

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.

Dr. Levon Advoyan, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C, for two copies of *To Know Wisdom and Instruction: A Visual Survey of the Armenian Literary Tradition from the Library of Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2012). 100 pp., color plates. This is a catalog of an exhibit held at the Library of Congress on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing.

Lucille Apcar, Mariposa, California, for a variety of books and CDs.

Dr. Vahé Baladouni, Falls Church, Virginia, for the book, *Hmayeak Shems: A Poet of Pure Spirit in English and Armenian*, (University Press of America, 2010), by Vahé Baladouni and John Gery. 102pp. This book is devoted to the life of Hmayeak Shems (Hmayeak Saprichian), an Armenian poet, 1896-1952.

Boghos Armenak Lakissian, Glendale, California, for his book *Aratta-Armina: Haykakan Srbazan Lernashkharh* (2012). 374pp. In Armenian.

Dr. Gerard Libaridian, Cambridge, Massachussets, for the books, *Hayots Patmakan Hnaravorutyunnere, VI-VIII Darerum* and *Mez Antsanot “Vartanats” Paterazme* by Hamlet Davtyan, (Yerevan, 2010). In Armenian.

Marc Mamigonian, NAASR, Belmont, MA, for the booklet *History in the Making: NAASR’s Leadership in Armenian Studies* (Belmont, MA: 2012). This 28-page booklet gives a history of NAASR’s contributions to the field of Armenian Studies. The booklet also discusses NAASR’s efforts to establish the first endowed Chair in Armenian Studies at Harvard University in 1959.

Alice Navasargian, Glendale, California, for her book, *The Immortals* (California, 2012). This is a pictorial anthology of historiographic works, and a brief history of the Armenians in Persia. Included is a series of biographic portraits of important Iranian born Armenians. 530pp. Illustrated with color and black and white plates.

Helene Pilibosian, Watertown, MA, for ten copies each of two books of poetry by her, *Carvings from an Heirloom: Oral History Poems* and *History’s Twists: The Armenians*.

Konrad Siekierski, Yerevan, Armenia and Poland for two books, *Armenian Artistic Heritage in Romania: Between Exilic Nostalgia and Cultural Integration* by Vlad Bedros (Romania, 2012), 165pp., in English, and *Khoselov mimyants het* (Speaking to Each Other) (2010), in Armenian and Turkish, by Hranoush Kharatyan-Arakelyan and Leyla Neyzi. *Armenian Artistic Heritage* is a beautifully executed history of the Armenian community of Romania and their contributions through art to the society in which they lived. *Speaking to Each Other* is a cooperative effort between many individuals and was sponsored by the Union of German Public High Schools. The goal of the book is to open a dialogue between the Armenians and Turks through oral history.

BOOK EXHIBIT, FROM PAGE 1

Studies Program was pleased to organize such an exhibit for the community.”

The catered reception took place just outside the Peters Ellipse Gallery, on the second floor of the Library, where an exhibit of rare printed books and manuscripts drew onlookers into the history of Armenian printing. The event attracted the presence of Fresno State President Dr. John D. Welty; Provost Dr. William Covino; Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities Dr. Vida Samiian; and Armenian Studies Professors Barlow Der Mugrdechian and Sergio La Porta, as well as keynote speaker Dr. Kevork Bardakjian (Marie Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian Literature, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor).

Those who joined the festivities, a plentiful mix of students and community members, were treated to short speeches by all of the aforementioned academic figures during the reception. Professor Kevork Bardakjian addressed the audience in a formal presentation following the reception.

The speeches and exhibit emphasized the value of Armenian Studies to the Fresno

State community. “The event was absolutely lovely and I know I felt absolutely enriched,” said community member and former Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School principal, Sophie Mekhitarian.

The exhibit was organized through the efforts of Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program, and Malina La Porta. From the various examples on display, it was apparent that printing developed rapidly for the Armenians, from published works originally written in Armenian to translations of the classics and then the works of western literary figures.

The quality of the exhibit “adds luster to the Armenian Studies Program... one of only a few such programs in the United States,” stated Provost Covino, commenting on the efforts made toward preserving the Armenian culture through artifacts.

The Armenian Studies Program is a “real treasure,” stated Provost Covino. But its real value is the community members who take the time to expand their own knowledge by taking the opportunity to attend an event such as this.

California State University, Fresno
Armenian Studies Program

Spring 2013 Schedule of Courses

| Course | Units | Time | Day | Instructor |
|---|-------|---------------|------|-------------------|
| • Arm 1B-Elementary Armenian (Class #32105) | 4 | 10:00A-11:50A | MW | B Der Mugrdechian |
| • Hum 10-Hum Antqty/Ren (Class #32209) | 3 | 11:00A-12:15P | TuTh | S La Porta |

General Education-Arts & Humanities, Area C2

| | | | | |
|--|---|-------------|-----|-------------------|
| • Arm 2A-Inter Armenian (Class #36275) | 3 | 9:00A-9:50A | MWF | B Der Mugrdechian |
|--|---|-------------|-----|-------------------|

Upper Division Armenian Studies Courses

| | | | | |
|---|---|--------------|------|-------------------|
| • ArmS 108B-Arm History II (Class #32104) | 3 | 9:30A-10:45A | TuTh | B Der Mugrdechian |
|---|---|--------------|------|-------------------|

General Education-Arts & Humanities, Area IC

| | | | | |
|--|---|--------------|------|------------|
| • Arm 148-Masterp. of Arm Culture (Class #33058) | 3 | 12:30P-1:45P | TuTh | S La Porta |
|--|---|--------------|------|------------|

NEW COURSE FOR SPRING-KAZAN VISITING PROFESSOR

| | | | | |
|--|---|---------------|------|--|
| • ArmS 120T-Arm. Genocide & Trans (Class #35933) | 3 | 11:00A-12:15P | TuTh | |
|--|---|---------------|------|--|

This course will cover the Armenian Genocide as it is reflected in literature and translation.

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

HYE SHARZHOOM

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Editor

Tamar Karkazian

Layout

Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Photographers

Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Erica Magarian

Staff Writers

Denise Altounian

Evelyn Demirchian

Andrew Esguerra

Tatevik Hovhannisyan

Suren Oganessian

Ruzan Orkusyan

Emma Shaljian

Marine Vardanyan

Advisor

Barlow Der Mugrdechian

barlowd@csufresno.edu

Armenian Studies Program Faculty:

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

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

Dickran Kouymjian, Berberian Professor Emeritus of Armenian Studies

2013-2014 Academic Year
Scholarships in Armenian Studies

2013-2014 Scholarship Applications
Now Available On-Line
www.fresnostate.edu/scholarships

Make sure to mark one of the areas pertaining to Armenian Culture or Language on the application. Armenian Studies Program-Supplemental application required.

