You Won’t Want to Miss the Mid-Year Meeting in Detroit!

The Armenian Bar Association will be holding its Mid-Year Meeting in Detroit, Michigan September 22 - 24, 2011. The meeting will officially kick-off at a Friday night reception at the firm of Miller Canfield. In addition to a delicious Middle Eastern dinner, participants will enjoy continuous entertainment provided by the Les Williams Trio playing Motown favorites and jazz violinist Harry Hovakimian offering sweet Armenian melodies.

On Saturday, the business meeting will take place at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. Located on the Detroit River with Windsor, Ontario, Canada just across the water, the Renaissance Center is also General Motors World Headquarters. The first panel of the day will focus on “Birthright Armenia”, a non-profit organization that offers diasporan young adults opportunities for true cultural-immersion.

See Mid-Year Meeting Preview, pg. 8

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The Armenian Bar Association held one of its most successful and productive annual meetings from April 29-May 1, 2011, in the wonderful City of San Francisco. We met and visited with the new Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, the Honorable Tani Cantil-Sakauye. We also had the honor of hosting and exchanging ideas about Armenia/Diaspora cooperation with the Justice Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Hrayr Tovma- syan. In between these exciting and groundbreaking events, there were many other honored guests, superb lectures and fascinating discussions of legal issues of current interest to Armenian.

See Message from the Chair, pg. 19

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ST. JOHN ARMENIAN CHURCH of Greater Detroit
San Francisco—More than a hundred-fifty Armenian American lawyers, judges, and community leaders gathered in the city by the bay from April 29 to May 1, 2011, for a breakthrough convention of the Armenian Bar Association.

“This has been the most fantastic convention of the Armenian Bar Association,” Chairman Edvin Minassian said. “We now return to work with high spirits and a renewed dedication to justice—in service to our country, our homeland, and our history.”

The weekend was officially opened at the California Supreme Court, where Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye received the members of the ArmenBar, first at a meeting of the California Judicial Council and then at a private luncheon reception. Drawing from her own background as a Philippina, Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye said that she shared with the ArmenBar a deep faith that a dedication to the national heritage “translates directly to our commitment to the rule of law and the strength of our community.”

The Chief Justice also expressed her gratitude for the contribution of so many Armenians, especially Governor George Deukmejian, both to her professional career and to the law in general. It was fitting, then, that several Armenian American legal luminaries were in attendance. Supreme Court Justice Marvin Baxter, a guiding member of the ArmenBar, presided over the afternoon meeting and later led a tour through the Supreme Court building. Retired Supreme Court Justice Armand Arabian and Court of Appeal Justice Charles Poochigian delighted the crowd with short, sweet reflections.

The convention was reconvened in the evening, this time at the rooftop hall of the Union Square Marriott Hotel, where Ann Lousin, a celebrated professor of commercial law at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago, presented the weekend’s first public service award. The recipient was David Balabanian, a premier civil litigator with the law firm Bingham McCutchen, who spoke of the complex controversies surrounding the 103-foot concrete cross on San Francisco’s Mount Davidson, the tallest monument ever dedicated to the Armenian Genocide. With signature wit and passion, Balabanian told the compelling tale of how the Armenian community-represented pro bono by his law firm—was able to crush a Turkish-funded lawsuit launched against the memory of 1915.

A night of festivities gave way to a serious and sober morning, with the first of two extensive panels titled “Armenia on the Road to Judicial Independence and Legal Reforms.” The Republic of Arme-
Armenian Bar Association and AAHPO Combine Forces for Resoundingly Successful Event in New York City

The Harvard Club, in the heart of New York City, was rocking on the evening of June 3, 2011, with an overflow crowd of Armenian attorneys and medical professionals. On this evening, the Armenian Bar Association and the Armenian-American Health Professionals Organization jointly sponsored a cocktail reception, dinner and educational program. This was the first such event of these two esteemed professional organizations. Organizers of the event initially anticipated a gathering of 60 persons; to their shock, and delight, the 125 attendees exceeded room capacity.

The festivities commenced with a one-hour cocktail reception. Guests and family members mingled with one another, resulting in a special camaraderie being established between the two groups of professionals. The program then continued with welcoming remarks by the two “heads of state.” On behalf of the Armenian Bar Association, Chairman Edvin Minassian rendered a short, highly informative presentation, in which he described the activities and aims of the Armenian Bar: Mr. Minassian highlighted the Association’s extensive efforts to protect the rights of Armenians, both domestically and internationally, as well as describing its more recent focus on submitting of amicus briefs in court cases involving issues of significant concern to Armenians.

Mr. Minassian also touched upon areas in which the Armenian Bar and AAHPO can cooperate, such as deterring domestic violence in Armenia, joint medicine and law programs, medical malpractice laws and medical ethics/end of life decisions. On behalf of AAHPO, President Lawrence Najarian, M.D. highlighted AAHPO efforts and projects, flagging projects concerning broad access to healthcare, which had been made possible through the efforts of both the medical and legal communities.

After a festive dinner; Shant Mardirossian, Chairman of the Near East Foundation, addressed the good works of that organization in a talk entitled “The Near East Foundation – Past and Present” The Near East Foundation is an international philanthropic organization giving aid to needy social groups in Armenia, as well as other countries in the Middle East and Africa. Mardirossian peppered the presentation with anecdotes of survivors and descendants of the founders of the Near East Foundation, healthcare and orphanage staff and overseers. His talk was accompanied by a superb visual presentation.

