



Philadelphia Wins



The 2016 AYF Olympics champion team: the Philadelphia "Sebouh" chapter

By **BOB TUTUNJIAN**

MILWAUKEE (A.W.)—The Philadelphia AYF chapter won its very first championship 11 years ago, when Racine hosted its first AYF Olympics. Since then, Philly has won four more times, more than any other chapter during that time. Its most recent first-place finish came in 2013, in Washington D.C., and featured a tight, 10-point contest.

This time the Sebouhs scored 176 points for a comfortable victory. On Friday, they won the swim meet but still trailed New Jersey 41-48. They then amassed a total of 135 points on Sunday to run away with the crown. They dominated the medal race with a balanced total of 12 gold, 10 silver, and 12 bronze, along with winning five relays.

Philly was led by Jessica Sarkisian and the Keshgegian brothers, Aram and Anto. Jessica and Aram won the pentathlons, while Anto won all three distance events. AYF-YOARF CE member Avi Keshgegian won the hurdles and took silver in the pool. Then Eric Papazian won the best "runner up" award with his three silvers in the sprints. Eric lost those three events by a combined total of only 0.82 seconds.

Last year's host, New Jersey,

scored 108 points and finished in second place for the first time in the chapter's history. The Arsens matched Philly's total of 22 silver and bronze medals but only won five events. Defending champion Greater Boston brought a much smaller team this year and was able to edge out Detroit for third 85-78 with nine golds and three relay victories. The Boston Nejdehs were led by three high scorers: Eric Movsesian in the pool, along with Anoush Krafian and Shant Mahrokhian in track and field. Detroit had the largest number of entries with 35 but could only muster wins in two individual events and one relay.

Chicago scored 37 points, with rookie Ally Devedjian winning three golds in the pool. The 2015 champion Providence placed sixth with 30.5 points. North Andover had 18 points, most of which came from 16-year-old Meline Almasian, who won three golds on Sunday. West San Fernando Valley also scored 18 points to tie for seventh place. Montreal finished ninth with 12 points, all from Faye Khatchadourian. The host chapter Racine finished 10th with 11 points. Toronto finished next with 6.5 points and the Western Region close behind, scoring 6. Glendale and Manhattan tied for 13th with 5 points, while Worcester and Burbank scored 2 each. New York and San Francisco entered but did not score.



The Philadelphia "Sebouh" chapter won the 84th AYF Olympic games in Milwaukee

Individual Awards

There were three female high scorers with 15 points each. Most notable was Anoush Krafian, who is undefeated during her three-year AYF career. This year she started by breaking her own record in the hurdles and then took the 200-meter dash and high jump. This follows a year of great accomplishments as a junior for

her Belmont High School track team. The first highlight came at the Massachusetts All State Meet, where she won both the pentathlon and the 100-meter high hurdles. In the hurdles, she came from behind to win by 0.01 of a second and a personal record (PR) of 14.64.

Two weeks later, Anoush traveled to North Carolina to compete in the heptathlon (seven events) at the New Balance Out-

door Nationals. Krafian earned All-American status by placing fifth at the prestigious event with a score of 4496 points. She set personal bests in the high jump (5'4.5") and the 200 (25.92) in doing so. She also has a PR of 17'6.5" in the long jump to her credit. She is currently weighing options for colleges as she enters her senior year.

From the Steering Committee



Last month, we reveled in the 84th AYF Olympic Games—the second that our chapter has had the extreme pleasure and fortune of hosting in our beloved city of Milwaukee, Wis. And we pass the Olympic torch onto the AYF Philadelphia “Sebouh” Chapter as we look forward to AYF Olympics 2018!

Congratulations to all the athletes for their efforts & dedication and for showing great sportsmanship and fraternalism throughout the weekend!

And above all...thank you to all of the AYF members and attendees from all corners—East, West, North & South—for your support of this incredible AYF tradition and our organization as a whole.

Endless thanks to our Racine community, organizations, and members for your tireless efforts to ensure the success of AYF Olympics 2017 in Downtown Milwaukee!

With Thanks,

Racine “Armen Garo” AYF Olympics 2017 Steering Committee

“Oor eh? Hos eh!”

2017 AYF Olympics: ‘Tebi’... Racine!

By Mark Gavoort

There have been a few articles published and online discussions taking place on the subject and concept of *Tebi Yergir*: “toward, or to, the country/Motherland/Homeland/Fatherland.” Lately, the term is about repatriation: *Tebi Hayastan*—a political, social, and forward-looking *Tebi Yergir*.

There is another kind of *Tebi Yergir*. This one more cultural and something a bit more, dare I say, soulful or spiritual. It is a longing for an ideal Armenia, the Armenia and Armenian ideals instilled in us by the first generation in America, the survivors of the Armenian Genocide. When that generation used the word *Yergir*, they meant the old country. For the folks of that generation I knew, it was a most rural and agrarian *Yergir*, the villages of the Armenian Highlands. They were referring to places emptied of Armenians, places that existed only in their memories. Mostly, they were children who had survived and many whose parents and siblings had not. They were my grandparents’ generation. They created community and raised my parents’ generation, who in turn raised my generation. That community and culture, that *Amerigahayutun* (American-Armenian-ness), instilled in me and many others that mystical and mythical

concept of *Yergir*.

This soulful, cultural, deep-rooted *Hayaganutun* (Armenian-ness) is what makes the old-school church picnics, Camp Hayastan, and the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) Olympics so special. These are places we go and gather to, as Saroyan said, “create a new Armenia.” The AYF Olympics is just that. Our *Tebi Yergir*.

AYF Olympics weekend we gathered in Wisconsin. The Racine Armen Garo Chapter hosted the 84th Annual Olympics in Milwaukee. It was the second time Racine is hosting the Olympics. The first was very well done, and the Armen Garo Team has worked very hard to make this one even more memorable.

The Armenians settled in Racine to work in the factories, such as J. I. Case, in this Midwestern industrial town, so they may be the most old-school Amerigahay community in the country, and the St. Hagop’s *Madagh* Picnic held annually in June is arguably the best Armenian church picnic in the country. Racine is a great community with great people.

Throwing an Olympics is a Herculean task: an immense amount of work requiring months of planning and preparation, culminating in a frenzied labor of love come Labor Day Weekend. It involves entire communities in the so called bigger chapters: Providence, Boston, Detroit, Philadelphia, and,

last year’s host, New Jersey.

And though Racine may not have the numbers, there is no bigger-hearted and harder-working community. They are proud to host the Olympics. They are excited to host Olympics. They have been working diligently for over a year to make sure the weekend is the smashing success I know it will be.

In my few years of writing articles for the Armenian Weekly Special Olympics issue, I have found that each committee has one or two stalwarts—tireless, inspiring, and natural leaders who lead by example far more than by authority. Zohrab Khaligian, to me, is clearly that fellow in Racine. He is a great planner and most certainly one of the most tireless, dedicated, and natural leaders I have ever seen... and I include my decades of corporate experience when I say this. He is also selfless, as will be evidenced by the mild scolding I will receive from him for singling him out over everyone else on the committee. Folks on the committee, however, will thank me for having done so.

The AYF Olympics is about seeing old friends, making new ones, and taking pride in the organizational skills, athletic abilities, and overall Armenian enthusiasm that the AYFers will bring to Armenia.

So, during AYF Olympics weekend, *Tebi Yergir* is *Tebi* Racine for us.

Dear Uncle Mark



The New Jersey chapter honors the late Mark Alashaian

By Arev Dinkjian

The Armenian Weekly Editorial Board would like to sincerely thank

Mark Gavoort,
Bob Tutunjian,
Harry Derderian,
Sona Gevorkian,
and Tamar Kanarian.

Without the tireless efforts of these individuals, the publication of this AYF Olympics Special Issue would be impossible.

This issue is dedicated to the memories of our beloved *unger*

Tom Vartabedian

over to me. I’m still working on the “happy” part.

I was angry. For a long time, I wallowed in this selfish sense of abandonment. “What are we going to do?” I kept saying to myself. Even out loud: “What are we going to do without Mark?” There were projects left half-finished, emails waiting for your response in cyberspace, Olympics around the corner. We had work to do.

You’ll be proud to know we put together a team to go to Milwaukee—a pretty good one, actually. And for the first time in “Arsen” history, we earned ourselves second place—but you already knew that. Every single athlete contributed, everyone helped, everyone stepped up, because you know what? That’s what we do for each other in Jersey. We reach down, we pull up,

we carry over the threshold, we hold on to each other in life and in death, and when we feel like we’ve succeeded, we turn right back around in search of someone else who needs us.

We are a team, and it is because of you. Some people, myself included, weren’t sure we’d be able to rally after such heartbreak. But we proved to our community, to the AYF, to you, and most importantly, to ourselves, that nothing can stop New Jersey. This year, Olympics was proof that so long as we vow to always work together, we will succeed. We’re not going anywhere but upward and onward. We will make you proud.

Thank you for being our coach, our mentor, our very own Olympic King, our family. You brought us to this point, but we can take it from here. Promise.

Philly Sweeps Pentathlons

By Bob Tutunjan

The pentathlon events at the 2017 AYF Olympics in Milwaukee were won by a defending champion and a first-time champion, both from Philadelphia.

In the women’s competition, Jessica Sarkisian scored 1,190 points to win by 240 points over Arev Dinkjian of New Jersey, who placed fourth last year. Dinkjian won the last event to edge out Jessica’s sister Kelsey, who had beaten her for the bronze in 2016. Knar Bedian was close behind, taking fourth place for Greater Boston.

Last year, Aram Keshgegian earned the silver in a close three-man competition. This year he topped 2011 champion Alan Dilanjan of Chicago with 2,326 points. Dilanjan had 2,174 points, which exceeded his total from six years ago by 48 points. Dan Chakmakjian of Greater Boston took third place with 1,863 points, which was over 200 more than Chicago’s Shant Alexanian. But this battle for the bronze was much closer until the last event. Over his AYF career, Dan had won the hurdles four times but chose to try the pentathlon this year.

The women’s competition started with the shot put on Sunday morning. Jessica threw 23’11” to beat Kelsey by a foot and build an early 20-point lead. They were both over 100 points ahead of the other competitors. Jessica expanded her lead by leaping 12’1.5” in the long jump and 4’1.25” in the high jump to win both of those events. She now had a lead of 162 over Kelsey and 325 over Arev. Jess clinched her gold by winning the 200-meter dash with a time of 34.35. But in this event Arev came in a close second and was now trailing Kelsey by 109 points. In the final 800-meter run, Dinkjian won in 3:26.62, with both Sarkisian sisters over 30 seconds behind. With this margin of victory, Arev earned enough points to take the silver. Knar Bedian was close behind Arev in the event and almost scored enough points for the bronze.

The men began in the discus circle, where Keshgegian threw 107’1” to establish a lead of 66 points over Chakmakjian. Aram next won the shot put with a heave of 38’3” and firmed up his lead over Daniel to 196 points. Keshgegian’s throws would have been good enough to win the open men’s discus and take bronze in the open shot put. Alan was close to second place: only 6 points be-



Aram Keshgegian (Philadelphia) edges ahead of Alan Dilanjan (Chicago) in the Pentathlon 200 Dash



Jessica Sarkisian (Philadelphia) pulls away from Arev Dinkjian (N.J.) in the Pentathlon 200 Dash

hind. The long jump was the third event and proved to be big for Chicago. Dilanjan’s leap of 17’10” earned 467 points and gave him a 131-point lead for second place. Interestingly, he trailed first place by the exact same margin. Alexanian was a close second in the event with a jump of 17’6” and overtook Dan for third place by 42 points. The fourth event was the 200-meter dash, and Keshgegian bounced back to edge out Alan by less than a tenth

of a second in 25.44. Alexanian and Chakmakjian stayed close to each other, separated by only 0.22 seconds. So, going into the final 1,500-meter run, Aram was in first with 2,068 points and had a lead of 138. In the battle for third, Shant was 57 points ahead of Daniel. But Chakmakjian pushed hard to win the event with a time of 5:58.30—and the bronze. The two frontrunners stayed close behind him, so the top medal standings did not change.



We would like to thank the following sponsors for supporting the 2017 AYF Olympics Special Issue

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Philly Tops Jersey at Swim Meet



25 Butterfly Medalists (L to R) Faye Khatchadourian (Montreal), Ally Devedjian (Chicago), and Azniv Khaligian (Racine)



50 Backstroke Medalists (L to R) Victoria Ezgilioglu (N.J.) and Lucine Bahtiarian (Boston)



50 Freestyle Medalists (L to R) Mike Ballard (Philadelphia), Eric Movsesian (Boston), and Ed Hovannisian (West San Fernando Valley)



Detroit Freestyle Relay (L to R) Araxie Tossunian, Patil Tcholakian, Knar Topouzian, and Taline Bedirian

By Bob Tutunjian

The Friday evening swim meet at the 2017 AYF Olympics in Milwaukee featured two triple-gold medalists who dominated the individual events, but Philadelphia used its depth to top the team scoring. The “Sebouhs” and New Jersey were tied with 25 points each before the final two relays. Philly then won the men’s free relay and took a close second in the coed event to eke out the win, and the swimming title, 33-30.

