different – besides misery he also presents Armenia with its beautiful mountainous landscape. But he wasn’t unsatisfied with Berkovsky’s work.

“I love Armenia very much, since here, unlike the United States, there is something to say and still many films that haven’t been made. What is gloom for you is beautiful to

me. There is life here,” said King.

Narek Nersisyan, 21, one of 20 Armenian actors involved in “Here,” played the tar during the concert, which was attended by about 400, most of whom left during the performance. He said that the Armenian audience was in fact unprepared for listening to such music.

“Only a narrow specialized audience should have come here, an audience that would not be afraid to see and hear Armenia through the eyes [and ears] of a foreigner,” said Nersisyan.

Eight days of Open Music Festival and three concerts still remain. The next performer will be mezzo-soprano from Italy Anna Maria Curie with the “Memories from Italy.”

Armenian Troop Deployment In Russia Denied

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) – Armenia will not have a permanent military presence in Russia as part of its involvement in a Russian-dominated rapid reaction force comprising troops from five former Soviet republics, a top official in Moscow said recently.

An agreement on the formation of the force, officially called the Collective Operational Reaction Forces (CORF), was formalized in June during a summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a Russian-led military alliance. Two of the CSTO’s seven member states, Belarus and Uzbekistan, refused to sign the agreement because of major disagreements with Moscow.

Citing an unnamed official at the CSTO headquarters in Moscow, the Russian Regnum news agency reported last month that under the terms of the deal, Armenia will be able to open two military bases in the Russian North Caucasus. The official was quoted as saying that the “limited contingent” would be stationed in the Krasnodar region and the restive Muslim republic of Dagestan to primarily ensure “the security of

the transport infrastructure” in the area.

The Armenian government has not explicitly denied the information so far. But Nikolay Bordyuzha, the CSTO secretary general, insisted on September 3 that Moscow and Yerevan have not even negotiated on the possibility of Armenian troop deployment in the mentioned area.

“Armenia is a party to the agreement on the Collective Operational Reaction Forces (CORF) and has set aside army units and special forces from national security and internal affairs bodies for that purpose,” Bordyuzha told Armenian journalists in a video conference from Moscow.

Bordyuzha said those forces would be normally based in Armenia. The CORF would use them only “in cases where there is a need for their involvement in carrying out a concrete military task,” he added.

The Russian military is expected to contribute by far the largest contingent of the CORF. Officials in Yerevan have yet to specify the number of Armenian soldiers and other security personnel that it will commit to the NATO-style force.

Judo Diplomacy: Armenian Organizers Raise Flag, Play Anthem For Azeri Judokas

By Georg Khachatryan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Azerbaijan’s flag was raised five times and their national anthem played once in the Armenian capital over the weekend as part of a pledge made by the host party ahead of the European junior judo championships in Yerevan (September 11-13) that for the first time drew five participants from neighboring Azerbaijan, a country with which Armenia has been in a state of undeclared war since the 1991-1994 conflict in Nagorno Karabagh.

Armenian authorities reported no major incidents during the championships and said all necessary security had been provided to the 15 members of the Azerbaijani delegation that also included coaches, doctors and medical personnel.

Five Azeri athletes won a total of five medals, including one gold and one silver, finishing seventh in overall team competition. Team Armenia, meanwhile, managed one gold and two bronze medals, finishing ninth in the competition won by the team from Ukraine.

“Judo can also become a means for dialogue between the two peoples,” said Azerbaijani judo team head coach Aghayar Akhuzade at a press briefing on the first day of the competitions. “Sport is not politics. Let politics remain politics.”

The Azeri delegation’s representative confirmed that security was provided at a high level.

Meanwhile, the Sports Ministry of Armenia denied information reported by some Azeri media that the minivan transporting the Azeri delegation to the sport complex had the flags of Georgia, Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh on it.

Armenia and Azerbaijan are known for their troubled relations in sports after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the bloody war in Nagorno Karabagh. The unresolved conflict still remains a major obstacle for athletes of one country to be present at sporting events hosted by the other.

Security concerns have also dogged sporting events involving Armenian and Azeri sportsmen held on neutral ground.

In January 2006, Armenia’s soccer champion Pyunik refused to play Baku’s Neftchi in the semi-final of the Commonwealth of Independent States Cup in Moscow to forestall possible clashes in the stands between Armenians and Azeris, who are known to have large ethnic communities in the Russian capital.

Later that year, an Armenia vs. Azerbaijan match in the Under-19 European championship qualifying group tournament in Cyprus turned violent after some of the partisan Armenian Cypriot crowd overreacted to unsportsmanlike behavior, obscene gestures and constant provocations by several Azeri players who climbed the protective fence to step onto the field. Play stopped for half an hour and resumed only after police intervention.

Those incidents led European football’s governing body, UEFA, to cancel two Euro-2008 qualifiers between the two countries’ senior teams planned for September 2007 in Baku and Yerevan.

Also in 2007, however, a 15-member team of Armenian wrestlers participated in the world championships in Baku. The Armenian delegation then acknowledged the high level of security provided to them. Also, the organizing party then raised the Armenian tricolor at the awarding ceremony after an Armenian wrestler won a bronze medal.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Ara Guler Receives French Vermeil Medal

PARIS (PanArmenian.Net) – Christophe Girard, deputy mayor of Paris, honored Turkish-Armenian photographer Ara Guler with the Vermeil Medal during a ceremony this past week, held at the municipal building in the French capital within the framework of the “Turkey Season” activities in France.

The award is being granted to dignitaries who make artistic contributions to the people of Paris.

The Paris Municipality had decided to also award Turkish film director Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Nobel-laureate author Orhan Pamuk with the same medal.

An exhibition comprising black-and-white photographs taken by Guler in Istanbul between 1950 and 1960 will open at the Maison Europeenne de la Photographie this week.

The exhibition will stay open through October 11.

Kurdish Studies Approved In Turkey

ANKARA (New York Times) – Turkey’s ethnic Kurds will be able to study their language at a Turkish university. The country’s Higher Education Board on September 10 approved Kurdish language studies at Mardin Artuklu University, in the mostly Kurdish southeast.

The university’s application was approved in the wake of renewed government efforts to resolve a quarter-century of armed separatist conflict through democratic means. The language had long been officially banned among the almost 12 million Kurds in Turkey, but was partially recognized after Parliament approved a public television network and private language courses in Kurdish last year.

Armenian President’s Visit To Syria is Postponed Until 2010

DAMASCUS, Syria (Syria News Station) – Armenia’s President Serge Sargsian has postponed a visit to Syria until the beginning of 2010 due to his schedule.

The head of the Armenian diplomatic corps at the Foreign Ministry, Levon Sargsian, told al-Watan newspaper last week that the Armenian president’s visit, which had been scheduled for mid-October, had been postponed. He noted the warm relations between Syria and Armenia, were enhanced by the visit of President Bashar al-Assad’s to Armenia last June. Last week, Economy and Trade Minister Amer Lutfi opened the Syrian-Armenian Businessmen Council’s meeting in Yerevan where the joint investment and economic cooperation relations were on the table. Lion Zaki who chaired the Syrian side in the council, said the Armenian side expressed its desire to export mineral water and drinks to Syria, and import cotton and raw materials.

Minsk Mayor Received the Armenian Ambassador to Belarus

MINSK, Belarus (Aysor) – This week the mayor of Minsk, Nicolay Ladutko and the ambassador of Armenia to Belarus Oleg Yesayan met.

During the meeting, the two discussed the issues of cooperation and friendship between the nations and the construction of the memorial monument for the 33,000 Armenian people who died for the Great Victory in Belarus.

The ambassador mentioned that the trade economic, scientific and technological and cultural cooperation signed between Yerevan and Minsk on June 6, 2002 should be enlarged and deepened. Especially taking into consideration the fact that the heads of both cities tend to pay a special attention on the mentioned questions.

Speaking about the unique architecture of Minsk, Yesayan congratulated Ladutko on the 942nd anniversary of Minsk, which was on September 12 and hoped the monument (Khachkar) for the memory of the victims who fall for the defense and liberation of Belarus will find its place in Minsk by the end of the year.

Turkish FM Discusses Armenia Deal in Parliament

By Emil Danielyan, Tatevik Lazarian

ANKARA (RFE/RL) – Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu opened on September 11 consultations with his country’s top political leaders on the draft agreements envisaging the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations.

Ankara and Yerevan publicized the two agreements on August 31 and pledged to sign them after six of “internal political consultations.” The two protocols have to be ratified by the parliaments of the two nations before they can come into effect.

“We aim to brief all political parties, institutions and civic bodies on the protocols that will be signed,” AFP news agency quoted Davutoglu as telling reporters after meeting Turkish parliament speaker Mehmet Ali Sahin.

Davutoglu added that he also asked for meetings with the leaders of Turkey’s two largest opposition parties represented in parliament. “We want to hold the briefings before par-

liament returns from summer recess in October,” he said.

Both opposition parties have said that they will continue to oppose the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey and reopening of their border before a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that would satisfy Azerbaijan. One of them, the Nationalist Movement Party, has slammed the Western-backed agreements as a Turkish “surrender” to Armenia.

Turkey’s governing Justice and Development Party (AKP), which controls the majority of parliament seats, has yet to formulate its position on the protocol ratification. Its leader, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has repeatedly stated in recent months that Ankara will not normalize ties with Yerevan as long as the Karabakh conflict remains unresolved.

Many politicians and pundits in Yerevan predict that Erdogan’s gov-

ernment will block or delay the parliamentary endorsement of the protocols if the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan fail to achieve a breakthrough in their peace talks in the coming months. Some Turkish commentators have likewise suggested that their ratification is contingent on a Karabagh deal.

Both the US and the European Union have welcomed the Turkish-Armenian agreements and stressed the need for their speedy implementation. “We urge Armenia and Turkey to proceed expeditiously, according to the agreed framework as described in today’s statement,” a US State Department spokesman said last week.

The protocols’ ratification by the Armenian parliament is widely seen as a forgone conclusion. Both the Republican Party of President Serge Sargsian and its two junior coalition partners, which enjoy a comfortable parliament majority, have voiced their unequivocal support for the deal.

The opposition, including the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), have denounced the protocols.

Armenia to Strengthen Relationship with China

BEIJING (Xinhua and PanArmenian.net) – An agreement on providing technical-economic assistance to Armenia was signed with the Chinese government on September 11 in the Trade Ministry of China.

A day prior, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian visited the Chinese Institute of International Studies (CIIS) to deliver a speech on Armenia’s foreign policy. During his visit to China, Nalbandian also visited Armenian Embassy in Beijing to conduct a working discussion with diplomatic staff representatives. He also met with Armenian students.

Armenia is very interested in the comprehensive development of its friendly relationship with China in all possible fields, Nalbandian said here last week.

“During the negotiations in Beijing, I had a chance to discuss ways to further strengthen and deepen cooperation in bilateral format and multilateral frameworks,” said Nalbandian, who was in China for a five-day official visit.

“The first records about an Armenian presence in China date to the second century,” Nalbandian said, “In the times of the Great Silk Road, which passed through Armenia, Armenian merchants were playing an active role in bridging East and West.”

Armenia became independent in 1991 and China was among the first countries that recognized Armenia’s independence and among the first ones to open an embassy in Armenia.

“We are proud of our enduring and time-tested friendship,” Nalbandian said.

He said Armenia and China maintained a high-level political dialogue at the level of highest leadership. The two countries had similar or close positions on the international scene.

“Cooperation between the parliaments is also on the rise,” he said, adding there was a solid legal base for bilateral relations.

The two countries implemented many joint economic projects, Nalbandian said, noting Chinese companies participated in the modernization and reconstruction of Armenian energy sector, such as mining, particularly copper-molybdenum extraction.

In north China’s Shanxi Province, Armenia and China jointly built a chloroprene rubber producing plant and the construction would be completed this autumn, he noted.

The absence of direct flights between Armenia and China has had a certain negative impact on economic relations. Nalbandian said he was glad that Armenia’s national air carrier Armavia intended to establish a direct air connection with China.

Apart from economic cooperation, the two countries work together on a wide range of sectors from education and science to IT, healthcare and sport.

“Cultural exchanges between us are intensifying, in November Armenia will host Chinese cultural days, and we are planning to organize Armenian cultural days in China,” he said.

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China, Nalbandian conveyed the congratulatory message of the Armenian President Serge Sargsian to the Chinese people.

During his visit, Nalbandian met with Chinese Vice President XiJinping and had “substantial” and “very productive” discussions with his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi.

Eurovision to Announce Decision on Azerbaijan Inquiry

OSLO (RFE/RL) – Eurovision has concluded an investigation into charges that Azerbaijani officials harassed people who voted for the Armenian entry in May’s Eurovision Song Content and will soon decide whether to sanction Azerbaijan.

Svante Stockselius, the executive supervisor of the Eurovision Song Contest, told RFE/RL’s Azerbaijani Service on Friday that Eurovision’s Reference Group – which consists of eight members – has met in Oslo and made a decision regarding Azerbaijan.

The decision will be sent to the European Broadcasting Union’s Television Committee, which will announce its decision on Azerbaijan in the coming days. Stockselius said Azerbaijan could be cleared of the charges or it could be found to have violated Eurovision rules and either fined or banned from participating in the contest for up to three years.

The Reference Group is made up of delegates from Russia, Serbia, and Norway – the last three winners of the Eurovision contest – along with Spain, Holland, Ireland and two members from Sweden.

Rovshan Nasirli, a 25-year-old Azerbaijani, was called to Azerbaijan’s National Security Ministry on August 12 to explain why he voted for an Armenian song in the Eurovision Song Contest, which was held in Moscow in May.

The officials told Nasirli that his vote for Armenia was a matter of national security and asked him for a written explanation before releasing him. He said the ministry had a list of a few dozen other Azerbaijanis who voted for the Armenian entry by sending a text message from their mobile phones.



Eurovision’s Svante Stockselius



NATIONAL NEWS

Budget Grab Costs Valley Redevelopment Projects \$35 Million

By E.J. Schultz

SACRAMENTO (*Sacramento Bee*)—Fresno is revitalizing a downtown neighborhood. Lemoore is planning a sports complex. Clovis is poised to put up 17 houses for first-time homebuyers.

But those projects — and countless others in the Valley — might be delayed or even halted as a result of the vote last month by state lawmakers to take more than \$2 billion in local redevelopment money.

Legislators approved the raid reluctantly, saying they had few other options to help close a \$24 billion budget gap that had brought the state to the brink of insolvency.

The state's 397 redevelopment agencies — which use property tax dollars to upgrade blighted neighborhoods — will lose \$1.7 billion this year and \$350 million in 2010-11. None of it will be paid back.

The California Redevelopment Association plans to file a lawsuit to stop the raid, which it says is unconstitutional and could cost the state thousands of construction and other jobs statewide.

"It's ironic that the governor and legislators talk so much about economic stimulus, and then they turn around and eliminate the state's best economic stimulus program," said John Shirey, executive director of the association, which represents agencies.

The 32 redevelopment agencies in Fresno, Tulare, Madera and Kings counties stand to lose more than \$35 million in the next two fiscal years, according to estimates.

The Fresno Redevelopment agency will lose the most — about \$8.1 million over two years; that includes \$6.7 million this year, or about half of what the agency planned to spend on projects and debt payments.

