

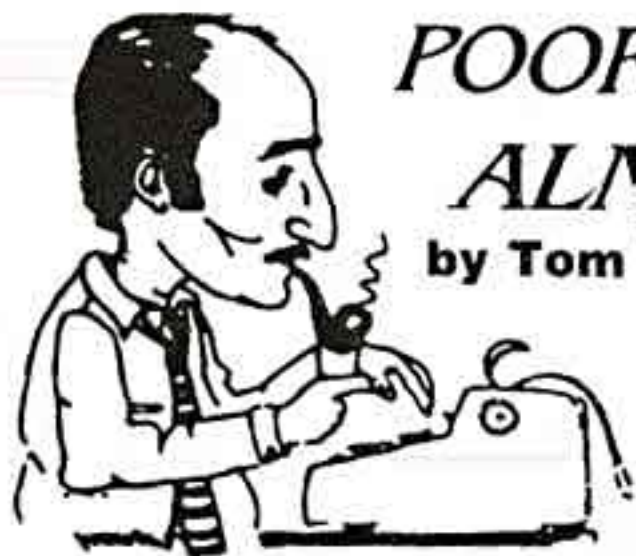
# The *Armenian* Weekly

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## POOR TOM'S ALMANAC by Tom Vartabedian

Paul and Susie Kalinian have something very special in common. In addition to being father and daughter, the two happen to be authorities on the great Armenian writer William Saroyan.

So special is their relationship and work-ethic, they co-produced an hour-long documentary entitled "William Saroyan: The Man, The Writer," which has garnered a host of accolades and has been seen by more than half a million people throughout 18 countries.

Most recently, the Kalinians brought their Saroyan bandwagon to Merrimack Valley after a highly-acclaimed tour of Armenia where viewers were literally standing in the aisles.

In a day and age when families are torn by strife and generational differences, these two not only fit the same mold, they break it. It is a special kind of relationship that will inspire any family in need of a common denominator.

Saroyan's greatest quality in this instance was bringing two people together at the hilt and suggesting an arena of awareness and cohesion. That, he has done, prolifically.

You may know Paul Kalinian as the man behind the commemorative postage stamp issued in 1991 jointly by the USA and USSR Postal Services marking the tenth anniversary of Saroyan's death.

What you probably don't know is that Susie Kalinian has



Father and daughter, Paul and Susie Kalinian

taken time away from her studies as a Tufts University dental student to champion the Saroyan cause and collaborate with her dad at every calling.

"We've always shared a very close relationship," said Susie. "Dad has always been my hero. His love for Saroyan has inspired an affinity of my own. When I look at my father, I see Saroyan in his eyes, a passion and kindness."

This is indeed a total family affair. Paul Kalinian's wife, Araxie, must be commended for her sacrifice and loyalty toward the effort. There is also a son who serves as the technical engineer. Together, they dedicated six years to the project, which was released in 1991, the same year as the postage stamp.

The film chronicles Saroyan's personal life, his works and message to the world, his cultural heritage and influence on becoming a writer, narrated by Michael Connors of Mannix fame.

Included in the film is rare footage, a capsule account of the writer's 60-year literary career, photographs, memorabilia, and an award-winning musical score composed by Paul Nazlikian.

Saroyan would have been flattered by such a gesture, even though he shunned publicity and sidetracked photographers. But he took a shine to Kalinian in 1976 out of persistence.

Although Susie only met the writer once, she feels as if she has known him all of her life, just by reading him and helping document his story.

"He appeared larger than life, like a Gene Kelly to the dance world," she compared. "There'll never be anyone else to emulate his style."

Paul Kalinian has enough footage to warrant a sequel.

"The time will come when the film will be sold to public TV and right now, we are weighing several offers," he says. "It's not easy dealing with companies you're not sure about."

Meanwhile, father and daughter have been hitting the open trail and drawing critical acclaim for their masterpiece. People everywhere are applauding it.

In Yerevan, it was shown seven times. The best response, however, was witnessed in Turkey where 5,000 viewers went ecstatic over it. The Turks lay their own claim to Saroyan, however incongruous that might be.

If the purpose alone was to preserve the legacy of Saroyan, the Kalinians have achieved that goal for generations to come.