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*A Musical Interlude:
Popular music master
Mimis Plessas*

*Greek Americans
host U.S. House
and Senate leaders
in New York*

*Special Interview
with singing star
Elli Kokkinou*

**Comedy sensation
Demetri Martin**

*Clarinet virtuoso
Lefteris Bournias:
master of all styles*



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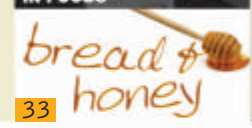
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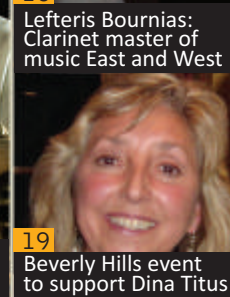
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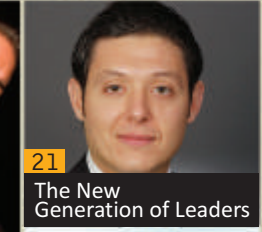
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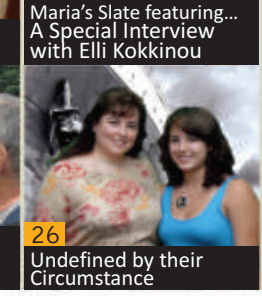
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A Musical Issue

This issue has a lot of music in it, from the new sensation of singing star Elli Kokkinou, to the synthesized mix of old and new by clarinet virtuoso Lefteris Bournias, to the long line of popular music tradition by grand master Mimis Plessas.



FROM THE EDITOR

I was born in Chios and still love the klarino more than any other instrument. The hairs stand on the back of my head when I hear the clarinet player tuning up before every wedding and the first dance usually has me up on the dance floor immediately—and staying there—as long as the klarino is playing. And when a virtuoso of both the old and new like Lefteris Bournias begins to play a tsifteli in the old style then I feel no pain and life has become just one sweet glendi that I wish would never end. Lefteris is also a musical explorer and pioneer, fearless in dipping into all sorts of styles and working with masters in all backgrounds, and also recreating the legends of his own tradition, as one example, his participation a few years ago in resurrecting the songs of the old Café Aman composers of the New World. I treasure that CD, and both treasure Lefteri's playing at any occasion and any new experiments he makes in varied musical genres.

I grew up, of course, as all of us, with the music of Mimis Plessas. The endless early magnitofona I listened to when I was growing up had the music of Mimis Plessas. The films I saw in the '60s in Astoria and Eighth Avenue in Manhattan and in the '70s in Chicago at old movie theaters outfitted for Greek films for the weekend all resonated with Mimis Plessas tunes. My favorite Greek movie stars all sang Mimis Plessas standards. The rides we took to the beach in my uncle's old Chevy station wagon (powdered with flour from his donut business) were all sing-alongs to Mimi Plessas tunes. I think he was a part of every Greek expatriates musical connection to home and part of the soundtrack of our lives.

Demetri Martin, our cover story, has nothing to do with music himself (except his new movie is about Woodstock), but there is a certain music to the loopy logic of his comedy. He said his entire family thought he was insane to give up law school with only one year left and to venture into comedy. He recounts the universal disappointment of his clan, but he struck out, anyway, on the treacherous waters of a comedy career and he's become a comedy original and one of its most creative and innovative stars. His new movie career was a complete surprise to him, but he seems perfectly cast in the part of the bookish young man who makes possible a social revolution—and a musical one, at that.

Dimitri C. Michalakis
Dimitri C. Michalakis

Cover photo: Martin Schoeller

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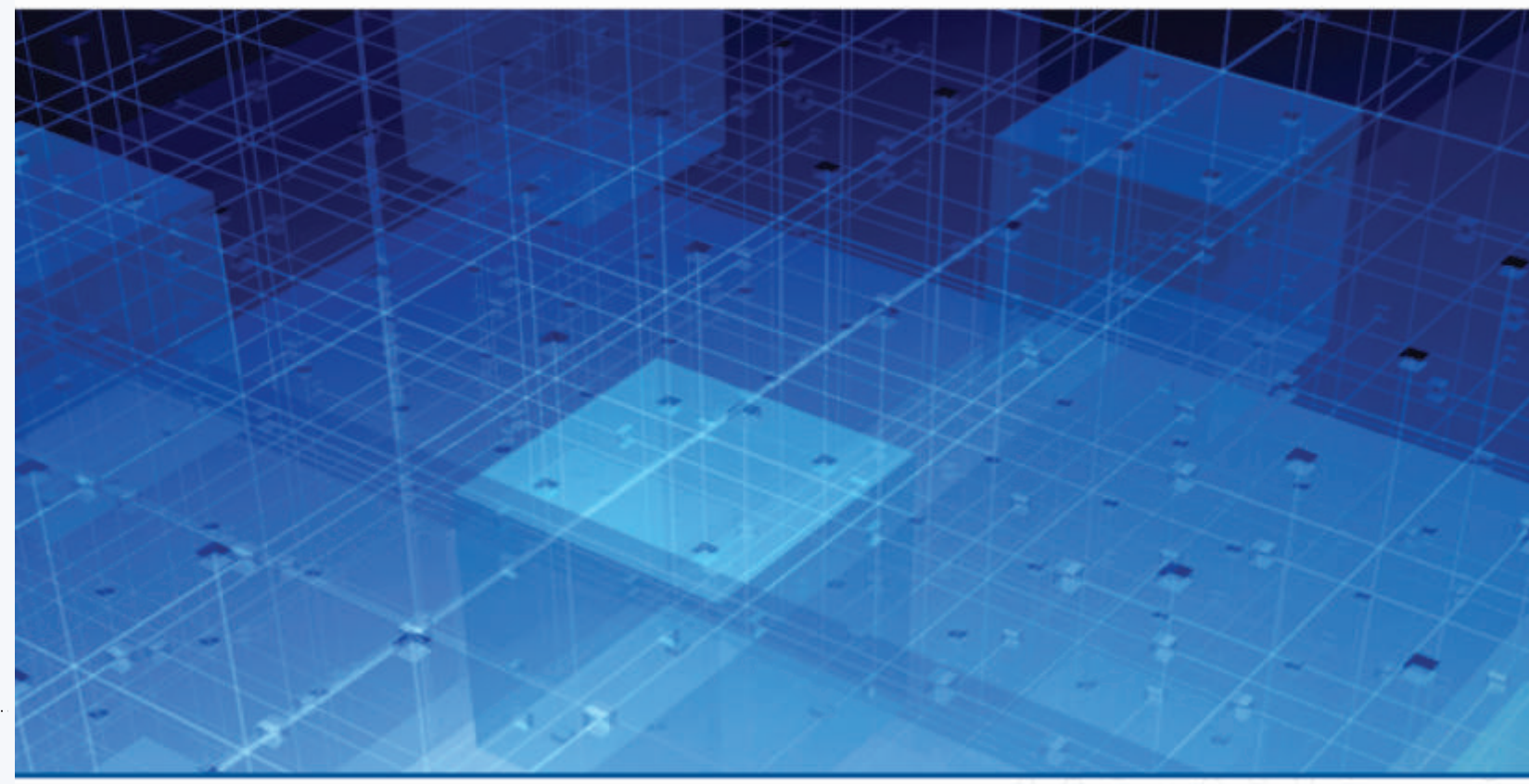
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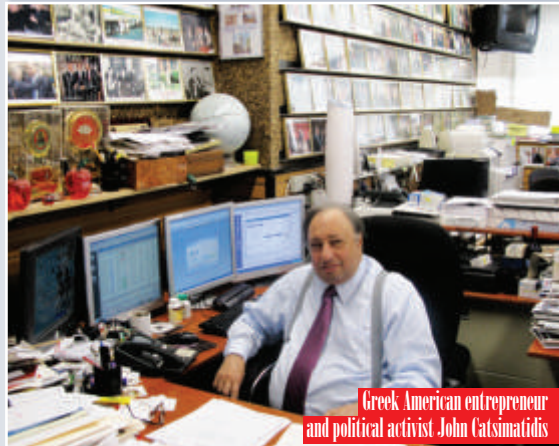
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Greek Americans to host U. S. House and Senate Leaders in New York

The 2010 campaign season kicks off in full swing this September as the Greek and Cypriot communities host the leaders of United States Congress in a series of receptions and dinners in Manhattan. The Greek American community has made great strides in recent years and has become known as a force in national politics.



Greek American entrepreneur and political activist John Catsimatidis



Congressman John Sarbanes



Congressman Gus Bilirakis



Senator Kirsten Gillibrand



US Senator Harry Reid

According to entrepreneur and political activist John Catsimatidis, "the Community has finally come together as a cohesive political force in the United States. Our community and our Church has so many issues the Congress can help us with, such as the safety and well being of our Ecumenical Patriarch or the unification of Cyprus. These dinners and receptions give us the opportunity to talk with these leaders on a personal level." It's also a question of abiding to tradition when it comes to Hellenes: "Greeks invented Democracy, we should have

a big hand in seeing that it succeeds," said Catsimatidis. "These gatherings are Democracy in action."

First on the calendar is the Majority Leader of the United States Senate Harry Reid of Nevada. He began his political career in the 70's when at the age of 30, he was elected the youngest Lt. Governor in the history of Nevada. After two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, Senator Reid was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1986. Now in his 4th term, he was elected Senate Majority Leader in 2005.

At this time, given the near veto proof majority of Senate Democrats, Senator Reid bears a tremendous responsibility for the direction of the Country, plus he is up for election in 2010. He will be hosted September 13, 2009, 6-8PM, at Persephone Restaurant, Manhattan.

Next on agenda is a favorite son of the Greek American Community, Congressman Gus Bilirakis of Tampa, Florida. Gus' father, Mike Bilirakis, served in the Congress for 24 years during which time he became the leading advocate for veterans of the military services, and like his father, Gus has taken up the cause for veteran rights since he succeeded his father in 2006.

Congressman Bilirakis serves on the House Committees on Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs. Known on Capitol Hill as a consensus builder and a common sense Congressman, Gus has earned a reputation as a member who can draft and move legislation through the maze of the House of Representatives. He will be hosted September 17, 2009, 5:30PM-7:30PM, at the Friars Club, Manhattan. New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand is the community's next guest. She was Senator a Congresswoman from upstate New York when she was chosen to fill the vacancy after Senator Clinton was appointed to Secretary of State. Senator Gillibrand is up for election in 2010.

Senator Gillibrand serves on the Environment and Public Works, Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, Special Committee on Aging and the all important Foreign Relations committee. The Greek American community is just getting to know the new Senator and nearly all the leaders of the Community are the host committee, September 25, 2009, 6PM - 8PM at the Regency Hotel, Manhattan.

Another favorite son of the Greek American community comes to New York this fall. Congressman John Sarbanes, the son of former U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes, represents Maryland's 3rd Congressional district in the U.S. Congress. The young Sarbanes sits on the Energy and Commerce and the Natural Resources Committees. This is the Congressman's second term and has gained a reputation of a hard working legislator who strives to provide first rate constituent services and practical solutions for the challenges that face Maryland's working families.

Senator Paul Sarbanes will be coming with the Congressman to a New York reception and dinner October 9, 2009, 6PM -8PM, also in Manhattan.

Full details on each of the events are available from the offices of John Catsimatidis (212-956-5803, Tmwred@aol.com).



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Plessas and Evi live

Mimis Plessas

Mimis Plessas with Christos Rafalides

For love and death, eros and love, gallantry, freedom, faith and ideals, I sang and I screamed. And I lived my life trying not to hurt the silence because I know that inside of her, the world's harmony is nested.

— Plessas' words of wisdom

Mimis Plessas: A Man for All Seasons Returns to New York

By Eleni Daniels

Sometimes you need to look back to move forward. Just ask Mimis Plessas. He is the man for all seasons. The American-educated and prolific multi-award winning Greek composer and pianist continues to build on his illustrious career, and is eager to soon embrace New York and perform for a whole new generation on this side of the Atlantic.

