Raffi Hovannisian Offers New Perspectives on Armenia

Andrew Esquerria
Staff Writer

Following the 20th anniversary of Armenian independence, which fell on September 21st of last year, a Fresno State audience of more than 200 gave their attention to a truly unique speaker, Raffi Hovannisian. Hovannisian, who visited Fresno on Friday, December 23, offered a look at Armenia from the perspective of a former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia, leader of the Heritage Party in Armenia, and a Fresno native. The first hand-account of a truly unique speaker, Raffi Hovannisian.

Mexican Ambassador to United States Arturo Sarukhan Pays Visit to Armenian Community

Tamar Karakazian
Editor

Thursday, February 16, was an eventful evening for the Armenian community of the San Joaquin Valley. The community gathered for the annual Vartanantz Commemoration, and also had an opportunity to meet with the Ambassador of Mexico to the United States, Arturo Sarukhan, prior to the church service and program.

The commemoration took place at the St. Gregory Armenian Church, in Fowler, and was sponsored by the Knights of Vartan Yeprad Tahlili, with the cooperation of local Armenian churches.

Accompanied by the Mexican Consul of Fresno, Reyna Torres-Mendivil, Ambassador Sarukhan was on an official visit to California, meeting with local farmers and workers and also visiting the Mexican consulate in Fresno. He took time out of his busy schedule to meet with the leaders of the Armenian community and to share his personal experiences. During the discussion the Ambassador explained how his family had established themselves in Mexico City. Both his parents escaped to Mexico as refugees—his mother from Spain, and his father from Armenia.

The Ambassador described the similarities between the Armenian community of the San Joaquin Valley and the Mexican community; he called it a “natural alliance” because of the similarities between the two communities. He also explained how both communities have collaborated between the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program and the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School.

Walter and Laurel Karabian Speak on Artist Aivazian (Aivazovsky)

Left to R.: Dr. Sergio La Porta, Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

As an artist, it was a huge honor to attend a lecture about a famous Armenian painter, Ivan Aivazovsky. This opportunity was made possible thanks to the Armenian Studies Program and Walter and Laurel Karabian, who spoke on “The Noted Armenian Artist Hovhannes Aivazian (Ivan Aivazovsky)” as part of the Armenian Studies Spring Lecture Series on Friday, March 2.

The Karabians brought several of Aivazovsky’s paintings from their collection with them to Fresno, among them “Romance” and “Ship on the Black Sea.”

Aivazovsky, born Hovhannes Aivazian, was a famous Armenian painter, who lived from 1817-1900. It is estimated that throughout his lifetime he painted artwork that is worth millions of dollars today.

The California State University, Fresno Armenian Studies Program cordially invites you to its 24th Annual Banquet Celebrating the 35th Anniversary of the Armenian Studies Program and honoring Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian A.E.F. Professor of Modern Armenian history, UCLA

Graduating seniors receiving an Armenian Studies Minor and ASP Scholarship recipients will be recognized.

Sunday, March 11, 2012
Reception-5:00PM Dinner-6:00PM
Ft. Washington Golf & Country Club Fresno, California

See Ambassador page 8

See Karabian page 8

Hye Sharzhoom
Armenian Action
ΛΗΞΕ ΣΟ΢ΟΜΗΑ
March 2012
Vol. 33, No. 3 (117)
Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian
Armenian Studies Program Book/Video/CD Archive Gifts

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Prof. Sergio La Porta, and the Armenian Studies Program would like to thank the donors, authors, and publishers for the following books, periodicals, videos, and archival gifts, either offered personally, or to the Program.

Fr. Martin M. Tourigian, Fresno, for a gift of several books authored by him, including The Psalms Tell the Story of My Soul (2010), Leed I Love You (2001), in Armenian, The Sacraments of the Armenian Church (2000), and The Eucharist Gallery (2011). From January to December 1915, an Armenian. He donated the newly published Shirakants of the Armenian Apostolic Church by Archibishop Yeghem Tabakian (Burbank, CA: Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, 2011). In Armenian. He also donated several other Armenian and English language books.

