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NEO

:: magazine



Special Cypriot American Issue

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Debuts Shutterbug**

**Dina Titus fighting
for Hellenic Issues**

**JoAnna Papageorgiou
brings Beach Volleyball
to ...Greece!**

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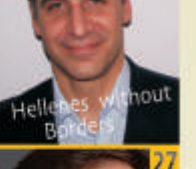
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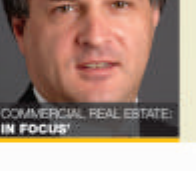
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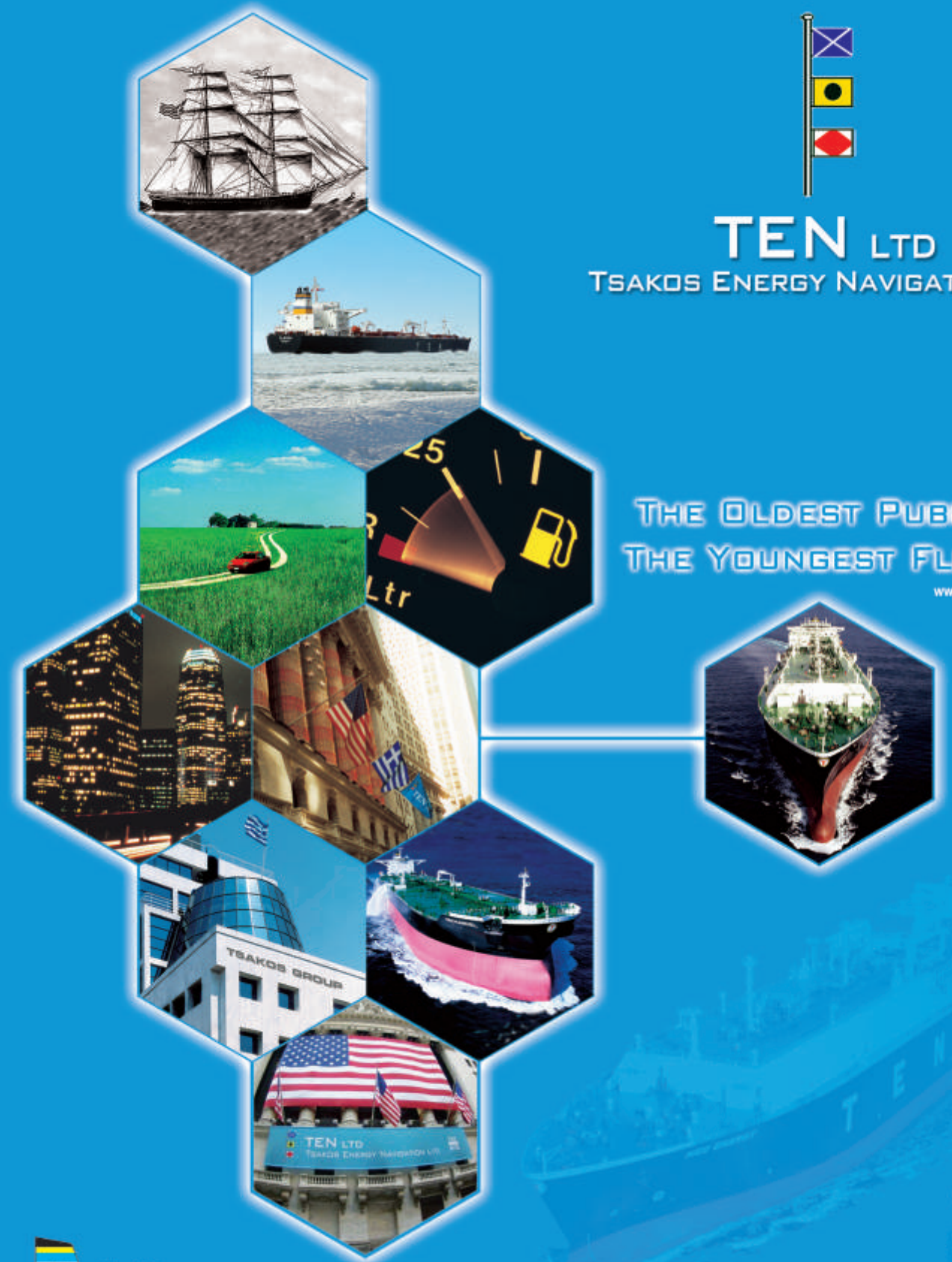
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Doing what's right



FROM THE EDITOR

The good people of Maine knew they had a good thing when they first elected Olympia Snowe to her senate seat: she not only came up the hard way like many of them (overcoming both poverty and the many tragedies in her life), but these hardships seasoned and made her something of a rarity in the current Senate: a thoughtful senator whose decisions are often based on good sense and the good of the country rather than the agenda of any interest group or political party.

"To me, it's not about titles or roles: it's doing what's right, whether that's working with Republicans or Democrats," she told Margarita Pournara in our cover story. "It's considering each bill or proposal and determining whether this was the right way to address a particular problem...The answer begins with resoluteness. It involves cooperation. It understands bipartisanship. And it ends with leadership."

Her brand of leadership, often a lonely road, has made this country great, has made any democracy great, and always comes with perils. They exiled Aristides from ancient Athens for acting on his conscience and Sen. Snowe was pilloried here by the various jackals in and out of office for her typical democratic (with a small "d") bipartisanship on health care reform in what is, after all, still a democratic forum. But that doesn't deter her and which, of course, is very much in character.

"The reality that the status quo is unacceptable was what originally brought six of us together on the Senate Finance Committee last summer in the only bipartisan effort in any committee of the House or Senate," she says.

And now that health care reform is law, she has, in typical fashion, moved on to making it better and making sense of it for her constituents. "Today, we still don't have answers to some of the most fundamental questions that people will be asking at their kitchen tables," she says. "These are the critical questions relevant to peoples' daily lives, such as, what does this mean for me? How much will my health insurance plan cost? How much will my deductible or my co-pay be? How much am I going to have to pay out of my pocket? Not one single member in Congress—Republican or Democrat— can answer those questions."

She, of course, will try, as she always has, as she always sees it her duty to try for her constituents, and for her conscience, which has become a rare commodity in our often-fractious democratic process.

Speaking of fractious, the travails in Greece have also roiled our passions here, of course. It's disturbing to see the country we love so much going through such upheaval and suffering. It's disturbing to see her being singled out for her penury. It's even more disturbing to see the riots in the street and the loss of life. Greeks have always been a proud and passionate people: passionate in their beliefs, passionate in their emotions, passionate in their actions. It's been our strength and sometimes our undoing. We wish our homeland well in these difficult times, and we wish her a speedy recovery. Nothing is tougher, we know, than the Greek people, who found inspiration and nourishment even in the unforgiving Greek soil.

Dimitri C. Michalakis



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Panelists Aristos Constantine, Michael Mavrides and Christian Pelagias

Cyprus: An upcoming Hedge Fund location

On Wednesday, April 14, 2010 The Cyprus Embassy Trade Center in cooperation with the Cyprus-US Chamber of Commerce Cordially hosted a Private, Round-Table discussion on: Redefining Global Operations Strategy; New Strategies for Multi Jurisdiction Management - Considerations for U.S. Companies Investing Through Cyprus.

The audience was addressed by the Trade Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus in New

liability by utilizing Cyprus as part of their international operations and structure.

Mr. Constantine discussed how, as the global economy is slowly struggling to get back on its feet, the hedge fund industry has shown tendencies of shifting from more traditional offshore jurisdictions in the Caribbean to Europe. The shift may, at this stage, be minimal but one of the main reasons why investment managers in the US are beginning to consider

As a result, European fund locations have begun to gain increased popularity in what can be seen as a pre-emptive move by US fund managers. However, whilst Dublin and Luxembourg are the more traditional choice of location, EU member states like Cyprus can also be an attractive alternative.

Mr. Constantine described how Cyprus as a member of the EU since 2004, is also fully compliant with the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Financial Stability Forum.

Mr Pelagias explained how the Cypriot tax system has recently undergone several amendments in order to facilitate the island's competitiveness in the hedge fund industry. With lowest corporate tax in the EU of 10% it also offers full tax exemption on profits from trading securities, no withholding tax on dividends and interests paid out of Cyprus, and a zero tax on dividend income (subject to conditions). In addition the cost of legal fees for setting up a fund in Cyprus it is around €15,000 to €20,000 compared to Luxembourg were the price can range between €70,000 to €100,000. The Cypriot regime also permits local representation of a fund to the regulator rather than direct client presence as in Luxembourg.

"Cyprus already holds the position as one of the most popular holding company jurisdictions in Europe and it has acted as an intermediate jurisdiction for hedge funds investing into Russia, Central Europe and the Middle East for decades" says George Pelagias. "The fact that Cyprus now can be used as a hedge fund location is only natural" he adds.

Whatever the outcome may be in Brussels with regards to the future of third country fund investments in Europe, Cyprus is undoubtedly on the path of becoming a competitive force to be reckoned with within the European financial service industry.



From left, Aristos Constantine, Cyprus Trade Commissioner in New York, Ambassador Andreas Jacovides, Consul General Koula Sofianou, Vassos Vassiliou and Dennis Droushiotis, President of US-Cyprus Chamber of Commerce

York, Mr. Aristos Constantine and industry experts Michael Mavrides, Partner, Bingham McCutchen LLP named one of the leading up-and-coming attorneys in the U.S., and Cyprus based attorney Christian Pelagias of Chr. G Pelagias & Co.

European jurisdictions for their structures are that the conventional zero tax jurisdiction is

The private event was an opportunity to meet with leading legal, administrative and corporate structure specialists, defining relevant multi jurisdiction strategies, tax efficiencies, opportunities for minimizing costs and limiting

Baltimore's new Deputy Mayor Kalliope Parthemios



Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake (left) with newly-appointed Deputy Mayor Kalliope Parthemios.

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake of Baltimore announced recently the new make-up of the Mayor's Office of Economic and Neighborhood Development. The office will be led by newly-appointed Deputy Mayor Kalliope Parthemios, who played an instrumental role in completing the City's agreement with Baltimore Racing Development.

"Deputy Mayor Parthemios will be working closely with businesses and

neighborhoods to make Baltimore's economy and communities stronger," Mayor Rawlings-Blake said.

Ms. Parthemios has served as Assistant Deputy Mayor for Economic and Neighborhood Development since February. She has advised the Mayor on all matters related to development projects, proposed zoning changes, special financing proposals, arts, marketing and tourism, and planning and real estate development outcomes. Previously, in the office of then City Council President Rawlings-Blake, Ms. Parthemios was Deputy Chief of Staff, overseeing Community Outreach, Constituent Services, Business and Economic Development, and the Board of Estimates.

Ms. Parthemios is a Baltimore native, and has worked in public service for many years. She served as a foster care caseworker with Baltimore City Department of Social Services, and as a Public Defender in Baltimore City for five years. She holds a B.A. from UMBC and a J.D. (Juris Doctor) from the University of Maryland School of Law.

Deputy Mayor Parthemios' office will oversee several City agencies related to neighborhoods and economic development including: Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), Housing and Community Development, Department of Planning, Recreation and Parks, Transportation, and Baltimore Office of Promotions and the Arts.

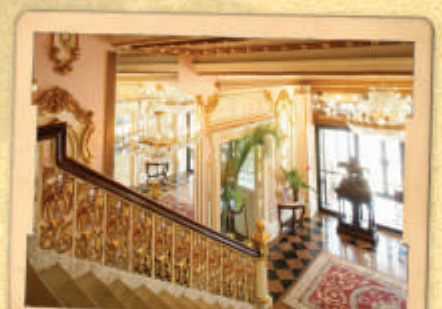


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Political wives take their revenge in Ted Venetoulis' new novel,

Hail to the Cheat

by Dimitri C. Michalakos

Ted Venetoulis knows something about politics: he served as Baltimore County Executive in the '70s, ran for governor in 1978, and is a childhood friend of Nancy Pelosi and her brother Tom, a former mayor of Baltimore. And as both a political operative and observer, he's taken the measure of some of the rascals in the business.

"I noticed that the two House Speakers back-to-back who were trying to impeach Bill Clinton had their own issues," he recalls. "Both were having their own dalliances

and had to resign. And most recently we had the governor of South Carolina flying off to Argentina to meet his mistress—and he was a family values guy. Then there's this senator from Nevada messing around with his chief of staff's wife. And there's the governor of New York having to resign over his scandals with prostitutes. You can't make this up!"

But he took up the challenge and pushed the envelope further with his recently published political spoof of presidential shenanigans and the woman behind the man who won't stand for it called *Hail to the Cheat*, in which the First Lady gets even on her horndog husband by enlisting the ghosts of former First Ladies and taking over the White House and the country.

"She is one extraordinary woman who simply refuses to stand by her man," Venetoulis describes the heroine of his novel. "She stands by her own dignity and principles and won't allow herself to get humiliated. There's a lot of twists and turns in the story and I think some pretty amazing characters who make up the political scene garnered from my years in politics."

Venetoulis, still spry at 70, and still in the thick of his second career as publisher (he's currently chairman of Corridor Media, Inc. and one of the principals interested in buying *The Baltimore Sun*), found the time

to write the novel despite being as busy as ever.

"I have my business and family," he says, "but I have to tell you, it was a joy writing it, because I don't play golf—and my ankles are bad, so I can't play tennis with my kids anymore. This became my hobby, and I've also got another one I'm working on and it's kind of fun."

