



**AMERICAN TURKISH
ASSOCIATION OF
WASHINGTON DC**

**JUNE/JULY 2024
ISSUE 2**

**ATA-DC'S 2024 ELECTION
FATHER'S DAY PICNIC**

**INTERVIEW, SENIH GERAY
THE GM OF WALDORF ASTORIA**

**CELEBRATING
TURKISH CUISINE &
GASTRODIPLOMACY
AT THE US CAPITOL**

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH AMBASSADOR
SEDAT ONAL**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	03
FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF	05
CELEBRATING TURKISH CUISINE AND GASTRODIPLOMACY	11
By Sevtap Schreffler	
INTERVIEW, SEDAT ONAL TURKISH AMBASSADOR TO THE US	14
By Elvan Ramazanoğulları	
ATA-DC'S 2024 ELECTION FATHER'S DAY PICNIC	21
By Gamze Çakmak	
INTERVIEW, SENİH GERAY GM OF WALDORF ASTORIA DC	24
By Özge Övün-Sertt	
BUSINESS START-UPS: "What not to do"	27
By Güçlü Özenci	
NGO'S ENGAGEMENT	29
By Aylin Yardımcı of BTF	
PROGRAMS UPDATE	31
By Demet Cabbar / Turgay Dabak	
MASTERCHEF'S JOY OF FOOD "Summer Wellness"	35
By Deniz Orhun	





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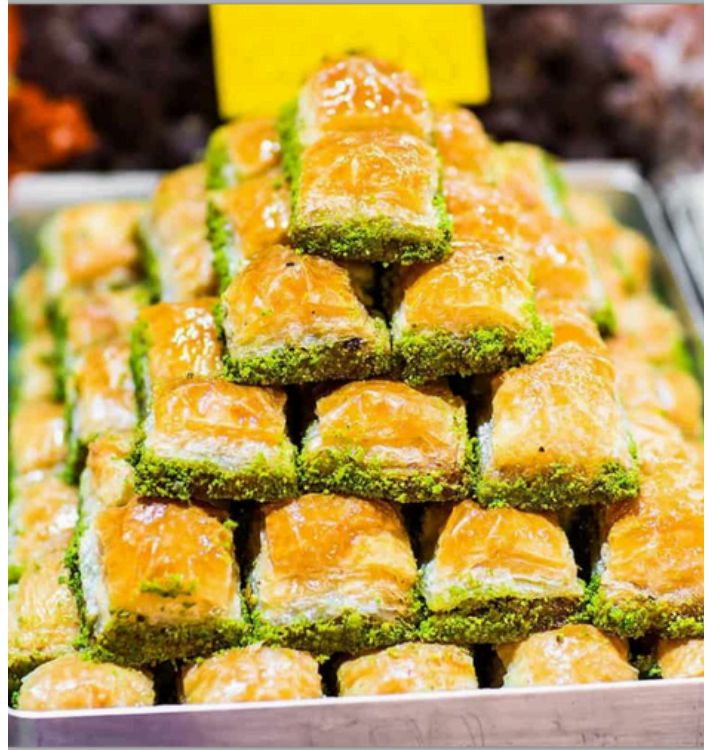
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear ATA-DC Members and Friends,

As we reflect on the past three months, it's with great pride and joy that I recount our many exciting and successful events. Our vibrant community has truly come together to celebrate our rich culture and heritage in ways that have left lasting impressions on all who participated.

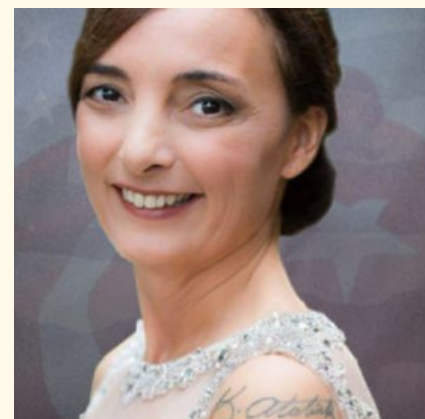
One standout moment was our celebration of Turkish Gastronomy Week. We had the immense pleasure of showcasing the richness of Turkish cuisine at the prestigious Rayburn Office Building. This event was not just about food; it was a celebration of our culinary heritage, an opportunity to bring the flavors and traditions of Türkiye to the heart of Washington, D.C. Equally noteworthy was our celebration of National Sovereignty and Children's Day on April 21st. This event was a true testament to the joy and vibrancy of our community. Hosting over 300 guests, the day was filled with laughter, music, and activities that brought smiles to the faces of children and adults alike.

As we transition into the summer months, I wish you all a safe and enjoyable holiday. Summer is a time for rest and rejuvenation, and I hope you all find moments of relaxation and joy. Whether you are traveling, spending time with family, or simply enjoying the warm weather, may your summer be filled with happiness and peace. While you take a well-deserved break, rest assured that we at ATA-DC will continue working diligently behind the scenes. We are preparing an exciting lineup of events for the fall, ensuring that there will be plenty to look forward to upon your return. Our dedicated team is particularly excited about the upcoming Turkish Heritage Month. This celebration will be a vibrant showcase of our culture, history, and contributions to the broader community. It will culminate in our award-winning Turkish Festival, an event that has become a beloved tradition and a highlight of our annual calendar. The festival will feature music, dance, food, and art, providing a comprehensive experience of Turkish culture that we are eager to share with all of you.

Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm. It is your participation and commitment that make our events successful and our community strong. We eagerly anticipate welcoming you back in the fall, refreshed and ready to join us in celebrating our vibrant heritage. Together, we will continue to promote cultural understanding and strengthen the bonds that unite us.

Sertap Schreffler

PRESIDENT OF ATA-DC





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- ▮ Company name on festival brochure
- ▮ Two festival t-shirts

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Hello friends and readers of ATANews,

Welcome to the latest edition of the ATANews magazine! As the editor-in-chief, I am delighted to share with you highlights from the past three months, featuring remarkable events, stories, and voices that enrich our lives, bring joy, and strengthen our connections.

In this issue, we explore the core of our mission to promote Turkish cuisine, culture, and history while highlighting the resilience and compassion that define our community. As our beloved MasterChef Deniz Orhun puts it, *“Turkish cuisine has had its own ‘culinary empire’ with its rich flavors and local delicacies spanning from 220 A.D. into the 21st century,”* and its impact on other cuisines cannot be ignored. To celebrate this rich culinary heritage, we dedicate a special editorial section, “Joy of Food,” where you can explore nutritional facts and discover quick recipes.

Another culinary event, our cover story, features the celebration of Turkish cuisine and its power to build cultural bridges and foster hospitality between Turkish and American people. As the Ambassador of Türkiye, Sedat Önal, expressed in his speech during the Turkish Cuisine Week reception at the U.S. Capitol, gastro-diplomacy is a powerful tool in international relations, and Türkiye has its own unique way of leveraging it. We were privileged to host Mr. Önal at this event, where he kindly invited us to his residence and gave us the opportunity for an exclusive interview.

Inside this edition, you’ll find inspiring profiles of individuals and organizations who go above and beyond to make a difference. One of them is Senih Geray, the General Manager of Waldorf Astoria DC. In an exclusive interview, we explored his Turkish roots and ancestors as well as the career path that took him from Ankara to London, and then to the United States. I personally thank Mr. Geray for hosting me at this magnificent hotel in the heart of Washington, DC, and for giving me a quick tour of the most significant and hidden corners of the historical building.

Lastly, this edition would not be complete without featuring the compelling initiatives of another non-profit organization with whom we proudly collaborate on various projects. Aylin Yardımcı from the Bridge to Türkiye Fund penned an article detailing her organization’s mission and its transformative projects dedicated to aiding underserved communities in Türkiye.

As always, stay connected with your community through ATANews and watch out for our upcoming editions.

With warm regards and cheers!

