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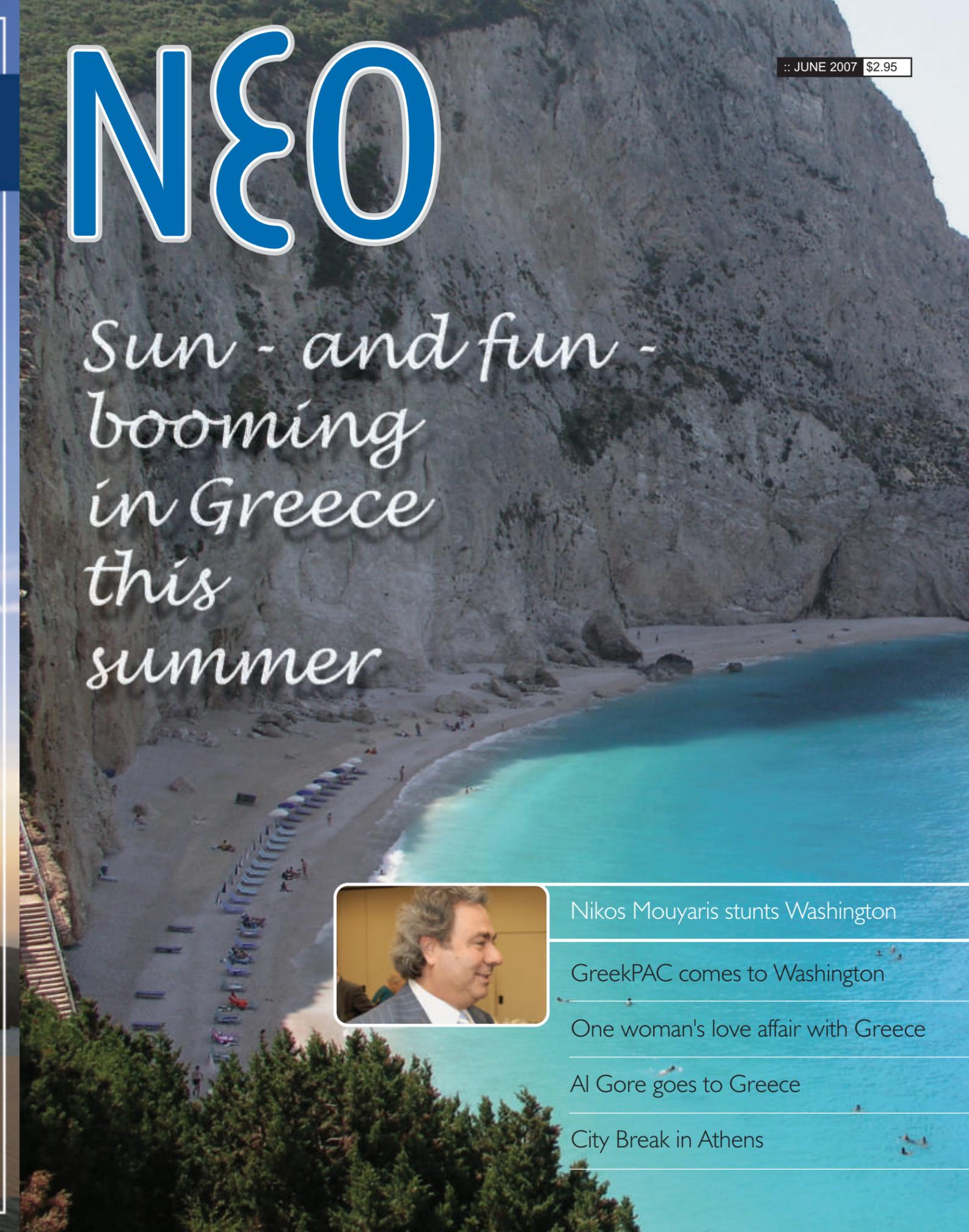


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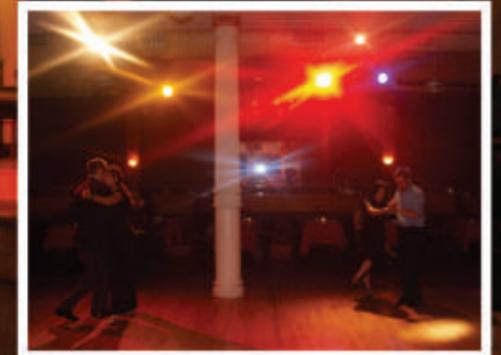
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NEO Magazine
is published monthly by
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Greek American political clout

John Brademas' father once told him (and the son still likes to quote), "The Greeks invented democracy; some of us should practice it."

With the formation of the first Greek Political Action Committee, Greek Americans are getting serious about exercising their political muscle. The committee makes its purpose plain: to raise the money that candidates need to get into the political process who are also in support of Greek and Greek American issues. That is the American way, and now Greeks are getting into it full time with a committee supported by political heavy hitters, and backed by the contributions of the hundreds, and potential thousands, who take the elder Brademas' injunction seriously, indeed.

Does money buy influence in Washington? Unfortunately, yes, but a PAC is a vehicle of democracy, because as its president George Sifakis says, what it really does is let Washington know that it's not one wealthy or powerful Greek who insists on his political rights, it's a whole community that is involved in the political process, is putting its money down, and is insisting that it be heard.

Greeks did invent democracy, and GreekPAC shows they are coming into their own in the American democracy.

Another groundbreaking political effort was initiated by Nikos Mouyaris of the Pancyprian Association, who put up \$2 million of his own money to start an organization that would "influence the policies of a superpower such as the United States. We are all successful businessmen, so let's run it as a business. If we don't do it, we will always return here and question our efforts."

Greek Americans as never before want answers to their concerns and want to be part of the political process. These breakthrough efforts are a major step in that direction. What is needed now is for the work of these organizations to be known, for the candidates who truly support Greek American issues to be supported, and for the grassroots of Greek Americans to get involved in the political process.

With organizations such as these they now have the means to do it. At the same time, it will be the eternal challenge of worthy organizations such as these to see that the Greek American community truly does get involved in its own democracy.

Dimitri C. Michalakis

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Is this a particularly good time for it?

It's almost like a new beginning, it really is, and we are fortunate to have John Sarbanes, Gus Bilirakis and Zach Space (three new members in Congress), who are amazing individuals, fantastic representatives of our community, in addition to Olympia Snowe, of course. I think we're extremely fortunate and it's important that we continue to assist anyone who wants to get into the political process, to connect them, whether with the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, so they're not daunted by the question, how do I do this? And this is also another way for us to reach out to members who would otherwise be supportive of Greek American issues but just haven't been approached or supported in the past.

Do you hope to get Greeks more involved in the political process?

I think it's in our spirit to be involved in the political process and you engage people just by the way I mentioned: by providing them with a vehicle or avenue for dialogue with the national parties. There are a whole lot of barriers to entering the political process, most of which are financial, but certainly the Greek

American community has shown that it's going to support folks that are supportive of our issues. The PAC is an umbrella organization that would be supportive of Greek American issues as a whole. It's not tied to one individual in the community; it's about the Greek American community as a whole.

You say that's the key to the PAC?

When the GreekPAC is supporting members of Congress, who perhaps had been supported individually but not under an umbrella PAC, they realize there is a community behind this and not just individuals. And that's the critical aspect of it, because many Greek Americans are active in the political process nationwide, but any support is done on an individual basis—so this is something new and we're excited. It's a great project.

How do you get people involved?

One of the ways we're reaching out to folks is through our website, where we try to highlight individuals like Lou Raptakis, as well as Greek American members within Congress, and then hopefully other Greek Americans can see these individuals at work

and will also jump onboard. It's well within our community's interest to increase the numbers in Congress. Right now we have a freshman member on the Republican side and a freshman member on the Democratic side, and we need to branch out and find many different members so we can find true solutions to issues that face our community.

How did Alex Spanos and George Behrakis get involved?

