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*Culture
Heritage
History
Language*

Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota
Established 1980

MinneHyeLites

No. 145 Summer 2016

What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian In ... Session 7 - March 13, 2016

On Sunday, March 13, 2016, ACOM hosted the 7th session in the “What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian In ...” series. The panelists this time were Peter Hajinian, who grew up in the Milwaukee area, Terese Najarian, who grew up in the Twin Cities area, and Artyom Tonoyan, who grew up in Armenia and the Ukraine. Our host was Francis Bulbulian.



Terese Elizabeth Najarian was born in Minneapolis. She is 1/4 Armenian, as her dad's mother is Armenian. She remembers her great grandfather, Garabed, as being a popcorn seller. She attended the college of St. Thomas and built a background in literature. She

speaks English (or, maybe, Minnesotan), French, and a few phrases in Armenian. Terese has an older sister, and had a brother. Her mother was a teacher while her dad was a famous football coach.



Artyom was born in Soviet Armenia in 1974 and is 100% Armenian. His grandparents survived the genocide. His mother's parents were the sole survivors of their families as young children. They were saved by Ameri-

can missionaries and brought to Russian Armenia. He grew up in Gyumri, soaked in Armenian culture. In about 1980, in his view, all Armenians became politicized. Artyom joined in the protests against Soviet rule following massacres in Azerbaijan. His Dad was a Communist party member so his family had to follow Soviet rules more strictly than they might have liked. For example, the children in his family weren't baptized. Because of this, some of his friends or ac-

quaintances would call him a Turk, which puzzled him when he was young.

Artyom's early education was in Armenia. After the earthquake in 1988 his family moved to the Ukraine for a year. He wanted to enter Yerevan University in 1992, but didn't score high enough on the entrance exam. Soviet style was that you had to declare your major ahead of time, then take entrance exams based on it. If you didn't pass, you couldn't enter school in that area. When he didn't get into the university, he entered business, taught himself English, and became a translator for politicians, businessmen and missionaries. Then Ukraine passed a law requiring a formal education in order to get a license as a translator, which left him out. A missionary helped him get into a Dallas bible college where he got a degree in philosophy. In the Ukraine, he had shed his Armenian identity in order to fit in better, but in Dallas he ended up drawing back into his Armenian identity in order to feel better personally. He ended up missing those parts of society, such as the music. He noticed that the history of Europe that was taught in his college didn't even mention the Armenian genocide while the Jewish Holocaust was a major portion of history teaching. After getting his degree, he went to Baylor University to get a graduate degree. He aimed his graduate work at viewing the Armenian genocide from a theological angle. More recently he ran a program at the University of Minnesota on Armenian history, did research on religion, nationalism and ethnic conflicts, and took part in a group which created policy recommendations for incoming presidents.

Artyom has a sister in Armenia and a brother who died. His mother is still living in Armenia, but his dad has died. He grew up enjoying hiking across fields with his dad. He was taught to read in Russian when he was 4, with his dad teaching him how to read the newspaper “Pravda.” The women in the family fol-

(Continued on page 3)