Ozge Orun-Sert

ATA-DC SECRETARY GENERAL
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



KARAOKE PARTY: FUNDRAISER EVENT FOR THE TURKISH FESTIVAL 2024



ATA-DC recently hosted a lively Welcome Summer and Karaoke Party, setting the tone for a season of community engagement and cultural celebration. This fundraiser, held in support of the upcoming Turkish Festival, brought together members of the Turkish-American community and friends of Türkiye for an evening filled with music, laughter, and camaraderie. The karaoke competition was a hit, with guests showcasing their vocal talents and entertaining the crowd with a mix of Turkish and international hits. Attendees enjoyed delicious food and drinks, dancing late into the evening, creating an atmosphere reminiscent of the vibrant street festivals Türkiye is known for.

The silent auction was also a great success, featuring amazing items generously provided by our sponsors: Agora Restaurant, Ala Restaurant, Avrasya Market, Bistro Cacao, BorekG Cafe & Market, Hillsborough Winery, Nuvo Aesthetic and Wellness Medical Spa, Salon O Tony, Signature Theater, Smyrna Restaurant, Salon Suna, ThirstyTowels.com, and Wolftrap. Thanks to their contributions, the event raised \$5,000, which was matched 100% by Saltzman and Evinch, bringing the total amount to an impressive \$10,000 for the award-winning Turkish Festival. Special appreciation goes to our incredible food sponsors: Smyrna Restaurant, Chef Aynur Cooks, and Anatolian Bistro. A heartfelt thank you to the Karaman family for graciously opening up their home to host the fundraiser; to our amazing volunteers and to BÜSRA KAYI TARHAN for spearheading the karaoke! Your efforts were instrumental in making the night a success.

The importance of our sponsors cannot be overstated. Their support ensures that the Turkish Festival continues to thrive and grow, offering a rich cultural experience for all attendees. This year marks the 22nd Turkish Festival, which will be held on October 20th, 2024. The festival is a cherished tradition that celebrates Türkiye's vibrant culture through music, dance, art, and food, bringing together the Turkish-American community and friends of Türkiye. As ATA-DC looks forward to the Turkish Festival, the success of the Welcome Summer and Karaoke Party is a promising indicator of the vibrant celebrations to come. Thank you to everyone who joined and supported us. We can't wait to celebrate with you all this October!

DMV TURKISH MUSIC ENSEMBLE CONCERT AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

DMV Türk Müziği Topluluğu, a vibrant ensemble of Turkish and Azerbaijani artists, held an enchanting concert titled "Yeşilçam Şarkıları" on May 18, at the American University. This captivating event drew over 300 Turkish music enthusiasts, showcasing the rich musical heritage and cultural fusion of the region.

Led by Tuna Yıldız, the choir delivered an unforgettable evening of soul-stirring performances and authentic Turkish musical flair. The concert featured a carefully curated repertoire inspired by the legendary Yeşilçam era (1950-1980), a golden age of Turkish cinema known for its evocative soundtracks and iconic films. The audience was taken on a nostalgic journey through this storied period, with mesmerizing melodies and timeless tunes that evoked the charm and spirit of classic movies such as "Hababam Sınıfı." The combination of powerful voices and expertly played instruments created an immersive experience that celebrated the legacy of Yeşilçam and its influence on Turkish culture.



THE RELAUNCH OF ATANEWS AT ATA-DC'S CONNECTION HOUR



ATA-DC celebrated the relaunch of its publication, ATANews magazine, at a special Connection Hour event.

ATANews, a staple since the 1970s, had paused production due to the pandemic. However, under the direction of the new board and publication committee, the magazine has made a triumphant return and will now be published quarterly, available in both print and digital formats.

The publication team is actively seeking sponsors for the magazine, which will primarily feature news, commentary and interviews tailored for Turkish community members living in US, particularly around the Washington DC area. Editor-in Chief and the secretary general of the ATA-DC, Özge Övün-Sert expressed gratitude to the advertisers who supported the inaugural issue and shared their confidence that as the magazine's success grows, so will the number of sponsoring individuals and companies.

President Schreffler also expressed her enthusiasm, stating, "We are thrilled to relaunch ATANews. Our first issue has already been met with great acclaim. Many members have reached out to me personally, spelling their appreciation. In future issues, we plan to distribute it to Turkish businesses and offices. Wherever there are Turks, our ATANews magazine will be there too."

ATATURK SOCIETY OF AMERICA HELD ITS FUNDRAISER EVENT

The Ataturk Society of America (ASA) hosted a fundraising dinner this on May 18th, at the beautiful home of ASA's co-founder and board member, Ms. Mirat Yavalar, in Washington DC. The event was a celebration of "May 19th Youth and Sports Day" and Ataturk's birthday. All proceeds from the event were donated for the benefit of the Darussafaka Schools.

Deeply rooted in the legacy left by ASA's founder, Hudai Yavalar, the event was a powerful celebration marked by high emotion, energy, and an immense sense of pride in being part of a modern Turkish nation. The generous donations by the guests to support Darussafaka Schools made the fundraiser a great success. This great school has been changing lives through education, by providing underprivileged children a better education since 1863.

ASA President Burak Sahin and all Board members stated that they were proud to support this outstanding school; a school that never compromises on the quality of education, and embraces Atatürk's ideology. The local Z-band's talented musicians donated their talent and time to the fundraiser. Their outstanding performances made this event even more memorable. ASA's traditional May 19 Atatürk Awards were also announced at the fundraiser dinner.

2024 awards were in three categories:

The "Atatürk Youth Award" recipient was award winning producer/filmmaker Ilayda Cetinkaya;

The "Atatürk Science Award" recipient was Physicist Dr. Furkan Ozturk, working on a research project at Harvard University;

The "Atatürk Sports Award" recipients were champion skiers, Autistic Twins Aliye Zeynep Bingöl and Muhsin Murat Bingöl.





A TASTE OF TURKIYE: TURKISH BREAKFAST HOSTED BY FIGEN ÖNAL AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

In celebration of Turkish Cuisine Week, Figen Önal, the esteemed wife of the Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Sedat Önal, hosted a delightful Turkish breakfast at the historic Turkish Ambassador's residence. The event brought together Turkish and American women from the community, including the wives of the ambassadors of Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Bahrain to the United States, as well as members of the board of directors of the American Turkish Association of Washington DC (ATA-DC) highlighting the spirit of international friendship and cooperation.

The Turkish breakfast, a cherished culinary tradition, showcased a variety of authentic Turkish dishes, offering guests a true taste of Türkiye. The breakfast spread included an array of cheeses, olives, fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, arugula, parsley, and dill. These fresh

and flavorful ingredients set the stage for a delightful and vibrant meal. "Menemen," a popular Turkish breakfast dish made with scrambled eggs, tomatoes, green peppers was a highlight of the menu. The guests also enjoyed "otlu börek," a savory pastry filled with a mixture of herbs and cheese, and "tahinli gözleme," a flatbread stuffed with tahini, providing a sweet and savory contrast.

The breakfast was artfully arranged, reflecting the elegance and hospitality that Turkish cuisine embodies. The setting at the Turkish Ambassador's residence, a historic building with a rich architectural heritage, added to the sophisticated atmosphere. The event not only celebrated Turkish cuisine but also highlighted the rich cultural heritage and traditions of Türkiye. It served as a reminder of the power of food to bring people together and fostering connections.



FIRE OF ANATOLIA WOWS WASHINGTON DC AUDIENCE ON USA TOUR

As part of their USA tour, Fire of Anatolia delivered an electrifying performance at George Washington University Lisner Auditorium in Washington DC on May 12, 2024. Organized by 90Events, the tour included stops in Chicago, Houston, Toronto, Fort Lauderdale, and New Jersey, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Türkiye through

a stunning display of dance. The Washington DC performance was met with great enthusiasm, drawing a large and diverse audience. Attendees were captivated by the dynamic choreography and vibrant costumes that represented the unique traditions of various regions of Türkiye.



