



*Culture  
Heritage  
History  
Language*

**Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota**  
Established 1980

# *MinneHyeLites*

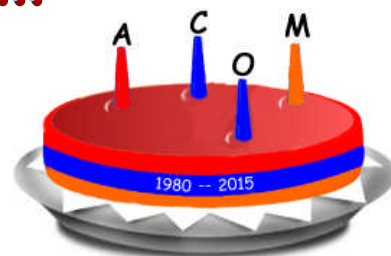
No. 141 Spring 2015



**ACOM Turned 35 !!!**

**1980 - 2015**

**Happy Birthday**



Save the Date for a Party !!!!

July 18th, 2015

Ararat Hall

St. Sahag Armenian Church

(Stay tuned for details on E-mail, Website, Facebook)



## **1915-2015 — 100 Years to Remember**



### **ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MEMORIAL WAS UNVEILED AT SCOTTSDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

A memorial to those killed in the Armenian Genocide of the early 20th century was unveiled Friday, April 24, at Scottsdale Community College.

The circular memorial was sculpted by Armenian artist Gaspar Gharibyan out of "tufa" stone, the traditional Armenian building material. It was gifted to the college by Arizona's Armenian community and the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, according to a news release from St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church in Scottsdale. The church says the monument is dedicated to "all genocide and holocaust martyrs."

As SCC is on Native American land, the monument combines Native American elements and symbols with traditional Armenian symbols. It's inscribed with the words "Not On Our Watch," the motto of SCC's Genocide Awareness Program. The [video](#) (click to see) shows Gharibyan working on the memorial.

### **REMEMBERING THE 1915 GENOCIDE**

For the remembrance of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the start of the Armenian Genocide, the Armenians of Jamestown, ND, along with friends and relatives, gathered on April 24, 2015, to honor their parents and grandparents who survived and found a way to leave their homeland and travel to America, Iran or Armenia.

Viola Abrahamian Reimers, Mary Kourajian Werner, Charlie Kourajian, Mrs. Jackie (Mike) Tarpinian, Gayane Hakobyan and Babken Ter-Vardanyan all related stories of their parents' or grandparents' struggles.

On Sunday, April 26, a small group attended Jamestown Presbyterian Church to continue this Remembrance. Pastor Raum invited Mary Kourajian Werner to speak. This is what she said:

"My mother and dad survived the Armenian Genocide of 1915 to 1923. I'm proud to say that I am full-blooded Armenian. This past Friday, April 24, 2015, was a Day of

**Submitted by Gloria Faust**

*(Continued on page 6)*

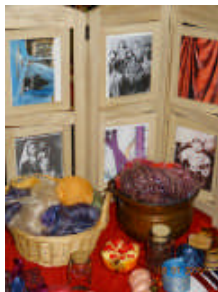
**ACOM 2015 Calendar of Events**

For further info, call Leroy Erickson,

ACOM President, 651-917-1818

**Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota**

Month	Date	Weekday	Event	Time
<b>2015</b>				
January	1	Thursday	New Year's Day	
January	3	Saturday	Gaghant - Barahantess, Marriott in Minnetonka	6:00 PM
January	12	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	4:30 PM
January	15	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
January	19	Monday	Martin Luther King Day	
January	20	Tuesday	Centennial Commemoration Steering Committee	7:00 PM
February	2	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
February	14	Saturday	Valentine's Day	
February	16	Monday	Presidents' Day	
February	17	Tuesday	Centennial Commemoration Steering Committee	7:00 PM
February	19	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
March	9	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
March	17	Tuesday	Centennial Commemoration Steering Committee	7:00 PM
March	19	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
March	21	Saturday	Sixth Session: What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian in..	5:30 PM
April	5	Sunday	Easter Sunday	
April	6	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
April	9	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
April	21	Tuesday	Centennial Commemoration Steering Committee	7:00 PM
April	24	Friday	Genocide Commemoration	7:00 PM
May	1,2,3		Festival of Nations	
May	4	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
May	10	Sunday	Mother's Day	
May	19	Tuesday	Centennial Commemoration Steering Committee	7:00 PM
May	21	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
May	25	Monday	Memorial Day	
May	30	Saturday	Music event Gnu Quintet	3:00 PM
June	1	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
June	18	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
June	21	Sunday	Father's Day	
July	3	Friday	Independence Day Holiday	
July	4	Saturday	Independence Day	
July	6	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
July	18	Saturday	ACOM 35th BIRTHDAY PARTY DINNER	5:00 PM
July	26	Sunday	How to get started in Armenian Genealogy and AFTER	1:00 PM
July			Movie Night	7:00 PM
August	3	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
August	9	Sunday	Andy Ylitalo's presentation on Armenia trip	1:00 PM
August	23	Sunday	ACOM Picnic	1:00 PM
September	7	Monday	Labor Day	
September	14	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
September	17	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
September	19	Saturday	Voski Ashoun - Armenian Play	5:00 PM
October	5	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
October	15	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
October	18	Sunday	What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian in .....	1:00 PM
November	2	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
November	7	Saturday	Cooking Class by Judy Ohannesian	10:00 AM
November	19	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
November	26	Thursday	Thanksgiving Day	
November			Movie Night	7:00 PM
December	7	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
December	25	Friday	Christmas Day	
<b>2016</b>				
January	2 or 9	Saturday	Gaghant - Barahantess	6:00 PM
January	4 or 16	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM



## Armenian Silk Work Booth Festival of Nations 2015

Once again, the Armenians were well represented at the annual Minnesota Festival of Nations! Held for four days, from April 30 through May 3, the festival entertained more than 10,000 visitors each day, including thousands of school students from Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin who attended on the two designated school



days prior to the weekend. In addition to the many performances by the graceful and elegant Armenian dance troupe, ACOM also sponsored the annual artisan demonstration booth and exhibit in the Festival Bazaar area. The Armenian exhibit was set up to look like a market

(Continued on page 14)

