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NEWSLETTER

Volume. XII , Number 2

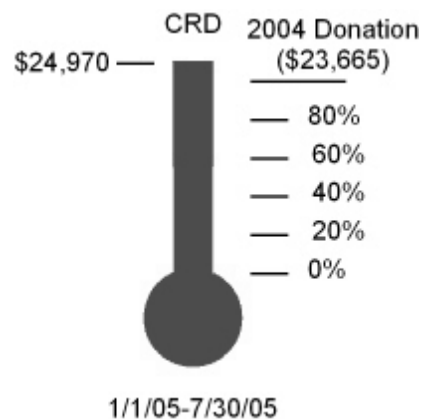
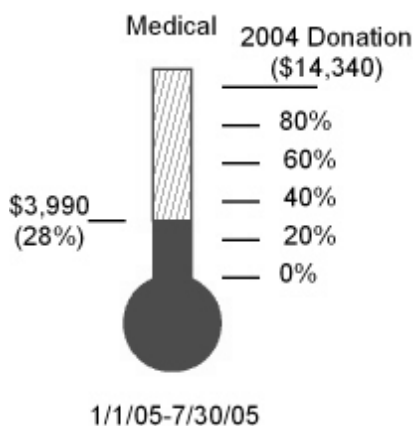
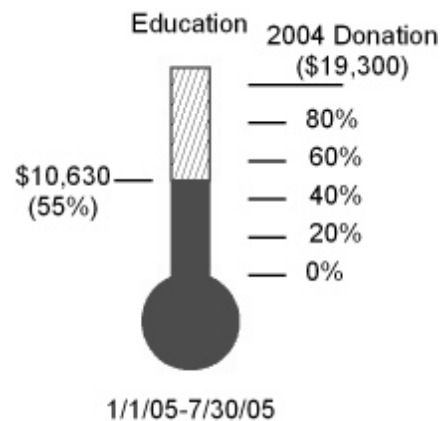
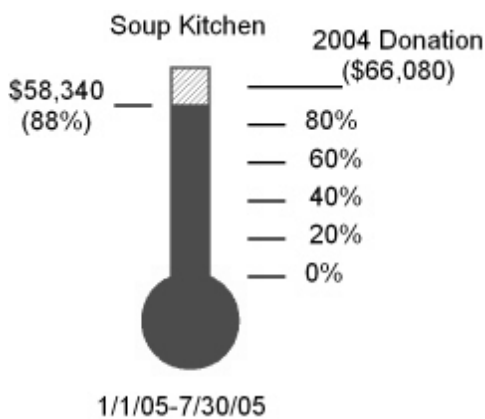
AUGUST 2005

Editor's Corner

Dear BAFA supporters,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of BAFA, I thank you for your continued and generous support. Your donations make a real difference in Armenia.

To keep you informed of our work in progress, the following charts provide a good picture of how we are meeting this year's goals.

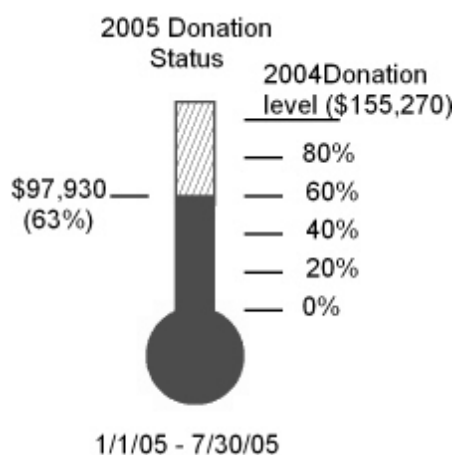


Bay Area Friends of Armenia is a tax exempt, charitable organization with the sole purpose for promoting the health, education, welfare and scientific excellence for the people of the Republic of Armenia.

In order to have better understanding of the global impact of the US dollar devaluation (from 560 Armenian Dram per Dollar in 2004 to 445 Dram per Dollar in 2005), additional conversions are required to show the correct buying power of donations.