Hazel Antaramian-Hofman, Fresno, for the gift of her Master's Thesis on the Portrait of King Gagik-Abas of Kars. She completed her Master of Fine Arts in Armenian Arts and Architecture at Fresno State in December 2011. Her thesis is an interpretation of textile wealth in the 11th century Armenian miniature family portrait of King Gagik-Abas of Kars, the last Bagrationi king in Caucasian Armenia.

Sheldon Gajarian, Fresno, for the gift of two posters: one on the battle of Sasonn and the other on the heroes of the Hinchak party.


James Kizirian, Novato, California, for the donation of the book Kaonak Patinker yev khink ou khnd (Beirut: Lebanon: Sevan Printing, 1961).


St. Mary Armenian Church, Fr. Vartan Kasparian, Yemen, CA, for the gift of an eight volume Bible, in new Armenian Braille (New York: American Bible Society, 1953). The Bibles are from the estate of the first ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Iran. 261 pp. In Armenian.

Dadrian, London, England, for the gift of the book Armenia in the 11th Century. He was a member of the Eastern Bureau of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the President of the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia (1910-1920) and was a noted intellectual. In Armenian. 278pp.


George Shirinian, Arlington, Massachusetts, for the gift of the new book Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials by Yvahin N. Dadrian and Tamer N. Krikorian (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), and for the article “The Armenian Genocide: Review of its Historical, Political, and Legal Aspects” in the University of St. Thomas Journal of Law & Public Policy, Volume V, Number 1 (Fall 2010) by Yvahin Dadrian. Judgment at Istanbul is a study of the Armenian Genocide as documented through the Ottoman Special Military Tribunal’s criminal prosecution of the perpetrators involved. 363 pp. In English.

Rev. Dr. Gorun Shrikan, Dearborn Heights, Michigan, for the gift of his book Armenians Under The Ottoman Empire and The American Mission’s Influence on Their Intellectual and Social Renaissance (Ottawa, Canada, 2011). The book is the author’s doctoral dissertation presented in 1977 to Concordia Seminary in Exile in cooperation with the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. 335 pp. In English.

Hye Sharzhoom, California State University, Fresno

Armenian Studies Program

Fall 2012 Schedule of Courses

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<th>Course</th>
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For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669 or visit our offices in the Peters Business Building, Room 384. Get a Minor in Armenian Studies. Check on requirements for the Minor in Armenian Studies in the 2012-2013 catalog: http://www.csufresno.edu/catoffice/current/armstudhd.html

Armenian Studies Program Faculty:

Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Coordinator, Armenian Studies Program and Director of the Center for Armenian Studies, ASO Advisor, Hye Sharzhoom Advisor (barlowd@csufresno.edu)

Sergio La Porta, Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies Dickran Kouymjian, Berberian Professor Emeritus of Armenian Studies

Director of the Center for Armenian Studies, ASO Advisor, Hye Sharzhoom Advisor (barlowd@csufresno.edu)

http://www.csufresno.edu/armenianstudies/
Dr. Thomas Mathews Discusses the Mystery of the Gospel of King Gagik of Kars

Kars was pillaged, the Gospel was safely stored in the Citadel. From there, it traveled to Tiflis, where it inspired new artists and scribes. Later, it was carried to Brolinkha with the Catholoces, and finally, to Jerusalem. Everywhere the Gospel went, it inspired artists; today we can draw parallels between the Gospel of Gagik-Abbas and works created in later centuries. In the Trebizond Gospel (Venice 1400), whose patron was princess Marem, fol. 7v is strikingly similar to fol. 8 of Gagik-Abbas’ Gospel. In addition, since the Gospel migrated to Cilicia after the fall of Tismandos, motifs seen in Gagik-Abbas’ Gospel are seen throughout Cilician manuscripts.

The last secret was of the fate of the Gospel, which suffered tragic mutilation that some attribute to deliberate vandalism, yet others, to devout Christians.

Professor Mathews commented that the figure of Christ had been cut out in all the miniatures. The miniatures that were not harmed were either of very poor quality or did not contain Christ’s image. This led Professor Mathews to hypothesize that the mutilation was the work of a devout Christian collecting images of Christ, sometime after the Gospel’s use in Cilicia but before its rebranding in 1703.

