



NEWSLETTER FALL/WINTER 2007

President's Message

Dear Friends of the ASP and Alumni,

With Thanksgiving around the corner, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to you - our Alumni and treasured friends - for your continued support and involvement with our organization. This newsletter brings you information about UCBAA's recent activities and our plans for the following year.

In recent years the primary focus of the UCBAA has been fundraising and support for the Armenian Studies Program. I was a student here 10 years ago and at that time, UC Berkeley had a visiting professorship in Modern Armenian Studies. Thanks to the mobilization of this community and generosity of a number of major donors, we have come a long way since the early days of the visiting professorship. The current Armenian Studies Program, under Executive Director Stephan Astourian, now offers two history survey courses, two levels of Armenian language, and several seminars each semester. These courses regularly enroll over 30 students of both Armenian and non-Armenian descent.

As an Armenian student, I remember that it was a great source of pride for me that a University such as this one offered courses in Armenian Studies. That pride is something we all should share, not only as students or Cal Alumni, but as members of the Armenian community. Our goal is to become the leading program in Contemporary Armenian Studies. The two endowments that support the ASP only partially support the current program and are not sufficient for further growth of the program. That is why the UCBAA has embarked on a fundraising campaign to raise additional funds to bring the ASP to the next level of financial stability and program breadth.

If you are wondering why you should support this program, I ask you to consider that having a legitimate and permanent Armenian Studies Program at a top American University gives a strong voice to our history, politics, language, and culture. Back in September, at the Holocaust Center of Northern California, Professor Astourian was one of two panelists discussing the recent Anti-Defamation League's refusal to recognize the Armenian Genocide. To paraphrase several people who attended this talk, Professor

Astourian was eloquent, informative, convincing, and made a lasting impression on the largely non-Armenian audience. We, as Armenians, are the direct beneficiaries when we have well-respected scholars and leaders representing us in this way. In recent months, in Washington and throughout the world, the Armenian-American community has demonstrated that our voice will be heard. This Armenian Studies Program is a vital educational opportunity for our future leaders and scholars and we have a responsibility to grow this program.

To that end, I am asking you to please consider becoming a part of our "100 Steps to \$1 Million" campaign, the details of which are included in this newsletter issue. We plan to celebrate the success of this campaign with our 2nd Annual ASP Fundraising Gala on March 29, 2008 – save the date!

In addition to our focus on fundraising, the UCBAA also continues to foster our relationship with both current UC Berkeley students and our community. This past May we hosted our 4th annual Armenian Students picnic to honor the graduating seniors and meet Cal Armenian students, a lively and interesting group who run a very active Armenian Students Association on campus. In September, we welcomed author and former Los Angeles Times reporter Mark Arax to the Alumni House on campus for a wine and cheese reception. A summary of Mr. Arax's talk, "Genocide Denial in an American Newsroom", is included in this newsletter issue. It was a pleasure to share this enjoyable afternoon with many of you and we look forward to bringing you more events such as these this coming year.

Finally this past year, the UCBAA launched a new and improved website to better communicate with our alumni and friends. Visit us at www.ucbaa.com and let us know what you think!

It has been my sincere pleasure to serve all of you as UCBAA president this past year and I look forward to the exciting developments ahead! I am at your service should you have any questions about our activities or suggestions for us. Feel free to email me at contact@ucbaa.com or phone me directly at (510) 882-3726.

Warmly,
Chaghig Minassian Walker

100 Steps to \$1 Million
Second Annual ASP Benefit Gala
March 29, 2008

The endowment campaign for the UC Berkeley Armenian Studies Program will be celebrating the community's support for the ASP with a formal fundraising gala on Saturday, March 29, 2008 at the exclusive Olympic Club in Daly City. To date, over \$700,000 has been raised for the ASP since the start of the UC Berkeley Armenian Alumni's \$2M fundraising campaign. The UCBAA has recently launched a "\$100 Steps to \$1 Million" campaign to reach a final goal of raising the additional \$1 million for the ASP. There are many ways in which we can come together to support this program:

TAKE A LEAP - Make a \$30,000 pledge over two years and contribute 3 giant steps towards our final goal!

