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Two archbishops
and a rabbi on
religion

Environmental
pioneer John
G. Rangos Sr.

Greek streets
in flames

Jazz Pioneer
Nicholas Royce
honored

Anna Rezan-Kritselis
wants to conquer America

"Last" Liberty ship
donated to Greece
as floating museum

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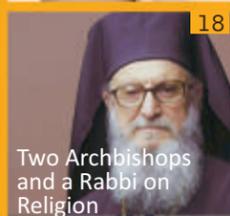
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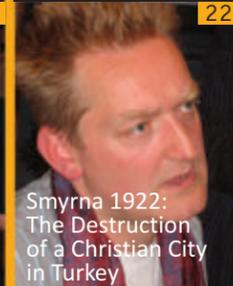
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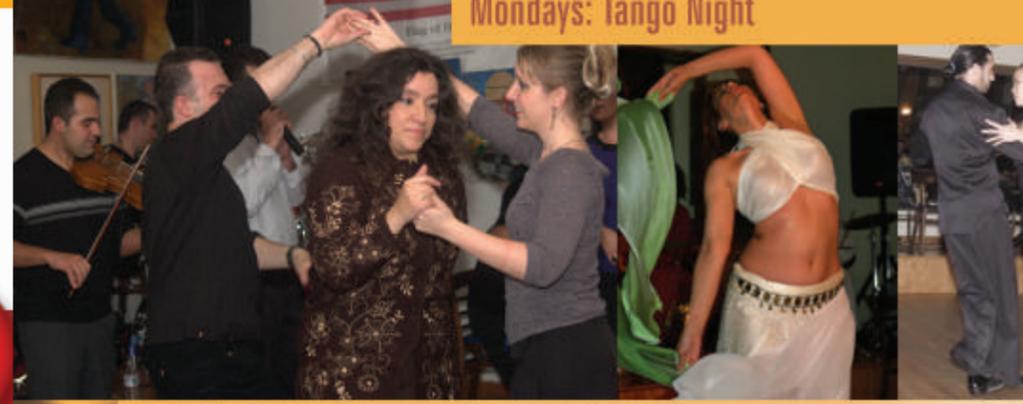
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FROM THE EDITOR

Politics here and there

Is the bloom off the rose already for the incoming Obama administration? Or are people getting a peek at the bugs under the rock that inhabit politics, not just in Chicago, but throughout the world and throughout history. Obama is the product not necessarily of the Chicago political machine but of the political machinations and alliances that go into any run for public office—particularly for the highest office in the land.

Has he handled his first test under fire with grace and his vaunted cool? Don't know. He gave boilerplate answers at first—Don't know all the facts. And then he was reminded to show proper outrage—I am appalled. And then he marshaled the awesome Obama political machine to get all the facts out and he held a formal press conference to say—that he couldn't say anything right now, but his team was busily researching all the possible connections with the disgraced governor of Illinois and all the facts would come out in detail. Except U. S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald then told the Obama team not to bring all the facts out right now, pending further progress of his investigation. And so the story lumbers on and the mystery deepens, and the spanking-new Obama administration continues to be saddled with this albatross. His appointments have now become a sideshow for the press, which smells blood, and pursues further inquiry into this sordid story. It's a sad deflation after the promise of change and the excitement of seeing a brand-new administration get a fresh start on the monumental problems of our world right now. Suddenly, everything new seems old again.

Americans have gotten only a fleeting glimpse of the turmoil that erupted in Greece recently and didn't seem to fathom the extent of the violence there. Hundreds of buildings were torched, hundreds of shops destroyed in Athens alone (and the violence had spread to Crete and Corfu), more than 70 people were injured and the protests had spread to the rest of the European Union. Labor unions in Greece were threatening to paralyze the country and the conservative government was struggling to stave off calls for its resignation by the socialist opposition.

Things have calmed down since and the typical Greek in the street has resumed his accustomed cynicism about politics in general by blaming both the government and the loyal opposition for using the situation to further their own interests. Things will calm down and the demonstrations peter out over the next few weeks, one political analyst has suggested. But he added, ominously, that it might take "a generation or two" to straighten things out in Greece. The schism is borne out by some of the newspaper polls in the last few days: in one poll, 62 percent of those questioned said the riots were inexcusable. And yet 60 percent said they considered them a legitimate social uprising...Stay tuned.

Dimitri C. Michalakis

Cover photo of actress Anna Rezan-Kritselis by Andreas Stavrinides



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The amazing transatlantic effort to get the "last" Liberty ship to Greece as a museum

the commitment and dedication of people who wanted to create a living resource to educate future generations about a vital era in the world's history."

More than 2,000 Liberty Ships were constructed in US shipyards beginning in 1942 to support the war effort. They were the first ships to be built using production line methods that resulted in a four day construction process for each ship. Although the Liberties were designed as cargo ships that could be built quickly and cheaply to meet immediate wartime needs, they proved to be very resilient and long-lasting. About two-thirds of all cargo shipped from the U.S. during World War II was shipped on Liberty Ships and more than 200 were sunk by enemy action.

After the war ended, many Liberty Ships were purchased by Greece to build up a merchant fleet which had been decimated by World War II and to deliver food, medicine and supplies in the crucial Cold War years.

supporters won passage of a bill to facilitate the donation of the vessel. But it took months of work and meetings with American and Greek government officials to overcome bureaucratic hurdles and raise money as part of a campaign to create a public/private partnership to give the Huddell new life.

In the spring of 2007, meetings with the U.S. Maritime Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency made it clear that a range of environmental tests would have to be completed on the vessel to ensure the final donation. In addition to working with those agencies to ensure the development of an environmental sampling plan and remediation plan, supporters of the Liberty Ship Project began working to raise money to demonstrate Greece's ongoing commitment to advance the establishment of the Huddell as a floating museum. A number of major Greek ship owners contributed to the effort and the American Bureau of Shipping contributed \$250,000.

Senator Leonidas Raptakis and Margarita Vartholomeou on the wheel of JOHN BORWN.



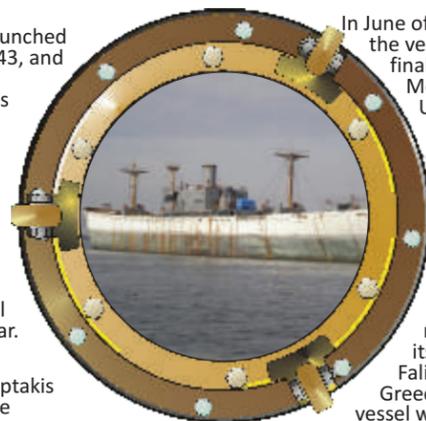
Senator Raptakis and Mr Spyros Stavrakas of the Baltimore-Piraeus Sister City Committee.

It has been called a "ghost ship" and a "maritime Lazarus". The Arthur M. Huddell is the last of the Liberty Ships, vessels which played a vital role in the efforts of the United States to aid European allies during World War II and during the Cold War years. For years, the Huddell had been anchored off Fort Eustis in Newport News Virginia and managed by the United States Maritime Administration.

Today, the Huddell is en route to Athens, thanks to an ambitious public/private partnership involving government officials and private citizens from both Greece and the United States who shared the vision of using the last Liberty Ship as a floating museum to commemorate Greece's maritime history and its strong ties to the United States. The Liberty Ship Project confirmed the existence of the Huddell and worked to facilitate its donation to Greece, raising funds to conduct necessary renovations and complete environmental tests necessary to finalize the process.

"There have been a number of people, both in Greece and the United States who have been working hard to secure the donation of the Huddell for more than two years," said Rhode Island State Senator Leonidas Raptakis, who helped launch the Liberty Ship Project in 2005. "Ship owners, historians, government officials, and concerned citizens in both countries have come together to make this happen ...to preserve a vital piece of history and create a lasting reminder of the strong ties between Greece and the United States. What started as a dream has become a reality thanks to

The Huddell was launched on December 7, 1943, and within a year was converted to lay gas pipeline across the English channel to supply fuel to the Allied forces after the D-Day landings. The Huddell subsequently worked as a cable layer in commercial service after the war.



In June of 2005, Raptakis joined Virginia State Senator Nick Rerras, Connecticut State Representative Dimitrios Giannaros, adviser to the Greek Minister of Merchantile Marine Manolis Alifierakis, Hellenic Maritime Attache Commander Andreas Lelakis (New York) and Superintendent Engineer of Seacrest Shipping Matheos Ferenduros in inspecting the ship. The Huddell had been identified as the last remaining Liberty Ship in private hands and the inspection confirmed what Raptakis and others had already suspected – that the Huddell was a very likely candidate to be restored as a floating museum.

Seacrest Shipping owner Spyros Polemis played a vital role in working with Raptakis and other legislators to initiate the Liberty Ship Project. After working to educate members of Congress about the project,

In June of 2008, the final transfer of the vessel to Greece was finalized with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the US and Greece, by the United States Maritime Administrator Sean Connaughton and Greek Minister of Merchantile Marine George Voulgarakis.

The vessel has been re-named Hellas Liberty and its new home will be in Faliron Harbor, near Piraeus, Greece. The hope is that the vessel will be placed alongside two famous Greek ships anchored there, the armed cruiser Georgios Averof, the flagship of the Royal Hellenic Navy during most of the first half of the 20th century, and the destroyer Velos, a former American vessel given to Greece in 1959 which sailed for a time in the Greek Navy.

"The idea of helping new generations reconnect with the shared history of the Greek and American people and with Greece's rich maritime heritage brought a wide range of people to the table," said Raptakis. "When it came time to raise money for initial renovations and environmental testing, Greek business and civic leaders played a vital role in advancing this effort and making sure the final hurdles were overcome."



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John G. Rangos Sr. speaking at a New York dinner reception in honor of the 2006 Grand Marshals of the Greek Independence Day Parade.

Environmental innovator and industrialist

John G. Rangos Sr.

has changed the landscape of by Dimitri C. Michalakis

the America that he loves so much

John G. Rangos, Sr. is an environmental pioneer and a giant in the field of recycling and waste management. His company has been cited by the Florida EPA for having one of the finest environmental records in the world and he's even designed a comprehensive environmental plan for Greece. His many innovations include the recycling of waste-generated methane into energy and the conversion of common boiler-ash into the components of cinder blocks and anti-skid material for highways. "Waste by-products can be converted and they can be converted into the energy we need," he says, still going strong at 79, but now more than ever involved with his many civic and charitable works.

Most recently his longstanding Rangos family charitable foundation dedicated a new 10-story, state-of-the-art research center at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, funded a groundbreaking study of colon cancer and a new research facility at Johns Hopkins and donated 71 acres of recreational trails to Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. He's also an archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a founder of International Orthodox Christian Charities, and as a proud Chian, was a co-chair of the 52nd National Chian Convention. "You do your best, that's all you can do," he says, "and hopefully you've accomplished something that will benefit mankind."

Are we making progress on the environment and recycling?

I think waste management has made some of the most extraordinary strides in ensuring security and being efficient. Waste management itself has provided an extraordinary recycling program that is second to none in the world, and the proof is that it's working and doing a great job in creating power by recycling methane and by combustion burning and it's adding a great resource to the country. There were bad actors in the business before. And I have fought them and brought regulation to the state of New Jersey, for example, where we pushed that violators get serious penalties and this has been enacted throughout the United States. (Carol) Browner, who was nominated by Obama for (White House energy czar) was the Florida EPA chief when we were building the largest waste site in the world there. And she told me, "I've never signed (off on) this for any other company; but your company, Mr. Rangos, has one of the finest environmental records in the world." The environmental record of our company is one of the best ever in the history of the United States and I'm awfully proud of that.

This takes a lot of engineering, but your background is in business.

