

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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Vol. XX Fall 2023



Sister Cities Portland, Maine, USA - Mytilene, Lesvos, Greece Celebrate their 20th Anniversary on September 21

Come help the Hellenic Society and the City of Portland celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our Greek Sister City with a special reception at 5 p.m. Thursday September 21 in the Wishcamper Center on the USM Portland campus. The reception will include a musical interlude by pianist Annie Antonacos. On October 20, 2003, a vote was held by the Portland City Council on a



Mytilene Sister City Resolution, establishing this friendship. Attending from Greece were the Mayor of Mytilene and other representatives. The relationship was founded, and is supported by, the Hellenic Society of Maine. Plans are underway for another event, in Mytilene next June 2024, to mark when a Portland delegation went to Mytilene in June of 2004 to sign reciprocal resolutions. Pianist Annie Antonacos will again perform a concert in the Mytilene Public Thea-



ter at that time. She gave a concert there 20 years ago as part of our gift to that city. The purpose of a Sister City is to promote world peace, international cooperation, and citizen diplomacy by establishing close and continuous ties between two world communities that already have several strong connections and much in common. There is a commonality between the two cities of Portland and Mytilene.

Both are located on the sea, in the northeast corner of their countries, in areas known for being environmentally clean, green and beautiful. Both are ports and are the economic, cultural, medical and legal centers of their region. Both have an important, growing university and other schools that give them a young and vibrant feel and a talented workforce. Both were established early in their country's history, and are associ-

Mytilenean delegation in Portland 2004

ated with historic and modern artistic and literary talent. Both are in areas that rely on tourism and natural resources for a good portion of their economy, and whose people are known for their independent spirits.

Contact novak@maine.edu for parking information.

(See page 4 for a brief photo history.)

"The Changing Landscape of Cultural Heritage and Human Rights: Insights from the Eastern Mediterranean" by Elizabeth Prodromou

November 16, 2023 at 7 p.m. — via Zoom



Internationally recognized scholar, Dr. Elizabeth H. Prodromou, will discuss the changes in cultural heritage and human rights policies in the Eastern Mediterranean during her talk on Nov. 16 via Zoom.

Dr. Prodromou is Visiting Professor in the International Studies Program at Boston College, and an affiliated faculty member of the Islamic Civiliza-

tions and Societies Program, as well as the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life. Her research interests and policy work focus on the intersections of geopolitics, religion, and human rights, with particular focus on the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.

She served a diplomatic appointment on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (2004-2012), and she was a member of the U.S. Secretary of State's Religion & Foreign Policy Working Group (2011-2015). She is co-editor of two volumes, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity and American Higher Education: Theological, Historical, and Contemporary Reflections,* and *Thinking through Faith: Perspectives from Orthodox Christian Scholars;* multiple book chapters; and is *(Cont. on p.3)*

"Was Nikos Kazantzakis a Novelist?" by Peter Bien

October 19, 2023—via ZOOM Translator and Kazantzakis scholar, Prof. Peter Bien,

will give a talk on the famous Greek writer at 7 p.m. Thursday, October 19 via Zoom. His topic is, "Was Nikos Kazantzakis a Novelist?" Prof. Bien had worked closely with the author.

Although Kazantzakis is now mostly known via translations of his novels, he was actually more devoted to poetry and theater. Even though he made a spectacular start as a playwright, circumstances worked against him, as did



his left-wing political position, forcing him to revert to journalism, translation, textbook writing, etc. in order to make a living in Greece.

Then, forced to live abroad owing to his government's belief that he was a communist, Kazantzakis found — starting with *Zorba*'s translation into French — that the surest way to make a living was by writing novels that would be translated into numerous European and Asian languages, which brought him fame and financial stability.

Peter Bien is Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature at Dartmouth College. (Cont. on p.3)



WATCH AND DISCUSS FILMS via the Internet and ZOOM or live. We offer films via an Internet link one week before a planned ZOOM discussion of the film (the ZOOM link will be sent separately.) Members receive automatic notifications. If you are interested in viewing the films below, send an email to: novak@maine.edu prior to the dates shown and the links will be sent to you.

