

GOLDEN GATE DISTRICT No 21

*Ahepa*  *Traveler*

CHAPTERS THROUGHOUT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN NEVADA

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Spring/March 2026

Spring...

Easter...



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A quarterly magazine  
highlighting significant  
events & achievements  
within the organization  
and the Greek-American  
community.



Cover  
*"Easter Blossom"*  
artwork by  
Selana Sirra



### ***Spring Reflections on Heritage and Light***

This spring issue of AHEPA Traveler is shaped by the threads of memory, faith, and renewal. As we **honor the 25th of March**, we revisit the spirit of 1821 through art, history, and the enduring courage that defined our path to freedom. As **Easter** approaches, we reflect on light, hope, and the traditions that continue to unite Greek families across generations and continents. In these pages, you will also find stories of community in action, from heartfelt chapter gatherings to acts of service, from rising young leaders to the living legacy of the Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection. We remember the remarkable life of Eleni Glykatzi-Arveler, celebrate the promise of our youth through scholarships and the Journey to Greece program, and look ahead to AHEPA Sunday 2026, a day that brings our mission into focus. This issue is a tribute to who we are and to everything we continue to build together.

*The editorial team*

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& DOP Governor District

AHEPA TRAVELER is the official publication of Golden Gate District 21 Order of AHEPA (American - Hellenic Educational Progressive Association). It is published and distributed to members and friends. There are Ahepa, Daughters, Sons and Maids Chapters in Northern California and Western Nevada.

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Follow us on social media and keep the journey alive



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## **Governor's Update February 2026**

Fellow Brothers:

This will be my last update as your Governor. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. It's been a privilege.

District Convention 2026 - I want to remind everyone about our upcoming District Convention. It will be hosted by the Oakland AHEPA and DOP Chapters on May 1st and 2nd. It will again be in Stockton, CA but will be at new hotel, the University Plaza Waterfront Hotel, 110 W Fremont St., Stockton, CA 95202. When calling Reservations, 209-944-1140, ask for the AHEPA Family rate of \$129 per night. I encourage everyone to make your reservations early to receive the AHEPA Family rate.

Supreme Convention 2026 – Celebrate America's 250th anniversary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with your AHEPA Family at the AHEPA Family Supreme Convention. The dates are July 26-31, 2026. Remember to have your Chapter Secretary submit your Delegate form.

WRDC 2027 – You won't want to miss this WRDC. Districts 17, 20, 21 and 22 will all have Chapters Celebrating their 100-Year Anniversaries. District 21's Chapters are: Chapter 150 San Francisco, Chapter 151 Fresno and 153 Sacramento. WRDC 2027 will be hosted by District 20. The tentative plans are for June 18th to 20th at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix, AZ.

Respectfully,  
Mark Hallock  
Governor  
AHEPA Golden Gate District 21



## DOP Governor's Update February/March 2026



Sisters,

I began this year counting down. Counting down to retirement from work, (August), to our District Convention in May, and the Sisterhood in April.

- The sisterhood is in San Diego on the last weekend in April (April 26th, Saturday) with District 20 hosting. I encourage any sister who has never gone to a Sisterhood to try to attend this year. The next one will be our turn to host in 2028. The form is on our website with a link to the hotel.
- District Convention is the first weekend in May at a different hotel in Stockton than last year. Please support our fellow DOP Oakland chapter, ECHO #4, and Oakland AHEPA as they take on the District Convention for a second consecutive year.
- National Convention is at the end of the July (26 thru 31) in Philadelphia, PA. We are celebrating our country's 250 birthday that month and Philly was a main Sons of Liberty city. Perfect for us history buffs!
- 15th August, I retire as House Supervisor at Sutter Auburn Faith Hospital. 16 years there and 15 years at St. Joseph's in Stockton. Time to retire and enjoy traveling to see children & grandchildren with my husband, (soon to be) PDG Mark. Hallock.

*Remember to Keep Alexandra's Dream Alive,  
In Theta Pi,*

Athena Hallock, District Governor  
Golden State District 21



# Vasilopita Gathering *in San Jose*

*By Dr. Vassilis Zarifis, Chapter 251 President*

**A Celebration**  
of Community **&** Tradition

---

The new year opened with warmth and fellowship as the **San Jose AHEPA** and **Daughters of Penelope chapters**, together with the **San Mateo DOP**, hosted their annual Vasilopita celebration at the welcoming Bill of Fare restaurant in San Jose. The gathering brought together 48 brothers and sisters, creating an atmosphere filled with connection, laughter, and the familiar comfort of shared tradition.

A heartfelt thank you was extended to **Owner George Spilios**, whose hospitality set the tone for the lunch. His home-made Greek yogurt, rich, authentic, and lovingly prepared, became one of the most memorable highlights of the event, a small reminder of how food often anchors our cultural identity.





The ceremonial cutting of the Vasilopita was led by the presidents of the chapters, **Dr. Vassilis Zarifis** and **Jacqui Argyres**, honoring a custom that has united Hellenic families and communities for generations. As the knife traced the cross atop the sweet bread, the room fell into a quiet anticipation, a collective moment of hope for the year ahead.





The **lucky coin** was discovered by **Angie Legakis**, Lt. Governor of DOP District 21, drawing warm applause and well-wishes from all present.



Events like this remind us that the strength of our community lies not only in tradition, but in the people who continue to gather, celebrate, and carry it forward. In San Jose, the spirit of AHEPA and DOP shone brightly a beautiful beginning to the year.



# AHEPA Hospital Thessaloniki

*A Diaspora Legacy Born from War,  
Sustained by Hope*

There are buildings that serve a purpose and there are buildings that carry a soul. The **AHEPA University Hospital in Thessaloniki** belongs firmly to the second category.

At a time when Greece lacked resources, infrastructure, even hope, AHEPA stepped in with something far greater than money: **belief**.

**Build in 1949 from the generosity of Greek Americans who refused to watch their homeland struggle alone after the devastation of World War II, the hospital stands as one of the most powerful symbols of diaspora love.**

Belief that a wounded nation could heal. Belief that education and medicine could rebuild what war had shattered.

When the hospital opened its doors, it was a promise. A promise that the Greeks of America would never forget where they came from. A promise that Thessaloniki would rise again.

Today, the AHEPA Hospital remains one of Greece's most important university hospitals, a place where science, compassion, and legacy meet. Generations of doctors trained within its walls now serve in leading medical centers across the United States, carrying with them a piece of Thessaloniki in every operating room and research lab.

**And the bond continues.** In a recent visit, Supreme President Chris Kaitson reaffirmed AHEPA's commitment with a major donation, strengthening the hospital's future and honoring its past.

The AHEPA Hospital is a bridge between Greece and its diaspora, between history and tomorrow, between the wounds of the past and the healing of the future.

*A living testament to what Hellenism can build when it chooses hope.*



In the video that follows, the story of AHEPA Hospital unfolds, from its founding to its mission today.



