



Editorial Viewpoint

What's Going on with HANC anyway?

It is a curious situation with the Hellenic American National Council or as it is abbreviated HANC. A few years back at elections, the national board elected Paul Kotrotsios as its president, to serve one term and only one term. Well, three years later we still find Kotrotsios at the helm of this organization and we wonder whether it is that a) no one wants

to run for that office, b) are they so happy to have him as president or c) that using his power he refuses to hold elections. We would certainly like to know which one of these three reasons is the one that keeps him in power for more than one term.

Aktina Coordinates a Tasting Of Cyprus' Spectacular Wines

Aside from the big winemakers and vintners of Lemessos, progress is something that has eluded the viticulturist on the rest of the island of Cyprus. The Roots of the Cyprus wine, a documentary by Paschalis Papapetrou that launched the Wine Tasting event by Elena Marouletti of Aktina Productions, Inc., at the Cyprus Consulate on Monday evening, June 1, showed the tools that the countryside Cypriot uses to produce the grapes that will turn into wine: His livestock, their feet to stomp on the grapes, some primitive gadgets, and his own feet for stumping on the grapes!

And it's a small wonder that under these conditions Cyprus manages to produce such quality wine, a wine that has been produced for 6,000 years, which some experts up to 8,000 years. It is the same wine that the Crusaders drank while criss-crossing the island, part of which became the celebrated Commanderie St John, the sweet Koumandaria wine that everyone has relished at one time or another. It is the product of the grape that Portugal's King several centuries ago transplanted to the offshore island of Madeira.



Aristos Constantine and Susan Kostrzewa pose with Aktina's Elena Marouletti during the Wine Tasting

Hence you have the sweet Madeira variety and the ones transplanted in Israel to produce the Malaga variety. And that isn't all. In the past 20 years, new varieties have sprung up such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Carignan Noir, Chardonnay and Semillon, which have been blended with local varieties.

With the video presentation over, Ms Marouletti asked Susan Kostrzewa, executive Editor of Wine Enthusiast Media who

just returned from a fact-finding mission of Cypriot wines, to speak on her discoveries. Also speaking on the wonderful wine of his country was the Consul General of Cyprus, Ambassador Vassilios Philippou and the Trade Consul Aristos Constantine, before attendees made their way to the second floor reception room where, aside from all the varieties of wines, an exquisite buffet of Greek delicacies was waiting for them.

Author Penelope Karageorge's has New Book, The Neon Suitcase Out

With devastating wit and compassion, prize-winning poet Penelope Karageorge travels boldly into the figurative highways and byways of the human heart. In her second poetry collection, *The Neon Suitcase*, she writes about life in the psychic border between Greece and the American Dream. Fearlessly, Karageorge investigates the mythic and emotional pull of families and memory. She had many inspirations, including the Goddess Circe, actress Bette Davis, Las Vegas neon, Aegean moonlight, the world of work, and Dionysian desire.

Asked how she came to write poetry, Karageorge explains that "It was not a straight line." She wrote poetry as a child, and won first prize in her high school poetry contest. At Simmons College in Boston, she gained a new perspective on poetry in a class taught by the brilliant Wylie Sypher who led her to discover T.S. Eliot and John Keats. After college, she became a journalist, novelist and publicity director of *People* magazine.

When New York City announced, in the *New York Times* Sunday Book Review, a contest for New York City poets celebrating the city, she wrote "New York Love Letter, P.S. You're Crazy." It took third prize out of thousands of contestants. Mayor Beame awarded the honors.