For the business of environment you have to have engineering and I don't know of a Greek who's not capable with math—it comes natural to them—and they're some of the best engineers in the world. I looked at companies and said to myself it's amazing that every one of these companies has either a number one or two technical engineer that's a Greek and educated in Greece. I wanted to take a trip to Greece and see what kind of academic program creates these kind of people. We went to Patras University and one of the men I went with, a world-renown engineer, said to me, "You know what, John, these guys are as good as I am. These engineers are really brilliant."

What do you think of the Obama energy team?

I was busy and I missed the announcement. But if it's anything like his previous Cabinet appointments that he's made he's well on his way. What I heard and I liked is that he's not against offshore drilling if it's part of a broad program that includes everything. I am a strong advocate of nuclear power and he

can get those millions jobs (he talks about) just by building 200 nuclear plants in America. France gets probably 90 percent of its power through nuclear and has never had an accident.

You were a supporter of JFK. Do you see any parallels with JFK and Obama?

Very much so. Let's go down the human aspect first: very charismatic, extremely bright. Can think on their feet very rapidly and have a great ability to draw the masses to them. Both men have these capabilities, which make them super-politicians. Both are fantastic communicators. I don't think two men have ever existed who have been more charismatic than JFK and this young man who's going to be our president now. I think he's one of the great political geniuses of modern times.

Why do you feel service to country is such an important part of your life?

I love my country, and I love my Hellenism, and if you're truly a Hellene, and you're truly an active American, you will try to shepherd in any way possible your talents to best serve the American people.

Did you ever think of going into politics yourself?

God forbid.

Why do you say that if you're so active politically?

First of all you have to be willing to compromise yourself. I am very careful about the commitment that I make and I will not compromise myself. And you can't be a politician with that concept.

Isn't that part of democracy—the interests of the many over the interests of the few?

Dimitri, I don't find anything wrong with somebody else feeling that whichever direction they want to take is democracy. I think you have to compromise in order to come to a common denominator: we make a decision and we're not all going to get what we want, but we make a decision. But I don't have that in my personality. It's not in me. I have strong feelings about what I believe and I don't compromise.

Is that something in your personality or did somebody inspire you?

I helped my granddad get his citizenship—his name was Konstantinos Svokos. He was a legend. A shipping captain. Livanos had baptized both my mother and my uncle John. So my granddad was deep in shipping as all the Svokos were. FDR was coming to my town and making a whistle stop in Weirton, West Virginia when I was a boy and I said to my grandfather, "Granddad, we're going to go and listen to the president. He's campaigning." And he said, "You're crazy, I'm not going to take little boy to this." And I said, "Granddad, you don't understand. You're going for your papers and Congress can change the laws about anything. It can even change the law about whether you can become a citizen or not. You have to be active." So he put four Coke cases together so I could see and I stood there listening to FDR talking to the Democrats of Weirton, West Virginia.



Confetti rained and band played moments after the official dedication opening of the John G. Rangos Sr. Building at Science + Technology Park at Johns Hopkins.

What was it like growing up Greek in Weirton, West Virginia?

It had one of the most booming steel mills in the country and my grandfather had a restaurant right there at the Number One gate of the plant. I was four years old when I went to kindergarten, and I had a hard time speaking English because we had a little Greek colony there and all we talked was Greek. But I caught on in about a year and I was able to speak fluent English. The Italians had their several blocks, the Greeks had theirs, the Poles had theirs. My grandfather spoke about 15 languages, because he was an old sea captain, and he'd walk down the street and see a Russian and he'd talk to him in Russian, a Serb in Serbian, an Italian in Italian. I'd say, "Granddad, how did you learn all these languages?" He'd say, "When you're a sea captain you have crews from all over the world. You learn their language or they don't know what you're talking about." He was a great old man. He's the backbone of what built me into what I am.



John G. Rangos Sr. with his family at a New York dinner reception honoring the Grand Marshals of the 2006 Greek Independence Day Parade.

From left to right: grandson John III, Alexander, granddaughter Virginia, Jenica, John Sr., Jill, John Jr. and grandson Nicholas.

Where did you get your spirit of public service?

I think it's part of what I grew up with. Ernest T. Weir was an industrialist like Carnegie, and when we were in the middle of the Depression he built a Weir Christian Center in Weirton where all of us could go and play basketball and other sports. And then he built a giant park, and all the time I'm saying, "Why does this man care for us so much?" And what I learned from him is to always give back. If you know West Virginia you know that we don't have much wealth, but our patriotism is so enormous that it's legendary. And my patriotism is from growing up with these roots. As I got into commerce I saw what a great country we have and what opportunities it's given me. There's not too many countries where you can rise from common roots to building an empire. And many Greek Americans have had this privilege in America and they should think more about giving back.

Do you think that Greeks in America are doing that?

To be politically correct I should say they are. But I would also have to say that they could do a lot more. They are doing some things, but they can do a great deal more. This country has been very good to them, and this country has given so much to them and I think they should be the example for everybody, not only for Hellenism, but for the whole country.

Do you think America will get over its

current economic problems?

America will get over this economic problem and will be the leader of the western world again, because without America I don't think the possibility of true freedom can exist. Maybe it leans a little right sometimes, or a little left, but Americans' love for freedom and Americans' love for democracy will always be a beacon for the world.

Do you think the incoming Obama administration is on the right track?

I was a friend of McCain's and I was for him because of his experience and because I thought he had given a lot of correct dissent with this administration when they were wrong. But, frankly, in watching Obama pick his Cabinet, I am extremely pleased. I think he's doing an outstanding job and I think he's got one of the best Cabinets I've ever seen put together in modern American politics.

The best and the brightest?

Absolutely, to the point it's kind of quizzical in my mind how one man can have the confidence of all these great people that he's surrounded himself with. And it has to be that he's deeper and stronger than we think. I haven't had the chance to talk to him, but I'm intending to at some point. I have an idea about how to finance the medical program for this country (health care) which I'm not going to disclose right now. But I'm close to a couple of the congressmen who are close to him and I'm going to give the

idea to them because I think it can be a balanced way to bring medical support to forty million people who have no insurance.

Your family comes from Chios?

My family comes from northern and southern Chios. The Rangos family is Kalamoti and the shipping side, the Svokos, come from the south. I usually go back every other year. Chios is gotten so modernized. When I was in the Poli there were so many brand-new homes I was startled by it. We've been breaking records in building new homes. They have made a fantastic transition. Markos Marinakis is trying hard to bring (many services to the island): sewers to one town, help with the schools in another town. He's always working to make progress there.

What is the legacy you hope to leave to your children and grandchildren and the community at large?

When you are fortunate enough to succeed, then you owe your fellow citizens and your country payback. That's the way I look at it. And I've been honored that God gave me the ability to succeed and I will try to do my best to my last day to bring about something better with my efforts. You do your best, that's all you can do, and hopefully you've accomplished something that will benefit mankind.

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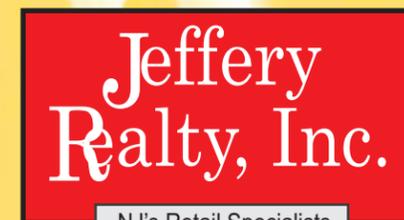
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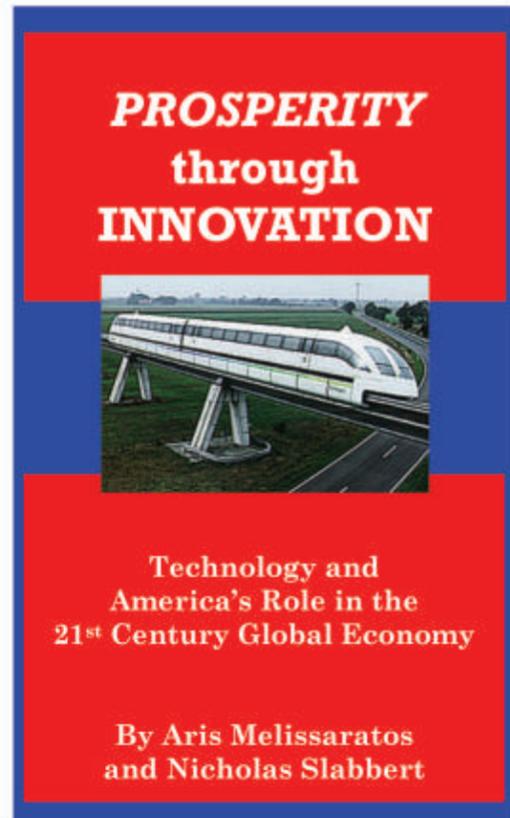
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TWO ARCHBISHOPS AND A RABBI ON RELIGION



The Athenagoras Human Rights Award is presented to Rabbi Schneier

PHOTO: J. MINDALA

Rabbi Arthur Schneier, the senior rabbi at New York's Park East Synagogue, has joined a very distinguished group, including Archbishop Iakovos, President Jimmy Carter, President George H.W. Bush, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa, Elie Wiesel and Archbishop Demetrios after becoming the 23rd recipient of the Athenagoras Human Rights Award of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America.

The award was presented to Rabbi Schneier at the Grand Banquet of the Order's annual three-day assembly, held in New York last October. The Rabbi was honored for his work as founder and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, an interfaith organization of corporate and spiritual leaders from all faiths committed to promote peace, tolerance, and ethnic conflict resolution.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Rabbi Schneier have worked closely together as co-chairs of the 1994 Peace and Tolerance Conference in Constantinople/Istanbul, which strove to bring an end to the bloodshed in Yugoslavia. In 2005, they co-chaired the second Peace and Tolerance Conference, bringing together leaders from all the major faiths promoting peace and tolerance in Southern Europe and Central Asia.

After the award ceremony Rabbi Schneier and Archbishop Demetrios of America shared some thoughts to NEO.

“Religion is like fire. It can bring comfort, but it can also destroy”

Rabbi Schneier

Rabbi, you said in your acceptance speech that in time of crisis people turn to religion.

What the economic crisis has shown is that we don't live in a divided world, that there are no borders, we are all in the same boat and basically what the Bible tells us is that we are all God's children. Now, each one of us has the capacity to use the God-given potential for good or for destruction. In the past, we had many religious conflicts, because religion is like

fire. It can warm, it can bring comfort, but it can also destroy. Fortunately, people have seen that some religious leaders today are not part of the problem but part of a solution for coexistence and dialogue. And that is a hopeful development.

As a Holocaust survivor, you have experienced the worst case of religious persecution and intolerance in human history. Yet just 60 years after the Holocaust, similar, even of lesser

magnitude, phenomena have occurred. Haven't we learned the lesson yet?

As I pointed out, this is a time for heightened intolerance. And although we've had globalization, the identity of individual cultures is really threatened. So you have heightened nationalism and I don't care for the word tolerance, because when you say tolerance, you tolerate. I believe in mutual acceptance, I respect you, I want you to respect me, I accept you, I want you to accept me. So, yes, unfortunately we have seen in Europe the rise of xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Again, the tendency of the human being is not to assume responsibility. You find radical Islam going back to Moses, bringing up things of the past. But we must not be paralyzed by the past, we must move forward. I could have been totally paralyzed by the pain of my losses, but thank God, I decided to use my energy help improve this world. So, that's the challenge each religious leader faces.

One of the institutions that face this kind of persecution and harassment is the Ecumenical Patriarchate. You have worked with the Patriarch in promoting religious dialogue and understanding.

He is an example of the capacity of a religious leader who understands the important teaching that we are all God's children. His love and his outreach have earned him the respect and admiration throughout the world. That's why I love the man; I admire him and respect him. He's really an inspiration.

Judaism and Hellenism came together and fused--actually Christianity is the result of that fusion. Nowadays, do you see there two ancient traditions coming together to do other good things?

