



# The Hellenic Voice

Η ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΦΩΝΗ

The Official Newsletter of the Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest

Volume 2, Number 6 • Published Quarterly by the Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest • Summer 2010

## Greek Blockbuster Season: Tango, Oresteia and Olympia!

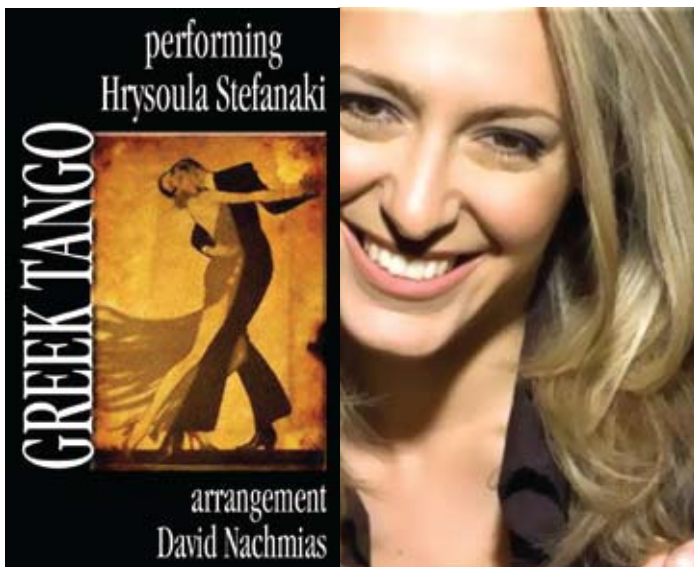
Last year Houston Mayor Bill White pronounced October 2009 as Hellenic Cultural Month. With the expansion and popularity of our events, we'll need Texas Governor Rick Perry to pronounce 2010 as Hellenic Cultural YEAR!

The Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest will produce events of a magnitude never before seen in our midst. The Greek Tango Ensemble from Athens, the Leonidas Loizides Theatrical Company, and, the darling of the Greek/American world, Olympia Dukakis, are coming to Houston this fall.

HCC-SW members Yannis Remediakis, Marko Dasigenis and Perry Mavrelis have taken the lead, along with their committee members, in organizing and producing these magnificent events for our audiences.

The Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest in conjunction with the Cretans of Houston will present the *Greek Tango Ensemble...An Evening to Remember*.

The Greek Tango Ensemble features singer and songwriter Hrysoula Stefanaki and world class pianist David Nachmias. Ms. Stefanaki is best known for her unique performances of international retro songs such as *Tango Noturno*, *Blue Heaven* and *The Last Waltz*.



The Ensemble's music arranger and pianist, David Nachmias, will bring his creative talents to the U.S. for the first time.

Many of their songs were written by Greek composers such as Attik, Gounaris, and Giannidis. Mr. Nachmias has re-orchestrated much of their music for many "opera class" musicians, and, of course, for the velvety voice of Hrysoula Stefanaki.

The Wortham Center is the venue for the Greek Tango Ensemble on Sunday, September 26, 2010 at 4 pm. Tickets are on sale now.

The Leonidas Loizides Theatrical Company is making their third appearance in Houston and will perform "Oresteia," a Greek tragedy by Aeschylus. This trilogy has been re-written by HBU's Dr. Louis Markos who combined the three continuing stories into one concise theatrical event.

The Dunham Theater on the HBU campus is the site for this dramatic presentation. On Friday, October 15, 2010 at 7:30 pm the curtain will rise on an idyllic scene from ancient Greece.

Then, on November 20, 2010, the spotlight will shine on Olympia Dukakis for her one woman show — *An Evening With Olympia*.

HCC-SW is thrilled to produce these events and to bring these talented performers to Houston. These events will establish a name for Greek culture and perhaps attract the likes of former Houston Mayor Bill White and Governor Rick Perry. It could prove to be a very interesting series of events.



See page 6 for more on Olympia Dukakis.

## A Big Fat Greek Thank You

We all owe a debt of gratitude, well earned praise and a big thank you to all the dedicated workers for our Hellenic Cultural Center. The Cultural Center has made steady progress since its inception because of them.

