

THE HELLENIC

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Co-Editors:

Kiki Glikerdas • Ginny Kramvis • Tula Christopoulos



Fall 2007

Stockton Celebrates "Greek American Dream" with U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes

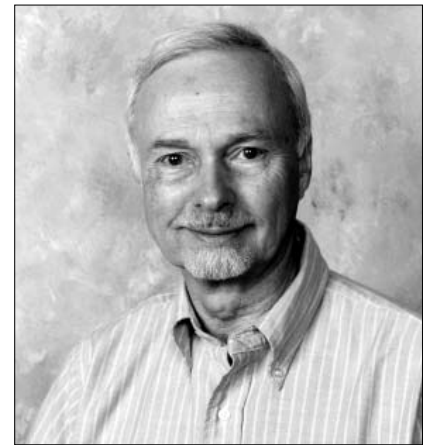


Rev. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos, President Herman Saatkamp, Senator Paul Sarbanes, and Prof. Tom Papademetriou

Galloway Township, NJ - Whether you are from Europe, Africa, or Asia, the experience of immigrating to America marks a dramatic rupture from the way of life in the Old World. On October 7, 2007, the Hellenic Studies program at Richard Stockton College of New Jersey celebrated the particular Greek immigration experience with guest speaker, Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (D-MD 1977-2007), and the showing of the film, "The Journey: The Greek American Dream." The film that examines the Greek immigration experience was previously screened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Benaki Museum in Athens. This was the first screening in any university or college and was attended by over 200 students, community members and supporters of Hellenic Studies and was organized by the community group The Friends of Hellenic Studies.

The film "The Journey," written, directed and produced by Maria Iliou in collaboration with Haverford College historian Professor Alexander Kitroeff, an expert in Hellenic diaspora history, tells the story of the Greek immigration to America from 1890 to 1980. Interviews with prominent Greek Americans including Senator Sarbanes, writers George Pelecanos and Elias

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IN HONOR OF DR. FRED MENCH

by Demetrios J. Constantelos

It is with pleasure, esteem, and love that I write this brief article in appreciation of Dr. Fred Mench. He retired recently as the American Foundation of Greek Language and Culture [AFGLC] Professor of Greek Culture, and as the Director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies at the Richard Stockton of New Jersey.

I have known Fred for more than thirty five years as a family man, teacher, scholar, administrator, community man, and especially as an anthropos, a human person. He was born and raised in Philadelphia [not of the ancient Greek Ionia in Asia Minor, [present day Turkey], Pennsylvania, where he received his primary and secondary education. He received his college education at Kenyon College, receiving his bachelor's degree with honors. He pursued his post graduate studies at Yale University from which he earned an M.A. and a Ph D. (1968) in classical studies, with a special concentration in the Latin Language and Literature, as well as the history and civilization of the Roman Republic.

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Special Keynote Speaker
Senator Paul S. Sarbanes
(D-MD 1977-2007)



Stockton Senior History Major Debbie Pantelaras & Stockton President Dr. Herman Saatkamp

Kulkundis, poet Olga Broumas, film critic/historian Dan Georgakas, Ellis Island Archivist George Tselos, Hellenic Studies professors Martha Klironomos and Artemis Leontis, and Father Bob Stephanopoulos complement the photographic and filmic archival footage.

Senator Sarbanes responded to the film by discussing his own family's experience as immigrants and his life as a Greek-American in public service. Sarbanes recounted how he had been born on Maryland's Eastern Shore to Greek immigrants, Spyros and Matina Sarbanes, who had immigrated from Laconia, Greece.

Sarbanes explained how he had always worked in his family's restaurant from a young boy washing glasses, and even after when he was attending Princeton, Oxford, and Harvard Law school. "One summer I had come home from law school after my father passed away to help my mother with the restaurant, and to give her a rest. As I was working behind the counter, one of the customers asked me that if I was at Harvard Law School, why was I still working at the restaurant. I looked at him, and I couldn't understand his question. I had always worked at the restaurant," said Sarbanes. Sarbanes went on to describe how he had been given an opportunity to attend Princeton, and how his father became friends with the President of Princeton University often sitting for coffee. The President had learned that the elder Sarbanes had brought baked hams from his restaurant for him on the occasions when he was visiting his son. "And they were good baked hams. But I didn't know about this at the time, and only learned it about it much later," remarked Sarbanes'.

Sarbanes identified four values that mark Greek immigrants and led them to success in the United States: family, faith, hard work and education. He expounded on each, offering examples of how these impacted his own life. He went on to discuss the importance of education, and how important it is to support programs such as those taking place that day at Stockton College, and the exceptional Stockton Hellenic Studies program. He also noted that it is essential that anyone who wishes to attend college, in this day and age, should be given the chance. It is the duty of our society to educate its people for the health of the society. Senator Sarbanes remarks were greatly appreciated and enjoyed by the audience.

The Chairman of the event, and Master of Ceremonies was Prof. Tom Papademetriou, who holds the Georgiou Endowed Professorship of Modern Greek history. Papademetriou also serves as the Executive Director of the Interdisciplinary Center of Hellenic Studies at Stockton.