# AHEPA **Sacramento:** A Christmas Tradition of Giving

*By George Koumis, Chapter 153 President*

Last December, the Brothers and Sisters of the Sacramento AHEPA Family – Chapter 153 and Daughters of Penelope Artemis #5 – gathered for their annual Christmas luncheon, continuing a tradition that brings the community together in fellowship and purpose. Nearly fifty members and guests filled the local restaurant with warmth, laughter, and the spirit of the season.

As in previous years, the luncheon became an opportunity to give back. Members collected gifts for Shriner Children's Hospital, offering comfort and joy to young patients and their families during the holidays. This act of generosity has become a hallmark of the Sacramento chapters, reflecting the values of service and compassion at the heart of AHEPA.

Following the celebration, the chapters held their annual visitation meetings with the AHEPA and DOP District 21 Lodges. A moment to connect, reflect, and reaffirm their shared mission.



For the **Sacramento AHEPA Family**, Christmas is more than a gathering. It is a reminder that community, philanthropy, and tradition continue to guide their work, year after year.



**Front Row (District Lodge):** Alex Mallas, Marshal; Ioannis Kokkinidis, SOP Advisor; Andrew Ganetsos, Treasurer; Mark Hallock, District Governor, Vassilis Zarifis, Secretary.

**Middle Row:** Dino Jakovas, Sebastian Urias, George Pauls, Reno Chapter President; George Koumis, Chapter President; Phil Fotopoulos, Makis Stathopoulos.

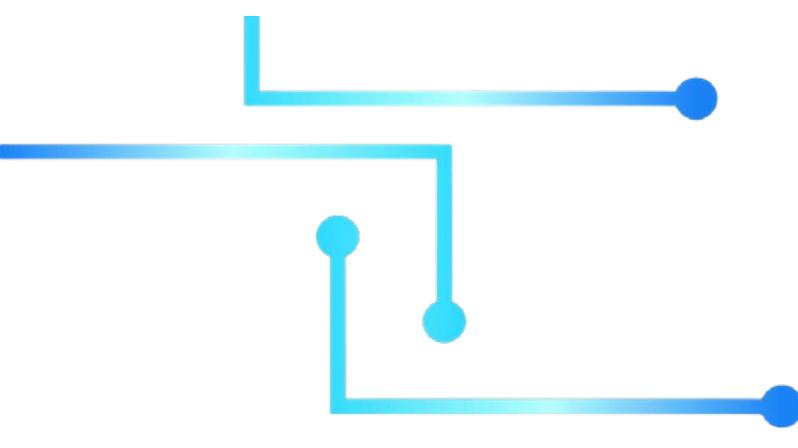
**Back Row:** Daniel Eriksson, Chapter V. President. Nick Docous, Paul Stamas, Vasilios Voudouris, Christos Papadopoulos, Stelios Papadopoulos, Stavros Vougioukas, Demos Papadopoulos, Eleftherios Koumis.

# Eleni Voudouris: A rising voice of Hellenic excellence

*By George Koumis, Chapter 153 President*



*Eleni Voudouris, on the right, an undergraduate student in Computer Science with a minor in Business, conducting research at UIUC's*



The Greek American community has every reason to be proud of **Eleni Voudouris**, daughter of Brother Vasilis Voudouris and recent District 21 scholarship recipient.

Eleni distinguished herself internationally as a member of the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign (UIUC) team that earned **second place in the prestigious Cyber 9/12 Strategy Competition hosted by the Atlantic Council**. Competing against top institutions such as Stanford University and the U.S. Air Force Academy, her achievement stands as a remarkable milestone for a young woman entering the demanding field of cybersecurity.

A Computer Science major with a minor in Business, Eleni is also involved in research at UIUC’s renowned Parasol Lab, contributing to cutting-edge work in distributed systems and cyber defense. At the same time, she remains deeply rooted in her Greek identity as **cofounder of the Illinakia Greek Folk Dance Group**, promoting Hellenic culture through traditional dance.

Eleni’s journey highlights how essential it is to support and encourage the youth of our diaspora to give them opportunities, mentorship, and the confidence to pursue excellence. She reminds us that Hellenic heritage is a source of strength that accompanies our young people wherever they go, from advanced research labs to the vibrant rhythms of Greek dance.





## *Stockton Daughters of Penelope*

### *Christmas Lunch at Las Casuelas*

***By Kathy Leles, PDG***

To ring in the holiday season, the Stockton and Modesto AHEPA Families once again came together for a Christmas lunch at Las Casuelas Restaurant in Manteca. Those that attended were welcomed by Mark & Athena Hallock, District 21 Governors, who also gave some insight of future happenings in 2026. Sparta and Phaedra Presidents Kathy Leles and Anna Affholter welcomed everyone and thanked them for their generous donations of unwrapped gifts for the children at Family Promise. Kathy Leles and Tom Chiarchianis, President of Stockton AHEPA 212, also presented District Governor Athena Hallock with DOP scholarships in memory of AHEPAN Bill Panagopoulos and Daughter Kay Chiarchianis. In addition, the Stockton Maids of Athena Eleftheria chapter held their annual Christmas tree gift card raffle which was very successful due to the generosity of those attended. Moneys raised will go towards national and local chosen projects this year. Thank you to those who attended. It surely was such a wonderful gathering of Sisters and Brothers!





# Warm Tea, Warm Coats, Warm Hearts

**By Claire Gagas, Chapter 290 President**

Sisters from Urania Chapter #290 in San Mateo gathered for a “Pop-up” Christmas Tea at Penelope’s (so very fitting!), where we enjoyed our warm sisterhood! In the spirit of the Christmas season, we also collected warm and beautiful coats, sweaters and hats for a local homeless shelter. We wish all of our Daughters of Penelope sisters and AHEPA brothers a Blessed New Year 2026!

Urania Chapter 290 Daughters of Penelope



**Standing from left to right:** Barbara Karvelis, Laura Tait, Valerie Vasilakos, Vivian Gavros, Julia Gavros, Anastacia Stamates, Claire Gagas

**Sitting from left to right:** Carole Karkazis, Demetra Sperow, Christina Longinidis, Irene Fotinos, Kathy Roque- Albert, Tina Cardaris, Edie Christoforidis, Kalliope Fousekis, Emmy Denton



