

HYE SHARZHOOM Armenian Action ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐԶԻՄ



38th Year

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Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

April 24 Armenian Genocide Commemoration at Fresno State



The Armenian Students Organization commemorated the Armenian Genocide on Monday, April 24. Photo: Raffi Mouradian

CLAIRE KASAIAN
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Students Organization held a “Multicultural Genocide Awareness Event” on Thursday, April 20, to raise awareness about genocides around the world. The event also served to bring attention to the Genocide Commemoration planned for Monday, April 24.

ASO students set up tables in the Free Speech area of campus, with posters and banners providing information about the Genocide. They displayed a blank poster with the question “what does injustice mean to you?” to encourage students to think about the injustices of genocide and to write their responses. Members

applied tattoos of the Armenian flag or the “forget-me-not-flower” on students. They also conducted a raffle for a free ASO Genocide commemorative t-shirt.

On April 24, the 102nd Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide commenced at noon in front of the Armenian Genocide Monument at Fresno State. ASO president Diana Gasparian was the Master of Ceremonies for the event, which began with ASO alumna Faten Kassabian singing the American and Armenian national anthems.

Students Michael Rettig and Lucie Ekezyan then shared their family stories from the Genocide. Rettig spoke about his great-great-grandfather

SEE APRIL 24 PAGE 8

Fethiye Çetin “Echo of Silence”



Left to right: Dr. Sergio La Porta, Prof. Hagop Ohanessian, Prof. Ani Kasparian, Fethiye Çetin, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and Greg Gostanian.

ANTO SAKAYAN
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Studies Program was privileged to welcome Turkish lawyer and human rights

activist Fethiye Çetin to give a talk on “Echo of Silence” on Wednesday, April 26, at St Paul Armenian Church in Fresno.

Çetin spoke in Fresno as part
SEE ÇETIN PAGE 3

Armenian Studies Program Celebrates 40th Anniversary at 29th Annual Gala Banquet

ARAMAYIS ORKUSYAN
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Studies Program 29th Annual Banquet, held on Sunday, March 19 at the Ft. Washington Golf and Country Club, was a special occasion that marked the Program’s 40th anniversary. Distinguished guests, alumni, and students gathered to celebrate the success of students and the ever-growing Armenian Studies Program, which has become the preeminent Armenian Studies Program in the world.

Among the guests were keynote speaker Dr. Mary Papazian, President of San José State University; Dr. Joseph Castro, President of Fresno State; Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, Dean of the College of Arts &



Photo: Hourig Attarian

L. to R.: Assoc. Dean Honora Chapman, Dean Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval; Dr. Mary Papazian, Dr. Joseph Castro, First Lady Mary Castro, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Dr. Dennis Papazian, and Prof. Hagop Ohanessian.

Humanities; and Dr. Honora Mugrdechian, Director of the Chapman, Associate Dean of the Armenian Studies Program, College of Arts & Humanities.

Professor Barlow Der

SEE ASP BANQUET PAGE 8

“The Promise” Opens in Theatres Nationwide- Hye Sharzhoom Covers Student Reaction



BARLOW DER MUGRDECHIAN
ADVISOR

Armenians have long awaited a “Genocide Movie” to bring the story of the Armenian Genocide to a broad audience. Maybe it has been a wish that has had too much expectation built in to it, so that no movie could ever be made to be *the* movie. However it has been important to have such a movie made in the face of the persistent denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Republic of Turkey since 1923. Armenians

have felt that they needed to have their story told, much as they felt that the Holocaust has been so successfully represented in films over the past decades. My comments below do not include a discussion of documentary films based on the Armenian Genocide.

The reasons for the paucity of Armenian genocide-themed movies are complex, but arise primarily from two different key issues. The first comes from trying to answer a fundamental

SEE THE PROMISE PAGE 5

“Lost Birds” Premieres at April 7 CineCulture Event

MARINE VARDANYAN
STAFF WRITER

Described as the first Armenian Genocide movie to make a Turkish audience cry, *Lost Birds* premiered in Fresno on Friday, April 7, as part of the CineCulture Film Series. The Armenian Studies Program, a sponsor of the screening, invited directors Ela Almayac and Aren Perdeci from Istanbul to speak about their film. Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian introduced the film and the directors and discussed the cooperative work with Dr. Mary Husain, faculty director of CineCulture, in bringing Armenian-themed films to the series.

A standing-room only audience of more than 325 people filled the



Photo: Hourig Attarian

Left to right: Dr. Mary Husain, Directors Ela Almayac and Aren Perdeci, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

Fresno State Leon S. and Pete P. Peters Educational Center Auditorium, creating a sense of anticipation and excitement.

Lost Birds premiered in Istanbul

to mainly Turkish audiences and many of those Turks were moved to tears by the film. They were

SEE LOST BIRDS PAGE 2

Armenian Studies Program Book/Video/CD Archival Gifts

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Prof. Sergio La Porta, and the Armenian Studies Program would like to thank the donors, authors, and publishers for the following books, periodicals, videos, and archival gifts, either offered personally, or to the Program.

Lena Maranian Adishian and Nareg Seferian, The 100 Years, 100 Facts Project, El Segundo, California, for a copy of the book *Impact of an Ancient Nation: Bridging the Past, Present, and Future with 100+ Facts About Armenia and Armenians* by Lena Maranian Adishian and Nareg Seferian (April 2017), 140pp., in English. The book presents one hundred separate facts about Armenia and the Armenians, from notable individuals, to music and dance, sports and entertainment, and Diaspora communities. 100years100facts.com.

Fethiye Çetin, Istanbul, Turkey, for copies of three of her books: *Anneannem* (My Grandmother), (Istanbul: Metis Press, 2004), 115 pp., in Turkish; *Torunlar* (The Grandchildren), with Ayşe Gül Altınay (Istanbul: Metis Press, 2009), 231pp., in Turkish; and *Utanc Duyuyorum!* (I am Ashamed: The Trials of the Hrant Dink Murder Case), (Metis, Siyahbeyaz, 2013), 372pp., in Turkish. Fethiye Çetin is a lawyer and human rights activist who spoke in Fresno on April 26, 2017.

Hapet J. Kharibian, St. Charles, MO, for various books with Armenian themes.

ASO Enjoys Spring Semester Activities and Volunteering



ASO members at the Santa Cruz Boardwalk.

DIANA GASPARYAN
STAFF WRITER

In the past few months, the Armenian Students Organization has held several socials, events, and fundraisers. The executive team was constantly occupied with planning, organizing, and collaborating on new ideas. There was an even balance between socials and volunteer events, mixing enjoyment and work throughout the semester.

The ideas to fundraise arose due to the anticipation of the substantial costs of holding the Armenian Genocide Commemorative events. On Friday, March 10, ASO held a fundraiser at Menchie's Frozen Yogurt. For every purchase made in the name of ASO, Menchie's donated 15% directly to ASO. The fund-raiser was very successful.