Yes, because basically, our core values are the same. I am an Orthodox rabbi, and I already have the affinity to the Orthodox (he laughs.) But you find the basic teaching of family, of education of children and so forth, is so similar. Even, I would say, our emotional feelings, Greeks are full of heart and emotion. So are Jews.

Archbishop Demetrios of America: "The world condition calls for a much stronger action on the part of Orthodoxy"

Tonight the American Greek Orthodox Church honored an Orthodox rabbi. What are some of the symbolisms and messages in your opinion?

This was a very nice occasion, something indicative of the spirit of openness that characterizes Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is receiving every good thing that we could have. And we are conscious that Christianity is a continuation and a transformation of Judaic religion, therefore there is and there always will be a connection. After all, the Old Testament is a book used completely in the Church together with the New Testament, which shows the continuity. Tonight we had this very auspicious occasion by honoring someone who is really honoring this tradition of ours, by working in many instances closely with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Rabbi Schneier has been instrumental in promoting issues of the Patriarchate with the religious, the diplomatic and political communities. So, there was a symbolism tonight, not only of openness but also of the value that is inherent in whatever

good in any given religion and in any given religious person.

You just returned from the journey walking in the footsteps of Saint Paul in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey. What is your feeling in terms of the Orthodox people working together, not just being "spiritually united?"

This was again an event of paramount significance. It was not the first time the leaders of Orthodox churches under the present Ecumenical Patriarch have met. But this time there is a special significance because of some existing difficulties between the leadership of some Orthodox churches. And because of the world condition that calls for a much stronger action on the part of Orthodoxy. I was there from the very beginning I had the responsibility for the academic part, which followed the Synaxis (meetings). It was in my opinion, one of the most beautiful expressions of Orthodoxy unity. Now, the consequence of this meeting in terms of practical unity in action, I think time will show that it was serious.

What we saw in the Russian-Georgian conflict, a war among two ancient Orthodox Catholic peoples, the church could neither prevent nor effectively mediate for a solution. Did the hierarchs discuss the possibility of establishing a mechanism to be more effective should the need arise in the future?

The issue is almost exclusively political it's not a religious conflict. On the other hand, I have to tell you that in the Synaxis we agreed on a statement of 14 points and there is a mentioning of the conflict

there, because the issue was brought to the attention of the leaders. It has been included as an issue that was painfully recognized, but was positively recognized in doing anything possible to avoid a recurrence of things like that in the future and we asked both sides to be able to proceed correctly in terms of the political procedure, because the ecclesiastical procedure, as we have been told, was undertaken from both sides.



Archbishop Hieronymos of Athens and all Greece with NEO's Demetrios Rhompotis

Demetrios Rhompotis recently had an audience with Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Hieronymos. One of the most erudite and spiritually capable hierarchs in today's Orthodoxy, Hieronymos resumed his current duties about a year ago, promising to focus his efforts in turning the Greek Church to more substantial work, both on the spiritual and practical levels. At the end of the meeting, His Beatitude agreed to briefly speak on the record, in his only second interview since becoming Archbishop.

As other religious leaders have pointed out, in time of crisis such as the one we are going through now, people turn to religion.

There have always been crises in the course of history. At the same time, there

have existed ways to overcome these crises. It's true that in times of hardship, people turn to God more often than in time of prosperity and well being in order to find comfort and inspiration. But crises don't get surpassed unless each one of us tries to do his part, for himself and the

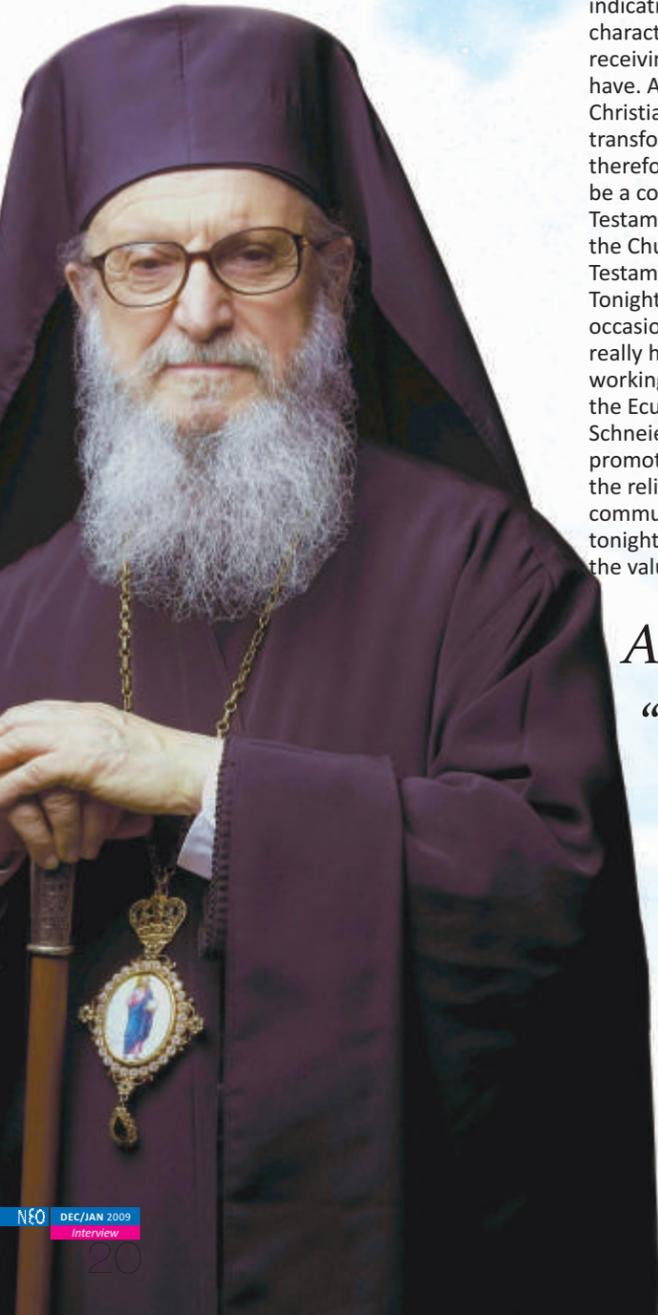
society in general.

What about the danger of fundamentalism?

When Orthodoxy is lived as an ecclesiastical experience and man lives within the spirit of Orthodox life and ways, there is no danger to become a fundamentalist or a fanatic in any sense of the word. Instead, he is looking for ways to strengthen himself in order to help the others. Orthodoxy is the Faith par excellence that stresses the belief that man shares the world with other people. That is what our faith in the Holy Trinity signifies: a society based on love. Thus, a Christian cannot see the "other" as enemy, but as a brother. Throughout the Orthodox teachings and beliefs I can't really see any danger that they might lead to fundamentalism, only when there are aberrations. Unfortunately, countless crimes have been committed in the name of Jesus Christ.

Are you planning to visit us any time soon?

I've been to the US three times. I would wish to be able to come again, but it's very difficult at this point due to my heavy schedule. We'll see.



Archbishop Demetrios of America:
"The world condition calls for a much stronger action on the part of Orthodoxy"



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Unresolved Issues Turned Greek Streets Aflame

By Asher J. Matathias

A friend's forwarding and timely email instructing to Click here: Greek fighting: the eurozone's weakest link starts to crack, by Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, put me in a reflective mood, permitting my mind to wander the span of six decades, roughly coinciding with my life. Born in Nazi-occupied Greece, my stream of consciousness exercise recalled my father Jacob's intermittent absences, particularly in daylight, to stay updated on underground activity in the Mt. Pelion, where we found relief found only close to the military base where he was stationed, his literacy and typing ability becoming indispensable to his commander, as the latter was prosecuting the strategy of the right-wing government engaged in a protracted three additional years of civil war barbarism.

The experience of rending the body politic asunder, dividing siblings, parents, and the broader society into Monarchist and Communist factions was settled by the abundant infusion of American arms, emphatically helping simultaneously a weakened Greek state (not to fail by falling into the then expanding Soviet sphere of influence), while picking up the political obligations of a chastened British Empire --- victorious in the Second World War, yes, but exhausted, facing a massive economic crisis at home. Indeed, the famous Winston Churchill was replaced by Clement Attlee as prime minister in 1945!

Under Cold War conditions --- the epic 45-year struggle that would lead to eventual triumph in 1989 with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and followed in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet empire --- Greece became a flash point for the epic confrontation; after all, the closest European country to the emerging longest-lasting conflict in the Middle East and a founding member of the original 1949 14-nation military alliance that became the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, the most successful unit of its kind.

However, while stressing the nominal ideals of democracy and self-determination, there was a overarching American aim in keeping Greece stable and safely in its camp --- even

if occasionally to achieve such goals internal autonomy was sacrificed to the expediency of military strongmen, and a police force more accustomed to suppress speech than to scrupulously abide by Constitutional norms guaranteeing legitimate demonstration and general respect for the prevalence of civilian rule.

Fear of police brutality comes naturally to Greek citizens. Unlike the American paradigm, growing up I was cautioned to cross over to the opposite sidewalk when passing a police station, their presence to be necessarily tolerated but functioning not as servants for the public but as its masters! Moreover, in the post-civil war period, police ranks were augmented by unreconstructed former Nazi collaborators and indigenous, frequently sadistic right-wing adherents with a propensity to suspect any government criticism easily categorizing such dialogue as leftist, or even Communist.

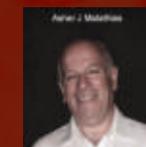
Within such a historical context, last December's event fomented by the tragic death of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos under incriminating circumstances for the police represented the latest chapter in the development of modern Greece. The jittery police confronting and unable to contain a growing citizen protest, inspired by deteriorating economic conditions (high unemployment and living costs. Some point to the adoption of the euro currency in the PASOK government of 2002); the fleeing of Greece's best and brightest to seek fame and fortune abroad; the endemic nepotism and corruption of the embedded political elites common in third world societies paved a fertile grove for the unleashing of frustration that has been manifested in the streets of Athens and spreading like wildfire to other Greek cities, with the aforementioned death becoming the spark for the televised anarchism we have been witnessing. Vandalism even reached the Greek Consulate in New York!

Noteworthy are the twin facts that Greece has evolved into a haven for many illegal immigrants, viewing the country as their passport to a brighter future, while legal immigrants, from points of origin in Eastern Europe and Russia and the former

Yugoslavia, number more than a million! These elements provide an easy platform for many charlatans who would aspire to the role of a Greek Lou Dobbs, stressing a puritanical native atavism, replete with ethnic intolerance and xenophobia. In the same category falls a fringe but continuous, unhealthy and rabid anti-Semitism, according to which Jews rule the world via a seemingly unholy alliance that connects them by an umbilical cord with the modern State of Israel to America!

The other event, with the United States again playing a major and unfortunate role, was the dictatorship of the colonels that held sway in the Greece, between 1967 and 1974. The antagonisms that were unleashed in those historic episodes, including police involvement in perpetrating the killing of more than a score of demonstrating university students in 1973, have never subsided --- frequently erupting into expressive anti-Americanism.

It is reassuring that the emotions that have precipitated the latest convergence of people, expectations and keen frustration have subsided considerably. Permanent resolution to the ills facing a still-evolving-into-maturity Greek society will remain elusive, absent a political creative leadership with vision, attaining its privileged position through merit and honest debate. My heart aches for the travails my native land, including family members, and a long roster of friends have experienced. Two proposals that can serve to bring long-term healing and social tranquility are recommended: for the immediate future, a grand coalition government to bring the country's disparate politics into focus to tackle the issues facing it (a la President-elect Obama's example); establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Commission to exhume the ghosts of the past in order to finally bury them with clear conscience. This broadly-based dispassionate analysis and understanding is both necessary and long overdue.