The scholarship application for California State University, Fresno is only available on-line.
Priority Application Period:
October 1, 2012-February 28, 2013

For applications to be considered you must also complete the Armenian Studies supplemental form which can be found at: <http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu/scholarships.htm>

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:

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

Author Ajemian Ahnert Presents Book-“The Knock at the Door”



Margaret Ajemian Ahnert

Photo: Erica Magarian

TATEVIK HOVHANNISYAN
STAFF WRITER

Author Margaret Ajemian Ahnert visited Fresno State on Thursday, November 1, to share her inspiration and insight on her book *The Knock At The Door: A Mother’s Survival of the Armenian Genocide*, in a lecture sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program and cosponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Greater Fresno chapter.

Ahnert, a talented writer, based the theme of the book on her mother Ester’s stories and memories as a survivor of the Armenian Genocide. For Ahnert, the book is more than a work of art, rather it is a way to raise awareness about the atrocities of the past.

“I don’t want land back. I only want them [the Turkish government] to recognize what they have done to the Armenians, and how they killed the young kids, raped the woman, and massacred the men. They forcibly made the Armenian young women get married to them and converted them into Islam. It was prohibited for the Armenians to speak their own language—they [the Turkish government] wanted to eliminate the Armenians from the world,”

stated Ahnert.

Writing the book and then speaking to audiences around the country became a reason for Ahnert’s activism. The title of the book itself reflects how the Turkish military literally knocked on the doors of Armenian families and deported them, often on short notice. Even as Ahnert described her visits to different cities around the United States, she significantly used the term “marching” as a metaphor for the people who were forced to march in the deserts and were later killed by the Ottoman Turks.

Ahnert has received many awards for her book, among which are, “Best Book of 2007” and “Best Historical Memoir of 2008.” Her book has been translated into many languages, including Armenian, Italian, French and even Turkish.

To open doors for future generations of Armenian girls, Ahnert has established a scholarship in the Republic of Armenia for young women who are interested in pursuing journalism and writing as a career.

Ahnert made her lecture emotional, yet engaging and funny. She amazed the audience with her courage and love toward her mother and her people.

and Ottoman Turkey’s defeat, the Greek army was authorized by the allied powers to occupy western Turkey, and Smyrna became the base of their operations.

After the Greeks unsuccessfully tried to enter Ankara in 1922, and were driven back by Turkish nationalist forces, they made a hasty retreat for the Greek islands, leaving Smyrna to be occupied by Turkish forces on September 9. The civilians didn’t feel threatened at first, and thought they would be safe. However, four days later, the Turkish army intentionally set fires in the Armenian quarter—actions that were verified by many eyewitnesses. These fires were carried by the wind into the Greek quarter, causing some 200,000 people to evacuate and seek safety on the docks. Many were then slaughtered by the Turkish army or pushed into the water to drown.

Allied battleships from the United States, Italy, and England were stationed just off shore, but did nothing to help until the next day, when they finally received permission to take refugees on

Bardakjian Gives Keynote Speech at Opening of “500th Anniversary of Armenian Printing” Exhibit

ANDREW ESGUERRA
STAFF WRITER

As with many cultures that have a language largely unique to their ancestors, the Armenian alphabet and language helped create a unified cultural identity for the Armenian people and is often cited as a definitive factor in the formation of Armenian identity.

Dr. Kevork Bardakjian, Marie Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian Language and Literature, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, delivered a keynote lecture on “The Impact of the Armenian Script and Printing on Armenian Identity and Letters,” to officially open the Madden Library exhibit “The 500th Anniversary of Armenian Printing.”

Dr. Bardakjian brought his years of experience and research in the field of Armenology to an audience who attended the opening of an exhibit on “The 500 Anniversary of Armenian Printing,” in the Henry Madden Library on Sunday, October 14. He explained through a power-point demonstration the revolution in the Armenian language and literary traditions that began with the creation of the Armenian alphabet by St. Mesrob Mashtots in the fifth century.

Dr. Bardakjian discussed the topic of the invention of the Armenian script, its effect on the Armenians, and how it became so intertwined with Armenian culture. He began his presentation discussing the history of writing in general, with examples of ancient cuneiform inscriptions, such as the one from Behistun, Persia, mentioning the word “Armenian” for the first time in the year 520BC.

Dr. Bardakjian noted that before the invention of the Armenian script, “The Armenian experience had no written record

board, thus saving about 6,000 people. Thousands more were forced by the Turkish army to central Turkey, where they were used as a bargaining chip in the population exchange of refugees between Turkey and Greece.

In modern Smyrna, there is barely a hint that the Greek and Armenian quarters ever existed, save for a few buildings that were converted into other uses. Dr. Hovannisian photographed many of these buildings during his visit to the city, and showed photos of the former St. Mesrob School (now a museum).

Dr. Hovannisian expressed hope that as more churches are renovated and more Turkish intellectuals are exploring the dark history of their country, the people of Turkey, as a whole, may someday finally accept the past instead of running from it.

While very tragic, Hovannisian’s lecture was an eye-opening look into one of the final phases of both the Armenian and Greek genocides in Turkey that is rarely discussed.

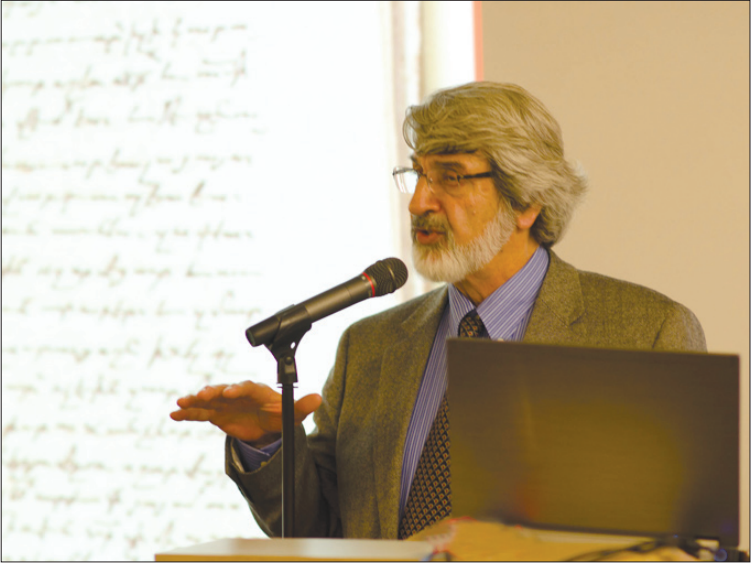


Photo: Nabil Sakib

Dr. Kevork Bardakjian at Fresno State talk.

in the Armenian language,” and that only a national memory of Armenian history existed until recorded by Armenian historians of the fifth century. The conversion of Armenia to Christianity was also a reason behind the creation of the alphabet.