# Coffee HOUR

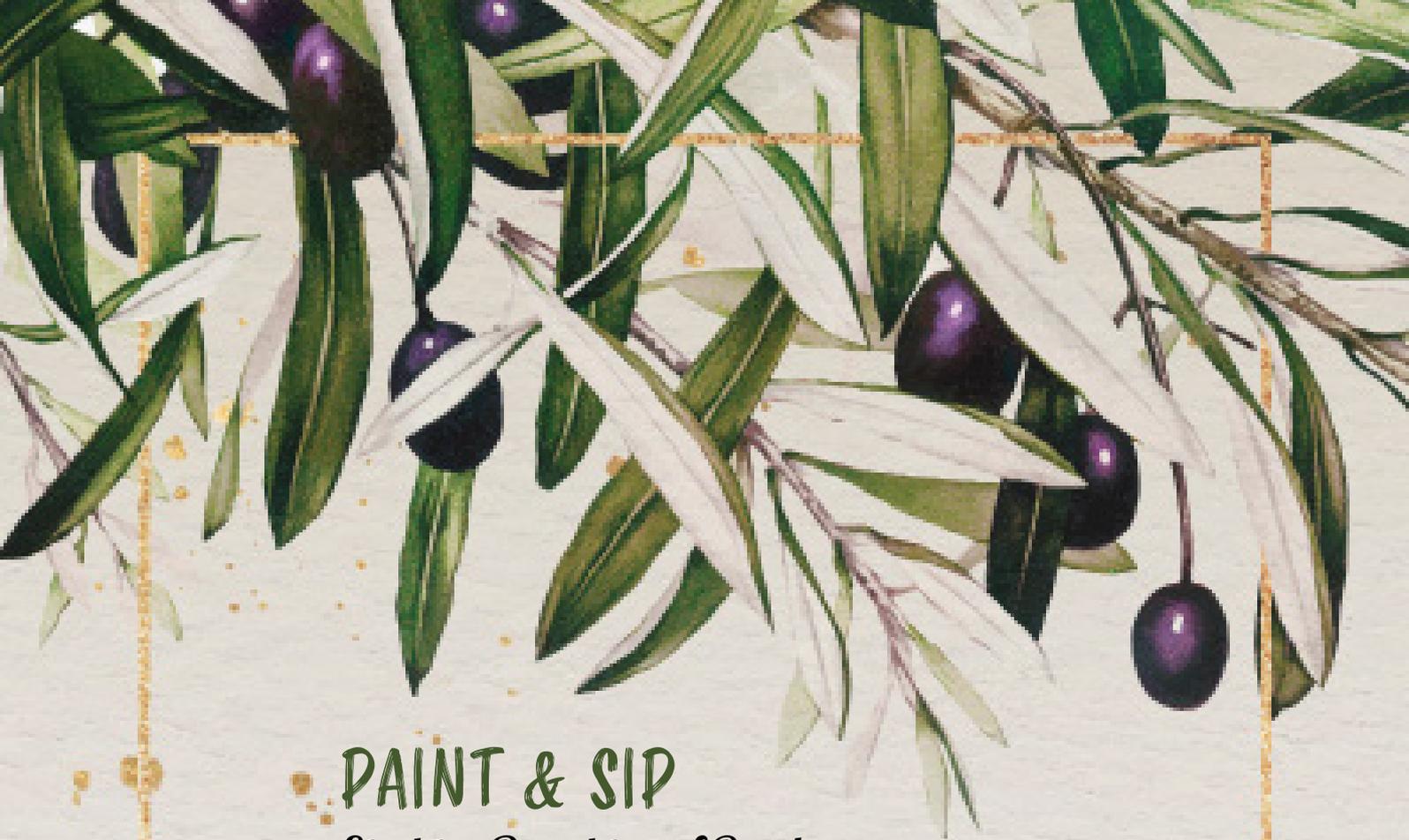


*By Kathy Leles, PDG*

Thank you to everyone who made our coffee hour a success as we raised funds for The American Heart Association and the GoRed campaign. This campaign is a premier initiative launched in 2004 to raise awareness that cardiovascular disease hits many women nationwide. It promotes action to reduce risk, supports research and encourages wearing red in the month of February. We thank all the Sisters of the Daughters of Penelope, as well as the ladies of Philoptochos, that came together for this worthwhile cause. We are happy to have raised \$140.00 in donations thanks to the generosity of many parishioners.

*Stockton Daughters of Penelope*





## PAINT & SIP

*Stockton Daughters of Penelope*

*By Kathy Leles, PDG*

Our 2nd annual Daughters of Penelope Paint & Sip event was again a huge success. Twenty-five artists came to Consumnes River Farm Winery to paint olive branches on a bottle, then were able to have it filled with either olive oil or vinegar compliments of the winery. Thank you to Sister Elena Panos and her husband Nick for hosting the event as well as offering raffle prizes. The two lucky winners of a gift basket were JoAnne Panagopoulos and Teri Blum. Proceeds from this event will go towards the non-profit organizations we support locally and nationally. We thank everyone who attended. If you missed this one, another Paint & Sip event is being planned for the fall.



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# Journey to Greece 2026

## ***A Summer that shapes identity***

This summer, AHEPA and Webster University invite young Greek Americans to embark on a transformative experience:

### ***the 20th Annual Journey to Greece Program***

taking place in *Summer 2026*.

More than just a study abroad opportunity, this program is a celebration of heritage, history, and personal growth. For four immersive weeks, college-age students will live and learn in Greece earning transferable university credits while exploring ancient ruins, vibrant cities, and the living traditions of Hellenism.

Participants will attend courses at Webster Athens, a fully accredited U.S. university campus, where small, interactive classes foster collaboration and self-expression. Beyond the classroom, students will travel across Greece, visiting iconic sites such as the Acropolis, Delphi, Nafplio, and more, experiencing firsthand the landscapes that shaped Western civilization.

But the Journey to Greece is more than monuments and museums. It's about connection:

- 🇬🇷 To one's Greek roots,
- 🇬🇷 To a global community of peers,
- 🇬🇷 And to the values of freedom, democracy, and cultural pride that define the Hellenic spirit.

Whether you're a returning participant or joining for the first time, this summer promises to be unforgettable.

### **Eligibility:**

Open to college students of Greek descent or affiliated with AHEPA, Sons of Pericles, or Maids of Athena.

### **Deadline for applications:**

April 30, 2026

[Click Here for Application](#)

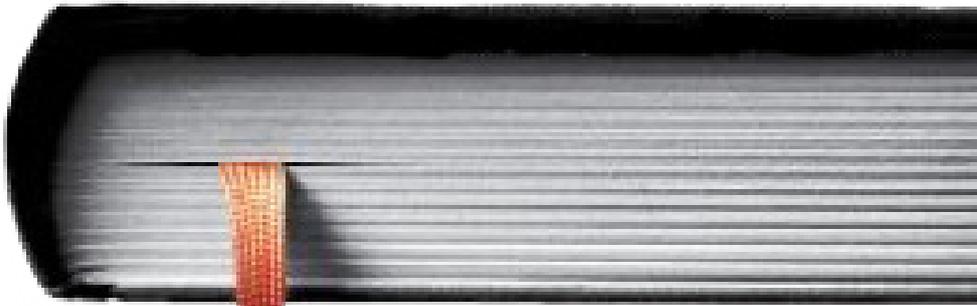
### **Program dates:**

July 6, 2026 [Depart USA] – July 31, 2026 [Depart HELLAS]

### **To learn more, visit:**

[Click Here for Informational Pamphlet](#)





