

# ***HYE SHARZHOOM*** ***Armenian Action*** ***ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՈՄ***

**30<sup>th</sup>**  
**Year**

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Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

## Armenian Studies Program Holds 21st Annual Banquet in March



L. to R.: Dr. George Bournoutian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Fresno State President Dr. John Welty, Ambassador John Ordway, Keith Simmons, Bruce Janigian, and Dr. Bill Erysian.

Photo: Joseph Vasquez

### STAFF REPORT

The Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno held its 21st Annual Banquet on Sunday, March 15, at the Fort Washington Golf and Country Club in Fresno. There was an exciting feeling in the air as many no-

tables joined guests for this special occasion.

Fresno State President Dr. John Welty greeted the special guests at the Banquet: former Ambassador to Armenia John Ordway, former USAID Mission Chief in Armenia

SEE **BANQUET** PAGE 7

## Fresno State Students Engage in Political Advocacy Workshop



L. to R.: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Yeghig Keshishian of the Armenian Assembly, Supervisor Debbie Poochigian, Stepan Kyutunyan, and Hagop Ohanessian.

Photo: Armenian Studies Program Archive

### STAFF REPORT

For busy college students occupied with classes and jobs, participating in a workshop to promote participation in the political process may not seem to be high on their radar screen. But the Armenian Students Organization organized such a workshop to bring students face to face with the challenges that politics can bring.

Yeghig Keshishian, Director of

the Western Region of the Armenian Assembly conducted a workshop on political advocacy with Fresno State students on Wednesday, April 22. His presentation included a practical discussion on why advocacy is important and how bills and resolutions are developed in Congress. His power-point presentation gave an overview of

SEE **ADVOCACY** PAGE 8

## Armenian Students Organization Commemorates April 24-Armenian Genocide in Free Speech Area

HAGOP OHANESSIAN  
STAFF WRITER

Friday, April 24, marked the 94th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, and Armenians all over the world came together to remember the past, even as students of Fresno State's Armenian Students Organization (ASO) held their own commemorative event. Students from Fresno State, both Armenian and non-Armenian, and members of the community, came together in the Free Speech area, not only to remember and reflect on the past, but to look at the future. During the week, the ASO distributed flyers and brochures about the Armenian Genocide in order to bring awareness on campus. The Armenian Genocide, which began on April 24, 1915, lasted up to 1923 and it is estimated that more than 1.5 million Armenians in the Otto-



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

The Arax Dancers performed two dances, "Moush," and "Adana," dedicated to the memory of the Armenian Genocide.

man Empire were killed in their historic homeland.

During the commemorative ceremony, photographs, and posters about the Armenian Genocide were

placed around the Free Speech area and a replica of the Armenian Martyrs Monument which is in Yerevan,

SEE **APRIL 24** PAGE 8

## Hye Sharzhoom Celebrates 30th Anniversary

PATEEL MEKHITARIAN  
EDITOR

*Hye Sharzhoom* is an ethnic supplement to *The Collegian*, the Fresno State campus newspaper. *Hye Sharzhoom* is published quarterly, covering special Armenian events at Fresno State and in the community. The goal of *Hye Sharzhoom* is to inform the public about what is occurring with Armenian students on campus, and to report on events that have occurred in Fresno. The Armenian Students Organization and the Armenian Studies Program are involved in the process of writing, editing, and preparing articles published in the

## ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՈՄ The Armenian Movement

Armenian Martyrs' Week, April 16-24 1979

paper. This year celebrates a milestone for *Hye Sharzhoom*, its 30th anniversary, which symbolizes the strong maintenance of the Armenian culture in society today.

Armenian Studies courses have been offered at Fresno State since the 1960s, before *Hye Sharzhoom* came into existence. After interviewing Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies Emeritus, who established the Armenian Studies Program in

1977, and also was instrumental in establishing *Hye Sharzhoom*, I learned a lot about the beginnings of the paper.

In 1976, Dr. Kouymjian was recruited to Fresno from Paris, where he was living at the time, after teaching eight years in Cairo and Beirut. He sought a method to attract the Armenian students on campus, to get involved with fel-

SEE **HYE SHARZHOOM** PAGE 6

## Society for Armenian Studies 35th Anniversary Conference-"Armenian Studies at a Threshold"

### STAFF REPORT

The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) held an international conference, "Armenian Studies at a Threshold," marking the 35th anniversary of the organization, at the University of California, Los Angeles, March 26-29.

The Society of Armenian Studies is composed of scholars and students (and some non-scholarly supporters of Armenian Studies). Its membership is international, although the overwhelming majority of members are based in the



Photo: Bedross Der Matossian

Scholars at UCLA for the SAS 35th Anniversary Conference.

SEE **SAS** PAGE 7



### Armenian Studies Program Book/Video/CD/Archival Gifts

**Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian 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.

**Kevorg Bardakjian**, for the gift of the book *The Historical Figures and Events in Some of Hagop Baronian’s Allegorical Works* (Boston: Baikar Publishing, 1980). A gift of the author.

**Kamron Jabbari**, Ph.D., (Publisher), for the gift of the book *Jambr (Archival Chamber)* with an Introduction and Annotated Translation by George A. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, Inc., 2009).

**Kamron Jabbari**, Ph.D., (Publisher), for the gift of the book *The Travel Accounts of Simeon of Poland* with an Annotated Translation and Introduction by George A. Bournoutian. (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, Inc., 2007).

**Satenig Karabian**, for the 3 DVD’s, that are a compilation of Armenian articles that were collected in her scrapbooks from 1930 – 1980, from Fresno, CA. Donated by the Hon. Walter Karabian.

**Martin Tourigian**, for the gift of his original music compositions.

## Erysian Recalls Early Days of Hye Sharzhoom in Banquet Remarks

Dr. Bill Erysian, one of the original editors and co-founders of Hye Sharzhoom, shared some of his thoughts on the early years of the newspaper during the Armenian Studies Banquet held March 15. His remarks are reprinted below.

It’s not difficult to recall what was happening on this campus, in this community and in the Diaspora thirty years ago. Because of a combination of political events unfolding in the late 1970’s that provoked a resurgent awareness of the complex issues still surrounding the Genocide, a sense of patriotism and historical identity had overtaken many Armenians in the world – 15 years before anyone would have realistically anticipated anything like an independent Armenian nation.

And a handful of young Armenian men and women at Fresno State University, prompted by the need for self-expression, a desire to add a new voice to world events and create a forum for debate and dissemination of thought – in all things Armenian – gathered to resurrect an Armenian students’ organization and create a medium for the message – Hye Sharzhoom. At that same time, an Armenian Studies Program was entering a new era under the guidance of Dickran Kouymjian, who, at that time, was not much older than my current age. Now that’s a measure of time.

We later saw it all as a sort of an alignment of the planets. How was it possible that nearly half of that core group of Armenian students were journalism majors? How was it possible that two of our mentors on the journalism faculty were the legendary former UPI Editor in Chief Roger Tatarian and long-time California Courier editor Art Margosian? It seemed like the perfect opportunity for us, presenting itself at a pivotal time in the history of the Armenian Diaspora. We embraced these exciting times and it was reflected in the diversity of the newspaper – breaking news, local and world events, editorials, arts and culture, poetry, debate, opinions, book reviews – virtually

anything we could squeeze onto those pages, including a special Armenian language page.

Thus began the long history of Hye Sharzhoom, the first and only student-run Armenian newspaper in the world, with a circulation that has now reached 7,000 and which is sent to more than 40 countries. You would be surprised at how many places this newspaper has popped up over the years. As one of the co-founders and original editors of the newspaper, I am compelled to recount a couple of interesting experiences I had because of my early association with Hye Sharzhoom that demonstrate the impact this publication has had.

