

HYE SHARZHOOM

Armenian Action

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39th Year

May 2018

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Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

Armenian Studies 30th Annual Banquet Recognizes Students



Left to right: Dr. Yektan Türkyılmaz, Prof. Hagop Ohanesian, Lesa Paboojian, Dr. Honora Chapman, President Dr. Joseph Castro, Mrs. Mary Castro, Warren Paboojian, Robert Saroyan, Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian and Dr. Sergio La Porta at the ASP Banquet.

CLAIRE KASAIAN
STAFF WRITER

Photo: Alain Ekmalian

On March 18, more than 200 students, faculty, administrators, and members of the community joined together at the Fort Washington Country Club for the Armenian Studies Program 30th Annual Banquet.

The event celebrated the more than forty students who received Armenian Studies Program scholarships in 2017-2018. Students earning a minor

in Armenian Studies, graduating seniors, and executive officers of the Armenian Students Organization were also recognized.

Special guests in attendance included Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro and Mrs. Mary Castro; Dean of the College of Arts & Humanities Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval; Kazan Visiting Professor Dr. Yektan

SEE [ASP BANQUET](#) PAGE 7

ASO Members Enjoy Spring Break with March Trip to San Francisco



ASO traveled to San Francisco on Monday, March 26.

SUZANNA EKMEKCHYAN
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Students Organization went on an outing to San Francisco during Spring Break and had an amazing experience traveling together to see so many great sites, such as the Golden Gate Bridge. ASO members embarked on their

journey bright and early Monday morning, March 26. Once they arrived in San Francisco, they went to the famous Pier 39 to shop and to have lunch.

They continued to St. John Armenian Church, where they were greeted by Parish Priest Fr. Mesrop Ash, who gave members a tour, discussing the history of the

SEE [ASO](#) PAGE 4

103rd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorated at Fresno State on April 24



ASO organized a Silent Protest at the Armenian Genocide Monument at Fresno State on Tuesday, April 24.

Photo: Hourig Attarian

MICHAEL RETTIG
EDITOR

Every year on April 24, the world watches from a distance as Armenians around the world march in the streets or gather at memorials to honor those who were killed. Every year, that distance seems to diminish, as high profile celebrities help to educate the world about the details surrounding the Genocide. Commemorative events are not only personal and intimate times of mourning for Armenians, but they demonstrate that the Genocide and its subsequent denial is still an important issue to Armenians, and humanity at large. It provides

Armenians with the opportunity to educate their peers about what took place while commemorating their ancestors.

On Tuesday, April 24, the Armenian Students Organization (ASO) hosted its annual Armenian Martyrs Day commemoration at the Fresno State Armenian Genocide Monument. This year, Armenian Studies Coordinator Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, organized an exhibit of posters with text and photographs to profile significant events from the Genocide. The posters were set up along the pathway leading to the Monument, where crowds of students and faculty stopped to read them as

they walked across campus.

Exchange students from Armenia, Hovsep Harutyunyan and Erik Abrahamyan, helped set up the exhibit. “It is easier to see something once rather than to hear about it ten times,” explained Harutyunyan. “The Exhibit provided a good opportunity for both people who have heard about the Genocide as well as those who haven’t, to learn the history.”

Abrahamyan, whose great-grandfather survived the massacres in Van, felt that his involvement with the Exhibit honored those of his family lost during the Genocide. “My great-

SEE [APRIL 24](#) PAGE 6

CineCulture Features Screening of “The Other Side of Home” with Director Naré Mkrtchyan

DAVID SAFRAZIAN
STAFF WRITER

“My grandparents were survivors of the Armenian Genocide, so I wanted to make a movie about the human story of the Genocide rather than a documentary,” said Naré Mkrtchyan.

On Friday, April 20, 2018, Mkrtchyan, director of “The Other Side of Home,” was at Fresno State to premiere her film and then follow with an audience discussion. The screening was part of the Spring 2018 CineCulture film series at Fresno

Photo: David Safrazian



Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Director Naré Mkrtchyan, Dr. Mary Husain, and Dr. Matthew Jendian.

SEE [CINECULTURE](#) PAGE 2

Armenian Studies Program
Book/Video/CD Archival 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.

- Hambersom Aghbashian**, Glendale, California, for a copy of his new book *Turkish Intellectuals who have Recognized the Reality of the Armenian Genocide* (Altadena, CA: Nor Publishing, 2018), vol. II, 150pp., in English. The book discusses fifty Turkish intellectuals who have acknowledged the Armenian Genocide.
- Edward Minasian**, Moraga, California, for a copy of his new book *They Came from Ararat: The Exodus of the Armenian People to America* (Lafayette, CA: Big Hat Press, 2018), 372pp., in English. This book is a history of Armenian emigration to America, focusing on the Armenian Genocide as a main cause of that emigration.
- Avag Simonyan**, “Intellectual Renaissance” Foundation, Yerevan, Armenia, for a copy of *Hazar u Mi Khagh* (Yerevan, 2015), a collection of folk songs by Komitas, 215pp., in Armenian.
- Carolyn Lais-Tufenkian**, Tufenkian Fine Arts, Glendale, California, for three albums on Armenian artists: *A Retrospective: Garo Z. Antreasian* (2017), 61pp.; *Hagop Hagopian: Encounter* (2017), 53pp.; and *Sam Grigorian@60* (2018), 56pp.

Fresno State to Offer Classical
Armenian Translation Course
in Summer of 2018



Dr. Sergio La Porta
STAFF REPORT

This summer from June 4-June 15, Fresno State will host the Fresno Institute for Classical Armenian Translation (FICAT), founded by Fresno State Professor of Armenian Studies, Dr. Sergio La Porta, and Dr. Michael Pifer of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

FICAT builds upon the success of a five-week intensive seminar in Classical Armenian that Drs. La Porta and Pifer conducted last summer at the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library at St. John’s College, Minnesota. The two professors taught introductory classical Armenian to ten graduate students and early career scholars who had no prior knowledge of Armenian.