Mr. Minassian, who traveled from Los Angeles to attend the grand event, remarked afterward, “I was delighted with the success of our initial joint venture with AAHPO. It is a truly outstanding organization and I look forward to additional events with AAHPO in the future, including in cities other than New York. The enthusiastic turnout for this event should also provide momentum to the Armenian Bar Association to grow its base of members in the Greater New York Metropolitan Area.”

Special thanks in organizing this event go to Denise Darmanian, Gary Moomjian, Lori Asquith and Diana Demirdjian of New York and Jacklin Boyadjian and Lisa Boyadjian of Los Angeles. ♦

AUA Law Hosts Armenian Open Legal Tumblog 1st Anniversary Forum

On June 4, 2011, the AUA Law Department co-hosted a legal forum to help introduce young lawyers and law students to the Armenian Open Legal Tumblog. For over a year now the Tumblog has served as an online forum for young legal professionals to engage in civic discourse on all legal issues related to Armenia. Papers published on this online forum deal with issues as far-ranging as the case law of the European Court of Human Rights to legal problem-solving methodology, uniform citation and the use of precedent in Armenia. The forum at AUA provided an opportunity for face-to-face discussions on these and other issues, including a debate on certain provisions of the RA Law on Citizenship. Participants left the forum energized and eager to contribute to the further development of the Armenian Open Legal Tumblog and to the development of law in Armenia. ♦
Alice Yardum-Hunter has been elected Chair of the Immigration Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. Her term will run from July 2011 to July 2012. The L.A. County Bar provides continuing legal education to approximately 500 lawyers in the Los Angeles area, provides outreach to the immigrant community, and informs the public about immigration law. Alice can be reached at alice@yardum-hunter.com

Annette Ohanganian has accepted a judicial position with California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board, as an Administrative Law Judge. She hears and rules on unemployment, disability and tax assessment cases in Pasadena.

On August 7, 2011, at the American Bar Association (ABA) annual meeting in Toronto, Canada, Dick Semerdjian was sworn in as the Chair-Elect of the American Bar Association (ABA) Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Section (TIPS). Dick, who specializes in civil litigation and trial practice, has begun his one-year term as the Chair-Elect and will be sworn in as the Chair at the close of the ABA Annual Meeting in August 2012, in Chicago, Illinois. Dick will be the first Chair ever in the 80 year history of the ABA to practice in San Diego.

On June 23, 2011, Armenian Bar member Lori Sinanyan welcomed two new additions to the family -- twin boys Aram and Areg Taron Sinanyan. Although born a little early, they have grown tremendously and are healthy and happy babies. The family (especially Anahit now age 5 1/2 and Mher age 3) is enjoying them tremendously. Here are some pictures which hopefully you too will enjoy.

Armenian Bar Former Board Member, Federal Prosecutor Claire Kedeshian Receives 2011 Henry L. Stimson Medal

Claire S. Kedeshian, a federal prosecutor in New York, received the prestigious 2011 Henry L. Stimson Medal from the City Bar Association on behalf of the United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York, Civil Division. The medal is awarded annually to outstanding Assistant U.S. Attorneys from both the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York, one from the Civil Division, one from the Criminal Division, who exemplify the characteristics of integrity, fair play and superior commitment to the public good. The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the EDNY is one of the largest and most active offices in the country and represents the government in federal cases throughout New York City and Long Island.

Claire is a two-time recipient of the Attorney General Director’s Award for her work on civil racketeering and international narcotics forfeiture cases. She has also been honored with the Department of Justice’s John Marshall Award for outstanding achievement in asset forfeiture.

A graduate of Barnard College, Columbia University and Brooklyn Law School, Claire has served as an elected member of the board of directors for the Armenian Bar Association and numerous other non-profit organizations. She has been a guest lecturer to law enforcement communities and at educational institutions throughout the United States, including West Point Academy, as well as internationally in Armenia, South America, and Mexico.
Pasadena, CA – On July 28, 2011, the Armenian Bar Association held its inaugural “20 Rising Stars under 40” awards ceremony at the Pandora on Green restaurant in Old Town Pasadena.

The Rising Stars award recognizes 20 Armenian legal professionals under the age of 40 who have distinguished themselves in their professions and who have made a meaningful impact on their respective communities. This year’s honorees span the globe, coming from Toronto, Boston, Hong Kong and Los Angeles, among other locations.

Master of Ceremonies Garo Hovannisian introduced each honoree to enthusiastic applause. He noted that “each of the award recipients has a remarkable story. Their accomplishments in their professions and their commitment to community and Armenian interests set them apart.” Hovannisian added that “we’re excited not only for their accomplishments thus far, but for the prospect of what lies ahead for each of them, both professionally and in terms of their contributions to the advancement of the Armenian communities worldwide.”

Armenian Bar Chairman, Edvin Minassian, followed Hovannisian’s introductory remarks. He noted that “Today’s Rising Stars award recipients represent the best in the Armenian legal community. When we honor them we likewise honor the profession we have chosen, one that ultimately stands as a bulwark against arbitrary government and assures that the rights of the individual shall remain at the forefront. By the same token, today’s honorees are not only individuals to whom we in the Armenian community may point with pride, they are also, and ultimately more importantly, individuals who have already made their professional mark in the larger society as well.”