A few years after I graduated from Fresno State, I left for graduate study at the London School of Economics in 1983. After settling into my classes and familiarizing myself with the challenges of higher education in England, I did what every good Fresno-born Armenian college student would do – I started an Armenian students club at the university. And the first thing our very small group did was what every good Armenian students club should do – we had a Kef Night...food, music, dancing and, of course, the mandatory showing of an Armenian Genocide documentary.

Later that evening, a rough looking but soft-spoken young man (obviously Armenian) came up to me and asked if I was Bill Erysian from Fresno. “I’m not sure, who is asking...?” was my first thought, but before I could answer he said, “I know who you are. You are one of the editors of Hye Sharzhoom – we used to read that paper all the time when we lived in Armenia....It’s a very provocative newspaper.” I was astonished that the newspaper had somehow found its way into Armenia (and other parts of the world) and that other young Armenians were interested in its contents.

Another time, not too long ago, I was in the Yerevan office of Dr. Samvel Avetisyan, the Armenian vice minister of Agriculture, when I noticed the latest issue of Hye

### California State University, Fresno Armenian Studies Program

## Fall 2009 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
<b>General Education</b>				
<b>Arts &amp; Humanities, Area C2</b>				
• ArmS 20 Arts of Armenia (Class #73946)	3	9:30A-10:45P	TuTh	B Der Mugrdechian
• Arm 1A Elementary Armenian (Class #72532)	4	10:30A-11:35A	MWF	B Der Mugrdechian
<b>Arts &amp; Humanities, Area C1</b>				
• Arm 2A Intermediate Armenian (Class #73424)	3	9:00A-9:50A	MWF	B Der Mugrdechian
<b>Social Studies, Area D3</b>				
• ArmS 10 Intro Arm. Studies (Class #72533)	3	1:00P-1:50P	MWF	S LaPorta
<b>Arts &amp; Humanities, Area IC</b>				
• Arm 148 Masterp. Arm Culture (Class #76627)	3	10:00A-10:50A	MWF	S LaPorta
<b>Upper Division Armenian Studies Courses</b>				
• ArmS 108A Arm History I (Class #72535)	3	11:00A-12:15A	TuTh	S LaPorta
• ArmS 120 Armenian Church (Class #76631)	3	12:30P-1:45P	TuTh	S LaPorta

**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 2009-2010 catalog: <http://www.csufresno.edu/catoffice/current/armstudhd.html>**

# HYE SHARZHOOM

## ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԺՈՈՄ

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### Not on the Hye Sharzhoom mailing list?

Send us your name and address and we will send you a free copy.

Moving?  
Send us your new address and we will update our mailing list.

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Hye Sharzhoom is an ethnic supplement of The Collegian and is the newspaper of the Fresno State Armenian Students Organization and the Armenian Studies Program and is funded by the Associated Students. Articles may be reprinted provided Hye Sharzhoom is acknowledged. Hye Sharzhoom welcomes prose, poetry, articles and other material from its student readers. For further information concerning the newspaper or the Armenian Studies Program contact us at:  
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# University of Michigan Armenian Studies Sponsors Workshop on Literature

## STAFF REPORT

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Director of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, participated in a workshop on Armenian literature held at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, April 16-19.

Organized by Dr. Kevork Bardakjian, Marie Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian Literature at the University of Michigan, the workshop brought together eighteen graduate students and scholars from throughout the world to present papers and discuss the results of their research in the field of Armenian literature.

The workshop opened on Friday, April 17. The format for the workshop called for two or three participants to each present for twenty-five minutes, followed by a discussion. Sessions were chaired

by Dr. Theo van Lint, Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies at Oxford University, Dr. Kevork Bardakjian, Dr. Khachig Tölölyan, Professor of English at Wesleyan University, Dr. Talar Chahinian of UCLA, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian of Fresno State.

Papers covered many topics, including “Some versions of the Armenian Epic Poem, *Sasna Tzrer*,” “The Contemporary Novel in Armenia,” and “Narrative Time and Diaspora’s New Novel: A Look at Krikor Beledian’s *Anune lezui tak*.”

Der Mugrdechian presented a paper on “Genocide, Identity, and Memory in Post-Genocide Armenian-American Literature,” focusing on the works of late twentieth century writers and especially on Peter Balakian’s *Black Dog of Fate*.

One session was devoted to



ASP Coordinator Barlow Der Mugrdechian (left) with Dr. Talar Chahinian, Dr. Kevork Bardakjian, and Dr. Khachig Tölölyan at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

translation, a field that is deserving of more attention. Papers in this panel included “The Reception and Translation of Dante in the Arme-

nian World,” by Sona Harutyunian, “Durian and Translation: Many Journeys, Several Destinations, No Arrival,” by Khachig Tölölyan,

“Translation and other Creations: The International Context of Armenian Culture,” by Theo van Lint, and “Translation: An Art of Creation or Simulation?” by Kevork Bardakjian.

Participants had the opportunity to interact in a warm atmosphere at a dinner party hosted Saturday night by Dr. Kevork and Flora Bardakjian at their Ann Arbor home. The previous night, participants were hosted for dinner at the home of Mourad and Ani Kasparian.

The workshop concluded in on Sunday, April 19, with an open forum on Armenia-Diaspora literary relations, chaired by Prof. Der Mugrdechian.

Participants then visited the St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, and toured the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, before departing.

## Bill Erysian Granted Ph.D. from State Agrarian Univ. of Armenia



Dr. Bill Erysian  
STAFF REPORT

Congratulations to Bill Erysian, who received his doctorate degree in Economics from the State Agrarian University (SAUA) of Armenia in November 2008. Erysian’s accomplishments in the branches of transitional economies and agrarian reform are the result of more than a decade of research and participation in numerous agricultural development initiatives in the Central Caucasus, particularly in Armenia.

Erysian began working in Armenia in 1996 as an advisor to the USDA Marketing Assistance Project, a foreign aid program originally designed to provide technical and financial support to the country’s emerging agriculture sector following independence from the former Soviet Union. That program grew into the largest and longest running agribusiness development project ever managed by the USDA.

Erysian has also been a frequent international consultant and project director for the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, ACIDI/VOCA and other international non-governmental organizations in the areas of agribusiness marketing, small/medium enterprise management and sustainable development. He has managed twelve international development projects in five different countries over the past thirteen years.

Following its declaration of in-

dependence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the Republic of Armenia launched one of the most aggressive land reform programs ever attempted by any of the former Soviet states. Within a few months, the entire structure of the Soviet style “collective” farms would be dismantled and more than 320,000 new private farms would be created. The government began a systematic program to privatize livestock, inputs, farm machinery and most of its processing sectors. In addition, the Armenian government would grant each family anywhere from 0.5 to 5.0 hectares of land as part of the privatization effort.

A free-market economy was born with an immediate dependence on this emerging agriculture sector, which would soon be responsible for nearly 40% of the country’s national income. Armenia’s integrated system of a planned economy, one that was traditionally controlled by Moscow, dissolved almost immediately and with it, the country’s once prosperous agrifood economy. Now that calculated production quantities and exports markets were gone, the great factories that once helped drive this centrally-planned economy quickly fell silent. Most production facilities in the country were subsequently stripped of their valuable metal and eventually sold off.

Thousands of jobs were lost in the privatization process as agricultural output fell dramatically. Independence, land privatization, and a blockade from the neighboring countries of Turkey and Azerbaijan would quickly challenge Armenia’s ability to adjust to an agricultural-based, free-market economy without the help of any historical road map.

In his dissertation, Erysian provides an exhaustive account of Armenia’s privatization process and the challenges the country faced in its transition to an economy based on market forces. Specifically, he explores the role of agriculture in this process and the gradual maturity of the agrarian sector of Armenia over the past 15 years.

