

Hye Hokin Հայ Հոգի

WINTER 2002

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to celebrate the rebirth of the *Hye Hokin*. Whether you are an ACYOA alumni or just learning about our organization, this newsletter will keep you updated with exciting ACYOA happenings internationally, nationally, and right in your backyard.

The ACYOA is truly a unique organization. Unlike other Armenian youth organizations, the ACYOA is directly connected to the Church. Therefore, in addition to providing a social forum, the ACYOA strives to attend to the spiritual needs of Christian American-Armenian youth as well. We enjoy the company of close friends, partake in social activities, and paramount to everything else, strengthen our relationship with God—**together as an ACYOA family.**

It is my hope that this newsletter will not only reinforce your commitment to the Church, but also strengthen the ties within our ACYOA family, whether it be re-connecting with youth in your own parishes or learning about ACYOA activities across the country.

I urge you to take advantage of this powerful communications tool. The ACYOA Central Council is providing you with the forum, but now it is up to you to help insure its success. Please tell us what you think about this issue and what you would like to see included in upcoming issues.

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE NEWS

The Leadership Conference is an annual weekend conference hosted by the ACYOA Central Council. The Conference is open to two ACYOA Seniors from each parish, selected by their pastor. The purpose of the Conference is to meet new people from throughout the Diocese, share ideas, and gain perspectives on how to effectively lead an ACYOA Chapter in even the smallest parish.

The 2001 Leadership Conference was held in February at the Don Bosco Retreat Center in Stony Point, NY. Close to 80 young adults

We look forward to receiving your feedback.

Together, as an ACYOA family, we will work together to build upon the successes of our organization and strengthen the presence of Christian American-Armenian youth within the Armenian Church of America.



Also, please visit our website at

www.acyoa.org for the latest ACYOA news from around the country, and always feel free to contact us with questions/concerns.

Respectfully,

Dn. Diran Jebajian
Chairman
ACYOA Central Council



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Reflection on the September 11th attacks by V. Rev. Fr. Vahan Hovhannessian.*
- *2001 Sports Weekend Wrap-Up and Pictures*
- *How to contact your Central Council Liaison.*



September 11th: A Reflection

Our entire country was affected by the tragedies at the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11th, 2001. These acts of terrorism have left us all with questions as to how such a thing could have occurred. As always in times of crisis, we turn to our faith for answers to these questions.

In the October 2001 issue of the *Narrec*, the newsletter of Holy Martyrs Armenian Church in Bayside, NY, their pastor, V. Rev. Fr. Vahan Hovhanessian, wrote a reflection in response to the September 11th attacks. With his permission, we have reprinted portions of Fr. Vahan's reflection, to perhaps give our readers some insight to help make some sense out of this senseless tragedy.

The following is from Fr. Vahan's reflection:

"Since the beginning of time, pious and faithful people themselves struggled with the question of the existence of evil...One thing we learn right from the first page of the Bible is that God did not create the world in the state in which it is now. The fact that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Himself was rejected in this world and crucified to death, is a clear indication that this is not the world in which God intended for us to live (John 14:13, 18:36, 1 Cor 7:31)."

"...Evil entered God's creation, as a consequence of

our selfishness and rejection of God's will. God is a God of love and He creates out of love. God desired to create a people that would share their life with Him and love Him, and He loves His creation. True love, however, is experienced and nourished through free choice and will. It cannot be a reaction to fear or obligation. Man, therefore, was given the choice to accept God's love or reject it. Man's choice to reject God, meant the rejection of the source of good and love. That choice made the thought and knowledge of evil, which existed as an essential component of man's ultimate freedom to choose and live, a reality and an existence in our life...By rejecting God, we rejected His 'plan' for us and the peace and security that came with that plan. By rejecting God, we separated ourselves from God and exposed ourselves to evil."

Prayer for Universal Peace

Give us, O God, the vision which can see Thy love in the world in spite of human failure.

Give us the faith, the trust, the goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.

Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with understanding hearts, and show us what each of us can do to set forth the coming of the day of universal peace.



