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NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey Warns France over Armenian Genocide Bill

ANKARA (RFE/RL) – Turkey reportedly threatened on Thursday to recall its ambassador to France and freeze ties with Paris if next week the French parliament passes a bill criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu accused French lawmakers of seeking to “dishonor” his country.

Under the bill, which will be debated by the National Assembly on December 22, anyone in France publicly denying that the 1915 mass killings of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire constituted genocide could face a year in jail and a fine of 45,000 euros (\$58,000). French President Nicolas Sarkozy signaled support for its passage when he visited Yerevan in October.



Turkish Ambassador Tahsin Burcuoglu

“There will be irreparable consequences in all bilateral relations,” Turkish Embassy spokesperson Engin Solakoglu told AFP news agency, adding he expects Turkey’s Ambassador to France Tahsin Burcuoglu to be called back to Ankara for an indefinite period as of December 22 (after press time).

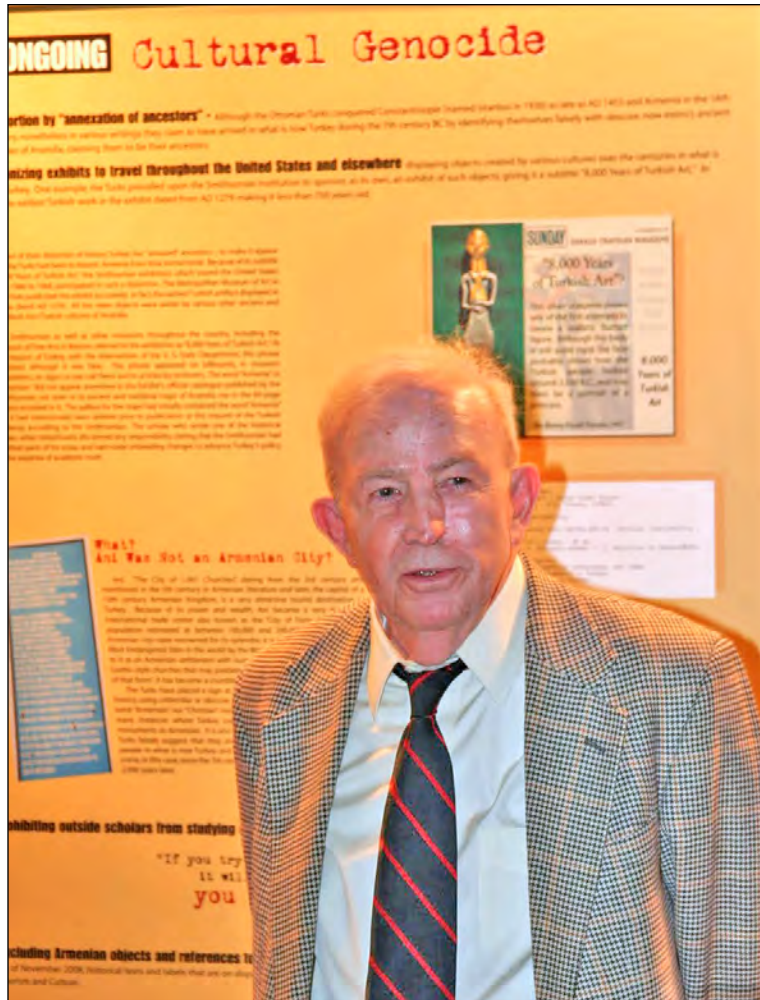
“Turkey considers this a hostile act by the French executive,” said Solakoglu. “All cooperation with the French government, all joint projects, will be frozen.”

Davutoglu likewise told Turkish parliamentarians that it is “out of the question to leave unanswered an attempt by any country leader, government or parliament to dishonor our country and nation.” “If this proposal is legislated, France will pioneer the return of a Middle Ages mindset to Europe,” Anatolia news agency quoted him as saying.

see FRANCE, page 3

Virginia Holocaust Museum to Develop Permanent Armenian Exhibit

STEVE BARSAMIAN PHOTO



Prof. Roger Smith

RICHMOND, Va. – With only a handful of the 16 Holocaust and genocide museums and 150 Holocaust and genocide study centers in the US containing substantial sections devoted to the Armenian Genocide, the decision of the Virginia Holocaust Museum to develop a permanent exhibit on the Armenian Genocide is all the more laudable and impressive. The museum hosted a special event on December 11 to call attention to its temporary Armenian exhibit and spur donations of suitable artifacts and financial support for the forthcoming permanent exhibit. The event was organized by the Armenian Education Center (AEC) of Virginia.

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

see VIRGINIA, page 20

40th Anniversary of Ordination of Archbishop Barsamian Celebrated

NEW YORK – This year marks the 40th anniversary of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian’s ordination into priesthood.

He has been a supporter of the Mother See of Holy Echiadzin, of the ongoing development of an independent homeland and of humanitarian outreach to the vulnerable among Armenia’s citizens.



The Diocesan Council organized a reception at the Sheraton Commander Hotel in Cambridge, Mass., in honor of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian’s 40th anniversary of priesthood and 20th anniversary of being Primate. The reception was hosted by Edward Guleserian and his family. At the reception, from left, are Papken Megerian, Sonig Vayedjian, Barsamian and Nishan Atinizian.

The foundation for Barsamian’s lifelong service and dedication to the Armenian Church was laid when he was a boy in Arapkir, Turkey. A major influence was his pious grandmother, a Genocide survivor, who instilled strong Christian values in him from his earliest years.

see PRIMATE, page 20

Appropriations Bill Maintains Parity Between Armenia and Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON – As the first session of the 112th Congress nears completion, the House and Senate approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which combined nine outstanding appropriations measures, including the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill. Although the overall omnibus bill cut discretionary spending by \$31 billion, but it did not reduce aid to Armenia, reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

The final conference agreement supported the administration’s budget request for Armenia, which was \$40 million in economic assistance. This number is consistent with the levels called for in the House and Senate versions of the FY2012 State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill.

In addition to continuing aid to Armenia, the House and Senate conferees to the bill see APPROPRIATIONS, page 20

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to Readers

WATERTOWN, Mass. – This issue of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* (numbered 4218 and 4219) will be the last issue of 2011. Our next issue will be published on January 7.

The staff of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* wishes our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Dink’s Daughter Marries Agos Editor

ISTANBUL (news.am) – Delal Dink, the daughter of Hrant Dink, the founder and former editor of *Agos* Armenian weekly who was murdered in 2007, wed with Robert Koptas, the current editor of *Agos*.

The couple walked down the aisle at Mary Mother of God Armenian Church in Istanbul’s Kumkapi district, and the 275-guest wedding banquet was held at Ponte Restaurant in Beyoglu district.

Leading Turkish journalists also attended the wedding. At the participants’ request, the late Hrant Dink’s favorite song, *Blonde Bride*, was sung numerous times.

Dink’s widow, Rakel Dink, wore black at the wedding and did not dance, *Aksam* daily reported.

Armenian Monastery to Be Built in Turkey

ANKARA (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKI) will build an Armenian monastery, a replica of the original, in a military zone in the Etlik neighborhood, as part of an agreement with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

As *Today’s Zaman* reported, TOKI will build a hospital for the Gülhane Military Academy of Medicine in a military zone between the Etlik and Diskapi neighborhoods. In lieu of payment, the Ministry of Defense gave TOKI another military area, which TOKI is expected to use for a shopping center and houses as part of a signed agreement with the Ministry of Defense.

However, a rift emerged between the ministries as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism objected to TOKI’s planned use of that zone. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism demanded that TOKI reconstruct the Vank Monastery, which was built in 1759 by the Armenian community and destroyed in the early 1920s.

The monastery can be seen in a painting in Amsterdam’s Rijksmuseum.

Architect Mehmet Emin Çevik designed the plan for the monastery after examining the painting and other historical documents, the daily reported. Çevik stated that the monastery would be built as a replica of the original although no physical traces are left.

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Grandma’s Tattoos

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News From Armenia

Selective Abortion of Girls Increases in Armenia, UN Says

YEREVAN (Agence France Presse) – The percentage of male children born in Armenia has risen significantly due to an increase in female foeticide, the United Nations Population Fund said on Monday.

More than 7,000 Armenian women have had selective abortions over the past five years, according to a new study carried out by the UN Population Fund with the Armenian Health Ministry and the Institute of Perinatology.

The gender ratio of births is 110-120 boys to 100 girls, higher than the accepted norm of 102-106 boys to 100 girls, the study said.

The trend could cause demographic problems for the country, UN Population Fund official Garik Hayrapetyan said. “In 10 to 20 years, we will face a deficit of women – that means, of potential mothers,” he added.

Selective abortion is a problem in countries like China and India.

But it has also reached “worrying proportions” in Caucasus states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly said in a resolution on gender selection in October.

The resolution said that pressure on women to have selective abortions should be seen as “a form of psychological violence.”

Ruling Party Won’t Censure Governor for Hitting Woman

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – President Serge Sargisian’s Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) indicated on Monday that it will not reprimand or even criticize a controversial regional governor for assaulting a woman.

Eduard Sharmazanov, the chief HHK spokesman and a deputy parliament speaker, pointed to law-enforcement authorities’ conclusion that Surik Khachatryan’s actions did not violate the Armenian Criminal Code.

The Special Investigative Service (SIS) said last week that Khachatryan, who heads Syunik province, did hit businesswoman Silva Hambarzumian at a Yerevan hotel on November 14 just days after she accused him of business-related fraud. But the SIS said the governor will not be prosecuted on “beating” charges because he did not injure Hambarzumian.

Government critics condemned the SIS stance, portraying it as further proof of impunity enjoyed by individuals close to the country’s political leadership. The opposition Zharangutyun (Heritage) party demanded last Wednesday that the authorities sack Khachatryan or at least make an appropriate “political evaluation” of his actions.

Khachatryan has been accused of attacking local business rivals as well as government critics, including a Syunik newspaper editor whose car was set on fire in 2005. He has always denied involvement in such incidents and denounced opposition politicians and pro-opposition media for labeling him as a crime figure.

Remains of First Armenian Illuminators To Be Brought to St. Echmiadzin Cathedral

ECHMIADZIN (news.am) – On Saturday, the Armenian Apostolic Church will commemorate the first Armenian illuminators, the Apostles Saint Thaddeus and Saint Bartholomew. And on that occasion, the Apostles’ remains, which are kept at the Treasury of the Holy See of St. Echmiadzin, were brought to Holy Echmiadzin Cathedral, on Friday, and they rested there until Saturday evening.

A Holy Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral, on Saturday, during which those present had the chance to pay homage to the Apostles’ remains.

The Flower Girl Of Amaras

By Tom Vartabedian

STEPANAKERT, Nagorno Karabagh – Ever since the fifth century, when Mesrop Mashtots put his script to the Armenian alphabet and St. Gregory the Illuminator founded a church here one century earlier, Amaras Monastery has served as a mecca for tourists and locals alike.

The Church of St. Grigoris, located inside this religious conclave, serves as a burial ground for St. Gregory’s grandson, who died in 338. It is here that St. Mesrop established the first-ever school that used his script.

The monastery was plundered in the 13th century by the Mongols, destroyed in a 1387 invasion and demolished again in the 16th century. Its history is one of reincarnation, built and rebuilt as a vibrant stomping ground for daily transients.

Today, it is both a spiritual and horticultural delight for anyone who chooses to cross its path near the village of SOS in the Martuni district of Nagorno Karabagh.

Anything you need to know about this site can be told by its caretaker, Vaal Kalian, who greeted us at the entrance with a pleasing smile and warm “Parev.” He walked with a limp.

The immediate presence of children and families stomping the grounds made a vast impression. I was quick to learn that the historical content competed very favorably with a recreational outlet that included rollicking fields of luscious flowers and a barbeque area for which to dine.

Amaras was an oasis in the middle of a turbulent ocean, calm and collected – a place where folks could go to gather their thoughts and distance themselves from reality.

Kolyan took us on a tour of the new chapel that housed the remains of St. Grigoris built in 1858 and paid for by Armenians in the city of Shushi. The three-nave basilica is constructed from bright white stone looking out over the lush green valley. It stands as one of the oldest Christian sites in the world.

We had arrived there after passing through the villages of Azogh and Dogh. A visit to Chenaree Tzar (the oldest tree in Armenia) by Shardsoshen started our day. The tree dates back more than 2,000 years and said to be a sanctuary for St. Mashtots to read and write.

As the afternoon worn on and my camera worked overtime, I noticed a young girl with pigtails ambling along. She personified that stereotypical Armenian look one might find in a travel book or calendar with an effervescent smile.

If only I could get her to pose for me without sounding obtrusive. I have been to Armenia twice and never did I encounter any difficulty in photographing children off the street. In fact, many times they asked to be immortalized digitally.

Within proximity was a field laden with daisies. It was as if one beckoned the other.

“I’d like to take your picture,” I told the girl.

She smiled coyly.



A young Armenian girl helps herself to flowers outside Amaras Monastery.

“In the field,” I continued.

A frown came over her sterile face.

“Votch,” she said, “Ots ga hon.” (No, there are snakes in there.)

I convinced her otherwise and was also reassured by her mother standing by. Perhaps there would be a reward for their accommodations, not that they were expecting any.

The girl made her way reluctantly into the field as if walking on eggshells. Her confidence restored, she began picking flowers upon command. The vast expanse of the field, complemented by the child’s beauty and activity at hand, led to a pleasing picture.

When the shoot ended, she made her way back to the road with a handful of daisies and offered them to her mother. I later found out it was the woman’s birthday and there was no better gift at hand than a bouquet of God’s bounty.

The best was yet to come – an invitation to join the family at a cookout with freshly-picked flowers gracing the picnic table.

In the midst of conflict and economic strife, the image of a child picking flowers at Amaras may not be paramount but it does serve as a reminder that often, it is the little things that bring us inner peace. As for the photo, it occupies a treasured place in my portfolio, shown to audiences where speaking engagements have occurred and used as a greeting card.

The memory of that day will be locked into my heart forever.

Birtright Armenia and AUA Offer a Unique Educational Package

YEREVAN – Education costs are skyrocketing around the world, an MBA degree can cost tens of thousands of dollars and student loans are a fact of life for many. However, for an affordable yet high quality MBA education, the School of Business Management at the American University of Armenia (AUA) is a viable option.

In order to promote the program and to further expand and enrich the range of long-term immersion and study opportunities in Armenia, a partnership agreement was signed between the American University of Armenia and Birtright Armenia. Accordingly, Birtright Armenia and the AUA’s School of Business and Management will join forces to offer a unique educational package to Diaspora Armenians desiring to pursue an MBA degree in Armenia.

The memorandum was signed by Dr. Bruce Boghosian, president of the AUA, and Sevan Kabakian, country director of Birtright Armenia.

Interested students would enroll in

the AUA MBA program that meets international standards and is accredited by the US-based Western Association of Schools and Colleges. During the two years of their study, students will also benefit from many exciting opportunities that Birtright Armenia offers, including full country and language immersion, part-time community service work, one round-trip airline ticket and accommodation within its network of local host families.

According to Kabakian, “With this collaboration, we are complementing each other’s areas of expertise and creating an exciting product which is a winner for the university, for Birtright Armenia and for all students. It’s a well-rounded study abroad experience that we will be promoting.”

Eric Guevorkian, the interim dean of the School of Business, stated that the agreement provides a viable option to the needs of many diaspora students. It affords them the opportunity of studying for an English language, accredited MBA

degree while experiencing and immersing in Armenia. Furthermore, Birtright Armenia’s community service experience would count for the internship requirement of the MBA program. Kabakian added, “We are embarking on a collaboration that will hopefully be expanded to other degrees in the future. Study abroad no longer needs to be limited to a few European capitals.”