## Armenian Dance Ensemble of Minnesota 2015 Dance Ensemble Performances

For further information call Nairy Digris 651-639-9346

Month	Date	Location	Time
January	25	The Wellington	2:00 PM
February	7	Keystone	2:00 PM
March	5	V.A. Home	7:00 PM
March	8	Festival of Nations Preview	1:00 PM
April	7	Episcopal Homes	7:00 PM
April	16	Langton Place	6.30 pm
May	1,2,3	Festival of Nations	
May	26	Edina Care & Rehab	7:00 PM
May	30	Patrick's Cabaret	7:30 PM
June	23	The Shores of Lake Phalen	6.30 pm
June	30	Shores of Lake Johanna	6:30 PM
July	6	Wealshire of Bloomington	6:30 PM
August	26	Centennial Lakes	7:00 PM
August	30	Cerenity Care	2:00 PM
September	12	Cherrywood Pointe	2:00 PM
October	25	The Wellington	2:00 PM
December	6	Ukrainian Christmas Festival	1:00 PM

### Interesting Small World Stuff:

"I got back from New Orleans a couple weeks ago, where I happened to meet a couple of guys who choreograph **Armenian Dance in New Orleans**. I can't remember their names at all, but I mentioned I'd be working with your group and they'd heard of you--small world!"

**Scott Artley,**  
**Patrick's Cabaret Performing Arts Curator**

## Armenian Dance Ensemble Festival of Nations 2015



# Readers' Corner

## COMMENTS ON NEWSLETTER 140

Keep up the good work !

**Art Kourajian**

I loved the coffee house article and the old painting in the newsletter! If you look at the detail in the painting..."the men are by the drink and the woman is at the sink"... Thank God the Gaghan party is sink free! The women are free to enjoy the festivities.

**Gloria Faust**

I just finished reading the entire issue of the newsletter. Another great job. Thank you so much for all of your hard work and dedication to the local Armenian community. I will forward this to both of my kids so they can stay informed of their hometown Armenian community.

**Judy Ohannesian**

Very good issue. Thanks for the hard work. OUR GRATITUDE IS EXTENDED TO TERRY.....for sure.

**Francis Bulbulian**

Great job you two!

**Tom Keljik**

This is an AWESOME issue! Fantastic job!

**Peggy Merjanian**

The newsletter looks lovely, as always! Thanks.

**Janet Rith-Najarian**

## WHAT WAS IT LIKE GROWING UP ARMENIAN IN .....

March 21, 2015

A small but attentive gathering were given a great treat in hearing Kristapor Souslian, Nairy Digris and John Parker-Der Boghossian talk about their upbringings in Egypt and France. If you missed this presentation, you missed an opportunity to hear from Nairy and Kristapor about Egypt under the King and later living under the rule of Pres. Nasser. John talked about the challenges of identity in France and assimilation that is expected into French culture. The three painted wonderful images of their youth and the assembled left with a greater understanding of the members of our community. Let's have more of these events - they never disappoint.

**Tom Keljik**

It seemed the presenters barely scratched the surface in the allotted time. Besides wishing more people had attended, I would have liked more time for the program. I have the sense, however that people's assembling together is the most important ingredient.

**Andrea Johnson**

## CONGRATULATIONS

To First-Time Grandma, Andrea Johnson, for this long awaited grand-baby, who decided to arrive Monday afternoon, March 23, 2015, in a hospital in Berkeley, CA, More details and photos on page 10.

To Der Tadeos, Yeretsgin Gayane, and brother Khatchadour, on the arrival of their daughter/sister Lucy Tatev Barseghyan. She was born on April 22, 2015 at 3:03 pm. See more details and photo on page 10.

## SYMPATHY

To Steve Scallen, Chacke and the entire Scallen family. ACOM expresses its condolences on the death of **THOMAS SCALLEN**, Steve's older brother, born August 14, 1925, who died peacefully at home on March 21, 2015, and was sent on his next adventure with love by his wife, family, friends, and his faithful dog Bella. Mass of Christian Burial took place on Thursday, March 26, 2015, 12 Noon at The Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis.

Memorials preferred to Saint Thomas Academy, Animal Humane Society or donor's choice. [www.GILLBROTHERS.com](http://www.GILLBROTHERS.com) MINNEAPOLIS, MN 612 861 6088.

**DENNIS FUCHS**, a very long time member of ACOM, passed away at age 67. He originally lived in St. Paul but had been living in Mankato for some time now. Both he and his parents, Bernard and Virginia Fuchs, had been very active in the Armenian Cafe at the Festival of Nations every year. Dennis is survived by brother and sister-in-law, Richard and Peggy Fox of Victoria, MN, nieces and nephews, Christine Fox, David and Melissa Fox, and Craig Fox. Many cousins, other relatives and friends. Memorial Service was held at St. Victoria Catholic Church followed by interment at St. Victoria Catholic cemetery.

## GEORGE BAGDASAROV

George passed away on May 3, 2015 after a long illness. His entire life was devoted to his loving family. From Azerbaijan, he went to Moscow and then settled in Minnesota. Everything he did was for his family. His grandchildren loved him so much. George had a peaceful and quiet presence and a smile that was always so real. The burial service took place at St. Sahag on May 8th followed by the interment at Gethsemane cemetery, and a luncheon back at St. Sahag. George will be missed by his family and all his friends. ACOM extends its most sincere condolences to the Bagdasarov family.

## GINA BONSIGNORE (ADE member)

Condolences from your friends in ADE on the passing of you father, Gina. May he rest in peace.

## ARMENIAN DANCERS AT THE FESTIVAL OF NATIONS

We both thought the Dance Ensemble looked great at the Festival! The hand movement in the last dance was beautiful and so wonderfully synchronized, we were very impressed. The lines of dancers looked good on the stage and the choreography highlighted the dances nicely adding interest and depth on stage. Great job!

