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FROM THE EDITOR

Sen. Bob Menendez

"Our decisions on the major issues are going to write the type of century this will be for America and for the world"



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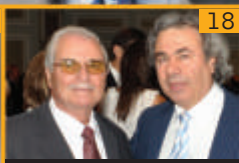
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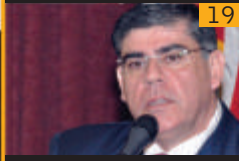
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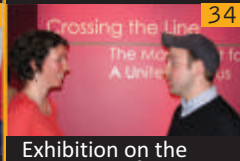
Cyprus - US Chamber of Commerce Merit Award



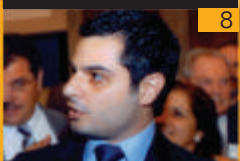
Aris Melissaratos honored by his fellow Cephalonians



Cyprus Federation of America: A force to reckon with



Exhibition on the Movement for a United Cyprus in Chicago



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Cyprus Wine Association launches US campaign



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Cyprus and its champions

The very best kind of friend that Cyprus has is U.S. Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey, himself the son of immigrants, who as my colleague Demetrios Rhompotis describes it, one day "met his constituent and neighbor Tasos Zambas, who challenged him to help him visit his house in the occupied area Cyprus after 30 years. Menendez not only took the request seriously, but a little while later he managed to cross the Green Line of division between the free and the occupied Cyprus and took Zambas to his home – inhabited by Turks – in what became perhaps the first case of a refugee going back to his birthplace after the brutal Turkish invasion of 1974."



FROM THE EDITOR

Menendez went on to visit the island repeatedly, and has even brought his children Alicia and Robert along to learn the plight of the Greek Cypriots firsthand. He has also demonstrated his zeal for the Cypriot cause in Congress, repeatedly calling for the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the island and sponsoring a resolution with Maine Senator Olympia Snowe. "Let me be clear," he said, "there is no justification for the 43,000 Turkish troops to be in Cyprus. Millions of people have been crossing the buffer zone without incident for years. There are no military attacks and there is no need for military protection of Turkish Cypriots. In the end, these troops only serve to create military tension."

His advocacy of the rights of the Greek Cypriots has drawn the notice of other notable human rights defenders: "Senator Menendez, as a human rights advocate I want to applaud you once again for your courage and commitment to human rights, the ethnic, and religious problems and above all your commitment to the real change in our foreign Policy," past president of CFA and PSEKA Harry Theofanus praised him.

Nick Larigakis of the American Hellenic Institute calls the senator a "man of great integrity and moral values. His actions as an esteemed member of the U.S. Senate are consistent with his obligation to support and defend the constitution of the United States and his constituents. And as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee he never acts in way that might compromise the interests or jeopardize the security of the United States."

Most remarkable in the whole tragedy of Cyprus for the past thirty-five years is how the country has not only survived, but won adherents around the world, and has flourished economically. Despite its plight and the battles it has to wage every day to retain its international standing and find justice for the injustice of its partition, Greek Cypriots have seen to it that Cyprus retain its traditional role as a mecca for business, commerce and culture and one of the most visited spots on the globe.

And in America, activists like Peter Papanicolaou, George Sofocleous and Nicos Pafitis of the Cyprus Federation, and the stalwart Philip Christopher of PSEKA (with the help of crusading public officials like Menendez) have never forgotten their roots and have kept alive the cause for half a lifetime and deserve to be among the leading authors of this truly-astonishing Cyprus success story.

Dimitri C. Michalakis

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Despite the current crisis, the United States of America remains an indisputable economic superpower. The importance of New York as a financial and commercial heart of the global economy is irrefutable and remains a focal point in the activities of the Cyprus Trade Center.

The mobilization of foreign direct investments (FDI) and export promotion as the essence of advancing interests in other countries, a goal pursued by all countries, is one of the primary objectives of Cyprus.

The Functions of the Trade Center as the commercial arm of our diplomatic representation in the United States, has become increasingly diverse in recent years. In a globalized and interconnected world, the role of our foreign trade representation has evolved into a private enterprise mindset... the Trade Center has come to be the eyes and ears of the business community in the marketplace and it is an important strategic partner for connecting business to opportunities and assisting in the assessment of business risks.

In the past 20 years, the Cyprus economy has shifted from agriculture and manufacturing to a predominantly services based economy. In particular, since Cyprus' accession to the European Union in 2004, a great many changes have

Aristos Constantine with then Senator Barack Obama



Leveraging such opportunities with professionalism and a targeted strategy is imperative.

Cyprus has a robust and transparent legal and regulatory environment which is a key, positive driver in the decision making process when it comes to investors. Cyprus already has a track record in FDI and as an international business center. In recent years, we have seen an ever increasing number of companies being registered in Cyprus, engaged in conducting business in and through Cyprus.

Cyprus: Ready for Business more than ever



With New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg

The 100 Largest Publicly Traded U.S. Corporations with presence in Cyprus

Corporation	Rank by revenue	2007 Revenue (USD in millions)	Number of subsidiaries in CY
Fluor Corporation	20	1,506,242	2
Morgan Stanley	21	87,879	2
Marathon Oil	35	60,044	1
PepsiCo, Inc.	58	39,474	5
News Corporation	82	28,655	1
Merck & Co, Inc.	95	24,198	1

Cyprus has double tax treaties with a number of countries, many of which contain reduced withholding tax rates, principally on dividends, interest and capital gains. As such, the primary tax of Cyprus by US multinational corporations are for corporate holding and financing activities, which result in these multinationals saving withholding taxes in the countries where they have operating subsidiaries.

The use of Cyprus in this manner, not only benefits the corporations but effectively increases the net flow of dividends into the USA which would otherwise have been reduced by such excessive non Cyprus withholding taxes. Examples of countries where US multinationals invested or provided finance and used Cyprus intermediaries to channel such investments are Russia, Ukraine and India.

With increased competition for FDI globally, our challenge today is to focus on matching Cyprus' clusters of advantages to the needs of investors in key priority sectors of the economy and articulate them through targeted and focused promotion. Promotion, therefore, is perhaps the most important and most complicated aspect of our mission because it touches so many areas, products, geographies, and comes face to face with the tough competition from other jurisdictions. We have to tell our story in a compelling manner that resonates with investors.

To this end, The Cyprus Trade Center actively seeks to foster strong relationships based on mutual benefit with existing and prospective investors by listening to their needs, helping address or resolve their issues by developing and highlighting Cyprus advantages to meet those needs and by encouraging and facilitating their further expansion. In the perfect storm, safe harbors are few and far between... Cyprus is one of them.

Aristos Constantine is the Trade Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus in New York.

taken place in the way the various sectors and industries of the Cyprus economy operate. Accession to the European Union obliged Cyprus to reform its tax system, and bring it into line with EU requirements and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) initiative against Harmful Tax Practices. Cyprus is now classified by the OECD under the group of "Jurisdictions that have substantially implemented the internationally agreed tax standard" and are included on the OECD's "White List".

In the past we capitalized on the good political and economic relations that we enjoyed with members of the former Soviet bloc to become the principal conduit for foreign investment in and out of Central and Eastern Europe. Cyprus is now well-placed to play a similar role for facilitating investment from the USA in and out of the EU, Middle East and Asia.

The Global economic environment is facing a possible long term financial crisis which has led to a reduction in international investment flows. Nevertheless, opportunities exist even in periods of economic recession. Precisely because of these uncertain times, foreign investors are looking for safe havens and overall more conducive destinations which better serve their business strategies.



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Cyprus Wine Association launches US campaign



From left, Cara Richardson, Kristen Helmeset, behind her is Molly Hannon (project manager), next to Kristen is Andry Dallago (exhibition manager), Loucas Michaelides (export manager KEO), Dennis Droushiotis (managing director) and Aristos Constantine (Cyprus Trade Commissioner).



The ancient Greeks brought wine to the masses, the Romans to the world. But it was the innovation of the Cypriots that showed them how. "The earliest examples of winemaking in the Mediterranean have been in Cyprus," claims archaeologist Maria Belgiorno Rossi. Evidence of ancient drinking horns and two jugs containing grape seeds dated between 3500-3000 B.C. prove its early winemaking prowess and eventual influence through the rest of Europe. The legendary Commandaria was introduced to Europe by the Crusaders and has been made on the island since 1,000 B.C. It is the world's oldest wine in production and was celebrated by the Greek poet Homer, drunk by the Pharaohs of Egypt, and lamented by the Crusader Richard the Lion Heart who once said "I must return to Cyprus if only to taste this wine again." Such testimonials continue right down to the present. According to Dennis C. Droushiotis, former Trade Commissioner of Cyprus to North America and currently Managing Director of The Cyprus Wine Association, "Commandaria consistently wins 'Best Buy - Exceptional' ratings from Wine & Spirits Magazine. Wine Enthusiast Magazine rates it one of the 'Top 10 Dessert Wines' in the world." And wine experts like Jonathan Levine praise it: "I love its aromas of dried fruit - apricots and peaches - and undertones of nuts and honey."

Winemaking remains a central aspect of

Cypriot life and it is vital to the economic health of the country. Today, tremendous resources and efforts have been invested into rediscovering indigenous Cypriot grape varieties. This has led to producing a superior wine imbued with an original Cypriot character. Cyprus also remains one of the few phylloxera-free wine-producing countries in the world. Therefore, Cypriot wines are European Vitis Vinifera self-sown plants retaining their classic organoleptic characteristics and potential for long life. Although amongst one of the oldest grape varieties in the world, its re-entry into the world market offers a new and exciting alternative to the varieties that have dominated in the past.

The newly formed Cyprus Wine Association launched its "Euro Wines" marketing campaign at the New York Wine Expo and South Beach Food and Wine Festival held earlier this year. Worth noting was the white Xynisteria and red Mavro varieties. When combined these unique wines produce the renowned dessert wine, Commandaria. The Village Voice praised the Association saying "Best of all were the wines from Cyprus," in its article, NY Wine Expo: Best Cheap Finds.

The Cyprus Wine Association was formed by The Republic of Cyprus and the European Union as a joint project. The project's mission is to increase trade and consumer awareness. The Association is comprised of the four major Cypriot wineries: ETKO, KEO, LOEL, and SODAP, all of which represent

86% of Cyprus wine exports worldwide. In North America, the two-year initiative will comprise of retail in-store tasting programs, wine seminars, trade and consumer advertising, and participatory exhibitions, such as the South Beach Food and Wine Festival and the New York Wine Expo.

