AHEPA

**96th AHEPA Supreme Convention**

**Atlantic City, NJ**

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Ubiqus/Nation-Wide Reporting & Convention Coverage

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# 96th AHEPA Supreme Convention

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MR. CARL HOLLISTER: Good morning. How are you today?

[Background conversation]

MR. HOLLISTER: Vote for me. Don’t vote for me again. Okay, where did he go? All right, good morning brothers. We want to get started as quickly as possible. The first order of business is going to be the nomination for convention chair. Brother George?

MR. GEORGE LOUCAS: Mr. Supreme President. I have [background noise] and -

MR. HOLLISTER: Brothers, good morning. Welcome to the Jersey Shore and Mr. President, I rise, thank you for allowing me the opportunity. Also standing in the general vicinity of yourself is past Supreme President, Nick Karacostas of the HEPA First party. The chairman of this year’s convention, nominee is a wonderful man, brother Jim Stasios. I rise to make that nomination and I believe Brother Karacostas may have the second.

MR. NICK KARACOSTAS: I second that nomination.

MR. HOLLISTER: Brother Jim, do you accept the nomination? Very good. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I order the nominations be closed. Everyone, let’s do a unanimous vote for the convention chairmen, Jim Stasios, say aye.

ALL: Aye.

MR. HOLLISTER: Very good, congratulations, Jim.

MR. LUCAS: Mr. President, I also rise to nominate as a vice chairman of this convention, Brother Zenon Christodoulou and I believe there may be a second in order for that one, as well.

MR. KARACOSTAS: I second the nomination for Brother Zenon Christodoulou from the great state of New Jersey.

MR. HOLLISTER: Brother Zenon, do you accept the nomination? Do we have any other nominations for vice chairman? Do we have any other nominations for vice chairman? Do we – yes, brother?

MALE VOICE 1: I move the nomination be closed, sir, for Zenon. Position of vice chairman for the 96th - - convention - - around the city of New Jersey, District number five.

MR. HOLLISTER: Outstanding. Harry? Okay, brothers, nominations are now closed. I order we cast a unanimous ballot for Zenon for vice chairmen of the convention. Those say aye?

ALL: Aye.

MR. HOLLISTER: Very good, congratulations.

[applause]

MR. LUCAS: So no breakfast and a lack of microphones. We also rise to place a nomination for secretary. Brother George Booras our supreme governor out west, so to speak and I believe there’s a second to that, too?

MR. KARACOSTAS: I second the nomination for Brother George Booras for the office of secretary from the great state of California.

MR. HOLLISTER: Brother George, do you accept the nomination for secretary for the convention?

MR. GEORGE BOORAS: Yes, I do, Brother President.

MR. HOLLISTER: Very good. Do we have any other nominations for secretary of the convention? Do we have any other nominations for secretary of the convention? Do we have any other nominations for secretary of the convention? Hearing none, I order that we have a unanimous ballot cast for George Booras for convention secretary. All those in favor, say aye.

ALL: Aye.

MR. HOLLISTER: Thank you. Okay, Brother Jim, Zenon, George, please come up.

[applause]

MR. HOLLISTER: Yeah. Not at them, right? Congratulations. All right, brothers, Jim – stand here. George – you …

[Background conversation]

MR. HOLLISTER: Please raise your right hands. We’re gonna swear ‘em in.

[Background conversation]

MR. HOLLISTER: Pull up a phone.

MR. LUCAS: The Verizon bible.

MR. HOLLISTER: The Verizon bible. Okay, brothers, I’m about to give you your oath. Please repeat after me. I, state your name.

ALL: I, [crosstalk] –

MR. HOLLISTER: Promise to uphold.

ALL: Promise to uphold.

MR. HOLLISTER: And defend.

ALL: And defend.

MR. HOLLISTER: And refer to.

ALL: And refer to.

MR. HOLLISTER: The constitution.

ALL: The constitution.

MR. HOLLISTER: Of the order of AHEPA.

ALL: Of the order of AHEPA.

MR. HOLLISTER: And the bylaws.

ALL: And the bylaws.

MR. HOLLISTER: So help me God.

ALL: So help me God.

MR. HOLLISTER: Congratulations.

ALL: Thank you.

MR. LUCAS: So this is the only one that works. They’re gonna come in with a replacement, then we’ll put that one back down.

MALE VOICE 1: Good morning, brothers. Thank you for being in the room so that we can get started with our convention. We’re trying to move along as expeditiously as possible. So your cooperation and attention will be greatly appreciated. As we begin our convention I want to take a moment – just as a reminder – we all know this, we’ve seen it, we’ve read it, we’ve repeated it and I want us to keep it in front of us during this week of deliberations. The mission statement of AHEPA is to promote the Hellenic ideals of education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, integrity and family and individual excellence through community service and volunteerism.

So you being here today is a prime example of that. We want to move right along with the report of our supreme officers and if we have in the room our Athletics Committee Chair? Please Brother, come forward, and then we’ll – oh, I’m sorry, Brother, I’m sorry. We were gonna start with our Supreme Governors and then I’ll call on you. I apologize for that. So, yes, we’re gonna begin with our Supreme Governors with – thank you – with Region 1 first with Brother Peter Nassos. Is he in the room?

MR. PETER NASSOS: Thank you, Brother.

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Sorry. I’ll let you start with that since they’re doing - -

[Background conversation]

MR. NASSOS: Good morning my dear brothers and welcome to Atlantic City. My name’s Pete Nassos, Atlanta, Georgia, Supreme Governor, Region 1, past District Governor, District 1, past President Mother Lodge Chapter Number 1. Current president of AHEPA One from AHEPA National Housing. Anyway, for those not familiar with Region 1, who needs a podium? I’m standing in the way of this chair. The region 1 is very broad. It goes from Myrtle Beach all the way to Memphis, Tennessee – just district 1, itself, and then District 2 is the state of Florida.

So we cover most of the southeast except for really Kentucky and Virginia, North Carolina. So big territory and lots of members. I won’t bore you with all the membership statistics but we’re in an area where our growth is plateaued. At least the good news is we’re not declining and we’re continuing to grow and we’re continuing to build our chapters. One of the most interesting thing is to think about is that in the AHEPA, you have the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association and education has been and continues to be a key focus on Region 1.

I was just running through the numbers in terms of the money that’s been given out. So we have a District 1 scholarship fund. We have a District 2 scholarship fund and in all the various chapters, many of ‘em have scholarship funds. The Mother Lodge scholarship fund, the corpus is $1.4 million and this year gave out $75,000 alone. When you add up between District 1 and District 2 and the various chapters contained within, the scholarship funds donated in scholarships this year, nearly $250,000 in scholarships.

That’s a big number and it’s a great accomplishment and it’s a continuing legacy of what we’re doing. The second area is also been in terms of senior housing. One third of all the HUD 202 projects are located within District 1 and District 2. Again, a lot of that – thanks to the legacy of our late, departed Brother Nick Stratos who has 13 of these HUD 202 projects in Mobile, Alabama, alone. But because of this work, this has also created quite a legacy, a service to the community, ‘cause we actually have housing units now for approximately 6,000 apartment units.

You add ‘em all up and it’s providing a great boon to the senior citizens of low income to have a safe, clean, and secure place to live. Of particular note in fundraising that was going on in District 2. We had Hurricane Maria came through and did a lot of damage, particularly in Puerto Rico. And our Brother Gus Pantalides, who is District Governor for District 2 went and they – raised, primarily within District 2 but on a national basis, $16,000 to provide a new neonatal incubator for the University Pediatric Hospital in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

A big effort because of the hurricane, they lost of their equipment and this was a very critical unit and for them to have replaced. So they were able to raise the money and Brother Gus went down and in conjunction with a relative of his that also lives in San Juan that’s also regenerating the AHEPH chapter down there. They donated this unit. So a lot to say about what’s going on in the area; we have our challenges but we also have our blessings and we’re continuing to grow and provide support and honor the good name and brand that’s been established with the order of AHEPA.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much. Is the Region 2 Supreme Governor in the room? Cleon Kordistos? I didn’t think I saw him yet. So, we’ll move on to Region 3. We’ll call on Supreme Governor, Tom Dushas.

MR. TOM DUSHAS: I had two minutes ago on my phone, unfortunately, I can’t find it now. However, I’ll find it in a second. Excuse me? Well, I need you to help me - - it froze – cancel, okay. Brothers, good morning. Brothers, good morning. Can I put it up there? Oh, it doesn’t sit. Okay. Well, I’ll try to get my word across anyway. Good morning, as I said, before. My name is Tom Dushas. I had a wonderful experience as your supreme governor of Region 3. Region 3 is made up of District 6 and District 5.

I am proud of brothers of both districts including the chapter presidents, the district lodgers, and especially both district governors who have done great work in their respective districts. Dr. Zenon Christodoulou and Ted Stamos, who’s not here from District 6 – they were fun and interesting to work with. They are young and have a lot they could and will offer to AHEPA for many years. I think the highlights of my term in office was having a great celebration for - - Day on October 28 at Ellis Island. Close to 500 people attended.

