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ZABEL (ELIZABETH) KARAPETYAN: A UNIQUE ZEST FOR LIFE

By Debbie Avedian

One of Ararat Home's newer residents, Zabel Karapetyan, was born in Alexandria, Egypt, to Baidzar and Hovanness Takougian of Dikrangerdtsi descent. Warned by a Turkish friend of the impending atrocities of the Genocide, Baidzar and Hovanness escaped to Alexandria, where they had five children: daughters Zabel, Victoria, Eughenie, Astghig, and son Haroutiun. Having left all their wealth behind, Zabel's parents experienced many hardships over the years, including her mother being left with the responsibility of supporting the family by working as a seamstress when her father lost his eyesight.

In Alexandria, Zabel attended a parochial school administered by nuns and grew up in a religious environment. She stresses, "My first home was the church." In her spare time, she enjoyed typing, roller-skating and singing in the church choir.

In 1947, her family moved to Yerevan, Armenia, where Zabel attended high school and was later

accepted to university with a scholarship to study opera. Due to her family's financial hardship, however, she was unable to pursue higher education and instead, went to work at the Women's Agricultural (Grape and Wine) Institute, where she translated French books into Armenian.

In 1950, Zabel married Haroutiun Karapetyan, and they were blessed with two sons: Sarkis born in 1952, and Dikran born in 1954. Haroutiun, in addition to nickel-plating clocks, also worked as a cobbler making patterns for men's shoes. Zabel helped her husband in his shoe business and focused on raising their children. With their emphasis on education, their son Sarkis attended university and studied economics, and Dikran attended university on a water-polo scholarship.

In 1980, the family moved to the United States, and Haroutiun continued to work as a cobbler in Los Angeles. Over the years, Zabel had lost contact with two of her sisters, Victoria and Eugenie, and their families. Victoria, who had stayed behind in Alexandria with her husband when the rest of the family had immigrated to Armenia, passed away unexpectedly at the age of 56. Unbeknownst to Zabel, Victoria's husband and son moved to Melbourne, Australia, subsequent to her death to pursue a more promising future. Knowing that many Armenians from Alexandria had immigrated to Australia, Zabel decided to find Victoria's husband and son by calling telephone operators there. She began searching for them in Sydney and finally located them in Melbourne, where after 40 years of having no contact, she reunited with Victoria's husband and son.

As for her other sister, Zabel had lost contact when Eugenie, upon graduating from college in



Armenia, married and immigrated to London, England, with her husband. Longing to reconnect with her after 25 years, a very determined Zabel once again utilized the help of local telephone operators to locate Eugenie in London.

Zabel's zeal for higher education was instilled in her children as well as her grandchildren. Her granddaughter Gina is a teacher, and Jennifer is a District Attorney in Santa Barbara County. Her grandson David is a mathematics professor, and Arthur is a professional musician who plays the saxophone and clarinet. Zabel lights up with joy when she talks about her grandchildren's excellent accomplishments.

In 1995, Zabel lost her beloved Haroutiun and subsequently directed her energy towards community service. She whole-heartedly volunteered for more than 15 years at St. Sarkis Church in Montebello. She was a member of the church advisory board, participated in the choir, and assisted in the kitchen for church events and banquets. Zabel experienced another tragedy when she lost her son Sarkis at the untimely age of 51; she expresses sadly, "I have learned to move on but will always miss him."

Even though Zabel has been living at Ararat Home for only 3 months, she has come to recognize numerous things that she loves and appreciates about the Home. She states, "I'm very happy and content living here. I wasn't expecting

IN THIS ISSUE

Zabel (Elizabeth) Karapetyan:1-2	a Unique Zest for Life
Religious Leaders Visit Ararat Home Board of Trustees	2
Annual Picnic Delights Large Crowd	3
Casino Night ... Just Fun!	4
Guilds Continue Organizing	5
Exciting Events to Support Ararat Home	
Ararat Home Endowment Fund	5
Fethiye Çetin Visits Ararat Home	6
Save the Dates	6

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

RELIGIOUS LEADERS VISIT ARARAT HOME BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By Ani Dikranian

Over the past several months, religious leaders of the Los Angeles Armenian community were invited to attend the monthly Board of Trustees meetings, where they met the trustees and were more closely introduced to the scope of work done at Ararat Home. After offering the opening prayer at the meetings, each clergyman commended the good work done at the Home. They thanked trustees for their commitment to the worthy mission of the Home, and they blessed employees' service and dedication to the very noble cause of providing compassionate care to the elderly members of the Armenian community.

