



ACOM

Culture
Heritage
History
Language

Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota
Established 1980

No. 131 Autumn 2010/Winter 2011

MinneHyeLites

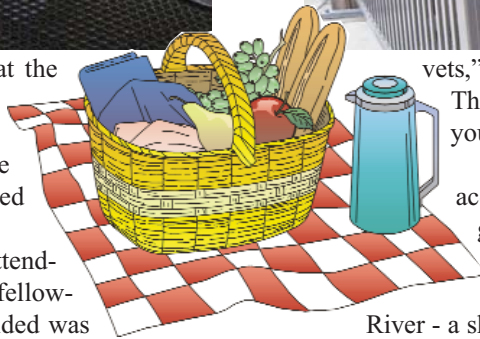


ACOM's 2010 summer picnic was held at the Waubon area of Minnehaha Park in south Minneapolis. This year marks ACOM's 30th Anniversary and well after everyone had left, the weather that evening provided some fireworks to help us celebrate!

Fifty-eight current and new friends attended the fun-gathering of food, games and fellowship. One of the many special treats provided was rojik Margaret Favre brought back from her recent trip to Armenia! Grilled corn on the cob, lamb, chicken and a variety of salads were also shared.

As a tribute to his friend, Beatrice Ohanessian, caricature artist Adnan Shati provided wonderful free caricatures for many of those attending.

Thanks to Marty Meketarian for again heading up the kids games portion. This year's champions of the very popular water balloon toss were a couple of "seasoned



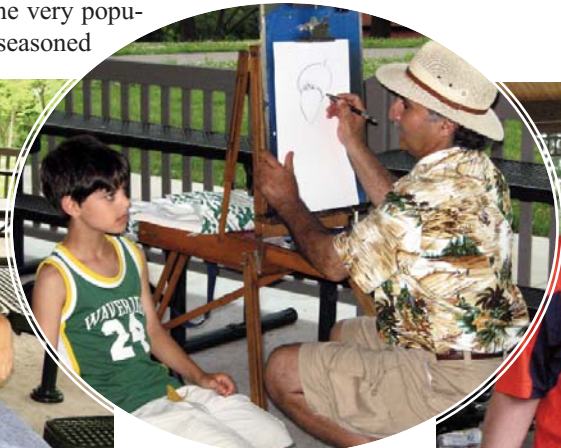
vets," Jim Favre and Mark Keljik. Great job, guys! They were upset winners over a couple of the young guns.

The scenic location provided us very close access to the children's wading pool and playground area, so there was plenty of activity for the young ones to enjoy. There was also a nice view overlooking the Mississippi River - a short walk from the shelter.

A brief shower did not deter us in the slightest. We just moved our buffet line further inside the large shelter and were not affected. We are already looking forward to next year's picnic.

On behalf of ACOM and personally, I just wanted to thank Marty Meketarian again for your annual contribution to our picnic. The kids (and adults) really appreciate your efforts organizing and leading the games.

Mark Wiersbeck



Get Well Wishes

The following members of the Armenian community have either been ill, hospitalized or undergone surgery during the year 2010. ACOM extends its sincere wishes for a speedy and complete recovery to:



Jeanne Andeweg
 Seda Bagdasarova
 Armine Boyadjian
 Gloria Gholdoian Faust's mother
 Happy Heilman
 Vahram Kardashian
 Raisa Martirosyan
 Peggy Merjanian
 Sam Mesrobian
 Elizabeth Plummer
 Helen Pompeian
 Mrs. Samelian
 Chacké Scallen

In Sympathy



Our deepest expressions of condolences to **Christina Babadjanian** on the passing of her grandmother in April 2010.

Sincere sympathy to **Anna Yesaybegyan** and her family on the passing of her mom, Mrs. Zina Erznkjian, on October 25, 2010.

Heartfelt condolences and prayers to Mesrobian family in memory of their beloved brother, **Ara Mesrobian**, who passed away in Toronto on October 24, 2010. He is the beloved brother of Sam and Azad Mesrobian and the uncle to Hagop Tabibian who is a deacon at St. Sahag.

Condolences to **Iren Tadevosyan** whose dad, Vigen, passed away in Armenia on October 23, 2010. He was 67.

Our sympathy to **Maline Broburg** on the loss of her beloved husband Eskil and **Elizabeth Seropian** on the loss of her husband Edward. Our condolences to **Harriet Balian** who is Maline and Elizabeth's sister.

Condolences to **Mariya Mirzoyan** whose father, David Mirzoyan passed away in Armenia.

Around Town

James and Margaret Favre are proud grandparents!! Grandson, Maximillian James, was born Friday, Nov. 26, 2010 - 19 3/4 inches long and weighed 7 lbs, 3.5 ounces. Both mother and son are doing fine.

I'm so proud of my mom, **Nancy Kavazanjan**, on her new position on the National Soybean Board!
Danielle Victoria Hammer

On May 12, **Christina Babadjanian**, who teaches math at Harding High School in St. Paul, was one of 8 Scholarship Award recipients. Christina was very excited and grateful and we think, absolutely deserving. Congratulations Christina. Great job!

In July, **Steve Merjanian** celebrated a "special birthday." For the occasion, his brother and sister-in-law, Tom and Meline Merjanian, came from New York for a long weekend visit.

Liana Martirosyan and **Vital Brouillard** had a baby girl, Eva Renee, on August 23. Congratulations to the entire family.

Alarica Hassett won second prize at this year's Minnesota State Fair Creative Activities where she entered a hand-made copper embossed book with jewelry ornamentation. The pages were handmade as well and the entire book measured around 9x13 inches.

Hagop Togramadjian led the SPA high school team to win the Minnesota State Geography championship. The team is currently preparing for the National competition in the spring in Washington DC.

Andy Ylitalo, a ninth-grader at Oak-Land Junior High, was one of 30 top Minnesota high school students represent-

ing the state at the American Regions Math League National Competition. The team won first place in the Midwest Region and third place nationally out of 65 teams.

Andy also earned a silver medal in the energy category of the I-SWEEEP (*International Sustainable World in Energy, Engineering and Environment Project*) science fair in Houston, Texas. His science project, "Windows of the Future: Saving Energy Year-Round," competed against more than 500 projects from 40 states and 69 countries. Ylitalo's silver medal was the highest award ever received by a Minnesota student.



Elina Saakian Robinson and **Robert Robinson** announce the arrival of their second daughter, Landyn Liana, born October 11, 2010. Congratulations to big sister, Mom, Dad, Grandma and Grandpa and especially **Great-Grandma, Mrs. Azatui Aavetisyan**.

Our congratulations to **Robert Nalbandov & Seta Iskandarianon** on the birth of their son January 16.

Congratulations to **Mariam Kocharian** who graduated from the University of Minnesota with a BA in economics and a minor in management. She will be working at the Target Headquarters in downtown Minneapolis as a Business Analyst.

Congratulations to **Sahak Budakyan** not only for graduating from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Economics, but for landing a job he loves at Wells Fargo as an Underwriter.

Best of luck to **Mariya Mirzoyan** in her job as a Cognitive Brain Trainer at the Learning Rx in Chanhassen, MN.

From Our Readers!

