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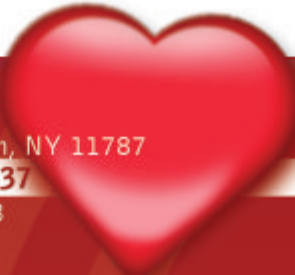
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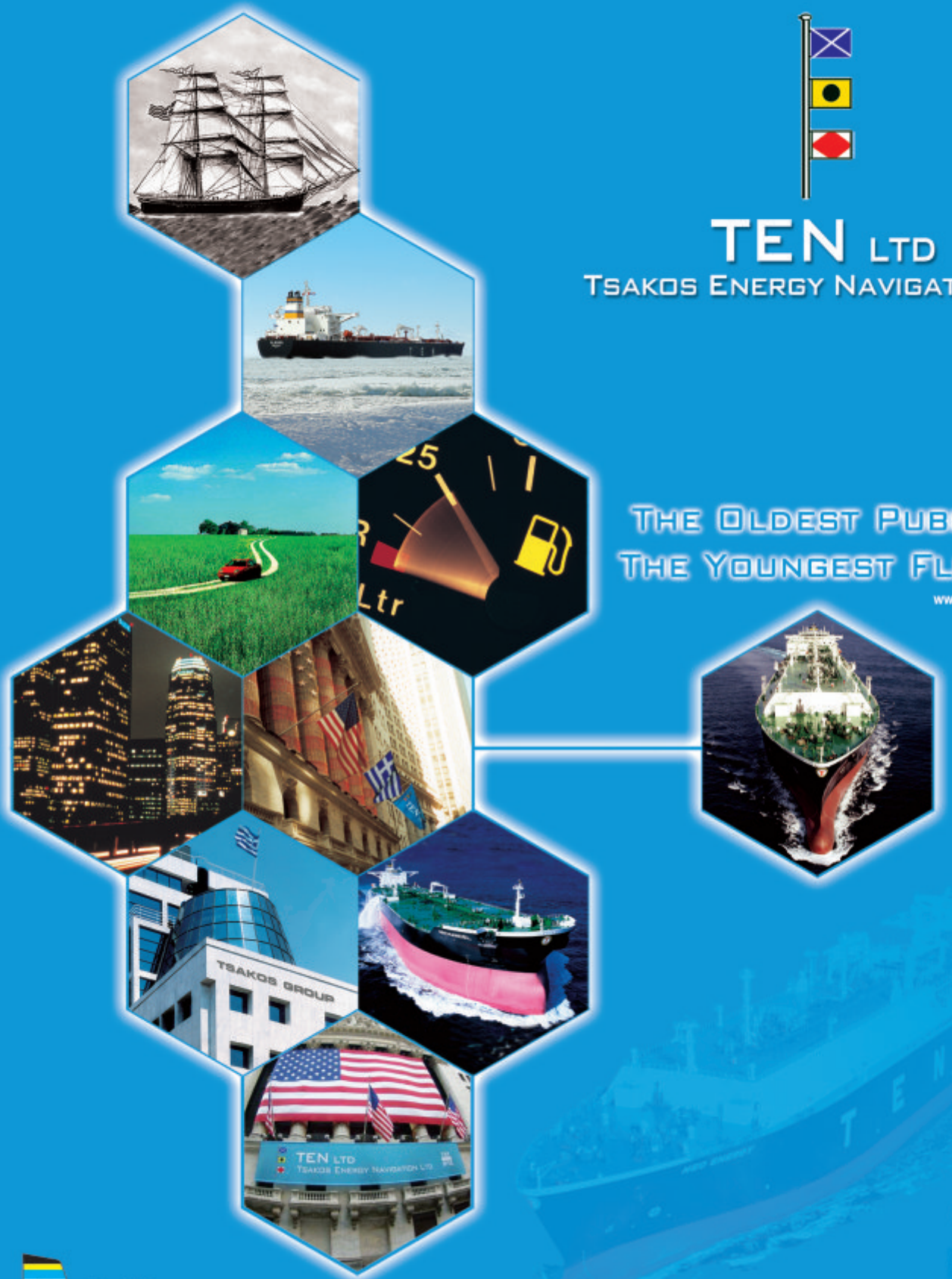
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**The Beautiful Game**

"What are you watching?" my wife said. "Soccer?"

"Football," I corrected her.

For the weeks that the World Cup was broadcast on American television I vowed to purge my soul of American sports (and the worst excesses of the Lebron circus - though I confess I was suckered into watching "The Decision") and to join my brothers and sisters from all over the world who would stay rooted to their television sets (whether at home or before those giant screens in the piazzas) and who clutched their heads (in operatic despair) at every missed shot and kissed each other on both cheeks (in operatic glee) for every goal made in the world's version of "the beautiful game" - which most Americans are both clueless about and proudly indifferent.

I was one of the few who used to watch the old Cosmos when they played in New York (my uncle visited from Germany around that time and drooled over Beckenbauer and he became my favorite player on the team) and I wanted to recapture some of that youthful folly.

And I suppose because I came to American when I was seven (and mostly attended Greek parochial schools) a part of me still held allegiance to the Old World and all its customs and when Americans derided soccer ("Not much happens"... Uh, and baseball?... "Just guys running around"... Uh, and football?) I usually took issue and became a contrarian.

So I became a contrarian now and in the midst of the Lebron coronation I proudly DVR'd every match my set could hold and set my watch by South African time. I tried to keep up with the blizzard of insights and statistics provided by the international bevy of commentators (but gave up with Liverpool legend Steve McManaman, who had the long hair of an English bad boy but the accent of every Beatle multiplied) and I tried to get excited over the big matches (once I knew which the big matches were).

I cheered on Greece (Hey, they were European champs! I vaguely remembered) and hoped they would perform a miracle and pull Greece out of its economic and social doldrums. No such luck.

I cheered on the U.S. and even listened to the play-by-play on the radio and hoped Landon Donovan would be the star of these games and help them overcome the robbery of the officiating (I was sure the horrendous officiating would only make the team's comeback more thrilling - Do you believe in miracles!). No such luck and the air came out my balloon pretty much after the U.S. lost to Ghana.

But then I hoped Ghana would become the Cinderella team for host Africa and cheered on their match with Uruguay (where is Uruguay, anyway?). No such luck. Ridiculous penalty kicks.

I thought Germany would be a juggernaut. No such luck.

I cheered for The Netherlands in the final because they had bombed three times in their history and I always root for the underdog.

No suck luck.

So it was a disappointing Cup for me, vague though my expectations were. But I got to see people cry and kiss each other and hug and drop to their knees and say thankful prayers to heaven (and that was just the players - how often do you see Kobe Bryant doing that?). And I got to see players escorted onto the field by children, and hardened-strikers and "keepers" - (don't you say goalies) - mouthing along to national anthems I never heard of. And I got to see the glories of South Africa and the miracle of a country emerging from the ashes of apartheid, and the gaudy colors and costumes of proud nations from around the world, and now will forever imagine every match sounding like a vuvuzela swarm of bees.

It was a thrill and a privilege sharing this with the world and feel I have renewed my claim as a citizen of the world.



Dimitri C. Michalakis



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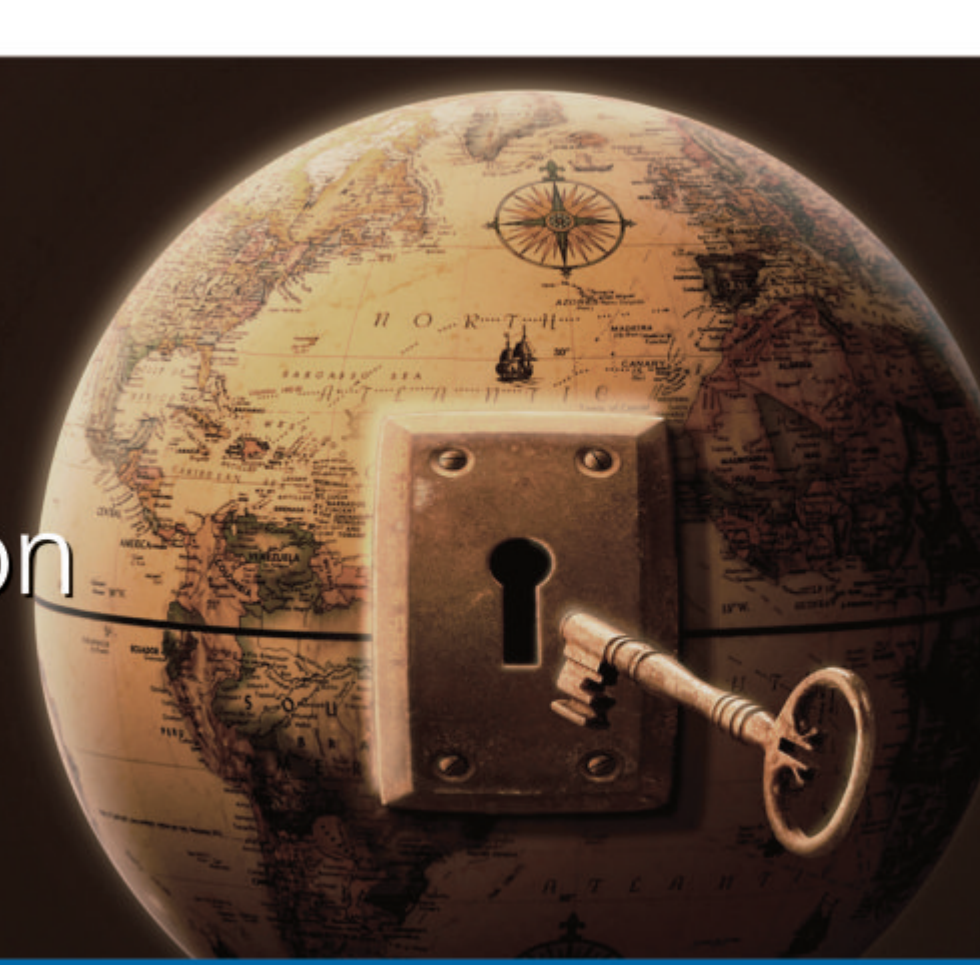
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# Greece & Globalization



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# Nikos and Carol Mouyiaris hold Fundraiser for Alexi Giannoulias



The hosts, Nikos and Carol Mouyiaris, with Alexi Giannoulias



Mr. Smith with Eleni Delimpaltadaki and Alexi Giannoulias



Alexi Giannoulias with Peter Pappas



From left, Philip Christopher, Alexi Giannoulias, Nikos Mouyiaris and Dennis Drousiotis



From left, Renos Georgiou, Stever Tserpellis and Aravella Simotas who's running for the New York State Assembly.

New York Cypriot American businessman Nikos Mouyiaris and his gracious wife Carol held recently a fundraiser for U.S. Senatorial candidate Alexi Giannoulias at their home in Manhattan. Giannoulias, elected Illinois Treasurer two years ago, at the age of 29, is running for President Barack Obama's old Senate seat this coming November.

Mr. Mouyiaris, welcoming the contributors, spoke of the significance this race holds for the Greek American community and the country in general. "Take the message to every fellow Hellene and try to help Alexi," he said.

"To elect Alexi in the U.S. Senate is going to be a great achievement, because we will

enhance our voice for Cyprus and the rest of the Greek national issues," Philip Christopher, Chairman of PSEKA, remarked in turn.

Recent polls featured the Greek American candidate who played professional basketball in Greece in his 20s, with a 3-4% lead over his Republican opponent Ron Kirk. Giannoulias, now 33 year old, expressed his gratitude to those present for their support all along and promised them "to write history together" on November 2nd. "At the age of 29, when I was running for State Treasurer, there were people saying that I had no chance. But I have all of you," he said. Giannoulias also praised his parents for their hard work and commitment to success, seeing in their effort

to overcome obstacles the plight of all generations of Greeks who reached the US shores. "We should be proud for what the Greek American immigrants accomplished in order for the next generation to have every opportunity of the world. They have showed us that if we want something very hard we can succeed it, even for the next generation."

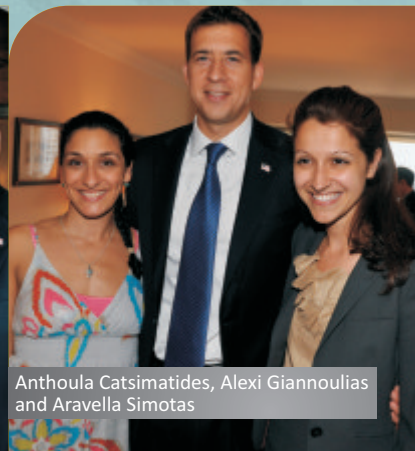
He then promised to intensify his efforts for Cyprus, if elected in the U.S. Senate. "It is fascinating that Turkey has showed her outrage over the events with the flotilla to Gaza. Where is the outrage for occupying Cyprus and for the violation of the human rights and the religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate?" he asked.



Harry Giannoulis with Endy Zemenides



Tasso Zambas, Alexi Giannoulias and a supporter



Anthoula Catsimatides, Alexi Giannoulias and Aravella Simotas



Alexi Giannoulias sharing the view with host Nikos Mouyiaris

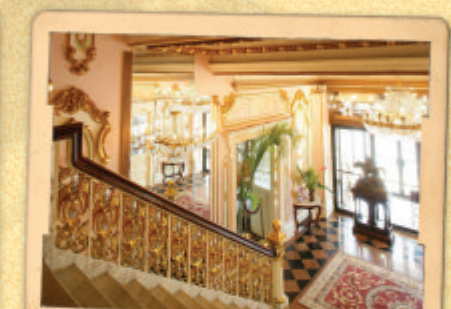


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By Demetrios Rhompotis and Margarita Vartholomeou

# Yiorgos Nikitiadis

## A Greek American in charge of Greek Tourism

When Yiorgos Nikitiadis was appointed Deputy Minister in charge of Tourism last May by George Papandreou he assumed a Herculean task: the season was about to start while the country's image was in tatters as a result of a months-long relentless barrage of negative reports on Greece's economic fallout. Good thing that Nikitiadis, who was born and spent his first years in New York, is no novice in the tourism industry. In 2007 he published the book **Tourism: 12 positions - Dodecanese: 12 dreams**, in which he details his views and aspirations about island tourism. The book won praise from former ministers and tourism experts and it has since been reprinted four times. The same year, he was elected Member of Parliament with the-then main opposition party PASOK for the Dodecanese Islands, gathering the biggest number of local votes. In 2008 he was appointed by Papandreou as the party's secretary for the tourism sector.

Born in New York to expatriate parents, Nikitiadis went to school on the Aegean island of Kos. He graduated in law from the University of Athens in 1976 and returned to New York for postgraduate studies, earning a master of law (LLM) degree from the University of New York. He is married to fellow lawyer Georgia Iatrou and has a daughter, Andella, who holds a psychology degree from the University of Athens.

In his interview with NEO, perhaps the first to US media, Nikitiadis takes a very cautious approach to key issues Greek tourism is facing, and contrary to many of his predecessors, he chooses not to say much. If deeds will compensate for his lack of grandiose rhetoric, remains to be seen.

