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Culture
Heritage
History
Language

Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota
Established 1980

MinneHyeLites

No. 143 Fall 2015

The 35th Annual “New Year—Gaghant”
will be a great ending to ACOM’s 35th Anniversary!
Mark your Calendar for January 9, 2016
NEW LOCATION - Como Dockside - St. Paul



Caroline Melkonian Ylitalo’s Family Just Arrived from Aleppo, Syria



My name is Fares Ghannoum. I’m 17 years old and I’m from Aleppo/Syria. My family and I came to Minnesota in September, and we have been living in Stillwater. We are Armenian Christians who used to live in a peaceful neighborhood in Aleppo. My father Akram is a surgical urologist who has his own clinic and works in two hospitals, my mother Nora Melkonian is a pathologist who used to teach at the University of Aleppo. My older sister Rena (18 years old) was studying pharmacy at Ebla university in Aleppo and my younger sister Cynthia (10 years old) was a student at the AGBU school in Aleppo. After 4 years of war, we were forced to leave Syria because we saw that there is no future there. So, my mother, my two sisters and I came here because we have resident cards (green card) but my father stayed in Aleppo because he doesn’t have one.

We suffered a lot until we got here, the trip was dangerous and very long. In the beginning, we left Aleppo to Beirut, this trip was very dangerous because of government road blocks and terrorists, after 15 hours we got to Beirut.

The following day, we flew from Beirut to Doha, Qatar, then to Miami. In Miami we missed our flight to Minneapolis because we were interrogated for six hours in the homeland security center. So we were forced to spend the night (our third night on the road) at the airport. The following day we took another flight to Chicago, then to Minneapolis, where we found most of our luggage (one bag was lost). Currently, we are staying at my aunt’s house, she is really helping us to get used to the new life here.

Now, we have a little amount of money to start a new life that needs a lot. My mother is looking for a job suitable to her profession because we need money to live. My older sister and I are also looking for jobs in order to pay for college. We just completed a series of placement tests and will enroll at Century College.

Thank God there are so many kind and generous people around us who help us to start our new life. About my father, we hired a lawyer to bring him here as soon as possible.

This is our story which is one of a million stories of Syrian families around the world who were forced to leave their homes, their work and their country to find a better life and a better future somewhere else.

ACOM 35th ANNUAL PICNIC

Sunday, August 23rd, 2015 marked the 35th annual ACOM summer picnic. A blustery day did not dissuade over 50 people from showing up to take part in fellowship, challenges of tavloo, the annual water balloon toss and some wonderful pot luck dishes. The high winds did not allow for the children's moon-walk to be used this year, but ping pong and other games substituted indoors.

A surprise visit by Floridians Dick and Pat Dolan led to much catching up and great conversation. It's always good to have "alumni" make a return visit when in town. Thanks again to Marty Meketarian for coordinating the water balloon toss, this year won by Lou Ann Matossian and some guy named Wiersbeck.....

If you were unable to attend this year, please plan to join us in 2016. Bring your family, friends and neighbors. All are welcome!

Mark Wiersbeck, ACOM Social Director

ACOM representatives attend a concert and a reception for the Borromeo Quartet and guest artist Kim Kashkashian

On Sunday afternoon, September 27, 2015, Schubert Club's Music in the Park concert series featured the Borromeo String Quarter with guest artist Kim Kashkashian. Kim Kashkashian, an Armenian-American from Michigan, is regarded as one of the finest violists in the world.

The concert took place at St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ on an unseasonably warm fall afternoon with a threat of rain. Francis and Barb Bulbulian and Lowell and Andrea Johnson attended the concert. The humidity, so heavy in the air of the church sanctuary, did not appear to affect the musicians. Beethoven's frenzied, six-movement String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat major, Opus 130, was a demanding, physical work. *Canzona*, a movement from the String Quartet No. 3 by recently-deceased composer Gunther Schuller, was dissonant yet delicate. Kim Kashkashian joined the quartet for the concluding piece, the highlight of the concert: Dvorak's String Quintet in E-flat major, Opus 97, *American*. Its familiar melodies and lovely harmonies had a touch of the cowboy west. It was curious to us that Ms. Kashkashian, the guest artist, played second viola in the quintet.