2004 Donations:
 $\$123,385 \times 560 = 69,095,600$ Dram

2005 Donations to 7/31/2005:
 $\$97,930 \times 445 = 43,578,850$ Dram



To maintain existing BAFA programs at the 2004 level, we would need an additional sum of 25,516,750 Dram or \$57,340 ($69,095,600 - 43,578,850 = 25,516,750$ Dram). This equates to an increase of 37% in donations.

Again, I give my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you who has supported BAFA over the years. I hope that your continued commitment will help us sustain our important work in Armenia.

Best regards
 Art Khachaturian

Fifteen Years of BAFA Support in the Development of Orthopedic Medicine in Armenia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, economic difficulties adversely impacted all sectors of Armenia, including the state of medical care. Since 1988, the Armenian people have seen war, earthquake, and blockades resulting in thousands of victims needing urgent and good medical care. Medicine was in a terrible state in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, and in Armenia in particular. Following independence, the Soviet medical system with inadequate medical equipment and knowledge was no longer useful. In fact, all educational and medical equipment delivered through Moscow came to a halt by 1990. It was during this time that Armenian soldiers desperately needed medical care, and this need paradoxically gave impetus to the development of medicine in Armenia.

No doubt, in large part the development of medicine in Armenia is due to the support of the Armenian Diaspora. Many physicians, including American Armenians, visited Armenia to provide humanitarian help. It is important to note that these individual doctors would not have been as successful in achieving their goals, had it not been for the backing of organizations such as BAFA, and its supporters.

Beginning in 1989, BAFA physicians paid bi-annual visits to Armenia. They included orthopedic surgeons Francois Antounian (CA), Emil Dionysian (CA), and Harry Sirounian (AZ), and physical therapist, Alain Serkissian (CA). These dedicated health professionals worked with us during the most difficult period in Armenia (1989-1995). They delivered lectures and provided hands-on training on arthroscopy. To everyone's surprise,

arthroscopic surgery quickly developed in Armenia. Such difficult surgeries as total hip and knee replacement, and ligament reconstructions were performed, and new approaches to fracture fixation were adopted.

Since 1990, almost 300 patients have annually received the best arthroscopic care. To date, approximately 5,000 patients have returned to active life. Under the Soviet medical system, most of these individuals would have joined the ranks of the disabled, and retreated from active life, thus becoming a burden to their families and society in general. During the past 15 years, BAFA has directly helped advance medical care in Armenia, and has compelled others to contribute to approximately 30 medical projects that have significantly impacted Armenia's orthopedic specialty.

Five physicians (three orthopedic and two general surgeons) received training at university hospitals in San Francisco. Thanks to BAFA, two orthopedic departments were established in Yerevan, one at the *Erebouni* Medical Center, and the other at *Sourb Nersess Metz* Medical Center. These orthopedic departments continue to receive hundreds of valuable equipment and implants. In addition to assisting patients in Armenia, child victims of the earthquake were sent to the US, and about two dozen were treated at San Francisco Shriners Hospital.

The successes in orthopedic medicine in Armenia demonstrate how with the backing of organizations such as BAFA, a few dedicated physicians in the Diaspora aligned with their counterparts in Armenia, can impact positive change, and improve the delivery of health care to Armenia's citizens.

We are grateful to our friends in the Diaspora—in particular, our Bay Area Friends of Armenia for your generosity and ongoing assistance.

Hayk Avagyan

They are not just Soup Kitchens

In May of this year I made my first trip to Armenia. It was full of surprises because I was so ignorant of what Armenia is really like. In May the land is green, the mountains are still covered with snow, and spring weather makes for comfortable temperatures. Yerevan is becoming a modern city with many good restaurants, expensive cars, and shops where you can buy almost anything you want. The successful young and middle-aged people are well dressed, and appear to be well fed. They will do well as Armenia's economy changes and grows. However, at the same time, a large part of the country's population is unemployed or very underemployed.

I was very fortunate to be in Armenia at the same time as my good friends, John and Arpie Haleblan, whom I have known for about 15 years. They generously made it possible for me to gain insight into how a lot of people struggle to live in Armenia in conditions that people born in the United States cannot imagine. By comparison, Americans are unimaginably wealthy, including the people we consider poor.



