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Τὰ Ἑλληνικὰ Χρονικὰ τοῦ Μόντρεαλ
GREEK TIMES

radio centre-ville
102,3 FM
Ελληνικά
Δευτέρα με Πέμπτη 8 βράδυ

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Montreal Cretans bring joy to Crete

Montreal Cretan Association donates $10,000 to Chania care center



Photo: Haniotika Nea



Dimitri PAPADOPOULOS
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The Cretan Association of Montreal has made a donation of 10,000 dollars to the Daily Care Center for People with Disabilities (ΚΗΦΑμεΑ) in Chania, Crete. The president of the association, Emmanuel Revelakis, along with his wife Eleni Revelaki, supervisor Manolis Sgourakis, and treasurer Giorgos Tsigkakis with his wife Joyce, visited the center to deliver the funds, fulfilling a promise made over a decade ago.

The fundraising initiative was revitalized when a woman approached the association with the desire to contribute to the center. The association's board unanimously decided to organize a larger philanthropic effort. The amount was raised through the contributions of that individual, the association itself, and many other members and friends. A significant portion of the funds was collected from two separate «loukoumades» fundraising events organized by the association's women's section. The first event raised approximately 3,600 dollars, with a second event adding another 3,000. The association contributed the remaining amount to reach the 10,000-dollar total.

In a recent interview on the Greek radio program EDO MONTREAL 102.3 FM, Emmanuel Revelakis explained that the original commitment dates back to around 2011-2012. During a visit to Crete for the association's 100th anniversary, he met the director of the center, who asked if the Cretan Association of Montreal could offer support. Although his presidential term ended before the promise could be realized, his re-election one and a half years ago provided the opportunity to see it through.

During the visit to the facility in Chania, Revelakis described being deeply moved by the experience. "When we saw that the Cretan Association of Montreal managed to raise this money and for it to go to such a good, sacred place, it was truly moving,» he said. «These are the days and events that, as president of the association, make me feel very, very proud." He added that the moment he truly felt the impact was the next day, when he saw the story published in the local newspaper, «Haniotika Nea.» «I said, look, the Cretan Association has touched the children, the parents, it has touched their hearts,» he recounted.

Niki Velegráki, president of K.H.Φ.A.AMEA, expressed her gratitude for the support. She noted that the funds, combined with a separate donation from the Pancretan Association, were initially intended for the completion of a hydrotherapy pool. However, as the funds for the pool have since been fully secured by another organization, this donation provides a significant financial advantage for the center to address other needs for the children.

Revelakis also highlighted the association's ongoing charitable work within Montreal, where its youth chapter organizes fundraisers for local institutions such as the Shriners Hospital and the Make-A-Wish Foundation, as well as its support for other community organizations like Magic Mission.


Jean Coutu
Φαρμακοποιός - ιδιοκτήτρια : Κατερίνα Καραΐνδρου
Νοσοκόμα για μέτρηση πίεσης, σακχάρου και χοληστερίνης κάθε Τρίτη 9πμ-3μμ
Ανοικτά 7 ημέρες την εβδομάδα: Καθημερινές 9πμ-10μμ και Σαββατοκύριακα 9πμ-9μμ
- Εμβόλια
- Κάθε είδους συνταγές
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Ἀπὸ τὸν Ἐκδότη

Ἀγαπητοὶ φίλοι,

Γιὰ περισσότερα ἀπὸ δέκα χρόνια, τὰ Ἑλληνικὰ Χρονικὰ τοῦ Μόντρεαλ ὑπῆρξαν ἡ μηνιαία ἐπιθεώρηση ποὺ κατέγραψε μὲ σεβασμὸ τὴν πορεία τῆς παροικίας μας, τὶς ἀνησυχίες τῆς ὁμογένειας καὶ τὰ ζητήματα ποὺ ἀφοροῦν τοὺς ἀπόδημους Ἕλληνες. Μέσα ἀπὸ τὶς σελίδες της, ἀναδείχθηκαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οἱ ἀξίες καὶ τὰ ἰδανικὰ ποὺ κρατοῦν ζωντανὸ τὸ ἑλληνικὸ φρόνημα στὸ Μόντρεαλ.

Σήμερα, κάνουμε ἕνα βῆμα φυσικῆς ἐξέλιξης. Μὲ αὐτὴ τὴν ἔκδοση, ἡ ἐφημερίδα ἀνοίγει τὸν λόγο καὶ στὴ νέα γενιὰ τῶν Ἑλληνοκαναδῶν, ποὺ κρατᾷ ζωντανὸ τὸ ἑλληνικὸ πνεῦμα μέσα ἀπὸ τὴ ζωή της ἐδῶ. Τὰ ἑλληνικὰ θὰ ἐξακολουθήσουν νὰ ὑπάρχουν, ἔστω καὶ σὲ μικρότερο βαθμό, ὡς ἡ γλῶσσα ποὺ κουβαλᾷ τὴν ἱστορία καὶ τὴν ταυτότητά μας.

Σᾶς εὐχαριστῶ βαθιὰ γιὰ τὴ στήριξη καὶ τὴν ἐμπιστοσύνη σας ὅλα αὐτὰ τὰ χρόνια. Χάρη σὲ ἐσᾶς, τὸ ἑλληνικὸ πνεῦμα συνεχίζει νὰ ζῇ καὶ νὰ ἐξελίσσεται.

Μὲ ἐκτίμηση καὶ συγκίνηση,
Δημήτρης Παπαδόπουλος, Ἐκδότης

Από το όνειρο ενός Ελληνικού κοινοτικού κέντρου στο Λαβάλ... σε μια συμβολική πινακίδα

Γράφει ο Δημήτρης Παπαδόπουλος

Το Δημοτικό Συμβούλιο του Λαβάλ ψήφισε ομόφωνα ψήφισμα την 1η Οκτωβρίου 2025, για την παραχώρηση συμβολικής ονομασίας «chemin Hellénique» (Ελληνική Οδός) σε τμήμα του Chemin du Souvenir, ενός δρόμου που λειτουργεί ως κεντρική οδική αρτηρία για την ελληνική κοινότητα της πόλης.

Ενώ παρουσιάστηκε ως αναγνώριση της συνεισφοράς της διασποράς, η πρωτοβουλία έχει πυροδοτήσει μια συζήτηση εντός της Ελληνικής Κοινότητας σχετικά με τη διαφάνεια, τη διακυβέρνηση και τη χρονική στιγμή της ανακοίνωσης κατά τη διάρκεια μιας δημοτικής προεκλογικής περιόδου.

Η πρόταση, που κατατέθηκε από τον Δημοτικό Σύμβουλο Βασίλειο Καριδογιάννη, ήταν η τελευταία του είδους της πριν από τις δημοτικές εκλογές που έχουν προγραμματιστεί για τις 2 Νοεμβρίου 2025. Αναγνωρίζει τη σημαντική παρουσία της ελληνικής κοινότητας στο Λαβάλ, η οποία επίσημα αριθμεί πάνω από 20.000 κατοίκους, και τη συγκέντρωση ελληνικών επιχειρήσεων, κατοικιών και δύο Ορθόδοξων εκκλησιών κατά μήκος του εν λόγω τμήματος του Chemin du Souvenir.

Η διαδικασία, ωστόσο, έχει προκαλέσει ερωτήματα. Ο Πρόεδρος της Ελληνικής Κοινότητας Μείζονος Μοντρεάλ (ΕΚΜΜ) Βασίλης Αγγελόπουλος, το μέλος του διοικητικού συμβουλίου Massimo Briganti και το μέλος του περιφερειακού συμβουλίου του Λαβάλ Βίκυ Καλιοτζάκη πραγματοποίησαν συναντήσεις με αξιωματούχους της πόλης στις 22 Αυγούστου 2025, για να προτείνουν το έργο χωρίς επίσημη εντολή από το Διοικητικό Συμβούλιο της ΕΚΜΜ. Η πρωτοβουλία έχει προκαλέσει ερωτήματα σχετικά με τη δέσμευση της διοίκησης στη διαφάνεια, δεδομένου ότι είχαν προηγουμένως διεξάγει εκστρατεία με σημαία τη βελτίωση της διακυβέρνησης.

Σε μια προφανή κίνηση για την αντιμετώπιση αυτού του ζητήματος, το Διοικητικό Συμβούλιο της ΕΚΜΜ ψήφισε ψήφισμα κατά τη συνεδρίασή του στις 7 Οκτωβρίου για να επικυρώσει αναδρομικά τις ενέργειες που έγιναν από τους εκπροσώπους του. Αυτό που τροφοδότησε περαιτέρω τη συζήτηση ήταν μια ανεπαίσθητη αλλά σημαντική αλλαγή στην ημερήσια διάταξη της συνεδρίασης. Η αρχική ημερήσια διάταξη για το θέμα #16 αναφερόταν στη «Μετονομασία της Λεωφόρου Souvenir», η οποία αργότερα τροποποιήθηκε σιωπηρά σε μια νέα έκδοση σε «Προσθήκη του 'Chemin Hellénique' σε τμήμα της Λεωφόρου Souvenir στο Λαβάλ, Qc». Η αλλαγή φαίνεται να έγινε για να διαχειριστεί τις προσδοκίες, αφού κατέστη σαφές στην ελληνική ραδιοφωνική εκπομπή στο Radio Centre-Ville 102.3 FM το προηγούμενο βράδυ, ότι η πρωτοβουλία δεν αφορούσε επίσημη μετονομασία.

Τι ενέκρινε πραγματικά το Δημοτικό Συμβούλιο

Η ουσία του ζητήματος έγκειται στην ερμηνεία της απόφασης του συμβουλίου. Οι δημόσιες ανακοινώσεις της ΕΚΜΜ πανηγύρισαν την έγκριση ενός «συμβολικού δευτερεύοντος ονόματος», οδηγώντας ορισμένους να πιστέψουν ότι μια συν-ονομασία ήταν εγγυημένη. Ωστόσο, η επίσημη πρόταση περιγράφει μια διαδικασία δύο μερών: το πρώτο είναι η συμβολική ονομασία και το δεύτερο είναι η εντολή προς τη διοίκηση της πόλης να μελετήσει τη φυσική της υλοποίηση.

Η πρόταση που ψήφισε το Δημοτικό Συμβούλιο του Λαβάλ αναφέρει τα εξής:

1. *«Η Εκτελεστική Επιτροπή να αναθέσει στη Γενική Διεύθυνση να αποδώσει μια **συμβολική** ονομασία στο Chemin du Souvenir, δηλαδή 'chemin Hellénique' (Ελληνική Οδός), σύμφωνα με την πρόταση της Ελληνικής Κοινότητας Μείζονος Μοντρεάλ σε αναγνώριση της συνεισφοράς της ελληνικής παροικίας στο Λαβάλ, και*
2. *να **αναλύσει τη δυνατότητα** μιας οδικής πινακίδας, μιας οπτικής υπογραφής ή ενός επεξηγηματικού πίνακα που θα επιτρέπει την αναγνώριση αυτής της ονομασίας και της σημασίας της στον δημόσιο χώρο.»*

Αυτή η διατύπωση καθιστά σαφές ότι, ενώ ο συμβολικός τίτλος έχει παραχωρηθεί, η φυσική του εκδήλωση υπόκειται σε μελέτη σκοπιμότητας. Ο Πρόεδρος της ΕΚΜΜ, όταν ρωτήθηκε στη συνεδρίαση του διοικητικού συμβουλίου στις 7 Οκτωβρίου, επιβεβαίωσε ότι η τελική μορφή της αναγνώρισης είναι άγνωστη και διατύπωσε μια σειρά από υποθέσεις για το πώς θα μπορούσε να υλοποιηθεί.