**Unlike your predecessors, you resumed your duties in the midst of perhaps the worst economic crisis Greece has ever faced. Moreover, due to the barrage of negative publicity internationally, the country's image has been seriously wounded. How are you dealing with all this?**

We have launched a campaign in all big tourist markets in order to reverse the negative atmosphere that some people created against our country. Through meetings and interviews, we are trying to convince all prospective tourists that Greece remains a sage destination. A few sporadic episodes were presented to be a generalized crisis by a portion of the Press, but this does not hold true. In parallel, we are organizing trips for foreign journalists to our country in order to help them realize by themselves that Greece is really safe. In this effort we need the support of the Greek diaspora, which always stands by us in every difficult period we come up against.

**What is your strategy for the US? Will you continue promoting Greece as a luxury destination, will you go back to the more popular image, or is it going to be both?**

Greece remains a blessed place with endless natural beauty and a unique cultural heritage. Our goal is to bring out each and every beauty separately, through alternative tourism forms. Alternative tourism will be developed in combination with the quality upgrade of our offered services, so that the visitor will feel content with his vacation in relation to money spent. Nautical and diving tourism, religious tourism, eco and agritourism, congresses and conferences tourism are just a few of the possibilities we offer. The "sun and sea" model on its own does not have a lot to offer to us any longer.

**AHEPA held a memorable national convention in Athens two years ago, the Hellenic American Doctor's Association met in Kos the year before, last summer the Pancretan Association did its convention on a cruise ship around Crete and the Leadership 100, perhaps the most powerful American Greek organization, is contemplating a conference there. Since you are a Greek American yourself and you know the terrain better than any of your predecessors, are you planning to actively encourage and assist this promising trend to develop even further?**



Mr. Nikitiadis with author Justine Frangoulis at an event organized recently by the Nissyrion Society in Astoria on the release of her book "For the Love of Others". Standing from left is John Catsimatides, Jr., John and Margo Catsimatides, George Andriotis, Consul General of Greece Aghi Balta and Consul General of Cyprus Koula Sophianou

Congresses and conferences tourism represents an internationally important market. That is the reason why we develop specific strategies in order to get all year round tourism. In our most important conference destinations (Athens, Salonica, Corfu, Crete, Rhodes, Kos) there already are (or are soon going to be built) conference centers of international standards, that will give a much needed boost to the rise of Greek conference tourism. Additionally, the largest hotels are, as we speak, renovating, modernizing and upgrading their conferences rooms. A country that aspires to be a conference center has to have many high quality conference hotels.

**Due to the high cost of airline tickets, many younger people and families have come to realize that the regular summer trip to Greece is beyond their means. However, it is crucial that Greek Americans maintain a direct relationship with the land of their ancestors. George Markus from California talks about the need for young American - born Hellenes to visit Greece at least one time for a period of two weeks. Would you consider exploring ways that could make things easier, perhaps a charter airline or incentives to fly there during off high season times?**

In a free market it is very difficult to venture great interventions, but I think that the way things are now, very soon all other airline companies will see a window of opportunity in order to increase flights from USA to Greece. Personally, I have undertaken several initiatives and I hope that fairly soon I will be in the position to tell you something more specific.

**Greece used to be the ideal place for students and young people in general until the Euro became too expensive and the prices in the country soared. Are you examining the possibility of enticing college students back, perhaps by helping to organize packages for the Spring Break when millions of them travel for eight days?**

Student tourism is a significant matter to us because we know that our rich cultural heritage, our museums and our ancient sights attract visitors on a global level. Our goal is to set incentives like, for instance, free entrance to all cultural sites so that the student visitors will get to know our ancient civilization in combination with our modern way of living. They will be able to discover our traditions and return home satisfied so that they will convey to their families and friends back home all the enriching experiences they had in Greece. In that way they will be the best possible ambassadors of Greece abroad.



With Prime Minister George Papandreou

**Prime Minister Papandreou, a Greek American himself, during his recent visits to the US met with American Greek entrepreneurs and encouraged them to take advantage of Greece's real opportunities in investing. In tourism, what are some areas where our people could put their money and expertise to work?**

As we saw in the recent International Investments Conference held in France, the European model that combines growth and social justice, political effectiveness and democratic values, adjustment to present conditions and maintain traditions despite the global financial crisis, offers important investment opportunities, especially in the fields of innovation and green technologies. Specifically in Greece, there is vast potential to invest in tourism (hot springs, alternative tourism etc), as well as in renewable energy sources.

**Are you planning to visit us anytime soon?**

As soon as possible, as long as my obligations allow it, I will be with you. As you know I try to always maintain contact and communication with our compatriots in the States. Last time I was in the States was last March, in order to celebrate our National Independence Day. However, I have to make a trip over there fairly soon in order to promote tourism in Greece.



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## UCLA BRUINS WOMEN'S TENNIS COACH

# STELLA SAMPTRAS

## ON THE FAMILY'S TENNIS LEGACY AND HER OWN COACHING SUCCESS

Only a few years into her tenure as head coach of women's tennis at UCLA, Stella Sampras Webster admitted she might coach "maybe five more years" at most.

More than a decade later, the 2000 ITA West Region and 2008 PAC-10 Coach of the Year has amassed 14 seasons with 12 top-ten finishes and seven in the top-five, with a NCAA championship in 2008 and the team's first national championship since 1981, and the most wins that season since 1982. She's also coached 16 All-Americans and guided her team to a winning season again this year (21-4) with a record-setting sweep of every event at the Pac-10 Championship in Ojai.

by Dimitri C. Michalakis

"What motivates me is getting each team to be the best team it can be and each player to be the best that they can be," says the 39-year-old Sampras Webster in her low-key style as she drives home from work one day. ("Once I'm done with work, I pretty much go straight home to be with my family," she says of her three-year old twins Sophia and Savannah and husband Steve.) "I like the everyday of getting players to improve and become better players and better people more than winning a national championship. I get most rewarded when I get a thank you from the players telling me how much of an impact I made in their lives—that means a lot to me."

That was demonstrated in 2000 when one of her top players, Sara Walker, lost her mother in an automobile accident during a tournament and Sampras Webster flew to El Paso to comfort Sara and her family and stayed with them for three days.

"I thought she would be here a day and then ask Sara if she was coming back to play," Sara's father told Sports Illustrated. "When I asked Stella if she had found out what Sara was going to do, she told me, 'I'm not here to find out what her plans are. I'm here only to be here if she needs me.' I thought that was remarkable. It spoke volumes about the kind of person she is."

Sampras Webster admits UCLA has a winning tradition and high-powered expectations for all its teams, but while she recruits players who she thinks can handle the competition and then expects them to perform under pressure, she rarely exerts that pressure herself.

"I'm not a screamer," she says with her usual equanimity. "I build relationships. I think the main thing as a coach is that you've got to be able to reach and motivate your players. You've got different personalities and different backgrounds and you've got to be able to reach each player. A great coach, regardless of the sport, has to be able to communicate and motivate the team."

Apparently that quality was spotted by her former Bruins coach (Bill Zaima) who hired her as his assistant and groomed her to take over after he stepped down. She was already more than familiar with the program: a four-time All-American as a Bruin (among a handful in the school's history), she had been a doubles champ and rated No. 3 nationally in doubles and No. 42 in singles.

And she was glad to be "home" again at UCLA after a year on the pro circuit (where she competed in doubles in both the U.S. Open and Wimbledon and won three satellite tournament titles).

"It was good, I was doing pretty well," she says. "But I knew I was never going to be in the top ten in the world and I wasn't crazy about all the traveling. I definitely wouldn't have had this job if I hadn't quit, so I'm very happy where I am right now and I think it was the right decision."

It also keeps her close to family, where she's always liked to be (an admitted homebody, her brothers kidded her for years about still living at home) and her family close to her, where they've always been. Even during his tour days, when her brother Pete the Wimbledon champ was in town he would sometimes deliver lunch to her office before going for a workout or stop by to talk to her players.

"She's always looking out for me and protecting me," he says of his older sister (by a year). "Her opinion is so important to me that if she doesn't like somebody, that definitely unsettles me."

The family got into the sport that became their hallmark when their father Sam (an aerospace engineer) and his wife Georgia packed the family Pinto (and parrot Jose) and moved the whole clan from Potomac, Maryland to Rancho Palos Verdes, California when Stella was eight.

"My dad fell in love with California and the weather and said it reminded him a lot of Greece," she says. "I knew that I had a ton of family back in DC and Maryland and we left all my cousins and my aunts and uncles from my mom's side. Coming here we didn't really know anyone and that was a big adjustment."

The kids started playing tennis at the nearby Jack Kramer Club ("My dad thought it was a nice sport for the family"), where Stella and Pete took to the sport most. "Pete and I were pretty disciplined with it," she says. "We played every day, and took lessons, and it really became a part of our life, our everyday life."

Brother and sister also became fierce competitors, with each other, and the debate still rages today over when Stella finally stopped beating her brother. "My brother thinks I stopped beating him when he was 11, but he was definitely 13," she insists. "I beat him all the time."

And they stayed close even after Pete went on tour and Stella stopped playing and started coaching. "We were very close, we had spent a lot of time together growing up, and once he was on the tour we definitely kept in touch," she says. As a coach and older sister did she ever critique him? "Oh, no," she laughs, "I wouldn't touch that. How could you tell the number one player in the world what he's doing wrong?—Would you hold on one second?" she asks suddenly. "My husband keeps calling me and I just want to see what he wants."

In fact, she met her husband through Pete, and while she herself doesn't play tennis much anymore, except with her players, she says her husband has gotten into the game and "plays for fun."

Which might be hard to do in the uber-tennis Sampras clan, except all the siblings now have children and have apparently mellowed (Marion, a teacher in LA, has three boys and a girl, Gus, an account executive who runs his brother's business affairs, has two girls, Pete has two boys, and Stella has her twins).

"Now we mostly play with our kids," says Sampras Webster. "And my parents never really played. They're just excited now to be playing with their grandkids. It's a lot of fun."



PHOTOS: SCOTT CHANDLER



Sampras family



Stella during a  
interview with ESPN



# HELLENIC AND ORTHODOX CHAMPIONS IN THE US CONGRESS

**Name:** Shelley Berkley (D-NV)

**District:** Nevada's 1st Congressional District (Las Vegas)

**Committee/Leadership Assignments:** House Ways and Means Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee, including positions on the European and Middle East Subcommittee

**Contact:** Tel: (202) 225-5965, (702) 220-9823; Fax: (202) 225-3119, (702) 220-9841

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

America's economy continues to face challenges that have tested my community of Las Vegas and others all across our nation, but I remain optimistic we will continue to see signs of a slow, but growing recovery. Macro-economic indicators have been improving steadily over the last 18 months, and data related to jobs has been improving on the national level. However, we face continuing global economic challenges such as the European Union debt crisis and trade imbalances that affect growth prospects on both sides of the Atlantic. While job losses in some parts of the U.S. have slowed dramatically and modest economic improvements are taking place, we have yet to see a broad return among many economic sectors, and results of growth are not evenly spread across the nation.

For instance, my Congressional District, which includes the famed Las Vegas Strip, continues to struggle with unemployment, foreclosures and the slow return of our travel and tourism based economy. My home State of Nevada relies on tourism as its economic engine, and until the economy improves in other parts of the U.S. and overseas, Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, Reno and other destinations in our State are likely to experience only a limited recovery in the short term.

Congress must do more to spur economic growth through smart tax policy, developing new economic growth engines such as alternative energy technologies, and maintaining the infrastructure investments that are creating jobs now and for the future. While Congress has passed significant legislation along these lines, we must continue to make progress on a variety of additional economic recovery efforts. As a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, I remain focused on reducing taxes, encouraging entrepreneurship and fostering new business investments.

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

Nevada continues to lead the nation in foreclosures and unemployment stands at 14% in the Las Vegas Valley, so jobs and helping families stay in their homes are my top priorities in Congress. Last year's Recovery Act helped keep teachers on the job in my State and put thousands to work building and improving roads and highways, but the overall effect was a limited shot in the arm. I am also working to ensure that banks and lending institutions work with America's homeowners to renegotiate loans and modify mortgages so even more families don't lose their homes, especially those who have also lost a job.

Las Vegas is known around the world for its glittering resorts and 24-hour entertainment. One of the best ways Americans can help our economic recovery is to travel, and to visit Southern Nevada and enjoy all that it has to offer. And of course, we love international visitors from Greece and everywhere else, so I hope NEO readers will vacation or attend a convention or trade show in Las Vegas and remind all their friends and relatives that it's a good deal and they will have a great time, I promise.

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

Each generation of Americans passes on our tradition of democracy to the next, and while we continue to see sharp differences on many policy issues that affect our nation, the foundations of this remarkable system of governing remain strong. Congress has its role to play, along with the White House, the courts and the private sector. State and

local governments make important policies that affect the lives of families and businesses, while working at the same time to administer federal programs and to utilize resources such as federal funding for education, infrastructure, public safety and economic development.

This cooperation and the two-way exchange between local communities and the federal government are a hallmark of American democracy and are woven into the very fabric of our nation. Americans maintain a shared commitment to opportunity, equality and liberty for all and our democratic principles enable the voice of the people to be heard in the halls of Congress, by the President of the United States and by elected leaders at every level. We are stronger as a result of our diversity which depends on democratic ideals born of the ancient Greek societies who laid down the foundation for so much of how we govern to this day.

In addition, I believe the increased flow of information is good for democracy, but at the same time, given the newness of our forms of communication, it also creates challenges on issues of perspective and accuracy. But in the long run, I believe new electronic media will create greater freedoms and stronger democracies.

**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 this issue as Congressman?**

The state of the economy continues to affect how Americans view Congress and I understand the frustration felt by those who are unemployed, businesses struggling just to pay the bills and homeowners who have been hit by the foreclosure wave. American troops remain on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan and we are witnessing growing tensions with Iran and North Korea that threaten to further undermine global stability. As a Congresswoman, I seek opportunities to provide incentives to create new jobs and to give small businesses assistance so they can grow. Tax relief for families helps put money in the pockets of Americans at a time when they are stretching every dollar.

I am back home in Las Vegas every weekend so I can be in my community, talking with those I represent and letting them know I understand how hard things are during these challenging times. I also use these opportunities to emphasize what I am doing to help with the economy and to keep our nation safe. I strongly believe every Member of Congress needs to clearly articulate a deep appreciation of the national and international problems we face. I work to communicate on a regular basis with my fellow citizens, using the media and social networks like Twitter and Facebook to let them know I am working as hard as I can on the every day issues that affect their lives.

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

The Internet is a daily part of life for many of my constituents. This valuable tool provides me with an expanding array of opportunities to engage those I represent, to inform them about my work in Congress and to solicit feedback that allows me to better serve their needs. In addition to my official website, [www.berkley.house.gov](http://www.berkley.house.gov), I also maintain Facebook, YouTube and Twitter pages that provide useful information and serve as forums for my constituents to weigh in on topics important to

them. I also use tele-townhalls to keep in touch over the telephone with people back home and to obtain their input on critical issues when I am working 2,500 miles away from Nevada in our nation's capital. I regularly encourage my constituents to take advantage of these new media outlets to stay up-to-date on what's happening in Congress and to share their comments, questions and concerns with me.