Month	Date	Weekday	Event	Time
January	9	Saturday	Gaghant - Barahantess, Como Dockside Pavilion St Paul	5:30 PM
January	18	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
January	18	Monday	<i>Martin Luther King Day</i>	
January	21	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:00 PM
January	23	Saturday	Genealogy workshop - St. Sahag	3:00 PM
February	8	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
February	14	Sunday	<i>Valentine's Day</i>	
February	15	Monday	<i>Presidents' Day</i>	
February	18	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:00 PM
March	7	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
March	13	Sunday	Seventh Session: What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian	1:30 PM
March	17	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:15 PM
March	19	Saturday	ACOM Movie Night	7:00 PM
March	27	Sunday	<i>Easter Sunday</i>	
April	4	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
April	14	Thursday	Ohannesian lecture - Peter Balakian	TBD
April	16	Saturday	ACOM Movie Night	7:00 PM
April	21	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:00 PM
April	24	Sunday	Genocide Commemoration	TBD
May	2	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
May	6,7,8		Festival of Nations	
May	8	Sunday	<i>Mother's Day</i>	
May	14	Saturday	ACOM Movie Night	7:00 PM
May	19	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:00 PM
May	30	Monday	<i>Memorial Day</i>	
TBD		Saturday	Music event, w/ cheese & wine reception	6:00 PM
June	4	Saturday	ACOM Movie Night	7:00 PM
June	6	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
June	16	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:00 PM
June	18	Saturday	ACOM Picnic/Pool Party - Erickson's	2:00 PM
June	19	Sunday	<i>Father's Day</i>	
July	4	Monday	<i>Independence Day</i>	
July	11	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
July	17	Sunday	Youth Musical Showcase	12:30PM
August	8	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
August	28	Sunday	ACOM Picnic - St. Sahag	1:00 PM
September	5	Monday	<i>Labor Day</i>	
September	12	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
September	15	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:00 PM
September	24	Saturday	Movie Night, Voski Ashoun, Brandy & Wine Tasting	5:00 PM
October	3	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
October	20	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:00 PM
October	23	Sunday	Eighth Session: What Was It Like Growing Up Armenian	1:30 PM
November	5	Saturday	Cooking Class by Judy O. & Michele A.	10:00 AM
November	7	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
November	17	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:00 PM
November	24	Thursday	<i>Thanksgiving Day</i>	
December	5	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
December	15	Thursday	ACOM Book Club	7:00 PM
December	25	Sunday	<i>Christmas Day</i>	
2017				
January	7	Saturday	Gaghant - Barahantess, Como Dockside Pavilion St Paul	5:00 PM
January	16	Monday	ACOM Executive Committee Meeting	5:00 PM

What It Was Like Growing Up Armenian In ... (Continued)

(Continued from page 1)

lowed traditional roles. He feels that he was spoiled when young when he went with his mom to market for fresh food and she always bought him treats.

Peter was born in Milwaukee. His mother is of German descent. His great grandfather was in Argentina during the genocide, went to Lebanon to get a wife and brought her to Milwaukee area because he had relatives there. (A family joke is that family members always ask why he didn't



have relatives in Hawaii or someplace else warm.) His grandfather had 4 children, each of whom had 2 children, so there's always a large crowd at family gatherings. A difference is that his family Thanksgiving dinner always had a large pot of pilaf instead of potatoes. One of his earliest Armenian memories is having neighbor kids seeing leftover sarma and wondering if he was actually going to eat it. Another memory is that they always had loud family gatherings.

Peter went to school in Milwaukee and to the University Wisconsin in Madison. He also noticed that nobody knew about the Armenian genocide. In south Milwaukee, his grandfather's basketball team was all Armenian except for two Polish players, so they gave them Armenian last names in order for them to fit in. He took Armenian language in elementary school and learned just enough Armenian to understand it when his aunts talked about his dates.

Peter has 3 younger sisters in the Milwaukee area. Women filled traditional roles until non-Armenians joined the family. He remembers an uncle commenting to one of the women in his family "why isn't she in the kitchen?" and was put down for

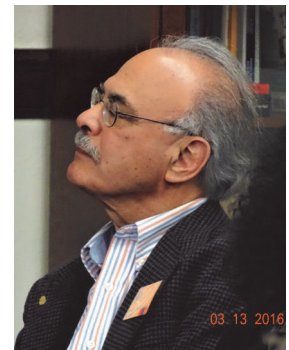
asking it. His family in many ways was liberated. Great aunts ran the family with a very strong mixture of tradition with American attitudes.

Peter's father is a collector of Armenian coins (and will be making a presentation on them for ACOM later in the year). Peter grew up listening to his father's friends talking about the coins and Armenian history, so he grew to like it.


