



# HELLENIC SOCIETY NEWS

Newsletter of the Hellenic Society of Maine

the Hellenic Society of Maine is a tax exempt non-profit public charitable organization

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Fall 2020

**Website:** [www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org](http://www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org) **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/hellenicsocietyofmaine](https://www.facebook.com/hellenicsocietyofmaine)

## Continuing On During This Pandemic The Hellenic Society of Maine Accepts the Challenge – Join Us!

Your continued support is still very important us.

### New Programming for Fall 2020

Who could have imagined life as we are living it now? In less than a year our world has turned upside down as the entire globe struggles to deal with a deadly virus.

The Hellenic Society of Maine was forced to postpone the last few events in our winter/spring schedule. This fall we are going to make every effort to present a variety of programming, but now delivered differently. We will miss not seeing you in person, but have a plan to offer some events via the ZOOM meeting platform.

We will present our film series in an entirely different way – by giving people links to movies to watch, then we'll gather one evening via ZOOM for a brief discussion of it. We will also present the postponed video and talk on the Holocaust in Greece via ZOOM. (See related stories for details and dates.)

We are delighted that our Greek Table language sessions have continued uninterrupted, and even expanded, once we switched to the ZOOM platform. Approximately 15 people "meet" every Monday at 10:30 a.m. for an hour of Modern Greek. We alternate weeks between classes taught by Cynthia Shelmerdine, and a conversation hour led by Mary Snell. We have attendees signing in from Florida and even Budapest, Hungary! A small advanced group meets separately for general conversation led by Evie Papacosma.

### Discussion with Filmmaker Michael Nickles

We are excited to present a special "live" discussion with filmmaker Michael Nickles to kick off our Fall Film Series.



Nickles and his co-writer and wife, Julia, will speak via Zoom at 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 8, to discuss "Swing Away," their film about a Greek-American golf pro who returns to Greece and finds a new meaning in life. (Audience members will view the film in advance on their own. See details on Page 2.)

After 25 years as a Los Angeles/New York based award-winning filmmaker, Nickles recently relocated to Maine. His latest feature "Holly Star," which he wrote, directed and produced in Maine, had its Netflix debut last fall. He has written, and/or produced over a dozen feature films including "Just Peck," "Playback," "Bunyan and Babe," "XII," and "This Is Not A Film." He graduated with top honors from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts where he won the William Morris Screenwriting Award and received the WTC Johnson Fellowship.

### Video: "It Was Nothing, It Was Everything" On Rescuers and the Rescued Jews of Greece with Commentary by Anna Wrobel ZOOM Discussion: Thursday, October 29, 7 pm

The focus of the video documentary "It Was Nothing / It Was Everything," is the rescue of Jewish fugitives in Greece during the Holocaust. Highlighting the almost total destruction of Greece's Jewish community, the documentary combines



archival footage and Ladino music along with interviews with rescuers and with those who were rescued in Thessaloniki, Athens, Crete, and other areas in the region. The documentary is in English and Greek with English sub-titles.

After folks have had from Oct. 22 - 29 to view the video on their own, a ZOOM discussion about the documentary will be led by Anna Wrobel at 7 p.m. Thursday, October 29. The links to view the video and for ZOOM will be sent to all HSoM members and to anyone who contacts Irwin Novak at [novak@maine.edu](mailto:novak@maine.edu).

The city of Thessaloniki (also known as Salonika) housed a major Jewish community, mostly Eastern Sephardim, until the middle of the Second World War. Sephardic Jews immigrated to the city following their expulsion from Spain by Christian rulers (Ferdinand and Isabella) under the Alhambra Decree in 1492. Thessaloniki is the only known example of a city of its size in the Jewish diaspora that retained a Jewish majority for centuries.

Anna Wrobel is an American historian, poet, Holocaust Studies educator and daughter of Polish Jewish refugees -- a rescue partisan mother and Soviet soldier father. Her poetry and essays appear in *Cafe Review*, *Lilith*, *Off the Coast* and *Jewish Currents*, where she is a contributing writer. Anna has two poetry collections, *Marengo Street* (2012) and *The Arrangement of Things* (2018), published by Maine's Moon Pie Press. Her work has appeared in University of Maine's Holocaust Human Rights Center art and poetry exhibit, *Dilemma of Memory*, and she's presented for the Puffin Foundation on Jewish resistance in WWII. Anna's poetry and teaching have been featured at the Maine Jewish Museum, Colby College, UMaine-Augusta, Jewish Community Alliance, University of Southern Maine's OLLI classes and OLLI Sage Lectures series. Poems taken from her manuscript *Sparrow Feathers: Second Generation/First Person* are used by teachers in several U.S. states, Poland, Germany and the Mideast. Anna co-hosts the long running poetry series, *Lowry's Lodge*, with musician/writer Jim Donnelly.

