



AC



M

Culture
Heritage
History
Language

Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota
Established 1980

MinneHyeLites

No. 165 Spring/Summer 2023

ACOM GAGHANT/VALENTINE's PARTY

February 11, 2023

After a great start to ACOM's 40th year in January 2020, our midwinter party took a 2-year "Pandemic" break, followed by a year with a cancelled in-person party. This year the party was on, finally, in-person, but with a start date that was close to Valentine's day.

ACOM had to locate a new venue for the party since the MidPointe Event Center closed down and the building was demolished. We were able to find an alternate location at the Cedarholm Community Room in Roseville. With easy freeway access, ample close-in parking, and ADA accessible, it turned out to be quite suitable for our event. The space is considerably smaller than our former venue, but not knowing what our attendance was expected to be, it fit the bill.

A crew of 15+ people helped in getting the new place ready the evening of the party. Our total attendance was an incredible 100 people. This number included several Armenian students from St. Olaf College in North-



ACOM President
Steven Usitalo - Remarks

field hosted by Jim and Margaret Favre and Cynthia and Leroy Erickson. Our meal was catered by Mim's Mediterranean Restaurant in St. Paul and music for dinner and dancing was again provided by Music Mundial. Many of us had not seen each other in person for a few years, so it was espe-

cially significant for all of us to be present together. A silent auction was a resounding success, raising \$687 that helped defray ACOM's expenses. Thanks to all the donors and to the bidders on items.

Kudos to the ACOM Board, our setup helpers and to Naïry Digris who oversaw plans and execution for the event. A great time was had by all. Look forward to next year.



Guests Gathered



Mesrobians



A Special Birthday



Great Food
from MIM's

ACOM held its annual Genocide Remembrance on April 23, 2023

This year, ACOM and the Minnesota Historical Society co-sponsored the event held in the 3M Auditorium at the Minnesota History Center main building, in the Capitol area of St. Paul.

This year's program was focused on the resilience of Armenian culture after the Genocide of 1915. Speakers covered various topics: housing, history, poetry, music, dance, language, alphabet and church architecture. The event was emceed by Steven Usitalo - ACOM President. More than 65 people attended and comments from the attendees after the event were very positive.



ARMENIAN GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY 3M AUDITORIUM – FREE ADMISSION

Program
Housing for Armenia, Fuller Center
History
Poetry
Surviving Armenian Genocide

INTERMISSION

Music
Architecture
Language and Alphabet
Dance Performance

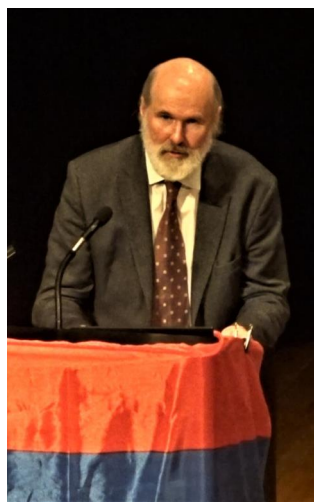


Program led by
Steven Usitalo

A summary of the Remembrance event on the Website. <https://mnarmenians.org/acom-life/genocide-commemoration>. This summary also includes a link to the event video.



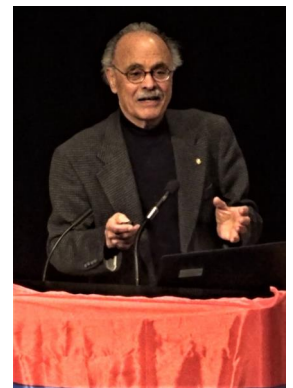
Art K.



Joachim S.



Andrea J.



Francis B.



Cynthia E.



Peter H.

**Cultural
Presenters**



**Music and
Dance
Max L. - Cello
ADE - Dance**

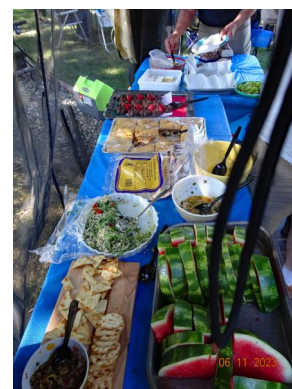


Q and A Session



ACOM Picnic - 2023

The annual ACOM Picnic was held June 11th on a beautiful summer Sunday. Naïry and Terry hosted the party in their backyard. Over 30 people attended and ages ranged from ~1 year to 90+ years, a real multigenerational gathering. The food was great; as is always the case with our Armenian Potluck picnics. Everyone enjoyed the company and attendees were able to catch up on everyone's life events.