"It's going to be particularly difficult for the downtown, where the needs are great and the revenues are modest," said Marlene Murphey, the agency's executive director.

Possibilities include delaying the restoration of five century-old homes. The homes, at Santa Clara and N streets, are scheduled to be moved to an adjacent lot as part of the planned revival of the downtown neighborhood, rechristened Old Armenian Town. Other projects in peril include street and sidewalk improvements on Golden State Boulevard. The upgrades are designed, in part, to lure new businesses to town.

Fuel runs out

Smaller cities also will feel the pinch.

In Madera, the redevelopment agency is "one of the few mechanisms to provide an economic stimulus," said Jim Taubert, executive director of the Madera Redevelopment Agency; but, the state is "basically taking away the gasoline."

The city's biggest redevelopment initiative is a 300-space parking lot for a planned courthouse. Work probably will move forward on that, despite the loss of \$2.5 million this year from its \$7 million budget, Taubert said; but, there might not be money left for other projects, such as making curbs and streets wheelchair accessible.

The Clovis Community Development Agency will have to give up \$1.7 million from a budget of \$3.4 million. Among the projects in doubt is a

planned 17-unit subdivision at Ashlan and Fowler avenues geared for first-time homebuyers.

"This project is at risk," said Tina Sumner, the city's interim community and economic development director. "We will be working very hard to pull all the pieces together; but, it's a problem."

In Lemoore, officials are worried about a sports complex they've been planning for years in partnership with the West Hills Community College District. Athletic fields, a gymnasium and an aquatic center would be shared by college students and city residents. Redevelopment money would cover up to \$5 million of the roughly \$30 million multiphase project, said Jeff Britz, the city manager and executive director of the Lemoore Redevelopment Agency.

"We need to step back now before we make that kind of commitment and make sure we have the funds to support it," he said. The agency, which has an annual budget of \$8.7 million, stands to lose nearly \$2.9 million over two years to the state.

Tax money diverted

Redevelopment agencies have been a major force since 1952, when voters approved "tax increment financing." Under the mechanism, agencies plan upgrades for blighted neighborhoods and keep all new tax revenues generated by rising property values.

The agencies are not universally loved, however. Because the agencies keep new tax revenues, it means less for counties and other taxing districts. About \$5 billion a year is now diverted.

"Redevelopment agencies have been bleeding public schools, counties and special districts for

years," Orange County Supervisor Chris Norby said in an essay published recently in a political blog called Fox & Hounds.

From 1989 to 2006, Fresno County lost nearly \$40 million in tax revenues kept by redevelopment agencies, according to a report by the state controller. But county administrator John Navarrette said he doesn't have a problem with the agencies because "they've taken on areas of blight and they've improved it."

State lawmakers have eyed redevelopment money before. In September, the Legislature approved taking \$350 million. But Sacramento Superior Court Judge Lloyd Connelly ruled the move illegal because it reallocated agency tax dollars "for purposes unrelated to" agencies' communities and projects.

Lawmakers said they wrote the current bill more carefully. The legislation, ABx4 26, redistributes the tax dollars from each agency to schools serving students living in the agency's boundary.

The shift does not mean schools will get more money than they are owed under education laws. It just means that more of the state's school funding obligation will come from property taxes, instead of the general fund. That, in turn, will free up money for other state programs.

Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Send Letter To NKR President

WASHINGTON — US Representatives Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) and Mark Kirk (R-IL), co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, sent the following letter to Nagorno Karabagh President Bako Sahakyan, congratulating him on the country's 18th independence anniversary:

Dear President Sahakyan:

We are writing to congratulate the people of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic, Artsakh and you on your 18th anniversary of independence. This historic day represents another important milestone in Nagorno Karabagh's path to freedom. On September 2, 1991 the people of Artsakh declared their intention to build a free and democratic state, and they have been steadfast in this mission.

Nagorno Karabagh Republic, Artsakh has successfully promoted democracy and the right to self-determination. Your continued efforts to advance these principals in the face of many challenges are admirable. We remain committed to supporting the restoration of Artsakh's war-torn economy, strengthening its democracy and creating a solid foundation for continued development and prosperity.

For the past 18 years, the Nagorno Karabagh Republic, Artsakh has firmly upheld the universal values of freedom, peace and democracy. We appreciate your ongoing contribution to regional stability and assure you of our continued dedication to Artsakh's security and development.

We have stood with you along your path to liberty and we continue to join you in the call for formal international recognition of your independence. We look forward to the day when we can join you in celebration of the flag of an independent Artsakh proudly flying in capitals all over the world

Sincerely,
Frank Pallone Jr.
Mark S. Kirk

Three Krekorian-Backed Bills Pass Senate

BURBANK, Calif. — Three bills authored by Assistant Majority Leader Paul Krekorian (D-Burbank) recently passed the Senate and now head back to the Assembly for a final vote before landing on the governor's desk. The bills will increase consumer protections, public safety and healthcare efficiency administration.

Assembly Bill 1319 will protect consumers without inhibiting businesses who act in the best interest of their clients. It requires talent services claiming to hold "auditions" or claiming that successful artists have used their service maintain supporting proof that the claims are true; in turn, that proof must be made available to law enforcement for inspection and copying.

The bill also promotes consumer protection by requiring that all artist contracts include a clear notice of cancellation and refund procedures while prohibiting automatic renewal of terms without the artist's affirmative assent. The act will also curb bait-and-switch business practices by prohibiting talent services from requiring clients to purchase photographs, websites and other promotional materials as a condition for using the talent service or for obtaining preferential treatment from the talent service. The Senate floor vote was 24-10.

AB 530 arms city attorneys and prosecutors in the cities of Los Angeles, Long Beach, Palmdale, San Diego, Oakland and Sacramento

with the authority to bring unlawful detainer actions against weapons and drug offenders. This bill will also help landlords who are intimidated from bringing eviction proceedings against tenants engaged in drug-related crimes and illegal possession of weapons or ammunition on the premises. The vote was 39-0

Approximately 1.6 million Californians receive their health benefits from federally regulated "Taft-Hartley" health plans. AB 952 will provide Taft-Hartley plan administrators with the data they need to administer those benefits smoothly and efficiently, but preserve California's strong patient privacy protections and ensure that benefit data is not misused. The vote was 38-0.

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2009



Since its inception in 2001, TCA's 'Sponsor a Teacher' program has raised over \$350,000 and reached out to 2,715 teachers and workers in Armenia and Karabagh.



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Community News

Walk of Life 2009 to Be Held October 3

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) will hold its annual walk-a-thon on Saturday, October 3, at the Verdugo Park in Glendale.

The annual event aims to raise awareness of the ABMDR's work and give attendees the chance to join the donor registry.

"The walk-a-thon provides a wonderful opportunity to support a cause that affects everyone, especially those of Armenian descent," said Dr. Frieda Jordan, president of the ABMDR Board of Directors.

Expected to draw hundreds of participants from all age groups, the event will feature food and live entertainment.

Mariette Keshishian and Dr. Evelyn Baghdassarian of the ABMDR are coordinating teams of students from local public schools with the help of Daniel Baghdassarian, a student at La Canada High.

Armenian schools will also have a strong presence. The Chamlian and Mesrobian schools are already onboard, with their respective teams posted on the ABMDR site (www.abmdr.am). Garbis Bartanian, a science teacher at Mesrobian School, is educating students about stem cell transplantation and genetics through a series of special talks. Dr. Baghdassarian noted that individuals of any age can start their own walk-a-thon team or join an existing one through the ABMDR site.

Walk of Life 2009, which is chaired by Armond Aghakhanian of the ABMDR, has received considerable corporate and local-government support. The event's main sponsor is the Glendale Memorial Hospital, represented at the walk-a-thon by Arpine Kestonian. Other sponsors include the Glendale City Council and Bank of America. The latter has contributed \$1,000 to the walk-a-thon and pledged to match all funds raised by Bank of America employees.

Jordan said that other sponsors can still join in and will receive ABMDR recognition as walk-a-thon supporters.

"We will be walking to save lives," Baghdassarian said. "At this very moment there are patients who are in desperate need of a bone marrow donor, so this is the time to help."

Throughout the event, volunteers will register potential donors after conducting a quick and simple screening, which involves taking a saliva sample with a swab. "By joining the ABMDR, participants will also become part of the National Marrow Donor Program, to help any and all individuals who are in need of a bone marrow transplantation," Baghdassarian noted.

"The ABMDR has become a genuinely pan-national project around which Armenians everywhere continue to rally," said Fimi Mekhitarian, one of the registry's donor recruiters. "Our upcoming walk-a-thon is a vitally important event not only because it will celebrate community activism and wellness, but function as a great conduit to further boost the life-saving mission of the registry."

For more information visit abmdr.am.



Scenes from last year's Walk of Life.



Although Alexa and Simone fell in love with all the children, they formed a very close bond with these two young sisters. They promised to make sure that they have them as two Godmothers from America always watching over them through the rest of their lives.

Little Hearts

Two Armenian Americans Create Documentary About Child Protection in Armenia

By Simone Paklaian and Alexa Sapah-Gulian

NEW YORK – We are both high school students who live in Connecticut and spend the summers on Cape Cod, where we work at Eulindas, a local ice cream shop. But this summer wasn't like the past 10 we've spent at the Cape. This summer we made the decision to go to Armenia during a portion of our break, work at the Child Protection Center, and then create a documentary about it to develop global awareness.

When we first heard about the Child Protection Center, which is run by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), we felt that the work being accomplished was very important and we decided to get involved.

Through our research, we learned that this was a one-of-a-kind center in Armenia, which is responsible for protecting abused children on a short-term basis until long-term plans can be set. It is a program that originated in conjunction with the Yerevan Police Department, which, in earlier days, routinely picked up abandoned children off the streets and placed them in facilities – facilities that didn't address the long-term needs of the children.

This Child Protection Center program fills that void by not only providing for the physical needs of the children, but also by addressing their psychological see DOCUMENTARY, page 7



Alexa and Simone help the children act out through play, as Mira Antoyan, director of the center, looks on.

Rakel Dink to Speak in Central California

FRESNO – Rakel Dink, the widow of Hrant Dink, the co-founder of *Agos* weekly who was assassinated two years ago, will speak here on Friday, October 2, and Saturday, October 3 at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church (FAPC), 430 South First St. Admission is free and open to the public and each evening will conclude with a fellowship reception in the adjacent church hall.

The October 2 presentation will primarily be in the Armenian language and the October 3 presentation will primarily be in the English language. Each of the talks will be preceded by a screening of the acclaimed European documentary, "Hrant Dink: Mercy and Truth Have Met Together." The October 2008 motion picture is a production of Net for God, part of the Chemin Neuf Community of Lyons, France.

A native of Malatya, Hrant Dink grew up in the Gedikpa Armenian Orphanage of Istanbul and the Tuzla Armenian Children's Camp of Marmara. At the camp, Dink first met Rakel Fbasan, a Kurdish-Armenian of the Varto clan. The couple married at the camp some eight years after their first meeting and eventually had three children.



Rakel Dink

After Dink studied zoology at Istanbul University and completed his military service obligation, he opened the Beyaz Adam Bookstore with his two brothers. He and Rakel later assumed management of the Tuzla Camp when the longtime administrator, Hrant Guzelian, was imprisoned.

In the Lenten Season of 1996, Dink and others started *Agos* weekly, the only newspaper in the Republic of Turkey to be published in both Armenian and Turkish. As the founding editor-in-chief, Dink focused on Turkish-Armenian relations, the need for democratization of the nation, and the rights and roles of minority communities in Anatolia.

Prosecuted three times for allegedly denigrating Turkishness under the Penal Code, Dink was featured in Carla Garapedian's 2006 Genocide documentary, "Screamers." On January 19, 2007, he was assassinated as he returned to the *Agos* editorial offices. Four days later, more than 100,000 citizens marched in his funeral procession, with many carrying signs reading, "We are all Armenians; We are all Hrant Dink."

Since his death, Rakel Dink has spoken at home and abroad about her husband's ideals and aims, her enduring Christian faith and the pressing need for greater justice in the land of her birth. Appearing before Turkish judicial authorities, she prayed for mercy for her husband's killers "with the love and justice of Jesus Christ, one who knows and sees all."

Founded on July 25, 1897 by 40 immigrants from Marsovan and Trebizond, FAPC is a multi-generational congregation of 400 drawn from the Old and New Worlds. The theme of the congregation for 2009 is "Nothing is impossible with God." Rakel Dink's visit is part of the congregation's Thanksgiving Season focus on the persecuted church worldwide.

Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian is senior pastor of the host church; Rev. Aren Balabanian is the associate pastor; Shant Barsoumian, M.Div. is the pastoral intern; and Elder Thomas Bulger is chair of the Committee on Missions. The boyhood church of authors William Saroyan and A.I. Bezzerides, FAPC is a member congregation of the Presbyterian Church (US) and the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.

More information about Rakel Dink's Fresno visit is available by visiting www.fapc.net.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Two Armenian-Americans Create Documentary About Child Protection in Armenia

DOCUMENTARY, from page 6

issues and long-term prospects. Instead of placing them in orphanages, the Center looks to reunite them with their families, where and when appropriate, or to a loving foster home as a better solution.

Since this program first started more than 10 years ago, it had grown to the point that the Center's Hotline and National Referral Network has brought in more children that are in desperate need of a second chance than the origi-

We had never been to Armenia and it was different from anything we had pictured. Both of us could not wait to arrive at the Center. Though nervous, we walked into the building confident. We were greeted by Executive Director of the Child Protection Center Dr. Mira Antonyan, and we began our day.

Her enthusiasm and passion for the center instantly calmed our nerves and she began to give us a tour of the facility. Initially it was difficult for us to communicate with the children because of our inability to speak fluent Armenian. They soon understood, however, and began to work with us and accepted our lack of perfect verbal communication. But what we did realize is that communication comes in different forms. A laugh, hug, high-five or smile enabled us to connect with the children on a level that speaking would not allow us to reach. We soon found ourselves anxious to return to the center and be with the children that we had come to know so well after a day.

Once we knew the children a little better, and had become familiar



From left, Simone Paklaian, US Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, Randy Sapah-Gulian, Alexa Sapah-Gulian.

nal police efforts did. Since the program was started, it has helped over 6,000 children, most of whom are between 4- and 16-years-old.

So when the time came, we boarded the plane in New York that was bound for Armenia, unaware of what to expect. Though we had been thoroughly briefed on paper, neither of us could have been prepared for what we would experience. We were picked up from the airport in Yerevan by Garnik Nanagoulian, FAR's executive director, and some of the in-country staff. We were told that we would be going to the Child Protection Center for our first day of work the next day.

The following morning we drove through the streets of Yerevan in awe of our surroundings.

with how the center was run, we were able to interview a few of them and hear more of their stories for our documentary. In addition to their individual stories, we were able to accompany the FAR caseworkers around the country as they conducted follow-up interviews with families who had already benefited from the center.

We also got involved as children were brought into the center, and initially evaluated for admission. In one case, we were heartbroken to see two young brothers, 5- and 8-years-old, brought in by the police because they had been wandering the streets for the last week after being abandoned by their mother.