Πιθανά Σενάρια Υλοποίησης

Με βάση το ψήφισμα που υιοθετήθηκε και τη συζήτηση του συμβουλίου, αποκαλύπτονται διάφορα πιθανά αποτελέσματα. Η συζήτηση κατά τη συνεδρίαση της 1ης Οκτωβρίου παρέχει σημαντικές ενδείξεις για το ποιες επιλογές θεωρούνται πιο βιώσιμες.

Τα πιθανά σενάρια περιλαμβάνουν:

Σενάριο 1: Μόνο Συμβολική Αναγνώριση. Σε αυτό το αποτέλεσμα, η πόλη θα αναγνώριζε επίσημα το όνομα «chemin Hellénique» στα αρχεία της, αλλά δεν θα τοποθετούσε καμία φυσική σήμανση. Αυτό παραμένει απίθανο, καθώς φαίνεται να έρχεται σε αντίθεση με το πνεύμα της πρότασης, η οποία ζητά ρητά μελέτη για την οπτική υλοποίηση.

Σενάριο 2: Πινακίδες εισόδου ή τελετουργικές πινακίδες. Αυτό το σενάριο ευθυγραμμίζεται με προηγούμενα παραδείγματα που αναφέρθηκαν κατά τη διάρκεια της συνεδρίασης του συμβουλίου, όπως η «Route des Fleurs» (Οδός των Λουλουδιών). Αντί να αλλάξουν οι πινακίδες σε κάθε διασταύρωση, θα μπορούσαν να τοποθετηθούν μεγαλύτερες, διακοσμητικές πινακίδες στα κύρια σημεία εισόδου της καθορισμένης περιοχής. Αυτή η επιλογή φάνηκε να κατευνάζει τις ανησυχίες των συμβούλων για σύγχυση και ως εκ τούτου θεωρείται ισχυρή πιθανότητα.

Σενάριο 3: Δευτερεύουσες πινακίδες πάνω από τις υπάρχουσες («Topper» Signs). Αυτή η επιλογή, η οποία θα προσέθετε μια δευτερεύουσα πινακίδα με το «Chemin Hellénique» στις υπάρχουσες πινακίδες «Chemin du Souvenir», αντιμετωπίστηκε με ανησυχία από τους συμβούλους. Η Σύμβουλος Lortie ρώτησε ευθέως αν θα μπορούσαν να υπάρχουν «δύο ονόματα δρόμων σε έναν στύλο», εκφράζοντας ανησυχία για πιθανή σύγχυση για τους κατοίκους, τις υπηρεσίες παράδοσης και τις υπηρεσίες έκτακτης ανάγκης. Ενώ το προσωπικό της πόλης διευκρίνισε ότι δεν θα ήταν επίσημη τοπωνυμική αλλαγή, ο εκφρασμένος δισταγμός καθιστά αυτό το αποτέλεσμα λιγότερο πιθανό.

Σενάριο 4: Επεξηγηματικοί Πίνακες. Το ίδιο το ψήφισμα προτείνει ρητά την εγκατάσταση ενός επεξηγηματικού πίνακα. Αυτό θα περιελάμβανε την τοποθέτηση πλακών σε καίρια σημεία (π.χ. στις εκκλησίες του Τιμίου Σταυρού ή/και του Αγίου Νικολάου) για να εξηγηθεί η ιστορία και η συνεισφορά της ελληνικής κοινότητας που οδήγησε σε αυτή την αναγνώριση. Αυτή η επιλογή εστιάζει περισσότερο στην ιστορική εκπαίδευση παρά στην ονομασία του δρόμου και παραμένει μια βιώσιμη πιθανότητα.

Σενάριο 5: Υβριδική Προσέγγιση. Η διοίκηση της πόλης θα μπορούσε να προτείνει έναν συνδυασμό μεθόδων, όπως η εγκατάσταση πινακίδων εισόδου (Σενάριο 2) που θα συμπληρώνεται από έναν επεξηγηματικό πίνακα (Σενάριο 4).

Από ένα Ελληνικό Κέντρο σε μια Συμβολική Πινακίδα

Η χρονική στιγμή αυτής της πρωτοβουλίας είναι αξιοσημείωτη, καθώς εκτυλίσσεται εν μέσω μιας έντονης δημοτικής προεκλογικής περιόδου στο Λαβάλ, μια εποχή που οι υποψήφιοι αναζητούν ενεργά τη δημόσια υποστήριξη και δίνουν υποσχέσεις. Η συζήτηση γύρω από την ΕΚΜΜ έχει επίσης αλλάξει δραματικά τον τελευταίο χρόνο. Υπό την προηγούμενη διοίκηση της ΕΚΜΜ υπό τον Δρ. Τσούκα, οι συζητήσεις επικεντρώνονταν σε φιλόδοξα, απτά έργα, συμπεριλαμβανομένων σχεδίων για ένα νέο Ελληνικό Κοινοτικό Κέντρο στο Λαβάλ, όπου πλέον διαμένει η πλειοψηφία της ελληνικής παροικίας.

Εκείνο το όραμα αφορούσε ένα νέο Ελληνικό Κοινοτικό Κέντρο, που σχεδιαζόταν για μια τοποθεσία σε αυτόν ακριβώς τον δρόμο, το Chemin du Souvenir. Το έργο υποστηριζόταν από ομοσπονδιακή επιχορήγηση 10 εκατομμυρίων δολαρίων, μια ανακοίνωση που έγινε πέρυσι προσωπικά από τον Πρωθυπουργό του Καναδά Τζάστιν Τρουντό, παρουσία του Πρωθυπουργού της Ελλάδας Κυριάκου Μητσοτάκη κατά την επίσημη επίσκεψή του στο Μόντρεαλ. Ωστόσο, αυτό το μεγαλεπήβολο έργο αντιμετώπισε σφοδρή αντίθεση και τελικά ακυρώθηκε από το σημερινό Διοικητικό Συμβούλιο.

Στη θέση του, στην κοινότητα παρουσιάζεται τώρα ένας δημοτικός σύμβουλος να ανακοινώνει μια πρόταση για μια μικρο-συμβολική πινακίδα, παρουσία του Γενικού Προξένου της Ελλάδος.

Αυτή η δραματική αλλαγή έχει αποκρυσταλλώσει την αίσθηση ότι η κοινότητα έχει περάσει «από το όνειρο ενός Ελληνικού Κέντρου στο Λαβάλ... στο να χειροκροτούμε μια συμβολική πινακίδα». Αυτό το συναίσθημα αποτυπώνει μια αίσθηση υποβαθμισμένης φιλοδοξίας, με την εστίαση να μετακινείται «από την πραγματικότητα ενός κτιρίου... στη φαντασία μιας πινακίδας». Ενώ η αναγνώριση είναι ευπρόσδεκτη από πολλούς, η γύρω διαμάχη αναδεικνύει μια βαθύτερη συζήτηση στην κοινότητα για το όραμα, την ηγεσία και το τι συνιστά ουσιαστική πρόοδο.

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RECYCLABLE

Tokenism triumphs as Laval Greek Community Center plans turn into a symbolic sign



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The Laval Municipal Council unanimously passed a resolution on October 1, 2025, to grant a symbolic designation of 'chemin Hellénique' (Hellenic Way) to a portion of Chemin du Souvenir, a street that serves as a central thoroughfare for the city's Greek community.

While presented as a recognition of the diaspora's contributions, the initiative has ignited a debate within the Greek Community over transparency, governance, and the timing of the announcement during a municipal election period.

The motion, brought forward by Councillor Vasilios Karidogiannis, was the last of its kind before the municipal elections scheduled for November 2, 2025. It acknowledges the significant presence of the Greek community in Laval, which officially numbers over 20,000 residents, and the concentration of Greek-owned businesses, residences, and two Orthodox churches along the targeted stretch of Chemin du Souvenir.

However, the process has drawn scrutiny. Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal (HCGM) President Basile Angelopoulos, board member Massimo Briganti, and Laval regional council member Vicky Kaliotzakis held meetings with city officials on August 22, 2025, to propose the project without a formal mandate from the HCGM Board of Directors. The initiative has prompted scrutiny over the leadership's commitment to transparency, given that they had previously campaigned on improving governance.

In an apparent move to address this, the HCGM Board of Directors passed a resolution during its October 7 meeting to retroactively ratify the actions taken by its representatives. Further fuelling the debate was a subtle but significant change to the meeting's agenda. The original agenda for item #16 referred to the "Renaming of Souvenir Boulevard", which was later silently amended in a new version to the "Addition of 'Chemin Hellénique' to a portion of Souvenir Boulevard in Laval, Qc". The change appears to have been made to manage expectations after it became clear on the Greek radio show on Radio Centre-Ville 102.3 FM the previous night, that the initiative was not a formal renaming.

What the Council actually approved

The core of the issue lies in the interpretation of the council's decision. The HCGM's public announcements celebrated the approval of a "symbolic secondary name," leading some to believe a co-naming was guaranteed. However, the official motion details a two-part process: the first is the symbolic naming, and the second is a mandate for city administration to study its physical implementation.

The motion passed by the Laval Municipal Council reads as follows:

1. *"That the Executive Committee mandate the Directorate-General to attribute a **symbolic** designation to Chemin du Souvenir, that is 'chemin Hellénique' (Hellenic Way), in accordance with the proposal of the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal in recognition of the contribution of the Greek community to Laval, and to*
2. ***analyze the feasibility** of a street sign, a visual signature, or an interpretation panel allowing for the recognition of this designation and its meaning in the public space."*

This language makes it clear that while the symbolic title has been granted, its physical manifestation is subject to a feasibility study. The HCGM President, when questioned at the October 7 board meeting, confirmed that the final form of the recognition is unknown and stated a series of hypotheses as to how it might be implemented.

Potential implementation scenarios

Based on the adopted resolution and the council discussion reveals several possible outcomes. The debate during the October 1st council session provides significant insight into which options are considered most viable.

The possible scenarios include:

Scenario 1: Symbolic Recognition Only. In this outcome, the city would officially recognize the name "chemin Hellénique" in its records but install no physical signage. This remains unlikely as it appears to contradict the spirit of the motion, which explicitly calls for a study on visual implementation.

