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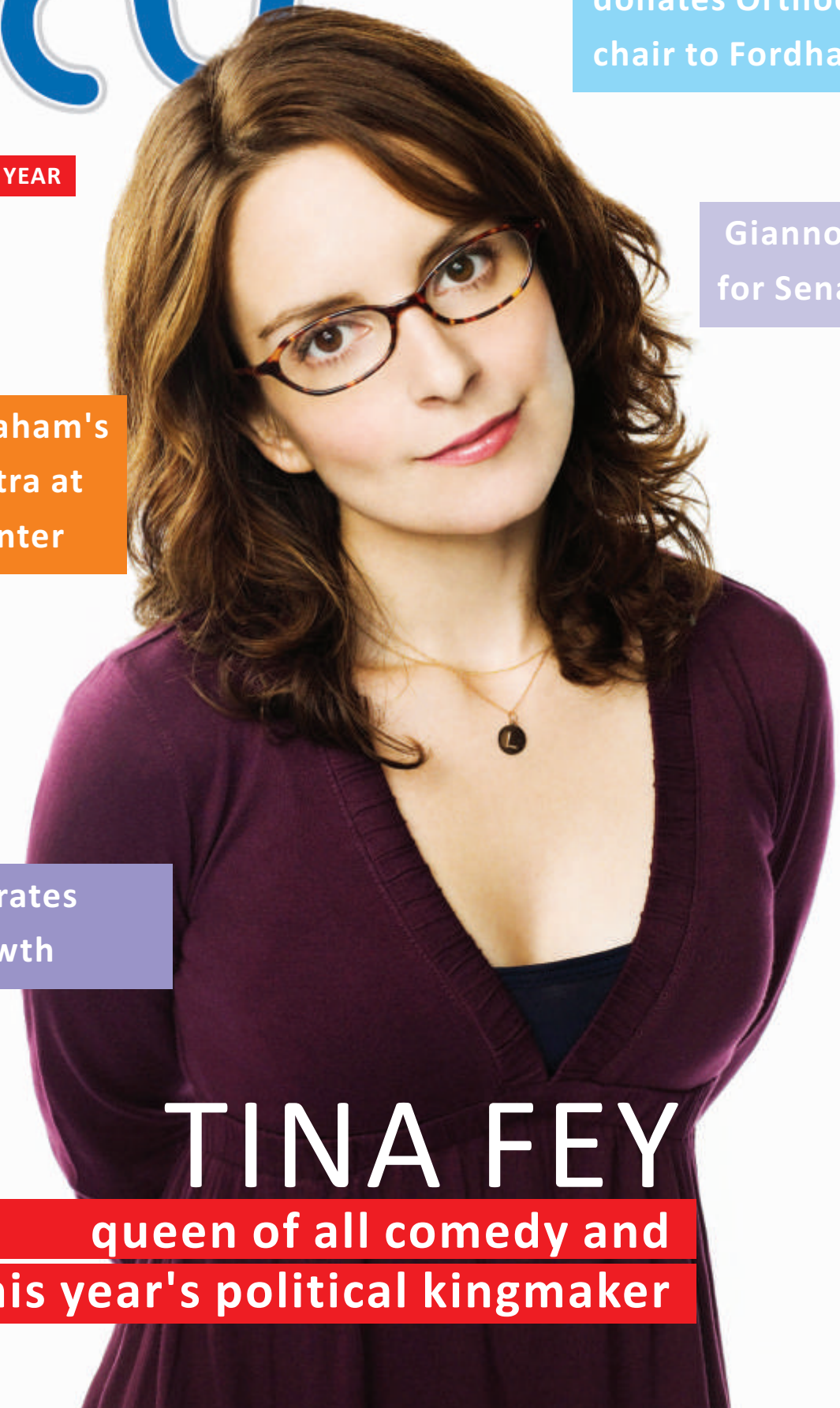
NΞO 2009

PERSON OF THE YEAR

Giannoulas for Senator?

Martha Graham's Clytemnestra at Skirball Center

L100 celebrates record growth



TINA FEY

queen of all comedy and this year's political kingmaker

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TINA FEY

queen of all comedy and this year's political kingmaker

N&O 2009

PERSON OF THE YEAR



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PERIXSCOPE



COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE: IN FOCUS



bread & honey



Clytemnestra to open Martha Graham Dance Company's New York Season



Is our education in danger?



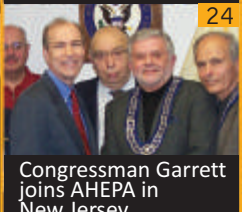
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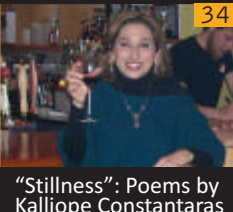
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Congressman Garrett joins AHEPA in New Jersey



Remembering "the most important Greek of Broadway" George Best Costacos



"Stillness": Poems by Kalliope Constantaras



L100 Conference Celebrates Record Growth



Giannoulis launches exploratory committee for U.S. Senate bid



Sophia Kalantzakos honors Senator Raptakis and Spyros Polemis



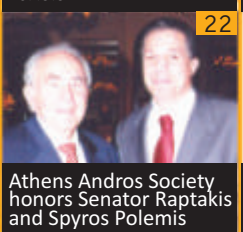
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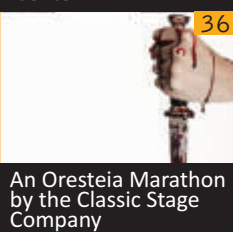
The new generation of Leaders



HABA's Special Panel on the US Economy



Athens Andros Society honors Senator Raptakis and Spyros Polemis



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Tina being Tina

What's striking about Tina Fey, our 2009 Person of the Year, is not only that she's a brilliant wit and fabulous writer and performer, but that with all her success and time in the spotlight, at heart she's still a Greek girl from Philly who keeps in touch with her roots (replies to e-mails from the high school math teacher who put her to sleep) and talks with fondness about the fetes her mother hosted which featured lots of Entenmann's products, and she might want to settle down in Florida one day and open up a craft shop.



FROM THE EDITOR

Her husband says it best when he told Vanity Fair:

"...she has her principles and she sticks to her principles more than anybody I've ever met in my life." Tina is not swayed by celebrity or the spotlight, which is glaring on her right now after her rollicking year impersonating Sarah Palin and winning seven Emmys for her sitcom 30 Rock. She would rather don old clothes and hunker over her laptop to write or spend time in the playground with her daughter and husband and then have a day out scarfing fries and burgers.

She is not a diva, though she is a star, she remains Elizabeth Stamatina Fey from Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, who graduated to the big leagues, but is still Stamatina Fey at heart and doesn't forget it. And who also happens to have the wit to skewer the muckety-mucks and remind them how they got there and how it doesn't buy them immunity from the hard-headed girls with the big glasses and even bigger sweaters who populated high school on the fringes and were sometimes forgotten but took everything in and are a built-in BS meter for the world.

Tina Fey didn't skewer Sarah Palin just because she looks uncannily like Sarah Palin—she skewered her because she is Tina Fey from Upper Darby and doesn't forget it though she lives in New York City and is now a star. And Sarah Palin had the misfortune to forget she will always be Sarah Palin from Wasilla, Alaska and not just the diva of a moribund Republican Party.

Tina Fey had the wisdom to set her straight and also put us all on guard against our own foolishness and petty vanities.

Dimitri C. Michalakis
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Clytemnestra

to open Martha Graham
Dance Company's
New York Season

Fang-Yi Sheu will dance the lead.



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

From left, Lena Karkasilari, Liana Skourles, the host Philip Tsiaras, Neila Redtke, Yalin Murdoch and Olga Alayozidou.



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

From left, Vassilis Grigoropoulos, Reggina Katopodis, Joannie Danielides and Janis Tripodakis.



Paul Szilard

This Martha Graham Dance Company's New York season celebrates the 50th anniversary of its founder's greatest masterpiece, Clytemnestra, with a five night engagement at the Skirball Center for the Performing Arts at NYU. It is a classic tale of love, betrayal and murder at the time of the Trojan War, re-imagined by America's greatest choreographer through the eyes of Agamemnon's queen, the all-powerful Clytemnestra.

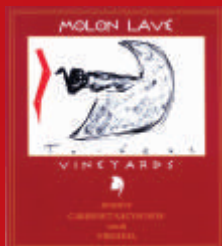
According to Vassilis Grigoropoulos, Executive Director of ATTRACT Productions (Greece) that has joined Paul Szilard Productions in producing the play, "it will be the third step of a world tour that premiered in Athens last October, came to Washington in December and now to New York." The Company will be performing two programs in addition to a special gala repertory on May 14th, honoring world-renowned impresario Paul Szilard. Paula Zahn will serve as honorary chair and Donna Hanover is the gala evening's emcee.

Molon Lave Vineyards, a Virginia based winery, will be donating all of the wine to be served at the Martha Graham Gala. Philip Tsiaras, an international artist of Greek origin, created the special label and he recently hosted a wine reception to unveil his design in his downtown Manhattan home which was attended by people in the art, food and dance world.

When Clytemnestra premiered in 1958 it became an instant hit, so it's no surprise that its 2008 revival has followed in its footsteps. It was the first contemporary choreodrama in two acts, plus a prologue and an epilogue and it has been recognized as a true 21st century masterpiece. The Martha Graham Dance Company is America's oldest (established in 1926) and most celebrated and its founder is regarded as one of the most important pioneers of modern dance. As LaRue Allen, the Company's Executive Director, said in an interview with NEO magazine, "the Greek component in the new production comes naturally, since Martha Graham was inspired for her work from the Hellenic antiquity."

Performances of Clytemnestra will be on May 12th, 15th and 16th and performances of "Lamentation Variations," "Sketches from Chronicle," "Errand into the Maze" and "Maple Leaf Rag" will be on May 13th and 16th. Tickets range from \$35 to \$65 and are available at 212.352.3101 or www.skirballcenter.nyu.edu. For gala evening reservations on May 14th, phone number is 212-319-7566.

Demetrios Rhompotis contributed to this story.



The "Molon Lave" label designed by Philip Tsiaras.



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Jaharis Foundation establishes Orthodox Studies chair at Fordham University in honor of Archbishop Demetrios

The President of Fordham University, Fr. Joseph M. McShane, S.J. announced a Jaharis Family Foundation gift establishing the Archbishop Demetrios Chair in Orthodox Theology and Culture as part of the Orthodox Christian Studies Program of this renowned Roman-Catholic Jesuit University. The Foundation donated \$2 million and the announcement came at the conclusion of the Sixth Annual Orthodoxy in America Lecture given this year by Fr. Stanley Harakas, ThD, who is the Archbishop Iakovos Professor of Orthodox Theology Emeritus at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

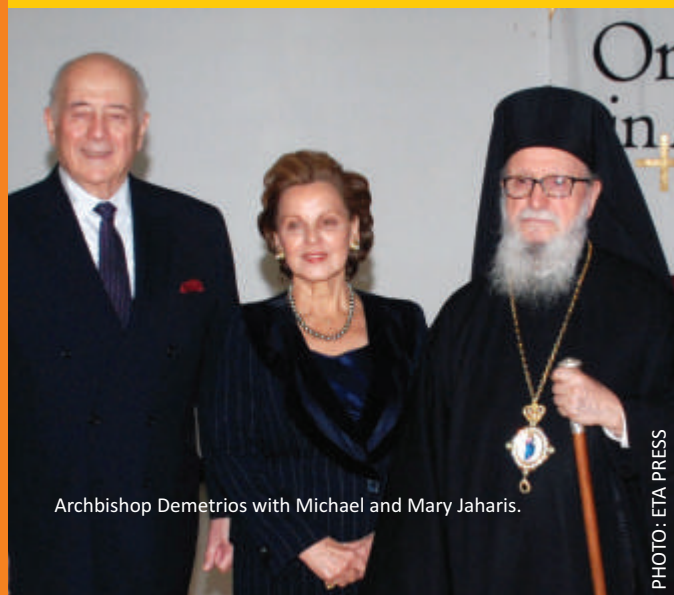


PHOTO: ETA PRESS

From left, Professor George Demakopoulos, Metropolitan Evangelos, Michael and Mary Jaharis, Fordham University President, Fr. Joseph M. McShane, S.J., Archbishop Demetrios of America, Fr. Stanley Harakas, Metropolitans Methodios and Nicholas, Bishop Savas and Professor Aristotle Papanikolaou.

