



HYE HOKIN Հայ Հոգևոր

The Newsletter of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America

FALL 2003

ARCHBISHOP'S TOURNAMENT 2003 NEW YORK CITY

NEW YORK—Another weekend of world-class athletic competition is complete. A new champion has been named. After a day of exciting matchups, the 2003 Sports Weekend champion Holy Martyrs team (Bayside, NY) beat out defending Archbishop's Tournament champion St. Vartan Cathedral (New York, NY) by one point, taking home the first place trophy. The 2003 Archbishop's



The 2003 Archbishop's Tournament and Sports Weekend Champion Holy Martyrs team.

Tournament, which took place October 10-12, was truly a success. Athletes and spectators alike spent the day at Basketball City in New York City's Chelsea Piers waterfront complex. Other teams that participated included: St. Leon Church (Fair Lawn, NJ), two teams from Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Church (Wynnewood, PA), and St. Sarkis Church (Douglaston, NY). Tournament MVP was Justin Ohnigian from Holy Martyrs, a first-time participant.

This year's Archbishop's Tournament, as always, included celebration and fellowship alongside the games. On Friday, October 10th, ACYOA members from local chapters,

and from out of town, gathered at the Ginger Man in the heart of midtown to socialize and see some familiar faces. The fun continued the next night, as many gathered to "Dance the Night Away" as the music of Onnik Dinkjian filled Kavookjian Hall. "I was very happy with the success of the weekend, and it's my hope that this tournament will continue to grow in the future," stated Central

Council chairman Dn. Diran Jebejian. "With the support of our local ACYOA chapters, we can eventually host weekends with 12-14 teams participating in fellowship and athletic competition." The weekend came to a close on Sunday, October 12, with Divine Liturgy at St. Vartan Cathedral.

Look for the competition to return in May 2004 at Sports Weekend in Dallas, TX, and in October 2004 at the next Archbishop's Tournament in Cambridge, MA! Visit our website, www.acyoa.org, for more details about the tournament games.



Sts. Sahag & Mesrob (l) vs. St. Sarkis



St. Vartan Cathedral vs. St. Leon

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CENTRAL COUNCIL NEWS

Do you know someone who would like to receive a copy of *Hye Hokin*?

E-mail newsletter@acyoa.org. Please provide recipient's name, age, mailing address, and e-mail address.



ACYOA Central Council

President
Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

Chairperson
Dn. Diran Jebejian

Vice Chairperson
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Maria Derderian

Programming Coordinator
Daron Bolat

ACYOA Executive Secretary
Nancy Basmajian

The ACYOA Central Council has been quite busy during the past few months. We met in August in New York, NY, and in October in Fair Lawn, NJ. We were happy to have our Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, and the Diocesan Executive Director, Dr. Sam Mikaelian with us at both meetings. Regional liaisons have been working on planning the fall regional conferences (see adjacent page for info) and we hope you all had a great time at Archbishop's Tournament! Thank you to all athletes and participants who helped make the weekend a success.

New Chapters

We are happy to announce that we have three new chapters officially forming! They are: Holy Trinity ACYOA Seniors from Cheltenham, PA; St. Gregory of Narek ACYOA Seniors from Cleveland, OH; and St. Mesrob ACYOA Seniors from Racine, WI. We welcome our new chapters to the ACYOA family. For more information on how to form a chapter, e-mail ACYOA Executive Secretary, Ms. Nancy Basmajian, at acyoa@armeniandiocese.org.

HyeMail

HyeMail, our e-mail newsletter for college students, is sent out monthly. To subscribe, send your e-mail address (or those of your college friends) to cchye-mail@yahoo.com. You can also view each *HyeMail* at www.acyoa.org.

Leadership Conference Dates Set

Stay tuned for more information regarding the 5th Annual Leadership Conference, taking place March 12-14, 2004 at the Don Bosco Retreat Center in Stony Point, NY. If you would like to attend, be sure to contact your pastor or Parish Council chairperson.

Hye Hokin Online

You can now view *Hye Hokin* online! Past issues have been posted on www.acyoa.org in PDF format. Refer to them for chapter ideas, and look for this issue to be posted soon.

ASP Pictures online

We have also added pictures from the 2003 ASP trip to www.acyoa.org. Thanks to participant Armen Babikyan from St. James Church in Watertown, MA for sharing his pictures with us! Take a look and see what our fellow ACYOA members experienced in our homeland.