We had interesting speakers, a tour of Ellis Island, the buildings of Ellis Island, and the museum. I started my term working in August and in August I held a membership meeting, followed by additional meetings every month until December. For the region, we had a 10% increase in membership; probably the largest. We are the largest region and we are also had the largest increase in numbers. This is due to the hard work, starting from the grassroots from the chapters to the districts and that’s what created these good numbers.

I was involved personally in reactivating four chapters and initiation of a new chapter in Middletown, New York. I believe that the Middletown chapter is the only new chapter in the United States this year. Only the European chapters have done better with lots of chapters that have new chapters that have started. I attended over a dozen initiations and I’m still working on District 6, large and reactivating chapters in Huntington, New York and also in Southampton, New York. In May, my wife and I went on an AHEPA excursion to Greece, Cypress, and Constantinople.

It was a trip I will never forget. While in Athens we attended a fundraiser for the AHEPA medical library at Evangelismos Hospital. HJ1 which is the chapter actually within Evangelismos Hospital is responsible for building out and furnishing of the library including databanks for use by doctors, doctors to save lives. I am on the committee and I was a successful presenter to the Supreme Convention two years ago where we made this a national project. We will make a detailed PowerPoint report to the general assembly in the next few days.

A chapter – as a chapter project being co-chairman of the project, we have a $110 million senior citizen affordable housing in White Plains, New York. We are offering consulting expertise to HANAC, which is a organization, mainly in the New York area. They are a Hellenic American National Action Committee and what it was – it was a project that they had started 10 years ago and for various political reasons – they were awarded this project and for various reasons, the project went dormant. My brother, George Curtis, who’s my chapter and myself started exploring.

We heard that about it going dormant and for the last four or five years, we’ve been working with the housing commission about the city of White Plains and the county of Westchester. And in that process, they agreed to reactivate their thoughts and actually the land that was going to be donated, it’s there and now they – the city council has agreed and the – actually the county legislature has agreed that this property belongs or should be given to this project. We are not working as partners on it but we are working as consultants, the two of us, and for which our chapter will get a very sizeable fee.

Also, we’ll get a monthly stipend. We also will have our AHEPA meeting room within the affordable housing complex and we will get a plaque showing that we were involved in putting this thing together. So I’m very proud of this. You’ll hear more about it in the next – by the end of the year, we should have this project put together. Now I know the time is short but I have to address something. As you may have heard, I have been accused of using the AHEPA name and logo without permission. I think I owe to my brothers –

MALE VOICE 2: [interposing] Mr. Chairman?

MR. DUSHAS: May I – wait a second, I have the floor.

MALE VOICE 2: Mr. Chairman, this is out of line.

MR. DUSHAS: Why?

MALE VOICE 2: You are here to give a supreme governor’s report.

MR. DUSHAS: This is part of my report.

MALE VOICE 2: That is not part of your report.

[Background conversation]

MR. DUSHAS: No, no, no this is within my –

MALE VOICE 2: No, it’s not. That has nothing to do with you being a Supreme Governor –

[crosstalk]

MR. HOLLISTER: It’s gonna make your job tomorrow much harder.

MR. DUSHAS: Well, Mr. President, all respect, I’ll stop; but in all respect, you’re wrong. Not only are you wrong, but this is the reason why I want to have that meeting on Tuesday because you’re stopping me from speaking.

MALE VOICE 2: [crosstalk]

MR. DUSHAS: Why am I out of line?

MALE VOICE 2: You’re out of line. If you have a grievance, take to the grievance [crosstalk] –

MR. HOLLISTER: Do it then. You’ll save yourself a lot of trouble.

MALE VOICE 2: This is for Supreme Governor’s report.

MR. DUSHAS: Thank you very much.

MALE VOICE 1: Brothers, as you know, we’re doing the supreme governors’ report at this time, so now we’re call on Region 4, Brother Jack Isaac.

MALE VOICE 3: And while Brother is coming, I would just like to welcome you all to New Jersey. I’m the past district governor of District 5 and I live in New Jersey. So I want to welcome you here. I hope you all made it safely. You’ll have a great time and for those of you who haven’t been to Atlantic City, I just want to give you some New Jersey advice. If you’re walking through the hotel and something urges you to go to the casino, I highly recommend that you clutch your wallet, keep it close to you, and walk away slowly.

If you’re out of the hotel and there’s some urge – somebody comes up to you and demands your wallet, give it to them, and run quickly. That’s some New Jersey advice. I think it will suit you well, especially if you’re out of the hotel. Thank you very much. Brother.

MR. JACK ISAAC: Thank you so much. I wish I had heard this yesterday. You know, it took me longer to get up to the podium than they’ve given us time for the Supreme Governors to speak. But that’s okay, we know our place. I am the Supreme Governor of Region 4 which encompasses Connecticut to Maine. I’ve been very fortunate to hold this position for two years. I’ve thoroughly enjoyed it and the greatest part of it, I think, is getting an opportunity to meet some tremendous brothers. Now, one of the things I’m proudest about is that in this last year, Region 4 managed to have an increase in membership in each of the three districts.

I’m very proud of that. That didn’t happen because of me – it happened because of the hard work of a lot of people, particularly, the district governors and the chapter presidents. So I thank them personally and in public. Thank you very much. Our district, 7, has been hosting the Hellenic history tournament for about a decade now. As you may or may not know, the tournament was the brainchild of Brother Nick Nikas [phonetic]. It’s an opportunity for our best and brightest students to participate in kind of a college bowl presentation.

Because of the success of this tournament, it’s been replicated in several places around the country. They take the winners of those regional tournaments, bring them this year to Atlantic City and we’re going to have a finals. That will be on Thursday. If you’ve never seen this tournament in action, I encourage you to come Thursday and see these young students. They are just incredible. We’re in good hands for the future, believe me. I’d also like to say that one of the great things that we have in our region is our Yankee News Publication which is from District 7. We are very proud that for the last three years it has been chosen as the best publication in the AHEPA domain.

We’re out to defend that championship this week. We are committed in our region to raising $15,000 in district 7 and hopefully District 8 and I see my friends from District 8 are over at that table. How about a shout out from you guys? Okay. They are also committed to raising funds for the service dogs for warriors. As you know it takes $15,000 to purchase a dog, to train him, and have him ready to be given to his owner. So it’s a tremendous cause and we’re working hard to fulfill that. So I guess I can say very simply and quickly, Region 4 is doing well and we hope we can continue doing well with all the help of the brothers in District 7, 8, and 9.

Thank you so much. Have a great convention. Maybe we’ll even see the sun at some point.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much, brother. Now we’ll hear from Region 5, Supreme Governor, Craig Theros.

[Background conversation]

MR. CRAIG THEROS: Good morning. My name is Craig Theros, Supreme Governor of Region 5. I’m gonna read my report ‘cause Brother Carl suggested that I might go over in my time because people from Michigan stutter. So … first of all, I’d like to thank the Supreme Lodge, Districts 10 and 11 and all the members of Region 5 in allowing me the opportunity to lead the region this past year as Supreme Governor. It has been a very rewarding experience. I’ve met so many people that shared the desire and help to help others not as fortunate as most of here today and constantly strive to make AHEPA greater than it already is.

I want to congratulate both Districts 10 and 11 and all the hard work that they did over the past year. I’d like to give a special shout out to the District 10’s Governor, Dr. Evans Farres and to Lieutenant Dmitris Popyouyou [phonetic] who rose to the occasion when he was temporarily needed to step in in the Governor’s position. Also to District 11’s Governor Bill Zantapolis [phonetic]. These brothers never said no. They always supported me and they did their best to attain the goals that I set forth for them in the respective districts. They made my job so much easier than it could have been and I thank them for that.

At last year’s governor’s conference, Supreme President Hollister asked that all Supreme Governors to create a membership committee comprised of members of various districts that we oversaw. This committee was the first focus on membership retainage and to get as many delinquents paid as possible by the end of the year. The committee was formed with four members from both districts 10 and 11. We met five times by phone conferences. Both districts stepped up. From September to the end of 2017, District 10 collected 76 delinquent members and District 11 collected 252 delinquent members.

At the beginning of 2018, the committee’s focus was changed to increasing membership. I set forth four goals for both districts. One, to increase the membership by 10% by June 1st either by new initiates or reinstatements. Two, to have all members paid to national by March 31st. Three, encourage each chapter to update their members’ contact information. Four, to encourage each chapter to pick a project or charity to work on together to create a camaraderie in the process of helping those in need. These were lofty goals to achieve.

Well, the brothers stepped up again. As of June 1st, District 10 reported a 6.5% increase in new or reinstated members, while District 11 had an increase of 4.1%. Per capita paid to national was 78.7% in District 10 and while District 11 had 66.1% paid. We also made positive advances in updating contact information and identifying projects that each chapter chose to undertake. We may not have fully realized our goals but both districts put forth one hell of an effort and I’m very proud of ‘em.