Fr. McShane welcomed Michael and Mary Jaharis and expressed his great joy and gratitude. He further said that naming the chair after Archbishop Demetrios is a most deserving honor and that the University was "thrilled that his name (the Archbishop's) and the name of the Jaharis family will forever be associated with Fordham."

"The fact that the (Roman) Catholics and the Orthodox (Catholics) have been meeting over the years and becoming probably close in terms of theology is significant," said Michael Jaharis in an interview with NEO magazine. "Also, for a (Roman) Catholic university such as Fordham, with a tradition in Orthodox studies, to have this chair will enhance its ability to play an even greater role in bringing the two churches closer." He also considered it most fitting to name the chair after Archbishop Demetrios. "He embodies so many of the principles Orthodoxy is all about and of what this chair can be about."



Archbishop Demetrios with Michael and Mary Jaharis.

PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Michael Jaharis, founder and former chairman emeritus of Kos Pharmaceuticals Inc., which was sold to Abbott Laboratories Inc., is noted for his generosity to science, medicine and the preservation of antiquities. A \$15 million gift to Tufts University School of Medicine last year was the largest in the institution's history.

The Orthodoxy in America lecture series at Fordham University is the largest of its kind and the only one housed within a university setting. In addition, the annual series is the only one to explore the Orthodox tradition as it intersects with the American religious experience. And since it is housed within a Roman Catholic institution, the series provides an unparalleled opportunity for an advanced ecumenical conversation about the common issues facing the Orthodox Catholic and Roman Catholic traditions.

Fr. Harakas' topic "The Future of Orthodox Christianity in America: A Normative Approach" captivated his diverse audience of academics, clergymen, students and laymen. He outlined the threats and pitfalls but also the opportunities of the social and cultural reality in America and suggested what we need to do and ought to do, as Orthodox.

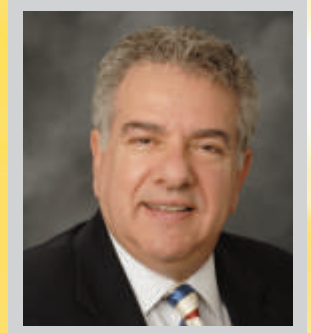
The program was hosted and presented by Professors George Demakopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, both graduates of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, associate professors of Theology at Fordham and co-founding directors of the Orthodox Christian Studies Program.

In attendance were also the Chairman of the University's Board of Trustees John N. Tognino and the Secretary John P. Kehoe, Fr. Patrick J. Ryan, vice-president for University Mission and Ministry and many other Fordham professors and students.

From the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America attending were Metropolitans Methodios of Boston, Nicholas of Detroit and Evangelos of New Jersey as well as Bishop Savas of Troas, the President of the National Philoptochos Society Aphrodite Skeadas, the National Commander of the Order of St. Andrew Dr. Anthony Limberakis and many Orthodox clergymen, Archons, professors and other faithful.

Demetrios Rhompotis contributed to this article

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PHOTOS: DIMITRIOS PANAGOS

Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Award for Excellence Founder-Recipients at Grand Banquet, left to right, Founder Peter M. Dion with wife, Diana; Eugenia Hasiotis who accepted on behalf of her father, Founder George K. Chimples; Dr. William A. Athens and wife, Angie, who accepted on behalf of Founders Andrew A. Athens and the late Thomas A. Athens; Founder Michael Jaharis with wife, Mary; Rev. Nicholas Triantafyllou, President of Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology, who accepted for the late Founder George P. Kokalis; George D. Behrakis, Chairman of Conference, Archbishop Demetrios, Founder Arthur C. Anton with wife, Madeline; and Thelma and Stephen G. Yeonas, L100 Chairman.



Dr. George Carayannopoulos, Justin Bozonelis, Constantine Maroulis and Fotios Piniros.

"We have had a very successful year despite the economic downturn and the future looks bright. We have reached 813 members in all with 64 new members in 2008 alone and managed to raise in excess of \$1million in special grant funds to allow our Endowment Fund to recover over 2009," Stephen G. Yeonas, Chairman of Leadership 100, told an estimated 340 members and their guests at the organization's 25th Anniversary Celebration Conference in Puerto Rico, marking record growth in membership and continued success in raising new funds for grants despite the

L100 Conference Celebrates Record Growth

economic downturn. "There is no question in my mind that our ultimate goal of 1,000 members and \$100 million in the Endowment Fund will be achieved before our 30th Anniversary. We are strivers and optimists by nature, faith and heritage and we will prevail!"

After two days of fora featuring the traditional Bible Study led by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, a business panel moderated by George D. Behrakis, (Chairperson of the Conference with his wife, Margo), which included Charles H. Cotros and John G. Pappajohn, and special talks by the prominent trial attorney Jacob Stein and Deborah Norville, host of Inside Edition, conferees gathered for the Grand Banquet Saturday night to honor Leadership 100 Founders, presenting them with the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Award for Excellence, named for the visionary Archbishop Iakovos who initiated the organization in 1984.

Metropolitan Athenagoras of Mexico, who is Exarch of Central America and the Caribbean Islands, and Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta also attended. The entertainment was highlighted by the preeminent country soul singer, Ronnie Milsap, winner of seven Grammy Awards. New members and fulfilled members in attendance received special recognition and Leadership 100 Partners, the young professionals and future leaders, now numbering 74, met at two special events.

Paulette Poulos, Executive Director (Interim), in addressing the General Assembly, said:

"It is with great humility and a heart full of gratitude that I stand before you this morning to express my heartfelt appreciation to each and every one of you who came to Puerto Rico to help celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Leadership 100. As we gather to honor our Founders, we are reminded of the monumental challenges each of them has faced in their lives and their amazing achievements and perseverance in support of our Church and Leadership 100, a shining example to all of us as we enter the next 25 years of our mission."



The Demetrios Kozonis Family.



Stefania Roumeliotes and Nicholas Javaras, Executive Vice President of the American College of Greece.



Cynthia Raftis and Katherine Georgas



Kostas Alexakis, Constantine Maroulis and Lynda Ann Costas.



L100 Staff—Stephanie Patsalis, Cathie Andriotis, Executive Director (Interim) Paulette Poulos, Dina Theodosakis and Fran Karivalis.

The new generation of Leaders

By Demetrios Rhompotis

From left, National Membership Co-Chairman John A. Payiavlas, Leadership 100 Chairman Stephen G. Yeonas and Leadership 100 Partners Chairman Michael Bapis.



Michael Bapis

Drake Behrakis

Drake and Maria Behrakis



Michael Bapis is the Chairman of Leadership 100 Partners Program, the national organization for young professionals that replaced the previous program under the name of Associate Membership. Inaugurated under his chairmanship, the program focuses on strategic planning, recruitment events and other means of reactivating or reaching out to young professionals.

Drake Behrakis and his wife Maria have been members of L100 for seven years. This past year Drake was asked to join the L100 Partners Program Membership Committee as co-chair for the Metropolis of Boston. His responsibilities include hosting local events for young Greek-American professionals to introduce them to the mission of L100 which is to promote Orthodoxy and Hellenism.

Your thoughts on the 25th Anniversary Conference.

This is my fifth convention. I think (the 25th Anniversary Convention) was important for members to rally and come down here, although it's difficult economic times, to celebrate something positive: the work that's been done in those 25 years and the promise to continue to do more in the future.

Has the economic downturn affected recruiting efforts seriously?

This year's recruiting effort commenced last fall, when the financial markets began to collapse. So, I think, considering what happened, we had a very decent year. This (2009) is going to be a challenging year as we have ahead of us six-seven tough months and certainly people are looking at their own pocketbooks and deciding which groups and organizations they want to support in the future. However, we need to keep doing our job, because this is really our turn, as the younger generation, to take this organization over to the next 25 years. Also, for the younger people the payment schedule is much easier.

You were born and raised here, you are successful in what you do, you are a mainstream American. There are other national, certainly not ethnic, entities that you can join, help, associate, be part of. Why L100?

Our ancestors, when they came here as immigrants, did a great job in preserving our culture, our heritage, and they were very strong, family-oriented, close to their Church. But now we are second, fourth, even fifth generation and I think it's important for us to look back at the legacy our parents and grandparents created. If you look at the history of our Church, it is the first time we have a real national organization to support all the work that's been done, outside of the Archdiocese.

Your father, George Behrakis, organized this convention. However, if you were to be in charge, what would you do differently?

Leadership went from a small group of people to people inviting their friends and family to join and there was a network that went on by word-of-mouth. I think now with over 800 members and with the assets accumulated you can go to all different metropolises' across the country and really start a sort of a marketing campaign to educate people about what Leadership is. Because a lot of people may have heard about the Leadership, but they are not sure what the organization is all about. So, I think, what started in the last few years and now has been accelerated this past year, is instead of saying I want to recruit this one person, go beyond it and say, I want these ten people to know about the Leadership and if I can get one or two to join today that's great if not, at least they know what's happening. I think we should bring the message to the local level.

Have you considered the possibility of establishing chapters in Greece and Cyprus?

We actually have members from Greece and Cyprus. A few years ago, (then) Minister of Tourism of Greece Dimitris Avramopoulos was here as a guest and he actually invited the Executive Committee of the Leadership to have a meeting in Greece and present the organization to the country's business and political community. It's important for the organization to show people in Greece what is really happening in the United States. To show that the Greeks of the United States are really taking their culture and heritage very seriously and they want to have as much feedback from the country of Greece as they can.

What about doing a convention there?

Absolutely! I think it's been talked about already. The organization has grown up to the point where you can give people the opportunity to try things. Certainly having a convention in Greece will probably be the pinnacle of the organization, because that's where everything started, our roots, our heritage, our language.

Your evaluation of this convention.

I think it was great, we had a record turnout. In a year like this, we exceeded our goals for membership! Our goal was to get 18 partners in the Youth Program and we ended up getting 21! We have a total of 74 in two years.

Not the best of times now, and yet you did very well.

It's been more difficult, don't get me wrong, it wasn't easy, but in the end people believe in the organization, they believe in their faith and heritage and they want to do something good for it and also for the community in general.

What was the part you liked the most at this conference?

First of all, it's my sixth convention and what I liked the most, hmmm, I think it was exciting to be at the 25th Anniversary and see the founders of this organization to be so overwhelmed by the fact that they have succeeded as much as they have. Archbishop Iakovos, when they came to him, he said if you can find 10 Greeks who could give 100,000 dollars that would be great, and we ended up with 813 members! It's also nice to see how many young people we had at this convention. There is a lot of enthusiasm.

If you were to organize this, what would you have done differently?

