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ΝΞΟ

:: magazine



Hellenic Medical Society
of NY meets with National
Board of Health in Athens

Rep. Michael McMahan of the House
Foreign Affairs Committee on Greece
and Cyprus: "The squeaky wheel gets the oil"

L100 New Generation Leader Cynthia Raftis

Greek singing sensation Stathi Raftopoulo

P.R. QUEEN
JOANNIE DANIELIDES

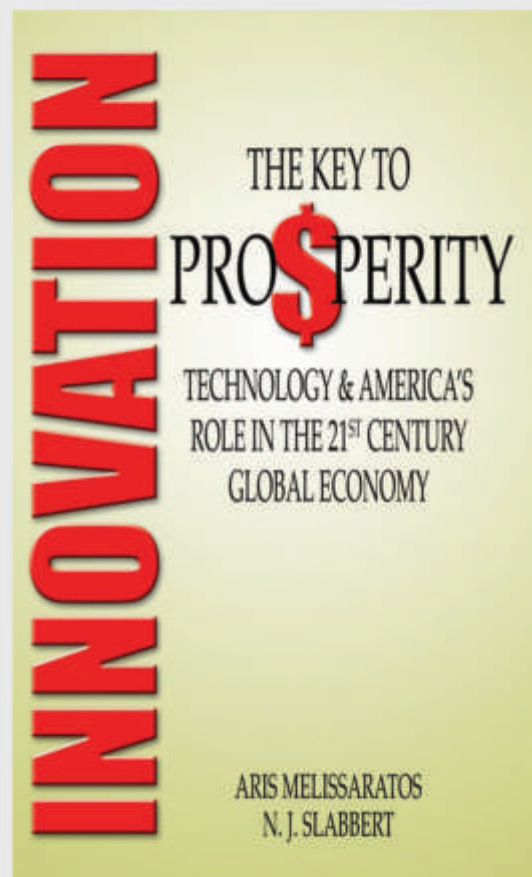
"There is only one way out of the country's economic, environmental and energy mess and it is described with rare clarity in this book."

Richard McCormack, Editor & Publisher, Manufacturing & Technology News

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NEO

CONTENT JULY



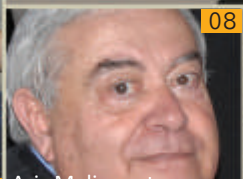
FROM THE EDITOR



P.R. QUEEN
JOANNIE DANIELIDES



MARIA'S
SLATE



Aris Melissaratos
Named 2009
Industrialist of the Year



Hellenic Values Day
on Capitol Hill



The New
Generation of Leaders



A Culinary Journey
with Chef Jim Botsacos



Young Professionals
Gather in SoHo to
Support Alexi Giannoulis



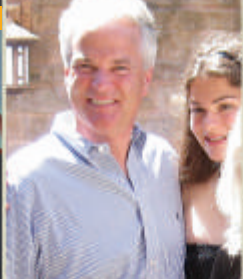
FOS' spectacular
Open House party



Greek Sailors take
the lead at the Vassiliki
Watersports Festival



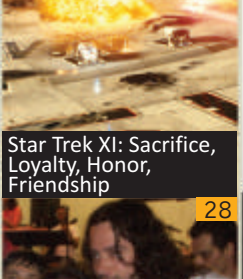
PERI X SCOPE



Hellenic Medical Society
of New York joins hands
across the ocean with
Greece's National Board
of Health



Star Trek XI: Sacrifice,
Loyalty, Honor,
Friendship



Stathi Raftopoulo:
Greece's new Singing
Sensation



bread & honey

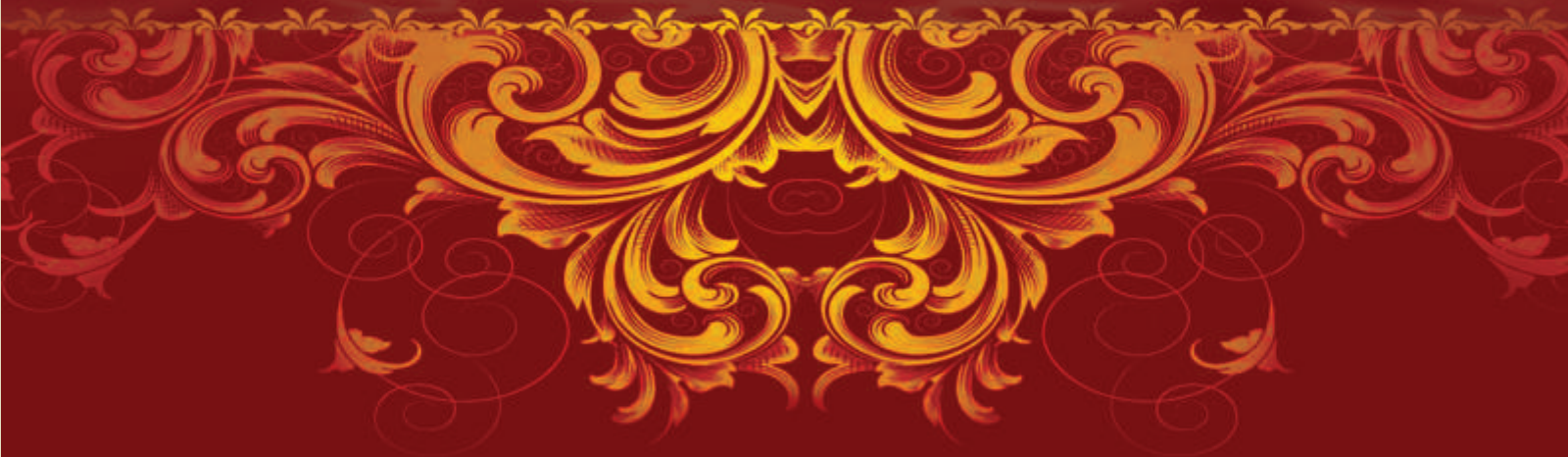
Congressman McMahon:
In politics, the squeaky
wheel gets the oil

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...Japan this summer!

Greek Folk Festival
featured Constantine
as Special Guest



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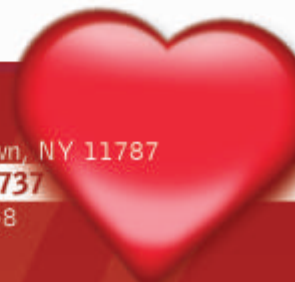
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Can you go home again?

Joannie Danielides wrote me about her article from Greece, where she's combining business with pleasure. I haven't been to Greece in several years, for one reason or another (I lived on the island of Chios with my grandparents when I was a kid) and I often wonder what I'll find there when I ever do go back.



FROM THE EDITOR

My grandparents lived on a farm right off the capital of the island and when my grandfather needed to shop in town (from the list given to him by my grandmother and sometimes written in chalk) he would saddle up the donkey, sometimes put me in the saddle (though I was a kid and a nuisance when my grandfather, normally the most patient of men, had important business to conduct) and take me with him. First we would stable the donkey in the municipal parking lot for donkeys and mules and the infrequent horse (the Cadillac of pack animals that few of us could afford)—a huge municipal stable where the animals would be watered and fed hay or oats and occasionally washed and brushed down (the custom special). I loved the smell of the old place and it still gives me a thrill when I pass one of the riding stables near my house and the wind blows the smell of manure in my direction.

After stabling our donkey, Papou and I would start on our rounds. First we would stop at the provision store to pick up some mail, and some gossip, and to have the proprietor dig his big, metal scoop into the giant, dusty sacks of wheat and rice and flour (and raise dust in the air) and fill up an assortment of little sacks with koukia and rice and flour, that would then be tied with a string from a roll and bitten off to size. And maybe Papou would also buy me a scoopful of square little sucking candy, or if he was really in an expansive mood and have more gossip or politics to discuss (though he professed not to like it), he would treat me to Italian gelato ice cream in the café on the square, right outside the public park with the palm trees shading the walks and the statue of local revolutionary hero Konstantinos Kanaris guarding the entrance. I would eat the wonder of ice cream (Papou would say, with a familiar twinkle in his eye, that I should let it "cool" before I ate it) and then stare at all the mihanakia zipping through the square like gnats, hardly any cars except for an ancient Chevy or Buick being used for a taxi, and as a kid marvel most at the assortment of mules and donkeys, some leading the small herd of goats and sheep tied to their saddles, and especially the huge wagons with truck tires and hubcaps pulled by enormous working mules with blinders and jingling harness and giant hooves that shot off sparks as they thundered across the square. That was a sight.

That was my world then, and, of course, that's a world gone forever. I will be shocked and saddened to see it all vanished when I do return to Greece, but it will remain forever in my memory, and I will be more than recompensed when I see my daughters form their own memories of Greece, which will stay with them forever, as mine do.

Dimitri C. Michalakis

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PHOTO: BOBBY WEST

From left to right, Former Maryland Governor Marvin Mandel, Former Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Lou Grasmick, the honoree, Aris Melissaratos, and Suzanne Jenniches.

Aris Melissaratos Named 2009 Industrialist of the Year



PHOTO: BOBBY WEST

Michael Angelos, Bruce Bereano, Baltimore City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Ed St-John of St. John Properties, sitting John Paterakis, President, H&S Bakery and H&S Properties



PHOTO: BOBBY WEST

Aris with Georgia Vavas and Steve Mavronis

The Baltimore Museum of Industry has named Aris Melissaratos, Senior Advisor to the President for Enterprise Development at Johns Hopkins University, the 2009 William Donald Schaefer Industrialist of the Year.

Mr. Melissaratos was selected because of his extraordinary commitment to Baltimore businesses and his efforts in promoting technology throughout the region. In accepting the honor, Melissaratos said: "I have lived in Baltimore since my arrival from Greece at age 13. Since then, I have had increased opportunities to work in all aspects of Baltimore's and Maryland's industries. Over that time, I became conversant with the technology and business details of all Maryland manufacturing companies, from large to small. I am truly honored to be considered worthy of this prestigious William Donald Schaefer Industrialist of the Year Award, which is most appreciated at this stage of my post industrial career."

A 1966 Johns Hopkins graduate, Aris currently serves as Senior Advisor to the President of Johns Hopkins University with responsibilities for technology transfer, corporate partnerships, and enterprise development. From 2003 to 2007, he served as Secretary of Business and Economic Development for the State of Maryland, driving the state's unemployment figures down to an impressive 3.6% and positioning Maryland for leadership in the emerging "knowledge economy".

Mr. Melissaratos worked for Westinghouse Electric Corporation for 32 years. When he retired he was the corporation's Chief Technology Officer and Vice President for Science and Technology, responsible for running Westinghouse's research and development functions. Before that he served as the Chief Operations Officer for the company's Defense Electronics Group, where he was responsible for managing 16,000 employees (9,000 engineers) and \$3.2 billion dollars in sales. On leaving Westinghouse he became Vice President of Thermo Electron Corporation and CEO of its Coleman Research Corporation and Thermo Information Solutions subsidiaries. He formed Armel Scientifics, LLC which invested in over 30 start-up companies in Life Sciences and Advanced Technology.

