



Culture  
Heritage  
History  
Language

Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota  
Established 1980

No. 136  
Summer 2013

## MinneHyeLites

When we speak of the Armenian Diaspora we know our people are dispersed over the face of the earth, but today, we are focusing on a group that deserves special attention for their drive to keep Armenian culture alive in the Upper Midwest, headquartered in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The organization is called Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota (ACOM) and I became aware of them through a half Armenian lady, Cynthia Reimers Erickson, whom I met at a Vanetzi convention in Detroit several years ago. She is a volunteer team leader building houses for the poor in Armenia through Fuller Center for Housing, making annual trips there as reported recently in the Weekly. How would we have known about this quiet heroine otherwise?

That the organization has given serious thought to their cultural mission is evident when you click on the ACOM homepage featuring an open book showing the first two letters of the Armenian alphabet and our mountains of Big and Little Ararat. Click on this page for a refreshing surprise.

There exists an abundance of Armenian cultural life beyond Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, and L.A. It is alive and thriving in Minnesota thanks to dedicated Armenians who remember their roots.

The Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota has been serving Armenians and friends since 1980, providing opportunities in culture, language, dance, history, social events, preserving Armenian identity and heritage. It is the oldest and largest Armenian organization in the state. ACOM welcomes everyone regardless of ethnic, religious or political affiliation who takes an interest in Armenia and Armenians. Their membership includes first generation through fourth generation Armenians, their families and non-Armenian friends of the community, very broad-minded.

### MICHIGAN HYE BEAT

By Betty Apigian Kessel

### MINNESOTA'S ACOM, A BRIGHT LIGHT IN ARMENIAN CULTURE

There is a lot of life in what many refer to the "frozen north". The organization's many cultural and social events include the annual holiday party, Armenian dance parties, guest speakers, Armenian language classes, folk dance classes and performances, chamber music concerts, art shows, summer picnics and craft shows. Their executive members have a 2013 calendar fully planned and prepared to launch so that members are aware of coming events.

They kicked off 2013 with their popular annual Gagghant Party. In the Fall, they celebrate Voski Ashoun (Golden Fall), another innovative celebration others can copy.

The most significant undertaking for ACOM has been the International Festival of Nations, the second largest attraction in Minnesota. ACOM sponsors all Armenian activities at this major regional folk festival held annually in St. Paul. The festival has become the Armenian organization's most visible public venue. It has helped keep Minnesota Armenians in the public eye. Very importantly, through the efforts of some of the members, ACOM has managed to spread awareness of its value and importance on society across the U.S. They are ambassadors of Armenian goodwill.

Guest speakers have included authors Tom Mooradian, Peter Balakian and transplant physician Dr. John Najarian, M.D. Proceeds from the sale of Dr. Najarian's book *The Miracle of Transplants* go to the Living Donor

Transplant Assistance Fund into which the Armenian community put almost \$1,000.

ACOM sponsors a popular series called "What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian In \_\_\_\_\_." featuring speakers formerly from Baku, Bulgaria, Aleppo, Lebanon and Egypt. All speakers had similar but different experiences as Armenians growing up in these locals. ACOM has found this series to be of particular interest and all events are well attended. This series is something other cities may want to emulate. These speakers have personal stories to tell of hardship and life-threatening circumstances. Their stories can be an awakening to those of us who have grown complacent, living what we hope will continue to be an open and free society.

Their Dance Ensemble alone has thirteen scheduled performances throughout the area for the year.

They even publish a newsletter kept up to date and when you read all the items you may just want to pull up stakes and move to Minnesota. It may not be Florida but it seems Armenians there are warm knit and think highly of one another, taking pride in being Armenian.

April 24, Armenian Remembrance Day, is held at St. Sahag Armenian Apostolic Church in St. Paul. It is interesting to note, all of ACOM's events are well attended. The posted photos alone in their Newsletters are proof of this community's desire to promote and perpetuate their Armenian heritage.

The organization makes the effort to send flowers on deserving occasions, get-well notes, gifts of donations to passing members' favorite charities. They just seem to know the value of friendship and make note of all this in their Newsletters.

Needless to say, we salute the Armenians and their friends of Minnesota for the good work they do.

The Newsletter is on ACOM'S website: [www.mnarmenians.org](http://www.mnarmenians.org)

## CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO THE YOUTH OF OUR COMMUNITY

*ANDERS SANDSTROM* ~~ The son of Chad and Julia Sandstrom, brother of Kjell and Milena Sandstrom, Anders will be graduating from Stillwater Area High School and attending the South Dakota School of Mining Technology in Rapid City, South Dakota in 2013. He plans to study engineering and material science.

*ANDY YLITALO* ~~ Three Washington County area high school students have been honored as "scholars of distinction" by the state Department of Education. The awards are presented annually to highly motivated, self-directed students in the areas of science, math, social studies, theater arts, leadership and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), the department's [website](#) states.

This year, 42 students were honored during the ceremony on May 18 at the Perpich Center for Arts Education in Golden Valley. One local honoree, Andy Ylitalo, a senior at Stillwater Area High School, captured his award in the same week that he competed at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Phoenix. He was named a scholar of distinction in the areas of science, mathematics and STEM.