Kazantzakis Director: Yannis Smaragdis, Greece, 2011 ZOOM Discussion: Thursday, October 5 at 7 p.m.

ΚΑΖΑΝΤΖΑΚΗΣ

During the week of September 28-October 5: watch on the link to be distributed by September 28. From the Director: "The great Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis believed that two things determined his life: dreams and travels. The film begins with a dream he had a little before he died, a nightmare which ends with the appearance of Domenicos Theotokopoulos (El Greco). Kazantzakis (played by Odysseus Papaspiliopoulos) begins to write the chapters of his autobiography Report to Greco with the support of his intuitive companion Eleni (Marina Kalogirou). These chapters are brought to life in a flashback, as a continuous journey to the places he visited in his lifetime: Mount Athos, Mount Sinai, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Moscow, Antibes and Beijing. At the same time they represent the 'spiritual' path of the author who keeps searching, wanting to understand Christ, the Buddha, Nietzsche, Lenin, and his ancestor Odysseus, and the big womb which is represented by the Aegean Sea and the Greek Light. Armed with the consciousness of his surroundings and his spirituality, he completes his 'path' with the 'Cretan

glance' that eventually leads him towards freedom by defying death. Through this long journey of the soul towards freedom, Kazantzakis succeeds in creating his universal work, a pillar of the Greek spirit today." In Greek with English subtitles, 120 minutes.

He Who Must Die ("Celui qui doit mourir") Director: Jules Dassin, France & Italy, 1957 **ZOOM** Discussion: Thursday, November 2 at 7 p.m.

During the week of October 26-November 2: watch on the link to be distributed by October 26.

This timely and controversial film is based on Nikos Kazantzakis' novel, Christ Recrucified. In a Greek village under Otto-

man rule in the 1920's (the Agha: Gregoire Asian), the leading citizens meet to cast the roles of the next year's Passion Play. Surprisingly, a stuttering shepherd is chosen to play Jesus (Pierre Vaneck). The town butcher, who wanted to be Jesus, is chosen as Judas, and the town prostitute is chosen for Mary Magdalene (Melina Mercouri). Within a few days they and the other citizens are challenged when a group of impoverished refugees, uprooted by the war, arrive at the village led by their devout and honorable priest (Fernand Ledoux). The wealthier citizens want nothing to do with these people and force them to move into caves in the nearby mountains. Slowly each of the chosen cast play out their biblical roles in real life. There is a huge cast of other French, German and Greek actors: Jean Servais, Gert Frobe, Rene Lefevre, Lucien Raimbourg, Maurice Ronet, Roger Hanin, Nicole Berger, Joe Dassin, Teddy Billis, Carl Mohner, Giorgos Fountas, Nasos Kedrakas, Dimos Starenios and Rira Mousouri. Music by Manos Hatzidakis. In French with English subtitles. 122 minutes



Little Greek Godfather (" $\Pi P\Omega TH \Phi OPA NONO\Sigma$ ") Director: Olga Malea, Greece, 2007 LIVE—Sunday, December 3, at 3:15 p.m., Talbot Auditorium, Luther Bonney Hall, USM Portland



This delightful film will leave you smiling! Brought up in California, the offspring of an important Greek political family, 11-year-old Alex (Tex Pardue) is sent to Crete as a proxy of his father, to baptize the baby child of a local leader and parliamentary candidate, Lefteris (Antonis Kafetzopoulos). Alex will be a Godfather for the first time, and hopes to prove to everybody, and mainly to his father, that he is a worthy son. His foreign looks, his difficulty with the Greek language because he grew up in the States, the Cretan father's peculiarities, and the tests he has to go through in order to be accepted, create a comedy with a political background, existential distresses and tragi-comic situations. This baptism - an initiation in the art and tricks of politics - will mark him for the rest of his life. The film is based on a semiautobiographical short story by Nikos Papandreou, an established writer and son of former Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, and brother of George Papandreou, also a former Prime Minister. In Greek, with English subtitles. 90 minutes. POPCORN WILL BE OFFERED!