**Caren Grantz & Mark Keljik**

## SPEEDY RECOVERY

One of our devoted long-time "odar" ADE dance members, KATHLEEN DANIELS, had surgery on May 8, 2015 where the doctors were able to reattach one of two torn tendons in her arm/shoulder. She will wear a sling for six weeks and do a lot of physical therapy. Her loving family will take very good care of her and we hope to see her back dancing in a few months.

PEGGY MERJANIAN wrote on 4/23/2015:

*"I just spent 4 days in the hospital....evidently had a couple of TIAs (mild strokes) doesn't seem to be any permanent fallout. Thanks to my son Rich upon whose insistence I went to the ER with him. The night before I called 911 upon the advice of a cover doctor. Got taken to the ER by ambulance, had some tests and was sent home about 2:00 AM. Slept about 12 hours and next thing I knew, I was in the car with my son and wife Theresa to the hospital again and wound up being admitted. Had MRI, carotid ultrasound, cardiac ultrasound etc.... can't remember when I've had that much "fun". Gratefully, am back home. My "get up and go" got up and went and has not been back yet. Am hoping soon."*

We all join to wish you a very speedy and complete recovery, Peggy!

ALARICA HASSETT recently had surgery on both her ankles to remove the "os trigonum", a small bone just behind the ankle joint. In one foot, this bone was broken into 3 pieces and in the other foot, it was lodged in such a way that it caused her excruciating pain. She is now able to walk, almost normally, without huge boots or crutches, and is undergoing physical therapy 2-3 times a week. The surgery was successful and she hopes to get back to all activities, including ballet, in the near future. Antsadz ullah, Alarica !

Very best wishes to ART KOURADJIAN who recently underwent emergency hip surgery.

## THANK YOU

Today I received beautiful flowers from ACOM. I'm very touched from ACOM's thoughtfulness. I appreciate it. Really liked them. Best regards,

**Gayane (Yeretsgin) Barseghyan**

Dear ADE friends,

Thank you so much for the lovely gift basket - we are all enjoying the treats very much!! And I am pretty sure that chocolate sea salt caramels have extra-special healing powers!

I think that Marcie had emailed that my surgery went very well, (I'm a little fuzzy about that day...) and next week I go in for a re-check with the surgeon and the start of my PT. I should have a better idea then about how long it will all take.

In the meantime, hope all of you are well. I am SO looking forward to being able to fully participate once again!

Many thanks,

**Kathleen Daniels**

You are so kind to send the lovely gift basket. My dad loved all things food-related, and it was his fascination with different cultures that brings me to our group. I love dancing with you all! Thank you,

**Gina Bonsignore**

## FROM OUR READERS

I need to let you all know how proud I am as an Armenian to be part of ACOM's organization. Thank you all for making me feel part of the family. It reminds me of my childhood and visiting my grandmother on Sundays for the family feast.

**Mark Wiersbeck**

For those of you that saw the movie, **The Cut**, this week, I'm wondering if your experience was the same as mine? I know most/all of you went on Monday evening. I went last night and was pleased to see the theater literally ull! People were scrambling to find seats before the show.

As the movie ended, the audience broke out in applause. Then something occurred that I've never experienced. The closing credits ran probably ten minutes and without exaggeration, 95% of the people stayed seated watching and listening to the music to the very end. I was numb at that point, so perhaps others felt the same connection. Then, as the credits finished, again there was applause

By the way, did anyone else notice Lou Ann's name on the credits? It was under the Historical information heading, near the very end of the credits. That was pretty cool to see.

**Mark Wiersbeck**

Thank you ACOM and St. Sahag Armenian church for your hard work in developing a truly outstanding program for the commemoration of the Genocide centennial. I am always proud of my Armenian heritage, but last night, seeing so many of us come together in honor of the same cause, I felt overwhelming love for our family and community. It was both sobering and uplifting, and proved yet again that no matter what, our Hye community will continue to rise above adversity and prevail!

**Christine Samuelian**

(Continued from page 1)

Remembrance of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the start of the Armenian Genocide.”

But time does not wash away the memory of the horrors of those days in history. In the mid-1920's, this Presbyterian Church in Jamestown, ND, welcomed with open arms eight fortunate, young Armenian refugees who had escaped the ravages of the death marches and massacres. They found their way to America, its freedom and safety.

These four refugee couples were: Melkon and Khattoun Abrahamian (Viola's parents); Anton and Margaret Melikian (Mary Melikian's parents); Charlie and Agavnee Tarpinian (Mike Tarpinian's parents); Vahan and Zarouhi Kourajian (my parents), and I am Mary Kourajian Werner.

These four couples didn't know each other when they came to Jamestown but found homes within 1 block of each other. They formed a bond of kinship / community in that they were all Armenian and had all experienced the devastations of the massacres and the loss of the rest of their families.

Because these four refugee couples had the will to live and the courage to help themselves find their way out of the death march and their beloved homeland, we, their children, 21 among the four families, were privileged and proud to be born in this great land of freedom and plenty, and to become responsible citizens.

It all began on April 24, 1915, during World War I. Because the Armenians would not denounce their Christianity, the young Turks ordered the mass deportation of all Armenians into the Syrian Desert. They were stripped of everything they had, even of the clothes on their backs and were forced to march through the desert.

With no food or water, they fell by the hundreds of thousands along the way. My mother remembers eating the grass from the ground for a bit of food, and told of her sister dying in her arms as she sang an old hymn of the church and was then forced to leave her and go on in the death march.

The Armenian Genocide is said to be one of the most horrific tragedies of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and led to the death of over one and one-half million Armenians. This event has been recognized as an attempt to eliminate all traces of a thriving and noble civilization over 5000 years old. As a people, the Armenians survived and embraced their Christian identity and undying faith in God. The nation's ancient religious faith unified the Armenians through invasions, exiles, persecutions, massacres and earthquakes over 16 centuries.

Armenia is the world's oldest Christian nation dating back to 301 AD. Legend says that Armenia was settled by the direct descendants of the biblical flood – it was on nearby Mt. Ararat that Noah's Ark came to rest, and Armenians believe themselves to be the descendants of Noah's great grandson, Hai.