The students were so engaged that they asked to continue their studies the next summer in Fresno. According to Dr. La

Porta, “they wanted to be in a city with an Armenian population so that they could interact with the community.” Nine of the ten students, none of whom are Armenian, are planning to participate in this year’s seminar.

“These students have made excellent progress in only five weeks during our intensive course, and have already begun to translate from Classical Armenian texts on their own,” commented Dr. Pifer.

Both professors are very excited about the seminar and are grateful to Fresno State President Joseph Castro for his support and to the Armenian Studies Program. President Castro will host the participants at the University House for a dinner to recognize their hard work and creativity. The participants will also present at least one public lecture so that the community can learn about their research and why they learned Armenian.



Dr. Michael Pifer

California State University, Fresno

Armenian Studies Program

Fall 2018 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2				
• Arm 1A-Elementary Armenian (Class #72293)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #73021)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Area D3				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #73477)	3	9:00A-9:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Area IC				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #73583)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	H. Ohanessian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #73478)	3	2:00P-3:15P	TuTh	S. La Porta
Upper Division Armenian Studies Course				
• ArmS 50T-William Saroyan (Class #76402)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	K. Henson
• ArmS 108A-Arm History II (Class #72294)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
• ArmS 120T-Arm Gen Comp (Class #76541)	3	3:30P-4:45P	MW	Kazan Visiting Prof.
• ArmS 120T-Armenians in Fresno (Class #76763)	1	5:00P-9:00P 9:00A-5:00P	Friday, October 5 Saturday, October 6	

HYE SHARZHOOM

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Yektan Türkylmaz, Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies

CINECULTURE, FROM PAGE 1

State, and was co-sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program and the Department of Sociology. A large audience was deeply engaged in watching the movie.

“The Other Side of Home” is about Maya, a Turkish woman, who discovers that her great-grandmother was a survivor of the Armenian Genocide. The film explores Maya’s struggle between her dual identities—that of perpetrator and victim. Mkrtchyan intentionally chose Maya after posting in a Facebook group, “I am a Descendant of a Survivor of the Armenian Genocide.” Mkrtchyan was searching for someone to embody the inner conflict of the Genocide.

Mkrtchyan wanted to tell a story that could connect with an audience. She was motivated to make the film to honor her family’s history and heritage. Mkrtchyan was proud that the film could engender a lively discussion about identity. “I’m very proud of the dialogue ‘The Other Side of Home’ has created,” said Mkrtchyan. “The film was one of the top ten nominees for an Oscar for best short documentary. I am very grateful.”

The film begins with Maya and her family story in her home in Turkey. She grew up hearing about how her great-grandfather had found her great-grandmother in the woods and saved her. But this she realized, was a fairy-tale.

In reality her great-grandmother never smiled because she lost most of her family in the Genocide.

Once she had learned about her past, Maya decided to travel to Yerevan on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. This proved to be a pivotal moment in the movie, as Maya would use the word genocide in private, but could not bring herself to utter the word before the camera. Her fear of the repercussions overwhelmed her sadness of the events.

“We screened it in four continents and various places in America,” stated Mkrtchyan. “I am pleasantly surprised it has received a lot of love. Most of

the reactions are good, but there are a small number of people who think I should have taken out the denial part, but the reality is if I took it out, I would be like Turkey because I would be lying and not showing the reality. The truth makes the film stronger.”

Mkrtchyan was born and raised in Armenia and came to America when she was 13 years old. She was drawn to the world of cinema at a very young age and attended the USC School of Cinematic Arts. She then worked for Oscar-winning producer, Rob Fried’s production company, where she produced over 60 shorts. Mkrtchyan had always wanted to make a film about the Genocide and was finally able to

do so.

“The Other Side of Home” featured strong direction and a memorable musical score. It is one thing to see a film about the Armenian Genocide with facts and numbers, but it is another thing to see first-hand how the Genocide affects the survivors. This movie provided a new perspective to attract to emotions and hearts.

Mkrtchyan is planning some future movie projects. “I want to work on human issues, to make an impact. I want to make a movie about the aftermath of the Gyumri [Armenia] earthquake of 1988. This will also serve as a fundraiser to help rebuild Gyumri.”

Dr. Ümit Kurt Presents on the New English Translation of “The Heroic Battle of Aintab”

CLAIRE KASAIAN
STAFF WRITER

On Friday, April 6, community members and students gathered at Fresno State to hear Dr. Ümit Kurt speak about the new book *The Heroic Battle of Aintab*, which he translated into English. Dr. Kurt was on a nation-wide speaking tour to introduce the book. His presentation was part of the Spring Lecture series of the Armenian Studies Program.

The Heroic Battle of Aintab, originally written by Kevork Baboian, is an eyewitness account that sheds light on the important events of the period. *The Heroic Battle of Aintab* was published by the Gomidas Institute of London, and was supported by a grant from the Armenian Studies Program. The book contains first hand testimonial accounts about the Turkish-French battle, 1920-1921, and the impact of that conflict on the Armenians.

Dr. Kurt read passages from *The Heroic Battle of Aintab*, including excerpts from a poem by Immanim Mennush, called “Saga,” a form of folk-poetry. Mennush participated in the heroic self-defense of the city and fought heroically.

After the Treaty of Mudros, Aintab was occupied by the British forces from December 1918-October 1919. The British facilitated the repatriation of Armenians to the city and also engaged in returning Armenian women who had been taken



Left to right: Marina Chardukian, David Safrazian, Claire Kasaian, Kara Statler, Suzanna Ekmekchyan, Prof. Hagop Ohanessian, Dr. Ümit Kurt (seated), Dr. Yektan Türkyılmaz, Dr. Sergio La Porta and Prof. Barlow Der Mugerdechian.

forcibly into Muslim households. In October of 1919 French forces replaced the British in Aintab. Many local Turks were upset by this new occupation and so resorted to organizing armed opposition. This culminated in the Turkish/Kemalist-French war which began on April 2, 1920. By February of 1921 the French emerged victorious, but in the succeeding months they decided to abandon Cilicia to the Turks. In November of 1921, the French officially began their evacuation, leading the Armenians to also abandon the city.