Although that was shocking, what surprised us



JAMAICA PLAIN, Mass. — A group of residents from the Armenian Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain enjoy a late summer outing in the neighboring Larz Anderson Park. A five-star facility according to ratings by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), the Armenian center was found to be deficiency-free after its annual inspection by the State Department of Public Health in May 2009.

even more was their quick rebound. After being admitted to the center, they were cleaned up, given new clothes and within a few hours were already involved in playing with the other children.

While the psychological wounds of being separated from their mother will probably take a great deal of time to heal, at least outwardly it was a step in the right direction.

During all of these interactions, we were both concerned that their life stories were too personal to share and that they would hold back. But we were surprised to find that they were more than willing to share their background with others.

These children and families told their stories with sincerity. Everyone in the room could tell how comfortable the children felt around us because even though we came off as adults, we have the hearts of children as they do. We both found the stories of their broken families and difficult childhoods devastating, but it showed us how much the Child Protection Center had really changed their lives for the better. They all seemed truly happy there and we were so thankful that we could experience a portion of their lives with them.

As the days went on, we grew more attached to each child and developed a personal connection with them. We knew them all by name, and

departure from Armenia bittersweet and more difficult than we both anticipated.

We boarded the plane home with a very different mindset. We both had bags full of pic-



Simone Paklaian and Alexa Sepah-Gulian meeting with Mira Antoyan, the director of FAR's Child Protection Center in Armenia

tures and gifts from the children and these would serve as constant reminders of the small things that make them happy in life.

This experience made us realize that we take everything we have for granted, and the simplicity of a laugh or a smile should be able to fulfill our needs, as it did for these little boys and girls. We will both have their smiling faces etched in our



In preparation for the documentary, the two girls accompanied the FAR caseworkers to interview the parents of children that were helped by FAR's Child Protection Center.

they knew us, too. Whether it involved working in the kitchen and serving them their meals, letting them act out by painting, singing or dancing, or by just simple play, we were always greeted with ample amounts of hugs and kisses everyday. It was nearly impossible for us to leave. Our final day, they followed our car out of the facility and would have come with us if we had let them.

When we spoke to Mira the next day, she told us they were asking for us. This made our

memories. Though they will grow up and find happiness on their own, we hope we changed their lives as much as they changed ours, even if they did only know us for a short amount of time. We could not have asked for a better experience in Armenia, and though the pictures will fade, our memories will last a lifetime.

For more information on FAR or to send donations, write to 630 Second Ave., New York, NY 10016; <http://farusa.org>; e-mail press@farusa.org.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Michigan Hye Beat

By Betty Apigian Kessel

The Silence of the Crickets

DETROIT – “I didn’t tell you this before,” I said to my husband Bob. “A couple of nights ago I had a horrible dream.”

“What was your dream about and why didn’t you tell me about it sooner?” He waited for my reply as I labored to relive it all over again.

“It was terrible, it was frightening. It was just horrible. I kept getting captured and tortured by the Turks. I would succeed in escaping but then they would capture me and the fear and torture would start all over. It just went on and on until I finally woke up.

Robert asks, “Where did this happen to you, where was it taking place?”

“In present day Turkey.” I replied somberly as tears splashed down my cheeks. And tonight at midnight I had to live the Genocide all over again. Sue Kapagian called to tell me author Peter Balakian was on the Charlie Rose program, so I watched it and now I am coming to bed having to rethink the horror of the Genocide like I do most days as correspondence pours in about Armenian affairs.”

We are fortunate to have someone like Balakian to represent the Armenians so eloquently on national television. He is credible. He has credentials, He is a scholar and a historian, a well known writer and a PhD holder. He has written a best-seller book which appeared on the *New York Times* list. I feel insignificant next to him but I have a self-imposed mission to accomplish to expose the Turks and do my part to inform people and keep the Armenian Spirit alive.

Balakian is discussing his new book, *Armenian Golgatha*, the English translation done by him and Aris Sevag, of Peter’s great-uncle Rev. Grigoris Balakian’s memoirs of the 1915 Genocide. He explained to Charlie Rose all the madness perpetrated on the Armenians by the Turks, how they used every inhumane method of killing our people.

I watched Rose’s face to see what kind of response he would have to all this mad brutality but he kept his professional composure as he listened. Balakian: “They even used farm implements to do their dirty work.” He told of them killing over one million Armenians in 1915, that the town crier would alert everyone in the villages to meet in the town center and the announcement would be that the Armenians had to leave their homes immediately.

Few escaped, most were killed as they were put on death marches to Der Zor. Long lines of women, children and old men became a tangle of rags, thirst and disease under the raging sun. Two hundred thousand more were killed in Der Zor.

“Bob, we live, I live while they died a horrible death. How am I supposed to feel – happy or guilty?”

“You should feel happy. You are alive and living in a free country. Your parents lived in freedom. You have grandchildren to nurture. People look forward to your column.”

“No I cannot let it go. It’s the terrible injustice that is yet to be acknowledged by the United States government and by those Turks! I live while my family was slaughtered. How does that work? How is it figured out, how is it decided who lives and who dies in this world and by which method their lives are ended. Humans are still barbarians.”

Balakian told Rose Hitler made that statement just seven days before his invasion of Poland, you know the one Bob. Hitler said “Who remembers the annihilation of the Armenians?” Charley Rose listened intently asking how it affects modern day Turkey and Peter told him it does not bode well for them because it is a pretty well accepted concept that they did commit genocide against the Armenians and that they are spending millions to deny it. That stain will prevent them from ever becoming the democratic society they wish to be conceived as and it is a factor against them for joining the European Union.

It’s a cut that will not heal for me until the deniers admit their fault. How difficult could it be for the world to shun Turkey until they admit their crime? For me with my non-political savvy it seems quite simple to do.

I would say, “Look Turkey, almost the whole world knows you for what you are, committers of Genocide of the Armenians. That is how we perceive you. Get over it. Admit it, apologize and the sun will still come up tomorrow and we can get on with our lives. You can stop spending millions of dollars to deny the Genocide. You can stop drafting over-the-hill, fat-cat American politicians and lobbyists to your beck and call and put that money towards rebuilding the villages and churches you destroyed in Historic Armenia. That would be a gracious, humanitarian move on your part.”

“How can God allow such things to happen to people? I fear God because I am not supposed to question him.”

“You question him all the time. Where are you going?”

“I have work to do. You go back to sleep.”

The windows are open. It is a warm quiet summer evening. I can hear the crickets chirping loudly. I do not hear the cries of terror and violence from those experiencing the Genocide in Van, Moush, Sepastia and Keghi. I do not hear the hopeless pleading of Haig Nahabed’s ancestors begging for mercy from God.

I do know this: I will forever condemn the Ottoman Turks. I will forever castigate the present Turkish government which was established on the blood and bones of my ancestors. I refuse to cave in and become a non-committed Armenian.

The chirp of the crickets grows quieter and the pitiful pleas of my ancestors grows louder. The impact of all this is written on my face. Am I, an Armenian woman, becoming extinct even as I sit and write these words in the middle of the night? Will justice ever prevail over politics, greed and commerce?

(Betty Apigian Kessel’s column appears courtesy of the *Armenian Weekly*.)

State Rep. Koutoujian to Be Honored by Professional Organizations

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – On Saturday, October 3, the Armenian American Health Professionals Associations will present a dinner dance testimonial at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Cambridge, honoring Massachusetts state Rep. Peter J. Koutoujian of Waltham, in recognition of all his many political and leadership accomplishments for the residents of Massachusetts and his dedication to the Armenian cause and community.

Several key speakers will honor Koutoujian that evening, including John Auerbach, commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Health; James Kalustian, president, Armenian Heritage Park; Dr. Myron Allukian Jr., DDS, MPH, past president, American Public Health Association and Dan Delaney, director, Office of Legislative Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The associations of professionals collaborating to honor Koutoujian consists of the following: the Armenian American Pharmacists’ Association (hosting); the Armenian Medical Association; the Armenian American Dental Society and the Council of Armenian American Nurses. This gala event includes a cocktail hour, dinner, music and dancing to Eddie K to round out the festivities, which is



State Rep. Peter Koutoujian

open to the public.

Tickets and reservations, which are on a first-come, first-serve basis, can be made by contacting Ara Demirjian at arademirjian@rcn.com.

More than 600 Attend Hye Pointe Picnic

HAVERHILL, Mass. – On Sunday August 23, the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe (merged parishes of Holy Cross in Lawrence and St. Gregory’s in Haverhill) held its annual church picnic on the beautiful grounds of the American Legion Farm. The festivities began with services performed by the church deacons on the picnic grounds. The picnic attendees enjoyed an excellent traditional Armenian cuisine prepared by the cooking crew. The Women’s Guild’s bakery table offered Armenian desserts.

Music for the event was provided by Hye Pointe’s own seven-piece Jason Naroian Ensemble, with guest vocalists Haz Essegian and Rickie Naroian. The church raffle had a \$500 grand prize as well as gift certificates to area restaurants and boutiques. Representatives from the Haverhill Cultural

Council were present to gain a better understanding and insight into Armenian music and its culture.

The church building committee displayed a banner with the architectural design of the new church complex. Pictures showing the site progress as well as the building’s foundation were displayed for all to see. A church informational mailing list and pledge brochures were available for those wishing to contribute to the new church.

The picnic drew attendees from the Merrimack Valley, Metro-Boston, New Hampshire, and Southern Maine.

For more information about the church, write to the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, PO Box 8069, Ward Hill MA 01835 or visit www.hyepointechurch.org.

– Robert Serabian



Picnickers enjoyed the event.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Archbishop Aykazian Represents Armenian Church at WCC Meetings

GENEVA, Switzerland – Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, legate of the Eastern Diocese and president of the National Council of Churches, took part in a series of meetings with the World Council of Churches (WCC) from August 23 to September 3. The meetings involving Christian leaders from around the world convened at the WCC's world headquarters here.

The sessions began with the meeting of the Executive Committee from August 23 to August 25. The committee discussed the elec-

September 2 was Yeretzgin Paula Devejian, Internet Development director at the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

The Central Committee elected a new general secretary for the World Council of Churches: Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, who has served as the General Secretary of the Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations since 2002. The committee also expressed its gratitude to outgoing General Secretary Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia.

The committee voted to hold the next General Assembly in Busan, South Korea. Aykazian was elected to the Assembly Planning Committee. The WCC's General Assembly is held every seven years, the last one was in Brazil in 2006. The 104th meeting will take place in 2013.

Also during the Central Committee meeting, Aykazian gave a report about the genocide in Darfur. The committee drafted a statement urging the government of Sudan "to assume full responsibility for the protection of its citizens," and "to allow uninterrupted humanitarian assistance to reach all suffering people in Darfur."

The WCC Central Committee also issued a series of statements on violence against women in the Congo, the protection of religious minorities in Pakistan, the Israeli-



Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit and Yn. Paula Devejian at the World Council of Churches meetings in Geneva, Switzerland. The Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit was elected to serve as the organization's new general secretary.

tion of the World Council of Churches general secretary as well as other issues and topics that would be brought to the floor during the subsequent Central Committee meeting.

Accompanying Aykazian to the WCC Central Committee meeting from August 26 to



Archbishop Vicken Aykazian with other participants at the World Council of Churches meetings held in Geneva, Switzerland

Palestinian conflict, caste-based discrimination in India, anti-Christian violence and other issues.

"This was a productive meeting for all members of the WCC," said Aykazian. "I am particularly hopeful that our statement on the genocide in Darfur will help bring more attention to this tragedy."

"This meeting of the committee was important in setting the direction of the organization for the next several years. In addition to electing a new General Secretary to lead the organization, serious work has been started on examining the working structure and

methods of communications," said Devejian. "Keeping in mind the goal of unity of the churches, new ideas and methods within the WCC can have a positive effect and influence on the ecumenical dialogues that are taking place between the individual churches."

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held in February in Geneva. The Central Committee will next meet in 2011.

The Armenian Church has been a member of the WCC since 1962. The council consists of 349 churches, denominations and church fellowships representing more than 110 countries and territories worldwide.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

A Visit to Mer Doon

By Rose Maljanian

Mer Doon (MD) is the epitome of a community of committed people coming together and making a truly meaningful impact on as many lives that may have otherwise been full of a lifetime of struggle and pain. MD, meaning Our



Resident Lilit explaining the art of rug weaving

Home, supports young people during the very important years between the time they must leave the orphanage and set out on their own to lead healthy and productive lives as adults in the Armenian community.

MD, located in Echmiadzin, opened its doors in 2006 and is providing an unique family environment for its residents, as well as the opportunity to pursue higher education and vocational careers. MD is meeting a largely unmet need in Armenia to break the cycle of dependency for these young girls.

As you enter MD, you immediately sense the combined atmosphere of love and support with discipline and hard work created by their truly giving house-mother and executive director, Tigranoohi Karapetyan. Not only does Tigranoohi provide the right atmosphere for the young women to flourish, but also provides a program that teaches important skills as well as opportunity to further their

education at the local universities. The young women share rooms, chores and a passion for being the best they can as housemates, craft persons, students and eventually wives and mothers of their own families.

The crafts they produce – carpets, hand-made jewelry and cards – are second to none. The culinary delights they prepared which included a full meal from soup to dessert and coffee along with carved fruit displays were those of expert chefs. Their professional and sophisticated serving style was incredibly unassuming and thus even more appreciated. We truly enjoyed this most delicious meal prepared by the girls, as well as sharing colorful conversation and laughter. For most of our family group consisting of grandparents, parents and teenagers, this was our first visit to Armenia and as you might guess, the conversations are already focused on going back in 2010. Upon reading and hearing about MD and its excellent reputation and mission in Armenia, we thought it would be a good experience, especially for our young family members, to visit MD. This was made possible and prearranged by

Tigranoohi Karapetyan, MD president in Armenia, and Julie Ashegian, MD president in the US.

Most importantly, we felt the exchange of



Resident Lusine displaying her handmade jewelry crafts

friendship and appreciation for each other between Tigranoohi and the young women and our families will not be forgotten. It was a very



US young visitors with Mer Doon residents.



Bidding farewell to guests

special thing to witness firsthand the strength of these young women. With all odds against them, they greet each day with cheerfulness and a commitment to succeed not only for themselves, but also to exemplify what MD stands for. Through their commitment and suc-

cess they keep alive the opportunity for other young women to live at MD and benefit from the gift of a future.

It is no wonder why we want to continue to support MD and ask everyone we meet to do the same...

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\$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.

All proceeds to benefit the 2010 ACYOA General Assembly and National Sports Weekend hosted by St. James ACYOA.

New York
METRO

Archbishop Barsamian Welcomes Catholic Archbishop Dolan and Orthodox Metropolitan Pauffhausen to NY, at Ecumenical Gathering

NEW YORK — On Tuesday, September 8, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), hosted an ecumenical gathering at the Diocesan Center to welcome two recently-installed religious leaders: Archbishop Timothy Dolan, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, and Metropolitan Jonah Pauffhausen, the Orthodox Church in America's archbishop for Washington and New York, and Metropolitan of All America and Canada.

Leaders of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Oriental Orthodox churches came together at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral for a prayer service, commemorating the Nativity of the Mother-of-God, which is observed on September 8, followed by a reception to honor Dolan and Pauffhausen.

Guests received a brief tour of the cathedral and had an opportunity to engage in a discussion at the Diocesan Center and to share their visions for the continuing mission of the ancient Christian traditions in today's world.