One of the first comments on the book came from his son: "Hey, Dad, it's a funny book, but I didn't know my dad was so racy." Other reactions have been just as astonished and astonishing: "Every once in a while I check up on Amazon and read the comments," says Venetoulis, "and one of them stuck out: 'If you're looking for a funny book, this is it; if you're looking for a woman's book, this is it; if you're looking for a funny woman's book, get two of them.' And I thought that was pretty good advice."

He's already thinking Hollywood ("A lot of people say it would be an interesting movie; some woman in Hollywood is going to want to play that role"), and he's already considering a sequel: "But it's hard to describe it until you've done it. I think I know where I'm going with it but it's in the very early stages."

In the meantime, as an old political hand, he can't help getting engrossed in the real-life drama of a new administration taking hold in Washington, and as an old political firebrand, getting riled up.

"I'm a Democrat, and Nancy Pelosi and I grew up together, and she's been a longtime friend, and damn it, we've got to show that we can govern, and people are waiting for that, and it's very, very difficult, very

difficult," he vents his frustration. "I was telling my wife the other day that we won the election, and those who win should govern, and those who lost should not be governing, and I don't think we've expressed that strongly enough. You want bipartisanship, but you can't let the folks who lost the election act as if they won. We should say we're changing these policies, this is what we were elected to do, and if we do them and then you don't like them, you can throw us out."

Meanwhile, he and his group of business investors are waiting on the Tribune Company to work out its bankruptcy proceedings and decide the dispensation of the venerable *Baltimore Sun*. "Of course, the big issue is, what do you get after you get it, if you get it? The way newspapers are today—not just newspapers—magazines, all the old style print-oriented publications; they're all having trouble, because we haven't handled the whole Internet process appropriately. I don't know if we were too old fashioned, or just didn't get it. There are a lot of big brains working on this thing, but they haven't figured it out yet: The *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, they're all having trouble figuring out how to handle this particular media. So why get into this? my wife says."

Then, as an old print man, he answers his own question: "I mean, what is a town without a paper? I don't get it. Who's going to look at these places and write about what's going on and what everybody's doing? A community needs its paper. If you're in danger of losing a sports team, you go out and you build them a stadium to try to keep them, or to get them back. But for a newspaper what do you do? And that would be a more significant blow to a community in my mind than the loss of a sports franchise. And I think those of us who have that understanding and sense of responsibility have an obligation to do this. It might not work but I think I would feel remiss, and the others with me, if we didn't at least make the effort."

But still he never forgets to check up on politics, and even after dropping out himself ("I was tired of shaking hands and schmoozing and smiling fixedly"), he never ceases to be amazed by the fortitude of those who survive and even thrive in it. "I admire Paul Sarbanes, who was very quiet and laid back, but was a terrific senator. And I'm amazed by his son, John, who's a terrific public official and might be even better than his dad, if that's possible."

And he regularly checks up on his old friend Nancy, who he once dated ("We were always talking politics") and who he credits with steering Obama in the right direction. "They rough her up, but it rolls right off of her," he marvels. "She still has her sense of humor, and remembers her friends, and remembers her values. It's just a staggering performance."

Very much like the First Lady of *Hail to the Cheat*?

"Yes," he says of Nancy, but it could also apply to his beleaguered First Lady, "she only takes the crap that she does because she's a woman."

We care. We want Greece to prosper.

By John P. Calamos Sr.

Once again, Greece is at an important crossroads. I believe, however, that despite its current difficulties, Greece can once again take its place as a leader in western civilization.

I recently had the privilege of being among a group of Greek American business leaders who met with Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou to offer our views on how Greece could compete successfully in the world economy. Mr. Papandreou seemed sincerely interested in our opinions, listening intently and taking copious notes.

Since then I have continued to consider what can be done and, most importantly, how we might be able to help. Our recent celebration of Greek Independence Day only served to remind us all, not only of the intense struggles of the Greek people, but also of the deep meaning and strength we all take from our Greek heritage. We care. We want Greece to prosper.

The reality is that Greece's entrance into the Euro zone has had unintended consequences. Greece is not competitive. The country's global trade deficit in 2009 was \$42.8 billion, 250% of its total exports. Greece's primary competitive trade advantage lies in agricultural products such as vegetables, dairy products and eggs. Unfortunately, any recovery based on such products will likely prove unsustainable because of abundant supplies from other trade nations.

On March 2, Prime Minister Papandreou announced that Greece's debit is now over \$400 billion, a staggering 125% of Greece's gross domestic product (GDP). The challenge is to find a way that will enable Greece to both reduce its debt and increase its competitive stance in the global economy. Debt reduction requires the adoption of an austerity program of unprecedented severity—one that would significantly cut government spending, raise taxes and depress salaries. These actions, of course, are the direct antithesis of what is needed to grow the economy, create jobs, enhance demand and make Greece competitive.

As painful as it sounds, I believe that Greece should heed the advice of the many European academic who have suggested that Greece withdraw from the Euro. They estimate that a 40% devaluation would be required to enable the Greece currency to recover the ground loss since entering the Euro.

Greece could also benefit from the wisdom that the Chicago School of Economics and Milton Friedman provided to Chile many years ago. As a result of policies adopted in response to the Chicago School's coaching, I believe the devastation caused by the recent earthquake in Chile will not have a serious long-term impact on the country's economy. In fact, it might even boost growth by fueling a boom in the construction industry.

Why is the Chilean economy in such good shape? Since the country returned to democracy in 1990, Chile has combined a free-market economy with prudent government spending. As a result, Chile has one of the lowest government debt to economic output ratios in Latin America. At the same time, its inflation rate is currently at 1.5%, and the Chilean interest rate is 0.5%. Not only does Chile have ample resources abroad to help finance the cost of its rebuilding efforts, its strong credit rating will enable the country to borrow any additional funds it needs to advance reconstruction at extremely good rates on the international markets.

What does all this mean for Greece? Some of Greece's economic problems are highly specific—a dated legal system, a closed economy and the lack of a centralized land registry. However, Greece also shares the problems of other European countries that offer substantial benefits to all its citizens. History records that government largesse generally leads to massive unemployment. Research shows that generous unemployment benefits, wage guarantees and employment protection policies hurt both productivity and the economy as a whole.

There is abundant research and historic precedent that can help Greece once again become a leader. Now is the time to for Greece to take control of its economy and begin the work needed to ensure a strong future!

John P. Calamos, Sr. is CEO/Co-CIO of Calamos Investments www.calamos.com.
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PHOTO: David S. Rubin

FILMMAKER MINOS PAPAS DEBUTS SHUTTERBUG

by Katerina Georgiou

In Greek mythology, Apollo says to his son Phaethon: "Ask me anything and I promise it shall be yours." His son replies that he wants to drive his father's chariot. Apollo reluctantly agrees, and Phaethon soars across the sky pulling the sun behind him. But sensing his inexperience, the horses overpower Phaethon and stampede to the top of the sky then down to the earth—causing the sun to set the earth on fire.

While making his debut feature, *Shutterbug* filmmaker Minos Papas felt a connection to this myth. His father, Michael Papas, is the critically acclaimed director, who, at age twenty-four, made "The Private Right"—a film that was part of the first wave of independent cinema in Europe in the 1960's.

Now thirty-three, Papas was in his late 20's when he made *Shutterbug*. And while the pressure to live up to his father's legacy is undeniable, it's clear that the younger Papas possess an original voice with something to say.

"I was at a point where I really had to make a feature film, and for me the best way to learn how to make a movie was to actually do it," he said.

By no means a novice, Papas was a graduate of New York's School of Visual Arts with nine short films under his belt before making *Shutterbug*. The feature is an extension of his award-winning thesis—a short called "Kalipolis." In both, New York is a landscape for "characters and journey."

Like *Shutterbug's* protagonist, Alex Santiago (Nando del Castillo), Papas found himself questioning the deeper meaning of life, love and work.

Alex is a successful photographer who is driven to understand that which cannot be perceived by others. In this case, it's the apparition of a mysterious woman who enters his field of vision (and photographs) after he looks directly at the sun. The incident turns his life upside down, and sets him on an odyssey for the truth that involves a few metaphysical twists.

Inspired in part by Dante's *Inferno*, the film weaves in elements of the underworld as portrayed in Greek, Egyptian and Native American mythology.

"For me it's about how two people are connected by light," said Papas. "Alex is searching for someone. He meets a muse on his journey and she's sort of guiding him until he figures it out who she is."

It took a month to write the script and just over thirty days to shoot it. He spent two years editing it at home on his Mac—a feat so remarkable that earlier this year he was invited to give a presentation at the Apple store in Soho to explain how he did it.

As if writing, directing and editing the film wasn't enough, Papas self-financed it too. The \$15,000 budget is a modest figure even by independent standards.

Most of the crew and actors were long-time collaborators of Papas', including the film's star Del Castillo, cinematographer Rossana Rizzo and composer Tao Zervas. Together, they created a feast for the senses and a unique story that leaves the audience with the feeling that they've just visited a different world.

"I didn't have any department heads like a wardrobe person or an art department or sound department," he said. "So I had to make all these choices, and I was making 100 choices per day."

He was guided along by some good advice from his father: "There's a solution to every problem."

Born in London and raised in Cyprus, Papas' childhood home doubled as his parents' production office. His British mother, Susan produces her husband's films.

"My life has been pretty much a film school growing up with my parents," he said. "There were casting calls and production meetings, and I was upstairs playing with my toy soldiers."

Given his upbringing there was little question of what he might become. "From five years old I had a camera in my hand," he said. "It was second nature to me." Still, his father urged him to take his time to think about filmmaking as a career.

Though he had a talent for writing and drawing, the desire to make movies eclipsed everything else. At sixteen, he made the short film "Whispers" that won first place in a film competition in Helsinki, Finland. That opened the door to a filmmaking workshop in Hungary where he made another short film. Later, while doing his military service in Cyprus, he became the army's official cameraman.

Today, aside from having completed his first feature, he runs Cyprian Films New York, a production company that offers a variety of film and video services including: features, shorts, documentaries, real estate videos and event coverage.

"Making a feature film was the big thing to accomplish—to prove to myself that I could do this."

And prove it he did.

Shutterbug enjoyed a two-week run at New York's Cinema Village art-house theater in March of this year and opened this month in LA. While self-distributing *Shutterbug*, Papas is currently developing and seeking investment for his new film, an ecologically themed sci-fi project.

For more information see:
www.shutterbugthefilm.com and
www.cyprianfilmsny.com

Director Minos Papas.



Aravella Simotas for the New York State Assembly



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

If elected, Aravella Simotas will be the first Greek American woman holding elected office in New York.

Aravella Simotas, a lifelong Astoria resident and community activist, kicked off her campaign for New York State Assembly in the 36th District, in front of an enthusiastic crowd of over 200 people, packed into the Taminent Democratic Club. The gathering included family, friends and a wide array of political and community leaders from throughout Queens among them Assembly Member Mike Gianaris, Congressman Joseph Crowley, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, former Council Speaker Peter F. Vallone Sr., State Senator George Onorato, State Senator Jose Peralta, Council Member Peter Vallone Jr., and Council Member James Van Bramer.

Aravella formally launched her campaign telling the excited crowd that she is ready to go to Albany and stand up for the working men and women of Astoria. She also spoke about the need for expanded health care services and the need to ensure that our public schools get the money they deserve. "I am so proud to stand here today in front of so many of my neighbors, friends and colleagues as we continue the fight to make sure that the working men and women of Astoria have another great ally in Albany," she stated. "I will fight to make sure every resident has access to health care services and that our schools are properly funded and I will make sure that Con Edison and the other polluters are held responsible for the damage they have caused."

"I know what it takes to represent this community in Albany and Aravella has what it takes. Aravella has the strength to fight back against powerful interests like Con Edison," stated Assembly Member Mike Gianaris who will run for State Senator.

"Aravella grew up in this community and she knows what it needs. She will make sure that we get our fair share of resources and funding from Albany," said Council Member Peter F. Vallone. "We need a strong

fighter and Aravella will be that fighter."

Aravella Simotas is a practicing attorney with a deep rooted commitment to her community and public service. A lifelong resident of Astoria, Queens, she is a long time member of Community Board 1, and currently sits on committees addressing Zoning and Variance; Industrial, Commercial, Cable T.V. and Communications; Parks and Recreation, Cultural Services, OTB; and Legal, Legislation and Parliamentary Procedures. Aravella also serves on the boards of the United Community Civic Association and the Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund. If elected she would be the first Greek-American woman elected in any New York office.



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

From left, Philip Christopher, Nick Mouyaris, Assemblyman Mike Gianaris, Aravella Simotas, Councilman Peter Vallone Jr. and Peter Papanicolaou at a recent fundraiser in Astoria.

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Photo: Maria Tolos

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When history calls, history calls, says Sen. Olympia Snowe on her bipartisan approach



By Margarita Pournara

In 2005 she was named the 54th most powerful woman in the world by Forbes. In 2006, TIME magazine ranked her one of the top 10 U.S. senators, the only woman so recognized. When first elected to Congress in 1978, at the age of 31, she was the youngest Republican woman and the first Greek-American woman,

Snowe was born Olympia Jean Bouchles in Augusta, Maine, the daughter of Georgia Goranites and George John Bouchles. Her father immigrated to the United States from Sparta, Greece. She is a member of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Lewiston, Maine. Snowe's early life had more than its share of tragedies; her mother died of breast cancer when she was eight and her father died of heart disease barely a year later. She was raised by her aunt and uncle in Auburn, Maine; her aunt was a textile mill worker and her uncle a barber, along with their five other children. Her brother John was raised separately, by other family members. Within a few years, illness would also claim her uncle's life.