The Bar Association’s Vice Chairman, Garo Ghazarian, also encouraged the recipients to stay the course and continue to excel, both professionally and with regard to their commitment to the community.
AGBU Young Professionals Partner with Armenian Bar Association for Event Geared Toward Young Adults Considering a Career in the Law

Pasadena, CA – On May 19, 2011, more than 75 young professionals, including college and high school students, gathered at the AGBU Pasadena Center’s Boyajian Hall for a panel discussion featuring distinguished members of the Armenian Bar Association (Armenian Bar). The panelists discussed how they entered their practice areas, their experiences in private and government practice, as well as ethical aspects of the legal profession.

The panel was moderated by federal prosecutor of violent and organized crime, John Lulejian. Mr. Lulejian is an Assistant U.S. Attorney and member of the Board of Governors of the ABA. He ably presented the panelists and brought each of their areas of expertise and past experience to light. The panelists included Edvin Minassian, who is also Chairman of the ABA. He was joined by renowned criminal defense attorney, Garo Ghazarian, who is Vice-Chair of the ABA and Dean of the People’s College of Law. Attorneys Sara Bedirian, Treasurer of the ABA, Hovanes Margarian, Secretary of the ABA, Deputy Public Defender Victoria Ourfalian, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Tamar Kouyoumdjian, also offered their advice about the profession of law as well as their personal experiences in utilizing their juris doctorate degrees.

Event organizer, Theodore Khachaturian, Esq., of Callanan, Rogers & Dzida, LLP says, “We are proud to partner with the Armenian Bar in accomplishing the AGBU Young Professionals’ goal of familiarizing yet another generation of young Armenians to the achievements of professionals in our community. I was pleased to see so many young adults come out who were eager to hear about the different career paths in the law.” In fact, this is one of many partnerships that the AGBU YPLA has taken advantage of in furthering the mission of the group. Khachaturian adds, “Our distinguished panel emphasized that regardless of the path you choose, success is only achieved through honesty, integrity, and a sense of social justice. Overall, it was a lively and inspiring presentation.”

Armenian Bar Chairman, Edvin Minassian remarked, “It was our pleasure to partner with AGBU-YPLA. They are a great group of energetic and vibrant professionals in our community. We were very impressed with the caliber of the attendees and the enthusiasm they showed for a potential career in law. Just as the diversity of the specialties of our panelists was important to make this an effective program, the active engagement of the audience was equally important. We look forward to future programs with AGBU-YPLA.”

YPLA is the Los Angeles Chapter of the AGBU Young Professionals—a growing network of individuals, between the ages of 22 and 40, who individually and collectively mirror the AGBU’s mission to preserve and promote Armenian identity and

See AGBU pg. 18
Betty Jamgotchian has been selected for the inaugural edition of the Martindale-Hubbell® Bar Register of Preeminent Women Lawyers™ - exclusively created for women attorneys who have received the highest possible rating in both legal ability and ethical standards from their peers. Less than 5% of women lawyers have been recognized with an AV Preeminent Rating. Below are her inspirational thoughts on the subject.

**WHAT AN AV RATED LAWYER LOVES TO DO OTHER THAN WORKING**

My Top 10 (based on an interview of a Top Chef—which I am not even dreaming of becoming)

**Bicycle:** I would love to ride a bicycle everyday, but I'm afraid to share the road, so you'll find me only on a country road with no cars. My favorite place to bike ride was Lucca, Italy on the roof top of the city walls. I might venture out on the Venice Beach bike path, but look out for a change of direction. “Turning, turning” is a warning I use for other riders to let them know I’m making a daring move or change in direction—(I wouldn’t try that in the courtroom!) Once every few years is all I get in. The rest of the time, I walk. There’s nothing like solid ground under my feet.

**Movies/Theatre:** I love going to the movies. Movies with panoramic scenery, comic situations and artistic versions of stories of “redeeming social value” mixed with European dialogue, French or Italian are the best. There is nothing wrong with a good Bond movie or even a Pink Panther. I prefer to leave the violent, numbing movies to others. A Noise Within Theatre is my place of choice for classic, well done, live theatre. I would go at least once a week.

**Novels:** I like to read about people and what they have accomplished in their lives. My favorites are the old classics I used to read in English Literature class at USC. Of course I have read a lot of inspirational works by Dr. Joseph Murphy, Dr. Alan Watts, Dr. Maxwell Maltz. My favorite is “Simple Abundance,” a book my children gave to me. I read it over and over again. I’ll also read almost any magazine you put in front of me. I am a subscriber of many.

**Music:** Classical is the reliable alternative to Spanish language pop songs. I hate commercials and too much talking in between, but I have never used a preloaded music device. CD's in the car are fun. Sometimes the best listening is on KPFK radio after midnight where conspiracy theories are mixed with food and health issues and Eastern philosophy.

**Childhood job:** My parents owned a pre-school and kindergarten and every day after high school and college, I went there to work. It kept me out of trouble, afforded me pocket money to do as I please and developed in me a respect for 2 year olds—they were sweet, innocent (not terrible at all) and very dependent on our care and love. They showed their appreciation. It’s really the best age!

**Food:** I love dark, dark chocolate. Plain is fine. The ones with roasted almonds taste terrific. The ones at Lara’s Gifts are wrapped in shiny, pastel foils which are good to pop a few at a time.

**Flowers:** I love my garden, but never spend any time grooming it.

*See Betty Jamgotchian pg. 19*
in Armenia. Panelists Linda Yepoyan, Executive Director of Birthright Armenia, will enlighten the audience about the organization and Mandy Ani Messer, a 2009 participant in the program will share her actual experience in Armenia.