"While today's program is a departure from the many Ancient Greek cultural events we have offered in the past, this one is appropriate as it displays the diachronic range of the Greek spirit from Antiquity to the modern times. It's also appropriate for Stockton because we are one of the few colleges or universities in this country that teaches courses that cover Antiquity, the Medieval or Byzantine period and modern Hellenism. The modern Greek immigration story as presented in this excellent film and through Senator Sarbanes can now be placed within the larger American immigration experience," said Prof. Papademetriou.

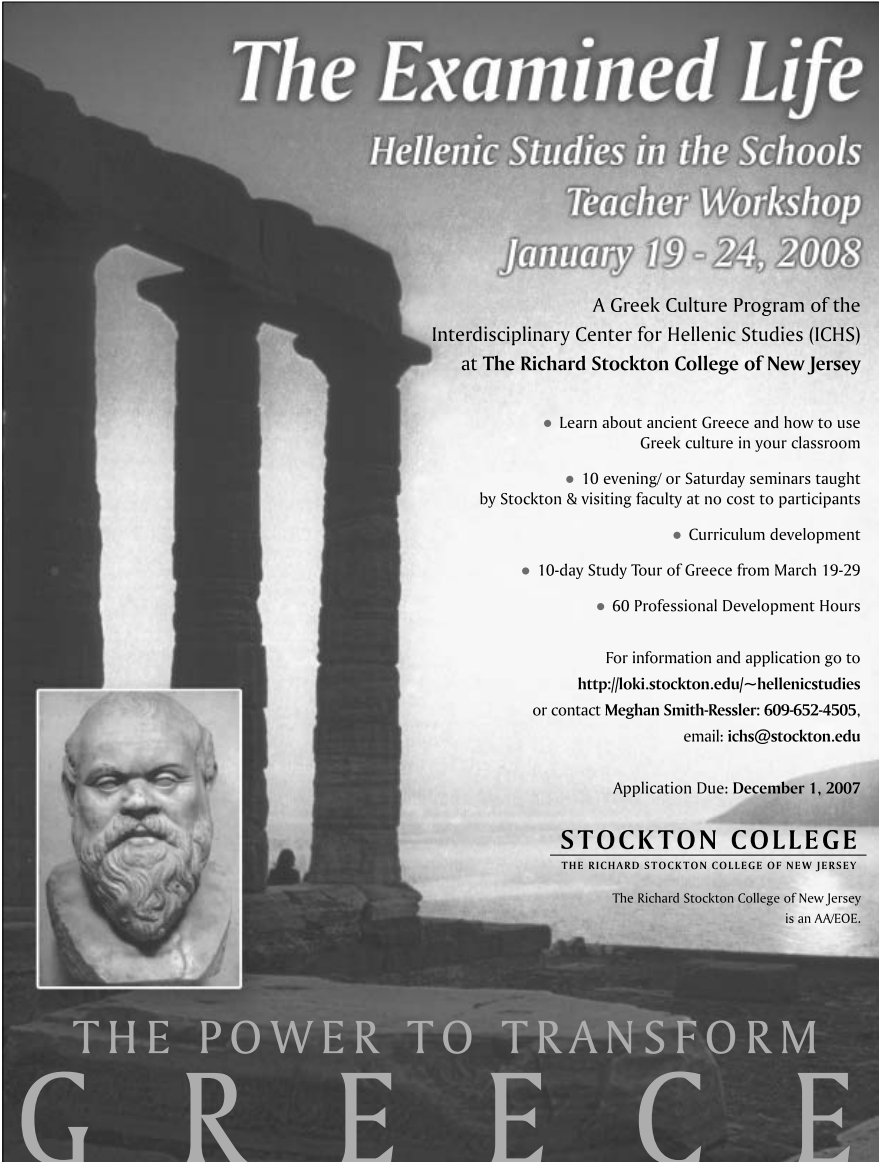
The Provost Dr. David Carr, and President, Dr. Herman Saatkamp offered greetings, highlighting the College's commitment to educating young people and the value of Hellenic Studies to a liberal arts education. President Saatkamp also received several donations that day, one for \$10,000 from Dr. Peter Yiannos of Wilmington, DE on behalf of the Tri-State American Foundation for Greek Language and Culture (AFGLC) to support the Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies. Dr. Yiannos, with his wife Stella, previously personally donated \$100,000 for the Peter & Stella Yiannos Endowed Professorship in Greek Language and Literature. Other benefactors who were present were Dean and Zoe Pappas (The Clement and Helen Pappas Endowed Professorship in Byzantine Civilization and Religion), Mr. Constantine Georgiou (The Constantine and Georgeian Georgiou Endowed Professorship in Greek History), and Mr. Petros Tsantes (The Petros and Despoina Tsantes Endowed Professorship of Ancient Greek Philosophy in honor of Katerina Batouyios). Yiannos explained the AFGLC itself sponsored the fifth endowment, but "we are still looking for a Nouno!"