Holiday Charities

Is your chapter looking for some activity ideas for the holiday season? Participate in a local charity. It's a wonderful way to provide Christian love and service to those less fortunate. Have a canned food drive in your parish for Thanksgiving, have a toy collection and deliver them to a local children's hospital for Christmas, or organize a blood drive at any time. Let us know what your chapter did, and we'll post it in an upcoming issue of *Hye Hokin*!

For additional ideas:

- www.toysfortots.org
- www.make-a-wish.org
- www.redcross.org

2004 Sports Weekend

Mark your calendars! The Dallas host committee is hard at work, making plans to welcome you all to the heart of Texas for the 2004 General Assembly and National Sports Weekend, taking place May 27-31. For details, visit www.acyoadallas.com.

Thank you to all ACYOA members who volunteered this summer as staff members at St. Vartan Camp, Hye Camp, and St. Nersess Summer Conferences! You serve as wonderful role models to future ACYOA members.



St. Vartan Camp 2003—Session A

FALL REGIONAL CONFERENCES



Members of the clergy in a discussion at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference.

Three of the four ACYOA Regional Conferences are complete, with the Southern Conference scheduled to take place on Saturday, November 22nd in Jacksonville, FL. These conferences were designed to allow ACYOA chapters to come together within their geographical region, and participate in fellowship while discussing their Armenian Christian faith and working together to strengthen their chapters. Program content included a Bible Study, a discussion led by clergy members on how to be a Christian in a non-Christian world, and workshops on how to keep chapters energetic.

Many thanks to our host parishes, Holy Trinity Church in Cheltenham, PA, St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Chicago, IL, and the Church of our Savior in Worcester, MA. Each conference has been a success, with increased participation from ACYOA members, and much support from local clergy. "Each and every one of the young people who attended is a very special 'gift' to our church," said Fr. Yeprem Kelegian, pastor of the St. Mesrob parish in Racine, WI. "They are bright, spiritual, thoughtful, full of love and goodness." Additional thanks go to ACYOA Executive Secretary, Ms. Nancy Basmajian, and Director of Youth Outreach, Yn. Arpi Kouzouian, for all of their hard work in planning each conference.



ACYOA Executive Secretary Ms. Nancy Basmajian and Central Council Vice-Chair Rita Akaraz.

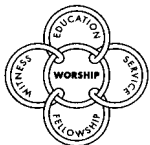
For more information on the Southern Conference, send an e-mail to acyoa@armeniandiocese.org.



A group breakout session at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference.



Fr. Yeprem Kelegian and the group from Wisconsin at the Midwest Regional Conference.



Have a question about youth programming? Interested in youth ministry training?

Contact Yn. Arpi Kouzouian, Coordinator of Youth Outreach

Department of Youth and Education - Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern) - 145 Brattle Street Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: 617-876-2700 Fax: 617-876-2266 dym@armeniandiocese.org

ATTENTION ACYOA ALUMNI

The 60th anniversary of the ACYOA is coming up!

The ACYOA Central Council is creating an Alumni database, but we need your help! Send your info to: newsletter@acyoa.org.

Please include the following info: Name, Address, E-mail address, and the ACYOA chapter of which you were a member.

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CHAPTER NEWS

CAMBRIDGE, MA - Holy Trinity Church

On Assumption Sunday, the ACYOA sponsored a brunch/fundraiser after Liturgy at which they raffled a gift basket with a grape theme. The event was a success and was used as an opportunity to inform the parish about their ACYOA, their activities, and future plans. The seniors of Holy Trinity gather one evening each month for a Bible Study for the youth of their parish in addition to their monthly volleyball practice. A new project the group is embarking on this Fall is a monthly visit to a soup kitchen organized by the Seniors for all parishioners to partake in. Finally, the ACYOA Seniors anxiously await their opportunity to host the Archbishop's Tournament in October of 2004.

CHELTENHAM, PA - Holy Trinity Church

The Holy Trinity chapter is one of our newest. Their new pastor, Rev. Fr. Tateos Abdalian is working hard to revitalize the ACYOA. Their first meeting took place at the beautiful home of Steve and Nancy Hovnanian, long-time supporters of the youth. At that time, they chose Patyl Oflazian and Nicklas Terkanian to coordinate activities for the group. The group is having dinner with their new pastor in November, at which time they hope to set some goals for the upcoming year.