There are fifteen indigenous grape varieties in Cyprus. The most widely cultivated are the Xynisteri, Mavro, Ophthalmo, and Maratheftiko. The Xynisteri represents Cyprus' white grape variety. It produces a lovely light colored white wine with low alcohol levels and low to medium acidity that is pleasing to the palette. The Maratheftiko represents the red grape variety. Densely concentrated throughout the mountain regions of Paphos and Pitsilia, it is considered extremely rare and valuable. This rare grape produces a high quality wine rich both in color and body. Its fruity aroma of cherries and blackberries compliment the country's terroir further distinguishing and revealing its true Cypriot character. Enchanted by the wines Maratheftiko produces and enticed by its growing potential, Cypriot wine producers are eager to invest in it.

Mr. Droushiotis notes that "Cyprus is the highest per capita wine exporter in the world with one fifth of its population employed by the wine industry. During the harvest season, one third of its population is engaged in the winemaking."

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US Senator Bob Menendez with Archbishop Demetrios of America. Peter Papanicolaou, President of the Cyprus Federation of America, is in background.

PHOTO: DIMITRIOS PANAGOS



With NEO's Demetrios Rhompotis during the interview

Sen. Bob Menendez:

“Our decisions on the major issues are going to write the type of century this will be for America and for the world”

By Demetrios Rhompotis

"I have an empathy with Greek Cypriots who had an invasion of the northern part of their country by Turkish forces ... When you lose your freedom and your rights or your homeland that is a crystallizing moment in terms of how important what you lost is"

For US Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), the man who, according to former Senator Paul Sarbanes, has done more in his 16 years in Congress for Hellenic issues than many Greeks, the case of Cyprus rings a familiar bell. The son of Cuban refugees himself, "I have an empathy with Greek Cypriots who had an invasion of the northern part of their country by Turkish forces ... When you lose your freedom and your rights or your homeland that is a crystallizing moment in terms of how important what you lost is," he says in a rather philosophical mood talking to NEO one sunny New York afternoon.

Indeed, his involvement with Hellenic issues started on that familiar premise in the mid-90s when in his second term as a

Congressman, he met his constituent and neighbor Tasos Zambas, who challenged him to help so that he could visit his house in the occupied Cyprus after 30 years. Menendez not only took the request seriously, but a little while later he managed to cross the Green Line of division between the free and the occupied Cyprus and took Zambas to his home – inhabited by Turks – in what became perhaps the first case of a refugee going back to his birthplace after the brutal Turkish invasion of 1974.

Since that time, Bob Menendez has visited Cyprus several times, including with his children Alicia and Robert. One of the first things he did as Senator was to introduce with Olympia Snow a bill titled the American-Owned Property in Occupied

Cyprus Claims Act, which would make it possible for US citizens who own property in the Turkish-occupied area to seek financial compensation in American courts.

The line of measures and initiatives taken by this tireless Senator goes far too long to be included here. Last year, right after the Greek veto in Bucharest on FYROM's NATO accession, Menendez put a hold on a Senate resolution introduced by Senator Voinovich, because it included two offensive paragraphs. It took some behind the scenes deliberations and the intervention of a few other senators, but the objectionable paragraphs were removed from the document.

A few weeks ago, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke before the House Foreign Relations Committee, surprising everyone with her well-formed positions on Cyprus, to the extent that she even called the Annan Plan "a mistake." "She was unbelievable," Zambas commented in all seriousness. Again, sources say that a meeting with Senator Menendez prior to her appearance before the Committee was extremely helpful in clarifying some of the issues, in order for the new administration not to continue the Bush-Chaney misguided policies on Cyprus.

Bob Menendez entered public service as a 19-year old college student when he launched a successful petition drive to reform his local school board. He has also served as mayor, state legislator and, since 1992, he has been a member of Congress, where he rose to become the third-highest ranking Democrat in the House of Representatives before taking office in the Senate in 2006, becoming the first Senator of Hispanic descent.

He considers "a joyful burden" the fact that the Democrats control both Houses – actually the three branches of government, if you include the White House – but at a time when "the challenges of the greatest

difficulties that the country has faced in at least two generations" need to be met. "It's an awesome responsibility. I know that my decisions today, as a United States Senator, go far beyond the moment. Our decisions on these major issues of the day are going to write the type of century this will be for America and for the world."

Any signs of recovery in the economy?

I see that we have signs of stabilization and I think we have seen the beginning of moving on the right direction. But we still have work to do. My hope is that, maybe sooner, but certainly by the end of the second quarter of next year, we will see some more significant progress. But, along the way, we will see progress that will be benchmarks to tell that we are moving on the right direction, they just won't be as fully robust as we would all like. Maybe things will get better a little quicker and that will be great.

In that case, Democrats will be in the majority for ever!

If by June of next year we can prove to people that they can see the light and see where we are going, I think it will be good for us. Right now, this is all about performance: it's about getting the work done and showing people that we can govern.

How are things in New Jersey? You had the Vice President visiting yesterday.

We need the economic recovery across the country. New Jersey isn't immune to the economic challenge and we will have about three billion dollars coming to New Jersey through the Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Vice President was there yesterday with the Governor and myself to show one of the many projects that are taking place to create jobs. In just that project, 500 jobs will be created. We need to create economic opportunity, to have a ripple effect in our economy that is positive and moving to the right direction and so we believe that what we are doing in New Jersey to bring jobs in construction, in education in new energy, is critical for us to meet the challenges of today and prepare ourselves for tomorrow.

What do you think of the Administration's performance so far?

I think, overall, I'd give them good grades. First of all, this is my 36th year of public life and I have never seen a greater set of challenges before America, I have never seen a greater set of consequential issues, I really believe that the history of this American century is being written right now, in the choices we make, in the decisions we take and the road that we travel. And I never saw a president who inherited in one singular moment more challenges in the economy with failing financial institutions, a collapse in the housing market to the tune

of three billion dollars that has been lost in collective wealth, high foreclosure rates, two wars abroad and challenges in the world in addition to those two wars. So you put all them together and ask what Obama has done in a hundred days? Well, he has created stability in the economic front, has attacked it frontally in terms of being aggressive to make sure that we don't end up in a global depression instead of a global recession, we are strengthening our financial institutions, we are finding ways for which homes will ultimately be preserved by their owners, we are changing our energy dynamics to a green energy economy that will create jobs here at home and be able to promote technology throughout the world that will help us with our global warming challenges and finally creating a new set of relationships in the world in which America will hopefully end with more allies and less enemies.

Some people say that the President's popularity here and abroad might turn into a self-serving situation and thus hold him from making tough decisions.

I think that President Obama will do what's necessary to protect the national interests and the security of the United States. I also think that what he is trying to do is to show that diplomacy can be a tool of strength, not a tool of weakness. In fact, countries that use diplomacy add to their arsenal in terms of getting their national interests and national security met. We had too little of that in the last eight years and too much of the gun and the bomb versus the engagement. So, I think the president will use both, he will use diplomacy to its maximum, and he will use military force when he thinks that's the way in which he needs to respond.

As you said, this is perhaps the most challenging time for America in generations. At the same time, Democrats enjoy almost absolute power. You have the president, a majority on the House and majority on the Senate. The field is yours.

It is what I consider a joyful burden. We are in the majority now but we are also meeting the challenges of the greatest difficulties that the country has faced in at least two generations. And so, that is an enormous challenge. In the Senate, however, our majority is still not what we call a filibuster proof majority (you need 60 votes for that and currently Democrats have 59 after Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania joined the Party a couple of weeks ago). Of course, next year's elections will determine what the ultimate number is for moving forward. So that means we still are working with some of our moderate Republican colleagues, we would like to do that even if we had 60, but very often we have to go with less than what we would desire.



Senator Menendez participates in panel on U.S. foreign policy with, from left, former U.S. Rep. Jim Leach, TV correspondent Judy Woodruff, Former Secretary of State Colin Powell and State Department official Wendy Sherman - Newseum, Washington, DC.

For 300 million Americans, you are one of only 100 Senators. When you sit down and reflect on that, on the challenges but also the power to do great things, how is it like.

It's awesome responsibility. I'm the son of political refugees, the first in my family to go to college. If you told me, growing up poor in a tenement in New Jersey, that I could rise to be one of 100 United States Senators in a country of 300 million people, I would have told you that isn't possible. But it is the promise of America fulfilled, it is a promise I fight every day to keep real for the next generation of Americans. And so, for me, it's an awesome responsibility and because of the challenges we are facing are so consequential, I know that my decisions today, as a United States Senator, go far beyond the moment. Our decisions on these major issues of the day are going to write the type of century this will be for America and for the world. And so, I probably have spent more time in my 36 years of public service thinking about my decisions and revisiting what I think will be my position on any given thing. More than even before I'm thrilled to be in the Senate in a moment of history, in which we talk about making a difference. Right now this is the ultimate opportunity to make a difference.

Has the fact that you are the son of refugees made you more sensitive when it came to shape your position in the case of the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus that produced tens of thousands of refugees?

In my 16 years in Congress, first in the House of Representatives (and on the House International Relations Committee) and the last three years-and-a half in the Senate (Foreign Relations Committee), I have always been a promoter of democracy and human rights. In the case of Cyprus I have an empathy with Greek Cypriots who had an invasion of the northern part of their country by Turkish forces who continue to occupy it in one of the most militarized places in the world, with no reason in terms of a threat to Turkish Cypriots. I've come to an appreciation that if Turkish Cypriots were left alone to their own devices with Greek Cypriots we'd have a solution to this problem. But the intervention of Ankara into the politics of the reunification is an

obstacle. Having visited with my friend Tasos Zambas his ancestral home in the area of Mophou, and having experienced in my family the tremendous emotional consequences of being a refugee, I fully understand why this is important. And I think Cyprus can play a major role as a bridge between the East and West. Cyprus is not just a country in and of itself, it is part of the European Union and what part of the European Union would be allowed to be divided with occupation?

There seem to be similarities between Cuban-Americans and Greek-Americans when it comes to political activity and electing their own people in office. Also, both have a national issue that serves as driving force.

When you lose your freedom and your rights or your homeland, that is a crystallizing moment in terms of how important what you lost is and it gives you a renewed sense especially for the following generation, of the importance of civic life. And now, those of us who come from families who have lost our native countries, or countries of our forefathers, or who have lost rights along the way, we have a very compelling drive to make sure that this thing never happens here. And to remind others of what they should not take for granted. And finally, to promote that same democracy for those who have lost it. The reason you see the activity in which you have many Greek-Americans as well as Cuban-Americans in elected positions of local, state and federal levels is because like the great Paul Sarbanes when he was in the Senate, he transcended the issues of Greece and Cyprus and became a Senator who people respected on so many issues, that gives us the gravitas to talk about these issues. Those experiences drive us.

