



House members concerned about Armenia-Turkey “road-map”

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Learning from the white stork

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Art Officially Favored tells a musician’s story

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Western U.S. Edition
Number 123
July 18, 2009

the armenian reporter



An Armenian memorial service at the site of the crash of Caspian Airlines Flight 7908 near Ghazvin in Iran. Since the earthly remains of the victims were scattered beyond recognition, mourners collected soil from the site. Photo: Photolure.

Tehran-Yerevan flight crashes, leaving 168 dead

Family and friends worldwide grieve

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National

Initiative highlights Kashatagh's Armenian roots

The Tufenkian Foundation on July 16 announced a new initiative on behalf of Kashatagh (formerly Lachin), the province of Nagorno-Karabagh that provides vital links to Armenia. The initiative will focus on restoring and protecting Kashatagh's historic

monuments and cultural artifacts, which attest to the region's Armenian character and background. It is a reaction to a peace proposal that would put the district under Azerbaijani control.

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National

Sophie Mekhitarian named principal of Keyan School, as Rosie Bedrosian steps down

After more than 30 years of service to the Armenian Community School in Central California, Rosie Bedrosian has announced her retirement as the school's principal. The Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School Board of Education

named Sophie Mekhitarian – a former Clovis Unified School District teacher and administrator – to replace Ms. Bedrosian at the conclusion of the 2008–2009 academic year.

See story on page 8

Armenia

American University in Armenia hosts international conferences for university administrators

The American University of Armenia hosted two conferences for overseas American universities in May 2009: the annual meeting of the Association of American International Colleges and Universities

(AAICU) and the 2009 meeting of the American International Consortium of Academic Libraries (AMICAL).

See story on page 19

Armenia



Children at play at a playground in central Yerevan, part of a series by Maria Abrahamyan.

See photos on page 11

Community

Khatchkar memorial for Civil War sailor gets go-ahead with a major donation

With a donation of \$10,000 from someone who wishes to remain anonymous at this time, the project for a khatchkar memorial for the only Armenian to have served in the American Civil War will go

ahead, Sandra Selverian, president of the Philadelphia Armenian-American Veterans Association (PAAVA), has announced.

See story on page 18

Community

Armenia Fund's HyeBridge Telehealth program demonstrated at Armenian medical congress

Programs and benefits of Armenia Fund USA's recently unveiled HyeBridge Telehealth program were presented at the Tenth Armenian Medical World Congress held in New York City in early July.

Healthcare providers in New York consulted with physicians in Yerevan about a case, reviewing case notes and ultrasound results.

See story on page 18



Family members and friends hoped not to find the names of their loved ones on flight manifests posted at Yerevan's Zvartnots International Airport after an airplane headed there from Tehran crashed, July 15, 2009. Photo: Hayk Badalian/Photolure.

Tehran-Yerevan flight crashes, leaves 168 dead, no survivors

Family and friends worldwide grieve

by Vincent Lima

YEREVAN – Lousik Tarbinian Vartanian, 63, a mother of five, was always afraid of flying, says her daughter Hermineh, who lives in Toronto. But this time, as she prepared to leave Tehran on board Caspian Airlines flight 7908, bound for Yerevan, she was happy, not worried. She was looking forward to her youngest son's wedding on August 15.

Having always encouraged her children to pursue their education, she was very proud of her son Vaheh, who was admitted last year to a Ph.D. program in architecture. On board she carried a tiara for Vaheh's fiancée, some wedding gifts, and candles. She had been concerned that the candles might melt, so she had covered them with ice. They melted anyway.

As she boarded, she called her husband and her daughter Lida – whose husband had only recently lost his mother – and told them there were no close friends on the flight, but she knew many of the people who were boarding with her.

168 lives lost

Her daughter Hilma was waiting along with her husband and daughter at Zvartnots International Airport in Yerevan when they heard the shocking news.

Lousik's airplane, a 22-year-old Russian-made Tupelev 154, crashed 16 minutes after it took off from Imam Khomeini International Airport on Wednesday, July 15. Witnesses cited by the BBC say it nosedived from the sky with its tail on fire near the Iranian city of Ghazvin at about 11:30 a.m. local time.

"On board the plane there were 151 adults, 2 children, and 15 crew mem-

Continued on page 4

President Serge Sargsian urged not to endorse "updated Madrid Document"

President Bako Sahakian of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic: "Any movement in Armenian-Turkish relations must not and cannot be to the detriment of the settlement of the Karabakh conflict."

by Tatul Hakobyan

STEPANAKERT – A pan-Armenian conference convened in Stepanakert on July 10–11 by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation called on Armenia's President Serge Sargsian to decline to endorse a proposed Karabakh settlement presented by the mediators, and "to take urgent steps to return the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic to the negotiating table as a full-fledged party."

U.S. President Barack Obama, President Dmitry Medvedev of



President Bako Sahakian of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic delivers the opening address at a pan-Armenian conference in Stepanakert, as ARF Bureau representative Hrant Markarian listens. July 10, 2009. Photo: Photolure.

Russia, and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France on July 10 released a statement that called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to endorse "an updated version" of the Basic Principles around which the Armenian and Azerbaijani sides have been negotiating. The three

presidents released the statement in their capacities as the heads of the states that co-chair the OSCE Minsk Group, which mediates in the Karabakh talks. The presiden-

Continued on page 21

NATIONAL



by Emil Sanamyan

U.S. sees Turkey, others as “emerging global powers”

“America’s mission in the world today [is] to exercise American leadership to solve problems in concert with others,” Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton** declared as she outlined U.S. foreign policy priorities in a July 15 speech at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Mrs. Clinton suggested that the United States was not concerned by what many U.S. experts see as the growing influence of regional powers, and she argued, “just as no nation can meet these [global] challenges alone, no challenge can be met without America.”

“We will also put special emphasis on encouraging major and emerging global powers – China, India, Russia, and Brazil, as well as Turkey, Indonesia, and South Africa – to be full partners in tackling the global agenda,” Mrs. Clinton said.

Last month, leaders of Brazil, China, India, and Russia, the so-



Hillary Clinton.

Washington briefing

called BRIC countries, held an inaugural gathering in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg and pledged cooperation in challenging U.S. dominance in the world politics.

Turkey, the only NATO member among the countries listed by Mrs. Clinton, has increasingly promoted policies that are frequently at odds with U.S. goals. Underscoring Washington’s interest in Ankara, both Secretary Clinton and President **Barack Obama** paid visits to Turkey within months of coming to office.

“These states are vital to achieving solutions to the shared problems and advancing our priorities – non-proliferation, counterterrorism, economic growth, climate change, among others,” Mrs. Clinton went on. “With these states, we will stand firm on our principles even as we seek common ground.”



Frank Pallone (D.-N.J.)



Adam Schiff (D.-Calif.)

Members of Congress raise concerns about Armenia-Turkey “road-map”

In a proposed letter to President **Barack Obama**, leading congressional advocates of Armenian-American issues charged Turkey with renegeing on a commitment to normalize relations with Armenia and urged the administration “to separate the issues of normalization and genocide recognition.”

The text of the letter, co-authored by Reps. **Frank Pallone** (D.-N.J.),

Mark Kirk (R.-Ill.), **Adam Schiff** (D.-Calif.), and **George Radanovich** (R.-Calif.) was circulated on July 10 to secure additional congressional co-signers, according to an electronic copy shared with the *Armenian Reporter*. [See editorial, “Ask your representative to sign the letter on Armenia-Turkey relations.”]

Citing preconditions that Turkish leaders have repeatedly reiterated since the “road-map” for normalization was first announced on April 22, members of Congress argued that “Turkey, in an effort to block U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide, agreed to a road-map it did not intend to uphold.”

The letter concluded with an expression of “hope that renewed efforts and focused resources from the Administration can be utilized to nurture the Armenia-Turkey



Mark Kirk (R.-Ill.)



George Radanovich (R.-Calif.)

normalization process without preconditions and within a reasonable timeframe, and continue to remain strongly supportive of your stated campaign policy to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.”

Mr. Obama avoided using the term *genocide* in his April 24 statement, citing the joint statement by Armenia and Turkey made public two days earlier.

ANCA denounces “pressure” on Armenia regarding Karabakh

In a sign of further disappointment with the Obama administration’s



Kenneth Hachikian

policy on Armenian issues, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) has expressed “profound disappointment” over what it termed “undue and unreasonable pressure being applied in a heavy-handed manner upon Armenia” by the United States, along with France and Russia, “to force unilateral and dangerous concessions by Armenians regarding the Nagorno Karabagh conflict.”

The July 14 letter by ANCA chairperson **Kenneth Hachikian** was the second such communication by the ANCA within two months. On May 18, Mr. Hachikian charged **Barack Obama** with a “grave offense” against Armenian-Americans over his failure to fulfill pre-election promises to recognize the Armenian Genocide and maintain U.S. support for Armenia.

This week’s letter was in reference to a joint statement by the presidents of France, Russia, and the United States, issued on July 10, which called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to agree to “basic principles” of a settlement, on terms that have been met with widespread criticism in Armenia.

Erdogan sees “nearly genocide” in China

Turkish prime minister **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** characterized recent clashes in China’s northwestern Xinjiang province as “nearly genocide,” news agencies reported.

The apparently ethnically motivated clashes between Han Chinese and Turkic Uighurs there last week left at least 156 people dead.

Mr. Erdogan’s choice of words at the July 10 press conference contrasted with his repeated denials that deaths of more than a million Armenians in Ottoman Turkey could constitute genocide. The comments came as Turkish nationalists held daily anti-China protests.

The Turkish leader also promised to raise concerns over what many Turks see as Chinese oppression of

Uighurs at the United Nation Security Council, where Turkey is currently a member.

The comments have elicited criticism by Chinese officials.

People’s Daily, the newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, charged Mr. Erdogan with “twisting facts” and making an “irresponsible and groundless accusation.”

A Chinese Foreign Ministry official was quoted as saying that the government was “following up on the reactions” from Turkey.

Turkey agrees with Europeans over gas transit

After months of disagreements, Turkey signed an agreement with Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Austria to serve as a transit point for natural gas supplies to Europe, news agencies reported.

The July 13 agreement removed a major roadblock toward the construction of what is known as the Nabucco gas pipeline, championed by the United States and the European Union as a way to ease Europeans’ reliance on natural-gas supplies from Russia.

By agreeing to the project in principle, Turkey is seen as favoring the West over the Russian-proposed South Stream pipeline.

The gas is expected to come initially from Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, as well as Iraq, whose energy sector was recently opened to foreign companies. Russia has in turn been seeking to buy up Central Asian gas to keep its dominant share of European markets.

Russia is the world’s largest gas producer. Iran is the second-largest, but it has been largely shut out of European markets due to Western sanctions.

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State **Matt Bryza**, who was present at the signing in Ankara, argued that the Nabucco line can be filled by Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Iraq, without Iran taking part.

UNHCR inaugurates residential block for Iraqi refugees in Armenia

by Anahit Hayrapetyan

DARBNİK, Armenia – The United Nations refugee agency on July 3 inaugurated a special residential centre for Iraqi refugees in the southern Armenian village of Darbnik. The building, a former agricultural college provided to the UN High Commission for Refugees by the government last year, features 46 apartments and a social and recreation room. It was rehabilitated by UNHCR implementing partner YMCA/Shelter.

At an opening ceremony at-

tended by government officials, diplomats, local businesspeople, UN organizations, humanitarian aid workers, and refugees from Iraq, the UNHCR representative in Armenia, **Bushra Halepota**, thanked all those who had helped in the project and wished the new residents a dignified and happy life in Darbnik, which is located in the Ararat province.

“A house is built by bricks, but a home and community are built by hearts and it is the close link with the community that will make this beautiful building into a happy abode for Iraqi families,” she said.

Many UNHCR partners were involved in the project: the Armenian government ensured that the building was linked to gas and electricity networks; telecoms company VivaCell-MTS provided some vital funding; and the United States Embassy has undertaken to supply furniture for the apartments.

Hundreds of members of the Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the world’s oldest Christian communities, have fled Iraq to escape sectarian violence in recent years. The majority were born in the Middle East nation.

About 1,000 Iraqi Armenians have

been granted refugee or temporary asylum status in Armenia in the past four years. They live in rented houses in the capital, Yerevan, or in Ararat and Kotayk provinces.

Most possess limited financial resources and are in urgent need of material assistance. They also find it hard to communicate in an unfamiliar dialect of Armenian, and face a major struggle to make ends meet in an alien land.

The UN refugee agency, working through its local implementing partners, has been helping the most vulnerable families and promoting local integration of the

refugees. The “Social House” in Darbnik is part of this program and addresses the most crucial need of the refugees – shelter.

“VivaCell-MTS, as a corporate citizen, wants to contribute to this great program of housing, initiated by UNHCR,” said VivaCell-MTS general manager Ralph Yirikian, who took part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony with Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan and others. “We, the Armenians of Armenia, have to do our best to create the conditions for these people [Iraqi refugees] to stay and see their children’s future here,” he added.

INTERNATIONAL

Jack Antreassian, 89, was executive director of AGBU and Eastern Diocese

NEW YORK – Jack Antreassian – writer, editor, publisher, executive director of both the AGBU and the Eastern Diocese, a true giant of the Armenian-American community – died on July 4 in New York, following an illness. He was 89. A memorial service will be held at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral (Second Avenue at 34th Street in New York City) on Sunday, July 26, at 4:00 p.m.

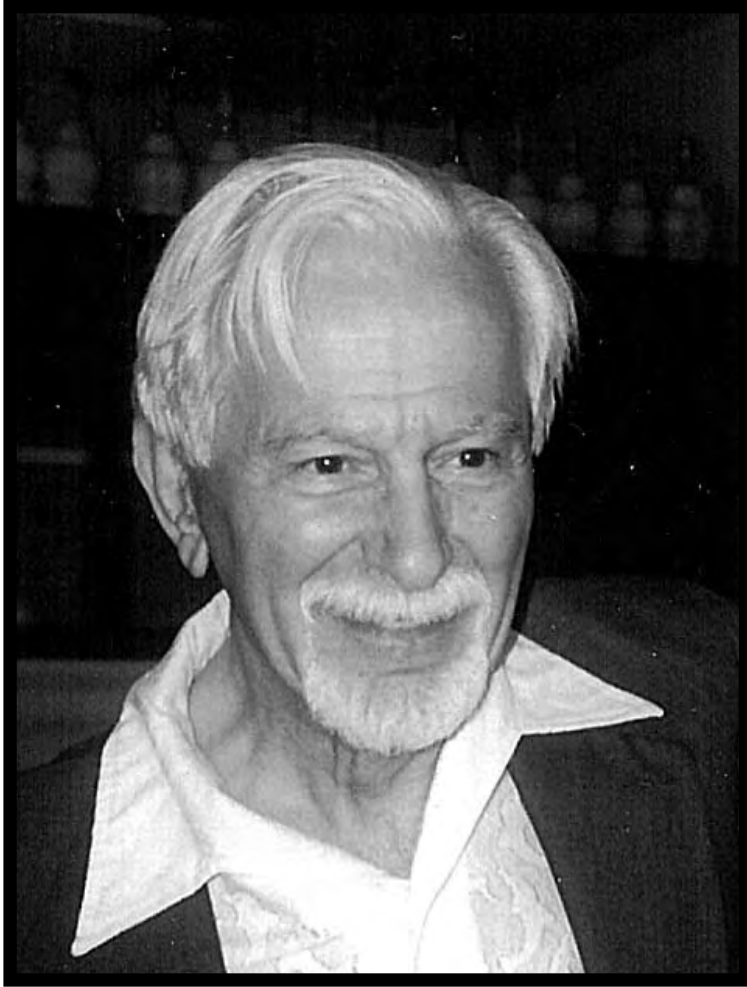
Jack (Ardavast) Antreassian was born on April 20, 1920, in Constantinople, where his family had sought shelter from massacres perpetrated in their native Hazari, Chimishgezeg. His father, Vahan, went ahead to New York City to prepare the way for the rest of the family – and to begin his new career as a barber.

Six months after their arrival in Constantinople, his mother Satenig brought Anne, Varsenig, and baby Ardavast to New York. Three older brothers – Ardashes, Ashod, and Antranig (who became an eloquent leader and writer in the Armenian-speaking world) – had to be placed in an orphanage in Greece, and could only join the others a few years later.

First settling on East 27th Street in New York's "Little Armenia," the Antreassians eventually moved to Washington Heights. Jack won a scholarship to Stuyvesant High School, and then went to City College for two years before dropping out to help support the family, despite his father's pleas for him to stay in school.

In 1943, on a furlough from his three-year stint in the Air Force, he married Alice Eksouzian, whom he had met through his sister Anne. Jack often related their love-at-first-sight story: "I remember her smile. I fell in love with her the minute I saw her and we knew from that first moment that there would be no one else." The couple had two children, Michael and Elise, and enjoyed all the pleasures of young family life in the home they bought in Flushing, Queens, New York City, next door to his sister Varsenig and brother-in-law George.

Passionate about literature and poetry, Jack continued to write even as he entered a long and distinguished career of public service in the Armenian community.



Jack Antreassian, 1920–2009.

He apprenticed at the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* (to which he returned a few times later as editor) under the fatherly and cherished tutelage of Bedros Norehad. He later served as executive director of the AGBU at its East 40th Street headquarters in New York, where he launched an ambitious Armenian cultural program of art exhibits, concerts, and classes. During his tenure, the local chapters nationwide were strong and numerous. He did a great deal of traveling in an effort to encourage and cultivate chapter growth. On a national level, he helped establish the Antranig Dance Group, Camp Nubar, and *Ararat* quarterly, a literary magazine that features Armenian artists and writers (with a sizable non-Armenian subscriber list – it was even sold at newsstands) which Jack edited for its first eight years. He later

established Ararat Press, a brief publishing venture of fiction, drama, and poetry.

Offered the executive director position at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Jack worked with the Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian (now Patriarch of Jerusalem), for several years, bringing the same creative leadership to the work of the Diocese. It was during this period that a number of exciting programs were born: the Festival of the Armenian Spirit; the One World Festival, a huge cultural event co-sponsored with New York City that featured international dance groups and food and attracted thousands of visitors to the Cathedral and St Vartan Park; Friday Night Open House – evenings of Armenian food, games, and special programs; Pro Musica, scholarships and concerts for

young Armenians in the performing arts; and the St. Vartan Drama Group, among others.