"Whether we pray to her as Theotokos, Asdvadzadzin, Our Lady, Bogoroditsa — or in any of her numerous names — all of us look to St. Mary as something more than an object to be venerated: she is, most of all, a Mother to be loved," Barsamian said. "Among the ancient, apostolic Christian churches, this has been our profound feeling and witness for centuries. And indeed, our common adoration of St. Mary is one of the things that makes us a unified family."

Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, delivered the invocation. He thanked Barsamian for organizing the day's program and congratulated Dolan and Pauffhausen on their new positions.

Dolan was installed as the 10th Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York on April 15. Pauffhausen was installed as the leader of the Orthodox Church in America on December 28, 2008.

Demetrios also emphasized Mary's faith and endurance in the face of many hardships, including the inhospitable conditions surrounding Christ's birth, the years she spent with her family in exile, and the witness she bore to the



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Metropolitan Jonah Pauffhausen, Archbishop Timothy Dolan and Archbishop Demetrios at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral



Religious leaders on the steps of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, where a prayer service was held Tuesday commemorating the Nativity of the Mother-of-God



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presents Archbishop Dolan with a pectoral cross on behalf of Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presents Archbishop Timothy Dolan with a carving of a Biblical scene hand-crafted in Armenia.

Mary's story is "the superb example of suffering and being patient under all circumstances."

The lesson is an important one in today's world, where Christian values often come under attack, Demetrios said.

Dolan and Pauffhausen spoke about the warm relationship among the ancient Christian churches in New York City, and in America generally.

"It just strikes me that this great New York community that all of us are honored to serve pastorally is a reflection of the universal church," said Dolan. "We see people of every language and background so beautifully represented in this room today."

"To me, it is so important that we be united in our proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Pauffhausen said.

William Cardinal Keeler, a long-time friend of the Eastern Diocese who has visited Armenia in the past decade, also addressed the gathering.

Barsamian presented Dolan and Pauffhausen with carvings of Biblical scenes hand-crafted in Armenia. He also presented Dolan with a pectoral cross and Pauffhausen with a panagia on behalf of Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

Bishop David, the General Bishop and Patriarchal Exarch of the Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese of North America, presented the two honorees with icons.

At the conclusion of the afternoon meeting, Metropolitan Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim, leader of the Syriac Orthodox Church of the Eastern United States, delivered a benediction asking God to bless and guide Dolan and Pauffhausen,

and thanking Him for the opportunity to gather in a spirit of brotherly love.

Also in attendance were Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican's permanent observer to the United Nations; John Myers, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Newark, NJ; Archbishop Zacharius, leader of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church of America; Bishop Manuel Batakian, Apostolic exarch for Armenian Catholics in the United States; as well as representatives of the Antioch Orthodox, the Russian Orthodox, the Bulgarian Orthodox and the Serbian Orthodox churches.

"It is a wonderful, hopeful sign that these brotherly gatherings have become more frequent in recent years," Barsamian said. "After all, we hold the deepest things in common. We all come from ancient, apostolic churches. We all represent 'Old World' traditions, transplanted in the New. And we all strive to keep faith with the greater, timeless truths, while trying to advance and renew our traditions for modern living."

Also representing the Eastern Diocese at Tuesday's event were Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, legate of the Diocese and president of the National Council of Churches; Very Rev. Haigazoun Najarian, Diocesan vicar; Very Rev. Souren Chinchinian; Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Vartan Cathedral and Rev. Tateos Abdalian, director of the Mission Parish Program at the Diocese.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presents Metropolitan Jonah Pauffhausen with a carving of a biblical scene hand-crafted in Armenia.

afflictions of her son later in life.

"It's an ordeal of tremendous magnitude, and she went through that," he said, adding that



New York METRO

FAR and USAID Collaborate on Bringing Drinking Water to Armenia's Ararat Region

NEW YORK – Two years of digging, building and constructing have brought a new source of life to another corner of Armenia. Like arms outstretched, drinking water now flows through new and refurbished pipelines, bringing life to the homes of more than 100,000 residents in the Ararat region.

This is the culmination of the results of the Artashat Water Supply Project, which the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) worked on in collaboration with the Armenian government through the help of a \$3.16 million grant from the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Construction crews restored two existing reservoirs and added an additional one, bringing the entire system's reservoir capacity to 8,000 cubic meters, up from the previous 4,000. And almost 50 kilometers of pipeline now pump water to residents, eliminating the unsafe and inefficient need to extract water from local wells.

On August 26 in the village of Qaghtsrashen, Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, blessed the new system, which will not only change the lives of the people in Artashat and its neighboring towns, but will also bring further economic development to regions outside Yerevan.

Karekin II; Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, president of the Fund for Armenian Relief and Primate of the Eastern Diocese; Marie L. Yovanovitch, US ambassador to the Republic of Armenia; Hovik Abrahamian, speaker of Armenia's National Assembly and other clergy and dignitaries extolled the benefits of collaboration and unity to overcome barriers.

"For us, today's ribbon-cutting is an example of the obstacles that can be overcome and the great goals that can be achieved through collaborative effort, intelligent use of resources and expertise, and an atmosphere of mutual trust and openness," Barsamian said.

The impacts of this project are already visible. The seemingly interminable lines of people waiting to gather well water that once snaked along the region's roads are no more, and the appreciation and newfound strength of Artashat's people is abundantly clear.

One of those people is Gayane, who lives in the village of Shahumyan and exudes a broad smile because her life has been transformed through this project. She and her husband no longer have to travel to Artashat in the bitter cold of winter or the oppressive summer heat to get their water; plus, her washing machine, which she purchased five years ago and which has since sat unused in her house, now has a purpose.

For the first time in 20 years, Julieta, also of Shahumyan, can now drink clean water in the comfort of her home. Unable to access potable water for years, she and her husband had at one point even tried to sell their home with the hope of buying a new one with better access, but with no success. When they first heard the news of the project, they were skeptical. Today, she can happily wash her dishes at home with fresh spring water. She extends her blessing to all of those involved in the project.

"May their lives be as long as the water," she said. For more information on FAR or to send donations, write to 630 Second Ave., New York, NY 10016 or visit farusa.org.



Manoogian-Demirdjian School students tour the grounds of Sardarabad.

AGBU High School Students from Los Angeles, Buenos Aires Visit Armenia

NEW YORK – A total of 92 students, comprised of 50 from the junior class of AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School in Canoga Park, Calif., 34 seniors of the AGBU Marie Manoogian School in Buenos Aires, Argentina and eight juniors from AGBU High School-Pasadena, made two-week pilgrimages to Armenia this summer. The California schools' trips began in the latter part of June and ended in early July, while the Argentinean school's occurred in late July and early August.

All three groups visited major historic and cultural landmarks throughout the country, including the reconstructed temple of

Yerablur; the house-museums of literary greats Yeghishe Charents and Hovhannes Toumanian; the Matenadaran Manuscript Repository in Yerevan; the fort of Amberd; the monastery of Sanahin; St. Hripsime and St. Gayane churches, as well as the ruins of Zvartnotz near Echmiadzin.

The juniors from the two AGBU high schools in California also visited the AGBU Children's Center in Nork, a district of Yerevan, where they were treated to an impressive performance of song, dance and acrobatics by its students. The juniors from Manoogian-Demirdjian High School met with the Georgian president and were inter-



AGBU Marie Manoogian School of Buenos Aires students meet with AGBU scouts who were also in Armenia during the month of August.

Garni, the medieval monastery of Geghard, the Sardarabad monument, the ancient Khor Virab monastery, Lake Sevan and Holy Echmiadzin. Other sites taken in by students from one or two of the groups were the Dzidzernagapert (Fortress of the Swallows) Armenian Genocide Monument and Museum; the military cemetery

viewed by a local radio station. In addition, they visited the Orran Center for impoverished children in Yerevan. Seniors of Marie Manoogian High School visited the AGBU Armenian Representation offices, met the local staff and became acquainted with AGBU activities in Armenia. While there, students met AGBU scouts from Beirut and



Pasadena students ventured all around Armenia to see some of the famous historic landmarks.

Iraq, who had arrived in Armenia to attend AGBU Camp Antranik. The two groups spent the whole afternoon together, sharing their thoughts and impressions, and forming bonds that were based on their common cultural identity.

The trip for the graduating seniors of Marie Manoogian was made possible through a number of fundraising events organized by the school, students and their parents at the AGBU Center in Buenos Aires throughout the year. These include the renowned Friday-evening, and the more recently instituted Saturday-evening, Armenian dinners, which are prepared by the school's parents and served by the senior class. These events are attended by Buenos Aires' Armenian and non-Armenian communities and have become an entrenched tradition in the city, ensuring that Marie Manoogian students, regardless of their financial conditions, will be able to experience firsthand the sights and sounds of the Armenian homeland.

Arts & Living

Jerusalem Odyssey

PART 4

By Arthur Hagopian

(Arthur Hagopian, former press officer of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem currently residing in Australia, has returned from a brief visit to the Old City of Jerusalem after a 15-year hiatus. Here, in the fourth of a series of articles, he tells of his encounter with Khader Khano, the first native-born Assyrian to be ordained priest in over 100 years).

JERUSALEM – It is early in the day in the Old City of Jerusalem, and virtually no one is up and around. It will be some time before the serenity of its streets and alleys is disturbed by the tread of heavy feet and the babble of many voices.

After an abbreviated breakfast of *ka'ek* (the elliptical breadroll cocooned in sesame seeds) and *falafel*, I stand before the ornately decorated gate of Deir El Siryan, the Syriac or Assyrian Convent of St. Mark.

I have come here filled with an unusual expectation: to hear a language first spoken in this part of the world 2,000 years ago by a man who changed the history of the world.

The gate is open, and I step in. In the ghostly, candlelit semi-darkness punctuated by velvety clouds of billowing incense, the sound of the priest intoning the Lord's prayer, echoes across the nave, an astringent but soothing balm.

"Avvon d-bish-maiya, nith-qaddash shimukh," (our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name).

This is Aramaic, the *lingua franca* from the times of Jesus of Nazareth, still vibrantly alive in the liturgy of the Syriac church, faithfully preserved down the centuries to the present day.

I listen rapt to the modern reverberations of the ancient tongue, feeling the haunting inflections of the guttural, mellifluous singing penetrate into the consciousness and overwhelm the soul, taking the imagination back through time and space, to hover within the presence of the man from Galilee.

"Tih-teh mal-chootukh," (thy kingdom come).

They are the same words uttered two millennia ago by the man who preached that the kingdom of God is within ourselves.

It is a lesson Khader Khano takes tenaciously to heart.

The service over, we are sitting in the secretariat, which is being manned by this earnest 21-year-old deacon who is acting for Archbishop Mar Sweiros Malki Murad during his absence abroad.

Within the space of weeks, Khano will be making history of his own when he is ordained celibate priest, the first time in over 100 years a Holy Land native-born aspirant is invested with the habit by the Syriac church.

The occasion has spawned widespread jubilation among the local Christian churches, particularly in Bethlehem where a sizeable community of Khano's compatriots are gearing up for the ceremony.

For centuries, St. Mark had languished in relative obscurity, its visibility and accessibility hindered by its uninviting
see JERUSALEM, page 14



Emil Kazaz

AGBU to Pay Tribute to Emil Kazaz Nov. 6-8

LOS ANGELES – This fall, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Southern California District Committee, in recognition of Emil Kazaz's artistic genius and outstanding contribution to the Armenian culture, is hosting a tribute to honor him, as well as exhibit his latest works.

The exhibition will take place November 6 to 8 at the AGBU Alex Manoogian Center, 2495 E. Mountain St., in Pasadena.

By Aleen L. Khanjian, Esq.

The tribute, scheduled to take place on Saturday, November 7, will feature speakers Shahan Khachatryan, an art historian and author from Armenia, and Joe Lewis, a renowned artist, author and educator from New York. The artistic program will feature concert pianist Vatche Mankerian and tenor Bakur Kalantaryan.

Both events are open to the public. The exhibited works will be provided by the Airian Dome of Fine Art, through its founder and president, Monet Airian, who represents the artist worldwide, and the paintings will be available to the public at special prices to raise funds for the AGBU's cultural, educational, youth-oriented and mentorship programs in Southern California. The portion of the sales amount designated and provided as a donation to the AGBU will be deductible for income, gift and estate purposes.

Kazaz is versatile and his roots matter. But his roots, alone, certainly don't define him. How can a man so colorful, so raw, so dramatic, so real, so unique, be put into a box. There is a darkness in his works that haunts the viewer. Yet color and depth scream out, too. Lewis, dean of the School of Art and Design in New York State College of Ceramics, states, "His themes are a blend
see KAZAZ, page 14



"Angel on the Horse," 2007

Cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan to Perform Debut Recital at Gardner Museum

By Ara Arakelian

BOSTON – Narek Hakhnazaryan, the young cellist who made an impressive debut with the Boston Pops Orchestra at the Armenian Night at the Pops earlier this year, will appear in a recital at the Tapestry Room of the Isabella Gardner Museum in Boston.

The concert, scheduled to take place on September 27 at 1:30 p.m., is part of the museum's Sunday Concert Series. Hakhnazaryan and his collaborative pianist, Noreen Polera, will perform Schumann's *Fantasiestuke*; Beethoven's *Sonata for Piano and Cello in A-Major*; Rachmaninoff's *Vocalise*; a seldom-heard work by the legendary cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, as well as the great *D-Minor Sonata* by Dmitri Shostakovich.

Currently an Artist Diploma Candidate at the New England Conservatory of Music, Hakhnazaryan is the winner of the 2008 coveted Young Concert Artists International Auditions. In October of 2008 he made his debuts in Carnegie's Zankel Hall in New York and in Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater in Washington, DC, to critical acclaim. "He produces powerful and colorful sound in all registers, and flashes all the virtuoso's tricks with insolent ease..." wrote the *Washington Post*, while the *New York Times* praised his "intense focus and expressive artistry."

Hakhnazaryan is also the laureate of several international competitions, including First



Narek Hakhnazaryan

Prize in the 2006 Aram Khachaturian International Competition, First Prize in the 2006 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players, and Fifth Prize at the 2007 Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow. He has received scholarships from the Rostropovich Russian Performing Arts Fund and has performed in Russia, Germany, Italy, Austria, France, Great Britain, Greece and Canada.

Born into a family of musicians – his father is a violinist and his mother a pianist – Hakhnazaryan attended the Sayat Nova School of Music, studying with Zareh Sarkisyan. At the age of 12, he began his studies at the Moscow Conservatory of Music with Alexey Seleznyov.

Tickets for this concert can be obtained from the Gardner Museum Box Office or by visiting www.gardnermuseum.org. Tickets may also be purchased at the front entrance of the Gardner Museum, 280 The Fenway.



ARTS & LIVING

Jerusalem Odyssey

JERUSALEM, from page 13

external architectural disposition. But all that changed with the 1948 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the salty caves of Qumran by an itinerant Bedouin shepherd. Through circuitous and mysterious routes under the gathering clouds of war between Arab and Jew, the scrolls finally reached Jerusalem and were kept for a brief spell in the convent of St. Mark, before surfacing on the shores of an astounded world.

Khano's ordination may not count as a comparably momentous eventuality, but there is no mistaking the euphoria that has gripped the Syriac church, for this too is another milestone in the glorious history of these proud descendants of the Babylonians.

