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AGBU ARMENIAN VIRTUAL COLLEGE IS 1 YEAR OLD

4 academic terms and more than 500 students from 35 countries

On July 2, Armenian General Benevolent Union's (AGBU) Armenian Virtual College (AVC) celebrated the first anniversary of its activities. The online forum organized by the AVC was attended by AGBU Central Board member and Founding-Chairman of the AVC Dr. Yervant Zorian, AGBU Central Board member and member of the Phoenix University Board of Directors Carol Aslanian, RA Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian, education specialists.

Having been launched in June 2009, the AVC has become the first Armenian online university, with a distinct goal to make Armenian education available to everyone and everywhere through modern technologies. During the one year of its activities the Armenian Virtual College has had four academic terms and more than 500 students from 35



From left: AGBU Central Board members Carol Aslanian and Dr. Yervant Zorian, and RA Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian

countries of the world including USA, Russia and France, as well as Venezuela, South Africa and Reunion Island. Education at AVC is conducted in six languages; Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, English, Russian, French and Spanish.

In his opening speech Dr. Zorian presented the activities and achievements of the AVC during the first year. Carol Aslanian, member of the Board of Directors of the University of Phoenix, the biggest university of online education in the world, talked about the recent developments and innovations of online education, presented certain statistical analyses of the field. Online education specialist professor Molly Freeman (University of Berkeley, USA) also spoke about the peculiarities of the field.

Many students of the university from different countries of the world, as well as online instructors and online education specialists participated in the forum through live online bridges. Live video connections were established with the students from

Turkey, United Arab Emirates, USA, France, Russia, who shared their experience of online education at AVC and answered the questions of those present.

As well as online courses during which the online instructors establish connections with the students, the AVC has also introduced "mixed education", where the online teacher joins a traditional class and conducts the lesson together with their teacher. This method has been successfully implemented at the Ohannesian School of United Arab Emirates. Chairman of the Ohannesian School Board Hrach Brunsuzian also joined the AVC online forum and shared his experience with those



AVC students participated in the online forum through live bridges

present. AGBU Lazar Najarian-Calouste Gulbenkian School of Aleppo will start a similar cooperation with the AVC soon.

(Continued on page 2)

AGBU ARMENIAN VIRTUAL COLLEGE IS 1 YEAR OLD...

(see page 1) In her congratulatory speech RA Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian thanked the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the faculty of the Yerevan State University for establishing such a high quality online university. She also suggested inviting all the students of the Armenian Virtual College to Armenia for a festive graduation ceremony.



Happy Birthday, Armenian Virtual College

Today, the AVC has three departments; Armenian language, history and culture, each of which offers courses of different levels. A new course of history of Armenian music will soon be introduced at AVC. Course developer professor Mher Navoyan spoke about this during the forum. Artur Avagian, the AVC Development Team Manager, presented the course management system at AVC, while the online instructors talked about the team work, forums and assignments implemented during the classes.

Talar Kazanjian from Georgia and Davit Abrahamian from South Africa shared their opinions about the influence of the Armenian Virtual College on the Armenian communities spread all over the world.

At the end of the forum the guests visited the AVC office to get acquainted with the activities of the online university and taste the jubilee cake.

For detailed information about the AGBU Armenian Virtual College please visit www.avc-agbu.org, or write to info@avc-agbu.org.



For the video materials please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMdIOoEWaOM>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxSmWMR3FiY>

AGBU ARMENIAN VIRTUAL COLLEGE HOSTED THE PARTICIPANTS OF RA DIASPORA MINISTRY'S "COME HOME" PROGRAM

On June 30, Armenian General Benevolent Union's (AGBU) Armenian Virtual College (AVC) hosted more than 100 participants of the RA Diaspora Ministry's "Come Home" program, who had arrived from different communities of the Diaspora, including Russia, Georgia, Canada, Lebanon and Syria, and spent two weeks in Armenian families.

Dr. Yervant Zorian, AGBU Central Board member and Founding-Chairman of the AVC, presented the potential of the online education system involving the youth in active discussions. His questions revealed that only 75% of those present have some knowledge of Armenian.

For the participants this meeting was at the same time their first online lesson of Armenian history. Following a brief video material about the invention of the Armenian alphabet the youth answered the teacher's questions on the material itself in effect having a mini examination.

