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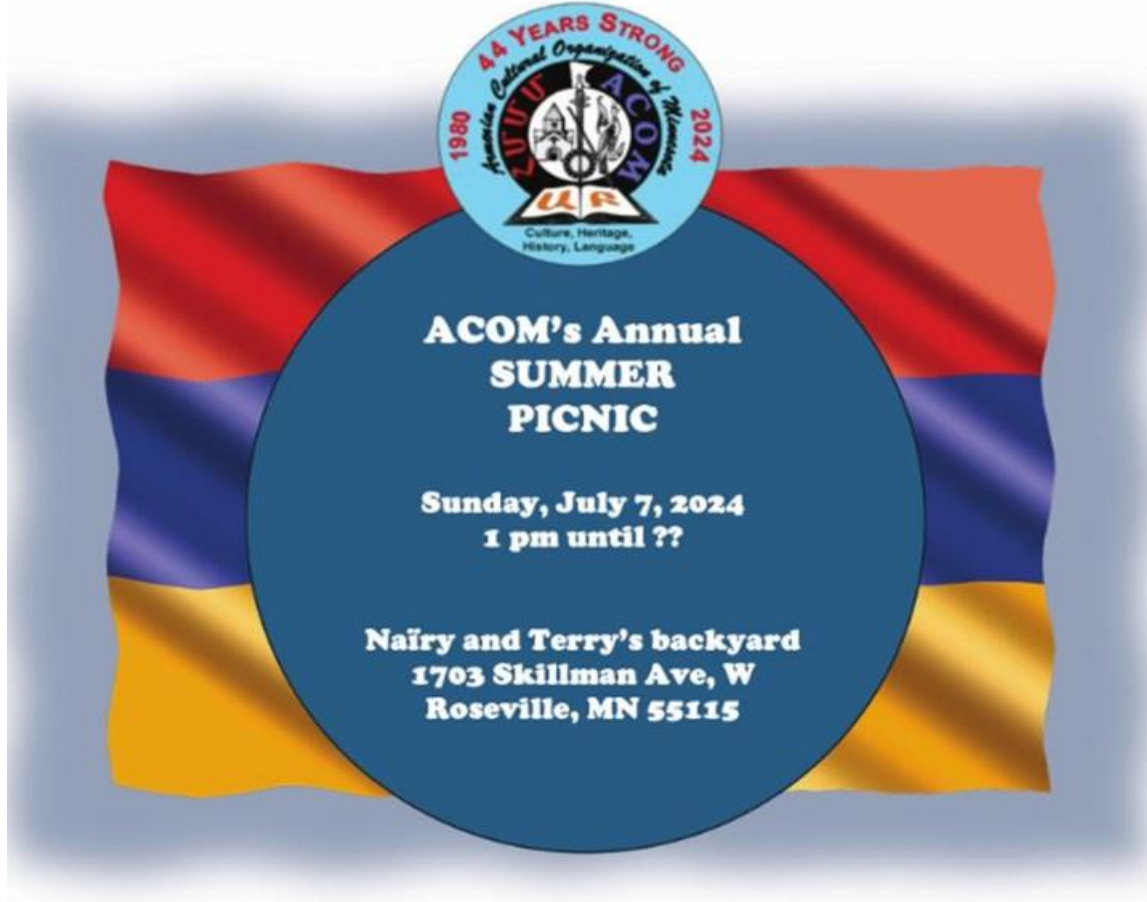
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Culture
Heritage
History
Language

Armenian Cultural Organization of Minnesota
Established 1980

MinneHyeLites

No. 168 Summer 2024



Happenings: Bring a dish to share or bring your own lunch
Please bring a lawn chair, if you can

Bring your tavloo set and we can start a tournament!!
(we have a couple of sets to start with)

Please **RSVP** to: hyebar@yahoo.com

In the event of inclement weather, we will postpone and email you
Questions? Please call 651 639-3946



ONE HUNDRED NINE YEARS LATER, ARMENIANS STILL REMEMBER

By Azad Mesrobian, ACOM President

This April 24, 2024, Armenians and their friends gathered at St. Sahag Church to commemorate those who died in the Armenian Genocide: the "Great Catastrophe."

There are two events in the history of the Armenian people that will be remembered till eternity. The first occurred in 451 AD when the Armenian Nation (which had adopted Christianity in 301) faced the threat of being converted back to Zoroastrianism by the mighty Persian Empire. Many brave people sacrificed their lives defending against this forced conversion. We commemorate that day as "Vartanantz" in honor of our military leader Vartan Mamigonian, who led the battle of Avarayr. Some historians call this event the "First Battle of Conscience" in the world.

The second event we commemorate happened in 1915 and it is referred to as the first Genocide of the nineteenth century. One and half million innocent Armenians were killed – some were killed outright, and others died by being starved to death, or by perishing in the Syrian Desert without shelter or water, or through exhausting long marches through the desert. This deliberate act of the Ottoman people and their leaders completely transformed the Armenian people's way of life and created a diaspora larger than the numbers who remained in our historic Motherland.

Some of us want to commemorate this day by telling our neighbors and friends of what happened in 1915. Some of us, like me, would like to thank the American public for reaching out and saving hundreds of thousands of Armenian orphans like my fa-

ther. The American people donated over \$116M to provide food and shelter all over the Middle East, That sum would be in the billions in today's currency.

