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Summer 2011

Metchikians Delightful Couple at the Home

By Debbie Avedian

During an afternoon at Ararat Home's resident dining room, I had the pleasure of meeting Arpine and Kevork Metchikian. I was impressed with their pleasant and cheerful demeanor and captivated by their interesting and distinctive background and life experiences.

Kevork Metchikian was born in Sofia, Bulgaria on August 14, 1914 to parents Eshapet and Agop Metchikian. His family's roots go back to Edirne in Eastern Thrace, the western most part of Turkey, near the borders of Greece and Bulgaria. In 1912 Ferdinand I, Tsar of Bulgaria, attended a diplomatic meeting in Istanbul, Turkey where he attended a banquet catered by Kevork's grandfather, Kevork Metchikian. The Tsar was so impressed with the feast that he asked for permission and subsequently arranged to take the chef and his entire family to Sofia, Bulgaria where he worked in the presidential palace until his passing away.

Arpine Metchikian was born in Istanbul, Turkey on May 1, 1926. Her parents, Aznive and Levon Mezadourian were from Sepastia, presently known as Sivas, located in central Turkey. The family moved to Istanbul in the 1920's and then to Sofia, Bulgaria in 1927.

On August 8, 1950 Kevork and Arpine were married in Sofia where Kevork had his own watch making business and worked as a master watchmaker. Arpine, following her graduation from a French College, worked as a French schoolteacher. She later became an interpreter for the Secretary of Department of Forest and Land Management in Bulgaria as well as continuing her teaching.

Due to declining economic conditions in Bulgaria, oppression under communist regime, and a quest for opportunities to enable a better life for their son, the Metchikians immigrated to New York in 1968. Kevork continued working as a master watchmaker and after working for 60 years retired at age 75. Arpine worked as an interpreter and corresponded with European customers for a prestigious stock brokerage firm on Wall Street.

In New York, they were active in the Armenian community where they attended St. Sarkis Church in Bayside, New York and participated in various activities within the Bulgarian Armenian community. Helping and assisting all newcomers, the Metchikians enjoyed entertaining and celebrating holidays with their extended family and friends.

Following their retirement, when it became apparent that managing and maintaining their home became too difficult, they decided to move to their condominium in Florida. After several years, this too became too difficult for them. Therefore, in 2008, they moved to Ararat Home Assisted Living Facility. While visiting Ararat Home campus 12 years ago, the Metchikians, so impressed with the facilities, decided that someday this would be their Home. Living in the



Home Arpine and Kevork enjoy great food, daily walks around the facility, attending church, visiting the Ararat-Eskigian museum, holiday celebrations, outings, housekeeping services provided to them, and most importantly the familiar environment where they are able to communicate in their own native language, Armenian. Everyday they are thankful and appreciative of the outstanding leadership of Rita Noravian, Assisted Living Administrator, and her wonderful and compassionate staff.

The Metchickians are blessed with their caring son Jack, a retired stockbroker, and their bright and benevolent granddaughter, Michelle. This past June, she graduated with honors with a degree in Biology from Loyola Marymount and is on her way to studying Forensic Science in graduate school at Michigan State. Their pride of heritage has passed on to their granddaughter. Last summer Michelle, through the Armenian Youth Federation, volunteered in Armenia. For the past two months, through Birthright Armenia, she has been volunteering in Gyumri at a convalescent hospital, working with handicapped children with ambulatory difficulties.

Arpine and Kevork Metchikian are perfect examples of their generation. They led productive lives and successfully imparted a strong work ethic and sense of Armenian pride to their son and granddaughter.

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On April 18, 2011, the Primate accompanied by Diocese clergy visited Ararat Home in Mission Hills and distributed Holy Communion to the Residents.



Standing from Left to Right

Deacon Guzh Khachikyan
Rev. Fr. Avedis Abovian
Rev. Fr. Mampré Kesabyan
Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate
Archpriest Fr. Arshag Khatchadourian
Archpriest Fr. Nareg Matarian

Ararat Home Assisted Living Facility: 5th Consecutive Year of Zero Deficiencies

By Cindy Kaloostian

MISSION HILLS, CA: "Doing the right things every day Equals Survey Success!!" These words, spoken by Ararat Home's Assisted Living Facility Administrator, Rita Noravian, convey the pride and commitment of her exceptional staff assuring a safe, comfortable environment for the residents of Ararat Home. A "Zero Deficiency" rating given by the State of California requires attention given to every imaginable detail. The categories taken into account during the rating process include: resident care, medication management, staffing, quality of the physical plant, and resident interviews. Would our own homes receive zero deficiencies? While we might squirm at the thought of being so rigorously examined, isn't it encouraging to those who entrust their loved ones to Ararat Home that the Ararat team is so diligent? All of us in the greater Armenian Community echo the response of Ararat Home Board Chairman, Nazar H. Ashjian, Jr. who reflected to Rita Noravian, "What a wonderful job. You make us all very proud. Please thank all of your staff and associates for setting such a wonderful example."