*BRADLEY ERICKSON* ~~ Bradley completed an Associates degree in Business Management at Century College in May 2013. He is continuing for one more year at Century College to complete an alternate Associates degree which includes prep courses before (hopefully) attending Carlson School of Management at the U of M in the fall of 2014.

*ELSA MATOSSIAN HOOVER* ~~ Elsa Matossian Hoover has graduated from South High School, Minneapolis, with highest honors. Active in student theater, she served as principal set designer and sound engineer; she also founded a political discussion club. During her last two years of high school, Elsa took several classes at the University of Minnesota. In the community, Elsa taught reading at Project for Pride in Living and served as an election judge. She volunteered at ACOM's Festival of Nations cultural exhibit and bazaar each year from the age of six, wearing traditional Armenian costume. In 2007, she participated in the bread and salt ceremony welcoming His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, to Minnesota. Elsa looks forward to entering Columbia University this fall as a student of architecture and environmental science. She has received scholarships from the General Mills Foundation, the Pohlad Foundation, and the Minneapolis Foundation.

*ERICA OHANNESIAN TIFFANY* ~~ Erica is teaching English to middle schoolers in Daejon, South Korea, for one year. She started in Feb of 2013. Erica graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire in 2012 where she majored in Spanish and Organizational Communications. She also competed on the varsity track and cross-country teams for four years.

*HAGOP TOGHRAMADJIAN* ~~ Hagop graduated from St. Paul Academy and Summit School cum laude, is a National Merit finalist, and won his school's history and debate awards. As far as awards, he received the Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Leadership Award (From the Diocese website. This award is given to an ACYOA Junior who has taken on leadership roles within his/her ACYOA chapter and/or parish, and has approached those roles with Christian love, understanding, and patience.) His plans for next fall are to enroll at Boston College and probably attend St. James Armenian Church in Watertown. Part of his scholarship at Boston College means he will be traveling for most summers, but he will come back to see everyone in Minnesota on holidays and whenever else he can!

*HARRISON OHANNESIAN TIFFANY* ~~ Harrison graduates from the Academy for Science and Agriculture in Vadnais Heights. He will begin studies in Horticulture at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls in the fall of 2013. This summer he will work for the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation in Alaska.

*MITCHELL ERICKSON* ~~ Mitchell completed his Bachelor's degree in BioMedical Engineering at the University of Minnesota this May 2013. He is continuing at the university for one more year to complete a Master's degree in the same major.

*RAFFI MIKAELIAN* ~~ Son of Vega, grandson of Vahram and Vali Kardashian, Raffi attended the University of Minnesota, Duluth, from the onset of 2008 through the end of December, 2012. After five years, he graduated Magna Cum Laude with a double major in Mechanical Engineering and Industrial Engineering, and with a minor degree in Mathematics. In addition, he earned departmental honors and made the Dean's List for Academic Excellence for seven semesters.



### CONGRATULATIONS!

**Anilga Moradkhani** and **Dr. Hagop Tabibian** were engaged in December 2012. A Fall wedding is in the plans. We congratulate you both and wish you a lot of happiness.

Our best wishes to **Iren Tadevosyan** and **Hayk Arustamyan** on the arrival of their twin babies. May you all be blessed with good health and happiness.

**Dr. Lou Ann Matossian**, is the newly appointed Director of

Development for the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church. Her area of responsibility covers the eastern U.S. as far west as Minnesota and Texas. She will be responsible for planning and implementing all fundraising strategies for the Eastern Diocese. These responsibilities include the areas of donor research, cultivation, and solicitation; leadership identification and planning; reporting to donors and the public; among other areas. We are all very happy for you, Lou Ann. Abriss!

## IN SYMPATHY



To **Natasha and Alarica Hassett (and Nairy Digris)**, with most heartfelt expressions of sympathy for the loss of their father, **Charles Hassett** (Nairy's ex-husband). Charles passed away on May 8, 2013 after a very long illness and many months spent at the hospital.

Our sincere condolences to **Harriet Balian, Meline Broburg, Elizabeth Seropian and Dr. Lucy Rorke-Adams, MD from NJ**, for the loss of their beloved first cousin, **Marge Gogian**. Marge was the owner and ran Turks Inn restaurant in Hayward, WI for 80 years. Funeral was on Friday, March 1, 2013 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Hayward. A hokehankisd service was done in her memory on Sunday, March 2nd, after the service at St. Sahag Armenian Church in St. Paul. May she rest in peace. Asdvadz hokin lousavoreh.

**Cleo T. Cafesjian** of Naples, Florida and Roseville, MN passed away Thursday, March 7, 2013 after bravely fighting without complaint, a prolonged illness. Cleo was born to the late Harry and Margaret Thomas on October 9, 1925. Cleo was from Forty Fort, Pennsylvania. She graduated from Roosevelt Hospital Nursing School in New York City as a Registered Nurse.

She met **Gerard L. Cafesjian** during World War II when she was a nurse and he was in the US Navy. Cleo and Gerry were married after the war on July 4, 1947. Cleo was a Registered Nurse, and was passionate about caring for the sick and needy. She was active with one of the earliest Meals on Wheels program in Minnesota in 1961, and was tireless in her volunteer efforts well into her eighties.