Asher J. Matathias is an Adjunct Prof. at St. John's University, Queens, NY. A survivor of the Holocaust in Greece and President of Five Towns B'nai B'rith he is also a Frequent Public Speaker and Writer.

Book review by Theodoros Karakostas

Giles Milton's "Paradise Lost Smyrna 1922" is a welcome contribution to work pertaining to the Genocide of the Greeks and Armenians by the Turkish nationalists of Mustafa Kemal. It is a thoroughly researched book with a very impressive bibliography. Among the citations in the bibliography are George Horton's "The Blight of Asia", Edward Hale Bierstadt's "The Great Betrayal" and Marjorie Housepian Dobkin's "Smyrna 1922 the Destruction of a City". The Horton and Bierstadt books were written in the years immediately following the horrors that took place in Smyrna and have tragically been excluded from many historical examinations of the period owing to the politically advantageous position that Turkey has held with regard to the perceived commercial interests of the western powers.

Milton has impressively established a concise history of Smyrna during its final years under the Ottoman Empire, and during the brief period of Greek rule. He vividly describes Smyrna and the large foreign populations which resided there, including a strong and prosperous American community. Attesting to the objectivity of the author with regard to the Turks, he writes of Rahmi Bey, Ottoman governor of Smyrna who during the period of the genocide of Greeks, Armenians, and Assyrians in Anatolia protected the Christian populations of Smyrna.

This history depicted in this book is a must read, not only for Greeks and Armenians, but for all those worried about the vulnerability of democracy and the inability of the media to report accurate information. A case in point is the example of American High Commissioner Admiral Mark Bristol, who made no secret of his support for the Nationalists of Mustafa Kemal, and who openly expressed utter contempt for Greeks. Admiral Bristol appalled many American officials and members of the American community at the time owing to his anti-Greek racism. When he was compelled to assign three American journalists who would

"objectively" cover the events transpiring in Smyrna, he made sure all three journalists would report favorably on the behavior of Kemal and the Turkish nationalists, while ensuring that the Greeks would be depicted as the perpetrators of atrocities.

Bristol was decisive in influencing the manner in which the events at Smyrna were covered, and in large part he is an important forerunner in America to the numerous pro-Turkish officials who ensure that American policy protects Turkey's falsified image and brutal policies at all cost. One year ago, the Bush administration blocked recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the House of Representatives. What shame can be attributed to today's pro-Turkish officials when Bristol did not just actively repress the commemoration of historical events, but who actively aided and abetted the Kemalists in their goal of exterminating Greek and Armenian Christians in Smyrna, and helping to cover up the evidence. Before Henry Kissinger and Cyprus, there was Admiral Mark Bristol and Smyrna.

Milton informs us that Admiral Bristol was so anti-Greek, that the New York Times published an editorial demanding his removal from his post and expressing dismay that American interests were being represented by such a person. Bristol horrified and appalled the members of the American community and other officials such as George Horton. The American community was sympathetic to the Greeks and the Armenians but they were drowned out by Admiral Bristol who had the last say in the formulation of policy, and in how the events of Smyrna were reported to the press. In addition, Milton gives readers a great deal of insight into the views of Mustafa Kemal. As early as 1905, when he first visited Smyrna, Kemal desired the elimination of the Christian populations. When in the aftermath of the massacres at Smyrna, and the subsequent burning of the City, General Ismet Inonu expressed regret over the burning of Turkish territory (but not for the fate of the Greeks and Armenians). Mustafa Kemal expressed his

joy over the events and assured Inonu that the City could easily be rebuilt. Milton's account of Mustafa Kemal make very clear his responsibility for the horrors that ensued, for it was Kemal himself who sent General Nouredin Pasha, a man known for his extremism, to Smyrna in the aftermath of the Greek evacuation. Milton regretfully criticizes Greek ambitions in Asia Minor at one point, and falls for the traditional myth that the Greek campaign could not have succeeded. The fact remains that Greece, in so far as Venizelos remained in power, would have trounced the Kemalists. The hostility and jealousy by the Western powers to the Venizelist success in Asia Minor is however recounted by Milton. In the aftermath of the Greek liberation of Smyrna, amidst celebrations which included the participation of Metropolitan Chrysostom, an Italian soldier fired a shot in order to foment violence and disrupt the Greek diplomatic and political success that resulted in the liberation of Smyrna.

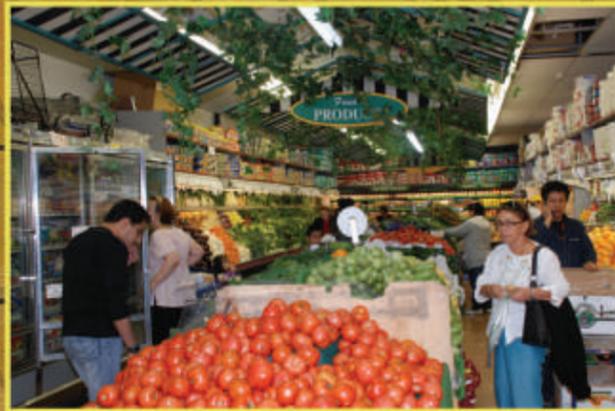
During the course of the War, the Italians, French, and British, alongside the Soviet Communists, each for their own interests armed and supported Mustafa Kemal's nationalists while cutting off all aid for the Greek Army. In light of these important facts, one can easily discern that the Greek campaign might have very well succeeded had it not been for the pro-Turkish interference of these divergent interests. In any case, "Paradise Lost" is a superb book that belongs on the shelves with other classic documents and historical works that pertain to the destruction and genocide of Hellenism and Christianity in Asia Minor.

The publication of this book and its appearance in prominent bookstores such as Borders, Barnes and Noble and Eleftheroudakis (Greece) is very encouraging. This is another small but significant step forward in democratizing history in western libraries and bookstores who have far too long carried fawning works on the person of Mustafa Kemal and mythical books about a democratic Turkey. Giles Milton serves to remind everyone how the foundations of modern Turkey were built.

Mr. Karakostas is a member of the Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC) www.Greece.org, a non for profit, no commercial organization. It was incorporated at the State of Delaware in 1995 and has a network of 37,000 members. The main objective of HEC is to promote and protect the Hellenism and the Hellenic culture.



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By Maria Athanasopoulos

bread & honey

A COLUMN DEVOTED TO MAKING GREEK FOOD EASY

The 12 days of Christmas may be long over for us, but in Greece they are still going strong since the holiday season begins on December 25th and lasts until January 6th, also known as "Dodekaimera". New Year's is more festive than Christmas in Greece and is surely the most loved holiday for children, since this is when they receive their presents and celebrate Santa Claus or as they call him, St. Basil. Although many special dishes are prepared for this holiday, the Vasilopita, which literally means St. Basil's bread, is by far the most important dish. This traditional Greek New Year's cake is eaten on January 1st in nearly every single Greek household worldwide. The cutting of the Vasilopita is a very important tradition in all Greek homes, not only in Greece but also for those in the Diaspora. Families come together to see which member will get the "flouri", the lucky coin, and be blessed for the year.

Every household has their own set of traditional rules for cutting the Vasilopita. Here is a set of the most common that my family also follows each year:

1. The cake is ceremoniously cut by the head of the household, who makes the sign of the cross over the bread with a knife before cutting. (In my home it is my dad).
2. The first piece is dedicated to Jesus Christ, the 2nd to the Virgin Mary, the 3rd to Saint Basil, the 4th to the house and then it's distributed by age, oldest to youngest.
3. If you get the coin in your piece, then you are believed to be the lucky one of the year! Congrats, you keep the coin but also have to eat your entire piece!

This cake or as some call it, sweet bread, is absolutely divine dipped in coffee and healthy enough to have for breakfast or a snack. It is also very portable and so I tend to eat Vasilopita for breakfast at work for about a week straight after the New Year. As usual, I was certain there was a way to modify my family's century old recipe to make it just a tiny bit heart-friendly in order to have it on a daily basis.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 cup low fat milk
- 2 eggs
- 4 egg whites
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 3/4 cup crushed almonds
- 1 large orange (need both the juice & the zest)
- 25 whole blanched almonds (optional)
- 1 quarter (or gold coin) wrapped in foil
- Icing sugar

Vasilopita - St. Basil's bread

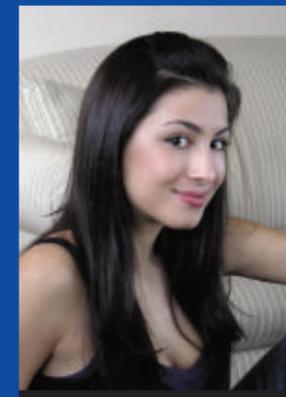
Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 45 minutes
Serves 12



Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
1. Mix sugar, butter, applesauce egg yolks in a medium bowl and beat until mixture becomes fluffy
2. Pour milk into a small saucepan and place over low heat until warm. Mix in the orange zest, orange juice, and vanilla. Once well blended, pour into the medium bowl that is holding the egg mixture.
3. Add beaten egg whites and slowly mix in the baking powder, flour and crushed almonds. Blend until the dough is very thick.
4. Pour mixture into a greased and floured round cake pan. Then mix in the foil-wrapped coin and ensure that it is not visible.
5. You can leave the cake plain and decorate after you bake it or you can opt to top it with the blanched almonds. If so, take the whole almonds and write out the New Year, 2009, on top of the cake mixture. Place into oven for 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center of the cake comes out clean.
6. Once you take the cake out of the oven quickly dust with the icing sugar add any other festive touches and let cool.

Kali Oresi & Hronia Polla!



MARIA'S SLATE

Happy New Year! Its officially 2009, it's the start of a brand new year and a fresh start on life not only for all Americans, but for the United States itself. We finally have a President with some intellect and common sense that is promising big changes and some hope for our ailing country. It is extremely refreshing to know that things can only get better and change is very near. Now that you don't have to worry about our country's future and well being, you can once again focus on yourself. Chances are you are one of the millions of Americans that make New Year's resolutions every year and truly believe that this is the year for

which you will follow through with your commitment for that huge lifestyle change. Among the top resolutions are weight loss, spend more time with family, starting an exercise regime, and quitting smoking.

Sadly statistics show that about a third of those resolutions will be dropped within the first week and sadly by mid-year, 95% of you have successfully managed to break every single resolution you made for yourself. Well don't beat yourself up about failing, clearly you are not alone. Ladies I am very confident that I can speak for 99% of you when I say that losing weight is recurring on your list of yearly resolutions. Don't let past failures get in your way of achieving your goals this year and growing into that "new you".

Oprah, America's favorite talk show queen, is going public with her decades long struggle with weight gain on both her TV show and the January issue of O Magazine. She also makes that same resolution every year and yes she does adhere to some sort of diet for a few months, loses weight, looks great and then bam, back to square one. Now this is someone that has the best trainers, nutritionists and gourmet chefs at her finger tips and she still can't maintain her goal weight. What has Oprah and the rest of you resolution breakers been doing wrong? Maybe the whole idea of having many resolutions is wrong, perhaps we should set up to 3 goals and simply focus on improving rather than completely changing ourselves.

Here are some tips in helping you achieve your New Year's "Goals":

1. **Be realistic.**
 - a. Can you really achieve this goal or better yet, do you really want to achieve this goal?
2. **Start small.**
 - a. Life is all about making small changes and taking small steps. So if you want to lose some weight, don't starve yourself! Make this change by eating lighter and smaller portions during week one. Then make an additional change, such as taking walks after dinner during week two.
3. **Friend support!**
 - a. Recruit your friends in helping you with your goal. If learning another language is what you wish to achieve, start taking lessons with a friend and support each other in keeping up with the classes. Or go online and join a forum that shares that same interest and have your new cyber buddies be your motivators.
4. **Time Management.**
 - a. You must figure out how achieving your new goal will fit into your current lifestyle and make the necessary changes. How do you expect to run in your city's next 5K and finish with a good time if you don't make time to practice?
5. **Celebrate Every Accomplishment.**
 - a. It's the small changes that will eventually transform you into that new you, it will not happen over night. So why not celebrate every successful step you make? This will help you keep the momentum which will inevitably give you the drive to achieve your goals!

