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# Los Angeles City Council supports Armenian Genocide resolution

Mayor Villaraigosa speaks out

Garcetti and Greuel take the lead

**LOS ANGELES** — The Los Angeles City Council unanimously voted to support the congressional committee resolution reaffirming the United States record on the Armenian Genocide.

The resolution, authored by Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Pasadena), was approved in October by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs over the objections of President Bush, who said the actions could endanger relations with Turkey.

Council members Wendy Greuel and Eric Garcetti led the October 24 Los Angeles City Council in a unanimous 13-0 vote, which put the City of Los Angeles on record in support of H.Res. 106

Mayor speaks out

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa urged the council's support by stating, "It's time to end the tradition of Holocaust denial that has only deepened the pain of those whose parents and grandparents suffered the unspeakable horror of ethnic cleansing." Mayor Villaraigosa also went on to say, "When



Council member Eric Garcetti.

we don't speak up, when we are silent, what we see is a continuation of a cycle of violence." (The full text of the mayor's speech appears on page B2.)

Council president hopes for healed world

On the council floor, Council President Eric Garcetti of District 14 said, "Until we recognize that past, we will never be a healed world and the 1.5 million lost people will be just that - lost not only in history, but lost in memory as well."

The Council president added, "Today we call on Congress to recognize the Armenian Genocide for what it was - a violation

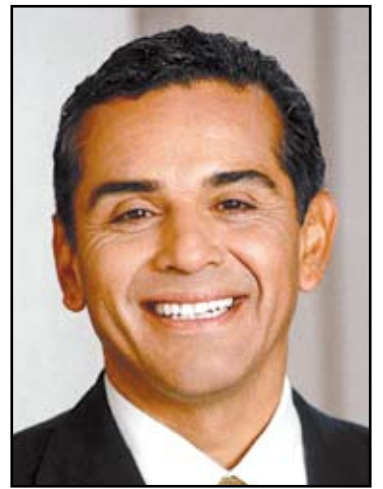


Council member Wendy Greuel.

of the human rights of millions of Armenians," Mr. Garcetti said. "In order for the wounds of the past to heal, we must recognize this horrific chapter of world history."

Wendy Greuel, council member for District 2 said, "We have an opportunity and an obligation to acknowledge the atrocities that the Armenian people suffered as genocide, both to heal the wounds of the survivors and the families of victims and to help prevent future genocides from occurring." She added, "It is simply the right thing to do."

H.Res. 106 - introduced by Adam Schiff on January 30, passed with a vote of 27-21 in the United States



L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs on Wednesday, October 10, 2007, and is now being considered for a full House vote.

H.Res. 106, calls upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning the issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide. The resolution is nonbinding and will not carry the weight of the law. Rather it will simply place the House of Representatives on record as labeling the Armenian Genocide as genocide.

# High school students planning a trek to support House Resolution 106

A ten-mile walk-a-thon will take place on November 8

by Razmig Sarkissian

**MONTEBELLO, Calif.** — With House Resolution 106 pending a vote in the House of Representatives, the 11th grade class at Armenian Mesrobian School has decided to take an initiative.

The students have organized a walk-a-thon to raise funds in support of the Armenian National Committee of America's (ANCA) efforts to shore up support for the resolution.

The 11th graders plan to raise at least \$1,000 through sponsorships to donate to the ANCA. They will be walking approximately ten miles from the Pasadena Armenian Center to the ANCA Western Region office in Glendale, on the morning of Thursday, November 8.

"Every little bit counts," said the 11th grade homeroom teacher, **Tro Tchekidjian**. "This is our small contribution to an organization that has been at the forefront of our cause for so many years."

Through their eyes

The 11th graders hope that the money they raise will help secure the passage of H. Res. 106.



The students watching the webcast of the House Committee resolution hearing. Photo: Rosdom Saliba.

The students have been closely following the events and the controversy surrounding the resolution.

"The passage of this resolution is extremely crucial, not only to Armenians but to humanity on a whole," commented 11th grade student **Nanor Harboyan**. "There should be no hesitance when it comes to justice, and upholding basic human rights."

When asked how he would feel if the resolution passed, Gevorg Iskadjyan answered, "It would be a huge load off our shoulders and a big step in the right direction, but our work wouldn't end there. America's recognition of the genocide would propel us forward and give us the momentum we need to get Turkey to finally face their history."

**Sophie Avedikian** believes that "if an influential nation such

as America recognizes the Armenian Genocide, then it would result in a chain reaction of recognition and help us achieve a worldwide consensus condemning Turkey for their crimes and denial."

In light of the surge of media interest in this topic, **Palig Saghdjian** is impressed with "how far we've come in the last 10 years," but believes "there is still room for improvement. The main media outlets still seem to be biased toward the [Bush] administration's stance, but at least it has finally become a topic of discussion."

Renewed activism

"The success and advancement of H. Res. 106 has definitely helped increase political activism,"

Continued on page B2



Poster of the November 4 rally.

# Armenian-Americans to rally for the adoption of the Genocide resolution

Nationwide push calls for Congress to stand firm in the face of Turkish threats

**LOS ANGELES** — The Armenian Youth Federation along with human rights supporters across the nation will hold several large-scale rallies this Sunday, November 4, 2007, calling for the passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution (H. Res. 106).

The mass gatherings, entitled "Rally 106: United Voices for the Armenian Genocide Resolution" will be held in prominent cities across the United States including Los Angeles, Phoenix, Houston, San Francisco, and Washington.

The rally is expected to draw thousands of community members and human rights advocates who want to mobilize efforts and bring awareness to this most urgent issue.

"We are encouraged that a broad cross section of Americans will be on hand for Rally 106," said Ishkhan Boghossian, the director of the Los Angeles area rally.

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## Community

### L.A. City Council supports Genocide Resolution

#### Text of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's speech

See story on page B1. The following is the text of the mayor's speech.

In 1896, during one of his last speeches, the legendary William Gladstone, who served three terms as Prime Minister of England, said that a failure to stop Turkish massacres of the Armenian people would leave Europe "disgraced in the face of the world." A century ago, crimes against the Armenian people were a widely-known and acknowledged truth. The genocide against Armenians reached its tragic zenith between 1915 and 1923, when an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were brutally killed in their historic homeland by Ottoman Turkey. Not surprisingly, the name Gladstone came to be reviled in Turkey.

While our relationship with modern Turkey is strategically vital, our national interest will always be more fundamentally aligned with the cause of human rights.

As Mayor of the city with the largest Armenian population outside of Armenia, I say it's time to end the tradition of holocaust denial that has only deepened the pain of those whose parents and grandparents suffered the unspeakable horrors of ethnic cleansing. Before casting their deciding votes, I hope every member of Congress will keep in mind one of Mr. Gladstone's most famous phrases, which was a favorite of Martin Luther King Jr: "Justice delayed is justice denied."

Some are resisting the call to recognize the Armenian Genocide on the grounds that it may upset sensitive relations with an ally in the Middle East and this is "not the right time" to approve such a resolution. I think we can all get behind the latter sentiment: this is not the right time to acknowledge the fact of the genocide, because we should have done so long before now.

The tragic outcome of the world's silence and inaction in the face of the Armenian Genocide is one of the darkest chapters of the 20th Century. With recent mass killings documented in Darfur and Kosovo, it remains our continuing responsibility as Americans to condemn genocide whenever and wherever it occurs.

When we turn a blind eye to holocaust, we lend it a legitimacy that makes us all complicit.

Truth should never be subjugated to prevailing political winds. Genocide is genocide, torture is torture and truth is truth. When words to lose their meaning, when the horrors of history are buried under layers of diplomatic euphemism, we invite future tragedies.

With this resolution we have an opportunity to reclaim America's moral leadership in the 21st century.

The whole world is watching. Congress must vote yes on House Bill 106. ☞

### High school students planning a trek to support House Resolution 106

#### Continued from page B1

commented 11th grade student **Nora Gourdikian**. "It has also helped bring the community together and unite the Armenians under a common cause."

One such example was a rally when Rep. **Jane Harman** was speaking. Ms. Harman, a co-sponsor of the resolution, had surprisingly begun working against its passage. Nora attended this rally and had trouble holding back her emotions upon seeing a woman she refers to as "that hypocrite."

Back when the resolution was scheduled to be voted on in the Foreign Affairs Committee, the 11th graders at Mesrobian dedicated an entire class period to calling up the offices of local representatives and urging them to vote yes on the resolution.

Member of Congress **Linda Sanchez**, the representative for Whittier, was among many who

Razmig Sarkissian, 16, is a junior at Armenian Mesrobian School in Pico Rivera, California

had yet to publicize which way they were going to vote.

A number of the students took turns calling her main office that day.

On the day of the vote, she voted in favor of the resolution.

"What was really fulfilling to me was seeing immediate results coming from the students' actions," said Mr. Tchekidjian.

"I partially attribute Sanchez voting yes to the work done by my students." Also, the students eagerly followed the debate in the Foreign Affairs Committee, on the day of the vote, via webcast.

"I always hear people comment on how the youth is inactive and apathetic," said Mr. Tchekidjian. "The students have shown me that we might have that statement backward. Let these students be an example to those adults."

Those who want to sponsor the students' walk-a-thon may contact the school. ☞

connect:  
(562) 699-2057

## Armenian-Americans to rally for Genocide Resolution

#### Continued from page B1

"By supporting the passage of the resolution we are supporting human rights and justice, two fundamental American values," he said. "We are also going to stand firmly against an attempt by a foreign government, Turkey, to hijack America's record on the Armenian Genocide. Clearly, the Republic of Turkey is funneling millions to Washington in a bid to strangle America's commitment to human rights. That is immoral and we will be gathering to reject Turkey's foreign interference."

"Rally 106" comes at a time when the government of Turkey is increasing its efforts to prevent the passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution. Turkey has hired public relations and lobbying firms such as the Livingston Group, Fleishman Hillard, and DLA Piper to lobby Members of Congress and persuade them to vote against the Armenian Genocide resolution.

"I assure you that the passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution has nothing to do with the reality that the Turks may move forward with their threat to cut critical

supply routes to our troops in Iraq. They were the cause of much hardship and strain on our troops at the start of the war at which time there was no Armenian Genocide Resolution pending in congress," said **Caspar Jivalagian**, chair of the Armenian Youth Federation. "The reason Turkey makes threats against our country is quite simple; they are an inconsistent ally and surely not a friend of ours."

Vice-President of the Western Region, **Vache Thomasian** has been ardously working to coordinate the communities nationwide. By visiting churches, schools, hu-

man rights organization and by using basic manpower, Thomassian feels that this is a critical time to be proactive. "We are sending the message across that this is a piece of legislation that does not have a wrong time to be talked about," Thomassian said. "There is tremendous support for this resolution among the Armenian-American community and many other human rights activist groups. We shouldn't be afraid to speak truth even in the face of our supposed ally."

Thomassian stressed this message by saying, "We need to make it clear that this issue is not being

swept under the rug, that this is still a very live issue both in Washington and our communities."

Thousands are expected to gather at the rallies in support of the Armenian Genocide Resolution, where various elected officials and dignitaries will voice their support as well. The Los Angeles area Rally 106 will be held in the Little Armenia area of Hollywood near the intersection of Hollywood Blvd. and Alexandria on Sunday, November 4, 2007 at 3 P.M. ☞

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## Hamazkayin Music Committee to celebrate its 20th anniversary in Los Angeles

by Maral Habeshian

**GLENDALE, Calif.** - Twenty years ago, the Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society realized a calling to document and advance Armenian music. To fulfill that mission, a music committee was formed to work directly with its Western United States Executive Board.

Today, the Hamazkayin Music Committee is poised to mark its accomplishments of the past twenty years, at a dinner aptly called an "Evening of Celebration," which will take place on November 9 in Los Angeles.

The evening will feature a recital by international piano virtuoso **Armen Babakhanian**, and the release of the Music Committee's latest children's DVD, along with a comprehensive 2-set CD of Sayat Nova works performed by the Sayat Nova Ensemble.

In discussing the history of the Music Committee, founding member **Seta Simonian** explained the initial need to form the body. "We recognized a need to professionally pursue and advance a distinguished quality of Armenian music. At first, we formed two very successful choral groups that existed until 1994."

Vatche Barsoumian directed those groups, but when he eventually left to found and direct Lark

Musical Society, the Music Committee's focus shifted to include sponsorship of classical and traditional recitals in order to promote a distinct brand of Armenian music. Eventually, out of necessity, the Committee found its calling.

