

massis Weekly

Volume 26, No. 33

Saturday, September 23, 2006

Third Armenia-Diaspora Conference Held In Yerevan

The three-day international Armenia-Diaspora conference that discussed ways of bolstering Armenia's links with its worldwide Diaspora drew to a close on Wednesday. As in the previous two conferences lack of concrete decisions made during the forum attended by over a thousand ethnic Armenians from around the world was evident.

The Armenian government had hoped to use the conference for drumming up Diaspora assistance to its stated efforts to alleviate the "huge" development gap between Yerevan and the rest of the country. But no donation pledges or other relevant decisions were announced by its organizers. They said the issue will be discussed in greater detail by smaller groups of participants.

Some delegates cautiously urged the Armenian authorities to tackle rampant corruption and serious problems with the rule of law which are believed to hamper greater Diaspora aid to Ar-



menia. "If you don't give us that, do not expect more from us," said Bedros Terzian, a French-Armenian activist. "We will remain stuck in this situation even if we multiply our efforts by ten or one hundred."

Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian, who presided over the conference, admitted that the lack of trust in the Armenian government's integrity is a major obstacle to its fund-raising efforts. "The higher the trust in the authorities, the people who get money to spend in on the people is, the larger that sum will be," he said.

Some Diaspora participants also called for the creation of an Armenian government agency tasked with coordinating relations with Armenian communities abroad. But the idea was rejected by the ruling regime.

8th Annual Armenian Festival Dedicated To 15th Anniversary Of The Independence Of Armenia

The 8th Annual Armenian Independence Day Festival, Organized by Nor Serout Cultural Association, Gaidz Youth Organization and Armenian Athletic Association, will take place, as in the past years, at the Verdugo Park in Glendale on Sunday, September 24, 2006 11:00am to 7:00p.m.

This year's festivities have special significance since they coincide with the 15th Anniversary of the independence of Armenia.

As in previous years, we expect a large number of our community members to come together and celebrate the Independence Day and the cultural diversity of the city. It will be a fun filled day for all, young and old, Armenians and non-Armenians.

During the daylong festivities there will be performances by famous Armenian singers and dance groups, children will enjoy fun games and older people will be able to participate in backgammon competitions.

Walking through the booths community members will find crafts made by Armenian artisans and enjoy the works of artists whose art will be on display.

Admission to the event is FREE!!!

Governor Schwarzenegger Commemorates The 15th Anniversary Of Armenian Independence

The Governor of California Arnold Scharzenegger has issued a message on the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of Armenian Independence. Following is the text of the letter:

September 21, 2006
Armenian Independence Day

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to all those commemorating the fifteenth anniversary of Armenian Independence.

It is always a special occasion when a people gather to rejoice in their heritage, and I am privileged to join with the Armenian-American community on this day of celebration. You enrich our nation - and especially our state - through your hard work, spirit of service and wonderful blend of cultural traditions. Thank you for your contributions to California's unique and evergrowing diversity.

In honoring our own ancestries, we not only come to a better understanding of ourselves, but we also gain a greater appreciation for the breadth of cultures and customs that make up our Golden State.

On behalf of all Californians, please accept my best wishes for a meaningful celebration and every future success.

Sincerely,
Arnold Schwarzenegger

Meeting Between SDHP Central Committee And ARF Bureau

On September 16 a meeting was held in Yerevan between the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party Central Committee and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Bureau.

During the meeting the participants discussed issues of by-partisan cooperation, Armenia-Diaspora Conference, Armenian Cause, Karabakh conflict and other issues.

The Hunchakian delegation was represented by its chairman Setrak Adjemian, Central Committee member Hrant Amirian and Dr. Matzag Poladian.

The ARF Bureau was represented by its chairman Hrant Markarian Armenian National Assembly Vice-president Vahan Hovanessian and Bureau member Albert Ajemian.

SDHP Press Office

Advocating A Radical Shift

Hrant Dink Calls For Campaign To Educate Ordinary Turks About The Genocide

Hrant Dink prominent Turkish-Armenian intellectual advocated on Tuesday a radical shift in the ongoing efforts at international recognition of the 1915 Armenian genocide, saying that Armenia and its influential Diaspora should educate ordinary Turks instead of seeking Western pressure on Ankara.

Dink, editor of the Istanbul-based Armenian newspaper "Agos," said the best way to get Turkey to address the mass killings and deportations of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire is to help it become a more democratic state.

"The Turkish state may one day recognize the genocide under pressure from various countries," Dink told a news conference in Yerevan. "This is possible. But is this the right solution? I don't think so."

The Armenian campaign has already led the governments and parliaments of about two dozen nations, including France, Russia, Italy and Canada, to officially term the slaughter of some 1.5 Ottoman Armenians a genocide. Diaspora organizations, backed by the authorities in Yerevan, believe that a similar move by the United States would dramatically heighten international pressure on the Turkish government, which vehemently denies the genocide. But their efforts to have the U.S. Congress pass a genocide resolution have been unsuccessful so far.

According to Dink, a genuine Turkish recognition could only be the result of domestic pressure. "The Turkish people



Hrant Dink

know nothing about those people," he argued. "Turkish society needs time to learn things. There is a need for a serious examination of history. Armenians must have a role in that examination."