In Honor or In Remembrance

This column lists donations made IN MEMORY OF (IMO) deceased, and IN HONOR OF (IHO) living, special persons by family members and friends. Listings include the name of the honoree followed by the name of the donor, and will run in two consecutive issues (* new). To donate you can send the membership form found in this newsletter and send it, together with a check to Hellenic Society of Maine, P.O. Box 8007, Portland, ME 04104-8007 – OR – use the donate button on our website (indicating IMO or IHO) at hellenicsocietyofmaine.org

> <u>Crown of Olive Level - \$500 or more</u> <u>Gold Level - \$250 or more</u>

> > Silver Level - \$100 or more IMO – Charles S. Bournakel *IMO – Antigone Bournakel Angela Bournakel

Prodromou (Cont. fr. p.1)

widely published in academic journals.

She sits on the editorial board of The Review of Faith & International Affairs and The Journal of World Christianity, and Co-Chairs the Orthodoxy, Politics, and International Relations Group of the International Orthodox Theological Association. Her policy and practitioner appointments include the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center (Non-Resident Senior Fellow), Religions for Peace (Co-President), and the Freedom of Religion or Belief Women's Alliance (Alliance Advisor). She was a member of the delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Holy and Great Council at Crete in 2016.

Prodromou has taught at Tufts University, Boston University, Princeton, and the College of Europe (Natolin campus). She earned a Ph.D. and an S.M. in political science from MIT, an M.A.L.D. from The Fletcher School at Tufts, and a B.A. in history and international relations from Tufts, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude.

Diagonal Latitudes – Images of Greece

This exhibition of botanical and landscape images includes drawings, etchings, screen prints, sculptures and cyanotypes by Judith Allen-Efstathiou and Eirene Efstathiou. It will be up at Cove Street Arts, 71 Cove St. Portland, from Sept. 14 to Nov. 4. Hours are 10 - 5:30 Monday to Friday, 10 - 5 Saturdays. The opening reception will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 14; an Artist Talk will be held in October 4.

Judith and Eirene, mother and daughter, are graduates of the Boston Museum School and Tufts. Eirene, who lives and works in Greece, has an MFA from the Athens School of Fine Arts and is currently working on a PhD in art theory. Judith lives and works six months of the year in Portland, and six months in Athens and on Kea Island. The exhibition examines sense of place and cross cultural living, focusing primarily on Athens and Kea. Bronze Level – under \$100 IMO – Constantine Karvonides Christos Gianopoulos IMO – Taxia Efthimion Paras Mary Snell & Irwin Novak *IMO – Elias & Alice Jasonides Anna Jasonides & Dimitris Manolakis *IMO – Georgia Gillis Jim Vanites *IMO – George & Theresa Cotsirilos Stephanie Cotsirilos

IHO – Mary Snell & Irwin Novak Bunny and Ross Wescott

Copper Level - under \$25 IMO – Haroula Kotsini David Webster & Nancy Salmon IMO – Dimitrios Millios Barbara S. Millios

Bien (Cont. fr. p.1)

Although his teaching there was devoted chiefly to James Joyce and other novelists of "high modernism," his publications have been mainly in the area of Modern Greek literature and language, stimulated originally by his marriage to Chrysanthi Yiannakou, a native Greek whom he met as a student in England.

His scholarly books include *Kazantzakis and the Linguistic Revolution in Greek Literature* (1972), which treats the history of the Greek language from ancient times to the early 20th century; *Kazantzakis: Politics of the Spirit* (volume 1, 1989, volume 2, 2007) a critical biography examining all of the author's writings; *The Selected Letters of Nikos Kazantzakis* (2012), which he chose and translated; *God's Struggler: Religion in the Writings of Nikos Kazantzakis*, which he co-edited (1996).

