

Կամաւորի Ձայնը

Voice of the Volunteer



Մարտի 2018

Կամաւորի Չայնը

Provided By: The Homenetmen Eastern Region USA & Armenian Youth Federation - Youth Organization of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Eastern Region USA

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Իմ Մայրենի Լեզուն

Մեղրի Տէր Վարդանեան

Յ. Ե. Դաշնակցութեան Պոսթընի “Նժդէհ” մասնաճիւղ

Լեզուն ազգի մը գոյատեւման միակ միջոցն է, ապրելու կամքն է, հպարտութեան առիթն է եւ ճողովուրդի մը ինքնութիւնը բնորոշող ազդակն է: Ամէն ժողովուրդ ունի իր մայրենի լեզուն, իմ, եւ բոլոր հայերուն մայրենի լեզուն հայերէնն է: Ուրեմն եկէք գուրգուրանք եւ պահենք մեր մայրենին անաղարտ մետրոպէան 38 տառերը, օգտագործենք որպէս զէնք ու վահան, գրելով հայերէն, խօսելով հայերէն եւ ապրելով հայօրէն:

Ես հպարտ եմ որ ծնած եմ հայ: Վկայ Արարատը: Ծնիլ հայ հպարտութիւն է, ապրիլ եւ գոյատեւել որպէս հայ պարծանք է: Ինչպէս հայօրէն ապրիլ սփիւռքեան այս խառնարանին մէջ, բանաստեղծը ըսած է,

Մեր շուրջը լեզուներ նոր ու հին

Մեր շուրջը կը խօսին այլօրէն

Եկ խօսինք եղբայր իմ հայերէն:

Այո՛ լեզուն է որ մեզ կը տարբերէ ուրիշ ազգերէ, եկուր երիտասարդ հայ, գրենք, խօսինք, երգենք հայերէն, որովհետեւ հայը ունի բարձր մշակոյթ, համաշխարային մակարդակով հպարտանանք:...Մեր անցեալով որպէսզի գալիքը ընդունինք պարծանքով:

Ճիշդ է, մենք հայերս ցրուած ենք, կ'ապրինք շատ հեռու մեր հայրենիքէն, կը խօսինք եւ կը յարգենք ուրիշ ազգերու լեզուները, բայց միշտ սիրենք եւ

գուրգուրանք մեր ոսկեղնիկ մայրենի լեզուն: Պետք է հասկնանք, եւ հասկնալով չի մոռնանք երբեք որ մեր ժառանգութեան մեծագոյն գանձը մեր լեզուն է: Ժ
Թող հայ լեզուն իր 38 տառերով դրօշմուած ըլլայ ամէն մէկ հայու մէջ, որ ոչ մէկ պատմական քամի չջնջէ մեր շրթունքներէն: Թող մեր մայրենի լեզուն հնչէ ամէն հայ տան մէջ որպէսզի յաջորդ սերունդը մեծնայ եւ սնանի հայօրէն:

Մեծ բանաստեղծուհի Սիլվա Կապուտիկեան աւանդած է մեզի.-

«Ու տես որդիս ուր էլ լինես,
Այս լուսի տակ, ուր էլ քնաս,
Թէ մօրդ անգամ մտքից հանես,
Քո մայր լեզուն չմոռնաս»:

Homenetmen Eastern U.S. Scouts Hold Seminar Ahead of 2018 Jamboree in Armenia

By *kouyr* Ani Chobanian

Homenetmen Boston chapter

Special to the Armenian Weekly

PROVIDENCE, R.I.—The Homenetmen Eastern United States Scouts held the first of three seminars in preparation for the 11th Pan-Homenetmen Jamboree at the Homenetmen campsite in Pyurakan, Armenia. The Jamboree will be taking place on July 19-29, with more than 1,000 Homenetmen Scouts from over 20 countries and 109 chapters expected to participate.



The Jamboree, which typically take place every four years, will provide the opportunity for our generation of Homenetmen members to celebrate the organization's centennial in the motherland.