"...And God will allow this [evil] state to continue, giving us a chance to seek the truth, and using our free will to choose the truth and shape our life in priorities by the truth. Evil will, however, eventually be destroyed....The Bible tells us that there will be a new world coming in which there will be no more tears or pain because all things will be made new and fully under God's control (see

Matthew 3:12, 3:13-30, Revelation 21:5)...Consequently, our life on this earth is an opportunity to know God and understand His will and make a choice: to follow or reject Him. That is why Christians pray saying, 'Thy Kingdom Come.' Every time we say this phrase, we are, in a way, saying 'God, claim your people, terminate our exposure to the possibility of evil, and the fallen state of this world, and make us, with our loved ones, worthy to enjoy eternity with you and under your protection.'"

"As Christians, we have the responsibility to resist and fight evil, with all its expressions of indifference, immorality and corruption. We should not tolerate or accept disasters or evil acts as if they are part of God's will for this world. ...It is also very dangerous to assume that these disasters are consequences of God's wrath on His people and are intended to punish those who have immoral lives (see Gen 8:21, John 3:16, 8:7)...As Christians, we have the responsibility to be with each other and support and help each other especially when 'evil' strikes. We also need to be strongly connected to God, our Creator and Savior, the source of peace and love, through prayer and reading of Scriptures, so that we remain firm in our faith and unshaken in our journey back to God."

-The ACYOA offers its love, sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of all those who perished at the World Trade Center and Pentagon on that tragic day. May God's love triumph over evil.

-Many thanks to V. Rev. Fr. Vahan Hovhanessian for permission to reprint his reflection.

ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST. VARTAN CATHEDRAL IN NEW YORK



Youth representatives from throughout the Diocese receiving Holy Muron and wooden crosses during Armenian Christmas services on January 6.



Why do we celebrate Armenian Christmas on January 6th?

Have you ever wondered why the Armenian Church celebrates Christmas on January 6th instead of December 25th, but have never heard the reason? This excerpt from [Saints & Feasts of the Armenian Church](#) provides a thorough explanation.

“Until about the second half of the second century, both in the East and the West, the Baptism of Christ was held in pre-eminence above all other celebrations, even to that of the Birth of our Lord. It was also in that same period in the West a need arose to separate the Feast of the Birth from Theophany by celebrating it in December 25. This was also designed to discourage Christians from partaking in a major pagan festival on that day. This custom eventually became accepted in the East as well, particularly in Jerusalem where it was very difficult to celebrate Christ’s Birth in Bethlehem and His Baptism at the River Jordan on the same day. Therefore, by the end of the fourth century, all churches were celebrating Christ’s Birth on December 25, with the exception of the Armenian Church which did not feel the need to deviate from the ancient canon.”

-From Saints & Feasts of the Armenian Church, by Patriarch Torkom Koushagian.

Chapter Focus—St. John Armenian Church Detroit, MI

The Detroit ACYOA Seniors of St. John Armenian Church are on their way to another successful year. Thanksgiving weekend we hosted the fifty-fifth annual November Dance. Over 400 young adults danced to the tunes of The Philly Kef Band and American DJ. Just one month later, our ACYOA Juniors and Seniors sponsored our annual Christmas Eve Tea, as a way to help bring parishioners closer together during the holiday season. Continuing with the spirit of giving, we also hosted a blood drive for The American Red Cross the day after Christmas. Together, we helped to save possibly forty-five or more lives.



Our newly elected board *St. John's Armenian Church in Detroit.*

is now actively preparing many activities for the upcoming months. We meet the second Tuesday of each month to plan and discuss events taking place, within and around our community. We are very fortunate to

be working with our priest, Father Garabed Kochakian, Parish Council Liaison Garry Javizian, and Youth Director Lisa Mardigian. In addition, our ACYOA Seniors are also working with the AGBU Young Professionals to plan an open forum for discussion and dialogue with Father Garabed later this February. A favorite activity for many members is our monthly bowling night, in which Seniors can come together for a fun and social night out.