"We began to focus on recording and publishing works that others didn't consider—perhaps because they were not commercially viable. Nevertheless, they needed to be documented," explains Simonian, pointing to the Committee's release of *Armenian Romance Songs* that feature pieces such as *Yes Siretzi* by Alemshah, *Bjingo* by Srvtantziantz, *Yes Saren Kougayi* by Komitas and many other classics on the two volume collection. "Now, these songs are documented and also serve to promote modern-day artists performing them."

Other works published by Hamazkayin Music Committee include: *Ganatchian Choral Works: An Anthology* (1991), *Komitas: Rustic Scenes* (1992), *Parsegh Ganatchian: Complete Works* (3-CD set, 2000), *Alexan Menakian: Children's Songs* (2003), *Avedis Nazarian: Children's Songs and Operetta* (2004), *Yetvart Hagopian: Children's Songs* (2004), *Sayat Nova: Piano Arrangements* (2005), *Komitas: Piano Works* (2-CD set, 2006), and *Aram Khachaturian: Complete Piano Works* (4-CD set, 2007).

Documentary booklets, spanning 30-92 pages, accompany each

CD. They include information about composers, the music, lyrics, and translations to offer perhaps the most comprehensive and accurate information on given artists and their works. "These will be around forever not only for scholars and music experts, but also the public," stresses Simonian.

#### Sayat Nova and the Yeraz Barig

When the Music Committee realized that there is no comprehensive recording of Sayat Nova works, they set out to publish their new CD that features 31 songs recorded by the Sayat Nova Ensemble and Thomas Boghossian. (*Sayat Nova: Complete Collection of Armenian Songs* (2-CD set))

Also ready for release is the children's DVD *Yeraz Barig*, a fifty minute children's musical performance written by Parsegh Topjian, and performed in Western Armenia.

Both the DVD and the CD were produced in Armenia and will be released at the November 9 event.

#### Babakhanian

Over the past 10 years, the Music Committee has established a special bond with Armen Babakhanian who performs the pieces on the CDs featuring Sayat Nova works arranged for piano as well as Komitas and Aram Khachaturian piano



Armen Babakhanian.

works. The Committee also organized two recitals for Babakhanian. Hence, Simonian says: "It was a natural to invite Armen to perform at our 20th Anniversary celebration. We are very proud to work with him."

Indeed, Babakhanian has garnered several award in international piano competitions including the Leeds (Third Prize), the Van Cliburn (Third Prize), the Guardian Dublin (Second Prize), the William Kappell (Second Prize), the Gina Bachauer (Second Prize) and most recently the World Piano Competition (First Prize).

#### Evening of celebration

The Music Committee's Evening of Celebration will take place on Friday, November 9, 2007, at 7:30 p.m., at the Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter's Baghdassarian-Shahinian Hall, 3347 N. San Fernando Rd., Los Angeles, CA 90065. Donation is \$50. Tickets are available in Glendale at Sardarabad Books 818-500-0790 and Abril Books 818-243-4112 or by emailing Hamazk@aol.com. ☞

He has performed with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Irish National Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra under Ms-tislav Rostropovich, Israel Philharmonic and the Moscow Philharmonic under Valery Gergiev and the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic under Yuri Temirkanov. Armen has played recitals in major North American venues including Carnegie Hall in New York, Kennedy Center in Washington, Jordan Hall in Boston, Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena and Place des Arts in Montreal. ☞

## Community

# Genocide survivor's memoirs fall on hungry ears

by Shahen Hagobian

**ENCINO, Calif.** — “The written word is never lost; it finds you just as this book has found me 90 years later,” said journalist and writer **Mark Arax** during the presentation of the newly published *The Fatal Night* last Sunday.

At Ferrahan High School's Avedissian Hall, the publishers of the book, **Hagop and Knar Manjikian**, held a book presentation of *The Fatal Night*, written by **Mikayel Shamtanchian**.

The book was penned by Shamtanchian in 1919, seven years before his death. The newly published English-language edition was translated by **Ishkhan Jimbashian**, and it is now available through Manjikian Publications.

*The Fatal Night* is the second volume in the Genocide Library series that the Manjikian have created.

While there have been countless memoirs written about the horrific events that led to the extermination of 1.5 million Armenians, Shamtanchian's book is a recounting of how 200 Armenian intellectuals, who were living in Istanbul at the time, were taken from their homes and imprisoned and eventually murdered.

The story follows Shamtanchian as he is taken to Istanbul's central prison, along with his intellectual peers, only to be separated from them and his own family over the course of the next three years.

The book tells the story of Shamtanchian's struggles to survive in a land of hostility and desperation, while his friends and colleagues disappear one by one into the voids of the cold, dark and unwelcoming Turkish landscape.



Hagop Manjikian, Mark Arax, and Knar Manjikian.

The writer survives, only to be released back into a devastated and irreplaceable life.

Among the speakers at the formal book presentation was **Aram Kaloustian**, who provided a brief introduction to the book and expanded on the importance of having Genocide-related literature.

“The remaining survivors will not be with us much longer,” said Kaloustian, “alas, the last direct remaining connections will be the properly-documented eyewitness accounts such as this book.”

Kaloustian stressed the importance of being active in a world where the global superpowers rewrite history as they see fit.

“History is not what occurred, it is what is written,” said Kaloustian. “When considering the detailed information contained in *The Fatal Night*, it is impossible for the reader to question the validity of the Armenian Genocide and the organized diabolic intent of the perpetrators.”

### Arax and his journey

Author and former *Los Angeles Times* writer **Mark Arax** provided those attending a thorough cri-

tique on the book, as well as insight into current issues involving genocide recognition.

“It's a slim volume, I've seen better covers, it does not bear the name of some big New York publishing company, and it's an account that's 90 years old,” said Arax. “It could be easy to dismiss it; yet when you open up its pages from the first word to the last word, there is no dismissing this book.”

Arax continued his talk with an introduction to his own journey as a writer, and how he was inspired by his grandfather's life and times as a writer.

He related the significance of Shamtanchian's experience with his own experience as a writer dealing with the genocide issue.

“In my 20-year career as a *Los Angeles Times* writer,” Arax said, “I wrote about half a dozen stories on Armenians, simply to avoid being pigeonholed as an Armenian writer writing about Armenian topics.”

Arax then spoke about an assignment he declined to take; the story was about a group of Armenians, who marched from Southern California to Sacramento

honoring the memory of Genocide victims.

Eventually, Arax said he caved in and wrote the piece, only to see it swept under the rug by the *LA Times*.

Months later, he saw an *LA Times* article, where the word “alleged” appeared before the word Genocide.

Arax said editors at the newspaper eventually corrected their understanding of the historical events after many letters to the editors and complaints from the Armenian community; however, Arax had to confront the issue again.

Early this year, Arax wrote about genocide awareness and the divisions within the Jewish community, between those who supported the Genocide Resolution and those against its passage.

When his story was not published about a week after his submission, Arax was told that there was a problem.

His managing editor at the time, Douglas Frantz, said, “As an Armenian, you should not be writing this piece.”

Franz had previously been the *New York Times* Bureau Chief in Istanbul and he was friends with Turkey's Consulate General in Los Angeles.

Franz's friend, the Consulate General, even told Arax in a meeting that there had not been any wrongdoing in the early 20th century and that all properties taken away from Armenians would be returned if proofs of ownership were provided.

Much like the events described in *The Fatal Night*, Arax faced a deceptive Turkish authority figure only to be slapped in the face with indecency and insult.

### The book

*The Fatal Night* is full of moving and powerful images and emotions that allow readers to understand the psychological landscapes Genocide victims found themselves in and the harsh realities of their experiences.

“Twilights in the outside world often inspire us with visions of new days,” wrote Shamtanchian.

“The prison day, dying without twilight, plummets like a mass of lead, crushing life's most delicate flowers, hopes, and passions,” wrote the author referring to the breaking down of the free mind and spirit at the hands of the It-tihadist Turks.

Hagop and Knar Manjikian created the Genocide Library with the mission to bring readers the first-hand stories of Genocide survivors.

“It has been a long time dream of mine to bring the literature of survivors to the youth of today,” said Hagop Manjikian.

“It's important to get a sense of the apocalyptic nature of the events,” he said. “The victims had no outside help to deal with their struggles and pains.”

The Manjikian have been publishing Genocide literature since 1993 to not only spread awareness of the events, but to also bring to light individual stories.

Arax stressed the importance of the Manjikian's books.

“We don't need congress to help our nation's cause; we need more of these,” said Arax and held up a copy of *The Fatal Night*.

“So don't tell your children to be doctors and lawyers,” he said. “Tell them to be writers.”

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### CRIME BEAT

## California charges three Armenians with healthcare fraud

### Clinic owners claimed to perform rare, specialized procedures repeatedly

by Jason Kandel

The operators of Scott Medical Center in Burbank claimed to have performed hundreds of invasive and painful-sounding medical exams in 2003.

There were the anal and urethral sphincter electromyographies, tests in which a doctor uses electrodes to check for incontinence. Then there were the anorectal manometry tests.

There were enough exams for each patient to have one of these every day of the week.

But they didn't occur.

California Justice Department agents accuse six people, including Armenian brothers, an Armenian woman, and two doctors of stealing more than \$1.5 million over two years from the state's healthcare program by filing phony documents.

The paperwork claimed the accused administered exams when they didn't and delivered medical equipment that wasn't necessary.

This alleged crime is the latest in a common scheme in Southern California that reaps millions of dollars from the government programs.

Arrested in connection with the case were Akop Melkonian, 34, of Chatsworth; his brother Richard Melkonian, 36, of Glendale; Lilit Baghdasaryan, 27, of Tujunga; David J. Garrison, 46, of Los Angeles; Dr. Neil Hollander, 67, of Huntington Beach; and Dr. Rito Castanon-Hill, 36, of Los Angeles.

In announcing the filing of the charges that include making false insurance and Medi-Cal claims, grand theft, and money laundering, California Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. said the suspects created a fake healthcare clinic to line their own pockets rather than help the sick and elderly.

“These arrests send a strong message that this kind of rip-off will not be tolerated,” he said.

Benjamin M. Gluck, an attorney for Ms. Baghdasaryan, said the investigation began more than four years ago and he looks forward to providing a vigorous defense. Tracy Green, an attorney for Dr. Castanon-Hill, declined to comment. Attorneys for the other defendants did not return calls.

The Melkonian brothers and Ms. Baghdasaryan were being held at the Los Angeles County Jail, with bail set at \$1.5 million each. Dr. Castanon-Hill was free on bail. Dr. Hollander was expected to surrender to authorities, but his status was unknown by press time. Mr. Garrison was free on \$250,000 bail.

The Armenian brothers allegedly hired the doctors to create a front for Mr. Garrison, a physician's assistant, who allegedly falsified records and billed government healthcare programs for nonexistent procedures, court records show.

The suspects also allegedly hired Vietnamese-speaking people to pick up patients in the Vietnamese communities of Westminster and Garden Grove in Orange County, Calif., for \$50 a head, to take rides in vans to the Burbank clinic.

The so-called “recruiters” enticed the patients by offering cases of the nutritional supplement Ensure, court records show.

Some patients received deliveries of motorized wheelchairs and semi-electric hospital beds that they didn't need, courtesy of a medical supply shop in Canoga Park that was owned by the Melkonian brothers, court records show.

Once at the clinic, the patients offered up their healthcare cards, agreed to take unnecessary exams, and filled out paperwork that allowed the clinic operators to get reimbursed by the government for the purported work.

Once they received the money, the defendants converted it to cash, and paid off their associates and themselves.

Ms. Baghdasaryan also faces tax evasion charges for allegedly filing false information to the California Franchise Tax Board in an effort to conceal stolen funds in 2003 and 2004, court records show. Mr. Garrison is accused of under-reporting and failing to report money he was allegedly paid by his accomplices, officials said.

In an interview with agents, Dr. Hollander said his job was to visit the Burbank clinic once a week and review 10 percent of all patient charts. In return, he'd get 25 percent of the receipts, while the oth-

ers would receive 75 percent, court records show.

Dr. Hollander, who said he quit working there in August 2003, told agents that Mr. Garrison had been ordering unnecessary tests, and that when he went to try to correct the problem, he was ignored, wrote Katie Viorel, the state agent overseeing the case, in her declaration in support of arrest/search warrants.

In an interview with state agents in April 2005, Mr. Melkonian admitted to having two drivers who delivered medical equipment to patients in San Diego and Los Angeles. But when agents pressed him about the sale of wheelchairs to patients who didn't appear to need them, he fell silent and referred further questions to his attorney, court records show.

