

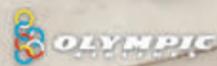
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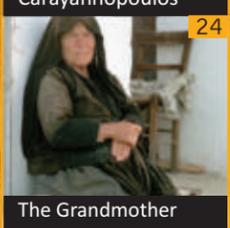
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Holy Week

For the most part I grew up in Brooklyn and I was an altar boy at two of its churches: Holy Cross and Kimisis. Kimisis was the older church on 18th Street and the one that most of my relatives attended before Holy Cross was built further uptown.



FROM THE EDITOR

I would take the bus Sunday morning in my stiff Sunday suit and skinny tie and make the trip to the church to join the other boys in their stiff Sunday suits and skinny ties in the small anteroom next to the altar, where we giggled and shoved and acted like kids talking about important things to us like wrestling on TV (Bruno Sammartino was king in those days) and how the Knicks were doing (the Knicks of Frazier and Bradley and Willis Reed).

And then it was showtime: we would don our robes and become solemn little altar boys with parts in our hair and skinny ties showing over the collars of our robes and our eyes always staring forward. The hard part was staring forward at each other the whole time in the altar while the priest performed the rites and muttered the prayers. One time I couldn't contain myself and started giggling at the altar boy opposite me and the priest had me kneel in the corner of the altar and stare at the wall for practically the whole mass—till my knees ached and creaked.

I spent many nights at Kimisis during Holy Week herding the self-conscious masses that worshipped overtime for Easter and I loved the procession outside under the stars when the whole world was suddenly Greek Orthodox and the voice of the chanters and the priest drowned out the usual traffic.

I became an altar boy at Holy Cross when the church was still whitewashed walls and most of the icons hadn't been painted yet—except for the mural of a dour Christ under the dome. I remember going nights for prayer and instruction and spending time with friends. Night at church seemed to be something special and mystical, which is why Holy Week seemed to have a special mystery, particularly the singing of the hymns in communion with all the other souls in the church that evening: it seemed a primitive and profoundly moving experience—what the early Christians might have experienced.

I stopped going to church as I got older, but I missed it and missed the rituals of Holy Week, and one night I went to Holy Cross by myself on Holy Tuesday, when the crowds had not yet massed for the big finale of the week. The church was nearly empty, just me and a few yayiades, and I sat and stared up at the dome and the mural of Christ, dour and gesturing his blessing as always. I was a teenager and had the usual distress, but the calm of the church, the lull of the hymns, and the moments it afforded me of quiet reflection acted like a balm to my soul.

I left the church that night with my ears buzzing with the holy hymns and my teenage angst subdued and uplifted.

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Pick For NATO Military Leader Rode Navy Fast Track



Adm. James Stavridis, the top U.S. commander for Latin America and the Caribbean, was picked to be NATO's top military commander. If he's confirmed, Stavridis would be the first Navy officer to fill a post that's traditionally been held by Army generals.

President Obama is expected to unveil a new strategy for the war in Afghanistan later this week. One man who will play an integral role as the U.S. and its allies prepare to ramp up operations there is Navy Adm. James Stavridis, who has been tapped to be NATO's top military commander.

If confirmed, Stavridis would be the first Navy officer to fill a post that's traditionally been held by Army generals. Dwight Eisenhower was supreme allied commander before he went on to the presidency. He was followed by, among others, Alexander Haig, Wesley Clark and President Obama's current national security adviser, Jim Jones. Jones also broke the mold, as a Marine Corps general. Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced Stavridis' new post last week. He noted that Stavridis speaks French, Spanish and a little Portuguese, and that he would bring the right mix of military and diplomatic know-how to NATO.

"I would say that Jim Stavridis, both in terms of knowledge of how things work here in Washington, but also in terms of his diplomatic skills, is probably one of the best senior military officers we have," Gates said.

Larry Di Rita, a spokesman for Bank of America, met Stavridis at the Naval Academy in the '70s. Years later, they both found themselves at the Pentagon working as aides to former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. They spent many an hour deep in the bowels of the Pentagon. That's where the squash courts are, and Di Rita says he's been trying to beat Stavridis even since their academy days. "Jim was — is pretty darn good," Di Rita says. "He'll outlast ya. He's in extremely good physical condition, and he'll just outlast ya."

Di Rita also says that Stavridis was one of Rumsfeld's favorite partners.

"The secretary took his share of games off him, but Jim is a pretty darn good player," Di Rita says. "He beats me most of the time, that's for sure."

Stavridis must have made a shrewd decision early on not to beat his bosses too often, because his career has flourished. He first commanded a ship at sea in 1993, when he took the helm of a Navy destroyer, the USS Barry.

From there, Stavridis kept working his way up, both inside the Pentagon and at

sea. He wrote speeches for the secretary of the Navy and commanded a carrier strike group in the Persian Gulf. By the time he made admiral, it was clear that Stavridis' career was on an unusual fast track.

"He went straight from one to three stars," skipping the rank of two-star admiral altogether, says his friend and Naval Academy classmate John Allen.

By 2006, Stavridis had ascended to four stars and the position he holds today as top U.S. military commander for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Perhaps the high point in Stavridis' tenure was the rescue last summer of three Americans who had been held hostage by rebel forces in Colombia for five years.

The actual operation was carried out by Colombian Special Forces. But the U.S. ambassador to Colombia, Bill Brownfield, says Stavridis was so closely involved that in the weeks leading up to the raid, the two of them were talking three or four times a day.

"Since he was the senior military guy on the ground offering the senior military judgment on this, he was well out on a plank along with me in this regard," Brownfield says. "So I say it's not only a question of brains, it's also — quite frankly — a question of guts."

Stavridis talked about the hostage rescue, among other things, at a Senate hearing last week. He opened his testimony with a joke about being the only Navy guy among the four senior officers testifying.

"I'm very fortunate to be joined by three generals," he said. "As a Navy admiral, I always feel good to have generals around me. I feel a little safer."

Stavridis' friends say a move to Europe would, in a way, bring his career full circle. Retired Vice Adm. Kevin Green notes that Stavridis' doctorate focused on NATO security issues. Today, those issues include Russia's relations with the alliance and France rejoining the command structure.

Green says Stavridis is already reading up, especially on the challenges ahead in Afghanistan.

"This is a fellow who does his homework," Green says. "And that process is in high gear."



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The Gabby Awards Launched at Kick-off Parties in New York and Chicago

Vote Now!
Greek America's Best and Brightest Stars to be honored on June 19th.

Aiming to become the Greek American community's premier award brand, the inaugural Gabby Awards were launched in Chicago on February 27th at a launch party with several hundred guests present, followed by a similar event at the John Varvatos Soho boutique in New York City on March 12th.

"Our aim is to celebrate Greek America's Best and Brightest Stars by creating an award that is representative of the excellence that Greek Americans embody in their work," stated Gregory C. Pappas, publisher of Greek America Magazine and creator of The Gabby Awards.

Dennis Malamatinas, the Chief Executive Officer of Greece's Marfin Investment Group, fresh from his company's historic purchase of Olympic Airlines, will attend the Gala event in Chicago on June 19th and present the Gabby Award for Business and Entrepreneurism. For Malamatinas, it is a sort of homecoming because he got his BS in Economics from Roosevelt University in Chicago. He went on to get his MBA from the University of Chicago, and the rest, as they say, is history. He went on to lead some of the largest companies in the United States and the world and also become one of the five founding members of President Clinton's Welfare to Work Reform Initiative. He is currently the CEO of MIG (Marfin Investment Group Holdings), the largest Industrial group in SE Europe with \$10 billion assets.

Honorary Co-Chairs of the Gabby Awards are actress Melina Kanakaredes and menswear designer John Varvatos. The show will be emceed by Chicago's own Emmy Award winning television journalist Anna Davlantes.

The Chicago launch party took place

downtown at the Bentley-Lamborghini dealership, with wine, champagne and passed appetizers in a festive, celebratory environment. Crowds cheered for local favorites who were announced among the forty nominees.

In New York City, celebrated designer John Varvatos and Bon Appétit Chef of the Year Michael Psilakis welcomed guests at the swank Soho boutique, while American Idol finalist Constantine Maroulis, celebrated "Sex and the City" costume designer Patricia Field, daytime soap actor Frank Dicopoulos and Gabby nominees John Catsimatidis and Col. Matthew Bogdanos mingled with the crowd of 200+ New Yorkers.

"This is the greatest idea in the Greek American community in our generation," said Psilakis, whose restaurants Anthos and Kefi provided the food for the New York City kick-off party. Varvatos added that "Greek Americans who aren't necessarily involved with the community have a great vehicle in the Gabby Awards to celebrate the hard work and dedication of so many special individuals. This is a project I'm honored to be a part of."

The eight Gabby Award categories include Business, Education, Performing Arts, Culture, Athletics, Philanthropy, Promotion of Hellenism and Politics—all areas in which Greek Americans have excelled over the years.

Five nominees per category were announced—selected by a secret ballot of an 85-member nationwide committee known as the Gabby Academy, which was asked to select three individuals in each category. The top five candidates in each category were selected as nominees. In the case of a tie, a sixth individual was included

as a nominee in that category. The Gabby Awards will be handed out to winners at a black tie gala awards show in Chicago on June 19th at the historic Merle Reskin Theater, followed by an unforgettable after party directly next door at the Chicago Hilton and Towers.

In addition to the eight Gabby awards, a special Lifetime Achievement award presented by Fox Films CEO Jim Gianopolos will be given to Academy Award winning actress Olympia Dukakis.

The event will include music and many surprises for the guests in attendance, including a special video and musical tribute to Greeks in Hollywood.

The after party will be a special celebration with open bars, unlimited food buffets and musical entertainment by Greece's biggest-selling female recording artist, Glykeria, who with her complete orchestra, promises to turn the International Ballroom of the Hilton Hotel into the biggest Greek dance party this side of the Atlantic.

Greek Americans are encouraged to vote at www.gabbyawards.com. Detailed biographical information about each nominee is on the website, as well as event and ticket information. Only 1000 tickets, which include entrance to the awards show and after party, will be sold.

Proceeds from the Gabby Awards will benefit the Hellenic Legacy Fund, a new endowment fund of the Greek America Foundation, which will award scholarships to students for study abroad programs in Greece.

For more information, please visit www.gabbyawards.com or search for "The Gabby Awards" on Facebook.

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Constantine Rocks Broadway

American Idol finalist Constantine Maroulis is now on Broadway and rocking the house in the musical *Rock of Ages*

Constantine Maroulis, the rocker who electrified *American Idol*, is now reprising his critically-acclaimed role as "Drew" in the new Broadway run of the musical *Rock of Ages*, which is about a small-town girl who meets a big-city rocker in an LA club and falls in love with him to the greatest songs of the 80s.

"I'm gonna keep rockin'"

were Maroulis' parting words after coming up fifth on *American Idol*, and he has done that ever since.

He's performed live around the globe from the Philippine to his native New Jersey (he was born in Brooklyn but left when he was five) and even created his own independent label, Sixth Place Records, which released his solo album, *Constantine* in 2007. He did a solo a solo tour of the U.S. in 2008 and was a featured performer at the 3rd Annual Wave Gathering featuring 175 Emerging Musical Artists in Asbury Park.



He's also done considerable musical theater since his days at the Boston Conservatory of Music (he also apprenticed in acting at the Williamstown Theatre Festival), with starring roles in Rent, Jesus Christ Superstar (which he also did in high school), The Wedding Singer, Hedwig and the Angry Inch, Jascques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris, and he's acted on television in Law and Order and The Bold and the Beautiful.

Not bad for a kid from Brooklyn whose grandparents came from Greece and who was brought up in the suburb of Wyckoff, New Jersey. He got his start in music from his brother Athan, who is now a record producer (his sister Anastasia is a teacher) and by 11 he was studying the trumpet at Eisenhower Middle School. He later sang in high school garage bands, including Lady Rain and Milkbone. And after graduating Ramapo High School in 1993, he attended The Boston Conservatory of Music, where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theater, and a minor in voice from the Berklee College of Music. He was in the cast recording of the 2000 musical Suburban Dreams and even competed on the dating show Elimidate, as well as dubbing the voices on the WB series Astro Boy.

It was supposedly on an ex-girlfriend's suggestion that he traveled to Washington DC to audition for American Idol, where he was among the first to do rock. He had a huge following, but was eliminated, which brought judge Paul Abdul to tears. She had proclaimed him the one to beat, but he assured her and his fans, "I'm gonna keep rocking."

After American Idol, he was approached by Ralph Lauren, among others, about modeling and won representation by the top talent agency in the business, Creative Artists Agency. He was named the sexiest 30-year-old in America by People magazine and he struck a deal to develop a network sitcom at ABC to be executive-produced by Kelsey Grammer. He also performed that summer on an American Idol tour to sold-out crowds. He even took his pre-Idol rock band, Pray for the Soul of Betty, on the road in a decked-out tour bus. And his rendition of "Bohemian Rhapsody" earned inclusion on a Queen tribute CD titled Killer Queen. He even got to chat with Jay Leno when he performed it on The Tonight Show.



Now his performance in Rock of Ages has drawn rave reviews: AP said that Maroulis "gives a touching performance and sings powerfully as Drew, the young wannabe rock singer." The show even had a landmark New York City restaurant, Serendipity 3, create a new dessert in its honor: "I Wanna Rock Root Beer Float."

In addition to his performing, Maroulis has always done considerable charity work. Most recently he agreed to perform at the June Greek Folk Festival of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Baltimore, and he has been the recipient of the Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund's Humanitarian Award for Artistic Achievement and of the New York City's Greek Heritage and Culture Celebration.

Maroulis, who looks very much like a rock star and is over six feet tall, told Rolling Stone he keeps almost every fan memento he was ever given in his parents' basement in New Jersey, which he calls his own "little Graceland." He said one of his favorite possessions is a homemade booklet with his face on the cover and poetry written by his fans. One page (with an onstage photo of his boot) has a poem titled "Ode to Your Favorite Boots":

He's put many miles on those soles almost worn out the heels and toes although he's now a lot more rich don't think he's ready to give 'em the pitch.

"One day when I'm unemployed and miserable," Maroulis says. "I can always look at that stuff and hopefully feel a little better about myself and what I once did and my contributions to society."



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Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born and raised in Dallas, Texas.

Who or what were the main influences in your life?

My pappou (grandfather) inspired me to become a physician, and my parents and brother emphasized the importance of education and our Greek heritage.

How did you get into your present work?

As a child, I spent my summers in Greece, and often I would go with my pappou to his medical office. I remember seeing the patients in his waiting room with concerned and even sad expressions, and after he had finished evaluating and treating them, they would leave happy and reassured. Many times patients and their family members would stop by his clinic to hug him and thank him for helping them. Witnessing those events as a child inspired me to pursue the medical profession with the hope to heal and help others like my pappou did for so many years.

As a successful American you could and perhaps have joined major organizations that are focused more on mainstream society. Why L100?