## Author Janigian Introduces *Riverbig* Novel

### STAFF REPORT

Author Aris Janigian presented his new book, *Riverbig: A Novel*, at 7:30PM on Wednesday, April 1, as part of the Spring Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program.

Armenian Studies Program Director Barlow Der Mugrdechian introduced Janigian, who read several excerpts from the book, capturing the spirit and mood of his novel. His intense prose and vivid imagination combine to make a fascinating book.

This work is the follow-up to *Bloodvine*, Janigian’s acclaimed first novel, and continues the tale of Andy Demerjian. Having finished college, returned to farming, and undergone a chain of disasters, he is now landless. Desperate to support his wife and two sons, Demerjian embarks on a series of ventures that put his integrity and mettle to the test.

The novel brings an unsettling look at the inner workings of one family. Set in California’s Central Valley, and ranging in time from World War II to the drug wars of the 1960s, *Riverbig* explores both emotional terrain and physical to-



Author Aris Janigian with Fresno State reference librarian Diane Majors at the *Riverbig* book-signing event.

pography as it transports the reader through the valley and into the rhythms of rural life.

The book is based upon a tragic and real episode in Janigian’s father’s life. He wrote this book because “I loved my father, and wanted to tell the story that he never got around to telling for himself.”

A second-generation Armenian American, Aris Janigian was born in Fresno, California, and currently

lives in Los Angeles with his family. He returns to the Fresno area annually to work as a grape packer and shipper. He is the author of *Bloodvine* and the coauthor, with April Greiman, of *Something from Nothing*.

*Riverbig* was published in 2008 by Heyday Books and is available at local bookstores or online at [www.heydaybooks.com](http://www.heydaybooks.com).

By targeting the research, analysis and assessment of the post-reform condition of Armenia’s agrifood sector, his ultimate purpose is to promote the stable development of Armenian agriculture and explain how it continues to affect the country’s economy. He also sets forth a calculated process of what steps the Armenian government has already taken and should continue to implement, in order to nurture the proper development of a free-market economy,

a reduction of poverty, an increase in manufacturing and consistent growth in the private sector. A strong case is made for agriculture to assume a critical role in the future of the country’s economic development.

Dr. Erysian currently serves as Coordinator of Grants and International Projects for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology at Fresno State. He is the founder and current Director of Resource Development for the five-

campus California State University Consortium for International Development. He also serves as Executive Director for the non-profit Armenian Agribusiness Education Fund. He holds an undergraduate degree in journalism from Fresno State (1980) and an MSc in International and Comparative Politics from the London School of Economics and Political Science. He can be reached at [bille@csufresno.edu](mailto:bille@csufresno.edu).

### ERYSIAN, FROM PAGE 1

Sharzhoom on his desk. “Do you read that paper?” I innocently asked. “All the time,” he quickly responded. “But it’s in English and you can’t read English,” I replied. “It’s okay...it doesn’t matter what I can or can’t read,” he explained. “What matters is what is written in the paper.”

Perhaps what I remember most

about *Hye Sharzhoom* is the incredible amount of work that went into producing some of those early issues. We had no desktop publishing in those days. Personal computers had not even been invented yet. It was cut and paste, paragraph by paragraph, on a dimly-lit lightboard in the basement of the *Daily Collegian* university newspaper office, late at night, struggling to meet our printing deadline

– with Dickran Kouymjian peering over our shoulders, smoking a cigar.

It was worth every minute...

A surprising number of individuals have worked on *Hye Sharzhoom* over the years. Those names appear in the booklet on your tables and some of those people are here today. They deserve to be recognized.

Thank you.



# Congratulations to Students Receiving Armenian Studies Minors



**Name:** Svetlana Bagdasarov  
**Major:** Social Work  
**Minor:** Armenian Studies

**Why did you pursue an Armenian Studies Minor?**  
I decided to pursue an Armenian Studies minor in order to increase my knowledge of my culture. I can honestly say that everything that I have learned about my heritage was a direct result of my participation in numerous Armenian Studies classes.  
**What Armenian Studies class or classes influenced you the most and why?**  
I truly enjoyed each and every Armenian Studies course offered during my undergraduate career. However, the class that influenced me the most would have to be Armenian Studies 20 (Arts of Armenia). The course not

only expanded my knowledge on the various aspects of Armenian culture, but it also elaborated on the many things that make it so distinctive.  
**How has taking Armenian Studies courses shaped your college education?**  
Armenian Studies courses were a great addition to my academic curriculum. The courses enhanced my college experience by enabling me to become a well-rounded individual through valuable information acquired outside of my field of study.  
**What was your favorite college experience?**  
My most memorable college experience would have to be the year that I served as a Wellness Ambassador for the Wellness Ambassador Program here at Fresno State. Since I have chosen to pursue public health as my ultimate career ambition, the time I spent working as a Wellness Ambassador was definitely the field experience that I needed to help me hone my skills as a future public health professional.  
What are your plans after graduation?  
Graduate school is definitely on my list of priorities after I graduate. I am planning to pursue a master’s degree in public health in order to fulfill my dream of becoming a public health professional working in the public or the private sector.

**Name:** Gina S. Jelladian  
**Major:** Real Estate & Urban Land Economics  
**Minor:** Armenian Studies

**Why did you pursue an Armenian Studies Minor?**  
I love my culture and I wanted to study it.  
**What Armenian Studies class or classes influenced you the most and why?**  
My favorite classes were the language classes, architecture, and the most recent Armenian Studies class with visiting professor Dr. Bournoutian.  
**How has taking Armenian Studies courses shaped your college education?**  
I took an Armenian Studies course nearly every semester during my college education, so it was a nice filler to space out all of my business classes. I’m not a huge fan of history, but all of the Armenian history, religion and literature of my people was invaluable!  
**What was your favorite college experience?**  
This – Graduating!  
**What are your plans after graduation?**  
I will continue running my gift and invitation boutique, RSVP, with my sister Stephanie. You can visit us anytime at the Palatine Building on Fresno and Alluvial – we do all types of party and wedding invitations and have a beautiful collection of gifts!



**Name:** Ariana Kasparian  
**Major:** Health Science (Option: Community Health)  
**Minor:** Armenian Studies

**Why did you pursue an Armenian Studies Minor?**  
A minor in Armenian Studies gave me the opportunity to learn so much more about my culture, religion and history. Going to church and being around Armenians does not necessarily teach you about where the history started and where things are today. I wanted to learn the language, as well as how to read and write. I wanted to learn about the country itself and all the history behind the architecture. Receiving my minor was an added bonus to going to college because I leave knowing more about myself then I came in with.  
**What Armenian Studies class or classes influenced you the most and why?**

The very first class I took my freshmen year was an Armenian Architecture class. I took this class with my older sister and we were truly inspired by this class. I learned the details of all the different styles of Armenian Churches, and also about Armenian manuscripts. Seeing all the architectural structure and beautiful relics made me appreciate my culture and where my family originated from even more than I already did. I have not had the opportunity to travel to Armenia, but when the time comes, I feel this class prepared me for what I will be seeing.  
**How has taking Armenian Studies courses shaped your college education?**  
Every course taken gave me a different type of knowledge. The Armenian Studies courses shaped my college education by presenting new material and teaching me about a variety of different things. They helped me stand out among my peers, because not only was I there to get a degree in something I love, but also to get a minor in something that is directly linked to me.  
**What was your favorite college experience?**  
The college experience in itself was an adventure, so it is hard to be able to pick just one. Those experiences stem from the classes I have taken, to the professors I have met and from all the obstacles along the way. College was a great experience, and I learned so much from the classes I took and from the people I met.  
**What are your plans after graduation?**  
My plans after graduation are to take the summer off and relax for a while. I have applied for

the Masters Program in Public Health Administration and I am hoping to be accepted into that program. If I am accepted into the program, I will begin in the fall and continue my education for another three years. While attending school I plan on interning and volunteering to gain the work experience needed to prepare me for my career ahead. I am very passionate about health and health education and I hope to be able to teach people one day.