Scenario 2: Ceremonial or Gateway Signage. This scenario aligns with precedents mentioned during the council meeting, such as the "Route des Fleurs" (Flower Route). Instead of altering signs at every intersection, larger, decorative signs would be placed at the main entry points of the designated area. This option appeared to ease councillors' concerns about confusion and is therefore considered a strong possibility.

Scenario 3: Secondary "Topper" Signs. This option, which would add a secondary sign with "Chemin Hellénique" to existing "Chemin du Souvenir" posts, was met with concern by councillors. Councillor Lortie directly questioned if there could be "two street names on a street post," signaling worry about potential confusion for residents, delivery services, and emergency responders. While city staff clarified it would not be an official toponymic change, the expressed hesitation makes this a less probable outcome.

Scenario 4: Interpretive Panels. The resolution itself specifically suggests installing an interpretive panel. This would involve placing plaques at key locations (ie Holy Cross and/or St. Nicholas churches) to explain the history and contributions of the Greek community that earned the designation. This option focuses more on historical education than on street naming and remains a viable possibility.

Scenario 5: A Hybrid Approach. The city's administration could recommend a combination of methods, such as installing gateway signage (Scenario 2) and supplementing it with a detailed interpretive panel (Scenario 4).

From a Greek Center to a symbolic sign

The timing of this initiative is noteworthy, unfolding in the middle of a heated municipal election period in Laval, a time when candidates are actively seeking public support and making promises. The debate around the HCGM has also shifted dramatically over the past year. Under the previous HCGM administration lead by Dr. Tsoukas, discussions centered on ambitious, tangible projects, including plans for a new Hellenic Community Center in Laval, where the majority of the Greek community now resides.

That vision was for a new Hellenic Community Center, planned for a site on this very Chemin du Souvenir. The project was backed by a $10 million federal grant, an announcement made personally by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last year, in the presence of Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis during his official visit to Montreal. However, that mega-project was fiercely opposed and ultimately scrapped by the current Board of Directors.

In its place, the community is now presented with a municipal councillor announcing a proposal for a micro-symbolic sign, in the presence of the Greek Consul.

This dramatic shift has crystallized the feeling that the community has gone "from the dream of a Greek Center in Laval... to applauding a symbolic sign." This sentiment captures a sense of downscaled ambition, with the focus moving "from the reality of a building... to the fantasy of a sign." While the recognition is welcomed by many, the surrounding controversy highlights a deeper community conversation about vision, leadership, and what constitutes meaningful progress.

Reader reaction and public contex

Following the online posting of the above news article "**Renaming of Souvenir Boulevard: Tokenism Triumphs as Laval Greek Community Center Plans Turn into a Symbolic Sign**" in the Facebook group "Laval Neighborhood Watch & Community Advice", the discussion that followed offered a revealing look at community sentiment. The article was posted for public feedback before print publication, an uncommon step intended to ensure both transparency and factual precision. During the ensuing debate, no factual element was disproven. While several readers agreed with the article's main points, a few attempted to derail or delete the discussion entirely.

Many comments expressed skepticism toward the symbolic "chemin Hellénique" designation and its timing. "All for the votes," wrote one participant, while another quipped, "Need the Greek vote much? Uh uh, no way." Others questioned priorities, with one user saying, "Boul. Souvenir will always be Boul. Souvenir," and another remarking, "I wish they'd pave the road in front of the church instead." The underlying sentiment was consistent: the symbolic gesture felt like a political diversion from more pressing community needs.

Amid these reactions, two responses stood out for their tone and lack of substance. One, from a profile named "HumptyDumptyCatLover," read less like a personal comment and more like an awkward attempt at corporate PR messaging. Framed in language that tried for public-relations poise but stumbled over its own pretension, it dismissed the critique as an "imaginative interpretation" and praised the symbolic designation as "progress measured not in square footage but in respect." The phrasing echoed the organization's internal talking points, mimicking the structure of official communication but without grasp of tone or context, producing something closer to parody than professionalism. Lacking evidence, correction, or engagement with facts, it offered only a labored effort to repackage symbolic tokenism as success, ending with the boilerplate PR line: "The HCGM remains focused on constructive outcomes, not commentary," which read like AI-generated copy spun from a weak prompt by a marketing apprentice.

A more combative reaction came from Christina GT, who responded with personal attacks rather than arguments. Most notably, she demanded the article's removal, insisting that it be deleted from the group rather than addressing any factual claim. This insistence on censorship instead of rebuttal illustrated a defensive impulse rather than an informed disagreement, a reaction driven by emotion, not evidence.

In contrast, others called for calm and reasoned dialogue. One participant urged, "Think this issue over critically and make comments that are factual instead of emotional." Another observed that, while the matter was largely symbolic, it opened a legitimate debate about leadership and priorities.

The overall reaction made one fact unmistakably clear: this article struck a nerve. Far from discrediting it, the furious demand to have it deleted only confirmed its accuracy and relevance. When those most offended cannot refute a single line but instead rush to silence it, the truth speaks louder than their outrage. No factual claim was challenged, no correction offered, only noise, emotion, and calls for censorship. In the end, the piece stands not just as a fair and verifiable account, but as proof that real journalism still unsettles those who would rather manage perception than face reality. ~ Dimitri P.

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SOURCES

[1] Annual Report on Government of Canada Advertising Activities 2023-2024, combined with proprietary industry data.

[2] Totum Research Canada, January 2025. Canadians 18+, n=2418.; Pollara for the Dais. 2025 Survey of Online Harms, Canadians 16+, n=2502.

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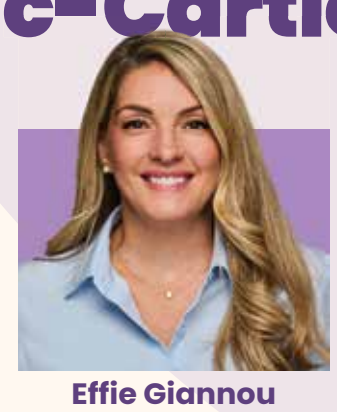


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Community answers the call for Hellenic Appeal Foundation



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LAVAL, QC – The grand ballroom of the Chateau Royal Reception Halls was filled with an atmosphere of warmth, generosity, and vibrant Hellenic pride for the 2025 Hellenic Appeal Foundation Gala. The annual event, a cornerstone for the Greek-Canadian community, brought together hundreds of guests for a night of celebration, all in the name of philanthropy and a shared commitment to helping those in need.

The air buzzed with conversation and laughter as attendees, dressed in their finest, enjoyed an array of exquisite Greek delicacies. The familiar, soul-stirring melodies of Panagiota Tsitsou and her band soon filled the room, drawing guests to the dance floor in a joyous celebration of life and culture that lasted well into the night. It was a scene that perfectly encapsulated the spirit of kefi—a uniquely Greek expression of joy, passion, and community.

But beneath the festive surface lay a profound purpose. The Hellenic Appeal Foundation has, for over three decades, been a beacon of hope for countless families within the community facing financial hardship. What began in 1990 as a simple, heartfelt gesture by two friends, Dr. Peter Limniatis and Dr. Athanasios Karamitsos, has blossomed into a formidable charitable organization.

"We realized that no one ever changed the world from their couch," Dr. Limniatis, the foundation's president, shared, reflecting on their humble beginnings. "We started by helping just a few families at Christmas. We wanted to do something ourselves, to be sure that our help was getting to the people who needed it."

That initial act of kindness has grown exponentially. Today, the foundation provides substantial support to hundreds of families, primarily during Christmas and Easter, delivering not just a single box of food, but enough to sustain a family for weeks. "We've given out over two and a half million dollars' worth of food to families over the years," Dr. Limniatis stated, his voice filled with a mixture of pride and humility.

The success of the foundation is a testament to the collective spirit of the Greek community. It's a network built on the principle of philotimo: a concept that encompasses love of honor, duty, and helping one's fellow person. "When a Greek is asked to give a helping hand, the Greek has philotimo," one organizer passionately explained. "It's something very unique that sets us apart."

Throughout the evening, personal stories brought the foundation's impact to life. Dr. Limniatis recounted a memory from an early delivery that has stayed with him. After passing a box of groceries through a basement window to a man caring for his handicapped child, he turned back to see the recipient making the sign of the cross in gratitude. "There are a lot of families out there that are in need," he said, "and that's why we do what we do."

Another long-time volunteer, Panagiotis Papadopoulos, shared what motivates him year after year. "What gives me the greatest joy is when we go to some houses, the door opens, and you see the little kids start dancing with joy. You can't put a price on that." These are not just deliveries of food; they are deliveries of hope, compassion, and the knowledge that the community cares.



photo by Harry Barba

The gala also served to honor the many volunteers and sponsors who are the lifeblood of the organization. From local entrepreneurs and donors to the dedicated individuals who spend hours packing boxes and making deliveries, often in the cold and snow, their collective effort is what makes the foundation's work possible. "We are not alone," Dr. Limniatis emphasized. "We have a lot of people that help. A lot of volunteers, a lot of sponsors."

As the evening's formal presentations concluded and the music swelled once more, the dance floor filled with people from all generations. It was a powerful visual representation of a community united by heritage, by celebration, and by a profound sense of responsibility for one another.

The Hellenic Appeal Foundation Gala is more than just a fundraiser; it is a reaffirmation of identity and values. In a world where families can feel isolated, this event sends a clear message: you are part of a larger family that will not let you fall. It is a night that proves that the strength of the Hellenic spirit is not just found in its ancient history or cultural traditions, but in its boundless capacity for generosity and love. It is the living, breathing embodiment of the belief that when you lift up a life, you illuminate your own existence, ensuring that the flame of Hellenism and humanity burns brightly for generations to come.

Young Greek-Canadian skier rises through Canada's alpine ranks



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At sixteen, Elena Deda has become one of Canada's most promising young alpine skiers. Her story resonates with Greek-Canadians who recognize in her both determination and a strong connection to heritage.

Born in northern Greece, she began skiing at the age of three before her family settled in Vancouver. Within a few short years she was training on Canadian slopes, joining local programs and quickly standing out among her peers. She now represents British Columbia through the Windermere Valley Ski Club and competes in national and international alpine events as part of the Canadian system.

Over the past two seasons, Deda has achieved an impressive record. She holds consecutive Western Canadian Overall Championships for 2024 and 2025, with top finishes in Slalom and Giant Slalom. At the 2024 Whistler Cup she raced for Team Canada in the U16 Nations Team Event, where her team won gold in the parallel slalom. She went on to finish second overall in the U16 girls division and received the Nancy Greene Trophy. These results have established her as a rising figure in Canadian alpine skiing.

Her consistent performances reflect years of focused training and the support of coaches who have helped refine her technical skill and racing strategy. Beyond competition, Elena is known for her discipline and positive attitude, traits that have made her a role model for younger athletes in her club. She balances this demanding athletic schedule with academic excellence and was recognized in 2024 with the Piper Award for outstanding scholastic achievement.