The Gospel remains an important treasure of Armenian past and an inspiration to those who see it. The audience was very fortunate to witness glimpses of a manuscript that very few have access to. And one can hope that with time, more is revealed about the vibrant history of the Gospel and therefore, Armenia.
Camp Darfur, From Page 1
never even heard of the Armenian Genocide. However, how many of us are aware of similar atrocities that have taken place in Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda, and Sudan? On Monday, March 5, Fresno State sought to change this as the traveling exhibit, “Camp Darfur,” was brought to campus. “Camp Darfur” is a traveling, simulated refugee camp, meant to educate the public about the current genocide happening in Darfur, Sudan, while reminding them of genocides of the past.

The event was held in the Memorial Gardens, in front of the Kennel Bookstore, and was open to students, faculty, staff, and the community. The Holocaust and the genocides of Armenia, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur were each represented by an authentic U.N. refugee tent.

Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Sudan? that have taken place in Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda, and Sudan?

The campus programming board, USU Productions, hosted “Camp Darfur” to raise awareness about the genocides of the past.

It would be difficult for me to say that traveling to Armenia was a lifelong dream of mine. I had always been curious about the land of my ancestors, but not much more. I had often heard that you can’t truly feel a connection to the land of your ancestry until you step foot on the soil and this past summer I discovered just how true that really is.

During the long plane ride there, my mind was filled with thoughts of what Armenia would be like. As we got off the plane in the early morning and saw Mount Ararat so clear in the distance, I knew any preconceived notions would be wrong. Traveling to Armenia with the Armenian Studies Program and Prof. Barlow was an experience of a lifetime. I can now say that I have seen more of Armenia than most of my family members. We traveled through so many regions of Armenia, each one having something different to offer. The turnaround was amazing, one day we would wake up in the high city atmosphere of Yerevan, while other days we were surrounded by mountains in the outskirts of Armenia, almost secluded from people.

One of my favorite visits was to Holy Etchmiadzin. Never before had I seen such a beautiful church filled with so many amazing treasures, and a choir that sang so beautifully. Another beautiful site was Lake Sevan—that really just took my breath away. The size of the lake was incredible and the time we spent on the small beach was so much fun.

A soccer game between Armenia and Russia that was being broadcast in downtown Yerevan was an unexpected moment, that really left an impression on me. There were many people gathered to support their country; you just could feel that everyone was watching the same game. Their passion and patriotism were amazing. It made me so proud and made me wish that we lived in a society where life could stop for a soccer game.

If I could take this trip again, I would in a heartbeat. I left proud to be Armenian and wanting to tell everyone I all knew about the country of Armenia and my trip.

Ench Ga Chga
The campus programming board, USU Productions, hosted “Camp Darfur” to raise awareness about genocides on Monday, March 5, 2012. The Armenian Genocide was one of six genocides represented. We asked students who visited the Armenian Genocide tent to share their reactions.

“I didn’t know that so many Armenians were killed during the Genocide. Learning about these atrocities is alarming, but also helpful because we are learning about history.”

Laura Carroll
Senior - English

“I was Armenian myself, and the reaction I felt was to be prouder of my country and my people.”

Oleg Muradyan
Junior - Nursing

“My reaction I felt was to be prouder of my country and my people.”

Andrey Khasgian
Junior
As a young child, I had always heard about the beauty and history of Armenia. So when a chance to visit Armenia arrived, I jumped at the opportunity. Once our plane landed, I saw the attractiveness of Armenia in Mt. Ararat. The landscape was stunning and was constantly changing. On each trip to see a different church, we saw more of the beautiful scenery of Armenia. I enjoyed seeing and hearing about all the history of Armenia, the churches, and the Armenian culture. Many of my favorite places that we visited were the churches and especially the landscape and scenery that surrounded them. Even though a majority of the memories I have of Armenia were of the churches or museums, some were of the new friends I made and the time we spent exploring Yerevan.

I plan on making a return trip to Armenia so I can see the tree that we helped plant in the grove at the Armenian Genocide Monument. I would recommend any and all students to attend and participate in a study abroad opportunity such as this.

Natcha Woodson
Junior - Double Major: Mathematics & African American Studies

“Before this event I was not informed about the Armenian Genocide. The similarities between the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust were very interesting, and the pictures that showed the maltreatment of the Armenians were especially shocking.”