Q and A


Natasha Vaubel asked Artyom, what the role was of the Russian language with respect to Armenian in Armenia. His answer was that when he grew up in the Soviet Union, Russian was predominant. The official Soviet attitude was that Russian culture was superior to the native cultures. People had to know Russian in order to get into the university and to raise themselves up in society. In some houses in Armenia, the families spoke Russian at home. His was a middle class family which had enough money to travel and buy gifts. Gyumri is a very conservative, nationalist society as opposed to Yerevan. In Gyumri, Armenian culture was highest. But in the bigger cities like Yerevan and in universities, people would almost be ashamed of their Armenian identities.

Francis Bulbulian
Moderated the session.




 (Links) to News Articles about Armenians (click on Chain to follow link)

Check out the article on George Clooney's visit to Yerevan commemorating the Genocide. 

For sports enthusiasts, PAUL CHARCHIAN writes in Tuesday, April 26th Tribune and editorial: *With Minnesota a hotbed for players, important safeguards are needed.* 

Joachim Savelsburg, the Ohanessian chair 

at the U of M, was in Yerevan for a conference on Genocide. Here's a link to an article in the Armenian press when they interviewed him. He was at the Balakian event at the U of M, and at the architectural lecture last fall. And he's been at various presentations by other Armenians also.

Article about Peter Balakian and his Pulitzer Prize for Poetry: 

ACOM 2016 PAID MEMBERS

If you have not yet renewed your membership, and would like to do so, please use the form on the back of the Newsletter to mail your check. Let us know if you are interested in receiving a copy of the Board Member biographies. Email your request to: hyebar@yahoo.com

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Adamek, David & Tina
 Agadzhanova, Galina
 Andeweg, George & Jeanne
 Aram, Connie & George
Asgian, Phil
Baradaran Cafesjian, Kathleen & Jaff
 Bobgan, Harold
 Bulbulian, Francis & Barbara
 Charchian, Aram & Ruth
 Daniels, Kathleen & Myers, Marcie; Mari
 Digris, Naïry & McGibbon, Terry
Dourgarian, Gregg & Mary & Family
 Erickson, Leroy, Cynthia, Bradley
 Favre, Jim & Margaret
 Gauro, Boghos & Lana
 Gildensoph, Lynne
 Gregorian, Henry & Laurel
 Grigoriants, Olga & Katia
Hajinian, Peter, Brooke, Charlie
 Hakobyan, Artur & Papiyeva, Nina
 Hayes, Adrienne, Jim, Michelle & Lila
 Johnson, Andrea & Lowell
 Kardashian, Van & Vali
 Kaye, Alfred
Keljik, Mark & Grantz, Caren
Keljik, Tom & Collins, Jennifer
 Kourajian, Art
Mardirosian, Artoosh & Helga
 Matossian, Lou Ann
 Meketarian, Marty, Mara, Hagop, Armen
 Merjanian, Peggy & Stephen
 Mesrobian, Azad & Karen
Najarian, John & Mignette
 Nyholm, Pete, Dana, Sam, Kira, Megan
 Ohanessian, Sita
 Ohannesian, Judy & Tiffany, Doug
 Parker-Der Boghossian, John
 Poritsky, Joan
 Rith-Najarian, Janet & Steve
 Samuelian, Christine & Family
 Savayan, Peka & Maria; Anderson, Steve
 Strichartz, Ariel
Tashjian, Joe & Savik, Kay
 Teosyan, Yelena, Vadim, Seda & family
 Vaubel, Natasha, Carol, Jamaica
 Wiersbeck, Mark
 Wiersbeck, Sarah
 Ylitalo, Caroline, David, Andy, Max

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

ARMENIAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF MINNESOTA (ACOM)

MISSION STATEMENT



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

CONSTITUTION

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

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

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

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

Armenian Dance Ensemble of Minnesota

If you have an 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, and costumes provided. It is a volunteer activity and we only ask for your time commitment. Rehearsals are typically held on Sundays at 12.30 pm. 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.