Deda's involvement in sport also carries a broader cultural meaning. Growing up in a Greek household in Vancouver, she maintains ties to her heritage while thriving in the Canadian sports environment. For many families within the Greek-Canadian community, her path represents the experience of the second generation: rooted in ancestral culture while succeeding in Canadian institutions. Her early memories of skiing in Greece remain a symbolic link to her origins, now carried forward on the slopes of British Columbia and across Canada.

Her athletic journey recently drew the attention of a Greek-Canadian company that decided to support her training. In announcing the sponsorship, company president Krinos Foods Canada, Alexander Georgiadis described her as an example of how cultural roots and ambition can coexist in the pursuit of excellence. The company's contribution is helping offset some of the considerable costs associated with high-level alpine competition, including travel, equipment, and coaching.

Deda's growing profile extends beyond her race results. On social media, she shares training updates and glimpses into her life as a young athlete, showing the discipline and enthusiasm that underpin her progress. Her posts reflect both gratitude for her supporters and excitement for future competitions.

As she transitions into higher competitive categories under the International Ski Federation, Elena Deda's development continues to attract interest among coaches and observers in the Canadian ski community. Her combination of technical precision, composure under pressure, and a clear sense of identity marks her as a young athlete with potential for long-term success.

For Greek-Canadians following her career, Elena's path is a reminder that the ideals of perseverance, family support, and pride in one's background remain powerful sources of motivation. She stands at the intersection of two cultures that value effort and excellence, and her progress in alpine skiing serves as an encouraging story of what can be achieved through commitment and character.







Montreal Cretans host «gamopilafo» feast



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LAVAL, QC – The air in the hall of the Cretan Association of Montreal was thick with the aromas of home and the vibrant sounds of the Cretan lyra last Saturday, October 11th. Cretans and friends of Crete from across the city gathered for a special supper event, a powerful testament to the enduring spirit of Hellenism in the diaspora. The centerpiece of the evening was «gamopilafo,» the iconic rice dish traditionally served at weddings on the island, offering guests not just a meal, but a profound connection to their roots.

The event, which kicked off the association's bustling autumn calendar, was a resounding success, drawing a full house of families, elders, and youth. It was a night of kefi, that untranslatable Greek word for joy, passion, and high spirits, where music, dance, and fellowship reaffirmed the strength of Montreal's Greek community.

The famed gamopilafo, a creamy pilaf made with a rich meat broth and a special Cretan butter known as stakovoutyro, was prepared with love and expertise in the association's kitchen. In a bustling kitchen filled with dedicated volunteers, the secrets of the perfect gamopilafo were shared. The process involves slowly simmering goat and lamb to create a flavourful broth, or zoumi, which is then used to cook the rice. A generous amount of stakovoutyro is stirred in at the end, giving the dish its characteristic rich texture. One of the cooks even revealed an old village secret: adding a grapevine cutting to the pot to ensure the meat becomes exceptionally tender. The dish, symbolic of celebration and new beginnings, served as the perfect starting point for the association's new season of activities.

«Tonight, we are kicking off a series of events for the year, and we're starting with the gamopilafo,» said the President of the Cretan Association, Mr. Emmanuel Revelakis. He spoke with pride about the association's dual mission: to preserve the vibrant Cretan culture and to give back to the community. «As usual, we raise money and help various organizations,» he noted, highlighting an upcoming «loukoumades» fundraiser on November 1st, where all proceeds will be donated to Montreal's Greek day schools, Socrates-Demosthenes. This philanthropic spirit is a cornerstone of the association. This past summer, they donated $10,000 to a center for children with special needs in Crete.

The association's calendar is packed, reflecting its dynamic role in the community. On November 15th, they will host their annual Arkadi Dance, a major event featuring a five-person orchestra brought directly from Greece. This is followed by a solemn doxology commemorating the Holocaust of the Arkadi Monastery. And their New Year's Eve réveillon is already nearly sold out, a testament to the community's enthusiasm.

This commitment to service is matched only by their dedication to passing on traditions. With over 150 children enrolled in its weekly dance classes, the association is a buzzing hive of cultural transmission. «There are many non-Cretans who bring their children here every Sunday, and we are very proud of that because we see that they embrace the Cretan culture,» President Revelakis added. For adults, the association offers «Cretobics» on Wednesday nights, a high-energy workout that combines exercise with learning traditional Cretan dances.

The sentiment of pan-Hellenic unity was echoed throughout the hall. Among the distinguished guests was Laval Municipal Councillor for Chomedey, Mrs. Aglaia Revelakis, the president's sister. «We Cretans are all one family,» she stated. «But it is an honor for us that so many people who are not Cretan come to celebrate with us.» Her words were embodied by attendees like Lefteris Karagiorgakis from Thessaloniki and his wife from Tripoli, Arcadia. Though not of Cretan descent, they came to support the event. «We are here for our friends,» Mrs. Karagiorgakis explained, «and the Cretan spirit is very strong.» This cross-regional support is vital, as another guest beautifully captured the diaspora experience, saying, «I feel more Greek here than in Greece,» a powerful statement on the importance of community organizations in preserving a strong Hellenic identity abroad.

The evening was also a tapestry of personal stories, reflecting the diverse journeys of the Greek diaspora. Kostas Zacharioudakis, whose roots are in Chania, shared his more recent immigration story. «I was two years unemployed in Greece,» he recalled. «It was a one-way ticket. Hello, Canada.» For him, the association is a vital support system. «I support it as much as I can. We are all one group here. We love one another.»



His experience stands alongside those of veterans who have called Montreal home for half a century. One gentleman, also from Chania, has been in Canada for over 50 years. He spoke of the association as a constant in his life, a place of community, especially after the recent passing of his brother in Greece. «We work, and as much as we can, we support the Cretan Association,» he said, reflecting a lifetime of dedication.

Mr. Tasso Xipolitakis, the association's secretary and a key figure in the community, recounted the origins of the legendary «Gefsi kai Paradosi» (Taste and Tradition) festival. «It started from a friendly argument with a newspaper publisher over who made the best pilaf,» he said with a smile. From that simple challenge, an unprecedented event was born, uniting 37 different Hellenic organizations. «We sold 2,225 tickets,» he remembered. «It was the first time in history that so many of our community groups came together.» The festival raised over $175,000, which funded the entire science laboratory for the Socrates-Demosthenes high school.

However, Mr. Xipolitakis also touched upon the challenges facing the community. «Thousands of children have passed through the association's dance program since it was founded. Only four or five families have remained consistently active.» He noted that President Revelakis himself is a product of one of those dedicated families, underscoring the critical need for generational continuity.

As the evening progressed, the sounds of music provided by the ever-present Manolis Sgourakis filled the hall, and the dance floor came alive with spirited Cretan dances. It was a scene that could have been taken directly from a village festival in Chania or Rethymno. The evening was a powerful reminder that thousands of kilometers from the shores of Crete, its heart beats strong in Montreal. Through food, music, and an unwavering commitment to community, the Cretans of Montreal are ensuring that their proud heritage not only survives but thrives for generations to come.

Canada's former Ambassador to Greece recalls nation's unbreakable resilience



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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

In a recent interview, former Canadian Ambassador to Greece, Robert Peck, offered a moving reflection on the profound strength of the Hellenic world and the powerful bond between Greece and Canada. This partnership was showcased during Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis's historic visit in March 2024, the first by a Greek leader in over four decades. Economically, the relationship is stronger than ever. As Ambassador Peck noted, "the reality today is that Canada is the largest non-EU investor in all kinds of major things, Eurobank, major Canadian investment, Athens International Airport".

This deep partnership was forged during one of Greece's most challenging modern periods, the economic crisis. While international media often focused on turmoil, the era truly revealed the nation's unbreakable spirit. Serving as ambassador in Athens during that time, Ambassador Peck witnessed this firsthand. "What impressed me was the resilience of Greeks," he recalled. "I think the solidarity of Greeks, the family unit, was, I think, a real strength to overcome a lot of the adversity during that particular time". It was a period that defied unfair stereotypes and proved the fundamental perseverance inherent in Greek society.

A powerful and visible symbol of this enduring friendship is the Canadair water bomber, a familiar sight in Greek skies during the difficult fire season. In a significant development, "Greece is first in the line to get 10 new Canadair water bombers," a move Peck calls "an important symbol for Canada and Greece". Here in Canada, the diaspora's commitment remains a vibrant force. Organizations like the Hellenic Heritage Foundation work tirelessly to advance Hellenic culture, while the Hellenic Initiative Canada raises crucial funds for those in need in Greece. This spirit is exemplified by the upcoming fundraising concert with celebrated artist Alkistis Protopsalti, an event that will unite the community in support of the homeland. The success of these efforts hinges on a timeless Hellenic principle. As Ambassador Peck powerfully stated, "when Greeks rally and work together, όλοι μαζί μπορούμε, it's not a cliché". From critical investments to shared cultural pride, the bridge between Greece and Canada is fortified by mutual respect and a shared Hellenic heart.

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Το έθνος δεν ορρωδεί προς ουδενός, υπό την έννοια της ζώσης διαχρονικής παραδόσεως καθότι, καίτοι η έννοια του έθνους, ενδεχομένως να συνιστά, φαινομενικά μία ακινητοποιημένα έννοια, ή απότοκο του Νεωτερισμού, εν τούτοις όμως, έχει βαθύτερες ρίζες εις το διάβα των αιώνων, καθότι σημασιοδοτεί την κοινή πορεία ενός λαού ή αλλέως ειπείν το ομόαιμον, το ομόγλωσσον, το ομόθρησκον και το ομότροπον του Μεγάλου Ηροδότου.

Ενί λόγω, το έθνος καθίσταται αρρήκτως συνυφασμένο με την εθνική ιδιοπροσωπία ενός λαού, σφυρηλατεί ως έπος ειπείν, την ταυτότητά του, καθότι δομεί τον πυρήνα της ύπαρξή του, λόγω ότι συγκεφαλαιώνει γόνιμα, την αργόσυρτη διαχρονία ενός πολιτισμού.

Ως εκ τούτου λοιπόν, η έννοια της παραδόσεως, έχει δυναμικό πρόσημο και ουχί ακινητοποιημένο εκ του παρελληλυθότος, άνευ ικμάδος και ζωτικότητας, διότι η παράδοση, φυλάττει την ακεραιότητα του παρελθόντος και μεταβιβάζει, εν είδει παρακατατθήκης τα πολιτισμικά χαρακτηριστικά ενός πολιτισμού και λαού προς το παρόν, επιδρώντας αναπόδρατα εις την διάπλαση του μέλλοντος.

Για τους λόγους αυτούς συνιστά ανυπερθέτως θεμελιώδη λίθο της ταυτότητας ενός λαού, ή καλλιέργεια ιστορικής αυτεπίγνωσης και εν γένει η καλλιέργεια εθνικής συνειδήσεως.

Η θύραθεν δε επιρροή εξ οθνείων και επείσακτων αλλότριων στοιχείων, επιχειρεί να αμφισβητήσει την ύπαρξη της εννοίας του έθνους αλλά και την απτή ιστορική συνέχεια του πολιτισμού του Ελληνισμού,.