An avid Bridge player and blessed with a mischievous sense of humor, Cleo was a uniquely kind, generous and loving soul who touched the hearts of everyone she met. With her red hair and blue eyes, she was strikingly beautiful in every sense, both inside and outside. Cleo is survived by her husband, Gerard L. Cafesjian; her daughter **Kathleen** and son-in-law **Jaff Baradaran**; her son **Thomas G. Cafesjian**; her granddaughter Carrie, Carrie's husband Ben Jones; and her great-grandchildren Sam, Eli and Jack Jones; and her brother George Thomas. She was predeceased by her first child, Gerard L. Cafesjian, Jr., her sister Peggy Williams and her brother Harry Thomas.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made on line at: <http://www.orrn.am/payment> to the Orran Home in Yerevan, Armenia, in her memory, an organization that cares for orphaned Armenian children, a cause close to Cleo's heart. *Published in Pioneer Press on March 10, 2013.*

Re: ACOM Newsletter #135 - Wonderful job guys !  
Tom Keljik

Thanks again for another year of events! The Minnesota Armenians sure know how to party. I will be ready with a fancy pedicure for the 2013 Grape-Stomping !  
Gloria Faust

I always enjoy ACOM programs and I am grateful to those who arrange them.

Margaret Johnson

## SPEEDY RECOVERY WISHES TO...



**Jeanne Andeweg** who broke her forearm from a slip and fall on the ice.

**Elizabeth Plummer** who is recovering from back surgery (March 2013).

**Sona Plummer** who underwent hip surgery at the same time as Elizabeth.

**Vartkes Ebrahimian** who is slowly getting better at a transitional care unit.

## THANK YOU ...

. . . to ACOM (after donation in memory of Cleo Cafesjian). That is so kind of you, thank you. It would make her so happy ....in the days before her death, she would worry about who would feed the children". Thanks for thinking of us.  
Kathie Baradaran

. . . to Mark Keljik, Leroy & Cynthia, Thanks so much for the arrangements for my Gnu Woodwind Quintet to play at Mark's store. What a great day! It was a marvelous venue....we all enjoyed ourselves. It was a good crowd. Perfect.

. . . and what a lovely reception that you hosted, Mark. Delicious...and generous of you! With such warm a welcome by ACOM, we are eager to play again.

. . . Please extend my thanks (and this email) to others at ACOM who should be thanked, such as Tom Keljik and Nairy. Best wishes,  
Art K. / [612-759-8394](tel:612-759-8394)

**Genocide Commemoration, Ancestral Tables & Pilaf-off :** Hope to attend both. Thanks to you and others for making these events possible and well publicized. Hope you are enjoying today's sunshine!  
Joan Poritsky

Good Idea !  
Janet Rith-Najarian

## RAZOO DONORS - THANK YOU ALL

Since our community was made aware of the Give MN organization - a collaborative venture that steers donations to Minnesota non-profits by giving on-line - the following people have extended their generosity to ACOM and we want to acknowledge them all:

- 2011: Leroy Erickson, Lou Ann Matossian, Terry McGibbon
- 2012: Caroline Ylitalo, Laurel Gregorian, Leroy Erickson, Lou Ann Matossian, Terry McGibbon, Tom Keljik
- 2013: Gloria Faust

Anyone interested in finding out more information about this organization and how to donate, please go to: [www.givemn.org](http://www.givemn.org)

## ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER FESTIVAL OF NATIONS.

The Armenians have been participating since its inception in 1932..... can we even imagine that far back?

THE DEMO booth situated in the Bazaar attracted a multitude of interested Festival attendees. Very Special Thanks to Janet Rith-Najarian for organizing the whole event, arranging volunteer help, and representing Armenian art and culture through silk painting and other related silk work. She even had real silk worms on display which were a great attraction to kids of all ages.

The Armenian Dance Ensemble performed eight times throughout the three days. Our group is somewhat smaller, but we have extremely dedicated dancers. We were happy to have Seda Bagdasarova accompany us by singing Jojan along with our dance. It elevated the performance to a much higher level!

My very special thanks to *(in alphabetical order)*:

<b>Bradley Erickson</b>	<b>Lynne Gildensoph</b>
<b>Cynthia Erickson</b>	<b>Nairy Digris</b>
<b>Ed Kvarnes</b>	<b>Seda Bagdasarova</b>
<b>Gina Bonsignore</b>	<b>Theresa Mish</b>
<b>Lynn Paulin</b>	<b>Terry McGibbon</b>

We are looking ahead towards next year, Festival of Nations 2014, and Seda has graciously offered to lead and train a singing group to join her while the Ensemble performs its dances. She would like to start soon.

If you like to sing and are interested, please contact Seda by phone: 952-937-0090 or email: emin2019@hotmail.com.

A mutually convenient time will be arranged.

Thanks, Nairy Digris

### ARMENIAN DANCE ENSEMBLE

You all looked great from the audience! The costumes are colorful, the hat repair is great, and the dancing was marvelous. The crowd loved the performance, and so many people joined in the dancing - that was fun!

Lynne Gildensoph

Landmark Center, 3/10/2013)

I wanted to let you know that I really enjoyed the performance of your Armenian dance group at the Festival of Nations. The dancing was beautiful, smooth, calm, and sophisticated.