COMMEMORATING ATATÜRK: A CINEMATIC CELEBRATION

The Atatürk 1881-1919 film, originally slated for release on Disney Plus but sparking considerable debate after the company's decision not to air it, had its first screening in the DC area in November 2023. The second part of the film was shown on May 5, at Regal Ballston Quarter in Virginia. Supported by ATA-DC for promotion and ticket sales, the screening was organized by Istanbul Broadcast as part of the May 19 Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth, and Sports Day. It was eagerly anticipated and attended by our members, who benefitted from ATA-DC membership discounts, along with many other enthusiasts. We extend our gratitude to the young founders of Istanbul Broadcast, Zeynep and Sercan Serifoglu, whose vision is to bring Turkish productions screened in Türkiye to audiences in the US.



THE PRESIDENT OF KKTC ERSIN TATAR MET WITH ATA-DC BOARD



ATADC Board Members warmly welcomed His Excellency Mr. Ersin Tatar, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

Ersin Tatar, along with the KKTC's Ambassador to the U.S., Ms. Damla Guclu, hosted a special event for local Turkish-American organizations. In his address, President Tatar spoke passionately about the KKTC's current global standing and its steadfast ambition to be recognized as a respected and equal member of the UN.

The event also celebrated KKTC's rich cultural heritage and its cultural values and the contributions to the global community, underlining their enduring desire for peace.

THE NEW YORK TURKISH DAY PARADE: CELEBRATING 41 YEARS OF TRADITION AND UNITY

The New York Turkish Day Parade, first held on Saturday, April 24, 1981 by officials of the Federation of Turkish American Associations (TADF), was initiated as a protest against the attacks by Armenian terrorist organizations on Turkish diplomats representing their country abroad. The inaugural march, aimed at condemning terrorism, saw the participation of 1,000 people. Over the years, this significant event has evolved into a cherished tradition and has been aligned with May to become an integral part of the celebrations for the 19 May Youth and Sports Day

This year, the 41st ANNUAL NEW YORK TURKISH DAY PARADE AND FESTIVAL commenced at the corner of Madison Avenue and 38th Street. The event attracted the highest number of participants in the last 15 years, with 7,500 people attending from the beginning to the end of the march. The parade ended at Madison Square Park where attendees were greeted by live entertainment on stage including renown artists including Pınar Ayhan (TV presenter and artist), Rafet El Roman, Anadolu Ateşi, Güliz Ayla, and Serkan Çağrı. The audience was captivated by their diverse and vibrant performances.

This march is significant, partly because only 13 countries have the right to hold a march in New York, with Türkiye being one of them. No other country outside these 13 is ever granted this privilege. If any of these 13 countries decide to discontinue their march, they lose their right permanently and can never regain it. Therefore, the Turkish Day Parade is held annually on the same weekend without exception, ensuring the continuation of this unique tradition.

The march was graced by the presence of distinguished guests, including the Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Sedat Önal, with his wife Mrs. Figen Önal, Türkiye's Permanent Representative to the UN Ahmet Yıldız, the Turkish Consul General in New York, Mr. Reyhan Özgür, former Turkish Minister of Economy Mr. Nihat Zeybekci, the Representative of the TRNC in New York Ambassador Mr. Mehmet Dana, and the Deputy Communication Director of the Presidency Mr. Çağatay Özdemir. The President of ATA-DC, Sevtap Schreffler, also attended. This diverse and high-profile attendance underscores the importance of the event in fostering unity and celebrating Turkish heritage in America.



TURKISH CUISINE WEEK SHINES AT U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



AMBASSADORS SEDAT ONAL, DAMLA GUCLU AND KHAZAR IBRAHIM

BY SEVTAP SCHREFFLER

For the second year in a row after the pandemic, the American Turkish Association of Washington DC (ATA-DC) successfully hosted the “Turkish Cuisine Week” reception at the U.S. House of Representatives. This highly anticipated event, held on May 22nd in collaboration with Congresswoman Virginia Foxx’s office, showcased the richness of Turkish cuisine and underscored the importance of culinary diplomacy in bridging cultural gaps and fostering mutual appreciation. The ATA-DC board was honored to welcome several distinguished guests, including Congressman Pete Sessions (R-TX), and Robert Aderholt (R-AL), Turkish Ambassador Sedat Önal, KKTC Ambassador Damla Güçlü, and Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Ibrahim. Their presence highlighted the significance of this cultural

event and its role in strengthening cross-cultural connections.

In my opening remarks, I highlighted the privilege of promoting Turkish cuisine, renowned for its hospitality, and traditions centered around food. I emphasized that Turkish Cuisine Week has become a cherished annual tradition at Congress under the leadership of ATA-DC. The newly appointed Turkish Ambassador Sedat Önal eloquently spoke about the soft power of gastro-diplomacy and the profound cultural impact of our “sofra” traditions. Our keynote speakers, master chef Deniz Orhun and owner of Taskin Bakery in New York City Derya Taskin, captivated the audience with their insightful experiences.

Deniz Orhun emphasized the importance of eating based on seasonal ingredients, explaining how seasonal eating enhances flavor, nutrition, and sustainability. “Turkish culinary practices, with their unique blend of world history, art, and science, are not just about ingredients or recipes but the very building blocks of other cuisines. The deep knowledge of Turkish cuisine with its science-based flavor combinations, proper cooking techniques, and a rich mosaic of cultural history.” Orhun noted.

Derya Taskin shared her inspiring story of moving to the USA from Türkiye at a young age, working at her family’s business, Taskin Bakery, and eventually becoming its CEO. She also ventured into politics, becoming America’s first Turkish Electoral College delegate and serving as deputy mayor of Paterson, New Jersey. Taskin’s journey exemplifies perseverance and the impact of cultural heritage on shaping successful careers.

In recognition of her invaluable and continuous contributions to U.S. - Türkiye relations and bilateral cultural diplomacy, Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-Florida) was presented with an award from the ATA-DC Board. This gesture of appreciation highlighted her ongoing support and commitment to strengthening ties between the two nations.

Additionally, Deniz Orhun and Derya Taskin were honored with outstanding leadership awards, celebrating their dedication to promoting Turkish culinary heritage and their efforts in advancing gastro-diplomacy.

The evening was made even more memorable by the delicious Turkish dishes provided by East West Cafe, the event’s restaurant sponsor. Guests had the opportunity to savor the rich and diverse flavors of Turkish cuisine, experiencing firsthand the culinary traditions that have been passed down through generations. The menu featured an array of traditional dishes that delighted the palate and offered a true taste of Turkish culinary.



Deniz Orhun gave a presentation to the audience on Turkish culinary traditions and emphasized the deep knowledge behind it



Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-Florida) with Derya Taskin



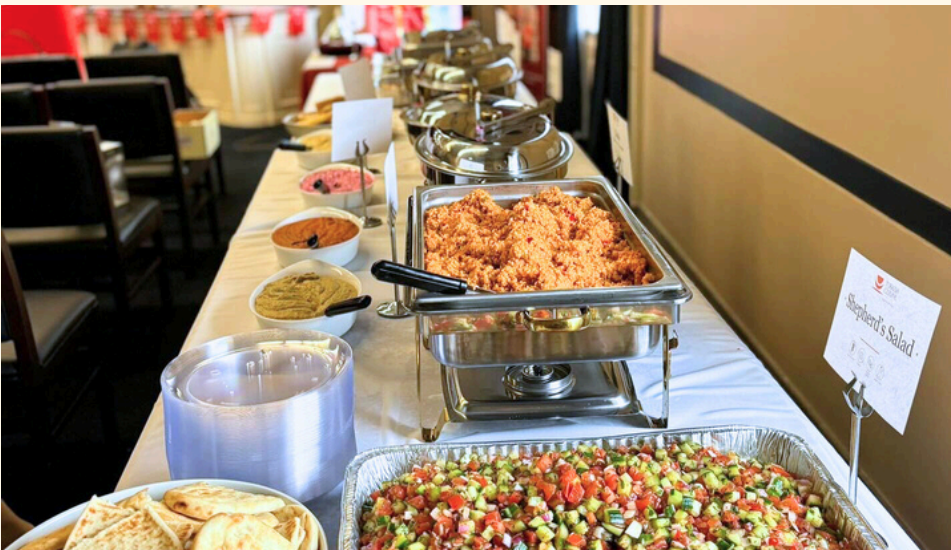
The event's success was further bolstered by the support of the Turkish Embassy, Taskin Bakery, and Turkish Coffee Lady. Their contributions ensured that the evening was not only a celebration of Turkish cuisine but also a testament to the collaborative spirit and strong community ties that make such events possible.