Tough question! I would have tried to attract even more young people (he laughs). I think we are moving to the right direction and as we get more young people we'll be able to do more. Right now, though, the most important thing is to get the young portion of the organization off the ground. We've already started to add functions for them, so probably in two years from now there will be even more things. Last night for example, we had a special reception where four people from the Executive Board, Michael Jaharis, Steve Yeonas, George Behrakis and Gus Karras, came and gave their thoughts and mingled with the people from the Partners Program. So the fact that they showed up and took the time to actually do this says a lot.

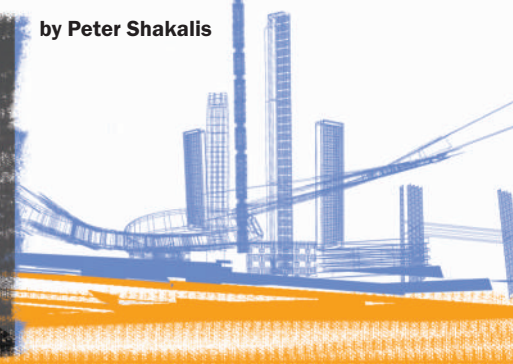
Any thoughts of holding a future convention in Greece or Cyprus?

Absolutely, ultimately that's where we want to do it! I don't have as much say to it as other people, but we talk about it.

Give me some good reasons why young, successful professionals like you should join the Leadership?

Our group is as progressive as any organization in the Greek community. You have to support your local churches, your local AHEPA etc, I do all that. But this is a national organization where everybody joins forces to do good things on a different level.

by Peter Shakalis



HABA's Special Panel on the US Economy



PHOTOS: ETA PRESS

▲ The three panelists, Demetri Papacostas, Charles Anastasiou and Constantine Soras.

From left, Constantine Soras-Verizon, Demetri Papacostas-Bloomberg, Georgia Tavliaris-Citigroup, Roula Kallos-HABA, John Giapoutzis-Merill Lynch, Peggy Delfinopoulos-Prudential, Charles Anastasiou-Wachovia, Costas Kellas-Objective, Emmanuel Argerakis-Tri-State Capital, Emmanuel Caravanos-Arab Bank, James Hansel-Eightwinds Capital, Nicholas Agrotis-HABA.

The Hellenic American Bankers Association (HABA), one of the premier Greek-American organizations in the New York metropolitan area, hosted recently the annual Panel Discussion on the US Economy, featuring Charles Anastasiou, from Wachovia Securities, Dr. Constantine Soras, from Verizon, and Demetri Papacostas from Bloomberg. The event took place at the First American Title New York City headquarters and drew a host of people from the greater banking sector who had the opportunity to also address questions to the speakers. HABA President James Hansel introduced the guests and reminded the participants of the organization's mission and accomplishments.

Dr. Constantine G. Soras has more than 25 years of experience in economic forecasting, industry and competitive analysis, financial analysis and planning, mergers & acquisitions, quantitative analysis and consulting. He has worked for various multi-billion dollar corporations, which include Merrill Lynch, Chemical Bank and Verizon Communications. Currently, he is a Senior Staff Consultant responsible for the review and analysis of investment proposals for mergers and acquisitions,

dispositions and development. Also provides economic analysis at the request of CEO and CFO. Named most accurate U.S. economic forecaster for 2005 by Business Week he was the third best U.S. economic forecaster for 2006. His real GDP growth for 2006 was right on the money.

Demetri Papacostas has extensive experience in developing and running profitable FX & Derivative businesses. His experience is focused on FX derivative products, in trading, structuring and selling to large and small corporations as well as to individual investors. He recently joined Bloomberg as an FX Derivative Product specialist.

Prior to Bloomberg, Mr. Papacostas was at JPMorgan where he ran the Commercial Bank FX sales team in New York. As a Managing Director and Head of Currency Derivative Sales, Mr. Papacostas created a profitable FX derivative sales business to compliment a top tier trading operation.

Mr. Anastasiou has 30 years of experience in the financial industry and has experienced several market cycles. Currently he is a "Premier Advisor" with

Wachovia Securities where he holds the title of Managing Director of Investments. He and his team manage a portfolio of several hundred million dollars, primarily in private client assets. Prior to the merger with Wachovia, he was at Prudential Securities where he served on the Chairman's and President's Council for many years. He has been a frequent speaker at Prudential and Wachovia regional meetings. Mr. Anastasiou has sat on various Boards of Directors and Boards of Trustees, including Muhlenberg Hospital, Cyprus Children's Fund and the Evangelismos Greek Orthodox Church.

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. For more information on HABA the website is www.haba.org.

Giannoulas launches exploratory committee for U.S. Senate bid

With less than a year before the 2010 primary election, Illinois State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulas announced earlier in the month that he will form an exploratory committee for election to the U.S. Senate. According to an official press release, he is filing the necessary paperwork with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) to form the committee, which will allow him to raise money for a possible Senate run in Illinois.

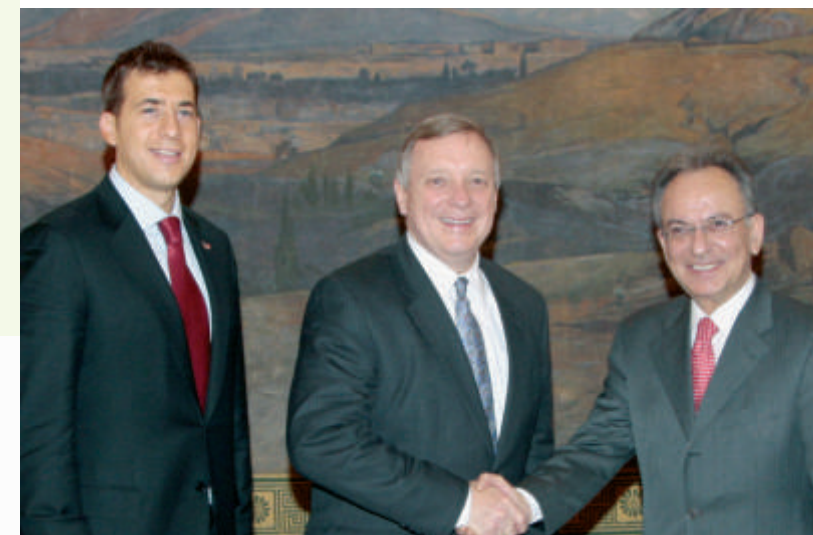
The Senate seat was held previously by Giannoulas' political mentor, Barack Obama, who stepped down after winning the U.S. Presidency last November.

"More than ever, we need a Senator who can deliver on the change that President Obama has promised our nation," said Giannoulas, noting that he has received a tremendous response from Illinois residents encouraging him to pursue the Senate seat.

Giannoulas, the state's chief investment officer, says restoring the public's trust and confidence in government, reviving the economy and getting Illinoisans back to work would serve as his top priorities.

"Working families in Illinois and throughout the nation are facing serious financial challenges during this economic downturn," Giannoulas said. "They are hungry for new leadership and solutions."

Giannoulas was elected Illinois State Treasurer in 2006 as an independent Democrat. He has been committed to wisely investing the state's money and to promoting a progressive, reform-based agenda that focuses on innovative initiatives and policies. Coming from the private sector, he sought to implement new safeguards to make government more accountable, curb ethical abuses and eliminate even the perception of any wrongdoing.



Alexi Giannoulas (left) with US Senator Dick Durbin (center) and the President of the Hellenic Parliament (Voule) Dimitris Sioufas during a recent visit to Greece.

"It's only because of your support and encouragement that I'm exploring a possible Senate run. As Illinois State Treasurer, I could not have accomplished so much or come so far in such a short time without your help. I appreciate everything you've done for me and will need you now more than ever," Giannoulas stated. "During the next several weeks, I will lay out my priorities and continue to reach out to people throughout the state and country who want to make a difference, who are tired of the politics of the past, and who are looking for answers to the enormous challenges we face together...It's going to take all of us to carry out the change President Obama has promised our nation. Let's work together to ensure that happens so we can create a better America for our children and grandchildren."

Office Market Gloom = Silver Lining for Tenants

Until recently, most New York City office tenants held little bargaining power. Landlords not only achieved their asking rents, but some even watched as their future tenants faced off for the right space—and drove the effective rents through the roof.

Times have changed dramatically since those days. Tenants wield considerable clout in the current office market, and landlords are in most cases anxious to work through terms with them. The question is: How can tenants effectively use this market to their advantage? The savviest tenants understand that the best deals only come to those who work with an experienced tenant representative.

So just how weak is the New York City office market, then? In Manhattan the overall availability rate for office space at the end of 2008 was 10.9%, the highest level in two years. Overall asking rent for Manhattan dropped by 4.0% from the previous quarter with leasing activity down 18.4% below the pace of a year ago.

When landlords lose their tenants in a market like this, they face substantial costs to replace them. Their costs often include a year or more of lost revenue due to vacancy, the cost to reconstruct a space for a new tenant coming into the building which can cost upwards of \$80.00 per square foot (\$8.00 per square foot over a 10 year lease), another 6 to 10 months of free rent to induce the tenant to sign a lease, as well as the landlord's marketing costs.

Against this backdrop, landlords have become increasingly aggressive in their tenant retention programs, putting tenants in an excellent position to maximize their negotiating leverage with their landlord particularly if the landlord is under the perception that the tenant is prepared to move to a less expensive or better quality building.

Companies paying rents higher than the present market—and which have leases coming due over the next one to three years—should consider proposing a rent reduction in their present lease, in return for a long term or extended commitment to stay in the landlords building. The difference between the tenant's present rent and the new reduced rent would be allocated over the new extended term, resulting in both an immediate rent reduction and a new long term lease.

Consider a tenant that is leasing 10,000 square feet of office space and pays \$90 per square foot. Let's assume that our hypothetical tenant has two more years remaining on their lease. The tenant hires an agent that would negotiate a new 10-year lease renewal at a reduced rental in the building. That lower rate would be \$75.00 per square foot.

The differential of \$15.00 per square foot for the two remaining years (or \$150,000) would be spread out over the term of the new ten-year lease, resulting in an additional \$1.50 per square foot per year for a total of \$76.50 over the new term.

Both landlords and tenants, however, should be mindful of the other's financial position. Tenants need to consider a landlord's staying power in these difficult economic times – especially for many of those properties that were purchased during the last several years at top dollar. Similarly, with business conditions deteriorating for many firms, landlords need to be vigilant about tracking the financial stability of their tenants.

The coming year will be one of great changes—both expected and unexpected. Change, however, always brings opportunities for those who are attentive and can react quickly and decisively.

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

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NEO 2009
**PERSON OF
THE YEAR:**

Comedy Queen
TINA FEY

Can anyone deny that **TINA FEY** was omnipresent this year with her hilarious take on Governor Sarah Palin that may have colored our perception a little when it came time to pull the lever in the voting booth? Aside from that, she proved herself once again one of our most brilliant writers

and performers and refreshingly, in her personal life, one of the most grounded. For being a kingmaker this year and perennial comedy queen, and for staying true to her Greek values, Tina Fey is our unanimous **NEO 2009 Person of the Year.**

Can laughter sway a whole election?

Did the outcome of the 2008 presidential race become inevitable when Tina Fey put on her Sarah Palin glasses, pin up her hair and start talking in Alaskese (or Palinese), and even crossed paths playing Sarah Palin with the real Sarah Palin in an alternative universe on Saturday Night Live?

"I just didn't want to do the impression at the same time with her," she confessed to Maureen Dowd in a cover story for *Vanity Fair* about the encounter. "...It's just always...the only word I can think of is 'sweaty.' It just always feels sweaty."

