

FROM THE EDITOR:

Click, Click, Hurray!

By Vanessa Diamataris

After a long-awaited 105 years, the Ethnikos Kiriz/National Herald digital archive will be available to the public for free thanks to the generous grant of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

As the longest continuously printed Greek-language daily newspaper outside of Greece, this Archive will offer Greeks and Philhellene alike a newspaper database to research our Community's rich history. Researchers will be able to track its incredible growth and evolution, decade after decade, and read about the fascinating and moving challenges, struggles and triumphs of our Greek immigrant friends and family.

With just a few keystrokes and a couple of clicks, members of our Community will be able to search for their families' histories in America and beyond.

The history of Hellenism in the United States, as well as around the world, has been printed in the Greek language on the pages of the National Herald from the day of its foundation on April 2, 1915 and in the English language from October 18, 1997. With the help and generosity of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, this invaluable history book will exist in perpetuity for all the generations to come.

Please visit our websites (ekirikas.com & thenationalherald.com) this weekend to access this historic archive. Let us know what you think and what you find! We look forward to hearing from you.

"Philoxenia Prevails" – Greece is Open

By Bela Tsilas

While Dr. Anthony Fauci warns, the United States is still knee-deep in the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic, Greece has handled the crisis as well as could be expected and is looking forward to summer tourists.

The world set a record for new coronavirus cases in 24 hours on July 10th, with 236,918 new cases, with the United States leading as the largest source of new infections. So far, Greece has managed to contain the coronavirus, with only 3,732 cases and 193 deaths compared to Spain with 300,988 cases and 28,403 deaths and Italy with 232,639 cases and 34,938 deaths.

This was not a given, considering Greece's elderly population and a weakened public health system following the 2008 economic crisis. Motivated to avoid the missteps of its neighbors, the country's pandemic response was coordinated and aggressive.

After several months of lockdown and the virus contained, Greece has begun easing lockdown restrictions and planning for tourism.

"Greece is ready to welcome tourists this summer by putting their safety and their health as a number one priority," declared Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

So how is Greece putting tourist and citizen safety first? How will tourism play out this Summer in Greece? The traumatic images of Italy served as a warning to the world and its neighbor Greece. Greece acted quickly to reinforce social distancing measures. On March 10, before most of Europe, Greece closed its schools. Soon after, cafes, restaurants, gyms, bars, retail stores, and museums shut down. Only those going to or from their workplace, shopping for food or medicine, visiting a doctor, or walking their pet were allowed to leave their homes. Citizens were required to carry an I.D. or passport with them, with a form naming one of the approved reasons to be out. Nonessential travel was limited. Sophia signals for the future of all minorities in Turkey. Diversity is strength, not weakness.

The Archbishop said that, "I hope that our community, the Osmeni here in the Diaspora, takes this heartbreak to heart. We need vigilance and advocacy at a level we have never imagined."

The entire interview follows:

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College Student Biked 48 Days

TNH Staff

ATHENS – Kleon Papadimitriou, a 20-year-old college student at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland decided that he would bike back home to Athens, Greece after all flights were cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. CNN reported, adding that the 2,175-mile journey took 48 days.

Papadimitriou told CNN, "it's just now dawning on me how big of an achievement this was. And I did learn a lot of things about myself, about my limits, about my strengths and my weaknesses. And I'd say I really hope that the trip inspired at least one more person to go out of their comfort zone and try something new, something big."

After three of the flights he booked to get home to Greece were cancelled, he told CNN that "by the first of April I knew that I would spend at least the next month in quarantine in Aberdeen," so he decided to cycle his way home, researching what he would need, preparing for his trip by buying a bike and supplies including a tent, sleeping bag, bread, canned sardines, and peanut butter, and told his parents and friends about his plans. His father suggested an app that would allow his family to track him and soon he was on his way.

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Aghia Sophia Conversion Outrages



A man waves a Turkish flag outside Aghia Sophia following Turkey's Council of State's decision to convert the former cathedral-turned-mosque that now serves as a museum back into a Muslim house of worship. The Council of State threw its weight behind a petition brought by a religious group and annulled a 1934 cabinet decision that changed the 6th century building into a museum.

Hopes fading pressure will block inaugural July 24 prayers

By Constantine S. Sirigos

ATHENS – Even as the condemnations from political and religious leaders and international organizations ring out around the world they are ignored by Turkish officials gleefully preparing for the formal prayers on Friday, July 24 that will mark the official conversion into a mosque of the Great Church of the Orthodox world, the Aghia Sophia of Constantinople.

Turkey's Islamist and increasingly revisionist President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on July 10 formally converted the "Megali Ekklesia" into a mosque and declared it open for Muslim worship. The Associated Press reported that "Turkey's high administrative court threw its weight behind a petition brought by a religious group and annulled the 1934 Cabinet decision that turned the site into a museum. Within hours, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed a decree handing over Hagia Sophia to Turkey's Religious Affairs Presidency."