Throughout his illustrious 50-plus year career, Plessas is the thread that has weaved the fabric of Greek song and film, theatre, radio and television in a wide genre of music. Since his first composition in 1952, he has received numerous honorable distinctions and accolades in Greece and worldwide in France, Spain, Belgium, Edinburgh, United States, Japan, Carlovi Vary (Czech Republic), Altomonte, Italy, and more recently in Rotterdam (Netherlands). He has directed renowned orchestras of the world and repeatedly earned Gold and Platinum records. The popular Greek record "O Dromos" (The Road/1969) with music by Plessas, lyrics by Lefteris Papadopoulos and vocals by Pouloupoulos, is by far, the best-selling album in Greek music.

Plessas got his start as a pianist in New York in the early 50s. He played along with jazz greats like pianist Art Tatum, the "Divine One" Sarah Vaughn, legendary alto saxophonist and clarinetist Jimmy Dorsey, trombonist and band leader Tommy Dorsey, among others. And some of them influenced his international career. They called him "D" — his full name, Demetrios,

was a mouthful to pronounce. And since then, "D" has become the Mimis Plessas we know — a legendary name in Europe and beyond with a vast repertoire of music, awards and accolades. When he performed in the U.S., it was for international artists at notable venues like Carnegie Hall and Café de Paris in New York and North Side's Ivanhoe Theatre in Chicago. But this time, it's different.

"This time it is a great honor to perform at Jazz at Lincoln Center and Queens Theatre and to have the children of our children there to experience the essence of my music," said Plessas.

Plessas will perform in the company of soulful vocalist Evi Siamanda and leading vibraphonist Christos Rafalides at Queens Theatre in the Park "Plessas in New York" (Sept 26, 27) and at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola "Evi Siamanda Sings Mimis Plessas" for the 5th Annual Women in Jazz Festival (Sept 28).

His love of jazz began as a young teenager, with his first asphalt record of the Benny Goodman Trio with Teddy Wilson on piano. He played it over and over.

"I started discovering the piano when my beloved grandmother died and by then the pianos and the radios were shut for six months for our "penthos" [mourning]," said Plessas. "The divinity of music has her own ways of choosing who would be the best."

In 1951, as a young pianist studying in the U.S. at the University of Minnesota Duluth, he received the first award in Music. In 1952, he was recognized as the fifth top pianist in the U.S., right above Oscar Peterson's (Canadian jazz pianist) name.

And while he is a distinguished pianist, Plessas is also a chemist. He was awarded a scholarship to attend Cornell University in New York where he pursued his PhD in chemistry on the protein myelin, believed to be critical in the process of myelination of nerves in the central nervous system whose reduction of which is directly associated with Muscular Dystrophy (MS). The results of which, according to Plessas, are applied by scientists around the world. He was mandated to return to Greece, serve in the military and care for his family who was in a "needy position" following the war.

He ruefully reflects how in every stage of his life in Greece, he was hiding two things — being an award-winning pianist and his PhD. "My every step was a fine line between luck and necessity. [In Greece], when we were speaking about the wonders of science and technology, we were not called futurologists but rather, 'katastrafo-logists' (doom-makers)."

In his early years in Athens, Plessas was "discovered" by singer Danae where he distinguished himself among peers as the first piano soloist on Greek radio. In 1939, he began hosting a radio show twice a week

in Athens called "Trianta Defterolepta" (30 Seconds) with various one-on-one interviews. He recalls how, for many years, this was his only hope.

His extremely popular radio show was soon ordered off-air by the Junta-run Greek government at the time, as a result of Plessas not agreeing to disclose his interview questions in advance.

During the mid 40s, together with his quartet and orchestras, he collaborated with all the popular singers of the time including Maroudas, Moli, Panagopoulos, Zaxa, Makouli, and others. And since the late 50s, his music has been celebrated in all genres of cinema, theatre, operettas, concerto suites, radio and television. He is widely known for the music he scored in the 60s for his 104 Greek movies, interpreted by popular singers like Marinella, Tzeni Vanou, Voskopoulos, and Pouloupoulos.

And Plessas' midas touch has turned the careers of many popular names in Greece including those of Zoe Kourkouki, Nana Mouskouri, Giovanna, Rena Koumioti, Yiannis Voyiatzis, Fotis Dimas, Stratos Dionisiou, and more.

"All the great actors that were already famous were my inspiration. And all the new talents since 1960 were either discovered or brought to fame through our productions. Every one of them shares in my memories, and I owe them a great part of my inspirations."

His music was original and ahead of its time. He had a keen talent in composing music to best reach each singer's potential. Plessas soon became a sought-after composer. Since 1959, every director asked the producer to use Plessas for the soundtrack of their film.

"The producers denied knowing my radio career since 1939 believing that I was not a composer. Even so, my first film was "Na Petheros na Malama" starring Dimitri Horn, who insisted that I was the only one who could give a different approach to the scoring of a Greek movie. I will never forget to thank Dimitri Ioannides, Ion Daifas and Marios Nousias who believed in me and helped me in my first attempt."

And in more recent years, his music has been adapted to contemporary, jazz, and world music rearrangements.

"I tried not to repeat myself. Every score was so different from the other! During my 25-year cinema era, I scored all kinds of Greek film productions. Happily, most of them were ahead of our time. This is the main reason that today my repertoire has received such recognition."

Plessas' contributions to the arts and culture transcend generations, geographical borders and musical platforms. He turns 85 in October and with his signature style of maturity and wisdom, he continues to compose, perform and inspire musicians of all ages throughout Europe and now back in

New York. "There is no doubt that many Greeks have the talent to produce interesting ways of expressions. To be inspired by our own heritage.... so rich! I don't know if this will happen in Greece [in the future], where political winds are pushing one way or the other, and usually not the talented and not the chosen."

He reflects on what has been his greatest achievement.

"Please give me the benefit to believe the things I will do in the near future will be more mature, and that we (I) last long enough to inspire the coming generations."

And, his ultimate goal? "To leave an unfinished symphony when the time comes? Who knows."

Plessas is a gift to humanity. His rare energy and zeal is evident in all his artistic work. His soul and enthusiasm is admirable. He is eager to return to New York and perform with Rafalides and Siamanda. Their recent CD recording - "echo: the music of Mimis Plessas" (produced by Rafalides, Emarel Music) features Plessas' music rearranged by Rafalides in a mosaic of global rhythms with Plessas on piano.

"[Plessas] is always inspiring and soulful. The man is a living legend. Love every single minute of it," said Rafalides. Experience the essence of their music later this month. For more information, please visit www.queenstheatre.org, www.jalc.org.

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Hellenic Business Network (HBN) will officially launch our latest chapter, HBN New York, on Tuesday, October 13, 2009 at the New York University Kimmel Center's Rosenthal Pavilion (10th floor) overlooking Washington Square Park in New York city.

Join us as we are expanding in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut area - a very important growth area for HBN and one that will give us (in addition to Boston and San Francisco) a significant presence on a national level.

Our overall vision is for our Hellenic community to be nationally and internationally recognized for education and research excellence, creativity and entrepreneurial success, and globally competitive business development in targeted industry sectors.

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Convertibles Reborn?

These Securities Have Existed Since the 1800s, but Many People are Only Beginning to Hear About Them, Thanks to Significant, Broad-Based Undervaluation and Certain Specific Characteristics.

Investment
Front



By John P. Calamos Sr.

Stock prices could not have rebounded as they have in 2009 without a major shift in investors' risk tolerance levels—from extreme caution in the second half of 2008, to greater risk appetite this year. Whether or not this continues is uncertain, and the stock market is historically a leading indicator. However, as the global economy begins to move out of recession, important headwinds remain in housing, employment, and consumers' propensity to spend. We are convinced that an effective way to hedge this uncertain scenario is through convertibles.

Convertibles are hybrid securities that can potentially change from a bond into a stock, usually at a predetermined conversion price. The bond element offers typical fixed-income characteristics: a coupon and greater capital preservation potential. The conversion into stock unleashes potential benefits in a market rally. Thus, convertibles are a way to invest in the stock market with potentially less risk—while receiving a return prior to the conversion.

The Calamos convertible strategy has not only acted defensively (and provided strong absolute returns this year), but it has done so with less volatility than stocks. Due to these risk/reward characteristics we, at the Calamos organization, have always regarded our convertible strategy as a core risk control element in asset allocations for moderate-to-conservative investors. However, convertibles need not be confined to these investors. It is not the convertible security that makes a strategy work, but how it is used to achieve a specific investment objective. Convertible portfolios can be managed across the risk spectrum, from very aggressive to very conservative. Our emphasis is on how we manage the convertible portfolios, rather than on convertibles as an asset class.

If convertibles, however, have performed well—capping the potential for future upside—is there still opportunity to begin an allocation? It depends. If you are the type of investor that sought to benefit exclusively from the large price dislocations that drove this market to the lowest

valuations in decades, you missed part of the excitement. The gap has closed fast, but not entirely. Based on Calamos proprietary valuations, we estimated that convertibles were trading at a 4.6% discount to theoretical fair value, as of July 31, 2009. This means that even if stocks do not rally, the valuation gap may continue to close, potentially providing a positive return. Reversion to fair value is unpredictable, but in prior cycles the process has taken several quarters, typically characterized by heightened market volatility.

Volatile markets that seem to lead nowhere, as in the late 70s and early 80s, can be excellent periods to manage the risk/reward element of convertibles, with one word of caution: quality. Triple C-rated convertibles have taken investors for a nice ride this year. We missed that ride on purpose. We are very leery of valuations that are not supported by the issuers' underlying fundamentals and know well how quickly a relative return advantage, especially one based on lower-quality issues, may reverse itself in volatile markets. This brings us to a second type of investor.

If your goal is to mitigate risk over the longer term, your entry point into convertibles is broad and should not focus exclusively on the current undervaluation gap. As a firm, we have managed convertibles as a defensive equity strategy for more than 30 years, over which we have always found undervalued securities, whether or not the convertible universe as a whole has been undervalued.

All in all, wealth management is about balancing risk with opportunity. We have always believed, and continue to believe today, that a good way to seek that balance is through a disciplined, long-term and time-tested approach to convertible investing.

For comments or additional information please contact us at JPCsr@calamos.com, or 888.857.7604.

The opinions referenced are as of August 2009 and are subject to change due to changes in the market or economic conditions and may not necessarily come to pass. Information contained herein is for informational purposes only and should not be considered investment advice. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Please visit www.calamos.com for additional information regarding investment strategies, current performance and important risk information.

Martin was born in New York City, the son of Constantine Martin, a Greek Orthodox priest (his mother Lillian, a nutritionist, ran the Sand Castle diner in Beachwood, New Jersey). He graduated from Yale and had a year left to get his law degree from NYU when he dropped out to pursue comedy. "It's weird to make a decision where everyone in your life disapproves, pretty vocally and directly," he now says. "They said, 'You've got one year left. Just do it.' I had a full scholarship so I didn't have to pay for it. I ignored them. They asked, 'Why don't you just get the degree so you can have it?' And I said, 'You don't understand. I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do and now I know. I have the answer and it's dumb to waste any more time.'"

The priest's son from New York City and law school dropout is now the hottest thing in comedy

Recently Martin was interviewed by Guy Raz on NPR's *All Things Considered*.

RAZ: You started doing standup a little more than a decade ago. And some people will know this. At the time, you were at NYU Law School. This is after you had graduated from Yale. Did people, particularly your parents, think you were insane for doing that?

MARTIN: Everybody was disappointed. Pretty much everybody I knew was surprised and disappointed. It was a strange feeling in life to have kind of across-the-board disappointment, disenchantment.

RAZ: Your dad was a Greek Orthodox priest. Your mom ran the family's diner. It almost sounds like the next line should be, and they walked into a bar.

MARTIN: Yeah.

RAZ: Was home a place where you could be funny? I mean - or did your parents sort of kind of demand achievement and discipline and things like that?

MARTIN: In my family, I think what they do, I learned later when I took Intro Psych, I figured it out: Operant Conditioning. You know Operant Conditioning where you - I guess you reward the behavior you like and you just withhold praise from what you don't like. So you don't really punish anybody or yell at them or anything.

