



The Youth Newsletter

Երիտասարդական Լրագիր

PROVIDED BY THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION & HOMENETMEN EASTERN REGION USA

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“Մեր Ցաջողութիւնը Մեր Հաւաքական Ուժին Մէջ Է” “Our Success Lies Within Our Collective Power.”

AYF Junior Seminar 2016

By Junior Seminar Committee 2016

To better understand how Armenians live today, we must look back to where we came from. There was a time where Armenians could only be found in one area of the world. Each village would know the names and lineage of every individual who lived there and community members relied on each other to survive and thrive. There was no such thing as Skype, YouTube, or Facebook. The only thing they had keeping them connected was the common ground of their culture and traditions.

As time went on, the world of the Armenians both expanded and shrank. We experienced great victories and devastations, but no matter what, we always held on to our culture and tradition strongly and proudly. Our ancestors went to great lengths to inscribe their stories into history so that one day we could pass them along and keep their legacies alive.



Now that 101 years have passed since the atrocities that took place in western Armenia, it's time we start looking at things a little differently. The years leading up to 1915 were the start of the greatest Armenian divide. As our lands and numbers decreased, our pride and spirit stayed strong, and for the first time we experienced a new phenomenon, one that William Saroyan referred to as “a new Armenia.” Our ancestors were forced out of their homes and needed to seek refuge in foreign lands, and because of that Armenians began creating and expanding their global footprint.

No matter where in the world we escaped to, Armenians were able to maintain their traditions and culture to continue passing on their history. We built communities all over the world that continue to grow in strength and numbers. When one of those communities is threatened, we now have the access to learn about their situation and decipher the means to send get them the support they need. For example, not only are we aware of the events that are taking place in Artsakh right now, but for the first time we are able to see what's happening to our brothers on the front lines in real time. This would never have been possible just 20 years ago.

We saw support flood in from every corner of the world during the centennial, after the assassination of Hrant Dink, and now with the situation in Artsakh. With the power of technology we now have a window looking into each of these “new Armenias.” While we celebrated, mourned, and protested in our own ways and in our own homes, we were also able to witness our brothers and sisters across the world doing the same. Although the land within Armenia's present day borders may one of the smallest areas it's ever been, the rest of its land is spread out throughout the world.

All Armenian diasporan communities throughout the world all share the same culture, tradition and history, together making up the new Armenia with the same common goals: love and respect for one another. That is why this



year's AYF-YOARF Junior Seminar theme will be "Մեր Յաջողութիւնը Մեր Հաւաքական Ուժին Մէջ Է", meaning "Our Success Lies Within Our Collective Power." Our juniors will learn about the successes and hardships faced by different diasporan communities and will be encouraged to discover how these communities are similar to their own. The Junior Seminar Committee has been working hard since January to make sure this event will be memorable for every Junior who will be there. We are asking all parents to consider giving their children the invaluable opportunity to be a part of it this Memorial Day weekend. If you have any questions please feel free to email the committee at seminar@ayf.org

Armenians have come a long way. It may not have been the smoothest ride but we survived and thrived for thousands of years. United, we are all one Armenia and we will continue to survive and thrive by passing our traditions, culture, and history down to our youth. We are not defined by the fact that we were not born in the homeland or don't live there either, but rather by the fact that the homeland was born in us and lives in us. That is why - no matter where in the world we may be - we will continue to build our new Armenia.

How a Community Came Together

By Michael Demirchian

On April 6th, a young woman took to Twitter when she noticed the billboard placed by Clear Channel Outdoor Boston at a very close proximity to our beloved Armenian Heritage Park. The billboard was by an anti-Armenian Genocide billboard. Just imagine if there was a billboard today in a major city denying the Holocaust ever happened. As Armenians, we could not let this happen. In this situation, the timing was everything, as I saw the tweet after my fellow Unger, Garin Bedian, retweeted it, and before I had a second to process the sincerity of the issue, I received a text from a fellow Ungerouhi, Anoush Youssoufian, bringing the tweet to my attention as Chair of this year's Armenian Genocide Commemoration at the Park. I was in the middle of class, so I asked my committee to determine the best method of calling and contacting, and the rest was history. ASA Suffolk founder Lori Yogurtian created a Facebook event, a "Phone Campaign to Take down the Billboard" before I was out of my meeting. It was an incredible sight, to see the event grow in magnitude so quickly, and in one day I can't tell you how many people confirmed they called the company, but it took less than 24 hours for the Boston Armenian community to unite to successfully quell this flaring act of genocide denial. A chain reaction, one might call it.

After confirmation of the removal of the disappointing and sickening billboard, the community was alerted to New Jersey experiencing the same form of denialist advertising by the notoriously infamous FactCheckArmenia.com, who certainly had no shame in publicly boasting that the billboards were sponsored by the Turkic Platform. Similar efforts were made in Chicago in the Chicago Tribune, and in New York City using written messages in the sky, to no avail. Once the ANCA got involved by using their wealth of e-mail addresses to promote activism in the community, any doubt of justice being served was eradicated. All of this action from Armenians in Boston, New Jersey, Chicago, and New York resulted in not only success, but more.

Taking a step back and observing the bigger picture allows for the discovery of the symbolism of all of these individual community responses. We as Armenians, regardless of ANY organizational, political, or social involvement, came together for a common cause. It's amazing what we can do when we choose to join our hands and spread a common message.