The glaring red flags for Scott Medical came when agents began looking at billing records – hundreds of unusual, complex, and expensive tests that were billed for between Jan. 6, 2003 and Aug. 11, 2003.

Court documents include testimony from Dr. Joseph Scoma, a colon-rectal surgery specialist, who said he didn't even perform such tests, instead referring them to specialists.

“The tests would certainly not be given at a medical clinic,” he said. “Neither a physician assistant, nor general practitioner would even know what these tests were for.”

The doctor said an anorectal manometry would be given to a patient two times at most, once before and once after surgery. An electromyography would be given

one time, if at all, he said, according to court documents.

“There is no justification for a patient receiving either of these tests five times in a period of seven to ten days,” he said, according to court documents. “It is impossible for a patient to need these tests that many times.”

This case is one of several involving Armenians and others that have occurred in Southern California in recent years.

This summer, Konstantin Grigoryan and his wife Mayya, their son-in-law, Eduard Gershelis, and two close associates, Aleksandr Treynker and Haroutyun Gulderyan, pleaded guilty to charges in connection with operating a network of bogus medical clinics that gutted \$20 million over five years from Medicare, the federal health care program for the elderly and disabled.

Also this summer, Glendale residents Simon Dulbandzhyan, 39, his wife, Vardui Rosi, 35, her 33-year-old sister, and a 32-year-old female accused accomplice were charged in connection with operating an adult day health care center that allegedly defrauded Medi-Cal by billing for services on a day their business was closed and employing unqualified individuals, including a two-time domestic violence suspect.

In 2000, Khachik Gezvkarayan, a 34-year-old auto parts salvaging business manager from Glendale was convicted in a scam in which he cheated Medi-Cal out of \$150,000 in phony prescriptions for incontinence supplies and equipment that were never delivered between April 1999 and March 2000.

## Community

# Armenian folktales to be featured at L.A. Storytelling Festival

## Alidz Agbabian and "Tellers from the Mountain" will perform Nov. 10

**LOS ANGELES** — Armenian folk and fairy tales will be in the air at Exposition Park as part of an afternoon family program at the 6th annual Los Angeles Storytelling Festival, which will take place on Saturday, November 10.

Dubbed "Building Community One Story at a Time," the day-long festivities will feature concerts for adults, workshops that explore how storytelling fits into everyday lives and work, "story swaps" where everyone gets a chance to tell a tale, and a special afternoon family program with stories, games, and performances geared for children.

"I am happy that the Armenian community will be represented with an Armenian legend, a medieval fable, and a folktale integrated with songs and chants," said Alidz Agbabian, who along with the three-member storytelling troupe "Tellers from the Mountain" will take the stage in the "Folk and Fairy Tales" segment of the festival, from



Alidz Agbabian (second from left) and "Tellers from the Mountain": Mher Vahakn, Areni Agbabian, and Ari Agbabian.

2:00 to 3:00 p.m. They will share the hour with two other storytellers.

An established storyteller and author who specializes in Armenian and Middle Eastern oral traditions, Agbabian brings folk tales, myths, songs and legends to many communities nationwide and around the world. Based in Los Angeles, she offers classroom, library, and museum presentations and teachers' workshops. She also develops special-theme presentations for schools, exhibits, conventions, and festivals.

As an author of children's books, she has established Dziludzar Pub-

lications, which for the past dozen years has introduced high-quality story books from the Armenian tradition to readers of all ages.

As in her recent appearances at the Getty Museum, Agbabian is again joined by "Tellers from the Mountain," the next generation of musicians and Armenian folk troubadours. The troupe consists of Areni Agbabian, who recently received her MFA in Music from CalArts and has worked with and learned from artists such as Vicki Ray, Vinny Golia, Michael Gordon, and Richard Foreman. Areni's primary interests are in contemporary

and improvised music, as well as theatrical and interdisciplinary forms.

Mher Vahakn received his BFA in photography from Art Center College of Design in 2002, and has since worked as a commercial photographer and graphic designer. A talented percussionist, Mher's love for music motivated him to co-found "Songs and Flight," a non-profit organization that helps promote and expose new musicians to the community. His current musical projects include local ethnic rock band, Visa.

Ari Agbabian is a graduate of New York University's Trish School of Arts, specializing in acting and dramaturgy; his Master's thesis topic was medieval Egyptian shadow puppetry. Based in New York, he is presently participating in workshops by storyteller Laura Simms, and interning at the Civilians Theater Group, a company that develops original projects based on creative investigation.

Supported in part by the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the annual storytelling celebration on November 10 will start at 9:00 a.m. and concludes at 8:30 p.m. with a concert. Registration is available at the festival website for the whole day (\$30) or for a single event (\$10), with special prices for students, children, and early childhood educators.

The festival will take place at the Exposition Park Intergenerational Community Center, 3980 Menlo Avenue, near the L.A. Coliseum. Information is available at the official website: lastorytellingfestival.com. Information on Alidz Agbabian and "Tellers from the Mountain" is available at <http://silvercrane.com>, and (soon) at a new website, <http://alidz.com>. ☞

## First Annual Writer's Award to Celebrate Kherdian's *Forgotten Bread*

**HOLLYWOOD, Calif.** — The Hamazkayin cultural organization will celebrate the publication of *Forgotten Bread* at its premiere Armenian-American Writer's Award Dinner and Book Signing on Sunday, November 18.

Edited by David Kherdian, *Forgotten Bread* is a collection of works by first generation Armenian-American writers. It boasts works from 17 writers and represents literature from the 1920s to present. Hamazkayin will honor Mr. Kherdian for compiling the anthology that is being called a "treasure trove of lost gems, filled with lasting, funny, deeply moving words."

Funds raised will help to establish three new scholarships – in literature, journalism, screenwriting – exclusively for Armenian-American students entering graduate writing programs.

The awards dinner will take place at Taglyan Hall in Hollywood, with master of ceremony Mark Arax. A VIP cocktail hour and author's party will commence at 5 P.M. followed by dinner and book signing at 6:30. A silent auction will feature a rare collection of signed books by many of the authors in the anthology, and a signed hand drawing by William Saroyan.

For tickets visit [forgottenbread@earthlink.net](mailto:forgottenbread@earthlink.net) or call 818-588-5625. Tickets are \$250 VIP and \$100 dinner per person.

### *Forgotten Bread: The Book*

Published by Heyday Book in Berkeley, *Forgotten Bread* is a 400-page anthology of writings from William Saroyan and Michael Arlen, and lesser-known literary masters such as Surmelian, Bezzerides, Sourian, Serabian-Herald, Bezzerides, Varandyan, Hagopian, Minasian, Pilibosian.

"It's a stunning display by the writers who came before my generation," says novelist Aris Janigian, author of *Bloodvine*.

Each of the 17 first-generation writers is introduced with a forward by a second-generation writer such as Mark Arax, Aram Saroyan, Gary Goshgarian, and Aris Janigian.

It is also characterized by the unspeakable sadness that accompanied the loss of so many Armenians in the genocide of 1915. Many of those who survived the genocide found their way to America, and writing became a salvation for talented young Armenian Americans in their struggle for dignity, iden-

tity, and meaning in their adopted country. Suffused with a sense of history, colored by personal experience, and imbued with the hopefulness of a fresh start, these stories convey what history books cannot. What coalesces, instead, is a deeply American story of the forces that propel individuals forward into a new world.

Arax says the collection is "nothing short of a cultural excavation," with Kherdian unearthing the first grafts of the Armenian experience onto places such as Racine, Wisconsin and Watertown, Massachusetts. This group of writers must have felt a great burden to find what was lost, if not the land itself than their family's material possessions, he said. And yet they chose not to be merchants or doctors or lawyers but writers—a road they surely knew would not lead to wealth.

### Kherdian to introduce *Forgotten Bread* at Fresno State

On the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 14, poet and writer Kherdian will take *Forgotten Bread* to Fresno, a place not unfamiliar in the anthology's crossings. Sponsored by the Fresno State Armenian Stud-

ies Program, the College of Arts and Humanities, the English Department, and the Greater Fresno Chapter of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the lecture will be held at 7:30 P.M. at the Fresno State Student Recreation Center, Peters Educational Center.

Kherdian will discuss how the first-generation poets, novelists and short story writers enriched U.S. literature with their own unique voices. "The story they tell is the human story of suffering and the building of a new life in America," says Kherdian, one of the collection's first generation writers who has penned more than 30 volumes of poetry, novels, memoirs and children's books over 40 years. "In the act of reconstruction, these artists played a crucial role."

Whether orphans of Anatolia or their family's first born in America, the writers represented the generation of flight, according to Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Fresno State professor of Armenian Studies.

"Yes, the Genocide and exile is part of what they were writing about," Der Mugrdchian said. "But I also found it interesting how distinctively American they were. Reading Arlene Avakian, for instance, you see her dealing with

themes of feminism. And some of Harry Barba's best stuff is completely outside the Armenian immigrant context."

As a kind of torch passing, each writer's work is prefaced in the collection by a short biography written by a second or third generation Armenian American such as Arax.

Kherdian will be joined at the lecture by Arax and a handful of students, each of whom will read a short selection from the anthology. Following the lecture and reading, Kherdian and Arax will sign books. Admission is free.

For more information, contact the Armenian Studies Program at 559-278-2669

### Community reading in San Francisco

San Francisco's KZV Armenian School will be hosting an evening with Mr. Kherdian on November 12, at 7:30PM Question and answer and book signing will follow the reading.

The event will take place at KZV Saroyan Hall, 825 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco, Calif.

Contact Edita Horoupan for information 415-586-8686 or [ehoroupan@kzv.org](mailto:ehoroupan@kzv.org). ☞

## V. & A. Chamlian first-grade students visit the Prelacy

**LA CRESCENTA, Calif.** — On the morning of Tuesday, October 30, first-grade students of Vahan and Anoush Chamlian School visited the Prelacy accompanied by their teachers, parents, and Armenian club members. The students had been invited by Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate, during his visit to the school at the start of the new academic year.

Under the supervision of their teachers and parents the students gathered in the St. Dertad and St. Ashken Chapel where they were greeted by the Prelate and Christian Education Directors Very Rev. Fathers Muron Aznikian and Barthev Gulumian. Following the

Lord's Prayer the Prelate welcomed the students and imparted information to them about the Chapel and the Saints after which it is named.

The students were then escorted to "Dikran and Zarouhie Der Ghazarian" Hall where members of the Armenian club offered the Prelate a memento, a poster of their collective drawings. The Prelate offered his thanks and blessings, after which the two Rev. Fathers gave further explained to the students about our Christian faith and the activities of the Prelacy. At the conclusion of the visit, the Prelate presented the students with religious videos and a DVD of the Prelacy's history. ☞

## Consul General of Armenia Armen Liloyan visits the Prelacy

On Wednesday, October 31, Armen Liloyan, consul general of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles, visited the Prelacy and was welcomed by Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate.

Participating in the meeting were Archbishop Yeprem Tabakian, Very Rev. Fr. Muron Aznikian, Chairman of the Religious Council, and Executive Council member Mr. Vahan Bezdikian.

Among the topics of discussion was the current state of affairs in Armenia, the recent activities in pursuit of the Armenian Cause, as well as the upcoming Telethon and various other events. The Prelate conveyed details of his recent trip to

Washington, and the general activities of the Prelacy and parishes. The meeting concluded with the Prelate commending the efforts of the consul general and the Consulate as a whole. Following the exchange of mementos the Prelate hosted lunch for the guest and meeting participants.

### Prelate meets with representatives of Hamazkayin

On the afternoon of Tuesday, October 30, representatives of Hamazkayin met with Archbishop Mardirossian, to relay details of an upcoming dinner and book signing.

The delegation included Regional Executive member Anita Havatian, and organizing committee members Nora Yacoubian and Lucine Choukajian.

The members had come to invite the Prelate to a book presentation and signing of David Kherdian's newly published book *Forgotten Bread*, and to ask for his blessing. The event will take place on Sunday, November 18, at Taglyan Hall in Hollywood. All proceeds will go to scholarship funds for Armenian students in the writing and journalism fields.

The Prelate commended their efforts and wished success to all of Hamazkayin's undertakings. ☞

## Community

# Church holds group therapy on Armenian-Turkish relations

### Organizer denies the personal is political

**GLENDALE, Calif.** - Armenians of all ages gathered at the St. Peter Armenian Church and Youth Ministries Center to hear **Ojig Yeretsian** discuss her project "Opening the Mountain" as a part of the "Questions in Faith" Series.