**How did you become interested in the Greek-American community, and who introduced you to them?**

Actually, it was the other way around. My grandmother came to the U.S. from Salonica, Greece, and I have always considered myself a daughter of Greece. So I sought out the Greek-American community due to my allegiance to my heritage and have made friends for life with my fellow Greek-Americans. I have taken every opportunity to travel to Greece, to meet with Greek leaders, to enjoy the wonderful culture and gain understanding of the challenges that face the great nation of Greece. I continue to serve as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, including positions on the European and Middle East Subcommittees. I also have the privilege of serving in my third year as the U.S. Chair of the Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue (TLD). A major focus of the TLD is transatlantic economic policy. TLD participants from Congress and the European Parliament meet twice annually, once in the host city of the EU Presidency and once in U.S., and work together to form actions plans designed to boost the economies of the U.S. and EU.

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

The continued Turkish occupation of Cyprus is unconscionable. The Turkish government has assigned thousands of armed troops and transported thousands of Turkish citizens to occupy the peaceful island nation of Cyprus for 36 years. Then the Turkish government has the gall to hypocritically criticize Israel for their self-defensive actions against the Hamas terrorists in Gaza. I have signed on to countless resolutions and letters calling on the Turks to end their illegal occupation of Cyprus and to agree to a settlement that provides for a single, unified government by the Cypriots and for the Cypriots, without any foreign intervention. Nothing less than that will bring justice and security to Cyprus. I have seen in person the disastrous results of the Turk occupation. It is totally unjustified and I stand shoulder to shoulder with all Cypriots.

**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 deeply concerned about the direction Turkey is heading today. Since the rise of Prime Minister Erdogan and his AK Party, we have seen Turkey shift markedly toward the fundamentalist Arab and Islamic worlds, even siding with the bloodthirsty, anti-Semitic, anti-Western Iranian regime against the most recent UN Security Council sanctions. I began to notice this shift when Turkey - ostensibly a NATO ally - refused to allow our troops to enter Turkey during the Iraq War. So I am watching their most recent actions in the Aegean very closely. It is absolutely essential Turkey avoid raising further tensions, which they can do by simply renouncing the politics of hatred that plague the region.

continues on page 37



## HABA elects New Officers

The Hellenic American Bankers Association (HABA) held its annual election at the Helmsley Park Lane Hotel this past June and Georgia Mouzakis Tavlarios, managing director at Citi Private Bank was re-elected president. Ms. Tavlarios joined Citi in 1984 and held a variety of managerial positions until she joined the Private Bank in 1996. She is responsible for developing and managing the relationships of high net worth clients. Ms. Tavlarios is a member of The Michael Bolton Charities-Women's Advisory Council and has volunteered with the New York City Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence on a special committee for a Family Justice Center.



From left, Costas Kellas, HABA's Vice President, Georgia Mouzakis-Tavlarios, President, and Emmanuel Caravanos, Treasurer.

Mr. Costas Kellas, chief executive officer of Objective Inc. was elected vice president. Mr. Emmanuel Caravanos, first vice president of Arab Bank Plc was elected treasurer and Ms. Lucretia Edeors, vice president of Mac Arthur Capital Group, was elected secretary. New board members elected were Mr. Antony Contomichalos, president of Mac Arthur Capital Group, Mr. Vasilis Katsikiotis, managing director of Bank of America-Merrill Lynch, Mr. Demetri Papacostas, FX derivative produce specialist, Bloomberg L.P., Mr. Harry Prassakos, vice president of Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UJ, and Ms. Fanny Trataros, executive vice president/underwriting counsel, Regal Title Agency. Mr. James Hansel, managing director of Eight Winds Capital Management LLC, is completing his second year in office as a board member.

The Hellenic American Bankers Association ("HABA") was established in 1982 to promote the professional and educational interest of Hellenic-

Americans in the banking and finance industries. HABA offers lectures, seminars and panel discussions primarily in New York City. Our lecturers and panelists are drawn from the large pool of talented and prominent Hellenes in the global financial industry. HABA sponsors receptions, luncheons and breakfasts that provide additional opportunities for networking. Each year HABA honors a prominent Hellenic executive at our Executive of the Year Award Dinner.

Please check out the HABA website at [www.haba.org](http://www.haba.org) for membership and future events.



Consul General of Greece Aghi Balta with James Orphanides

**Rania Dante**  
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## 3-MILLION-DOLLAR WOMAN

by Kathy Heine

Two years and \$3 million worth of timeshare is an impressive record for any salesperson. But for someone who's a fashion designer by background, never sold timeshare before, and sold it for the first time during the start-up at an urban timeshare where units start at \$15,815? The record is nothing short of remarkable, and the most amazing thing is - get this - she accomplished it by being nice to people.

"I believe that if you're nice to clients and honest with them, they're gonna go for it," says Manhattan Club's \$3 million sales executive, Rania Dante. "It works with high-end clientele. It works with any clientele," she says.

A native of Greece who speaks six languages, Manhattan Club's timeshare sales dynamo is particularly adept at wooing international and/or affluent clients. She generates many of these clients herself, often cultivating them over the phone before they ever set foot in the sales center. Then, if they do not buy the day they visit, she follows up with cards, phone calls - even dinners - until she eventually makes the sale.

Dante honed her art of the soft sell during the eight years she ran her own fashion business, then again during her stint as a real-estate agent in Beverly Hills and the Big Apple. "When you're working with Beverly Hills clients, you don't usually say, 'You have to buy this \$20 million mansion right now,'" she says. "That's the biggest difference. In timeshare you have to ask for the money that day."

That hasn't been a problem, however. The Manhattan Club, which offers stunningly decorated one- and two-bedroom suites with all the amenities of a five-star hotel, is just across the street from Carnegie Hall and only two blocks from Central Park. Fifty Broadway shows are within walking distance. The clientele that are attracted to Manhattan Club are highly qualified. They enjoy the theater, the arts, and shopping. They come in to the city for trade shows. Many are referred by clients who already own a unit at the Manhattan Club. All of these factors contribute to a very high closing rate.

Incentives make it worthwhile for clients to buy on the same day. And because prices do go up - in one year the price went up eight times - it's actually in the client's best interest to buy the day of the presentation. Still, Dante does not believe in pushing people to buy. "I like to give people options," she says. "If they like it, they're welcome to do it. If they don't, that's fine, too."

Dante continues to cultivate clients even after they purchase. She sends them thank-you cards, calls them - "whatever has to be done to make them feel good and wanted," she says. Happy clients, in turn, give more business to Dante by sending her their friends. Would her approach work elsewhere? "People are the same everywhere," she says. "They just have nuances. Treat them nicely, and they'll be wonderful to you."

From the March-April 1999 Issue of RCI Premier Magazine



# "THE EMPIRE STATE" TO GREECE!



"The Empire State" anchored at Andros



Neo's Margarita Vartholomeou with Captain Richard S. Smith (left) and Admiral John W. Craine Jr, President of the State University of New York Maritime College.



Welcoming reception at Andros' Paradise Hotel

By Margarita Vartholomeou

The training ship "EMPIRE STATE" of the State University of New York - Maritime College, under Captain Richard S. Smith, visited recently the island of Andros and the main Greek port of Piraeus, part of its annual training trip, during which cadets have the opportunity to apply what they have learned in school, in real conditions. The visit to Piraeus coincided with "Posidonia," one of the most important shipping conferences in the world.

The purpose of the visit to Andros was to boost the maritime profession in the island, part of the campaign "Lets go to the Sea" that was officially launched in March by the Panandriaki Society of Sailors. As cadets had the opportunity to get a glimpse of the island's rich maritime tradition, locals could visit the ship and get an idea of how the industry has developed and perhaps think it seriously as a career choice.

A great number of dignitaries were there to welcome "The Empire State", among them the Maritime Attache of the American Embassy in Athens Philip N. Campbell and Admiral (retired) John W. Craine Jr, President of the State University of New York - Maritime College.

The visit, both in Andros and in Piraeus, was organized by Mr. Dimitrios Kokkinis, who took the initiative to bring the ship to Greece. Mr. Kokkinis is the Managing Director of Goldendestiny (the company that was honored as the best broker of the year 2009 by Lloyd's) and he is also the representative of the Sunny Maritime College in Greece.



PHOTO: JAMES HUELBIG

(bottom line) Courtni Wilson, Kristine Murphy, Laura Percy, Keely Scarlata, Rebecca Magazine. (standing) Patrick Kenner, Diego F. Chavez, Daniel Pietruszka, Aaron Thomsen, Vanessa Altshuler, Tyler Richardson. (sitting on the bike) Amanda Joy Loth, Christos Alexandrou

## "Seduction" with Christos Alexandrou

Seduction, a new rock opera written by the award winning recording artist, composer, producer/director and president of Kaleidoscope Entertainment Corporation, Salvatore Caesar Scordato, featuring as "Mr Devile" Greek Singer/Actor Christos Alexandrou, was presented July 7th through 18th, at the Gene Frankel Theater, in New York City, receiving accolades from viewers and critics.

In order to better portray the international problem of runaway, abducted and enslaved children, Seduction exploits the classic struggle between good and evil by tearing back the curtain to unveil what lurks behind the beautiful and seemingly serene middle class suburb of Springfield U.S.A. The play leads you through a maze of sexual and mental deception, manipulation, adultery, murder, divorce and scandal.

Starring (in order of appearance) were Vanessa Altshuler (Mary), Christos Alexandrou (Devile), Tyler Richardson (Joe), Aaron Thomsen (Eugene), Kristine Murphy (Maggie), and Amanda Joy Loth (Dominique). Featuring Patrick Kenner (Elvis), Diego F. Chavez (The Make Over Artist), Daniel Pietruszka (The Gangster), Rebecca Magazine, Laura Percy, Courtni Wilson, and Keely Scarlata. Choreographer Liz Piccolli brings this thrilling story to life through vibrant and sultry dance.

"Christos Alexandrou is absolutely sensational as the devilish charmer in 'Seduction', wrote author Penelope Karageorge. "He sings, he dances and brings a special wit and droll charm to the role. Four stars! The show is delightful, with a young cast, high energy, and terrific choreography. I'm a big fan of the musical -- recently saw 'Fela' and 'A Little Night Music' -- and 'Seduction' was a real surprise in the most positive sense. You never know what you'll find when you step off an East Village Street to see a fledgling production. 'Seduction' and Christos were definitely worth the trip."



Mr. Evangelos Marinakis with the team of Capital Ship Management in New York

## Evangelos Marinakis at "Posidonia"

Within the framework of "Posidonia," one of the major maritime events worldwide, held recently at Piraeus, Greece, Evangelos Marinakis, or Vangelis as he is known, gave a very big party at the prestigious club-restaurant "Island" for all clients, associates and friends of his company. Marinakis started working in the shipping at the age of 21 and formed his first company when he was just 23. Today, at the age of 42, he is chairman and chief executive of Crude Carriers Corp. which listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in March. He has also been the chairman of Nasdaq-listed Capital Products Partners LP (CPLP) since it was formed in 2007 and he has been chief executive and a director of Capital Maritime since it was incorporated in 2005. Before that, he was the commercial manager

of Capital Ship Management and for the past 15 years has been active in various other family businesses, all related to the shipping industry. Marinakis has also strong views about the fact that the majority of Greek shipowners choose to stay in Greece, despite the fact that there exists a less than ideal climate.

His love and respect for the history of Greece is echoed in the names of Marinakis's vessels. Many have been named after heroes of Greek history and mythology, such as Alexander the Great, Achilles and the great strategist Miltiades, after whom his father was named. We also have to stress out the fact that Marinakis is very quick to see opportunities and very good in making decisions on both



From the reception at "Island": Capt. Nikos Syntychakis (Managing Director, Capital Ship Management Corp.), Gerry Ventouris (Chief Commercial Officer, Capital Maritime & Trading Corp.), Jerry Kalogiratos (Chief Financial Officer, Crude Carriers Corp.), Andreas Konialidis (Chartering Manager, Crude Carriers Corp.) and NEO's Margarita Vartholomeou

the buy and sell side. Today, Capital ship Management lists a mixed fleet of 45 vessels and some 3.5 million dwt. including the 19 tankers of Capital Product Partners LP and the five VLCC and suezmax tankers of Crude Carriers Corp.

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# The Art of Affordable Gourmet now in Great Neck

PHOTOS: ETA PRESS



Nassau County Comptroller George Maragos is cutting the inaugurating ribbon



From left, Comptroller George Maragos, Angela Maragos, Marilena and Nick Katopodis, Stelio Katopodis, Nick Sahlaras, Fay and Thomas Tsamis, Peter and Maria Mamais



Mike and Vangelis Gerasimou with Thomas Tsamis



Steve Frankis is capturing the memorable moments



Rev. Gerasimos Ballas (right) and Rev. John Vlahos officiating the Hagiasmos Ceremony

The art of "affordable gourmet" was introduced to Long Island, New York, eight years ago by Nick Katopodis when he opened the first North Shore Farms Market in Port Washington. It was followed two years later by another gourmet market in Glen Cove, and now a third has opened in Great Neck. Smaller in size, but equally rich in choices as the other two, the new North Shore Farms since its grand opening this past June has become an instant success and a focal point for those who are on the lookout for high-end food products at realistic prices.

"My motto is that everybody needs to have access to good, healthy products," says Katopodis, who spent more than two decades managing Manhattan's West Side Supermarket, before taking the bold step of transplanting and expanding the affordable gourmet theme in Long Island. "Eating well is a right, not a luxury," he points out, while going through an all-impressive fresh salad stand.

This time Katopodis has partnered with Peter Mamais of Apple Tree on the Upper West Side, another veteran in the food business who finally decided to try the waters outside the city. "I'm sure there are differences in the way people shop here, but I believe everybody speaks the same language when it comes to quality and freshness," Mamais said in an interview with NEO. "I'm impressed by the level of sophistication and that is exactly what I'm used to. It feels like home already."

North Shore Farms in Great Neck is replete with gourmet products from all over the world and with fresh produce from Long Island's vast fields. All that, with a home style cuisine that has turned the markets into an immediate attraction. For most of the patrons, North Shore Farms Markets are not just stores; they are institutions reflecting the area's development and the new needs that go with it. Nassau County Comptroller George Maragos, who was

invited to cut the ribbon at the grand opening, issued a special citation recognizing Mr. Katopodis' contribution in the area.

The cheese selection, from the beginning a North Shore Farms staple, is equally impressive here, as is the line of fresh meat and fish, vegetables, olive oil from various countries—even cold cuts are healthy, some of them 99% fat free! If you go there early in the morning, the freshly baked bread, coming daily from a traditional brick oven in Brooklyn, will immediately mesmerize you. For Greek-Americans living in the greater area, the new place renders Astoria obsolete! Most Greek and Cypriot products are here and in bigger varieties.

The new North Shore Farms Market is located at 90 Horace Harding Blvd., Great Neck, tel: (516) 482-6287. The website address is [www.northshorefarms.com](http://www.northshorefarms.com)



Klio Demetriou, Commercial Attache of Cyprus, setting up shop at the Show

*Little Cyprus fairs Big at the Fancy Food Show*

The Cyprus Embassy Trade Center participated with a National Pavilion in the specialized exhibition International Fancy Food & Confection Show held in New York City this past June with the participation of 19 exhibitors from Cyprus. The Cyprus Pavilion was showcasing specialty gourmet food products from, such as an array of cheeses, wines and Commandaria, Honey Spread derived from the combined mixing of rare varieties of natural bee honey and organic herb extracts, Mediterranean organic Sea Salt Flakes in various flavors in disposable grinders as well as many other fine specialty food products.