All of the Board of Directors, current and past, have contributed to the development of the HCC-SW. Special kudos go to those who have "Chaired" events. Dr. K. D. Charalampous got us off to a good start with the I-Max presentation of "Greece: Secrets of the Past" and "An Evening With Elia Kazan". Anthony Kouzounis and Perry Mavrelis chaired "The Hidden Children of Occupied Greece" that brought to Houston Gov. Michael Dukakis. George Zombanakis lead a committee that organized the "Symposium on Nikos Kazantzakis".

Alex Jelson chaired the committee that put together the first "Local Greek Artists' Exhibit". Alex has agreed to chair the second exhibit in 2011. Marko Dasigenis has Chaired the presentation of two classic Greek dramas by Euripides; "The Bacchae" at UH and "The Troades" at HBU, both by the Loizides Theatrical Co. from Athens. And this year Marko is again chairing the presentation of "Oresteia," the trilogy by Aeschylus on October 15th.

Thank you to Dr. George Blytas, first for writing "The First Victory: Greece in The Second World War" and together with George Kalfoglou organizing the book signing event. Thanks again to Perry Mavrelis for Chairing "An Evening With Olympia Dukakis" on November 20th. Yannis Remediakis has not only given to HCC-SW its web site but is also chairing an event this year "The Greek Tango Ensemble" that will be presented at the Cullen Theater at the Wortham Center on September 26th.

Needless to say, it is not just the chairpersons who deserve our thanks but also their committee members for their dedication and hours of service to our Center. In addition to the "Event Chairs", we have standing committee chairpersons who work tirelessly for all of us. Anthony Kouzounis heads the Program Committee and has always done more than his share in promoting and supporting the HCC-SW.

George Polydoros chairs our Facilities Acquisition Committee. He keeps his finger on the pulse of the real estate market. Through George, we have looked at numerous properties, and one day we will find just the right property,

at just the right place, at just the right time and make the right purchase.

Thanks are due also to Tom Pearson for chairing our Audit Committee and to Sakis Onisiphorou for years of service on that committee. We welcome this year Louis Poutous who has agreed to chair the Membership Committee. Thanks to Vangie Barrow and Mary Verges for co-chairing the Hospitality Committee and making our meetings and events more enjoyable.

My list of appreciation and thanks cannot be complete without mentioning several other people who make my job easier and indeed enjoyable. Thank you Mel Mamula and Pete Vossos, my co-editors of our Newsletter the "Hellenic Voice". Mel is the graphic arts specialist for the newsletter and for most of our event graphics. He has donated his talents since the beginning. Pete is also the HCC-SW Treasurer and doing a great job. These guys are not only good, they are fun to work with.

Last but by no means least, we must all thank Ernest Papavasiliou the HCC-SW archivist. Archivist does not begin to describe all that Ernie does for us. He keeps track of everything from soup to nuts. He keeps our minutes, is in charge of the mailing list, both e-mail and regular mail. He sends out all correspondence. As if he needed more to do, he also is undertaking keeping our web calendar up to date. It would take at least four people to replace Ernie if it could even be done.

A very special "Thank You" goes to our Greek Consul Alexandra Theodoropoulou. The consul and consulate have been very supportive of our efforts from the inception of the Cultural Center. The consul's input, advice and presence has been important to our development.

I hope our readers will say thanks to all the people I have cited above. Bringing Hellenic Culture to our city and area is not easy. It takes a lot of effort from many people. We at HCC-SW think it is worth the effort. Please support our efforts by becoming a member of HCC-SW and attending as many of the events we present as you can.

Embrace your Hellenic Heritage,

**NICK CHECKLES, MD**

*President, Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest*

### HCC-SW Newsletter Editorial Staff

The HCC-SW Newsletter is the official publication of the Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest, is produced by members and friends and issued quarterly. Member organizations include: Consul of Greece in Houston, Alexander the Great Chapter #29, Order of AHEPA, Arcadians of Texas, Cretans of Houston, Daughters of Penelope, Hellenic Enosis, Hellenic Professional Society of Texas, Macedonian Association of Greater Houston, Pancyprian Association of Texas, Inc., and the Marathon Exchange Organization. Postage is Paid at Houston, Texas. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HCC-SW, 3015 Richmond Ave., Houston, TX 77098. For comments, articles, suggestions for articles, and/or news for the HCC-SW Newsletter, please contact one of our Editorial Staff.