The first book translated into Armenian was the Bible. Years of relying on the versions of the sacred texts in languages such as Greek, had created a barrier between the Bible’s message and the Armenian people.

In this way, the Armenian script also contributed to the creation of the new Armenian identity, centered on Christianity and the alphabet.

Dr. Bardakjian also hypothesized that the translation of the Bible to Armenian led to the adaptation of *grabar*, or Classical Armenian. He

stated that Classical Armenian standards were created to meet the flourishes, expressions, wording, and reverence of the Bible that did not appear in the spoken Armenian at the time.

The Armenian alphabet was the root of an explosion of Armenian literature, the creation of collective Armenian identity, and the development of Christianity in Armenia.

“I will never forget the indelible image of a dying Armenian woman during the Genocide writing the Armenian alphabet in the sand to teach it to her son,” concluded Dr. Bardakjian, providing hope for the perseverance of the Armenian language and culture.

Dr. Bardakjian’s presentation established the significance of the discovery of the Armenian alphabet and its immense impact on Armenian cultural history.

Armenians on the Internet

SUREN OGANESSION
STAFF WRITER



Haytomar.com
Ancient Armenian Calendar

Main Categories: Home, Converter, Calendar, Holidays, Get Buttons, Friends, Contact

If you heard that this was the year 4,505, would you believe it? According to the often forgotten ancient Armenian calendar—which places its starting date on the day of the legendary battle between Hayk and the Babylonian King Bel—it would be. Haytomar.com is a website dedicated to spreading awareness about Armenia’s ancient calendar, which many Armenians may not have heard of. “We hope that this website will allow the ancient Armenian calendar to gain worldwide recognition and popularity along with such calendars as the Aztec or Jacobian,” explains the home page of the site. Started by Rouben Sardaryan and Artavazd Eghiazaryan in 2008, or the year 4,500 by the ancient calendar, the website features a converter where one can enter dates from the Gregorian calendar and receive the equivalent date from the Armenian calendar. Users can also find an html code for a ticker that displays the converted day’s date on various online forums. Also available is a page on the history of the calendar, as well as a list of the names of months and days. The site explains that the calendar was used by pagan Armenians until the adoption of Christianity, and would have been forgotten had it not been researched and documented by the 19th century Armenian priest and historian, the Very Rev. Fr. Ghevond Alishan. In the Armenian calendar, the seven days of the week were named for the sun, moon, and five known planets at the time. The days of the month, rather than being numbered, were named for pagan deities or for regions in historic Armenia. For example, the date of Armenia’s independence from the Soviet Union (September 21, 1991), would be written as Gor Ani, 4,484. The calendar had thirteen months in a year, twelve of thirty days each and a thirteenth consisting of five days. This format was borrowed from the ancient Egyptian calendar. Although out of use for centuries, the calendar and the site are important for helping Armenians remember their ancient roots.

Congratulations December 2012 Armenian Studies Graduates

Arev Chakhlasyan
Mass Communication & Journalism, Advertising



What or whom encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?
I wanted to learn how to properly read and write in Armenian. Although I can speak and understand it fairly well, I had always wanted to learn it in its entirety. The Armenian Studies course allowed me to do that.

What do you value most from your experiences taking Armenian studies courses?
Having the opportunity to read and write in Armenian. Also, I have met several outstanding people, both professors within the Program and fellow students.

What are your plans after graduation?
Ideally, I would love to pursue a career in either media sales or social media marketing. I have also considered working at an advertising agency. All options sound extremely exciting to me.

What words of wisdom do you have for incoming students?
Simply put, college is what you make of it. Work hard, make wise decisions, and choose to live against the grain. There will be many people telling you who you should be or how you should act, but remember to live out the life that God has given you.



Evelyn Demirchian
Mass Communications and Journalism, Print Journalism
Minors in Armenian Studies & Middle Eastern Studies

What or whom first encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?
As a Fresno Armenian, I had known about the ASP for some time, and had seen how the program is such a huge part of

our community. When I transferred, I tried out two classes, Armenian 1A with Professor Der Mugrdechian, and a history class with Dr. La Porta. Both are so passionate and such great instructors that I wanted to stay a part of the program so I could continue learning under them.

What do you value most from your experiences taking Armenian Studies courses?
Learning to read and write in my mother tongue, diving deeper into Armenian history, and becoming exposed to the work done by Armenian Studies scholars, here, at Fresno State and around the world. The recent illuminated manuscript and book exhibit in the Henry Madden Library blew me away.

What are your plans after graduation?
I'll stay in Fresno for another year to save money, as well as gain more experience with my company before I fly out to the East Coast.

What words of wisdom do you have for incoming students?
It's all right if you're not entirely sure as to what you're doing because no one really does, but stay focused. Don't be afraid to get involved in programs, classes, and organizations on campus that relate to your passions, because if you don't experiment in college, when will you?

Ani Grigoryan
Business Administration, Management



What or whom first encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?
I decided that for myself. Because I am Armenian, I wanted to learn as much about my country and my roots as I could. I grew up in Moscow, Russia, and had never taken Armenian courses before, so this helped me learn more about my culture. I am glad that I decided to come to Fresno State—the city and the university have a lot of connections with Armenia and the Armenian people.

What do you value most from your experiences taking Armenian Studies courses?
I value everything: the knowledge, the connections I made, and the excellent environment to learn. All the Armenian Studies courses I have taken were the best ones of my college experience.

What are your plans after graduation?
I am applying to MBA programs in California. I am thinking of getting a Ph.D. in the future. Teaching college courses and doing research is something I would like to do.

What words of wisdom do you have for an incoming freshman?
Get involved! I joined the Armenian Students Organization my sophomore year and I regret not joining sooner. Try to find an organization that is close to who you are, as a person. Most of my best memories are connected with ASO.

Hagop Karakazian
Mathematics



What or whom first encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?
Being Armenian motivated me to learn more about Armenian literature, art, and history through the Armenian Studies Program.

What do you value most from your experiences taking Armenian Studies courses?
Armenian Studies courses helped me discover more about my ethnic identity and that is what I value in my experiences.

What are your plans after graduation?
I plan to continue studying at Fresno State to obtain a Master's degree in Mathematics.