"Does the campaign for genocide recognition facilitate or complicate this process? In my view, we just give more ammunition to Turkish nationalists," he added.

Calling the Armenian massacres a genocide is still considered a crime in Turkey. Dink himself was given a suspended six-month prison sentence last July for speaking up on the subject that was until recently considered a taboo in the country. He was convicted under a controversial article of the Turkish Criminal Code that imposes prison sentences on those who "insult Turkishness." The clause, condemned by the European Union, has been used to bring charges against dozens of Turkish journalists, publishers and scholars questioning the official line on the bloody events of 1915-1918.

Gallup Poll:

Armenians Against Open Border With Turkey

Most Armenians are against having an open border with Turkey as long as the latter refuses to recognize the 1915 Armenian genocide, according to a new U.S.-funded opinion poll.

The nationwide survey, the second of its kind, was commissioned by the U.S. Agency for International Development and conducted by the U.S. International Republican Institute, the Gallup Organization and the Armenian Sociological Association in early August.

It found that 57 percent of some 1,200 people randomly interviewed across

Armenia believe their government must not agree to the reopening of the Turkish-Armenian border without Turkish recognition of the genocide. Only 39 percent backed Yerevan's insistence on an unconditional resumption of cross-border travel and commerce between the two estranged nations.

Turkey closed its land border with Armenia in 1993, at the height of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, out of solidarity with Azerbaijan, its closest regional ally.

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Armenian Press Freedom In Serious Danger

Armen Harutiunian, the state human rights ombudsman, warned on Thursday that violence against Armenian journalists seems to be becoming "systematic" and poses a serious threat to press freedom in the country.

"Freedom of speech is really in danger," he said. "We urge all relevant law-enforcement bodies to take the problem very seriously and solve those crimes."

"When you have four or five such cases in as many months, you can't help but see an alarming trend," he added.

Harutiunian joined last week Armenian media associations and human rights groups in condemning the reported beating of Hovannes Galajian, editor of the opposition-linked "Iravunk" newspaper. They fear that such attacks could become more frequent in advance of next year's parliamentary elections because of the Armenian authorities' failure so far to punish their perpetrators.

Galajian and his staff suspect that powerful government figures such as Defense Minister Serzh Sarksian may have been behind the attack. Sarksian has angrily rejected the suspicion, saying that he has no habit of fighting against "wretched people" like Galajian.

Harutiunian strongly disapproved



**Human rights ombudsman
Armen Harutiunian**

of the derogatory description. "No newspaper editor or person in general can be wretched," he told a news conference. "And I am convinced that there are no wretched people in our society. If somebody is portrayed as wretched, we are ready to stand by them."

The ombudsman also described as too harsh a four-year prison sentence given last Friday to another newspaper editor, Arman Babajanian, who was convicted of illegally avoiding military service. He admitted that Babajanian may well have received a shorter sentence if his "Zhamanak Yerevan" newspaper was not in opposition to the government.

"I don't think that his action warranted a four-year imprisonment," said Harutiunian.

Armenia Fund Unveils International Telethon Campaign

Telethon 2006 to Benefit Hadrut Regional Development

LOS ANGELES -- On Wednesday, September 13, 2006, Armenia Fund United States Western Region launched the 9th annual international telethon's campaign with a special reception at the Alex Theatre Forecourt. The event highlighted the start of the campaign with a special telethon logo unveiling program with the participation of all major Armenian-American organizations as well as religious and community leaders.

In the light of the 15th anniversary of the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh, the 2006 campaign is dubbed as "I Love Armenia" and "I Love Artsakh", which features a pomegranate with its seeds in formation of a heart as the telethon logo. The dual international campaign jointly launched from Los Angeles, New York, Paris and Yerevan will be widely used by Armenia Fund's 19 international offices to promote the 2006 Telethon as well as highlight the 15 years of independence of the republics. The Telethon is set to air internationally on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 2006.

Los Angeles based graphic artist Helena Gregorian designed the logo. Gregorian draws years of experience in the graphic design and arts industry. Armenia Fund's Telethon 2005 was designed by Gregorian as well.

The special reception drew hundreds of Armenia Fund supporters, community leaders and activists, as well as special guests. Present were also Armenia Fund's Board members. The Fund's Board has a unique composition of the heads of all major Armenian organizations, churches and political parties. Essentially, the Fund is the only Pan-Armenian organization both within Armenia and the Diaspora at

large. Chairperson of Armenia Fund United States Western Region Maria Mehranian welcomed the attendees to the event and thanked all those who were once again at the forefront of supporting Armenia Fund's nation building projects.

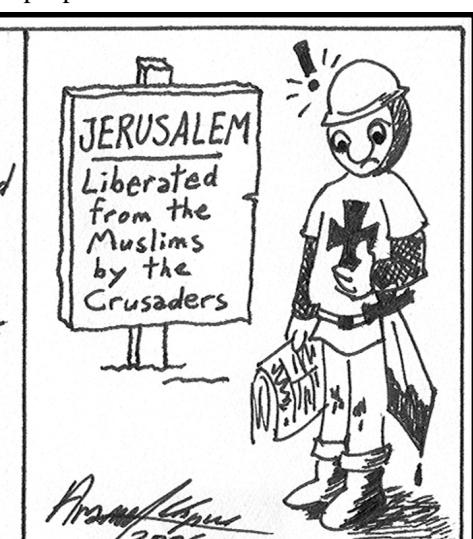
Building on the merits of the Martakert Regional Development plan, which is underway, Armenia Fund plans on implementing a parallel program in the southernmost borderline region – Hadrut. During the liberation war, nearly all regions of Nagorno Karabakh came under heavy fire from Azeri forces. The brutal war brought insurmountable damage to the infrastructure as well as the local economy.

