



# HELLENIC LINK, Inc. ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΟΣ

Member Update Bulletin

Ενημέρωση Μελών, Φίλων, και Συνεργαζών του Συνδέσμου

## Bulletin Number 159 May 2018

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## HELLENIC LINK NEWS

On May 6, 2018, the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Link, Inc. held its latest 2-hr Meeting, chaired by the President (P) Constantine J. Efthymiou, PhD. Due to the fact that the members of the current Board live in different localities, the meetings are now held as teleconferences.

At the start, the Board moved to approve the Minutes of the previous meeting. The P commented on the need to carry out a rigorous membership drive. In the discussion, at the recommendation of the Vice President (VP) Prof. Stella

Tsirka, it was decided to support the drive with a well-designed brochure, explaining the objectives, activities and factual accomplishments of the Association. The VP also announced that her University, Stony Brook U., would hold a Greek Festival on its campus the following Sunday; it was decided that on this occasion and similar ones in the future, it would be appropriate for the HL to be present publicizing its work, at least with a supervised display and distribution of its electronic publications. The P also

announced that hence forth VP will assume the management and chairmanship of the Advisory Council on Hellenic Education of the Board. CE referred also to the letter received from the distinguished Cultural Society PARNASSOS of Athens, Greece; he asked fellow-member Constantine Hatzidimitriou, PhD, to reply to Parnassos on behalf of the Board in a spirit of responsive understanding and collaboration. Then, the following Board committees reported on their activities.

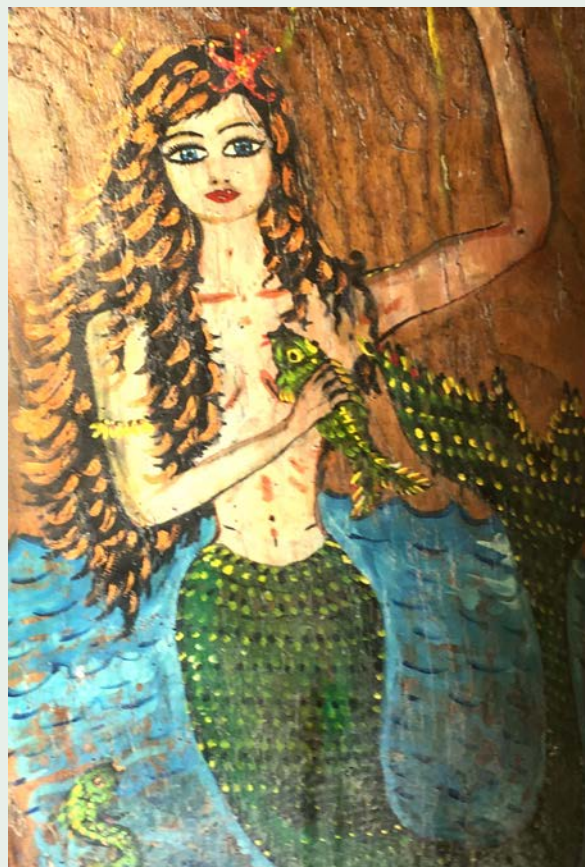
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\* Photos from the island of Lesbos (Mytilene) are included in deference of collaborative healthcare initiatives of our members in support of the local populace in the 1970s-1980s.

## Financial Resources Committee

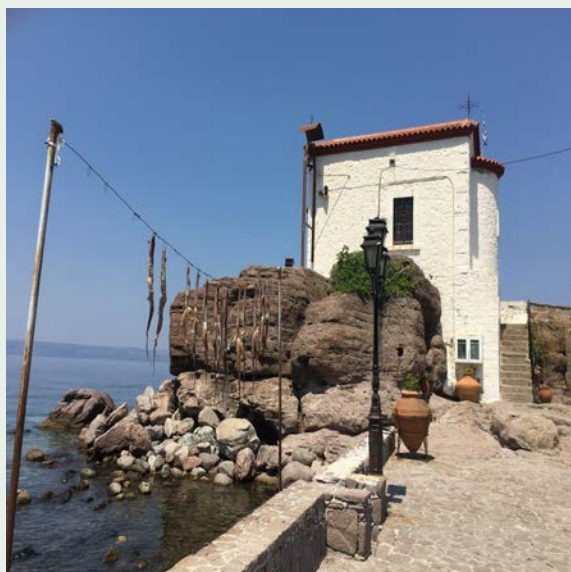
Dr. Michael Papaioannou, the chairperson of the newly created Financial Resources Committee, gave some guidelines for its structure and mode of operation. He explained that the purpose of this committee is to raise funds for HL projects that require material underpinning. How can we proceed and with what strategy? He suggested that the HL will have to approach people and foundations that embrace the social goals of the HL with good communication skills. It is inherent in the mission of acquiring needed grant funds, to plan in advance, list all innovative projects needing financial backing, prioritize them and determine their costs realistically. It is important that in this committee participate key members of the Board, members with experience in fund raising, and others from the community of finance; also, members intimately involved in the articulation and the detailed development of the planned project should be part of this committee. In the discussion, two examples of projects that could utilize grant money assistance productively were suggested: the publication of a developed (in collaboration with the National Research Foundation of Greece (EIE) Teaching Guide for the Byzantine Civilization, as the initial project for the introduction of modular teaching of major themes of Hellenic Culture, suitable for inclusion in high school curricula for Social Studies, and the publication of the National Standards for Teaching Modern Greek as a Foreign/Second Language. The determination of these Standards was initiated by the Advisory Council of the HL and continued with the guidance and collaboration of the American Council for Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (Even though the completed draft was submitted to ACTFL several years ago, the Standards remain unpublished). In further discussion, several members suggested names of Foundations and individuals who could prove instrumental in providing grant assistance to worthy HL projects.