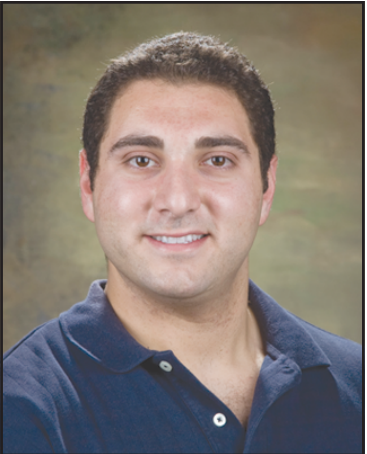
**Name:** Mary Madoyan  
**Major:** Business Management  
**Minor:** Armenian Studies

**Why did you pursue an Armenian Studies Minor?**  
I pursued a minor in Armenian Studies because I wanted to learn more about my culture.  
**What Armenian Studies class or classes influenced you the most and why?**  
The Armenian Studies class that influenced me the most was Armenian history. Armenians have such a rich history; it was interesting to learn about everything they have gone through over the centuries. It is truly amazing that after all their struggles they still held on to their beliefs, language, and religion, and that today their still stands a country named Armenia.  
**How has taking Armenian Studies courses shaped your college education?**  
Armenian Studies courses have provided me with an abundance of information about Armenia and Armenians that I was never aware of. They have helped me answer many questions that I had about Armenians, and helped me fill in gaps where I only had bits and pieces of information growing up.  
**What was your favorite college experience?**  
My favorite part of college was getting to meet new people and making new friends. College allows you to network and meet people you probably would have never come in contact with outside of school.  
**What are your plans after graduation?**  
After graduation, I plan to take some time off and hopefully do some traveling. After my break, I am planning to find a management position in a hospital.



**Name:** Peter Petrosyan  
**Major:** Business Management

**What Armenian Studies class or classes influenced you the most and why?**  
All of the courses influenced me equally because they all had interesting information about Armenian culture.  
**How has taking Armenian Studies courses shaped your college education?**  
The courses helped me realize that understanding different cultures assists you in approaching ideas and solving problems with different perspectives.  
**What was your favorite college experience?**  
My favorite college experience was meeting teachers and students with similar interests.  
**What are your plans after graduation?**  
My plans after graduation will be to find a career that supports my major, as well as pursue my MBA.



Photos: Randy Vaughn-Dotta

**Candice Denise Antaramian**, graduated in December 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History.  
A fuller listing of 2009 graduating seniors will be published in *Hye Sharzhoom* in the Fall.

## Armenians on the Internet

PATEEL MEKHITARIAN-EDITOR

### Armenian Legends and Epics

[www.armenianheritage.com](http://www.armenianheritage.com), [www.armenian-history.com](http://www.armenian-history.com)

Armenian literature is a major aspect of the culture. Literature may include a wide assortment of genres, such as fables, folk tales, myths, fantasy, poem, prose, and many others. However, early Armenian literature began with the oral legends and epics. In many towns, storytellers (*gousans*) played music as they narrated these legends, reciting them as entertainment for the village people. Movses Khorenatsi, one of the earliest Armenian historians from the fifth century, is to thank for the preservation of the early Armenian legends. Because of Khorenatsi, the early legends of the Armenian culture are still being orally passed down today, from generation to generation.  
A well-known legend from the Armenian culture is the story of “Hayk and Bel.” Hayk was an Armenian epic hero, who continually fought for his people. Bel was a tyrant, who wanted Hayk’s power and land, however Hayk refused Bel. Hayk is today known as the patriarch of the Armenians because he proved that it is better to fight for what you believe in, rather than to live under tyranny. This legend is about freedom and the strength to stand up for oneself. Hayk portrayed these brave characteristics, and is therefore known as an Armenian hero.  
Another Armenian legend, recorded by Khorenatsi, is “Ara the Handsome.” Ara was a handsome Armenian hero, who was desperately desired by the queen of Assyria, Queen Semiramis. Queen Semiramis offered riches, love, wealth, and prosperity to Ara, however because Ara was already married, he continually denied her foolish offers. Because of her frustrations, Assyria called for battle, where Ara the Handsome was eventually killed. Once the queen was notified of his death, she yearned to bring him back to life, however her wishes were never fulfilled. This legend shows how loyal and faithful Ara was to his home, family, and himself.



Dr. Bournoutian Gives Second Lecture on The Armenian Church Under Russian Rule

MARISSA ISQUIERDO  
STAFF WRITER

On Tuesday, March 24 at 7:30 PM, Dr. George Bournoutian gave the second of his three part lecture series on “The Armenian Church Under Foreign Rule: Persia, Russia, and South Asia 1600-1800,” to a full audience in the Alice Peters Auditorium at Fresno State. In this lecture, Dr. Bournoutian covered the topic “The Armenian Church under Russian Rule: 1600-1800.” He spoke on how the Armenian community in Russia had to fight for their right to practice their faith in their own church and the significant impact the Armenian Church had on Armenians in Russia. He cited numerous sources, such as letters and official documents, which he himself had translated from Russian into English.

Dr. Bournoutian is currently Kazan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies for the Spring 2009 semester at Fresno State. He is senior Professor of East European

and Middle Eastern Studies at Iona College in New York and the author of seventeen books.

Dr. Bournoutian gave a stirring presentation on the history of the Armenian Church under Russian rule during the period of the Romanov Dynasty from approximately 1600-1800. Audience members learned that the Armenians living in Russia at this time had to overcome Russian opposition to Armenians practicing their faith and to building Armenian churches. Dr. Bournoutian noted that Armenians had settled in Russia since the time of Ivan the Terrible in the tenth century, so by the seventeenth century, Russia had a substantial Armenian population, yet the Armenians were denied the opportunity to pray in Russian churches.

This changed in 1667 after Armenian merchants presented a diamond throne to the Russian Tsar, who then granted the Armenian community access to pray in Russian churches. Thirty years later, the Russian ruler Peter the Great

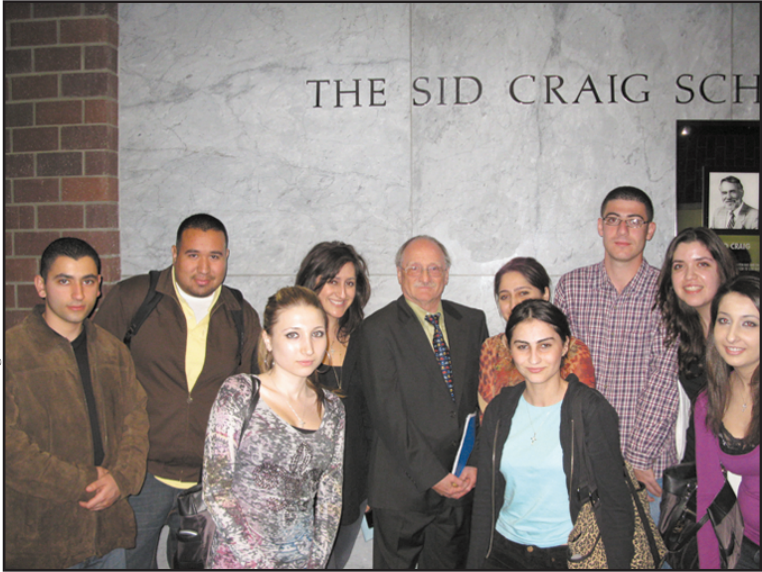


Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

Dr. George Bournoutian and some students at lecture.

permitted the Armenians to build a wooden church in Astrakhan. However, this church remained the only Armenian Church for the entire Armenian community in Russia until 1762.