On Sunday, March 19, ASO organized and held a silent auction at the Armenian Studies Program 29th Annual Banquet. Items were donated by Rainbow Flowers, Ara Karkazian Jewelers, Harry's Bagels, Fresno Auto, and Ark Mediterranean Grill.

It was time for a break. ASO wanted to have a unique social, so they planned a scenic hike at Millerton Lake on Sunday, March 26. The weather was beautiful, and the members enjoyed the fresh air and greenery.

Once the group reached the first level of the Sky Harbor trail they had a nice picnic before heading back down. It was a great way of socializing while being active.

However, the most exciting social of the semester was the remarkable Santa Cruz day trip that took place on Monday, April 10. It was an exhilarating way to kick off Spring Break: from visiting the thrilling theme park to enjoying the relaxingly crisp sea air. Members were able to enjoy a substantial amount of time at the beach and the Boardwalk, sharing laughs throughout the entire day.

On Saturday, April 8, the ASO participated in the Fresno State First Nations Powwow. ASO had an informational table set up which attracted many guests who were curious to learn more of Armenian culture. Members discussed both Armenian history and the Armenian Genocide and answered questions. The event was a great opportunity for ASO members to get involved and work with other student organizations on campus.

ASO did not want to miss out on the chance to see the iconic new film, "The Promise." ASO went as a group to the April 21 screening of the first major Hollywood motion picture to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. While the movie left everyone in tears, it caused all who attended great joy that the story of the Genocide was finally told on screen in such a beautiful way.

ASO's mission is to be helpful, informative, and attentive to events happening around us. Anything is possible through the pride and joy we have for our culture and our people.

California State University, Fresno Armenian Studies Program

Fall 2017 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2				
• Arm 1A-Elementary Armenian (Class #72291)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #73056)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Area D3				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #73571)	3	3:30P-4:45P	MW	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Area IC				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #73706)	3	9:00-9:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #73572)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
Upper Division Armenian Studies Course				
• ArmS 108A-Arm History I (Class #72292)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	S. La Porta
• ArmS 120T-Arm Urbanism (Class #76358)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	Kazan Visiting Prof.

For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669.

Get a Minor in Armenian Studies.

Check on requirements for the Minor in Armenian Studies in the current catalog.

<http://www.fresnostate.edu/catalog/subjects/armenian-studies/armenia-mn.html>

HYE SHARZHOOM

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LOST BIRDS, FROM PAGE 1

motivated to ask the directors why they knew nothing about the Armenian Genocide.

A film that took five years to complete, *Lost Birds* presents the fairytale-like story of two inseparable siblings, Bedo and Maryam, who live in bliss with their mother and grandparents in a peaceful Armenian village. Maryam and Bedo often play in their secret cave, where their imagination transforms them into a princess and a knight. One day, upon returning from their playful venture in the cave, the siblings find their village deserted. Maryam and Bedo set out on a journey to find their family, unaware that the Turkish

gendarmes have deported all the Armenians. This is the beginning of the Armenian Genocide, which is never explicitly mentioned in the film.

Turkish directors Ela Alyamac and Aren Perdeci pursued this brave endeavor despite risk of punishment. In Turkey, discussing the Armenian Genocide could be deemed as violating Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, "insulting the Turkish nation."

Director Aren Perdeci explained how his Armenian heritage was a motivator for him to make such a film. For the safety of the actors and production team, which included two Armenian theatre troupes from Istanbul, the film was shot under the pretense

of a love story. When asked about future opportunities to shoot films regarding the Genocide in Turkey, Alyamac replied, "The window has closed."

Alyamac and Perdeci shot the film with stunning cinematography depicting the towns of Kayseri and Güzelyurt, and the emotional musical score included works from the composer Komitas Vardapet, oudist John Bilezikjian, and others.

Candles were a recurrent image in the film. "More than 5,000 candles were made," related Perdeci, as he explained the three months he dedicated

Dr. Ümit Kurt Explores Motivations of “Ordinary” Genocide Perpetrators in Talk on Aintab



Left to right: Kara Statler, Dr. Ümit Kurt, Michael Rettig, Dikran Dzhezyan, and Prof. Hagop Ohanessian.

MICHAEL RETTIG
EDITOR

When one typically thinks of the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide, they usually have in mind high-ranking officials who directed policy, such as Talaat, Enver, or Djemal Pasha. The term “perpetrator” might also conjure up images of *gendarmes* and soldiers herding Armenian refugees through the desert. However perpetrators were often ordinary people, emphasized Dr. Umit Kurt in his lecture, “A Curious Case of Armenian Genocide Perpetrator Ahmed Faik Bey,” held on Tuesday March 7. This lecture was a part of the Spring Lecture Studies sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program and the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

According to Dr. Kurt, “Perpetrator Studies”—the field of enquiry that seeks to understand the motivations behind perpetrators’ actions—has been largely neglected in the case of the Armenian Genocide. Scholars tend to focus on the motivations of Turkish leaders, rather than trying to understand why ordinary civilians decided to take up arms against their Armenian neighbors. Dr. Kurt’s research fills this gap in the historiography by utilizing archives and memoirs of ordinary people who carried out genocidal policies to examine their lives before and after the Genocide.

Dr. Kurt emphasized that Turkish and Kurdish civilians in local provinces were vital to the Committee of Union and Progress’ (CUP) plot to exterminate the Armenians. In many cases it was the local notables who convinced central authorities to deport the Armenians in their district.

“Political and social elites can either expedite or delay and resist genocidal destruction ordered from above,” explained Dr. Kurt.

Perpetrators were often motivated by different factors; some sought wealth and property while others yearned for a “Turkey for the Turks.” According to Dr. Kurt, self-interest was one of the most sweeping motivations for ordinary people to participate in the massacres. “The Genocide provided numerous profiteers with a unique opportunity to combine the ideologies of the regime with their personal interests. Many of them used

the chaotic circumstances to pursue their own self-interests by claiming Armenian property and goods.”

Dr. Kurt examined the careers and motivations of several Turks who participated in the Genocide, such as Ali Cenani Bey and Ahmed Faik Bey. Ali Cenani Bey was elected as president of the CUP in Aintab because the locals wanted a civilian leader. He became one of the main organizers of the deportations in Aintab. Dr. Kurt noted that Cenani Bey was driven more by opportunism than ideology because he protected wealthy Armenian families in order to profit from them. Many other Turkish elites protected select Armenians for personal benefit; most often to use for labor.

Perpetrators such as Ahmed

Faik Bey, however, were driven solely by their ideology. He would often file complaints to the central authorities and confronted opportunistic Turks such as Ali Cenani Bey, who protected Armenians.

“Ahmed Bey did not want a single Armenian to remain in Aintab and made a great effort to reveal those who protected them,” said Dr. Kurt.