I hope you found these 5 tips helpful and wish you the best of luck in growing into that new you. Feel free to email me if you have any success stories or better tips in keeping your new year's resolutions or goals. I look forward to hearing from you!

Maria (Maria.Athanasopoulos@gmail.com)

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CHRISTINE CUSHING'S



Baby Rocket Salad with Halloumi Croutons in Citrus Olive Oil Vinaigrette

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

Salad

- 5 oz package baby rocket (arugula), washed
- 5 oz Halloumi cheese cut into ½ inch cubes
- ¼ cup fine corn meal
- 2 tablespoon grape seed oil for frying
- 1 beet, thinly sliced on a mandolin and shallow fried until crisp.

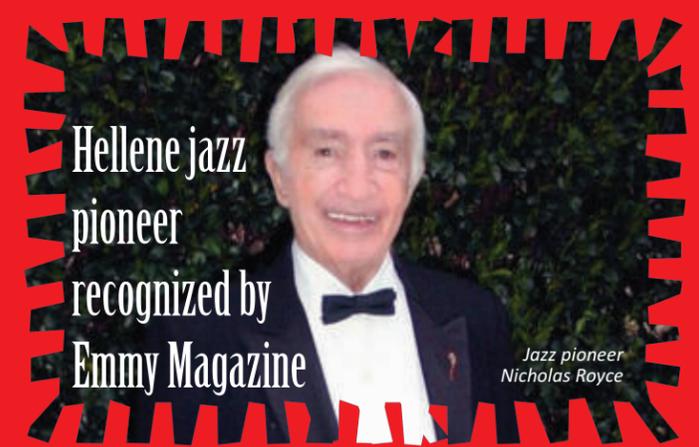
Citrus Dressing

- 2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoon fresh orange juice
- Grated zest of 1 orange and 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon vin cotto or balsamic vinegar
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Instructions:

1. Wash and dry the arugula and place in a medium bowl.
2. To make the dressing, combine the citrus juices and zests, mustard, vin cotto or balsamic with salt and pepper and whisk well. While whisking slowly pour in the oil and combine well. Set aside.
3. Dust the Halloumi cubes in fine corn meal, tossing gently in a bowl. Transfer to a plate and discard remaining corn meal.
4. In a medium skillet, heat grape seed oil over medium high temperature. Fry the Halloumi for about 5 minutes, turning often to get a dark golden crust.
5. Remove from heat and transfer back to plate.
6. Toss the greens with the vinaigrette and cheese gently to coat. Sprinkle with beet chips and serve immediately.

Hellene jazz pioneer recognized by Emmy Magazine



Jazz pioneer Nicholas Royce

Emmy, the magazine of the Academy of the Television Arts and Sciences, recently profiled entertainer and Hellene Nicholas Royce about his life of activism, much of which has greatly benefited Christian Orthodoxy in America. The issue also featured Hellene Tina Fey, an Emmy winner for the television program 30 Rock.

According to Emmy magazine, “as a dancer-choreographer, Royce developed a modern jazz style in the late 1940s and ‘50s...performed in night clubs and on the Ed Sullivan, Milton Berle and Kate Smith TV variety shows.” Although now retired from entertaining, Royce is still active in the industry, judging submissions for the Daytime Emmy Awards among other such industry activities, in addition to his extensive work for various causes, most prominent of which is his Orthodox faith.

“Royce was born in Pennsylvania as Nicholas Vlangas. The son of immigrant parents from Sparta, Greece, he moved to Baltimore, Maryland as a youth. He adopted the stage name Royce, as was the custom at that time. His entertaining began in the military towards the end of WWII where he was billed as ‘the Greek Fred Astaire in GI clothing.’ Royce has had friendships with other Hellenes in the entertainment industry beginning with the best-selling female vocal group in the history of popular music, the Andrews Sisters, following WWII, and including today actress Betty White. After his military service, he studied dance in New York and began a career which led to national prominence.”

“Royce’s charitable work for Orthodoxy, homelessness, AIDS, and domestic and child abuse has been recognized by U.S Presidents and others. Recently his activities were honored in the U.S. Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman Howard Berman of California.”

“Nicholas Royce has been advocating proper treatment of Orthodox Christians in the United States and for the Ecumenical Patriarchate long before it became a major, recent focus of attention in the White House and Congress. Following his time in the Army, Royce undertook numerous efforts, including the introduction of federal legislation to have Greek Orthodoxy listed as an official religion by the U.S. military. By 1955 the efforts succeeded, and the term ‘Eastern Orthodoxy’ became commonly used.”

“Following a trip to Turkey in 1965 during which he met Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, he began a lifelong effort to assist the Mother Church... The strokes Royce suffered have not lessened the energy or attention he gives the various causes to which he has devoted his life.”

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By Achilles M. Peklaris

Starlet Anna Rezan - aims to conquer

Kritselis America

*She's a total blonde,
She's a 20-year-old girl,*

*but she doesn't think or talk like one.
but she doesn't act like one.*



Most of the teen stars her age would be more than happy to get a role in a famous Greek TV series, but Anna Rezan-Kritselis, instead of staying in Athens and enjoying her early stardom, decided to go to the Big Apple—that is, New York City. She moved stateside in early autumn and she's still here trying to prove a point. What's wrong with this kid? Is she never satisfied?





Actually, there's nothing wrong with her—yet, it's true, she's never satisfied! Probably ten or twenty years ago just picking up and moving to New York after having such a measure of success in Greece, would sound risky and frivolous—even dangerous. But in the year 2008, when the world has turned into a “small village,” because of the Internet and Facebook, moving to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean is way safer than it used to be. That's how Anna made it and that's why she didn't hesitate at all in taking that big step.

“I think moving to the USA is a decision I made when was a kid,” she says. “I've always been a big fan of the ‘land of opportunities’. And when I was ready to move permanently to London, while thinking that my America plans had to wait for a couple of years, I came here for an intensive ‘acting for camera’ workshop and I ended up leaving my friends, car, cats, apartment, career and, of course, my mom's moussaka – and moved to New York for good!” Wow, that sounds exciting! Why New York? “I fell in love with this city immediately. I noticed straightaway that if you have a goal and you are a crazy dreamer, this is the place to be!”

But is this the right move, career-wise? Career-wise she was doing just fine in Greece. Born in Maroussi, Athens (her parents are lawyers: her father comes from Smyrna, Crete and Peloponnesus and her mother is a Sephardic, Polish-Jew), Anna was already an entertainment veteran.

“Well, that's kind of funny, because I moved here exactly at the point that I got established in the Greek entertainment industry. I worked in many TV shows, participating with bigger or smaller parts. The best and my most favorite part is the one I did for this very season, just before I left the country. It was a pleasure working with one of the most renowned and successful Greek directors, Mr. Kostas Koutsomitis, the show is a period drama, based on Dido Soteriou's bestseller *Matomena Khomata* (Farewell Anatolia). Other interesting things I did was working with other promising directors, such as Dimitris Vorriss, for his animated feature film (the first in Greece) – being a cartoon was fun!” More directors she worked with: “Some very talented ones, like Stelios Zogopoulos and Christos Houliaras.”

But she leaves it all behind and comes to New York: “As I already said, everything seemed like a step taking me to a different level, so I just wanted to take things to the next level. For myself, and my career, and last, but not least, quite important I would say, is that sometimes I just couldn't deal with the way things work most of the time in Greece.”

This is a very hot topic for us Greeks living abroad: Why Greece's business and star system don't work quite the way they should. Anna explains her own case:

“Listen, I'm in and out of the business, literally, since I was a little kid, in many fields, like dancing, singing, high fashion, musical theatre, acting etc. Even when I was studying at the university (she studied Communication, Media and Culture at the Pantion University of Athens) I noticed one single thing: In my humble opinion, Greeks do cut their own wings. They like to play it safe; they never risk in order to get things further on. Therefore, most of the time they stay in the average safety-middle-boring zone. Hence, there are not many chances. Most of the time people are afraid of anything new. No matter if you're a young actress, a young doctor, or a young journalist.”

So has she found what she was looking for in New York City?

“Here you're able to find the people, the teachers, the partners, the space, the money, the understanding (above all) and the audience to make a start. And I believe that if you have something to contribute, there is no way of losing. I strongly believe that,” she points out, sitting at her Queens flat one rainy afternoon. “Anyway, whether you like it or not, the US was always open and helpful to many new ideas and young people. Americans always use young people's energy to move things forward and that's why this country is always ahead and it culturally rules the world.”

What are her achievements so far in America? “Frankly, I realize that I'm playing in a different court. In the first place, I'm taking classes constantly, that's the most important right now. I have to understand and learn the ‘American way’ and, of course, meet people, discover this beautiful city, watch plays, movies, go to concerts. I have to get into it, be a part of it. So far I had a role in an indie feature film. It was a very interesting part in a fiction movie and I can't hide how excited I am about that! I cannot say more about this project, not yet at least.”

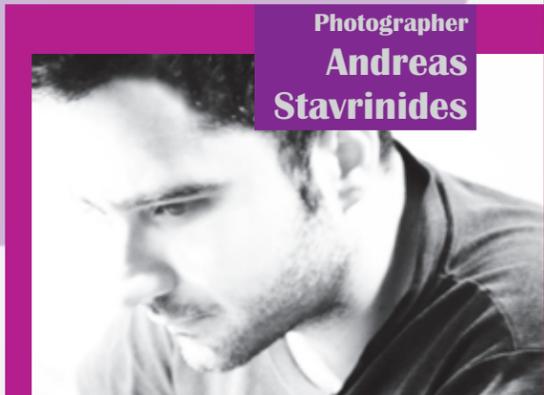
Anna splits her time between L.A. and New York and, as she says, “at some point I'll have to stick to one of those cities. My goal is to make my dreams I had since I was a little girl come true. To work with all these

people that I admire and respect or with others that share the same vision. I'm ready to work hard and I don't worry at all. I am convinced that sooner or later I'll get my reward...”

While now in love with America, Anna would still like to see more of Europe--Berlin, London, Paris, or Athens. She looks forward to participating in Giorgos Papatheodorou's new TV series in Greece. She mostly admires the «Old Hollywood» actresses, such as Marlene Dietrich or Rita Hayworth, but she's very attracted to Juliette Binoche, Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway or Cameron Diaz—“all of them for a different reason!”

Her life motto? Well, there is more than one: “Those who dare, do not live long, but all the others don't live at all.” And Anna adds: “A dear friend of mine used to say: ‘Dude, live it or leave it’ and I totally agree on that one!”

*Achilles M. Peklaris is the New York Desk Editor for the Athens Voice
achillespek@yahoo.com*



**Photographer
Andreas
Stavrinides**

Photographer Andreas Stavrinides was born and raised in Athens. He studied Sociology and Art History while he was working as an event organizer for quite big productions, such as 1997's Krzysztof Penderecki performance at Herodium Theater (under the Acropolis), as well as other important music projects on the radio. He was the publicist for the renowned Greek opera singer Mr. Mario Frangoulis and the Press Officer for the «Art Theater of Athens». Since 1998 Andreas works as a professional photographer, being a regular contributor for publications like VOGUE (Greece and Portugal), ELLE, MARIE CLAIRE, VOTRE BEAUTE, MUSE, BMM and he's a associate of the Italian VOGUE. Anna Rezan's photo shooting for NEO Magazine was done in London, U.K.