As part of the event, Yeretsian moderated dialogue between Armenians and their relationship with all things Turkish. The mission was to learn about each other and themselves. The evening prompted discussion, listening, and led to the understanding that we all view the world through different paradigms but that there is space for cohesiveness.

Father **Vasken Movsesian** began the evening by dedicating the event "to communications, to facing our challenges and overcoming the hurdles in front of us." He used the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech from 1964 to inspire the audience: "I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and nonviolent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land."

Ojig Yeretsian, who has a graduate degree in public health, sees Turkish-Armenian tensions from a health perspective. She grew up in a tightknit Armenian community in Los Angeles, with its schools, cultural groups, and bookstores. Her interest in dialogue work grew out of her commitment to social justice and community health.

Yeretsian believes that in order to build out capacity as a community, we need to try to break the cycle of hatred by taking an honest look at ourselves, individually and as a group.

This passion led her to start "Opening the Mountain."

### Began with Facing the Mountain

"Facing the Mountain" was a one day workshop held on March 10, 2007 in Berkeley, California, facilitated by Armand Volkas, director of Healing the Wounds of History. The aim of the workshop was to invite Armenians and Turks to participate in a groundbreaking project to transform their painful historical legacies into constructive action through humanizing each other through sharing personal stories and taking steps towards healing personal and collective wounds using creative and experimental methods, including, dialogue exercises and drama therapy.

Drama therapy aims to heal the wounds of history by using drama to build empathy and compassion. "The work is very personal," says Yeretsian. "But it has a social and public component."

Volkas has used his techniques to bring together groups in conflict together, such as Germans and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis, and Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans to name a few.

### Opening the Mountain

Yeretsian was inspired by work being done with Arabs and Jews and Palestinians and Israelis. "If they can do it," she said, "we can do it."

Confident that Berkeley, California was the place to start this project, "Opening the Mountain" called on Armenians, Turks, and supportive others to engage in a dialogue, to listen to all narratives, overcome stereotypes and see each other's common humanity.

The first meeting for "Opening the Mountain" was held on April 17, 2007, in response to the lack of communication between Armenians and Turks. It is an ongoing dialogue group for Armenians and Turks that grew out of "Facing the Mountain."

"At first there was barely any comfort and trust, now they are committed to the group," said Yeretsian.

Non-Armenian and non-Turkish members of the group, who create a safe space for sharing personal experiences, facilitate the monthly meetings. The goal is to raise an understanding of the self and others through effective communication. The group practices listening and presenting perspectives about selected discussion topics, ranging from the importance of history, family stories, invisibility, and cycles of oppression.

The group continues to meet once a month.

### In Los Angeles

The evening's event focused on Armenians constructing dialogue within their own community. It began first with an introduction then led to an exercise on dialogue.

The process began by audience members introducing themselves and explaining their relationship with anything Turkish. Yeretsian posed questions such as their experience with Turkish people, has it been challenging and rewarding? Have they been protesting all things Turkish without questioning it? Did they boycott Turkish products?

Armenians talked about Turks without antagonism, instead approaching the issue with understanding and removing stigmas to unveil the emotions that we all share. Yeretsian's goal is to "build



Ojig Yeretsian.

an understanding based on peace not pain."

Consistent with the non-judgmental spirit of the event, the participants were granted anonymity.

Experiences by the participants ranged from positive to not so positive. Though most Armenian-American's now encounter Turks later in life the pain still resonates. They grew up with stereotypes that are hard to shed.

Some had relationships with Turks that stay fruitful as long as the Genocide issue is never brought up. Others have tried having friendships with Turks, but the Genocide issue became a sticking point.

Some of the younger participants had never had any contact with Turks. The new generation of Armenians in American first meet Turks in college or high school, but for some of the older participants, they came with positive memories of Turkish families who protected their parents from being perished during the Genocide.

Armenians from Turkey shared a different experience because they grow up speaking Turkish at home and are familiar with Turkish products. Other participants don't purchase products "Made in Turkey" in order to boycott their economy.

Participants also revealed how they've met Turks who have been sympathetic and helpful. In one case of a Turk cried to an Armenian and was apologetic when she said, "this history we don't know."

One woman told her story about a Turkish family friend who was imprisoned for associating with Armenians. Presently, Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code makes it hard for Turkish society to evolve. Article 301, which criminalizes "insulting Turkishness," has been invoked repeatedly to investigate and prosecute individuals who mention

the Armenian Genocide. Orhan Pamuk, the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, and Hrant Dink, the Turkish-Armenian editor who was assassinated earlier this year, were among those persecuted under this law.

Even though there are sympathetic Turks, one participant reminded the audience that he still wants Turkey to recognize the Genocide. "Collectively I cannot accept them and the way they've done things," said one participant. "They have a lot to account for."

Others that shared this opinion will not engage with Turks unless the whole nation recognizes the Armenian Genocide.

The goal of this process, however, was not to diminish the issue of recognition, but rather to listen.

After the audience introductions, Yeretsian asked the participants to break off in pairs and practice "dialogue." Dialogue is the willingness to engage with the other person, listen, and come to an understanding without judgments. This does not mean you have to agree, but the goal is mutual understanding in an attempt to break the cycle of resentment and build a future of peace.

Yeretsian posed the question, "How would you like to interact with Turks?"

Ground rules were to listen to each other's answer without responding. Participants had to listen to their partner and repeat what they said, including body gestures. This was an exercise to measure the extent to which you were listening to what others were saying and not the judgments you conceive.

"Back and forth discussion is not what dialogue is about," said Yeretsian. "The dialogue structure is not free. We are training ourselves to be more spacious with our listening."

The mission is to "replace hostility with peace and come up with

new narrative to break down fences," said Yeretsian.

"It's liberating to tell someone else how you feel," said one participant. "There are a lot of feelings in common."

When asked by the audience what Yeretsian wants to accomplish with this program, she responded by saying it's "unburdening ourselves from this trauma and confronting this gaping wound." She hopes to, "engage with perpetrators that don't break me down and continue the trauma."

Yeretsian explained how there is validation to talk about an experience while the target audience is sitting in front of you.

Participant and organizer **Suzie Shatarevyan** said, "This has nothing to do with a discussion about politics." She went on to say, "It's dealing with the issue on an individual level where you can speak in a nonthreatening environment without being judged."

As for continuing this work in Los Angeles, Yeretsian faces both optimism and pessimism. There is diversity among Armenians on this issue. "There is a lot of work to do within our own community," said one participant in response to Armenians who refuse to breach dialogue with Turks unless the Genocide issue is resolved.

The question of Genocide makes it harder to build relations, "but the goal is not friendship, it is raising consciousness," reminds Yeretsian who cannot wait for a political conclusion. "I'm trying to empower myself and make a connection on the ground level."

Some participants offered different perspectives. "If we begin dialogue now, you will lose concentration," said one participant. He suggested that we establish the facts and then talk about feelings.

However, Yeretsian is not diluting the issue of recognition. "My issue is with the state of Turkey, not on a personal level," she said. Making the distinction that there is still work to be done toward the government and their policy.

The evening's exercise was in line with Father Vasken's "In His Shoes" initiative to mobilize people to address issues in their own lives, their own communities, and people who share their plight.

Yeretsian assured the audience that the process is also the outcome and we cannot settle for just the political answer. The Armenian community, like other victimized peoples, need to also deal with the aftermath of recognition so to stop the cycle of antagonism and build a future between the two nations and within our own communities. ☞

connect:  
openingthemountain@gmail.com

# Armenian neuroscientists to participate in Neuroscience 2007

### by Maral Habeshian

**SAN DIEGO, Calif.** - Scientists from around the world will gather Nov. 3-7 in San Diego, California for Neuroscience 2007 to exchange ideas about cutting-edge research on the brain, spinal cord, and nervous system. Among them will be UNESCO Chair in Life Sciences Professor Sinerik Ayrapetyan whose research and countless published works in biophysics, radiobiology and magnetobiology has placed him at the forefront of his field.

The San Diego conference is the 37th annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience (SfN), and is expected to draw more

than 30,000 scientists, including Dr. Arbi Nazarian, an assistant professor at Western University of Health Sciences. Recognizing that the annual conference provides the ideal networking opportunity for Armenian neuroscientists, Dr. Nazarian has organized the second Armenian Neuroscientist Social. Last year's gathering in Atlanta, Georgia brought together 30 Armenian neuroscientists.

"The goal is to create a cohesive community of Armenian neuroscientists in order to provide grants and scholarships for Armenian students in the field," says Dr. Nazarian who decided to organize the event after consistently running

into other Armenians during past conferences.

According to Dr. Nazarian, there are about 80 Armenian neuroscientists throughout the world. The SfN conference is the largest conference of its kind, and he is always fascinated by the Armenian students he meets, as well as very well known scientists in the field.

"The social gathering allows for scientific agendas to be presented. Ultimately, my vision is to secure funding so that students in Armenia would be able to study abroad."

The largest and most thriving neuroscience community is in the United States. Dr. Nazarian attributes this to the limitless resources that are available to neuroscientists.

Research in Japan and Europe is also thriving while China and CIS countries are catching up quickly, he explains.

Through their research, neuroscientists work to describe the human brain and how it functions normally, determine how the nervous system develops, matures and maintains itself through life, and find ways to prevent or cure many devastating neurological and psychiatric disorders.

### ARMENIA 2008

Dr. Sinerik Ayrapetyan is expected to address the social gathering in San Diego to detail the Congress of All Armenian Life Scien-

tists (CAALS), scheduled to take place in Yerevan, Armenia and Stepanakert, Karabakh, November 7-8, 2008.

Dr. Ayrapetyan has been appointed the chairman of CAALS that will examine the possibility of making Armenia a scientific regional research and educational center by tapping into the vast potential of scientists from Armenia and the Diaspora, so as to prepare the next generation of leaders in the field of life sciences.

The Armenian Neuroscientists social will take place November 5, 6:30-8:30 P.M. in San Diego. Dr. Nazarian may be contacted for further details at (909) 469-5424, anazarian@westernu.edu. ☞

## Community

# Kohar orchestra and choir takes San Francisco by storm

by Tania Ketenjian

**SAN FRANCISCO** — The crowd in San Francisco was buzzing as revelers, anticipating a unique orchestral program, chatted in the entrance hall to the Masonic Auditorium in San Francisco. Looking over the city landscape, the Masonic Auditorium hosts some of the best performers that come to San Francisco. Among them was Kohar, a symphony orchestra and choir founded in Gyumri, Armenia to “lift the spirits of the Armenian people and remind them of the beauty of their culture.”

Kohar was established by the Khatchadourian brothers who, in 1997, formed a music school in Armenia for any child that was musically inclined. They renovated an old factory and offered musical education for free. By 2000, many of these children started performing in Armenia and several of them have since toured different parts of the world – Lebanon, Cyprus, Turkey, Russia and now, 10 years later, the United States and Canada. They landed in San Francisco this past weekend and they played to what they felt was their most enthusiastic crowd yet.

The conductor of Kohar, Sebouh Abcarian, is a vibrant and boisterous man whose presence on stage is accentuated by his flock of white hair and his gestural movements towards his orchestra. There were moments in the performance where the audience would catch him dancing to the music whilst conducting his performers.

Kohar arrived from Los Angeles, home to the largest community of Armenians outside of Armenia, where over 5,000 people had attended their concert. In contrast to that, in San Francisco 1,500 people attended the performance. But Mr. Abcarian had interesting thoughts about it: “It is true that the community in San Francisco is



Maestro Sebouh Abcarian.

small but because it is the weekend and the venue here is a bit more intimate, people were really able to let go.” And that is precisely what happened. Without encouragement, audience members clapped their hands, sang along, got up and danced and seemed to drink in every moment of this concert.

The crowd was quite mixed in age. Families had brought their children, young men and women had brought their dates and there were even a few Americans in the crowd.

One of these was a woman who had met her husband on the airplane. He was from Yerevan and she was from the southern part of America. She doesn’t speak Armenian but, according to her, “You don’t need to know the language; this music speaks to your soul, regardless of where you are from.” There was also a mother who had brought her young children to the concert. She reflected that, “I grew up with this music and I am bringing the children so that they too can know these songs and maybe one day teach them to their own children.” Finally, a group of young men were huddled around the bar, during intermission. They were UC Berkeley students originally from Armenia. “I feel like I am coming home



Kohar dancers.

when I hear this music. In America, everyone talks about getting back to your roots. Well this is my way of getting back to my roots.”