This past Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the events that began the Armenian Genocide.

To this day, Turkey still denies their part in the genocide and blames the deaths on the war.

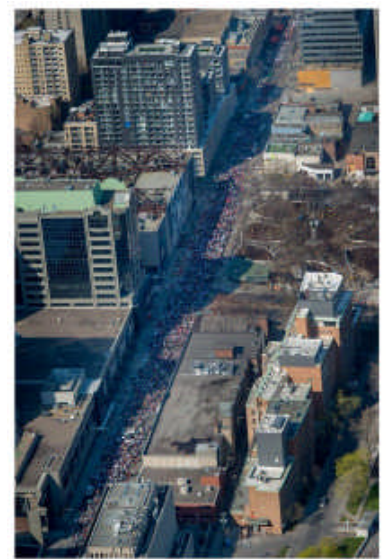
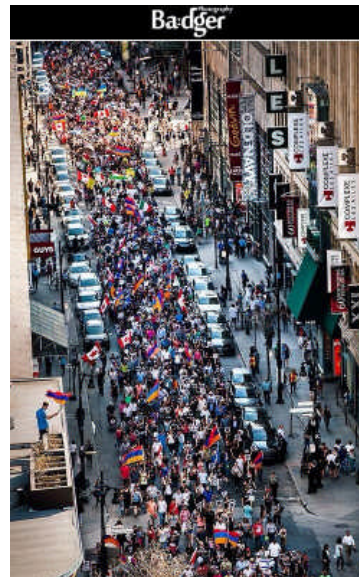
In remembrance of our parents and the suffering they endured, some of their descendants met this past Friday evening to share stories and recognition of their struggles caused by the genocide. At the time we were children growing up, we didn't realize or understand the hardships our parents had gone through, but now we know and understand and feel their pain.

Our story is a brave and inspiring page out of the book of history. We are proud of our heritage and urge the younger generation to learn all they can about their Armenian history. Our parents were all hard workers – never complaining. The men found work on the railroad as section laborers. They all had huge gardens that provided food for their families and the neighbors. They all found the means to care for their families without the help of any social programs. In their simple faith, these young immigrants who didn't speak or understand the language or customs, were ever thankful for all they had in this great country and instilled in their children the love and worship of the same God that cared for them.

Thank you for letting us worship with you today in our parents' home church. We pause in remembrance of them and give thanks for their lives which God has blessed.”

**Submitted by Mary Kourajian Werner and Viola Abrahamian Reimers**

**SUNDAY 5/3/15, GENOCIDE MARCH IN MONTREAL CANADA**



## WORLD WITHOUT GENOCIDE TENTS OF WITNESS

March 28 and 29, 2015, Saturday and Sunday, was the weekend where the 10 World Without Genocide Tents of Witness were on display at St. Sahag. Attendance on Saturday was very disappointing, with only about 8 people attending, but Sunday more than made up for it with from 50 to 60 people attending. A big thank you to all of the people who helped with the assembly and tear-down of the tents.

It was definitely interesting to browse through all of the tents and read the information on each of the genocides which were represented, and to see the similarities and differences between them. It was also interesting to finally learn the story of exactly how and why the Armenian tent was added.

**Leroy Erickson**



AT WILLIAM MITCHELL COLLEGE OF LAW  
protect. prevent. prosecute. remember.

### CNN DOCUMENTARY: ON THE ROAD OF ARMENIA.

A very interesting video on YouTube on current day Armenia. A little long, but worthwhile watching.

<http://youtu.be/2J9h-kipigk>

From Ariel Strichartz  
when she was in  
Argentina

(If you look very closely  
you can see Ariel reflected  
in the window)



Additional Genocide material: *(Continued on page 11)*



### ARMENIAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF MINNESOTA

203 North Howell Street ~ St. Paul, MN 55104

#### 2015 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

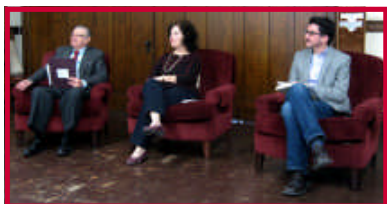
President:	Leroy Erickson	651-917-1818
Vice President:	Francis Bulbulian	651-645-2460
Treasurer:	Nairy Digris	651-639-9346
Assistant to Treasurer	Bradley Erickson	651-917-1818
Secretary:	Lynne Gildensoph	651-690-8621
Social Director:	Mark Wiersbeck	952-220-6695
Cultural Director:	Andrea Johnson	651-323-4140
Past President:	Tom Keljik	651-659-0552

Newsletter Editors:	Peggy Merjanian	952-473-HYEM
	Terry McGibbon	651-639-9346

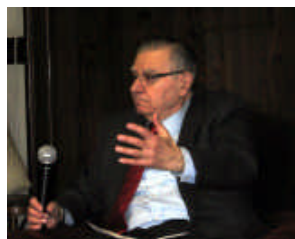


## What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian In . . . . .

Session 6, March 21, 2015



The sixth session of ACOM's popular series of ***"What it was like growing up Armenian In ..."*** was held on March 21, 2015. The featured speakers this time were Kristapor Souslian, who grew up in Egypt, Nairy Digris, who also grew up in Egypt, and John Parker Der Boghossian, who grew up in France and the U.S.



Kristapor's grandparents were killed in the genocide. A relative rescued his father and aunt and brought them to Greece. They later moved to Egypt. His mother was born in Egypt, to a very rich family. He grew up in a rich family in Egypt and loved it until the king was driven out in 1952. Under the new government, all of the

Greeks, Italians, French, English and other foreign people were driven out of Egypt.



Nairy also grew up in Egypt. Her paternal grandfather's original name was Deveyan, but was changed to Digris in order to get work (surname chosen from the Tigris river). Both of her sets of grandparents left Armenia shortly before the genocide. Her family also had a good life in Egypt until the king was deposed, with her father working as a banker. In the elementary school that she attended, they learned four

languages: French, Arabic, Armenian and English. She attended high school at an American school where she had to take most classes in Arabic. After the king was deposed and Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power, life totally changed and things were much more restricted. With great difficulty, her family finally managed to emigrate to the United States, where they joined her uncle and aunt, Van and Vali Kardashian in the Twin Cities.



