ADIEU - ՀՐԱԺԵՇՏ

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Category: Opinions

Dear Reader,

Keghart.com was launched nine years ago to communicate with non-Armenian Canadians so as to voice concerns about a variety of Canadian and global political and human rights issues, including but not limited to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. As well, Keghart.com was intended to familiarize non-Armenian Canadians with issues vital (our Diasporas, conditions in Armenia and existential challenges Armenians face, to cite some) to the eight million global Armenian nation.

It was not a novel idea to involve non-Armenians in our deliberations, but it was a new attempt on digital media. This was also a time when leading Canadian journalists (syndicated columnist Gwynne Dyer and "Globe and Mail's" national columnist Jeffrey Simpson) spewed unfriendly, sometimes even couched inimical remarks about Armenians' plight, a period when the Genocide of Armenians was mentioned with qualifiers, and when the foreign minister was nodding to Turkish demands for a "commission" of historians to determine the veracity of the Genocide which was at odds with the prime minister's principled stand. The memory of a preceding government fiasco was fresh in the minds of Canadian Armenians and the wounds resulting from the cowardly assassination of Hrant Dink had not healed and still have not.

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The tragedy of March 1, 2008 in Yerevan, and the subsequent developments dramatically diverted Keghart.com's editorial orientation. It became more "Armeno-centric". Due to the imperatives of the day the articles' focus shifted to global Armenian issues and with the Armenian reader in mind.

At its height the database counted more than 20,000 addresses. Most of the articles were viewed by

thousands of readers and some articles garnered cumulative one-half million clicks over time.

Keghart.com also organized public events -- some in cooperation with other organizations. Notable were the Roundtable Discussions: Policy Directions in Post Election Armenia of June 2008 immediately following the March tragedy, the Unity Symposium, the panel discussion devoted to Kurdish-Armenian relations and "by invitation only" meeting with the National Congress of Western Armenians chairman Souren Seraydarian. All were attended in numbers worthy of any major community organization event. Of all the articles and editorials "Proposed Media Guidelines" (two parts), penned by the site's English language editor Jirair Tutunjian has to be singled out for its insightful and practical recommendations to improve communication with the non-Armenian media.

Throughout its performance Keghart.com strived to remain non-partisan and open-minded. It provided an arena for readers to air conflicting views through articles and comments guided by the principle that no individual or entity has the monopoly on the truth. As such, it strived to fill a void in the North American Armenian media.

It was an exciting journey which came at a financial cost. By latest count Keghart.com expenses have been equivalent to the cost of raising a child from birth to mid teen-age years in Canada. To keep the website running in its present form entails the need for ongoing revenues that I, as a septuagenarian publisher, cannot afford, particularly because of imminent retirement. Health concerns and expanding family demands are additional reasons to say, "Adieu" to Keghart.com readers.

Over the past couple of years editors Tutunjian, Minas Kojayan and I have spent numerous hours and criss-crossed Canada and the US West Coast to recruit potential new publishers. Our efforts have failed for a variety of reasons. However, we've not given up and hope that concerned individuals, friends of Keghart.com will come up with novel and practical proposals to continue the site or a sister project guided by the same principles of non-partisanship, to provide a free "marketplace of ideas" and unbiased discussion which our communities sorely need.

The site will be on the net serving as a personal blog; readers can post comments, and announcements about significant community events will be circulated from time to time.

Keghart.com's list of columnists, commentators, editors and board members is long. They soon will receive personal e-mails of thanks. I'd like also to thank you, the Keghart.com reader, who followed the site and kept it going.

Sincerely,

Dikran Abrahamian
Penetanguishene, Ontario
8 September 2016