Eric Movsesian won three events to lead Greater Boston to third place with 26 points. Newcomer Ally Devedjian was the other triple winner and brought Chicago to fourth place with her 15 points. Veteran Faye Khatchadourian scored 12 points for Montreal, and the host chapter Racine totaled 11. West San Fernando Valley was 7th with 10 points, while Detroit had 8. Burbank completed the scoring with 2 points.

Women’s Results

Rookie Ally Devedjian won triple gold for Chicago and topped last year’s high scorer, Azniv Khaligian from Racine, in each of her events. She first won the 50-yard freestyle in 27.53, ahead of Azniv as well as Lucine Bahtiarian of Greater Boston. Ally then took the 100 free in 1:01.85 over Khaligian and Jersey tennis star Lina Ariyan in third. In her last event, Devedjian won the 25 butterfly in 13.59, once again in front of Azniv, with Faye Khatchadourian in third.

Prior to that, Faye had won the first event of the meet, the 25 freestyle. Her time of 14.75 was good enough to edge defending champ Theresa Jelalian of New Jersey and Seran Krikorian of Burbank. Khatchadourian then won the 50 breaststroke in 39.07, well ahead of Detroit’s Knar Topouzian and Jersey’s other tennis star, Katia Ariyan. The 50 backstroke was won by Victoria Ezgilioglu (N.J.) in 46.54, with Lucine Bahtiarian taking the silver.

Finally, the girls 4x25 relay had three teams battling for the gold, but Detroit pulled away to win in 1:06.47. New Jersey came on strong to touch out Philly for second place.

Men’s Results

In the men’s events, the focus was mainly on veteran Eric Movsesian of Greater Boston. The first event was the 50-yard breaststroke, in which Eric pulled away to win in 37.78. Philly’s Avi Keshgegian took silver, and Ed Hovannisian won bronze for West San Fernando.

The next men’s event was the 50 freestyle, in which Movsesian touched in 26.31, ahead of Hovannisian and Philly’s Mike Ballard. Eric completed his trifecta in the 50 backstroke with a time of 33.12. Golf champion Mark Santerian won silver for Philadelphia, and Garo Sarajian took third for Jersey.

In the 100 freestyle, Mike Ballard and Pete Tashjian went 1-2 to score 8 points for the “Sebouhs.” Ballard covered the distance in 1:16.10. After a bronze and a silver, Ed Hovannisian was golden in the 50 butterfly, in 45.47. Kyle Dinkjian (N.J.) edged out Pete Tashjian for the silver.

In the 4x50 medley relay event, Philadelphia used its overall balance to win easily in 2:36.05 over New Jersey. The “Sebouhs” did the same in the 4x50 freestyle relay with a time of 2:19.60, while the “Arsens” settled for second again.

The final event was the coed 4x50 freestyle relay, and it was definitely the most exciting of the entire meet. Philadelphia took the lead with New Jersey and Greater Boston close behind. But on the final leg Eric Movsesian surged to finish barely ahead of the “Sebouhs” in a time of 2:14.18, with Jersey in third.



Greater Boston Coed Relay (L to R) Eric Movsesian, Lucine Bahtiarian, Anoush Krafian, and Dan Chakmakjian



Philadelphia Medley Relay (L to R) Mark Santerian, Avi Keshgegian, Mike Ballard, and Alec Arakelian

AYF Olympics Tennis: New Jersey and Providence Shine



The Men's Tennis medal winners (L to R) Gabriel Chahinian (Toronto), Hagop Taraksian (Providence), and Nareg Mkrtchjan (Providence)



The Women's medal winners (L to R) Ema Bandazian (N.J.), Lina Ariyan (N.J.), and Katia Ariyan (N.J.)



Kyle Dinkjian in action



Ema Bandazian and Olivia Barberian

By Mark Gavor

The weather was perfect for AYF Tennis. The Tennis matches took place at the McKinley Park tennis courts, with Lake Michigan in the background. There were eight players in the women's bracket and seven in the men's. The matches were exciting, with the New Jersey women taking three of the four places after sweeping the event last year. They did take all three medals for the second year in a row.

1. Lina Ariyan—New Jersey
2. Ema Bandazian—New Jersey
3. Katia Ariyan—New Jersey
4. Kenar Charchaflian—Worcester

Providence was the dominant force on the Men's side, taking three of the four point places.

1. Hagop Taraksian—Providence
2. Gabriel Chahinian—Toronto
3. Nareg Mkrtchjan—Providence
4. Garo Tashian—Providence

Both Lina, from New Jersey, and Hagop, from Providence, are repeat gold medal winners. Congratulations to both of them; they are great players, and we look for them to perform well in Philly next year.

One of the best matches of the day was in the first round, in which just one set is played. Kyle Dinkjian of New Jersey and Nareg Mkrtchjan of Providence squared off, and they were evenly matched. In the end, Nareg won 9-7, going on to take the bronze.

Nareg, a senior mechanical engineering major at Boston University, said, "It was my first year playing tennis, so I wasn't too sure what to expect. Kyle literally could not make a mistake, so I had

to be a little more aggressive rather than let him beat himself. Luckily, when it was 8-7, I closed out the last game to win the match, but it was a great match to start the day, and the first win of my tennis career at Olympics."

Kenar Charchaflian is a great AYFer. She is a full participant in leadership and athletics in her beloved Worcester Aram Chapter, and on a national level serving on Central Executive. She knew she had a tough path to get points or to medal against the New Jersey girls, but she persevered to capture fourth place and get a point for her chapter. Kenar beat Karine Keshgegian of Philadelphia 8-0 in the first round. She lost 6-0, 6-2 to Lina Ariyan, the eventual gold medalist, in the second round. In her third match, she had to face Lina's sister, Katia, who took the single set 8-3 to secure the bronze medal.

The reigning champ, Hagop Taraksian of Providence, had a bye in the first round. He took on fellow Providence teammate Garo Tashian in the second, winning both sets 6-0. Hagop was joined in the finals by Gabriel Chahinian of Toronto. Gabriel, who took the bronze last year, beat Garo Sarajian of New Jersey 8-0, and Nareg 6-2, 6-0 to advance to the finals. Hagop took the first set 6-0, but Garo fought back in the second set but came up short, losing to Hagop 6-4.

Lina Ariyan, the women's winner, was simply awesome this day. She beat Silvahna Menissian of Providence 8-0 in the first round. She next took on and beat Kenar 6-0, 6-2. In the finals, Lina faced Ema Bandazian of New Jersey, who had beat Katia Ariyan in the second round 6-4, 7-5. Lina beat Ema to take the gold 6-2, 6-1.

Reflecting on AYF Tennis and the success of the Jersey Girls, Katia Ariyan commented, "I grew up with all the Jersey tennis girls, so it just makes it extra special that we get to contribute to our chapter's points together through a sport that we've always shared with each other. Playing against Ema Bandazian this year was a rush; we had some really crazy points and we each kept coming back after each other. It was really a fight, and it was so much fun specifically playing against Ema because not only is she a phenomenal player but she's one of my best friends and we've commiserated through many tennis camps together. I really hope the men's side of Jersey can pick up some tennis points next year too."

We were delighted to meet a Swedish-

born Armenian tennis pro and coach, Daniel Emirzian. He is the graduate assistant coach of the Division 1 Women's program at Northwestern State University in Louisiana. He heard Armenian were gathering for an athletic weekend in which tennis was included, so he decided to join us for the weekend. Mike Varadian, the AYF Olympics Governing Body member running the tennis games, graciously had Daniel present the medals. Coach Daniel was very enthusiastic about AYF Tennis and most encouraging to the participants. He did say that he was "impressed with the level of play." We hope to see more of Coach Daniel at the AYF Olympics.

It was a great day of AYF Golf and Tennis. Thanks to all the participants and volunteers.



Tennis fans take in the matches

AYF Olympics Golf: Santerian Bests Tashjian by One Stroke



Gold Medalist Mark Santerian



Theresa Jelalian and Claudia Boyadjian

By MARK GAVOOR

For both golf and tennis, the Racine AYF chapter could not have dialed up better weather. The conditions were perfect for both sports. The skies were clear, the breeze gentle, and the temperatures in the 60s and 70s. There was just a hint of fall in the air.

The AYF Golf and Alumni Open took place at the Oakwood Park Golf Course in Franklin, WI, continuing the AYF tradition of playing at some very lovely courses. There were two foursomes of men, just two women golfers, and five Alumni foursomes competing. The first tee off was at 8 a.m. In previous years, the AYF had used a shotgun start for the alumni; this year, there was no need for that, and everyone teed off from Hole 1.

The competition on the men’s side was as we have come to expect. Philly good friends Mark Santerian and Peter Tashjian were vying for first and second. Peter shot a 38 on the front nine, and Mark was 2 strokes off. One point separated them at the end: Mark got the gold, and Peter the silver.

Peter had beat out Mark the past two years. It was Peter’s last year of competition. The two have enjoyed this great rivalry. Mark recalls that they each have four golds in the time they have played together. They are close friends, and they really enjoy hanging out and playing golf together. But, as close as they are, they both want to win. We should expect to see Peter compete and win the Alumni Open next year in Philadelphia.

Last year’s silver medalist, Shahan Hagen, did not come to Mikwaukee. Michael Haase took third place and the bronze. Alexan Topalian and Haig Chahinian tied for fourth. It was the first time competing in golf for Haig; he has played tennis for the past few years and thought he would try golf for a change.

Here are the results for the men’s golf competition:

1. Mark Santerian: 77 (Philadelphia)
2. Peter Tashjian: 78 (Philadelphia)
3. Michael Haase: 85 (Detroit)
4. Alexan Topalian: 96 (Providence)

Haig Chahinian: 96 (Toronto)

Santerian is a versatile AYF athlete. Though golf may be his best sport, he also competes in the 50 backstroke and the javelin. In the backstroke, Mark got the silver medal last year, in New Jersey, and this year in Racine. He won the javelin in both Olympics.

Mark came to Racine with 70 career points. With his performance this year, he is the leading active men’s high scorer. He noted, “I have never been a high scorer. That is one goal I would like to achieve.” Perhaps he will in Philly, next year.

Alexan Topalian summed it up: “This year marked an ending to a great rivalry. I have played with Mark and Pete for the past five years. Although this was Pete’s last year on the golf course with us AYFers, we will have a new member to fill his spot. My youngest brother, Shahan, will finally be old enough to compete in his first senior Olympics. Here is the new rivalry.”

In women’s golf, we had two new competitors, both from New Jersey: Claudia Boyajian and Theresa Jelalian. Both were novice golfers and shared a set of clubs. Not to be outdone by the men, one point separated these two friends as well:

1. Theresa Jelalian: 54
2. Claudia Boyajian: 55

They were proud it was a New Jersey sweep and look forward to golfing again, next year, in Philadelphia. And though they would love to see another New Jersey sweep of women’s golf, they heartily encourage more AYF members to participate.

The AYF should note that Claudia is a professional event planner for the accounting and consulting firm KPMG, which clearly qualifies her as a potential member of the Governing Body when she becomes an alumna.

On the alumni side, Rich Kanarian took the honors and was awarded the Cory Tosoian Memorial Alumni Golf Award. He was delighted to win and honored to join his brother Stepan as a winner of alumni golf. Rich says no other brother combination has won the Corey Tosoian Memorial Trophy.

A Letter of Heartfelt Thanks

By MGO KASSABIAN

This past February, at my last AYF National Athletic Tournament (NAT), I told my North Andover “Sassoun” team: “Let’s get the old man at least one win this weekend.” Not only did we win one game... but double that.

After those two wins, I can say that I’ve finally completed my AYF sports career ,from our first ever win as a full softball team in North Andover to countless trophies from JAG, I can say that I am truly proud of my chapter for showing that you don’t need to have 100 members, or the best players or countless wins at Senior Olympics: We may never win AYF Olympics or NATs, but showing up and playing are just as good in my eyes.

Although for AYF Olympics in Milwaukee this year we showed up with just five members to participate, we came through and showed our chapter pride. To say that I was proud of my members for the past 10 years when I became the junior adviser is to put it mildly.

When I started my AYF Olympics career, it was in Milwaukee 11 years ago, walking the track by myself, holding that North Andover sign high above my head. And all I heard was my father, with that booming voice of his, saying: “THAT’S MY BOY!” Still, to this day, 11 years later, I think about that day. But this time I instead heard other voices, saying, “Yay, North Andover!” That right there gives me chills, and the fact that I got to end my AYF career the same place I started is honestly pretty cool in my eyes.

This organization has given so much, and introduced me to people I now consider my family.

