"FIVE YEARS OF KEGHART.COM 2007-2012"

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By Dikran Abrahamian & Jirair J. Tutunjian
Reviewed by Vahe H. Apelian, 10 September 2013

Recently I received a copy of a book the founder of the Keghart.com, Dr. Dikran Abrahamian, had given to me with the following inscription: “Thanks to people like you, Keghart.com was able to survive this long”.

My association with Keghart.com as a contributor dates to November 2009 when my first article, about Miss Effie Chambers, a beloved missionary among the Armenians, was published.

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I had seen the "Keghart.com Five Years" book in its electronic version at the Keghart.com site and as hard copy at the Glendale Public Library. Even though I could have read the articles in their electronic version I had downloaded, I much appreciated Dikran’s thoughtfulness in personalizing and mailing a hard copy to me.

The book is in softcover and is printed by Zohrab Sarkissian in Toronto, Canada. Sevan Abrahamian has designed its simple and yet effective cover. It is 396 pages and is dedicated to the families of Keghart.com Editorial Board. In its first five years the board comprised of Publisher and Editor-in-Chief Abrahamian (BA, MD), Editor Jirair J. Tutunjian (BA-Journalism; MA-communications), Technical Manager Vako Nicolian (B.Sc., CLP) and Nayiri Abrahamian as Secretary and Distribution Manager.

The preface, by Dr. Abrahmamian, and an introduciton by Viken L. Attarian precede the main content of the book which is comprised of articles the authors have penned in Keghart.com during the first five years of its existence.

The articles are divided into four sections. The first section, titled “Editorials”, is 235 pages long and is a compilation of 75 editorials written by Dr. Abrahamian and Mr. Tutunjian. The first editorial, titled “US Armenian Lobby’s Clout Exaggerated” is dated Nov. 22, 2009; the last is “Who is Armenian?” (Aug. 15, 2012).

The second section is titled "Views & Reviews". It is 52 pages long and includes 16 articles by Mr. Tutunjian. The first article is titled "Reflections on the Hon. Hranush Hacobyan's Visit to Canada" (March 5, 2009) and the last is "Another Shakespearean Mystery Unveiled" (Aug. 20, 2012).

The third section is "As I was Saying". It is 97 pages long and is comprised of 38 articles written by Dr. Abrahamian. The first article is "The Last Victim of the Armenian Genocide & Democracy: Hrant Dink" (Jan. 19, 2007) and the last is "Open Letter to Canadian Armenian Physicians". (July 14, 2011).

The fourth and last section of the book is "Readership Statistics" comprised of two tables. The first--"The Hit Parade"--lists the 25 countries with the most hits, that is, people viewing the site. The five leading countries are the United States, Canada, the Russian Federation, Armenia, and Germany. The second table is titled "Keghart's Soaring Popularity". It lists the number of Keghart.com visitors per month. For example, on Sept. 6, 2007, presumably when Keghart.com first appeared in the cyber world, the visitor number was 6. That number climbed to 13,117 on August 2012, upon the site's fifth anniversary.

Keghart.com is a labor of love. The number of the articles the authors have penned is a reflection of the time and effort the two have vested to make the site popular among many. The breath of the subjects the two authors have covered is telling of the scope of the issues they have presented to the readership, inviting them to voice their opinions.

The popularity of Keghart.com is in no uncertain term a much-deserved achievement by its editorial board. Along with the publisher and the editor, Vako Nicolian and Nayiri Abrahamian have had equally huge input to assure 'Keghart's soaring popularity'. The appealing and interactive design of the site where readers' comments and evaluation of the comments follow each article is the brainchild of Vako Nicolian, the technical manager. Nayiri's task has been no less important in assuring the orderly and timely dissemination of the new editorials, articles that filled the pages of Keghart.com as time went by.

It is also a tribute to the reputation of the editorial board that Keghart.com has been able to entice prominent Diasporan Armenians to pen articles and have their say. Among them I count the eminent Pilikian brothers, Avedis Kevorkian, Viken L. Attarian, Hamo Moskofian, Lucine Kasbarian, and many more.

Publisher Abrahamian gives due credit to the contribution of "activists, columnists, historians, legal experts, and community leaders" who have enhanced the popularity, growth and longevity of Keghart.com as an Armenian cyber forum. However, the content of the book does not reflect their contribution. Other than the paragraph-long introduction in the preface, they are altogether absent from the book. It is a sore point to adequately qualify the five years of Keghart.com.

The absence of Armenian articles, not to say of any word in Armenian, is painfully evident. For understandable reasons, Armenian articles have been relatively few in Keghart.com. However, the site has enjoyed the contribution of eminent authors who have written in eloquent Armenian. Among them the following come to my mind: Krikor Kradjian, Zvart Apelian, Barouyr Aghbashian, Minas Kojayan, Hrayr Jebejian and the eminent Maitre Kasbar Derderian. It would have been nice if Keghart's editorial board had accommodated some of them or evaluated, in Armenian, their contribution.

Keghart.com had a major test of its longevity with the recent change of its editorial board. Founder-Publisher Abrahamian resigned from the day-to-day affairs of the site. A new editorial board has now come into place. The transition has been smooth from readers' standpoint, although I would think there must have been many issues to iron and to assure that the site remained an open forum for all.

I remain hopeful that come 2017, a book titled "A Decade of Keghart.com" will hit the shelves of libraries and of individuals alike, and of course, along with its electronic version. Should that become a reality, Keghart's principals and authors may consider the comments I have mentioned.