But her series of impressions of the Alaska governor not only got big ratings for *S.N.L.* and recognition of Fey's critically-acclaimed sitcom *30 Rock*, it may also have doomed Palin in the eyes of the electorate as a backwoods figure who claimed to shoot wolf for recreation and moose for game and who touted her foreign policy credentials with a wink and a nod to Russia as Alaska's backdoor neighbor.

The lampooning of Palin, the Republican vice presidential candidate and aspiring hope of the party, may have been something of a personal conflict for Fey (her parents are diehard Republicans and as a kid her mother's marching orders were, 'You just go in and pull the big Republican lever').

But as one of those mousy kids in high school with "a dash of high-school bitchy" that made her blossom into *S.N.L.*'s first woman head writer and won her seven Emmys for her sitcom *30 Rock*, could anyone else have been a better candidate to skewer candidate Sarah Palin (and the resemblance is uncanny)?

"There had not been such a unanimous national casting decision since Clark Gable as Rhett Butler in *Gone with the Wind*," says Dowd. And though the majority of the sketches were written by *S.N.L.* mainstay Seth Meyers, Fey did contribute the line that Jon Stewart of the *Daily Show* called the single best line of the campaign year. That was the one Fey delivered as Palin during a mock debate: "I believe marriage is a sacred institution between two unwilling teenagers."

"It is the most ridiculous, borderline-dangerous thing that the Republican vice presidential nominee happened to look like the funniest woman working in America," says writer Adam McKay.

Fey herself is more toned-down about the whole experience. She was apprehensive about meeting Palin during their mutual *S.N.L.* appearance (because she didn't want to meet the person she was

"goofing" on). But the women were gracious and Fey says Palin "asked me where my daughter was. She said Bristol could have babysat."

She also bridled when a TV reporter said Palin had been gracious to Fey but Fey hadn't reciprocated. "What made me super-mad about it," she says, "was that it seemed very sexist toward me and her. The implication was that she's so fragile, which she is not. She's a strong woman."

And so is Fey herself, who might be so soft-spoken off-camera that people have to "lean in to her," as Matthew Broderick once said, but who is so prim in her personal life that she still can't forgive her husband for visiting a strip club while they were dating and once told actor Rip Torn, who was guest starring on her sitcom, to stop ogling her because she was married and loved her husband and had a child. (Her daughter Alice is three.)



"She's half German, half Greek," says husband Jeff Richmond, 48 (a musical director), who's ten years older than Fey and she met back in her Second City improv days in Chicago and married in 2001 in a Greek Orthodox ceremony. "That is just like loosey-goosey-crazy, and then you get, 'Do the trains run on time?'"

When asked what is the wildest thing she ever did, Fey simply replies "nothing," and admits, "I don't enjoy any kind of danger or volatility. I don't have that kind of, 'I love the bag guys' thing."

No, no thank you. I like nice people."

Nice people like her neighbors in a Greek neighborhood of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, a middle class suburb of Philadelphia, where she was born Elizabeth Stamatina to a Greek mother and a German-Scottish father. Her father Donald was a grant writer for the University of Pennsylvania (who read books on comedy). Her mother Jeanne (formerly Xenakes) worked in a brokerage firm and Richmond says has the "drag queen humor" that Fey inherited.

"I loved hanging out with the ladies, because they were funny, and a little bit mean, and had lots of Entenmann's products," Fey remembers. And because 'of the Greek girl thing,' I have, like, boobs and butt...I have only two speeds—either matronly or a little too slutty. I have to be steered away from cheetah prints."

Her older brother Peter (by eight years) remembers a drawing that Tina made at seven which shows people holding hands and walking down the street holding wedges of Swiss cheese. And the caption reads: "What a friend we have in cheeses!"

Fey herself remembers watching a lot of comedy.

"I remember my parents sneaking me in to see Young Frankenstein," she says. "We would also watch Saturday Night Live or Monty Python or old Marx Brothers movies. My dad would let us stay up late to watch The Honeymooners. We were not allowed to watch The Flintstones, though, which my dad hated because it ripped off The

Honeymooners."

But Tina being Tina, she was also a serious student of comedy. "She was always focused," her father says. "When she was 11, she took all these books out of the library by Steve Allen and other guys. I said, 'What's that for?' And she said, 'I'm writing a paper.' It was on the nature of comedy."

Her brother remembers that she had "a very intelligent humor, not the jokey kind. She would zing you and a few seconds later you'd react. Like, 'Did a 14-year-old just say that?'"

She attended Upper Darby High School (she was inducted into its Wall of Fame in 2004) where she did well in everything except math and science. "I saw my old calculus teacher recently," she says, "and I said, 'You're not going to believe it: I'm playing a calculus teacher.' My desk butted up against his desk and I'd fall asleep in his face in calculus."

The math teacher holds no grudges, and neither does she: "Over the last few years, I've sent her some brief e-mails, knowing how busy she is," says math teacher Paul Roth. "And she always takes a few minutes to get back to me. She's the same great girl I knew from high school."

Fey then went to the University of Virginia, intending to major in English, but changing her mind. "They were too snooty-pants in the English department. "So I got sucked into drama, which of course was a much easier major, since it's the only one that's graded on effort." She also wrote a short comic play. "I remember—sitting back in the back of the theater—watching people laugh," she says. "I was like—'Oh, my God, this is really cool.'"

She applied to the graduate theater program at DePaul, decided not to go, but went to Chicago, anyway, where she folded towels at the local YMCA while she took classes and did improv comedy. She

eventually found her way to the famed Second City comedy troupe, which was the finishing school for Bill Murray, John Candy and Martin Short among others. She began as a performer in the traveling company,

but soon graduated to the main stage—and was a little overwhelmed.

"You never feel like you're funny enough," Richmond remembers (he was Second City's musical director at the time). "She went through a period when she would come home and she'd cry and say, 'Oh, I'm not making it.' But, of course, she was."

She did only two main-stage shows with Second City when S.N.L. came calling. She had sent several spec scripts to the show and Second City alum Adam McKay, then head writer at S.N.L., He liked them and showed them to Lorne Michaels. "She was very modest—and funny, and clearly very smart," said Michaels, who hired Fey, then 27.

She moved to New York, got a walk-up apartment on the Upper West Side, struggled at first on the show, then in a few weeks got her first sketch on the air, a Sally Jessy Raphael satire featuring an oversized baby played by Chris Farley. Parodies became her specialty and she later wrote recurring ones of Live with Regis and Kelly and The View. Within two years she was the show's head writer and overseeing a staff of 30.

"You give more responsibility to those who consistently deliver," S.N.L. executive producer Lorne Michaels told David Hiltbrand in his feature on Fey for Knight Ridder Newspapers. "Apart from her extraordinary work ethic, Tina's writing is consistently original and funny and contains a guiding intelligence."

Soon she was co-anchor with Jimmy Fallon on Weekend Update and working overtime on writing her gigs and supervising all the others. "I wasn't close enough to a nervous breakdown," Fey says. "I needed to pick up a little extra work."

For the 20 weeks the show was in production Fey wrote or oversaw sketches most of the week, then worked into the weekend on Weekend Update. "You just can't do anything else," she says.

"You can't take a shirt to the dry cleaner. You can't get your teeth cleaned. Then you try to make it all up on a hiatus week."

Despite the pace, her wit remained razor-sharp. "I can always tell one of Tina's gags," says her father. "They're the short, punchy ones. She takes a different view of things. It's a real Philadelphia sense of humor."

And she brought that to the big screen, as well, when she decided to write a feature film while working on S.N.L. by mining a self-help parental guide: Rosalind Wiseman's Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and Other Realities of Adolescence.

"Some of those behaviors, while damaging ... struck me as funny — the lengths girls will go to (to hurt other girls) and the ingenious ways they mess with each other," says Fey. The script became Mean Girls, the catty comedy of high school mean starring Lindsay Lohan as a home-schooled teen venturing for the first time into the social minefield of high school mores. Fey gave herself the part of Ms. Norbury, the hapless but well-meaning math teacher, who at one point sheds her shirt in front of her calculus class and her principal.

"It's true," says Fey. "I get my clothes off

before the opening credits are done with...People are going to see that and say, 'You wrote in the part that you take your shirt off? How tacky!...'It was supposed to be evidence of her bad luck."

To fit her gig on the movie with her gig on S.N.L. Fey would finish S.N.L. "at 1 in the morning, take off my makeup, put on pajamas, and get in a motor home. I'd sleep while they drove ... so I could be on the set at 5 a.m."

She jokes that she was the first woman smuggled into Canada in pajamas.

Fey herself, despite her growing list of successes and perhaps her kingmaker role in this year's presidential election, still likes to think of herself as more a writer than a performer (the glasses she wears on TV are props—she wears contacts).

"Paula pushed me up against the wall and threatened to beat the crap out of me as soon as she saw any change in my behavior," Fey once said of another fellow S.N.L. player, Paula Pell. "She hasn't beaten me yet."

Longtime friend Amy Poehler says, "She grew up middle-class. She has a real blue-collar sense of comedy: Work really hard and remember where you came from."

That's why despite the Emmys, and the success of Mean Girls, and the contract for the new humor book she's writing, and her definitive Sarah Palin impression, Fey considers herself more a homebody and a no-drama queen. She says her perfect day off would be for her and her husband to take Alice to the playground and then go for shakes and burgers.

"Even now, Tina says, 'I wish I had a little craft shop somewhere in Florida,' her husband admits. "Every job she has had has been a great job—they are dream jobs to people—but they are also very hard."

Unfortunately for her (and fortunately for us), with all the success she's had this year, Tina Fey won't be retiring to that little shop in Florida anytime soon.

The Theater Group "ICHNEFTES" in collaboration with THE ARCHDIOCESAN HELLENIC CULTURAL CENTER present the comedy
by A.Yalamas-K.Pretenteris
Director: Martha Tompoulidou

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Athens Andros Society honors Senator Raptakis and Spyros Polemis



At this year's annual Vasilopita cutting of the Athens Andros Society, held at the Ballroom of Grande Bretagne Hotel, Rhode Island State Senator Lou (Leonidas) Raptakis was honored for his effort in successfully securing the last remaining Liberty ship for donation to Greece in order to be used as a museum. Mr. Raptakis' family originates from the island of Andros and he was honored together with shipowner Spyros Polemis who conceived the idea of obtaining and converting the ship to a museum. The Athens Andros Society is one of the oldest in Greece, established in 1956.

During his speech, Senator Raptakis was delighted that his effort had succeeded despite the fact that the difficulties were a lot and he had to overcome many obstacles. He also expressed his gratitude to all those who contributed to the implementation of the idea. "My dream is to see the ship as a floating museum in order to ensure that our heritage and our history will pass on from one generation to another," he

said. "Our mission has been now completed. Now the Greek Government has to follow up with a particular plan and save money in order for that dream to become true."

A host of distinguished guest showed up for the event, among them Shipowners N. Papadakis, M. Kokkinis, E. Logothetis, Mr. Karastamatis, M. Kourtesis, the President of the Merchant Marine Museum of Greece A. Paloubi and her husband Mr. Paloubis, the President of the Hellenic-American Society Chris Spyrou, Prof. Thalassinos from the University of Piraeus, members of the Greek Parliament, the General Secretary of the Ministry of Merchant Marine, Mr. Joannos, representing the Andros Society of New York, Mr. Papatheofanis, journalists, Mr. Prokos from ERT, Mr. Noe Parlavantzas also from ERT, Mr. Demetrios Filios of the Greek American Educational Public Information System, Mrs. Thanasoula from ERT ODYSSEIA along with Mr. Malaspinas, and NEO's Konstantinos Rhompotis.