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# Meet the Challenge

Those of you born before World War II can probably relate to my life's experiences, but certainly with some exceptions. I was born in a small city in South Dakota shortly after my parents emigrated from Greece.

We spoke Greek at home (I didn't learn English until I entered school). Our social life was 100% Greek within the small Greek community in that city; my early playmates were cousins or other Greek kids and church was, occasionally, the Episcopal Church with a visiting Greek priest on holidays.

Being Greek in South Dakota in those days meant you were socially non-existent and, at times I found it difficult or embarrassing. I was often asked "what is that?" or "what kind of a name is that?" and on some occasions I denied I was Greek. In college, being "Greek" was being fraternity. After college I moved to Chicago and then, and only then, discovered being Greek wasn't so bad.

Flash forward a few decades, and now you find me a charter member of the Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest. Few people will be more proud than I of being of Greek descent. I learned along the way of all the contributions the ancient, Byzantine and, yes, modern Greeks have made to civilization. No other culture, bar none, has contributed more!

Dwell on that point a few moments. Everyone who has any Greek blood in them should stand up and shout how proud he/she is to have this heritage.

Every one of my grandchildren is just half Greek, and I love them dearly; but times have changed, and they will not have the same experiences I had. Gone are most of the great grandparents and Greek-speaking aunts and uncles. But, most assuredly, I want them to learn about and appreciate their heritage!

We here in the Houston area have an opportunity to strengthen our heritage for our families and spread knowledge and appreciation of that heritage to others via the Hellenic Cultural Center. I urge all of you to join, if you are not now a member, and ask others—family members, other Greeks or Philhellenes—to join. Meet this challenge...I urge you!

PETER H. VOSSOS  
*Editor, The Hellenic Voice*

*To do... is to be.*  
SOCRATES

*Grandparents... Parents... Where Did Their Journey Begin?  
How Did They Get to Houston?*

## What's Your Family's Story?

by PETER H. VOSSOS

There are many large Greek families in the Houston area today that began many years ago, usually with a single male Greek immigrant. Today some families go back three and even four generations.

I am very sure every one of those families has a history worth telling folks about –there is something common, but also something unique in each of those stories. There are some happy instances as well as sad or tragic ones.

What part of Greece or the Middle East did these immigrants come from? Why did they leave their homeland? How did they get to America? How did they find their spouse? How did they survive the first few years? How did they get to the Houston area? What did their children do with their lives?

We can help you write your story. Perhaps you would prefer that we interview you and help put the story together. Either way, contact us. We would be happy to help. Your approval on the story details before it is published is a promise. But you must contact us.

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# PHILOTIMO: A Greek Core Value

by THEODOROS A. KATERINAKIS, Drexel University, Philadelphia

*Reprinted from GREEK ETHOS, Volume III Issue 10/Spring 2010. Edited by Peter H Vossos*

“Philotimo” is for Greeks what “freedom” is for Americans, what “social justice” is for Canadians, or perhaps what apotheosis of “duty” is in the German culture. It is one of those not well-defined core values that cultures and nations possess at the center of their collective self: it is their “ethos.” In Greek culture, this central value is called “philotimo”, a non-translatable and unique conscious virtue of honor, pride, and dignity promoting empathy for others, through acts of generosity and even sacrifice.

A high compliment is to say of someone that they are “philotimos” e.g., honor loving (from “philo” - lover, “timi” - honor) who will “do the right thing” regardless the benefit. Philotimo is one of the highest values of Greeks.

In Homeric Greece, people were susceptible to arguments revolving around losing ‘face’ and honorable standing among peers. In modern Greece people too can be motivated to do the right thing through appeals to their fear of demotion in the public eye, i.e., insults to their self-esteem, their philotimo.

Philotimo has been a highly desirable trait of Greeks from time immemorial.