ATA-DC remains committed to promoting the rich heritage of Turkish cuisine through our upcoming cultural and social events. The success of this year's Turkish Cuisine Week at the Congress reaffirms our dedication to fostering cultural exchange

TURKISH AMBASSADOR SEDAT ÖNAL SPOKE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF GASTRO-DIPLOMACY AND ITS SOFT POWER WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN CULTURES AND COUNTRIES



and celebrating the diverse and delicious traditions of Turkish cuisine. As we look to the future, we are excited to continue our efforts in building bridges between cultures and creating opportunities for meaningful connections through the shared love of food.



The ATA-DC Board of Directors extend our heartfelt thanks to former president and board member of ATA-DC, Gizem Salcigil White, for her tireless efforts and unwavering support in making this event a success. We also deeply appreciate Lydia Borland, who generously offers her time and professional expertise for our events. Without her support, ATA-DC would not be able to hold such high-caliber events and effectively reach out to congressional staff for their support of the Turkish-American community. We are profoundly grateful for your presence and contributions.

AMBASSADOR SEDAT ÖNAL

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: HIS EXCELLENCY SHARES HIS
INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES WITH ATANEWS READERS

BY ELVAN RAMAZANOĞULLARI



ATANews Magazine's Managing Editor Elvan Ramazanoğlu met with Turkish Ambassador Sedat Önal at his residency

A Diplomat's Vision: How Sedat Önal sees the Turkish-American community and bilateral relations between the two countries as a seasoned career diplomat

Washington, D.C. has welcomed a new ambassador with the recent appointment of Sedat Önal as the Turkish Ambassador to the United States. With a distinguished career spanning 35 years, Ambassador Önal brings a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective to his role. In this interview, Ambassador Önal shares his insights on his diplomatic journey, initial impressions of Washington, D.C., plans for engaging the Turkish diaspora, goals for Turkish-American relations, a glimpse into his daily life, personal interests, and advice for aspiring diplomats.

Career Background and Diplomatic Journey

As a distinguished career diplomat with extensive experience, can you share with us a little about your background and the journey that led you to your current position as the Turkish Ambassador to the United States? What have been some of the key milestones and experiences that have shaped your approach to diplomacy?

I am a career diplomat of 35 years of experience. I have mostly dealt with Middle Eastern issues, having served in countries like Kuwait, Iran, and Jordan, and in various capacities from the Head of Department to Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I also worked in our Consulate Generals in Germany, Austria, and the United States. Before I was assigned as Ambassador to the USA, I was the Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the United Nations in New York.

Initial Impressions of the capital city, Washington D.C., and Community Engagement

Upon assuming your role in Washington, D.C., what are your initial thoughts about the city and its diplomatic community? How do you intend to engage with American policymakers and the public to enhance the bilateral relationships between our countries?

Washington, D.C. is one of the important diplomatic and political centers of the world. Therefore, the diplomatic community is mostly composed of experienced, veteran diplomats with some of whom I had consultations in my previous positions. During my tenure, we will try to contribute to the further enhancement of our bilateral relations with the U.S. on a multi-dimensional manner. In order to do so, I intend to increase our engagement with our American interlocutors at all levels, including through civil society, media, and think tanks. Diplomacy in a continental country like the USA should naturally include engagement at the state level as well. Therefore, we will increase our efforts all across the country in coordination with our Consulate Generals.

Engaging the Turkish Community in the United States

How do you plan to connect with the Turkish diaspora in the United States, and what role do you envision for them in fortifying Turkish-American relations?

The Turkish community in the U.S. is a dynamic, entrepreneurial, skilled, and resilient community. We are proud of their achievements in various fields, from sports to arts, business to science. I believe that the Turkish-American community has an important role to play in terms of constituting a cultural bridge between the two countries and bringing added value to the development of bilateral cooperation. The increased profile of the Turkish-American community in both local and federal decision-making processes will also have positive implications for Türkiye-U.S. relations. We will always stand in solidarity with the Turkish-American community in good times and bad times, getting together on the occasion of various events that we organize or participate in, and also during our visits throughout the USA.



Goals for Turkish-American Relations

As the newly appointed Ambassador, what are your principal objectives for bolstering Turkish-American relations? What do you identify as the main challenges and opportunities in our current bilateral relationship?

Turkish-American relations have a multidimensional nature. The partnership between these two NATO allies serves not only to the mutual interests of our peoples but also contributes to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region and beyond. High-level mutual visits further advance our relations. During my tenure, my colleagues and I will do our best to contribute to the further development of bilateral relations between Türkiye and the United States in every field.

The strategic cooperation mechanism that was launched in accordance with the agreement of our Presidents and co-chaired by our Foreign Ministers constitutes a suitable political framework in this regard. We aim to enhance bilateral cooperation in such areas as economy, trade, investments, technology, energy security, counter-terrorism, climate change, defense industry, education, culture, and tourism. On regional and international issues of common concern, we will try to minimize divergences and increase

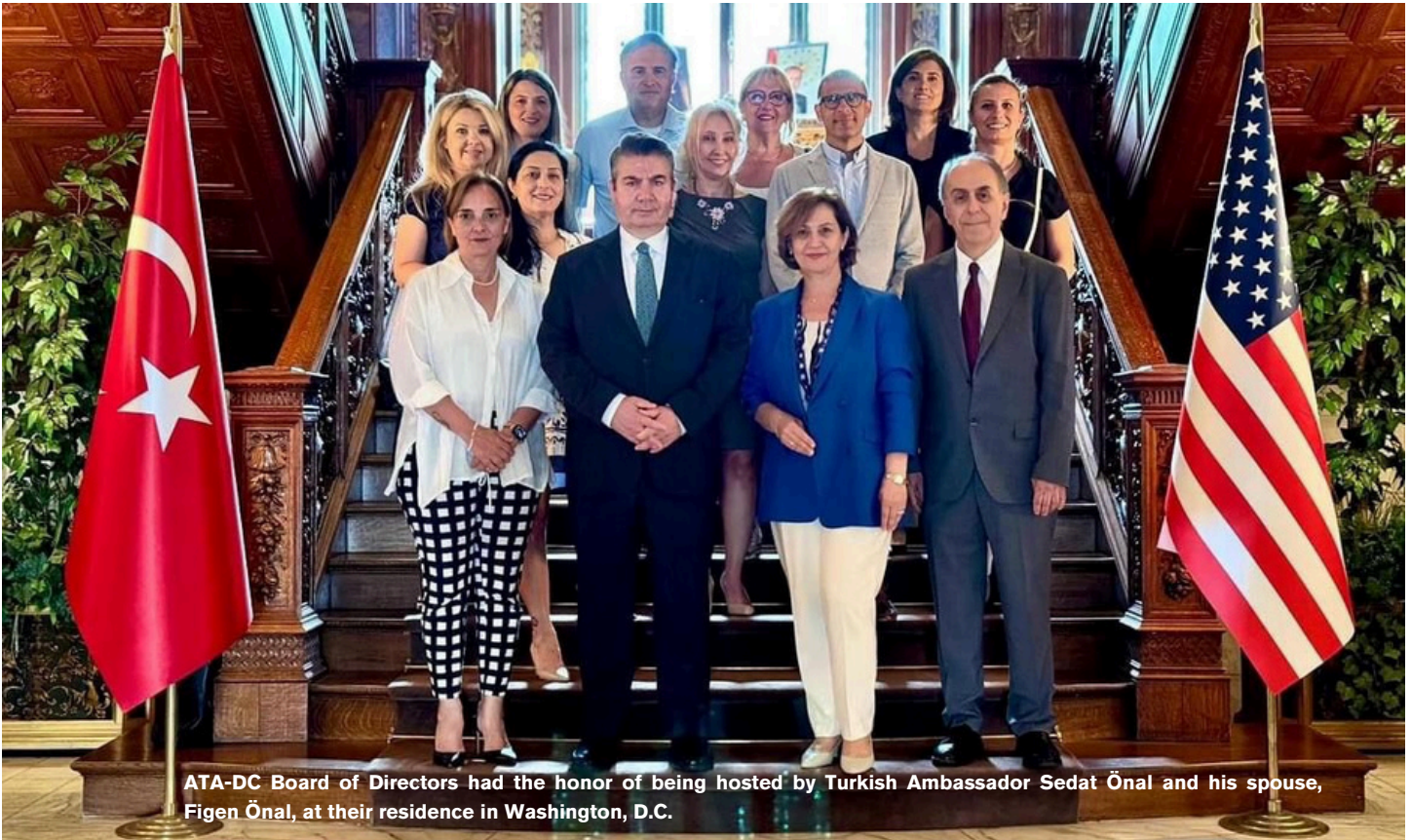
convergences. People-to-people ties are also fundamental elements of bilateral relations. Through our cultural diplomacy efforts, we will continue strengthening the people-to-people contacts and support the efforts of the Turkish-American community in this direction.