Second World War Veteran with medals from Nor Hadjn Soup Kitchen

In contrast to most Armenians, Americans are primarily concerned with acquiring more than we already have, while for many of the most vulnerable people in Armenia, the concern is whether they can get enough to exist with a small degree of comfort and dignity. It is disconcerting to see old Armenian women begging in the street or to see people selling things of little value to make a living. I have supported the BAFA Soup Kitchens for some years, but until you visit one, it is impossible to understand how vital a program like this is to the people who are allowed to participate. John and Arpie invited me to join them on one of the days they visited two of the soup kitchens BAFA supports there.

We arrived at our first soup kitchen at noon in a town not far from Yerevan. The director and some of the staff were anxiously waiting outside for our arrival. The director had the air of



Mother and boys fed at Nor Hadjn Soup Kitchen

someone who had previously carried much more managerial responsibility than his current position at this soup kitchen required. The soup kitchen was located in what used to be a cafeteria in a complex that formerly had thousands working in a highly developed diamond cutting industry before the Soviet Union collapsed. Today there are only a few

hundred working there as the business slowly recovers.

We got to the soup kitchen before the people who came once a day, five days per week started arriving. We had a chance to meet with the staff and to see what was being served for lunch. Fresh bread, huge kettles of hearty bean soup, and pasta had been prepared for the day's meal. The staff was dressed in clean, starched aprons and smocks, working in facilities that were badly in



Two friends from Nor Hadjn Soup Kitchen

need of repair and would never be permitted to operate under American OSHA laws; but Armenia has its own standards. The staff was happy because they had jobs in a country where people are predominantly unemployed or underemployed. They were probably also grateful just to be close to one meal a day they could also count on as part of their pay.

Suddenly the children, their mothers, the teenagers, the old people, and the rest of the people qualifying for assistance because they are the poorest and least able of the poor, began to arrive by means of the stairs leading to the second floor where the dining area was. Soviet era architects didn't plan for people who couldn't climb steps. Healthy, working men and women are not eligible for assistance.

Coming from America where almost any event is a reason to celebrate by eating in a restaurant it took awhile for me to begin to understand what I was seeing. These people essentially eat once per day, five days per week. Without BAFA's Soup Kitchen program many of them don't have food after their Friday noon meal until the kitchen feeds them again on Monday at noon. **I can't imagine living like that!** No food in the house, no snacks, no treats for your children or yourself, no feeding guests or pets. The population served by BAFA and similar programs consists of orphans, the sick and infirm, children from families without the means to feed them properly, and old people.

In Armenia the government pension for retirees is about \$14.00 per month. If that is all you have you will not be able to feed yourself. In some villages people have to buy water from trucks because there are no water systems. In these circumstances it is not unusual for \$10.00 to \$12.00 of the monthly pension allowance to be spent on water alone. Their challenge is to survive somehow.

We arrived at the second soup kitchen in another town at 1:00 p.m. Another group of similar people were waiting, except they were one hour hungrier. It is one thing to be hungry, but to see a group of people who are really hungry is something we Americans seldom experience. This facility used to be a pleasant dining room in a factory but the rain from the night before was still on the floor and this building was also in need of repair. That didn't discourage anyone because today there was freshly baked bread, pasta, and even meat, and they were hungry.

One of the many surprises I encountered in Armenia was when I began taking a few snapshots at the first soup kitchen. Soon an elderly lady came up and asked me to take her picture. Not wanting to be rude, I snapped her picture, and then someone else approached me with the same request. Within seconds people of all

ages lined up to have their pictures taken. I didn't really know what to make of this unexpected turn of events, but since I had a digital camera I figured why not? If I didn't like the result I could discard the picture. The children, teenagers, adults, and old people had no expectation of ever seeing the pictures, but they wanted their pictures taken anyway.

On the way to the next soup kitchen I learned these people are so poor they have no recent pictures of themselves or their family members. I was astounded. Imagine not having any pictures of your children, yourself during your life, your parents or ancestors, to show to your family or friends. They are losing their family histories.

