



HELLENIC SOCIETY NEWS

Newsletter of the Hellenic Society of Maine

Vol. X
Fall 2015

Website: www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/

Rebetoparea Returns!

They are coming back! After a hugely successful performance in Portland last September, “Rebetoparea” is coming back for another evening of dinner and rebetiko music, presented by the Hellenic Society of Maine. A wide array of items also will be offered in an accompanying **Silent Auction** that evening. Come early to get a seat and bid on your favorite items. Doors open at 4 p.m.

This group of musicians from the Boston area will perform from **4:30-8 p.m. Sunday, September 20 at Italian Heritage Center, 40 Westland Ave.**, just off Congress St., Portland. An Italian *buffet dinner* is included in the ticket price. There will be a cash bar. To purchase tickets for individuals or tables of eight, contact Chris Ziagos at [207-775-3607](tel:207-775-3607) or czziagos@maine.rr.com by Wednesday, September 16.



Band members include Kosmas Vrouvlianis – bouzouki; Yiannis Mitaras – bouzouki; Yiannis Bozis – bass guitar; An-nemooon Van Erp – violin; Sandy Theodorou – accordion; Panagiotis Vorvis – baglama; and Giorgos Galanakis – guitar. The playlist may include such songs as “Siganopsixalisma” and “Synefiasmeni Kyriaki” by Tsi-

tsanis, “To Kapilio” by Mitsakis, “Mantalena” by Hadjidakis, and “Ta pethia tis geitonias sou” among other favorites.

Rembetiko is often compared to American blues. Though there is no consensus on a definition, one may describe a *rembetiko* song as one that expresses sorrow of loss, lovesickness, and the tough life of the underworld. It is the musical folklore of the urban centers at the turn of the last century and, in particular, of the urban population that lived in the margins of society.

The roots of *rembetika* probably originated in the music of the larger Greek cities, most of them coastal, in today's Greece and in Asia Minor (now part of Turkey) during the Ottoman era. Following the Asia Minor Disaster and

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Trouble in our Sister City

As if the current economic crisis in Greece isn't tough enough — the citizens of Mytilene, Lesbos, are also being overwhelmed by waves of refugees fleeing the war in Syria and other regions of the Middle East.

As many as 1,000 people a day have come ashore from nearby Turkey, straining the ability of the residents of the island to help. This has been the lead story on the BBC News, CNN, The New York Times, as well as the Greek news-



Photo by Michael Honegger © taken on Eftalou beach near Molyvos, Lesbos.

paper in New York, the National Herald.

The Hellenic Society of Maine supports the Sister City relationship between the cities of Portland, Maine and Mytilene, Lesbos.

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Fall 2015 Lecture

October 21 — “Greece’s Current Crisis: A Historian’s Reflections” by S. Victor Papacosma

This lecture will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday October 21 in Room 206. Payson Smith Hall at the University of Southern Maine, Portland campus. Free and open to the public.



Dr. Papacosma returns to present another interesting lecture, “Greece’s Current Crisis: A Historian’s Reflections.” As its history since World War I indicates, Greece is no stranger to crisis. The dimensions of the most recent one, which began in full force in 2009 as a volatile component within a global crisis, have captured the world’s attention. An attempt will be made to explain aspects of the traumatic situation in historical and cultural terms. It will also be argued that, although many of the root causes for the debt crisis are self-inflicted, the Greeks alone are not totally responsible for it.

S. Victor Papacosma is Professor Emeritus of History and Director Emeritus of the Lemnitzer Center for NATO and European Union Studies at Kent State University, where he taught for 42 years. He received his A.B. from Bowdoin College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Indiana University. He has published extensively on Balkan issues, particularly on twentieth-century and contemporary Greek politics and security issues. Among his publications are *The Military in Greek Politics: The 1909 Coup d’État*, which also appeared in Greek translation, and ten co-edited volumes of Lemnitzer Center conference proceedings. He served as an officer of the Modern Greek Studies Association and as its Executive Director for ten years until 2014.