**A Treasure  
of Hellenism  
in the Heart  
of California**

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**Hellenic Collection**

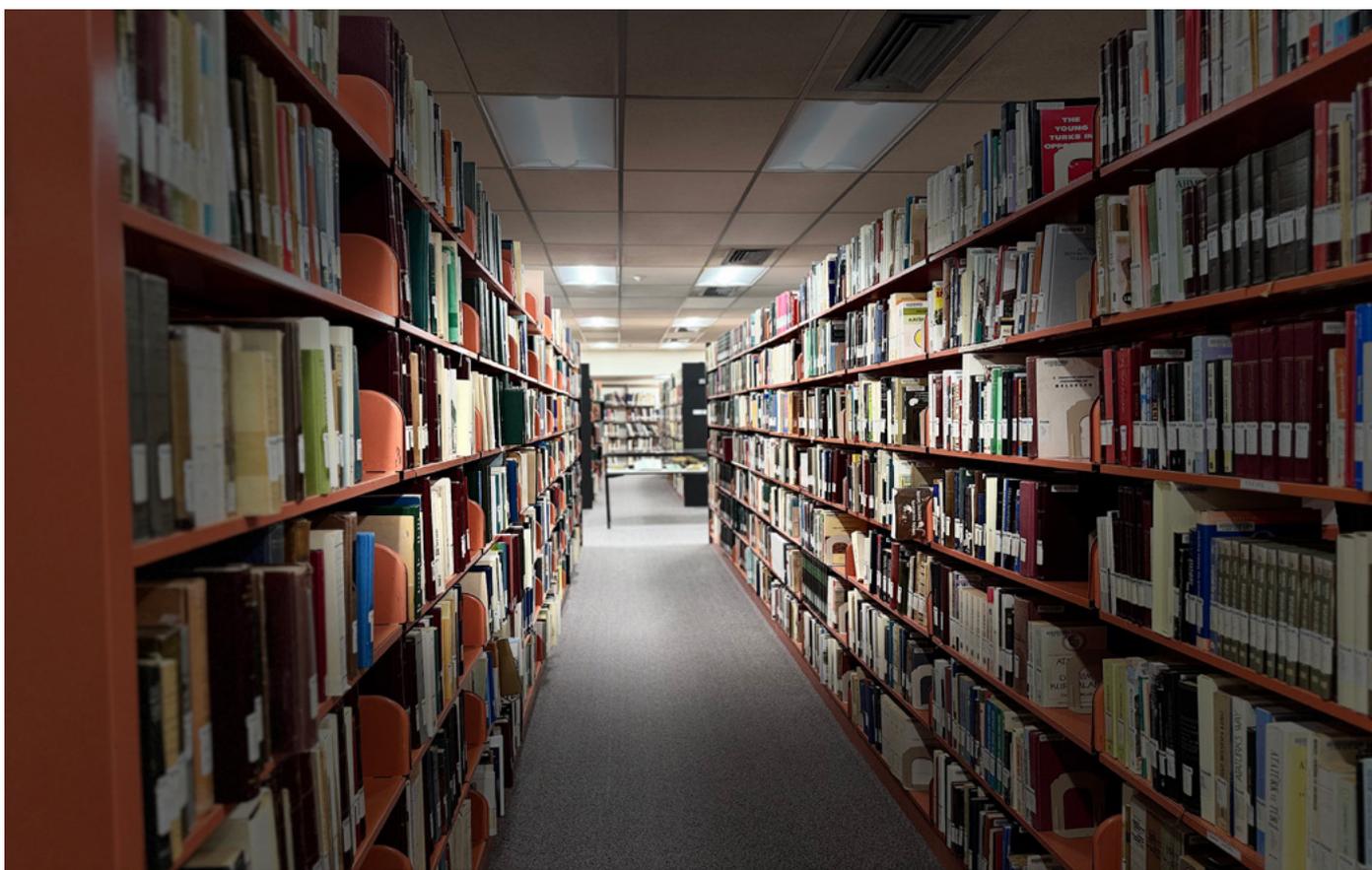
*By Dr. George Zioulas, PSG*

*One of the most significant and comprehensive collections of Greek books, archives, rare materials, and cultural artifacts outside of Greece . A living repository of Hellenism in the American West.*

In Sacramento, far from our ancestral roots yet close to the heart of the Greek diaspora, there is a place that breathes Greece. A place that safeguards memories, stories, language, art, and culture. A true sanctuary of Hellenism.

This place is the **Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection at Sacramento State University**, one of the most significant collections of Greek books, archives, and materials outside of Greece. A collection born from vision, strengthened by generosity, and still flourishing thanks to people who deeply believe that Hellenism is not only a past to honor, but a future to build.

The history of the collection is a journey in itself. It begins with the library of the Speros Basil Vryonis Center, passes through thousands of donations, personal libraries, archives, and collections, and **today encompasses 83,000 volumes including circulating books, journal holdings, nearly 500 linear feet of personal papers and institutional archives, electronic resources, non-print media materials, rare books, art, and artifacts.**



Behind every donation lies a story: families who offered the libraries of their loved ones, universities that entrusted their materials, foundations that provided support, individuals who wanted their books to have a future, and members of the Greek diaspora who wished to leave a mark.

The Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection is a mosaic of generosity. A work built by many, with love, conviction, and a profound sense of responsibility toward Greek heritage.

At the center of it all stands the person who gave this project its soul:

### **George I. Paganelis**

Since 2003, when he became curator of the collection, George Paganelis has been a guardian of memory, a storyteller, a research companion, and a cultural ambassador. He is the person who kept the collection alive, expanded it, and opened it to the world. With a level of dedication rarely encountered, he curated thousands of volumes, organized archives that might otherwise have been lost, welcomed donations and transformed them into structured knowledge, supported students, the only one of its kind west of the Mississippi and brought entire libraries from authors, scholars,

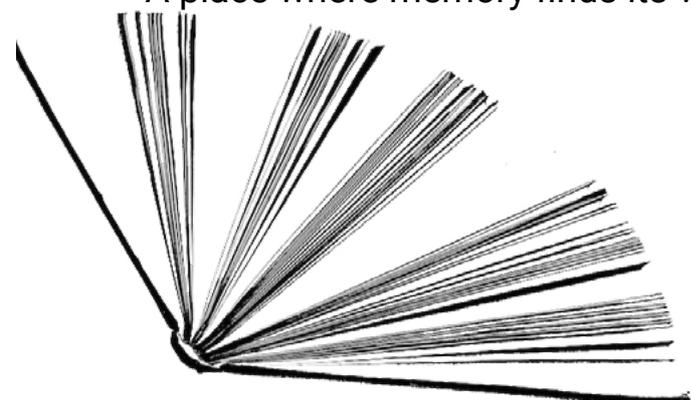
journalists, historians, and artists into the collection. It is no exaggeration to say that without George Paganelis, the Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection would not be what it is today: an international point of reference for Hellenism.

The collection is a living space. Here, lectures take place, exhibitions are hosted, conferences are organized, researchers from around the world arrive, dissertations, articles, and books are written, and new ideas about Hellenism are born. The Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection is a cultural beacon illuminating the Greek presence in America.