Update On Expansion of the Ararat Nursing Home

By Armen Hampar and Ron Nazeley

The Board of Trustees of the Ararat Home is pleased to announce its extensive plan for the expansion of the Mission Hills Skilled Nursing Facility. Due to the need to relocate our 42 residents at the aged Eagle Rock Convalescent Hospital to a facility more in keeping with the high Ararat standards plus increased demand for nursing care, it has become of utmost priority to expand this facility. The Building Committee has been meeting every other week to advance the addition of 58 more beds at the Mission Hills Nursing Facility. Of the five qualified contractors invited by the Committee to bid on the job, three were selected for final interviews. At a special meeting on July 11, the Board of Trustees voted in favor of awarding the contract to highly qualified Sinanian Development, Inc. who was the lowest bidder.



From the bid received it has become clear that the completed project, ready for occupancy, will cost approximately \$11 million. Although the Home possesses most of the funds from previous and current donations and the sale of the Rockhaven property, money will still have to be raised to complete the project without taking on additional debt. Co-chairs of the Fund Raising Committee, Ron Nazeley and Berj Shahbazian, are organizing their members to raise the short fall. Opportunities will be available for donation to specific areas inside and outside of the new facility. Donor names will be recognized and displayed on engraved plaques at the site of the gift.

At this writing, evidence of the start of construction will soon become apparent. During the end of July or early August the emergency generator located just north of the nursing facility will be removed to make room for the new building. This 17 year old piece of equipment will be replaced with a newer emergency generator with greater output to be located on the east side of the nursing facility. Actual construction on the building expansion is scheduled to start in the late fall of this year. The entire project will be ready for occupancy sometime during the fall of 2012.

We look forward to the day when the 42 residents of our aged Eagle Rock Facility can be moved to more comfortable, spacious and cheerful accommodations in Mission Hills.

On April 27, 2011 the Western Prelate accompanied by Prelacy clergy visited Ararat Home in Mission Hills for Easter Services. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Chapel and residents received Holy Communion.



Last Row From Left to Right

Rev. Fr. Ardak Demirjian	Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate
Rev. Fr. Razmig Khatchadourian	
Rev. Fr. Khoren Babochian	Very Rev. Fr. Muron Aznikian
Very Rev. Fr. Barthev Gulumian	Rev. Fr. Ashod Kambourian
Archpriest Fr. Nareg Pehlivanian	Deacon Setrag Karadolian

Meet the Alaverdyans: Tri-Sister Team Contributes To Five Star Reputation

By Phyllis Hamo

Introducing the Alaverdyan Sisters: **Alisa, Ermine, and Hilda.** These dedicated sisters joined the staff of the Ararat Skilled Nursing Facility in Mission Hills in 1998. The first to join the staff was Alisa, followed by Hilda four months later, and then Ermine. What has kept them working at this non-profit facility is Ararat Home's high quality employees and first-class services in an environment of compassion, dignity, integrity, self-determination, flexibility, and excellence.

The three sister team began as Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and all have received additional training and have moved up the career ladder, something that is encouraged at the Ararat Home. Alisa is a Restorative Nursing Assistant who works the day shift. When asked how she feels about the Home her response was, *"Ararat gives me fulfillment in my career."* She praises the Executive Director, Margo Babikian for establishing innovative ideas and positive reinforcement. Mrs. Babikian has been a compelling force in guiding this top rated facility toward its five star rating, and she constantly inspires the staff with encouragement.

One of the Executive Director's novel ideas has been the creation of window sites. There are currently eight window sites at the Home, each named for a different aide, recommended by their team for their exemplary service. Alisa has a window site named after her in the northwest wing. At this window with a lovely view, she helps residents with their meals, performs group exercises to music, and does strengthening and ambulation exercises with them.

When Hilda, a Licensed Vocational Charge Nurse, was asked about Ararat, she said, *"I am very proud to work at my second home, the Ararat Nursing Home."* Hilda has graciously accepted the responsibility of working all shifts to accommodate the needs of the Home.

Ermine, a senior CNA team leader on the day shift, works efficiently, taking on clerical duties, and serving as a big sister to other CNAs when assistance is needed. When asked about Ararat Home, her response was, *"It is a pleasure to work in a professional environment and serve the Armenian elderly."*

Although the sisters work in the same facility, their schedule and duties give them little opportunity for interaction. However, being a close-knit family, they often gather at their homes for family celebrations. The Alaverdyans were born in Iran, migrated to Armenia, and then to the United States. Each of the sisters is happily married and, as is customary in Armenia, they use their maiden names. Each has also raised high achieving children, who are now college graduates with degrees in political science, history, and biology.

There are also two younger Alaverdyan sisters, Bella, a Registered Dental Assistant and Ella, an accountant. Their proud mother, a widow, has nine grandchildren and lives independently in Glendale.



Meet the Alaverdyans from left, Alisa, Hilda, and Ermine.

