





Armenian Studies Program  
Book/Video/CD Archival Gifts

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

**Lucille Apcar**, Mariposa, California, for the gift of her book *Shibaraku: Memories of Japan 1926-1946* (Denver, Colorado: Outskirts Press, Inc., 2011). *Shibaraku* means “I have missed seeing you” in Japanese and reflects the deep emotions reflected in this personal memoir by Lucille Apcar, detailing her life growing up in Yokohama, Japan, and following her and her family through World War II and after. Lucille Apcar’s paternal grandmother is Diana Agabeg Apcar, humanitarian, diplomat, and writer. Diana Apcar served as Consul for the Republic of Armenia in Japan (1918-1920). 148pp.

**Lory Bedikian**, Tujunga, California, for the gift of her book *The Book of Lamenting* (Florida: Anhinga Press, 2011). Bedikian’s book of poetry won the 2011 Phillip Levine Prize for poetry and reflects the author’s interest in her Armenian heritage. She explores memory and family in this enchanting book. 91pp.

**Diana Der-Hovanesian**, Cambridge, Massachusetts, for the gift of her books *Now I See It* (2011), *Songs of Bread, Songs of Salt* (1990), *The Other Voice Armenian Women’s Poetry Through the Ages*, and *The Second Question* (1990). Poems by the prolific Armenian-American poet.

**Dr. Robert Hewsen**, Fresno, for the gift of the CD, *Armenian Songs of Grikor Mirzaian Suni* (1876-1939). Folk songs and original compositions by the composer Grikor Mirzaian.

**Dr. Kamran Jabbari**, Mazda Press, Costa Mesa, California for the gift of the book *The 1823 Russian Survey of the Karabagh Province: A Primary Source on the Demography and Economy of Karabagh in the Early 19th Century* by George A. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2011). The book is a primary source on the demography and economy of Karabagh in the early 19th century. In particular, it provides valuable information on Karabagh before its annexation into Russia, thus demonstrating the fact that that the Armenians formed the overwhelming majority of the population in the districts which later comprise Nagorno-Karabagh. 449pp.

**Antonia Kloian**, Richmond, California, for the gift of mini-DVDs, recorded by the late Richard Kloian. They are recordings of lectures and interviews by prominent Armenians speaking about the Armenian Genocide.

**Armen Kandarian**, Fowler, California, for the gift of the journals *Aramazd Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies Volume V, Issues 1 & 2, 2010* (Yerevan: Association for Near Eastern and Caucasian Studies). The two journals are in honor of Nicolay Harutyunyan on the occasion of his 90th birthday. The articles are on a variety of archaeological and historical topics. In English and Armenian.

**Oxford University Press**, New York, for the gift of the book *The Walls Came Tumbling Down, Collapse and Rebirth In Eastern Europe Second Edition* by Gale Stokes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

**Susan Paul Pattie**, London, England, for the gift of her book, *Who Are The Armenians?* (London: Armenian Institute, 2010), written with Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian and Maral Kerovpyan. The book is intended for young people, and the reader will learn about Armenian history, language, food, music, and arts and crafts. 48pp., with a CD of Armenian songs and music.

**Martin M. Tourigian**, Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, for the gift of eight articles on the late Steve Jobs, whose adopted mother was Armenian. He also donated two tapes, one on the concert of the Knar Chorus, a coloring history book by Lucy Tourigian, and a water-color painting.

California State University, Fresno

Armenian Studies Program

Spring 2012 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
• Arm 1B-Elementary Armenian (Class #33571)	4	10:30A-11:35A	MWF	B Der Mugrdechian
• Hum 10-Hum Antqty to Ren (Class #33683)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	S La Porta

General Education-Arts & Humanities, Area C1

• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #35716)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B Der Mugrdechian
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Upper Division Armenian Studies Courses

• ArmS 108B-Arm History II (Class #30490)	3	9:30A-11:00A	TuTh	S La Porta
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General Education-Arts & Humanities, Area IC

• Arm 148-Masterp. of Arm Culture (Class #34668)	3	9:00A-9:50A	MWF	B Der Mugrdechian
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For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669 or visit our offices in the Peters Business Building, Room 384. Get a Minor in Armenian Studies. Check on requirements for the Minor in Armenian Studies in the 2011-2012 catalog: <http://www.csufresno.edu/catoffice/current/armstudhd.html>

HYE SHARZHOOM

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2012-2013 Academic Year Scholarships in Armenian Studies

2012-2013 Scholarship Applications  
Now Available On-Line

<https://scholarship.csufresno.edu/>

Make sure to mark one of the areas pertaining to Armenian Studies on the application

1) Will enroll in Armenian Studies

or

2) Armenian-Supplemental application required

The scholarship application for California State University, Fresno is only available online.

Priority Application Period:  
October 1, 2011-February 29, 2012

Hye Sharzhoom is an ethnic supplement of *The Collegian*, funded by the Associated Students, and is the newspaper of the Fresno State Armenian Students Organization and the Armenian Studies Program. 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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## Review-“The Fatal Night”

**RUZAN ORKUSYAN**  
STAFF WRITER

*The Fatal Night: An Eyewitness Account of the Extermination of Armenia Intellectuals in 1915.* Studio City, CA: H. and K. Manjikian Publishers, 2007. 67pp. Volume 2 of the Armenia Genocide Library Book Series.

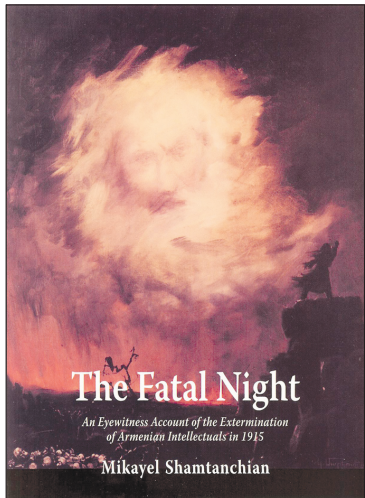
Mikayel Shamtanchian vividly captures the events of April 1915 and the succeeding years with a poignant, tragic, and at times even a sarcastic and bitter tone. With grace and sophistication he delves into the tumultuous psychology of the prisoners, guards, and Turkish government during the period of the Armenian Genocide. Through his writing style he transports readers to the roads leading to exile and persecution that he and countless other Armenians experienced. Ishkhan Jinbashian brings to life Shamtanchian’s experiences in this breathtaking translation, as part of the H. and K. Manjikian Armenian Genocide Library Book Series.