After the concert, we walked a very short distance to the Bulbulian's house and saw Barbara's beautiful gardens. Then, as ACOM had received an invitation for a small number of representatives to attend the musicians' reception, which entailed eating dinner, we walked to Muffuletta Restaurant and were seated at a table for four. The musicians and Schubert Club leaders arrived a short time later and were seated at a long table opposite ours. Francis greeted Ms. Kashkashian on behalf of ACOM and the Armenian community in Minnesota. He described our Armenian cultural organization and told her we also have a church, St. Sahag, and a priest, Father Tadeos Barseghyan. He asked Ms. Kashkashian what "kashkash" means and found it is the Turkish word for "poppy." He also expressed our disappointment that her musicianship was not more prominently featured in the program. Ms. Kashkashian replied she has performed with the Borromeo String Quartet on other occasions and enjoys being part of their ensemble.

We left the restaurant and saw the blood moon begin its eclipse in a clear, starry sky, a memorable event ending a fine afternoon and evening!

Andrea Johnson, ACOM Cultural Director

MICHAEL GULEZIAN

A group of over 40 guitar music lovers gathered once again at **Mark Keljik's rugstore** in South Minneapolis to be entertained by Michael and his magical fingers on Sunday, September 20, 2015. Michael comes to Minnesota on a yearly basis so chances are he will be back next year. If you missed him this year, you will probably be able to catch him next Summer.



IN MEMORIAM



PLUMMER William H. Jr.

Bill passed away on September 26, 2015

Preceded in death by wife Sona. Survived by children Christopher (Mitsuko) and Elizabeth, grandchildren George and Robert, and nieces. Memorial Service was held Tuesday, October 6 at St. John the Evangelist Church, where Bill was a longtime member.

ACOM members and the entire Armenian community who knew Bill were shocked by the news of his sudden death. We learned from Elizabeth that Bill attended Breck in his youth, then went to Carlton College before being drafted. Upon his return, he completed his university studies and opened a photography shop. He was a photographer by trade until he retired, after which he enjoyed delivering flowers for a local florist. Bill was a permanent fixture in the ACOM Cafe for many, many years at the Festival of Nations, along with his wife Sona. The kitchen could not properly function at the Festival without their presence. May God rest their souls and give strength and courage to Elizabeth and Christopher.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION



ACOM is a tax-exempt, 501 C-3 organization. If your current employer (or the one from which you may have retired) **matches donated funds** to arts or cultural tax-exempt organizations, please contact them to see what forms need to be filled out in order for said employer to match your donation to ACOM.

Your contributions are always appreciated. **Also, please note that due to the fact that ACOM's expenses have increased, the Executive Committee has reluctantly decided to increase annual dues from \$30 to \$35 per family effective January 1, 2016. The last time we raised our dues was in 2000. Thank you in advance for your generosity and understanding.**



CONGRATULATIONS

Aja Tashjian and **Aram Desteian**, as well as Tashjian and Desteian grandparents, on the arrival of their new baby boy (and grandson).

Congratulations also to **Lydia** and **Artyom Donayan** on the birth of their baby boy.

Abby Kardashian, daughter of Vaughn and Susan and granddaughter of Van and Vali Kardashian, on her graduation from Chanhassen High School in May 2015. She just started attending the University of Minnesota, St. Paul campus.

Oktyabrina Mollaeva, graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor's Degree in Global Studies.

Thomas Toghramadjian graduated from High School and joined his brother at Boston College.

George & Aida Yaghsezian: ACOM wishes to congratulate you on 50 years of marriage !

Boghos (Paul) Gauro & Lana Cusik: Best wishes on the occasion of your recent wedding !

