

HYE SHARZHOOM ***Armenian Action*** ***ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՒՄ***

28th Year

March 2007

Vol. 28, No. 3 (97)

Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

The Armenian Studies Program

cordially invites you to its

19th Annual Banquet

with special guest

The Honorable Armen Liloyan

Consul General of the Republic of Armenia

*recognizing the recipients of
Armenian Studies Program scholarships
-with a silent auction organized by the
Armenian Alumni & Friends at Fresno State*

Piano selections by Michael Krikorian

Featuring music by the Mirage Armenian Ensemble

Saturday, March 24, 2007

**Fort Washington Golf & Country Club
10272 N. Millbrook
Fresno, CA**

Reception-6PM • Dinner-7PM

\$50 per person • \$500 table of ten • \$20 Fresno State students

For reservations, please call the Armenian Studies Program office at 278-2669. Please respond by March 16, 2007.

Director Garapedian Discusses New Film *Screamers* With Enthusiastic Audience at Fresno State



Photo: Armenian Studies Archives

Carla Garapedian and Barlow Der Mugrdchian.

ARA NALBANDIAN
Staff Writer

On January 21st 2007, Taner Akçam, the author of the newly published book *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, was scheduled to speak at Cali-

fornia State University, Fresno. However, on January 19th, Hrant Dink, editor of the Turkish-Armenian *Agos* weekly newspaper, was brutally gunned down in front of the *Agos* offices in Istanbul, Turkey. Akçam, a friend of Dink's, made the last minute decision to cancel his appearance in Fresno, so

that he could attend Dink's funeral service in Istanbul.

Documentary film director Carla Garapedian was invited to speak in Akçam's place. Garapedian, had been busy promoting her new film *Screamers*, a documentary about the Armenian Genocide and its continued denial, when she accepted an invitation from Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian of the Armenian Studies Program to fill in for Akçam.

Garapedian's film *Screamers*, which just had its Fresno premiere two days earlier, features video clips of both Akçam and Dink. Garapedian began her talk by paying tribute to Dink and fondly sharing her memories of him. She recalled that Dink was not only an intelligent man, but also a very charismatic figure. Dink had attended the premiere of *Screamers* in Hollywood at the American Film

SEE **SCREAMERS** PAGE 6

Armenian Community School 30th Anniversary



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

The first grade class of the ACSF at lunch.

RANDY BALOIAN

Special to Hye Sharzhoom

It's 9:00 am at the Armenian Community School of Fresno.

In Miss Primavera's second grade class Hakop Mardirossian, Joseph Colarian, Alena Kutumian, and Lauren Cooper sit poised along with the other 5 or 6 students, listening intently as the teacher quizzes them on the essentials of mathematics. From an adult's perspective, each represents a different historical element of the school. Children of recent immigrants from the Republic of Armenia. The kids of families originally from Lebanon, Aleppo, and other diasporan communities of the Middle East. Dark-

eyed third generation Armenian-Americans. Freckle-faced Americans.

For the students, of course, that kind of history must wait for another time and perhaps another place. Their focus is on the lesson at hand, mixed in with thoughts about the 10:00 am recess and what sorts of games lay ahead.

On this day, as it has been on any school day for the past 30 years, the standard lessons are based on the same curriculum used by Fresno public schools and approved by the California State Department of Education. Each year, grades 1 through 6 collectively rank in the

SEE **COMMUNITY SCHOOL** PAGE 4

Agos Editor Hrant Dink Assassinated in Istanbul

Hrant Dink, a prominent Armenian journalist, and editor of the Armenian and Turkish language *Agos* newspaper, was assassinated on January 19th, in Istanbul.

Born in Malatya, in 1954, he was a fearless defender of the right of free speech.

For his efforts he was prosecuted numerous times in Turkey on the charge of "insulting Turkishness," according to article 301 of the Turk-

ish penal code. Just last year Dink had traveled throughout California on a speaking tour, promoting dialogue between Armenians and Turks.

Active in various democratic platforms and civil society organizations, Hrant Dink emphasized the need for democratization in Turkey and focused on the issues of

SEE **DINK** PAGE 7



Photo: Courtesy Dickran Kouymjian

Hrant Dink, right, with Taner Akçam in Yerevan, Armenia.

"Year of Armenia in France" Showcases Armenian Art & Culture Through 2007

**Arménie mon amie,
l'Année de l'Arménie
September 21, 2006-
July 14, 2007**

STAFF REPORT

A series of major art exhibits across France is marking the "Year of Armenia in France." The program for the entire "Year of Armenia" includes around six-hundred events in more than forty cities all over France. The main purpose of the "Year of Armenia" is to represent Armenia to the world. Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan

SEE **YEAR OF ARMENIA** PAGE 7



Photo: Courtesy Dickran Kouymjian

Sergei Paradjanov (left) and Dr. Dickran Kouymjian at Paradjanov's home in Tiflis, May 24, 1987.

Armenian Studies Program
Book/Video/CD/Archival Gifts

Dr. Dickran Kouymjian 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.

Biblioteca Nacional, Buenos Aires, Argentina, for the book *La Biblioteca, La Critica Literaria en Argentina*.
Dr. Ruth Büttner and Judith Peltz (ed.), Koblenz, Germany, for the book *Mythical Landscapes Then and Now: The Mystification of Landscapes in Search of National Identity*, (Antares, 2006).

Sara Chitjian, Los Angeles, for the book *A Hair’s Breadth From Death: The Memoirs of Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian* (Taderon Press: London, 2003).

Armen Dadour, Granada Hills, for his book *Symphony II*, a collection of short stories, diaries, articles, etc. (2004).

Armen Haghnazarian, RAA Research on Armenian Architecture, Aachen, Germany, for the pamphlet on *JULFA, The Annihilation of the Armenian Cemetery* by *Nakhijevan’s Azerbaijani Authorities* (Beirut, 2006).

Walter Karabian, Los Angeles, for the Lark Musical Concert Society Program featuring the music of *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Requiem in D Minor)*, with a dedication to the memory of Mgrdich “Mego” Hovsepi Fidanian (October 2006).

Krikor Keusseyan, Watertown, MA, for the book *Namagani, Volume C—Letters From Shahan Shanour to Writers* (in Armenian), edited by Krikor Keusseyan (Watertown, MA, 2006).