Ahmed Bey was a loyal CUP party member, who Talaat Pasha trusted to facilitate the Armenian deportations in Aintab. Ahmed Bey was driven by his nationalist ideology and believed that the Armenians were a threat to the Ottoman Empire. According to Dr. Kurt, Ahmed Bey proclaimed that “if one is guilty, all are guilty,” and was largely responsible for escalating the death toll for Armenian deportees in the region.

While Ahmed Bey was driven by ideological motivations, Dr. Kurt noted that many more were driven by self-interest. The potential material gain to be acquired from participation in the massacres inspired a wider amount of people who did not always share similar ideologies to take part in the Genocide. “Entire generations were educated and provided for by the Armenian property and wealth acquired in 1915,” said Dr. Kurt.

Case studies into the lives of these perpetrators are important in understanding the average men who carried out massacres on the local level.

LOST BIRDS, FROM PAGE 2

towards finding the best candles for the film. They had to burn in just the right way to produce the desired effects, especially in a scene where no artificial light was utilized.

Lost Birds was filmed in the Turkish language, with English subtitles. Armenian was spoken in some of the scenes in Maryam’s and Bedo’s home, as well as during the Easter services at the Armenian Church. The

ÇETIN, FROM PAGE 1

of a nation-wide speaking tour and was accompanied by Ani Kasparian of Detroit, who read the English translation of Çetin’s speech.

In her presentation Çetin, speaking in Turkish, expanded on her memoir, *My Grandmother: A Memoir*, published in 2004, in which she tells the story of how her grandmother Seher revealed to her that she was not Turkish but Armenian and that her birth name was Heranush.

She told Çetin that a Turkish soldier had taken her away from her family during the death march, adopted her, and raised her as a Muslim woman. This revelation initially shocked and confused Çetin, but it ultimately led her to question everything she was taught and knew about her life.

Çetin recounted how her grandmother was uprooted from her home and lost her religion and voice. The community around

directors explained the historical foundation of their decision, “When they spoke in secret, it was in Armenian, but when they were among Turks, it was Turkish.” Alyamac and Perdecı were very committed to creating a historically accurate product.

With the help of their history consultant, Dr. Vahe Tashjian (director of the Houshamadyan Project), and an interview

SEE LOST BIRDS PAGE 7

her disappeared; even the names of the villages that were once familiar were changed. Çetin spoke of her grandmother’s silent moments during her revelation, and how she would look to the sky and rub her knee, rocking back and forth. These actions demonstrated a silent cry, a way of coping with the tragic events that took place in her youth.

For Çetin, her grandmother’s silent pauses were the most painful to witness, yet she stated, “Her pain was now my pain.” There was no turning back for Çetin. What was she to do with the information that was revealed to her?

“I was very confused at first,” stated Çetin. “I thought that all the things I had learned were wrong.”

Things became clearer when her grandmother began to tell Çetin about her relatives in the United States, which she initially took as a joke. She then asked her grandmother about why her relatives were in the United States and why she had not gone with

Armenia Focus of Presentation at International Coffee Hour



Left to right: Kara Statler, Claire Kasaian, and Arthur Khatchatrian.

DIANA GASPARYAN
STAFF WRITER

At the beginning of the Spring 2017 semester, ASO was invited to give a presentation at the International Coffee Hour (ICH), a Fresno State series that is held every Tuesday from 2-3pm in the Henry Madden Library. The ICH is unique in that it brings people of diverse backgrounds to share their culture, history, and customs with others.

Diversity is a core value at Fresno State and the International Coffee Hour gives students, faculty, and the community an opportunity to learn more about the various cultures. It has been a Fresno State tradition that has been taking place on campus for 32 years, and the ASO was overjoyed to participate.

Three ASO members prepared the presentation: Kara Statler-Vice President, Claire Kasaian-Secretary, and Arthur Khatchatrian-Public Relations. The team first provided the audience a very detailed description Armenia’s history and its geography. This gave the audience a clear idea of where the country is and how long it has been in existence. The symbolism in the Armenian flag and in the Armenians the Coat of Arms was also explained.

Photos of Etchmiadzin, Republic Square, Tatev Monastery, Lake Sevan, and other iconic sites gave the audience an idea of what they could expect to see in Armenia.

This then led to a discussion

them. Her grandmother began to tell Çetin what had happened to her when she was younger. “When I wrote the book [*My Grandmother*],” said Çetin, “it was like opening a champagne bottle that was shaken up.”

According to Çetin, once the book was written, “others began to come forth and to talk about how their grandparents were Armenian.”

When Çetin was asked if these others were obliged to speak out, she stated that individuals needed to speak out in order to have peace in their hearts.

Those with stories similar to those told by Çetin now have another obstacle to overcome. On April 16, 2017, Turkish President Reccip Tayyip Erdogan,

of holidays and festivals traditionally held in Armenia, such as Vardavar, Armenia’s Independence Day, and Prpoor. The team shared the meaning and importance of these events, intriguing the audience and generating more curiosity.

What better way to explain the music and dance of Armenia than to show a video showcasing an example of traditional Armenian music and dancing? The presenters also discussed traditional Armenian instruments, such as the *Duduk*, *Kamancha*, *Oud*, and *Kanun*.

Food is a major part of any culture—mouth-watering images of delicious Armenian foods were shown, causing many members of the audience to ask where they could get Armenian food in Fresno.

The presentation also included a video of how *lavash* (traditional Armenian bread) is made from scratch and then baked in a *tonir*.

Then came the discussion of a sad portion of Armenian history, the Genocide.

The presenters explained how the Genocide began, complete with dates and maps of deportation routes.

As the presentation concluded, the ASO Executives answered questions from the audience. Questions ranged from how the economy of Armenia is doing to how the presenters feel about the cultural clash of being an Armenian living in America.

Overall, the ICH presentation on Armenia had a positive outcome.

consolidated his authoritarian rule with the passing of the Turkish Constitutional Referendum.

When Çetin was asked why she continued to pursue her convictions despite possible threats, she responded with boldness.

“I want everybody to learn the truth. I want justice for the injustices that were done,” Çetin said. “This crime against humanity must be accepted. I don’t want another 1915 to happen again.”

It is estimated that around two million Turks in Turkey share a similar story to Çetins, many of whom have yet to speak out.

Support Hye Sharzhoom

Congratulations Armenian Studies Minors and Graduating Seniors for 2016-2017



HAYERJ STANBOULIAN
Biology
Minor in Armenian Studies

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

I wanted to stay connected to my Armenian roots and expand my knowledge about our amazing culture and history.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

The Armenian Studies Program has a great community of Armenians who are really passionate about their heritage. I really appreciated how everyone in the Program was proud to be an Armenian and how we had a great community away from our homeland.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

The most memorable event was the unveiling the Armenian Genocide monument at Fresno State. I was grateful to be part of that historic moment. I loved every single Armenian Studies course I took. Each one of them was unique and taught me something new about my culture.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan on attending graduate school to pursue a Ph.D. in Gene Regulation at UCLA.