Note: if you wish to perform with the group, you need to purchase your own "character shoes" and be ready to perform without eyeglasses.

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

ARMENIAN DANCE NOTE

Nairy taught Armenian line dances at Tapestry Folk-dance Center in Minneapolis on both Fridays, April 15 and 22, 2016, and this is the feedback that was received. We thought you may all find it interesting how some "ODARS" are enjoying Armenian dances:

"Mary C. wanted me to share with you the feedback I got from my friends who danced International last week at Tapestry for the videos.

When we did the exit interview with them, in addition to saying that they enjoyed the dances, they specifically mentioned that they enjoyed the opportunity to learn about Armenia. They read the materials on the table that Nairy had brought, and were interested in the country, so the geography-focused teaching enhanced their interest. Also, they liked the music."

Leslie

Performance Calendar

Month	Date	Location
2016		
January	17	The Wellington
February	28	Keystone Highland Park
March	6	Festival of Nations Preview
March	12	Episcopal Homes
April	7	Jones Harrison
April	17	Cherrywood Pointe
May	6,7,8	Festival of Nations
May	31	Edina Care & Rehab
June	26	Shores of Lake Johanna
July	30	Cerenity Care
August	27	MN State Fair
August	31	Centennial Lakes
November	19	Maplewood Good Samaritan
December	4	Ukrainian Christmas Festival
December	5	St. Michael's Christmas Event

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS May 2016

Bravo! The Armenian Dance Ensemble did a beautiful performance at the Festival. We saw you on Sunday. Everyone looked proud, handsome and happy. There is such a nice mix of ages in the Ensemble! The choreography was lovely and varied and the performance looked impeccable to us. Kudos to you and all the dancers. And an extra kudo to Terry for how quickly he changed costumes between the Hungarian and Armenian dance performances!

Andrea Johnson

Thank you for making the Armenians in MN look so good!

Judy Ohannesian

Dance Ensemble
at 2016
Festival of Nations



Dance Ensemble on World Stage—Festival of Nations 2016



05 07 2016

CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Joseph Tashjian, St. Paul Radiology, for his award as Best Doctor for Women in 2015. More info can be found in the Minnesota Monthly magazine. We are very happy for you, Joe, and proud to have you as a member of the Armenian community.

CONDOLENCES

To Hank and Deb Manthei, ACOM extends their sincere condolences on the passing of your beloved mother.

Vali Kardashian and George Yaghsezian on the unexpected loss of two cousins, two days apart, mid April. One was in Egypt, the other in New York. Our heartfelt expressions of sympathy to you and your families.

Lynne Gildensoph on the passing of her beloved mother in New Jersey, after a long illness. Our condolences to you, Lynne, and your entire family. May your mom rest in peace.

ACOM NEWSLETTER

Beautiful, Nairy and Terry, and jam-packed!
Peter Hajinian

Greetings to all. Thanks for the ACOM letter. Happy the items for the auction were helpful. I loved them.
Mignette Najarian

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Peggy Merjanian had right knee replacement surgery

mid-April 2016. We all join to wish you a very speedy recovery. Peggy would welcome calls: 617-754-6203

Christine Samuelian had gall bladder surgery. Glad to see you back in full swing.

Laurel Gregorian tore the rotator cuff on her left shoulder and is recovering with physical therapy.

To Sita Ohanessian on her recent surgery.