Interested parties should contact Birtright Armenia at info@birtrightarmenia.org or the AUA at admission@aua.am and ApplySBM@aua.am.

Birtright Armenia’s mission is to strengthen ties between the homeland and diasporan youth by affording them an opportunity to be a part of Armenia’s daily life and to contribute to Armenia’s development through work, study and volunteer experiences, while developing a renewed sense of Armenian identity. For more information, or to make an online donation, visit www.birtrightarmenia.org.



INTERNATIONAL

AGBU YP London Holds Annual Networking Event at Saatchi Gallery with Guest Robert Tateossian

LONDON — On November 23, AGBU's Young Professionals (YP) of London held a networking event at the Saatchi Gallery. Robert Tateossian, designer and owner of the world-famous jewelry brand Tateossian, was the special guest at the event. More than 80 people attended.

Tateossian spoke about building up his business and developing it into an international brand. A trend-setting entrepreneur who speaks seven languages, Tateossian was born in Kuwait to a Lebanese-Armenian family. A former banker, Tateossian eventually moved into the jewelry business, starting out by designing cufflinks. This led to the designer becoming dubbed the "King of Cufflinks."

Following the presentation, the businessman answered questions from the attendees, who were particularly interested in Tateossian's recent entry into the Armenian market. "I had a meeting with the Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan. I had a very warm welcome in Armenia and am happy to have representation in my homeland," said Tateossian. The event continued with a fundraising



Robert Tateossian addressing the young professionals in attendance

raffle, which included jewelry from working events since 2009, and this Tateossian's line. event was another successful initiative

AGBU YP London has organized net- by the team.

AGBU Valence Celebrates 80th Anniversary

BOURG-lès-VALENCE, France — Celebrating its 80th anniversary, the AGBU Valence Chapter gathered 200 members and supporters for a gala dinner dance on Saturday, November 19, at the Columbine. Special guests included AGBU Europe and France Districts Chairman Alexis Govciyan, AGBU Valence Chapter Chair Philippe Panossian, the Mayor of Valence Alain Maurice, government officials of the Drome department (French administrative division), local officials of Armenian origin from Valence, AGBU representatives from Lyon, Marseille and Paris, representatives from local Armenian organizations and former Valence Chapter Chairmen Edward Torossian, Jean-Jacques Gochgarian, Jacques Markarian and Varoujan Varvarian.

Panossian addressed the audience by recalling a number of events that the Chapter had helped to organize over the past five years: the opening of the

Armenian Heritage Centre in 2005, a performance by the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra at Théâtre Belle Image in 2006, the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the earthquake in Armenia at the Municipal Theatre of Valence in 2008 and a concert by internationally renowned young jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan at the Train-Théâtre de Portes-lès-Valence in 2009.

On this occasion, Govciyan presented an AGBU France Honor Member certificate to French-Armenian sculptor Toros Rastkhan in recognition of his many years of service, as well as ongoing commitment, to the French republic's Armenian community. The artist, also known as Toros, had carved a bust of AGBU Founder Boghos Nubar, which is displayed in the AGBU Valence Center.

In his remarks, Govciyan presented AGBU's current and new projects in France,

Europe and Armenia, and also drew emphasis to the organization's guiding principles of preserving and promoting the Armenian heritage around the world.

The weekend of events also included a slideshow presentation on Thursday

evening, November 18, when a sizeable audience gathered to remember with pride 80 years of AGBU in Valence and a requiem service for deceased members of the Chapter on Sunday, November 20, at the local St. Sahag Armenian Church.



AGBU Europe District Chairman Alexis Govciyan presents a certificate of honor from AGBU France to French-Armenian sculptor Toros Rastkhan.

Turkey Warns France Over Armenian Genocide Bill

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The French Foreign Ministry refused to directly comment on the threat. "Turkey is an important friend and ally," spokesman Bernard Valero said, according to AFP.

Visiting Armenia, Sarkozy repeatedly reaffirmed France's official recognition of the Genocide enshrined in a 2001 law. He urged Ankara to stop denying a premeditated government effort to wipe out Ottoman Turkey's Armenian population.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan angrily rejected the call.

Armenian President Serge Sargsian was full of praise for Sarkozy when he visited France's second largest city of Marseille last week. "We must simply be grateful to the wise president of this beautiful country," he said in a speech there.

Sargsian also urged the Turks to "repent" for the Genocide and expressed confidence that they will eventually recognize it.



AGBU Europe District Chairman Alexis Govciyan cuts the ceremonial cake as AGBU Valence Chapter Chairman Philippe Panossian (back left) and members look on.

International News

Armenian Ambassador, Iraqi Officials Discuss Development of Economic Relations

BAGHDAD (news.am) — Armenian Ambassador to Iraq Murad Muradian visited Iraq's Al Anbar province last week to meet with Gov. Qsim Mohammad Abid.

The sides discussed prospects for development of relations between Armenia and the province. The Iraqi officials briefed the ambassador on possible investment programs for the Armenian companies, in particular in construction, industry, agriculture and energy.

Muradian said the programs would be studied thoroughly.

Al Anbar is the largest province in Iraq, sharing borders with Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Italy to Strengthen Ties With Entrepreneurs

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Italy's ambassador to Armenia expressed his dedication to strengthening relations between the two countries.

Commenting on his contributions to the development of bilateral ties, Bruno Scapini noted, "aware of the challenges we're facing in political, economical and cultural sectors, I feel a commitment to improve the degree of cooperation to the best of my possibilities."

"At present, I'm working on establishment of Armenian-Italian business association, which can be a basis for further cooperation in other fields as well, maybe exchange of youth, students, organization of seminars, collective events and fairs," the ambassador noted.

"I found businessmen in Italy that would like to join this initiative, which in itself symbolizes the existing relations," Scapini said.

Association formation activities will be launched in December, with the program to probably kick off in early 2012.

Representatives of Turkey's Minorities Meet At Armenian Patriarchate

ISTANBUL (news.am) — The religious leaders of Turkey's national minorities met at the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople last week to discuss the country's new constitution.

The participants discussed the state's guaranteeing of the freedom of religion and conscience, within the citizenship concept, in Turkey's new constitution.

The attendees decided that the report, which will be prepared after four such meetings, be presented to the parliament a, Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople informed Armenian News.

The next meeting will be held at the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Christie's hosts auction Of Contemporary Armenian Art

LONDON (news.am) — Charity auction of Contemporary Armenian Art was held at the Christie's in London.

The event was organized by former Armenian Premier Armen Sargsyan within the framework of Yerevan My Art charitable project assisted also by the Armenian Embassy in London.

Benefactors, businessmen, members of the European Parliament, ambassadors and diplomats were present.

The auction featured works of such painters as Vahan Topchyan, Samvel Baghdasaryan, Sargis Hamalbashyan, Ararat Sargsyan, Ayyaz Avoyan, Arthur Sargsian and others.

The funds received from the auction will be donated to Mother and Child C

enter to help mothers overcome poverty and violence problems.

Community News

Fr. Shnork Kasparian: 50 Years of Service

BELLEVILLE, Ill. — The Holy Virgin Mary and Shoghagat Church hosted a weekend program here, centered on celebrating the 50th ordination anniversary of longtime parish pastor (and current visiting pastor), the Very Rev. Shnork Kasparian.

Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presided over the gala banquet at the Cedars Ballroom in, St. Louis, Mo., on Friday, December 9, which was also attended by honored clergy including Bishop Robert Shaheen, the Maronite Eparchial Bishop of Our Lady of Lebanon Eparchy and the Very Rev. Aren Jebejian, pastor of Chicago's St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church.

Nearly 100 people attended, including guests who had traveled from New York, Canada and Chicago to honor Kasparian. Mark Marifian and Adrienne Krikorian served as masters of ceremony. Tributes and congratulatory letters presented included those from US Sen. Mark Kirk and from clergy throughout the United States. A video tribute spanning Kasparian's life, prepared by George and Nina Marifian, was also shown.

Barsamian addressed the gathering, sharing his experiences with Kasparian and emphasizing the piety of this humble servant of the Lord. He also presented the honoree with an encyclical from Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, which Jebejian read to a standing audience.

At last, Kasparian reflected on his many years of service, expressing thanks to people around the world to whom he had ministered. To conclude the program, Parish Council Chairman George Marifian presented Kasparian with a new laptop computer from the parish.

As part of the banquet, Barsamian presented diplomas to the parish's recent Sunday School graduates: Erik Stryshak, Adrienne Krikorian,



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presents Fr. Shnork Kasparian with an encyclical from Karekin II.

Gabrielle Krikorian, Gregory Marifian and Mark Marifian.

The anniversary organizing committee, co-chaired by Raffi Krikorian and Jane Matoesian, included committee members Lisa Bedian, Caroline Kernan, Lydia Kachigian Krikorian, Adrienne Krikorian, Mark Marifian, Nina Marifian, Rose Nersesian, Tamara Noubarian and Arleen Stryshak, assisted by Marifian.

A native of Alexandria, Egypt, Kasparian studied at the St. James Armenian Seminary of Jerusalem and was ordained to the priesthood in 1961. He served in Brazil and Uruguay prior to arriving in the Eastern Diocese, where he continued his theological studies at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wis., and was assigned to serve at St. John the Baptist Church in Greenfield, Wis.

In 1969, he was invited by Vazken I, the late Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians, to serve as the dean of the theological seminary at Holy Echimadzin. He returned to the Eastern Diocese in 1972, and went on to serve in Worcester, Mass., Providence, RI, Milwaukee, Wis. and Belleville, Ill.

Kasparian has also served in the Canadian Diocese, at the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.



John Krikorian thanks his rescuers. Granddaughter Seran Krikorian is looking at the card they made for the rescuers.

John Krikorian Thanks His Lifesavers

GLENDALE, Calif. — As trite a cliché as this might seem, sometimes it pays to be in the right place at the right time.

Business Life publisher John Krikorian has two very good reasons to thank the Glendale Fire Department.

By Tom Vartabedian

One is accepting a community service award for the good journalism he has provided to his West Coast readership over the past two decades.

And, another, is for saving his life during an acceptance speech at the podium following a heart attack.

Krikorian showed up with his wife Elsie and other members of his family for an honor he richly deserved. He was being showcased under the theme "Service Above Self" during an awards luncheon at the Glendale Hilton.

Moments after accepting his award, Krikorian suffered a seizure and crumbled to the stage floor, much to the groans of a stunned audience.

Firefighters and paramedics on hand immediately rushed to perform CPR. Had it been another type of venue, the outcome could have been fatal.

He was transported to Glendale Adventist where doctors and nurses treated him in the cardiac catheterization lab, which specializes in heart conditions.

Krikorian remained hospitalized for three weeks and indicated he didn't have a memory of his collapse and the days that followed.

His surgeon, Thahn Ngun, discovered Krikorian had a blockage in his heart, along with an irregular heartbeat — the combination of which led to his heart attack.

A stent and defibrillator were placed inside his chest to help jump-start his heart should he encounter any future struggles.

The Krikorians, well known throughout the Armenian community of America, decided to return the favor and served up a lunch for Glendale firefighters and paramedics from three stations, thanking them for saving his life.

His grandchildren were on hand reading huge "thank you" cards prepared by the family. Sharing center stage was 14-year-old Seran Krikorian. The *Glendale News Press* prepared a photo gallery of the event, showing a smiley Krikorian.

He now appears fully recovered and is back at work on his magazine. Despite being in his upper 70s, Krikorian shows no sign of cutting back, joined in the business by his wife and son Gregory, making it more than a mom-and-pop enterprise.

Awards and recognitions are nothing new to Krikorian. He was previously applauded as "Small Business Journalist of the Year" in Los Angeles. The award epitomizes journalists representing print media who report and champion small business issues with concentrated efforts to increase public understanding.

"Now I have two birthdays," he told the *Glendale Press*. "My birthday on August 24 and my life date on October 12. These firefighters who saved my life are my guardian angels."

Ironically, the date happened to coincide with Columbus Day when America was discovered.

You may know Krikorian through his seven children or his 22 grandchildren — all with Armenian names. Or you may recognize him from his days with the *Hartford Courant* back a generation ago when he spurred the advertising department to uncharted heights.

Krikorian was the "go-to" guy whenever it came to securing an ad. *Business Life* enjoys a wide circulation and is distributed complimentary. Any money that comes out of it is raised through advertising.

see LIFESAVERS, page 5

Armenian Assembly of America Participates In Religious Freedom Event on Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON — Last month, the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly), the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and the Knights of Vartan Ani Lodge, joined members of the Armenian Caucus and Hellenic Caucus on Capitol Hill for the first annual St. Andrew's Human Rights and Religious Freedom reception. Organized by Hellenic and Armenian Caucus member Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD), the reception was hosted by Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) of the Helsinki Commission, Representatives Frank Wolf (R-VA) and James P. McGovern (D-MA) of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, Representatives Trent Franks (R-AZ) and Heath Shuler (D-NC) of the International Religious Freedom Caucus and Representatives Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) of the Hellenic Caucus.

The State Department's ambassador-at-large for religious freedom, Suzan Johnson Cook, Sen. Ben Cardin, co-chair of the Helsinki Commission, Sen. Robert Menendez and 16 representatives, many who sit on both the Armenian Caucus and Hellenic Caucus, were on hand illustrating the growing support among members of Congress in protecting religious freedom at home and abroad. In fact, just last week, the House of Representatives unanimously adopted H. Res. 306. Introduced by Armenian Caucus Co-chair Ed Royce (R-CA), H. Res. 306 urges the Republic of Turkey to safe-



From left, Taniel Koushadjian, Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD) and former Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-MD)

guard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties. Sarbanes joined his Armenian Caucus colleagues in speaking in support of H. Res. 306 on the House floor.

"The Armenian Assembly and the greater Armenian-American community know first-hand the effect religious discrimination and persecution have on people," stated Assembly Grassroots Director Taniel Koushadjian. "For far too long the Turkish government has pursued a policy that provokes, discriminates and fails to protect religious minorities against extremists and ultranationalists, as evidenced by the 2006 murder of Father Santoro, the 2007 murder of Hrant Dink, the 2010 murder of Roman Catholic Bishop Padovese and the decades-long attempt to expunge the Ecumenical Patriarchate from Turkey," stated Koushadjian.

Opening remarks on the history of the Ecumenical Patriarchate were offered by Peter Marudas. Ambassador Johnson Cook also spoke to the Obama Administration's support for the Greek Ecumenical Patriarchate. These remarks were followed by a presentation of "The Apostle of Love, Hope and Reconciliation," a short documentary film about the mission of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

The event was widely attended by the Pan-Orthodox community and others who support the Ecumenical Patriarchate in its struggle for human rights and religious freedom. The many members of Congress who came to offer their best wishes were given a brochure detailing the plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and a replica coin of the Congressional Gold Medal awarded to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew by the US Congress.

see ASSEMBLY, page 7



COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Mary Church of Hollywood, Fla. Commemorates Past, Looks to Future

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. — On Sunday, December 11, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), visited St. Mary Church of Hollywood as the community marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the first Armenian parish in Miami and the 13th anniversary of the consecration of the present church building in Hollywood.

The day began with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the ordination of five altar servers. Barsamian ordained Andrew Dilanchian, Johnny Heghinian, Sevan Lusararian and Sage McBride to the rank of acolyte.

Arie Zakaryan, who began his altar service at St. Mary Church but has since moved to the Chicago area where he is pursuing graduate study, returned to his home parish on this special occasion and was ordained to the sub-diaconate.

Barsamian presented the newly-ordained young people with certificates and wooden crosses from Armenia and encouraged them to continue their involvement in the life of the Armenian Church. The theme resounded through the Primate's sermon.