Unquestionably, the Armenians in the diaspora have this incredible stored energy, this potential to rise above the doubt. In order to see the first of the three R's (Recognition, Restitution, Reparation) accomplished, we need to continue the fight, not just during the month of April, not only when a billboard arises, but every single day. It's as



simple as telling an Armenian joke in the break room at work, or having a small Armenian flag bumper sticker on your car. Remember, knowledge is power. It is through the education of our youth, through involvement in our Armenian and non-Armenian communities, and through success in our own lives, that we can keep the fight against genocide denial alive. Justice will prevail. Let's honor the martyrs, now saints, by being successful, and NEVER forgetting what our people went through 101 years ago.

(Above) Picture of the removed billboard

Tensions Peak in Artsakh

By Austin Helie

Tension among both Azeri and Armenian occupants of the Artsakh (also known as the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh) region and surrounding areas is at an all-time high. Aside from scattered provocations in recent years, the fighting has been at bay since the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan was established in 1994 by way of Russia. Artsakh, although within Azerbaijan's borders, consists primarily of ethnic Armenians. The Artsakh region voted to join Armenian parliament after Soviet rule weakened, which agitated what were already strained relations. By the time the Soviet Union had collapsed, starting from 1988 up until 1994, war broke out between Azerbaijan and the people of Artsakh. The war left over 30,000 casualties combined on both sides. By 1994, both sides were ready for a ceasefire with their manpower being exhausted. However, even after the signing of the ceasefire, there has always been a fear that this situation could escalate again. Then at the beginning of April 2016, Azeri forces launched a large-scale assault along the border of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. This situation left over 30 Armenian soldiers and civilians dead.



Statements regarding the dispute over the region, made by Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense, included that it would keep their land under any circumstances and that it will "strengthen the defense of the liberated territories." Comments such as these indicate that fighting will only increase and it is only a matter of time until the ceasefire is disestablished and full-out war renews. Armenia's actions of building up and upgrading their military forces indicate they are preparing for something larger than a border skirmish.



Analyzing from a third-person perspective, to Azerbaijan, Artsakh is one-fifth of the country's land. Although occupied by ninety-five percent Armenians, the region is a large portion of their country. On the other hand, as a region, Artsakh declared itself an independent republic in 1991 due to the distinction of the region's people from the rest of the country. Both sides desire the land and there is no agreement on settling for anything less than the whole region. This mentality from both countries sets up the circumstances for war to break out at any point, especially after the comments made by the Azeri Ministry of Defense.

Put Your Game Face On... Again!

Do you think you have what it takes to become a **champion**? You better work hard because your friends and fellow members from Albany, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Florida, New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Providence, Washington DC, Montreal, Hamilton, Toronto, Cambridge, St. Catherines, and Laval chapters will make you earn your spurs.

Whether this is your first or tenth time to the Navasartian games, the Eastern USA Region of Homenetmen welcomes you to the biggest tournament of the year with various sports you can choose to compete across many age groups. Be the one to bring the title back to your chapter by registering today at www.Homenetmen.com/Navasartian



The 2016 Homenetmen US Eastern Region's Navasartian Games will be hosted by the Homenetmen of Chicago Chapter from June 30th- July 4th in Chicago, IL.

ACTIVITIES

Word search:

B I L L B O A R D Q X W I H B C N G
D K L C G Y M R F L S G T W R C A Y
G T Z V E B J X Y E J U X J P R C D
T W F A D A D S U U D Q Q K T M U U
M J Q H K K S K U L X V F S Y T M X
X S Z K J S D E X V O Y A U U G B R
M E D G Z J K V F T W K W H E Z E B
J X B C M U X D O I H J L B W R I Y
E R M O K A B S E A R O P S A I D U
B F F J E J Z U X M S E M I N A R I
I R C R Q N N O I T I N G O C E R Q
A B V H H E Z B O S S U C C E S S F
Q K P B I U R U H U F N P F O G C A
Z F H U B C M J D I Z P H Q B Z X S
C N O I P M A H C J D I Z J F X F T
C B I G T E D G N L K L Y H D N X A
V H O A A N H G O N J H C P I E B K
B Y Z D N A V A S A R T I A N M Z K

SUCCESS
SEMINAR
DIASPORA
NAVASARTIAN
CHICAGO
CHAMPION
BILLBOARD
ARTSAKH
RECOGNITION
CEASEFIRE

Quiz Questions:

- What is this year's Junior Seminar theme?
- Where is the Armenian Heritage Park located?
- What is the name of the group that posted the anti-Armenian Genocide Billboards?
- What year did Armenia and Azerbaijan agree to the initial ceasefire?
- Where's this year's Homenetmen Navasartian Games?

UPCOMING EVENTS: Save the Date!

WHAT: AYF-YOARF Senior Olympics 2016

WHEN: September 1-5, 2016

WHERE: New Jersey



WHAT: Homenetmen Navasartian Games

WHEN: July 1-4, 2016

WHERE: Chicago, IL

**Hotel: Westin Chicago Northwest
Itasca, IL**



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ՇԻԶԱԿՕ Յուլիս 2016

WHAT: AYF-YOARF Junior Seminar 2016

WHEN: May 27-30, 2016

**WHERE: Camp Lutherlyn
Prospect, PA**

APPLICATIONS OPEN!

