

## *Irvine Screening of Saroyan Film Hosted by ASA and ARS 'Sevan'*

By Laura Kasarian

IRVINE, Calif. - On May 3, I decided to go to the movies as I typically do with my weekends. However, this was no ordinary outing to the movies where I might bring along my freshly popped popcorn and indulge in a box of chocolate-covered raisins, as I sit waiting for the action to begin on the screen. The film I went to see offered me a glimpse of an extraordinary man, a writer, a philosopher, an Armenian by the name of William Saroyan.

The Armenian Students Association of the University of California at Irvine and the Armenian Relief Society "Sevan" Chapter of Orange County hosted the screening of "William Saroyan: The Man, The Writer," a film written, produced and directed by Paul Kalinian.

After opening remarks were

made to the 250 persons in attendance by Prof. Ara Apkarian, advisor to the UCI Armenian Students Association, Kalinian was invited to the podium and shared some background information about the film, which was six years in the making.

Hank Saroyan, nephew of the author, spoke of the turmoil which erupted in Los Angeles last week and pointed out that at the height of the chaos and violence of the riots, the cable TV network Showtime aired William Saroyan's "The Human Comedy." The irony was inescapable.

Kalinian's film had its world premiere in 1991 in Fresno, and has since toured six major U.S. cities. The film chronicles Saroyan's personal life, essays his character and philosophy and writing style and provides many a memorable anecdote.

The film, which begins with

Saroyan himself reminiscing about his past, is narrated by actor Mike Connors. The film conveys how Saroyan was able to unite the two cultures that were a part of him. The spiritual features of Armenians were everpresent in his American characters. The film underscores Saroyan's belief in the "basic goodness of all people." The only revolution Saroyan believed in was the one that could take place in the heart.

The program included a short musical selection of musical duets played by Salpy Kerkonian on the flute and Amy Wilkins on the harp, as a prelude to the film screening.

At the reception which followed the screening, a selection of Saroyan's novels and short stories were on sale as well as posters and first edition Saroyan postal stamps. Over 20 photo portraits of Saroyan taken by Kalinian captured the many moods of Saroyan. One of the portraits was selected by the U.S. and the former U.S.S.R. for a commemorative postal stamp.