

# ARARAT

## HIGHLIGHTS

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## ANAHID TASHDJIAN: Proud of Her Rich Family History

the majority of the Armenian community. Along the way, Vartouhi met a woman who happened to be visiting Diyarbakir from the United States with her two young sons at the time of the deportations. As their caravan neared Der Zor, they were attacked by a group of Chechens, thrashed with one-handed flails, and thrown into a well. Vartouhi's mother and the mother of the two young boys were fatally injured. A man witnessing this horrific incident saved the two boys and took them to his home. When the boys cried incessantly, the man returned to the well and rescued Vartouhi and the others; he took them to his village, where they were dispersed to local family homes. Vartouhi had the misfortune of being taken as a servant to the home of the man who assaulted her. She was often reminded of her

Due to political uprisings in Aleppo, the family relocated to Smyrna, Turkey, in 1920, and were soon blessed with another daughter. But, their peaceful existence was short-lived, when the Turkish army entered the city in 1922, and burned the Armenian neighborhoods. Once again, they were forced to abandon their home. Carrying Anahid and her baby on her back,

Vartouhi escaped by ship to Thessaloniki, Greece. Anahid remarks that the bronze statue in front of Ararat-Eskigian Museum of "Mother Armenia Rising Out of the Ashes" depicts the image she has in her memory of her mother's ordeal of leaving Smyrna.

In Thessaloniki, Vartouhi supported her children by making traditional Armenian needle lace. Sadly though, she lost her baby daughter to complications from chicken pox.

With the money that she was



gradually able to save, Vartouhi and Anahid were reunited with Hagop in Jerusalem nearly two years later. Skilled in carpentry, Hagop supported his family by building doors and windows for homes and businesses.

When Anahid arrived in Jerusalem, she was four years old and happily attended an English school until the age of 16. When her father injured his fingers and could no longer work in his craft, Anahid was obliged to quit school. With her newly learned sewing skills, she was soon able to contribute to the family's finances while still continuing her education through private tutoring.

traumatic experience by the man's wife, who would show her the flail that was used to thrash her and her family. Eventually, Vartouhi used her wits to escape, and she made her way to Aleppo.

In an open market one day, Vartouhi stumbled upon the son of a family friend, who eagerly took her to live with his family. Later, at the age of 22, Vartouhi met Hagop Esmerian, who had travelled to Aleppo from Urfa to find work to support his family. He was a kind man and an activist who helped feed the hungry and the less fortunate. In 1919, Hagop and Vartouhi married and were soon blessed with a beautiful daughter, Anahid.

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# ARARAT CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL CELEBRATES 35 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE AND RECEIVES A PRESTIGIOUS AWARD



Ararat Convalescent Hospital Administrator Varsenik Keshishyan and several staff members proudly display their well-deserved Bronze Award recognition

We are very proud to report that Ararat Convalescent Hospital has been recognized as a 2015 recipient of the *Bronze - Commitment to Quality Award* for its dedication to improving the lives of residents through quality care and performance excellence. This is the highest, most prestigious recognition Ararat Home has received thus far for the care and services it provides.

This national quality award is presented annually by the American Health Care Association, which represents more than 12,000 care facilities. Ararat Convalescent Hospital was among only 19 Bronze Award recipients in California.

The National Quality Award Program has three progressive levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. The awards recognize those facilities that demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering ever-improving value to residents as well as families and to improving overall organizational performance.



"Ararat Convalescent Hospital is honored by this Bronze Award recognition; we could not have celebrated our 35th year milestone under better circumstances," says Administrator Varsenik Keshishyan. "Our facility has cared for hundreds of residents since its founding 35 years ago, and we have always been committed to making the delivery of quality, compassionate care our primary focus. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to Ararat Convalescent Hospital's success, we have now laid a strong foundation to continue our quality journey by striving for the Silver and Gold levels!"

On the occasion of Ararat Convalescent Hospital's 35th anniversary,

administration, staff and trustees gathered for a celebratory luncheon at the facility. Several employees received recognition and special lapel pins for certain benchmark years of service to the Convalescent Hospital: Rima Dilanchian (two years); Rita Hamalian, Lidia Sarkisova, Hasmik Sogomonyan and Salpi Tepirjian (15 years); Janet Bakalian and Ovanes Bakalian (35 years). Additionally, Mayor Ara Najarian issued a certificate of commendation to the Convalescent Hospital on behalf of the City of Glendale.

