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AGBU PRESIDENT BERGE SETRAKIAN VISITS ARMENIA

Trip builds anticipation for AGBU's 87th General Assembly to convene in Armenia in October

AGBU President Berge Setrakian visited Armenia from June 16-19, 2012. During his visit, he had the opportunity to meet with RA President HE Serge Sargsyan, HH Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians and RA Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobyan. Mr. Setrakian also had the opportunity to visit the site in construction of the future AGBU Center in Yerevan.



AGBU President paid a courtesy visit to RA President Serge Sargsyan

Mr. Setrakian paid a courtesy visit to RA President HE Serge Sargsyan, during which time he reported on the various activities of the Union around the world and had the opportunity to discuss various issues of national concern both in the diaspora and Armenia. They also addressed issues of interest to be considered during the upcoming meeting of the committee of the Centennial of the Genocide to be held in September. Mr. Setrakian then informed the President of AGBU Central Board's decision to hold its 87th worldwide General Assembly in Armenia in October this year. He invited the President and his representatives to attend the many events to be held and organized on this occasion. The President gracefully accepted the invitation.

In his meeting with His Holiness, Setrakian addressed national and church-related issues as well as the upcoming September meeting in Yerevan of the National Coordinating Committee to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. AGBU's many global and homeland activities were also discussed, as well as its joint programs with the Holy See.

Welcoming Mr. and Mrs. Berge and Vera Setrakian to Holy Etchmiadzin, His Holiness expressed his appreciation for AGBU's and its members' continued commitment to, and support of, the spiritual epicenter of all Armenians.



Mr. Setrakian was received by His Holiness Karekin II

for AGBU's and its members' continued commitment to, and support of, the spiritual epicenter of all Armenians.

During the visit, Mr. and Mrs. Setrakian were offered a tour of the several ongoing construction projects in Holy Etchmiadzin, including the old quarters of the Veharan, which is undergoing major renovations through their generous donation.

(Continued on page 2)

AGBU PRESIDENT BERGE SETRAKIAN...

(see page 1) On June 18, Mr. Setrakian met with American University of Armenia (AUA) president Dr. Bruce Boghossian; academic dean Armen Der Gureghian; vice president of operations Ashot Ghazarian; and vice president of finance Gevorg Goyounyan. Their discussions focused on various expansion plans and activities of the University, and the potential development programs to attract students from abroad, especially with the



With Hranoush Hakobyan, RA Minister of Diaspora

launch of the new undergraduate program at AUA. Mr. Setrakian reiterated AGBU's continued sponsorship and support for AUA, which has been ongoing since its inception, through the contributions of its benefactors, fundraising efforts and general assistance.

That same day, Mr. Setrakian also met with the RA Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobyan, accompanied by Mr. Ghazarian and Mr. Hovig Eordekian, the interim director of AGBU's Armenia Representation. During the meeting, MP Hakobyan briefed the president on the Ministry's various activities that aim to strengthen awareness of heritage and preserve identity in the diaspora. Mr. Setrakian stressed the importance of developing programs to reach out to the second and third generations of young talented Armenians of the diaspora, who are drifting away from community life due to the challenges of the cultural and professional environments they are living in.

Emphasizing the importance of close and productive cooperation between Armenia and its diaspora, Mr. Setrakian shared his thoughts and outlook on the many challenges facing the latter group. He highlighted the different programs initiated by AGBU that are designed to appeal specifically to diasporan youth and encourage them to connect with their homeland. He underscored the importance of instilling a sense of pride and motivation in

youth by sharing with them inspirational stories of Armenians who have achieved great success in fields such as the arts, business, the sciences, and technology.

ARMENIAN GENERAL BENEVOLENT UNION'S 87TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ARMENIA (OCTOBER, 2012)

The Central Board of the Armenian General Benevolent Union has the pleasure of informing you that the 87th General Assembly will be held **on Saturday, October 20, 2012** in Yerevan, Armenia, as well as the numerous events will be organized surrounding the occasion.

The program will begin with an optional trip to Karabakh **from October 14 to 16**, and the main activities in Armenia will occur from **October 17 to 21, 2012**.

As always, we ask you distribute it to all interested AGBU delegates, members and friends who wish to attend. Forms should be filled and returned to the AGBU Central Board **by Monday morning, 18 September 2012**.