Painting of a mermaid at a seaside taverna in Skala Sykamias, Lesvos.







Church of Panagia Gorgona in Skala Sykamias.



Picturesque homes in Molyvos, Lesvos.

## Restitution of a Medical Outreach Tasks Group

CE observed that with the reentry of Medical Doctors into our Board, we wish to return to earlier days' policies and practices when our Association and its antecedent Krikos, Inc. engaged in well-aimed healthcare activities for the benefit of Hellenes; he reminded the members of the efforts under the leadership of the late Dr. Demetrios Flessas, in cooperation with many other physicians here in the USA and in Greece as well as with the cooperation of the fraternal organization of Mytilineans to offer up to date treatment to patients in Mytilene, suffering from

Cooley's (Mediterranean) Anemia; support several Medical Schools that were then being established in Greece with new faculty and medical literature to assist them in enriching their sprouting medical libraries; to establish the first pediatric intensive care unit (ICU) in Southern Greece (hospitals in Herakleion, Crete); and more recently, cooperation with the voluntary **Aegean Team of Doctors** offering comprehensive medical and dental healthcare to the inhabitants of the small Greek Islands near the coast of Asia Minor in the Eastern-Southeastern Aegean. Noting that the passage of time brings about new conditions and surfaces new needs,

which, however, it is our civic duty to address, he introduced to the Board Nicholas Patronas, MD, PhD, Professor of Neuroradiology at the Georgetown University Medical School and until last year Chief, section of Neuroradiology at the Clinical Center of NIH (National Institutes of Neurologic Disorders and Stroke, NINDS). Dr. NP referred to a prominent feature of many MDs in the Washington, DC area: their heavy engagement in medical research. Therefore, he suggested that the first project he would engage himself in would be in collaboration with colleagues in his area to try to facilitate the admission to hospital of Greek patients suffering from rare diseases for which there occurs cutting edge research on etiology and therapeutic modalities going on at public expense. CE suggested that medical schools and hospitals in Greece should become aware of such activity so that a very useful interaction could ensue. ST said that indeed we need to establish a greater, closer network. NP informed the Board that there is no connection between Hellene doctors in Washington and the Hellenic Medical Society of New York or the Federation of Hellenic Medical Societies of North America; CE pointed out that it would be a plausible objective to establish a nexus of communication and collaboration with them.

## **The Advisory Council on Hellenic Education**

CE said that after last BOD meeting's discussions, this meeting's task is to respond positively to the request of Prof. Mattheoudakis to assist in the conduct of the survey of the Greek teachers by making specific plans to reach out to the teachers, inform them of the survey, and invite them to respond to it by answering the Questionnaire to be distributed by Prof. Mattheoudakis. In the discussion that followed, specific groupings of teachers were identified and assignments of Board members for the relevant contacts were made:

- The teachers of the largest system of primary and secondary education providing teaching/learning of the Modern Greek language are those of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The system is subdivided in 9 Diocesan Districts: Archdiocesan (New York), Chicago, Pittsburgh, Boston, Denver, Atlanta, Detroit, San Francisco, and New Jersey. The system includes "Day Schools", "Saturday or Afternoon Schools", and classes for adults.
- The Federation of Greek Educators "Prometheus"
- Supplementary direct approach of parochial schools and their teachers by members of the Hellenic Link. For example, it was reported that Stella Tsirka in collaboration with Prof. Mattheoudakis distributed the cover letter and Questionnaire of the Survey to several communities in Eastern Long Island.
- The Greek Faculty of Greek – Culture - oriented Charter Schools.
- Teachers affiliated with the Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).
- Effort will be made to spread the information on the survey to Greek Educators at large through the social media Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.
- Utilization of newspapers, printed and electronic; in some cases needed payment will be authorized.
- Hellenic Studies Programs of tertiary education (Colleges and Universities). For this particular group, the cooperation of The Modern Greek Studies Association (MGSA) will be sought.
- Greek Teachers working in Canada (With kind assistance from Spyros Volonakis, Director, Office of Greek Education, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto and Nikos Varmazis, PE).