In addition to the many companies that have participated in previous years, this year several new companies and products were showcased from Cyprus, namely; M & M Mamas Kettle Ltd with their hand cooked natural potato chips, SA Bioplants Ltd with an array of unique herbal teas, Mesarka Dairy Ltd with their line of Halloumi cheese, Thamira Food MFRS Ltd with Traditional Regional Cyprus Biscuits and baked goods, Mitsides Public Company Ltd authentic pasta, tomato sauces and gourmet frozen traditional ready meals & frozen ravioli, Demetriou Dairy Ltd with halloumi and strained yogurt, A & O Bakeries Ltd traditional Cyprus biscuits, paximadia and koulouria, Allantika Dymes Ltd with traditional smoked meat products, Chrysostomos Elia Ltd with their line of halloumi and other Cyprus cheeses, and Manger Catering Ltd.

The specialty food industry is a thriving and vital part of the U.S. and global food market. Cyprus' participation in the Fancy Food show is an integral part of the country's efforts to promote and expand the exports to the U.S. Cyprus products are known for their authenticity, ethnic and cultural origin, superior ingredients, and consistent high quality.

The NASFT Summer Fancy Food Show presented this year 2,500 exhibiting companies and 81 countries. The show is the central hub of the specialty food industry, with an estimated over 24,000 attending buyers from every major segment.



by Peter Shakalis



## Positive Momentum Sustains the Market's Gains

The overall availability of office space in Manhattan inched a little higher in the second quarter to 13.8 percent from 13.6 percent in the first quarter of 2010, and 13.4 percent in 2009's second quarter. (The availability rate, you may recall from past columns, is a measure of vacant space and space that is currently occupied but can be made available for lease.) This modest increase was due to the continued weakening in the Downtown market where the availability rate reached 16.4 percent by the end of the second quarter, the highest of all the Manhattan business districts.

While Midtown South's availability rate also increased to 11.7 percent, other measures of the Midtown South market indicate that will remain upbeat. This area of Manhattan joins the Midtown North market in continued improvement. In Midtown North, the availability rate for space declined to 13.3 percent from 14.2 percent in the first quarter of 2010. The vacancy rate, which measures the amount of space that is vacant, declined in both the Midtown North and Midtown South markets.

In Midtown North, the vacancy rate is down to 7.4 percent from 7.7 percent in the first quarter of 2010. For the Midtown South market, the vacancy rate reached 5.5 percent by the end of the second quarter from 5.8 percent in the first quarter. The Downtown market moved in the opposite direction however, with the vacancy rate increasing to 8.4 percent from 7.5 percent in the first quarter. The same bifurcation appeared in rents.

### 2Q 2010 Capital Market Developments

Four transactions closed during the second quarter of 2010, resulting in a total transactional volume of eight properties for the first half of this year. This activity is an improvement over the 2009 doldrums when only three transactions closed during the first half of the year. Total sales volume for 2010 is \$1.2 billion compared to \$950 million in the first half of 2009. Two Midtown Class A buildings traded during the second quarter. HSBC's headquarters building at 452 Fifth Avenue traded for \$330 million or \$382/sf, a sale/leaseback that was negotiated in mid-2009. SL Green purchased 600 Lexington Avenue, a core plus asset, in a joint venture with the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board for \$193 million or \$636/sf, from Hines Interests.

Two value-added Midtown Class B buildings also traded during the quarter, both to foreign buyers. Carlos Slim Helu purchased 417 Fifth Avenue from the Moinian Group and Goldman Sachs for \$140 million or \$340/sf. Malzoni Group, a Sao Paulo based company, purchased 145 East 57th Street from Ashkenazy Acquisition Corporation for \$31 million or \$544/sf. The building, which features an attractive retail location, will become mostly vacant by September, 2010 when Hammacher Schlemmer's net lease expires.

The sales market has seen an increase of offerings in the past quarter. Five properties are under contract and nine buildings are on the market. Sellers are capitalizing on the signs that the market is strengthening. Lenders and special servicers are continuing to deal with mortgage defaults by frequently opting to offer extensions or debt restructuring rather than taking back the property. This process is likely to continue as a number of large loans that were originated at the height of the market will be coming due during the next two years.

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# THE NEW GENERATION of DOCTORS

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Theodora Niki Petratos, M.D.</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Attending Ophthalmology Physician/Surgeon, Sub-specialist in Cornea, External Disease and Refractive Surgery, Affiliated with Mount Sinai Hospital
<b>Education:</b>	Fellowship Training, Cornea, External Disease & Refractive Surgery - Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NY Ophthalmology Residency - New York Medical College, New York, New York; Internship - Transitional Year, Flushing Hospital Medical Center, Flushing, New York; Medical School - University of Buffalo School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Buffalo, New York; Undergraduate Education - Cornell University, Bachelor of Science, Magna Cum Laude



**Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

I was born in New York City at New York Presbyterian Hospital to Kathryn and Vasiliou Petratos. For the first several years of my life I grew up in Whitestone, New York. When I was just entering first grade my parents moved me and my two older brothers, Gerasimos and Nicholas, to Port Washington, Long Island. At the time it was a bit of a culture shock as we were only one of a few Greek families to have moved to this area of Long Island. My parents however were determined to keep our Greek culture and heritage part of our lives. We grew up speaking only Greek in the house and did not really learn English until we entered school.

**Who or what were the main influences in your life?**

If one was to ask my parents how they would describe me, they can be sure that the first words out of their mouths would be "very inquisitive, head-strong, and determined." However, it is my family who has ultimately influenced who I am today. Having grown up in a Greek home, the values of my parents have shaped my life. Living with and learning from Greek parents has not been easy, but it has its advantages. Being educated and a genuinely altruistic person, who is both well-rounded and active in the community is very important to me. I learned from my parents that even though some people are better at some things than others, these differences have nothing to do with ethnicity. I was taught never to have a set opinion, but always to explore the possibilities and to try to see all sides of an issue.

**Why did you become a doctor?**

I knew that I always wanted to do something in my life that would make a difference, as cliché as that may sound. I wanted to contribute to society and help people, but at the same time come home feeling good about what I had accomplished for the day. I honestly enjoyed many things in school, from science, to politics, even engineering and math. I had no medical doctors in the family growing up that I could look up to for guidance however I did have my parents' exemplary commitment to education and altruism. I majored in Neurobiology and Animal behavior at Cornell which piqued my interest in the human body and its' complex and intricate processes. I knew there was more to learn and Medical School was a way for me to pursue this goal and implement my knowledge into patient care. I also enjoy the fact that Medicine is a universal language. I can take my knowledge and expertise and help people in remote areas of the world if the need arises, or I can take care of people right here in my own community. Medicine knows no borders, race, ethnicity, or language, it is a tool I can always use for the greater good and that is what I love about being a doctor.

**As a new generation doctor, how do you evaluate the state of health care in the US?**

This is definitely not an easy question and one that can be answered in just a few sentences. It is a multi-factorial issue with many parts to the problem. We undeniably have great health care in the United States, but is it the best in the world? That's also not such an easy question for me to answer because I have not visited many other healthcare systems in the world. Statistically, the United States does not rank as highly as other countries in the world, however from first hand experience in the hospitals that I have worked in, physicians, nurses and ancillary staff are excellently trained. We also have amazing technology and diagnostic tools that people come from all over the world to use and be treated with. However, all of these advantages come at a price and the question remains of how do we

pay for it and how can we make the system more efficient.

**If you were a patient, what would the ideal doctor look to you like?**

The ideal doctor, I believe, has to be inherently a kind and empathetic person who is willing to listen to a patient's problem and spent the time to figure out a solution. A physician does have to be intelligent and must be able to master the medical knowledge needed to become a doctor, however, if this can not be translated into proper and appropriate patient care then I do not believe a physician can serve his/her community appropriately. A physician is someone who will go the extra mile, stay the late night and respect the patient's autonomy. There are very few professions where a person places so much trust and honesty in an individual and I believe it is a sacred bond that physicians must honor and respect. I hope to achieve these goals as I embark on my new career and I will always strive to provide continuity of care, kindness, integrity, loyalty and respect to my future patients and profession.

**Has your Hellenic heritage influenced your professional conduct and in what ways?**

Having grown-up as a Greek-American I understand and realize the struggles that our ancestors and relatives have made to create a better life for the future generations. Many Greeks, like my father and mother's grandparents, who came to the United States did so to provide a better life for their children. Not knowing the language, many still managed to become successful in private industry, including restaurants, dry cleaners, floral shops, real estate and the fur industry. Their determination and struggle to do something better and survive has influenced my determination to do better for myself, my family and my community. Just in the same way that these Greeks contributed to their families and their communities here and in Greece, I hope to bring this same type of integrity and determination to my profession.

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

I am a part of many other professional organizations in my field of Ophthalmology, and in various professional women organizations as well, however the Hellenic Medical Society (HMS) holds a more personal place in my career. I have been coming to the events and lectures of the HMS since I was a student in High School. At that time my older brother was embarking on his own Medical School career and, as most younger sisters tend to do, I wanted to be part of this interesting organization and follow in his footsteps. I attended all of the lectures and made some wonderful friends in this organization that I still have to this day and they have guided me in my Medical School and Residency career.

The HMS not only provided an excellent social support system, but they were able to alleviate the costs of both of our Medical School careers through generous scholarships that we received throughout our schooling. Both my brother and I are very grateful for this social and economic support system that the Hellenic Medical Society provided and would like to remain part of this tradition and contribute to the future of other young doctors throughout our medical careers.

**What qualities do you most admire or value in others?**

I admire those individuals that are kind, honest, determined, and altruistic. It is not always easy to find all of these characteristics in

people but I have had very good examples within my own family, including my parents, my brothers and my husband. I believe that if we can at least work on being better people everyday in our home and work environment we are working toward a greater good.

**Who are your heroes in real life?**

As I mentioned above my parents have had a major influence on my life. However, I have also had countless people, including many of my teachers and relatives that have guided my moral and intellectual development. I had fantastic teachers in High School who opened my eyes up to new things and always kept me thinking. I developed a love for the Spanish language, culture and poetry through my High School Spanish teacher. To this day I still use my Spanish to communicate with my patients because of how much I enjoyed learning it, and I can see how much they appreciate it when I make the effort to communicate with them. I also have met some amazing Professors at Cornell, environmental and wildlife conservationists such as Jane Goodall, novelists such as Toni Morrison and celebrities such as Magic Johnson. To hear these amazing people speak about their struggles, passions and illnesses and how they have overcome these challenges to do something better for society has been a true inspiration and thought provoking experience. I have also had wonderful teachers and mentors in Medical School and Residency who inspired me to learn more and constantly do more for my patients.

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

Professionally, I would like to still be practicing Ophthalmology. I love working with my patients and I greatly enjoy operating and providing better vision. There is nothing better for me than taking out someone's cataract, performing a Cornea transplant, or Laser surgery and seeing the patient's reaction when they can see better than they previously could. It is such a satisfying and emotional experience. I would like to continue improving my skills in the next twenty years so that I can continue to provide even better and more advanced care. Personally, I hope for many years of health and happiness with my husband and family. I hope to be lucky enough to have many children and to be able to teach and guide them well as my parents were able to do with me and my brothers.

**How do you spend your time outside of work?**

I take a lot of pride in enjoying personal time and interests. Medical School, Residency and Fellowship definitely were stressful and intense environments and so it was always necessary for me to participate in sports and maintain an active life-style. I was always very active in intra-mural sports in school as well as running, cycling and going to the gym. Nowadays, with both of our busy work schedules, my husband and I mostly enjoy relaxing with friends and family. When we are not too exhausted we enjoy cooking dinner together, going out for coffee with friends and heading out East to Long Island to enjoy the wonderful beaches, while the weather is still good. Every opportunity we get we enjoy traveling and while we are here in New York we like going to concerts, shows, and Greek cultural events.

**What is your idea of happiness?**

My idea of happiness is when the people I care about most are, above all, healthy and doing well. I care deeply about my family and friends and I am most happy when I have the time and ability to spend quality time with them.



"We are looking to expand our 'sleep on nature' philosophy into the American market," says Emmanuel Stefanakis



Greeks about to change the way Americans sleep!



PHOTOS: ETA PRESS

By Demetrios Rhompotis

For the last eight months mainstream media have outdone themselves in bashing Greece and her people after the country's economic fallout. With exceptional relish "experts" of all kinds concluded that nothing good can come out of Greece and in their zeal to sound convincing, they went as far as to blame—nature—by attributing the problem to the people's Mediterranean traits, e.g. their "natural" laziness, their love for oversleeping, coupled with "institutionalized" afternoon naps! Well, poetic justice works in mysterious ways and COCO-MAT, a company founded in Greece by an American 20 years ago, perhaps the leader worldwide in the manufacture of sleep systems made out of 100% natural materials (with more than 60 points of sale in Europe and another 10 in China) has come to a Manhattan staple, the ABC Home, aiming to change the way Americans sleep, alas, even seducing us into sleeping a little longer!

When a friend called me and enthusiastically spoke to me about the first great news coming out of Greece for a long time, urging me to go to ABC Home (888 Broadway) to see with my own eyes those remarkable products and write about them, being as busy as I was, I tried to avoid the commitment, asking him to email me information instead. But he was adamant. "You gotta come down," he insisted and it didn't take long before I was in the store's elevator, taking me up to third floor, where COCO-MAT products are displayed in a soothing, gallery-like environment.

According to Emmanuel Stefanakis, a Greek American from Boston who's the company's Director of Operations for the US, "relying on what Mother Nature can provide, COCO-MAT's philosophy of manufacturing relies on sustainability, environmentally-friendly production and natural materials which are derived from 100% biological cultivations and undergo only ecological treatment. Consequently, all of our products are hypo-allergenic." Based on these principles, the company has managed to produce high-quality sleep products, like bed-mattresses, mattresses and pillows an extensive bed linen range, using absolutely real cotton, seaweed, horse hair, wood etc. As a result, the whole bed breathes, a relief for New York's hot and humid summers. Moreover, "elasticity is another key element. The mattress adapts to the body, not the other way round," explains Stefanakis. "COCO-MAT's 4-layer sleep system, consisting of a bed-mattress, mattress and two top-mattresses, offers exemplary comfort and relaxation enabling the body to get the much needed rest it needs, thereby allowing us to wake up refreshed and ready to face the challenges of the day ahead." In addition to their sleep product range, they also make furniture for the bedroom, living room and kitchen.

COCO-MAT's shop-in-shop within the ABC department store is the company's first step into the US. As Emmanuel Stefanakis puts it, "we are looking to expand our 'sleep on nature' philosophy into the American market and this place is the ideal starting point. We are

dedicated just as much as ABC to making our world a better place to live." The vision of COCO-MAT's founders is to become the world leader in the mattress market, to promote a working culture based on sustainability and to provide equal opportunities to all of its employees, irrespective of nationality, race, color, religion or disability.

