



## IN THE FIELD

**TEGA CAY, SC** – When this small planned town in South Carolina welcomed a delegation of Armenian bloggers on Leap Day, it became Open World’s 2,000th U.S. host community, a milestone that all of us at the Open World Leadership Center are quite proud of. A suburb of both Rock Hill, SC, and Charlotte, NC, Tega Cay made an ideal home base for the

and the HeraldOnline.com. A group discussion with faculty and students at the University of South Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communication was another trip highlight. Also on the delegates’ agenda were stops at *The Charlotte Observer* and the Knight School of Communication at Queens University of Charlotte; meetings with independent and newsroom bloggers; and, of course, time for blogging about what they were seeing, learning, and sharing during their Open World visit.

Local host coordinator **Harry Moorachian**, founder of a nonprofit organization called Soonch (Armenian for “Breath”), says of Tega Cay’s first Open World exchange, “It was a very rewarding experience to introduce five young “democrats” who had never been to the United States to the people of Tega Cay. It was even more exciting to hear later how much the visitors and their



*Armenian bloggers and hosts gather at an area restaurant for the Open World certificate ceremony. Back row, from left: interpreter Armen Hovhannisyan, home hosts Darryl Spencer and Mary Etta Moorachian, facilitator Evelina Arabyan, delegate Narine Aghabekyan, and local host coordinators Sandy Waldron and Harry Moorachian. Bottom row, from left: delegates Edgar Barseghyan, Tigran Kocharyan, and Hambarzum Hambarzumyan.*



*One of Armenia’s top bloggers, Tigran Kocharyan, on the porch of his host family’s Tega Cay home.*

delegates as they studied social-issues blogging in the United States.

In Rock Hill, the Armenians held talks with staff of *The Herald* newspaper

new American friends learned from each other, and to discover the interest that so many of our citizens now have in learning of future visits by other Open World delegations.”

## HOSTING CORNER

**MONTGOMERY, AL** – In late February, the Open World Leadership Center welcomed its second delegation from the Youth Parliament of Kazakhstan for a program on youth in government. Though an NGO, this unique Kazakhstani organization works closely with the national parliament and has the authority to introduce and help shape youth-related legislation. (In Open World countries, “youth” encompasses young people up to age 30.) The youth parliament delegates traveled to Alabama after an intensive program in Washington, DC, during which they met with Rep. **Martha Roby** (AL) and DC-area young professionals. While in their host community of Montgomery, the Kazakhstanis attended the Alabama Collegiate Legislature program, a model of an actual legislative session. The delegates were impressed by the enthusiasm with which participants discussed bills on the “floor.” The Kazakhstanis also met with Montgomery Mayor **Todd Strange** to explore how Alabama cities involve youth in government, and visited NGOs that serve youth. Local Host Organization: Friendship Force of Montgomery.



*Kazakhstani Youth Parliamentarians meet with Rep. Martha Roby, center, to discuss youth issues in her home state of Alabama. Also shown, from right: Open World Program Manager Jeff Magnuson and Natasha Dombrovskaya of American Councils.*