Your costumes are beautiful, and add to the authenticity of the performance. The dancers work together seamlessly, and obviously enjoy the

dancing, making it even more fun to watch. I was glad to have had an opportunity to see the performance. Laurie J. (International folkdancer)  
(Festival of Nations, 5/3-4-5/2013)

Thank you so much for the wonderful performance last night! Everyone who attended enjoyed the evening! We are happy that you could come out to our community. Many thanks again, and hope to see your group again in the future!

Cheryl H.

(Croixdale Presbyterian Homes, 5/15/2013)



## LET'S GET ACQUAINTED !

Arthur Kourajian

### 1. Please introduce yourself by name, age, occupation.

#### If retired, what did you do before retiring?

Arthur David Kourajian. Birthday: August 8, 1944 // Current age: 68. 1800 Graham Ave. Unit 200. Saint Paul MN 55116  
Currently retired. Was a computer consultant for large-scale air-line computer systems. Employed for 44 years with Unisys Corp..

### 2. Where are you from originally?

I was born in Jamestown, North Dakota—the eighth of nine children

### 3. Where is your Armenian family from?

#### Your parents, your grandparents?

Parents (both deceased): Zarouhe (Sarah) Geuvjehizian (Deceased 1986) Born: January 10, 1907 in Tarsus, Armenia. Vahan Kourajian (Deceased 1975) Born: May 13, 1896 in Orar, Armenia. Grandparents, etc.: never known

### 4. How did they end up in America?

My father was conscripted into the Turkish army. He left those confines and worked his way on a ship to America, arriving apx 1920. He worked on the railroad (laying track) from the east coast to the Midwest—and finally settled in Jamestown, North Dakota in apx 1925. He then wrote to a family friend in Beirut for an Armenian bride; the friend packed up my mother and shipped her to Marseilles, France. My father came from the US—they met on a Saturday at noon, married at 3pm and were back on a ship to the US at 6pm. They travelled by train from the US east coast all the way to Jamestown, North Dakota, where they lived their whole lives and raised nine children. Before you came to Minnesota, how involved were you in Armenian activities?

### 5. Before you came to Minnesota, how involved were you in Armenian activities?

Almost not at all, except for family activities, regular meal dishes (such as pilaf, choreg, yogurt, stews) and special dishes at holidays (such as paklava). My parents spoke Armenian (to each other) but did not teach us children Armenian, because they wanted to raise us as Americans.

### 6. Before you came to Minnesota, how much did you know about Armenians here?

Did not know anything about the Armenians in Minnesota when I came here after University in North Dakota, in 1968.

### 7. How did you/your family end up in Minnesota? When was this?

After university, I took a job with Univac/Unisys Corporation in Saint Paul as a computer developer/programmer in 1968.

### 8. How and when did you first make contact with Minnesota Armenians?

I met my Armenian wife (Priscilla Jamgotch) in 1975 and she had Armenian relatives. I met other Armenians through her and learned of the ACOM from them.

### 9. What made you decide to stay connected with Armenians in Minnesota?

An interest in being with folks of a like-mind and like-background, and the possibility of learning more of the Armenian language and cooking.

### 10. What kinds of Armenian activities have you been involved with here?

The picnics, Christmas parties, an occasional church service

### 11. What would be something really memorable that you were part of in this community?

The casual picnics where conversation flows and people are at ease and easier to meet.

### 12. Has your involvement in Armenian activities changed over the years? In what ways?

Sadly....it has become less frequent.

### 13. Has your sense of being “Armenian” changed over the years? How?

Yes! I met cousins/aunts/uncles that immigrated from Armenia in 1975 and I married an Armenian girl (from Minneapolis) in 1976. Both events were gratifying and fulfilling of something in the soul.....something that was missing all my life as I lived amongst the non-Armenians of MN and ND.

### 14. When you travel, and people ask about the Minnesota Armenians, what do you tell them?

A happy story about ACOM and the community interest amongst Armenians to be together for social and cultural reasons.

### 15. How would you compare the Minnesota Armenians to other Armenian communities you have known?

Casual, friendly, eager. The only other Armenian community I know is in Los Angeles where my Armenian cousins/ aunts/ uncles live. There are so many Armenians there—plus churches, grocery stores, concerts—that it is not as special to them as it is to us here. They live it daily; we cherish the special moments that we have.

### 16. What would you want your children and grandchildren to know about Armenians in Minnesota?

That they exist and that they are a link to learn more about who they themselves are. That to be with other Armenians is a special feeling—a fulfillment of heart and soul.



**GENOCIDE COMMEMORATED IN DIYARBAKIR  
FOR FIRST TIME**

By [Gulisor Akkum](#) // Posted on April 23, 2013 in [Featured](#), [Headline](#), [News](#) // 18 Comments // [Email](#) // [Print](#)  
*This report was filed by the Armenian Weekly's Diyarbakir correspondent, Gulisor Akkum.*

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (A.W.)—A large crowd gathered at the Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality Theater on April 23 to commemorate the Armenian Genocide.

**A scene from the commemoration**

The event, commemorating the 98th anniversary of the destruction of the Armenian community in the city, was organized by the Diyarbakir Bar Association (DBA) and the Diyarbakir Municipality, and featured a panel discussion with historian Ara Sarafian and the head of the DBA, Tahir Elci.