"The idea of a calling is a very important one for Christians," he said. "When God calls to his children, He is always calling us to draw near to Him, to fill our lives with His love, and to allow Him to smile upon us — as our infant Lord Jesus smiled upon those who drew near him in the manger, on that first Christmas day."

"All of our parishioners were uplifted by the ordinations," said the Rev. Vartan Joulfayan, parish pastor, adding that this was the second ordination of altar servers since the consecration of the present church building 13 years ago.

Also present for the service were the Rev. Nersess and Yn. Aurora Jebejian, who live in the area and were invited by Joulfayan to take part in the day's program.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and the Rev. Fr. Vartan Joulfayan with newly-ordained altar servers at St. Mary Church in Hollywood, Fla.

Some 150 people gathered for the afternoon banquet in the church hall.

Parish Council Chair Armand Dilanchian thanked Barsamian for joining the parish on this happy occasion and extended his appreciation to parishioners for their hard work and commitment to St. Mary Church.

Joulfayan spoke about the history of the community, which traces its roots to the late 1930s, when Armenians first began to settle in South Florida. He said those initial newcomers worshipped outdoors, often gathering on the beach for prayer, and in each other's homes until they raised enough money to purchase a house of worship in Miami in 1951.

That church, consecrated as St. John the

Baptist Church in 1953, went on to become the first Armenian church in Florida and served the community for almost three decades. In the late 1980s, when the building had aged beyond repair, the parish sold the property and drew up plans to erect a new house of worship.

In February 1996, Karekin I, the late Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, blessed the ground for St. Mary Church during his first historic pontifical visit to the United States. Within two years construction was completed, and the present-day building was consecrated in the spring of 1998.

Joulfayan stressed the contributions of all the individuals and families who helped the community grow over the past six decades. A photo slideshow prepared by Eddy Masraff featuring historic and recent pictures complemented his presentation.

Joulfayan expressed his appreciation to members of the various St. Mary Church organizations whose service helps the parish grow. Invoking a local tradition, he then invited parishioners to light candles on an oversized anniversary cake.

During Sunday's banquet, Joulfayan also unveiled the parish's redesigned website. The new site — www.stmaryarmenianchurch.org — features photo and video galleries, Christian education materials and other resources.

The day's program also included the singing of the national anthems by Claudia Lusararian; the recitation of poetry by Tanya Lusararian; remarks by Virginia Kevoorkian and an instrumental performance by Audrey Pilafian (cello), Marina Berberian (piano), and Sage McBride (violin). Harout Esmerian served as the master of ceremonies.

St. James Armenian Church Men's Club Hosts Edward Avedisian

WATERTOWN, Mass. — On Monday, January 2, Edward Avedisian, private investor and former member of the Boston Pops will be the speaker at the dinner meeting of the St. James Armenian Church Men's Club. The topic will be "Education in Armenia: Is the Glass Half Full or Half Empty?"

Avedisian's professional career spans four disciplines: a performing classical musician, teaching at the university level, arts administration, as well as investing and philanthropy. He recently resigned after 35 years of service as clarinetist with the Boston Pops and

43 seasons with the Boston Ballet Orchestra. He has held posts in the Atlanta Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Boston Opera Company, Boston Lyric Opera and Harvard Chamber Orchestra, as well as fulfilling substitute engagements with the Boston Symphony and the Metropolitan Opera. In addition to his solo appearances in the US, he has performed with the Armenian Philharmonic, the Armenian Radio and Television Orchestra and the National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia, and was visiting artist to

Boston's sister city of Hangzhou, China, in 1998. He was appointed a Fromm Fellow for Contemporary Music Performance at Tanglewood under the direction of Aaron Copland and received the American National Theater Academy Award for his performances in Europe.

He has been an adjunct professor of music at Boston University and lecturer at Endicott College and served for two years as a panelist for the National Foundation for Advancement of the Arts, which makes determinations for Presidential Scholars in the Arts.

He was artistic administrator of the Harvard Chamber Orchestra (a professional resident orchestra at Harvard University). In addition, he has served as orchestra committee chairman with both the Lake George Opera Festival and the Boston Ballet Orchestras. He also has served as orchestra personnel manager for tours of the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra.

During the course of the above, he has also been active as a private investor. The success of this endeavor has enabled him to establish endowments and award grants to a number of nonprofit organizations. At the American University of Armenia he was the lead sponsor of the new 100,000 sq. ft. Paramaz Avedisian Building and was appointed to the recent Presidential Search Committee for AUA by C. Judson King, former provost of the University of California and present chair of the AUA Board of Trustees. Others include the founding and sponsorship of both the Koren and Shooshanig Avedisian K-12 School in Malatia-Sepastia, Armenia, and chairman of the AUA-Nork Marash Children's Cardiac Hospital Project, where open heart surgeries are performed free for children in Armenia. He also serves as Trustee for the American University of Armenia and the Armenian Missionary Association of America. As a member of the Friends of the American University of Armenia his contributions in Armenia include a complete renovation of the high school in Haghaganag Village and the installation of lights at the Didzernaghaper Armenian Genocide Memorial.

Avedisian was born in 1937 in Pawtucket, RI, where he attended school and served as president of his graduating class.

The social hour starts with mezza at 6:15 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 per person. The dinner meeting will be at the St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St. Women are welcome.

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From left, Gary, Anahid and Aurelian Mardiros

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John Krikorian Thanks His Lifesavers

LIFESAVERS, from page 4

A consummate journalist and business professional, he writes and edits. He publishes and circulates. He pays the bills and sweeps the office. The day has no set hours. It is gauged by the workload.

His success is a testament to the innovative spirit of entrepreneurs everywhere and what can be achieved even through these trying economic times.

Krikorian is so thankful at getting a second chance at life, he has e-mailed all his closest friends from coast-to-coast with a photo taken at the luncheon he and Elsie sponsored to thank the firemen who saved his life.

Two words were all that accompanied his message "Stay well."



COMMUNITY NEWS

Boston Magazine Taps Saryan as 'Top Doc'

By Tom Vartabedian

BURLINGTON, Mass. — John Saryan never wanted to be a doctor. He was not that young kid who was surrounded by medical playthings with a physician's dream in mind.

Instead, he leaned toward a career in math and science. He wanted to be an engineer who could shape the world in its evolution.

Today, he stands with a celebrated class as chairman of the Allergy and Immunology Department at Lahey Clinic, bringing comfort and healing to his patients over the past 29 years.

The December issue of *Boston* magazine listed Saryan as one of the top doctors throughout the Greater Boston area — for the fourth time over the past decade.

"It serves as a privilege to be acknowledged among the very best," admitted the 59-year-old. "Boston is surrounded by world-class hospitals and medical schools and I'm very proud and humbled to be among other Lahey physicians included in this list."

Saryan was chosen by his peers. These are



Dr. John Saryan, chairman of the Department of Allergy and Immunology at Lahey Clinic, Burlington, Mass. as a deacon at St. Gregory Church in North Andover

the doctors that other doctors recommend to family and friends.

"Competition to make this list is pretty tough," concludes magazine editor John Wolfson. "With so many leading experts around town, how do you decide who makes the cut? You ask the experts themselves."

Other Armenians named to the select list include: John Krikorian, oncology, MetroWest Medical Center, Framingham; Alphonse Taghlian, radiation oncology, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston and Christine Peeters-Asdourian, pain medicine, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital, Boston.

As department head, Saryan is in charge of four doctors, 10 nurses and a nurse practitioner. A host of credits follows his name in the pro-

fession, including past president of the New England Society of Allergy and past president of the Massachusetts Society of Allergy.

Among other laurels is a dedicated service award from the Asthma and Allergy Foundation, where he serves on the New England Board of Directors.

"It makes me feel that all the time and effort I put into my job gets recognized," Saryan added. "If anything, I'm probably too devoted to my work."

It wasn't until he took a course in human physiology at Air Force Academy that caused Saryan to change his career path to medicine. Up until then, he was leaning toward engineering.

"I became fascinated by medical science," he recalled. "My mother wanted me to be a doctor. It was a noble profession. People respect doctors. She was surprised when I decided to enter the field. The decision came after a lot of soul-searching."

Saryan is a 1970 graduate of Mount Pleasant High School in Wilmington, Del., where he was a member of the National Honor Society and part of a state championship tennis team.

He proceeded to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md, ultimately graduating from its School of Medicine in 1977. He performed his residency at Boston's Children Hospital before joining Lahey, where he was appointed department chairman in 2004.

"My patients are my biggest inspiration," he points out. "They all pose a different challenge. You're making a difference in their lives. There are the personal connections that often go beyond the job description."

Medicine runs in the family with a daughter, Diana Balekian, 29, a pediatric resident at Massachusetts General, and a niece, Ani Saryan, a family practice resident in Appleton, Wis.

Daughter Valerie Saryan, 26, is in Los Angeles, working and attending Whittier Law School, and youngest daughter, Melanie Saryan, 20, is a junior at Bentley University, Waltham. Saryan has been married for 30 years to the former Debbie Musserian, with whom he resides in Andover.

His late father, Sarkis, was a linguist, scholar and chemist who authored a book, titled *Language Connections*. His mother, Armine, is 90 and living in Los Angeles. She taught at the Jemaran in Beirut for 10 years, wrote poems and essays for publications and mothered four children, all college-educated.

The Armenian side is just as relevant. Saryan is past president and chairman of the Scholarship Committee for the Armenian Medical Association and belongs to the Council of Armenian Executives. He has been the medical director of Camp Haiastan for 30 years and a board member for 10 years.

Each Sunday he is on the altar of St. Gregory Church in North Andover, where he has been serving as a deacon since 2001. He has supervised Bible study and taught Sunday School for six years while also serving on the Prelacy's Armenian Religious Education Council for eight years.

"The church is a place I go for peace," Saryan maintains. "It's been a definite stress-buster for me. Every success I've achieved is a gift from God. I'm His servant and I'd like to be an example to others. Every time I put on that stole, it's where I belong."

Christmas Donations to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

Below are the Christmas donations received to date. Some donors preferred to include Christmas and New Year greetings.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

University of Michigan Celebrates 30 Years of Armenian Studies

Occasion Marked by Series Of Events over Four Days

By Betty Apigian Kessel

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — From October 13 to 16, the University of Michigan and the larger community celebrated the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History and of the Armenian Studies Program itself. The events, stretched over four days, included a reception, a special dinner, a special exhibit at the Hatcher Graduate Library, a presentation of Armenian films and a lecture on the subject and a symposium. The second meeting of the three-year old project "Report on the State of Armenian Studies" was also held in conjunction with these activities.

A reception marking the occasion was held on October 13, in the foyer of the University of Michigan's Museum of Art. Attending the reception were University administrators, faculty, students and staff, members of the community and major donors to the program, headed by Richard Manoogian, president of MASCO Corporation.

Prof. Ronald Suny, the first chair holder of the Alex Manoogian Chair acted as master of ceremonies. In his opening remarks, Suny recognized a number of individuals who in different capacities, had been instrumental in the establishment of the first in Armenian studies chair at the University. Suny related

the difficult circumstances under which the program was set up and the long years of development, including the endowment of the second chair at the University in 1987, the Marie Manoogian Chair in Armenian Language and Literature, and the sustained support from Louise Manoogian Simone and Richard Manoogian.

University Provost Philip Hanlon offered his congratulatory and supportive remarks in the following words, as did Dean Terrence McDonald, who has been instrumental in the efforts to expand the activities of the program in the last five years. Suny read a congratulatory and supportive letter from the president of the University of Michigan, Mar Sue Coleman, who could not attend the reception.

The last speaker was Richard Manoogian. Speaking on behalf of the Manoogian family, including his sister Louise Simone Manoogian, the speaker related the contributions his parents, Alex and Marie Manoogian had made toward the genesis and growth of Armenian studies in US academic institutions, culminating in the establishment of the two endowed chairs and program at the University of Michigan. Manoogian thanked all who had made his parents' dream of a vibrant program possible.

"I know my parents who cared about every step in the development of the program, are present with us today, watching with shining eyes, the celebration of the dream which they ignited so many years ago," stated Manoogian. "My Sister Louise and I appreciate our family's 30-year partnership with the

University of Michigan and thank all of you who have contributed to the success of the program. We eagerly look forward to many more years of productive scholarship and research in Armenian Studies," he concluded.

The reception was followed by a celebratory dinner attended by select faculty, administrators and guests.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the special exhibit that opened to the academic and general community in the afternoon of October 14. The event, titled "Armenian Studies and the Libraries of the University of Michigan," took place in the Gallery of the Hatcher Graduate Library at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

A short program consisted of comments by Peggy Daub and Dr. Pablo Alvarez, curators at Special Collections Library, and Prof. Kevork Bardakjian, Marie Manoogian Chair in Armenian Language and Literature.

The exhibit, spanning centuries and continents, was made possible through the collaboration and rich holdings of a number of collections: The Hatcher Graduate Library of U-M in Ann Arbor; the Special Collections Library which holds four extraordinary Armenian manuscripts ranging from the 12th to the 17th centuries and other valuable archives and collections related to Armenian studies; the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and the holdings of the Armenian Studies program of the University. The items exhibited included medieval manuscripts, rare books, historical documents, archival materials and samples of holdings of 19th and 20th journals.

Armenian Films and Lecture

Culminating a semester of presentations of Armenian films, in the evening of Friday, October 14, Manoogian Simone Foundation Visiting Scholar and cultural historian Dr. Artsvi Bakhchinyan of Yerevan offered two classic films: "Tjvjik" (Armen Manaryan director, 1961) and "A Piece of the Sky" (Henrik Malyan director, 1980). The presentation of the films was accompanied by a lecture by Bakhchinyan, titled "A View of Armenian Cinema."

An important aspect of the special weekend was the symposium on "Armenia in World History/the World in Armenian History," at which four scholars made presentations that excited and involved the large audience.

Prof. Sebouh Aslanian, the newly-appointed Richard G. Hovannisian Assistant Professor of Modern Armenian History at the University of California at Los Angeles, discussed "World History's Challenge to Armenian Studies," in which he pointed out many of the shortcomings in approaches to Armenian history. Prof. Stephen Rapp, a scholar trained at the U-M who is currently a research fellow at the University of Bern in Switzerland, discussed ways of understanding the earlier periods of Armenian history, those that precede the actual emergence and presence of the Nation. Prof. Maud Mandel, a historian of Judaic Studies at Brown, also trained at Michigan, who has written an important comparative study of the reactions of the Armenian and Jewish communities of France to their respective genocides, discussed the ways in which a comparative historiography of diaspora identity may best be carried out by scholars. Finally, Michael Pifer, a doctoral student in comparative literature at the University of Michigan, delivered an impressive and indeed moving analysis of the Crane/Groong motif in Armenian literature and in the traditions adjacent to Armenia.

The second workshop on the "The State of Armenian Studies," a special project of the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan, convened in conjunction with the activities marking the 30th anniversary of the Program (October 14-16) and will be covered separately.

(Videos of the reception, exhibit, symposium and lecture on Armenian films can be seen on the website of the Armenian Studies Program: www.ii.umich.edu/asp)

The University of Michigan's Armenian Studies Program promotes the study of Armenian history, culture and society. A member of the University of Michigan International Institute, the program organizes educational opportunities for students, faculty and the community. For more information, contact the Armenian Studies Program or visit www.ii.umich.edu/asp/.

The University of Michigan International Institute houses 18 centers and programs focused on world regions and global themes. The institute develops and supports international teaching, research and public affairs programs to promote global understanding across the campus and to build connections with intellectuals and institutions worldwide. For more information, visit www.ii.umich.edu.