Six \$1,000 scholarships that were awarded to students who excelled in Hellenic Studies were announced. The scholarships are named in honor of Rev. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos, the founder of Hellenic Studies at Stockton, as well as in the names of James and Soteria Roumbas, and Phokas and Lily Angelatos, other New Jersey benefactors.

Rev. Dr. Demetrios J. Constantelos, an internationally recognized historian, theologian and professor emeritus at Stockton, and the founder of Hellenic studies at Stockton offered closing remarks and the benediction. Dr. Constantelos emphasized the ideas of faith and knowledge (*pistis kai gnosis*) and the importance of supporting Hellenic Studies at Stockton College and across the country. ■

The Examined Life: Greek Studies in the Schools

by Marilyn Bonner and Mary Granahan



The Examined Life
Hellenic Studies in the Schools
Teacher Workshop
January 19 - 24, 2008

A Greek Culture Program of the
Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies (ICHS)
at **The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey**

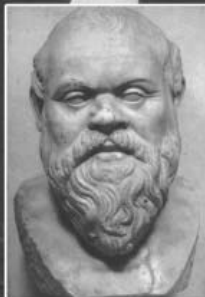
- Learn about ancient Greece and how to use Greek culture in your classroom
- 10 evening/ or Saturday seminars taught by Stockton & visiting faculty at no cost to participants
 - Curriculum development
- 10-day Study Tour of Greece from March 19-29
 - 60 Professional Development Hours

For information and application go to
<http://loki.stockton.edu/~hellenicstudies>
or contact **Meghan Smith-Ressler: 609-652-4505**,
email: ichs@stockton.edu

Application Due: **December 1, 2007**

STOCKTON COLLEGE
THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
is an AAVEOE.



THE POWER TO TRANSFORM
G R E E C E

January 2006 was the beginning of an exciting change in the lives of Mary Granahan and Marilyn Bonner, two sixth grade teachers at Mill Pond Elementary School in Lacey Township. Both were accepted into the Examined Life Program at Stockton State College.

The program, being offered again in 2008, was a series of classes and seminars designed to bring Greek culture into the classroom. Staff and visiting professors presented Greek history, literature, and philosophy. Breakout sessions after the initial lectures focused on ways to present Greek culture to all grade levels. The highlight of the class was a trip to Greece to experience first hand all that had been discussed in the course. The only formal requirement of the program was a project demonstrating how the material was being used to enrich the curriculum in each participant's school.

Mary and Marilyn decided to enhance the existing sixth grade curriculum with the materials studied in the Examined Life Program. They were not prepared, however, for the profound affect the program would have on them, their students, or their school. Their enthusiasm at Mill Pond seemed contagious. Not only was their delivery of Greek history and culture enhanced, other teachers joined in the wave of excitement. The art teacher, Debbie Pope, designed a project on warm and cool colors using traditional pottery shapes. Ms. Julie Lawrence, the vocal music teacher, discussed early Greek theater and music that may have accompanied performances with the children. Mrs. Geri-Lynn VanSant, the librarian, opened the library for an exhibit of authentic Greek pottery, researched and recreated by the children. She also submitted a grant proposal based on materials and contacts presented through the class.

Mary and Marilyn completed the Fellowship Program in November of 2006, yet they continue their affiliation with Stockton by participating and promoting Greek programs offered by the college.

Applications for the Examined Life Fellowship Program being offered January 19 – May 24, 2008, at Stockton College are available through Stockton's Interdisciplinary Center of Hellenic Studies at <http://loki.Stockton.edu/~hellenicstudies> or by contacting Meghan Smith-Ressler at 609-652-4505. The application deadline is December 1, 2007. ■



Events sponsored by The Friends...

First Alumni-Friends Trip to Greece: Visits Spilia - "The Other Capital of Greece" & Other Adventures



Hard-hat tour with Dr. Pandermalis at the New Acropolis Museum

For ten days in June, twenty-one Stockton Alumni, and Friends of Hellenic Studies had the opportunity to travel through Greece to visit the famous ancient Greek sites and also to visit the village of Spilia, "the Other Capital of Greece." According to beloved Stockton History Professor who accompanied the trip, Rev. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos, the capital of Greece is considered by some to be the village of Spilia, in the southwestern corner of the Peloponnese. This tiny agricultural village with ancient roots happens to be the birthplace of Dr. Constantelos, and as he jokes with his students and friends, Athens is considered by most as the capital, but Spilia is really "his" capital.

The journey began at Stockton on June 18, with travelers excitedly gathering at the Stockton Athletic Center ready for their departure. Made up of Alumni and Friends of Hellenic Studies, the group was led by faculty tour leaders Dr. Tom Papademetriou, and Dr. Constantelos. Arriving in Athens at the beginning of the famous June heat wave, the group enjoyed luxurious accommodations in Athens at the Hotel Residence Giorgio before setting out to tour the ancient sites. Because of the close relations between Dr. Pandermalis, the Director of the New Acropolis Museum, and the Mitoulis family of EHT, and his friendship with Dr. Constantelos, the Stockton group was given a private hard-hat tour of the new museum that was still in the middle of construction. This was the first of many opportunities that were enjoyed because of the Stockton connections!