I would like to thank ACOM for the beautiful flowers that were sent to me and my brother Sam. Your kind thoughts are very much appreciated. God bless you all. ~~Azad Mesrobian

Dear ACOM folks, Thank you for the flowers you sent. We appreciate the thoughtfulness of your group on this sad and difficult time of losing a loved one in our family. I will pass on your sympathy also to his widow in Canada.~~ Sam Mesroubian

My sincere thanks for the lovely plant! It brightened my day every time I looked at it.~~ Peggy Merjanian

I want you all to know that I appreciate very much your thoughts and prayers. The flowers are beautiful and brighten my days. Thanks for your kindness. Hope to see you all soon. ~~Azad Mesrobian

Chacké Scallen was cheered by the ACOM flowers wishing her a Speedy Recovery.

Thanks ACOM and Terry McGibbon for all the wonderful things you do for the St. Sahag building. ~~ Steve Scallen

Dear ACOM, Thank you so much for the wonderful chocolate dipped fruit. Both George and I have enjoyed it, a perfect dessert to recuperate. I appreciate all the concern and positive thoughts from the Armenian community. It sure helps your spirit. See you all soon. With a thankful heart, ~~ Jeanne Andeweg

Dear members of ACOM, Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness and a present of beautiful mums. We will enjoy them this fall. We are doing well here. Eva does have colic and that's hard on her, otherwise she is a good baby. Thank you, ~~ Liana Martirosyan Brouillard (for the birth of her baby)

Dear ACOM, Thank you so very much for all of your efforts regarding Dr. Najarian's appearance (book reading and signing)! I am honored to be helping this wonderful physician in any small way I can, and I greatly appreciate your assistance in this endeavor. Thank you again for all of your help; it is most kind of you. Sincerely, ~~ Rachel Smith, Surgical Research Institute Senior Intern

WELL DONE, Haygagan Bar: Not sure I spelt that right, but I just wanted to say it was great to see you and the troupe (ADE) out dancing at the State Fair. We were there with Brooke's family, and her mom thought it was beautiful. It looked great. ~~ Peter Hajinian

To The Editor, I just finished reading the ACOM newsletter. It is wonderful. My commendations to editor, Peggy.~~ Aram Sam Charchian

Newsletter is enjoyable to read... The pictures are nice!~~ Helen Pompeian

Blessings on a great organization.~~ Margaret Johnson

On behalf of St. Sahag, we thank ACOM for taking on the "Table changing and moving project" in the Fellowship Hall and also for donating nice tableclothes, which is very rare nowadays and hard to find considering the size and the shape of the tables. It took them a great amount of time and effort to move all the old tables and to bring the round tables from downstairs, so we sincerely appreciate all of that. We are very thankful to ACOM's continued support and help to St. Sahag Armenian Church. ~~ Fr. Hratch Sargsyan

We appreciate all the help ACOM gives us and we appreciate all the wonderful programs and activities for the Armenian community. ~~ Steve Scallen

I want to thank ACOM for the lovely Azalea plant that I arrived today! love, ~~ Elizabeth Plummer

Danielle Hammer, a young woman who has visited us in the past, was named the Dodge County (WI) Fairest of the Fair in August, 2010, and started her year long reign that day. Danielle is the daughter of Charles Hammer and Nancy Kavazanjian, both of Beaver Dam, WI. She is majoring in agricultural business and international relations at University of Wisconsin-River Falls, where she is a junior. While she holds the title of Fairest of the Fair, Danielle serves as the hostess of the Fair and will represent Dodge County's Fair Association during parades and other promotional functions throughout the year. Congratulations, Danielle!

Sub-deacon Benjamin Najarian, who graduated from Saint. Nersess Armenian Seminary last May, is currently continuing his studies at the Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, where he is strengthening his Armenian language and liturgical knowledge. His wife, Danielle, is volunteering as a teacher at Jerusalem's Sourp Tarkmanchatz School. The couple expect to continue their studies and to work in Jerusalem until June. The Rev. Fr. Mardiros Chevian, Dean of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York, on a recent personal visit to Jerusalem, met with Benjamin and Danielle. Sub-deacon Benjamin took part in the life of the Holy City, during the season of Christ's Theophany.

INTRODUCTION TO ARMENIAN DANCE AND AN INVITATION

The Armenian dance heritage has been one of the oldest, richest and most varied in the Near East. The ancestors of the Armenians established themselves in Hayastan (Armenia) about 650 BC, soon after the collapse of the Urartian Empire. The Armenian civilization predates the Islamic Arabs by 1300 years, and the Seljuk Turks by 1700 years.

The geographic position of Armenia proved to be both a blessing and a curse. Located at major crossroads between powerful empires, it became a buffer state, continually ravaged by invading armies, but distant enough to retain its own culture and identity. The adoption of Christianity as the state religion in 301 AD and the development of the Armenian alphabet in 404 AD provided a focal point for the preservation of the Armenian culture in later centuries, in the face of continuous onslaughts and oppression.

At this point, it is important to elaborate on the relationship between music and dance in the traditional village setting. The concept of a party/hantess/kef with a band is a modern innovation. None existed in the old country. A party was not a separate function, but merely one aspect of some major event or festivity, such as a baptism, a wedding, or a religious celebration, which usually involved the entire community. In the olden days, the poor villager did not have a band conveniently playing when he wanted to dance, but he could provide his own music with drums and the zourna (a wind instrument). Other dances were done to the singing of the dancers themselves. The steps of the dance were kept very simple so one could easily sing and dance simultaneously.

Armenian Dance nowadays can be divided into two forms: Solo Dances (usually performed by women) Group Dances, which in turn can be divided into: Stage Dance, based on ballet, or choreographed folk dances Circle Dance (shourchbar), once again divided into: Traditional Village Dance - actually done by Armenian villagers, Contemporary Party Dance - done at today's parties by Armenian-Americans.

In addition, these forms are also broken down into two distinctly different styles of dance: Anatolian (Western Armenian) and Kavkaz (Eastern Armenian.) Anatolian/Western Armenian, is the native style of most of the original dances of the Armenian immigrants in America, who settled here after fleeing the genocide in Western Armenia. This style is noted for earthy movements, heavy footwork and stamps.

The Kavkaz/Eastern Armenian, is the style usually performed by most Armenian stage groups, strongly influenced by the State Dance Ensemble of Armenia. It is acrobatic and is known for ballet-like movements. The above article is excerpted from "Dance Armenian" by Gary and Susan Lind-Sinianian

If all of the above sounds really exciting, fascinating, heart-throbbing, or simply makes you curious, you are invited to come and check out the Armenian Dance Ensemble of Minnesota. Since 1990, its goal has been to enhance community awareness of Armenian heritage, culture and history through music, dance and costume. Our invitation extends to Armenians and non-Armenians alike! Dances are taught, copies of the music and syllabi are supplied, costumes are provided! No partners needed. No fees involved. Previous dance experience of any type helpful, but not absolutely necessary.

All we ask for is your time commitment and willingness to learn: come to practice every Sunday (with some exceptions, of course) to St. Sahag, 2nd floor dance space, starting at 2 pm. For specific questions, contact: hyebar@qwest.net.

*Sincerely,
Nairy Digris*

Armenian Dance Ensemble of Minnesota

DR. LOU ANN MATOSSIAN SPEAKS AT NAASR

Dr. Matossian gave a lecture entitled "From Massachusetts to Minnesota: Pioneering Armenian-American Writer Bedros Keljik," this past summer, at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, in Belmont, Massachusetts.