These were the early days of the Diocesan Center, in the wake of the consecration of St. Vartan Cathedral. The center was so alive with activity – with classes in art appreciation, language, cooking, and history, exhibits, and "talk show" interview evenings with notable Armenians – that a popular newsletter was released called Center News. Jack also launched St. Vartan Press, among whose titles was the enormously lucrative cookbook, *Armenian Cooking Today*, a labor of love written and donated by his wife Alice, which earned many thousands of dollars for the Diocese.

In leading both of these Armenian institutions, Jack set many precedents: introducing the local Armenian public to important national and international personalities such as composer Aram Khatchaturian, the film pioneer Rouben Mamoulian, the writers Michael Arlen and William Saroyan, and the media critic Ben Bagdikian, among others (the special evenings featuring these talents were exciting community events); forming and serving on dozens of energetic committees; providing opportunities for writers, artists, and musicians to work and serve, launching many a career in the process.

Along with his strong, innovative leadership, Jack possessed a rare quality for a community leader. In a tribute in the *Mirror-Spectator* to Jack and Bedros Norehad, two of the paper's illustrious editors, Michael Zeytoonian noted that Jack "had a wonderful and unassuming charisma . . . and possessed a keen ability to relate to all types of people, to meet them at whatever place they were at in their lives and to bring them into the fold. His sense of community and grasp of the notion that every individual has a role in the greater good were infectious." As a result, wherever he went, Jack quickly attracted droves of talented, enthusiastic volunteers who felt both challenged and nurtured by him.

Upon retiring, Jack returned to the Diocese at the request of Archbishop Manoogian to oversee the

massive relief efforts for the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, traveling there himself a number of times. This effort was eventually to evolve into the highly effective Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).

But perhaps his most important "second career" venture was Ashod Press, a publishing project named for his beloved brother who died in the Spanish Civil War. The effort, based on a highly personal vision of seeing Armenian literature translated and new writers encouraged and cultivated, produced 32 titles of great Armenian literature, original poetry, essays, memoirs, and its own quarterly newsletter. In 1989, when a friend (who wished to remain anonymous) approached him with the idea of a literary prize for Armenian writers, Jack was instrumental in creating the annual Anahid Award. This has so far celebrated the achievement of 19 writers, granting each a \$5,000 stipend and the recognition of a grateful community.

Jack was blessed with a large extended family for whom he felt great affection, counting them as yet another gift in his life. He is survived by his sister, Varsenig, his daughter, Elise, her husband, Pappen, who was like a son to him, and their children (his adoring grandchildren), Kohar, Aris, and Vahan Bayizian, with whom he lived for the past 15 years, as well as a son, Michael, his wife, Brenda, and their son, Adam.

He also leaves behind the love of his life, his wife, Alice. She developed Alzheimer's 15 years ago; Jack devotedly cared for her first at home and then at his daughter's house; she finally had to enter the New York Armenian Home, and Jack visited her daily, sometimes twice a day.

During his own illness, to which he succumbed on Saturday, July 4, 2009, he was serenely philosophical. "I have lived a long, happy life. I would be a fool to complain now that I have to leave it. What a lucky man I have been."

Luckier were those who knew and loved him.

The family has asked that in-lieu-of-flowers donations go to the New York Armenian Home, 13731 45th Avenue, Flushing, NY 11355. ☛

Memories of Jack Antreassian

by Joyce Chorbajian

Jack Antreassian's memorial will take place on Sunday, July 26, at 4 p.m. at St. Vartan's Cathedral. How fitting for him to be memorialized at the place that is so defined with him. He was an iconic figure, although he would never have agreed with me, but he was that and so much more.

Jack became the first executive director of St. Vartan's Cathedral when the leadership of the day-to-day operations was basically in its infancy. How important it was for the cathedral and the Armenian community back in those days to have someone so capable and dedicated to bring this incredible institution through its developmental stages.

They say that the first 5 years of an infant's life is when they formulate who they are and how they will develop. Well, I believe there is much truth to that not

only for children, but also for new enterprises. I say enterprise because the running of St. Vartan's was not about religion, but about good business. While Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, now Patriarch of Jerusalem, was then the first Primate of St. Vartan, seeing to the spiritual development of his flock, Jack Antreassian was about keeping the community involved and the operations humming.

He was tireless. He did not know what an 8-hour day was. He did not know what a 14-hour day was. His clock spun 24-hours and never stopped for a winding.

I spent a period of time volunteering for the cathedral offices in those days. One of the projects I was given was to take all of the photographs of the consecration of St. Vartan's, and there were hundreds, organize them, and put them somewhere for safekeeping. If I tell you how daunted I was, it would be an understatement.

I collected the photographs and myself and went to work. I then began looking for a filing cabinet that had space to store this important collection, only to find out that there was not even one empty drawer anywhere to be found. My next task was to try to pin Jack down to okay the purchase of a filing cabinet.

Well, as usual, my requests for an appointment went unheeded. I began running after Jack, as he never walked and he never used the elevator, as it took too long. Up the stairs, down the stairs, to no avail. Jack was too busy.

One day, out sheer frustration, I ran up the stairs behind Jack, followed him into his office and proceeded to tell him that I was not going to leave unless I got the okay for the filing cabinet, as all of my efforts would be lost. Jack said he was too busy.

I slammed both my hands down on his desk, told him I did not care how busy he was and I was not go-

ing to leave his office until he gave me the okay. He looked at me and said, "You're fired!" I looked back at him and replied, "You can't fire me. I'm a volunteer!"

With that, we both started laughing and I got the filing cabinet. That was Jack. No matter how difficult the situation was, how tired he was, or how much he had to do, he never lost his sense of humor.

I also want to acknowledge his wife, Alice, and his wonderful family for their dedication to the community and to St. Vartan's. They sacrificed a great deal in the loss

of quality time spent with a husband and a father. I know what that is about all too well, but even my mother and I had more time with my dad/husband than the Antreassian family did with Jack.

If there is a special place in heaven, and I am sure there is, I know without a doubt, Jack is there. For all the incredible things, which Jack did for the Armenian community that we know about, I know that God is aware of all that he did, which no one knows about.

May he travel well. ☛

Let us know what's on your mind.

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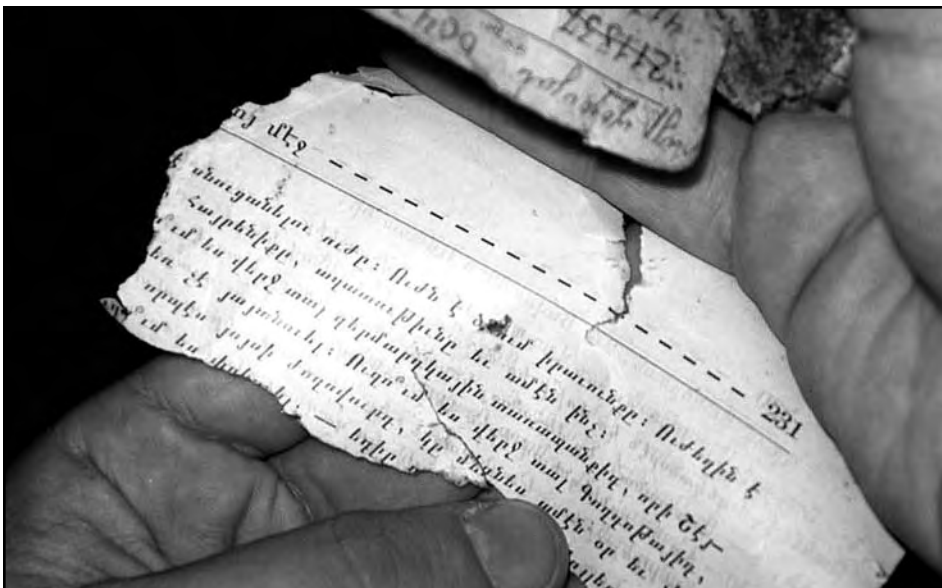
International



July 16 was a national day of mourning in Armenia. Photo: Tigran Tadevosian / Photolure



Parts of the airplane were scattered. Photo: Photolure.



A page from a book found at the crash site. Photo: Photolure.



A view of the scene of the crash of Caspian Airlines flight 7908, near Ghazvin in Iran, July 15, 2009. Photo: Photolure.

Tehran-Yerevan flight crashes, leaves 168 dead, no survivors

Continued from page 1

bers," **Arlen Davudyan**, Caspian Airlines' representative in Yerevan, told Reuters at Zvartnots airport. Everyone on board is presumed dead.

Mr. Davudyan had relatives on the plane. His wife's brother had moved from Iran to Australia with his family some years ago. The children, **Areen** and **Ani Melkom Abkar**, had come to see relations in Iran and were making what was to be their first trip to Armenia.

Ani had been part of the editorial board of Sydney's *Garoon*, editor in chief Tamraz Hovsepian says. He adds that Areen had recently completed a Ph.D.

Another wedding

Tatul Moradian had boarded the flight to join his wife Vanuhi in Yerevan; they too were looking forward to a wedding. Their son Hamik was tying the knot. And Mr. Moradian looked forward to seeing his daughter Hermineh and her two children – her son, and a daughter born only a few months ago – who had recently arrived in Yerevan from their home outside Paris.

Also among the passengers was **Levon Davidian**, a psychiatrist who served from 2000 to 2004 as a member of Iran's parliament, representing the Armenian communities of the northern part of Iran.

There were perhaps three dozen ethnic Armenians on the flight.

According to Armenia's civil aviation authorities, the passengers included 4 citizens of Armenia, and the crew included two more, **Grigor Barsegyan**, 42, and **Surik Soghomonyan**, 43. Also among the passengers were two Georgian citizens, **Natalia Nikonova**, wife of her country's chargé d'affaires in Tehran, and Georgian Embassy staffer **Givi Chkadua**.

Coming together

Among the many non-Armenian Iranians on the flight was **Sadegh Najafi Lahiji** of Rasht, who was starting what was meant to be a four-day vacation with his family, travel agent Kamelia Balian said. Ms. Balian's husband was supposed to be on the flight but called that morning to say he would be returning home to Yerevan a day or two later.

Mr. Najafi Lahiji and his family were booked at the Marriott and had scheduled tours of Armenia for three of the four days they planned to be in the country.

Eight members of Iran's national youth judo team, along with two coaches and a delegation chief, were on the flight, on their way to train with the Armenian judo team and attend a competition in Hungary in August.

Even as they digested the news and fielded calls and visits from relatives, friends, and loved ones, the Caspian Airlines representative Mr. Davudyan and Ms. Balian had to make arrangements for passengers who had planned to board the plane on its return trip to Tehran. Ms. Balian says she got a concerned call from the management of Aviatrans Hotel, who offered three free rooms for stranded passengers. "Everyone has really come together out of concern and love and solidarity," she said.

A day of mourning

At Yerevan's airport, a notice on a wall listed the people who were on board. Health brigades treated

relatives and friends for shock and heart problems.

Citing Caspian Airlines representatives, ArmeniaNow reported that 60 relatives of the deceased left for Iran the next day at the company's expense. One family informed the *Armenian Reporter* that they had to delay their unexpected trip to Iran because of Iranian visa problems for a child.

President Serge Sargsian declared July 16 a day of mourning. The Armenian flag flew at half-mast. Parties planned in connection with the Golden Apricot International Film Festival were canceled. The U.S. Embassy postponed a ceremony marking the donation of equipment to Armenia's police. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, which lost two members in the flight – Mr. Davidian, the former member of Iran's parliament, and **Azat Hovhannesian** – called off a planned protest in front of the Foreign Ministry.

At the crash site

The crash gouged a trench more than 10 feet deep in a field near the village of Jannatabad, the *New York Times* reported, quoting state news

agencies. The wreckage was spread over a large area of farmland, 120 km (75 miles) northwest of Tehran.

Investigators report having found two of the three flight data recorders or black boxes. They said the recorders were damaged but were expected to yield data to help find the reasons for the crash.

Witnesses cited by the BBC said the plane had circled briefly looking for an emergency landing site. One man described it exploding on impact.

"I saw the plane crashing nose-down. It hit the ground causing a big explosion. The impact shook the ground like an earthquake," Ali Akbar Hashemi told The Associated Press.

Since the Islamic revolution of 1979, trade embargoes by Western nations have forced Iran to buy mainly Russian-built planes to supplement an existing fleet of Boeings and other U.S. and European models, the BBC notes. Most of the planes are old and in poor condition. ☞

For a list of names of the passengers and crew, see <http://www.caspian.aero/list.html>

International



A baseball cap inscribed with the name Armen in Armenian. Photo: Photolure.



Charred remains found at the site of the crash. Photo: Photolure.



Archbishop Sepouh Sargisian prays at the crash site. Next to him is Gevorg Vartanian, a member of Iran's parliament. Photo: Photolure.



Prayers at Yerevan's mosque on July 16, the day after a Tehran-Yerevan flight crashed. While there were many Armenian Christians on board, the majority of the passengers and crew were Iranian Muslims. Photo: Tigran Tadevosian / Photolure.



Family members gathering soil from the crash site. Photo: Photolure.

Armenian churches nationwide to hold requiem services for victims of airline crash

On Sunday, July 19, all Armenian churches nationwide will offer prayers for the victims of the July 15 airplane crash in Iran during the singing of "Der Vorghormya" (Lord Have Mercy) during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Separate announcements to this effect were released by Archbishop **Hovnan Derderian**, Primate of the Western Diocese, Archbishop **Moushegh Martirosian**, Primate of the Western Prelacy, Archbishop **Oshagan Choloyan**, Primate of the Eastern Prelacy, and Archbishop **Khajag Barsamian**, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church.

The archbishops asked the faithful to join in prayers for the souls of the deceased and for comfort to the families that have been touched.

One of the victims, Dr. **Levon Davidian**, was a current member

of the Central Executive Committee of the Catholicate of Cilicia. The Catholicos, **Aram I**, held a requiem service at the Catholicate's summer house in Bikfaya, Lebanon, on July 16. A delegation appointed by the catholicos visited the Iranian Embassy in Beirut to convey condolences.

In a letter, the Catholicos of All Armenians, **Karekin II**, wrote: "We heard about the air crash and death of passengers with deep sorrow. We mourn this loss together with our people. On behalf of the Ecclesiastical Council and Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, we express our support and condolences to all the family members and close ones of the deceased."

Expressing his heartfelt sympathy to the families of the victims, Archbishop Oshagan offered prayers for the souls of the victims

and for comfort and healing to those who are mourning the sudden loss of their loved ones.

"We offer our prayers for the victims of this tragedy that God illuminate their souls and make them worthy to join Him in His kingdom of which there is no end. We also pray for the families who have been affected, that God send them the comfort of the Holy Spirit in this difficult time," said Archbishop Derderian.

Archbishop Martirosian wrote to the Prelate of Tehran, Archbishop **Sepouh Sargisian**, to express condolences through him to the families of the victims.

Archbishop Barsamian issued a directive to the leaders of all Diocesan parishes. He asked the community to offer prayers for the victims. What follows is the text of that message, issued on July 15, 2009:

"This morning, we awoke to the terrible news that an airliner had crashed in Iran, taking the lives of all onboard. Such news is always tragic, whatever the circumstances; but for us as Armenians, it was especially dispiriting to learn that the flight had departed from Tehran en route to Yerevan, and that so many of the people on board were our fellow countrymen.

"News reports cite six Armenian nationals - that is, citizens of the Republic of Armenia - among those who lost their lives today. But to read the flight manifest is to become aware of numerous Armenian surnames and given names among the 156 passengers and 12 crew members - several crew members, and at least a third of the passengers - indicating that many Iranian-Ar-

menians were also on board the doomed flight.

"Our hearts go out to all the victims of Flight 7908, and their families. May God be with them, and comfort them in this time of grief.

"Our special prayers go for the souls of our lost brothers and sisters, who only a few hours ago said goodbye to their families, or expected to shortly be reunited with them - but now will never be seen again. We ask our risen Lord to remember them on the day of his judgment, and to console and strengthen their loved ones.

"With this directive, I am asking our parishes to hold a special *hokehankisd* service this Sunday, July 19, for the repose of the souls of the crash victims.

"May God bless you and all our people."

Community

U.S. ambassador discusses the status of women in Armenia

AIWA and ALMA sponsor gathering

WATERTOWN, Mass. — The current economic downturn in Armenia has had an especially adverse effect on the position of women, according to **Marie Yovanovitch**, the U.S. ambassador.

Speaking last month at a breakfast in Watertown co-sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association and the Armenian Library and Museum of America, Ms. Yovanovitch acknowledged that statistics are imprecise, but had no doubt that "women are especially hard hit by unemployment in Armenia." Women are more likely than men to lose their jobs, and it is more difficult for them to find new positions, she said. This situation has serious consequences for families, the ambassador observed.

In some areas affecting women, however, Armenia has made impressive progress, Ms. Yovanovitch pointed out. Over the past eight to nine months, the government has taken a strong stand against trafficking in women. There have been a number of prosecutions, and penalties for those convicted have been stiff.

As a result, in a report just released by Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton**, Armenia has been removed from the Tier Two Watch List in trafficking. She credited Deputy Prime Minister **Armen Gevorgyan** with taking the lead on this issue. "Even in these difficult times, the Armenian government has put money into this effort," she said.

Asked about charges of undue influence in Armenia's society by hidden "mafia" elements or financial magnates, Ms. Yovanovitch said that this was a matter to be considered. The people convicted in trafficking cases were all women, although one might suspect that there were men operating behind these women, she said.

In a more general sense, "the lack of transparency in government and in society is a serious concern," the ambassador stated. "People in Armenia (and in the United States) pay a big price for this." The ambassador went on to applaud the Armenian government for progress in some areas, for example the recent action to grant a general amnesty that made special provisions for those prosecuted in connection



At Breakfast with U.S. ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch, seated, from right, AIWA founder Barbara Merguerian, Ms. Yovanovitch, ALMA chairperson Haig Der Manuelian, and visit coordinator James Kalustian.

with the bloody clashes of March 1, 2008.

Regarding the status of women in general, Ms. Yovanovitch granted, "we could be doing a lot more on gender issues."

She has met a large number of "remarkable women," in Armenia, the ambassador noted. The U.S. Embassy is embarking on a mentoring program to pair some of these women with young students at the American University of Armenia.

Asked about prospects for one of AIWA's initiatives in Armenia, the Women's Entrepreneurship Project, the ambassador acknowledged that opportunities for Armenian women in the fields of business and finance are limited. It is very difficult to obtain a loan in Armenia, she noted. The United States formerly had programs in this field, but "perhaps we might have departed too soon."

