

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN  
ARMENIAN RESEARCH CENTER  
4901 EVERGREEN ROAD  
DEARBORN, MI 48128-1491  
USA

*Dennis R. Papazian, Ph.D.*  
*Director*  
*313-593-5181*  
*FAX 313-593-5452*  
*Internet: dpapazia@ca-f1.umd.umich.edu*

Knights of Vartan Endowment  
Helen & Edward Mardigian Fund  
John Vigen Der Manuelian Library  
George & Isabelle Elanjian Fund

March 10, 1995

Fr. Baret Yeretzian, Pastor  
St. John's Armenian Church  
22001 Northwestern Highway  
Southfield, MI 48075

Dear Fr. Baret,

Pursuant to our conversations of Wednesday, March 8, and Thursday, March 9, 1995, I must regretfully inform you that I cannot sign, as chairman of the Parish Assembly, the minutes of the Parish Assembly held on Friday, February 24, 1995.

As I explained to you, there seemed to be some irregularity in the omnibus ballot taken for members of the Parish Council, the Diocesan Delegates, and the Nominating Committee. Scantron ballots, which had been marked before distribution to the members, were brought up to the dais. These ballots which were brought forward were destroyed, but I have no personal knowledge if other pre-marked ballots were inadvertently retained by the Nominating Committee and mixed in with the ballots for the evening.

I understand that I was told that these pre-marked ballots were left over from last year and that all of them were removed from the stack of new ballots before they were counted, but I cannot personally testify that this was done.

Furthermore, as I explained to you, I was not, as the chairman, given the actual tally of the votes, even though I requested the tally sheet three times from one responsible parish official and twice from the chairperson of the Nominating Committee. I did not press the issue further at the time, since I wanted to avoid a public display.

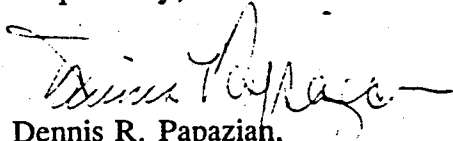
While I was given a list of names—without the tally—to be announced as those who prevailed in the balloting, I was not given the order of names of those who would serve as Alternates to the Diocesan Delegates. I announced these names as "the report of the Nominating Committee," since I had no personal knowledge of the tally or the order of Alternates, since I was not shown the tally.

While I was shown a sheet of paper with a tally almost two weeks after the Parish Assembly, I cannot personally testify as to the provenance of that document.

Fr. Baret Yeretzian, Pastor  
St. John's Armenian Church  
March 10, 1995  
Page 2.

I am told that by signing the Minutes of the Parish Assembly of February 24, 1995, that I would, as Chairman, be testifying not only to what transpired at the meeting in terms of procedures, motions, and open voting, but would also be giving my personal imprimatur to the results of the ballot election. After much prayerful consideration, soul searching, and "quaking of the spirit," I have decided that in good conscience I cannot sign the Minutes of that meeting.

Respectfully,



Dennis R. Papazian,  
Chairman  
Parish Assembly

cc: Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate  
American Diocese of the Armenian Church

Edward Haig Korkoian, Chairman, Parish Council  
St. John's Armenian Church

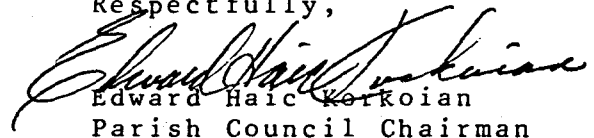
March 11, 1995

Very Rev. Fr. Baret Yeretzian  
Pastor St. Johns Armenian Church  
22001 Northwestern Hwy.  
Southfield, Mi 48075

Dear Fr. Baret:

On the evening of February 24, 1995 at the Parish Assembly, Mrs. Jacqueline ElChemmas, a member of the Nominating Committee came up to the dias where I was seated, showed me and Dennis Papazian three ballots that had been given out and the recipient returned them to the monitor, because they were marked. I tore up the three ballots in front of Mrs. ElChemmas and Dennis Papazian.