Armenian Assembly Participates in Religious Freedom Event on Capitol Hill



Members of Congress honored

ASSEMBLY, from page 4

"I was pleased to see so many members of Congress attend and delighted to join the Armenian-American community in support of our Christian and Hellenic brothers," stated

Rev. Hovsep Karapetian from St. Mary Armenian Church who was present at the event. "Patriarch Bartholomew is a very well respected voice in the Orthodox Church and his work is important to addressing our mutual con-

cerns, especially in the context of human rights and religious freedom," stated Karapetian.

St. Andrew is the patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and on November 30 he is venerated in both the Western and Eastern Churches.

Great Opportunity to Study in Armenia and Receive College Credit

Northeastern University's Dialogue of Civilizations program has been sending students to Armenia for the past three years to learn about Armenia's history, politics, and culture.

Classes are held in English at the American University of Armenia and are supplemented by numerous field trips. Students earn 8 college credits. The program will be held in Yerevan from late May to late June 12.

Visit the website: http://www.northeastern.edu/internationalaffairs/learning_coop/dialogue/

Qualified non-Northeastern college student may apply. Contact Gregory Aftandilian, adjunct faculty member, at gaftandilian@verizon.net or phone 703-402-9134.

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New York
M E T R O

AGBU's University Outreach Program Interacts With Boston and New York Students

NEW YORK and BOSTON – On Friday, December 2, AGBU's University Outreach program, in collaboration with the Boston University Armenian Club, held a social media and business etiquette seminar titled "Social Media and Me." The event was led by University Outreach Coordinator Dan

reputation.

Melissa Kuzoian, president of the Boston University Armenian Club, said of the seminar, "It was very interesting to learn about all the great programs AGBU offers. Many of my peers were unaware of these opportunities before, so it was nice to learn what a helpful

Queens College attended the evening, which was presented by AGBU Central Board member and graduate Prof. Arda Haratunian. Students learned about the importance of resume and cover letter writing, public speaking, effective interviewing, interpersonal communication and networking. Attendees had the opportunity to ask Haratunian questions about their specific career paths and were able to speak with her one-on-one after the talk.

"As Armenian youth, not only are we excited to gather and network with one another, but having the opportunity to learn from Armenian professionals who can pass on

their expertise is invaluable," said Dara Hourdajian, president of Columbia's Armenian Society. "AGBU helped to make that happen by organizing an event with Arda Haratunian, who shared with us her insight into resume presentation and interview skills."

In addition to the workshop, AGBU's Associate Education Director Natalie Gabrelian gave a presentation on the organization's youth programs, including opportunities for internships, scholarships, camp counselor positions and online education, as well as information about AGBU's Young Professionals network.



Hilary Allard, VP of The Castle Group, discusses social media networking with Armenian students from various Boston-area schools.

Antreasyan and featured guest speaker Hilary Allard, vice president of the Castle Group, a public relations company.

With the goal of attracting students from all local universities, the event brought together 40 students from Boston University, Lesley University, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, MIT, Suffolk University, Tufts University, University of Massachusetts Boston and Wellesley College.

Allard offered tips on how to properly optimize various social media platforms to help advance one's career and cultivate an online

resource we have in AGBU, especially in regard to the internship programs. Overall the event was extremely informative, and it would be great to have someone come speak to us again soon."

On the heels of an event generating such positive outcomes, University Outreach hosted a career development workshop, this time with the help of the Columbia University Armenian Society, on Wednesday, December 7, on Columbia's campus. Nearly a dozen students from Columbia, Rutgers University, Barnard College, School of Visual Arts and

Troy Genocide Memorial Efforts Getting off Ground

TROY, N.Y. – After lengthy negotiations and several meetings with the city officials of Troy, the Monument Committee of Knights and Daughters of Vartan have succeeded in the first stages of creating an Armenian Heritage Monument to be erected on the grounds at Riverfront Park. The site is a visible one which will attract the curiosity of many non-Armenians in the area. The inscription on the granite monument will honor the many Armenian ancestors who fled from their homeland to settle in and contribute to the betterment of the City of Troy.

On Friday, December 9, a crowd of Armenians came to this site to witness the consecration of the monument grounds. Clergy from all three area Armenian churches presided in a moving service.

Construction and installation of the monument will begin in the spring. Special thanks go to Mayor Harry Tutunjian, a member of the Knights, who supported efforts in the procurement of this land.

– D. Edward Kebabjian



From right, Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian, Fr. Bedros Shetilian, Rev. Vincent Kumjian and Troy Mayor Harry Tutunjian

SarkissianMason Donating \$100k To Combat Human Trafficking

NEW YORK – Digital innovation agency SarkissianMason (SM) announced this month that it would engineer a mobile solution for an anti-human trafficking organization in need of a technological innovation in its first Technology for Change Grant.

The agency will be donating up to \$100,000 of time and resources to work hand-in-hand with a not-for-profit partner working in the field of anti-human trafficking.

CEO Patrick Sarkissian explained the agency's idea, "We must help. NGOs can give us their knowledge and insights; then we can apply our method of innovation and help make a difference with an issue that preys upon people throughout the world, including an alarming amount in the US."

Starting December 5, the agency will begin accepting applications from registered US-based 501c(3) organizations. The organization should be involved in providing direct services, reporting, education and/or advocacy around anti-human trafficking and have a vision for utilizing technology to increase their reach and impact.

SM will work closely with the nonprofit part-

ner to conceptualize and build a mobile technology solution and adoption strategy. Specific examples of deliverables could include: SMS-based awareness campaigns and fundraising, customized mobile application development for locally-relevant content and services or mobile-based data collection services for reporting and tracking.

Innovation is nothing new to SM, which has traditionally invested 25 percent of company time in developing its own intellectual property. "We are really excited to showcase a technology innovation in the social change space, and to ultimately add the creation into our intellectual property portfolio," Sarkissian adds, "social innovation isn't just about creating positive social impact, but it's also about integrating technology solutions into services and connecting a number of stakeholders around social problems."

To find out more, or to apply for the SarkissianMason Technology for Change Grant, visit sarkissianmason.com/charity.

The deadline for 2012 grant applications is Tuesday, January 31.

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Deadline for returning completed Applications: March 15, 2012



COMMUNITY NEWS

New US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern Visits Armenian American Wellness Center

By Negar M. Joy

WASHINGTON – On Tuesday, October 25, the new US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern, along with his wife, Libby, and Dr. Jatinder Cheema, the director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission, visited the Armenian American Wellness Center in Yerevan. They presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Khachanush Hakobyan, the executive director of the Wellness Center, for the center's work in providing quality health care to the women of Armenia as a partner to USAID.

"We are honored that Ambassador Heffern chose to visit the Wellness Center within the first month of arriving in Armenia," said Hakobyan. The Wellness Center has become the hallmark of American expertise and quality and also of the latest technology and medical services in Armenia. American values are reflected in the level of transparency, accountability, and high quality medical care that the Wellness Center holds as its guiding principles. The Armenian American Cultural Association (AACA) is the US sponsor of the Wellness Center.

The Wellness Center, since its inception in April 1997, has been led by two volunteers: Rita Balian and Hranush Hakobyan, the latter currently Armenia's minister of the diaspora.

"This project has become a reality largely because of its dedicated volunteers and the financial support from the Armenian-American community and our longstanding partnership with USAID," said Balian.

John and Libby Heffern, as well as Cheema, were impressed by the transformation of the Wellness Center building into the modern facility it has become. Less than 10 years ago, the government of Armenia, in appreciation of the work done, donated the land and the Soviet-era building where the clinic was previously located on the first floor to the Wellness Center. The



The medical staff of the Wellness Center with US Ambassador John Heffern and his wife, present the award to Khachanush Hakobyan.

departments, including the newly established Men's Health Diagnostic Program for prostate cancer screening, a full-time pharmacy and an on-site hematology laboratory, in addition to its existing pathology lab.

Each day, between 100 to 125 women and men, come to the Wellness Center for services. On the day of the US ambassador's visit, 127 women and men received medical and diagnostic services. For those who are unable to travel to Yerevan or its satellite clinic in Gavar, by Lake Sevan, the Wellness Center's monthly Medical Outreach Missions travel to remote regions of the country and Artsakh to provide free-of-charge medical services. Since 1997, 80 remote villages and towns and close to 13,000



The reconstructed, seismically reinforced and renovated six-story building of the Wellness Center in Yerevan, Armenia



Khachanush Hakobyan, executive director of the Wellness Center, center, receives a certificate of appreciation from US Ambassador John Heffern, left, and the USAID Armenia mission director, Dr. Jatinder Cheema

center is registered, incidentally, as the first not-for-profit foundation in Armenia.

Through the hard work and dedication of architect/builder Vartkess Balian, together with architect Osep Sarafian from Detroit, they conceived the new design of the building and supervised the team of local architects and sub-contractors, to reconstruct, expand, seismically reinforce and renovate the building to become a state-of-the-art, six-story medical and conference center. During the years of construction, AACA worked closely with USAID and has supplemented US government funding with private donations from thousands of Armenian Americans to expand the Wellness Center.

The Wellness Center currently has seven

patients in Armenia and Artsakh have received medical assistance during such missions.

Dr. Ani Hakobyan, chief of the Radiology Department at the Wellness Center, updated the ambassador on the new collaboration with Heidelberg University Hospital in Germany, one of the foremost hospitals in Europe for cancer diagnosis, treatment and cure. The head of the Heidelberg University Hospital visited the Wellness Center earlier this year and was impressed with the quality of the work and the accuracy of the center's diagnosis.

The Wellness Center stays current with the latest medical technology. It is in the process of converting its analogue mammography equipment into digital 3D. Dr. Ann Archer, the chair

of or the center's 15 US Medical Advisory Board, is currently in Armenia training the center's radiologists and staff in preparation for the conversion to Selenia Dimensions 3D Tomosynthesis program. This conversion will make the center one of the few health care facilities throughout the world to have such modern equipment.

The Wellness Center has also been a leader in introducing solar energy to Armenia. The reconstructed, seismically-reinforced, expanded and

renovated building has a Solar Roof Integrated Photovoltaic (PV) System that generates renewable energy. Additional energy will be generated from the installation of a combined heat and power (CHP) system. This will use natural gas to provide power and also to heat or cool the building and provide its hot water.

"As an American citizen and as an Armenian woman, I am so proud that the Wellness Center is a model of all that is good about Armenia and America," said Balian.



Three generations of the same family regularly visit the Wellness Center for their annual check-ups and health care needs.



2011



Merry Christmas

and a Very Happy New Year to All Our Readers

We wish our Friends and the Armenian Community a joyous Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Charleen and Peter Onanian
Weston, MA

We wish Happy Holidays and prosperous 2012 to our family and friends worldwide.

Sirop and Maro Bedrosian
Houston, TX

Happy New Year and Merry Christmas from the George Ignatius Foundation

Trustees: George Phillips, Esq., Michael Amerian, Esq. and Walter Karabian, Esq.
Los Angeles, CA

With love to our dear friends At Christmas Time and Throughout the New Year. You know who you are!

Michael and Ida Boodakian
Winchester, MA

Shnorhavor Nor Dari Yev Sourp Dznount to our Friends and Relatives.

John and Roxie Maljanian
Newington, CT

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, love

Toufayan Bakery, Inc.
Ridgefield, NJ

You all do a wonderful job. I look forward to every issue.

Dr. Gregory and Deborah Adamian
Medford, MA

The best of wishes for Christmas and a Great New Year

Peter and Violet Galazan
New Britain, CT

We wish our Friends and Relatives a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Edmond and Nora Azadian
Southfield, MI

Our Warmest Christmas and New Year Wishes to ALL Members of Tekeyan, ADL, AGBU and Armenian Church here and Worldwide.

Antoine, Rose, Armen and Vicken Bazarbashian
Paoli, PA

Happy New Year and Sourp Dznount to all my Relatives and Friends.

Hapet Torosian
Watertown, MA

Christmas and New Year Greetings From The Soghian Family.

Florence Soghoian
Glen Allen, VA

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kevorik and Silva Keushkerian
Pasadena, CA

Good Health and Happiness to all this Xmas Season

Jacob Pilibosian
Arlington, MA

Edmond and Nora Azadian
Southfield, MI

Antoine, Rose, Armen and Vicken Bazarbashian
Paoli, PA

You are the Best
Michael H. and Seta E. Kalajian
Bedford, MA

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

St. James Armenian Church
Watertown, MA

Congratulations & continued Good Luck

Peter D. Budakian
New York, NY

Continued Success for the Mirror Spectator and Happy Holidays

Avedis and Alice Sakalian
Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Ծնորհաւոր նոր Տարի եւ Սուրբ Ծնունդ բոլոր ընկերներուն եւ Բարեկամներուն

Wishes for a Very Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year.

Arthur A. Maranian Sr.
Belmont, MA

Merry Christmas ans a Happy New Year to all our Friends

Hagop and Maria Vartivarian
Englewood, NJ

Happy New Year and Merry Christmas to all our friends and family throughout the world. May the year 2012 bring prosperity to you all. We pray that the Holy See of Echmiadzin always remain steadfast as the cornerstone of our Church and Nation, as well as we pray for peace to our Homeland, Armenia, Artsakh and Javakhk.

Papken and Anahid Megerian,
Newtown Square, PA

Continued Success reporting all the news with resolve and interesting critique

Margaret Ajemian Ahnert
Fort Lauderdale, FL
www.margaretahnert.com

Wishing our Friends a joyous Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Jack and Eva Medzorian
Winchester, MA

We wish a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our friends and to our sisters and brothers in Armenia.

Osep and Dr. Nadia Sarafian
Farmington Hills, MI

Best Wishes For 2011

H. Doumanian, M.D.
Chicago, IL

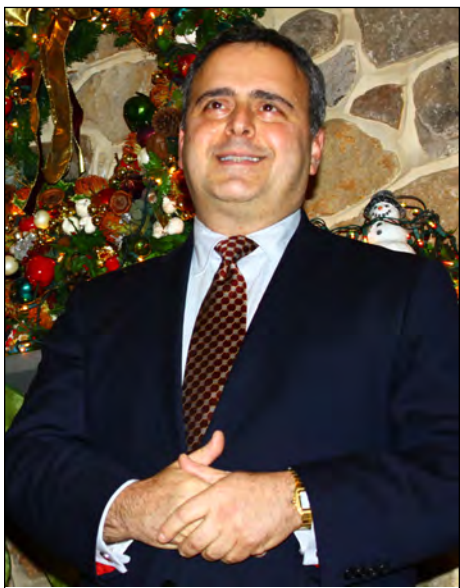


Archbishop's Annual Appeal Reception Is Held in Philadelphia

By Lisa Manookian

PHILADELPHIA – On December 7, Papken and Anahid Megerian hosted a dinner reception in their home for the leadership of the Philadelphia community in support of the 2011 Archbishop's Annual Appeal. Prior to blessing the table, the Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgulian requested a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia and the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, who were then remembered in a prayer led by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

Anahid Megerian welcomed the more than 60 guests and the Primate blessed the table she had graciously prepared. Following dinner, Gulgulian began the program by stating, "the Armenian Church is the spiritual home of our souls." He emphasized how lucky Armenians



Diocesan Council Chair Oscar Tatosian addresses the Philadelphia leadership.

were to have Armenian churches in the United States, in which they could worship, a constant reminder of the Battle of Avarayr in 451 AD, during which Armenians gave up their lives in

order to keep their adherence to the church.

Diocesan Council Chair Oscar Tatosian welcomed everyone and thanked the Megerians for opening their home and for their continued support of the church. Tatosian thanked the Primate for bringing the community together during the holiday season and spoke about the importance of the appeal, saying that much of the Diocese's resources support programs that serve the youth. He shared the story of one man whose act of faith led him to invest in the future of the church by underwriting last year's trip to Jerusalem, during which a large number of young adults experienced the riches of our traditions, returning to their parishes with a renewed strength and vigor to serve.