Being on several mixed chapter softball and basketball teams in the past was great. But these past couple of years, being able to play and participate as a team, by ourselves, makes it so much better. People ask me why travel and have sleepless nights and dance until the sun comes up, and I tell them: pride. I explain that I travel these weekends with my juniors and seniors to make sure everyone is safe, and because my mentors did the same thing for me. Now that feeling I had, when my father and mother watched me at my first Olympics, walking the track... I will have that same feeling for the rest of my life, watching those who came after me walk and play softball and basketball.

Thank you, AYF, for giving me not only a sense of pride and love for this organization but also a family: I can go to so many places across the country, and even the world, and have a place to stay. Without AYF, I don’t think I would have known that I wanted to pursue a career in education and working with children. To end this letter of thanks for what I have learned from and in the AYF, I say: Turkey failed, truly.



Team North Andover

Coaches' Comments

By Bob Tutunjian

This section is a compilation of quotes from some of the coaches who were involved in the preparation of their teams for this year's Olympics.

Philadelphia

Former Philadelphia track star and past Governing Body member Dave Papazian started coaching the "Sebouhs" a few years ago. He gave his thoughts on their championship this year:

When the Chapter and I started reaching out to see who would be participating in Racine, I figured that we would have to cajole our way to 11-12 athletes. As contacts were made, I was surprised how many members had already decided they were going. These kids just wanted to be together and wanted to be there, no matter the miles. We ended up with 20 athletes who all wanted to do three events, and I cannot say enough about their positive attitude and teamwork.

Even considering our point total, this is a complete "Sebouh" team which does not depend on a "star" system. Seventeen of our 20 athletes participated in either a swim or run relay, and we only had one of the six Olympics high scorers. Our two pentathlon champions and our one high scorer put in the hard work to eventually achieve these heights. Aram Keshgegian won his first pentathlon, and anytime I asked him to run a little more this summer he would ask what more he could do after that. He followed in the footsteps of his cousin Jessica Sarkisian, who won her second pent last year and repeated this year, even with slowing down to help her injured sister Kelsey across the line in the 800 so she could finish third.

I also am really proud of Aram's brother, Anto, who also ran like a madman leading up to the games so that he could have enough for the 3,200, 1,600 and 800, which he swept for the first time. Anto has taken a leadership role in the chapter and has grown immensely.

We have two AYF Central Executive members who each earned personal highs in points. Avi Keshgegian (yes, the third, and oldest brother) won his first-ever gold medal, in the 110 hurdles, along with a silver in the 50 breaststroke, for eight individual points. He does not just see these hurdles once per year and hope. He has practiced many hours with Tavit Froundjian (bronze and two other medals) for the last three summers, and now both were rewarded. I also told him in August that he was first string in the 4x400 run relay, and he was ready, helping us to a gold.

Our other CE member, Pete Tashjian was (mildly) disappointed to earn silver in golf to his teammate Mark Santerian, but went on to add a silver and bronze in the pool. Mark added a javelin gold and a backstroke silver while playing the role of a true team leader. Other out-

standing contributors were Lindsey Santerian (11 points), Eric Papazian (9), Michael Ballard (9), and 16-year-old Mher Mardirosyan (9). We also had invaluable help from Aram Grigoryan, a recent "Sebouh" alum, who helped get the team into shape this summer.

The team and I also spent a lot of time this weekend thinking about the recent loss of my friend and counterpart 90 miles to the north, Mark Alashaian, as well as his father, Avo. I grew up with Mark in the AYF since the age of 10, and the Keshgegians/Sarkissians are related to his family. I know he was not jumping for joy that Philly won over his New Jersey Arsens, but his presence in spirit is a reminder to us that we are really all on the same team.

New Jersey

The New Jersey "Arsens" finished in second place for the first time in the history of their chapter. They were coached by former Central Executive member Ara Sarajian, who shared his thoughts on their efforts:

This year's team really adopted a family mentality and worked toward the goal of another Top 3 finish. Everyone bought in early, and you could see the excitement and anticipation among our athletes as they arrived in Milwaukee on Thursday. I was very proud to see that every single athlete signed up for three events and embraced the entire group as teammates. With this attitude, it was great to see that every one of our 22 athletes significantly contributed by scoring at least one point via an individual event or relay, or played a key role on the softball team.

On Friday, the team started off with a strong statement by posting 18 points between tennis and golf. Team high scorers Claudia Boyajian (11 points) and Theresa Jelalian (10 points) started us off by going 1-2 in golf. Our plan was to sweep the medals in women's tennis and Lina Ariyan, Ema Bandazian, and Katiya Ariyan ensured that we would for the second year in a row. Our depth carried us in the pool, where we were able to pick up 30 points and finish the day with 48. A ton of credit goes to each swimmer for competing hard and holding nothing back. Every athlete who jumped in the pool helped bring home points and set us up nicely for the weekend.

Heading into Sunday, we were counting on returning female athletes Ani Sarajian, Claudia Boyajian, Jacqueline Fales, and rookie Talia Boyajian to each bring in 6-10 points. They all did just that. Haig Sarajian was able to lead our men by bringing home two medals in the throwing events and has nicely stepped up as one of the younger members to take on a vocal and encouraging role. As the day progressed and the team began to see their hard work paying off, everyone stayed at the track to encourage teammates and competitors alike, providing the momentum needed to secure New Jersey's first-



The Philadelphia "Sebouh" chapter



The New Jersey "Arsen" chapter



The Greater Boston "Nejdeh" chapter

ever second-place finish.

Two athletes that deserve to be recognized are Arev Dinkjian and Shant Alashaian. Arev set a goal earlier this year to improve on last year's performance in the pentathlon. She put in the work, and heading into her final event, the 800m run, she had a decent grip on third place. Seizing the opportunity, she pushed herself and was able to slide up and take second. Although this was Shant's rookie year, it seems as though he's been on the bench for many softball victories and has always been part of the team. On Saturday, Shant proved to be a key contributor at the plate and first base while also serving as a catalyst with his base-running and enthusiasm. He continued to contribute on Sunday by taking fourth in the Javelin.

While team spirits were high and everyone celebrated the win loudly and together, it's important to mention that the chapter wanted to place this weekend and dedicate their Olympics performance to Mark Alashaian, our coach who started the rebuilding process for the team. We know that he'd be proud of the team performance,

but even prouder of the way each athlete competed and carried themselves.

The future for the "Arsens" is bright. With a lot of young athletes, we continue to see our veteran core of Kyle, Arev, Garo, and Ani leading by example. Their biggest contribution is that they are showing our younger members the right way. And each time I see one of our younger members eager to compete and celebrate hand in hand with a teammate, I know they've done a good job.

Greater Boston

Third place Greater Boston was once again coached by Ara Krafiyan. Ara is one of the highest scorers in AYF history, a past Governing Body member, and an Olympics King. He shared his feelings about his team:

The 2017 Greater Boston Olympic team experienced a series of highs and lows. The highs included an impressive showing by three athletes who earned high scorer honors, the Earnest Nahigian Sportsmanship award winner, and seeing the women's 4x100m and coed 4x200m relay teams, which ex-

tended two dominant relay winning streaks. The lows came from a last-minute chapter executive decision to penalize several members, making them ineligible to compete. As a result, those members, who had traveled to Milwaukee expecting to participate, instead supported their teammates from the sidelines. The chapter had uncharacteristically low participation in individual events, and we were unable to field relay teams in five of the nine relays. It's safe to say second place was there for the taking. Notwithstanding, our team congratulates Philly on their outstanding effort and great participation, and we applaud New Jersey for bringing their brand of team spirit, heart, loyalty, and fellowship to Milwaukee for a well-deserved second-place finish.

In the end, 13 participants combined for an impressive 85 points. Our scoring started in the pool, where Eric Movsesian got us started with a dominant 15 points, making him the first of our three high scorers. Lucine Bahtarian provided a nice complement on the women's

‘He Went Shopping at the Gap There’: An Interview with Commentators from AYF Olympics Softball 2017

By Michelle Hagopian

The AYF-YOARF 84th Olympics in Milwaukee was a huge success, with memories lingering weeks after the event. Perhaps one of the most entertaining and memorable events, however, was the softball tournament on Saturday.

Sure, the games were exciting and the AYF members always make it enjoyable, but the commentary on the action was what stuck in the minds of many attendees/participants after the fact. Armen Saryan, David Mahdasian, and Dan Krueger (all local to the Racine community) contributed their talents to add hilarious and much welcomed commentary to the softball games.

I was able to catch up with them and gained some insight into how the idea came to fruition, their favorite memories, and more. The full interview is below.

Michelle Hagopian: Where did the idea to have commentators at Saturday softball originate?

Armen Saryan: Well actually the impetus and the credit for this idea has to go to two of our fellow steering committee members and fellow Racine AYF alumni, Silva Karapetian and Lara Kazarian. It wasn’t something we originally had a master plan for; we were just brainstorming things about the events that normally occur at Olympics and how we could put a twist on them, and they noted that it was always kind of hard to figure out what was going on at softball if you arrived in the middle of the games. Like who was playing, wearing which color, score and time, and the overall tournament information.

Additionally, they noted that a team at the softball tourney last year in Jersey brought along their own music machine to play between innings and batters on the bench and how much energy they added to the day. In all honesty it was just a super fun idea for us and especially me, because I love to talk and make too many comments and basically I never shut up. When we are at these things we just spend time making comments and observations anyway, so I like to say the only difference is that we turned the microphones on!

David Mahdasian: Armen, my brother Raffi, and I were asked if we would be interested in doing it. The three of us have a podcast (Three Armigos) where we talk about our crazy experiences as Armenians in the Midwest (shameless plug), so they thought we’d be a good fit. Lara also offered up Dan (her husband) to help out. We had absolutely no idea what to expect, but we knew it would be the worst thing we’d ever done, or one of the best.

Dan Krueger: I have no previous experience calling sports events, but I do love sports and people have told me I have an enjoyable voice so I thought I would volunteer myself for the day. The idea came to us as my wife (Lara Kazarian) and I attended the AYF Olympics in 2016 in New Jersey along with other Racine AYF friends. I really enjoyed the softball event greatly last year; however, it was difficult to keep up with the scores as there was not a scoreboard available and you really had to watch the umpires closely to know what was happening on the field. I mentioned the idea to my wife on the ride home and we began coordinating within the Racine steering committee to make it happen.

M.H.: Can you provide a bit of background on your career and interests?

A.S.: I was a broadcasting major in college at Marquette and have worked in radio in Milwaukee ever since. I currently work for the iHeartMedia Milwaukee cluster of radio stations, and produce and co-host a daily show on our sports station, The Big 920 here in Milwaukee (am920). But really what makes it all work is how much I love sports and talking about sports. I sort of have this unique obsession with sports and not just that, but the stories and competition of athletic events and the pursuit of glory in them. I mean I used to sit in my room and pretend I was the public address guy at games, or do play-by-play when I was a kid playing Madden, silly stuff like that. It was always fun for me...and above all especially, the AYF Olympics. I used to devour the results every year when the ad book came out, memorizing the host city years and chapter winners, and dig for great stories of old AYF Olympic glory. I would even daydream sometimes that the AYF Olympics could be televised or put on radio, and how it would sound as a professional sports broadcast that could properly build the drama through storytelling.

D.M.: I teach full time, but I also have a side business doing voice overs. I’ve done radio/TV/internet commercials and some on-camera work.

D.K.: I am a big football and baseball fan and follow sports in general. As a Wisconsin transplant, I currently live in Las Vegas, so I am always listening to the betting aspects of sports, as well as MMA and boxing. I have always enjoyed TV commentators that have brought their own style to the mic, especially people like Jon Gruden. I had the privilege of meeting him once in San Francisco during lunch at a restaurant and I can tell you from first hand experience he is the same person inside the booth as outside of the booth. That always stuck with me and I think being yourself is the most important characteristic to bring to the audience.

M.H.: Everyone remembers Milwaukee Olympics in 2006, which exceeded expectations, especially for a small chapter like Racine. Why do you think this year’s Olympics were a success? What makes 2017 different than 2006?

A.S.: I think the reason it was a success is mostly a testament to the people and the community involved. The reason we thrive as a smaller community is that we all bear the burden of a collective effort and energy to put on events, and we recognize that with smaller numbers, it may take that more much from each of us and we are willing to work hard enough to do it. I also think of the Racine and Southeastern Wisconsin Armenian community of the true spirit of the AYF and Armenian diaspora ideal. Our strength as an Armenian community comes from our closeness and strong spirit, and not necessarily our sheer numbers, which has always been the way

for Armenians. Also, I think Milwaukee is just a great underrated city that most people might not experience that often. It’s a great place to live.

But in reality, and we all know this, the reason we make it work, and a success, is the singular force of energy and spirit from Zohrab Khaligian. He instills the confidence and belief that we can pull off events like this, and is the leader and organizer that a chapter like us would need to be able to host an AYF Senior Olympics.

D.M.: First, Zohrab did a great job in leading us in both 2006 and 2017. Second, we had two great steering committees and a dedicated community who were totally committed to making both Olympics a success. Much of the 2006 committee returned to help out in 2017, so we had an experienced crew. I think that folks who were present in 2006 were our best method of advertisement. We received a lot of compliments back then, and word-of-mouth really helped us out. I really feel like 2017 had much higher attendance for us.