A Day in the Life of an Ambassador

Could you describe a typical day for you as the Turkish Ambassador to the United States? What are your everyday responsibilities, and how do you balance the demands of your official duties with personal time?

I start my day reading the daily newspapers. Later, I attend the scheduled meetings and appointments. Throughout the day, my colleagues and I discuss various issues. As a diplomat, representing my country at functions, meetings, conferences, and ceremonies, as well as networking with interlocutors from various areas, occupies a significant portion of my daily schedule.

Turkish-American relations are very dynamic and intense. In addition to the bilateral agenda, we keep track of developments in many parts of the world that concern both our country and the U.S. As a result, we have a busy work schedule. Therefore, I try to use my personal and family time as efficiently as possible.



ATA-DC Board of Directors had the honor of being hosted by Turkish Ambassador Sedat Önal and his spouse, Figen Önal, at their residence in Washington, D.C.

Aside from your diplomatic responsibilities, what are your personal hobbies and interests? How do you prefer to spend your free time?

When I was younger, I played soccer. Now, I am only a soccer fan. My favorite team is Beşiktaş. I am interested in art, literature, and music, especially classical music and jazz.

Advice for Aspiring Diplomats

What advice would you offer to young individuals in Türkiye or the U.S. who are considering a career in diplomacy?

Just like any profession, diplomacy has its challenges and rewards. To me, the best part is the ability to represent my country. It is an honor and invaluable privilege. Diplomacy offers opportunities to see the world, experience different cultures, and learn new languages. It helps you to widen your world outlook. It is a highly satisfying profession. As to the challenges, the need to change places all the time requires a great deal of sacrifice, resilience, and adaptation capacity for you and your family. Diplomacy is a career job, which means you build diplomatic skills over time, blend them with professional knowledge and experience, and assume more responsibilities as you become more senior. So, the master-apprentice relationship, patience, and perseverance are keywords for success. Foreign language proficiency and strong communication skills are qualities that are also key for a successful career.



Sedat Önal congratulated the relaunch of ATANews during the Turkish Food Week event at the U.S. Congress



“TURKISH AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN TERMS OF CONSTITUTING A CULTURAL BRIDGE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES”

As a testament to his commitment to community engagement, the ATA-DC Board of Directors had the honor of being hosted by Turkish Ambassador Sedat Önal and his spouse, Figen Önal, at their residence in Washington, D.C. Established in 1965, ATA-DC is one of the oldest Turkish American organizations, deeply rooted in promoting cultural understanding and community engagement. During the meet and greet, the discussion focused on the mission and rich history of ATA-DC. Grateful for the warm welcome and hospitality extended by Ambassador Önal and Figen Önal, ATA-DC looks forward to continuing to build stronger ties under Ambassador Önal's new appointment.

Ambassador Sedat Önal's extensive experience and insightful approach promise a dynamic and fruitful tenure in Washington, D.C., as he aims to further strengthen the bonds between Türkiye and the United States.

VIBRANT SCENES FROM ATA-DC EVENTS: A SNAPSHOT OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT







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A Day of Festivities: ATA-DC Picnic Combines Eid al-Adha, Father's Day, and Board Announcements

ANNUAL ELECTION PICNIC 🌻

BY GAMZE CAKMAK

On Sunday, June 16, ATA-DC members and Turks living in the DC area gathered at Arlington County's Quincy Park to celebrate both Father's Day and Eid al-Adha, which coincided on the same day this year. Despite the temperature being above 90°F, guests enjoyed the day, relishing the opportunity to share the first day of Eid with friends while also making new connections. Children and young people also joined in the fun, playing a variety of games in the park, including corn hole, volleyball, and basketball.

The results for ATA-DC's 2024 Board Election were also announced during the event, introducing the newly elected board members to the guests. After a 14-day secured online voting period, the new Board of Directors members are Mert Arkan, Umut Burak Geyikci, Ozlem Akkaya, Aynur Kahveci Ozdemir, Izlem Moore, and Selcuk Oflaz. Additionally, Koray Kukrer was announced as the new Vice President, and Patsy Jones, who has served as Treasurer from 2007 to 2014 and resumed her role in 2022, will continue in her current position as Treasurer. In her speech, President Sevtap Schreffler congratulated everyone including re-elected board members Gamze Cakmak, Feriha Istar and Tolga Ozek.

The new board will begin its meetings after the summer break. Traditionally, ATA-DC kicks off the Turkish Festival preparations in March however major meetings and gatherings with grassroots volunteers occur in late August and September.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT KORAY KUKRER AND BOARD MEMBERS MERT ARKAN, BURAK GEYIKCI, OZLEM AKKAYA, AYNUR KAHVECI OZDEMIR, IZLEM MOORE, AND SELCUK OFLAZ. WE ALSO COMMEND OUR RE-ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS GAMZE CAKMAK, FERIHA ISTAR, TOLGA OZEK FOR THEIR CONTINUED DEDICATION.



Due to her busy schedule, Gizem Salcigil White has taken a break from the board. She was honored with the Outstanding Leadership Award by ATA- DC President Sevtap Schreffler and the Board of Directors for her exceptional contributions to the organization. It was a heartfelt moment as Gizem, who has held various roles within ATA-DC over the past 15 years, including initiating the Young Cultural Ambassador Program and several others, and serving as ATA-DC President from 2013 to 2017, received this recognition. Gizem also delivered an emotional speech, emphasizing the strong, unbreakable bonds within the ATA-DC family and expressing her profound connection to ATA-DC.

Certificates were also awarded to the graduates of the 2023-2024 Young Cultural Ambassador Program (YCAP), ATA-DC's initiative for high school students, which began back in 2016 aims to foster cultural understanding and leadership skills.



ATA-DC's new Board members and the graduates of YCAP 2024 posed for the cameras at the Father's Day picnic

We congratulate the YCAP graduates and extend our best wishes for success in their future endeavors. To our high school graduates, may you thrive in your new pursuits, and to those continuing their studies, we eagerly anticipate your return among us again next year.

Picnic attendees also enjoyed the unique music and songs performed by Cemil Akca and his friends, who added a special touch with their traditional Turkish tunes. Delicious döner, rice, shepherd's salad, and various mezes from the beloved local restaurant Akkiva Grill were quickly devoured and greatly appreciated. We extend our sincere gratitude to Akkiva Grill for their generous support.

Bayram wouldn't be complete without sweets. Thanks to the efforts of our dear Young Cultural Ambassador Ceyla Karabulut, who organized the entire bake sale and baked savory cookies; Feriha Istar who prepared the beloved Turkish dessert revani and strawberry cake; Dalya Cakmak who delighted children with chocolate house cookies; Turgay Dabak with his exquisite cake; and board members who brought tea from their homes in thermoses, the tradition continued deliciously. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of the picnic and celebration. All proceeds from the event will go to 2024 Washington DC Turkish Festival, ensuring that our cultural heritage continues to flourish. ■

**WE CONGRATULATE THE YCAP GRADUATES AND WISH THEM
SUCCESS IN THEIR FUTURE ENDEAVORS**



SENIH GERAY, THE GENERAL MANAGER OF WALDORF ASTORIA DC

A heart-to-heart conversation with the guy who made the climb



BY ÖZGE ÖVÜN-SERT

Let's start by learning about your early life in Türkiye. Where were you born, what schools did you attend, and can you provide a brief background of your family for our readers?