The Heroic Battle of Aintab gives a detailed day to day description of how the Armenians put aside their political differences, and came together to defend their city during the battle

for Aintab. In 1936 Baboian moved to Beirut and even there he continued to interview survivors and write down their experiences and the traumas they had gone through. Baboian stayed in Beirut until he passed away on March 8, 1949.

The Heroic Battle of Aintab is a book that is important to the study of the post-World War I Ottoman Empire, before the Turkish Republic was established.

Dr. Kurt, who is a native of Aintab, wrote his dissertation on the plunder of Aintab by local Turkish elites. He earned his Ph.D. in history at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University in 2016 and is currently a Polonsky Fellow in the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem.

The Press Holds Reception Featuring Its Publications



The Press at California State University, Fresno held a reception at the Smittcamp Alumni House on April 19.

STAFF REPORT

The Armenian Series of The Press at California State University, Fresno, was one of six featured authors and programs at a reception celebrating the achievements of The Press. College of Arts & Humanities Dean Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval and Associate Dean Dr. Honora Chapman hosted the event, which was held from 4:30-6:30PM on Thursday, April 19.

Tables featuring The Press publications were placed in Fresno State’s Smittcamp Alumni House, where guests purchased books and had author’s sign their works. Each author or program was then given the opportunity to address the guests and to discuss their publications.

Professor Barlow Der Mugerdechian, Berberian Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program, represented the Armenian Series at the event. Prof. Der Mugerdechian has been the general editor of the Armenian Series since 2008. The most recent publication of the Series is Krikor Beledian’s *Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France*, which provides insight into the literary production of one of the world’s most important Armenian Diasporan communities.

Earlier publications include *David of Sassoun: Critical Studies on the Armenian Epic* (2013) and *Armenian Poetry of Our Time* (2011) by Diana Der-Hovanesian. Berge Bulbulian’s *The Fresno Armenians* is also now available in digital format

through The Press website.

Works on and by William Saroyan, such *Young Saroyan ‘Follow’ and Other Writings* have also been published by the Armenian Series.

Funding for the Armenian Series is provided by the M. Victoria Karagozian Kazan and Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Endowment of the Armenian Studies Program.

More information on the Armenian Series is available at The Press website, <http://www.thepressatcsufresno.org/armenian-culture.html>.

Armen Bacon’s latest book *My Name is Armen, Outside the Lines*, was featured at The Press reception. An earlier work by Bacon, *My Name is Armen-A Life in Column Inches* was published in 2014.

Evo Bluestein’s *Road to Sweet’s Mill: The West Coast Folk Music Revival in the 1960s and ’70* centers on Sweet’s Mill, a former logging camp that became the magnet for many key folk and old-time music figures.

Dr. Gerald R. McMenamin is the author of a Spanish-language textbook on forensic linguistics, *Introducción a la Lingüística Forense*, a Spanish-language textbook for college courses in forensic linguistics. Dr. McMenamin is professor emeritus of Linguistics.

The Center for Creativity

Dr. Demoyan Discusses Identities and Memories of Armenian World



Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugerdechian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Dr. Hayk Demoyan, and Prof. Hagop Ohanessian.

STAFF REPORT

Photo: Hourig Attarian

The Armenian Studies Program hosted a presentation by Dr. Hayk Demoyan on “Multiple Identities and Memories of the Armenian World” on Monday, March 19. Dr. Demoyan, director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, spoke to an audience of students and community members at Fresno State.

Dr. Demoyan’s presentation was based on his research in the area of Armenian memory and identity. He utilized images taken during the last ten years of his field-work to show how memory is contested in physical structures that have symbolic meaning. Dr. Demoyan stated that examples such as statues, street names, and place names could be interpreted from both a cultural viewpoint and from a national security standpoint. The naming of the structure is a way to give a narrative power, although some people contest the narratives.

The naming of streets and cities represents one such example. Dr. Demoyan illustrated the example of contesting viewpoints through the controversy over the potential renaming of Amiryan Street in downtown Yerevan. Named after a commissar in the Baku Commune, some want to change the name, embroiling Yerevan City Hall in the dispute.

Dr. Demoyan also discussed “memory sites,” places where monuments are constructed to instill a certain history. Dr. Demoyan used the statue of Stalin which used to tower over Victory Park in Yerevan as his example, but which has now been replaced with Mother Armenia. Stalin’s statue was a reminder of his power in the Soviet Union, but after his death the statue lost its significance.

There are still some statues of

Armenian communist leaders that remain in Yerevan, but all of those who were not also Armenian have been removed. Thus, the national issue has higher priority than the ideological issues.

Renaming streets, cities, and regions is a way to demonstrate political power in the contest over memory. Dr. Demoyan stated that a special commission has been created in Armenia to discuss possible name changes. Over the centuries, because of foreign rule, some city acquired Persian or Turkish names. These were often easy to change into Armenian because they were translations from the original Armenian.

Gyumri was the first city in the Soviet Union to be named after Lenin after his death—Leninakan. The same city had formerly been called Alexandropol in the Tsarist period, and after the breakup of the Soviet Union, it became Gyumri once again.

The start of the Karabagh movement in 1987, is another illustration of how memory plays a significant role in society. When Armenians in Karabagh united to demand the independence of Karabagh, Azerbaijan responded with pogroms against Armenians. For Armenians, these events revived memories of the Armenian Genocide, and they associated the two narratives of the Genocide and 1988.

Dr. Hayk Demoyan is a U.S. Fulbright visiting scholar at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies of Harvard University and is researching the identity transformation processes in the South Caucasus. He has been the Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute (AGMI) in Yerevan, Armenia since 2006.