Η εθνομηδενεστική τάση, επιχειρεί ακριβώς να αποδομήσει ακριβώς την πολιτισμική αυτοτέλεια του εκάστοτε λαού, ακριβώς δια να δημιουργηθεί μία κατάσταση πλήρης ομοιογενοποιήσεως των πάντων δίκην της επελαυνούσης παγκοσμιοποιήσεως και της εγκαθιδρυθησομένης Νέας Τάξης πραγμάτων, εγκειμένη εις την επιβολή της αυθεντίας και της πρωτοκαθεδρίας της παγκόσμιας διακυβέρνησης.

Οι σύγχρονες τάσεις της πολύφερνης woke ατζέντα, ουδόλως περιορίζεται μόνον, εις τα σεξουαλικά δικαιώματα των ατόμων, αλλά συνιστά κατά τους δικαιωματιστές, μία ριζοτόμα και ανηλεή επίθεση εις ό,τι παραδοσιακό και μη ομαλό.

Ως εκ τούτου, εις την μονοφυσίτικη και δογματική αυτή αντίληψη, έναντι του έθνους προβάλλονται οι συλλογικότητας, με βάση έτερα επιδερμικά χαρακτηριστικά, αμφισβητώντας, την απαράμιλη μοναδικότητα του κάθε λαού, ο οποίος άνεθεξε στον χρόνο.

Η 28ης Οκτωβρίου σηματοδοτεί μια ηρωική ημέρα όπου ο τότε Πρωθυπουργός είχε πει το περίφημο «Όχι», δηλονότι ο Ιωάννης Μεταξά, πρέτεινε και προέκρινε το εθνικό συμφέρον έναν του ατομικού, με αποτέλεσμα, η χώρα να αρνηθεί την διεύλευση των Ιταλικών στρατευμάτων εκ των ελληνικών εδαφών, καθότι ο Ιωάννης Ματαξάς ήτο φίλα προσκείμενος προς τις δυνάμεις του Άξονα.

Εν άλλοις λόγοις, ρίγη συγκινήσεως μας πλημμυρίζουν ανήμερα της επετειακής αυτής ημέρας, όπου τιμάμε του Ήρωες Έλληνες οι οποίοι πολεμούσαν, με αίσθημα ευθύνης και θυσιαστική αυταπάρνηση, αναχαιτίζοντας την ανηλεή αναχαίτιση των Ιταλών, εγγγράφοντας την περίδο εκείνη, ιστορία με ανεξίτηλα χαραγμένα χρόνια.

Η Ελλάδα απέδειξε πανηγυρικά προς άπασες τις δυνάμεις, ότι το διακύβευμα διεκδικήσεως της ελευθερίας καθίσταται το μείζον και δεν διαπραγματεύεται το παραμικρό έναντι της εθνικής αξιοπρέπειας και των αρετών των προγώνων μας.

Η Ελλάς έπρεπε να μείνει ελεύθερη και παρέμεινε με πολύ, θυσία και κόπο, ωστόσο όμως το ισχυρό ελατήριο δια την ελευθερία ήτο η αυτοθυσία και η παράδοση, από τον «Μολών Λαβέ» του Λεωνίδα, προς τον περίφημο «Αέρας»

Εν κατακλείδι η Ελλάδα έδειξε ότι όταν είναι ενωμένη δύναται να επιτύχει θαύματα επ' ωφελεία του εθνικού συμφέροντος, ανεξαρτήτως ιδεοληψιών, αλλά υπέρ Πίστεως και Πατρίδας, υπέρ της εθνικής ανεξαρτησίας και της εδαφικής ακεραιότητας της Πατρίδας.

Χαράλαμπος Β Κατσιβαρδάς
Δικηγόρος Παρ' Αρείω Πάγω και Στ.Ε
Ανεξάρτητος Βουλευτής
του Ελληνικού Κοινοβουλίου

Montreal honors 100 years since the birth of Mikis Theodorakis

By Kyriaki Speri, Local Journalism Initiative reporter, The Montreal Greek Times

A series of cultural events commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of legendary Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis is taking place in Montreal this summer. The initiative is led by the Hellenic Congress of Quebec, in collaboration with the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal and various local Greek associations.

At the heart of the tribute are two concerts presented by the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM), featuring symphonic works by Mikis Theodorakis. The events aim to highlight the composer's lesser-known classical repertoire and his enduring impact on global music and culture.

The first concert is scheduled for August 13 at the Olympic Park esplanade, adjacent to Montreal's Olympic Stadium. This open-air performance will be free to the public and is expected to attract a diverse audience. Special arrangements have been made for a group of young Greek Canadians to attend, with transportation provided by the community. The orchestra's conductor, Maestro Rafael Payare, has expressed interest in meeting with the students to share insights into the world of classical music and orchestral performance.

The second concert will be held on August 16 at the Maison symphonique, located within Place des Arts. This formal performance will feature music by both Beethoven and Mikis Theodorakis. The concert was made possible through the efforts of renowned restaurateur Costas Spiliadis, who initiated discussions with the orchestra and purchased 350 tickets to be distributed free of charge to the Greek community through cultural organizations and associations.

Mr. Spiliadis' generous contribution was acknowledged by organizers, who emphasized the importance of making high-quality cultural experiences accessible to the Greek diaspora. While most of the donated tickets have already been allocated, a limited number remain available. Additional tickets can also be purchased through the OSM box office, including affordable seats in the upper balcony, which still offer exceptional acoustics due to the hall's architectural design.

Sotiris Antypas, president of the Hellenic Congress of Quebec, expressed gratitude for Mr. Spiliadis' support and noted the strong response from community organizations. Numerous associations have already claimed tickets for their members, ensuring a robust Greek presence at the events.

In addition to the August concerts, the Hellenic Congress is planning a third musical event for late fall or winter of 2025. This tribute will focus on Theodorakis' iconic songs, well known among Greeks worldwide. The event will feature local music groups and performers from the community, providing a platform to showcase homegrown talent while celebrating the composer's rich cultural legacy.

Dimitris Katsaounis, representing the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal, underlined the importance of collective participation in such tributes and affirmed the Community's ongoing commitment to supporting initiatives that honor influential figures in Hellenic culture. He highlighted the Community's vast network of institutions, schools, and associations that form the backbone of Greek life in Montreal, a city home to more than 80,000 individuals of Greek descent.

Born in 1925 and passing in 2021, Mikis Theodorakis remains one of the most significant figures in modern Greek history. His vast body of work spans classical compositions, oratorios, film scores, and popular songs that have shaped the cultural identity of Greece and resonated worldwide.

The upcoming concerts in Montreal not only pay tribute to his artistic genius but also provide an opportunity for the Greek Canadian community to remember, celebrate, and pass on his legacy to future generations.

For ticket information, interested individuals are encouraged to contact their local Greek associations or visit the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal's official website.



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The immortal «OXI» of the Hellenic soul

For many of us, growing up Greek-Canadian means experiencing our heritage through vibrant festivals, delicious food, and stories of the *patrida* told by our grandparents. We've seen the flag, heard the music, and maybe even spent a summer on the beautiful beaches of Greece. But woven into the fabric of our identity is a story of incredible courage, a story encapsulated by a single, powerful word: «Oxi» (No). This is the story of October 28th, 1940, a day that defines the modern Greek spirit.

So, what exactly happened? In the early hours of that day, as World War II raged across Europe, the Italian ambassador delivered a chilling ultimatum to Greece's Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas. The demand was simple and brutal: allow Mussolini's Axis forces to enter Greece and occupy strategic locations, or face war. The Prime Minister's response was not a long negotiation. It was a swift, defiant, and resounding «Oxi»!

This «No» was not just the answer of a politician; it was the collective voice of the Greek people. It was a declaration that freedom, dignity, and national sovereignty were not for sale, no matter the cost. Outnumbered and with a much smaller army, Greece did the unthinkable. When Italian forces invaded through the mountains of Albania, the Greek army not only stopped the invaders but pushed them back. This was the first major land victory for the Allies in the war, a stunning feat that sent a shockwave of hope and inspiration across a world darkened by tyranny.

This is what we honor on Oxi Day. We don't celebrate war, but the courage to stand against impossible odds for what is right. We honor the soldiers who fought in the snow-covered Pindus Mountains and the everyday citizen: the women, children, and elderly, who supported the effort with everything they had. We celebrate the indomitable Greek spirit, the *philotimo*, that refuses to bow to oppression.

This anniversary is profoundly important to Greeks everywhere, from Athens to Toronto, Melbourne to Montreal. It's a powerful reminder of our shared values. It connects us, no matter how many generations away we are from Greece, to a legacy of heroism. It's a day that makes us proud to carry the blood of ancestors who chose bravery over submission.

In Greece, the day is marked with great patriotic pride. Cities and villages come alive with parades. You'll see proud soldiers and military hardware marching in major cities like Thessaloniki, while in every town, schoolchildren dress in blue and white and parade through the streets, waving the Greek flag high. It's a national holiday where the entire country pauses to remember.

That same pride is mirrored here in Canada. In Greek communities across the country, the day is commemorated with special church services, called *doxologies*, to give thanks. Associations organize their own events and students in Greek schools recite patriotic poems and perform traditional dances, keeping the memory and the meaning of «Oxi» alive for the next generation.

As a second and third-generation Greek-Canadian, Oxi Day is our story, too. It's a vital piece of our heritage, a testament to the strength and resilience that is part of our DNA. It's the story of a small nation that dared to say «No» to a giant, reminding the world that the size of our mother country matters less than the size of our heart. It's a day to stand a little taller, knowing we come from a people who taught the world a lesson in courage.

Canadian Pan-Macedonian participation at World convention in Greece highlights advocacy for historical truth



Dimitri PAPADOPOULOS
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The Pan-Macedonian Association convened its annual assembly in the courtyard of the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle in Kastoria, drawing together representatives from its global chapters. The convention served as a forum for discussions on cultural preservation and historical matters. The event's program included a series of formal addresses and detailed presentations by leading members of the Pan-Macedonian community from around the world.

The proceedings were formally opened by Mr. Dimitrios Gkoulioumatzidis, who welcomed the international delegates. In his inaugural address, Mr. Gkoulioumatzidis outlined the convention's objectives. "This convention serves as a platform for the exchange of ideas and the coordination of our efforts in preserving and promoting our rich Macedonian heritage," he stated. "We are gathered here to reaffirm our commitment to the historical truths of Macedonia. Our purpose is to deliberate on our strategies for the dissemination of factual, source-based historical information and to strengthen the bonds between our communities across the globe."

A scholarly perspective was provided by Dr. Eleni Agiopetritou, a professor of Byzantine History at the University of Thessaloniki. Her lecture focused on the Macedonian dynasty of the Byzantine Empire. Dr. Agiopetritou presented a detailed analysis based on primary sources, stating, "The historical record provides an unambiguous account of the Hellenic identity of Macedonia throughout the centuries. It is our duty to disseminate this scholarly evidence to a wider audience, to counter misinformation with verifiable facts. The continuity of Hellenic culture in Macedonia is not a matter of interpretation, but a fact supported by an overwhelming body of archaeological and textual evidence."

