



---

---

# The Youth Newsletter

## Երիտասարդական Լրագիր

---

---

PROVIDED BY THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION & HOMENETMEN EASTERN REGION USA

Volume 1, Issue 3

May 2016

---

---

## The Greatest Lesson Learned: How To Be An Armenian

Because being "hye" means so much more.

*By Mary Apkarian*

Oftentimes I find myself being asked what nationality I am. "You're Spanish, right?" No. "You're Jewish?" No. "You're definitely, like, Arabic or something, right?" No, again. First of all, dark, curly hair does not automatically mean a person is Spanish. Second, being Jewish is not a nationality, it's a religion. Third, "Arabic" is a language. I think my favorite part of this whole guessing game is the look on the person's face when I tell them I'm Armenian. "You're a what?" Uh, you heard me. I said Armenian. You know, like from that little Christian country called Armenia that is bordered by Iran, Georgia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan? See, it doesn't make me angry that my peers, as well as educators, are unaware of this small country with such rich history, indescribable artifacts, and breathtaking scenery. What bothers me is that they are, for most of the time, close-minded to hearing what I have to say.



I remember walking around in elementary school being embarrassed of who I was. I come from a suburban, mainly white-dominated community of Americans that are hardly aware of their own family's ancestry. I was always the odd one out. On Saturdays, while my friends were having birthday parties, going to soccer practice, or even ballet, I was forced to spend my day in Armenian school. Though at the time I was upset about missing all these "cool" activities, I learned to read, write, sing, dance, and recite poems in Armenian. I also was lucky enough to learn about some of the greatest Armenian musicians, inventors, writers, and singers, as well as the "lost" history of my ancestors—the ones that lost their land, were forced to change religion, were burned, tortured, and massacred.

Certainly, Armenian school wasn't the only opportunity I had to learn about my culture. I became a member of organizations such as Homenetmen, which taught me to be an Armenian scout, leader, and survivor, the AYF (Armenian Youth Federation), which continues to teach me about present-day Armenia, and of course, Nayiri Dance



Ensemble, which taught me passion for cultural dance. These organizations have provided me with the greatest understanding of where I come from; they gave me an understanding of the past, the base for the present, and a comprehension for the future of Armenians. Most importantly, they gave me my best friends: people I was able to connect to without having to try to be someone else. I am able to relate to them in two languages, and able to experience new things with them, including going to Armenia for the first time.

Because I was lucky enough to have these experiences, I realized what being Armenian truly means and how it has taught me several lessons no educator is able to teach. It has taught me to never give up on a cause that is incredibly crucial to me--even if it means fighting for 100 years. It has taught me that I must always be willing to educate, no matter how frustrating it may be. It has taught me how to be strong, prideful, and courageous in all my endeavors. It has taught me that being able to communicate in two languages isn't such a bad thing after all. It's actually the greatest thing in the world, especially when you tell an American "yes esh em" means "hi, how are you?" which, for the record, it does not. It has taught me to be myself and be comfortable with sharing who I am and where I come from. Being Armenian is one gift I've received that I'd never, ever want a receipt for. I am unbelievably blessed and can't imagine being anything, or anyone else.

---



## Garó Paylan

*By Haig Aboyan*

In Turkey, Garo Paylan is known as a politician who is part of the Peoples' Democratic Party, but to Armenians he is much more. Garo Paylan was born in Istanbul, Turkey in 1972 to an Armenian family that originates its roots from Malatya. He then graduated from Istanbul University's School of Business, where his political passion was sparked. After graduating he became one of the founders of the Peoples' Democratic Party, and was part of the central

committee. He soon developed an interest for his Armenians roots, and the history of the Armenians within the borders of Turkey. Throughout his time as a politician he has made countless efforts to stop the denial of the Armenian Genocide. He is one of three politicians of Armenian decent to sit on the Grand National Assembly. In 2015, Paylan pushed for prosecutors to take action against hate speeches that had taken place prior to his efforts. At a Turkish press conference Paylan said this about hate speeches, "Each hate speech crime going unpunished pushes people targeted by hate speech to the 'dove's skittishness' and lays the ground for hate crimes..." The phrase 'doves skittishness' is part of an article Hrant Dink, a Turkish Armenian journalist, wrote in his bilingual newspaper, Agos. By using that specific phrase, the listener can understand that he was specifically referring to the hate speeches towards the Armenian population in Turkey.