Dr. Demoyan presented a new perspective on the politics of names.

and the Arts, represented by Dr. Cindy Urrutia, director of CCA, has published several companion catalogs to recent exhibitions.

Fresno States’ MFA Program in Creative Writing produces *The Normal School*, a biannual literary journal. Prof. Steven Church of the Department of English and founding editor of the journal represented *The Normal School*.

The mission of The Press is to publish great literature by both

emerging and established voices, scholarly books that expand the horizons of human knowledge, and other works that promote the rich cultural heritage of California’s Central Valley.

The Press, housed within the College of Arts & Humanities at Fresno State, is the only university press in the California State University system. The website of The Press is <http://www.thepressatcsufresno.org/>.

Congratulations Armenian Studies Minors and Graduating Seniors for 2017-2018

HOURIG ATTARIAN
Food and Nutrition Science

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

Even before I was enrolled in Fresno State I really wanted to take an Armenian studies class. Armenian culture is something that I value very much in life. I wanted to take the course as an opportunity to learn more about the Armenian culture and heritage.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

I really enjoyed getting to meet other young Armenians and connect with them on something so special like the culture we grew up with. I also have enjoyed attending different events during my years as the *Hye Sharzhoom* photographer.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation, I plan on getting more work experience in the field of nutrition and dietetics and then applying to a combined dietetic internship and graduate school in Southern California with the plan of becoming a Registered Dietitian.



SHELBI OHANESIAN
Liberal Studies
Minor in Armenian Studies

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

I really wanted to learn more about my culture and where I came from.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

I value my Minor the most. It is much more than simply being able to say I have a Minor. To me my



Minor was much more personal. It was a way for me to understand where my family is from and the history of my people. Participating in the Program brought much more into my life than expected, such as joining the ASO where I met so many amazing people who I now call my friends.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite event was going to Armenia in the summer of 2017 with the Armenian Studies Program. That has been the best experience in my life and I know those memories will last forever. To actually step foot into the country where your ancestors are from is an indescribable experience. I owe the Armenian Studies Program so much thanks for providing me so many memories I never expected college to provide.

What are your plans after graduation?

I will be attending the Multiple Subject Credential Program at Fresno State and would like to be in an internship teaching position in the fall.

DIANA GASPARYAN
Communicative Disorders-Speech Pathology

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

My family was planning on visiting Armenia the following summer, and I knew the experience would not be as meaningful if I did not have a deeper understanding of my history and culture. This encouraged me to enroll in an Armenian Studies course, which in turn led me to fall more in love with Armenia and its four-thousand year old history. The Armenian Studies Program allowed me to discover more about myself and my ancestors than I would have ever thought possible, and for that I am forever grateful.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

Prior to attending Fresno State, I never came to truly know any Armenians of my age. Fresno State's Armenian Studies Program and Armenian Students Organization opened the doors to meeting fellow Armenian classmates that became lifelong friends. I value these connections, for they have shaped my future and my confidence in representing my culture. I also value the leadership skills I earned from serving as ASO Secretary and President as it gave me the opportunity to reach out and serve our Armenian community.



What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

Ranging from the incredible Armenian Studies 148 class to the various socials and events held by ASO, the highlight of my participation would have to be planning and organizing the 2017 Armenian Genocide Commemoration. It was unbelievably humbling to be able to help in providing an opportunity in which Fresno's Armenian community could come and take part in an event that is so close to our hearts. The gathering is so empowering and holds a great deal of importance to me.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan on applying to Fresno State's Speech-Language Pathology Masters Program and then become a Speech Pathologist working in a hospital, clinic, or private practice setting where I can best utilize my skills of helping people achieve their speech, swallowing, and language goals. My emphasis in Gerontology leads me to specialize in aiding the growing elderly population in the Central Valley. An important goal of mine is to find a way to give back to the Armenian community, either here in Fresno or in Armenia.



MARINE VARDANYAN
M.A. in Educational Leadership and Administration

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

I learned about the Armenian Studies Program when I was still in high school. I knew that was the first thing I was going to get involved in when I got to Fresno State. I wanted to Minor in Armenian Studies to build a closer connection to my heritage. I was eager to explore the different topics that the Armenian Studies

courses covered because even though I live in the United States, it's still very important for me to learn about our history, culture, and language.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

The Program gave me purpose at Fresno State. It made me feel at home. It's where I met some of my closest friends, where I grew as a leader and as a writer, and where I have been able to develop and strengthen my identity as an Armenian-American. I value all the lessons I have learned from the Program, both in class and out. The program and Prof. Der Mugrdechian's mentorship has shaped me into the person I am today.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite Armenian Studies activity that I was part of in graduate school was the Armenia Summer Study Trip 2017. This was my second time going to Armenia with Prof. Der Mugrdechian, but unlike the last trip, this time I was going with my fiancé and best friends. I had the time of my life in Armenia, with special experiences like getting our engagement blessed by Hayr Mikayel in Tatev Monastery, having lunch with villagers in Saghmosavank, and meeting with the United States Ambassador to Armenia.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan to stay in the Central Valley and work in student affairs.

MICHAEL RETTIG
M.A. in History

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

My experience in the Armenian Studies Program as a graduate student revolved around my Master's thesis and *Hye Sharzhoom*. Professor Der Mugrdechian was a member of my thesis committee and worked closely with me on editing and revising my paper. Working on the *Hye Sharzhoom* similarly helped hone my writing and editing abilities. I also enjoyed broadening the readership of *Hye Sharzhoom* by creating a Facebook page, where we live-stream our lectures and post our stories.



What are your plans after graduation?

I plan to enroll in the Credential Program at Fresno State. I am currently working on turning a portion of my thesis into a book chapter for an edited volume and plan to continue my research on Armenians in British Intelligence during World War I. I am also considering pursuing a Ph.D. in History.

A full listing of all graduates is available after graduation on Saturday, May 19.

Photos: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

ASO, FROM PAGE 1

architecture of the Church. The Church has a Fresno connection, as artist Varaz Samuelian was responsible for painting a large image of Jesus Christ behind the main altar.

