



ARMENIAN GENERAL BENEVOLENT UNION

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January 1, 2009

Dear AGBU District, Chapter, and Young Professionals Chairmen and Committee Members,

On the threshold of the New Year, we greet all of you with warm feelings of contentment and appreciation. We are pleased to note the prolific activity and achievements of our organization in the past year. Yet, we are aware that we are faced with new imperatives, which we are bracing to address with a deep sense of responsibility and spirit of cooperation.

The past year of 2008, which was characterized by important national, political and religious developments in the life of the Armenian nation, became a period of new directions and a generational shift for the Armenian General Benevolent Union.

In addition to the organization's current extensive programs in Armenia and the Diaspora, certain important initiatives began to materialize, such as the programs in Armenia aimed at cultivating the identity of the new generation. Among these programs are the study abroad program in Armenia for Diasporan students, jamborees for AGBU scouts worldwide at Camp Antranik in the Lori region, and the Virtual College providing instruction in Armenian language, history and culture in six languages via the Internet. AGBU Europe was created, which continues to implement a busy program of conferences and activities on an international level within the sphere of the European Council. The 85th General Assembly, the first at the beginning of this new era, affirmed the organization's contemporary modus operandi dictated by the evolving realities and needs in the Homeland and Diaspora; this was manifested through the inclusion of young new members in the leadership of our organization. Our schools worldwide continued their educational endeavor, our students achieving outstanding scholastic results. With their high-quality cultural programs, as well as athletic, youth and scouting activities, our chapters energized Diasporan Armenian community life. The New York, Paris and Yerevan Summer Intern Programs were successfully implemented. The XVIII World Games took place in Montevideo. The Generation Next mentorship program of Southern California expanded the realm of its activity. Talented young musicians, who had received performing arts scholarships from AGBU, gave a brilliant group performance in New York's Carnegie Hall. The ranks of Young Professionals swelled with the formation of new groups in different parts of the world, and an AGBU office was opened in Frankfurt, through their partnership with HAIK, an association of Armenian students in German universities.

On this occasion, we express our appreciation to all the old and new members of District Committees, Chapters and Sub-Committees for their leadership and organizational spirit. We also convey our warm feelings of gratitude to the principals and faculty of our schools for their devotion and dedicated service.

continued

CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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DIRECTOR EMERITUS - BARRY ZORTHIAN.

IN MEMORIAM - BOGHOS NUBAR, *Founder*; ALEX MANOOGIAN, *Honorary Life President*.

We greet the New Year with optimism and ever stronger commitment to the realization of AGBU's goals. We are fully conscious that the international economic situation, which started last year and whose negative effects shall continue to manifest themselves in all areas over the next several years as well, dictates that we act with even greater responsibility, in terms of using our precious resources with utmost effectiveness and circumspection. To that end, we invite all of you to carefully reevaluate your programs within the context of AGBU's overall mission and direction, and then decide on your priorities, in order to exercise the necessary frugality in budgetary considerations and/or ensure additional funds through new initiatives. We are convinced that you will combine your efforts with those of our worldwide membership to ensure the unimpeded realization of our organization's objectives and programs of benefit to the nation as a whole.

We send you our heartfelt wishes for a peaceful, joyous and fruitful New Year.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Setrakian", written over a horizontal line.

Berge Setrakian
President