M.H.: Readers who don’t know you would be interested to learn about your AYF/Armenian background. Can you provide an overview of your involvement (past or present) in the Armenian community?

A.S.: Well besides my years in AYF with Racine Armen Garo, I’ve always been an active member at our St. Hagop parish in Racine. And basically I guess I just love being Armenian - I take great pride in it, I talk about it all the time, (which is fairly significant because this isn’t an especially large area of Armenians) and I would say it’s a large part of the brand I try and create as a radio talent as well. Listeners know me as an Armenian, and it’s a big part of my identity as a professional. My family also has deep AYF roots, my grandfather Sarkis was at the first AYF convention, my Uncle John was AYF King this year and along with my aunts were well known for their tennis success in AYF Olympics, and my father Levon was a very active AYF member as well.

D.M.: I joined when I was 10 and participated in Junior and Senior Olympics, Junior Seminar, Camp Haiastan... you name it. Now my three kids (Nadya, Alec, and Nishan) are members of the chapter, and they participate in these activities as well.

D.K.: I actually have a more interesting perspective since I married into everything, but I can tell you the AYF is a tremendous organization that does an amazing job keeping the community vibrant and continually progressing forward. My first Olympics was Milwaukee in 2006 and I have enjoyed learning about the AYF and what it means and represents to the community.

M.H.: What was your favorite moment/play from commentating the games?

A.S.: I think probably the final game (Detroit vs. West Coast) in general. Those are the moments that are most exciting to talk about and take in, when a championship is on the line. Plus, for that game we added the music in between innings and you could tell it just heightened the experience for everyone. The whole day was wonderful for me because I knew how much the softball games used to mean to me. When I was an AYFer we had to join a mixed team for those games and I always thought it was the best example of AYF fraternalism and teamwork. So often we would combine with Granite City (Gracine!), who I think shares an affinity to Racine in many ways as a smaller chapter—and we were so happy to just be able to play and play together—and that all brought us closer together. I think it was quite remarkable that it started raining about 10 minutes after that championship game ended this year. I think the Milwaukee Olympics must be charmed!

D.K.: My favorite moments were just watching the AYF kids play their hearts out and leave it all out on the field. We saw pitchers that were hit hard by batted balls, shortstop and third basemen blocking ground balls with their bodies, and some impressive catches in the outfield. It was amazing action and I was so fortunate to be a small part of it.

M.H.: Based on comments I heard from the crowd, the commentary was a major success, with some even saying Philadelphia should hire you guys for the 2018 Olympics. Do you see this trend picking up steam in the future, whether by you or others?

A.S.: I’m glad everyone enjoyed it so much. I’m sure any of us would do whatever the AYF would ask to make the events the best they could be. Really, it wasn’t too difficult to set up and it’s definitely something that could be easily done again in the future.

D.M.: I think Armen and Dan really played well off of each other. I would love to see other chapters doing something similar. It keeps the crowd involved, and it makes for a fun and memorable day. If we were asked to do it again, it would be a very tempting offer.

D.K.: I would love to see continued support of AYF softball with additional resources to keep the crowd engaged and informed of the scores! Most people attending the softball tournament are socializing and following their team, so it is helpful to keep everybody updated on all the action going on. As we often reminded the crowd in Milwaukee, “a lot can happen in AYF softball” and we witnessed 15 run innings, shutout innings, so it helps keeping the crowd updated.

M.H.: I would be remiss if I failed to ask what your favorite phrases/one-liners were from that day. Can you share a few of your most memorable?

A.S.: “He went shopping at the gap there” when there was a hit to the gap in center field. I waited all day to say it! I also said “He just got elected mayor of Rip City” a few times.

D.K.: In the championship game a left fielder was back peddling to catch a ball and I snuck in a Chris Berman “Back Back Back Back” reference. I also said “and the offensive train continues to roll” on occasion.

Philadelphia...

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

The first triple gold winner of the weekend was 16-year-old swimmer Ally Devedjian from the Chicago chapter. Ally won the 25-meter butterfly as well as the 50- and 100-meter freestyles. Her brother Andrew scored 13 points in the pool at the 2015 Olympics in Providence. She swims for the Coho Swim Club as well as the Deerfield High School team in Illinois. Her personal bests for Coho are 27.56 in the 50 free and 58.68 in the 100 free.

Meline Almasian became the first high scorer ever from the North Andover chapter. The rookie first won the long jump and later took the 50- and 100-meter dashes. She is the daughter of Joe Almasian, who racked up 111 points while competing for the Framingham and Providence chapters. Meline runs track for Westford Academy, where she will be a junior. In May, at the Division 1 Eastern Massachusetts Championship, she placed fifth in the 100-meter dash with a PR of 12.75. Almasian then placed 19th in the 100 at the All State Meet, where she also anchored the Westford 4x100 relay to a fourth-place finish. Meline also long jumped over 16' during the season.

There were also three men who scored 15 points. On Friday, Eric Movsesian repeated as a high scorer by winning the 50 freestyle, 50 breaststroke, and 50 backstroke. Movsesian studied accounting at Bentley University and now works as an auditor for Wolf & Company. He was a four-year member of the Bentley swim team after swimming for Acton Boxborough High School.

On Sunday, two AYF veterans became high scorers for their first time. Shant Mahrokhian defended his long jump crown on Sunday morning and added the 100- and 200-meter dashes in the afternoon. Last year, Shant settled for bronze and silver in the dashes. But this past year he joined the track team at Tufts University, where he is majoring in biology and entering his senior year. He was co-captain of the soccer team at Lexington High School but never was a member of its track team. With the Tufts team, Shant recorded several long jumps over 21 feet and did well in the sprints.

Anto Keshgegian was competing in his fourth Olympics and has always focused on the distance events. He had never won a gold medal before but made up for that this year with three of them. Anto won the 3,200 in the morning session and then the 800 early in the afternoon. His third gold came shortly after that in the 1,600 meters. Anto just transferred to Temple University, where he will be studying general business. Last year he was a freshman at nearby Eastern University, where he also played on the basketball team.

Both of the pentathlon champions hail from the winning Philadelphia chapter. Jessica Sarkisian defended her championship and won the event for the third time in her career. Last year she won by only 76 points but had an easier

time in Milwaukee. Jessica won the first four events and built a lead of almost 300 points over her sister Kelsey. But New Jersey's Arev Dinkjian won the final 800-meter run to overtake Kelsey for the silver by 41 points. Aram Keshgegian took bronze in the pentathlon at his first Olympics in 2012 and silver in a close match last year. During the years in between, he has medaled in a variety of events, including discus, long jump, and hurdles. This year, he built a 200-point lead in the throwing events and cruised to victory over Alan Dilanjian from Chicago.

Last year, no records were broken or tied. But this year Anoush Krafian smashed her own mark in the 100-meter hurdles by over a second. The Ernest Nahigian Award for sportsmanship and fraternal spirit was presented to Dan Chakmakjian of Greater Boston. Chicago won the Most Improved Chapter trophy.

Men's Track and Field

The men's field events were won by six athletes, just like last year, and this time featured the only two winners from 2016. Shant Mahrokhian was the first athlete to defend a title, winning the long jump with a leap of 19'10.75". Philadelphia brothers Masis and Mher Mardirosian won silver and bronze in that event. The other repeat winner was Sebouh Mark Santerian in the javelin, taking the event for the fourth straight year. Mark had a toss of 134'2", which was well ahead of Michael Nercesian from Detroit and teammate Tavit Frounjan.

Armen Nercesian won the shot put in 2013 and 2014 for Detroit and came back this year to win the first gold medal for the Manhattan AYF. Armen threw 39'7.5" to best Detroit's Michael Haase and Jersey's Haig Sarajian. The discus was tightly contested as Varantian Alexan Topalian topped Garo and Haig Sarajian by less than four feet with a distance of 88'0.5". The other jumping events were both won by last year's runner-ups. Armand Keosian from West San Fernando Valley took the triple jump at 38'4". The other medals were won by Alec Arakelian and Mher Mardirosian, both from Philadelphia. The high jump went to Providence's Nareg Mkrtchjan, who cleared 5'4". Chicago's Garin Bedian and Tavit Frounjan took second and third.

On the track, high scorers Shant Mahrokhian and Anto Keshgegian dominated the sprint and distance events, respectively. Shant won the 100 in 11.25 and the 200 in 23.57, with Eric Papazian close behind in both events. Stepan Topouzian of Detroit was the third medalist in the 100, while Harout Tashian from Providence did so in the 200. Teammates Eric Papazian and Mher Mardirosian battled in the 400, with Mher taking the gold in 56.40. Chris Tarzian won bronze for New Jersey.

The distance events began in the morning with the 3,200-meter run. Keshgegian beat fellow "Sebouh" Mike Ballard with a time of 12:27.00. Detroit's Alec Kourtjian was close behind in third. Anto then ran 2:19.03 in 800 to edge Haig Chahinian (Toronto) and Eddie Garibian



400 Dash Medalists (L to R) Talia Boyajian (N.J.), Knar Topouzian (Detroit), and Patil Tcholakian (Detroit)



Avi Keshgegian (Philadelphia) edges Michael Nercesian (Detroit) in the 100 Hurdles



Anoush Krafian (Boston) passes inside to win the 4 x 100 Relay



Meline Almasian (North Andover) sprints to victory in the 50 Dash

(Greater Boston). Keshgegian completed his trifecta with a 5:32.30 time in the 1,600. Triple jumper Armand Keosian placed second and Alec Kourtjian was right behind him. The hurdles were won in 17.47 by Avi Keshgegian in a photo finish over Mike Nercesian (Detroit), with Tavit Frounjan close behind. Philadelphia defended its

titles in both the 4x100 and the 4x400 meter relays with times of 47.74 and 4:04.70. Detroit and Greater Boston trailed in the sprint relay, as did Providence and New Jersey in the 4x400.

Women's Track and Field

High scorers Anoush Krafian and Meline Almasian dominated

ed the women's track and field events. Meline started the day by soaring 16'5" to win the long jump by more than three feet over Nairi Krafian of Greater Boston and Victoria Selverian of Philadelphia. Almasian then easily won both the 50- and 100-meter dashes. Her time of 6.66 in the 50 was only 0.06 off the record, and her 12.85

in the 100 was the fastest time in the event since Andrea Nranian set the standard in 1979. Melanie Sarafian from Detroit won the silver in both events, while Almasian’s teammate Meline Markarian was third in the 50. Victoria Selverian edged Markarian for third in the 100 meters. Meanwhile, Anoush Krafian won her first gold of the games by setting the only record of the weekend in the 100-meter hurdles. Her time of 14.68 was over 4 seconds ahead of Talia Boyajian (N.J.), who finished just in front of Lia Arakelian (Philadelphia). Anoush then ran 26.78 in the 200 where Melanie Sarafian won her third silver and Lia Arakelian won her second bronze. The high jump saw the same three medalists as last year with Anoush besting Knar Topouzian from Detroit and Jersey’s Theresa Jelalian; Krafian cleared 5’0” and just grazed the bar when attempting a new record at 5’4”.

The only other double gold medalist at Sunday’s track meet was Lindsey Santerian of Philadelphia. Lindsey first topped defending triple jump champion Jacqueline Fales from New Jersey with a leap of 31’7.5”. Santerian set the record of 33’1” in this jump in 2012. Jersey also took third in the event with Talia Boyajian. Santerian then made the javelin a family affair with her brother Mark. She threw 83’6” with Claudia Boyajian (N.J.) and Arev Tossounian (Detroit) in second and third. Claudia came back to win the baseball throw with a toss of 144’4”, while Jacqueline Fales placed second ahead of Talia Oknayan of Detroit.

The morning throwing events saw the best field event battle of the entire day. In the shot put, last year’s runner-up, Patil Tcholakian of Detroit, took the early lead over defending champ Ani Sarajian of New Jersey. Ani went ahead on her fourth toss, but Patil came up big with a final throw of 30’2” to win. Detroit also won the bronze with Gasia Oknayan. Sarajian bounced back to heave the discus 76’ to win that event for her first time. Gasia was second, and fellow Detroiters Haigan Tcholakian took third.

The longer track events were won by three women. Knar Topouzian took the 400 meters in 69.10, while shot-putter Patil showed her versatility by winning the bronze. Talia Boyajian placed second. The West Coast struck gold in both the distance events. Lori Berberian of Glendale ran 2:53.25 in the 800, and Dvin Ghazarian won the 1,600 in 8:07.40. Chicago’s Tamar Alexanian was second in both events, while Grace Ezgilioglu (N.J.) was third in the 1,600.

The Greater Boston girls won the 4x100 relay for the third straight year, with a time of 58.47. It was the closest track event of the day as Anoush Krafian took the baton in fourth place and came all the way back to edge out Detroit and Philadelphia at the wire. The “Sebouhs” recovered to win the 4x200 relay in 2:10.10 while Detroit and New Jersey trailed behind. Greater Boston also three-peated in the 4x200 coed relay. Their time of 1:51.50 was a bit slower than their record set in 2015, but it was good enough to top Detroit and Philadelphia.