Several other topics of interest, especially regarding relations between the United States and Armenia, were covered informally during the breakfast, which was the first event in Ms. Yovanovitch's tour of Armenian communities in the United States. AIWA founder and former president **Barbara Merguerian** introduced the ambassador, and ALMA chairperson **Haig Der Manuelian** offered welcoming remarks. **James Kalustian** was coordinator of the Boston visit.



At breakfast with U.S. ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch, co-sponsored by ALMA and AIWA, from left, AIWA Vice President Joy Renjilian-Burgy, AIWA scholarship recipient Sarah Varadian (Stonehill College), Ms. Yovanovitch, and AIWA founder Barbara Merguerian.

Berdj Svajian lectures at AGBU Montreal Chapter on the centennial of the Adana massacres

MONTREAL — On April 29, Berdj Svajian delivered a lecture about the Adana Massacres to an audience of over 100 people at the AGBU Demirdjian Hall in Montreal. The event was organized by the AGBU Montreal Cultural Committee and the Manuel Keoseyan Armenian Studies Course on the centennial of this historic event and included a presentation of documentary evidence and 200 slides.

The lecturer was introduced by **Shahé Tanashian**, director of the Manuel Keoseyan Armenian Studies Course. Mr. Svajian began his presentation by dedicating the event to the memory of his grandparents, who were forced to leave their native Adana during the massacres of 1909. Starting with general information about the geography and history of the city, he included a detailed description of local cus-

toms and practices that defined the place.

He projected slides depicting the massacre, torture of intellectuals, destruction of churches, and transformation of schools into stables. The first massacre took place on April 1, 1909, and was followed by a second, and even more horrible event, which aimed to eliminate the whole Armenian population. Mr. Svajian's slides also included scenes of the Ayn Toura orphanage in Lebanon, which had been established to house and Turkify Armenian orphans and was under the supervision of Halide Edib Hanim and Jemal Pasha, who later served as the Turkish marine minister.

The final slides showed the documents and photos of the signed property deeds belonging to Mr. Svajian's grandparents, which were rescued from the 1909 massacre. At the end of the program, Mr. Sva-



A view of the audience that attended the April 29th Adana lecture by Berdj Svajian at the AGBU Montreal Center.

jian invited **Garbis Dekmezian**, an Adana native, to light candles in memory of the victims of 1909.

Words of appreciation and thanks were spoken by **Arsine At-**

tarian, chair of AGBU Montreal's Cultural Committee, and **Arshavir Gundjian**, AGBU vice president and founding president of the Alex Manoogian School.

The program came to a close with a prayer by Rev. **Mher Khachigian** and the blessings of Bishop **Bagrat Galstian**, Primate of the Diocese of Canada.

Community

Armenian Medical World Congress convenes in New York

New advances in medicine discussed

by Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — More than 350 Armenian health professionals from 10 countries on five continents assembled at the New York Hilton from July 1 to 4 for the Tenth Armenian Medical World Congress. The congress featured world-famous doctors along with the latest findings on several medical questions.

Among the many prominent attendees were Britain's health minister Lord **Ara Darzi**, the health minister of Armenia Dr. **Harutiun Kushkian**, Armenia's diaspora minister **Hranush Hakobyan**, Ph.D., former health minister of Armenia Dr. **Ara Babloyan**, the health minister of Karabakh Dr. **Armen Khachatryan**, and the president of the American University of Armenia Dr. **Haroutune Armenian**.

Eminent healthcare providers also included geneticist Dr. **Vazken Der Kaloustian**, Armenian Eyecare Project founder Dr. **Roger V. Ohanesian**, endocrinologists Dr. **Sylva Arslanian** and Dr. **Avedis Khachadourian**, and public-health expert Dr. **Myron Allukian, Jr.** Attending many of the functions were Armenia's ambassador to the United Nations **Armen Martirosian** and Rep. **Frank Pallone, Jr.** (D-N.J.), founder and co-chair of the Congressional Armenian Caucus.

Dr. **Raymond Damadian**, inventor of the MRI, said there was a need for both a sitting and standing MRI, in addition to the lying down version that is commonly used. Lord Darzi discussed in de-

tail his work in Great Britain on a series of healthcare reforms, which stress the concept of quality.

Also addressing the assemblage was Dr. **Ara Hovanesian**, a top cancer specialist from Paris, who is looking for a cure for cancer.

The opening day, July 1, was devoted to several medical specialties, including nursing, ophthalmology, dentistry, emergency medicine, mental health, pediatrics, anesthesiology, and physical therapy. During the next three days, there were intense and detailed discussions on obesity, nutrition, diabetes, breast cancer, orthopedic surgery, psychiatry, infectious diseases, cardiovascular disease, women's health, radiology, endocrinology, and robotic surgery.

Popular topics

One of the most focused discussions of the congress involved healthcare delivery and education in Armenia. **More than 100 health professionals from Armenia were in attendance.** During a special telemedicine event, through the medium of television, the unique medical problems of two seriously

ill patients in Armenia were televised live, and the doctors at the congress were able to discuss and evaluate their conditions.

Most popular was a lecture delivered by Dr. **Hagop Akiskal** on the provocative topic, "Chemistry of Romantic Love," where he claimed that the face and especially the lips provide 90 percent of attraction.

Another well attended and highly controversial and heated discussion revolved around the pros and cons of circumcision, where it was noted that the practice is not a custom among Armenians, and serves no religious purpose.

A fascinating talk on mental health was delivered by Dr. **Armen Nersisyan** from Armenia, who reports having been able to heal Mediterranean fever. In a jaw-dropping video, attendees saw a twelve-year-old boy who, two years earlier had been bitten by a dog, and was so traumatized that he could only speak by barking like a dog. Dr. Nersisyan and therapists reported using "vibration tools" and the prayers from the 10th-century St. Gregory of Narek's *Book of Lamentations* to cure the boy.

In another inspirational demonstration, Dr. **Edmund Gergerian**, who worked with many children in Armenia after the earthquake, again using vibration tools and tapping on acupuncture points, spoke of the power of the subconscious mind, which, he said, is "80 percent of our being. One's thoughts, words, activities generate energy sources. Energy balancing technology is the main source of love," he said. "The language of energy has to lead to balance in the individual."

Also of great interest was the topic, "Dignity in Health Care," addressed by Dr. Haroutune Armenian, in which he stated that dignity is achieved through structure (hospitals and clinics), process (waiting time, communication), and outcome (not just about disease and death, but about self-esteem and self-assurance).

Strengthen Armenia-diaspora relations

Armenia's diaspora minister, Ms. Hakobyan - who with **Rita Balian** is cofounder of the Armenian

American Wellness Center in Yerevan - gave a passionate address. He thanked Armenians of the diaspora for all the benefits they have given to Armenia. She pointed out that medicine in Armenia has improved greatly, and predicted that Armenia will become the medical center for the region.

Ms. Hakobyan presented gold medals and certificates to several individuals who have donated their services to Armenia, including Armenian Medical International Congress (AMIC) President Dr. **Avedis Dr. Bogosyan**, and to Drs. **Edgar Housepian**, **Aram Chobanian**, **John Nercessian**, and **Frieda Jordan**, as well as to **Annette Choolfaian** and Ms. Balian.

Closing the four-day event, Dr. **Larry Najarian** enthusiastically noted that "this tenth Congress begins AMIC's 36th year. Through our substantive work, we have reinforced new and effective ways to connect with Armenia. This is our focus. It's this work which will make a difference all over the world," he stated as all in attendance stood and sang the Armenian national anthem. 🇦🇲



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Calendar of Events

Northern California

JULY 20 - Crocodile Dock - Vacation Bible School. Location: 725 Brotherhood Way San Francisco. Admission: \$35.00. For more information contact 415-586-2000

OCTOBER 4 - YerazArt in benefit for KZV Armenian Day School. Location: Saroyan Hall @ Khatchaturian Center: 825 Brotherhood Way San Francisco. For more information contact: 415-586-8686

NOVEMBER 14 - Armenian Food Fair and Festival. Location: Calvary Armenian Congregational Church: 725 Brotherhood way San Francisco, 12:00noon-9:00pm. Admission: Free. For more information contact: cacc@caccsf.org or 415-586-2000.

Central California

JULY 18 - Moonlight Picnic. Location: California Arme-

nian Home Grounds: 6720 E. Kings Canyon Rd. Fresno, 6:00pm to 11:00pm. Admission: \$5:00 parking. For more information contact: rex@sti.net or 559-226-5796.

Southern California

AUGUST 16 - ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC AND GRAPE BLESSING. Location: Mission Bay Park, Mission Blvd., San Diego, CA. 12:00pm Admission: Free. For more information contact St John Garabed Armenian Church, 619-284-7179; StJohnGarabed@sbcglobal.net.

SEPTEMBER 5 - FIFA - ARMENIAN VS. BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA SOCCER GAME SHOWING. Location: AGBU Alex Manoogian Pasadena Center, 2495 E. Mountain St., Pasadena, CA. TBA Admission: Free. For more information contact AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program, (626)794-7942; info@agbugennext.org.

SEPTEMBER 9 - FIFA ARMENIA VS. BELGIUM SOCCER GAME SHOWING. Location: AGBU Alex Manoogian Pasadena Center, 2495 E. Mountain St., Pasadena, CA. Admission: Free. For more information contact AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program, 626-794-7942; info@agbugennext.org.

OCTOBER 3 - Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry Walk of Life. Location: Verdugo Park: 1621 Canada Blvd Glendale. 7:30 am registration, 9 am Walk. Admission: Pre \$25, Day \$30. Contact: phone: (818) 522-8531.

OCTOBER 10 - FIFA - ARMENIA VS. SPAIN SOCCER GAME SHOWING. Location: AGBU Alex Manoogian Pasadena Center, 2495 E. Mountain St., Pasadena, CA. Admission: Free. For more information contact AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program, 626-794-7942; info@agbugennext.org.

OCTOBER 14 - FIFA- ARMENIA VS TURKEY SOCCER GAME SHOWING. Location: AGBU Alex Manoogian Pasadena Center, 2495 E. Mountain St., Pasadena, CA. Admission: Free. For more information contact AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program, 626-794-7942; info@agbugennext.org.

OCTOBER 17 - ANNUAL BAZAAR- ARMENIAN CULTURAL FESTIVAL. Location: St John Garabed Armenian Church, 4473 30th Street, San Diego, CA. 12:00pm Admission: Free. For more information contact St. John Garabed Armenian Church, 619-284-7179; StJohnGarabed@sbcglobal.net.

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Community

Sophie Mekhitarian named principal of Keyan School

Rosie Bedrosian retires

FRESNO, Calif. — After more than 30 years of service to the Armenian Community School, **Rosie Bedrosian** has announced her retirement as the school's principal. The Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School Board of Education named **Sophie Mekhitarian** — a former Clovis Unified School District teacher and administrator — to replace Ms. Bedrosian at the conclusion of the 2008–2009 academic year.

Ms. Bedrosian began as an elementary grade teacher in 1978, just two years after the founding of the school. Following a term as vice principal, she succeeded **Seth Atamian** as the school's principal in 2002.

A capable public speaker and administrator, Ms. Bedrosian has been the face of the school for the past seven years and managed its daily operations over a series of relocations — from the school's long-time home on Fresno Street, to its Tower Campus at Saint Therese Catholic Church, to a temporary residence at the Saint Luke's Church, to its current Clovis home on Villa Avenue. Every other year since 2000, she has led the 5th and 6th graders and their parents on a tour of Armenia.

Ms. Bedrosian recalled that one of the most memorable highlights of her tenure came in 2006 when she and school board officers traveled to Coachella to first meet **Charlie Keyan**. A few months afterward, the school secured the

funds to purchase the property for its new campus.

"I wish the school continued success and all the best for the future."

Ms. Bedrosian looks forward to spending more time with her family and continuing to serve on the Central Executive Board of the Armenian Relief Society and as a member of the society's local Sophia Chapter.

Ms. Mekhitarian comes to the CKACS with over 30 years experience in the public school system. She received her master's degree in education from the University of San Francisco and has been the superintendent of Sunday school classes at the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church as well as a former secretary of the school's board of education. Ms. Mekhitarian has been busy meeting with board members, teachers, and parents and making preparations for the 2009–2010 school year.

"Mrs. Rosie Bedrosian has been carrying the torch for many years," said the new principal. "She's given us what we need to take it to the next level. She will always be a part of this school and be remembered for her patience, endurance, and the love she holds for our heritage."

Ms. Mekhitarian plans to expand the basic curriculum and scope of extracurricular activities while remaining focused on the broader objectives of the CKACS. "It is the mission of the school to develop people of substance, of class, people who fulfill their personal goals and reach out to society, leaving it better for the next generation." ❏



Rosie Bedrosian, who is retiring as CKACS principal, with students during this year's Awards Day presentations.



New CKACS Principal Sophie Mekhitarian and CKACS Board chairperson Ara Karkazian.

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Community

“Cheers to Conservation” event in New York will promote environmental awareness, celebrate Sarkis Acopian’s vision

NEW YORK – A grand vision has turned into an even grander reality for an Armenian-American industrialist whose passion for the environment has enhanced environmental understanding and conservation, not only in Armenia but across the globe. The late Sarkis Acopian’s mission of promoting conservation awareness among the citizenry of Armenia and the diaspora is being continued at the Yerevan-based Acopian Center for the Environment.

On Thursday, July 30, the Acopian family will sponsor an event, “Cheers to Conservation,” hosted by the Young Professionals of Greater New York at the AGBU headquarters in New York City. The event is intended to encourage public involvement for conservation in Armenia.

The republic is home to a multitude of habitats and species that are quickly disappearing, becoming extinct or migrating to Turkey and other neighboring countries because of deforestation, overhunting, wetland drainage and pollution, says nephew **Alex Karapetian**, 27. “The current lack of environmental preservation in Armenia isn’t just an Armenian issue,” he adds. “It’s a global issue and everyone should be involved.”

Mr. Acopian, a successful Armenian-American entrepreneur who first started his power supply business, Acopian Technical Company, in 1957, was a philanthropist who believed in supporting the community quietly but with unmatched generosity.

In addition to the Acopian Center for the Environment, the Acopian name is synonymous with several world-class educational facilities, including the Acopian Engineering Center at Lafayette College, in Easton, Pennsylvania, the Acopian Center for Ornithology at Muhlenberg College, in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and the Acopian Center for Conservation Learning at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Acopian also established endowments for leadership at the American University of Armenia (AUA) in Yerevan, Lafayette College, and Florida Institute of Technology, in Melbourne, Florida.

A global and progressive thinker, Mr. Acopian wanted to make a lasting impact in Armenia as well. Not satisfied with just monetary contributions, he initiated an informed environmental movement in the country using a two-pronged approach to attain his goal, beginning in 1992.

First, he established a department at the American University in Armenia to promote environmental conservation through research, education, and public involvement. Today, this internationally recognized, award-winning department is known as the Acopian Center for the Environment (ACE).

In addition to providing specialization within the field of conservation, the American University of Armenia requires all of its students to take at least one course in environmental studies before graduating. Mr. Acopian believed that by providing an educational facility that promoted conservation and environmental awareness, the citizenry of Armenia, especially the younger generation, would begin to appreciate their natural resources and encourage others to also protect Armenia’s biodiversity.

Second, he created and spearheaded the Birds of Armenia Project (BOA); assembling a team of



The Princess Royal (Princess Anne) presented Dr. Karen Aghababian, ACE director, with the Whitley Award of Nature, Britain’s highest conservation award, for his research on the White Stork Project.



From left: Dr. Keith L. Bildstein, Hawk Mountain Director, Alex Karapetian, and Jeff Acopian.

ornithologists from around the world to work on a field guide. His goal was to promote conservation awareness in Armenia and introduce its rich natural treasures to the world. BOA has since published three important works: *A Field Guide to Birds of Armenia* (1997), (in Armenian, 1999), a reference map of Armenia (1999), and *The Handbook of the Birds of Armenia* (1999), all of which were published at a time when the newly independent Republic of Armenia needed to thrive on its own.

Mr. Acopian’s son **Jeff** and daughter-in-law **Helen** have been a vital part of the family’s mission of promoting environmental conservation in Armenia since the inception of the Birds of Armenia Project in 1992. The field guide was the beginning of an awakening for Armenians to realize what they had and for people outside Armenia to learn what Armenia had, they say.

Supporting the Acopians’ claim is **Frank Gill**, vice president of the National Audubon Society who praised *A Field Guide to Birds of Armenia* as “clearly and effectively documenting the bird life of a region largely unknown in the West, but richly endowed with biological and cultural diversity. Here an international team of expert ornithologists shines the international spotlight on the fascinating birds of Armenia in one of the world’s ... very best regional field guides.” The field guide now serves to introduce both Armenians and international birders to the bird life of Armenia—an initial step in better protecting this portion of the country’s biological heritage.

Today, the Acopian Center for the Environment sponsors many educational programs for youth. A conservation education competition called “Birds in my Backyard” encourages schoolchildren to build bird feeders, observe the birds, and take a photo or draw a picture of a bird that comes to the feeder. This competition also puts special emphasis on the youth and children’s participation in discussing current environmental challenges in the region.

In May 2007, the **Princess Royal** (Princess Anne) of Great Britain and Sir **David Attenborough** presented Dr. **Karen Aghababian**, ACE director, with the Whitley Award of Nature, Britain’s highest conservation award, for his research on the White Stork Project.

With the help of Armenian villagers throughout the country, this project monitors the very common and abundant white stork as a potential bio-indicator of environmental changes in Armenia. As “nest neighbors” in the data collection process, the villagers gain a better understanding of wildlife ecology and improve their relationship with nesting storks.



An ACE staff member surveying a villager outside the villager’s home as part of her data collection for the White Stork Project.

“People don’t realize that if we do nothing, Armenia’s natural resources will be permanently depleted,” Mr. Acopian once said. “Unfortunately, planting trees won’t revive natural forest systems that are being destroyed, and in a few years, environmental preservation in Armenia will be a lost cause. We can only be ultimately successful if the youth join our fight for environmental awareness.” Thus, the Acopians reached out to their nephew, Alex Karapetian, for his experience and ties to the Armenian-American youth.