He holds a Master of Science in engineering management from George Washington University and has completed the program for Management Development at the Harvard University School of Business. He completed the course work for a Ph.D. in International Politics at the Catholic University of America but did not complete the dissertation.

Among many honors, Melissaratos was named 2008 Baltimore's Extraordinary Technology Advocate (BETA). He is the founding co-chair of the Greater Baltimore Technology Council and is a former vice president of the Maryland Chamber of Commerce. "BMI is extremely pleased to honor Aris Melissaratos. He is a man who has had a significant positive impact in many areas of the Maryland business economy both in supporting existing industries and in fostering businesses of the future. His professional career and his work in the community exemplify the criteria for our honorees," said Roland Woodward, Director of the Baltimore Museum of Industry.

The William Donald Schaefer Industrialist of the Year Award was introduced in 2004 to recognize and celebrate Maryland's visionary business leaders as distinguished by their innovative approaches to industry, and dedication to the well-being of their communities. The award is named for William Donald Schaefer, a founder of the Baltimore Museum of Industry and former Mayor of Baltimore who in 1977 began a project to recognize and preserve the innovations of this region's industrial heritage.

Past Industrialists include: (2008) Edwin F. Hale Sr., chairman and chief executive officer of 1st Mariner Bancorp, (2007) Suzanne F. Jenniches, Vice President, Government Systems Division of Northrop Grumman Corporation, (2006) the late Mark Sneed, president Phillip Foods, Inc., (2005) Kevin Plank, president Under Armour, and (2004) Richard Baker, plant manager Domino Sugar.



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PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Alexi Giannoulias and friends of Samantha Thompson

Host Justin Bozonelis with sisters Tanya and Stella Diamantis



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Mary Ellen Stefanou, Diana Doukas, Olga Alexakos, Stephanie Stamas and Victoria Todis



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

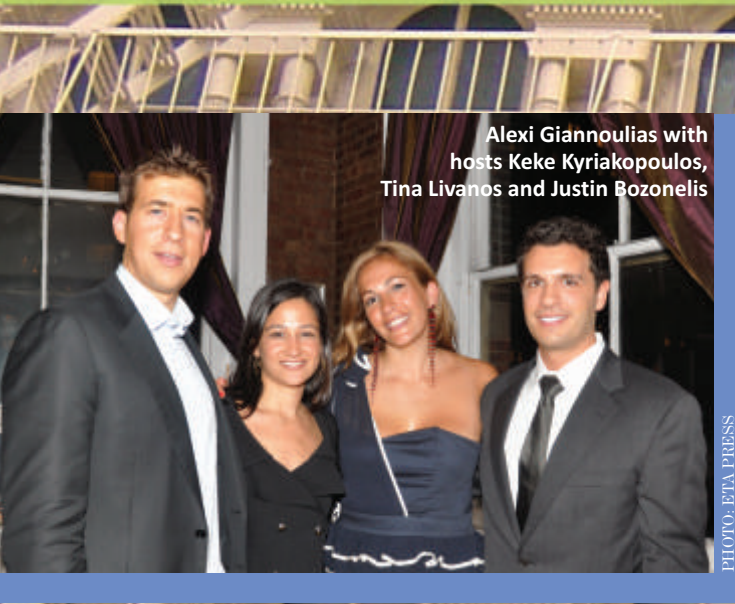
Catie Chatzopoulos and Petek Gunay



PHOTO: ETA PRESS



Angela Giannopoulos and Irene Vomvolakis



Alexi Giannoulias with hosts Keke Kyriakopoulos, Tina Livanos and Justin Bozonelis

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



Stefanie Amanatides, Dr. George Carayannopoulos and Elaina Loizou

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



Resident hosts Stavros and Christine Tsiibiridis

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GATHER IN SO HO TO SUPPORT ALEXI GIANNOULIAS

Alexi Giannoulias, State Treasurer of Illinois and candidate for the United States Senate in 2010, was the special guest during a private fundraiser held on his behalf in Manhattan. Hosted by friends Tina Livanos, Keke Kyriakopoulos and Justin Bozonelis the event took place at the Greene Street residence of Stavros and Christine Tsiibiridis. A group of nearly 100 young adults attended with donations in support of the 33 year-old Treasurer from the State of Illinois.

In 2006, Giannoulias became the first Democrat elected to hold the Illinois State Treasurer's seat in twelve years and was publicly endorsed in that campaign by his mentor, President Barack Obama. He has since formed an exploratory committee to assess his candidacy for U.S. Senate in 2010 and the fundraiser served to increase awareness of this campaign among young-professionals within the New York community.

A crowd comprised primarily of Greek-Americans gathered within the private SoHo loft to enjoy mezedes and wine provided by Thalassa restaurant in TriBeCa and, most importantly, the chance to hear the guest address the attendees. "As impressed as you are with what you read about Alexi

Giannoulias, I can promise that you will be even more impressed with what you hear when you listen him speak", said host Justin Bozonelis in his introductory speech. "We want you to leave with the same feeling and enthusiasm which we have, knowing that someone who grew up with the same culture and experiences shared by many in this room has become such an emerging leader not only in our community, but at the national level" continued Bozonelis.

Host Tina Livanos spent previous Summers with her close friend Giannoulias in Greece and studied with him in Spetses. She was able to add a personal anecdote, recalling a moment when Alexi responded that "he wanted to become President" when asked about his aspirations at a young age.

Guests were shown a short campaign video which portrayed Giannoulias through clips of various speeches and his accomplishments as a public servant. The highlight of the evening then came when Giannoulias addressed the guests with a thoughtful speech referencing the importance of family, heritage and his dynamic path to becoming an elected official. He expressed deep gratitude for the support he continues to gain from the Greek-American community and his goals heading into the 2010 Senatorial race.

Giannoulias offered optimistic words about one's ability to overcome obstacles, citing his own journey toward capturing the Treasure's seat at a young age and without significant political connections. Parallels were drawn to his mentor, President Barack Obama, and his

overcoming public doubt to historically win the Presidency.

Giannoulias stressed his goals relating to social and educational improvements, particularly focusing on economic initiatives given his currently held position. Host Keke Kyriakopoulos, a former political consultant, followed the speech by opening the floor up for an interactive Q&A in which a handful of guests were able to discuss issues. Topics ranged from healthcare reform to his opinion on previous Presidents and issues facing the Hellenic community such as the U.S.'s recognition of the name "Macedonia" for FYROM.

Giannoulias remained at the loft for the remainder of the night and mingled with the

various guests. The event offered a unique chance for professionals around Giannoulias' own age to get to know an increasingly recognized individual who has become such a rising star within the political arena. The fundraiser turned out to be success with all financial goals met though a warm audience of contributors who readily welcomed the out-of-state leader. Although an Illinois State official, guests offered strong encouragement and support given a common regard for Giannoulias as a peer. The hosts pointed to a significant level of follow-up inquiries after the event from people who want to get more involved with his campaign efforts.



P.R. QUEEN JOANNIE DANIELIDES

by Dimitri Michalakis

HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE AND SPEAK NO EVIL AND HOW TO GET YOUR BOOK ON OPRAH

Joannie Danielides is a veteran public relations executive—which means she has wonderful things to say about all of her clients (former NYC First Lady Donna Hanover: “A really dynamic, wonderful woman”; gourmet foods purveyor Likitsakos: “They have wonderful high-quality products and it was a pleasure to work with them”; the country of France and the city of Cannes: “There’s nothing not to like about France....We did an image campaign for the city of Cannes and it was wonderful”).

And she will never write a tell-all book: “No, no, I don’t want to be out of business,” laughs the 52-year-old founder and president of Danielides Communications, based in New York, which she runs with her husband Nicholas (“It’s wonderful...It’s great to have the support of one another”).

She will tell you about her long association with the nursing profession. “I helped to produce a 60 Minutes segment on nursing which helped to define an image campaign of nurses in the 21st century. I think that nurses are the solution for primary care, especially with the health care reform that’s coming forward now. I started out working with Columbia University School of Nursing many years ago, and now I’m very fortunate to be working with NYU College of Nursing. I helped them to launch their 75th anniversary and now they are expanding. I’m working with the dean of the nursing school, who’s a very passionate leader: she’s



The Danielides Family from left to right Nick, Alexander (son), Joannie and Philippe Danielides (son) at the Matrix Awards.



Danielides herself was given the Matrix Award by New York Women in Communications (Donna Hanover was the presenter; Danielides was her press secretary for eight years) and she has long been a leader in promoting women in her field. “I’m very committed to giving back. My firm has a big internship program. I feel very strongly about that. I also headed the Women in Communications Foundation, which gives scholarships to women entering the profession.”

She will also tell you about other long-standing clients in the firm’s long roster, including the The Boys Choir of Harlem, which became her first client over twenty years ago. “I had a friend who was on the board of directors there and she called and said that the director, a wonderful man, Dr. Walter Turnbull, was looking for someone to promote the choir tour through the South. And the director came and met with me and asked me to promote the first tour, and I did, and it was a lot of fun, and then they asked me back again and again and I got hooked.”

Former First Lady of New York City and Broadcast Journalist Donna Hanover presenting the Matrix Award to Joannie Danielides

a gerontologist, her name is Dr. Terry Fulmer, and she is a leader in her profession.”

And she will tell you about her long affiliation with dynamic women like Dr. Fulmer. “I love working with female leaders. I was president of Women in Communications for several years, and their foundation and their philosophy is similar to mine about empowering women in the communications industry and in all disciplines, and to help them reach their full potential. I’ve always had female role models in business and in the communications field and I guess I relate very well to other women who are professional in business and what they do.”





Former First Lady of New York City and Broadcast Journalist Donna Hanover, Deb Shriver- Hearst Corporation, Joannie Danielides, Broadcast journalist Paula Zahn

You need sharp elbows in the business to get your clients media exposure and she might tell you how to get your book on Oprah. "You have to have the right book, and then you have to develop an angle, a media pitch, and then it's all about connections: you talk to the producer. I've been doing this a long time, so I've made a lot of friends in the media and we talk all the time about what we have to offer, and they tell me what they're looking for."

She specializes in handling the authors of the Mystery Writers of America (a client) and enjoys the privilege. "A lot of them are former lawyers and physicians, and they've wanted to be writers, and they write these fabulous mystery books and crime books. One my favorite writers from that genre is Linda Fairstein, the former head of the NYC sex crimes unit (and the author of the Alexandra Cooper mysteries), who writes a book a year that's always on the New York Times bestseller list. It's a pleasure to work with her. It's fun, because there are great writers in every genre, and they invest so much time in their story and in writing it."

Danielides wrote her own story in the profession almost thirty years ago when she switched from art history (she was working as a historian at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art) to public relations. "The last five years at the museum I was running corporate-sponsored art programs and lectures and the corporation that sponsored my program to put the arts in the public schools hired a public relations agency to promote the program and a light bulb went off in my head. Oh, my goodness--you can promote the arts and empower them more than just be in them!" She started working for the big p.r. firm Ruder Finn, but they insisted she work on travel accounts. "With two little boys at home under three, that's not what I really wanted to do, be on the road all the time. So I resigned and started my own company."