THANK YOU

To all members of the ACOM Executive Committee. I thank you so much for your donation for Sam, and appreciate your kindness.
Sylvia Mesroubian

Hi my ACOM friends-I want to thank you so much for the incredible gift basket that arrived this afternoon. Your thoughtfulness makes a sad time better, because I realize that I've got great friends. Thank you also for condolence messages on the death of my mother. The beautiful basket is full of fruit, with some chocolates and other goodies. I'm going to have the most amazing fruit salads for the next week, and I'll think of you as I eat them! Thank you again
Lynne Gildensoph

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Nice report, thank you.
Marty Meketarian

FOOD SHELF DONATIONS***REMEMBER THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN US !***

Quite a few years ago, ACOM placed an empty barrel for food donations in Fellowship Hall; and it finally got replaced as it was falling apart. There are a lot of empty grocery bags in that barrel. If you are in Fellowship Hall, remember to pick up a bag, take it home, fill it with non-perishable food items and bring it back with you next time. Place the filled bag in that barrel and an ACOM board member will deliver it to Keystone Food Shelf.



THANK YOU !



Lucille (Kanian) Desteian

Desteian, Lucille (nee Kanian) Born September 27, 1922 and died March 6, 2016. Lucy was the daughter of Armen and Vartanoush Kanian, a survivor of the Armenian genocide in Turkey, 1915-23. Her husband, Vahan died in 1989. Her sister Susan (Stephen) Torosian, died in 2002. She is survived by her daughter, Susan; son, John (Judith Savage); grandson, Aram (Aja Tashjian); great-grandson, Massis; cousin, Mary Gindorff; nieces, Terry (Dale) Kolander, and Kim (Steven) Koeneke; nephew, Richard (Barbara) Kenderian; and many grand and great-grand nieces and nephews. A life-long resident of the Linden Hills neighborhood, and retired officer of Colle & McVoy Advertising Agency. Lucy had many friends who joined her family in mourning her passing.

Published in the Minneapolis Star-Tribune on March 8, 2016

Harriet Balian

Balian, Harriet, Beloved Sister & Aunt. Retired from State of MN / 3M Company. Born August 3, 1927, died on March 12, 2016.

Preceded in death by her parents & sister, Eva Rudisel. Survived by sisters, Elizabeth Seropian, Marlene Broburg, Dr. Lucy Rorke-Adams (Harry Knowles); 6 nieces & nephews. 7 great-nieces & nephews.

Funeral service took place at 11 am on Saturday, March 19th at ST. SAHAG ARMENIAN CHURCH, 203 N. Howell Street, St. Paul, MN,

Memorial lunch was catered by Beirut Restaurant (South St. Paul).

Published on March 15, 2016

Rose Salzano (nee Knadjian)

Salzano, Rose (nee Knadjian), our beloved mother, passed away on May 15, 2016, just a few days before her 90th birthday.

Rosie was the little sparrow with a heart as fierce as an eagle. She loved life as an artist, whether restoring a historic house or jazz dancing on stage. She was truly an amazing person, combining a vibrant mixture of traits, both artistic and whimsical. As an interior designer and entrepreneur, educated at the New York School of Interior Design, Rosie transformed many people's homes into calm and beautiful spaces. She loved theater and dance. She was a lifelong member of the Strollers of Maplewood, and designed sets for a large number of plays over the years, and also acted, was technical chair, and chaired both the props and costume departments. She was a dresser at the Paper Mill Playhouse for many productions, and designed sets for some off-Broadway plays. Additionally, she volunteered her artistic services as a docent at the Newark Museum, and also worked at Liberty Hall Museum, cataloguing their antiques and designing and carrying out tea ceremonies. With her beloved husband Carl, she was an accomplished sailor, and really loved the times they spent on their sailboat in North Carolina.

Rose leaves behind her children, Lynne Gildensoph, Jeanne MacFarland (Robert MacFarland), and Edward Salzano, and her grandchildren, Tristan Stoner and his wife Erin, Morgan Stoner and his wife Karleena, Holden Stoner, and Zoe Stoner, along with great-grandchildren Madison and Caleb Stoner, and her niece Beverly Dodd and great-nephew Kevin Dodd. She was predeceased by her first husband Bernard W. Gildensoph.

