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AGBU ARMENIA PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE VICTIMS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

On April 24th, on the occasion of the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the Armenia-based structures and members of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), headed by AGBU Armenian Representation Director Ashot Ghazarian, AGBU Armenian Representation Deputy Director Hovig Eordekian and AGBU Diaspora Youth Programs Coordinator in Armenia Hermine Duzian, visited Tsitsernakaberd to pay tribute to the 1.5 million innocent victims of the Armenian Genocide. Carrying the flags of the Republic of Armenia, AGBU and the scout movement, members of the AGBU Yerevan Scout movement, AGBU Young Professionals Yerevan team, AGBU Armenia members and AGBU Armenian representation staff, accompanied by the AGBU Montevideo “Groong” choir, who were on a concert tour in Armenia during that time, walked to the Genocide memorial and laid a wreath at the eternal fire to honor the memory of the Genocide victims.

AGBU URUGUAY “GROONG” CHOIR’S “TO THE HOMELAND” CONCERTS IN ARMENIA

Upon the initiative of the Diaspora Ministry of the Republic of Armenia and Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), “Groong” choir of AGBU Montevideo, Uruguay, gave two unforgettable concerts in Armenia, as the start of the series of concerts dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Armenia’s independence. Established in 1993, “Groong” choir is headed by Maestro Alvaro Hakobian, who is also the principal conductor of the Montevideo Philharmonic Orchestra. After touring South American cities with substantial Armenian populations, the choir headed to Armenia for their first-ever performance in the Homeland.

The first concert of the “To the Homeland” tour took place at the Arno Babajanian Concert Hall in central Yerevan, on April 26. Many prominent art figures, government members, representatives of diplomatic missions and the intelligentsia were present at the concert.

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In her opening remarks, RA Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobian said: “My warm and cordial greetings to our compatriots from Uruguay. We are grateful to “Groong” for preserving Armenian roots, Armenian identity and Armenian culture. This is the result of the unification of the Armenian communities of South America. Symbolic is the fact that Uruguay was the first country in the world to recognize and condemn the Armenian Genocide and certainly, the Armenian community of Uruguay played a major role in this. For decades “Groong” choir has sung about Armenians and Armenia and their heart is, indeed, in Armenia”.

The Minister thanked the choir members and conductor Alvaro Hakobian and awarded them with an RA Diaspora Ministry’s certificate for the proliferation and development of the Armenian culture, preservation of the Armenian identity and continuous creative activities. The concert program presented by the choir included pieces by Komitas, Tigranian, Hekimian, Avetissian, Goosan Sharam, Goosan Ashto, Goosan Shahen, Kotoyan, Tamatian and others, as well as various interpretations of famous folk and patriotic songs. After a lasting standing ovation of the packed hall the choir performed several additional songs. A warm and touching atmosphere filled the hall and the choir was very warmly received by the audience.

The second concert by “Groong” took place in the Gyumri Art Academy on April 28th opening the “Renaissance” 3rd International Contest-Festival of Musician-Performers. The concert was attended by town officials, prominent public and art figures and students.

The choir members also went sightseeing and visited different cultural centers in Armenia. On April 24th, together with AGBU Armenian Representation staff, AGBU scouts and Yerevan YP team, the choir ascended to the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Tsitsernakanabert to pay tribute to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. A wreath on behalf of the Union was placed at the eternal fire.

On April 29th, members of “Groong” visited the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and were received by His Holiness Karekin II.

On April 30th, the choir was hosted at the AGBU Armenian Representation, where Asshot Ghazarian, AGBU Armenian Representation Director, made a brief presentation on the Union’s activities in Armenia. The guests also got acquainted with the activities of the AGBU Armenian Virtual College. On the evening of the same day the choir members attended the beautiful and unforgettable concert at the AGBU and Holy Etchmiadzin Nork Children’s Center.