CLEVELAND, OH - St. Gregory of Narek Church

The ACYOA Senior chapter in Cleveland has re-organized with Stacy Patena and Greg Andonian serving as Co-Chairs. No one was able to attend the Midwest Regional Conference because they were busy working at the annual church bazaar that weekend. They've organized a soccer team that has been practicing after church on Sundays and will start playing in November. Most of the chapter's members are students at Kent State, University of Akron, and Cleveland State. Anyone going to school in Ohio is urged to contact them by either calling Greg 330.283.3729 or Stacy at 330.802.5148.

DALLAS, TX - St. Sarkis Church

The ACYOA Seniors of St. Sarkis had a busy summer: activities included sponsoring a luncheon for the parish on Assumption Sunday and hosting Camp Leave '03 for children ages 8-17. They recently participated in the church bazaar called "Armenia Fest" in which their members danced, served as models in the fashion show, organized and manned children's games and face painting, sold raffle tickets and more. Needless to say, Armenia Fest was a huge success! Service-wise, several chapter members are regularly involved in both the Armenian School and the Sunday School. The chapter also donated a much-needed freezer to the parish. This fall they plan to host an informational session for St. Sarkis parishioners to discuss ACYOA plans for Sports Weekend 2004. Check out Dallas' website by visiting www.acyoadallas.com.

DETROIT, MI—St. John Church

The St. John's chapter has been busy this fall. Their activities included: a welcome back members brunch after Liturgy in September, their first official monthly meeting which included a talk on comparative religion by their pastor, Fr. Garabed Kochakian, raspberry and apple picking, helping with the concessions at the annual church bazaar, attending Archbishop's Tournament in New York and the Midwest Regional Conference in Chicago. Upcoming events include a fundraiser concert to benefit a cardiac care center in Armenia, a trip to the University of Michigan to visit with the students of the Armenian Club and bring them to their parish to attend Liturgy, a Detroit Pistons game, and a Christmas Eve tea. Last but not least, plans are underway for the annual St. John's ACYOA November dance, scheduled for November 29th. For more info, visit their website: www.detroitacyoa.org.

FAIR LAWN, NJ - St. Leon Church

Recent St. Nersess Seminary graduate, Deacon Ara Kadehjian, who is working with the youth at St. Leon's tells us that they have two important meetings planned this fall: one with the executive board (to set goals, etc. for the chapter) and the other with the entire chapter, hopefully followed by fellowship. And then, on November 15, there will be a day-long leadership seminar at the church. All those in the area are encouraged to attend.

CHAPTER NEWS

RICHMOND, VA - St. James Church

The Richmond ACYOA chapter is sponsoring a dinner-dance in November featuring a popular local band. They expect a major turnout from parishioners and hope to raise money for their chapter. The church's annual food festival is fast approaching and the ACYOA, as always, will be involved in food preparation, serving meals and clean up at the three-day event. Also, back by popular demand, will be the Valentine dinner in February. It was a huge success this year in spite of poor weather; everybody's counting on the same kind of support this time, too.

TRUMBULL, CT—Holy Ascension Church

Newly-elected Chair Raffi Gulbenk is truly enthused about the ACYOA. Raffi represented CT at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference in Cheltenham, PA, as well as other past events such as General Assembly with Maral Nalbandian. "My focus is to take the ACYOA of the past, and bring it into the future, encompassing every available resource that is suitable to encourage the growth of the chapter here in CT and elsewhere." His sister, Ani, who just returned from three weeks in Armenia, will talk to parishioners about her trip in a few weeks. Other activities in which the ACYOA will be participating are the events celebrating the 25th anniversary of the parish, which includes a visit from the Primate in November when an impromptu Youth Forum will be held. The ACYOA members in Trumbull will end 2003, in tradition, with their Christmas Caroling expedition on December 23rd. For the past 10 years, ACYOA members have gotten together with their pastor, Fr. Untzag Nalbandian, to visit area hospitals, nursing homes and private residences to spread the joy of Christ's birth. This is a special occasion where the ACYOA Seniors and Juniors can share such a joyous experience and bond together in the name of the Church.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—St. Mary Church

The 2003 Chapter 'A' Award winners, after hosting the 2003 General Assembly and National Sports Weekend, had a busy summer which included, among other things, a variety show and a trip to the beach. They commemorated Armenian Independence Day by sponsoring a chess and tavloo tournament. They participated in the Regional Conference in Cheltenham, PA. They had a Bible study, a lecture on the "Political Heritage of the Royal Coinage in Armenian Currency," they helped with the annual church bazaar and had a rug raffle to benefit Armenia. Future plans include a movie night, a panel discussion on Armenian identity, a presentation of Chairperson Sevan Topjian's trip to Armenia, and a joint ACYOA/YF viewing and discussion of the film "Ararat."