After enjoying the Acropolis, the sublime beauty of the Parthenon, and a cool lunch in the Plaka, the group headed into the Constantelos' Peloponnesos. Using Nafplion as a base, the group toured the citadel of Mycenae where Agamemnon once ruled, and learned about the Golden Mean (or ratio) when we examined the theater of Epidauros. Ryan Parris' vocal rendition

of "Wild thing" delivered from the center of the theater could be heard even in the highest seats. Arlene Gonzales and Conan Mowbray with Dr. Papademetriou and Dorrie Papademetriou headed to the highest point in Mystra to lay claim to the imperial Byzantine throne in this medieval Byzantine city preserved high on a Peloponnesian mountainside. Afterward, the group was treated to a fine luncheon by Friends President, Mr. George Christy, who had arranged the meal through his nephews Vasili and Thomas in Sparta. While the group ate well everywhere, the group agreed that this was, in fact, one of the best meals of the trip.

The tour guide Antonis, and the driver Nikos "o Kalamatianos" made sure the bus rides were educational AND adventurous, as they traveled from site to site. Arriving in Spilia, Fr. Constantelos took the group on a walking tour of the village, where they visited the school, church and home of Dr. Constantelos. They learned how olives are processed for their oil, and were able to eat fresh figs that were picked just for them by Dr. Constantelos' family.

The highlight of this trip was to visit Dr. Constantelos' home where the group was treated to the famous Homeric hospitality (philoxenia) by Dr. Constantelos' brother and sister. Even after more than 30 years as a professor at Stockton, with thousands of students whom he taught, a score of significant publications, and several Greek Orthodox communities that he helped found, Dr. Constantelos has been known to express the desire to trade in all his books, papers, and accomplishments for a mule and a plow, and a few acres of fields, his 63 olive trees, and to return back to his roots in Spilia. Those who were fortunate to be on this trip now understand why!

At a special dinner offered by the mayor of Kyparissia (the county headquarters that includes Spilia) offered Dr. Constantelos and Dr. Papademetriou special medallions inscribed in appreciation for their contribution to scholarship and to Greek civilization.



The theater at Epidauros



Luncheon by the water in Kyparrisia

The group received special certificates of honor and also were welcomed and honored by the officials of Kyparrisia and Spilia. They were then treated to an evening of celebration as a wedding party was taking place at the hotel that evening. The groom, who happened to be a teacher himself, invited the entire group to celebrate, himself bringing wine and cake to the participants. An unscheduled stop led the group to the Temple of Apollo at Bassae that was one of the most inspirational and emotional moments for many members of the group. Having to contend with a labor strike of museum employees on the day the tour was going to Olympia, the group left early for their four days in Kefalonia. Staying at a resort hotel, the participants were free to wander about the island without any set schedule, although an excursion to Myrtos beach and other beautiful spots was arranged. Robin Parris, Ryan Parris, James and Meghan Lowe, Les Osborne, Karol Kinkade, Carolyn Gutierrez and Arlene Gonzalez even ventured to the neighboring island of Ithaka to visit the kingdom of Odysseus. Most of the group had plenty of time to relax, to shop and enjoy time at the lovely beaches and hotel pool.

“This trip was unique in that we wanted to give our adult travelers the opportunity to travel with Stockton faculty scholars, to learn about wonderful places and historical events, and still enjoy a lovely first class vacation filled with good food, good company, recreation and relaxation,” said Dr. Papademetriou. He added that “I think this tour made the past come alive in a new and vibrant way our travelers, especially those who have never been to Greece and even for Greek-born individuals who have visited Greece many times over.” Experienced Greek travelers Cosmas and Marion Zahariadis have already asked to be first on the list for next year’s trip. Lia (Sophia) Katsanis, a St. Joseph University student, and daughter of Friends member Lester Katsanis, and friend Justine Kelly used the opportunity to soak in as much information from the guide and the two faculty members. Robin Dratch, who learned about this trip through the alumni network was glad to have an opportunity to reconnect also with Stockton on such an exotic tour.

After four days on the island, the tour continued back to Olympia, to see the impressive home of the Olympic games, which before the August fires was lush and green. Next, the tour visited the Church of St. Andrews in Patras, and then the Oracle in Delphi with its breathtaking location and inspirational setting. The last night in Athens was spent at a special dinner with traditional Greek dancing at which Nancy Hicks refused the appeal of the handsome Greek evzone who proposed marriage to daughter, Heather Hicks, on stage in front of the entire audience. After a last evening on the rooftop of the hotel looking at the beautiful moon over the Acropolis, the group left Greece to return home. With a bit of sorrow for having to leave Greece, but with joy from all the riches they experienced, each of the travelers arrived home safely, and with memories to last... until next year’s trip! ■



Dr. Constantelos explaining how to peel figs - Spilia



Starting the race in Olympia



The last night for Glendi at the Folk Dance Dinner-Athens

Vassilopita Evening

by Walter and Youla Mularz



George Christy, FHS President, Fr. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos, Tom Papademetriou, ICHS Director.