What words of wisdom do you have for incoming students?
Attending university is the mission of stealing knowledge from your instructors and textbooks. Therefore, don't miss any classes and study daily to get the most out of everything you learn.



Erica Magarian
Criminology, Forensic Behavioral Science

How did you first become involved in the Hye Sharzhoom newspaper?
It was the beginning of the Fall 2009 semester when I received an email from Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, asking if anyone would be interested in taking on the role of photographer for *Hye Sharzhoom*. I had five years of photography experience and felt that it would be an excellent opportunity for me to learn more about Armenian history and culture.

What do you value most from your experiences working for Hye Sharzhoom?
My most valued experiences, while working for *Hye Sharzhoom*,

include hearing about the history of Armenia from the many excellent guest lecturers and learning so much more about the Armenian Genocide from the descendants of family members who were lost in the tragedy.

What are your plans after graduation?
My plans after graduation are to begin a new chapter of my life, searching for and settling into a career.

What words of wisdom do you have for incoming students?
Please, take advantage of the many opportunities Fresno State has to offer. Learn as much as you can and remember to have some fun along the way.

Photos: Cary Edmondson, University Photographer

Students Enjoy Varied Armenian Studies Classes

DENISE ALTOUNIAN
ANDREW ESGUERRA
TATEVIK HOVHANNISYAN
MARINE VARDANYAN
STAFF WRITERS

The Armenian Studies Program is often highlighted for its achievement in the community, for the scholarships it offers, and for its recognized professors. However, the classes offered are at the core of the Program. These classes connect students to the rich and vast history of the Armenian people, whether through literature, language, or history. Three such classes being taught this semester are Armenian Studies 10-Introduction to Armenian Studies; Armenian Studies 108A-Armenian History I; and Armenian 148-Masterpieces of Armenian Culture.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian



Prof. La Porta, left, with Armenian 148 students.

Valley and specifically in Fresno.

Armenians Studies 10 includes lectures that focus on specific topics, such as the Armenian alphabet, screenings of videos, such as the Armenian Genocide documentary *The River Ran Red*, and readings from texts about and by Armenians—for example an excerpt from *My Name is Aram* by William Saroyan.

“I enjoyed learning about different perspectives of Armenian history and culture that aren’t always accurately portrayed in the modern media. It made me more open-minded in how I perceive history,” said junior Armen Arikian about his experience in the class.

This course is an interesting combination of all things

Armenian, enticing students who may have heard little or nothing of the Armenian people, to begin to ask more questions. For those with more in depth questions regarding Armenian literature, language, history, and culture, there are opportunities to take an upper division advanced course offered by the Armenian Studies Program each semester.

Armenian Studies 108A-Armenian History I
The Armenian civilization is one of the oldest in the world. The mountainous land holds remarkable history, as Armenia was the first country to accept Christianity, and has experienced

Der Mugrdechian Speaks on Historic Armenia

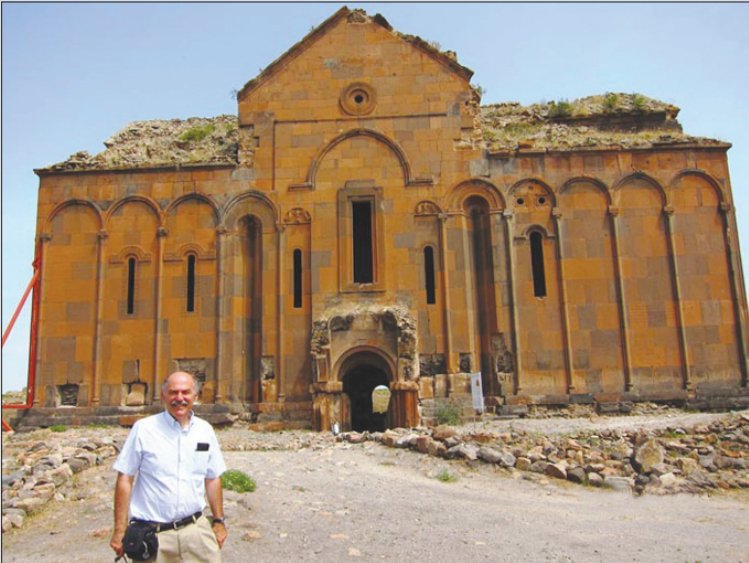


Photo: Harry Tavarian

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian in front of the 11th c. Cathedral of Ani, in the former Bagratid capital of Ani.

DENISE ALTOUNIAN
STAFF WRITER

The area that today comprises Eastern Turkey, holds both enduring and painful memories for Armenians. Many grew up listening to stories their grandparents and great-grandparents told about their lives in places such as Erzerum, Van, Kharpert and many other Armenian inhabited cities and towns within the Ottoman Empire. Unfortunately, the Genocide of 1915 brought a sudden and tragic end to Armenian life in these communities, and others like it. Constantinople too, had once been home to a strong and thriving Armenian community of intellectuals, businessmen, and artists, but is now much reduced in population. While some have made the pilgrimage to historic Armenia others are left wondering what that area holds today. Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program, was able to answer many of those questions in his presentation

“Historic Armenia: Memories and Images,” detailing his trip last summer to Turkey, to see the remnants of what was once historic Armenia. The lecture, which was sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program, took place on Wednesday, November 14, in the University Business Center. Professor Der Mugrdechian’s trip took place between June 23 and June 29. He traveled from Yerevan to Kars, Ani, Van, Bitlis, Moush, and Erzerum, and visited many other sites on the journey. Among the highlights of the trip was a visit to the Monastery of Varak and the island of Akhtamar in the region of Van. In the region of Moush, the greatest impact he felt was made by a visit to the St. Karapet Monastery and the Arakelots Monastery, both in Moush, and both of which had played important roles as being among the oldest pilgrimage sites in Armenia. The lecture outlined many of the changes that have taken place since 1915 and the state of the region today. The Armenian

presence could still be seen and felt throughout the lecture. Many of the sites that were home to Armenians families now show little signs of what was once there. Many of the churches have since been destroyed either by intentional action of the government or earthquakes. It is interesting to note that many of the areas once inhabited by Armenians are now home to Kurds. During a week spent in Istanbul in mid-June, Professor Der Mugrdechian visited the Armenian Patriarchate and met with Archbishop Aram Ateshian, visited Armenian churches and schools, walked the grounds of the Shishli Armenian cemetery, and visited the offices of the *Agos* newspaper, which was particularly moving as the editor Hrant Dink was assassinated in 2007 for speaking out about the Armenian Genocide. The audience left with a clearer idea of what life is like for Armenians in present-day Turkey and what has happened to many of the Armenian churches and historical monuments. “It was very interesting, yet sad to see so much Armenian history. It was also disheartening to find out that the Turkish government tries to make it look like the Armenians committed atrocities against them,” said senior Arpy Soghomonian. For those in the audience, it was painful to see the images of so many damaged or destroyed churches, all that endures of a once thriving Armenian culture. Despite the pain, it was something that every Armenian should see, as part of our history. The Armenian spirit will always be felt in Turkey, even if it can no longer be easily seen.