All my life my parents have been heavily involved with the organizations of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Hellenic community. They give tirelessly of their time and money to support these organizations and they always remind me about the importance of being involved and supporting organizations that seek to preserve and promote our faith and our rich Hellenic heritage. Leadership 100 was an easy choice for me because of its mission to support the Greek Orthodox Church and its ministries. L100 is unique from other organizations in that it requires all of its members to make a significant financial contribution in order to achieve its goals, which it has done successfully over the past 25 years.

How would you evaluate your so far experience in the organization?

I realize how important this organization is in its efforts to preserve our Orthodox faith; however, one of the nice benefits of being a member is the ability to network with a large group of successful people. I have had the opportunity to meet some of the most influential and successful leaders in our Greek American Community and I am blessed to have made many friends.

As a new generation leader, what are some ideas of yours on the future of Leadership 100?

Leadership 100 was initially founded to support the Archdiocese during a time of financial crisis in the mid 1980's. The organization has done an amazing job in supporting the Greek Orthodox Church and its ministries with roughly \$27 million in grants that have been distributed from 1989-2008. Through this financial support, it has indirectly supported Hellenism. It was at the Greek Church in Dallas where I went to Greek school, learned how to Greek dance, learned about Greek history, and shared my Hellenic identity with others. The reality is that our Greek Orthodox communities are placing less of an emphasis on preserving our Greek language and culture. L100 is the paradigm of how an organization can be structured and successful in its mission. I would love to see this organization play a direct role in preserving and promoting Hellenism. In the Greek community, our Faith and our culture are intertwined and are dependent on each other. We as leaders need to support both our religious and cultural heritage.

How has your involvement in Leadership 100 proved valuable in other activities of your life?

I have made many friends among the leaders in our community and through these friendships I have been able to have many experiences outside of the medical field which have expanded my horizons.

What qualities do you most admire or value in others?

Honesty, Loyalty, Wisdom, and Generosity.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

My greatest achievement is becoming a physician. By being a physician, I have been able to realize many dreams including one of my most memorable which was being selected as the cardiologist for all of the 20,000 athletes and staff from the international community residing at the Olympic Village at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games.

Who are your heroes in real life?

My heroes are the immigrants who had the courage to leave their friends, family, and country behind and come to America with hopes of a better life. My father came to the United States knowing no one and with one dollar that he received from a lady on his trip to America as a "gouri" (good luck), and my mother came here to get an education. Many of the Greek immigrants who came to the United States have contributed to the greater good of our country in every field.

How do you spend your time outside of work?

I try to spend as much time as I can with my family and friends. I also enjoy staying physically active with sports, playing and listening to music and dancing to Greek, Country and Latin songs.

What are your thoughts on the current economic crisis?

This is a very tough question to answer in detail without taking up the whole magazine. Generally, I believe that the qualities of honesty, loyalty, wisdom, and generosity are lacking in today's financial and economic arena. Many of our major financial institutions and financial "gurus" lacked wisdom in their decisions to seek very high risk investment strategies in order to boost profits and returns. They were dishonest by manipulating and misleading their clients to believing that future great financial rewards were to come at an acceptable risk. The Ponzi schemes, sub-prime mortgage lending and the derivative games are some of these examples. Of course the need for prudence and wisdom that we expect from our financial and political leaders also extends to all of us as individuals. Unfortunately this individual prudence was lacking and contributed to the crisis.

This crisis has served as a wake-up call for all of us. We need to exercise more fiscal responsibility, be more thoughtful in our individual lives with regard to our real priorities and find ways that we can benefit ourselves as individuals and yet contribute generously to the overall improvement of our country and communities. It is through these changes that we may see a real end to this historic economic crisis and even emerge stronger than we were before.

Where would you like to be in your professional and personal life 20 years from now?

I would like to be the top senior advisor to the President regarding health care delivery and reform. After several years of running my own medical practice, I clearly see how broken, inefficient, and wasteful our medical system is. I would also like to be a medical correspondent for a large news agency in order to inform people on a massive scale on the signs and symptoms of disease and on how to improve their health and quality of life.

With regard to my personal life, I hope by that time I will have a loving and devoted wife with whom I can raise a great family with children who will contribute to the good of society and are proud of their Greek heritage.

What is your idea of happiness?

I am happy when I am helping others, enjoying the time I get to spend with family and friends, and striving to do my best to pass on the "dada" (torch) of Hellenism and Orthodoxy to future generations.

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Theodore G. Spyropoulos



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Miracle on the Hudson: On a wing and a prayer

By Rev. Dr. Frank Marangos

“The Lord is like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.”

Deuteronomy 32:11

“It is a Miracle!” This is the way that media pundits, politicians and most Americans first characterized the airline crash that occurred on a cold January afternoon in Manhattan. News reports of the incident, complete with amateur photographs, video and eyewitness accounts filled television, Internet, and radio airwaves. According to the government’s official report, US Airways flight 1549 lost power after liftoff from LaGuardia Airport when a flock of geese flew into its engines. The pilot, Sully Sullenberger, amazingly glided the airplane over the George Washington Bridge and safely ditched it into the Hudson River. All of the 155 passengers and crew were safely rescued from the plane before it slowly began to sink into the frigid waters. Underscoring the unprecedented nature of the remarkable landing, the copilot turned to Sullenberger and remarked, “You know Sully, no one has ever had a successful ditch like this before . . . you pulled it off!” The photograph of the floating plane with its passengers standing on its wings was published on the top front folds of newspapers and magazines throughout the globe with the caption: “Miracle on the Hudson!”

Sadly, yet not surprisingly, it was not long for the story’s punctuation to change from explanation point to that of question mark. As the novelty of the extraordinary event began to wane, airplane manufacturers, pilots, sailors, meteorologists, and, curiously, unconvinced theologians, all began to offer alternative explanations. Was it a miracle? Or was the astonishing landing merely the result of favorable, yet random factors, that all coalesced behind the calm, focused leadership and expertise of a veteran fighter pilot with small glider plane experience? Did society observe the “Hand of God” or was the safe landing and subsequent evacuation of the passengers due to the pilot, flight crew, the masterful engineering of the aircraft, and to the boats and barges that just happened to be nearby?

After seriously taking into account all of the “human” factors and serendipitous circumstances, something inside of us, and primarily in the hearts and minds of the passengers, distinguishes another “Force” at work . . . something greater than mere chance, skill or circumstance . . . something Divine! Most significantly, when interviewed, all the passengers acknowledged, that “everyone was praying” during those stressful moments when they thought the plane was going to crash!

The incident on the Hudson raises numerous questions concerning the reality

of miracles. Do we believe in them or not? Was God really involved with Flight 1549? Does our contemporary society still believe in miracles or has the miraculous, at best, been confined to the pages of the Bible and the biographies of the saints? Are miracles merely fables for children and not for the more mature, sophisticated mind?

To believe in miracles is to acknowledge that God is, has always been, and is still very much involved in the affairs of His creation! Orthodox Christianity rejects the notion of an exiled or absent God who created the cosmos and then stood back to

watch from a safe distance. The intricate theology that explains why Orthodoxy chose the dome instead of the steeple as the architectural structure of every Church sanctuary emphasizes the importance of God’s nearness. He is not exiled in heaven but is here lovingly present. In general, the miracles as outlined in the Holy Scriptures, and, in particular, the account of the healing of the Ten Lepers (Saint Luke), all bear witness to this nearness of God and to His continual and intimate involvement with the affairs of humanity.

When reflecting upon the miracle stories that he provides in his Gospel, it is important to remember that apart from being an evangelist, Saint Luke was also a medical doctor. Consequently, he is an expert witness for the extra-ordinary nature of the miraculous. Standing at a distance, due to prescribed Levitical requirements, Luke informs us that ten lepers once requested Jesus’ assistance. “Have mercy on us!” they cried. Jesus’ directive is significantly instructive. “Go,” He commands, “show yourselves to the priests” (Luke). The evangelist insists that the ten lepers were cleansed en route, “as they were on their way.” Tragically, only one of the ten returned to give thanks. The miracle account concludes with two complementary questions posed by Jesus, “Were not all of you healed? Where are the other nine?”

Contemporary denials of the miraculous are often in league with the nine unappreciative lepers in Saint Luke’s Gospel story. Like the lepers, we are, at best, often unaware of Jesus’ miraculous interventions, believing that life’s positive outcomes are merely the result of medicine, technology or some other understandable explanation. At worse, however, we are hesitant and often resistant to offer gratitude to God when we experience miraculous events because of the consequences of just what such an acknowledgement may personally involve.

Chapter 32 of the Book of Deuteronomy describes God as an eagle that “hovers over His young” and “spreads out His wings to catch and carry them to safety on His mighty pinions” (Deut. 32:11). I believe that we all experienced this very action on the Hudson. It could have happened anywhere around the world. But it did not. It occurred on the worldwide stage of New York . . . during rush hour traffic . . . miles of commuters lining the river’s edge like invited guests to a Broadway theater. Suddenly, a plane without engines glides over the George Washington Bridge . . . landing safely on the waters of the Hudson River on one of the coldest of northeast winter days. Private and public water vessels were ready to provide assistance. No one was seriously hurt. The passengers standing on the wings of the plane like the wings of God! Are you kidding . . . not a miracle? The real question is: where are the other nine?

After extinguishing a devastating tree fire in Yellowstone Park a group of forest rangers began the arduous task of assessing the inferno’s damage. One of them discovered the body of a petrified eagle, literally covered in ashes, at the base of a tree. The dead bird was still standing in a statuesque pose with its wings outspread. Sickened by the eerie sight, the forest ranger knocked the bird over with a stick. Only then were her three tiny chicks discovered . . . alive and unharmed. Keenly aware of the impending danger, the eagle had carried

her offspring to a safe location and there covered them with her pinions. While the eagle had the power to fly high and save itself, it refused to abandon her children.

The miracle on the Hudson, like that of the Ten Lepers, depicts mankind’s unfortunate hesitancy to acknowledge the action of God in history. Yes, it is important that in all circumstances, we must also do our part . . . contribute the very best of our intellect and strength. However, we need to likewise develop adequate discernment to realize the occasions of divine intervention and then to express our gratitude and praise to God! Like the Yellowstone eagle, our Lord is always willing to sacrifice Himself for His children. At Golgotha, he refused to abandon His creation but chose to be scorched by the inferno of death that was raging on the tree of the cross. This is the miracle from which all other miracles find their source. Let us not miss the opportunities to see such love in action . . . always guiding and gliding us to safety on a wing and prayer!

Rev. Dr. Frank Marangos is the Dean of the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York City. He is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Saint John’s University (NY). Please visit <http://www.thecathedral.goarch.org/OnlineSermons.dsp> to view the on-line sermon that inspired this article.



Story by Harry Mark Petrakis

THE GRANDMOTHER

That spring Marina Petrou received a phone call from Father Basil, the priest in the village of Fanaron, with the news that her grandmother was seriously ill and was not expected to live.

Marina had an almost identical call concerning her grandmother's failing health from the priest a year earlier and though she planned at that time to go to Fanaron, business at her Travel Agency in Athens delayed her a few days that became weeks. In the end she phoned the priest that she could not make the journey. Her grandmother had lived through that illness and Marina suspected the sturdy and baleful old woman would survive this crisis, as well.

The truth was Marina had little desire to visit her grandmother. The last time she had been to the village was ten years earlier for her mother's funeral. That was the last time Marina had seen her grandmother's small, gnarled figure.

She could never remember her grandmother displaying a trace of kindness or affection toward either of her parents. The old woman

was the same with the villagers who either feared or despised her. In all her relationships she was obdurate, acid-tongued, mordantly vengeful, bigoted, proud with little reason for pride except for her survival.

Evdoxia Petrou was a small woman, her height an inch or two over five feet. At one time she might have been fine-featured but the years had blunted and hardened her face so it seemed carved in stone. In the cold of winter she grew pale and stooped, her limbs stiff and her energy depleted. When spring arrived, she eagerly carried her spade and pitchfork to the field and began tearing up the clumps of earth. As she worked planting tomatoes, potatoes and corn, the sun seemed a funnel which fed her energy and power. An amazing transformation took place, her face and arms burned a deep brown, her small figure acquiring nimbleness and strength. She even appeared taller, her winter feebleness banished as if by sorcery.

"My mother is a force of nature," Marina remembered her father once telling a neighbor, his face serious and his voice reverent. "Earth, rain and storm are ingrained in her. In the spring when the sun is renewed, she is resurrected."

Marina understood that old age was a time of decline with little reason for joy. But other old men and women in the village occasionally displayed good spirits and sometimes laughed. Her grandmother never revealed either of those traits. The stark truth was that as far back as she could recall, her grandmother had shadowed and tyrannized their house. Marina vividly remembered her grandmother's fits of temper if something her son or daughter-in-law said or did displeased her. The old woman launched into a tirade of unbridled anger marked by the clamorous banging of pots against the hearth.

Marina was dismayed at how passively her parents accepted these fits of temper.

"That is the way Evdoxia is and has always been," her mother's voice was quiet and resigned. "I remember her angry during the time your father courted me. She was also angry when we married. I thought it was because she wished her son had chosen a more attractive or wealthier girl. But I came to understand that it was simply her nature."

"Has she always lived with you?"

"She moved in the day after we married," her mother said. "Since that time I have never lived a day without having her tell me what I should or should not do."

As Marina grew older, her father sought to soften the harsh resentment she felt about her grandmother.

"She has suffered a great deal," her father said. "She lost my father during the war when he was murdered by the Germans who occupied our village. I was a baby then and she was left alone to raise me. She has never spoken much about that occupation but I know the soldiers abused and humiliated the villagers, robbed their houses of food and kindling. People grew ill because of the cold or starved for lack of food. It required incredible strength and courage simply to survive."

Her father died the summer Marina was ten years old. After working all day in the field, he sat down at the table to eat supper. A moment later he slumped forward, his forehead landing upon a plate of greens. For years afterwards Marina remembered the way the greens stained his dead face.

When Marina became seventeen and felt confident enough to leave the village, she pleaded with her mother to go with her.

"You don't have any kind of life here," Marina said. "Come with me, mama, and we'll live together in Athens. I'll get a good job and you can enjoy life a little. We can eat in nice restaurants and we'll go to theaters. You'll see marvels you've never seen before."

"I was in Athens once," her mother said. "It was like being in the midst of an earthquake. The noise, the traffic and the crowds." She shook her head. "I was born in Fanaron, dearest Marina, and I will die in Fanaron and be buried beside your father. You go now and make a life for yourself."

Within a year after Marina left the village for Athens, her mother died, as well. The midwife who attended her last hours said it appeared to be a malady related to her heart. But Marina knew her mother's death was precipitated by hopelessness and weariness.

After the funeral Marina prepared to return to Athens the following day.

"I'd stay a little longer, grandmother," she said. "But we're beginning the busy tourist season at the agency."

"Did I ask you to stay?" her grandmother asked brusquely. "No one is stopping you. Go and do your work."

Ten years had passed since then. Marina wrote her grandmother several times but the old lady never answered. She could not phone her because the grandmother had never allowed a telephone in the house. When Marina phoned a neighbor asking for information, the neighbor told her the old woman was healthy and as prickly and bellicose as always.