At the second soup kitchen I was ready for what was about to happen and invited people to have their photos taken. The results were equally astonishing. I had a lot of fun and it was also very emotional. It was like looking into history. I saw faces that looked like faces from old photos of Armenians I have seen in books or magazines. But I also saw the faces of Armenians of the present and many who will live into the country's future. I saw the faces of those who were old enough to know that they were having a hard time. Fortunately, the small children and the teenagers haven't been beaten down by deprivation. They seemed cheerful and optimistic.

I believe that is the way Armenians will have to be if they are to change their circumstances. As a person who loves food (and eats too much of it) I believe the soup kitchens BAFA and other organizations run are vital to supporting Armenia's old people, buying time for adults to somehow find gainful employment, and absolutely necessary for nurturing any nation's most important asset, its children. The need to feed and educate people will continue for a long time.

While I was in the soup kitchens I gained a more direct connection between the cause and effect of any contributions I make because I could

see what was happening. Most importantly, it made me feel really good to know that I was helping somebody. I encourage anyone who is interested, to visit Armenia. You will be very glad you did it. I also encourage anyone to indulge in doing something that is really enjoyable, non-fattening, and doesn't have too much salt.

Help someone in Armenia. It really makes you feel good.

Ray Garabedian

Who is Leonid?

Many times during my discussions with BAFA supporters, I have referred to Leonid, as the individual in Armenia who supervises all education projects of BAFA. So who is Leonid?

I met Leonid Manukyan through my brother-in law, who was a Fulbright fellow during the Soviet era at the Yerevan Polytechnic, and had worked with Dr. Leonid Manukyan. Leonid was a professor at the Polytechnic, now called State Engineering University of Armenia, and currently conducts research and teaches courses in Alternative energy.

When BAFA decided to support Education in Armenia, we needed someone locally who could guide us in identifying the greatest needs. Leonid, hearing about our interest, volunteered to be our liaison pertaining to projects related to education. For over 10 years Dr. Manukyan has generously offered his time to BAFA, not only in identifying needs, but also in following up on each project. He regularly reports in detail how funds designated to teachers' salaries, school building repairs, textbooks, and eye exams, are used.

Leonid was born in 1940 in Baku. His family moved to Yerevan when he was an infant. He studied Electromechanical Engineering at Polytechnic and did his 'Aspirant' work in Moscow. Since graduation from Moscow he has been teaching at the State Engineering University. Dr. Manukyan is married to Lena, who is a

High school Mathematics teacher in Yerevan. They have a daughter Anna, who manages the Siemens office in Yerevan.

Leonid has a real altruistic spirit. He once told me, "Due to the present situation in Armenia, I cannot help BAFA financially, but I can give my time." This, he has indeed done for over the past 10 years.



Leonid Manukyan

BAFA Board salutes Leonid Manukyan for his humanitarian spirit, and thanks him for his unwavering support to BAFA education projects.

John Haleblian

Cosmic Ray Division— New Accomplishments, New International Impact

The Cosmic Ray Division (CRD) of the Alikhanian Physics Institute won the All Armenia e-Content Contest in 2005 in the e-Science category. The competition, dedicated to the 1600th anniversary of the creation of the Armenian Alphabet, was appropriately named the *Mashtots-1600* contest. Winners of this contest will represent Armenia at the World Summit

on Information Society's (WSIS) competition in Tunis in November 2005. Because the CRD won the 2003 world competition held in Geneva, the second place winner of the All Armenia contest in the e-science category in 2005 will represent Armenia in Tunis this year. As the winner from the previous WSIS contest, CRD's head, Prof. Ashot Chilingarian, will likely serve as a judge at the Tunis competition. We wish success to all the Armenian entries to the world contest in Tunis this year.

CRD has made a number of internationally significant contributions in the recent months.