TADEH ISSAKHANIAN
Master in Business Administration

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

As an Armenian, I think it is important to learn as much as possible about the history of our people. The Masterpieces of Armenian Culture (Armenian 148) course taught me so much about the writers, poets and musicians from our past.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

The friendships and connections I made with my fellow students has to be the most valuable aspect of the Program. It has been a wonderful experience to learn about our history and culture alongside other Armenians.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorites were the numerous lectures that were hosted by the Program. The lectures brought in speakers from all over the world, who presented on so many unique and interesting topics.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation I will continue my current position in Washington, D.C. with Congressman Costa's office, while continuing to be active in the Armenian community in the nation's capital.



ELENA SARMAZIAN
Psychology

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

I was encouraged to take those courses to deepen my understanding of my own culture.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

The most valuable thing to me during my time in the Armenian Studies Program was the people I got to meet and engage with. These friendships will last a

lifetime and what's even better is that they started during those classes where we all were learning more about our culture.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite class was definitely the Arts of Armenia (ArmS 20) class with Professor Der Mugrdchian. I loved learning about the different architectural styles of our beautiful churches and all the amazing art that the Armenian people created.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation, I plan on continuing my education to receive my Master's degree in Clinical Psychology and hopefully continue to become a psychiatrist.

ELINA KARAPETYAN
Political Science

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?

I have always been very much in tune with my roots. I visit Armenia often and try to soak up as much as I can while I am there. I thought taking an Armenian literature course would be perfect for me because I love good writing. Studying the works from passionate Armenians who experienced the Genocide and other incredible hardships was potent and at times daunting.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

I enjoyed meeting and connecting with young, enthusiastic, like-minded, patriotic students. I like seeing Armenians who are still in touch with their culture. Also connecting with professors who offer valuable advice was great.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

I loved attending lectures where experts come from all over to teach us about their work.



Last year, Dr. George Bournoutian, from Iona College, visited Fresno State to give a talk about Iran's mission of apology to Russia in 1829. I was so amazed by his lecture, I bought his book right after and asked him to sign it.

Last semester I attended the concert of accomplished pianist Sofya Melikyan. I wrote an article for *Hye Sharzhoom* and sent it to my aunt Lianna who lives in Russia to read. She told me she went to the same conservatory as Sofya in Armenia. So, it has been very fun.

What are your plans after graduation?

I have always dreamed of moving to Washington D.C to start off my career in politics. I am currently working on making that happen. I also plan on going to law school after a year of working, and studying for the LSATs.

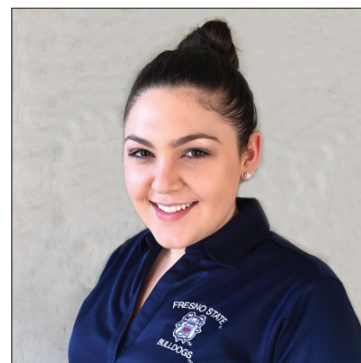
SEROUN MOURADIAN
Public Health

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

It is difficult to choose, but if I have to, then meeting Garo Paylan was by far the most impactful. It was an honor meeting not only an influential figure of Turkish Parliament, but an Armenian who defiantly lives to serve those who have no voice in Turkey. Seeing everyone come together with the hope of a brighter future made me feel so much joy.

What are your plans after graduation?

I want to continue my education and obtain my Masters in Public Health so I can contribute to women's health. And of course, travel. I am just going to get started and see where the road takes me. I feel like the best experiences are unplanned and unexpected. One day at a time, but I am super excited to see what unfolds!



ALYSSE ARAKELIAN
Food and Nutrition Science-Culinology

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

I had the opportunity to take Dr. La Porta's Masterpieces of Armenian Culture (Arm 148) course. I really appreciated the way the class was structured because I learned so much about Armenian history and culture through the lives of various prominent figures and leaders.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL RETTIG

ASO "Member of the Semester"



Photo: Michael Rettig

Diana Gasparyan, left, with David Safrazian.

DIANA GASPARYAN-STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Students Organization has started many new initiatives this semester, with a silent auction at the Armenian Studies Program 29th Annual Banquet, and a Frozen Yogurt fundraiser.

ASO is introducing an award, called the "Member of the Semester," recognizing a member who has demonstrated exceptional effort in assisting with club events and volunteer work. The core of any organization are its dependable members, and the Executive officers wanted to show their gratitude by recognizing one outstanding member each semester.

The recipient of the Spring 2017 Member of the Semester award is junior David Safrazian, who is majoring in Biology and who is aspiring to become a pharmacist. Safrazian's hard work did not go unnoticed, with his constant participation in events and willingness to help. Safrazian joined ASO this Spring semester, but quickly grew to be a valuable part of the club.

"Being a part of ASO is something I can cherish because I can make new friends that I'll have for the rest of my life while being productive and helping the community," said Safrazian. Keeping up with all of the events throughout the semester is not an easy task, but Safrazian always attended lectures held by the Armenian Studies Program and assisted in passing out parking passes and directing guests.

Safrazian was a member of the Genocide Committee and helped bring supplies to the Genocide Awareness Event that took place on Thursday, April 20. He also volunteered to help sell ASO Genocide Commemorative T-shirts at his home church, St. Mary Armenian Church in Yettum, spreading ASO's impact. Safrazian additionally lent a helping hand at the ASO's Armenian Genocide Commemoration held on April 24, helping set up chairs, passing out programs, and setting a great example for members.

ASO is a team. The successes of ASO are due to the participation of each member, not simply one. All of the members have the common interest of wanting to share their Armenian pride while engaging in constructive activities. The "Member of the Semester" award is an acknowledgement of the outstanding members who go the extra mile.

“The Promise” Opens to High Expectations

THE PROMISE, FROM PAGE 1 question—how do you represent a catastrophe such as the Armenian Genocide in an esthetic fashion? It has challenged most areas of endeavor including the production of literary works. The second comes from the challenge of finding the right story, to be able to market that story to a Hollywood studio, and then to find the financial resources to complete the production.

Aurora Mardiganian’s memoir, *Ravished Armenia*, was made into a silent film in 1919 called “Auction of Souls.” But this film did not achieve broad distribution. In 1934, Franz Werfel’s American bestseller “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh” was slated to become an MGM movie. This was a much awaited film, with many expecting it to be a blockbuster on the order of



“The Mutiny on the Bounty,” also expected to be released in 1935. But the Turkish Ambassador to the United States, and the Turkish government, learning of the production succeeded in squelching the project with a blend of threats and bluffs.

Thus “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh” had to wait another forty-seven years to be produced and made, not by a Hollywood studio, but by an Armenian-American producer in a low budget production, shown primarily to Armenian audiences.