Col. Carl Mahakian, Rancho Mirage, for the books by William Saroyan and a copy of the William Saroyan Guide, archive material, and the book *Armenian Needlelace and Embroidery* by Alice Odian Kasparian with Foreward by Dickran Kouymjian (1983).

Chuck Nickson, Houston, TX, for the book *Forsaken Love*, translated and edited by Ara Melkonian and Ara Sarafian.

Vartan Thomasian, Vashbouragan Society, Granada Hills, for the *Varak* periodical, Volume 53, 2006.

Martin M. Tourigian, Drexel Hill, PA, for the monthly *Hask* literature (2006) and his watercolor painting of St. Vartan.

● Armenians on the Internet ●

PATEEL MEKHITARIAN
Staff Writer

Sacred Sites

www.sacredsites.com/europe/armenia/armenia.htm

The culture of Armenia is enriched with generations of tradition. However, in addition to the music, food, people, and dance of the Armenians, the actual country of Armenia is a very cherished part of the culture. On the internet one finds numerous sites, which explain, illustrate, and provide interactive tours of Armenia.

This site offers pictures and explanations of many sacred areas of Armenia. Along with each image of a special place in Armenia, there is also a brief paragraph, which explains the history. For example, this site includes descriptions of the Temple of Garni, where Armenians worshiped before the country converted to Christianity, the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin, the Monastery of Geghard, the Khor Virap Monastery, and Mt. Ararat. These are examples of places which are very sacred to the people.

Arm Gate

www.armgate.com/churches/index.html

The Christian religion is important in Armenian culture. This website provides pictures of numerous churches in many different areas of Armenia. For example, there are links to the churches of Northern, Central, and Southern Armenia, as well as Karabagh.

California State University, Fresno
Armenian Studies Program

Fall 2007 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education				
Social Sciences, Area D3				
• ArmS 10 Intro to Arm Studies	3	8:00-9:15A	TTh	Staff
(Class #74761)				
Arts & Humanities, Arts, Area C2				
• Arm 1A Elementary Armenian	4	10:00-11:50A	TTh	Staff
(Class #74759)				
• ArmS 190 Independent Study	1-3	Arranged		Staff

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 2007-2008 catalog: <http://www.csufresno.edu/catoffice/current/armstudhd.html>

Hye Sharzhoom
is on the web.

http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu/hye_sharzhoom/index.htm

37th Annual Armenian Summer Games
June 22-24, 2007

Events held at Buchanan High School in Clovis, CA

Men’s and Women’s Basketball, Track and Field, Tennis
(competition in age groups)

information and entry forms on the website:
armeniansummernames.com

or contact Van Der Mugrdechian at
armeniansports@aol.com

HYE SHARZHOOM

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Editor

Zhanna Bagdasarov
zhannab20@aol.com

Layout

Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Photographer

Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Staff Writers

Svetlana Bagdasarov
Pateel Mekhitarian
Ara Nalbandian
Sarah Soghomonian

Advisor

Barlow Der Mugrdechian
barlowd@csufresno.edu

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Let us know what you think-please contact us.

Have you moved?

Would you like to have Hye Sharzhoom sent to a friend?

Let us know. Please contact us with any questions regarding Hye Sharzhoom.

Armenian Studies Program Faculty and Staff:

Dickran Kouymjian, *Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies, Coordinator*

Barlow Der Mugrdechian, *Lecturer, ASO Advisor, Hye Sharzhoom Advisor (barlowd@csufresno.edu)*

Kati Litten, *Program Administrative Assistant (klitten@csufresno.edu)*

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Armenian Studies Program
5245 N. Backer Ave. PB4
Fresno, CA 93740-8001
Telephone (559) 278-2669 • FAX (559) 278-2129
<http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu>

Bozigian Presents 6th Annual Armenian Dance Seminar



Tom Bozigian,standing, fourth from right, with students.

ZHANNA BAGDASAROV
Editor

Meg, Yergoo, Yerek, Cha Cha Cha, repeated Tom Bozigian to a large group of student and community dancers during the weekend of February 2nd and 3rd. Dressed in comfortable clothes and shoes, participants of the seminar gathered at the Fresno State South Gym to learn Armenian folk-dances. Together with his wife and dance partner, Sheri, Bozigian demonstrated his expertise while the crowd looked on in amazement. With every step synchronized and all movements carried out with ease, the instructors delivered great examples of Greek and Armenian dances.

The weekend-long seminar, Armenian Studies 120T-Armenian Dance, consisted of learning several Armenian dances; among these were *Khumkhuma*, *Jurjena*, *Ishkani*, *Tamzara*, *Hayr oo Mamogner*, *Sayat Nova*, *Yerek*

Meg, and others. Beginning with simpler dances first, Bozigian provided a full explanation and demonstration of each step in a particular dance. Most students exhibited a quick understanding, while for others it was the first time Armenian dances were introduced. Nonetheless, each person’s dance level



Students practicing the Tamzara.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

8th Annual Armenian Film Festival-Huge Success

ZHANNA BAGDASAROV
Editor

When word of the Annual Armenian Film Festival gets out, films to be showcased at this community event begin to pour into the Armenian Studies Program office. Films with an Armenian theme, concerning Armenian issues, and/or those directed by Armenians arrive from around the country, as well as the world. This year was no different. Numerous interesting and creative films were submitted for a chance to be featured at this year’s 8th Annual Armenian Film Festival.

Though many movies were submitted for review, only few made it to the big screen. *The Story of my Name: An Armenian Tale* (The Netherlands), a film directed by Dorothée Forma, delved into the life of Alex Peltekian, who discovered his Armenian heritage at nineteen years of age. Until then, he lived his life as Alex Luijten, not knowing that his biological father was Armenian. At the age of forty-four Alex Peltekian decides to explore his Armenian name and discover the story behind it. With this goal he embarks on a journey that takes him from Holland, his home, to Beirut, Lebanon and then Dörtıyol, Turkey. With a cousin in Lebanon, one he found through the internet, he travels throughout Beirut and Dörtıyol searching for other Peltekians. It is here that he discovers that his ancestors owned much property in Dörtıyol, as well as an orange plantation that belonged to his grandfather. While searching for traces of his family, Alex Peltekian visits various Armenian churches, and encoun-

ters people who elucidate what it means to be an Armenian.