I think they saw the need for this type of PAC. I think they're people excited about the fact that it is a national Greek American political action committee whose mission is to support Greek American issues, to support Greek Americans in Congress and hopefully increase the numbers. I think the great example is the folks at the state level, who really need assistance in terms of support from the Greek American community. You haven't heard of many of them. But that's exactly the kind of thing we're hoping to change. We're hoping the Greek American community will come together to highlight people who have a future in national politics: very bright people with a very bright future.

GreekPAC to hold inaugural reception in Washington

On the eve of the inauguration of George W. Bush for a second term, prominent members of the Greek-American community gathered at Washington's Hay-Adams Hotel. The event was hosted by businessman and philanthropist Alex G. Spanos. The result was the formation of the first Greek American political action committee, appropriately called GreekPAC.

Now GreekPAC is hosting its first inaugural reception on June 26 at the Capitol Hilton in Washington, DC, and the rising stars of the new congress will be among the guest speakers: Gus Bilirakis, John Sarbanes, Zach Space. GreekPAC hopes many more Greek Americans will join them and many others who support Greek American issues.

"The PAC was created to be a bipartisan PAC to benefit candidates who are in support of our issues," says Nick Larigakis, vice

president of the group's founding member advisory board (led by honorary founding chairman Alex Spanos and co-chairman George Behrakis). "It's a mechanism to provide financial assistance for those politicians who are either in office or running for office and who have a predisposition to assist in Greek American issues."

Individuals may contribute up to \$5,000 per calendar year to the PAC, which can be reached at www.greekamericanpac.com.

George Sifakis is president of the advisory board and he spoke to NEO Magazine:

How did GreekPAC come about?

I think it's overdue. I think the Greek American community is certainly vibrant, but it could be doing better in terms of the number of members it has in Congress. It's

never been done nationally and I think it's very important step for the entire community on a host of different levels.

How will it make a difference?

There's never been, to our knowledge, a national a Greek American political action committee that could make a difference in the number of members of Congress. We have three members now in the House of Representatives, but I think the numbers could be higher. That's why the PAC is supporting people on the state level, for example, like Lou Raptakis, and helping them in any way to get to the next level on the federal side. We need to highlight the need for more Greek Americans to be involved in the political process and that's why this step is very exciting.



George Sifakis with Charlie Crist and Gus Bilirakis



Alex G. Spanos with members of the board

Athens prepares for bold entry in the City Break market

By Helen Iatrou, *Special Advisor to the mayor of Athens*



Athens hosted the international travel trade exhibition City Break 2007 and the European Cities Marketing annual conference this month at the Faliro Sports Pavilion and the Hotel Athenaeum InterContinental.

In June 2006 the City of Athens and the Athens Tourism and Economic Development Agency (ATEDA), in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO), won the right to host the two events. The high-profile exhibition and conference offer a first-class opportunity for the international promotion of Athens. The exhibition plays a significant role in the specialized city break tourism market, which concerns the Greek capital directly. Tourism Minister Fanny Palli-Petralia's personal initiative played a definitive role in the bidding process, while the Ministry of Tourism and GNTO support the event's organisation on all levels.

City Break 2007 is being staged in cooperation with Europe's biggest tourism exhibition organiser, Britain's Reed Travel Exhibitions (the organiser of London's World

Travel Market and Barcelona's EIBTM, among others), which guarantees the event's success as well as the realization of significant, immediate benefits for the local tourism industry. This specific event counts among the so-called new generation exhibitions, which are strictly geared to tourism industry professionals and aim to facilitate agreements and strategic cooperation between buyers and exhibitors. Athens' hosting of the event and 200 of the world's most important tour operators offers a rare occasion for the promotion of the city's new image, while it also lays the foundation for Athens' classification as one of Europe's leading urban destinations.

European Cities Marketing, the European network of city tourist offices and convention bureaus, is staging its annual conference whose theme will be e-tourism and destination management systems. Some 75 delegates will focus on successful methods employed in the United States and Europe, and engage in technological know-how transfer.

Fifty selected media organizations from within Greece and abroad are expected to provide extensive coverage of the exhibition and conference. A large-scale social activity programme has also been arranged, with the aim of providing participants with the best possible hospitality as well as highlighting the advantages of Athens as a tourist destination in comparison with its European competitors. Additionally, other urban Greek destinations are taking part in the exhibition either individually or with the support of GNTO.

City break travel is one of the fastest-growing forms of tourism, with significant increases in visitor numbers compared to traditional longer stays. City Break is the only travel trade exhibition dedicated to this specialised form of tourism and Greece's hosting of the event marks the start of a new, coordinated effort to promote Athens and other Greek cities in the international tourism market.

ATEDA, the City of Athens' official tourism board, is responsible for the development, management and promotion of Athens as a tourist destination.

Chronia Polla for Elaine



Socialite Elaine Toskos celebrated recently her name day throwing an after hour party for some of her closest friends at one of NYC's most in places, Park Blue lounge (158 W, 58th St.,) owned and operated by Greek American Fonda Tsironis. Besides Elaine celebrities of Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt's caliber frequent Park Blue's cozy ambience, along with many chefs from other well known establishments who have come to appreciate this – just for those who know – place, the gourmet kitchen of which closes at 2:00 am!

Pictured from left are Fonda Tsironis, NEO's Demetrios Rhompotis, Dimitris Patsos, Elaine Toskos, George Avramopoulos, Sofia Lioreisis and Dionyssis Tsiros.

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Convention on Hellenism in America



Marathon Bank's President Paul Stathouloupoulos (center) was briefed recently about the upcoming convention by Demetrios Demetriou (left) and Christos Vournas.

This year marks the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York 70th anniversary and the Executive Board, acting upon a proposal by journalist extraordinaire Alexander Stephanopoulos and General Secretary Demetrios Demetriou, decided to organize a "bilateral" convention, in New York and Athens, with "Hellenism of America in the 21st Century" as its general theme. Bridging Hellenism's transatlantic components is one of the organizers declared goals, along with the search for pathways that will lead each part closer to the other.

The New York phase of the convention will take place at the Federation's Stathakeion Center (June 23, 24, 30 and July 1.) The Panteion University and the Hellenic Ministry of Communications (September 27, 28, 29 and 30) will be hosting the Athens meetings.

The Convention will comprise the following major thematic categories: a) The role of the Greek Orthodox Church in the USA, b) Education and civilization: Problems, visions and goals, c) Organizing the Greeks of America and the right to elect and be elected,

d) The role of the Greek media in America and in Greece, e) Greece and Hellenism of America as one united global economic power.

Distinguished scientists, academics, political and social representatives from prestigious institutions in the US and Greece are expected to participate as speakers.

A Scientific Board, comprised of Metropolitan Bishop Ioannis (former president of the Academy of Athens), Professors Antonis Makridimitris, George

Kontogiorgis, Dimitrios Nanopoulos, Dimitrios Trichopoulos, Stamos Papastamou, Fotis Papadimitrakopoulos and Charalambos Vassileiadis, is to evaluate speakers and participants.

Paraskevi Goltsi, Charilaos Daskalothanassis, George Dionisopoulos, Thanassis Zisimopoulos, Roula Kotseta, Chryssanthos Lazaridis, George Nikezis, Alexandros Stefanopoulos, Despinia Siriopoulou and Costas Triantafilakis have formed the Convention's Executive Administration.

An Organizing Committee has been also established with Federation's General Secretary Demetrios Demetriou as president and Christos Vournas (Federation's Treasurer) as vice-president. A committee of Direction and Technical Support with Assistant General Secretary of the Board of Directors, Apostolos Skotidas as director, will function under the Organizing Committee's supervision.

The Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York was incorporated on August 12, 1938, after a decision made by a select group of representatives from 19 various based in New York, including the Athenians, Aitolokarnanes, Andrion, Vrison, Anavritis, Vorioepiroton, Evoieon, Thessalon, Ikarion, Karustion, Kastorianon, Kefallinon, Korinthion, Cretans "Omonia," Kithirion, Lakedemonon, Messinion, Nafpakton, Pireon, and the Chians. The idea of forming a federation came up during a meeting held in 1936, but it was another meeting, on November 22, 1937, at the house of the Cretans of Omonia, in which delegates officially agreed to form a higher-level organization, which would cover the Greek societies in the States of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Today, the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York is perhaps the largest community organization in the Hellenic Diaspora with a membership of over 150 entities.