It's just that when they do something you like, you give them a lot of praise, and say that's so great, and they tell all their friends,

he's doing this. For example, I was a White House intern the summer before I dropped out of law school. Everybody knew about it. I'd come home and go to church and everybody would say, oh, my God. Demetri, you're working at the White House. And I guess my parents, my mom had told everybody, he's working at the White House, you know? The next summer, I started doing standup comedy, and when I'd come home, nobody knows. What, you're doing what? This is the kind of a shameful move from the White House to open mics.

RAZ: Most people got to know you from the "The Daily Show" as the youth correspondent. And I want to play a clip of you giving young people some financial advice.

(Soundbite of "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart")

MARTIN: Young people, listen up. Protect your credit. Number one, don't put your credit card near a magnet...It can erase it. So, like, if you are going to buy magnets, use cash...Two, if you're locked out of your apartment, don't use your credit card to break in, it'll damage the card. Instead, use the card to buy a new apartment...

RAZ: Did you ever think that you would make it? I mean, I guess that's sort of a strange question, because what are you going to say, yeah, I thought I was going to

make it. But I mean, were you pretty confident that you could actually give up all this stuff, you know, law school and this person that your parents may be wanted you to be, and actually make it in the entertainment industry?

MARTIN: When I started, I dropped out of law school when I was 24, and I started doing standup that summer. And I tried to switch from this idea of big achievements or being a lawyer or senator or something like that.

RAZ: A senator?

MARTIN: Well, I didn't - I don't know if I ever wanted to be a senator, but I was student council president and president of some other things when I was a kid. So I had, like, a really good track record. I hadn't lost any elections from, like, sixth grade. So my family said, he's going to be a senator. Like, look at this streak he has going here. It's like, not very realistic when you're president of, like, the Greek Orthodox Youth Association at church or something like, he's going to be a senator. He's two-time GOYA president, come on. Here we go. But what I was going to say was, I just figured I'm going to go boldly in the direction of my dreams, say it as Thoreau would say, and just see where it takes me. And my only rule being if when I wake in the morning I'm looking forward to the things that I have to do that day, then I'm on the right track.

Demetri Martin is currently starring in the film, *Taking Woodstock*, which is about a nebbish from upstate New York who convinces his parents to let him host a rock concert. The 35-year-old Emmy-award winning comedian has worked on *The Daily Show* and hosts his own show on Comedy Central called *Important Things with Demetri Martin*.

Demetri Martin



Photo: Martin Schoeller

Clarinet virtuoso Lefteris Bournias



Lefteris Bournias: Clarinet master of music East and West

Renown clarinet virtuoso Lefteris Bournias will join The Meandros Ensemble on Friday, October 9, 8:00 p.m. at Peter Norton Symphony Space (Broadway at 95th Street, New York) for a concert on "Old World Sounds from Greece and Turkey", sponsored by the World Music Institute that this year celebrates its 25th anniversary.

By Demetrios Rhompotis

Led by the brilliant oud (lute) player/vocalist Mavrothi Kontanis, the ensemble recreates the music of the 1920s -1940s, specializing in Smyrneika and early rembetika ("Greek blues") songs, which have their roots in the urban music of Constantinople (Istanbul), Smyrna and later Athens and Thessaloniki. The program will feature many songs which were originally performed by the most recognizable names of the time, including Antonios Dhiamantidis, Roza Eskenazi and Rita Abadzi, along with music from the Ottoman repertoire. Violinist Megan Gould and percussionist Timothy Quigley will also join for what is promising to be a memorable evening.

Lefteris, although born and raised in New York, is the artist par excellence to feature in a program encompassing songs from both sides of the Aegean. His parents came to the US from the island of Chios (abreast the Turkish coast) but their ancestors moved there from the town of Krini, modern day Tsesme, in Asia Minor. While a young child, he remembers sitting on his father's lap (Elias Bournias, a Greek flogera player) and under his direction, bang out rhythms on pillows while listening to Turkish and Greek night club music.

At this point, one could say the rest is history and avoid a longer introduction; things, however, are not that simple. While his interest in music was there from the beginning, his involvement with the clarinet at which he has excelled ever since, prompting New York based jazz musician and composer Spiros Exaras to call him "perhaps the best of all," came later. It was Classic Rock and the bands of the 70's that captured his attention and while in Athens, where the family moved for a period of time before resettling to New York, he asked his mother to buy him an electric guitar. She was hesitant at first, as he remembers, but then she conceded, offering an alternative at the same time: "Hey, why don't you get a clarinet instead and make your father happy?" "Clarinet!!!" he exclaimed. "What are you talking

about?" But almost like a bolt of lightening, the idea stayed with him and that summer he bought his first clarinet.

He was also extremely fortunate to live near a legendary gypsy clarinetist, Vasilis Soukas, and he soon frequented his house for lessons while attending the Athens Conservatory of Music under the guidance of clarinetist Mr. Farandatos. Upon returning to New York with his family, Lefteris attended the Aaron Copeland School of Music, earning a B.A. in Performance, and a Masters of Science in Music Education, and attempted a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology (still pending!). Ever since, he has performed and recorded with many highly acclaimed groups, singers and musicians, amongst them, The New York Pops (under the direction of Skitch Henderson), The New York Philharmonic, En hordes, Uri Cane, Charles Genus, Henry Hay, Matt Garisson, Gene Lake, Charles Blesing, Steve Haas, Elektra Ensemble, Nikos and Giasemi Saragoudas, Spiros Exaras Band, Avram Pengas Noga Group, Ara Dinkjian, Uri Yunakoff, Omar Faruk Tekbelik, Okay Temiz, Selim Sesler, Takis Zaharatos, Hristos Antoniadis, Stathis Aggelopoulos, Eleni Legaki, Nikos Hatzopoulos, Makis Hristodouloupoulos, Pitsa Papadopoulou, Peggy Zina and Doukissa.

As a diverse and versatile musician, Lefteris moves between Greek traditional, Gypsy, Classical, Turkish Gypsy, and elements of Jazz (rhythmical and harmonic) with the ease and grace of a real cosmopolitan! No wonder he is eagerly sought after for weddings, family gatherings, concerts and other social events. Responding to the demand, more than a decade ago he was instrumental in forming Apollo Orchestras with the goal of serving the Greek- American Community with quality, traditional, and modern Greek music as well as American music

(<http://www.apolloorchestras.com/music/profile.asp>).

The Meandros Ensemble in action
From left, Megan Gould, Mavrothi Kontanis, Lefteris Bournias and Timothy Quigley.



This coming October, as part of The Meandros Ensemble, you will appear at the Symphony Space, offering a wide range of Greek and Eastern Mediterranean music, especially from the area of Smyrna. It sounds very exciting.

Yes. I am very excited. My roots are traced back to Asia Minor. My father's side of the family was originally from "Krini" or what they call today Tsesme. They had moved to Chios many generations before the Catastrophe (the genocide and forced expulsion of the remaining Greeks from Turkey) and settled in a village atop Mount Pelineon called Spartounda. Every year I travel to Tsesme and Smyrna and I must say, I feel a special connection, a vibe if you will. I am sure it is my ancestors greeting me in my return to the homeland. As you can imagine, I am in turn nostalgic and being able to play the music of my ancestors...Well it is something like a ritual, a tribute to all Hellenes that lived and thrived in Asia Minor.

Is Meandros trying to reinterpret this extremely rich tradition, in other words, are you also experimenting by amplifying it and perhaps incorporating other elements that match and enhance their expressive capabilities?

On the contrary, Meandros is trying to capture the energy and nostalgia of that period in time. We try to do this by staying as close as possible to all stylistic nuances of the time. Everything, from the original orchestration, forms, timbre of instruments etc. but mostly trying to recapture the lost soul of that music. I myself have been playing a metal clarinet in the key of G in order to stay as close as possible to the timbre of the players and especially the legendary Sukru Tunar that recorded much with Greek singers during that time.

Was the Cafe Aman America project, of

which you were part, an early pioneer of some sort in terms of reintroducing this music to America with a local flavor?

The Cafe Aman Project was an experimental project which kept elements such as nuances in text (Greenglish) and adding different elements like style (electric guitar), experimental harmonies and traditional instruments to songs of the cafe Aman period recorded here in the U.S.

You started as a rock musician, playing guitar, and then you turned to traditional Greek and South European music, taking up clarinet! At first, it sounds like an oxymoron, but given the fact that both styles, rock and traditional music, express genuine needs, are they as different as they sound?

I think all music has a common thread. I would not be the musician I am today without my influences from the rock bands of the 70's which I so adored. The soul in much of this music, based on rhythm and blues, expressed hardships, much similar as our traditional music. The improvisational nature is the backbone that connects the two. Using "traditional" instruments or rather more modal elements to newer forms is something that has been done and is being done as we speak. The Spiros Exaras Band is an example of a union between contemporary harmonies and traditional rhythms in a improvisational frenzy. Local musicians around the world are being discovered through the Internet, YouTube, Facebook etc. and the world is more unified in many ways, music being one of them. I am writing certain things now that will be using world elements. I am envisioning vocalizing from distant, remote parts of the world in a dialogue with clarinet.

It seems there are three kinds of "ethnic" music: a) the very traditional, as close as possible to the original form b) a more flexible style, incorporating new things and

instruments c) a vague attempt at creating sth. that sounds exotic enough to claim "ethnic" status. Can you be both "ethnic" and original, creating even a totally new form of music that will be able to organically absorb elements of many traditions, remaining at the same time totally modern?

It should be the goal of every artist. That is to say to be their own and to create their own sound and stuff. To be "modern" takes care of itself. We live with today's sounds. We have different vibrations than people who lived even 50 years ago. The main goal is to take these vibrations and interpret them with your own experiences. This will make you original, to be distinctive and recognizable in your music.

As far as discography, is there anything new in the offing?

There is one album coming up with Electra Curtis with Shimon Shaheen and Bob Stewart on Tuba, another with Pashalis Periphanis and his ensemble from Thrace, and two more, one of dance music with The Kavala Brass Band and one with my wedding band Apollo Orchestras. I am also gathering ideas and building my studio for my own project to come soon.



Apollo Orchestras
Lefteris bournias, Spiros Cardamis, Kostas Fotiadis and Kostas Konstantinou.

Alexi goes to

PHOTOS: John Sciulli© Berliner Studio/BEImages



Alexi Giannoulas with Jim and Ann Gianopoulos



Alexi Giannoulas with Arianna Huffington



Endy Zemenides, Nia Vardalos, Ian Gomez



Peter Constantinides, Melina Kanakaredes, Alexi Giannoulas, Greg Pappas and Brandon Wilson



Alexi Giannoulas, Melina Kanakaredes, Peter Constantinides



Alexi Giannoulas & Peter Fasseas, Paula Fasseas, Alexis Fasseas



...Hollywood!

By Alexandros Mizan

This past August, in a typical Los Angeles fashion, Hollywood met Washington at the star-studded fundraiser Chairman of Fox Studios Jim Gianopoulos and his wife Ann hosted for Alexi Giannoulas, the 33-year old Greek-American who is running for US Senate in the state of Illinois.

Among the Giannoulas supporters who attended the event were Nia Vardalos ("My Big Fat Greek Wedding" and "My Life in Ruins"), Melina Kanakaredes ("CSI New York"), Kary Antholis President of HBO, Michael Chiklis ("The Shield"; "Fantastic Four"), Arianna Huffington of the Huffington Post, Paul Adelstein ("Private Practice") and

leaders of the American Hellenic Council such as its legendary Vice President Aris Anagnos, famous for his liberal political action over the years, Dino Andrianos and Mike Galanakis, the current President of the Council, who have both been active in SAE and in the local political scene over the years and have been early supporters of

Alexi in his campaign for the Senate. They were optimistic for Alexi's success and were eager to be there and help him every step of the way. Mr. Anagnos expressed his satisfaction that Mr. Giannoulas is a healthcare-reform supporter and has a very good shot at a US Senate seat. Guests had also the opportunity to meet and greet the new Consul General of Greece in Los Angeles, Mrs. Elisavet Fotiadou.