Seventeenth Annual - Fall 2020 - Via Zoom

## GREEK FILM SERIES

Contemporary & Classic Films about Greece

presented by

Hellenic Society of Maine

### WATCH AND DISCUSS FILMS via the Internet and on ZOOM

Instead of viewing films together in Talbot Auditorium at USM, we will offer films via an Internet link one week before a planned ZOOM discussion of the film (the ZOOM link will also be sent.) Such a system worked very well in a film course offered by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. If you are interested in viewing the films below, send an email to [novak@maine.edu](mailto:novak@maine.edu) prior to the date shown, and the links will be sent to you.

**SWING AWAY** Dir.: Michael Nickles, USA & Greece, 2016

**ZOOM Discussion: Thursday, October 8 at 7 p.m. with Director Michael Nickles**

**During the week of October 1 - 8: watch on the Internet. URL and ZOOM links to be distributed by October 1. (Nominal Fee of \$2.99 for this film only.)**



Following a meltdown that leads to a suspension, professional golfer Zoe Papadopoulou travels to her grandparents' village in Greece to escape the harsh spotlight of the international sports world. Between baking bread and eating baklava, she meets and mentors a ten-year-old girl who is determined—against all odds—to become the next golf sensation. Along the way, Zoe rediscovers her Greek heritage, her love of the game, and the hidden strength within herself as she inspires the townspeople in an epic showdown against a greedy American developer. The film was shot on location on the island of Rhodes and stars Shannon Elizabeth (American Pie, Love Actually) and John O'Hurley (All My Children, Seinfeld) as well as many other well known actors. *In English. 98 minutes.*

**OYZEPI ΤΣΙΤΣΑΝΗΣ (“Cloudy Sunday”)** Dir.: Manousos Manousakis, Greece, 2015

**ZOOM Discussion: Thursday, November 19 at 7 p.m.**

**During the week of November 12 - 19: watch on the Internet. URL and ZOOM links to be distributed by November 12.**

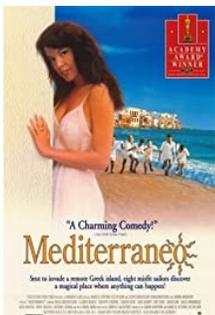
During World War II in Thessaloniki, Greece, under the Nazi occupation, one Christian, Giorgos, falls in love with a Jewess, Estrea -- something completely forbidden by both cultures. A parallel storyline follows the drama that takes place in a local ouzeri. Vassilis Tsitsanis, one of the greatest Greek rembetika composers, librettist and singer of the 20th century, plays here each evening. These dramas unfold as the Holocaust descends on the Jewish community there. *In Greek and Ladino w/English subtitles. 116 minutes.*



**“MEDITERRANEO”** Dir.: Gabriele Salvatores, Italy, 1991

**ZOOM Discussion: Thursday, December 17 at 7 p.m.**

**During the week of December 10 - 17: watch on the Internet. URL and ZOOM links to be distributed by December 10.**



The Greek Sea, World War II. A warship arrives with a handful of Italian soldiers to a little Greek island; their mission is to spot enemy ships and to hold the island in case of attack. The village of the island seems abandoned and there isn't a single enemy in sight, so the soldiers begin to relax a little. Things change when their ship is hit and destroyed by the enemy, and the soldiers find themselves abandoned there. Actually, the island isn't deserted and when the Greeks understand that those Italians are harmless, they come out of their hiding places in the mountains and continue their peaceful lives. Soon the soldiers discover that being left behind in a God-forgotten Greek island isn't such a bad thing after all... One of the most charming movies ever, and the 1992 Academy Award winner for best Foreign Film and Golden Globe winner for best original score. *In Greek and Italian w/English subtitles. 129 minutes.*

# Hellenic Society of Maine

P. O. Box 8007  
Portland Maine 04104-8007

a tax exempt non-profit public  
charitable organization

[www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org](http://www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org)

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## Do We Have Your Latest Mail / E-mail Contact Information?

We want to keep our lists up-to-date. If you've changed your address or email please send a note to: Irwin Novak at [novak@maine.edu](mailto:novak@maine.edu).

For more information on HSoM go to the Hellenic Society of Maine website (see above) or "like" the HSoM Facebook page [www.facebook.com/hellenicsocietyofmaine](http://www.facebook.com/hellenicsocietyofmaine)

## Successful Events Earlier This Year



The HSoM held another Annual Social and Cutting of the Vasilopita in January at Tiqua in Portland. In addition to slices of the pita, delicious *mezedes* were offered (with a cash bar) which attendees have come to enjoy.

Pictured left to right are: HSoM members Chris Ziagos, Mary Snell, Steve Poulos, Lucky Hollander, Linda and Steve Linnell, Toby Hollander, and Sylvia Kostopoulos.