Following her mother's death, Snowe was sent to Saint Basil's Academy, a Greek Orthodox Catholic institution that cares for children in Garrison, New York, where she remained from the third grade to the ninth and was taught by Athena Hatzimmanuel. Returning to Auburn, she attended Edward Little High School, before entering the University of Maine in Orono, in 1969, where she earned a degree in Political Science. Shortly after graduation, Bouchles, married her fiancé, Republican state legislator Peter Snowe. She then received an honorary degree from Bates College in 1998, and another from the University of Delaware in 2008.

Snowe entered politics and rose quickly, winning a seat on the Board of Voter Registration and working for Congressman William Cohen. Tragedy struck Snowe again in 1973, when her husband was killed in an automobile accident. At the urging of family, friends, neighbors and local leaders, Snowe ran for her husband's Auburn-based seat in the Maine House of Representatives at the age of 26 and won. She was re-elected to the House in 1974, and, in 1976, won election to the Maine Senate, representing Androscoggin County. That same year, she was a delegate to both the state and national Republican conventions.

Olympia Snowe was elected to the US House of Representatives in 1978, and represented Maine's 2nd Congressional District from 1979 to 1995. She married John "Jock" McKernan, then Governor of Maine, in February 1989. Snowe and McKernan had served together in Congress from 1983 to 1986, when McKernan represented the 1st District. While Snowe was First Lady of Maine from 1989 to 1995, she also served as a U.S. Representative.

In 1994, when Senate Majority Leader George J. Mitchell declined to run for re-election, Olympia immediately declared her candidacy for the seat and she won by 60% of the votes, carrying every county in the state. Snowe was part of the Republican electoral sweep of 1994, in which Republicans captured the House and Senate for the first time since 1954. She was easily reelected in 2000 and 2006, and she is now a member of the Select Committee on Intelligence, the Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation, the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship. In 2001 she became the first Republican woman ever to secure a full-term seat on the Senate Finance Committee.

You are about to participate and be honored at the 26th Annual Cyprus and Hellenic Leadership Conference in Washington DC. Your thoughts on that?

As the first Greek-American woman elected to both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate, I have always felt there could be no greater tribute to my heritage than working on matters of vital concern and relevance to our ancestral homeland. As members of the Hellenic community, we are defined by our long and proud dedication to liberty, democracy, and human dignity. With this in mind, protecting the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople from persecution, and ending the illegal occupation of the north of Cyprus, remain as enormous imperatives that will require constructive engagement and a strong commitment from those willing to champion human rights. You can be assured that whether it's working to help end the illegal occupation of Cyprus, or fighting to further strengthen U.S.-Greece relations, I will never stop putting my "Mediterranean tenacity" to work.

Your childhood and young adulthood were marked by personal tragedies. How have those experiences shaped your character?

What I experienced as an eight-year-old, when my mother had breast cancer, and the struggle that my parents went through, has had a profound influence on me and helps guide, and focus, my decision-making process. When my mother was sick, we were living in a small apartment in Lewiston. I was so young, but I knew we didn't have a lot ...my mother wasn't working at this point and we didn't have much money ...no car, either, and I don't know if we had insurance, but I can't imagine – given our circumstances – that we did. I remember wondering what was going to happen. When you're young, you're not fully aware of the toll a devastating illness can take on a family. But later in life, reading letters my mother wrote to friends and relatives, it was quite obvious that it was excruciatingly painful—emotionally, physically, and financially – on my entire family. When you don't have much, a catastrophic illness, and the financial ramifications resulting from that, it's a horrifying prospect – and that never leaves you. That thought of desperation and fear of getting sick, or having gotten sick and not knowing how to manage the mounting medical bills, never leaves my mind. Someone who gets sick should never have to worry about how they're paying their bills – they should be solely focused on their treatment and getting back to good health as quickly as possible.

You've had a distinguished political career and built a strong reputation as a moderate. You were the only Republican Senator to vote for the Democratic leadership's health care reform last fall. You were severely criticized by some in your party for that decision.

Having been fully immersed in this issue for the entire year, and as the only Republican

to vote for health reform in the Finance Committee, I deeply regret that I could not support the health care reform legislation the Senate passed in December, given my continued concerns with the measure, and (with) an artificial and arbitrary deadline of completing the bill before Christmas, which in my view, shortchanged the process on this monumental and trans-generational effort. I remain convinced we must work toward a responsible, common sense solution to reverse the trend of spiraling health care costs that will cause one-in-four Americans this year to have either inadequate coverage or none at all, and threatens affordable coverage for millions more Americans in the future. I couldn't agree more that reform is an imperative, and I will continue my constructive efforts to forge effective, common sense health care reform as the process moves forward. The reality that the status quo is unacceptable is what originally brought six of us together on the Senate Finance Committee last summer in the only bipartisan effort in any committee of the House or Senate in the so-called Group of Six, convened by Chairman Max Baucus. We met 31 times, week after week for over four months, to debate policy and not politics. Today, we still don't have answers to some of the most fundamental questions that people will be asking at their kitchen tables. These are the critical questions relevant to peoples' daily lives, such as, what does this mean for me? How much will my health insurance plan cost? How much will my deductible or my co-pay be? How much am I going to have to pay out of my pocket? Not one single member in Congress – Republican or Democrat – can answer those questions.

What do you think has to be done?

We must now spend the time necessary to get this right. Legislation affecting more than 300 million Americans deserves better than midnight votes on a bill that cannot be further amended and that no one has had the opportunity to fully consider – and the Senate must step up to its responsibility as the world's greatest deliberative body on behalf of the American people.

Do you think that American political life has become overly polarized?

To me, it's not about titles or roles; it's doing what's right ...whether that's working with Republicans or Democrats. It's considering each bill or proposal and determining whether this was the right way to address a particular problem. Americans have little trust in the ability of Congress to address their concerns or the problems of our nation. No wonder our approval ratings as an institution have reached all-time lows!

The answer begins with resoluteness. It involves cooperation. It understands bipartisanship. And it ends with leadership. Our government, our nation, our political system, and our people have persevered in the face of enormous challenges, because people of good will have gotten involved and worked together. The fact is, no party has a lock on good ideas – and especially when it comes to the major issues, for any proposed solutions to have true credibility with the American people, they cannot simply represent the desires of those on the political extremes. So I fully expect to continue working on behalf of my constituents in Maine and in the best interests of the American people. But for those people who know me, my role in the 111th Congress has been no different than the role I've been playing throughout my career.

You have managed to accomplish so much in a time when it was still hard for women to take a leading role in political life.

I believe women have always had something to say and have always had a unique and strong role to fill in the public sphere. Yet, it was that proverbial "glass ceiling" that needed prodding (or maybe jackhammering!) to break away from the traditional public perception of women. I often think of the question posed by a sixth grade girl that if women make up half of population of the United States, shouldn't there be 50 women in the Senate? Of

"Those who get sick should never have to worry about how they're paying their bills – they should be solely focused on their treatment and getting back to good health as quickly as possible"

course this concept doesn't exactly comply with the principles of our Constitution; but it's promising and humbling to hear such notions of equality and empowerment from such young women. When I was young, such ideas of political equality were not so engrained in our minds. It has taken years of pushing (and we're still pushing!) to create an "open door" policy for women in politics.

What would you say to young women who feel that they have to choose between a demanding career and a full-fledged family life?

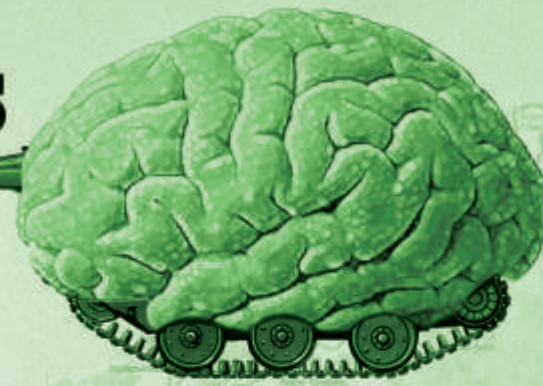
I always like to remind women that Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, but she did it backwards and in high heels. Women face complex challenges and stereotypes regarding their roles in the public sphere and their ability to juggle a family with a career. It's a debate that has been going on for my entire lifetime and surely as long as women realized that life outside the cave wasn't so bad and went out to hunt and gather for themselves.

"The fact is, no party has a lock on good ideas. Our government, our nation, our political system, and our people have persevered in the face of enormous challenges, because people of good will have gotten involved and worked together"

CYPRUS: THINK TANKS

By Andreas C. Chrysafis

(NOT JUST ARMY TANKS!)



The negotiations in progress on the Cyprus issue have been praised by world leaders as the last chance to reach an agreement to the ongoing problematic question for the re-unification of the island. Full of optimism Mr. Demetris Christofias, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, made it his election campaign to resolve the Cyprus issue where all others have failed and if not, he will not run for another term in office. He gambled on the fact that Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat, a moderate and the leader of the Turkish Cypriots was a personal friend of his and both shared similar ideologies in socialism. Few years ago, Cyprus experienced an identical scenario between Denktash and Clyrides who were also good friends; those talks equally amounted to failure!

Two years on, and those aspirations may possibly now go up in smoke...! At the recent "elections" in the occupied area, Mr Talat has been ousted by an ultra right wing nationalist. More than 162.000 Turks cast their vote at the polls and a question arises: where did all these "registered" voters come from? Certainly they were not indigenous Turkish Cypriots (appx.65.000 living on the island) but rather "imports" aimed to alter the demographic character of the island before a solution can be reached. No official figures are available but it is estimated that over 320.000 mainland Turks have now settled in the northern part of Cyprus.

For 36 years, these on/off talks have achieved nothing but rather helped to wedge the "partition" of the island. The general public on the other hand are not optimistic and the results of a recent nationwide poll showed that 80% of Cypriots do not have faith in the negotiations. It raises serious questions as to why these talks have bitterly failed to produce positive results all these years. What is it that it's so badly wrong that no agreement has been reached so far? The answer has always been elusive.

Under normal conditions, the track record of past experiences is a good barometer of the present. In the case of Cyprus, it illustrates that the past performance of home-grown politicians attempting to resolve crucial issues has been marginal and very limited indeed. On the other hand, the coffee-house mentality hails supreme amongst the echelons of the Cypriot political life and it's certainly not the way to forward.

In Greece, it is this kind of attitude compounded by a thriving black-market economy, an intransigent over-bloated public sector and institutional corruption that broke the camels back. Greece did not take effective measures to deal with its problems instead; it wily swept them under the carpet in the hope that they will never surface! Meanwhile, the powerful and influential, especially the banking institutions the likes of the giant Goldman Sachs and others, made billions out of the cover-up - and a most embarrassing situation for the Greek nation indeed!

Cousin-Cyprus is no different; it is also infected by the same Hellenic virus. Is there a storm on the way? Economic analysts predict that if no immediate steps are taken to protect the economy it's only a matter of time before currency speculators make their next move;

they have already set their sights on Cyprus! As everyone knows, the currency markets do not take prisoners!

To understand why Cyprus always trips from one frying pan into another, one has to first recognize the behaviour of the ruling elite; after all, it is they that have been steering the cart from the very beginning. A great number of them truly believe that they know everything there is to know. Their motto is: "if they don't already know it...it's not worth knowing!" and quickly brush aside that which does not comply with their own political ideology.

In time such attitudes may change and it will not be a bad thing. Positive results are brought about by fair-minded affirmative actions and not political point-scoring. In the case of Cyprus this has always been its drawback. There exists a political haemorrhage causing an ungodly schism amongst the nation for far too long. Unless society tackles this problem head-on, there is little room or prospect for a change in the future. The nation desperately needs to be overhauled and rejuvenated with new ideas, new institutions, more universities, fair and just laws and finally, bury the detestable past for good.

One of those positive changes it's recognising the importance of introducing and establishing new foundations such as brain institutions. Cyprus cannot afford to lag behind other progressive nations and by using these powerful brains known as Think Tanks or Policy Institutes is a way forward.

There is a treasure trove of great minds in Cyprus but unfortunately - and for political expediency - these minds have not been capitalized upon or utilized effectively. Their impact on resolving serious issues could prove of paramount importance but so far, no government in office dared to consider such revolutionary ideas. It preferred to let this wonderful national asset go to waste and sadly...wasted it has been indeed!

In 1831 at the initiative of the Duke of Wellington the first Think Tank, known as the Institute for Defense and Security Studies (RUSI) was founded. The Fabian Society followed next in 1884.

A study in early 2009 found a total of 5,465 Think Tanks worldwide. Of that number, 1,777 were based in the United States; approximately 350 in Washington, DC alone. The UK has 130, Germany 15, France 17, Canada 12, Ireland 8

and the list goes on to include Australia, Iran, Japan, China, India, Pakistan and so on. It is no wonder these nations made great leaps ahead in technology, sciences, medical research, manufacturing and other areas crucial to their nation's competitiveness.

In Greece there are 17 such "research organizations" as they are commonly known but unfortunately they are ideologically linked with political parties and are not really Think Tanks as such but rather party policy organizations. Their impartiality is questionable.

Many of these professional international Policy Institutes are funded by their governments, interest groups or businesses while others derive their income from consultation on Research & Development. Most companies in progressive nations, they normally allocate a percentage (between 2-5%) in their budget for R & D in their attempt to find solutions or new discoveries for a steady economic growth - that is, if they want to stay ahead of the competition! Governments offer lucrative tax incentives to help companies capitalize upon the expertise of Think Tanks but in Cyprus, such luxury is non-existent...

It has been proven that Policy Institutes are most important, particularly in the security and defense field. Most governments seek the advice of these unique consultancies to provide them with an impartial analysis and proposals to overcome impending situations. In the United States for instance, such institutes form both foreign and domestic policy.