Tamar Karkazian
Editor
Photos: Andrew Esperanza
Jendian Awarded 2012 President’s Award

ARMEN ARIKIAN
STAFF WRITER

Those involved in the Armenian community often feel a sense of pride when they hear that a fellow Armenian has won an award or been recognized for an accomplishment. On January 11, 2012 they had one reason, as Dr. Matthew Jendian was the recipient of Fresno State’s 2012 Presidential Award of Excellence.

The President’s Award of Excellence, established in Fall 2001, recognizes faculty members who have demonstrated leadership, and a commitment to the university and the community, as exemplified by President Welty.” The University Advisory Board reviewed the candidates for the award and made the decision to select Professor Jendian as this 2012 recipient.

Jendian, a Fresno State alumnus and founding director of Arts in Sociology with minors in Armenian Studies and Psychology, spent 10 years as a professor and faculty advisor of the Fresno State Armenian Students Organization, as well as a staff writer for Yerevan Sun. At the Spring faculty and staff assembly, where the award was announced, Dr. Jendian stated that as honored as he was, he knew that “there are many others on our campus who are equally or even more worthy” of the award. Jendian believes that “awards like this are as big or bigger than the individual being recognized,” emphasizing that his achievements and projects would have not been possible without the support of his wife Pam, his parents, his siblings, his in-laws, his grandparents, and several of his colleagues and mentors.

Jendian is the author of Becoming an Armenian: Remaining Ethnic: The Case of Armenian Americans in Central California (2008). He is currently writing another book, with his siblings, on how his family survived the Armenian Genocide, and how they maintained their Armenian identity in the United States.

Professor Jendian is the founding director of Fresno State’s Humanities Program, which prepares and certifies students to strengthen and lead nonprofit organizations. Jendian is enthusiastic about a recently established grant in the Humanities Program, the Philipp T. Manooian Philanthropic Award. This award will give students of the Program the opportunity to donate $3,000 to their choice of community benefit organizations in the field of education. The award, named in honor of Jendian’s father-in-law who was professionally involved with the Fresno State Alumni Association for 35 years, will be presented on May 14, 2012.

Grateful to those who helped him with all his projects—past, present, and future contributions—Jendian is inspired by his students. “Many of them tell me that I inspire them, but I keep reminding them that they are inspiring me to work as hard as I do for the benefit of my university and my community.”

Grandma’s Tattoos Screened at Fresno State to Large Audience

TATYEV HOVHANNISYAN
STAFF WRITER

When one hears about the Armenian Genocide, one often hears about the death marches and the killing of the Armenian leadership on April 24. Rarely do we hear what happened to the women who were “saved.”

The movie, Grandma’s Tattoos, explored this topic at a screening on Wednesday, February 29, at Fresno State.

The Armenian Studies Program co-sponsored the Fresno premiere of Grandma’s Tattoos with the Armenian National Committee, Central Valley.

Directed by Suzanne Khaladian, the 58-minute documentary explores Grandmother Khanoon’s horrifying past—one that she wanted to share with her grandchildren or children and grandchildren, because she was ashamed of her experiences.

The movie follows the director, Suzanne Khaladian, as she embarks on a journey to better understand her grandmother and to find out what prevented her grandmother from expressing love and affection to her family. She first visits her family home in Beirut, where her grandmother had settled as a refugee. She wanted to find out about the “devilish-marks” on her grandmother’s face and hands meant. Realizing that there were more questions than answers, she traveled to the United States to find out more from her grandmother’s sister. After hearing shocking and tragic stories about her grandmother’s childhood, Khaladian traveled to Armenia to interview a survivor of the Genocide, who could tell her stories of what happened to the young girls who survived the Armenian Genocide.

Turkish Embassy every April 24.

Khaladian learned that the Ottoman Empire killed most of the Armenian male population during the Genocide, leaving the women miserable and helpless. As the death marches started, Turkish gendarmes took more than 90,000 children, mostly young girls, and converted them to Islam, and forced some of them into prostitution. In order to remind the young girls of their past, the Turks tattooed their faces, chests, and foreheads. The tattoos were meant to distinguish them from the locals.