400 Dash Medalists (L to R) Eric Papazian (Philadelphia), Mher Mardirosyan (Philadelphia), Chris Tarzian (N.J.)



Philadelphia 4 x 200 Relay (L to R) Lindsey Santerian, Jessica Sarkisian, Lia Arakelian, (Front) Victoria Selverian



Anoush Krafian's (Boston) record-setting 100 Hurdles



Anto Keshgegian (Philadelphia) Kicks To Win The 800 Run Over Haig Chahinian (Toronto) and Ed Garibian (Boston)



Alexan Topalian (Providence) Wins The Discus Throw



Baseball Throw Medalists (L to R) Jacqueline Fales (N.J.), Claudia Boyajian (N.J.), Talia Oknayan (Detroit)



High Jump Medalists (L to R) Garin Bedian (Chicago), Nareg Mkrtshjan (Providence), Tavit Frounjan (Philadelphia)



Javelin Medalists (L to R) Michael Nercesian (Detroit), Mark Santerian (Philadelphia), and Tavit Frounjan (Philadelphia)



Shot Put Medalists (L to R) Michael Haase (Detroit), Armen Nercesian (Manhattan), Haig Sarajian (N.J.)



Shot Put Medalists (L to R) Ani Sarajian (N.J.), Patil Tcholakian (Detroit), and Gasia Oknayan (Detroit)



Shant Mahrokhian (Boston) battles Eric Papazian (Philadelphia) in the 100 Dash



Triple Jump Medalists (L to R) Alec Arakelian (Philadelphia), Armand Keosian (S.F.), Mher Mardirosyan (Philadelphia)



Triple Jump Medalists (L to R) Jacqueline Fales (N.J.), Lindsey Santerian (Philadelphia), Talia Boyajian (N.J.)

Varadian Spirit Award: Racine’s Spirited Denise

By HARRY DERDERIAN

“I’m in shock for this award.... Here, in a small community, we are like family and help each other and the community. We think nothing of it... It is part of our day. We always have something going,” an appreciative Racine native Denise Lansing said upon receiving the Varadian Spirit award.

Denise is truly a local product. She is a consummate volunteer and someone who, for all her life, has added to the fabric of the proud Racine Armenian community.

Fellow Racine family member Zohrab Khaligian, himself a genuine spirit, offered his thoughts: “Denise is a tribute to the Racine family community. She helps prove that our local accomplishments are as great as any other Armenian-American community’s. We are proud of her, she reflects who we are.”

Denise was born and bred in Racine and has two brothers, Robert and Jeff, who were also AYFers.

Her mom, the former Margaret Kaprielian, and her dad, Robert, encouraged Denise to add her talent and energy to become involved in her spirited Armenian community.

“My dad was amazing. Obviously not Armenian, but he served as maintenance man at the church, served on the church board, and was a deacon. He was my hero,” she added with pride.

Denise was an active member of the Racine Armen Garo AYF chapter, volunteering, being on the executive, and attending many conventions. She also proved to be a model AYF member in that the AYF was only the beginning for her and not an end.

“I participated in one Olympics, in Toronto... I was in long jump and 50-yard dash—no points, but I had a great time, met a lot of people who are still my friends. What other organization could offer that?” she adds.

She is an active member of the St. Hagop Armenian Church community, where she has taught Sunday School for over 30 years and has been a member of the Church Auxiliary for just as long. She also has been committed for years in helping the local ARS, ARF, ANC, Armenian School, and just about every other effort and activity in the community.

The essence of this award—as Mal Varadian used to say about being members of a community—is “make it better than it was.”

“Proud to be in Racine Denise” has been doing that in Racine for a long time: She has made it better.



(L to R) Dr. John Saryan, Denise Lansing, and Dr. Raffi Karapetian

1961 Olympic King Armen Topouzian: A Legacy We Should All Try to Emulate

By MARK GAVOOR

During World War II, my father’s first cousin, John Baronian, an Olympic King (1964 Lynn Olympics), was on a train going to Rome Army Air Base, where he was stationed. When the train stopped in Utica, Uncle John decided to stop by a variety store, a small grocer, to buy something. Upon entering the store, he saw a most familiar and welcoming sight. The proprietor, Mihran Topouzian, was seated and reading the Hairenik. Immediately, John found a home away from home. While stationed at Rome, he enjoyed the hospitality of Mihran and Varsenig Topouzian and their children, Armenag and Armenouhi. That was the start of a close relationship between the Topouzian family and ours that lasts to this day.

The next chapter in that relationship began just after the war, in 1946, at the New Britain Olympics. My father and uncle, both Olympic Kings, Aram “Sonny” Gavoor (1975, Detroit) and Richard “Buddy” Gavoor (1968, Washington D.C.) were part of the Watertown Gaidzag Chapter. Armen was a track and field athlete from Utica. He was from a small chapter without many athletes, and so he became friends with the Watertown guys, including my dad and uncle.

My parents started off in Watertown but soon moved to Detroit because in the mid-1950s jobs were more plentiful there. Armen married a Detroit AYFer, Norma Ardash, in 1955. As he had a degree in mechanical engineering, the auto industry was a logical place to work. So he too settled in Detroit, and the friendship continued.

Armenag (Armen) Topouzian, born on February 7, 1929, was one of the finest Armenians I have had the pleasure of knowing. He was an active AYF and ARF member. He never sought attention, but he took his oath of serving the Armenian people to heart and did so quietly and effectively. He passed away just before the 84th Annual Olympic Games, on August 24, 2017, at the age of 88.

My mother recalls that Armen and his wife Norma actually met on the track at an Olympics. They had three boys, Keri (Rita), Daron (Simóné), and Ara (Della), who all grew up in the AYF. He was blessed with 10 grandchildren.

The Topouzians and Gavoor have been close for a few generations. We grew up in Detroit with the Topouzians. The boys and their families are our friends. Ara babysat for our children. We would take our children to their house, always the last stop, on Halloween. Ara and I play music together, and I am on two of his CDs, the proceeds of both of which went to philanthropic causes in Armenia.

Armen was a top-notch engineer and an executive at Ford Motor Company. He earned a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (1951, Phi-Beta Kappa—Engineering honor society) and a master’s degree in mechanical engineering from Wayne State University (1958). At Ford, he worked for more than 30 years in engine engineering and turbine research. At the high point in his career, he managed over 140 engineers. He developed or co-developed 36 patents while at Ford.

Armen was instrumental in my first real, meaningful job. I was an undergraduate majoring in mathematics and nearing the end of my sophomore year in 1972. I was thinking about a summer job and wanted to do something more mathematical, more so than the sales and factory worker jobs I had. Today, I would have said I wanted an internship. I had no clue how to get such a position. I thought of Mr. Topouzian. He was a friend of the family, and I knew he had a rather important engineering position at Ford Motor Company. I asked my mother if I should give him a call, and she encouraged me to. So I did. Armen was most cordial and asked the kinds of quasi-interview questions one might expect from an engineer’s engineer. He said he would get back to me. Shortly, he did, and offered me a summer job in his group: Advanced Engine Concepts in the Ford Research and Development office. I was pleased as punch, very appreciative—and had no clue what I would be doing.

When I started the position, I understood and was impressed that Armen was an expert in turbine and supercharged engine designs. My job was to take specifications from the engineers and work through equations to give the dimensions and operational characteristics of the heat exchanger. It was fun at first, and then a bit repetitive and tedious. I asked if I would get access to any computer support and was referred to a few people. Before I knew it, I had access to a



1961 Olympic King Armen Topouzian

computer, mainframes in those days, with a terminal where I could program in BASIC or FORTRAN. Cool. I spent a few weeks and had a system that all the engineers could use and just plug their numbers in and get answers. I was kind of proud. They were ecstatic.

This was a great starting point in my career, and I was so thankful to Mr. Topouzian. I found out through coworkers that Armen had actually created the position just for me. I was even more impressed and thankful. I was still more impressed when, later in my career, I found out just how hard it is to do that.

This kind of act and action defined Armen Topouzian, and it extended just as much into the Armenian community, where he was key figure in building both the Armenian Community Center and the St. Sarkis Armenian Senior Citizen Towers in Dearborn, Mich.

To quote from a piece prepared by his sons:

Armen’s philanthropic endeavors extend globally. Since 1975, he was active in raising funds, and providing medical supplies and hospital equipment for people in Armenia. In 1997, he traveled to Armenia and Karabagh for the first time “to learn and help our people,” he once said. He would end up making over 30 trips over the next 15 years, raising funds and sponsoring the Armenian Relief Society NKR “Soseh Mangabardez” program—creating 13 mangabardez (kindergartens).

From 2000-2005, he also sponsored 12 children in Armenia and Karabagh through the ARS of Eastern USA.

All in all, he raised close to two million dollars for Armenia and Karabagh.

His love of Armenia and its history led him to publish BANK OTTOMAN, Memoirs of Armen Garo, The Armenian Ambassador to America from the independent Republic of Armenia.

For his dedication to the people of Armenia and his philanthropic efforts, Armen was awarded a Testimonial of Appreciation from the Armenian Relief Society (ARS) in 2005, and in 2011 he was presented the Agnoui Award from the ARS. In 2015, he received the ANCA-ER Vahan Cardashian Award, which is given annually to an ANCA supporter who demonstrates longstanding dedication and active involvement in the Armenian-American community and its issues.

No one really knows about all this work he accomplished, because Armen not only preferred to work quietly but also part of his mission and his personality was to avoid the limelight and be behind the scenes.

Armen was truly a man of family and nation, a man with character, integrity, and a passion to serve whom all Armenians should want to emulate. AYFers, active and alumni, need to know, preserve, and emulate the legacy of this Olympic King.

AYF Softball: A Purely American-Armenian Experience

By Mark Gavor

There is nothing like AYF Softball. The teams are coed. They play three-pitch softball. You pitch to your own team, and each batter only gets three pitches. So the games are short and exciting. The excitement comes from great plays, great hits, and heartbreaking errors. It is the only team-based competition of the Olympic Weekend. And... there are no points. The teams play for fun, spirit, and pride. They play for the fraternalism that is the AYF.

It is a friendly competition. But, it is a competition. Everyone still wants to win.

On top of it all, and maybe because the games are happening on two adjacent fields, there were fans. Pretty much, the fans stayed all day. They consisted of players as well as families. They watched their own chapter when it was playing, and whatever game was more hotly contested when it was not.

The Racine folks had the grill and concessions going all day, the weather was most pleasant, and for the first time ever in AYF Softball there was live commentary. It was as good as AYF Softball gets.

This year, the AYF moved to a round-robin format, giving each team three games. Mgo Kassabian of North Andover said, “Hats off to CE for doing this and giving me three games in my last AYF Softball Tournament... as a player.”

There were eight teams in two divisions. One was a mixed chapter team consisting of the newly formed Manhattan chapter, Worcester, North Andover, and Canada.

The results of the division play were as follows:

Group 1

- 1. West Coast
- 2. New Jersey
- 3. Chicago
- 4. Providence

Group 2

- 1. Detroit
- 2. Boston
- 3. Philadelphia
- 4. Mixed Chapter

Though all the games were good, and fun to watch, the Providence-Chicago game in Group 1 was hotly contested. About this game, Alexan Topalian noted, “My favorite game was against Chicago. It went into extra innings. The odds were stacked against us as a team who didn’t practice and expected to be knocked out quickly. Surprisingly, we put up a great fight. Our team started hitting. My favorite moment was my greedy triple to center field and trying to steal home. I got out. Despite the injuries caused during that game, I though our team came out and left everything on the field.”

Indeed, they did. The game also featured a rare and impressive unassisted triple play by Chicago’s shortstop Ari Alexanian. He made a great catch on a short pop-fly. Runners on first and second were running, certain that it was going to be a hit. Ari then tagged second for the second out and tagged out the runner from first base for the third out.

It was also fun watching the two Chicago dads coaching the team in that game. The errors that led to extra innings made them crazy... as can only happen to Armenian coaches.

The Boston-Detroit game was also very good. Coach Ara Krafian commented on his team in general and the Detroit game in particular: “This year’s Boston team did a great job, given the fact that we weren’t certain that we would even field a team on Friday. The team was quite literally led by Mark Bejakian, chapter president, both in organizing the troops and with his on-field play. What was impressive about our kids was the measurable improvement they made over time, noticeable with each inning and each game. They started off a ragtag group happy to get past Philly, and ended their day with a 2-1 record, losing to Detroit, the eventual champs, in a hard-fought contest. The final game exhibited timely hitting from Nishan Avedikian, Eric Movsesian, Shant Mahrokhian, and Mark Bejakian to go along with a stingy defense to keep Detroit in check for most of the game.”