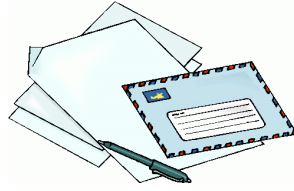
ACOM WEBSITE

Remember to continue to check our website:

www.mnarmenians.org

FROM OUR MAIL BAG

These are sent by folks who get the ACOM newsletter:



The donation I just made online was for my "out of state" membership for 2023.

You do good work!

Der Yeprem

Lynne, just wanted to say happy New Year and send best wishes to you and everyone at ACOM... I greatly admire the way you continue to keep a full calendar of activities to bring the MN Armenians together as a community. I'm going to share your newsletter with the AGBU/Chicago board chair for inspiration...

Best regards,

Gary Rejebian

Evanston, IL

Many years ago, Gary brought the *Road to Sepastia* show to Minnesota. He's been on our list for a long time. I remember him well and thanked him for his positive comments.

I do get other comments like this as people are amazed that being such a small group, we continue to keep up with our activities. As I've always said, ACOM has my full commitment - it's a passion - I will never give up on ACOM - something my uncle Vahram Kardashian started 43 years ago, and it remains so dear to my heart..... Hard work really pays off - out of towners see it 😊

Nairy D.

SPEEDY RECOVERY TO:

Karen Mesrobian

Aram Charchian

Barb Bulbulian

Natasha Hassett

THANK YOU

After two days in the city of hope for Karen's surgery, we came home and found a nice package on the front door. It was so thoughtful of the ACOM board to cheer us further. You people are so caring and thoughtful. Karen loves chocolate and there is fine chocolate shop at Mayo/Gonda subway level. I have been buying her fine chocolates except today. I just forgot and was in a hurry to get back and get some

rest myself. God bless you all as we are blessed to belong to such good friends. I also want to express my thanks for all the work that was done to make the Memorial Day (Genocide remembrance) a meaningful afternoon to a nice audience. US public support has been a big factor in saving the Armenian race. Thank you very much. Big hugs to all.

Azad M.

A big thank you from Barb for the dark chocolate covered almonds, plus 5 bars of chocolates. Very thoughtful 😊

Shad shnoragalem

Francis B.

SYMPATHY

Mark Wiersbeck writes:

Dr. George Malkasian, Jr. recently passed away in Rochester. My mother knew him, as he occasionally attended her church there. His wife Mary Ellen also worked at John Marshall HS, when my mother was there. I met him a couple times and he was a really nice and humble person, despite all of his incredible achievements. He was with Mayo for many years and served on numerous boards over the years.

Complete article on Dr. Malkasian below:

<https://www.postbulletin.com/obituaries/obits/dr-george-malkasian-jr-5ecfe7691e6ee72e56b8942b-64527ac668ae0a54f1bc56d9>

ACOM ANNUAL REPORT

Steven,

Thanks for your excellent 2022 ACOM Annual Report. I very much appreciate the good work you are doing leading ACOM in this past challenging year. Abris

Francis B.

What a "rich" year you had. So many good cultural events. And I was just caught by "Year 42 - 2022." May Year 43 be as gratifying

Der Yeprem K.

GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION

I have posted a summary of the Remembrance event on the Website. <https://mnarmenians.org/acom-life/genocide-commemoration>

Terry McG.

That's great Terry, Thanks!

Kassian V.

Looks great! Thanks, Terry!

Kat K.

(Continued from page 4)

Terry, I had a chance to watch the video you put together from the 2023 ACOM Genocide Commemoration event. Excellent work on editing the event. Thank you for your work and time spent.

Francis B.

Good afternoon, Naïry,
Thank you for reaching out and inviting the Governor and Lt. Governor to the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Event. We apologize for not getting back to you in a timely manner and we hope your event was a success yesterday!

From Governor Walz's office

My thanks to you, and all those who organized and presented at yesterday's wonderfully uplifting program. Special thanks to you (Naïry) and Terry -- the heart and soul of ACOM.

Warm regards

Joan P.

Thank you to the ACOM Board for all the work that went into organizing the Genocide Commemoration program at the MN History Center. What a vibrant event, with such a wide range of presentations about our Armenian culture. I feel fortunate to have participated. Thankful for ACOM! I'm still basking in the good vibes of yesterday's ACOM program at the History Center!