Armenia Fund continues implementing major regional development projects aimed at enhancing the socio-economic standards of Nagorno Karabakh

Armenia Fund's 9th international telethon will air in all major U.S. markets as well as internationally in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, South America, and Australia.



Muslims Outraged By Statements Included in The Pope's Lecture, ... Head of the Vatican Press Office Federico Lombardi responded to this criticism, stating that Benedict XVI respects Islam, but he does not accept violence motivated by religion.



Armenia's Tigran Hamasyan Wins 2006 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition

The Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition wrapped up this weekend with finals and a gala concert on September 17 at the Kennedy Center celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.

Taking first prize in the competition, devoted this year to the piano, was 19-year-old Tigran Hamasyan, a native of Armenia who is currently an undergraduate at the University of Southern California.

Americans Gerald Clayton, 22, and Aaron Parks, 23, took second and third place. Clayton is also a student at USC, while Parks currently tours with trumpeter Terence Blanchard.

While the jury — which included Herbie Hancock, Andrew Hill, Danilo Perez, Renee Rosnes, Billy Taylor and Randy Weston — deliberated over the performances of the three finalists, the full house at the Kennedy Center was treated to an all-star gala featuring Wayne Shorter, Joshua Redman, Terence Blanchard, Patti Austin, Jane Monheit, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Thelonious Monk's son T.S.

Hosting the evening were Quincy Jones, Phylicia Rashad and Billy Dee Williams; honorary co-chairs Madeline Albright and Colin Powell presented a special award from the Monk Institute to Stevie Wonder for his longtime support of jazz education.

The Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition, presented annually by the Institute, has launched the careers of, among others, singers Jane Monheit and



Tigran Hamasyan

Tierney Sutton, saxophonist Joshua Redman, and pianists Marcus Roberts, Jacky Terrasson and Joey DeFrancesco.

About Tigran Hamasyan

Tigran Hamasyan was born in Gyumri, Armenia and began playing piano at age 10. He currently attends the University of Southern California where he is studying jazz piano. Influenced by Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker, Art Tatum, Miles Davis and Bud Powell, Hamasyan began writing his first piano compositions at a young age. He recently won first prize at the Monaco Jazz Soloist Competition and has performed at concerts, competitions, festivals throughout Europe.

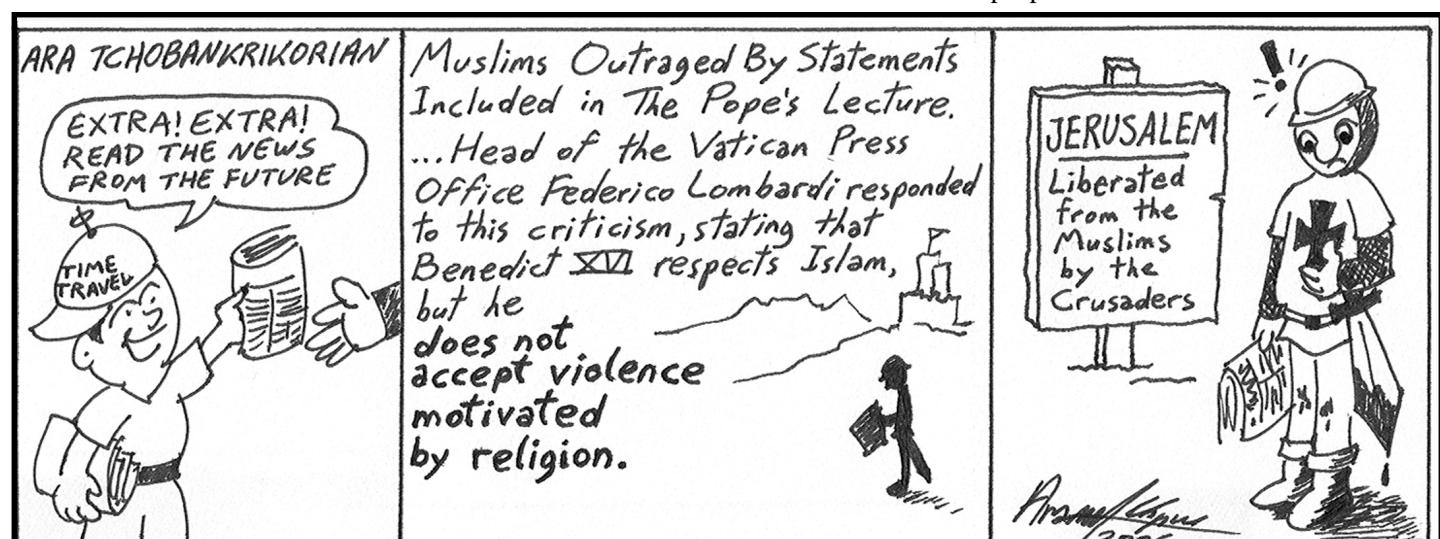
AMAAAwards Scholarships To Needy And Deserving Students

As the rising cost of education in the United States becomes a profound concern, many undergraduate students who desire to secure a better future, rely on scholarship aid. Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), sharing this same concern, established its scholarship program to help needy and promising undergraduate students. Over the past 35 years of its existence, this scholarship program has helped thousands of college and university students. So far AMAA has provided three million dollars in direct scholarship aid.