They also asked questions about the online education to the AVC Academic Director Dr. Hasmik Khapayan, who gave detailed answers to all those interested in any aspect of the Armenian Virtual College.

On July 16, AVC hosted the second group of "Come Home" program participants consisting of youth from Athens, Hungary, Turkey, Georgia, Russia and Cyprus. The participants of both groups agreed to meet each other upon the completion of the "Come Home" program, but this time in the virtual world as classmates of the AGBU Armenian Virtual College.

The third and fourth shifts of the "Come Home" program will also visit the AVC in the coming months. As a result of four meetings more than 600 Diaspora youths will get acquainted with the AVC activities and those interested will become students of the first Armenian virtual college.



For the video material please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP41T34yMOE>



About 600 participants of RA Diaspora Ministry's "Come Home" program hosted at the Armenian Virtual College

DIASPORA-ARMENIAN TEACHERS INTRODUCED TO AGBU ARMENIAN VIRTUAL COLLEGE

70 Diaspora-Armenian teachers from 16 countries of the world, who were visiting Armenia within the framework of the Diaspora-Armenian Teachers Training Program organized by the RA Education and Science Ministry and the Yerevan State Pedagogical University visited the Armenian Virtual College on July 19, got acquainted with its activities and courses, with the results and achievements of the first year of the university's operation and the possibilities of putting it into practice in the Armenian schools of their respective Diasporan communities.



Diaspora-Armenian teachers at the AGBU Armenian Virtual College

AGBU Armenian Representation Director Ashot Ghazarian briefly introduced the history and the idea behind the virtual college, while Dr. Hasmik Khalapyan, Academic Director of the AVC, spoke about the AVC courses, educational methods, privileges of distance learning and the possibilities of applying the AVC at the Armenian schools of the Diaspora. To make the AVC activities more comprehensive and descriptive for the guests the AVC online instructors organized a brief demonstration of AVC courses.

As representatives of different Armenian schools of different Armenian communities the teachers present at the meeting were particularly interested in the hybrid method of education introduced by the AVC, during which the online instructor joins a traditional class and conducts the lesson together with their teacher. Varduhi Piliposian-Garakizlian, a teacher from the Ohannesian School of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates), who was also present at the meeting thanked the AVC and the AGBU and personally testified to the effectiveness of the hybrid education method used in her school.

In the end of the meeting Ashot Ghazarian and Hasmik Khalapyan answered the questions raised by the teachers. AVC is the first Armenian online university. It aims to make Armenian education available to everyone and everywhere through modern technologies.

ANNUAL ALUMNI DINNER AND COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

2010 graduates, alumni, faculty, staff, Board of Trustee members, invited guests and friends of the American University of Armenia joined together in an evening of festivities on June 25 to celebrate the 2010 graduates of AUA and 14 years of leadership by President Haroutune Armenian.

Dr. Armenian is stepping down as AUA President after nearly two decades of service to AUA and Armenia. Board of Trustee members Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian and Dr. Yuri Sargsyan made moving toasts along with AGBU Armenian Representation Director Mr. Ashot Ghazarian, and Mr. Ashot Hovhannisian, President of Synergy International.

Mr. Armen Ashotyan, RA Minister of Education and Science, surprised both President Armenian and guests with his presentation to President Armenian of a Gold Medal of the RA Ministry of Education and Science.

Commencement Ceremonies were held on Sunday, June 27, during which Master's Degrees were awarded to students who have successfully completed requirements. The keynote speakers this year were Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian and Dr. Dzovag Avakian. AUA 2010 Valedictorians, Ms. Lilia Petrosyan in Armenian and Mr. Stepan Khzrtian in English, gave inspiring speeches.

The Dinner Dance was sponsored by Byblos Bank. Raffle prizes included donations by British Midland International of a ticket to London, by Austrian Airlines of a ticket to Vienna, and Kecharis hotel and resort for a two-night stay in Tsakhkadzor. The AUA Turpanjian Rural Development Program donated a two night stay at a Bed and Breakfast in Karabagh.