“The Promise”-A Movie Review

ARTHUR KHATCHATRIAN
STAFF WRITER

Mesmerizing is the only word that can encompass the magnificence of “The Promise.” From the beginning of the film to the end, the viewer is captivated by its invigorating scenes and direction that keeps one on the edge of their seats.

“The Promise” deals with the topic of the Armenian Genocide in a way that resembles that of a high-production, sophisticated

action-drama movie, rather than the typical hour-long documentary. It is a complete modern movie, incorporating all that goes into major Hollywood movies, yet maintaining its historical purpose and message. The movie was full of thrilling scenes that kept one’s eyes glued to the screen and clearly shows the amount of work that went into shooting each scene.

“The Promise,” directed by Terry George (“Hotel Rwanda”), features renowned actors Os-

car Isaac, Christian Bale, and Charlotte Le Bon. The late Fresno native and philanthropist Kirk Kerkorian fully funded the film’s \$90 million dollar budget. Without his vision and dedication to the Armenian cause, “The Promise” would not be here today for the world to see. Anyone who watches this film will leave full of emotion, completely speechless, and in awe.

The film revolves around the story of an Armenian man named Mikael (Isaac), an aspiring medical student from the town of Siroun, who ventures to Constantinople to further his studies. However, Mikael soon finds himself falling love with a French-Armenian dance instructor named Ana (Le Bon). She is however already in a relationship with an American reporter named Chris (Bale). Mikael and Ana’s budding happiness and bliss is cut short when the Turkish government orders the deportations and killings of the Armenian population.



Director Terry George

As an Armenian, it was phenomenal to see not only some of the stories of my own ancestors brought to the screen, but the countless stories of Armenians throughout the world that had never been depicted to this extent before.

“The Promise” is significant in so many ways, but one of the most important is the attention it brought to the Armenian Genocide. Many of the actors in the movie have become vocal advocates against Genocide denial because of their involvement in this project.

For those who have not seen this movie yet, you are missing out on something absolutely priceless. Whether Armenian or not, “The Promise” shares with the world a message that every viewer can relate to.

“The Promise” provides a grander overview of events from the mob riots in Istanbul, to the arrest of intellectuals, the labor battalions of Armenian men, German involvement in the Ottoman Empire, the death marches, foreign aid to Armenian orphans, moments of resistance, and more. After viewing the film with fellow graduate students from the History Department, many of them described feeling acutely aware of their prior ignorance of the Genocide and were eager to

or great attention outside of the Armenian community.

Although many felt the hundredth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide would be the opportunity for the production of a major Genocide-themed movie, it remained until the release of “The Promise” this year to redeem the hopes of Armenians.

It is *deja-vu* as once again Turkish denialists have attempted almost any means to keep “The Promise” out of theaters, from resorting first to trying to block

distribution, and then to writing negative reviews, and finally engaging in tickets scams to keep viewers away.

“The Promise” is now in distribution and has received wide-scale attention in the greater community. Has it fulfilled the hopes of two generations of Armenians? Has it succeeded in relating the story of the Armenian Genocide? Time must pass before we have all of the answers that we seek and for a full assessment to be made.

Reflections on “The Promise”

MICHAEL RETTIG
EDITOR



“The Promise” stars Oscar Isaac and Charlotte Le Bon.

Like many Armenians, I had been eagerly anticipating the release of “The Promise” since first hearing that such a film would be released. I did not initially have high hopes when I heard that Kirk Kerkorian would be funding a Hollywood blockbuster about the Genocide because I had too often been disappointed with similar announcements in the past that did not come to fruition. However, on April 21 I found myself rushing to the opening weekend showing with high expectations. Our story was finally being told. “The Promise” did not disappoint and kept me returning for multiple viewings.

Although “The Promise” revolves around a love triangle between Chris Myers (Christian Bale), Mikael Boghosian (Oscar Isaac) and Ana Khesarian (Charlotte Le Bon), the romance never overwhelms the story. Rather, “The Promise” follows the protagonists as they are swept up in the Armenian Genocide and must struggle to deal with the horrors as best they can. The romance never fully engaged me as the director might have intended, but I did appreciate certain moments that kept the Genocide as the focus of the film. One such moment is when Myers stumbles upon Boghosian and Khesarian kissing on a beach near Musa Dagh. Rather than create a dramatic encounter between the three friends, Myers’ next lines are “here, let me help you” to an Armenian refugee. This was a story of love tragically interrupted by genocide.

“The Promise,” as the first major Hollywood film about the Genocide, had an obligation to accurately portray the events of 1915 to a wide audience with little exposure to the topic. The movie succeeds in this regard and provides an effective introduction to the history. Rather than delve into any one theme of the Genocide in great depth, “The Promise” provides a grander overview of events from the mob

riots in Istanbul, to the arrest of intellectuals, the labor battalions of Armenian men, German involvement in the Ottoman Empire, the death marches, foreign aid to Armenian orphans, moments of resistance, and more. After viewing the film with fellow graduate students from the History Department, many of them described feeling acutely aware of their prior ignorance of the Genocide and were eager to

read more about the topic.

One critique I have of the movie is the writing. Much of the dialogue came across scripted. Khesarian’s line that she was born in Paris “but I’m a proud Armenian” rang hollow. Often the moments of silence were most effective. There was a particular scene when Myers and Khesarian shared a silent conversation that conveyed emotion more effectively than words. Khesarian, who was living with Myers, had just brought Mikael Boghosian’s relatives to their apartment for refuge. When Myers confronted her in the bathroom, their gaze communicated a deep understanding of the enormity of their situation and a hardened resolve to aid the Boghosians in any way possible. While some of the lines resulted in two-dimensional characters, performances by Oscar Isaac and Marwan Kenzari, as the noble carefree Turkish medical student, Emre Ogan, carried the show.

“The Promise” is an especially important film to support considering Turkish efforts to sabotage the distribution of the movie and deny the events surrounding it. Mikael’s challenge to the doubting villager at the foot of Musa Dagh doubly served as a challenge to those who would deny the Genocide. “Go out and see! Follow the vultures and the smell...!” as if to say to denialists, “the evidence is there if you but open your eyes!”

Watching this film with a sold-out Armenian audience was particularly moving. All of us saw our ancestors in the faces of the Armenians portrayed in “The Promise.” At the film’s conclusion, viewers were left with mixed emotions of joy and grief; joy that we have survived as a race, joy that such a film has finally been created, but grief at the horrors that our ancestors suffered. “The Promise” is an important memorial to those lost in the Genocide that will continue to educate people for many years to come.

Students Reactions to “The Promise”

HAVERJ STANBOULIAN • STAFF WRITER



Andrew Esguerra

What was your first reaction to “The Promise”?

One of the most surprising things about this movie was how few of the main actors were actually Armenian, but when I saw them on screen, I saw people that I thought could be part of my family. I looked at them and could see my ancestors, a friend from church, or a relative. I felt that they captured that very well, which added an addition emotional layer for me as an Armenian viewer.