The second feature film of the evening, *The Long Journey from the NFL to Armenia* produced by Peter Musurlian, familiarized the audience with Rien Vartan Long, a 24-year-old football player for the Tennessee Titans. Born and raised in the United States, Long rarely questioned his Armenian identity. His great-grandfather, Toros Vartanian, made sure to tell Rien their family history. After Toros Vartanian and wife Elizabeth Krekorian fled the Armenian Genocide of 1915, they settled in America. Spending much of his time researching Armenian art, examples of which are tattooed on both his arms, Rien decides to visit his ancestral homeland of Armenia along with his mother, Bailey, and grandmother, Jo, to experience some of the artwork in person. After his arrival in Armenia, Rien visits churches and historic places that house original artworks he found so fascinating. The film provided footage of various places in Armenia and Karabagh, and discussed issues currently important for Armenians throughout the world.

Other independent films such as

did not prevent all from having a great time.

All the dances possessed a rich and long history. *Khumkhuma*, for one, was passed on to Bozigian by Vanetsi immigrants in Detroit, MI. *Jurjena* is originally from Kharpert, and named after its rhythm, while *Ishkani* are cycles of dances tied to the Assyrian people.

With new terminology used throughout the class, students were able to not only learn dance steps, but also a bit of Armenian vocabulary. Bozigian utilized Armenian words for certain dance steps and counted in Armenian when he danced, which was another way of making the class feel authentic.

By the conclusion of the weekend-long seminar the class was able to recall the steps to each dance without the help of the instructor. Every person attending walked away with newfound knowledge of the Armenian culture, language, dance, and music.

BEAUTIFUL ARMENIANS (2006)(California), Director: Tamar Salibian
DAUGHTERS OF VARTAN (2006) (California), Director: Adeline Arakelian
THE GATES (2006) (Massachusetts), Director: Apo Torosyan
SHIKAHOGH (Environmental Film No. 1/2005) (Massachusetts), Director: Nikolay Davtyan
THE LONG JOURNEY FROM THE NFL TO ARMENIA (2006) (California), Producer: Peter Musurlian and Dr. Arbi Ohanian
THE STORY OF MY NAME (2006) (The Netherlands), Director: Dorothée Forma
TABRIZ – IMAGES FROM THE FORGOTTEN WORLD (2006) (United States/Iran), Director: Mohammad Ehsani
VORT [WORM] (2005) (California), Director: James Martin

2006-2007 Armenian Studies Program Scholarships and Grant Awards

The Armenian Studies Program awarded more than \$60,000 in scholarships and research grants for the 2006/7 cademic year. These scholarships encourage students to purse minors in Armenian Studies and to enroll in the various course offerings. We ask our student and our supporters to tell their friends and relatives about the Armenian Studies Scholarship program and encourage them to apply.

Applying has become simplified and is entirely online through the Program website at [http:// www.armenianstudies .csufresno.edu](http://www.armenianstudies.csufresno.edu) and the University website at <http://www.csufresno.edu>

Nerces and Ruth Azadian Memorial Scholarship
Marissa Kalashian

Kirkor and Mary Bedoian Memorial Scholarship
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Arman Kalamkarian

The Harry and Mary Topoozian Armenian Studies Merit Scholarship Fund
Sebough Krioghlian

Land and Culture Organization Plans Summer Campaign

STAFF REPORT

The Land and Culture Organization is planning its annual campaign from July 3-31, 2007, with the possibility of one in August as well. Volunteers will arrange for their own transportation to Armenia to meet with the group by July 3rd.

In 1977 a group of young Frenchmen of Armenian heritage led by Keram Kevonian founded the Land and Culture Organization (LCO) in France, which soon opened branches in the United States, England, and later in Armenia and other countries. LCO started to work in Armenia in 1989, after the disastrous earthquake. The organization was officially registered in Armenia in 1994.

For over 28 years the LCO has organized summer programs- popularly called “Campaigns” -in which volunteers from Europe, Canada, the United States and elsewhere join together on ancestral sites. They apply their physical energy and mental ingenuity to a variety of tasks in architectural preservation,

land cultivation, and community development. LCO Summer Campaigns not only afford Armenians in the Diaspora the rare experience of discovering their ancestral roots and expanding their cultural horizons, but they also create opportunities that put ideals into action.

In 2007 Land and Culture will be working in the village of Azat, in the Vardenis region of Armenia, southeast of Lake Sevan.

Land and Culture is a grass-roots organization which believes that working on our historical lands is more valuable than just viewing it, for the volunteer and for the locals. They try to concentrate on the rural areas that have not received as much attention or help as the urban areas.

Basic information about past campaigns and volunteers statements are on the Land and Culture website, www.lcousa.org.

The Land and Culture campaigns in the rural areas give hope and moral support to the villagers as well as creating an incredible bond for volunteers with the land and people.

Armenian Community School of Fresno Provides Quality Education to Students

COMMUNITY SCHOOL, FROM PAGE 1

upper 20th percentile on the Stanford Nine Achievement Test, which measures aptitude in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social science. The individual scores of several students are among the highest in the state.

tory is taught to the upper grades, and throughout the year, the entire school recognizes such important historical dates as January 6th (Armenian Christmas), May 28th (Independence of the 1st Armenian Republic), September 21 (Independence of the current Republic of Armenia), and April 24th (Com-

memoration of the Armenian Genocide).

This February, the ACSF observed Saint Vartan's day by participating in a community-wide event at the First Presbyterian Armenian Church. The commemoration of Saint Vartan, or Vartanantz, marks the famous 451 AD battle between the Armenian and Persian armies, in which General Vartan Mamigonian and his fellow

soldiers perished defending Armenia's right to practice Christianity. Although the clash left the Armenian forces decimated, it sparked a 30 year-long popular struggle that eventually succeeded in securing religious freedom for Armenia.

"It is very special and heart warming for me, as a first and second generation Armenian, to see my child along with everyone else speaking, reading, writing, and singing the language of their ancestors."

Deanna Garabedian, ACSF Parent

At a time when secularism and religion are having their own battle in the classroom, the ACSF has achieved a comfortable balance where Christian belief is neither stressed nor discouraged but simply accepted. On selected Friday assemblies, clergy from the four Fresno Armenian churches visit the students to give a brief parable and spiritual lesson. Indeed, it would be next to impossible to convey Armenian history since 301 A.D., the year Armenia became the first Christian nation, without some understanding and appreciation of the faith. During her lecture to students earlier in the year about Mesrop Mashtots, the creator of the Armenian alphabet, Armenian instructor Maral Markarian elegantly tied together religion, language, and history. Recalling the words of the poet Avetik Isahakian, Markarian said,

"When you want to talk to God, speak in Armenian. Our language is a prayer language, a spiritual language."