We would like to take your attention to the importance of such an Assembly at which could participate all AGBU members as well as to enriching meetings and activities organized there.

For all inquiries, please contact **Victoria Grigorian** at the AGBU Central Office (+ 1 212 319 6383, ext. 133) or at generalassembly@agbu.org



20TH JUBILEE GRADUATION CEREMONY AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

The 20th jubilee graduation and commencement ceremony took place at the large auditorium of the American University of Armenia (AUA) on June 23, 2012, with more than 1000 officials, faculty members, students, alumni, parents and guests in attendance, who had come to congratulate and honor this year's graduates.



20th jubilee graduation and commencement ceremony at AUA

The Commencement ceremony started with the ceremonial procession of the class of 2012, the President of AUA, the Deans of the Colleges and the faculty, followed by the anthems of the Republic of Armenia and the United States of America.



Graduates throwing their caps in the air

The Class of 2012 added another 170 graduate alumni, bringing the total number to 2,300 graduates, holding various degrees: Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Master of Law, Master of Political Science and International Affairs, Master of

Science in Computer and Information Science, Master of Industrial Engineering and Systems Management, and Master of Business Administration. Many of them now have two master degrees from AUA.

After His Grace Bishop Gevorg Saroyan's invocation, AUA President Bruce Boghosian welcomed the graduating class. After Interim Provost Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, Taisei Professor of Civil Engineering, University of California, Berkeley, and AUA Trustee, of the University, read greetings on behalf of the University of California.

Commencement addresses were delivered by Mr. Ralph Yirikian, General Manager, VivaCell-MTS and Dr. Dennis Leavens, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, United Arab Emirates University. Valedictorians Ms.

Edita Gzoyan and Mr. Hayk Mamajanyan spoke on behalf of the Class 2012. After this, 170 young men and women were presented by their respective Deans and called to the stage one by one to receive their Master's Degrees. The graduates concluded the ceremony

by throwing their caps in the air. Warm words of congratulations were exchanged during an open reception that followed. The graduation ceremony was followed by the traditional Alumni Dinner, which brought together 300 graduates, faculty and staff to celebrate American University of Armenia's Class of 2012.

"The founding of the American University of Armenia was a bold move that planned for the development of a brand new university at a difficult time in Armenia's history... As the third President of AUA I hope to continue the pursuit of academic excellence, to provide educational opportunities for all who wish to pursue them, and to provide Armenia with graduates who will serve their country with knowledge and dignity", noted Dr. Bruce Boghosian in his address.



Cutting the jubilee cake

AUA graduates now occupy important leadership positions, such as Deputy Minister of Justice, Deputy Minister of Defense, Ambassador to India, as well as many top management of private corporations and international organizations.

The American University of Armenia (AUA) is a private, non-sectarian, independent university located in Yerevan, Armenia. Founded in 1991, AUA is affiliated with the University of California. Through teaching, research, and public service, AUA serves Armenia and the region by supplying high-quality education in seven different major fields, encouraging civic engagement, and promoting democratic values.

The American University of Armenia is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 985 Atlantic Avenue, #100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510-748-9001.

For the video materials please visit: [AUA Graduation \(H1\)](#), [AUA Graduation \(Shant TV\)](#), [AUA Graduation \(AR TV\)](#)

AGBU YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK PULLS WORLDWIDE RESOURCES TO DONATE 2,000 USD TO AUA'S ACM DIGITAL LIBRARY

Since 2001, the AGBU Young Professionals (YP) Network has lent its financial support to the American University of Armenia (AUA) in Yerevan by sponsoring its annual subscription to the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Digital Library. More than a decade later, the giving continues with support provided this year by YP Boston, YP Greater New York, YP Lebanon, YP Los Angeles, YP Orange County, and HAIK, a YP Partner organization in Frankfurt, Germany. In total, AGBU YP Groups and Partners have donated nearly \$25,000 to this endeavor over the years.

"It is important for the AGBU Young Professionals to support AUA graduate students in their efforts to pursue their studies," says YP Orange County Chairwoman Dora Gulesserian, whose group donated for the first time this year. *"The ACM Digital Library is an invaluable resource in providing knowledge about the computing industry and we are happy to be able to direct funds to this important cause."*

Advancing the educational and research efforts of AUA graduate students and faculty, the ACM Digital Library is the ultimate resource to the computing industry, providing a vast collection of citations and full texts from current and archival journals, articles, and conference proceedings, both in print and online.