Kazan Visiting Scholar Siekierski at Fresno State

EMMA SHALJYAN
STAFF WRITER

How did a graduate student from Poland find himself in Fresno doing research in Armenian Studies? As an undergraduate student Konrad Siekierski visited Turkey in 2001 and he was so impressed by the remnants of the Armenian cultural heritage he saw, including the ruins of Ani, the city of Van, and the monastery of Akhtamar, that he decided to go to Armenia one day to see the living culture. This idea came true in 2005, after his successful submission of a M.A. research project on the topic of “The Situation of the Armenian Apostolic Church in post-Soviet Armenia.” This research project brought together his two main fields of scholarly interest: the anthropology of religion and the anthropology of post-socialism. This is Siekierski’s third visit to the United States. In March 2009 he participated in a conference, “Armenian Studies at a Threshold: Celebrating the 35th Anniversary of the Society for Armenian Studies,” where he met Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian for the first time. A year later he



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Kazan Visiting Scholar Konrad Siekierski.

participated in the 8th Armenian Graduate Students Colloquium organized at UCLA and after the event visited Fresno for a week. Professor Der Mugrdechian recognized the novelty and importance for Armenian Studies of Siekierski’s research and invited the young Polish scholar for a stay at Fresno State as a Kazan Visiting Scholar, to continue research and to work on his thesis “Pilgrimage and Sacred Places in the Context of Modern Armenian Culture,” based on fieldwork he is doing in Armenia. Siekierski received his B.A. and M.A degrees in Cultural

Anthropology at the University of Warsaw. For the past few years he has spent most of his time in Armenia and in countries with an Armenian Diaspora. In September 2007, Siekierski enrolled in a Ph.D. program in the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, where he is working under the supervision of Dr. Levon Abrahamian. A year later he also became a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of Eastern Studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland). Siekierski’s Ph.D. dissertation

ASO Participates in Culture Night



Left to right: ASO dancers Benjamin Tanielian, Hagop Ohanessian, Michael Rettig, Aramais Orkusyan, Ruzan Orkusyan, Marine Vardanyan, Tatevik Hovhannisyan, and Noel Lenard. Not pictured Ani and Lilit Grigoryan.

Photo: ASP Archive

DENISE ALTOUNIAN
STAFF WRITER

For one night only, the unique and diverse student population of Fresno State came together, on one stage, to share their culture through music and dance at Fresno State’s International Culture Night, held at the Satellite Student Union on Saturday, November 17. This annual event is organized by student volunteers to promote awareness about the many cultures of the international students studying at the university. The theme of the night was “Around the World in 80 Minutes” and featured performances from a number of student groups and international students representing eight countries. This year’s committee was headed by graduating senior Ani Grigoryan. After seeing Grigoryan’s commitment to the Armenian Students Organization’s performance the previous year, at International Culture Night (ICN), she was asked to help organize this year’s event. “Seeing so many people attend and hearing the

positive comments was definitely a highlight,” said Grigoryan, an international student herself. The ASO members performed a two-part set that consisted of both a song and a dance representing Armenia. Ruzan Orkusyan, Aramais Orkusyan, and Michael Rettig performed “Chinar Es,” a 20th century song made famous by Armenian composer and priest Komitas Vartabed. Ruzan Orkusyan’s vocals were accompanied by her brother Aramais Orkusyan, who played the *duduk*, and Michael Rettig who played the *oud*. ASO members Tatevik, Hovhannisyan, Noel Lenard, Marine Vardanyan, Ruzan Orkusyan, Ani Grigoryan, Lilit Grigoryan, Benjamin Tanielian, Michael Rettig, Aramais Orkusyan, and Hagop Ohanessian then danced to the music of “Sardarapat” by Ara Gevorgyan, choreographed by Ani and Lilit Grigoryan. Each student wore a modern version of traditional Armenian clothing, with aprons, belts, and headpieces.

SEE CULTURE NIGHT PAGE 6

concentrates on the modern period and includes attitudes of the institutional Church toward pilgrimage practice and folk/popular religiosity. He also conducted other projects in Armenia—on institutional revival of the Armenian Apostolic Church, on national discourse promoted by the Church, and on religious minorities in Armenia, including the neo-pagan movement. Siekierski is also engaged in research on the contemporary Armenian Diaspora in Europe and North America. His primary place of fieldwork became Romania, where he spent five months in 2011 and three months in 2012. “Every Armenian Diaspora has its own flavor and is unique with the way it mixes with local culture,” stated Siekierski. Romania, where a small but diverse and active Armenian Diaspora includes descendants from Ani, Genocide survivors, and newcomers from post-Soviet Armenia, clearly is a good illustration of his point. Armenians in Romania belong to the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Catholic churches, and while the former associate themselves mostly with Romanian

culture, the latter have strong ties with the Hungarian minority in Romania. During his stay in Fresno, Siekierski will study anthropological literature on pilgrimage, ritual, sacred places, and other relevant topics, as well as texts regarding religious life of Armenians in historical context. He also plans to do research on local Armenian communities. Siekierski will also be preparing two volumes: *The Anthropology of Modern Armenian Culture*, will be published in Polish and will contain the works of leading cultural anthropologists from Armenia; and the *Armenians in Post-Communist Europe* will be published in English, and will cover topics on contemporary Armenian communities in Central and Eastern Europe. Siekierski will also participate in two conferences and conduct archival research at the Keston Centre for Religion, Politics and Society in Waco, Texas. Siekierski likes the people, nature, landscape, and food of Armenia and finds Armenians to be friendly and open. “Armenia is a good country to be a foreigner in,” he concluded.

Hamazkayin Ani Dance Company Performs at Memorial Auditorium



ASO members with Hamazkayin Ani Dance Company at the November 10 performance.

Photo: ASP Archive

MARINE VARDANYAN
STAFF WRITER

Many things can reflect the tradition of the Armenian culture, but one rich and unique aspect, which has undoubtedly played a key role in preserving the Armenian heritage, is dance. Even now, it draws individuals together and on Saturday, November 10, feelings of pride and joy were awakened in members of the Armenian community who gathered in the Veterans Memorial Auditorium to enjoy a beautiful performance by the Hamazkayin Ani Dance Company of Los Angeles. Folk and traditional dances, along with contemporary pieces, captivated the audience throughout the night as the talented young dancers performed to music by Aram Khachaturian, Sayat Nova, Komitas, Ara Gevorgyan, and more.