Ararat Home Board of Trustees Chairman Joseph Kanimian, Esq. congratulated Administrator Keshishyan and the entire Convalescent Hospital staff for their outstanding recent accomplishment as well as their achievements over the last 35 years. He conveyed the Board's gratitude to staff, volunteers and donors for such unparalleled devotion to Ararat Home's mission.



Administrator Varsenik Keshishyan and Director of Nursing Aida Yeghiayan

Ararat Convalescent Hospital receives a commendation from the mayor of Glendale



Eventually, Hagop was able to secure a job in the village of Tulkarem, located in the Palestinian West Bank, and for the following four years, he taught his craft to incarcerated youths. His employment was transferred to Acre, where the family made their home in tents on the prison grounds. Hagop continued training prisoners while Anahid and her mother worked as seamstresses sewing clothes for the prisoners.

In 1939, Anahid met her husband, Nerses Tashdjian, in Acre. After they married, Anahid moved to Haifa, where Nerses lived. As the owner and operator of a rug retail business, Nerses provided a comfortable living for his wife and their five children: Hratch, Armine (Armig), Seta, Hasmig and Aida. In 1945, with the wrath of the harsh winter in Haifa, they lost their precious daughter Armig at the tender age of one. Due to local tensions between Arabs and Armenians, in 1948, the family moved to Beirut, Lebanon, where Nerses re-established his rug business.

Anahid and Nerses worked together to build a good, wholesome home for their family. Their son Hratch followed in his father's footsteps to work in the rug industry. Their daughter Seta worked with needy Armenian families in her capacity as a social worker for the non-profit Jinishian Memorial Program in Lebanon.

When Seta planned to move to the United States to pursue her education, Anahid decided to accompany her. In 1977, Anahid immigrated to California, and Nerses followed her afterwards. The couple had liquidated their assets in Beirut and deposited their capital in a local bank. Unfortunately, they lost the majority of their life savings when the Lebanese currency devalued some time later. As a result, Nerses grew despondent, and in 1994, he had a massive stroke and passed away.

In May 2007, Anahid moved to the Ararat Home Assisted Living Facility. Even though she suffers from chronic back pain, she considers herself generally healthy and is content with her living situation. She says, "I am very happy that I have good health and can care for myself. I have a lot of respect for all the kind staff, and I appreciate all that they do for me and for the other residents."

Anahid spends much time reading the Bible, and she takes pleasure in comparing the modern Armenian translation to that of classical Armenian (Krapar). Additionally, she loves to draw and has decorated her room with her beautiful works. She also still pursues her scrapbooking hobby and values her collections reflecting Armenian historical events and notable Armenian individuals.

Anahid is proud of her Armenian heritage. Her mother was a founding member of the Jerusalem chapter of the Armenian Relief Society. Continuing that tradition of service, Anahid became a member of the Armenian Relief Society in Beirut and continued her membership and active support of the organization in the United States through the Orange County Sevan Chapter. She has also supported Ararat Home as a member since 1984 and makes annual donations to the Home on April 24th saying that it is her "duty as an Armenian to do so".

At the age of 95, Anahid has a pleasant disposition even though she has experienced so many adversities; the most recent being the loss of her daughter Seta three years ago. Unquestionably, like her mother, Anahid has an immense inner strength that has led her to accept the hardships she has faced, to persevere, to enjoy life and to keep smiling.

# Have You Been To Ararat-Eskijian Museum Lately?

If you have visited Ararat-Eskijian Museum in recent months, you have undoubtedly been impressed by the current exhibitions and latest additions to the museum collection. If you have not yet had the opportunity to visit, Director Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin and Curator Dr. Edouard Selian invite you to stop by to admire the historical treasures housed there.

Founded in 1993 by architect, collector and genocide survivor Luther Eskijian, Ararat-Eskijian Museum is a unique institution of Armenian culture and history. It is a small organization with a vital and expansive purpose of preserving the rich heritage of the Armenian people. Director Mangassarian-Goschin says, "While the Home takes care of the well-being of our elders during their golden years, the Museum preserves their traditions and legacy, thus creating a bridge for our children and grandchildren to understand and appreciate the art, history, expression, sacrifice and character of our people."