"Shutterbug" awarded at the Indie Fest

"Shutterbug," Minos Papas' exciting feature film has won a prestigious Award of Merit from The Indie Fest for exceptional performances, a unique visual style and original story. The Indie Fest recognizes film professionals who demonstrate exceptional achievement in craft and creativity, and those who produce standout entertainment or contribute to profound social change. Entries are judged by highly qualified professionals in the film industry.

In winning an Indie, Minos Papas joins the ranks of other high-profile winners of this internationally respected award. Thomas Baker, Ph.D., who chairs the Indie Fest, had to say about the latest winners: "The Indie is not an easy award to win. Entries are received from around the world. The Indie helps set the standard for craft and creativity. The judges were pleased with the exceptionally high quality of entries. The goal of The Indie Fest is to help winners achieve the recognition they deserve".

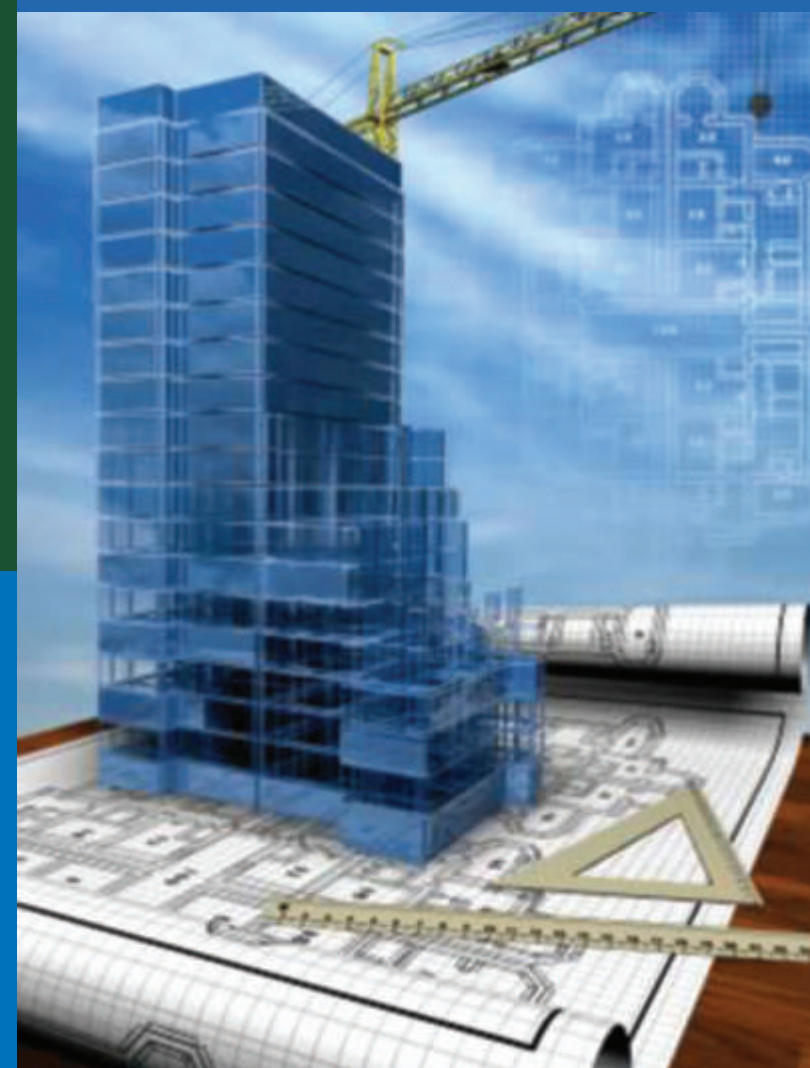


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Congressman Garrett joins AHEPA in New Jersey

By Ted Vittas

US Representative Scott Garrett (R-NJ) was inducted recently into the Order of AHEPA, the largest Greek-American organization in the world. Congressman Garrett was sworn in at his eastern district office, in Glen Rock, NJ, with the ceremony performed by the President of the Ramapo Chapter #453 Jim Giokas and Chapter Treasurer George Mellides. A total of 11 Ahepans were present at to witness the event.



From left, Steve Bojekian-Chapter member, Philip Vogis-District 5 Lt Governor, Ted Vittas-Past District Governor, Savas Tsivicos-District 5 Treasurer, Louis Arvanitis-Supreme Governor, Dino Aletras-Chapter member, Congressman Scott Garrett-New Brother Ahepan, Tom Pappas-Past Supreme Governor, Jim Giokas-Chapter President, George Mellides-Chapter Treasurer, Chuck Humblias-Chapter member and Peter Humblias-Chapter member.



Congressman Scott Garrett addressing the AHEPA visitors after the ceremony.

Earlier this year, Congressman Scott Garrett was sworn in to his fourth term in the United States House of Representatives, representing New Jersey's Fifth Congressional District. He was first elected to Congress in 2002. Garrett serves on the House Financial Services and Budget Committees. He is a member of the Financial Services Subcommittees on Capital Markets, Insurance, and Government Sponsored Enterprises; Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit; and Housing and Community Opportunity.

The Congressman spent over thirty minutes with Supreme Governor Louis Arvanitis, Lieutenant Governor of District 5 Phil Vogis and the members present to discuss issues of importance to the Order. These issues included public works projects such as the formation of charter schools and the building of senior citizens housing plans. Also discussed were public policy issues regarding the Republics of Greece and Cyprus. The discussion on policy was lead by Savas Tsivicos, a member of the AHEPA Cyprus & Hellenic Affairs Committee and also the AHEPA District 5 Treasurer.

Congressman Garrett is no stranger to AHEPA. He has met with the chapter before and had vowed to the chapter's VP of Civic Affairs Chuck Humblias to join AHEPA at a later time. In 2008, the Congressman was given an upper tier, 87% rating, on Greek-American issues in AHEPA's Congressional Scorecard. He is also listed as a member of the Hellenic Caucus. A link to the score card can be found on AHEPA's Public Policy page, www.ahepa.org/policy.

Mr. Garrett will be joining the Ramapo Chapter #453, New Jersey's largest AHEPA chapter, boasting 135 members. It is chartered in Wyckoff and serves the communities of north-western Bergen County. In 2007, the chapter was voted the Most Outstanding Chapter in AHEPA's 5th District. That year the chapter started an adult Greek language school that is now entering its 3rd year.

The mission of the AHEPA family is to promote the ancient Greek ideals of education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, family and individual excellence through community service and volunteerism. For more information about the AHEPA family, please contact AHEPA Headquarters at (202) 232-6300 or visit www.ahepa.org. For more information about the Ramapo Chapter, visit their web site at www.ahepa453.org.



Remembering

"the most important Greek of Broadway" George Best Costacos

Friends, colleagues, and fans will gather to honor the memory of the late Broadway actor and singer George Best Costacos on Monday, March 16, 2009 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Actors' Equity Audition Center, 165 West 46th Street, 2nd floor, New York, NY 10036. Steve Ross, Seth Weinstein and Lynn Manuel are among those who will commemorate the work of this gifted artist by performing some of George's best-known and beloved songs. The event is open to the public.

Beside his great talent as a performer, George was a proud and very active member of Actor's Equity. There is no more suitable place to remember George, who worked tirelessly on the front line during the union's struggles on behalf of actors' rights. His passion and fighting spirit were recognized by the French newspaper 'Le Monde' and the 'New York Times.'

George made news as the only Actors' Equity member invited from the USA to perform in the Athens 2004 Olympics Opening Ceremony. His image was issued on the official commemorative materials and he was commended on the Congressional Statement in Washington DC. George was invited twice to participate live on PBS for The Greek Americans. He is the International Patron of the George Best Foundation in the UK. George's love of life, dedication to his work, and humanitarian spirit were memorable to all who met him. To honor his memory and in recognition of his talent and life's work, a series of benefit concerts is planned with renown artists from the United States and Europe. The proceeds will support the Actors' Equity Foundation as well as brain cancer research. Mr. Panayiotis Koukoulis, the mayor of Aegina, Greece, will name a street after him. In addition, the island will host an annual George Best Costacos Memorial Marathon with runners from Europe and the United States. This is the first time an Actors' Equity member will be honored this way in Greece. The President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Karolos Papoulias will also honor George Best Costacos' memory with a posthumous award.

George Costacos received countless kudos for diverse and prolific creativity as an actor and a writer, "carving the steady and significant course of a dynamic artist who has bewitched with his multifaceted talent, knows how to magnetize the lens of current events and puts his signature on every

aspect of his work" -- to quote a few of the glowing reviews in the abundant international press.

With his passionate sense of drama and "boundless energy," George Costacos was dubbed by theatrical leaders and press alike as "an unencumbered spirit with a mission," "an artistic chameleon," "a particularly distinguished actor," "a genuine child of the theater" with "a noteworthy career of quality work and talent that is necessary, if not indispensable." Esquire magazine called George Costacos "the most important Greek of Broadway."

Additional highlights of George Costacos' career include an appearance at The Metropolitan Room on July 21st 2008, performances with Steve Ross in: The Metropolitan Museum of Art Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, The 45th Street Theater, The National Arts Club, and Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium in the Library for the Performing Arts (the last two also with Julie Wilson). George's critically acclaimed musical Greek Gifts premiered and was recorded with musical direction by Seth Weinstein, it has been performed in benefit concert sponsored by the New York Foundation, and a version with choir at Dicapo Theatre under musical direction by Broadway maestro and music director of the Queens Symphony Orchestra Constantine Kitsopoulos -- who previously directed George in Axion Esti. at Merkin Concert Hall. Other appearances include City Center, Alexander Hamilton Auditorium, Hudson River Museum, Barnes & Noble, Sardi's, Don't Tell Mama, Eighty Eight's, The Greek Cultural Center (sponsored by the NY State Foundation for the Arts) and landmark theatres all along the East Coast.

George Costacos died suddenly at the age of 44 in Hanover, Germany of complications from a brain tumor. The handsome singer/actor was laid to rest on November 23rd, 2009 on his native island of Aegina, near Athens, with an emotional community outpouring and a funeral attended by his many friends, relatives and neighbors as well as numerous international dignitaries including the Mayor Athens, the German Consul and local officials. His splendid voice was broadcast in the cathedral and streets of Aegina as his funeral procession marched towards his final internment, near his grandparents. "Broadway George" leaves behind many friends and relatives in the US and Greece.



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RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AT A CROSSROADS

Editor's Note

On January 27, the delegates to the Russian Orthodox Church Council convened in Moscow and elected Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad the 16th Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. Kirill garnered 508 (72%) out of the 702 votes during the election. Another 169 votes (24%) went to Metropolitan Kliment of Kaluga and Borovsk. Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk, who was also nominated for Patriarch by the Bishops' Council, had withdrawn from the elections in favor of Metropolitan Kirill about two hours before the voting.

From left Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew with the late Russian Patriarch Alexy and then Metropolitan Kirill while visiting Ukraine.

By Sergei Bychkov

The death of Patriarch Alexy II, of Moscow and All Russia, marked the end of an era that began with the awakening of the Church in the early twentieth century. The time has not come yet to evaluate the 18 year rule of the 15th Russian patriarch. One thing is clear though: a new era started and new people will lead the church. It remains now to be seen whether business as usual will prevail or if the new generation will implement reforms that were conceived in the Russian Church 100 years ago but were frozen by the Bolshevik coup. Every new beginning starts with repentance. The late Archbishop Christodoulos of Greece called for repentance in the summer of 2006, at the meeting of the heads of Orthodox Churches in Moscow. His call, unfortunately, was not heard or even pronounced. Let us hope that it will become the evangelical grain, which fallen on fertile soil will bring fruits in due time.