The Ani Company danced throughout the night, performing 22 pieces. The evening began with “Hoy Nazan,” a popular Armenian folk-song, with both male and female dancers introducing themselves with energetic and vivacious dancing. The show continued with upbeat and amusing dances, along with performances with a more serious

tone. Each dance told a story—there was a dance about a woman with many suitors, one about a sibling rivalry, and another about the playfulness of boys in “Khagh Bar.” All of which brought smiles and laughter to the audience. Haunting dances, such as “Anreli Zankagadun” and “Requiem” (Hokehankisd) were performed in memory of all Hamazkayin Ani Dance Company members.

The concert would not have its full effect without the mesmerizing costumes of the performers. Vibrant blues and red colors dominated the stage and dazzled the audience. The men showcased their masculinity through dances with vigorous, strong, decisive movements and leaps, while the females illustrated their gracefulness with their flexible and expressive arms and hands.

The Fresno Armenian community enjoyed and appreciated the concert. “The best part was seeing so many people enjoy the performance,” said ASO member Ruzan Orkusyan.

This was not their first or last visit to Fresno, the Hamazkayin Ani Dance Company made sure their performance in Fresno was unforgettable.

CULTURE NIGHT, FROM PAGE 5

The students spent countless hours preparing for a successful performance because of the importance of the event. They felt that ICN was a great way to present the Armenian culture to the campus community. The fun and fast paced performance showcased the best of Armenian dance and the group received a rousing round of applause following their performance.

“I think it was important for ASO to take part in International Culture Night because Armenians have such a rich culture and it is good to share it with other students and to educate them about our beautiful dances and songs. We wanted to show everyone the beauty and spirit of the Armenian culture,” explained participant Marine Vardanyan.

The audience felt as if they had traveled the world in eighty minutes, taking a quick yet enjoyable stop in Armenia, thanks to ASO’s dedication and fantastic performance.

PETERS, FROM PAGE 1

been touched by Peters’ generosity, including the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, Valley Public Television, the San Joaquin College of Law, and the Boys and Girls Club.

Since the early 1980s, the Peters family has provided numerous gifts to Fresno State including the Pete P. Peters Endowment in Armenian Studies, the President’s Fund, Ag One Foundation, the Henry Madden Library, the Bulldog Foundation, the Leon S. Peters Honors Scholars, and the Business Associates Program.

We are updating our mailing list.

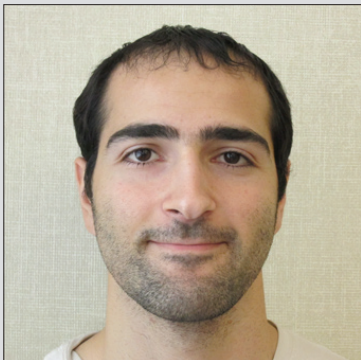
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Contact us at 559-278-2669 to update your address.

Eench Ga Chga

TATEVIK HOVHANNISYAN • STAFF WRITER

Describe how you and your family celebrate the holidays with Armenian and American traditions.



Zhora Pogosyan
Sophomore
Major: Biology

As Armenians, we celebrate the holidays with respect to the holy aspects. My family does not give gifts—we view it as a religious day. The stories and traditions behind all the holidays are what make them special for the Armenian culture.



Vartanush Mesropyan
Senior
Major: Psychology

Living in America we are encouraged to follow American

traditions and American holidays, dishes, and styles surround us. As Armenians, we celebrate these holidays, but with our elaborate Armenian dishes, such as our *khovavats* and *kufita*. We love going door-to-door and welcoming our friends and families with hospitality and lots of food. Sometimes, we add on turkey for Thanksgiving and ham for Christmas because it is what we see. But we stay Armenian and continue with our tradition as well.



Megi Hakobjanyan
Sophomore
Major: Political Science

We try not to mix Armenian and American holidays. On Thanksgiving we eat turkey, mashed potatoes and watch the Macy’s Day Parade. However, we celebrate Christmas on January 6 and try to keep it as authentic as possible. Like in Armenia, I love keeping Christmas simple and spiritual. It is not about the

presents or the hustle—it is about family and religion. It is important to respect the American ways, however it is essential to keep Armenian customs alive.



Anoush Hakobyan
Junior
Major: Child Development

When we were in Armenia, we celebrated Christmas on January 6. We would have a big white tree in the corner of our kitchen and our table would be filled with different types of food: *dolma*, *khach*, *perashki*, cheese, mashed potatoes, tomatoes, and more. Our families would go from one relative’s house to another, giving each other gifts and eating dinner together. After the feast, we would dance. But when we came to America, we started celebrating Christmas on December 25th. It’s still the same celebration as when we were in Armenia, but on a different day. We also celebrate on January 6.

Photos: Barlow Der Mugrdchian

Graduating Senior Reflects on How Armenian Studies Made a Difference in College Career

EVELYN DEMIRCHIAN
STAFF WRITER

It’s fitting that my last class at Fresno State ends the same way it began—in a small lecture room with Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian.

When I first transferred to Fresno State, I didn’t expect to dive into the Armenian Studies Program. It happened on a whim. I knew plenty about the Program and how deeply it was connected with the local Armenian community, but it wasn’t until the last weeks before my first semester that I decided to add an Armenian language class. It fit perfectly into my schedule, and that led me to add Dr. Sergio La Porta’s history course, for the same term.

On another whim, I decided to walk into a *Hye Sharzhoom* meeting. I have always had an interest in journalism, and thought this would be a good way to test the waters, to see if it was something I could really excel in. It was those first few experiences with *Hye Sharzhoom* that became the primary reason that I eventually switched my major to print journalism and committed to an Armenian Studies minor.

Hye Sharzhoom let me test out the waters with a variety of writing



Evelyn Demirchian

styles: event writing, opinion writing, and interviews. I can’t emphasize enough how influential my spring 2011 interview, with writer Mark Arax, was in my choice to go into writing.

Hye Sharzhoom, and the Armenian Studies Program, opened me up to the Armenian community of Fresno, in ways I hadn’t thought of before. I had left the Armenian Church years ago, and had unintentionally kept

an arms length of distance from my own. I was not only distant, but incredibly naïve about my own history, until I chose to write for *Hye Sharzhoom*.