A place where memory finds its voice and continues to inspire.



George I. Paganelis



“

In an era when identity is tested and memory often fades, such places are invaluable. They remind us who we are. They give our children access to a heritage that might otherwise be lost. They keep our language, literature, history, and art alive. And they show that Hellenism thrives wherever there are people committed to preserving it.

”

The Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection is a library that transcends its role, a living testament to the fact that Hellenism can take root and flourish wherever people cherish it. It is a place that unites generations, stories, and memories, reminding us that our cultural heritage has a future as long as we support and share it.



California Zephyr: The Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection as a Cultural Repository and Research Destination  
George I. Paganelis

Introduction

Comprising the holdings of the Basil Vyvionis Center for the Study of Hellenism, the Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection was donated to the university library at California State University, Sacramento in the fall of 2002, opening to the public a year later. The Center was established in 1985 in Los Angeles by the late Prof. Spiros Vyvionis, a scholar in Byzantine and Ottoman Studies, in memory of his late son Spiros Vyvionis. The library of approximately 13,000 volumes formed the nucleus of the Center. In 1989, Spiros Vyvionis came to reside in the Sacramento area. The Center's name was changed by Vyvionis' appointment as the founding director of the Alexander S. Onassis Center for Hellenic Studies at New York University in 1988. In its new home the Center's library was further enhanced under successive directors, growing to nearly 70,000 volumes by the time it closed in the summer of 2000. Following the closure of the Vyvionis Center, the library was transferred to Sacramento State where it was renamed the Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection in honor of its benefactor and alumnus Angelo Tsakopoulos, whose financial support of the Center had enabled the library to flourish.<sup>1</sup>

Sacramento State is a four-year, regional comprehensive university (soon to be reclassified as an R2), providing an affordable, yet high-quality education in the capital of the Golden State. The university enrolls nearly 30,000 students and graduates more than 8,300 annually. Our mission is to "transform lives by preparing students to lead, serve, and succeed." The University Library is the hub of intellectual discovery for our students, faculty, and the broader community. Part of the Donald & Beverly Gerth Special Collections & University Archives, the Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection (<https://library.csus.edu/tsakopoulos>) serves as the anchor of the Hellenic Studies Program within the Angelo K. Tsakopoulos Hellenic Studies Center on campus and as a research collection of international significance for scholars around the globe.



Those who wish to explore more deeply the history and breadth of the Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection may refer to the recent article by George I. Paganelis in the American Journal of Contemporary Hellenic Issues. By clicking on the article's cover, you can learn more about the development, collections, and work of the library.

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**Golden Gate District 21**

**2026**

**DREAM BIG.  
LEAD WITH PURPOSE.  
RISE WITH AHEPA.**

# YOUR HERITAGE - YOUR VOICE - YOUR FUTURE

Because excellence is in our DNA.  
Because Hellenic values shape leaders.  
Because your story continues a legacy thousands  
of years old.

The AHEPA Golden Gate District 21 Scholarship Program is now open.  
An opportunity created for the young people who carry within them the spirit of  
our ancestors, the strength of our community, and the promise of tomorrow.

You are part of a culture that gave the world: Democracy, Philosophy, Inquiry,  
Courage, Philotimo. These are the compass guiding every new generation of  
American youth of Greek heritage and Philhellenes.

## **T**his scholarship honors that legacy.

It recognizes students who strive for excellence, who serve their community,  
who lead with integrity, and who **dream** with the same boldness that shaped  
our heritage.

### **Who can apply?**

Students connected to the AHEPA  
family. AHEPA, Daughters of  
Penelope, Sons of Pericles, Maids of  
Athena or children of members.

### **What do we ask of you?**

**Your effort - Your heart - Your truth**

1. Completed application
2. Two letters of recommendation
3. Official transcripts
4. A one-page essay about your goals  
and the world you hope to build

**DEADLINE: APRIL 1, 2026**

**Honor your heritage. Invest in your future**

Start here:

[ahepa21.org/scholarship](http://ahepa21.org/scholarship)

**The future of Hellenism begins with you.**

# A Life Lived with Honor: Brother John Tatarakis

*By George Koumis, Chapter 153 President*

Brother John Tatarakis, a devoted member of the Sacramento Chapter for 44 years, passed away on January 25, 2026, following a brief illness, just ten days short of his 94th birthday. A former U.S. Marine, Brother John was a retired Sacramento Police detective who served for many years as an undercover narcotics officer. He was widely admired by all who knew him for his gentle, kind, and warm personality. Military service ran deep in his family. His older brother, Corporal George Tatarakis, has been listed as Missing in Action since the Korean War.



*John Tatarakis receives his 35-year service pin in 2017 from Sacramento Chapter President Jonathan Zahariou.*

Brother John's funeral service was held at St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church in Elk Grove and was attended by several hundred friends and family members from across Northern California and throughout the United States. He was laid to rest at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon.



# Eleni Glykatzi - Arveler

1926-2026

With your eyes to the sky and  
your feet on the ground never  
stop chasing your dream



Eleni Glykatzi - Arveler

Eleni Glykatzi-Arveler, one of the most luminous figures of modern Hellenism, passed away leaving behind a legacy that transcends borders and generations. A visionary and a scholar of global stature, she became the first woman to serve as Rector of the Sorbonne, honoring Greece at every step of her remarkable journey. A distinguished Byzantinologist whose work and public voice helped restore Byzantium to the center of European history, not as a dimmed epilogue than a durable, governing civilization. With her integrity, intellect, and unwavering devotion to Greek culture, she emerged as a true ambassador of our heritage on the international academic stage. Her life embodied excellence, strength, and the timeless values that shaped the Hellenic world. Her loss leaves a profound void, yet her legacy will continue to inspire for years to come.

*Her most profound and far-reaching interview can be found on Vouli TV. A conversation that captures her wisdom, her clarity, and her lifelong devotion to Hellenism. [Click to watch.](#)*



**1821:**  
Ten Philhellenes  
Painters Capture  
the Essence of  
*the Greek  
Revolution*



**B**efore photography, the story of 1821 lived only through words. Until European philhellene painters transformed the Greek struggle into images that still move us today. Their canvases captured the courage, the grief, and the unbreakable resolve of a people fighting for freedom after centuries of oppression. Through their eyes, the world first witnessed the heroism of the Greek fighters and the sacrifices that shaped a new nation.

**A**rtists like Delacroix, Aivazovsky, and von Hess became advocates. Their paintings, from the haunting scenes of Chios to the symbolic figure of Greece rising from the ruins of Missolonghi, stirred European public opinion and helped ignite support for the Greek cause. Each work is both a tribute and a testimony, preserving moments we would otherwise never have seen.

**T**he ten artworks featured in our digital collection bring this chapter of history to life. They remind us that art does more than depict events. It safeguards memory, emotion, and truth across generations. Through these paintings, the spirit of 1821 remains vivid, inviting every viewer to reconnect with the Revolution as both a historic milestone and a deeply human story.