The preparatory seminar, which was held on Feb. 3-4, was organized by Homenetmen Eastern U.S. Regional Scouting Council, hosted by the Homenetmen Providence chapter, and led by regional scouting *Khmpabeds* (troupe leaders) *kouyr* Tamar Samuelian and *yeghpayr* Alex Ourfalian and the help of 18 leaders from various chapters. Held at the Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church of Providence, represented chapters included Boston, New Jersey, Washington D.C., Detroit, Chicago, New York, Albany, and Providence, with around 130 scouts in total.

The seminar kicked-off with an opening ceremony Saturday morning, followed by a day filled with activities and stations. The scouts were separated into groups of 12, and spent the day going from station to station together.

Every hour we moved onto a new station, learning about and preparing for our exciting trip. Some stations included learning *heghapokhakan* (patriotic) songs such as "*Kini Lits*," "*Lerner Hayreni*," and "*Artyok Ovker En*." We then learned how to tie knots, build tents, work on *sharkayin ashkhadank* (line discipline), and test our puzzle and problem solving skills. We also participated in debates and discussions about the current situation in Armenia, and how we in the Diaspora can help our homeland. By moving from station to station, we got a chance to meet and work with all 20 leaders, as well as build bonds with the scouts in our group.



After rotating through all the stations, we gathered together for a big game of Armenian-style Jeopardy, during which each team fought for the winning prize—a Homenetmen snapback hat!

To conclude the day, we held a *kharouykahantess* (show around a bonfire). Each group prepared songs, skits, *kanches* (chants), dances, and presented them. With each group putting forth their best efforts, it turned out to be a huge success! The night ended with all of us, hand in hand, singing *heghapokhagan* songs and dancing.

Although the seminar lasted two days, all the members were able to reconnect with old friends, build new friendships and relationships, and expand their knowledge of Homenetmen Scouting.

Personally, every time I attend these types of seminars, I feel more dedicated to the Armenian Cause. These events help us learn Armenian songs, gain knowledge about our country and people, help us better connect to the Armenian culture.

I am so inspired and can't wait to see what July's Jamboree has in store for us all!

National Athletic Tournament 2018: Back Where It All Began

By: U. Rita Bahnan

Worcester? Woosta? Worchester? Where on earth...

On January 14, 1933, the Armenian Youth Federation was born. Well, Worcester, MA just happens to be where the groundwork of the Armenian Youth Federation of the United States of America began (no big deal...kinda). Holding the title of the first chapter of the Armenian Youth Federation in the U.S.A., the Worcester "Aram" Chapter has had many expectations to live up to. Although the Worcester "Aram" Chapter may have decreased in size over the years, the comradery of the chapter has only continued to grow.

In 2017, the Worcester "Aram" Chapter was asked to host the AYF's annual National Athletic Tournament in 2018. The last time the chapter had hosted NATs was in 2009. Undoubtedly, hosting such a large-scale event for the first time in years was quite the task to take on for a chapter of less than 30 members. However, the Worcester Arams felt that hosting NATs in the city where the first AYF chapter of the U.S.A. was established would bring a special sense of unity and *home* to our fellow ungers.

Many of us are used to our regional and national events being hosted in larger cities (i.e. Boston, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Detroit, etc.). The perks of hosting an event in a smaller city is that the people, athletic facilities, and venues are all in close proximity. The first night of the weekend, on Friday, was held in the ballroom of the Hilton Garden Inn downtown, featuring DJ Chris "kidbibz" Habibian (a Worcester "Aram" alumni) and DJ Joe Tagessian. The Saturday morning to follow commenced the basketball games for the weekend. Ungers and ungerouhis shed sweat, blood, and tears leading some to losses and others to championships. To end this day of multiple intense games, the Saturday night event was again held in the ballroom at the main hotel, the Hilton Garden Inn. Ungers and ungerouhis had a blast dancing to singer Jaq Hagopian.

At the crack of dawn on Sunday morning, the volleyball games took place. On their own turf, the Worcester "Aram" Chapter (mixed team) were crowned the champions! Fun fact: The Worcester "Aram" Chapter won every single event at the first Olympics in 1934, setting an unsurpassable record. To follow volleyball, the last day of basketball games took place. Although many potential Kyrie's were on the court, only one team could take home the 'ship. For men's, the Boston A team took home the first place trophy named in memory of the late *Unger* Mark Alashaian, New Jersey came in second, and our ungers from the Western US came in third. For our ladies, Philadelphia placed first, Detroit second, and New Jersey third. Shoutout to the most valuable players of the weekend, U. Victoria Selverian and U. Alex Voskanian.