One of our last live events this winter was a lecture by engineer Miltiades Zacas in February. Through an extensive PowerPoint presentation, Miltiades explored "The Parthenon: A Marvel Through the Ages." In this talk he looked at some of the architectural and technical challenges faced by the builders when they constructed this temple to Athena on the Acropolis. He also discussed the social, political and economic environment that gave rise to this most famous of manmade structures.



*Miltiades Zacas' presentation on Ancient Greek Engineering*

This summer we kept you informed of other Greek related events by sending emails to those addresses we have. The extraordinary live-streamed production of "The Persians" presented by the National Theatre of Greece at the Theater of Epidaurus was a stunning event. Too many of you missed it, thus we are keeping an eye out for information on any re-broadcast of this moving interpretation of Aeschylus' tragedy.

Plus, we hope folks tuned into the Greek cooking series, "My Greek Table" by Diane Kochilas on the PBS Create channel. This international chef travels to different areas of Greece to learn their secrets, then demonstrates how to cook other dishes in her kitchen. The recipes are great, as are the views of favorite places. You might still catch episodes on the national PBS website: <https://www.pbs.org/show/my-greek-table/>

## YOU CAN NOW JOIN THROUGH OUR WEBSITE

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, through our website, go to: [www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org](http://www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org) and use the "Donate" button to pay through PayPal or Credit Card, and indicate "For Membership" - **OR** fill out the form below and mail it in.

*✂ Cut Out and Return!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**For July 1, 2020—June 30, 2021:** Renewal / New member (<— circle one)

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

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

\_\_\_\_ Number of Memberships

I can't join now, OR I want to give more!

Enclosed is my donation of \_\_\_\_\_  
in support of your efforts.

Make check or money order payable to:

Hellenic Society of Maine

Send to: Chris Ziagos, Treasurer

P.O. Box 8007

Portland, ME 04104-8007

## Quick Calendar Summary

All online via Internet and ZOOM

**Week of Oct 1-8: View the film** “Swing Away” (Fee: \$2.99)

**Thurs. Oct. 8, 7 p.m.: Discussion** with filmmaker Michael Nickles via ZOOM

**Week of Oct. 22-29: - View the documentary** “It Was Nothing, It Was Everything”

**Thurs. Oct. 29, 7 p.m.: Commentary** by Holocaust scholar and poet, Anna Wrobel via ZOOM

**Week of Nov. 12-19: View the film** “Ouzari Tsitsanis”

**Thurs. Nov. 19, 7 p.m. - Discussion** of the film via ZOOM

**Week of Dec. 10-17: View the film** “Mediterraneo”

**Thurs. Dec. 17, 7 p.m.: Discussion** of the film via ZOOM

**E-mail [novak@maine.edu](mailto:novak@maine.edu) for film & discussion links**

✂ *Clip and Save!* ✂

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## Ellenika Biblia

As a tribute to two of Greece’s most admired women poets (both of whom died earlier this year) we offer this overview of them, plus a few titles. Also, we are pleased to be among the first to review a new novel by Timothy Smith set in Greece.

Kiki Dimoula was *born in the Kypseli area of Athens in 1931. She lived in that same neighborhood all of her life. After graduating from high school she started work at the National Bank of Greece where she stayed until retirement 25 years later. From 1952 until the end of her life she had a number of volumes of poetry published by prestigious presses. She was named a member of the Academy of Athens which awarded her its Aristeion of Letters. She was also awarded the Greek State Prize twice, the Grand State Prize, the Ouranis Prize, as well as the European Prize for Literature. A wonderful bilingual edition of her collected later works, *The Brazen Plagiarist* is a great introduction to her work. (2012 Yale University Press)*

Katerina Anghelaki-Rooke, also born in Athens in 1939, felt most at home on the island of Aegina. Her godfather was Nikos Kazantzakis. She earned a degree in translation and interpretation from the University of Geneva and was fluent in French, English, and Russian. She translated many books of poetry including classical as well as American, European and Russian poets, and taught at Princeton University where she was poet-in-residence. She was awarded the Greek National Prize for poetry and the Greek Academy’s Poetry Prize. A retrospective collection, *The Scattered Papers of Penelope*, is translated into English -- as well as several other of her volumes. (2009, Graywolf Press)

*Fire on the Island* is a “page turner” by Timothy Jay Smith set in a coastal town on a large northeastern Greek island. From the book jacket: ... “it is a playful, romantic thriller set in contemporary Greece, with a gay Greek-American FBI agent stationed in Athens, who goes undercover on the island to investigate a series of mysterious fires. Set against the very real refugee crisis on the beautiful, sun-drenched Greek islands, this novel paints a loving portrait of a community in crisis. As the island residents grapple with declining tourism, poverty, refugees, family feuds, and a perilously damaged church, an arsonist invades their midst.” (2020, Arcade Publishing Co.) Available from Amazon.com

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