You have also been a champion when it comes to protecting the Ecumenical Patriarchate of state persecution in Turkey and also promoting peace and stability in the Aegean, threatened constantly by Turkish violations.

It is my hope that as Turkey wants to progress on the world stage, as she wants to be part of the European Union, one of the

things she must respect is religious freedom. The Ecumenical Patriarch is the leader of millions of Orthodox Christians in the world and therefore Turkey must have his rights of religious freedom preserved, like the Halki Seminary, the ability to have non-Turkish priests ordained and the ability to have non Turkish born clergy elected Patriarchs. I think there is a growing understanding in this issue and it unites people who believe strongly in religious freedom, regardless of what their religion may be. So, I see it as one of the primary opportunities for Turkey to show that they are moving in the right direction and I think the cores of voices on the government in the United States will continue to rise in this respect. And I will continue to bring it up until we achieve the success we want.

May Greek Americans don't think the new administration has moved from the positions of the previous one to the extent that one can sense a difference.

The new administration is getting its foundation together, as I said earlier there is not an administration that inherited more enormous challenges all at the same, than this one. I think the reality is that while we all have expectations and desires both at home and abroad, it's been only a little over a hundred days and not everything can be accomplished in that time frame. It is my expectation that with the encouragement of Congress, the encouragement of those of us who support President Obama, we will continue to move the administration into the right direction, working with the Secretary of State, so that they understand both our resolve as a Congress and strengthen their resolve to meet some of those challenges. So I expect greater success as we move forward, it's very early in the administration.

In your 36 years of public service you have met with many Greek-Americans as well as Greek and Cypriot officials here and abroad. How would you evaluate our approach when it comes to promoting our issues in the US?

I think that as Greek-Americans increasingly become more sophisticated, their role will be enhanced in this democracy in terms of their right to be advocates for US-Greek-Cypriot relations in a way that many other groups are doing it, like Irish-American in terms of promoting peace in Northern Ireland, Jewish-Americans in the Middle East etc. However, I have also seen a very significant undertaking by the Turkish government in the United States, particularly through think tanks and other entities, to promote their ideas and I think that could probably behoove the Greek and Cypriot governments as well. If I was to make a recommendation, I would say expanding the universe of who knows about these issues and promoting their own views would be very helpful to those outside of the Greek community.



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Philip Christopher (right) with journalist and author Christopher Hitchens at a past PSEKA conference in DC.



Cathy and George Sakellaris

Senator Dick Durbin



PSEKA gathers Cypriots in DC for its annual conference

Senator Durbin and the Sakellaris couple to be honored

Over 100 of the top Greek-American and Cypriot-American leaders from across the country, and Hellenes from around the world, will be in Washington, D.C. May 20-22, 2009 for the 25th Annual Cyprus and Hellenic Leadership Conference hosted by PSEKA (The International Coordinating Committee "Justice for Cyprus") and the Coordinated Effort of Hellenes.

"At this crucial time for Cyprus settlement efforts, conference participants will again be meeting with over 30 key U.S. Senators and Members of Congress who serve on the pertinent committees and subcommittees and others who play a major role in the formulation of these matters," said Philip Christopher, President of PSEKA. "They will also be meeting with high-level administration officials in charge of U.S. policy toward Cyprus, Greece and Turkey." At previous conferences participants have met with Presidents, Vice Presidents, cabinet members and senior officials.

This year, Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), the Assistant Senate Majority Leader and close friend of President Barack Obama, will receive the Paraskevaides Award and George and Cathy Sakellaris, a Massachusetts powerhouse couple, will be honored with the Livanos Award.

Richard Joseph "Dick" Durbin is the senior US Senator from Illinois and Majority Whip, the second highest position in the

Democratic Party leadership in the Senate. In April 2006, Time magazine listed him as one of "America's 10 Best Senators." Earlier this year, he led a delegation to Cyprus, Greece and Turkey in an attempt to have first hand knowledge in an array of issues the area is facing.

Entrepreneur George Sakellaris had a vision of creating an energy company that had the skills, capabilities and foresight to create energy solutions that went beyond just conservation. As a result he founded Ameresco in April 2000. Mr. Sakellaris was also appointed to be a Senior Vice President of a Fortune 500 Energy Company and he served as a founding member of the National Association of Energy Service Companies. Together with his wife Cathy are involved in a series of philanthropic, cultural and social activities that have brought them to the forefront of civic life as exemplary citizens.

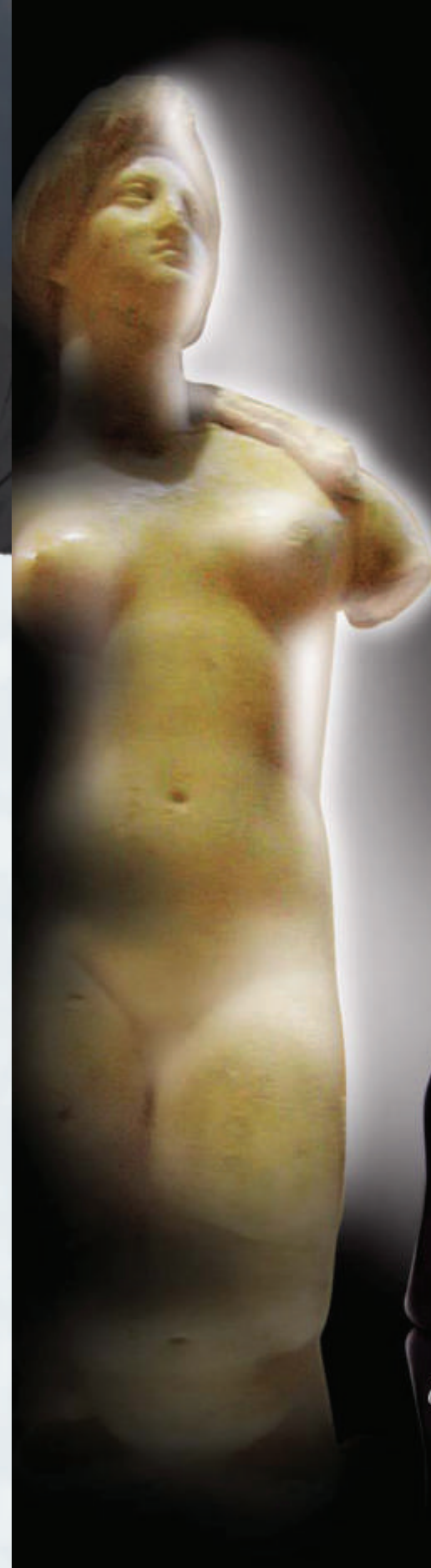
The participants at this year's PSEKA conference include Congressmen Ed Royce (R-CA) and Russ Carnahan (D-MO), both members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee who just visited Cyprus, Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senator Arlen Specter (D-PA) of the Senate Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, Illinois State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias and New York State Assemblyman Mike Gianaris. Both, the

Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator John Kerry (D-MA), and the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman Howard Berman (D-CA), are also expected to address the conference.

The delegation from Cyprus will include the Mayors of Famagusta, Alexis Galanos, Lefkoniko, Michalis Pilikos, and Akanthou, Savvas Savvides, as well as the Director of Overseas Cypriots Charalambos Ioannides.

The International Coordinating Committee "Justice for Cyprus", also known as PSEKA, was founded in 1975 by the late President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios. The organization, with headquarters in Nicosia, Cyprus, has chapters all over the world. Its North American headquarters are located in New York City. Today PSEKA is staffed by professionals and volunteers working together in cities all over the United States and Canada. Over the last few years, PSEKA and its Board of Directors has begun a push via the Internet, to raise awareness over the plight of the people of Cyprus. "Our mission remains the pursuit of a just and viable solution to the Cyprus Problem, which will see the people of Cyprus free from the tyranny of an invading force - that of the Turkish Armed Forces - which occupies over 35% of its territory," explains Philip Christopher. "While the history of the conflict between Turkey and Cyprus is rooted in the 60's and 70's, the repercussions of that conflict has definitely spilled over to the new millenium."

Today, the Cyprus Problem remains the only source of military and political tension in the southern sphere of influence of Europe and the Balkans region. "We will never forget, we will never cease. Our mission is to see Cyprus free of occupying forces. This is a fate its people, both Greek and Turk deserve," Christopher pointed out, himself a refugee from the occupied port city of Kyreneia.



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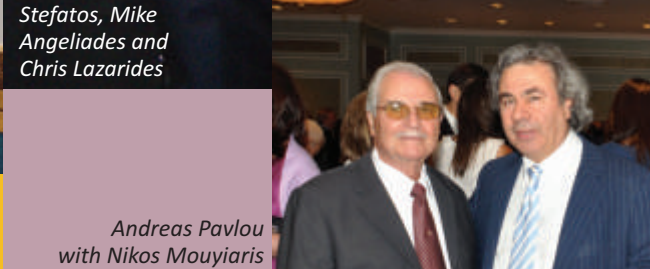
From left, Archimandrite Sebastian Skordallos, Kiki Lazarides, Peter Kakoyiannis, Chris Lazarides, Despina Axiotakis, Andreas Comodromos, Joanna Savvides and Nicole Petalides.



Chris Lazarides with Paul Stathouloupoulos, President of Marathon Bank



From left, Fannie Holiday, James Stefatos, Mike Angeliades and Chris Lazarides



Andreas Pavlou with Nikos Mouyiaris

CYPRUS – US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MERIT AWARD

Chris G. Lazarides was this year's honoree at the Cyprus U.S. Chamber of Commerce 6th annual gala held earlier in May at the New York Hilton. Mr. Lazarides, a founding member of the Chamber, as President Peter Kakoyiannis pointed out, by receiving the Cyprus U.S. Distinguished Merit Award joined a coveted group of people, including Stelios Hajiloannou of easyGroup, the late George Paraskevaides, Dinos Iordanou of Arch Insurance, John Catsimatidis of the Red Apple Group and Peter Pappas of PJ Mechanical.

His daughter Theana Iordanou introduced her father and spoke about the kind of person he is, praising his many qualities, to the extent that Mr. Lazarides, upon accepting the award, clearly moved, said that during the presentation he was constantly wondering whom she was talking about!

Chris G. Lazarides was born in Lefkoniko, Famagusta, Cyprus in June, 1935. In August of 1953, he emigrated to the United States and attended Columbia College and graduated in 1957 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. His graduate degrees include a Master of Science Degree from Columbia University Graduate School of Business (1958) as well as a degree from the Stonier Graduate School of Banking Rutgers University (1970).