For more information about our chapter, check out our website at www.stjohnsarmenianchurch.org, or e-mail us at reetz30a@hotmail.com. Next time you're in Detroit, let us know. The Detroit ACYOA Seniors and Juniors would love to have you join us at one of our many monthly events.

-Submitted by Jennifer Morris

Would you like to see your chapter featured in *Hye Hokin*? Send chapter updates, articles, or pictures to newsletter@acyoa.org.

Chapter Focus—Holy Martyrs Armenian Church Bayside, NY

The Holy Martyrs (Bayside, NY) chapter of the ACYOA Seniors has been keeping busy during the fall months. Following the tragic events of September 11, we gathered to discuss our thoughts and feelings. Our pastor, Fr. Vahan Hovhannessian, offered some comforting words on the events. Later on in the month, some of us went for an outing at Washington Square Park in Manhattan, followed by an early supper. It was an opportunity to enjoy each other's company and fellowship.

October and November were also very full. At our October Meeting, some members who visited Armenia during the summer gave a video and photo presentation and described their experiences. On Sunday, November 4, we visited the Armenian Home for the Aged in Flushing, NY, following Badarak. ACYOA Seniors and the residents alike had a wonderful time together singing, dancing, and making tissue paper flowers. We look forward to returning there. During November we also treated the ACYOA Juniors to a Movie/Pizza night, showing the movie "The Omega Code".

On Saturday, November 17, we hosted an

ACYOA retreat, with the theme "Putting On The Armor of God", which was taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. In the first session, after the reading from 1 Peter 5:8-9, we talked about the importance of being alert to the presence of evil. The second session focused on how to put on the armor of God. The reading from Ephesians 6:10-18 describes the various parts of the armor that need to be used, in order for us to resist the forces of evil. We closed out the day with a nice dinner at a local Middle Eastern restaurant. Everybody found the retreat to be a refreshing and inspiring event.

We continue to make plans for the upcoming months. During December, we hosted a Christmas Dance ("Jingle Mingle") which attracted youth from surrounding areas. We also held our annual Poinsettia sale. Our chapter holds General Meetings on the third Thursday of each month, at Holy Martyrs. If you'd like to find out more about our chapter, please e-mail Antranige@aol.com or check out our website at www.holy-martyrs.org. Join us as we continue to follow in the footsteps of our Lord.

-Submitted by Rita Sekdorian

1700 YEARS... 1700 PEOPLE SPORTS WEEKEND 2001 New York, NY

Memorial Day Weekend 2001 was a weekend to be remembered, as record numbers of Armenian youth gathered in the heart of New York City for the 2001 National Sports Weekend and General Assembly. This was a special weekend, as the ACYOA events ran alongside the Diocesan events commemorating Armenia's

1700th Anniversary of the adoption of Christianity as a state religion. The weekend began with the most successful General Assembly in recent years. Intense athletic competition fol-



lowed, with the Watertown, MA chapter winning the Overall Trophy. Along with social events planned throughout the weekend, Armenian youth from all over the United States and Canada came



The Flame of St. Gregory is carried into Central Park by Armenian Youth from throughout the Diocese.



Our 2002 Hosts, the Watertown Chapter, at the steps of the Diocesan Plaza with their Overall Trophy.

BACK IN BEANTOWN!

2002 GENERAL ASSEMBLY & NATIONAL SPORTS WEEKEND

May 23-27th, 2002

Hosted by the St. James chapter of Watertown, MA

Check www.acyoa.org for details coming soon!

ACYOA ARMENIA SERVICE PROGRAM (ASP)

ASP 2002

June 27-July 18, 2002

(dates are approximate)

Open to all young adults ages 18-29

Join fifteen young adults on this extraordinary program which gives you the opportunity to MAKE A DIFFERENCE in Armenia while seeing the religious and cultural sites you've learned about all your life!

If you would like to learn more or receive an application, please respond to: asp@acyoa.org immediately and be sure to leave your mailing address AND telephone number.

"My return to America really shed light on how I had changed and how much my love for Armenia had grown."