The Syriacs of the Holy Land are better known by the Arabic appellation "Sir-yan," but in other parts of the world they also refer to themselves as Ashourayeh, Ashouri or Suryoyo.

Traditionally, the Syriac church used to replenish the ranks of its clergy from the youth of Ashouri colonies in neighboring Arab countries, particularly Iraq. But the political upheavals unleashed by the 1967 Six-Day War forced that gateway to close.

Khano bubbles with scarcely concealed enthusiasm, caught up blissfully in the gentle breeze of faith and conviction.

"I have thought very hard and very long over my decision to become a priest, and I have found that there is nothing more important to me than to serve God in this way," he tells me.

"All the books I have read, all the lessons I have studied have prepared me just for this. I have no other interest in life other than to become a priest."

He will be ordained in Bethlehem but will come back to serve, under his new name, Father Boulos (Paul) at St. Mark, which was the first Christian edifice ever built anywhere, according to a sixth century inscription unearthed in 1940. This was the house of Mary, mother of John, called Mark, the Evangelist. The church boasts a portrait of the Virgin Mary reputedly painted by St. Luke the evangelist.

Alas, the monastery compound, located at the periphery of the Armenian Quarter, is the last remaining enclave left to the Syriac Orthodox Church, which has lost everything else in the city. It is now home to a handful of clergymen, their sharp decline paralleled by the attrition in the number of members in the Syriac community.

Only years after its erection, the church was destroyed by Titus when he conquered the city, only to rise phoenix like from its ashes, and to be rebuilt, over and over again, the last time a century and a half ago.

I take my leave of Khano and a short time later, I am in Bethlehem to meet Saliba Tawil, a member of the Bethlehem Syriac community. We are old friends.

We sit for lunch at Abu Ely's restaurant. A few feet away, the monstrous security wall Israel has erected, glares at us menacingly.

Tawil is a career educator, with a wide-ranging interest in community affairs. He has been instrumental in furthering negotiations for a twinning agreement between Bethlehem and the French city of Grenoble.

Like all members of minority groups, he is zealous in his pursuit of the aim to see his children gain and retain a mastery of their native tongue. And like them, he is worried about assimilation and the loss of ethnic identity.

But he also has a pragmatic turn of mind. "We are all destined to live here together in the Holy Land," he says.

His fondest wish is for his children to grow and appreciate not only their ethnicity, but also the wider world community.

And he believes the only way this can be achieved is when peace reigns in the land.

AGBU to Pay Tribute to Emil Kazaz Nov. 6-8

KAZAZ, from page 13

of sensual mysticism and provocative introspection — beauty, love and valor prevail." It is this breadth of creation that makes you stop and realize how someone so grand thrives in an artist's haven like Los Angeles.

As Lewis says, "Kazaz straddles the creative philosophies of two world cultures, East and West, bodied in constant flux."

Kazaz was born in 1953, in Gumri, Armenia. As a man, and as an artist, it is apparent that his work irresistibly possesses the authenticity of one of Armenia's oldest cities, and yet it also completely encompasses the indescribably hip nature of Los Angeles. This does not come as a surprise, seeing as Kazaz's youth is defined by an inevitable nest of creativity. His father was a cobbler and his mother worked at the local theater. Kazaz credits his mother with introducing him to drama and to ornate details, which play out in his pieces.

Kazaz has undeniably lived out an artist's dream. The young Emil Kazaz began to sculpt and study sculpture at the age of 7. At the age of 12, he attended the Mercurio Art School. At 15, he was accepted to the Terlemezian Art School. By 19, he graduated from college in Yerevan, and was admitted to the Academy of Fine Arts, which he completed in 1979. That same year, his daughter, Sate, was born. In 1980, as his art took wings, his very legend manifested in our very own City of Angels.

Since then, Kazaz has worked continuously creating bronze sculptures, oil paintings and mixed media art. He has exhibited his work countless times in Europe, Asia, North and

South America. He is the recipient of the Lorenzo Medici medal from Italy's Florence Biennale 2003 and the Grande Lorenzo il Magnifico (Medici) Prize in Sculpture from Florence Biennale 2007. His constant success as well as his Medici medal in sculpture gave Kazaz the opportunity to establish even deeper relationships with the greatest galleries and museums of the world, thus bringing his work to the broadest of world markets.

Henrik Igityan, the art critic and founder of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Yerevan and an admirer of Kazaz's art, once said, "They often ask Emil the question: Who do you consider yourself to be, what medium do you prefer? His answer is natural and simple. 'I equally cherish all visual arts. It's like asking whether one prefers air, water, or earth. I am a painter when I paint. I am a draftsman when I draw. I am a sculptor when I sculpt.' Emil has once told me, 'I have nothing more to ask from God, he has given me everything I have ever dreamt of.' And I, in my turn, have nothing to add to this."

Just recently, the Academia Gallery and Airian Dome of Fine Art presented the suc-



"Self Portrait," 2008

cessful "New Era" exhibition of Emil Kazaz at the Academia Gallery in Yerevan, Armenia. Hundreds of people, including the general public, prominent artists and art critics, the president of the National Assembly, the chancellor of Yerevan, and the mayors of Yerevan and Gumri, attended the exhibition on opening night — an event that received great acclaim and wide media coverage.

Author Peter Balakian to Speak at Bergen Community College October 8

PARAMUS, N.J. — Noted author and Teaneck-native Peter Balakian, who has written extensively about the Armenian experience, will speak at Bergen Community College on Thursday, October 8, at 6 p.m.

The program, arranged by the college's Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Center and the Center for the Study of Intercultural Understanding, brings the nationally recognized author and scholar to Bergen to discuss the struggle of the Armenian people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as well as their history, poetry and literature.

There are 1.5 million people of Armenian descent living in the US, according to the US Census for 2000. More than 8,300 Armenian Americans live in Bergen County.

Balakian serves as the current Donald M. and

Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities and director of creative writing in Colgate University's English department. He was also the university's first director of its Center for Ethics and World Societies.

Balakian won the PEN/Albrand Prize for his memoir, *Black Dog of Fate*, which earned *New York Times* Notable Book honors. He was the recipient of a 1999 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2004 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and the 2005 Raphael Lemkin Prize for his book, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*.

His address will take place in the Moses Family Meeting and Training Center (Technology Education Center room 128) at the College, 400 Paramus Road, Paramus, NJ. Seating is limited and reservations are sug-

gested. Contact Keith Chu at kchu@bergen.edu to make a reservation.

The Peace Justice and Reconciliation Center provides educational experiences, exhibitions, dialogues and forums on the issues of war, genocide and social justice. Additionally, the center aims to develop skills in conflict-resolution through interdisciplinary study. The center's philosophy is that peace can be promoted, and that cultural conflicts can be reduced.

The Center for the Study of Intercultural Understanding promotes a greater understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures through better communication and critical-thinking skills. Originally introduced at the college as the Center of International Study in 1979, the CSIU is committed to the study of diversity and global issues.



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ARTS & LIVING

Collective Amnesia in Wake of Genocide Topic of New Book

BOBELIAN, from page 1

"The Genocide was widely acknowledged while it was taking place. There was huge international relief sent to help," he said. "There was wide press coverage."

"By the 1940s, 1950s, much of the world had forgotten. The world had moved on.. How does that happen?"

After 1923, he said, and the Treaty of Lausanne, the chapter became closed, as far as the world was concerned.

Bobelian also looked at Hitler's famous quote, often quoted by Armenians or those seeking affirmation of the Genocide, in which he justifies going through with the Jewish Holocaust, suggesting it would be forgotten, since "who today remembers the Armenians?"

He explained, "Armenians look at the quote of Hitler, and they look at that as a symbol of the costs of impunity in regard to punishing the perpetrators of the Genocide. But it can be looked at in another way: how this event, which was so well-known, and inspired this huge inter-

national aid movement, disappeared from the world's consciousness so quickly. By the mid 1960s, outside of the Armenian world, it became 'the forgotten genocide.' How did the Armenians allow it to happen? There was a long era of public silence during which Armenians allowed the Genocide to disappear from the public's consciousness."

It was only in 1965, he said, where there was a collective wake-up call, with massive demonstration in New York, Los Angeles, Beirut, Paris, Athens, Moscow and Yerevan, which with 100,000 participants, had the bragging rights to be the largest.

And why that year? "It is a big mystery. It was the 50th anniversary, a round number. By 1965, in the diaspora, the survivors' children who were leading those demonstrations, had economic and personal security. They made their political voices heard," he explained.

"In Soviet Armenia, it was the first steps of a nationalist movement," he noted, adding that there, the Armenians had the freedom to express their nationalism in art and culture.

"In America and Europe, the student movement and the anti-Vietnam movement was starting," he said. "It was just a perfect storm in 1965."

The first book to talk about the Genocide, Bobelian said, was British-Armenian journalist Michael Arlen's *A Passage to Ararat*. He added, the first Genocide museum in the world was only erected in Yerevan in 1995. "The survivors were severely traumatized and they were rebuilding their lives. Many of them were orphans. At 18, they would leave orphanages and start families. If you took the time to do things about the Genocide, it would cost you a lot," he added.

"Armenians lacked political power and a political voice," he said. Adding that we should not forget that the perpetrators of the Genocide had purposely killed off the community leaders. "It is difficult in that context to have a political voice."

"In the 1950s, Armenians in the US started to participate in American politics. They were treating it as a Cold War issue, with Tashnags

versus non-Tashnags. The question was 'are you for or against Soviet Armenia?'"

The Armenian newspapers, he said, debated only that issue; they seldom wrote about the Genocide.

For research, Bobelian said that he looked to established historians such as Vahakn Dadrian, Richard Hovannisian, Taner Akcam, and other historians who have covered the genocide era. But most of those books really come to an end by the mid to late 1920s. He said, "Much of my research was mostly primary research since I had no books to rely upon. Some of the things I read were lots of Armenian-American papers. I interviewed many Armenian advocates, both from this era and leading advocates in the 1960s and 1970s. I also did a lot of research at the National Archives, which allowed me to get an understanding of the US position on the Genocide issue, not just in the 1920s and President Woodrow Wilson's era, but all the way through the present day. I also did a lot of Freedom of Information Act requests again from the US government and retrieved files not available in the archives, so they needed to go through a security clearance. The last place I looked was the presidential libraries, which had a great deal of information about legislative efforts in dealing with Armenian Genocide resolutions that were proposed in Congress since the 1970s."

He continued, "The hardest part actually was in writing about the Genocide itself. I spent three or four months reading personal accounts of survivors. When you read stories about parents choosing which child lives, which child dies, mothers taking their children's lives out of mercy, and you wonder about the predicament these people were in. Looking at my daughter, who was just a few months old at the time, it was hard to absorb. After that, I was able to maintain a detached outlook needed for research."

The lack of a homeland, he said, only compounded this paralysis by the Armenians to get the Genocide issue front and center. The Jews, he said, through having a homeland, were able to put up the Yad Vashem memorial, as well as to have the Adolf Eichmann trial, both of which were able to put the Holocaust on the map. He noted that around the 1960s, the Holocaust was seldom spoken of.

He added, "I touch upon the political parties, especially in the early sections of the book where I feel like they had much greater impact on Armenian history and world events. But mostly I try to write through individuals and not through the parties. For instance, I write about Simon Vratsian, the last prime minister of the first Armenian republic that came to an end in 1920. He's a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, so I try to write about him and not the party that he was a member of."

Bobelian said he wants Armenian readers to learn about their recent history, especially the beginnings of the recognition movement. "We have inherited not only the scars of the Genocide but a campaign for justice from previous generations. We deserve to know the origins and evolution of this campaign."

For non-Armenians, he added, "I want them to appreciate why this still matters. A lot of people I ran into while writing this book would ask me why Armenians still persist since it's been

Author Michael Bobelian To Discuss New Book on Genocide Recognition

BELMONT, Mass. – Author and journalist Michael Bobelian will discuss his newly-published book, *Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-Long Struggle for Justice* (Simon & Schuster), on Thursday, October 8, at 8 p.m., at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave. This will be Bobelian's first talk in the Boston area.

From 1915 to 1923, around 2 million Armenians were driven from their ancestral homeland and some 1.5 million of them were killed. While there was an initial global outcry and a movement to aid the "starving Armenians," the promise to hold the perpetrators accountable was never fulfilled and a curtain of silence soon descended on one of the worst crimes of modern history.

The grandson of Genocide survivors, Bobelian struggled to rationalize how an event as widely reported as the Armenian Genocide could fade from public consciousness. What role did America's national self-interest play in helping Turkey evade public accountability? Why did decades of silence pass before a new generation of activists arose who would renew the fight for justice?

Based on years of research and personal interviews, Bobelian's groundbreaking *Children of Armenia* is the first book to trace this post-Genocide history and reveal the events that have conspired to eradicate the "hidden holocaust" from the world's memory and the story of the Armenians who struggled to seek redress in the face of recalcitrant perpetrators and an indifferent world.

Bobelian is a graduate of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. A lawyer and journalist, he has written for Forbes.com, *American Lawyer* and *Legal Affairs* magazine and has been featured on NPR's Leonard Lopate Show. He lives in New York with his wife and daughter.

Children of Armenia will be on sale the night of the lecture and available for signing by the author.


Admission to the event is free. More information about the lecture is available by e-mailing hq@naasr.org.

St. James Book Club Begins its Third Year

WATERTOWN, Mass. – St. James Armenian Church will begin the third year of its Book Club on Thursday, September 24, at 7:30 p.m. in the St. James Armenians and Veronica Tarvezian Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St.

The Book Club features books of all genres, attendees of all ages, diverse perspectives and opinions, and enthusiastic and interesting discussions of the selection. The first St. James Book Club selection of the 2009-2010 year is *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* by Lisa See. Light refreshments are served.

All are welcome to attend. Those interested in attending, joining the book club or sharing a suggestion for a book can contact Yeretzing Natasha Aljalian at aljalian@comcast.net.



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almost a 100 years since the Genocide took place. I want them to understand and appreciate that it still matters. Even today, these issues of denial and impunity resonate not only for Armenians but for genocides across the world. Finally, there are very few moments of social justice that have lasted this long and span the world."

For more information about *Children of Armenia*, please visit www.childrenarmenia.com.

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SEPTEMBER 22 – OCTOBER 27 – Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, published by Simon & Schuster, will participate in a series of readings and book signings. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.com.

- September 22 – 6:30 p.m., at UC Berkeley, 223 Moses Hall, Berkeley, Calif.
- September 23 – 7:30 p.m., at the Skylight Bookstore, 1818 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.
- September 24 – 7:30 p.m. at the AGBU Alex Manoogian Center, 2495 E. Mountain St., Pasadena, Calif.
- September 29 – 7 p.m., at the Glendale Public Library, 222 E. Harvard St., Glendale, Calif.
- October 1 – 7 p.m., at the Fresno Public Library (Fig Garden Branch), 3071 West Bullard Ave., Fresno, Calif.
- October 18 – 4 p.m., at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, 15105 Mission Hills Road, Mission Hills, Calif.
- October 27 – 7 p.m. at Chaucer's Bookstore, 3321 State St., Santa Barbara, Calif.

NOVEMBER 7 – Armenian Professional Society Honors Dr. Vartan Gregorian as their Professional of the Year. Sheraton Universal, Los Angeles. Tickets: \$150.