A substantial part of the convention was devoted to the reports from the Pan-Macedonian federations active in the diaspora. A particularly comprehensive report was delivered by Mr. George Dimitrakopoulos, the President of the Pan-Macedonian Federation of Canada, whose presentation detailed the organization's extensive activities, with a pronounced focus on the dynamic community in Montreal.

The President of the Canadian Federation offered a thorough overview of his organization's multi-faceted approach to community engagement and cultural programming. "The Pan-Macedonian Federation of Canada has been steadfast in its mission to foster a vibrant and active community," he began. "Our activities are designed to engage all generations of Greek-Canadians, from our esteemed elders to our promising youth. We believe that a strong community is an informed community, and our programs are developed with this principle at their core."

He provided a detailed chronicle of the Federation's recent cultural initiatives across Canada. "In the past fiscal year, our Federation has organized a series of cultural events. A notable success was a theatrical performance in Montreal depicting the life of Alexander the Great, which was attended by over 1,500 people. This production was the result of a collaboration with local artists and historians to ensure its cultural and historical authenticity," the speaker elaborated. "Additionally, our traditional Macedonian music and dance festival in Toronto attracted a significant audience, including many non-Greeks, providing a valuable opportunity to share our culture with the broader Canadian society."

The representative from Canada also highlighted other cultural events. "We have also sponsored a film festival in Vancouver showcasing the work of Greek filmmakers, and we have established a youth choir in Montreal that performs traditional Macedonian songs at community gatherings and official events. These initiatives are not merely for entertainment; they are a vital means of cultural transmission and preservation."

The Federation's educational outreach was another key area of focus in the presentation. "We have established a scholarship fund for university students of Hellenic descent who are pursuing studies in history, archaeology, and classical studies," he announced. "The objective of this fund is to encourage and support the next generation of scholars who will continue the important work of researching and teaching the history of our region." He further detailed the public education efforts: "Furthermore, we have launched a series of public lectures in Montreal and Vancouver, featuring respected academics who present the history of Macedonia based on primary sources and archaeological findings. These lectures are free and open to the public, and they are often followed by question-and-answer sessions to facilitate a deeper public understanding of the subject."

Advocacy and government relations were also presented as a cornerstone of the Canadian Federation's work. "The Pan-Macedonian Federation of Canada maintains an active dialogue with Canadian government officials and policymakers," the speaker explained. "We make it a point to provide them with accurate, source-based information regarding the history and cultural heritage of Macedonia. Our aim is to ensure that the Canadian public discourse on this matter is well-informed and grounded in historical fact. We have prepared comprehensive informational packets, which include academic papers, historical maps, and translations of primary sources, and we have distributed these materials to members of Parliament and other government agencies."

The role of media and public relations in the Federation's strategy was also emphasized. "We have cultivated a strong relationship with the Greek-Canadian press," he noted. "Through regular press releases and media briefings, we ensure that our community is kept abreast of our activities and the broader issues concerning Macedonia. We also actively engage with mainstream Canadian media to provide a factual perspective on matters related to Macedonia, and we have had some success in getting our articles and letters to the editor published in major Canadian newspapers."

In his concluding remarks, the Canadian representative issued a call for greater collaboration among the international Pan-Macedonian associations. "Our strength lies in our unity and our collective resolve," he asserted. "The work of the Pan-Macedonian Federation of Canada is but one part of a global effort. By sharing our resources, coordinating our strategies, and learning from each other's successes, we can be more effective in our shared mission. I propose the establishment of a joint committee to facilitate the sharing of educational materials and the coordination of our international advocacy efforts."

The convention also received a report from Mr. Ioannis Kofopoulos of the Pan-Macedonian Association of USA, who addressed the critical issue of youth engagement. "The future of our organizations depends on our ability to inspire the younger generation to take an active role in our cultural and educational initiatives," he said. "We must find new and innovative ways to connect with our youth and to make them feel a sense of ownership and pride in their heritage."

The event culminated in the unanimous adoption of a resolution that reaffirmed the commitment of the Pan-Macedonian associations to the preservation of the Hellenic heritage of Macedonia. The resolution outlined a series of action items for the upcoming year, including the creation of new educational resources for schools, the expansion of cultural exchange programs, and the establishment of a digital archive of historical documents. The convention was formally adjourned by Mr. Gkoulioumatzidis, who expressed his gratitude to the delegates for their constructive participation and their unwavering dedication to the cause of Macedonia.

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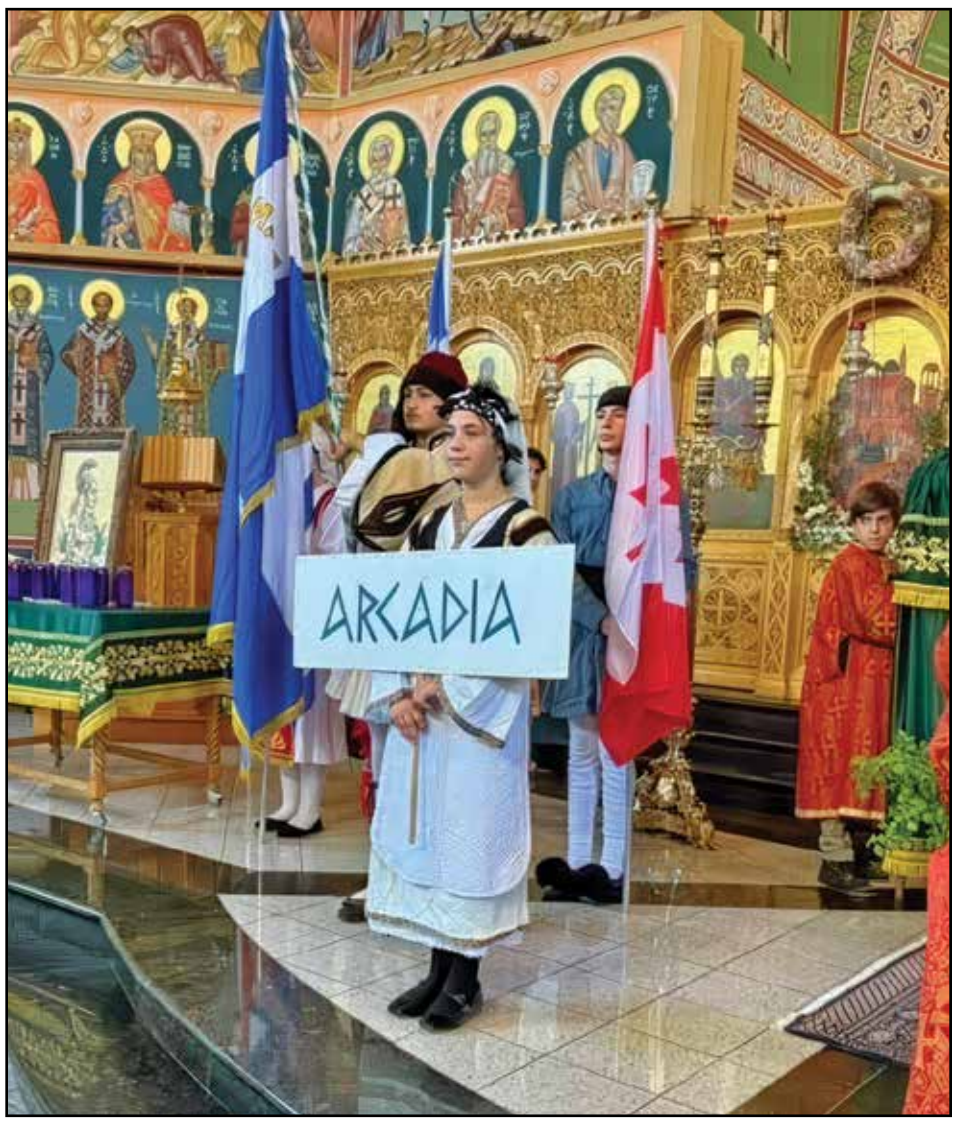
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Fall of Tripolitsa remembered in solemn Laval ceremony



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LAVAL - The Pan-Arcadian Brotherhood of Canada hosted a commemorative event in Laval, Quebec, to honour the 204th anniversary of the Fall of Tripolitsa, a pivotal moment in the Greek War of Independence. The day's proceedings began with a formal doxology service at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Chomedey and were followed by a luncheon at the association's community hall, bringing together prominent figures from the Hellenic diaspora and Quebec political life. The gathering served not only as a remembrance of a historic military victory but also as a profound expression of cultural identity and continuity for the Greek community in Montreal.

The event was attended by a distinguished list of guests, reflecting the deep connections between the community and various levels of government and civic society. Among those present were Mr. Zisis Fotopoulos, President of the Pan-Arcadian Brotherhood of Canada; Mr. Nikolaos Karalekas, the Consul General of Greece in Montreal; Sona Lakhoyan, Member of the National Assembly of Quebec; and Aglaia Revelakis, a Laval Municipal Councillor. Also in attendance were Mr. Sotiris Antipas, President of the Hellenic Congress of Quebec, and Mr. Vasilis Angelopoulos, President of the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal, alongside former presidents of the brotherhood and numerous members of the diaspora who participated with emotion and pride.

The historical event at the heart of the commemoration, the Fall of Tripolitsa on September 23, 1821, was a crucial turning point in Greece's struggle for sovereignty. At the time, Tripolitsa (modern-day Tripoli) was the Ottoman Empire's administrative and military capital in the Peloponnese peninsula. Its capture by Greek revolutionary forces under the command of Theodoros Kolokotronis was the first major victory of the war. This success galvanized the Greek cause, providing a critical morale boost, a strategic stronghold, and a substantial cache of arms for the nascent rebellion. The victory, while celebrated for its strategic importance, was also the result of a brutal siege and violent aftermath, a complexity that underscores the profound sacrifices made during the fight for independence.

For the Greek diaspora in Montreal, commemorating this anniversary is a vital link to their ancestral heritage. In a multicultural society like Quebec, such events are fundamental to preserving and transmitting history, values, and a collective sense of identity to succeeding generations. The Fall of Tripolitsa symbolizes resilience, the fight against overwhelming odds, and the ultimate price of freedom, themes that resonate universally and reinforce a shared cultural narrative. The brotherhood's explicit mention of the "heroes of the Greek Revolution" highlights the event's role in anchoring the community's modern identity in a legacy of historic struggle and national pride.

This connection between past and present was powerfully symbolized by the active participation of youth. The association made special mention of the "young people who held the flags high, proudly honouring our ancestors and their glorious history". This image is central to the event's contemporary meaning; it represents the conscious effort to ensure that the stories and sacrifices of 1821 are not forgotten but are instead embraced by young Greek-Canadians. Furthermore, the presence of elected officials like MNA Sona Lakhoyan and Councillor Aglaia Revelakis signifies the Hellenic community's integration and recognized role within the political landscape of Quebec. Their attendance acknowledges the community's civic importance and demonstrates how celebrating a specific cultural history contributes to the broader multicultural fabric of the province. In this context, the commemoration becomes a dialogue between a proud ancestral past and an engaged civic present.