The evening started in the St. Sahag sanctuary and then moved outside to the khatchkar with a prayer by St. Sahag Sub-Deacon Ferris Ghannoum. Then we moved inside to Yerevan Hall.

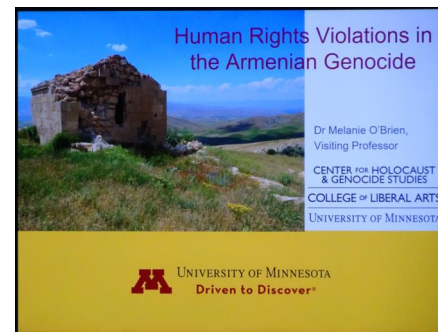
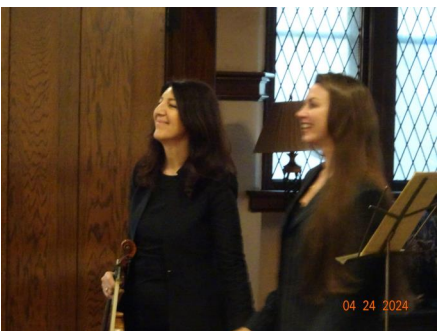
The night's main speaker was Dr. Melanie O'Brien, a distinguished professor from Perth, Australia who has devoted her entire life to working with Armenian, Jewish and Iranian communities. She talked about human rights violations in the Armenian Genocide and shed the light on historical events and their implications for understanding global justice. Currently, Dr. O'Brien is a Visiting Professor at the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Minnesota. I recommend reading her new book "From Discrimination to Death: Genocide Process through a Human Rights Lens." Her work includes extensive research in Armenia and Turkey.

We all listened to the outstanding musical interludes of two musical talents. Liana Martirosyan Brouillard and Ekaterina Knyazeva. So well done ladies. Many thanks.

The evening was capped off with a delicious buffet sponsored by Armenian Youth Initiative Director Martin Meketarian and his wife Mara.

I was amazed at the eagerness of the young adults in the audience to learn more about the horrific atrocities committed by the Ottoman Empire. **We shall never forget.**

Over sixty people attended the midweek event. We hope to keep seeing all of you at future ACOM events. All are welcome.



OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE TRAVELING !

By: Rachel Kirchner, ADE member, February 2024

I have always been interested in languages. Spanish and Arabic I studied formally, but it's so fun to learn (and learn about) other languages. Not only is it fun in and of itself, but it's so important for being able to understand other perspectives and the lives of others. In 2023,

I spent over three months abroad learning Arabic and Armenian. I was forced out of my comfort zone and exposed to uncomfortable truths, but I made important realizations and grew as a person. My dad's mom, Jeanne Ohanian, moved to the US by herself as a twelve-year-old in the late 40's from an Armenian family in Marseilles. She grew up in Milwaukee with her Armenian aunt and uncle, but didn't talk much about her Armenian identity before she died when I was 18, so I've been trying to learn about the family history from her own surviving family: nieces and nephews in France and Armenia whom I found on Facebook.

I went to visit them in Marseilles in 2018, but I couldn't communicate with the cousin I was staying with. She spoke French and Armenian, but no English. This was when I realized I would need to learn Armenian if I wanted to communicate with the whole family, but I didn't know where to start. Eastern, Western, the alphabet, and a complete lack of resources that worked for me were all things that made me put my Armenian goals on the back burner. In January 2020, after having studied Arabic for 3 years, I spent my last semester studying Arabic abroad in Amman, Jordan. Unfortunately, Covid cut my semester in half, and I had to return two months early. Feeling like I didn't get the full experience, I always said to myself that I would return to Jordan someday. I had to come home and start my lockdown life.

In 2021 I moved to the Twin Cities. I was becoming interested in Armenian again, and started looking for resources. I bought an old study book, but it was hard to use, and there weren't any good internet resources. So, I searched for any Armenians in Minnesota, found ACOM, and also joined the dance group. Again, life distracted me from learning Armenian, but I was still planning on returning to Jordan someday. After three years I finally decided that in 2023, I was going to go back. I started making plans, found a hostel to work at, and left for Amman in September of last year with the intention of re-learning Arabic and immersing myself in Jordanian culture. Being in roughly that part of the world, I decided to also plan a week in Armenia at the end of my trip to meet my dad's cousins who remained there.

I spent three months in Jordan which were very critical in world events: Artsakh and Gaza happened while I was in Amman. We received in the hostel many people who had come from the West Bank. People like me, who had come to the Middle East to discover language and people, who also discovered ugly truths about Israel's apartheid. In the midst of this atmosphere and the protests and discussions, I had an amazing time in Amman and learned so much. I made wonderful friends and saw incredible natural beauty and ancient wonders. I had free time I couldn't even imagine having at home while working. This allowed me to study not only Arabic, but also Armenian and prepare for my upcoming trip to Armenia.

Finally, after years of failed attempts to learn Armenian, I was about to go to Armenia itself. Why was this language so hard for me? There are many reasons why it's difficult, but one is just the fact that it has relatively few native speakers. There aren't as many resources for it, and the resources that exist may not be of the quality you would get for a Spanish, French, Arabic, or Chinese resource.