Philotimo is the main issue at the very beginning of the epic classic ‘Iliad’ by Homer. As you may recall, Agamemnon, commander of the Greeks, is forced to give up his concubine ‘Chryseis, who turned out to be the daughter of a priest of Apollo. Her priest father had managed to use his influence with Apollo to spread disease among the Greeks, who had spent the previous 9 years ravaging the country sides of Anatolia and Pontos. The only way to lift the plague was to give up Chryseis, which Agamemnon, a man of duty who had sacrificed his daughter to make the expedition against Troy possible, duly does.

What Agamemnon does next is to dishonor Achilles, ordering him to hand over his concubine ‘Briseis’. Achilles as you might recall was the best weapon the Greeks had against the Trojans. Achilles obeys reluctantly, but because of losing face among his peers, stops fighting for the Greeks, and returns to his tent in a sulk. Greek military fortunes deteriorate.

In a desperate attempt to turn the tide, Achilles’ best friend, Patroklos, dons Achilles’ armor and leads a sortie that results in his death. Overcome by grief, Achilles re-enters the fray and the Greeks embark on a new winning streak when, in a duel in front of all the armies, Achilles kills Hector, the valiant prince of Troy.

Both Achilles’ departure from battle and his return to it are prompted by matters of honor, friendship, sacrifice, i.e., philotimo. In the first instance, the dishonor of losing Briseis; in the second instance philotimo brings Achilles back to the battle to avenge the death of his friend Patroklos, even though he is aware of his own prophesized death by an arrow shot to his heel by Paris, the brother of Hector and the one who abducted Helen of Sparta. This war effort brought on by the abduction had resulted in the colonization of Anatolia and Pontos by the Greeks.

It has become stereotypical to appeal to Greek men to cooperate with their philotimo to persuade them to do what is of “higher value”. A typical instance was the Athens Olympic 2004 volunteers’ movement, which by appealing to philotimo drew more than 60,000 applicants.

Traditional Greek ethos of philotimo is very important not only in the need for self-esteem, but also in business. This cultural trait explains, to an extent, the phenomenon of small family-owned firms.

In a recent letter to NY Times, V. Vasilikos, the author of the book “Z” that was made into a globally acclaimed movie by the famous filmmaker Costa-Gravas, wrote that the Greeks shall overcome the financial crisis now confronting Greece, because, after all, it is comparatively miniscule in the history of Greece, with their national pride and international dignity intact.

In a televised White House ceremony marking Greek Independence Day, President Barack Obama credited philotimo –the love of personal honor and dignity, the duty to do right, and the notion to be for each other –as a unique Greek virtue that drove Greeks to succeed in America.

And he even pronounced it right: Philotimo!

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# Build It And They Will Come! ~Kevin Costner

In Kevin Costner's movie *Field of Dreams* he was told that "...If you build it, they will come." His "dream" was to build a baseball field in his corn field—and they did come.

In that same vein, HCC-SW is building an organization that desires to attract Hellenes and Philhellenes from the greater Houston area in order to build a Hellenic Cultural Center. This will be a museum "...to promote an understanding of the rich history and legacy that Hellenes have given to civilization."

That legacy brought democracy to the world which attracts, to this day, people from around the globe to the United States of America. Our country is where we can say, believe and build whatever we can envision.

The last line of our mission statement reads: **To accomplish this mission, we shall purchase or erect an appropriate building.**

To achieve this in a timelier fashion, we need to attract more dedicated people to our ranks. Dr. Nick Checkles, HCC-SW president, has asked each member to recruit one new member by the end of September. As you can see by the number of events we are producing, we need more people to help build our dream.

This small group of dedicated Greek men and women have produced events which encompassed an expansive

variety of programs from movies and lectures to plays and art shows. It was relatively easy to put money into these events, but more importantly, it took time—hundreds of hours—and work to arrange the myriad of details that made all of our events successful.

After four years, we are now an established member of the Houston community and are vigorously striving to have *an appropriate building* to showcase Hellenic culture. We need you to join us and bring your talents to our table so we may create a diversity of events that will attract Houstonians – Texans and Greeks – to our cause.

No, it's not an easy task. It requires time, money and dedication to produce anything of lasting value. And, the sooner we attract more dedicated people to our ranks, the sooner we will be able to build our dream –The Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest. Go to [www.hcc-sw.org](http://www.hcc-sw.org) and join now!