In that vein, Mr. Abcarian spoke about the responsibility of being the bearer of tradition. “This new generation is living in the 21st Century and it is important for us to bring modern work to them and impress upon their souls that Armenians have the aptitude towards making the traditional tangible.” With every single song, Mr. Abcarian would personally introduce the performer to the audience, showing reverence for their talent. It represented a support and a familiarity that allowed audience members to immediately feel a bond with the orchestra.

The vibrancy and excitement with which the orchestra played reverberated through the audience. Female soloists emerged with long, flowing dresses full of color and life; the male soloists sang from their soul and all the musicians seemed joyful as they were participating in something which for many of them was a dream come true. For many of these men and women, opportunity in Armenia is scarce yet by being part of Kohar, they are paid



Kohar soloist captivating the audience.

a salary that supports their entire family. The Khatchadourian brothers believe in providing prosperity for the talented members of the orchestra and they don’t relinquish those intentions in any way. For instance, during their tour across North America and Canada, the entire orchestra and crew will be staying in beautiful hotels, eating delicious food and even going sightseeing.

Yet, even with the best intentions, unexpected situations arise. Tamar Kevonian is the production coordinator for Kohar and has been instrumental in making this tour a possibility. “We seemed to have thought of everything - the passports, the tickets, the accommodations and food. But right before we were about to set off, we realized we hadn’t thought of a very basic aspect of day to day living, laundry. How will we be able to deal with laundry for 180 people.” Tamar had to be creative and managed to find a way to make it work. But there is always something that comes up and Tamar manages to squeeze six days of work into a few hours. Is it worth it? “I love the scope of the project; every time I see the show, I enjoy it. There is no other group that is doing up-

dated traditional music, they are community based and very avant-garde and no one is taking popular songs and nationalistic songs in this way. The production crew is just extraordinary, this is simply the best of what is out there.”

Lucy Der-Tawitian is the media spokesperson for Kohar and she has felt extraordinarily inspired by working with this group. “They laugh so much; they are just so happy and regardless of the fact that they are in the U.S., they present themselves as they are, not needing to conform to our ways here. They are just happy with who they are.” Ms. Der-Tawitian is originally from Lebanon and understands the struggles Armenians have had to face. “We have so much going on as Armenians. Every time you say that you’re an Armenian, there is so much tragedy around that identity and it is so refreshing to experience an Armenian event that inspires joy. I can’t think of too many of these occasions - one that makes us celebrate who we are. I am so honored to be part of this and re-discovering the profoundly joyful part of being Armenian.”

connect:  
koharconcert.com

## Author Shant Kenderian speaks with students at UCLA

by Alene Tchekmedyian

**WESTWOOD, Calif.** — During the first Armenian Literary Series event of the school year, the Armenian Graduate Student Association (AGSA) at UCLA hosted Shant Kenderian, author of *1001 Nights in Iraq*, to discuss his experience fighting on the front lines of the Iran-Iraq war.

To an audience of fascinated UCLA students and faculty, Kenderian gave a detailed account of many struggles he had to face in Iraq. As a seventeen year old who was on a mission to make peace with his father, Kenderian ended up spending an appalling ten years in Iraq before returning to his home in the United States.

Even after undergoing these traumatic experiences, Kenderian is able to share his story to the world. Kenderian said, “We all have stories, mine is one of the crazy ones.”

In his book, he depicts the struggle to survive without proper sources of food or shelter. He states, “We would go to bed not knowing who would wake us up in the morning. We had no shelters to hide in.” The soldiers were also malnourished. Kenderian recalls, “We had no food. We lived on a bagel sized piece of bread a day and we drank a lot of water,” he jokes. “We ate carbs. They don’t really make you fat, I lost a lot of weight like that.” After the hardships he endured, and the

casualties he witnessed, he is still able to maintain a sense of humor.

During his time serving in the war, however, he admits he was falling apart. He said, “I was one of ones who was mentally able, but even in that mental capacity, I was losing it.

I didn’t think I would come out of this alive.”

An aspect of his experience that film producers and book publishers were especially interested in was his romantic relationship with a female American soldier. “I usually don’t talk about this...we knew it was wrong, but it’s one of those things that the more you try to resist it, the more attracted you get,” he said of the affair. He laughs, “Not much can happen in a prisoners of war camp.”

To this day, Kenderian maintains the unexpected friendships he made during the war. He states, “I made a lot of friends. I made friends with the people who blew up my boat. I made friends with the people who kept me. I made friends with my interrogators. I am still in touch with these guys today.”

The audience was impressed with Kenderian’s ability to view his experience as having a positive affect on his life. Ara Soghomonian, a fifth year UCLA graduate student in near eastern languages and cultures said, “What is amazing is how good natured he is about the whole experience. It seems like going through the experience actually enriched his life, and he considers



Shant Kenderian. Photos: Andrew Behesnilian.

himself blessed today, which is pretty amazing.”

Andrew Behesnilian, a second year UCLA medical school student and project manager of the event, said the goal was to, “Bring the voice of Armenians in literature to the UCLA campus and to give stu-

dents an opportunity to come into contact with published colleagues.”

Raffi Kassabian, a third year UCLA law student and executive officer of AGSA said, “We want to highlight Armenian American authors, but we also want to build a forum for graduate students to meet one



Talking with one of the students.

another.” He hopes to expand the involvement of graduate students with campus events.

Kenderian ended his lecture with the eye opening statement, “I feel like Job in the bible; bad luck in the beginning and good luck in the end.”

## Community

# Armenia Fund Telethon builds on a tradition of dedication

## Rafi Ourfalian was the first president

By Lory Tatoulian

**LOS ANGELES** — Before the Armenia Fund emerged into a fundraising powerhouse, it began with the single mission – to serve the immediate needs of the newly formed Republic of Armenia. Because of its initial successes, it has now mushroomed into a network of 19 affiliates worldwide and has implemented over \$120 million of infrastructure development in Armenia.

The West Coast office of the Armenia Fund is one of the leading affiliates that has proven its dedication to the Armenia Fund by taking on the herculean task of producing the annual Thanksgiving Telethon, which has become a staple in the life of the global Armenian community.

The large-scale success of the Armenia Fund is due to a number of dedicated individuals and visionaries who worked hard to make the organization an effective philanthropic institution. For the 10 years the West Coast affiliate has been operating, it has benefitted from a host of insightful and talented leaders.

The presidents who have served in the West Coast office have included, **Berge Boyajian, Rafi Ourfalian, Zaven Khanjian, Tomig Alexanian,** and its current president, **Maria Mehranian.** All five individuals expressed their deep concern for the prosperity of their homeland by selflessly devoting their time and energy to fulfill the mission of state building.

Since the organization's inception, prominent Los Angeles attorney **Rafi Ourfalian** has been heavily involved with the West Coast office of the Armenia Fund. In 1991, Mr. Ourfalian became the executive director of the Western Regional office, and remembers the numerous individuals who were instrumental in making the Armenia Fund into what it is today.

"Going through the history of everyone one who helped organize the Armenia Fund is endless," Mr.



Summer 99 At the Calvary Armenian Evangelical Church in San Francisco. First official pre-Telethon 99 visit to San Francisco with Armen Melkonian, consul general of Armenia in Los Angeles, and Khajak Sarkissian and Joseph Matossian, the two San Francisco representatives in Armenia Fund's international board.

Ourfalian said. "This was a worldwide, pan-Armenian project that was nonpartisan and involved in every major Armenia organization."

**Zaven Khanjian** served as Armenia Fund's West Coast executive in 1999 and 2000. He came on board during a time when Armenia was experiencing political turmoil. Because of the volatile political climate, the 1998 Armenia Fund telethon was dormant for a year.

"Even with the political distress of the time and the idle year of not having broadcast a telethon, we decided to go forward and do our best to put on a successful telethon," Mr. Khanjian said. Mr. Khanjian is proud to say that with that particular comeback year in 1999, the telethon witnessed the highest number of individual donors on the West Coast throughout its history.

"I think the compassion and the overall emotion that was created as a result of the instability in Armenia helped bolster efforts in the diaspora," Mr. Khanjian said.

**Tomig Alexanian** served as executive director of the western office in 2001, 2002, and 2003. Mr. Alexanian's involvement with the Armenia Fund began during the very start of the telethon, while Rafi Ourfalian was launching the very first program. Mr. Alexanian joined the telethon because of his expertise in technical engineering. For the broadcast, Mr. Alexanian was responsible for all of the technical aspects of the programming



November 22, 1999 at the Glendale Red Lion. Zaven Khanjian Welcoming NKR Pres. Arkady Ghoukassian to Telethon 99. Pictured in the middle is Hagop (Jack) Shirvanian.

including wiring the computers, hooking up the phone lines, and running the databases. For 27 years, Mr. Alexanian has been the president of David, Peter, Flower, Edward Data Processing and Field Engineering Corp. in Los Angeles. Mr. Alexanian extended his expertise in the field of telecommunications and donated his industriousness to the progress of the Armenia Fund.

"I am indebted to Rafi Ourfalian for paving the way for us," Mr. Alexanian remarked. "It made our job much easier to follow in his footsteps."

Tomig Alexanian assumed the position of executive director at a time when the United States was dealing with the tragedies of September 11. The Executive Board at the time decided not to air a telethon, but instead conduct a phone-a-thon. "We decided to do a phone-a-thon, and to our surprise it was just as successful as a telethon," Mr. Alexanian noted.

The next year, in 2002, the Armenia Fund was able to rejuvenate the organization and celebrate its 10 anniversary with a major gala celebration at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

"There was such a positive and energetic pulse for the anniversary banquet, you could feel everybody's excitement," Mr. Alexanian said.

The concept to create a pan-Armenian philanthropic organization was led in 1992 by **Gagik Harutiunian**, who occupied the now-eliminated post of vice president of Armenia. The first executive director was **Manushak Petrossian**, a close ally of **Levon Ter-Petrossian**, who was then the president of Armenia.

The nonprofit organization seeks to unite Armenians all over the world and help the young democracy establish sustainable development in Armenia and Artsakh.

The Armenia Fund began as a response to the difficulties Armenia was undergoing during its transition from a socialist state to a free-market economy. As the fledgling country was working to recreate itself in the midst of the Karabakh war, economic blockades, and repercussions of the earthquake, the Armenia Fund was founded by a

presidential decree to handle these critical socioeconomic travails.

The very first project initiated by the Armenia Fund was the Winter Humanitarian Project in 1992. With upwards of \$30 million raised, the humanitarian project helped build homes in the earthquake-ravaged region of Spitak. Other early initiatives included providing financial assistance to families and soldiers who were victims of the Artsakh conflict and also assisted in alleviating the energy crisis gripping the country at the time.

The second project the Armenia Fund undertook was the Goris-Stepanakert Highway that served as the lifeline that connects Armenia and Karabakh. "The North-South Highway enabled Karabakh to survive and flourish," Mr. Ourfalian said. "These two projects are very symbolic of the nature and purpose of the Armenia Fund."

Armenia Fund's approach to fundraising was a little different than traditional fundraising. The initial idea was to encourage Armenians from all over the world to pay a voluntary yearly contribution or "national tax" to the Armenia Fund, which would then use the proceeds to fund the Winter Humanitarian Project and the highway.

"The idea of a telethon was born from these two initiatives, emphasizing participation which would then translate into investments, making people into shareholders or feel morally culpable to the development of their motherland," Mr. Ourfalian said.

As the internal structure of the organization shifted and expanded, the focus of Armenia Fund concentrated on gaining its main support from the telethon rather than a voluntary tax system. The first telethon took place in 1996. Over 30 Armenian organizations were involved and many people from various walks of life joined in the grassroots efforts to launch the first telethon.

The Armenia Fund relayed the message by visiting churches, Armenian schools, community centers, and using these shared spaces as recruiting grounds to spread the message and make people aware of Armenia Fund's purpose. "Ar-

menia Fund volunteers even went to the extent of walking into public parks to get the old men who play tavloo there involved with the Armenia Fund," Mr. Ourfalian said. "We wanted every Armenian to be a part of the project."

Since its infancy, coteries of talented artists were called upon to produce, direct, and conceptualize a progressive format for the telethon. For over nine years, **Ara Madzounian** had been involved in the production aspects of the broadcast. With his expertise in film production, Mr. Madzounian brought a fresh and progressive edge to the telethon. He wanted the format to be emotionally provocative and visually entertaining. He opted to veer away from banal programming that generated pedantic information; instead he wished to engage the viewers and allow them to make emotional connections to Armenia while still gaining essential information.

"Once they turn on the TV, my job was to keep them watching as long as possible," Mr. Madzounian said. "The more you watch, the more you are going to be emotionally involved and make a pledge. As producer, my approach was to put on a very high quality television show," Mr. Madzounian noted.