The Chairman of the AMAA Scholarship Committee, Mr. Robert Hekemian, Jr., just recently reported the awarding of \$110,000 in direct scholarship grants to college and university students for the 2006-07 academic year. This year 72 students applied and, upon verification of need and academic qualifications, 65 students were awarded scholarships. In

addition, \$10,000.00 was awarded to university students in Armenia and \$300,000 has been provided to various institutions of higher learning, and charitable organizations for distribution. These institutions include Haigazian University of Beirut, in Lebanon and California State University in Fresno.

The Scholarship Committee, in cooperation with the AMAA Publication Committee, this year evaluated the essays submitted by the students with their applications and chose the best essays. Additional grants from the James Jameson Essay Contest Fund were awarded to the following students: Aram Levon Shemassian, Charles Kaladjian, Karine Manukyan, Jessica Vitale and Gregory Chavoor. Their essays were qualified to be the best five. The scholarships, which were granted this year, were awarded from 70 AMAA endowment funds established for this purpose.



August 6th - The escalators hidden in the concrete of the colossal Cascade can take one only part way up the hillside. A relatively short hike from the staircase's unfinished terminus, however, will lead you to Victory Park, where a bronze statue of Mair Hairenik stands, sword in hand, in the shape of a cross, overlooking Yerevan. The trek to the view is enjoyable in the early evening air. That's where we come in, on a leisurely race to meet a sunset that is painting the city center gold. See us pointing at the Massis in the dusk. We trace the ridge of the snow line in the air like a sentence from an arabic textbook. There's the spot where we'd stood at the summit. 17 thousand feet, amazing! Alien lights flicker and appear two-thirds the way up the mountain, and we descend into the night.

Daghlar! Daghlar!

On a stuffy but modern bus from the garrison town of Erzurum, sitting among wool vested men and women in black chadors, listening communally to a rehashing of a pop hit from the seventies as the shells of overturned trucks pass on the wayside, Alisa and I enjoy our first glimpse of the enormity that marks the end of the Anatolian plateau. The upper reaches of Ararat are faint through a halo of fog, the triple peak crown obscured by a late afternoon accumulation of ominous storm clouds. There is no other wonder of its caliber.

Dogubeyazut is a sprawling frontier outpost, though one of the well-dressed locals explains that the nearby borders aren't really significant at all. For him the region is the heartland of greater Kurdistan, one that includes adjacent sections of Iraq, Iran, and Syria. The Kurds and I have something in common, 'Historic' Armenia, the Eden my people lost and they inherited. They celebrate our troubled land with exotic words written to familiar melodies. Songs of love, patriotism, and rebellion are recorded onto cassettes and packed neatly by the score into sturdy wooden handcarts, where they bake and warp and fade in the summer heat, while dusty merchants await your buying pleasure. Apricot music permeates the air of the rustic town at the foot of the dormant volcano.

The Ishak Pasha has decent rooms, and a picture perfect view of Ararat. Its on a tapestry that the night clerk points to on check in. In the lobby, we meet Mustapha, an overworked tout who considers us lucky to have found him. He makes his living hawking day trips, but will provide us with all we need for our expedition, leaving us time also for sightseeing. The 7 kilometer stretch to the newly renovated Seljuk palace named after our hotel is a cakewalk. The deserted Saray with its Urartian walls was designed in the seventeenth century by an Armenian architect and built for a Kurdish prince, or so the latest guidebook states. No one really knows, here history is written and re-written to taste. On the way back to town, we are invited to pick and sample the spotted fruits of a lone orchard among endless hayfields, as a preoccupied dust devil whirls about like a dervish in search of Nirvana. Nearby, Ataturk's flag is carved into a barren mound surrounded by razor wire. Beside it is a disclaimer that bites, "What Joy it is to be a Turk." Little Ararat is majestic in the distance.

The Approach

Fettah, a protoge, takes us shop-

An Ararat Odyssey

By Harry Kalfaian

"In Armenia there is a very high mountain - the highest in existence - and its name is Ararat. On that mountain Noah's Ark landed after the flood. No one can climb the mountain because of the great quantity of snow on it in winter and summer. But at the summit a great black object is always visible, the Ark of Noah."

Quote from the era of Marco Polo's travels



Top of the world: at mount Ararat Summit

ping at the Hipermarket in the eve, and returns to pick us up at 6AM sharp. We meet a Polish couple, Wojtek and Kasia, who had just come from the Khatchkars, a week of strenuous hiking in lower altitudes near the Black Sea. The four of us help Fettah and the driver load our packs onto the roof of a dolmush and we all make the one hour drive to a location beyond Ellikoy, an abandoned village of

with the yols of the mountain. He leads us at a hurried pace along the 'classic' trail. Its the easiest and, therefore, the most popular route to the summit.

