



The Youth Newsletter

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Trip to Rio

By Mari Manoogian

For three weeks this summer, I had the privilege of attending the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro through the George Washington University School of Business' sports and event management program. As a student in a Master of Arts program studying public diplomacy and global communications, this opportunity presented itself as a once-in-a-lifetime chance to experience sports diplomacy firsthand.

I spent the three weeks collecting data for the International Olympic Committee, attending classes and guest lectures with GW, and working at USA House—the de facto meeting place of Team USA and friends.

While in Rio, I met officials, sponsors, national committee representatives, and yes, athletes. Although I did not get the chance to connect with the now famous gymnast Houry Gebeshian or other athletes representing Armenia, I did, however, meet an athlete of Armenian descent.



Nareg Guregian (left) is an Armenian-American athlete who has competed for Team USA as a rower since 2007, and graduated from the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian High School in Los Angeles. A proud Armenian-American, Nareg even was a camp counselor at Hye Camp on the west coast. So, when I physically bumped into him at the USA House, we instantly connected. We chatted about growing up in the Armenian community in the United States, his fiancée's gold medal winning performance on the women's Team USA rowing team, and bonded over the massive number of Armenian "aunties" we both have who love to keep up with our lives on social media.

Our meeting was serendipitous: Nareg and his men's pairs partner, Andrew Weiss almost didn't qualify for Rio. Both were cut from the men's eight and men's four boats, and ended up beating out former Olympians to secure their trip to Rio as a pair.

I was getting ready to head out for the evening, and was waiting to talk to my professor when I ran into Nareg. When I met Nareg, it was toward the end of my trip, and I was feeling a little homesick. Meeting a fellow Armenian-American from home who totally understood what I was feeling was exactly what I needed to

finish the trip strong. Nareg and I have stayed in touch since leaving Rio, and I hope to remain friends with him for a long time.

The trip to Rio was nothing short of life changing. I firmly believe that when young Armenian-Americans are exposed to phenomenal educational and career development opportunities, our community becomes stronger, and our potential to build a strong Armenia becomes greater. I hope, someday, to be able to use what I learned to conduct a sports diplomacy or sports development program with children in Armenia, and contribute in some small way to the development of Hayastan.

'Rise and Raise:' Why Homenetmen Matters

By Manoug Mardirossian

Homenetmen is a worldwide non-profit Armenian organization dedicated to sports and scouting, founded in Constantinople in 1918 by Shavarsh Krissian, Krikor Hagopian, and Hovhannes Hintilian. Their purpose was to create an organization that would help strengthen and teach Armenian youth. That message was made clear with their motto, "*Partsratseer, Partsratsoor*" ("Rise and Raise"). Essentially, it meant that you should elevate yourself as well as elevate those around you. As a member of the nearly 100-year-old organization, I can attest to that motto being just a small part of what being part of Homenetmen is all about.



After its establishment, Homenetmen (the Armenian General Athletic Union and Scouts, in English) eventually expanded and spread all over the world where Armenians lived. There are currently chapters in Armenia, Lebanon, Syria, Argentina, France, England, Canada, the United States (Eastern and Western regions), as well as several other cities across the globe. The international presence of Homenetmen is a testament not only to the strength of the Armenian people, but also to the principles of the organization's founders.



I am a proud member of the Homenetmen Boston chapter. Founded in 1973, the Boston chapter is one of 10 chapters in the United States Eastern Region. For most members, being a part of Homenetmen, at least in Boston, isn't something you really chose. Rather, it is something you are born in to—a generational thing. And while many of its members are the children of *Homenetmenagans* (Homenetmen members), the organization has always welcomed newcomers with open arms. All Armenians are welcome to be a part of the big family.

Homenetmen has been in my life for as long as I can remember. I was around five when I attended my first scouting meeting. It speaks measures that a majority of the kids I met through Homenetmen in those first years are still my friends to this day; they are people who I consider lifelong friends, and I have Homenetmen to thank for that.