However, "no matter what one says, it can't be compared to the experience of seeing and laying on one of these beds or touring around and touching the freshness of the material," Stefanakis explains, as he insists on literally taking me to bed, which, with all its elaborateness, looks very fragile for my Greek Presidential Guard body, with its equally presidential and much less Evzon-like protruding belly. I cautiously lay down, while the rest of the customers watched with curiosity, waiting their turn, I guess. (In the meantime, I was trying not to wrinkle my shirt completely, as I had another place to go to.) "Oh boy, it feels good," was my immediate reaction, sensing the smoothness of the garment enveloping my tired body as a protecting aura that put me pretty much at ease with my hypertension-inflicted self. I closed my eyes and it took just seconds before I fell asleep then and there! Before anybody noticed, my cell rang and my rescue and brought me back into reality. Greece had scored her first goal in the World Cup!



From left, Portland State University Professor Harry Anastasiou; University of Washington Professor Emeritus Theodore Kaltsounis, University of Washington Professor Gus Kravas; Portland State University President Wim Wiewel; E. John Rumpakis; Cleo Rumpakis; Ms. Kristina Coy, Portland State Greek language student; Marvin Kaiser, Dean of Portland State's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences; Consul General of Greece Ioannis Andreades

E. John Rumpakis, a graduate of the University of Portland, 7-year member of State of Oregon's Heritage Commission, a student of Greek and Latin, a member of the Leadership 100, AHEPA and a huge advocate for Hellenism to say the least, believes in trying to "light the Olympic flame here, as far as Hellenism is concerned." He served for over 35 years the Greek Consulate of San Francisco and donated funds to Portland State University to bring international peace scholar Dr. Harry Anastasiou from Europe. Dr. Anastasiou takes about 20-25 graduate students a year from Portland State University to the green line in Cyprus to better understand conflict resolution, using Cyprus as a "lab". And this is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to E. John Rumpakis. When asked about his new program, he replies: "Money should definitely be the closing line. This is not a "Greece for Greeks alone" program; this is a program for anyone who wants to learn about a bedrock culture of Western Civilization, both in its historical and current manifestations - i.e. both ancient and modern Greece."

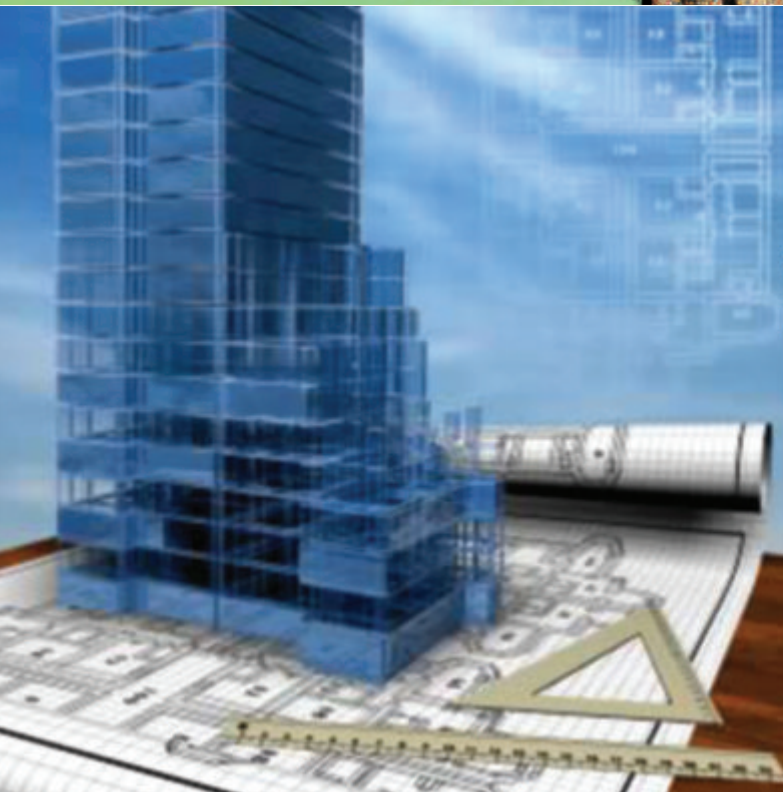
By Katerina Grafakos

E. John Rumpakis, an Oregon realtor, has generously donated \$250,000 for a new Hellenic studies program at Portland State University. The program, starting fall of 2011 "will pull together resources from the Departments of World Languages and Literatures, History, and Conflict Resolution." Through internships, study-abroad programs, lectures and performances by visiting scholars, authors and artists, students will get a "deep understanding of the on-going contributions of Greek culture to Western Civilization and the notions of democracy and personal freedom," as well as learn about our history, culture and heritage. Starting with a minor, the program will eventually add a major and hope to see it work with other programs in the school such as Italian and Judaic Studies, as well as the School of Business and the College of Urban and Public Affairs. This program will show how "Greece's

classical Hellenic past is interwoven with her modern present," as well as ours. As E. John Rumpakis says, "The way our life is ordered and built and practiced is all done by the ancient Greeks... they built structures for western world."



Cleo and E. John Rumpakis with Greek Consul General Ioannis Andreades



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Ernie Anastos with one of the scholarship recipients, Steve Kollias

The honoree, James Orfanides with the host, John Catsimatides

Alexis Christoforou and Nick Gregory with spouses and friends

## HTSF GALA: NEW YORK'S STAR-STudded EVENT



Ukrainian super model Irena Igorevna with NEO's Demetrios Rhompotis and Dimitris Filios from Cosmos FM



All of the recipients of the Hellenic Times SF with John and Margo Catsimatides and their guests



Mary Zias of TD Bank with friends



Margo Catsimatides

More than 1000 people attended this year's, 19th Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund Gala, held recently at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York. Kati Garbi, The Shirelles, and the Greek American band ALPHA, along with golden confetti and hundreds of balloons created a fantastic environment, perhaps the best prelude for the upcoming summer season.

James Orphanides (Partner Centurion Holdings LLC and Chairman Emeritus of First American Title Insurance Co. of NY) and George Eads, starring at CBS drama, CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, were the recipients of the HTSF's 2010 Humanitarian Award. A small book containing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America was at every table, a gift by Mr. Orphanides.

Five previous HTSF Honorees were also present: Ernie Anastos, Anchor of FOX 5 News, Alexis Christoforou, CBS News Anchor, the Hon. Nick Tsoucalas, Judge of the US Court of International Trade, Nick Gregory, FOX 5 Meteorologist, and actor Frank Dicapoulos. Four screen presenters featured previous HTSF Honorees, Cat Cora, the FOOD Network's Iron Chef, Melina Kanakaredes, actor, CSI: NewYork, Gilles Marini, actor, Brothers and Sisters, and rock star Constantine Maroulis.

Among the distinguished guests were Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Aghi Balta, Consul General of Greece in New York and Koula Sophianou, Consul General of Cyprus in New York. The event's hosts were John and Margo Catsimatides, founders of HTSF, with their children Andrea and John. The American and Greek National Anthems were sung by Nicolette Scott, 2010 scholarship recipient, and Eleni Rodopoulos Kaufman, 2000 scholarship recipient.

For the first time this year, the HTSF awarded scholarships to students attending various Greek American schools. A total of 30 scholarships were offered to students from all over the United States.

According to Nick Katsoris, Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund President and Gala Chairman, the Fund has awarded more than 700 scholarships, totaling over \$1.8 million dollars since it began twenty years ago. The Gala is also the only fundraiser event for the Scholarship Fund. Money raised from tickets, raffles, journal, and donations goes to the scholarships of next year's event, scheduled for May 14, 2011.



The Shirelles



Katy Garbi



Eleni Hrambani, instructor at the Hellenic American Institute of Bronx



By Andrea Photopoulos

The Pacific Pulse

With all the economic turmoil going on in our beloved Greece, NEO went on a mission to the streets of San Francisco's Bay Area to speak to young Greek Americans and get some opinions. When asked about their feelings on Greece's issues, many were quite opinionated and passionate about their answers. Obviously, even though living in California, the problems in Greece hit close to home for many of these young individuals, with family and friends being affected directly. In conclusion, it is refreshing to see that young Greek Americans with roots from all over Greece are keeping themselves educated on the current issues in their homeland.

Check out what they had to say...

# Loose Talk on Greek Street



Chris Vurnis

"As for Greece, they have a common issue that affects many other nations. Fundamentally; they've had a declining birthrate for decades. Thus; there are less and less young workers available to pay taxes to support the pension systems. The same is occurring in the US as well.

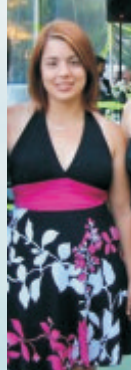
Recognizing the aging population issue, the Greek government is paying bonuses to couples to have more kids. My cousin Petro is being paid a few hundred Euros a month by the government for having a third child.

The Euro currency is also a constraint for Greece. She no longer has any independent ability to set central bank interest rates or define currency policy for the benefit of her people.

My aunt is on a fixed retirement income, and she sees her purchasing power decline year after year. And with increased VAT tax on goods coming into law this year, it will get worse.

However; in the end, it is the overly relaxed work week that has been a major contributor to the detriment of Greece. Nations today can scarcely be industrially competitive with a 30 hour workweek and a labor force that repeatedly goes on strike as a national pastime. My mom is from Chios and my paternal grandparents are from Rhodes" -Chris Vurnis age 36 Engineer in Semiconductor Industry.

"I think Greece deserves what's happening to it. People long abused the system they have in place, one that was created and supported by corrupt politicians who the people elected to keep in office. Everyone wants to be a socialist, but you have to pay to be one and no one wants to pay, they just want to get-paid. Personally it doesn't affect me in a direct way. Most of my family lives there, but I live here. I holiday there occasionally and all I can think when people bring up politics and economics, despite not being a fan of how our country is run all the time is, "USA! USA! USA!" and make myself a frappe /irony. My dad is from Nea Kios and my mom is from Sparta." -Georgia T age 27, self employed.



Elaine Sahines

"Though I do not know much about what is truly going on in Greece, I still feel sad. I want things to get better for them and I am sure they will pull through! I have faith in my fellow Greeks that they will get out of the hole they are in. My mom is from Sparta and Tripoli and my dad is from Stranza, Greece." -Elaine Sahines age 26, nanny.



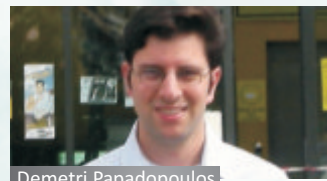
Lila Louise Gemellos

"I think this economy crisis is impacting those newer to the workforce or those trying to enter it for the first time. It's hard to get ahead and plan for the future when our futures are so uncertain. We're not sure what new obstacles will present themselves in years to come, in regards to employment, banking, housing, and education, or which obstacles will be removed in time. My family is from Chrystostomos, Ikaria." -Lila Louise Gemellos age 25, artist and founder of "No Paradigm Designs"



George Bakas

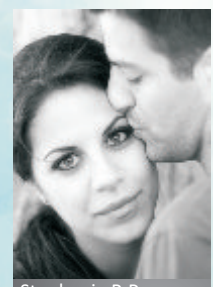
"My family has not been directly affected yet but I fear most Greeks will see a short to medium term (2-5yrs) drop in their quality of life. The solution to Greece's problem is the same as the US, they need real job creation. People think Greeks are not hard workers but 2008 OECD data shows Greek workers logged the most hours of any country after South Korea - 2100+hrs avg. Meanwhile, German workers were almost last at 1500hrs average annual worked and US was in the middle. Regardless of economic situations I will be going to the Greek Islands this summer because....it's in the blood, I have to see some real clear blue water! My family is from Kalymnos, Greece" - George Bakas age 42, Strategic US Account Manager.



Demetri Papadopoulos

"In a nutshell it all starts with the financial sector. Once that is fixed, then the rest will mend itself. Sort of like US. Here we have some CEOs that make way too much \$\$\$ and that looks bad.

Thank You! Forever young! My father is from Thessaloniki and my mom is from Kokkoni, Korinth." -Demetri Papadopoulos age 32, Real Estate Management.



Stephanina R.P. Panayotopoulos

"Though Greek people have felt the pain of the Eurodollar on a daily basis for over 10 years following the country's political powers abandoning the Drachma as its main currency, it is now that the world sees how the rich continue to get richer and the poor stay poor front and center. Is this failed economy because of Greeks? Not really. When you trace who "helped" initiate the failure to come - it is none other than the best USA bank Goldman Sachs. Just as we in the USA do not elect politicians because they are good, but rather choose the "lesser of two evils", and it is the people of Greece who were the innocent people who did not have a chance at seeing what was about to hit them. So Greeks are staying Greek, finding ways to cope without the support of their leaders, without money and without a flourishing economy. My family is from Ikaria, Greece." -Stephanina R.P. Panayotopoulos age 27, owner of "For My Sweet P"/Freelance PR Consultant.



Maria Leles

"I think the current state of the Greek economy sucks, like how they are in debt, etc. I don't follow politics very well, but I can only imagine that they are going through what we in the US went through and are still going through. My mother is from Tripoli and Kistoria, and my father is from Astros and Megalopoli (Arkadia)." -Maria Leles age 21, college student at Sacramento State.



By Alexander Billinis

# TO SOUTHERN ITALY, IN SEARCH OF GREEKS...

Venice clearly displays its influences from, and on Byzantium, and, as we discussed a couple of months ago, Venice's processing of generations of Byzantine immigrants set the pattern for the post-Byzantine Diaspora. This pattern repeated itself elsewhere in Orthodox communities in Europe and later in the Americas and Australia. Southern Italy differs considerably. Here, the Byzantine communities were autochthonous, local Greek-speaking people loyal to the Emperor in Constantinople and to the Orthodox Patriarch there. Greeks settled in Southern Italy in ancient times, and their communities remained intact and loyal to the Byzantine Emperor until the Arabs evicted Imperial rule from Sicily and the Normans from Southern Italy. The last enclave, Bari, fell to the Normans in 1071, and except for a brief occupation of Ancona one hundred years later, Byzantine rule never returned, and Southern Italy became, to use the Greek term, a hameni patrida, lost homeland.

Ten years ago to the month, in August 2000, I arrived in Naples, the Ancient Greek city of Neapolis (New City), directly from Chicago, where I then lived and worked. Just turned thirty and still single, I had become obsessed with the Byzantine remnants in Southern Italy. I get that way sometimes, when a topic or a place absorbs me. My ultimate destination was the Heel of Italy, the Salentine Peninsula, where nine villages are collectively known as La Grecia Salentina (Salentine Greece) or in the local dialect, Griko, "ta ennia choria." Here aspects of the Greek language and culture have survived the centuries. The other Hellenophone area of Italy, La Grecia Bovesia, centered on the Calabrian hill town of Bova, also speaks a version of Griko.

I spent an evening in Naples, where the palette declared itself satisfied with the local pizza, and wine taken straight from the barrel, without the dubious benefit of sulfites. Then, the obligatory evening stroll to a café where the doppio espresso predictably did not disappoint. The swarthy Neapolitans, tyrannized by car and scooter, and devotees of the café culture, readily resemble Greeks, yet their baroque city recalls little, if anything, of the Balkans. Ancient Greeks may have founded Neapolis, and Byzantium may have held periodic sway, but Naples, in contrast to Venice, conjures no images of Byzantium.