I was born and raised in Ankara. I lived at two different addresses in Ankara and moved in my senior year of high school. My dad was a lawyer working for the State Bank of Türkiye, Ziraat Bankası, in charge of their legal affairs. He received a political appointment in the early '80s to open a new branch in Munich, Germany. He took the assignment for three years, and I followed him, finishing my senior high school year in Munich. Initially, it was unsettling because it was my best year in high school with friends I had grown up with since middle school. I attended Ted Ankara College for middle school and high school. It was bittersweet to say goodbye in the final year but also exciting for new opportunities. My family originally moved to Ankara due to my dad's position, even though most of our relatives lived in İstanbul. We traveled back and forth during holidays, so I probably know İstanbul better than Ankara. After one year in Munich, I wanted to come to the States for my college degree. Since my mom passed away long ago, it was just me and my dad. He felt the States were too far, so we explored options in Europe, and I enrolled in a college right outside London where I studied business administration.

This allowed me to visit Germany and Türkiye more easily. In my final semester, the college headquarters were in San Diego, and I transferred there. Since 1989, I've been in the States.

How did your career develop in the States? Have you ever gone back to Türkiye?

I actually went back to Türkiye to work there for the first time in 2002. I was appointed as the General Manager of the Sheraton Hotel in Antalya. Unfortunately, my dad had cancer, and I felt like I had to be close by. Luckily, the position became available, and that was my first post after St. Regis, NY, where I was a finance director back then. We moved to Türkiye, and that's where my younger son Eren was born. Cem was born in Connecticut two years prior. We had a beautiful four years in Türkiye. It was bittersweet because my dad passed away about a year after we moved, but I always feel like he felt more at peace. I think he stopped fighting cancer because he knew I was back in the country. It was important for him. Eventually, I wanted to get back to the US because, as good as it was for social life, it wasn't the best place to advance my career in hospitality. But my wife Patricia, originally from Chicago, fell in love with Türkiye and she resisted the idea of moving after a year or two, so we ended up

staying four years because of her connection to Turkish culture and people. I always say that's where she really found her identity because our culture embraces people coming from the outside. Eventually, I got an opportunity to transfer to St. Regis in Aspen, and we left in 2006. Her devotion to Türkiye continued, as she took the boys to Türkiye every summer for two months for almost another 7 to 8 years, until they became teenagers.

When did you take over this historical and magnificent hotel in the heart of the US capital, and what does it mean to you to lead the first Waldorf Astoria in Washington, DC, given the hotel's rich history and legacy? Can you share a memorable moment in that sense?

From Aspen, I moved to the Atlanta Regis Hotel for 4 years and then back to Regis, New York, as the GM this time. We stayed there about 5.5 years until I came here 2 years ago to oversee the conversion from Trump International to Waldorf Astoria. It's a continuous moment of achievement and pride because we didn't open this hotel from scratch. This hotel had an identity prior to our arrival. It essentially overnight changed from Trump International to Waldorf Astoria. Different brands have different cultures and standards. When we took over, our entire team transitioned together. It was supposed to feel different because of the new brand name on the building. We approached things differently. We aimed to blend both cultures into a harmonious partnership. Witnessing that evolution with all its challenges and rewards was incredibly exciting.

The other project we started from scratch was the restaurant concept. The previous operator had exited the building, leaving us with a blank canvas. Collaborating with Jose Andres and his team to introduce the Bazaar to this location was captivating. The nine months from initial designs to construction, hiring, tasting menus, and finally opening the doors was a major celebration. It's gratifying to see how beloved it is by Washingtonians. Despite Jose Andres having many restaurants in the area, people flock here to experience it. That was also a significant milestone for our growth within the organization.

How does the hospitality industry in the United States compare to the one you experienced in Türkiye?

The mindset is different because it's more about mass tourism versus individual tourism. Many visitors come to Türkiye with tour operators. The Sheraton in Antalya was part of Starwood Hotels and Resorts, which had a substantial luxury presence in Europe. We consistently ranked number one or two in guest satisfaction, competing with St. Regis Rome or the Great Britannia in Athens, all luxury hotels. The ultimate outcome always relied on what we offered and provided. The Sheraton had a stunning structure and even won an architectural award in 1992, but it operated in a market often overwhelmed by mass tourism. Our success was a result of our team's dedication and Turkish hospitality. We ranked highly among key players in Europe. I always reminded our staff that it's not just

about rates and individuals but also about the hospitality and service provided. We excelled because our staff connected with our guests. Our rate of repeat guests was one of the highest within the portfolio. I'll never forget the guests who came to the hotel as couples for many years, and even after one partner passed away, the other continued visiting to keep memories alive. It was challenging for them, but our staff made sure they never felt lonely, demonstrating that the journey continues. Those connections deeply touched people. I believe that's why my wife loved Türkiye and remained connected to it for many years after we moved.



What are the most significant trends you are currently seeing in the hospitality industry?

After Covid, there's been a shift in the perception of luxury. People now make reservations and are more willing to invest in premium experiences such as suites and spa services. The demand for personalized and elevated experiences has risen. For instance, themed events like our Cherry Blossom and Alice in Wonderland concepts attract more family reservations. We find ways to connect with people on a deeper personal level, moving beyond transactional interactions to create real connections. What you offer in terms of the product is one thing, but if you bring the ambiance and try to actually connect it, that's something else. I think we are now finding ways to go more into that space and try to indulge people with that

How has your interaction with the Turkish-American community in DC area been, both professionally and personally?

Initially, it came in through the business channels because as you can imagine, being between the White House and the Capitol building, we do get a lot of delegations from all around the world. That includes Turkish delegations. I also had a chance to meet some other individuals who have been in the society here, like ATA-DC members and its president. My first year, it was a little bit more transient because my family and I still had a residency in Connecticut, so we didn't really relocate here in DC right away. But this past year, after we made our residency in Alexandria, VA with my wife, I feel more connection. It's enriching to find a vibrant community that resonates with my roots. In Aspen, I was the only Turk, which was isolating. However, in major metropolitan areas like DC, there's a stronger connection to Türkiye.

**AS MUCH AS I LIVED
MOST OF MY LIFE IN
THE UNITED STATES,
THERE'S A CERTAIN
PART OF IT INSIDE ME
THAT ALWAYS
RESONATES WHERE I
WAS BORN AND HOW I
WAS RAISED**

I noticed your sons have Turkish names. Do they have American or English names as well?

No, only Turkish names. My wife insisted on having Turkish names, initially suggesting Orhan and Osman, but we opted for more modern names. As I said earlier, my wife Patricia's and our sons' connection to Turkish culture, heritage, and the country is as strong as mine, if not stronger. ■



Senih Geray gave a quick tour to the most hidden and historical parts of the hotel



BY GUCLU OZENCI

We are thrilled to present the second edition of ATANews, revitalized and shared with ATA-DC members, families, and the entire DMV Turkish American community. Our mission is to support each other and to enjoy, protect our values and heritage through social, educational, and cultural activities. As the Turkish diaspora in the DMV region, we are lucky to have each other. The potential support system and guidance we can provide make a huge difference in our lives. The DMV region has the most highly educated population thanks to all the UN organizations, non-profits, governmental institutions, and higher education in our area. The Turkish population is no different; our highly educated community attracts like-minded individuals to our region. We need to support, guide, help, and flourish our diaspora to be more successful.

My background is in the information technology industry. Although I am not a technical person, I have learned to work with technical people and clients, making me a bridge between them. Translating needs, problems, solutions, preferences, and priorities by listening to

STARTING A BUSINESS: AVOID THESE COMMON MISTAKES!

each other has been the essence of my work. This perfectly applies to the tech startup industry. However, today we will not only delve into tech startups but all startup businesses, including lifestyle or brick-and-mortar businesses. There are several things to do when you consider starting a business. Most involve testing the waters, understanding the needs and the market, the competition, and surely the client. Since we are focusing on what to avoid, let's look into common pitfalls.