On May 2, Mr. and Mrs. Hrayr and Anna Hovnanian organized a farewell evening for the choir members in their Yerevan residence.

For the video material please visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvFUmfWqugl
On May 13th, AGBU Board of Trustees member Karnig Yacoubian, together with his wife Ani Yacoubian, visited the Republican Scientific-Medical Library of the RA Health Ministry to participate in the opening of the library’s teaching center renovated with their financial support.

As part of the “Electronic Medical Library” project the Open Society Institute had already provided substantial financial assistance to the Scientific-Medical Library for the purchase of furniture, equipment, as well as for the preparation and launch of the library website.

Mr. and Mrs. Yacoubian had generously taken the responsibility of financing the renovation of the teaching center including renovation and painting of the walls, changing of windows and doors, and purchase of window blinds and carpeting.

In her speech Director of the Library Anna Shirinyan thanked the benefactors and handed in a special letter of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Yacoubian for their contribution in the renovation of the library teaching center.

The Republican Scientific-Medical Library of the RA Health Ministry was established in 1939.

A WORKING MEETING OF MOSCOW-BASED ARMENIAN BUSINESSMEN AND AGBU REPRESENTATIVES AT THE RA MINISTRY OF DIASPORA

On April 9th, RA Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobian received Moscow-based Armenian businessmen, active members of the Armenian community of Russia Avetik Chalabian, Gregory Mazmaniants, Igor Zargarian and Ashot Tumasian, as well as AGBU Central Board member and AGBU Armenian Virtual College President Dr. Yervant Zorian, AGBU Armenian Representation Deputy Director Hovik Eordekian, and Executive Director of “Birthright” Sevan Kabakian.

Mrs. Hakobian spoke about the activities of the Ministry and the upcoming programs scheduled for 2011. The scope of issues discussed during the meeting included the educational problems of the Armenian community of Russia, the need to provide assistance to the Armenian schools and to publish modern Armenian textbooks for a Russian-speaking Armenian population with a goal of making the Armenian language easier and more accessible to learn for the Armenians of Russia.

Dr. Zorian and Mr. Kabakian presented details about the activities of AGBU AVC and Birthright correspondingly.

The prospects of involving more and more representatives of the Armenian community of Russia in the youth programs carried out by the Republic of Armenia’s Diaspora Ministry were also discussed during the meeting.

Those present expressed their eagerness to assist the Ministry in its mission and programs directed towards uniting the potential of the Diaspora.
The final round of the AGBU-sponsored 5th Republican Interschool Chess Tournament was held on May 6-8th, 2011, in the city of Dilijan in Armenia’s Tavush region with three winning teams from Yerevan, two from Shirak, Lori and Tavush regions, and one from Artsakh, Javakhk and each of the other seven regions of Armenia. The 5th republican interschool chess tournament started in the fall of 2010.

Present at the championship match were Vice President of the RA Chess federation Smbat Lputyan, AGBU Board of Trustees member Karnig Yacoubian, AGBU Armenian Representation Director Ashot Ghazarian, Rector of the Yerevan State University Aram Simonian, Governor of Tavush region Armen Ghularian, Mayor of Dilijan Armen Santrosian, other officials and guests.

As opposed to the previous tournament, where all three winners were from Yerevan, this year Yerevan schools shared only second (Yerevan school #190) and third (Yerevan school #55) places. The winner of the 5th Republican interschool chess olympiad was Vanadzor school #5. Incidentally, the two winning Yerevan schools this year, were among last year’s winners. The winners on an individual score basis on different chess boards were Hovaness Gabuzian (Yerevan school #55), who was last year’s winner on individual score basis, Aram Pluzian (Vanadzor school #5), Hayk Ghazarian (Vanadzor school #5), and Juliet Ghazarian (Vardenik education complex).