NOVEMBER 8 – Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston travels to California to present its dynamic "Power in Rhythm" performance at Glendale High School Auditorium, 1440 E. Broadway, Glendale. For tickets, contact www.itmyseat.com.

CONNECTICUT

SEPTEMBER 25-27 – Kef Time Hartford.

- September 25 – Friday, 10 p.m. at the Shish Kebab House of Afghanistan, LaSalle Road, West Hartford, \$25, after 9 p.m./\$15 (cabaret fee) included with dining prior to 9 p.m., featuring Harry Bedrosian, Mal Barsamian, Kenny Kalajian, Jason Naroian.
- September 26 – Saturday, 6 p.m.-12 a.m. at the West Hartford Meeting and Conference Center, 50 S. Main St., West Hartford. \$40/\$25 (17 and under). Kef Time All-Star Band, featuring Richard Hagopian, Hachig Kazarian, Jack Chalikian, Mal Barsamian, Ron Tutunjian and Paul Mooradian.
- September 27 – Sunday Kef! 12 p.m. at the new Shish Bar and Ultra Lounge, 904 Farmington Ave. West Hartford. \$25. Cash bar. Featuring the Mal Barsamian Ensemble with Joe Kouyoumjian, Harry Bedrossian, Harold Hagopian and Ron Tutunjian. Hotel accommodations: Homewood Suites Hotel, 2 Farm Glen Blvd. (860) 321-0000. Ask for special Kef Time rate, \$99 per night. Includes breakfast. For info., e-mail gary-hov@aol.com or leave a voicemail for Gary at (860) 690-5959.

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 19-OCTOBER 10 – Whistler House Museum celebrates Arshile Gorky. Preview Party, September 13, Parker Gallery, donation, \$50 per person; \$35 for members. Event features a premiere of works by Gorky, as well as the cuisine and music of his Armenian homeland. For reservations, contact Whistler House Museum of Art, 243 Worthen St., Lowell, call (978) 452-7641 or e-mail jdyment@whistlerhouse.org. Exhibit opens on Wednesday, September 16, 11 a.m. Admission, \$5, adults. Public reception, Saturday, September 19, 2-4 p.m. On Saturday, October 10, at 6 p.m., an original play will be performed by Regina Eliot Ramsey about Willem De Kooning and Gorky.

SEPTEMBER 20 – Celebrating 15 years of Greening Armenia Regional event honoring Armenia Tree Project. Sunday.

SEPTEMBER 21 – St. Stephen's Armenian School/ACEC 14th Annual Golf Outing. Framingham Country Club. \$170 includes golf, lunch, dinner and contests. For info., contact Astor, (781) 326-5764.

SEPTEMBER 24 – Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club – 29th Annual Fall Dinner and Drawing, 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Donation: \$7.99 for delicious losh kebab dinner. Tickets on sale at door. Lottery drawing at 8 p.m. for regular monthly prizes plus five additional cash prizes. "One-Time" numbers will be sold at the dinner. Special offer: Buy four numbers for the night and get the fifth free. For more info., contact the Holy Trinity Church Office at (617) 354-0632 or e-mail office@htaac.org.



On October 2, the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) will have its Jazz Nights @ ALMA, with the Armen Donelian Trio, at 8 p.m. in ALMA's Contemporary Art Gallery, in Watertown. For more info., call (617) 926-2562 or visit www.almainc.org. Pictured above is Donelian.

SEPTEMBER 26 – Smithsonian Museum Day Offers Free Admission to Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown. Visit www.almainc.org. Select the Calendar page and click on Smithsonian Museum Day to download your Museum Day Admission Card. Attendees must present the Museum Day Admission Card to gain free entry. Each card provides museum access for two people. The museum is open 1-5 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 28 – First Annual Sts. Vartanantz Golf Tournament and outing, Butter Brook Golf Club, Westford. \$150, includes golf, cart, prizes, reception and awards dinner. 1 p.m., shotgun start. Dinner only, \$35. Proceeds to benefit Sts. Vartanantz Youth Scholarship Fund. Contact Ara at (978) 251-4845, Steve at (978) 808-2820 or e-mail: StsVGolf@earthlink.net.

OCTOBER 2 – Jazz Nights @ ALMA with Armen Donelian Trio at Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown. Donelian (piano), David Clark (bass) and George Schuller (drums) will perform music from their latest album "Oasis." The concert begins at 8 p.m. in ALMA's Contemporary Art Gallery; museum doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$15 (includes one complimentary glass of wine for 21+). ALMA members, students and JazzBoston members (with proper ID) pay \$10. Visit www.almainc.org or call (617) 926-2562 to preorder tickets/make table reservations.

OCTOBER 3 – Brattle Boutique and Sparks St. Café – A Fall Fair featuring specialty gift and food items, sponsored by the Women's Guild of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday. Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. This new event will feature a variety of specialty vendors selling gifts and gourmet food. There will also be a Children's Corner with activities and items for children. Admission is free. For further info., contact the Holy Trinity Church Office at (617) 354-0632 or e-mail office@htaac.org.

OCTOBER 3 – Armenian American Professionals Gala Banquet and Dance Honoring Massachusetts state Rep. Peter Koutoujian of Waltham. 6 p.m., cocktail hour. Dinner with music and dancing with DJ Eddie K. Hyatt Regency Hotel, Cambridge. For information and tickets, contact Ara Demirjian at (617) 974-8343. Sponsored by the following associations: Armenian American Medical Association, Armenian American Dental Society, Armenian American Nurses Association, Armenian American Bar Association (Law Society) and hosted by the Armenian American Pharmacists' Association.

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 Raphalian (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. All proceeds to benefit the 2010 ACYOA General Assembly and National Sports Weekend hosted by St. James ACYOA.

OCTOBER 4 – Celebration of Armenian Independence Day (New Republic) by the Lowell ARF, 1 p.m., Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Westford Road, North Chelmsford; complimentary dinner and program; David Boyajian will be recognized for his years of dedicated service to the No Place for Hate campaign and will offer an update.

OCTOBER 7 – Armenian Cultural Foundation, Book Presentation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington, 7:30 p.m. An evening with author, scholar and political activist Muriel Mirak-Weissbach on her thought-provoking and groundbreaking work *Through the Wall of Fire, Armenia-Iraq-Palestine: From Wrath to Reconciliation*, examining the fate of the orphans in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide, Iraqi and Palestinian children after decades of war and deportations and search for a path to reconciliation. The event is free and open to the public followed by a reception and book signing. For more info., call ACF at (781) 646-3090.

OCTOBER 8 – Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, will participate in a reading and book signing. 7 p.m. at NAASR Bookstore, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, Mass. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.com.

OCTOBER 15 – Human Rights in Armenian History, a lecture by Prof. Simon Payaslian, at 7 p.m. at the Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown. Payaslian, Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature at Boston University, discusses the development of human rights in Armenia within a long historical perspective and contends human rights values and customary practices require centuries of development. For more info., visit www.almainc.org. The event is free and open to the public.

OCTOBER 17 – St. James 62nd Annual Bazaar. 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Armenian food, shish kebab, chicken kebab, losh kebab, kheyma and eetch. (served from 11 a.m.-8 p.m.) Armenian delicacies and pastries. Boereg, manti, yalanchi, porov kufteh, tourshi, choereg, cream and nut khadaif, bourma, baklava and more. Booths and vendors including the country store, Armenian items, attic treasures, jewelry and spa vendors, candy sale. \$100 raffle. (Only 350 sold. Purchase by September 30 to be entered in a \$500 special early-bird drawing. Grand prize: \$5,000; second-fourth prizes: \$1,000. Fifth-eighth prizes: \$500) and \$2 raffle. Silent auction including art from Armenia and Jerusalem, jewelry, gift certificates and sporting events. St. James' Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For info., call (617) 923-8860.

OCTOBER 23 & 25 – Armenian Festival, Armenian Church of Our Saviour, offering the most delicious shish, losh and chicken kebab on char-broiled grills. Freshly-made kheyma, kids meals available, raffle/prizes, beer and wine. The best authentic Armenian baked goods, country store, music and fun for the entire family. Friday, October 23, 5-9 p.m., and Sunday, October 25, 12-5 p.m. Cultural Center, 34 Boynton St., Worcester. (508) 756-2931.

NOVEMBER 6 – Wine Tasting, 7-9 p.m. Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Road, Chelmsford. Tickets: \$30 per person (before October 24) \$35 thereafter. Includes brief wine presentation, appetizers and wine. Contact Carol Hildebrand (978) 618-6982 or e-mail stswine-tasting09@gmail.com.

NOVEMBER 6 – Jazz Nights @ ALMA with Steve Tashjian's Classic Groove at Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown. ClassicGroove returns to the stage, performing an exciting range of jazz favorites in ALMA's Contemporary Art Gallery. The concert begins at 8 p.m.; museum doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$15 (includes one complimentary glass of wine for 21+). ALMA members, students and JazzBoston members (with proper ID) pay \$10. Visit www.almainc.org or call (617) 926-2562 to preorder your tickets/make table reservations.

NOVEMBER 6 – "The Golden Voices of Opera," featuring Yeghishe Manucharyan, Victoria Avetisyan and Yelena Dudochkin with Tatyana Dudochkin, piano. Celebrate 2009 Armenian Cultural Heritage Program. Sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church and Choir of Greater Boston. Friday, 8 p.m. Longy School of Music, Edward M. Pickman Concert Hall, 27 Garden St., Cambridge. Tickets: \$25 per person. The program will include favorite arias, duets and romances, including Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, Tigranyan, Abrahamyan,



ARTS & LIVING

Rimsky-Korsakov and others. For further info., contact the Holy Trinity Church Office at (617) 354-0632 or e-mail office@htaac.org.

NOVEMBER 6-7 — St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, 53rd Armenian Bazaar. Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Lamb, losh and chicken kebab, kheyima, kufta and yalanchi. Meals served from 11:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Takeout available. Armenian pastries, gourmet, soujoukh, arts and crafts, books, tapes, art sale, children's games. Auction starts at 7 p.m. Also raffles, sports tickets and much more.

NOVEMBER 7 — Film Screening of "Hove" presented by the Armenian Library and Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown, at 2 p.m. Olympia Dukakis stars in this moving tale about two Armenian women whose friendship is deeply affected by an encounter with the past and the powerful, unresolved legacy of the Armenian Genocide. Co-star Shirleyann Kaladjian and Director Alex Webb will attend the screening. Admission is \$8. ALMA members pay \$5. Visit almainc.org.

NOVEMBER 21 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston sponsors the popular and beloved singer Alla Levonyan of Armenia in a live concert. Save the date. Details to follow.

DECEMBER 4 — Jazz Nights @ ALMA with Yulia Musayelyan Quartet at Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown. Musayelyan (flute), Fernando Huergo (bass), Franco Pinna (drums) and a pianist conclude the 2009 concert series with original compositions and arrangements that infuse folk rhythms from Argentina, Armenia and other cultures. The concert begins at 8 p.m. in ALMA's Contemporary Art Gallery; museum doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets, \$15 (includes one complimentary glass of wine for 21+). ALMA members, students and JazzBoston members (with proper ID) pay \$10. Visit www.almainc.org or call (617) 926-2562 to preorder tickets/make table reservations.

DECEMBER 4 and 5 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Friday, 3-9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Save the date. Details to follow. For info., contact Holy Trinity Church Office at (617) 354-0632 or e-mail office@htaac.org.

DECEMBER 5 — Second Annual Breakfast with Santa. 10 a.m. St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall. 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Tickets must be purchased in advance, and include breakfast, time and photos with Santa, and a special gift for each child. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for children, 1-12 years old; \$15 for children under 1-year-old. Payment must be received to reserve your space. Contact Mark Janian at (617) 875-3671 or Markhj77@yahoo.com or e-mail stjamesbreakfastwsanta@yahoo.com for tickets. Tickets will also be available in the St. James church office and during Fellowship Hour on Sundays. Call Tina Kurkjian at (781) 727-3643 or e-mail stjamesbreakfastwsanta@yahoo.com to include a greeting, ad or photo of one's child in the Christmas Greetings Book.

FEBRUARY 27-28, 2010 — Arsenal Center for the Arts sponsors the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston. The production will be performed for two nights at the Charles Mosesian Theater, 321 Arsenal St., Watertown.

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

MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 10 — The AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School 40th Anniversary Celebration Dinner Dance, featuring the opening of the new High School Building Expansion. 22001 Northwestern Highway, Southfield. Hors d'oeuvres and school tours, 7-7:45 p.m. Ribbon-cutting ceremony, 8 p.m. Strolling dinner and open bar to follow. Music provided by Arthur Apkarian. Donation, \$50. Advance tickets only. Reservations by September 30: Linda Darian Karibian (248) 932-5282 or school office (248) 569-2988.

NOVEMBER 19 — Soireé Musical, featuring violinist Henrik Karapetian and his quartet, 7 p.m. Bloomfield Township Library Hall. Reception to follow.

NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 7 — Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, published by Simon & Schuster, will participate in a reading and book signing. 7 p.m. at the Books and Greetings Bookstore, 271 Livingston St., Northvale, NJ. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.com.

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 15 — "One Nation, One Culture," a cultural festival under the auspices of Dr. Hranush Hakobyan, Republic of Armenia Minister of Diaspora, organized by Hamazkayin Eastern USA Regional Executive, featuring Alla Levonyan from Armenia and Babin Boghosian & Ensemble from Los Angeles, with the participation of Antranig Dance Ensemble of AGBU, Akh'tamar Dance Ensemble of St. Thomas Armenian Church, Yeraz Dance Ensemble of St. Sarkis Church, NJ, Hamazkayin Nayiri Dance Group and Arekag Children's Choir and Dohl Group. Sunday, 4 p.m. Felician College, 262 S. Main St., Lodi, NJ. Donation: \$75, \$50, \$35, \$25. For more info. or tickets, contact Haazkayin at (201) 945-8992 or paradon2009@gmail.com.

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 26 — "Evening under the Stars" at St. Nersess Seminary — 150 Stratton Road, New Rochelle. Join in for this cocktail and hors d'oeuvres benefit reception at \$100 per person. A great opportunity to learn about and support St. Nersess Seminary. RSVP at stnersess.edu or call (914) 636-2003.

OCTOBER 15 — Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, will participate in a reading and book signing. 7 p.m. at the Zohrab Center, 630 Second Ave., New York, NY. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting

the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.com.

OCTOBER 24 — AGBU New York Special Events Committee (NYSEC) presents — AGBU Performing Artists in Concert. A benefit for the AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship Program, showcasing the talents of 12 Armenian youth, under the artistic direction of Hrant and Kevork Parsamian, all of whom have benefited from AGBU's scholarship assistance toward their studies in performing arts. Curtain time 8:30 p.m. Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, 154 West 57th St., New York City. Tickets, \$65. For tickets and info., call (212) 319-6383, ext. 124 or visit www.carnegiehall.org.

JANUARY 15, 2010 — On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, the Fund for Armenian Relief will honor and thank a lifetime benefactor to the global Armenian community, Dr. Edgar Houspian. Dinner and Program at Cipriani Wall Street New York City, 7 p.m. Info. at (212) 889-5150 and far@farusa.org.