He began his career in banking in 1958 at the Atlantic Bank of New York as a trainee in the International Department and rose through the ranks to become Senior Executive Vice President. In 1988, he joined the Olympian Bank as President and Chief Executive Officer. In 1992 he joined Audiovox Corporation as Vice President/Director of International Operations until his retirement in 2005.

Mr. Lazarides has devoted his time and energy to many organizations that included the following: Founding member of the Board of Directors and first treasurer of the Cyprus Relief Fund and the Cyprus Children's Fund; founding member of the Board of Directors of the Cyprus-U.S. Chamber of Commerce; founding member and treasurer of the American Cyprus Congress (originally Cyprus Cultural Society); Trustee of the Pancyprian Association and former treasurer of the Pancyprian Freedom Award Committee; member of the fund raising Committee of the Kyrenia Cardiovascular Center of the New York Hospital Queens Medical Center. His professional memberships include The Committee on International Banking; The American Management Association; Member of the Columbia College and Columbia University Graduate School of Business Alumni Associations.

The Cyprus - U.S. Chamber of Commerce was incorporated in 1998 and the inauguration was held on September 23, 1998 at the Harvard Club in New York City. Its purpose since has been to help potential investors open doors and offer advice on foreign investment projects and introduce Americans to Cypriot partners, to hold exclusive briefings by private and government officials and much more. The Chamber has become the forum for members to share ideas, knowledge, and expand their business horizons.

According to Peter Kakoyiannis, before the chamber was founded, the word haloumi was unknown in America. Today and thanks to the efforts of Dennis Droushiotis, former Cyprus Trade Commissioner in New York, this quality and healthy cheese is available in most major supermarket chains and restaurants with an increase in sales of 47%

last year alone!

We are here "to promote and extend the commercial, industrial, and economic relations between the Republic of Cyprus and the United States and the development of commercial exchanges between their respective industries, trades, and business," said Andy Comodromos, the Chamber's Chairman. Addressing the event, he also spoke about the endurance of our community's banks during the current crisis and praised their leadership for steering them clear from trouble.

Besides the Distinguished Merit Award Dinner held in New York May of every year, the Chamber co-sponsors a Food and Wine Tasting with the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce and it holds an annual Career Fair in Manhattan help our young people find jobs and perhaps make career choices.

"As always, the continuing success of CCC rests on its members, their networking, and their professional interaction," said Kakoyiannis, a lawyer, who runs his last year as President. "In order to pursue its growth and further enhance its professional image, CCC relies on the continued financial support and the commitment of its members, as well as the attraction of new members."

At this year's gala Nicole Petalides, Fox Business Network Anchor, and Mr. Lazarides' niece, was the Mistress of Ceremonies. Despina Axiotakis, the Chamber's tireless Executive Director, welcomed the guests, among them the Ambassador of Cyprus in Washington, Mr. Andreas Kakouris, and the Consul General of Greece in New York, Mrs. Aghi Balta.

More information on the Cyprus – US Chamber of Commerce can be found at www.cypiruschamber.com

Peter Papanicolaou, President of the Cyprus Federation of America

Cyprus Federation of America: A force to reckon with

An array of high-ranking Greek elected officials saluted the 37th National Convention of the Cyprus Federation of America, held this past April in New York, underlining the respect and the importance that this entity has come to enjoy as a steadfast promoter of Cypriot unity in America and also of the struggle for a just resolution in the Cyprus problem.

Greece's National Defence Minister Vangelis Meimarakis, Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Miltiades Varvitsiotis, Members of Parliament and former Ministers Grigoris Niotis, George Orfanos and Christos Papoutsis were among the dignitaries who praised the work of Cypriot Americans in the national issues of Hellenism and reiterated Greece's unequivocal support to the efforts of the Cyprus government to have the island reunited.



Maria Varianides was this year's honoree at the convention. Here's with Archbishop Demetrios, Greek Minister of National Defense Vangelis Meimarakis, Ambassador of Cyprus Andras Kakouris and leaders of the Federation

This year's convention came in the wake of the so-called elections in the occupied territories that gave a majority to the hard liners, a development that could prove a setback to the hopes of a more conducive solution on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots. Also, later in May, Cyprus Federation officials are scheduled to meet with Vice President Joe Biden at the annual PSEKA conference in Washington DC. In his speech President Peter Papanicolaou who was re-elected unopposed (with George Sofocleous as vice president and Nicos Pafitis in charge of public relations) recapped the efforts undertaken last year and expressed his confidence that things look good in both houses of Congress and that there is a line of communication with the new administration that can bear many fruits in the future. Striking a similar chord, PSEKA President Philip Christopher sought to reassure those who expressed uneasiness over President Obama and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton's recent visit to Turkey. "I would like to believe that Joe Biden and Hilary Clinton as well as President Obama will not forget their pre-election promises to the overseas Greeks."

Archbishop Demetrios of America addressing the delegates of the 28 organizations that took part in the convention spoke of the "paradox" of a country which is a member of the united Europe to be in a state of division due to occupation. "And superpowers like the US and Europe are completely powerless in imposing the fundamental human solutions."

Besides the Cyprus issue, the agenda included reports on the activities of the member organizations and the report of CYCA (the Youth Division of the CFA).

The Cyprus Federation was founded in 1951 in New York City and currently consists of 25 chapter members located throughout the United States including the Tri-State area, Virginia, Ohio, Chicago, Washington, Florida and California. The Federation networks closely with the Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE), the International Coordinating Committee "Justice for Cyprus" (PSEKA), the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), the United Hellenic American Congress (UHAC), and the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York.

Maria Varianides, a long time member who has served the Cyprus Federation of America for over 40 years in many capacities, was the honoree at the convention, receiving a special award and an abundance of well-deserved praise for her commitment and multi-faceted work.

by Peter Shakalis



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

DEMAND FUNDAMENTALS DRIVING OFFICE PERFORMANCE

To no one's surprise, the first quarter Manhattan office market statistics recorded a sharp erosion in the sector's operating performance. The economy's implosion was the precursor of the property market's weakness. Both employment and corporate profits have declined, reducing the demand for space and the ability to sustain occupancy costs.

Most of the attention on New York City's economy has been focused on the financial sector, with good reason. Direct employment in this industry is 12.5% of total employment, and this sector has provided recently about one-third of the total personal income earned in New York City. In addition, though, the city is the corporate or North American headquarters for many global companies, and the demand for space by these firms has to reflect overall economic trends. During the past year, the U.S. economy lost 5.3 million jobs and corporate profits declined 21.5% as the level of economic activity shrank. In short, fundamentals dictated that office demand would contract.

As the first quarter ended however the picture did begin to improve, although tentatively. There is a rough positive relationship between the ups and downs of the stock market and employment levels in New York City. Typically, employment begins to decline six to nine months after stocks start to fall, and rises about six to twelve months after the stock market establishes a clear upward path. Stocks pushed higher in the first quarter on a surge in volume, so if current levels can be maintained, that would represent a positive sign. In addition, the shift in FASB rules for banks that pull away from the strict adherence of marking assets to current market prices may help stop the downward spiral in the financial sector. This change in the rules that recognizes how illusionary market prices are for some of the banks' assets provides a real positive for the New York City economy and employment.

Even with these glimmers of hope, it will still be some time before demand conditions turn decidedly positive. However, the net impact on performance from demand weakness will be ameliorated by the fact that additions to the supply of office space in the city are being stretched out. The new World Trade Center buildings that were originally scheduled for delivery in the 2011-2012 period may be delayed for at least several years. Near term this depresses employment in the construction industry. Stretching out deliveries, however, will help to stabilize building market values, avoiding additional asset problems among financial institutions.

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

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The Evzons of the Greek Presidential Guard



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

From left, John Catsimatides, Tony Orlando, Senator Charles Schumer, Minister of Defense Vangelis Meimarakis, Archbishop Demetrios of America and Illinois Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Minister Vangelis Meimarakis with his wife and Takis Nikolopoulos dressed as Theodoros Kolokotronis, one of the revolution's most important leaders.



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Deputy Minister of the Interior Christos Zois, Alexi Giannoulias, Dimitrios Kalamaras, Archbishop Demetrios and Minister of National Defense Vangelis Meimarakis

Greek pride marched along Fifth Avenue



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Endy Zemenides and George Carayannopoulos surrounded by beautiful friends

On April 26, on a sunny and beautiful day reminiscent of Greece, more than 50,000 Greek-Americans and their friends, led by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Archbishop Demetrios of America, filed up Manhattan's Fifth Avenue for the annual Greek parade, commemorating the 187th Anniversary of the Greek Declaration of Independence (March 25th, 1821) and also paying tribute to the Greek community's accomplishments and contribution to the American society.

Illinois Treasurer and senatorial hopeful Alexi Giannoulias, Greek Minister of Defense Evangelos Meimarakis (Grand Marshals), a numerous delegation of the Greek Parliament, New York State Senator Dean Skellos, who rumors have running for New York governor in the near future, Rhode Island State Senator Lou Raptakis, who rumors have running for Lieutenant Governor or Secretary of State, New York Assemblyman Mike Gianaris, the American born Greek singing sensation Kalomira, the famous Tony Orlando (Grand Marshal), one of New York's most powerful people John Catsimatides, to mention just a few, joined tens of thousands of other Greeks who as they did in their youth, displayed the pride of their heritage in abundance.

The annual Greek Independence Day Parade has become a New York City tradition. It started as early as 1938 and since 1951 the City has allocated it Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, an honor reserved for only a handful of other ethnic groups. For the last three years it has been broadcast live on Channel 9 from 2:00pm to 4:00pm with anchors our fellow Greek Ernie Anastos with Rosanna Scotto.

The biggest event of New York's Greek community, the parade is organized by the Federation of Hellenic Societies with John Catsimatidis as Parade Chairman and Tasos Manassis, Phil Christopher, Nick Katsoris and Matthew Mirones as Co-Chairmen.

The Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York represents a large number of Greek societies, fraternities and local organizations. It is the largest and the oldest (founded in 1937) federation in America. Its declared mission is to promote and preserve the Greek-American heritage and administer philanthropic endeavors. Since its inception, the Federation has distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars for medical aid, scholarships, disaster relief, and other charitable causes in North America and Greece.



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L100 Partners kick off Membership Campaign

Leadership 100 Partners, the young professional organization created by Leadership 100 to pass its mission on to the next generation, kicked off the first event of a nation wide membership campaign in Washington DC. Under the capable leadership of Mike Manatos, a reception took place at The Source, a restaurant in the Newseum, the popular interactive news museum, in the nation's capital on April 30. A group of some 30 young and impressive Greek-American professionals gathered to hear the story of Leadership 100 and to share in an evening of fellowship.