The telethon producer continued to explain that he shied away from using the telethon as a soapbox, but instead used the program to broadcast to visceral subject matter. "Thanksgiving Day is a TV day in this country and people are with their families and they want to be entertained," Mr. Madzounian explained.

"The telethon is not only a fundraiser, but it's a day to unite Armenians around the world under one umbrella to help rebuild the homeland," Mr. Madzounian said.

Madzounian always made sure to bring along professional colleagues to work on the telethon with him. **Narbeh Nazarian**, who is a successful film and television designer in Hollywood, helped design the sets, while a crew of 60 people assisted in assuring the technical coordination of programming was seamless.

Also on the crew was production whiz **Kerop Manoukian**, who devoted countless hours in postproduction by editing segments from Armenia, creating graphic motion, mixing audio, and assembling 12 hours of broadcast. Mr. Manoukian also handled editing the segments that were being produced in Armenia by **Dickran Pakhvejian** and **Ara Shirimian**.

"I always wanted the Armenians watching to feel proud that they are watching quality programming," Mr. Madzounian said. "We all believed in the cause."

Mr. Ourfalian notes that for the first year of the telethon, over 16,000 people called and made a contribution, resulting in raising an "unprecedented" \$15 million dollars. **Kirk Krekorian's** Lincy Foundation boosted efforts by matching every pledge dollar for dollar. Since then, the Armenia Fund telethon has become the second largest telethon in the United States, second only to the Jerry Lewis Telethon.

Now the West Coast affiliate and the telethon continue in the tradition of the original movers and shakers whose altruism and efficacious efforts were critical in laying the foundation of this network. These pioneers and visionaries set forth to literally alter the landscape of Armenia by building new schools, hospitals, homes and roadways, simply because they had the dream of transforming their homeland into a progressive and stable nation. ¶

## Prelate welcomes Armenia Fund president

On Friday, October 26, Armenia Fund President Maria Mehranian was welcomed to the Prelacy by Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate, on a visit regarding the planning of the Armenia Fund's annual Telethon. In keeping with tradition, the Telethon will take place on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 22.

During the meeting, the Prelate commended the important work of the Armenia Fund and conveyed his hope that this year's Telethon would see unprecedented success. He stressed that Armenia is the homeland of all Armenians and we all must therefore participate in and contribute to the rebuilding process.

The annual gala is scheduled for Sunday, November 18. Honored guests will include President of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Bako Sahakyan, and Vartan Oskanian, Foreign Minister of Armenia. A pre-gala reception, hosted by Armen Khatchadourian and Maria Mehranian, took place on Thursday,



Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian and Maria Mehranian.

November 1. Among the guests in attendance was the president of the Constitutional Court of Armenia and Vice-President of Armenia Fund International, Gagik Harutyunyan. ¶

## Community

# On the road with Catholicos Karekin II

### A diverse North Carolina parish shows its unity for Vehapar

by Antranig Dereyan

**CHARLOTTE, N.C.** — Catholicos Karekin's visit to the 12-year-old Armenian Church community in Charlotte began like most other stops on the itinerary of the Pontifical tour: with an airport welcoming ceremony featuring children in traditional costume.

Later, at the city's Marriott Hotel, the Catholicos had an opportunity to meet the members of the St. Sarkis Church, who in a relatively short period have built up a community, erected a church, and consecrated it. In remarks before the gathering of young and adult parishioners, Catholicos Karekin expressed his admiration for the small but active community.

The following day gave some of the young Armenians of this "city of churches" an opportunity to show their dedication and spirit to their pontiff. And they wanted to get things just right.

"Asdvadz oknagan, Vehapar Der," repeated 14-year-old Olga Kocharyan, a member of the Nayiri Armenian Folk Dance Ensemble, as she paced up and down the sidewalk outside the church. In anticipation of the Catholicos of All Armenians' arrival, Olga was practicing the greeting over and over -- much to the consternation



Olga's "moment of truth": her greeting to the Catholicos was perfect.

of her fellow dancers. It would be their job to lay flowers at the pontiff's feet when he finally drew up to the church.

"I have been practicing this line for 45 minutes. I don't speak Armenian, I speak Russian, so this is hard for me," said Olga, revealing a personal characteristic she shares with many of her fellow parishioners. "I'm afraid of messing up and having Vehapar think something bad about me."

Olga was still pacing and practicing when the pontifical limo came into view. She ran to her position and, when her moment came to speak and throw her flowers, she uttered the words she had been practicing all day.

It was perfect.

"I am so glad that when Vehapar finally came I was calm, and said my line without a break. I didn't

mess up -- and I am glad for that," Olga said afterwards.

### Diverse and strong

As Eastern Diocesan parishes go, the Charlotte community is a very diverse one, uniting Armenians from various points of origin, with no single subset holding a majority. Walking among the people entering St. Sarkis Church, you might be forgiven for imagining you're at the United Nations. Here you'll notice the distinctive sounds of Russian and Arabic, various Eastern European tongues, as well as Armenian -- both the western and eastern dialects.

"I believe our diversity is what makes us stronger," said Talin Sarkissian, one of the local committee chairs for the Pontifical visit. "We have our problems, but we are improving. We are still a fairly new church: we had our consecration

just two years ago, in 2005. We are still coming together; there is still room for improvement. But we've come a long way from where we were two years ago."

The sense of faith and unity at St. Sarkis glowed with special brightness during a youth event where young people ages 5 to 17 reciting poems and stories for the Catholicos. One girl, Marnie Kastorian, approached Vehapar to give him a hug, which made the pontiff smile and turn a slight shade of red.

When it was time for Catholicos Karekin to speak to the kids, he first spoke in English, and was very engaged with the youth.

"Who knows what the words over the altar mean?" said Vehapar. "It means God loves us," said one of the youth.

"How much do you love your parents and church?" the Catholicos asked.

"Very much, sometimes," the youth responded.

"Sometimes? Why, it should be always," said Karekin II.

In North Carolina, Vehapar's face glowed with a renewed sense of enjoyment after the previous days' busy schedule of official appearances. The presence of the young people -- representing Armenians from around the world, united in a single community -- was clearly a special source of cheer for him.

"One day I will come back and see your parents, older and with gray hair, sitting with your kids," he told the young crowd, "and I will be overjoyed."

### Turning the corner

Faith and unity play an important role in the St. Sarkis Church; but

that doesn't spare the parish from its share of difficulties.

"We have splits along with the diversity, and we have financial problems," said Talin Sarkissian. "I hope it won't take a long time to get this church established and running, so we don't continue having more expenses than revenue."

Others hope that the Pontifical visit will have lasting beneficial effects on parish life. "I am hoping that Vehapar's visit will motivate people to become more active in the church beyond the actual church itself -- whether it would be cleaning up the lawn in the fall, or cooking for an event," said parishioner Elina Tunyan.

Parishioners who have migrated to Charlotte from places like Baku are certainly well aware that nothing comes easily in this world. But people also seem very optimistic about the young parish's future. The very existence of an Armenian Church in this southern "city of churches" is a new and notable achievement -- even something of a miracle. And for all their superficial differences, the parishioners share an uncommon sense of "belonging" to their church and to their fellow Armenians. For some of them, it's a feeling that they were not permitted to express or explore in their former countries, and so they cherish it all the more in America.

With all that going for the parish, there's little doubt that the next time a catholicos visits these parts, there will be a thriving community waiting to greet him. And he'll be overjoyed. ☩

## A tree grows in Cleveland, with Catholicos Karekin's blessing

by Antranig Dereyan

### RICHMOND HEIGHTS, Ohio

Catholicos Karekin II arrived in Cleveland on the day after the Indians had lost the American League Championship to the Boston Red Sox. While the rest of the city consoled itself with the never-quite-reassuring line, "There's always next year," the local Armenian community prepared to greet a figure whose enduring office is itself an emblem of optimism in the face of loss.

Vehapar's two-day stopover in Ohio began with a couple of youth gatherings at the St. Gregory of Narek Church: first with young children, and later with the teen- and college-age kids of the local ACYOA Juniors and Seniors organizations. The older youth had the rare opportunity to engage in a Q-and-A session with the Catholicos of All Arme-

nians, and the questions posed to their pontiff covered a range of topics in religion, faith, and identity.

"What does it mean to be Armenian?" one young questioner asked. "Being Armenian is being faithful," said the Catholicos. "To be close to your church, the country of Armenia, and the country you are in, which is the United States." He went on to say that being Armenian meant "being loving ... knowing your history."

About 70 young people took part in the youth events on October 22.

That same evening, the church conveyed its official welcome to the Catholicos in an *hrashapar* service, where around 200 parishioners and their deacon-in-charge Dn. Ardak Khachikyan joined with members of other religious groups in the area.

Among the latter was Rev. Gene McAfee, pastor of the nearby United Church of Christ parish. "I

was invited to this service, and I was honored to come," he said. "I came here to this service to see the Catholicos to show my respect. Him being here lifts the Armenian people's spirit ... and will raise the visibility of the Armenian Church here in Ohio," said Rev. McAfee.

As part of the service, Mona Karoghlanian, chair of the regional Pontifical visit committee and a member of the St. Gregory of Narek parish council, received the "St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal" from the Catholicos.

"I am very shocked and honored that Vehapar gave me this medal. I'm speechless. It was a big surprise," said Ms. Karoghlanian.

A banquet followed the service. One attendee was Fr. Arakel Aljalian, of the Watertown, Mass., parish -- who suffered no ill will despite Cleveland's crushing baseball loss to Boston. To the contrary, said Mona Karoghlanian in remarks to

the crowd, "We knew that Fr. Arakel was coming, but we didn't know if it was to congratulate us or to comfort us. Now we know it is to comfort us."

Dn. Artak Khachikyan told the history of the Ohio parish, relating that "the last visit to this state by a catholicos was in 1960, by Vehapar Vasken I, and [at the time] this church wasn't consecrated yet. So this is officially the first visit to our church by a catholicos -- and hopefully we won't have to wait long for another visit."

The following day Karekin II struck a more serious tone as he met with some community leaders. "Armenia is better than before, but it still needs work and help," he explained. "We have a good relationship with the government and the youth have more jobs open to them. However, more is always welcomed, and with your help we can get Armenia the help it needs to move forward."

After the breakfast meeting he returned went to the St. Gregory of Narek Church to bless the site on the church grounds where a new tree will be planted. The gesture had a symbolic resonance: during the 1960 Pontifical visit, Catholicos Vasken had blessed a tree on the site that would eventually be occupied by the church building. The 2007 tree-blessing was a symbol of continuity, potentials realized, and promises kept over the course of 47 years.

About 150 attended the event and the reception that followed, where longtime parish members mingled with the more recent arrivals from Armenia and Baku.

St. Gregory of Narek's parish council chair Arshavir Andonian spoke for many in attendance. "I cannot find the proper words to express myself. This is the first time I have had the privilege to be in the presences of Vehapar, and I am proud and thankful he came," he said. ☩

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Inquiries can be directed to the attention of Paul Chaderjian, West Coast Bureau Chief, Armenian Reporter, 3191 Casitas Ave Ste 216, Los Angeles, CA 90039. Resumes and letter of introduction can also be emailed to paul@reporter.am or faxed to (323) 671-1033. No phone calls, please.

### CORRECTION

A story about an art opening in last week's Community sections erroneously included animals in a list of taboo potential marriage partners mentioned in a poem by Nancy Agabian. We regret the error.

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## Community

# In a 9-hour visit to Wisconsin, Catholicos Karekin rekindles memories from 47 years ago

**RACINE, Wisc.** — Joe Gabrielian was only a boy the last time a Catholicos of All Armenians made it to Racine. But seeing Catholicos Vasken I back in 1960 left a deep impression on the man who now serves on the parish council of Racine's St. Mesrob Church. Those 47-year-old feelings came flooding back as Gabrielian watched his own 8-year-old son welcoming another catholicos to the city on October 23.

It was one of the many personal milestones that hundreds of individuals observed on this Midwestern leg Catholicos Karekin II's Pontifical tour of the Eastern Diocese. The Armenians of Wisconsin — home to three Diocesan parishes, and a venerable and active Armenian community — were overjoyed to be "back on the map" of a catholicos's tour after close to half a century.

The final stopover in the state lasted nine hours, with every minute devoted to official visits and public events. Following the airport welcoming ceremony, Karekin II and his entourage went directly to the St. Francis Seminary, which serves the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Archbishop Timothy Dolan played host.