Now, I’d like to just highlight some of the significant accomplishments from both districts. District 11: a district newsletter was created and dispersed comprised of great information from District 11 and its chapters. I was told that was the first one in quite some time. The district fees were instituted and collected from the members to help fund the district sponsored programs and activities. It wasn’t the most popular initiative but it was well-needed. This year the district’s educational foundation awarded $43,000.00 to 38 scholarship recipients.

In District 10, a mentoring program was initiated to help students connect with professionals to help answer their many questions and bypass the many obstacles associated with starting a new career. A committee was formed with included metropolitan Nicholas in which the AHEPA will collaborate with the metropolis of Detroit and its churches on finding ways to assist each other in their organizational causes and needs. This year, District 10’s educational foundation awarded $58,000.00 in 37 scholarships; the most ever in District 10.

Again, the district fundraised for and purchased another semi truck load of nearly 2,000 gallons of milk which we personally handed out to the innocent victims of the Flint water crisis through the district’s Milk for Flint program. This now totals five truckloads of nearly 10,000 gallons of milk in just over two years. At the end of 2017, District 10 increased its membership by more than 9% from the previous year. I truly believe that this large increase was greatly influenced by the Milk for Flint program. Not only has this program provided much needed relief for the Flint community but it has also acquired positive media reporting which undoubtedly increased AHEPA’s visibility to those outside the Greek community.

All in all, it was a good year in Region 5. We realized many accomplishments. However, we will continue to work diligently this coming year to support our great fraternity by increasing our membership, by promoting its ideals, by achieving lofty goals and helping those in need. Thank you.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much. Now we’ll call on Region 6 Supreme Governor Donald Vanover.

[applause]

MR. DONALD VANOVER: Thank you. My name’s Don Vanover, I represent Region 6 and for those of you who may not know Region 6 includes most of the upper Midwest, District 12 which is Indiana, 13 which is Illinois and Wisconsin, and District 14 which is Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska. That all represents an area of just under 600,000 square miles. As a former district governor in 14 I can tell you that to drive from Duluth, which is the Chapter in the northern most reaches of our organization, down to St. Louis, which is the chapter in the far south – it’s 14 hours driving, assuming clear roads and no snow.

During my tenure as a Supreme Governor, my travels have taken me from coast to coast, from New Jersey and New York and Washington on the East, to Arizona, California, and Nevada on the west. From Minnesota in the north down to Florida in the south. It’s also taken me to Greece, Turkey, and Cypress and wherever I’ve gone, I have to tell you I’ve noticed a similarity of all the members; the love that they show for one another and I think that’s really a good indication of the strength of our fraternity. The AHEPA family is an extraordinary organization which we all be very proud to belong.

Our commitment to Hellenism, education, youth, philanthropy, and service to others is unparalleled. As an example, we witnessed District 12’s philanthropy. District 12, historically, is either the first or near first to provide donations to wherever the need that has been identified; whether it’s local, national, or international or witnessed the 724 district 14 students who have benefitted from scholarship received from the district’s educational foundation, valued at just under $400,000.00. Or the 101 high school and college youth who are honored this past June with individual athletic awards as well as 17 scholarships from District 13.

At the national level, if you rolled all of our educational donations it comes under about $2,000,000.00 a year. Old eyes. As AHEPA approaches its 100th anniversary, we’ve become an international organization and continuing to expand with 10 chapters in Europe, 36 chapters in Greece and Cypress, plus chapters in Canada and Australia. But I would be remiss, since I do this at any meeting I go to, and that is to mention that the lifeblood of any organization is its members and AHEPA is no exception. So, I always carry membership applications with me and I would ask that every member be vigilant to find and ask friends, family, and coworkers to join.

In summary and finally, I’d like to thank Carl Hollister and Andy Zachariades whose leadership I served for the past few years. They’re excellent, excellent leaders, a lot of fun to be around and I’m stepping down but I’m behind this organization 100% which goes a lot for a philhellene. I think if you don’t know – I think the future of this organization is not just with the Greeks, but it’s with the philhellenes. So, if you see anymore Dutch boys out there, ask ‘em to join.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much, brother. Now Region 7, Nick Dixie. See – is the brother in the room? If not, we’ll move on to Region 8 and our convention secretary Supreme Governor, George Booras.

[applause]

MR. BOORAS: Thank you. Thank you, brothers, and good morning to you. Region 8 is on the west coast. Region 8 includes Districts 20, 21, and 22 with chapters in the states of California, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii. It’s quite a large region. I’m gonna go over briefly some of the highlights of the region and just let you know what we’ve been up to on the west coast. We just recently had our western regional district convention in Reno. That encompassed four districts: district 17 and then all of the districts in Region 8, so 20, 21, and 22. Each district has their own business meeting but we come together for the social events.

It was extremely well-attended. We had a total amount of delegates was 164. We had over a couple hundred people at each of the social events and I was really happy to see so many people take advantage of this very unique opportunity to meet the brothers and sisters from their neighboring districts at an event like this. We do this every two years on the even year. I encourage other districts to try something similar to this. It really works out very well. Let me move on to some highlights from District 20. Last fall, as you know, we had a series of AHEPA regional workshops and banquets and the first of those was in Los Angeles at the St. Sophia Cathedral. Brother Carl was there, Brother Jimmy Kokotas was there and we had great discussions about the future of the AHEPA Family.

We had the sons and Maids there, as well. We had a banquet where we presented several awards and veterans pins. District 20 had their midwinter conference on January 27th in San Bernardino. As a part of that we also had a tour of the only AHEPA housing project that’s on the west coast and that is in San Bernardino. We’re very proud of what they’ve done there. One other significant accomplishment in District 20 has been a fundraiser for the victims of the massive Thomas wildfire in Southern California. The brothers really have done a lot to help their people that were displaced out of their homes as a result of that.

Moving on to my district, which is District 21, northern California, one of our highlights was at our fall conference in San Jose. We reactivated a son’s and a maid’s chapter. The district 21 project for the last couple of years has been the renovation of the St. Nicholas Ranch AHEPA dormitory and that has been – that’s a three phase project, total cost of about $180,000.00. The first two phases have already been completed. The St. Nicholas ranch is near Fresno, California and is used by many of the parishes in the San Francisco metropolis.

Finally, last but not least, I want to talk a little bit about District 22. District 22 is a small district, a number of chapters but three major ones: Portland, Tacoma, and Seattle. They are famous in their neighborhoods; in their communities for the work that they do there. Both the Tacoma and Portland chapters have some very successful crab feeds. In Portland, they actually have two seatings. They serve a total for 550 people at their crab feeds. Tacoma serves about 450 people. These are major fundraising events that helps to support their scholarship program and other charities in the areas.

The Seattle chapter hosts a very large Greek independence day event. They get the whole community involved up in Seattle. I just wanted to note that District 22, of the three districts in my region, District 22 has a very well organized and very well funded scholarship program. Again, they’re not that large of a district but they give far more scholarship money per capita than either of the other districts in the region. They just do incredible work with their program up there. Finally, I would really like to thank the district governors that I had the wonderful opportunity of working with for the past year.

In District 20, Alex Soles - Alex has been quite active – he’s been to a number of conventions. Unfortunately he couldn’t be here for this one. George Zioulas is our district governor from District 21. He will be here at this convention. George is on his 2nd year. And in District 22, we had Chris Economou – Chris did a wonderful job of getting the brothers together up there and I really want to appreciate and thank these brothers for all the work that they’ve done. As great AHEPAns, they’ve set a high bar for the brothers to follow them. Finally, I really want to thank the members of the Supreme Lodge for the honor and privilege of serving with them.

It’s been really a pleasure; a very professional group of people – very well organized. All of you – I have really looked – enjoyed this past year and thank you very much.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much, Brother George. Now we’ll call on Region 10, Supreme Governor, Dr. Alfred Purrich [phonetic].

[applause]

DR. ALFRED PURRICH: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Before I begin with the highlights, I would like to request your indulgence because the brothers who have come from my region have come from Cypress, they’ve come from Brussels, they’ve come from Bulgaria, and all over Greece. I believe it’s important that we recognize these brothers so I’d like to begin by – if that’s okay with you and then I’ll go in the highlights. So, we have today, the district governor from Cypress, Phanos Pitiris, please, Phano.

[applause]

MR. PURRICH: Also, we have the current district governor, Stavos [phonetic] Gefiritis [phonetic] from District 25.

[applause]

MR. PURRICH: Also together on this trip is our priest, Arito [phonetic] Grogekis [phonetic], vice president of Hellenism – I don’t know if he’s here right now. Two members who are new members and that’s why I believe it’s important that they be recognized and everybody get a chance to interact are Andonis [phonetic] Yanakiris [phonetic] and Kostas [phonetic] Zois [phonetic] from Rhodes. This is one of our very active chapters. Andonis is a president and they’ve done a lot of things. I’ll just zoom through on the highlights. Also we have Father Ignazio [phonetic] Zevropolos [phonetic] who you’ve heard a lot about with the volley ball.