"When your grandmother goes near the chicken coops," the neighbor said, "even the hens cringe and are too terrified to lay their eggs."

Marina could not be sure just how old her grandmother was. Records in the village were erratically recorded and poorly maintained. Evdoxia had to be at least eighty and perhaps even a few years older.

Her grandmother's advanced age suggested that this latest illness might indeed be her last and Marina decided to return to the village. She left Athens in the morning and drove to Fanaron. When she arrived in the village that evening, she found her grandmother recovered. Marina braced herself to endure the old woman's grim presence for no more than another day.

"You should plan to come and visit me in Athens, grandmother," Marina said, hoping her voice wouldn't reveal her insincerity. "You'd see what an exciting city Athens is."

"I know all I need to know about your exciting city," her grandmother said. "It is a devil's haven full of thieves and whores. If you'd had sense enough to remain here you'd be married by now and have borne several children instead of being a spinster. In a few more years you'll become dried up like a withered prune."

Marina did not tell her grandmother that in the years she'd lived in Athens, she'd had several lovers, and could have been married more than once if she'd chosen to accept the proposals.

On that last evening in the village, Marina ate a dinner of beans and mushrooms with her grandmother. The old woman had lost several of her teeth leaving gaps in her mouth but her gums had hardened and she chewed her food with vigor. They also drank several glasses of wine and her grandmother's cheeks grew flushed. When the meal was finished and Marina tried to help with the few dishes, her grandmother brusquely waved her away.

"Go and sit by the fire," she said.

After her grandmother had washed and dried their plates, she came to sit across from Marina in the wicker chair beside the fireplace. The flames flickered across the old woman's dour face.

"I'll try to visit you again in a month or two," Marina said.

"No need to bother," her grandmother said. "And when someone phones to tell you I have died, you don't even need to return then. All you'll miss is that fork-tongued old priest mumbling a few words before a swarm of hypocrites who are only attending the funeral to make sure the old witch is really dead."

The old lady stared into the fire. Perhaps because of the wine she had drunk, Marina saw a softening in her grandmother's face and, when she spoke, a pensiveness in her voice.

"I have lived longer than God allows most mortals to dwell on this earth," her grandmother said, her voice low and solemn. "You see what a wreck I've become and its time for me to die now. Children die of illness or accident every day so the death of an old woman who has lived an eternity means very little."

A wind rose in the night outside the house and rattled the sash of the windows. Realizing this might be the last time she'd see her grandmother alive, Marina felt a surge of remorse at how little she knew of the lifetime the old woman had endured.

"You have never spoken to any of us about the years of the war, grandmother," Marina said. "What was it like for you then?"

"That was a century ago. You weren't even alive. What do you care about what happened then?"

"I'd like to know."

For a few moments they sat in silence.

"The war years were an evil and terrible time," her grandmother said finally. "Our village suffered more than some and not as much as others. There were towns like Kalavryta where the Germans slaughtered more than a thousand men and boys over fourteen. In Fanaron they didn't massacre us all but they killed enough. That is how your grandfather died. Some partisan had shot and seriously wounded a German soldier. So the brutes took six of our men, stood them against the wall of the church and shot them. Your grandfather was one of them. I saw him die and felt as if the bullets that killed him had pierced my own heart."

Her grandmother paused, her face stony, concealing any emotion.

"Your father was just a baby then and I was left alone to look after him," her grandmother said. "We rarely left our house except to work in the fields. The German soldiers were swaggering brutes and we were in terror of them. As the war went on those soldiers who

first came into our village were sent away and younger soldiers replaced them. I think the new ones were recruits who hadn't seen any warfare and were being used only to occupy villages and towns."

"Were the younger ones any better than the others?"

"They were still Germans," her grandmother said grimly. "Cruelty and barbarism was in their nature." For a while she fell silent, her black eyes glistening in the flames of the fire. "There was one young soldier who seemed different. I had seen him watching me. He even followed me to the field where I was working but he never came close, just watched from a distance. I worked nervously and kept the baby, your father, strapped to my back."

The wind sweeping down the chimney fanned the flames and the fire flared more brightly.

"One morning I found some tins of food and a bar of chocolate outside my door. I suspected the young soldier who had been watching me put them there. I was in terror thinking he might harm me. Other girls in the village had been assaulted, a few kidnaped and taken up the mountain and raped. For weeks I slept with a knife under my pillow resolved I'd kill him if he tried to break into our house." She paused, her throat grown dry, her voice a little hoarser. "But he never tried to speak to me. Yet, several times a week there were bars of chocolate, a chunk of cheese, a loaf of bread outside my door. In the beginning I swore not to touch them, to throw them away. But food was scarce and my child had to eat...so I used what the soldier left. Yet I never let myself think kindly of him. I knew a vulture does not become a dove."

Her grandmother fell silent again, her head bent slightly, as if remembering were an effort. When she resumed speaking, her voice had become strangely softer.

"There was a morning in the spring," her grandmother said. "I heard someone outside and I opened the door. This German soldier stood there holding a small clutch of flowers. For the first time I saw what he looked like and I was surprised how young he was, no more than nineteen or twenty. He looked as penitent as a boy caught in some mischievous act. I felt fear but felt I also needed to show some gratitude for the food he'd provided us. Still on my guard, resolved to fight like a wolf if he touched me, I let him into the house. I made tea and we sat like you and I are sitting now, by the fire. I confess I was nervous, but he seemed so young. I didn't think he meant to harm us."

The grandmother seemed suddenly unaware of Marina's presence, the unleashing of memories from her past obscuring the immediacy of the moment.

"His hair was blonde and silky, his eyes blue," her grandmother said, "He was fairer in a way that was different from the other blonde Germans with their washed-out complexions. I think to make himself look older he wore a mustache, a foolish sprout of hair that drooped over his lower lip. He had learned some Greek and we were able to exchange a few sentences. He came from a city in Germany called Ham-borg," the old woman stumbled over the word. "He had been a student in university when the war began and he was conscripted. He spoke of someday returning home and studying again. He wanted to be an artist."

Her grandmother suddenly seemed to catch herself. She stared in aggravation at Marina.

"The wine and the fire have rattled my senses," she said impatiently. "Listen to me babbling now like a flabby-tongued old woman. That's enough."

"I'm grateful you're telling me the story, grandmother," Marina said. "How long did the Germans stay in the village?"

"We heard the English and American armies had landed in France and were advancing across Europe," her grandmother said. "We knew that had to be true when the soldiers who garrisoned our village just left. One Sunday they were here and on Monday they were gone."

"Do you know if that young German soldier ever made it home?"

"How would I know that?" her grandmother snapped. "He might have made it home or he could have been killed in the war. It made no difference to me." The old woman rose stiffly. "It's time we were in bed," she said. "You have a long drive tomorrow and need your rest."

Less than two months after Marina had returned to Athens, a telephone call from Father Basil informed her that her grandmother Evdoxia had died. Marina drove to the village for a final time and attended a funeral once more as she had when her father and mother died. Father Basil conducted the service while Stephanos, the aged cantor chanted the lament in his hoarse, unsteady voice. Lying stiff and straight in her pine coffin her grandmother looked as stern and unforgiving in death as she had appeared in life.

After the service, the villagers formed a solemn procession behind the cart carrying the casket to the cemetery. As they clustered about the newly opened grave to view the coffin being lowered into the ground, Marina remembered what her grandmother had said about the villagers attending the funeral only to make sure the old virago was dead.

They interred her grandmother beside the graves of her husband and Marina's parents. In that small plot of earth, her mother, father and grandmother would be reunited for eternity. If the dead could speak perhaps her grandmother would continue the bad temper and abuse she had heaped upon her son and daughter-in-law while they lived.

Knowing she would never return to the village again, Marina made arrangements to sell the small family house and land. She spent the following few days disposing of most of the furniture in the house by giving the pieces to neighbors. She kept a few personal items that belonged to her mother, some embroidery and miniature icons, a gold locket and a necklace.

The last item she opened was a small trunk she remembered belonged to her grandmother. The trunk which was stored in a corner of the fruit cellar appeared not to have been opened in decades and was covered with dust and the webs of spiders. As she struggled and finally opened the lid, the rusty hinges creaked noisily and the trunk's interior emitted a noxious odor, the way a grave might smell if it were opened after many years.

The trunk contained what must have been her grandmother's bridal dress, once white but through the years faded to a dreary gray. There was a bible, the binding and pages exuding a stale aroma. There were a pair of faded and withered wedding crowns so old and brittle that the flower petals snapped apart when Marina touched them.

Then, at the very bottom of the trunk, Marina found a parcel wrapped carefully in cotton cloth. She unfolded the fabric and found a series of paintings, a few in watercolor but most of them done in tempera, the dry pigment mixed with water and yoke of egg.

There were paintings of some of the villagers. She recognized Father Basil, Aspasia Pyrhos, Theofilos Verzas. The painting of Theofilos was of the old man sitting on the stoop outside his house, his hands folded in his lap, a sadness in his face. None of them were signed but she suspected they must have been painted by the young German soldier who aspired to be an artist. Marina doubted that any of the subjects had posed so the soldier must have drawn them from memory but they were eerily accurate in capturing the resignation in the countenances of each one.

There was a painting of a village door, a blue door, marred with scratches near the base that a cat might have made. The door was closed but one expected that any moment it might open and the villager who lived in it would walk out. There were depictions of the landscape, as well. In one painting of the mountain looming above the village one could tell it was summer. The wild flowers in full color had been captured so flawlessly she could almost feel the petals fluttering in the winds that swept down the slope from the peaks. The geraniums reflecting a brilliant light from the sun seemed poised to burst from the painting.

There was a painting of a group of German soldiers lounging on the terrace of the taverna, booted feet extending indolently out before them. There were bottles of wine on the table. Two of the soldiers were smoking and one held a wine glass to his lips. The

bored, lazy posture of the uniformed men still conveyed a sense of tension and menace the villagers must have experienced through the occupation. There was a grim painting of a villager lying sprawled face down in the street. The grotesque extension of his arms and legs indicated the man had died a violent death. The brush of the artist had caught the tragic desolation of the scene.

What Marina felt in each of the paintings was the sensitivity of the artist, an empathy with both the beauty of the village as well as the suffering of the villagers. In his paintings he seemed to be offering an apology and remorse he could never have openly spoken.

When she came to the last few paintings in the parcel, she was startled to see they were nudes. At first the model appeared an unknown young woman until Marina recognized a piercing glow in the figure's dark eyes. From a memory of her childhood, there was also something familiar about the braided black hair, the tight strands dangling across the woman's shoulders. With a shock of recognition Marina realized the nude paintings were of her grandmother as a young woman.

She studied them slowly and intently, struck by their beauty. There was a nude of her grandmother kneeling, arms folded behind her back. Her braids framed her cheeks, garlanding the loveliness of her face. Her lips gleamed red and her black eyes were luminous. Providing a tiny splash of color, a peach blossom glistened in her hair.

One painting above all astonished and fascinated her. It was of her grandmother's figure reclining in bed, a sheet drawn to her thighs and her body nude from her navel to her head. She seemed to be floating on the

bed, her figure radiating a delicacy and grace. One of her arms was extended along the sheet, her hair now loosened from their braids tumbled in luxuriant splendor about her shoulders.

But it was her breasts that filled Marina with awe and admiration because they were the most beautiful she had ever seen, the mounds flawless, the nipples perfectly formed. One could sense the sexual passion in the painting, the languorous contentment and striking sensuality of a woman only an artist who was also her lover could have captured so stunningly and so well.

That night, the last night she would ever spend in the village, Marina could not sleep. The nudes of her grandmother as a young woman painted by the young soldier haunted her.

Nothing in those flawless, sensuous figures provided the slightest hint of the angry, embittered woman Marina had always known. In a stillness burnished by the light from a bright moon glowing at the window, she understood that what had forever perished with her grandmother's death were the words and events that had transpired from the morning the young soldier first entered her grandmother's house to drink a cup of tea and the paintings he had drawn so lovingly of her exquisite nakedness.

In that moment Marina couldn't restrain her tears. Yet, she cried less with sadness than with wonder at the mysteries humans concealed within their hearts and carried with them into death. After a while, she turned away from the moon-bright window, trying to rest for her drive in the morning from the village to Athens.



*Our Warmest Wishes for a Beautiful
and most Blessed Pascha
that renews your Faith, uplifts your Spirit
and fills your heart with Joy!*



Christos Anesti!

Stephen G. and Thelma S. Yeonas

*Happy Easter
to all Greek-Americans
May God Bless your Families*

John G. Rangos Jr.



AHI Executive Director
Nick Larigakis

PHOTOS: ETA PRESS



Gene Rossides,
founder of AHI

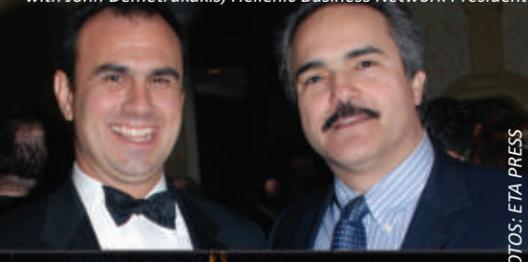


Presentation of the Colors
and Greek and American
National Anthems by Elena Stavrakas



Nick Karambelas, Tatiana
Deligiannaki, Ananea
Adamidis and Helen
Rouvelas

AHI President Aleco Haralambides (left)
with John Demetrakakis, Hellenic Business Network President



PHOTOS: ETA PRESS



From left Andrea, Athena, Alicia and Maria



George Pelecanos (right)
with Ted Pedas



Honorees from left to right:
George Pelecanos, John G. Rangos, Sr., Cat Cora,
Dr. George Tsetsekos, Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL)

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



John G. Rangos Sr. with
George Stephanopoulos

PHOTO: ETA PRESS

AHI's National Service Awards Dinner

The Washington DC based American Hellenic Institute (AHI) honored a distinguished set of Greek Americans during its 34th Anniversary Hellenic Heritage and National Public Service Awards Dinner, held recently at the Capital Hilton. Linked by their important career achievements and by their contributions to the Greek American community and the community at-large, this year's honorees were Cat Cora, acclaimed chef, philanthropist and author, Dr. George P. Tsetsekos, Dean of the LeBow College of Business at Drexel University, George Pelecanos, renowned crime novelist, U.S. Congressman Gus M. Bilirakis, of the 9th Congressional District of Florida (R-FL), and John G. Rangos, Sr., philanthropist and successful businessman. The master of ceremonies for the evening was, George Stephanopoulos, ABC News Chief Washington correspondent and anchor of "This Week with George Stephanopoulos."

These individuals' many accomplishments were celebrated throughout the evening, and also highlighted in congratulatory letters submitted to AHI by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Ambassador of Greece to the United States Alexandros P. Mallias, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the United States Andreas S. Kakouris, World Council of Hellenes Abroad USA Region President Ted G. Spyropoulos, and International Coordinating Committee Justice for Cyprus President Philip Christopher.