In turn, the Board of Trustees thanked the clergy of the Armenian churches for their long-standing support of Ararat Home, particularly for pastors' regular visits to all three facilities in Mission Hills and Eagle Rock, where the spiritual enrichment and guidance they provide enlivens residents. As a token of appreciation, the Board presented each religious leader special Ararat Home memorabilia gifts.



▲ His Eminence Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church
- May 2014

◀ Most Reverend Mikael Mouradian, Bishop of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy in the United States and Canada - August 2014



◀ Reverend Joseph D. Matossian, Minister to the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America
- September 2014



◀ His Eminence Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America
- October 2014

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the food to be so delicious, and having Armenian food makes me feel as though I'm in my own home." She loves socializing with the other residents, playing bingo and watching television in her spare time. She enjoys helping the other residents, particularly during activities when she passes out water and treats. She remarks, "I have never been so comfortable and relaxed. Everyone is so compassionate, pleasant and honest." She loves telling jokes to Skilled Nursing Facility Administrator Margarita Kechichian; with a big

smile, she exclaims, "Margarita always laughs whenever she hears my jokes!"

Zabel exhibits tremendous perseverance and focus. She is culturally aware, big-hearted and has great humility. It was not until the end of my interview that she mentioned in passing, that she speaks eight languages: Armenian (Eastern and Western dialects), English, French, Arabic, Russian, Greek, Turkish and Spanish. With her love for life, she is a wonderful member of the Ararat Home family.

ANNUAL PICNIC DELIGHTS LARGE CROWD

By Cindy Kaloostian

The 62nd Annual Ararat Home Picnic on September 28 was a huge success. Most years, Annual Picnic Committee Chair Mike Surmeian announces a sale of leftover food for picnickers to buy and take home. But, this year, all the delicious food (kebab, pilaf, yalanchi, kuftah, souboreg) was sold out by early afternoon, and those who came later enjoyed the baked goods sold by the Ladies Auxiliary. Whether it was the perfect picnic weather or the fabulous entertainment and delicacies or the fun memories of past Ararat Home picnics that drew

the large crowd, the Triple X Fraternity – Los Angeles Chapter that helped organize, cook and serve at the picnic, was very pleased with the turnout. This year, Chookasian Armenian Folk Ensemble and Ara Dance Group wonderfully entertained guests. Every year, the Ararat Home Picnic features generous raffle prizes, games and fun for children, and most of all, the opportunity for attendees to visit with dear friends and family.

Picnic Committee Chairman Mike Surmeian (center) with members of Triple X Fraternity, Los Angeles chapter



Auxiliary ladies hard at work preparing the traditional picnic kadayif



Chookasian Armenian Folk Ensemble play beautiful Armenian dance music



Ara Dance Group



Guests participate in Armenian dancing



Games and prizes for children





CASINO NIGHT ...JUST FUN!

By Cindy Kaloostian

Sometimes it's just good sense to have some fun, and Casino Night XI was just that. If eating great food, playing fun games, laughing with friends, and winning beautiful prizes appeals to you, then we hope you were there, because that's exactly what we did! Thanks to the hardworking committee chaired by Gary Kaloostian and thanks to the scores of generous donors and supporters, the Home profited handsomely. We are proud to say that this year we had three Grand Sponsors: Hank and Louise Arklin, the John and Hasmik Mgrdichian Foundation, and Lewis and Associates Insurance Brokers. Keep an eye open for the announcement of Casino Night XII in 2015; you don't want to miss it!