-Dikran Callan, a participant from Detroit, MI.



ASP 2000 participants pose with campers after an arts & crafts session at Camp Siranoush.

ARMENIAN WEBSITES

Check out some of these Armenian Church Links on the Web...



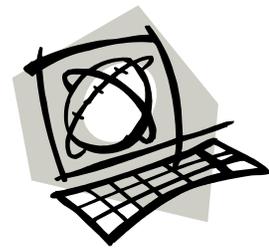
Armenian Church Youth Organization
Western Diocese
www.acyo-wd.org

St. Nersess Armenian Seminary
www.stnersess.edu

Armenian Church Youth Organization of America
www.acyoa.org

Diocese of the Armenian Church of Canada
www.canarmdiocese.org

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
www.armenianchurch.org



CONTACT THE ACYOA CENTRAL COUNCIL

Need to contact someone on the ACYOA Central Council? Liaisons have been appointed for all geographical regions. Listed to the right are all members of the Central Council, their home parish, and their respective regions.

Contact us with suggestions, questions about your chapter, concerns, or anything else that is on your mind. We would love to hear from you!

Central Council Liaisons

Chairperson	Diran Jebejian	Fair Lawn, NJ	diranjebejian@yahoo.com
Chapter Relations	Nadine Yavru-Sakuk	Tenafly, NJ	nyavrusan@yahoo.com

Liaisons

New England	Karen Khatchadourian	Tenafly, NJ	karro430@hotmail.com
Mid-Atlantic	Maria Derderian	Wynnewood, PA	mavia1@aol.com
	Saro Kalayjian	Washington, DC	sarovk@aol.com
South	Armen McOmber	Elberon, NJ	ramcomber@aol.com
Midwest	Jennifer Morris	Detroit, MI	hyejem@msn.com

Do you know someone who would like to receive a copy of *Hye Hokin*, or be included in the ACYOA Mailing List?

Just e-mail newsletter@acyoa.org

Include Name, Address, E-mail address, and Chapter, and a copy of *Hye Hokin* will be on its way!



Have a question about youth programming?

Want to know how to plan a retreat?

Contact the DYM!!

Yn. Arpi Kouzouian

Director of Programming

Department of Youth Ministry (DYM)

Diocese of the Armenian Church

145 Brattle Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: 617-876-2700 Fax: 617-876-2266

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself."
(Matthew 22:37-39)



Hye Hakin
 Armenian Church Youth Organization of America
 Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
 630 Second Ave.
 New York, NY 10016
 Phone: 212.686.0710
 Fax: 212.779.3558
 Email: newsletter@acyoa.org



Visit our website!
www.acyoa.org

Want to add your chapter's event to the list?
 E-mail
ACYOA_calendar@acyoa.org
 with the details!

Upcoming Events...

February

- 2 Winter Gala—Seniors
Washington Marriott
Washington, DC
- 9 Valentine's Day Dance—Juniors
St. Leon Armenian Church
Fair Lawn, NJ
- 16 Reunion of the FAR Young Professionals trip to Armenia (1996-2001)
Holy Martyrs Armenian Church
Bayside, NY
- 15-17 2nd Annual Leadership Conference
Don Bosco Retreat Center
Stony Point, NY

March

- 24 Palm Sunday— ACYOA Day

OPENING FEBRUARY 2, 2002 at a WASHINGTON MARRIOTT NEAR YOU!

RETURN of the WINTER GALA 2002

THRILL!! to the sounds of the **ARAVOD ENSEMBLE**

THOUSANDS of dance crazed Armenian Youth
GO WILD

Hosted by
 ST. MARY'S WASHINGTON DC ACYOA

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2002
 WASHINGTON MARRIOTT
 1221 22nd Street NW
 7:00pm
 COCKTAIL RECEPTION
 8:00pm
 DINNER
 Dinner and Dance \$50
 * advanced ticket purchase required*

Contact Kareen Sivaslian for tickets or for more information
 (703)430-3024 or DCACYOA@aol.com, www.stmaryacyoa.org