John's mother's family escaped during the genocide and made it to Lebanon and then to France. His father ended up defecting from the Soviet army during World War II and also moved to France. His parents ended up moving to the Michigan in the United States.

This program, as well as all other sessions of ***"What It Was Like ..."***, are available on DVD if you would like to watch them.

## ACOM Book Club



The ACOM Book Club has continued its monthly meetings at St. Sahag Armenian church. Last October, we finished off our summer discussion of Armenian history and then moved on to a somewhat lighter topic with William Saroyan's *"The Human Comedy"*. Everybody in the club agreed that they loved this book and had even given copies to their children or grandchildren to read. We then moved on to Louis de Berniere's *"Birds Without Wings"* and Meline Tomani's *"There Was and There Was Not"*. The general opinion was that both books were difficult to read, but they triggered discussions of life in the Ottoman empire before the Armenian genocide, with Armenians, Turks, Greeks, Kurds, Assyrians and other groups all living together. This, in turn, triggered stories of the members' various Armenian ancestors, where they came from, how and when they moved to the United States, and what they did when they got here. Along the way, several of us have also read Markar Melkonian's *"My Brother's Road"* and Nancy Krikorian's *"Dreams of Bread and Fire"*, but we have never quite found time to discuss them at the club meetings. We will now be moving on to Aline Ohanesian's *"Orhan's Inheritance"*, which was an award winner on Amazon. After our June meeting we'll be taking a break for the summer and then getting back together again in September. Come and join us. It's fun!



## FOODSHELF DONATIONS

ACOM's food shelf barrel is still in Fellowship Hall along with empty grocery bags.

Please keep in mind the less fortunate and bring non-perishable food items to place in the barrel.

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 in St. Paul.

Thank You!



## ACOM 2015 PAID MEMBERS

Angell, Michele & Bill  
Adamek, Tina & David  
Agadzhanova, Galina  
**Andeweg, George & Jeanne**  
**Asgian, Philip**  
Balian, Harriet  
Bejanyan, Nelli & Lazaryan, Aleksandr  
Bobgan, Harold  
Boranian, Mayva  
Bulbulian, Barbara & Francis  
Charchian, Aram & Ruth  
Digris, Naïry & McGibbon, Terry  
Djerdjian, Viken & Nancy  
**Dourgarian, Gregg & Mary & family**  
Erickson, Leroy, Cynthia, Bradley, Mitchell  
Esaybegyan, Anna, Sergei & family  
**Faust, Gloria & Doug**  
Favre, Jim & Margaret  
Gauro, Boghos & Cusik, Lana  
Gildensoph, Lynne  
Gregorian, Henry & Laurel  
Hakobyan, Artur & Papiyeva, Nina  
Hayes, Adrienne, Jim & family  
Johnson, Andrea & Lowell  
**Keljik, Mark & Grantz, Caren**  
Keljik, Susan & Jeff  
Keljik, Tom & Collins, Jennifer  
**Kourajian, Arthur**  
Lippert, Jim  
**Mardirossian, Artoosh & Helga**  
Matossian, Lou Ann  
Meketarian, Marty, Mara & family  
Merjanian, Peggy & Steve  
Mesrobian, Azad & Karen  
Mokhtarian, Koko & Joanne  
Nyholm, Dana, Peter & family  
Ohannesian, Judy & Tiffany, Doug & family  
Plummer, Bill, Elizabeth & Chris  
**Pompeian, Edward, Jayne & Family**  
**Reimers, Vi**  
Saakian, Valeriy, Karine & family  
Savayan, Peka, Maria & Steve A.  
**Warner, Beth Dardarian**  
Wiersbeck, Mark  
Wiersbeck, Sarah  
Ylitalo, Caroline, David & family

*NOTE: Boldface type indicates members who  
have contributed \$50.00 or more to ACOM.  
Our thanks for everyone's most generous support.*

### 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.

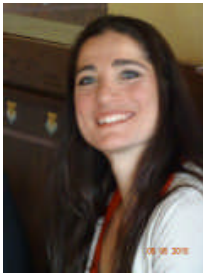
ACOM's numerous cultural and social events include Armenian dance parties (barahantess), guest speakers, Armenian language classes, folk dance lessons and performances by the Armenian Dance Ensemble of Minnesota, chamber music concerts by the Armenian Music Ensemble, art shows, summer picnics, and craft 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.

## ACOM Board Invites Armenian Opera Star Nora Sourouzian to Lunch



On May 5, a small group of nine ACOM board members met Nora Sourouzian, the young mezzo-soprano from Montreal. the Twin Cities in *Carmen* with the US debut, and by ticed her name in of the Pioneer suggested contact-Minnesota was date was hurriedly last free days persistent efforts of Andrea Johnson.



Nora arrived at Muffuletta's restaurant accompanied by MN Opera staffer, Andrea Bork, and we settled quickly into a comfortable conversation around the table. Nora is half Armenian and half French. She is bilingual in French and Western Armenian and speaks English, Italian and German as well. She wears her Armenian heritage, from the Van area, proudly. Her Armenian father lives in Yerevan with his Armenian wife, her French mother lives in Paris, and Nora lives in Copenhagen with her partner. She is on the road the majority of the year, with most of her performances in European cities.



Nora studied opera at Université de McGill in Montreal. She stopped one semester short of graduation when, in 2005, she was called to Wexford, Ireland, to replace the lead singer, who had fallen ill, in the title role of Fauré's *Pénélope*. Her opera career took off in Europe and she continued her studies at the International Opera Centrum Nederland in Amsterdam. Now, motivated by wanting to better understand the complexities of the women whose roles she performs, she studies part-time for a psychology degree through a university in Lausanne, Switzerland.