The second panel is “The Use of Economic Experts in Litigation”. Panelists Mick Kahayian, Director of Stout Risius will present the expert perspective and attorney Brian Akkashian, Partner, Paesano Akkashian, PC, will offer the litigator perspective on the topic. The final panel will discuss Corporate Compliance and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Panelists the Honorable Richard Hartunian, U.S. Attorney, Albany, New York, Joe Papelian, Deputy General Counsel, Delphi Corporation, will missed Ford Rouge Factory Tour, where visitors see F-150 Trucks being assembled in a state-of-the-art (but historic) plant, classic cars and so much more. Downtown Detroit also offers three casinos, fine restaurants and cultural attractions, should you wish to extend your visit.

Registration is now open – don’t miss out on the 2011 Mid-Year in Motown! For more information go to http://www.armenianbar.org/events/details/135 ♦
Civil Society Organizations Fight Corruption in Armenia

In 2007, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Mobilizing Action Against Corruption (MAAC) Activity in Armenia, aimed at reducing corruption in the country. As part of this initiative, Advocacy and Assistance Centers (AACs) were established in the capital city of Yerevan, as well as in each of the country’s marzes (provinces). Operated by three Armenian non-government organizations (NGOs), the network of 11 AACs serves three primary functions: 1) provide free legal assistance and support to victims of corruption on a walk-in or call-in basis; 2) advocate for the adoption of reforms addressing root causes of corruption; and 3) conduct public education and awareness activities. To this end, full centers were opened in Yerevan, Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori and Shirak, Syunik, Tavush and Vayots Dzor, and two smaller reception centers in Aparan and Talin.

Since the project’s inception, over 13,000 complaints have been addressed and more than 1,750 corruption cases tackled in various sectors, including healthcare, property rights, labor, traffic and public services. The complaints range in scope from a simple issue regarding weak enforcement of anti-smoking laws, inadequate traffic signs, and lack of civil registration and notary offices, to more grave problems such as extortion from police officers, parents bribing school administrators to allow their children to enroll in a specific school, lack of fiscal transparency in government agencies, lack of information for business owners regarding specific rights and reforms, and a corrupt judicial system, among others. Yet, independent of the complexity of each complaint, these concerns shed light on the social and institutional cleavages affecting the country.

As a result of the ongoing anti-corruption awareness campaign, as well as from the collaboration of civil society organizations in Armenia, the complaints are being addressed effectively. For example, business owners who have been victims of extortion are being informed of the latest tax law changes to prevent recurring abuses from tax inspectors, while simultaneously increasing tax collection in the community. Furthermore, property rights information is being publicly posted on bulletin boards in cities and villages, making citizens more aware of their rights and helping to lessen acts of corruption. Citizens are also being proactively informed of the process under which labor records are reviewed and how pension payments are calculated. These are just a few examples revealing the positive effects the AACs are having in advocating policy reforms in Armenia.

During the last three years, the AACs have proven to be successful mechanisms to address citizen and community concerns, while combating the country’s corruption. Men and women, young and old, are reaching out to the AACs. In fact, from 2009 to 2010 there was a 40% increase in citizen awareness in the existence of the AACs and the services they provide. The work of the Centers is not only changing the local political and social dynamics, but is also creating the necessary measures of accountability and transparency required for a new and democratic society to thrive. Through this initiative, individuals are not only becoming more aware of their rights, but are also advancing a culture intolerant of corrupt behavior.

While the USAID MAAC Activity comes to a close this fall, it is envisioned the AAC network will continue to operate, under direct USAID funding, for at least one more year. Nonetheless, starting now, the AACs will be looking for additional funding to keep their doors open beyond the summer of 2012. While the MAAC Activity has revealed positive results, combating deep-rooted corruption is a long-term process and one the people of Armenia hope Armenians abroad will be willing to invest in. To learn more about how you or your organization can help the AACs, please go to www.maac.am or contact Irina Rukhkyan at +37494 479724 or via email at irukhkyan@casals.com
Los Angeles, CA - The Armenian Bar Association Annual Scholarship Program is now into its 6th year. It was developed as a program to support and nurture meritorious students of Armenian descent in their continued pursuit of academic excellence at a recognized law school. For the past five years, this bridge linking the Association to promising future lawyers has been an important pathway in allowing the worthy scholarship recipients to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. The 2010 scholarship recipients have continued the vaunted tradition and excellence of the previous recipients of this prestigious award and each individual has accomplished a great deal in the past year:

Hayk Kupelyants has been enrolled in the University College of London (UCL) since the fall of 2010. He has also been working at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL). BIICL is one of Europe’s leading legal research institutes and Mr. Kupelyants is a Research Fellow in International Private Law there. In addition to this position, Mr. Kupelyants was also invited to become a teaching assistant at the Law School of Queen Mary, University of London which is considered to be one of London’s top law universities.

Narini Badalian, another recipient of the 2010 scholarship, will be attending the Northeastern University School of Law in Boston, Massachusetts in the fall of this year. Northeastern University is one of the most respected schools of law in the United States with a venerable history that dates back to the 1800s. It is considered to be one of the best public interest law schools in the country. The final recipient, Heghine Gyulnazaryan, is enrolled in Queen Mary University of London.