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Southeast Europe Project Scholar Opportunities

Along with its robust public affairs programming, the Wilson Center Southeast Europe Project offers a number of exciting opportunities for research scholarships. The Project looks to foster innovative scholars and analysts whose works identify and illuminate emerging regional and functional issues involving Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, or Bulgaria, as well as related issues affecting broader geopolitics throughout southeast Europe.

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Southeast Europe Project



www.wilsoncenter.org/sep

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Frontline in the 21st century

With the European Union enlarging and NATO realigning in Southeast Europe, this complex region has taken center stage in the new century. Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, and Bulgaria stand at the nexus of institutions and civilizations, and regional issues now have global consequences. The Woodrow Wilson Center Southeast Europe Project promotes scholarly research and informed debate on the region's increasing political integration, emerging security challenges, and expanding global transactions.

FAITH

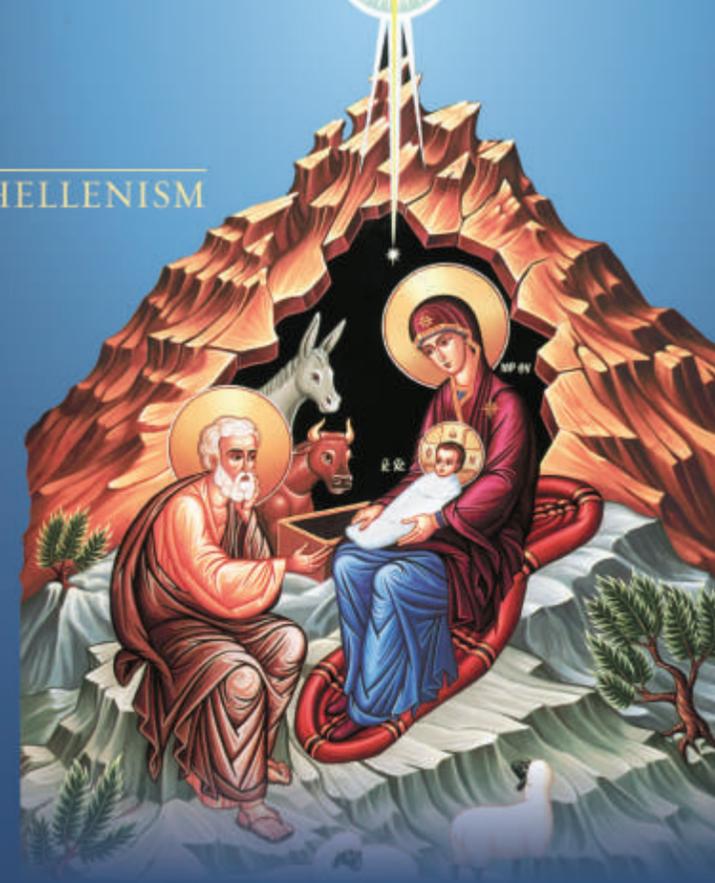
AN ENDOWMENT FOR ORTHODOXY & HELLENISM

The core mission of *Faith* is to promote Hellenism and an understanding of the Greek Orthodox faith through a series of high quality innovative educational programs and cultural initiatives through an endowment to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Faith works to support the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in creating the ministries and educational 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. Founded by a group of prominent Greek American leaders representing a diversity of professional fields and philanthropic values, the primary focus of *Faith* is to fund and

encourage the development of new educational and cultural initiatives and opportunities through the Archdiocese for our community and future generations.

More than ever, with our community membership expanding, there is an urgent need to support the existing educational programs as well as to promote new programs and opportunities that will incorporate new technologies, resources and that partner with secular, educational, and cultural institutions. A commitment to excellence and realistic long term sustainability is at the core of the development of new programs to support the advancement of Hellenism and Orthodoxy in the United States for young, adult and elderly audiences.



The Founding Members wish you

A Blessed Christmas and a new year filled with peace and joy!

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To receive notification about Southeast Europe Project news and events, send your name and e-mail address to sep@wilsoncenter.org

Season's Greetings



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A Merry Christmas
and a Happy and Healthy New Year**

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*On behalf of the coordinating
council of SAE/USA,
and myself personally,*

*I wish fellow Hellenes
and Philhellenes everywhere
a very happy, healthy and prosperous
New Year 2009!*

Theodore G. Spyropoulos



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Luxembourg, 12.11.2008

*2009 wishes
from
The Cyprus Federation of America
and its President
Peter Papanicolaou
for this Holiday Season!*

*May the New Year
bring a just and viable solution
of our country's problem,
with no more refugees,
no more occupying Turkish troops
but a reunified homeland
in progress and prosperity
for all her people.*

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Μέλη:
Γιάννης Νικολακάκης
Γιάννης Ασσαριώτης

Dear Cretans and friends,

I am sending the warm wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2009 from our mother land, Crete.

As President of the “World Council of Cretans”, I wish to add my personal wishes for a New Year full with love, health and prosperity for you and your families. It is true that as Cretan Hellenes, we have an exceptional sensitivity for the value of family and at this time of year when love and family bonds are most celebrated, we must express the need to embrace our entire family and be closer to our brothers in America.

Allow me to take this opportunity to invite each Cretan living anywhere in Greece, anywhere in America, anywhere in the world to indulge in the warmth of our link, our common origin. Furthermore, I would like to invite each of you to actively support the Cretan association nearest to you and be inspired by the ideas and goals of the “World Council of Cretans”. Together, with your support and participation we can make our sentimental bonds more relevant to our quest for preserving and promulgating our Hellenic Cretan heritage.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New year 2009
George Aerakis
President of the “World Council of Cretans”

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• Πανελλήνια Ομοσπονδία Κρητικών Σωματείων 1927 (www.poks.gr) • Παγκρητική Ένωση Αμερικής 1929 (www.pancretan.org)
• Παγκρητική Ομοσπονδία Ευρώπης 1974 (www.pankritiki.eu) • Κρητική Ομοσπονδία Αυστραλίας & Νέας Ζηλανδίας 1980 (www.cretan.com.au)



▲ Kent Swig addresses the crowd



▲ Anthony Kazazis Address the crowd (seated: Norm Jacobson (Helmsley Spear) and John Stratakis Esq.)



◀ Leigh Sioris (Sotheby's Int'l Real Estate), Connie Allen (Akada & Company)

◀ Kyprianos Bazenikas (NEO magazine), Kent Swig (Swig Equities), Demetrios Rhompotis (NEO magazine) and Anthony Kazazis (Hudson Land Co.)

Swig Speaks at HLC Breakfast Seminar

Owner/Developer Kent Swig spoke to a full-house at Hudson Land Company's Networking Seminar organized recently by Anthony Kazazis. The talk was given at his HelmsleySpear offices atop the Lincoln Building just days before the brokerage firm's move to their new headquarters at 770 Lexington Avenue, home to his SwigEquities, Falcon Pacific Construction and Hudson Land Companies, as well Brown Harris Stevens and Halstead Property where he is part owner. Swig spoke about the changing economy and his recent real estate adventures. This talk was the final breakfast event in the 2008 series. The series picks up again in February 2009 and will be hosted at Sheffield57, 322 West 57th Street, Manhattan.





John Bazdekis, HABA President James Hansel, Hercules Kontos, Ahtanasia Sfikas and Bill Sfyroeras

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



Antony Contomichalos, Peter Krekoukis, Peter Pappas and Peter Kakoyiannis

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



From left, Fotine Stamatelos, Mary Kostopoulos, Roula Kallos and Anna Zoitas

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



John Giapoutzis, Manny Argerakis, Peggy Delphinopoulos, Nicholas Agrotis, Manny Caravanos, Lucretia Edreos

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



Vicky Rekoutis and John Demetrakis

PHOTO: ETA PRESS

HABA's Christmas Cheer ...cheerful despite the uncertainty

Despite the economic crisis and financial uncertainty, an impressive turnout that filled Manhattan's Ethos Restaurant to capacity, marked the Hellenic American Bankers Association Christmas Cheer 2008, held this past December. Members and friends crowded the place and stayed well over the official event's time framework, conveying a much needed air of optimism and will to go through this time of hardship.

The Hellenic American Bankers Association, Inc. (H.A.B.A.) is one of the premier Greek-American organizations in the New York metropolitan area. HABA is a not-for-profit organization established in 1982 to promote the professional and educational interest of Greek-Americans in the banking and finance industries. Its current active membership consists of over 200 professionals representing more than 50 institutions across the financial spectrum.

Since its inception, HABA has strived to serve the professional and educational interests of Greek-American financial professionals through the sponsoring of lectures, seminars, cocktail receptions with guest speakers and other events. Over the past years, HABA has had many distinguished speakers and lecturers.

Monday, January 12th, 2009, from 6:00pm to 8:30pm, at The Atrium Cafe, Olympic Tower (645 Fifth Ave., Manhattan - enter from 51st or 52nd Street., between 5th & Madison) HABA will honor another tradition, the Vasilopitta cutting. Friends of HABA are always welcome to attend. The non-member admission is \$45, which includes an open bar, hors d'oeuvres, and Vasilopita. Membership renewals may be paid at the event, or may be paid online with free member registration.

More info on HABA and its events can be obtained online www.haba.org

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Host Nicholas Bornozis, President of Capital Link

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



Keynote Speaker
Spyros I. Capralos,
Chairman of the
Athens Exchange

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



From left, Panos Stogioglou and George Katsaounis from Marathon Bank and James Hansel from Eight Winds Capital Management.

PHOTO: ETA PRESS



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

TEN YEARS OF CAPITAL LINK FORUM IN NEW YORK

For the 10th consecutive year, Capital Link organized recently at the Metropolitan Club in New York, the Capital Link New York Forum with the main topic: "Greece: The New Reform Agenda: Investment & Business opportunities in Greece Today". Despite the current unfavorable international economic environment and the fact that the world economy is entering a major downturn, the New York Forum experienced a great success and was attended by more than 400 top executives with special interest in the Economic Policy of Greece and the broader area. A series of one-to-one meetings with investors took place and in particular presentations of international companies with important investments and success stories in Greece were conducted.

The forum was organized under the auspices of Greek Ministry of Economy & Finance and the collaboration of the New York Stock Exchange, the Athens Stock Exchange, the Association of Greek Institutional Investors, the Secretariat General of Information, the European Institute and the following large international investment houses: Sal Oppenheim, NBG International, JPMorgan, Citigroup, Credit Suisse, Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley as well as other important Institutions and Mass & International Financial Media. Additionally, the

contribution of the Greek-American business community was of high value, given that major organizations supported the Forum: the American Hellenic Institute, the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce of New York and the Hellenic American Bankers Association. The Annual Capital Link Forum is the only one in its kind that takes place outside of Greece.

This year's topic focused on the important reforms taking place today in the economy and the new initiatives in view of the international financial crisis as well as on the business and investment opportunities in Greece and Southeastern Europe in general.

The President of Capital Link, Mr. Nicolas Bornozis noted that "despite the turmoil and the uncertainty in global markets, within the framework of the current globalized economy, investors are constantly seeking proper investment opportunities across the globe... Greece constitutes the safest and most effective gateway towards the rapidly evolving region of Southeast Europe, significantly contributing to the development of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East."

Spyros Capralos, Chairman of the Athens Stock Exchange, was as the keynote speaker

during the Lunch. The Greek Delegation this year consisted of Panagiotis Drossos, Secretary General of Investments, & Development, Ministry of Economy & Finance, Konstantinos Kollias, Special Secretary for Privatizations, Ministry of Economy & Finance, Leonidas Korres, Special Secretary for Public Private Partnership, Ministry of Economy & Finance, Prof. Haris Lambropoulos, Chairman, DEPANOM - Public Health Infrastructure Development Co., Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, and Alexandra Palli, Secretary General, Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry & BoD Member of the Hellenic Foreign Trade Board (HEPO).