Promise,” I was really excited to see it because it was the first big movie about the Armenian Genocide I would see in a theater. It was interesting to follow one family’s journey to try and escape death knowing that every family has their own story of triumph.

Why is a movie like this important?

Movies like this are important because they educate people about an issue that the world refuses to recognize.



DAVID SAFRAZIAN

What scene stood out and why?

My favorite scene was when Anna said “our revenge will be to survive.” Since the Turkish government tried to erase Armenians from existence, this is what they did not want. Today we flourish and thrive all over the world, and that is better than any other kind of revenge.

Why is a movie like this important?

It tells a history that many don’t know about and show the truth and horror that happened to so many people.



MARINA CHARDUKIAN

What was your first reaction to “The Promise”?

When I first heard about “The

Photos: Michael Rettig

Dr. Watenpaugh on Humanitarianism



Left to right: Michael Rettig, Aramays Orkusyan, Molly Gostanian, Diana Gasparyan, Dr. Keith Watenpaugh, Dr. Stacy Fahrenthold, Gardenia Nahigian, and Dr. Sergio La Porta.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

MICHAEL RETTIG EDITOR

The Armenian Genocide prompted one of the largest humanitarian aid campaigns in American history. The American Committee for Relief in the Near East spearheaded this effort to alleviate the sufferings of the Armenian people. Dr. Keith Watenpaugh (UC Davis), in his lecture “The Drowned, the Saved, and the Forgotten: Genocide and the Foundations of Modern Humanitarianism,” on Tuesday, April 4, argued that the Armenian Genocide marked a monumental shift in how humanitarian aid was conducted.

Whereas prior humanitarian work was primarily carried out by religious organizations, the American response to the Armenian Genocide was the first widespread secular relief project. This lecture concluded the day-long Symposium for Syrian Refugees, sponsored by the Islamic Studies Speaker Series, the Department of History, the College of Social Sciences, and the Armenian Studies Program.

According to Dr. Watenpaugh, the Rockefeller Foundation was one of the most influential humanitarian organizations in addressing the sufferings of WWI victims.

Employees of the Rockefeller Foundation quickly realized that the sufferings of the Armenians were not the typical war time casualties that they were accustomed to aiding.

“As early as the fall of 1915, Western relief workers understood that what was happening to the Armenians was unique and unprecedented in the scope of humanitarian action,” said Dr. Watenpaugh.

Dr. Watenpaugh stressed that it is also important to consider how the Armenians themselves viewed the situation of the refugees.

When the Armenians of Musa Dagh were saved and taken to Port Said, they were forced to reside in what Dr. Watenpaugh described as “the first modern refugee camp.” Armenians referred to these refugees as “shipwrecked.”

They were different from the victims of prior massacres because they were torn from their native environment and utterly helpless without outside intervention.

Dr. Watenpaugh noted that reports from Rockefeller aid workers to America inspired activists to take a more aggressive humanitarian response to address the needs of the Armenians.

The American Committee for Relief in the Near East was founded in response to the Genocide and began a campaign to raise funds for the Armenian victims. According to Dr. Watenpaugh, the Near East Relief did not focus on raising money in traditional avenues, such as churches or religious organizations.

Rather, they took a more modern secular business-oriented approach to humanitarianism by using propaganda posters and advertisements, thereby raising more money than any other organization.

One poster depicts a refugee girl with outstretched arms appealing to the reader for help, with the caption: “Lest We Perish.” Dr. Watenpaugh stressed that the aid workers from Near East Relief were not missionaries, but doctors, professionals, and veterans.

In conducting his research, Dr. Watenpaugh noticed that the Armenians often “disappeared into a faceless mass.” He was interested in uncovering the voices of Armenian refugees. To accomplish this, Dr. Watenpaugh utilized three memoirs of Armenians who had interacted with the Near East Relief.

One such memoir was Antranig Dzarougian’s *Men Without Childhood*. Dzarougian faced a difficult life in a Near East Relief orphanage and expressed an understanding that his status as an orphan had damaged him.

“It is a profound reminder of how the dehumanizing elements of genocide continue to be visited on survivors no matter how effective programs of relief could be,” said Dr. Watenpaugh.

Dr. Watenpaugh concluded his lecture by detailing how funding for the Near East Relief eventually declined as the orphans grew older and donor fatigue settled in.

Despite this fact, the Near East Relief was able to successfully mobilize Americans of different faiths and denominations in support of the Armenian refugees, thus laying the foundations for modern humanitarianism.

Richard Hagopian Discusses Armenian Folk Music

MICHAEL RETTIG EDITOR

Few have done more to preserve traditional Armenian folk music than local Fresno *oud* master Richard Hagopian. On Thursday, April 27, Hagopian recounted his first experiences with the *oud* and showcased traditional Armenian songs in his presentation, “Melodic and Rhythmic Considerations in Oud Performance” as part of the Middle East Studies Lecture, Performance & Film Series, cosponsored by the Music Department’s Global Music Lecture Series and the Armenian Studies Program.

Hagopian described the moment he first heard the *oud* as a child. He immediately fell in love with the instrument and implored his father to find him one so that he could learn to play. World War II was raging in Europe and it was no easy task to ship an *oud* from the Middle East to Fresno. Fortunately, Hagopian was able to acquire an *oud* from a local Armenian and was soon playing at local functions. An Armenian band in need of an *oud* player hired Hagopian to perform with them, and they soon dominated the Armenian music scene in Fresno.

Hagopian’s earliest influences were the Armenian *kanun* player Kanuni Garbis and the blind *oud* player from Istanbul, Udi Hrant. When Hagopian learned that both of his idols would be performing



Oud master Richard Hagopian

Photo: Alain Ekmalian

in Fresno, he eagerly attended the concert with his band. After the concert, Udi Hrant gifted his *oud* to Hagopian, who would later perform with Udi Hrant during his next Fresno tour.

Udi Hrant noticed Hagopian’s mastery of the instrument and would later grant him the title of “*udi*,” or *oud* master, a title reserved for the most elite *oudists* in the world. One can only become an *udi* if an *oud* master notices one’s talent and deems him worthy.

In the second portion of his presentation, Hagopian described the structure of Armenian songs

as well time signature and beats unique to Armenian music. The audience listened in reverent silence as Hagopian brought to life traditional melodies such as *Tamzara* and *Siro Yerk*.

Hagopian has been instrumental in preserving Armenian folk music by passing his knowledge on to his children and grandchildren as well as performing for the Armenian community for over 30 years. Educational presentations such as this are similarly important in keeping Armenian folk music alive for the next generation.

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Survey of Armenian History Draws Student Interest



Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, left, with students from the modern Armenian History course.

Photo: Hagop Ohanessian

STAFF REPORT

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian has been teaching an Armenian history survey course at Fresno State for more than thirty years. This semester twenty-three students are enrolled in the Armenian Studies 108B-Modern Armenian History course, which is a survey of Armenian history from the fall of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia to the establishment of the Modern Armenian Republic.