My biggest challenge was the alphabet. I believe you can't pronounce something correctly from a transliteration. I need to read it in the native alphabet to know how a word is supposed to be pronounced. The problem is that the Armenian alphabet has 38 lowercase letters, 38 uppercase letters, and 38 upper and lowercase handwritten letters. I wrote them all down from a YouTube video and made a personalized list of letters that I could learn from. I spent hours and days learning letter after letter, and I still hadn't learned everything by the time I got to Armenia. I hardly spent any time actually learning the language because I was so engrossed in being able to read.

Finally it was time for me to leave my friends in Jordan and meet the family I had been wishing to see for so many years. It was December, so it was cold in Yerevan when I arrived. They lived in Abovyan, which is about an hour drive away from the airport. They didn't have a car, so they picked me up in a taxi. They were very welcoming, but Lusine, the youngest, was the only one who spoke English. Meri, her mother, and Lida, her grandmother (my dad's first cousin) only spoke Armenian. This was when I realized I should have spent more time learning actual conversation and less reading, but I could read a lot of the signs on the street, which was good, because almost nothing was written in English. When Lusine was gone, I relied exclusively on google

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translate to talk to the others, which worked fairly well, but of course wasn't perfect. I spent just under a week there and a lot of time studying. By my departure day, I could read fairly well and had learned some words, though I still hardly understood anything. I had met a lot of relatives on the phone and some others that lived in Abovyan. I discovered that most of them are poor. My second cousins and Lucine have to support the whole family and work almost every day, while Lucy is also in university. It is amazing coming from the US and seeing your own family living in poverty. By chance my Grandmother came here, and Meri's grandmother went back to Armenia.

Those events have made me an American, and her an Armenian. By chance, I have the luxury of a life where I don't have to struggle to afford basic necessities, while they do. Despite their financial situation, they would not hear of me paying for a single thing while I was there, and I was never hungry the entire time. My trip to Jordan and Armenia and search for my own family history reinforced how blessed we are and how grateful I should be. Language learning is about connecting with people and forming relationships with those who have different lives than us and trying to understand them. It's about learning how to feel people's hardships and tragedies as much as partaking in their food and culture. With Arabic, I can understand the people of Gaza screaming for their dead children. With Armenian, I can understand the hardships of my own family, understand the upheaval of the people of Artsakh. We have blessings that were gotten from the plunder of other peoples. We have wealth that other parts of the world can only dream of. Americans need to remember that we are part of the world and it is our duty to use the resources we have by birth to make it better. We use our wealth to provide weapons. We should be using it to provide food and water. Traveling and learning languages is our key to understanding our luck and our privilege and accessing those emotions to do good in the world (including in our own communities). Take some time to connect with those in need: whether it's traveling across the world, educating yourself about current events, or donating to local aid organizations. It is our responsibility to help.

GOOD DAY, MATE! OUR AUSTRALIAN JOURNEY

By: Tom Keljik

The name is derived from the Latin *Terra Australis* ("southern land"), a name used for a hypothetical continent in the Southern Hemisphere since ancient times. Several sixteenth century cartographers used the word *Australia* on maps, but not to identify mod-

ern Australia. When Europeans began visiting and mapping Australia in the 17th century, the name ***Terra Australis*** was applied to the new territories.

Until the early 19th century, Australia was best known as *New Holland*, a name first applied by the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman in 1644 (as ***Nieuw-Holland***)

Our travel partners on numerous trips, the Singhs began building our excursion to Down Under upon our return from Egypt in 2022. Jasbir had visited Australia as a rambunctious student fifty years ago and had fond memories of his month-long stay. Frances, a New Zealander, having grown up as a nearby neighbor had never been to the southern continent. Their planning was remarkable and detailed.

The package they laid out in front of us was a six-week adventure starting in Sydney with it culminating in far southern Tasmania.

Jennifer was retiring the first of the year with many details to work out and was scheduled for a fourth quarter hip replacement, putting additional pressure on the timeline. Six weeks seemed too long for us, having never taken but a bit more than a two-week chunk of time. We finally explained to our friends we would join them on the first half of the trip, but would abandon them and return home at the three-week mark.

Most of our accommodations and internal air travel was paid in advance. Jasbir suggested we use Split Wise (software app) that kept a record of our communal expenses and allowed us to tally shared expenses. BTW, we used Australian currency rarely in our purchases.

Our passports were current and we did our visa request online. Bags were packed and we hopped a flight to LA where we boarded a 15 hour flight to Sydney on the night of January 15, 2024. We arrived on the 17th and met up with our traveling companions at the airport and grabbed a cab ride to our accommodations - Zara Towers - a two-bedroom two bathroom, and common living room/kitchen. We went grocery shopping and purchased our morning breakfast needs for the next six days. Our first adventure was to meet up with a free walking tour (pay what you want at the end). The tours give you a good grounding for further explorations into the city.

We met up with Lilly, our tour guide and some twenty other participants. We started our walk through the botanical gardens, passing many historic buildings on our way down to the bay where we got fantastic views of the world renowned Sydney Opera House and the Harbor Bridge. (picture on next page)

Many statues of significant British and early Australians were encountered on our walk. In 1770 Cap-

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tain James Cook sailed the Endeavor into Botany Bay (today - Sydney Airport location). This was eventually deemed a suitable place to establish a British settlement. With the loss of the American colonies, where Britain had dumped many of their convict population (think the founding of the colony of Georgia) transport shifted to Down Under.

Between 1788 and 1868 more than 162,000 convicts were shipped to Australia.