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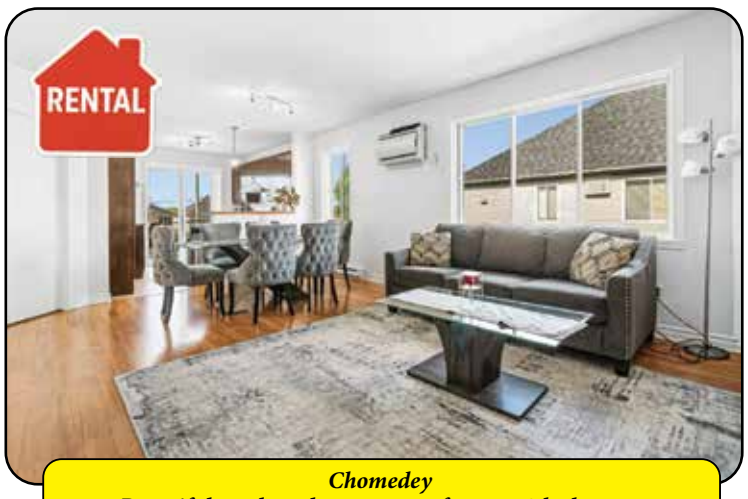
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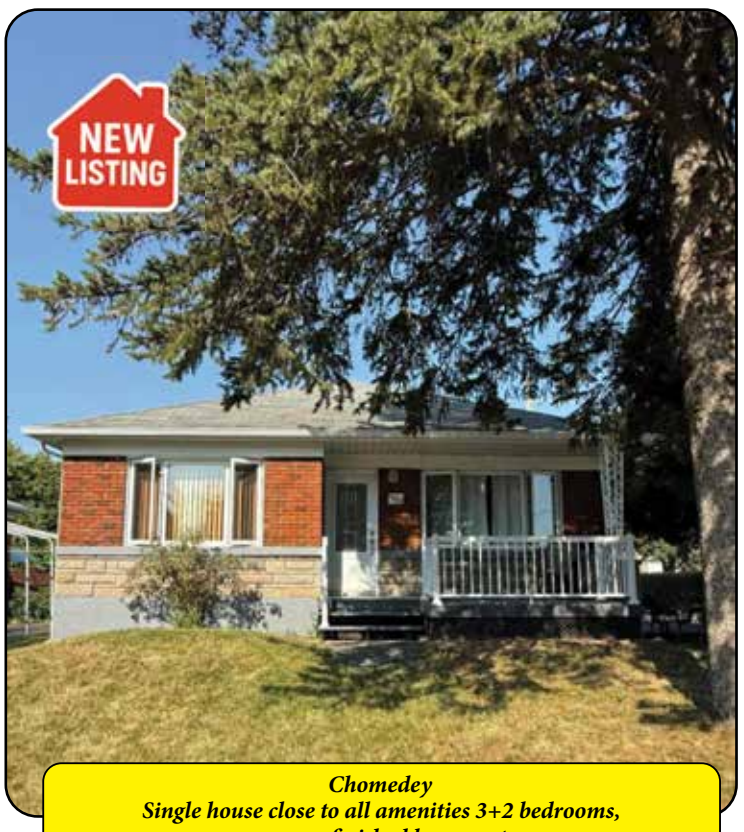
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Thousands Raised for Montreal Greek Schools at Annual Cretan Fest



Antonia MACRIS
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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

This past August, the grounds of Evangelismos tis Theotokou Church in Park Extension once again came alive with the sounds and flavors of Crete for the annual Festival of St. Eftychios. For over 15 years, the Makrymanolakis family has organized this cherished two-day event, which serves as both a vibrant cultural gathering and a major philanthropic effort benefiting the Greek community of Montreal.

The festival is a cornerstone for preserving Cretan heritage in the city, offering traditional dishes rarely found elsewhere. Attendees had the opportunity to enjoy authentic foods such as boiled goat (vrasti katsika), souvlakia, and sausages. The main attraction, however, was the Cretan gamopilafo.

In an interview that aired on EDO Montreal Radio on 102.3 FM and Odyssey-TV, Park Extension City Councillor Mary Deros described the meal as "the tastiest pilaf I have ever eaten in my life," adding, "we come every year to eat this unique pilaf with the goat." Tasos Xipolitakis, President of the Fundraising Commitee of the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal, explained the dish's cultural significance: "This we call gamopilafo in Crete because they make it at weddings."

Beyond the celebration of culture, the festival's core purpose is charity. Organizer Eftychios Makrymanolakis, who founded the Philanthropic Organization of Saint Eftychios, has made the event a pillar of support for the community. "We are continuing our philanthropic work, because it is for a philanthropic cause that we continue," said Mr. Makrymanolakis.

The festival consistently raises significant funds, with proceeds directed to vital community institutions. Mr. Makrymanolakis confirmed, "The profits go to the schools, to the hospitals, to the community, and wherever I understand that there is a need."

The Montreal Greek community sees the direct benefits of this generosity. Recently, the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal announced a $6,000 donation from Mr. Makrymanolakis, raised from the festival, to support its Supplementary Education Schools. In a public letter, Mr. Makrymanolakis reinforced his commitment, stating, "Our schools are the future and the continuation of our Hellenism in Montreal... we have a duty to support them so that no Greek child remains ignorant of the language of his parents and ancestors."

Run by Mr. Makrymanolakis, his family, and dedicated friends who volunteer their time, the festival is a testament to community spirit. It successfully brings the feeling of a Greek village festival to Montreal, helping to continue "the tradition and the customs of our homeland." Mr. Makrymanolakis has expressed his wish that his family and descendants will continue this important tradition for years to come.



HCGM Board meets to discuss operational and financial challenges



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MONTREAL – A tone of determined transition marked the regular monthly meeting of the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal (HCGM) Board of Directors on Tuesday, October 7, 2025. In a session that balanced confronting serious legacy issues with launching forward-looking projects, the board, led by President Basile Angelopoulos, addressed a dense agenda covering the organization's significant financial liabilities, a key leadership appointment, school system updates, and new community outreach efforts. The meeting, held at the community's headquarters on Wilderton Avenue and attended by board members and media both in-person and online, laid out the new administration's approach to the challenges facing the nearly 120-year-old institution.

A primary focus of the evening was the HCGM's precarious financial health. A Treasury Report dated October 1, 2025, revealed the organization is managing unaudited estimated liabilities totaling $6.808 million. This debt includes a Bank of Montreal line of credit that is nearly maximized at $1.874 million against a $2.0 million limit, leaving minimal remaining borrowing capacity. During his remarks, President Angelopoulos provided stark context to these figures, stating, "The debt costs us 70,000 dollars each month, approximately 850,000 dollars a year. It's something the community is not in a position to continue to service". He also explained that over the summer, the HCGM had secured a temporary increase to its line of credit, which reached $2.75 million before being reduced back to its $2 million limit by September 30, as agreed with the bank. In response to these pressures, the board has initiated the 2025-2026 budgeting process. While Mr. Angelopoulos acknowledged that the current year's budget will show an operating deficit, he assured attendees it would be less than the previous year's and affirmed a firm commitment that "our second budget for the year 2026-2027 will be balanced, if not with a surplus". The audit for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2025, is nearing completion, and the treasurer confirmed that all payroll-related deductions are being paid on time.

As part of its strategy to steer the community toward recovery, the board announced the appointment of George Tsantrizos as the HCGM's new Executive Director. The appointment follows a recruitment process that began in late June and drew over 100 applications. An alumnus of the community's École Socrates-Démosthène, Mr. Tsantrizos possesses expertise in "business development, human resources optimization, and financial management, along with experience in real estate management," according to the Secretary of Human Resources' report. He previously collaborated with the HCGM for 11 years as a political consultant. His appointment was unanimously approved by the board on October 2, with an official start date of October 14. The board also formally welcomed the new Consul General of Greece in Montreal, Nikolaos Karalekas, who has been in the city for a month. In his address, the Consul General expressed his admiration for the community's high level of organization and pledged his full support, stating, "I am here to be by your side and to serve you because that is my mission".

Updates concerning the École Socrates-Démosthène school system included changes to the tuition fees for the 2026-2027 academic year. These increases, intended to help balance the school's budget, will raise pre-kindergarten and elementary fees to $1,625 and high school fees to $5,825. Accessory fees will rise from $800 to $950. A new policy was also instituted, effective for the same year, requiring both parents of enrolled students to be members of the HCGM.

The school's recent Open House on October 4, promoted through what the Secretariat of Education's report called a "successful and unprecedented social media campaign," became a subject of detailed questioning during the media period. The campaign relied on social media and featured alumni testimonials and drone footage provided pro bono by an alumnus. During the meeting, questions submitted via email by Dimitri Papadopoulos of the Montreal Greek Times were read, asking for specific data on attendance and new enrollments compared to the previous year, the total cost of the campaign, and whether it was "accurate that this year's Open Door campaign underperformed, with overall response and engagement estimated to be 50% to 75% lower than last year?". In response, President Basile Angelopoulos stated that the specific data on attendance and enrollment had not yet been compiled but would be provided soon. He did, however, state the total cost of the campaign: "15 thousand dollars in total". He characterized the social media-focused strategy as an "experiment" to "see to what extent this medium responds and is effective". Mr. Angelopoulos then announced a significant change in future marketing strategy, stating, "we will change course on how we will promote and market our school in the future". He criticized the reliance on a single, short annual event and announced that the school's marketing budget would be increased from $15,000 to $100,000 to support a continuous, year-round promotional effort.On the cultural and community front, the board reported a major civic achievement after the City of Laval's council voted unanimously to give a portion of Souvenir Boulevard, between Chomedey and Clarendon, a symbolic, secondary Hellenic name. The HCGM board passed its own unanimous motion to formally support the initiative, which was spearheaded by board members in collaboration with Laval city councillors Aglaia Revelakis and Vassilis Karidogiannis. Plans for the upcoming "OXI Day" commemoration on October 28 were announced, which will include a Doxology at Holy Cross Church in Laval followed by a luncheon at the Embassy Plaza. Looking ahead, President Angelopoulos announced the formation of two new committees: one chaired by Kostia Pantazis to organize events celebrating community achievements, and another led by Justine Frangouli-Argyris to plan the HCGM's 120th-anniversary celebrations in 2026.