Upon joining his uncle at Acopian Technical Company, Mr. Karapetian was awakened to the urgent need for action to safeguard Armenia’s unique natural areas. “We Armenians have strong roots and my generation needs to come together for this great and urgent cause to preserve our homeland’s natural resources,” he says.

Originally from Los Angeles, Mr. Karapetian has served as the assistant grassroots director at the Armenian Assembly of America in Washington, and managed the Assembly’s annual summer internship program. He has also taken leadership roles among the young alumni of Lafayette College.

Dr. **Keith Bildstein**, the Sarkis Acopian Director of Conservation Science at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, the home of the Acopian Center for Conservation Learning,



Acopian Engineering Center dedication at Lafayette College in Easton, Pa.

sums up Mr. Acopian’s global conservation impact:

“Sarkis had the twin gifts of recognizing meaningful conservation actions, and supporting conservation organizations that wanted to achieve them. At my organization, the Acopian Center’s unique international internship program has

trained more than 300 promising young conservationists from 58 countries on six continents, including three Armenians. This new generation of conservationists is now helping to protect bird life globally.

“Quite literally, Mr. Acopian’s informed giving has made all the difference in the world.”

Siren's Feast, or on the road with Nancy Mehagian

Siren's Feast: An Edible Odyssey by Nancy Mehagian. Cielo Press, 2008, 340 pp.

reviewed by **Shushan Avagyan**

Author Nancy Mehagian was glad to see our new column about food, and she sent us some of her recipes. Here – for you to make at home – is her cheese boerag. Meanwhile, as a reminder, we reprint Shushan Avagyan's review of Siren's Feast.

Siren's Feast: An Edible Odyssey is a fascinating autobiography, often described as a culinary memoir, by Nancy Mehagian, who has been involved with food and healing since 1969, when she opened the first vegetarian restaurant on the Spanish island of Ibiza.

Set primarily against the backdrop of the 1960s and early 1970s, and highly reminiscent of Jack Kerouac's famous novel about spontaneous road trips across America, *Siren's Feast*

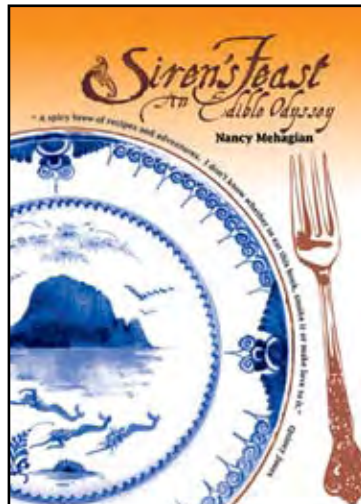
Shushan Avagyan is a doctoral student in English and comparative literature at Illinois State University. She has translated a volume of poetry by Shushanik Kurghinian and a book on plot by Viktor Shklovsky.

weaves stories of Mehagian's spiritual journey from the suburbs of Phoenix, Arizona, to the most remote outposts of the world, with over 40 delicious recipes, including those from her Armenian mother's kitchen.

The book opens with the most amusing lines, "Don't you dare have that baby today, Florence, and ruin our dinner," as the family matriarch issues instructions to Nancy's mother on Christmas Day. Shortly after Nancy's parents return home from the family dinner, Florence goes into labor, giving birth to a daughter, who "having been made to wait developed a certain impulsiveness."

By 14, Nancy starts sneaking out from home to hang out at the ballrooms in South Phoenix, where Ray Charles and James Brown performed. Later, in 1966, when she transfers to the University of Southern California, she persuades her parents to send her to Italy to study at the University of Florence for a semester. By this time, she has already read Dante and Pirandello in the originals, smoked marijuana, and dropped acid with a group of friends.

In January 1968 Nancy flies to Lisbon, from where her incessant travels begin. She hitchhikes through Spain, boards a ferry to Tangier, and, instead of going to Italy, decides to stay in



Siren's Feast: An Edible Odyssey.

Morocco, where she meets her first love, a Spaniard named Alejandro. Her parents manage to coax her to come back to Phoenix for a short period. Here Nancy meets Taj Mahal, who later comes to visit her in Ibiza.

The sun-drenched island of Ibiza, like a magnet attracting colonies of American and European hippies, artists, and musicians, soon becomes Nancy's second home, where she opens a vegetarian restaurant called Double Duck, welcoming everyone from her multifarious "Ibiza family" of expatriates. But the road keeps calling her, and after staying in Ibiza for a year, Nancy sets out for Kathmandu and from there to New Delhi, where she meets up with friends from Ibiza.

The next voyage takes Nancy



Nancy Mehagian, author of *Siren's Feast*.

to Beirut, from where, after a series of dangerous affairs, she ends up in Syria with a troupe of cabaret dancers. In her typically impulsive way, Nancy falls in love with a Bedouin fiddler and at 24 becomes pregnant with his child. Unfortunately this moment of joy is short-lived as Nancy gets herself in serious trouble and ends up in the infamous London prison. After a 16-month incarceration and giving birth to a lovely daughter named Vedra, Nancy's journey comes full circle when she returns home and finds her true purpose and meaningful work through Mary Burmeister, an enigmatic teacher of the ancient Japanese healing art of jin shin jyutsu.

Mehagian begins each chapter with an epigraph from various adored authors and poets such as James Baldwin, Cervantes, William Blake, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Oscar Wilde, Zora Neale Hurston, and many others. And to offer food for thought, literally, the book's 36 chapters are interspersed with most delectable recipes from all over the globe – as Quincy Jones puts it, "I don't know whether to eat this book, smoke it, or make love to it."

Siren's Feast is full of vitality as well as profundity, resonating with meditations and memoirs that grip you with sensual impressions and storytelling that's captivating, engaging, and fresh. ☞

Cheese Beorag

A tradition Armenian delicacy made with an old family twist. As an hors d'oeuvre it cannot be matched.

- ✔ 1 pound filo dough (if dough is frozen, thaw overnight in the refrigerator)
- ✔ ½ pound butter, melted

Filling:

- ✔ ½ lb. feta cheese (I prefer French or Bulgarian as they are less salty)
- ✔ ½ lb. jack cheese, grated
- ✔ 1 bunch parsley, chopped very finely
- ✔ ½ tsp. black pepper
- ✔ 2 eggs, beaten

Custard:

- ✔ 1 cup milk
- ✔ 1 egg

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

In a mixing bowl, crumble feta cheese. Add grated jack cheese. Next, add the eggs, parsley, and black pepper. Blend well and set aside.

Set up a workspace. Filo dough is paper-thin and dries out when exposed to air, so it will be necessary to work quickly. Have enough room on countertop for dough, melted butter, and baking dish. I use a clay baking dish approximately 10" x 14" x 2". Glass and stainless steel are also good. Open filo dough and lay sheets of filo on a piece of wax paper or foil. Place two sheets of filo at a time in the baking dish. Using a pastry brush, brush dough with the melted butter. Continue layering the dough in this manner, two sheets at a time, brushing every two sheets with melted butter until half of the dough is used.

Next spread the cheese mixture evenly over the buttered dough. Then continue layering dough and brushing with but-



Nancy Mehagian's cheese beorag.

ter until all the dough is used.

Place baking dish in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour to harden the butter. Using a sharp knife cut the unbaked

beorag into serving-sized pieces (about 2 inch squares). Blend milk and egg together and pour over the top so that the liquid goes down inside the cuts.

Bake in the oven for 25–30 minutes or until pastry rises and turns golden brown. Remove from oven and serve hot. Serves 12 or more. ☞

Send us your recipes at reporter.am

books

Yes, We Have celebrates Armenian contributions to U.S. civilization

Up-to-date volume features numerous little-known inventors and luminaries

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Arts Fund has released *Yes, We Have*, a compendium of American-Armenian contributions to American life. The illustrated volume contains contributions by American-Armenians in the fields of science, technology, visual arts (including film), literature, music, sports, and public service.

Yes, We Have was compiled by **Stepan Partamian**, founder and president of the Armenian Arts Fund.

“As I researched the material for the book and learned of all the wonderful milestones achieved by Armenians in this country, I was simply in awe of the range and significance of their contributions to American civilization,” Partamian said.

“*Yes, We Have* presents a mosaic of American-Armenian accomplishments and recognizes the extraordinary men and women behind them,” Partamian continued. “Today we take pride in them not only as exemplary sons and daughters of the United States, but as sources of inspiration and role models, particularly for the new generation of American-Armenians.”

Yes, We Have opens with the April 24, 2009 statement of President **Barack Obama**. The

president’s statement reads, in part: “The United States of America is a far richer country because of the many Americans of Armenian descent who have contributed to our society.”

The rich history of the American-Armenians began as early as the 1600s, when Martin the Armenian, an expert silkworm grower, settled in Jamestown Colony, Virginia. The first entry in *Yes, We Have* belongs to him. The book goes on to document a panoply of achievements by American-Armenians in the centuries since, from the Armenian-born **Thomas Corwin** (governor of Ohio and U.S. secretary of the Treasury) to the rock band System Of A Down, academic **Vartan Gregorian**, and California Assembly member **Paul Krekorian**.

Yes, We Have also includes information about numerous lesser-known American-Armenian luminaries such as organ-transplant pioneer **John Najarian** and **Oscar Banker** (Asadour Sarafian), one of America’s most prolific inventors and a pioneer of consumer advocacy.

Oscar Banker invented the first practical automatic transmission and successfully fought car companies to have them adopt his own safety standards. It’s why he came to be known as “the man who made Ralph Nader,” the consumer advocate. Banker next invented the primary controls of the first generation of helicopters. Thanks to his designs, U.S.-made helicop-

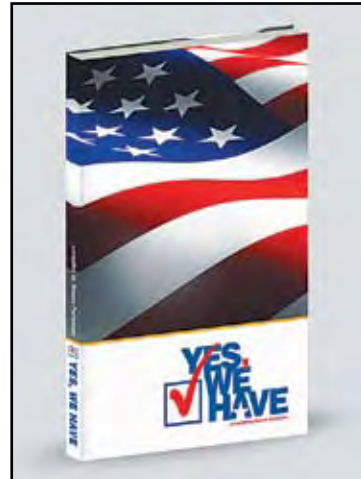


Stepan Partamian.

ters saved the lives of an estimated 20,000 service members fighting in the Pacific during the Second World War. Banker practically donated his invention to the American government. His long list of groundbreaking inventions also includes the first versatile needleless inoculation gun and the first four-color flat-bed printing press.

“Banker is one of those tireless geniuses whose work has made American life as we know it all the better,” Partamian said.

Since the release of *Yes, We Have* earlier this month, many readers have bought extra copies of the book and sent them as presents to various U.S. elected officials, at Partamian’s prompting. “We’re doing this because we need to remind American leaders of their American-Armenian constituents’ outstanding contributions to our country. It’s also a great way to share our sense of



Yes, We Have.

pride with the American public at large,” Partamian explained.

The Armenian Arts Fund is encouraging readers throughout America to give copies of *Yes, We Have* to elected officials and institutions including members of Congress, the administration, local governments, school boards, libraries, and schools. The Armenian Arts Fund has simplified the gift-giving process through a special shopping cart on its site, yeswehave.org. Readers who visit the site can order copies of the book and instruct the publisher to send them to officials of their choosing. The Armenian Arts Fund will then mail out the books with no shipping charges (within the 50 states). According to Partamian, the *Yes, We Have* site will include a list of all U.S. elected officials who have received copies of the book as well as those who haven’t yet. “The goal is to share the wealth of American-Armenian achieve-

ments with every important government and community office in this country, by presenting them with copies of the book,” Partamian stressed.

All proceeds from the sale of *Yes, We Have* will benefit “The Armenian in America,” the latest initiative of the Armenian Arts Fund. Kicking off on August 1, 2009, “The Armenian in America” is a film and book project that will document off-the-beaten track Armenian life throughout the United States. Partamian, who will drive across the country to conduct interviews and film his subjects, is encouraging people to give him leads and suggestions as to which Armenian individuals, landmarks, and institutions to include in the documentary.

Established in Los Angeles in 1999, the Armenian Arts Fund is a nonprofit, independent organization that promotes artistic excellence, open public discourse, and the dissemination of Armenian culture. Future plans of the organization include the publication in 2015 of a volume titled “Gifts to the World: A Compendium of Armenian Contributions to Humanity,” which will introduce an overview of Armenian contributions to the world as a whole. The book will be released on the centenary of the 1915 Genocide. ☒

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Updating the Armenian canon

by **Albert Keshgegian**

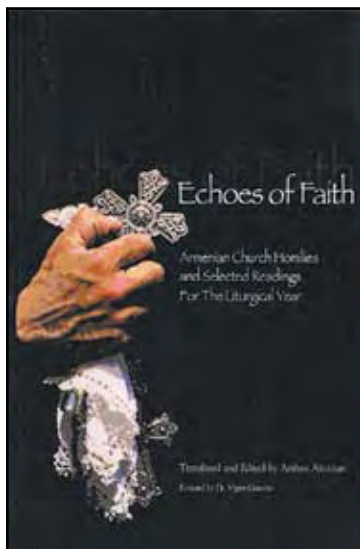
So often in the Armenian Church we emphasize the writings and achievements of our early Church fathers. These individuals, although crucial to the development of Armenian Christianity, lived hundreds of years ago, in very different circumstances from those of our society today. Even among the saints, Church members whom we honor as exemplary followers of Christ, the official roster ends with St. Gregory of Tatev, who lived in the 14th century. Sometimes it can seem that the Church stopped being a living institution back then and our function now is to venerate the ancient past.

Of course the Armenian Church continues to be vibrant, and Fr. Arshen Aivazian’s remarkable achievement is to bring witness to that point.

In *Echoes of Faith*, he presents a collection and translation of

writings not from antiquity, but from Church leaders of the first half of the 20th century. This was a time of great stresses in the Armenian nation and in the Church – early massacres, followed by the Genocide and the oppression of the Church by the Soviet Union. These are events that occurred in the lifetime of some still alive today. The authors include individuals such as Archbishop Torkom Koushagian, considered the greatest homilist of the time, and Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, who was so instrumental in strengthening the Armenian Church in the United States, and to whom the book is dedicated. Sources include books published by these individuals, as well as periodicals, such as the scholarly publication of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, *Sion*.

Fr. Aivazian presents these homilies, poems, editorials, and meditations on various topics approximately following the



Echoes of Faith: Armenian Church Homilies and Selected Readings for the Liturgical Year, trans. and ed. Rev. Fr. Arshen Aivazian (New Rochelle, N.Y.: St. Nersess Seminary Press, 2008)

Church year calendar. The selections start with the New Year, followed by the Nativity, and finish with Advent, the eve of the Nativity, and exploration of several Christian virtues. Prior to each selection, Fr. Aivazian

provides a brief introduction and explanation of the topic or the event being celebrated. The explanations are themselves a useful summary of many of the beliefs of the Armenian Church. At the end of the book, there is also a helpful short biography of each of the authors.

These writings provide an interesting overview of the thoughts of our Church leaders who held fast to and promulgated the basic Christian beliefs and virtues during a time (which happened to be of great turbulence) that we can relate to. An editorial on the “Spirituality of Lent,” for example, compares fasting as a requirement for the health of our soul and the medical therapies and diets that we willingly accept for the health of our bodies. A homily for the Second Sunday of Advent (“The Suggestion of Events”) explores the age-old question of why bad things happen to good people.

To me, faith is as much a matter of the heart as of the mind. A

religious writing should not only educate, but also inspire and emotionally involve the reader. A number of the writings do just that. The one that touched me the most was a poem titled, “I Thirst,” by Nersess Vartabed Danielian. It describes this “last word” of Christ not just as physical thirst, but as thirst for “the love of the fallen man/ Because it was out of his love for all men/ That he drank the bitter cup of the cross.” The biography notes that Hayr Nersess was killed during the Genocide; he knelt down and prayed as he was executed under a tree. Could Hayr Nersess be one of the saints of the 20th century, not as yet canonized by the Church?

This book will appeal to anyone who wishes to learn more about Christianity and the Armenian Church, especially as seen through the writings of its greatest spiritual thinkers of the early 20th century. ☒

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panorama



Yerevan's Lovers' Park is a popular place for lovers of all ages, and for children. Here, the park is hosting an event dedicated to World AIDS day, while the everyday life of the park continues.



Maria Abrahamyan, 17, lives in Moscow, where she takes classes in photojournalism. She asked us for some assignments. We told her we wanted scenes from Yerevan. She chose to focus on Armenian hands.



panorama



Below right: Among the joys of Yerevan for children – and their parents – are the watercolor tables in many parks. Children choose a white clay figure and paint it, all for a dollar or two. Nearby, invariably, there's a place for the parents to get some coffee. Above and top: One of the places to get coffee – or cocktails – along with crepes, Asian food, or pizza, is Santa Fe, across from the Cascade. Besides the watercolor table, there is a sandbox playground with a very competent attendant (not seen here) who keeps the children occupied and fairly safe.



Kilikia on the high seas with its calm-weather mast. In *Creation*, the unusual setup of the mast is discussed and placed in historical context. Photos: Areg Nazaryan, Samvel Babasyan, Alexandr Margaryan.



Creation tells the story of a passion fulfilled

by Vincent Lima

YEREVAN – The documentary film *Creation*, directed and narrated (in the Armenian version) by Areg Nazaryan, starts in 1985 with a group of men with a passion for naval lore. They live in a landlocked republic of the Soviet Union, Armenia. But they know Armenia was not always landlocked. They remember the Cilician kingdom of Armenia, on the Mediterranean coast, and they are studying its ship building and navigation practices, as well as sea routes, old flags, and the like.

They have formed a club, the Ayas Nautical Research Club, and they have big dreams. They will build a full-scale replica of a 13th-century Armenian ship and sail it on the high seas.

Why not? Why can't a group of dedicated enthusiasts do what they set their minds and hearts at doing?

I am watching the film standing up in a crowded screening room at Yerevan's Moscow Theater. It's the Golden Apricot International Film Festival, and though I have paid for my ticket and have arrived 15 minutes early, I am one of perhaps 20 people with no seats. I have been to the festival in its third, fourth, fifth, and now sixth years, and have always been struck by how poorly organized it is every year.

Felling a tree

I consider leaving. The narration at this point is impersonal, and the film has not yet grabbed me. I know they built the ship – *Kilikia*, or Cilicia – and sailed it. I even saw *Kilikia* on display in central Yerevan a few weeks ago. So there's no suspense as to the outcome.

But, still, I wonder: How can they pursue this hobby when the decade that follows 1985 is the decade in which the Soviet Union collapses, the Karabakh war rages, there's no work, no light, no water?