After the attendees got a chance to taste the Greek-cuisine hoer d'oeuvres, Mr. Gianopoulos warmly greeted Mr. Giannoulas with a short, sincere introduction. He stressed that he sees in Alexi a new generation that is needed in the Senate in order to bring meaningful change in the way business is done in Washington. It's notable that even though Mr. Gianopoulos is generally not involved in political activities, he chose Mr. Giannoulas and opened his home to him. Later, Alexi after he mentioned he was excited to be in Hollywood, he joked that if he hadn't had "other obligations" he would be totally content living at Mr. Gianopoulos' guest house.

Giannoulas, 33, is the son of Greek immigrants and is the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination for President Barack Obama's old Senate seat. "I was honored to have so many Greek Americans and philhellenes come out and support our campaign in Los Angeles. Greeks are a generous people in everything we do, and I've seen that every day on the campaign trail. All across Illinois, and even from coast to coast, Greek Americans are offering their time, money, and support to this campaign, and I am incredibly grateful for their support," Giannoulas said.

This race is the opportune moment for Greeks to show their political force. "Greek Americans have demonstrated in the past, specifically with Michael Dukakis that they can come together nationally and work to elect their own candidates. This election provides us with another change to prove that yes, we are a political force that is on par with any other community or advocacy group in the United States."

In March, Giannoulas launched an Exploratory Committee for the Senate run, and raised \$1.1 million in less than one month. Since then, Giannoulas ranks second in fundraising for Senate candidates seeking open seats. Polls show him with a commanding lead in the Democratic primary, which will occur on February 2, 2010, less than five months from now.

The event wended down a little before sunset but not before almost everybody had a chance to speak one-to-one with the promising new star of Greek-American politics. Overall, it was a quiet gathering with a typical Greek family feeling, where one felt at home, even if you were next to Hollywood celebrities and political figures.

The Alexi for Illinois Campaign also contributed to this report.

By Alexander Mizan

Beverly Hills event to support Dina Titus

Greek American Congresswoman Dina Titus (D-NV03) had the opportunity to reiterate her unwavering support for the unification of Cyprus and the protection of the name and territory of Macedonia from unfounded claims by FYROM, at a fundraising event and discussion of current political issues held this past August in Beverly Hills, CA, as part of her effort to raise awareness about healthcare and energy reform and to reconfirm her support for Greek issues.



AHC Board Members Dino Andrianos, Aris Anagnos and Mike Galanakis with Congresswoman Dina Titus



Congresswoman Dina Titus with LADWP CEO and GM David Nahai



Isaura Anagnos of the American Hellenic Council with Congresswoman Dina Titus

The event was hosted by Mr. & Mrs. David Nahai, CEO and General Manager of the LA Department of Water and Power, the largest municipal utility in the country, that has been a strong proponent of renewable energy in an effort to take California to the next level of clean power generation. Several members of the American Hellenic Council attended the event, including President Mike Galanakis, Mr. Aris Anagnos & Mr. Dinos Andrianos.

During the event, Ms. Titus expressed her backing for energy reform and pursuing renewable energy as a solution to our dependence on foreign oil and curtailment of emissions. She has a strong record in her state for pursuing aggressive renewable energy portfolio standards and successfully pushing legislation for net metering.

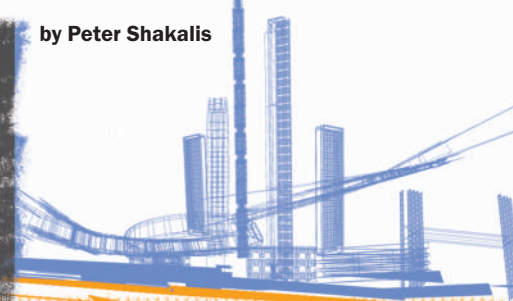
As one could expect, a hot topic at the event among attendees was healthcare reform. Ms. Titus repeatedly stressed her support for comprehensive healthcare reform, including supporting a public option and other proposals that liberal Democrats are backing.

In private discussions with American Hellenic Council board members, Ms. Titus referred to her recent trip to Greece as President Obama's special envoy to the opening ceremony of the New Acropolis Museum last June. She mentioned that she was taken aback by the country's hospitality and impressed by the new museum.

The fundraiser event coincided with the announcement of Mr. John Guedry, a former executive at City National Bank, that he would be running on the Republican Ticket against Ms. Titus in the upcoming election. Mr. Guedry is a former bank executive from Nevada, a state that has been suffering from one of the highest foreclosure rates in the country. When asked about the new opponent, Ms. Titus seemed confident that Nevadans will support her over someone who worked in the industry that is the cause for their woes.

Dina Titus is a first-term Member of the US House of Representatives from Nevada's Third District. Before being elected to the House in 2008, she had also served at the Nevada State Senate for 20 years concurrently to her Political Science teaching position at the University of Nevada.

by Peter Shakalis



SOME THAWING IN THE FROZEN OFFICE MARKETS...

The Manhattan commercial office market has seemed to transition from a market with no or very little demand for space to one where tenants and landlords are again engaged in the sometimes protracted process of searching for the right space and negotiating a lease. While there was more decline in pricing and we expect competitive pressures on rent levels to continue, we may be looking at something in its nascent stage, attitudes about how to approach the property markets did begin to change in the second quarter.

Investors, tenants and landlords have all been looking for signs that the bottom in the recession was within sight. This would be their signal that they needed to get back into the real estate market. In the second quarter, there were some tentative signs that the bottom was approaching. For New York City, as an example, one of those events was the permission received by ten major banks that allowed them to repay the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds to the Treasury, which they proceeded to do.

While the business and regulatory landscape has certainly changed for financial institutions, repaying the TARP funds helps give these banks the capacity to respond to this new environment in a systematic and business driven way. As one of the forces that drives the New York City economy, a strong and innovative financial services industry is an important component in the recovery of its property market.

Monitoring the amount of space added and removed from the market on a weekly basis shows that market performance in the beginning second quarter was essentially a continuation of the first quarter as demand for space weakened at a very rapid pace. However this slippage slowed by the latter half of May when compared to earlier in the year. Overall market fundamentals continued their decline during the 2nd quarter, but there was clearly a moderation in the second half of the quarter. We saw that firms that earlier were not even beginning the decision making process about their respective future space and occupancy needs quickly shifted and ramped up their search activity.

With the average effective rents down by close to 40% from the peak rent numbers in 2008, many firms have decided that rents are close enough to bottom that an additional decline would not be sufficient enough to deter them from moving forward on leasing deals. In fact mid June to the end of July saw twenty two lease transactions of 50,000 square feet or more, a substantial increase in transactions in that size range. While it is too early to speak of the office market with great confidence, the signs seem to be pointing in a positive direction.

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

Harry Markopolos, the man who uncovered Madoff

"No one paid us, a four man team, to uncover Bernard Madoff. We paid out of our pockets. We had to stand up and do this for free, for patriotism," said Harry Markopolos, guest speaker at this year's Sophocles and Louisa Zoullas Memorial Hellenic Lecture, held last month on the grounds of the Dormition of Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church in the Hamptons. Over four hundred persons attended from the tri-state area, including former Senator Alphonse D'Amato, Judge Nicholas Garaufis, Margo and John Catsimatidis and other prominent individuals.



Mr. Harry Markopolos with Rev. Alexander Karloutsos.



Mr. Nicholas Zoullas, sponsor of this unique lecture series.



Mr. Harry Markopolos speaking with John and Margo Catsimatidis.

Dr. Peter Michalos, the program moderator, made the introduction. "It is always an academic and religious event held twice a year," he said. "Tonight, this lecture is about Democracy and Justice. Mr. Markopolos, who is of Chian background, is a teacher and educator. He explained to the United States Congress and the entire world what financial transparency is all about. The Ancient Greek Philosopher Isocrates said 'the roots of education are often bitter, but the fruit is sweet'."

Bernard Madoff cost thousands of investors \$65 billion, according to a recent report by Larry Neumeister. "Many people were negligent in the Madoff fraud, including the government's watchdog agencies. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chairman Mary Shapiro has said the agency has been revamping itself, buttressing enforcement efforts and taking initiatives to protect investors following the Madoff scandal." In his lecture, Mr. Markopolos explained that his "documentation was buried in the SEC and ignored. SEC had a negative attitude towards his findings. The Hedge Fund industry must be more diligent to customers, revealing exactly what they

are doing, and not in secret. This is a global tragedy. Research, Non-profit Institutions, Endowments are now gone. The banking and security regulators were asleep, destroying the United States' credibility." His dry sense of humor kept everyone's attention during the lecture. He described complex events in simple terms understandable to the average person.

"I know I am not a hero," said Markopolos. "Nor am I brave. We were four men of four faiths who worked against an Army of Bernard Madoff. We tried going to the Press. The Press thought we were crazy and did not print our findings. One may ask where did the Ponzi money go? Twelve percent went to victims and individual investments. Feeder funds and marketing agencies received four percent. Madoff received one percent." A Ponzi scheme uses money from new clients to pay off old ones. According to a recent interview with Bernard Madoff in Neumeister's article, "it might be in many different venues ...because money was paid out to Feeders."

Markopolos believes the Feeder Agencies helped Madoff to succeed. "Greeks are tactless. I tell it like it is. Madoff did not allow outside audits, taking money from organized crime and nations. Forty-nine

nations were affected by this Ponzi scheme. We are now less trusting of financial institutions. What frightened our team of four persons was that the Press could not take Madoff down. He was the President of Nasdaq. We were really worried about ourselves. I believed that if Madoff found out I turned him in, I would not be long for this world."

Mr. Harry Markopolos was born in Erie, Pennsylvania in a tight knit Greek-American family. His seventeen year military background in the Army National Guard and Reserve, where he served as a lieutenant to major, was revealed in his lecture by describing his strategy against Madoff in military terms. His brilliance as a mathematician is legendary.

Mr. Nicholas Zoullas funded this exceptional event free to the community for persons of all background. His generosity is enabling mainstream America to meet the top religious thinkers and prominent persons shaping the image of the twenty-first century Greek American. Rev. Alexander Karloutsos, the Parish Dean, Mr. Dimitrios Hatgistavrou, the Parish President and their Community are commended for their efforts to enhance the quality of intellectual life on the East End of Long Island.

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 their peers.

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.

Name: George T. Soterakis

Position: Attorney, Winston & Strawn LLP

Education: Johns Hopkins University, B.A., Political Science and Hispanic and Italian Studies (With Honors); Boston University School of Law, J.D.

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born and raised in Manhasset, New York, which is on Long Island.

Who or what were the main influences in your life?

My family members were the main influences in my life. I was blessed to grow up with two loving grandmothers who came to the United States from Greece as well as wonderful parents and an older sister. Each one of them played a unique role in making me the person I am today.

How did you get into your present work?

When I was a child, I saw first hand the impact that one person can have on the life of another. My father is a physician and his unyielding service to others was an enormous influence on me. I originally thought that I would follow in his footsteps and be a physician, however, when I was an undergraduate, I had the privilege of interning for then United States Senator Paul S. Sarbanes of Maryland. The Senator showed me that you can better people's lives through professions other than medicine. Thus, it was with the inspiration of my father's work and the example of Senator Sarbanes that I decided to go to law school and pursue a career as an attorney; hoping to help people by being their advocate and defending their rights.

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

Growing up in a Greek-American household I learned that so much of our cultural identity is tied to the Church. I served as an altar boy and attended Greek School. Fellowship within the community and being active in Church affairs were, and continue to be, very important to me. L100's dedication to Orthodoxy as demonstrated through its support of the Archdiocese and the clergy played a prominent role in my decision to join the organization. In addition, I was intrigued by the opportunity to promote our culture by working with the best, brightest and most successful members of the Greek-American community.

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

My experience to date has exceeded any expectation that I had before I joined. Every member, from the founders and existing members, to Paulette Poulos and the L100 staff, have been extremely welcoming. In the short time that I have been a member, I have already made friendships which will last a lifetime. It is inspiring to witness first hand the difference that our commitment to Orthodoxy and Hellenism in America makes for our community.