General sponsor of the tournament, Armenian General Benevolent Union, presented netbooks to each of the four players of the winning team, Anahit Hovanissian, David Shahinian, Hayk Ghazarian and Aram Pluzian, as well as to Juliet Ghazarian from Vardenik, who was the only girl among the individual score basis winners, and Mane Adamian, the winner among players under 10. Vice President of the RA Chess Federation Smbat Lputyan handed out medals to the winning teams. Other awards and presents were also given to the participants.

The Republican Interschool Chess tournament is greatly supported by the AGBU, which has already distributed more than 4000 chess boards and 150 chess clocks to all the schools of RA regions and Yerevan, which creates a solid basis for the development of chess in the Republic.

For the fourth consecutive year the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) is sponsoring the Republican Interschool Chess Championship. This project is the initiative of the Armenian Chess Federation under the auspices of the Republic of Armenia’s Ministry of Education and Science. AGBU enjoys the status of Vice President of the Championship’s organizing committee.

The aim of the national championship is to promote a love of chess among schoolchildren and identify talented young people who can grow to be future champions in the sport, helping to continue Armenia’s role as a major player in world chess competitions.

For the video material please visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eahl_BPWri8
On May 5-13th, the Vartan Atjemian Drama Theater of Gyumri hosted the “Renaissance” 3rd International Contest-Festival of Musician-Performers held under the high patronage of the First Lady of the Republic of Armenia Mrs. Rita Sargsyan. The organizers of the festival-contest are RA Culture Ministry, RA Diaspora Ministry, “Pyunik” All-Armenian Fund for Human Resources Development and the Gyumri branch of the Yerevan State Conservatory (YSC). “Renaissance” is held with the sponsorship and financial support of VivaCell-MTS, “South-Caucasian Railways” JSC, Electric Networks of Armenia, and Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).

A welcoming message to the participants of the festival was sent by AGBU President Mr. Berge Setrakian.

The first “Renaissance” dedicated to the 140th birthday anniversary of Komitas was held in 2009. This year the festival was dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Armenia’s independence and hosted more than 1200 participants from 23 countries of the world including Argentina, the Baltics and CIS countries, China, Georgia, Greece, France, Russia, South Korea, Uruguay and USA. The goal of the festival is to discover young talented musicians, support their development and professional growth and help the rebirth of the cultural life of Gyumri. 77 professional musicians and artists from all over the world were included in the contest-festival’s jury in seven categories and four age groups.

As part of the festival, a two day international conference entitled “Dialogue of Cultures: Armenia and the World Culture”, dedicated to the 90th birthday anniversary of the well-known Armenian composer Eduard Mirzoyan, took place on May 6-7 with the participation of many prominent scholars, scientists, professors and academics from Armenia and abroad. Different events, master classes, jubilee evenings, meetings and tours were organized within the framework of the contest-festival that contributed greatly to the establishment of cooperation between local and international artists in music. AGBU Montevideo “Groong” choir’s concert in the Gyumri Art Academy marked a remarkable and unforgettable opening to “Renaissance”.

The closing ceremony and gala concert took place at the Vartan Atjemian Drama Theater hall on May 13th. The festival revealed many new talents. Grand prix in different categories were awarded to Georgy Abuladze (piano, Georgia), David Kosemyan (string instruments, Yerevan), Yulia Shosnobich (wind instruments, Belarus), Ani Bekjanian (solo performance, Gyumri), Yerevan State Conservatory Piano Quartet (chamber ensemble), Ahmad Yahyazadeh (national instruments, France), Arman Khachatryan (national singing, Yerevan). As well as the grand prix, first, second and third prizes in each category and age group were also awarded. Other participants received titles of laureate of the contest and diplomas. The jury of the festival also awarded special prizes to individual participants.

Promotion of classical art, creation of new ties, strengthening and expansion of the scope of cooperation, spreading of the Armenian culture and creation of new opportunities for young and talented musicians are just some of the goals pursued by the organizers of this contest-festival.