Shamtanchian was a prominent Armenian intellectual, an orator, editor, translator, and teacher. He was arrested along with hundreds of Armenian intellectuals on the eve of April 24, 1915 and deported to Anatolia. His memoir offers a day-by-day, week-by-week account of the journey from Istanbul, his home, to a place of exile and murder. According to the back jacket, the book is a “profoundly-nuanced psychological portrait of innocent men who experienced the indignities and uncertainty of exile before being massacred.” Shamtanchian movingly describes the confusion and naivety of the exiled, the undying hope hanging by a few tattered threads, while sprinkling the text with the bitter taste of disillusionment.

The most touching moments are the stoic portraits of fellow intellectuals like Siamanto, Ruben Zardarian, Varuzhan and Sevak, whom we see marching to their

tragic deaths. We see the unity of the Armenian people, their endless fight against all odds. We hear their everlasting hope and faith in the “wistful echoes” of Komitas’ “Lord, Have Mercy.”

Through Shamtanchian we witness the clash between “the constructive spirit of the Armenian nation, which knows how to breathe life into something sterile and transform evil into good,” and the Armenophobic Turks, whose hateful glances and stark disregard for human life destroy countless lives. And in the midst of carnage and calamity, Shamtanchian offers a silver



lining, suggesting that those like himself who “witnessed death and survived came out tougher than ever.”

Shamtanchian’s memoir is a must read for Armenians and non-Armenians alike. It is a passionate philosophical journey to the depths of inferno and back, powerfully woven by a veteran hand. Offering a unique and heartbreaking glimpse into the hearts and minds of the intellectuals, *The Fatal Night* is a “literary masterpiece of haunting lyricism” that reminds readers of the tragic acts of the Armenian Genocide and the inner fortitude with which the Armenians rebuilt their lives.

**Support  
Hye Sharzhoom!**

## Dr. La Porta at 30th Anniversary Meeting of AIEA

STAFF REPORT

From October 6-8, 2011, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies, attended the 30th anniversary meeting of the Association Internationale des Etudes Arméniennes (AIEA), which convened at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. The congress, which is held once every three years, is the largest such gathering devoted to Armenian Studies and was attended by dozens of scholars from institutions throughout the world. There were three days of lectures consisting of seven sessions and twenty-one panels. In addition, distinguished lectures were delivered by Prof. James Russell, Prof. Zaza Alexidze, Prof. Thomas Mathews, and Prof. Marc Nichanian. Dr. La Porta said that he thoroughly enjoyed the conference particularly as it gave him the chance to connect with

friends and colleagues, many of whom he had not seen since the last AIEA conference.

Dr. La Porta delivered a talk on the Armenian and Syriac versions of the scholia of John of Scythopolis on the corpus of works attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. The Dionysian corpus was translated from Greek into Armenian by Step’anos Siwnec’i in the eighth century. Along with the corpus were translated marginal comments, called scholia, by John the bishop of Scythopolis, as well as by later commentators. In the Armenian tradition these explanatory remarks were attributed to Step’anos Siwnec’i himself and proved very important for the Armenian interpretation of the Dionysian texts in the monastic schools of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. John of Scythopolis, however, was a Chalcedonian monk whose Christology thus differed from that of the Armenian Church.

## ASP Represented at Third Genocide Conference

STAFF REPORT

The Third International Conference on Genocide was held on Friday, November 4, on the campus of Sacramento State University. A panel on the Armenian Genocide was organized and chaired by Dr. Sergio La Porta, Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State, and included five papers on various aspects of the Armenian Genocide by scholars including Fresno State’s Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian.

Dr. La Porta introduced the panel and spoke on “The Armenian Genocide and the Politics of Memory.” His paper provided a brief historical background of the Genocide as a context for the papers delivered at the panel and emphasized the common elements between the Armenian Genocide and other genocides that have been perpetrated in the twentieth century. He further discussed how political expediency had encouraged a policy of forgetting the Genocide in the United States. He noted that the policy of forgetfulness caused Americans to lose a significant and praiseworthy part of their own history as it also extended to the great efforts of the United States in trying to help the Armenian afterwards. He concluded his presentation by cautioning that Genocide recognition should be based on its moral and historical bases, rather than on political considerations.

Ms. Elizabeth Landin, a graduate student in the history program at Sacramento State, presented a paper on “Armenian Genocide Denial and the Role of the Turkish Secular Nationalism.” Landin traced how the Republic of Turkey, founded in 1923, had developed its policy of Genocide denial in the decades after its foundation. In particular, she drew attention to the connection between denial of the Genocide and the Republic’s program of secular nationalization,



**L. to R: Dr. Bedross Der Matossian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Elizabeth Landin, Dr. Sergio La Porta, and Ara Oshagan at Sacramento State Genocide conference.**

demonstrating that the denial served a vital role in the evolution of Turkish secularism. She thereby underscored the continuity between the events of the Genocide, which occurred during the rule of the Ottoman Empire by the Committee of Union and Progress, and the foundation and ideology of the new Turkish Republic. Her paper brought up further questions regarding Genocide recognition in the Turkish Republic now that the ruling political party is Islamist rather than overtly nationalist.

Ara Oshagan, an independent photographer, spoke on “Oral History, Testimony, and the Visual Arts.” Oshagan tackled the question of whether artists and art can provide an innovative and restorative way of narrating the Genocide. As a program of annihilation, genocide stands in absolute contrast to the artist’s desire to create and challenges the artist to find a way to overcome that chasm. He proposed that the inclusion of oral histories and survivor testimonies within artistic creations allowed the artist to become a witness to the witness and to tell a new narrative

about genocide that can restore dignity to the victims.