## Anthony Kouzounis Re-Elected AHEPA Supreme Secretary

Anthony Kouzounis was re-elected Supreme Secretary at the 2010 AHEPA National Convention. This is indeed a high honor and well deserved. AXIOS!

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# An Evening With Olympia

a biographical sketch by SANDRA BRENNAN

This photo was taken in 1987, the night Olympia won her Academy Award for portraying Cher's mother in "Moonstruck."

Olympia Dukakis is one of those character actresses who infallibly lends a touch of class to whatever picture in which she's performing. Despite her extraordinary dignity and class, she is able to make even the most outrageous character believable.

Though she is well regarded in film, Dukakis has spent the bulk of her distinguished career on-stage as an actress and a director. She is also a highly respected drama teacher.

The daughter of Greek immigrants, Dukakis once worked as a physical therapist. Her interest in acting came after appearing in summer stock and then taking adult-education classes in drama at Boston University, where she graduated with a master's in Fine Arts.

After graduation, she began her theatrical career and then co-founded Boston's renowned Charles Playhouse. She first gained notice in 1987 when she won an Academy Award for playing Cher's Italian mother in *Moonstruck*.

Since then, Dukakis has specialized in playing older women from different ethnic backgrounds. Subsequent film appearances include *Steel Magnolias* in 1989, where

she played the elegant widow Clairee Belcher; *Mighty Aphrodite* in 1995, and *Picture Perfect* in 1997.

In addition to her film and stage work, Dukakis has appeared in over 100 plays and has occasionally appeared on television in a variety of movies and miniseries. One of her most famous roles was that of the mysterious and kooky Annie Madrigal in the PBS adaptation of Armistad Maupin's *Tales of the City* (1993). Though the miniseries' gay themes led to considerable controversy, a sequel starring Dukakis was released in 1998.

In addition to her Oscar win, she has earned Obie Awards, a New York and Los Angeles Critics Award, and a Golden Globe.

As a drama teacher, Dukakis has worked at New York University and Yale. Her cousin, Michael Dukakis, was a presidential candidate for the Democratic party in 1988. In 2009 Michael Dukakis was our keynote speaker for "The Hidden Children" event.