For more information on the convention the website is www.hellenisminamerica.com and the Federation's phone number (718) 204-6500.

A successful community program



In a room filled with students, proud friends and families, the Hellenic Immersion Program of the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York had its annual graduation ceremony with the Honorable New York City Councilmember Peter F. Vallone, Jr., Dr. Mary Marangos, Community Field Representative of the Honorable U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney, and Irene Stathos, representative of the Honorable New York State Assemblyman Michael Gianaris highlighting the event.

In her welcoming remarks, Jeannie Kouros, Program Director of the Hellenic Immersion Program, thanked all those who participated in the English Language & Citizen and Dancing Programs that has been operating for seven years. She also thanked Councilmember Vallone, Jr. for his tireless efforts and support in making these programs possible for the hundreds of immigrants in the community who thrive to learn English and become U.S. citizens. She mentioned that his dedication to Hellenic Immersion Program helped increase the organization's educational budget to \$50,500. In his speech, the Executive Director of the Hellenic Immersion Program, Demetrios K. Demetriou, congratulated all graduating students for their hard work and dedication to eventually achieving the American dream and becoming U.S. citizens.

Following the introductory speeches, Kouros and Demetriou gave out the certificates to the graduating students, with the assistance of Mr. Vallone, Jr., Ms. Stathos, and Dr. Marangos. Approximately 31 students graduated from the English Language and Citizenship Program and 23 from the Dancing Program.



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Athens Mayor welcomes Sampras and Courier



Athens Mayor Nikitas Kaklamanis received at City Hall two tennis legends, Greek-American Pete Sampras and Jim Courier. Kaklamanis presented symbolic gifts to the two players, who are participating in the international tennis tournament Athens Champions Cup 2007. General Secretary for Sport Stavros Douvis, City of Athens Youth and Sport Organisation Chairman Vassilis Kikilias, Athens Open SA chairman Konstantinos Makrykostas and International Tennis Hall of Fame Executive Committee Chairman Chris Clouser were also present at the Mayor's meeting with the two athletes.

Al Gore to talk about global warming in Athens



Former vice president Al Gore is expected in Athens on June 13 to give a lecture at the Athens Concert Hall as part of the Megaron Plus series, and part of Gore's current world tour. The appearance was organized by the Athens Concert Hall in collaboration with Ecoweek 2007. Gore is scheduled to talk on the subject of global warming.

The Megaron lecture, which will be accompanied by screenings of the documentary in Athens, Thessaloniki, Corfu and Aegina, is supported by a group of sponsors that includes the Bodosakis Foundation, the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, the A.G. Leventis Foundation and the Titan cement firm. A not-for-profit organization, Ecoweek was founded by Ilias Messinas in 2005.

Athens Concert Hall, 1 Kokkali & Vas. Sofias, tel 210.728.2333. For more information on "An Inconvenient Truth" screenings, visit www.ecoweek.gr.

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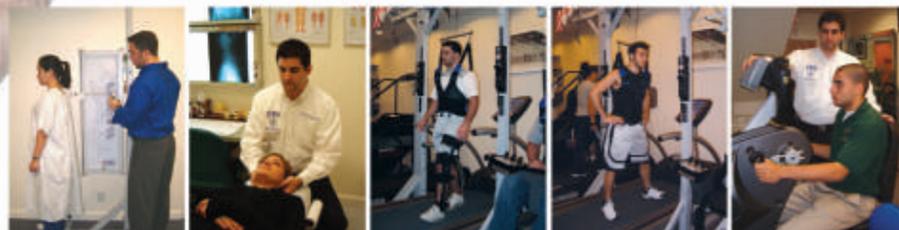
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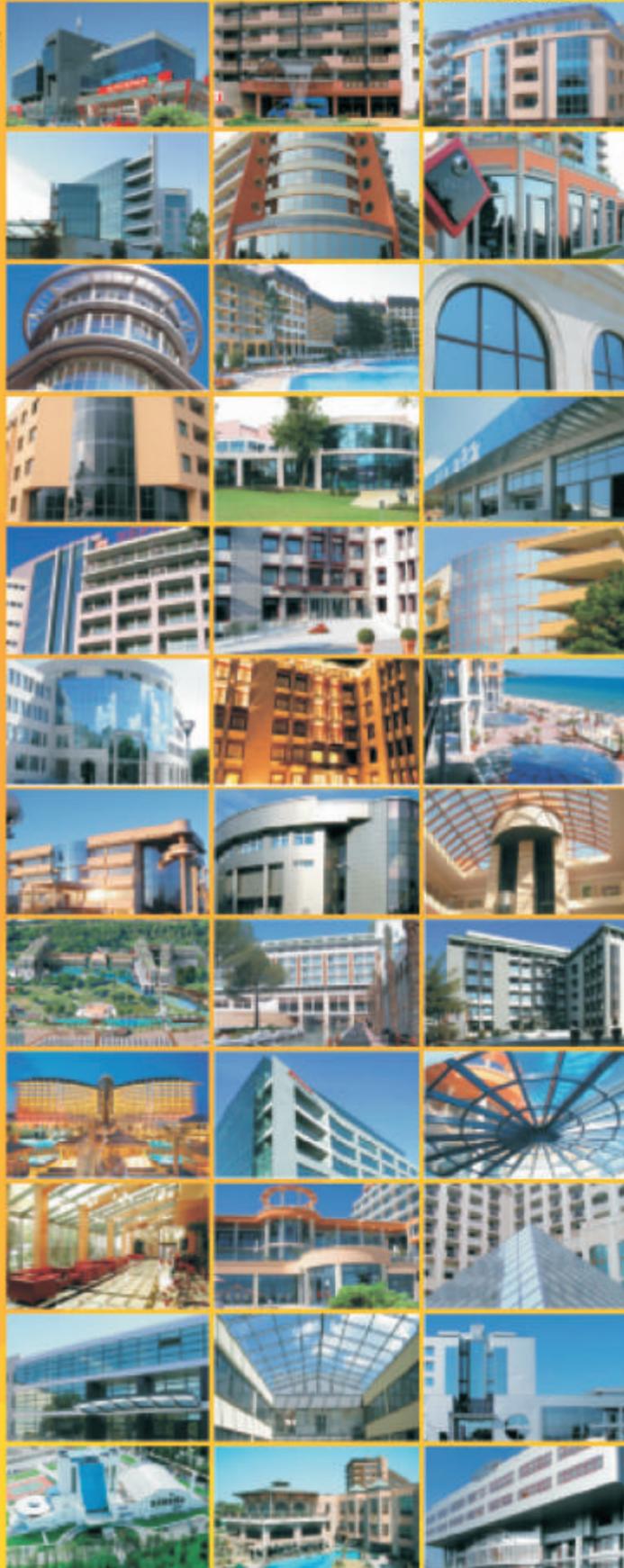
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Greece bracing for summer tourist boom

By Niki Kitsantonis

Greece is bracing for an unprecedented influx of visitors this summer in a boom that is cheering the tourism industry but causing concern among environmentalists, who warn that overbuilding along the country's pristine island seafrosts would mar their beauty and create environmental risks.

The number of tourist arrivals this year is expected to increase by 7 percent to 16 million visitors, according to the Institute for Tourism Research and Predictions. Santorini, which is one of hundreds of Aegean islands, expects a million visitors, 20 percent more than last year, despite the sinking of a cruise ship off its coast in March.

At least a third of arrivals will come from Britain and Germany, Greece's most loyal markets. But the biggest increases are expected from the United States and Russia, with arrivals set to rise by 50 percent and 20 percent respectively, bringing in about 1.7 million tourists. A marked increase is also expected from residents of new European Union member states in the Balkans.

"Greece is this year not just a popular destination but a preferred one, which is a big difference," said Tourism Minister Fani Palli-Petralia.