Under the rule of Catherine the Great, 1762-1796, Armenians enjoyed a period of prosperity and Armenian churches were built in

Moscow, St. Petersburg, and a second one in Astrakhan. Russia even forbade Catholic missionaries from converting Armenians.

Towards the end of his lecture, Dr. Bournoutian focused his attention on the Statutes (*Polozheniye*) of 1836. The Statutes defined the relationship between the Russian Government and the Armenian

Church and are important because they remained in force until 1917. Dr. Bournoutian mentioned that historians view these Statutes as either having a positive or negative impact on the Armenian Church. He noted that some historians view these Statutes as either being “restrictions placed on the Armenian Church by Russia” or as “the official document that gave the Armenian Church its autonomy.”

Fresno State students showed their appreciation for Dr. Bournoutian’s lecture. “It is fascinating to learn about the Armenian culture and its impact in European society in its development,” commented Jonathan Munoz, a senior History major at Fresno State. Ani Simonyan, a junior History major at Fresno State, felt that “Dr. Bournoutian presented a history of 300 years in an informative way in our understanding of the Armenian Church under Russian rule.”

Dr. Bournoutian concluded his three part lecture series on Tuesday, April 21.

South Asian Churches Focus of Final Lecture



Photo: George Bournoutian

The Armenian Church in Singapore, built in 1835.

PATEEL MEKHITARIAN  
EDITOR

On Tuesday, April 21, Dr. George Bournoutian presented his third and final lecture in a series on the Armenian Churches of Persia, Russia, and South Asia. The lecture covered the many areas in South Asia where Armenian churches exist and are maintained. Dr. Bournoutian accompanied his talk with slides that he had taken during his numerous trips to the region.

Many of the churches, including Holy Etchmiadzin, the headquarters of the Armenian Church, show the artistic influence of Armenia’s neighbors. Over the years, due to war and hardships, Etchmiadzin had been neglected and when it was renovated and re-decorated in the seventeenth century, the Persian influence was very strong.

From 1600-1800 many Armenian churches were constructed in a number of South Asian cities, such as Delhi, Bombay (Mumbai), Madras (Chennai), and Calcutta (Kolkata). Holy Nazaret church in Kolkata is the oldest church in India, and while it does not look like a traditional Armenian church, the dome is of an Armenian style. Calcutta had many Armenians who settled in the area, creating the largest Armenian community in India, with about 4-5,000 Armenians having lived there at one time. Today,

there are only some 200 Armenians left in Calcutta. A major street in the city is now known as “Armenian Street,” and a resident priest from Etchmiadzin is responsible for all Armenian churches in South Asia.

The Armenians living in India were greatly influenced by the British merchants, who came to the area to establish trade agreements. Both Indians and Armenians were increasingly influenced by the British throughout the years, for example, Armenians started changing their names, from Davidian to simply David. In addition, Armenian gravestones began to be written in English, instead of Armenian.

The Armenian Sports Club and the Armenian College in India are still open and active today. Students from Lebanon, Cyprus, Armenia, Iran, and other countries travel to study at the Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy, whose curriculum is based on the British educational system.

Bombay’s Armenian community only has twelve to fourteen Armenians, most of who intermarried with the British or Indians. There is a commercial building in Bombay, called Ararat, and the money collected from rents is donated to the Armenian Church.

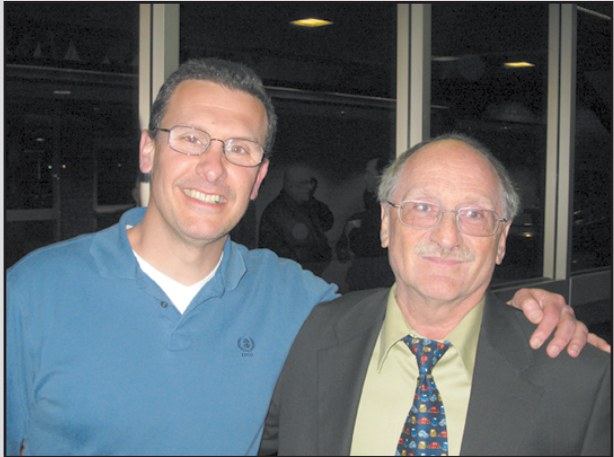
In Bangladesh, there is a beautiful church built with three large church bells. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the city

had many Armenians, who produced 85% of the jute, which is a material used for burlap and ropes. The Armenians became wealthy through the jute trade.

The church in Bangladesh has an octagonal dome, executed in an Armenian style. Until today, a caretaker is responsible for maintaining the church and he resides in a house directly next to the Church. Names here also started changing, for example, Haroutoun Krikor Simonian became Arratoon Gregory Simeon. Today, there is only a single Armenian living in Bangladesh.

Singapore is another country that was once home to a large Armenian community. A huge church was built in 1835 and is currently extremely well maintained and restored thanks to the former Armenian ambassador in Thailand. The church is so large and beautiful that non-Armenians, such as the Koreans, often wed at the church. There is a plaque in front of the church, recognizing the building as the Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator.

Dr. Bournoutian Ends Semester With Fond Memories of Students



Former Hye Sharzhoom editor Mark Malkasian (left) with Dr. George Bournoutian.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

HAGOP OHANESSIAN  
STAFF WRITER

Dr. George Bournoutian, Professor of History at Iona College in New York, was appointed as the seventh Henry Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies for the Spring 2009 semester. This semester he taught a three unit course on the Armenian Diaspora and Genocide, Monday evenings from 6:00-8:50 PM. The course focused primarily on the Diaspora, that began with the fall of the Arshakuni Kingdom, the first partition of Armenia in the fourth century, and continued through the political upheavals of the twentieth century, and up to the present day.

When asked about his class and students at Fresno State, Dr. Bournoutian stated, “I would rate my students as very good.” He was impressed with how well his students did on their midterm, “Several students in particular received an A on the midterm.” Dr. Bournoutian believes in research and seminars for students, over memorization.

Each student in the class chose a topic on the Diaspora or the Genocide and wrote a research paper.

Some of the topics chosen by students included writing about the Armenian communities of Russia, France, Greece, Poland, Hungary, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Argentina, the United

States, and many more. Other students focused on the Armenian Genocide, the first Genocide of the twentieth century.

The most memorable moments for Dr. Bournoutian were his three public lectures where he talked about three important Armenian Diasporan communities. All three presentations were fascinating, in particular the one on Southeast Asia where he showed photos of the different Armenian churches.

When Dr. Bournoutian was asked about what he felt was different about teaching in Fresno from other places he answered by stating, “The Armenian Center, the director, and the staff of the university was extremely friendly.” This is interesting because Fresno State is one of only a few other programs that has a strong Armenian Studies undergraduate program. Dr. Bournoutian enjoyed his stay in Fresno and in particular he loved the fruits and the trees blooming all over the Valley. When asked if he would return to Fresno to teach another course his answer was a definite yes.

On behalf of the students taking his class at Fresno State, we thank Dr. Bournoutian for all of his hard work and dedication.

Armenians built churches everywhere they went, staying true to their roots. The Armenian people deeply cherish their Christian faith

and due to their strong bond, they have maintained their unique identity over time.



## CineCulture Feature Film on Armenian Genocide

MARISSA KALASHIAN  
STAFF WRITER

Every year as April approaches, Armenians are increasingly reminded of the Armenian Genocide, “the forgotten genocide,” which commenced on April 24, 1915 with the massacres of Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders in Constantinople. In Fresno, where there is a considerable Armenian population, the Genocide issue is constantly alive, and Armenians take the opportunity in April to remind the rest of the world of the first Genocide of the twentieth century.