Her husband joined the firm 23 years ago when another client became the New York City Marathon. "He's a runner, and he could run with all the reporters around the reservoir and convince them to write stories for the company." His French background (he was born in Athens but studied in France and graduated the Sorbonne) also helped bring onboard the city of Cannes and his choir background (he was a former choir boy in Greece) helped them tailor their campaign for The Boys Choir of Harlem.

She calls Nicholas the firm's crisis manager. "He's a really great negotiator. I think that's something within your personality. He's very diplomatic and he has a great demeanor in dealing with clients and a great understanding. He can mediate very well on behalf of his clients." (He also advises CEOs and lectures on crisis management and corporate communications throughout the United States and Europe.) Husband and wife each have their own field of expertise and stable of clients ("We leave the house in the morning, but each goes in a different direction"),

though they do get together on projects of mutual concern.

"Nick and I did work together with the Center for Arts Education to help put the arts back in the public schools," she says. "We worked with city government; we worked with the United Federation of Teachers and the public schools and brought cultural institutions to the public schools so that it was integrated into the curriculum. That was very, very rewarding because it impacted the lives of so many students who didn't have that opportunity for a long time and it blended education with the arts and the sciences in a very positive way."

She is also on the board of the American Farm School in Thessaloniki and a board member of Literacy Partners in New York.

The couple have two sons, Philippe, 26, a graduate of Georgetown Law School now studying for the bar, and Alexander, 23, who works on Wall Street as a financial analyst.

As for that tell-all book about her many clients and the business?

"I'm not writing that," she laughs again. "That could be dangerous."



Nick Danielides, Queen Noor, Joannie Danielides



Joannie Danielides greeting Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Former First Lady of New York City Donna Hanover



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"I have a real kinship for Cyprus and what her people want. It's very similar to what my forebears had in Ireland. There was an invasion and then after the invasion, settlers were put in. Although it happened like 600 years ago, the actions are sort of similar."



By Demetrios Rhompotis

Congressman McMahon: In politics, the squeaky wheel gets the oil

The weather hasn't been very accommodating so far, but summertime is barbecue time and people in New York find ways to gather in the open air to meet with family and friends and spend some real quality moments – with really cold beer and premium cigars, if possible - that make existing bonds stronger and forge new ones. However, for Cypriot Americans, whose country of origin, Cyprus, remains divided after the 1974 brutal Turkish invasion and occupation, this time is not just about leisure and happy hours: barbecue has become a political tool with which friends of the cause are thanked and new ones are enlisted.

Recently, Philip Christopher and Nikos Mouyiaris, with Peter Papanicolaou as host, organized such a barbecue reception honoring Congressman Michael E. McMahon from New York's 13th Congressional District, covering Staten Island and parts of Brooklyn (where Papanicolaou, and more than 20,000 Greek-Americans, live).

"He's been a great friend of our community, he's been outspoken on the issue of Cyprus and all the issues of concern of the Greek American community," said Peter Papanicolaou. "Therefore we want to make sure he stays in Congress for many

years and advances these issues."

"I have a real kinship for Cyprus and what her people want," Congressman McMahon explained at an interview with NEO magazine. "It's very similar to what my forebears had in Ireland. There was an invasion and then after the invasion, settlers were brought to the island. Although it happened 600 years ago, the actions are sort of similar." He also spoke of the need of citizens to have open lines of communication with their elected officials and to educate them on the issues, while making sure follow-up is taking place. "Often in American politics the squeaky wheel gets the oil. It sounds a little disparaging, but it is true: those who raise their voices are heard. So you have to continue to raise your voice."

Rep. Michael E. McMahon was elected to the 111th Congress in 2008, winning a seat held by Republicans for almost thirty years. His District includes the entire borough of Staten Island, as well as the Bensonhurst, Gravesend, Dyker Heights, and Bay Ridge neighborhoods of Brooklyn. Improving the quality of life for residents through better infrastructure, jobs, healthcare and schools is the top priority of the Congressman. Rep. McMahon serves on the powerful House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, where he sits on the Subcommittees on Aviation, Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, and Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials. He also serves on the influential House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and was named to the Subcommittees on the Middle East and South Asia, Europe, Terrorism, Non-proliferation and Trade.

Prior to his election to the 111th Congress, he was a respected member of the New York City Council for seven years, and a partner in the law firm of O'Leary, McMahon and Spero. He chaired the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, and led the fight for environmental and conservation issues in New York City. A life-long Staten Islander, Rep.

McMahon has been married for over twenty years to New York State Supreme Court Justice Judith Novellino McMahon. They have two children, Joseph (19) and Julia (17).

The economy is in everybody's mind nowadays. How are things going?

I think what we see are some glimmers of hope. As the President has said, the stock market continues to tick upward, there seems to be a trend on that and that certainly is a reflection of confidence I think that people have in our economy. Also, the consumer confidence index has picked up half a percentage point in the last few months. I also see some important indicators, such as an increase in orders for short rail delivery; meaning that whole sales products are starting to move again, that is for manufacturing or construction. The real estate market, and I talk to real estate brokers all the time, they see some activity. We know that there is a lot of pent-up demand in the real estate markets, especially home owners and we are seeing that starting to manifest itself. We have a long way to go, but I'm optimistic that we are out of the deepest part of recession and we will start to move forward. And that's what we need to have: we need to have growth in the economy that will solve the problems with the deficit, with unemployment, so we need to continue working on some of those priorities, like fixing the economy and creating jobs.

What are the main challenges for people from your district?

The economy certainly affects everyone, even those who haven't lost their jobs, whose business haven't been challenged. There is always that overriding concern and this trepidation in people's conduct, so it is a big factor for us. But we also have in this district some overarching quality-of-life concerns. Living in a growing community and dealing with the fact that we have terrible traffic conditions, lack of mass transportation services; we need to do better on our schools, with our parks - maintaining them and making sure that people

have a place for recreation - so we've got a lot of work to do and that's what I started to do with the City Council and that's what I will continue to do in the Congress.

What did you think of the Obama speech in Cairo?

For me, foreign affairs are very important and that's why I got a seat on the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House. I think the president's speech was a somewhat bold, yet measured, attempt to begin a dialogue with so many people in this world that had not had a dialogue with America for a long period of time. I don't think anything he said was so much earth-shattering as the fact that we went to Cairo, to a major capital in a Muslim country, and said, look we have many issues. We are not going to solve them all today or tomorrow, but at least let's talk about them. I think that it was a brave thing to do and I give him credit for it.

From left, Tasos Zambas, George Mihaltses, Peter Papanicolaou, Haeda Mihaltses, Michael McMahon, Julia McMahon, Judith McMahon (his wife), Savas Tsvicos, Bill Matsikoudis and Philip Christopher.



When it comes to the relationship between the US, Greece and Cyprus, there is a pattern of mixed messages from Washington. It seems as if these two countries are not treated as steadfast friends and allies by America.

I think that for America and for all democracies in the world, Greece, being the first democracy, and also because of its strategic position, its loyalty and friendship to the Western and Judeo-Christians ideals that we all share, it is such an important partner to us as we try to find a way to coexist with the Muslim world. Greece is an incredibly strategic partner for us and extremely important to us as well. I'm part of the Hellenic Caucus and consider myself a good friend of Greece for those reasons and also because there are many Greek-Americans in this district, 15,000 the census number showed and probably there are more, it's always understated. So, I think we have to do work there. There is one thing in particular, which is the Visa Waiver Program and I had a meeting with Foreign Minister Bakoyannis to talk about that in Washington. I think it's a mistake in American foreign policy that we don't have that highest level of partnership on all levels with Greece and that is something we have to remedy. I didn't know that (problem existed) until I was elected in the House and I thought how is it possible that we treat Greece differently than we treat Germany?

Or Slovenia...

Right, or any of our allies. That makes no sense to me. It's something that I will continue to advocate on.

Regarding Cyprus, a European Union country and proven friend of the US, we have the case of a brutal invasion and continuous occupation by Turkey. Again, the US hasn't been consistent, or even clear, when it comes to that issue, sometimes openly favoring the invaders.

About a year ago, in the very place that we sit today, I had the honor of meeting President (of Cyprus) Christophias, together with Archbishop Demetrios, and I had a great discussion with President Christophias and I was encouraged by his optimism that progress would be made in the talks Cyprus was having with his counterpart, the leader of occupied Cyprus. He seemed to think that some progress could be made. Obviously there have been some setbacks last year. It's very similar to what my forebears had in Ireland. There was an invasion and then after the invasion settlers were brought to the island. Although it happened 600 years ago, the actions are sort of similar. So I have a real kinship for Cyprus and what her people want. They coexisted with Turkish Cypriots before and they can do that again, I'm sure. My country and the policy that I advocate for in the Committee, is that we have to convince the Turkish government to remove the troops from Cyprus and it's important for us in the West that Turkey becomes a reasonable partner and even joins the EU. But, they should not be able to join the EU until they remove their troops from Cyprus. For me that is an absolute mandate. Cyprus is so strategically important to the world and the Eastern Part of the Mediterranean and I think that America should speak with a clear voice. Earlier this year, in a Committee meeting with Secretary Clinton, I raised the issue, and in particular the thought that we should not allow any aid for infrastructure coming from the United States or the UN to be used in other way other than be integrated for the whole island. She recognized that as a very important issue and said that she would consider that further.

From left, Vasiliki Vassiliou, Julia McMahon (McMahon's daughter), Michael McMahon, Nasia Papanicolaou, Despina Axiotakis, Jeanie Tsentas, Pana Ioannou and Evie Paphitis.



THE PASSING OF A TRUE MACEDONIAN SPIRIT

By Elias Neofytides

Barbara Papigiotis was born in Neapolis, in the prefecture of Kozani. She arrived in the United States in 1967 and lived in Chicago. In 1978 moved to the East Coast, in New Jersey, where she lived till her passing this past June after an aneurysm stroke.

While in Chicago she got very actively involved with the Macedonian Societies and continued after she moved to the East Coast, serving as member and president of various Hellenic organizations and specially the Benevolent Society of Aliakmon. She served as a Secretary and Governor to the Pan-Macedonian Association of USA and Canada. In 1995 Barbara Papigiotis, Paul Evangelou, Fotis Gerasopoulos and myself incorporated the Pan-Macedonian Studies Center, where she served on the board till her passing.

I met Barbara in 1989 while serving as president of the Benevolent Association Draminon "Agia Barbara" and since that moment we became very close family friends and shared the same values and we were engulfed by the same progressive fire and spirit to work harder and make the Macedonian Issue known to the broader masses. Barbara was a true zealot for the recognition of the Macedonian Issue to the wider USA population, even amongst the Greek Americans and tried with all her heart and soul to fight for the purpose of not recognizing FYROM as "Macedonia" as the Skopjans and in some cases our government wanted to.

Barbara was a very strong minded person, but also a well read one, and she never backed down an issue without fighting till the end, even when she got death threats. She didn't really care if you were a high ranked official, a minister or even the President, she stood her ground and fought for Greece and Macedonia, for this was her life's purpose: to defend Hellenism, history and reason.