He’s here and he’s from the Nafatos [phonetic]. Also we have two members from the Athens, Leftedes [phonetic] Sicaledes [phonetic] and Vares [phonetic] Koralrosiv [phonetic] – they’re here right now. Also we have from the European district, D28, we have the current district governor, Kalamades [phonetic] Seejakem [phonetic] and also Themos [phonetic] Momonas [phonetic] from Brussels – who’s a president from Brussels. [applause] And he is also the AHEPAN of the year for Europe. So, we’re rooting for you, Themo. Okay.

Now, I’d like to also thank very much the members of my region – the region team 10. Today we have with us past supreme governor, Nick Papavopolous [phonetic] who you all know – he’s not a new member. The other two members who are part of my region 10 team are Iliz [phonetic] Visiliad [phonetic] and John Matropolis [phonetic] who couldn’t make it here. So I appreciate their input, otherwise I could not do what we have done. Now, I’ll briefly go over some details – I’ll begin with Phanos. We visited Cypress on the presidential excursion and he had everything there ready for us.

All the meetings – everything was set up and it was a very productive meeting – not only fun, but it was fun as well. Zenon knows that. So briefly let me go over, also former district governor, Tasos [phonetic] Visiliades [phonetic] couldn’t make it here but I’m just gonna go over what we did in the District 28 – the Europe. The first in September, 2017, we did the first district convention in Sophia. That went very well. In October, in Stuttgart, there was a celebration for the 28th October [Greek language spoken 00:48:58].

In the 6th of November, there was a participation of the 7th German Hellenic assembly with the president of the association of municipalities and townships, Mr. Patoulis [phonetic] also took place in Stuttgart. The 3rd of December, the first contact for the creation of a new chapter which was created in Wiesbaden. We have three new chapters and we’re going strong. On December 7th, we represented our Supreme President with George Koriotis [phonetic] as the Supreme Treasurer and a visit to Brussels and we thank the Brussels Chapter and Themos and George Koritikos [phonetic] for the excellent job that they did there for us.

Also there was participation in the Christmas festivities on District 25 by members of District 28, as well. Let me just go over this quickly. There was on the 21st of January, there was a co- organization of our chapter there for the protest march on the Macedonian issue in Stuttgart, as well. I mentioned – oh, okay – January 26th with the members of my team, we visited the Paris chapters with John Mitropolicilies [phonetic] Varsiliades [phonetic] and after that we went to London and we had the mid-winter conference there. We successfully reactivated the London chapter.

There were donations from Europe from the European chapter for the electronic library of Evangilmos Hospital, as well. On the 15th of February there was a meeting with George Peep [phonetic], mayor of Cambridge. Okay, on the 20th of February, there was a dinner in – where was it? In Stuttgart, if I’m not mistaken of four past Supreme Governor Nick and DOP President Vakariti [phonetic] if I’m not mistaken, right? Also there was a dinner in honor of Mrs. Demi Thomas. In the 11th of March we had the formal recognition by the courts of District 28 ‘cause we were functioning under AHEPA laws until then and we are now formally recognized in Europe.

There was several initiations in all the chapters; I won’t go into details on that. There were, like I said, two new chapters in Bulgaria, as well, and one in Wiesbaden. There was a wreath laying ceremony by the vice president of Hellenism for District 28, Joachim [phonetic] Calamadis [phonetic] at the Rupel [phonetic] Fort. More initiations … and the preparations with the working together with the president of Berlin of the Berlin chapter, Jerses [phonetic] Gazanzis [phonetic] and we ended up with the elections of the 2nd convention in District 28 – which occurred in Berlin and there was wreath laying ceremony in commemoration of the genocide by the Ottoman Empire.

So that wraps up a little bit for District 28 – the European District. Now, District 25, Supreme Governor Duchas covered a part of that for me. Anyway, there was a lot of philanthropy. One of the events whereby the Komoteni [phonetic] chapter, so Brother District Governor Stavias [phonetic] can fill you in on details. There was supporting efforts and events for the Evangelismos Library. There were philanthropic events by Chapters HA17. There was a seminar on CPR by the Volis [phonetic] Chapter HA 13 and HA 11 hosted talks on the geopolitical significance of the Greek identity and that was very significant one.

So we have about 35 chapters; about half of them are really active. So I won’t go into details – most of it was philanthropy and Hellenism. So I think I covered that and I thank you for your attention.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much, brother. We thank you for all your hard work and we want to especially welcome our European brothers that are here with us and have traveled to the States. Thank you for being with us. In the interest of time and due to the fact that our Supreme Athletic Director has another commitment shortly, we’ll ask that he come forward and give his report at this time, Brother Lou Atsaves.

[applause]

MR. LOU ATSAVES: I do. Thank you. Good morning brothers. I brought my laptop up here because I find it easier to read it off the screen as opposed to paper based on the lighting that we have in here. You will see my report – my report runs six pages and I can give you the option of either having me read all six pages to you or doing the shorthand version. So … [laughter] it seems like the unanimous vote is for Plan B. So, anyway, I was honored to be re-elected as the Supreme Athletic Director at Walt Disney World – enough completing my 5th year of service to AHEPA in this particular capacity.

I still consider the Supreme Athletic department as one of the fines programs that AHEPA offers to the Hellenic community. No other single Greek American organization offers anything close to what we offer to Greek America. Always keep that in mind as we go through this report and thinking about athletics and AHEPA, in general. These programs would not be possible without the direct involvement of many AHEPAns. I’d like to briefly mention a few names because all of them, for the order of AHEPA, wear multiple hats. Not only do they work for athletics but they also have other positions, elected or appointed within AHEPA that they work extremely hard for.

I’ll start with the efforts of Brother Sandy Papadopoulos who is our current Supreme Sons Advisor – he also doubles as our National Director of the National Golf Tournaments. Brother Greg Stamos who was in here – I think he’s in here [applause] there he is – all the way in the corner. Brother Stamos sets the record – he triples and I think quadruples as our National AHEPA Athletic Hall of Fame Director, as our Special Awards Director, and as our National AHEPA Athletic Scholarship Director. I also want to mention my brother, Brother Chris Atsaves, who also wears multiple hats.

He’s the assistant National Director of the golf tournaments, nationally. He’s Chairman of the AHEPA Midwest Regional Golf Tournament. He is the 13th District Sports Director and as such, he chairs every year annually for 50 consecutive years now. He’s been at his 23rd year – the 13th District Annual Sports Award Chairman. Brother Demetrios Kirkiles doubles as a supreme counselor – he’s sitting right in front here and he’s also the director of the AHEPA marathon program that we run annually. Brother John Venetos [phonetic] is Chairman of the National AHEPA Marrow Program.

He’s also an Assistant Director of Basketball and you will – he had plans on flying in this weekend for the basketball tournament – we’ll get to that in a moment. Brother Kosta [phonetic] Papadimitriou [phonetic] is the head of basketball, nationally, for AHEPA and we’ll discuss basketball in a moment. Brother Costa [phonetic] also wears multiple hats. Brother Themi [phonetic] Chonas [phonetic], hall of famer, Brother Kirk Vitas [phonetic] holds multiple hats in AHEPA; he was just elected secretary of our chapter, Northshore 94, back in Chicago. He’s doing that in his spare time, as well.

Brother George Karris [phonetic] has been National AHEPA Bowling Director for nearly a half a century now. Brother Nick Loxis [phonetic], his assistant as a Bowling Director is now, I believe, the Lieutenant Governor of District 12 of the Order of AHEPA. Brother Paul Pavlakos [phonetic], sons of Pericles Supreme Athletic Director, again, everyone wears multiple hats to bring this program to you. I want to stress that you so – my parish priest, when I was parish council president and we were looking for volunteers always had the philosophy that if you want to get something done, approach the busiest person in the room because he will find a way to get it done.

So keep that in mind as we go through this. I also want to thank – there’s a number of additional brothers who I’ve not mentioned who have been instrumental in the program. There are far too many names to mention. I hope they don’t take offense by me not mentioning them but I will be thanking them during the course of this convention ‘cause a lot of them are here today. Now, statistics and scores are a major part of any athletic director or any athletic endeavor and as you’ll see below – the athletic program is just more than just golf. I will start with golf.

We sponsored two national golf invitational tournaments this year. First was held on October 29th through November 4th and that’s our annual golf invitational. We held that Innisbrook in Tarpin Springs, Florida. There were 52 golfers attending along with eight spouses. There were approximately 20 guests who attended. The majority of the golfers elected the five day golf package as opposed to the three day golf package. There were 22 individuals that sponsored holes over this event contributing $250.00 per sponsorship. So we did very well on that.

I want to give a special shout out to Brother Nick Aroutzidis who’s the chairman of the board of governors from Canada who not only brought himself but five additional golfers from Canada for this particular event. The second event was held March 11th through the 17th and that’s the annual Dr. Monte Kolfis [phonetic] national invitational tournament. That was held in Charleston, South Carolina, at the Wild Dunes Resort. We had 64 golfers in attendance, 10 spouses, and another 15 guests. The overwhelming majority of golfers again participated in the five day package as opposed to the three day package.

