



# HELLENIC SOCIETY NEWS

Newsletter of the Hellenic Society of Maine

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

Vol. XVI  
Spring 2020

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

## “The Parthenon: A Marvel through Ages ” with Miltiades Zacas

**7 p.m., Thursday, February 20**  
**Room 113, Wishcamper Center**  
**USM Portland**  
**Free and open to the public**



Undoubtedly a creation of art and a model of architecture, the Parthenon fully represents the multifaceted social, political and cultural development of the Golden Age of ancient Greece. The lecture will cover the high architectural

and technical demands for the creation of this great monument, which remains as one of the most famous examples of Greek (and not only) architecture. In addition, the contribution of social, political and economic environment of the era that gave birth to this amazing monument will be discussed.

**Miltiades Zacas, Ph.D, P.E., M.ASCE** has over 35 years of experience in geotechnical investigation, design and consultancy on various projects in Maine and internationally (Greece, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Colombia). While in Greece, Dr. Zacas served for 14 years as Managing Partner of “Pangaea Consulting Engineers, Ltd.” a geotechnical engineering company based in Athens. He served as consultant for tunnel projects for the Greek Ministry of Public Works and Environment and for dam projects for the Greek Ministry of Irrigation and Agriculture. He is Geotechnical Engineering Consultant for FGS/CMT, Inc. (Bangor, Maine) for the design and management of geotechnical projects. Dr. Zacas is Adjunct Professor in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department of the University of Maine and teaches courses in Geotechnical Engineering and Sustainability in Engineering. Dr. Zacas’ diverse experience in geotechnical engineering includes services in a variety of projects such as bridges, dams, tunnels, harbors, highways and buildings. He has authored or co-authored numerous articles published in journals and seminars/conferences/symposia proceedings.

## Annual Social and Cutting of the Vasilopita



Continuing with the Greek New Year’s tradition of individuals and organizations cutting the Vasilopita, we will hold our annual Social and Cutting of the Vasilopita from 5 to 7 p.m. on **Thursday, January 16 at Tiqa, 327 Commercial Street**. The Vasilopita is either a sweet bread or cake that has a special coin baked inside. Whoever finds the coin in their slice has good luck for the year. Join us for a drink (cash bar), some tasty mezedes, and maybe you’ll get the coin!

## Film: “It Was Nothing...It Was Everything” Rescuers and the Rescued Jews of Greece Introduction and Discussion by Anna Wrobel

**7 p.m., Thursday, March 26**  
**Room 211 Wishcamper Center, USM Portland**  
**Free and open to the public**

The focus of this documentary by Sy Rotter is the rescue of Jews 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 those who were rescued in Thessaloniki, Athens, Crete, and in other areas. Narrated by Irene Papas, the 30-minute documentary is in English and Greek with English sub-titles.

Anna Wrobel will introduce the film and will lead a discussion after, following a quick break for pizza.

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.

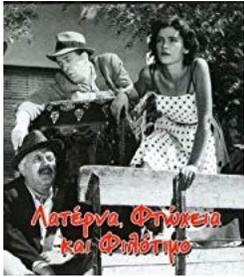
**Anna Wrobel** is an American historian, poet, Holocaust Studies educator and daughter of Polish Jewish refugees—a rescue partisan mother and Soviet soldier father. Her poetry and essays appear in *Cafe Review*, *Lilith*, *Off the Coast*, and *Jewish Currents* where she is a contributing writer. Anna has two poetry collections, *Marengo Street* (2012) and *The*



Sixteenth Annual - Spring 2020  
**GREEK FILM SERIES**  
 Contemporary & Classic Films about Greece  
 presented by  
**Hellenic Society of Maine**

**“Λατέρνα, Φτώχεια, και Φιλοτιμο” (Laterna, Poverty, and Honor)**

Dir.: Alekos Sakellarios, Greece (1955)



*Sunday, February 9, 3 PM, Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland Campus*