Homenetmen's main focus is on scouting and athletics. As a member, you are not obligated to participate in both; however, most do. I along with many others grew up going to weekly scouting meetings, and participating in basketball and soccer teams. Athletics and scouting are the integral pillars of

Homenetmen, and both are imperative in their own way. While some may assume that athletics and scouting are very different things, they have more in common than one might think. In the case of Homenetmen, both succeed in bringing the Armenian youth closer together to create a special bond for the kids participating. They each also offer different ways of bonding with one another and enriching the youth

Being a scout at such a young age helps develop a sense of responsibility and discipline that is vital to our development and transition into adulthood. I have been a scout for 16 years and I know firsthand the vast amount of knowledge you garner by taking part in the organization. My friends and I met through the weekly scouts meetings and used that as a stepping stone to forging lifelong friendships outside the organization.

Besides acquiring knowledge and learning about our people's culture, the relationships you make are an important part of a *Homenetmenagan's* life. Not only did I form lifelong relationships with other scouts from the Greater Boston area, but also with members from other chapters. Once a year the Homenetmen Eastern Region holds a regional camping trip, during which scouts from the 10 chapters come together for a 5-day camp. During these camps, I have met and befriended many Armenians from other states, and I have Homenetmen to thank for that.

The bonds one makes through the organization also transcend borders. Every four years, Homenetmen hosts an international Jamboree in Armenia. The Jamboree is a 10-day camp, during which Homenetmen scouts from around the world get selected to participate. You get to take part in group activities on the campsite and visit the landmarks you grew up learning about. It is both a privilege and an honor to be selected, and I myself have been fortunate enough to have attended twice. I can say, without a doubt, that those trips were one of the most memorable times of my life. I met Armenians from all over the world. I have Homenetmen to thank for that.

Though I cannot speak for other chapters around the world, but from my own experience, I know that in the Eastern Region, the athletic component of Homenetmen is very important. Whether a weekly basketball practice, or competing in a youth soccer league, my friends and I found ourselves thrust into the athletic world at a very young age.

The weekly practices that take place throughout the year culminate at the annual Homenetmen Navarsartian Games, which take place annually over the July 4th holiday weekend. The games have been taking place for 26 years. The weekend is filled with competition from all 10 chapters as they compete in basketball, soccer, volleyball, and track and field, among other sports. The games are an example of a friendly competition that brings together Armenian youth from all over the region.

Much like the scouting Jamboree, Homenetmen hosts a World Games every four years as well. Athletes from chapters all around the world come together and represent their region against one another in friendly competition. Just like with scouts, the regional and the world games help you meet and make lifelong friends from all around the world.

Homenetmen has been an integral part of the worldwide Armenian community for nearly a century now. The hundreds of chapters spread across the globe is a testament to the vision of the original founders. The three of them would be proud of what has been accomplished. Today, we must thank them for taking a simple idea and turning it into a global phenomenon. It is a testament to the Armenian people and the power of unity.

We, as the next generation, need to make sure that we maintain that level of importance. We need to ensure that the organization not only survives, but also keeps up with the times. It is our duty to continue to help emphasize that importance to the next generation much like our parents' generation did.



It is in our hands and no one else's. While I run the risk of sounding "preachy," through my experience in the organization, I urge the Armenian youth around the world to join this international movement. If you are not in Homenetmen, join. If you have kids that are not in Homenetmen, have them join. It is a decision that you surely will never regret.

I can proudly say that I would not be the person I am today if it was not for this unique organization, and I am certain those who served in the organization before me would agree.

Now wouldn't it be something if the youth of our future could say the same thing years from now? It is in our hands to make sure they do.



Camp Javakhk: Uniting Diasporan Armenians

By Carnie Armenian

Our first jampar of 2016 is in full throttle in Akhalkalak, a historically Armenian town in Georgia since Armenians resettled here from Erzerum during the Armenian Genocide. Our first 3 years of camp we had a presence in Akhalkalak and Akhaltskha, adding Dzalka and Ninotsminda last year. As the committee and counselors had prepared for 120 campers, we are pleasantly overwhelmed and overflowing with more than 160 campers—our highest number to date! With campers between the ages of 6 and 15, the program is continuously expanding with demand by the local youth and organizations, as we hold camp in 4 towns and villages throughout the Armenian territories of Georgia.



Following meetings with the local Armenian Relief Society and community leaders, our 8 counselors who have come together from Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, London, and Canada prepared tirelessly for our first day of camp with the like cause: a successful camp in educating the youth of Javakhk on topics such as historically monumental Armenian women, Armenian inventors, Artsakh, our history that has shaped our people, current events, and most importantly the Armenian Cause.