On May 7, Art Kourajian and Lowell and Andrea Johnson had the memorable experience of hearing Nora perform at the Ordway. She was a sassy, classy *Carmen*, her voice rich and full, her stage presence striking. We went backstage after the last act and presented



Nora with a bouquet of yellow roses and and a card that Art picked up. We chatted until the Ordway was deserted and a maintenance man unlocked a door to let us out. Art walked her to her car in the Lowry ramp. Nora truly appreciated ACOM reaching out to her during her last week in Minnesota. We wished her well on her rising career and told her we all await her return.

**Submitted by Andrea Johnson**

## A couple of new Armenian babies to welcome



Eyes wide open on grandma's quilt !



Cornac, one week and one day

**Cormac Lincoln** weighed 7 lbs, 3.6 oz, and was 20 inches long. A perfect baby boy. The baby, mom, Molly Howard (Andrea's daughter) and dad, Nash Lincoln, are doing well. They live in Oakland, CA. ! Precious first grandchild of Andrea and Lowell Johnson. Great-grandma Margaret Johnson would have been so proud ! *"It was VERY hard to leave Oakland. Thank goodness it sounds like his mama and papa will be moving to Minnesota before the end of the year."*

**Andrea Johnson**



First family picture of newborn baby **Lucy Barseghyan**.



She was born on April 22, 2015 at 3:03 pm. Her weight was 8 pounds 1 oz, and she was 20 inches long. Her parents named her Lucy Tatev. In Armenian, Lucy means light and Tatev means "may God give you wings". To Der Tadeos, Yeretsgin Gayane, and brother Khatchadour, ACOM extends its congratulations.



(Continued from Page 7)

## Governments/States Recognizing The Armenian Genocide as of April 20, 2015

Countries			U.S. States		
1. Argentina	15. Poland	1. Alaska	15. Louisiana	29. North Carolina	
2. Armenia	16. Russia	2. Arizona	16. Maine	30. North Dakota	
3. Belgium	17. Slovakia	3. Arkansas	17. Maryland	31. Ohio	
4. Bolivia	18. Sweden	4. California	18. Massachusetts	32. Oklahoma	
5. Canada	19. Switzerland	5. Colorado	19. Michigan	33. Oregon	
6. Chile	20. Syria	6. Connecticut	20. Minnesota	34. Pennsylvania	
7. Cyprus	21. Uruguay	7. Delaware	21. Missouri	35. Rhode Island	
8. Czech Republic	22. Holy See	8. Florida	22. Montana	36. South Carolina	
9. France	23. Venezuela	9. Georgia	23. Nebraska	37. Tennessee	
10. Greece		10. Hawaii	24. Nevada	38. Texas	
11. Italy		11. Idaho	25. New Hampshire	39. Utah	
12. Lithuania		12. Illinois	26. New Jersey	40. Vermont	
13. Lebanon		13. Kansas	27. New Mexico	41. Virginia	
14. Netherlands		14. Kentucky	28. New York	42. Washington	
<a href="#">Country Source</a>		<a href="#">State Source</a>		43. Wisconsin	

### Local Groups - ACOM and WWG pressed for a letter to Obama from our US Senators

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
March 27, 2015

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, during which 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children were massacred or marched to their deaths by the Ottoman Empire. We are writing to request that you attend the main commemorative event in Yerevan, Armenia on April 24th in order to send a powerful message that the United States recognizes the magnitude and full meaning of the Armenian Genocide. Your affirmation, this April, of the Armenian Genocide - as a clear case of genocide - will properly honor the victims of this crime and underscore America's principled stand against all genocides - past, present, and future.

From 1915 to 1923, 2 million Armenians were deported or expelled from their historic homeland where they had lived for 2,500 years. More than 1.5 million men, women, and children perished. This was genocide. At the time, U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, explicitly described the genocide as a "campaign of race extermination," an account that was corroborated at the time by the Allied Powers of England, France, and Russia. At the end of World War I, the Ottoman Turkish Government indicted the persons responsible for organizing and executing massacres against the Armenian people. Since then, the historical record of the Armenian Genocide has been documented by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum through a public examination of the historic record.

The United States Congress marked the beginning of the Armenian Genocide in 1916 with the passage of its first Armenian Genocide resolution, which noted the "starvation, diseases, and untold suffering" of the Armenians. In subsequent years, additional congressional resolutions noted the "clearly established the truth of the reported massacres and other atrocities from which the Armenian people have suffered." Last year the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported Senate Resolution 410, which calls for the foreign policy of the United States to reflect this understanding of the Armenian Genocide.

While the United States Congress has a long history of support for the victims

and the memory of the Armenian Genocide, the Administration has not formally recognized the atrocities that were perpetrated against the Armenians as "genocide". Your presence at the event would send a powerful signal to the international community that this Administration is committed to recognizing the Armenian Genocide, to upholding the ideals of tolerance and universal human rights upon which our country was founded, and to preventing similar atrocities from ever happening again.

Sincerely,

*Robert Menendez*  
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

*Barbara Boxer*  
Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator

*Edward J. Markey*  
Ed Markey  
United States Senator

*Dick Durbin*  
Dick Durbin  
United States Senator

*Jack Reed*  
Jack Reed  
United States Senator

*Gary Peters*  
Gary Peters  
United States Senator

*Debbie Stabenow*  
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

*Sheldon Whitehouse*  
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

*Cory Gardner*  
Cory Gardner  
United States Senator

*Mark Kirk*  
Mark Kirk  
United States Senator

*Dean Heller*  
Dean Heller  
United States Senator

*Marco Rubio*  
Marco Rubio  
United States Senator

*Elizabeth Warren*  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

*Dianne Feinstein*  
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

*Brian Schatz*  
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



## ACOM 2015 INTEREST SURVEY WHAT YOU TOLD US:

The ACOM 2015 interest survey had 45 responses (although not all 45 responders gave a response to all of the items.) Here is how your responses ranked the items in each category on the survey:

### Which events did you attend in 2014, from highest to lowest attendance:

Gaghant (27 yes, 18 no); ACOM picnic at St. Sahag (26 yes, 17 no); "What was it like growing up Armenian in....?" (26 yes, 19 no); Voski Ashoun (22 yes, 20 no); Armenian Dance Ensemble (14 yes, 27 no); ACOM summer pool party (13 yes, 28 no); Armenian movie and popcorn night (10 yes, 29 no); Armenian cooking class (9 yes, 29 no); Armenian book club (8 yes, 32 no).