Jeanette Manthei

Manthei, Jeanette 4/27/1926 - 5/26/2016. She never gave up. Celebration of life to follow in September. Washburn-McReavy.com Robbinsdale Chapel 763-537-2333

Published in the Minneapolis Star-Tribune on June 4, 2016

SAVE THE DATES**ST. SAHAG CHURCH UPCOMING EVENTS****Armenia Service Project - July 2-17, 2016**

All young adults ages 18-30 are welcome to participate. Register by March 20 to secure a discounted rate of \$1975

For more information: www.acyoa.org

Armenian Festival - Sunday, September 18, 2016

ARMENIAN SCHOLARSHIPS

Armenian organizations across the country offer scholarships and fellowships for students of Armenian descent to pursue their undergraduate and graduate degrees. The following link provides you with a good list of opportunities available. What is very helpful on the applications is demonstrated volunteer experience and service to the Armenian community. ACOM can offer opportunities for you to volunteer and serve the Armenian Community! If your student is interested, please contact ACOM Social Director, John, for more information on volunteering: jpderboghossian@gmail.com
<http://thearmenite.com/2015/02/armenian-scholarships-2015/>

PETER BALAKIAN VISITS THE TWIN CITIES

By: Francis Bulbulian, ACOM President

Peter Balakian's Pulitzer prize winning announcement was 2 days after he was in town to give a lecture sponsored by the University Holocaust Studies Center. ACOM Board members had invited Peter Balakian for dinner at the Mufuletta the evening before his lecture. At that time he did not know he had



won the Pulitzer for poetry and was discussing his newly published book of poetry during dinner. The book of poetry called *Ozone Journal** was selected for the Pulitzer prize.

After waiting at his hotel on campus to pick him up for dinner, he apologized for being late. He had arrived from the airport 2 hours prior and had decided to take a jog on campus. He told me he knew the campus well, especially in the late 1960's when he was courting his girlfriend who was a student here. Peter also told me while we were driving that his first love was poetry even though his 2 books, *Burning Tigris* and *Black Dog of Fate* are very popular on peoples reading lists.

Peter is an avid oriental rug collector and on a few occasions when he has been in town he visits Keljik's rug store after his evening lectures and goes thru Keljik's carpet collection sometimes late into the night. The evening of our dinner was no different, after a late dinner he rode off with Mark Keljik to his rug store.

*The ACOM Book Club had *Ozone Journal* as a book selection.

Minor planet named after Stillwater Area High School Senior

Published March 14, 2016 at 10:13 pm Stillwater Gazette

Senior Max Ylitalo wins silver medal in International Science Fair

Published February 26, 2016 at 7:00 am Stillwater Gazette



Max Ylitalo, a Stillwater Area High School senior, was recently selected to have a minor planet (asteroid) named after him. (Photo courtesy of Max Ylitalo)

Links to Articles:

[Stillwater Gazette](#)

[Stillwater Gazette](#)

[Stillwater Area High Schools](#)

[KSTP News](#)

Youth Musical Showcase

NOTE: UPCOMING EVENT, JULY 17

We are proud to announce a showcase of the musically gifted Armenian Youth in the Twin Cities. Join us on Sunday July 17 in the fellowship hall of St. Saghag Church after Badarak (the morning church service). Our program currently includes seven youth who play a variety of instruments, including classical piano, trumpet, guitar and trombone! Armenian culture has a rich tradition of musical heritage. Check out the website: "[Sistema Armenia—Transforming Lives Through Music](#)" whose mission is to strengthen civil society in Armenia through collaborative, ensemble-based music education." Armenian Youth have commemorated the Armenian Genocide through performance of traditional songs as well as original compositions. And in her 2015 book, *Music and the Armenian Diaspora: Searching for Home in Exile*, Associate Professor of Music Dr. Sylvia Alajaji argues, "Given the traumas suffered and the continuing contestation over what constitutes the past, music, for the Armenians, has served as a way to take control of their narrative." We hope to see you on July 17 as we celebrate the talent of our Armenian musicians!