Tourism is huge in Greece, accounting for one-fifth of the country's gross domestic product and one in five jobs. Last year, tourism registered revenue of €11 billion, or \$14.8 billion, a record that is expected to be broken this year despite fierce competition

from Mediterranean rivals like Spain, Turkey, and Egypt and up-and-coming contenders like Croatia and Montenegro.

But memories of a tourism slump that began after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and continued up to the 2004 Athens Olympics have not faded; so the government has taken steps to prevent a repeat. A drive is under way to extend the traditional May-October season and bolster the country's tourism infrastructure.

Tens of millions of euros have been invested in promotion to add religious tourism, spas, golf, "agritourism," mountaineering, and yachting to Greece's traditional attractions of sun-drenched islands and ancient

monuments. This year's advertising campaign, "Explore your senses," aims to attract more tourists during the low season, particularly wealthy visitors with specialist interests.

The local authorities have been cooperating with officials of the Greek Orthodox Church to attract residents of neighboring Christian countries like Italy and the countries of the former Soviet Union to sites of religious significance. An effort to promote the wanderings of Saint Paul, from the island of Samothrace in the north to Corinth in the south, has attracted much interest.

Alternative forms of tourism like agritourism are gaining in popularity, too, with local the



Greek Tourism Minister - Fanny Palli-Petralia



authorities in northern and central Greece promoting workshops that offer first-hand experience of the local culture and gastronomy while supporting the agricultural economy. The initiative has flourished, largely because of EU subsidies that also promote the renovation and construction of traditional village settlements.

Lesser known but geographically spectacular parts of Greece are also being promoted to attract visitors interested in combining mountaineering, rafting, or diving with a fresh insight into the country's natural charms.

"Tourists are increasingly seeking specialized vacations," said Yiannis Machairidis, the prefect of the Dodecanese islands, which include Rhodes. "If we fail to grasp this, we will struggle to survive in this market."

Another initiative, aimed at attracting wealthier tourists all year, has provoked debate. The government's "land zoning" plan foresees the creation of luxury tourism complexes, including holiday homes for long-term lease or sale as well as golf courses and spas. Two such complexes, on Crete and in the western Peloponnese, are already in the works.

The environment and public works minister, Giorgos Souflias, who presented the plan this month, envisions "one million Europeans interested in acquiring a second residence in Greece."

But there has been a mixed reception for the plan, which offers incentives for construction in less developed areas and allows building up to 50 meters, or 165 feet, from the coastline, in areas protected by the EU program Natura and on uninhabited islets.

Stavros Andreadis, president of the Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises, says the plan will be "a catalyst for tourism development" if it is followed by legislative action to curb bureaucratic hurdles that have discouraged investors.

The Technical Chamber of Greece, an association of civil engineers, has condemned the plan, and environmental and conservation groups have warned against coastal "concretization" that has marred the Spanish coast. They also object to the creation of water-guzzling golf courses when much of Greece is on red alert for drought this summer.

"The authorities are desperate to sell off prime pieces of coastal land for hotels," said Nikos Charalambides, executive director of Greenpeace Greece. "This might bring in short-term financial gains, but in the long-term it will downgrade these areas, as we have seen in Spain."

But Palli-Petralia, the tourism minister, dismisses such fears. "We are not going to turn Greece into Spain," she said at a news conference this month. "The destruction of our environment will finish us off as a tourist destination."

Greece is also seeking to increase year-round tourism by promoting Athens, Thessaloniki, and other major locations as "city break" destinations. The Athens campaign has coincided with hotel and museum renovations and a widespread revamping of the city's historic center.

The authorities are promoting an enriched cultural program, including the Athens Festival with open-air operas in ancient theaters. Seminars in good manners are being held for the capital's notoriously surly taxi drivers.

"Athens is on its way to becoming a leading European destination for both tourists and business travelers," said Panagiotis Arkoumanas, general manager of the Athens Tourism and Economic Development Agency, the capital's official tourist body.

The agency observed a 20 percent increase in tourists visiting Athens in 2006, with an 8 percent rise in the first quarter of this year. Last week, when the Champions' League soccer final took place in Athens, was one of the most profitable in Greece's tourism history, netting about €26 million, according to preliminary industry estimates.

There has also been an increase in conferences and exhibitions in the greater Athens area as authorities start exploiting expensive Olympic venues, many of which have lain idle since 2004.

To show it is serious about upgrading its tourism services, the government has stepped up checks on hotels, threatening 800 - or nearly 10 percent - with being shut down unless they get fire safety certification. But industry officials say cramped harbors, congested provincial airports and badly maintained roads also need attention.

There has been some progress. Works completed before the Olympics - the extension of the Athens Metro, the new Athens airport, road and rail network improvements, and the upgrading of passenger ferries - laid the foundations for robust growth in tourism.

This year, €800 million has been earmarked for revamping provincial airports. Harbors are being enlarged to accommodate large cruise ships, and the scheduled opening in June of southern Athens' renovated marina at Flisvos is expected to lure a large crowd of wealthy yachting enthusiasts.

Reprinted from International Herald Tribune

Falling in love with Greece

by Colleen McGuire



Greeks find it strange that someone called Colleen McGuire has adopted Greece as a homeland. My name is Celtic to the core. When I announce that my maternal grandfather's name was Orestes Spadafora, big smiles break out, "Oh, the namesake of King Agamemnon's son is surely of Greek heritage." When I add that the Spadaforas hailed from Sicily, an ancient Greek colony, I am then embraced as a true child of Ellas.

Rural areas are reservoirs of traditional arts, such as, weaving and wood carving, which also fascinate me. In these tourist-deprived regions I revel speaking my kindergarten Greek with elders who patiently wait for me to formulate my sentences, unlike unruly Athenians who jump in with the correct word or more typically revert to English which thwarts my earnest efforts to conquer this tantalizing language. Locals in rural regions tend to be proud people and they are flattered that you admire their customs and simple living. My preference is to explore the countryside and islands by bicycle.

I am somewhat of an anomaly in Greece because I cycle for transport, for pleasure, for exercise, a way of life. Although Greece is the home of the Olympics, paradoxically, cycling and physical activity in general are uncommon pursuits for the average Greek. This is a pity because a bicycle allows an intimacy unattainable from the seclusion of a car or the altitudes of a bus. Even a motorcycle shatters the serenity of village life. On numerous occasions villagers have told me that I was the first person in memory to arrive by bicycle. Through slow motion travel I have seen so many endearing sights in remote and untrafficked areas.

In the Peloponnese peninsula near Kalavrita I pedaled to a hamlet whose prized feature is a hollow tree so huge that it holds a church inside it. Honest to God. I walked through the carved-out door and sighed when I saw an altar and eight chairs in a circle. Religious icons hung from the inside bark and you could light a candle as you would in any other chapel. I almost genuflected on the spot.

One late May while mountain biking near Mt. Parnassus, I discovered wild strawberries clinging to a wall of earth. Sparkling from the morning dew and no bigger than a dime, they had a luscious sweetness way out of



For my part, I feel I must have Greek blood because my attachment to this land runs so deep. I live minutes from the Acropolis and do not take that elegant monument or its surrounding ruins for granted. When I pass it or glimpse a few white marble columns from my terrace I experience a momentary sense of enlightenment. Indeed, even unheralded ruins excite me, like those a bulldozer once uncovered in a construction site behind the building where first I lived in the Thissio neighborhood of Athens. The antiquities authorities immediately issued a stop-work order and for the next year and a half I devotedly monitored the progress of a bona fide archaeological dig right in my backyard.

proportion to their size. The biggest treat in rural Greece is the abundance of fresh water springs that make store-bought water taste stale. Some sources are nothing more than rigged-up pipe spigots while others are more elaborate -- fountains embellished with a lion's head, the cold alpine water gushing from its roaring mouth.