Playing texas hold'em poker for a good cause



Administrator and trustees share in the fun



Part of the Casino Night Committee: Chair Gary Kaloostian, Ron Nazeley and Kathleen Kurkjian



Grand Sponsors Hank and Louise Arklin with Anne Mills



COO Derik Ghookasian with his wife Adrineh "showing their hands"



Full crowd at Casino Night XI



Getting settled at the black jack table



Fun at the craps table



GUILDS CONTINUE ORGANIZING EXCITING EVENTS TO SUPPORT ARARAT HOME

By Cindy Kaloostian

The San Gabriel Valley Ararat Guild's annual Kuftah Dinner on September 8th was a great success. The much-anticipated featured speaker, Araksya Karapetyan, engaged guests with the heart-warming story of her journey from Armenia to becoming a celebrated newscaster in Los Angeles as an anchor for Good Day LA and Fox 11 News at 10 a.m. She paid tribute to her great uncle George Tumanjan, who had been instrumental in bringing her entire family to the South Bay area after their home in Gyumri was devastated in the 1988 earthquake. In speaking about balancing her cultural identity with her public life, she shared an anecdote of once being asked to change her name. Her response had been: "Listen, I'm Armenian and proud of it. Don't worry, people will get used to my name." Despite having to be at work early the next morning, Ms. Karapetyan stayed until the end of the evening to converse with guests, sign autographs and pose for many pictures. Guild members had done a wonderful job organizing an absolutely delightful evening!

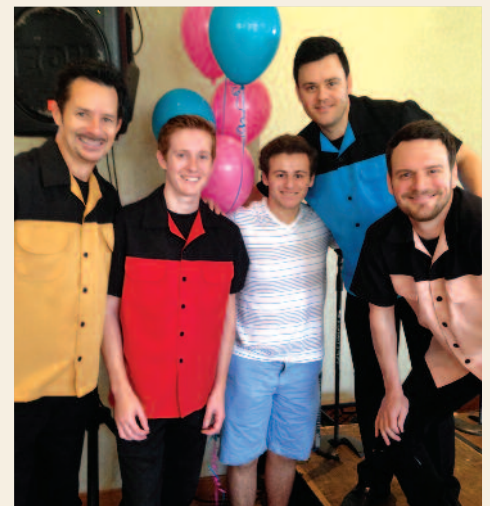


Araksya Karapetyan with Guild Chairlady Vicky Parian, Guild members, trustees, and administrators

A few weeks later, on October 18th, the Ararat Home Massis Guild held a fabulous '50s style luncheon at the Rio Hondo Event Center in Downey. The Massis Family 50s Diner featured terrific boutiques, a fun photo booth, candy station, face painting for children, and a delicious lunch. The wonderful and humorous singing group, The Alley Cats, provided outstanding entertainment for the afternoon. These four entertainers sang all the oldies in doo-wop style, and their hilarious program had guests in stitches! The most fun was their involvement of the audience, including inviting Lucas Der Mugrdechian, grandson of Massis Guild founding member Alma Agopian, to sing with them.

And, on December 6, Westside Ararat Guild had its annual Christmas Luncheon at The Beverly Hills Hotel. Guests enjoyed purchasing homemade baked goods and bidding on beautiful silent auction items. The joyous program included honoring Paulette Kardashian as Angel of the Year for her dedication to the Home. Representatives from Ralph Lauren displayed a variety of accessories for purchase, and a portion of the proceeds will be donated back to the guild.

These events along with those planned throughout the year by the Ladies Auxiliary of Ararat Home and three other guilds bring us together for a great cause. Guild membership is a special experience, and we encourage you to participate in the guild in your area. For a list of the Home's supporting organizations, please visit our website: www.ararathome.org.



Lucas Der Mugrdechian and The Alley Cats sing "Stand By Me"

ARARAT HOME ENDOWMENT FUND

By Armen Hampar, Committee Chair

In 1949, the founders of Ararat Home established the mission of caring for the Armenian elderly in our community. To ensure the continuation of this mission in perpetuity, in 1997, the trustees of the Home established the Ararat Home Endowment Fund with an initial investment of \$346,000. Today, with the generous support of 61 individuals, families, trusts and foundations, the value of the Fund has appreciated to over \$10 million. We are grateful to each contributor, all of whom have invested between \$25,000 and \$1 million.

