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## An interview with Ardy Kassakhian, City Clerk for the City of Glendale.



Given Ardy Kassakhian's (AK) very busy schedule, he took a few moments to answer some important questions about what he does, the role of Armenian-

Americans in the Community and how each of us can be more involved in City politics.

The City Clerk's primary responsibility is to accurately record the actions and proceedings of City Council, Redevelopment Agency and Housing Authority meetings.

AH: What is the most enjoyable part about your job?

AK: I love interacting with the public and reaching out to various groups. When I meet with a group who doesn't have a very thorough understanding of how the City works or what services are available to them, and by the end of the meeting have been able to share information about how my office can help or where to go to apply for a job within the City. I feel a great sense of accomplishment. I'm looking forward to the day when the Armenian-American community, which is still relatively new to Glendale, has been fully integrated into the fabric of our city organizations.

I believe immigrants bring a lot to our communities. They are hard working and want to achieve the American Dream. If we can help them do that, then we've accomplished a lot.

AH: We know you campaigned for your job, and it took a lot of time and effort to prepare and to win of course. You were known to have a very well organized campaign and your outreach efforts were impeccable. What was your success in terms of campaigning? What made it work?

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## Executive Director's Note

With just a few months into the New Year, we are moving forward with full force. There have been some changes to our leadership as the Executive Board has welcomed four new faces, Medik Baban, Helik Issagholian, Gayaneh Pezeshkian, and Serge Grakasian. Also, two previous board members, Ano Mansourian and Khachik Kalatian, were elected to the Regional Executive Board where we know they will continue to make great strides in expanding Homenetmen's outreach in the community.

Over the last 10 years, as we have expanded our services to our members and the community, we have outgrown our center. For the past year and a half, we have been actively looking for a satellite center. The board has found some good prospective locations and made a few offers but with no success. We are hopeful that this year we will make greater strides in this area.

Finally, in 2007 we are hoping to duplicate some of our success from last year with Choral Concert and the Glendale Friendship Games. As most of you remember, last year our Choir had an amazing debut performance and we know under the leadership of Alenoush Yeghnazar, they will continue to shine. Also, we have already started planning for the Glendale Friendship Games and our goal is to increase community involvement in the games and the festival. We encourage all our members to get involved with both activities.

On behalf of the Executive Board, I would like to thank all our members for their commitment to the organization, and I look forward to working with all of you this year.

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# Our Newest Division's Task Develop New Programs



Three years ago, Ararat formed a new division called the Programs Division, that would work along side the Executive Board and assist with the creation and implementation of various programs. Since then, the Programs Division has been spearheading new activities and helping enhance existing programs. This year, the Division is concentrating on developing a leadership program for Chapter members and broadening the organization's funding base.

The leadership program's focus is to provide a systematic method of producing cross organizational leaders, by introducing all members to the basic elements of leadership. Through hands-on training, mentoring by current leaders, as well as a defined set of study material, the goal is to provide resources for the Chapter's leaders to thrive in their respective roles.

The second area of focus is to initiate new sources of income for the Chapter. Whether applying for grants from foundations, corporations and government agencies or working with members to develop a planned giving and endowment program, the Division always tries to find new avenues of income in order to enhance Ararat's valuable programs.

The Programs Division is also working to expand the Chapter's involvement in the community through such activities as Graffiti Clean-up and Healthy Kids, Relay for Life, Coin and Toy Drive, as well as providing college counseling and career development programs to members. As our Chapter continues to grow and expand its outreach, the Programs Division invites individuals to join and work to improve the services we provide to members and the community.

## *An interview with Ardy Kassakhian,*

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AK: Thank you. That is a very nice compliment and it means a lot to have people notice the hard work that our team put into my candidacy and campaign. It's very difficult for me, even today, to refer to it as my campaign or my victory because it really was about getting many people involved in a movement. There hadn't been an open race for City Clerk in Glendale in 75 years. There were many people running – 9 total, and even though the race was tough, what made it so successful was the number of volunteers and particularly the youth who showed up to our campaign office wanting to help. Karekin Njdeh – the famous 19th century Armenian freedom fighter – once said that “If you wish to know a nation's future, just look at its youth.” I want our youth to have positive role models and be engaged in their communities and various organizations. Campaigns are an excellent way to be involved and learn a lot so we welcomed everyone with open arms. Fortunately, it worked. I'm glad to be where I am and couldn't have done without our volunteers. If they're our future, then the future looks bright! I admire the scouts, athletes and Ararat's staff and I truly cherish the friendships and relationships I've forged over the years with everyone.. I look forward to working with everyone in Ararat in the future for the betterment of our City and our City's future – our youth.

AH: How can Armenians be more involved in City affairs and politics? What are some of the misconceptions they have about City politics? Where can they find out more about the jobs available in the City?

AK: We're very lucky to live in a democracy that allows us to have a voice in our local government. Although Armenians have acquired a certain level of respect within a short period of time politically, there is still

a vacuum for qualified Armenian-Americans applying to City jobs in Glendale. We need to embrace every opportunity we have to serve the public in whatever capacity it may be. The most popular example is the Glendale Police Department. The GPD is looking to hire qualified young Armenian-Americans to join its ranks and serve the city. A misconception a lot of Armenians have of the City is that City work is something to fall back on. Most families will push their children to apply to law or medical schools and when they fall on hard times or employment is hard to come by, they will turn to the only entity which they think provides a steady and stable job – the City. The City is not a fall-back plan. Most people who work for the city have made this their life ambition to be in public service. I recommend young college students to consider careers working with the City and studying subjects like Public Administration, Urban Planning and Development or Civil Engineering in college because it will translate into a very rewarding and satisfying career in City Government. If anyone is interested in finding out more about a job with the City, they should check our Web site at [www.ci.glendale.ca.us](http://www.ci.glendale.ca.us). City offices are available to give presentations to groups who are interested in learning more about what they do.