Tenth Annual – Fall 2015

Contemporary & Classic Films about Greece

“Honor Still Exists” (“Υπάρχει και φιλότιμο”) Director: Alekos Sakkelarios Greece, 1965
Sunday, October 4, 3 PM, Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland campus



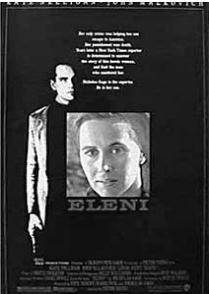
We repeat this film now because the issues in this biting political satire of the mid-60s are even more relevant today. A classic of its era, the film stars Lambros Konstantaras and Dionysis Papayianopoulos. A self-absorbed government Minister in Athens has no idea what is really going on amongst his constituents in the provinces. Surrounded by his spoiled, rich family and conniving party workers, he doesn't learn the truth until a fortunate accident brings him close to the simple people of a village – a meeting that changes him profoundly. This film is a primer on how, unfortunately, Greek government functioned for many years — and how the country got in the mess it is in now. Not Rated. 91 minutes. In B&W. In Greek with English subtitles.

“Loafing and Camouflage” (“Λούφα και Παραλλαγή”) Director: Nikos Perakis Greece, 1984
Sunday, November 1, 3 PM, Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland campus

This film is a modern Greek comedy classic that spawned a sequel and a TV series. The film tells the story of a group of soldiers, who, during their compulsory military service in 1967 and 1968 (just before and at the beginning of the Greek Junta) are assigned to the, then, recently founded Armed Forces Television. This TV station, founded for the civilian population, was run by the Cinematographic Unit of the army which until then had only produced propaganda films and newsreels and was responsible for entertaining the troops and other charity organizations with movie screenings. The personnel were composed mostly of soldiers, who already had experience in the film business in their civilian lives, as well as those who received their training in the army. It deftly reveals the often idiotic funny business that bored soldiers engage in—yet there is an undercurrent of bitterness considering the political situation. Awards: Grand Prix, Best Screenplay, Best Actor, Best Editing, 1984, Thessaloniki International Film Festival; Golden Bear, Nominated, 35th Berlin International Film Festival. 99 minutes. In Greek with English Subtitles.



“Eleni” Director: Peter Yates USA, 1985
Sunday, December 6, 3 PM, Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland Campus



"Eleni" is based on the true story of a New York Times reporter, Nicholas Gage, who went searching for his past in Greece. As a very young boy, he is sent to America to join relatives at the end of World War II. He has a sharp memory of his mother promising to join him as soon as possible. But his mother never arrives, and word finally comes that she has been killed - shot by a firing squad in the confused days of the Greek Civil War. As the movie opens, years have passed, but the agony of that loss has not faded for Nick Gage. He feels he cannot rest until he finds the answers to the questions that haunt him: Why was his mother killed? Who killed her? "Eleni" tells Gage's story in the present day, and then uses flashbacks to tell his mother's story. The adult Nick is played by John Malkovich as an introspective, wryly intelligent man who harbors deep hurts and angers. Rated: "PG." 114 minutes. In English.

Trouble—Con't. from p.1

In June more than 15,000 refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq landed on the beaches of Lesbos – over-burdening residents who are dealing with the worst economic depression in its modern history.

There was no time to prepare properly for this number of refugees, so the residents and government are struggling. Some tourists have stepped in to help with coordination and fundraising, but the task is too big.

Two friends of board members Mary Snell and Irwin Novak spent the month of May on the island helping organize a first response to the crisis in the hardest hit northern village of Molyvos. Tim Smith and Michael Honegger, together with local volunteers, faced huge difficulties in providing so many people with basic water, food, and shelter. The situation has only gotten worse. Many are housed in refugee camps that were built for a tenth of the number who are staying there now.

Most of the tourists don't see the crisis, Honegger says. In the morning when the first boats hit the shore, one can see the refugees on the beaches and on the roads, but by noon they are bused to Mytilene for processing. By the afternoon the town bustles with the usual smiling tourists eating in cafes and shopping.

There has been virtually no response from international aid groups to date. Smith and Honegger began a fundraising campaign on line and have given the money to local restaurants and stores who then purchase food and water that is given out by volunteers. Much more needs to be done.

Quick Calendar Summary

Sept. 20 – Rembetiko Music and Dinner plus Silent Auction:

Rebetoparea at Italian Heritage Center, Portland. 4:30 to 8 p.m. \$50. Reservations required. Call 775-3607.

Oct. 4 – Film: “Honor Still Exists” 3 p.m. Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland.

Oct. 21 – Lecture: “Greece’s Current Crisis: A Historian’s Reflections” by S. Victor Papacosma. 7 p.m. Room 206, Payson Smith Hall, USM Portland.

Nov. 1 – Film: “Loafing and Camouflage” 3 p.m. Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland.