So you can see where we’re going with the national program in the future when it comes to three days versus five days. There are 20 whole sponsors for that event contributing $250.00 each and the reason why I bring up the whole sponsorships is because on Wednesday, when we have our athletic luncheon and we award our athletic scholarships, a lot of the scholarships that are awarded through the athletic booster club are in Dr. Kolfis’ name. You’ll see there and even some of the other scholarships are only partially funded. This is where a lot of the money comes from for those scholarships.

So, in the future, when we try to hit up your chapter or you for a donation, you know where it’s gonna go. Our plan is to continue expanding the golf program. Our plan is to continue to expand the regional golf outing concept before the big blow up with athletics. There used to be seven regional outings that would send winners of their tournaments to the national outings. We, right now, have two and we’d like to get that back up to seven or eight as quickly as possible. We will continue with two national tournaments.

I will take the opportunity to announce that our fall national golf invitational will be held in Frisco, Texas, just outside of Dallas at the Stonebriar Resort and Golf Club. The dates are October 29, 2018 through November 3rd, so see Brother Sandy or myself and get yourself signed up for that early. There seems to be a lot of excitement for that particular event. Again, a special thank you to Brother Sandy and Brother Chris for the outstanding work they’ve done in rebuilding the golf program. Our national bowling tournament was held in Hammond, Indiana, at Olympia Lanes, hosted by Hammond Chapter 213.

The owner of Olympia Lanes is our assistant bowling director, Nick Loxis, just in case you’re wondering. Winners for first place for individual competition was Sam Floros [phonetic] of Detroit’s GM Chapter, second place, Nick Loxis of Hammond, and third place Frank Gregorio of Aegean Chapter. The team competitions; first place – I lost my place, I’m sorry – first place was Hammond, 123. Second place Garfield Chapter, Team Number 1 – they sent two teams, and third place was my northshore chapter 94, team number 2.

The number of pins separating those three teams were 11. So, just to give you an idea how tight the competition was that year. Next year, we will have that outing in Joliet, Illinois. We’ve tried to expand the program this year by inviting a lot of additional chapters to attend. We didn’t get much of a response and I know people have bowled in the past and this is a handicap bowling venture. So, feel free to participate next year. Put together a team. If you can’t put together a team and you have three guys, we will add you on to another team.

With that, the national basketball tournament will be held this year starting on Thursday and Friday. Right now we have somewhere between 18 and 20 teams that have registered. If they all show up they will run the full two days and I hope everyone takes the opportunity to see these kids and these young adults play basketball during the course of this convention. We started it up two years ago in Las Vegas. Last year we tried to do it again at Walt Disney World but with Walt Disney World there are so many different things going on it was hard to compete with that.

But in Las Vegas, for example, we had eight teams. So, it’s quite a jump and Brother Kosta Papadimitriou [phonetic] has done a marvelous job with his committee in putting that together. We hope to make that an annual event, not just a semiannual event. We also sponsor and support the Greek National baseball team. We have donated over $5,000.00 to them over the five year span for franchise or registration fees and also assisting in getting some of the players to bear the cost of flying there and flying them back because most of the kids that are playing are in college and they’re either broke or close to being broke.

So let’s be – try to do that. I want to thank Brother Tom Mazorakos [phonetic] for not only putting that together – the baseball team, some of the members would be here for this convention, except right now as we speak, they’re playing in Ireland in a tournament. So, hopefully, we’ll do well, if I hear any progress reports, I’ll let you know how they’re doing. They have a website to tell uniforms, hats to try to raise some money. If you go to an outfit called team Lockhard.squad and lockhard.com and look up the Hellenic baseball, you’ll see a variety of items there including baseball hats, jerseys, bats and balls, and anything else that you’d like to get.

So, feel free to step in and try to sponsor them because they’re struggling. The goal is to get them to well enough in these tournaments so that come Olympic time, Greece will have an entry in the Olympics for baseball. The AHEPA hall of fame – you will see the honorees that will be recognized tomorrow. This is probably the most popular program we have here. This year we’re going to induct into the hall of fame, Harry Sikma [phonetic], Michelle Koklanis [phonetic], George Papadakos [phonetic], Mark Phillipousis, [phonetic] and George Ravanis [phonetic]. Sikma played professional tennis for several years.

He’s now the sports anchor of WNBC television in New York. Koklanis played basketball at the University of Richmond, later professionally in Greece and Bulgaria and she’s now a college coach. Phillipousis is a Greek Australian who played professional tennis for over two decades. At one point he was ranked number eight in the world. Ravanis is a hall of fame baseball pitcher from Boston College who was later drafted by the Cleveland Indians. They will all be present with the exception of Phillipousis at our luncheon so I hope you take the time to say hi to them and meet ‘em.

With the honorees for athletics, we are honoring, I believe nine but we have special honorees for athletics. This year’s special honoree is Dean Karnasis [phonetic] who’s a worldwide ultra marathoner who runs practically every single day of the week. This guy is just nothing but phenomenal. He will receive the 2018 AHEPA Harry Aganis [phonetic] award. James Nicholas, a college golfer, will receive the William Chagotis [phonetic] award. Steve Leondis, a philanthropist, will receive the Stamos family hall of fame lifetime achievement award.

We’re gonna present those at the luncheon as well. And finally for the scholarships, which is I believe is still the important part of program. Our recipients are Elena [phonetic] Barloutsos [phonetic] who will receive the Manios [phonetic] scholarship award. Christina Andonakis [phonetic] who will receive one of the Valahos [phonetic] scholarship awards. Harrison Nicholas will receive the other one. Leanna Degan [phonetic], the athletic booster fund excellence in athletic scholarship. Diana Hijani [phonetic] will receive one of the Sponakos [phonetic] brothers awards.

Dmitri Brown will receive the other Sponakos brother award. Dmitri Triandofil has already received the Phil Bozeus [phonetic] scholarship – which is a new one. Ashley Spirison [phonetic] and Jacob Gassert [phonetic] will receive the collegiate awards. These scholarships will also be presented during the luncheon. When you hear the credentials of these kids you will be blown away. That’s all I can say. I mean, I applied for scholarships when I was a kid. I was active athletically as a kid. Believe me, I could never measure up to them as they are there.

We were also planning to do a district athletic director of the year award. We’ll see how that works.

[Background conversation]

I understand but I’m being crammed in here, too, so … in terms of teamwork, inclusion, and expansion, now comes the big beef – this will only take a minute. After five years on the job, I’m still hearing that the athletic booster club moneys does not belong to the order of AHEPA. That is a bald face lie. I want everybody to go back to your chapters and tell them that the money is in Washington, DC. It’s been invested and if you look at page A9 of your financial reports. There’s over $400,000.00 in there.

So, whoever keeps telling these lies – tell them to their face, it’s a lie. Tell everyone else out there who’s not in this room, that it’s a lie and that athletics is alive and well and well-funded. In addition, if you look at pages 10 and 11 of that same financial report and page 13, you will see the scholarships that are funded through various trusts and funds. Those scholarships – the corpus of those funds total almost $125,000.00 and that includes $50,000.00 for the hall of famers. So if anybody tells you differently, it’s a lie. I used to be polite about it. I used to politely tell everybody but now there’s no more politeness.

If anybody tells you that those funds don’t exist, tell ‘em that it’s a lie. Invite them to read what you’re looking at right now on those particular pages I’ve cited. If you can’t find it, let me know. Our plan is to continue expanding. We are part of the 501C3 of the AHEPA 501C3 organization. Anyone who tells you different is telling you a big, fat lie. So, with that, I want to thank you because it’s been an interesting five years. We’ve had some problems. We did a lot of rebuilding but AHEPA athletics is not only alive and well, but is growing at a rapid pace.

It may be growing a little too fast to handle. If you have time to participate in a program, please come up and see me. Come up and see my successor. There is no reason in the world why we can’t have this – the biggest and the best program around and remember, the people that golf, the people that bowl are all members of AHEPA or they all join AHEPA. It’s a membership driver. Finally, I’m no longer asking; I’m demanding. Every single chapter in the order of AHEPA should have an athletic director. You would be shocked at how many do not.

Every single district in the order of AHEPA should have an athletic director. I’m no longer asking; I’m demanding. Go back and appoint those individuals and help them get the program rolling. My best conversations this year was with the newly appointed athletic director of district 28 in Europe? Right? We’ve had several long conversations in giving him advice in how to set things up. He’s excited and you’d be amazed at what this guy is planning for next year. With that, again, thank you very much. Sorry I took up so much of your time but just try to cram anything in as best we could.

Any questions I’ll be happy to take them, otherwise, see you on the golf course. See you in a bowling alley. See you at the athletics sports award function. See you on the athletic circuit ‘cause I plan on remaining active in athletics. Thank you.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you Brother Lou. We appreciate your hard work and dedication and passion that you’ve demonstrated and shown here to the delegates at the convention. At this time I’d like to make my appointment of our parliamentarian, Brother Craig Clawson [phonetic] – the committees we have the sign-up sheets over here posted. So when you have a moment, there’s a particular committee you want to work on, please do so and the appointments for those committee chairs are listed at the top of the forms. So in the interest of time, we’ll continue.