On 16th April, 1941, the British government could not decide on a foreign policy decision and offered the Cyprus question to a Think Tank headed by Professor A.J. Toynbee at the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Balliol College in Oxford with a simple question: "What do we do with Cyprus? Keep it or hand it over to Greece as promised to them?" In a well drafted memorandum prepared by Professor H. Beeley a level-headed expert in Middle East Affairs, the answer was swift and decisive: "Keep it...!" The rest is history.

If Cyprus is to become a modern progressive nation, it has to break down old dogmatic barriers and reach out for new goals. Above all else, it needs to broaden up its sights and take the initiative to encourage the establishment of a variety of these tried and tested brain institutions. Consequently, government and industry alike would start to build upon the non-politically-affiliated counsel of these rare breed of wise academics, professionals and other experts in their field of excellence. Alternatively, "brain imports" is another way to pave the way forward.

How many Think Tanks or Policy Institutes operate in Cyprus...? Absolutely none...!

Andreas C. Chrysafis (info@evandia.com) is published author of: *ANDARTES (Historical Novel)*, *WHO SHALL GOVERN CYPRUS - Brussels or Nicosia? (Political analysis)* and *PORPHYRA in PURPLE (Adventure/Metaphysical novel)*.



From left, Kostas Hatzistefanidis, President Ted Stamas and Comptroller George Maragos



Comptroller George Maragos, Vince Tabone, Councilman Dan Halloran, Senator Frank Padavan and Republican Chairman Phil Ragusa

PHOTOS: ETA PRESS

AHEPA in Whitestone holds Annual Fete



Kostas Hatzistefanidis, Mr. & Mrs. Maragos, Ted Stamas, Mr. & Mrs. John Deligrammatikas and Nick Manekas



Petros Ragoussis with family and friends



Comptroller George Maragos with friends originating from his native island of Lefkas, Greece



Nick Manekas and John Deligrammatikas



Members of the The Andreas T. Stamboulidis Parthenon Chapter



From left, Vangelis Gerasimou, John Tsolis, Steve Valiotis and Thomas Zoitas

The Andreas T. Stamboulidis Parthenon Chapter of the Order of AHEPA hosted its 29th Annual Dinner Dance at the Holly Cross in Whitestone, NY, community center, honoring Nassau County Comptroller and, although not officially declared yet, United States Senate Candidate George Maragos. AHEPA member and President of the Holly Cross Parish in Whitestone, Mr. John Delagrammatikas was also honored, as was Nick Manekas for his life time work in the community. It was only fitting that proceeds from the event were donated mainly to the building fund of the Church. However, over the years, the chapter has contributed to many worthwhile causes, such as the Ronald McDonald House of New York, St. Basil's Academy, St. Michael's

Home for the Aged, Freedom for Cyprus, YASA, HANAC, the Ahepa District Christmas Party, the Federation of Hellenic Charities, the Greek Independence Day Parade, the Hellenic Society of Constantinople and other causes near and dear to the Greek community.

Both, State Senator Frank Padavan and Councilman Dan Halloran were present and saluted the event. They were joined by Republican Party Chairman Phil Ragusa, New York City Council candidate Vince Tabone and Republican Party organizer Kimon Thermos.

Ted Stamas, President of the Andreas T. Stamboulidis Parthenon Chapter, opened the event and welcomed the participants.

He also introduced Comptroller George Maragos who in turn thanked everybody and promised to work even harder to ensure that their money as taxpayers will be properly applied, making every effort to curtail on waste and mismanagement. He then went through a general overview of the US and New York economy, indicating that much need to be done in order for the country and state to get back on track by producing more wealth and real development.

For President Theodore A. Stamas (Stamboulidis), there is another reason that makes his involvement in the organization so special. "Our Chapter was founded by my late father, Andreas Stamboulidis 29 years ago," he explained in an interview with NEO. "He had been a longstanding member and for several years was the President of the Hermes Chapter 186. He was also elected Supreme Governor of the national organization. Shortly after his death in early 2000, in order to honor him, the national organization of AHEPA renamed our Chapter the Andreas T. Stamboulidis Parthenon Chapter of Whitestone, New York."

Since its inception, the Chapter has contributed tremendously to the financial well being of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church of Whitestone and to the physical and spiritual well being of its members. "We have done over \$250,000 in monetary contributions to our church for its building fund and the building fund of our community center," says Stamas. "Our members have also worked on the parish council and in other capacities. Our local Chapter has awarded approximately \$12,000 in scholarships to students graduating from our afternoon Greek school."

He also went ahead to especially thank members Mike Katsandonis and Petros Ragoussis for helping organizing the successful event.

DEMETRIOS RHOMPOTIS



HELLENIC AND ORTHODOX CHAMPIONS IN THE US CONGRESS



Name: Dina Titus (D-NV)

District: Nevada's 3rd Congressional District (Clark County, Las Vegas, Henderson and Boulder City)

Committee/Leadership Assignments: Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials - Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment), Education and Labor Committee (Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness - Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education) and Homeland Security Committee (Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response - Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection)

Contact: Phone (202) 225-3252, (702) 387-4941, Fax: (202) 225-2185, (702) 837-0728
Webpage: <http://titus.house.gov/index.shtml>

Regarding the state of the US economy, what are the prospects for recovery, and how soon?

The economic situation is still difficult for many Americans, especially in my home state of Nevada. We have, however, begun to see signs that the economy has hit the bottom and is starting to turn around. When I was sworn into office last year on my grandfather's Greek bible, our country was losing more than 700,000 jobs a month. Now, we are beginning to see job creation. It's not enough and we must continue to do more, but we are moving in the right direction thanks to our efforts such as the Recovery Act, which made critical investments in infrastructure and education, and provides tax cuts for families and small businesses.

What are some of the particular challenges that you are facing in your district?

Jobs and the economy are at the forefront as is the case in many communities across the country. I am working in Congress to focus on efforts to invest in Nevada's abundant renewable energy resources that will diversify our economy and lead to the next wave of innovation and job creation.

Another critical issue facing my district is the foreclosure crisis. Southern Nevada is ground zero. That is why I was one of the first congressional offices to help homeowners on an individual basis. I have heard from too many people who can't get in touch with their lenders, had their paperwork lost, or been incorrectly told they don't qualify for help. I have devoted significant resources from my office to help homeowners, who through no fault of their own, are at risk of foreclosure and need someone to fight on their behalf.

What would you say is the state of our democracy in these challenging and unusually polarized times?

I believe we are seeing a greater polarization

than we have in the past, and it has contributed to the gridlock in Washington. But we must find ways to work together to make real progress for the American people. Our nation faces a number of serious challenges. We cannot afford to play partisan games aimed at scoring political points. We must find common ground and move our country forward on the major issues concerning the security and well-being of the American people.

In various polls conducted throughout the U.S. Congress hasn't fared well with the American people. Why is that, in your opinion, and how do you address the issue as member of Congress?

I understand the frustration of the American people. These are challenging times and we have just suffered from the greatest recession in a generation. People are concerned about their economic security – will they be able to pay their mortgage, afford to send their child to college, or retire with dignity. I am doing all I can to change how Washington works. I have supported efforts to block pay raises for Members of Congress, give all Americans the same kinds of health care choices as members of Congress, and restore rules that require Congress to save a dollar to spend a dollar. I have also cosponsored a number of bills with members of the other party and work with the bipartisan Nevada delegation on issues facing our state. The American people need to know that we are here fighting for them, not just going along with business as usual.

Would you encourage more active voter participation in your decision making as Congresswoman, using the advances of technology, like the Internet and other forms of communication?

The foundation of a strong democracy is participation by its citizens. I encourage everyone to get involved in the process and

make their voices heard. I have used technology and the Internet to reach out to my constituents. My website includes a web page that allows people from the Third District to share their stories with me on their housing situation. If their lenders are ignoring them and losing their paperwork, I want to hear about it so we can hold them accountable.

As a member of the Education and Labor Committee, I will be focusing on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, better known as the No Child Left Behind Act. On my website, parents, educators, or concerned individuals can send me ideas or suggestions on how we need to fix this important legislation.

In addition to using technology, I also have worked to meet face to face with my constituents. I have held nearly a dozen Congress on the Corner events where I sit outside a grocery store for a few hours and people can talk to their Congresswoman and buy their Girl Scout cookies at the same time. I have also held housing workshops, telephone town halls, and workshops on a variety of topics.

Being Greek American, what does it mean to you?

My Greek heritage has always been close to my heart and an important part of my life. I didn't have the privilege of living in a large Greek community, but I was very close to my grandfather, Arthur Costandinos Cathones, for whom I am named. He came to the U.S. through Ellis Island in 1911. Since there was no church or Greek school in my hometown of Tifton, Georgia, my grandfather taught me to count, say a few words, and write the alphabet in Greek and introduced me to wonderful Greek food and culture and values. As an adult, I have traveled to Greece many times and last year had the wonderful honor of representing the U.S. at the opening of the

fabulous new Acropolis Museum in Athens.

What are your thoughts on the Cyprus issue and what are some of the things you've done to support settlement efforts?

I am very concerned with the current status in Cyprus. The attitude and actions of Turkey are both unlawful and unfair. It is time for the world community to work together to find a way to bring a fair solution to this issue. I have been working hard to support the Cypriots. I have signed letters to both President Barack Obama and Secretary Clinton asking them to support a fair and quick resolution to the disagreement. I also had the opportunity to meet with Demetris Christofias, President of Cyprus, just last year to discuss his perspective on the situation and what can be done to bring a swift resolution to this issue. For far too long, native Cypriots have been denied access to their homes and their past. It is far past time for Ankara to negotiate in good faith and agree to a fair solution.

With a new leader in the Turkish occupied area in Cyprus, I will continue to work with my colleagues and the White House to push Turkey for a just solution. I am concerned that Dervis Eroglu, the newly elected President, has a long history of supporting permanent unjust separation and not a fair solution.

Do you consider Turkish provocations in the Aegean a threat to regional stability and international peace? Also, what actions have you taken or do you plan to take to encourage the US to take a stronger stance against this kind of irresponsible behavior?

I am very concerned about Turkey's actions in the Aegean. It is vital that the European and world communities address these actions before they lead to bigger problems. It must be made clear to Turkey that violating the sovereignty of other nations will not be taken lightly by the world community. I had the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister George Papandreou several times in the past year and we discussed the importance of Turkey ending these potentially provocative actions. I offered to be of any assistance that would be helpful in this important endeavor.

Are you aware of the state persecution against the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey and what have you done to address this issue in Congress?

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew during his recent visit to Washington. During his visit he addressed political and religious freedoms in Turkey. I was very inspired by his commitment to world issues including religious freedom

and climate change. I am committed to ensuring the Patriarch has complete political and religious freedoms and will continue to work with my colleagues to encourage Turkey to provide all of these basic freedoms, as well as to allow the Church to reopen the Halki Seminary. I am proud to be a cosponsor of House Resolution 236 which urges Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Since the Bush Administration recognized FYROM as "Macedonia", the country has become more intransigent when it comes to territorial and cultural irredentism against Greece who is a major financial supporter in the region. What kind of action on the part of the US would you promote in order for a mutually acceptable solution to be facilitated?

I disagree with President Bush's decision to recognize FYROM as "Macedonia." I am a firm believer that this is not an appropriate description of the region. Every implication that arises with the word "Macedonia" belongs to Greeks. It is important that this distinction is clarified in world organizations such as the United Nations. I believe that the United States should take a position on this issue to further regional growth and cooperation.

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Joseph R. Ficalora, (right) Chairman, President & CEO of New York Community Bancorp, Inc. (Parent of New York Community Bank and New York Commercial Bank) and Spiros J. Voutsinas (left), President & CEO, Atlantic Bank, division of New York Community Bank, New York Community Bank – Member FDIC.

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Meet Cypriot actress (diplomat, interior designer and much more!)

Joanna Kyriacou



PHOTOS: ETA PRESS

She is beautiful, young, single, an actress, an interior designer, a diplomat and she lives in New York! This perfect combination finds full embodiment in Joanna Kyriacou, an administrative member in the Permanent Mission of Cyprus in the UN, who's recently trying her bets in theater, portraying a young maid about to get married in the "Kitrina Gantia," a Greek play directed by Martha Tomboulidou at the Hellenic Cultural Center. Her natural charm, her ease in captivating the public's attention, her innate grace that flows with every movement, become clear the moment she steps on the stage. Even her slight Cypriot accent when speaking Greek becomes a plus, enhancing her ability to win hearts and minds, the same way certain French actresses do when speaking English (providing they've taken some phonetics in advance).

Being an actress from Cyprus in New York sounds more or less like the anecdotal "an Albanian tourist in Greece!" People would think that Cyprus doesn't even have theater (wrong!) forget about actors! "Actually, Cyprus has many and excellent actors who are not so well known internationally, because they are not supported enough," counters Joanna in her gentle, yet assertive manner. Although she comes from the island of Aphrodite, she's not blonde; she's more on the brunette side, with almond-shaped eyes that reveal a lot of influences. Certainly the island has been at the crossroads for many peoples and civilizations, giving way to a unique osmosis with a refreshingly-scented Greek aftertaste. In that regard, Joanna Kyriacou is the perfect example.

After she studied Business Administration & Economics in Greece, she moved back to Cyprus, where she worked in, what else, offshore businesses. Before getting into modeling and appearing in TV commercials, she worked as an air hostess, while at the same time pursuing studies in modern jazz dance. About three years ago she made the big decision and crossed the Atlantic, settling in New York City, where she has a full time job at Cyprus' Permanent Mission in the UN. She is also working as Interior Designer/Decorator and still finds time to appear on stage. Her first role in New York was in the play "O Xenos", directed by

Andreas Tselepos, followed by the role of "Filio" in "Cuckoo Family", directed by Larisa Antypa.