What unites the awardees is their strong commitment to the Armenian community and their outstanding academic achievements. ArmenBar Chairman Edvin Minassian, in recognition of this positive union of scholarship and service, lauded the students’ “renewed dedication to justice- for our country, our homeland and our history.”
Armenian Bar Sends An Open Letter To The President Of Armenia Calling For Investigation Of Abuse In The Military And Implementation Of Reforms Within The Military And Justice Systems

Justice Minister of Armenia Hrayr Tovmasyan spoke in solidarity to protesting parents and reportedly said “This is also my sorrow, my pain”, then adding “two issues are at stake here: security and justice.” These were the key points the Armenian Bar raised in its open letter to the President of Armenia. Mr. Tovmasyan was the guest of honor of the ArmenBar during our San Francisco Annual Meeting earlier this year. Sara Anjargolian, acting as the representative for the Armenian Bar Association, read and distributed the open letter during the rally to attendees including members of the media in order to raise awareness.

Copy of Letter on next page.

Protest demonstration in Yerevan by parents of soldiers murdered during their military service and the NGO “An Army Without Murders”

Photographs are credited to Nazik Armenakyan.
August 31, 2011

The Honorable Serzh Sargsyan
President of the Republic of Armenia

As members of the Armenian Bar Association, which is comprised worldwide of thousands of lawyers, jurists, prosecutors and members of academia, we must express our deep concern regarding the latest non-combat death of a member of the Armenian Military Forces, Aghasi Abrahamian, an 18-year-old army conscript. The reports of the rising number of suspicious deaths of military personnel occurring in non-combat conditions is alarming, as are the reported acts of cruel, abusive and harmful acts committed against members of the military by their own.

We are confident that you are committed to fairness, justice and equity for all soldiers, regardless of rank and background. As a military commander of the armed forces who defended the fatherland and registered historic victories in the struggle for Artsakh’s freedom, you know better than others how important it is to have unit cohesion, the spirit of teamwork and mutual respect among senior and subordinate personnel. In such a military structure, there cannot be any tolerance towards human rights abuses. While we all understand that military discipline is crucial, it must be founded on respect for properly-constituted and lawful military authority. That can be best achieved when everyone is treated with dignity and respect promoting an environment of physical and psychological fitness.

We are encouraged by your remarks at the recently-held First Army Conference of Young Officers on July 9, 2011, when you asked the young officer corps to rid Armenian society of certain rude and boorish tendencies in the military. We also welcome the recent actions of your Defense Minister, Seyran Ohanian, who is leading the investigation into the death of Mr. Abrahamian and has already announced the arrests of several suspects. We request that you take personal charge and hold accountable all who abuse official authority and ensure a fair and transparent enforcement of the law against the perpetrators.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, in Section 5 states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment." We ask that, consistent with the spirit of that statement and as the President of Armenia, you order an investigation into the allegations and look into systemicwide abuses with a view to determine how to improve the system and prevent further incidents or abuse. If the organizational climate is found to be geared towards allowing victims to be subject to cruel and inhumane treatment, you must ask your government to implement proper legal proceedings and enactment of laws and regulations to prohibit it.

We recommend that a mechanism and procedure be established allowing individuals and groups to express their complaints within the military without fear of reprisals. We call on you to ensure that the laws and standards be respected, implemented and enforced by the military and the justice system.

As an independent organization dedicated to the rule of law and the protection of human rights, we are at your service.

Respectfully,

Edvin E. Minassian
Chairman, Armenian Bar Association
Glendale, CA. - The Armenian Bar Association (ArmenBar), in conjunction with the Armenian National Committee of Glendale (ANCG), conducted their fourth pro bono legal clinic on immigration-related matters. The venue was the Glendale Youth Center, on August 17, 2011. More than eighty community members were able to consult with volunteer attorneys regarding the spectrum of issues relating to immigration.

“One of the critical public service roles for the Armenian Bar Association is to provide legal counsel and education to the at-large Armenian community. This legal clinic gave us a unique opportunity to provide immigration-related legal information to individuals on a pro bono basis. The Association’s efforts were strengthened through the ANCG’s program participation, a major factor in our success at achieving a wider audience,” stated ArmenBar Chairman Edvin Minassian. ArmenBar Executive Director, Jacklin Boyadjian underscored the benefits of cooperative synergy. “We are thrilled to continue our partnership with the Armenian National Committee of Glendale, to provide the much needed services and guidance to the Armenian community.”

The volunteer ArmenBar attorneys included Anahid Chalikian, Ashley Gambourian, Peter Hosharian, Betty Jamgotchian, Arek Nizamian, Hagop Tashjian, and AliceYardum-Hunter—several of whom had past clinic experience. In addition, attorneys Armen Hovannisian, Saro Kerkonian, and Sarkis Ourfalian provided expertise in the community participant screening process. Armenian Bar Chairman, Edvin Minassian and Executive Director, Jacklin Boyadjian along with ANCG’s Executive Director, Elen Asatryan appeared on local Armenian television programs to promote the event.

A substantial majority of the community participants had benefited from earlier ArmenBar pro bono clinics. (Past clinics were devoted to issues of a civil and criminal nature that were affecting community members. However, the 2011 edition concentrated on immigration issues.) Our clinic gave assistance to a broader segment of the Glendale community, including Hispanics with Immigration related questions.

Patience and goodwill were the order of the day. Some participants waited over two hours to meet with a volunteer attorney. ANCG’s Executive Director, Elen Asatryan’s words expressed the Organization’s appreciation. “To the volunteer attorneys—thank you, thank you, thank you. We literally can’t host these clinics without you. And to all the interns and volunteers—who had the sometimes thankless job of keeping order during a tiresome waiting period—My hat’s off to all of you for handling it so well.”