"I can attest to the importance of our students having access to inspirational information in their field of expertise," shares Aram Hajian, Dean of the AUA College of Engineering. *"The AGBU YP donation has helped enable our students to be aware of the most up-to-date scientific scholarship in computer science through the ACM subscription. I am happy to express my thanks and appreciation to the AGBU Young Professionals on behalf of the AUA College of Engineering. We highly value such examples of Diasporan support for Armenia's institutional development and for AUA in particular."*

ACM is the world's largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting educators, researchers, students, and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources, and address the field's challenges. Access to the latest publications via the ACM Digital Library is essential for AUA graduate students and faculty to further their scholarship and stay abreast of the changing trends in computing and information technologies.

"We are grateful to have the committed support of the global network of the AGBU Young Professionals. The AGBU YP sponsorship of the ACM has been steadfast over the years," remarked Dr. Bruce Boghosian, President of AUA.



AUA graduate students accessing online and in print the ACM Digital Library, which is sponsored annually by the AGBU Young Professionals

AGBU ARMENIAN REPRESENTATION INTERIM DIRECTOR HOVIG EORDEKIAN TRAVELS TO SOUTH AMERICA

By the invitation of the AGBU Buenos Aires chapter, AGBU Armenian Representation interim director Hovig Eordekian paid a visit to South America on May 24-June 4. His first lecture about the activities of AGBU in Armenia took place on May 28th in the "Sahagian" hall of the AGBU Buenos Aires Center.



Hovig Eordekian making a presentation of AGBU activities in Armenia in Buenos Aires

Opening remarks were made by Antonio Sarafyan, AGBU Buenos Aires Chapter Secretary. Archbishop Kissag Mouradyan, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Argentina and Chile Diocese, Rouben Keshishian, AGBU Central Board member and Chairman of the AGBU Buenos Aires Chapter, members of different AGBU structures and local Board, representatives of Argentinean-Armenian organizations and the local Armenian community were present at the meeting. With historical remarks and accompanied by a video presentation, Mr. Eordekian gave a brief history of AGBU's activities in Armenia from 1920s up to today. Another similar presentation, more focused on youth activities of the Union, took place at the AGBU Marie Manoogian School on June 1 with many students in attendance.

(Continued on page 5)

ARMENIANS AND PANTOMIME: THE AGBU ARMENIAN VIRTUAL COLLEGE'S NEW ONLINE PRESENTATION



Well-known Armenian clown Leonid Yengibaryan

An interesting online cultural event "Armenians and Pantomime" was organized by the AGBU Armenian Virtual College in late May 2012. Students rated the activity as one of the most successful online social events implemented by AVC. For many of them this was the first ever experience of getting acquainted with the history of Armenian Pantomime and especially with the art of the king of clowns, Leonid Yengibaryan.

As the Armenian Pantomime Renaissance was intertwined with Leonid Yengibaryan and his art as an internationally recognized Armenian mime, AVC's online instructors prepared an educational and entertaining online presentation enriched with his theatrical performances and other general educational and cultural facts that made all participating students actively join and enjoy this unprecedented event.

This online virtual event was another step forward in AVC's mission to educate its students in Armenian language, history and culture while also creating and providing a strong bond and social network among students from all over the world.

AGBU ARMENIAN VIRTUAL COLLEGE HOSTED RA DIASPORA MINISTRY'S "ARI TUN" YOUTH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Every year, the Republic of Armenia's Diaspora Ministry holds the "Ari Tun" youth program, which aims to bring Armenian youth to their homeland, strengthen the ties between Diaspora and Armenia and instill a solid system of national values among the participants. It has become a tradition for the program participants to visit the AGBU Armenian Virtual College and learn more about its activities.

On June 13 and 20, the first two groups of "Ari Tun" visited the AVC office in Yerevan to get to know the details of the online education offered by the AVC.

AVC online teacher Ms. Ovsanna Tchorokhian greeted the guests and introduced the primary goals and mission of AVC, she spoke about the activities and opportunities provided by AGBU Armenian Virtual College and demonstrated several online courses.

During this meeting AVC Development Coordinator Mrs. Noushik Mikayelian conducted an interesting General Knowledge Contest that was received with great enthusiasm and joy by the young participants.