TAKE A STEP - Make a \$10,000 pledge over two years – after taxes that is only about \$3,750 per year!

TAKE A HALF-STEP - Make a \$5,000 pledge over two years and help us step closer to our goal!

STEP TOGETHER - Form a group of 10 with your family and friends and each donate \$500 a year for two years.

Any amount donated to this campaign is greatly appreciated. Funds raised by the Gala and future events will benefit the William Saroyan Endowment in contemporary Armenian studies at UC Berkeley. The \$2M goal is to ensure the expansion and permanence of the ASP's multi-faceted program, with a long-term goal of becoming the national leader in Armenian studies. These additional funds will make the William Saroyan Professorship fully self-sustaining, expand Armenian language course offerings, allow for visiting professors to conduct special courses, support public lectures and conferences on contemporary Armenian issues, and more.

Plans are underway for an elegant and exciting evening. The night will include guest speaker Former US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans, as well as KTVU news reporter Gasia Mikaelian as Mistress of Ceremonies.

Entertainment for the evening will include the Hosharian Brothers Band from Los Angeles, live auction, and more. Our 2006 Gala turned out to be a lovely evening enjoyed by all who attended, make sure and save the date so you don't miss this exciting event!

ASP Update

During this past Spring 2007 semester, the ASP organized a series of lectures/events for the campus and Bay Area community, all held on the UC Berkeley campus. On April 27, Dr. Donald Miller, Professor of Religion, Director of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture from USC gave a talk entitled "Oral History Perspectives on the Armenian and Rwandan Genocides." On May 4, Dr. David Guant, Professor of History from Sodertorn University College in Stockholm talked about "Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relation in Eastern Anatolia during World War I." The ASP also brought Director Patrick Cazals to campus on May 21 for a screening of two of his films: "Rouben Mamoulian: The Golden Age of Broadway and Hollywood" and "Serguei Paradjanov, The Rebel."

To stay up to date with upcoming ASP events, be sure to check the UCBAA website frequently. You may also request to be added to the ASP email list (for emailed announcements about upcoming events) by emailing Professor Stephan Astourian at astour@berkeley.edu.

Fall ASP Courses at UC Berkeley

History 280B – From Empire to Nation-State: The Ottoman-Turkish Transition

This course explores the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the modern Turkish Empire. The seminar focuses on two main themes: first the processes involved in the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and second the issue of continuity. The history course is taught by Professor Stephan Astourian.

Eurasian Studies 1A Beginning Armenian

This course is for students who have little or no previous knowledge of Armenian. Proficiency in the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing is developed. Modern Western Armenian is taught primarily, but students who would like to learn Eastern Armenian are also accommodated. Armenian is taught as one language. The commonalities are highlighted and the differences recognized and taught.

Eurasian Studies 101A Continuing Armenian

The purpose of this course is to further develop students' Armenian proficiency in all four language skills, using discussions, oral presentations, written assignments and a variety of readings (literature, non-fiction, folklore, newspaper articles, etc.) chosen for their cultural significance and based on student needs and interests. Particular skills (e.g. reading) are emphasized. Three hours of class per week. Course may be repeated for credit. The language courses are taught by Santoukht Mikaelian.

2007 Scholarship Recipient

This past September, the Hrayr Terzian Armenian Alumni Scholarship was awarded to first year law student Vartanoush Defterderian. Defterderian graduated with honors from the University of Pennsylvania with a BA in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. In addition to maintaining an excellent academic record while at Penn, she has a long list of extracurricular activities including establishing Armenian Students Associations both at her high school and college, interning for a summer with Hetq.am, Investigative Journalists of Armenia as a translator and



journalist, and working with the Penn Consortium of Undergraduate Women, the umbrella organization for all women's groups on the Penn campus.