In his opening remarks, Elci noted that as Armenian intellectuals and community leaders were being rounded up in Istanbul on April 24, 1915 and during the weeks that followed, a similar process unfolded in Diyarbakir.

Stressing Kurdish participation in the genocide in Diyarbakir, Elci said that confronting the reality of the genocide by Kurds today is inevitable. Moreover, he argued that Kurds should support Armenians in the struggle against the state's ideology and denialism.

"We grew up with the stories of our grand-parents about the massacres of the Armenians. Denialist discourse does not withstand legal and historic scrutiny," he said.

"Today, we commemorate the genocide in Diyarbakir for the first time. This is a very important day for us. We bow respectfully before the memory of our Armenian brothers who were murdered in 1915, and condemn the genocide," Elci concluded.

Sarafian focused on the process of the destruction of the Armenians in Diyarbakir in 1915. He noted that he had come to Diyarbakir to conduct research on the genocide, and that locals had been very helpful.

After the meeting, members of the audience headed to the banks of the Tigris River and threw flowers in the water in memory of the Armenians killed there during the genocide.



*Ara Sarafian in Diyarbakir holding a photograph from the genocide.*

**APRIL 24TH - GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY**

A gathering of some sixty people prepared their hearts and minds to commemorate the 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The remembrance was held with the collaboration of St. Sahag Armenian Church and ACOM (Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota). This year it was ably led by Hagop Toghramadjian.

The program was preceded by a Hokehankisd (Requiem Service) offered by Father Tadeos Barseghyan. The Remembrance program began with a welcome from Father Tadeos, then featured a musical piece - "Ay Vart (O Rose)" performed by Tommy Toghramadjian, a poem - "Paruyr Sevak (We are Few)" read eloquently by Hagop Toghramadjian.

Poignant remarks were delivered by Alejandro Baer, director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Minnesota, two songs performed by the Vartanants Choir of St. Sahag Armenian Church. This was followed by an impassioned talk titled "The Armenian Phoenix" given by Hagop Tabibian.

Closing remarks were read by Tom Keljik, President of ACOM reflecting on the many horrific events occurring in the month of April over the past 98 years pertaining to "genocide".

Thank you, Mara and Marty Meketarian, for the wonderful fruit platter. Special thanks to Adrienne Hayes for arranging the food and beverages served in Fellowship Hall.

*Tom Keljik.*



**ANCESTRAL TREASURES AND PILAF-OFF**

ACOM launched its first Ancestral Treasures and Pilaf-Off event on May 19th. The intent of this gathering was to provide a forum for our community to share items of our ancestral histories to better understand those who came before us. While our number of participants was small, it was an amazing introduction to the idea which will only grow with time.

Judy Ohanessian, Marty Meketarian, Naïry Digris, Mark Keljik and Tom Keljik assembled photos, lace, coffee grinders, musical instruments, documents, books and more, all having a story that added to the richness of our community's sense of past. Judy brought a pair of scissors representing the only tangible artifact from her ancestral connection to the old country. The "scissor maker" had brought them to America with him. Mark Keljik quickly identified them as shears used to make the pile of a carpet, which added to Judy's understanding of the artifact and a stronger connection to knowing her ancestor.

There were five participants in the Pilaf-Off contest - Tina Ademek, Mark Keljik, Cynthia Erickson, Tom Keljik, and Arthur Kourajian. Miraculously, after the votes were tallied the contest resulted in a five way tie!

Look forward to similar events next year.

*Tom Keljik.*



Zeynep Tozduman, "Soykırım yaşıyan Anadolu halklarından ve inançlarından özründür,"  
IzmirIzmir.net, April 21, 2013. English translation by Raffi Bedrosyan, Seta's Armenian Blog, April 26, 2013

### *A Proper Apology...*

**Please read below the public statement of The Chairperson of Izmir Council of Peace  
Zeynep Tozduman—a courageous woman,  
I hope she stays safe...**

FROM ZEYNEP TOZDUMAN - IZMIR , TURKEY

April 24, 2013

### **MY APOLOGY FROM ALL THE PEOPLES OF ANATOLIA SUBJECTED TO GENOCIDE.**

I apologize for every single day that we have remained silent since the days of genocide.

I apologize for our grandfathers who cooperated with the murderers carrying out the brutal massacre of 1.5 million people in Anatolia .

I apologize from your young girls for permanently burying their hopes into their dowry chests.

I apologize from all your people left dead without a proper burial, shroud or cemeteries.

I apologize for causing you to add the word 'converted - Donme' to your vocabulary.

I apologize from all your girls and women abused and raped, forcefully converted to Kurd, Turk, Alevi or Islam.

I apologize for forcing you to become the Diaspora and scatter like pomegranate seeds to all corners of the world.

I apologize for forcing you to long for your homeland with broken hearts from the faraway deportation points.

I apologize for preventing you from giving your children proper names and education in your mother tongue, a basic human right.

I apologize for confiscating your houses, properties, lands, farms, orchards, and shops to create our national economy, based on a disease of racism in this country.

I apologize for denying even the very existence of the original peoples of these lands after subjecting them to economic, cultural and political genocide.