The Gyumri Art Academy, built by the Armenian General Benevolent Union in 1997, houses the Gyumri branches of the Film and Theater State Institute, the Yerevan State Conservatory and the Yerevan Academy of Fine Arts. For years the AGBU has provided scholarships to the talented and needy students of the academy and continues supporting the academy up to now.

For the video material please visit:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jW4vi8F3dY
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9catpZVMBA

Winner in the category of string instruments
David Kosemyan from Yerevan

Yulia Shosnobich from Belarus won in the wind instruments category

AGBU CONTINUES ITS SUPPORT OF THE “RENAISSANCE” INTERNATIONAL CONTEST-FESTIVAL OF MUSICIAN-PERFORMERS
Famous painter and director Sukias Torossian, also known as Toto, together with the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra and Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of APO Eduard Topchjan presented his interpretation of Tchaikovsky's “Nutcracker”. The opening concert took place at Aram Khachatrian Concert Hall on March 25th. At the request of classical art lovers Tchaikovsky's “Nutcracker” was once again performed on April 9th.

Torossian is famous for his innovative ideas and vision. Perhaps many of those present were anticipating classical ballet, but what they witnessed was a unique and unforgettable performance with innovative solutions beyond their imagination. The colors projected on the huge screen on the stage combined with the rhythmic and plastic ballet movements came to merge with the sounds of music and create a fairytale atmosphere in the hall.

The three latest concerts of the APO had a distinctly fairytale feel: the first was Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Shahrezade” (based on the Arabic “One thousand and one nights” fairytales) followed by two presentations of Tchaikovsky’s “Nutcracker”.

The impressions of the April 9 concert will live long in the hearts and memories of those present. It was truly an unforgettable evening: a dark hall with palely lit music stands, the curtain on the organ and the female voice of the narrator accompanied with Torossian’s drawings projected on the round screen on the curtain had turned the stage into a beautiful canvas. The drawings were also separately exhibited in the lounge of the Aram Khachatrian Concert Hall. Tchaikovsky’s music was interrupted by the narration of passages from Hoffman’s fairytale accompanied by colorful brush strokes on the curtain. The unique combination of sound, light and color together with the beautiful vocals of the “Speghani” choir coming from the balcony (artistic director Sarina Avtandilian) had drawn the audience into a fantastic world of fairytales. With his symbolic appearance of Herr Drosselmeyer Maestro Eduard Topchjan led the orchestra with the miraculous stick in his hands. Amazed and breathless the hall followed the storyline and listened to the beautiful music. The fairytale is over. A lasting standing ovation for the orchestra, conductor, narrator and stage designer and director.

Charmed and fascinated the audience left the hall bearing the sounds and impressions of the incredible evening in their minds.
To increase interest in classical music among youth and develop a taste for the classic arts, the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra has come forth with an interesting and encouraging initiative of holding a series of concerts at higher educational institutions around Armenia. This initiative of the orchestra has received RA Culture Ministry’s support and has caused great interest and enthusiasm among the youth.

The first two concerts of the series took place on February 18th and March 8th at the Armenian-Russian and Yerevan State Medical Universities correspondingly, raising great interest among youth, who constantly asked about the time and place of the next concerts in the series.

As part of the university concerts, on April 15th, the Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra headed by Maestro Eduard Topchjan was hosted at the Yerevan State Pedagogical University. The students, faculty and staff of the university enjoyed Mozart’s symphony #40 and “Hallelujah” performed by young soloist Hasmik Torossian. As a conclusion the orchestra performed well-known Armenian composer Eduard Mirzoyan’s “Shushanik” dedicating it to all those named Shushanik present.

Lasting applause made Maestro Topchjan promise that the concerts at the Pedagogical University will become a tradition. Entrance for the university concerts is free. During these concerts students will also have the opportunity to listen to famous guest musicians from different countries, who, apart from the regular concerts at “Aram Khachatrian” concert hall, will also perform with the APO at the universities. The process of establishment of classical music lovers clubs at the universities is also in progress.