EUREKA!!! The lucky coin.



Board Members: Walter Mularz, Pete Mitoulis, Donna Andrews, Sophie Nestor, Virginia Nikolaidis. Guest in front row: Helen Bauer.

On January 24th 2007 the Friends of Hellenic Studies of Richard Stockton College conducted its monthly meeting. On this date however, it was hosted by Ginny Kramvis, a member of FHS and her family at their home in Atlantic City. It was a scheduled meeting that transformed itself into a social event and a vibrant New Year celebration with dinner and dessert graciously provided by our most hospitable hosts.

Since it was our first scheduled meeting for the year 2007, we observed Vassilopita, a tradition of the Greek Orthodox Church. The word Vassilopita is a compound Greek word meaning the sweet "bread of Basil". The name Basil refers to Saint Basil the Great, a 4th Century Bishop, who loved and had compassion for the poor and the unfortunate. Among numerous acts of charity, he was also the first person to establish an orphanage for little children and founded the first Christian hospital.

The traditional observance of Vassilopita began in the last half of the

4th century in Cappadocia of Caesarea and continues to be celebrated each year on January 1st and for most of the month of January. A wrapped coin is baked into the ingredients of the bread.

The head of the family or a priest will cut slices of bread for the Lord, the Virgin Mary, the Church, Saints, the poor, various other people and for each family member in order of age. Each slice symbolizes the hope that the New Year will be filled with the sweetness of life, health and happiness. The individual receiving the portion containing the wrapped coin is considered blessed.

In accordance, the most honored and respected Dr. Demetrios Constantelos conducted the ritual of slicing portions of the sweet bread. Before the initial slice was cut, Dr. Constantelos enthusiastically declared that the recipient of the coin should make a donation of \$1000.00 to FHS. We agreed and the recipient of the coin to everyone's surprise was none other than Dr. Constantelos, who properly adhered to his declaration and made his contribution to FHS.

The Friends are sincerely grateful to Dr. Constantelos for his most generous donation.

On behalf of everyone in attendance, I wish to express our heartfelt and sincere appreciation to Ginny Kramvis, her husband George and daughters Athena and Amalia for being such wonderful hosts.

By the way, in case you were wondering, we did conduct our scheduled meeting that evening. It was most enjoyable and most productive. ■

Two Fundraising evenings at Sophia Restaurant

by Walter and Youla Mularz



Presvitera Voula and Father George Liacopoulos and their guests, Presvitera Stella Constantelos and Tom Papademetriou, ICHS Director.



Board members: Sinthia Obelenus, Ginny Kramvis, Youla Mularz.



Eleni Stamelos, Bev Pagano and Youla Mularz.

On two separate occasions, Sunday, November 12, 2006 and Sunday, March 25, 2007, the Faculty and Friends of Hellenic Studies at Richard Stockton College celebrated Greek Night at Sofia's to benefit the Hellenic Studies scholarships and programs at Richard Stockton College. Both events were held at Sofia's Restaurant by the Margate Bay and were graciously hosted by the owners of the establishment, Dr. Athanasios Papastamelos and family.

The evening of November 12 was especially noteworthy, since it was our inaugural event at Sofia's. It was greeted with much anticipation and enthusiasm by approximately 120 guests in attendance - a social composite of individuals interested in, dedicated to and supportive of Hellenic Studies. A distinctive Greek and Mediterranean ambiance permeated the atmosphere in regard to cuisine, entertainment, music, education, culture, and enjoyment. These were visually enhanced by the décor of the restaurant itself. One could not ignore the architectural appeal of the interior space accented by the ornate woodwork and the display of original artwork. It was a visually aesthetic and stimulating experience.

Our evening formally commenced with opening remarks from Dr. Papastamelos who welcomed everyone in attendance. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos, Dr. Tom Papademetriou and Dr. Fred Mench were our guest speakers. Dr. Constantelos and Dr. Papademetriou discussed and reflected upon a variety of topics but most importantly emphasized the significance of Hellenic Studies in the formal educational process of an individual. Philanthropy was also highlighted and encouraged to sustain the necessary programs, endowments, professorships, scholarships, and other educational opportunities.

Dr. Fred Mench informed us about "The Examined Life", a program of the Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies at Richard Stockton College. Its primary objective is the implementation of Greek culture in the classroom through curriculum development. It is a very comprehensive program that is free to K-12 teachers, provides fellowships to all participants, conducts seminars, includes a 10-day tour of Greece and provides up to 60 Professional Development Hours.

Our evening concluded with music and dance provided by the OPA Dance Group from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox

Church of Egg Harbor Township. The dance group is under the capable direction of Dr. Vicky Georges. To the delight of everyone, the dance group enthusiastically performed a variety of dances from different parts of Greece. They concluded their performance by encouraging audience participation. We eagerly complied with their request.