Along the lower slope, teenagers offer us a yoghurt drink they call 'Yurt.' Occasionally, wild voices call from the foothills, & sometimes these are followed by barefoot urchins running at us with open palm raised, chanting, "Para!



Back to Dogubeyazut

cross carvings and Armenian ghosts. A turn near the army barracks takes us off the trunk highway, and up nine hundred meters on a dirt road. Our minivan stumbles and kicks up dust till we arrive at a rubble boulevard of cooled lava, beyond which only a jeep can go. Fifteen miles from town, at 2500 meters (about seven thousand feet) we have breakfast tea and wait.

A tweed capped herdsman, our weather wrinkled guide, arrives with his grandson and a lean but sturdy horse. We wiggle our luggage into a burlap sack, made of two tear-free Achtamar brand grain casings sewn together. The fifty-five year old Ahmed slowly ties the bags, taking great care for balance, and leaves us to follow the child. Mehmet, a sparrow in a New England Patriots hat, is ten years old and already well acquainted

Para! ...Hello maah-ney." If it were springtime, the alpine meadows would be full of red poppies and buzzing with the fat lazy bees that sway in their nectar. The seventh month, however, is brittle.

Muhajirs

Four hours and five tranquil miles later, we arrive at Yeshil Camp. On the higher side of a split is a yayla where semi-nomadic villagers annually bring their animals to graze for the warmer season. To the far right is a more formal spread where we see a dozen two person domes, bivouac showers, and a garden hose running down from the faraway glacier. Mehmet steers us toward the summer pasture, where we are invited out of the strong midday sun into the shade of a communal tarpaulin shelter. Half a dozen children emerge to greet us.

They take our shoes, and bring us never-ending tulip glasses of chay heated over a smoky and pungent dung cake fire. As sugar cubes dissolve, and the clinking sounds of tiny metal spoons fill the 'room', the family members introduce themselves with the courtesy of the Von Trapps, the youngest one punctuating her name with a triple clap of tiny hands and a flick of blond hair away from her dark face.

"Green" Camp is at 3200 meters, roughly ten thousand feet, and sits on an angle. In the dry seabed of civilization below, bizarrely located above the horizon, is Durupinar, the site where some claim the Ark of Noah rests. This theory is centered upon a ship shaped geological aberration, and is backed by the discovery of iron rivets. For me, the Armenian traditions are far more appealing. Legend has it that the triple decked barge that survived both the great flood and 4500 years of weathering is preserved today inside three hundred feet of ice on the 'smiling' side of Ararat. It is supposed to be in the treacherous and hard to reach Ahora Gorge. There was a settlement near the site, but a landslide buried it after the avalanche of 1840, one that crushed over a thousand people, all Armenians I presume. Its the site of an off-limits Turkish transmitter station now, whose lights can be seen from Yerevan.

Enter the Iranians... four wild eyed climbers who hail from the Caspian Sea, traveling under the constant watch of two equally jovial cameramen wielding cheap Panasonics with Farsi text in the viewfinder. One barges into our tent at the ungodly hour of 8:30 pm, shining a flashlight and insisting we find him a set of crampons. They made the crossing from the nearby border last night. Their arrival completes our group of ten.

Day Two

6AM and in the early light there are already signs of life. A descendant of one of the two by twos, a bearded goat on a perch, gives me an unusual and knowing grin as I take in the fresh autumn-like air and search for a secluded spot, toilet paper roll in hand. Not a Marriott in sight, nor a porcelain footprint. A flock of koyu are let out of a stone pen and led over a hillock with a series of strange calls. I make a move toward a nursing foal, and within seconds am surrounded by a crew of snarling sheepdogs. An old woman stops her washing and throws a few pebbles at the hounds, keeping them at bay. Mehmet and his sister, carrying a large empty container, disappear over a ledge toward a hidden sulfur spring, the fountain of old age. The water is not exactly toxic, but we were told not to drink it, so prepare our morning beverage with what we brought along.

Ahmed appears from out the broken boulders with our steed and a backpack of his own, and as he loads the three bags, a girl in a red dress, Rubiya, braids the black hair on its mane. We're off again on another three hour hike, this time for a distance of only a mile and a half. The terrain is extremely rocky and the switchbacks become more numerous as the incline becomes more severe. I take a few shortcuts and gain some

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Harry Kalfaian works as a cameraman at the FOX newschannel in New York. This article is about his recent journey to the summit of Mt. Ararat.

An Ararat Odyssey

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ground. When I pause to look back from a vantage point, I notice the Iranians have stopped to dance a Dabke with some passers by on mules, while Wojtek is nodding his noggin with disapproval, well sheltered under a broad chapeau.

As the atmosphere gets thinner, the gunesh gets stronger, and sunscreen becomes an obvious necessity. Alisa is up ahead in a shady alcove talking to two licensed guides who are shepherding a flock of clients down from the summit. The topic of conversation turns to yours truly, the human lobster. I'm offered a container of SPF 60, and rub my beard as I ponder the expeditioners' descending. They are covered from head to ankle in bright Gore-Tex and Polar Fleece, except for their faces, which are painted almost a Geisha white with zinc oxide. I am without a hat, wearing jeans and a black cotton guinea tee. My skin is red as a nur. One last hurdle, a steep where our horse stumbles and kicks up dust, and we arrive on a convex overcrowded obsidian ledge.