AUA president, faculty and graduates after the commencement ceremony in front of the AUA building

FOURTH SEASON OF AGBU YEREVAN SUMMER INTERN PROGRAM

For the fourth consecutive year the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) held the Yerevan Summer Intern Program (YSIP) - one of the major Diaspora youth programs of the AGBU carried out in Armenia. Joining its sister programs in New York and Paris, the Yerevan Summer Intern Program was established in 2007. The goal of YSIP is to help Armenian college students of the Diaspora develop closer ties with their homeland and a better understanding of their roots, interact with their peers and get actively involved in cultural and professional activities in Armenia.



20 interns from eight countries spent their summer internship at the leading companies and organizations of Yerevan

United Nations Organization, Armenian Center for National and International Studies, "Civilitas" Foundation, American University of Armenia, Deem Communications, "Narek Sargsyan" architectural company, Ter-Tatjatian Law Firm, IDS Design studio, Spanish Center and Varshavian Orphanage.

This is a month of cultural enrichment during which the Diaspora Armenians interact with their peers and feel the reality of statehood in their newly-independent motherland.

As well as gaining professional experience, the interns also participated in various cultural activities, attended Armenian language and folk dance classes, visited historical monuments, got acquainted with the programs carried out by the AGBU both in Armenia and Karabakh. During the YSIP participants' visit to the AGBU Armenian Virtual College, Dr. Yervant Zorian, AGBU Central Board member and Founding-Chairman of the Armenian Virtual College, held a special presentation speaking about the results and the achievements of the first year of the AVC activities. As part of their program the interns were received by the RA Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian.



Fun at YSIP: after a memorable basketball match

This year's AGBU Yerevan summer internship program was successfully supervised by YSIP coordinator Anna Aghajanian and YSIP Activities Coordinator Sati Boyajyan.

From June 25 to August 6, 20 interns from eight countries of the world, USA, Canada, Syria, Lebanon, Russia, UK, France and Bulgaria, spent their summer internship at a number of leading institutions and organizations of Armenia, including the RA National Assembly, RA Diaspora Ministry, RA Human Rights Defender's Office, Ameria Bank,



AGBU YSIP participants with NKR Parliament Speaker Ashot Ghulyan

NKR National Assembly Speaker Ashot Ghulyan received the YSIP participants during their three-day trip to Artsakh. They spoke about Diaspora-Armenia relations and other issues concerning the role of the Armenian youth. On July 25, the interns visited the AGBU "Antranik" Scout Camp in Lori region of Armenia and spent an unforgettable day with the Armenian scouts from all around the world.

AGBU STARTS SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN MOSCOW

In 2010, a new program was added to the long list of Diaspora youth programs of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) carried out worldwide. This city with the biggest Armenian community - Moscow - became the location of the most recent AGBU Summer Intern Program, joining the organization's successful summer internship programs in New York, Paris and Yerevan. The program offers students of Armenian descent from around the world a once-in-a-lifetime professional experience in a global hub of trade, commerce, diplomacy and innovation.

The first AGBU Moscow Summer Intern Program started on June 26 and lasted until August 31. 8 interns, 20-26 years of age, from five countries of the world, USA, the Netherlands, Brazil, Romania and Canada, spent five weeks in the capital of the Russian Federation carrying out their internships in leading local and international organizations and companies such as "Henderson and Hayas", "Creditreform-RUS", "Mediacrat", Association of Banks of Russia, "Cigarclan", "Monitor" and "Dilidjan International High School".

Apart from gaining professional experience the MSIP participants were also offered classes of Russian and Armenian languages and Armenian folk dances. Following a day of work, the interns visited different historical-cultural monuments, got acquainted with the representatives of the Armenian community of Moscow and explored the Armenian character of the city.

The interns were so enthusiastic and impressed by their experience that some of them, Alex from Canada and Marianna from Brazil for example, are planning to continue the cooperation with their companies after the completion of the internship and after their return to their home cities.



Alex Bedrosyan spent his summer internship in "Dilidjan International High School" project in Moscow



Diaspora-Armenian youth spent five weeks in the capital of the Russian Federation

In addition to local outings, educational seminars and cultural workshops the MSIP participants traveled to St. Petersburg and visited the famous Hermitage Museum and St. Catherine's Armenian Apostolic Church.

The first AGBU Moscow Summer Internship Program was successfully supervised by MSIP coordinator Angela Sargsyan and MSIP Activities Coordinator Lusine Kerobian.

As a sign of appreciation and gratitude for their commitment, Anna and Raffi, both from New York, were invited to corporate evenings and business lunches by their employing companies.