Oshagan presented four specific visual representations by different artists on different themes that incorporated oral accounts of traumatic experiences into their work in order to restore the balance between creation and destruction. He included examples from his own work, a project entitled *iwitness*, which incorporates survivor testimonies within portraits of survivors.

Dr. Bedross Der Matossian (University of Nebraska) spoke on “Economic Policies of Genocide: The Ramifications of the Armenian Genocide.” He gave an overview of the concept of “Armenian capital,” that is the economic activity of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Dr. Der Matossian discussed the significance of Armenians for the Ottoman economy and how they were highly integrated into the Ottoman economic system. He then showed how the Ottoman Empire systematically confiscated and appropriated Armenian wealth and property through a series of

SEE CONFERENCE PAGE 7

## Armenians on the Internet

Armen Arikian • Staff Writer

Vem Radio

<http://www.vem.am/>



**Main Categories:**

Home, Programs, Archives, Films, Vem Shop, About Vem, Contact Us, Sponsor Vem

**Summary:**

Vem Radio concentrates on Armenian media art and provides access to several radio programs, films, music, and books. It focuses on tradition and spiritual tastes more than modern.

There are about twenty free radio programs available for the public. Examples of the website’s radio programs include “World View,” “World Classical Music,” “Armenian Perspectives,” and “Hour of Fairy Tales.” These shows are organized under the “Programs” tab.

Vem radio provides a wide range of programs to match diverse tastes. Next to each program is a broadcast schedule of when live shows will air. On the top right of the page is a section called “Live,” which directs the audience to a list of radio programs on air. Previously aired shows are archived on the website and can be found by clicking a specific program and looking at the section “Past Shows.”

Armenian independent films are also available for viewing under the section “Films.” Viewers can watch films such as “Shikahogh,” “Yerevan: City or Desert,” and “Deadly Formulas.” Many of these films focus on environmental and political issues currently affecting Armenia and its people.

Vem Radio’s goal is “to communicate in a language and medium that targets the human soul” (Vem Radio, 2011). This wide selection of radio programs, along with the short films, are used for this purpose—allowing viewers to not only enjoy the content, but to also self-reflect.



# Students Recount Impressions of Visit to Armenia on ASP Summer Trip



**David Tataryan**  
Senior, Computer Science

This past summer I took a trip to Armenia and it was an unforgettable experience. All of my life I had wanted to see the city I was born in, the neighborhood my parents grew up in, and the home that my family once lived in. And I finally did.

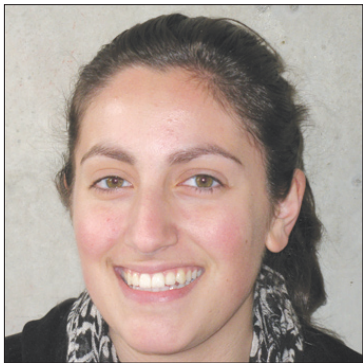
I was very excited but at the same time nervous. I had seen pictures, read articles, and heard stories about Armenia, but still wasn't sure what to expect. But all my nervousness seemed to disappear when my uncle greeted me at the airport. He took me to his home, where I stayed with his family for five weeks. I was very happy to spend time with them because they were the nicest people one could meet. Although everything was new to me, I felt a sense of familiarity and belonging.

My favorite site in Armenia was the monastery of Tatev. It was very beautiful and the location was unbelievably peaceful. The surrounding mountains and high landscape made it feel like a resort. During our visit to the monastery, we had the pleasure of

riding the world's longest cable car line, which took us directly to Tatev.

My most memorable experience in Armenia was my christening. I was baptized in the beautiful cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator, in central Yerevan. It was one of the largest churches we had seen in Armenia. I was lucky to be baptized in a church in Armenia, but was even luckier to share that day with friends from Fresno and close relatives in Yerevan.

This trip was a great gift to me from my parents. They allowed me to travel to Armenia to see and feel the history that I have read so much about. It was an amazing experience that I will never forget. This trip is a story that I will tell my children, because some day they too may see and experience the land of their ancestors.



**Ann Arpy Sghomonian**  
Junior, Biology, Minor in Armenian Studies

Although this trip was my second to the homeland, it was exciting and one that I will always remember, thanks to the group I went with. Although I had already been to many of the



**Armenia Summer Study Trip participants at the Eternal Flame of the Armenian Genocide Monument.**

sites we visited, the information and visits stuck much more than when I was 11 years old!

The places I loved that I had not been to before were the monastery of Tatev, with the awesome and long cable car ride, and Noravank, the beautiful monastery near Yeghegnadzor. Seeing all the monasteries and churches were fascinating, especially since we had learned so much about them in the Armenian Studies courses. Another amazing experience was being able to plant a tree at the Genocide Memorial grove, partially thanks to my random question to the Director of the Armenian Genocide Memorial-Museum, Dr. Hayk Demoyan.

The educational part of the trip was interesting, but it was the social aspect that set the trip apart from any other. Interacting with the college students from Yerevan was great; we got to see how people our age live. It

also showed how different, yet similar, people can be, even if they are thousands of miles away. It was great getting to know all the students in our group! Some people I had known for years, others I had only just met at the few orientation meetings we had before the trip, but while in Armenia, we all acted like old friends. We definitely bonded and created so many memories to share.

Overall, it was an amazing experience and everything went pretty smoothly. The people we met were fascinating, hospitable, and showed us a lot about the culture. Yerevan is gorgeous, and the architecture is impeccable. I encourage others to go and see for themselves the beauty of the country and feel the strong sense of pride in the people.



**Tamar Karkazian**  
Junior, Business Administration, Option Sports Marketing

Growing up in the Armenian community, people always talked



**Armenia Summer Study students at the Varaz Samuelian Cultural Center in the city of Artik.** Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

## ARMENIA, FROM PAGE 1

his students to visit London's St. Sarkis Armenian Church, where they received the honor of meeting with the Very Rev. Dr. Vahan Hovhannessian, Primate of the Armenian Church in Great Britain.

Professor Der Mugrdechian embarked on this journey with the goal of enlightening his students. "The students have to come away with a true learning experience," he stated.