During the 19th century Russian thinkers and theologians were developing the theme of catholicity (clergy-laity participation in all aspects of Church life). They considered the main difference between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism to be the fact that key issues of Church life are solved through the catholicity process. Last January, the Russian Orthodox Church Council pushed aside the legacy of those theologians. Having met for only half a day, the Council resolved only one issue, the election of the 16th primate. Even among the episcopate canonical differences emerged, but the presidium would not consider allowing any discussion. Moreover, as it may sound paradoxical, the Council chose the path of abolishing catholicity. From now on will it will convene only when necessary and that will be determined by the Bishop's Synod. So reads the new ROC (Russian Orthodox Church) constitutional bylaws, approved during the last Council. In essence, this means that now in the Russian Orthodox Church, all theological and other issues will be resolved only by the episcopate, without the participation of lower clergy and laity. A bishop in Russia has long ceased to be a teacher, turning into a manager. Thus, the Council wiped out the last distinction of

Russian Orthodoxy from Roman Catholicism.

Addressing the problems of Russian Orthodoxy was once again postponed indefinitely. And they have been accumulating during the last century. Despite the revival of churches and monasteries, the catechesis and evangelization of Russians after the 70-year-old institutional struggle against God (Communist regimes) remains number one priority. No missionary or social work was revived. In the last 18 years, Russia has been developing following the capitalist model of the mid-19th century. This brought a wide abyss between rich and poor. Today in Russia there are several million of orphans and about four million homeless. Every day 80 people die of drugs. Alcoholism has become a national disaster. Given that the Bolshevik repression and Second World War scythed the nation's genetic pool, one can assume that today Russia is fading away. These problems of fundamental importance were not noticed by the Russian Church and were not discussed at the clergy and laity congress of last January.

That shows that the shepherds of the Russian Church do not see or do not want to see these problems. Unfortunately, the Russian Church has not used the freedom she gained after the collapse of the totalitarian regime in order to fulfill her mission which was given by the Divine Founder – to proclaim the resurrected Christ comforting and feeding the poor, the orphans and those who have strayed in life. One of the reasons for this omission of duty is her intimate union with the governmental structures that in today's Russia, according to what its rulers have confessed, are riddled with corruption and passion for greed. This infectious disease struck the Russian episcopate and the priests. They forgot the warning of Paul the Apostle: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Spiritually weak parishioners when faced with this irresistible pursuit of the episcopate and the clergy for luxurious life, often lose their faith. Moreover, young people who come to join the ministry of the Church are as well infected with this disease.

The world financial crisis is particularly felt in Russia. On the one hand there is a gradual sobering understanding that life consists not only in the pursuit of material goods. On the other hand the country has not yet established legal mechanisms that could help those who lost their jobs and hope. Unfortunately, the Church continues to remain aloof from the pressing problems. She forgot about caring for the suffering. It is important that the Russian Church eventually becomes able to leave the ghetto in which it was pushed by the Bolsheviks.

The last meetings of Patriarch Alexy II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in June and October 2008 gave rise to the hope that the ROC will restore fraternal ties with other Orthodox Churches and through their experience will be able to emerge from a protracted crisis. During those meetings it was decided to resume preparations for a Pan-Orthodox Synod after a 15-year pause. In my opinion, the most important legacy the departed 15th patriarch has left us is the fraternal openness, the willingness to engage in dialogue and renunciation of search for enemies. He commanded us to keep communication open and through catholicity to solve many common problems, being able to transcend the resentments and grievances. Today more than ever, it is important to learn and develop his covenants. It is noteworthy that in 2009 for the first time in Russia, a book by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (An introduction to the Sacrament) on the problems of modern Orthodoxy was published. It is a pity that this work was released by a secular publishing house and it is not sold in the Russian churches.


Sergei Bychkov is a journalist, a professor of History and the leading Russian Church historian.


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By Maria Athanasopoulos

bread & honey

A COLUMN DEVOTED TO MAKING GREEK FOOD EASY

Great Lent has officially begun and many Christians are embarking on a journey of religious and spiritual renewal in preparation for Easter. This period of sacrifice and penance also includes cleansing yourself physically and giving up certain foods and pleasures by fasting. If you plan on adhering to the traditional rules of fasting or simply abstaining from meat for 40 days, you have probably already stocked up on peanut butter and jelly. However, due the severe peanut butter pandemic, you may have switched to its cousin this year, almond butter. Regardless of which nut butter you are choosing to eat, the foods that are fast-friendly or "nistisima" are limited. Naturally, this may leave you feeling flustered and with a gloomy feeling that there's simply nothing left to eat but bread and vegetables right? WRONG!

If you aren't already vegan or vegetarian, its true, your daily diet is getting a huge makeover since meat, fish that has blood, dairy and basically anything that comes from an animal is restricted. What you didn't know is that this is a period to introduce your daily palate to other delicacies made with shellfish such as scallops and lobster or a wide array of pastas and legumes. Octopus, shrimp and calamari are the most popular types of seafood that Greeks eat during lent. I simply love calamari and eat it year round, however I didn't attempt to try cooking it for years since I always assumed it had to be intricate to prepare and cook at home. A couple years ago I finally mustered up the courage to recreate a family recipe that I enjoyed for years and all I can say is wow, I was definitely missing out since it was so easy to make and so yummy to eat.

The most common way of cooking calamari is by deep frying it, this is also the most popular way it is eaten globally. The thought of fried calamari with a generous squirt of fresh lemon juice sounds mouth watering, however how many times can you eat it like this without getting sick of it or creating some serious damage to your arteries and not to mention waistline?! Personally, I prefer to order it prepared in this fat laden way at restaurants, where I don't have to worry about creating a disaster in my kitchen or burning myself with the extremely hot oil, which, unfortunately, has happened one too many times!

So after much experimentation, I created an easy yet delightfully healthy and scrumptious calamari recipe that you can make in your kitchen in minutes (literally!).

**Calamari Sautéed with
 Tomato and Orzo**

Prep time: 10 minutes
 Cook time: 25 minutes
 Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 pound cleaned calamari (squid) fresh or frozen and cut into rings
- 1 medium can of crushed tomatoes
- 1 cup white wine of your choice
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 cup orzo
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and diced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Dash salt & pepper to taste
- ½ cup feta (optional)
- ½ cup kalamata olives (optional)



Preparation:

- Pour oil onto a large saucepan and cook on high heat. Once oil get hot, add garlic, ½ of the chopped onion and sauté for 3 minutes or until lightly browned. Next slowly mix in tomatoes and let simmer on low for 10 minutes.
- In a large saucepan, bring 2 cups water to a boil and add a dash of salt. Add one cup orzo to boiling water and cook over medium high heat. Once it comes to a boil again, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for about 6 to 8 minutes or until al dente (tender). Remove from heat, drain, rinse and set orzo aside.
- Slowly stir in calamari, wine, parsley, remaining onion, salt and pepper to your tomato mixture and continue to cook on medium heat for 5 minutes. It is extremely important not to overcook the calamari since it will quickly become rubbery and tough to eat.
- Spoon orzo into individual plates or bowls and generously pour calamari mixture on top. Garnish with your choice of parsley, kalamata olives and/or feta cheese – if you are not fasting from dairy that is!

Enjoy this lent friendly and mouthwatering meal with a glass of Retsina.

Kali Orexi!



MARIA'S SLATE

As most of my fellow fashionistas know, last month's Mercedes-Benz Fashion week was yet another glamorous success. About 63 designers had their oh so frail models strutting their hottest fall 2009 trends in Bryant Park. A wide array of styles and personalities were present, from luxurious and classic designers such as Oscar de la Renta, with his fabulous fur accents on virtually every piece in his collection, to newcomers such as Zac Posen who brought a

little bit of the 80's back with his wide and padded shouldered look. Sadly, what we didn't see was a single Greek or Greek-American designer, not one! You may think that's fine since there aren't many Greek designers anyway, right? Actually it is quite the opposite, there are many and they are thriving.

While the Hellenic fashion industry is slowly beginning to create a foundation, especially since it began its official fashion week 8 years ago, it needs to work on enhancing its marketing and sponsorship skills. A perfect example of this is asking any Greek-American when fashion week takes place in Greece, they probably will look at you puzzled and ask if Greece even has a fashion week. This is a direct result of Grecians not investing their time, efforts and money to promote an industry that can actually boost their economy.

Greece has an eclectic plethora of young designers, such as Ioannis Dimitrousis who stole the show during this past month's fashion week in London with his extravagant collection of futuristic trousers and elaborately silk crocheted dresses. I also must mention the ever so talented and tres chic Sophia Kokosalaki who recently dressed academy award nominee Anne Hathaway for the MTV Movie Awards. Sophia was one of the first to create the Greek goddess look with an edge by using a rich color palette, textiles and leather. However we don't hear about Sophia, but we do know and did see that Reem Acra's Fall 2009 collection drew inspiration from Greece and also chose to dress celebrities to resemble sexy Greek goddesses at many red carpet events. Ioannis and Sophia are just a few of the many designers that should receive more attention and support from the Greeks in the Diaspora, since it really is in our power to help bring them the publicity they deserve. In turn, of course, we can enjoy basking in their glory and the priceless sense of patriotic pride, much like the Italians publicly display when fashion week in Milan is mentioned. A few other talented designers that call Greece their home are Deux Hommes, Patricia Fields, Angelos Bratis, Mi-Ro and of course the trendy yet sophisticated John Varvatos.

I apologize for the rant, however it is extremely frustrating to see the talent that Hellenes possess going unnoticed, yet we have amateurs from Project Runway fully present in Bryant Park with tents and all. If any of you have similar opinions in regards to how Greek designers are portrayed, not supported or appreciated enough, please email me. Perhaps together we can make a difference by reaching out to the organizers of Greece's fashion week, The Hellenic Fashion Designers Association (HFDA), and giving them our opinion from an outsider's perspective. HFDA's website is <http://www.hfda.gr/>. As usual, I would love to hear your thoughts, so feel free to email me maria.athanasopoulos@gmail.com.

Maria

Identify an individual that has had a great impact and influence in your life; a teacher or professor is guaranteed to be part of that list. During childhood and early adulthood, a minimum of 7 hrs is spent in school. Therefore, it is expected that teachers have an absolute influence in your life. Teachers not only instill values, morals and respect, but teach you what to grab from the world around you, completely molding you to the person you are today. Yet, as the years progress, teachers seem to be losing interest in their students, and school systems continue to disintegrate. My questions remain to be, what is to be expected in the future? Will high schools' quality of education continue to dissipate due to their lack of funding? Will universities continue to hold on to incapable professors due to tenure? Is the once profound emphasis on education diminishing?

The most motivational teachers tend to be those of elementary or grade school. It is then that teachers have more excitement and patience to teach those young minds. Dan Lomeli, student, states: "My second grade teacher, Mrs. Drago, was so sweet and kind. She was really involved with the kids in the class. She was the one that saw my flare for writing and nurtured it, helping me become a better writer." The teachers in that stage of the learning process should all be encouraging. At that age, teachers make learning fun so that they can keep the attention of their students. Surely this style of teaching could continue throughout ones' educational career.