Cyprus is a small Mediterranean island country of which about half the territory is under Turkish occupation since 1974. Her parents were among the thousands of refugees that had to flee the advancing Turkish troops. "Of course I wasn't born then, my parents lived the drama of the invasion," she says, suddenly invisible shadows clouding her eyes and her mood changes completely. "I visited the occupied territories last summer for the first time and I can tell that I was very touched by what I've seen. It's hard to know that your parents' house is occupied by Turkish people and you cannot live there anymore, only visit it like a tourist." Part of her job in the Mission is to inform people about the great injustice that befell her land, which despite the efforts, continues to this date. She believes, however, that more than politics, people will make a difference. "I've met actors, here in New York, that came from the occupied territories and they are not happy with the situation. They don't want to forget it, they write and stage plays instead so that they can channel their anger and frustration there." Indeed, Turkish Cypriots in the occupied areas are a minority already, thanks to about 40,000 Turkish troops and more than 150,000 colonists who have completely altered the demographics.

New York has been a big school for Joanna and her antennae are up to intercept the city's various waves and frequencies. "I am taking advantage of this great cosmopolis," she admits, relaxing at a sidewalk café on a rarely-beautiful afternoon, sipping the last drops of a milk-foamed frappe. ("Skim milk, of course," she is eager to clarify.) "I'm learning a lot from others and I have the opportunity to see and live other traditions and experience people in ways that I couldn't imagine before." She understands, however, that interaction is a two-way street. "I also brought my own culture here, I didn't just come to take, I have a lot to give and I'm sure this great city can find it very useful. As Greeks we've always been participants, we never liked to be on the side line. Our place is right in the middle of the stage, we are natural performers." Well, at least she is and when asked what we can expect from her in the future: "Everything!" was her answer. "I've done many things in my life already but there is still so much more that I need to do. I owe it to me, to those who love me, to those I love, to my heritage as Greek Cypriot and to been a New Yorker now! There is no time to waste." Indeed, there is not, as she rushes to say good bye and run to afternoon acting classes, leaving me to wonder if that was the reason for her sudden departure or to get away from me and my sleep-inducing questions...
DEMETRIOS RHOMPOTIS

Mario Frangoulis & Friends in New York



George Perris (left) Mario Frangoulis (right)

Fans of acclaimed tenor Mario Frangoulis were in for a special evening on Friday, April 30. The Sony Classical recording artist held a one-night only performance at the Allen Room of Frederick P. Rose Hall, home to Jazz at Lincoln Center. "Mario Frangoulis & Friends," a multi-cultural event conceived by Frangoulis in cooperation with The Greek Institute, benefited the homeless advocacy organization, Give Us Your Poor.

The venue, based on the design of a Greek amphitheater, provided concert-goers with a breathtaking backdrop of the New York City sunset, with sweeping views of Central Park and the Manhattan skyline, as they listened to Frangoulis perform in Greek, English, Spanish, Italian and French. He was joined on stage by beguiling folk and rock songstress Martha Wainwright and up-and-coming pop/jazz sensation George Perris. Grammy-nominated, blues and soul singer

Mighty Sam McClain gave a powerful performance, and shared moving words with the audience of his own experience with homelessness as a young man. The talented nine-member musical ensemble played under the direction of composer Panagiotis Liaropoulos.

Give Us Your Poor is a national public education campaign aimed at ending homelessness in the U.S. It's a cause close to Frangoulis' heart. In 2007, he teamed up with Give Us Your Poor for a concert and compilation CD along with Bruce Springsteen, Bon Jovi, Bonnie Raitt and other artists.

Since exploding onto the global music scene in 2002, Frangoulis has released nine CD's, including 2009's "The Season of Love: Manos Hadjidakis." He plans to release a follow-up album of the composer's works, as well as an international album of his own in the fall of 2010.

Visit his website at:
<http://www.mariofrangoulis.com/>

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American Hellenic Institute National Public Service Awards Dinner

The Washington, DC, based American Hellenic Institute (AHI) honored a renowned set of Greek Americans at its 35th Anniversary Hellenic Heritage and National Public Service Awards Dinner, held recently at the Capital Hilton. United by their important career achievements and by their contributions to the Greek American community and the community at-large, this year's honorees were John Aniston, Award-winning actor, Peter Karmanos, Jr., Chairman & CEO of Compuware Corporation, owner, Carolina Hurricanes of the NHL and Philanthropist, Niki Leondakis,



(L-R) AHI Executive Director Nick Larigakis, Rep. John Sarbanes and former Senator Paul Sarbanes.



(Right) Peter Karmanos, Jr. being presented the Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award by his friend Jim Mavrikos.



Niki Leondakis being presented with the Hellenic Heritage Achievement Award by her Husband Bob Pucinni.



(L-R) AHI (Right) Peter Marudas presenting Emanuel "Manny" Rouvelas with the Hellenic Heritage National Public Service Award.



(L-R) At the Greek Embassy Dinner are AHI President Aleco Haralambides, Ambassador Vassilis Kaskarelis, Niki Leondakis, COO, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, Emanuel "Manny" Rouvelas, Partner, K&L Gates LLP and AHI Executive Director Nick Larigakis.



AHI Founder Gene Rossides.

Affaires, acting head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United States; Athena Katsoulos, Deputy Director for European & Eurasian Public Affairs (DOS); Louis Caldera, former Clinton Secretary of the Army; retired Army Brigadier General Stephen Xenakis; John Sitalides, Chairman of the Woodrow Wilson Center Southeast Europe Project; Dennis Menos of the International Association for the Reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures; Larry Michael the Voice of the Washington Redskins; Congressional Candidates George Demos (R-NY) and Dean Scontras (R-ME); President of the American College of Greece, Dr. David Horner and his wife Dr. Susan Horner; Basil Mossaidis, Executive Director, Order of AHEPA; Demetrios Kontolios, President, Chios Societies of America and Canada; Dr. George Moutsatsos, President, AHI-Delaware Chapter; Tina Papadopoulos, President, AHI-New England; Paul Sogotis, President, AHI-California; Kostas Kelas, VP Hellenic Bankers Association of NY; and two AHI members that travelled from Athens, Greece to attend the event, Gregory Kanakaris and Katerina Papathanassiou.

Notable members of the Press attending the dinner were: Helen Thomas, Dean of the White House Press Corps; Christine Brennan, USA Today Sports Columnist; Art Dimopoulos, Publisher, Odyssey Magazine; Greg Pappas, Publisher Greek America; Paul Kotrotsios, Publisher, the Hellenic News of America; Frosene Phillips,

Chief Operating Officer, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, Emanuel L. "Manny" Rouvelas, Partner, K&L Gates LLP and supporter of Hellenic educational endeavors and U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes, Third Congressional District of Maryland. The master of ceremonies for the evening was Thalia Assuras, former CBS News anchor, who currently is a communications consultant.

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

Opening the evening's program was AHI Executive Director Nick Larigakis. The Marines of Headquarters Battalion presented the colors and the American and Greek national anthems were performed by Elena Stavrakas. Father Dimitrios Antokas, Saint George Greek Orthodox Church, Bethesda, Md., offered the invocation. The band Apollonia provided the musical entertainment.

American Hellenic Institute Secretary of the Board of Directors Nicholas G. Karambelas, Esq. introduced the master of ceremonies, Thalia Assuras and then AHI Founder and President Gene Rossides welcomed the evening's guests. He also introduced AHI President Aleco Haralambides.

Other notable guests attending the dinner were, Angelos Pangratis, Charge d'



(L-R) Ted Pedas, Lia Pedas, Greg Pappas and Jim Pedas.



Master of Ceremonies Thalia Assuras, former Anchor, Co-Ancor and National Correspondent for CBS Network News.



Elena Stavrakas performing the American and Greek national anthems.

Managing Editor, The Hellenic Journal; Demetrios Rhompotis, Publisher, NEO Magazine; George Moshos, Executive Producer, Radio Olympus; Angeliki Contis, The National Herald; Katerina Voutsina, DC Bureau Reporter for the Greek Newspaper VIMA and Tom Ellis, DC Bureau chief for Greek Newspaper Kathimerini and Antenna TV.

Former AHI honorees at the dinner included Dr. George Tsetsekos, Dean, LeBow College of Business, Drexel University; Mrs. Marilyn Rouvelas; Dr. Christine Warnke; Reverend John Tavlarides, Dean, Saint Sophia Cathedral, Washington, DC; Kathryn Porter, Tremendous Human Rights Activist; Senator Paul Sarbanes and Evangeline Gouletas.

Byzantine Music is celebrated in Mostly Orthros Festival



Greek folk music performance by the William Spyropoulos School Student Choir of Saint Nicholas, Flushing, New York, directed by Areti Giovanou. The William Spyropoulos School, the largest Greek school in the US, is the first to initiate a Byzantine component in its curriculum.

This year's "Mostly Orthros Festival" by the Axion Estin Foundation was a three-day celebration of Byzantine music through workshops, lectures, and a concert of Byzantine chant and folk music, with CBS anchor John Metaxas serving as Master of Ceremonies.

The Mostly Orthros Festival began with the first of a series of lectures offered by Dr. Katy Romanou, Senior Visiting Scholar of the Onassis Foundation USA. It was Dr. Romanou who in 1972 first translated into English the Great Theory of Music by Chrysanthos of Madytos (1770 - 1846). Chrysanthos reformed the older Byzantine notation, making it simpler by reducing the number of interval and expression signs (neumes) to the most essential.

The lecture was followed by a Byzantine sacred music and Greek Folk music concert. The highlight of the evening was the delivery of the first copy of the book by Theodore Brakatselos, representing the Axion Estin Foundation, along with Nick Kyriakos, chairman of the Rev. Peter N. Kyriakos Endowment Fund, to Professor Stephen Blum, Director of the PhD program in Ethnomusicology of CUNY - Graduate Center.

The concert included notable Greek soloists Christos Chalkias and Eleftherios Eleftheriadis, U.S. violinist Elias Sarkar, and percussionist Ozan Aksoy, a GC doctoral candidate in music. For the finale, the school choir from St Nicholas William Spyropoulos School in Flushing, the largest Greek school in the U.S., joined the ensemble in two folk songs, reading the complex notation with astonishing ease—the school being the first in the U.S. to initiate a Byzantine component in its curriculum.



The newly-formed Axion Estin Great Vespers Choir.

On the third day of the festival, a formal gala, subtitled "A Banquet Celebrating the Byzantine Arts," was jointly presented by the Axion Estin Foundation and The Rev. Peter N. Kyriakos Endowment at the Newington - Cropsey Foundation Gallery in Hastings - on - Hudson. Honored as one of the foremost authorities on Byzantine Art world - wide, Dr. Helen C. Evans, curator, author and educator, received the Axion Award of Excellence during an original event entitled "Creating Sacred Space." New York. Fox 5 News Meteorologist Nick Gregory, served as Master of Ceremonies for the event that also featured renowned speakers in Byzantine architecture, iconography and music. Master Chanters from Thessaloniki, Greece, performed for the audience and the newly published book, "Great Theory of Music" was dedicated to the late Very Rev. Peter N. Kyriakos. "You all who overflow this room stand as a commitment of your community to everyone knowing the greatness and culture of the Byzantine tradition," Dr. Evans said to the sold - out audience in attendance at the Newington - Cropsey Foundation Gallery, where the event was held.

This was the second festival of Byzantine music at the GC in three years. In 2008, the Greek Byzantine Choir flew in from Athens to perform in Elebash Recital Hall before fulfilling its engagement at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Temple of Dendur.

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Καλή Ορεξη!

Famagusta: Cyprus' Sleeping Beauty



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

President of CYPRECO and event organizer Elena Maroulleti

Members of the Greek Cypriot and Greek American community of all generations and ages, including an impressive number of people from the general audience, packed the Stathakion Cultural Center in Astoria, New York, in response to CYPRECO's invitation to attend its special program dedicated to "The Sad Story of Famagusta," perhaps the only "ghost city" in the world and one of the many towns under Turkish occupation following Turkey's 1974 invasion of Cyprus. The event moved everyone in

Famagusta the Professor explained that it all happened when he was first starting out as a young architect and after he was commissioned by the Archbishopric of Cyprus and then President Archbishop Makarios to built two structures in the city. The first was the church of Aghia Trias and the second the Aspelia Hotel. Building the church of Aghia Trias, as he explained, was the most challenging project because many found his idea of building a modern structure as shocking, however, Archbishop Makarios who "was open to new ideas" approved the project and the young architect was justified. Professor David shared some recent photographs of his returning to Famagusta and glancing at his structures behind the barbed wire noting "this is a very painful moment for an architect." However, he spoke with much optimism about the future when Famagusta is returned. In rebuilding the city, "all emotions must be set aside as to how we knew and loved the city," Mr. David stressed adding "a renaissance of Famagusta must be a reconstructive representation to its returning citizens of its many layered history through its significant modern and ancient architecture along with new architecture which is yet to be imagined and realized." Mr. David cautioned that we cannot return to the mistakes of the past by building structures two steps from the beach, noting that "this is unacceptable."

Consul General of Cyprus to New York Koula Sofianou who also comes from Famagusta, talked about the unlawful occupation of the town by Turkish troops stressing the immediate need for U.N. Resolution 550 to be finally enforced. In describing the tragic aftermath of the city which is locked behind the barb wire for 36 long years and deprived of its inhabitants, Ms. Sofianou stressed that this is an absurd situation, "snakes, rats and other predators" now inhabit the city. The return of Famagusta is the first step to a solution to the Cyprus problem, she further stressed.