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

I believe that our organization has a bright future. One of the things I can do to ensure that L100 continues to thrive is to be active in membership recruitment and disseminating information to people so that they know the kind of work L100 does. For example, the contributions of L100 extend beyond financial, and include time and talent. Once people have a full understanding of our goals, I believe that our organization will continue to grow and be successful.

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

L100 has enriched my life in many ways. Personally, the fellowship with the members, meeting people from all across the country and developing and strengthening friendships that will last a lifetime have made this experience. Professionally, being able to meet and speak with so many successful members of the Greek-American community has been invaluable for me as I continue my professional development.

What qualities do you most admire or value in others?

Honesty and integrity are the qualities I value most in others.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

That is a very difficult question to answer. I have been blessed in all facets of my life. One of my greatest achievements was being selected to serve as an intern at the U.S. Embassy in Athens, Greece. The State Department chooses a small number of interns from an extremely competitive field to represent the United States abroad. To serve in this role and in Greece no less, was an amazing opportunity. Observing the interaction between the U.S. and Greek governments was unique. I participated in the strengthening of ties and exchange of ideas between our two great nations, which helped me develop into the person I am today.

On a personal note, the experience afforded me the opportunity to live in Greece, develop a closer relationship with my relatives there (and I have a lot of them) and cultivate a love for our "patritha" that pervades my life to this day. The extended time I spent in Greece strengthened my love of my Greek heritage and is an important reason why I am a member of L100.

Who are your heroes in real life?

That is an easy question. My heroes are my grandparents and my parents. I never met my grandfathers but the sacrifices they made in coming to this country are something that I do not know if I will ever comprehend. My grandmothers inspired me throughout my life and showed me unconditional love. My mother is an absolutely remarkable woman. She always provided me and my sister with a loving home and made sure that we had everything that we could ever need. And my father, by far, the nicest human being I know, for setting an example that integrity, ethics and compassion are the foundations of professional and personal success.

Continues on page 36

Maria's Slate featuring...

A Special Interview with Elli Kokkinou

As a first generation Greek-American with two very Greek parents, it was no surprise that I grew up in a household that listened to Greek music 99.9% of the time. My mother and grandfather instilled the love of dancing and music in me at a very young age. I was so intrigued by Greek artists and their unique styles that I even sang the laiko song "S'anazito Sti Saloniki" by the accomplished Dimitris Mitropanos, for my 3rd grade talent show and no this was not in Greek school! So naturally when I received an email requesting I interview Elli Kokkinou, yes "the" Elli Kokkinou, I was completely ecstatic and couldn't say yes fast enough.

Elli is a beautiful singer that I particularly respect and adore for many reasons, some of which include her compelling vocal talent, professional composure and her incredible sense of fashion glam. The high energy performer clearly isn't afraid to be risqué which is evident by one of her most successful CD's titled "SEX" which was certified gold on the day of its release and who can forget "Masai" or "To Gucci Ton Masai"? Therefore, I expected Elli to be somewhat wild, very private and definitely had her down to be a vain prima donna.

My preconceptions immediately vanished once Elli walked into her NYC hotel to meet me dressed in cut off blue jean shorts, an emerald green off the shoulder t-shirt, flats, free flowing hair, and minimal makeup. It was especially shocking when she did not shake my extended hand but greeted me with a hug and kiss. Elli's down to earth personality and openness of spirit immediately surfaced, making my interview with her seem more like a conversation with a new friend.



My new CD will be released this fall, its going to be very unique and multifaceted. One of the songs, "Pame Xana", will soon be released digitally so you will hear it online and it will also be featured in my tour in October.

How did you get involved with recording the track "Demenes" for the Barbie Movie "I Barbie Kai To Diamantenio Kastro"?

I loved Barbie growing up and I still love animated films. Barbie is the doll of every girl's dream. When I was very young, my mom used to travel in the US and I couldn't wait for her to return to bring me a Barbie doll. So when I was approached with this opportunity I immediately took it since I always wanted to work on an animated film.

In June 2008, you gave birth to a baby boy. How do you like being a mom? Do you see yourself having more children?

It's the best thing in my life, it is what I do best and also what I love to do more than anything else. I think I was meant to be a mom. Alexandros is amazing and I can't wait to go back to Athens to see him.

I definitely see myself having a second child, but not sure as to what the time frame is, when it comes it comes!

I can't believe you had a baby, you look fabulous! Can you tell us what your daily

diet consists of? What about your exercise regime?

Well you just saw me eat 4 chips so not that healthy! Haha just kidding!

I'm actually a very healthy eater was very lucky during my pregnancy since I didn't experience any crazy cravings. I actually ate less then than I do now!

My nutritionist also helped me by showing me how to cook healthy and to eat what I crave in moderation. It is very important to eat all natural and whole foods. I used to eat every 2 to 3 hours during my pregnancy and I only gained 22 pounds.

My exercise routine is not what it used to be since I had the baby, I don't have much time to myself. But it does make me happy to be able to take care of my home, husband and baby. Although I do have help, I don't have a full time or live in nanny. I don't like the idea of having someone in my home over night or on the weekends.

Pre-baby, I used to exercise very hard, 5 to 6 days a week for 2 hours with my personal trainer. During my tours, I will finally be taking care of Elli again. I plan to get back on track with my exercise routine, but I also look forward to sleeping!

As I'm sure you know, you have a large fan base here in the US. There are many

aspiring musicians that look up to you and hope to someday reach your level of success. What is the best piece of advice that you can give them?

Oh thank you! I have been through a lot in this career and I must say being patient and constantly persistent is what helped me finally make it. When I have a goal, I have a target and don't see right from left, I just see my target and just go there. I hit many barriers along the way but I never gave up. I have gotten rejected so many times! But I believe that if you are good in what you do and you have a good support system that believes in you, then it will empower you to accomplish your goals.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

I definitely see myself being a mom to a 2nd baby. I just hope and wish that my family and I are healthy in 5 years. I hope to be doing what I love and have peace in my life. I don't want to be stressed out with work and whatever comes my way, will come and I will handle it then. I don't like making long term plans, I have plans and dreams but I want to take it day by day because you never know what will happen tomorrow.



Welcome to New York City Elli! I know you will be back here in October for your North American concert tour and will also be performing in Chicago, Boston, LA, Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. What brings you here in August?

I'm here for a week long promo tour that was organized by Jimmy Panagiotou or Jimbabway as you all probably know him! He thought it would be good for the media to get to meet the "real Elli" and also for me to meet my fans and to say thanks before my concert tour kicks off in October.

Can you tell us who is Elli Kokkinou? What single word best describes you?

Who am I? I don't know, I'm a persistent person and an optimist. Crazy, would be how I best describe myself, in a good way of course!

Where do you call home?

Home is where my baby is and that is in Athens, where I was also born.

Why did you decide to pursue music?

I never thought I would be a professional singer, however I grew up singing and one day something clicked inside of me telling me to start singing in public. I started working and singing for fun to see if this is what I wanted to do. The first time I sang professionally at a real organized event, I immediately felt alive and knew it was right. Kostas Tournas also made me see that I can really do this.

Who are some of your musical influences?

When I was younger, I never listened to Greek music, my dad was a jazz lover and my mom was into disco. So when I started thinking about being a singer around the age of 19, I looked up to mostly non-Greek artists such as Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey and Barbara Streisand.

Really, I'm surprised that you liked these musicians during your teenage years living in Greece. If you could collaborate with any American artist, who would it be and why?

Only one? There are so many! I think I

would die if I could sing with Jon Bon Jovi, I really adore him! I was really in love with Jon Bon Jovi when I was 22, I love his voice, his music and his down to earth lifestyle. He is real and doesn't live a fake or staged life. Others include Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston, Celine Dion, Alicia Keys, and Jennifer Lopez.

Do you write your own lyrics and music? Do you play any instruments?

Never, I can't write lyrics. Well I never really say never, but I'm sure I won't be good at writing lyrics and music. I do play the keyboard but I'm not able to compose my own songs. I also play the guitar but haven't played or planned to play on tour.

You moved to LA in 1992 and studied at the Musicians Institute of Technology, why did you return to Greece after graduating? Why didn't you stay in the states?

My mom! I went back to Greece for my mom, I was 24 then and I had big dreams but I still couldn't leave my mom alone. So I went back to pursue music there.

You put out many successful CDs, "SEX" was especially popular amongst Greek-Americans as well as your most recent "Eilikirna", tell us about your next CD...



Eleni Peltseles, Angela Argirakis, Dimi Kosmakos, Georgia Vavas with Elli Kokkinou



Katerina Charalidis with Kalomira at Central Sushi Lounge for the "After Party"



Nexus Productions Radio Team
Anastasia Papavlasopoulos, Haralabos Fillipidis, Maria Kontakis, George Dourmas, DJ Stamati Tsilimos with Elli Kokkinou

Elli Kokkinou at Nexus Productions Radio

By Georgia Vavas

Sometime this past July, I received an invitation from DJ Stamatis Tsilimos to attend a live interview on 8/15/09 with Elli Kokkinou at Nexus Productions Radio Studio in Astoria, NY. I asked my three young friends to accompany me and they were ecstatic about the opportunity to see and listen to Elli in person--both at the Nexus Studio and Central Sushi Lounge in Astoria. To my amazement, the whole experience was more than what I had anticipated. We walked in to the Studio and were greeted by a large group of fans of Elli and Stamati from all ages--from infants to adults. I wondered what the hype was all about--how could Stamati be on the air with Elli that long? I soon found out. I guess it is all his background experience with interviews he has conducted with many top-notch singers and musicians from all over the world and deejaying for numerous years. My friends and I watched Stamati from outside the Sound Booth while he was interviewing Elli for about two hours. When she came out, she gladly posed for pictures with all her fans with a huge smile on her face.

Nexus Productions Studio looked absolutely beautiful and had a lot to offer--sushi, snacks, soft drinks, flowers, colorful plants and huge banners all over the Studio advertising the upcoming Blue & White Party given by Nexus Productions Radio on 9/10 and Elli's upcoming concert on 10/9. I was very impressed that this little Studio in the heart of Greektown Astoria was so well organized and visitor-friendly. People can walk in unannounced and be amazed at what they see.

The next surprise came when the whole group was told that we were going to Central Sushi Lounge in Astoria. Little did I expect that Stamati would usher us past the long line that was stretched around the block to a VIP area upstairs. We were treated like royalty. We watched the scene below which was packed with fans who came to hear Elli sing. Kalomira, who represented Greece in the Eurovision Fame Contest, was right next to us. My friends were thrilled and posed for pictures with her.

In summary, my New York experience with DJ Stamati's interview with Elli Kokkinou was quite unforgettable. My friends and I are looking forward to the next big event sponsored by Nexus Productions Radio--The Blue and White Party on September 10, 2009, at the Chateau Body English in Carle Place, L.I. For more information about the Nexus radio program which features Greek music 24/7 and a variety of other offers, visit www.nexusproductionsradio.com or call 1-718-606-9225.

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Undefined by their Circumstance

By Vivienne Papadatos



Vivienne Papadatos (left) with Jasmine visiting Titanic.



Saint Basil Academy, located in Garrison, New York, is a home for Orthodox children in need. The love of Father Costa Sitaras, their staff, the Orthodox Church, Philoptochos Society, countless of organizations and volunteers help nurture the children to grow into adulthood. After High School, often the children reside in the Bridge Program, where they remain a part of the Academy as they pursue their higher education.

The Saint Basil Academy Young Adults, transformed into the Saint Basil Academy Fellowship, has been a steady rock in campus life for over 25 years. We are dedicated to provide friendship and mentorship to the children as they enter young adulthood. Through our monthly visits, we strive to make a difference in their lives and help them grow into self fulfilled individuals. Our wish is that they realize their full potential and play a constructive role in society.

There is a special, unbreakable bond between the Academy Fellowship and the children in which both benefit greatly. Our priority is to ensure they remain undefined by their circumstances. We encourage their interests and provide opportunities for Adult social networking both near the Academy and in New York City.