When Barbara spoke people listened whether they were at her side or not. I will always remember the occasion when she was talking to the Prime Minister and later President of the Hellenic Republic, Konstantinos Karamanlis, while they had an argument on the way Greece was handling the Macedonian Issue. Trying to escape her reasoning and political knowledge, he said to her: "I think it's better for you to go and find a husband and leave politics to men." Little that he knew....

Coming September 2009, the Pan-Macedonian Studies Center will inaugurate its Hellenic-American Public Library, the first of its kind in our community, where members and non members alike can join and read any book they wish, from over 3,000 volumes we have already accumulated and still growing. A section of this library bearing her name will accommodate Barbara's book collection and notes and various historical documents.

The sad truth is Hellenism lost one more valuable defender of its history. And I with my wife Markella lost a dear good friend that cannot be replaced ever. We need more Barbaras in our lives for the sake of Hellenism.

Hellenic Values Day



The Federation of Hellenic American Educators under the auspices of SAE-USA (World Council For Hellenes Abroad) Region and the Greek Embassy in Washington, D.C. presented the 2nd annual event on "The Ecumenical, Humanistic and Diachronic Values of the Greek Culture and Education" on Thursday morning, June 4th at the Cannon Building of the Capitol, Washington, D.C. Nancy Biska, representing Mariyana Spyropoulos, was Mistress of Ceremonies. Greetings were delivered by Senator John Sarbanes and representatives from Congressional leaders Carolyn Maloney, Gus Bilirakis and Tina Titus. Closing remarks were made by Rhode Island State Senator Leonidas Raptakis.

The honorees this year were Alexandros Mallias, Ambassador of Greece to the United States, U.S. Senator Richard Durbin, U.S. Senator John F. Kerry, Marcus Alexander Templar, Balkan Expert, and Dr. George Melikokis, Principal of Jamaica Greek American Day School. Student presentations were made by the following schools: The Hellenic School of Potomac, Maryland, Ancient Greek from Isokrates' "Evagora", Andreas Nicolaou, Yiannis Philipopoulos, George Seferis "Helen", Irene Frantzis; St. Athanasios, Paramus, New Jersey, Recitation of "The Philikon's Oath", Stelios Kostopoulos; The Choir of the Odyssey Charter School, Wilmington, Delaware, performance of traditional Greek songs by Theodorakis, Hadjidakis and Leontis.

"Today, we honor Ambassador Alexandros Mallias, a man who has created history in Washington, D.C.," stated Mrs.

Photo 1 – Congressman John Sarbanes with the Odysseus School Choir at the Capitol.

Photo 2 – Dr. George Melikokis honored (third from left) by Ambassador Alexandros Mallias (4th from left) as leaders of the event look on.

Photo 3 – Greek American educators standing in front of the Cannon building at the Capitol, Washington, D.C. with Greek Education Consul Antonios Marmarinos (2nd from left, 2nd row) and Mrs. Stella Kokolis (3rd from left, 2nd row).

Photo 4 - Stelios Kostopoulos of St. Athanasios Church, Paramus, New Jersey, reciting "The Philikon's Oath". On his right is journalist Nancy Biska.



Stella Kokolis, President of the Federation of Hellenic American Educators, SAE - USA Region. "He is responsible for creating the education events at the Capitol in 2008 and 2009. Without his support, we would not be here. We wish him well in his next diplomatic mission, since this is his last day in Washington, D.C."

According to Nancy Biska, "the presence of all (honorees) honors our Hellenic heritage, democratic values and ideas. Our efforts keep Hellenism alive for the younger generations."

Senator John Sarbanes believes "our youth must learn and strive for excellence that leads to personal success. Give back to your own community, strengthening institutions for the next generation. Take Hellenic values and use them for the larger community."

Addressing the participants, Ambassador Mallias reminded that the Federalist Papers were an analysis of the Greek Polis. Reading Aristotle, Democritus and Greek philosophers will add to our knowledge of the economy. His final farewell was saying "it was a great honor to serve my country in Washington, D. C. and follow in the footsteps of former ambassadors."

Rhode Island State Senator Leonidas Raptakis delivered the closing remarks saying he learned Greek at home. "I did not have the opportunity to go to GreekSchool. I went to Greece every summer and tried to speak Greek as a native. My home state of Rhode Island passed a bill to continue the Greek Language in our Rhode Island University for mainstream America."

ON CAPITOL HILL

By Catherine Tsounis

Senator Raptakis joins the Andros Yacht Club



Members of the Board of Directors of the Andros Yacht Club with State Senator L. Raptakis, Mr. Kokkinis, the club's President, Mrs. Anna Kokkini and Andrioti youth in traditional costumes.

The Andros Yacht Club Board of Directors (in Andros Island, Greece), taking into consideration the fact that State Senator of Rhode Island Leonidas Raptakis has taken special interest in Hellenic issues, with most recent example his successful effort to have one of the last Liberty-type ships returned to Greece as a floating museum, decided unanimously to make him an Honorary Member. Leonidas Raptakis has always kept close contacts with Greece and especially with the island of his origin, Andros, which he tries to visit frequently.

In 1955 the youth of Andros, having already displayed a special interest in sailing, requested from the island's Mayor Michail Polemis and the well-off families there to help them in founding the Andros Yacht Club in order to preserve and enhance their interest in the sport. The dream became a reality and the club was founded in 1957.

Thanks to the Andros Yacht Club sailing was established on the island at that time as a classical and perpetual value and many kids of the club have already been distinguished in Hellenic and European sailing races. The club nowadays functions as a meeting point for all the Andrioti ship owners, the local aristocracy and the members who enjoy the facilities, situated by the sea in Chora. The biggest event is the annual gala on the 15th of August, with many dignitaries participating.

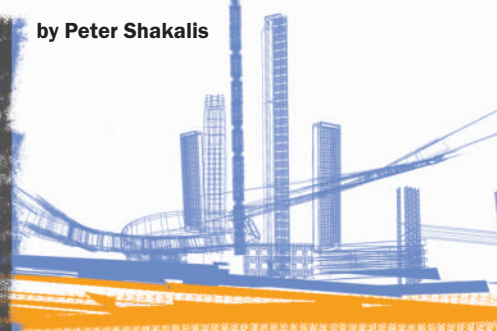
The event celebrating Senator Leonidas Raptakis' honorary membership coincided with the 42nd Andros International Sailing Race with Deputy Minister of External Affairs Miltiades Varvitsiotis giving the signal. The Andros Sailing Grand Prix was established in 1967 by Mr Giannis Gouladrakis (Big John) and it is continued until today.

State Senator Leonidas Raptakis was very touched by the ceremony and noted that he feels an indispensable part of Greece and especially Andros and promised that from his position and with the values of cohesion, moral strength, clarity and transparency that he has already inherited from his parents, he will work hard and with the same enthusiasm in order to further promote Hellenic-American issues.



Mrs. Anna Kokkini with State Senator Lou Raptakis, Mrs. Margarita Vartholomeou and Mr. Theodosios Sousoudis.

by Peter Shakalis



What's Ahead for Landlords and Tenants...

New opportunities and challenges certainly abound for office tenants and landlords in this evolving New York real estate market.

From our vantage point we see owners of real estate tending to fall into one of two categories. Many landlords are facing a challenging financial position caused by top-of-market purchases of office properties that were highly leveraged, especially for those properties that risked having a substantial number of leases coming due in the near term.

Falling rental rates and a slow down in office leasing activity in the market place will put additional pressure on near-term cash flow expectations. Many of these properties will face default and be returned to the lenders, a big concern for sublessors and sublessees alike.

In contrast, those landlords that have purchased their properties prior to 2005, did not refinance at unsustainable terms, and/or have a well leased building with healthy tenants, will be able to weather the storm quite well. This group of landlords will be able to retain their existing office tenants and attract new tenants because they offer a greater degree of financial stability.

Although market activity continues to slow dramatically, tenants subletting their office space still have a realistic chance to re-lease their space in a reasonable timeframe, but at greatly discounted rates. Many firms are extremely uncertain about their future business plans, which is not conducive to long-term occupancy planning. Therefore, many tenants in this group rely on short-term office lease commitments until their future path becomes clearer.

On the other hand, numerous tenants will need to take some action as they near the end of their leases. This group however is tending to wait as long as possible to achieve the very best transaction.

Both of these situations frequently translate into procrastination, short-term lease transactions and an above average number of office lease renewals. When a tenant decides they must move out of their building, the advantage of pre-built space at very attractive rates found in the sublease market, is a strong economic advantage.

Peter Shakalis is a Director at FirstService Williams Real Estate
pshakalis@fswre.com



Front Row - From left are Consul General of Greece Aghi Balta, Dr. Irene Anagnostopoulou, President of the Hellenic Society of Clinical Cytology Dr. Hara Margari, Minister of Health Dimitrios Avramopoulos, Vice President of the Hellenic Society of Clinical Cytology & Speaker Dr. Maria Nasioutziki, President of the Hellenic Center for Mental Health and Research & Speaker Dr. George Christodoulou.
Second Row - From left are Dr. Spyros Meztis, Mayor of Kymi Dimitrios Thomas, Dr. George Tsioulis and Dr. George Dangas.

For the first time, this year (late June), a member of the Hellenic Medical Society of New York (HMS) was invited to participate in a meeting of KESY (Greece's National Board of Health - the highest advisory board for public health issues), signaling perhaps the beginning of a new era of cooperation between the country of origin and her scientific Diaspora.

Dr. George Tsioulis, President of HMS, went to Athens at the invitation of Greece's Health Minister Dimitris Avramopoulos, following the latter's visit in New York last May where he was presented with the first ever Grand Papanicolaou Award at the annual Dr. George N. Papanicolaou Symposium, organized by the HMS and the Panevoikos Society of New York at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

"It is a great privilege to be included in KESY," wrote Dr. Tsioulis from Athens, during an electronic interview with NEO. "It signifies the importance and recognition that the Hellenic Medical Society of New York has acquired," while at the same time it offers motherland the opportunity "to potentially tap on their (HMS members) diverse experience and innovative views to improve public health care in Greece." As Minister Avramopoulos pointed out in his speech at the annual Papanicolaou Symposium in New York, named after the "father of cytology", "health finds no national borders."

Minister of Health Dimitrios Avramopoulos receiving the Award from Dr. George Tsioulis



Executive Vice Dean and Senior Vice Dean of Clinical Affairs at Cornell Medical College, Dr. Darracott Vaughan, Mayor of Kymi, Greece, where Papanicolaou was born, Mr. Dimitrios Thomas, the President of the Panevoikos Society of America, Mr. Vassilios Chaimanis, the President of the Hellenic Society of Clinical Cytology, Dr. Hara Margari, the Director of Cytopathology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Dr. Maria Nasioutziki, the Chairman of the World Psychiatric Association Standing Committee on Ethics, Professor George Christodoulou, and the President of the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York, Mr. Dimitrios Kalamaras, joined key note speaker Minister Avramopoulos in addressing the audience at this year's Symposium.

A biography of the great scientist, translated into English by Dr. Anthony Vasilas, was distributed to participants, as the Symposium's aim, besides exchanging experience and scientific knowledge, is to maintain and promote Papanicolaou's legacy within the medical community.