Still, it seems as if school systems are quickly disintegrating and students are suffering. Schools, especially public and high-need schools, have trouble keeping the importance of the classrooms. The lack of authority and discipline, is affecting the learning of the students. However this isn't solely the teachers' fault. Beth Pasternak notes that "in my opinion, the problem with high-need schools is that teachers tend to care more than the administration does; teachers can't give a structure without the help of the administration, and that ends up hurting the students." And this isn't only an issue in grade schools; universities are experiencing the same problems as well.

In private universities the tuition is quite often over 20,000 a year; for that amount one expects the professors to be excellent. Yet, many a time students have complained about the professors' lack of interest and capabilities. For instance, while attending a university, I came in contact with a certain professor that was completely disinterested, not only in the subject area,

but in the students as well. This was evident with the amount of students that dropped the class within the first week, resulting in a total of 10 students by the end of the year; students that barely passed the class at that. The students not only expressed their disappointment and concerns to the department, but filled out the professor reviews with their complaints. And yet, the professor remained because of tenure.

These problems are not only central to private universities; they can be seen, perhaps more visibly, in those that are public as well. Staverie Boundouris, speech pathologist, states: "I once had a professor, in what could have been an interesting class, open up a newspaper and read it while sipping his coffee as we sat in the classroom and watched him." Students in all universities are hurt by the inconsistency of professors. Beth Pasternak, teacher, notes that "some professors either want to be there and teach, while others are more interested in their research." Many require the books they have written as reading material for their class, completely absolving them of the need for any interactive learning. Others rattle off assignments on material not even covered in class. And some even post power point presentations online, completely obliterating their need to actively teach in class. As Boundouris states, "...there is a certain sense of nostalgia of what teachers were like in much simpler times. Before, the chalkboards actually spoke to you, and we wrote in notebooks with pencils instead of Macbooks." And yet, even though reviews are filled out negatively, and complaints are filed, there is no significant change, and professors continue to show a complete disregard for their classes. How are students expected to learn and excel when they have no say in their education process?

Yet, hope is not all lost; the exceptional professors that go the extra mile for their students do exist. According to Pasternak, "in some of my classes, the professors truly had a passion for education, and you can tell that in their teaching." With the addition of extensive office hours and the availability of email, most students are able to easily interact with their professors one on one (those who offer them of course). As a general rule, these professors are the ones that are new to their occupation. Although most young teachers offer the most interactive of classes, there are those with tenure that still are able to teach with passion. Billy Schroder, student, says that "...the teachers who have a passion for teaching help the students. Normally those are the ones who are newer in the teaching

game, because they remember how it was to be in our shoes."

There are many reasons why a significant amount of teachers that have been in the industry for a long time lose their touch. "Over the course of a ten, twenty, thirty year career, certain sense of reality hits and the 'joy' portion of doing something you love at least simmers down a slight bit," says Ian Nugent, a student. In addition, teachers may be tired of trying to fight the administration on many issues and give up, treating their occupation as a simple job. There will always be a rift between those who go to work simply to get money and go home, and those who love what they do and are passionate about it.

In 2008 the school systems were hit with a major blow. According to the New York Post, Mayor Bloomberg ordered the Department of Education "to cut \$100 million, or 1.75 percent" from their budget. A survey of 375 schools showed nearly half had to cut orders for books, instructional supplies, tutoring services and after-school and weekend classes." In January of 2009, according to The New York Times, schools may "have to lay off 15,000 employees, many of them teachers" within the next year. Not only are these cuts horrific but they are going to have a profound effect on the education system. These cuts are especially evident in universities, where in an effort to protect those under tenure, adjunct professors are the first to be laid off. This will in fact be a devastating blow to the universities. As Pasternak notes, "new young teachers tend to be more enthusiastic than the ones that have been there for a long time. The professors that have been teaching for many years are usually the ones that don't feel like they have to go above and beyond." Since adjunct professors are typically the new teachers, they are the ones that are being laid off. What is this saying about our education system?

Overall there seems to be a widespread agreement: the teachers that are the most influential and encouraging are the new, young ones. But, there are quite a few of teachers and professors with tenure that still are able to influence and motivate students. As Staverie Boundouris explains, "young teachers are those who come in with fresh ideas and enthusiasm. However, keep in mind there are the seasoned teachers that have more wisdom and knowledge over the subject matter." My question is, what can we do, as students, mothers, fathers and teachers, to improve the education system for the future?



Is our education in danger?

Catherine Skaris



Emarel Music announces its debut CD entitled "ήχώ/echo" the music of Mimis Plessas, produced in Greece and released this month (January 5), featuring 10 classic Greek songs newly arranged by New York-based leading vibist, musician, and composer Christos Rafalides. His collaboration with Mimis Plessas, the internationally renowned multi award-winning Greek composer, has resulted in an urban sound—mosaic of global rhythms—echoing Rafalides' musical roots. The album features the soulful vocals of Greek performer Evi Siamanda and Mimis Plessas as special guest on piano.

Known as the "Greek Gershwin," Mimis Plessas' music has been celebrated throughout his illustrious career in film, theatre, opera, concerto suites, radio, and television. The CD "ήχώ/echo" reintroduces Plessas' arrangements originally interpreted in the '60's by eminent female performers Tzeni Vanou and Marinella.

Reintroducing Mimis Plessas' music was both a challenge and an inspiration for Rafalides. He collaborated with some of Greece's top musicians to create a "mixture of sounds"—mindful of the distinct Greek sound yet encompassing a bold approach in transcending musical

boundaries in order to create a contemporary sound for a new generation. "As an arranger, working on "ήχώ/echo", I tried to reflect my own musical personality into these songs and mix them with the sounds and rhythms of the New World. Inspired melodies, intelligent harmonies and romantic lyrics—from my Greek heritage—was what I had to work with," Rafalides, founder of the New York-based contemporary jazz quartet Manhattan Vibes, said.

Evi Siamanda has performed with Mimis Plessas, Mario Frangoulis, Goran Bregovic, Stefanos Korkolis, and Antonis Remos. She has appeared with Christos Rafalides along with Grammy-nominated Donny McCaslin and several Grammy winners such as Mark Ledford. Siamanda was featured on the soundtrack of the documentary "Secrets of the Past" with the music of Grammy-winning composer Steve Woods.

"ήχώ/echo" the music of Mimis Plessas is a production of Emarel Music recorded and produced in Greece, now available in the U.S. and other markets. Sample listening of four tracks is available at: <http://www.travelersroadmusic.com/rafalides/>. More information at: www.emarelmusic.com and <http://cdbaby.com/cd/christosevi>.

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Contrary to the word end the journey is far from over. The journey takes her into a place of inner self, peeled and exposed time and time again. The journey enters into a dialectical exploration that is ancestrally hers: Greek mythology, its folktales, history and literature. She delves into the nostalgic past perhaps to shape or illuminate an image or a moment of the present.

Constantaras does not want to be seen as a Greek-American poet, but, as a poet in a country of no boundaries and as an entity constantly becoming and evolving. When needed, she doesn't hesitate to enter into the frightening abyss of our self, aware that the key element is not to stay there. This resonating idea is eloquently expressed in the poem "Reaching Fear": "The constellations hanging from the/Evening sky almost seem transparent now./At times we lifelessly roll in tide-washed shores."

She believes that her relating with others is essential to further the development of self. She does this every day when she teaches, goes to the supermarket, talking to a friend or "driving through Manhattan against SUV bullies."

Kalliope Constantaras received her Masters In Fine Arts from Brooklyn College. Her mentor continues to be Louis Asekoff who is Chairman of the English Department.

As an instructor, she designed, developed and departmentalized Science As Inquiry into the elementary level.

Asked again about her inspiration, she pauses for a moment. "If it was some prescribed formula, I would not be a poet," she answers thoughtfully. "Just read my poems and discover yourself."

"Stillness," a new collection of poems by Kalliope Constantaras, published recently in English and Greek, is now available at Barnes & Noble (on line). In this edition, she continues to inspire and captivate her readers with poetic images painted in vibrant Aegean colors. "Tangerine sunset/Drips like candle wax/On Thebes' thick sea of mountains/Rocks harsh as silence."

Asked what motivates her to write, "every day life," she replies. "From a young girl she was preoccupied with the inner search of the self. After reading and studying Jean Paul Sartre's "L'Être et le néant" (Being and Nothingness), she felt it was the liberation for her juxtaposition of everyday images (French Surrealism) stripped to an ontological existence. This is evident in the poem, "The Sojourn Ends": "One night she escapes/The cloaked world of decorum/Until she meets indigo sky./The self is torn by loving thorns./The bleeding nakedness is truth."

Gregory Pappas Special Advisor To The American College of Greece



Dr. David Horner, president of The American College of Greece (ACG), announced the appointment of Gregory C. Pappas of Chicago, Ill., as a Special Advisor to the College. Pappas will advise ACG's president and senior administration on issues related to communications, community outreach, and development for the College's activities in the United States, as well as for strategy related to academic and study abroad programs.

ACG is the oldest and largest American-sponsored institution of higher education in Europe. Founded in Smyrna in 1875, the College relocated to Athens in 1922 at the invitation of Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, following the Asia Minor Catastrophe.

Today the College is considered one of the most prestigious American international institutions, with a long list of illustrious alumni, which includes the current Prime Minister of Greece, Constantine Karamanlis, as well as many business, civic and political leaders who have assumed high profile posts throughout the world.

Gregory Pappas has spent the better part of his 15-year career working in the Greek American community. He founded and continues to publish Greek America Magazine, the nation's most widely circulated periodical for Greek Americans. He attributes much of his career's focus on the Greek American community and love for his Greek heritage to the year abroad he spent studying at The American College of Greece in the early 1990s.

His company, Cosmos Communications Group Inc., handles a number of public affairs advisory-related services for clients in Greece and the United States as well as strategic corporate planning, media relations and event planning throughout the world.

Pappas serves on the boards of several church or public benefit foundations and organizations. He is a Public Affairs Advisor to John P. Calamos Sr., Chairman and CEO of Calamos Investments in Naperville, Illinois.

He also serves on the Advisory Council of the X Prize Foundation, an educational nonprofit prize institute whose mission is to create radical breakthroughs for the benefit of humanity. In 2004, the X Prize Foundation captured world headlines when Burt Rutan, backed by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, built and flew the world's first private vehicle to space to win the \$10 million Ansari X Prize. In his capacity as advisor, Pappas works directly with the chairman of the Foundation, Dr. Peter Diamandis, who is considered one of the world's foremost entrepreneurs.

In his capacity as publisher of Greek America - a magazine reaching over 250,000 readers throughout the nation - Pappas has interviewed dozens of business, religious, entertainment and political leaders throughout the world and has written dozens of critically-acclaimed articles and profile pieces. He also writes for a number of political and lifestyle publications in Athens, Greece.

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AN ORESTEIA MARATHON BY THE CLASSIC STAGE COMPANY

The New York Classic Stage Company in one of its most ambitious theatrical undertakings will bring to life the fall of the house of Atreus in a two-evening epic tale of power, revenge and redemption. It is first production in the United States that brings together the works of the three Greek masters Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

This bold new look at the Oresteia cycle is told by each of ancient Greece's greatest tragedians in a stunning set of translations by critically-acclaimed poet Anne Carson (Autobiography of Red, Decepcion). With accessibility, wit, and dazzling morbidity, Anne Carson's AN ORESTEIA is a watershed translation, a death-dance of vengeance and passion not to be missed.

As one of the most important foundational texts in Western civilization, AN ORESTEIA is a cornerstone of our theatrical heritage, a powerful reminder of the essential role of Greek culture in shaping the arts within our democratic justice system.