The Primate addressed the leaders of the Philadelphia community, stating that in this season of Advent, amidst celebrations, "We must remember that He calls each one of us to be a part of his ministry, and this year's Diocesan theme is the 'Ministry of the Faithful.'"

He continued, "We are part of that ministry," he continued, recalling back two weeks before when Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cheltenham, Penn. celebrated its 45th anniversary and honored several lifelong dedicated parishioners.

"We now have the opportunity to keep the ministry alive through our parish involvement," he concluded.

Following the presentation, the reception continued with a special champagne tribute to the Primate in honor of the 40th Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and as well as the 20th anniversary of becoming Primate.

The Annual Appeal is the only Diocesan-wide fundraiser conducted each year to help the Diocese undertake the many ministries, programs and resources that enrich the lives of local parishes. This year's appeal honors the 40th anniversary of Archbishop Khajag



Papken Megerian toasts the Primate in a tribute in honor of the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and the 20th anniversary of his Primacy.

Barsamian's ordination into the holy priesthood of the Armenian Church. The first \$700,000 raised will fund the Diocese's operat-

ing budget, but all funds raised beyond that amount will be used to establish a special endowment in the Primate's honor.



Rev. Hakob Gevorkyan, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, and the Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgulian, gather together prior to the blessing of the table.



The Primate addresses the Philadelphia leadership.



Host and hostess Papken and Anahid Megerian welcome the leaders of the Philadelphia community to their home.



CHRIST IS BORN AND REVEALED! BLESSED IS HIS REVELATION!

THE FEAST OF THE *Nativity & Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral
630 Second Avenue (corner of 34th Street and Second Avenue)
New York City

Thursday, January 5, 2012

*Eve of the Feast of the Nativity
and Baptism of our Lord* (Armenian Christmas Eve)

Readings from the Old Testament 6:30 p.m.
By Students from the Diocesan Khrimian Lyceum

Divine Liturgy at 7:15 p.m.

Celebrant
HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP YEGHISHE GIZIRIAN

The St. Vartan Cathedral Youth Choir
With the participation of students from the Khrimian Lyceum
Conducted by Maestro Khoren Mekanejian

*A festive reception, which is free and open to the public,
will follow the services in Vartan Hall.*

Friday, January 6, 2012

*Nativity and Baptism of
Our Lord Jesus Christ* (Armenian Christmas)

Morning Service at 9:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy at 10:30 a.m.

Celebrant
HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP KHAJAG BARSAMIAN
Primate

The St. Vartan Cathedral Choir will sing the Divine Liturgy
Under the direction of Maestro Khoren Mekanejian

The Blessing of Water ceremony will follow the Liturgy;
The Godfather of the ceremony will be Dr. Raffy Hovanessian

*Following the services, please join us in Haik and Alice Kavookjian
Auditorium for a Christmas reception, where the Akh'tamar Dance
Ensemble of St. Thomas Armenian Church (Tenafly, N.J.) will
perform.*



Contact your local parish to find out the date and time of its
Armenian Christmas celebration.

Families throughout the Eastern Diocese are encouraged
to renew the beautiful Armenian tradition of requesting a
Home Blessing during the Christmas season. Local pastors
are eager to visit the homes of their parishioners, to perform
the blessing ceremony and offer prayers for the family
members.

For information and activities on Armenian Christmas,
log onto the Eastern Diocese's website:
www.armenianchurch-ed.net

*An exhibit, "Armenian Christmas and the Legacy
of Armenian Artists," will be on display in Guild
Hall and Yerevan Hall on January 5 (1:00 to 6:30
p.m.) and January 6 (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.).*

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)
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630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016
212.686.0710 | www.armenianchurch-ed.net

**Քրիստոս Ծնաւ եւ Յայտնեցաւ.
Օրհնեալ է Յայտնութիւնն Քրիստոսի:**

Arts & Living

An Interview with ADAA's Paul Award-Winning Screenwriters Jeff Kalousdian and Kraig Kuzirian

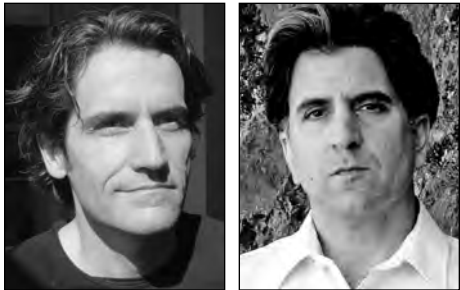
The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA) awarded its biennial \$10,000 Paul Screenwriting Award in October to two screenwriters, in its first-ever competition tie: Jeff Kalousdian, for his script "The Florist," and Kraig Kuzirian, for his script "Bluebeard."

Recently, ADAA interviewed the winners, to learn more about the background of these talented Armenian writers, who are making headway in the entertainment industry.

ADAA: How did you begin as a writer?

Jeff Kalousdian: I really just started writing. I began by writing "The Florist," the script I submitted for the Paul Award. It's my first creative work... at least the first one I have shared with the public.

Kraig Kuzirian: I began as a writer, a young child, enjoying telling stories and lies. My voice modulated into poems in my early adolescent and high school years. Short stories, plays, and film scripts started emanating throughout college. I've turned back to telling lies and writing film scripts as there is no money in poems, and there is too much cerebral competition in theater.



Jeff Kalousdian and Kraig Kuzirian

ADAA: Briefly describe the winning script.

JK: With the Nagorno Karabagh war as the backdrop, "The Florist" is a contemporary drama about an old man that struggles to come to terms with the disappearance of his son who went missing years earlier near the border with Azerbaijan. The story takes place nearly 10 years after the 1993 ceasefire so there are no battles scenes or violence, but, just as in real life, the unresolved war looms in the background. The story is really about our need to believe in something, even our own lies, because not believing in something makes it so much harder to get through life. All the central characters, a French reporter, Spanish Red Cross worker, Armenian military commander and the old man, are all clinging to something that deep down they know is untrue. As the story progresses, all the characters are forced to face their "truths," and we slowly discover what happened to the old man's missing son.

KK: "Bluebeard," my winning script is an adaptation of a warm and hilarious biographical novel by the brilliant and inimitable Kurt Vonnegut. "Bluebeard" is a light epic, the story of a fictitious Armenian modern art broker told against an 80-year back-drop of world history. The adaptation was one of the easiest writing jobs I've ever had. Mr. Vonnegut did all of the heavy lifting. Adapting a writer that profound and straight shooting, you simply stand out of the way. My colossal sorrow is not ever having been able to meet him.

ADAA: What are you working on now?

JK: I have a couple writing projects in the works. One that I am very excited about deals with love, racism and borders in our "global" world. It's not an Armenian story, but I think it is one Armenians will relate to very well. I am also producing a couple of films that should be out in 2013.

KK: I'm now working a science fiction screenplay.

see INTERVIEW, page 16



A photo of Grandma Khanoum

'Grandma's Tattoos' Shines Spotlight on the Female Victims of Genocide

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Families are closest to one's heart, or so goes conventional thinking. But what happens if there's a member of the family who is so physically and emotionally detached that others either have no memories of their presence in family events or what memories there are, are bitter?

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

That is the starting point of documentary filmmaker Suzanne Khardalian. Her film, based on her own grandmother, "Grandma's Tattoos," shown at Watertown Middle School on December 14, was sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Boston Sardarabad Gomideh and the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). She spoke and took questions after the showing.

Her paternal grandmother, Khanoum, lived in the apartment above her family's. The camera captures the emotions of Khardalian, her sisters and their mother, who express their resentment of and dislike for the dour woman with the repulsive tattoos, who was incapable of displaying any love to her husband, children or grandchildren.

The denouement, of course, brings tears to their eyes, when they see her with the eyes of adults, realizing her horrific childhood and its effect on her psyche.

Khanoum's story is unraveled by the very same despised tattoos. Where did they come from?

Khardalian successfully merges the personal and the universal, with Khanoum as starting point. The filmmaker, by chance, saw some long-forgotten documents and photographs from the Near East Foundation on the fate of about 90,000 young Armenian girls kidnapped and forced into prostitution or sexual slavery during the Genocide. The girls had markings similar to her grandmother. A light bulb went on in her head and she decided to find out if her grandmother was one of those girls.

The film, which is recommended for audiences ages 13 and over, succeeds in taking us on a journey of understanding by the whole family as they come together for a relative's engagement in Beirut. For a documentary on such a disturbing subject, there are many moments of lightness and the family members' love for each other as well as tremendous honesty, as they gather from all corners of the earth, is apparent.

It is Khardalian's mother, who through dribs and drabs, confirms the story of Khanoum, a woman who was broken, rendered incapable of loving. She was only 12 when she, her younger sister and mother, accepted the help of a man with a boat to escape certain death. Unfortunately, the mother gave all their valuables to the man, in hopes that he would let them go. Sadly, his depraved reasons for helping the family become apparent all too soon. It would be several years before the sisters could escape.

Khanoum eventually reaches an orphanage in Beirut and there she is coerced into marriage. Khardalian stresses that her grandmother could not open up to anyone and that marked women like her were looked down upon. Also,

see TATTOOS, page 15

Papasian Honored with Gold Medal from Ministry Of Culture

PARIS — On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the independence of Armenia, a special celebration was held on December 14 at the Pavilion Dauphine, during which Armenia's ambassador, Vigen Tchitedjian, presented the gold medal of the Ministry of Culture to actor/director Gerald Papasian on behalf of Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosian, for his significant accomplishments in the practice of the development and diffusion of Armenian culture.

Other important diaspora figures and institutions also received honors during the event by the Ministry of the Diaspora as well as the Republic of Karabagh.

Papasian had already received the Movses Khorenatsi presidential medal in



Gerald Papasian

2010 from President Serge Sargisyan during a special celebration in Yerevan for his endeavors of putting Armenian theatrical and operatic works onto the professional international stage.

He is known for directing the first all-American production of the opera "Anoush" at the Michigan Opera Theater in 1981, and later in 2001, the award-winning play "Sojourn at Ararat" presented in English and French, his restoration of the original version of Tchouhadjian's first opera "Arshak II" which premiered at the San Francisco Opera Theater. He also directed "The Amazon," a contemporary opera based on French-Armenian playwright Jean-Jacques Varoujan's play, the first French language production of Hagop Baronian's comedy, "Taparnigos Ladies' Dentist." He also designed a course in Western Armenian at the University of Venice. Most recently, he premiered in French the completely restored and uncut version of Tchouhadjian's masterpiece "Gariné" (known as "Léblébi Hor Hor Agha") in Paris and Marseille at the Odeon theater as the season's opening.

With the help of Poghosian, he has also organized a successful Armenian tour of the Irinia Brook Theater Company, of which he is a founding member and lead actor.

He has also established the Dikran Tchouhadjian Research Center in Paris and acts as its director.

Papasian thanked the minister and the ambassador and said that in return for their gift, he offers a gift of his own. He then introduced Amelie Robinault, a soprano, and asked her to sing in Armenian. The non-Armenian singer sang *Yerevan-Eerebuni* to the amazement and delight of the crowd. Her articulation and accent were highly commended, for which Robinault credited Papasian.



Suzanne Khardalian



ARTS & LIVING

Fourth Annual Performing Artists in Concert at Carnegie Hall Raises More than \$60,000 for AGBU Scholarships

NEW YORK — On December 3, the AGBU New York Special Events Committee (NYSEC), under the auspices of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations, hosted its fourth annual AGBU Performing Artists in Concert, which showcased the talents of yet another group of outstanding young Armenian musicians. The sold-out event was held at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall.

In addition to sharing the many talents of the artists who have benefited from the organization's scholarship assistance toward their musical aspirations, this year's event also honored the 150th anniversary of the birth of Norwegian Arctic explorer, scientist, Nobel laureate, diplomat, humanitarian and friend to the Armenian people, Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930). In addition to his many other achievements as the League of Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees, Nansen played a significant role in providing humanitarian relief for Armenian refugees in the 1920s. He drew up a political, industrial and financial plan for creating a national home for the Armenians in Yerevan. Through the Nansen International Office for Refugees, these repatriation efforts later helped settle some 10,000 Armenian refugees in Yerevan and an additional 40,000 in Syria and Lebanon. Historians believe that the modern state of Armenia owes its legal existence to arrangements supported by Nansen that were made following World War I.

On this occasion, nine performers, under the direction of pianist Kariné Poghosyan, collaborated to prepare a repertoire of music, celebrating Armenian, Norwegian and other composers, including Arno Babajanian, Johann Sebastian Bach, Francois Borne, Edvard Grieg, Aram Khachaturian and Komitas Vartapet. The cele-



Artistic director and pianist Kariné Poghosyan, violinist Cecee Pantikian, violinist Ani Bukujian, pianist Ursula von Lerber, saxophonist Hayrapet Arakelyan, harpist Ruth Boyajian, cellist Lilit Kurdiyanyan, pianist Christian Erbslöh-Papazian and violist Aleksandr Nazaryan receive a standing ovation from the packed audience.

including the Manhattan School of Music and the Juilliard School in New York.

Thanks to AGBU's close circle of friends and the Armenian community at large, last year's benefit performance allowed NYSEC to provide scholarship support to several students, some of whom were featured at the recent 2011 concert. AGBU will help some of the best future musicians in the world reach their goals and showcase them through this annual concert. AGBU also appreciates the generosity of the evening's donors who believe in supporting the performing arts, recognizing the talents of young Armenian artists and helping in their advancement. Major benefactors included Dr. Paul Khoury and author Margaret Ajemian Ahnert. The 2011 benefit concert raised more than \$60,000 for the AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship Program.

The event was organized by the AGBU NYSEC Committee, chaired by Nila Festekjian and Sossy Setrakian. Members include: Anita Anserian, Carol Aslanian, Betty Cherkezian, Melissa Demirjian, Maral Hajjar, Hilda Hartounian, Maral Jebejian, Vesna Markarian, Jennifer Oughourlian and Vera Setrakian. Performing Artists in Concert contributors included graphic designer Alex Basmagian and coordinator Natalie Gabrelian of the AGBU Central Office.

The concert was attended by AGBU President Berge Setrakian and his wife, Vera, as well as Ambassador Garen Nazarian, permanent representative of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations, and his wife, Siranoush. Guests also included members of the AGBU Central Board of Directors and several UN dignitaries. "We are truly grateful to AGBU, its leadership, members and supporters for their continued commitment to preserving and promoting the Armenian identity and heritage through rich educational and cultural programs worldwide," said Nazarian. He continued, "By listening to Edvard Greig's masterpieces we establish a special connection with the people and century-long humanitarian tradition of Norway as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of the prominent Norwegian explorer, scientist, diplo-

mat and Nobel Laureate Fridtjof Nansen. This concert is one of the numerous cultural events and exhibitions organized by the Armenian diplomatic missions and the Armenian Diaspora in many world capitals and in my hometown of Yerevan, signifying the respect and veneration of the Armenian people and its government toward the fond memory and name of Nansen."

"This was one of the most monumental evenings of my entire performing life. The pro-

Bukujian, originally from Los Angeles, expressed her enthusiasm for being a part of the 2011 concert and her gratitude to AGBU. "It was an honor playing with the other artists, as well as getting to meet many of the people at the AGBU Central Office. I would also like to thank AGBU for offering me a scholarship toward my education at the Juilliard School. I am extremely grateful and happy to have met such kind-hearted people during tough times here in New York.



Harpist Ruth Boyajian

bration of music saluted the impressive artistic achievements of the various performers in their respective fields, and featured performances by a string quartet, a piano duo from France, a classical saxophonist from Germany as well as an emerging 14-year-old harpist. The musicians were all recipients of AGBU scholarships, which have allowed them to be educated at some of the most prestigious conservatories and universities,



Violinists Cecee Pantikian and Ani Bukujian, pianist Kariné Poghosyan, saxophonist Hayrapet Arakelyan, cellist Lilit Kurdiyanyan and violist Aleksandr Nazaryan

gram that I had spent countless hours envisioning in my head came to life in such a beautiful way, with everyone truly giving their all to every note they played," said Poghosyan. "I congratulate and thank all of my fellow performers for putting such committed effort into this evening. They are not only highly gifted artists, but also beautiful human beings and it was an honor working with them all."