Much is made of the ordeals of the convict population and the harsh environment they existed under. We visited a number of these places of internment in numerous locations on the east coast of Australia. The book *Fatal Shore - an Epic of Australia's Founding*, by Robert Hughes is an over 1,000 page book detailing the immense cruelty to the transported people and deadly consequences of the invasion to the Aboriginal population.

Mary Gilmore would write in 1918 of the prisoners who built Australia:

*I was the convict Sent to hell,
To make in the desert The living well:
I split the rock; I felled the tree-
The nation was Because of me.*

About twenty percent of Australians today can trace to convict ancestry.

Culminating our stay in Sydney, we met up with Lou. She was a friend of Frances' sister growing up in New Zealand. After many years residence in Australia, she gained citizenship. We jumped a ferry boat and had a lovely lunch and then proceeded to walk across the bridge to her neighborhood and a wonderful look at the harbor from her apartment window. It was now time to exit Sydney.

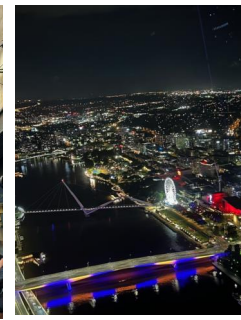
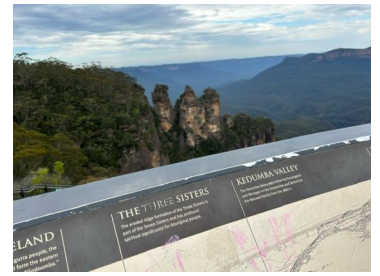
Jasbir had booked a car rental for the next part of our adventure. I signed on as a second driver (just in case I was needed in an emergency). Fortunately, Jasbir was able to command the steering wheel for the entire time. The Aussies of course drive on the left side. It should be noted that the country is nearly the same size as the USA 48 contiguous states. Our stay was exclusively on the eastern coast, but distances between venues required considerable driving and some internal air flights.



Our next stay was in the Blue Mountains where we did extensive hiking.

I'll let the photo show the beauty of the area.

Our next leg of the journey took us on the coastal highway to Brisbane. We made an overnight stop in Port Macquarie, a great midsized town with beautiful access to the ocean - just take a look (right picture below)



We arrived in Brisbane (pronounced Brisbin) and went immediately to our lodging. Our apartment was located on the river and a full 70 stories up the

tower. (left picture - the view at night)

The next morning we had arranged a free walking tour. An hour prior we received a phone call from our guide asking if we intended to participate since it was pouring rain. We told him we had rain gear so expect us to show. By the time we arrived, the rain had stopped and we met up with Terry, a retiree and a city ambassador. It was the four of us and Terry. The tour was terrific, gaining insight on the city and its monuments, parks and other amenities.

Terry explained that Brisbane founders were convicts from Britain. Their captivity was especially brutal and he pulled a photo out of the cat-of-nine-tails whip that was frequently applied to the backs of prisoners.

One of the great features of Brisbane are the free Kitty Cats - (ferry boats) that carry you to many great venues along the shoreline.

As with all cities of size in Australia population has become more diverse. Immigration policy changes and opportunities, have drawn many from Malaysia, India, Japan, and Africa. The Chinese do have a presence as well, but mostly in large aggregates of tourists.

Our next adventure required an airplane trip from Brisbane to Cairns which gives access to the Great Barrier Reef and the Kuranda Rainforest. Once settled in, we went to the heliport on the shoreline and boarded the chopper which took us some twenty miles out to the reef and landing on a floating pad.

Here are photos that give a bit of the beauty we witnessed. A view from the helicopter (Top of next page)

The following day we boarded a bus instead of

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the railway which was washed out by massive rains several months before our arrival and headed up a rugged road to the Kurunda rainforest. We went through the swampy sections of rainforest in old WWII landing crafts. We also were entertained by Aboriginal people with dance, boomerang throwing and the playing of the didgeridoo. This is a wind instrument played with vibrating lips to produce a continuous drone while using a special breathing technique called circular breathing. We exited the rainforest via sky cable car giving us spectacular views of the terrain below.

Back to Cairns, we boarded a flight to Melbourne. This beautiful city is at the southern end of the east coast some 1,500 miles from Cairns. Of course, we did a free walking tour giving us a great orientation. Our guide, Sam said it was one of the hottest days he could remember- over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. He also said you could experience all four seasons in the city in one day. The following day was a four-season special!

The next day we decided to go to the beach. It was complicated because the light rail routes had been modified giving us a very indirect route. Walking the last mile and a half to the beach we discovered the reason for the transportation disruption. We were in the midst of Melbourne's massive Gay Parade celebration. Thousands lined the streets as the parade went through. Here is a photo of a heck of a costume.



Our last night in Melbourne we had a great dinner in a Lebanese restaurant followed by a quiet walk along the river front. The next morning, we headed off to the airport for our trip home. The Singhs were at midpoint in their stay and would post us photos and texts to keep us informed of their continuing adventures.

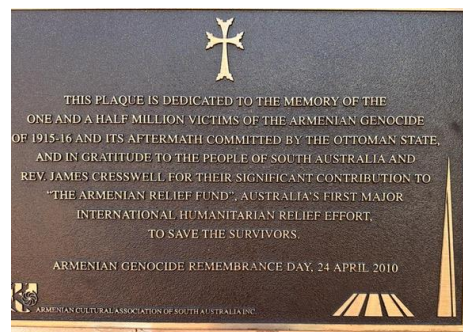
While in Adelaide, the Singhs went to The Migration Museum and encountered the plaque below. In the year 1915 the British, utilizing Australian and New Zealand troops known as ANZACS launched an attack on Germany's ally, Turkey in World War One at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915.