ArmenBar extends a special thanks to Horizon and ARTN-TV; without whose publicity efforts we would not have achieved so much. And, of course, a special thanks is extended to Attorney Vicken I. Simonian who tirelessly rallied the support of the volunteer attorneys assuring that supply met demand.

The mechanics of ArmenBar’s pro bono clinics are straight forward. After screening, each participant meets with and discusses his issue with an attorney having special expertise in that area of the law. Volunteer attorneys restrict themselves to information and assistance. ♦
nia’s newly/appointed Minister of Justice, Hrayr Tovmasyan, led the discussion with an eloquent and candid survey of the problems plaguing the post-Soviet country’s legal system. “The elimination of corruption, the independence of the judiciary, the protection of human rights, the supremacy of law—these are issues that we must face together, if Armenia is ever to become the land of our dreams,” Tovmasyan said.

The minister’s general comments were complemented by the detailed accounting presented by Yerevan State University professor Ruben Melikyan, who addressed specific problems—such as the lack of a system of precedent in Armenia—and offered specific solutions toward reforming the judicial culture in Armenia. His proposal, that diasporan lawyers and judges be invited to take on official, legally binding roles in the administration of law in the republic, was met with particular enthusiasm. Also on the panel, and contributing the diaspora’s perspective, were Antranig Kasbarian, director of the Tufenkian Foundation, and Garin K. Hovannisian, author of Family of Shadows.

The second panel, “The Armenian Genocide’s Legal Significance in Recovery Litigation,” was powered by a distinguished panel of experts on international law, most notably David Balabanian who, in perfect Socratic method, peppered the panelists with thought-provoking questions. Rounding out the panel were Harut Sassounian, public commentator and political scientist specializing in international law; Steven Dadaian, lawyer, advocate, and leading draftsman of legislation that governs Genocide litigation in the United States; Professor Lee Crawford-Boyd, chief architect of Genocide litigation ongoing in the California courts; and Federico Hairabedian, Argentine-Armenian lawyer who recently won a historic lawsuit against Turkey in Argentine Federal Court, which issued a verdict recognizing the Armenian Genocide and the murder of his family by Ottoman Turkey.

“We set a landmark in which we took the Genocide, which is an international crime, into a federal court, but we did this without considering the next step,” Hairabedian said. Indeed, this was the panel’s original goal and ultimate success: to serve as the foundational discussion about that “next step”—how to organize the disparate efforts of Armenians across the world into a clear and comprehensive international campaign to seek justice for the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

Tucked between the extensive Saturday deliberations was the gala luncheon, which was billed as the celebratory event of the weekend convention, but which transformed, through successive heavyweight speeches, into a long, saturated afternoon.

After an elegant and heartrending introduction by founding member Vicken Simonian, Garo Ghazarian took the podium to deliver the keynote lecture. Drawing from his friendship with Simonian, who was his athletic adversary and best friend on the racetracks of Southern California, Ghazarian inspired the crowd with his larger-than-life story of failure and redemption in America. He concluded with a fascinating chronicle of his recent mission to Yerevan, where he monitored the progress of civil rights and visited Raffi K. Hovannisian, the first foreign minister of Arme-
nia and present-day leader of the Heritage Party, who had declared a freedom fast at Liberty Square.

Raffi Hovannisian himself, who had made a surprise appearance in San Francisco, followed Ghazarian to address the members of the Armenian Bar Association, the organization he founded in 1989. “Our nation is not lost,” he said. “We still have a cause to deliver on—to make Armenia the land of liberty, sovereignty, and the national interest that we all expect it to become.” Hovannisian also expressed his appreciation to David Balabanian, Walter Karabian, and all those who nourished the Armenian Bar from its humble beginnings, and fueled its evolution into a pioneering force of justice in the United States.

The gala luncheon was closed by Raffi’s brother, Armen K. Hovannisian, who had organized and presided over the weekend’s many events and festivities, and who now stood before the crowd to receive the Armenian Bar Public Service Award for decades of dedication to law and community. In a powerful and deeply moving acceptance speech, which incited the tears and laughter of a hundred lawyers and judges, Hovannisian spoke about his grandmother Siroon Hovannisian and grandfather Hovakim Kotcholosian, who represent for him the different faces of the Armenian Genocide, as they do the common formula of his service to his community and country. “I’m not one of those people who can leave a mark,” he said. “I’m somebody who carries the marks of others.”

The convention, which was the 22nd annual convention of the Armenian Bar Association, was interspersed with social events, long walks through the golden city, and a concluding dinner in Little Italy, where the lawyers and judges offered toasts and sang Armenian songs. In attendance throughout the weekend were Marvin Baxter, Associate Justice of the California Supreme; Armand Arabian, Retired Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court; Chuck Poochigian, Justice of the California Court of Appeal; Zaven V. Sinanian, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge; Amy Hoogasian, United States Immigration Law Judge; Garo Mardirossian, Immediate Past President of Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles; Frederick K. Ohlrich, Clerk of the Court, California Supreme Court; Debbie Poochigian, Fresno County Supervisor; Metropolitan News Publisher and Editor-In-Chief Roger M. Grace and President Jo-Ann Grace; and many distinguished others.

The members of the Armenian Bar Association left San Francisco on Sunday with a newly elected 17-member board, including the most recent class of 2011, which consists of Michael Amerian, Ara Babaian, Garo Ghazarian, Armen K. Hovannisian, Laura Karabulut, Edvin Minassian, and Gary Moomjian. The executive officers for the 2011-2012 term were also elected: Edvin Minassian, chairperson; Garo Ghazarian, vice chairperson; Harry Dikranian, vice chairperson; Sara Bedirian, treasurer; and Hovanes Margarian, secretary. Sonya Nersessian will continue in her role as chairperson ex-officio.
to the Armenian community.