I apologize for confiscating your places of worship (monastery, church, synagogue, Jem house, etc.), and converting them to mosques, museums, community centres or stables.

I apologize from the survivors of the genocide for even forbidding them from dreaming in their own language.

I apologize for forcing racism on you by making you repeat every morning 'So happy to be a Turk'.

I apologize for presenting your properties as gifts to your own murderers.

I apologize for transforming the Anatolian garden of different peoples to a cemetery of different peoples.

I apologize for realizing too late that the sorrow expressed in the song 'Sari Gelin' was in reality the sorrow of the genocide.

I apologize for wiping out the various original peoples of Anatolia living on these lands long before the arrival of the Turks, and for trying to create a single nation state.

I apologize for creating a hell of murders in this country, instead of a heaven of humanity.

I apologize for burying all the people named Agop, Kiriakos, Samuel, Ani, Maria or Sarkis in my city Smyrna (Izmir) as well as the rest of the country, and also burying our humanity in the process.

I apologize for committing crimes against humanity for one thousand and four hundred years in these lands.

I apologize for not realizing that fascism would eventually arrive and start killing us as well in these lands.

I apologize for not being able to put a stop to the denial and assimilation policies for one hundred years.

I apologize especially for our inhumane behaviour during the genocides of the Armenians, Assyrians, Pontic Greeks, Yezidis and Alevis.

And I apologize once again on this April 24 genocide commemoration day, for our inability to protect you and preserve our humanity.





# A SUMMERTIME ADVENTURE



On July 14,  
Leroy & Cynthia Erickson  
hosted a  
“Picnic by the Pool”!  
55 people attended.  
Leroy grilled hamurgers,  
hot dogs and brats.  
Everyone else brought  
a side dish to share.



More than a dozen children  
and young adults spent  
the majority of their  
time in the pool.  
It was a perfect day  
for it! Thank you  
Ericksons for being  
such great  
hosts.



## POPE FRANCIS: I WANT TO BE BURIED BENEATH ARMENIAN KHACHKAR

April 3, 2013 - 21:34 AMT PanARMENIAN.Net -

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, elected the Catholic church's 266th pope, has often attended the liturgies of Armenian Apostolic church in Buenos Aires.

According to the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Argentina and Chile, Archbishop Kissag Muradian, during the inauguration of the khachkar on the 95th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Archbishop Bergoglio expressed a wish to be buried beneath the memorial.

As Armenian-Turkish Agos newspaper reports, on April 23, 2004, at a special mass he celebrated in Buenos Aires' Metropolitan Cathedral, Archb. Bergoglio said,

"We are united in the pain of a Genocide, the first one in the 20th century, which now powerful empires try by all means to silence and cover up... We pray that the Lord frees us from all this and gives us freedom."

Two years later, during the celebration of an ecumenical liturgy presided by Cardinal Bergoglio and Archb. Kissag at the Buenos Aires Cathedral, during the 91st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on April 2006, the priest who is now the Pope said, "Today we pray for this nation who is still deprived of human rights."

"Our friendship with Cardinal Bergoglio mainly started in the years 2004, 2005 and grew especially on the 95th anniversary of the Genocide, when a khachkar was placed in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Cathedral," Archb. Kissag said. A "He had told me he wanted to be buried beneath that Armenian khachkar," he added, expressing his hope that his friend, now as Pope Francis I, will help in achieving progress for recognition of the Genocide.



## ASPIRING CONDUCTOR PREPARES FOR BIG NIGHT

(ABC 6 NEWS)



Many people in Rochester know Ed Pompeian. He's probably best-known for founding the Gift of Life Transplant House, but come Saturday night, he'll be known for something else. Ed is the winner of the 2013 Aspiring Conductor contest for the **Rochester Symphony Orchestra and Chorale**. He'll take center stage for the RSOC's finale concert, *Homeland*. Wednesday night was one of his final rehearsals. He told us he doesn't have a musical background, so he does have some butterflies. Ed says, "Sure I'm nervous. I've never done it before. But I'm sure I'll get through it. Others have before me." If you'd like to see Ed in action and check out the RSOC's finale concert tickets are still available. The show starts at 7:30 Saturday night at Mayo Civic Center.

## A UNIQUE CELEBRATION

Steve and Peggy Merjanian were treated to an elegant dinner for their 25th Wedding Anniversary by Peggy's sons. The occasion had an additional meaning: Steve and Peggy are in the process of moving to the East coast. Thirty years in Minnesota kept them apart on most special occasions and they felt they needed to be closer to family . . . in particular, Peggy's sons, Richard and Gregory, two grandchildren, many nephews and nieces and Steve's brother, sister-in-law and families.

Pictured here (from the left)  
Steve, Gregory, Peggy and Richard.



## STILLWATER: NELSON'S ICE CREAM OPENS TODAY

By [Mary Divine - mdivine@pioneerpress.com](http://Mary Divine - mdivine@pioneerpress.com)

Posted: 04/02/2013 12:01:00 AM CDT

Updated: 04/02/2013 02:03:41 PM CDT

A sure sign of spring in Stillwater: Nelson's Ice Cream opens at 3 p.m. Tuesday, April 2. "Nothing will stop us from coming out of hibernation," said manager **DAVID NAJARIAN**. "We're going to make it spring, even if the weather isn't cooperating."