On the evening of Friday, March 6, Fresno State students and local community members gathered on campus to view the documentary, *The Armenian Genocide*. The CineCulture film series is a semester-long program organized by Professor Mary Husain and the Mass Communication and Journalism Department at Fresno State. The objective of CineCulture is to



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

**Flowers are placed at the base of the Martyr's Monument at the conclusion of the April 24 Commemorative Ceremonies.**

present films that promote diversity through cultural themes, followed up by a post-film discussion led by professors of Fresno State. After *The Armenian Genocide*, Professor Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program, solicited questions from the audience and prompted a

lively and interesting discussion.

Written and directed by documentary filmmaker Andrew Goldberg, *The Armenian Genocide* first aired on PBS in 2006. The sixty-minute film presents valuable information about the Genocide including interviews with world-renowned genocide scholars, as

well as historical accounts from survivors, perpetrators, and eyewitnesses. Experts in the field like Samantha Power, Taner Akçam, Peter Balakian, Vahakn Dadrian, Ara Sarafian, and others appear in this film to explain the historical, political, and social aspects of the genocide. Celebrities also lend themselves to the production by narrating the film and giving voice to the many personal historical accounts from people living at the time of the Genocide.

The documentary provides viewers with a history of Armenians in their homeland from the rise of the Ottoman Empire up to present-day Turkey. The complex aftermath of the Genocide is analyzed, including the reasons behind Turkey's ongoing denial of the Genocide. Described by one scholar as a “fabricated national memory,” the film captures, through candid interviews, the belief widely-held by many modern Turkish citizens that the Genocide never happened. In these interviews, a number of Turks dispute the claim that 1.5 million Armenians were systematically mur-

dered by the government of the Young Turks from 1915 to 1923, instead claiming that it was a civil war and that both sides suffered. Although the majority of Turks believe the official government story that the Genocide did not occur, there are those who recognize it, as the film also shows. One man recounts how his grandfather told him stories of the killings. For some, it is too difficult to accept that their relatives participated in such atrocities.

As a follow-up to this film, Professor Barlow Der Mugrdchian invited the viewers to respond to the film and opened the floor to questions. A thoughtful discussion ensued in which audience members inquired about several issues including the religious aspects of the Genocide, the limited instances of Armenian resistance, and the modern Turkish government's continued denial of the Genocide.

After the film and discussion had concluded, CineCulture provided a questionnaire for viewers to complete to share their responses to the film.

### HYE SHARZHOOM, FROM PAGE 1

low Armenians, take Armenian classes, and start a successful pro-

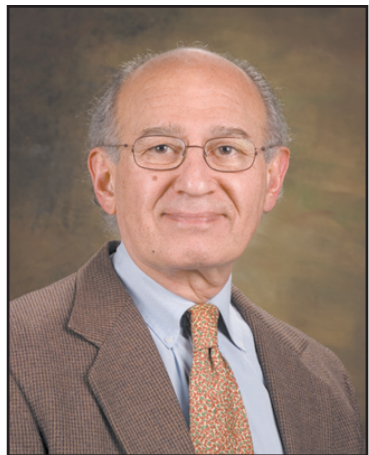


Photo: Randy Vaughn-Dotta

**Dr. Dickran Kouymjian**

gram. In order to achieve this goal, Dr. Kouymjian decided to petition the Student Senate to request permission to start an Armenian newspaper. At the same time, African-American and Hispanic students already had student supplements.

Thanks to Dr. Kouymjian, *Hye Sharzhoom* was first published in April 1979. I contacted Dr. Kouymjian to ask him some questions regarding the paper. “I chose the paper's name, *Hye Sharzhoom*, inspired by an important militant newspaper started in Paris in 1975 call *Hay Baïkar, Armenian Struggle*,” stated Kouymjian, “At first we translated *Hye Sharzhoom* by *Armenian Movement*, but after some kidding about ‘what kind of movement,’ I changed it to *Armenian Action*. From the beginning I wanted those involved in the paper and those who eventually would read the paper to feel engaged in Armenian life not only locally, but also internationally.”

*Hye Sharzhoom* quickly became a success, with journalism students aiding in writing articles. In the first academic year of production, most students in Armenian Studies courses and those involved in the Armenian Students Organization were contributing to the paper. Mark Malkasian and Mark Najarian were the first editors of the *Hye Sharzhoom*. When I asked Mr. Malkasian about the significance

of the paper, he responded with pride. “*Hye Sharzhoom* gave voice to Armenian youth like no other institution I've ever been part of. Although Prof. Kouymjian was responsible for getting the newspaper off the ground, he gave students the freedom to take ownership of the editorial content. *Hye Sharzhoom* helped put Fresno State on the map in the Armenian Diaspora.”

Because of Dr. Kouymjian's efforts, many students who worked on the newspaper have benefited from it — whether from writing, editing, or taking photos. Dr. Kouymjian was the advisor for the paper for the first six years, and then was joined by Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, who has been the advisor of the *Hye Sharzhoom* until today.

Many editors and writers have taken a lot away from being a part of the *Hye Sharzhoom* team. Editors such as Mark Malkasian (1979-1980), Bill Erysian (1979-1980), Arakel Arisian (1998), and Zhanna Bagdasarov (2005-2007) have put



Photo: Randy Vaughn-Dotta

**Zhanna Bagdasarov**

great effort into both maintaining the level of the paper and enhancing reader interest.

Zhanna Bagdasarov began contributing to the publication during her first semester of her freshman year, but it wasn't until she became the editor that she realized how many people enjoy reading it and take pride in its existence. “Letters from grateful readers often filled my email inbox commenting on the high caliber of the publication,” she said, “Many claimed that they im-

patiently awaited the arrival of *Hye Sharzhoom* to stay connected with Fresno and the Armenian Studies Program, while others looked forward to learning something new about the Armenian culture and people.”

For Arakel Arisian, involvement with *Hye Sharzhoom* began when he was a freshman and joined the staff as a writer. “Writing for *Hye Sharzhoom* had a profound impact on my college experience,” said Arisian, “Not only did I improve my writing skills and learn the process behind creating a newspaper, but I also was able to better analyze current events and issues affecting the Armenians.” Arisian says that the newspaper creates learning opportunities for students, and that “*Hye Sharzhoom* strengthens the connection between the Armenian Studies Program and the Armenian community throughout the world.”

Thanks to these devoted Fresno State students, the newspaper has remained strong throughout the years. The existence of *Hye Sharzhoom* has allowed the community to stay involved with events organized by the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State.

*Hye Sharzhoom* has made such a profound difference for the Armenian students at Fresno State, and the Armenian community in general. Although the amount of effort necessary for the production of the paper is enormous for the editors, production staff, and the advisors, the work is worth all of the effort. At one time, the circulation reached 8,000 copies, which is far above the standard campus newspaper. The paper is being distributed to more than 20 countries, including Armenia, and countries in the Middle East, and Europe.

When asked about the evolution of the paper, Dr. Kouymjian said, “Years ago I used to boast that *Hye Sharzhoom* was the only regularly published Armenian university student newspaper in the

world or that it is the longest continuously published Armenian student publication anywhere at any



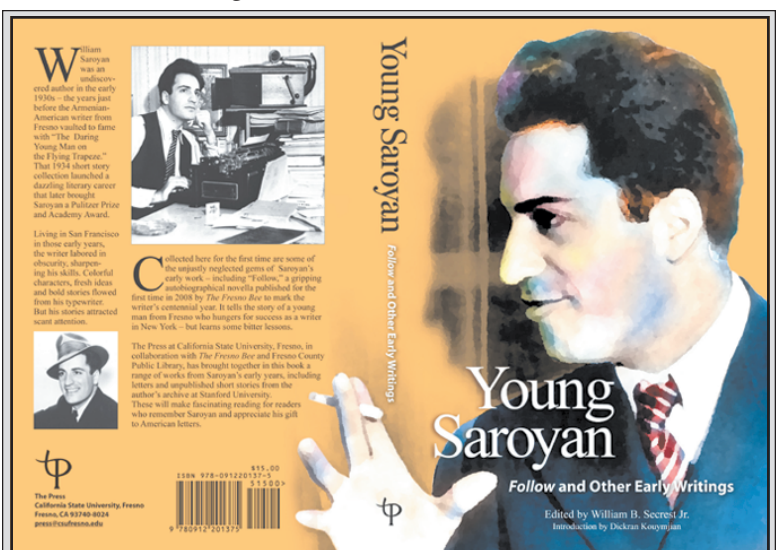
**Arakel Arisian**

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

time. Though all of this is even truer today after thirty years, still the most important functions of the newspaper are its outreach to the community, covering the dynamic activities of the Program and the

University, and as a training ground for our students in the experience of news making and reporting.