The 2011 Rising Stars award recipients are Ani E. Ajemian (Sherin & Lodgen, Boston, MA), Armen Akaragian (Mardirossian & Associates, Los Angeles, CA), Michael R. Amerian (Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney, Los Angeles, CA), Henri Arslanian (UBS Investment Bank, Hong Kong), Ara A. Babaian (Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP, Beverly Hills, CA), Nareg Gourjian (Gourjian Law Group, Glendale, CA), Annie P. Marandjian-Hovanessian (Vulcan Materials Company Inc, Los Angeles, CA), Ara Jabagchourian (Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy LLP, Burlingame, CA), Raffi Kassabian (Reed Smith, LLP, Los Angeles, CA), Lara Kayayan (Home Savings of America, Los Angeles, CA), Karnig Kerkonian (The Kerkonian Law Firm, LLP, Evanston, IL), Alex Khachaturian (White & Case LLP, Washington, DC), Hovanes Margarian (The Law Office of Hovanes Margarian, Sherman Oaks, CA), Armen S. Martin (Liner Grode et al., Los Angeles, CA), Mampre Pomakian (LAUSD, Office of General Counsel, Los Angeles, CA), Suzanne J. Prysak (Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago, IL), Chris K. Safarian (Safarian & Choi, Los Angeles, CA), Nicole J. Simonian (Bryan Cave LLP, Santa Monica, CA), and Fernand Vartanian (ACE INA Insurance, Toronto, ONT, Canada).

Over 250 guests attended the gala awards ceremony. Among the many prominent attendees were Zaven V. Sinanian (Judge, Los Angeles Superior
Rising Stars
continued from pg. 16

Court), Chahe-Philippe Arslanian (Judge, Quebec Administrative Tribunal, Montreal, QUE, Canada), Antranig Kasbarian (Chairman, ARF Central Committee, Eastern U.S., and Executive Director, Tufenkian Foundation), Garo Mardirossian (immediate past president of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles), and Steven Dadaian, Esq., (Senior policy advisor, Armenian National Committee). On a more personal note, the ArmenBar is particularly gratified that so many family members chose to accompany honorees, many traveling considerable distances to participate in the ceremony. Their presence and obvious exuberance added a measure of sparkle to what was an altogether enjoyable evening.

ArmenBar’s Honorary “Oscar” Awards to the Rising Stars

Vicken I. Simonian with Family and Friends

Master of Ceremonies Garo K. Hovannisian

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heritage by adding dimensions to the lives of young professional Armenians through educational, cultural, social and humanitarian programs. YPLA puts on monthly activities including social-networking and professional career-building events, signature weekend getaways, hiking and camping trips, international video-conferences, service-oriented activities targeted toward Armenian youth, benefit events, as well as casual get-togethers, where up to 250 young Armenians can come together to exchange ideas and get to know each other better. YPLA is always looking for individuals who would like to volunteer their time either as a board member or on an event-by-event basis. For more information on how to get involved with YPLA, please contact: agbu.ypla@gmail.com

The Armenian Bar was founded in 1989 by a vibrant group of prominent judges, lawyers and law professors from across the nation. The organization’s membership of judges, lawyers, law professors and students is a dynamic group of professionals bound together by the ties of the past and the promise of the future. Their common heritage and history provide the backdrop to and motivation for their commitment to public service. The Armenian Bar Association is forward looking, offering pro bono services to help teach the members of the Armenian community not only about their legal rights, but more importantly about their civic responsibilities. ArmenBar has been instrumental in providing assistance to the Republic of Armenia in its establishment of democracy and the rule of law. For information on how you can become a member, please visit the Armenian Bar Association’s website at www.armenianbar.org.

Established in 1906, AGBU (www.agbu.org) is the world’s largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians around the world.
Betty Jamgotchian  
Continued from pg. 7

Nevertheless, it grows on its own and spring time is bursting with color, and my favorite lavender and English roses are profuse after the camellias have stopped blooming. My favorite is the pomegranate tree that my father planted for me. The flowers are like crepe paper and it reminds me of his love.

Cooking pots: I have my favorite Farberware®, just don't mix it up with your set! The next best thing is the BBQ grill. But who can compare with my Mom's home cooking. She makes the best Armenian food!

Monte Carlo: What a dreamy place! The aerial photos of the city were always breathtaking and the Formula One Monaco Grand Prix was enticing to watch. Visiting Monte Carlo in person was a lifetime dream. Now, that was a great accomplishment! The Trevi Fountain is another place I never tire to see. But when I long for the beach, find me in Laguna Beach.

Jewelry: It's never enough. I love the vintage ones-- they seem to go well with present day attire. I will ask my husband for a 3 carat solitaire, like Tiffany's, just because it is our 30th anniversary this year and I feel that 1 carat per decade is reasonable. But of course, I won't expect it because, to afford it, it would drive him and me to working even harder than ever. A Hawaii vacation will do just fine, thank you! ♦

Message from the Chairman  
continued from pg. 1

legal professionals. You can find more information about these and other of our events, which I will only outline here, in further detail by visiting our website www.armenianbar.org.