High Camp

We make camp on a prize vista blocked by two government-issue mess tents, and discover our propane tank is out of order. As we resign ourselves to the fact there would be no improvised mint souppilaf for sustenance that evening, a group of four English speakers arrive at the dining hall closest us and we pop over for 'Hye' tea. They are American Embassy workers who'd hired a car and come from Yerevan, no more than thirty miles away. Not surprisingly, it had taken them a week to cover the short distance. I think it is unfortunate that there is no direct route between the two republics, but the ambassadors say they enjoyed their travels through Georgia.

Alisa and I walk to a cascading creek at the edge of camp to fetch water, which runs ice cold from out a melting glacial tongue. I cannot help but gorge myself on gulps so big that my brain freezes and I have to pull my hands and face away. She refrains from doing the same and sighs at the potential bacteriological repercussions of what I'd just done. I fill an empty plastic Fatsu bottle, and study its contents. It is cloudy with silt.

The leader of a group of twenty-five Germans gathering at the second mess tent invites us over for dinner. He's a continental Turk from Ankara University, who tells us how Agri is different from many mountains in that it is unregulated and therefore environmentally unprotected, pointing out that "there is garbage everywhere." We eat tasty gyuvech and couscous doled out of steaming cauldrons and leave no room for the sweet halva dessert. "A high carb diet is essential," he explains, it will provide the energy we need for the tough journey ahead. Since the next trek was to

be an early one, we prepare a gear pack for the 3 mile return trip and turn in with the sun. Outside, the temperature is below freezing. With a bed of jackets as blankets and backpacks for pillows, inside our tent, it's warm and cozy.

Endurance

Two seventeen AM according to my Nikon and a string of swaying headlamp beams are already winding their way serpentine along an invisible path towards a destination just west of Arcturus. The Germans are off, the Poles are boiling coffee by flashlight, and the Iranians are collecting themselves noisily, having chosen to top it without crampons instead of waiting till our return. I look up and lose myself among the thousand stars of an all-encompassing night sky while trying to get the thick zipper working on my duvet coat. A shape trudges slowly in the dark, like a scavenging bear or a wolf on the prowl, but before I lament the lack of guard dogs comes a faint taint of burning tobacco. It's Khalle Ahmed, the ember of a fancy Chibouk glowing in one hand and the shadow of a walking stick in the other.

At 4200 meters (about fourteen thousand feet), we are already closer to the heavens than the Sis, and as we move up and along cool blue contours of dew-frosted scree, it begins to grow twilight. Lesser Ararat appears gradually out an amber glow that stretches across the Serdarbulak saddle, but I'm too busy to enjoy the breathtaking view. I haven't adjusted to the ultra-high altitudes very well and it shows. With every two normal sized steps I want to rest. AMS is rough, but I decide it won't stop me from going on.

"Don't look up don't look down," Alisa reminds me repeatedly, "you'll get a distorted sense of progress." "Don't sit," the Iranians insist, you may be one of the two a year that nap and never wake up. I follow orders as best I can, but am truly lethargic, only pushes from behind keep me going. The last clear image I have with company is of a pre-dawn Ahmed. He is opening his pack with the near stillness of a heroin addict and hand-feeding me pretzels, one by one on one knee, till the cellophane is empty. He gives me a corklike wafer, an energy pill that has no effect. Alisa pleads with me to return to base camp. Though, I am delirious with oxygen deprivation, I release her and the others from any obligations toward me, then continue alone till I reach the permanent snow line, and a stretch of level ground. It's very windy on the heights, but not unbearably cold. I don't think I even put on my winter gloves.

The Summit

I walk in the neve field for about an hour on a single spiked shoe, carrying a short pickaxe that is of no use. I don't remember putting the crampon

Armenians Against Open Border With Turkey

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Successive governments in Ankara have made its reopening conditional on a resolution of the Karabakh conflict. They have also demanded an end to the increasingly successful genocide recognition campaign.

Armenian public opinion seems simi-

larly apprehensive about Turkey, with 80 percent of those polled viewing their Western neighbor as a threat to Armenia's national security. Conversely, 85 percent referred to Russia as a strategic partner of Armenia. It was followed by France (53 percent) and the European Union (36 percent) as a whole. Only 16 percent mentioned the United States.



Sis - lesser Ararat at 5:30am day three

on, and assume its mate is being shared with the Iranians. I'd gladly trade the lot for a staff or a set of poles. At the other end of the shallow crater I pass Wojtek. He says the summit is just fifty meters away over a ridge. He'd just been, and is duly elated. I survey the ridge. It looks like the crest of a Ayvazovsky wave frozen in mid-break. The glacier is crunchy and full of wormholes, but compact, so I make the grade without stumbling. Suddenly, I'm surrounded by bundled people in sunglasses jumping for joy on a large white dune crisscrossed with bootprints. This is it, then, the peak of Ararat, top of the world! I take a snap of a group of three posing with what looks like a Lithuanian flag and it clicks. Next, I turn the camera to myself to capture the moment of a lifetime and get the red letters, 'battery malfunction'. Its 8AM give or take fifteen minutes.