One day before the attack was launched, Armenian intellectuals were rounded up in Constantinople designating the beginning date -April 24th - of the Armenian Genocide.

It was First Lord of the Admiralty - Winston Churchill's plan to cut open the soft underbelly of the Central Powers and move on to take Constantinople and keep rolling north to eventually crush Germany. His plan was destroyed by the Turkish General Kemal Ataturk who later would become the father of the modern Turkish state.

The April 25 date is known as ANZAC Commemoration Day in Australia and New Zealand and is considered the beginning of national consciousness.

The Armenian community in Australia is estimated to be 50,000 people who primarily reside in Sydney and Melbourne. In both cities, communities have established a number of organizations that cater for



the educational, cultural, sport and welfare needs of the community.

The first Armenians migrated to Australia from Asia in the 1850s, during the gold rush and later from their homeland due to political upheaval and other tragic events such as the 1896 massacres, the 1915 Armenian Genocide and the Second World War.

However, the majority came to Australia in the 1960s and 1970s, from the Middle-East starting with the Armenians of Egypt after Nasser came to power. Then, from Cyprus after the Turkish occupation of the island, later from Lebanon and Syria due to civil unrest and from Iran as a result of the country's political upheaval.

I asked Naïry about her Egyptian Armenian relatives. She told me they migrated to Sydney and Melbourne when Gamal Abdel Nasser rose to power.

Where do we go next?

VISIT TO SLOVENIA AND CROATIA

By: Phil Asgian

In May 2024, I traveled with a small group from the University of Minnesota Alumni Association to Slovenia and Croatia. My interest in these countries started with several friends in Minnesota of Slovenian descent that have traveled there to visit family. I

ACOM WEBSITE

Remember to continue to check our website:
www.mnarmenians.org

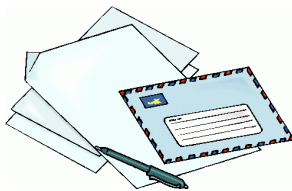
FROM OUR MAIL BAG

These are notes sent by folks who get the ACOM Newsletter.

THANK YOU

Dear ACOM,
Thank you for the donation and vote of confidence to the work we are doing in Armenia. Your compassion and concern are motivating and remind us – we are all in this together!
Peace,
Marty & Mara M.

It was such a wonderful surprise to find the box of chocolates from ACOM in my mailbox last night. It is so thoughtful of you to recognize my appointment to the National Academy with a gift. I love milk chocolate, and I enjoyed a few pieces after dinner yesterday. ACOM's support of its members is very much valued and appreciated.
Caroline M. Y.



Hi ACOM Board folks — Well, I went to my book club discussion this morning, and when I got home there was a package waiting for me, which was a surprise. I opened it up and it contained dark chocolate eggs and some chocolate shamrocks. Yum! Thank you all so much - what a very nice treat! It's always nice to know your friends are sending good wishes (and chocolate) your way when you have to deal with health issues. ACOM is the best!
Lynne G.

Thank you so much for the chocolates you sent for Armen. He really appreciated them and was very moved that ACOM was thinking of him.
Barbara B.

Dear ACOM, thank you for the gift of chocolates. Andrea and I both think they are delicious. They are also judiciously wrapped so a person might eat just a little at a time.
I wish you all a Happy Easter.
Lowell J.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HELEN !



Members of ADE performed at Highland Path Senior Home to celebrate Helen (Kourajian) Peterson's **96th Birthday.**

Thank you for your great show at Highland. You really made mom's birthday special for all of us. Love the group, and hope to see you again soon.

Michael P. (Art K.'s nephew)

ADE

We just watched the Armenian dancers perform (at Amira) It was a big hit! I didn't know your son was part of the group. Everyone was very engaged and had lots of questions.
Sorry to have missed you.
Susan H. (friend of Cynthia E.)

SYMPATHY

Alice Zoerb Staples, née Kavoukjian, passed away on April 17, 2024 in Sun City West, Arizona. She was the sister to Andy Kavoukjian whom we all knew and who was very involved with ACOM and its activities. A memorial service for Alice was held at Saint Sahag Armenian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota on May 20, 2024.

CONGRATULATIONS GO TO:

Kat Keljik on her new job effective April 1, 2024

Kat Keljik joined the 106 Group as a Senior Project Manager in April after 3 years with the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS). 106 Group provides cultural resource consulting services and helps manage projects of archaeological and historic value all across the US. Kat is excited to transition to this small and dynamic team of professionals as she continues to focus on preservation of heritage across the region. In this new role, Kat will continue to work with teams of archaeologists, historians, designers, and city planners. She will also draw on her experience in heritage preservation, community engagement, and her passion for accessibility.

On April 13, 2024, **Andy Ylitalo** and **Anahid Telfeyan** were engaged to be married at Holy Martyrs Armenian Apostolic Church in Long Island, NY. They were engaged in the Armenian tradition through the

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knew little about Croatia before preparing and taking the trip. I know much more now. Both countries were splendid to visit.