Opening the evening's program was AHI Executive Director Nick Larigakis. The Marines of Headquarters Battalion presented the colors and the American and Greek national anthems were performed by Elena Stavrakas. Father Constantinos

Pavlakos, of Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, Falls Church, VA, offered the invocation. Music was provided by the band Apollonia. American Hellenic Institute Secretary of the Board of Directors, Nicholas G. Karambelas, Esq. introduced the master of ceremonies, George Stephanopoulos. AHI Founder Gene Rossides then welcomed the evening's guests. He also introduced and congratulated his successor, the newly elected AHI President, Aleco Haralambides.

The first award recipient of the evening was George Pelecanos, who was presented with the Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award for his literary achievements and excellence in his profession. "To me Greek American means a rich culture of tradition, family, work ethic, the pleasure of good friends, good food, good drink, and our Faith," he remarked accepting the award. "We are known for being proud. Some might say overly proud of our heritage, our relatively rapid progress, and success here in America. And to that I say; we have a right to be!"

Dr. George Tsetsekos received the Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award for his outstanding achievements, and innovation strategies in education. Upon receiving his award, he said, that "it's always wonderful to be recognized for professional achievements, but being recognized by an organization connected to my heritage is something very special to me. Today it is estimated that more than three thousand academics of Hellenic heritage are involved in education and various roles at universities across the United States. They are part of the intellectual fabric of this great country."

Cat Cora received the Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award for her dedicated philanthropy, achievements and excellence in her profession. She spoke about the influence and importance that her Hellenic heritage has made in her life and profession. "I am very humbled by this honor for doing simply what I love. And that is showing my passion as a Greek American to the world through food, wine, and teaching. I especially want to say how proud I am of the tireless work of the AHI in upholding the rule of law and matters of U.S. foreign policy, particularly in our nation's response in dealing with Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, and all of Southeastern Europe. They continue to inform and influence leaders, policy makers and citizens like myself."

Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) was the recipient of the Hellenic Heritage National Public Service Award for his commitment to public service and his support in strengthening U.S. relations with Greece

and Cyprus. "As a member of Congress I feel that it is especially incumbent upon me to do all I can within my power to uphold the rule of law, in matters of U.S. foreign policy, particularly in our nation's dealings with Greece, Cyprus and Turkey, the articulated mission of AHI," he stated.

John G. Rangos, Sr., received the Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award for his outstanding business achievements, dedicated philanthropy, and generous support of education and the Greek American community. Mr. Rangos spoke about the strength of the upcoming Greek American generations, the importance of upholding the values and faith of the Hellenic heritage and the need to educate the world on Modern Greek history. "We have so much to work for because we are the shepherds of tomorrow and we must work hard in these stormy waters of today with what strengths we have in these upcoming generations of Hellenes. They are some of the most prosperous, best

educated, and have the desire to be successful. We have the goals of our Church and the strengths of our families to accomplish anything in the world... We had a Thermopylai in World War II, and today's Greek American great writers, and people that make movies, should have these truths publicized all the time."

Special guests attending the event included: Ambassador of Greece to the United States Alexandros Mallias and Mrs. Mallias, Ambassador of Cyprus to the United States Andreas Kakouris and Mrs. Kakouris, former U.S. Ambassador to Greece Tom Miller and Bonnie Miller, two former U.S. Deputy Chief of Missions from the U.S. Embassy in Athens Tom Countryman and Mike Cleverly, and former U.S. Ambassador to Qatar Patrick Theros.

Other notable guests attending the dinner were: Basil Mossaides, Executive Director, Order of AHEPA; two former Supreme Presidents of AHEPA, John T. Pappas and Frank Manios; Maria Stamoulas, President, Hellenic American Women's Council; Manny Velivasakis, President, Hellenic American National Council and President Pan Cretan Association of America; Demetrios Kontolios, President, Chios Societies of America and Canada; Panos Spiliakos, past President of the Pan-Macedonian Association; Dr. George Moutsatsos, President, AHI-Delaware Chapter, Tina Papadopoulos, President, AHI-New England Chapter; Mariyana Spyropoulos, President, AHI-Chicago Chapter; Paul Sogotis, President, AHI-California Chapter; Congressman Zack and Mary Space (D-OH); Congressman Elijah Cummings (D-MD); John Sitalides, Chairman of the Woodrow Wilson Center Southeast Europe Project; Athena Katsoulos, Deputy Director for European and Eurasian Public Affairs, Department of State; Terry Netos, Cyprus Desk Officer, Department of State; David Horner and Mrs. Horner, new President of the American College of Greece; and three AHI members that traveled from Athens, Greece, to attend the event, Aris Drivas, Constantine Poulis and Katharine Papatthanassiou.



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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Did you know...



Did you know that the United States is the world's largest consumer of vanilla and uses it everywhere from enhancing flavors in your food, to adding it to perfume, pharmaceuticals and even in house paint?! Vanilla not only boosts the flavor of ice cream and sweets, it is also used medicinally for illnesses such as fever, stomach aches, breast cancer, congestion and also is a "feel-good" neurotransmitter.

By Maria Athanasopoulos

bread & honey

A COLUMN DEVOTED TO MAKING GREEK FOOD EASY

Easter is fast approaching, whether you are celebrating with the western world by the Gregorian calendar or with the Orthodox who follow the Julian calendar. This is indisputably the most sacred and celebrated holiday in the Greek Orthodox Church. Orthodox Christians will observe the resurrection of Christ on April 19th this year.

Greek paschal traditions require a great deal of preparation, therefore baking begins one to two weeks before in order to free up time during Holy Week. Traditionally Greek housewives made Easter cookies, which are called koulourakia, on Holy Tuesday to be eaten after Holy Saturday. However, due to their long shelf life, these delectable golden egg glazed twists are often baked in advance. Koulourakia remain exceptionally fresh when stored in an airtight plastic container and can last for a couple of months!

Exchanging koulourakia, along with other Easter treats, such as Tsoureki (sweet Easter bread) and dyed eggs is an old tradition that almost every Greek household continues to participate in. This is why my recipe makes 5 to 6 dozen cookies, enough for your family to enjoy, enough to bring to the office and to your friends that are always asking for more Greek sweets. If for some odd reason you still have many koulourakia left over, freeze them! You can then enjoy them year round and are especially scrumptious dipped in your coffee or milk.

Koulourakia Greek Easter Cookies

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 15 - 20 minutes
Makes 5 to 6 dozen cookies

Ingredients:

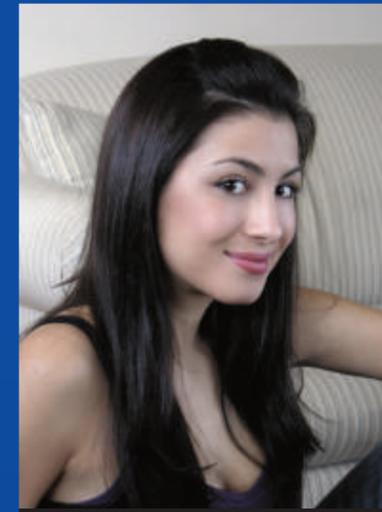
- 1 pound unsalted or sweet butter (at room temperature)
- 6 eggs (separated)
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 orange (zest and juice)
- 2 tbspn vanilla
- 6 tsp. baking powder
- 6 to 7 cups all purpose flour
- Sesame seeds or blanched almonds for garnish
- 1 extra egg beaten and set aside for glaze

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, combine butter and sugar beating until creamed. Add egg yolks, orange zest, orange juice and mixing well.
2. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites until they foam and add to your creamed mixture. Next add baking powder, vanilla and mix well.
3. Slowly add the flour one cup at a time, mixing well after you add each cup. After you add the 6th cup, check your dough; if it is very sticky add more flour to form stiff dough.
4. Knead the dough thoroughly with your hands until smooth. It should no longer stick to your hands, if it still does, simply add a little more flour. If you are pressed for time, place the dough in a sealed container and refrigerate till the next day.
5. Break off small pieces and roll them into the traditional koulourakia shapes which include circles, twisted wreathes, braids or curled "S" shapes. Although I love the traditional cookie shapes, I also find it very festive and easy to roll out the dough flat and use Easter cookie cutters. Children will appreciate the mini bunnies and ducks.
6. Place the cookies onto greased baking sheets and brush with the beaten egg. Sprinkle sesame seeds or blanched almonds (whichever you prefer) over the glaze.
7. Bake for about 15 to 20 minutes or until the bottoms of the cookies are a light brown color. Cool on cookie rack. Enjoy immediately or store your koulourakia in an air tight container at room temperature.



Kali Oresi &
Christos Anesti!



MARIA'S SLATE

know I sure did! Quite frankly I'm sick and tired of wearing UGGs and a Northface fleece every single morning just to take the subway to work. Is this sudden change in climate due to global warming? If so, isn't it supposed to be getting warmer and not colder? Not necessarily.

Al Gore has devoted his efforts and time to raising awareness on this worldwide epidemic. He has gained the respect of many, including NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies which has conducted intense research on this topic and confirmed that the rate of warming is rapidly increasing. The last two decades were the hottest in 400 years. As a result, arctic ice, glaciers and coral reefs are decreasing in staggering numbers. According to the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) humans are the main cause of global warming.

Over the past few years, many organizations have devoted their efforts to tackle global warming. On March 28th, 2009 between 8:30pm and 9:30pm, the earth was a few shades darker due to "Earth Hour". This worldwide endeavor against global warming was a grand success and proved that together we can really make a difference. I highly recommend you go to their website: www.earthhour.org/news/ and learn more about it.

Here are some simple energy saving tips that you can try at home to help make a difference:

• Change your light bulbs

Replacing your old incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs will help increase your energy efficiency. This small change will help stop global warming by reducing air pollution caused by power plants.

• Reduce - Reuse - Recycle

Yes you've heard this since grade school, but recycling is huge! Instead of using paper or plastic bags at grocery stores, bring your own reusable bag. According to 'An Inconvenient Truth,' it takes 12 million barrels of oil to produce the plastic bags Americans use each year. In addition, about 15 million trees are cut down to produce paper for paper bags.

• Become Green!

If you are able to switch your energy source to wind or solar do it! In some areas, you can even get refunds by the government if you choose to switch to a clean energy producer.

• Install a programmable thermostat

This will allow you to lower your heat or air conditioning at night and raise it again in the morning. A small change like this can save you \$100 a year on your energy bill. Tax credits on energy efficient heating and cooling equipment make now a great time to upgrade.

We don't need to wait for the government to come save us, we may not be able to stop global warming but we can slow it down if we all act together.

Maria (maria.athanasopoulos@gmail.com)

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Award Ceremony and Presentations: 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.
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Contact George Pappas at the
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Sons are encouraged to join this new chapter.

The Gold Coast Chapter is conducting a membership drive.
Please, contact our chapter's president or chapter's secretary
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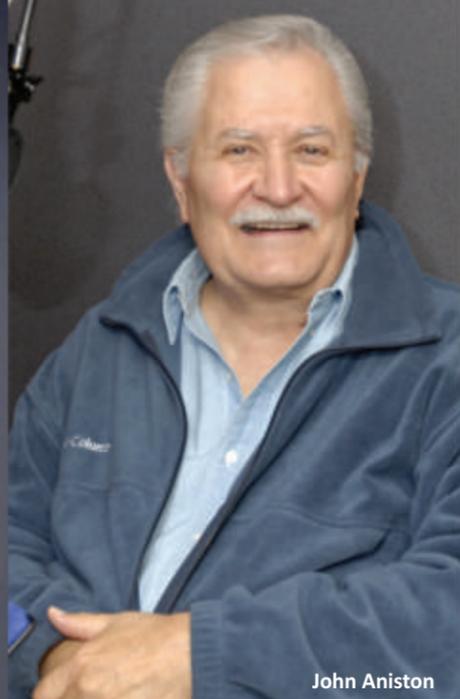
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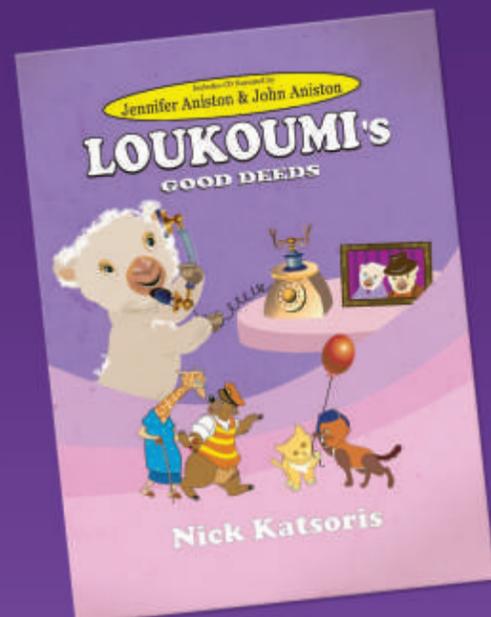
Olympia Dukakis with Nick Katsoris



Frank Dicopoulos

Loukoumi's Good Deeds

Jennifer Aniston and John Aniston narrate third book in illustrated children's series with proceeds to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital



Loukoumi, the fluffy, cuddly lamb, returns this spring with **Loukoumi's Good Deeds (Dream Day Press/NK Publications; April 1, 2009; \$15.95)**, the third title in the award winning series of illustrated books by attorney Nick Katsoris for children 4-8. Featuring a bonus CD narrated by Jennifer Aniston and her father Days of Our Lives star John Aniston, the new book follows Loukoumi through her day as she discovers how easy it is to make other people happy by doing something nice. The CD also contains an original song by GRAMMY award winning legend Gloria Gaynor titled "Make Someone Smile."

Loukoumi's Good Deeds, by Nick Katsoris, continues the adventures of Loukoumi and her friends Gus the Bear, Fistiki the Cat, Dean the Dog and Marika the Monkey. Whether it's cleaning the house, lending a helping hand or showing your grandparents how much you love them, kids will find that each good deed is unique in its own special way and can make a huge difference in the

lives of those around them.

"The idea for Loukoumi's Good Deeds and Loukoumi's Gift came to me from a very fond memory when someone did something very nice for me," says Katsoris. "It was about 15 years ago and I was working as a law clerk for a Federal Judge. My appointment was for a two year term and at the end of the two years I came into work on the last day and there was a present on my desk. No one else was around, so I opened the present and it was a pair of beautiful gold cufflinks. About an hour later Daisy the cleaning lady came into my office and said, 'Did you like my present?' and I couldn't believe it. Here was a sweet wonderful woman who didn't have a lot of money, yet she bought me a pair of gold cufflinks. I said to her, 'Daisy, you didn't have to do this, why did you buy me this present?' and she responded, 'because you said good morning to me every day!' That was the nicest thing that anyone ever did for me."

He says, "This book is dedicated to Daisy for teaching me at a young age that the perfect gift comes straight from the heart. It doesn't have to cost a lot of money, but a gift could take the shape of a thoughtful act like saying good morning to someone, or helping your parents clean their room, making them a card, or calling them and telling them that you love them. It is a theme that I hope kids will take from this book and CD and carry it over with them into their own lives...This book is also dedicated to the celebrities who donated their time to help make a difference in the lives of others."