Respectfully,

  
Edward Haic Korkoian  
Parish Council Chairman

St. John's Armenian Church  
OF GREATER DETROIT

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Very Rev. Fr. Paren Avedikian  
Pastor

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

★ PHONE (313) 569-3405 ★

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

3-12-95

Dear HARK SCOTT

As St John Church members,  
we observed the election  
ballot counting on 2/24/95  
conducted by Beverly Boladian  
Chairwoman of the Election, and  
there were no irregularities. We  
did not observe any miscounting  
of election ballots.

Jher Belademan, Auditor  
Thomas Stamboulian, Auditor

**St. John's Armenian Church**  
OF GREATER DETROIT



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ՄԵԾԱԳՈՅՆ ՏԻՔՐՈՑՔԻ

VERY REV. FR. BARET YERETZIAN  
PASTOR

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22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

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PHONE: 569-3405

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SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

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March 12, 1995

Dear Hayr Soorp:

As St. John's Church auditors, we observed the Election ballot counting on February 24, 1995 conducted by Marilyn Boladian Chairwomen of the Election, and there were no irregularities. We did not observe any miscounting of Election Ballots.

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John Bahadurian, Auditor

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Thomas Stambouljian, Auditor

*Paula Beant Harkun*

Dear Hayr Soorp -

Per your request of 3-11-95, the announcement of the 1995 Parish Assembly elections results were not announced by the Nominating Committee Chairperson, Marilyn Boladian.

I did approach the podium to where the Chairperson of the Day and Parish Council Chairperson resided and questioned whether or not I should ~~ask~~<sup>announce</sup> the election results. I was told by the Chairperson of the Day and Parish Council Chairperson that the Chairperson of the Day could announce the results.

*Marilyn Boladian*  
Nominating Committee Chairperson

**St. John's Armenian Church**  
OF GREATER DETROIT



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ՄԵՆԱԳՈՑՆ ՏԻՔՐՈՑԻ

VERY REV. FR. BARET YERETZIAN  
PASTOR

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22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

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PHONE: 569-3405

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SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

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I did approach the podium to where the Chairperson of the day and Parish Council Chairperson resided and questioned whether or not I should announce the election results. I was told by the Chairperson of the Day and Parish Council Chairperson that the Chairperson of the Day could announce the results.

Marilyn Boladian, Nominating Committee Chairperson

*Fateh Bant Jank*

3-12-95

Dear Hayr Soorp.

Per your request of 3-11-95, the previously marked and machine processed ballots were removed from the valid group of ballots and thrown into the wastepaper basket. Evidently, these used ballots were mixed in <sup>with</sup> a large stack of blank ballots, which <sup>were</sup> most likely left <sup>over</sup> from the previous year's (1994) elections. This situation was not brought to my attention until after all the ballots were collected,

The already processed ballots were disposed of and were not fed through the Scan-tron machine. The machine does not reprocess already processed forms.

..... Church auditors, John Bahadurian and Tom Stamboulian, and I were the only individuals in the room reviewing and processing the ballots.

Prior to the official election announcement, I was not asked, nor did I provide any election results to anyone that evening.

John Bahadurian, St. Peter Church Auditor  
Thomas Stamboulian Church Auditor  
Mehmet Balaban Nominating Committee Chairperson



**St. John's Armenian Church**  
OF GREATER DETROIT



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VERY REV. FR. BARET YERETZIAN  
PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

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PHONE: 569-3405

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SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

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John Bahadurian, Auditor  
St. John's Armenian Church

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Tom Stamboulian, Auditor  
St. John's Armenian Church

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Marilyn Boladian, Nominating Committee Chairperson

*Fr. Baret Yeretzian*

St. John's Armenian Church  
OF GREATER DETROIT



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VERY REV. FR. BARET YERETZIAN  
PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

PHONE: 569-3405

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

March 12, 1995

To: Very Rev. Fr. Baret Yeretizian  
From: 1994 Nominating Committee  
Re: 1995 Parish Assembly Meeting  
of Feb 24, 1995.