So I stay. And I am very glad I did. The narrator warms to his task. It turns out that he is one of the group, and he is telling his own story as well as the story of the group.

We hardly hear about the crises in the world they occupy. Rather, we see them in a forest, selecting an enormous tree to fell. We see them moving the tree to a clearing, where it has to dry out for a whole year. Then we see the men – they are all men – split the tree into long, long planks that will be the hull of their ship.

Nothing high-tech

All the while, I am waiting for someone to come, make off with the wood to burn for heat and light in the difficult winter of 1993. But no such thing is even hinted at.

The Ayas members are using



Above left, Ayas club members prepare to fell an enormous tree to provide very long planks for the hull of the ship. Left: Building *Kilikia* took 11 years. On the left is Karen Balayan.

13th-century techniques. Nothing high-tech. Imagine smoothing and sanding down and entire ship, inside and out, by

hand, without power tools. The ship is 20 meters, or 22 yards, long.

Slowly, but surely, before our

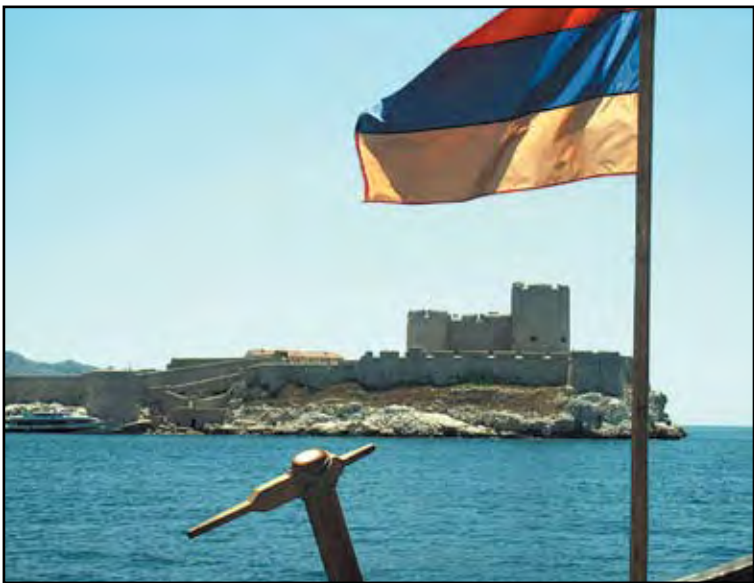
eyes, a ship is built. It takes 11 years.

Continued on page 15

Creation tells the story of a passion fulfilled



Kilikia makes its way through muddy mountain roads to the Black Sea. The journey took 10 days.



Kilikia at Ayas in Cilicia, Sept. 22, 2004.



Proudly displaying the colors of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Kilikia sails.

Continued from page 14

It's built, but is it seaworthy? First stop: Lake Sevan. The narrator tells us Lake Sevan replicates some of the challenges of sailing on the open sea. An unfortunate event, which we do not see, costs one member of the group his life. The ship, however, is fine. And the dream lives on.

Birds of a feather

Now it is time to move the ship to the Black Sea. It is not a given that they will manage. The ship has to travel through poorly maintained mountain roads. Again and again, we see the group digging the trailer carrying the ship out of the mud. Next thing we know, they have run into a group of Scandinavian enthusiasts who are reliving their own history, navigating a river in a replica they have built.

A few weeks ago, I happened upon another documentary: a replica of *HMS Endeavour* had



Kilikia started in Georgia, at the Black Sea, made it through the Mediterranean, to the Atlantic, up to the Baltic Sea, and on through Russia, back to Georgia.

been built, and a group of volunteers were going to relive Captain Cook's journey of discovery. They had professional sailors in command, and we got to follow a lot of their personal interactions and thoughts as the journey progressed.

In *Creation*, we are told that selecting the crew was one of the hardest parts of the job: you don't want to be stuck with in-

compatible people for weeks on end, or to have to rely on them in life-or-death situations. We don't see any of the tensions that may have arisen, or really get to know anyone. That's a shame. As I watch, I wonder who that man with the beard is. (Subsequent research reveals that he is Karen Balayan,

Continued on page 17

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Program Grid 20 - 26 July USA Armenia

		20 July	21 July	22 July	23 July	24 July	25 July	26 July
		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
EST	PST							
09:30 PM	12:30 AM	The Armenian	The Armenian	The Armenian	The Armenian	The Armenian	Hot Line	Hot Line
10:00 PM	1:00 AM	Stepan Partamian	Stepan Partamian	Stepan Partamian	Stepan Partamian	Stepan Partamian	Hamerk	Gongret Show
10:30 PM	1:30 AM	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer		P S Club
11:00 PM	2:00 AM							Blef
11:30 PM	2:30 AM							Yere 1 (ye:re:van)
12:00 AM	3:00 AM	7 Mekhq	7 Mekhq	7 Mekhq	7 Mekhq	7 Mekhq		Mer Lezoun - Mer Khoske
12:30 AM	3:30 AM	5	1	2	3	4	Khohanotz	Mer Aybenaran
1:00 AM	4:00 AM	Khohanotz	Khohanotz	Khohanotz	Khohanotz	Khohanotz	Arogchabahagan	Century
1:30 AM	4:30 AM	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	Arogchabahagan	Arogchabahagan	Discovery	Discovery
2:00 AM	5:00 AM	Discovery	Discovery	Discovery	Discovery	Discovery	Century	Film Story
2:30 AM	5:30 AM	Century	Century	Century	Century	Century	Gevo	
3:00 AM	6:00 AM	Gevo	Gevo	Gevo	Gevo	Gevo	Tesangouyn	Hay Film
3:30 AM	6:30 AM	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	Armenian Movie
4:00 AM	7:00 AM						Deal or No Deal	Deal or No Deal
4:30 AM	7:30 AM							
5:00 AM	8:00 AM	CLONE Repeat	CLONE Repeat	CLONE Repeat	CLONE Repeat	CLONE Repeat	News	Hot Line
5:30 AM	8:30 AM	5	1	2	3	4	Mer Aibenarane	
6:00 AM	9:00 AM	Sassounian Commentary	News	News	News	News	Mer Lezoun Mer Khoske	Armenian Teletime
6:30 AM	9:30 AM	Unlucky Happiness Repeat	Unlucky Happiness Repeat	Unlucky Happiness Repeat	Unlucky Happiness Repeat	Unlucky Happiness Repeat	Yere 1 (ye:re:van)	
7:00 AM	10:00 AM	5	1	2	3	4	P S Club	Film Story
7:30 AM	10:30 AM	Bari Kisher Hayer	Bari Kisher Hayer	Bari Kisher Hayer	Bari Kisher Hayer	Bari Kisher Hayer	When Stars are Dancing (Hamerk)	Hay Film
8:00 AM	11:00 AM	Live	Live	Live	Live	Live	Hay Film	Armenian Movie
8:30 AM	11:30 AM						Armenian Movie	Hamerk
9:00 AM	12:00 PM							
9:30 AM	12:30 PM	The Armenian	The Armenian	The Armenian	The Armenian	The Armenian	News	Love E Lee
10:00 AM	01:00 PM	Stepan Partamian	Stepan Partamian	Stepan Partamian	Stepan Partamian	Stepan Partamian	Tesangouyn	Tesangouyn
10:30 AM	01:30 PM	Sassounian Commentary	News	News	News	News	Mi Gatil Megher	Mi Gatil Megher
11:00 AM	02:00 PM	7 Mekhq	7 Mekhq	7 Mekhq	7 Mekhq	7 Mekhq	Yere 1 (ye:re:van)	Yere 1 (ye:re:van)
11:30 AM	02:30 PM	1	2	3	4	5	Garkin Haghortum	Garkin Haghortum
12:00 PM	03:00 PM	P S Club	Mi Gatil Megher	Blef	Yere 1	Garkin Haghortum	Sassounian Commentary	Sassounian Commentary
12:30 PM	03:30 PM	YO YO	YO YO	YO YO	YO YO	YO YO	Discovery	Deal or No Deal
01:00 PM	04:00 PM	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	Arogchabahagan	Arogchabahagan	Century	
01:30 PM	04:30 PM	Live from America	Live from America	Live from America	Mi Gatil Megher	Mi Gatil Megher	Mer Lezoun Mer Khoske	Blef
02:00 PM	05:00 PM	News	News	News	News	News	Armenia Diaspora	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding
02:30 PM	05:30 PM	CLONE Original	CLONE Original	CLONE Original	CLONE Original	CLONE Original	Deal or No Deal	Directions With Rafi Manoukian
03:00 PM	06:00 PM	1	2	3	4	5	Sassounian Commentary	When Stars are Dancing
03:30 AM	06:30 AM	Unlucky Happiness Original	Unlucky Happiness Original	Unlucky Happiness Original	Unlucky Happiness Original	Unlucky Happiness Original	Gongret Show	When Stars are Dancing
04:00 PM	07:00 PM	1	2	3	4	5	PS NEWS	Yere 1 (ye:re:van)
04:30 AM	07:30 AM	News	News	News	News	News	Film Story	Cool Program
05:00 PM	08:00 PM	Gyanki Keene - Original	Gyanki Keene - Original	Gyanki Keene - Original	Gyanki Keene -Original	Gyanki Keene -Original	Hot Line	Hot Line
05:30 PM	08:30 PM	1	2	3	4	5		
06:00 PM	09:00 PM	Bari Kisher Hayer	Bari Kisher Hayer	Bari Kisher Hayer	Bari Kisher Hayer	Bari Kisher Hayer		
06:30 PM	09:30 PM							
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08:30 PM	11:30 PM							
09:00 PM	12:00 AM							

Art Officially Favored to be released in time for major film festivals

Argentine-Armenian filmmaker Martín Yernazian has a universal message

Michael Masley is not your typical street performer. According to Argentine-Armenian filmmaker Martín Yernazian, Masley revolutionized 2.5 millennia of musical history by taking one of the most ancient and culturally universal string instruments and giving it a voice of its own. He invented a technique that allowed him to bow, pick, and hammer the strings all at the same time.

With his "bowhammer" cymbalom Michael has managed to mesmerize countless people, among them Steven Tyler, Joe Elliott, and Jack Douglas.

Art Officially Favored is a movie that follows the musical adventures and struggles of an artist armed with his creative impulse, challenging today's cultural paradigms. Directed by Martín Yernazian, this is a promising project that has already received attention from filmmaker Michael Moore.

After five turbulent years of production, Yernazian hopes to complete the project in time for all the major film festivals. The message of the movie is a universal one - it is a warm and touching film that will speak to the heart of everyone who sees it.

Martín was born in Argentina

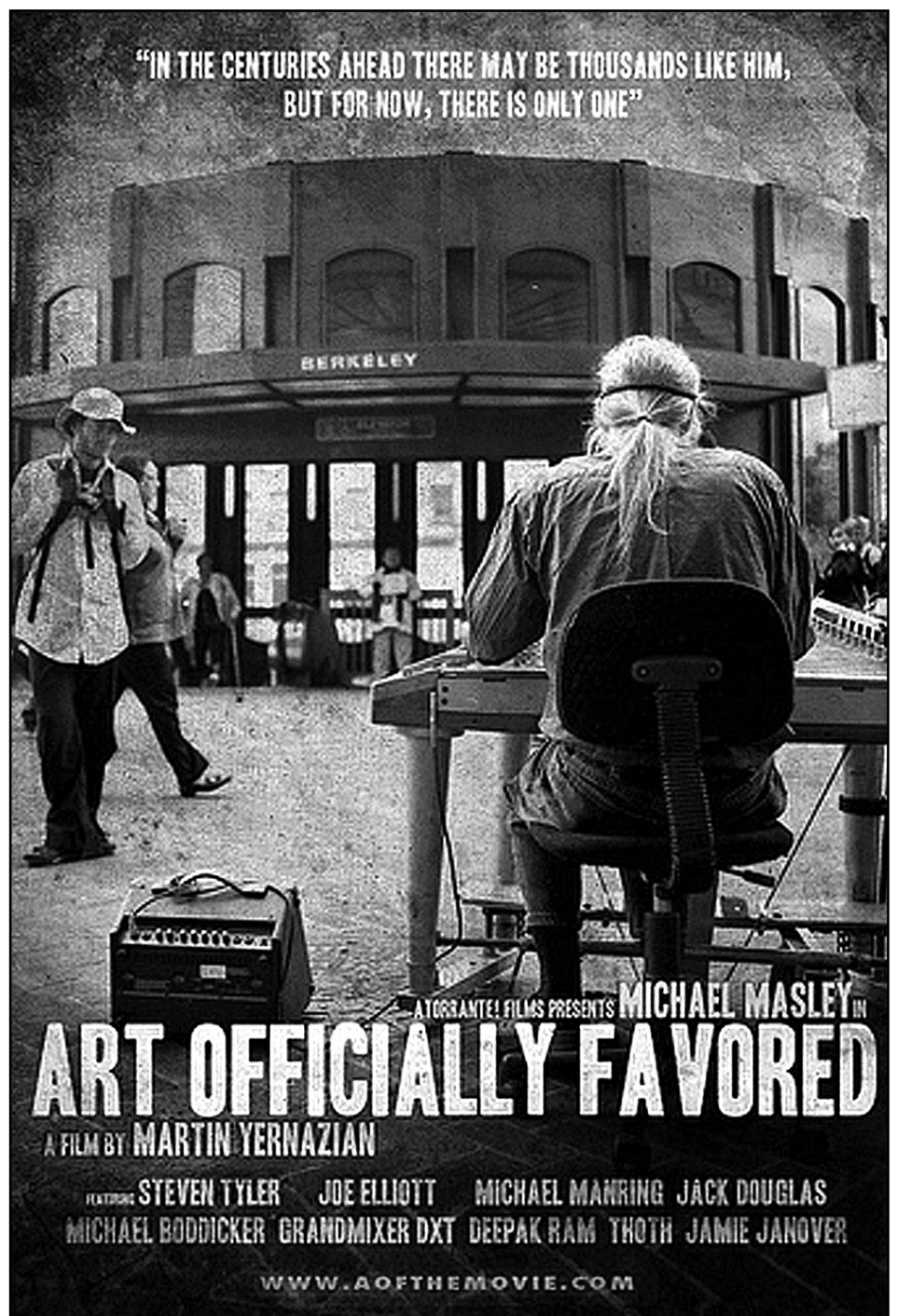


in 1982. From a very early age he toyed with photography and writing. At the age of 12, during a trip to Los Angeles, he saw the Hollywood sign for the first time and realized that he was going to pursue a career as a film director.

Seven years later, he returned to Los Angeles. Today, he resides in Berkeley, where he met musician Michael Masley. Since mid-2004 Yernazian has been working on *Art Officially Favored*, documenting Masley's adventures and day-to-day struggles.

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Above: Martín Yernazian at the camera. Right: *Art Officially Favored*.



Satellite Broadcast Program Grid

20 - 26 July



20 July		21 July		22 July		23 July		24 July		25 July		26 July	
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
EST	PST	EST	PST	EST	PST	EST	PST	EST	PST	EST	PST	EST	PST
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Creation tells the story of a passion fulfilled

Continued from page 15

who has been in many ways the driving force of the club and the project.)

Though it's a bit impersonal, the film is still fascinating. Even for someone standing up.

Now we're on the Black Sea.

Kilikia is displaying the Armenian tricolor. But wait, there's a jagged white line on it. It's not the flag of Armenia, but that of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. And one of the guys present for the launch looks an awful lot like Zori Balayan, the prominent Karabakh activist. (It is him.)

On the briny

We have our first major storm. The enormous wooden rudder breaks. What is to be done? As the ship tosses, and throws the rudder – now on deck – and the crew around, someone remembers something he had read somewhere. They attach metal buckets to long ropes, and steer the ship by dropping the buckets on port or starboard, and hanging tight. Somehow, the next day, they make it back to Poti, where they undertake repairs.

It's not possible to be absolutely faithful to 13th-century practice at sea in the 21st century. There are enormous container ships out there, and others traveling at high speeds, relying on radar. There are also rules and laws that must be followed. So we see lifeboats and some high-tech equipment on board, but the crew, we are told, tries to stick to 13th-century methods to the extent possible.

Before long, we join the crew on their way to the Mediterranean, and from there to the Atlantic.

In the first year of their journey, they made it to Italy, where they spent the winter. Then, in 2005, they started in Venice, home of the Armenian Mekhitarist Congregation, and entered the Atlantic by way of Gibraltar. They stopped in Lisbon, home of the Gulbenkian Foundation. And they made their way to England, where they spent the winter. In the third and final year, they headed via the Baltic Sea to Russia and made their way back down to the Black Sea.

For the crew, the highlight of the trip comes in the first year,



The smaller sail, *Creation* teaches us, is for stormy weather. Though the crew sought to replicate 13th century conditions, they were legally obliged to carry safety equipment.

on September 22, 2004. They arrive in Cilicia, at the fortress of Ayas, the namesake of their club.

In Turkish territorial waters, instead of the Karabakh flag we see Armenia's flag. And here's the ship *Kilikia*, next to the medieval castle. The narrator says something about the ship's genetic memory, which doesn't make a lot of sense, but it's moving to see the Armenian

ship sailing in what used to be the waters of the Cilician Kingdom of Armenia.

Watch the film if you get a chance. It tells a compelling story, and it tells it well.



Community

Khatchkar memorial in Philadelphia for Armenian who fought in the Civil War gets go-ahead with a major donation

PHILADELPHIA — With a donation of \$10,000 from someone who wishes to remain anonymous at this time, the project for a *khatchkar* memorial for the only Armenian to have served in the American Civil War will go ahead, **Sandra Selverian**, president of the Philadelphia Armenian-American Veterans Association (PAAVA), has announced.

A final appeal is underway for more donations so as to underwrite perpetual care for the gravesite, Ms. Selverian added.

Khachadour Garabedian was born near Constantinople and came to Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 1850s, where he worked as a machinist, and became an American citizen. He enlisted in the Union Navy during the Civil War, and held what was then officer rank. He served aboard two ships engaged in the blockade of Southern ports — first along the Atlantic Coast and later in the Gulf of Mexico. He was discharged in Philadelphia in August 1865 and remained here, thus

becoming the first Armenian in the city. He married into a prominent Philadelphia family, and died in 1881. There were no children.

He is buried in Fernwood Cemetery in southwest Philadelphia.