New Chess Club

It goes without saying that there is a long history and enjoyment of the game of Chess in Armenia. It is, after all, the only country in the world where learning chess is a mandatory class in K-12 education! After many requests, ACOM is starting a chess club for all ages who want to learn this classic game of strategy and logic. ACOM will provide chess sets as well as an instructor from the Armenian Community to assist with the learning. Whether you cannot tell a rook from a knight, or can quote all the Armenian Grandmasters of Chess we look forward to welcoming players of all stages! For more information please contact our Social Director, John Parker - Der Boghossian at jpderboghossian@gmail.com

ARMENIANS at FESTIVAL of NATIONS 2016

By: Janet Rith-Najarian

The 2016 Minnesota Festival of Nations was held May 5-8 this year, and it was bigger and better than ever—including bigger and better for the Armenian exhibit! After winning a first place “Award of Excellence” for our interactive Cultural exhibit on Armenian silk and textiles at the festival 10 years ago, we were invited to exhibit in the selective artisan demonstration area of the Festival marketplace. At this location, we could have a cultural exhibit and artisan demos, as well as being able to sell products as a fundraiser for ACOM.

Since then, we have had annual exhibits focusing on silk arts in Armenian in the context of Armenian connections to the Silk Road trade routes between Asia and Europe. While we have had a similar theme every year, we have had slight differences in the arts we demonstrate, and have also expanded our educational displays about the Silk Road in general, as well as Armenia in particular. Because we have been presenting displays that focus not just on Armenia, but the broader context of the cultures and geography of the Silk Road in general, we were presented a wonderful opportunity this year—the chance to double the size of our exhibit! Of all the cultures exhibiting, now only the Vikings have a larger display than ours. So yes, indeed, the ACOM exhibit was bigger and better than ever!

Half our display presented cultures of the middle east, near east, Europe, and beyond, who developed trade with Armenia for silk, rather than far distant China where silk originated. This part of the display featured dolls in folk costumes from all those different peoples

who incorporated Armenian silk into their national dress; these beautiful and elaborate dolls, made by Judy Ohannessian and Janet Rith-Najarian, were placed against a backdrop of a new handpainted silk tapestry showing a world map with the Silk Road and its many branches delineated.

The map noted China as the original source of silk, but Armenia was shown as central to the routes of western trade that subsequently developed centuries ago. Adjacent to this was another backdrop of a world map behind



a colorful display of life-sized heads showing different ways that men and women around the world can wear silk in the form of headwraps, veils, hats and turbans. Front and center in this display was a live potted mulberry tree and a fresh crop of live silk worms chowing down on their favorite mulberry



leaves and growing bigger every day! So, this was the international context of the Silk Road showing multicultural connections to Armenia.

The other half of the exhibit was set up as a traditional Armenian artisan’s arbor, such as might be seen at a traditional village vernissage, beneath which we had displays of Armenian hats and costumes and painted silk items, a display of natural items used for silk dye recipes along with live demos of the silk dyeing process, plus display and demos of spinning on a silk spinning wheel, weaving on a silk ribbon loom, and silk painting and printing.



As always, we love the teachable moments that occur

(Continued on page 10)

when visitors stop by our booth! But as our exhibit was bigger and better and even more colorful and inviting than ever before, it also seems that we had more visitors than usual, which meant more opportunities to educate Minnesotans about Armenian culture, history, geography, and of course silk arts. In addition to friendly and knowledgeable visitors



from some of the nations of our sister orthodox churches (including Malankaran, Coptic, and Ethiopian) plus some of Armenia's neighbors (Persians, Russians, Greeks and more) we also met many more curious and interested visitors who were learning about Armenia and Armenian culture for the first time. What a wonderful way to do ACOM outreach! It also meant we ended up selling more than double the amount of our hand dyed natural silk scarves this year!