Manatos, Vice President of Manatos and Manatos, a public relations firm, and the third generation of his family involved in government relations, told L100 partners and prospective Partners how proud he was to join Leadership 100 with his wife, Laura, describing the organization as an endowment program that provides valuable funding to the National Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Church. He thanked two distinguished young Greek American U.S. Congressmen in attendance, Gus Bilirakis, a Republican representing Florida's 9th Congressional District, who was elected to the seat of his father, former U.S. Representative Michael Bilirakis, and John Sarbanes, a Democrat representing Maryland's 3rd Congressional District and the son of former U.S. Senator Paul S. Sarbanes. Both spoke on their concerns for Greek American issues and the human and religious rights issues regarding the situation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Stephen G. Yeonas, Leadership 100 Chairman, Constantine G. Caras, Leadership 100 Vice Chairman, Paulette Poulos, Executive Director (Interim) of Leadership 100 and Michael N. Bapis, National Chairman of Leadership 100 Partners, all addressed the gathering.

The highlight of the evening was a moving presentation by one of the newest L100 Partners, Maria Nanis Nionakis, who had joined with her husband, Dimitri. She expressed deep pride in being a part of Leadership 100 and in meeting so many prominent Greek Americans from throughout the United States at the 25th Anniversary Celebration Conference, held just last February in Puerto Rico.

In closing, Fr. John Tavlarides, Dean of Saint Sophia Cathedral in Washington DC, thanked Leadership 100 for its support of Clergy and the Church at large.



L-R: Mike A. Manatos, Paulette Poulos, L100 executive Director (Interim), Constantine G. Caras, L100 Vice Chairman, Congressman Gus Bilirakis, Stephen G. Yeonas, L100 Chairman, and Michael N. Bapis, L100 Partner National Chairman.



Fr. John Tavlarides, Dean, Saint Sophia Cathedral, greets John Sittlides, L100 Grant Chairman, and Constantine G. Caras. Background is Dina Theodosakis, Paulette Poulos and Congressman Gus Bilirakis



L-R: Michael N. Bapis, Congressman Gus Bilirakis, George Soterakis and Paul Kaldes



L-R: Themis Johnson, Stephen G. Yeonas, Charlie and Vasiliki Szczesny



L-R: Stefanie Roumeliotes, Maria Nanis and Mike A. Manatos

THE NEW GENERATION of LEADERS

Leadership 100
NEO

Neo Magazine and Leadership 100 have partnered to present a monthly profile of the New Generation of Leaders who belong to the Leadership 100 Partners Program which recruits young Greek American professionals on the rise in their careers, making membership affordable and providing a network for meeting

Leadership 100 was founded 25 years ago by the visionary Archbishop Iakovos and a small band of outstanding Greek American businessmen who wished to support the Greek Orthodox Church and perpetuate their faith and Hellenic heritage in America, passing it on to future generations.

Justin Koutras Bozonelis

Position: Vice President, Private Equity, Neuberger Berman Alternatives Advisory and Placement Group

Education: BS Finance, Dean's Merit Scholar, Stern School of Business at New York University

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born in Morristown, New Jersey, and raised in Chatham, New Jersey, where I attended public schools.

Who or what were the main influences in your life?

My family and the Greek Orthodox Christian faith. I am blessed with loving parents who stressed the importance of faith in our religion and education. They selflessly sacrificed to provide me with the opportunity to pursue my academic interests. I also have a very close relationship with my sister Lia, who has always been there for me and who knows that I am always there for her in return. My faith in Christ continues to guide my life.

How did you get into your present work?

My mother grew up in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, with my noni, pappou and her three sisters. My pappou was very traditional and college was not an option for his daughters. My mom, however, wouldn't accept this and enrolled at Vernon Court, a junior college in Newport, RI. She supported herself by working at the Hasbro, Inc. toy factory in Pawtucket. After succeeding in her studies, she transferred to and graduated from George Washington University, in Washington D.C. where she met my father.

When I was seven-years old, my Aunt Lillian gave me five Hasbro stock certificates as a birthday present. I couldn't believe that I had actually become an owner of the company where my own mother once worked, the very same huge factory we would drive by a few times a year when visiting my noni. I treasured the gift and my father would help me check its value a few times a week in the local paper. It is through this practice that my interest in the stock market gradually developed. We lost my Aunt Lilly to cancer, but I am thankful that one of the many gifts she left behind was exposing me to my present career.

As a successful American you could and perhaps have joined major organizations that are focused more on mainstream society. Why L100?

For many of us, the Greek Orthodox Church is the focal point of our lives and an integral part of what shapes us as Greek-Americans. We are all baptized in the church, yet our understanding and appreciation of how deeply it impacts our lives tends to grow with time. I became especially close to the church after being tonsured a reader and acolyte at the age of 15 by Archbishop Iakovos. Whether living in New York, Miami Beach or Sydney, Australia, I have always attended church faithfully and have looked forward to Holy Week as a time of renewal. Now a pacesetter of the Archdiocesan Cathedral, I am able to make additional contributions and become more involved as I progress in my career.

Through the significant financial contribution required of its members, Leadership 100 is the preeminent endowment fund responsible for supporting the priority needs of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. It holds the deepest impact among major organizations in maintaining the life ministries of the church. This impact has been demonstrated by the commendable disbursement of grants throughout its 25-year history.

How would you evaluate your so far experience in the organization?

I have been very impressed with Leadership 100; the quality of the organization has exceeded even my initial high expectations. Through the annual conference, recruiting events and informal networks, I have been able to interact and develop relationships with some of the most interesting and successful Greek-Americans in the U.S. These relationships are rooted in a deep reverence for the Greek Orthodox Church, which makes for an overall positive experience and pervades all organizational activities.

As a new generation leader, what are some ideas of yours on the future of Leadership 100?

Leadership 100 Partners are uniquely positioned as part of a community of both established Greek-American leaders as well as Greek-American young adults. This group may therefore come across charitable initiatives that could help serve the Archdiocese, events and programs which may not have been presented to the more senior members of Leadership 100. With this in mind, I think it makes sense to have the Leadership 100 Partners involved in identifying potential grant recommendations (on a smaller scale), which will help serve the Greek Orthodox Church.

How has your involvement in Leadership 100 proved valuable in other activities of your life?

I have made many new friendships through the Leadership 100 organization and given our common interests and values, I know that these relationships will endure. The annual conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico was truly outstanding and an excellent way to meet other members from various parts of the country.

What qualities do you most admire or value in others?

Strength of faith, creativity, humor, integrity, humility and selflessness.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

I think we all have achievements which serve as milestones at different points in our lives. My greatest recent professional achievement is surviving the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy and being promoted within its wake. Lehman Brothers filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on September 15th, 2008, and this was the largest bankruptcy filing in U.S. history. I worked within the firm's private equity division, which was substantially dismantled, and I

Fr. Frank Marangos, Dean of the Cathedral, welcoming the participants. First row, from right to left are Archbishop Demetrios, Professor Christos Yannaras, Consul General of Greece Aghi Balta, Deacon Pantelaiemon and Archimandrite Sebastian.



PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Christos Yannaras, eminent theologian, philosopher, author of more than 40 books translated into 10 languages, and professor emeritus of Philosophy at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens, Greece, was hosted recently by the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Manhattan and the Stathakion Center in Astoria. He spoke to audiences representing a cross-section of the Greek-American clerical and lay community including His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. The topics he presented on were "Greek Orthodoxy: Cultural or Religious Identity" and "Revolution of 1821: A Clash of Two Visions." His visit and lecture series were made possible by the Arcadian Society "Geros tou Moria," the Athenian Society of New York, the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, NEO magazine and under the aegis of the Federation of Hellenic Societies and the Panarcadian Federation of America. Ted Spyropoulos and Nick Mouyaris were the events' main sponsors.

The article below addresses solely his presentation at the Cathedral. As the lecture was in Greek and my primary language is English with a conversational knowledge of Greek, and even with the English synopsis graciously and spontaneously provided by Christos Tripoulas, it was admittedly a challenge to capture all his intriguing thoughts. With this article, I believe that my contribution is in presenting what someone like me, the average American-Greek member of the audience, could ascertain as challenges which can lead to further reflection and become catalyst for concrete action.

Greek Orthodoxy:

Cultural or Religious Identity – Reflecting on a Christos Yannaras lecture

By R. Dorothy Poli
Professor Yannaras operates at such a high plane that it is a challenge to understand the full essence of his very powerful message. He combines a high theological thinking with philosophy of life and this is not what people think about in the everyday occurrence of life.

The question of who is a Hellene and what makes one a true Hellene was the basic premise and goal of the presentation. He posed: is it simply a Greek-born or naturalized citizen regardless of background? Is it anyone who is of Greek descent? Or does being a true Hellene go beyond that classification to a mode of thinking and way of living. In Professor Yannaras' view, a true Hellene is characterized by critiquing critical thought following in the tradition of the ancient Greeks. Critical thought was born in Greece out of the need to seek the deeper truth and not what only appears to be true.



Petros Galatoulas, Consul of Greece Sophia Veve, Member of Parliament George Orfanos, Dimitrios Kalamaras, Dr. Christos Yannaras, Metropolitan Bishop Alexios of Atlanta, Christina Kostakis, George Stavropoulos and Dimitris Filios.

PHOTO: ETA PRESS

Professor Yannaras examined next what it means to be a Greek Orthodox. Orthodoxy, he said, should not be viewed as simply religion reduced to a set of rules nor one limited by the instinctual or psychological needs of man. Again, as with what characterizes a Hellene, it is something beyond what appears superficially. Christianity is characterized by the metaphysical search and transformation of our existence, and not a relative truth but the absolute truth. A Greek Orthodox engages his inheritance of ancient Greek critical thought to distinguish "truth from falsehood" and then through the Church discover what truly exists and what does not, and share that truth by building relationships based on love for God and for one another.

Whereas we commonly use the words religion and church interchangeably, Professor Yannaras makes a distinction in this regard. The Ecclesia or Church became the new "polis" as a place of

congregation and exchange. The polis of ancient Athenian society was not only a group of people co-existing but an expression of a way of life. Their priority was interacting, debating and communing with fellow citizens for the governance of the "polis" and for developing, expressing and sharing critical thought in search of the truth. The Church too is a place to congregate in order to worship and commune with God as a community, i.e. communing in unity.

A fundamental difference the Professor highlighted between the Orthodox Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church and (Catholic from the Greek denotes universality in this context and is the term used in the early Church before the Great Schism) is that in the latter there is more emphasis on the individual hence the infallibility of the Pope. In the Roman Catholic Church, there is a different understanding of "catholicity" in that the guiding principle is that every parish adheres to same principles applied across geographic boundaries.