The Armenian History course is a requirement for students planning to complete a Minor in Armenian Studies. For History majors, the course fulfills the World Regions Field of the History Department.

This year’s students are

enthusiastic to learn about the experiences of the Armenian people as they faced a variety of challenges. Class participation has been high with students engaging with Prof. Der Mugrdechian in discussions highlighting the often complex problems Armenians faced.

Many of the students were intrigued to learn about the Armenian Genocide. History major Paul Dinh thought learning about the Genocide was the most interesting part of the course. “An important theme that I have learned is that one group of people’s hatred towards another group can cause them to conduct terrible crimes.” For Anna Nelson learning more about the Genocide in comparison to the Holocaust was what caught her interest.

History major Mercedes Martinez felt the course was important because “it shed light on a history that is not well known.”

Some of the students who are taking the course for a Minor, have learned more about the Armenian people. “Classes like this are important so that students can get an insight on important historical events not taught in other classes,” said Alica Yegiazaryan.

“I liked the class discussions about different topics which have helped me understand the material better,” said Christine Idjian, who is minoring in Armenian Studies.

Many of the history majors in the course enjoyed learning about the Armenians. “Classes like this are important because the Armenian people have had a major influence in the world. It was interesting to get a different perspective about a culture and its traditions,” said Vivian Zavala.

Arthur Pena-Flatray was impressed by the fact that Armenians “were able to maintain their identities despite constant invasions and threats.” Sometime students enroll in the class because it is a requirement, as in the case of Thomas Scarr, but “it has become my favorite class.”

“I believe these classes are important because educating non-Armenians about the past spreads the word about the Armenian culture and history,” said Arlen Pilavian.

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5th Annual "Genocide Awareness Week" Held in Scottsdale, Arizona



Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, Prof. John Liffiton, and Fr. Zacharia Saribekyan, pastor of St. Apkar Armenian Church of Scottsdale.

STAFF REPORT

Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian participated in the 5th Annual "Genocide Awareness Week," organized by Scottsdale Community College, in Scottsdale, Arizona. Der Mugrdechian spoke on the topic of "The Armenian Genocide and International Recognition," on Monday, April 17, to students, faculty, and community members. This year Der Mugrdechian was joined by guest speaker Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, who spoke on "The Long Shadow of the Armenian Genocide," on Tuesday, April 18. The "Genocide Awareness Week" has included presentations on the Armenian Genocide in past years by Dr. Richard Hovannisian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, and Dr. Ümit Kurt. Der Mugrdechian's lecture

examined the history of Armenian Genocide recognition from 1915 to the present. He examined two broad phases of the recognition process, emphasizing how recognition and continued Armenian Genocide denial by the Republic of Turkey are often two facets of the same issue. For many years, both Armenians in the Soviet Union and in the Diaspora, had difficulty in raising the Genocide issue before international bodies. This changed beginning in 1965 on the 50th anniversary of the Genocide, when spontaneous public demonstrations took place throughout the world. It was then that the Armenian Genocide became an issue that was brought before such bodies as the People's Tribunal (1984) and the International Association of Genocide Scholars (1997), which both affirmed the Genocide. By the early 2000's, through the

Maronian's "Women of 1915" Screened in Fresno

ELINA KARAPETYAN
STAFF WRITER

On April 24, Armenians around the world came together for the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Pursuing worldwide recognition and honoring both survivors and lost souls of 1915 is incredibly important for the modern Armenian today.

On Sunday, April 30, a large audience gathered at the Fresno State Leon and Pete Peters Educational Center auditorium for a screening of the award winning documentary, "Women of 1915." The film was followed by an interactive discussion with director Bared Maronian.

The screening was organized by the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program, the Women's League of the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School, the local chapters of the Armenian Relief Society, the Armenian Cultural Conservancy of Fresno, and the local branch of the Hamazkayin Armenian Educational & Cultural Society.

This emotionally stunning film explores the amazing resilience, bravery, and strength the women of 1915 demonstrated in the midst of battle and bloodshed. Frequently, when discussing the topic of war, women are customarily left out of the conversation, so Maronian felt a personal obligation to shed light on how incredibly important women were during this period because "...their stories needed to be told."

The film is divided into several sections covering topics such as "Spellbinding Motherhood," "The American Dream," "Forced Assimilation," and "Resilience," all of which were relevant to the women of 1915. Maronian personified the tragedy by introducing individual women who made a significant difference in 1915. Interviewing the descendants of Genocide survivors was equally meaningful because they were the ones who went on to carry their ancestor's legacy and achieve extraordinary accomplishments of their own.

efforts of both organizations and individuals, countries throughout world began to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Mouradian's lecture was focused on what were the fundamental characteristics shared by those who were able to survive the Armenian Genocide. Survivors also in many cases resisted against the perpetrators.

Organized by Prof. John Liffiton, Scottsdale Community College's "Genocide Awareness Week" featured speakers on American Indians, on the Holocaust, and on the topic of comparative Genocide.

The St. Apkar Armenian Church of Scottsdale has been a generous supporter of the "Genocide Awareness Week" activities and annually sponsors speakers on the Armenian Genocide. Fr. Zacharia Saribekyan, pastor of



Left to right, committee members: Patty Torosian, Zar Der Mugrdechian, Mary Ekmalian, Angele Ohannessian, Leslie Antazo, director Bared Maronian, Karoun Boyajian, Serpouhie Messerlian, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

According to Maronian, the documentary required "...both primary and secondary research techniques..." in order to fully encapsulate the true horrors of the Genocide.

The film first explores the life and legacy of Aurora Mardigian, who most famously promoted Armenian Genocide awareness. She miraculously survived the Genocide and went on to share her painfully poignant story to the rest of the world. Her autobiographical book, *Ravished Armenia* and subsequent film, "Auction of Souls," were incredibly successful in humanizing the tragedy, raising relief funds and awareness. The documentary shows footage of Mardigian recounting how the Turks whipped her and said, "All of you are going to die. There will be no one single Armenian to live." They slaughtered her loved ones before her eyes. Mardigian died in Los Angeles in 1994, and was buried in an unmarked grave. Her work will continue to keep her spirit alive.

Victoria Artinian is another resilient woman, born in Urfa in 1894, who managed to escape annihilation with some members of her family. It was incredibly difficult to avoid the death marches, forced assimilations, rampant slaughter, rape, and murder. Women were particularly vulnerable because the men were killed first. The lives of some beautiful Armenian women

were spared, while others were taken in as Turkish servants and wives. Under such devastating circumstances Artinian managed to flee to America. She settled in San Francisco with her husband Louis Hagopian and daughter Clara. Clara later married Paul Jobs, and after many years of struggling to create a family, the couple adopted a boy named Steve. Armenian genocide survivor Victoria Artinian is the grandmother of Steve Jobs, a man who single handedly revolutionized technology and the way people around the world live.