Beyond the blinding ice, miles below, is the earth's floor. Its hazy but I can see the flat brown plains of Haiastan on the northern side. I'm so high up I can distinguish nothing, not Yerevan, not Khor Virap, not even Mt Kazbegi on the Chechen border. I'm forced to imagine these things. Instead, for an unmeasurable moment, I feel I am standing at the helm of a big ship adrift in a sea of minnowed humanity. I've become Noy, the ancient mariner. Ararat is my ark.

The Return

The Germans have dispensed with order and dispersed, descending at their leisure. Living trail markers, they pop up in unexpected places in pairs. After days of looking always at Ararat, reaching the summit meant facing the world once again, but my attention is focused primarily on the ground at my feet. The jagged earth is moving. With every slippery step a minor rockslide, and a crushing pain in the toes.

At one point, I hear what sounds like gunfire coming from a ravine. What could certainly be a PKK training mission is only the heat of day loosening boulders from their sober surroundings. Rocks the size of pyramid bricks tumble and crack in explosive plumes of millenium ash to the left of me. It happens in the snow filled gully to my right, as well. Nature's bowling game breaks the monotony. Its an amusement, like watching the news.

Around noontime, I near a camp, though it looks unfamiliar. I reach an abode at the outskirts and inquire if

there is another nearby. "Yes," comes the answer with a thick accent, "But we are tze people who fed you last night. Your friends, tzye are over there." I am relieved to be with my companions again. As their midday prayers are wrapped up and the kilims put away, "yalla" comes the rallying cry, and we're back on the track once more.

Vini, Vidi, Vici

Below fourteen thousand feet, I am my old self, but with bruised feet and sore muscles I quickly fall behind. I can see now the extent of the community that inhabits the habitable altitudes. The vast expanse of rolling baseland is peppered with single-family shelters. The trails are full of somber Europeans, moving along with a mechanical energy. I salute the familiar ones as they pass, and meet a scout sent to fetch me. He motions that I hurry. He has a horse for me to ride the rest of the way to prevent further delay. "Hayur, no thanks. I can walk." He stops for a moment, puzzled and repeats himself, "yes?" "No!"

Yeshil camp is lively. Alisa is entertaining a group of children, running in circles around her. Little shave headed Ogdun stands at her side, his head moving about in all directions. The Iranians are doing monologues, shaking hands or talking on the phone long distance. Ahmed is caterwauling a Kurdish folk tune, for the cameras. Wojtek is looking at his watch and muttering something about getting back to town before dark. I'd like to prolong nature a spell or two longer, but he presses the point. Tomorrow a real rain will fall.

Seventeen hours have passed since we left for the peak, and now we're taking leave of our guide and going on home, which for tonight will be Dogbiscuit again. In the crowded van at golden hour, listening to the melancholy chimes of something Googoosh that launches the Iranians into a limb waving frenzy, which spreads to the driver and buries the Poles under a slightly touchy introversion, I can't help but feel a certain clear connection with the people around me and the land under our wheels. Ararat brought us together to share a truly unique experience that each one of us will feel in the muscles of our bodies and the sinews of our souls for days and maybe weeks to come, and for that I'm grateful, grateful to be an Armenian on Ararat.

ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ԲԱՐԵԳՈՐԾԱԿԱՆ ԸՆԴՀԱՆՈՒՐ ՄԻՈՒԹԻՒՆ ■ ARMENIAN GENERAL BENEVOLENT UNION



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Անգլիոյ ֆութապոլի առաջնութեան հիմքերորդ հանգրուանի մրցումներուն արդիւնքները	0-1	Մանչեսթր Եուն. - Արսենալ	0-1
Չելսի - Լիվըրփուլ	1-0	Շեֆիլտ Եուն. - Ռիտինկ	1-2
Էվրօրոն - Ուիկան Արլեթիք	2-2	Թորենհամ - Ֆուլհամ	0-0
Ուէսթ Ջամ - Նիւքսուլ Եուն.	0-2	Պոլթըն - Սիտըլզպորո	0-0
Ուաթֆորտ - Ասթոն Վիլլա	0-0	Պլէքպոլ - Մանչեսթր Սիթի	4-2

Առաջատար խումբերու դասաւորումը

Փորթսոնտր	5	4	1	0	9-0	13
Մանչեսթր Եունայթընտ	5	4	0	1	11-3	12
Չելսի	5	4	0	1	9-3	12
Էվրօրոն	5	3	2	0	10-4	11
Ասթոն Վիլլա	5	2	3	0	6-3	9
Ռիտինկ	5	3	0	1	7-6	9

ԳԵՐՄԱՆԻՈՅ ԱՌԱՋՆՈՒԹԻՒՆԳերմանիոյ ֆութապոլի առաջնութեան չորրորդ հանգրուանի
մրցումներուն արդիւնքները