In addition to the Anistons, the CD also features the character voices of Oscar winner Olympia Dukakis, Gloria Gaynor (GRAMMY winner for "I Will Survive,"), American Idol's Constantine Maroulis, Guiding Light star Frank Dicopoulos and CBS News anchor Alexis Christoforous as the voice of Loukoumi.

The CD features a bonus story, Loukoumi's Gift, narrated by John Aniston, in which Jennifer voices the part of Daisy the Giraffe, who teaches Loukoumi that a gift needs not cost a lot of money, but instead can come straight from the heart. Track 3 on the CD is a new version of the previous Loukoumi title, Growing up with Loukoumi, also narrated by Jennifer Aniston. The track includes the voices of the three winners of the national Growing up with Loukoumi Dream Day contest, Sophie, Lionel and Nika. Each winning kid received the chance to spend a day in their dream career, which included witnessing a Mars landing from NASA, playing soccer with the New York Red Bulls, cooking on CBS News with chef Tony Tantillo and meeting with TV chef Rachael Ray.

The second annual Loukoumi Dream Day contest is also set to coincide with the release of Loukoumi's Good Deeds. This contest is based on the award-winning children's book and celebrity narrated CD,

Growing Up With Loukoumi, which teaches kids they can be anything when they grow up if they believe in themselves. Children can enter the contest by drawing a picture of themselves in their future dream career accompanied by the statement: "I Want to be a _____ because..." Dream Day events will take place at libraries, schools, and bookstores nationwide from April 1 through December 31, with the top winners living their dream career for a day.

Every time a child reads Loukoumi's Good Deeds they too will be performing a good deed. \$2.00 from the sale of each book will be donated to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Previous titles in the iParenting Media Award winning series by Nick Katsoris include Loukoumi and Growing Up with Loukoumi.

For further information on Loukoumi's Good Deeds visit www.Loukoumi.com.



PHOTO: PETER YIANNOS

Greek Kindergarten teacher Katerina Thanou with one of her classes ready for action immediately after lunch.



PHOTO: PETER YIANNOS

Greek Math Teacher Eleni Speliopoulou Teaching decimals to a special class.



PHOTO: PETER YIANNOS

Music Teacher Kostis Kritsotakis with one of his classes as a group.



PHOTO: PETER YIANNOS

Greek Math Teacher Alberto Koen and Homeroom teacher Sandy Poplos with their 2nd grade class showing their math assignment.

At Delaware Charter School

By Katerina Georgiou

On a recent visit to Kostis Kritsotakis' music class at the Odyssey Charter School in Wilmington, Delaware, the second grade class is singing along to an American folk song – in Greek. Dressed in blue and white uniforms (tan pants are also permitted), the students sway back and forth in their chairs – voices strong and confident – as Mr. Kritsotakis sits at the piano beside the blackboard.

An accomplished composer and Yaddo Fellow, whose work has been performed by the Albany Symphony Orchestra, he admits that teaching children both music and a foreign language is a challenge. "I prefer to go slow and steadily so no one gets left behind," he says.

Though the students' voices are impressive, it's their mathematical prowess that's winning their notice. In 2007, these same students placed first in the DSTP (Delaware Student Testing Program) in math.

Delaware is home to sixteen charter schools, but Odyssey is the only one with a mathematics-focused curriculum where Greek is taught as a second language. Students take 45 minutes of Greek per day,

reinforced by 45 minutes of math taught in Greek (to supplement their regular math class.)

Since opening its doors in 2006, Odyssey has earned high marks for its rigorous academic program. Students have consistently exceeded statewide expectations for performance standards and last year the school was rated "superior" by the Delaware Department of Education.

Odyssey's success can be attributed, at least in part, to its core teaching philosophy: the belief that knowledge is comprehended through relation. So, subjects like math and music are taught in complimentary ways.

Inspired by the Hellenic Charter schools sprouting up across the country, AHEPA Chapter 95 provided the initial seed money for Odyssey, after several of its members, with backgrounds in engineering, finance and physics, set out to create a school with a decidedly forward-thinking thrust. "Studies have shown that children who are taught language and music at an early age develop better learning and problem solving skills," says George Righos, a former asset manager who is one of the schools' founders, as well as its Vice President. Nearly 300 students from kindergarten to fourth grade attend

the school – a number expected to swell to approximately 480 students by 2010.

Odyssey's small-school environment and one-on-one attention rivals the offerings of tony private schools with one notable exception: as a charter school, tuition is free. Not surprisingly, seats at Odyssey fill fast. Admission is by lottery if applicants outnumber spaces. Last year, 96 names were placed on a waiting list.

For the 2009-2010 academic year, the school has already received more than double the number of applications than spaces available. To meet the increased demand, plans are underway for an expansion to a nearby building this summer to accommodate the upper grades.

While Odyssey employs Delaware certified teachers, and classes are taught using a core Houghton Mifflin curriculum, lessons also meet the standards of the Greek Ministry of Education. Mr. Kritsotakis is one of seven teachers brought to Odyssey on a program sponsored by the Greek Ministry that encourages teachers to work abroad. "The arrangement enables Odyssey students to receive the best educational practices of both countries," says Dr. Peter Yiannos, an engineer and former executive with Scott

Math is taught in Greek

Paper Company, who sits on Odyssey's Board.

But with the trend towards more global languages such as Chinese and Arabic, some may wonder why Greek? "It's not only that Greek is a centuries-old language that has withstood the test of time," says Mr. Righos. "It's a language that's descriptive, the words are not abstract." And with so many English words derived from Greek roots, he argues, students have a leg up on mastering their native tongue.

Still, it's the thorough understanding of concept – embodied in the Greek tradition of teaching mathematics -- that Mr. Righos believes will set Odyssey students apart

from their peers. "In traditional American schools you add up the numbers and it stops there. In Greece, mathematicians analyze and show you why the numbers add up to the amount." This approach to teaching mathematics embodies the school's mission: to keep students motivated by nurturing "philomatheia" – a lifelong love of learning. Browsing the hallways of Odyssey, colorful displays adorn the walls and paper skeletons hang from classroom ceilings like leftover Halloween decorations. Francesca "Frankie" Sedlacek, a third grader, explains that the skeletons are part of an ongoing project, in which the students trace their bodies to learn about the anatomical structure. "We're learning about our biceps and triceps," says Frankie excitedly, as she

Ελληνικά

leaps up from her seat to demonstrate. "And these muscles right here," she says, pointing down her leg, "are our tibia, fibula and phalanges." "I'm happy here," quipped her classmate, Despina Kotanidis, who, at age eight, is already studying the saxophone, piano and violin. "In my last school, we did paperwork during gym," she adds with a grin. "Here we actually get to run!"

This story first appeared in The Hellenic Voice, 02/18/09



PHOTO: PETER YIANNOS



PHOTO: PETER YIANNOS

Children in Greek Physical Education Class learning to dance Syrtaki.



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REMINDER: THIS YEAR'S WALKATHON WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2009 FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL: 212 639-0188 OR 212-717-6608

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President PSEKA*

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**Dr. Constantine Papadakis (1946-2009):
An innovator in higher education**

Drexel University President, Dr. Constantine Papadakis passed away suddenly on Monday, April 6, at the age of 63 from pulmonary complications. He had been in remission from cancer. He is survived by his wife Eliana and his daughter Maria.

"This is a difficult day at Drexel. Dr. Papadakis's lasting impact on the University will be profound," Chairman Richard A. Greenawalt stated. "Dr. Papadakis's 13 years at the helm of our University represents one of the most remarkable and sustained periods of success in the University's history. Today's Drexel in many ways reflects his leadership: bold, innovative and committed to the highest level of excellence."

Philadelphia Mayor Nutter hailed Mr. Papadakis as an "incredible visionary" who had "more of a hands on impact" than any other university president he could recall.

"Dr. Papadakis was a stellar personality and a model of creativity and inspiration in the administration of the university," Ted Spyropoulos, Coordinator of the SAE USA Region, pointed out in a written statement. "He was a pioneering figure as a university leader who contributed greatly to the growth and upgrading of Drexel, even as he served with pathos Hellenic ideals and Hellenic culture."



A Greek-born engineer and former Bechtel Corp. executive, Mr. Papadakis was known for starting his days at 6 a.m. and staying after everyone else left. In the days leading up to his leave, he worked from the hospital while he underwent treatment. He and his family then decided it was time to focus on recovery.

Dr. Papadakis received his diploma in Civil Engineering from the National Technical University of Athens in Greece. He holds a master's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Cincinnati and a doctorate from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Constantine, or Taki, as his friends call him, was a Professional Engineer registered in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Greece. A member of numerous professional and honorary societies, he is a fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Society for Engineering Education and the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. He is author or co-author of 80 articles and technical publications.

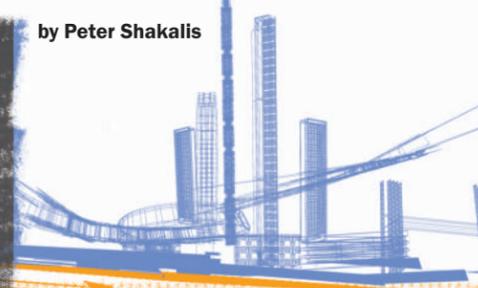
Constantine Papadakis, an innovator in higher education with extensive experience in both academe and the corporate world, has been president of Drexel University since 1995. Since then, Dr. Papadakis has used the historic strengths of the University (cooperative education, Drexel's focus on technology and the rich resources of its Philadelphia location) to grow full-time undergraduate enrollment from 4,500 in 1996 to more than 11,000 today, freshman applications from 3,500 to 22,000, grow the endowment from \$90 million to \$650 million and research funding from \$14 million to \$105 million. Today, Drexel educates 21,000 students, is the sixth largest employer in Philadelphia employing 5,300 people and has an annual budget of \$650 million.

Dr. Papadakis joined Bechtel Power Company in 1974, where he served in several engineering positions. He managed a group of engineering specialists who did pioneering work in flood-control systems, hydroelectric power and cooling systems for nuclear reactors. He was recruited by STS Consultants, one of the top 150 engineering design firms in the nation, as vice president in charge of the Water Resources Division of the company, which had 17 offices. His accomplishments there included privatization of small hydroelectric power plants in the early 1980s. Tetra Tech, a Honeywell subsidiary in Pasadena, attracted him next. As vice president of the company he led FEMA and Superfund environmental projects.

Dr. Papadakis was lured back to academia when he realized that strong management could revolutionize an institution. In 1984 he agreed to head up Colorado State University's civil engineering department, then the second largest in the nation and known for water resources research and an entrepreneurial faculty. Two years later, he became the dean of the University of Cincinnati, College of Engineering. There, he built top-quality graduate programs, more than quadrupled research contracts and grants and established relationships with leaders of local industry. During his tenure he increased the size of the faculty from 94 to 170 and commissioned architect Michael Graves to design a research center, completed in 1995.



by Peter Shakalis



**First Quarter News
From the Manhattan Leasing Market**

The latest news from the Manhattan office leasing market reflects the continued deterioration in the national and New York City economies during the first quarter of 2009. The amount of available space increased to 12% by the end of the first quarter from 8.4% at the end of March 2008, which eliminated much of the gain in office occupancy from mid-2005 through 2007.

These conditions should be no surprise considering the substantial employee reductions that large corporations have made along with curtailing their expansion plans for the foreseeable future. While many companies today are shedding excess space where they can, others are sitting on the sidelines taking a wait-and-see approach when it comes to their real estate needs.

The average asking rent for Manhattan declined to \$65.18 per square foot last quarter from \$74.50 per square foot in the fourth quarter of 2008. While the average rents had been declining for much of 2008, this most recent 12.5% drop in quarterly rents indicates that asking rents are adapting to the realities of weaker demand by tenants. Manhattan's average asking rent has declined by almost 18% from its peak in the second quarter of 2008.

There also has been a downward trend in landlord 'effective rents', which is the net rent the landlord receives after paying for tenant concessions such as construction of the tenants office space and free rent. This suggests that asking rents will continue to decline during the second and third quarters.

As in previous down cycles, the substantial increase in the amount of sublease space available from tenants places strong downward pressure on office rents. Sublease space is typically priced less than direct space, since the lease term is usually just 1 to 4 years and is offered with only minor alterations to the existing layout. Currently the sublease inventory accounts for 25% of all available space in Manhattan, up from well under 20% in the first half of 2008. In the Midtown North sub-market (42nd to 57th street), 30% of all available space falls into the sublease category.

What is interesting about this recessionary period is that in prior downturns the Midtown North market was less affected than either the Midtown South or Downtown markets. This time, however, the Midtown North market is leading the decline in rents. This suggests that rents in the Midtown North sub-market were artificially driven up in recent years.

Going forward, signs of some reduction in available space, increased rental activity and sustained or increasing rent levels will be good indicators that the deterioration in the market has stopped and consolidation has finally begun.