ARARAT HOME ANNUAL PICNIC

Sunday, Sept. 25, 2011

11:30 am - 6:00 pm

ON THE GROUNDS
OF THE HOME

KEF TIME
Games★Music★Dancing
DELICIOUS Food

**Don't miss
this year's
WORLD
FAMOUS
PICNIC!**

**FREE ADMISSION
FREE PARKING
COMPLIMENTARY SHUTTLE
SERVICE AVAILABLE**



Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin Celebrates Fourteen Years With Museum

By Phyllis Hamo

If you have attended programs or events at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum then you have probably met Marguerite Mangassarian-Goschin, known by all as Maggie. Maggie discovered the museum on a Sunday afternoon in 1997 after visiting with her grandmother, resident at Ararat Skilled Nursing facility. While walking to her car she noticed the open door of the museum.

My husband Sam and I, members of the museum board at the time, were on duty when Maggie walked in. During our conversation she told us she was interested in becoming a docent, so we interviewed her and recommended her for consideration as a volunteer. As the proverbial statement goes... the rest is history.

Martin Eskijian, son of the museum's founder, architect, and benefactor Luther Eskijian, has summed up Maggie's accomplishments this way: *"She has facilitated the growth of the museum into international recognition. Because of her efforts we are known around the world, with ties now to the Genocide Museum in Yerevan. She has worked very hard. Expanding the museum and its programs has been her passion. We are greatly indebted to her for her efforts and value her sacrifice of time and talent. We are very blessed to have her as the vice chair and director of the museum."*

Yes, Maggie has become a driving force working tirelessly to bring outstanding speakers, exhibitions, documentaries, and artifacts to the museum. *"I enjoy all the events," she says, "because each gives us a glimpse of our history. It's like putting the puzzle together, especially for a surviving nation."* She has maintained contact with NAASR (National Association of Armenian Studies), Project SAVE photographic archives, various universities in the greater Los Angeles area, and has collaborated with the Genocide Museum in Armenia to bring events to Los Angeles. The museum has collaborated on the translation of a book from Armenian to English on Genocide survivors recently published in Armenia.

Two other books in the works include one on the Arts and a non-fiction novel.

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Maggie emigrated to the U.S. with her parents in 1974. She earned a bachelors degree in history and archeology. She worked as an insurance underwriter for 22 years. Maggie is gifted in languages, an invaluable asset for the Museum. She reads and writes Armenian, English, and French and knows some Turkish, Arabic and Romanian. Recently she has devoted her time to museum events and activities.

In 1983 Maggie married Lazar-Toma Goschin, a systems analyst with Farmer's Insurance, originally from Bucharest Romania. They live in Northridge and have two daughters, college students Christina-Alexandra, majoring in veterinary science, and Carina Julia, majoring in graphic design.



Martin Eskijian credits the Director of Ararat-Eskijian Museum Maggie Mangassarian for expanding the Museum and its programs.

During the past ten years the museum has conducted and participated in more than 125 events, most at the museum, but some in libraries, theaters, and other locations. Some of the recent program titles have been, "Armenians on the Titanic," "Komitas Vartapet," "Orphans of the Genocide," "The Armenian Genocide: Centennial Anniversary and Commemoration Strategies," and "Armenian Women in Distress." The museum library has expanded to include rare books not in circulation. If you have any Armenian artifacts or books and would like to donate them to the museum, please contact Maggie Goschin at (818) 838-4862 or email her at Maggie.goschin@gmail.com.

Maggie extends appreciation to the Hasmig Mgrdichian Foundation for its generous financial support. Hasmig was the first chairman of the museum board. Volunteers are always welcome, especially those who can offer expertise with exhibits. This year Maggie was elected to the Ararat Home Board of Trustees. She has a wonderful perspective. *"What better place could I volunteer? The Home takes care of the well being of our elders during the senior transition in their lives, and the museum preserves their tradition and legacy!"*

Gift Shop Provides Service To Residents

By Cindy Kaloostian

When "Mr. Ararat," Bob Shamlian, was asking for help to establish a convenient store for residents at the brand new Ararat Home in Mission Hills, he found a group of women who stepped up to the challenge and went to work. The Ararat Gift Shop began by filling modest needs such as sundries, candies, small gifts for grandchildren and the like. Just as important, the several faithful volunteers, who are the staff, make it their business to get to know the residents' names as they pass by or come in to browse. The atmosphere is homey, like an old-fashioned corner store. The Gift Shop moves upstairs on Monthly Luncheon days for the convenience of the luncheon attendees. It's a rare shopper who can pass by without making a purchase or two.

After several years, the buyers expanded the selection and learned on the job by trial and error. Ideally, Monday through Thursday, the shop is kept open. This depends on the availability of ladies to take care of business. The gift shop committee is always on the lookout for volunteers who are willing to give a day and welcomes teams of two to join in the effort. If you think you may be interested, please volunteer. All profits from the Gift Shop are donated back to Ararat Home.

*Volunteers
Needed in
Gift Shop*

PLEASE CALL LORAINÉ
(818) 766-4788

ARARAT HYLIGHTS

EDITOR

DEBBIE AVEDIAN

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

PHYLLIS HAMO
NORA HAMPAR
CINDY KALOOSTIAN

ADVISORS

ARMEN HAMPAR

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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Upcoming Events

Sunday, September 25
Annual Picnic

Saturday, November 19
Casino Night VIII