

THE AGORA

National Hellenic Society | Heritage Greece | Preserving & Celebrating Heritage

Points of Interest:

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Current Projects:

To volunteer for existing project or suggest a project click [here](#).

Peer Mentorship: Nicole Vournazos

The Agora Newsletter: TBD

Google Grant: Nicole Vournazos

LinkedIn: Jenna Douvikas

Oral History: Nick Amoroso

Events:

Marathon Wreath Ceremony-
Boston
April 13th

National Hellenic Museum
Gala- Chicago, May 13th

NHS Corner:



Updates

A Word from your National Co-Chairs

We are pleased to announce that we have established three new Heritage Greece Chapters in the Southeast Region: Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida. Cynthia Tassopoulos (GA), Vicky Poulimenos (NC), Tim Clark (NC), Dena Manos (FL), and Johnny Masarik (FL) lead these Chapters. Please join us in congratulating these alumni on their new roles as Regional Co-Chairs!

- Please let us know if you would like to participate in the peer-to-peer mentorship program- this has been a very successful program aimed at helping our younger alumni navigate career planning from some of our young professionals in similar fields. Please contact [Nicole Vournazos](#)

- We are actively looking for an Editor for The Agora, please [reach out](#) if you would like further details about the position.

- Keep a look out for the results of the 2017 application awareness competition!

- Check out our new LinkedIn page [here](#).

All HG members are welcomed to attend our monthly calls on the first Sunday of every month at 9:30pm EST (you can listen in or contribute to the discussion). Reminders are sent each month. We look forward to your participation!

Noël Giglio & Austin Cooke
National Co- Chairs



NHS Spotlight

An Interview with Drake Behrakis



Drake Behrakis resides with his wife, Maria, and three children, George, Zoe, and Demetri, in Sudbury, Massachusetts. He is the President of Marwick Associates, a real estate investment and development company located in Lexington, Massachusetts. Drake is actively involved in the Greek community and serves on the Board of the National Hellenic Society.

Where in Greece is your family from?

My father's side of the family is from Mani, Laconia and my mother's side is from Thessaly.

Why did you get involved with the NHS and serve in a leadership capacity?

I was attracted to NHS because of the caliber of people who founded the organization but more importantly the quality and immediate impact of their programs. As I became more involved, it was apparent to me that the trajectory of this organization was in line with my personal objectives; my opinion and input was highly valued and somewhat instrumental in the expansion of existing and new initiatives. It's also an organization that has attracted members of all ages, especially, the younger professionals, involving them to become active in governance and programming. This will pay dividends down the road as we transition to the next generation of leaders.

Could you speak as to why you concentrate your efforts on Hellenic youth? What is your hope for the lasting legacy of these initiatives?

It's important when you have reached the pinnacle of your career that you pass on your experiences, guidance, and wisdom to the next generation so they can not only take up the torch and keep the flame alive but also continue to preserve and expand the vision of the organization. Boston College has been an important part of my life so it's only natural that I help lay the foundation of getting more Greek Americans involved; it is the same for Heritage Greece. There are many ways for us as individuals to help in a very small way.

What is it that drives your level of dedication and commitment? And how to do you achieve balance in "doing it all"?

I learned at an early age that we are put on this Earth to make the world a better place for those who will follow us. For me it is personal, as I carry on the legacy of my immigrant grandparents and my parents. The only way you can do this is to stay committed to their values and beliefs, which starts at home, then at work, and in your community. At times, it is a huge sacrifice but an important one.

What advice would you give to young professionals just starting out in their career?

Early in your career is a time for you to roll up your sleeves and work hard but also a time you will make a lot of mistakes, keep an open mind and learn from them. Always look ahead and make sure never to try to be someone you are not. Push the boundaries beyond your comfort zone but don't pretend. Follow your passions and dreams and truly see if they will last a lifetime.

What's New?