Peter Shakalis is a Director at
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pshakalis@fswre.com

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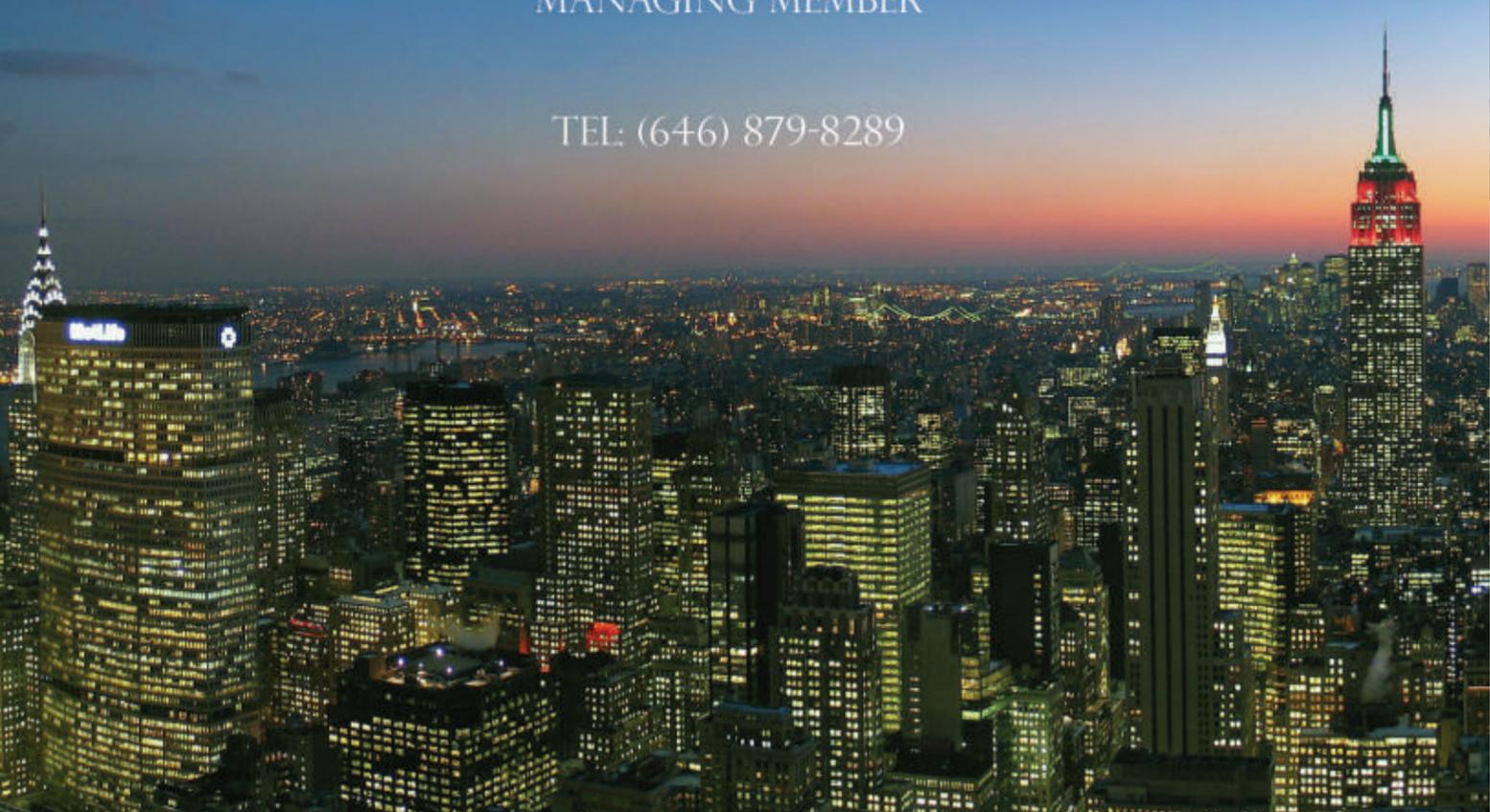
Happy Easter/ΚΑΛΟ ΠΑΣΧΑ



FROM JAMES M. ORPHANIDES

MANAGING MEMBER

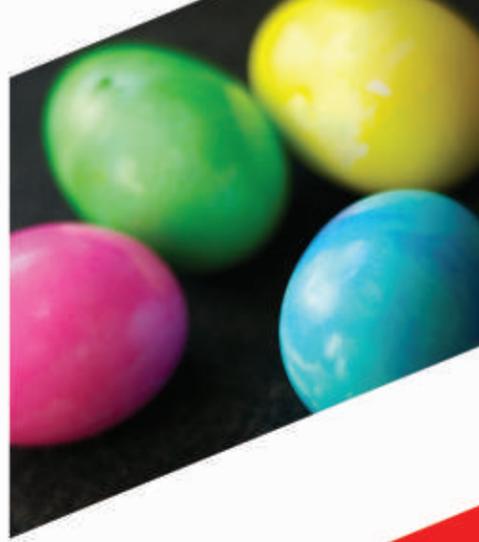
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Greek Music Journey 2009 with Melina Aslanidou

On Friday, May 1, 2009 at 9pm, the historic Town Hall Theatre in Manhattan, New York will turn Greek again to host AKTINA's annual concert from the series GREEK MUSIC JOURNEY. This one of a kind concert presented for the first time in New York, will feature the popular singer from Greece Melina Aslanidou in a tribute to "The Songs of Greek Cinema".

Against a backdrop of videos, Melina Aslanidou accompanied by singer Vangelis Douvalis and her orchestra comprised by bouzouki maestros Manolis Georgostathis and Aris Koukos and 6 other representative and talented musicians, will treat lovers of Greek popular-folk and rembetika (Greek blues) to a special and unique musical tribute to the everlasting songs which evolved from great and award winning Greek movies such as "Never On Sunday", "The Greek", "Rembetiko", "Stella" and many others by great composers and songwriters such as Theodorakis, Hadjidakis, Xarhakos, Plessas, Hiotis, Vamvakaris, Tsitsanis, Zambetas among many others.

Popular to this day, "The Songs Of Greek Cinema" comprise a very important and representative aspect of the Greek music repertoire while they have also contributed in introducing some of the finest composers, songwriters, musicians and singers of Greece.

For more information please call 718-545-1151 or visit www.aktina.org

With an impressive career in live performances and discography spanning over 10 years, Melina Aslanidou is one of the most representative popular-folk and rembetika singers of the new generation of "quality" singers in Greece. She rose high in the ranks of the Greek music repertoire very early on in her career and she is credited for bringing back to fame the song from the Greek Cinema "Ti Sou Kana Ke Pinis" which was released in 2001 on the cd "To Parelthon Thimithika" when she was collaborating as a lead singer for the music group "Oi Apenanti". GREEK MUSIC JOURNEY concert series was introduced by AKTINA Productions, Inc. (a Queens-based non-profit cultural organization) in 1994 with a purpose to promote and preserve all aspects of the representative traditional, folk, popular-folk and contemporary music of Greece in America, including the rembetika. Since 2006 the series exclusively features singers and musicians from Greece.

Ticket prices start at \$45 and are now on sale through AKTINA FM at 718-545-1151, Ticketmaster at 212-307-4100, and the Greek Music & Video in Astoria 718-932-8400. The Town Hall Theatre is located at 123 West 43rd Street, between 6th and 7th Avenues in Manhattan, NY and it's easily accessible by car or by train. It is also wheelchair accessible and special seating is available for the handicapped.



ROB BALDUCCI

PHOENIX REIGN

Heavy Metal shakes the Greek Federation of Astoria

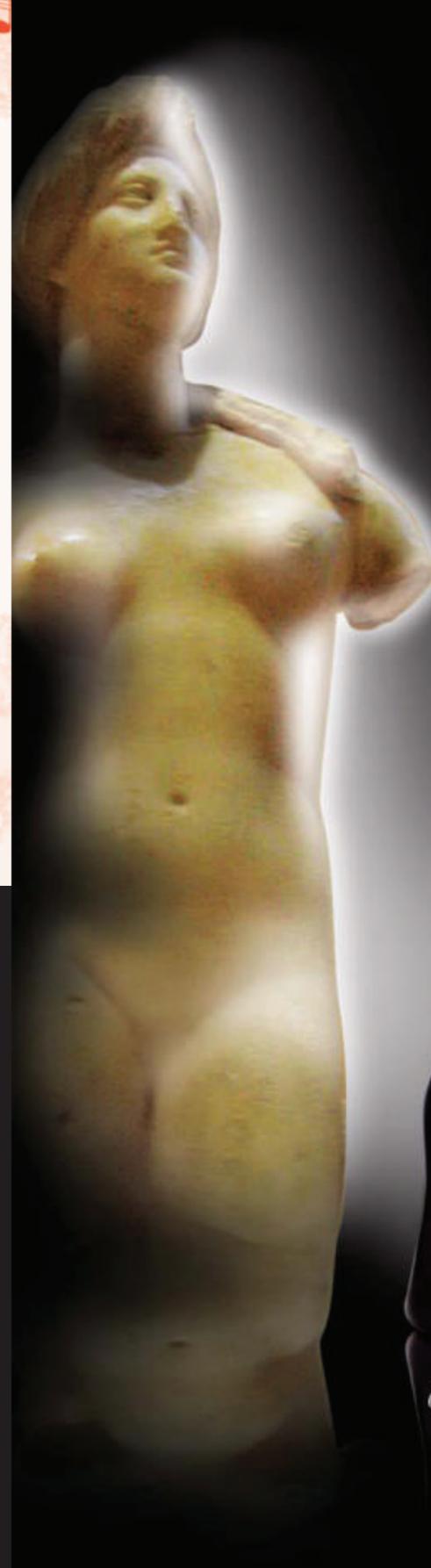
The first ever March Metal Mayhem festival exploded on the New York scene in Astoria, Queens, recently, as four of the top heavy weights of the New York metal scene came together for the first time in the Stathakion Center, home of the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York. In order to honor the Greek Parade festivities, this event was sponsored by the Federation of Hellenic Societies with its Youth Committee and organized by Byzantine Crown Productions and members of Phoenix Reign, with help from the Ms. Greek Independence Pageant contestants.

The bands participating were female fronted hard rock/power metallers Phoenix Reign, with Theresa Gaffney on vocals, guitarists Billy Chrissochos and Kostas Psarros, bassist Chris Pollatos and drummer Wayne Noon, speed/progressive metal vets Zandelle, fronted by George Tsalikis, old school thrashers Martyrd, led by guitarists Michael Andreas and Dan Agapitos, and the ultimate metal instrumental trio the Rob Balducci band (who are currently on Steve Vai's Favored Nations' label). Former guitarist/front man of Tenebrae, Telmorn Altayon kept the audience enthused as master of ceremonies between sets. With a mixed crowd of all ages in attendance, the bands rocked the audience. They made new believers out of those that thought metal can't be fun, educational and equivalent (if not better) to any other noteworthy music form on the radio.

The festival was topped by a photographic exhibition of Greek themed tattoos which was organized with the help of Dionysios Pylarinos. The president of the Federation, Mr. Jim Kalamaras, greeted the excited and anxious audience. Youth chairman, Billy Chrissochos, promised to see everyone back in June, while fellow co-organizer Peter Giakoumis, of Byzantine Crown Productions, promised the next festival will blow everyone away. For info on all the bands and to follow on their current projects please visit: www.marchmetalmayhem.com For Phoenix Reign and its current Constantinople 1453 music video project visit: www.blacktuesday1453.com and www.phoenixreign.com



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From left, Fr. James Moskovitis, Prof. Charles W. Calomiris and Fr. Nick Anctil

Hope, Prayer and the Economic Crisis: The Really Long Run

Tiberius, successor to Augustus and Emperor of Rome, ended a financial panic by loaning banks money from the Imperial Treasury, in a stimulus package very reminiscent of the one under way by the Obama Administration. However, for all his brilliance, which ended much suffering, Tiberius is largely remembered by history for another event that took place during his reign: The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

According to Charles W. Calomiris, Henry Kaufman Professor of Financial Institutions at the Columbia University, "crisis is a word derived from the ancient Greek krinein, which means "to sift, to separate, or to judge." In other words, crises are moments when circumstances force us to make important decisions. But why should our individual or collective decisions in response to financial crises have a spiritual component? How will spirituality make our decisions better? Calomiris, that gave a stimulating and inspiring presentation titled "Hope, Prayer and the Economic Crisis: The Really Long Run" at New York's Harvard Club, began his answer with the fascinating declaration that the Bible, after all, is itself largely a crisis management chronicle. "It might be best described as a recounting of a sequence of political, economic, and personal crises, which often coincide, and in which spiritual insights or errors prompted people to make important decisions, for better or worse, about their personal and societal." A heavy hitter in the lineup of people focused on the financial crisis, in his limited free time Dr. Calomiris performs modern Greek music and is a master of Byzantine Chant. It is this other aspect of his life that opened a door into the spiritual dimension of the economic crisis. The lecture was sponsored by The Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation and The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was WCBS correspondent John Metaxas.

Dr. Calomiris brought his singular knowledge of the global financial system and his deep Greek Orthodox spirituality to bear on the challenges we will face in the coming years. He began by presenting a clear picture of where we are and where we might be headed from an economic policy perspective. He said that "during the economic expansion of 2003-2007, lenders the world over accumulated large portfolios of risky investments." He stressed the impact of "unusually risky mortgage loans to US borrowers with poor credit histories and

little or no downpayments," so-called "subprime" lending. He added that it now seems that complex transactions called credit default swaps played much less of a role. His most powerful statement of the evening was that "responding spiritually to a crisis in the right way on the inside involves reflection and prayer. Crises shake our world, but they also stop us in our tracks emotionally; and thus, amidst all the chaos that they entail they also create unique opportunities for reflection and prayer. Crises also test our commitment to doing what is right because it is harder to do what is right during a crisis. What we do and say in the presence of others during crises can have profound effects on them."

The evening concluded with a lively and informative question and answer period which went into details on policy matters and reinforced the event's main message that the difficult economic climate is an opportunity to learn and witness. Dr. Calomiris asked: "What can we learn from the current crisis and what can we witness about it?" We can learn from suffering and being witnesses to our faith.

Fr. James Moskovitis, Pastor of the Church of the Annunciation at 91st street on the Upper West Side, noted that the event, produced on extremely short notice by Mr. Staz Tsiavos, was a great success thanks to the support of numerous new and traditional organizations of the Greek Community, including the Hellenic American Bankers Association, Inc, Hellenic Business Network (HBN), Hellenic Professional Associations Wall Street, Hellenic University Club (HUC), the Hellenic Medical Society of New York, and many of the clergy of the Archdiocesan District of New York. Mr. Tsiavos was overwhelmed by the support he received, which included additional organizations that could also not be acknowledge that evening. He declared it to be a moving sign of unity and cooperation among Greek American organizations of New York and an indication of many great things to come for the community. For those who are interested in reading Dr. Calomiris's work, please visit his faculty page on Columbia University's website at <http://www4.gsb.columbia.edu/cbs-directory/detail/494785/Charles+Calomiris> Information about the Church of the Annunciation can be found on their web site: [evangelismos.org](http://www.evangelismos.org).

SAE USA Youth Network: Opening its wings across the country

By Steven B. Livaditis



From left Anthony Papadopoulos, Sophia Koustas, Stavroula Kotrotsios, Theodore Spyropoulos, Maurice Gritzalis and Alice Shukla

Last October, SAE USA's Regional Coordinator Theodore Spyropoulos hosted the founding convention for the SAE USA Youth Network. In merely 6 months from the Network's inauguration, SAE USA Youth has made a tremendous start in achieving its goals and initiatives.

The SAE USA Youth Network is an organization operating under the umbrella of SAE USA serving Hellenic American youth through initiatives that include scholarships, career guidance, mentoring, promoting Hellenic culture and history as well as informing on Hellenic national issues. The founding convention included young Hellenic American delegates from across the country; New York, Alabama, California, Denver, Washington, and Florida among others. This was a true demonstration of some of the best and brightest young Hellenic Americans coming together for common causes and goals across the country. The energy and talent and professionalism displayed at the convention was amazing and it has carried on. The organizational structure of the SAE USA Youth network is comprised of the elected Coordinating Council, the elected Youth Network Regional Delegates, Committee Chairpersons and Delegates. The Coordinating Council includes Maurice Gritzalis (Coordinator), Alice Shukla (Secretary), Anthony Papadopoulos (Treasurer), Stavroula Kotrotsios (member) and Sophia Koustas (member). SAE USA Youth Network has branched itself into six different committees which assist in directing the various initiatives of the SAE USA Youth Network and the Greek Community. These committees include Communications, Culture, Environmental, Social, Career, and Finance all directed by volunteers. Each committee is responsible to create value adding initiatives encompassing, national issues and history, mentoring programs, job fairs, upcoming social events including a trip to Greece, and the group's forecasted budget for 2009.