Lesvos (a/k/a Mytilini) is Greece's third largest island with an extensive road network of over 400 kilometers. On my first visit, I spent two weeks cycling on my own to just about every town and settlement accessible by asphalt. Despite its size, Lesvos is not a major tourist destination. This means there are plenty of beaches that render bikinis as useless as a parka in July. I have fond memories of my first evening when I pitched my tent near the adorable fishing village of Skala Sikaminias and walked into town for dinner at a seaside taverna. The highlight was watching the sun, plump and red as a fire engine, linger to the point of loitering on the horizon as if debating whether to set. The next morning I zipped open my tent, took three or four paces and—splash!—I was swimming in the sea, perky as a seal. More than half my camp sites on Lesvos were within spitting distance of the Aegean.

Greece has so many precious places that it is regrettable tourists predominantly flock to Santorini and Mykonos. These are gorgeous islands but I can name a dozen venues that vie in charm and allure, starting with romantic Hania in Crete, the indestructible mastic villages of Chios, car-free Skyros and the World Heritage Site of Meteora - all virtually unknown destinations to American vacationers. I once had the privilege to escort the publisher of National Geographic Adventure magazine and his family on their first visit to Greece and select their itinerary. They had never heard of Nafplio, but, like me, they instantly fell in love with this graceful and quintessentially Greek city.

Nowadays, that is my mission - to convert newcomers to Greece into Grecophiles.



Colleen McGuire formerly had her own housing rights law firm for sixteen years in New York City until Greece seized her attention. She now divides her time between Athens, Greece and New York City operating a bicycle tour company called CycleGreece www.cyclegreece.gr and a specialty tour company called Aegean Adventures www.aegeanadventures.com She is a contributor to Greece A Love Story (Seal Press, 2007), essays from 19 American women, with a story called "Siga Siga: Cycling in Greece." Colleen bicycled solo from New York City to San Francisco with all her gear.

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Growing up Greek and American

Author Dan Georgakas tells his Greek-American story by exploring his family's past, as well as his own of growing up in Detroit Michigan.

By Adrienne Kalfopoulo

What is it that defines the Greek-American experience in this ever increasing foray of ethnic voices?

In his book *My Detroit, Growing Up Greek and American in Motor City*, Dan Georgakas gives us a startlingly vivid journey into a past and time that revisits a lost America as much as it speaks of the experiences of a second-generation Greek-American boy's parents and grandparent from Peloponnesus (father) and the besieged Smyrna (mother and grandfather). All three become invaluable examples in the young Georgakas' orientation to the world.

Sofia Georgakas nee Poursoukas made her passage to the new world with her brother in the extraordinary circumstances that defined so many in the Great Transatlantic Migration (1870-1914) of the European poor to the American continent. Their father (Georgakas' grandfather, who is referred to throughout as Papou) had left them in the care of cousins after having inadvertently killed an opponent vying for the hand of a woman in a second marriage he hoped would secure the care for his children.

Deciding to escape the Turkish court which would not have given him a favorable verdict, Papou

makes his way to Canada, as the young children at the onset of the 1920s are caught up in the panic that sent fleeing Greeks to the port of Smyrna. The two barely adolescent children find their way to the port and a small boat as Smyrna goes up in flames. By sheer luck, a compassionate captain of a Japanese ship, apparently the last one to leave the harbor with refugees, picks them up.

Yet another chain of unlikely circumstances reunite the children with their father; it takes two years for Papou to locate them when he pays off a local politician to get them across the Atlantic; they travel in open-deck steerage until reaching their father in Quebec. How imagination preserves such life-defining experiences and becomes part of the cultural inheritance of those who pass it down is part of what Georgakas' memoir demonstrates.

When Pearl Harbor is bombed, Georgakas' mother Sofia's "grief for the American dead was unqualified... What my mother relived when she viewed the smoldering hulks of the battered American warships was not the carnage of Hawaii but that of Smyrna. She was never able to fully articulate her feelings, but she understood that just as in one place the flag of the rising sun had brought death, in another it had brought life."

Over and over, *My Detroit* demonstrates old world integrity and new world opportunity as relative concepts that take on their greatest influence when these apparently opposed realities come together.

Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, Dan Georgakas learns the intimacies of what it means to define oneself according to the terms of belonging; this is the first sentence of the memoir: "When Greek meets Greek, they ask one another: Where are you from? I often reply: Anatolia. Less often, I answer: The Peloponnesus. That I was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, does not matter.

We knew our semi-literate fathers could be foolish and outdated... As they sang songs whose roots were centuries old and exchanged tall tales from different localities, we understood they were men who adhered to a code of behaviour, a way of being, that allowed them to face life sure of who they were and where they belonged."

It is finally the movies and Hollywood that teaches the young Georgakas "how to talk American, look American, and think American". Not surprisingly, Georgakas went on to be a film critic and script writer, as well as a labor historian with a list of publications that include *Greek America at Work and Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*, as well as co-editing *The Cineaste Interviews* (2 volumes).

Active in the culture of community organizations, student strikes and independent publications that defined the 1960s, Georgakas marched down Woodward Avenue with Martin Luther King in 1963. And while Detroit becomes the industrial motor capital of the nation to a budding center for theatre and the arts (from the Lone Ranger to Lily Tomlin), Greektown gradually loses its old neighborhood Greeks, many of whom move to the suburbs, and with the advent of the race riots of the 1960s, becomes less safe.

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Halloumi cheese gains new ground in the US

The Cyprus Association for the Promotion of Milk Products, which recently launched "CheesEU," a two-year tactical promotional campaign to increase sales of Halloumi® cheese in North America, already has positive indications toward the program's targeted goals. Imports of Halloumi® cheese, Cyprus' delicious and unique sheep's and goat's milk cheese, by U.S. buyers in the first quarter of 2007 have increased by 31% over the same period last year.

"We are extremely pleased with this additional boom in the sales of Halloumi® cheese. Halloumi® exports to the U.S. have grown steadily over the past 10 years. The goal of the CheesEU campaign is to assist our U.S. food industry partners at the importer/distributor level in increasing awareness and sales of Halloumi® cheese among the American consumer," states Dennis C. Droushiotis, Managing Director of the Cyprus Dairy Association in North America. In addition to a nationwide advertising campaign and participation in selected trade shows, the CheesEU campaign includes over 400 in-store tastings in key metropolitan markets including Los Angeles, New York, Washington D.C., and Boston, to give the opportunity to a greater number of Americans to sample taste Halloumi®.

Recognized as a unique product originating only from Cyprus, Halloumi® holds a U.S. registered trade mark. Droushiotis notes: "Our trade mark in the U.S. helps ensure that the American consumer will enjoy authentic Halloumi® from Cyprus made in the unique and traditional methods, which involves using sheep's and goat's milk and folding the cheese by hand."





AKTINA FM/TV tribute to Zambetas a huge success

remarkable performance that lasted for two and a half hours. Amazingly enough, many people came from other cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago and Boston, while some also came from Toronto and Montreal! Many dignitaries were also in attendance, including the Consul of Greece in New York, Sophia Veve, who represented the Greek government.

The repertoire included some of the great and everlasting hits of George Zambetas, which are considered to be among the finest examples of the Greek musical inheritance. It also included a projection of still photos and video clips beautifully incorporated with the songs, highlighting Zambetas performing and speaking about his music and career, including his experiences with Greek Americans during his visits to the United States. Those who knew him personally were truly enthused to see and hear him up on the big screen. Those who never knew him were able to appreciate his unique style, humor and magnitude as a bouzouki player.

Kostas Makedonas, accompanied by Dimitra Kostaki, a new



AHEPA's District 5 Governor Ted Vittas presents Kostas Makedonas with an honorary plaque - Shown in the photo from left are Dimitra Kostaki, Kostas Makedonas, Elena Maroulleti, President of AKTINA Productions, Inc., and Ted Vittas.



and upcoming female vocalist who truly captivated the audience with her performance, the bouzouki maestros Dimitris Mariolas and Aris Koukos, and the other members of his orchestra, many of whom have worked with George Zambetas, truly set the Town Hall on fire during this unique and very well produced performance that left everyone in attendance ecstatic.