Mr. Garabedian was “discovered” by chance by **Gary Kooltokian** of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, who uncovered Garabedian’s early years in America. His researches reached Philadelphia, and the rest of Garabedian’s story was developed here.

“The reason we needed a grave-

stone for Garabedian,” said **Paul Sookiasian**, who did extensive research on Garabedian’s life, “is that the original stone disintegrated in the 1950s and his grave is without a marker. We thought that a traditional *khatchkar* would be ideal replacement.” Mr. Sookiasian brought the Garabedian story to PAAVA, which readily agreed to undertake a fund-raising drive for the monument.

The 10-year-old PAAVA is composed of veterans from the tri-state

Philadelphia area as well as former Philadelphians who want to retain their ties with the area. At its peak, it had more than 420 members, and it enjoys the support of all five churches in the area, members from which serve on PAAVA’s board.

No date has been set for the unveiling ceremony.

connect:
PAAVA Civil War Project/o Richard Weinsheimer300 Ernest Way, Apt. 229Philadelphia PA 19111

Armenia Fund’s HyeBridge Telehealth program demonstrated at Armenian Medical World Congress

Benefits discussed and demonstrated

NEW YORK — Programs and benefits of Armenia Fund USA’s recently unveiled HyeBridge Telehealth™ program were presented at the Tenth Armenian Medical World Congress held in New York City in early July.

“Our HyeBridge Telehealth program is the next important phase in our already successfully implemented healthcare programs,” said **Irina Lazarian**, executive director of Armenia Fund USA. “This program builds on our experience delivering direct care to patients, in educating healthcare providers, and in building and equipping clinics. We are taking many of these successful elements to the next level. Armenia Fund has never shied away from new challenges. Rather, we look at this as a tremendous opportunity to build a hallmark program.”

Live diagnostics

During the conference, Armenia Fund USA showcased its healthcare experience and outlined HyeBridge Telehealth’s various programs and patient benefits. Armenia Fund used Polycom videoconferencing technology to broadcast the conference’s plenary sessions live to Armenia and Karabakh and to facilitate a live diagnostic session.

The interactive technology enabled more than 400 doctors, nurses, and university administrators in Armenia and Karabakh to participate in the conference. Not only did use of the technology save remote participants significant time and money, but turned the conference into a more effective and dynamic event.

Conference attendees participated in a diagnostic session where the healthcare needs of a seriously ill child were discussed. Armenia Fund used this opportunity to stress that HyeBridge Telehealth is designed around the role of *people*, not necessarily the technology, as essential to delivering critical healthcare services efficiently and successfully to those who need it most.

“It was a very successful and positive exercise,” said Dr. **Vicken N. Pamoukian**, vascular surgeon, Lenox Hill Hospital, New York, and United States co-chair of the conference. “I am very happy we were able to collaborate in this fashion.”

Administrators at Yerevan State Medical University, a key HyeBridge Telehealth partner, were excited by the program’s broad impact and expressed excitement for the future of Armenia’s healthcare.

“I am happy to say that the tele-broadcast of the 10th Armenian Medical World Congress was successfully established and accepted with great enthusiasm by the Yerevan State Medical University named after Mkhitar Heratsi, the Department of Postgraduate Education and CME, and the representatives of various regional hospitals,” said Dr. **Mikhail Z. Narimanyan**, vice rector of reforms and integration.

“The telehealth consultation segment was particularly interesting to us all, since the input of all the New York participants was of great practical importance here in Armenia. We strongly support and look forward to the continuity of this initiative. On behalf of all the university’s doctors and staff, we would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this congress through the HyeBridge Telehealth network,” he added.

Continuing medical education

Aside from videoconferencing, HyeBridge Telehealth provides much-needed access to the most up-to-date medical information and education available today. Armenia Fund showed attendees how the program delivers, via the Internet, education modules, access to medical databases, and live training sessions to remote healthcare providers. HyeBridge Telehealth builds on 10 healthcare related lectures and seminars held between Yerevan and Karabakh in 2008.

At the conference, Armenia Fund encouraged those attending to become involved in HyeBridge Telehealth. Currently, Armenia Fund is working with a number of groups in Armenia and the United States to deliver healthcare and medical education.

“HyeBridge Telehealth is about people,” said Ms. Lazarian. “The program’s state-of-the-art buildings, equipment, and technology are critical to our success. But they don’t save lives. People do. We saw the congress as an opportunity to talk about our program to people who are deeply committed to providing the best care possible to those that need it most.”

Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU), a state-run institution of higher learning, is Armenia Fund’s primary collaborative partner in Armenia. YSMU serves as program manager and the main technology and information hub for the program. YSMU creates the continuing medical education modules, oversees necessary training, facilitates diagnostic sessions, and manages the overall IT network. It also oversees training and allocation of



Ultrasound of one patient in Armenia is projected for evaluation at the medical congress in New York’s Hilton Hotel.

newly graduated residents in the healthcare centers and hospitals in rural Armenia where Armenia Fund implements its healthcare program.

“Telemedicine is a great opportunity for all Armenian doctors in Armenia and the diaspora to collaborate and bring the state of the art medical knowledge to Armenia,” said **Gevorg Yaghjian**, vice dean of postgraduate education and CME, Yerevan State Medical University. “This is a place where all Armenia doctors can consolidate their efforts”

Armenian American Health Professional Organization (AAHPO), representing healthcare professionals in the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut region, and the host of the 10th Armenian Medical World Congress, partnered with Armenia Fund in providing medical expertise and U.S. site support to the live consultations sessions. The group is dedicated to improving health care to the local community as well as brethren in Armenia.

Armenia Fund is also partnering with iCons in Medicine to provide web-based teleconsultations using that group’s iConsult services. Armenia Fund will continue to establish relationships with additional program partners. Healthcare professionals or organizations interested in providing healthcare services to rural Armenia through HyeBridge Telehealth are encouraged to contact Armenia Fund.



Co-chairs of the Armenian Medical World Congress stop by the Armenia Fund USA booth to learn more about the HyeBridge Telehealth program. From left, Dr. Larry Najarian, president of AAHPO and co-chair of AMWC; Irina Lazarian, executive director of Armenia Fund USA, Raffi Festekjian, chairperson of Armenia Fund USA, and Dr. Vicken Pamoukian, co-chair of AMWC.

Karabakh Telecom, a leading provider of Internet and other telecommunication services to Nagorno-Karabakh, and VivaCell, a cellular service provider in Armenia, are contributing their services that allow participating healthcare facilities to connect with YSMU.

“We are excited by HyeBridge Telehealth’s success and are thankful for the many in-kind gifts and volunteer hours both here in the United States and in Armenia,” said **Raffi Festekjian**,

chairperson of the Fund. “Our goal is to expand from these pilot sites to all of rural Armenia and Karabakh thus enabling connectivity between rural Armenia, Yerevan and United States. We are confident that HyeBridge Telehealth will continue to advance Armenian’s health, expand community’s medical knowledge, and most importantly, improve quality of life.”

connect:
www.ArmeniaFundUSA.org.

ARMENIA

AUA hosts two international conferences for university administrators

YEREVAN – The American University of Armenia hosted two conferences for overseas American universities in May 2009, the annual meeting of the Association of American International Colleges and Universities (AAICU) and the 2009 meeting of the American International Consortium of Academic Libraries (AMICAL).

AAICU is an association of American universities established to promote American standards of education, cultural exchange, and research and development, as well as serving to bridge cultures and foster dialogue within the framework of the American liberal arts tradition. During the 2009 meeting, the association reaffirmed its commitment to the AAICU Cairo Declaration, which stated that the association serves as a “bridge for encouragement of quality American-style education outside the United States and for the translation of cultural and educational values in countries where AAICU institutions are located to constituencies in the United States.”

“We were pleased to host both the AAICU and AMICAL meetings this year and to have the opportunity to showcase the American University of Armenia and Armenia for so many university presidents, provosts, and library directors from all over Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia,” remarked AUA President **Haroutune Armanian**. The meetings were hosted in the new state-of-the-art Paramaz Avedisian Building facilities.

An AAICU delegation will visit Washington in the fall of 2009 to promote international dialogue on the core values of American higher education, encourage expansion of support from the U.S. Agency for International Development, and seek the extension



Participants in the American International Consortium of Academic Libraries (AMICAL) conference at the American University of Armenia, May 2009.

of Pell grants to U.S. students studying at AAICU member institutions and federal research grants eligibility and institutional support to AAICU member institutions.

AAICU member institutions strive for a global standard of excellence by providing privileged spaces of intellectual interchange, academic freedom and responsibility. They also promote the pursuit of learning and of democratic values so their graduates are prepared for the rapidly changing needs of

the 21st first century.

AAICU members include the American University of Armenia, American University of Cairo, American University of Beirut, The American College of Greece, St. Louis University, Madrid Campus, Haigazian University, American University in Kosovo, American University of Central Asia, American University in Bulgaria, Lebanese American University, American College of Thessaloniki, Institute for American Universities, Franklin College, The Ameri-

can University of Paris, John Cabot University, Association of American Colleges and University Programs in Italy, American College Dublin, American University of Sharjah.

The AMICAL conference was the sixth in the series of annual conferences, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and brought together 60 participants including library, information and instructional technology staff members and faculty from 21 AMICAL member institutions

higher education.

This year's conference focused on “The Learner's Perspective – Adapting Information Services for Today's Students,” and how students are using information resources in academic work and what technology needs. The four-day conference featured two keynote speakers, **Nancy Foster**, University of Rochester, and **James Simon** of Sun Microsystems, and a post-conference workshop led by **Matt Goldner**, OCLC executive director. ■

New initiative highlights Kashatagh's Armenian roots

Tufenkian Foundation leads the way

NEW YORK – The Tufenkian Foundation on July 16 announced a new initiative on behalf of Kashatagh (formerly Lachin), the province of Nagorno-Karabakh that provides vital links to Armenia.

The initiative will focus on restoring and protecting Kashatagh's historic monuments and cultural

artifacts, which attest to the region's Armenian character and background.

The initiative comes only days after the presidents of the United States, Russia, and France jointly called for “return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control.” Kashatagh is an integral part of Nagorno-Karabakh, and the initiative is designed as a direct response to this affront to Karabagh's sovereignty and self-determination.

“Many people know Kashatagh to be the vital, strategic link between Karabagh and Armenia,” noted foundation director **Antranig Kasbarian**. “Less known is that the region has Armenian roots historically – roots that were torn out via massacre and deportation in 1918–1920. Now that the region has been liberated, we believe we must emphasize that Azerbaijan's claims to it are artificial, and cannot enjoy support from the international community.”

To kick off this effort, the foundation has begun renovating the historic St. Minas Church (16th century), found in the village of Hak, which traces its Armenian ancestry to the 11th century. Hak's Armenian population was wiped out in a massacre by Azerbaijani forces in October 1918. The village was reclaimed by Armenian forces in 1992 and is now subject to an active resettlement policy by Karabagh authorities.

Alongside the church renovations, the foundation will also

renovate nearby Armenian cemeteries and will build a new water supply for the village, which currently houses 50 inhabitants.

This effort has been made possible by a generous grant from Ms. **Virginia Davies** of New York City. Other supporters have also come forward with offers of assistance, which will be publicized in coming weeks. ■

connect:

Rick Barry at RBarry@Tufenkian.com
www.TufenkianFoundation.org

Many walk out demanding better pay at Armenia's troubled mining plant

by Anush Martirosian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – About 100 workers of a Canadian-owned mining plant in southeastern Armenia have refused to show up for work on Monday morning, July 13, in what they described as the start of a possible large-scale strike for a pay raise.

The Deno Gold Mining Company, which employed about 1,500 residents at its facility near the town of Kapan, slashed about 300 jobs and sent hundreds of others on leave as it scaled down its operations last November. The company cited a sharp

decrease in international prices for nonferrous metals. The company administration decreased the wages of most of the remaining staff by half as the plant continued to operate at only 20 percent of its capacity.

Operational capacity has been restored, and many workers ask for the restoration of their full wages as well.

“They are paying us a fraction of our wages now. For eight months we have received half of our former wages, but the volume of work has now been restored,” one worker told RFE/RL.

“About a hundred people have refused to work this morning and

since these workers are engaged in basic operations, the enterprise's work will stop without them,” he said, adding that the protest might grow into a full-scale strike unless their demands for a hike in wages were met.

The company, purchased by Canada's Dundee Precious Metals group in 2006, has for decades mined and processed copper and molybdenum in the mountainous area close to the Armenian-Iranian border. It is Kapan's single largest employer.

Last Friday, Deno Gold Mining Company director general **Robert Falletta** announced a bonus

scheme that he said would prevent an employee walkout.

On Monday, the director offered a monthly pay raise of \$15 to workers as part of the announced bonus payment package.

Yet, the protesting employees called it unfair, considering that night shift extra payments had been reduced by about \$110.

The company's liaison officer **Rubina Ter-Martirosian** told RFE/RL in the afternoon new offers would be made for the purpose of reengaging the disgruntled workers.

“These are people to whom terms of the bonus project have not yet been presented,” said Ms. Ter-Mar-

tirosian, adding that the administration was preparing a new offer.

Later, several company workers told RFE/RL that Deno Gold Mining in fact had made the same offer to them.

A company spokesperson explained that copies of the offer had been distributed among all workers so that they could “study the details.”

The workers, however, insisted on continuing their walkout. ■

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Armenia

ARF calls on government to discontinue talks with Turkey and reassess the last year of diplomacy

STEPANAKERT – A resolution adopted by a pan-Armenian conference organized by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and held July 10-11 in Stepanakert acknowledged that Armenia and Turkey must eventually establish normal relations. But, finding that the process of public interactions with Turkey initiated by President **Serge Sargsian** a year ago was generating “negative results,” the resolution called on Mr. Sargsian to “reassess” and “discontinue” the process.

The conference brought together over 100 participants from 25 countries. Over the course of two days, the participants heard eight reports on Armenia-Turkey relations and the Karabakh issue. The focus of the second day of the conference was questions and answers and discussion.

On Armenia-Turkey relations, the conference heard from **Giro Manoyan**, who heads the ARF Bureau’s Hai Tahd and Political Affairs Office; former ARF Bureau member **Garo Armenian** - whose health did not allow him to make the journey to Karabakh in person; **Henry Theriault**, a philosophy professor at Worcester State; and ARF Bureau member (and former agriculture minister) **Davit Lokian**.

Because the issue of Karabakh and Armenia-Turkey relations are linked, the speakers who addressed the Karabakh issue also touched on Armenia-Turkey relations. They were Karabakh’s Foreign Minister **Georgi Petrossian**; University of Massachusetts Lowell sociology professor **Levon Chorbajian**; former foreign minister of Armenia **Vartan Oskanian**; and ARF Supreme Body of Armenia member **Armen Rustamian**, who heads the foreign relations committee of Armenia’s parliament.

Shavarsh Kocharian, deputy foreign minister of Armenia, gave a major address and participated in the question-and-answer and debate.



Armen Rustamian, representative of the ARF Supreme Body of Armenia and chairperson of the foreign relations committee of Armenia’s National Assembly, addressing a pan-Armenian conference in Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh, July 10, 2009. ARF Central Hai Tahd Council chairperson Hagop Der Khatchadourian and ARF Bureau member (and former minister of education) Levon Mkrtychian look on. Photo: Photolure.

Benefits of normal relations

Mr. Manoyan, in his speech, said that diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey and open borders are necessary.

“The issue is what price must be paid for those relations and those routes. What will Armenia gain and what will it not gain from establishing relations and open roads? They will give Armenia new opportunities for political self-reliance in the region; we will be able to speak to Georgia in a different way; likewise with Iran, and even Russia. They will give Armenia some economic possibilities - which may or may not translate into profit. And, most importantly, they will give us political advantages in the Karabakh issue because Turkey’s blockade

of Armenia remains the last form of leverage Azerbaijan maintains on Armenia,” Mr. Manoyan said.

But, he warned, open roads and diplomatic relations will not provide Armenia with security guarantees.

“The process of recognizing the Genocide is one of the basic weapons that we have in our hands to force Turkey to change its antagonistic position toward Armenians and Armenia. That weapon cannot be negotiated. To lay down arms is to surrender. The weapon must remain aimed at its target, and the target must be achieved. When the weapon itself becomes a subject of negotiations, we lose the weapon and the means of reaching our target. The April 22-23 statement was an effort to make recognition a matter for negotiation,” Mr. Manoyan said, referring to the joint statement of the foreign

ministries of Armenia and Turkey announcing that they had agreed on a framework for an “on-going process” toward normalization. He said the official stance must be changed, the “politics of concessions” must end, and the position maintained from 1998 to 2008 must be restored.

Pressure shifted

Mr. Oskanian said in his address that Armenia-Turkey relations and the Karabakh issue have never been as closely linked as they are today, and this linkage has negative consequences. He said the April 22 statement “drove a stake between Armenia and the diaspora.” Turkey has taken on a new role in the Karabakh issue, he said.

“We are the reason for this. Everyone wants the Armenia-Turkey border to open. Obama has put

his prestige on the line. Armenia wants it; our president’s credibility is at stake. Turkey wants it too. The European Union wants it. Russia also wants it. Everyone wants the Armenia-Turkey border to be opened. It is a matter of credibility for them. But they understand that Turkey will not open the border until there is some movement in the Karabakh issue. So the pressure has been shifted from Armenia-Turkey to Karabakh. And because progress in Karabakh is useful to Turkey - so that Azerbaijan gets satisfaction and so Turkey can open the border - Turkey is naturally going to take on a big role,” Mr. Oskanian added.

Referring to the Karabakh issue on the one hand and Armenia-Turkey relations on the other, Mr. Rustamian said parallel lines don’t cross, “but Turkish diplomacy can make them cross in the chronological sense.”

“If Armenia-Turkey relations and the Karabakh issue can be settled at the same point, the parallels will cross,” he explained.

How to change course

Several participants at the conference, especially participants from the diaspora, raised the possibility of calling for the resignation of Foreign Minister **Edward Nalbandian**. Other participants suggested that such a course of action would be unrealistic. What matters, they argued, is the foreign-policy priorities set by the president.