Our first day of Camp Javakhk began with a welcoming ceremony at the newly renovated Youth Center of the Armenian Relief Society. Our campers' day began at 9:30 am with a prayer by Der Yeghisheh Haroutounian who ensured campers and parents that, "we are here in Javakhk, we will continue to be here, and we will continue to become stronger." Harkeli Karine Tatevosyan from the local Armenian Relief Society, who has ensured the continuity and success of camp over the last 5 years, then welcomed the group and introduced our counselors: Carnie Armenian (Boston), Garin Bedian (Boston), Puzant Berberian (Los Angeles), Ari Boghossian (London), Vahe Boghossian (London), Arman Ghaloosian (Toronto), Ani Khachatourian (Boston), Dickran Khodanian (Los Angeles).

Our typical day at camp continues through 5 pm where we educate the Armenian youth of Javakhk on topics and activities including Armenian songs, Armenian dances, arts and crafts, athletics, and more. Morning lessons are divided among three age groups where lessons are taught each at their own pace; thus far we've discussed Agos Newspaper, Hrant Dink, Lisbon 5, Nor Zartonk, as well as health, exercise, and general sanitation. Afternoon activities are then divided in mixed age groups of red, blue, and orange where the

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importance of leadership and team spirit among the camp is stressed. Currently the blue team is leading the camp competition in soccer, steal-the-bacon, and dodgeball; however, song competition will determine a clear winner!



Our counselors have come together in Javakhk with the purpose of developing ties and forming stronger connections with the Armenian community outside of our nation's rightful borders, sharing our love for Armenia and its people. As our objective is to host a successful camp for the youth of Javakhk, we simultaneously have formed friendships with the local counselors who not only participate in our daily camp schedule, but have chosen to give their time to us to share their rich community and surroundings of Javakhk. Yesterday our new friends took us on a trip to the nearby town of Ablar where we hiked among endless fields of green, visited a church in ruins and a small shrine, and ended the evening with a picnic adjacent to a small lake. It is not only the children we

look forward to interacting with but our peers whom we feel we've known for years. By the end of our 3 weeks in Javakhk, Georgia, we will have met well over 600 children, and in the years to come, we will continue to strengthen our relationship, share our knowledge, and move forward in creating a new Armenia.

Home Away from Home: Camp Haiastan

By Austin Helie

722 Summer Street, Franklin, MA, 02038. To some, this address represents a home away from home. Camp Haiastan has been exactly that for many of my friends, as well as myself. Thirteen of my summers have been dedicated to spending time in Franklin with friends from all over the world. By now, if you have never been to camp before, you are probably wondering why I would do such a thing. The short answer is because I was given some of the best summers of my life, growing up, going to camp for two weeks. Once I was too old to be a camper, I felt it was only right that I worked as a counselor to give back and preserve for a younger generation what I personally looked forward to for 351 days of the year.



My first encounter with Camp Haiastan was when I was eight years old. We were on our way to drop my older brother off for third year as a camper and as soon as we arrived I was mesmerized. It was my first true exposure to anything relatively influenced by Armenian culture besides going to church every Sunday. The sounds of Onnik Dinkjian filled the air accompanied by the smell of fresh kebab. We sat in the office to check my brother in, which is when I first met Baron Peter Jelalian, otherwise known as "P.J. Hoops". The energy that filled camp was alluring and I begged my parents to let me stay for the two weeks. Even though I had nothing packed, my mother finally agreed to let me stay. Living only forty-five minutes away from Camp Haiastan has its perks. I was given sheets and a pillow for the first night and my parents came the next morning, bright and early, dropped off my clothes, a water bottle, and enough bug-spray and sunscreen to supply a small army. The

first day of Camp was filled with many different activities including sports, arts and crafts, and Armenian school. I quickly fell into the daily routine, which has not changed much over the years. As the two weeks came to a close, I did not want to leave. That summer marked the beginning of my passion for Camp Haiastan and I was hooked.

After working the past three and a half summers at camp, I moved up from SIT, to counselor, to head counselor. Camp has a completely different perspective once experienced from behind the scenes. Certain activities that seemed to magically happen, became transparent. When working nine weeks at an overnight camp, it becomes tiring, but a specific appreciation is formed after going through what previous counselors had gone through. If you have never been to camp and are debating to go, take a leap of faith and don't miss out. Whether to attend as a camper, work as a staff member, or even visit on a Sunday for a picnic, do yourself a favor and go experience what many of us call our second home.