Slovenia and Croatia both were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for several hundred years and that shows in the architecture and some of the food. Slovenia grows a lot of paprika and has great goulash, as well as good sausages and beer. Croatia has a bit more varied set of historical influences, especially Italian. I bet I had at least a half dozen new varieties of Risotto. The countryside was beautiful. Slovenia is at the foothills of the Alps.

The coastline in Croatia is very rocky and also beautiful; the most scenic of anything I have seen along the Mediterranean. Wonderful national parks in Croatia, including one with a series of waterfalls, lakes and great hiking trails and another with one of the world's largest underground caves that one tours by tram as well as hiking. Also learned a lot more about the wars in the early 1990's as a result of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. With my interest in music, there was an added interesting discovery at the National Museum of Slovenia in Zagreb and that was the oldest known musical instrument in the world, a flute made by Neanderthals dates to 55,000 years ago.

VISIT TO PERU

By: Steven Usitalo

My recent trip to Peru was an extraordinary adventure. From May 8-20, I co-led a group of 24 people from Northern State University in South Dakota. Some were alumni, some were students (not all from NSU), and some were interested community members. As the fifth trip I've organized, the third for NSU, following excursions to Finland, France/Belgium, Cambodia and Thailand, and Morocco, Peru offered a unique blend of cultural and natural wonders.

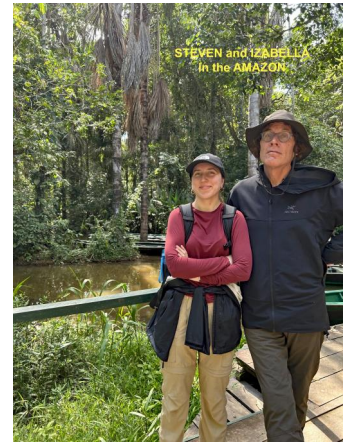
Our journey began in Lima, where we explored the city's culture and history. I especially recommend visiting the Larco Museum – they have a wonderful collection of pre-Columbian art. Afterward, we flew to Cusco, which had been the heart of the Inca Empire. From Cusco, we ventured into the Sacred Valley, focusing on visiting local arts and crafts cooperatives. This allowed us to connect with local artisans and appreciate Peruvian craftsmanship.

One of the most anticipated parts of our trip was visiting Machu Picchu. Some members of our group, including my daughter Izabella and me, participated in a one-day hike along the Inca Trail. This experience offered breathtaking views and a sense of ac-

complishment upon reaching the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu.

Following our time in the mountains, we flew to Puerto Maldonado on the edge of the Amazon rainforest. Here, we stayed at a local hotel and cooperative for five days, exploring the (vanishing) beauty of the Amazon. Our activities included hikes through the rainforest and visits to various agricultural cooperatives, providing us with a deeper understanding of the region's ecology and sustainable practices.

The 12-day trip was an incredible educational experience, emphasizing the geography and history of Peru. It was a journey filled with unforgettable, and fun, moments, meaningful connections, and a deeper appreciation for the diverse landscapes and cultures of Peru. Next year we are already organizing a trip to, most likely, Vietnam. All are welcome!



NEAT ARTICLE ABOUT PETER BALAKIAN

Reading at Jack Kerouac's House!

From the Armenian Spectator.

PETERSBURG, Fla. Pulitzer Prize winning poet Peter Balakian gave a reading on March 24 at the Jack Kerouac House in St. Petersburg, Florida. The legendary novelist was, along with Allen Ginsberg, the founder of the Beat Movement. He had purchased the house in 1967 and was living there when he died in 1969 at the age of 47.

Full Article in the link below;

<https://mirrorspectator.com/2024/04/07/balakian-reads-at-historic-jack-kerouac-house/>

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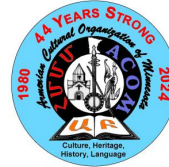
Andy and Anahid Engagement Cont.
CONGRATS

“nshandook” ceremony, meaning the “giving of signs.” In addition to the usual rings, Andy and Anahid exchanged the most powerful sign in the Christian tradition, the Holy Cross, and now wear Armenian cross necklaces as signs of their engagement. The ceremony was a small gathering and was fol-

lowed by a lobster dinner at a nearby restaurant. Andy and Anahid will be married in 2025.

ACOM CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2024

Questions, suggestions, email: azadmesrobian@hotmail.com
or call ACOM President Azad at: 507-382-1838



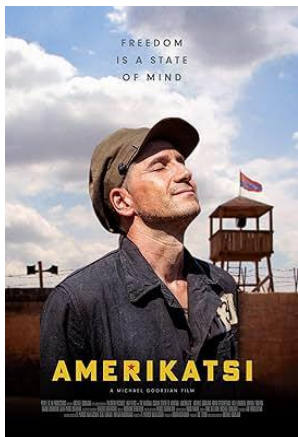
DATE	DAY	TIME	EVENT
7/7/2024	Sunday	1:00 PM	ACOM Summer Picnic
7/8/2024	Monday	5:30 PM	ACOM Board Meeting (ZOOM)
8/12/2024	Monday	5:30 PM	ACOM Board Meeting (ZOOM)
9/9/2024	Monday	5:30 PM	ACOM Board Meeting (ZOOM)
September	TBD	TBD	Special Armenia Dance Trip presentation
October	TBD	TBD	Voski Ashoun
November 1-3,2024	Fri-Sun	Various	Tapestry Fall Workshop - Armenian Weekend (Info)

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

ACOM CINEMA SATURDAY

Three ACOM Cinema Saturday events, have been held this year. Two of them were at St. Sahag: one in Yerevan Hall (**Amerikatsi**) and one in the parlor (**Anjar: Flowers, Goats, and Heroes - Stories from the Armenian Genocide**) The third was held at Digris/McGibbon residence (**Umbrellas of Cherbourg**)

Synopsis: Charlie escapes the Armenian genocide as a boy by fleeing to the United States, but he returns as an adult and is arrested. He watches an Armenian couple from his prison cell, finally learning about his homeland.