The President of the International Coordinating Committee Justice For Cyprus Philip Christopher after congratulating CYPRECO and Ms. Maroulleti, conveyed a very inspiring message of solidarity and unity stressing that the Greek American community will continue to work very hard until Cyprus is reunited.

The event was also attended and addressed by the Washington-DC-based attorney Athan Tsimpedes who is currently undertaking a court case in the U.S. against Turkey on behalf of Greek Cypriots. One of the linchpins of his case is that Turkey used US made weapons in its invasion which were not intended to be used in such an aggression.

Poet/lyricist Polys Kyriacou embellished the evening with his recital of four different poems which revived Famagusta's rich history over the centuries but at the same time also expressed the pain for what has happened in 1974, the betrayal and violence that followed on the city and its once-inhabitants, the longing for return as well as the missing

The event ended with a screening of the documentary "Hidden In The Sand" and discussion with its creator Vasia Markides.

CYPRECO's next presentation will take place again at the Stathakion Cultural Center on Friday, June 4th, 8pm. A documentary by Elena Maroulleti, titled "SALAMIS, The Ancient City of Teucer of Telamon," will be screened, highlighting the rich history and culture of Salamis currently under Turkish occupation. Admission is free. For more information and reservations call 718-545-1151 or visit www.aktina.org



PHOTO: ETA PRESS
First row, from left, Poet/lyricist Polys Kyriacou, Keynote Speaker, Dr. Theoharis David, Elena Maroulleti, Andreas Komodromos, Philip Christopher, President of PSEKA, Attorney Athan Tsimpedes, Michael Hadjiloucas, Panpaphian Association of America President, and Consul General Koula Sofianou



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Film Director Vasia Markides

DIASPORA VS. AUTOCHTHONY



Lady of the Mountains, Panagia Sumela Monastery, Trabzon, Pontus (Modern day Turkey)

As a Diaspora Greek and an avid student of history, I often wonder what constitutes a Diaspora community and what is, rather, a remnant of an autochthonous Byzantine community identifying itself with Greece. Last month's issue focused on our quick trip to Constantinople, the quintessential "hameni patrida [lost homeland]." The few thousand Greeks who hang on in Turkey's largest city are locals, with roots in the city for over 25 centuries, far longer than the Turks who progressively expelled them. Venice, as we discussed a few months ago, in my opinion was the first true Diaspora community, as Greeks (or Byzantines) immigrated there, congregated around the Orthodox church, and established institutions and community life that would be familiar to any Greek-American or Greek-Australian.

Greece is a successor state to the Byzantine Empire and like all resurrections of past polities, it is in some ways inaccurate. It lacks the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire that it tried to recreate with the ill-fated Megali Idea (Great Idea). As such, large populations affiliated with Greece, or at least with Byzantium, remained outside the frontiers of the Modern Greek state. At the same time, Greece developed over five centuries a considerable and influential Diaspora. Finally, Greece is not the only successor to Byzantium and other states vie for the souls and the allegiance of these post-Byzantine populations.

Certainly Greek settlement in North and South America, Australia and Central and Northern Europe are clear examples of Diaspora communities, which Greeks founded after immigrating to these distant lands. The Greeks arrived in an alien environment, adjusted as needed to become successful and assimilated to varying degrees. I would also argue that the Greeks of Marseilles in France and Alexandria in Egypt are a Diaspora, even though the Ancient Greeks established their respective cities. The Greeks' emigration to these cities was recent and motivated by economic factors, rather than a continuous community from antiquity. Closer to the Byzantine heartland, the Balkan and Asia Minor Peninsulas, the question is more difficult and as I have found through both research and from personal experience, it is always more controversial.

The Greek-speaking communities of Southern Italy are clear ethno-linguistic remnants of communities who lived in this part of Italy since antiquity. The Byzantine Empire held sway here

until the mid eleventh century and these Greek-speaking Orthodox communities remained, though Roman Catholicism eventually took over ecclesiastical authority by the 1400s. These small, insular communities did not have a strong link to Greece and though Greeks fleeing Ottoman rule did settle in these lands, the local identity reigned supreme. Today, the nine Greek-speaking villages of La Grecia Salentina (a small region in the middle of the Italian heel) maintain several cultural associations emphasizing their music in the local dialect, Griko, a grammatically simpler version of Greek written in the Latin (which itself is an original Greek) alphabet with a fair mixture of Italian words, anachronistic terms and a complete absence of the Turkish expressions that spice modern Greek. When I visited, in 2000, I found that most local people I talked to could carry a simple conversation in Griko and in a few villages, schools teach the language. They view the Greeks in Greece as "cousins" but have no sense of belonging to a Greek nation. They are Roman Catholic Italians, though some locals have converted to Orthodoxy out of cultural discovery, but this is the exception that proves the rule.

When I lived in Bulgaria in the summer of 1994, I saw reminders of Greece everywhere. It makes sense, as Greece and Bulgaria were the heartlands of both the Byzantine and the Ottoman realms and the border between the two countries, in Macedonia and Thrace, really represents a cease-fire line between the Greeks and the Bulgarians, rather than a true ethnic frontier. As a Bulgarian friend once told me, "between us and you (Greeks) there is no border, that's part of the problem." He was more right than he knew, the Greek and Bulgarian ethnicities and identities, both bound in Byzantine Orthodoxy, are thoroughly mixed together. After the Balkan Wars and World War I, Greece and Bulgaria conducted a voluntary population exchange and about 60,000 people went each way. The remaining Greeks in Bulgaria, or Bulgarians in Greece, generally assimilated into their surroundings. It was not difficult, as they were among co-religionists and the only real change was linguistic and state identity, which was still quite fluid. Time and again on the Black Sea coast or in the City of Plovdiv, known to Greeks as Philipoupolis, local Bulgarians would tell me, often as not in decent Greek, about their Greek grandparents.

The whole Black Sea littoral is a veritable necropolis of Hellenism, with still living remnants of "Romiosini" scattered all along the

coasts. City names, Sozopol in Bulgaria, Sevastopol in Ukraine, and Trebizond in Turkey, to name just a few, all bear witness to their lost custodians. In 1814, three Greek merchants in Odessa, Ukraine's second largest city and principal port, established the "Filike Etairia," the secret organization dedicated to the liberation of Greece. Even a century ago, Greek was a key commercial language in the Black Sea basin. Today, in Bulgaria and Romania, Greeks have mostly assimilated or emigrated to Greece. The same is true in Russia, the Ukraine, and Georgia, though all three countries still possess distinctly ethnic Greek villages, clinging on to their identity with the general support of their current governments. Stalin forcibly uprooted many of these communities to Central Asia and several hundred thousand have immigrated to Greece in the past twenty years. When I served in the Greek military a few years ago, a good ten percent of my unit was made up of Russian- or Ukrainian-born Greeks.

Many of these Black Sea Greeks are Pontic Greeks, originally from the Black Sea coast of Turkey. An exceptional lot, Pontic Greeks are in a sense a nation within the Greek nation. Their Diaspora is global, they remain distinctive within Greece though proud to be Greek and in their Black Sea homeland, in Georgia and in Ukraine, their language is still spoken. In Turkey, the Pontic speakers share a common ethnic descent, at least in part, with the Pontic Greeks, but they are Muslims. The Greek-Turkish population exchange basically divided the two nations by religion, to be Orthodox was to be Greek, to be Muslim was to be Turkish. This reflected the Turkish tradition of identifying their subjects by religion and was replicated by all of the successor states, whether Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, or Serbia. I am not going to speculate on whether these Pontic Muslims feel a kinship with their Orthodox kin, but they do live in Pontus, a quintessential Hammeni Patrida. At least, the ability to go to the villages above Trebizond today and to hear a form of Greek spoken in general parlance displays the profound reach of our Byzantine-Hellenic world. The Hammeni Patrida leaves its traces, even when the Orthodox religion so central to Hellenism is abandoned

Hellenism outside the borders of Greece exists in many forms, whether as an established Diaspora community, the autochthonous remnants of a Hammeni Patrida, or the variously assimilated communities of these lands. These global Greeks reflect the tides, triumphs, and tragedies of our history, as well as the great diversity of Hellenism.

Alexander Billinis has spent a decade in international banking in the US and Europe, most recently in London. He is particularly interested in Greece's economic and cultural position in the Balkans. He has worked with companies invested in the Balkans, and is writing a travel-historical book about the post-Byzantine states of modern Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania.

By Alexander Billinis



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Greek America Innovation Conference in Chicago

The Greek America Foundation will host the first ever National Innovation Conference (NIC) in Chicago on June 12th, where global innovators, thinkers and leaders will lead a conversation about innovation and how each of these people have incorporated it in their work, their companies and their every day lives.

The conference will take place at the ultra-modern studio space of Resolution Digital Studios in the West Loop and will include two meals. The format will include 18-minute long presentations by each speaker, many of whom will incorporate multi-media in their remarks. The conference will include several networking breaks where individuals can meet the presenters and each other and continue the conversations off stage that were started on-stage.

According to Gregory Pappas, founder of the Greek America Foundation and executive producer of NIC, the conference is about "examining the unexamined life." As Socrates encouraged, Pappas notes - "we humans must think outside the box and learn from new ideas, otherwise we become stagnant and stop being creative, dynamic people."

"The conference is definitely not for everyone," according to Pappas. "It's for people who want to network, who want to listen to new ideas and grow personally and professionally, as well as professionals who want to meet other professionals and take dialogue and thinking to a new level in Greek America."

The innovation theme, according to the organizers, is a continuation of the age old tradition of Greek ideals.

"The ancient Greeks were the world's greatest innovators and incorporated innovation in everything they did... from their architecture, the worship of their gods, most definitely their form of government. We are continuing the theme that has been an important component of Greek ideals and thought for the last two and a half thousand years."

For additional information, presenter bios and registration information, visit nic2010.org

The Greek America Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion, preservation and perpetuation of Greek culture, history and heritage in America and seeks to create a conducive environment for these ideals to prosper in mainstream America. For additional information visit greekamerica.org

Speakers at the daylong conference include among others, Kary Antholis, President, HBO Miniseries & Oscar-winning filmmaker, Cat Cora Celebrity Chef & TV personality, Peter Diamandis, Founder & Chairman, X Prize Foundation, and Jim Gianopulos, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Fox Filmed Entertainment.



by Peter Shakalis



The Role of the Agent in the Site Selection / Relocation Process...

It used to be that the commercial real estate brokers' role was a relatively simple one, assisting their customers in the acquisition of new office space as companies grew or reduced staff. This activity required the knowledge of office buildings and their floor layouts (foot prints,) the characteristics of the business districts where they were located, prevailing rental pricing and a working knowledge of the office lease. To a large measure, these functions along with an ability to negotiate the price per square foot and to review the New York Real Estate Board's boiler plate office lease was the sum of the agent's role.

Today, we have third party and in-house computerized listing systems that provide agents access to building information and locations as well as available office space units offered by landlords or tenants. As a result finding and showing office space is the easiest part of my work as a real estate agent. Moreover, it is also just the beginning of a much more involved process.

In today's marketplace, agents must operate as an extension of the client's own staff; assisting the client's organization in defining its real estate requirements; to objectively analyze prospective office buildings and space units; review the portions of the lease that impact the operating flexibility of the client's business; and act as a point person between the various individuals and professional disciplines involved in the process. These individuals often include: architects, furniture & phone vendors, IT consultants, attorneys, landlord agents, construction contractors and the clients own personal.

One of the most important services I perform involves reviewing the landlord's charges incorporated into the business points and clauses of a lease. The attorney's efforts are focused primarily on the aspects of the lease that deal with rights and obligations such as; 'what happens if there is a monetary default'. The business points - the ones that cost tenants money - such as yearly rent escalations (discussed in a prior article); after hour air conditioning costs; the cost of tenant electricity; the loss factors on space (non-existent space that landlords charge for) and other items need to be identified, reviewed and negotiated.

The quality and financial strength of a prospective landlord is also a very important issue. I have suggested to clients on occasion to reconsider otherwise strong space alternatives based upon the weak financial profile of the building and the challenges that they can bring. Just as important is looking over the client's shoulder to assure that the various disciplines involved in the process are serving the client's best interests, and not their own.

Ultimately these and other aspects of the relocation process require that brokerage agents provide concise information and independent advice, as well as strong negotiating skills. While the process is not often seamless, good brokerage skills will mitigate the ups and downs and assure as much as possible that there are no surprises financially or otherwise in the later years of the tenant's occupancy.

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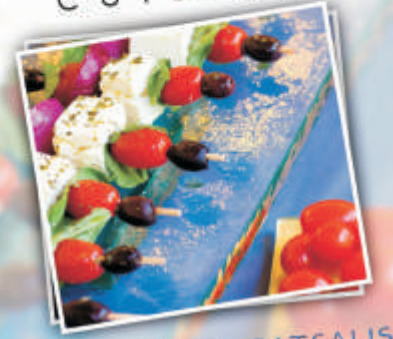
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Greek Chic CUISINE



STEPHANIE M. PATSALIS

“Greek Chic Cuisine” from ...Omaha!

Chocolate Cupcakes. The Greek diet, especially the one from the Island of Crete, is scientifically proven to be the healthiest in the world. This food uses the freshest ingredients making it healthy not heavy, highlighting the best of Greek culture.