Thankfully, though there was much more work than usual to set up our double-sized artisan booth and to create more new display items for the larger size booth, we also had lots of old and new volunteers who came to help! Our whole time at the festival, from packing up our display items from the ACOM storage at St Sahag Church, to the pre-festival set-up on the Wednesday before opening day, to docent shifts throughout the four days of the festival itself, and finally to the exhibit take-down and the return of everything back into storage, the whole operation ran smoothly and wonderfully well, proof that many hands make light work!

For set-up we had Terry McGibbon, Leroy Erickson, Tom Keljik, and Francis Bulbulian doing all the heaving



packing and lifting and big item set-up, with Janet arranging the display. Then, a relay of cheerful and beautifully costumed exhibit guides—including Jim and Margaret Favre, Katie Toghramadjian and Isabelle, Dana Nyholm and Sam, Judy Ohanessian and Erica, Lynne Gildensoph, Ariel Stricharz, and Eileen Huggins—took turns greeting and guiding visitors through our display. Terry returned Sunday night to orchestrate the taking down of the exhibit, helped by Lynne Gildensoph, Naïry Digris, Peter Hajinian, Leroy and Bradley Erickson, and John Parker Der Boghossian. Phew! What a whirlwind of activity, and it all worked like clockwork! Thanks so much everyone! The festival organizers were well pleased with our

efforts, and we look forward to returning next year for another wonderful chance to exhibit and engage the public in our most extensive ACOM outreach project of the year!

An additional note—aside from the festival, we are extremely grateful to the Wild Hare Bistro of Bemidji, who invited us to be the featured artist exhibit of the entire month for April prior to the Festival.

The exhibit was part of the rotating city-wide Art Walk in Bemidji, and was timed to coincide with the last month of the Armenian Genocide Centennial. In addition to exhibiting some of our new Festival display items as well as info about the genocide and its centennial, the Bistro also held an opening reception featuring an elegant custom made Armenian rose and pistachio cake along with other gourmet Armenian treats and beverages. In addition, they also hosted Janet for a Saturday silk arts demo at the Bistro as part of the opening weekend of the new northern Minnesota Fiber Arts trail. Best of all, several times throughout the month, the featured special cuisine of the day was a delicious Armenian platter! This was a wonderful opportunity, and probably the northernmost location for an ACOM event. And yes, we did have visitors from further afield than the Bemidji area! Several carloads of metro-area Armenians, including adults and many of the members of the junior ACYOA, arrived just in time for an Armenian lunch and to help out with the opening reception, or came up the weekend or two after! We truly have a wonderful and vibrant and supportive Armenian community here in Minnesota!



MINNESOTA ARMENIAN GENEALOGY PROJECT



This is an interest group for Minnesota Armenians and friends who are interested in researching and documenting their family history, building family trees, learning about new archival and DNA resources for documenting their past, and creating a genealogy network for the Minnesota Armenian community. We will host presentations, workshops, and informal help sessions on a regular basis, and post resources and research tips on the group page, and serve as a forum for helping each other! For more information, contact:

- Janet Rith-Najarian (E-mail: riversedge.mn@gmail.com)
- Judy Ohanessian (E-mail: jtohanessian@gmail.com)


ACOM Summer Adventure Pool Party

An even two dozen people were at Leroy & Cynthia Erickson's house on a hot afternoon on Saturday, June 18th, for the 2016 ACOM Summer Adventure/Pool Party. Those in attendance ate brats, burgers and hot dogs along with a nice collection of salads & desserts, including Marty's fantastic chicken & cheese dip. The two Meketarian boys spent the whole day in the pool while many of the adults sat at the edge dangling their legs in the water to cool off. Other than the food & the water, it was a nice, relaxing afternoon which allowed everyone to just sit around and visit.



A few Random Photos from the Archives





ACOM MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

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