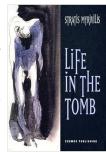
As a translator, Prof. Bien published Kazantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1960), *Saint Francis (1962), Report to Greco* (1965) and *Zorba the Greek* (2014). He has written about and translated works by other major Greek writers such as Yannis Ritsos, Stratis Myrivilis and Stylianos Harkianakis.

He is a co-editor of *A Century of Greek Poetry 1900–2000* (2004); and a co-author of the textbooks *Demotic Greek 1* (1972), *Demotic Greek 2: The Flying Telephone Booth* (1982) and *Greek Today* (2004).

He has been honored with three Fulbright Fellowships, The Golden Cross of Apostle Andrew, an honorary Ph.D. from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and an honorary membership in the Hellenic Authors' Society. A founder and past president of the Modern Greek Studies Association of America and Canada, he served as editor of the Association's *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* from 1991 to 1999. He taught as visiting professor at the universities of Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Brown, Melbourne, Thessaloniki, and Crete.

Ellenika Biblia - A column with suggestions for Greek-related books to read.

Life in the Tomb by Stratis Myrivilis was translated by Peter Bien (who will give a talk for HSoM in October.) Myrivilis, a native of Mytilene, has written one of the most sensitive and perceptive novels to come out of World War I. Set in Macedonia and Serbia during the Balkan Wars of the early 20th century, *Life in the Tomb* also has moments of great literary beauty. In 1917 Myrivilis was 25 when he joined the Archipelago Division of the Greek Army and fought in that war. He structured his novel as a series of journals, old papers and letters written by a sergeant fighting in the trenches. Peter Levi writes in his introduction, "It is a better, and deeper book than *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and no other book quite like it had ever been written....This is a book about despair with a background of courage, corruption and tragedy, with a background of innocence and fear, with a background of earthly life. Small wonder it sold more copies than any other Greek novel down to today." Of this English translation C.M. Woodhouse of the "Times Literary Supplement " writes: "[Bien] has turned a Greek masterpiece into something not much less than an English one." (1987, Quartet Books).





As part of the Sister City relationship, there have been five mayoral delegation visits to Maine and to Mytilene, which included tours and cultural events in both cities. There were several other initiatives sponsored by the Hellenic Society of Maine:

2003 A delegation from Mytilene came to Portland to establish the Sister City. *Photo #1* - L to R: Mytilene Mayor Aris Hatzicomninos, Mytilene Councilor Nikos Katranis, Portland Mayor James Cloutier. *Photo #2* - Mytilene Councilors Makis Vanetas and Nikos Katranis, Mayor Hatzicomninos, Hellenic Society vice president Mary Snell, Aegean Art Exchange tapestry artist, Sophia Tata, and Hellenic Society president, Nikos Minadakis.

2004 The **Portland delegation** in Mytilene. *Photo* #3 USM President Richard Pattenaude, Mayor Hatzicomninos, Portland Mayor Nicholas Mavodones, and Portland Multicultural Director, Rachel Talbot Ross.

2007 The Society shipped 80 hardcover **Books in English** on American culture to the Mytilene Public Library. 2012 We collaborated with Jeff and Lydia Badger through Tetra Projects to send the art exhibit, **Portes**, to Mytilene featuring 50 Portland artists. The show was exhibited in the Mytilene Art Museum for a week. It also was exhibited earlier at Space

Gallery in Portland. *Photo #4* - Jeff and Lydia Badger at Space Gallery. *Photo #5* - in Mytilene: Eleni Iatridou, contributing artists Eriene Efstathiou and Judith Allen-Efstathiou, and Alex Seferiadis.

2012 The Hellenic Society commissioned and installed a permanent **oak display case** in Portland City Hall to promote the Sister City. *Photo* #6 - M. Snell, Portland councilor N. Mavodones, Portland Mayor Michael Brennan, and Rachel Talbot Ross. *Photo* #7 - the case in Portland City Hall.