The next day, I boarded the train, crossing the boot of Italy and the central Apennine Range, bound for the Adriatic port of Bari, an obvious destination for two reasons. First, Byzantium's political presence in Italy expired here, in 1071, the last outpost to fall to the Normans. Then, there is Saint Nicholas, whose corpse was taken from Asia Minor by Bariot sailors, and now lies in a crypt at San Nicola di Bari Basilica, a lovely Roman Catholic Church in Bari's old center. As the patron saint of sailors, Saint Nicholas and the male and female versions of the name Nicholas are ubiquitous in Greece, and to a lesser extent in other Orthodox countries. In a gratifying show of inter-Christian solidarity, the Crypt itself

houses an Orthodox chapel, where, when I visited, two Russian monks were deep in prayer, their Slavonic cadences transporting Bari back to the Byzantine bosom, if only in supplication and incense. Though the Crypt and the earthly remains of Saint Nicholas moved me greatly, generally Bari left me a bit non-pulsed. It seemed a typical Mediterranean port, somewhat seedy, with few monuments recalling the particular Byzantine past I sought to find. I needed to head south, into Salento, to find a living link to the Byzantine past.

Italians love their cars, and their road builders obviously retain enough of the Roman engineering skill to produce some of the world's finest highways, the autostrade. This is a complete contrast to Greece, where until recently most roads were oriental tracks. The route from Bari to Lecce, Salento's baroque "capital," was a brisk one, and merited a stop in the shade of architecture to rival Florence, for one of my beloved espressos. Notwithstanding the moniker "Florence of the South," all of the locals and tourists seemed to be Italians, and they enjoyed their architecture with a relaxed intimacy that, as an American bereft of such monuments at home, I could only envy.

The autostrade runs through the middle of the Italian "Heel," and only a few signs alert the driver that he is passing through Grecia Salentina, a small oasis of Greek language and culture in the middle of the Salentine Peninsula. Pulling off to one of them, the village of Calimera, I am greeted by the town name and "Kalos lrtet" the local welcome in the Griko dialect. The nine towns of Grecia Salentina, all of which I visited, were part of a larger Greek language area that receded with time, and for the most part the towns, lovely, whitewashed affairs in the midst of olive groves clustered around a baroque church bell tower, all looked the same. The colors were the same as in Greek islands, and even the church towers recalled places in Greece which had experienced Venetian rule, such as Naxos or Corfu.

Though there were a few carefully preserved Orthodox chapels dotting the countryside, the functioning churches were all Roman Catholic, and have been for centuries. Orthodoxy faded, by necessity into the Uniate Doctrine, or Rito Greco, as it is known locally. This rite, using Greek in the liturgy and elements of Orthodox liturgy ended by 1600, to be replaced by standard Roman Catholic liturgy and doctrine. That said, some people have converted to Orthodoxy out of a sense of cultural loyalty, and in Griko Bovesia, a small proportion of Greek-speakers remain Uniates. Southern Italy also has a large Albanian-speaking population, similar in culture to Greece's Arvanites, and often they remain staunchly Uniate or Orthodox, and culturally Byzantine. Many in fact came to Italy in the Ottoman era from parts of Greece, and the foustanela is often worn at their celebrations.

In the town of Corigliano d'Otranto, I fell in with a local cultural circle, the Argalio (Greek for "loom"), and they spun tales, in a combination of the Griko dialect, my Spanish-leaning Italian, and broken English, over fantastic seaside meals and

midnight music, where all voices joined in their songs of love and heartbreak, in a dialect readily understandable to a modern Greek. They also introduced me to their Pizzicata dance, a spinning dance where man circles woman circles man, and they laughed at how I danced it "like a Balkan, but I guess that's what you are, after all." Their music lacked the spice of the East, of Turkey, that so peppers music from the Slovenian border to Syria. They too lacked that bitter taste, that peppery anger, which all of the people on the Eastern side of the Adriatic seem to possess. The heavy weight of the Turkish presence was palpably absent.



Santa Cesaria, Otranto

For a bit more of the Balkans in Italy, I went to the town of Otranto, where the Adriatic reaches its narrowest point. Here fortress walls, a properly frescoed Byzantine Church greet the visitor, the only place on the Italian mainland to fall to the Turks, in 1481. Albanians were all over the town, ferry services advertised routes to Corfu, Valona, and Durres. My car radio picked up music from across the Adriatic, Albanian folk pop sounding every bit like Greek, Serbian, or Turkish music, just change the language. I could not help think that the Balkans without the Turkish legacy is not the Balkans. After all, the word "Balkan" itself is Turkish for "mountain range." It says it all.

Back in Corigliano d'Otranto, we had another evening of cafés and mini festivals. More parties were due later in the week, in neighboring towns, but I had to move on. The place captivated me too much, it was like Greece with all of the delights but without the weight. I sensed that if I did not leave, I might just stay. The next day, I boarded a ferry from Brindisi to Patras, the Peloponnesian port where my grandfather first set out for America. My friends waved from the pier.

The Salentine "Greeks" are a lively bunch, with a lust for life. They are Catholic Italians who share blood with Greeks and aspects of their culture and language, but neither their religion nor their identity. They are a lost Greek homeland, but they do not feel lost, and they are at home. So was I, when I was there.

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.

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Harry Mark Petrakis' latest collection of short stories, *Cavafy's Stone*, will be published this November by **Wicker Park Press** and centers around a village in Greece. *The Sisters* is part of the collection. The writer, now 87, says of his latest effort: "Part of me longs to start writing once more and part of me dreads it. I once wrote a story, *The Bastards of Thanos*, about a poet dying in an island hospital, spending his final hours fashioning and refashioning an unfinished poem. There are worse ways for an old scribe to end his days."

## The Sisters by Harry Mark Petrakis

Chrissis and Selene had been born within minutes of one another but they were not twins. Their weight was different, (Selene one pound lighter) as was the color of their eyes. Chrissis' were dark while Selene's were hazel.

As children they played compatibly, started school together, and, when they lost their mother during the aborted birth of a baby who would have been their brother, both sorely grieved. Their forlorn father, Nafkratis, spent the next few years raising them. When they were seventeen he told them he was leaving Fanaron for America.

"You are both old enough now to look after yourselves as well as each other," he said. "Your Uncle Theofilos has written from America that he has a job for me. I will go and get settled there and when I have saved enough money, I will send for both of you."

But in the years that followed, their father did not fulfill his promise. His letters always contrived one excuse or another. He was working long hours and had no time to look for a

larger apartment than the solitary room in which he lived. He was changing jobs. He had been ill with pneumonia and needed time to recover. In the beginning he wrote at least once a month but as time passed his letters became less frequent.

"He has forgotten us," Chrissis said bitterly. "He has always been selfish and cares only for himself."

"I am glad he has found a new life for himself in America," Selene said. "He might even marry again. If he has other children, there wouldn't be room enough in his house for two grown daughters."

Chrissis thought perhaps Selene was more willing to accept the reluctance of their father to rescue them from Fanaron because she didn't seem to mind her life in the village. She worked hard alongside Chrissis during the day and, in the evening, was content to sit before the fire knitting or reading and rereading one of the few books they had acquired.

In contrast, Chrissis found life in the village primitive and unbearable. As if it were a forewarning of her own fate, all around her she witnessed the weariness and resignation of village women condemned to lives of constant toil. They labored from dawn till dusk in the corn-patches, sickle in hand, the more unfortunate ones working with babies slung in cloth cradles from their shoulders.

In addition to their endless work, the mores of the village required them to wear black for the rest of their lives to signify they had lost a relative. For these women the period of mourning never ended.

After a while both sisters ceased to believe that their father would ever send for them. They slept together in an old four-poster bed, tended their small field for most of the day, milked the goat, ate eggs from their chickens. By the time they had reached the age of twenty, all that was missing from their lives were husbands.

The problem was that the village had a meager choice of eligible suitors. The more desirable men were already taken by other girls. Among the single men remaining, there was Panfelio, a hard-working farmer and obviously kind man who came courting. But he had huge ears that hung like an elephant's appendages along each side of his head. There was Emmanuel who wasn't bad looking and who also had a sturdy figure but he rarely washed and one couldn't bear to be in the same room with him because of the odors of pigs and goats he carried with him.

One unmarried man who stood out from the others was Helios Varnavas. He was tall, with glossy black hair that curled around his ears. His

strong face seemed hewn from rock that was warmed by the sun. He had chestnut-colored eyes that could gleam with laughter or throw off sparks of some inestimable tenderness. His lips were ripe and full and seemed to Chrissis to be made for a lover's kiss.

Any number of girls in the village would have been delighted by attention from Helios but he seemed to favor Chrissis and Selene. In the beginning Chrissis simply enjoyed his presence in their house but, as time went on, she found herself assessing the amount of attention he paid to each of them. She began to worry whether his words and gestures were more affectionate toward Selene than to her.

When Chrissis was alone, sewing or working the spindle of the loom, she pondered her attractiveness alongside that of her sister. Both were undeniably lovely girls -everyone in the village said so. Both had raven-black hair and flawless complexions. Their figures were also similar in that both were slender and firm-fleshed.

If Chrissis could discern any difference it was one that puzzled and distressed her. That variance between them had to do with Selene's eyes. They weren't simply a different color but radiated a strange gentleness, a softness that was almost spiritual. Chrissis examined her own face in the mirror and knew her eyes could never reflect that innocence and goodness of heart because of the violent, unconstrained emotions that seethed behind them. Her thoughts harbored anger, resentment, frustration, violent emotions that leaped and hissed the way a fire threw off sparks.

On those evening Helios came to their house, both girls dressed as becomingly as they could. When he was with them the room seemed warmer and brighter.

"I am the most fortunate of men," he told them one night in the spring. "Most men are grateful to be able to share the evening with just one lovely girl. But when I visit, I have two beauties to look upon."

While his flattery seemed to encompass both of them, the question that bothered Chrissis and as time went on grew in intensity was which one of them Helios favored. There were times he appeared to be more attentive to Chrissis. At other times his attention seemed focused on Selene. For the first time in her life Chrissis felt a certain jealousy toward her sister.

As the months passed, Helios continued to visit them and their evenings were pleasant and convivial. Chrissis heard from a neighbor woman that some of the villagers were wagering as to which of the sisters Helios would ask to marry him.

In the beginning Chrissis felt she could endure living on if Helios chose Selene. But as her love for him grew more ardent, she found the thought that he might select Selene unbearable. If she could not become his wife the village would become an even more barren and desolate place, a place of dingy houses and joyless inhabitants. She imagined them at night, finding what meager joy they could in fevered coupling unless exhaustion from the day's labor fostered sleep instead of love.

Sometimes at night in bed beside her sleeping sister, Chrissis imagined what it would be like nestled beside Helios, secure in his strong embrace. In her boldest fantasies she thought of the two of them naked, their bodies pressed together, her gestures reckless and wanton. She felt that the love that raged within her had to surpass any love her more passive and restrained Selene might feel. She couldn't help thinking that Helios deserved her more passionate love. When dawn came and her fevered imagining had still not allowed her to sleep, she heard the herdsman driving the sheep up the mountain and the barking of dogs. She had barely closed her eyes when Selene rising woke her and it was time to get up. Meanwhile, Chrissis took her sister's ability to sleep soundly as further evidence that she was not experiencing the urgency and passion toward Helios that Chrissis felt.

The weeks passed into months and Helios continued to visit them several evenings a week. Sometimes on Sunday, the three of them walked up the mountain. The path they ascended was scented with basil, mint, and most fragrant of all, lemon blossoms.

Chrissis found herself resenting the presence of her sister, thinking how much more satisfying it would be if she had Helios to herself. Sitting beside him, she noticed the back of his neck burned dark by the sun. Below the collar of his shirt she glimpsed the paler shade of his flesh and she imagined his strong body naked. She felt an urge to touch him, grasp his arm, pull him closer to her, things she could not do with Selene present.

There were a few times when one of them was busy and the other had Helios to herself. Chrissis savored those moments, emboldened to sound more endearing and open in her gestures of affection than she would have if Selene were present. Yet while Selene did not seem to resent those evenings, Chrissis fiercely resented the evenings Helios spent alone with her sister.

In the church confessional with Father Basil, Chrissis spoke of her dilemma. The village priest offered what comfort he could.

"You are both attractive young women, Chrissis," Father Basil said. "I can readily see why Helios might have trouble making up his mind. But that day will come. If you are fortunate, he will choose you. If on the other hand he selects Selene, then you must feel joy for your sister and be a loving sister-in-law to Helios."

While Chrissis understood the good sense of that advice, the thought of not having Helios consumed her with a desperation that bordered on panic. She could not bear the thought of having to stand beside the altar table, seeing Helios and Selene wearing the flowered crowns attached to white ribbons that signified union and abiding love.

The rains came to an end during a brilliant month when the mountain above the village crested in green and thousands of new spring flowers bloomed among the rocks. That spring an event occurred that convinced her that Helios favored her. Selene had gone to assist a neighbor woman who had a sick child. In her absence Helios had come to the house and he and Chrissis ascended the mountain together.

Chrissis relished not having to share Helios with her sister and she felt buoyant and reckless. Her glances and gestures were more flirtatious than she had ever dared display before. She held Helios' hand tightly as they walked. When they sat on a boulder to rest she sat as close to him as she could, pressing her thigh against his leg. She looked at the ripe fullness of his lips and then into his eyes. At that moment, miracle of miracles, Helios kissed her!

She was delighted and felt triumphant but Helios seemed remorseful.

"Forgive me, Chrissis," he said quietly. "I had no right to do that." He struggled to continue. "Until I have made up my mind and asked either you or Selene to be my wife, I had no right to make such an advance."

They were silent for a moment while she struggled for words to convey her feelings.

"You know we both love you, Helios," Chrissis said finally. "You must know that."

"I have felt it," Helios said quietly. "And I'm not sure I deserve such a bounty. Either one of you would make a wonderful wife for any man lucky enough to have you. The truth is that I also love you both." He paused, his handsome dark eyes staring at Chrissis with a moving gentleness. "I make you a promise," he said. "When the time comes, you will both know whom I have chosen God help me; that is all I can do."

Hearing Helios confess his love, even though it was a love she shared with Selene, filled Chrissis with gratefulness. She yearned to embrace him, feel his lips again, feel her body pressed against the strength of his body. Every part of her wanted to shamelessly cry out, "Choose me! Choose me!"

The first shadows of twilight obscured the final tracings of daylight, the trilling of cicadas growing louder. The dark peak of the mountain was contoured against the sky which still carried the scarlet tint of the setting sun.

Helios rose and extended his hand to help her rise.

"We better start down," he said. Still holding her hand, they began their descent of the mountain.

That night in bed, Chrissis relived the intimacy of the kiss, the feel of Helios' lips against her own, the scent of honey from his tongue. She could not contain her jubilation because she felt the kiss signified that he preferred her over Selene. That gesture of intimacy reassured her that Helios really loved her but his gentle, caring nature was reluctant to hurt and disappoint Selene.