"I am very glad that His Holiness came here to visit us; this just shows the unity between members



The Catholicos of All Armenians arrives in Racine, Wisc. — for the first time in 47 years.

of the Christian faith," Archbishop Dolan said. "We are all one in our faith to the one God."

After brunch with the Catholic leaders, it was back to the motorcade and a meeting with representative of the three Wisconsin parishes at the Sienna Center in Racine.

The meeting took form of a question-and-answer session with the Catholicos. Vehapar led the gathering in English, and took questions from all comers. One question that he was especially keen to answer

was, "How can we best help Armenia?"

"Creating more jobs is the best way to help Armenia," Vehapar replied; but "don't just send fish, teach fishing." He said that "financial aid is welcome, but economic aid through creating new jobs for the citizens to support themselves and their families is the best way to help Armenia."

A different question became the main topic of discussion for the session, and it was familiar to those who had listened to him speak in

the other cities on the itinerary: "Why is the badarak not spoken in English for the Armenians who don't know the language?"

"If the church puts the badarak in English in America, then the it will have to be done in French in France, in Russian in Russia — and we as a nation will lose our face, our identity," came Catholicos Karekin's reply. But he added: "Language makes no difference; it is all about one's faith. So learn the badarak; it does not change; it will remain the same from when one is born to when he dies."

An appropriate answer from the head of a church noted for its endurance over many generations. Still, the point got a mixed reaction from the parish representatives.

Next the Catholicos went to Racine's St. Mesrob Church, for the main religious event of the visit: a hrashapar service with several hundred people from the Racine, Greenfield and South Milwaukee communities, along with religious and civic leaders from the area.

Fr. Yeprem Kelegian, himself a product of the Wisconsin community, spoke about what the visit meant to his parishioners. "I was excited to see my people inspired by Vehapar, by his mere presence, and so warmed by his words. We are all excited to have him here. My flock are so far from Armenia — they are third or fourth-generation

Armenian-Americans. But His Holiness' presence reconnected them with their roots. So many mothers told me that their children will remember this forever."

He went on: "We have not seen a catholicos visit Wisconsin for 47 years. This Catholicos intensified the warm memory of 47 years ago; this visit has created a new generation of people with a fond connection with their earthly father. The old were re-instilled, and the new were brought to precious awe."

"Vehapar has done a great job by being here to visit us," said Stanley Sheridan, a member of the St. Mesrob Church and ACYOA Central Council. "I can't believe he has done this: everything so fast with no breaks. The Armenian community here in Wisconsin is very appreciative of Vehapar, and what he has done for us with his visit."

For Joe Gabrielian, who relived his own childhood memory alongside his son Jacob, the visit "was exciting and something I'll never forget, plus something my son will never forget. His Holiness is one of the nicest people I've ever met. It was something I may never get to see again, so I've been trying to soak in everything His Holiness said."

(The Reporter's Antranig Dereyan and the Eastern Diocese contributed to this article.)

## In Minnesota, Karekin II's standing as an international leader shines

by Antranig Dereyan

**MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.** — Catholicos Karekin's October 25-26 visit to the Twin Cities began like most of the other stops on the Pontifical tour, with a ceremonial airport greeting, and then a hrashapar service at the local St. Sahag Church — a beautiful, wood-paneled, Gothic structure that six years ago was rededicated as the city's first Armenian sanctuary.

The service itself did not diverge from the familiar routine established for the visit: the entry into the church with parish "elders" conveying the canopy over Vehapar; the eager faces seeking the pontiff's blessing; the Catholicos's homily touching on the need to keep the faith, language, and traditions of the Armenian Church alive; Fr. **Ktrij Devejian** doing his dutiful job as translator. The community put on cultural program featuring afterwards, where Vehapar showed his special rapport with children.

Equally familiar was the distinctive garb of the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and other ecumenical leaders among the congregation, who had come out to greet the visiting Armenian dignitary.

What was out of the ordinary was the several of those ecumenical figures had come to make an appeal to the Catholicos, to use the authority of his ancient office to intercede in a matter internal to their own church.

A three-member delegation from the Eritrean Orthodox Church, based in Ethiopia, arrived to brief Catholicos Karekin about what they termed the "unlawful removal of His Holiness **Antonios**, the legal patriarch of Eritrea," from his throne.

Fr. **Yeprem Kelegian**, the Armenian pastor of the St. Mesrob Church of Racine, Wisc., who has served as visiting pastor to the Minnesota Armenian community



St. Thomas University president Fr. Dennis Dease confers an honorary doctorate on the Catholicos. Photo: Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

and is familiar with the Eritrean Church crisis, explained: "Their situation is one of a grave nature. Their government has turned to a Marxist government. They have arrested and imprisoned the rightfully chosen patriarch for two years, and have imposed a government-selected patriarch upon them. And now the church and the government are in a battle."

"Hopefully, it can be resolved through the international church," said Fr. Kelegian, referring to role Catholicos Karekin and other church hierarchy's could potentially play in the matter.

"What is happening to us is illegal," said Fr. **Yohannes**, a member of the Eritrean delegation. "We do not accept the appointed patriarch as the rightful patriarch."

After meeting and speaking with the three representatives, Karekin II pledged to support their efforts, and said that the Armenian Church would recognize no Eritrean patriarch other than the deposed Antonios.

"He said he will support us in any action we do," said Fr. Yohannes.

### Honors from and for the Catholicos

For the relatively small Armenian community of Minneapolis-St. Paul, the episode was a reminder that they are part of a larger community, with a worldwide reach and international influence. The thought brought a feeling of solidarity to the parishioners.

"I think it is wonderful that Vehapar has visited us here in Minnesota and it shows the respect that the church has for our little community," said parish leader Dr. **John Najarian**. "I hope that this visit energizes the church, and inspires people to want to come back and contribute to the church."

The following day brought yet another acknowledgment of Catholicos Karekin's standing in the world, as the city's University of St. Thomas, a Roman Catholic institution,

conferred an honorary doctoral degree on the Armenian pontiff.

"I am very honored to receive this degree. It shows the religious freedom that is expressed in this country of the United States," said the Catholicos as he received the degree from university president Fr. **Dennis Dease**, in the sunlit atrium of the Law School.

"This is the land of the free, and home of the brave. This country opened its doors and accepted the members of the Armenian community ... it gave the members of the Armenian community a way to start their new lives after the Genocide, and I am very thankful for that," Vehapar said.

During the same ceremony Catholicos Karekin had an honor of his own to bestow: the "St. Gregory the Illuminator Medal" — the highest honor the Armenian Church confers on a member of the laity — which he gave to philanthropist **Gerard Cafesjian**, president of the Cafesjian Family Foundation, which has col-

laborated with the University of St. Thomas on several Armenian-oriented projects both in Armenia and in the U.S. (The Cafesjian Family Foundation owns this newspaper.)

Citing the recipient's dedication and contributions to the worldwide Armenian community, Vehapar pinned on the medal, to the evident delight of both Gerard Cafesjian and his wife, **Cleo Cafesjian**. "I didn't know I would be receiving this medal. I was completely surprised," Mr. Cafesjian said.

The trip to Minnesota was the last stop before returning to New York for the culminating events of the Pontifical tour (a visit to the large Detroit community is the actual final stop on the tour). Before he left, the Catholicos reflected: "I am glad to have seen our people in Minnesota; it is a very vibrant community."

With that, he boarded the plane that would take him and his entourage to New York.



The Catholicos addresses the Twin Cities community.

## RESTAURANTS

# Noah's Ark unveiled

by the Epicurious Armenian

**SHERMAN OAKS, Calif.** - Embedded in the San Fernando Valley lies a hidden relic - Noah's Ark Mediterranean Restaurant. They say nothing can compare to homemade food. The special spices, the personalized touches, and most importantly, love are the ingredients in homemade food that keep you coming back for more. Such is the dining experience at the new and improved Noah's Ark, which embarked on its voyage only three months ago.

Don't let its location fool you. Though it is situated at an intersection in a very suburban community, its neighbors are as diverse as the hallways at the United Nations. There is an Italian Pizzeria, a British restaurant and an Irish pub. It only makes sense to add Armenian food to this eclectic mix.

Customary to the Ark itself, the entrance to the restaurant showcases a wood covered wall that compliments the interior of rich hardwood floors and traditional Armenian accents. The most striking thing you notice when you first walk in is the larger than life mural on the wall depicting Hovhannes Ayzavovski's "Descent of Noah from Mount Ararat." As a wooden contraption with ancient décor, one can't help feeling like

they've walked into the original Ark.

The menu options range from Russian, Georgian, Arabic and of course, Armenian. Noah's Ark is a reflection of the diverse Armenian diasporan communities, with options like hommus, lula kebob, tejvejik (mixture of animal parts better left unspecified) and kinkale (Georgian dumplings).

Armenian cuisine is as ancient as its history. Each dish is an example of the influences that have shaped its culture. Recipes include a wonderful combination of fresh, healthy ingredients in mild combinations that allow the ingredients to speak for themselves.

In the tradition of Noah and his Ark, I was obliged to order pairs: two appetizers, two salads, two dinner entrées and two soups. I started off with the Combination Appetizers Plate, which includes hommus, moutabal, and kashke (yogurt with walnuts and a touch of garlic), and Sarma (vegetarian stuffed grape leaves). Portions were enough to fulfill any vegetarian's cravings as a complete meal.

I continued with the Armenian salad and Fatoush salad. The only difference between the two was the dry pita chips on the Fatoush. The Armenian salad was tasty but banal, I would opt for the Fatoush salad, made with romaine lettuce and a tangy mixture of lemon-lime dressing.



Noah's Ark.

Time for the main course! To gauge the range of the complex menu, I opted for fish and meat entrées. The BBQ fish was absolutely delicious. Side dishes unique to Noah's Ark, such as their potato salad, sets it apart from other fish entrées at Mediterranean restaurants. The Keru Sus, their specialty of thinly

sliced meat paired with potato and grilled vegetables, was new to me but no doubt will become a future favorite. The friendly staff informed me that the predominantly non-Armenian clientele prefer the chicken kebab as the most popular dish.

Finally, I made room for the traditional soups rarely found in restaurants in Southern California. Aveluk (greens boiled and mixed with lentils) makes a nice vegetarian option. Khash, a specialty served when the weather cools down, is not on the menu, but is always available. As for Piti and Khrchik, I'll let you decide.

Overall, Noah's Ark is a great place for couples and families. The atmosphere is conducive for special events up to 100-120 people. The restaurant offers nightly entertainment that ranges from Armenian music to a live saxophone player.

The restaurant is owned and operated by the Karapetyan family. Having owned a restaurant in

Armenia, they are continuing the tradition in Southern California.

Noah's Ark is located off of Woodman Avenue and Burbank Boulevard at 13641 Burbank Boulevard, Valley Glenn, California 91401. Lunch prices range from \$7 and dinner starts at \$10. For take out, call 818-786-1202.

Whether you come for lunch or dinner, Noah's Ark is a great option for persons migrating outside of Glendale and Hollywood to find healthy and affordable traditional Armenian food.

Do you have a favorite Armenian or Middle Eastern restaurant you want to the world to know about? Do you know Armenian chefs or Armenian-owned or operated restaurants that warrant a visit by our Epicurious Armenian? Send your tips to [news@reporter.am](mailto:news@reporter.am)

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# Community

## Calendar of Events

### California

**NOVEMBER 2- SHUSHI ART MUSEUM FUNDRAISING.** The Tufenkian Foundation invites you to a Reception and Presentation to benefit the Shushi Museum. Featured speaker Antranig Kasbarian. At the home of Art and Vicky Marashlian, Friday, November 2nd at 8:00 p.m. Admission is \$200.00 per person, \$300.00 per couple. Please RSVP by October 26 to nellig@tufenkiancarperts.com or by calling (212) 475-2475 ext. 340.

**NOVEMBER 2- WHAT'S UP HYE-ER?** Showing at the Stars Art Theatre, 417 Brand Blvd, Glendale, November 2nd, 16th, and 30th. A comedy show written and directed by Zohrab Yacoubian. Admission \$60.00. For more information contact the Bees Theatrical Group at (818) 621-4646.

**NOVEMBER 2- VISA AT THE DERBY.** Visa will be performing live at The Derby, 4500 Los Feliz Blvd, Los Angeles. Admission TBA. For more information please call (818) 331-0091.

**NOVEMBER 2- 4 - ARPA FESTIVAL.** Save the date. Arpa Gala Banquet Sunday November 4th at 7:30 p.m. More information coming soon.