Avoid Thinking That You Know It All

You do not! Usually, when you want to start a business, it is in the topic of your interest, experience, or expertise. However, you need to realize that the world has already changed. People's preferences are affected by changes in society, regulations, purchasing

decisions, and priorities. This is why most disruptors come from a totally different industry. They have no prior experience, no set rules or beliefs, and are not bound by realities. The answer is to reach out to hundreds of people, ask for their opinions, do interviews, and listen to them.

Avoid Procrastinating Planning

Our culture has a saying about that: *Kervan yolda düzülür!* This means that some things can only be fixed along the way. While you cannot plan everything and there is no ideal time or situation to start a business, you need to start and keep going. LinkedIn's founder Reid Hoffman famously said: "Entrepreneurs jump off a cliff and build their parachutes on the way down." However, this does not mean you should jump in blindly. You need to do your research, conduct interviews, create your business model, and identify key partners. A Business Model Canvas is a valuable tool to see the big picture and plan before you jump and build your parachute. There will always be unknowns.



Avoid Insisting and Keep Adapting

Persistence, perseverance, and resilience are highly appreciated traits that most successful entrepreneurs have in common. You need these personality traits to succeed. Being a finisher is extremely valuable. However, this does not mean you should be strict and never take guidance, advice, or analyze the situation and change accordingly. Life is about change, and as the theory suggests, it is not the strongest who survives but the most adaptable. In our world, where everything changes rapidly thanks to technology and innovation, we need to adapt and pivot when necessary. Watch the metrics and they will tell you when to.

Avoid Being Solo

It is great to be the founder who brought up the genius idea and started it all. However, it is all about execution, not about the idea or being the first. The team that executes wins. It is not one person but the team that the leader creates, nourishes, grows, and maintains the spirit, culture, and motivation while increasing retention. In Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter, Liz

Wiseman and Greg McKeown discuss how great leaders make everyone in the team smarter. Sometimes, public figures promote or market the brand, but they always work with an army of professionals who execute together.

Avoid Ego Boost

Entrepreneurs generally have higher egos than others. They have the courage to start a business and risk their money, time, and all resources, including their reputation. When they succeed, they earn it, but an ego boost can prevent a successful entrepreneur from calculating risks properly. You need to plan your finances, calculate cash flow, analyze risks and opportunities, consider technology, and assess competition and market conditions. Ego may clash with these analyses and sometimes prevent you from seeing an obvious threat.

Avoid Not Getting Counseling

Setting up a company, whether it is an LLC, C-corp, or S-corp, is straightforward. You can even do it online in a few minutes using service providers. However, it is the structure and strategy that make it a success. How are you going to distribute shares? Will there be vesting for everyone, including yourself? What about the option pool – should you have it, and if yes, what percentage? Legal and regulatory issues usually come into focus when there is a problem. You need to be ready and plan at the beginning to succeed. Otherwise, it could be very costly to not have the right NDA agreements and contracts. You need to be fast, but that does not mean you do not need a strategy or plan. Legal, tax and accounting counselors know this and can warn you beforehand.

We look forward to connecting with those who are interested in discussing further. Our community has all the expertise and network connections to help and guide each other. ■

Who is Guclu Ozenci?

Guclu is a member of ATA-DC Board of Directors and has been working in the IT industry for over 25 years.

He has been with Cisco and HP for 15 years before turning an entrepreneur and co-founding a tech startup, raised funding from VCs, grew in regions and led its acquisition in 2020.



He is the Managing Director of the Founder Institute, Washington DC to accelerate ventures at their pre-seed stage. He advises, consults and guides VC backed startups through his www.connectop.com consultancy. Guclu holds a BSc. in Economics from Middle East Technical University and MBA from University of New Orleans.

BRIDGE TO TÜRKİYE FUND:

TWO DECADES OF BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THE US AND TÜRKİYE

BY AYLIN YARDIMCI

In a world where philanthropy often feels distant and disconnected, the Bridge to Türkiye Fund (BTF) stands as a beacon of collaboration, hope, and true community spirit. Fueled by a genuine desire to give back and transform young lives and communities, BTF was founded in 2003 by a group of Turkish-American volunteers and friends of Türkiye. Over its 21 years, BTF has carved a unique niche in diaspora philanthropy, focusing on mobilizing grassroots communities in the US—and beyond—to foster modern, equitable, and secular education for future generations in Türkiye.

A MISSION ROOTED IN COMMUNITY AND TRUST

At its core, BTF's mission is simple yet profound: to be the trusted bridge that connects brilliant ideas with philanthropic resources. With a rapidly growing community of 40,000 supporters, BTF leverages collective goodwill to create impactful programs that improve the future prospects of Türkiye's disadvantaged youth. This mission is grounded in the belief that every child and young person, regardless of their background, deserves access to quality education and life opportunities that can elevate them to a brighter future.

TRANSFORMING GOODWILL INTO TANGIBLE IMPACT

BTF's approach is transparent and systematic. By partnering with carefully-vetted Turkish NGOs and providing regular impact reports, the organization ensures that donors' contributions are utilized efficiently and transparently. This collaborative model enables BTF



Child Amputees of Türkiye Earthquakes (CATE) project offers prosthetic limbs and holistic rehabilitation

to support a wide range of initiatives, from providing scholarships and educational resources to funding healthcare and wellbeing projects, environmental conservation, and disaster management efforts. One of BTF's standout projects is the Child Amputees of Türkiye Earthquakes (CATE) project, which offers scholarships, holistic rehabilitation, and prosthetic limbs to children who have faced limb loss in the disaster. The project now continues to flourish under the leadership of Çukurova University's Child Wellness Center in Adana.



A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF CHANGE LEADERS

What sets BTF apart is its strong sense of community. Based in the Triangle area of North Carolina in the United States, BTF has expanded across the country and beyond, including Canada, Ireland, the United Arab Emirates, and Australia, through a network of regional giving circles and individual donors. This global community is united by a shared commitment to building a brighter Türkiye for future generations.

LOOKING FORWARD

As BTF continues to grow and evolve, its dedication to empowering future generations remains unwavering. With each scholarship awarded, each classroom equipped, and each child given a chance to thrive, BTF reaffirms its commitment to creating a brighter, more equitable future. To learn more about BTF's work and mission, visit <http://bridgetoturkiye.org> or read the BTF 2023 Türkiye Earthquakes Donor Impact Report at <http://btf.news/earthquake> ■



BY TURGAY DABAK / DEMET CABBAR

THE YCAP GRADUATES BID FAREWELL TO A YEAR OF GREAT SUCCESS

The American Turkish Association of Washington, DC (ATA-DC) proudly presented the 2023-2024 Young Cultural Ambassadors. On Sunday, June 16, 26 participants received their certificates at ATADC's Fathers Day, Election, and Bayram Picnic after successfully completing a nine-month curriculum. This included individual and team assignments, lectures, and volunteer activities.

The program, established in 2017, engages high school students from the DC-MD-VA area in cultural and educational activities to promote volunteerism and cross-cultural dialogue. It expanded nationally in 2020 to include students from across the U.S. Since its inception, nearly 85 students have joined YCAP. This year, over 30 Young Cultural Ambassadors are participating, learning about Turkish culture, volunteering, and building networks within the Turkish-American and international community.

YCAPs attend weekly presentations by experts in fields such as civic engagement, political science, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and media. Running from October to May, YCAP combines virtual and in-person activities.



Recently, YCAs visited the Turkish American TV studios, where they learned about public broadcasting and explored media production. They heard from TATV founder Hurriyet Ok and other members, gaining valuable insights.

The ATA-DC's YCA program empowers high school students by broadening their knowledge, providing volunteer opportunities, and fostering leadership skills through cultural exchange. Here is what they had to say:

Dila Arat:

I have been in YCAP for all four years of high school. I was a coordinator this year and helped out during the Turkish Festival in DC. YCAP has helped me tremendously and I am so grateful for all the wonderful relationships I've made throughout these past four years. As a Turkish American, it's amazing to see other high schoolers get together and make a good impact on the community.