Hagop and Anilga Tabibian have moved to the East Coast where Hagop will be doing a year of advanced interventional endoscopy training at the University of Pennsylvania and Anilga will be working for a nonprofit psychology organization. Good luck to both of you on your move. We will miss you two a lot.

Hasmik Ter Vardanyan and Albert Siu tied the knot on May 16. It was quite an international event: Hasmik's aunt came from Armenia, Albert's grandparents came from Canada, and aunts and uncle came from Hong Kong. Congratulations!

CONDOLENCES

To **Lana Cusick and Boghos Gauro** on the passing of Lana's father at the age of 91. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

To **Gayane Hakobyan** on the loss of her father who passed away early October in Armenia. He was also Hasmik Ter Vardanyan-Siu's and Artur Ter Vardanyan's grandfather, a cousin to Vi Reimers and Tom Abrahamian, and an uncle to Cynthia Erickson and Todd Abrahamian and their families. ACOM extends their heartfelt condolences to everyone.

To **Elizabeth and Christopher Plummer** on the unexpected death of their beloved father Bill. The entire community mourns his loss.

ACOM 35TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Dear ACOM Board,
Wonderful event last Saturday night! Nice time to reflect on the journey of ACOM and the many Armenians in MN. I still remember the night I met Van Kardashian at the Festival of Nations around 1982.

Thanks again,
Judy Ohannesian

ACOM NEWSLETTER

OUTSTANDING Newsletter! Thorough and informative. Thank

you to all who put in the time/effort to produce this excellent product.

Marty and Mara M.

Another great newsletter, thank you for your tireless commitment to ACOM and the entire Armenian Community
Judy Ohannesian

ACOM NEWSLETTER SPECIAL EDITION, GENOCIDE CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION

Thank you, Leroy, for sending the ACOM newsletter. It was an honor to be part of this important commemoration and I enjoyed the collaboration with the centennial committee.

Best regards from Madrid,

Alejandro Baer

Thank you for the opportunity to share in this year's important commemoration.E.

Ellen J. Kennedy, Ph.D. *Executive Director,*
World Without Genocide, William Mitchell College of Law

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Tom and Virginia Abrahamian

Tom and Virginia are both home from rehabilitation. Tom is slowly recovering. His hip surgery went well but he is challenged with his memory loss. Currently he is managing his independence, but he does need assistance from friends and family to help him complete a task.

Virginia's knee surgery went well. She is slowly regaining strength and flexibility in her left knee. She will need her right knee replaced in about a year. Also, she is looking at carpal tunnel surgery on her wrists. Virginia returned to work at Marshall's in Blaine. She hopes to continue to work for another year but given her health she might have to retire sooner.

From **Todd A.**

(ACOM wishes you both a speedy and full recovery)

Jeannette Manthei has been under the weather for a while but we hope that she is improving. We all join to send her our warmest regards and good wishes.

To **Gina Bonsignore**, an ADE member, who underwent emergency appendectomy a few months ago, but is already up and dancing. Keep up the good work, Gina.

THANK YOU FROM ACOM,

Mark Keljik for your donation of the oriental rug which was raffled off at ACOM's 35th Anniversary Birthday Party.

Kathie Cafesjian Baradaran for your donation of 2 cases of red wine served at ACOM's 35th Anniversary Birthday Party.

THANK YOU FROM OUR READERS

Dear friends at ACOM,
Thank you so much for the lovely begonia plant. Your kindness and caring mean so much.

Jeanette Manthei

Thank you so much for the beautiful plant. That is so thoughtful of ACOM to remember us as we grieve the loss of our father. We truly appreciate your caring.

All my best,
Lana Cusick

- * Musical Tribute to **Beatrice Ohanessian**, November 14, 2015 at 4 pm, organized and sponsored by Sita Ohanessian, in cooperation with ACOM and St. Sahag Church
- * Election of new ACOM Executive Committee for 2016-17 (by dues paid members), November 2015
- * ACOM 35th Gagbant Party, January 9, 2016

Armenian Dance Ensemble of Minnesota

Towards the end of January 2016, we will regroup to learn and practice dances that will be performed at the annual Festival of Nations at the RiverCentre, downtown St. Paul. The dates for the Festival in 2016 are May 5 through May 8.