According to the knowledge of the  
1994 Nominating Committee members  
the only irregularity observed was  
the distribution of previously marked  
ballots. Please note, a Committee  
member, when she became aware of  
the situation, ripped-in-half those  
previously marked ballots, and  
brought it to the attention of the  
Chairman of the Day and the Chairman  
of the Parish Council.  
Nancy Mouradian, Jacqueline Chemmas  
Marilyn Polakian  
Alex Anderson

St. John's Armenian Church  
OF GREATER DETROIT



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VERY REV. FR. BARET YERETZIAN  
PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

★ PHONE: 569-3405 ★

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

March 12, 1995

TO: Very Rev. fr. Baret Yeretizian

FROM: 1994 Nominating Committee

Re: 1995 Parish Assembly Meeting of February 24, 1995.

According to the knowledge of the 1994 Nominating Committee members the only irregularity observed was the distribution of previously marked ballots. \* Please note, a committee member, when she became aware of the situation, ripped-in-half those previously marked ballots, and brought it to the attention of the Chairman of the Day and the Chairman of the Parish Council.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nancy Mouradian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marilyn Boladian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacqueline El Chemmas

\_\_\_\_\_  
Alice Derderian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mickey Mardirosian

\*Last Years Ballots

*Fallon Bant Member*

**St. John's Armenian Church**  
OF GREATER DETROIT



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VERY REV. FR. BARET YERETZIAN  
PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY



PHONE: 569-3405



SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

March 13, 1995

Dr. Dennis Papazian  
University of Michigan-Dearborn  
Armenian Research Center  
4901 Evergreen  
Dearborn, MI 48228-1491

Dear Dr. Papazian:

I read your letter of March 10, 1995 with great disappointment, and I'd like to point out my disagreement and dissatisfaction, not only with the content but with the intent.

1. On February 24, 1995 at St. John's Annual Parish Assembly you were elected Chairman of the Day. You mention that at the assembly some premarked ballots were brought to you and destroyed in your presence and the presence of the Parish Council Chairman. You were aware of this until 12:05 a.m. when you adjourned the assembly. I would like to ask you as the Chairman of the Assembly, why you didn't object at that time and bring the incident to my attention?

2. The balloting was closed at 9:30 p.m., and at approximately 10:00 p.m. you came to me and expressed satisfaction that the meeting was progressing very smoothly and was "under control." Why didn't you express your dissatisfaction during the meeting?

3. After the assembly adjourned, while everyone was conversing, you approached me in the presence of your wife and asked if you could see the total number of votes cast for each nominee. My reply was don't worry I will provide them to you tomorrow if I have the time."

4. On Wednesday, March 8, prior to the Lenten Fish Dinner, you came to me with disappointment in your heart, stating that you did not wish to sign the minutes because you "could not verify the number of votes". I did explain to you that the verification was not your duty, but that of the Nominating Committee members. At that time you asked me for the tally and I handed you the list which you read in my presence. I then asked that you sign the minutes when they are completed.

5. The next day, March 9, at approximately 6:00 p.m. you came to my office with a draft of the minutes, and together we corrected the minutes. You then promised that you would sign the minutes, excluding the verification of votes, when they were retyped.

6. On Saturday, March 12, the minutes were ready as prepared by the Parish Assembly Secretary, Gloria Korkoian. I called your home and informed you of this, but you replied that you were occupied with your daughter and would see me on Sunday. A half hour following our conversation, my secretary brought me the mail which contained your letter of March 10.

7. Prior to the adjournment of the assembly, the Nominating Committee Chairman, Marilyn Boladian handed me the names of the winners and I handed the list to you. You then announced the results to the membership without stating any objection.