Finally, as a token of our gratitude and appreciation for a most enjoyable evening, a beautiful silk tie containing the Hippocratic Oath was presented to Dr. Papastamelos by Dr. Demetrios Constantelos on behalf of the Friends of Hellenic Studies.

Our second "Greek Night at Sofias" occurred on March 25 2007, a date of paramount importance superseding practically everything in the lives of every Greek, the celebration of Greek Independence Day on March 25, 1821. It was on this date that Bishop Germanos of Patras in the Peloponnese ignited the revolutionary spark by raising the Greek flag at the Monastery of Agia Laura. It is a day to celebrate the rebirth of the Nation of Greece and to remember and honor the bravery, the

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The Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies of
The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
and
The Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
of Egg Harbor Township, NJ

present:

**MODERN GREEK:
An Introduction to Modern Greek**



1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

**For ten consecutive Sundays,
Sunday, January 27 - Sunday, March 30, 2007**

This is a non-credit five week course in Modern Greek for adults with little or no background in the language. The course integrates culture into the teaching of basic conversational expressions, particularly for those planning a trip to Greece. Students will learn the alphabet and will be able to read and write simple phrases and text.

Location:

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church Community Center
(on the corner of Ridge and Mill Roads in Egg Harbor Township)

Cost: \$100.00

To sign up, or for information, please call 609-652-4505.

As an Instructor for the Ancient Greek Class

by Jeff Cole



Professor David Roessel (center) and his student instructors, from left to right: Christa Fratantoro, Victoria Conover, Jeff Cole, Brich Priskett, and Angie Fedkenheuer.

ANCIENT GREEK CLASSES FOR FREE??

A note from editor Ginny Kramvis

If you ever wanted to learn some Greek, now is your chance (whether for Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Herodotus or the New Testament.) The Stockton Free Ancient Greek classes began May 16th at 6pm offered by the Hellenic Studies program at the college. This is the second year for the program and everyone is welcome to take advantage of this incredible offer.

This June I enrolled in the Ancient Greek Class. I was impressed with the caliber of the student instructors, with their enthusiasm and dedication in teaching us Ancient Greek. I asked my instructor Jeff to give us some of his thoughts on learning Ancient Greek and then teaching it....

After first selecting Beginning Ancient Greek I at my freshman orientation, I hadn't given my decision a great deal of thought. Greatly appreciating European history and culture, it seemed a valid yet altogether opportunistic choice as my first college class.

My first semester was, quite simply, a learning experience in every sense of the word. Beyond adapting myself to the new atmosphere, schedule, class structure, and responsibility existed a single course in which I was neither particularly adept nor entirely sure of my decision. Seeming far more distant and complex than the requisite years of Spanish completed

in high school, I was admittedly intimidated by the sheer inaccessibility of the language.

Patience would prove a virtue though, and after a daunting start I began appreciating grammar and syntax, vocabulary and etymology. Professor David Roessel and his absolute dedication to the subject matter as well as his students created such a dynamic environment that I believed myself to be entirely capable of learning Ancient Greek. After having completed two full years of Ancient Greek I had thought myself moderately proficient in the language, enough to grasp the various underlying concepts and formulae at work.

Professor Roessel later informed our class of a free Ancient Greek course he offers and wished for us to be a part of it; only this time we were to be the instructor rather than the student. Which is not to say there was nothing to learn. On the contrary, instructing Ancient Greek, especially to those who are so willing to learn it, has been yet another unique and rewarding experience with my peers and the language itself.

Under the guidance of Professor Roessel and Mr. Brian Priskett, the Ancient Greek seminar offered at Stockton College has offered a great deal of opportunities to both the students themselves as well as their instructors. The opportunity to teach something so important and historical on the world scale, as well as culturally and linguistically relevant to today's descendants of the Indo-European languages has been a great honor. ■

Ποίηση Δημήτρη Σπηλαίου

Ο Δημήτρης Σπηλαίος είναι
απόφοιτος του Γυμνασίου
Κυπαρισσίας, 1945

Ο φίλος μου, ο Άθεος

Το είπα, φίλε μου, και σου το ξαναλέγω
Σε θεό δεν πίστευα, μήτε και πιστεύω
Εγώ είμαι άθεος, δεν θα με πείσης, όσα κι αν μου πεις,
«Όν με πείσης καν με πείσεις», όπως λέγαν οι παλαιοί

Έλα μαζί μου, ταξίδι στη ζούγκλα, απεφάσισα να πάω
Μόνο για αστέρια και λουλουδία θα μιλάμε εκεί
Μακριά από τις μηχανές, το θόρυβο της πόλης
Όχι κουβέντες άλογες εκεί, μόνο σιωπή και βλέμμα

Ταξίδι μακρινό εκάναμε, άξιζε τον κόπο
Για κοίτα, φίλε μου, την φυλωσία του δάσους
Πανύψηλα τα δένδρα, τα χαίρονται οι πίθηκοι, και οι ουρακοτάγκοι
Ερωτεύονται επάνω εκεί, φωλιάζουν και τα αηδόνια