2013 We held a **10th Anniversary Celebration** attended by Portland City officials. *Photo #8* - Mayor Brennan, Councilors N. Mavodones and Ed Suslovic.

2016 We raised \$20,000 for Lesvos Hospital Aid to purchase and ship a 40' container of medical supplies and equipment from Partners for World Health for the Mytilene General Hospital being impacted by an historic migration crisis. *Photo* #9 fundraising concert at USM with Skordalia. *Photo* #10 - Portland Mayor Ethan Strimling, PWH founder Elizabeth McLellan, M. Snell, and N. Mavodones. *Photo* #11 - container arriving in Mytilene. *Photo* #12 - Mytilene General Hospital.

2018 The art exhibition **IXNOS** was held at the University of Southern Maine Library in collaboration with Peregrine Studios. IXNOS explored the ongoing refugee crisis on Lesvos Island and in Greece, as part of the statewide initiative, "Making Migration Visible." *Photo #13* - co-creators of IXNOS M. Snell and J. Allen-Efstathiou at USM.

Hellenic Society of Maine

P. O. Box 8007 Portland Maine 04104-8007 a tax exempt non-profit public charitable organization

www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org

Board of Directors

Judith Allen-Efstathiou, Portland Angela Bournakel, Yarmouth Lucky Hollander, Portland Irwin Novak, Gorham Secretary Marina Schneller, Portland Vice-President Mary Snell, Gorham President Chris Ziagos, Portland Treasurer

Biblia Mazi - Books Together

This fall marks the two-year anniversary of the "Biblia Mazi" book group. Current members of the Hellenic Society of Maine are invited to attend our upcoming fall and winter book discussions. A Zoom link will be sent to all HSoM members the day before each Zoom discussion. The Biblia Mazi committee includes Lucky Hollander, Evie Papacosma, Mary Snell and Angela Bournakel (Coordinator).

The fall book selection is *Freedom or Death*, a novel by the Greek writer Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1957), published in 1950 under the title of *Captain Michalis*. Kazantzakis grew up on the island of Crete, and this is the story inspired by his father's experiences as a Cretan resistance fighter during the uprisings against the Ottoman Turks in the late 1800's. Kazantzakis, nominated nine times for the Nobel Prize in Literature, is perhaps best known for his novel *Zorba the Greek*. We'll discuss the book during a Zoom meeting at 7 p.m. on **Tuesday September 26.** (Faber & Faber, 2001. ISBN-10: 057117857X. ISBN-13: 9780571178575)

The winter book selection is *The Flight of Ikaros: Travels in Greece During the Civil War* by Kevin Andrews (1924-1989). Andrews, a philhellene, writer and archaeologist, lived in Greece most of his adult life beginning in 1947, and eventually became a Greek citizen. This book was first published in 1959, and is considered one of the great books about modern Greece. Andrews writes about his travels in the Peloponnesus, about the people he met, and the Civil War and its aftermath. Our Zoom discussion will be held at 7 p.m. on **Tuesday Jan. 30, 2024.** (Paul Dry Books, 2012. ISBN-10: 1589880641. ISBN-13: 9781589880641)

WE'RE EXCITED ABOUT OUR NEW WEBSITE

We have a new look — and many new options that allow you to see what we are doing, but also an easy way to become a member, renew membership, make a donation, and/or pay tribute to a special person.

To get there, go to: www.hellenicsocietyofmaine.org

You will see drop-down tabs to look at current and past events, all our previous newsletters, a history and timeline of the HSoM, and membership and donation options.

To renew or become a new member, use the "Donate" button to pay through PayPal or use a Credit Card, and indicate "For Membership."

The months of work involved to improve the site was done by a subcommittee which includes Angela Bournakel, Chris Ziagos and Irwin Novak. Special thanks to Tracey Jasas-Hardel for her guidance and expertise in making this happen through the Squarespace program.

You can also find us on Facebook (don't forget to "like" us there) www.facebook.com/hellenicsocietyofmaine

Greek Trivia Night!