The championship game matched the reigning champs from Detroit against the always-excellent West Coast team. Alec Kourtjian is the leader, soul, and shortstop of the Detroit team, while the same can be said of Eddie Hovannisian, the first baseman, for the California team. Detroit takes it so seriously that the team played in a Tuesday night league to prepare for AYF Softball. As the West Coast team was composed of a few chapters, they did not practice at all but performed very well. The West Coast team was in the same group as New Jersey, the other perennial powerhouse, and beat Jersey to advance to the final. There were great plays, great hits, and heartbreaking errors in the final game, with Detroit prevailing in the end for their second Softball championship in a row.

They all play for bragging rights and pride. But, the real winner is fraternalism, the hugs, handshakes, and team photos at the end.

Mgo Kassabian summed it up perfectly: “I played softball for 11 years in a row. I only played with a North Andover team for two of those. I was on mixed teams with Granite City, Toronto, and this year the new Manhattan chapter. I don’t care if we get killed, I just love being out there.”

AYF softball... such a purely American-Armenian experience.



The Detroit and West Coast Softball teams



"Why slide when you can practice the long jump?"



Players closely follow their teammates during the game



Seran Krikorian of the West Coast bats

AYF Olympic King 2017: Dr. John Saryan

By HARRY DERDERIAN

AYF 2017 Olympic King Dr. John Saryan started his AYF career at age 16, when his parents started the Delaware “Dro” AYF Chapter.

“Thank you for this. The AYF has meant a lot to our family through the years, learning about our rich history and culture, making lifelong friends... AYF is very special,” John stated.

In his years of Olympic tennis competition, John earned a total of 25 points, including two first-place finishes along with seconds and thirds. By the end of his AYF career, John had represented Wilmington, Grand Rapids, and Boston in AYF tennis competition.

His notable first place win for Wilmington came when he defeated Harry Derderian, who had dominated tennis with 10 consecutive years of first-place gold medals.

John attended John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md., ultimately graduating from its School of Medicine in 1977. He performed his residency at Boston’s Children Hospital before joining Lahey Clinic and being appointed department chairman of allergy and immunology there in 2004.

Several times, Boston Magazine has listed Saryan as one of the top doctors in his specialty in the Greater Boston area—a peer-voted recognition.

“It serves as a privilege to be acknowledged among the very best,” John said, reflecting on the recognition.

For many years, John has devoted himself to the AYF and Armenian Community.

He served on Camp Haiastan’s board of directors and was, over a 30-year period, the camp’s medical director and on-call physician. He was an active member at St. Stephen’s Armenian Church, in Watertown, and later at St. Gregory’s Armenian church, in North Andover. For several years he served as a trustee at St. Gregory’s and a Sunday School teacher.

In 1998, he was ordained a sub-deacon and later became a full deacon.

“Being involved with the church is a place I go for peace,” he said. “It’s been a definite stress-buster for me. Every success I’ve achieved is a gift from God.”

Living in Andover, Mass., John is married to the former Debbie Musserian and the couple has three daughters.

Diana is an allergy immunology specialist like her dad, Valerie is an attorney in California, and Melanie is in the marketing field in Boston.



The Brothers Saryan

AYF Olympic Queen 2017: Ani Mikaelian



(L to R) Olympic Queen Anni Mikaelian Avi Kehgegian

By HARRY DERDERIAN

“Can you believe one year at Olympics all of us from Racine AYF stayed in one room?”

Ani Mikaelian, Olympic Queen 2017, cherishes her AYF days.

Ani was born and bred in Racine, brought up in a golfing family, and was a member of the Racine Armen Garo AYF chapter.

She joined AYF Juniors at age 10 and went to her first Olympics at age 18.

Ani’s memories: “Starting at the age 18, I went to every Senior Olympics until about age 27.... I traveled with my brother, Garo, and cousins each year and have great memories shared with all of them and with the friends I made..... My first year breaking the female golf record and my brother Garo also winning the gold the same year (Boston ’96) in men’s golf.... Can you believe one year all of us from Racine stayed in one room...? I cherish those years so much.”

In the nine AYF Olympic golf tournaments she participated, she took an amazing seven golds and 2 silvers. She set the women’s 9-hole record, a 42, in her first year of competition, in 1996, and that record lasted for 15 years.

She could not participate in AYF golf while in high school because of Division I school rules prohibiting golf team members participating in outside events. She was a standout high school golfer; as an AYFer, she easily could have added first place finishes to her 41 points if it were not for that rule.

Ani has two bachelor degrees from University of Wisconsin—one in fine arts, and another in business administration.

She has been a labor relations specialist at MillerCoors for more than 10 years.

She overflows with pride when she talks about her dynamic-duo four-year-old twins: Nyree and Massis.

Today, she is an active member of the St. Hagop Armenian Church community, ARS Racine Soseh Chapter, and ARF Racine Marzbed gomideh. She is the Olympic Steering Committee co-treasurer this year, and was also the co-treasurer for the last Milwaukee Olympics in 2006.

Racine’s Zohrab Khaligian notes: “Ani is prime example that an AYFer’s Armenian life does not end in the AYF, the AYF is only the beginning.... She is a true spirit of her upbringing and this city.”

Ani’s final thought for this local Olympics and her award: “Racine is not a community, it is a family. Racine rules!”

‘Oor Eh? Hos Eh!’

By Arakel Khaligian

Eleven years ago, the Racine “Armen Garo” Chapter hosted AYF Senior Olympics for the first time in the 73 years of the AYF. I joined AYF in April of 2006, and in May I attended my first Junior Seminar. To my surprise, there were kids from Detroit who had never heard of Racine, and East Coast members who didn’t even know where Wisconsin was! For some people, the first Downtown Milwaukee Olympics literally put Racine and Wisconsin on the map. We proved that one of the smallest communities could pull off our organization’s biggest event. Although I had a minimal role in that Olympics, I was ready to be closer to the helm next time.

The host community of this year’s AYF Olympics was chosen in Worcester, in 2013, which happened to be my first AYF Convention. After some discussion—the choice was between Chicago and Racine—the convention chose Milwaukee to be the home of the 2017 Olympic Games. About two years later, our steering committee began to meet regularly to start planning. Rather than meeting at church, we gathered at each other’s houses for lunch and would hang out for the afternoon. We knew that the more we enjoyed hosting Olympics, the better the experience would be for the attendees.

The biggest and most unpredictable challenge of hosting Olympics in the Midwest is attendance. We realized that this meant our brand needed to be clear and attractive. Our focus was showcasing Milwaukee’s strengths: affordable, walkable, hospitable, diverse, and unique. The goal was to prove that a trip to Wisconsin is well worth it. From this came our slogan that perfectly sums up how we felt: Oor eh? Hos eh! (Where is it? It’s here!). We always asked ourselves what we would want from an AYF Olympics experience, and it’s amazing how many great original ideas came from this mindset. Something that our chapter excels at is staying unique, and that’s a trademark of the Racine community.

This past year has shown fantastic growth for the “Armen Garo” Chapter. At the New Jersey Olympics last year, we were awarded with the “Most Improved Chapter” trophy and had our first ever high-scoring athlete. Our juniors scored a total of 72 points at Junior Olympics in Granite City, and won second place for the first time during my lifetime. If that wasn’t enough, our roster will cross the 20-member threshold before the end of this year.

I am so proud of our chapter, and I was very glad to see them experience a “Racine style” Olympics as AYF members. I cannot wait to work with them to host Downtown Milwaukee: Round 3!



Who Has It Better Than Us?

By Christopher Tarzian

A good friend of mine once said, “I should like to see any power of the world destroy this race, this small tribe of unimportant people.... Then see if they will not laugh, sing and pray again. For when two of them meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia.” After a memorable weekend in the heart of cheese country (Milwaukee), Saroyan’s words never seemed more apropos.

Of all the places AYF Senior Olympics has been held, Milwaukee was one of the most obscure. Yet it never really felt that way. The Racine “Armen Garo” Chapter held, in my opinion, one of the most organized and well-put-together events in recent memory, and it did not disappoint. That much-heralded Midwest charm was on full display throughout the weekend. In fact, they were even kind enough to allow the NJ “Arsen” Chapter to achieve its best finish ever (second place). For that, we thank you Milwaukee!

In all seriousness, though, you can’t help but think that Uncle Mark Alashaian was looking down on us that weekend. Over the years he had established himself as a pillar of the community and an integral part of not only our New Jersey chapter but also several other factions of the AYF. Uncle Mark believed that it was incumbent on the Diaspora’s current generation of Armenians to proudly carry the torch and leave the state of the AYF better than when we found out. The best way to honor his memory was to go out there and compete. The New Jersey “Arsen” Chapter did just that. Every attending member participated, which helped pave the way for pulling off a feat never accomplished in its storied past. To us, second place is the new first place. Uncle Mark, we love and miss you.

But the story doesn’t end there. For the many *ungers* and *ungerouhis* who have attended Camp Haiastan, the phrase “home is where the heart is” has long resonated. The best summers of our lives were spent at 722 Summer Street. I had always felt that my home away from home was this Armenian camp nestled in a corner of Massachusetts. But a home doesn’t always have to be a specific location but, rather, a place that draws your deepest affections. The four days I spent in Milwaukee only served to reinforce that point. The Armenian Youth Federation is home no matter the location. There is a reason people attend AYF Senior Olympics year after year after year. There is a reason my non-Armenian friends always ask, with a hint of jealousy, whether I’m off to another one of those “Armenian conventions.” There is a reason I could feel right at home in a place I had never even been before.

When Armenians meet anywhere in the world, we are simply at home.

Each year, those four days of AYF Olympics capture the very essence of what it means to be Armenian. For those few days out of the year, our culture, our food, our language, and our people are the most important things in the world. So I ask you: Who has it better than us? The answer: nobody.



It was appropriate and touching for these honored Alumni to be acknowledged, and touching that the AYF has chosen to so honor *ungers* Tom and Mark.

2016 Summary Results



Final Chapter Standings

1	Philadelphia	176
2	New Jersey	108
3	Greater Boston	85
4	Detroit	78
5	Chicago	37
6	Providence	30.5
7 (tie)	North Andover	18
	West San Fernando	18
9	Montreal	12
10	Racine	11
11	Toronto	6.5
12	Western Region	6
13 (tie)	Glendale	5
	Manhattan	5
15 (tie)	Burbank	2
	Worcester	2
17 (tie)	New York	0
	San Francisco	0



Most Improved

Chicago

Softball Winner

Detroit

High Scorers

	Chapter	Event 1
Ally Devedjian	Chicago	50 y. Freestyle
Anoush Krafian	Greater Boston	200 m. Dash
Meline Almasian	North Andover	50 m. Dash
Eric Movsesian	Greater Boston	50 y. Backstroke
Anto Keshgegian	Philadelphia	1600 m. Run
Shant Mahrokhian	Greater Boston	100 m. Dash