Lou Ann Matossian, Ph.D., first became interested in Bedros Keljik while organizing our community's centennial celebration in 1999. The history of Armenian settlement in Minnesota led her to the Christie missionary archive, a topic she presented at NAASR and in Istanbul. Dr. Matossian also serves as program director of the Cafesjian Family Foundation in Minneapolis.

More information about Dr. Matossian's lecture or NAASR and its programs for the furtherance of Armenian studies, research, and publication may be had by calling 617-489-1610, faxing 617-484-1759, e-mailing hq@naasr.org, or writing to NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478.

This summer our family went on a trip We had been looking forward to this land of our ancestors. Neither of us had what to expect. However, we'd formed some land would be like. We thought it would be a tory. We also thought the people would be nice and friendly, based on our experiences with the Armenians at our church. However, it was much more than we could've ever imagined.

Our Trip to Armenia

By Andy and Max Ylitalo

Eventually, the day of departure arrived, and after many hours at the airport and on the plane, the land of our people, Armenia, was in sight. It was beautiful, with majestic mountains dotting the landscape and luscious greenery in abundance throughout the rest of the scene. Finally we arrived, and were greeted by nice, friendly Armenians we had contacted who helped us much throughout the trip. They were ready with more than enough cars to accommodate us to bring us to the apartment we had rented. During the drive to the apartment, they asked us if we'd ever been to Armenia. We replied no. They said it was a great place, and that we'd love it. This foreshadowed what we'd come to think of Armenia.

Finally we arrived at our apartment in the center of Yerevan, the capital, and went to bed. The second day we walked around to find out what the city had to offer. During our walk, we visited the famed Republic Square, went through the Museum of Natural History where we saw artifacts that were millions of years old, and had our first experience of true Armenian cuisine at a small sit-down restaurant. Of course, it was delicious!

The third day we met our tour guide and embarked on our first (of many) day trip to Etchmiadzin, the Holy See of the Armenian Church and home of Catholicos Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch of all Armenians. There we saw our old and much-missed friend Manuk Malkhasyan serving in perhaps the most beautiful divine liturgy in all the world. We also saw the procession of the Catholicos from his residence to the church. Max and our mom were fortunate enough to be blessed His Holiness. It was quite a spectacle.

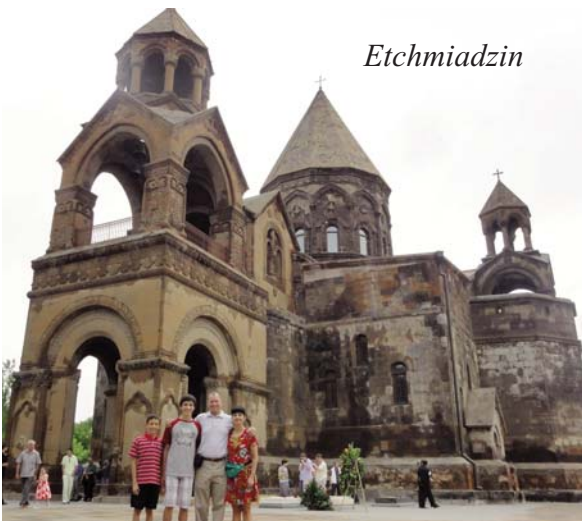
Later that day we met up with Manuk and his new wife and ate out at a restaurant called Afrikyan's. The cool part about that restaurant was it had a five person Armenian folk band with a qanoun, duduk, dhol, accordion, and singer.

The fifth day was that which we had all been waiting for: the day we went to Mt. Ararat. We chose this day for Mt. Ararat because the view of it was nice and cloudless, an incredibly rare occurrence. So, we drove over there as fast as we could so we could capture the beautiful view on camera. On our way over, our tour guide pointed out to us where on the mountain Noah's Ark lay. It was pretty cool to see something from the Bible before our very eyes. Next we went to Khor Virab, the monastery where St. Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned for preaching Christianity. Our favorite part of that was definitely going down into the pit that contained the man who helped Armenia become a Christian nation.

After, we drove over to Noravank monastery, which happened to be very close to the site where the world's oldest leather shoe was found. On our way back we drove right past the cave it was found in! Day number six was the day we visited Dilijan, said to be "the Little Switzerland of Armenia." And it sure lived up to its name with its rolling hills and blanket of trees. In Dilijan we drove up to a high-elevation lake called Crystal Lake. After we went to Lake Sevan where we were brave enough to walk ten feet into its frigid waters to get a picture.

Next we drove over to our mom's cousins' house where they so generously prepared a large meal in our honor and showed us around their house. That meal lasted a long time, so it obviously had a lot of conversation. All of it was in Armenian, so it was almost impossible to understand. However, we were able to pick out a few words now and then and discern the subject of the conversation sometimes thanks to the years of Armenian lessons we'd had with Manuk. Thanks to that and some translating from our mom, we learned a lot about the current situation in Armenia, like how schools are focusing more on teaching English and less on teaching Russian. For example, Vahe, a 14 year-old second cousin of mine, had an English class in his school and was able to talk a little bit to us and understand some of our English conversations. On the other hand, it seemed nobody older than 35 years old spoke English, but had chosen to learn Russian as kids. It's good that English will be in their future so they can continue to grow.

Finally came our day of departure. It was sad seeing this wonderful country float out of view on the plane; however, it had been an amazing experience for all of us that we were glad to have been able to have. Both of us learned so much and saw for the first time our country, the land in which our roots are planted. Maybe someday we'll go back again and show our kids their country, their fatherland.



Etchmiadzin



RENOWNED JAZZ PIANIST, ARTHUR DONELIAN, PERFORMS IN MINNESOTA

by Mark Wiersbeck

Nine members of ACOM traveled to Minnesota State University, Mankato on February 18, to hear world renowned jazz pianist Armen Donelian in concert. Mr. Donelian performed solo for a little over one hour, in front of an appreciative, sold-out auditorium of mostly students from the university.

Mr. Donelian opened the concert with "Kani Vourjan Im," written by Armenian composer Sayat Nova. (1712-1795) The concert featured two pieces written by Dave Brubeck, including the well-known "Take Five." Mr. Donelian commented that Brubeck used a Middle East influenced beat to write "Take Five," as well as other arrangements. Original Donelian compositions titled "Oasis," "Wave," "Metropolitan Madness" and "Stargazer" were all played. In writing these tunes, Donelian mentioned "Oasis" as being his way of using music as a place of refuge, a healing, joy and inspiration. "Metropolitan Madness" symbolizes the hectic life that surrounds him at his home in New York City. Finally, he spoke of "Stargazer," saying it was one of his favorites, as he enjoys looking at the night sky, with all the bright stars and beauty they hold.

Mr. Donelian spoke to the audience, telling us that live performances were definitely a two-way street. The performer feeds off the energy of the listeners and they hopefully receive enjoyment of the music in return. We definitely felt this was the case.

After the concert, our group had the opportunity to meet with him. The first thing you notice about him is his size, as he stands approximately 6' 5" tall! You'll notice in the attached photo how he towers over most of us. A very gracious man, he answered all our questions, took pictures with us and discussed a possible return to Minnesota later this spring for another performance. We all would be honored to hear him perform again.