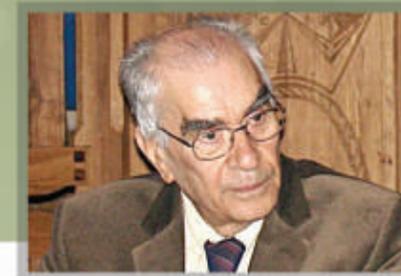
Members of the Youth at the SAE U.S.A. Convention in Chicago

Since our inauguration, we have taken upon many initiatives and we are matching our goals, which have been impressive. We have created an amazing website which includes a social network platform. In today's climate, we felt that it was extremely important to integrate a social network within our website. Now our members are able to log on to our website and communicate effectively with the ability to blog, upload photos and video, message each other, post resumes and more. Our website is www.saeusayouth.com. In cooperation with the Hermes Expo International Trade Show, we hosted the SAE Youth Career Fair at the Tropicana Hotel in Atlantic City. The Career Fair was open to college students and young professionals interested in exploring career opportunities, industry trends, and upcoming workforce needs within various companies participating in the Expo.

Under the Auspices of the World Council of Hellenes Abroad SAE U.S.A. Youth Network, AGDC will host a nation wide Greek Dance Competition and culture weekend. Hellenic American Youth will be able to showcase their talents while learning the traditional customs & culture of Greece. The event will take place in Chicago October 9-12 2009, for more info please contact agdcinfo@att.net. Our mission statement is to promote Hellenism through a network in which young American Hellenes and Hellenic American organizations can encourage the preservation of our heritage in the Diaspora by educating, communicating and collaborating with each other, in order to strengthen ties within the U.S. and with Hellas. I feel we are on the right track." For more information on the SAE USA Youth Network please visit the website at www.saeusayouth.com or email communications@saeusayouth.com.

Steven B. Livaditis is the Communications Chairperson of SAE USA Youth

The Arcadian Society "Geros tou Moria", the Athenians Society of New York and the Cathedral Fellowship are hosting two lectures open to the public with the acclaimed philosopher and author Christos Yannaras



Tuesday, April 28, 7:00 p.m. at the Holy Trinity Cathedral Hall (337 East 74th Street, New York, NY, tel: 212 288-3215) "Greek Orthodoxy: Cultural or Religious Identity" (In Greek with a synopsis in English)

Thursday, April 30, 8:00 p.m. at the Stathakion Center (22-51 29th St, Long Island City, NY, tel: 718 204-6500) "Greek National Uprising 1821: Conflict of two Visions" (In Greek)

The events are under the aegis of the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York and the Panarcadian Federation of USA



Santorini: Light and Color from Greece

Santorini is an isle located in the southern Aegean Sea. About 3,500 years ago, a rare volcanic eruption changed the topography of the round shaped island into a crescent destroying the former and at the same time laying the foundation for the new.

Nature as pure artist frees energy from the bowels of the earth and spreads a veil of Greek light that caresses, embraces, and invigorates the soul of man. As her true child and in complete harmony with her, Man with the same urging energy frees from within him hidden forces full of memories and multi-coloured dreams. Inspired, he endeavors, with his own pallet to create works of art equal in value and beauty with hers. "Santorini: Light and Color from Greece," is a collection of 18 photographs by Nikos Rigopoulos, presented through April 30th Jadite Gallery (413 West 50th St. New York City).

"Every morning when I open my eyes a miracle appears. The seen and the unseen mix, co-operate, and create. The air, the earth, and the sea receive the light, are formed and reformed by the color, and always like a surprise they reveal the vision," says Rigopoulos. "I respond to this view, embracing my troubled waters, allowing this first code of recognition to reveal the miracle."

Callisti, Strogili, Thira, Santorini

Christ is Risen!
Best wishes from
an anonymous friend



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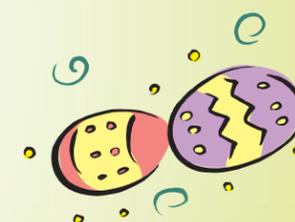
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George Stamboulidis Named Managing Partner of Baker Hostetler's New York Office



About George Stamboulidis

The national law firm of Baker & Hostetler LLP has announced that George A. Stamboulidis has been named Managing Partner of the firm's New York office. Stamboulidis is succeeding Paul Eyre, who held the position since the office opened in 2001. Baker Hostetler's New York office includes diverse practice areas, with particular depth in business, intellectual property, litigation, corporate governance and monitorships. Based in part on this strength, Irving H. Picard, Court-appointed trustee in the liquidation of Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities LLC, recently joined Baker Hostetler in New York.

"In these troubling economic times, now more than ever, our clients take great comfort knowing our deep-bench of experienced attorneys is here to successfully and efficiently represent their interests," said Stamboulidis who will manage the operations of the 66-attorney office. "Clients can rely on Baker Hostetler's track record of integrity and results," he said.

"George Stamboulidis is ideally suited to head our rapidly growing office in New York," said Steven Kestner, Executive Partner of the firm. "He understands the workings as well as the culture of both the city and our firm, and he is a proven leader. I am confident that the office will continue to flourish under George as it has under Paul Eyre."

Eyre led the New York office during a period of remarkable growth. "We have grown the New York office by assembling a diverse team of high caliber attorneys and by maintaining our culture of integrity and client focus," says Eyre, who will remain active in the New York office and on the firm's Policy Committee.

George Stamboulidis joined the firm with the opening of the New York office after an illustrious 13-year career as a federal prosecutor in New York and New Jersey. He has been selected as an independent monitor on five separate occasions, more than any other attorney. In addition to having served as the corporate monitor for Merrill Lynch, The Bank of New York, Mellon Bank, and others, Stamboulidis and the firm's white collar team have conducted monitoring work and internal investigations for leading corporations.

While with the U.S. Attorneys' Office in the Eastern District of NY, Stamboulidis served in a variety of supervisory positions, including Chief of the Long Island Division. In that capacity, he investigated and prosecuted cases involving complex business, bank, health care, accounting, securities and bankruptcy fraud, tax, public and labor corruption, extortion, racketeering, environmental and money laundering offenses. Stamboulidis successfully prosecuted Mafia boss Vincent "Chin" Gigante, the boss of the Genovese crime family.

After a nationwide search, former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno selected Stamboulidis to take over and successfully resolve the Wen Ho Lee nuclear weapons secrets prosecution. Reno three times presented Stamboulidis with the Department of Justice's Director's Award. Over the last seven years at Baker, Stamboulidis has served as Litigation Coordinator for the office, is a current member of the firm's Policy Committee and Operating Group and heads the firm's White Collar Defense and Corporate Investigations Practice — which has become one of the preeminent such practices in the country.

About Baker Hostetler's New York Office

With 66 attorneys and growing, Baker Hostetler has established a stronghold in New York. Last year, the firm moved to new offices, occupying several floors at 45 Rockefeller Plaza.

In addition to Stamboulidis, New York office management includes John Siegal, who succeeds Stamboulidis as head of the Litigation Practice in New York, Laurence S. Markowitz, the newly appointed head of the Business Practice in New York, Gerald J. Ferguson, head of the Intellectual Property Practice in New York and Elizabeth A. Smith, head of the Tax Practice in New York. All are long-time New York lawyers. Siegal, a 20-year New York business litigator and former Mayoral aide, represents clients in the financial services, media and real estate industries. Markowitz has practiced corporate and securities law for over 30 years, with a particular focus on hedge and private equity funds. Ferguson has extensive experience in intellectual property and has assisted a wide variety of businesses in developing intellectual property protection programs. Smith focuses her practice in the areas of tax advice and planning and tax controversy, and represents hedge funds, energy companies, and public and private corporations.

About Baker Hostetler

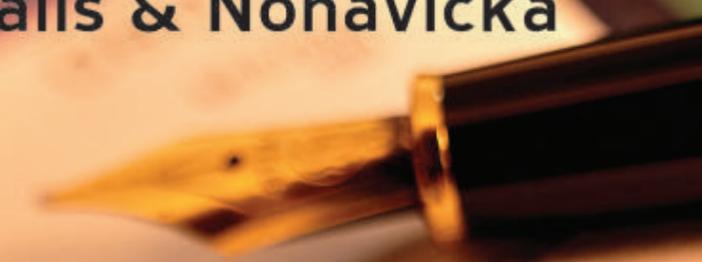
Founded over 90 years ago in 1916, Baker Hostetler is among the nation's 100 largest law firms with 620 attorneys coast to coast. The firm has 10 offices nationwide: New York, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Costa Mesa, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Orlando and Washington, D.C. Its five primary practice groups are Business, Employment, Intellectual Property, Litigation and Tax. For more information, visit the firm's Web site at



Congratulations to the Hellenic Museum in Chicago for purchasing the Cyprus Collection from the Cyprus Museum in Jacksonville, North Carolina.

Happy Easter and lots of luck,
Dr. Takey Crist, Founder and Assistant Director.

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The Greek Cultural Center's production of PRIME NUMBERS was one of the first plays in the English language to be staged at the Greek Cultural Center (Feb 21 - April 5), in Astoria. It embodied the spirit of Off-Broadway theater and was a captivating and praise worthy endeavor. The production could not have been made possible without the support of the National Ministry of Tourism of Greece and it will soon set out for a tour at selected cities.

PRIME NUMBERS is based on Gianni Skaragas' novel of the same name. It is a psychological thriller that treats the themes of sin and guilt, revenge and retribution, love and betrayal

Prime Numbers: An Off-Broadway play in Astoria

Andreas Tselepos as Oedipus

through the relationships of six characters trapped in a motel, in Tijuana, Mexico, during a supposed hurricane. It is a play of recovered humanity, transcending tragedy and evoking redemptive triumph. Through allegory and symbols, the writer makes an astute observation on contemporary politics and the psychological and emotional conundrum of today: are we allowed to forge our destiny at the expense of others?

Fotini Baxevasi, a prominent actress and composer in Greece, has made her New York debut as the director of Gianni Skaragas' original play. She has managed to successfully balance the complex psychological world of the characters with an economy in movement, striking stage images and clear character development. She brings visual, aural and performative elements together to create a wonderful theatrical experience. Under her guidance, the cast, with the aid of four chairs and only the essential stage properties, create characters that are defined in both their private moments as well as their relationships to one another.

Eddie, played by the energetic Stephen Lundberg, upsets life at the motel when he is carried there after an accident. As he strives to figure out his own past, he pushes each character to confront his or her own history. Given the identity of a writer he, and the audience with him, gradually becomes engulfed in this illusion. Tereza Grimani is the fiery yet fragile Julietta and is equally convincing as the innocent girl in the first part of the play and as the powerful vindictive force she becomes in the final scenes. Ceasar Nixon as Cain, the motel

owner, portrays the contradiction of the quintessential giant with the soft, god-fearing heart. Oedipus, a modern version of the incestuous king and a mathematical genius who has destroyed his life on gambling, is treated by Andreas Tselepos as a defeated, weak man. Salvette, clad in a red dress and silky white robe, is excellent as Marguerite Gaultier, a has-been Las Vegas singer, reminiscent of the 50's Hollywood starlets. Her voice is beautiful as she sings "Tonight I Said I love you" (original lyrics by Gianni Skaragas) especially written and composed for this play - a song you will be sure to sing on your way out of the theatre. Kalliope Koutelos is a rightfully angry Medea, voicing her criticism of the war on terror, as an Iraqi woman brought to the US by a marine she fell in love with and married.

Skaragas' play is written with extraordinary literary elegance and the confessions of each character ingeniously delve deep into the human soul. Special kudos to Ellie Papageorgakopoulou for the creation of a beautifully simple, purposely non-descript set that could easily - and eerily - be the common room of a mental institution or any of the hidden corners of our mind. Similarly, the costumes are at once suggestive and casual. The lighting design by Orpheas Emirzas complements her set - the use of both stage lights and spotlights hung from the stage's low ceiling, as well as the slide projection of abstract images on the walls during the scenes, delineate space and mood successfully.

As the actors turn on and off their own spotlights, pick up their few props from the wardrobe - set visibly on stage - and interact with the wall projections, they invite our imagination and let us rejoice in the possibilities of the theatrical experience. Baxevasi has used the entire palette of the theatrical language and has brought us a performance that is rarely seen in the Greek American community, comparable to Off Broadway productions. This is a must see!

Cast: Tereza Grimani (Julietta), Stephen Lundberg (Eddie), Kalliope Koutelos (Medea), Ceasar Nixon (Cain), Stacey Salvette (Marguerite) and Andreas Tselepos (Oedipus).
Crew: Giannis Skaragas- Playwright, Fotini Baxevasi - Director, Ellie Papageorgakopoulou - Set/Costume Design, and Orpheas Emirzas - Lighting/Media Design.

(Left to right) Stephen Lundberg, Tereza Grimani, Stacey Salvette, Ceasar Nixon, Kalliope Koutelos and Andreas Tselepos.

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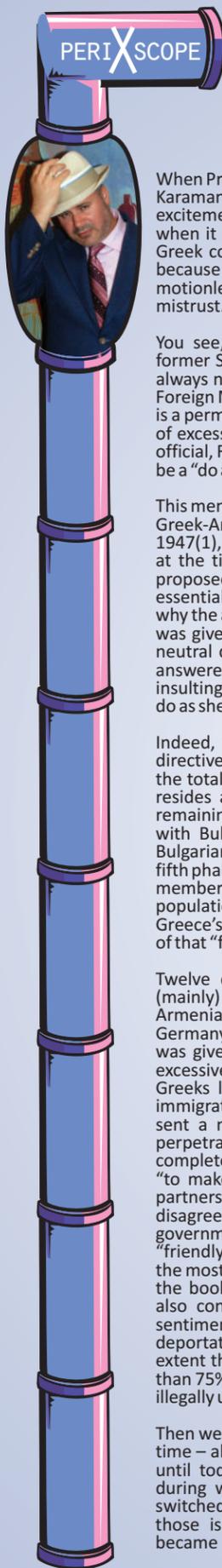
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White House Rice and ...beans!

When President Barack Obama called Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis his "friend," I felt goose bumps, and not because of excitement. There is a very negative load on the word "friend" when it comes from the lips of an American official talking to a Greek counterpart. I believe that Karamanlis felt the same way, because during Obama's monologue he was seated next to him motionless, with a "lets get this crap over with" look that betrayed mistrust.

You see, it's not only the recent failed "friendship" between former Secretary of State Condoleezza (how nice she's former! I always need to Google her name to spell it right) Rice and Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis (the latter's toothpaste ad smile is a permanent fixture. It could be fake - bad enough - or the result of excessive use of Botox - even worse!) As with every American official, Rice and now Obama have understood this "friendship" to be a "do as you're told" kind of thing.

This mentality goes decades back and has become a pattern which Greek-American relations haven't managed to get rid of. In 1947(1), Senators Vandenberg and Connally asked Dean Acheson, at the time Acting Secretary of State (he is the same guy that proposed the Acheson plan for Cyprus in 1964, the plan that essentially partitioned Cyprus under the guise of union to Greece), why the aid of the Truman Doctrine to a proven ally such as Greece was given with so many restrictions, while to Turkey, which was neutral during WW II, there were no strings attached. Acheson answered that Turkey is a proud country and she would consider insulting those restrictions, while Greece is our friend and she will do as she is told!