Khaladian later discovered that her grandmother had been raped when she was a young girl, which was why she was always filled with so much anger and rarely showed love towards her family.

It really opened my eyes to the pain that the women and children faced,” reflected Denise Altsouian.

The survivors who are asked to talk need to speak up and to share their story so that people around the world know what happened during and after the Genocide.

An eager crowd packed the Industrial Technology Building’s auditorium the evening of Friday, February 24 in anticipation of the 13th Annual Armenian Film Festival at Fresno State. The Festival was organized by the Armenian Studies Program and featured volunteers from the Armenian Students Organization, who introduced the films. The Festival was funded in part by the Thomas A. Koyoumjian Family Foundation.

Students, family, professors, filmmakers, and community members all came out to support this annual event that features a variety of films from the international Armenian film community.


The winners this year once again showcased the bevy of talent, artistry, and passion alive in Armenian filmmakers around the world.
Opinion-Genocide Law in France

EVELYN DEMIRCHIAN
STAFF WRITER

There’s a question in my mind that keeps repeating, “Why such a controversy about the Armenian Genocide” law in France, if they [Turkey] have nothing to hide?” Why must there be such a push from the nation of Turkey (and Turkish individuals abroad) to bully, blackmail, threaten, and intimidate their allies when these allies attempt to recognize a wholly-accepted facet of their past? Is it fair that one country has a clean record; all nations have shameful moments in their histories. Why refuse to let this skeleton out of its glass closet?

At the time that this piece was written, the French Constitutional Council overturned the “Armenian Genocide” law that had been approved by both houses of the French Parliament. If validated, the law would have criminalized the denial of the Armenian Genocide in France. It has been a controversial topic as there is a large Armenian community of Fresno, and the Charlie Armenian theater companies, community came together at works into one hilarious two- that combines three of Odian’s

In first world countries, such as in France and the United States, where the idea of Free Speech is, virtually sacred, what does the criminalization and subsequent punishment of denial achieve?

At Fresno State, in last week’s campus newspaper The Collegian, editor Tony Petersen quoted French philosopher Voltaire, “I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend your right to say it.” As an Armenian, my heart aches watching the ancestors of those who attempted to kill off my people continue this cycle of hate and denial. Yet, as someone who wholly believes in free speech, I would sooner defend the right of a man to speak freely in France, whose philosophy is “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité,” rather than see that man punished.

It’s a slippery slope of regulations and consequences; such a law as the proposed “Armenian Genocide” law is enacted.

Until the issue is resolved and the French parliament and courts agree, the law will be upheld. The Armenian Genocide deniers and naysayers spew their ignorance and continue to make themselves look like fools. Let the rest of us take this high road and continue to learn, educate, and remember. The ignorance will, and history will right itself. Politicians can attempt to right these matters, but ultimately we as individuals carry the responsibility of awareness.

In France and the United States, criminalization and subsequent consequences for the denial of the Armenian Genocide is virtually sacred, what does the law do for me? For me, something about this genocide is missing under this law. While recognition, education, and open public discussion of the Armenian Genocide must be pursued, I wonder if the law like the Armenian Genocide in France.

For me, something about this issue remains mildly unsettling. While recognition, education, and open public discussion of the Armenian Genocide must be pursued, I wonder if the law like the Armenian Genocide in France now is the right course of action.

Lory Bedikian Reads Poetry From New Book

Suren Oganessian
STAFF WRITER

Lory Bedikian, poet and author, of the book, "The Book of Lamenting" came to Fresno State on February 17, to read poems from her new book in an event sponsored by Fresno State’s Creative Writing MFA Program and the Fresno Poet’s Association. The Armenian Studies Program also supported her appearance in Fresno.

Among those in attendance were United States poet laureate Philip Levine, as well as Fresno State students and faculty.

Bedikian is an award-winning poet, as "The Book of Lamenting won the 2010 Philip Levine Prize for Poetry. She graduated from UCLA earning a B.A in Creative Writing, Poetry, and earned her MFA in Poetry at the University of Oregon. Her poetry has earned her a plethora of other awards as well, and she currently teaches poetry workshops in Los Angeles, where she resides with her husband.