Nov. 8 - Greek Dance Workshop with Eustathios Stratis, 3-5 p.m., Rm. 102. Wishcamper, USM. FREE

Dec. 6 – Film: “Eleni” 3 p.m. Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland.

How to check on event storm cancellations

In the case of bad weather, call 892-9831 or the USM Storm Line 780-4800. If the USM campus is closed, HSoM events there are cancelled too.

✂ *Clip and Save!* ✂

News From the Board

New officers were elected to the board this spring, and several existing officers changed their roles. Christos Gianopoulos and Chris Ziagos are serving as co-presidents; George Spatoulas is vice president; Irwin Novak and Mary Snell are sharing the duties of secretary; and Taxia Paras continues as treasurer.

Board member and artist Judith Allen Efsthathiou will show works based on drawings she has done of botanicals on the Island of Kea, Greece, at The George Marshall Store Gallery, 140 Lindey Road, in York, Maine. The show will run Oct. 10 to Nov. 15. The opening reception is from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 10. FMI call the gallery at 207-351-1083.



Mary Snell hands over the gavel to new co-presidents Christos Gianopoulos, left, and Chris Ziagos, right, at the annual meeting this past May.

A Greek Dance Workshop!

Eustathios Zapheirios Stratis will come to Portland to give a dance workshop from 3-5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 8. The workshop will focus on dances from the Dodecanese Islands, but will also include several Pan Hellenic folk dances from many other regions of Greece. This **FREE** workshop will be held in Room 102 of the Wishcamper Center at USM, Portland.

“I like my classes too, first of all, be a lot of fun but also elucidating,” he says. “I explain the background of the dances both culturally and geographically, and why the movements and steps are the way they are. This helps our imagination bring us closer to the real.”

He is a professionally trained dance teacher with a BA in Physical Education with a Dance Emphasis and a Masters in Creative Arts with a Dance emphasis. He lived for 25 years on the Island of Rhodes, and did research in the field there. He danced and performed at the Old Town Theater under the direction of Nellie Demoglou. He taught Greek folk dance in the San Francisco Bay Area and in the Boston Metropolitan area at various churches, organizations and clubs. He also taught for two years at Hellenic College, Brookline, Mass., and for six years at the University of the Aegean in Rhodes, Greece.

To register, email Stelios Cotsis at scotsis@roadrunner.com. (We need to have a rough count of participants prior to the workshop.)

DUES - Our dues cover the period of July 1 to June 30, each year, NOT a calendar year. If you want to become a member or renew your membership, please fill out the form and send it, and a check, (made out to: Hellenic Society of Maine) to HSoM, c/o Taxia Paras, P.O. Box 598, Scarborough, ME 04070-0598

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

For 2015-2016: Renewal / New member (circle one)

____ (\$19.75) (date of constitution) **Annual Full Member** (grants the right to vote on policy issues)

____ (\$12.50) (BC date of Trojan War) **Annual Associate Member**

____ I can't join now, but enclosed is my donation of _____ in support of your efforts.

**Make check or money order payable to:
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Send to: Taxia Paras, Treasurer
P.O. Box 598
Scarborough, ME 04070-0598**

Hellenic Society of Maine

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We rely on email to send quick updates. PLEASE send us your EMAIL. With rising costs, we are not sure how long we can afford to print and mail this newsletter twice a year. Email: novak@maine.edu

Rembetiko (Con't from p.1)



Anilda and Dimitri Gribizis and Emily Breitner

population exchange of 1923 – when ethnic Greeks were deported from the coastal cities of Asia Minor -- huge numbers of refugees settled in Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Volos and other harbor cities.

Many being highly competent musicians, they brought with them both European and Anatolian musical instruments and musical elements, including Ottoman café music. But these cosmopolitan people, now in exile, were thrown into poverty and a new underworld of pain – all reflected in a new musical expression – rembetika.

Spring 2015 Panel Discussion and Lecture

This past spring HSoM presented two interesting programs which were well received. On April 24 a panel discussion on Greeks immigrating to Maine was taped and broadcast on CTN Ch.5 “Pachios on the News.” Panelists were, *pictured from left to right*, Angelo Sotiropoulos, Venetia Kouzounas, Stavros Nashi, and Sylvia Kostopoulos. Harold Pachios, *standing*, moderated.



Also, on March 5, Prof. Dorothea Klimis Zacas gave a fascinating talk on “The Mediterranean Diet: Defense Against Disease” in which she explained the nutritional health benefits of the Mediterranean Diet—a diet that promotes healthy eating as well as a healthy active lifestyle.

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