Thank you Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra and Maestro Eduard Topchjan for this wonderful and encouraging initiative.

Artsakh Chamber Orchestra continues to fill halls in the capital Stepanakert. It has become a tradition to organize jubilee evenings and literary-musical events, apart from the orchestra’s regular weekly concerts.

The April 20th concert of the Artsakh Chamber Orchestra at the Stepanakert Cultural Center was dedicated to Komitas and the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

This time Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the orchestra Maestro Gevork Muradyan had invited narrator Sarkis Najarian and soprano Irina Zakyan from Yerevan.

The literary part of the evening was based on the archive materials of the great Komitas, his memoirs and letters, while the concert part was fully composed of his musical legacy.

Najarian’s strong recitations of Komitas’ pieces, Irina Zakyan’s wonderful vocals and the unforgettable performance of the Artsakh Chamber Orchestra and “Mrakats” State Chamber Choir had created an enchanting atmosphere in the hall.

Present at the concert were guests from AGBU Sydney Chapter, Karapet Setyan, and Mr. and Mrs. Tigranian, as well as state officials, members of the intelligentsia and guests.
AGBU YP Yerevan team in association with “Ognir Kez” non-governmental organization initiated a project of helping the people of Barekamavan village of the Tavush region of Armenia. The project consists of two phases: material assistance to the residents and an environmental project to improve the economic condition of the village.

To meet personally with the villagers and estimate on the spot the current needs of the village, AGBU YP steering committee member Gayane Gevorgyan and representative of “Ognir Kez” NGO Arman Hayrapetyan, visited the village on May 17th, taking with them about 20 boxes of clothes and toys, 1 TV set, 2 monitors, sport items for the village school and medications for the medical center of the village for a total sum of 50,000AMD raised beforehand.

Phase 2 will bring a more complex approach to the needs of the village with a more far-reaching initiative to improve the economic situation of the village. The talks with the villagers and the village head revealed the importance of focusing on the implementation of agricultural projects. Considering the local natural and climate conditions it will be really helpful and profitable to plant apple and persimmon gardens in the village.

There are 11 hectares of community lands, which can be planted with apple trees and distributed among the villagers. This will ease the villagers’ hardship. Prospects of renovation of the irrigation water pipeline and construction of a new drinking water reservoir were also discussed. Another important but not a vital issue, is the renovation of the village’s culture club or the foundation of a new center of entertainment for the people of Barekamavan.

This project was assisted by Byblos Bank represented by Isabella Sargsyan, 106.5 radio station, Harut and Tsolin Bouldoukian, Victor Sargsyan and Natasha Hilis, Raffi and Lusine Kasanjian, the Harutyunian family, and Lusine Nalbandian. Barekamavan is on the border with Georgia and Azerbaijan. The Azeri border guard posts are seen from the village, which puts the lives of villagers in daily danger, especially in the hay and harvest season. Cases of attacks and shots have already been registered.

As well as helping the rural communities of Armenia, AGBU YPs also lend a helping hand to the Armenian communities of the Diaspora. May 2, was a memorable day for the children of #29 Armenian school of Batumi, Georgia. AGBU YP Yerevan team had organized a collection of more than 200 books and textbooks, which on that day were distributed to the school children. The books sent are included in the school curriculum and will certainly be very useful and helpful to the children.

Batumi school #29 has only 27 students only, despite the fact that there are more than 60 school age children living in the Armenian community. The school recently moved to a suburb making it very difficult for people without any means of transport to reach it. As a result many Armenian families prefer to send their children to other nearby schools, either Georgian or Russian.

The only Armenian Church of Batumi also has a Sunday school, which has three classes with no age limitation. Every person willing to learn oral and written Armenian can attend this school.