As an Armenian-American, understanding the history of my community in the United States has led to personal growth and gave way to meeting some of the most interesting individuals, who are working and teaching in Armenian academics. Not to forget, my peers are some of the most enthusiastic, intelligent and hard-working friends I’ve made during my time at the university.

My experience at Fresno State wouldn’t have been nearly as dynamic without Professor Der Mugrdchian, Dr. La Porta, my ASP peers and *Hye Sharzhoom*. Thank you all for the opportunity to be involved. I hope to see *Hye Sharzhoom* continue for as long as there is an Armenian student community at Fresno State.

Armenian Studies Program
5245 N. Backer Ave., PB4
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HAROUTYUNIAN, FROM PAGE 1

tenth Kazan Visiting Professor, will be joining the Armenian Studies Program from the University of Venice in Spring 2013, to offer a fascinating three-unit course, Armenian Studies 120T, “Armenian Genocide and Translation.” The course will focus on studying the translation of literature on the Armenian Genocide, and how it has played a role in educating and raising awareness about it.

Dr. Haroutyunian is an accomplished scholar, having translated Antonia Arslan’s *Skylark Farm* from Italian into Armenian. A graduate of Yerevan State University, she received her Masters of Arts in pedagogy, philology, and literary translation in 1996, and later her Ph.D. in philology. She received her second Ph.D. in linguistics at the

University of Venice, where she has been a professor of Armenian language and literature since 2001.

Along with teaching, Dr. Haroutyunian has also directed her skills towards working as the Cultural Advisor to the Ambassador of Armenia in Italy, and the Italian and Armenian Website Coordinator and Translator for the Armenian Embassy in Italy. Recently, Dr. Haroutyunian completed mapping translations from the Armenian language into Italian, a project she has worked on with UNESCO.

In addition to teaching her course, Dr. Haroutyunian will also be giving three public lectures during her visit, which will be published in the Kazan Armenian Studies series.

We welcome Dr. Haroutyunian to Fresno and look forward to her enlightening lectures and class.

Alumnus Karkazian Pursues Fashion Career

Talene Karkazian
Class of 2009
Major: Fashion Merchandising
Minor: Armenian Studies
Active in the Armenian Students
Organization

After graduating from Fresno State, Karkazian went on to pursue a Masters Degree in Fashion Design and Apparel, at California State University, Northridge. She is currently working on her thesis, which focuses on the sustainability and upcycling of clothing. Upcycling is a process that takes discarded materials and transforms them into stylish and beautiful garments.

Karkazian has published in



Photo: ASP Archive

Talene Karkazian

the ITAA journal (International Textile and Apparel Association), and won four competitions around the United States. She has traveled to Philadelphia, to Canada, and participated in a competition for Cotton Incorporated. She

represented California State University, Northridge at the Canada Hemp Trade Alliance conference with two upcycled dresses made purely from hemp materials.

Along with working on her thesis, Karkazian also creates jewelry from recycled materials, which can be found on Facebook (Meow-Lynn Accessories and Clothing). She is truly thankful to God and her family for all the opportunities they have blessed her with. She also would like to thank the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State for supporting her throughout the years.

Armenian Students Make a Difference in USU



Photo: ASP Archive

Left to right: Tamar Karkazian, Arpy Soghomonian, Denise Altounian, and Andrew Esguerra.

STAFF REPORT

William Saroyan once wrote “For when two of them [Armenians] meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia.” Years later these words still ring true, but instead of just two Armenian students, it’s four Armenians at Fresno State.

Denise Altounian, Andrew Esguerra, Tamar Karkazian, and Ann Arpy Soghomonian are not only actively involved in the Armenian Studies Program and Armenian Students Organization, but are also part of the University Student Union Productions, a student-run campus programming board.

These students, along with their colleagues, plan, organize, and host various events throughout

the semester. USU Productions is one of the most active groups on campus, consisting of ten committees that strive to develop entertaining and enriching programs for students throughout the year.

By getting involved in the Fresno State community, these students have created a “new Armenia,” and have tied many Armenians on campus with USU Productions.

This new Armenia has not only brought them closer together, as Armenians, but has also educated their teammates and peers about Armenian culture and history.

Senior Tamar Karkazian, who has been working for USU Productions for the past three years and is now its director, is also *Hye Sharzhoom* editor. “It is great being involved in both

programs because the things I learn in one, I can share with the other,” stated Karkazian. Last semester USU Productions organized a “Camp Darfur” event, an informational exhibit on genocide in general, highlighting the Armenian Genocide. The event was organized by Denise Altounian because she realized the impact of genocide and the need to spread awareness.

“I wanted to become a part of Fresno State. I think it’s important to get involved with something you enjoy doing,” explained Altounian, on why she got involved.

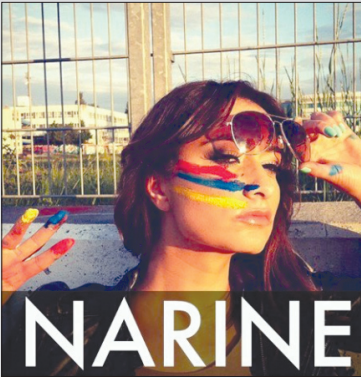
“My favorite part is the people. I love working with the different artists that perform, as well as all the people in our office,” said Arpy Soghomonian, who plans a mini-concert series every semester.

The ties to USU Productions positively impacts all the individuals and organizations involved.

This connection provides a means for ASO to get the word out about their events and to reach out to the broader campus community. It also helps ASO members stay informed about fun events happening on campus for students.

By getting involved with USU Productions, these individuals are able to share their culture and heritage with other students who might not have had the opportunity to really learn about it.

Armenian-Polish Singer Narine To Release Debut Album



SUREN OGANESSION
STAFF WRITER

Narine (singer Narine Torosyan) is an emerging synthpop solo act from Poland. She recently created waves over the past summer when the music video to her first single, “Hay Em Yes” [I Am Armenian],

premiered on Armenia TV’s “Bari Luys Hayer” [Good Morning Armenians] program. The music video is a patriotic track with both English and Armenian lyrics about her connection to her Armenian heritage. The song blends traditional Armenian vocals and catchy riffs with a synthesized electronic beat. In the music video, Narine Torosyan is seen roaming around Yerevan, candidly spreading finger paint on people’s cheeks in the colors of the Armenian flag.

Torosyan was born in Yerevan, but has been living in Poland since 1995. In choosing to become a singer she is continuing a family tradition, as many members of her family are linked to the national Opera House in Yerevan. In Poland, she became

the winner of the “Chance for Success” program, and she gained a wider audience and notoriety after participating in the Polish reality television program “Bar,” which aired on Polsat, a national broadcast station. She was then a presenter on “Music Ring,” a music program aired on Poland’s TV4.