Each photograph in the presentation had its own story, and Professor Der Mugrdechian made sure to clearly explain what it was. Every other day, the group traveled outside Yerevan, visiting many different sites such as the temple of Garni, Holy Etchmiadzin, Tatev Monastery,

the Areni Winery, and Lake Sevan. In visiting the many churches, the group was able to travel throughout Armenia. During the days when the group stayed in the city, they visited museums, attended lectures, and even visited the grave of Fresno's own William Saroyan. At every stop, Professor Der Mugrdechian and his students made sure to capture the moment with their cameras.

Following the trip overview, students Michael Rettig, Tamar Karkazian, and Kyle Gaede volunteered to speak about their impressions of Armenia and what they enjoyed the most. Michael Rettig's favorite part of the trip was meeting with people. "They were all hospitable and treated us like family," he stated. He was so

charmed by the people, both old and young, that while visiting the Noraduz Khatchkar Cemetery he purchased numerous socks, hats, and gloves from the villagers. After trying to explain that he had no money left, a young boy shook his head and with a smile said "Surprise!" as he gifted Michael with one of his drawings.

Tamar Karkazian enjoyed this trip to Armenia much more than her first visit a few years ago. Her favorite part of the trip was planting a tree with the group in the Armenian Genocide Memorial Grove.

Kyle Gaede was struck mostly by the intensity of life in Armenia and the beauty of the country, with mountains rising in every direction. The students were able to take a lot away from their trip, each with their own individual impressions, and through the added guidance provided by Professor Der Mugrdechian.

The video clips ended the presentation, with excerpts bringing to life the group's various experiences. The video began on the first morning in Armenia, which was one of the only days Ararat was in clear view. Women singing in the Temple of Garni, the video of the group's cable car ride to the Monastery of Tatev, and the beautiful *sharagans* sung by the choir at St. Gayane all helped the audience gain an idea of what was experienced in those two weeks in Armenia. And on the last day in Armenia, Mt.

about visiting their homeland, Armenia, and coming back touched and moved by their experiences there. Let's just say the first time I visited Armenia I did not quite feel that connection, but during my second trip, with the Armenian Studies Program, I felt more of a connection. I felt this connection and awe during the interactions we had with the people. For me, the trip wasn't about the sites (I had seen them already) but rather the people and the scenery were breathtaking. It was an amazing experience to be able to see all the places we had learned about in classes. The sites we visited were beautiful, but what I remember vividly are the meeting with the Armenian people, in action.

One such memory was during one of the first nights in Armenia. There was a political rally in front of the Opera House and Michael Rettig and I decided to go. Although neither of us really understood what was being said, the atmosphere spoke to us. We could feel the passion and unity of the people there.

Another moment that truly moved me was during a soccer game. I know, only I would say that. There was a soccer game between Armenia and another country and a group of about 100 people had stopped in the middle of the street to watch it on one of the big screens. Nothing could tear them away from their team, not the fact they were losing, or the weather (it started raining). Seeing this sense of unity and pride filled me with pride and envy. I was proud that my people had such a great bond, and envious because we don't have that strong of a bond in the United States, California, or Fresno, and I feel that we are certainly capable of having those same bonds.

Planting a tree at the Genocide Memorial grove was an unbelievable experience, but seeing Armenians in their everyday lives was definitely a highlight of the trip. Despite the challenges of their lives, the poverty some face, they have an unfaltering faith, a generous spirit of hospitality, and great pride and unity in their culture and people.

## The Armenian Studies Program

presents

## "The Conservation of Armenian Scrolls: Hmayil from the Minasian Collection of the UCLA Library"

by

**Kristen St. John**

*UCLA Library Conservation Center*

*Hmayil* are Armenian prayer scrolls which serve as talismans to protect the bearer against evil and potential danger. The Minasian Collection of the UCLA Library has approximately forty scrolls dating from the early 17th to the 19th century.

**Monday, November 28, 2011 • 7:30 p.m.**

**University Business Center • Alice Peters Auditorium • Fresno State**

Ararat finally appeared to bid the group farewell.

Although only fourteen students visited Armenia with Professor Der Mugrdechian,

this evening the members of the audience were also able to experience and discover Armenia through the pictures, stories, and videos the group shared.



Fall Months are Full of Armenian Students Organization Activities and Events

EMMA SHALJYAN  
STAFF WRITER

October is always a busy month for college students—with midterms, papers, and other school related events. Members of ASO are no exception, especially with the number of events they participated in. A variety of ASO events were held throughout October: an Armenia Independence Day Celebration, their Annual Car Wash, a Halloween Movie Night, and the “Walk of Life.” All these events were great successes and created unforgettable memories.

To celebrate Armenia’s 20th anniversary of independence on September 21, the ASO decided to educate their fellow peers.

They set up a table in the Free Speech area and made a poster with information on Armenia before and after independence. With Armenian music playing, ASO members explained Armenia’s history to interested students. “It gave us a chance to educate people who might not have heard of Armenia and it was fun exposing them to Armenian music,” explained graduate student Suren Oganessian.

This year the ASO executives decided that the club should stay active in the community and volunteer, so they participated in the “Walk of Life,” organized by the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. Participants walked along a historic two and a half mile route that emphasized



The ASO enjoyed a bowling night at the Fresno State USU.

Armenian culture, with stops at the statue of David of Sassoon, the William Saroyan Theatre, and Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church. The goal of the walk was to raise awareness about the need for bone marrow donors who can be potential matches for Armenians around the world. Armenians who have leukemia or various related diseases use the Registry to find matches. ASO members also gave blood and became part of the Registry.

ASO’s Annual Car Wash

was held in the parking lot of Viktoria’s Place restaurant on Saturday, October 22. This event was a huge success thanks to the many Fresno State students, as well as parents and friends who stopped by. Members had lots of fun washing cars and enjoying each other’s company. This year the group got very creative to keep busy and get peoples’ attention. They organized a little Vartavar celebration for themselves, throwing water on each other once in a while. Vartavar is an

Armenian tradition, associated with the feast of Transfiguration that takes place in July. Other members held posters on the sidewalk and started dancing an Armenian dance, *Kochari*. Overall, the event was a great success and the students had a great time and raised a lot of money for their future events.