ASO then hiked to the peak of Mount Davidson, to visit the Mount Davidson Cross. A commemorative plaque honoring the memory of the Armenian Genocide has been placed at the base of the Cross, which was inaugurated in 1998.

Following the hike, ASO members crossed the Golden Gate Bridge to go to the look-out point with a panoramic view of

the city. The final stop was a visit to Chinatown and Union Square. After a long day, members headed back to Fresno to conclude a wonderful Spring Break trip together.

Prior to Spring Break, ASO participated in Fresno State's Preview Day on Saturday, March 17, designed for incoming freshman to get their first opportunity to visit campus and to become familiar with the academic programs. Students also were able to meet with representatives of the different campus clubs and organizations. Many freshmen approached the ASO table and were eager to join



ASO members at Preview Day.

ASO next Fall.

ASO had a very successful movie night on Friday, April 13 at Fresno State. They enjoyed snacks and got comfortable to

watch one of the most highly rated movies of 2018—"Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle." ASO members had a fun time laughing and enjoying the comedic movie.

ASO planned many commemorative programs in honor of the Armenian Genocide and designed special T-shirt for this year's April 24 activities. On Tuesday, April 17, ASO had a table at the Free Speech area with

flyers containing information about the Armenian Genocide, and information on upcoming commemorative events. The main purpose of the table was to raise awareness and to educate Fresno State students about the Genocide. ASO members were eager to share their knowledge on the topic with students.

As the semester is ending, the ASO is getting ready to say a fond farewell to its graduating members and is ready to begin welcoming incoming freshman. With new members come new ideas, and ASO is excited to see what is in store for the future of the organization.

Dr. Türkyilmaz on Armenian Record Production



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Left to right: Kara Statler, Marina Chardukian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Richard Hagopian, Dr. Yektan Türkyilmaz, David Safrazian, Ashkhen Chamasanyan, Michael Rettig, Prof. Hagop Ohanessian, and Phillip Hagopian.

MICHAEL RETTIG
EDITOR

Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies Dr. Yektan Türkyilmaz developed an interest in records at an early age when his father brought home a gramophone. While a student at Duke University he became interested in the intellectual aspect of records and record production. “Records did not only have music on them, it was a global medium from the first day,” Dr. Türkyilmaz explained. “It revolutionized the way people thought about themselves and their music, language, and politics.”

On Wednesday, March 7, Dr. Türkyilmaz shared his research in his lecture, “Armenians on Records: Music Production from Homeland to Diasporas,” followed by a musical presentation by oud-master Richard Hagopian. This was the second in a set of three presentations given by Dr. Türkyilmaz in the Spring semester.

Thomas Edison’s invention of the first commercial phonograph in 1877 revolutionized the way people listened to music. Before the phonograph, people relied on live performers for their music consumption. Dr. Türkyilmaz noted that when record production became a global phenomenon, ideas were more freely disseminated to masses around the world, whether or not they were literate.

“It was the first time that music could be consumed where it was not produced,” Dr. Türkyilmaz stated. This commercialization of records changed what kind of music was created. Record companies determined what would be recorded based on the profitability of the music. Musicians had to adapt their craft for this novel invention by shortening their songs to fit on records and experimenting with different instruments.

According to Dr. Türkyilmaz, Armenians were among the earliest groups to record their music. The first Armenian recording session was not in the Ottoman Empire, as one might expect, but in St. Petersburg in 1901. “The Armenians were a diasporan community,” said Dr. Türkyilmaz. “Wherever

they lived they were involved in cultural production.” Dr. Türkyilmaz played a sample of *Groung* from the 1901 St. Petersburg recording session, a song that is emblematic of the Armenian diasporic experience.

Dr. Türkyilmaz stressed that Armenians did not just produce music in the Armenian language, but were active in various facets of the Ottoman music scene. When Italian *canto* music became widely popular in the Ottoman Empire, Armenians were able to satisfy the demand for *canto* singers, as it was prohibited to Muslim women. Armenians were similarly sought after to sing in Turkish because they spoke Turkish without an accent, unlike the Greeks. Armenians were integral to the Ottoman music scene as composers, instrumentalists, vocalists, and directors of music who decided what to record.

Dr. Türkyilmaz divided Armenian music recorded in the Ottoman Empire into three categories: liturgical, folk and *gousan*, and revolutionary marches. The music was predominantly recorded in Istanbul for the Armenian cultural elite because those in the countryside could not afford gramophones and records. However, revolutionary marches were very popular among the masses. Dr. Türkyilmaz played a sample of his favorite march, *Tsayn Muh Hnchets* (A Voice Resounded), which became the most famous revolutionary song of the period.

Dr. Türkyilmaz noted that while records did help preserve the musical heritage of various groups, they did not preserve folk songs in their original form. Record producers primarily recorded what would be profitable among the elites. “These were folk songs as Istanbul Armenians would like to see them.” When

Gomidas Vartabed collected and transcribed thousands of Armenian folk songs from remote villages, he did not necessarily preserve the songs as they were before modern influences. Dr. Türkyilmaz explained that Gomidas was engaged in the debate surrounding the true “essence” of Armenian music. “He believed there was something essentially Armenian in the folk songs that needed to be extracted and preserved while eliminating the foreign influences.”

However, it was in the United States that Armenians were able to record a more diverse repertoire. Armenians in America had greater access to gramophones which made it more profitable for amateur musicians to record their unique styles.

“You could never find this music on records in the Ottoman Empire,” Dr. Türkyilmaz explained. “You had to be in contact with the elite to be recorded. In America, the tables have turned and it was the working class who bought records.” Dr. Türkyilmaz stressed that Armenian music in America existed in dialogue with other groups from the Ottoman Empire. He used the Parsegian label as an example; the label was Armenian, the band on the record was Jewish, and they sang in Turkish. According to Dr. Türkyilmaz, it was not until the 1950s, when diasporas from the Ottoman Empire lost the ability to speak Turkish, that the music became more distinct from one another.