The Moscow High School of Economics organized a series of lectures and trainings for the MSIP interns with the participation of representatives of renowned companies such as KPMG and Price Waterhouse Coopers.



MSIP participants on unforgettable sightseeing trips

AGBU “ANTRANIK” SCOUT CAMP KICKED OFF FOR THE THIRD TIME AT LORI REGION OF ARMENIA

In 2010, Armenian General Benevolent Union's "Antranik" scout camp brought together 120 scouts from Aleppo, Kamishli, Damascus (Syria), Beirut (Lebanon), Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Yerevan (Armenia).



AGBU scouts received by His Holiness Karekin II at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin

AGBU constructed a completely new facility with all the necessary conditions to hold interesting evenings and events in its beautiful and bright hall.

On July 24, the scouts were received by the Catholicos of All-Armenians Karekin II at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. His Holiness welcomed the scouts and extended his message and words of blessing to them.

The traditional fire ceremony of the "Antranik" scout camp took place on July 25 with the participation of AGBU Central Board member Vasken Yacoubian, AGBU Armenian Representation Director Ashot Ghazarian, Primate of the Diocese of Gougark of the Armenian Apostolic Church Bishop Sepuh Chuljian, a lot of parents and guests. The fire ceremony was also attended by the participants of the AGBU Yerevan Summer Intern Program, students of the AGBU Marie Manoogian School of Buenos Aires and AGBU Canada Youth Team currently in Armenia on community service.

The third season of AGBU "Antranik" scout camp opened on July 18 at AGBU's private campsite in the village of Lermontovo, Lori region of Armenia. Besides the regular camp activities, educational talks, games and hiking, the scouts also took sightseeing trips to the historical and cultural monuments of Armenia.

With a distinct intention to improve the conditions and substructures at campsite and attract more scouts from abroad, this year



Scouts spent unforgettable evenings at the newly built camp facility



With a distinct goal to return to Armenia next year: 120 scouts from four countries at AGBU campsite in Lori region of Armenia

Bishop Sepuh Chuljian and AGBU Central Board member Vasken Yacoubian had the honor of lighting the fire ceremony torch. The scouts demonstrated their skills. The atmosphere was filled with singing, dancing, recitation and different scout games.

Like the two previous years, the third season of AGBU "Antranik" Scout Camp was also supervised by Kevork Santourian, Executive Secretary of the AGBU Armenian Youth Association (AYA) Lebanon.

AGBU-AYA “VAHRAM PAPAZIAN” THEATER GROUP OF BEIRUT ON TOUR IN ARMENIA

Armenian General Benevolent Union-Armenian Youth Association's "Vahram Papazian" theater group of Beirut was on tour in Armenia from July 3-10 as part of the RA Diaspora Ministry's "One Nation, One Culture" festival. On July 4, the group presented Hakob Paronian's "Shoghokort" ("The Flatterer") in the packed hall of the Paronian State Theater of Musical Comedy in Yerevan. In charge of the production of the two-act comedy was professor Yervant Ghazanchian, who has been directing the group for the past decade. He is also the Artistic Director of the Paronian State Theater of Musical Comedy.



AGBU-AYA "Vahram Papazian" theater group of Beirut performing Hakob Paronian's "Shoghokort" on Armenian stage

Tamara Poghosian, President of the "One Nation, One Culture" foundation, delivered a welcoming speech after the performance. On behalf of AGBU and AYA, Chairman of the "Vahram Papazian" theater group Trdat Avedikian thanked everyone for the warm reception of the group on their motherland. "We are proud to celebrate our 50th anniversary in Armenia and share that happiness with so many dear and honorable representatives of art and culture from my homeland", said Mr. Avedikian. He thanked the "One Nation, One Culture" foundation, presented the Paronian Theater of Musical Comedy with souvenirs, and extended special words of gratitude to prof. Yervant Ghazanchian for his commitment to the theater group.

Sona Harutiunian, Head of the RA Culture Ministry Art Department, handed in Golden Medals to Trdat Avedikian for his contribution in strengthening theatrical and cultural ties between the Diaspora and Armenia, actor Manuel Markarian and decorator Mateos Avakian. Secretary of the Theater Group Maro Telvizian was awarded a Ministry diploma.