The Ararat Home Endowment Fund Committee is tasked with the management and growth of the

assets. While the Fund's principal is maintained in a balanced portfolio of mutual funds invested in stocks and bonds, the income generated from interests and dividends is disbursed to supplement the Home's other sources of revenue. Interrupted only by the recession begun in 2008, the Fund has grown steadily over the years and has distributed over \$1.8 million to the Home. The Committee closely monitors changes in the markets and, in addition to the much-appreciated dedication of its members, is aided by the expertise of John Yaldezian II of Wells Fargo Advisors and Rafi Kendirjian of Merrill Lynch in achieving its investment objectives.

FETHIYE ÇETIN VISITS ARARAT HOME

By Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin

Fethiye Çetin, a Turkish lawyer, writer and human rights activist, who had represented the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, visited the Ararat Home Mission Hills campus on November 15, 2014, where she was greeted by Ararat-Eskijian Museum Director, Maggie Mangassarian-

Maden, Turkey. Ms. Çetin is well-known for her courageous journey of acknowledging and speaking about her Armenian roots. Her maternal grandmother, Seher "Heranuş Gadaryan", had revealed late in life that she was by birth an Armenian Christian. During the deportations, at the age of ten, Seher

published her second book, *The Grandchildren*, which has been translated into three languages.

Ms. Çetin is today a strong individual at peace after years of struggling as a human rights lawyer.



From Left: Derik Ghookasian (Chief Operating Officer), Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin (Vice-Chairperson and Director of Ararat-Eskijian Museum), Dr. Ohannes Avedikyan (Chairman of Cultural Committee of Organization of Istanbul Armenians), Fethiye Çetin, Ani Dikranian (Executive Secretary to the Board), and Bared Maronian (Producer of the documentary *Orphans of the Genocide*)



Fethiye Çetin with resident Yevnige Salibian

Goschin. Ms. Çetin was in Los Angeles at the invitation of the United Armenian Council for the Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. She was invited to Ararat Home to pay tribute to our elders.

Born into a Muslim family in the small town of

was taken away from her mother and adopted by her rescuer, a Turkish soldier. After her grandmother's death in 2004, Ms. Çetin published her groundbreaking book, *My Grandmother*, narrating Seher's story. The book was translated into 13 languages. In 2009, she

On her tour of the Skilled Nursing Facility, she met and spoke with several residents and became particularly emotional during her encounter with Yevnige Salibian. Mrs. Salibian, a 100-year old survivor of the Armenian Genocide from Aintab, Turkey, spoke in Turkish with Ms. Çetin, shared her story and showed her the scar on her thigh from the wound she had sustained during her escape from Aintab in 1922.

Ms. Çetin enjoyed the Ararat Home grounds and complimented the beauty and landscape of the Home. She was pleased to have had the opportunity to visit the ethnographic Ararat-Eskijian Museum as well as some of the residents. She said that her visit was both rewarding and inspiring.

SAVE THE DATES

"LADIES AUXILIARY"

MONTHLY LUNCHEONS

FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH, 11:00 A.M.

Exception: January Luncheon on January 13, 2015

Ararat Home Deukmejian Ballroom

"ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING"

MARCH 1, 2015, 3:00 P.M.

Ararat Home Deukmejian Ballroom

"GENOCIDE CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION EVENTS"

MEMORIAL AND DEDICATION SERVICE

MARCH 12, 2015, 10:30 A.M.

Sheen Memorial Chapel

Ararat Home Mission Hills Campus

"CELEBRATION OF LIFE": a Tribute to Survival

MARCH 15, 2015, 3:00 P.M.

Ararat Home Deukmejian Ballroom

ARARAT HIGHLIGHTS

CO-EDITORS

DEBBIE AVEDIAN
ANI DIKRANIAN

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

ARMEN HAMPAR
CINDY KALOOSTIAN
MAGGIE MANGASSARIAN-GOSCHIN

ADVISORS

ARMEN HAMPAR
NORA HAMPAR
ARTHUR ZABOUNIAN

PHOTOGRAPHY

DERIK GHOOKASIAN

DESIGN/PRINTING

DOCTORIAN PRODUCTIONS



ARARAT HOME OF LOS ANGELES, INC.®

15105 MISSION HILLS ROAD
MISSION HILLS, CA 91345

(818) 365-3000

(818) 898-0224 Fax

www.ararathome.org

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