Armenian music in America was different than that of other immigrant communities. “Armenians did not have a social network to return to their homelands; they were a diaspora without a reference,” stated Dr. Türkyilmaz.

It was because of this disconnect that Armenian immigrant music reflected a sense of regret and unfulfilled desire. They did not always find what they were hoping to find in America, yet they could not go back.

“It was a feeling of being cornered; you have to be here, you have to go through this.” Dr. Türkyilmaz played a sample of *Yar Ounei*, a song about the loss of one’s beloved and one’s connection to the homeland.

Oud-master Richard Hagopian concluded the event by sharing his experiences in the Armenian-American music scene. He then treated the audience to a presentation of live music with his grandson Phillip Hagopian. Dr. Türkyilmaz’s multi-media presentation illuminated an important and hitherto unexplored area of Armenia’s history.

The Armenian Series at Fresno State

General Editor:
Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian

<http://www.thepressatcsufresno.org/armenian-culture.html>

Fresno State Students Conclude Study Abroad at AUA in Armenia



Left to right: Yervand Boyajyan, Lilit Hovhannisyan, Cole Egoian, and Stephen Gonzalez at Hagbat Monastery.

MICHAEL RETTIG
EDITOR

Photo: ASP Archive

As the semester draws to an end, three Fresno State students studying abroad at the American University of Armenia are preparing to return to Fresno. Cole Egoian, Stephen Gonzalez, and Yervand Boyajyan were awarded the Kashian Family Scholarship to spend the Spring 2018 semester in Yerevan. This scholarship provided them the opportunity to not only study at an Armenian university, but to visit historic sites, interact with locals, and make personal connections with Armenians.

Egoian, Gonzalez, and Boyajyan all shared their initial reflections of Armenia in the March issue of *Hye Sharzhoom*. Since then, they have grown more accustomed to living in Yerevan. “One thing that has definitely changed is how comfortable I am in Yerevan now. I feel like I have been living here my entire life,” said Boyajyan, who spent his early childhood in Yerevan.

Gonzalez noted that he will miss his adventures in Yerevan when he returns home. “This is the longest time I’ve spent in a major city, and it has been exciting.” Egoian echoed this sentiment, “People are always out and about and the city is always lively.”

Egoian and Gonzalez, who are not native Armenian speakers, have been taking Armenian classes at AUA. “I cannot yet speak fluently,” Gonzalez explained, “but I can read and write quite well.”

Their lessons have helped them interact with locals. Egoian fondly recalled one of his trips to the GUM open air fruit market. “I practiced my broken Armenian with them and they became excited and engaged.”

One of the first connections Egoian and Gonzalez made was with the bartender at a local Irish pub. “Every time we visit, he walks to up to us, gives us a big hug, and asks how we are doing,”

said Gonzalez. Egoian noted that they were cordially invited to the pub’s 10th year anniversary celebration.

Boyajyan’s most meaningful personal connection has been with his relatives in Yerevan. “I became closer with my cousins and I will miss my relatives when I leave, but I know we will maintain this connection into the future.”

As part of their experience, AUA organized excursions for the students. They visited sites such as Garni, Geghard, Noravank, Tatev Monastery, the Erebuni fortress, and more.

Boyajyan’s favorite experience was visiting Noravank. “I was so amazed by the monastery. After studying in Professor Der Mugrdechian’s Arts of Armenia class, I dreamt about one day visiting. I got to see the famous relief of God, one of the rare times God was depicted in a relief.”

One of Gonzalez’s favorite experiences has been his interaction with professors at the AUA. “They are not afraid to speak their minds about global and local politics,” Gonzalez explained. “They provide a perspective we are not used to in the United States.”

Egoian, Gonzalez, and Boyajyan agreed that the experience helped them become more independent and cosmopolitan. Living abroad also helped them better appreciate what they have in America.

“I am now more appreciative of certain things I took for granted back home that are luxuries here,” Egoian said. When asked what they missed most about America, all three replied family, friends, and Mexican food.

“I spend a lot of time with my family in America, and not being able to for such a long time makes me appreciate them that much more,” Boyajyan remarked.

Egoian also misses his family, but is appreciative of the opportunity he had to connect with his father’s family roots.

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ASO Screens “Architects of Denial” and Holds Vigil at Armenian Genocide Monument



ASO members at the Candlelight Vigil.

SUZANNA EKMEKCHYAN
STAFF WRITER

To mark the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian Students Organization organized the showing of “Architects of Denial,” followed by a candle-light vigil in the evening of Monday, April 23. The documentary “Architects of Denial,” directed by David Lee George and released in 2017, is not only an account about the

Armenian Genocide, but about Genocide denial.

The movie depicts graphic visual evidence from the Genocide and features interviews with experts speaking on the topic of what constitutes genocide, and why the Armenian Genocide should be considered a genocide.

Among the experts interviewed were Dr. Taner Akçam, former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Evans, and Julian Assange.

“Architects of Denial” focuses

on denial and how that denial can be connected to mass atrocities of the past fifty years.

The movie was eye-opening to the members in the audience because of its graphic depictions of the Genocide and the survivor testimonies.

For many, some of the scenes were very difficult to watch due to the inhumane conditions and savagery that the Armenian people were forced to endure.

“Architects of Denial” also investigated politicians in the United States who deny that the Armenian Genocide occurred. Politicians were asked point blank about their views on the Genocide, but many simply refused to answer.

Some of these politicians belong to the Turkey Caucus of the United States House of Representatives, and their views reflect that of Turkey with regards to the Genocide.

Audience members scoffed as interviews of these officials denying the Genocide were shown.

As the movie came to an end, there was a unanimous feeling



Rev. Greg Haroutunian, center, with participants at the Vigil.

in the audience of longing for justice.