İpek Guner:

I enjoyed listening and interacting with other ycap students. I learned a lot from the presentations and it was an overall fun experience! I am a rising sophomore and I plan on participating in this program for the entirety of my high school journey! I look forward to meeting even more people and gaining knowledge on issues that surround us in our community and in Türkiye.



ATATÜRK SCHOOL ENDS 2024 ON A JOYFUL NOTE

ATA-DC's Atatürk School completed another successful year and ended on May 12. Students played traditional Turkish games on the closing day and received their certificates. In April, as we do every year, we had a big celebration for the 23 Nisan National Sovereignty and Children's Day. Over 350 children and their parents joined us to observe this important day where our students recited poems, sang songs and danced.

ATA-DC's Atatürk School for Children has been teaching the Turkish language and culture to children 5 to 12 years old since 1980. The school operates every Sunday 10 am to 1 pm at McLean High School in Fairfax County. This year our school will commence on September 8, 2024. Registration forms can be found at www.atadc.org/school which must be submitted by August 31. Click on "Registration Form/Kayıt Formu", fill out the form and submit.

ATATURK SCHOOL

is waiting for you!

Registration for 2024-25 school year is now open

For more information go to our website at atadc.org/school
or scan the QR code!



SCAN ME



* School is in session from September 8 to May 5

* Location: McLean HS in Virginia

* Email: school@atadc.org



SUMMER WELLNESS: NOURISHING YOUR BODY WITH SEASONAL FOODS AND SMART HABITS

BY DENİZ ORHUN

The summer solstice is coming and a fragile dance between weather phenomenon and our body's reaction needs to be balanced through our nutrition. Imagine where the Earth is on June 21st. During the summer in the North Hemisphere, it's crucial to ensure we get the necessary minerals, vitamins, and water. After the shortest night, the winds that will change the season begin to blow. We can see 'Kay,' known as summer rain and rain-hail storms. It may be necessary to protect fresh seedlings. As the air temperature increases in June, the humidity ratio will increase. Our body is constantly exchanging heat with the environment. Therefore, our body will perceive the increasing heat in June-July due to environmental and climatic factors and will take action to keep our body temperature in balance. When the temperature balance of our body is precise, the hormones and enzymes that play an essential role in our body will perform their duties fully. Consequently, some minerals and vitamins are necessary for the body during this period and we need to give all these values.

Understanding the importance of seasonal foods and their benefits can empower us to make informed food choices. During summer, it's crucial to consume a balanced variety of seasonal vegetables such as okra, artichoke, and tomato and period fruits such as cherries, watermelon, and apricots. These foods are not only delicious but also packed with the necessary minerals and vitamins our bodies need during this period. Additionally, including boiled grains and legumes, proper meat, and sufficient water in our diet is equally essential for our health. When August comes, temperature differences in the beginning and end of the month affect the humidity in the air. Therefore, if you are drying vegetables and fruits for autumn preparation, there are better months than August. "Tail Storm-Kuyruk Fırtınası" is seen during this period—the weather temperature significantly changes night and day. Among farmers, it is also a sign that the vintage is approaching: Doğdu kuyruk, kalmadı koruk! "Koruk means "unripe grapes" Kuyruk indicates the Deneb star, which means "tail" in Arabic

Deneb is the tail star of the Cygnus (Swan) constellation. It resembles a bird flying over the Milky Way. The expression tells us the ripening of grapes and the right harvest time when the Deneb star is seen at a particular time & place in the sky. Temperature differences between day and night begin to increase; therefore, dew and humidity rise. If you are drying fruits and vegetables naturally, is not recommended to do so during humid times as it will cause rotting.

In conclusion, understanding the effects of tastes on our hormones can enlighten us about our eating habits. For instance, incorporating sour tastes in the morning and sweet flavors in the evening can help us maintain a healthy eating routine. Sweet, in particular, activates the 'leptin' hormone, which we call the satiety hormone, thereby increasing our feeling of fullness. This can prevent overeating in the evening. Being aware of these effects can help us make more mindful food choices, leading to a healthier lifestyle. For more detailed information, you can refer to the book 'What You Eat Becomes Your Behavior-Yedikleriniz Davranışlarınız Olur' and the 2015 'Nutrition Reviews' publication of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Florida Koku Tat Nerve Cell Sciences Center.

EATING SEASONAL FOODS SUCH AS OKRA, ARTICHOKE, TOMATOES, CHERRIES, WATERMELON, AND APRICOTS, ALONG WITH GRAINS, LEGUMES, MEAT, AND ADEQUATE WATER, IS ESSENTIAL IN SUMMER

I have shared, in the resource section of this article, two scientific publications regarding a well-known combination of yogurt and fruit. This health-benefiting combination can help us for summer when we need snacks. And here is an ice cream recipe without artificial additives. I wish you a healthy and joyful summer.

Homemade Strawberry Ice Cream

You can make an ice-cream at home. You may use different fruits; my favorites for this season are cherries, strawberries and raspberries. In addition, it is possible to prepare it in advance for your guest and keep it in an ice cream container in the deep freezer.

Ingredients (2 servings):

300g strawberries- 10 oz.
1-2 tablespoons of yogurt
1 banana
1-2 tablespoons of honey



Directions:

- Wash and clean the strawberries and put them in the freezer in a refrigerator bag.
- Slice the banana and freeze it in a plastic bag.
- The next day, take out the frozen fruits, add yoghurt and honey and mix them in the food processor. Do not overmix, or the structure will become watery. Your ice cream is ready. Bon appetit!



Deniz Orhun graduated from Ankara University-Department of Agriculture Engineering. She completed her MBA degree at London College and Hacettepe University. She worked at Merck Sharp & Dohme, at Novartis and at Tetra Pak for various missions in Sweden, Dubai and Brazil. She then went to the US and studied Baking and Pastry

at Kendall College which is known as the "Harvard of the culinary world". She worked at Swedish Bakery, Union League and Four Seasons Chicago. She represented Türkiye during the International Cuisine Festival and won a first prize. Chef Deniz is owner and founder of Klemantin since 2008, she has gained success through a variety of business ventures.

CONGRATS TO THE CLASS OF 2024!

We are thrilled to congratulate all of our graduates, including our community members, Atatürk School alumni, and YCAP participants. Your dedication and resilience have led you to this achievement.

As you embark on this new journey, remember that the possibilities are limitless. Seize every opportunity, pursue your dreams, and make a positive impact on the world.



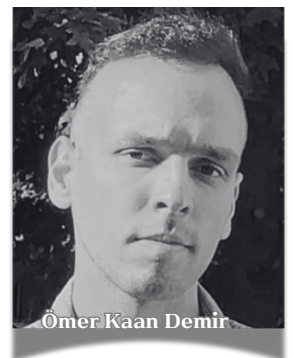
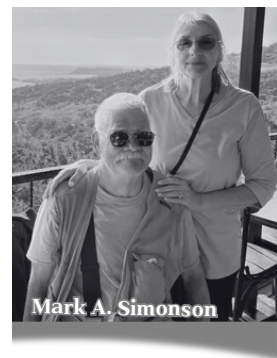
ATA-DC YOUTH CULTURAL AMBASSADORS 2023 -2024

We extend our sincere gratitude to all program participants and their families for making this year so rewarding. And we wish all the best moving forward!

Congratulations to our 2023-2024 grads! Don't forget to keep an eye out for the application call for the '24-'25 session.

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WE LOST

ATA- DC mourns the loss of Mark A. Simonson and Ömer Kaan Demir, beloved community members. They will be dearly missed.





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As a new initiative, ATA-DC provides a special membership to [Working Advantage](#) website. Working Advantage is the leading Corporate Discount Program provider, offering exclusive discounts and special offers on products, services and experiences you need and love. Save big on theme parks, attractions, hotels, rental cars, concerts, sports, live events, electronics, appliances, apparel, gift cards, movie tickets and much more. Please reach out to us to get the passcode for your membership.

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