Three of last year’s graduates of the school have decided to come to Armenia and continue their education here. Hopefully, their numbers will grow in the future.
AGBU YEREVAN SCOUTS’ THREE-DAY CAMPING TRIPS

AGBU YP Yerevan and AGBU Yerevan Scouts hold a joint tree-planting

Several times during the year AGBU Yerevan Scout groups hold 3-day camping trips at AGBU’s “Antranik” campsite in the village of Lermontovo in Armenia’s Lori region. These trips provide a good opportunity for the scouts to not only put into practice the knowledge they had gained during their weekly meetings at Arabkir Children’s Center of Yerevan but also to acquire new skills and knowledge. This is why the AGBU Yerevan scouts are always eagerly looking forward to these outings. This year’s first trip took place on April 15-17th. The group left the Children’s Center early in the morning heading to the AGBU campsite. Shortly after reaching the camp the scouts had their lunch and gathered in the camp hall for their first lecture. The next morning the scouts were joined by the AGBU YP Yerevan team for a joint tree-planting event. Over 100 seedlings, mostly poplars, were planted, which certainly will make the campsite a more attractive and healthy place. Different games and interesting discussions were also organized during the day. Together the two groups visited the river Debed.

The second trip was held on May 7-9th. The scouts left for the camp in high spirits and ready for the challenges for the 3-day trip. Upon arrival each group of scouts began their pre-assigned duties: food preparation, clean up of the surrounding area, construction of the flag pole. A rich and diverse program of activities, including discussions, lectures, games, singing and dancing followed. Despite their exhaustion the scouts did not pass up the opportunity to go on a hike. They returned to Yerevan on May 9th, where they were met by their parents. After words of farewell and gratitude the scouts left the center with unforgettable memories of the trip and in anticipation of their next Sunday meeting.

NEW BRANCH OF AGBU YEREVAN SCOUT MOVEMENT AT YEREVAN NORK CHILDREN’S CENTER

AGBU Yerevan Scout movement was established in 2008 with only several members. In time more than 150 young boys and girls have joined the movement, which has weekly meetings at the AGBU and Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin Arabkir Children’s Center and organizes various interesting events. The success of the previous years urged the scouts to expand their activities in Armenia and open a new branch at Nork Children’s Center. With this purpose a meeting between the scouts and interested children and parents was held at Nork Children’s Center on May 22nd. Present at the meeting were AGBU Yerevan Scout Council head Garen Dirarian, Deputy Head Edward Der Kassbar, AGBU Armenian Representation Deputy Director Hovik Eordekian, other members of the movement. A welcome speech was made by Aida Andreassian, Director of the Nork Children’s Center, followed by a presentation of the scout movement history, mission and activities. A word of encouragement and gratitude was delivered by Hovik Eordekian. The meeting raised interest among the children and their parents. Consequently, a new branch of the AGBU Yerevan Scout movement has now began operating at the Nork Children’s Center.
AGBU SWITZERLAND HONORS
TWO LONGTIME LEADERS OF THE TOPALIAN FOUNDATION

25th International Fair for Books and Press in Geneva

Acknowledging their longstanding dedication and outstanding services to the Armenian community, AGBU Switzerland honored the leadership of the H.D. Topalian Foundation with a special tribute held on April 29, 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Topalian Foundation, which is an AGBU-affiliated organization, was established in 1993 in Switzerland to fulfill the national aspirations of the late Hagop D. Topalian, a major benefactor of the Union. For about two decades, the president of the foundation, Edmond Pilossian, and its most active vice-chairwoman, Annie Mesrobian, continued to lead the activities of the foundation in carrying out its noble mission in support of a number of humanitarian and cultural initiatives.

During the recognition, AGBU President Berge Setrakian emphasized the role of AGBU Switzerland, which was established in 1924 by the late Boghos Nubar and is presently led by Vahe Gabrache of Geneva. Setrakian praised all those who served on the board of the Topalian Foundation for their staunch dedication, and he bestowed the status of AGBU Honor Member on the two honorees. They, in turn, thanked AGBU and humbly accepted this recognition. Following the bestowal of the certificates, the two honorees were presented with crystal plaques as tokens of appreciation.