The Orthodox Church is "quality-based." For the Orthodox, "catholicity" means fullness of experience and of truth at any one Eucharistic gathering (celebration of the Liturgy and the Eucharist - Holy Communion). As a parallel example, if one needs to see maternal love or romantic love, one need only to have one sincere and true example and not a multitude of each to understand its nature.

The understanding is qualitative.

Today our Church is going through a difficult period. The complete and total need to transform the individual's existence into a loving communal and Eucharistic relationship has taken second priority to the lower level needs of society. For Greek-Americans, to rediscover our love for Hellenism would lead us to offer something unique to American culture and society. Interestingly, he says, "we can become even better Americans if we become true Hellenes."

In order for us to accomplish this, Professor Yannaras urged the Greek-American community to remain as independent as possible institutionally from the modern Greek state. Through their heritage,

however, Greek-Americans can and must assess how and what they can contribute to American society in order to actively continue the high ideals of Hellenic tradition. And, if Greeks do not achieve this, some other group that espouses Hellenic ideals will do so because "truth never dies."

Provocative was his unparalleled call for a reawakening of what it is to be truly Greek and a reevaluation of what it can mean to be a Greek-American!

Greeks in the diaspora, throughout the world, do hold on tightly to Greek culture and traditions. Perhaps as a form of self-preservation originally, they also linked ethnicity and Church that at times subordinates our Church to the folkloric aspects of Greek culture. Professor Yannaras promotes a link of Church to cultural identity, but the cultural identity is that of Hellenism in a way that goes beyond just

the folkloric aspects of culture and reawakens us to the metaphysical needs and roots of Hellenism.

The Church and Orthodoxy are integral to the Hellenic tradition. Ancient Greek thought in the pursuit of truth was realized and incorporated in early Christian thinking. Christianity was propagated largely because of the Greek Church Fathers and through the rich and intricate expression of their language. Our ancient ancestry, Greek and Orthodox Christian, is undeniable very rich. The question is again: can we rise to the level of our forefathers and continue this tradition?

Given what Professor Yannaras says, in making our mark in American society, we Greek-Americans have an opportunity to bring Orthodoxy and the high ideals of Hellenism to American culture and society. Can our contribution to intellectual, educational and political thought in American society sprout from and within the Church as in Byzantium?

punish when we break the rules), however, it is actually more guidelines-oriented than rules-based. Abidance in rules for the sake of rules makes our faith less than what it can be for us. In Orthodoxy, the intention of the heart is as important as the action based on Jesus' emphasis on the 'spirit of the law' vs. the 'letter of the law'. Therefore, it is important to know why one does what one does in their faith and to do it willingly and purposefully. Do we apply this critical thought to ourselves: why do we believe or do we really believe?

We must understand the richness of our faith. There is an issue with regard to the language barrier. If I only understood a part of Professor Yannaras' lecture, I understand even less of the liturgical services in Greek. However, I am not a proponent of eliminating the Greek language from liturgical worship given the richness of the language, but I am a proponent of finding a way to make the faith more near and dear to the people, whether it is education,

Can the Church really be the new "polis" again today? Generally we, including myself, are ignorant of our Hellenistic and ecclesiastical roots. We have a huge treasure in Orthodoxy but most of us do not know this. I have only begun to see the treasure. Being brought up in a western society, we tend to lose the distinction of what is western and what is Hellenic and this is particularly manifested in our faith. So we must educate ourselves first by going back to our roots beyond the folklore, which is important to us and also makes us interesting to non-Greeks but does not necessarily elevate us. How do we give the gift of Orthodoxy and of our original Hellenism to our world so that all in the society can benefit from something that is uniquely ours?

How can we spread the word and pass down this inheritance if we don't understand it? Worse yet, we often reduce the Church to an ethnic club. As Greek-Americans assimilate more and more, this ethnic group will dilute and fade and so will our Church as we know it. The Church itself will never die because it belongs to Christ but He may give it to the safekeeping and stewardship of others.

In practice, do modern-day Greeks continue to live the ideals of Hellenism or do we just live on past glories? Have we reduced Orthodoxy to an ideology, a set of rules and mere ethnic tradition and not necessarily a way of life? Do we really make an impact?

Further, we often think of Orthodoxy as a religion of "do's and don'ts", (i.e. fasting, standing, being under the constant surveillance of God Who stands ready to

translation books or some other means. The question is "what?"

To be Hellenic is to be spiritual. And, to be spiritual is to joyously contemplate the truth of our existence through the Church; the gift given to us by the Truth Who is Christ.

R. Dorothy Poli, a structured finance banker by profession, is also the Coordinator of FOS (Forum on Orthodox Spirituality), a group of New York Orthodox professionals that meet weekly to learn about and come deeper into the meaning of Orthodoxy in order to make it more relevant to their lives. FOS is under the spiritual leadership of Rev. Dr. Frank Marangos, Dean of the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. For more info on FOS, please visit <http://www.thecathedral.goarch.org/FOSSummary/>.

Professor Yannaras addressing Greek American Educators. Rev. Apostolos, Dean of St. Demetrios Cathedral in Astoria, hosted the event, and journalist Nancy Biska coordinated the program.



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Nicholas Bornozis,
President of Capital Link



Nikolas Tsakos,
CEO of TEN Navigation,
addressing the participants

Capital Link Forum on International Shipping

That shipping remains in the radar of Wall Street despite the overall current market volatility, became clear at the 3rd Annual Capital Link Forum "Invest in International Shipping" organized earlier this year in New York City with notable success. The conference was completely booked with a participation of 742 attendees and with standing room only for most presentations throughout the day. Attendance increased by over 25% from last year, setting a new record.

The objective of the Forum was to provide investors with a comprehensive review and outlook of the various shipping markets as well as of the participating companies. The Forum also aimed to enhance the information flow between investors and shipping companies and to increase the awareness about shipping as an industry to a wide audience of investors.

The conference featured panels on several topics of current interest, company presentations and one-on-one meetings between company management and investors.

According to Mr. Guy Verberne, Head of Economics and Investment Strategy of Fortis Bank Nederland/Global Markets, "recessions usually don't last very long: the post-war average for the United States

stands at 10 months, while the longest recession lasted no more than 16 months. The current US recession ranks among the deepest in post-war history, but it is unlikely to break the record by more than a few months, thanks to assertive government interventions to preserve the banking system, and the very aggressive easing of fiscal and monetary policy. This would imply a return to positive growth rates somewhere around the middle of the year."

The Forum was highlighted by Luncheon Keynote speaker Dr. Peter Swift, Managing Director of INTERTANKO. INTERTANKO is the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners. INTERTANKO has been the voice of independent tanker owners since 1970, ensuring that the oil that keeps the world turning is shipped safely, responsibly and competitively.

Introduced by Mr. Nikolas Tsakos, CEO - Tsakos Energy, Dr. Swift addressed a 400-strong luncheon crowd of high caliber shipping investors, fund managers, shipowners, bankers and lawyers. His speech included a brief introduction on INTERTANKO and a comprehensive review and outlook of the various shipping markets. Speaking on the outlook for tanker markets in 2009, Dr. Swift admitted that global oil demand is likely to continue to be weakened next year. He added however, that despite any weakening, demand "will

still be there" as the world "needs oil". He concluded the speech by warming up the crowd with a humorous joke: "What's the difference between a shipowner and a pirate? A pirate can make money out of a capesize vessel." Also, there were presentations by the management of the following companies:

- Aries Maritime (NASDAQ:RAMS), by Mr. Jeff Parry, CEO
- Capital Product Partners (NASDAQ: CPLP), by Mr. John Lazaridis, CEO
- d'Amico International Shipping (MI: DIS), Mr. Marco Fiori, CEO
- Danaos Corporation (NYSE: DAC), Mr. Dimitri Andritsoyannis, CFO
- Ocean Rig, a subsidiary of DryShips Inc. (NASDAQ: DRY), Mr. David Mullen, CEO
- Euroseas (NASDAQ: ESEA), Mr. Aristides Pittas, CEO
- Navios Maritime Holdings (NYSE: NM), Mr. Ted Petrone, President
- Navios Maritime Partners (NYSE: NMM), Mr. Michael McClure, CFO
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- Safe Bulkers (NYSE: SB), Mr. Polys Hajioannou, CEO
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From left, Aris Melissaratos, Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas and Jerasimos Stefanitsis



Aris Melissaratos addressing the event. With him are Jerasimos Vasiliatos, Eliana Stefanitsis, Voula Kavallieratos, Jerasimos Stefanitsis and Louis Lourentzatos.

ARIS MELISSARATOS HONORED BY HIS FELLOW CEPHALONIANS



Members of the dance group

Aris Melissaratos, former secretary of Maryland's Department of Business and Economic Development and currently Special Adviser to the President of The Johns Hopkins University for enterprise development, was honored at the Cephalonian Brotherhood's annual Gala, held recently in New York. Born in Romania from Cephalonia parents, Mr. Melissaratos had to flee the country with his family at the age of three after the communist dictatorship seized power, and his family relocated to its native Cephalonia before eventually immigrating to the US.

At the Gala, Aris recalled with humor his time on the island and urged everybody to cherish the Cephalonian and Greek heritage in order to become even better Americans.

A restless mind and innovator himself, Aris Melissaratos is about to publish his new book titled Innovation: The Key To Prosperity Technology & America's Role In The 21st Century Global Economy, co-authored with N.J. Slabbert. In it, the authors call for a renewal of America's commitment to technological innovation, believing that this will enable the United States to transform the present economic climate into a new age of plenty which will include effective responses to problems of environmental challenge and energy resources. America's greatest wealth, the authors contend, lies in its intellectual capital, which, wisely used, can make the 21st century a golden age of prosperity for the world.

According to Melissaratos, "this book is dedicated to the Hellenic spirit of freedom and discovery that formed the foundation of democracy and Western political and scientific thought, passed down to me and my sister, Stella, by our parents, Panagiotis and Anthippi." (For signed copies or the book or more information visit www.TheArisInstitute.com)

The Cephalonian Brotherhood of New York was founded 13 years ago by a group of visionary individuals led by entrepreneur Jerarimos Stefanitsis, with the aim to preserve and promote to new generations

the distinct character of their native island within a warm environment, devoid of local and sometimes-personal differences that have led similar type organizations to inertia and finally extinction. They organize a number of events on a yearly basis in order to bring closer the youth and also the Cephalonians scattered in the tri-state area and try to reenact customs and, most importantly, recreate the particular spirit prevalent in Cephalonian gatherings.