Having signed onto the record label OffMusic, she is currently preparing for her debut album. Tracks from the album can be heard on her YouTube channel (found at <http://www.youtube.com/user/NarineMusic>). While singing chiefly in English, Narine Torosyan shows a deep connection with her roots, and anyone who enjoys synthpop or electronic music in general may find much to enjoy in her music.



L. to R.: Marine Vardanyan, Kevork Ajamian, Lauren Chardukian, Tatevik Hovhannisyan, and Hagop Ohanesian at Masis Ararat cemetery.

ASO, FROM PAGE 1

as they bowled and socialized. It was a great way for old and new members to meet and learn more about one another and their advisor, Professor Der Mugrdechian, who joined the students for a night of fun. Moreover, bowling was a great team building exercise, as everyone learned to cheer for and encourage one another.

ASO has also organized several volunteering events. For Veterans Day, members visited the Ararat and Ararat Masis cemeteries to place flags at the graves of Armenian-American veterans.

Volunteers braved the early morning cold to honor and remember the veterans. ASO executive member Hagop Ohanesian commented, “We

were excited for the opportunity to give back to the Armenian community and to reflect on the past and how Armenians have always been active and supportive of the countries that they live in.”

Also in November, ASO members had the pleasure of ushering at the Hamazkayin Ani Dance Company performance. The students helped seat attendees and afterwards enjoyed the beautiful performance.

More recently, ASO held a general meeting at the California Pizza Kitchen to inform members about upcoming events while also supporting a fundraiser for the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School.

Finally, ten ASO members performed November 17, at International Culture Night, at Fresno State and proudly presented their Armenian culture through music, dance, and traditional clothing.

Even as the semester ends, winter promises new volunteering opportunities, including Christmas Caroling at the California Armenian Home, social events, and a December 21 Christmas Party for ASO members and their families at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church.

Meanwhile, the ASO Executive is busy planning and coordinating new and exciting events for the upcoming spring semester.

SAS Holds Annual Membership Meeting in Denver

STAFF REPORT

The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) held its 39th Annual Membership meeting on Saturday, November 17, 2012, in conjunction with the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) annual conference held at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel.

At the annual meeting members reviewed the activities of the SAS for the past year and discussed future activities. Plans for panels were formulated for next year’s meeting, which will be held in October in New Orleans.

Three new members were elected to the Executive Council: Ani Kasparian (University of Michigan), Tamar Boyadjian (UCLA), and Barlow Der Mugrdechian (Fresno State). They join continuing members Kevork Bardakjian, Marc Mamigonian (NAASR), Bedross Der Matossian (University of Nebraska), and Nanor Kebranian (Columbia).

The Armenians of Colorado hosted a reception for SAS members Saturday evening. Richard Hovannisian (UCLA) was invited to speak on “Armenian Smyrna,” and then community members met with SAS members and had the opportunity to become familiar with the activities of the SAS.

During the MESA conference, SAS members attended a variety of panels devoted to different aspects of Middle Eastern studies and especially Armenian Studies.

A workshop on “New Strategies and Methodologies for Teaching of Modern Armenian” was organized by Barlow Der Mugrdechian. Kevork Bardakjian chaired the workshop and Ani Kasparian was a discussant.

A panel on “Armenians in the Modern World” featured Arda Melkonian and Doris Melkonian.

There were two Armenian themed panels on Monday, November 19. The first, “History and Community: The Armenians of Lebanon and Syria,” was organized by Barlow Der Mugrdechian, who also chaired the panel. Papers were



Photo: ASP Archive

The Armenians Of Colorado hosted members of the Society for Armenian Studies at a reception in Denver.

presented by Ohannes Guekjian, Ara Sanjian, and Vahram Shemmassian. Kevork Bardakjian was the discussant.

Later that day, there was a panel on “Armenia in Dialogue with the Near East, 8-15th Centuries,” chaired by Sergio La Porta. Papers were presented by

Christina Maranci, Alison Vacca, Sergio La Porta, and by Michael Pifer.

The aim of the Society for Armenian Studies is to promote the study of Armenian culture and society. The Secretariat of the Society is located at the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program.

ARMENIAN CLASSES, FROM PAGE 4

many disasters, wars, and revolutions. This Armenian history course covers these topics in great depth, as well as covering the origins of the Armenian people.

The course is taught by Professor Der Mugrdechian, who explains Armenian history in detail, making it impossible to get lost in the complicated and profound history. The course is a survey of Armenian history from the origins of the Armenians to the medieval period.

“Armenian history is definitely something I did not know much about, but it is interesting how Armenian history ties in with Persian and Roman history,” said student Greta Bell.

Although students find this course challenging because of the long period of history covered, they enjoy the knowledge they gain about the culture.

Armenian 148-Masterpieces of Armenian Culture

“Armenian 148 has allowed me to learn about my Armenian culture from a totally new perspective. Armenians have

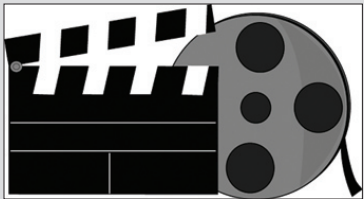
such a rich literary tradition that I would have otherwise never been exposed to it,” stated Denise Altounian, describing her experience in the course.

Dr. La Porta’s class is enlightening because of both the content and the teaching method. The masterpieces covered in this class include the oral traditions, such as that of the Armenian patriarch Hayk. The class features a number of genres, allowing something for everyone: epics, medieval religious poetry, and modern Armenian literature.

Whether you start the class with some familiarity to the works or with none at all, you will leave the class with a newfound understanding.

Dr. La Porta is an exceptional professor, who incorporates humor, sharing his own experiences, and encouraging class discussions. He creates an inviting atmosphere for students to feel comfortable to share their opinions and thoughts on the pieces being discussed. It is a class that teaches students to appreciate great literary works and learn why they have earned the honor of being called “masterpieces.”

14th Annual Armenian Film Festival



Fourteenth Annual Armenian Film Festival Spring 2013

Sponsored by the Armenian Students Organization and Armenian Studies Program

First Call for Entries

Entries are being sought for the Fourteenth Annual Armenian Film Festival to be held on the Fresno State campus.

Films made by Armenian directors/writers, or films with an Armenian theme are being sought.

Films may be in any language (with subtitles), English preferred.

Films may be on any topic, Armenian theme preferred. Film must be in video (NTSC)/DVD format.

Please send the video/DVD to: Armenian Film Festival c/o Armenian Studies Program 5245 N. Backer Ave. PB4 Fresno, CA 93740-8001

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