The following top management executives of the NYSE listed companies made presentations at the event:

- The Chief Operating Officer of Hellenic Telecommunications Organization, Mr. Iordanis Aivazis,
- The CEO of Danaos Corporation (NYSE: DAC), Dr. John Coustas,
- The President of Navios Maritime Holdings (NYSE: NOM), Mr. Ted Petrone,
- The Senior Manager - Corporate Development of Tsakos Energy Navigation (NYSE: TNP), Mr. Harry Kosmatos.

The Ambassador of Greece to the United States, Mr. Alexander Mallias, opened the Forum proceedings which consisted of a series of panels on various topics and fields.

Manatos & Manatos

Andrew E. Manatos
President

May we celebrate Christmas and the New Year by re-dedicating ourselves to the promotion and protection of Hellenic and Orthodox issues in 2009. And a special thank you to Neo Magazine for all it does in this regard.

**Andy and Mike Manatos
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(L-r) Franciscos Economides, Vasilios Kotsatos, Nick Larigakis, Alex Aliferis



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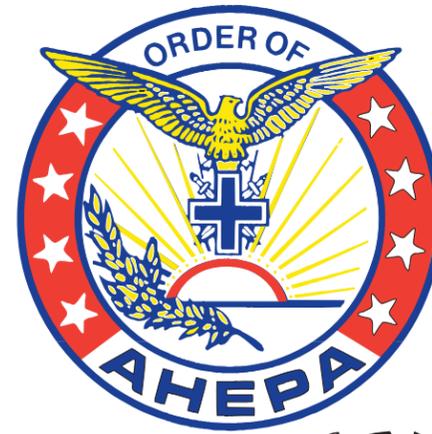


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The Hellenic Classical Charter School provides students in grades kindergarten through eight with a rigorous classical education that is rich in challenging content. The school instructs all students using the Core Knowledge curriculum and supplements all instruction with the classical study of the Greek and Latin languages, as well as history, art, and other cultural studies. The school utilizes didactic instruction, coaching and Socratic questioning (Paideia). All students will leave the school prepared intellectually, socially, and emotionally to gain entry to and succeed in the best high schools in New York City.



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From left, FMGS Board Members George Keros, John Kaounas, Professor Vasillis Lambropoulos, George Reganis, Professor Artemis Leontis, Sam Roumanis and Gus Kaounas.



The Foundation for Modern Greek Studies celebrates 10th Anniversary

Photo by Mario Mihos

With a festive dinner, held recently at the Mediterraneo Restaurant in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the Foundation for Modern Greek Studies celebrated 10 years of productive collaboration with the Modern Greek Program at the University of Michigan. The event was attended by a capacity gathering (100 people) including 13 students of the Program and their parents. Informative presentations were given by Professor Artemis Leontis, on behalf of the Program, and George Reganis, on behalf of the Foundation. It was an extraordinary evening with exceptional Greek food, wine and music, the latter provided by pianist Pantelis Polychronides and soprano Mariangela Chatzistamatiou, two young musicians from Greece who presented an evening-long program of classic songs.

The Foundation was incorporated in 1997

with the mission of promoting the study of modern Greek language and culture by supporting educational institutions, as well as related efforts. It was and remains a grassroots effort of many dedicated Greeks and Philhellenes in the greater metropolitan Detroit area, as well as supporters throughout the country. The Foundation has played a central role in the development of Modern Greek at the University of Michigan by making possible the C.P. Cavafy Chair, a wide range of cultural events each year, scholarships and general student support.

The Modern Greek Program at Michigan has achieved remarkable success in attracting students. Most notable has been its range of diverse courses that appeal to ever increasing numbers of undergraduates of all ethnic backgrounds. Starting with a couple of dozen of students in the 1990s,



The pianist Pantelis Polychronides and Mariangela Charistimatiou. The young girl next to her is Aphrodite Roumanis (student).

Photo by Mario Mihos

enrollments specifically in Modern Greek courses reached 400 this year. In addition, Professors Vassilis Lambropoulos and Artemis Leontis stress that each semester approximately one in ten undergraduates at Michigan take a Greek course. This popularity of Greek learning is particularly important since, according to recent rankings in the London Times, Michigan is the top public University in America.

The synergy between the Foundation and Michigan has been exceptional. First, the University matched the Foundation's funds, creating the endowed C. P. Cavafy Chair in Modern Greek, the cornerstone of the Program. Next, the University responded to growing enrollments by creating two additional, full-time teaching positions. Overall, Michigan is extremely pleased with its collaboration with the Foundation and the commitment of Greeks and Philhellenes to contemporary Hellenism. Congratulating the Foundation for its first 10 years, Terrence McDonald, the Dean of the College of Literature, Science & the Arts, wrote: "We are proud to work in partnership with you to provide outstanding resources for the study of Modern Greek language, culture and history at the University of Michigan in the 21st century."



PHOTO: MARIA TOLIOS

Hellenic Lawyers Celebrate 20th Year with Grand Fete

HLA Officers and Board Members with 2008 Honorees. Front Row (left-right) Ekaterina Pipas, Elena Paraskevas Thadani, Maria Hartofilis, Mamie Stathatos-Fulgieri, Kate Christoforatos, Chrisanthi Zapanti. Back Row (left-right) Peter Metis, Michael J. Hartofilis, Peter Lagonikos, John Saketos, George A. Tsougarakis, Hon. Nicholas Tsoucalas, Hon. Michael A. Chagares, Maria C. Miles, Tony Andriotti, Evridiki Poupouridis, Christopher G. Kulakis

The Hellenic Lawyers Association (HLA) celebrated their 20th anniversary Annual Gala Dinner with a record number of invited guests from the tri-state area. The event was held recently at The Pierre in New York City. Over 300 guests gathered to celebrate the momentous occasion, to honor their Hellenic roots and pay homage to distinctive individuals in the legal profession. Special guests included NY State Assemblyman Michael Gianaris and the Honorable Nicholas Tsoucalas, Senior Judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade, who is also one of the founding members of HLA. Among the guests were members of the judiciary including federal, appellate division, state court, and prominent attorneys from the New York metropolitan area.

The HLA outgoing president, attorney John Saketos, proudly reflected on HLA's achievements, on his two-year tenure as president, and presented five scholarships to deserving law students, the most ever given by HLA. "We have taken the Association to the next level

and have received recognition from the highest reaches of the legal community. This year, we are proud to have offered five scholarships. Under the guidance of our incoming president, Mamie Stathatos-Fulgieri, we are certain to exceed all our expectations," said John Saketos.

The 2008 HLA honorees included the Honorable Justice Michael A. Chagares of the Court of Appeals, Third Circuit, and George A. Tsougarakis, Esq. of Hughes Hubbard and Reed, as Attorney of the Year.

The swearing-in installation of Mamie Stathatos-Fulgieri as the new president of the HLA was conducted by Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas. The new president recalled standing before HLA and its members 15 years earlier and accepting the only scholarship offered to a law student that year. Stathatos-Fulgieri described how far the HLA had come from their early humble and modest beginnings in Queens County, NY, with only a few lawyers to now boasting over 450 members from many county lines.

"My hope is that the Hellenic Lawyers Association will continue to expand in numbers and high esteem in the Greek American legal community, so that the next generation of our lawyers will have an exceptional foundation to forge ahead and take this organization to even greater heights," said Stathatos-Fulgieri, Senior Attorney of Shaub, Ahmuty, Citrin & Spratt, LLP.

The Hellenic Lawyers Association is a premier organization of legal professionals of Greek descent. The organization promotes professional excellence, cultural awareness, community service and civic involvement.

In addition to hosting lectures, continued legal education seminars and networking opportunities, the Hellenic Lawyers Association provides scholarships to deserving law students. More information is available at: www.helleniclawyersassociation.org.

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HACC Young Professionals Annual Christmas Party

By Maria Athanasopoulos

This year's shattered economy canceled most, if not all, holiday parties both in corporate America and for several community based organizations. Many employees received emails simply stating that their companies can't justify the expense since their budgets, not to mention personnel, have been drastically cut. Fortunately, the Hellenic-American Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals didn't share this common problem and proceeded to have a very successful and well attended Christmas party. The two year old business networking organization dedicated to young professionals of Greek descent, never charges an admission fee and so was not responsible for financially funding their annual Christmas party which is why it went on with no avail.

The HACC Young Professionals group held their annual event on Thursday, December 18th at The World Bar located inside the exclusive Trump World Tower which overlooks the United Nations. According to the group's President, Anastasios Pardalis, over 200 young professionals attended the Christmas party making this their largest networking event thus far. However this is not their best accomplishment, the strength and noble reputation they gained nearly overnight is what makes them noteworthy. The chamber's young professionals consist of well educated scholars, media producers, lawyers, doctors, financial advisers, designers etc... All of which have come together to make this is a multifaceted organization that not only has popular networking events, but also has helped many young Greek-Americans with their careers.

For more information on becoming a member of the HACC Young Professionals and/or attending their upcoming monthly networking events, feel free to reach out to Anastasios Pardalis at mplawfirm@gmail.com.



James Hansel, Despina Axiotakis, Peter Kakoyannis, Cyprus Trade Commissioner Aristos Constantine and Vassos Vassiliou



Mr & Mrs Nicholas Belias, Greece Trade Attache and Mr. Dennis Droushiotis, President Equis Trading

RAISING A GLASS TO CYPRUS: AN EVENING CELEBRATING CYPRIOT WINE

By Katerina Georgiou

Lying in the eastern Mediterranean, at the crossroads of Europe, Africa and Asia, Cyprus is an island that has seen its fair share of red. I'm not referring to its turbulent past but, rather, its ability to inspire the heart. After all, it's the birthplace of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty. And in Roman times, Mark Anthony gifted it to Cleopatra - a token of his devotion. Now, its warm climate and fertile terrain are beckoning a new generation of suitors: wine lovers from around the world.

To introduce Cyprus' latest wines, The Cyprus Embassy Trade Center, in collaboration with the Cyprus-US Chamber of Commerce, held recently a tasting event at the Helen Mills Event Space in Manhattan. Attendees sampled a variety of wines from Cyprus (including kosher varieties), paired with traditional delicacies prepared by Chef David Ogren of Ammos Restaurant.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg attended, addressing the crowd of business leaders and wine aficionados. Until recently, it was believed that Cyprus'

long history of wine production dated back to at least 1,000 B.C. But archeological discoveries of uniquely Cypriot wine-drinking objects -- including centuries-old jugs and drinking horn pottery -- now suggest that Cyprus was the first producer of wine in the Mediterranean more than 6,000 years ago.

Many of its wines still adhere to the same ancient production methods and coupled with the island's approximately fifteen indigenous grape varieties, the results are distinctly Cypriot in character.