Armen Donelian's accomplishments include: Performing in 23 countries throughout the world, performing with legends such as Sonny Rollins, Chet Baker and Billy Harper, receiving six Jazz Performance Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts for concerts and master classes and teaching at conservatories in Copenhagen, Lisbon, Paris, Yerevan and Zurich.



ACOM members with Armen Donelian. L-R Azad Mesrobian, Mark Wiersbeck, Lou Ann Matossian, Mariana Karanyan, Armen Donelian, Mariam Khachatryan, Mark Keljik, Nairy Digris, Terry McGibbon and Harut Khachatryan.

(Photo courtesy of Mariam Khachatryan)

A BRIEF BUT EYE-OPENING ENCOUNTER WITH A FASCINATING WOMAN

By: Betty Apigian-Kessel



Destiny continues to point in the right direction where this columnist is concerned. I have to believe it “was written”—jagadagir—that when I was a guest at the June 2010 Vasbouragan (Vanetsi) Convention’s Friday evening social I would have a brief but eye-opening encounter with a fascinating woman whose story would be of great interest to readers.

Cynthia Reimers Erickson possesses the quiet type of celebrity. She represents the quiet heroes, the non-self promoters who do not seek publicity, leaving that for others to discover. The evening was ending rather uneventfully when someone insisted I meet a convention delegate from Minnesota named Cynthia Reimers Erickson, past president of the Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota (ACOM). I was familiar with that organization and immediately knew I had found someone with a connection to my good friend Helen Pompeian from Rochester, Minn.

After introductions, I asked if she knew ACOM member Pompeian and she replied in the affirmative. The ice was quickly broken; we had common ground but Cynthia was being rushed off to another event. She hastily handed me her business card, which I quickly scanned—causing me to raise my eyebrows and my curiosity. It didn’t take long to conclude I was dealing with an exceptional woman.

The card stated that Cynthia was “a volunteer team leader with the Fuller Center in Armenia,” building interest-free homes for the poor. Who was this heroic person who did not look traditionally Armenian? And what is it that she does in Armenia? Emails soon answered all my questions.

Cynthia grew up on a farm near Wimbledon, N.D. with her Armenian mother Viola Satenig (Abrahamian) and German father Laurence Reimers, both American born, and her four siblings. Now, how many Armenians do you know who live in North Dakota? Providence, Boston, Glendale, and Detroit perhaps—cities deemed to be the center of the U.S. diasporan universe, but North Dakota? Not even close.

Her Armenian grandmother Khashkhatoun Bargamian, a genocide survivor from Palu, lived in nearby Jamestown, N.D. Her Vanetsi grandfather Melkon Abrahamian had moved here by the time of the genocide. Her grandparents married in Cuba in 1924 but Melkon died before Cynthia’s birth.

She fondly recalls visits to her grandmother, who she describes as “a kind, sweet, gentle person, but we never learned to speak Armenian. I think grandma was the one who made me want to visit Armenia one day.” It was a foretelling of Cynthia’s future.

While finishing college at University of North Dakota, Cynthia moved to Minneapolis-St. Paul to complete an internship at the Hennepin County Medical Center as a medical technologist. She attended Armenian events with her aunt Sue Kerner, including an 80’s visit by Archbishop Torkom Manoogian.

The Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota brought lecturers and performers, and offered Armenian-language

classes. Armenian visitors were no strangers to the Twin Cities; some were author Peter Balakian, Ara Sarafian from Great Britain, Prof. Vahakn Dadrian, and singer Charles Aznavour.

The cultural organization also had an Armenian folk dance group which Cynthia joined. That folk dance group eventually became the Armenian Dance Ensemble of Minnesota and performs annually at the Festival of Nations in St. Paul and at other events. She says, “I am fascinated with the various experiences of the people of our community, what escape routes they took to arrive here. They are a wealth of history and information and culture. Being Armenian is unique and I like being unique. Don’t we all?”

In 1985, Cynthia traveled to Soviet Armenia with her parents and aunt Cathy Igielski to meet cousins in Yerevan.

In 2002, Cynthia met Kristi Rendahl, who had just returned from spending five years in Armenia with the Peace Corps, then worked to start Habitat for Humanity, leaving that to develop “Made In Armenia Direct” to support Armenian artisans.

“Kristi Rendahl is the reason I became involved first with Habitat for Humanity in Armenia and then with the Fuller Center for Housing,” says Cynthia. “She was the team leader of the first home building mission trip that I took to Armenia in 2003. At the time I thought it was the greatest opportunity for me to return to Armenia 18 years after my first visit—to go with the American responsible for launching Habitat in Armenia. I loved the work, loved my teammates, and loved the people of Armenia, but not the hot August weather.”

“After leading teams for Habitat for several years,” Cynthia says, “I finally found my mission in life.” Like Kristi, Cynthia found Habitat’s changes not to her liking. Issues arose so she joined a newer organization founded by Millard Fuller: the Fuller Center for Housing. “I was able to continue to serve the lower income working poor in Armenia (with an organization that provides) them interest-free loans to build a decent home.”

Fuller founded Habitat for Humanity in 1976 but parted ways with them in 2005, and founded the Fuller Center for Housing. Cynthia led teams with the Fuller Center in 2008 and 2009. In 2008, seven of the team members were from her family: her mother, sister, aunt and uncle, one nephew, one son, and herself.

Rather than slinging buckets of concrete, she made her mother Viola “ambassador,” and she also helped the host families prepare meals and socialized with them, building bonds of culture between our two countries.

Cynthia plans on leading a team again in 2011 and is making preparations to do so May 15-29. She says that like in previous years, her teams are open to all people interested in volunteering in Armenia and traveling the back roads, not just the tourist sites. “It’s a way to make a difference in the lives of hard-working, poor Armenians, to help them obtain a decent, healthy home for their families so that the fabric of Armenian society is strengthened.” You can learn so much from others if you open yourself up to new friendships. The opportunity for me thankfully arose at the Vasbouragan social evening.

The half-Armenian girl who grew up on a farm in North Dakota has paid more respect to her grandmother and grandfather’s memory than one can imagine.

Cynthia - Continued on page 9

ACOM'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY GAGHANT DINNER



On Saturday night, January 15, 2011, eighty four ACOM members and friends enjoyed an evening of relaxing social time, wonderful food and drink and, of course, Armenian dancing!



To help mark ACOM's 30th anniversary, this year's dinner was held at the Marriott Hotel in Minnetonka. It was a beautiful setting, with

attractively decorated, candle-lit tables, a bright green Christmas tree and colorful lights on the trees just outside our windows, to brighten the night. It was a great opportunity for old friends to catch up and new friends to be made.

ACOM President Mark Keljik presented Terry McGibbon with an award of



lifetime "Honorary Armenian" for all the services he has provided to our community through the years, with the hope that, in order to hold onto his award, Terry will learn to be "Armenian style" late. Terry is and has been for a long time - the "go to" person



for all the electrical needs at St. Sahag: lighting, microphones, sound system, and just about anything else that needs attention, he can be counted on. Terry, you are very much appreciated!