AH: Lastly what do you think Homenetmen's role is in our community?

AK: Homenetmen attracts the best and the brightest in our community. I think that Homenetmen can play a big role in a city like Glendale. It is the largest youth athletic and scouting organization in the City and provides a positive outlet for children. I think that the Friendship Games were an excellent example of how a traditional Armenian organization can be the catalyst to building cross-cultural and generational bridges in our community. We have to encourage and promote these types of healthy, positive relationships with our fellow “Glendalians.”

## Basketball Seminar Teaches Coaches the Importance of Teaching Skills

On January 30th, the basketball division held a mandatory educational seminar for all coaches of Division D, E, F and G players. The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the chapter's goals regarding athletes who take part in the basketball program.

First, Housik Gukasyan, the Chapter's Athletic Director, outlined general rules regarding rosters, gym use, player conduct, and other procedural matters. Next, each coach was given a booklet that contained general guidelines for each division, broken down by gender and division. Arthur Rumaya reviewed the contents of the booklet and spoke to the group. The discussion started with results of a national survey regarding why children take part in sports, why they should be involved in sports, and what the coaches' goals for children this age should be and stressing how important it is to understand the child's point of view, balancing education with fun. Next, Arthur discussed the physical and psychological differences between children of various ages and presented ideas of how to teach and how to communicate with each of them, stressing patience and appropriate expectations.

The seminar then turned to the technical aspects of coaching. Arthur went on to talk about individual offensive and defensive skills and teaching methods for each age group and gender. He talked about what each age group was capable of and when to teach (and when not to teach) each skill. The same ideas of age readiness were discussed in regards to team skills and organized play. Throughout the discussion, Arthur stressed that practice must

be fun and interesting for the players.

The seminar ended with the message that in the end, what we must remember is that children come to Ararat to be with friends and make friends who share the same interests, background, and culture – basketball is just the tool we use to attract them.

## Ararat's Choir Second Annual Concert

The Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter through the Cultural Division formed the chapter's first choir. This choir began its practices by meeting once a week with their conductor Ms. Alenoush Yeghnazar. With 40 choir members, they presented their first annual concert last year in March with great success. This event being the only one of its kind in the extended Homenetmen family has gained much deserved attention as 400 ticket holders enjoyed 26 national and patriotic songs composed by various famous Armenian composers. This year again with great enthusiasm Ms. Yeghnazar and her choir will perform favorites and signature pieces from their repartee. We are sure that this year's concert will top last year's greatly reviewed event.

The Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter's Cultural Division is proud to present its Choir's Second Annual concert on March 25th at 6pm at the First Methodist Church of Glendale at 134 N. Kenwood St. in Glendale, for tickets please call (323)256-2564 or (818)419-1108.



## Homenetmen Welcomes Armenia's Soccer Team



Armenian's National Soccer Team visited California for the first time on January 11th and was warmly welcomed by Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter's members with a celebratory dinner. The team was visiting California to compete in two friendly soccer tournaments, one against Panama and the second against Fresno.

Homenetmen Ararat generously welcomed the team with a dinner, and a celebratory plaque to support their teamwork and their standing in the UEFA EURO Championships. Head coach Ian Porterfield accepted the plaque and also acknowledged those team members that were delayed. The team came straight from the airport, with no time for rest or a chance to put down their bags. Despite their 40 hour travel ordeal, the team was in good spirits, and eager to meet their fellow supporters in California.

Ararat leaders were thrilled to welcome the team; in attendance were Ararat's Executive Committee, Athletic Division Executive Committee, representatives from the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia, and Homenetmen Western U.S. Region, and Major League Soccer Player Alecko Eskandarian, Toronto Football Club's forward. Many in attendance sat down with team members, chatted, and took pictures. The plaque was generously accepted by Coach Porterfield, and team members passed it around and posed for pictures, before returning to their hotel rooms to get the much needed rest they deserved.



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**Get Involved !!  
Become a Volunteer**

### **Calendar of Events**

#### **MARCH:**

Choir performance 3/25/07  
Tabriz Night 33/31/07

#### **APRIL:**

Easter Festival 4/08/07  
Pot Luck 4/09/07  
Indoor soccer 4/13-15  
Fresno Games 4/14-15  
O.C. Games 4/21-22  
Genocide Memorial 4/22/07  
Allen Volleyball Tournament 4/25/07  
Sanctioned trnment, Ping Pong 4/29/07

#### **MAY:**

Mother's Day 5/06/07  
Navasartian Opening Ceremony 5/06/07  
Allen Volleyball Tournament 5/12/07  
Allen Volleyball Tournament 5/16/07  
Armenia Fundraising Event 5/19/07  
Allen Volleyball Tour 5/19-20  
Sunday Cultural Event 5/20/07

## **Ararat Getting Ready to Participate in Pan Armenia Games**



Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" chapter is representing the City of Glendale, by participating in the Pan Armenia Games which will take place on August 18-27, 2007 in Yerevan, Armenia. "Ararat" will be participating with 70-75 athletes and coaches in the following sports;

- Soccer
- Boys and girls basketball,
- Boys and girls volleyball
- Ping Pong

A committee was formed in early January and has been working to organize and plan the trip. Currently a selection process is underway to determine the final participants. 30% of athletes participating in this year's games will be "first timers". Coaches have been appointed by two athletic division Executive Committees. In



order to raise money to send our athletes to the Pan Armenian Games, "Armenian Night" a fundraising dinner is scheduled for May 19th.