The *Hye Sharzhoom* is currently a cherished part of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State. The newspaper was a definite success in bringing the Armenian students together on campus, and has far exceeded the initial expectations. This widely read Armenian newspaper is unique and very special. Thanks to the editors, staff writers, and advisors from throughout the years, we have managed to educate the public about our treasured culture. Most importantly, this paper has allowed Fresno State students to preserve and remember our beautiful Armenian roots. For these reasons, we today celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Hye Sharzhoom*.



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## ASP 21st Anniversary Banquet Honors HS Staff

**BANQUET, FROM PAGE 1**

Keith Simmons, and American University of Armenia Vice-President, Bruce Janigian.

Many guests from the community joined students, faculty, and administrators in celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of *Hye Sharzhoom*, the Armenian student newspaper on campus. Former and current editors and staff were invited to the Banquet and many took the opportunity to attend and catch up with former colleagues.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Director of the Armenian Studies Program, formally welcomed all to the Banquet and invited Dr. Welty to give his opening remarks.

“Thank you to all of you for not only being here this evening, but thank you for the incredible support that you have provided for the Armenian Studies Program over the years,” said Dr. Welty, “We are, as Barlow mentioned, in a difficult time and we have some difficult decisions ahead of us, but I can assure you that as a result of the sacrifices that you have made over the years, that the Armenian Studies Program is strong and is a Program that has a bright future... The



Photo: Joseph Vasquez

**Dr. John Welty, center, with *Hye Sharzhoom* editors and staff.**

intellectual quality that the Program brings to our campus enriches our entire university environment.”

Dr. Welty continued, “Tonight I feel an enormous sense of gratitude to all of you, for what you have done to build a Program that will live on forever. We are just a little over a year from beginning our centennial celebration at Fresno State, in April of 2010, marking the 100th anniversary of the then Fresno Normal School that was officially started through legislative act... The Ar-

menian Studies Program will be one of those Programs that we will highlight and honor, and indeed I look forward to it.”

Prof. Der Mugrdechian then introduced Dr. Vida Samiian, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, and thanked her for her support as Dean.

“Thank you Barlow. Barlow is giving me credit for what he has done. He has really done an amazing job carrying Armenian Studies forward, seamlessly, from the de-

tempt: Rearticulation of (National) Belonging and the Inscription of Aftermath Experience in French Armenian Literature Between the Wars.”

Congratulatory letters to the SAS were received from Dr. Radik Martirosyan, President of the Armenian Academy of Sciences; Academician Dr. Vladimir Barkhudaryan; Davit Sargsyan, Director of the National Library of Armenia; Dr. Virgina Aksan, President of the Middle East Studies Association; Hrachia Tamrazyan, Director of the Matenadaran; William Taubman, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies; and Dr. Valentina Calzolari, President of the International Association of Armenian Studies.

The Society for Armenian Studies was founded in 1974 in Boston by five scholars: Richard Hovannisian (UCLA), Avedis Sanjian (UCLA), Nina Garsoian (Columbia University), Robert Thomson (Harvard, then Oxford), and Dickran Kouymjian (AUB, then Fresno State). Since its inception, the Society has grown to over 250 members, with scholars in all the major countries of the world represented.

Fresno State Professor Dickran Kouymjian (Berberian Chair of Armenian Studies, Emeritus) was President of SAS in 1985-1986 and 1993-1994, while Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian was President (2001-2004).

The Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, along with several other Armenian Studies Programs in the United State, co-sponsored the Conference, along with the Society for Armenian Studies.

Those interested in learning more about the Society or in applying for membership may go to the web page for the Society for Armenian Studies at <http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu/sas/index.htm>.

parture of Dr. Kouymjian,” said Dean Samiian. “It is so wonderful to see the accomplishments this year, especially because it ensures the success of the Program into the future. I have to tell you, that this event, the Armenian Studies Banquet, is one of my favorite events, because of the community that you all bring to the university. And is such a perfect example, that at every table, there are all of these wonderful stories that go on during dinner, and every one of you brings your history, your diversity, your perspective and that is so enriching for us. And that is what makes our Program so successful.”

Dr. Samiian continued, “So I too, I want to thank you for the investment that you have made in our Program and I can tell you that we have the strongest undergraduate Armenian Studies Program nationally, and I am so proud of ev-



Photo: Joseph Vasquez

**Dean Vida Samiian**

everything that our faculty has done, our students who are our hope for the future, and everything that each of you are doing in supporting us, and in supporting our community, and our campus. Thank you.”

Thirty years ago in April 1979, a small group of students, under the direction of Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, director of the Armenian Studies Program, started a newspaper, that thirty years later has become an institution. Several

generations of students have contributed their efforts in making the newspaper, *Hye Sharzhoom*, into an international phenomenon, reaching a readership of more than seven thousand throughout the world.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian introduced Dr. Bill Erysian, one of the founders and first editors of *Hye Sharzhoom*, to speak about how the newspaper began and what was behind its growth. (Dr. Erysian’s full remarks are found at the end of this article.)

Prof. Der Mugrdechian invited Dr. Welty to bestow certificates on those staff members of *Hye Sharzhoom* in attendance. Editors, staff members, photographers, from all eras of the paper stepped forward to receive recognition for their accomplishments.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian also recognized the many student recipients of scholarships and grants that have been established at the university through the generosity of the Armenian community.

Ambassador John Ordway, Keith Simmons, and Bruce Janigian then engaged in a panel discussion on “United States Foreign Policy in Armenia and the Caucasus.” Each spoke on their experience while in Armenia. Ambassador Ordway in particular had enjoyed his tenure in Armenia and spoke about how he viewed Armenia’s future development and relations with the United States. Simmons discussed the opportunities for economic development in Armenia. Janigian spoke about the success of the American University of Armenia (AUA), and how AUA is making an important contribution to the intellectual development of the Republic of Armenia.

The 21st Annual Banquet was a wonderful event that brought together the university with the community. It has become an annual tradition that should continue long into the future.

### SAS FROM PAGE 1

United States and Canada. The Secretariat of SAS is based at the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State.

The aims of the Society for Armenian Studies are to promote the study of Armenian culture and society, including history, language, literature, and social, political, and economic questions; to facilitate the exchange of scholarly information pertaining to Armenian studies around the world; and to sponsor panels and conferences on Armenian studies at national conventions of organizations such as the Middle East Studies Association, the American Historical Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies.

Fresno State Armenian Studies Program Director Barlow Der Mugrdechian participated in a panel on “The State of Armenian Studies Chairs and Programs in the United States,” that brought twelve chair holders and program directors together to discuss their Programs. Der Mugrdechian reported on the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State and presented an overview of its activities.

Dr. Richard Hovannisian, AEF Professor of Modern Armenian History and President of the Society for Armenian Studies opened the conference with his welcoming remarks on Thursday, March 26. Hundreds of students and community members attended the various sessions during the three day conference.