PART 1 of the production will feature AGAMEMNON by Aeschylus and ELECTRA by Sophocles, directed by Brian Kulick and Gisela Cardenas respectively. Part 2 will comprise ORESTES by Euripides, directed by Paul Lazar and choreographed by Annie B-Parson.

Performances will be held from Mar. 22 to Apr. 19, PART 1: Tues & Thurs at 8:00 p.m., PART 2: Wed & Fri at 8:00 p.m. and MARATHONS: Sat & Sun at 3:00 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased by phone, 212-352-3101 (toll-free 866-811-4111) or in person CSC Box Office, 136 East 13th Street, Monday-Friday 12:00 – 6:00 p.m.

CLASSIC STAGE COMPANY is the award-winning off-Broadway theatre committed to re-imagining the classical repertory for a contemporary American audience. Brian Kulick is the Artistic Director and Jessica R. Jenen the Executive Director.

PERISCOPE

SEX AND THE CITI

It's Saturday morning and I am in a sort of Sarah Jessica Parker mood, sitting on my art nouveau sofa, having my (caffeine-free) green tea and with my lap top on my lap filling this empty space with words that come and go as easily as Sarah Jessica's lovers. Only there is not much sex – my wife has just washed dishes and is doing laundry – and the only city in my immediate surroundings is Citibank, with its plethora of bills that have to be paid, or else--! As a taxpayer I will also have to pick up another bill in order for the Citi to be saved, if it can be saved, because its stock went further down, below the dollar, at 99 cents! Forget about e*trade, from now on we could buy stocks at the 99c stores, as Bill Maher said the other day, and if this trend continues there will be a lot of choices, not just Citi (with or without sex)!

I tend to not pay attention to conspiracy theories, although I have to admit I enjoy it sometimes, because in their hopelessness they offer the possibility to explain things that otherwise you can't within the constraints of regular logic. This economic meltdown – which proves that-- global warming is an undisputable fact – seems to have gone out of control (if you know what I mean, my fellow co-conspirators), and it threatens to submerge entire countries under surging ...bills! Nobody appears to know what's going to happen, when this thing will stop, or where it will possibly lead. And the media, controlled in this country in a way that knows no parallel in human history (NEO is an exception because nobody would bother censoring it, at least not yet) despite what regular people think, seem to either be lost in the vortex or to play games of which neither they nor we are aware. Because how can we explain the fact that they systematically sustain this notion of complete uncertainty which makes more businessmen lay off workers preemptively – another legacy of Ws – and people to cut their spending to minimum levels. Now, I'm not an economist, but this is a consumption based system, so unless you restore some kind of confidence to consumers, how do you expect to come out of this hole!

Another thing that worries me a lot is that each one of us owes to China close to \$6,000 and the last thing I want is to be indebted to my neighbors (most of them are Chinese). I promised to myself to make sure I somehow come up with that money and give it to them! I always felt bad watching on TV those poor people in Chinese villages--imagine how I feel now that I know I owe them money!

It seems the only way out of this gloomy mood is to turn to Greek TV. Lately it's become a source of consolation and it's too bad that most Americans don't have access to it (in this case, too, a few of us are Greek and the rest barbarians!) so that they get this ray of hope coming from the birthplace of civilization, etc. When you hear President Obama saying we don't know how to deal with the crisis, we try various things and we keep what's working, and then watch some other European leaders be equally at a loss,

Greece comes to the rescue!

The Greek government assures people every single day that, yes, they have a plan to deal with the crisis and once approved by the European Union, case solved (same as with Olympic Airlines, basically). It's that simple, don't panic, people, spring is in the air after all (and the Eurovision song contest)!

Then you have the main opposition party (and what a party it was: 20 years in power with minor interruptions) PASOK, that claims, again on a daily basis, that it – and only it – has a plan that will for sure lead the country's ship to safety (there is a whole ministry of maritime affairs, too)!

Again, look at the contrast between Greece and the rest of the (civilized) world! When others preach the imminent doom, in Athens politicians are competing with who has the best plan, same way mobile telephone companies are advertising their plans!

Time is ripe for American media and people in politics to turn to Greece for leadership. As this country's founding fathers looked to ancient Greece for inspiration, so too our modern day "fathers" should try the proven recipe and forget about improvising. We, the people, too, should look to Greece for ideas and take to the streets to celebrate democracy, by, yes, smashing a few store windows and burning down banks (already burnt anyway)! Too bad the Christmas season is over and we can't burn the tree at the Rockefeller Plaza as they did in Constitution Square, Athens, this last December, prompting the mayor to place a new one with a 24/7 guard around it. (If the famous tree in the Garden of Eden was equally guarded, many things would have been different, but it wasn't Greek territory and municipal authority could not apply.)

I'm not inciting people to violence, as some of you probably have rushed to think. I'm just saying that in the spirit of trying different things to see which ones might work, why not really turn to Europe for some inspiration. And while I strongly condemn smashing windows and banks (we are going to pay for the damages) it wouldn't be a bad idea to try some form of protest to what is going on around us.

So many thousands of people have been laid off, and yet, no public outcry. Billions upon trillions have been stolen or wasted and now we have to take the bill and yet nobody is demonstrating his or her outrage. For more than four years gas prices quadrupled and again, we paid and shut up. Isn't about time to raise our voice at least at an equal volume as Citi's interest rate (if you fail to pay them on time just once), and say enough is enough (before you pay the bill anyway)?

Changing the subject now: The pictures you already saw on this page--and perhaps that's why you stopped and decided to take a look (I left this for last in purpose so that you would read the whole thing!)--are from the concert my friend Spiros Exaras (www.spirosexaras.com) and his ensemble gave with the Queens Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Constantine Kitsopoulos, who had the original idea, this past February. It was a memorable evening, as ancient rhythms that made it to traditional Greek music mingled with jazz (whose basic rhythmical structure is also built on ancient Greek tunes, refined by the mastery of African American tradition) having as background support the acoustic abundance of the symphonic orchestra. It was a unique combination that produced I could say a new sound, neither ethnic, nor jazz or classical, a sound that if properly amplified and cultivated might lead to breakthrough musical mutations of innumerable possibilities. It was also a successful



PHOTO: MARIA KARAMANOU

Spiros Exaras and Maestro Constantine Kitsopoulos

combination of the ideas we discussed previously: Exaras, an accomplished jazz guitarist and composer, turned to Greece for inspiration and like Obama, he combined different things and they worked together. Let us really hope that Obama's jam sessions will prove likewise...

DEMETRIOS RHOMPOTIS
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"PRIME NUMBERS" AT THE GREEK CULTURAL CENTER

"Prime Numbers," a play by The Greek Cultural Center in New York, will run until April 5th, offering theater lovers a mind-trap, a literary, psychological thriller about love and revenge, about punishment and destiny, where nothing is what it seems. This is a World Premiere, celebrating the Center's 35 years anniversary. Since its inception, The Greek Cultural Center strove to develop a new kind of relationship with the American audience and the ever-changing rhythm of the theatrical trends of New York.

The story, an adaptation of Gianni Skaragas' novel Prime Numbers, poses the question: What is real, and what is not? Can you change destiny at someone else's expense?

Eddie is a writer in LA. His latest manuscript is about a novelist who watched his characters come alive and tries to kill them. His agent asks him to change the ending, especially the detail that his lead role suffers from amnesia. After he's drunk and unwilling to make any change in his draft, he drives through the city and has an accident. When he opens his eyes, however, everything's changed. Eddie finds himself somehow mysteriously transported in Tijuana, in an isolated motel where a storm traps him with a strange group of people; Oedipus, a math genius, Medea, a runaway

Midwest wife, (who was rescued by an American soldier during the war in Iraq), Julietta, a local young pharmacist, Ms. Gautier, a Las Vegas star has-been, and finally Cain, the landlord. They seem to share a secret, hiding from the rest of the world but Eddie has something else to worry about; he cannot remember a thing about his past. His only recollection is that he is a writer. The only evidence left is a military dog-tag around his neck and his manuscript which is gone. Eddie has a crush on Julietta but before he is about to show her his feelings, he finds his lost manuscript and realizes that the five of them are the characters he was writing about. Now, he has to kill them before they kill him.

"Prime Numbers" is Directed by Fotini Baxevasi, with participating actors Tereza Grimani, Kalliope Koutelos, Stephen Lundberg, Ceasar Nixon, Stacy Salvette and Andreas Tselepos. Set & Costume Designer is by Ellie Papageorgakopoulou, original music by Petros Sakelliou, lighting designer is Orfeas Emirzas and Vocal Coach Christos Alexandrou.

Performances are taking place at the intimate but versatile space of the Greek Cultural Center (27-18 Hoyt Avenue South, Astoria, NY, tel. 718 726-7329)



Gianni Skaragas

KENTRO EΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΥ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ
GREEK CULTURAL CENTER





Greek Deputy Minister of Employment & Social Protection Sophia Kalantzakos on the economic crisis

Special for NEO magazine

Every country in Europe and the world is feeling the repercussions of the current global economic crisis. Its scope and depth are unprecedented and all governments are having to now step in to stop the bleeding in the banking sector and help boost the job market since the private sector is feeling the brunt of the economic downturn. All of Europe is seeking to take measures which will restore liquidity in the market so that people can borrow money to buy a house, expand their business, make an investment etc. They are also trying to strengthen the social net and make sure those citizens losing their jobs are not alone, that they will be helped in their job search, that they will be given some kind of opportunity to make it through this very difficult patch. At the ministry of employment and social protection we are spending over 3 billion euros between 2007-2013 in funding a variety of programs aiming to boost employment, increase social cohesion, train and help the workforce retool. Unemployment went down from 11.3% in 2004 to 7.8% in 2008. And the intention is to use all our tools and all our policies to help keep it as low as possible given the circumstances. Since we are not an industrial nation, tourism is one of our most important economic sectors, we are taking the steps required to deal with potentially declining tourist numbers for the summer of 2009. Construction is also very important so we have numerous large scale public works underway which are being built through public private partnership. These projects will help the construction industry. We are all hoping that the crisis will not last as long as some fear but at the moment the top issues in every government agenda are the economy, the economy and again the economy.



The Obama presidency

The new President ran a very inspiring campaign full of hope and a chance to start anew. People wanted that, people needed that, people voted for that. The economy is the number one priority for him and for every other government in the world today. I think that Greece and the US have been strong friends and allies, have worked together over the years and can work very constructively in the future. If there is mutual respect and understanding I am sure that much work will be done to benefit both countries and our region. For the moment, I wish him all the best and all the luck in the world. I hope that he will be able to stay focused because economic recovery is the most pivotal issue at hand. The melt down has proven that changes will have to be made to ensure that these kinds of excesses and these kinds of bubbles do not bring down the entire global financial system in the future. We have become a very small world with very slim borders and we need to understand that being so interconnected makes it critical that we all play by the rules. So rules and transparency are absolutely necessary. He is young and charismatic and believes in education and environmental issues which for me are both critical and important.

Sophia Kalantzakos, Deputy Minister of Employment & Social Protection, was born in Athens. She received her BA in History and Italian Literature from Yale University in 1987. She obtained her MA degree from Columbia University in the School of International & Public Affairs in 1998. Her work focused mainly on European Affairs and Turkey. As a Ph.D. candidate, Mrs. Kalantzakos is focussing on the politics of water and water management. She is married to Phillip Mitsis, A. S. Onassis Professor of Hellenic Culture and Civilization, and Chairman of the Department of Classics at NYU. They have a daughter, Alexandra.

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