Event 2

25 y. Butterfly
100 m. Hurdles
100 m. Dash

Event 3

100 y. Freestyle
High Jump
Long Jump

50 y. Freestyle
800 m. Run
Long Jump

Women’s Pentathlon Winner

Jessica Sarkisian Philadelphia 1190 points

Men’s Pentathlon Winner

Aram Keshgegian Philadelphia 2326 points

Outstanding Records

	Chapter	Event	New Mark
Anoush Krafian	Gr. Boston	100 m. Hurdles	14.68

Old Mark	Record Held By	Chapter	Set In
15.76	Anoush Krafian	Gr. Boston	2015

Ernest Nahigian Sportsmanship Award

Dan Chakmakjian Greater Boston

Track Results

Women 50 Meter Dash				Women Javelin Throw			
1	Almasian, Meline	North Andover	6.66	1	Santerian, Lindsey	Philadelphia	83-06
2	Sarafian, Melanie	Detroit	7.31	2	Boyajian, Claudia	New Jersey	64-08
3	Markarian, Meline	North Andover	7.43	3	Tossounian, Arev	Detroit	59-03
4	Santerian, Lindsey	Philadelphia	7.47	4	Bedirian, Taline	Detroit	57-04
5	Krafian, Nairi	Greater Boston	7.53	5	Sarajian, Ani	New Jersey	50-11
6	Selverian, Victoria	Philadelphia	7.56	6	Billeh, Lauren	Chicago	45-03
7	Chipolone, Ariana	New Jersey	8.35	7	Dakesian, Ani	Detroit	39-04
8	Nigoghosian, Ariana	Detroit	8.47	8	Bagdasarian, Talar	Detroit	39-03
				9	Bagdasarian, Alique	Detroit	32-06
Women 100 Meter Dash				Women Baseball Throw			
1	Almasian, Meline	North Andover	12.85	1	Boyajian, Claudia	New Jersey	144-04.00
2	Sarafian, Melanie	Detroit	13.71	2	Fales, Jacqueline	New Jersey	135-09.00
3	Selverian, Victoria	Philadelphia	14.41	3	Oknayan, Talia	Detroit	132-05.00
4	Markarian, Meline	North Andover	14.66	4	Bagdasarian, Sareen	Detroit	122-04.00
5	Krafian, Nairi	Greater Boston	14.69	5	Tossounian, Araxie	Detroit	121-10.00
6	Fales, Jacqueline	New Jersey	14.75	6	Niffin, Kara	Detroit	117-08.00
7	Oknayan, Talia	Detroit	16.22	7	Keosian, Sarin	Western Region	106-11.00
Women 200 Meter Dash				8	Dakesian, Ani	Detroit	97-10.00
1	Krafian, Anoush	Greater Boston	26.78	9	Attar, Helen	Detroit	97-00.00
2	Sarafian, Melanie	Detroit	29.41	10	Chipolone, Alexandra	New Jersey	89-08.00
3	Arakelian, Lia	Philadelphia	32.16	11	Bagdasarian, Alique	Detroit	89-05.00
4	Tcholakian, Patil	Detroit	32.94	12	Billeh, Lauren	Chicago	82-08.00
5	Ezgilioglu, Victoria	New Jersey	34.31	13	Andonian, Vana	San Francisco	76-05.00
6	Mahrokhian, Sanan	Greater Boston	34.62	14	Bagdasarian, Talar	Detroit	76-04.00
7	Barberian, Olivia	North Andover	38.00	15	Alexanian, Tamar	Chicago	64-05.00
Women 400 Meter Dash				16	Keshgegian, Karine	Philadelphia	63-11.00
1	Topouzian, Knar	Detroit	1:09.10	17	Khachatourian, Ani	Greater Boston	61-03.00
2	Boyajian, Talia	New Jersey	1:15.40	18	Khachatourian, Nairi	Greater Boston	49-08.00
3	Tcholakian, Patil	Detroit	1:17.40	19	Bandazian, Ema	New Jersey	47-02.00
4	Arakelian, Lia	Philadelphia	1:20.10	20	Mardoian, Audrey	Manhattan	46-07.00
5	Mahrokhian, Sanan	Greater Boston	1:28.00	Women Outdoor Pentathlon			
6	Ezgilioglu, Victoria	New Jersey	1:29.00	1	Sarkisian, Jessica	Philadelphia	1190
Women 800 Meter Run				2	Dinkjian, Arev	New Jersey	950
1	Berberian, Lori	Glendale	2:53.25	3	Sarkisian, Kelsey	Philadelphia	909
2	Alexanian, Tamar	Chicago	3:50.96	4	Bedian, Knar	Greater Boston	863
Women 1600 Meter Run				Men 100 Meter Dash			
1	Ghazarian, Dvin	Western Region	8:07.40	1	Mahrokhian, Shant	Greater Boston	11.25
2	Alexanian, Tamar	Chicago	8:12.40	2	Papazian, Eric	Philadelphia	11.44
3	Ezgilioglu, Grace	New Jersey	8:47.70	3	Topouzian, Stepan	Detroit	12.10
4	Tossounian, Araxie	Detroit	9:11.40	4	Tashian, Harout	Providence	12.12
Women 100 Meter Hurdles				5	Chamesian, Paul	New Jersey	13.38
1	Krafian, Anoush	Greater Boston	14.68 R	6	Surenian, Alek	Chicago	13.60
2	Boyajian, Talia	New Jersey	19.16	Men 200 Meter Dash			
3	Arakelian, Lia	Philadelphia	19.34	1	Mahrokhian, Shant	Greater Boston	23.57
4	Charchaflian, Kenar	Worcester	20.19	2	Papazian, Eric	Philadelphia	23.90
5	Tossounian, Araxie	Detroit	25.50	3	Tashian, Harout	Providence	26.34
Women 4x100 Meter Relay				4	Chamesian, Paul	New Jersey	29.81
1	Greater Boston 'A'		58.47	Men 400 Meter Dash			
2	Detroit 'A'		58.57	1	Mardirosyan, Mher	Philadelphia	56.40
3	Philadelphia 'A'		1:00.16	2	Papazian, Eric	Philadelphia	56.70
4	New Jersey 'A'		1:00.96	3	Tarzian, Christopher	New Jersey	1:01.00
5	North Andover 'A'		1:02.94	4	Knight, Garrett	Providence	1:01.10
6	Western Region 'A'		1:06.47	5	Niffin, Kyle	Detroit	1:06.60
Women 4x200 Meter Relay				Men 800 Meter Run			
1	Philadelphia 'A'		2:10.10	1	Keshgegian, Anto	Philadelphia	2:19.03
2	Detroit 'A'		2:16.10	2	Chahinian, Haig	Toronto	2:22.06
3	New Jersey 'A'		2:47.30	3	Garibian, Eddie	Greater Boston	2:27.50
Women High Jump				4	Knight, Garrett	Providence	2:30.00
1	Krafian, Anoush	Greater Boston	5-00.00	5	Kourtjian, Alec	Detroit	2:41.00
2	Topouzian, Knar	Detroit	4-07.00	6	Niffin, Kyle	Detroit	2:41.75
3	Jelalian, Theresa	New Jersey	3-11.00	7	Mahdasian, Nishan	Racine	3:03.00
4	Comella, Ani	Providence	3-09.00	8	Alexanian, Arek	Chicago	3:04.10
5	Papazian, Taline	Philadelphia	3-09.00	9	Bedian, Daron	Chicago	3:05.00
5	Ezgilioglu, Grace	New Jersey	3-09.00	Men 1600 Meter Run			
Women Long Jump				1	Keshgegian, Anto	Philadelphia	5:32.30
1	Almasian, Meline	North Andover	16-05.00	2	Keosian, Armand	West San Fernando	5:49.03
2	Krafian, Nairi	Greater Boston	13-01.00	3	Kourtjian, Alec	Detroit	5:52.18
3	Selverian, Victoria	Philadelphia	12-09.00	4	Garibian, Eddie	Greater Boston	5:54.40
4	Menissian, Sylvahna	Providence	11-06.75	5	Arakelian, Alec	Philadelphia	5:57.00
5	Ezgilioglu, Grace	New Jersey	11-03.50	6	Chahinian, Gabriel	Toronto	5:59.00
5	Papazian, Taline	Philadelphia	11-03.50	7	Surenian, Alek	Chicago	6:12.19
7	Bagdasarian, Alique	Detroit	11-03.00	8	Pjojian, Eric	Providence	6:15.50
8	Markarian, Meline	North Andover	11-01.00	9	Mahdasian, Nishan	Racine	7:38.25
9	Barberian, Lucille	North Andover	9-08.50	10	Bedian, Daron	Chicago	9:44.00
10	Oknayan, Talia	Detroit	8-09.00	10	Kourtjian, Chris	Detroit	9:44.00
				10	Khaligian, Arakel	Racine	9:44.00
Women Triple Jump				Men 3200 Meter Run			
1	Santerian, Lindsey	Philadelphia	31-07.50	1	Keshgegian, Anto	Philadelphia	12:27.00
2	Fales, Jacqueline	New Jersey	29-03.50	2	Ballard, Michael	Philadelphia	12:41.00
3	Boyajian, Talia	New Jersey	26-04.50	3	Kourtjian, Alec	Detroit	12:42.00
4	Comella, Ani	Providence	23-06.00	4	Arakelian, Alec	Philadelphia	12:53.00
5	Papazian, Taline	Philadelphia	20-08.50	5	Pjojian, Eric	Providence	12:58.00
6	Tcholakian, Haigan	Detroit	20-04.50	6	Chahinian, Gabriel	Toronto	13:21.00
Women Shot Put				7	Dinkjian, Kyle	New Jersey	14:45.00
1	Tcholakian, Patil	Detroit	30-02.00	8	Bedian, Daron	Chicago	15:11.00
2	Sarajian, Ani	New Jersey	29-07.00	9	Khaligian, Arakel	Racine	19:24.00
3	Oknayan, Gasia	Detroit	25-04.50	Men 110 Meter Hurdles			
4	Billeh, Lauren	Chicago	25-03.00	1	Keshgegian, Richard	Philadelphia	17.47
5	Tcholakian, Haigan	Detroit	24-09.50	2	Nercesian, Michael	Detroit	17.65
6	Tossounian, Arev	Detroit	24-02.00	3	Frounjian, Tavit	Philadelphia	18.72
7	Bagdasarian, Talar	Detroit	21-08.00	4	Sirian, Ryan	Detroit	22.93
8	Dakesian, Ani	Detroit	21-00.50	Men 4x100 Meter Relay			
9	Menissian, Sylvahna	Providence	20-02.00	1	Philadelphia 'A'		47.74
9	Krikorian, Seran	Burbank	20-02.00	2	Detroit 'A'		50.75
11	Keshgegian, Karine	Philadelphia	19-09.00	3	Greater Boston 'A'		50.81
12	Dakesian, Nina	Detroit	19-08.00	4	Western Region 'A'		50.94
13	Karakelian, Tsoline	Philadelphia	19-07.00	5	Providence 'A'		51.91
13	Bedirian, Taline	Detroit	19-07.00	6	New Jersey 'A'		51.94
15	Mahrokhian, Sanan	Greater Boston	19-04.00	7	Chicago 'A'		53.54
16	Barberian, Lucille	North Andover	19-01.00	Men 4x400 Meter Relay			
17	Bandazian, Ema	New Jersey	18-03.00	1	Philadelphia 'A'		4:04.70
18	Topouzian, Ani	Detroit	15-06.50	2	Providence 'A'		5:08.50
Women Discus Throw				3	New Jersey 'A'		5:26.10
1	Sarajian, Ani	New Jersey	76-00	Men High Jump			
2	Oknayan, Gasia	Detroit	70-09	1	Mkrtschjan, Nareg	Providence	5-04.00
3	Tcholakian, Haigan	Detroit	65-05	2	Bedian, Garin	Chicago	4-03.00
4	Tossounian, Arev	Detroit	56-00	3	Frounjian, Tavit	Philadelphia	4-00.00
5	Topouzian, Ani	Detroit	47-10				

Track Results (Continued)

Men Long Jump		
1 Mahrokhian, Shant	Greater Boston	19-10.75
2 Mardirosian, Masis	Philadelphia	18-11.00
3 Mardirosyan, Mher	Philadelphia	17-06.50
4 Chiloyan, Varant	Greater Boston	15-07.00
5 Tossounian, Mourad	Detroit	14-07.00
6 Bedian, Garin	Chicago	12-07.00
6 Alashaian, Armen	New Jersey	12-07.00
Men Triple Jump		
1 Keosian, Armand	West San Fernando	38-04.00
2 Arakelian, Alec	Philadelphia	36-11.00
3 Mardirosyan, Mher	Philadelphia	33-11.00
4 Chiloyan, Varant	Greater Boston	31-06.00
5 Nercesian, Michael	Detroit	30-01.00
6 Sarajian, Haig	New Jersey	27-00.50
7 Alashaian, Armen	New Jersey	25-10.00
Men Shot Put		
1 Nercesian, Armen	Manhattan	39-07.50
2 Haase, Michael	Detroit	38-04.00
3 Sarajian, Haig	New Jersey	35-05.00
4 Topalian, Alexan	Providence	35-01.50
5 Dadaian, Raffi	West San Fernando	33-03.00
6 Dramgotchian, Gevork	Philadelphia	32-05.00
7 Alashaian, Shant	New Jersey	30-00.50
8 Kassabian, Megerdich	North Andover	28-10.00
9 Bedian, Garin	Chicago	27-07.00
10 Kourtjian, Chris	Detroit	27-06.50

Men Discus Throw		
1 Topalian, Alexan	Providence	88-00.50
2 Sarajian, Garo	New Jersey	84-10.50
3 Sarajian, Haig	New Jersey	84-04.00
4 Dramgotchian, Gevork	Philadelphia	78-04.50
5 Alashaian, Shant	New Jersey	76-09.00
6 Kassabian, Megerdich	North Andover	68-10.00
Men Javelin Throw		
1 Santerian, Mark	Philadelphia	134-02
2 Nercesian, Michael	Detroit	115-00
3 Frounjian, Tavit	Philadelphia	104-00
4 Alashaian, Shant	New Jersey	93-02
5 Tossounian, Mourad	Detroit	88-00
6 Kassabian, Megerdich	North Andover	70-03
7 Dadaian, Raffi	West San Fernando	67-11
8 Alashaian, Armen	New Jersey	62-07
Men Outdoor Pentathlon		
1 Keshgegian, Aram	Philadelphia	2326
2 Dilanjian, Alan	Chicago	2174
3 Chakmakjian, Daniel	Greater Boston	1863
4 Alexanian, Shant	Chicago	1649
Mixed 4x200 Meter Relay		
1 Greater Boston 'A'		1:51.50
2 Detroit 'A'		1:56.30
3 Philadelphia 'A'		1:56.90
4 New Jersey 'A'		1:57.30