The organization is credited with establishing in New York the Robola Celebration every December, honoring (in generous doses) the unique wine variety produced exclusively in Cephalonia.

According to Mr. Stefanitsis, "as Cephalonians, we recognize that in order to preserve our heritage, history and our identity in the diaspora, we must communicate, collaborate and unite."

About a year ago, another breakthrough came with the establishment of the Cephalonian Brotherhood Youth that came to add to the dynamism of the original organization. A prolific dance troupe was formed, while excursions and other events brought teenagers and their friends together to forge bonds of friendship that will accompany them for life. Voula Kavallieratos is the president, with Elian Stefanitsis vice president and Petros Stellatos treasurer. Public Relations liaisons are Elias Georgatos and Denise Grouzis.

"The youth is our future and we understand that we have the ability to guarantee the promotion of Hellenism and specifically the culture of our beautiful island," said Louis Lourentzatos, the Brotherhood's current president, pointing out the importance placed to the newly-formed group.

For more information on the organization and its activities the telephone number is (914) 472-7828 and the email brotherhood@cephalonia.com. For the Youth group, the telephone number is (917) 335-4193 and the email kefalonianbrotherhoodyouth@gmail.com

DEMETRIOS RHOMPOTIS



Did you know...

Did you know feta is one of the lowest in fat cheeses, high in calcium and vitamin B12? It is also one of the world's oldest, Homer wrote about it in his epic the "Odyssey".

By Maria Athanasopoulos

bread & honey

A COLUMN DEVOTED TO MAKING GREEK FOOD EASY

One of my favorite things to do is recreating a gourmet meal I had in a restaurant at home. It's healthier, less expensive, challenging and truly gratifying. While in Toronto celebrating Easter with my dad's side of the family, I had one of the most amazing culinary experiences and I immediately knew another food challenge was on my hands.

After fasting for 50 days and eating lamb all day on Easter, the last thing I wanted to eat on the Monday after was seafood, beans, or lamb. So I ordered what seemed to be a unique Greek dish called "chicken exohicko". After tasting the first bite of the tender chicken breast filet layered with creamy Romano, feta cheese and roasted peppers hugged tightly in crisp phyllo dough, I was in heaven. I was certain that such a rich and delicious, yet delicate meal had to be prepared by a gastronomic wizard. After licking my plate clean, I immediately tried to decipher what ingredients and methods were used so that I can make this perfect meal at home.

After a few hours of experimenting and taste testing, I proudly created my own version of "chicken exohicko". The end result was just as good, healthier and maybe even a little better than what I had at the restaurant, due to my substitutions and addition of fresh herbs. This is an elegant meal that you can serve to anyone from hard to impress company to your family on a weeknight. You can also make this ahead and refrigerate until you are ready to bake.

Maria's Chicken Exohicko

Prep time: 15 to 20 minutes
Cook time: 35 minutes
Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves (about 1 pound)
- 1/2 cup brie cheese, sliced (rinds cut off)
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese and 1/5 cup set aside of garnish
- 4 oz reduced fat cream cheese or Neufchatel cheese
- 3 cloves garlic, diced
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- 1 egg yolk, beaten
- 8 sheets phyllo dough, thawed to room temperature if frozen
- 1 TBPN all-purpose flour
- 2 TBPN Extra-virgin olive oil & a little extra for garnish
- Salt and pepper

Preparation:

- Preheat oven to 375. Cut chicken breasts in half, place between two sheets of plastic wrap and pound each breast with a meat mallet until flat. Season with salt and pepper.
- Coat a large skillet with olive oil and place over medium high heat. Add garlic and onions and sauté for 2 minutes. Add spinach and sauté for another 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in cream cheese first, then slowly mix in feta, egg yolk, flour, oregano and turn off heat.
- Spread the cheese mixture evenly over each chicken breast, top with a medium slice of brie cheese, fresh basil and fold over once in half to close.
- Slowly unfold phyllo dough, lay one sheet out on work surface while keeping the remaining sheets covered with a damp towel until ready to use. This will prevent them from drying out. Brush sheet lightly with olive oil, top with a second sheet and repeat.
- Place one chicken mixture on layered phyllo sheets, about 2 inches from the short edge. Roll over once, fold in the sides and continue to roll neatly in a jelly roll style. Repeat with remaining 3 chicken mixtures.
- Place rolls in a lightly greased baking dish with the seams of the phyllo facing down. Brush tops with olive oil, sprinkle with feta cheese and oregano. Bake at 375 until golden brown, about 30 to 35 minutes.

Let cool for a few minutes and dig in! Make this a complete meal by adding a hearty vegetable of your preference, like roasted broccoli and garlic. Pair it with toasted bread drizzled with extra virgin olive oil and a nice glass of native Greek Agiorgitiko wine.

Kali Orexi



MARIA'S SLATE

Spring Cleaning

It's something that you may not look forward to or maybe even dread, but its time for spring cleaning! I know the thought alone is painful for some, while others get the urge to go on a cleaning spree once the warmer weather sets in. Cleaning your home or just your closet, can be a grueling and arduous project if you don't plan ahead. No ladies, I'm not talking about putting together an intricate week long action plan, a simple checklist with "to do" tasks for the day will do.

I must confess... I'm a bit of a closet spring clean queen. I can not tolerate my apartment to be cluttered, dirty or unorganized. Yes, I realize that I may sound a bit neurotic, but it is simply bad Feng Shui to have an imbalanced home. I can not be at peace or even concentrate when things are in shambles. At the same time, I work an 11 hour day, write for this lovely magazine, freelance for TV, cook dinner almost every night and am working on a couple other "top secret" projects. Oh yea, did I mention I'm also planning a wedding?! Therefore, I don't have the time or energy to devote hours to keeping my home spotless, which is why I realize the importance of a "speedy spring cleaning".

Creating a "to do" list is essential and the first step. Be certain to have the necessary cleaning agents and gear before you get started. Next turn on the music and get started! Remember being organized will cut your cleaning time in half.

Here are my top tips and secrets for a speedy spring cleaning.

- Kitchen & Bathroom Cleaning**
 - These are not my favorite rooms to clean. If you are like me, you probably use the heaviest duty cleaning agents in order to get the job done fast. If you do, put the bleach away immediately! Did you know that accidentally mixing products such as ammonia and bleach is toxic and even deadly?
 - Since many cleaning products can be hazardous to your health and also to the environment, choose "green" cleaning agents. They are eco friendly, effective and won't make you sick. Baking soda also works wonders, use it instead of commercial abrasives to clean your countertops.
 - Allowing your cleaners to set in one room, while starting on another room will make it easier to clean any surface and save you time.
 - Use vinegar! Its cheap, quick, green and a great disinfectant.
- Throw Away, Give Away & Keep**
 - This should be your motto when cleaning your home and especially your closet. Over the course of the year, we manage to hoard so many unnecessary items and clothes that we create a significant mess and imbalance to our home's karma. If you haven't worn an item in the past year then toss it or if it is in good condition, donate it!
 - Many non-profit foundations and charities will come to your home and pick up your donation. The Lupus Foundation is one of these, go to www.lupuspickup.org. Not only do they pick up for free, they also leave a tax deduction form right on your doorstep!
- Take One Room at a Time**
 - You will get more accomplished and be more organized in your cleaning process if you stick to one room at a time. Dividing parts of the house into two to three days is all helpful and a huge stress reliever. Regardless of which room you start with, always begin at the top, from the ceiling to the bottom. Next dust off furniture, spray countertops, and leave vacuuming and sweeping last.

Remember, spring cleaning doesn't have to happen in one day! It took all winter for your house to become cluttered and dirty, so take it one day at a time. For more tips and advice, feel free to email me at maria.athanasopoulos@gmail.com.

Exhibition on the Movement for a United Cyprus in Chicago

The Hellenic Museum & Cultural Center in Chicago opened the second phase of its ongoing Cypriot Collection Exhibitions called "Crossing the Line: the Movement for a United Cyprus." The Cyprus Gallery holds an extensive collection of beautiful works of art and a video with footage of the women's campaign. There was a welcome to the assembled by Executive Board Member Stephanie Anton Vlahakis who spoke of the Museum and its direction in the future, the importance of the Cypriot Collection and the progress on the new Museum.

This collection presents aspects of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 that left the island physically and emotionally divided, with refugees from both sides unable to return to their homes across the Green Line. In response to this division, a grass roots movement called "Women Walk Home" developed. With the aim of one day living in a united Cyprus with freedom of movement, these women staged marches to attempt to cross the Green Line. Their successes brought attention to "the Cyprus problem" while giving women a new found place in the political arena. By examining art, objects, documents and first-hand accounts, this exhibit will show how daily life on the island was disrupted by the invasion and while also revealing the subsequent movement for reunification.

The exhibition was guest curated by Daniela C. Bono of the Field Museum of Natural History. Daniela was awarded the Brunilde Ridgway Fellowship and spent the summer of 2007 in Agios Georgios in Cyprus where she worked on the Yeronisos Island Excavation. For more information regarding this exhibition, please contact the Museum at 312-655-1234.



Guest Curator Daniela C. Bono with Friend



Stephanie Anton Vlahakis

Guest admiring a work by Hambis Tsanganis

TRACING THE EARLY GREEK IMMIGRANTS



The Greek Consulate in New York hosted a program entitled "A Journey, A Dream and a Fulfillment: The Story of the Greek American Immigrant." The presentation was given by the Co-Founders of The Greek Museum, the Center of Greek American Heritage, Katherine R. Boulukos and Anastasia Nicholas in a slide program. It told the story of the early immigrants with photographs that are

part of their collection. It traced their arrivals, their businesses and their lives.

Mrs. Agi Balta, Consul General of Greece, welcomed the women and praised their efforts in working to establish a Greek immigrant museum in the metropolitan area. She offered enthusiastic words of encouragement on this project. As a "museum in the making", she urged the support from the general public to establish such an institution in the near future.

A large audience watched the photographs, which traced the story of the early immigrants, an under documented group that comprised people from varied backgrounds who managed to find their way in industry, commerce and trade. The presentation included some vintage pictures from the turn of the century. A lively question and answer period followed the presentation.

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ultimately became one of two senior professionals to remain employed out of an original team of over 20 people. We are now a part of Neuberger Berman, which assumed the private equity assets of Lehman Brothers.

Who are your heroes in real life?