PENNSYLVANIA

OCTOBER 3 — The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR), Inc. Fourth Annual Complimentary Cocktail Reception. The Village Hall, (Spread Village) in Wayne. A cultural evening featuring the Ararat Dance Ensemble; comedienne Lory Tatoulian, vocalists, artists and rugs. 5-10 p.m. For additional info., contact George S. Yacoubian, Jr. at (610) 213-3452 or gyacoubian@soar-us.org.

RHODE ISLAND

SEPTEMBER 26 — Autumn Concert — "Rising Stars," featuring Kate Norigian (soprano), John Paul Norigian (piano), Timothy Aznavourian (guitar/vocal) and David Griego (flute). Presented by the Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church as part of its annual Classical and Armenian music; presentation of the art works of Dr. Ara Sadaniantz. Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. 7 p.m. Donations, \$10. Refreshments.

NOVEMBER 28 — Providence ACYOA hosts the Annual Holiday Kef, featuring an All-Star Band. Jason Naroian, Leon Janikian, Kenny Kalajian, David Hoplamajian, Joe Kouyoumjian and more. For individual or table of 10 reservations, call Kevork Vartanian at (401) 419-1052 or Ara Janigian at (401) 486-8495 or Sevan Janigian at (401) 533-4147 or contact providenceacyoa@gmail.com.

CANADA

OCTOBER 3 — Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia*, published by Simon & Schuster, will participate in a reading and book signing. The Armenian Bar Association mid-year meeting in Toronto, Canada. This groundbreaking book is the first to chronicle the aftermath of the first genocide of the 20th century, recounting the Armenian struggle for justice in the face of silence and denial. For more info., www.childrenarmenia.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 mirrorads@aol.com. Due to the anticipated shortage of space, items may be edited to fit the space.

'Jazz Nights @ ALMA' Returns Oct. 2 with Armen Donelian Trio

WATERTOWN — On October 2, the Armen Donelian Trio will kick off the concert series at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) titled Jazz Nights @ ALMA. The concert series features Armenian jazz musicians on the first Friday of every month for the remainder of the year. Each concert starts at 8 p.m. in the Contemporary Art Gallery. Museum doors will open at 7:30 p.m.

Called "a pianist with a crystalline touch, but a penchant for avant gardism" (*New York Times*), Donelian will play a set of original compositions with David Clark (bass) and George Schuller (drums).

Donelian recently made his musical mark in Greece, where he taught and performed as a 2009 Fulbright Senior Specialist at Ionian University in Corfu and Nakas Conservatory in Athens. He has also taught and performed in Switzerland, Austria, Holland and Israel since the start of the year. Donelian's career also includes collaborations with jazz legends such as Sonny Rollins, Chet Baker, Paquito D'Rivera, Mongo Santamaria and Billy Harper.

On November 6, Steve Tashjian's Classic Groove will take the stage to play renditions of jazz ballads and standards. Classic Groove features Tashjian

(woodwinds), Paul Dillon (drums), Lee Lundy (bass), Gretchen Bostrom (vocals), Kevin Magarian (guitar) and Face (keyboards). Their upcoming performance will make the group's third appearance in the Jazz Nights series.

The Yulia Musayelyan Quartet will conclude the 2009 series on December 4 with a combination of original compositions and arrangements, using folk rhythms from Argentina, Armenia and other cultures.

"Part of the repertoire of this group evolved from the exploration of my Armenian heritage," says Musayelyan. "When I first heard the sound of Armenian folk music, I found to my surprise that this spirit was also coming from within; I began to transcribe folk tunes and playing them on the flute." Her performance with Franco Pinna (drum), Fernando Huergo (bass) and a pianist will showcase the constant evolution of new sounds generated from a combination of original melodies, jazz improvisation and extended techniques.

Ticket price includes a complimentary glass of wine for those 21 and over. For more information about the Jazz Nights @ ALMA concert series or to watch past Jazz Nights @ ALMA videos, visit almainc.org/calendar_jazz.html

Artist Hejinian Unveils Painting Dedicated to September 11 at Mass. State House

BOSTON — As part of ceremonies being held across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to commemorate the eighth anniversary of the September 11 attacks, state Rep. Peter J. Koutoujian was honored to host a local artist of Armenian descent at the State House to display his artwork reflecting an immigrant's view of the events that took place that day.

Varoujan unveiled "Missing Stripes," the centerpiece of his new collection titled "Colors of Liberty" at a reception organized by Peace of Art, a non-profit educational organization, and sponsored by Koutoujian. The work depicts Lady Liberty in front of seven stripes of the American flag with two missing, symbolizing the Twin Towers.





COMMENTARY

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EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Thomas C. Nash

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Taleen Babayan

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

PRODUCTION

Dilani Yugaratnam

COPY EDITOR

Rose Muggerridge

CONTRIBUTORS:

Elizabeth Aprahamian, Dr. Haroutiune Arzoumanian, Edmond Azadian, Prof. Vahakn N. Dadrian, Diana Der Hovanesian, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Arsen Noubar Mamourian, Moorad Mooradian, Sonia Kailian-Placido, Harut Sassounian, Mary Terzian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian

Boston - Nancy Kalajian

Philadelphia - Lisa Manookian

Contributing Photographers: Sarkis Bahar, George Bogosian, Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian.

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Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

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E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

New York/New Jersey Office

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(201) 800-1164

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Baikar Association, Inc.

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

COMMENTARY

ARF Actions Against Armenian Government in America Are Wrong

By Kevork Marashlian

The ARF Eastern Region Central Committee of USA, following orders from their headquarters in Armenia, issued a statement on September 13 denouncing the protocols announced on August 31 by the foreign ministers of Armenia and Turkey for the normalization of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia.

The statement notes that while the Central Committee agrees that Armenia and Turkey "must take steps to normalize relations," any protocols between the two neighboring countries must be free of preconditions that are dangerous to Armenia's national interests.

The Armenian government and President Serge Sargsisian have always announced that Armenia's relations with Turkey must be free of any preconditions. After signing the Protocols, the president and the Foreign Minister of Armenia reiterated that the protocols do not include any preconditions.

At the same time, the ARF statement urges its members to be present and protest against the Armenian Government during a rally in front of the Republic of Armenia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, in New York.

You read it right, in front of the Armenian Mission, and not Turkish Mission or the United Nations headquarters itself.

The protest is organized by the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) on direct orders from the Central Committee.

In addition, the statements mentions that the Central

Committee will lead a national delegation to meet in Washington, DC with Armenian Ambassador to the United States Tatoul Markarian to present and discuss the ARF position on the protocols.

This last gesture is the right thing to do. Every body and every organization is entitled to its opinion. The difference between people and organizations is the way of expressing their opinions.

If you live outside the Republic of Armenia, and you are an Armenian, you do not protest and rally against your government and the people of your motherland in this way, in order to give the mistaken idea that the Republic of Armenia and its leaders are traitors. You do it by protesting to the ambassador personally, in this case, United Nations Ambassador Garen Nazarian. Mr. Nazarian, who was installed recently, was not even informed officially by the ARF about its plans.

Meanwhile, a delegation of ADL District Committee met with Ambassador Nazarian on September 9 at his office in New York, and discussed the organization's concerns with him.

For many years, the ARF was one of the coalition partners of the Armenian government in Yerevan. Since last April, they have decided rightfully to come out and work as opposition party.

As an opposition party, the ARF is well within its rights to protest against the government of Armenia in Armenia.

But, have you ever seen Republicans organize protests against President Obama and the White House in Paris or London?

This is the first time Armenians are protesting Armenians. I hope it will be the last.

(Kevork Marashlian is the executive secretary of ADL district Committee of Eastern US and Canada.)

Statement of AGBU Central Board Of Directors on Recent Draft of Protocols to Be Considered by Armenia and Turkey

(On September 10, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) released a statement on the Protocols to be adopted by the governments of Armenia and Turkey. We reprint the statement below, in its entirety.)

On August 31, 2009 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, together with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, jointly produced two documents of protocol concerning the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey and the development of bilateral relations. These documents provide details on the initial steps to be taken for the normalization of relations, the establishment of consular representation, and the opening of the current border between the two countries.

This marks a significant moment in the history of relations between the Armenian and Turkish peoples. It presents major ramifications for both the government of the newly independent Republic of Armenia and the Armenian nation worldwide. The Armenian people in both the homeland and the diaspora have followed these negotiations with great interest and concern.

We recognize the great geopolitical challenges faced by Armenia – its concern for its national security, the need to improve its accessibility and communication links vital to its economic development, the desire to participate in regional programs of political and economic cooperation. All of these objectives motivate the Armenian government to be positive and sincere in its approach to these negotiations and to adopt a pragmatic policy with regard to Turkey. However, as practical as such a policy may be, it should not be implemented at the expense of the fundamental and historic rights of the Armenian people. We believe the official governmental authorities in Armenia are both the administrators of the state and the guardians of its future. Therefore, they must be guided by pan-national goals and aspirations in making these difficult and far-reaching decisions.

The documents establishing diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey touch directly or indirectly upon the enduring issues

of the Armenian Genocide and our territorial demands. We understand the importance for the Republic of Armenia to have normal diplomatic relations with neighboring states, including Turkey. We also believe that justice for the sacred Armenian Case and the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide should transcend and not be sacrificed for any immediate diplomatic consideration.

The start of negotiations between Armenia and Turkey has been favorably encouraged by the international community. The sole opponent to this dialogue between Armenia and Turkey has been the country of Azerbaijan. For almost two decades, Turkey has joined with Azerbaijan in the blockade of Armenia due to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

In the past, Turkey has used the unresolved Nagorno-Karabagh conflict as justification for its refusal to pursue a separate rapprochement with Armenia. This current effort to normalize relations between Armenia and Turkey should not be pre-conditioned by any terms of concession involving the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. The people of Nagorno-Karabagh have already clearly expressed their will to live freely through their exercise of the sacred right of peoples for self-determination.

This is a rare moment of opportunity for Turkey. It must show that it is ready to move forward in earnest. If it falters, hesitates or withdraws, it will expose itself to the reproach of the international major powers and those regional nations which are fostering this rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey.

As this bold diplomatic initiative moves toward normalized relations between the two countries, Turkey will find itself subjected to even greater international scrutiny. To justify its membership in the European Union, Turkey will be under pressure to fulfill its international commitments. It will become more exposed and accountable to world public opinion. It will be forced to adhere to principles of human rights and democratic rule and to cooperate with its neighboring countries.

We know the authorities in Armenia face a difficult path as they endeavor to build new relations with Turkey without imposed preconditions. We also believe the government of

Armenia shares our serious concerns about the sincerity of Turkey, given its historic anti-Armenian policy that has continued to the present time. We commend their initiative and lend our support in their efforts to find a just and fair outcome in the building of good neighborly relations between Armenia and Turkey, while safeguarding the historic claims and rights of the Armenian People.

The Armenian General Benevolent Union has been steadfast in serving the Armenian people for more than a century. It has been a leading voice for the desires and aspirations of the Diaspora. AGBU unwaveringly adheres to its time-honored policy of supporting the homeland, safeguarding the rights of the Armenian nation, and promoting the historic and cultural legacy of our people.

On this occasion, we appeal to all Armenians to face the challenges of this historical moment, in collaboration with the government of the Republic of Armenia, with wisdom, national unity and the spirit of cooperation among our people.

Armenian General Benevolent Union
Central Board of Directors

LETTERS

Thanks, but Just to Clarify...

To the Editor,

Thank you for printing my piece on "Hellenism or Ottomanism" in your issue of August 22. I hope your readers found it useful.

But I am not the author of *At History's Crossroad: The Making of the Armenian Nation*. I wish the author of that book all the best. Myself he ain't! My most recent production was the paperback edition of *Visions of Ararat: Writings about Armenia*.

I much enjoy your paper, especially Edmond Azadian's contributions. His thoughtful worldview is always interesting, and deserves the fullest attention.

Faithfully,
Christopher J. Walker



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Turkey and Azerbaijan Try to Undermine Appointment of Canadian-Armenian Judge

Turks and Azerbaijanis, probably at the instigation of their governments, have attempted to undermine the recent appointment of Canadian-Armenian Aris Babikian as a Citizenship Judge, responsible for making decisions with regard to applications for Canadian citizenship.

In making the appointment, Jason Kenney, Canada's Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, described Babikian as an individual who has been "very involved in immigration, citizenship, social services, culture, human rights and multicultural issues in his community. He has served as Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of Canada, and been a member of the Ontario Film Review Board and the Canadian Ethnocultural Council. Mr. Babikian was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and the Ontario Volunteer Service Award. He speaks English, Armenian, Arabic, Turkish and Greek."

Canadian-Turkish and Azeri organizations immediately launched a vicious hate campaign against Judge Babikian, writing letters to the minister of citizenship and the prime minister protesting his appointment.

Dayaz, an Azeri news website, called Judge Babikian a

racist, chauvinist and an extremist. Stating that his appointment is "unacceptable" and "of serious concern to the Azerbaijani and Turkish communities of Canada," the Azeri website made the ridiculous claim that "Babikian had access to all sectors of the Canadian political establishment due to the power and money of the Armenian community, particularly the Dashnaks."

The website attacked the Canadian government for having recognized the Armenian Genocide and disparaged Minister Kenney for being selected ANC's "Man of the Year." The Azeri site made the baseless charge that any Canadian journalist who dared to write against Armenians would jeopardize his career.

Bizim Anadolu, a Canadian-Turkish monthly newspaper, also targeted Judge Babikian in its July 2009 issue, calling him "a hard-line Armenian political lobbyist [who] has displayed bias and hatred towards Turks, has been against dialogue and reconciliation, and clearly does not possess the cross-cultural sensitivity that is a prerequisite for the appointment of a citizenship judge."

Reacting to these Turkish attacks, Canadian political figures, journalists, leaders of ethnic communities and NGO representatives wrote letters of commendation to the minister of citizenship and the prime minister in support of Babikian's appointment.

The most unexpected defense of Judge Babikian came from a liberal Canadian-Turkish newspaper, *Yeni Hayat*, which published a lengthy editorial on August 27, countering the defamatory Turkish and Azeri attacks against him.

Yeni Hayat wrote that Judge Babikian was being subjected to "an orchestrated campaign of character assassination, intimidation, lies, innuendo, misinformation and propaganda [which] was launched in certain Canadian-Turkish media outlets, mirroring similar campaigns in Azerbaijan and Turkey."

Yeni Hayat highly praised Babikian's "cross-cultural, civic, human rights, educational, multicultural, civic projects, plus

his service record, voluntarism, and contribution to the enrichment of the Canadian civil society should suffice as convincing rebuttal to this vicious, immoral, unethical and mendacious campaign. Everyone who has had the opportunity to work with and to know Judge Babikian will attest that he is a man of integrity, honesty, sincerity, moderation and a firm believer in peaceful coexistence. The accolades he has received from many governments and NGOs are testimony to the man's high moral standing and commitment to making Canada a welcoming place to everyone regardless of religion, color, race or any other differences."

Yeni Hayat pointed out that Babikian "always made a distinction between the Turkish people and the Turkish government." He is "cognizant that the Turkish government and a minority of ultra-nationalists are out of touch with their civil society's thinking when it comes to the Armenian Genocide."

The Turkish newspaper deplored that these "ultra-nationalists, with the help and support of foreign elements, have taken over the Canadian-Turkish community and are trying to radicalize the community and sow the seeds of hatred against other communities in Canada."