Now, for one last call for the two supreme governors that weren’t in the room at the time when I first called. Region 2, Leon Kordistis [phonetic] is he in the room? And then Supreme Governor, Nick Dixie? Okay, we’ve given them an opportunity to speak. I’m sorry they weren’t here. Now we move on to our other supreme -

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Sorry, Brother Carl, you –

MALE VOICE 2: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I’m gonna give my report on Thursday morning. I’m gonna have committee president to go for me Thursday morning - -

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you. So now we’ll call on our Supreme Counselor, Brother Demetrios Kirkiles to give his report and Brother, I’ll be glad to bring you the microphone if that –

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Take your time.

MR. DEMETRIOS KIRKILES: I want to thank all the brothers who over the last couple months who’ve called and lent their support. Demetrios Kirkiles, Supreme Counselor of this past year. It’s been a real honor and a pleasure to serve. I can’t express that enough. The fascinating thing about this job is not only is the supreme counselor for the order of AHEPA, believe it or not, he’s also responsible for the daughters of Penelope, the Maids of Athena, and the sons of Pericles. If they ever have legal advice or required my services, I was always a phone call away. Believe it or not I did answer some Daughters of Penelope questions during the past year.

My report is in the book. I’m going to just read it. I’m just gonna summarize on it. I did review contracts for the upcoming 2020 convention where we will be returning to Walt Disney World and I did sign a letter of understanding or excuse me – reviewed a letter of understanding which was later signed for the convention in Greece, potentially, in 2021 but those discussions are ongoing and continuing. Since that’s an international matter, it’s a little more complicated than a standard contract. My biggest issue this year was an unfortunate situation where the Supreme Lodge had to remove a president from office and find that the person was insubordinate in accordance with the AHEPA constitution, article 15, section G2.

After notice hearing, the person was ultimately expelled from the order of AHEPA. I believe that’s the first time in over 15 years where that issues has ever come up. I fielded many, many information questions and inquiries. I’ve been able to answer them. It was always a pleasure to talk to the brothers and discuss matters. I’ve also had to review the European bylaws to achieve their recognition. That was an interesting intellectual exercise and I really enjoyed it. I have not included anything that’s pending. There’s been no litigation with the order of AHEPA that I was aware of or made aware of.

So we’re in good stand as far as the courts are concerned. There was one matter that came up within the last couple days regarding the use of the AHEPA logo and the alteration of the AHEPA logo. We sent a cease and desist letter and the matter was immediately resolve and the only thing I can ultimately say is I really wish to thank Carl Hollister, our current Supreme President. Carl, it’s been a great pleasure and I always welcomed your phone calls with like an urgent need for something. You’ve always tasked me to remember every little nook and cranny of the AHEPA constitution and bylaws and I never realized I knew it that well.

So, it’s scary. Thank you very much. I also want to thank everybody on the Supreme Lodge. You guys are great. Every position you serve in the order of AHEPA; it changes you. It makes you better, stronger, and you really, really, really, really, really, really appreciate this organization and what it does. We all do things – not now, Mom. Excuse me. We all do things that never get reported. We all do things quietly that are silent and behind the scenes that will never get the order of AHEPA credit. We do things for our brothers. We do things for strangers.

Sometimes it’s as simple as helping a little old lady across a street or whatever. But we’re AHEPAns and we need to stand out as being better. Of course every organization has problems but I view this as the second golden age of AHEPA is at our footsteps. We are on the upswing. We have changed. We have altered. We have progressed. The members who are now coming in; the members who are dedicated here at this convention are serving in a new era and we see it and we are changing slowly but surely. And I would urge you to keep looking forward.

We don’t forget the past. We’re part of a long line but as Supreme Counselor, I can tell you that I have been privy to things that would amaze you about the order of AHEPA. We should count our blessings, thank God, and keep moving forward. God bless and thank you very much.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you Brother Demetri, we appreciate it. We offer our continued good will wishes to you [Greek Language Spoken 01:21:45] as we say. At this time, I’m going to ask Supreme Governor, Nick Dixie, if you will come up and give his overview, please.

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Okay. Moving on then, we’ll accept the Supreme Counselor’s report into the minutes as well as the Athletic Director’s report. And now we’ll call on our Supreme Treasurer, Brother George Horiates to give his report.

[Background conversation]

[applause]

MR. GEORGE HORIATES: Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair. Hm. Brothers, welcome to the Jersey Shore. I can tell you that you have in front of you your delegate books. You’ve registered. And if you haven’t, you should. But Mr. Chair, I bring my personal greetings to you for the many years I’ve known you. From - - to North Carolina. If everybody doesn’t know my wife is from Wilmington. It’s always interesting going back down and seeing the good people in that community. Let’s start with the Atlantic City Convention itself ‘cause I do have some additional nuggets of information for you.

The convention, itself, tonight and a lot of you are asking questions. We’re gonna have a jitney – sounds like a horrible term but a jitney is a small, little bus, that you try to take and go around with. It’s not where the taxis are or anything along that line. It’s in the back area of the hotel calls ground transportation, I believe. So, we’re gonna – we’ve contracted with like four jitneys. They pack in like 15 at a time. So it’s gonna kinda like be the phonebooks from like, you know, the phone booths from the 1950s or something.

Everybody kinda trying to pack in. So, start leaving early when we get down there to the bungalow - - or you can just take a cab or Uber it or … you can’t walk. The weather we have been tracking it all this time has cleared up and it’s gonna be clear skies today. So, that being said to those of you who are thinking about – on the fence about golfing – the tee time is 12:00 please consider that as well. You can do that via Uber and or I’ll find you some transportation. Some of you were on the fence earlier today. The golf tournament, Brother Atsaves gave a report.

I can tell you that although District 5 is basically running the tournament, that any proceeds from the tournament are gonna be turned over the national athletics into Brother Atsaves and let’s give another kid a scholarship at some point in time next year. That’s that. We also have the volleyball on the beach. So if anybody’s interested in that. I know Brother Ragopolis [phonetic] is interested in spiking the ball. The only thing is we only have three balls. So, you know, anybody wants to do that you have to leave deposit at the front desk. Then take the balls with you.

We have a license for it so if anybody’s on the beach, at the net, at the new facility on Albany Avenue, just let me know. If you want to go out and you have a couple free minutes and/or you have a wife and/or a significant other or some friends, I highly recommend going out to three different areas, actually, four different areas. Number one, and the lodge heard this yesterday, Gardener’s Basin. It’s a five minute cab ride here. It’s nice little area of shops. It’s on the inner harbor portion. It’s not on the beach itself.

Number two: you can go down to, again, Albany Avenue. I don’t know what they call it – the Chelsea section. Always say something in the boardwalk. Remember the Monopoly game, okay? Anything is – something in the boardwalk, okay? So take a look at Albany in the Boardwalk in that area. A more popular spot is Caesar’s and the Boardwalk. That’s in the middle of it all. We call that Midtown. You know, it’s a really small town. So when we say Midtown, I know the New Yorkers may chuckle. Also the other area that you would be interested in visiting is Steel Pier section where the Hard Rock just reopened. The Donald’s, the SCOTUS, former Trump Taj Majal.

That’s a nice area, as well. Okay, that being said, for tonight, if you’re interested in going out there to the Bungalow Beach, you don’t really need to wear jackets. I wouldn’t recommend it. It’s casual attire. Literally it’s a bar on the beach. We have cornered of our own section for that. Again, that’s California Avenue in the Boardwalk if you cannot make it via Jitney and/or you want to travel with friends or that type of a thing. Okay? Any questions? CZ none.

Number one. Number two. Yeah. Anyway. Number two, Mr. Chair, you called me up as a matter of protocol to talk about the treasurer’s report. I did give a treasurer’s report in the delegate package, itself. I can tell you that the process of being a treasurer is what you would ordinarily think. Your moneys in terms of operational expenses and receipts is so well managed. The moneys are safe. The procedure is crystal clear. This isn’t an audit report. It’s not. It’s a report from someone who does not just do a perfunctory position of treasurer.

They give me copies of everything. I have receipts in my hand. It’s all done by invoice. It’s all done by request with backup documentation as to everything that we do. So I can tell you that I feel good when I see that kind of stuff going on in any organization. And your system that has been developed over the years? Is an excellent one; is an excellent one. But I don’t stop there. I don’t stop merely with telling you, hey, you know, well that’s what a treasurer does and thank you and thank you for your trust and let’s have a good year. No. I love the order just as much as you do and of course, I try to get involved in all aspects of what we do.

So, that being said, what I would like to talk to you about is my year from my perspective with our Supreme Lodge and with our Supreme President. I thought the Supreme President and I wrote about it but I’ll say it again, did an outstanding job. He did an excellent job. Brothers, Supreme President Carl Hollister, went the extra mile with everything that he did, with every event. Trying to promote the brand, raising funds, going coast to coast. Going continent to continent. Reaching out on a daily basis with not just chapter members, not just chapter members in California or Texas or in Greece or in Brussels.