Visibly moved, Kostas Makedonas in his opening remarks thanked the audience for their "warm reception" noting that, "honestly we did not expect this and we were exceptionally happy when we learned that the show was sold out. I would like to thank you for this, this is great, but not because you are supporting us, because you are supporting the good Greek song, and today's tribute to George Zambetas is a tribute to the good Greek song, I would also like to thank my good friend Elena Maroulleti who has envisioned tonight's performance for several years now and despite the many obstacles she has faced, we were finally able to accomplish her dream."

After the performance, Elena Maroulleti offered flowers to Kostas Makedonas and Dimitra Kostaki and proclaimed that "AKTINA (which means illuminating ray) has illuminated the evening" and thanked the audience for attending and sharing her dream to bring to New York this performance. She also thanked the performers, and all of those who supported the concert and then invited Ted Vittas, Governor of AHEPA's District 5 in New Jersey, to join her on the stage for a special plaque presentation honoring Kostas Makedonas. The plaque paid tribute to Kostas Makedonas for "his cultural contributions to Hellenism in conjunction with AKTINA FM and AKTINA TV the presenters of the concert/tribute to George Zambetas at Town Hall."

Manhattan's Town Hall, one of the most representative and historic theaters of the Big Apple, was turned Greek again on May 18 when it hosted a concert/tribute to the late George Zambetas, with renown singer Kostas Makedonas as the leading vocalist. The presentation was part of AKTINA FM and AKTINA TV ongoing series GREEK MUSIC JOURNEY, initiated in 1994 with the mission to present "unique" performances that feature only the best music and songs from the Greek world.

"The concert's tremendous success verifies that Greek Americans truly appreciate musical performances that are dedicated to quality Greek music despite the beliefs of some that our community does not support this type of music and is influenced by the non-representative music and songs that Greece has to offer today," said an exuberant Elena Maroulleti, President of AKTINA and concert Executive Producer, in an interview with NEO.

The concert was an outstanding success and sold out. Greek Americans and non-Greeks from all walks of life and ages packed the theater and shared a



The Queens Real Estate Expo: Networking Breakfast Meetings

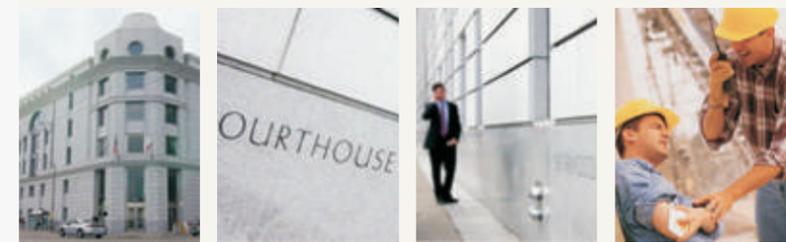
The Queens Real Estate Expo monthly breakfast meetings at Marbella Restaurant in Bayside on the last Wednesday of every month, bring together professionals from all different fields related to real estate--from bankers, attorneys, real estate brokers, insurance and mortgage companies to marketing and inspirational coaches, builders, decorative painters, and a feng shui consultant. Anthony Kazazis, director of the Queens Real Estate Expo, started these breakfast meetings "...so that potential exhibitors can meet, network and connect, and hopefully begin giving business to one another before the Expo even happens."

The networking breakfast meetings are a predecessor to this year's second annual Queens Real Estate Expo, which will take place on September 30th, 2007 at York College in Jamaica, Queens. Kazazis explains, "Two of the reasons why we chose York College for the home of the Queens Real Estate Expo were because of its central location in Queens and its easy accessibility by public transportation and available free parking." The Expo will feature over 200+ exhibitors, all experts in their fields ready to answer your real estate related questions. There will also be free educational seminars going on over the course of the day.

To participate in the next networking breakfast meeting on June 27th, or for more information about exhibiting or attending the Queens Real Estate Expo on September 30th, 2007 go to www.QueensRealEstateExpo.com. You can also reach Anthony Kazazis directly at 646-210-2545 or apkazazis@optonline.net with any questions.

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METROPOLITAN YOUTH CHOIR: A DREAM COME TRUE



Photo: ETA Press

It started as a wish by Archbishop Demetrios, on January 30, 2001, the day of celebration of "Three Hierarchs" and of Greek Letters, when he expressed his desire for the establishment of a children's choir "that will make us all proud." Then, entrepreneur and activist Peter Papanicolaou acted upon the idea by supporting the project financially and logistically.

That is how the Archdiocesan Metropolitan Youth Choir, which consists of students of the Greek American day and afternoon schools of the Metropolitan area, came about and is zealously now in its 5th season. It has appeared annually for Christmas, spring and many other special events. Its highlights include performances with tenor Mario Frangoulis and singer George Dalaras, then at New York University in honor of the president of Cyprus, during the visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios in New York, for the UN secretary general etc. Now the choir's first recording is in the offing and this coming July it will accompany

Archbishop Demetrios and a group of 22 educators in Greek American schools, to Cyprus, where it will perform at the Presidential Palace for President Tassos Papadopoulos and other dignitaries!

Sunday, June 3, at the Petros Patrides Cultural Center of the St. Demetrios Parish in Astoria, the choir gave a taste of the program to present in Cyprus, in front of a multitude of Greek Americans who had every reason to feel moved and proud – fulfilling thus one of the Archbishop's original wishes – as they heard American born children to perform staple songs of both the Greek and Cypriot repertoire. Archbishop Demetrios was there, as was Bishop Philotheos, members of the clergy, Consul General of Cyprus Martha Frangoulis and singer George Dalaras, then at New York University in honor of the president of Cyprus, during the visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios in New York, for the UN secretary general etc. Now the choir's first recording is in the offing and this coming July it will accompany

wishers.

Under the direction of Maria Koleva, the choir successfully became a performing and voice based musical group providing resources to students and music educators. Its repertoire spans from Renaissance to the present day and it includes both sacred and secular music. Born in Bulgaria, Ms. Koleva is a graduate of the Vienna Musical Academy and the Tsaikosky State Academy of Music in Moscow with a Masters Degree in Orchestra and Choral Conducting. Her extensive experience and dedication in teaching music, piano and conducting had led this choir to its continual success.

Pianist Areti Giovanou has been a sensational asset to the choir. A native of Athens, Greece, she graduated Cum Laude from the Athens Conservatory in 2001 and three years later she received her Master Degree from Mannes College of Music. Currently, she is a professional studies candidate at the same school.

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Proposal and pledges for an American Hellenic Committee

Making the case for Cyprus and Greece in DC

By Demetrios Rhompotis

Activist and entrepreneur Nikos Mouyaris from New York, Pancyprian Association's executive vice president, made headlines at this year's 23rd Annual Cyprus, Hellenic and Orthodox Issues Conference in Washington, D.C. held this past May by proposing the creation of a national organization, something like the American Hellenic Committee, to systematically deal with the issues of Greek American concern, and pledging \$ 2 million of his own money towards that end.

Such an organization would be chaired by a paid executive director of George Tenet's standing and caliber. According to Mouyaris, the existing associations are doing a good job, but are not in a position "to influence the policies of a superpower such as the United States. We are all successful businessmen, so let's run it as a business. If we don't do it, we will always return here and question our efforts."

Tom Kyrus, from Virginia, embraced the effort immediately, promising another \$25,000. Participants discussed the proposal and a final decision is pending upon further debate.

A total of 30 key U.S. Senators and Members of Congress, including three of the top four presidential candidates from both parties, and the high-level Administration officials in charge of matters relating to Cyprus, Greece and Turkey participated in this year's conference marking new records. Over 100 Hellenic leaders from across the U.S. and around the world lobbied these key policy-makers.

The tough remarks of Congressman Tom Lantos' (D-CA), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, on Turkey's asphyxiating policies against the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (seated in Istanbul, Turkey) was another very promising step, along with a letter of his to Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan (following a letter last year to President Bush on the same lines, signed by a record number of 73 US senators.)