As with any family, the Academy Fellowship

creates special memories and traditions. Our building Christmas gingerbread houses is a creative project where the results range from the traditional home to a Swiss chalet with furniture. During our bowling excursions, the children love to see one dedicated volunteer do his 'dance' each time he prepares to bowl. It is quite a site to be seen with his arms stretching, legs kicking, squats and more. His presence is now a requirement. The volunteers have just as much fun as the children.

At a recent obstacle course event, it was heartening to see one team, which included a few older children, slow their dash so the younger team could meet them at the finish line. When the tie-breaker run through had completed, the older children barely won. To see such compassion between the children was moving. The children were not so lenient with us volunteers when we raced.

The children have matured into wonderful young adults right before our eyes. Some of them have spent the majority of their childhood at the Academy. The importance of the Academy is evident when any graduate or alumnus speaks, as they always thank God, the Archdiocese, the Philoptochos and all of the countless organizations and individuals for its existence. Many say that they do not know where they would be if it were not for the Academy.

My first young adult visit was for a YAL Academy Christmas visit, which included decorating the Christmas tree and attending the YAL party. The warmth I felt that day, both with the children and the other adults, 'drew' me in. I have continued my visits since that fateful day. As an additional blessing, I have met some of my closest friends through the Academy. People may wonder in and out of your life, but it is the consistency of the Academy in my life and my family that embraces me. As a volunteer who organizes the monthly Academy Fellowship events and now a faithful servant of the Academy Board, it is my hope that everyone can have a similar experience as I had.

No matter how busy my life is or how stressful it can be, the Academy is an oasis that provides me inner peace, even when surrounded by the booming laughter of the children and volunteers. It is a respite that I hope to be blessed to continue to visit throughout my life. I view being at the Academy and spending time with the Fellowship as an extension of who I am. I volunteer for I have been blessed with wonderful parents, who have provided me a loving family life and an Orthodox Christian upbringing. I feel the need to reciprocate that love and foundation.

As Orthodox Christians, it is our responsibility to provide the children of the Academy with the same love, time, and attention we would give our own. You can make a difference in a child's life. You can have a profound impact that will last a lifetime. Both of your lives will be forever changed. Through all our deeds, our unconditional love will remain with them. Come experience the magic of the children and Academy life.

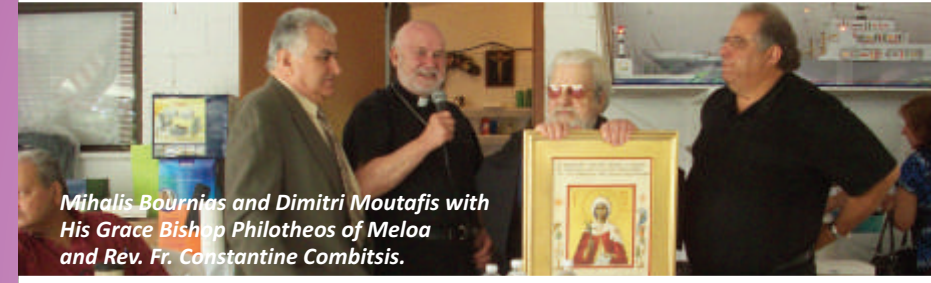
No matter where you live, there are so many ways you can be a part of the Academy. Organize a fundraiser to support the many needs of the Academy. Donate. Remember the Academy in your long term estate planning. Host a Child. Become a "Godparent" to one. Volunteer. Contribute your services. Spread the word. Remember the children in your prayers. Contact us today.

For more information on the Fellowship, contact me at sba_yal@yahoo.com. For more information on the Academy itself, contact them directly at 845-424-3500. Visit them at www.saintbasilacademy.org.

A NEW TRADITION ESTABLISHED



The Litany



Mihalis Bournias and Dimitri Moutafis with His Grace Bishop Philotheos of Meloa and Rev. Fr. Constantine Combitsis.



Ellie Livadiotakis with her father Bobby

By Georgia Vavas

A new tradition has taken root, as more and more Greek-Americans, many of them coming from New York, Bethlehem and Philadelphia, PA, New England, Ohio and Baltimore, MD areas, are embracing the annual feast and pilgrimage to the Shrine of Agia Markella, located in the Town of Delaware, Sullivan County, New York. The event recreates the traditional pilgrimage of many Christians that travel to the site in Chios Island, Greece, where Agia Markella was martyred by her father. This past July, the Northern Chios Society "Pelineon" of Greater New York hosted the two days festivities with His Grace Bishop Philotheos of Meloa and Rev. Fr. Constantine Combitsis officiating over the Vesper services and Divine Liturgy, followed by the traditional luncheon outdoors under the new picnic pavilion on the grounds of the Agia Markella property that is owned and maintained by the Pelineon Society for over 25 years.

President Mihalis Bournias and Vice-President Dimitrios Moutafis welcomed and thanked the guests for their support and donations to the Pelineon Society. The proceeds from the weekend sustain the organization's activities and upkeep of the Agia Markella property for the whole year.

The Shrine of Agia Markella in Upstate NY, has full picnic facilities including outdoor grilling area, indoor kitchen, restrooms, and a new pavilion for over 500 guests. It is available to any society or organization interested in hosting their event there. Anyone who wishes to visit and make an offering to Agia Markella is welcome year round. For directions and further information, please contact: Mihalis Bournias, 718-956-7304, Dimitrios Moutafis, 201-833-4744; Northern Chios Society's "Pelineon" address is: PO Box 3138, Steinway Station, 43-04 Broadway, Astoria, NY 11103.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

As you all are aware by now, our Annunciation Cathedral parish experienced tremendous pain and loss on August 5 due to a tragic automobile accident involving three members of our Cathedral family, Melina and Alexia Sitaras, the daughters of our former assistant priest, Father Stelios Sitaras, and their mother Elena Badger. Sadly our sister in Christ Elena did not survive the accident. As a result of this accident, Melina and Alexia sustained serious and life threatening physical trauma that has resulted in numerous surgeries and painful procedures in order to help them survive their extensive injuries, and ultimately move them both toward physical recovery.

At the direction of Metropolitan Isaiah, all parishes of the Metropolis of Denver and all parish ministries have been asked to help raise funds to help with the astronomical medical costs that have resulted and that will continue to be incurred as a result of this unforeseen accident.

As faithful stewards of Annunciation Cathedral, I humbly ask that each of you help with a financial gift, no matter how small, in order to help these two beautiful and faithful sisters in their long and painful road to recovery. It is times such as these that we are called to put our faith into action.

Please make all contribution payable to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral and mail to 3511 Yoakum Boulevard, Houston, TX 77006-4388. Make sure you place the names "Melina & Alexia" in the memo line in order that the funds are properly credited.

In Christ,
Father Michael Lambakis



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By Rev. Dr. Frank Marangos

A different kind of Universal Care

Conversation concerning the appropriateness of universal healthcare most certainly includes the description of a variety of insurance policy options. Numerous groups using verbal maneuvering steeped in passionate political assurances have been debating rival ideas for some time. In the end, however, concerned citizens are currently left none-the-better. "What policy," we ask, "truly provides the best protection . . . private, single-payer, collective or the public umbrella of government sponsorship?"

Founded in 1864 in Hartford, CT, Travelers is the largest insurance company by market-share in America. In its thought-provoking TV advertisement, a distinguished senior executive is shown carrying a gigantic red umbrella – the company's recognizable logo. The meticulously dressed gentleman demonstrates his company's resolution to the contemporary insurance quandary by providing solutions to three groups of individuals.

The first group of individuals the executive encounters consists of children surrounding a broken bicycle. The representative invites the youths to sit on the handle of his umbrella. Once aboard, the parasol gently lifts and transports the children safely home. The second difficulty encountered is a guild of actors trying to cross a wide river that separates them from their theater. Once again, the distinguished "traveler" provides his large umbrella. Having encouraged the thespians to stand in the down-turned cradle of the red canopy they sail smoothly to their venue on the opposite shore.

The imaginative commercial concludes with the executive atop a high-rise building scanning the horizon of a metropolitan city while numerous red umbrellas hover overhead. The message is clear – Travelers Insurance is preeminent when it comes to offering universal care – vigilant to provide its red umbrella of protection to all who fall under its guardianship.

Overall insurance coverage is often referred to as an "umbrella policy." A similar symbol is used by Christians to convey God's ubiquitous alternative – His own universal "polity" of provision and protection. Orthodox Churches, for example, focus special attention on God's desire to provide loving care and protection to His entire creation by placing an icon referred to as the "Pantocrator" (One Who Rules or has Dominion) in the domes of their sanctuaries. The "Pantocrator" is the Church's inspired theological option for universal care. This "Canopy of Christ" powerfully announces the preeminent spiritual umbrella of God – supported by divine polity rather than political policy.

The message of the 91st Psalm of David supports the theological polity (sovereignty) conveyed through the ecclesiastical architecture of the Pantocrator. "He who dwells under the shelter of the Most High," insists the Psalmist, "will rest in the secret place (shadow) of the Almighty (Psalm 91:1). David continues by asserting that those who acknowledge God's sovereignty will find the ultimate "refuge," "rampart," and "shield." If we "acknowledge God's Name," he promises, we will be "guarded by angels and lifted up in their hands" (Psalm 91:11-14).

The Church Fathers chose to insert the chanting of the 91st Psalm in its worship services long before the Travelers Insurance Company accepted the symbol of a red umbrella as its logo. The Church selected pertinent biblical passages, designed architecture, formulated liturgical rubrics, and painted icons to remind us that God is humanity's first and

primary divine awning. He Alone is the protective parasol of the entire cosmos beneath whose shade all other canopies invariably find their effectiveness and strength of utility.

Originally, the use of umbrellas was restricted to royalty and those with power. Ancient paintings and sculptures depict the heads of kings, queens, sultans, and conquering generals protected from nature's elements by umbrellas held by slaves. Umbrellas are multi-purpose. When deployed, they can be used to protect against precipitation. Inverted, they provide floatation. They can be used as decorative parasols in refreshments. Closed and buttoned, umbrellas become walking canes for the dignified. When confronted with the mischievous, they can finally be wielded as a weapon.

Significantly, it was during the Byzantine Empire that the umbrella of the royal court was first introduced into Church usage. Its influence might still be detected in canopy-covered altar tables and thrones, sanctuary domes, acolyte fans, and Eucharistic chalice coverings. While its explicit use in Orthodox Christianity slowly waned, the Vatican continues to employ multi-colored ceremonial umbrellas in its Roman Catholic liturgical processions. The role and utility of the umbrella, however, was always reversed in its ecclesiastical manifestation where care, love, and concern for the well being of others was never an issue of public policy but divine polity.

Providentially, God has changed places with us. He willingly becomes our servant and caretaker, the One who protects, provides and humbly presides over the hazardous moments of life. He is our ultimate "Proestamemos," whose rule is not characterized by abusive power, coercion and deception! On the contrary, He is the One who perpetually scans the horizon for those in need, distressed, or discouraged! He is the One who employs the umbrella of the Gospel to broom barking terriers of falsehood. He opens wide the canopy of the Holy Sacraments, His very Body and Blood, as Arks that sail humbled passengers to the safety of heavenly shores. Finally, holding His umbrella as the Scepter of a Shepherd, He presides with the merciful distinction of Servant over the entire assembly of life itself!

For care to be truly universal, each and every one of us should also be willing to help extend God's umbrella over the heads of others. We would do well to accept this stewardship of love freely and without compulsion. As citizens living under His sovereignty, we should strive to become like our King – attendants who are willing to distinguish ourselves by providing umbrellas of care, service, and truth to all in need. This then is the added element missing in the Travelers Insurance commercial. Care is not a one-way street, but a partnership – a privilege that must be fully opened and extended to all.

Unlike its political or private counterparts, the umbrella polity of God's is truly universal. The Church encourages us to freely sit on the handle of God's love whenever our physical, emotional, financial and spiritual bicycles are shattered. He will provide guidance and strength when unforeseen problems create obstacles that separate us like mighty rivers from our task, aspirations, and each other. He will, finally, always be there, sitting upon the very rooftop of the Church – atop the cosmos itself – a Distinguished Deity – scanning, reviewing, concerned! In short His polity supplies the ultimate universal care, protecting, providing, and presiding over the needs of each and every one of us.