*Explore the full collection:*





# Protecting the Blue That Sustains Us

*By Dr. Spiros Kalogeropoulos*

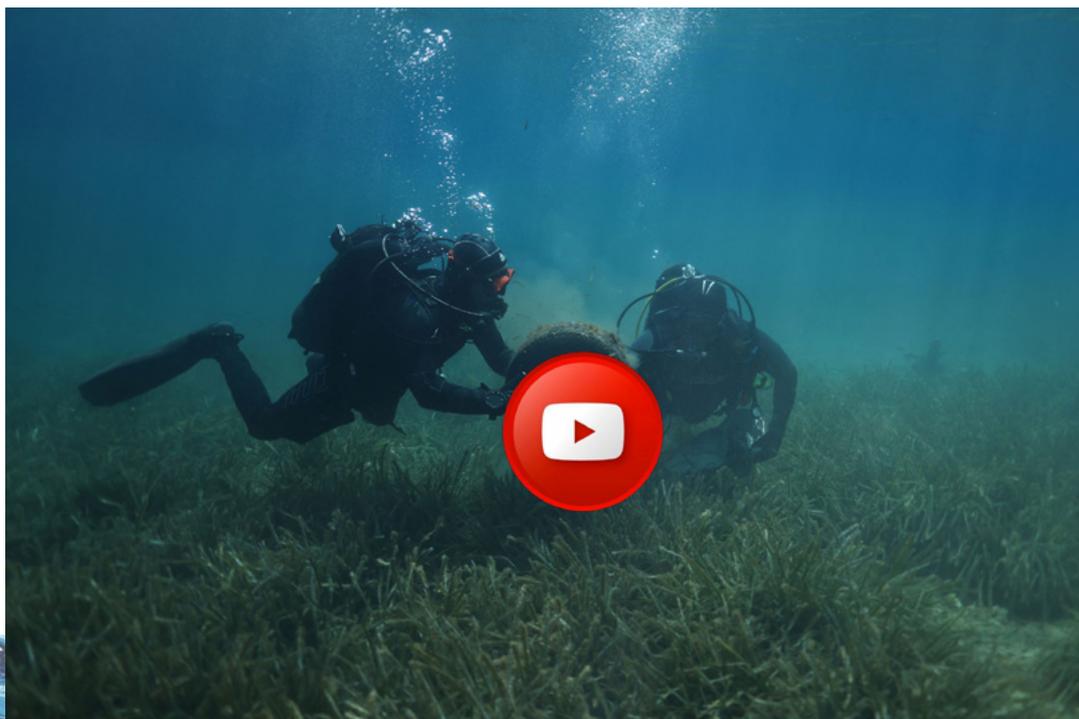
Every year on March 22, **World Water Day** reminds us that the planet's most essential natural resource is under increasing threat. Climate change, overuse, and pollution are placing immense pressure on water systems across the globe, from major continental rivers to fragile island ecosystems.

According to a recent United Nations [report \(January 2026\)](#), the world has entered a new era of “**global water bankruptcy**.” Many regions can no longer return to historical water baselines. “Normal” is gone. The report calls for a fundamental reset of global water policy, grounded in science and honesty.

The warning signs are already visible. In the United States, the **Colorado River** has been experiencing declining flow for decades, pushing reservoirs like Lake Mead to historic lows. In Greece, the **Mornos Reservoir**, the primary water source for the Athens metropolitan area, faces growing strain due to reduced rainfall and rising demand. These examples reflect a global challenge that will shape the future of water security.

In this reality, protecting marine and freshwater ecosystems becomes more critical than ever. **AHEPA Chapter Silicon Valley 251** is proud to support with a generous donation, the work of **Aegean Rebreath**, an organization dedicated to safeguarding Greece's seas and empowering local communities through hands-on environmental action.

Watch the video below to see one of their remarkable underwater clean-ups, a powerful reminder of why this mission matters.



*Aegean Rebreath is a multi-sectoral organization working on the protection and renewal of the marine environment. Through integrated programs, they seek to change the way people interact with the sea, locally and nationally. They create synergies between coastal communities and civil society, and local, regional and national authorities working to save the seas.*

# EASTER:

A Celebration  
of  
*Faith*  
AND  
LIGHT



For Greeks living far from home, Easter is a thread that ties the present to everything we carry within us. Holy Week arrives with the same quiet anticipation: the hymns of our childhood, the scent of incense drifting through dimly lit churches, the glow of candlelight reflected on familiar faces. It is the moment when faith becomes a bridge, allowing us to feel close to the people and places we miss most.

Celebrating Easter in America may look different. A different church, a different neighborhood, a different sky above the midnight *Christos Anesti*. Yet the essence remains unchanged. Every ritual, whether simple or elaborate, becomes an act of remembrance. Lighting a candle, cracking a red egg, whispering a prayer, each gesture carries the weight of generations and the comfort of continuity.

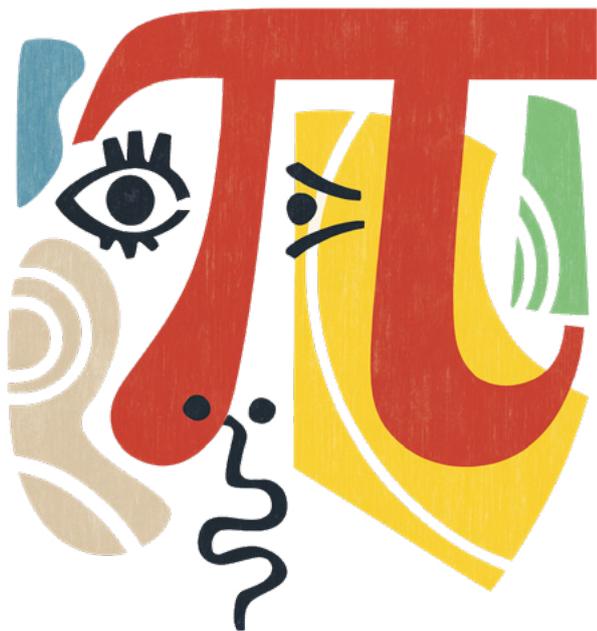
And while we may be far from the villages, islands, and cities where these traditions were born, their stories still belong to us. Across Greece, each region adds its own voice to the Easter symphony: the “**botides**” crashing onto the streets of Corfu, the “**rouketopolemos**” lighting up the sky in Chios, the “**saitopolemos**” of Kalamata. These customs are expressions of identity, belonging, and the enduring power of tradition.

Through the Easter Atlas we created, you can explore the full tapestry of Greek Easter, from how the date of the Resurrection is determined, to the hymns that define Holy Week, the flavors that fill every home, and the regional customs that give each place its own identity. It is a journey through faith, memory, and tradition, gathered in one place so that every reader can rediscover the Easter they grew up with, and the Easter that continues to evolve wherever Greeks are in the world.