At the end of the contest prizes were awarded to the winning group. It must also be noted that many of the participants showed interest in the Armenian Virtual College and its online courses of Armenian Language, History and Culture.



AGBU Armenian Virtual College hosts "Ari Tun" participants

...HOVIG EORDEKIAN TRAVELS TO SOUTH AMERICA

(see page 4) On May 29th, Mr. Eordekian arrived in Montevideo, Uruguay. He visited the AGBU Noubarian School and the AGBU Alex Manoogian Center in Montevideo.

A special lecture on AGBU projects in Armenia took place in the "Sam Simonian" hall of the school on May 30. Another meeting with the AGBU Armenian Representation interim director was scheduled for the evening of the same day at AGBU Alex Manoogian Center. He particularly focused on the Union's current cultural, educational, humanitarian and youth projects carried out in Armenia. Present at the meeting were Archbishop Hagop Klendjian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church's Uruguay Diocese, members of Armenian organizations of Uruguay, local AGBU Board members, AGBU Youth League representatives, members of "Yerevan 50" scout group and "Groong" choir. During his visit to South America Mr. Eordekian gave interviews to both the Buenos Aires and Montevideo Armenian Radio hours once again speaking about the largest Armenian organization's activities in general and in Armenia in particular.

TROPHIES PRESENTED AS 6TH ANNUAL AGBU-SPONSORED INTER-SCHOOL CHESS TOURNAMENT IN ARMENIA COMES TO A CLOSE

The winners of this year's AGBU-sponsored Republican Interschool Chess Tournament have been announced, marking an end to the annual 8-month-long competition that attracts thousands of talented youth across Armenia, Artsakh and Javakh, Georgia.

The winning schools, Vanadzor School #5, Gyumri School #3 and Yerevan School #55, which placed in first through third place respectively, progressed through four challenging rounds before receiving their titles. The first phase is held within schools; in the second phase, schools from the same community compete; through the third phase, winners of different communities from the same region participate; and, lastly, the finalists arrive at the regional level. This year, the number of student participants, whose ages range from six to seventeen, totaled more than five thousand. The tournament's widespread popularity indicates the students' commitment to, and passion for, the game, which Inessa Margaryan, the AGBU Armenian Representation Special Projects Coordinator who coordinated the matches, witnessed firsthand. As she commented, "watching the pupils sit



6th Republican Interschool Chess Tournament finals at the Chess Academy

across the chessboards, we could sense their high level of concentration and focus on the game. They moved each piece with intention and care, and had clearly developed strategic approaches over the course of the tournament. It was rewarding to see so many students from various schools come together for the occasion," noting that over 1,000 schools were represented.

The awards service, which was held on May 5, 2012, at the Chess Academy of Armenia in Yerevan, will likely be the first of many such ceremonies that this year's participants will have the honor of attending. Present at the award ceremony were RA President Serge Sargsyan, RA Education and Science Minister Armen Ashotyan, Chess Federation vice-president, grand master Smbat Lputyan, AGBU Armenian Representation Managing Committee Chairman Ashot Ghazaryan, Olympic Champion, grand master Rafael Vahanyan.



RA President Serge Sargsyan with the winners of the AGBU-funded tournament

Since it began in 2008, the Interschool Tournament, which is an initiative of the Armenian Chess Federation, under the auspices of the Republic of Armenia's Ministry of Education and Science, has produced many players who graduate to the professional level and take home prestigious awards from Armenia's Youth Chess Championship, the Republic of Armenia Chess Championship and the international Vladimir Dvorkovich Cup in Moscow. For now, the recent winners of the AGBU-sponsored competition will enjoy prizes such as chess sets, chess clocks and projectors for their schools, as well as souvenirs from the Chess Academy and their local municipality. Those tools will keep them engaged while they continue to hone their expertise and skills, and prepare for the fifth tournament set to begin in October.



Chess tournament participants in Etchmiadzin

6 WEEKS OF CULTURAL ENRICHMENT AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

AGBU Yerevan Summer Intern Program kicks off for the sixth time

AGBU's Yerevan Summer Internship Program (YSIP) was launched in 2007 joining the Union's similar programs of New York and Paris. In the past six years more than 150 Diaspora-Armenian youth have come to Armenia as part of YSIP to spend their summer vacation in the homeland, work and gain professional experience in a number of leading organizations and institutions of Armenia.