If you have in interest in Armenian dance, if you have danced in the past, or have never danced but really would like to learn and participate, this would be a good time to give it a try. All the dances are taught, costumes provided. It is a volunteer activity and we only ask for your time commitment. Rehearsals are typically held on Sundays. Remember: you do not need to be Armenian to become a member of the dance group, just a desire to learn and enjoy Armenian music and dance.

For additional information, call Nairy at 651-639-9346 or email: hyebar@yahoo.com



MN State Fair,
8/29/15



Wealshire Residence with Lucy Desteian,
7/6/15



Remaining Armenian Dance Ensemble Performances for 2015

Month	Date	Location	Time
October	25	The Wellington	2:00 PM
November	8	Cherrywood Pointe	2:00 PM
November	15	Keystone Communities	2:30 PM
November	29	Ukrainian Christmas Festival	1:00 PM

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

Kardashian, Vahram and Vali

Kaye, Alfred

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

Mesroubian, Sam and Sylvia

Nyholm, Dana, Peter & family

Ohannesian, Judy & Tiffany, Doug & family

Plummer, Bill, Elizabeth & Chris

Pompeian, Edward, Jayne & Family

Reimers, Vi

Rith-Najarian, Steven & Janet

Saakian, Valeriy, Karine & family

Savayan, Peka, Maria & Steve A.

Warner, Beth Dardarian

Wiersbeck, Mark

Wiersbeck, Sarah

Ylitalo, Caroline, David & family

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.

NOTE: Boldface type indicates members who have contributed \$50.00 or more to ACOM.

Our thanks for everyone's most generous support.

ARMENIAN AMERICAN HELPED STOP FRENCH TRAIN ATTACK

<http://armenianweekly.com/2015/08/24/armenian-american-stops-train-attack/>

A 51-year-old Sorbonne professor, Armenian-American Mark Moogalian, has been identified by the UK's Telegraph Daily as the first passenger to tackle gunman Ayoub El-Khazzani on Aug. 21 aboard the Amsterdam-Paris train.



Mark Moogalian (Photo: The Telegraph)

During the high-speed train ride, Moogalian tackled El-Khazzani, who was armed with an AK-47 assault rifle. It is reported that he instinctively acted to protect his wife Isabella Risacher, and managed to take the assault rifle away from El-Khazzani. The professor's sister, who was also on the train, revealed that the assailant drew another gun and shot Moogalian in the neck. Moogalian was quickly rushed to a hospital, where he is in serious but stable condition. It is reported that he may have lost some of the functionality of his left arm as a result of the attack.

According to the Telegraph, Moogalian, who is from Midlothian, Virginia, teaches English at Paris-Sorbonne University and holds dual French and American nationality.

Moogalian's heroism, along with the actions of Americans Alek Skarlatos, Spencer Stone, and Anthony Sadler, and Briton Chris Norman, helped save many lives. Skarlatos, Stone, Sadler, and Norman were awarded the Legion d'Honneur, France's highest decoration, by French President Francois Hollande. Hollande has announced that he will award Moogalian the Legion d'Honneur once he recuperates.

SECOND GENERATION HOTELIERS CONTINUE FAMILY TRADITION

Jeff Kiger, jkiger@postbulletin.com

For some Rochester hoteliers, hospitality is more than a job. It's a family tradition.

When Fairfield Inn and Suites, Rochester's newest hotel, launched in July 2015, a young trio of second generation hoteliers opened the doors.

"I think we were all born into it," said Matt McColom, Fairfield's general manager, of himself and hotel's lead developers, **Nick Pompeian** and Harshal Patel.