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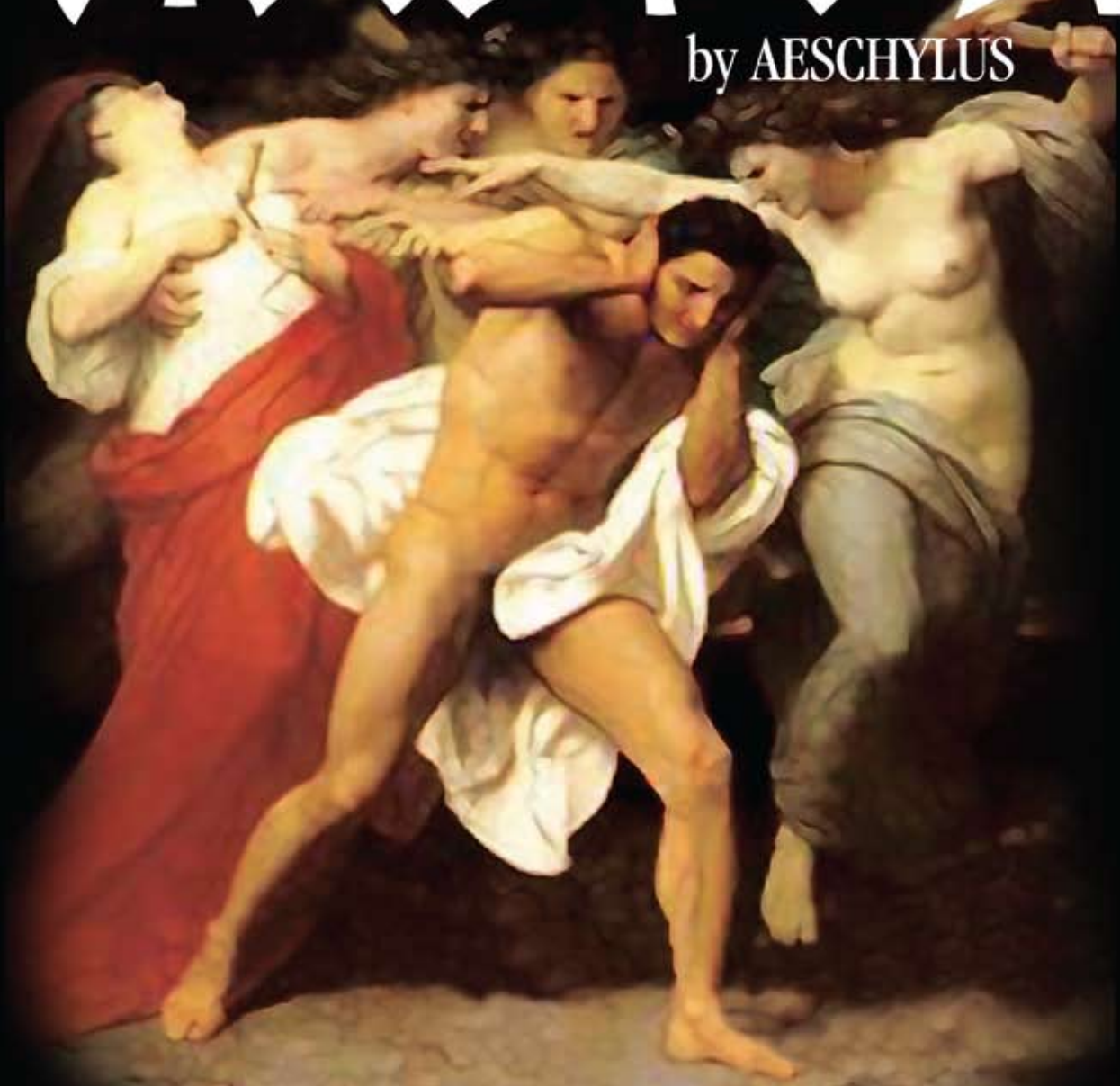
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Music by YANNIS MARKOPOULIS & MARIA KLINAKI | Directed by LEONIDAS LOIZIDES | Choreography by CINDI TRIANTOS  
Lyrics by KATE NIKOLOPOULOS | Chorus Costume Design by ERIKA WILHELMINE KNICKMANN SPYROPOULOS

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# 2011–The Year of Hellenism in Houston

With all the productions HCC-SW currently has under way, we are in the midst of planning for 2011, which really may be called the *Year of Hellenism* in Houston. We even have a new event that may be the sweetest thing we've ever done.

Once again we are teaming up with the AIA (Archeological Institute of America) to learn how the ancient Greeks lived, evolved and developed all aspects of their society. In May our lecture series continues with the Minoan Ship Wrecks. We are planning to have six lectures in 2011 with a diversity of topics.

The success of our Greek Art Exhibit in 2009, and an astonishing number of requests to make this an annual event, has encouraged Alex Jelson and his daughter, Christine J. West, to begin planning the Second HCC-SW Greek Art Exhibit.

There were a few surprises in that first art show. As expected, Alex entered two of his works, and, of course, interior designer Perry Mavrelis displayed his art. However, the paintings of real estate magnate George Polydoros blew everyone's socks off. Who knew he had that "artistic" talent?

The Leonidas Loizides Theatrical Company will, in all likelihood, return in 2011 to continue their entertaining interpretations of the ancient Greek tragedies.

Each year, this event has grown and even found a home at Houston Baptist University. Dr. Louis Markos, HBU's professor in residence, has even condensed this year's trilogy *Oresteia* into a two hour performance.

For our sweet new event, Vangie Barrow and Mary Verges formed a committee to host our very first Chocolate Festival. You read right, folks. A chocolate festival in Houston in the spring.

They are in the planning phase now, but from all indications, this could possibly grow into an event that will draw people from the entire Houston metropolitan area.


It's quite obvious that we have ambitious plans. Our vision is to build a Hellenic Cultural Center to house most of our events and display the contributions Hellenes have brought to western civilization. To join in the fun, join the Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest and contribute to our vision.