With that feeling in mind, the ASO distributed candles to audience members, who walked to the Armenian Genocide Monument at Fresno State. Everyone formed a circle in the center of the Monument, candles in hand, and silently listened as Reverend Greg Haroutunian, Senior Pastor of First Armenian Presbyterian Church, delivered a brief homily.

He then asked that everyone observe a moment of silence to honor the lives of the victims of the Armenian Genocide. Some of the audience members began to softly sing “Der Voghormia” (Lord have Mercy), and more and more people began to join in, until the entire crowd was singing together.

It was beautiful to witness the community come together and to pray for justice.

APRIL 24, FROM PAGE 1

grandfather’s mother left his sister in a church so she could focus on protecting her sons, as the Turks were especially targeting males,” said Abrahamyan. “I feel like I have done something real for my great-grandfather’s sister, who was never found, in helping to educate my peers.” While people studied the Exhibit, ASO students staged a silent protest in front of the Armenian Genocide Monument, holding flags and signs decrying genocide denial.

The formal program began at noon as ASO student Suzanna Ekmekchyan sang the American and Armenian national anthems. The program included a poem ASO executives recited titled “To Remember is to Live” and a statement of support by the Associated Students Inc. representative, Evangelia Pappas (Senator, College of Arts & Humanities). ASO President Kara Statler gave opening comments highlighting the tenacity of the Armenian people.

“We have heard of countless atrocities starting in 1895, yet we are much more than victims of genocide, we are survivors,” said Statler. “We have thrived in countries all over the world with a diaspora dating back centuries. We have built churches and



Left to right: ASO Executive members Arthur Khatchatrian, Kara Statler, David Sfazian, Claire Kasaian, and Suzanna Ekmekchyan reading a poem at the commemoration.

schools in almost every continent. We have thrived, and we have proven time and time again that not only will we not be silenced but that our voices will be heard.”

Statler then voiced her support for the peaceful protestors in Armenia who forced former President Serzh Sargsyan to resign after he was elected Prime Minister.

“While so much of our homeland was taken away from us, we must not let corruption ruin what’s left of it. We stand with our brothers and sisters in Armenia.”

Kazan Visiting Professor Dr. Yektan Türkyılmaz delivered the

keynote address, stressing the long-lasting effects genocides have on victim groups. “Genocides are not single events, they are processes,” Dr. Türkyılmaz explained. “They do not simply occur and then stop.” He noted that denial accentuates this continuity and ensures that victim groups are repeatedly targeted. “The Genocide continues in violence against Armenians, Assyrians, Yezidis, and the Kurds in Afrin. It is our duty to call on governments to urge the Turkish state to put an end to their continued aggressive discriminatory policies.”

At the conclusion of the program, those in attendance placed carnations in the center of the Monument to the melancholy drone of the *duduk*. The ceremony was both an intimate and personal moment as well as an educational experience for Fresno State students, some of whom watched from a distance and others who interacted with the exhibit and ceremony.

Approximately 1,000 people gathered at the Monument later that evening for the community commemoration, organized by the Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee of Fresno. Former Kazan Visiting Professor, Dr.

Khatchig Mouradian delivered the keynote address. Since its construction, the Monument has served as a way for the Armenian

Studies Program to educate students about the Genocide, not only on April 24, but on every day of the year.



Armenian Students Organization members at the Armenian Genocide Monument at Fresno State.



Dr. Yektan Türkyılmaz



Laying of flowers.



The Armenian Genocide exhibit, consisting of photos and stories about the Genocide, attracted a large audience.



The educational exhibit lined the path to the Genocide Monument.

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ASP BANQUET, FROM PAGE 1

Türkyılmaz, Fulbright Visiting Scholar Dr. Hayk Demoyan; and William Saroyan Home & Museum Project Coordinator Avag Simoyan.

Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugerdechian delivered the opening remarks of the Banquet, stressing the important impact the Program has on its students. “This academic year the Program awarded \$54,000 in scholarships to more than 40 students,” Prof. Der Mugerdechian remarked. “The

30th Annual Banquet Recognizes Armenian Studies Scholarship Recipients



Scholarship in Armenian Studies. Paboojian, who was a writer for *Hye Sharzhoom*, emphasized the importance of the paper. “*Hye Sharzhoom* provides a voice to students and I am pleased to be able to encourage students to continue to write for the paper.”

Rob Saroyan emphasized the importance of philanthropy and stated that he was motivated to establish a scholarship fund to

college experience more than I could ever imagine,” said Shelbie Ohanesian, a liberal studies major minoring in Armenia Studies.

received the Outstanding Thesis Award from the Department of History. “I grew up in Oakhurst, a small

really the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State that gave me the opportunity to dive into that history and background,” Rettig stated. “From the classes I took, to the friends I’ve made, to the places I’ve traveled, the Armenian Studies Program has been integral to my development as a student and as a person.”

Marine Vardanyan is graduating with a Master’s Degree in Education in the Educational Leadership and Administration option. Her senior project was on “Identity, Belonging, & Armenian Studies: Exploring the Program’s Role in Students’ Lives.”

“The Armenian Studies Program gave me a purpose on campus and it allowed me to connect with my university beyond just attending classes and going home. It allowed me to build a network of friends who helped each other navigate through college.

It helped me learn more about our rich history and culture, it opened my eyes to the strength of our Fresno-Armenian community who supports our program and our students.”

The ASP Annual Banquet provided a warm atmosphere for all to enjoy each other’s company while celebrating the student achievements.



Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugerdechian, Warren Paboojian and Lesa Paboojian, and Dr. Sergio La Porta.

scholarships make a meaningful impact by supporting deserving students.”

Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies Dr. Sergio La Porta welcomed the attendees and affirmed that the success of the Armenian Studies Program was based both on the strength of student involvement and through the support of the community.

Dr. La Porta introduced Dean Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval and Associate Dean Dr. Honora Chapman, who spoke of the Armenian Studies Program’s remarkable influence on the community. “It took a thousand years and a lot of pain for you to be here as a community,” Dr. Jimenez-Sandoval observed. “One thing I have learned from the Armenians is to be aware and conscious of who you are, and then to take action.”

Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro highlighted the contribution that the Program makes to the university by attracting Armenian students and providing them with a variety of services. “I want to express my gratitude to all of you for making this Program the best of its kind in the country.”

The Armenian Studies Program gave special recognition to Warren and Lesa Paboojian, for establishing the Warren R. Paboojian Award for Student Editor of *Hye Sharzhoom* and to Robert Saroyan for establishing the Robert V. Saroyan Family



Left to right: Dr. Sergio La Porta, Robert Saroyan, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugerdechian.

“I owe many thanks to my 91 year-old grandmother, Florence Ohanesian, who is here tonight. I remember sitting down at her kitchen table years ago and listening to the stories of her mother and father escaping the Armenian Genocide. Through the Program, I was able to reconnect with my heritage.”

Michael Rettig is graduating with his Master’s Degree in History. The Armenian Studies Program helped him develop his thesis topic based on his great-great-grandfather Thomas Mugerditchian’s career as Vice Consul in Diyarbakir. Rettig

mountain town, without a strong connection to my Armenian roots. As far as I knew we were the only Armenians in the world. When I moved to Fresno, I discovered there were more of us and became interested in my culture. It was



Shelbie Ohanesian, left, with her grandmother Florence Ohanesian.

Scottsdale Community College “Genocide Awareness Week”

STAFF REPORT

Former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John M. Evans was the keynote speaker opening the 6th Annual “Genocide Awareness Week” held at Scottsdale Community College, in Scottsdale, Arizona, April 9-14. Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugerdechian was also a guest speaker at the conference, speaking on “The Armenian Genocide Today,” on Tuesday, April 10, to students, faculty, and Scottsdale community members.

In past years “Genocide Awareness Week” has included presentations on the Armenian Genocide by Dr. Richard Hovannisian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Dr. Ümit Kurt, and Dr. Khatchig Mouradian.

Organized by Prof. John Liffiton, Scottsdale Community College’s “Genocide Awareness Week” has become the largest such event on a college campus in the United States. This year’s conference featured presentations

on American Indians, the Holocaust, the Assyrian Seyfo, and Rwanda.

St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church of Scottsdale has been a generous supporter of the “Genocide Awareness Week” activities and annually sponsors speakers on the Armenian Genocide. Fr. Zacharia Saribekyan, pastor of St. Apkar, has played a key role in the continuing inclusion of the Armenian Genocide in the “Genocide Awareness Week.” This year the Armenian Assembly of America also became a key sponsor of the event and their Western Regional Director Mihran Toumajan attended the conference.

Ambassador Evans is the author of “Truth Held Hostage: America and the Armenian Genocide. What Then? What Now?” (Gomidas Institute, 2016), a detailed look into his experience while Ambassador in Armenia. A veteran of the United State Foreign Service, Ambassador Evans had no Armenian ancestors or family connections. However,

over the course of his historical studies and diplomatic career, he became convinced that a gross injustice was being perpetrated against the Armenians through the denialist policies of the Turkish Government and the United State Government’s tacit acceptance of them.

Ambassador Evans served as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia from August of 2004 until 2006. In February 2005 he made a trip to California and at several different meetings with Armenian-American groups, when asked about Washington’s lack of official recognition of the 1915-23 Armenian Genocide as a “genocide,” Evans replied: “I will today call it the Armenian Genocide.” He thus publicly broke with the U.S. government’s policy of non-recognition of the 1915 Armenian Genocide and was recalled from his post by President Bush.

The pastor and Parish Council of St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church organized a special reception for Ambassador Evans on Tuesday, April 11, at the

Melikian Hall of the Church. Earlier in the day, the local Barnes & Noble book-store hosted a book talk and signing by Ambassador Evans. Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny attended the evening reception.

Der Mugerdechian’s lecture on “The Armenian Genocide Today,” focused on three aspects of the Genocide: memoirs and oral history, the Armenian Genocide in Armenian-American literature, and memorials and monuments to the Genocide. The overall theme of the presentation was on the cultural impact of the Genocide and the Armenian response to it.

The first phase of the post-Genocide diaspora was the collection of oral histories on the Genocide. Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s multiple Armenian organizations embarked on Oral History projects to document the experiences of survivors. By doing so, they preserved a story which otherwise may have been lost.



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Saroyan House Museum to Open Friday, August 31, 2018 in Fresno



Left to right: Fr. Zacharia Saribekyan, Mihran Toumajan, Prof. John Liffiton, Amb. John Evans, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

SCOTTSDALE, FROM PAGE 7

A second phase of the post-Genocide period was when Armenian-American writers began to include references to the Genocide in their works. Authors such as William Saroyan and Peter Najarian explored how the Genocide became a central focus of the Diasporan experience in the making of identity.

Hundreds of memorials and monuments have been constructed throughout the Diaspora to not only affirm the

Genocide, but to educate future generations. These monuments have become the focus for April 24 commemorations through the world.

Armenian Genocide memorials at Fresno State and at Scottsdale Community College were given as significant examples of this phenomenon.

The seventh annual “Genocide Awareness Week,” is already in the planning stages and will be held the week of April 15, 2019.

Photo: ASP Archive



Speaker Dr. Khatchig Mouradian.

Photos: Alain Ekmalian

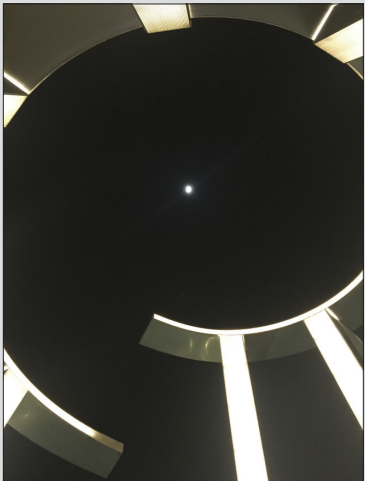


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