Andrea J.

I second Andrea's sentiments. Thank you for the opportunity to participate, it was a great event.

Peter H.

We both were enthralled by the presentations... very knowledgeable and credible people, and we learned a lot. Also, we were *very* impressed with your dance choreographies! Good job! Thanks for getting us there.

Jim K. & Linda F.

Greetings all - well, I think that was a very successful commemorative event at the Minnesota History Center. All of the presentations, in my view, went well. They were concise and well-delivered. We had a good-sized crowd as well.

Naïry and Terry, in particular, thank you for your long hard work organizing today's event.

Best wishes all.

Steven U.

Wonderful program - interesting presentations and good music and dance. The venue was great.

Lynne G.

I wanted to mention that I thought the Genocide Commemoration program last month was very well done. The talks were excellent, the forum was very nice. Thanks for your (Naïry and Terry's) hard work in pulling off an outstanding and important program.

Marty M.

Congratulations on a really successful event, everyone! It was great to have so many topics covered along with some beautiful performances. Thanks to all who helped organize.

Kat K

Many positive comments were also heard about the signage that ACOM put at the MNHS prior to the event.

WELCOME TO OUR TWO NEWEST ACOM BOARD MEMBERS

KAT KELJIK, Board Member At-Large

Kat is excited and honored to be joining the ACOM Board. As a part of the Twin Cities Armenian community, she is looking forward to engaging with more people on topics related to Armenian-American culture. Her background in community engagement at arts organizations in Minnesota will help inform efforts for increasing outreach with ACOM. Kat currently works at the MN Historical Society as a Project Manager for preservation of historic buildings. She is also looking forward to incorporating her love of history in this role with ACOM!

KATHLEEN DANIELS, ACOM Secretary

I recently joined the ACOM Board but have been part of the ACOM community for many years. I started as a member of the Armenian Dance Ensemble, thanks to Lynne Gildensoph encouraging me to give it a try, more than 20 years ago! My daughter, Mari, also has been a member of the dance ensemble up until her recent move out of town.

I retired about a year ago from my librarian job at the Minneapolis Community and Technical College; before that I worked in public health at the U of M. Outside of being part of the Armenian Dance Ensemble my hobbies include: birding, hiking, gardening, and art.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

After so much enjoyment I and my family have gotten from the ADE, I'm happy to be a part of the ACOM board!

WELCOME INTO THIS WORLD

Nico Conrad Masis Erickson was born on January 10, 2023 at 19 ¾ inches long and weighing 8 lb 6 oz. Nico is the son of Mitchell and Sarah Erickson and has an older brother, Tiago. Very proud and happy family members are: uncles Christopher and Bradley, grandparents Cynthia and Leroy, and great-grandma Viola Reimers (ND).

NEWSLETTER

Lynne.....please pass my compliments to the ACOM Newsletter people.....for a job well done. Interesting, relevant, well-written, attractive layout. Good job. Greatly appreciated!!
Art K.

FAREWELL CATHY RIORDAN

Cathy Riordan returned to the Twin Cities a couple of years ago and was happy to know that the Armenian Dance Ensemble continued to exist. ADE members were happy to welcome her back from Scotland and Ireland where she resided for 25 years. However, Cathy decided to move one more time – the last time, says Cathy - to be closer to her daughter in Atlanta, GA, so once again, we said goodbye to her on April 21, 2023.

We will miss you Cathy, but are very grateful for your having come back to ADE, and for all your help and support. We wish you good luck and much happiness in Atlanta. Keep on dancing!

A VERY NEW ACOM MEMBER

Hi Naïry,
Unfortunately I won't be available at 1pm today (ACOM Genocide Remembrance event at MNHS, April 23, 2023), but I did see the event listed somewhere and that's how I found your organization. I do not have Armenian heritage or connection, but I like to support cultural centers and organizations. I like to study languages and participate in cultural events as much as possible. Thank you for the warm welcome!

Kelly Rynda

Kelly, on behalf of ACOM, we extend our warmest welcome to you. It is very touching to know that people like you exist, and support an organization such as the Armenian Cultural Org. of MN, and on top of that, immediately decide to pay membership dues and join. We are adding you to the ACOM email list and you will receive regular notifications by email. You can choose to attend or not, and since these events are all open to the public, you can bring family members and friends with you. Everyone is welcome. Thanks again and we look forward to meeting you soon.