I feel fortunate in saying that my real-life heroes are within my own family. My father is a New Jersey State Judge, a position which warrants the respect of individuals outside of our family. He is also an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the highest honor awarded to a layman in our faith. My father has balanced his faith and his career. That said, my personal respect for him is founded in the man and father that he is, and whom I aspire to emulate. Similarly, my mother is an author and a loving woman who has always put her family first. Finally, my first cousin John Vartanian is a soldier in the U.S. Army Special Forces based in Iraq. His son, my cousin John Jr., chose to heroically follow in his father's footsteps and is an airman in the U.S. Air Force with tours of duty in Iraq. We enjoy the freedom which they help to provide and protect.

How do you spend your time outside of work?

I enjoy spending time with my family and group of friends, particularly at events within the New York Greek community. Working out regularly and Greek dance comprise my physical fitness routine. I am also a cinemaphile and a big New York Giants fan.

What are your thoughts on the current economic crisis?

The current economic crisis has a profound impact upon us all. I miss seeing the friends I had worked with daily at Lehman Brothers. I'm not sure that there is a clear-cut remedy; however, Wall Street can modify its proactive and reactive approaches to the crisis. I think we can start with proactive measures, namely stimulating the availability of liquidity to protect bank lending, money market funds and making sure that working capital exists for the sustenance and

growth of new businesses. Multi-billion dollar bailout packages inject funds into financial institutions, but do not ensure an increasing supply of necessary loans or ease in mortgage repayment terms. In addition, the financial marketplace is a global economy and, as such, we must be open to the idea of growing our international fiscal policy through a marked expansion in exports.

Wall Street can be a questionably myopic place. Through my nine years in the industry, I have seen entire divisions of major investment banks let go during a downturn, only to be rebuilt and hired back immediately during the inevitable upturn, which can ironically follow shortly thereafter. I think this is somewhat analogous to the traditional approach in dealing with the cyclical extremities of the U.S. economy. Letting suffering businesses fail and cutting multi-billion checks are a reactive start; creative initiatives involving international cooperation and immediate liquidity are preventative solutions.

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

I would like to own my own business: specifically an alternative capital firm which principally invests in other alternative capital partnerships. I also have an interest in the placement agency business and am fortunate that my current position allows me to explore both avenues. With time, I would like to exit the finance industry and pursue independent film production. I love what I do, but am also very passionate about film and would like to pursue this as a new chapter later in life, if blessed to have succeeded in my current profession. In terms of my personal life, I hope to have a loving wife who makes me laugh. My parents have been together for 39 years and my ultimate hope is to have a marriage as happy as theirs, with children who have the same love and respect for one another as I have for my sister.

What is your idea of happiness?

I am happy when I see the people I love most and care about at peace, in good health and enjoying their lives. I am at peace within my Greek Orthodox Christian faith.

PERISCOPE

"Those folks had their priorities straight"

As you probably noticed in the previous pages, this NEO issue is devoted to Cyprus and my Periscope could not be an exception, because as with most Hellenes, the island is very close to my heart, even though I never went there. But again, I never went to Thrace or Crete and they still are very close to my heart. When it comes to Hellenism you don't need to witness a place to consider it part of your own "territorial" background, the cultural connection, the faith and the common march through the millenia suffice to bind you with it forever.

A part of Cypriot history that I believe remains relatively unknown to us and the rest of the world is the anti-colonial struggle against the British in the '50s, that proved with deeds, not just words, that yes, Hellenes can still astound humanity by the quality of their spirit. A new line of martyrs, of real heroes that could inspire every generation and every nationality, rose from that struggle and although politics did not let their dream come true to the fullest, it made us reaffirm the belief in everything we stand for as Hellenes. To use a phrase, one of just very few that I happened to like from former President Bush, "those folks had their priorities straight!" Moreover, that part of Cyprus history sheds light on today's facts on the ground and why it's so hard to find a solution to the island's division after the brutal Turkish invasion.

As we read, "in 1955, after a long but unsuccessful struggle to attain their freedom by peaceful means, the people of Cyprus took up arms against the colonial power under the EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kypriakou Agonos = National Organization of Cypriot Struggle), demanding the end of colonialism and union with Greece. The British Government, in its attempt to thwart the Cyprus people's aspirations for self-determination, exploited the presence in Cyprus of the Turkish Cypriot minority, and sought assistance from Turkey in obstructing the natural trend of events in Cyprus. The British Government threatened that if self-determination were ever to be achieved in Cyprus, the result would be the partition of the island since the Turkish Cypriot minority would be offered the right to self-determination separately. That threat might have been intended to discourage the Cypriot people's struggle for freedom, but its consequences were quite different. Instead, the partition of Cyprus became an objective of Turkish foreign policy and a number of Turkish Cypriots took up arms against the Cypriot freedom fighters while the Turkish Cypriot leadership advocated either partition or the continuation of British colonial rule." The divide and rule principle in exemplary application!

During the epic struggle against the British colonial forces - under the leadership of Sir (sic) John Harding, synonymous with brutality in Cyprus - a number of young heroic figures sprouted like Spring flowers and became symbols of freedom. The Central Jail of the capital Lefkosia not only held in its cells many of those heroes, but is also known for the Imprisoned Tombs where 13 of the EOKA fighters were interred. "Nine of them were hanged by the British, three fell on the battlefield and one died in hospital from his battle wounds. The tombs were built in an area adjacent to the cells of the condemned and close to the gallows where they would be executed." In Europe, the one and only similar case of imprisoned tombs was in Enver Hohza's (the Albanian communist dictator) regime, against which the supposedly democratic Britain was standing as a NATO and free world member!

When the mother of the 19-year-old Evagoras Pallikarides appealed to the young, (in her 30s then) Queen Elizabeth, who had recently become mother, asking to pardon her son, the latter wasn't moved by her plea. Not even her husband, partly of Greek origin, felt the need to persuade her. In the meantime, fresh was the blood of the Cypriot fighters on the side of British forces during World War II, saving her majesty's ass from her cousins, the Nazis!

For the record, the names of only those buried in the Imprisoned Tombs are Michalis Karaolis, Andreas Dimitriou, Iakovos Patatsos, Andreas Zakos, Charilaos Michail, Michail Koutsoftas, Stelios Mavrommatis, Andreas Panagidis, Evagoras Pallikaridis, Markos Drakos, Grigoris Afxentiou, Stylianos Lenas and Kyriakos Matsis.

"After Cyprus gained her independence, the Imprisoned Tombs became a national monument where thousands visit. A sign proclaiming 'The brave man's death is no death at all' was put up against one of the walls. During the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 battles raged around the Central Jail of Lefkosia. Vastly outnumbered, the Cypriot national guardsmen - aided by correction officers - managed to fight off the Turks and keep the jail with its Imprisoned Tombs from being captured."



Evagoras Pallikaridis, despite his youth - he was only 18 at the time - he was sentenced to die for gun possession. His parents' pleas to Queen Elizabeth - a young mother herself at the time - for mercy went unheeded and the young hero was hanged on March 14, 1957 - 15 days after his 19th birthday.

We American Hellenes are proud of our ancestors' deeds, especially from the antiquity. With all due respect, the EOKA martyrs and fighters were no less remarkable and no less important for humanity because they struggled for the universal values of freedom and self-rule. They also showed that King Leonidas of Sparta can be revived by his descendants in the battlefield - not just in a Hollywood movie or by the Belgian chocolatier of the same name.

Not long ago, an event in Astoria organized by the Cyprus Federation of America, Petros Petrides and a few other individuals, paid tribute to the EOKA martyrs in a very special way. No speeches were pronounced, only excerpts from letters those young heroes wrote to their families while they were awaiting execution. The calmness, unequivocal faith to what they stood for, an absolute certainty in Resurrection as Christians, the complete absence of fanaticism, hatred or sorrow, showed how exceptional those people who led by example were. Archbishop Demetrios of America called them "martyrs of the Church, too" and proposed for their correspondence to be collected, translated and published as a testament to all Hellenes and Orthodox.

Plaque for less known heroes and members of the 1955-59 EOKA struggle for Independence of Cyprus next to the monument of Kyriakos Karaolis at Aglandjia, Nicosia. Almost all of them died of torture at the hands of the British colonial forces.



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Anna Vissi

in Hollywood

By Athan Karras

Who can ever forget that incredible appearance that ANNA VISSI made at the Olympics closing ceremonies in Athens 2004. She took the stage like the love song goddess she's become as might be expected being born in Cyprus, representing Aphrodite the reputed love goddess of Greek mythology born on the seashores of Cyprus.

Anna's recent visit to California's southland chose to celebrate Greek Easter at Hollywood's SBE's AREA NIGHTCLUB, home of the Hollywood heavyweight celebrities and upbeat latest rage partygoers at this airy space fancy Mid-Century Modern décor. It was just what Anna Vissi, the ultimate superstar and reigning queen of Greek music, chose appropriately the AREA nightclub, a latest addition of expanding nightlife in Los Angeles hotspots to celebrate Greek Easter. Anna reached out to entertain her young fans in southern California as she does all over the world adorned her fans with a new previewed CD bearing the title "APAGOREVMENO" (forbidden), composed by Patrick Leonard and Kara Dioguardi, who have been associated with Celine Dion, Gwen Stefani, Santana and others bearing delicate and sensitive intriguing arrangements, bringing out Anna Vissi's torch like moods that flared throughout the multiple TV monitors at the Area Club. Fans anxiously waited, while others stretched on banquettes and sofas in intimate seating areas surrounding the dance floor flanked by the club's two bars. The poised fans eagerly waited for the goddess to appear and as she emerged, young celebrants with flowers in hand hoisted her on the dance floor while sparkling flashing cell phone cameras snapped commemorating this special holiday for Greeks. She opened in soft spoken Greek a warm narration, and invited all to join at this momentous special occasion.

Anna Vissi is no stranger to Los Angeles, frequently visits for recording sessions and concerts and this Hollywood nightspot gave her a new energy to reinvent herself with enthusiastic Greek and crossover audiences in a mix of young fans who find her as fascinating, and impulsively attractive, sexy and sultry as she moved lithely delivering songs with an undulating vibrant rhythmic pulsation, that brought the AREA Greek club to a flaming excitement. Eager and restless young ladies in miniskirts raged at the shortened spirits of young men casually dressed, with multiple spiked hairdos all waved at Greek ms and writhed while Anna Vissi took the floor to nonstop renditions, a mike in hand embracing and contacting her audience few performers rarely involve their fans.

Anna's stellar career is a perfect example of a talent that showed promise very early in her high school years in Larnaca, Cyprus, where she excelled and encouraged to continue musical studies, along with classical piano and dance. Her natural talent immediately burst through that by the age of twelve she was signed for her first recording contract. Her collaboration with Nicos Karvelas brought her even greater attention and soon began a touring career in Greece and immediately after that in Europe, where sell-out crowds thronged at the theaters.

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