



from the office of the

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America

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news:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(With Photos)

UNPRECEDENTED ATTENDANCE AT 1988 ACYOA GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND NATIONAL SPORTS WEEKEND IN PROVIDENCE, R.I.

The attendance at the recent 1988 ACYOA General Assembly and National Sports Weekend in Providence, R.I. was unprecedented, with many hundreds of Chapter delegates, ACYOA members and their families congregating for the event over the five-day period. The Chapter delegates hailed from Parishes throughout the Diocese, from New England, the Midwest, Florida and as far away as Texas.

His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Diocese, lauded the work of the ACYOA and said that the Diocese has accelerated its programs and activities to enable the members of the General Assembly and Chapter delegates to help attract more Armenian young people to the ranks of the organization. The Primate also presented the 1988 ACYOA Alumni Award and the annual sports awards. The Alumni Award winner was Julia Tashjian, the distinguished Secretary of State of Connecticut. (The awards program will be reported on separately.)

Addressing the General Assembly on the morning of Thursday, September 1 at the Providence Marriott Inn, the Archbishop told the delegates that they were "very special people," as they are charged with the responsibility of attracting more Armenian youth to the Church community. He said that thanks to the ACYOA fundraising efforts and the generous donations of benefactors such as Edward and Helen Mardigian, the ACYOA has initiated many new opportunities for program development. He noted that last year, there were two weekend educational programs. In 1988-89, there are six.

"These range from explorations into the Armenian faith to personal growth, through religious involvement, to leadership seminars, exciting sports weekends, such as this one, and cultural activities," he said. "They include enlightening forays into

Armenian history, arts, language and culture. There are also sessions on developing leadership skills, and imparting this rich knowledge to others.

"Together, these programs give our youth the opportunity to interface on current issues, to meet their peers, to exchange ideas, to reach out to fellow Armenians across America with the message of kinship and oneness."

His Eminence said that while there are many challenges in attracting youth to the Church community as a result of the social and moral ills that currently plague American society, he believed in "the essential Armenian nature of most of our youth." He said the recent demonstrations for the reunification of Nagorno-Karabagh with the Armenian motherland rekindled a new national awareness of the Armenian heritage. He noted that many young people joined in the historic Karabagh march from the Diocese earlier this year to the Soviet Mission to the United Nations.

"For the first time, he said, the Karabagh issue made many of them truly aware of their Armenian background."

The potentials to attract others to the ACYOA banner are certainly viable, he said, "And you are the key to bringing them to fruition in our Church youth activities -- in the new program opportunities that have been created and which will be expanded as time goes on. You are the role models. In you rests the potentiality as well as the growth of the Armenian faith and cultural identity in America. It is an awesome responsibility. But it has its rewards, spiritually, socially and culturally. It is in greater cohesiveness that we will find our full collective strength, as dedicated Armenian Christians and as patriotic Americans."

More than 80 delegates were in attendance at the Assembly, in addition to 16 members of the clergy. David Onanian, Houston, Texas ACYOA Chapter, was elected Chairman of the Assembly; Richard Mardirosian, ACYOA Chapter, Hartford, Conn., was elected Vice Chairman. Delegates from these new Chapters were welcomed: Dallas, and Houston, Texas; and Western Queens, N.Y. Gregory Apagian, Cleveland, Ohio ACYOA Chapter presented a spirited address entitled, "Challenge for ACYOA Leaders: Attracting and Motivating

Volunteers." Each of the Chapter delegates gave reports, stressing both their successes and respective problem areas. Richard Mardirosian, Chairman of the New England ACYOA Regional Committee, discussed the work of his group in networking in the region. Scott Najarian, head of the ACYOA Central Council, pointed out that the organization's membership has increased from about 500 to the present 650. This was largely attributed to intensified programs, endowments from benefactors, and increased visits to local Chapters by ACYOA Central Council members and Douglas Tashjian, ACYOA Executive Secretary. These visits resulted in the establishment of three new Chapters: in Trumbull, Conn., Springfield, and Lawrence, Mass. The Central Council is planning a membership drive and has targeted more parishes for ACYOA Chapter formation.

Mr. Tashjian detailed the new programs scheduled for 1988-89. He pointed out that "in the past too much emphasis was placed on social events and sports activities, and we deviated from the primary goals of ACYOA. There is a need for balance. For this reason, the organization is presently stressing more religious, educational and cultural activities.