### Reasons you gave if you did not attend Gaghant in January, 2014:

Schedule conflict - 15 yes; Location - 4 yes; Cost - 0 yes; Weather - 0 yes.

### Your level of interest for continuing familiar ACOM events in the future, from greatest to least interest by adding together "Strong Interest" and "Avid Interest" responses for each item:

Commemoration (37), "What was it like growing up Armenian in....?" (34), music events at Keljik's Rugs or other location (33), ACOM picnic at St. Sahag (32), Gaghant (31), Voski Ashoun (27), ACOM summer pool part (22), Armenian cooking class (21), Armenian movie and popcorn night (21), Armenian book club (16), Armenian Dance Ensemble (15).

### Level of interest for "new events" (or resuming "old events") in the future, from greatest to least interest:

Periodic wine and cheese social: (36 yes, 5 no), Western Armenian language classes: (25 yes, 14 no), Dining club at restaurant, or rotating hosting: (26 yes, 15 no), Armenian intergenerational vocal ensemble (18 yes, 20 no); Participation in staging a play by Armenian author (13 yes, 23 no), Poetry writing group (5 yes, 33 no).

### Preferred time for ACOM events, from most popular to least popular time:

Saturday afternoon: (25 yes, 5 no); Sunday afternoon: (25 yes, 8 no); Saturday evening: (22 yes, 10 no), Weeknight evening: (19 yes, 12 no), Friday evening: (20 yes, 14 no), Sunday evening: (10 yes, 16 no).

### Barriers to attending:

Busy schedule (34 yes, 7 no), Transportation (4 yes, 27 no), Cost (3 yes, 27 No), Child care (3 yes, 20 no).

### Your comments added a personal tone to the survey. A few examples:

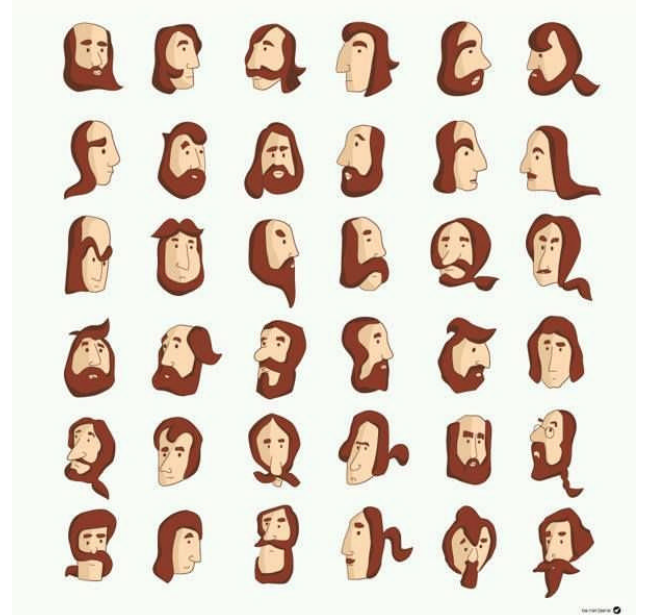
"Good for building community and preserving culture!" "I appreciate the events and time taken to put them together. The reason why I did not attend was due to family needs." Comments related to future programming: "Events highlighting contributions of Armenians in and from MN." "Would like to attend evening event where a famous Armenian would come and discuss some current topic that is of interest to the rebuilding of Armenia." "You need to have at least 3-4 kid friendly events so we can bring the grandchildren."

**Thank you for your feedback. While the survey was a formal tool, we welcome your comments and suggestions anytime!**

Andrea Johnson



**Can you  
match up  
the letters?**



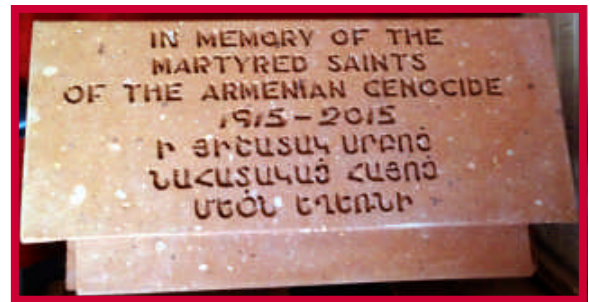
## **Dedication of the Memorial Khatchkar** *honoring the martyred saints of the Armenian Genocide*

**Sunday, June 7, 2015**

*Badarak at ten o'clock in the morning  
Dedication and luncheon to follow*

VERY REV. FR. SIMON ODABASHIAN, DIOCESAN VICAR  
REV. FR. TADEOS BARSEGHYAN, PASTOR

Saint Sahag Armenian Church



**Base Inscription**

## LINKS TO GENOCIDE CENTENNIAL EVENTS

(Print copies of this Newsletter will not have active links. A web search on the Title may produce the link page)

**MPR interview with the Keljik brothers:**

[Never again: Family's stories recall Armenian genocide](#)

[Turkish pastor visits Fresno Church asking forgiveness for genocide](#)

[Mehmet Celal Bey, the Turkish Oskar Schindler](#)

[A Century After Armenian Genocide, Turkey's Denial Only Deepens](#)

[100 years later, Armenians in Twin Cities around world recall 'forgotten holocaust'](#)

[Director of '1915 The Movie' on growing up with Armenian genocide as family history](#)

[New Generations Of Armenian-Americans Still Passionate About Recognizing Genocide](#)

[St. Paul church pushes to recognize Armenian genocide](#)

[The First Deportation ... the Armenian Genocide](#)