WATERTOWN, MA—St. James Church

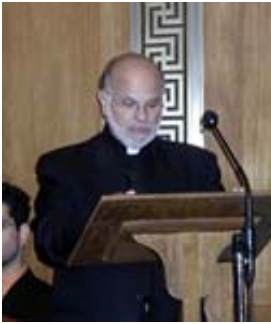
State Representative Peter Koutoujian and his father, Peter Koutoujian, Sr. will be guest speakers at St. James Church in Watertown, MA on Sunday, November 16 to discuss their trip to Armenia as part of an Election Observation Mission. Their presentation and the fellowship after Divine Liturgy that day will be sponsored by the ACYOA Seniors. The Koutoujians were selected by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to be parliamentary election observers in Armenia this past May. Their duties included monitoring the opening of polling stations, voting, counting of ballots, and the tabulation of results. Their service was part of a broader Election Observation Mission, established to assess the election process in terms of its compliance with international standards for democratic elections and national legislation.

WYNNEWOOD, PA—St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Church

The Wynnewood ACYOA Seniors are busy planning for the fall. Most recently, their parish sent two teams to Archbishop's Tournament. Events in the coming months include membership meetings, volunteering at the annual parish bazaar in December, an educational session, and various service projects including a visit to a soup kitchen, and a donation drive to benefit a local shelter for victims of domestic violence.

If you don't see your chapter here, please e-mail: acyoa@armeniandiocese.org.

SEVEN QUESTIONS: AN INTERVIEW WITH FR. GARABED KOCHAKIAN



Fr. Garabed accepting the first Fr. Haigazoun Melkonian Award at the 2003 General Assembly in Washington, DC.

The following is a short interview with Fr. Garabed Kochakian, pastor of St. John's Armenian Church in Southfield, MI conducted by one of his parishioners and ACYDA Central Council Treasurer, Jennifer Morris. At this year's ACYDA General Assembly, Fr. Garabed was recognized for his nurturing and positive leadership of youth by becoming the first recipient of the Fr. Haigazoun Melkonian Award, created in honor and memory of the late priest. The introduction below is written by Jennifer.

As my pastor, cousin and friend, Fr. Garabed has been someone whom I have turned to for guidance and support for many years. However, it was not until a recent conversation over dinner that I learned about the man behind the collar.

Fr. Garabed grew up in Massachusetts where it was apparent at a very early age that he was dedicated to the Church. He served as organist, choir member and altar server in his local parish and was an active member of the ACYDA as a youth. He also developed a passion and deep love for art. After high school, he attended Vesper George School of Art and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School of Art, both in Boston to pursue his passion. But after completing his second year of art school, he made a major change in his career path: at 21, he decided he wanted to become a priest and entered St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY.

In the summer of 1970, he traveled to Armenia to study language and church history at Etchmiadzin and it was there that he met his future yeretzgin (my cousin), Roberta Carman of Detroit, MI, who was there on an ASP trip. Later, he also studied at the Melkonian Educational Institute in Nicosia, Cyprus and the Armenian Patriarchate of St. James in Jerusalem. He has led parishes in Worcester, MA, where he was first Deacon-in-Charge and then pastor, and in Racine, WI where he served for ten years at St. Mesrob Church. He was appointed Chancellor of the Diocese by the Primate, and for six years worked with Diocesan staff, parish clergy and lay leaders. He returned in 1998 to St. John's Church (where 22 years earlier he had gotten married) to serve as our pastor. Fr. Garabed's leadership at St. John's has been an inspiration for parishioners of all ages, but especially for the youth.

What are three words or phrases you would use to describe yourself?

Let me think about that one. I'd have to say disciplined, wanting to love and finicky because of my type A personality.

What do you feel is your greatest strength?

I believe my greatest strengths are teaching and preaching.

What do you hope each parishioner leaves church with each Sunday?

I hope they leave church smiling, with a happy heart, and a desire to return because it is the beauty of worship that holds us together.

What is your greatest concern as a pastor?

I'd like to find someone to replace me when I'm gone. I hope to do that by personally developing and cultivating a one-on-one relationship with a future seminarian.

What is your greatest frustration?

It's the lack of time I have to spend with youth. I'm so busy with my regular parish duties that I just can't be with them as much as I'd like. I truly believe that there's no future in the life of the church unless a pastor spends time with his youth.

What is one of your greatest accomplishments?