8. Later in my conversation with the Nominating Committee Chairman, I became aware that you didn't allow her to announce the election results. According to the bylaws, she as the chairperson has the full right and privilege of governing the elections at the assembly. She also mentioned to me that you did not ask her for a tally of the election results.

9. You have been Chairman of the Day at St. John's Parish Assembly at least twice before according to previous minutes. In 1979, when Simon Javizian was the Nominating Committee Chairman, he announced the election results in your presence; and in 1984 when you were once again the Chairman, you announced the election results yourself without mentioning the names of the alternates.

I don't understand at this juncture, why after almost two weeks following the election, you came to me and informed me of the incidents that occurred at the assembly. As a reminder to you, our bylaws clearly stat that any complaint must be written to the pastor within seven days after the assembly, and the pastor will forward it to the Primate and the Diocesan Council.

At this moment I feel very sad that you chose to take this path, rather than the path of understanding and harmony.

Prayerfully,

*Father Baret Yeretian*  
Father Baret Yeretian  
Pastor

cc: Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate  
Diocesan Council Chairman  
Parish Council Chairman

**St. John's Armenian Church**  
OF GREATER DETROIT



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VERY REV. FR. BARET YERETZIAN  
PASTOR

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22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

★ PHONE: 569-3405 ★

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

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March 14, 1995

Dear Dennis:

Although your letter of March 10, 1995, addressed to Father Baret Yeretjian, did not request a direct response from the Nominating Committee, we, nonetheless, feel compelled to address your concerns regarding possible irregularities. First, and foremost, let us assure you that no improprieties were observed or entered into by any member of the Nominating Committee relative to the balloting process at the February 24, 1995 Parish Assembly.

Before addressing some of the issues raised in your correspondence, we must admit that after thoughtful deliberation and "quivering of our conscience" we are confused as to the motive of your letter. Was it written in the best interest of this parish? We will presume that as a Christian your intentions are honorable, albeit, your veiled inferences of unseemly actions on the part of committee members and the respected Pastor of our beloved Church.

For Your Information:

- \* To allay your fears of pre-marked ballots intermingling with 1995 ballots, please be advised that the Scan-tron will not accept previously processed ballots. As Chairman of the Day, you were aware of pre-marked ballots and their destruction. Yet you continued to assure Father Baret throughout the meeting that everything was running satisfactorily.
- \* To disclose the actual tally of votes is not common practice during Parish Assembly procedures. Furthermore, the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee is generally accorded the responsibility and honor of announcing the successful candidates. Your insistence on handling the pronouncement was a departure from past practice.
- \* Last, but certainly not least, the by-laws of the Parish Assembly, specifically, Section 20, states:

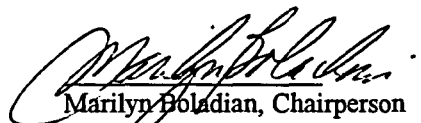
"Any member of the Parish questioning the legality of a Parish Assembly or its resolution or elections may, within seven days from the date of the meeting, file a written complaint with the Parish Priest who will immediately forward the same to the Diocesan Council for necessary action."

We believe your letter of March 10th failed to meet this statute of limitations.

Dr. Papazian we value your commitment and dedication to the Armenian Church, as well as your contribution to many Armenian causes. However, we are disappointed that you did not choose to review the matter with us before distributing your letter of concern.

In good faith, honesty, and love of our Church, we respectfully submit this response.

Cordially,



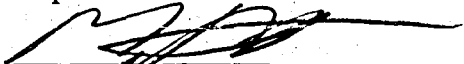
Marilyn Boladian, Chairperson



Alice Derderian



Jacqueline El Chemmas



Mickey Mardirosian



Nancy Mouradian

cc: Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate  
American Diocese of the Armenian Church

Very Reverend Baret Yeretjian, Pastor  
St. John's Armenian Church

Edward Korkoian, Chairman, Parish Council  
St. John's Armenian Church