Bravo and congratulations to all athletes - each one of you is an MVP in Worcester's eyes!

Upon some last minute changes, Sunday night was hosted at the music lounge, Electric Haze. The venue reached maximum capacity and the event itself certainly ended the weekend with a bang. Worcester

was lucky to have DJ Chris “kidbibz” Habibian as the entertainer again, featuring a mix of many genres of music, including heghapoghagan. This last night of the weekend was Worcester’s treat of sending our ungers off with sore feet, no voices, and great memories with even better company! The night was truly *electric*.

What was most imperative in making this event a success was the aid and support from the community. The Worcester “Aram” Chapter extends our deepest love and gratitude to our fellow ungers, friends, family, and everyone who contributed to this event. Every single hand on deck and participant is what made this weekend an incredible success, and the Worcester Arams cannot thank everyone enough for partaking. We look forward to hosting our next event and seeing all of your beautiful faces again!

Ungeragan Cherm Parevnerov,
U. Rita Bahnan
Vice President of the Worcester “Aram” Chapter
AYF-YOARF Eastern United States

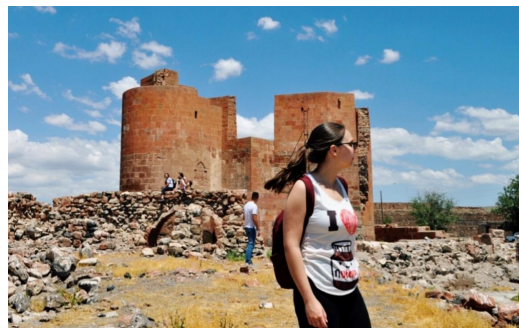


My Eleventh Trip to Armenia That Felt Like My First
By Sophia Yedigarian D.C. “Ani” Chapter

Saturday, July 1st, 2017. This summer was my eleventh time in Armenia, but on this particular day, it felt like the first.

I woke up exhausted after spending the previous night with friends, playing mafia and poking fun at each other into the wee hours of the night. Even though I knew to expect the impending exhaustion as we started our days bright and early every Saturday, I just couldn't skip out on a Friday evening with friends. Monday through Friday, I volunteered with the Women's Support Center in Yerevan, assisting with research on the sexual and reproductive health outcomes of domestic violence victims. Although I intend to make assisting these victims my life's work, after pouring over and translating some heavy interviews all week, I couldn't help but to want to kick back with my հայասեր/hayaser* (Armenia-loving) friends by the time Friday rolled around.

Every Saturday morning, Birthright Armenia volunteers filed onto a bus to explore our motherland. We'd visit both the popular sites, and some of the lesser-known ones as well. As the bus cruised along, some of the more chipper volunteers would distribute խաչապուրի/khachapuri (cheesy, flaky bread) or paprika Pringles to the groggier volunteers who didn't have time for breakfast. On this particular Saturday, we visited the Cathedral of Talin (no longer an active church), Surp Astvatsatsin Church, and Dashtadem Fortress (10th through 19th century, now a historical site). By lunchtime, we were ravenous, and also a little clueless as to what this lunch would soon entail.



When we arrived at the site of our lunch, the Birthright Armenia director, Sevan Kabakian, explained that a local family in the village of Dashtadem had opened their doors to us, and that the meal to come would be made entirely from scratch. Standing outside of a little house and shielding my eyes from the beating sun, I took in the scene around me. There were a few young, Armenian women, dressed in our traditional տարազ/taraz (costume), sitting on a bench, huddled together and giggling. Some of my

fellow Birthright volunteers were seeking refuge from the sun under the few trees in the yard, while the rest excitedly went in the direction of the clucking chickens in coops. The mouth-watering smell of խորոված/khorovats (barbeque) was seemingly wafting in my direction... or was it տոլմա/tolma (stuffed grape or cabbage leaves)? A few feet away from me appeared to be the man of the house, holding an accordion and towering over a little boy who was looking up at him in admiration. This man then turned towards us and said համեցէ՛ք/hametsek (roughly translates to “come on in” in this context), while motioning for us to make our way into the house.