Defterderian is a true activist. As a young high school student she was writing articles and letters to promote genocide recognition. More recently she has worked with women's

advocacy groups to promote equality and combat violence against women. Her interest and work with issues related to human rights violations and domestic abuse brought her to Boalt, where she plans to pursue a degree in public interest law. Included in her beautifully written application were truly glowing recommendations from her teachers and mentors, describing her as a stand-out student, natural leader, intelligent, enthusiastic and dedicated young Armenian woman. It is our great pleasure to assist her as she continues along her path of success. *(Ms. Defterderian pictured here on left with UCBAA President, Chaghig Minassian Walker.)*

The Hrayr Terzian Armenian Alumni Scholarship is offered yearly to a current UC Berkeley student of Armenian descent and is in the amount of \$1000.

If you are interested in helping in any capacity, please contact us at contact@ucbaa.com.

Mark Arax Talk & Reception

Mark Arax, former editor and reporter/journalist with the *Los Angeles Times*, and the parent of a current U.C. Berkeley student, spoke to a packed crowd at the Alumni House on September 23, 2007. UCBAA members and friends heard about his firsthand experiences with the press and the Armenian Genocide.

Starting his career in journalism at the *Baltimore Sun*, then for more than 20 years at the *Los Angeles Times*, Mr. Arax carefully built his reputation for professional, thorough,

dependable and fair reporting. This past year, Mr. Arax put this all on the line – his job, his reputation, his career, and his financial future – for the truthful portrayal of the Genocide and the Genocide Recognition Resolution. Arax brought the issue to life for his audience, and demonstrated his award-winning storytelling style, in a description of his recent experience.

As a backdrop, Arax begins the story in 2005. Early that year Arax's editor asked him to cover the story of the Californian-Armenians marching from Los Angeles to Sacramento to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Genocide. Prior to that, Arax had written five or six stories for the *LA Times*, over the years, on Armenians or Armenian issues.

Later that summer, the *LA Times* issued a set of ethical guidelines that encourages accurate reporting, setting a high bar for journalistic quality. In September, the *LA Times* published an article that referred to the Armenian Genocide as the "alleged slayings." Arax immediately protested, encouraged by the new ethics guidelines. Later in the month, two other articles were published, all using "alleged". Ironically, Arax published an article that referred to the Genocide correctly, so that the same event was described both ways on the same day in the same paper! As a result of the continued use of the term "alleged", Arax and five or six other staff members wrote a letter to the editors. The *LA Times* corrected its ways, changing its policy to correctly refer to the tragedy as genocide.

The story culminates this past spring – 2007. With the Democratic Party turnover in Congress, the Armenian Genocide Resolution looked like it had a chance to pass. Looking for a new angle on the story, Arax wanted to report



on the controversy within the Jewish community over supporting the Genocide resolution. Arax contacted the large political organizations such as the ADL, AIPAC, JINSA and found out they were all against passage of the resolution. Israel's geopolitical relationship with Turkey put Israel against the resolution and the American Jewish lobby supported Israel's

stance. He interviewed the Turkish Consul General for the article as well. The consulate stated that if Arax wanted to make his editor happy, he would have to make the consulate happy.

Arax wrote the story, including a quote from Abe Foxman of the ADL. The article was submitted and was supposed to run in April on the front page. Unfortunately for all involved, the *LA Times* had just brought in Doug Frantz as new managing editor, fresh from reporting from the *LA Times* and *NY Times* in Turkey. Not surprisingly, he decided to “kill” the article. Arax was shocked, as he had not had an article killed in his 20 year career at the *LA Times*. Frantz justified his decision in an email response to Arax stating two reasons: (1) It was a conflict of interest for Arax to write about an issue under current Congressional debate; he had demonstrated his bias in his petition to change the use of “alleged” in *LA Times* articles; and (2) the established procedures for writing about a Congressional matter had not been followed – a Fresno writer was writing about a DC issue. Arax responded immediately, in his defense. First, Arax did not have a bias and had not “petitioned” the *LA Times* in 2005 – the Genocide is a known fact and he had simply written a letter, per the ethics guidelines of the organization. Second, Arax had written about Armenian issues in the past, and had been assigned such projects, without the Conflict of Interest concern being raised. He had followed journalistic standards to present a fair picture. Pure objectivity is not possible for any reporter – we all filter through our own experience and perspectives. And finally, he had followed established procedures, getting the necessary authorization up the line of command.