Για πρόσεξε, πώς τα γάργαρα νερά, του ποταμού κυλάνε
Χοροπηδάνε όταν πέτρες συναντάνε
Στο ποτάμι εκεί Ρινόκεροι κολυμπάνε
Να, κι αντίτερα μοσχοβολούν οι πικροδάφνες

Έλα, φίλε μου, στο δάσος πιο βαθιά να πάμε
Να δούμε πετεινά, και σπάνια ερπετά μαζί
Ζαρκάδια και λαγούς, αρκούδες και λιοντάρια
Ελέφαντες και καμηλοπαρδάλεις

Προχώρει, φίλε μου, κι εγώ θα σ' ακολουθήσω
Άσε με στις σκέψεις μου, την προσευχή μου θενά κάνω
Για προσευχή καλύτερο από το δάσος δεν είναι άλλο
Θα σε θωρώ, πόσο μακριά θα φθάσης.

Κραυγή ακούστηκε από του ποταμού την όχθη
Ο φίλος μου τα έχασε, σε κίνδυνο ευρέθη

Σε αρκούδας σπιτικό πολύ κοντά ευρέθη
Την φωλιά της επροστάτευσε και τα μικρά παιδιά της

Πήδησε στον φίλο μου, τον άρπαξε από το δεξί του χέρι
Στα χόματα τον κύλησε, τροφή για τα παιδιά της ενόμισε πως βρήκε
Θεέ μου, Σώσε με, άκουσα την τραγική φωνή του
Η Αρκούδα κοντοστάθηκε, κοίταξε τα παιδιά της

Τότε εκατάλαβα, ο φίλος μου επίστευε, δεν το 'χε καταλάβει

Νοσταλγίες ημερών αρχαίων (1935 - 1945)

Αχ, να 'χα ένα ωραίο άλογο, μια λυγερή φοράδα
Σαν τη Νοτιά, Ρουμπίνα την φωνάζαμε
Όταν το όνομά της άκουγε
Μας κοίταζε και χαρούμενα χλιμίντριζε.

Διάκριση δεν κάνω,
Ας είχα ένα βαρβάτο άλογο
Ψαρή να το 'λεγαν, ας ήταν και μιμιμπιλίς
Σαν το άλογο, που ο πόλεμος του σαράντα μας επήρε.

Μα θα 'θελα κι ένα καλό μονάλετρο
Καλοφτιαγμένο με κοφτερό νή
Στο γύφτικο του Σαραντάκου σμιλεμένο
Να χειρουργεί άπονα τη μάνα γη.

Θα 'θελα ακόμη ένα καλό χωράφι
Με αφράτο χώμα και παχύ, κάπου στου Μεσοράχη
Εκεί που κάποτε πολλά πουλάκια κελαϊδούσαν
Μα τώρα πεινασμένα γεράκια θηηολογούν.

Εάν με αφρόχομα χωράφι, χωρίς πέτρες και ξιφάρες
Κοντά στα δυο ποτάμια
Του Πεδικονερίου τον ποταμό, και της Καναλεπούς το ρέμα
Εκεί, που ήταν οι βοσκοί έπαιζαν φλογέρα
Εχόρευαν γίδα και πρόβατα μαζί.

Την ανατολή του ήλιου, από την κορυφή του Αϊ Λιά,
Κάλεσμα για προσευχή, με κλειστά τα μάτια και ανατεταμένο νου
Τον ήλιο να χαίρομαι, να μεσουραίνει από πάνω
Να βλέπω και ηλιοβασιλεμα
Στου Ιόνιου τα πορφυρά νερά.

Απ' το πρωί ως το ηλιοβασιλεμα
Να οργώσω την τροφοδότρα γη
Και με τη μάνα γη να ομιλώ

Άλλοτε στα συγκαλά μου και άλλοτε σαν παλαβός.

Ξυπόλυτος θέλω να οργώνω
Με τα μπατζάκια τραβηγμένα στα γόνατα επάνω
Να νιώθουν τα πόδια μου τη ζεστασιά
Από τα αγνίζοντα χόματα, τα φρεσκοκυλισμένα.

Αχ, να 'χα στα Μεσοράχια ένα κομμάτι γης,
Ένα άλογο κι' ένα μονάλετρο μαζί
Μια καλύβα, από ρίκια και κοιμαριές φτιαγμένη
Ένα βαρύ σάλισμα στη γη,
Και μια κουβέρτα νεροτριβής από πάνω.

Να κοιμάμαι ύπνο γλυκό, αγκαλιά με την μάνα γη
Να ξυπνώ με το λάλημα του πετεινού
Και την ανατολή του αναγερινού
Κι' ολημερίς να οργώνω, να οργώνω και να σπέρνω
Τον Ιόνιου να θερίζω, τον Ιούλιο να 'λωνίζω.