In addition, Mariam Khachatryan was presented with a gift card for her hard work faithfully teaching Armenian language classes to children on Sundays. We also cannot forget Harut Khachatryan and the wonderful job he did playing the music for our dancing. Thanks again! All in all a fun evening for all.

We already look forward to next year's dinner!



Mark Wiersbeck

Cynthia continued from page 7 Cynthia Reimers Erickson, we salute you for your amazing contributions to humanity and to Armenia. Your story should stand as an inspiration to others who question how they can truly contribute to the growth and stabilization of Armenia.

Character is defined by noble work accomplished by noble people. Cynthia Reimers Erickson stands as a firm example of just that. 

ACOM and the Minnesota Armenian Community welcomes



Evelina Malkhasyan, daughter of Fr. Abraham and Yeretsgin Karine Malkhasyan

Born: January 29, 2011 in Yerevan, Armenia



Fr. Abraham, Yeretsgin Karine and Evelina Malkhasyan

RENDAHL: CELEBRATING THE ARMENIAN WOMAN

By Kristi Rendahl

I've had the privilege of celebrating International Women's Day in Armenia on five occasions. It might well be one of my favorite holidays, second only to International Children's Day on June 1 (also my birthday, for those of you who wish to note it in your calendars). The only hard part about celebrating women in Armenia is narrowing down the countless women to admire. But I want to take a moment to tell you about one of those women important in my life.

Gayane was my first close friend in Armenia. We ended up friends by mere chance nearly 13 years ago, but have remained friends by choice. Almost the same age, but separated by countless cultural norms, not to mention language, we had to work to understand each other. She colored outside of the lines in comparison with most village girls, but never enough to cause a scandal. Together we raised the eyebrows of neighbors by picnicking with a bottle of wine on a rock in the river and having a leisurely conversation in the village square when only men did such things. It's hard to pinpoint when a person decides to be utterly devoted to a friendship. My devotion to Gayane may have begun when we hiked up to a khatchkar on the side of a mountain and she insisted on wearing heels.

I should have seen then that her heels were indicative of a deeper resolve to achieve the seemingly impossible. After meeting and marrying an American man, she traveled with him to South Korea to teach English for a year. Now keep in mind that this was the same woman whose English skills during our friendship consisted of phrases like: "Is your armchair comfortable?" But we lost touch for a few years, so I didn't hear about those experiences until they had moved to New York City to start a new life together. Ever defying the expectations of the world Gayane was able to support her husband while he earned a master's degree, first at a miserable telemarketing job and later at a major U.S. corporation. Today, the girl from the village can be found commuting to work or taking their son to and from day care. At breakneck speed. In her heels.



TURKISH 'TARAF' ISSUES STATEMENT RECOGNIZING ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The Turkish press is shocked by the statement published in popular Taraf daily, signed by 14 readers to withstand PM Erdogan's statement to expel Armenians from Turkey, Habercinin reported. The statement recognizes the Armenian Genocide and strongly condemns the Turkish people.

The Joint statement of 14 readers published in Taraf reads, "Armenians were massacred in Ottoman Empire in 1915 and conscience does not allow us to deny it. We condemn that injustice and share pain of our Armenian brothers. We protest against Erdogan's intention to use needy Armenians as hostages and consider his statement immoral."

A REDISCOVERED CLASSIC: BEDROS KELJIK'S ARMENIAN-AMERICAN SKETCHES

by Lou Ann Matossian

Ararat, the fifty-year-old flagship literary magazine of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, has been relaunched online with a series of short stories by Bedros Arakel Keljik (1874–1959), founder of the Minnesota Armenian community. The excerpts from Keljik's 1944 Armenian-American Sketches, translated from the original Armenian by Ararat editor Aris Sevag, are semi-fictionalized vignettes of immigrant life from the earliest days of Armenian settlement. Most have never before appeared in English.

Keljik's first-hand knowledge of the Oriental rug trade provides a recurring theme in several of the stories. In "No Good Comes from Having Children in This Country," the first in the series of 21, entrepreneur Yeghiazar Abrahamian achieves fleeting commercial success as a rug merchant in America, only to be shunned by his assimilated sons. Also included in the inaugural electronic issue is a biographical sketch of the author by Lou Ann Matossian, which originally accompanied her translation of Keljik's short story "Chicago Characters" (Ararat, winter 1997).

Ararat has kindly given permission for MinneHyeLites to reprint the Keljik stories, so watch for them in this newsletter. Connect to Ararat at www.araratmagazine.org.

ABOUT BEDROS KELJIK

A native of Kharpert, Keljik was strongly influenced by one of his teachers, the Armenian realist writer Tlgadintzi (Hovhannes Haroutiunian). Not the only writer in the family, Bedros was also the brother of "Devrish" (Krikor Arakel Keljik), an Armenian-American novelist and poet popular in the 1930s and 1940s.

After emigrating to the U.S. in 1890, Bedros was employed for two years in factories in Worcester and Fitchburg, Mass., then moved to Boston, where he became known as a fiery orator for the Hnchag Party. Through his involvement in Armenian literary circles, he became a collaborator of humanitarian, activist and editor Alice Stone Blackwell, providing her with literal translations of Armenian poems, which she then rendered into English verse. These were published in book form by Roberts Bros. in 1896.

After the presidential election of that year, a series of entrepreneurial adventures landed Bedros in Chicago, where he sold Oriental rugs in a department store, stumped for the Democratic Party, and somehow found the time to attend law school, graduating in the spring of 1899.

In November 1899, Bedros Keljik arrived in St. Paul, becoming the first Armenian to settle permanently in Minnesota, and established a family Oriental rug business now in its third generation. Railroad magnate James J. Hill was an early and loyal patron.

The Keljik family has remained active in Minnesota Armenian affairs for over a century. Grandson Mark, who took over Keljik's Oriental Rugs from his father Emerson, currently serves as ACOM President, and his brother, Tom Keljik, is a member of the ACOM Executive Committee.

Watch for Part 1 of Armenian-American Sketches in the next issue of MinneHyeLites.

VOSKI ASHOUN was celebrated Friday night, November 19th in the Fellowship Hall at St. Sahag's church. This year, ACOM presented jazz-singer Stephanie Nakasian. Fifty people attended and enjoyed a very captivating and engaging performance.

Stephanie, who hails from Charlottesville, Virginia, sang many old-time jazz tunes from the 1930s and 1940s, in the style of Billie Holiday.

Accompanied on piano by local musician Phil Aaron, it sounded like they had played together for years, but actually they had never performed together before!

Stephanie sprinkled in a few fond stories about her father and growing up in New York. Her first career was working on Wall Street, before she met a piano man in New York. They married and Stephanie eventually changed careers into singing. For several years, she has also been a voice instructor at both The College of William & Mary and the University of Virginia. In addition, Stephanie tours and has released nine CDs to date, including two during 2009.

To set the mood, the ACOM Executive Committee converted Fellowship Hall into a concert setting. Round tables were brought in, which helped enhance the performer and audience connection. Candles adorned the tables and a couple spotlights (Thanks, Terry!) were set-up for the show. A very positive response was heard from many in attendance, as to how much they really liked this arrangement. During intermission and after the performance, treats and refreshments were provided by ACOM. During that time, many people had a chance to say hello to Stephanie and have her sign her CDs. Stephanie was thrilled to come sing for our community and we all enjoyed her talents and graciousness.