The final event for the month of October was a Halloween event that consisted of a potluck, screening of a “scary” movie called “Devil,” and a costume fashion show/contest. All the members were dressed up in fun and unique costumes, such as a mad scientist and Minnie Mouse.

“My favorite part was the fashion show. It was fun seeing everyone get into their character,” said Marine Vardanyan.

After the fashion show some of the members began dancing the “Macarena,” which became the highlight of the evening.

This semester has been very successful so far. The ASO has dedicated members who find time in their busy schedules to participate in meetings and events. The ASO has many events still planned.



ASO members at the Halloween party.

Photo: ASP Archive

Opinion-Reflections on the 20th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Armenia

EVELYN DEMIRCHIAN  
STAFF WRITER

Think back to over twenty years ago; a lot was different in society and around the world. There was no Facebook, no smart phones, and no independent Armenia. It was not until September 21, 1991 that Armenia declared itself independent from the Soviet Union.

Since the emergence of an independent Republic of Armenia, the nation of three million has had its fair share of tragedy and triumph as it enters into its third decade of freedom. In the Diaspora, many watched the live festivities in Republic Square celebrating 20 years of independence. As we witnessed the beginning of the third decade of independence the small, but proud nation is proving itself spirited, despite the many hurdles it faces.

The early years of independence for Armenia were tough, the economy was faltering, and the nation was struggling to support Karabakh in their fight against Azerbaijan. Strained relations with neighbors Turkey and Azerbaijan added pressure on the already fragile economy and the nation barely made it through to the 21st century.

It is difficult to paint a positive picture of the Republic when the economic numbers show a fairly grim image. The near-collapse of the world economy in the late 2000’s weakened progressive steps Armenia had taken early on in the decade. Forbes Magazine rated Armenia as the second-worst economy in the world in 2011 due to a 15% economic decline. Much of the downturn was due to a cutoff in foreign investment and a



Left to right: Ani Grigoryan, Emma Shaljyan, Faten Kassabian, ASO President Vartush Mesropyan, and Lilit Grigoryan at the ASO table in the Free Speech area. Students distributed information about Armenia.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

slow down in remittances, largely from members of the Armenian Diaspora, who were also directly affected by the global economic collapse. Many of the brightest minds left the nation to seek better opportunities abroad, and the brain drain has left a dent in the social development of the country.

While Armenia is still recovering from the pains of those early years and the decline of the world economy, there is still plenty to take pride in. A free market and strong relations with the West have helped increase trade and amicable relations with Georgia and Iran, bringing in much needed gas and oil to the landlocked republic.

Recent developments in education also paint a brighter portrait for Armenia’s future; the country boasts a 99% literacy rate, and chess has even become required in the classroom. The Armenian National Soccer Team beat Macedonia 4-1 and came one

step closer to qualifying for the UEFA Euro 2012.

While independence has not proven particularly remarkable for Armenia, the fact is that the nation has seen darker days. For thousands of years the people have stood up against foreign invaders, have held on strongly to their Orthodox Christian faith and have maintained a rich history, culture, and language, unequaled by many others on this planet. After centuries of foreign rule under various empires, the fact that Armenia is now a sovereign nation is a testament to the persistence of its people.

Whatever troubles may be ailing the nation of Armenia, they are surely to be overcome. The Armenian spirit that has spread globally will always return back home and support the freedom of its motherland. Despite a difficult twenty years, Armenia will survive and hopefully thrive, as a player on the world’s stage.

Melidonian Graduating in Fall with Armenian Studies Minor

MARI KOSHKAKARYAN  
STAFF WRITER

Armen Melidonian  
Business Administration,  
Option Accounting  
Minor in Armenian  
Studies

What Armenian Studies activities and/or events did you participate in throughout your undergraduate career at Fresno State?

In addition to getting a minor in Armenian Studies, I have been a member of ASO for more than two years, and served as Treasurer for a year. I was a staff writer for *Hye Sharzhoom* for two years and attended numerous lectures and ASO activities.

What was your favorite and most memorable Armenian Studies course?

My favorite and most memorable course was Armenian Studies 120T, Armenian Diaspora and Genocide, taught by Dr. George Bournoutian from Iona College. He was the Kazan Visiting Professor for one semester and attending his lectures was quite a different experience. Dr. Bournoutian delved into societal aspects of Armenian history to get us to understand what people were thinking, and also introduced essay topics that got us to ask and analyze open-ended questions.

What was your favorite experience at Fresno State? What will you miss the most?

My favorite part of going to Fresno State was during the last couple of years, when I increased my involvement on campus. I will miss the professors and all my great classmates and the student and professional organizations here. The business courses at Fresno State are challenging and awesome, but taking classes outside my major added many unique and practical insights and skills that I probably would not have learned about otherwise.

What are your plans after graduation?

Following graduation, I plan to become an Accountant and continue applying my knowledge of business beyond the classroom. I plan to get my CPA license within the next few years.

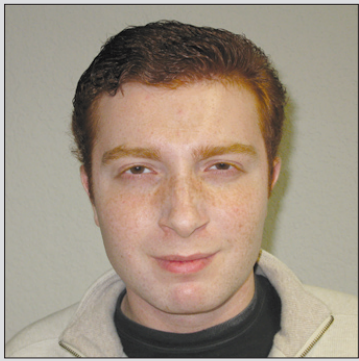


Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian



## Review-Haik Solar and Arni Rock Bring Synth Pop to Armenia



Photo: ASP Archive

**SUREN OGANESSION**  
STAFF WRITER

When listening to Armenian music we usually find that certain elements are used; the same instruments, and similar melodies. But a duo composed of Haik Solar and Arni Rock, two musicians from Armenia, has taken a different approach to music. Absent are the *duduk*, the *kamancha*, and other Armenian staples. Instead they have imported the style of synth pop into their music.