On July 8, "Vahram Papazian" theater group presented "Shoghokort" in the Hamo Kharazian Drama Theater in Artashat - the theatrical capital of Armenia. The performance was attended by RA National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamian, Governor of Ararat region Vardges Hovakimian, Mayor of Artashat Gagik Mouradian, other officials and guests.

In his speech Artistic Director of the theater group Yervant Ghazanchian mentioned that the group was invited to Artashat by RA NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamian. Once again Trdat Avedikian thanked everyone for the warm reception and hospitality and handed in a souvenir to NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamian.

Flowers and lasting standing ovations accompanied the performances of the "Vahram Papazian" theater group everywhere in Armenia. The mastery and professionalism of the actors of the group - Manuel Markarian, Harout Torosian, Arpi Avedikian, Harout Manoukian, Hovakim Keshishian, Varya Bournazian, Vartan Mkrtchian, Sako Ohanian and Hovik Katerdjian - were highly praised and accessed by the Armenian audience.

During the days in Armenia the members of the "Vahram Papazian" theater group were received by RA Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian. They visited the AGBU Armenian Representation and got acquainted with the activities of the Union in Armenia.

AGBU-AYA "Vahram Papazian" theater group was founded in 1959. It has over 200 performances in its repertoire and this was its third visit to Armenia (1972, 2008). In the course of its history "Vahram Papazian" theater group was managed by famous Diaspora-Armenian artists such as Berge Fazlian, Krikor Satamian, Vatche Adrouni and others.



From left: Artistic Director of "Vahram Papazian" theater group Yervant Ghazanchian, RA NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamian, and Chairman of "Vahram Papazian" theater group Trdat Avedikian before the performance in Artashat



For the video material please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsXIMURIH2U>

AGBU SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT 20-YEAR-OLD ANOUSH NIKOGHOSYAN WINNER OF KÄRNTNER SPARKASSE PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL VIOLIN COMPETITION

The most famous and influential figures from the world of classical music recently gathered in the Kärntner region of Austria for the annual Kärntner Sparkasse prestigious international violin competition, which took place from May 31 to June 6, 2010. 96 talented young violinists from 30 countries including Russia, France, USA, Germany, Italy, China, Austria, UK and Japan, participated in the competition. 20-year-old Anoush Nikoghosyan from Armenia was the outstanding winner of the competition and received the 10,000 euro prize. She was a clear winner of the competition, far ahead of the second prize winner Iva Miletic and the other four finalists. Anoush also received a special prize from the jury for the best performance of the Mozart concerto in the first stage of the competition.

Since 2001, every May, music-lovers focus their attention on the Kärntner Sparkasse. The jury of the competition is always composed of the world's most famous musicians, conductors, producers, music critics and agents. The competition is held in three phases. In the first two the participants perform solo, while in the third phase all the finalists are accompanied by an orchestra, which this year was conducted by Maestro Eduard Topchjan, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra.



Anoush Nikoghosyan performing during the Kärntner Sparkasse prestigious international violin competition

This year's international jury consisted of prominent figures such as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Zurich Opera House, Dresden State Opera, and principal guest conductor of the Metropolitan Opera Fabio Luisi (President, Austria), Suisse Romande Orchestra Manager and Artistic Director Steve Roger (Switzerland), Principal Conductor of the Austin Symphony Orchestra Peter Bay (USA), Vienna Symphony Orchestra concertmaster Anton Sorokov (Austria), Professor of Vienna and Florence Music Academies Pavel Vernikov (Austria), Artistic Director of the Sapporo Music Festival Kenny Chen (Japan), Artistic Director of Klagenfurt Musikverein Ernest Hoetzl (Austria), Schönbrunn Concert Agent Sonja Steindl (Austria), one of the most famous music critics Wilhelm Sinkovitz (Austria).



From left: Director of Sparkasse Alois Hohegger, Anoush Nikoghosyan, and Maestro Fabio Luisi

Besides the financial award Anoush Nikoghosyan also signed a contract for 2 performances with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra under the direction of the renowned Fabio Luisi in February 2011. She also received about 14 different invitations from prestigious companies and festivals, including the Sapporo Music Festival of Japan.