Alex Andreadis
HG 2014

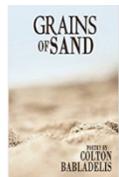
VIACOM

In March of 2016, Alex joined Viacom as Coordinator, MTVU Marketing &

Distribution. In this role, Alex supports the growth of MTV's college channel, MTVU, through marketing and sales assistance, vendor relations, and project management relating to the brand and its brand partnerships.



Colton Babladelis
HG 2010



In March of 2016, Colton published his first book featuring his poetry, "Grains of Sand". With his debut poetry collection, he reflects the lyrical inspiration of his ancestral land, Greece, and time spent traveling through the United States and Central America.



Cynthia Tassopoulos
HG 2010



Over the summer of 2016, Cynthia relocated from DC to Atlanta, GA where she started pursuing an MBA-MPH (public health) degree at Emory University. She is looking forward to exploring her new city, learning about the intersection of business and healthcare, and especially, being back in a city with delicious Southern food!



Austin Cooke
HG 2011



In October of 2016, Austin moved from

Chicago to Los Angeles to pursue a new position within Alliance Bernstein. Austin is an Analyst in Wealth Strategies at AB. As an analyst, Austin provides complex wealth planning solutions and analytic support to high-net-worth families and professional advisors on a variety of issues including retirement planning, asset allocation, multigenerational wealth transfer and philanthropy.



Noël Giglio
HG 2010



In November of 2016, Noël joined Philips as Legal Counsel- Legal Compliance. Noël was formerly Assistant General Counsel at Olympus. As in-house counsel for Philips, Noël is focusing her practice on anti-bribery and anti-corruption in the healthcare-medical device space. She is responsible for the North American Market, supporting the sales function across the full suite of medical devices and solutions.

Please let us know what is new with you so we can share it with the group! Contact us [here](#).

Op Ed: Peer Mentorship



This year, I am excited to announce that we have launched a peer-to-peer mentoring program for the Heritage Greece (HG) students. The goal of

the program is to create assets within the HG community. Every first Sunday of the month, HG alumni “mentors” have 30-minute Google hangouts (video chats) with other HG alumni. Mentors offer open office hours to discuss topics such as class schedules, resumes, and the internship and full-time recruiting process. Potential questions include:

- What classes should I take to help me on “x” career path?
- Do you have any feedback on this section of my resume?
- What are some common interview questions that you had during your recruiting process?

Mentors range from pediatric residents to investment bankers to MBA/MPH students. HG students can participate in as many open office hours as they would like.

A big thank you to our mentors for volunteering their time. We hope to continue expanding the program by adding mentors across a broader spectrum of industries.

By: Nicole Vournazos
HG 2010

Op Ed: Team Building Fun

I can’t believe it’s been a whole year since we have all seen each other! As I scan the crowd, I see lots of familiar faces. It seems like it was yesterday when we were all in Greece together: Cynthia was laying the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Alexa was helping me practice my Greek,

and Noël and I were exploring the beach. Now, here we are seven years later.

There are many new friends in the crowd as well: friends from past year’s reunions. These are my new pareia! These are the pareia I have met through listening to speakers talk about our proud history of Greece or through working on the oral history project for the National Hellenic Museum. And it doesn’t matter that we only just met, as I get overwhelmed with questions: how are your brothers? How is California? And, perhaps my favorite, when are you coming over for dinner?

These are the exceptional friends I have met and bonded with through each year’s reunion. This year was no exception. In this year’s activity, we were split into teams and tasked with building the largest statute out of spaghetti (no easy feat!). If someone looked at us from afar, they’d think we had grown up with each other and known each other for years (which I can now



proudly say that some of us have). Another reunion goes by and our friendships continue to grow!

With this in mind, I want to share our renewed mission: *“We are the Heritage Greece Alumni Network, a*

distinguished association of young Greek American students and graduates that participated in the NHS Heritage Greece Program. We serve as ambassadors of Hellenic heritage by supporting the expansion of Heritage Greece and other programs that promote Hellenism and create rewarding opportunities for HG Alumni. To be part of the HG Alumni is to be part of the NHS family...”