In May the *Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities* (SENCER) conference, organized by the National Science Foundation (NSF) of the United States, was held at CRD's Nor Amberd research station on Mt. Aragats. SENCER, a flagship program of the NSF, aims to advance important national educational goals by helping students understand the scientific process and the importance of civic responsibility. Prof. Chilingarian, one of four key presenters, spoke about "Space Weather and Solar Physics—Basic Science Influencing Everyday Life." Prof. Karen Kashmanian Oates, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs of Harrisburg University of Science and Technology, was the conference chair. About 30 participants from the Georgian State University, Georgian Medical University, Alikhanyan Physics Institute, Yerevan State University, Yerevan Technical University, as well as the chairman of Armenia's National Foundation for Science and Advanced Technologies (NFSAT), Dr. Harut Karapetyan, were among the attendees. The next meeting will be in San Jose, California, in August. Four Armenian scientists will join an international group of colleagues involved in science education reform in order to continue the work started at

Nor Amberd. Armenia's participation is funded through a SENCER-Armenia grant sponsored by the International Center for Science and Technology at the National Science Foundation.

In June, Prof. Chilingarian represented Armenia in two key regional forums, propelling Armenia's visibility for its contribution to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Space Weather Forecasting in the world. At the World Summit Contributory Conference on ICT & Creativity in Vienna, Prof. Chilingarian pressed the importance of the ICT on forecasting and alerting on natural disasters, and the need for a focused effort in this direction. In particular he sighted his efforts in the field of space weather forecasting and alerts. This question will be discussed in more detail at the Solar Extreme Events '05 workshop at CRD's Nor Amberd research station in September. Participants from the US (Naval Research Laboratory, Stanford University, University of Delaware), Europe, Japan, and Russia will discuss and draw a conclusion which could be presented to the World Summit on Information Society in 2005 in Tunis as the *Armenian Declaration*. The *Vienna Declaration* focused on e-learning and multimedia.

In Bulgaria, at the Balkan and Black Sea regional planning meeting for the International Heliophysical Year in 2007, Prof. Chilingarian represented Armenia as a leading player in the region for space weather forecasting. With its two high altitude research stations, Nor Amberd at 6,500 ft. and Aragats at 10,500 ft., CRD is a world Leader for ground based space weather research. Space weather is the effect of the solar activity on terrestrial systems, and thus is a very hot topic of consideration for the year dedicated to heliophysical research. The workshop in Bulgaria included representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia,

Greece, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and others countries of the region. Armenia is clearly the leader on ground based space weather monitoring in the region. Reliance on the expertise of the CRD in setting up a regional network of solar monitoring stations in other countries for 24 hours of alert service, was highlighted in the workshop. The new monitors under development at the CRD may be installed in new locations in Croatia and Bulgaria, and initial discussion along these lines show great promise.

Diaspora's support of the CRD continues to play a key role in this success story. It is truly amazing how CRD, on a funding level of less than the equivalent of the salaries of two US professors, can accomplish such great

feats in the international arena. Its staff of 80 scientists, technicians, and support personnel, and its 18 young university students and graduates truly represent a treasure for Armenia. The support of the Diaspora, together with the talent and dedication of CRD's staff, has been crucial in allowing the CRD to continue making important scientific advances and making Armenia an international leader in the competitive science of space weather forecasting. We thank you for your continuous support and hope that you can be proud of the CRD achievements because of it. For more information about the CRD please visit WWW.CRDFRIENDS.ORG .

Anahid Yeremian



Winners of the All Armenia e-content contest – 2005 in the e-science category. CRD's Prof. Ashot Chilingarian, Tigran Hyrapetyan, Veronica Moiseenko, and Aram Eghikyan.



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Yes: I wish to make a Tax-Deductible donation to B.A.F.A.

Dear Bay Area Friend of Armenia,

Bay Area Friends of Armenia continues to support health, education, welfare and advanced sciences in the republic of Armenia.

We have initiated a new program called Feed Armenia's Future, which is designated to provide our supporters, with a personal connection to the grandparents or children who are being served in our Soup Kitchens.

The key to implementing any, and all of these projects, depends directly on your financial commitment. If you wish to make a separate contribution specifically to one, or more of these projects, please mark the box below and return the form with your tax-deductible contribution to the Bay Area Friends of Armenia.

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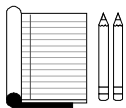
SOUP KITCHENS OF ARMENIA

\$50 \$100 \$200 \$500 Other \$ _____

FEED ARMENIA'S FUTURE

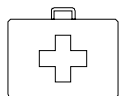
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