Anoush Nikoghosyan was born in Yerevan in 1990. She studied at Sayat-Nova Music School of Yerevan from 1995-2003. In 2005 Anoush graduated from the Yerevan State Conservatory. Today, Anoush is a third year student at the Munich Music Academy. She is a recipient of the AGBU scholarship and for the third year running the AGBU has financed her stay in Germany. Her teachers are Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Germany Christoph Poppen and Artistic Director and

Principal Conductor of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra Eduard Topchjan. Anoush has participated in a number of international competitions and festivals in Yerevan, Dubai, Kaunas and Moscow. She has performed in the UK, Lithuania, UAE, Syria, Russia and Germany, has appeared as a soloist with the Yerevan Symphony Orchestra, Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, Serenade Chamber Orchestra (Armenia) and Kaunas Chamber Orchestra (Lithuania).

AGBU CENTRAL BOARD MEMBER DR. YERVANT ZORIAN WELCOMED THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 5TH PAN-ARMENIAN CONFERENCE OF WRITERS

The official opening ceremony of the 5th pan-Armenian conference of writers took place on June 28 in the Writers' Union Resort in Tsaghkadzor with the participation of 90 delegates from 20 countries of the world and 50 writers from Armenia and Artsakh. The conference is held within the framework of RA Diaspora Ministry's "One Nation, One Culture" festival with the assistance of RA Culture Ministry, World Armenian Organization, Union of Armenians of Russia and Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).



Dr. Zorian made a welcoming speech at the 5th pan-Armenian conference of writers

Opening speeches were delivered by RA Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian, Chairman of the Writers' Union of Armenia Levon Ananian, AGBU Central Board member Dr. Yervant Zorian, and others.

In his welcoming speech Dr. Zorian spoke about AGBU's century-long activities directed towards the preservation and development of Armenian literature. "Armenian literature is the citadel of Armenians, while the writers and the intelligentsia are the defenders of that citadel", said Dr. Zorian. Speaking about the past 20 years of AGBU activities towards the development of Armenian literature, Dr. Zorian mentioned only some of the projects carried out by the Union in this direction, including the publication of the works of Diaspora-Armenian writers, the establishment of the "Levon Z.

Surmelian" printing house in the Writers' Union of Armenia, and the Union's contribution in the organization of the pan-Armenian conferences of writers.

Among other AGBU-sponsored projects in this field Dr. Zorian underlined the Armenian Virtual College, which through modern technologies offers courses of Armenian language, history and culture in six different languages, the digitalization of archives at the American University of Armenia and the Noubarian Library of Paris, as well as the recent launching of English-language "Ararat" online literary magazine.

In the end Dr. Zorian wished success and future prosperity to the pan-Armenian conference of writers.

AGBU ARMENIAN VIRTUAL COLLEGE PRESENTED AT THE "STATE OF INSTRUCTION OF WESTERN ARMENIAN IN THE DIASPORA" PAN-ARMENIAN CONFERENCE

Another pan-Armenian conference, "The state of instruction of Western Armenian in the Diaspora", took place at the Writers' Union Resort of Tsaghkadzor on July 3-5 with the participation of delegates from Canada, USA, France, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt, Greece and Armenia. RA Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian welcomed all the participants of the conference and called on the specialists of Western Armenian to unite their potential in favor of the 170,000 Armenian students studying in the Diaspora. She also asked everyone to put aside all kinds of professional controversies and unite around the idea of preparing new textbooks of Armenian language for Sunday and everyday elementary, secondary and high schools of the Diaspora.

Among the guests of the conference was Dr. Yervant Zorian, member of the Central Board of Directors of the AGBU and Founding-Chairman of the Armenian Virtual College, who made a short introduction of the courses and education methods of the AVC. As he mentioned the main purpose of the Armenian virtual college is to make Armenian education available to everyone and everywhere.

The conference was also attended by the Chairman of the AGBU District Committee of Egypt Berdj Terzian, AGBU Armenian Representation Deputy Director Hovig Eordekian and AVC Academic Director Dr. Hasmik Khalapyan. Mr. Terzian, who presided over the third session of the July 4 conference, presented the current state of teaching of Western Armenian in the Armenian community of Egypt. He suggested reviewing the methods of teaching, establishing teachers' training centers and improving the existing textbooks.



Dr. Zorian presented the Armenian Virtual College at the pan-Armenian conference on Western Armenian

(Continued on page 10)

AGBU ARMENIAN VIRTUAL COLLEGE PRESENTED AT THE...