The tributary evening was attended by several AGBU Switzerland Board members, including Vahe Gabrache, Aris Atamian, and Yervant Zorian, as well as AGBU Europe District chairman, Alexis Govciyan, and AGBU Europe board members. The event was held in conjunction with the 25th International Fair for Books and Press in Geneva, where, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the first printed book in Armenian, “Armenia-Hayastan” was this year’s honorary pavilion. Not surprisingly, the event was organized mainly by the H.D. Topalian Foundation and co-sponsored by AGBU Switzerland.

As part of his official visit to Switzerland, President of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan also visited the fair on May 2nd. After a tour of the exhibition President Sargsyan shared his impressions stating that this was a significant event on the eve of the 500th anniversary of Armenian book printing and UNESCO’s announcement of Yerevan as the 2012 World Book Capital. President Sargsyan visited the exhibition’s Armenian pavilion and got acquainted with the books published in Armenia and the Diaspora. Within the framework of the exhibition AGBU Central Board member and AGBU AVC President Dr. Yervant Zorian presented the activities and educational projects of the AVC.

AGBU AVC ANNOUNCES ENROLLMENT FOR SUMMER TERM - 2011

The AGBU Armenian Virtual College (AVC) is pleased to announce the enrollment for Summer Term 2011. The following courses are offered in multiple languages (including Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and on multiple levels:

- Eastern Armenian;
- Western Armenian;
- History of Armenia;
- Introduction to Armenian Architecture;
- Introduction to Armenian Music.

The classes start on July 4 and end on September 6. To enroll, please visit AVC portal at www.avc-agbu.org, create a log-in and submit your enrollment application. For questions, please contact: enrollment@avc-agbu.org

AGBU enables Armenian education anytime anywhere!
ON MAY 5, 2011, HIS EXCELLENCY DEMETRIS CHRISTOFIAS, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, INAUGURATED THE AGBU ARMENIAN CULTURAL CENTER IN LARNACA

The realization of the project had been made possible through the generous sponsorship and guidance of the AGBU Central Board, the Kalaydjian Foundation, the AGBU Larnaca, Limassol and Nicosia Chapters, and several prominent Armenian-Cypriot families, as well as benefactors from abroad. The building housing the Center was designed by architect Merouzhan Sarkisian of Limassol. Archbishop of the Armenian Prelature of Cyprus, His Eminence Varoujan Hergelian, conducted an official blessing of the new building. The ceremony concluded with the unveiling by the President of a plaque and the cutting of the ribbon, followed by a reception and media interviews. Also attending the ceremony on behalf of the AGBU leadership was Damascus-based Central Board Member Vasken Yacobian.

DONATION TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF ARMENIA

Within the framework of the “National Library Week” a ceremony of book-giving was held at the National Library of Armenia on April 15th. Among other publications, the National Library of Armenia was presented with the unique and complete 5 volume collection of “Erebuni” national, cultural and public biweekly published from 1980-1995 by the Tekeyan Trust of London and under the editorship of Dr. Andreas Tsulikian. A brief history of the newspaper’s birth and content, as well as the national-public activities of Dr. Tsulikian, who has carried out editorial duties for 12 years on a voluntary basis, were presented during the ceremony. “Erebuni” was established as a monthly and later became a biweekly in 2 languages. 4 out of 5 volumes presented to the library included all the Armenian issues of “Erebuni”, while the fifth consisted of the English issues of the British-Armenian newspaper. The presentation of his own private collection of all the issues of “Erebuni” was the personal initiative of Dr. Tsulikian. On his behalf the volumes were presented to the Library by his Yerevan-based brothers Tigran and Hakob Tsulikian.