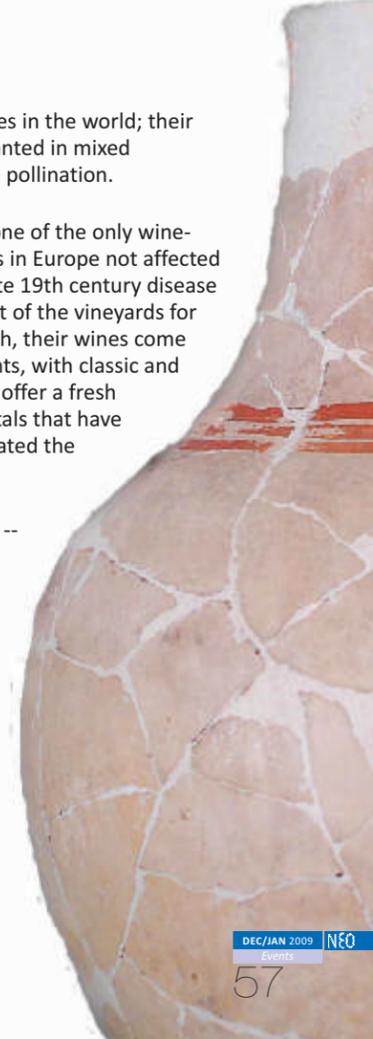
Its most famous, Commandaria, holds the distinction of being the world's oldest named wine still in production. An amber-colored dessert wine, it's made exclusively from a blend of red and white grapes endemic to Cyprus -- the Mavro and Xynisteri respectively. The other most common grape varieties in Cyprus include: Othhalmo and Maratheftiko or Vamvakada.

The Maratheftiko/ Vamvakada is a rare and densely concentrated variety found in the regions of Paphos and Pitsilia. Known for their intense color and full-bodied, fruity aromas of cherries and blackberries, Maratheftiko are also among the only non-

hermaphroditic vines in the world; their female buds are planted in mixed vineyards to ensure pollination.

Notably, Cyprus is one of the only wine-producing countries in Europe not affected by phylloxera -- a late 19th century disease that destroyed most of the vineyards for wine grapes. As such, their wines come from self-sown plants, with classic and distinct tastes, that offer a fresh alternative to varietals that have traditionally dominated the market.

This holiday season -- whether it's red or white -- the wide-ranging tastes and value of Cypriot wines are sure to give (wine) lovers another reason to celebrate.



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Our Fatherland Hellas under Siege

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Similarly, we express our wishes to all for a Merry Christmas and a New Year full of health, happiness and prosperity.

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We Hope to See Everyone Again in the coming year at all our Quarterly Meetings, at the Greek Independence Day Parade on 5th Ave in New York, and at the 55th Annual Chian Convention



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Happy New ...Gear!

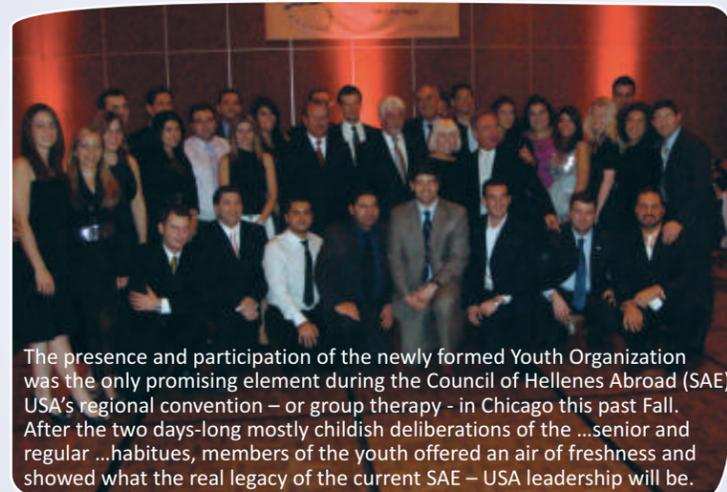
What you have in your hands is perhaps the most beautiful issue of NEO published so far! Not because of the cover only, but the whole package has the air of the finesse and robust sensitivity reminiscent of an aristocrat that even in times of crisis or economic downturns, or even during history's most capricious whims, knows how "to walk out but never run," as Sting has sung. Like Hellenism itself, this issue of NEO is oblivious to contretemps and looks to them with the contempt that only a very secure personality can display, seemingly ignoring reality in order to keep acquiring knowledge through the experience of picked or chance battlefields, at duels over beautiful women – or even a pair of hens – at fights over a soccer team's infallibility and at rallies for a party's political supremacy!

This brainstorm of images is not the result of heavy drinking or consuming illicit substances – other than Coke, that is. It's a very sober string of thoughts sprung up as I'm walking down one of the Athenian streets heavily hit during the disturbances of last December that brought the city center stage at an international level, the first time after the 2004 too-perfect-to-be-true Olympics. The ashes, burnt material and broken glass have mostly been cleaned. Some holes in store windows that sell very expensive suits excepting, the streets look normal and show no other signs of the battles fought there only days ago. And the mayor's new Christmas tree stands as lifeless as the rest of the seasonal décor in the middle of the vibrant square, very well guarded this time against the subcommandante Marco's-styled head-covered "city guerillas" that have pledged to burn it again! In the meantime, the nearby Monument of the Unknown Soldier was once more vandalized despite the 24/7 presence of guards, the nation's pride, those skirted soldiers who would never take their pants down - they simply don't wear them now!

Jazz music flows in the air, merriment and smiles are everywhere, window shopping continues as before and commentaries upon commentaries are offering explanations on what happened with the same ease everybody is offering you kourambiedes this Holiday Season – my first in Greece after 21 years – God I'm old! Modern Greek society strove for decades to follow on the footsteps of the northern European countries and in the

process had to kill herself in order to re-emerge as something else: Same way one is initiated in secret societies. Now it's this something else that looks and sounds strange and it seems these outbursts are like the seizures of the fat professor in the Eddie Murphy movie, when he was competing with his artificial slim version in order to return to his older problematic yes, but more familiar self. In the case of Modern Greek society the fight will continue as long as the old self manages to remain alive even in an unconscious state. A little cigarette butt might start a wildfire to both provide comfort and to burn, as Rabbi Schneier says in this issue, talking on something else, though.

Back to the less magical reality now, as I said in the beginning, despite the economic downturn and the hardships, friends and supporters came through this time as well, making the first issue of 2009 an astounding success. Not only that, but new people and entities advertised or



The presence and participation of the newly formed Youth Organization was the only promising element during the Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE) USA's regional convention – or group therapy - in Chicago this past Fall. After the two days-long mostly childish deliberations of the ...senior and regular ...habitués, members of the youth offered an air of freshness and showed what the real legacy of the current SAE – USA leadership will be.

sent New Year's messages in another very important, crucial, I should say, vote of confidence. That is the spirit: we never give up, tough times are for tough people. We should see this whole thing as a good opportunity to exercise, build some muscle to display on a beautiful summer beach when the climate in general will be better. Let us move on with this new ...gear that will bring us to the other side of the hill.

Witnessing - from far away - the tragic events in Gaza, something that has clearly emerged from the ashes and smokes of destruction, is the sad reality that the State of Israel has turned to one of the most ...anti-Semitic countries in the world! Just to mention a few instances, it supported Hamas in its initial phase in order to counterbalance Yassir Arafat's Fatah, sowing the seeds of what it's trying to eradicate now; Chalakah "rabbis" teach young Israeli soldiers that it's OK to kill women and children in the name of their "holy war" (jihad in Arabic); an Israeli

politician a couple of weeks ago suggested that the Palestinian problem can only be resolved with "a mini Holocaust;" in the internal election of the main opposition Likud Party a declared admirer of Hitler finished number three and recently a neo-Nazi group made up by people of Jewish descent was disbanded. Jewish scholars of international standing likened Israel's actions in Gaza to those of the Nazi's. Fascism, Nazism and the rest of evil things do not pertain to just one nation or group of people. They are mentalities that, unfortunately, find their way even to people who have suffered the most from them!

On a completely different note and key now, the Queens Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Constantine Kitsopoulos will present the second feature in the Masterworks Concert Series Bernstein & Friends, entitled New Sounds, on Saturday, February 21, 2009, 7:30 pm., at QPAC (Queensborough Performing Arts Center) in Bayside. To remember Leonard Bernstein on what would have been his 90th birthday this season, QSO will present works by composers that influenced him greatly;

Prelude & Fugue for Strings, Op. 29 by Benjamin Britten and Suite from "Pulcinella" by Igor Stravinsky. The second half of the evening, QSO will perform a world premiere work by my good friend Spiros Exaras featuring the Spiros Exaras World-Jazz Ensemble combined with the symphonic orchestra. Greek guitarist and composer Exaras has brought together Greek instruments, rhythms, and tunings with his jazz fusion ensemble and the entire symphonic orchestra to create a completely new sound. This is a groundbreaking event not to be missed. For further information about QSO and its programs, the website is www.queenssymphony.org Concert tickets can be purchased in advance by calling the QSO office at 718-326-4455, ext. 20.

DEMETRIOS RHOMPOTIS
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Jazz guitarist and
composer Spiros Exaras

Alaska has been in the news lately and this story from our archives describes the state's multivariate Orthodoxy...

by Dimitri C. Michalakos

Greek church in Anchorage has Orthodox of all stripes

When Helen Hercha moved to Alaska almost fifty years ago she was looking for a Russian Orthodox church where she could worship when she heard about a Russian priest holding services in his home. His brother-in-law was George Pogas and through him she was invited to attend services at the Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church on Arctic Boulevard and Tudor in Anchorage.

before his appointment to Alaska. "There are Ukrainians, Russians, Rumanians, Arabs. For instance, we'll say the Lord's Prayer in seven different languages. That's a tradition they've kept here."

And though the Russian Orthodox church has now proliferated in Alaska, the ties established by the original families to Holy Transfiguration remain strong.

"I have spent so much time at the Greek church and I had a little granddaughter that was born and was buried in the Greek church," says Helen Hercha.

She's used to it because back in Coaldale, Pennsylvania where she grew up, the Greeks who lived in town had no church of their own and attended services at the Russian church.

"We would put in the Kyrie Eleison for the Greek people that were attending,"

recalls the mother of five kids, who mostly grew up in the Greek church.

The Transfiguration community runs a Greek school, Sunday school, and chapters of JOY, GOYA and YAL. But keeping in character, on the second floor it also houses a private school, the Atheneum School, run by parishioner Lydia Ossorgin and using the "Socratic approach."

"This is one way of doing outreach to the community," says Fr. Roll. "We're putting our emphasis on education, because it tends to get neglected. This private school is a very excellent school and by

allowing them to come in and rent space from us, we're kind of helping each other out, yet providing a nice service to the local community."

The talk of the local community, in fact, is the August Greek festival of the church, which is one of the liveliest events in town and features the celebrated Vorio Sellas dancers who, as director Diane Primis says, "have developed from young children struggling to learn the unfamiliar steps to the mature and elegant young adult dancers that I (have) witnessed."

In fact, the church is not only a place of worship, but in a state with a population as diverse and transient as Alaska has, the church also serves as a family and home away from home.

"I would say the majority of the people up here don't have families, I mean extended families, grandparents, uncles, cousins, because most of us came from other areas of the country," says Cathy Copadis, who came from New England twenty years ago. "In some respects, I'd have to say that probably makes us a closer-knit group."

John Tsakres, now in his late-80s, was working in Piraeus when he met his wife Goldie in the 1950s. She had lived in Alaska since 1936 and after they got married, they moved there and ran what he says was "the best restaurant in town"--the Anchorage Grill. The cold was bitter, he remembers, but the summers were refreshing: "It's green all over, and we don't have heat."

Helen Hercha first read about Alaska in her fourth grade geography book and was entranced: "It showed a group of Eskimos standing in the snow around a whale they had caught and were preparing to share and that fascinated me."

"The winters are long," Cathy Copadis admits. "But you adjust your life....It's a small community, so we're all friends."



"Which we did," remembers the 85-year-old grandmother who has been a parishioner ever since. "And then the Serbian people came, more Greek people came, more Russian people came out of the woodwork, and it was growing."

Today the church operates out of a converted mansion on O'Malley Road (that is also the future site of a new church in the works) and the congregation is four times its original size, but its multivariate heritage remains.

"It's a very diverse community," admits pastor Fr. John Roll, 37, who was youth director for the San Francisco diocese



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