Վուլպուրկ - Ջամովըն-96	1-2	Այնթ. Ֆրանքֆորթ - Պ. Լիվըրփուզըն	
Տորթմունտ - Ջամպուրկ	1-0		3-1
Քոթպիւս - ՖՍՎ Մայնց	2-0	Արմ. Պիլցֆէլտ - Պայերն Միւնիս	2-1
Վարտըն Պույմըն - Շթութգարք	2-3	Շերթա Պերլին - Շալքէ	2-0
Նիւրեմպուրկ - ՎՖԼ Պոխում	1-1	Ավախըն - Մէնշենդելատպախ	4-2

Առաջատար խումբերու դասաւորումը

Շերթա Պերլին	4	3	1	0	9-1	10
Նիւրեմպուրկ	4	2	2	0	5-1	8
Պայերն Միւնիս	4	2	1	1	5-3	7
Շալքէ-04	4	2	1	1	4-3	7
Քոթպիւս	4	2	1	1	5-4	7
Պոխուսիա Տորթմունտ	4	2	1	1	5-4	7

ԻՏԱԼԻՈՅ ԱՌԱՋՆՈՒԹԻՒՆԻտալիայի ֆութապոլի առաջնութեան երկրորդ հանգրուանի
մրցումներուն արդիւնքները

Ուեճինա - Քալիարի	2-1	Սիենա - Ա. Էս. Ուոմա	1-3
Ինքեր Միլան - Սամտորիա	1-1	Քաթանիա - Արալանթա	0-0
Էնվոլի - Քիեւլո	1-1	Փարմա - Ա. Սէ. Միլան	0-2
Լիվորնո - Ֆիորենտինա	1-0	Լացիո - Փալերմո	1-2
Ուտինեգէ - Թորինո	2-0	Ասքոլի - Մեսինա	1-1

Առաջատար խումբերու դասաւորումը

Ա. Էս. Ուոմա	2	2	0	0	5-1	6
Փալերմո	2	2	0	0	6-4	6
Արալանթա	2	1	1	0	3-1	4
Ինքեր Միլան	2	1	1	0	4-3	4
Էնվոլի	2	1	1	0	3-2	4
Քաթանիա	2	1	1	0	1-0	4

ՄՏԵՐԻՄ ԽՕՍՔ՝**Տարունակուածէ 7-էն**

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Հայրենի ժողովուրդը ինչ պահանձ պիտի պահէ, պահանձ այսօր պահուածէ այս գաղաքին հայրենի ժողովուրդը հայրենի անհամապէս չափերով քաղաքապէս պատկող, արամածաշաշանին մէջ իր դիրքերը աննախընթաց արագութեամբ ամրապնդող, քարիւղադանակին նեցուկով իր միջնագագաքն թիկունքը հօրացնող ու մէզ շրջափակող թշնամին դէմ իրական պահանձան պատճառութեան եւ անբարտաւանութեան յատկացնելու տեղ կամ ժամանակ չունինք այլեւ։ Ժշմարտութեան պահանձան պահանձ է։

ՖՐԱՆՍԱՅԻ ԱՌԱՋՆՈՒԹԻՒՆՖրանսայի ֆութապոլի առաջնութեան վեցերորդ հանգրուանի
մրցումներուն արդիւնքները

Սըտան - Լը Մանս	1-2	Մարսէլ - Պորտո	2-1
Սանսի - Ռընէ	0-0	Լորիան - Լիոն	1-3
Վալանսիէ - Նամթ	1-0	Սէնթ Էթիեն - Օքսէն	2-4
Սոշո - Լանս	0-3	Թրուա - Նիս	2-0
Լիլ - Թուլուզ	1-3	Մոնաքո - Փարիզ Սէն ժերմէն	1-2

Առաջատար խումբերու դասաւորումը

Լիոն	6	5	1	0	15-5	16
Մարսէլ	6	5	1	0	12-2	16
Նամսի	6	3	2	1	7-4	11
Թուլուզ	6	3	2	1	9-7	11
Լը Մանս	6	3	2	1	9-8	11
Լիլ	6	3	1	2	11-6	10

ՍՊԱՆԻՈՅ ԱՌԱՋՆՈՒԹԻՒՆՍպանիայի ֆութապոլի առաջնութեան երրորդ հանգրուանի
մրցումներուն արդիւնքները

Տեֆ. Քորունա - Վիլա Պերիս	2-0	Սեւիլլա - Ուէալ Պերիս	3-2
Ուէալ Սատորիս - Ուէալ Սոսիէտ	2-0	Ուասինկ - Պարուենա	0-3
Վալենսիա - Կեթաֆէ	2-0	Էսֆանիոլ - Սելեթ Վիկո	2-1
Օսասունա - Կիմնասթիք	2-0	Արլեթ. Պիլպաօ - Արլեթ. Սատորիս	1-4
Ռեթեաթիո Շուէլվա - Լեվանքէ	0-1	Սարակոսա - Մայորը	2-0

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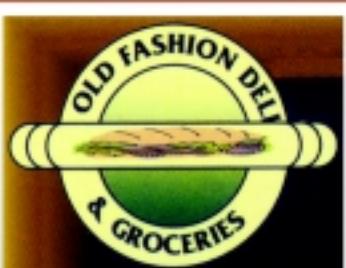
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ՅԱՐՈՒԹ ՅԱԿՈԲԵԱՆ
ԱՐՄԵՆ ԱԼՈՅԵԱՆ
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