Official submission of Armenia for the 'Best International

Feature Film' category of the 96th Academy Awards in 2024.

Synopsis: Growing up in Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War, the filmmaker's life in a small Armenian village becomes forever linked to a group of 1915 genocide survivors. Through rare photos and archival footage the feature documentary lyrically travels between two war-torn eras, leaving the viewer with the impression that history is never that far away.



Synopsis: Original title: "Les parapluies de Cherbourg" A young woman separated from her lover by war faces a life-altering decision.

The umbrella shop still exists at 13

Rue de Port, Cherbourg, and is marked with a plaque that commemorates the film.



ACOM Cinema Saturdays

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Any ACOM current year 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.

AYI PRESENTATION, March 17, 2024



Lila Hayes



Hagop Meketarian



Marty Meketarian presented a talk on his work in Armenia during his most recent trip.

Marty spoke about a number of young people he worked with during his month-long visit. He also pointed out some of the difficulties and conundrums he experienced in this work.

The presentation was sponsored by ACOM and

presented on Sunday March 17, 2024 in the conference room in the Merriam Park Library in St. Paul

Refreshments were provided by Mara Meketarian
Special readers were: Lila Hayes and Hagop Meketarian



04 21 2024

GULEZIAN House Concert

Michael Gulezian, an Armenian-American Guitarist, who tours yearly to Minnesota (performed at the 318 Café in Excelsior), was excited this year to be able to play a house concert at the home of Naïry and Terry on April 20th. We had a potluck Armenian dinner prior to the concert. Michael then played a number of his compositions over the next 1 ½ hours. A very enjoyable and intimate experience for all who attended.



04 21 2024



04 21 2024



04 21 2024

ARMENIAN DANCE REHEARSALS

Sunday afternoons, at 1 pm in Roseville.
Interested in joining the group? email: yekibdos@gmail.com

***** SPECIAL NOTICE TO ADE and ARMENIANS in the TWINCITIES *****

On the weekend of November 1-3, 2024 there will be an Armenian Dance Workshop at Tapestry Folkdance Center

Dance Instructor: **Sevag Avakian**, Artistic Director and Choreographer for Sassoun Armenian Dance Ensemble in Toronto, Canada

You need to register ahead of time (Registration can be made through the Tapestry website: <https://www.tapestryfolkdance.org/international-dance-workshop.html>)

MEET TWO NEW ADE MEMBERS

Katie Anderson is the newest member of ADE. She may not have Armenian heritage, but she is an ABC – Armenian By Choice.

She grew up in Wisconsin and Kentucky, and went back to the Midwest for graduate school in Marquette, MI. This was where she was introduced to Armenian dance, through international folk dance. One of the instructors was Cecilia “Cee” Wilkinson who at that time had recently done a tour of Armenia and had lots of dances to share. Cee was currently in Armenia on another tour, with two ADE members. Small world!

Katie worked at the University of Kentucky as a scientist for years and danced with the Lexington folk dance group. However, she wasn't done with the Midwest and moved to Minneapolis in 2023 for a job in the medical device industry.

She met Naïry at her first visit to Tapestry for international folk dance, and was a part of ADE a week later! Katie is grateful to have found such a wonderful group to dance with, and to learn more about Armenian culture!

Jyni Koschak writes: I grew up in rural Southwestern Pennsylvania, about 35 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. My ethnic heritage is Carpatho-Rusyn

and Lithuanian. Three of my grandparents were immigrants, the other was born to immigrant parents.

My three sisters and I loved to dance (often pretend ballet) when our mother played records. She exposed us to everything from classical composers to songs of the Alps, from Fiddler on the Roof to bullfight melodies. We were mesmerized when we first saw live folk dancers perform at an ethnic festival.

I joined the Army out of high school. After training as a radio operator. I was sent to a Pershing missile unit in Cold War West Germany.

I started folk dancing in 1994, with the University Folk Dancers. That led to Tapestry, where I learned Armenian dances taught by Naïry and Terry.

I have a daughter and two granddaughters (and one who died at 13).

I've danced with the St Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers for about 16 years, and was delighted that my granddaughters danced with the Czech and Slovak children's group.

I work with AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Volunteer Program of VOAMN, matching people 55 and over with opportunities to share their skills at local nonprofits.



ADE at Amira 2024



ADE at Highland Path 2024



ADE at Hayden House 2024



Mr. Five Percent comes to Minnesota (well... almost)

By: *Kassian Vaubel*

On March 29 I attended the fabulous concert of pianist Yuja Wang, playing Prokofiev's 1st piano concerto with the Minnesota Orchestra. Reading the program notes before the concert, I was delighted to discover that the conductor slated to conduct was Finnish conductor Hannu Lintu, who recently became the conductor for the Lisbon-based **Orquestra Gulbenkian**.