More than sixty scholars were invited to participate in the conference, presenting papers in a wide variety of disciplines. One panel on “New Perspectives on the Armenian Genocide,” brought together scholars who presented their findings based on new research. Taner Akçam of Clark University gave a paper on “Ottoman Documents and Genocidal Intent of the Union and Progress Party,” while

Vahram Shemmassian of California State University, Northridge, gave a paper on “The Rescue of Captive Genocide Survivors, 1919-1921.”

Other panels included “Medieval Literature and the Arts,” “Medieval History and Culture,” “Researching the Contemporary Armenian Diaspora: Consolidating the Past, Situating the Future,” “Armenian History as Connected History,” “Economy, Society, and Culture of Early Modern East Central Europe (14th-19th centuries),” “Between Perversion and Representation: Sexual Allegories in Armenian Literature,” “Contemporary Armenia,” “Discourse and Violence: Revisiting the Adana Massacres of 1909,” “Church Politics and Identity,” and “Armenians, World War II, and Repatriation.” A full listing of conference participants and individual papers can be found on the SAS website at <http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu/sas/SAS/35thAnniversaryProgram.htm>

A gala banquet held at the Taghlyan Center in Hollywood concluded the conference. Dr. Rubina Perroomian was the mistress of ceremonies for the program that featured remarks from several guests as well as musical entertainment by Salbi Mailyan. The Honorable Grigor Hovhannissian, Consul General of the Republic of Armenia was present to give his congratulations, as did Haig Der Manuelian, and Dr. Theo van Lint representing the International Association of Armenian Studies. Dr. Joseph Kéchichian, editor of the Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies, awarded the prize for the best dissertation in Armenian Studies for 2006-2008 to Sebouh Aslanian for his work “From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: Circulation and the Global Trade Network of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa, Isfahan, 1605-1747.” Honorable mention went to Talar Chahinian for her dissertation “The Paris At-

## ASO Spring Semester Activities

**HAGOP OHANESSIAN**  
STAFF WRITER

As the Spring semester is coming to an end, the Armenian Students Organization, together with the Armenian Studies Program has continued to cosponsor several events. This semester we have had the privilege to hear three public lectures by Dr. George Bournoutian, who was appointed as the seventh Henry Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies for the Spring 2009 semester. He lectured on the Armenian church and communities in three areas of the world: Persia,



**ASO Vice-President Hagop Ohanessian at the April 24th commemorative event.**

Russia, and Southeast Asia, during the period 1600-1800. Students from the ASO as well as members of the community attended these lectures.

On Wednesday March 11, the ASO invited members to a “Bowling Night” in the Student Union on campus. It was a great evening, as members of the club showed off their bowling skills and enjoyed each other’s company over soft drinks and pizza.

During the months of March and April, the ASO and the ASP worked to organize the 94th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, which took place on campus April 24, in the Free Speech Area.



**ASO President Stepan Kyutunyan at the April 24th commemorative event.**





L. to R.: Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Hagop Ohanessian, Stepan Kyutunyan, Councilman Borgeas, and Yeghig Keshishian.

ADVOCACY, FROM PAGE 1

grassroots lobbying and its importance in the political process.

Keshishian also presented some of the top issues for Armenian lobbyists in Washington D.C.: U.S. assistance to Armenia, Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, elimination of blockades and regional cooperation and energy security for Armenia, U.S. assistance to Karabagh, Turkey and Article 301, the Karabagh peace process, and the Armenian Genocide.

The Armenian Students Organization organized the workshop as part of the activities associated with Armenian Genocide Commemoration week at Fresno State.

Following the workshop, ASO President Stepan Kyutunyan and Vice President Hagop Ohanessian, together with ASO Advisor Barlow Der Mugrdechian and Keshishian, paid a visit to offices of three politicians: Fresno County Supervisor Debbie Poochigian, the office of United States Senator Barbara Boxer, and Fresno City Councilman Andreas Borgeas.

Debbie Poochigian is a Fresno County Supervisor for District Five, located in eastern Fresno County. She is married to former State Senator Chuck Poochigian and her father was former Fresno County Supervisor Deran Koligian. Poochigian graduated from Fresno State where she received her bachelor's degree and two teaching credentials.

Poochigian discussed a variety of issues dealing with her work in the County. She has been an active voice in efforts to have the Arme-

nian Genocide recognized and she emphasized that political involvement was important and that students should consider working as volunteers or as interns in political offices, focusing on the broad local issues. At the conclusion of the discussion she presented the Armenian Students Organization with a Certificate of Recognition for "cultivating a spirit of appreciation toward Armenian history, culture, and the Armenian language."

The delegation then visited the offices of United States Senator Barbara Boxer in the Fresno Federal Courthouse. Tom Bohigian, State Director, Ameen Khan, Director of Central and Eastern California, and intern Marissa Kalashian greeted the Fresno State group. As State Director, Bohigian is responsible for supervising Boxer's California operations and has worked for Senator Boxer since 1993. A lifelong resident of Fresno, Bohigian holds a degree in Journalism from Fresno State.

A productive conversation revolved around how politics were practiced in the nation's capital. Senator Boxer has been at the forefront of efforts to pass a Genocide resolution in the United States Senate. Bohigian emphasized that Boxer will continue to support the issue and call on the President to fulfill his campaign pledge to support affirmation of the Armenian Genocide. Bohigian also emphasized that student involvement in the political process was key to making changes in the political process.

The final visit was to Fresno City

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Armenia, was placed in front of the speaker's platform. With the sound of the *duduk* playing in the background, people gathered around the Free Speech area at noon.

This year the ASO and the Armenian Studies Program invited the Arax Armenian dancers of Fresno to perform two dances dedicated to the genocide, "Moush," and "Adana." The dance ensemble consisting of Arevik Stepanyan, Flora Mirijanian, Ani Mirijanian, Faten Myaznih, Michael Rettig, Kevork Gevorkian, and leader Zaroohi Der Mugrdechian, wore traditional Armenian costumes. They performed elegantly and every member in the audience applauded for their fantastic performance.

Students from the Keyan Armenian Community School of Fresno recited poetry in Armenian that had themes of Armenian culture and identity.

Armenian Studies Program Director Barlow Der Mugrdechian presented a historical overview of the Genocide, while Hagop Ohanessian, Vice-President of the ASO recounted two survivor testimonies about the terrible events

Hall and a meeting with Fresno City Councilman Andreas Borgeas, newly elected to the Second Council District of Fresno. Councilman Borgeas discussed with the group some plans for upcoming activities in Fresno, that involve Armenians. On June 5 and 6 the City is coordinating HyeFest, a festival of Armenian culture in downtown Fresno. Efforts are also underway to increase ties with the Republic of Armenia through a variety of initiatives.

Councilman Borgeas is active in supporting Armenian efforts to recognize the Armenian Genocide and in general issues of interest to Armenians. He presented students with a Letter of Commendation for their "...commitment and desire to strengthen political outreach and efforts of the Armenian community in cultivating relations with elected officials..."

The workshop and visits to political offices provided students with an inside view of politics and the importance of participation in the political process..



Some of the students and guests on April 24.

perpetrated by Turkish generals.

At the conclusion of the commemoration, those in attendance placed flowers at the base of the Martyrs Monument.

At 7:30PM on Thursday, April 23, the ASO and the Armenian Studies Program invited students and members of the community to a screening of the movie "Screamers." In the film, director Carla Garapedian follows the rock band "System of a Down" as they tour Europe and the U.S., pointing out the horrors of modern genocide that began with the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915, up though

Darfur today. Following the movie, there was a march and a candle light vigil to the Martyrs Monument in the Free Speech area.

Fresno State's *Collegian* covered the Genocide commemorative events with a full front-page cover in the Monday, April 27, issue of the newspaper. See the article at <http://collegian.csufresno.edu/2009/04/27/a-day-of-remembrance/>.

The ASO thanks everyone for their support in the Commemoration of the 94th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.



Students of the Keyan Armenian School on April 24.

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