Rev. Dr. Frank Marangos is the Dean of the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York City. He is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Saint John's University (NY). Please visit <http://www.thecathedral.goarch.org> to view the on-line sermon that inspired this article.

St. Spyridon Youth Help hellenicare

Members of the Youth Committee that worked to raise the funds.



Children at the new computer lab in Telavi, Georgia.



Charity sees a need and fulfills it. The youth and parishioners of the Saint Spyridon Hellenic Orthodox Church in Palos Heights, Illinois, have done just that with their recent donation of \$5,000 to support the creation of a computer lab at the Telavi State Orphanage in the Republic of Georgia. hellenicare has been providing medical services and humanitarian assistance to the orphanage since 2002. In 2007, hellenicare renovated the shower and bathroom facilities at the Telavi Orphanage. After learning more about hellenicare's mission to alleviate poverty and oppression Reverend Father Tilemahos and Presbytera Georgia Alikakos contacted hellenicare's Program Director, Cynthia Yannias, asking her to make a presentation to their youth. Every year the youth of the parish adopt special philanthropic organizations, where the youth take responsibility for planning and hosting fundraising events. That's how the idea for the lab came about. The computers would help students in their school work and the youth of St. Spyridon also wanted to create an email "pen pal" program. "What a wonderful expression of love and friendship!" said Cynthia Yannias. "We are truly grateful to the youth and parish of Saint Spyridon for caring about hellenicare and the youth at the Telavi Orphanage," said in turn, Andrew A. Athens, President and Founder. "The parish of St. Spyridon has given the children an opportunity to not only enhance their educational skills, but the gift of friendship."

The youth held a variety of fundraisers including a bake sale and a dance that helped to raise funds. On May 24, Father Tilemahos and Presbytera Alikakos, along with Mr. James Korbakes, Parish Council President presented a check in the amount of \$5,000. For more information about hellenicare, the new website is www.hellenicare.org and the phone number (312) 775-9000.

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A COLUMN DEVOTED TO MAKING GREEK FOOD EASY

By Maria Athanasopoulos

Greek Stuffed Tomatoes "Yemista"

September might be here, but don't fret since summer is not over yet! The days are still relatively long, warm and most summer produce is gratefully at its peak ripeness despite the endless amount of rain we received this season. One of my most favorite "foodie" parts of summer is the plethora of succulent and sweet heirloom tomatoes. Not surprisingly, this popular fruit is often called the cornerstone of Greek cuisine and is incorporated into nearly every meal, from tomatoes and eggs for breakfast to seafood pasta with tomato sauce for dinner.

Since tomatoes are in season and priced at their year round low, we too should have an arsenal of tomato dishes in our diets during these summer months. Yemista is a popular summer tomato dish that is a perfect example of a well rounded Mediterranean Diet recipe. This very authentic Greek main dish can be made using different variations such as adding peppers, zucchini and even making it meatless. I personally love adding plump raisins and sliced almonds to the savory filling, it gives it a burst of sweetness that is simply divine!

Yemista is what I like to call healthy comfort food at its finest. It is very rich and filling, yet backed with wholesome immunity enhancing nourishment. The tomatoes turn sweet and fleshy after their long roasting and the rice filling transforms into a creamy risotto-like texture. It may appear complex to create this culinary sensation, but I assure you its not if you follow my steps correctly. Most importantly, be sure to use tomatoes that are at their peak ripeness, as the flavor is incomparable otherwise.

Did you know...
that Extra Virgin Olive Oil not only has exceptional health benefits but is also an amazing preservative, keeping fish, cheese, and even wine good for years? It is an excellent alternative to butter and enhances the flavor of food more than any other oil while uniquely retaining all of its nutritional benefits.



Prep time: 25 minutes

Cook time: 1 to 1 1/2 hours

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

- 8 large firm, ripe tomatoes
- 2 1/2 pounds lean ground beef or lean ground turkey
- 1 cup uncooked brown rice
- 1/2 cup scallions, finely diced
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh mint, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 4 big potatoes, peeled and sliced into quarters
- 1/2 cup crushed tomatoes
- 1/2 cup Feta Cheese, crumbled
- Salt & pepper

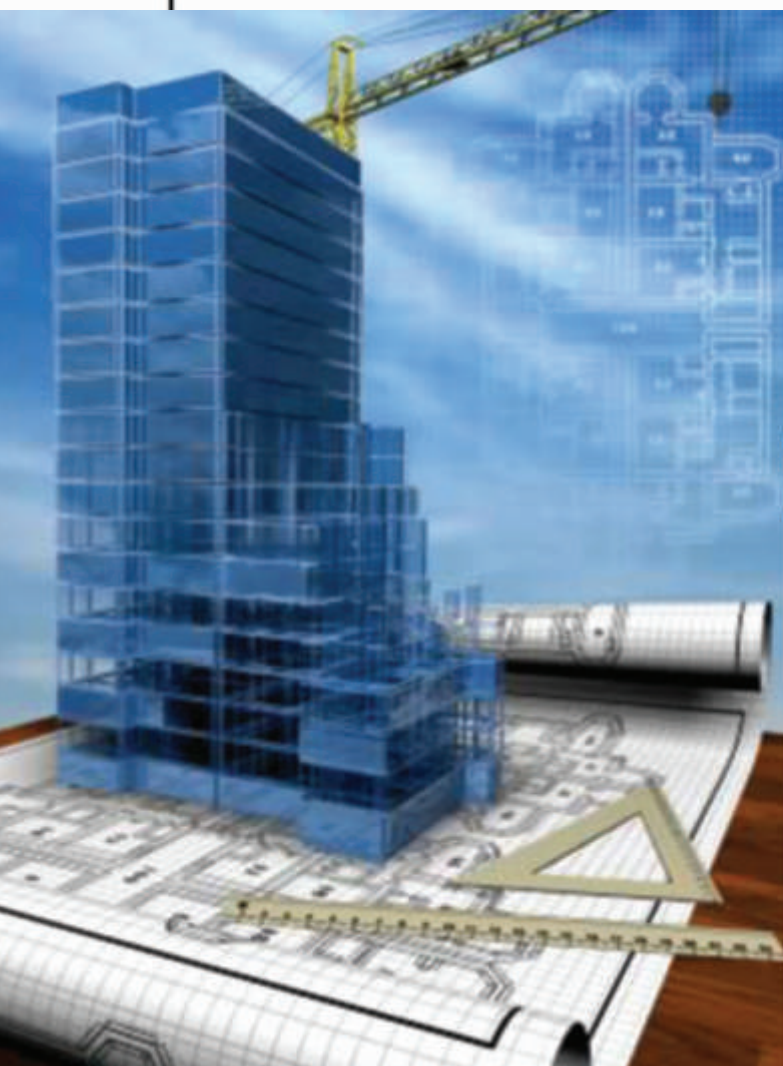
Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Carefully slice off the tops of the tomatoes and set aside. Carefully scoop out the insides of the tomatoes with a small spoon, while keeping the outside intact so that they can hold the filling. Chop the pulps and place in a bowl.
2. Add olive oil in a large cooking pot over medium heat. Once the olive oil gets hot, add garlic, scallions, parsley, mint and your preferred amount of salt and pepper. Sauté for three minutes and add the ground meat. Once the meat acquires a light brown color, stir in the fresh tomato pulps and the crushed tomatoes.
3. Slowly mix in 1 cup of water and the brown rice. Let cook over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove pot from heat.
4. Place tomatoes and sliced potatoes in a baking or roasting pan large enough to hold them comfortably. Fill each tomato with the rice and meat mixture, leaving a little room at the top for the rice to expand. Sprinkle each tomato with feta cheese and place the tomato tops back on to cover. If you have leftover filling, add in the pan around the tomatoes.
5. Cover pan with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes. Take foil off baking dish and add 1 cup of water. Place pan back into oven and bake for 1 hour or until rice is tender. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.
6. Serve warm with your choice of vegetables and pair with a glass of a lively red wine like a full-bodied Merlot, which will balance the acidity of the tomatoes and enhance the flavor of the filling. I especially love Chateau Julia Merlot, a luscious dry red with a slight taste of small berries, aromas of wild cherry and mulberry.

Mmm... all I can say is that Yemista is a very Greekalicious meal! Kali Orexi!!

MAKE AHEAD!

If you don't have much time to prepare yemista on a weeknight, make it on the weekend! This well rounded meal can be refrigerated for up to 2 days. When ready to serve, cover pan with foil and reheat in the oven for 10 minutes at 350, then uncover and bake for about 15 minutes longer, or until heated through.



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"Neolaia" means new people or youth in the Greek language. "Pathos" is an element in artistic expression that appeals to the audience's imagination. Neolaia/Pathos: new.youth.passion, is an exhibition featuring 13 Greek American artists between the ages of 20 and 40, and suggested in their work is the passion of youth as well as the influence of cultural heritage. Chicago's National Hellenic Museum brings together this diverse group of visual artists from across the United States for an exhibition that is on view from September 10, 2009, to January 9, 2010.

Using various media, including painting, photography, sculpture, and video, the artists of Neolaia/Pathos are influenced by the mythology, history, and culture that nurtured them. The exhibition relates to the idea that a new generation of Greek American artists continues a long line of art making and story telling. Rich details from life develop into metaphors that become iconic, axiomatic: the memory of cherished smells from a kitchen dedicated to recipes passed down through generations, an icon passed through the family, or the fragments of Greek words that mixed with English become "Greenlish." Greek identity is constantly evolving, however long the generations of assimilation or distancing from homeland. The Neolaia artists witness the complexity of change and ask the audience to share in the distinctive idiosyncrasies and psychologies of being a Greek American through their stories and their artwork.

This exhibition follows the highly successful, Neolaia: Fresh Faces in Art, exhibited in 2002. The National Hellenic Museum is committed to support and encourage young artists. By reaching out to new and emerging artists and providing a venue for their work, the Museum fulfills its mission to connect generations through Greek history, culture, and art.

Neolaia/Pathos is curated by Mary Antonakos, director of I space, Chicago gallery of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Diane Katsiaficas, artist and professor, department of art, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.

The artists exhibited are: Eleanna Anagnos, Adam Fotos, Yiota Georgas, J Anthony Kosar, John Megas, Anna Moisaidis, Demetrius Romanos, Eleni Sianis, George Sinioris, Christopher Thomopoulos, Sophia Vourdoukis, Niki Xenakis, and Fotios Zemenides.

The Museum is located at 801 W. Adams Street, 4th Floor, at the corner of Adams and Halsted Streets. It is open Tuesday through Friday from 10 am to 4 pm and Saturday from 11 am – 4 pm. The Museum is closed on Monday and Sunday. Suggested general admission is \$5 for adults and seniors. Children 12 years of age and under and museum members are admitted free. Information about exhibitions, programs and special events is available at www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org.



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By Spiro Pandelopoulous

MY SUMMER JOURNEY TO THE IONIAN VILLAGE

After traveling over 22 hours, through 3 airports, and boarding 3 different airplanes, I arrived at Ionian Village (IV) - the camp location hosting summer camp for teens of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Not sure what to expect, a childhood friend and I embarked on our journey together with an open-mind. I have attended my local metropolis summer camp for years, but was excited to experience what others always told me was the best experience of their lives. After a warm welcome dinner of Greek chicken and potatoes, we were shuffled into the outdoor amphitheatre to watch opening skits. The excited and enthusiastic staff welcomed us with comedy and songs. My first impression of camp and the staff was that it was crazy and fun and the next few weeks were going to be amazing. Then it was off to get settled into our cabins with 13 guys I had never met before.

Each day began and ended with prayer services at the outdoor chapel. Beginning with prayer really helped set the tone for the day. We rotated between Orthodox Life, Arts & Crafts, Athletics and Music & Greek Culture. During Orthodox Life sessions, we explored various Orthodox topics and how they relate to our lives as teenagers. In Arts & Crafts we were busy making friendship bracelets, necklaces and other fun projects, all while getting to know other campers in one of the breeziest and coolest locations of the camp. Athletics was full of kick-ball, Capture the Flag and Soccer all played on the sports field located alongside the Ionian Sea. My favorite session was Music & Greek Culture where we learned about our Greek Heritage, were taught various Greek folk dances from different regions of Greece and even learned how to make a frappe - the summer coffee choice of most native Greeks.