Becoming as obsolete as their old instrument, two poor portable barrel organ players (Mimis Fotopoulos and Vasilis Avlonitis) travel to a village panageri to make some money. Instead, they stumble upon an affluent but desperate runaway girl, Keti (Jenny Karezi), intent on escaping a much-despised marriage arranged by her wealthy parents. Will the men help her, or forsake their beliefs for money's sake? All the actors here are in the best role of their careers, according to one reviewer. A very young Karezi is seen here in her first role. A plus is that one of Greece's greatest composers, Manos Hatzidakis, wrote the music for this film including "Γαρφαλλο στο Αυτι" ("Carnation on the Ear") - to this day one of the most popular songs in Greece. *In Greek with English subtitles. 85 minutes.*

**“Αδικοσ Κοσμος” (Unfair World) Dir.: Filippos Tsitos, Greece (2012)**

*Sunday, March 8, 3 PM, Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland Campus*

Sotiris (Antonis Kafetzopoulos) is a police interrogator. Fed up with the injustice and the unfairness of life for many of his accused, one day he decides to pardon every poor person to whom life has been cruel. While trying to help an innocent soul, something terrible happens, and suddenly Sotiris' fate rests with Dora, a lonely cleaning lady who leads a breathless life trying to make ends meet. Although Sotiris and Dora come to like each other, love, honesty and justice are anything but easy to combine. The story melds drama and criminal activity into quiet comedy. Antonis Kafetzopoulos was last seen as Stavros in "Plato's Academy." *In Greek with English subtitles. 107 minutes.*



**“Mediterraneo” Dir.: Gabrielle Salvatores, Italy, (1991)**

*Sunday, April 5, 3 PM, Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland Campus*



At the beginning of this delightful film, an Italian ship leaves a handful of WWII soldiers on a little Greek island. Their mission is to spot enemy ships and to hold the island in case of attack. The village on 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 destroyed by the enemy and the soldiers find themselves abandoned there. Actually, the island isn't deserted, and when the Greeks understand that the 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. 1992 Academy Award, Best Foreign Language Film. Rated "R." *In Greek and Italian with English subtitles, 96 minutes.*

**Wrobel, from page 1-** *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 has 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 Middle East. Anna co-hosts the long running poetry series, *Lowry's Lodge*, with her husband, musician/writer Jim Donnelly.

**Greek Mythology Through Film**

The wonderful and complex world of Greek myths will be explored through the medium of film in a six-week course offered this January 7 – February 11 through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Southern Maine. HSoM board members Irwin Novak and Mary Snell will briefly discuss the myths, then show classic and contemporary films that bring those myths to life in *Greek Myth Through Film* held Tuesday afternoons. For more information and/or to register, go to the OLLI website: [www.usm.maine.edu/OLLI](http://www.usm.maine.edu/OLLI) (NOTE: You must become a member of OLLI to take the course. Fee \$25 per year.) Course fee is \$50.

# Hellenic Society of Maine

P. O. Box 8007  
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a tax exempt non-profit public  
charitable organization

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

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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)

*We want to keep our lists up-to-date. If you've changed your address or email please send us a note.*

**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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**For July 1, 2019 ~June 30, 2020:** 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.

## Fall Events

*In addition to our popular Greek film series, we presented two events this fall that focused on Greek food and were slightly different from our usual lectures.*



*Chef Marc Provencher & wine expert Alison Cheevers.*

**Wine Dinner** - On September 29 a Greek Wine Dinner was held at the Taverna Khioni in Brunswick. Thirty people filled all the tables and the bar space which made for a cozy yet lively *parea*. Owner/chef Marc Provencher and wine expert Alison Cheevers (sales representative for M.S. Walker distributors) offered delicious food and timely information about Greek wines. The four-course dinner was paired with four wines (plus a bonus glass!) from small wineries from different regions of Greece. HSoM member attendees included Miltos and Dorothea Zacas, George

Spatoulas and Doreen Morrow, Chris Ziagos, Irwin Novak and Mary Snell, Emily Breitner and husband, and Cynthia Shelmerdine and Kate Bracher.