Erdogan attempted to assuage world public opinion by stating, "like all of our other mosques, the doors of Hagia Sophia will be open to all, locals or foreigners, Muslims and non-Muslims."

What has not been addressed is universal concern that conversion to a mosque will entail covering up of Aghia Sophia's mosaics, a number of them renowned as some of the world's greatest works of religious art, with many fearing their removal and damage. Scholars also noted that important restorations work and re-

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Archbishop Speaks on Ag. Sophia

By Theodore Kalmoukos

BOSTON – Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, speaking exclusively to The National Herald about the conversion of Aghia Sophia into a mosque, expressed deep concern regarding the course Turkey is taking. He said, "now we have to wonder what the re-conversion of Aghia Sophia signals for the future of all minorities in Turkey. Diversity is strength, not weakness."

The Archbishop said that, "I hope that our community, the Osmeni here in the Diaspora, takes this heartbreak to heart. We need vigilance and advocacy at a level we have never imagined."

The entire interview follows:

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The National Herald: Your Eminence, what does this decision by Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan mean for relations with the Christian world in general and with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in particular?

Archbishop Elpidophoros: The Christian world is deeply pained by this move, and indeed the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Its status quo as a monument was an indication of acceptance of past history and current realities. We had hoped that the last years would have brought about more inclusion for the religious and ethnic minorities of Turkey. We had hoped for the re-opening of the Theological School of Halki on the island of Heybeliada. As you know, before I was

elected Archbishop of America, I was the Abbot of the Holy Trinity Monastery and the School there, a monastic institution since the Ninth Century. Now we have to wonder what the re-conversion of Aghia Sophia signals for the future of all minorities in Turkey. Diversity is strength, not weakness. There should be no more room for monolithic views of society in the modern world. Look how the pandemic has reminded all of us – negatively for sure – of how interconnected and interdependent we truly are. We need to accept that the unitary versions of societies no longer work, even for the majority.

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Better Late Than Never for Vacationing

By Stavros Marmarinos

TAMPA, FL. – Many members of the Greek-American community prefer to wait a little longer rather than skip this year's summer vacation in Greece due to the coronavirus pandemic. Speaking to The National Herald, some of them from various cities noted that they are not much concerned about their stay in Greece, which dealt so successfully with the pandemic from early on, but about the trip by plane, which may be full of passengers from different areas, as well as wearing masks for many hours of the flight.

Nikos Apostolopoulos, a businessman and president of the Hellenic Congress of America, who lives in Charlotte, NC, goes every year for about two-months vacation to Greece. He comes from Karpenisi in Evritania and besides his hometown he also visits Athens, Evia, Preveza, and Lefkada, always with his friends from Greece.

"This time of year, I always went to Greece, but now I will wait and if all goes well, I will go for Christmas and New Year's," he told TNH.

He is not worried about his stay in Greece, as the situation there is an example for many countries and is not comparable to the United States. But he is concerned about traveling by plane, due to the large number of passengers and their various places of origin. "However, my friends in Greece call me almost every day, ask me how I am and advise me to be careful. None of them encouraged me to visit the homeland."

Nick Intzes, President of the Nisytos Society of Florida, said that he has not ruled out a holiday in Greece this year, where he usually stays for more than three months. "I'm worried about the trip by plane, that is, how many passengers it will have, as well as the mask I have to wear for so many hours all the time. I am not afraid of stay-

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Constantinos Sofikitis on His Latest Project

By Eleni Sakellis

NEW YORK – Constantinos Sofikitis shared the details of his latest project, Marabou Aegean, with The National Herald. Sofikitis is a professional photographer and member of the LensCulture society (Magnum Photos) successfully carrying on his family's deep-rooted ties to photography, his greatest inspiration being his father, highly acclaimed Greek photographer Dimitris Sofikitis.

Of his project, Constantinos Sofikitis told TNH, "Marabou Aegean is a journey to the uninhabited islands of the Aegean composed of a historiography of emblematic individuals, represented through images and accompanying texts, with the aim of preserving and commemorating the true essence of each island."

Among his honors, he was awarded first place in 2017 at the Sony World Photography Awards (Open, Street Photography category), was shortlisted for the title of Best Photographer in the same competition for the Street Photography category, and named Best Greek Photographer by Sony.

Sofikitis noted that "Marabou Aegean sets out to uncover the untold stories of the people of the Aegean islands; observing the occupations at risk of becoming extinct and the



Zampeta Anagnostopoulou on the island of Anafi.

local customs and traditions that are unique to each island.

"It is the inhabitants of these islands who embody the heart and soul of the Aegean. A collection of folks who aren't simply linked together by a nickname, a rare talent and a characteristic gaze, but by the unique stories that form the identity of our Aegean. Diverse

people whose common characteristic is their love for the place they call home, a passion to preserve its history and an endless longing for life," he said.