Bedikian’s poetry illustrates the experience of immigrants coming to California from the Middle East. She was born in San Francisco, and grew up in Cupertino, and also lived for a brief time in Los Angeles. She writes about her family and

AFOS enjoys February & March Activities

EMMA SHALYAN
STAFF WRITER

With the start of the Spring semester, the Armenian Students Organization has continued with the same enthusiasm and dedication that has driven their success during the Fall semester. "We have a lot of great events planned for this semester," stated Ani Altounian, president of the Armenian Students Organization. "It made me proud to see ASO participate, they were a great addition," she recounted. Along with the table, ASO set up the scale model of the Armenian Martyrs Monument (Tsitsernakaberd).

ASO members taught students how to make handmade carnations to commemorate the Armenian Genocide, which were then placed on the Genocide model. The purpose was to show students that they can make a difference and help get genocides recognized; it was also meant to raise awareness about April 24. By the end of the day there was dozens upon dozens of carnations. "It made me proud to see ASO participate in a campus event," said Tamar Karkarian, assistant director for USU Productions. "They represented the Armenian community well with their commitment and dedication."

Looking ahead, ASO has planned many upcoming events. In the coming weeks they will take a trip to Badger Pass to learn how to ski and snowboard. In late March, Hasmik Hurumyan will visit campus to lead a workshop on Armenian dancing. ASO is also preparing for the annual April Armenian Genocide activities and commemorations.

ASO members at the 13th Annual Armenian Film Festival.

Emma Shalyan
STAFF WRITER

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Armenian Play Brings Fun to Fresno Audience on Feb. 26

For one enjoyable Sunday afternoon. On Sunday, February 26, the Ardavazt Theater Group from Los Angeles paid a visit to the Armenian community of Fresno, bringing with them the invaluable gift of love and laughter with their comedy play, “See Yev Dizraghiz” by Vervand Ovan.

"See Yev Dizraghiz" is a play that combines three of Odian’s works into one hilarious two-act comedy. Fresno’s Armenian community came together at Fresno High School’s auditorium to enjoy one of America’s best Armenian theater companies, sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Fresno Chapter, and the Charlie Armenian folk music, and scenic backgrounds, all of which added to the perfection of the play.

"It is always a joy to have an Armenian play performed in Fresno...the acting was wonderful and we all enjoyed it.”

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ASO enjoys February & March Activities with additional information about the Armenian Genocide. Denise Altounian organized the event, with USU Productions. “We were very pleased that ASO wanted to participate, they were a great addition,” she recollected. Along with the table, ASO set up the scale model of the Armenian Martyrs Monument (Tsitsernakaberd). ASO members taught students how to make handmade carnations to commemorate the Armenian Genocide, which were then placed on the Genocide model. The purpose was to show students that they can make a difference and help get genocides recognized; it was also meant to raise awareness about April 24. By the end of the day there was dozens upon dozens of carnations. “It made me proud to see ASO participate in a campus event,” said Tamar Karkarian, assistant director for USU Productions. “They represented the Armenian community well with their commitment and dedication.”

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Armenian Play Brings Fun to Fresno Audience on Feb. 26

Keyan Armenian Community School.

The play takes place in Bolis (Constantinople) during the late 19th century, and describes the chaos that arises with the task of matchmaking a wealthy family’s daughter, Vartuhi. Vartuhi’s parents, Yepimeh and Arin Agha can’t seem to agree on which suitor would be best for their daughter, as each of them is being persuaded by a different matchmaker—both matchmakers hoping to make money from their experience.

The father is in favor of a young man, Arigpis, while the mother favors the daughter from France, Shavarsh. What about the father, mother, and both matchmakers, don’t know, is that Vartuhi has already made up her mind, Vartuhi is neither Shavarsh nor Arigpis. Instead it is Edward, a young man from America. The play follows the convoluting actions of all the characters, but most importantly shadows the actions Edward and Vartuhi, who are both conspiring to end up with one another.

The dynamic characters of the play were each unique, silly, never ceasing to amuse the audience. The performance had such great acting that even if one didn’t understand the language, the performance was sufficient enough to make the play enjoyable and entertaining.