Δημήτρης Σπηλαίος
Απόφοιτος Γυμνασίου Κυπαρισσίας 1945

Report from the International Byron Society Conference

by Assistant Professor David Roessel

Peter and Stella Yiannos Professor of Greek Language and Literature



San Servolo - No longer a dreary pile

*I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:*

The International Byron Society met in Venice in July, where Byron lived a rather reckless life from 1818 to 1820 before his serious commitment to the cause of Greek freedom some years later. During that period, Byron and P.B. Shelley would go riding on the Lido, and one evening when they passed the lunatic asylum on the island of San Servolo, made famous in Shelly's poem "Julian and Maddalo."

I looked, and saw between us and the sun
A building on an island; such a one
As age to age might add, for uses vile,
A windowless, deformed and dreary pile.

San Servolo now houses Venice International University and, instead of a dreary pile, was a wonderful place for an academic conference. The only maniacs leaving their rooms for food at the sound of the bell were a hundred bedraggled Byronists who had been out too late at the Piazza San Marco the night before. While much of the conference was devoted to Byron's association and writing about Venice, there was a panel on Byron and Greece. Michael Franklin talked about Byron's view of the East as opposed to that of his contemporary, H. Galley Knight. Matt Green spoke about the politics and sexual politics in Byron's Eastern Tales. And, since we were in Venice, I spoke about Byron's attitude to Francesco Morosini, called Peloponniasticus by the Venetians for conquering the Morea in 1684-86, but who also fired the shot that

took the roof off the Parthenon in 1687. Morosini then tried to take the west pediment of the temple back to Venice, but the statues fell to the ground and smashed when he tried to remove them. My question was why, if Byron cursed Elgin for taking the marbles back to England, he had nothing to say about what Morosini had done in Athens? John Cam Hobhouse, who was traveling with Byron in Greece, called Morosini's actions a "sacrilege." I suggested an answer might be found in the poem "The Siege of Corinth," set when the Turks reconquered the Morea from the Venetians in 1715 and cited several passages including:

Coumourgi—can his glory cease,
That latest conqueror of Greece,
Till Christian hands again restore
The freedom Venice gave of yore?
A hundred years have rolled away
Since he refix'd the Moslem's sway.

Byron was less harsh on Morosini because, in Byron's eyes, he had brought the Greeks of the Morea "freedom," although historians now say that the Greeks were sick of Venetian rule by 1715, and that freedom might be seen as more important than ancient marbles. Elgin, on the other hand, brought nothing in return for the things he took. The argument was longer and more pedantic than that, of course.

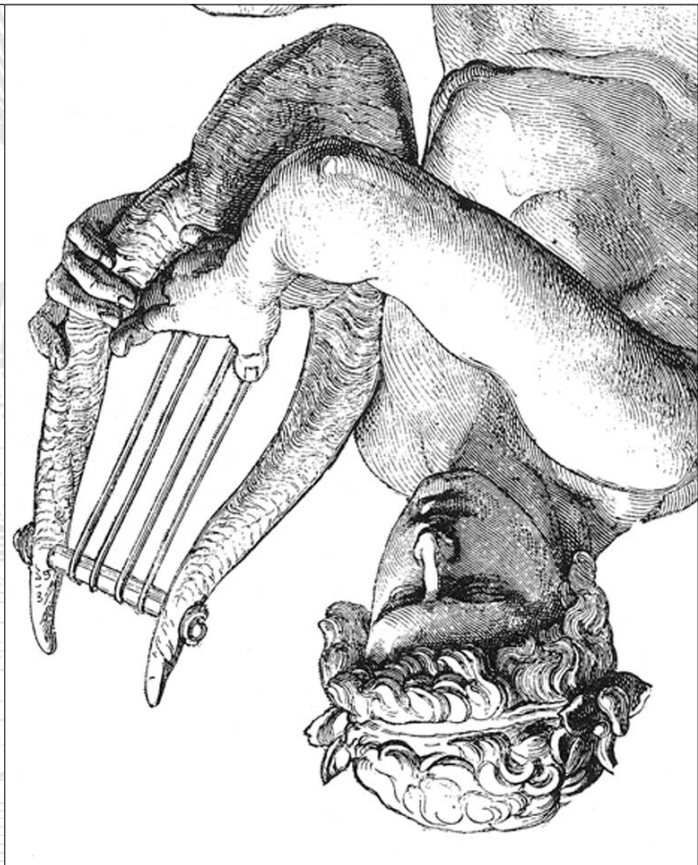
But it was wonderful to walk through Venice with Byron and Shelley in hand. To the left was the hotel where Thomas Mann wrote *Death in Venice*, to the right the pension where Henry James wrote *Portrait of a Lady*. And in the center the Teatro Goldoni, with a Goldoni Festival going on. As I keep telling my friend Tom Papademetriou, why read history when you are surrounded by literature? What could be better? Well, the 2009 meeting will gather in Missolonghi and go to Zakynthos. ■



Boats gathering in the Basin of St. Mark for the Redentore (Festival of the Redeemer.)

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