Stephanie has traveled extensively to Europe, Asia, and Australia and has lived in various cities from Tokyo to Minneapolis and New York. Along the way, she has enjoyed the culinary specialties of each metropolitan area and experienced regional tastes firsthand, often created by world class chefs. This exposure has taught Stephanie about the similar characteristics of the various cuisines and shown her that a focus on family is truly the foundation of every good recipe.

Learning and loving to cook inspired Stephanie to open her own contemporary kitchen in the gourmet food industry years ago. The Cooking Club Inc. was a solution that taught the busy gourmet easy, make-and-take meals in an instructional kitchen. She tested and developed over one hundred unique recipes for families to enjoy at home. This successful endeavor launched The Cooking Club Inc. onto new adventures including a catering company, a gourmet food retail catalog, and instructional cooking classes for the home.

Yet all along, there had been a growing need for Stephanie to do something more with her strong



Stephanie Patsalis with daughters Athena and Eleni

love of her heritage. Her continued affiliation and involvement with her Greek Orthodox Church and various Hellenic foundations are a testament to devotion. She believes in giving back.

The core of Greek Chic Cuisine is the focus on easy, simple, and authentic Mediterranean diet recipes for all families to enjoy. As a mother, Stephanie wanted to pass on more than just a business to her daughters. She and her young daughters, Athena and Eleni, have tested, researched, and created a legacy with their cookbook, “Greek Chic Cuisine.”

bread & honey

A COLUMN DEVOTED TO MAKING GREEK FOOD EASY

Maria A. Pardalis



With Chef Stelios Papageorgiou at Zenon Taverna

As a Greek-Cypriot American that has been spoiled by home cooked meals, I find it almost impossible to locate authentic and delicious Cypriot food when dining out. Zenon Taverna in Astoria is the sole exception, this cozy culinary haven never disappoints and always provides delectable and comforting meals that are truly comparable to village style Greek-Cypriot cooking. It is the only place where I can close my eyes and feel like I've been transported back to Aphrodite's island, enjoying tender kleftiko on my yiayia's veranda while taking in the aromas of fresh herbs and mouthwatering sweets lingering in the air.

This unique Cypriot gastronomic experience is the creation of Zenon's chef and owner Stelios Papageorgiou, who prides himself in using only the best imported Cypriot herbs, spices and wines in all his recipes to emulate the genuine taste of the Greek-Cypriot cuisine.

Cyprus has been heavily influenced by many cultures during its turbulent history. As a result, Cypriot cuisine is an innovative fusion of Greek, Middle Eastern and African dishes. Chef Stelios along with his wife Dora and daughters Konstantina, Elena and Angela, work hard in preserving the true Cypriot cuisine and ensuring Zenon's menu covers something for every taste bud. They are gregarious hosts that are happy to explain their scrumptious delicacies and even share a few family recipes with their patrons.

Chef Stelios was nice enough to share one of his favorite and easy to make recipes, Halloumopitouses, savory cheese cake mini muffins made with halloumi.

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Directed by Labrini Stathopoulou
Music by Dionisis Savropoulos

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Zenon's Halloumopitouses

Prep time: 10 minutes
Bake time: 25 to 30 minutes
Makes: 40 to 50 mini muffins

Ingredients:

- 3 cups all purpose flour
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup soybean oil
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 cups halloumi cheese, grated
- 3 teaspoons crushed mint, dried
- 2 tablespoons Brandy or Cognac

Preparation:

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and mix until well blended.
- Pour into lightly greased mini muffin tins and place into oven.
- Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until crisp and golden brown.

Serve warm or at room temperature.

Kali Orexi!!

For more information on Zenon Taverna, visit: zenontaverna.com or call 718-956-0133.

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Baltimore dressed in blue and white



President State Delegate Brian McHale, Gayle Economos, Deputy Mayor Kalliope Parthemos, Georgia Vavas, Aris Melissaratos, Greek Ambassador Vasilis Kaskarelis, Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Grand Marshal Col. Nicholas Vamvakias and Demetrius Govtosos.

300 Spartan Warriors of Thermopylae



Greek Ambassador Vasilis Kaskarelis and retired Senator Paul Sarbanes



By Georgia Vavas

Thousands of spectators from across the Mid-Atlantic region flocked to Baltimore's officially designated Greektown, festooned with Greek & American flags, to enjoy the Greek Independence Day Parade honoring our ancestors' sacrifices to preserve the ideals of Freedom and Democracy.

Many marching groups representing their churches and various regions and islands of Greece, took part in ethnic costumes. Also were dance troupes, members of AHEPA, Daughters of Penelope, the 300 Spartan Warriors of Thermopylae, the Evzones and many more. Government officials and media personalities paraded in celebration of the independence of the birthplace of democracy, Greece. Among the key dignitaries were retired Senator Paul Sarbanes, Ambassador of Greece Vasilis Kaskarelis, Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Aris Melissaratos, Special Advisor to the President of Johns Hopkins University, and military attaches from the Greek and Cypriot Embassies. The Grand Marshal was Colonel Nicholas Vamvakias, Supreme Treasurer of AHEPA.

Congratulations to the Chairmen, Emmanuel Matsos and George Stakias and the Parade Committee for a very successful event. The beautiful weather contributed to making this display of Greek pride an unforgettable experience.

The 2010 Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

On Saturday, April 10th, Saints Mary Magdalene and Markella Greek Orthodox Church in Darlington, MD hosted the 2010 Saint John Chrysostom Maryland District Festival.

Representing Saint Demetrios Church, Baltimore, MD in the Senior Division was Rachel Cocoros and in the Junior Division were Austin Hooper and William (Billy) Scolinos.

Both Rachel and Austin received Honorable mention and Billy was awarded 1st Place Finalist. Billy becomes the very first participant from St. Demetrios to ever achieve this honor and on May 15th will represent his Church and District by competing in the Metropolis Oratorical Festival to be held at Holy Trinity Church, Westfield, NJ.

During his Sunday sermon, Rev. Fr. Louis Noplos, Proistamenos of St. Demetrios, recognized his achievement and presented him with an Icon. Father Lou also congratulated Billy's mother, Stephanie and public speaking coach, George Zaverdinos who is also the Church School Director.



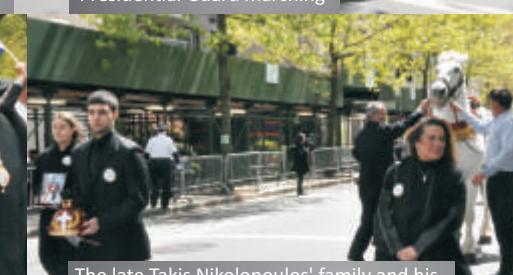
Archbishop Demetrios flanked by Grand Marshals, Colonel Matthew Bogdanos, Ernie Anastos and Philip Christopher, representing the Greek government, Deputy Foreign Minister Spyros Kouvelis, the New York City Comptroller John Liu and the President of the Federation of Hellenic Societies Dimitrios Kalamaras



Members of the Greek Presidential Guard marching



The Cyprus Federation of America: From left, Consul General Koula Sofianou, Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the UN, Ambassador Menas Hadjimichael, President of the Federation Peter Papanicolaou, Director General of the Cyprus Foreign Ministry Nikos Emiliou, Cyprus Ambassador to the US Andreas Kakouris and Grand Marshal Philip Christopher



The late Takis Nikolopoulos' family and his horse took part at the parade honoring his memory. Takis, dressed as Theodoros Kolokotronis on horseback, was leading the parade for a number of years.

Greek Independence Day Parade in New York

PHOTOS: ETA PRESS



Nassau County Comptroller George Maragos and his wife Angela.

The Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund Float: From left, Andrea Catsimatides, Singer Ariana Savalas, Margo Catsimatides, Tricia Nixon Cox and Edward Cox.

Thousands of Greek Americans filled 5th Avenue to celebrate Greek Independence day and to honor our rich cultural heritage. The celebration marked 189 years since Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire and 2,500 years since the epic Battle of Marathon that kept intact the basis of Western culture as we know it.

This year's stellar Grand Marshalls included New York City's most esteemed news anchor and most recognized Greek American, FOX network TV-My9's Ernie Anastos. Philip Christopher was the first Greek Cypriot ever selected as a Grand Marshall of the parade and is the leading spokesperson regarding Cyprus. The final individual Grand Marshall was Colonel Matthew Bogdanos, who is an Assistant District Attorney in Manhattan (since 1988), author (Thieves of Baghdad), and a colonel in the United States Marine Corps Reserves. In 2003, while on active duty in Marine Corps, he led the investigation into the looting of Iraq's National Museum, and was subsequently awarded the National Humanities Medal for his efforts.

The group selected as Grand Marshall was the Boy and Girl Scouts of America, who celebrate their 100th year in existence.

Co-chairs of the parade this year were the Presidents of the two prominent Greek American professional organizations in New York: George Tsioulis, M.D., of the Hellenic Medical Society and Mamie Stathatos-Fulgieri, Esq. of the Hellenic Lawyers Association.

The Parade attracted a vast number of New York marchers and participants. It was the culmination of a month long celebration of Greek heritage, hosted and organized by the Federation of Hellenic Society of Greater New York.

New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg did not make this year, but he sent Deputy Mayor Haeda Mihaltses, herself a Greek-American, to represent him.

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BY JOANNA XIPA

JOANNA PAPAGEORGIU: BRINGING BEACH VOLLEYBALL FROM CALIFORNIA TO GREECE!

The Ancient Greeks introduced the concept of the Trilogy of Beauty to the world; i.e. Beauty of the Mind, Body, and Soul! Exemplified in all aspects of their lives, the Greeks taught us that learning is a life-long process, not only in stimulating our cognitive processes through academic pursuits and acquired skills, but also through nourishing our spirits in keeping our hopes and dreams alive by their beliefs of higher being(s). As the saying goes, you can't have one without the other, and in this case, the formula is not complete unless one strived to condition their body not only for maintaining their health, but also for reaching optimal performance in athletic competitions. Hence the Ancient Olympics were born!

Today's Greek-Americans are starting to put Greece back on the map in terms of the Olympic Games. They've managed to embrace the best of both worlds by not only representing their 'Patriida' in certain sports, but also bringing a little bit of 'Americana' to the mix as well. If you recall during the 2004 Olympics, the Greek baseball team was comprised mainly of Greek Americans. Not as popular to Europeans as Soccer or "Football" perhaps, but at least their hard work and efforts made us proud.

Beach Volleyball is another All-American game. When you think of beach volleyball one of the things that comes to mind are the innocent movies starring Frankie Avalon & Annette Funicello depicting fun in the sun, on surf and sand! True, it does have its roots in Southern California, as the local temperate climate is more sports-friendly, with the year-long sunshine enjoyed only by "SoCal" residents.

One such local resident is Professional Volleyball Player, JoAnna Papageorgiou, who not only was California Dreamin' when she moved here over 2 years ago from the Midwest, she's also planning on putting Greece on the map in the world of Beach Volleyball! Especially with our help and support, through our sponsorship, she's going to take that California sunshine with her and shine for us when she goes for the Gold on behalf of Greece during the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, England!

JoAnna is a Greek American professional indoor volleyball player turned beach volleyball player living, working, and training in Redondo Beach, California, located in the South Bay region of Los Angeles, just minutes from LAX (Los Angeles International Airport). She played professional indoor volleyball in Europe from 2001 to 2008. The last four of those years were in Greece and included playing for the Greek indoor national team and representing Greece internationally in beach volleyball. Like most American-born Greeks, we don't really have a chance to appreciate where we really come from until one day we're immersed in our traditional surroundings, forcing us to fine-tune our language skills, and embrace our Hellenic Heritage up close and personal! While living in Greece, she learned to really appreciate her roots and her family upbringing, and became one with the culture there; quite the different experience than growing up back home in America, with only one of the 2 parents being Greek, despite being in the heart of one of America's largest Greek hubs, near Chicago, IL.

Her father is from a small village named "Harakas" (Χαρακάς) near the picturesque town of Monemvasia in the Peloponnese. I guess the closest major city you might acquaint that with for those of you who still haven't had the pleasure of visiting there, is Sparta. He was born there, raised in Athens, and then moved to America as a young adult where he met and married her Italian-American mother and created a family of three daughters providing a life for them the best way he knew how in the Greek community of Rock Island, IL.

In March of 2008 when her career was temporarily interrupted due to a broken hand and surgery from a volleyball injury occurring in Greece, she returned to the United States, but never lost focus on her goals. In order to pursue her Olympic dreams, she came to California which provides the best opportunities for continued training. Here she met and partnered up with a local California native, teammate Christina Roubani, daughter of the well-known Thodoris Roubanis. Not only do they share that common Greek-American bond, but they also share the Italian-American bond from their mothers' side as well!

They recently met with one of the Greek national team coaches that lives and trains the men's beach volleyball team in Greece. His news about the financial and organizational situation of the Greek Volleyball Federation was not good. It was expected, though, considering Greece's economic crisis. They know that if they want to play in the Olympics, they need to find their own sponsors to support them in their journey, as the federation has no means of

supporting them at this time.

The process of Olympic qualification is to play in the FIVB international beach volleyball tour, which holds tournaments in over 15 different countries every summer. They have from now until the summer of 2012 to play in these tournaments and earn a ranking in the top 25 teams of the world. Only two teams per country are allowed to qualify for the Olympics. Currently, Greece has only one other women's national team. JoAnna & Christina are the second! Imagine if one or both teams qualify and one player gets injured! If there is no other team, then Greece must drop out of the Olympics!