*Mark Wiersbeck
ACOM Social Director*



Stepan Khachatryan, Stephanie Nakasian and Harut Khachatryan

ACOM Members

Highlighted names have donated \$50 or more.

2010

Agadzhanova, Galina
 Almasian, Arakel & Mary
Andeweg, George & Jeanne
 Aram, George & Connie
 Bagdasarov/Teosyan, Georgiy/Yelena
 Balian, Harriet
 Bulbulian, Francis & Barbara
 Charchian, Aram & Ruth
 Desteian/ Savage, John/Judy
 Digris/McGibbon/Hassett,
 Nairy/Terry/Alarica & Natasha
Dourgarian, Gregg
 Erickson, Cynthia, Leroy, Bradley, Mitchell
 Faust, Gloria Gholdoian
Gauro, Boghos, Cusik, Lana & family
 Gildensoph, Lynne
 Gregorian, Henry & Laurel
 Grigorians, Olga & Katia
 Hajinian, Peter & Brooke
 Hayes, Jackie, Carlson, Mike & Family
 Heilman, Happy
 Hodowanic, Lara & Mark
 Hoover, Kris & Elsa
 Johnson, Margaret
Keljik, Mark
 Keljik/Collins, Tom / Jennifer
 Kourajian, John & Myrna
 Mardirosian, Artoosh & Helga
 Martinson, Ann
 Matossian, Lou Ann
 Meketerian, Martin & Mara
 Merjanian, Steve & Peggy
Mesrobian, Azad & Karen
 Mesroubian, Sam & Sylvia
Ohanessian, Sita
 Ohannesian Judy, Tiffany, Doug & family
 Oyler, Bill
 Plummer, Elizabeth
 Plummer, Sona & Bill
 Pompeian, Helen
 Rendahl/Parker, Kristi/Jamie
 Rith-Najarian, Stephen & Janet
 Samelian, Amy
 Savayan/Anderson, Peka Christova/Stephen,
 Maria
 Tashjian, Alice & Harry
 Toghramadjian, Avo, Katie & family
 Warren/Bendian, John/Melanie
 Wiersbeck, Mark
 Wiersbeck, Ray & Sarah
 Yaghsejian, George & Aida
Yeterian, Massis
 Ylitalo, Caroline Melkonian, David & family

2011

Andeweg, George & Jeanne
 Bulbulian, Francis & Barbara
 Charchian, Aram & Ruth
 Clarke, Barbara
 Digris/McGibbon, Nairy/Terry
Dourgarian, Gregg & Mary
 Ehramjian, Vartkes
 Erickson, Leroy & Cynthia
 Faust, Gloria & Doug
 Favre, Jim & Margaret
 Gauro, Boghos
 Gregorian, Henry & Laurel
 Hayes, Adrienne, Jim, Michelle
 Hayes, Jackie
Keljik, Mark
 Keljik/Collins, Tom/Jennifer
 Kibarian, Chris & Gohar
 Matossian, Lou Ann
 Meketerian, Marty & Mara
 Merjanian, Steve & Peggy
 Mesrobian, Azad & Karen
 Mesroubian, Sam and Sylvia
 Nyholm, Peter, Dana & Family
 Ohanessian, Sita
 Ohannesian/Tiffany, Judy/Doug
 Oyler, Bill
 Plummer, Elizabeth
 Samelian, Amy
 Sandstrom, Julia & Chad
 Savayan, Peka
 Teosyan/Bagdasarov, Yelena/Georgiy
 Toghramadjian, Avo & Katie
 Wiersbeck, Mark
 Yaghsejian, George & Aida

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 your dues to:
ACOM Treasurer
 1703 Skillman Avenue West
 Roseville, MN 55113

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.

THE EARLIEST KNOWN WINERY HAS BEEN UNCOVERED IN A CAVE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ARMENIA.

A vat to press the grapes, fermentation jars and even a cup and drinking bowl dating to about 6,000 years ago were discovered in the cave complex by an international team of researchers. While older evidence of wine drinking has been found, this is the earliest example of complete wine production, according to Gregory Areshian of the University of California, Los Angeles, co-director of the excavation.

The findings, announced Tuesday by the National Geographic Society, are published in the online edition of the *Journal of Archaeological Science*. "The evidence argues convincingly for a wine-making facility," said Patrick McGovern, scientific director of the Biomolecular Archaeology Laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia, who was not part of the research team. Such large-scale wine production implies that the Eurasian grape had already been domesticated, said McGovern, author of "Uncorking the Past: The Quest for Wine, Beer and Other Alcoholic Beverages."

The same Armenian area was the site of the discovery of the oldest known leather shoe, dated to about 5,500 years ago. That discovery at the area known as Areni-1 was reported last summer. According to the archeologists, inside the cave was a shallow basin about 3 feet across that was positioned to drain into a deep vat.

The basin could have served as a wine press where people stomped the grapes with their feet, a method Areshian noted was traditional for centuries. They also found grape seeds, remains of pressed grapes and dozens of dried vines. The seeds were from the same type of grapes, *Vitis vinifera vinifera*, still used to make wine.

The earliest comparable remains were found in the tomb of the ancient Egyptian king Scorpion I, dating to around 5,100 years ago. Because the wine-making facility was found surrounded by graves, the researchers suggest the wine may have been intended for ceremonial use. That made sense to McGovern, who noted that wine was the main beverage at funeral feasts and was later used for tomb offerings.

Indeed, he said, "Even in lowland regions like ancient Egypt where beer reigned supreme, special wines from the Nile Delta were required as funerary offerings and huge quantities of wine were consumed at major royal and religious festivals." McGovern noted that similar vats for treading on grapes and jars for storage have been found around the Mediterranean area. In his books, McGovern has suggested that a "wine culture," including the domestication of the Eurasian grape, was first consolidated in the mountainous regions around Armenia before moving to the south.

Related article, including photos, at:

More, including photos, at:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2011/01/110111-oldest-wine-press-making-winery-armenia-science-ucla/>

FOUND: 5,500-YEAR-OLD LEATHER SHOE.

WANTED: MATCHING LEFT, SIZE 7

By Pam Belluck, New York Times

Updated: 06/10/2010

Reprinted with permission from the St. Paul Pioneer Press

Think of it as a kind of prehistoric Prada: Archaeologists have discovered what they say is the world's oldest known leather shoe.

Perfectly preserved under layers of sheep dung (who needs cedar closets?), the shoe, made of cowhide and tanned with oil from a plant or vegetable, is about 5,500 years old, older than Stonehenge and the Egyptian pyramids, scientists say. Leather laces crisscross through numerous leather eyelets, and it was worn on the right foot; there is no word on the left shoe.

While the shoe more closely resembles an L.L. Bean-type soft-soled walking shoe than anything by Jimmy Choo, "these were probably quite expensive shoes, made of leather, very high quality," said one of the lead scientists, Gregory Areshian, of the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at the University of California, Los Angeles.

It could have fit a small man or a teenager, but it was most likely worn by a woman with roughly size 7 feet. (According to the website www.celebrityshoesize.com, that would be slightly roomy for Sarah Jessica Parker, whose Manolo Blahniks are size 6 1/2, and a tad tight for Sarah Palin, who, during the 2008 campaign, wore red Double Dare pumps by Naughty Monkey, size 7 1/2.)