But the name Garo Paylan has been coming up much more in the year 2016 than in 2015. On April 21, 2016, the Turkish Grand National Assembly hosted a session. There, Paylan stood up at the podium with a stack of papers, face down. He began his speech with, "Parev tsez". He then went on to discuss his suggestion on investigating the killings of Armenian politicians in 1915. Then one by one, he began displaying the pages that were stacked faced down. On each piece of paper was a different Armenian politician that was killed, exiled or arrested during the Armenian Genocide. He



then ended his address with, "Asdvadz irents hokin lusavoreh", which means, "May God illuminate their souls". Days after his address, a fight broke out within the Turkish parliament between the AKP party and the Peoples' Democratic Party. Paylan predominately blamed the AKP party for the events that took place that day. One week later on May 2, 2016, at another meeting, an additional fight broke out which was kindled by comments made by the Minister of Justice, Bekir Bozdog. Bozdog blamed Paylan for the outbreak that had taken place one week before. After the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Paylan said that Bekir Bozdags comments were "slanderous" and that many racist comments about his Armenian identity were made.

With the 101 years since the Armenian Genocide passing by this April, it is our responsibility as Armenians, either in the diaspora or not, to project our voices and opinions. And its people like Garo Paylan who lead the way and open new doors and opportunities for recognition, reparations and most importantly restitutions.

---

## Syria Conflict

*By Austin Helie*

During the month of March, 2011, the Arab Spring found its way into Syria, when peaceful protesters took to the streets to demand more freedom. The peaceful protests soon escalated to violent skirmishes between protesters and the Syrian military, laying the foundation for what would become a five-year conflict which continues today. A state of civil war broke out in Syria; the Rebels and government military were not the only factions present in this overwhelming destruction that as consumed the once peaceful country. Opposition of government created a power vacuum in which the Islamic State (IS) took advantage of, moving into Syria and gaining momentum through tactics such as propaganda and killing whoever opposed them.

Countries such as the U.S., Great Britain, France, Russia, and Turkey have entered this conflict on varying fronts. It is unclear who is helping who but with such large contenders comes large publicity. After a chemical weapon attack on rebels occurred, many of these countries stepped in to help ease the rising violence in Syria. Caught in the middle of the three main oppositions, the people of Syria who want nothing of this war have been forced to flee or remain in dangerous living conditions. Syrian refugees have become a topic of many news outlets in recent months and the refugee issue is one of the largest human issues at hand in the world right now. Syrians have been forced to become a diaspora community, similar to that of Armenians' after the Armenian Genocide.



Aside from being exiled from their homeland, diasporan Syrians often face problems different from those who are still struggling to live in Syria. While those in Syria are being starved from learning in school and dealing with the immediate effects of the conflict, diasporan Syrians will begin to face the same problem that Armenians have had to face: assimilation or "white genocide". Due to the conflict happening fairly recently, this current generation of Syrians will find it easy to hold onto their culture and values, but as time goes on a conscious effort must be made to retain key cultural identities such as language, dance, and food. Many third-generation Armenian-Americans still speak Armenian, but a handful of communities that lack language specific schools and cultural centers struggle with maintaining language ties down through generations. As time goes on, diasporan Syrians will have to face assimilation and maintain their cultural identity while conforming to their respectful location's language and culture to be able to live and work efficiently.

## 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](http://www.Homenetmen.com/Navasartian)

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



### Quiz Questions:

- **Garo Paylan is the founder of what political party?**
- **What did Garo Paylan do on April 21, 2016?**
- **Who did Garo Paylan quote during his press conference about hate speeches?**
- **Who is Syria's President?**
- **How long has the conflict Syria been going?**

## 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**



**Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ. Արևելեան Մ.Ն.**

**26րդ Նախաարդեան Խաղեր**

**ՇԻՔԱԿՕ Յուլիս 2016**

**Follow us on Instagram:**

**@Homenetmen.east**

**@ayfeast**