Members of the Advisory Council assumed the responsibility to contact the above groups of Greek Teachers and facilitate the conduct of the Survey in collaboration with Dr. Marina Mattheoudakis (Professor in Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Philosophy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece; former President of the School of Modern Greek at the Aristotle University. Her expertise lies in the area of foreign language teaching and acquisition, in the design of foreign language curricula, instruction and assessment and in foreign language teacher education and training. For the last year, she has been in Wilmington, DE, working as the Dean of the Greek program at Odyssey Charter School and at the same time she has been cooperating with the School of Modern Greek at the Aristotle

University in order to design and conduct a survey in the USA and Canada. The aim of the survey is to study the language and training needs of Greek language teachers in the two countries; for this purpose, the research team has designed a questionnaire to be distributed to as many as possible Greek teachers engaged in the teaching of Greek as a foreign language. The questionnaire can be accessed in the following link:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Greek\\_US](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Greek_US)

## Teaching Guide for Byzantine Studies

CE brought to the attention of the Board the document of the Agreement contracted between the Hellenic National Research Foundation (Εθνικόν Ίδρυμα Ερευνών/ Ίνστιτούτο Ιστορικών Ερευνών) for the collaboration to write and publish a Guide to teach on the Byzantine Culture and State, novel aid for the Social Studies Curricula of US high schools. The mutual commitments stipulated by the Agreement were presented and discussed. In conformity with the terms, 6 of the 10 teaching units of the Guide have been drafted and just received with the rest 5 being in various stages of completion. Dr. Constantine Hatzidimitriou, the director of the project stated that in the drafted units the quality of writing is good needing only minor editorial adjustments. CE advised that soon we should be adequately prepared to proceed to the next step in our plan, which is the digital publication of the Guide for its testing in schools.

## Σχόλιον της Σύνταξης

Η κατά τα ανωτέρω εν εξελίξει έρευνα του Αριστοτέλειου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης αξιολόγησης της κατάρτισης του διαθέσιμου προσωπικού διδασκαλίας της νεοελληνικής ως ξένης γλώσσας αποτελεί σημαντικώτατο γεγονός για την πρόοδο της ελληνομάθειας στο Δυτικό ημισφαίριο. Οι ειδικοί γλωσσολόγοι μας πληροφορούν ότι απο μία τέτοια σωστά διεξαγώμενη έρευνα εξαρτάται η εξαγωγή ορθών στατιστικών συμπερασμάτων που θα οδηγήσουν στη δόμηση προγραμμάτων επιμόρφωσης διδασκάλων, θα διορθώσουν υπάρχουσες διδακτικές αδυναμίες και θα αναπληρώσουν δαπιστούμενα ελλείποντα στοιχεία. Βασικός όρος επιτυχίας της έρευνας είναι να ερωτηθούν τα σωστά ερωτήματα και να ερωτηθεί ένας αναγκαία μεγάλος αριθμός διδασκάλων. Χωρίς αυτά η έρευνα δεν μπορεί να επιτύχει του σκοπού της. Η περίπτωση μου θυμίζει πανεπιστημιακό μου δάσκαλο και μέντορα που έλεγε η καλή στατιστική έρευνα είναι σαν το φανοστάτη στο δρόμο όταν ρίχνει άπλετο φως στο σκοτάδι και όχι όταν χρησιμεύει για στήριγμα σε διερχόμενους, συνήθως... μεθυσμένους, διαβάτες (επιπόλαιους έρευνητές). Η έγκυρη τεχνογνωσία και μακρά εμπειρία του Σχολείου Νεας ελληνικής Γλώσσας του Αριστοτέλειου Πανεπιστημίου στη διδασκαλία της γλώσσας ως ξένης και στην εκπαίδευση διδασκάλων της εγγυώνται την καρποφορία της προσπάθειας. Το Συμβούλιο και τα Μέλη του Ελληνικού Συνδέσμου είμαστε ευτυχείς που συμβάλλομε στην καρποφόρο αυτή προσπάθεια του Ελληνικού Πανεπιστημίου που στέκεται πολύτιμα αρωγό στις εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες της Ομογένειας. Και είμαστε επίσης πολύ ευτυχείς που καθώς γνωρίζουμε τούτη είναι η πρώτη φορά που οι εκπαιδευτικοί φορείς της Ομογένειας δέχονται να συνεργασθούν παναμερικανικά για την προκοπή όλων με την φωτεινή και ενοποιό ηγεσία του Αριστοτέλειου Πανεπιστημίου. Ας ευχηθούμε η συνεργασία αυτή να φέρει το ποθούμενο αποτέλεσμα και να αποβεί η αφετηρία για πολλές άλλες παραγωγικές συνεργασίες. **KXE**



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