It appears that the Turkish government, just as it has done in a number of countries around the world, has been financing ultra-nationalist Turkish groups in Canada in order to export genocide denialism, silence its foreign critics, and counter the political activities of the

Armenian community. In this particular case, Turkey's long arm, with Azerbaijan's backing, has sought to reach all the way into Canada to undermine the appointment of a qualified Canadian-Armenian Judge.

Ankara and Baku have no right to interfere in the Canadian government's internal decision-making on judicial appointments.

Instigating Turkish and Azeri immigrants against Canadian-Armenians could have dire consequences for which Turkey and Azerbaijan would bear full responsibility.

Ted Kennedy Extended Social Justice Ideals beyond American Borders

By Maria Lewytky

In May 2007, in his effort to put history in its proper perspective, Sen. Ted Kennedy voted that the president should accurately acknowledge the Armenian Genocide of the early 1900s. While the Turkish government along with its lobbyists were opposed to the passing of the US Armenian Genocide resolution by the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 2007, S. Res./H.Res.106, Armenian Genocide Resolution, was passed by a vote of 27-21. This resolution was cosponsored by Kennedy. That same year Kennedy urged Venezuela to re-open dissident radio and TV stations in May 2007. He voted yes, on ending the Vietnam embargo; no, on strengthening the trade embargo against Cuba; and no, on limiting NATO expansion to only Poland, Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia in 1998. He voted to limit the President's power to impose economic sanctions; no, on capping foreign aid at only \$12.7 billion, and yes on enlarging NATO to include Eastern Europe. His Senate record speaks for itself and provides a glimpse at a Senator who believed in democratic ideals and principles, fought for checks and balances on the executive branch and against embargos that he deemed were ineffective (even given that his brother President Jack Kennedy had expanded the Cuban embargo.) Speaking in 2007, he said:

"I believe the idea of isolating Cuba was a mistake...It has been ineffective. Whatever the reasons and justifications may have been at the time, now they are invalid."

And even while he regularly sparred with President Ronald Reagan, as the featured speaker at a forum sponsored by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library in 2007, he praised Reagan for his aggressive stance toward the Soviet Union that resulted in securing a better resolution to the Cold War. While there were certainly abstract differences that led both to have different views of the world around them, Kennedy found that Reagan's interest to win a point with a foe, didn't lead to a rhetorical style that was contemptible or that contained personal attacks. Reagan, to Ted Kennedy, was not a loose cannon in the face of opposition.

"He was always a good friend and a gracious foe. He wanted to defeat his opponents, but not destroy them."

Even so, Sen. Ted Kennedy was very active on supporting a nuclear freeze and in 1982 proposed a nuclear freeze resolution to halt the nuclear arms race. He also actively opposed the Star Wars program. The author of the "Hydrogen Molecular Ion" who later became part of the Manhattan Project and the father of the first atomic bomb that was built in Los Alamos, New Mexico, Edward Teller had a very different perspective that year.

"I hope [the nuclear-freeze movement] will not become an important force. I hope more sense will prevail. If the nuclear freeze goes through, this country won't exist in 1990. The Soviet Union is a country that has had totalitarian rule for many hundreds of years, and what a relatively small ruling class there might do can be very different from what a democratic country can decide to do. The rulers in the Kremlin are as eager as Hitler was to get power over the whole world. But unlike Hitler they are not gamblers. If we can put up a missile defense that makes their attack dubious, chances are they will never try the attack. We can avoid a third world war, but only if strength is in the hands of those who want peace more than they want power."

Even though he wanted to limit the use of sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy, in 1985, after a visit to South Africa, he introduced legislation to impose economic sanctions on South Africa. According to Randal Robinson, a renowned anti-apartheid activist, and currently a professor of human rights law at the Dickinson School of Law at Penn State University, "What we did that resulted in the overriding of Ronald Reagan's veto – the first time in the 20th century that a foreign policy veto of a sitting president had been overridden by the Senate – that could not have happened without Ted Kennedy. He was not just a major force, he was the essential, he was the indispensable force."

Ted Kennedy's vision of a just society didn't end at the American border.

When he spoke about the Iraq invasion, he was apprehensive.

"In Iraq, we have acted nearly alone, and we are paying a terrible price," Kennedy said. "We can and sometimes must defend democracy by force, but we cannot impose it by force. Democratic principles are universal, but democracy must find its champions within each country's culture and tradition."

While conservative columnists had a field day

calling the American left morally bankrupt as a result of Ted Kennedy's public statements about Iraq and specifically about the Abu Ghraib scandal – "We are the most hated nation in the world," said Ted Kennedy, "as a result of this disastrous policy in the prisons" – now they see him as a good compromiser, pragmatic and a realist. Ted Kennedy was a bipartisan.

Speaking to the Council on Foreign Relations in 2004 on the Iraq issue, he conjured up John Adams:

"The nation is engaged in a major ongoing debate about why America went to war in Iraq, when Iraq was not an imminent threat, had no nuclear weapons, no persuasive links to al Qaeda, no connection to the terrorist attacks of September 11, and no stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

Over two centuries ago, John Adams spoke eloquently about the need to let facts and evidence guide actions and policies. He said, "Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence." Listen to those words again, and you can hear John Adams speaking to us now about Iraq. "Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

And in order to respond to the discrediting and the quickness to label Kennedy as a senator acting and speaking against American interests, Ted Kennedy gave a speech at Johns Hopkins' Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies in Washington DC that is a perfect example of his steadfast belief in the freedom of expression and his belief that the decision about war and peace is not one to be made in a back room on Capitol Hill.

"I have come here today to express my view that America should not go to war against Iraq unless and until other reasonable alternatives are exhausted. But I begin with the strongest possible affirmation that good and decent people on all sides of this debate, who may in the end stand on opposing sides of this decision, are equally committed to our national security.

The life and death issue of war and peace is too important to be left to politics. And I disagree with those who suggest that this fateful issue cannot or should not be contested vigorously, publicly, and all across America. When it is the people's sons and daughters who will risk and even lose their lives, then the people

should hear and be heard, speak and be listened to.

But there is a difference between honest public dialogue and partisan appeals. There is a difference between questioning policy and questioning motives. There are Republicans and Democrats who support the immediate use of force – and Republicans and Democrats who have raised doubts and dissented.

In this serious time for America and many American families, no one should poison the public square by attacking the patriotism of opponents, or by assailing proponents as more interested in the cause of politics than in the merits of their cause. I reject this, as should we all."

Although 34 radio stations have been forced off the air in Venezuela at the beginning of August under circumstances that are being debated and discussed, while licensing issues are being cited, Senator Kennedy tried to keep Radio Caracas Television (RCTV) open. It was closed in 2007 and since then it has been reported that independent stations have been threatened with greater frequency.

Finally, on the issues of the Cuban embargo, while President Nixon and Henry Kissinger were able to frame Cuba within a cold war context with enough success to win over much of Congress, Sen. Ted Kennedy prominently voiced that the embargo was an "outdated and unrealistic" approach. He suggested that China and Cuba were more analogous.

Ted Kennedy never apologized about his liberal values on domestic issues and foreign matters. According to insider Jay Doherty, an old friend of Ted Kennedy's, Ted Kennedy worked hard at his job and he was aggressive at maintaining his friendships. Although he was attacked for his views that government has a responsibility to improve the lives of its citizens, he always believed in human rights and kept this belief at the core of his arguments whether they be on domestic or foreign issues. He found cruelty and anti-democratic crackdowns a call to action. He defied conventional wisdom when it came to nuclear attacks, and he took political risks that many would not take, ones that might be considered taboo or too soft. Ted Kennedy challenged the reigning orthodoxy when it mattered most, when there were only prevailing dynamics and alternatives were discouraged and seemed few and far between.

(This article originally appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner* newspaper on August 28.)



New Georgian Border Splits Armenian Villagers from Lands

By Naira Melkumian, Yeranuhi Soghoian and Nana Mamagulishvili

TBILISI (IWPR) – Some Armenian villagers may have to slaughter cows they cannot afford to feed, now that Georgian border guards have decided their traditional grazing lands are Georgian territory.

Georgian officials declined to comment on the situation, but some Armenian politicians said the August 25 move by their counterparts in Tbilisi was unjustified and illegal.

“I could not collect hay. I have 11 cattle, and what will I feed them with this winter?” asked Nvard Shahbekian, a resident of the village of Bavra, which lies on the border between the two South Caucasus countries.

She has calculated that she will need 20 tons of hay to feed her livestock, and could now have to buy the feed at \$80 a ton.

“What can I do? I don’t have this money,” Shahbekian said. “Even if I am going to be shot, I must collect my own hay.”

The villagers said the Georgian border guards had suddenly set up a checkpoint between them and their fields, and threatened to fine them 2,000 liras (\$1,200) if they passed it, although Georgian officials were not available

to confirm this.

Shahbekian’s cattle, and those of her neighbors, are hostages to legal uncertainty surrounding the precise limits of the two countries.

Armenia and Georgia set up a joint commission more than a decade ago to oversee the demarcation of their border, but as the Bavra villagers’ struggle makes clear, problems remain since 30 percent of the border is yet to be agreed on.

Experts say both sides are guilty of defining the border to serve their own purposes.

“There have been cases when, according to the Georgian authorities, the Armenian side has itself unilaterally moved the border, therefore until the delimitation is finished and there is an agreement between the government at the level of foreign ministers, who head the commission, the territorial resolution will not be final,” said Sergei Minasian, an analyst at the Caucasus Institute in Yerevan.

The Armenians say the location of the border is laid out in a deal signed between the two then-Soviet republics in 1921, and amendments to it agreed over the next two decades.

“According to these amendments, the lands of Bavra in particular are worked by Armenian farmers living in the village. Apart from this, they have certificates of the privatization of this land,” said Shirak Torosian, a member of the Armenian parliament from the ruling Republican Party and chairman of the Javakh organization, which campaigns for ethnic Armenians who live in southern Georgia.

However, Georgian politicians source their claims from a 1947 map, which awarded the land to them.

“Now the Georgian border guards see the actions of the Armenian villagers as a violation of the border, and bring in the 1947 map, which supposedly agreed that this territory is part of Georgia, but this is doubtful, since in that difficult time, when the Second World War was ongoing, it is unlikely that the border could be surveyed,” Torosian said.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry confirmed that the border delimitations were ongoing, and had been on the agenda when Georgia’s foreign minister visited Yerevan on September 5.

Both the Georgian Foreign Ministry and the border guards in Tbilisi refused to comment on the situation in Bavra.

“Between two young states, in which the process of institution building is ongoing and the demarcation of the border is not finished,

such incidents can occur, but the situation is under control and will be regulated,” said David Darchiashvili, a member of the Georgian parliament.

“The demarcation of the border is not completed, like with Azerbaijan, but the situation is being stirred up by a few irresponsible websites,” he added. “I am sure that soon all will be made clear at a diplomatic level. This can all be regulated if goodwill is shown.”

Seventy percent of Armenia’s exports go through Georgian territory, which is almost its only outlet to the outside world since its borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey remain closed.

President Serge Sargisian raised the issue of Georgia’s Armenian population in an address to diplomats on September 1, saying his government needed to support their compatriots abroad.

“I think, that steps towards recognizing Armenian as a regional language of Georgia, the registration of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the preservation of Armenian monuments in Georgia would only help the strengthening of Armenian-Georgian relations, and a deepened atmosphere of mutual trust,” he said.

Meanwhile, the villagers of Bavra like Valerik Margarian, were contemplating a winter without livestock.

“I have four cows and three sheep, and if I cannot gather hay to feed my stock this winter, then I will have to slaughter them, and then what will I live on?” Margarian said.

Iran Nuclear Talks Likely in Turkey: EU’s Solana

BRUSSELS (Reuters) – Talks between world powers and Tehran on Iran’s nuclear program will likely be in Turkey, the chief Western negotiator said Tuesday, while urging Iran to respond positively to US engagement in the process.

“I think very likely it will be Turkey,” EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who has headed the Western negotiating effort with Iran, told reporters in Brussels when asked where the October 1 talks would take place.

Solana said Western policy remained “twin track” – to offer incentives to Iran to abandon a nuclear program the West suspects is aimed at producing nuclear weapons, while holding out the threat of further sanctions. But he said now was not the time to talk about fresh sanctions.

“At this point in time we are going to try to enter into negotiations,” he said. “Let’s talk about that.”

Iran has agreed to wide-ranging talks with six world powers but has ruled out discussing its nuclear activities, which it says are for peaceful generation of electricity.

The United States and the European Union insist Tehran’s nuclear efforts must be the focus of the talks, the first on the issue since July 2008.

Solana, who has been representing the six powers – the United States, France, Germany, Britain, China and Russia – in long-running efforts to resolve the row with Iran, was cautious when asked how much he thought the new talks could achieve.

But he urged Tehran to take advantage of stepped-up US engagement in the talks process under the administration of President Barack Obama.

“I always intend to try and achieve as much as possible in the negotiations. But it is not the first time we meet. We know each other well,” he said.

“There are some things that are new: the Americans will be present in a formalized man-

ner; that is new, and I think that has to be evaluated positively by the Iranians.”

Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Burak Ozugergin confirmed Turkey had offered to host the meeting. “We are entering a critical period that should be used wisely,” he said.

Turkey, a predominantly Muslim NATO member and close US ally that is also looking to expand economic and energy ties with neighboring Iran, said earlier this year it was trying to bridge US-Iranian differences.

A senior Iranian official said Monday Iran would not negotiate on its “sovereign right” to nuclear energy but, if that were recognized, Iran was ready to discuss any issue at the talks, including ways of upholding non-proliferation globally.

Monday, a senior US official called Iran’s agreement to enter talks an “important first step,” but the White House said Iran would show its failure to meet international obligations if it stuck to its refusal to discuss its nuclear program.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu welcomed Iran’s decision to enter talks as “an important step,” adding:

“The relevant parties should use this opportunity to further enhance diplomatic efforts, to push forward the meeting in order to get positive results, and to resume talks and negotiations.”

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said on Monday Iran’s continued refusal of IAEA access to clarify intelligence material suggesting Iran illicitly researched how to design a nuclear weapon was unacceptable.

EU foreign ministers discussed the Iranian nuclear issue on Monday evening, and Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb said more sanctions would be needed if talks did not succeed.

He said these should come from the United Nations, but if that were not possible, the EU should act unilaterally.

Hovsep Khurshudian, said that Zharangutyun has yet to discuss and decide whether to attend Thursday’s meeting. Its top leader, Raffi Hovannisian, was present at Sargisian’s first meeting with party leaders but boycotted the second one.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun), another vocal opponent of Sargisian’s Turkish policy, will likely send its leaders to the upcoming meeting. Dashnaktsutyun is expected to circulate on Tuesday specific amendments which it believes must be made in the draft protocols.

Sargisian to Meet Armenian Party Leaders on Turkey

LEADERS, from page 1

Some of Ter-Petrosian’s close associates have harshly criticized key provisions of the Turkish-Armenian protocols publicized on August 31. The HAK’s official reaction to the documents, contained in a September 1 statement, was more positive though. Ter-Petrosian is expected to comment on the matter in detail during an HAK rally in Yerevan scheduled for this Friday.

Another major opposition force, the Zharangutyun (Heritage) party, has condemned the Turkish-Armenian deal. Its spokesman,

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