Three of YSIP participants work at Arabkir Children's Medical Center

The 6th AGBU Yerevan Summer Intern Program began on June 25. 28 participants from 5 countries, Germany, Great Britain, Lebanon, Syria and USA, will spend six weeks in Armenia, living under the same roof, working in different organizations and sharing their experience and knowledge. These are just some



YSIP 2012 at AGBU Armenian Representation

of the organizations where the interns will work for the next six weeks: RA Diaspora Ministry, UNDP, Grand Thornton, American University of Armenia, Armenian national gallery, Deem Communications, Center for Innovative Experimental Art (NPAK), TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, Women Resource Center, "Future is Yours" NGO, "Arabkir" children's medical center, "Vitamax" pharmaceutical company, #1 hospital of Yerevan, etc. The program pursues several goals: first and most importantly, Armenian youth from different educational institutions are provided with a unique opportunity to gain professional experience and practical knowledge, have a better understanding of their homeland and involve themselves actively in its development, as well as interact with their peers both from Armenia and different communities of the Diaspora. Weekly Armenian language and folk dance classes are also an important component of the program, which includes sightseeing trips, visits to historical monuments and museums in Armenia and Artsakh, and meetings with different famous political and social figures. The group will also visit the AGBU Yerevan office, the Armenian Virtual College and AGBU's "Antranik" scout camp in Lori region of Armenia.

For the video materials please visit: [YSIP 2012 \(ArmNews\)](#), [YSIP 2012 in NKR](#)

AGBU'S MOSCOW SUMMER INTERN PROGRAM IS 3 YEARS OLD

Parallel to the Yerevan internship program, AGBU's Moscow Summer Internship Program (MSIP), which this year is held for the third time, started in the Russian capital on June 25th. 8 participants from 4 countries, Canada, France, Great Britain and USA, will spend 6 weeks in the country with the biggest Armenian Diaspora, spending their internships in companies like "Troika Dialog" investment bank, "SKOLKOVO" Moscow School of Management, "Moscow Times" magazine, Federal Center of Medicine and Rehabilitation, "Meganom" architectural company, etc.

As well as carrying out their internship at some of Russia's most prestigious companies and organizations, the participants will also have the opportunity to attend Russian language and Armenian folk dance classes, and meet with prominent political and public figures, as well as representatives of the local Armenian community.

The program also includes sightseeing trips, visits to museums and an unforgettable trip to St. Petersburg, the cultural capital of the Russian Federation.



Participants of the 2012 AGBU Moscow Summer Internship Program

SUMMER ACTIVITIES OF THE AGBU YEREVAN SCOUT MOVEMENT

Summer is probably the most anticipated season for the AGBU Yerevan Scouts. For the 5th year in a row “Antranik” scout camp will open its doors to the AGBU scouts from all over the world in July. Meanwhile, AGBU Yerevan Scouts continue to come up with new and interesting initiatives and participate in the youth events carried out in Armenia and Artsakh.

AGBU SCOUTS IN ARTSAKH

On May 7th, members of the AGBU Yerevan Scout movement left for Artsakh to participate in the 20th anniversary events of the Shoushi liberation. They arrived in Stepanakert early in the morning. On the historical land of Artsakh AGBU scouts were met by the members of the local scout movement. After a short rest the group headed to Shoushi, where the famous Shoushi Castle had hosted the jubilee celebrations of the city’s liberation. The events continued the next day in Stepanakert and again the AGBU Yerevan Scouts were among the participants. The scouts returned to Yerevan with a proud feeling of being an Armenian, having an independent country and liberated Artsakh.



AGBU Yerevan Scouts in Stepanakert



At Sergey Paradjanov Museum

A DAY WITH PARADJANOV

As well as standard scout activities, the

AGBU Scouts care deeply about their cultural and educational development. Realizing the richness and importance of our national legacy, the scouts often organize visits to cultural establishments and museums. One of the recent similar initiatives was the visit of 35 AGBU Yerevan Scout members to the Sergey Paradjanov Museum in Yerevan. In the morning of May 20, the scouts gathered at the Arabkir Children’s Center, shared their knowledge of Paradjanov’s life and activities, watched episodes from the Master’s movies “Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors”, “The Color of the pomegranate” and “Ashik Kerib” and with bright and fresh impressions visited the museum of one of the greatest masters of cinema of the 20th century. Amazed and impressed with Paradjanov’s works, his vivid imagination and flexible perception, the scouts spent several hours in the museum enjoying the uniqueness of this great master.