Indeed, Greece did as she was told. Following the Washington directives, successive Greek governments carried out a plan for the total Turkification of Greek Thrace, where a Muslim minority resides and of which only one third is ethnically Turkish. The remaining two-thirds are Roma and Pomaks, the latter, a group with Bulgarian characteristics. The US feared that Communist Bulgarian spies might infiltrate the Pomacs and create a sort of fifth phalanx inside a NATO country. Meanwhile Turkey was a NATO member and they thought it would be safer for the whole Muslim population in Greece to be Turkish. Today, a real danger to Greece's territorial integrity exists thanks to the implementation of that "friendly" directive on the part of the US.

Twelve days after the September 6-7, 1955 pogrom against (mainly) the Greeks of Constantinople, Turkey, (and also Jews and Armenians, just a few years after the Kristallnacht in Nazi Germany) when the final blow to that millennia-old community was given by the Turkish state and its thugs (as a result of the excessive destruction on people and property, more than 100,000 Greeks left the City and about 65% of the Jewish community immigrated to Israel) then-US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles sent a message to both Greece (the victim) and Turkey (the perpetrator of a crime that amounted to another genocide) completely overlooking what happened and urging the two sides "to make every effort to assure that the effectiveness of your partnership (as NATO members) is not impaired by present disagreements." Reluctantly, Papagos and successive Greek governments swallowed the bitterness and heeded to the "friendly" advice. (According to Dr. Speros Vryonis, who has done the most thorough so-far study of the pogrom and is the author of the book "The Mechanism of Catastrophe," Dulles' "statement also constitutes a landmark in the genesis for anti-American sentiment in Greece"). Meanwhile, the Turks continued the deportations and the confiscation of Greek properties, to the extent that less than 2,000 Greeks remain there today and more than 75% of the property of the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been illegally usurped by the authorities.

Then we had Cyprus, where a "friendly" US nod - to the Turks this time - allowed them to invade and occupy almost half the island until today. In the mid-90's, the Imia islets incident occurred, during which Turkey invaded Greek territory. American policy switched overnight and although in all American military maps those islets appeared as Greek, from that moment on they became "disputed." President Clinton had to intervene and have

the Turks leave Imia - establishing in effect their "disputed" status.

Just four years ago, President Bush recognized FYROM as "Macedonia" - although American diplomats as early as 1949 warned about the Communist plot to carve out the northern territory of Greece called Macedonia and have it united with the southernmost tip of the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, Bush, through Rice (and beans?) tried repeatedly to have Greece vote for the entrance of FYROM to NATO before a solution on the name dispute is reached. Karamanlis said no and guess what? The State Department went ahead to punish Greece by not allowing her to enter the Special Waiver Visa Program, a sign of despair and bad form by our country, that behaved neither as friend or superpower, but like a disreputable pimp.



Here would have been the photo of the meeting between Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and President Barak Obama in Constantinople, Turkey. However, as a good American I decided not to place the picture in order for our President not to irritate Turkey's leadership that demanded the meeting to be played down (and he obeyed). It is my humble contribution to the success of our President's foreign policy.

Instead I offer you this photo that immerses us into a different kind of reality, where being an "ex" isn't so bad after all!

There is much more to write about this "friendship" and really explore the way our country, the US, treats steadfast allies. Some will rush to point to the supposed anti-Americanism in Greece. That shouldn't come as an excuse, however, because Turkey is by far more anti-American. Moreover, Serbia was even in times of Communism one for the most pro-American countries in the world, until we bombarded the shit out of her in the '90s and we reduced her into a landlocked hell, surrounded by pro-Nazi, corrupted, crime-ridden prostitution heavens.

Today and in the midst of this terrible economic crisis, our country is not what it used to be. People don't take us as seriously, no matter how much we like to believe otherwise. President Obama, although extremely popular, didn't get what he wanted during his recent trip to Europe and in many instances he played the role of the mediator instead of the playmaker. While in Turkey, he bravely called for more religious freedom addressing their National Assembly, in front of President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan who were both persecuted as candidates running for office because of their beliefs (Erdogan even went to jail). However, in order not to irritate the country's "secular" mullahs who represent the Deep State (a military-industrial complex that runs the country behind the scenes - pretty much like here, that is), he had to sneak

PERISCOPE



a 12 minutes meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew who heads the country's oldest institution and is the spiritual leader of more than 10 million US citizens. Even the photographs of the meeting were released by the White House only after Greek-Americans protested! Both Presidents Clinton and Bush had visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate while in office, ignoring the Turkish gestures not to.

Let us hope that this new humility based on reality and necessity will be also extended to US' traditional friends, like Greece. The president should make true to his offer and invite Karamanlis to the US sooner rather than later. He needs to do the same to the President of Cyprus (to show Turkey that he means business when he called for a solution to the Cyprus problem). This way he will also demonstrate that his talk on friendship represents a break with the past. In November, Bartholomew will visit the US and President Obama will have every chance to remind Turks how serious the US is when it comes to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

We understand that the President needs Turkey to carry out his Middle East agenda, but experience shows that in politics whoever has put all his eggs in one basket has lost. Moreover, and speaking of baskets, Obama, as a basketball player, knows that in a game there are two baskets to shoot at, not one.

Last, but not least, in this month's Periscope is the mess at this year's 23rd Celebration of the Greek Independence Day at the White House (March 25). Every time we hear complains about who gets to be invited and many don't like the fact that they are excluded from the list of the so-called "leaders" that make it there. This time, though, the whole thing started on the wrong foot because President Obama, the host, waited until the last minute to make it known that he would organize the reception. When, finally, about a couple of weeks before March 25, it became widely known that the event will take place – a way to appease Greeks because the President announced he was going only to Turkey, breaking another tradition that had every American president visiting Greece too as part of the same trip – the offstage war about the invitations was declared. AHEPA's Supreme President Ike Gulas in a letter to the White House expressed his disappointment that members of his organization got the invitation just a day(!) before and it would be impossible to arrange for transportation. Moreover, it's insulting to invite someone on such short notice. Other people, like me, were told by the White House staff to come to Washington and wait outside, in case something would change and they could sneak up at the last minute (the problem is they sounded serious!)

When it came to the press, the mess was monumental. According to the list one day before the reception, only a representative of the Athens News Agency, one from the Cyprus New Agency, and a cameraman from the Greek State television were registered to get in! That meant that no Greek-American media were invited at all! It's really intriguing that the President's staff that supposedly plans everything to the minutest detail, would have only the people of Greece and Cyprus, two foreign countries for that matter, be informed about the event and not the Greek-American public. Unless that was precisely the case, to placate Greece's disappointment because she was left out from the presidential trip to Europe!

In the future, if President Obama condescends to do the reception again, the list of those invited should be compiled by the Archdiocese, the most important institution in the community, and AHEPA, the oldest and biggest secular Greek-American organization. And besides inviting primarily "leaders," as Andy Athens stated in a letter, responding to Gulas' protest, emphasis should be given to having people who, while being Greek-American, are or have been shaping this country's character in all fields of endeavor (besides, last year when I got in, I saw only a handful of real leaders among the 300 or more guests). Gulas' father, Alek, is such a person and he should have been among the first people invited by President Obama. As a club owner in Alabama, Alek Gulas defied racism – when it was extremely dangerous to do so – and he had artists of color perform there. AHEPA, also, was founded in part to fight racism in the American south.

In his letter, Mr. Athens explained that the reception is the President's prerogative and Greek-Americans, after all, are only the second group after the Irish to have such an honor. He also pointed out how hard many people – himself included – had to work in order for this tradition to gain footing.

Although Mr. Athens is absolutely right on the premise of his argument, one cannot fail to notice two different attitudes between him and Mr. Gulas and that they represent a generational difference. Athens, on the one hand, grew up and became extremely successful (and helpful to Hellenism) when it wasn't so hip to be a Hellene in America, the melting pot was the norm and "blind" allegiance to authority was considered the only patriotic way. As Greek-Americans, we hadn't proved ourselves then and we had to be grateful for what America offered us, oblivious to our contribution to her.

Gulas, on the other hand, represents a more self-assured generation of Greek-Americans that are not hesitant at all to play and, yes, fight in equal terms. As a lawyer, he took on huge pharmaceuticals in court and he won. Although thankful for being invited by the President to the White House, he didn't hesitate to turn it down protesting that the invitation came last minute (another not so honoring aspect of the celebration is that the appetizers served at these events are paid for by wealthy Greek-Americans, which makes the initial reason for the reluctance of Obama to hold the reception this year due to economic constraints, obsolete!)

It will be very interesting to see how these two attitudes, as represented in this case by Mr. Athens and Mr. Gulas, intertwine and play in the future. As there is a time for everything, so in our state of affairs we need as a community to be less grateful and more assertive, even if it needs to be at the expense of a presidential reception (for which we foot the bill, anyway).

1. Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine, Hearings held in Executive Session Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 80th Congress, First Session on S. 938, A Bill to provide assistance to Greece and Turkey. Executive session held on March 13, and 28 and April 1, 2, 3, 1947. Made Public January 12, 1973, Historical Series. Information provided by Professor Van Coufoudakis.

DEMETRIOS RHOMPOTIS
dondemetrio@neomagazine.com

Press Release

The Federation of Hellenic Societies of New York, In co-operation with the Hellenic Arts & Letters Institute and The New York Chapter of the American Hellenic Institute, Invite the Community to a book presentation on Wednesday, April 22 at 7PM at the Stathakeion Center, in Astoria. Professor Van Coufoudakis, the author, will speak about his latest book: "International Aggression and Violations of Human Rights: The Case of Turkey in Cyprus"

Professor Chris Ioannides will present the author.

Admission is free; refreshments will be served.

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Η Ομοσπονδία Ελληνικών Σωματείων της Μείζονος Νέας Υόρκης, με την Συνεργασία του Ινστιτούτου Ελληνικών Γραμμάτων & Τεχνών και του Τμήματος Νέας Υόρκης του Ελληνο-Αμερικανικού Ινστιτούτου, Προσκαλεί την Ομογένεια στην παρουσίαση του βιβλίου του καθηγητή Βαγγέλη Κουφουδάκη «Διεθνής Εισβολή και Παραβιάσεις των Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων: Η Περίπτωση της Κύπρου»

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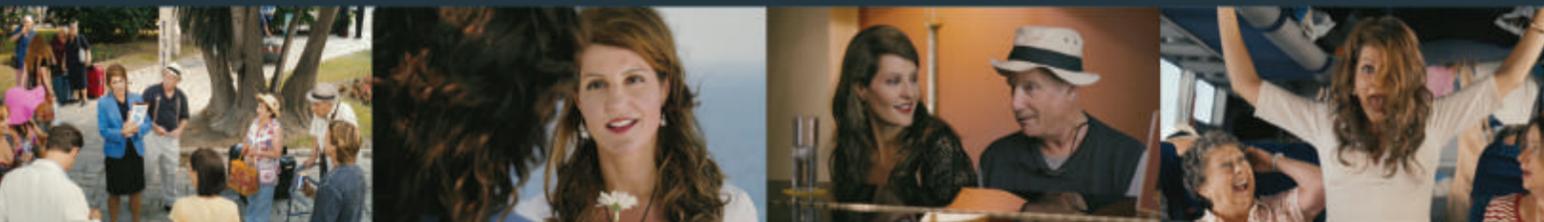


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In her new film, Nia Vardalos plays a professor who moves to Greece and gets a job as a tour guide. The \$20 million film premiered in Athens on April 3 and is due to open in the US later this spring. It was shot partly in Greece at venerated ancient sites and produced by Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson's Playtone. The premiere was at the Athens Concert Hall and is thought to be the first opening of a major Hollywood film in Greece.



NIA VARDALOS PREMIERES MY LIFE IN RUINS IN GREECE



This time, Nia Vardalos doesn't just go Greek. She actually goes to Greece.

The star of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, the big fat sleeper hit of 2002, mines her Hellenic heritage for laughs once more in *My Life in Ruins*, opening May 8. She's Georgia, a tour guide who has lost her kefi— or mojo — and finds it again, thanks to a ragtag group of travelers led by Richard Dreyfuss and an inscrutable bus driver.

Greek Wedding's Toula was in the travel business and romantically challenged, too, but Vardalos insists this is no sequel. "Georgia moves on a whim to Greece, and this is the only job she could get," she explains. "She is a history professor who is all about facts and figures," which only bores the tourists. "All they want is a T-shirt of the Parthenon."

The major difference: location, location, location.

"It was a dream come true to shoot in Greece," says the actress, 46, who persuaded authorities to allow filming at such sacred historical sites as Olympia and Delphi. "It was surreal on the set, to stand by the Acropolis, close my eyes before they say 'Action' and feel the wind blowing through the columns. It doesn't get any better."

That she had celebrated the culture in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, shot in Chicago and

Toronto, bolstered her cred with the locals. "A journalist explained to me the reason why the film was so popular in Greece: 'We love to make fun of you Greek Americans.'"

That favor is returned with the casting of Alexis Georgoulis as bus driver Poupi (pronounced "poopy"), Georgia's unlikely love interest. Described by Vardalos as "the George Clooney of Greece," the model-handsome 34-year-old makes his American film debut hidden behind a bushy beard and a tangled mop of hair.

But don't be fooled by his appearance. When women on the production team saw his audition tape during a lunch break, "we didn't move, breathe or chew," Vardalos says. "When the scene was finished, everyone jumped up and down and said, 'We've found him!'"

Reuniting with the actress as executive producers are Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson, who has a brief role in the film. This is the fourth time Wilson and her husband have collaborated with her fellow Greek. "We don't have a deal with Nia," she says. "We just love her. Actually, the script came to us, and it just happened to take place in Greece. We wanted her to rewrite it, and it was just serendipitous."

Vardalos briefly lost her own kefi with her Greek Wedding follow-up, 2004's *Connie and Carla*. The musical farce, a distaff *Some Like It Hot* in which she and Toni Collette

posed as drag queens, was mostly ignored by the over-40 fans charmed by her first scripted effort. "It was for a different audience," she says. "I have no regrets about doing a film about an issue that is so close to my heart — equal rights for our gay brethren."

Wilson has her own theory: "Sally Field told me this a long time ago. You have to allow people to know who you are before you make a change. If a change is made too quickly, people aren't going to accept it."

With *My Life in Ruins*, Vardalos is firmly back on familiar turf. But the film faces different challenges: namely, Spock and Kirk. The rejuvenated redo of *Star Trek* opens the same day. "They think it's a movie for women," she says about the counterprogramming proposed by distributor Fox Searchlight. "Based on the strength of *Sex and the City*, they know if women want to see a movie, they will go."

Not that Vardalos has anything against *Star Trek*, especially since director J.J. Abrams hired her husband, Ian Gomez, for the TV show *Felicity*. Still, she does have a message for female filmgoers who crave summer alternatives: "Women, take off your Spock ears."

by Susan Wloszczyna, USA TODAY
with reporting by Alexis Grivas, Screen Daily
Photos credit: Fox Searchlight

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