The shoe was discovered by scientists excavating in a huge cave in Armenia, part of a treasure trove of artifacts they found that experts say provide unprecedented information about an important and sparsely documented era: the Chalcolithic 02period or Copper Age, when humans are believed to have invented the wheel, domesticated horses and produced other innovations.

Along with the shoe, the cave, designated Areni-1, has yielded evidence of an ancient winemaking operation and caches of what may be the oldest known intentionally dried fruits: apricots, grapes, prunes. The scientists, financed by the National Geographic Society and other institutions, also found skulls of three adolescents ("subadults," in archaeology-speak) in ceramic vessels, suggesting ritualistic or religious practice; one skull, Areshian said, even contained desiccated brain tissue older than the shoe, about 6,000 years old.

"It's sort of a Pompeii moment, except without the burning," said Mitchell Rothman, an anthropologist and Chalcolithic expert at Widener University who is not involved in the expedition. "The shoe is really cool, and it's certainly something that highlights the unbelievable kinds of discoveries at this site. The larger importance, though, is where the site itself becomes significant. You have the transition really into the modern world, the precursor to the kings and queens and bureaucrats."

Previously, the oldest known leather shoe belonged to Oetzi the Iceman, a mummy found 19 years ago in the Alps. His shoes were about 300 years younger than the Armenian shoe. The Armenian shoe discovery was published Wednesday in PLoS One, an online journal.



ACOM's 2011 Calendar of Events



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

*PLEASE NOTE: All events are held at
St. Sahag Armenian Church unless otherwise specified.*

For further information, call Mark Keljik, ACOM President 612-823-6338

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
JANUARY	16	Gaghant – Barahantess	5:30 p.m.
FEBRUARY	8	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
	23	Armenian Dance Ensemble Volunteers of America, Minneapolis	1:00 p.m.
MARCH	4	Armenian Dance Ensemble Walker Elder Suites, Edina	2:30 p.m.
	17	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
	20	Armenian Dance Ensemble Preview for Festival of Nations - Dance	1:00 p.m.
APRIL	7	Armenian Dance Ensemble Sholom Home East, St. Paul	7:00 p.m.
	21	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
	TBD	Genocide Memorial Event and Reception	7:00-8:00 p.m.
MAY	5,6,7,8	Festival of Nations	All day
	18	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
	19	Armenian Dance Ensemble Richfield Care Center, Richfield	7:00 p.m.
	31	Armenian Dance Ensemble Edina Care and Rehab, Edina	7:00 p.m.
JUNE	16	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
JULY	7	Armenian Dance Ensemble Sholom Home East, St. Paul	7:00 p.m.
	21	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
	23	Picnic, Minnehaha Park, Minneapolis	4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
AUGUST	18	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
	31	Armenian Dance Ensemble Centennial Lakes Park, Edina	7:00 p.m.
SEPTEMBER	11	Armenian Dance Ensemble Serenity Senior Care, St. Paul	2:00 p.m.
	15	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
OCTOBER	TBD	Voski Ashoun – Entertainment and reception	7:00 p.m.
	20	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
NOVEMBER	3	Armenian Dance Ensemble Sholom Home East, St. Paul	7:00 p.m.
	17	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.
DECEMBER	15	ACOM Executive Committee meeting	7:00 p.m.

ACOM 2012 Calendar of Events

JANUARY	7	Gaghant - Barahantess	TBD
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ARMENIAN ORPHAN RUG LIVES UP TO ITS NAME

WASHINGTON—Somewhere inside the White House, stashed away inside an obscure storage room, lays an historic rug.

A close-up of the Armenian Orphan Rug with its intricate detail bearing colorful images of animals akin to the Garden of Eden. The rug was woven in 1924-25 and presented to President Calvin Coolidge. It now lies in storage inside the White House. Not just any rug, but one created by 400 Armenian orphans from 1924-25 in a town called Ghazir, about 40 miles north of Beirut.

This colorful piece of tapestry, which measures 18 feet by 12 feet, lives up to its name: It has remained an “orphan” rug since it passed through the hands of President Calvin Coolidge in 1926.

The intricacy is woven with a passion unlike others of its kind, containing some 4 million knots made to characterize the biblical Garden of Eden with its collection of animals and other symbolic features.

The big loom was set up for an “Isfahan.” The 400 orphaned girls worked in shifts and spent 18 months on its completion. It was then sent to Washington and presented at a special ceremony to the White House in recognition of the help rendered by the American people to Armenian orphans.

Armenian historians and archivists are looking for a more permanent home, one that will avail itself to tourists and public acclaim. They’d like nothing better than to see this rug on permanent display in the White House, with credit given to Armenian Genocide survivors or, at the very least, have it showcased inside the Genocide Museum, or perhaps the Smithsonian. They seem to think there are political ramifications preventing this rug from enjoying the life of nobility, for which it was intended.

“If you bring out the story of this rug, you’re talking genocide, and this country doesn’t recognize the Armenian Genocide,” laments Dr. H. Martin Deranian, a prominent Worcester historian and dentist who has documented every facet of this jewel. “It’ll open up the story of the orphans. I’ve taken responsibility to see this story brought to the surface and its meaning appreciated.” Deranian has turned himself into a self-imposed rug ambassador in seeking the cause of justice. By unraveling this mystery, he’s hoping to bring greater credence to the Near East Relief and the scores of orphans saved during the genocide years of 1915-23. He continues to pay homage to Dr. Jacob Kuenzler, or “Papa” Kuenzler as he was affectionately called, for evacuating thousands of Armenian orphans from Turkey to the relative security of Syria while working for the Near East Relief. Kuenzler had the idea of starting a rug factory in Ghazir. He thought the girls would learn to weave rugs and go on

earning a living this way. It seemed to him that even on so small an outlay, much good could be achieved for these orphans. With only two looms, he started this rug factory in Ghazir, high up in the mountains.

President Coolidge was more than grateful for the rug. In a letter he wrote to Dr. John Finley, vice-president of the Near East Relief, Coolidge was overwhelmed by the gift. “This beautiful rug woven by children in Lebanon has been received. This, their expression of gratitude for what we’ve been able to do for this country for their aid, is accepted by me as a token of their goodwill to the people of the United States who have assisted in the work of the Near East Relief. Please extend to these orphans my thanks and the thanks of the vast number of our citizens whose generosity this labor of love is intended to acknowledge. The rug has a place of honor in the White House where it will be a daily symbol of goodwill on earth.”

A “Golden Rule” Sunday had been instituted in the United States. Each year, on the first Sunday in December, people were asked to eat only a one-course meal and contribute the money they had saved to the Near East Relief. Some \$2 million was collected annually.



An overall view of the Armenian Orphan Rug, which measures 18'x12'.

Armenian activists are trying to have it removed from storage inside the White House and have it showcased.

The presentation of the Ghazir rug to the White House in 1925 was given such widespread publicity that contributions from Golden Rule Sunday doubled. The factory received numerous orders for special carpets and many of the girls ultimately found homes and became brides. The

event was covered in the New York Times, which carried the headline, “President receives rug woven by orphans of Near East and praises work on relief.” Coolidge displayed the rug in the Blue Room under his administration. It remained there until 1928 when he took it to his residence in Northampton, Mass.

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!