[Serj Tankian's 100 Years Commemorative Video](#)

[Directors slam Russell Crowe's Water Diviner](#)

[100 years later, Obama should formally recognize the Armenian genocide](#)

[The Armenian rugs that tell two stories](#)

[The New Yorker - Remembering the Armenian Genocide](#)

[White House Acknowledges Armenian Genocide, But Avoids The Term](#)

[Armenian tragedy still raw in Turkey 100 years on](#)

[Interview with Richard Hovannisian on Armenian TV \(in English\)](#)

[Canonization of Martyrs of Armenian Genocide at Etchmiadzin](#)

[Interview with Joachim Savelsberg on WCCO](#)  
[http://mnarmenians.org/index.php?p=1\\_10](http://mnarmenians.org/index.php?p=1_10)

[New York Times opinion page "Armenians shouldn't let Genocide define us"](#)

[Eiffel Tower lights were switched off to honor Armenian Genocide](#)

[Armenian Genocide Centennial commemoration in Times Square](#)

[Armenian Genocide Memorial at Scottsdale Community College](#)

[A crash course in Armenian history](#)

[New York Times rejects Turkish ad as being a denial of the genocide](#)

[NPR - Armenians mark a century since World War I massacre](#)

[NPR - A century since atrocities against Armenians, an unresolved wound](#)

[St. Paul Pioneer Press - interview with Father Tadeos](#)

[MinnPost - Why won't Obama use the 'g' word?](#)

[New York Times report on Yerevan commemoration, Peter Hajinian's dad is quoted](#)

[Thomas De Waal on memoirs of the Armenian Catastrophe](#)

[Vice News - Thousands gather in Istanbul](#)

[The Guardian - Armenia's A-List](#)

[NPR - Hidden Armenians emerge in Turkey](#)

(Continued from page 3)

booth at a traditional Vernissage from the old days in Yerevan, complete with a grapevine-wrapped arbor and a mural with Ararat on the horizon. Inside, we featured a display depicting the famous Silk Road and the Armenian role in the silk trade with the neighboring nations, along with an exhibit of traditional plants and pigments used for silk dyeing and painting, a hands



on demo of silk processing that included live silk worms to cocoons to a spinning wheel, demos of silk painting and printing and stenciling, and a rainbow array of naturally hand-dyed and painted silk scarves and ties for sale. Of particular interest to visitors was the

chance to see and touch our live silkworms and learn how silk is actually made. The visitors were also very interested in our dolls of different countries, which were laid out along a route of the Silk Road, each doll dressed in its own country's traditional folk clothing with some aspect of Armenian silk in their traditional dress. It was a colorful and eye catching booth, with the exhibit created by Janet Rith-Najarian and Judy Ohannessian, and the Arbor and booth structure built by Steve Rith-Najarian and then assembled and ably installed at the Festival by Terry McGibbon, Tom Keljik, and Leroy Erickson. The booth was staffed by many cheerful and friendly Armenians in different shifts during the course of the Festival; in addition to Janet, the exhibitors included Margaret Vartanian, Dana Perusse Nyholm along with Sam and Megan, Lynne Gildensoph, Christine Samuelian with Talene, Katie Butler Toghradjian and Isabelle, Ariel Taline Strichartz, Alarica Hassett, Cynthia Reimers Erickson, and Leroy Erickson. We also enjoyed extended visits from other supportive Armenians who helped welcome guests at our booth during their visit, including Nairy Digris and members of the Armenian Dance Ensemble, Avo Toghradjian and Tommy, Caroline Melkonian Ylitalo and Max, and Der Tadeos Barseghyan and Khachadour. We were well represented, and made a proud showing, which was especially important during this year of the Genocide commemoration!

Three of the most remarkable aspects of this year's festival experience was 1) that we had many repeat visitors-- they had come to our booth in past years, initially not knowing much about Armenians but wanting to know more, and returned to see us again this year after having read up on Armenian his-

tory since their last visit; 2) that we had a friendly visit from by a group of Turkish students who were very complimentary and very interested in our exhibit, and 3) we had myriad visitors who said they had seen the Armenian genocide billboards around the metro, and/or followed the genocide coverage in the media and then visited the ACOM and St Sahag websites, and/or heard about the Genocide memorial services and attended one or both. Those who said they attended a service either at the St Paul cathedral or at St Sahag often noted that they found out about the events either from the billboards, the media publicity, or from announcements in their church bulletins;



and for that, we thank the members of the joint Genocide Commemoration Committee for their tireless planning and publicity, including Nairy Digris who personally visited dozens of area churches to drop off posters and announcements for their church bulletins, and to Der Tadeos who contacted metro clergy to encourage their participation and submitted information to the media, and more. All of these efforts must have been incredibly widespread, because this year so many people who stopped by our booth were well informed about the genocide, and about past and recent Armenian history and culture. It was amazing, even astonishing for me to experience this, because so often in past years we have had countless "teachable moments" when we had to correct a lot of misinformation, or lack of information, about Armenia. In the past, we so often got questions like "Armenia...isn't that by Saudi Arabia?" or "Armenians are all Muslim, right?" or "Armenia was one of those ancient civilizations, but it doesn't exist anymore, does it?" It was extremely gratifying this year not to have even one single question like that. Good job, fellow Armenians and friends of Armenians, our presence in Minnesota is being seen, being heard, being noticed, and we've made a difference! This speaks to the importance of all the members of our Minnesotan Armenian community coming together and working together to all this possible. If we continue to have both the support of our active Cultural Organization through ACOM, and our faithful parish community of St Sahag Church, together we will grow and thrive and move to the future in a way that defies the Genocide and the will of its architects. Shad lav!

**Submitted by Janet Rith-Najarian**







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

# ACOM MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

VALID THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2015

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 emailed to all and distributed via USPS only 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@yahoo.com](mailto:hyebar@yahoo.com)

1703 Skillman Avenue West

Roseville, MN 55113



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

*We're on the Web*

[www.mnarmenians.org](http://www.mnarmenians.org)