Swimming, Tennis, and Golf Results

Swimming Results

Women 25 Yard Freestyle		
1 Khatchadourian, Faye	Montreal	14.75
2 Jelalian, Theresa	New Jersey	15.18
3 Krikorian, Seran	Burbank	16.69
4 Bahtiarian, Lucine	Greater Boston	17.03
5 Karakelian, Tsoline	Philadelphia	18.57
6 Topouzian, Ani	Detroit	21.40
Women 50 Yard Freestyle		
1 Devedjian, Ally	Chicago	27.53
2 Khaligian, Azniv	Racine	30.06
3 Bahtiarian, Lucine	Greater Boston	39.34
4 Ariyan, Lina	New Jersey	41.59
5 Ariyan, Katia	New Jersey	42.84
Women 100 Yard Freestyle		
1 Devedjian, Ally	Chicago	1:01.85
2 Khaligian, Azniv	Racine	1:08.31
3 Ariyan, Lina	New Jersey	1:48.22
Women 50 Yard Backstroke		
1 Ezgilioglu, Victoria	New Jersey	46.54
2 Bahtiarian, Lucine	Greater Boston	48.59
Women 50 Yard Breaststroke		
1 Khatchadourian, Faye	Montreal	39.07
2 Topouzian, Knar	Detroit	43.84
3 Ariyan, Katia	New Jersey	49.19
4 Khaligian, Areknaz	Racine	50.50
Women 25 Yard Butterfly		
1 Devedjian, Ally	Chicago	13.59
2 Khaligian, Azniv	Racine	14.35
3 Khatchadourian, Faye	Montreal	15.94
Women 100 Yard Freestyle Relay		
1 Detroit		1:06.47
2 New Jersey		1:12.50
3 Philadelphia		1:12.97
Men 50 Yard Freestyle		
1 Movsesian, Eric	Greater Boston	26.31
2 Hovannisian, Eddie	West San Fernando	29.46
3 Ballard, Michael	Philadelphia	30.04
4 Tarzian, Christopher	New Jersey	31.40
Men 100 Yard Freestyle		
1 Ballard, Michael	Philadelphia	1:16.10
2 Tashjian, Peter	Philadelphia	1:24.94
Men 50 Yard Backstroke		
1 Movsesian, Eric	Greater Boston	33.12
2 Santerian, Mark	Philadelphia	35.06
3 Sarajian, Garo	New Jersey	1:33.84
Men 50 Yard Breaststroke		
1 Movsesian, Eric	Greater Boston	37.78
2 Keshgegian, Richard	Philadelphia	43.35
3 Hovannisian, Eddie	West San Fernando	49.06
Men 50 Yard Butterfly		
1 Hovannisian, Eddie	West San Fernando	45.47
2 Dinkjian, Kyle	New Jersey	49.34
3 Tashjian, Peter	Philadelphia	49.97

Men 200 Yard Freestyle Relay		
1 Philadelphia		2:19.60
2 New Jersey		3:46.00
Men 200 Yard Medley Relay		
1 Philadelphia		2:36.05
2 New Jersey		4:25.08
Coed 200 Yard Freestyle Relay		
1 Greater Boston		2:14.18
2 Philadelphia		2:14.63
3 New Jersey		2:17.59
4 Racine		3:03.72

Tennis Results

Men's Tennis		
1 Hagop Taraksian	Providence	
2 Gabriel Chahinian	Toronto	
3 Nareg Mkrtchian	Providence	
4 Garo Tashian	Providence	
Women's Tennis		
1 Lina Ariyan	New Jersey	
2 Ema Bandazian	New Jersey	
3 Katia Ariyan	New Jersey	
4 Kenar Charchaflian	Worcester	

Golf Results

Men's Golf		
1 Mark Santerian	Philadelphia	77
2 Peter Tashjian	Philadelphia	78
3 Michael Haase	Detroit	85
4 Alexan Topalian	Providence	96 (tie)
Haig Chahinian	Toronto	96
Women's Golf		
1 Theresa Jelalian	New Jersey	54
2 Claudia Boyajian	New Jersey	55



Thinking about the 84th AYF Olympic Games

By Mark Gavor

This article is an homage to Angel Perethian and Tom Vartabedian. It is our first Olympics without our beloved Olympic King Tom. We, the intrepid team that now does what he used to do by himself, are ready, willing, and able to continue on without him. But, we miss him. Even though he was “retired” from covering the AYF Olympics, he still did. In fact, last year, while in the throes of the cancer that would take him from us a few months later, he still wrote three articles. He was an amazing man, and he embodied the true spirit of the AYF.

Angel Perethian was a longtime contributor to the Armenian Weekly AYF Olympics Issue articles. She wrote a delightful piece called “Angel Over the Olympics,” in which she noted and commented on the people in attendance and the social aspects of the weekend. “Angel Over the Olympics” was, as Tom Vartabedian often said, “The first article people turned to when the Olympics issue of the Armenian Weekly arrived. It may have also been the most popular article as well.” This article is reminiscent of her style.

At the welcoming table, there was a book for sale. It was a beautiful piece of work assembled by the AYF Junior Chapters of the Midwest. It is titled From the Old Country to the New: A Collection of Family Histories. It is a fascinating book and a brilliant idea to help capture and keep the histories of our first generation alive. It was well worth the \$25.

It is amazing how the AYF softballs games have grown. They draw as big a crowd as swimming, and the crowd stays strong the entire day.

There were a couple plaques about Milwaukee history I saw over the Olympics Weekend. About a block from the hotel, a plaque commemorated the founding of baseball’s American League on March 5, 1900. The site used to be the Republican Hotel, where Connie Mack, Charles Comisky, and others met that day. Currently, it is a parking lot for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. The second plaque was in the hotel lobby. It noted that the site where the Hyatt was built had formerly been the Hotel Gilpartick, where there was an assassination attempt against Theodore Roosevelt in 1912. Google it to read the amazing story.

North Andover stalwart Mgo Kassabian noted that “The first Olympics I participated in was in Racine in 2006. This year, again in Racine, marks my last Olympics as a participant. Being from a small chapter myself, I am so proud of Racine for putting on this event twice, with such success.” Well said, Mgo.

It was a pleasure seeing Marty and Diane Shoushanian and family from Detroit. They recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, and were delightfully surprised when the band at the Alumni Dance played “Hars u Pesa” just for them.

The ad book was fantastic. Congratulations to Nicole Dadian, Silva Karapetian, Holly Khaligian, Denise Lansing, and Sosi Mikaelian for doing a fantastic job pulling this wonderful souvenir book together.

It was great to see Governing Body member in training Daron Topouzian shadowing current members Michael Varadian, Jeff Hagopian, and Rich Keshgegian. The role of the Governing Body is to provide oversight, guidance, and continuity as the AYF Olympics moves from city to city. These amazing and hardworking volunteers are always in the background, but they’re indispensable.

Over the years, the AYF Olympics has been a place where young Armenians developed their leadership and organizational skills. Organizing and hosting an event of this magnitude is no small feat. Olympics is a place where young Armenians have developed a love of sport that perhaps propelled them in high school, college, and beyond. It is also a place where young Armenians have become enamored with our music. Some have gone from fan and devotee to fledgling musician, to becoming part of the musical scene. The famed hook-up was a key factor in this development. A hook-up was simply a group of musicians playing impromptu in their rooms or hotel lobby. Over the years, the AYF has moved to hiring musicians to play after the dances to keep the hook-ups from happening in the rooms, which often upset hotel guests trying to sleep. It was a refreshing throwback to see a real hookup in the lobby on late Sunday afternoon when Michael Kamalian on clarinet, Datev Gevorkian on oud, and Alek Surenian on dumbeg set up in the lobby, truly entertaining and impressing everyone.

Oh, and speaking of the ad book... given this world of on-demand printing, when are folks going to be able to order a book online?

Alec Sarafian did a marvelous job as the emcee/announcer at the track and field events. Alec would have made longtime announcer Mark Alashaian proud.

There were three ads in the ad book mentioning Tom Vartabedian. One was from Harry Derderian and Armen Harootian. They had a lovely photo of Tom holding the book he co-authored, Armenians of the Merrimack Valley. Their ad was simply titled “Tom Vartabedian, The Eternal Olympic Spirit.” Another was an ad called Olympic Kings and Queens, and it featured a photo of Harry Kushigian, Tom Vartabedian, Leo Derderian, Margaret Stepanian, Armen Harootian, and Sylvia Simonian. Below the photo, it said what many people feel: “AYF brought us together, Friends and *Ungers* Forever.” Indeed. The third ad was a photo of Tom with his camera. It was from the team of four people it took to replace him in preparing this Olympics supplement to the Armenian Weekly.

I walked in the lobby, and the first people I saw were Rich and Nora Sarajian. They were about to head out to a Brewer’s game. They were playing the Nationals. How did they get tickets, I wondered. They had an extra ticket and invited me along. I had other obligations, however.

It was great seeing Peter Jelalian and catching up with him a bit. Karen Kehetian had flown from L.A. to St. Louis, and then driven up with her sister Janet and niece Melanie Haroian. It was great to see the Khaligian family, especially Areknaz, who is spending a year working in Armenia. But she was not about to miss an Olympics, especially one hosted by her own Racine Chapter. Ara and Margo Dinkijan were there, as was the Steve Hagopian family. Later in the evening, the Kzirian brothers and families arrived.

Steve Mesrobian and Tereza Yerimyan, both representing the ANCA, were at the welcoming table getting people to sign up for their innovative ANCA Rapid Responder Program. Inquire about it by emailing them at anca@anca.org.

Big kudos to Lara Kazarian Krueger, Melissa Mikaelian, and Sona Mikaelian for organizing a wonderful Alumni Reception and Dance Friday night. They had a great local band, Chicago’s HyeVibes, with special guest kanunist and singer Stepan Fronjian.

Speaking of bands, I thought the Sunday night band was awesome. They had a big fat sound. Mike Gostanian, David Hoplamazian, Aram Hovakimian, Antranig Kizirian, Jim Kizirian, Chris Vosbikian, and Steve Vosbikian had everyone up and dancing. I did see Michael Kamalian and Datev Gevorkian, stage-side, watching their every move with awe and looking forward to the day when they might be on the big stage.

It is great that Michelle Hagopian went from being an AYF athlete to reporter this year. Bravo, Michelle! She penned a most interesting interview with a truly Racine in-



Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan addresses the 2017 AYF Olympics Opening Ceremony



The Steering Committee of the 84th Annual AYF Olympics

novation at this year’s softball games: commentators. Dan Krueger and Armen Saryan were awesome.

Speaking of the Governing Body, Ken Topalian is officially retired. But seeing his involvement and assistance over the weekend in, well, almost everything, “retired” is not a word I would use to describe him.

One of the most amazing ads in the ad book was from Lucy and Hachig Samessian: “In loving memory of our maternal grandparents and their legacy, our Mayrig.” It gave the timeline of their mother, Mari Samessian, and their grandparents Khachadour and Lusatzen Buchaklian. They were in Smyrna in 1922. Lusatzen and Mari survived. Sadly, Khachadour was martyred. I have known Hachig and Lucy for years and did not know this story. Thank you for sharing your family history. It would be great to see more ads like this.

In the opening ceremonies, His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, ARF Representative Haig Oshagan, and AYF CE Chairperson Garo Tashian gave inspirational speeches. All three, in their own way, emphasized the need to focus on preserving our Armenian life, lifestyle, and communities here in the United States. They all noted the truly strong role the AYF has served and will continue to serve in that regard.

Looking forward to the Olympics next year in Philadelphia and to returning to Milwaukee sooner rather than later...

A job very well done to the Armen Garos!

Coaches'...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE SEVEN

side by scoring in all three of her individual events. Anoush Krafian and Dan Chakmakjian joined the two swimmers to help us win a tight coed relay.

On the track the best race of the day was the women’s 4x100m relay, where first-year participant Sanan Mahrokhian impressed as she joined the Krafian sisters (Araxi, Nairi, and Anoush). Anoush, running the anchor leg, was able to run down the competition to out-lean Detroit by a tenth of a second at the line for the win. Anoush’s day included a record-breaking win in the 100m hurdles, followed by wins in 200m dash, high jump, and a strong leg in the 4x200m coed relay. Nairi Krafian, who also contributed to the same two winning relays had a second-place finish in the long jump. Knar Bedian chipped in with three very hard-earned points in the exhausting pentathlon on the women’s side.

For the men, Shant Mahrokhian was flawless, winning the 100m and 200m dashes, and easily took the honors for a second straight year in the long jump to earn his 15 points to make him our third high scorer. Dan Chakmakjian had a busy day with a determined final-event mile to come from behind and take third place in the pentathlon. He also participated on two relays, including the winning coed, which followed shortly after he had completed the difficult pentathlon. Dan’s effort and attitude earned him the prestigious Earnest Nahigian Sportsmanship Award. Eddie Garibian, a junior eligible 16-year-old member, had third and fourth place finishes in the 800m and mile. Finally, Varant Chiloyan chipped in with points in the long and triple jumps.

I’m confident that we will get our organizational issues worked out before long. Look for Greater Boston to once again field a spirited team ready to compete in Philadelphia in 2018.

Snapshots: 2017 AYF Olympics



Photographers contributing to this AYF Olympics Special Issue were Tamar Kanarian, Sona Gevorkian, and Mark Gavoor.