The mid-1970s, though probably not apparent at the time, was a watershed period in the history of the Fresno Armenian Community. Compared to previous decades, there was a greater sense of identity, due in part to the growing number of newly arrived Armenians fleeing the instability of the Middle East. It was in this context that the Armenian Community School of Fresno was established.

In 1976, largely through the efforts of Rev. Fr. Kourken Yarialian and a group of motivated businessmen, professionals, and clergy who became the "founding fathers" of the school, the Armenian Community School of Fresno was created. Meher Chekerdemian, one of the members of that committee, recalls some of the problems involved in getting the school established.

"We had essentially three obstacles to overcome: finding the financial support; finding a location; and finding the students. Ironically, these are the same challenges facing the school today. I remember our first fund raiser collected about \$60-\$70,000, enough to get the school off the ground. Because we were a community school and did not want it to be associated with only one church, we approached the local churches for a location and were eventually accepted by Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church. As far as finding students, Father Yarialian literally went from home to home to convince families about the benefits of sending their children to the school."

The first year, classes, with a total of 22 students, were held in the basement of Holy Trinity and Hagop Terjimanian served as the school's first principal. Terjimanian was succeeded by Lu Ann Missakian, Deran Berberian, Diane Emerzian, Assadour Assadourian, Seth Atamian, and the current principal Rosie Bedrosian—all of whom have continued the school's tradition of academic achievement.

Four years after its inception and feeling the growing pains of rising enrollment, the school moved to its long-time home on Fresno Street and Weldon Avenue. For the next two decades, the two-story building routinely accommodated 100 or more students.

Unfortunately, by late 1990s, the urban decay of the surrounding neighborhood coupled with the nearby construction of the Highway 41/Highway 168 interchange compelled the school's educational board to relocate the ACSF to another site. In 2001, the school moved to its present campus at the Saint Therese Catholic Church in Fresno's Tower District. The former parochial school, which is rented to the ACSF, was intended as a temporary facility, since the ACSF had received a land donation from a local developer. However, these plans never materialized due to the prohibitive costs involved with this project.

This past December, the school received some bad news when it was informed that Saint Therese would be making major improvements to the grounds and that it would be unable to renew the lease for another term. The ACSF current educational board, which had previously considered alternative locations, has stepped-up its efforts to find a new site before the Fall. The ACSF has been reaching out to the community to aid in this search.

The ACSF is truly a community school in that it does not rely on the financial backing of one benefactor or one organization but on the grass-roots support of its many donors. In this sense, it is an anomaly compared to other California Armenian schools, all of which are named after a major patron and fall under the umbrella of a larger entity such as the Armenian Prelacy or Armenian General Benevolent Union.

The concept of an independent school does have some appeal to a diasporan community like Fresno, which consists of several—and at times contentious—religious, political, and social elements. Moreover, if it weren't for the generous support of its diverse base of contributors, the ACSF would have closed long ago. The ACSF Women's League and Parent Teacher Club play an important role in increasing the school's visibility through their many fund raisers.

Yet it would be an overstatement to say the community has embraced the ACSF, and it is remarkable that the school has endured for 30 years as an autonomous entity. In many respects, the ACSF has an orphan-like status in the broader community. An ACSF board member explained it this way:

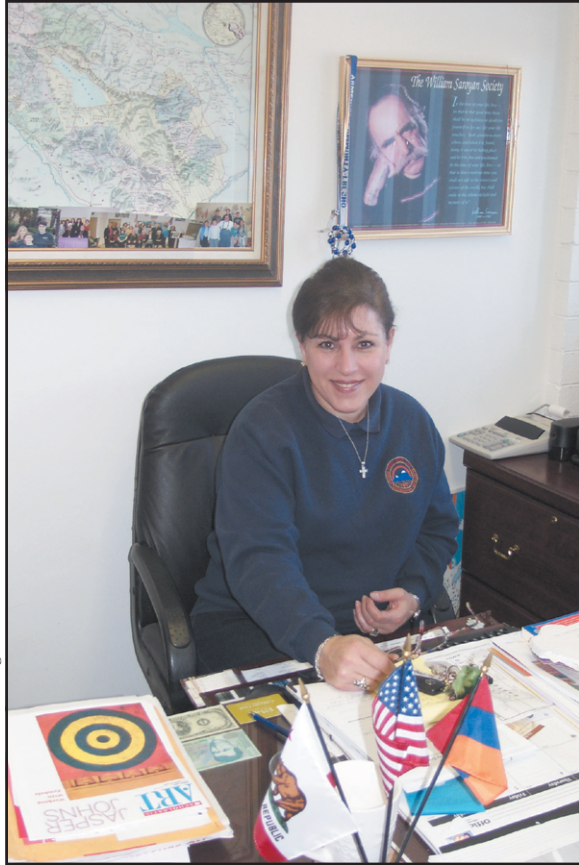
"The response of the community to our fund-raising events is impressive. For the past two years, our annual crab feed had over 450 people attending. Each year we receive tens of thousands of dollars

proven itself year in and year out by providing a quality education to its students. Unfortunately only a small fraction of the community's youth attends the ACSF because for whatever reasons, most parents would rather send their children to overcrowded public schools."

One example of how such cooperative endeavors can positively impact the school has been the new orchestral music program. Earlier in the year, Patrick Balakian of Balakian's Music approached the ACSF with the idea to integrate instrumental music into the school's standard curriculum. ** Like Armenian language and history, the orchestral music program is something the public schools do not offer, and Balakian made his proposal flexible and affordable enough to fit into the school's tight budget. The classes, which begin at the 1st grade level and continue upward, are currently being taught by Ms. Selin Eskandarian, who is coincidentally an alumnus of the ACSF. ** She describes her return to the ACSF as "very rewarding," adding that the excitement from the children is very apparent when they get to handle musical instruments for the first time. Along with the basic musical instruction, the students are learning traditional Armenian pieces that will be performed at the year-end Hantes in June.

Lately, the search for a new site has occupied the minds of everyone associated with the ACSF, yet from the very beginning the school has never been about its location or the facilities but about what goes on inside in the buildings. For the past 30 years, the collective backbone of the school has been the remarkable dedication of its teachers and staff as well as the commitment of its families to provide their children with not just a primary education, but an education imbued with an understanding of Armenian history and language.