*Explore the full Easter Atlas:*



**Greek Easter is the light we carry, the memories we honor  
and the hope we share.**



## Pi: THE INFINITE GREEK THAT SHAPES THE WORLD

Every March 14th, the world celebrates Pi Day, a global tribute to the most iconic number in mathematics. **A number that stretches into infinity**, never repeats, and somehow manages to appear everywhere: in circles, in waves, in architecture, in physics, in the algorithms that power our phones. Yet behind this universal symbol lies a truth we often overlook: pi is profoundly, unmistakably Greek.

Its very symbol,  $\pi$ , is the Greek letter that has carried the meaning of “perimeter” for centuries. The words “geometry,” “mathematics,” and “perimeter” are Greek. And the first person to calculate pi with astonishing precision was Archimedes, a Greek mind whose influence still echoes through modern science.

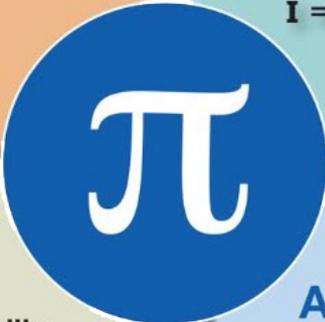
**Pi is a living testament to enduring Greek brilliance.** It has become a cultural phenomenon. Students memorize its digits for fun. Social media turns it into memes. Some celebrate Pi Day by eating... pie. And every time we use GPS, stream a video, or open a map app, pi is quietly working in the background, doing what it has always done: **connecting ideas, solving problems, shaping the world**



**Astrophysicists**  
 use pi in Einstein's equation for the general theory of relativity, which describes how space-time is curved.

$$G = \frac{8 \pi G T}{C^4}$$


**Mechanical Engineers**  
 use pi to determine the moment of inertia of a cylinder or disc rotating about a central axis.

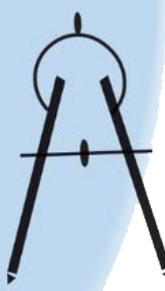
$$I = \int_0^R (r^2) (\rho) (2 \pi r) dr (L)$$


**Aviators**  
 use pi in an equation like this to calculate the drag coefficient—the amount of drag, or resistance, in air—of an aircraft.

$$C_d = C_{do} + \frac{Cl^2}{\pi A Re}$$


**Architects**  
 use pi in a design to find the length of an arc or the surface area of a dome.

$$C = 2 \pi r$$

$$A = 2 \pi r^2$$


Designed by: **CAROLINA**<sup>®</sup>  
[www.carolina.com](http://www.carolina.com)

*“Behind the world’s most mysterious number lies a single Greek letter. And a legacy that never ends”*



May 10 ·

# Mother's Day



*A journey into maternal  
love through the words of  
Greece's greatest poets.*

There are words that return to us like breath, like memory, like prayer. And among them, none carries more tenderness, more weight, more quiet power than the word mother.

Greek poets, from Palamas to Ritsos, from Vrettakos to Elytis, saw in her the symbol of roots, resilience, and unconditional love.

For **Palamas**, the mother is the first comfort and the final gaze. In his poem *Her Last Look*, the maternal figure becomes a light that never fades, a gaze that follows the child even after she is gone, a sacred presence shaping a person long before they understand the world. **Ritsos**, raised amid loss and upheaval, saw the mother as a pillar, a woman who carries pain without breaking. In his poems, she is "a door open to the light," the quiet heroine of everyday life.

**Vrettakos** speaks of the mother as if speaking of the sun, "the light that gave me birth." His mother is kindness, simplicity, purity.

Elytis lets her permeate his poetry like the sea, like a caress, like the light of the Aegean, the source of innocence and beauty in the world.

**Karyotakis** sees her as solace in sorrow, the one presence capable of softening a world that wounds.

Each poet saw her differently, yet all saw her with awe.

*As light. As root. As memory...  
As a love that asks for nothing and gives everything.*

Greek poetry is filled with mothers who light vigil lamps, wait by windows, whisper prayers, hold the world steady with their hands. And through these words, every reader finds their own mother, their own first homeland.



## Η υστερνή ματιά της

Όταν η δόλια η μάνα μου τον κόσμο παραιτούσε,  
μ' επήγαν κι εγονάτισα, μικρό πουλί, μπροστά της,  
την τελευταία της πνοή ο Χάρος ερουφούσε,  
κι έμενε μόνο θλιβερή, σαν κάτι να ζητούσε,  
η υστερνή ματιά της.

Να σβήσει δεν την άφηνε σα φως από καντήλι,  
προτού τής έβρει μια φωλιά να μοιάζει τη φωλιά της.  
σ' άλλη καντήλα ήθελε το φως της να το στείλει,  
και ήρθε μες στα μάτια μου και πάλι ν' ανατείλει  
η υστερνή ματιά της.

Και από τότε ό,τι θωρώ, και σ' ό,τι σταματήσω  
το κουρασμένο βήμα μου, πικρής ζωής διαβάτης,  
σα μάνα θα τ' αγκαλιασθώ και θα το αγαπήσω,  
γιατ' είναι μες στα μάτια μου, όσο να ξεψυχήσω,  
η υστερνή ματιά της.

*Kostis Palamas*

► [Listen \(1:50\)](#)