The Unforgettable Experience of Panagoom2k16

By Lori Samuelian and Tvene Baronian

Sweat trickled endlessly down our backs as the heat only progressed over time. Dozing bodies were packed tightly in their sleeping bags, and the cramped space only made the cabin conditions more overwhelming. Although the conditions were seemingly unbearable, the "Arenoushes" (older girl scouts) woke up filled with joy and ready for an unforgettable Panagoom experience.

Panagoom started with a bang! It was held on August 10th to the 14th at Camp Greenough in Yarmouth, Massachusetts. After settling in, we were called for the first flag-raising of the panagoom. The

veteran "Ari's" (older boy scouts) and Arenoushes would smirk deviously at the newcomers who would be forced to do the flag-raising. Although the leaders relentlessly guided the newbies, it was a terrifying experience for fear of messing up. After eating lunch and regaining our energy, we would split into two groups for interesting rounds of icebreakers. Although it was only our first day at panagoom, it felt like we had been there for years because we were having so much fun.

The next few days of Panagoom would get much more exciting. In the mornings, the Arenoushes would have "marzank" (exercise) with their leaders. Marzank would be followed by flag-raising, breakfast and then the activity that was loved by all... the lake. The lake was always filled with the happy smiles of Kouyrs and Yeghpays; this was because we were able to go every day. Whether it be jumping in the lake or using the canoes, everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves.

There were always those Kouyrs and Yeghpays that did not wish to participate in the lake activities. Luckily, Kouyr Maral Kachichican from New Jersey, often referred to as "the arts and crafts lady" by the scouts, brought materials for all the scouts to make bracelets, necklaces, and key chains. Arts and crafts have always been a panagoom favorite.

Another daily activity included "kharouyg" practice. At night time, we would sit around a camp-fire, sing songs and prepare little skits. The learning of these songs and skits is what we refer to as "kharouyg practice". We would sing Armenian heghapoghagan songs, including Kini Lits, and we would shout out some long-time favorites such as the butterfly song.

Another one of the activities we did during the day included the "Arshav" (hike). The Ari's and Arenoushes lines were separated into two teams as we hiked into the woods while loudly chanting some of our favorite "ganches" (short songs). We ended up in the middle of nowhere and had a "ganch off". These events were definitely fun, however there were also educational activities done throughout the day too. Lectures

included Armenians competing in the Rio Olympics and the impact on future Olympians, current issues in Armenia, and the situation in Artsakh. Another important learning opportunity for the scouts was a chance for the scouts to give their ideas on how to make improvements to the organization. The scouts were able to come together and brainstorm ideas that included making and selling Homenetmen apparel, and adding more events through the year so this wonderful group of kids all across the east coast can see each other more.

Although the day-time activities were enjoyable, the night activities were just as fun. The first night, the scouts participated in speed dating. The Kouyrs and Yeghpays sat opposite each other and had thirty seconds of free interaction. The activity of the second night was "A-Minute-to-Win-it" Competition, where the Kouyrs and Yeghpays were separated into teams leaving them with a minute to complete each task; such as stacking cups and balancing balloons.



During the third and fourth night, the scouts created new skits, and practiced old skits in order to prepare for the grand "kharouygahantes". On the last night of the camp, parents and friends are invited to the camp for dinner. Following the dinner, the scouts put on a show for the guests that include the new and old skits/songs, and this is what is referred to as the "kharouygahantes". With the campfire lit brightly, the Kouyrs and Yeghpays performed a wonderful show for the parents and other veteran scouts. After these entertaining performances, we all got up and danced Armenian traditional dances. Although this was the last official event of the night, the best part of the camp was yet to come.

What caps off the weekend, just like every other panagoom was a game of "hartsagoom". Hartsagoom is a game where former scouts try to sneak into the camp and steal a flag. The camp puts scouts as guards (known as "bahags") at set locations to protect the camp from these "intruders". The game is usually played at night which makes it all more adrenaline pumping. Having a chance to be "bahag" during hartsagoom is every scouts dream. Being a bahag requires a lot of strategy and courage. The game can get intense because when the intruders are caught, they can be tied up until everyone from the group is found. But the game is for fun, and in the end everyone is a part of the Homenetmen family. These type of games lead to lifetime stories and great laughs. So this year, five yeghpays tried to capture the flag, but the scouts were prepared and caught them all quickly.