This year's group of AGBU performing artists included Hayrapet Arakelyan (saxophone), Ruth Boyajian (harp), Ani Bukujian (violin), Christian Erbslöh-Papazian (piano), Lilit Kurdiyanyan (cello), Aleksandr Nazaryan (viola), Cecee Pantikian (violin), Kariné Poghosyan (piano) and Ursula von Lerber (piano).

Thank you, AGBU, for all your support." Boyajian added, "My experience performing in the AGBU concert was incredible! I was so thankful for the scholarship, and it was an honor to be invited to perform in the annual concert with such gifted musicians. The generosity of AGBU has been a great encouragement to me, and I am so grateful for all of the wonderful experiences I have been given by the organization."

This year's concert not only welcomed to the stage AGBU's US talents but, for the first time, opened its arms to embrace the European artists, who were appreciative of the artistic and cultural exchange. "The concert was an opportunity to say thank you to the people who have been helping me for years, to say thank you with my art. The feeling I got was a feeling of love, of trying to do the best for our nation," expressed Arakelyan of Germany. "The Armenian culture, so strongly defended by AGBU, is finding an extraordinary exchange process. Our everyday spoken language may be German, French or Bulgarian, but we all are proud to participate to keep alive our millennial Armenian heritage. We are proud to feel we belong to the AGBU family," remarked Erbslöh-Papazian and von Lerber of France.

For decades, AGBU scholarships have been awarded to qualified, talented students of Armenian descent studying in the performing arts who have demonstrated excellence in their chosen fields. These awards enable recipients to reach their potential, laying the foundation for their future, as they celebrate their heritage and identity.

'Grandma's Tattoos' Shines Spotlight on the Female Victims of Genocide

TATTOOS, from page 14

she noted that it is probable that her grandmother had given birth to several children and was forced to leave them before forming her family in Beirut.

Khardalian goes on a pilgrimage to the Syrian desert to the area where most probably her grandmother was held captive, along with many others. There she runs into several people who say they have Armenian grandmothers, all probably women who were forcibly brought into their families.

All in all, Khardalian deftly connects her family's story with a painful, still-hidden chapter of the Armenian Genocide, which is much like the

fate of women in later genocides, including Rwanda, Darfur and even Congo today.

Denial and shame about these incidences have helped the issue remain hidden. She spoke about one tattooed Armenian woman whose experiences a cousin revealed to Khardalian in Fresno. When she arrived at her home to interview her, she was kicked out of the woman's house by her son, who suggested that nothing of the sort had happened to his mother.

Closer to home, she speaks to her great-aunt in Los Angeles, also with similar tattoos, who denies ever being forced into sexual slavery and instead says that when she was little and played

with little Turkish children, they suggested tattooing her fingers and she just went along with it, as part of a game.

One of the most touching scenes in the film was that of a 104-year-old survivor who now lives in Yerevan. As she tells her story, her tears roll down her face and she starts crying for her mother who was kidnapped along with her. The passage of time had clearly not made the memories any easier to live with.

Khardalian has made numerous other documentaries, including the first one on the Armenian Genocide, "Back to Ararat," in 1988. She noted that the film is going to be released in DVD form in the near future.



ARTS & LIVING

Turkish Edition of George Bournoutian's A Concise History of the Armenian People Published

ISTANBUL – Renowned historian and author George Bournoutian's *A Concise History of the Armenian People* has just been published in Turkish by Aras Publishers. The book, which was translated by an Armenian and a Turk, and contains 464 pages of text, several maps, photos and time tables, made its debut at the annual Istanbul International Book Fair (November 18-December 1). This was the first time that an Armenian publishing house participated in the fair.

A Concise History, the first of its kind in English, was commissioned by AGBU in 1993-1994. More recently, AGBU Buenos Aires published the Spanish version of the book and AGBU Cairo will publish the Arabic version in the first quarter of 2012. With more than 20,000 copies in five different editions sold, a sixth updated edition will go to press shortly. The book has been adopted as the main text at a number of colleges, universities and high schools teaching Armenian history.

Originally published in two volumes as *A History of the Armenian People*, this much-praised book, which was the first history of the Armenians from ancient times to the early

1990s, was printed three times before going out of print. That circumstance, plus recognition of the increasing political importance of the region at the time, necessitated a fourth revised and updated edition, renamed *A Concise History of the Armenian People*, in which the two volumes were combined into one, with considerable extra information. Examining the history of the Armenians in relation to the rest of the world, the book's main purpose is to familiarize Armenians and non-Armenians alike with a people whose history and culture is absent from most history courses and texts.

Beginning in November, AGBU launched a tour of Bournoutian's newest publication, *The 1823 Russian Survey of the Karabagh Province: A Primary Source on the Demography and Economy of Karabagh in*

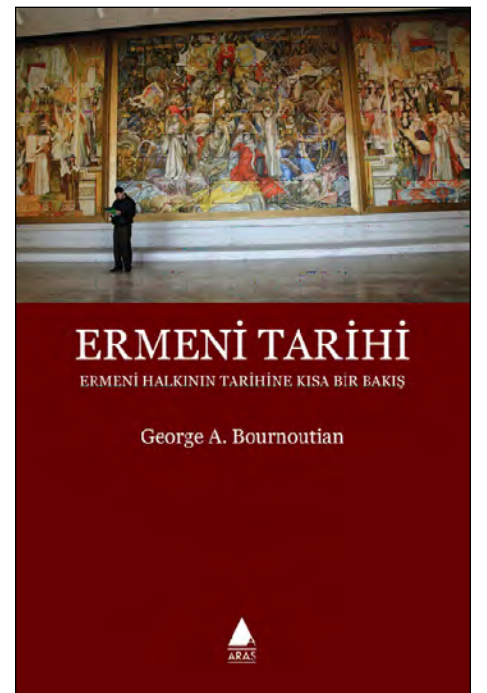


Dr. George Bournoutian

the Early 19th Century, which proves that Armenians formed the overwhelming 95-percent majority of the populations inhabiting the Nagorno-Karabagh territory and the villages of Zangezur in 1822. Scores of enthusiastic attendees came to hear Bournoutian speak in Detroit, Montreal, New York and Toronto. Several other US and international cities are lined up for 2012.

Bournoutian is a professor of Eastern European and Middle Eastern History at Iona College, as well as a recipient of the IREX, NDEA and Mellow Fellowships. He has taught Armenian and Iranian history at UCLA and Columbia University. Moreover, he organized and taught the first Armenian history courses at University of Connecticut, Glendale Community College, New York University, Ramapo College, Rutgers University and Tufts University. Bournoutian is also the author of more than a dozen other volumes consisting of annotated English translations of primary sources in Armenian, Russian and Persian, with introductions, glossaries and indexes.

A Concise History of the Armenian People is available from Aras Publishers website at a 25 percent-discount.



The cover of the newly-published Turkish edition of *A Concise History of the Armenian People*

Bohjalian's Latest Features Witchcraft, the Paranormal

The Night Strangers by Chris Bohjalian.
Crown Publishers. 2011. 378 pp. \$25. ISBN
978-0-307-39499-6

By Daphne Abeel

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Whether it is the author's conscious intent or not, Chris Bohjalian's newest novel, set in a remote New Hampshire village, shares an eerie tie with a short story, published 63 years ago in the *New Yorker*. In 1948, Shirley Jackson's short story, "The Lottery," created a firestorm with its tale of a village in northern New England that practiced the rite of sacrifice of one of its citizens in order to ensure a good corn crop for the coming year.

Bohjalian also portrays a small town peopled especially by a group of women who are variously suggested to be shamans, witches or herbalists, who have as their purpose the selection of a prepubescent child, a twin, whose blood and death will ensure the eternal youth and well being of the town.

The story focuses on Chip Linton, a pilot, who with his wife, Emily, and twin daughters, Hallie and Garnet, moves from Pennsylvania to Bethel, NH, to escape the fallout from an aviation accident in which he was forced to crash land his passenger plane in Lake Champlain. While he and some passengers escape, 39 are killed, most notably his co-pilot and a family who have a daughter, Ashley, about the same age as his twins.

The accident, caused by birds flying into the plane's engines, is in no way Chip's fault, but deeply distressed and suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), he decides to make a new life in a new locale. The family buys a house in Bethel that, strangely, has a mysterious door in the basement firmly closed with 39 bolts. The mysterious 39 bolts are only the first of many signs of foreboding and gloom that pervade the house. It is known that one of the twin sons of the Dunsdales, the former owners, has died presumably by suicide, and the Lintons soon discover peculiar objects in the house, a knife, an axe, bones. Their real estate agent dies shortly after selling them the house and a small bird trapped inside the house also crashes against a windowpane to its death.

The family and particularly the twin daughters are soon taken up by a gaggle of women in the town who specialize in growing plants and herbs, many of them poisonous. The Lintons'

new dwelling includes a greenhouse, which the girls take over as a playhouse for their dolls. The women, who include Reseda Hill (also a twin, whose sister died), Anise, Sage and Clary, cluster around the girls, eventually insisting that they take new names, Rosemary and Calindra, in order to bind them more closely to their cultish practices, which include making tinctures from various plants.

Bohjalian constantly hints that the women are up to no good although their purposes, for most of the novel remain unclear. For example, describing Reseda in her greenhouse, he describes her tending of arnica. "On Monday, she would harvest the arnica for a tincture. Most people only used arnica externally as an anti-inflammatory. They rubbed it on sprains and strains. They feared its toxicity when taken internally. A large enough dose was lethal."

Meanwhile Emily, a lawyer, is attempting to adjust to her new job and the twins are attempting to make new friends, but spending many hours with the over-friendly herbalists. Chip has, with great effort, pried and hacked the door in the basement open. Immediately, he begins to experience hallucinations that bring back passengers who died in the crash, specifically the young girl, Ashley, and her father who insists that his daughter is lonely and needs playmates.

Bohjalian is nothing if not a researcher of his fictional milieu and the story is filled with detailed descriptions both of the mechanics of the plane crash and the names and effects of the many herbs and plants the women grow, from belladonna to hypnobium. This approach lends the novel a certain specificity and realism, yet at times the factual material overwhelms both the intricate plot and more importantly the characters who can often seem mere pawns of what the information imposes on them.

The story moves somewhat relentlessly in the sphere of gothic horror and the paranormal.

Readers fascinated with the grotesque, the notion of witchcraft, the psychological reality of hallucinations and the nuances of the cultivation of plants and herbs, will find this a deftly-plotted and gripping tale. Fans of character development and a more realistic fictional framework may find this novel less appealing.

Bohjalian has won a wide audience with previous books such as *Midwives*, *The Double Bind*, *Secrets of Eden* and *Skeletons at the Feast*, all of which have made the *New York Times* bestseller list. He lives in Vermont with his wife and daughter.



An Interview with Screenwriters Jeff Kalousdian and Kraig Kuzirian

INTERVIEW, from page 14

ADAA: Tell us more about your background.

JK: I'm originally from Lake Tahoe, Calif. and grew up in the San Francisco area. These days I spend about half the year in Armenia and half in the US or Europe. I began producing films in 2008. Prior to this I worked for 15 years in the humanitarian field, managing economic development and human rights projects in Armenia, Georgia, Serbia, Macedonia and Kosovo. My first step into the world of cinema was in 2006 where I helped pioneer a program in the Golden Apricot Film Festival in Yerevan called "Directors Across Borders." The program helps build cross-border cultural and political relations in the region through collaborative film projects.

KK: I was born to first-generation Armenian parents and educated in California – kindergarten to UCLA.

ADAA: What advice would you give other Armenians just starting out to write?

JK: I was hoping someone would advise me. I am just a rookie myself. Maybe I should answer the question not as writer but as an Armenian in love with story and cinema.

We have so many stories to tell, such a rich past and present. I want the world to hear these stories. But we don't have enough people telling them, not at least in ways that non-Armenians would find interesting. We are competing against thousands of non-Armenian film scripts written every year... thousands of really good scripts. My advice to writers just starting out is to be adventurous, avoid our clichés and think about non-Armenians while you write... how to grab them and how to make our stories relevant to them.

KK: The twofold advice I would give an Armenian just picking up a pen is what I would tell anybody: back slowly out of the room and run far away. This is a stupid, stupid business with only a few more degrees of self-actualizing control than roulette. That said, telling a writer not to write is like telling a runner not to run.

So the default advice: experience things with as original a perception as you can muster: lift yourself above while delving in further. Your pen will respond.

ADAA: How do you think this award will help you?

JK: First and foremost, it's a huge boost of confidence. It inspires me to keep writing. I hope to produce "The Florist" in the near future, maybe even direct it. While writing a script is very time consuming and difficult, it

is the first of many steps in getting a story to the screen. The cash prize will help me start down the long road of putting together the right people and resources to make the film.

KK: The Paul Award helped, of course, financially, but also spiritually. Every writer, except a very few highly praised, face moments, or decades, when they feel there is nothing worthwhile coming out. The Paul Award, originating from my "tribe," is a small but mighty punch of love and acknowledgement and has given me courage to push on.

ADAA: Why do you think ADAA is important for the Armenian community?

JK: Armenians are always excited to have Armenian subjects, characters and themes featured in movies. I don't know an Armenian who is not proud when they see an "ian" in the film credits. The ADAA helps make sure that we see Armenian last names in films. The Armenian communities around the world have many film festivals where our films are screened for Armenian and non-Armenians audiences. This is incredibly important. The ADAA not only runs a film festival but it is dedicated to nurturing the creative process from the very first step. In other words, the ADAA doesn't just celebrate Armenian films and filmmakers long after all the hard work is done; it encourages, supports and challenges filmmakers right from the idea stage.

KK: The ADAA is vastly, vitally important to budding writers. The world is overwhelming and frightful if you plan on selling movie scripts in it. A group of people, that have collectively faced stakes much scarier than being forced to live in quiet unpublished obscurity, have lovingly gathered around to help you in ways practical and ineffably profound.

I will, honestly, always cherish and find strength in my Lillian and Varnum Paul Screenwriting Award.

(ADAA's mission is to project the Armenian voice on the world stage through the dramatic arts of theatre and film. It does this through writing contests, an annual film festival, screenings and playreadings and the most comprehensive Armenian performing arts website in the world. The Paul Screenwriting Award for screenplays on Armenian themes will be held next in 2013. ADAA's next competition, the Saroyan Playwriting Prize for stage plays on Armenian themes, will be awarded in Fall 2012 – submissions are due February 15, 2012. For more information, visit www.armeniandrama.org or email adaa@armeniandrama.org.)



ARTS & LIVING

Erevan Choral Society's Annual Christmas Holiday Concert

By Robert Dulgarian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The old saying has it that “Christmas comes but once a year,” but on December 11, the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra’s annual Christmas Holiday Concert at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, ushered in the holiday season to a capacity crowd. In addition to commemorating and continuing the legacy and commitment to the ministry of music of the Very Rev. Oshagan Minassian, founder and music director of the Erevan Choral Society from 1965 until his passing in 2008, the concert celebrated the 20th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia.