## ECC

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## Hrysoula Stefanaki



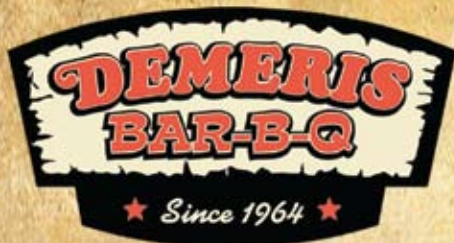
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## Dates and Times to Remember

HCC-SW is gearing up for another memorable fall season for all things Greek—and we promise you'll be talking about it for a long time to come.

Beginning on Sunday, September 26, 2010 at 4 pm, the Greek Tango Ensemble will display their musical talents with, of all things, Greek tango tunes at the Wortham Center. Yannis Remediakis traveled all the way to Greece to finalize the details with Hrysoula Stefanaki, one of the most talented and popular Greek singers.

The annual, and ever popular, Greek Festival will open the gates Thursday, October 7, 2010 with fun, food, and dancing.

For the third year in a row, the Leonidas Loizides Theatrical Co. is coming to Houston and will perform *Oresteia*, a Greek tragedy by Aeschylus, Friday, October 15, 2010 at HBU's Dunham Theater.

Olympia Dukakis will perform her one woman show November 20, 2010. Tickets go on sale September 1st.

Houston will again be the home of all things Greek this fall. Get your tickets to all events early!

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# Go To HCC-SW.ORG for All Things Greek!



Our web site is up, running and filled with events and stories about Hellenes in the Greater Houston metropolitan area. The calendar of events has all of our programs listed and those of our member organizations. They are the backbone of HCC-SW and diligently work to make our programs successful.

You can even join HCC-SW on the site and soon you'll be able to purchase tickets to our events online. Yannis Remediakis developed hcc-sw.org and has maintained and updated it over the past three years.

He's even attempted to train a few of our members to input some of the mountain of information and features that need to be disseminated to our audience, but that takes a lot of training.

Yannis puts this newsletter on our site so that you may have all of your friends and relatives from around the world read about all things Greek in Houston. To learn more about HCC-SW and all we have to offer, go to [www.hcc-sw.org](http://www.hcc-sw.org).



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# AHEPA #29 Educational Foundation Awards 36 Scholarships

by DR. NICK CHECKLES

On July 22, 2010 at the Annunciation Cathedral's Martel Hall, the AHEPA #29 Educational Foundation presented 36 scholarships to worthy students attending college in the 2010-2011 school year. The scholarships are for \$1,000 per academic year per student. As each student received their award, they mentioned their university and their academic major and then thanked the donor of that particular scholarship.

The students' interests varied from the traditional professions of Medicine, Law and Engineering to Theatrical Management, Creative Writing and Business and Finance. The students' choices of Universities also varied from local and state schools to the Ivy League schools. The "Hellenic Voice" extends its congratulations to all the scholarship recipients.

The keynote speaker for the event was the Honorable Judge Pat Lykos, Harris County District Attorney. She spoke eloquently about what a wonderful country we all live in. She reminded the students that they are the descendants of the people who established the first democracy in the world—the Hellenes.

She indicated that America, meaning the USA, is the inheritor of this democratic concept and has become

the greatest democracy ever. She pointed out that the dominance of Rome declined in its third century of power. Our American democracy is only a little over 200 years old and beginning its third century. She emphasized that it is the responsibility of each succeeding generation to nurture this democracy and to preserve it.

*The Hellenic Voice* and the Hellenic Cultural Center applaud the tremendous work that President Dr. Nick Patzakis and the Board of Directors of the Foundation are doing to raise money for scholarships. The Foundation was founded just nine years ago, but followed in the footsteps of the AHEPA Scholarship Committee.

At the beginning, six \$500 dollar scholarships were distributed annually. There has been steady growth since then so that now the Foundation distributes \$30,000 to \$40,000 in scholarships annually. In the past ten years, the foundation has raised about \$500,000 and distributed about \$283,000 in scholarships. This is truly a remarkable accomplishment and deserves the full support of all of us, and our thanks to the Foundation for a job well done.

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Dr Skaribas was born in Itea Fokidos, Greece. He is a graduate of the Medical School of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki in Greece. Dr. Skaribas trained at Baylor College of Medicine, where he completed a residency in anesthesiology, and a fellowship in pain medicine. He is board certified in both anesthesiology and pain medicine by the American Board of Anesthesiology.

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