

## BOOK REVIEWS · BOOK REVIEWS · BOOK REVIEWS

## ARMENIAN-AMERICAN NIGHT

### AUGUST 26

### EISENHOWER PARK

## Cobblestone Children's Magazine Features Armenian Americans

A review by Sandra Vartanian

*COBBLESTONE* children's magazine has devoted its entire May 2000 issue to *Armenian Americans*. In doing so, it has published one of the most up-to-date and relevant educational resources available on this topic. The Cobblestone Publishing Company, producers of this and other children's periodicals such as *CALLIOPE* and *FACES*, is celebrating its 20th year of publication of non-fiction magazines. There is a great deal to celebrate. Motivating young people to read non-fiction can sometimes be an arduous task. To its credit, the *Armenian Americans* issue of *COBBLESTONE* magazine captivates the reader from the outset.

Consulting editors, Lucine Kasbarian, a writer, editor, and author of *Armenia: A Rugged Land, an Enduring People*, and Gary Lind-Sinianian, curator of the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) in Watertown, MA, were the impetus behind the issue's publication.

The first article in the one-time issue, "Armenian Immigration to America," written by Lucine Kasbarian, provides sufficient historical information on the subject and is appropriate as an introduction to a thematic study of Armenians. Students can develop a time line of Armenian history as they read through the issue. Various writers -- many from the Armenian press -- explore Armenian-American life by recalling early settlements in California, to reporting about present-day experiences of a new generation of Armenians in a piece about the students of the Hovnanian Armenian School in New Jersey. A look at *Famous Armenian Americans*, such as William Saroyan, Arshile Gorky, Kirk Kerkorian, and others, can be found along with colorful illustrations.

This edition of *COBBLESTONE* is visually appealing as it is in full color and includes sidebars that introduce new vocabulary words from each article, making it extremely user-

friendly. The articles are written in age-appropriate text for readers between the ages of 9 to 14 (grades four through nine), so that students of varied reading abilities will find this a welcome addition to their libraries. Historical photographs, maps, and even a cartoon are included. The key to the success of this issue lies in its diversity. *Brain Ticklers*, instructions on playing backgammon, and even a recipe for preparing choereg (Armenian biscuits) are all fun yet worthwhile activities for readers of all ages.

It is noteworthy that *COBBLESTONE* magazine is included on the reading list of the New Performance Standards for English Language Arts in the middle schools. The New Standards is a joint project of the Learning Research and Development Center (LRDC) at the University of Pittsburgh and the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE).

The New Standards for reading require that students read and comprehend informational materials in order to develop understanding and expertise on a topic. It necessitates that they produce written or oral work reflective of their reading, which must meet a number of criteria. The *Armenian Americans* issue provides

thought-provoking articles for young people who may engage in further study of the topic and subsequently produced standard-setting oral presentations or written works.

Educating students through expository writing about ethnic heritage must begin in the primary years. The adoption of a multicultural curriculum in the public schools, along with the mandated study of the Armenian Genocide in several states, necessitates that suitable reading material be available to students.

To that end, this issue on *Armenian Americans* is an additional student resource that belongs in classrooms and public libraries. Moreover, a concerted effort should be made so that students have access to a variety of quality reading materials about Armenians. Writers of non-fiction for children should be encouraged to write about Armenians. By doing so, they would fill a void that exists in educational publishing today.

Educators, organizations, and community groups should utilize this issue in order to foster greater knowledge about Armenian history, culture and customs to the American public. The *Armenian Americans* issue should find its place in every home. Parents and children will find it to be useful as a reference guide and may find themselves in its pages as well.

To order *COBBLESTONE*'s May 2000 issue about the *Armenian Americans*, contact Cobblestone Publishing at 800-821-0115; 30 Grove St., Suite C, Peterborough, NH 03458; [www.cobblestonepub.com](http://www.cobblestonepub.com). Discounts for bulk orders are available through the publisher.

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