Chairman of AGBU District Committee of Egypt Berdj Terzian presided over the 3rd session of July 4 conference

(see page 9) Other participants of the conference also presented the situation in their respective communities, spoke about the necessity to change the methods of teacher training, the imperfection of the textbooks and lack of academic hours at schools.

Minister of Diaspora Hranoush Hakobian thanked everyone for accepting the invitation of the Ministry and disciplined participation in the first-ever pan-Armenian conference of specialists of Western Armenian. "Diaspora is a permanent presence in Armenia and its voice should be heard in the Motherland. In this hall we must listen to every concern and every alarm", said the Minister.

A memorandum was signed during the closing ceremony and a committee was established to actively involve in the preparation of a new joint textbook of Western Armenian.

CHAIRMAN OF THE AGBU DISTRICT COMMITTEE OF EGYPT BERDJ TERZIAN PRESENTED THE ARMENIAN NATIONAL LIBRARY WITH THE DIGITAL COLLECTION OF ARMENIAN-EGYPTIAN "AREV" NEWSPAPER

Berdj Terzian, Chairman of the AGBU District Committee of Egypt, arrived in Armenia in the beginning of July, together with his wife, to participate in two major pan-Armenian conferences held in Tsaghkadzor; the 5th pan-Armenian conference of writers and the pan-Armenian conference dedicated to the current state of instruction of Western Armenian in the Diaspora communities.

On July 7, Mr. and Mrs. Terzian paid a visit to the Armenian National Library (ANL) to participate in the festive events organized on the occasion of the Day of the Armenian National Library celebrated annually in Armenia on July 4. On this occasion Chairman of the AGBU District Committee of Egypt, editorial advisor of AGBU Cairo's "Deghegadou" quarterly magazine and "Areg" Arabic supplement for Armenian issues, prominent Armenian-Egyptian intellectual Berdj Terzian presented the Armenian National Library with the digital collection of "Arev" newspaper's 1915-2000 issues published in Cairo.

In his speech, David Sargsyan, Director of the Armenian National Library, expressed his gratitude to Mr. Terzian for the invaluable gift and congratulated all the employees of the library on the occasion of the Day of the ANL.



Berdj Terzian presented the digital collection of "Arev" newspaper to the Armenian National Library

Speaking about the historical value of the digitalized collection Berdj Terzian emphasized the important role and mission of "Arev" particularly during the years of 1915-1923, when it covered all the significant events taking place in the life of the Armenian communities of the Diaspora during and after the Armenian Genocide. As Mr. Terzian mentioned the digitalization of the collection has been financed by AGBU Cairo's "Satenig Chaker" Fund.

It is also worth mentioning that in October 2009 Berdj Terzian published a book called "How the 200th anniversary of Armenian periodical press was celebrated in Cairo". It came out as a supplementary to the 2009-2010 joint issue of AGBU "Deghegadou" published in Egypt, and contained information about the exhibition organized in Cairo in 1994 dedicated to the 200th anniversary of Armenian periodical press.

The ceremony at the Armenian National Library was attended by Ashot Ghazarian, Director of the Armenian Representation of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, who congratulated the library staff on the occasion of their holiday and expressed his happiness and satisfaction about the fact that despite all the difficulties and challenges the love of book and literature among the youth has been tangibly growing nowadays, and that the digitalization of literature and the use of other means of modern information technologies help the Armenian youth take Armenian books in their hands again.

AGBU NAJARIAN-GULBENKIAN SCHOOL TEAM ANNOUNCED WINNER OF “HAY ASPET - SPYURQ” TV CONTEST

For five years now “Hay Aspet” (“Armenian Knight”) educational program has been actively involved in instilling a love of homeland and developing a deeper feeling of patriotism among the Armenian children. A key role in achieving this goal is played by a television contest of the same name, which is currently very popular in Armenia. This year “Hay Aspet” television contest hosted teams from different Armenian schools of the Diaspora.