If President Serge Sargsian is convinced that Turkey is deliberately misleading the international community - as he said recently - and if he now wishes to change course, then changing his foreign minister may allow him to gain time. Turkey’s Prime Minister **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** did the same thing when he was ready to stall Armenia-Turkey talks, replacing the optimistic **Ali Babacan** with the realistic **Ahmet Davutoglu**. ☐

Hrant Markarian: Correcting course would be “a sign of self-confidence, not weakness”

ARF leader says genocide recognition has been taken off Armenia’s agenda

by **Tatul Hakobyan**

STEPANAKERT – Participants in a pan-Armenian conference held July 10-11 in Stepanakert expressed concern about the course of Armenian-Turkish “soccer diplomacy,” claiming that Armenia’s authorities have made three “mistakes”: The first is President **Serge Sargsian**’s June 23, 2008, announcement in Moscow that Armenia would not be opposed to the establishment of a commission of Armenian and Turkish historians. [He later ruled out the establishment of such a commission.] The second is the joint statement of the foreign ministries of Armenia and Turkey, released on April 22, 2009, announcing that they had agreed on a framework for an “on-going process” toward

normalization. The third is allowing Turkey to insert itself into the Karabakh negotiations, or steps toward linking the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations to the Karabakh issue.

ARF Bureau representative **Hrant Markarian** gave an opening address at the conference, after which he spoke to *Armenian Reporter* Senior Correspondent **Tatul Hakobyan**.

Tatul Hakobyan: Mr. Markarian, what steps would you have the Armenian authorities take to come out of the current situation with Armenia-Turkey relations?

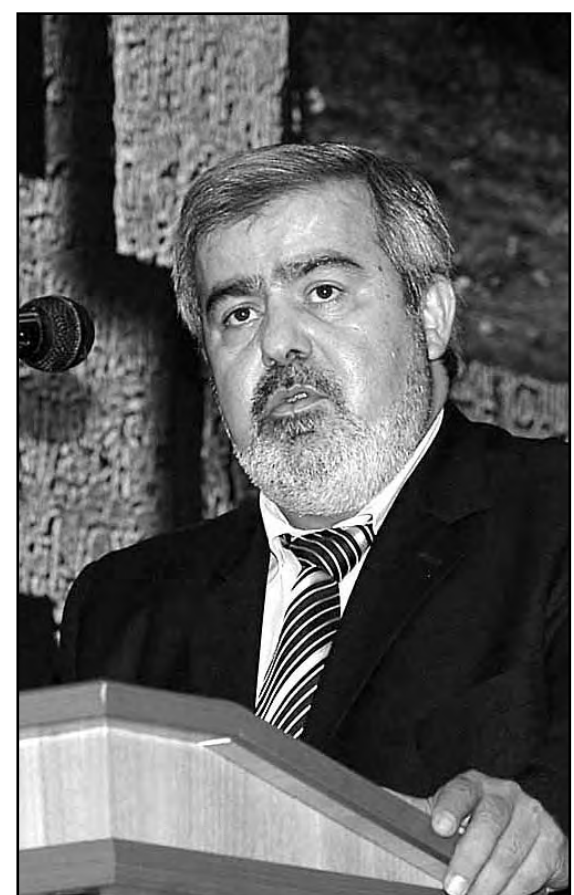
Hrant Markarian: Whenever you stop a mistake, that’s a good thing. I think that they should return to the original positions. If they have a preliminary understanding with the Turks, they should declare the understanding null and void, and emphasize that they seek normal relations without preconditions. [If Turkey insists on keeping the border closed, that means it is setting preconditions for normalizing relations. It is not honoring any commitment it may have made to proceed without preconditions.]

Meanwhile, the pursuit of recognition of the Genocide must return to the foreign-policy agenda. As a result of Armenia-Turkey negotiations, the process of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide has been suspended and interrupted. We must return to it.

To come back to all this requires will, and I would want our authorities not to be stubborn. If you stop a mistake, that’s good, and it would be a sign of self-confidence, not weakness.

TH: Some people are saying Armenia’s leadership initiated dialogue with the Turks because of serious domestic issues. As evidence, they point to the encouragement coming from Europe and the United States. Do you consider the tragic events of March 1, 2008, and the domestic political crisis forced President Sargsian to initiate Armenia-Turkey talks?

HM: There is a lot of evidence of that. The Armenian side has made serious mistakes in its “soccer diplomacy.” The first was the meeting in the fall of 2008 [on the sidelines of the opening of the United Nations



Hrant Markarian. Photo: Photolure.

Continued on page 21 ☐

Armenia

President Serge Sargsian urged not to endorse “updated Madrid Document”

Continued from page 1

tial statement is the first of its kind since 1997.

Mr. Sargsian was scheduled to meet his Azerbaijani counterpart, **Ilham Aliyev**, in Moscow on July 17.

On July 8 and 9, the co-chairs of the Minsk Group visited Yerevan and Baku in anticipation of the Moscow summit. For the second consecutive time, they failed to visit Stepanakert, citing the weather. This *Armenian Reporter* correspondent was on assignment in Karabakh at the time and can confirm that the weather was bright and calm – as it had been the last time the co-chairs avoided visiting Stepanakert.

Yuri Merzlyakov, the Russian co-chair, said in Baku that the Moscow summit would allow “the negotiation process to reach the finish line.”

The question of Kelbajar

The “updated version of the Madrid Document of November 2007,” which the three presidents summarized in a fact sheet attached to their statement, calls for “the return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control.” The summary includes no special provisions for the districts of Kelbajar and Lachin, except for a corridor in Lachin linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh.

The original Madrid Document proposed a formula under which Kelbajar would remain under Armenian control until the final status of Karabakh had been determined or, alternatively, until Karabakh’s interim status had been recognized.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity on July 10 but before the release of the presidential statement, a former high-ranking Armenian official long involved in both Armenian-Turkish relations and the settlement of the Karabakh conflict told the *Armenian Reporter*, “Armenia is now prepared to return Kelbajar in its entirety and part of Lachin.” Official Yerevan is willing to settle for a 20–25 km corridor to provide a land connection between Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh, the former official said.

The former official said the international community today seeks progress in the Karabakh issue in order to “save the Armenian-Turkish process,” which has reached a dead-end.

Yerevan welcomes Obama-Medvedev-Sarkozy statement

But Armenia’s foreign minister, **Edward Nalbandian**, denied that the “updated Madrid Principles,” as outlined by the Obama-Medvedev-Sarkozy statement, are final.

Mr. Nalbandian on July 11 received U.S. Deputy Secretary of State **James Steinberg**, who had been dispatched to Yerevan and Baku in the immediate wake of the presidential statement. At a joint news conference on that day, Mr. Nalbandian said, “Some of the details that appeared on the websites of the OSCE and the co-chair states are being negotiated; some have not been discussed.

“The thing that’s important, about which Armenia has been speaking for a long time, is that the statement unequivocally says that the status of Karabakh must be decided by an expression of will of the people of Karabakh, and that will be legally binding. It’s important that it speaks of security guarantees. These are important elements, about which Armenia has spoken often as the most important foundations for the resolution of the Karabakh issue,” Mr. Nalbandian said.

No settlement without Karabakh’s participation

The conference in Stepanakert was held under the auspices of Karabakh’s President **Bako Sahakian** and was organized by the ARF Central Hai Tahd Council.

A resolution released at the conclusion of the conference found “deplorable, unacceptable, and devoid of legal force the adoption of any document negotiated without the direct participation of the fundamental party, the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh.” The format of the talks is “distorted,” the resolution insisted, and “Armenia has no right to replace” the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict.

“Armenia must guarantee by all means NKR’s security and independence and international recognition of that status,” the resolution said.

The statement of the presidents of the United States, Russia, and France, the resolution found, “absolutely does not emanate from the nature and history of conflict.



U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Jim Steinberg, Yerevan, July 11 2009. Photo: Tigran Tadevosian/Photolure.

Moreover, it circumvents and completely ignores the will of the people of NKR, already expressed in a lawful format.

“Aware that negotiations require mutual concessions, we at the same time insist that the concessions of the sides, taking into account all elements of the settlement of the conflict, must be commensurate, equal, concurrent, and within a comprehensive package solution. Otherwise, any weakening of the security belt around NKR, without restoring its territorial integrity, will increase the likelihood of war and threaten the population of Artsakh,” the resolution stated.

Reaction from Stepanakert

The government of Karabakh, and Mr. Sahakian in particular, have not yet responded directly to the statement of the three presidents. On July 10, before the release of the statement, Mr. Sahakian said in his opening address to the conference: “Our position is clear and it has remained unchanged. The independence of NKR is an established fact and is not subject to review.”

He said, “Without the consent of the people of NKR, it is impossible to implement any decision.” Saying the “negotiations are proceeding in a distorted format,” he decried the fact that Karabakh, “which is the fundamental side in the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict, is left out of the negotiations today and we

must reach the restoration of that important principle.”

The president of Karabakh emphasized, “Any movement in Armenian-Turkish relations must not and cannot be to the detriment of the settlement of the Karabakh conflict.” He said efforts to take these separate issues and link them would “definitely lead to a dead-end.”

Armenia’s Karabakh policy assailed

Hrant Markarian, representative of the ARF Bureau, told the conference, “There is no separate Karabakh question, there aren’t separate historical questions, there is no separate Armenian-Turkish relationship, there isn’t a separate domestic policy. Everything is a whole, with the present, the past, and the future tied together.

“It would be naïve to think that it is possible to concede in any one national issue and not endanger the whole. On the contrary, conceding in one issue will force a chain of concessions in other areas. I am convinced that official Stepanakert, Artsakh as a whole, and the people of Artsakh, in the interests of Artsakh, have no right to be indifferent to what is happening in Armenian-Turkish relations and the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Turkey speaks to us with preconditions; in every international meeting, and with everyone, it addresses the Karabakh issue. Aliyev publicly presents his [uncompromising] vision for a resolution,” Mr. Markarian said.

Conference participants also addressed the Russian-brokered joint declaration signed by Mr. Sargsian and Mr. Aliyev at Meindorf Castle, near Moscow, on November 2, 2008.

Armen Rustamian, chairperson of Armenia’s parliamentary commission on foreign relations – and representative of the ARF Supreme Body of Armenia – contested the official position of Yerevan that the Meindorf document was acceptable for Armenia. He criticized Armenia’s willingness to leave Karabakh out of the negotiations. He said the negotiation process was not advantageous to Armenians and specific steps must be taken, even, “if necessary, withdrawing from the negotiations, since they are not taking us to a good place.”

Vartan Oskanian, former foreign minister of Armenia, spoke about U.S.-Russia talks. In a shifting global political environment,

he said, various issues are put on the table together, and when there is a desire on both sides to find solutions, the chances of trade-offs and negotiations increases.

“I know that the Karabakh question is on the [Russian-American] table, on the plate, and it is really possible that the Karabakh question may be traded off for energy issues, nuclear-weapons issues, and other issues. It is necessary to exercise extreme caution here,” Mr. Oskanian said.

He was highly critical of the Meindorf statement, and particularly the point that calls for the resolution of the Karabakh question “on the basis of principles and norms of international law and solutions and documents adopted in their frames.” This formulation implies deference to Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity.

“All these decisions favor Azerbaijan. There is no decision that favors Armenia. This is among the biggest challenges for our diplomacy, a challenge that we have created by signing the statement,” Mr. Oskanian said.

An abomination

Professor **Levon Chorbajian** of the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, the author works on Karabakh, gave a cautionary talk at the conference about “weak negotiating strategies and settlement traps.”

“The exclusion of Karabakh from these negotiations is an abomination. I do not know any case in which the central party to the purpose of the negotiations has been excluded,” Professor Chorbajian said. He called on the Armenian side to do everything to bring Karabakh back to the negotiating table.

Three criteria are used to decide “the fate of contested territories internationally,” Professor Chorbajian said. “The first is who has lived there historically; the second is who is there now; the third is what about the people?”

“The Karabakh case for recognized independence is one of the strongest that has existed in the world. This is the point needs to be stressed again and again.”

Among the other points that need to be emphasized, Professor Chorbajian argued, is that Baku artificially created districts to divide Karabakh from Armenia, and that Shahumian and Getashen at the north of Artsakh were ceded without basis to Azerbaijan in the 1920s. ■■

Hrant Markarian: Correcting course would be “a sign of self-confidence, not weakness”

Continued from page 20

General Assembly] between the foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. It was a mistake because [through this meeting] Armenia allowed Turkey to become a party to the Karabakh conflict.

The second mistake was the April 22 statement [of the foreign ministries of Armenia and Turkey announcing that they had agreed on a framework for an “on-going process” toward normalization]. This statement was adopted under U.S. pressure. It is understandable that Armenia sought to improve relations with the United States. The opposition led by **Levon Ter-Petrosian**, too, softened its criticism of Serge Sargsian, with Ter-Petrosian saying he did not want

to undercut the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations. In this way, government and opposition cooperated in the matter of Armenia-Turkey relations.

This was a tax from the government to the opposition. What Ter-Petrosian had wanted to do for years, Serge Sargsian tried to do. We think that in inviting Turkey’s President **Abdullah Gül**, Serge Sargsian was taking the initiative. We did not have a negative estimation of that step – as long as it was not followed by concessions and tactical errors.

It was those errors – and not the simple fact of negotiating with the Turks – that changed this whole thing to a negative. We tried to help, so that the errors would be corrected. Then we withdrew from

the governing coalition. Now we try to help, have influence in this way so the authorities can correct their course. I think it would be a sign of their strength.

TH: You drew parallels between the first and third presidents. But, in contrast to Mr. Ter-Petrosian – who, it is true, was opposed to treating the Armenian Genocide as a political issue – Mr. Sargsian went so far as to once say he may not be opposed to forming an Armenian-Turkish commission of historians [proposed by Turkey to determine the truth about the events of the First World War].

HM: What matters today is fixing errors and returning to the correct path. If I were to compare, I would say Ter-Petrosian had a different direction entirely. Let’s remember the

conference in Yerevan organized in 1995 on the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I was in jail at the time [on political charges that were dropped upon the resignation of Mr. Ter-Petrosian as president] and was following from jail. Ter-Petrosian questioned the very nature of the Genocide. He placed responsibility for the Genocide not on the perpetrator state, but more so on the ARF. Ter-Petrosian pursued a different direction, and it is not possible to compare his policy with the policy pursued by today’s authorities, which are [simply] making tactical errors.

TH: You said that pursuit of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide must return to Armenia’s foreign-policy agenda. Do you believe it has been taken off

the agenda?

HM: I think the Armenian authorities have delivered a big blow to the process of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Turkey took advantage, but Armenia helped make it possible for Turkey to take advantage. Armenia got nothing, but the process of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide took a big blow. That’s a fact. President Sargsian said in a recent interview that he won’t allow Turkey to take advantage and mislead the international community. That is an admission that Turkey has taken advantage and benefitted. Today the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide may not be officially off the agenda, but it is off the agenda in fact. ■■

Editorial

the armenian
reporter

A time for more public diplomacy

On November 20, 2008, Armenia's President Serge Sargsian convened an unprecedented closed-door, off-the-record consultation with representatives of all the political parties registered in Armenia. The president informed participants about the state of negotiations toward a framework agreement on the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, and heard what they had to say.

Although as a media organization we naturally favor open-door, transparent meetings, we believe the consultation was an excellent and timely initiative. Indeed, the November 20 consultation can serve as a model for further sorely needed communication between the Armenian administration and the Armenian polity.

At this momentous stage of the Karabakh peace process, all Armenians would benefit from another round of public diplomacy that begins with President Sargsian's assessment of the Moscow talks this weekend.

In addition to the peace process, we are witnessing rapid developments in other matters of critical importance to the Armenian people, including international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and efforts to normalize Armenia-Turkey relations.

As President Sargsian noted quite recently, Armenia's adversaries seek to manipulate public perception of these developments in ways that are not favorable to Armenia. Thus, on April 11, responding to a question about Armenia-Turkey talks posed by the *Armenian Reporter*, Mr. Sargsian could say with confidence that Armenia would "come out of the process much stronger." Why? Because even if Armenia had "miscalculated," Mr. Sargsian said, and Turkey reneged on the commitments it had made going into the talks, Armenia could demonstrate to the international community that it had been "really prepared to establish

relations without preconditions."

Now the president is rightly concerned that Turkey and Azerbaijan are "misleading the international community" with their version of events – according to which it is Armenia that has allegedly changed the goalposts in "soccer diplomacy."

What can the Armenian administration do? It can speak out.

As a media outlet with a deep commitment to disseminating Armenia's voice, we want to hear more from the administration. When there's a development, we look to the Office of the President, to the Foreign Ministry, and to Armenian embassies for an informative and authoritative statement that is not only responsive to the development but also reiterates Armenia's values and goals.

Thus, we would like to see the president and the foreign minister grant interviews to Armenian media outlets – as the president sometimes does to the *Wall Street Journal*, to excellent effect – and to author articles and video clips that air their perspectives.

Ideally, a glance at the Foreign Ministry website would persuade a non-hostile visitor of the wisdom of Armenia's chosen path, and how it combines enlightened self-interest with a commitment to regional peace and prosperity as well as genocide prevention.

Beyond such direct communications, there are, of course, many other opportunities to shape public opinion. Consultations with national opinion leaders – such as the one held on November 20, but also with civil society representatives and the media – will go a long way to better inform and help shape public perceptions in Armenia.

The best response to the efforts of Turkey and its friends to mislead public opinion is to make an intensive and ongoing effort to speak out and be heard. We look forward to it. ☐

Tragedy on a Tehran-Yerevan flight

Tragedies that leave us numb sometimes also remind us of the strength of our bonds and of our common humanity. On Wednesday, July 15, we learned that 168 lives had ended on an airplane flying from Tehran to Yerevan. And we also saw that tens of thousands of other lives were touched by this calamity.

Armenians are spread across the globe, but an event like this shows us how small that globe is. Everywhere you look – in Sydney, in Toronto, in Los Angeles, in Tbilisi, and beyond – there are shocked and grieving relatives and friends. Almost everyone you speak to either lost someone or has friends or colleagues who lost someone. And now, from these far cor-

ners, families will be reuniting for a grim occasion.

It is also worth remembering that most of the passengers on the plane were non-Armenians visiting Armenia: families who had chosen "Armenistan" as their vacation spot; business people building prosperity for themselves and the two countries; a group of young judoists preparing to train jointly with their Armenian counterparts.

As we grieve and pray and offer each other comfort, let us also find consolation in vastness of the community that grieves and prays with us. ☐

Ask your representative to sign the letter on Armenia-Turkey relations

At the bipartisan initiative of Reps. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-N.J.), and Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), the co-chairs of the House Armenian Caucus, and Reps. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) and George Radanovich (R-Calif.), members of Congress are being asked to sign a letter to President Barack Obama on Armenia-Turkey relations.