Recently featured as Artist of the Month for October 2011 on Armenianpulse.com, the emerging duo have been making waves with their synthesized electronic music, a style that has only reached Armenia in recent years, but a style that has been and still is very popular in Europe today. Strictly musicians, the two hire female Armenian singers, such as Mashee and Narine, to provide the vocals to their songs, with lyrics both in English and Armenian. They have also produced music videos to the

songs “Unwanted” and “Beautiful Sunday,” which are viewable on YouTube and other websites.

Haik Solar, whose real name is Hayk Harutunyan, began studying music at the Komitas State Conservatory in Yerevan, where he studied classical music and specialized in woodwind instruments. He soon developed a love for electronic music, which led him to take DJ classes at Moscow’s DJ Groove school. After he returned to Armenia, he wrote a song for the hip-hop group H.A.Y.Q. “Qami Pchi,” which was later named “Hit of the Year” at the Armenian Music Awards.

Arni Rock, whose real name is Vahe Akhperjanyan, has been a DJ since 2001. He gained notoriety on Armenian radio stations by mixing songs with his original compositions. Both Haik Solar and Arni Rock are also a part of the Apricota music project, which produces commercial hit music for the Armenian music industry.

They are an up and coming duo to look out for.

## An Armenian *Panduxt*’s (Expatriate’s) View

**EMMA SHALJYAN**  
STAFF WRITER

Growing up in Armenia I remember the most discussed topic in my Armenian literature classes was about the *panduxts* [expatriates]. Every year we read stories and poems about *panduxts*—people who left their native land because of circumstances, and missed their native land more than anyone could imagine.

I knew the meaning of the word, but I did not really KNOW the true meaning of it. Looking back, I don’t think my teachers knew the true meaning of it either. Yes, they taught us about *panduxts*, but they only knew as much as they read.

I remember reading stories about *panduxts*, as a teenager, and laughing. I thought of these people as fools, people who did not know what they wanted in life. I did not understand their reasons for leaving their native land, then missing it until it hurt, but never returning back. I did not follow their logic, or may I say, lack of logic in what they did and felt. You never truly understand someone, until you walk in his or her shoes. Today, I walk in their shoes, and believe me, stories about *panduxts* are not close to being funny.

I had always dreamed of living somewhere else, and when the opportunity arose I was extremely happy. My country seemed to



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

**Emma Shaljian**

have closed the door to a better future for its people and I was happy to have a chance at a new and better life.

As the day of my departure grew closer, my happiness began fading. I started to realize that I was going to lose something very meaningful in my life. During my last day in my country, there was so much tension in my body that I was fighting with what I wanted before, to leave, and what I wanted now, to stay.

The hardest part was leaving my home—HOME, where I took my first steps, said my first words, had my first laugh, and shed my first tear. It’s where we spent time with my dearest family members, where we spent most of our birthdays, a home that no other place in the world could replace. I walked out into the yard, where my childhood was spent and saw the garden that my grandpa took care of with the greatest pleasure. I saw the apricot tree and grapevines that he had planted with his own hands, saw the land that he watered every week, and

I did not want to let it go. I did not want to lose this treasure, this beauty I saw everyday. Even though my heart was begging me to stay, I had to leave my home. I cried realizing the reality of what was happening. I cried because of the unknown—when would I be back? Or would I ever come back?

As the plane started its engine I felt another loss—this time it was the loss of my country. It was at this moment I felt how separated I was from my land. An emptiness took over me, I felt nonexistent, as if my body was there, but that I was not really there. The higher and higher the plane flew, the more I began to appreciate Armenia, but it was all too late.

Walking on the streets of this new country felt unreal. I was walking but wasn’t seeing the sights I was used to. I felt powerless when I realized the real impact distance has, and with this realization I felt very small and weak. It was then that I realized I could no longer walk to Republic Square, the Opera House, or the Cascade. The distance broke me down.

I dreamed of my home often. It took me a long time to distinguish my dreams from reality. I lived in my dreams, and lived in my nightmares. I could not control the situation, no matter how hard I tried. My dreams seemed more real than my actual life. I enjoyed the life that I lived in my dreams—I laughed and had fun, like I had in Armenia.

## Eench Ga Chga?

What kinds of special traditions does your family have for the holidays?

DENISE ALTOUNIAN • STAFF WRITER



**Ian Garoian**  
Senior  
Music

This year for Christmas, my aunt, uncle, and two cousins are coming to Visalia. We usually make tons of *sarma*, *yalanchi*, and rice *pilaf* and eat way too much of it.



**Suren Oganessian**  
Masters Program  
Creative Writing

My extended family picks a day

when everyone can get together for a reunion and a big dinner (and in the case of Christmas, exchange presents). It’s rarely on the actual holiday though, since everyone has different places to be.



**Arev Chakhlasyan**  
Junior  
Advertising

For Christmas, my family celebrates by doing Secret Santa, going to the Christmas Eve service at church, and eating dinner together that evening. We usually exchange gifts and enjoy a meal that is a combination of American and Armenian food. Christmas is very important to my family because it is a time to celebrate Jesus’ birth and the blessings of the family.



**Rakel Hairabedian**  
Senior  
Civil Engineering

We spend Thanksgiving with family in Orange County. Instead of turkey we have a whole roasted lamb stuffed with pilaf. The next day we head off to ACYO conventions. At Christmas, my mother and I make tons of *kufra* for the family and my grandma makes *basturma* and eggs in the morning. On New Year’s day my uncle has everyone over for brunch and we celebrate Armenian Christmas by going to *badarak* on that day.

Photos: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

### ASLANIAN, FROM PAGE 1

developing one of the most advanced trading systems in the world. New Julfan trade spread across three neighboring empires: the Mughal (India), the Safavid, and the Ottoman.

The Indian Ocean network connected New Julfa with various regions, and New Julfan agents would travel by ship across the Indian Ocean to reach their destinations. Dr. Aslanian explained how the New Julfans experienced difficulties with maintaining this network, which relied heavily on wind patterns and the ocean currents. The two primary wind patterns of Indian Ocean are Northwest and Southwest: Northwestern wind currents took place from December to March whereas Southwestern wind currents took place from May to October. If the New Julfans spent too much time at their destination, they would be unable to return to New Julfa until the wind pattern changed.