The news got out the Armenian community through Harout Sassounian, editor of The Armenian Courier, that an Armenian journalist was being censured. Thousands of letters flowed in to the editor, and in response, Frantz sent the response he had given Arax about the conflict of interest and following procedures. Sending out such a response was clearly defamatory and Arax was compelled to complain to human resources. He ended up in a legal battle with the *LA Times* and left his job. Frantz also left the *LA Times* and returned to his beloved Istanbul, this time to report for the *Wall Street Journal*. The legal issue was settled in Arax’s favor, but how do you put your reputation as a journalist, carefully built up over a career, back together?

The article was eventually published, under the “By line” of another journalist, using quite a bit of Arax’s work (which belonged to the *LA Times*). Mark Arax is no longer with the *LA Times*, but is now free to pursue other literary interests, such as publishing his grandfather’s poetry.

Marx Arax’s experience is not a big surprise to seasoned observers of the treatment of the Genocide in the American press. But Mr. Arax’s courage as a journalist and as an Armenian to stand up for what he believes when the stakes are high is inspiring. He has our admiration and respect.

William Saroyan Endowment Donations November 2006 to October 2007

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In Memory of Arthur O. Hazarabedian, D.V.M.

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In Memory of Rosalie Mahakian

Evelyn & Armen Boyd

In Honor of Cynthia Avakian’s Birthday

Armen Sedrakian & Ruth Alahydoian

UCBAA General Fund Donations November 2006 to October 2007

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Norma Kaufman	Cynthia Avakian
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Nectar Kaiser	

Dues are due and remember, you don't have to be a UCB Graduate to join us!

We have over 500 "alums" on our mailing list, yet we receive dues from fewer than 50. The dues become part of our General Fund which covers our operating expenses, including mailings, printing, honorariums and travel expenses for guest speakers, and much more. Remember, only dues paying members are allowed to vote in our elections. Annual dues are a small fee of \$35. Use the envelope provided in the newsletter and the forms below to send us your dues and updated contact information.

Visit us online!

The UCBAAs new website includes information about ASP courses and events, UCBAAs events, scholarship programs, and more. Please visit us at www.ucbaa.com and sign up for the newsletter to receive electronic messages about upcoming events and important announcements. We appreciate your feedback, please feel free to drop us a line at contact@ucbaa.com.

Join our Board or Volunteer on a Sub-Committee

Calling all alumni or interested community members! The UCBAAs is actively searching for more volunteers to either join our Board or a sub-committee. Sub-committee members need not be Cal graduates and we welcome anyone who is willing to come help us plan culturally enriching and entertaining events for the Bay Area Armenian community. If you are interested in helping in any capacity, please contact us at contact@ucbaa.com.

Ways to Give to the UCBAAs and the Armenian Studies Program at the UCB

UC Berkeley Armenian Alumni

Donation – support our activities and services to the Armenian Studies Program

Membership - become a member and have a voting voice

William Saroyan Endowment Fund

Donation – The most immediate way to show your support

Memorial Donation – In memory of a loved one in lieu of flowers

In Honor of – Birthdays and Anniversaries

Matching Gift Program – Double your contribution by taking advantage of your employer's matching gift program

Wills and Trusts – Remember the UC Berkeley Armenian Studies Program (William Saroyan Endowment or the UC Berkeley Armenian Alumni) in your will

Life Insurance, Brokerage Accounts, Retirement Plans – Name the UC Berkeley Armenian Studies Program (William Saroyan Endowment or the UC Berkeley Armenian Alumni) as **beneficiary**.

For more information, please contact Cynthia Avakian at (415) 566 1120 or cpavakian@yahoo.com

UCBAAs Contribution Form

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Please make checks payable to UCBAAs, P. O. Box 10113, Berkeley, CA 94709-5113

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