Many students enter the ACSF at the Nursery or Pre-Kindergarten



ACSF Principal Rosie Bedrosian.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugdechian



Photo: Barlow Der Mugdechian

ACSF kindergarten class.

in donations necessary for the school's continued existence."

"On the other hand, I feel there is sometimes this unspoken perception among the community that the school is a burden or that it is somehow not up to par. In other words, while people willingly donate materially to the school, individuals and organizations are hesitant to invest in the school in ways that would be mutually beneficial. For thirty years, the school has a

level and continue right on up to the 6th grade. The challenges of teaching pre-school come not only from the children but also from new parents, many of whom are leaving their sons and daughters in someone else's care for probably the first time. To reassure parents, Nursery school teacher Annette Agulian adopts a flexible approach in dealing with this separation anxiety.

"We take it slow the first couple

Armenian education does not end with language. Armenian his-

Armenian Community School-30th Anniversary

of months. In most cases, it’s best if the child can immediately begin to adjust to the new surroundings without the parents, but I also explain that the parents are welcome to stay in the class as long as they want.

school curriculum. That weekly class is currently taught by Ms. Shoghig Papoyan, who also arranges the musical scores for the yearly Hantes and other community performances. Kataroyan con-

are so close.”

A former substitute teacher in the public school system, MacDonald likes the flexibility afforded to her at the ACSF, adding that “I can devote more of time to teaching and less to the red tape that is typical of public schools.” In fact, the fifth and sixth grade class is in continual motion. To name just a few of its outings, the class has visited the Challenger Learning Center in Atwater, the UC Berkeley campus for a science program, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium with the third and fourth graders. She is also planning a 4-day camping excursion to Morro Bay and a one-day tour of the State Capitol later in the year. Perhaps the most memorable journey for the students is a one week trip to Armenia, a journey the fifth and sixth graders take on alternate years. Principal Rosie Bedrosian remembers when the school first made the trek to Armenia:

“On the occasion of the 1700th anniversary of Christianity in 2001, our upper grade students traveled to Armenia. The group included parents, teachers, and former graduates of the ACSF. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for our students to visit their homeland and see the living legacy of their forefathers. Being able to attend Sunday services at Holy Etchmiadzin in the audience of His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of all Armenians on Palm Sunday, was an experience that our students can never forget. The trip was such a success that it has become a bi-annual event for our upper grade class.”

MacDonald, who also has a granddaughter in the ACSF pre-school, enjoys the amount of support she gets from the parents, a sentiment echoed by all the teachers.

Parental participation is essential for the school. The Parent Teacher Club holds a variety of fund raising events throughout the year to offset the school’s expense. Among the PTC most active members are the fathers and mothers of the school’s small but energetic non-Armenian contingent. Most notably, Rose Willems Camerena has leant her leadership and public relation skills ever since joining the ACSF. Also included are neighborhood families and parents who, having looked into the ACSF as an educational institution, simply appreciate the quality of instruction and family atmosphere the school provides. Referring to her non-Armenian students, Tanossian reflects that “perhaps they leave the school with an awareness of not just Armenian culture but of all cultures.”

At recess the kids are running about, skipping rope, shooting baskets—doing what kids normally do. In a corner of the playground, one

sidered such events — in which students of each class recite poems, sing songs, or dance before hundreds of onlookers—as invaluable to the school, not only by showcasing its talents but, more importantly, from the standpoint of building the self-esteem of each student. Last year, second grade teacher Melissa Primavera coordinated and choreographed the year end Hantes, a production that featured various fairy-tales made popular by Disney.

As the students progress into the upper grades, the educational opportunities expand with their growing independence. Third and fourth grade teacher Talin Tanossian is currently having her students construct a model of the solar system from a shoe box and other basic materials—a project that combines art and crafts with astronomy. Last year, they were encouraged to paint their version of Vincent Van Gogh’s famous image, “The Starry Night.” Tanossian notes that given the countless number of possibilities, she rarely repeats such assignments from year to year. Other extra-curricular activities include the school’s many field trips. During the Winter Semester, for instance, grades 3 through 5 walked a few blocks down to the historic Tower Theatre, where they attended a performance of “The Most Valuable Player,” a play that celebrates the life of Jackie Robinson and his impact on baseball and American society.

By the time a student has reached the sixth grade, he or she has spent at least 7 years with the same cohort of classmates. Sixth grade teacher MacDonald, who has been with the school for 10 years, remarks that: “They’re like brothers and sisters. They know each other’s idiosyncrasies. Occasionally, they even quarrel like siblings. But they



ACSF nursery class prepares for their afternoon nap.

Once the children become familiar to their caretakers and classmates, they sometimes don’t want to go home at the end of the day.”

While the ACSF pre-school program is an affordable alternative to other child care institutions in the Fresno area, the curriculum of the school’s Pre-K class goes well beyond the content and breath of the standard day care facility. Students practice social skills and learn introductory concepts in math and English. It is also here that Armenian instruction begins. Pre-School Director Vicky Kataroyan, who has been with the school since 1982, comments that the combination of love and discipline has a powerful effect in the development of the students. “I cannot accept it when children say ‘I can’t do this’ and instead assure them that they are capable of doing anything they put their minds to.”

After graduating from Pre-K, the students are well-prepared to move on to primary school. Anyone who watches Kindergarten teacher Jackie Chekerdemian interact with her current and former pupils can’t help but look at her as the students’ older sister. When asked about that special relationship, Chekerdemian says,

“They are more than just students to me. They are my children. The friendships they make here will last throughout their whole lives. You can’t get that type of family environment from a public school.”

First grade instructor Maida Derkalousdian has taught at the school since 1981 and has deeply rooted ties with the ACSF. She has a granddaughter in Nursery, and her daughter-in law, Zepur Derkalousdian, is the Armenian instructor for the upper grades. Derkalousdian, who also has the ability to seamlessly forge both warmth and discipline in her teaching style, arrives at school each day with the same affection and focus that she instills in her students. “I feel like this is my second home. When I come here, I see only the students.”

Throughout the week the students are kept busy with various activities. Long before instrumental music was begun at the school, choir music has been a staple of the

Eench ga Chga?

Svetlana Bagdasarov
Staff Writer

Question: “If you had the opportunity to spend a day with an Armenian celebrity, who would you choose and why?”