Everyday we swam in the sea before lunch and after it was time for siesta - a time when everyone goes into his or her cabin to nap during the hottest part of the day. If swimming wasn't of interest there were a number of tavli games happening on the beach - again, another time to make friends and get to know the other campers. Lunch was loud and fun - filled with cheering and laughter. "Efharistoume kyria Sophia!" was another common chant- giving thanks to our cook, kyria Sophia, who showed her

unconditional love through the meals she prepared for us. Following vespers and dinner, each night played host to a different evening activity - Music Festival, Night with God where we learned to make Prosforon (bread for church), Olympics to name a few. Our last night at camp was spent celebrating in a traditional way - a Panegyri Dance with a live Greek band. It was a great way to end our journey together as new friends.

Some days were not spent on the grounds of IV, but rather traveling to various historical locations. In a country so rich in history and culture we visited locations such as Olympia, Delphi and the Parthenon. We visited the island of Kefalonia and the monastery of Aghios Gerasimos. I was able to climb down into the cave where Aghios Gerasimos spent 35 years in solitary prayer. It was life changing and I couldn't believe that someone could commit that much of their life in isolation. Everyone was to crawl through a small hole in the rock to enter into the cave. My faith was validated as I imagined this saint living alone in the dark, damp cave for so many years growing closer to Christ.

My favorite day-trip was Monastiraki because we got the opportunity to shop in the ancient marketplace, visit a local Athenian restaurant and see life in Greece in its true and modern form. It was fun to learn about ancient Greece while on the grounds of Ionian Village, then to visit modern Greece to see how much it has changed. With the ruins of ancient times still existing in the modern city it creates an interesting contrast of old and new Hellenism.

As for the 13 guys who I had never met before who I shared a cabin with - I now have 13 new friends in my life. We came from different States, with different backgrounds and different lives. With the encouragement of our counselors during late night devotionals we grew close to one another and became a family of brothers known as cabin Tripoli.

It is because of the FAITH Endowment that I was able to attend Ionian Village. I am grateful to the FAITH Endowment for the opportunity to experience such a life-changing program, as well as for showing unconditional love and "agape" toward my family and me.

Tripoli wins the Olympics!



Dinner in Patras after visiting the Church of St. Andrew



Dinner in Patras



Happy 4th of July- Greek Style!



Music Festival - playing the water jug!



PHOTOS: REV. JASON ROLL

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Continued from page 21

How do you spend your time outside of work?

I spend my time outside of work enjoying the company of my family and friends. I am blessed to have wonderful parents, a loving sister and brother-in-law and a loving grandmother close to me. I treasure the time I spend with yiyia. She is a source of strength and continues to enlighten me. I am also a new uncle. The joys of having my little nephew in my family are indescribable. In addition, I have the greatest group of friends anyone can ask for. They are loving and dedicated and I consider them an extension of my family.

In the community, I am committed to serving my home Church, the Archangel Michael in Roslyn, New York. I am active in raising funds for our new church complex, an undertaking which is critical to our Church's future. I also continue to serve the Johns Hopkins University as a member of the Alumni Council.

What are your thoughts on the current economic crisis?

These are dire times for many people both here and abroad. I have no doubt that this economy will turn around and we will emerge stronger and more productive than ever. It is a truly difficult time for all Americans but we are resilient and I know that we will recover.

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

Personally, I hope that my friends and family all are in good health and that I can continue to enjoy their company. By that time, I hope to have started a family of my own and to be able, with my loving wife, to pass on the traditions and love that I experienced growing up to my children. Professionally, I want to continue to serve the interests of others and hope to serve my community through a career in public service, playing an active role in government.

What is your idea of happiness?

Happiness is a balance of personal and professional success. It is being surrounded by those you love. Having a strong family, grounded in the teachings of our Church and balancing that life with a challenging and dynamic career is my idea of happiness.

PERISCOPE

Hope of deliverance (by Delta--no more Olympic)

It's just a day after Labor Day and the new season starts in full swing, putting us in ...labor for another nine months before the next vacation period that year by year gets shorter for reasons unrelated to the calendar and the moves of the cosmic bodies. "Economy" is on everybody's lips, along with possible bacteria which carry with them the so-much-talked-about flu that awaits us all this coming winter, according to the specialists' prognosis, the latest one that is, because they prognosticated an earlier disaster in summer, which fortunately, like the New York weather forecast, quite often did not materialize. And while there is a certain way to deal with the flu once it hits you, the same isn't true with the economy: no certain path to recovery is offered by the other kind of specialists, only the vague hope that things will get better as time goes by; another kind of prognosis that is--a forecast, which unfortunately entails with it the 50% possibility of every guess--not to happen!

However, being the optimists that we are, we can't give up hope, life is like that, anyway, so we will embark into this new season with the blind faith that there are enough life jackets and self-inflated boats for all passengers, should the boat hit something and begins to sink. Just knowing how to swim helps a lot, only that isn't enough in this case, as we will be in deep, frozen cold waters and our rescue will depend on any kind of assistance that we can get!

I did not intend to start this page and this season on a gloomy tone, but as is often the case, creative writing has its own dynamic and leads you in ways and corners that you were not planning to visit, or even pass by. And this mood reversal isn't just the result of high blood pressure pills, but perhaps something deeper and wider at the same time, related to the general decadence of our surroundings, our city, "our way of life", our illusion of security, all that which we took for granted for so long and we came to realize that like everything else, sooner or later, age, too, and collapse, pretty much like ...Lehman Brothers or Bear Sterns. And this is a more real and hurtful crisis because more than our pockets, it affects our morale, where the most important wealth is and the savings that each and everyone looks at in order to overcome a downturn. It seems that a lot of us are running out of that kind of savings--along with the other, that is



This is Agiophylli, just one of the captivating beaches in my home island of Lefkas, Greece.

Summer Memories

--and perhaps it is there where we need to focus in order to accumulate again some capital before we venture into reestablishing our economic stability. And that's the field where our real strength will play or be played out.

Let us turn a virtual page now and delve into this -- alas -- past summer's recent memories, especially those of us who were blessed to go away and spend sometime in Greece or the other Greece, Cyprus. I say, blessed, because it isn't that simple anymore. Despite the crisis which we talk and worry about so much, it seems more and more people are willing to pay up to \$1,600 in mid-summer to escape for a few days or weeks to one of the more or less sought after islands, to the extent that is harder and harder to even find a seat on the days you want. Once there, you realize how weak your dollar has become and you start rearranging your plans in order not to run out of money in the first few days. And certainly, we have an image to maintain, that of the wealthy and generous "American" who can afford to spend left and right and treat everybody in the local cafes. Well, those days too seem to be over, along with the drachma. Many places will sell you a frappe, the Greek cold coffee, for more than €3--\$4.5, that is, not 350 drachmas or 75 cents that it used to be. Now you go there and you see friends and relatives and you silently hope to be treated and invited by them, while you are offering them sermons about the need to save for the hard days that are coming and how ridiculous it is for a coffee and indecent plate of food to cost that much! In the heat of your indignation you promise to yourself and to the others not to come back for many years (Australian Greeks seem to be completely lost!), because the whole situation is unacceptable! And yet, the moment the plane lands at Kennedy and you see the humidity on the horizon and start thinking of the bills and chores that await you, you vaguely initiate planning your next trip back and the bittersweet nostalgia gets the better of you.

Just to make things more realistic, not worse, Olympic Airlines will cease - after more than 40 years - to fly to this side of the Atlantic as part of its restructuring policy after it went to private hands earlier this year. They say that in less than two years, the flights will be reestablished, and lets hope that will be the case, because prices will go even higher and the quality of service even lower, as we learn that Delta will take over the Olympic slots. I had the experience of flying with both carriers to Greece and I can tell you that although Olympic was far from perfect, it had newer, better and bigger aircrafts, while Delta's are older, smaller -- that means less seats and naturally higher prices -- and they literally stink! Again, let us invoke hope and wish that they will somehow improve and things eventually will be better than before so that we can fly happily ever after!

Landing back into reality now and before we hang up, let me remind you that the beginning of the season also entails the renewal of commitment, any kind of commitment. In tough times like these, I expect all of you who have come to like and appreciate NEO to take the extra step and help us continue bringing it to the forefront of our community's limelight. Subscribing to it, placing an ad - talking to friends who might place an ad is equally important -- and are ways to actively support this effort and prove -- as we've been doing for the last four years -- that our community CAN afford media that are not BY RULE backed by the Greek government -- from disappointing to disastrous results in both cases. As we embark on another season of struggle and great challenges, we are as ready as ever to make NEO open to new ideas and trends that in turn will lead to the articulation of a real community agenda with no preconditions or strings attached. Once more, welcome aboard and fasten your belts for the bad times, but also to take off!

DEMETRIOS RHOMPOTIS
dondemetrio@neomagazine.com

Egremnoi is perhaps the most breath taking beach in Lefkas and my favorite. Thanks to the unstable nature of the surrounding rocks, the road goes only up to a point and a 300 steps staircase awaits the visitors, which makes it hard for throngs of them to go there, remaining thus relatively unspoiled. It's about three miles long, with a kind of thin sand that doesn't stick on you. As the sun rays hit on the white rocks that form a natural background wall and then fall onto the sea surface, the water takes the mesmerising, turquoise shade that only with difficulty the latest technology in photography can captivate.

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HACC Young Professionals Happy Hour

By Maria Athanasopoulos



Photo: ETA PRESS

Are you a young professional of Greek descent that is looking for a new scene, a new networking circle, or perhaps a potential spouse?! If so, the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals group is perfect for you! This eclectic organization hosts a series of hip, yet effective networking events, specifically happy hours every month at various NYC lounges, bars, restaurants and clubs. In addition to throwing cutting edge parties and events, the young professionals are an inspirational and friendly group committed to promoting Hellenism as well as helping young Greek-Americans network and succeed in their professions.



Photo: ETA PRESS

The HACC Young Professionals kicked off the summer right with an uber chic networking night on Monday, June 22nd in New York City at the trendy Mad 46 Rooftop Lounge located in the Roosevelt Hotel. As usual, the event did not disappoint since over 150 young professionals filled the outdoor venue despite the rainy weather. A dynamic crowd composed of bankers, lawyers, TV producers, realtors, doctors, educators, and artists mingled and swapped business cards throughout the evening. Despite the night's professional networking purpose, it resembled a hipster party, bursting with high fashion and many picture perfect beautiful people that were happily mingling throughout the evening. Let's just say Christian Louboutin would have been all smiles if he were in attendance.

Executive Board member Katerina Makris coordinated June's happy hour. She worked closely with Roosevelt's Hotel PR manager, Kate Girotti, to ensure a flawless operation. "We had a remarkable turnout and filled the entire venue with our members. Everyone seemed to be enjoying the cocktails and the amazing view of the city. At one point, I took a step back and I observed the scene, I felt a sense of pride for our board as I watched the Hellenic professionals mingle under Manhattan's illuminating skyline. I think we all had a MAD-tastic time!" exclaimed Makris.

The group also had a more casual beach party at Water Taxi Beach at the South Street Seaport on August 2nd that drew in everyone who didn't go to Greece this summer. In addition to happy hours, they hold a series of "Meet & Greet" receptions featuring successful Greek-Americans who have spoken about their career paths and how they made it in their respective fields. The young professionals are hosting their first ever black tie dinner gala at the Metropolitan Club on October 23rd, 2009. It will be an elegant night of dinner and dancing that will feature live music, a very popular Greek DJ and some very high profile guests. If you are interested in attending, it is highly recommended that you reserve your tickets now since half are already gone!

For more information about the black tie dinner gala or learning more about the HACC Young Professionals, please contact the group's President, Anastasios Pardalis: taso@mpnfirm.com.

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