**A Greek Cooks Panel: "The Flavors of Greece"** was presented November 7 in Wishcamper Center at USM Portland. The three Maine Greek cooks who participated on the panel were Bill Doukas of Portland, Dina Medouris of Lewiston, and Anna Nashi of Saco.

HSoM president, Mary Snell of Gorham, moderated the discussion. Delicious Greek food cooked by the panelists was offered following the animated and informative discussion – about everything from how to prepare snails for cooking, to secrets to a successful avgolemono soup. Audience members asked that we do this again!



*Lt.-Rt.: Mary Snell, Bill Doukas, Dina Medouris, & Anna Nashi.*

## Greek Language Table – and class!

The regulars at the monthly Greek Table are offering a brief half-hour class in Modern Greek before the regular conversation hour. If you are a beginner, or just want to buff up your grammar, consider coming early. The Greek Table meetings usually are held around noon in Portland and we converse IN GREEK ONLY. In the class or at the Table, there's no pressure for perfection, just make an effort at whatever your level of fluency – it's free and it's fun! To be added to the contact list for the class and meeting, email Mary at [msnell@maine.edu](mailto:msnell@maine.edu) or Marina at [marinaschneller@yahoo.com](mailto:marinaschneller@yahoo.com). Please let us know if you are interested in the class.

## Quick Calendar Summary

*Held at USM's Portland campus  
unless otherwise noted*

**Jan. 16 - Annual Social and Cutting of the Vasilopita:** 5-7 p.m. at Tiqa, 327 Commercial St., Portland.

**Feb. 9 - Film:** “*Laterna, Poverty, and Honor,*” 3 p.m., Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM

**Feb. 20 - Lecture:** Miltiades Zacas, “The Parthenon: A Marvel Through the Ages” 7 p.m. Rm. 113 Wishcamper Center, USM

**Mar. 8 - Film:** “*Unfair World*” 3 p.m., Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM

**Mar. 26 - Documentary & Pizza:** “*It was Nothing...It Was Everything*” with guest moderator **Anna Wrobel**, 7 p.m., Rm. 211 Wishcamper Center, USM

**April 5 - Film:** “*Mediterraneo*” 3 p.m., Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM

### **Storm cancellation?**

In the case of bad weather, on weekdays call the USM Storm Line 780-4800. (If the USM campus is closed, HSoM events there are cancelled too.) On weekends call 892-9831 or 775-3607.

✂*Clip and Save!*✂

Hellenic Society of Maine  
P.O. Box 8007  
Portland, ME 04104-8007

## Ellenika Biblia

*Books from or about Greece, written in or translated into English, are the focus of this regular column. We try to select books available in the US or via the internet. We welcome your suggestions of good books you have read.*

Here are guest reviews from two HSoM members.

In preparation for watching and discussing the March 26 documentary (see cover story) you may want to read *The House by the Sea: A Portrait of the Holocaust in Greece* by Rebecca Fromer. This book is the true story of one man’s quest for survival, and the fate of family and friends in Salonika and Athens during the German occupation of Greece in WWII. Ninety-seven percent (about 56,000) of Thessaloniki’s (also known as Salonica) Jewish population died at the hands of the Nazis during WWII – the highest percentage of any city in Europe. (1998, Mercury House Press, San Francisco). *Submitted by Irwin Novak.*

Relating to the class on Greek Myths Through Film in January (see page two) — For readers who love Greek mythology, it’s hard to find a book that will draw you into the world of the Titans and Olympians and the ancient, quasi-mythical Mediterranean world as well as *Circe*, by Madeline Miller. Circe, the sorceress encountered by Odysseus and his men on their way home from Troy, tells her own story in this novel called “bold and subversive” and “epic and intimate” by the New York Times. Beginning in her childhood, sitting at the feet of her Titan father Helios, Circe’s story draws the reader headlong through her failures and betrayals, her passions, fears, cruelties and achievements. Brilliantly imagined and beautifully written, the novel weaves together threads from many Greek myths, as well as from *The Odyssey*. (2018, Little Brown & Co., New York - paperback due April, 2020). *Submitted by Susan Swain.*

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