Name: Janik Oganessian
Major: Biology
Year: Sophomore

“I would have to say Charles Aznavour, because he is a respected Armenian and plus, he would give me a tour of France.”



Name: Nayiri Moumdjian
Major: Business
Year: Freshman

“I would spend the day with my favorite singer, Paul Baghdadian. His lyrics are heartfelt and have depth. I listen to his music almost everyday.”

Name: Aaron K. Telloian
Major: Philosophy
Year: Freshman

“I wouldn’t be able to pick a specific celebrity since my respect goes out to all the Armenian athletes reclaiming fame on the world circuit. However, if I had to choose, I would spend the day with either boxer Kahren Harutyunyan or Vic “Raging Bull” Darchinyan. As an athlete, I can identify with all the athletes who are fighting to reclaim the prestige of Armenia in a global sense.”



Name: Suzan Merdzhimekian
Major: Laboratory Technician
Year: Freshman

“If I had the opportunity to spend a day with an Armenian celebrity I would choose Tata Simonyan. Tata is truly an inspiration to the Armenian community.”

Photos: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

of the citizens of the second grade has taken hold of a small nerf football. Chased and finally surrounded by her classmates, she now forms the center of one big, laughing group hug. The smell of the day’s lunch—sometimes chicken and pilav, sometimes mac and cheese, sometimes lahmajoon—is wafting out from

cook Zarouhi Karadanyan’s kitchen. On this day, at least, all seems right for the Armenian Community School of Fresno.

For more information on the Armenian Community School of Fresno, please phone the school office at 559-233-1800.

Fresno State’s
Armenian Radio Show

“Hye Oozh”

Every Saturday morning
from 9:00AM-noon

KFSR 90.7 FM

On the internet at www.kfsr.org!

ACSF Seeks Alumni

The Armenian Community School of Fresno (ACSF) is looking for former students that attended the school during its 30 year history. This May, the ACSF will hold its annual banquet and would like to have as many alumni as possible to celebrate the ACSF’s 30th anniversary. If you are a former student of the ACSF, please contact the school’s office at 559-233-1800 or write to the school at ACSF, 1444 N. Wishon Avenue, Fresno, CA, 93728. The ACSF would like invite you to this year’s event and include you on its permanent mailing list.

Fresno Welcomes Tata Simonyan



SVETLANA BAGDASAROV
Staff Writer

On February 23rd, at approximately 8PM, Tata Simonyan graced the stage of the Warnors Theatre in downtown Fresno. Thanks to the tremendous effort of local promoter Hakop Krboyan, people were finally able to enjoy a popular concert without having to travel to big cities like Los Angeles or San Francisco. Fresno was truly lucky to have such a talented and well-known artist fly all the way from Yerevan, Armenia just to entertain the public.

Tatevik Ekejian opened the show with a short introduction as

the audience continued to fill the auditorium. Oddly enough, the theatre was not filled to capacity. Even though seeing the empty seats was a bit disappointing, once Tata took control of the microphone and began to sing, the audience was completely entranced. Wearing one of his signature hats, Tata was comfortably dressed and ready to prove why he is one of the most popular performers to enter the Armenian music scene. Accompanied by an extremely gifted band, Tata sang, without rest, for a little over two hours, only stopping for brief conversations with the audience. He was very friendly and genuine when he spoke to the people, especially

when he mentioned Armenia, and how grateful he was to share his musical talent.

After singing major hits such as “Yes U Du,” “Ov e Na,” and “Yerevani Aghchignerin,” the theatre began to look like a huge celebration instead of a concert. People of all ages were getting up to dance, sing along, whistle and cheer. Tata himself couldn’t resist dancing along to his own songs and acoustic solos. Tata’s vocals were practically flawless. There was absolutely no difference in his recordings and the live performance, and these days it is really rare to find an

artist that sounds just as amazing live as he or she sounds on a recording.

Overall, the concert was definitely worth every penny. People gathered after the concert just to discuss the incredible success of the show. Even those who drove all the way from cities such as Los Angeles and Sacramento felt that their trip was definitely not in vain. Let’s just hope Fresno continues to attract such superstars as Tata Simonyan and the Armenian community continues to support these events by attending as many as possible.

Review: *Screamers*-A Powerful Film

ARA NALBANDIAN
Staff Writer

Screamers, directed by Carla Garapedian, is a hard hitting documentary about the Armenian Genocide of 1915, perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, and its continued denial.

Garapedian earned her Ph.D. in international relations at the prestigious London School of Economics, before cutting her teeth as a correspondent for NBC and later being swept up by the BBC as a director and anchor.

Screamers, features the music and live concert footage of the multi-platinum, heavy-metal rock band *System of a Down*, combining the personal testimony of genocide survivors and historians, the haunting images of the victims of genocide, and the heart-pounding energy and message of *System of a Down*’s music. It presents an unforgettable and captivating lesson in genocide that even the *LA Times* calls, “Eye-opening.”

What is a screamer? According to Pulitzer-Prize-winning Harvard Professor Samantha Power, screamers are people who throughout history refuse to stand idly by and watch genocides unfold. Power, the author of *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, is featured throughout Garapedian’s film, and has shown the connection between the Armenian genocide (the first genocide of the 20th century) and the subsequent genocides that followed in the 20th and 21st centuries. When asked the question, “Why do genocides continue in the 21st century?” Garapedian responded, “Because those who perpetrated them in the 20th century got away with it.”

“Screamers,” which centers around Tankian’s journey, shows how Tankian’s grandfather Stepan Haytayan, a 96 year-old survivor of the Armenian genocide, inspired him to fight against the injustice of the Armenian genocide, being dismissed by both the Turkish government and the United States government. In addition to Haytayan’s testimony, Garapedian presents the horrific testimony of two other genocide survivors: Maritza Ohanesian and Verjin Membreian, each of whom tell their own heart-wrenching stories of how their family members were slaughtered by Ottoman soldiers.



Screamers director Carla Garapedian, left, with System of a Down lead singer Serj Tankian.

To present the unbiased historical facts, Garapedian gathered testimony and footage from Turkish historian and dissident Taner Akçam, former FBI Turkish translator and whistle-blower Sibel Edmonds, historian Ara Sarafian (Gomidas Institute), and the late Hrant Dink (editor of *Agos* weekly newspaper, Istanbul). The film shows how the current government of Turkey, not only denies, but also attempts to imprison anyone who dares to speak publicly about the genocide. It is through a controversial law, titled Article 301, that Turkey has tried to make the discussion of the issue of the Armenian genocide a taboo subject within Turkey. By prosecuting scholars like Akçam and Orhan Pamuk, based on comments they have made about the Armenian genocide, Turkey has been able to control what its own citizens know or do not know about their own history.