With congressmen, with ambassadors, with diplomats, with fundraising people, with executives, with CEOs, CFOs, with the housing corporation, with our church, with our church leaders, with our church representatives. He was whirlwind and he did it all for love of the order but he did it with a sincerity. I think most of you understand and can see in that AHEPA magazine. I’m damn proud of that magazine. It shows what type of organization that we’re in now. We’re on the move. Brother Kirkiles said it best, we’re on the upswing and I think that was a perfect, perfect, short summation of what I say in a long winded fashion.

We are on the upswing. So Brother Carl, we’re all very proud of you. I’m proud of you. Thank you. So, let me talk to you about what I’ve done throughout the course of the year, as well. I also participated in my region as well as the idea of teams that Brother Koko had discussed and the Supreme President, Brother Loucas. I was also stuck on a team somewhere in Districts 6 and 7 – region 6 and 7 so it was a nice opportunity for me to kind of branch out to beyond the Mississippi, let’s put it that way. I thought that worked really, really well.

Many times throughout the course of the year, I was asked to travel on behalf of the Supreme President – not because, again, he couldn’t make it because he was doing so much stuff. We also had some programs. We also did that Hellenic history tournament – mid Atlantic one - - down on Washington in addition to the regional program that Brother Tom Duchas had talked about. The regional banquet system that was an excellent system, the one in Dallas, I was glad to assist and Brother Nick Dixie, I think did an outstanding job there.

Visits to the Odyssey Charter School – I gotta pause on this one. I have to tell you – if you haven’t been to Wilmington, Delaware, I understand. It is simply a jewel of our order that does not get the flair, the press, the publicity that other groups get and rightfully so. You know you want to beat your chest and say, hey, this is what we do; that’s great. We should do that. But the Odyssey Charter School is Greek immersion school. You’re gonna hear a lot about it because we have some of these people as the Supreme President said in his initial speech opening up the convention that are coming her from - - coming here from Delaware, from all points.

They have relationships with numerous top notch colleges and universities. This school has now opened up this year with this Demetri Dandelos [phonetic] and it happened in Wilmington chapter 95. The Ithaca learning center which is for those who are early years, let’s put it that way, and it’s something else. By the way, most of them weren’t Greek. You have a lot of, let’s say minorities, it’s a wonderful thing. If I may take personal privilege, Mr. Chair. When you walk into a room as a Supreme President will when they go and visit and they salute you and say, you know, you see a little [Greek language spoken 1:34:14] saying to you, yes, [Greek language spoken 1:34:16] and they’re talking in Greek.

They’re talking in Greek and it’s a wonderful thing. They’re not just learning Greek. You know what they learn math in Greek is what they do. I mean that’s the type of forward thinking that this school does and we’re very proud of it. It’s not Odyssey Charter School. It’s AHEPA Odyssey Charter School and I think the people down there do a great job. You’re gonna hear a lot more about that. In addition, I was asked to attend and pay heed, discuss, matters that the [Greek language spoken 1:34:50] the big, huge convocation so to speak in Manhattan on the issue of Macedonia.

AHEPA was honored as the first organization to discuss things there. Other areas where we went whether it was Dallas or Tarpin, I would be remiss if I didn’t say, just not in the United States but also to say about those trips that our president, our Canadian president discussed. Also our Supreme Governor, Dr. Barrage [phonetic]. [Greek language spoken 1:35:24] where we celebrated as AHEPA the 25 year enthrallment of his o holiness patriarch Bartholomew. I thought that was an excellent, eye opening experience for myself to go there with both these distinguished AHEPAns, Christo and to Alfred, I want to thank you for taking this South Jerseyan with you guys to [Greek language spoken 1:35:53].

That was just an amazing experience. They – just to let you know – we’re sitting here and where you might be from Denver or Arizona or wherever and we kind of lose track as to what AHEPA is and there’s other parts of the world where it is so strong and we don’t understand it here. We really don’t. You would be proud of these people. This chapter – this region what they did during that. The Roman Agora in Thessaloniki was taken over by AHEPA. Just to put it in concept and the patriarch comes in to town and they had – and we raised the moneys. AHEPA raised the moneys for this and you have AHEPA banners that are like all over the place.

Our name was out there not just to Thessaloniki but to the whole world – to the whole Orthodox world and to the whole world with regards to what they did. It was a photograph exhibit by a very famous photographer who works exclusively with the patriarch. It was all throughout what was a wonderful facility, an ancient facility, the Roman Agora in Thessaloniki. We also had follow up visits. I want to thank the brothers of that chapter and that region and the former governors and Supreme Governor. The Supreme Governor, all the Canadian President – even though it’s not Canada. I can tell you that Thessaloniki is kind of like a second home to Brother, President Christos Argiriou.

Every time I went to do something and go buy something or - - or something like that – he would go, Thessaloniki, Macedonia, you know? And I wasn’t allowed to spend any money there. I wasn’t allowed to spend any money. And then he also took me on some wonderful tours. We went to various - - included seeing the school children that we kind of stumbled on and then before you knew it we’re on European TV as AHEPA because they have that type of heightened awareness about what you stand for. Just think about it. It wasn’t like a planned thing. They said, where you from? AHEPA?

You’re the Canadian president and you hear the, okay, yeah, well, let’s do this. And those are the kind of doors that get opened when you talk about that little pin that you wear on your lapels. It does have power and it is being on the upswing, again. Christos, I look forward to doing it with you again, soon. Anyway, also, I would be remiss if I didn’t talk about my visit with the Brussels chapter, the European eagle. Brothers, I know that when I go home, when I talk to my mom, when I talk to theos and theas when I go to my church and I try to speak in Greek [Greek language spoken 1:39:12 – 1:39:18].

But I didn’t know my English – I knew my Greek would have some difficulty there, right? I didn’t know these guys actually speak better English than we do, too. These are – these AHEPAns, these brothers are the cream of the top in international relations. There all work as delegates. What do you call that thing? What do guys call work as? What? Right. They work in the parliament in the Burlemont [phonetic] in the EU, in the UN. They are the cream of the cream – they are the Supreme diplomats. Not just for Greece, not just for Cypress, not just for the United States.

They are in positions for various different countries. It was an amazing experience in Brussels. I’m very proud that we have the forethought and the ability, Mr. President, to go and do a visit to Europe. I mean, let’s face it, I kinda enjoy doing it myself, Mr. President. Because I know you had your religious freedom conference along with Alfred and along with the fine gentleman. Vimo [phonetic] I want to thank you. People do not know and appreciate what you do. It was an outstanding visit. I know it was difficult. The vice president had indicated the time and dedication that we have and away from our jobs and how this is a volunteer organization.

You were outstanding in all regards, available 24, 7 and it was a trip that I will never, ever, ever forget. I’m looking forward to doing it again. If the Supreme President next year, Brother Loucas, allows – I would like to also visit London because I understand the world Super Bowl Champion Philadelphia Eagles are going to be playing in London in October. Maybe we can visit some other chapters, as well. Also, another trip that I went on and the Supreme President allowed me to go on with him was the presidential excursion. You will read more about that in the just released AHEPA magazine that is in front of you.

I can tell you that the Supreme President and I said it before, acquitted himself so well. So amazing. In all regards. Christo, again, you were with us throughout that excursion. When I just had mentioned earlier in my report how anywhere I went in Thessaloniki, he said Macedonia. Right? So by the time we got to Ikaria I said, oh, Ikaria but it was a great event. First we went to the patriarch and that was an amazing experience with the brothers that were there again, I want to thank those brothers publicly for all they did for all of us, particularly myself because I got a case of pink eye as soon as I landed.

So, Brother Thaso [phonetic] went down to the pharmacy and picked up some eye drops so my eyes cleared up and people started talking to me again. Then after that, we had gone to the rock – the island where people forgot to die and I can tell you that our visit to Ikaria was very memorable for me. It was an honor of our Supreme President. You’ll read more about that in the magazine, itself, but I can tell you the Chinook that we took to get there was – I mean, it was off the charts to be on that Chinook – kind of touring the Aegean. Thereafter we went to Cypress. Yes?

[Background conversation]

MR. HORIATES: It is a boat but it’s a flying boat. I can tell you what an excellent job you did in Cypress as well. It was amazing. Kinda blew up my diet with the heavy foods that you have but the government officials there received us so well, so well. I think that they see the positives in Cypress, as well, in terms of the current upswing as Brother Kirkile says, again, in that area. I think that it’s great to have you here and we hope you continue to be involved because we need you. We want to continue to increase our presence everywhere including Cypress ‘cause Cypress is – it’s Greek, just like Macedonia is Greek. We have to send that message home to everybody.

That’s what we stand for. Then we went to Athens – that was, again, quite phenomenal. I do give kudos to the Supreme Governor, Tom Duchas, for the fundraiser and to the local chapters as well as to the Lodges in Greece with what was a wonderful experience in Athens itself touring Evangelismos Hospital. Brother Carl got to – at one point in time we did a kind of split squad. He went to go with Alexi Chibra [phonetic] and then I got to go with Procobi [phonetic] on the other side. Before I knew it I had to kick my Greek into high gear.