Re-energized and re-invigorated after the memorable California convention, we got down to the business of our collective work. On May 19, 2011, the ArmenBar partnered with AGBU-YP in bringing together nearly 100 young professionals to an event geared towards those who are considering a career in law. A panel discussion featured members of the ArmenBar who have a distinguished track record and experience in a wide variety of legal specialties.

It was my pleasure to travel to New York City in order to attend a unique event that we co-hosted with the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) on June 3, 2011, at the Harvard Club. It was a joint cocktail reception, dinner and educational program, bringing together for the first time the communities of legal and medical professionals. Attended by well over 100 people, the Armenian lawyers and doctors resolved to continue their cooperation and to engage in joint projects where law and medicine intersect, whether that crossroads lies in North America or in the Republic of Armenia. We plan on organizing future events in other cities as well as again in New York.

On July 28, 2011, in Pasadena, California, we held our first 20 Rising Stars under 40 Awards Banquet. There were over 250 guests in attendance and it was amazing to witness the presentations and individual success stories, as well as to draw inspiration and pride from the accomplishments of our Rising Stars who had come from all over the globe, including Boston, Chicago, Toronto, Hong Kong as well as Northern and Southern California. Their families, law firms and friends who were in attendance showed great joy and appreciation for these lawyers who have already made an impact on the profession and their communities at a relatively young age. I must thank and commend our selection committee for the superb and objective work they did in making hard and honest choices among the many worthy nominees. I understand that the nominations were all outstanding. In coming years, we look forward to your providing us with nominations because peer recognition is one of the greatest honors any professional can receive. Our organization will also continue to grow and benefit from the active participation of the honorees as they, too, continue to make positive marks in their respective fields of practice.

On August 17, 2011, in partnership with Armenian National Committee- Glendale, the ArmenBar hosted a free immigration clinic. Thanks to the top-notch immigration specialists from within our ranks, we were able to successfully serve over 100 Armenian community members. The event garnered extensive media coverage and,
as a testament to its timeliness and favorable impact, community members began standing in line hours before the start time. In turn, our volunteer attorneys stayed well beyond closing time to ensure that everyone who had shown up would receive the benefit of the legal guidance for which they had come.

In an era when, due to the effects of the global economic crisis, there is increased financial pressure on public interest law, the pro bono efforts of the Armenian Bar Association are in even greater need. Access to justice is very important and I am sure that our members will join me in pledging that we will redouble our commitment and do our best to serve the needy.

Along those lines, I must also mention that we are well aware of the adverse effects of the financial crisis on the legal profession. Graduates of law schools, as well as associates who counted on growth and opportunity with large law firms, face very tough job-market conditions. There are ongoing permanent changes to the way the profession has operated and we will do our best to guide, counsel and educate younger members as best we can.

Education and training are not only important for young lawyers but for all of us. It is a process that begins in law school and continues throughout our professional life. Our continuing legal education initiatives have gained momentum and, this fall, we will have at least two more programs, one featuring nationwide experts in bankruptcy law and related matters and the other dealing with intellectual property law. In the current legal era as boutique firms replace large firms in greater numbers, quality and competitiveness can be best maintained as we interact with each other and those who are experts in different fields of law.

We have also teamed up with the Tufenkian Foundation and AIWA (Armenian International Women’s Association), as well as many other organizations, to host an event to support women’s shelters in Armenia. The event will take place on September 15, 2011, and details are available on our website. The ArmenBar’s role naturally involves legal aspects of the battle against domestic violence. From providing guidance and assistance to the victims themselves, to facilitating the promulgation of protective laws, such as criminal restraining orders, and extending to the training of legal professionals, prosecutors, law enforcement and social workers, there is a lot that ArmenBar and our can contribute to this major endeavor. The enactment of domestic violence-related laws, which still do not exist in Armenia’s statutes, or the signing of treaties and the like, is not enough to correct this tragic problem. The perception of domestic violence among, especially, the authorities must be changed and must not be dismissed as a mere inconvenience or as a cultural by-product. We must ensure the enactment of appropriate laws to protect victims of domestic violence; but we must also direct our effort to ensure the enforcement of those laws. We engage in partnerships with organizations that have a broader range of membership and purpose to achieve these types of goals, while maintaining our independence and limiting our role to the adherence to the rule of law.

Our organization has achieved and maintained its measurable relevance and we will continue our efforts with even greater vigor. We support the efforts of our members who seek judicial office and find ourselves in a position to advocate for an increased number of Armenians to serve on the bench. Please contact us if you have recommendations and requests in that regard.

I wish all of you a great and productive fall season.

Sincerely,

Edvin Minassian
Chairman
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The Armenian Bar Association is an I.R.C. Sec. 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
The Armenian Bar Association is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, formed in 1989 to enable attorneys of Armenian heritage to better serve the law, the legal profession, and the Armenian community.

The Association provides pro bono services and legal education in Armenian communities across the country and sponsors programs to promote democracy and the rule of law in the Republic of Armenia.

Coming together socially and professionally, members from around the world have the opportunity to learn from one another as they join their different backgrounds and experiences in Association activities.

The Association is a democratic organization. It is supported and directed by its members, who approve its bylaws, elect its Board of Governors, nominate prominent jurists as honorary members, and set the Association’s annual goals and policies.

The Armenian Bar Association is committed to serving the profession of law, addressing the legal concerns of the Armenian community and fostering respect for human and civil rights.

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- Pro Bono Program
- Rule of Law Projects in the Republic of Armenia
- Armenian Rights Watch
- Annual National Meeting
- Newsletter
- Membership Directory
- Amicus Curiae Submission on Issues of Interest
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