As in the years since Minassian’s passing, music director and composer Konstantin Petrossian conducted the chorus and orchestra in a program that reflected his dedication to both the Armenian and Western musical and spiritual traditions. Choral settings of the *Khorhoort Medz* (O Magnum Mysterium) of Movses Kertogh and *Aravod Looso* of Nerses Shnorhali complemented renditions of hymns familiar from the Armenian *Badarak*, rounded out by Vahan Bedelian’s *Yegheghetsin Haygagan* (The Armenian Church), an Erevan Choral Society favorite. Traditional Western Christmas carols included a setting by John Rutter of *How Great Our Joy*, featuring a solo by Choral Society member and soprano Jane Zanichkowsky, as well as such beloved standards as *O Come All Ye Faithful* and Irving Berlin’s *White Christmas*.

In addition to strictly choral pieces, this December’s concert featured three distinguished soloists, including the talented soprano Nouné Karapetian who performed the *Alleluia* from W.A. Mozart’s *Exsultate, Jubilate* and the Bach/Gounod *Ave Maria* with great panache. Karapetian was joined by perennial Erevan Choral favorites and stars Yeghishe Manucharyan, tenor, and Victoria Avetisyan, mezzo-soprano. In keeping with the theme of Armenian independence, Avetisyan’s offerings included the world premiere of Martin Vardazarian’s *Siro Khosk Hayasdanin* (Words of Love to Armenia) in a performance that showcased her signature combination of intense lyricism and expressiveness. For his part, Manucharyan electrified the audience with a powerful, dramatic, yet seemingly effortless rendition of Komitas Vartabed’s *Hayasdan* in a setting by Petrossian himself. The pair also collaborated in a perfectly-matched rendition of Pietro Yon’s *Gesu Bambino*.

The evening concluded with a powerful and inspirational blessing by Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, former Primate of Great Britain and a former pastor of Holy Trinity, underlining the importance of the Armenian Apostolic Church.



Musical director and conductor of the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, Konstantin Petrossian, left, with Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian and the chorus

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

DECEMBER 31 — St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack presents its annual **New Year’s Gala**, Saturday, at 8:30 p.m. \$75 pp, Wyndham Hotel, Andover. Includes mezza and the midnight soujouk and eggs full breakfast, buffet and desserts. Music with Richard Berberian, Mal Barsamian, Bruce Gigarjian and Ron Tutunjian. For tickets, contact Christine Kourkounian at (508) 878-4199, Greg Minasian at (978) 470-3075 or the church office at (978) 685-5038.

JANUARY 21 — The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) presents jazz sensation **Grace Kelly in Concert**. Proceeds to benefit the Avedisian School in Armenia. National Heritage Museum, Lexington. Tickets \$35, \$20 with student ID. Cocktails at 6:30 p.m., concert at 8 p.m. For tickets or more information, call AMAA at (201) 265-2607; Jean Marie Papelian at (781) 904-2700 or visit www.gracekellymusic.com or www.amaa.org.

NEW YORK

JANUARY 6 — Armenian Christmas Reception, following services on Friday, at St. Vartan Cathedral, 630 Second Ave. (corner 34th Street), New York City. Program to feature the Akh’tamar Armenian Dance Ensemble. Admission is free. For general information, call (212) 686-0710.

MAY 19, 2012 — HMADS Gala Dinner Dance. Details to follow, June 25. HMADS 30th Commencement Exercise at 8 p.m., Kalustyan Hall.



On January 21, at 8 p.m., the Armenian Missionary Association will present a concert by Grace Kelly, pictured here, with proceeds to benefit the Avedisian School. Tickets are \$35 and \$25 with student ID. For more info, visit www.gracekellymusic.com or www.amaa.org.

A Private Art Collection Made Public

By Chirine Lahoud

BEIRUT, Lebanon (*The Daily Star*) — Zara Mazmanian founded the Esquisse Gallery in Bahrain in mid-2009. After the Arab Spring arrived in that country, however, the gallery moved to Beirut.

As Esquisse is still under construction and not scheduled to open officially in the Ashrafieh neighborhood of this city until January 2012, Mazmanian decided to open her first show, “Contemporary Dawn,” last weekend at Hamra’s Tourism Ministry showroom. This collective exhibition is taken from Mazmanian’s private collection, pieces which, “spoke to [her] heart.”

“Contemporary Dawn” is composed of work from such Armenian artists as Albert Hakobyan, Gabriel Manukyan and Mkrtich Mazmanian and Middle Eastern artists such as Faika al-Hasan.

The exhibition title, she said, “expresses a fresh start,” and what better place than the Tourism Ministry to host the blending of cultures that the nationalities of artists implies.

Gabriel Manukyan (aka Gabo) is represented by a pair of acrylic-on-canvas works titled, respectively, “The Wedding Day” and “Across the Bank.”

What immediately attracts the eye of the viewer is the artist’s palette of vivid colors. Greens, blues, yellows and browns pervade the canvas, giving it a cheerful aspect. His art is described in press documents as reflecting “a world of fantasy, magic and joy.”

“The Wedding Day” focuses on two persons, presumably a bride and groom. The bride is sensually reclined on a decorative platform, her wedding bed. Above her, two figures (apparently men) seem to be blowing on horn-like instruments — whether to woo her or to celebrate the impending nuptials is uncertain.

This tableau unfolds before a solid green background — the color of fertility and

regeneration — which further underlines the sense of celebration.

Gabo’s depiction of his two characters is puppet-like. Whatever makes up their bodies, it is not bone, muscle or flesh. Their body parts appear to have been stitched together so that it is difficult to tell where the flesh ends and the clothing begins, assemblages of colorful cloth, which give the characters the aspect of living piñatas.

The balance between the solid background and the fabric-like riot of Gabo’s figures is well devised: to have painted a variegated background would have stifled the canvases too much.

Although these are very busy canvases, it is a pleasure to gaze upon the dream-like world depicted in this artist’s work.

Not all the work in “Contemporary Dawn” is equally enjoyable.

Teni Vardanyan’s four oil-on-canvas pieces place viewers before quite obscure scenes.

“The Yellow Light” (82x65 cm) portrays three odd creatures, which appear to be joined to one another at the hips and shoulders, like Siamese triplets. Two arms are visible, with gloved hands. The creature on the right has two faces and is wearing slippers, while the other two stand barefoot on what looks like a floor tile or a stage. All stand before a yellow light bulb suspended from the ceiling.

Vardanyan’s painting technique emphasizes this impression of looking at fantastic creatures. Their faces are not detailed and their heads are round-shaped (like a light bulb actually). No clue about gender is given to viewers and we do not know whether they

are nude or dressed.

We notice a dichotomy in the color used to paint their bodies. Legs radiate shades of orange, as though reflecting the light emitted by the bulb. The upper parts of their bodies, on the other hand, are blue, almost fluorescent.

There is something perfunctory in the depiction of the light bulb, as though it were added at the last minute.

The exhibition includes a range of figurative sculptures in bronze by Mkrtich Mazmanian — father of the gallery owner. His sculptures depict female-shaped bodies in different situations.

The bottom part of “Messenger” (103x25x20 cm) is composed of an angular feminine body, combined with an upper body made of what appears to be a roll of paper.

Mkrtich Mazmanian’s deployment of his “Messenger” suggests it/she is on her way to deliver this message. The exhibition literature suggests his art is “spatial ... abstract yet contains realism.” The sole trace of realism here lies in its depiction of the female body, though the uncoiling of the paper roll conveys the impression of movement.

The bronze “Mirage Two” (65x30x20 cm) radiates a sense of lightness, portraying the body of an angel — from what we decipher to be a wing on the left side of the work — with its legs replaced by a striped piece of bronze, similar to the waves of a mirage you might see in the desert.

In Mazmanian’s sculptures, there is always a hint of motion. He transports viewers into an imaginary world, blending realist shapes with fantastical ones.

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COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

New Challenges for a New Year

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The yearend is a stage when individuals take a moment to ponder the past 12 months, evaluate their achievements and learn from their mistakes. It is also an occasion to make new resolutions, which though one seldom keeps, one can feel good about possibilities for the coming year.

When it comes to collective entities, evaluations are done by groups of people, as well as the resolutions made. Therefore, individuals become responsible to each other and to the collective entity.

Our lives as Armenians have dual complementary phases: our existence in the diaspora and our commitment to Armenia. Those among us who shirk responsibilities to Armenia have a more comfortable existence, albeit by forfeiting part of their identity. Those individuals who have to cope with both challenges have a more responsible life, which in the end is more fulfilling and more full.

As we review the year 2011, the diasporan life looks like a rudderless ship, with fragmented leadership and divided loyalties. In the past, when the Internet did not churn information and challenge all authority, the community was more cohesive and the leadership had its values and its place. That is how collective efforts paid off and major projects were achieved.

In today's world, cynicism abounds, people challenge authority, yet they fail to produce what authority could provide. That has led us to an amorphous existence.

The diaspora derives its meaning and the source of its cohesion from Armenia. Wherever Armenia is ranked in our priorities, that will mark the extent of our cohesive life.

During the year 2011, Armenia projected itself into the diaspora in many ways; politically, economically and spiritually. But that projection seldom extended beyond slogans. Because of a mutual lack of understanding, the diaspora as a whole does not fully understand Armenia and vice versa. The Diasporan Ministry was a welcome addition, and in time, may develop in-roads in the diaspora life. Yet thus far, its activities and projection have been stifled in Soviet style rhetoric.

The problems and the challenges facing Armenia seem to require more resources and skills than the leadership there can provide; the Karabagh conflict, economic leadership and the resulting depopulation of the country would tax even the most resourceful leadership.

We always maintain that the diaspora has great potential to help Armenia. Yet that contention is never tested to prove its

veracity. Those Diaspora Armenians who have tried to invest in Armenia have been badly burnt. That is why all invitations to take part in Armenia's economic development ring hollow. That also deters others from extending any help. The laws are in place only to be broken. There is a legal system in place, which runs on the principles of cronyism. The past year and the years before prove that showering medals is no cure. It only devalues those medals.

Armenia is in a hostile neighborhood, surrounded by enemies and friendly foes. Yet regional politics has awarded it a strategic value, which the leadership has been trying to tap.

Domestically the country is divided. All the electioneering has weakened the two opposing factions, namely, the government and the opposition. And now they have realized they need each other in order to maintain a viable nation. The year 2012 will prove to be a watershed, because parliamentary elections are ahead of us. The world is watching and most of the foreign aid depends on the outcome of those elections. In addition, domestic political realignment will come to solidify the foundations of statehood.

This nascent republic faces an uncertain future. Twenty years of existence and survival is a feat in itself. Was that the making of its leadership or historic circumstances that developed during the last 20 years? Perhaps both.

The election is our challenge, yet the advent of the year 2012 brings us closer to the centennial of the Genocide. A high-powered committee was founded to mark the centennial. No one has yet heard a progress report from that committee, while Turkey puts to action its well-oiled state machine to counter any political initiative from the Armenian side. They are already prepared to make a preemptive strike even before we make our move. It is not just the Turks and Azeris who hinder us. The benefactors who had planned the Genocide Museum in Washington are at loggerheads and they don't need any action from Turkey to kill the project.

As we look back over the year 2011, it seems pretty somber, while 2012 is full of new challenges.

Armenian history is not a chain of happy moments, yet Armenians have managed to survive. The very fact that we are still able to analyze our problems is an indication that we are determined to conquer the future. Our mistakes and our failures will educate us to plan for tomorrow, to whip up diaspora into action, to help Armenia emancipate from its medieval political culture and prepare for the onslaught. Our enemies are too many and our friends are too few. Yet we have to depend on each other, to complement each other and chart our course for the 2012. Unity, harmony and cooperation will be our wishes and our goals for the New Year.

God is So Human

By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian

"When the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons"

(Galatians 4:4-5).

Before the advent of Christ, there were people who expected that when God decided to act, He would send some supernatural person. The world might well become more and more evil, but then, just as evil seemed about to win, God would enter, overthrow evil and establish a reign of righteousness under the leadership of His Messiah. When Christians came, claiming that God came in Jesus, as a human being, born of peasants, those people were greatly offended.

Christians believe that God's plan was to enter the world as it was in the manner all other human beings did, by being born of a woman. The child that was born of that woman was exposed to all the experiences common to human beings. He knew what it was to be sad and to be happy, to succeed and fail, to live and to die. The difference was that he did not sin. He did not sacrifice his humanity: he embraced it, all

of it, just as God embraced the world in all its brokenness, suffering and evil.

It is so tempting at Christmastime to move into another world – a world of sentimentality and carols, a world that speaks of angel choirs and a mysterious star that led wise men from the East to bring their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These are indeed a part of the Christmas story, but only a part, and when they are made into the whole story, Christmas becomes an escape. It is dehumanized. It becomes a story of a being quite unreal, born into a world that never was.

The obvious but difficult message of Christmas that God expresses Himself most fully is when we see Him in an ordinary human being living in an ordinary world. By that we do not mean that God is like "the average" man, nor that He likes the world as it is. What we mean is that God does not reject the world if it is evil but that He chooses it as His home and place of work.

The renowned painter Pablo Picasso used to say that when he chose to draw a chair he looked for the most ordinary chair he could find not some very unusual, ornate piece of furniture. He did that because he wanted people to see themselves in his pictures and to see the kind of chair they might well sit in. The chair

has meaning then because it is so ordinary. So God, when He chose to express Himself, sent His Son, "born of a woman," to "sit" in the kind of "chair" all humanity sits in. Looking at Jesus Christ, then, we can say: "He knows how I feel."

Christmas is the celebration of the time when God reached out to mankind through a babe in a manger. It is an affirmation of faith by the Creator in His creatures. The babe lying in the manger was God's way of saying to us, "I believe in you, and I love you. Accept the gift of my love. Walk in it and share it with others."

Christmas is the celebration of not only what God has done to mankind in the past, but it is also the celebration of His presence with us here and now. Centuries ago, Prophet Isaiah prophesied, "The virgin will give birth to a son and they will call him Immanuel-which means, "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14).

Those who truly experience Christmas will surely experience the rebirth of the Christ Child in their hearts, for his coming into the world is not limited by time. He has entered the lives of millions of people throughout the ages, and he continues to do the same today. He is truly God and truly man – the most significant person who ever has graced this planet; he is the Lord of lords and King of kings; he is the Savior of mankind.

(Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian is the executive director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council.)



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Congress Urges Turkey to Return Churches: First Successful Attempt at Restitution

Turkey suffered a major setback last week when the US House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a landmark resolution calling on the Turkish government to return over 2,000 confiscated Christian churches and other properties “to their rightful owners.”

This victory is particularly significant as it comes at a time when Turkey is said to be at the apex of its power both regionally and internationally. Yet, despite its considerable political and economic clout, neither the Turkish regime nor its high-powered lobbyists could openly oppose a congressional resolution intended to protect the religious rights of Christian minorities in Turkey. This is the reason why, when the resolution was first submitted to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on July 20, as an amendment to the State Department’s Foreign Relations Authorization Act, it was easily adopted by a vote of 43-1.

Just before the resolution came up for a vote on the House floor on December 13, the State Department, at Turkey’s request, made discreet but ultimately futile efforts

to derail it. Turkish-American groups also unsuccessfully lobbied against the resolution. Neither the House Republican majority nor the Democratic minority heeded their denialist demands. The strong bipartisan consensus paved the way for the resolution to overcome the hurdle of needing over two-thirds of the House votes for passage, since the motion was presented under a special parliamentary procedure known as the Suspension Calendar.

The Turkish government and its high-priced lobbying firms were greatly embarrassed when only one member of Congress rose on the House floor to speak and vote against the resolution. Even then, Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-KY), a co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Turkey, readily acknowledged that not “very many people would oppose” this bill! He then added: “The mere fact that the resolution is being introduced would leave an objective observer with the intent [sic] opinion that religious freedom is being systematically denied in Turkey!” After rambling on for a few more minutes and running out of things to say, Whitfield yielded the balance of his time to his opponents – the supporters of the resolution!