Maronian said that at times, the process of creating the documentary was emotionally draining. "As a professional filmmaker, I had to emotionally detach myself from the subject matter I was dealing with" in order to create the most authentic film that would immortalize the women of 1915.

"At times, it was beyond difficult to work on the film, specially during the post-production process where you have to watch a scene, listen to horrific human experiences and carry on your work," said Maronian.

Maronian's "Women of 1915" demands the rightful recognition of the Armenian Genocide and honors the incredible women who were at the forefront fighting for their people.

LOST BIRDS, FROM PAGE 3

with a 95-year-old Genocide survivor, the film was able to capture specific details of the time period. The main locations of *Lost Birds*, the church, orphanage, and Maryam's and Bedo's home, were all existing structures in 1915, restored by the directors especially for their film. The home, discovered in a village near Kayseri, was one of the only Armenian homes that was still standing. They were able to utilize the house with the condition that they restore it to its original condition. The costumes of the actors were designed using authentic materials and motifs from the period of 1915. This is a testament to the directors' attention to detail. Another

example was the mother's gown, which was a genuine 100 year-old dress. The film successfully conveyed a feeling of authenticity as viewers appreciated the thoughtfulness and diligence of the work.

"We wanted to make a film that children could watch without being traumatized," said Alyamac. Indeed, the film introduces the dark chapter of history in a manner that avoids violent scenes and explicit references to the Genocide. Instead, *Lost Birds* focuses on the relationships and lives that were forever changed because of the Genocide of 1915.

"Lost Birds, for people who don't know about the history, is a good starting point," said Perdec.

St. Apkar, has played a key role in the continuing inclusion of

the Armenian Genocide in the "Genocide Awareness Week."



Fresno Mayor Lee Brand was the keynote speaker at the Armenian Genocide Commemoration held in the evening.

APRIL 24, FROM PAGE 1

Mardiros Gashagortzian's brother, Harutyun, and his family. Mardiros left Bitlis for Fresno with his family in the early 1900s while his brother Harutyun remained in Bitlis with his wife, children, and mother. Harutyun and half of his family were killed in the Armenian Genocide.



Michael Rettig, right, and Raffi Apkarian

Rettig displayed a poster-sized photograph of Harutyun and his family from 1912, three years before many of them were massacred. "I chose to talk about them today to preserve their memory, as they were so nearly lost to history," said Rettig.



Lucie Ekezyan

Ekezyan shared her great grandmother Araksi's story of

survival. She was orphaned early in the Genocide and was then enslaved by the very people who had murdered her family. Araksi was able to protect her three younger siblings and preserve her Armenian identity until she was rescued by Armenian soldiers, who took them to an orphanage in Gyumri.

"Despite having lost everything, Araksi still thrived for the sake of her family. She dedicated herself to nurturing and caring for her siblings so that they might be capable of doing the same for their families in the future," said Ekezyan.



Aramayis Orkusyan

Students from the Charlie Keyan Community School then sang, "Adanayi Voghpe," (The Tragedy of Adana) and "Mshetsi Mor" (Mother from Moush). The audience appreciated seeing the Armenian culture preserved in the next generation through music.

Associated Student Body President Tim Ryan, spoke about how the Fresno State Associated Students Senate has affirmed the Armenian Genocide in resolutions.

Aramayis Orkusyan, on guitar and vocals, and Rettig, on

oud, performed "Sareri Hovin Mernem." "I chose this song because it speaks to a common yearning I think all Armenians in the diaspora share—a desire to set foot in their homeland again," said Orkusyan.

Professor Hagop Ohanessian of the Armenian Studies Program was the keynote speaker of the event. Ohanessian's presentation focused on "how the memory of surviving the Armenian Genocide and the resilient spirit of the Armenian people over the course of our history have shaped who we are today as Armenian-Americans." Ohanessian in



Prof. Hagop Ohanessian

particular used the example of the Armenian community in the San Joaquin Valley to illustrate his point that it is possible to overcome tragedy and to thrive. He discussed how stories his parents told about his own family and the challenges they faced, have shaped who he is as an Armenian-American.

"Never lose sight of the sacrifices your ancestors made and the memories that they shared with you because truly our survival is a testament to their sacrifices," stated Ohanessian.

More than 250 students and community members attended the noon commemoration, which concluded with Orkusyan playing the *duduk* as those in attendance placed carnations in the center of the Genocide Monument.



Diana Gasparyan

Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro Named as "Man of the Year"



Dr. Joseph Castro was honored as "Man of the Year" by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan at a March 25 Banquet.

ASP BANQUET, FROM PAGE 1

opened the event by thanking the donors and students.

Dr. Sergio La Porta, Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies, emphasized the importance of the students, the community, and the donors. "The Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State is great, and the real reason for that is our students, their parents, and you, the community, who make sure that we stay on our toes and make sure that our students get the most out of their education possible," said Dr. La Porta.

Dean Jiménez-Sandoval and Associate Dean Dr. Honora Chapman discussed the important role of the Program within the College of Arts & Humanities. The Armenian Studies Program provides Fresno State's diverse student population with education in communicative skills, humanistic values, and cultural awareness, which are all goals the College of Arts & Humanities strives to achieve.

"Armenian Studies is the perfect example of every single discipline in our college of arts and humanities from poetry to lectures to history to art," said Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval. "As humanists, we are creators of concepts, and at the heart of our creations is the quest for knowledge invested in bettering our society. Within this parameter of the arts and the humanities, it is Armenian Studies that is the 'Crown Jewel' of the College."

Attending the Banquet for the fourth consecutive year, President Castro continued to show his strong support for the Program and the Armenian community. "This Armenian Studies Program is undoubtedly

the most distinguished of its kind," said President Castro. "It is so impressive to me that in 40 years, the Program has sponsored over 400 world-class lectures, conferences, and musical programs on our campus."

President Castro also commended the students, past and present, who have been involved in Armenian Studies Program. "Students who participate in the Armenian Students Organization and the Hye Sharzhoom newspaper have opportunities for leadership and engagement and are among our most active students on campus."

The Banquet attendees had the privilege to hear from Dr. Mary Papazian, the only female, Armenian university president in the United States. Dr. Papazian reflected on the origins of the Program and on the future that lies ahead. "Let me tell you that we are witnessing the development of a very special new generation. These young Armenians are talented, ambitious, caring, and dedicated. They are making us proud and they rightfully will outdo us. It is our obligation to continue to support them to ensure that our community remains as united today, and into the future, as it was during the centennial commemoration."

The program concluded with reflections from graduating senior Haverj Stanboulian, who is minoring in Armenian Studies. Graduating seniors earning a Minor in Armenian Studies, ASO Executive officers, and recipients of Armenian Studies scholarships were individually acknowledged and awarded certificates. Forty-five students were among the more than 220 attending the Banquet.

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