ACOM Board

NEWS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST

CONGRATULATIONS to NICK LENTS

He shared the following good news with us:

"The end of the semester finished off really strong and the transition into my new job at Blu Dot has been jam-packed. I am so sorry that I missed this (the ACOM picnic), and wish I could've made it. I would definitely love to find a time to meet over coffee. I want to share a photo book mock-up of my Armenian photo project with you. I finally gave my photo project a title called "Everything the Old Country Has Forgotten and Nothing the New Country Has Seen Before".

I also want to share some good news. I am the recipient of the MCAD Photography Merit Award. There is an interview that I did and it talks about the Armenian

photo project that I have been working on with you. To read more about it, click on the provided link below.

<https://www.mcad.edu/merit-scholarship-recipients/23-24/nicholas-lents>

SOAR

Thank you ACOM for allowing SOAR (Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief) Minneapolis chapter to hold a silent auction during the Gagghant party in February.

We were able to raise \$289 to be added to the Chunmei Guo Memorial Scholarship fund. The fund has exceeded \$10,000 and is dedicated to cover college expenses for girls at the "Our Lady of Armenia Annie

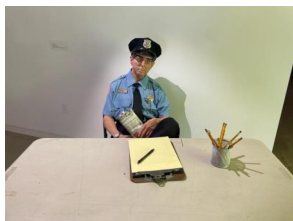
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NEWS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST

Bezikian Center" which houses girls who age out of the orphanage system. The fund primarily covers college tuition and expenses for Ella Anatosian who is pursuing a degree in mathematics and computer science at Yerevan State University. The Chunmei Guo memorial scholarship fund was established by Chunmei's daughter in memory of her mother who was a scientist at 3M and passed away in 2012. More information about SOAR sponsorship program can be found at: <https://www.soar-us.org/sponsorship-highlights->

CAFESJIAN ART TRUST MUSEUM

Margaret and Jim Favre went to the "CAT" museum for an excellent Chihuly art glass guided tour personally led by Andy Schlauch, the Executive Director of the Cafesjian Art Trust. Well worth while! Thank you for including the write up in the ACOM newsletter.



ie (or not) but definitely with a lot of snacking going on. Anyone is welcome to join. Once you receive the email announcing the movie, you need to respond if you plan to attend. See you at the next one!

CAROLINE YLITALO RECOGNITION

American Chemical Society recognized Caroline's volunteer work mentoring girls and women with a national award. Photos from the awards banquet in March. Congrats, Caroline !!



SPECIAL BIRTHDAY - Picture on page 1

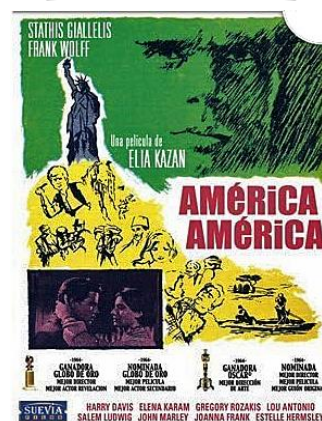
A special surprise was waiting for **Lowell Johnson** at this year's Gagghant/Valentine's Party -- an 80th Birthday celebration. Andrea, his wife, arranged with about 20 of Lowell's family and friends for a celebration of his birthday at our annual mid-winter event. The celebration was a nice addition to our normal Gagghant event. Lowell was pleasantly surprised and appreciative of all the well wishes for him.

ACOM CINEMA SATURDAY BACK IN SESSION

In person !!! We have already met a few times and it feels really good to get together and socialize, watch a movie, drink wine or tea, and munch on various goodies.

The event takes place on the third Saturday of the month (usually) at Nairy and Terry's home. It starts at 7 pm and the evening ends with a review of the mov-

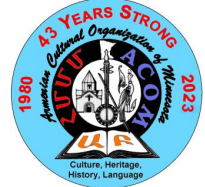
ACOM Cinema Saturdays
Presents:



Coming in July
Watch for more
Details in
your E-mail.