Along with the talented acting, the comedy had singing, beautiful

Love and laughter are the perfect ingredients for a happy life. They also make for an enjoyable Sunday afternoon. On Sunday, February 26, the Ardavazt Theater Group from Los Angeles paid a visit to the Armenian community of Fresno, bringing with them the invaluable gift of love and laughter with their comedy play, “See Yev Dizraghiz” by Vervand Ovan.

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Hye Sharzroom
March 2012
Thank You Annual Fund Donors (received as of March 12, 2012)

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Alice & Berge Bulbulian
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In memory of Arlene Najarian

Reminiscing about the independence of Armenia, Hovannisian spoke about his family, their experiences, and the challenges that face the Armenian nation today. Joined by his wife Armineh, who is the head of the Orran Benevolent Organization in Armenia, Hovannisian spoke on his family life focusing on the time when he was growing up. He recalled his trips from L.A. to Fresno, "the Armenian school [he] never had," every weekend. Along the way he would visit his uncles and aunts and his hardworking grandparents. Kaspar, a proud man and a fighter who hailed from Kharpert, "lost everything yet danced in the face of adversity," and his niece, Arlene, who represented a more Americanized culture and took the nickname Sarah, helped shape Hovannisian’s personal cultural identity. His other grandparents “gave their world to their grandchildren” even though they were plagued by nightmares of what they had been through. It is of note that his family history is documented in Garin Hovannisian’s (Raffi’s son) book, Family of Shadows, which was launched in Fresno this past September.

Hovannisian insisted that the young republic needs to become a viable nation economically and socially by emphasizing the importance of leadership by means of fair elections. The Armenian government must strengthen its sovereignty by being more independent in its duties, such as in national defense.

Regarding the Armenians in Karabakh, Hovannisian felt that the government in Armenia should support the Armenians in Karabakh especially as they are an independent country, which should be internationally recognized (this sentiment is also shared by the Heritage Party). By striving to become a modern, democratic nation and by putting the people in charge of their own matters, Armenia earned its position on the world stage, reaffirming the meaning and significance of its tricolor flag flying at the United Nations.

Raffi Hovannisian offered a one-of-a-kind story of how one “Armenian” American gave back so much to the historical homeland of Armenians. His message was one that was fresh and motivating for the Armenian-American audience and especially important for the future of the Armenian community, especially to the Charlie Keyan Armenian School students in attendance, to show them that they can one day make a difference in a land so far away, yet so close to all of us.

ZARINA BADASAROV
CLASS OF 2007 MA
EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
CLASS OF 2006-BA PSYCHOLOGY, MINOR ARMSNEN STUDIES
FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT AND ASO SECRETARY, FORMER EDITOR OF HYE SHARZOOM

In 2009, Bagasanov was accepted into a PhD program in Industrial/Organizational Psychology and offered full financial support at the University of Oklahoma. Currently, she is studying various issues pertaining to ethical decision-making and emotions in the workplace, while also serving as the coordinator for the University-wide ethics training effort. Bagasanov is living in Norman, Oklahoma and working diligently toward completing her degree.

Left to right: Grant Bedrosian, Armine Hovannisian, and Gail Bedrosian. Armine Hovannisian, Raffi Hovannisian's wife, is the founder of the Orran Benevolent Organization in Yerevan, Armenia, that provides services for disadvantaged youth. She has been a long-time advocate for the aged and disadvantaged in Armenia.

Photo: J. J. Zvedzian
Two paintings by Hovhannes Alvazian (Aivazovsky) brought for display to Fresno by the Karabians.

Photo: Erica Magarian

Kooyumjian Family Foundation Donates $35,000

STAFF REPORT

Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian announced that the Bertha and John Garabedian Foundation has made a generous donation of $5,000 to the Armenian Studies Program for the 2011-2012 aca-
demic year. The gift will be used for a variety of activities, including outreach ac-
tivities and awarding scholarships.

The Garabedian Foundation has been a long standing supporter of the Armenian Studies Program. Their grants have supported the development of the Armenian Studies Program website and the online Arts of Armenia.

AMBASSADOR, FROM PAGE 1

faced similar injustices, such as discrimination. Ambassador Sarukhan went on to explain how working together would benefit everyone, considering that agriculture is a focus in both the San Joaquin Valley and Mexico.