Garapedian’s film also shows how the Turkish government has continually tried to prevent its world-wide image from being tarnished by misusing its political power. The film focuses its attention on former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Dennis Hastert. It shows Tankian and *System of a Down* drummer John Dolmayan confronting Hastert

on his political stance on the pending House Genocide Resolution. The band members encouraged Hastert to, “Do the right thing.” However, Hastert, who has allegedly been at the center of a bribery scandal with Turkey over the Armenian genocide recognition initiatives, did not do the right thing after all.

Screamers is not just a documentary about the Armenian genocide, but of all genocides. The film concludes by displaying the numbers of individuals killed in genocides during the last two centuries. “Armenia, 1.5 million dead; The Holocaust, 6 million dead; Cambodia, 2 million dead; Rwanda, 800,000 dead; Bosnia, 200,000 dead; Darfur, 400,000 dead...and counting.”

The world needs more screamers in order to prevent additional killings. Serj Tankian and *System of a Down* are screamers. Carla Garapedian is a screamer. I also agree with Serj Tankian’s statement at the end of the film, when he said, “I think we should all be screamers.”

If you have not yet seen *Screamers*, it is no longer playing in your local theatre, so look for it in the near future on DVD. For more information visit <http://www.screamersmovie.com>.

SCREAMERS, FROM PAGE 1

Institute’s Film Festival this past November.

Garapedian treated the captivated audience to a 19 minute preview of her highly acclaimed documentary, which combines the testimony of genocide survivors and historians with the music of the all Armenian, multi-platinum, heavy metal rock band *System of a Down*. The documentary centers around *System of a Down*’s lead singer, Serj Tankian’s, personal journey for recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the United States government.

Garapedian spoke about her recent visit to Washington, on January 17th, where she had the opportunity to screen her documentary for members of Congress. During the discussion that followed the screening there, Garapedian was asked by a Turkish woman, why the Turkish side of this issue was not portrayed in her film. Garapedian responded by stating that, “Genocide does not have two sides.”

During the question and answer period following her lecture in Fresno, two different Turkish men stood up and expressed their sorrow for what had been done to the

Armenian people. One of the men emotionally stated that while fully understanding that his comments on the Armenian genocide would place him in direct violation of Turkey’s law against public denigration of Turkishness (Article 301), he expressed his embarrassment over the Turkish government’s continued denial. He added that Turkish people privately do understand and admit what was done to the Armenian people was genocide, but publicly the same people would deny it out of fear of punishment.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the Armenian Studies Program thanked Carla Garapedian for taking time out of her busy schedule to speak. Her schedule included a screening of her film the following day at Valley Beth Shalom Temple in the San Fernando Valley. The screening of her film at the Jewish temple was a ground-breaking event that showed the support of the Jewish community in recognizing the Armenian genocide.

Though Taner Akçam was missed that afternoon, Prof. Der Mugrdechian announced that his talk would be rescheduled.

179 Congressmen Support House Genocide Resolution (H.R. 106)

STAFF REPORT

“The affirmation of the U.S. Record on the Armenian Genocide resolution” has bipartisan support from 179 Members of the House of Representatives. It calls on the President “to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.”

Section 2 of the Resolution includes 30 findings regarding the Armenian Genocide.

The resolution has the support of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA), and US-Armenia Public Affairs Committee (USAPAC).

Original cosponsors of the resolution are Reps. Adam Schiff (D-CA), Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), George Radanovich (R-CA) and Joe Knollenberg (R-MI).

Congressman Adam Schiff, who has led the effort to have the U.S. Government recognize the

Armenian Genocide, has introduced a new resolution, which may have a stronger chance of success.

In the past, the Republican leadership has bottled up the matter in Congress, to avoid putting President George Bush on the spot with U.S. ally Turkey.

This year, with Democrats in control of both houses, the likelihood of success is greater.

“The United States has a compelling historical and moral reason to recognize the Armenian Genocide, which cost a million and a half people their lives,” said Rep. Schiff. “But we also have a powerful contemporary reason as well—how can we take effective action against the genocide in Darfur if we lack the will to condemn genocide whenever and wherever it occurs? With the new leadership in Congress, I am hopeful we can finally get this resolution passed.” The new bill is identical to the Genocide Bill from the last Congress (H. Res. 316), which resoundingly passed the House International Relations Committee, but was not considered for a vote on the House floor.

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Profile-Randy Baloian

SARAH SOGHOMONIAN
Staff Writer

The *Hye Sharzhoom* may not have made it to its 28th year without Randy Baloian. In the mid-1980’s Baloian and editor Vahé Messerlian helped revitalize the college newspaper. “It was hard work,” said Baloian, who was editor during the 1985-1986 school year. “Neither of us were journalists.”

According to Baloian, age 44, the paper had been on hiatus and Messerlian thought it was time to bring it back. “We solicited some students from the Armenian Students Organization for help,” Baloian said.

One student Baloian credited as being instrumental was Gary Kazanjian, who now works as a professional photographer. “Gary would take the pictures and we would write the stories,” Baloian said.

The most challenging part Baloian said was doing the layout. “It wasn’t computerized like today,” he commented. “We had to paste pieces to big paper. It was a real pain.”

Baloian graduated from Fresno State with degrees in Business and Anthropology, along with a minor in Armenian Studies. He later received a master’s degree in Anthropology from UC Davis.

A career in anthropology was put on hold when Baloian began working at his family’s local produce company. But five

years ago he left the family business and began working at Applied Earth Works, a company that deals with historical preservation. The firm studies historical sites, such as old buildings and landmarks. “We study the remains of human culture,” he said. “We’re in a developer’s town, where developers rule.”

Baloian’s work requires a great deal of writing. Reports have to be published. That’s where his time with the *Hye Sharzhoom* comes in handy. “It absolutely helps now,” he said. “I wasn’t so great with words before.”

The time Baloian spent at Fresno State was life changing. He said the Armenian Studies Program allowed him to better understand his culture. “From an Armenian standpoint it gives so much more weight to your beliefs,” he said. “You go out and do something. It is more than just saying I’m Armenian.”