Op Ed: Love of Language



Since I was a little girl, I have assisted my γιαγιά and παπού with their acquisition of the English language, while they simultaneously taught me how to read, write, and speak in Greek. As my grandparents learned English, and while I learned Greek, I not only witnessed our successes,

but I also noticed our linguistic struggles. Our struggles, especially, elicited a spark and calling within me to help others learn English.

A month before I left for Heritage Greece, I was afforded the opportunity to do classroom observations at the Hazleton Area Middle School in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. In recent years, big corporations, such as Amazon, have opened warehouses in Hazleton, which has caused many job-seekers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds to move into the area. Prior to this, Hazleton was not a place of great diversity; however, today the Hazleton Area School District documents over 1,500 English language learners, also known as ELLs.

I was beyond excited when I found out that I would be observing in both seventh and eighth grade classrooms during my two weeks in Hazleton. Because I am an English Education major with an ESL Certificate, I was able to observe in both literature classes and in ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms.

“As my grandparents learned English, and while I learned Greek, I not only witnessed our successes, but I also noticed our linguistic struggles. Our struggles, especially, elicited a spark and calling within me to help others learn English.”

I instantly noticed that the ESL classrooms were a lot different than the literature classrooms. From the moment I walked into the ESL classrooms, I noticed and felt a strong sense of community amongst the students. This sense of community instantly reminded me of the strong sense of community that my family and I have felt within the Greek community in our hometown. The students in the classroom were helping one another, laughing and joking around, and conversing with each other; it reminded me of the Greek food festivals held at my church and coffee hour after church on Sundays. What was interesting, though, was that not one of these students were speaking English – they were all speaking Spanish.

I was intimidated, to say the least. Although I had taken Spanish in high school, I am far from a Spanish speaker, even at a conversational level. I was worried that I would not connect with these students due to what seemed to be a language barrier. In this moment, I imagined how my γιαγιά and παπού must have felt coming to a new country without knowing any English at all; I was afraid.

However, the “language barrier” I was so worried about actually turned out to be more of a language bridge. While working with the students, I came to notice that we always found a way to meet each other halfway and then, together, get to the other end of an issue. When the students and I had difficulties understanding one another, we would make accommodations to assist each other. Although it was difficult, I was able to help effectively the students I was working

with, and I even learned some Spanish in the process. Not only did I help them, but they helped me, too. The students I worked with allowed me to receive real-world experience, which taught me more than any college language class I have ever taken.

Two months after this experience, I was sitting in a Greek language class at the American College of Greece. Once again, I found myself struggling to speak and understand a language that was not my first. However, the professor accommodated me and made what we were learning meaningful to me, just as I tried to do with the students in Hazleton.

These experiences made me fall deeper in love with both language learning and language teaching. While sitting in class at The American College of Greece, I couldn't help but picture myself teaching English in Greece, one day.

By: Marina Stelmack
HG 2016

Op-Ed Oral History Project



One of our ongoing initiatives is the Frank S. Kamberos Oral History Project with the National Hellenic Museum (NHM)

in Chicago (available [here](#)). For those that are not familiar with the Oral History Project, it is an initiative created by the NHM with the purpose of preserving the history of Greek Americans by collecting the recorded interviews and memoirs of individuals and/or groups. Persons of Greek descent, the

spouses, or relatives of Greeks are all invited to tell their story.



Over last fall's Heritage Weekend in Las Vegas, we were able to capture four interviews with members of the NHS and have collected six interviews to date. We currently have four sets of recording equipment with one set located in each of the following locations: east coast, mid-west, and west coast. We are seeking out individuals interested in conducting oral histories.

If you are interested in conducting an interview or would like more information, you can contact [Nick Amoroso](#) or [Laura Calamos](#). More information about the Frank S. Oral History Project can be found on the NHM website.

By: Nicholas Amoroso
HG 2012