"First, and most important, Turkey must recognize that the Patriarchate is indeed ecumenical. Its ecumenical nature exists in the hearts of Orthodox believers everywhere, and it is absurd for Turkey to try to deny it," Lantos stated. "Second, Turkey must cease all interference in the process of selecting the Ecumenical Patriarch, particularly its maddening insistence that the Patriarch be a

Turkish citizen...The demise of this solemn spiritual institution – with a tradition spanning two millennia – is intolerable to Orthodox worshippers, to the world at large, and to me personally. All Orthodox, regardless of citizenship, should be eligible to become the Ecumenical Patriarch. It is the Church, not the Turkish state, that should determine who becomes Ecumenical Patriarch."

Equally categorical, said Lantos, was Turkey's usurpation of patriarchal property, a policy he described as "unethical" and "illegal." According to Anthony Liberakis, National Commander of the Archons of St. Andrew, more than 75% of the patriarchal property has been confiscated.

Another welcoming paradox in this year's conference was Congressman Robert Wexler (D-FL), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Europe Subcommittee and founder and co-chair of the Turkish Caucus, calling on Turkey to substantially reduce the number of her occupying troops on Cyprus, deemed unnecessarily high by today's reality. Wexler, who is facing a primary in Florida and has received numerous letters concerning his pro-Turkish positions in the past, has also introduced legislation calling FYROM to curb its irredentism against Greece.

For the first time in Hellenic-American history, three of the four leading American Presidential candidates from both parties made presentations regarding Hellenic and Orthodox matters. They all appeared very supportive and promised a different approach to Cyprus if elected. Senator Joe Biden, who knows the case perhaps better than anyone else in DC – "I wish people of power in Greece had the same knowledge on Hellenic issues as he does," a Greek-American delegate speaking to NEO on condition of anonymity, said – outdid all his colleagues during his speech, offering "substantiated" hope for something better, if elected.

Senator John McCain (R-AZ), on the other hand, addressing the delegates from his phone, left no good impressions. Not only he had nothing to say to people who lost their homes after the Turkish invasion of 1974 and became refugees, but he made things worse using stereotyped images of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"-style in recalling his time in Piraeus, when he came to like ouzo and learn a few steps of a Greek dance! "Not enough to

win my vote," a delegate exclaimed to the general amusement.

Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis, a preeminent American business leader and Democrat introduced Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY). Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), who is also the Chairman of the Senate European Affairs Subcommittee, was introduced by his protégé, the recently-elected Illinois State Treasurer, 30-year-old Alexi Giannoulias. Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) was the first annual recipient of the James Williams Award, named after James Williams, an African-American from Baltimore, Maryland who went to Greece in 1821 to fight alongside Hellenes in the Greek War of Independence and was among the casualties of that fight for Greece's freedom.

Conference participants also traveled to the State Department where they held an over one-hour, in-depth discussion with the third-ranking State Department official – Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns (also former US Ambassador in Athens.) The Undersecretary's arrival for this meeting was delayed because he was pulled into a last-minute meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who sent conference participants her greetings. This session offered leaders an opportunity to express in great detail their concerns and frustrations with Cyprus settlement efforts, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the problems created by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and other issues. Undersecretary Burns was the first Philhellene to receive the Livanos Award at the end of the meeting.

A number of the most influential Members of Congress and Senators met with conference participants to hear their concerns and express support for their efforts. They included: The Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA), the Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Europe Subcommittee members, Congressmen Albio Sires (D-NY) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), who is also the Co-Chair of the Hellenic Caucus, the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Africa and Global Health Subcommittee, Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ), House Foreign Affairs Committee member, Congressman Russ Carnahan (D-MO,) the Chair of the House State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee,



Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. (right) with Andy Athens and Gregory Niotis.



Senator Barack Obama with Illinois Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias



Senator Hillary Clinton with Eleni Tsakopoulos-Kounalakis.



Telly Fiouris shows pictures of his father's vandalized grave in the Turkish occupied Cyprus to Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.



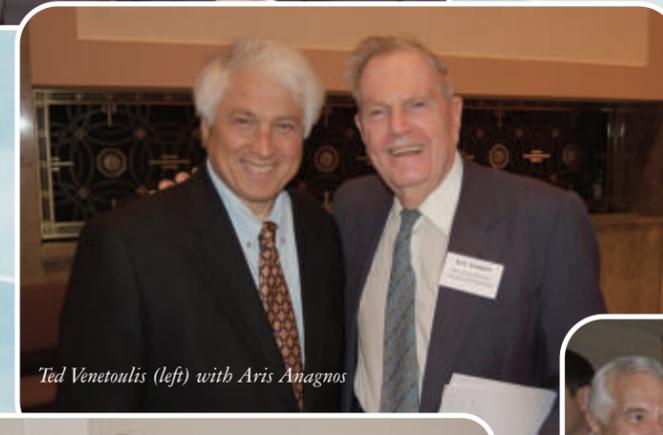
Congressman Tom Lantos with Philip Christopher (right)



Senator Joe Biden with Anthony Limberakis (center) and Gregory Niotis from the Hellenic Parliament



From left, former Congressman Nick Galifianakis, Andy Manatos, former Senator Paul Sarbanes with his wife Christine



Ted Venetoulis (left) with Aris Anagnos



Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (left) with State Senator Leonidas Raptakis



Peter Papanicolaou (right) with Georgia Vavas, Alkeias Panagoulas, Dino Rallis, Eleni Vettas and Tasso Manassis



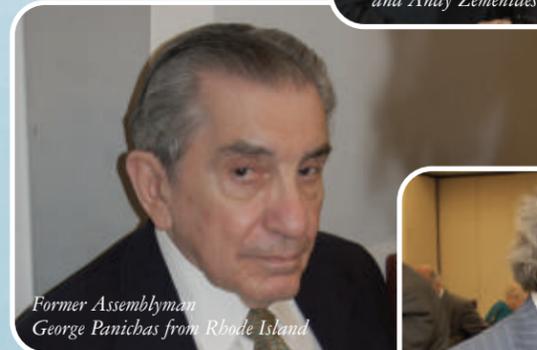
From left are Andy Manatos, Andy Athens, Dr. Takey Crist, Nikos Mouyaris and Philip Christopher



Congressman Zach Space (right) with Nikos Mouyaris, Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Peter Papanicolaou



From left, Aristos Constantine, Basil Polemites and Andy Zemenides



Former Assemblyman George Panichas from Rhode Island



Nikos Mouyaris and Dennis Mebiel



Andy Manatos addressing the convention. SAE's Coordinator for the US Ted Spyropoulos and Mrs. Spyropoulos also participated



Rev. Alex Karloutsos with State Representative Mike Gianaris



Members of Congress John Sarbanes (from right), Heana Ros-Lebtinen, Gus Bilirakis and Nita Lowey with Greek Parliamentarian Gregory Niotis (left), Andy Athens, Eleni Tsakopoulos-Kounalakis and friends



The honoree, Rabbi Arthur Schneier (right) with Michael Sarbanes



Illinois Treasurer Alexi Giannoulis (left) with Andy Zemenides

Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY,) other House State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee members, Congressmen Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL,) House Appropriations Committee member, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY,) House Majority Leader, Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD,) House Republican Leadership – Chair, House Republican Policy Committee Congressman Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI,) Greek-American Congressmen John Sarbanes (D-MD) and Zack Space (D-OH), and Congresswoman Shelley Berkley (D-NV) whose family is from the Jewish community of Thessaloniki, the Co-Chair of the Hellenic Caucus, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY,) Congressmen Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL) and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL).

The Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Joe Biden (D-DE,) the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's European Affairs Subcommittee, Senator Barack Obama (D-IL,) the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Carl Levin (D-MI,) the Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator John McCain (R-AZ,) the #2 in the Senate Leadership – Assistant Majority Leader (Majority Whip), Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL,) who is also a member of the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee and Chairman of the Financial Services Appropriations Subcommittee, Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's European Affairs Subcommittee, Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), who is also a member of the Senate Leadership as the Vice-Chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's European Affairs Subcommittee, Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), who is also the Co-Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) "U.S. Helsinki Commission," Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY,) Member of the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), who is also the Chair of the Senate Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee,

Member of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).