The New Julfans maintained a system where they traded with people who they could trust. Dr. Aslanian emphasized this trust as he described a

It is true when people say that time is the best medicine, because time did heal me. As the years passed, I began to feel like I belonged again. Even though the time healed my heart, my heart will never be the same. Time healed the wounds, but didn’t get rid of the scars, the memories of my past, my native land.

You never appreciate what you

process used amongst Julfans for trade. *Commenda* contracts, a primary example of this mutual trust, served as a foundation of New Julfan trade. This type of agreement was between two New Julfans, one a merchant capitalist, and the other an agent, who would represent the merchant.

The agent would normally be away from home several years at a time conducting business for the merchant. Upon the agent’s return, earnings were divided, with the hard working agent receiving a mere 25 percent of the profit, while the merchant received 75 percent. Dr. Aslanian used the *Commenda* contract to illustrate the theme of trust among the New Julfan community. Why would an agent agree to perform a majority of the labor for minimal profit? The reason is so that they could build a strong reputation within the region. Trust was essential in the New Julfan community.

The New Julfan community remained vibrant and successful for a little more than one hundred years. Several Armenian churches remain standing in the region, serving as a reminder of one of the most successful mercantile systems in the world.

have, until you lose it. Reflecting back, I did not appreciate Armenia enough while I lived there. I now have a big scar in my heart. A scar left by the distance. A scar left by my home. And no matter how much I smile and how much I succeed in life, nothing will heal this scar. Nothing will heal this scar because my heart was left in my home, in Armenia.



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CULTURE NIGHT,  
FROM PAGE 1

to perfecting their performance, practicing four hours a week since the beginning of the semester. “We had a lot of fun practicing,” explained Andrew Esguerra. “We are trying to educate more people about the Armenian culture and this was a good way to do that.”

ASO’s performance began with Ruzan Orkusyan and Emma Shaljyan singing a beautiful song about the capital of Armenia, called “Im Yerevan” [My Armenia], written by noted composer Arno Babajanyan. “We chose to sing this song because it represents a more modern Armenia to us, ”



Lilit Grigoryan and Andrew Esguerra.

Photo: Erica Magarian

are Armenian, they represent different aspects of the culture. The first dance, the California Hop, is a more modern dance, created by immigrants to preserve the Armenian culture, while Kochari is one of the oldest dances of the Armenian people. Both dances showed the traditions of the Armenian people and their dedication to their culture.

At the conclusion of the evening, two representatives from each cultural group participated in a fashion show, modeling the traditional clothing of their culture. Lilit Grigoryan and Andrew Esguerra modeled the traditional dress of the Armenian people.

The students did a great job representing Armenian culture, and this was evident in the applause from the audience. The performance demonstrated the ASO’s passion for its culture and also helped ASO reach its goal of educating students about Armenian culture and traditions.

Photo: Erica Magarian

show the Armenian culture to others, but more than that, it was a way of keeping the Armenian culture alive within myself,” Orkusyan stated.

Following their instrumental performance, ten ASO members performed two Armenian dances: the California Hop and the Kochari. Although both dances



Michael Rettig playing the oud.

Shalijyan explained. “And it was very entertaining.”

Michael Rettig performed next, playing “Laz Bar” on the traditional *oud*, a stringed instrument, followed by Aramais Orkusyan who played “Chachaneh Tsaghadzoreh” on the *duduk*, a flute-like instrument.

“It was important for me to

Fresno State Alumni Find Success



Photos: ASP Archive

American Medical Society of California, and the Armenia Fund.

Pateel Mekhitarian

Major in Chemistry with a minor in Armenian Studies  
Graduated in 2010

Editor and staff writer for *Hye Sharzhoom*, Treasurer of ASO

Pateel Mekhitarian is in her second year of pharmacy school at the Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, at the University of the Pacific. She will graduate in 2013 from the three-year accelerated program. In 2007 she, along with a group of students, went with Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian to Armenia.



This was one of the highlights of her undergraduate years. During her final year at Fresno State, Prof. Der Mugrdechian was her advisor for a research paper on the reasons for high emigration rates out of Armenia, a requirement for her completion of the Honors Program in Armenian Studies. After Mekhitarian graduates from UOP, she plans on sticking to her roots and continuing to be active in the Armenian community.

Tatevik Ekezian

Major in Psychology with a minor in Armenian Studies  
Graduated in 2004

Writer for *Hye Sharzhoom*, Vice President of ASO, Host of *Hye Oozh* Radio

Since graduation Ekezian has been very active in the Armenian community, especially in the music scene. After eight years of hosting *Hye Oozh*, she became the main host for the program. She has also hosted many musical television shows and concerts in the Los Angeles area, including the MClub Armenian Music Video and the Armenian Music Awards held at the Nokia Theater, with an audience of more than 7,000.

Although Ekezian is busy with her career in marketing and advertising, she still makes time to volunteer for various Armenian organizations such as the Armenian American Chamber of Commerce, the Armenian

HIS HOLINESS, FROM PAGE 1

Valley, His Holiness visited the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church and the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School in Clovis. At a banquet held in his honor at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church on Saturday, October 8, the Vehapar [Catholicos] spoke to the audience about the importance of maintaining Armenian Christian values. Also of note, was his focus on the future members of the church, the children.

His Holiness was the celebrant of the Divine Liturgy held at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church on Sunday, October 9, where the faithful gathered to welcome him. Following the Liturgy, His Holiness addressed the Sunday school students.

During a Monday, October

10 visit to the Keyan Armenian Community School, His Holiness emphasized the importance of investing in and engaging the future generations of Armenians and churchgoers. The principal, teachers, students and the Executive Board of the school warmly greeted him. The school band welcomed him by playing *Mer Hayrenik* [Our Fatherland]. Speaking directly to the children, His Holiness told them to thank their parents for sending them to a school where they could learn the Armenian heritage.

This message was consistent with his encyclical in January, declaring 2011 the Year of the Armenian Child, and that to invest in Armenian children now will keep the community and the Armenian faith alive.