The Hellenic Medical Society of New York (HMS) itself has its origins in the Greek-American Medical Fraternity, an organization co-founded by Dr. George N. Papanicolaou during the First World War. This organization officially registered with the New York State authorities in 1920. Drs.



From right, Mrs. Stavroula Mastora with daughter Anatole and grandma Anatole Papadopoulou

Hellenic Medical Society of New York joins hands across the ocean with Greece's National Board of Health

By Demetrios Rhompotis

George N. Papanicolaou, Nicholas Papadopoulos, Constantinos Carousos and Constantinos Logothetis served consecutively as presidents of the fraternity.

Since its inception, HMS has made great strides in unifying the Greek-American physicians in the New York metropolitan area and neighboring states, and in accomplishing its community goals. A medical student exchange program between the United States and Greece has been reinstated for elective clinical clerkships.

In 1997, trees brought from the island of Kos by Dr. Vasilas, were planted at the New York-Presbyterian Hospital of Cornell University in honor of George Papanicolaou. Another donation, arranged by Dr. Kartopoulou, was given at the Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine in New Jersey supporting the large statue of Hippocrates.

Early in 1999, the G.N. Papanicolaou Endowed Scholarship was reestablished at Weill Medical College of Cornell University, which is considered to be the only scholarship commemorating the creator of the "Pap Test" at a medical school in the United States. The Society is actively campaigning to increase the existing and to establish new named scholarships. In 2000-2001, yearly lectures have been instituted in memory of Dr. Papanicolaou.

Dr. George Tsioulis, the HMS current President, was born and raised in Athens and graduated from the University of Athens Medical School. He then served two years as a medical officer in the Greek Air Force, before receiving scholarships from the Japanese Government and the European Union to conduct research in Japan, where he got a Ph.D. in Cell Biology



George Zapantis, Dr. Helen Rouvelas, Dr. Ananea Adamidis and Chryssanthe Zapantis

from the University of Tokyo. He was immediately invited to the US to continue medical research as a postdoctoral associate at Cornell University Medical College and Rockefeller University for three years. Since 2001 he has been a Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery at the Mount Sinai School Medicine and practicing surgical oncologist in the New York area.



From left, Dino and Dr. Dimitra Theodoropoulos, Mrs. Donnamarie Chaimanis and Ms. Barbara Thomas





President of the Hellenic Medical Society, Dr. George Tsioulis, with Leadership 100 President Stephen Yeonas (left)

Recently you took part in the Greece's National Board of Health (KESY) meeting as for the first time the Hellenic Medical Society of New York has been invited to send a member from this year on. What was that like?

It is a great privilege to be included in KESY, the highest advisory board for public health issues in our motherland Greece. This is the first time ever that the KESY invites an organization outside Greece to participate in its board meetings.

It signifies the importance and recognition that the Hellenic Medical Society of New York (HMS) has asserted over the last few years and the interest of the Greek State, in this case through the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity under the guidance of Dimitris Avramopoulos, to include members of the Hellenic Medical Diaspora and potentially tap on their diverse experience and innovative views to improve public health care in Greece.

Are there more projects under way between the HMS and the Hellenic Ministry of Health? What about a program for Greek and non-Greek students from the US that would take them to Greece to study Medicine - due to the high expense required in the US - instead of most of them going to Mexico or Grenada?

Greece. We are in close collaboration with the municipality of Kymi, in Evia, birthplace of Dr. George Papanicolaou, in order to promote and support his namesake institute which is devoted to cancer education and

early detection. We have established a program through the kind offices of our member in Greece, Dr. George Farmakides, for medical students of Greek descent who would like to spend time in Greek hospitals. Finally, arrangements are under way to expand the DIAS college student exchange program in Greece, which has been established by Dr. Nathenas to Greek American medical students with partial funding by the HMS.

At the recent Papanicolaou Symposium in New York, what would you consider the most important thing discussed or accomplished?

This year's Papanicolaou Symposium had the highest and more diverse attendance

We are in the process of evaluating several joint projects with organizations and authorities in Greece. We are in contact with the Aegean Teams (Omades Aegaiou), a voluntary organization that specializes in improving the infrastructure and offering medical support to communities in remote isolated islands of the Aegean Sea. We are also in contact with EMKAE (Commission for the Registration and Support of the Greek Diaspora), which is another organization with a similar scope of interests but for isolated Greek populations in need outside

ever. Several factors may have contributed to this year's success. The main lecture on Ethics in Medicine had clearly a far reaching appeal beyond the medical community. It was widely publicized and it created a lot of interest in the media and public. The guest lecturers and the honoree, Minister Dimitrios Avramopoulos, were well known figures and seasoned speakers. The most important things achieved were the publicity that Papanicolaou's work received, the interest it stirred among laypeople in the Greek American community and the message it conveyed about the sensitivities of the HMS regarding ethical issues in medicine.

Do you believe the Symposium should somehow be elevated to a more scientific status in order for its results to be of importance to the greater medical community, as it's been named after the inventor of the Papanicolaou test?

The Papanicolaou Symposium lectures have always been of the highest academic standards and over the years we have invited distinguished scientists whose work is directly or indirectly related to that of Dr. Papanicolaou's. There was a partial departure in this year's celebration because we presented for the first time the "Grand Papanicolaou Award" which is bestowed on individuals with significant contributions to public health or medical science.

It seems there is an effort underway to have the Medical Society in closer collaboration with other Greek-American Institutions, such as the Federation of Hellenic Societies and the Leadership 100. What's the long term perspective and are you doing the same with other American institutions?

One of my priorities is to make the HMS more diverse in its activities, more involved in joint projects with other organizations of the Greek American community. It is important for our people to feel that their doctors are always close to them and not only for medical matters. The long term goal is to lead by example, get more people involved in public affairs, and develop strong ties and close collaboration with other Greek or American organizations.

What are the priorities of your presidency, after you tenure will be completed, what things you would like to see accomplished or in a process of being developed?

The priorities of my presidency are to make HMS a more extrovert organization, strengthen the ties of our Society with Greece, lobby for our members' right to practice quality medicine with dignity and attract more actively participating members especially among the younger generation of Greek American doctors.

THE NEW GENERATION of LEADERS

Leadership 100
NEO

Neo Magazine and Leadership 100 have partnered to present a monthly profile of the New Generation of Leaders who belong to the Leadership 100 Partners Program which recruits young Greek American professionals on the rise in their careers, making membership affordable and providing a network for meeting their peers.

Leadership 100 was founded 25 years ago by the visionary Archbishop Iakovos and a small band of outstanding Greek American businessmen who wished to support the Greek Orthodox Church and perpetuate their faith and Hellenic heritage in America, passing it on to future generations.

Cynthia Raftis

Position: Vice President, Carnegie Office Park

Education: B.A., University of Pittsburgh

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Who or what were the main influences in your life?

My parents, Spiros and Anastasia Raftis.

How did you get into your present work?

I studied economics and communications in college and then went into the family business of real estate development.

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

My parents are members of Leadership 100 and I believe in the goals of the organization, especially the funding for scholarships at Holy Cross School of Theology which educates future priests, the foundation of our Church. I also have friends who are members of Leadership 100.

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

Excellent. I have enjoyed all the annual conferences at which I have been exposed to outstanding speakers that I otherwise would not have known about.



With Archbishop Demetrios

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

Leadership 100 must increase membership, especially amongst young adults, while, at the same time, increasing awareness of Orthodoxy and Hellenism both in the U.S.A. and the around the globe.

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

Yes, it has provided a social network of other young adults and opportunity to meet outstanding clergy and hierarchy and build important relationships.

What qualities do you most admire or value in others?

The qualities I most admire are integrity and philanthropy. It all comes down to: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Building the family business and increasing my personal and spiritual development. Every day I get a little closer to the Lord is an achievement.

Who are your heroes in real life?

The Panagia, my mother and Mother Teresa.

How do you spend your time outside of work?

I enjoy golfing, gardening and swimming.

What are your thoughts on the current economic crisis?

Maybe we are at low point and this is the time to think about saving for a rainy day. But I do think the economy will turn around for the better with patience and time.

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

I thought a lot about this but I could answer that I live a day at a time, continuing to develop personally and spiritually as I go along, bending my will to God's will.

What is your idea of happiness?

The calmness of my soul that The Jesus Prayer brings.



Dorothy Poli, Fr. Frank Marangos, Presvytera Haidee Marangos

ButtonPhoto.com



Board member, George Koutsos, Cathedral Administrator Steve Hantzarides, FOS Director & Board member, Dorothy Poli, Kellari owner, Stavros Aktipis, Joanna Koutsos, FOS Committee member, Tina Dakas & Kellari Exec Chef/Partner Gregory Zapanitis.



Vangelis Alkimos & Leonidas Haxhitasi performing their ballad

Photo: Margarita & Parascevi Giavis

FOS SPECTACULAR OPEN HOUSE PARTY

Approximately 300 individuals enjoyed the lavish Open House party that FOS (Forum on Orthodox Spirituality) group threw recently at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Manhattan. The party served to introduce those interested in the spirituality offered by this newest Cathedral ministry. The attendees danced away to live Greek music by singing sensation and FOS participant Vangelis Alkimos. The Cathedral Ballroom was transformed into a palace by George Andreakos, musician, artist and founder of International Sounds, who combines music with his eclectic design of decor lighting, furniture and live art provided by him. Vangelis and FOS participant Leonidas Haxhitasi, a classical pianist, mesmerized the audience with the debut of their ballad Poso S'agapo.

The party was no small feat. It involved the teamwork of approximately 30 FOS volunteers as well as the Cathedral's administrative staff. Businesses including restaurants, media organizations, photographers, web designers as well as the above-mentioned musicians, all numbering 17, helped make this party spectacular. Kellari, Thalassa, Avra, Kefi, Mythos, Plaka, Athens Café and Fantis Foods provided their delicacies. In addition, ANTENNA TV, AKTINA FM, COSMOS FM as well as NEO Magazine advertised the event. The photographers, 3 Button Photo and Margarita and Parascevi Giavis, and Media Punch website designers are also FOS participants.

In appreciation for their gracious and generous support, FOS acknowledged all of its above donors verbally and by a poster of their logos that was displayed at the entrance. NEO was also thanked for previous support through a feature on FOS in a prior issue when the ministry was still growing.

During the six-hour festivities, there was an inspiring presentation by Rev. Dr. Frank Marangos, Dean of the Cathedral and spiritual leader of FOS, and Dorothy Poli, FOS Director and Board of Trustees member, who also orchestrated the event. Two FOS participants, Maria Dubrowski and Chris Neamonitis, also spoke poignantly of the impact of FOS on their lives. Fr. Frank introduced the summer series topic, Soul Trek, which is a take on the new Star Trek movie. The series explores the stages of spiritual development, the purpose of our existence and calling for our lives. FOS uses contemporary themes to convey the spiritual message in the issues of everyday life. Both Fr. Frank and Dorothy emphasized two running themes in FOS: to be spiritual is to be joyous and the importance of integrating the spiritual within the life of the community.

FOS has been attracting approximately 120 individuals on Tuesday nights. The first of the Tuesday sessions for the summer series was held on June 16 and had 150 individuals in attendance. This number is sure to further grow after this magnificent introduction to the new summer series. More information on FOS can be found on <http://www.thecathedral.goarch.org/> or by calling (212) 288-3215.