In closing remarks, when asked why she wants to represent Greece rather than the American soil that raised her, she replied: "I am so happy to have had the opportunity to play professional volleyball for 4 years in Greece (for the teams Iraklis-Kifisias, AEK, and Porfiras). This time allowed me to finally understand much more what it means to be Greek and to develop a growing pride and identity with my culture! I am so honored to have this opportunity to earn the chance to represent Greece in the Olympics in 2012! I realize that the Federation is unable to help, but do know that where there's a will there's always a way!" ...spoken like a Spartan!

Every team around the world depends upon sponsorship to afford the airfare, hotel, transportation, health and nutrition, and other expenses of such an undertaking. For details, and to show your support & interest in her cause, kindly contact her directly via email, cupofjoanna@yahoo.com, or phone 309-230-4865 and 309-230-4865.



JoAnna Papageorgiou



JoAnna Papageorgiou with teammate Christina Roubani

PERISCOPE

Cyprus Problem: Time for off the beaten path ways

In Greece things don't look good. On the other hand, it would be naive to take images we watch on TV--infotainment programs--literally. The country is in deep shit, yes, but doom isn't looming over. After all, scatology and eschatology are two different things, even if their root is the same. Greece shall overcome it's Europe and the Euro that might plunge like a stray meteorite. But we will have the opportunity to discuss these topics another time as they don't seem destined to go away soon.

This edition, like every May issue the last three years, is devoted to Cyprus and Cypriot Americans. As most of you know, Cyprus, an independent country, member of the UN, with Greek inhabitants constituting 80% of the population, and the remaining 20% Turks and others, was invaded by Turkey in 1974 and since then about 37% of her territory remains under occupation, with about 40,000 Turkish soldiers and more than 150,000 colonists creating and maintaining new facts on the ground. As we speak, Cypriot-born Turks are a minority in the occupied areas and not few are suffering constant harassment and threats from the occupiers. About half of the original Turkish Cypriot population has emigrated to Great Britain. And if the situation is becoming unbearable for the Turkish Cypriots, whom Turkey sought to "protect" - it's not a coincidence that pimps use the same language - by invading the small Mediterranean island country in 1974, what one can say for the about 150,000 Greek Cypriot refugees who had to run for their lives as the invading Turks were advancing! (It is documented that the Turkish military chose from its ranks the worst elements they could find: criminals, bloodthirsty Kurds, and other mountain Turks whose ancestors barely 60 years before had massacred millions of Assyrians, Armenians and Greeks, and threw them into battle, against the civilian population mainly, as the Cyprus army was reduced to almost nothing before the invasion, thanks to an array of stupid political decisions.) Refugees, not only had to start anew, either in the remaining half of the Cyprus Republic or as immigrants to many other countries, but many are still waiting to hear about the fate of relatives, in the case of more than 1,600 Greek Cypriots (among them American citizens) whose traces have disappeared after the brutal invasion. At the same time, a new generation of refugees has been born and raised away from their ancestral places, enhancing the de facto Turkification of the northern, occupied part of Cyprus, as their connection to the land weakens.

This is more or less the tragic history of Cyprus, a historically-Hellenic land that fought another brutal occupation, the British in the '50s, with the hope of joining Greece, accepting at the end independent status as a way to get rid from her English oppressors (for more info on the Cyprus struggle against colonialism go to http://www.neomagazine.com/2009_05_may/_periscope.html). Today, new challenges have emerged as another round of talks to reunite the island is under way. Although the recent victory in the occupied territories of an old Ankara regime puppet Dervic Eroglou has been perceived as a major setback, the negotiations will continue because both the US and Britain seem eager to close the case.

While success (in their terms) is far from certain, it is expected that they would exert unbearable pressure on the Republic of Cyprus, the victim, to accept unacceptable things in the name of...peace.

At this point, and after 37 years of on and off hopes for "a just and viable" solution, getting off the beaten path, with all the risk it entails, seems to be the only option. When someone is terminally ill, the doctors try various things, even not sanctioned by the FDA. Old formulas and repetition of slightly variegated cycles of talks, only serve as a ceremonial reminder that the problem is there and the patient is dying.

First of all, the basis of every negotiation must always be that this is a staple case of military invasion, occupation and ethnic cleansing. By conceding and making it look like an intercommunal dispute, the essence of the problem which can lead to a just solution is lost. It won't take long before Turks are perceived as victims and all this talk about lifting the so-called isolation of the Turkish Cypriots implies just that. Having made the negotiating basis clear, Cyprus can discuss reunification in the form of a bi-communal federation, but certain things need to be taken care of so that it will remain so. First of all, it's the Greeks that must insist that in any final settlement no Turks will be allowed to settle in the south or own property and in no case shall Turkish Cypriots be allowed to vote in the Greek constituent republic. So far it's the Turks that are asking this, demanding an exception from the EU aquis communautaire that calls for free movement and residence for all European Union citizens in the entirety of the EU. If that won't be the case, the Turkish component republic in Cyprus will eventually be flooded by more colonists from Turkey and it will be a matter of time before they will become the majority on the island. Imagine if they have the right to settle on the Greek side and later have the right to vote. In 20 years Cyprus will be Turkish in essence.

The Cyprus Republic must demand the immediate return of Famagusta and the strip of territory provisioned in the Anan Plan that would allow most of the Greek refugees to return to their homes. In cases such as Keryneia, Karpassia and some historic sites, Nicosia should demand a special status even within the Turkish zone and the same status should afford to the Turkish Cypriots that have returned or will return in their villages on the Greek side.

One will wonder how and why Turkey would accept a solution along those lines. The answer isn't simple, but Ankara could be more willing to consider such a proposal if in return she would be granted sovereignty over one of the two British military bases in Cyprus. If a new Republic is created, Britain immediately loses sovereignty over her two bases, a remnant of colonialism and a disgrace to modern civility. The other British base should go to Greece, so that the Greek Cypriots will have a psychological assurance, since Turkey will remain on the island within her base. We must always remember that Turkey occupied northern Cyprus by war and Cypriots, rightly, chose to deal with the problem through diplomacy. In that equation of things, it would be naive for Cypriots to look or hope for a restoration of the status quo ante or something similar to that. And since Turkey cannot be forced to make

concessions (US won't do it and Greece with Cyprus can't do it) the only way to consider a solution seriously is only by enticing her through rewards that can also serve as safe saving mechanisms for "retreating". No Turkish prime minister can sell to his or her supervising military establishment and the Turkish people the idea of "abandoning" Cyprus. However, if Turkey is to gain sovereign territory in the form of a former British military base and at the same time a constituent Turkish Cypriot component state has been established on the island, he or she can claim victory and at the same time to remove a major diplomatic obstacle from Turkish efforts to join Europe.

Needless to say that Britain and the US because of Britain, won't support this plan easily, but if Cyprus with the help of Greece (perhaps by threatening to completely derail Turkey's prospects to join EU) and a nod from Ankara make public such a proposal, the pressure will be too much on Britain and the US not to ignore it. Anyway, Britain won't have any moral basis to object to such a solution, because she militantly supported the now defunct Anan Plan that provisioned for a new Cypriot state, making thus any British claim to the military bases in Cyprus obsolete.

Again, these are just ideas, food for thought in the best case, no prescriptions for solution. Besides, it's the Cypriots themselves who will have to decide what kind of settlement they are looking for, otherwise no matter which one is imposed on them it won't be to their liking. As author Andreas Chrysafis points out in his commentary on page 16, Cyprus needs "to break down old dogmatic barriers and reach out for new goals". Stalemate in thought, stagnation in ideas is the worse thing it can happen to a person or country (US and Greece are not exceptions at this point) and bodes ill for both the present and future.

DEMETRIOS RHOMPOTIS
dondemetrio@neomagazine.com

Skata is beautiful!



When talking about skata these days, most people think of the situation in Greece. However, even when it comes to skata, Greece lags far behind as others have already made it a popular destination, where local flavor can be savored in abundance and the aromas of spring can mingle with the its distinct scent. Skata is a historic district in the city of Jakobstad, Finland. It dates back to the 18th century. Until the latter half of 19th century, Skata was inhabited by sailors. In 1890's the area was inhabited mostly by workers. No wonder, then, it was called...Skata!



By Fr. John Bakas

Gales from the Stole: A God Moment

It was the second Sunday after Pascha this year—the Sunday of the Holy Myrrhbearers. The precious God moment of the Divine Liturgy was over. Two forty day blessings were awaiting me and a few minutes of prayer for a parishioner going to the hospital the next day. By the time I finished, the parish fellowship hall was mostly empty and the coffee hour was over.

I was really hungry and in the mood for some chicken. In the Saint Sophia Cathedral neighborhood the best chicken and fries can be found at Dino's, a Greek owned fast food restaurant right in the heart of what is now officially and legally known as the "Byzantine—Latino Quarter of Los Angeles." In addition to our own significant Greek Orthodox presence, we share a geographic area made up mostly of Koreans and Latinos. The Latinos mostly come from all parts of Central America and Mexico. We all peaceably co-exist in our multi-ethnic and multi-religious megalopolis.

I walked the five blocks down Pico Blvd. to Dino's, greeting neighbors and business owners along the way, and took my place in line at the outdoor order window. The employees and most customers are Spanish speaking. Since I speak Spanish I converse with them in their native language. They are friends and I have known most of them for years. Catching the counterman's eye, I put in my order, "Cesar, quiero mi plato de pollo regular" (Cesar, let me have my regular chicken order). "Si, como no Padre" (Of course, Father) Cesar responded with a smile.

I took a seat at an outside table by myself and waited. In quick fashion the chicken was brought to me and I began to dig into the juicy treat. Absolutely delicious! There's chicken and then there's chicken, as the expression says. There's nothing better in LA fast food than Dino's "secret spice recipe" chicken, lovingly nicknamed "Byzantine Red" or "Pollo Rojo" because of its reddish broiled color. I took my first bite when my cell phone rang. Joyce, one of my parishioners called to tell me that her

elderly immigrant father had a stroke early that morning and was doing reasonably well in the hospital ICU.

"Can he speak?" I asked. "Yes, he can talk. Here, say hello to him Father." "Christos Anesti, Petro mou." "I enthusiastically proclaimed. In Greek, we exchanged the words of paschal cheer, encouragement and prayer. Here was another God moment with the Holy Spirit being present as we called upon the name of the Lord. I told him I would be by as soon as I could for a visit. To close our conversation, I started singing the hymn of Pascha, to somehow bring the joy of the resurrection to Petro's hospital bed: "Christos Anesti ek nekron, thanato, thanato patisas"....

"Christos Anesti Petro mou." "Alithos Anesti Pater" was his loving yet weak voice reply.

The other customers didn't pay much attention to my unfamiliar words or to my singing. Now, I could continue with my Sunday feast. Before I could swallow the fries I had put into my mouth, a skin head tattooed tough looking fellow wearing a soiled Metallica band with menacing skull design emblazoned t-shirt, walked up to my table and gave me a puzzled threatening look. My appetite was suddenly gone. I felt a tightening in my stomach. A gang member for sure, I thought. His left upper arm tattoo gave him away. MS-13 engraved in a twisted barbed wire motif. MS-13 is a notorious Central American gang.

"En que idioma estabas cantando Padre?" (What language were you singing in, Father?) he asked in an unexpectedly kind voice.

"Estaba hablando y cantando en Griego" (I was speaking and singing in Greek), I answered with a sigh of relief.

"Que clase de idioma es Griego?" (What kind of language is Greek?), he asked. I didn't know quite what to say as he now sat uninvited at my table. So I answered in a way to hopefully have him leave.

"Es el idioma de Dios...el idioma de la Biblia" (It is the language of God, the language of the Bible). My answer seemed to make a huge impression on him as he pulled out and showed me the silver cross he was wearing under his t-shirt.

"Donde hablan Griego?" (Where do they speak Greek?) Oh boy, now how to answer this guy and get him to leave me alone so I could at least eat some of my meal and get back to the

cathedral. The fact that he was wearing a cross reassured me and calmed my anxiety. I had to answer him one way or another.

"Hablan Griego en el pais que se llama Grecia" (They speak Greek in a country called Greece).

Just then he took off his t-shirt and to my sheer shock and amazement, he had the entire map of planet earth tattooed on his chest, back, and sides. With his t-shirt off, he looked like a walking globe. The western hemisphere was on his front and the eastern on his back. I noticed a small inked-in spot where El Salvador would normally be on the map. A remembrance of home, I guessed.

"Muestra me Grecia, Padre" (Show me where Greece is, Father), he insisted.

I lifted up his left arm and taking his right forefinger, I placed it on the left lower side of his rib cage.

"Aqui esta. Un lugar chiquitito pero poderoso" (Here it is. A small but powerful place), I answered as he stretched his neck downward to have a look. He smiled and seemed pleased.

"Padre, mi nombre is Oscar. Por favor ruegue por mi ahora. Lo necesito. (Father, please say a prayer for me right now, I need it)

"Si, como no. Lo quieres en Español?" (Yes, of course. Do you want it in Spanish?), I asked, feeling humbled and moved by the request.

"No Padre, lo quiero en Griego, el idioma de Dios" (No Father, I want it in Greek, the language of God).

Before I could move or say anything, he knelt before me and literally grabbed my right hand and put it on top of his shaved head. Everyone outside the restaurant stood still and silent not understanding what was going on. I was choked with emotion. What a God moment this was for me. I stood up, swallowed several times to keep my voice from cracking, closed my eyes and prayed the Orthodox prayer to the Holy Spirit.

"Vasilef ouranie, paraklites to pnevma tis alithias"...." (O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth").

I finished the prayer in a half trembling voice with a loud AMEN. Oscar stood up, gave me a hug and walked away, taking with him his own personal God moment. When I returned to my meal it was cold. But it was the best tasting chicken I had ever eaten at Dino's.

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