SCOUTS VISIT “MOURATSAN” UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Helping others and caring for the vulnerable is an important part of the scout ideology. On June 1st, the International Children’s Day, dressed as children’s favorite cartoon heroes, AGBU Yerevan Scouts visited the children at the Mouratsan university hospital. They entered every department at the hospital and approached every child one by one to make them feel special and not deprived



At “Mouratsan” hospital on the International Children’s Day

of the right to celebrate their day like all other children outside hospital walls. Another ordinary day for the hospital children turned into a true holiday with lots of presents, signing and dancing. After visiting the children in their wards, the scouts then took them to the hospital hall, not only to dance, sing and recite for them, but also to teach them different poems, songs and dance movements. *“Every child needs care, warmth and tenderness. We chose this place because children inside these hospital walls would most probably feel ignored and deprived. We wanted to change their monotonous day in the hospital and prove to them that they are not neglected. There were both moments of joy and sadness during our visit. Our hope is that these children will celebrate June 1st next year with their families, healthy and happy”*, said Satenik Eloyan, member of the AGBU Yerevan Scout Movement.

...AGBU YEREVAN SCOUT MOVEMENT

June 15 is the Armenian Day of National Symbols - the flag, the anthem and the coat of arms. A number of festive events are organized in the capital, the biggest of them being the jubilee march with the participation of different units of the RA Armed Forces, the Police and the Ministry of Emergency Situations, students of the "Vazgen Sargsyan" military academy, various dance groups and choirs accompanied by the motorcyclists of the traffic police and the demonstration flights by the RA air forces.

JUNE 15: THE DAY OF NATIONAL SYMBOLS



Scouts participated in the RA National Symbols Day

For the second year in a row members of the AGBU Yerevan Scout movement headed by the Scout Council also participated in the jubilee events. Respect and honor towards the state symbols is part of the scout ideology and is instilled in them from early childhood. As Armenians and as scouts the members of the AGBU scout movement acknowledge the importance of state symbols and are honored to be part of the celebrations of the Day.

"It is an honor for every citizen to participate in this festive march. We kneel down in front of our flag, our anthem and our coat of arms. We are proud to carry the Armenian tricolor in our hands", said the AGBU Scouts. This is an event of pan-national significance. It unites the youth around national symbols, to express their respect and honor the state symbols - attributes of statehood, national identity and dignity. It's also a unique expression of national accord and pride by the free citizens of our independent state.

ONE-DAY CAMP WITH "HAYKAZOUNNER"

The young scouts of the Nork and Arabkir departments of the AGBU Yerevan Scout movement went on a one day camping trip along with "Haykazounner" scouts of the "Hay Ariner" organization. An unforgettable day of contests, scout games, a trip to Hrazdan river, hiking and sharing of knowledge and experience.

The elder participants of the camping visited the nearby military unit, got acquainted with different types of armament and attended an interesting lecture. After a late dinner prepared by their own hands, the scouts returned to Yerevan.



AGBU little scouts on a one-day camping trip

STUDENTS OF AGBU "VATCHE AND TAMAR MANOUKIAN" AND "MANOOGIAN-DEMIRDJIAN" SCHOOLS VISIT ARMENIA



Students of AGBU schools with His Holiness Karekin II in Etchmiadzin

Every year the senior students of the AGBU worldwide schools pay visits to Armenia. These trips give the students a unique opportunity to step foot on the land of their ancestors, get acquainted with its historical and cultural monuments, meet their peers living in Armenia, as well as other public and cultural figures, go to sightseeing trips and have a better understanding of homeland. As part of these visits, a group of 65 students and their teachers from two US-based AGBU schools, "Vatche and Tamar Manoukian" and "Manoogian-Demirdjian", were in Armenia from June 4-19.

During their stay in Armenia the students of both AGBU schools were received by Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. "Manoogian-Demirdjian" school students also had the opportunity to meet with RA Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobyan. *(Continued on page 10)*

STUDENTS OF AGBU SCHOOLS...