Chrissis wasn't sure just when the baleful thought first occurred to her. It began that winter when Selene fell ill with some ailment. She ran a fever, her cheeks flushed and her brow moist.

The midwife came and gave her some medication and for two nights Chrissis sat beside her sister and bathed her brow to ease her discomfort. At the same time that she felt an outpouring of love for Selene, she could not banish the thought that her sister's death would resolve all their problems. Chrissis would be the one left and Helios would not have to choose.

At once she felt ashamed of the vagrant and heartless thought. She scoured herself for her selfishness and uttered a prayer for God to forgive her.

But like an aberrant seed that was planted and began to grow, the thought of how her sister's death would mean her own happiness consumed her. It was fueled by her terror of never marrying, of becoming in the end one of the wretched village women, widows and spinsters, black kerchiefs knotted around their heads, busy winding wool with fingers so stripped of flesh by grief and labor that they resembled claws.

One evening as Chrissis was preparing their dinner, she noticed on the shelf a can which contained some toxic liquid a farmer had given them to poison the animals that foraged on their crops. As the greens boiled in the pot, her glance kept returning obsessively to the can. In that moment she felt herself possessed by some alien and demonic presence, controlling her body, guiding her movements and actions as if she no longer had them under her control.

When she placed some of the greens on a plate for Selene, the demon that had possessed her reached for the can and poured a spoonful of the liquid across the plate of greens. Afterwards,

Chrissis poured olive oil on the greens to blunt any bitterness of taste.

As Chrissis carried the plate of tainted greens to the table before her sister, she felt a moment of panic. She couldn't believe what the evil spirit within her had done. While she struggled for some excuse to remove the plate of greens, Selene began to eat the tainted food.

All that evening and into their bedtime, Chrissis watched her sister in panic, feeling her breathing tight in her chest. Aside from complaining about some mild distress in her stomach, Selene seemed unaffected by the toxic liquid. When Chrissis spoke her prayers that night, she expressed her gratefulness to God that she hadn't harmed her sister. When they were in bed together later that night she reached out and clasped her sister's hand. She was reassured when Selene pressed her fingers in response.

The following evening she resisted the temptation to add the liquid, fighting the evil impulse with all of her strength. But that night she was sleepless, thinking of Helios and his dilemma. Perhaps he would grow weary of struggling to decide and pick another village girl. In that way neither Selene or she would have him.

The next night, once again driven by an aberrant impulse, she added a little more of the toxic liquid to Selene's portion. She was surprised when Selene did not seem to show any ill effects.

Impaled between gratefulness and a measure of frustration, the following evening she added a larger portion of the toxic liquid. Selene complained about the astringent taste of the food.

In the middle of the night, Chrissis was awakened by her sister's hoarse moaning. When Chrissis lit the lamp she saw her sister's face flushed, her eyes glowing, her cheeks burning. She seemed to be having trouble breathing and seized by panic and remorse, Chrissis ran barefooted to their neighbor's house, asking her to fetch the midwife.

The midwife came, bringing her small sack of potions and poultices. For the remainder of the night she tended Selene while Chrissis huddled in a corner, tearful and repentant, not believing what she had done. In that moment she prayed with all of her heart for Chrissis to live. Her shame and remorse cut so deep she vowed if God spared Selene she'd willingly relinquish Helios to her sister.

As the first tracings of dawn glinted at the windows, the weary midwife turned from beside the bed and came to the corner where Chrissis sat, sleepless and exhausted.

"She's dead," the midwife said gravely. "Your sister is dead."

Chrissis felt as if a knife had been thrust into her breast. She could only stare at the midwife in disbelief.

"Later this morning, I'll send the women to prepare the body," the midwife said and turned away. "She was young and healthy and we may never know what ailment caused her death. We must only accept that the ways of God are beyond mortal understanding." She looked with compassion at Chrissis. "Try to be strong now," she said quietly. "You have hard and lonely years ahead of you."

She walked slowly to the door. Before she left the house, she turned back to Chrissis a final time.

"No one else but you and I need ever know," she said quietly. "But your sister was bearing a child. From the feel of her abdomen, I would say she was in her third or fourth month."

The door closed behind the old midwife as if it were a tombstone sealing a grave.





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## Political Action by Young Professionals in Manhattan

George Demos, Republican running for United States Congress in the First Congressional District of New York, was the special guest during a private fundraiser held on his behalf in Manhattan. Organized by a Host Committee comprised of 10 young professionals from the New York Greek-American community, the event took place at the Central Park West residence of entrepreneur Zina Spezakis. A group of nearly 50 young-adults gathered with donations to support the 33-year old Congressional candidate.



Jessica Meyer, Tassos Recachinas, Katerina Recachinas and Dan Pergola



Justin Bozonelis, Alexi Yannas, Jim Ravanos, Keke Kyriakopoulos and Zina Spzakis



Faye Papadakis and Sonya Kypros



Katerina Makris and Angelika Ioannou



Stefanie Amanatides and Ariana Arbes



Zina Spezakis and Marina Spezakis

The George Demos for Congress Host Committee included Justin Bozonelis, Keke Kyriakopoulos, Zina Spezakis, Dr. George Carayannopoulos, Dr. Michael Plakogiannis, Tassos Recachinas, George Soterakis, Christina Tsemelis, Sophie Vassilaras and Alexi Yannas. "This is the second fundraiser that we have organized for George targeted at the Greek-American young professional community in New York and, once again, we have a considerable host committee and room filled with attendees all excited to support him. It's a strong and encouraging testament to how our community views George and our shared belief in him as leader," remarked close friend to George Demos and Host Committee member Justin Bozonelis in his introductory speech.

George Demos earned his BA from Columbia University and law degree from Fordham University where he served on the Environmental Law Journal. He holds very strong ties to both the Greek-American and Greek-Orthodox communities, having served as an altar boy at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. He is also a member of Kimisis Tis Theotokou in Southampton, was recently appointed to serve on the Archdiocesan Council by Archbishop Demetrios and is also a member of Leadership 100, the major endowment fund operated in support of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

Attendees enjoyed a social atmosphere marked by refreshments and music as a prelude to George addressing his guests with an update on how the effort has progressed. "Our campaign has received tremendous support and with your continued support we are well positioned to win and become New York's first ever Greek American Congressman," said George in his speech. He reaffirmed his platform, including strong opposition to tax increases and creative initiatives to counter to wasteful pork barrel spending. The floor then opened for a Q&A session where supporters could voice their input directly to the candidate. Questions posed related to healthcare, the upcoming primary and specific plans to re-engineer local economic growth. "I have spent my career fighting corporate fraud as an SEC Attorney and I want to take that same fight to Washington to fight the corruption and reckless spending that is bankrupting out nation," continued George Demos.

The fundraiser exceeded its financial expectations. "I cannot tell you how grateful I am for all of your support. It means everything to me," he concluded.

Information on George Demos' 2010 campaign can be found at [www.georgedemos.com](http://www.georgedemos.com)

Young Professionals Gather in Support of George Demos

## bread & honey

A COLUMN DEVOTED TO MAKING GREEK FOOD EASY

Maria A. Pardalis



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Greek cuisine has become all the rage in New York City over the past 10 years, this may be due to researchers reporting on the abundance of health benefits that it brings to its devout followers or perhaps to the claims that it will help you win the battle of the bulge. As a result, we have seen a sudden spike in haute Greek cuisine and classical Grecian restaurants all over the tri-state area. A personal Manhattan favorite of mine is Kellari Parea Bistro, an oasis of Greek-American comfort food that I frequent for its fresh seafood that is displayed packed in ice, its delectable fava spread and mouth watering sheep's milk yogurt, generously topped with Greek thyme honey and toasted walnuts. The culinary creations featured in its robust menu are unfettered by heavy sauces, complicated ingredients and will rapidly transport you back to the clear blue Mesogios.

The menu's craftsman is Gregory Zapantis, a prominent and award-winning New York chef also responsible for Kellari Taverna NY and Kellari Taverna DC. Chef Gregory came to the United States from Kefalonia as an aspiring architect that worked in the food industry in order to pay his way through school. Little did he know that during his college years he would discover his true calling in life, the world of culinary art. Chef Gregory's passion for cooking and his family is warmly presented in his eclectic menu consisting of authentic Greek and Mediterranean recipes, most of which stem from his childhood years. He feels strongly about how Kellari Parea Bistro is characterized, since most people are quick to label it as a Greek restaurant. "How can you put borders on food? I want everyone to know that Kellari Parea is a seafood restaurant with Greek influence," Chef Gregory exclaims.

Growing up on a small island, exposed Chef Gregory to many different types of seafood and quickly caused him to embrace seasonal ingredients in his cooking. As a result, Kellari Parea Bistro's menu always features local ingredients, seasonal specials and whole fish imported from Greece. Kellari Parea Bistro's best selling item may be grilled lavraki served with steamed greens, but I strongly recommend you try Yesterday's Lamb™, a succulent dish that is slowly roasted and marinated over 24 hours and served with oven glazed oregano lemon potatoes. Sadly, Chef Gregory could not share this recipe with me since its trademarked, however he did share a brilliant one for halibut.

### Barrel Aged Feta Crusted Halibut



Prep Time: 15 minutes  
Bake Time: 30 to 40 minutes  
Serves: 2

#### Ingredients:

- 2-8 oz fillets of halibut- skin on
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 8 oz white wine
- 1 tomato sliced in four 1-inch pieces
- 1 Spanish onion, sliced thin
- 1 tsp of fresh thyme
- 1 tsp of fresh oregano
- 4-6 leaves of fresh basil
- 4-6 oz of barrel aged crumbled feta cheese
- Fresh pepper to taste

#### Preparation:

1. Place the two pieces of Halibut fillets in an oven-proof casserole. Rub the fillets with the olive oil and fresh herbs and set them aside (refrigerate for 1 hour)
2. Arrange the onions in the bottom of the casserole, and place tomato slices over the onions.
3. Add the wine and fresh herbs
4. Place a portion of Halibut over each tomato slice. Spread feta over the entire Casserole and bake in oven at 400 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes.

**Kali Orexi!!**

Visit [www.kellari-parea.com](http://www.kellari-parea.com) for more information on Chef Gregory and Kellari Parea Bistro. They are also currently offering a LIFETIME FREE Bottle of champagne when you sign up to receive their Kellari Gourmet newsletter.

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Lou Raptakis (RI State Senator), Fanis Economidis, Dr. James Kallins, Vicki Liviakis, Father John Bakas



Lou Raptakis (RI State Senator), Mike Naft, Congresswoman Dina Titus and her husband Thomas

# AHC Annual Honors Awards Dinner

July is an important month for the American Hellenic Council of California (AHC), the leading Greek American political action organization in the West Coast. In July 1974, Turkey invaded the island state of Cyprus, causing thousands of deaths and forced displacement for 160,000 people. A group of active Greek Americans from the greater Los Angeles area came together in order to respond to the crisis and make sure that this act of barbarism wouldn't go unanswered. That is how the AHC came to be and since then it has been the focal point of political activities of Greek Americans in California. The AHC has become an effective and respected political lobbying group whose sole purpose is to lobby the U.S. Congress for the protection and promotion of Greek-American interests. During its existence, the American Hellenic Council has supported numerous Hellenic issues, has made political donations and raised significant contributions for members of Congress who support Hellenic issues.

Recently, AHC held its 34th Annual Honors Dinner Dance at the Omni Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles. "With over 400 people in attendance, the evening was a great success thanks to the support of our members and friends," says Alexander Mizan, AHC's Director. "Every year, AHC celebrates the achievements of dedicated political and community leaders who have made major contributions to Hellenic causes." This year, with KRON journalist Vicki Liviakis as the event's Master of Ceremonies, the Council recognized the accomplishments of four honorees - Mr. George M. Marcus, Ms. Zoye Fidler, Mr. Demetrios Liappas and Congresswoman Dina Titus.



Paul Sogotis with Alitheia Avramis and a friend



The new generation of AHC members and friends



Paris Kostopoulos, Makis Mizan and Suzanna Mizan



Stella and Dino Andrianos with a friend



Kathy Tavoularis, George Tavoularis, Eletheria Polychronis, Vicky Papoulias, Marianna Courlas



Kelly Vlahakis-Hanks with Alexander Mizan



John Moutsanas (right) with friends



Aris Katopodis, Constance Boukidis, Vassilis Papoutsis with friends



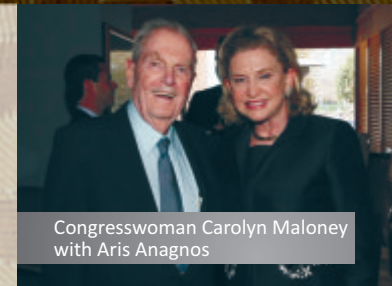
Konstantine Kabilafkas, Nikoletta Orlandou and a friend



Soula Katsinis with friends



Konstantine Kabilafkas, Andreas Stathopoulos, Mike Galanakis, Mary Politis, Emily Mihailidis and Georgia Lainiotis



Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney with Aris Anagnos



Zoye Fidler with Vicki Liviakis after she received her award



Honoree Demetrios Liappas receiving the award from Vicki Liviakis

Mr. Marcus received the Aristeion Award, presented each year to an outstanding individual who has made a major impact in his field and has been a supporter of Hellenism. The award is a testimony to Mr. Marcus's achievements in the real estate business as co-founder of Marcus & Millichap and as head of the Essex Property Trust, a publicly held REIT. It also recognized the support Mr. Marcus has given to several Greek-American organizations, including the Elios and the National Heritage Societies.

The Saloutos honor was awarded to Mr. Liappas and Ms. Fidler in recognition of their contributions to Hellenism in the community. The award is named after Theodore Saloutos, one of the founding members of the American Hellenic Council. Mr. Liappas has been longtime Director of the Basil P. Caloyeras Center for Modern Greek Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

Ms. Fidler received the Saloutos award after years of service to Hellenic Causes. Having served as president of the Greek-American Heritage Society of California, she was instrumental in developing many documentaries about Greek immigrants in the United States and raising awareness about their lives and history.

The Pericles award was given to first-term Greek-American Congresswoman Dina Titus, who represents the 3rd district of Nevada. Ms. Titus is the granddaughter of Greek immigrants and grew up in Georgia. Before she was elected in Congress, she was a professor of Political Science at the University of Nevada. Since her taking the oath of office, she has ardently supported the causes of our community in Congress and raised awareness of our issues among her colleagues.

Next year's Annual Honors Dinner Dance is expected to be held on April 9 in Los Angeles, CA. For more information on contributing, attending or participating in this or other AHC-sponsored events during the year, please direct all inquiries to the American Hellenic Council at: 323-651-3507 or online at [www.americanhellenic.org](http://www.americanhellenic.org).

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## GREEK BAR NIGHTS AT MIRABELLE'S IN HOLLYWOOD



BY JOANNA XIPA



Joanna Xipa and Nikos Dimitrokalis



Alex Mizan and Joanna Xipa



Maria Zinelis, Joanna and Elena Bagourdi



Jenny Kitsios and Yorgos Economou



Elias Livanis dancing



Pavlina Zenonos, Elias, Elena and Annetta Babackanie



Yorgos Economou and Keiko Fucumoto



Jenny Kitsios, Kostas Pelechrinis and Tassos Mourikis

Ahhh Hollywood... known for its stars, the glitz and the glamour! Its very foundation has been graced with famous names, beautiful people, and a carefree lifestyle that one can easily succumb to! You would think that here in LA-LA-Land that it would negatively affect the great minds of the local Greek-American Community, but it doesn't! It has even drawn many Greeks from around the world together in search of stardom and recognition in the "Industry" as we call it. Together these "Hollywood Greeks" and the rest of us Greeks live normal lives in complete harmony.