Fr. Stepanos [Doudoukjian] is one of my great success stories. I felt that through our relationship while he was struggling about his future and we had many conversations, he was able to develop the courage to do what he was called by God to do. And today, he is one of our finest priests. [In one particular letter, Fr. Garabed wrote, "The Lord surely presents the work to us all, it's up to us to be self-motivated and perform His work. If you are a procrastinator by nature, then you'll never get anything done or achieve anything—even the salvation of your soul: but if you are a worker and do, you will be able to perform greater works for the Glory of God."]]

And finally, Der Hayr, what's your favorite Bible passage?

John 3:16

A CONFESSION OF FAITH FOR ALL TIMES

By James Magarian*



"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." (Matthew 16:16)

When Jesus asked his disciples about who people say is the Son of God, they replied that some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others, Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. But when he asked them, "What about you? Who do you say I am?", the disciples are put on the spot. Perhaps Jesus was challenging them. Maybe he was testing their faith. Or perhaps he wanted to hear from his disciples--his closest followers and friends--what they thought, what they believed. Their Lord and Master asked them a direct and personal question. It touched upon their faith, knowledge, experience, cultural heritage, and religious tradition. "Who is this Jesus?" they may have asked themselves.

The synoptic gospels tell us that Simon Peter spoke up and bailed out the group by making the greatest confession of faith of all time: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

His reply, his confession, is very clear. Simon tells Jesus that he is not just another of the prophets, but rather the Messiah, the Christ. Upon hearing this confession of faith, Jesus immediately blessed Simon and said, "For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

In an age when "seeing is believing" (re: the nightly news), the challenges to our faith are many, if not constant. We're shown both the beauty of a sunset and the result of terrorist acts, and seem to place God in both. We praise God for the beautiful sunset, and we either blame him for "man's inhumanity to man," or question how he could allow it to occur.

When Simon spoke, he was speaking to the Lord, he was with the Lord; he walked and talked with the Lord daily. Yet, Jesus blessed him, not because he gave the correct answer, not because of any human revelation via flesh and blood, but because to understand spiritual realities involves God's beneficence to disclose such. And the prerequisite for such disclosure is faith.

When Jesus asks us, "who do you say I am," will our faith allow us to echo Simon Peter?

** James Magarian served as ACYOA Executive Secretary from 1980 to 1986. He is currently Director of Corporate and Community Graduate Relations, Off-Campus Graduate Programs at the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He also serves as a deacon at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church in Chelmsford, MA.*



Last month, on October 11th, the Armenian Church commemorated the feast of the Holy Translators, among whom of course is St. Mesrob Mashdots. Below is a brief bio. Take it to your next meeting, and share with the group as an educational session.

St. Mesrob Mashdots was born in Western Armenia. He had been prominent in the court but gave up life as a nobleman-soldier to become a monk (*vartabed*). The Catholicos Sahag assigned to him the job of inventing the Armenian alphabet. Mashdots was sent to the center of Christian learning, Edessa, and then to Samosad, where he worked with the help of a calligrapher to form the 36 letters. (Mashdots is also responsible for the alphabets used by the Georgians and the Caucasian Albanians.)

With Sahag, he founded the first schools to teach the language. Much of his own writing, the letters and speeches, have been lost. All that remain are descriptions of them in the biography written by his student Goriun. But his church hymns have survived as well as some poetry.

Useful link for more info: http://www.hyeetch.nareg.com.au/armenians/language_p1.html



Hye Hokin
Armenian Church Youth Organization of America
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)
Abp. Khajag Barsamian, Primate
630 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Phone: 212.686.0710
newsletter@acyoa.org

www.acyoa.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 22 Southern Regional Conference—Jacksonville, FL
29 Detroit ACYOA November Dance—Southfield, MI

DECEMBER

- 6 Providence ACYOA 'Christmas with Onnik' Dance—Providence, RI
13 Regional Youth Workers Conference—PA

JANUARY

- 6-9 St. Nersess Winter Conference—New Rochelle, NY

MARCH

- 12-14 Fifth Annual ACYOA Young Adult Leadership Conference—Stony Point, NY

SUMMER 2004

ARMENIA

ARMENIA SERVICE PROGRAM (ASP)
AGES 18-28

More information coming soon...

Questions? E-mail asp@acyoa.org

SUGGESTION:

By now hopefully you've read, or at least heard of, Peter Balakian's wonderful new book, "The Burning Tigris." The book made its debut at #4 on *The New York Times* best-seller list. Why not buy a few copies and donate one to your local college or neighborhood library?