The 2007 Frizis Award was presented to the President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation and Spiritual Leader, Rabbi Arthur Schneier. The Frizis Award is named after Mordohai Frizis, the Jewish Greek hero who was the first high ranking Greek military officer to give his life in defense of freedom against the Axis Powers in 1940. It is awarded each year to a prominent member of the Jewish community in the U.S. who has made significant contributions to Hellenic issues. Congressman Eliot Engel (D-NY), was the 2007 recipient of the Paraskevaides Award. This award is presented each year to "that individual who, like George Paraskevaides, has utilized ancient Hellenic values to contribute to the nations and people of Cyprus and America, and to Hellenism in the modern world."

In addition, conference participants honored: Former Undersecretary of State, Former Member of Congress and Former Cabinet Member Edward Derwinski; Mayor of occupied Kyrenia, Maria Ioannou; Cyprus Consul General Martha Mavrommatis; Honorary Consul of the Republic of Cyprus for Virginia, Tommy Kyros; Honorary Consul of the Republic of Cyprus for North Carolina, Takey Crist; Pan-Macedonian Association, Inc., USA Supreme President, Panos Spiliakos; American Hellenic Council of California Vice President Aris Anagnos; and Pan-Pontian Federation of USA and Canada member Panos Stavrianiades.

The heads of many of the top Hellenic organizations in the U.S., and around the world, came to Washington, D.C. for this important strategy and lobbying session. They included: President, International Coordinating Committee – Justice for Cyprus (PSEKA), Philip Christopher, Honorary World President, World Council of Hellenes (SAE); and National Chairman, UHAC, Andrew A. Athens, President, National Coordinated Effort of Hellenes (CEH), Andrew E. Manatos, Supreme President, Cyprus Federation of America, Panicos Papanicolaou, Executive Vice President, Pancyprian Association of America, Nikos

Mouyaris, National Commander, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Anthony Limberakis, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Father Alexander Karloutsos, Vice President, American Hellenic Council of California, Aris Anagnos, U.S. Regional Coordinator, World Council of Hellenes (SAE), Ted Spyropoulos, AHEPA Cyprus and Hellenic Affairs Committee / Cyprus Honorary Consul for North Carolina, Dr. Takey Crist, Supreme President, Pan-Macedonian Association USA, Panos Spiliakos, Pan-Pontian Federation, George Mavropoulos, Past President, Federation of Hellenic Societies, Tasos Manessis, Chios Societies of American & Canada, James Kontolios, President, Hellenic American Leadership Council, Endy Zemenides, President, U.S.-Cyprus Chamber of Commerce, Andreas Comodromos, President, Morphou District Association, Nikolaos Kotziamanis, Executive Council Member, National Federation of Cypriots in Great Britain, Suzy Constantinides, Lobby for Cyprus (UK), Andrew Kevorkian, President, Pancyprian Association of Florida and Thelma Pieri.

Those Cyprus and Greek government officials who also participated in this important effort include Ambassador of Greece to the United States, Alexandros Mallias, Ambassador of Cyprus to the United States, Andreas Kakouris, Consul General of Cyprus in New York Martha Mavromatis, Greek Parliamentarian and First Vice-Chairman of the Inter-parliamentary Committee for Hellenes Abroad, Gregory Niotis, and the Mayor of occupied Kyrenia Maria Ioannou.

"I think these meetings are useful, although sometimes we get frustrated because year after year we hear the same things," said veteran activist Aris Anagnos of Los Angeles, evaluating the conference in an interview with NEO. "That is why, I feel, we have to concentrate on a just few issues. We need unity. I liked what Andy Zemenides said, that they are going to organize the Greeks of Chicago to do lobby, which is very important. This is what we need to do in every part of the country, using every organization and showing a unified community. So, all and all, it (the conference) was a positive experience but we have to build on that."



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Preserving their native language, Hellenic groups buy books for students studying Greek

Haverhill - There weren't enough Greek language textbooks to go around the last two years at Haverhill High School.

The 40 students who enrolled in Greek classes last year had to get by with 30 new books. A tight school budget meant that some students had to wait to get their own books. This year's group increased to 44 students, and some continued to go without books. Their teacher, Zachary Eldridge, helped make up for the shortage with supplemental materials. "I had to teach more from the blackboard, and they had to take more notes since they didn't have texts," Eldridge said.

But two local Greek organizations are making sure there will be enough books for all 64 students who have enrolled in Greek language classes for the fall - supporting the high school's efforts to preserve classical language classes.

Earlier this year, Debbie Sasso-Flanagan, supervisor of social studies and foreign languages at the school, was talking with a friend who is a member of the local Greek men's organization AHEPA - American

Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. Their local chapter, Acropolis Chapter 39, expressed interest in the Greek language program at the high school. Members of the chapter contacted their sister organization, Daughters of Penelope - Rhea Chapter 36, and the two groups decided to help Eldridge's students. They donated \$1,400 to buy 45 new college-level textbooks titled "From Alpha to Omega." The donation is in the spirit of what the school district calls the Textbook Project, a community effort to draw enough donations from businesses and individuals to replace all textbooks in the district because they are outdated or worn out. Both AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope promote Greek culture and heritage and support education as well as charities. They are part of the city's large Greek population.

Dr. Byron Chopas, president of the Acropolis chapter, and Anastasia Papaefthemiou, president of Daughters of Penelope, visited Eldridge's classroom yesterday to talk about their Greek heritage. Papaefthemiou read a few excerpts out of the textbook in her native language and talked about her heritage. A graduate of the

Mike LaBella, Staff Writer Eagle-Tribune

Haverhill High class of 1978, Papaefthemiou studied Greek in high school as a way to maintain her heritage. She was born in Greece and did not want to let her Greek language skills languish when she was in high school. "I felt it was important to continue my knowledge of the language," she said. "It's very important that the Greek language continue. It's a beautiful language, and it will help these students when they go to college."

Chopas studied dentistry after graduating Haverhill High in 1953. He studied Latin while in high school. He told students it helped prepare him for the rigors of medical school. "If you want to go into medicine, you'll find that a lot of words derive from Greek and Latin," Chopas said.

For sophomore Brendan Allen, the Greek and Latin language classes he is enrolled in will help prepare him for college, where he plans to study philosophy. "Our class had textbooks, but other Greek classes didn't," he said. "I think it's great to have more texts thanks to this donation."

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Nick Gregory presenting scholarship to Ashlyn Michalakis

John Catsimatidis, Nick Bouras and Nick Katsoris

Thanos Petrelis singing

More than 1400 guests and celebrities attended the 16th Annual Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund Anniversary Gala at the New York Marriott Marquis honoring Humanitarian and business leader Nicholas J. Bouras and singer/actor & American Idol finalist Constantine Maroulis (currently starring in the CBS daytime drama "The Bold & The Beautiful"). The HTSF was also pleased to welcome Greek singing sensation Thanos Petrelis, and Grammy nominated singer Taylor Dayne ("Tell It To My Heart," "Love Will Lead You Back"), who performed at the event.

HTSF Celebrates 16th Anniversary with Star-studded Gala

This year the HTSF awarded 35 scholarships totaling over \$100,000 to students across the United States and with this year's awards the organization has granted more than 550 scholarships since its inception. Scholarship presenters included CBS News anchor Alexis Christoforou, Fox-5 meteorologist Nick Gregory and Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas. Big Screen Presenters included: Fox News anchor Ernie Anastos, CSI:NY star Melina Kanakaredes, television legend Betty White, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" Actress Nia Vardalos and tennis ace Pete Sampras.

Nick Katsoris, President and Founder of the HTSF also served as Dinner Chairman and presented the Humanitarian awards. Katsoris is a New York attorney and author of the Loukoumi children's books. Fund Vice-Chair Margo Catsimatidis then presented the 2006 HTSF Scholarships and Hellenic Times Publisher and Chairman of the Red Apple Group, John Catsimatidis, thanked the contributors of the HTSF for their support.

Thanos Petrelis and Nick Katsoris



The HTSF scholarship recipients with Nick Katsoris, Constantine Maroulis, John & Margo Catsimatidis, Nick Gregory and Nick Bouras



Margo Catsimatidis and Constantine Maroulis



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