*A moving recitation of Kostis Palamas' poem.*



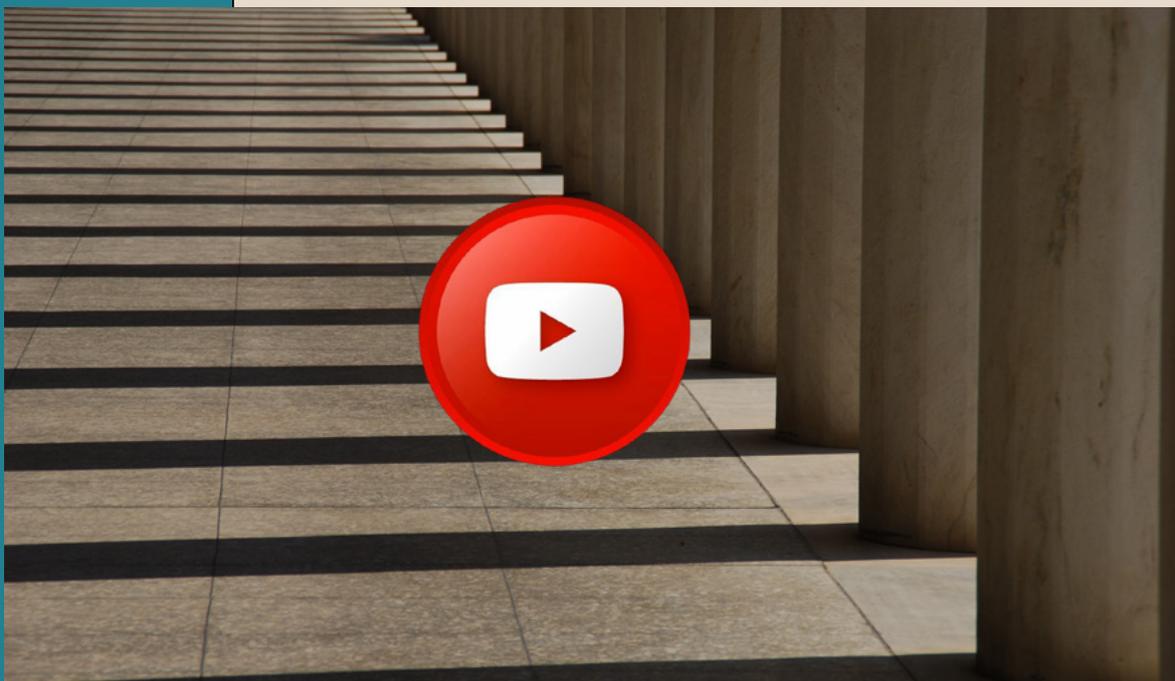
*Happy  
Mother's  
Day*



# A Year in Moments: GREECE 2025

The year 2025 left Greece with a mosaic of images, contrasts, and events that reflected the country's rhythm. From the tranquil Snow Moon rising over Philopappos Hill to the institutional, social, and environmental developments that shaped public life, the year blended moments of calm with intense news cycles. Significant institutional changes, the arrival of the new U.S. Ambassador, and the strengthening of Greece–U.S. cooperation highlighted the country's international role. At the same time, challenges, public mobilizations, environmental pressures, and cultural losses influenced the national climate.

The short video that follows brings together key images and moments from 2025, offering a concise look at the events that shaped the year for Greece. A period marked by challenges, developments, and stories with a distinct imprint.



# upcoming events



# BLOOD DRIVE

Because of you,  
life doesn't stop  
#vitaltolife

## AHEPA Silicon Valley Chapter #251 Blood Drive

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

**Room:** Church Hall

**Date:** March 5th 2026

**Time:** 1:00 P.M – 5:00 PM

**Contact:** Vassilis Zarifis

**Email:** [ahepa.c251@gmail.com](mailto:ahepa.c251@gmail.com)



SCAN ME



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**GET LUCKY**  
**CHANCE TO WIN**  
**\$10,000**



## Be Someone's Lucky Charm and You Could Win BIG!

Donate March 1-April 5 and you'll be automatically entered for a chance to win a \$10,000 gift card.\* Your donation is a lucky charm for patients in need. Schedule today.

## AHEPA Silicon Valley Chapter #251 Blood Drive

Thursday, March 5th, 2026  
1:00 P.M – 5:00 P.M

**St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church**  
1260 Davis St San Jose, CA 95126



\*Terms and condition apply; see [vitalant.org/LuckyGiveaway](https://vitalant.org/LuckyGiveaway).

Find us @vitalant:     

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Hosted with love by the Modesto Daughters of Penelope

# A Toast to Brunch

Join us for a bubbly morning full of delicious food, endless mimosas, a coffee bar, raffle prizes, games, and springtime cheer!

**Saturday, April 25, 2026**

**Time: 11:00 AM (Doors open 10:30 AM)**

**Annunciation Church Fellowship Hall**

**313 Tokay Avenue Modesto, CA 95350**

**Adult- \$35 Child-\$15**

**Text/Call Mary to RSVP by April 15**

**(209) 765-2314**

**Portion of Proceeds to benefit Without Permission**

**Zelle: [phaedra64@outlook.com](mailto:phaedra64@outlook.com)**

**(Spring chic attire encouraged)**



## District 21 Family Convention

**May 1st & 2nd  
2026**

*Stockton, California*

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

**[CLICK HERE FOR REGISTRATION](#)**

*Registration Deadline: Thursday, April 1st*

# AHEPA on Capitol Hill 2026

*(13–14 May)*



Every May, the AHEPA Family gathers in Washington, D.C. for a weekend that blends celebration with purpose. On **May 13**, members from across the United States will attend **the annual AHEPA Banquet**, honoring public service and reaffirming the organization's commitment to education, philanthropy, and civic engagement.

On **May 14**, AHEPA members will **visit Capitol Hill** for a full day of advocacy meetings with U.S. Representatives and Senators, including members of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus. These meetings focus on strengthening U.S.–Greece relations, supporting Cyprus, safeguarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate, promoting stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, and addressing issues such as religious freedom, security cooperation, and regional energy policy.

Capitol Hill Day is a signature AHEPA tradition: a chance for members to speak directly with policymakers, present community priorities, and ensure that Hellenic issues remain visible at the highest levels of government.

**Sign up for Capitol Hill Day!**

# AHEPA Sunday 2026

A Day of  
Heritage  
& Service  
Community

Every May, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America designates a special Sunday to honor the AHEPA Family and this year, **AHEPA Sunday falls on May 17, 2026**. It is a day that celebrates nearly a century of service, leadership, and devotion to Hellenic ideals across the United States. From civic responsibility and philanthropy to education and the promotion of democracy, AHEPA's mission continues to shape and uplift Greek-American life.

Across the country, chapters will gather in their local parishes, hosting coffee hours, displaying banners, and connecting with the community to share who we are and the difference we make. It is a moment of pride, unity, and reflection — a reminder that our heritage is not only remembered, but lived. AHEPA Sunday invites all of us to stand together as one family, honoring our past and strengthening our future.

For chapters seeking inspiration or guidance, the official AHEPA Sunday Plan Book is available online. [Click here to explore it.](#)

Word: **Nóstos**

*Noun – pronounced “NOH-stos”*

Nóstos is often translated as “return,” but in Greek culture it means something deeper: the journey back to where your soul feels at home. It is memory, longing, and belonging woven together. In Homer’s *Odyssey*, nóstos becomes destiny.

Odysseus crosses seas and storms guided by one force – the pull of Ithaca, of love, of identity.

Today, nóstos appears in quieter ways:

- in the coastline that greets you from an airplane window,
- in the taste of a childhood dish,
- in the moment you step again onto familiar ground.

Used to describe:

- A traveler returning after years away
- A Greek abroad who carries home in their voice
- Any journey that brings you back to yourself

*Nóstos is not just going back. It is remembering who you are and where your heart begins.*

## surprisingly Greek

### **The Milk of the Sky**

The word galaxy feels scientific. Until you trace it back to Greek.

**Gala =milk**

According to myth, the Milky Way began when Hera’s divine milk spilled across the heavens, leaving a glowing river of stars. A cosmic accident became the sky’s brightest story.

Astronomers kept the name long after myth faded.

Even today, when scientists speak of galaxies colliding or drifting through darkness, they’re using a word rooted in something tender and unmistakably Greek.

*Look up... and you’re still reading Greek.*

**2025-2026**  
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*ahepa21.org*

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DISTRICT LT. GOVERNOR

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*Encourage and lift one another  
because we build this world  
TOGETHER*





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has united, documented, and inspired  
the Greek-American community of  
California and the diaspora.*

Follow us on social media and keep the journey alive





District 21

AHEPA Traveler

A quarterly magazine highlighting  
significant events & achievements  
within the organization and the  
Greek-American community