Departmental reports highlighted pressing infrastructure needs alongside operational progress. An inspection of the community's athletic facilities revealed "significant negligence and extensive wear and tear," rendering the gymnasium "unsuitable for revenue-generating purposes". A volunteer-aided "cost-effective facelift" focusing on deep cleaning and cosmetic refreshment has since begun. The department plans to raise approximately $25,000 through new banner sponsorships to fund equipment replacement and other projects. The Real Estate department is overseeing extensive renovations of seven long-vacant apartments adjacent to the headquarters, a project aided by volunteers and donations from Greek-Canadian businesses. The department is also managing ongoing roof issues, including a leak at Panagitsa Church and a more complex insurance claim process for the full replacement of the Grande Salle roof. In a move toward increased financial disclosure, the President announced that a new online contract inventory is now available for all active HCGM members to consult. In response to a question from an attendee, President Angelopoulos confirmed that a mandate has been given to work on the "repatriation" of the community's social services program.

As this report was being prepared for press, new information emerged concerning an internal matter facing the HCGM leadership. A formal complaint was filed with the Board of Directors regarding a senior staff member affiliated with the HCGM. The complaint centers on the director of one of the community's Centres de la Petite Enfance (CPE), who is currently an active candidate for city councillor in Montreal.

The letter of complaint, addressed to the HCGM Board, alleges "a serious conflict of interest and ongoing ethical misconduct". The grounds for the complaint include the allegation that the individual is using her position of authority within the government-funded CPE to solicit political support, specifically by approaching staff and parents for nomination signatures. The letter states that several individuals felt "pressured, intimidated, or coerced into complying, fearing potential consequences if they decline".

Further, the complaint alleges a "misuse of work environment for political purposes," arguing that campaigning during working hours at a public-serving institution "undermines the integrity of the institution". The letter also raises concerns about the potential for reputational harm to the HCGM, pointing out that should the individual be elected, she would hold two "very demanding full-time, publicly funded positions simultaneously". The complaint estimates a municipal salary of approximately $85,000 in addition to her current compensation of around $100,000.

The complainants are requesting that the HCGM Board take immediate action, including conducting a "formal and impartial investigation" into the allegations, requiring the individual to take a "leave of absence as Director of CPE Wilderton for the duration of the campaign," and establishing clear policy guidelines regarding political candidacy for individuals in leadership roles within HCGM institutions. The letter emphasizes that while civic engagement is encouraged, "the pursuit of public office must never come at the cost of ethical leadership, professional integrity, or the wellbeing of the families who rely on these institutions". The HCGM has not yet issued a public statement on the matter.

Unity and Hellenism at Messinian amphictyony conference with Montreal's Nick Mavros elected VP



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Messinia hosted the 16th Annual Conference and General Assembly of the Messinian Amphictyony, with a central focus on Greek language education and the importance of Hellenic culture in modern society. The gathering brought together Greeks from the diaspora around the world, underlining the enduring role of the Greek language as a defining element of identity and continuity. The conference was inaugurated by the Mayor of Kalamata and the President of the Messinian Amphictyony, Athanasios Vassilopoulos.

The primary objective of the event was to emphasize the need to strengthen Greek language learning among younger generations of the diaspora. It was noted that many children of the second and third generations have limited knowledge of the language, while some do not speak it at all. To address this, partnerships have been developed with primary and secondary education systems, as well as with universities in Patras, Kalamata, and abroad. Within this framework, the conference presented the concept of a digital tutoring platform designed to promote Greek language education globally, using modern technological and pedagogical methods that can be applied across borders.

Participants underlined that for Greek language instruction to be effective, there must be a shift in teaching approaches, with greater adoption of digital tools and resources. The language was described not only as a means of communication but also as a living cultural symbol. For the diaspora, Greek is a bridge that connects generations and transmits traditions, values, and collective memory. Volunteers, teachers, and community organizations were highlighted for their continuous work in keeping the language alive among children of the third and fourth generations in major cities such as Montreal, Melbourne, and New York.

A particularly notable moment of the conference was the intervention of Nikos Mavros, Member of the Hellenic Community of Montreal. Representing Canada in his role as executive Vice President of the Messinian Amphictyony, Mr. Mavros conveyed a strong message of unity and outlined the daily effort of Greeks abroad to preserve their language and culture thousands of kilometers from their homeland. He emphasized that the annual conference is an opportunity for Messinians of the diaspora to come together, discuss shared concerns, strengthen ties, and identify ways to support Greek communities both abroad and in Greece.

The conference featured several distinguished speakers, including academics and representatives of organizations, who addressed the importance of the Greek language as a vehicle of cultural heritage. Among them were the President of the Naval Museum of Kalamata, Professor Eleni Benekou, the Secretary General of the Federation of Greek Associations of Ukraine, Spyridon Chalvantzis, and Assistant Professor of Greek Philology, Giorgos Kontogiannis. Their contributions stressed the role of language in preserving identity and heritage.

Further interventions came from author Ilias Toutoulakis, and philologist Christos Byporos, each highlighting how language and culture remain central to the everyday life of diaspora communities. These perspectives reinforced the view that language is not merely a tool for communication but the core link that sustains traditions, memories, and continuity across generations.

The speakers also emphasized the long-standing role of the diaspora as a pillar of support for Greece. Across the world, organized communities invest significant effort into maintaining Greek schools and programs, often relying on volunteers and community resources. This commitment reflects the strong attachment of Greeks abroad to their roots and the determination to pass on their heritage to younger generations.

The conference proceedings concluded with the General Assembly and elections for the new Administrative Council of the Messinian Amphictyony. The day was dedicated to the Greek language, history, and the values that unite Hellenism worldwide. The event reaffirmed the importance of a collective effort to safeguard Greek language learning, both within Greece and across diaspora communities around the world.

FILIA's Walk-a-Thon boosts funds for food deliveries to homebound seniors

The Association Troisième Âge «FILIA» hosted its 19th annual Walk-a-Thon at Saint-Norbert Park. The event brought together members and supporters to raise funds and awareness for the association's "Meals on Wheels" program, which serves seniors and other individuals in need.

The event was organized by FILIA President Johanna Tsoublekas, who addressed the participants before the walk began. "As usual for the last 19 years, we are doing this little walk, which has to do with strengthening the Meals-on-Wheels, the program we have where we take food three times a week to the homes of the elderly, the sick and not only," Ms. Tsoublekas stated. She highlighted the dual goals of the event: "One goal is to publicize what we do... The other is to make the rest of the world understand that the elderly also have needs and we are trying with this little walk... to raise some money, even if it's a little, to be able to cope."

The "Meals on Wheels" program is a core service for the organization. "We cook in the morning on the same day and in three hours, between 11:30 and 12:00, the food is at their homes," Ms. Tsoublekas explained. She also spoke about the social impact of the service on isolated seniors. "For some of them, we are perhaps the only ones they see, no one else steps into their house."



The Walk-a-Thon is an established autumn tradition in Laval's Chomedey neighborhood. For a registration fee of $10.00, participants walked a route around the park, after which they were provided with complimentary food. An outdoor yoga session was also offered to attendees.

Tassos Xipolitakis, the association's secretary, spoke about his involvement with the organization. "I just want to congratulate you for the God-pleasing work you do all these years and to urge everyone to come and help Filia," he said. "About 8-10 years ago, I felt the need when I reached a certain age that I had to help somewhere and that's why I came to Filia. Please, come and help."

Also in attendance was Mary Deros, the Municipal Councilor for Park Extension. In her remarks, she acknowledged FILIA's long-standing service to the community. "I admire you because for so many years you continue to give services to the elderly and you help as much as you can. 45 whole years," Ms. Deros said. She noted the event's importance for both physical activity and social connection. "...when we come we see friends, we exchange opinions, we talk. And this is good for the mind when we are happy to see our own people next to us. It is first of all the mind and health and these are thanks to Filia and Joanna Tsoublekas."

The FILIA association has operated for 45 years. While its original mission was to assist Greek women in Parc Extension, its mandate has since grown to serve seniors and individuals from all backgrounds across the Montreal region, with an increasing focus on the Laval population. For its first 13 years, the Walk-a-Thon was held in Parc Extension before moving to Laval.

In addition to the food delivery program, FILIA offers a range of other services. According to Ms. Tsoublekas, these include gymnastics classes twice a week to help with balance, a food bank that provides free groceries to those in need, yoga sessions, and painting classes, which will begin in November. The association also provides assistance with tax returns for low-income individuals and acts as a resource for information on services available to seniors.

Ms. Tsoublekas thanked the attendees for their participation and support. "I wish you all the best. Be well," she concluded.

Greek Viper premiere packs Montreal Improv Theatre



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Montreal-born actor Elias Scoufaras brought his one-man show, Greek Viper, to a hometown audience last Wednesday, performing to a packed house at the Montreal Improv Theatre. The premiere on September 25 was a homecoming for the artist, whose solo performance arrived in the city following a sold-out run at the Hudson Theatre in Los Angeles. That venue is noted as the same stage where the theatrical production of My Big Fat Greek Wedding first debuted, a detail featured in the promotional material for Mr. Scoufaras's show. His return to the city of his birth was met with a standing ovation, with attendees praising both his comedic timing and the intensity of the story.

The 70-minute play is billed as «My Big Fat Greek Wedding meets A Bronx Tale» and blends family comedy with the narrative of a mob thriller. The story follows a pianist whose world changes when love and tragedy pull him into the criminal underworld of Montreal. This story is laced with humor, which is drawn from the presence of the protagonist's overbearing Greek parents and a gallery of other personalities. Over the course of the evening, Mr. Scoufaras embodies all 17 characters himself, portraying characters ranging from relatives to mobsters.

For Mr. Scoufaras, performing Greek Viper in Montreal was more than a professional milestone; it was a personal one. "To perform it here, in the city where I was born, feels like coming full circle," he told the crowd after the show. He explained that the play grew out of his own experiences with culture, identity, and the contradictions of family life. He has called the show his most personal project to date, a work that requires his humor, heart, and intensity. This authenticity was noted by audience members, some of whom laughed in recognition at the depictions of Greek family dynamics woven into the narrative. Mr. Scoufaras summarized the show's themes as «love, loss, and revenge, with a side of baklava».

While now based in Los Angeles, Mr. Scoufaras was born and raised in Montreal and has built a career across film, television, and theatre. He is an alumnus of the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute in New York and has worked professionally in Montreal, Toronto, and Los Angeles. His recent screen credits include an appearance as Kostas on the television series General Hospital. In 2024, he won the Vanguard Best Actor Award at the Idyllwild International Festival of Cinema for his role in the film Rich and Happy.

The production was guided by its creative team to be an experience described as both cinematic and intimate. The show was directed by Alec Norris, a Los Angeles-based director with a focus on character-driven, emotionally resonant narratives. The producer was Michael Donovan, an award-winning casting director and the recipient of 10 Artios Awards from the Casting Society of America for Outstanding Achievement in Casting. With more than 1,000 theatre productions to his name, Mr. Donovan brought his industry expertise to shepherd the project from page to stage.

The reception in Montreal was reflected in local media, which described the play as a "tour de force" and "a story that only Montreal could inspire". The welcome in his hometown may mark the beginning of a new chapter for Greek Viper, which is expected to continue its run in other cities.



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