This is a very important and timely initiative, and Reps. Pallone, Kirk, Schiff, and Radanovich deserve our gratitude for taking it.

Referring to the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey and the Armenian Genocide, the letter calls on President Obama "to separate the issues of normalization and genocide recognition."

The authors of the letter note that the State Department on April 22 released a statement welcoming the announcement of Armenia and Turkey that they had agreed on a roadmap toward the normalization of relations. Two days later, on April 24, instead of recognizing the Armenian Genocide, the president opted to focus on the road map.

The authors note that Armenia has remained committed to the roadmap, but Turkey has chosen to "undermine U.S. policy that normalization take place without preconditions." They conclude that Turkey, "in an effort to block U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide, agreed to a roadmap it did not intend to uphold."

Members of Congress who sign the letter will be asking the president to proceed with recognizing the Genocide as he promised, and separately continuing to urge Turkey to proceed with normalization of relations with Armenia.

Make a difference: contact your representative in the House and urge him or her to sign this letter. ☐

To reach the Senate switchboard, call 1-202-224-3121.

To reach the House, call 1-202-225-3121.

Letters

Summer reading

Sir:
I just finished reading *A Summer without Dawn*, and I am really impressed by the qualities of this book, how it is written, how detailed and measured it is in presenting the facts of the

Armenian Genocide, superbly intertwined with the lives of several Armenian families, dramatic and yet realistic love stories, and so on.

I highly recommend to our fellow Armenians to read this book in order to better understand the events related to Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and during the First

World War, the struggle and dreams of so many for an independent and greater Armenia, which due to some international interests and events did not come to full fruition the way most Armenians desired.

During my childhood I witnessed my paternal grandmother daily lamenting the loss of

her two older sons, of 21 and 23, who perished as volunteers in General Antranig's armies fighting for a free and independent Armenia.

Very truly yours,
Cricor Dolmaian
Garden City, N.Y.

Tell us what you think. Write to letters@reporter.am

Armenian Reporter (ISSN 0004-2358), an independent newspaper, is published weekly by Armenian Reporter LLC.

Gerard L. Cafesjian, President and CEO

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Periodicals postage paid at Paramus, N.J., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PO Box 129, Paramus, NJ 07652-0129.

The views expressed, except in the editorial, are not necessarily those of the publishers.

Editor Vincent Lima

Associate editor Maria Titizian

Washington editor Emil Sanamyan

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COMMENTARY

Madrid principles put Armenia on verge of Lisbon 2

Diplomatic setback could lead to domestic crisis

by Emil Sanamyan

WASHINGTON – The long-running Karabakh conflict and the associated peace process have captured unusual levels of attention from global and regional leaders in recent months and weeks.

This increased attention brought about the Moscow declaration on Karabakh made by Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia last November, the first declaration of its kind since 1992.

And, last week, the statement by the presidents of France, Russia, and the United States at the G8 Summit became the first such statement since 1997.

The troika statement also provided the outline of the so-called updated Madrid Document outlining the Basic Principles of a settlement that leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan were urged to finalize.

While the fundamental issue at the core of the conflict – Karabakh’s status – is no closer to resolution, a certain confluence of circumstances has put the recent negotiations on a track that could precipitate a serious domestic challenge for President **Serge Sargsian** and the administration he leads.

Key figures in both Stepanakert and Yerevan have already indicated opposition to the principles outlined in the updated Madrid principles and to the Armenian government’s overall approach to talks with Azerbaijan as well as Turkey.

Pyrenean prequel

The Madrid principles are so known because they were initially submitted to the parties by French, Russian, and U.S. negotiators at the ministerial meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) held in the Spanish capital in November 2007.

Eleven years earlier, it was in Lisbon, the other capital on the Iberian or, as it is also known, Pyrenean peninsula, where Armenia’s diplomacy suffered one of its worst defeats.

At the OSCE summit held in December 1996, Armenia had to threaten its right to veto of the summit declaration because it included a reference supporting Azerbaijan’s claim on Karabakh. As a result, a statement by an OSCE chairman-in-office that contained that endorsement was issued instead.

Six months later, at the G8 summit in Denver, leaders of France, Russia, and the United States issued a joint statement that essentially endorsed the Lisbon approach.

By the fall of 1997, then-President **Levon Ter-Petrosian** appeared diplomatically defeated and agreed to a plan that would have Armenian forces pull out from parts of Karabakh in exchange for international security guarantees, but without addressing the final status of Karabakh.

But Azerbaijan’s Pyrenean victory proved a Pyrrhic one. In February 1998, Mr. Ter-Petrosian was forced to resign by key members of his government opposed to the proposed pullout.

Mediation pendulum

Since the 1990s there has been a significant shift in how the U.S.-led international community approaches the Karabakh conflict. In large part, that shift was precipitated by President **Robert Kocharian**, who, unlike his predecessor, publicly insisted on a settlement that would formalize the existing “non-subordination” of Karabakh to Azerbaijan.

If in the past, mediators sought to find mechanisms to place Karabakh inside Azerbaijan as a self-governing state entity, for most of the last decade the focus shifted to finding mechanisms to formalize Karabakh’s factual independence from Azerbaijan. That was the focus of talks at the summit in Key West and throughout the subsequent Prague process.

But in a departure from the policies of his father and predecessor Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan’s **Ilham Aliyev** took a progressively tougher policy line, demanding unilateral Armenian concessions and ruling out Azer-

baijani acquiescence to Karabakh’s de facto separation from Azerbaijan.

The diplomatic pendulum began to swing away from Armenian preferences.

A key indication of this shift came after the August war between Russia and Georgia last year. As part of a response to a conflict that threatened to undermine U.S. influence, State Department officials sought to shore up ties with Azerbaijan by putting greater emphasis on Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity in U.S. policy language on Karabakh.

According to available reports, since their original submission in 2007, the Madrid principles have gone through significant mutations. Specifically, the mechanism and timing for the determination of Nagorno-Karabakh’s final status have been further watered down.

Thus, for the first time in more than a decade, mediators have offered a proposal that is more acceptable to Azerbaijan than to Armenia. From an Armenian perspective, they present only a cosmetic improvement over the 1997 “stage-by-stage” plan that ended Mr. Ter-Petrosian’s presidency.

Lisbon redux?

While the proposal itself does not necessarily augur changes for the situation on the ground, it does represent a significant diplomatic setback for Armenia.

In addition to Azerbaijani activism on Karabakh, this setback can be traced to miscalculations by Armenia’s leadership that are now proving costly.

Since taking office last year President Sargsian launched a diplomatic initiative with Turkey – where Armenia has few ways to leverage a positive outcome – rather than on Karabakh, where Armenians have advantages on the ground, as well as the recent precedents in Kosovo and Ossetia.

Similarly, rather than seeking to win international recognition of Karabakh immediately after its declaration of independence, the Ter-Petrosian administration focused on trying to establish relations with Turkey “without preconditions,” a policy that proved fruitless.

In recent months, Turkish diplomats appear to have successfully translated international interest in seeing Armenian-Turkish issues resolved into interest in the “parallel” track in the Karabakh negotiations, but now on terms that are more favorable to Azerbaijan.

Like the Bush administration eight years ago, the Obama administration is seeking to win an early diplomatic success. And an agreement on “basic principles,” independent of their substance and without an actual resolution, could well be sold as such a success.

Whether or not President Sargsian accedes to the “basic principles,” Azerbaijan will seek to develop its diplomatic success. With Turkey presiding at the United Nations Security Council, it may well initiate discussions of the Karabakh conflict there for the first time since the 1990s, and try to use that as a leverage that could continue to stall the campaign for recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

What could come next

Judging from President Ter-Petrosian’s experience, President Sargsian’s next policy steps could have consequences for his ability to govern Armenia. The Armenian leadership is by no means monolithic, and signs of potential troubles for Mr. Sargsian are already becoming apparent.

On July 9 Karabakh army commander General **Movses Hakobian** told visiting Yerevan journalists that Armenia – led by President Sargsian – was pursuing a “defeatist” policy on Karabakh, News.am and Regnum.ru reported.

The last time a top military officer registered public disagreement with political leadership in Yerevan was in 1997, when the Karabakh commander at the time, Gen. **Samvel Babayan**, warned President Ter-Petrosian against committing to compromises. Mr. Ter-Petrosian resigned weeks after Armenia’s defense minister at the time, **Vazgen Sargsian**, expressed opposition to his line on Karabakh.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation and elements of the political opposition have already called on President Sargsian to



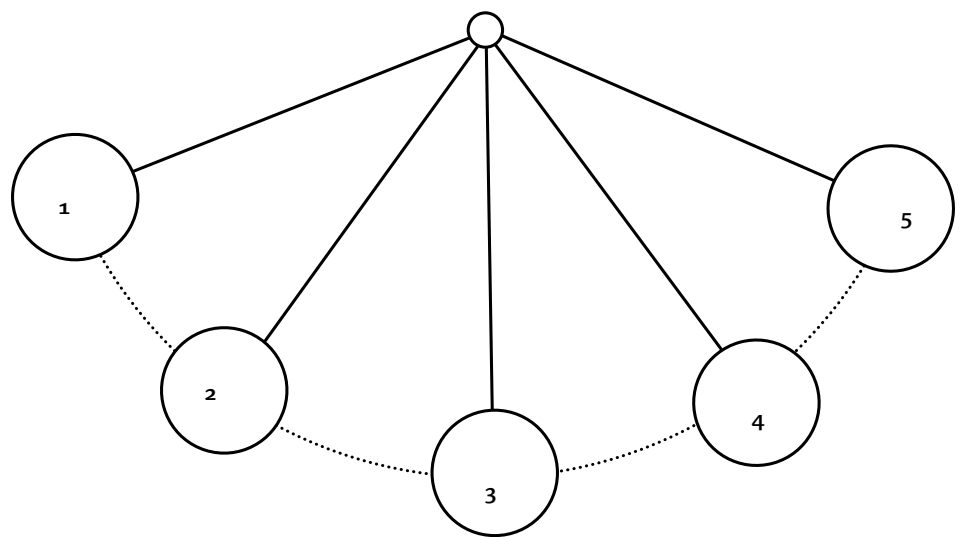
Pres. Serge Sargsian on visit to Gyumri this week. He is under fire over diplomatic setbacks in talks with Turkey and Azerbaijan. Photo: Photolure.



In January 1998 then-defense minister Vazgen Sargsian makes public his disagreement with Karabakh policy of then-Pres. Ter-Petrosian, who resigned weeks later. Photo: Armenian Defense ministry.



Karabakh army commander Gen. Movses Hakobian publicly expressed his dissatisfaction with Armenia’s foreign policy last week. Photolure.



Negotiations on Karabakh could be illustrated as a simple pendulum moving back and forth from the point of rest at 3, equivalent to the status quo. In that case 1 could represent a return to status quo ante before the conflict (Karabakh inside Azerbaijan); 2, a transitional point in such a return, such as the 1997 “stage-by-stage” proposal or the Madrid principles; 5, formalization of Karabakh’s separation from Azerbaijan; and 4, a transitional point to such an eventuality that a new referendum on status or unilateral recognition of Karabakh’s independence could provide.

The geography of the peace process

Even for those following the Karabakh negotiations closely, the convoluted jargon developed in the peace process can sound like a geography quiz.

In the last several years alone, the Minsk Group troika went through the Prague process and Rambouillet round to develop the Madrid principles only to see Russia seal a Meindorf declaration.

The geographic associations help provide some organization to the long process and also add color to otherwise repetitive protocol events.

Below is the geography of the main stages of the Karabakh peace process:

- 1991 Zheleznovodsk (Russia) declaration
- 1992 Minsk Group launched
- 1992 Tehran declaration
- 1992 Villa Madama (Italy) talks commence
- 1994 Bishkek protocol signed
- 1994 Budapest summit declaration
- 1996 Lisbon summit statement
- 1997 Denver statement
- 2001 Key West summit
- 2004 Prague process begins
- 2006 Rambouillet round held
- 2007 Madrid principles submitted
- 2008 Meindorf (Moscow) declaration
- 2009 L’Aquila (Italy) statement

sack Foreign Minister **Edward Nalbandian**, whom they want to see blamed for “mishandling” of the negotiations with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Nagorno-Karabakh’s Foreign Ministry issued a statement registering public disagreement with Mr. Nalbandian’s positive assessment of the Madrid principles and, borrowing a term from the Obama administration, urging a “reset” in the mediators’ approach to the Karabakh peace process.

It is quite conceivable that should Mr. Sargsian continue to push the “principles,”

even officials at the most senior levels of government in Yerevan could potentially abandon and even challenge him in the manner that precipitated Mr. Ter-Petrosian’s resignation.

While the list of analogies between 1997 and 2009 is quite extensive (including challenging elections that preceded both years), there are also differences.

Unlike Mr. Ter-Petrosian, Mr. Sargsian is known for his flexible political style that leaves open an opportunity for a new policy direction under his leadership.

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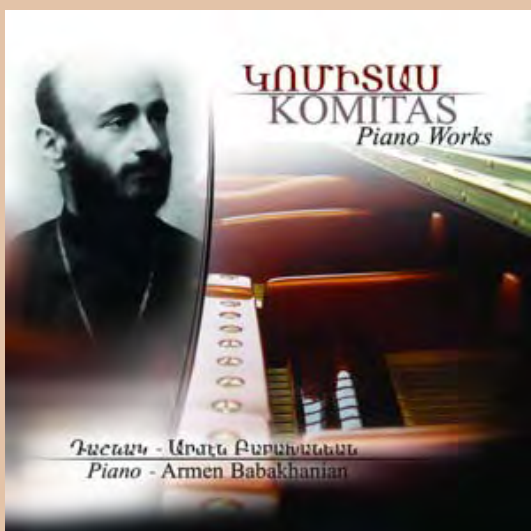


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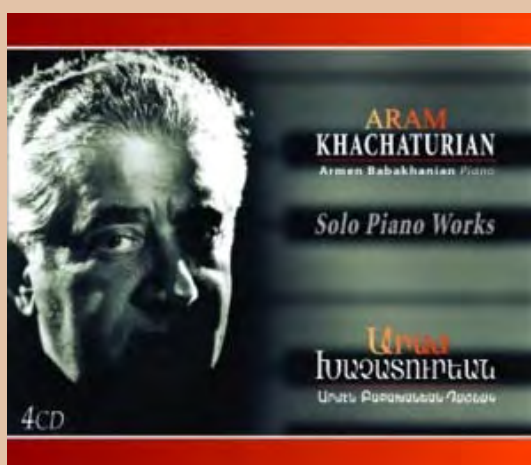
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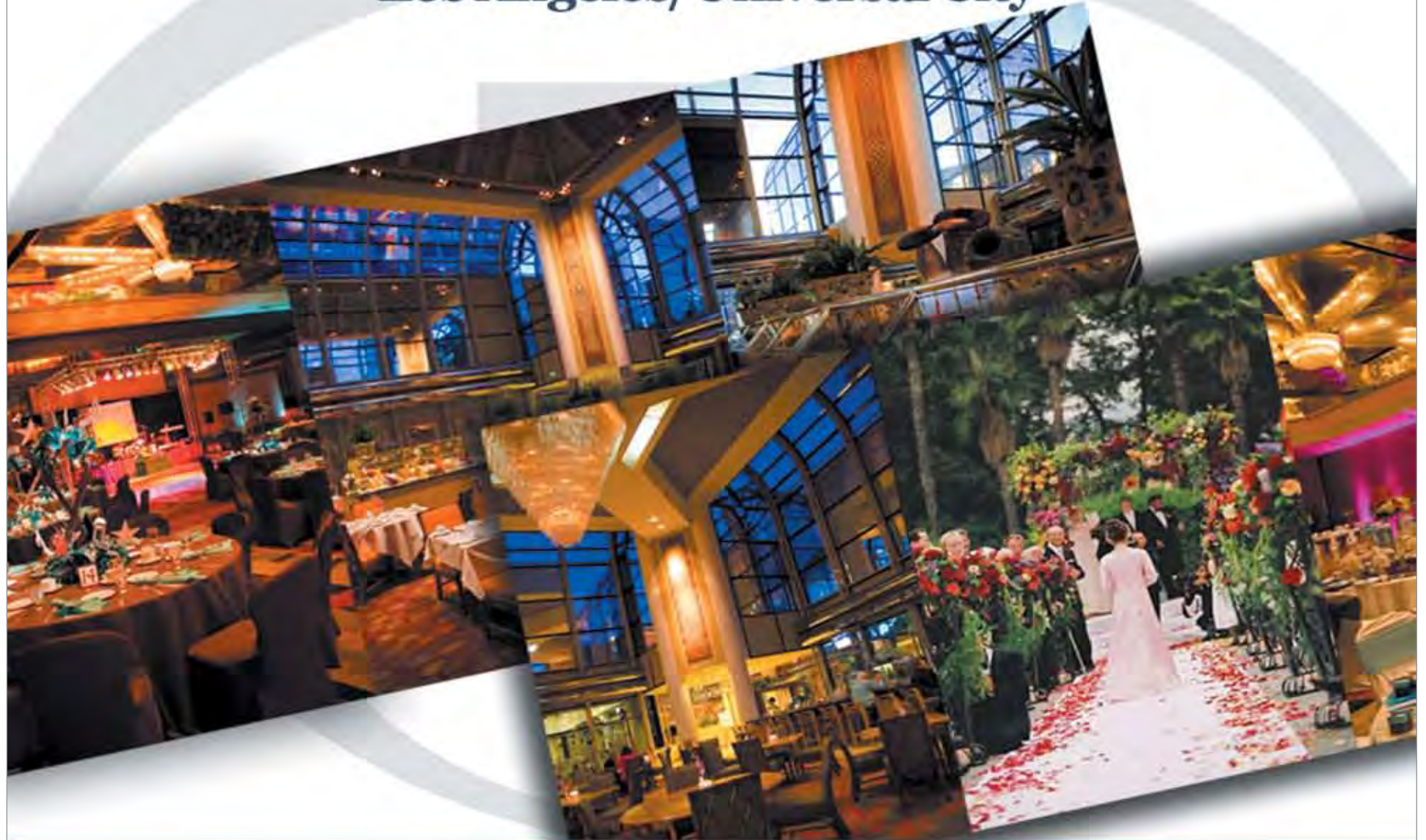
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