As we walked into the house and past the kitchen, several women were scurrying about, and despite having their hands full, they smiled and exchanged pleasantries with a few of us. There is no such thing as too many guests in an Armenian home, as was exemplified by all 50 of us somehow sitting down to eat together in the same small room. The room was sparse, filled with only tables and chairs. Paint was chipping off of the walls. The table was filled with a hodgepodge of dishes, cups, and silverware, probably from borrowing some from the next-door neighbors in order to accommodate all of us. This hospitality (and doing so with the utmost happiness) is typical of Armenian villagers, who often are struggling financially. They extend their homes and their hearts to visitors and ensure that we feel comfortable and that we leave with full bellies. Even if we were strangers upon first arriving, we would leave feeling like family.

As we started munching on the splendor of food in front of us (freshly baked bread, hand-rolled tolma, tan made with milk from their cow...), a few men began to play beautiful music on some of Armenia's traditional instruments. I understand that folk music might not be everyone's favorite genre of music,

but as I looked around the room, every single person was absolutely fixated on this performance, and occasionally clapping along when the beat permitted it. I took one video for posterity's sake, and spent the rest of the time being completely present and soaking up these ephemeral moments.

After we all but cleared the food off the table, we were then asked to step outside of the family's home, and were surprised with a stunning dance performance by the taraz-wearing women who I saw earlier. At the conclusion of their performance, one of the women stepped towards us and began instructing us on how to replicate several of the dances that we had just watched. Despite a few of us clearly having two left feet (ahem, me) and Sevan needing to translate the instructions into English for some of us, our patient teacher continued with unparalleled enthusiasm for the entire duration of our lesson.



Between hearing my favorite instrument, the զուռնա/zurna, reverberating throughout the room, being patiently and lovingly taught how to dance our traditional dances, and the overall generous hospitality of the family who hosted us, my eyes welled up with tears a few times that day.

It didn't matter whether you spoke Eastern or Western Armenian, if your accent was too "American-sounding," or if you spoke any Armenian at all. It didn't matter where your parents came from, or which political party they supported. It didn't matter if you were born in Armenia, or elsewhere. It didn't matter if you were "100% Armenian," or if you "looked Armenian." These characteristics have so often been the reason for ridiculing others in the diasporan community in the United States, and for

driving a wedge within our already-small community. And during these moments, on July 1st, none of this mattered.

Some of us were from countries with an almost nonexistent Armenian community. Some of us had never had any exposure to anything Armenian, so we decided to leave our comfort zones and go straight to Armenia. Some of us were born and raised in Armenia, and had never crossed its borders into another country. Some of us had freckles, or light brown to blonde hair, or small noses, or pale skin. Some of us were not even Armenian by blood. Yet there we were, sharing a meal together, clapping along to the same songs, holding pinkies during the same dances, and exchanging smiles even when we didn't have a language in common.

What mattered is what we *did* have in common. What we shared in our hearts that day.

This was the day that felt like it was my first time *really* experiencing Armenia. And this was the day I fell even more in love with Armenia and its beautiful people. Our beautiful people. After spending almost a month at my job site delving into a social issue which has since become my passion, and then experiencing this excursion with Birthright Armenia, filled with so much history, music, food, tradition, language, fellowship... our culture, my heart was so full.

If you would like to submit any articles for the Gamavori Tsaynuh, please contact us at prc.eusa@homenetmen.org or pr@ayf.org

Articles must be submitted by the 20th of the month.

SAVE THE DATES

Homenetmen Scout Seminar April 8th - 6th New Jersey

Homenetmen Scout Seminar 13th - 15th Detroit

AYF Junior Seminar May 25th - 28th Camp Kweebec

Homenetmen Navasartian Games June 30th - July 4th Washington DC

85th Celebration of the AYF July 21st Warwick, Rhode Island

AYF Olympics August 30th - September 3rd 2018