The ice cream parlor, which has been in operation since 1923, is known for its mammoth portions.

Nelson's will feature two new flavors this year: Blue Moon, a sky-blue-colored ice cream with marshmallows, and Peanut Campfire Crunch, which is "like eating a s'more with peanut butter smeared on it," **NAJARIAN** said. "It tastes amazing."

Spring hours are 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and noon to 9 p.m. Sunday. Summer hours will be 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 10 p.m. Sunday; they will begin when summer vacation starts for Stillwater Area Public Schools students, he said. Nelson's is at 920 W. Olive St.

**2013 ACOM Members**

Highlighted names have donated \$50 or more.

ACOM thanks you

Adamek	Tina & David
Agadzhanova	Galina
Andeweg	George & Jeanne
Angell/Byfield	Bill/Michele
<b>Aram</b>	<b>Connie &amp; George</b>
<b>Asgian</b>	<b>Phil</b>
Balian	Harriet
<b>Baradaran</b>	<b>Kathie &amp; Jaff</b>
Bobgan	Harold
Bulbulian	Francis & Barbara
Charchian	Aram & Ruth
Clarke	Barbara
Desteian/Savage	John/Judy
Digris/McGibbon	Naïry/Terry & family
<b>Dourgarian</b>	<b>Gregg &amp; Mary &amp; family</b>
Erickson	Cynthia & Leroy ,Chris, Bradley, Mitchell
Faust	Gloria & Doug
Favre	Jim & Margaret
Gauro	Boghos & family
Gildensoph	Lynne
Gindorff	Mary Moukalian
Gregorian	Henry & Laurel
Grigorians	Olga & Katia
Hajinian	Peter & Brooke
Hayes	Michelle
Johnson	Margaret
Keljik	Jeff & Susan, Katie
<b>Keljik/Collins</b>	<b>Tom/Jennifer</b>
<b>Keljik /Grantz</b>	<b>Mark/Caren</b>
Kocharian/Davtian	Armen/Marine
Kourajian	John & Myrna
<b>Lippert</b>	<b>James</b>
Manthei	Debra
<b>Mardirosian</b>	<b>Artoosh &amp; Helga</b>
Matossian	Lou Ann
Meketarian	Marty & Mara & family
Merjanian	Steve & Peggy
<b>Mesrobian</b>	<b>Azad &amp; Karen</b>
Mesroubian	Sam & Sylvia
<b>Najarian</b>	<b>John &amp; Mignette</b>
Nyholm	Peter & Dana & family
Ohanessian	Sita
Ohannessian/Tiffany	Judy/Doug, Erica, Harrison
Oyler	William
Pederson	Mary
Plummer	Sona & Bill
Rith-Najarian	Steve & Janet
Saakian	Karina & Valeriy & family
Savayan	Peka & family
Tashjian	Alice
Teosyan/Bagdasarov	Yelena/Georgiy
<b>Toghramadjan</b>	<b>Avo &amp; Katie &amp; family</b>
Warren	Melanie & John
Wiersbeck	Sarah
Wiersbeck	Mark
Yaghsezian	George & Aida, Gregory
Ylitalo	Caroline & David, Andy, Max

ACOM appreciates all donations, no matter how large or small. Your support allows us to continue to serve the MN Armenian Community. To join or rejoin, please use the form on the back cover and mail it with your dues to:

ACOM Treasurer ~ 1703 Skillman Avenue West  
Roseville, MN 55113

# ACOM'S ANNUAL PICNIC

## AUGUST 11, 2013



In the backyard of St. Sahag

**POTLUCK** - Bring a dish to share

**ACOM** will provide refreshments, plates, napkins and "plasticware".

Bring your lawn chairs

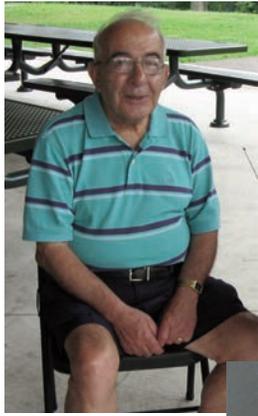
Moonwalk & games for all

**ARMENIAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF MINNESOTA**

203 North Howell Street ~ St. Paul MN 55104

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President:	Tom Keljik	651-659-0552
Vice President:	Leroy Erickson	651-917-1818
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Past President:	Mark Keljik	612-823-6338
Newsletter Editor:	Peggy Merjanian	603-521-7142



# ACOM PicNics



## of the past



### ARMENIAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF MINNESOTA (ACOM)

#### MISSION STATEMENT

- 1) To provide programs and events which encourage its members to learn Armenian culture, language, history and heritage.
- 2) To provide programs of Armenian culture, language, history and heritage for the general Minnesota area.
- 3) To provide an environment which encourages participation of all Armenians, their relations and friends who have an interest in Armenian culture, regardless of religious, political or social differences, and to promote harmony among its members.
- 4) To provide periodic gatherings and meetings for the cultural furtherance of the Armenian people, their relations and friends who have an interest in Armenian culture within the general Minnesota area.