Vangelis Alkimos entertaining the guests

ButtonPhoto.com



Crowd dancing to music by Vangelis Alkimos & George Andreakos, International Sounds

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Cathedral Ballroom redesigned with furniture & lighting by George Andreakos

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Live Art by George Andreakos



Photo: George Andreakos



Star Trek XI: Sacrifice, Loyalty, Honor, Friendship

Sacrifice, loyalty, honor, and friendship are some of the topics for which the ever-so-popular Star Trek television and movie series is noted. The most recent addition to the cinema screen, Star Trek XI, continues this tradition of delineating the human condition – its hideous weaknesses and noble aspirations – by focusing on the important issue of humanity's celestial calling. From the spectacular opening battle scene to its noble closing moments, Star Trek XI proves to be one of the most electrifying films of the summer.

Like a newly discovered Old Testament Apocryphal text, the film provides critical yet previously lacking background information concerning the physical, emotional and even spiritual formation of the primary Star Trek characters. Who were they before entering Star Fleet? What were their personalities, and how did they become friends? The film resolves the queries of many fans by providing more than a passing glimpse into their formative years and succeeds in briefly outlining a process of spiritual development that generally follows what many Orthodox Christian authors have proffered throughout the centuries.

According to the Holy Fathers, spiritual growth includes: (a) increasing the understanding of God's Word and Will through spiritual mentorship, (2) decreasing the frequency and severity of sin through spiritual warfare, (3) increasing the practice of Christ-like qualities in community, and (4) prayerfully celebrating through prayer trust in God's Grace. Perhaps the best summary of this process of spiritual growth is the desire to become more like Jesus Christ. For over four decades, many clergymen and teachers have employed Star Trek vignettes in their sermons and lessons to springboard into conversation with teens, young adults, and adults regarding biblical teachings and patristic observations concerning the proper formation of the spiritual life. From such a perspective, a close examination of Star Trek XI's plot discloses the existence of the salient elements: (a) calling, (b) risk/sacrifice, (c) mentorship, (d) warfare, (e) community, and (f) celebration.

As the prequel introduces younger Trekkies to a better understanding of past science fiction traditions, there is also a need for the Church to teach and explain these elements of spiritual formation to each new generation of young Christians. Who are we

and why are we here? Who or what determines our future existence? Is there a God, and does He have a purpose for our life? Is there a risk, a cost, associated with accepting God's call? Do we fight alone or do we overcome life's difficulties together? These and other soul-centered questions are at the heart of Star Trek XI. They are the salient questions whose answers engrave our hearts with spiritual maturity.

Star Trek XI opens with the U.S.S. Kelvin encountering a lightning storm in space. After a sinister Romulan enemy murders its captain, Commander George Kirk, the Kelvin's most senior officer, assumes the responsibilities of command. With the autopilot function destroyed, the new captain has no choice but to sacrifice himself and his crew by flying the Kelvin into a mining ship. His pregnant wife escapes before impact along with 800 passengers aboard fleeing ships and gives birth to their son, James T. Kirk!

For the next 25 years, young Kirk is tethered to the flat lands of Iowa. Although mentally brilliant he is emotionally immature, choosing to break the law by spending most of his time fighting and womanizing. It is here, during a bar fight with a number of Star Fleet cadets on leave, that Kirk receives his call to destiny. He is challenged by an officer that knew his father. "Your father was captain of a starship for 12 minutes and saved hundreds of lives, including yours," he tells him. "I dare you to be better!"

For the very first time in its long film history, the Star Trek prequel describes the initial call of James T. Kirk. The non-stop action of the film revolves around this most important invitation . . . a choice that must be made. In the powerful vignette that follows his invitation to join Star Fleet, Kirk rides his motorcycle, a symbol of his rebellious self, into a recruiting center. He tosses the keys to the first person he encounters and unflinchingly boards a spacecraft with a group of eager young cadets headed for training.

Not so hidden in the entire Star Trek narrative is the issue of personal destiny . . . of divine calling. Whereas each Star Trek episode begins with the statement "to boldly go where no man has gone before," Christian viewers might consider the expression as an invitation by God. Like Abraham in the Old Testament who was exhorted "to leave his country, people and father's household and go to the land God

would show him" (Gen. 12:1), each and every one of us is challenged to accept God's call by boldly going where He alone will lead us.

Scripture is replete with examples concerning such divine callings. A list of the most prominent might include Moses, Abraham, Samuel, Gideon, Esther, Jonah, and the disciples Andrew and Peter. Whereas the disciples were invited by Jesus to leave their boats, nets and relatives in order to become "fishers of men," it is significant that the Old Testament prophet Jonah was caught in the belly of a large fish because he did not respond affirmatively to God's call. While both images center on the issue of freedom, Jonah-type choices rest on the illusion that we are capable of successfully living according to our personal ideology and desires while denying those of God! Like a defiant young Kirk living a flatland existence in Iowa, lifestyle choices that do not consider God's calling will never provide the wings of spiritual flight but tethers our existence to the earthly. Entombed in the whale of such a self-centered perspective, our spiritual development is stymied!

Like the prophet Jonah, however, young Kirk repents and accepts the risks and sacrifices associated with his initial calling. His, is to become a captain whose leadership is based on sacrifice. From the ensuing mentorship and wise council he receives from Spock (Mind) and McCoy (Body), to the fierce warfare and subsequent celebration of the Star Trek crew's victory over their Romulan enemy, Star Trek XI hosts its viewers to a delicious multi-course banquet of spiritual development for the soul. Like Captain Kirk, when we are willing to follow in the footsteps of our Heavenly Father, then we are emboldened to throw away the keys to temporal pursuits and achievements, choosing rather to embark on a trek towards loftier aspirations. In the final analysis Star Trek XI is as much interested with the soul as it is with stars. To boldly engage the invitation of God is to accept a Soul Trek towards mankind's ultimate frontier!

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/FOSSummery/> to view the on-line series of lectures that inspired this article.

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Greek Folk Festival featured Constantine as Special Guest

By Georgia Vavas

Baltimore went Greek once more during the 2009 Saint Nicholas Annual Greek Folk Festival that was celebrated last month in the heart of the city's "Greektown" and proved to be one of the most successful since this beautiful tradition was started in the mid 70's.



Demetrakia II of St Demetrios Church, Baltimore



St. Nicholas Church, Baltimore Dance Group

Constantine with Tommy,
Maria and Tony Pearce
and John Skleres
of Apollonia Band



Constantine Maroulis, the American Idol finalist, Star of the Broadway hit "Rock of Ages" and best actor Tony nominee, featured at the Commencement Ceremony of the Festival. After a few periods of a downpour, which made everyone duck for cover under the tent, Constantine finally appeared with his guitarist Tommy, and his brother Athan, who is also an accomplished vocalist and producer. The loyal teeny bopper fans weathered it out with umbrellas because they were not about to give up their front row seats. Constantine was magnificent and well worth the wait. He did not disappoint his fans. His performance was classic Maroulis—entertaining and charming. He started off strong with "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" to the delight of his screaming fans. He stayed until midnight autographing his cd's and various items and gladly posed for pictures with his fans and their parents. At one point, he invited a young lady to come on stage and while he serenaded her, she surprised him with a bouquet of flowers that she had hidden behind her back.



Constantine with his fans

The next three days proved to be just as successful as the first. Sunny skies, aromas of Greek food and pastries, dancing ensembles from neighboring Greek churches in Baltimore, extensive display of religious and cultural exhibits and live Greek music by Apollonia Band, greeted the guests as they arrived. People of all ages, including toddlers, and other ethnic backgrounds "literally" danced in the streets.

Congratulations to Festival chairperson Frank Mitsos, co-chairpersons, Georgia Fotopoulos, Sophia Gerapetritis, Tina Harris & Stanley Souranis, Father Michael Pastrikos and the whole Saint Nicholas Parish for a most successful festival.

If you happen to be in ...Japan this summer!

The HAIYUZA THEATRE COMPANY in collaboration with ARTLINE PROMOTION and DOGYO-SHA, under the sponsorship of the Polish Embassy in, presents this July "Korczak" featuring music/live performances by Christina Travlopoulou and Go Nagano on six and eleven string guitars in an All-Chopin program. The play is directed and scripted by Shu-Ichi Yasukawa with Go Kato starring.

The play, set in Warsaw of the 30's, is based on the biography and writings of the famous Polish pediatrician, educator and children's author, Dr Janusz Korczak. Director that time of an orphanage for Jewish children, Korczak envisioned and created a paradigmatic children's republic founded upon the principles of democracy and idealism. The entire play is a hymn to the poetic and stormy one-man's attempt to maintain justice, tolerance and humanitarianism in the face of totalitarian oppression; a hymn to a dream abruptly brought to an end in the gas chambers of Treblinka.

Luckily, Korczak's pioneering work with children was revealed after his death and became the basis for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Christina Travlopoulou and Go Nagano bonded together into a guitar duo since their studies at The Juilliard School, New York, the common denominator being their mutual interest in early music masterworks that were not originally composed for the guitar. Thus, Christina on a six-string guitar and Go on an eleven-string guitar began making their own transcriptions of solo and concertante works from the Renaissance, Baroque and Romantic Era, building this way a unique repertoire which they, always to high acclaim by audiences and critics alike, have presented in the United States, Brazil and Japan, at such venues as New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Tokyo's Casals Hall and Yamaha Hall, and Brazil's SESC Hall.

Performances for "Korczak" will take place JULY 4 - JULY 14 KAI Theater Tokyo, JULY 15 Ukawa Memorial Hall Kanagawa, JULY 16 Kyouiku Kaikan Hall Chiba and JULY 17 Sakuramate Sun Hall Saitama. For more information contact Artline Promotion at info@artlinepromotion.com

Christina Travlopoulou



Go Nagano

Mavromihalis, Pardalis & Nohavicka Attorneys at Law

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PHOTOS: ETA PRESS

A Culinary Journey with Chef



Jim Botsacos

By Maria Athanasopoulos

How did Greek-Americans go from serving souvlaki platters at their family diners to owning 5 star award winning restaurants and serving gourmet dishes like kataifi wrapped scallops covered with a light feta cheese sauce? This is a question that many of the attendees at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in New York City had while patiently waiting for Chef Jim Botsacos to begin speaking. St. John's Church hosted what turned out to be a very lively discussion with Chef Jim, of Molyvos Restaurant, titled "From the Cheeseburger to the deconstructed Moussaka Entrée: A culinary journey of Greek American Cuisine" on Wednesday, June 10th. The event was moderated by Stellene Volandes of Departures Magazine and was sponsored by many vendors including Molyvos Restaurant, Mastiha Shop and Steve Makris from Fantis Foods.

Botsacos is a third generation Greek-American/Italian-American from the Bronx, who acquired a love for food at a very early age. Although he grew up cooking with his mother, it was his father's innovative spirit and creativity in the kitchen that influenced him to experiment with food on his own.