ACOM CALENDAR OF EVENTS - July- December 2023

Questions, Suggestions, email: steven.uusitalo@gmail.com
or call ACOM President Steven at: 248-808-8615



DATE	DAY	TIME	EVENT
7/15/2023	Sat.	7:00P	ACOM Cinema Saturday - America America Pt. 1
7/22/2023	Sat.	3:00P	What was it like growing up Armenian in ...
8/12/2023	Sat.	7:00P	ACOM Cinema Saturday - America America Pt. 2
9/16/2023	Sat.	7:00P	ACOM Cinema Saturday - America America Pt. 3
9/21/2023	Thurs.	7:00P	ACOM Book Club
Oct/Nov	TBD	TBD	Voski Ashoun

NOTE: dates and times are accurate at the time of publishing. For an up-to-date calendar, please visit our website: mnarmenians.org



ARMENIAN DANCE LESSONS FOR KIDS

Are there children whose parents want them to learn simple Armenian dance steps? Naïry would be willing to set up a Sunday afternoon teaching schedule. If you are interested, please email her at:

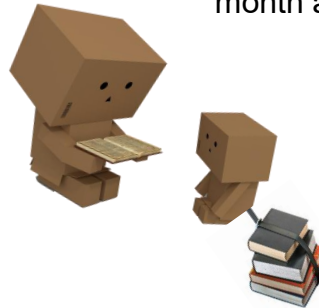


yekibdos@gmail.com

ACOM BOOK CLUB NEWS

If you are interested in joining this group, contact Leroy at: leroy.erickson@minnmicro.com

The club meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month at a location we all agree upon.



ACOM BOARD MEMBERS 2022-23

President: Steven U.
Vice President: Azad M.
Past President: John P-D B.
Secretary: Kathleen D.
Communications Secretary: Lynne G.
Treasurer: Naïry D.
Members at Large: Kassian V., Alarica H., Kat K.
Webmaster & Newsletter Editor: Terry M.
Board Advisor: Tom K.

Any ACOM dues-paid member who is interested in serving on the Board is welcome to contact us:

www.mnarmenians.org

Likewise, get in touch with us if you have comments, suggestions or would like to submit an article for an upcoming ACOM Newsletter.

ARMENIAN DANCE ENSEMBLE OF MINNESOTA



I had the opportunity to choreograph four new Armenian dances that I am teaching on Zoom and in person. I did some research and found out there were no steps associated with the well-known Armenian songs that were interest-

ing to teach to groups: Noubar Noubar, Karnan Mekhag, and Soudé Soudé. Since I liked these pieces, I decided to share them with the folkdance community and choreographed some simple, yet Armenian-style inspired steps. I also choreographed a simple Korchari to teach on ZOOM and at Tapestry.

For additional information, call Naïry: 651-639-9346 or email: yekibdos@gmail.com



ADE at International Holiday Festival -
Ukrainian American Community Center

The Armenian Dance Ensemble was invited to perform on Nov. 27, 2022

Dance Ensemble Highlights

ARMENIAN FOLKDANCE LESSONS ON ZOOM

We are continuing the practice we started on Sunday, August 30, 2020 of teaching Armenian folk dances on ZOOM on the **last Sunday of each month**. The dance steps are explained and demonstrated, and then the participants are able to do them with the music in the "comfort" of their own homes. Since these are not choreographed dances, anyone interested in Armenian music and dance is invited to join. ZOOM sessions are set up for each month starting at 1:30 pm.

There has been a substantial amount of interest for this event on line, and the participants have been Armenians and non-Armenians alike, from all around the US as well as overseas. If anyone is interested in receiving the link in order to participate, send me an email and I will add your name to the list. The ZOOM invitation will come to you by email about 1 day before the event.

Email yekibdos@gmail.com

Date	Place
7/15/2023	Brookdale Senior Residence
8/12/2023	Lyngblomsten Senior Residence
8/26/2023	MN State Fair
11/26/2023	Holiday Festival Ukrainian Center
11/30/2023	Village Shores Senior Residence

NOTE: dates and times are accurate at the time of publishing. For an up-to-date calendar, please visit our website: mnarmenians.org



ADE at Brookdale Senior Residence



ADE at Mount Olivet Residence 05.21.2023

Pictures from ADE Dance Presentations at:

ACOM's Genocide Remembrance Day, Brookdale Senior Residence, and Mt. Olivet Senior Center

The Armenian Dance Ensemble has been representing Armenian Culture through Dance and Music for over 25 years. If you have an interest in Armenian dance, if you have danced in the past, or have never danced but really would like to learn and participate, this would be a good time to give it a try. All the dances are taught, and costumes provided. It is a volunteer activity and we only ask for your time commitment. Rehearsals are typically held on Sundays at 1:00 pm in person. Remember: you do not need to be Armenian to become a member of the dance group, just a desire to learn and enjoy Armenian music and dance.