#### CONSTITUTION

The Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota (ACOM) preserves and promotes Armenian culture, language, history and heritage in Minnesota and the upper Midwest. Founded in 1980 and headquartered in St. Paul, ACOM is the oldest and largest Armenian organization in the state.

ACOM welcomes everyone, regardless of ethnic, religious, or political affiliation, who takes an interest in Armenia and Armenians. Our members include first-generation through fourth-generation Minnesota Armenians, their families, and non-Armenian friends of the community.

ACOM's numerous cultural and social events include Armenian dance parties (barahantess), guest speakers, Armenian language classes, folk dance lessons and performances by the Armenian Dance Ensemble of Minnesota, chamber music concerts by the Armenian Music Ensemble, art shows, summer picnics, and craft sales. ACOM also sponsors all Armenian activities at the International Institute's *Festival of Nations*, a major regional folk festival held annually in St. Paul. Minnesota Armenians were founding participants in 1932; today, the Festival is ACOM's most visible public venue.

The ACOM office and most activities are in the historic St. Sahag Armenian Church building, at the intersection of Dayton and Howell, in the Merriam Park neighborhood of St. Paul. As an independent, 501(c)3 non-profit organization, ACOM is supported primarily by membership dues and private donations. Gifts to ACOM are tax-deductible to the extent permissible by law.



Armenian Cultural Organization  
of Minnesota

Culture. Heritage. History. Language.

# ACOM's 2013 Calendar of Events

For further info, call Tom Keljik, ACOM President, 651-659-0552

## Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota

Month	Date	Event	Time
January	5	Gaghant - Barahantess, Marriott in Minnetonka	6:00 PM
January	15	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
February	10	What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian In ...	1:00 PM
February	19	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
March	10	Urban Expedition featuring Armenia, Landmark Center Valeriy Saakian on accordion, ADE performance	1:00 PM
March	20	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
March	23	Festival Silk Dying & Painting workshop	1:00 PM
April	22	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
April	24	Genocide Commemoration	7:30 PM
May	2,3,4,5	Festival of Nations, St. Paul: Children, our past, our future	
May	15	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
May	19	Pilaf Off..... & Ancestral Tables	1:30 PM
May	31	Missahats/Lahmajoun order placed	
June	9	Kourajian GNU Quintet @ Keljik Rugs, Minneapolis	2:00 PM
June	19	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
July	14	ACOM Off-Site Picnic - Erickson's, Roseville	1:00 PM
July	17	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
August	4	M. Gulezian Guitar - Benefit Fuller Center for Housing Location: Keljik Oriental Rugs, Minneapolis	4:00 PM
August	11	ACOM Picnic	1:00 PM
August	21	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
September	7	Voski Ashoun	5:00 PM
September	18	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
October	13	What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian In .....	1:30 PM
October	16	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
November	19	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
December	17	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	6:00 PM
January 4, 2014		Gaghant - Barahantess, Marriott in Minnetonka	5:30 PM

Following are Armenian Dance Ensemble performances at various locations.  
You are invited and welcome to attend. There is no charge for these events.

### 2013 ARMENIAN DANCE ENSEMBLE OF MINNESOTA

For further info, call Nairy Digris 651-639-9346

Month	Date	Location	Time
March	10	Festival of Nations Preview	1:00 PM
March	10	Landmark Center	1:45 PM
April	11	Sholom Home	7:00 PM
April	23	Episcopal Homes	6:45 PM
May	3,4,5	Festival of Nations (8 performances)	
May	15	Presbyterian Homes, Croixdale	6:30 PM
June	6	Jones-Harrison Residence	7:00 PM
June	25	Edina Care and Rehab	7:00 PM
July	12	Hennepin County Government Center	12:00 NOON
August	24	Minnesota State Fair	12-5 PM
September	24	Episcopal Homes	6:45 PM
October	22	Sholom Home	7:00 PM
November	12	Edina Care and Rehab	7:00 PM
December	1	Ukrainian Christmas Festival	TBD



ACOM has placed a barrel in the Fellowship Hall along with empty grocery bags on the side. Please keep in mind the less fortunate and bring non-perishable food items. Your donated items will be much appreciated by those who are in need. ACOM has been regularly delivering bags of food to the Keystone Foodshelf. They have delivered more than 300 pounds of food. Thank You!



Armenian Cultural Organization  
of Minnesota  
Culture. Heritage. History. Language.

# ACOM MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

**VALID THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2013**

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

STREET: \_\_\_\_\_ City/St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

- HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP\***  
**MINNESOTA RESIDENTS . . . . . \$30.00**
- OUT OF STATE . . . . . \$15.00**  
**(Newsletter Only)**
- CONTRIBUTING . . . . . \$100.00**

*\*Includes all members of one household*

Comments? \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO ACOM.**

**COMPLETE THIS FORM and**  
**RETURN IT WITH YOUR CHECK TO**   **Nairy Digris, Treasurer**  
**1703 Skillman Ave. W.**  
**Roseville MN 55113**

**We appreciate and count on your continued support.**

MinneHyeLites is distributed via EMAIL to those who request it. This saves ACOM considerable printing and mailing costs. If you'd like to receive your newsletter via email, just send your email address to [hyebar@q.com](mailto:hyebar@q.com)



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