7 p.m. Tuesday December 12, 2023 Our first **Greek Trivia Night** last spring was a big success. So -- we are offering you another chance to test your knowledge of Greek history, culture, and mythology AND have a lot of laughs while doing it. Plan to join us December 12 on Zoom. The link will open at 7 p.m. We'll ask the questions; you'll be assigned one of several breakout groups to jointly come up with the answer; and then we will all come back together to see who's right. The rule is: if you don't know the real answer, come up with the funniest response. No scores. No pressure. Contact Irwin Novak at novak@maine.edu to be sent the Zoom link the day before.

To send a check - which will save us processing fees - cut out and use the form below

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Quick Calendar Summary

Thurs. Sept. 14, 5-8 p.m. - Diagonal Latitudes, opening of the exhibition, Cove Street Arts, Portland. Artist talk: Oct. 4.

Thurs. Sept. 21, 5-7 p.m. - Sister City 20th Anniversary Celebration with pianist Annie Antonacos, Rm.102 Wishcamper Center, USM, Portland. Contact us re: parking in garage.

KAZANTZAKIS RETROSPECTIVE

Tues. Sept. 26, 7 p.m. - Biblia Mazi: Discussion of the book *Freedom or Death* by Kazantzakis, via Zoom

- Thurs. Oct. 5, 7 p.m. Film Discussion of "Kazantzakis" via Zoom. View the film online from Sept. 28-Oct. 5.
- Thurs. Oct. 19, 7 p.m. Talk by Peter Bien, the foremost translator of Kazantzakis, via Zoom.
- Thurs. Nov. 2, 7 p.m. Film Discussion of "He Who Must Die," based on Kazantzakis book, *Christ Recrucified*, via Zoom. View the film online from Oct. 26-Nov. 2.

Sat. Nov. 12, 1 p.m. - Greek Mythology in The Sky, planetarium show at USM, Falmouth St., Portland. \$6.50 / \$5 Call 207-780-4249 to reserve seats.

Thurs. Nov. 16, 7 p.m. - Talk by Elizabeth Prodromou: "The Changing Landscape of Cultural Heritage and Human Rights: Insights from the Eastern Mediterranean," via Zoom.

Sun. Dec. 3, 3:15 p.m. - In-person Film Viewing of the comedy "The Little Godfather." Luther Bonney Auditorium at USM. *Free popcorn!*

Tues. Dec. 12, 7 p.m. - Greek Trivia Night via Zoom

Thurs. Jan. 25, 5-7 p.m. - Annual Cutting of the Vasilopita & Social at Local 188, 685 Congress St., Portland. Parking in rear.

Tues. Jan. 30, 7 p.m. - Biblia Mazi: Discussion of the book *The Flight of Icarus: Travels in Greece During the Civil War* by Kevin Andrews, via Zoom.

E-mail: novak@maine.edu for film & discussion links

Greek Mythology in the Night Sky Saturday, Nov. 12, 2023 at 1 p.m.

This extremely popular program will once again be presented in the Southworth Planetarium in the USM Science Building, Falmouth Street, on the USM Portland campus. Explore the rich realm of night sky mythology under the stars with planetarium director Edward Herrick-Gleason. Within one hour you will discover the legends and lore of the stars and planets. Perseus slays the Gorgon Medusa. Pegasus arises from her blood. Bellerophon tames Pegasus and slays the Chimera. Cassiopeia's brag becomes Andromeda's despair. Gods and monsters; forlorn lovers and ancient warriors: see them all amongst the stars. Limited Seating (62 Seats). For Reservations call the Planetarium at: 207-780-4249. Leave your name, phone, plus number of seats requested. Admission: Adults \$6.50 Children under 12: \$5 Vasilopita Cutting & Social 2024 January 25, 5-7 at Local 188 685 Congress St., Portland.



At left: Former Co-Presidents Christos Gianopoulos and (now current Treasurer) Chris Ziagos, cut two vasilopitas in 2016.

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

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