ACOM 2023 PAID MEMBERS

If you do NOT SEE your name below, then you have NOT renewed your 2023 membership. You can still send in your membership by filling in the form on the back of the newsletter and mailing it to the address on the form.

Andeweg, George, Jeanne
 Aram, Connie & George
 Aroutiunian, Margarita; Usitalo, Steven
 Asgian, Phil
 Bulbulian, Francis, Barbara
 Daniels, Kathleen; Myers, Marcie, Mari
 Digris, Naïry; McGibbon, Terry & Hassetts
 Erickson, Bradley
 Erickson, Cynthia, Leroy
 Favre, Margaret, Jim
 Gauro, Boghos, Lana
 Gildensoph, Lynne
 Hajinian, Peter, Brooke & family
 Hakobyan, Artur; Papyieva, Nina & family
 Hayes, Jackie; Nelson, Mike
 Izmirian, Peter
 Johnson, Andrea, Lowell
 Kelegian, Der Yeprem, Judy
 Keljik, Mark; Grantz, Caren
 Keljik, Jeff, Susan
 Keljik, Tom; Collins, Jennifer
 Kourajian, Art
 Lents, Nicholas
 Lind-Sinanian, Gary, Susan
 Manthei, Hank
 Matossian, Lou Ann
 Meketarian, Martin, Mara & family
 Mesrobian, Azad, Karen
 Ohannesian, Judy; Tiffany, Doug
 Parker-Der Boghosian, John; Pounds, Jim
 Poritsky, Joan
 Rynda, Kelly
 Savayan, Peka, Maria & Stephen A.
 Vaubel, Kass, Carol, Jamaica P.
 Wiersbeck, Mark
 Wiersbeck, Sarah
 Ylitalo, Caroline, David & family

ARMENIAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF MINNESOTA — ACOM

MISSION STATEMENT



- 1) To provide programs and events which encourage its members to learn Armenian culture, language, history and heritage.
- 2) To provide programs of Armenian culture, language, history and heritage for the general Minnesota area.
- 3) To provide an environment which encourages participation of all Armenians, their relations and friends who have an interest in Armenian culture, regardless of religious, political or social differences, and to promote harmony among its members.
- 4) To provide periodic gatherings and meetings for the cultural furtherance of the Armenian people, their relations and friends who have an interest in Armenian culture within the general Minnesota area.

CONSTITUTION

The Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota (ACOM) preserves and promotes Armenian culture, language, history and heritage in Minnesota and the upper Midwest. Founded in 1980 and headquartered in St. Paul, ACOM is the oldest and largest Armenian organization in the state.

ACOM welcomes everyone, regardless of ethnic, religious, or political affiliation, who takes an interest in Armenia and Armenians. Our members include first-generation through fourth-generation Minnesota Armenians, their families, and non-Armenian friends of the community.

ACOM's numerous cultural and social events include Armenian dance parties (Gaghant), guest speakers, folk dance lessons and performances by the Armenian Dance Ensemble of Minnesota, Genocide commemorations, summer picnics, and series of Interviews of Presenters talking about their heritage. ACOM also sponsors all Armenian activities at the International Institute's Festival of Nations, a major regional folk festival held annually in St. Paul. Minnesota Armenians were founding participants in 1932; today, the Festival is ACOM's most visible public venue.

As an independent, 501 (c)3 non-profit organization, ACOM is supported primarily by membership dues and private donations. Gifts to ACOM are tax-deductible to the extent permissible by law.



ACOM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Valid January 1 to December 31, 2023

Name: _____

Street: _____

Phone: () - - E-Mail Address: _____

☐ Household Membership \$35.00
Includes all members of one household

☐ Out Of State..... \$15.00
(Newsletter Only)

☐ Contributing..... \$100.00

Comments: _____

==>Please Make Your Check Payable to ACOM<==



Complete this form and
Return it with your check to



Nairy Digris, Treasurer
1703 Skillman Ave. W.
Roseville, MN 55113

We appreciate and count on your continued support

MinneHyeLites is emailed to all and distributed via USPS only to those who request it. This saves ACOM considerable printing and mailing costs. If you would like to receive your newsletter via email, just send your email address to hyebar@yahoo.com

1703 Skillman Avenue West

Roseville, MN 55113



We're on the Web

www.mnarmenians.org