Along with other Armenian schools from Lebanon, Georgia, Syria and Belgium, the AGBU Lazar Najarian-Calouste Gulbenkian School of Aleppo was also among the participants of this year’s “Hay Aspet-Spyurq” television contest. Gaining victories over the Melankton and Haig Arslanian School of Beirut and the Grtasirats School of Aleppo during the July 18 game, AGBU Najarian-Gulbenkian School of Aleppo was announced the winner of “Hay Aspet-Spyurq”. The winning team, consisting of Anna Tamerian, Talar Kazanjian, Talar Kushagian, Rosie Shushanian, Lala Hajenlian, Heghina Atashian, Hovsep Krikorian and Aren Der-Hovaniessian, also won the right to participate in “One Day of Childhood in Stepanakert” festival and a 7-day pilgrimage to Artsakh. The team was headed by Zepyur Tamerian, the Armenian language teacher of the AGBU Najarian-Gulbenkian School.



AGBU Najarian-Gulbenkian school children and their teacher at the AGBU Armenian Representation

Within the framework of “Hay Aspet” program the AGBU Najarian-Gulbenkian school children went sightseeing trips visiting the Matenadaran, Oshakan, St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral, Tsitsernakabert, and Sevan, watched “Anoush” opera and were received by His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All-Armenians, at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin on July 15. On July 21, the students of the AGBU Najarian-Gulbenkian School of Aleppo and their teacher were hosted at the AGBU Armenian Representation.

ARMENIAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA PRESENTED PYOTR TCHAYKOVSKI’S “EUGENE ONEGIN” OPERA

Famous film director Vigen Chaldranian and Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra presented “Eugene Onegin” opera by well-known Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky at the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall.



Pyotr Tchaikovsky's “Eugene Onegin” by Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra

Produced and directed by Vigen Chaldranian and conducted by Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of APO Maestro Eduard Topchjan, “Eugene Onegin” was staged with the support of the RA Ministry of Culture. Solo parts were performed by Rosa Hovsepian (Larina), Liana Ghazarian and Susanna Melkonian (Tatiana), Greta Bagian (Olga), Gevorg Hakobian (Onegin), and Hovanes Ayzazian (Lenski). Soloists of the Al. Spendiarian Opera and Ballet Academic Theater and “Hover” chamber choir also participated in the opera.

“I’m sure this will be a very interesting evening. “Eugene Onegin” is one of the most famous classical pieces and has not been on our stage for a very long time”, said Maestro Harutiun Arzumanyan in his interview to “Armenpress” news agency shortly before the opening night.

Unforgettable was the opening night: beautiful costumes and stage decorations, packed hall and prominent figures of the Armenian musical stratum in the balcony - Eduard Mirzoyan, Tigran Mansourian and Yuri Davtian. The audience was fascinated by the amazing performances of the soloists, the high professionalism of the orchestra and the remarkable direction. This is Maestro Eduard Topchjan's sixth successful attempt to present the concert performances of the world's most famous pieces of opera art since 2001.

With the July 21 performance of “Eugene Onegin” the Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra closed the 2009-2010 concert season, which is sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union.

STUDENTS OF AGBU SCHOOLS IN ARMENIA

From June 18-July 21, students of three AGBU schools, Manoogian-Demirjian School of California, Vatche and Tamar Manoukian School of Pasadena and Artaki Kalpakian School of Athens, paid a visit to Armenia. As part of their stay in homeland the students of the California schools visited the Matenadaran repository of ancient Armenian manuscripts, Tsitsernakabert Memorial and Genocide Museum, Khor Virap, Noravank, Garni temple, Geghard monastery, Haghartsin, Sevan, Sanahin, Sardarapat, Zvartnots, Tsaghkadzor, Gyumri and Ambert, participated in community works.



AGBU Manoogian-Demirjian school students at the AGBU Armenian Representation

The program prepared for them also included a visit to the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and a tour in the Mother See Museum. On June 30, the students were hosted at the Armenian Representation of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, where they got acquainted with the AGBU programs carried out in Armenia including the activities of the AGBU Arme-



AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian School students visited the AGBU Armenian Virtual College

nian Virtual College. On the evening of the same day the AGBU schools' students attended the concert program prepared especially for them by the children of the AGBU and Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin Youth Centers.

AGBU Artaki Kalpakian School students were in Armenia as part of the RA Diaspora Ministry's "Come Home" program. Along with interesting sightseeing trips they also visited the AGBU Armenian Representation and familiarized themselves with the activities of the Union in Armenia and Karabakh.



AGBU Artaki Kalpakian school participated in "Come Home" program

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Established in 1906, AGBU (www.agbu.org) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City with an annual budget of \$36 million, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians on six continents.

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