(see page 9) Among their numerous sightseeing trips and visits, the students also dedicated a day to the AGBU projects in Armenia, visiting the AGBU Yerevan office, the Armenian Virtual College and the Nork Children's Center, where a beautiful concert program was prepared especially for them. The AVC personnel had also prepared an interesting course presentation and a general knowledge contest for the AGBU students, the winners of which received presents. The students and their chaperons left the AVC office with bright impressions reaffirming that AVC is a strong and firm bridge for all Armenians, reducing time and distance between them.

Another interesting visit was to the American University of Armenia paid by the "Manoogian-Demirdjian" school students. They got acquainted with the departments and programs offered by the University and learned the possibilities of continuing their education in one of the best and accredited universities in their homeland.

Coincidentally, during those days, AGBU President Berge Setrakian was also in Armenia, and he seized the chance to meet with the "Manoogian-Demirdjian" school students.

The students also visited Tsitsernakabert, Khor Virap, Sardarapat, Noravank, Amberd, Zvartnots, Tsaghkadzor, Sevan, Dilijan, Ha-ghartsin, Garni, Geghard, Matenadaran, Oshakan and historical monuments and cultural establishments.



Mr. and Mrs. Berge and Vera Setrakian with the AGBU "Manoogian-Demirdjian" school students in Yerevan

ARMENIAN GENERAL BENEVOLENT UNION HAS A NEW ADDRESS IN ARTSAKH

Feeling the need to expand its activities in Nagorno-Karabakh and acknowledging the importance of coordinating them locally, in 2004 AGBU opened an office in Stepanakert. In the past seven years the AGBU office in Stepanakert was situated in the NK Foreign Ministry building successfully coordinating all the AGBU projects in



The Artsakh office coordinates the NKR projects of AGBU

Artsakh including the construction of the residential building for war veterans and widows, the renovation of the Stepanakert school #7, the reconstruction and repopulation project of Artsakh's Norashen region, which was initiated by the AGBU France chapter and later supported by the worldwide chapters of the Union, the construction of the medical center and the school in Norashen, etc. Today, more than 150 people live in the 35 houses built by AGBU in Karabakh, including many young families.

The AGBU-funded Artsakh Chamber Orchestra has been operating in Artsakh since 2004, bringing its invaluable contribution to the cultural rebirth and development of Artsakh. Once again with the support of AGBU, the orchestra is currently getting ready for their upcoming tour in Norway, where they will represent Artsakh.

AGBU continues its support of Artsakh and today the Union has a new address in Stepanakert. The new AGBU office is situated at 5 Azatamartikneri Street and Sassoun Baghdassarian successfully coordinates AGBU's NK projects.

AGBU ISSUES CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO SAYAT NOVA INTERNATIONAL COMPOSITION COMPETITION IN HONOR OF THE LEGENDARY MUSICIAN

AGBU

2012 Sayat Nova International Composition Competition

1st Prize: 2,500 €

2nd Prize: 1,500 €

3rd Prize: 1,000 €

Participation requirements:

- Birthdate must be on or after **September 1, 1972**
- Composition for a chamber ensemble that includes six (6) instruments (**1 piano, 2 violins, 1 viola, 1 cello and 1 duduk**), and one (1) vocal (**spoken or sung**) with a duration of **7-10 minutes**
- The work must include one quotation, in any form, from a text of Sayat Nova

The winners' works will be recorded and produced in concert on the occasion of the tercentenary celebrations of the birth of Sayat Nova.

The deadline for submission is no later than September 1, 2012

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On May 1, 2012, AGBU launched its second call for applicants to the Sayat Nova International Composition Competition. This year's Competition marks the 300-year anniversary of the birth of the distinguished troubadour, whose work continues to be celebrated both in Armenia and diaspora communities around the globe.

Through this renewed initiative, AGBU seeks to draw the interest of younger generations to classical music and the Armenian traditional repertoire.

The contest combines modernism, tradition and Armenian inspiration. It seeks to discover young talented composers, help them financially, record their works and distribute them.

The participants to the first Sayat Nova Competition, which was held in 2006 to coincide with AGBU's centennial celebration, overwhelmed an expert jury with their ingenuity. That year, first place was awarded to Artur Akshelyan, whose piece was performed at the Intercontinental Hotel in Paris by the Armenian Diaspora Chamber Orchestra. The performance helped launch Akshelyan's career. In the course of the past years, he has received several international awards, among which the Kiefer-Hablitzel composition Award (Bern, 2012) and the Geneva international Music Competition (first prize in 2011). His string quartet *Im memoriam* earned him his selection to the workshop and the Arditti Quartet Concert in London (2012). Among other successes, is his participation to the New Music Session in collaboration with the *Nouvel Ensemble Moderne* (Canada/Quebec, 2011).