There aren't many Greek restaurants around here considering the population of Los Angeles County spread across a vast radius. Yet somehow we do find each other despite our distances. Luckily with today's technology, through Facebook, for example, on the Internet, we're able to connect with each other and plan our next get-togethers. This is exactly what Elias Livanis is using to get the locals to come and hang out together on Friday Nights, at a well known 40-year establishment on

Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood, Greek-owned and operated, called Mirabelle. If you were to google-search it, all you'd see is nothing but rave reviews. In fact it has a 5 star rating by the Citysearch.com link that pops up first in searches, and even shows you a video / commercial to get a feel for the atmosphere there.

([http://losangeles.citysearch.com/profile/101364/west\\_hollywood\\_ca/mirabelle.html](http://losangeles.citysearch.com/profile/101364/west_hollywood_ca/mirabelle.html)).

Its open-roof bar section is where the local Greek Bar Nights have been taking place for over 20 weeks now.

While sipping on their deliciously fruity Sangria, and listening to the latest Greek Grooves overhead, one can relax and unwind after a long and difficult work week. And whether you plan ahead of time with friends, or decide to go on the spur of the moment alone, you can always count on Mirabelle's to find a familiar face you know, including the "Hollywood Greeks" in the Industry! Everyone becomes like family here! Nobody is unapproachable,

whether they're famous or not, you can always join them to share in your stories, tell a few jokes, even plan to meet again all the while, simply having a relaxing good time! Let's not forget of course that we're Greek and when there is a cause for celebration, (or even better, simply celebrating life), nothing stops you from dancing your heart out as long as you keep the plate smashing to a minimum, right Elia?

If you have Facebook, you too can stay in the loop by looking up "Greek Bar" and adding Elias to your friends list. And for the rest of you who don't use it, simply remember that the next time you're in the Los Angeles Area and you're here on a Friday night, Mirabelle's is the place to mingle and meet both local and Hollywood Greeks! Thanks to Elias Livanis, for making it possible to have a casual Greek Bar Night, in this wonderful establishment where both newcomers to the area as well as long time fixtures can feel right at home. Asthat famous television jingle goes: Where Everybody Knows Your Name". Our very own Greek 'Cheers' if you may! ...Opa! (no pun intended!)

### PERISCOPE

## Jennifer Lopez: You Made the Right Move. Thank You!

By Ellen Karis

Lack of space again left me with not much breathing air! Happy summer to all and I'll make it up to you in September!

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A couple of weeks ago, a Facebook group called "Against Jennifer Lopez Performing in Occupied Cyprus" came to my attention. Being a Greek-American and half Cypriot, I immediately investigated and found out that Ms. Lopez was scheduled to perform in Cyprus on July 24th, as part of the opening of the Cartos Premium Hotel and in celebration of her 41st birthday. The uproar was due to the fact that the event was not an ordinary concert at some new 5-star hotel at a Mediterranean resort, it was a

hotel that is located in the town of Kyrenia, which is one of the many towns occupied unlawfully by the Turks.

Why would this be so personal? Because my grandparents are from Kyrenia and their land was unlawfully taken away from them during the Turkish occupation of Cyprus in 1974. Even though they had to come to the United States many years prior and became American citizens (like they use to do back in the day), there is no recourse for them to claim what is rightfully theirs. In brief, the Turks invaded the northern half of Cyprus, brutalizing its citizens and evicting 180,000 Greek Cypriots from their homes as Turkish Forces settled the Turks into the properties of those displaced Greeks.

The events were a violation of the Geneva Convention and various UN resolutions. In 1983, Turkish Cypriots proclaimed the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus which is recognized only by Turkey. So when I read about J. Lo's concert it affected me as well as many others of Greek heritage.

Believe me, I get it, if you are blessed enough to have a high profile career like Ms. Lopez, people will pay \$3 million dollars for an evening in your presence. God Bless you that is your path, but no matter what amount of money or accolades you will attain from the experience, one really must know who they are breaking bread with. I was not hopeful all the website groups and the subsequent emails to Ms. Lopez's and her agents would have an affect because I, for one, did not think they would even be aware of the severity of that island's history. Additionally, for someone who does not have a vested interest, who cares? — it's one night, you fly in on a private jet, you belt out 8 songs, you are fed well,

photographed, put up in a beautiful suite and then flown out on a private jet the next day. So I was shocked when I read a few days ago that Ms. Lopez withdrew from her commitment with the Cartos Hotel and made the following statement:

"Jennifer Lopez would never knowingly support any state, country, institution or regime that was associated with any form of human rights abuse, after a full review of the relevant circumstances in Cyprus, it was the decision of her advisors to withdraw from the appearance. This was a team decision that reflects our sensitivity to the political realities of the region."

Jennifer please allow me to say "Euxaristo Para Poli"—which is thank you very much in Greek. I was so impressed that you took a stance and you and your people took the time to investigate the situation.

Unfortunately, in the litigious world that we live in, Ms. Lopez has been threatened with a \$35-\$40 million lawsuit for renegeing on her obligation. I wouldn't expect anything else from full-fledged thieves. In the end it will cost her at the very least legal fees, but she made the right decision this time — not taking blood money and doing what was morally and ethically correct.

It's very much appreciated J.Lo, and a tray of homemade baklava is on me!

*The article first appeared in Big Hollywood Blog. Ellen Karis is one of the very few Greek female stand-up comedians. She is also an accomplished actress having been in several independent films, radio shows and TV including The Sopranos.*

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### 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 have worked very hard to bring more attention to the issue of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Turkey must grant religious freedom and property rights to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and re-open the Theological School at Halki. This would show their commitment to religious freedom. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.Res. 236, which calls on Turkey to take those necessary steps, which they unfortunately still have refused to do.

**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?**

The U.S. must insist that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) abide by the UN-brokered agreement with Greece. It is time they stopped teaching their children that parts of Greece are part of the FYROM, or that a "Greater Macedonia" extends many miles into Greece to Mount Olympus and even into Bulgaria. The U.S. should clearly condemn these actions and make it clear that the FYROM must abide by past agreements.

## Scholarships by the Fulbright Foundation and FAITH

The Fulbright Foundation and "Faith: An Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism," are pleased to announce two new scholarships for American citizens in the following specialization areas: Byzantine Music, Classical Literature, Patristic Literature, Byzantine Art and Architecture, Iconography, "Mikrotechnia" (miniatures), New Testament Studies and Theology. Scholarships are available for American graduate students and scholars to travel to Greece. For detailed information and requirements on the Fulbright Scholarship Program please visit [www.Fulbright.gr](http://www.Fulbright.gr) or [www.faithendowment.gr](http://www.faithendowment.gr).

The Fulbright Program is the premier international educational exchange program in the world. Since 1948 the Fulbright Foundation in Greece has awarded scholarships to more than 4,700 Greeks and Americans and has offered free advising services for studies in the U.S. to thousands of individuals. The continuity and growth of programs offered through the Fulbright Foundation in Greece would not be possible without the support of the US and Greek governments and the generosity and philanthropy of corporations, foundations, institutions and individuals. FAITH was created in 2004 as a response to His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios' of America challenge to create such an endowment to support Education programs that promote an understanding of our Orthodox Faith, Hellenic culture, and the relationship of the two to each other and to America's multicultural landscape. The Fulbright Foundation gratefully acknowledges their support.

Greater Value  
Prestige  
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# New York Institute of Management: A Transformative Model for Change



Panos Linardos, founder of NYIM

Founded by a unique team of seasoned executives and educators, New York Institute of Management works with scholars from leading US business schools to deliver rigorous, targeted executive education programs online. NYIM is a boutique educational institution that provides online executive education programs to accelerate the professional advancement of its clients and create value for their organizations.

“Our goal is to promote education and professional development by providing highly specialized management programs at a fair value, accessible to all,” said Panos Linardos, co-founder and Executive Director of NYIM. “All our programs aim to retool and equip the active workforce with the skills required to be successfully positioned in the knowledge-based economy and help them make a tangible impact to their careers, their business and the society overall.”

Academically, NYIM’s goal is to offer superior real-world education in terms of relevance and value. To ensure relevance, NYIM’s programs are designed by a team of content experts with a mix of Ivy League academic and high-quality professional backgrounds in cooperation with the related industry and communities of practice. To ensure value, NYIM aims to create only high-quality programs that can be delivered more efficiently through an online learning platform.

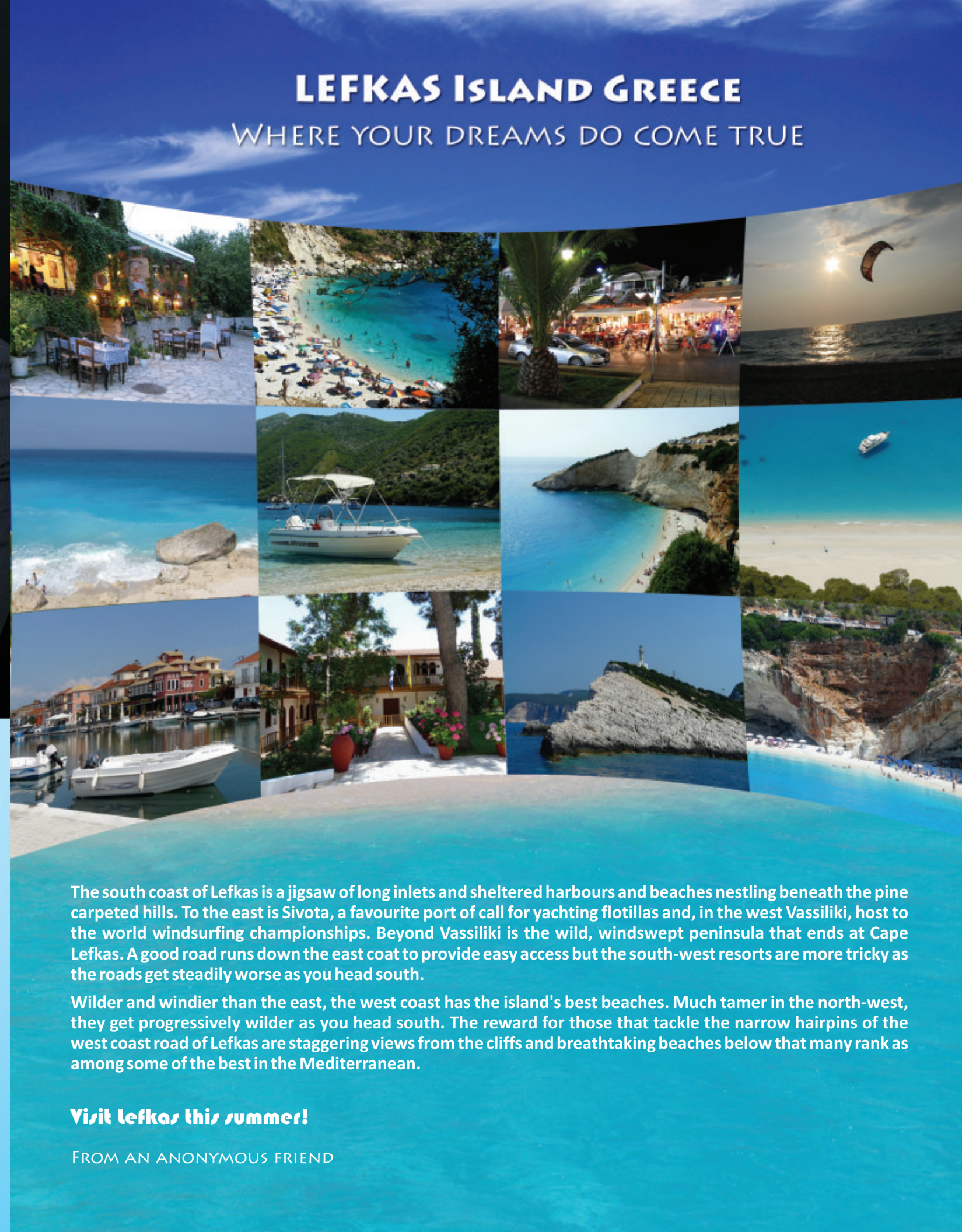
“It is imperative that we embrace technologies to create an executive education ecosystem that is accessible to all,” Mr. Linardos. “The surplus of value we can unlock is more than sufficient to reward our efforts while delighting our students and the community.”

The NYIM team is currently working on further strengthening the organization and its course portfolio and preparing for a launch in Fall 2010. “It’s an exciting time to work with educators and subject matter experts to develop executive education programs that address some of the pressing challenges that professionals face today and help them expand their capacity to prosper in the global competitive economic environment.”

The Institute believes that there is a significant underserved population of prospective students who want and need a range of high-impact, results-oriented programs at the quality standard of the premier academic institutions and strategy consulting firms. However, students today are unwilling to or unhappy about paying non-flexible, highly priced, traditional education programs. NYIM aims to bring quality and tuition fees back in line for these students, by presenting its programs through primarily online channels, which allows for greater geographic reach than physical institutions at a much lower cost. “We’re planning to offer a selected mix of courses and certificate programs that combine cutting-edge theory with tested tools and practices used in the worlds’ leading organization,” continued Panos Linardos.

Initially, NYIM plans to offer twenty four executive education programs and four Certificates, each designed to appeal to and meet the educational objectives of middle-level executives and career professionals. The diversity of its program portfolio will allow NYIM to target relevant portions of the adult student population and provide offerings in several high demand areas of study, including Corporate Finance, Management and Leadership Development, Corporate Strategy, Human Resources, and Marketing and Sales.

The Institute has attracted the interest of a virtual team of academics and subject enthusiasts who are collaborating on the design and development of its programs. They all bring unique foresight, knowledge and deep functional expertise to help NYIM better build its students skills and deliver real world, advanced business education with impact. “I am inspired by the breadth and depth of the academic response to our call for bringing executive education online and I am eager to witness our students’ journeys of development and impact,” Panos says. “It’s a great feeling.”



## LEFKAS ISLAND GREECE

WHERE YOUR DREAMS DO COME TRUE

The south coast of Lefkas is a jigsaw of long inlets and sheltered harbours and beaches nestling beneath the pine carpeted hills. To the east is Sivota, a favourite port of call for yachting flotillas and, in the west Vassiliki, host to the world windsurfing championships. Beyond Vassiliki is the wild, windswept peninsula that ends at Cape Lefkas. A good road runs down the east coast to provide easy access but the south-west resorts are more tricky as the roads get steadily worse as you head south.

Wilder and windier than the east, the west coast has the island's best beaches. Much tamer in the north-west, they get progressively wilder as you head south. The reward for those that tackle the narrow hairpins of the west coast road of Lefkas are staggering views from the cliffs and breathtaking beaches below that many rank as among some of the best in the Mediterranean.

**Visit lefkas this summer!**

FROM AN ANONYMOUS FRIEND