After graduating from culinary school, Botsacos worked at some of New York's finest restaurants including The 21 Club and Blue Water Grill where he always insured to incorporate his Greek and Italian backgrounds in most of his culinary creations. It wasn't until a few years before opening Molyvos that his interest in creating mostly Greek progressive meals sharply sparked. This inspired Botsacos to travel to Greece and other European countries so that he can deeply explore, research and taste different foods. He even went as far as visiting the homes of villagers to see what they were cooking and how they prepared their native dishes.

In 1997 Molyvos opened and this is when the young chef's creations "New Greek Classics" were born. Botsacos gleamed as he told the crowd how he can "Greek-A-Fy" anything. He loves testing Greek cookery and making new age dishes for his customers but would never go to the extreme, in Botsacos own words, "Feta must look like Feta!" Some of his inventive interpretations of Hellenic specialties include "Turkey a la Greque and Ouzo Cured Salmon.

The evolution of Greek food in America had a slow start compared to the cuisines of other countries, however once the doors of the first high end epicurean Hellenic restaurant opened, it was clear they were here to stay. The warm hospitality and delectable yet healthy cuisine is enough to put these new gourmet Greek restaurants ahead of the game and in a somewhat safer economic haven. Greek immigrants may have been simple neon colored diner owners that continue to serve Greek salad containing mostly iceberg lettuce and cheap feta, but 2nd and 3rd generation Greek-American chefs would not be where they are today with out them. It was their undying love for the business, authentic home-style cooking and intense work ethic that helped pave the way to opening award winning Greek restaurants and of course to the birth of the deconstructed moussaka.

For more information on upcoming events at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, contact Kenneth Volandes at kenneth@volandeslaw.com.



Did you know... the refreshing aroma of mint is a quick remedy for nausea, congestion and is also a natural relaxant? It has been used for centuries since it also boosts libido and increases stamina! Ancient Greeks used mint as a perfume, medicine and in their day to day cooking.

bread & honey

By Maria Athanasopoulos

A COLUMN DEVOTED TO MAKING GREEK FOOD EASY

Although similar, Cypriot cuisine noticeably differs from the traditional Greek kitchen. Due to its unique geographical position, Cyprus was influenced strongly by Turkey and many of its surrounding Middle Eastern countries, such as Lebanon. As a result, the Cypriot kitchen is an extremely tasteful and fascinating experience since it is a fusion of many different flavors, from so many diverse countries. Growing up with a Greek Cypriot mother and Grecian father introduced me to this eclectic cuisine at a very young age. Almost every meal we created was inspired from both countries. My mother and I constantly experimented with different spices, sauces and of course our favorite, cheeses! Simply swapping out a Greek cheese for a Cypriot cheese in a recipe gives a dish a significantly new flavor and personality.

Aphrodite's birthplace takes serious pride in their most popular cheese, halloumi, a tangy and salty cheese indigenous to Cyprus. The white fibrous cheese, often garnished with mint, is part of daily Cypriot eating and appears at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Halloumi is simply brilliant and extremely versatile. You can grill it, fry it, boil it, bake it, marinate it, roast it, grate it, or eat it raw! The possibilities are endless when it comes to incorporating halloumi into a recipe and that is why I always have some handy in my freezer. It also very healthy since it's low in fat and an exceptional source of protein and calcium.

In these hot summer months, I often thread halloumi onto a skewer along with vegetables and grill it out on the barbeque grill. However, for a refreshing meal that seems more like a treat, I love having grilled halloumi & watermelon salad. The juicy slices of watermelon compliment this sheep's and goat milk cheese beautifully. The secret to delicious Cypriot cooking is using very good olive oil, so be sure to use extra virgin olive oil. Remember the darker and greener the better!

Grilled Halloumi & Watermelon Mint Salad

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 10 to 15 minutes
Serves: 4

Ingredients

- 12 oz Halloumi cheese, sliced or cubed
- 1 small watermelon, sliced into 2 to 3 inch cubes
- Juice of 1 large lemon
- 1 TBPN Extra virgin olive oil
- Small bunch of Fresh mint
- ½ cup Pine nuts or ½ cup sliced almonds
- Whole wheat pita bread or crusty whole wheat baguette, brushed with extra virgin olive oil
- Salt & pepper

This is an easy and sweat-free meal that has proven to be a crowd pleaser.

Preparation:

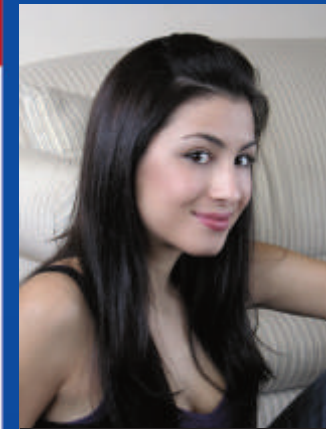
1. Heat your outdoor grill to medium-high. Wrap the nuts in aluminum foil and place on your grill to lightly toast.
2. Slice the watermelon into 2 inch squares and toss with the fresh mint. Place into a large bowl and set aside.
3. Spread your sliced halloumi onto the grill or thread it onto 4 to 6 skewers. Grill the halloumi until it comes to a light brown color, about 5 minutes on each side.
4. When your halloumi is almost done cooking, add the bread to the grill. Once the halloumi is grilled to your liking, take off the grill and off the skewers.



Kali Orexi!

5. If you did not already cube your halloumi, dice it into 2 inch squares and add to your watermelon mixture. Sprinkle with fresh squeezed lemon juice, olive oil, salt, pepper and toss well to coat.

Top with toasted nuts and dig in with your toasted bread. Enjoy this light summer meal with some chilled KEO beer, the island's local favorite.



MARIA'S SLATE

This never ending recession has killed your daily espresso fix, the economy has given you anxiety, the dollar is weak, gas prices are once again rising and you are still thinking about going away on a summervacation?!

Remember you don't have to travel to a different country or state to

relax and escape from your day to day chaotic routine. Our nation's economic crisis has given imagination and organic play a huge comeback. Many organizations, museums and amusement parks are offering free events as well as discounts on tickets and shows that you should be taking advantage of. Did you know you can see a Broadway show for 35 dollars? Yes, you now have to become more of a creative planner and adapt to becoming extremely flexible, but by doing this you can have your cake and eat it too.

The first step is creating a game plan and setting a budget. Next start surfing the net! There are tons of local freebies and coupons that you can find online. Discovering your state is another fun and different thing you can do. Grab a map, pile your family in your car and go on a road trip. I assure you, at the very least, it will be a unique and memorable experience. Just because you aren't on a beach in St. Tropez doesn't mean you can't get a tan and some serious swimming in this summer. Another fantastic idea is to go camping, check www.stateparks.com/usa.html or www.nps.gov for state or national park service information.

Remember, no matter how bad things get during your travels, the dollar menu is not the way to go! You will only create more expenses for yourself with the increased medical attention you will need after your arteries being to clog. Fill up a travel cooler with fresh fruit, low fat cheese, veggies, baked chips, sandwiches, juice and granola bars. You won't have to spend extra time searching for food and will stay away from all the junk.

Although staying local is very practical and can strengthen your family's bond, it may not be your cup of tea. If the thought alone is enough to make your stress levels go through the roof, don't fret, you can travel to your desired location off season or try visiting a country where the dollar is strong. I hear Iceland is not a bad choice nowadays!

Feel free to email me if you have any unique recession proof summer travel ideas. I love hearing from you!

Maria
Maria.Athanasopoulos@gmail.com



Greek Sailors take the lead at the Vassiliki Watersports Festival

By Yannis Mavgelis

The Vassiliki (Lefkas Island, Greece) Watersports Festival is now the biggest in all Greece and one of the few competitions in the world where amateurs can take on professionals for prize money. This past June, in a quality field of Olympic athletes and International Champions, the winners of the dominant classes, Laser and Open Catamaran, were the local teams.

Jordanis Pashalides and Kostas Trigonis, current Tornado European Champions, but sailing here an F18 Hobie Tiger, put in an impressive 6 firsts out of 7 races, leaving last year's winners Joe Bennett and Marko Reynolds (also Tiger) in 2nd and Tom Nottingham and Remco Fisher a Dutch/Cypriot team on an F20 Hobie Fox in 3rd. Jordanis and Kostas, with their €1000 winning check, are now headed over to Weymouth, England, to defend their 2007 & 2008 titles at the forthcoming Tornado class Europeans, while Joe and Marko and determined to improve their result at the forthcoming Hobie Tiger Europeans in Lake Como, Italy. Adonis Bouyouuris, former Greek National Champion and Radial World Champion,

topped the leader board for the Laser class 2 points ahead of his compatriot Alexis Katsios and a further 2 points ahead of Alastair Nichol from the UK in 3rd.

Virginia Kravarioti, Bronze medalist in the Yngling class at the Beijing/Quindao Olympics, took the prize money in the Laser Radial class, edging UK representative Eve Brinsley into 2nd and her Yngling team mate Sofia Papadopoulou into 3rd.

David Barker and David Mather took the honors in the Open Dinghy fleet on a Laser 2000 and Stratos Kosmoglou and Pavlos Dimitriadis in the Hobie 16 fleet.

Tony Dudley and his crew on the J24 'Jungle' narrowly squeezed out Neil McRoberts on his Dehler Optima 101 'Leona' into 2nd with Bob Bennett of Felixstowe also on a Dehler 101 (Das Boot) into 3rd in the one day Yacht race around the small island of Arkoudi off the Lefkas coast.

The windsurfing side of the event had in 1st place Max Rowe (UK) in his first ever competition win, with Andy (Bubble) Chambers in 2nd and Chris Hartley, Club

Vassiliki's beach manager in 3rd.

The Festival included the Miss Bikini competition, attended by 2,000 people, a Greek cultural night of folklore dancing, a Harp concert, a mountain bike race and a BMX competition as well.

At the Opening Ceremony 6 Greek Olympic sailors presented the local school with a gift of 2 RS Tera's from the organizers and the major sponsor of the event Wildwind Holidays. The village is already anticipating its kids representing Greece at the future Olympic regattas.

"Although we are a little disappointed that the wind didn't fill in enough for a decent windsurfing event, the 7 race series for the sailors was superb, the evenings' social program an absolute success and the feedback from everyone is that they will be returning next year with all of their friends, said Festival Organizer Simon Morgan. "We are looking forward immensely to seeing the Festival on Sky Sport Watersports World program in the near future."



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The Northern Chios Society of Pelineon, Inc. invites members and friends to Celebrate its Matron Saint Markella with an annual pilgrimage to the society's estate Shrine at the Town of Delaware, Sullivan County, Upstate New York (Close to Kenoza Lake)



Saturday, July 18, 8:00 p.m.