The creation of new 91-room hotel at 470 17th Ave. NW was driven by the Rochester trio who are all younger than 30 years old. However, much of their lives have been spent around hotels, thanks to their families. See Story Here: [GoTo Post Bulletin Story](#)

[http://m.postbulletin.com/business/nd-generation-hoteliers-continue-family-tradition/article_6dd0d537-6418-5d15-bc1c-030a31236748.html?mode=jqm]

FULLER CENTER FOR HOUSING ARMENIA CELEBRATES 400th HOME MILESTONE

Siranush Ghazanchyan 23 Jun 2015



The Fuller Center for Housing Armenia team and the Global Builders volunteer team from

the U.S., led by Cynthia Reimers Erickson, celebrated the 400th home milestone in Lejan village of Lori Region.

It's the call of blood and the will of helping others that has brought Cynthia Erickson to Armenia already for 10 years; and, she comes not alone, but with teams of volunteers who do tremendous work in short time building homes for Armenian families in need of decent housing.

The day was of triple celebration; the 400th home milestone construction became more noteworthy with the 10th year celebration of the dedicated veteran team leader, Cynthia Reimers Erickson and a devoted, selfless volunteer Charles Takesian – 10 years with Fuller Center for Housing Armenia, 10 years of dedicated and selfless service to help the dream of having a decent home of the families in need come true.

"I am very happy to be working with the Fuller Center Armenia all these years. They have dedicated and extremely competent staff who have generous hearts and are devoted to helping their fellow Armenians be successful in Armenia. It is a pleasure for me to bring a team of Americans to Armenia to work with these selfless folks and contribute to the completion of a suitable home for a family. Armenia is in my blood and, for me, this is the best way I can honor the memory of my grandparents and their family members who were deprived of their lives and their homeland – by helping others gain a home and strengthen their homeland," said Cynthia Reimers Erickson.

Many families have felt the constructive force of Cynthia Erickson's team. This time the Margaryans from Lejan Vilage of Lori Region were among the happy ones, who have been the eyewitness of the unreal seeming change of their house since June 15.

The Margaryans lost their house during the 1988 earthquake and since then they have been living in a temporary shelter (domik).

"Each time I see the Armenian families becoming homeowners, it fills me with special joy and sense of pride. Today it's the 400th time I am the eyewitness of such happiness. I hope that we will still build many more homes with the help of our friend Cynthia, who helped us in our mission throughout her 10 years of devotion, her team and many other volunteers who come to Armenia to help build homes," said Fuller Center for Housing Armenia President Ashot Yeghiazaryan.

FULLER CENTER FOR HOUSING

ARMENIA TRIP DIARY—JUNE 2015

BY CYNTHIA ERICKSON

Got to Armenia and did some of the normal touring (after some rest) of the sights around Yerevan, the capital city. A few years ago, I was introduced to a lovely restaurant in the city of Garni where we sit outside under the trees, away from traffic and sidewalks. We enjoyed a lovely lunch there and then went back to the capital city to wander around and eventually gathered at the fountains in Republic Square. This is at a pool in front of the State Museum, and it's rather like the Bellagio in Las Vegas - movement of water fountains to music that is played.

It sounds like we'll be spending all of our work days at the same home. The family consists of parents in their early-mid 50s and their 27 year old (unmarried) son. Living in a metal container here does not make one a very eligible bachelor. There's a stigma associated with that type of home. Many of these families have been living in shipping containers - called Domiks (little homes) since the earthquake that struck Armenia in December of 1988.

At the site, we also have the daughter of the parents and her two children - Maneh (female) is 8 yrs old and Andranik (male) is about 2 yrs old. Maneh has warmed up to us but Andranik is a harder sell. Today, when we put on a CD of my dance group's music, the two children really cut a rug and had a great time moving to the music. They entertained us until we had to return to work.

The weather has been pretty cooperative, although we did have rain at times on the first two work days. We seem to get at least a little sprinkle every day, but the first two days we actually had to stop work. They have some interesting contraptions that are used when heavy rain is expected. Before the rain started, we heard several loud booms - like a rifle firing - every few seconds. We were told they were to make sure that the rainfall was not very heavy. Then they also told us that they prevented the formation of hail. These units fire propane into the air. Somehow that helps to reduce the size of hailstones (we saw pea sized ones) and it reduces the rainfall so that these don't damage the crops and the land as badly if they weren't used. The Armenians find it strange that we don't use these in the U.S.