**NOVEMBER 3- JUBILEE BANQUET- Celebrating Yerevan Polytechnic Institute's 75th anniversary** at Vedugo Hills country Club, 400 W. Glenoaks Blvd., Glendale. Admission \$65.00. For more information please call (626) 577-6674.

**NOVEMBER 3 - CLASSICAL GUITAR CONCERT** by LAKOVOS KOLANIAN. St. Andrew Hall, 11370 S. Stelling Rd. Cupertino, CA. 7:00 p.m. For more info. Call St. Andrew Cultural Committee, (408) 777-8688.

**NOVEMBER 4 - RALLY 106: UNITED VOICES FOR THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RESOLUTION.** American-Armenians to rally for Genocide Resolution in Little Armenia, Hollywood, near the intersection of Hollywood Blvd and Alexandria, at 3:00 p.m. For more information call (818) 507-1933 or e-mail info@ayfwest.org.

**NOVEMBER 4- ARMENIAN HERITAGE IN FASION.** Come join the Armenian International Medical Fund for a fashion show featuring traditional Armenian costumes as well as the collections of contemporary Armenian designers, at the Marriott in Downtown, 333s. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Admission is \$65.00, students \$50.00. All proceeds benefit the Armenian International Medical Fund, a non-profit organization dedicated to giving the gift of hearing to the children of Armenia. For more information please call (818) 257-8998.

**NOVEMBER 7- MULTI-MEDIA ARMENIAN CULTURAL PROGRAM.** Organizers of the Armenian Festival Committee of Orange County have established a partnering relationship with the city of Irvine, to present a cultural exploration of Armenian, its history, its culture, and tourism to the general public at the Irvine Multicultural Association's monthly social meeting. The meeting is held at 20 Lake Road in Irvine. Seating begins at 5:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served prior to, during the mid-way break, and following the program. For more information please call (949) 552-7433.

**NOVEMBER 8- ART SHOW BENEFITTING FOCUS ON CHILDREN NOW.** Please join Focus on Children Now for a free art show at the Globe Art Gallery, 2325 N. San Fernando Road, Los Angeles. FCN is dedicated to assisting children and families in rural Armenia with donations of clothing, school

supplies, medical knowledge and scholarships. For more information please call Lenna Vanerian at (818) 554-8832.

**NOVEMBER 8- KA YEV CKA: THERE IS AND THERE ISN'T.** Last performance is Thursday, November 8th at 8:00 p.m. at Luna Playhouse, 3808 San Fernando Road, Glendale. For more information please call Christina at (818) 556-6122.

**NOVEMBER 8- CARZOU EXHIBITION.** Honoring Exhibition of French Armenian artist. Opening reception is Thursday November 8th at 6:00 p.m. The exhibition will run through November 30th, Monday to Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. at Stephanie's Art Gallery 466 Foothill Blvd, La Canada. For more information please call (818) 790-4905.

**NOVEMBER 9- APS ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR BANQUET.** The event, at Castaway Restaurant, begins with a 6:30 p.m. cocktail hour followed by dinner. Admission is \$100.00. For more information please call (818) 891-3200.

**NOVEMBER 9- AYP CAMP 30TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER DANCE.** Dinner and dancing at Bagramian Hall, 900 West Lincoln Ave. Montebello. Admission is \$50.00. For more information please call (818) 242-7494.

**NOVEMBER 9 - 12 - KEF CRUISE TO MEXICO.** Three-night Kef Cruise to Mexico with Carnival/Paradise Ship. Inside cabin: \$365., Cabin with ocean view: \$405. RSVP by 05/30/2007 with \$100 deposit for each person. For more information please call Saro Dance (818) 324-0979.

**NOVEMBER 10- ANNUAL TURKEY BINGO.** Sponsored by Selma Triple X-Charitable Trust. At the California Armenian Home, 6720 East Kings Canyon Road, Fresno. Admission is \$15.00. For more information please call (559) 439-1479.

**NOVEMBER 10- CCAC FOOD FESTIVAL.** Food Festival at 725 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco. Admission is free. For more information please call (415) 586-2000.

**NOVEMBER 10- GOR LIVE AT STARS THEATRE.** Stars Theatre presents Gor Live Saturday November 10th at 8:00 p.m. Proceeds go to Armenian Educational Relief Foundation. Admission is \$35.00-\$50.00. For more information please call (818) 640-4454.

**NOVEMBER 11- CULTURAL DAY: KIDS FESTIVAL.** Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter's Cultural Division presents: Kids Festival. The event will feature Ararat Dance Academy, Art Exhibitions, Ararat Youth Choir and Raffi Armenian Language School. Admission is \$15.00 for adults and \$10.00 for Children. For more information please call Armond Gorgorian at (323) 256-2564.

**NOVEMBER 11- DJANBAZIAN DANCE ACADEMY'S ANNUAL CONCERT.** A broad range of artistic skills and talents will be on display at the academy's annual concert, "Lasting Memories." The Concert will be at 6:00 p.m. the Lanterman Auditorium, 4491 Cornishon Ave., La Canada. Admission is \$30.00 - \$40.00. For more information please call (818) 248-4458.

**NOVEMBER 11- TUFENKIAN FOUNDATION RECEPTION & PRESENTATION.** The Tufenkian Foundation invites you to a reception and program to benefit Youth Programs in Armenia and Karabagh. The event takes place Sunday from 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. at the home of Mark and Paulette Geragos, 4134 Commonwealth Ave., La Canada. Admission is \$250.00. For more information please call (201) 221-1055 ext. 340.

**NOVEMBER 12- AN EVENING WITH DAVID KHERDIAN.** A com-

munity reading by David Kherdian will take place at 7:30 p.m. at Saroyan Hall, 825 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco. Admission \$5.00-\$8.00.

**NOVEMBER 15- USC AGSA ASSEMBLY OF ARMENIAN PROFESSIONALS NETWORKING NIGHT.** The USC AGSA will host its First Annual Assembly of Armenian Professionals. The event begins at 7:30 p.m. at Spazio, 14755 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks. Admission is \$20.00. For more information please call (818) 728-8400.

**NOVEMBER 16- IN THE NANO-PRESENT.** The harvest Gallery is pleased to present recent works of Seta Injeyan, from 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.. The Gallery is located at 938 N. Brand Blvd, Glendale. Admission is free. For more information please call (818) 546-1000.

**NOVEMBER 16- ARARAD AHARONIAN LIVE IN GLENDALE.** Dinner and dance and the Verdugo Country Club, 400 W. Glenoaks Blvd., Glendale. For more information please call (818) 522-7722.

**NOVEMBER 17- ARARAT BASKETBALL NIGHT.** Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter presents Basketball Dinner Dance featuring Asot & DJ Artin, at 3347 N. San Fernando Road, at 8:00 p.m. Admission is \$65.00. For more information please call (323) 256-2564.

**NOVEMBER 17- A.R.F 30TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER.** A.R.F. Pasadena is celebrating their 30th anniversary with a dinner & dance celebration featuring Karnig Sarkisian & his band. For more information please contact Lucy at (626) 685-6780.

**November 17—The Armenian EyeCare Project** will host its Sixth Annual Newport Gala on Saturday evening, November 17, at half past six in the evening, at The Balboa Bay Club, Newport Beach. The event will honor Aram Bassanian, A.I.A. with a Lifetime Humanitarian Award and celebrate "Bringing Sight to Armenian Eyes" for fifteen years. Dinner is \$500 per person and proceeds will benefit the Project's programs to eliminate preventable blindness in Armenia. For advance reservations and additional information, contact the AACP office toll free at 866-448-2327.

**NOVEMBER 18- LAUGHTER FOR LIFE.** The Armenian Bone Marrow Registry presents the 5th annual Laughter for Life, featuring many hilarious comedians. Cocktails and food at 7:00 p.m., followed by the show at 8:00 p.m. Tickets \$50.00 - \$100.00. Must be 21 to attend. For more information please call Tina at (323) 896-0988.

**NOVEMBER 18- POETRY EVENING.** Poetry evening in the foyer at 3347 N. San Fernando Road, Los Angeles. For more information please call Armond Gorgorian at (323) 256-2564.

**NOVEMBER 18- VOLLEYBALL CAMP.** Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter is holding a volleyball camp at 3347 N. San Fernando Road, Los Angeles, in the blue gym. Admission is free. For more information please call Armond Gorgorian at (323) 256-2564.

**NOVEMBER 18- ARARAT CRUISE.** Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter presents Cruise to Baja Mexico. Prices starting at \$385.00. For more information please call Armond Gorgorian at (323) 256-2564.

**NOVEMBER 18- ARARAT PING PONG TOURNAMENT.** Hosted by Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter, 3347 N. San Fernando Road, Los Angeles. For more information please call Armond Gorgorian (323) 256-2564.

**NOVEMBER 18- 5TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE & BAKE SALE.** The Armenian Society, Oakland Erepouni Chapter, presents

their 5th annual Christmas Boutique & Bake Sale at St. Gregory Armenian Church, 51 Commonwealth Ave., San Francisco, immediately following church services. A donation of \$10.00 is suggested.

**NOVEMBER 18- THE FIRST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL KOMITAS HONORS CONCERT FEATURING FLORA MARTIROSIAN.** Sunday, November 18th at 7:00 p.m. at the Alex Theatre, 216 North Brand Blvd., Glendale. Ticket prices vary. For more information please call (818) 243-3622.

**NOVEMBER 18- THE FIRST ANNUAL ARMENIAN-AMERICAN WRITER'S SINNER AND BOOK SIGNING.** Presented by Hamazkayin, at the Taglyan Hall, 1201 North Vine St., Hollywood. Admission is \$100.00+. All proceeds go towards scholarship funds for Armenian-American graduate students. For more information please call (818) 588-5625.

**NOVEMBER 18- HOLY CROSS CATHEDRAL RENOVATION BANQUET.** Held at Holy Cross Cathedral, 900 W. Lincoln Road, Montebello. Cocktail hour begins at 6:00 p.m. followed by dinner and program. Tickets are \$100.00. For more information please call (323) 727-1113.

**NOVEMBER 18- ARMENIA FUND ANNUAL GALA.** Held at the Omni Hotel, 251 South Olive Street, Los Angeles at 7:00 p.m. More details to follow. For question please call (818) 243-6222.

**NOVEMBER 22- 10TH INTERNATIONAL TELETHON.** Armenians across the world will unite under one mission: to help rebuild Armenia's impoverished rural regions. Proceeds from the telethon will benefit Armenia Fund's new beneficiary project the Village Development Program. For more information please visit www.armenianfund.org or call (818) 243-6222.

**NOVEMBER 23- THE ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER DANCE.** Vergine Productions presents the annual dinner dance with legends Paul and Adiss, being held at the Pasadena Armenian Center, 740 E. Washington Blvd. Admission is \$45.00. For more information please call (818) 247-1717.

**NOVEMBER 23- THE 9TH ANNUAL ARMENIAN MUSIC AWARDS.** Held at the Gibson Amphitheatre at Universal Citywalk, 100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City. Red carpet begins at 4:00 p.m. awards begin at 7:00 p.m. Admission is \$60.00 - \$150.00.

**NOVEMBER 25- NORK CHILDREN CENTER PERFORMANCE.** This dynamic troupe of over 60 performers between the ages of seven

to sixteen from Armenian are touring the west coast for the first time. The group will be performing at the Bayside Performing Art Center, 2025 Kehoe Ave., San Mateo. Admission is \$25.00-\$50.00. For more information please call (650) 969-2612.

**DECEMBER 6- THE UNICEF SNOWFLAKE BALL.** The U.S. Fund for UNICEF hosts the Snowflake Ball, awarding Tamar and Bob Maoukian. The event will be held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, 9500 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills. For more information please call Monika Mraz at (212) 922-2564.

**DECEMBER 15- CACC CHRISTMAS BANQUET.** Save the date for Calvary Armenian Congregational Church's Christmas Banquet. CACC phone: (415) 586-2000. More information to follow.

**DECEMBER 16 - HAMAZKAYIN ANI DANCE COMPANY PERFORMANCE.** Sunday, 6:00PM. Glendale High School Auditorium, 1440 E. Broadway Glendale, CA. For Ticket Information call (310) 379-3807 or (818) 209-7702. ANIDANCECOMPANY.COM

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### NEVADA

**NOVEMBER 10 - CHARITY ARMENIAN POKER TOURNAMENT.** The Armenian American Cultural Society of Las Vegas announces the first "Armenian Poker Tournament" to be held at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas on Saturday November 10th. Admission into the Texas Hold'em tournament is \$500.00 with a prize pool of \$50,000.00. For more information or to reserve a seat please call (702) 580-0807.

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