"As Christians, it is our duty to commit ourselves to serving others and the mission of the Church," he continued. "We should stress the spiritual and cultural values of our Armenian Christian heritage as much as possible."

Addresses were also given by Paulette Kasparian, chairperson of the Western Diocese ACYO Central Council; and the Youth Director of the Canadian Diocese, the Very Reverend Father Hovnan Derderian, Pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Toronto.

Among other highlights, there were elections of three members each to the Nominating and Auditing Committees; and the election of two individuals to the Central Council to serve two year-terms: Lauri Onanian, Watertown, Mass.; and Suzie Ashjian, Westchester, N.Y. They replace Sarah Andonian, Detroit, Mich., and Gregory Saraydarian, Bayside, N.Y., who finished their respective terms of office.

That evening, there was a dinner cruise of Newport Harbor on the "Spirit of Newport," hosted by the Providence ACYOA Chapter. The following day, at the closing sessions of the Assembly, voting took place on budgets and various program suggestions, which will eventually be considered by the Diocesan Council. At a special

Open Forum, the delegates -- as luncheon guests of Archbishop Manoogian -- questioned the Primate on various issues of concern, including spirituality, language and culture .

At one point he told them, "We hear of many ideas, some of which are excellent. But you must remember, you are the Church. It does not exist in a vacuum. If you believe strongly in something, take the initiative. Do not become frustrated. Don't give in. Keep pushing until your idea becomes reality."

In the final session, the Assembly voted to hold the 1989 General Assembly and National Sports Weekend in Houston, Texas, August 30 to September 4. It will be hosted by the Houston ACYOA Chapter of St. Kevork Armenian Church.

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9/14/88



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ACYOA COMMEMORATES ITS 42ND ANNIVERSARY AT PETER ARMENIAN CHURCH,
WATERVLIET, N.Y.

The Armenian heritage burst into full bloom in the Albany, New York, area recently with the celebration of the 42nd Anniversary of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) at St. Peter Armenian Church in Watervliet.

The ACYOA Watervliet chapter hosted the 1988 National Anniversary Ball this year. More than 300 people participated in the program, which included a gala banquet and dance at the Albany Hilton on Saturday, July 23. The Rev. Father Garen Gdanian, pastor of St. Peter's, officiated at the Badarak on Sunday, the 24th. His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, gave the sermon.

At the banquet, Archbishop Manoogian told the audience that as Watervliet is relatively isolated from mainstream Armenian life, "it is incumbent upon the area's youth to instill a sense of community and perpetuate the Armenian heritage."

Father Gdanian cited the many laudable activities of the ACYOA and thanked the organization's members for their continuing work and support. Scott Najarian, ACYOA Central Council Chairman, noted that Watervliet was one of the original ACYOA chapters when the organization was formed in 1946. He presented to Harry Tutunjian, Chairman of the chapter, a new charter in honor of the formation of the Senior group this year. Parish Council Chairman Edward Belemjian said the ACYOA has brought "new life to St. Peter's" through its many services and projects. Douglas Tashjian, the ACYOA's Executive Secretary, gave an overall view of the organization and its work, stating that "it is a prime example of Armenian young people growing and developing together through Sunday School,

Armenian School and the ACYOA Juniors, emerging as ACYOA Seniors and Church community leaders with a true commitment to their faith." He said the Watervliet chapter was an example for the entire national ACYOA organization.

At the dance, Hatchig Kazarian's clarinet and Richard Hagopian's oud provided the exciting pulse beat, with the accompaniment of guitarist Mal Barsamian, Ron Tutunjian on the dumbeg, and Paul Mooradian on the def.

Another highlight of the two-day celebration was the parish picnic hosted by the ACYOA Watervliet chapter.

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8/17/88



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news:

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REQUEST FOR COVERAGE

JULIA TASHJIAN, CONNECTICUT SECRETARY OF STATE, TO RECEIVE
ARMENIAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION ALUMNI AWARD

SUBJECT: Presentation of the Annual National Alumni Award of the Armenian Church Youth Organization (ACYOA) to Mrs. Julia Tashjian, Secretary of State of Connecticut.

TIME: Sunday, September 4, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom, Providence Marriott Inn, Charles and Orms Streets, Providence (401/272-2400).

DETAILS: Presentation of this prestigious annual award to be made by His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. Ms. Tashjian will be cited for her work as an outstanding Armenian-American political leader and member of the Armenian Church community.

(Archbishop's presentation remarks enclosed for your further information)

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