Author Molly Peacock succinctly summarizes and praises *The Neon Suitcase*: "With its freewheeling mash-up of Greek island and Manhattan island, the stylish *Neon Suitcase* is Penelope Karageorge's latest volume of sassy but serious poems. At once classy and classical, *The Neon Suitcase* is the perfect carry-on and Karageorge, a sensuous, wise travelling companion, may carry you away." *The Neon Suitcase* can be ordered directly from Amazon.com. For more information about the book, please visit www.somersethallpress.com

A.G.A.P.W. Honors Special Mothers with Plaques During Event at Coco-Mat

This year's theme of A.G.A.P.W. reception was "Mothers to the Community: Greek American Women's Contribution to Philanthropy and Civic Education." The event was held on May 26th at the stylish Coco-Mat Showroom downtown, AGAPW presented the honorees: Mrs. Anthoussa Diakopoulou-Iliopoulou, (fourth from left) the National Philoptochos Society – represented by its President, Ms. Maria Logus, Esq., (fifth) and Mrs. Lila Prounis (third,) with commemorative plaques acknowledging their contributions to the community. President Olga Alexakos is to the left of Anthoussa Iliopoulou, shown with other members of the organization.



This Octogenarian's Paintings, Have Been Deemed Worth for the Museum

As a restaurateur more than four decades ago Nick Pappas (Papadopoulos) of Cherry Hill, NJ, was familiar with the paint and brush, immortalizing on canvas all types of still life, including landscapes and seascapes. Then, something happened in his life so traumatic that he gave up altogether painting.

Now at the age of 86, Pappas who's in a new phase of painting for the last few years, can boast of a sizeable collection, old and new, which, thanks to a good friend, engineer John Apostolou, has it displayed on u tube, produced three viral exhibits and has additional ambitious plans for his 95 plus works he has completed so far.

For his work he has received many accolades and positive comments from all sorts of individuals including a judge, who deemed the paintings 'a real treasure.' He also has had over 300 hits on the u tube.

However, Nick Pappas' life was not always as placid. The man who always longed to come to America for the better life, went through many adventures and disappointments before he can realize his dream. His life growing up in German-occupied Greece was not any better.

He remembers as a child having to work at an eatery which while shutting it down one evening several Italian soldiers in a truck full of guns stopped and asked for directions. Nick gave the directions and proceeded to close down the store, heading for home.

It was early in the morning the next day when German soldiers swarmed in his house with orders to arrest him. The charge: The Italian soldiers had reported that he had stolen the guns, guns which they had sold for money to an undisclosed buyer. Despite the pleas of his family and some people in authority who tried to reason with the soldiers, young Nikos Pappas was hauled away to prison in which he nearly rotted until the truth prevailed and he was let free.

As a young adult, Pappas thought that he was close to realizing his dream when he boarded a ship

bound for Italy as a sailor. He arrived in Genova where he met a woman by the name of Francesca which played a role in his life while in Italy.

Yearning to get to America, Pappas boarded another ship that was sailing for Liverpool, England, where he was overwhelmed by people he found very cold and indifferent, and an environment prevailed by fog and smoke. The destination of this ship was not westward however as he would wish it, but eastward towards China.

The adventures never stopped for Nick. The ship sailed for the Mediterranean, passed through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea and on to the Philippines where a Typhoon hit making the day look like nighttime. This weather was partly responsible for a damage in the engines, which delayed their trip until the problem was fixed and they could sail on to China.

It was sixty-five years ago when he was sailing from China towards Japan, towards Canada. With final destination England and Ireland. They passed the Panama Canal and headed straight towards London. Once again his plans for the United States were thwarted and once again he found himself in Europe. But a Liberty ship was leaving for Canada so he sailed on it until they arrived in Halifax. There, with only his shirt on his back, Nick disembarked secretly and headed for the town where he made a contact with two Greek girls on the train, one of which helped him through her father reach his destination, a prelude to crossing over to the United States where he realized his dream.

Currently Nick has completed or near-completed 16 new paintings which he will add to his collection. From those already in the collection are 40 done some 40 years ago and 55 new in his second period of his painting career. His style of painting ranges from Primitive to Realism with realism more apparent in paintings of churches and houses, such as his native home in Patras. Others with realistic features are like the Lagoon of Messolonghi, where Hellenes were besieged during the war of Independence of 1821 and where Lord Byron died.