Born in Egypt in 1934 Andreas Tsulikian moved to London in 1967. In 1979 he was elected member of the British-Armenian Community and Church Council, later occupying the position of the Council’s Executive Director. He’s been an elected representative of the Board of Trustees of the Gevork Tahtayan national Sunday school of London, member of the Board of Tamatian Club of London’s Ramkavar-Azatakan Party, first as a Chairman and later as a President. Dr. Tsulikian is one of the founders of the London Tekeyan Trust and the Union of Armenian-British Doctors, is a veteran member of the Armenian General Benevolent Union and an active member of the Armenian Cause committee. During the ceremony welcoming speeches were made by National Library Director David Sarıyan, Hakob Tsulikian, Verjine Svazlian and Hakob Hakopian.
The chairman of AGBU Egypt's District Committee and honorary chairman of AGBU's Cairo Chapter, Berdj Terzian, was recently honored for his long-term commitment and contribution to the Armenian community around the world. On April 24, 2011, following Easter Mass at the St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church in Cairo, Terzian received the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Medal of Honor according to the encyclical issued by His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, on October 27, 2010 at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. The Sts. Sahag & Mesrob medal is one of the highest honors of the Armenian Church and is awarded for significant achievements in communal, academic, educational, and literary activities dedicated to the Armenian cause and to the Motherland.

Two weeks later, on May 8, around 90 people gathered at the Belekdanian Hall in Cairo to once again honor Berdj Terzian, this time at an award ceremony and cocktail reception. AGBU's Central Board bestowed on Terzian the title of "AGBU Honor Member," which is given to individuals who have rendered extraordinary services to AGBU. The event, which was organized by AGBU Cairo, was attended by His Grace Bishop Ashtot Mnatsaganian, Pri- mate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Egypt; His Grace Bishop Monsignor Krikor Augustinos Coussan, Pri- mate of the Armenian Catholic Community in Egypt; His Excellency Armen Melkonian, the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Egypt, and his wife; numerous members of the Cairo Diocesan Council; and many board members of local Ar- menian institutions, clubs and organizations, as well as the honoree's close friends and relatives.

An introductory address was given by AGBU Cairo chairman Viken Djizmedjian, who also presented the AGBU Honor Member certificate to the distinguished guest. There was a reading of the Pontifical Encyclical by Reverend Father Hagop Hagopian, pastor of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Cairo, and a reading by AGBU's President Berge Setrakian, who shared congratulatory letters addressed to Terzian. Onnig Belekdanian, vice-chairman of AGBU Cairo and member of the AGBU Egypt District Committee, presented Terzian with a commemorative plate on behalf of AGBU Cairo.

Others also spoke and shared their thoughts of Terzian’s decades of service, including longtime friend Norayr Deuvletian, Armen Melkonian, His Grace Bishop Monsignor Krikor Augustinos Coussan, and His Grace Bishop Ashtot Mnatsaganian. They each praised the work and deeds of Terzian, giving accounts of personal and professional experiences that they had shared with him, and stressing his important work for Armenians everywhere.

Subsequently, the evening’s honoree took to the floor to express his gratitude to His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, AGBU President Setrakian, and all members of the AGBU Central Board of Directors. He conveyed his personal appreciation for the bestowment of his distinguished awards, and he thanked everyone in attendance for supporting these distinct honors and coming out to celebrate.

Berdj Terzian has been serving the Armenian Church in Egypt as a member of its Diocesan Council for several decades, as a member of the Diocesan Board of Education, a member of Nubarian School’s Board of Trustees, and eventually as the Chairman of the Armenian Apostolic Church’s Executive Committee from 2003 to 2006. Terzian is known for his marked contribution to AGBU’s Egypt district and Cairo chapter for nearly five decades as a member and a chairman. He is also revered for his vigorous involvement in various Armenian-related editorial activities in both the Armenian and Arabic languages. He is especially noted for his relentless pursuit of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide through his numerous writings and two published books.

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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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AGBU EGYPT CHAIRMAN BERDJ TERZIAN HONORED IN CAIRO

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