On to Gyumri - we visited the central square and St. Asdvatsin church (Holy Mother of God) which was damaged during the earthquake. There are still cranes there today, although it looks like the repairs may almost be finished. Twenty seven years have passed. That's what happens in a poor country like Armenia.

On our way back to Vanadzor, we stopped at the village of Jajour where there's a lovely art museum containing the works of Minas Avetissyan, a well known Armenian painter who died mysteriously in the mid 70s, during the Soviet years. Just as we were preparing to leave, the docent said to me, in Armenian, that the son of the artist was the man who had just arrived. Oh my gosh!! The son of the artist!!! His name is Armand, and he is the director of the museum. So we got an additional tour and presentation about a fresco that is in the museum now and the work that is going to be done over the next 2 days to create another fresco.

For the rest of our workdays, we continued to use the bucket line. We had buckets going straight up, straight down, sideways, and every which way. And no injuries or sprains occurred during all of this!! A nice side benefit for all of us.

One day after work we visited the Armenia Tree Project. At the education center, teachers are trained in sustainability and environmental benefits of trees. Deforestation became a big problem during the mid 1990s when hostile neighbors stopped the flow of fuel to Armenia during the wintertime. People went into the forests and cut their own fuel, and this risked loss of topsoil in the mountains and hills. Those were some of the reasons that this non-profit was founded.

On our next day off, we drove to a town named Alaverdi, which sits very near the Teghut forest. This forest sits on copper and molybdenum ore veins. An interesting fact that I learned this year is that 75% of the copper used in the Statue of Liberty that France gave

to the U.S. originated from this area of Armenia.

We had some interesting driving experiences to and from Alaverdi. The best one occurred earlier in the morning. There are a few tunnels through the mountains and most are fine, however there was one that was a bit different. It did not have smoothly cut walls or floor. That was okay until we met a semi truck. As my eyes moved from the tunnel wall to the road ahead of the van, I saw a large semi truck bouncing towards us. Oh, boy, this looks bad!! The truck then stopped, which caused it to stop bouncing. Then it proceeded slowly, and crept toward us, inched past us, while we all held our breath because we couldn't believe that we'd both actually fit. But we did! Not a scratch - not even to the side mirrors! Our driver Sarkis seemed so calm during this whole event!! Later in the day, after another tunnel-van adventure that wasn't near as exciting, we showed our appreciation for our driver's skill by chanting 'Sarkis, Sarkis, he's our man, if he can't do it, no one can!' That brought a smile to his otherwise somber, shy face. (Not that he understood a word of it, besides his name!) He wasn't quite as shy after that day.

On Monday, the Fuller Center folks from headquarters in Yerevan drove 3 hours to start their day with us. We had a little ceremony that celebrated the fact that we were building the 400th house and that one of our members, Charlie, was on his 10th build trip. Oh, yes, they also celebrated that this was my 10th year of leading teams of volunteers to Armenia.

Every year we celebrate the work we've done by having a farewell banquet on our last work day. It's a nice dinner with delicious salads, grilled meat, fruits and veggies, and wine and other beverages. We give toasts to honor various people amongst us and to thank them specifically for their hard work and contributions.

One interesting museum we visited in Yerevan has connections to Minnesota. The Cafesjian Museum is housed at the Cascade, which was built into a hillside during Soviet times. It has a series of escalators that people would use to get from the neighborhood at the top of the hill down to the level of the main city, so they could more easily go to work or go shopping. Gerard Cafesjian, from Minnesota, created the museum that is now housed inside the Cascade. You may recognize the name from the Carousel that operates in Como Park. The Cascade museum has been open since November of 2009. I just missed the grand opening of it that year.

Thanks for coming along for the adventures!

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:	Naïry 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



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

1703 Skillman Avenue West
Roseville, MN 55113



We're on the Web
www.mnarmenians.org