After such a devastating defeat, the Turkish Foreign Ministry did not have much to say, except to express its disappointment. This is standard Turkish practice – initially applying heavy pressure and making threats to prevent an unfavorable decision, and after losing the vote, dismissing the bill as being unimportant, in order to hide their embarrassing failure. If the Turkish government did not think the bill was important, why did it turn the world upside down in trying to defeat it?

In attempting to fool the unsuspecting public, Turkish officials claimed that the resolution was merely adopted by a two-to-one vote, without explaining that during voice votes, most House members are not usually in the

Chamber. Once the leadership of the two parties comes to an agreement on an issue, only a handful of members are then required to adopt the bill. The real question that Turkish authorities must answer is why only one Congressman out of 435 voted against the resolution? This episode demonstrates that the new Ottoman emperor has no clothes!

Even though this resolution is not binding, unless the Senate also adopts it and the president signs it into law, it is still a significant breakthrough for all Christian minorities in Turkey whose properties have been confiscated for decades. Encouraged by this positive development, the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek communities will continue their active collaboration to pressure Turkey to restore their historic rights.

For Armenians worldwide, this is the first time that the US Congress has demanded restitution from Turkey, rather than mere recognition of the Genocide. This resolution could serve as an impetus for other countries and international organizations to follow suit, demanding the restoration of property rights in Turkey. Henceforth, the Turkish government has to be much more cautious when trampling on these rights, knowing full well that the international community is keeping a watchful eye on its recurring violations.

The successful passage of this bill will energize Armenians around the world to continue the struggle for restitution of their losses during the Genocide. Regrettably, no clergyman or official in Armenia has said a single word on this important issue, as if the fate of Armenian churches in Turkey is of no interest to them! Wouldn’t it be in Armenians’ best interest if Armenia joined with the diaspora to seek restitution, particularly in view of President Sargisian’s recent declaration in Marseille, France, demanding “justice” from Turkey?

Facing History, the Anti-Defamation League And the Silence of the Lambs

By David Boyajian

The Anti-Defamation League’s hostility to Armenian Americans is no secret. The ADL and its national director, Abraham Foxman, have worked with Turkey to deny the Armenian Genocide and defeat the Armenian Genocide resolution in Congress. It was a shock, therefore, to learn that Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO), a nationwide Holocaust and human rights educational organization whose curriculum includes the Armenian Genocide, was to “partner” with Foxman for an ADL panel discussion on “The New Anti-Semitism” in Boston on November 7.

Alerted by an Armenian-authored open letter to FHAO, many Armenians urged the group to withdraw its partnership with Foxman. I myself spoke to FHAO, without success.

Instead, FHAO responded to Armenian Americans with a form letter which claimed, disingenuously, that Foxman had acknowledged the Armenian Genocide. FHAO didn’t even bother to address the ADL’s hypocritical opposition to the Armenian Genocide resolution, which Foxman continues to call a “counterproductive diversion.”

Though Foxman’s notorious August 21, 2007 statement mentioned the “G” word, it also implied that Armenian deaths in 1915 were a “consequence” of wartime conditions rather than intentional. “Intent,” however, is what United Nations law requires for an act to be considered genocide. Foxman knew that when he issued his statement.

Prompted by human rights activists and Armenian Americans, a dozen Massachusetts cities and the Massachusetts Municipal Association condemned Foxman’s rhetorical sleight-of-hand, and from 2007-2008 – after Foxman’s statement – cut ties with the ADL’s No Place for Hate program.

A second open letter (October 31, 2011) requested the San Francisco-based Armenian organization, the Genocide Education Project (GEP), whose primary mission is teaching the Armenian Genocide, to ask FHAO to drop its co-sponsorship of the Foxman event.

Why GEP? Because it and FHAO’s advisory boards overlap: Professors Peter Balakian and Richard Hovannisian are on both boards. And FHAO executives Adam Strom, son of his group’s founder, and Jack Weinstein, are on GEP’s advisory board.

I contacted GEP, which said that it would decide how to proceed and get back to me. It never did. Other Armenians, too, pressed GEP to ask FHAO to not co-sponsor Foxman. I later made another attempt to reach GEP, without success. Ultimately, GEP remained silent. GEP owed answers to a concerned public. Silence invites speculation. Did it fear losing FHAO’s friendship? If so, should an Armenian American organization collaborate with such organizations if that prevents it from speaking out?

Fortunately, the Coalition to Recognize the Armenian Genocide, composed of Armenians and Jews, rose to the occasion. At the ADL event, it distributed flyers urging “all organizations and officials to spurn the ADL until it unequivocally recognizes the Armenian Genocide” and “ceases lobbying against” the Armenian Genocide resolution.

Interesting questions and issues arise from the sad spectacle of the FHAO-ADL partnership and GEP’s silence.

If an organization recognizes, and even teaches about, the Armenian Genocide, is that recognition principled and consistent? Or is it mainly a vehicle to advance the organization’s own goals?

We do know, after all, of organizations that use human rights or Genocide education to disguise their real agenda. The ADL is one such example.

The ADL has lots of nice-sounding, “politically correct” programs: “No Place for Hate,” “Combat Bullying,” “Making Diversity Count,” “Workplace of Difference,” “Stories of LGBT History” and more. These programs, along with its ample funds and alleged prestige, have enabled the ADL to gain entry to thousands of public elementary and high schools, colleges, corporations, cities and governments. (FHAO, incidentally, has several programs similar to the ADL’s.) Teaching human rights is not, however, the ADL’s real aim. ADL programs are just a

“no genuine human rights organization would ever work closely – as the ADL has done – with the human rights-abusing, genocide-denying Turkish government to defeat a Congressional resolution on the Armenian Genocide”

backdoor way to instill familiarity and sympathy with itself, the concerns of the Jewish people, the Holocaust and Israel.

How do we know this? Because no genuine human rights organization would ever work closely – as the ADL has done – with the human rights-abusing, genocide-denying Turkish government to defeat a Congressional resolution on the Armenian Genocide, especially while advocating Holocaust recognition and reparations in Congress.

And must we surrender to the “taboo” against critiquing Jewish groups such as the ADL, even when they’re clearly adversaries?

That taboo could explain the reluctance, three to four years ago, of many Armenian American political groups, leaders and academicians, especially on the West Coast, to emulate Massachusetts’ hugely successful, internationally-recognized campaign (www.NoPlaceForDenial.com) against the ADL’s anti-Armenian bias.

When Armenian American leaders avoid criticizing influential adversaries, are they defending the community’s interests or their own?

Another question: when an individual recognizes the Armenian Genocide, is that recognition principled and consistent? Or is it mainly a vehicle to advance his or her interests? Public officials are, of course, the most obvious examples.

Genocide ‘Bait and Switch’

Presidential candidate Barack Obama recognized the Armenian Genocide and promised to do the same as president. As a result, he garnered several Armenian American endorsements. Once in the White House, he quickly forgot his promise. And consider Jane Harman who as a congresswoman (D-CA) supported the Genocide resolution before she deceitfully undermined it. Then there is Richard Gephardt, at one time the US House majority leader. As a congressman (D-MO), he supported the Armenian resolution. He even spoke at an Armenian Genocide commemoration on Capitol Hill. Nevertheless, after leaving Congress in 2005, Gephardt became a paid consultant for Turkey and lobbied against the Armenian resolution that he once supported. And recall Samantha Power, the alleged genocide expert and “friend” of Armenian Americans.

Three years ago Power very publicly urged Armenian Americans to vote for Barack Obama because as president he would recognize our genocide. She now heads the White House’s Office of Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights (while her husband and longtime Obama friend, Cass Sunstein, is the president’s “regulatory czar.”) Our “friend” Samantha hasn’t been heard from in years. By now, Armenian American organizations should have made some kind of critique of America’s “Human Rights” sweetheart. But, no, they’re as quiet as she is. The lesson is not lost on Power or anyone else contemplating self-serving rhetoric and promises to Armenians.

And could self-interest, rather than the Armenian people’s best interests, explain why more Diasporan Armenian “leaders” and organizations haven’t been more critical of corruption among Armenia’s government officials and oligarchs?

Armenian Americans expect their political leaders and organizations to speak up strongly when our interests are at stake. Fear of offending those who offend us is a poor excuse.

(David Boyajian is a Massachusetts resident who is active in Armenian affairs.)



Virginia Holocaust Museum to Develop Permanent Armenian Exhibit

VIRGINIA, from page 1

The Virginia Holocaust Museum was founded in 1997 in several rooms of Temple Beth El but as it grew, in 2000, it was gifted an old tobacco warehouse by the Virginia State Legislature. One of its most famous exhibits, which opened in 2008, is the only existing replica of the Nuremberg Trials Courtroom. Its stated mission is teaching tolerance to all through education.

AEC Director Arpi Bouroujian and committee member Barkev Baronian served as the masters of ceremonies. Tim Hensley, the librarian of the museum, spoke about the museum's plan for a permanent exhibit, titled "The Whole World Failed," which will include materials on a variety of 20th- and 21st-century genocides and the genocide of the American Indians. The Armenian Genocide will be a major part of this exhibit. Hensley estimated that it would take some two to two-and-one-half years to prepare the Armenian section. He called for community support. While financial donations would be appreciated, even more important are original personal accounts, photos, letters, and other artifacts connected to the Armenian Genocide. If families do not wish initially to donate such items, the museum can also make high quality reproductions.

Historian Aram Arkun (also the author of this report) who recently moved to the Richmond area, related the historical connection of Richmond with Armenians, and the involvement of Virginians in the raising of aid for Armenian Genocide victims, including the sponsorship of a Near East Relief orphanage and school on the Greek island of Syros.

Arkun spoke on the importance of the role of museums in presenting information on the Armenian Genocide and genocides in general. In the absence of the immediacy of contact with genocide survivors, multimedia museum exhibits can convey something of the immense tragedy of mass murder and violence to those unfamiliar with such events. They can help sensitize the public to the danger signs of future genocides along with memorializing terrible episodes from the past that still face organized campaigns of denial today. Armenians, Jews and other communities of survivors and descendants of survivors of genocide have the obligation to help others understand great oppression through knowledge acquired at such high cost as a first step toward prevention.

Dr. Roger W. Smith, professor emeritus of government at the College of William and Mary, who is a specialist on comparative genocide and has served as chairman of the Zoryan Institute's Academic Board of Directors since 2004, has been helpful to the AEC in its endeavors. Smith reflected on the importance of education for prevention of genocide. The opening up of the Virginia museum to genocides other than the Holocaust was tremendously important, he felt. Tears and sadness over past tragedies were not sufficient. For this reason, Smith said, "I think this project is a symbol of hope and resurrection."

Bouroujian and Baronian expressed their appreciation to the Virginia Holocaust Museum for establishing what will be a permanent memorial to the victims of the Armenian Genocide, and stressed the importance of obtaining donations of artifacts. Bouroujian



Tim Hensley, librarian of the Virginia Holocaust Museum, in front of the ALMA traveling exhibit

acknowledged the presence of genocide scholar Dr. Herbert Hirsch, professor of political science at Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Political Science, and most recently, author of *Anti-Genocide*.

Dr. Vigen Guroian, professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia, was also present in the audience.

Fr. Mesrob Hovsepian of St. James Armenian Church of Richmond was the final speaker of the afternoon. He expressed the gratitude of the Armenian community toward the museum for providing a space for the temporary and for a permanent exhibit — a place for remembrance.

The afternoon event was well attended, with more than 100 people present from Richmond, other parts of Virginia and Washington, DC. It was covered by Haykaram Nahapetyan, a Washington-based correspondent for the H1 state television channel of the Republic of Armenia.

The Virginia Holocaust Museum is hosting the Watertown, Mass.-based Armenian Library and Museum of America's folding panel display, "The Ongoing Armenian Genocide: Death, Denial and Desecration," devoted to the Armenian Genocide and its denial, from November 2011 to July 2012. It may also be shown at the University of Richmond for several months after this. The exhibit is funded by a grant from Haig and Adele Der Manuelian, Vigen Der Manuelian and Lucy Der Manuelian in memory of their parents, Armenouhy and Manuel Der Manuelian.

Said Haig Der Manuelian, "When our committee — myself as chairman, Elisabeth Kenosian and Arakel Almasian — worked on this exhibit for many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of hours, it was with a view to placing it at non-Armenian sites. We do not need to preach the Genocide to the choir. It took two

years but we finally have accomplished placement in such a great situs by working with the local Armenian church group in Richmond, including Anne Norris. Importantly, that Holocaust Museum intends to develop, in time starting now, their own original permanent Armenian Genocide exhibit and exhibits on other genocides besides the Holocaust. They have asked and we have agreed to allow them — after July — to place this exhibit successively at two universities in the Richmond area."

The AEC was established in 2001. In addition to helping the Virginia Holocaust Museum project, it was instrumental in the adoption in 2001 by Virginia's Board of Education of the mandate to teach the Armenian Genocide as part of World History, and the development of two lesson plans. Beginning in 2006, it has run an annual essay contest on the Armenian Genocide for Virginia high school students who vie to win a \$1,000 prize. Its website provides information to educators (<http://www.armenian-educationcenter.org>).

40th Anniversary of Ordination Of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

PRIMATE, from page 1

Raised in a loving and religious family, he began his formal religious studies at the age of 13, at the Holy Cross Seminary in Istanbul. Sensing his potential, the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople at the time, Archbishop Shnork Kaloustian, sent the boy to Jerusalem in 1967, to study at St. James Armenian Patriarchate, where he was ordained into the holy priesthood in 1971. His educational pursuits led him throughout the US and Europe: to New York's General Theological Seminary, St. John's University in Minneapolis, the Gregorian University in Rome and the Oriental Institute.

The young Barsamian arrived in the United States in 1976 and was appointed pastor of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour in Worcester, Mass. and in 1977 became Grand Sacristan of New York's St. Vartan Cathedral. He later took on the duties of vicar general of the Diocese under the Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian.

He was elected as Primate of the Diocese in 1990, following Manoogian's election as the Patriarch of Jerusalem and elevated to the rank of bishop by Vazken I, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, at Holy Echmiadzin. Two years later, he received the rank of archbishop.

Barsamian has also played a leading role representing the Armenian Church in ecumenical organizations, including the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations, Religion in American Life and the American Bible Society.

He is the longtime president of the Fund for Armenian Relief, which under his guidance has become one of the leading humanitarian relief and development agencies serving Armenia and its people.

In the Eastern Diocese, Barsamian has devoted his efforts to strengthening the Armenian Church from within. He frequently visits local parishes and plays a pivotal role in the creation and development of programs and ministries at the Diocesan Center, including the Department of Youth and Education.

From very early on his tenure as Primate, Barsamian has focused on a consistent yearly theme for the Diocese, beginning in 1994 with the "Year of the Family." Other themes have revolved around the Holy Bible, Mission Outreach, Church and Home, Vocations and most recently "The Call to Serve Ministry of the Faithful."



Congress Recommends Aid to Karabagh

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specifically recommended "assistance for victims of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict at levels consistent with prior years, and for ongoing needs related to the conflict."

As passed by the House and Senate, the consolidated bill makes funds available for the Southern Caucasus region to "be used for confidence-building measures and other activities in furtherance of the peaceful resolution of conflicts, including in Nagorno-Karabagh." Consistent with long-standing US policy, the final report language also urged a "peaceful resolution" of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. The conference agreement also maintained parity for Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training

(IMET) for Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Overall, the omnibus bill provides \$626.7 million in assistance for the countries of Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia (AEECA), which is \$69 million below the FY 2011 level.

"Throughout the appropriations process, the Assembly worked with the House and Senate, and in particular our friends on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to make sure that funding for Armenia was maintained," stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "The final language also allows additional funding to be used for ongoing needs related to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, and we will continue to press forward to ensure robust assistance in that regard," added Ardouny.