This year, AGBU looks forward to receiving submissions that will again introduce today's emerging artists to dignitaries and the broader public.

According to Christian Erbslöh-Papazian, pianist and musicologist who has initiated the competition, "*The encounter between classical musicians, of written tradition, and traditional musicians, of oral music, is sometimes difficult, yet, it is very rich in exchanges. Together they create the musical heritage of tomorrow.*"

To participate, candidates must follow a few basic guidelines. They must be born after September 1, 1972, and their work must include one quotation, in any form, from a text of Sayat Nova in Armenian or translated into a Western language (i.e. English, German, French, Italian, Spanish or Russian). The submitted work must be a composition for a chamber ensemble that includes six instrumentalists, specifically one piano, two violins, one viola, one cello and one duduk, as well as one vocal (spoken or sung). The duration of the piece must be within 7 to 10 minutes.

The deadline for submission is no later than September 1, 2012.

Participants will be considered for three prizes of 2,500 euros, 1,500 euros, and 1,000 euros. The winning pieces will be recorded and produced at a special concert in Paris in December 2012.

For more information, please contact Zarouhi Odabashian at zodabashian@agbueurope.org or visit the following website: <http://sayatnova.agbueurope.org>

VAHE VAHIAN'S "POET'S HEART" COMPILATION OF LETTERS

The presentation of prominent poet, literary critic, education and public figure and editor Vahe Vahian's compilation of letters called "Poet's Heart", edited and published by Aram Sepetjian, Lebanese-Armenian writer, cultural and public figure, took place on May 4 at the Writers' Union of Armenia. An opening speech was delivered by Levon Ananian, Chairman of the Writers' Union of Armenia, who spoke about the genre of letter writing and highly valued the publication of Vahe Vahian's letters.

Speeches on Vahian's life and activities, as well as congratulatory messages on the occasion of the new publication were delivered by Souren Danielyan, Head of the "Spyurq" science and education center, literary critics Azat Yeghiazaryan, Vazgen Gabrielyan, Samvel Mouradyan, AGBU Armenian Representation Interim Director Hovig Eordekian, historian and Vahian's student Gevork Yazedjian, as well as Diaspora-Armenian writer and public figure Manvel Adamian.

Mr. Eordekian spoke about Vahian as a devoted educator and teacher. *"Undeniable are the merits of Vahian as a teacher. For almost half a century Vahian has served in the AGBU schools. As a teacher of Armenian language and literature he came to substitute Vahan Tekeyan and worked at Melkonian Educational Institution in Cyprus, then in Hovagimian-Manoogian and Tarouhi Hagopian schools of Beirut. Many Diasporan-Armenians and graduates of the AGBU schools have inherited their love and respect towards the Armenian alphabet and literature, and their patriotism from Vahian. Vahian was also the founder and director of AGBU Yervant Hussissian Center for Armenian Studies"*, said Mr. Eordekian in his speech.

Those present highly assessed the book's author Aram Sepetjian's hard work and dedication in editing and publishing the book. The 766-page compilation of Vahian's letters includes 449 letters by Vahian and 60 letters addressed to him during the period of 1930-1992.

Congratulating Aram Sepetjian on the publication of the book and praising his contribution and merits, Levon Ananian, Chairman of the Writers' Union of Armenia, awarded Mr. Sepetjian with the "William Saroyan" medal of the RA Diaspora Ministry and the Writers' Union of Armenia. Mr. Ananian also announced that AGBU President Berge Setrakian has applied to the Writers' Union of Armenia and the RA Education and Science Ministry with a request to rename one of the Yerevan schools after Vahe Vahian. Head of the "Spyurq" center Souren Danielyan announced in his turn that Rouben Mirzakhanyan, President of the Yerevan State Pedagogical University, has awarded Mr. Sepetjian with "Pedagogical University" medal.



Chairman of WUA Levon Ananian awards Aram Sepetjian with "William Saroyan" medal

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Established in 1906, AGBU (www.agbu.org) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians around the world.

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