In the morning, all of the scouts awakened to enjoy their final day at panagoom with their friends from other states. After flag lowering in full uniform, the scouts all took pictures together and bid their final goodbyes. All of the Kouyrs and Yeghpays left anxiously anticipating Panagoom2k17.

Homenetmen Providence Chapter's 35th Anniversary Celebration

By Ari Nalbandian

The Providence Homenetmen chapter celebrated their 35th Anniversary on Saturday, June 4, 2016, at Venus de Milo in Swansea, with a Gala Banquet and dance. Guests which included ARF Eastern Central Executive member Unger Levon Attarian, Homenetmen Eastern Regional Executive member Yeghpayr Vicken Khatchadourian, ARS Eastern Regional Executive member Ungerouhy Talin Mkrtshjan, Archpriest Father Gomidas Bagsarian Pastor of Sts. Vartanantz Church and the Assistant Pastor Father Kapriel Nazarian, were all honored at the event.



With over 200 people in attendance, the night started off with a procession of the Providence Homenetmen Scouts marching band and flag-bearers. Yeghpayr Raffi Rachdouni and Kooyr Menar Tarbinian then led the crowd with the singing of the Star Spangled Banner, Mer Hairenik and Harach Nahadag. The food was then blessed by Der Gomidas and a moment of silence followed for the founding fathers of Homenetmen. Kooyr Siran Krikorian and Yeghpayr Raffi Rachdouni were the hosts of the evening and welcomed the honored guests of the evening, from the ARF, Homenetmen, ARS, AYF, Hamazkayin, and Sts. Vartanantz Church.

Before the dinner, a presentation was given by Yeghpayr Harout Arakelian (from CA; former member and scout of Providence Homenetmen). The presentation displayed pictures from various athletic, scouting and social events from the past 35 years of the Providence Homenetmen chapter.

Next, Providence Homenetmen executive chairman, Yeghpayr Sarkis Tarpinian, gave a speech and presented awards to members of the Providence Homenetmen Chapter who had held the records for most years served on the executive board since the chapter's founding: Y. Hamo Rachdouni (8 years), K. Anahid Attarian (9 years and the first ever female chairperson), Y. Sarkis Tarpinian (13 years), Y. Harout Taraksian (15 years) and Y. Christapor Krikorian (18 years; the longest serving member). In addition, plaques praising the vision and relentless efforts of the only four remaining founding fathers of the Providence Homenetmen Chapter were presented and noted the number of years served in the Providence Executive: Y. Rosdom Jawharjian (1 year), Y. Sarkis Yepremian (9 years), Y. Sarkis Minassian (10 years) and Y. Hagop Khatchadourian (11 years).

Pastor of Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church, Archpriest Father Gomidas Baghsarian, praised the founders, members and all of the supporters for their 35 years of effort. Today, the Providence community benefits from the members of Homenetmen and in particular the scout's participation in all community functions, especially serving on the Altar.



Representative of the Homenetmen Eastern Regional Executive, Yeghpayr Vicken Khatchadourian, congratulated the Providence community for their unyielding dedication that resulted in successful accomplishments today and in past 35 years. In addition, he bestowed Service medals (Dzarayoutyan Shekaneshan) to all four founding fathers, after a short bio for each: Y. Rosdom Jawharjian, Y. Sarkis Yepremian, Y. Sarkis Minassian and Y. Hagop Khatchadourian.

After the program, singer Zareh Kasbarian from Washington and his band, entertained the crowd with great music and lively dancing. The evening ended with the singing of Heghapokhagan songs.

Quiz Questions:

- **Who is the Armenian-American athlete who competed for Team USA rowing team at the Rio Olympics?**
- **What is the Homenetmen motto?**
- **What Homenetmen events occur every 4 years?**
- **In what town is Camp Haiastan located?**
- **What is the game called where former scouts try to sneak into the camp and steal a flag?**

UPCOMING EVENTS: Save the Date!

**WHAT: AYF-YOARF Senior
Seminar 2016**

**WHEN: September 30th-
October 2nd**

WHERE: Camp Haiastan

WHAT: AYF Junior Athletic Games

WHEN: September 23-25th, 2016

WHERE: Camp Haiastan

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