CONFERENCE, FROM PAGE 3

laws designed specifically for this purpose. Dr. Der Matossian noted that the need to legally legitimize such appropriations of capital is a common feature among regimes that commit genocide. This broad topic has only recently become of interest to researchers, who are now examining and writing about the issue.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, concluded the panel. He spoke on “Living with Genocide: Armenian Culture in the Post-Genocide Period.” His presentation focused on the

repercussion of the Genocide as represented in Armenian-American literature. Examples from the works of Armenian-American writers were analyzed to demonstrate how the Genocide had been integrated into the works of such authors as Peter Najarian, Peter Balakian, Nancy Kricorian, Micheline Marcom, and David Kherdian.

The panel was well-attended and well-received. The organizers of the conference indicated that they hope that at the next conference a plenary session will be dedicated to the Armenian Genocide.



Meet the Enthusiastic Fresno State Hye Sharzhoom Staff



Photo: ASP Archive

Front row, left to right: Marine Vartanyan, Emma Shaljian, Tatevik Hovhannisyian, and Denise Altounian. Back row, left to right: Erica Magarian, Tamar Karkazian, Andrew Esguerra, Suren Oganessian, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

TAMAR KARKAZIAN  
EDITOR

People often say the people you work with make the experience amazing or not; they influence the environment and outcomes. During the past three years a dedicated group of students, who make up the *Hye Sharzhoom* newspaper, have provided an amazing experience. They are all dedicated to the Armenian community and are always willing to give 100% to make sure the paper succeeds. I wanted to take a moment to recognize these dedicated and talented individuals and thank them for all their work.

This year, *Hye Sharzhoom* has a staff of 11 students: Denise Altounian, Armen Arikian, Evelyn Demirchian, Andrew Esguerra,

Tatevik Hovhannisyian, Mari Koshkakaryan, Suren Oganessian, Ruzan Orkusyan, Emma Shaljian, Marine Vardanyan, and myself. They range from freshmen and sophomores, to graduate students, and have majors such as business, journalism, biology, and political science. They have a variety of interests and volunteer and participate in numerous clubs and organizations at Fresno State and in the community. But despite all their individual likes and characteristics, they all have one thing in common—a love for their culture and an even greater love of sharing what they know, think, and see.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, is Director of the Armenian Studies Program, and has been the *Hye Sharzhoom* advisor for the past twenty-seven years. “It

is great to work with such an enthusiastic staff. We have been fortunate to have students who are willing to work hard to produce a paper that is read throughout the world. I commend the staff for their dedication.” *Hye Sharzhoom* is the oldest continuously published Armenian university paper, with its first edition having been published in 1979.

When I asked my staff what they enjoyed most about writing for *Hye Sharzhoom* I got various answers. “Writing for *Hye Sharzhoom* is something that’s added so much to my Fresno State experience and I am incredibly grateful for having the opportunity to have done so,” stated Evelyn Demirchian, a staff writer of several years.

“The best part of writing is seeing all the work you put in get published,” said sophomore Denise Altounian.

“The opportunity to take pictures of people who have taught me and the Fresno community so much about the Armenian culture has to be my favorite part,” stated dedicated photographer Erica Magarian.

We also want to thank you, the readers, for your continuous and overwhelming support. Emma Shaljian explains our gratitude best, “When I realize that readers are waiting to get an issue of *Hye Sharzhoom* I become very happy.”

We write because we want to share our pride and joy in the community but it is because of you, the readers, we continue to grow and flourish.

“Armenia: Imprints of a Civilization” Opens in Venice

STAFF REPORT

A major exhibition, entitled “Armenia: Imprints of a Civilization,” will open in the museums of St. Mark’s Square in Venice on December 16, 2011. Hosting the exhibition will be the prestigious venues of the Correr Museum, the National Archaeological Museum, and the Marciana National Library.

The exhibition will mark the five hundredth anniversary of the first book printed in the Armenian



Urbat’agir’, Yakob Meghapart, Venice, 1512. Photo: Ara Güler. Courtesy Arts of Armenia.

language and will be open from December 16, 2011 to April 10, 2012. This exhibition will act as

the official launch of the jubilee celebrations taking place in the Armenian capital of Yerevan, a UNESCO World Book Capital for 2012.

Among the distinguished scholars participating in the preparation of the catalog is Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, Haig & Isabel Berberian Professor Emeritus of Armenian Studies at Fresno State, who contributed one of the longest and most illustrated articles on Armenian manuscript painting.

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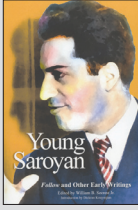
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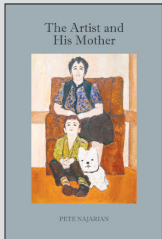
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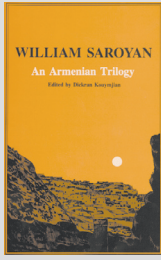
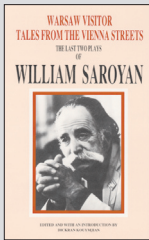
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**Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School  
New Year’s Eve Dinner and Dance  
Saturday, December 31, 2011  
Call the school office 559.323.1955 for more info.**

Armenian Studies Events

• **Friday, December 23, 2011, 7:00PM-**  
**Raffi Hovannisian, member of the Armenian Parliament, will speak about his experiences in Armenia. McLane Hall, Room 121, Fresno State.**

• **Wednesday, February 8, 2012, 7:30PM-**  
**“The Secrets of the Gospel of King Gagik of Kars” by Dr. Thomas Mathews.**

• **Thursday, February 16, 2012-“The Book of Lamenting,” a poetry reading by Lory Bedikian.**

• **Friday, February 24, 2012-**  
**Thirteenth Annual Armenian Film Festival**

• **Sunday, March 11, 2012-24th Annual Armenian Studies Banquet, honoring special guest Dr. Richard Hovannisian, for his fifty year of scholarship, teaching, and service in the field of Armenian Studies.**

**Full details on Armenian Studies events can be found on the Armenian Studies Program website, at armenianstudies.csufresno.edu or by calling the Armenian Studies Program office at 559-278-2669.**

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