Gulbenkian? Clearly an Armenian name, and it was familiar. A little research informed me that the orchestra was founded by the **Calouste Gulbenkian foundation** in 1962, and has a rich history, touring internationally and winning many awards.



But who was this Calouste Gulbenkian? None other than the famous "Mr. Five Percent", so named because he was the single person most involved in opening up the oil fields of the Middle East.

His family had fled the Ottoman Empire to Egypt in 1896, after the Hamidian massacres. His father, who ran a carpet business, sent him to study in Marseille. Then Gulbenkian studied petroleum engineering at King's College, London. At the age of 22, he published a study on the history and possibilities of further exploitation of oil resources in Azerbaijan. His work impressed the

mining minister of the Ottoman Empire so much that he ordered the young engineer to issue a certificate for the opening of oil fields in Mesopotamia. This was the beginning of the history of oil production in the Arab oil fields.

In 1907, he helped negotiate the merger of the Royal Dutch Petroleum Company and the "Shell" Transport and Trading Company Ltd. He kept a five percent stake in the new companies he helped create, which earned him the nickname "Mr. Five Percent".

Gulbenkian became one of the richest men in the world, and he used much of his money to collect a huge art collection at his mansion in Paris. During WWII he moved to Lisbon, Portugal (a neutral country.) He lived there until his death in 1955.

He bequeathed much of his fortune, including the art collection, to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The sum of 300-400 thousand dollars was also reserved for repairs of the Cathedral of St. Mother of God in Echmiadzin, Armenia.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation was created in 1956 and aims to improve people's lives through art, charity, science and education. His massive art collection became the basis of the **The Calouste Gulbenkian Museum**, which opened in Lisbon in 1969, exhibiting works of ancient, oriental and European art.

Going back to the MN Orchestra concert; when I attended the concert, which was wonderful (Yuja Wang played two encores!), it turns out that Hannu Lintu was replaced by Teddy Abrams, music director of the Louisville Orchestra. So Gulbenkian didn't end up coming to Minnesota after all, at least this time. But we can still celebrate the amazing legacy of this Armenian who played a major role in the 20th Century.

From Andrea Johnson

Happy midsummer, soon. Hi all, Thought this might be of interest -- a positive, constructive story.

University of Colorado - Boulder

College of Engineering and Applied Science

Research Professor [Edith Zagona](#) introduced modern water management approaches during a **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-sponsored visit to Armenia**. The weeklong visit, which included a seminar for the students and faculty of Yerevan State University, was part of USAID's Improved Water Resources Management for Sustainable Economic Growth in Armenia program, held at the university May 20-24, 2024

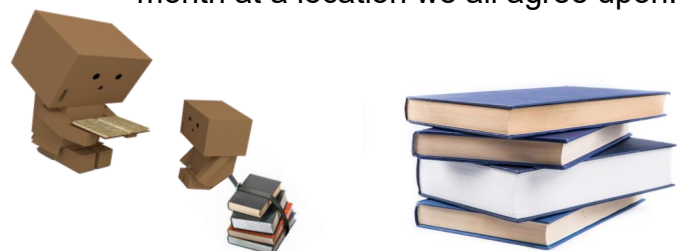
Full article in the link below:

<https://www.colorado.edu/ceae/2024/06/06/modern-water-management-approaches-tap-during-usaid-visit>

ACOM BOOK CLUB NEWS

Contact Leroy if you are interested in participating:
leroy.erickson@minmicro.com

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



ACOM 2024 PAID MEMBERS

If you do NOT SEE your name below, then you have NOT renewed your 2024 membership. You can still send in your membership by filling in the form on the back of this newsletter and mailing it to the address on the form.

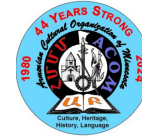
You can also use PayPal, accessible from the website.

THANK YOU !

- Andeweg, George, Jeanne
- Aroutiunian, Margarita; Usitalo, Steven
- Arslan, Arnold
- Asgian, Phil
- Bulbulian, Francis, Barbara
- Cafesjian, Kathy; Baradaran, Jeff
- Charchian, Aram, Ruth
- Daniels, Kathleen; Myers, Marcie, Mari
- Digris, Naïry; McGibbon, Terry & Hassetts
- Erickson, Bradley
- Erickson, Cynthia, Leroy
- Favre, Margaret, Jim
- Gauro, Boghos, Lana
- Gildensoph, Lynne
- Hakobyan, Artur; Papyieva, Nina & family
- Hayes, Michelle & Lila
- Kashian, Darla & family
- Keljik, Kat; Earley, Matt
- Keljik, Mark; Grantz, Caren
- Keljik, Tom; Collins, Jennifer
- Kourajian, Art
- Lents, Nicholas; Francis, Walter
- Matossian, Lou Ann
- Meketarian, Martin, Mara & family
- Mesrobian, Azad, Karen
- Ohannesian, Judy; Tiffany, Doug
- Poritsky, Joan
- Rynda, Kelly
- Savayan, Peka, Maria; Anderson, Stephen
- 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, 2024

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<==



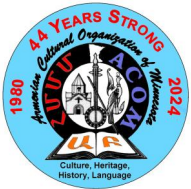
Complete this form and
Return it with your check to



Nairy Digris, Treasurer
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Roseville, MN 55113

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We're on the Web

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