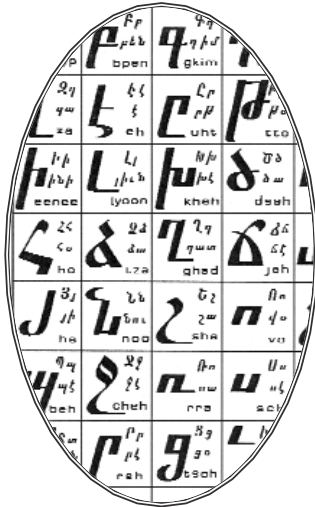


THE MIRACLE OF TRANSPLANTATION

On July 16th, ACOM member, Dr. John Najarian spoke to the ACOM membership and to the general public on his recently published book "The Miracle of Transplantation." He is a pioneer in transplant surgery at the University of Minnesota. He shared stories from his book, which included his Armenian background and the development of transplant surgery. He read to us the fascinating story of Jamie Fisk, the first successful kidney transplant in a child.

A lively question and answer period was included. The attendance was over fifty people and John graciously stayed to sign all books that were purchased. Proceeds of the sale went to The Organ Donor's Fund.

SCHEDULE CHANGE IN LANGUAGE CLASSES



Armenian Classes are now held
EACH SUNDAY
from 1:15 to 1:45 p.m.
 for half an hour.
 If you or your children are unable
 to attend a particular session,
 please contact
 Mariam Khachatryan
IN ADVANCE
 by phone: [612-250-4453](tel:612-250-4453) or email:
khachatryan.mariam@yahoo.com.
 Feel free to contact her with any
 questions you may have.

ARMENIAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF MINNESOTA

203 North Howell Street ~ St. Paul, MN 55104

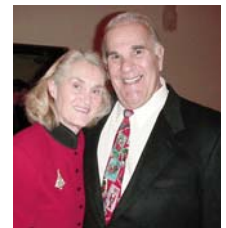
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Past President:	Cynthia Erickson	651-917-1818
Newsletter Editor:	Peggy Merjanian	952-473-HYEM

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN!

TAKE A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

Can you identify who, where & when?



HISTORICAL ARMENIAN EVENT IN CHINA: THE FIRST ARMENIAN BAPTISM ON CHINESE SOIL

On July 9th, 2010, with the blessings of His Holiness Karekin II Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, the Armenian Community of China celebrated the first Armenian baptism on Chinese soil in recent history. Very Rev. Father Khoren Hovhannisyanyan, Pastor of Armenians in India was specially flown to China to celebrate this historical event. The historical baptism was held in Shenzhen, in Southern China, with about 40 guests, mostly other Armenians living in the Greater China region.

The baptism was that of Enza and Aaron Sert, children of Harutyun and Liza Sert, a young and successful Armenian couple from France, who moved to China in the last decade and who now own several factories employing hundreds of workers making high end jewelry for European clients. As there are currently no Armenian Churches in China, the Sert family had beautifully transformed their house into an Armenian Church for the occasion.

Whilst relatively unknown to the rest of the Armenian Diaspora, the Armenian community of China, commonly known as ChinaHay, has grown in numbers in recent years with about 200 Armenians now living, working or studying in China, mostly in the coastal cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong. These Armenians come to China to take advantage of the numerous economic opportunities from all the corners of the globe including France, Australia, Canada, Argentina, U.S., England, Russia, Lebanon, Syria and, of course, Armenia. These individuals are involved in a broad range of professions from jewelers and traders to fashion designers and lawyers. The ChinaHay community regularly gets together in various parts of China and is expected to grow substantially in the coming years due to China's economic expansion. Anyone interested to learn more about the Armenian community of China is encouraged to visit their website www.chinahay.com or their Facebook ChinaHay group.

CHARLES AZNAVOUR UNVEILS KHATCHKHAR IN VERSAILLES

On 30 May, many French political personalities joined the ceremonies as a tribute to Armenian and French veterans at the opening of an khatchkhar that came specially from Armenia dedicated to the victims of Armenian genocide in 1915. It is placed in the gardens of City Hall.

It's Charles Aznavour who unveiled the work of Maxime Kevorkian with the mayor of the city of Versailles, Mr. Francois de Mazieres and Viguen Tchitetchian, RA Ambassador to France . Previously, Bishop Norvan Zakarian, Apostolic Primate of All Armenians of France said a prayer of requiem in St. Louis Cathedral. Then he blessed the Khatchkhar.

Antoine Bagdikian (President of National Association of Armenian Veterans), organizer of the event, said: "We are not here to seek revenge. We only ask that justice be done after all these years. We give thanks to France that was the first to recognize this genocide. "

Jean Eckian / Paris

ORDINATION CEREMONY

On Sunday, August 29, 2010, His Holiness Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos Etchmiadzin, Bishop Hovakim Manukian celebrated the Divine Liturgy and ordained the deacons.



Three deacons were ordained as married priests, and one deacon as a celibate priest. Following the traditional 40-day seclusion period of fasting, meditation, and prayer, the new priests will be appointed to serve in different dioceses of the Armenian Church or at various departments of the Holy See.

Among the three deacons ordained was our beloved Deacon Manuk Malkhasyan who is now renamed Father Abraham.

“ORPHANS OF THE GENOCIDE” GETS NOMINATED FOR AN EMMY

On October 18, 2010, the Suncoast Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences nominated the seven-minute version of “Orphans of the Genocide” in the category of Historical Documentary.

“Orphans of the Genocide” is an 18 minute documentary produced by the Armenoid Team about the untold story of over 130,000 Armenian children left parentless as a direct result of the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire during WWI. These orphans were saved and documented by the United States Congress commissioned, Near East Relief organization.

“Our Emmy nomination is great news. It will generate more confidence in our next phase of production,” says Bedo Der Bedrossian, one of the producers of “Orphans of the Genocide.” Currently the Armenoid Team is working on expanding this 18 minute documentary to a one hour film. “We have interviewed orphans and their families and have lined up a number of experts and scholars in this field for interviews” adds co-producer Paul Andonian.

For the production of the one-hour version, The Armenoid Team has widened its scope of research and coverage beyond the United States and has explored the international arena for fact finding missions. In Canada, the team documented and filmed the designation ceremony of the “Georgetown Boys” farmhouse into a historical sight in Ontario, Canada this past June.

“Georgetown Boys” is a group of Armenian orphans brought to Canada in the early Twenties and given shelter. “We just returned from filming three crucial locales in the Middle East where Armenian genocide orphans were housed. One of them is the “Antoura Orphanage where 1,000 Armenian orphans were being turkified under direct orders from the commander of the 4th Ottoman Army, Djemal Pasha, who appointed Halideh Edib Adivar, the most prominent feminist of the Ottoman Empire as the directress of this turkification center”, concludes the director of the documentay and founder of the Armenoid Team, Bared Maronian. www.armenoidteam.com.



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

ACOM MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

VALID THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2011

NAME(S): _____

STREET: _____ City/St/Zip _____

Phone: (____) _____ E-Mail Address: _____

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP*
MINNESOTA RESIDENTS \$30.00

OUT OF STATE \$15.00
(Newsletter Only)

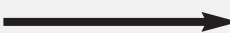
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Newsletter #131
Autumn 2010/Winter 2011