Great Vespers will be officiated by Bishop Philotheos, assisted by Protopresbyter Constantine Combitsis. After the ceremony, there will be a traditional pilaf and goat pot roast prepared by renown chef Louis Bournias

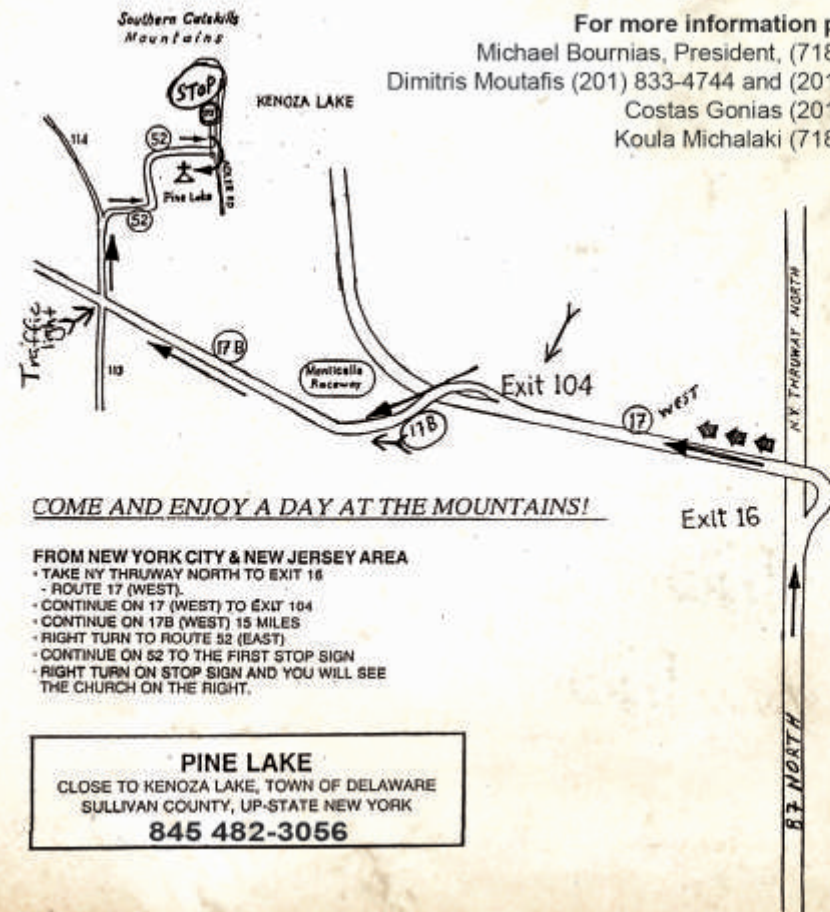
Sunday, July 19

10:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy, Procession of the Holy Icon, Artoklasia.

For your convenience, the society is providing special buses:

From Brooklyn, buses will depart Saturday, July 18, at 7:30 p.m., corner of 75th Street and 5th Avenue. From Astoria buses will depart at 8:00 p.m. from Nexus Production office (23-09, 24th Street).

For more information please call:
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I started this column hoping not to talk about politics--summer is in full swing (even with thunderstorms and persistent lack of sunshine)--but it seems inevitable. It's a constant temptation and I'm too weak to resist, especially if it offers opportunities to expose cases that take people's stupidity for granted. It's pathetic when "political" speech is reminiscent of a Jehovah's Witness' sermon, not only in terms of content -- we had that in abundance the last eight years -- but also, and even worse, for Jehovah's sake, IN STYLE! For our "leaders" to think of us as naive is insulting enough, but to take us for complete idiots is a...honor we can't afford!

When Hillary Clinton, speaking on the recent election in Iran and the ensuing chaos, said that people have the right for their votes to be counted and that elections must reflect the will of the people, the irony struck like lightning: In our "best in the world" democracy, Bush became president with lesser votes and after the Supreme Court had to intervene on his behalf in a very Ayatollah-like manner. Eight years later, Hillary lost the Democratic nomination to Obama, although she won the popular vote!

In the recent past, not a few times has our country acquired the flavor of...an "Islamic" Republic! John David Ashcroft had the breasts of Justice covered on a painting used as his background while addressing the press, same way a few years ago Iranians at a conference in a Cyprus Hotel demanded the statues of Aphrodite and other semineude goddesses be covered (Aphrodite with burqa)! Some extremely "religious" groups in the US threatened to sue NBC because when transmitting the Athens Olympics opening ceremony, it didn't censure the part with the goddesses parading topless! Prior to the war in Iraq, the incarnation of failure, Donald Rumsfeld, acting as Ayatollah instead of Secretary of Defense, would send memos to President Bush on the planning of the invasion accompanied with Biblical verse (perhaps the first case of official "religious" doping in the government of a western country -- too bad the International Olympic Committee had no jurisdiction on US politics!) the very moment the US was supposedly fighting the incited by various mullahs terrorism against us! Was (mullah) Rumsfeld different from those mullahs that cite similar verse when they send their youth to commit crimes against...infidels?

Watching the movie "Recount" once more, a few nights ago, then-Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris appeared to believe that she somehow had become the reincarnation of Queen Ruth from the Biblical story, destined to...save the American people even if she had to perish along the way. Unfortunately for the American people, she didn't perish, instead she helped the country to almost perish by assuring that the presidency would go to Bush (she was later awarded a congressional seat for that -- well, not a Ruth-like status, but not bad either, since perishing was out of the question!) The list could go on for ever, but I know there is so much we can all have if reminded of what we let our "leaders" put us through, of all those "miraculous" deeds that brought us to where we are now. Hopefully we are also reaching the limit in the amount of bullshit we can take from our country's leadership and start reacting when our intelligence gets insulted in such a clear-cut way.

Speaking of intelligence and bullshit, I was recently asked by a publication to contribute a piece on what I think Hellenism is about! The problem is that Hellenism cannot be thought about; it's something that requires apophaticism; going beyond what the linguistic, and by extension, intellectual, capabilities of ours can express; in other words, we must enter the ambit of experience and there we might attempt to make some sense of what that outer space will wordlessly proclaim. Besides, when you talk about Hellenism in English it is true that the first thing that comes to mind is....Hell! Last December's riots in Athens and other major cities and the havoc they created seemed to verify that approach.

I don't know, but we Hellenes, of all generations and epochs, have managed to make history -- not just write it -- both in times of glory and during our falls. It seems as if triumph and failure, happiness and tragedy, were not just happening, as is life's norm. In our case they were sought after, sometimes with the same fervor (it sounds masochistic, but again, words are not what they seem once you go beyond them). Traces of this "trend" can be found everywhere, at the recent riots, the seemingly hopeless repetition of rituals in the form of traditions, the spark of the eye besides the perfect naiveté displayed on the surface, the beauty and the beast of our entrepreneurial spirit!

What I feel about Hellenism is a hopefully-desperate optimism which transcends reality by negating the current state of things as superficial, fake, and even too good to be true. It's a Sisyphean practice that draws its faith to success by the fact that it's taking place not in the underworld, but in real time, providing this reality is seen beyond the very word's mundane overuses.

Happy summer to all!

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P.S. I'm not sure it was a good idea for the Greek authorities to deliberately highlight the dispute with the Brits for the stolen Parthenon Marbles at the inauguration of the New Acropolis Museum. I believe it took much from the event itself, while projecting the country again as a Balkan noisemaker, asking for things others took from her, etc. The event was a first-class opportunity for Greece to show a confident, powerful, self-assured, culturally leading image similar to that she displayed at the 2004 Olympic Games (imagine if they would use the Games to talk about the Cyprus issue, the Turkish threats in the Aegean, FROM or the stolen Parthenon Marbles). When you are complaining, nagging about things even in moments of glory, people get the wrong impression and they get tired of you. Let the international media raise the issue (as they did without Greece's help) by pointing to the empty space where the stolen marbles would have been placed, had Britain done the right thing and returned them to Greece.

“Xorizoume, pou pige
oli auti I agapi, pou
lipi to allo mou
kommati, giati na
ftasoume os edo...”,
sings *Stathi
Raftopoulos* from his
new single
“Xorizoume.”

If this song doesn't seem familiar, then I'm sure you must know "Oti pio omorfo," played frequently on Blue TV. And if you still don't know who I'm talking about, do not despair; Stathi Raftopoulos is so quickly sweeping the Greek scene with his voice and charm that you will definitely know him by the end of the summer. I had a chance to sit down and chat with Raftopoulos and was not only charmed by him, but ended up humming his songs the rest of the day as well.

Who is Stathi Raftopoulos? Born in beautiful Rhodes, he began singing at the age of 16, when he was still in High School. "I never really took singing seriously before that, I would only sing at home. One night my friends and I went out to the bouzoukia and someone gave me a mike to sing. After a few days they gave me a job there as a singer."

It didn't take long for Raftopoulos to realize that singing was his passion, and he began to look at it as a possible career. He began to sing at small venues in Rhodes and later on, with the support of his family and friends, moved to Athens to further his singing career. His profound interest in music drove him to learn a bit of all the instruments including baglama, tzoura, guitar and the accordion, which was also the first instrument he learned to play at age 7. "Even if I wasn't a singer I would be doing something in the music business," Raftopoulos states; his love and interest for music is unquestionable.

Stathi Raftopoulos: Greece's new Singing Sensation

By Katherine Skaris

In 2006 when Stathi Raftopoulos appeared in Fame Story 4 of ANT1 it was evident that music and song was his forte. He became well known for his version of "Kryfa Monopatia," and ended the show with a bang by doing a duet with Kaiti Garbi "Isovios Desmos." As soon as the show was over, he was immediately signed with Heaven Music; this is where he got his big break. Phoebus, one of the most famous and leading song writers in Greece, is also a part of Heaven Music. After hearing and seeing Raftopoulos live at Posidonio, Phoebus decided to take him under his wing. He then wrote not 1 song, but the first 3 (he would eventually finish his whole record). This was exceedingly shocking for Phoebus due to the fact that he rarely takes interest in young new singers; evidently Stathi Raftopoulos was someone to take note of. Almost immediately, Raftopoulos became the subject of interest; TV shows and magazines often addressed him as "O Nearos Star" (The Young Star), and "Ena Asteri Genniete" (A Star is Born). And since his 3 song Demo titled "Oti Pio Omorfo" was released, Raftopoulos has appeared as well as sung on Proino Kafe, Kalomeleta Ki Erxete, and Mes Stin Treli Xara. In addition, on May 22, he guest appeared on Gregory Arnaoutoglous' show on the MEGA channel.

As for what he does in his spare time, Raftopoulos explains "I play guitar, write songs, sing and basically annoy all my neighbors who bang on the door and yell ...but sadly I can't do otherwise; I love music;" and it is a good thing he does. When watching Raftopoulos sing it is apparent that he completely gets swept away with his songs; "love, pain, anger and angst and generally all emotions influence and encompass all my music; it is something magical."

In the past year Raftopoulos has sung at Posidonio in Athens alongside Niko Kourkouli, Katerina Topazi and Niko Verti. Currently he is sharing the bill with Christos Cholidis and Thelxi. Although his career is just beginning he does want to eventually "have national and international concerts, especially in NY."

The future of Stathi Raftopoulos is looking to be extremely successful. Aside from singing only songs that he would be proud of singing, he goes on by stating that in the future "I want to continuously be moving forward ...where I will end up I don't know." And with his deep, flawless voice, charm, and amazingly catchy songs, it is hard to see him end up anything but famous, and number 1 in the music scene.

If you haven't yet purchased the demo "Oti Pio Omorfo," be sure to pick up pick up his full-length album, music and lyrics by Phoebus, this summer.



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