Advancing the mission to *collect, preserve and promote* Armenian culture and history, Ararat-Eskijian Museum underwent



substantial renovations and reopened in 2013 with a remarkable new design and beautiful displays. While Mr. Eskijian's collection forms the core of the museum's original repository, thanks to donations of heirlooms, documents and books from families and organizations within and outside the Armenian community, the museum's collection has notably grown.

This trustworthy reputation that the museum has built over the years is an honor and





responsibility that Director Mangassarian-Goschin appreciates and passionately maintains. "Every item in the museum has a story," she says. And, she delights in sharing those stories with visitors.

On the occasion of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide this year, the museum has designated an alcove for the display of several intriguing items acquired on loan. In addition to the rugs, orphan dress and such other related objects pictured here, the museum has organized a fascinating exhibition of rare photographs from the archives of the Near East Foundation.

related exhibitions; museum items have been loaned for display in locally-organized events as well as in San Francisco's City Hall and in *Museo Memoria Y Tolerancia*



in Mexico City.

With the intention of reaching a wider audience and increasing accessibility to its resources, Ararat-Eskijian Museum has two ongoing projects: digitization of its collection as well as of the recently acquired archives of Professor Vahakn Dadrian, an historian and world-renowned expert on the Armenian Genocide. The projects are progressing on a slow but steady pace, as the museum is dependent on the generosity of supporters throughout the community.

The museum welcomes everyone: individual as well as group visitors, student groups from elementary schools



The museum does not only house artifacts, but also serves as a center of living culture and education. Under the leadership and efforts of the Director and with the support of community members, the museum has organized more than 200 cultural and educational events over the past 13 years: exhibitions of art, photos and rugs; poetry readings; theatrical and musical performances; film screenings; international conferences and outstanding lectures by prominent authors, artists, speakers and scholars.

The museum has also gained international recognition and has expanded its scope as it has begun collaborating with various scholars, organizations and institutions. Projects have included publications of scholarly and non-fiction works as well as theater and film productions. Ararat-Eskijian Museum has established a strong cooperative relationship with the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan. Additionally, the museum has had a full schedule this year serving as a resource assisting other organizations with Armenian Genocide

as well as universities, grandparents and grandchildren, Armenians and non-Armenians alike. So, the next time you find yourself on the Ararat Home Mission Hills campus – whether it is to tour the facilities, visit a loved one, attend one of the monthly Tuesday luncheons or one of the bi-monthly museum-hosted events, – the



Curator and the Director look forward to greeting you and introducing or re-introducing you to the extensive history and rich heritage of the Armenian people. Your visit will be truly enriched!

The museum is open on Saturdays and Sundays (except holidays) from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., on the first Tuesday of each month from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., and by appointment. Admission is free. Donations are always welcomed and greatly appreciated! For more information, please visit [ararat-eskijian-museum.com](http://ararat-eskijian-museum.com) or call (747) 500-7585. To stay informed on upcoming museum events, you may write to [ararat-eskijian-museum@netzero.net](mailto:ararat-eskijian-museum@netzero.net) to be added to the museum email list.





## ARARAT HOME GUILDS AND AUXILIARY ARE EAGER TO WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

By Cindy Kaloostian

Ararat Home is fortunate to have a troop of dedicated volunteers that are members of several Southern California area support guilds. Guilds create a social network for members, who come together to plan fun and exciting fundraising events for the Home. Each of the six Ararat Home guilds is very happy to welcome new members.

**If you are looking for a tangible way to help Ararat Home and you have a few hours to spare several times a year, perhaps guild membership is for you!**

There are many ways to help: mailings, email communication, flyer preparation, event decorations, serving at luncheons and dinners, cooking and baking, and

other types of volunteer work based on your talents. Of course, enjoying your time with dear friends at fundraising events is important, too!

In addition to the support guilds, Ararat Home also benefits from the wonderful efforts of the Ladies Auxiliary. This admirable group of capable and devoted women organize the Home's monthly luncheons on the first Tuesday of each month. They would be happy to count more service-minded people in their ranks.

Want to sign up or want more information? The chairladies of these supporting organizations would love to hear from you!