Baloian has been married 10 years to his wife Mary, who also works at Applied Earthwork as an archaeologist. They have two children, Sosse and Lilly. He says he tries to stay active in the Armenian community. Currently he is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Community School. Sosse attends the private school and is in the second grade.

Baloian said the Armenian Studies program and the *Hye Sharzhoom* would always have a special place in his heart. “I read every issue,” he said.

YEAR OF ARMENIA, FROM PAGE 1

Oskanian and French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, along with the Ministers of Culture of each country, opened the “Year of



Gilded silver reliquary, 1300AD, Khotagerats St. Nshan Monastery. Photo: Ara Güler. Photo courtesy-Arts of Armenia.

Armenia in France” in September 2006. The day-to-day work is handled by the officially designated *Comminer*, Nelly Tardivier Henrot and her Armenian counterpart Vigen Sargsyan in Armenia. The “Year of Armenia” was launched on September 21, 2006, Armenian Independence Day, and will conclude on July 14, 2007, France’s 4th of July, with a final closing ceremony in the beginning of September 2007.

Eduard Nalbandian, Armenia’s Ambassador to France, and Philippe Etienne, Director General of International Cooperation and Development of France, signed several documents on the agree-

ments reached and principles of the “Year in of Armenia” organization. Highlighting the events of the “Year of Armenia” is the massive “Armenia Sacra” exhibition on medieval Armenian Church art at the Louvre Museum. There are over 200 objects that will be displayed for three months in this exhibition. Of these, 27 are *khatchkars* or cross-stones-the first time so many have been exhibited anywhere outside of Armenia. At the press conference celebrating the opening, more than 300 newspaper, radio, and TV journalists from all over Europe were in attendance. The catalogue of the exhibit, with over 400 pages, will be a substantial landmark in medieval Armenian art history. Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State and Director of the Armenian Studies Program,



Khatchkar, 966AD, from Noraduz. Photo: Dickran Kouymjian. Arts of Armenia.

contributed to the preparation and writing of the catalogue. On March 2nd, Prof. Kouymjian gave a lecture on “The Year of Armenia” in Brussels.

Also in February was the opening of “L’Orient des photographes arméniens,” on Armenian photographers of the Ottoman Empire at the Institut du monde arabe, one of Paris’s major museums and the center of Islamic and Arab culture in France. Thousands of Parisians attended the opening.

Two major exhibitions on the filmmaker-artist Sergei Paradjanov are being held in Paris. At the Institut nationale superior des Beaux-Arts, 70 of his collages from the Paradjanov Museum in Erevan are on display. A beautiful catalogue of the exhibit is also a landmark on this art. In it are two major articles by Prof. Kouymjian and more than 100 documents and photos from his archive, many of them with the Fresno State logo. On March 9th is the opening of a retrospective of the films and more collages of Sergei Paradjanov at the Magic Cinema in Bobigny, a major Paris suburb, with a 200 page catalogue in which the journal Dr. Kouymjian kept during the attempt by Paradjanov to make a film on the Treasures of Etchmiadzin (which unfortunately failed), is published for the first time along with more material from his archives. The driving force for both exhibits is Zaven Sargsyan, a close friend of Paradjanov and the founder and director of his Erevan museum.

On March 16-17th there is an



Erevan, Matenadaran. MS 2374. “Etchmiadzin Gospel.” Photo: Ara Güler. Photo courtesy-Arts of Armenia.

international conference on Arme-

DINK, FROM PAGE 1

free speech, minority rights, civic rights and issues pertaining to the Armenian community in Turkey. He was a very important peace activist. In his public speeches, which were often intensely emotional, he never refrained from using the word genocide when talking about the Armenian Genocide, a term fiercely rejected by Turkey.

In the 2006 genocide documentary film *Screamers* he explains: “There are Turks who don't admit that their ancestors committed genocide. If you look at it though, they seem to be nice people... So why don't they admit it? Because they think that genocide is a bad thing which they would never want to commit, and because they can’t believe their ancestors would do

such a thing either.” Dink had a long history of personal threats by Turkish nationalists for his statements on Armenian identity and the Armenian Genocide. He regularly received emails with threats to his physical security and he compared himself to a dove, “equally obsessed by what goes-on on my left and right, front and back. My head is just as mobile and fast.” He complained about the indifference of the Turkish government to this atmosphere of terror: “Do you ministers know the price of making someone as scared as a dove?” Tens of thousands protested his death on the streets of Istanbul. The death of Hrant Dink was a tragedy and the Armenians have lost a powerful voice.

The California State University, Fresno • Armenian Studies Program
presents the French film producer and director

Patrick Cazals

Screening two of his films

Rouben Mamoulian:

The Golden Age of Broadway and Hollywood

(2007, 63 minutes)

The documentary uses the Mamoulian archives at the Library of Congress, the archives at the Eastman Center, Rochester, and interviews with Mamoulian and Mamoulian specialists. It premiered in Paris on February the 12th at the Balzac Cinéma on the Champs-Élysées, sponsored by Arménie mon amie ("The Year of Armenia in France").

and

Sergueï Paradjanov: The Rebel

(2004, 52 minutes)

A very moving portrait of someone Cazals knew very well. Cazals made a previous documentary on the filming of Paradjanov's last film, *Ashik Kerib*.

Sunday, May 20, 2007 • 3:00PM

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present

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by

Dr. Lawrence Baron

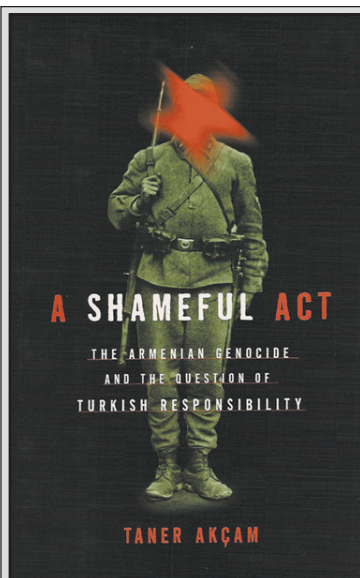
*Nasatir Professor of Modern Jewish History
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This lecture examines how feature films draw on iconic documentary images to convey the uniqueness of the Armenian and Jewish experiences while simultaneously employing similar cinematic strategies to dramatize their stories. Clips from various movies that deal with the Armenian Genocide and other genocides will be viewed as part of the lecture.

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

7:30 p.m.

**University Business Center • Alice Peters Auditorium
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*A Shameful Act: The
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Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian



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