Following the meeting with Ambassador Sarukhan, Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the church sanctuary by Fr. Yeghis Hairabedian, pastor of St. Gregory Armenian Church.

Vartanants is a commemoration held every year to honor General Vartan Mamigonian and the sacrifice of the lives of so many Armenians. Mamigonian is considered an Armenian hero because of his courage in the face of death; he was willing to die for a cause he believed in, Christianity. As the commander-in-chief of the Armenian army during the Battle of Avaray in 451 AD, Mamigonian inspired his troops with his selfless philosophy. Although he was mortally wounded in the battle, Avaray is still considered a victory by Armenians, as they later achieved religious freedom from the Persians.

Fr. Vahan Gosdanian, pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, was one of the speakers at the commemoration. He spoke about the battles faced by Armenians, past and present, explaining that although our ancestors fought with swords, we continue the battle today with words. He went on to say that it is not enough to celebrate the victory of our ancestors; we must continue to fight for what we believe in.

Armenian Studies Events

• Thursday, March 22, 2012 • 7:30PM: “Knowledge, Heresy, and Inquisition: The Armenian Reaction to Latin Missionaries in the 14th century” by Dr. Sergio La Porta. University Business Center (UBC), Room 191.
• Thursday, April 19, 2012 • 7:30PM “Remaking Landscapes of Historic Western Armenia: Reflections on a Journey into the Past” by Dr. Richard Hovannisian, Peters Aud., SaveMartCenter.

L. to R.: Mexican Consul Reyna Torres-Mendivil, Ambassa-
dor Arturo Sarukhan and Jasmine Markarian. Students from the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School concluded the evening with a short program in the church social hall. They recited several poems and songs honoring St. Vartan. Their enthusiasm and zest during the performance would have made Vartan Mamigonian himself proud.

CARABIAN, FROM PAGE 1

He was born in Theodosia, Crimea, to an Armenian father and mother.

Aivazovsky studied in St. Petersburg Academy of Arts and graduated with a gold medal. A very talented artist, he traveled around the world to exhibit his work. Although Aivazovsky once received a medal from the Turkish Sultan for his amazing paintings, he gave up his medal because he was so affected by the Hamidian massacres of Armenians (1895-1896). His works such as “The Expulsion of the Turkish Ship” and “The Armenian Massacres at Trebizond,” represent his expression of the Turkish government’s mistreatment of the Armenians.

Walter Karabian started collecting Aivazovsky paintings about twenty years ago; it all began with his fifth wedding anniversary. He wanted to give his wife something very special, so he bought an Aivazovsky ink sketch—one that had a hole cut in the middle of it. After buying that first piece, Karabian began collecting Aivazovsky’s art.

Laurel Karabian presented some of the biographical details of the life of Aivazovsky, speaking passionately about the talented artist.

Walter Karabian presented many aspects of Aivazovsky’s work, using a power point presentation to highlight many of the most prized of Aivazovsky’s paintings, many of which were painted in Venice. Karabian is a native of Fresno who went on to attend USC, where he served as student body president from 1959-1960. He also earned a Law degree and a Master’s degree from USC. He became a Deputy District Attorney for Los Angeles County in 1965 before winning a seat in the California State Assembly, in 1966. By the time he left the Assembly in 1974, he had served as the youngest majority leader in the history of that body. Karabian has been a partner in the law firm of Kars & Karabian since the 1960’s.

During his talk Karabian stated that he was planning to sell three Aivazovsky’s paintings from his collection, and that he would prefer to sell it to Armenians, in order to keep these treasures within the Armenian community. When asked if there was a specific Aivazovsky painting he would really like to have, Karabian replied that he admired the painting of the Suez Canal, which was done during Aivazovsky’s travels to Egypt, specifically for the opening of the canal. Aivazovsky, in fact, was the first painter to paint the Suez Canal. Ivan Aivazovsky died on May 5, 1900, at the age of 82. Aivazovsky’s work was astonishing to view. It is no wonder his work remains a source of inspiration until today.

Armenian Students Organization 97th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide

• Tuesday, April 24, 2012 • 12:15PM Free Speech Area, Fresno State

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March 2012