"Through this project," he continued, "we seek to get to know these people, their faces weathered from the salt and honest gazes, and become part of their gripping stories told in

the little traditional cafes (kafeneta) – spaces that are unfortunately becoming extinct and thus jeopardizing the existence of the many narratives that play out within them each day.

"The coffee table book that will emerge from this project,

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Constantinos Sofikitis Shares His Latest Project, Marabou Aegean

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displaying the material collected from visiting around 70 inhabited islands of the Northeast Aegean, the Cyclades, the Sporades islands and the Dodecanese, will display a folklore identity since it serves to preserve fragments from the lives of the islanders. For this reason, there is a greater emphasis on the photographic depiction of these individuals within an environmental portrait. A form of narrative photography that manages to masterfully depict the individual's personality whilst simultaneously revealing information about their past, long lost memories, and the history of the island itself.

The main idea behind this project is a modern yet traditional documentation of the lives of the people living on the Aegean islands. Intertwining a narrative of words and printing the photographs on paper in the form of a coffee table book will help to ensure these unique individuals and what they stand for is preserved forever. Whilst the video recordings, thematically in the form of episodes as well as collectively in the form of a documentary, will allow for the reproduction of the material for both televised media and internet content. Finally, the material will be used wisely and distributed to be displayed at periodic exhibitions, museums and galleries. This project is aimed at an audience of all ages, however, a greater emphasis will be placed on a younger audience who via a visually modern layout, the use of video to be shared on social media along with the exhibits, will have the chance to completely immerse themselves in this experience of the Aegean, to discover its people and learn the history of this unique region in the most unedited and true-to-life way," said Sofikitis.

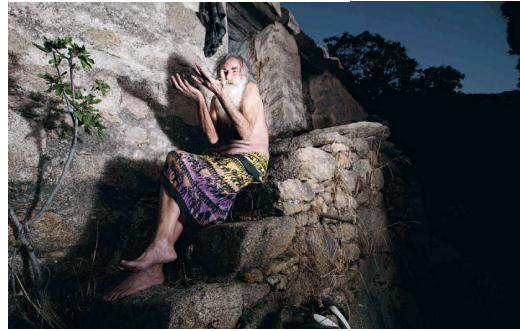
"Moreover, in partnership with Katerina Papadopoulou and her band Norio Toxo – one of the most well-known bands performing traditional music focused on sounds from the Aegean – a series of sound and video recordings will be created at unique locations across the Aegean islands – monasteries, caves, lighthouses or abandoned homes. Thus, incorporating traditional musical elements from each place with the aim of celebrating Greek her-



Photographer Constantinos Sofikitis spoke to The National Herald about his latest project.



Nikos Vlavianos on the island of Amorgos.



Stamatis Vavougiou on the island of Ikaria.



Dimitris Karistinaios on the island of Folegandros.

itage and culture as well as uncovering forgotten aspects of the Aegean."

A sample of the individual episodes is available on the Marabou Narrations YouTube channel: shorturl.at/zDFM6.

When asked about how the global coronavirus pandemic has affected the project, Sofikitis told

TNH, visits to the islands stopped for a while, like everything else, due to the situation, but for some time now I have been in the Aegean again to complete the portraits on all the islands. There is a lot of interest from institutions, museums and private entities and I am trying to approach the Ministry of Culture and pub-

lishing houses so that I can distribute the book when it is completed along with other events in the Greek community. In addition, a few months ago I received an invitation from Yale University to present this project (it was launched at the end of April) but due to COVID it was postponed until after the summer."

He concluded, "our main concern and deepest aspiration is to ensure the support of the project via sponsors who will also treat the material produced as part of their own legacy. We are seeking sponsors-fellow travelers who will join us on this journey to discover these uncharted and forgotten fragments of our heritage

... of our country."

Sofikitis has also posted images from the project so far on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B6TeR6aLk/> and <https://www.instagram.com/p/B7LroOIAwRh/>.

Follow Sofikitis on Instagram: [c_sofikitis](https://www.instagram.com/c_sofikitis) and Facebook.

Announcement from The National Herald / ΕΘΝΙΚΟΣ ΚΗΡΥΞ

Dear members of the Community,

We are incredibly proud to announce that
**the historical 105-year-old Archive of the
ΕΘΝΙΚΟΣ ΚΗΡΥΞ**

as well as the 23-year-old Archive of

The National Herald

will be available through our newspapers' sites

STARTING THIS WEEKEND

Access to the Archives is FREE thanks to the generous grant of

ΙΣΝ / SNF

ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION



Look through our Archive and discover your family's history - from 1915!

With one click you will now have access to the first portion of one of the most historical
Archives of Greeks outside of Greece - the Archive of The National Herald.

We can't wait to share it with you all

ekirikas.com ■ thenationalherald.com