Ladies Auxiliary	Dianne Ohanesian	818-349-5824	houses2di4@aol.com
Massis Guild	Lovey Sherman	323-722-7994	loveysherman@gmail.com
Orange County Guild	Sona Simsarian	949-733-1243	ssimsar@cox.net
San Diego Guild	Lisa Kradjian	858-792-5350	lkradjian@san.rr.com
San Gabriel Valley Guild	Vicky Parian	626-303-2023	bparian@hotmail.com
Valley Guild	Lucy Melkonian	818-708-7769	lcmelkonian@yahoo.com
Westside Guild	Patty Samarge	310-397-4979	psamarge@yahoo.com

OUR FORMER BOARD CHAIRMEN  
ANSWER THE QUESTION: >>>

## What Does Ararat Home Mean To You?



### Nazar H. Ashjian, Jr.

Ararat Home to me is...

The safety of a loving home for our residents  
The protector over family members  
The symbol of our respect for others in need  
Our pride in our Armenian heritage, and  
A thank you to God and our parents  
For teaching us To Help One Another



### Armen Hampar

It has been an honor and privilege for me to serve on the Ararat Home Board of Trustees for nearly 30 years and as Chairman for two terms. During this period, I have watched the Home grow from a mom-and-pop organization to a corporation, all while maintaining the same compassionate spirit and providing loving care to our dear residents. We are proud that our facilities continue to be evaluated with excellent results by regulatory agencies and recognized for quality of care. And, we are grateful for the trust we have earned from our supporting public, which has enabled the Home to expand its services and advance its mission over the decades.

## Ararat Home Annual Picnic: FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

By Cindy Kaloostian

Are you ready for a great kebab meal, wonderful entertainment, fun games, Armenian dancing and a chance to win exciting raffle prizes? Let's do it! The Ararat Home Annual Picnic will take place on the Mission Hills campus on Sunday, Sept. 27. Picnic Committee Chairman Mike Surmeian and the energetic crew from the Los Angeles Triple X Fraternity are preparing for another successful, enjoyable day of eating, playing and visiting with

dear friends. Lamb and chicken kebab meals will be sold for \$12; side dishes, like koftah, sarma, sou beoreg and lahmajoun, will also be available. Don't forget to stop by the fabulous dessert table hosted by the Ladies Auxiliary, where you're bound to find several of your favorites. So, don't dilly-dally on your way to the Picnic. Arrive early, bring your whole family, and enjoy a fun day together all in support of the Home!

## CASINO NIGHT XII

SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 21

CONTACT: Ani Dikranian 818-838-4860



# SAVE THE DATES

## **ARARAT HOME ANNUAL PICNIC**

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

11:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

CONTACT: 818-365-3000

## **CASINO NIGHT XII**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

CONTACT: Ani Dikranian

818-838-4860

## **ARARAT-ESKIJIAN MUSEUM**

**CONFERENCE:** "Armenian Photographers: The Eyes of Our Culture"

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

10 A.M. – 4 P.M.

## **MASSIS GUILD**

CONTACT: Lovey Sherman

323-722-7994

## **PUTTING ON THE RITZ –**

**CASINO NIGHT;** Entertainment

By Doug Rozier with Musical

Selections of Yesteryear

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 6 P.M. - 10 P.M.

Quiet Cannon at the

Montebello Golf Course

**CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON AND**

**INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 12:30 P.M.

Rio Hondo Event Center

## **ORANGE COUNTY GUILD**

CONTACT: Sona Simsarian

949-733-1243

## **LUNCH & ENTERTAINMENT**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 11 A.M.

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse - Irvine

## **SUMMER SOCIAL**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 3 P.M.

Kazarian Home – Coto De Caza

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

Old Ranch Country Club

## **SAN GABRIEL VALLEY GUILD**

CONTACT: Cindy Kaloostian

626-792-4479

## **ANNUAL KUFTE DINNER**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

## **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

## **VALLEY GUILD**

CONTACT: Tamarr Murachanian

818-362-2100

## **BI-MONTHLY LUNCHEONS**

## **WESTSIDE GUILD**

CONTACT: Patty Samarge

310-397-4979

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 11 A.M.

Beverly Hills Hotel

## **LADIES AUXILIARY**

**MONTHLY LUNCHEONS**

FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

11 A.M.

# *Ara Dance Group at the Annual Picnic*



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