The event that we had at the old parliament building is an experience that I will not forget any time soon. To be able to sit there in Greek and to explain to what was a large crowd how we feel – how we are the continuation of Fila Keteria [phonetic] here as AHEPAns that we this certain obligation to continue the fight in all regards and to never let our guard down and that was an experience for me. [applause] Then finally going to Thessaloniki, my apologies to the Supreme Governor, I mean to the District Governor in Bulgaria – where’s he at now? Is he on the beach?

For not making it up to that convention in Berlin but I will tell you that, again, in Thessaloniki, me, I – I guess I was volunteered just to hang out with Brother, President Argriro [phonetic] in Thessaloniki on a Daughter’s Conference. I think that’s another thing that I would like to talk about. Your AHEPA made significant inroads and continued to work with the daughters of Penelope in all regards and I think Carl that was an initiative – it was a reminder to us to continue that relationship with them. I can tell you even at this convention, we raised moneys for many projects that have daughters involved in it.

Then finally, well, I’d like to talk to you about and there was like other various trips – whatever it was – Tarpin and many, many more but I guess you want me to brief. So I’m trying to be brief. I want to talk to you about the sons and Maids. So, sometimes simplicity in a certain focus is the best thing in any organization including AHEPA and when the president said branding – try to elevate our brand and also to membership and also to support the sons and the Maids. These aren’t novel concepts. These are core ideas, core ideas and I felt this year throughout the domain that there was a sense of buy-in – there was a buy in from everybody across the domain on those topics: membership, brand awareness, and the sons and Maids.

So I have a daughter and I have a son. My daughter is 21 years old. She’s been in the Maids for a couple of years now and my son, this year, well, I should say in the beginning of the year, I joined the Sons of Pericles, as well. I’m not saying it to beat my chest, I’m just telling you how proud I am to assist those orders and it wasn’t because, hey, you know, - - your dad is the Supreme Treasurer, can you start a Sons chapter to get involved and let’s have a basketball team, blah, blah, blah, blah. No, he came up to me. You know?

The kids in my community and the surrounding communities in the Philadelphia area came up to me and they said, hey, Mr. Horiartes, we would like to get involved in the Sons, what can we do? When your own son does that [Greek language spoken 1:48:35 – 1:48:38] we’re gonna get this done, we’re gonna get this done. So to me that was the highlight of my year because it involves my family. I can tell you that I’m this self absorbed attorney, maybe doesn’t spend too much time with his family, maybe spends too much time with AHEPA. It has been a great bonding experience for myself and for many – we have like 30 in our chapter, another 20- I put in a chapter in upper Darby.

We have them in Trenton. It’s really been quite an experience for myself. So I want to thank you for allowing me that opportunity of having my son unprompted, just come up to me and say, hey, Dad, what’s the Sons of Pericles about? And we would like to start a chapter. I am enjoying that more than everything else that I just talked about. Please consider supporting your sons and supporting your maids more than we do. When you go back to your chapters – how many times in your chapter – if you do have a Sons and Maids – does the chapter actually meet with them?

Does your chapter bring them? Do you have a family event with all of the orders including the Daughters? I think those are the things that we need to get to have real, sustainable growth. So those are my thoughts with regards to the Sons and the Maids. Brothers, it’s been my pleasure to serve you and certainly if you have any other questions, let me know. I also have saltwater taffy outside for you. See you tonight and thank you. God bless AHEPA.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you, Brother George, for your brief report. Now we’ll call on our Supreme Secretary, Brother Jimmy Kokotas if he left you any time, brother, please –

MR. JIMMY KOKOTAS: Do I have as much time as Brother Horiates?

MALE VOICE 1: No one has as much time as Brother Horiates.

MR. KOKOTAS: That was about as brief as George’s briefs used to be before he lost the weight. Brothers, thank you for the honor for electing me Supreme Secretary last year. It’s been my privilege and pleasure to represent you. Congratulations to our chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary elect. To our brothers – yeah, yeah – yes.

[Background conversation]

MR. KOKOTAS: To the brothers here in New Jersey, congratulations for bringing this convention to the East Coast again to the North East and hopefully it’s a good experiment and maybe New York can do in a couple years with a Supreme Convention, as well. I promise I won’t be as brief as George was. Our Supreme President came up with a good strategy at the beginning of the year. He gave us all districts and regions to help with membership and support our local chapters and district and supreme governors. I had the pleasure of working with supreme governor, Cleon, in Region 2 and Brother Booras out west.

My year started in the month of August on a vacation to California where I met with our webmaster extraordinaire, Winn and his chapter and some brothers over there and the priest from the church; a great group of brothers. From Palm Desert, the tour continued to San Bernardino and the housing project over there which is really magnificent. The work that they’ve done. We also had a visitation during the course of the year. We went back out there to St. Sophia’s for a wonderful ceremony where we presented with the Supreme President veteran’s pins to many of the veterans in that community.

At another meeting in San Jose with the brothers up in the Northern part of the state. California, as you know, is a pretty big state. Jim, you’re in the Southern part, hopefully we get to hit that officially, maybe, this year. Things are a little bit more difficult out on the west coast. I think it’s because the weather’s so nice and people have so many other good things to do. That maybe AHEPA’s not so high up on their list but I think we’re making some inroads there and I know Brother George has worked very hard and I know that there’ll be some productive stuff and some fruit to that labor that we’ll be seeing shortly.

Also I had the pleasure this year – I’m gonna go out of some order. We had a couple of regional banquets. Just recently, both in Dallas, Texas and in Columbus, Ohio. Both extremely well put together, well representative of this organization, honoring some local heroes in the Texas area and in the Ohio area. They really represented the greatness of this organization, well attended, 300 people in Texas and probably another 250 people in Ohio. In Ohio, we kinda got capped off because it was the state house that the event was in. Our Supreme President did a magnificent job in Ohio.

Nick Dixie and Anthony Kozunas and all the other people involved in the Texas one – a magnificent job in Texas. Those regional banquets are something everybody here should consider no matter what part of the country you’re in or Canada or Europe. You’ve got some great people in your area that deserve recognition. You should approach somebody from the Supreme Lodge and get put on the list for the next couple of years. Maybe it won’t happen right now, but be put on their list. Bring it to their attention that you’d like to host a regional banquet to honor some of the great in your area, your district, your region, whatever it may be.

So I encourage everybody – those are the type of flagship opportunities that we have. I know they were well covered in the media as well. You’ll see some of them in the publications. So think about doing stuff like that. It really goes a long way for the morale of your districts, too. Sometimes misfortune really tests the wherewithal in people and as somebody who lived through Hurricane Sandy, when Harvey and Erma hit, we kind of relived it. I had the opportunity to go down and follow our Supreme President to Texas to see what our past Supreme President, Anthony, Kozunas and the brothers of his Houston chapter had put together.

How they sprung into action to help the brothers and to help a lot of the other members of that community that were suffering. I stayed down there for about three, four days and worked with the IOCC – for those of you not familiar with the IOCC – they’re an organization that we’ve worked with in the past to send medical supplies to Greece. They’re disaster relief was amazing. They showed up over there with a van – 10 or 15 people from the organization, gathered volunteers in Houston and were sending out crews of 40 to 50 people a day.

In their truck, they had everything you could possibly need: hammers, gloves, masks. They had the tools with them, drove down from Minnesota. It was a great honor to see other people that approach volunteerism and the opportunity to help and to get involved as much as them. And I encourage you – you probably get stuff in the mail – write a small check – whatever it may be to support the IOCC and their endeavors because this was really amazing to see. Hopefully you guys never have to see it and they’re not needed but for what they did with disaster relief was amazing.

A lot of my other work was just supporting the lodge, working with our supreme president, the rest of the members. We went out to Chicago, also, for the enthronement of metropolitan Nathaniel who, before, he moved to Chicago was serving at our Brooklyn parish of St. Constantine and Helen. A very good man who I think is going to help us in the order of AHEPA – he’s a great supporter of ours. I attended the ARCON [phonetic] dinner in New York, bunch of other things that I’m probably forgetting.

I did not have the opportunity to do the international travel. I apologize for that –between business and some other personal matters – I hope this year maybe to be a little bit more active, but I apologize for that. I think that’s probably an area that I need to work on. One of the things I’m happy to bring up is as we’ll be seeing our new website, in the next couple of days – one of the things that we tried to get started four, five years ago was an introductory version of what AHEPA is to people that hear about us but are hesitant to join and pay a membership and belong to another organization which is just an internet based newsletter.

This was something that we’d been talking about since past Supreme President - - was around. I think now we finally have the software at headquarters where the goal is to put together the E news that we get every week into one concise, monthly newsletter that people will get once a month and what we will do is go out there and get our family members; whether it’s our spouses or siblings, our parents, male and female, sign them up so they can receive this newsletter every month, hopefully a bunch of our friends. This could be an introductory way to some of the people that you approach at church that like, ah, they’re hesitant.

Just get their email address, let them see, ‘cause the e-news is usually full of good information and good works, anyway. Once we make that even more concise into seven or eight really pertinent things and people see the good work that the chapters are doing, the international work is being done and the value that AHEPA has, not only in their local communities but throughout the world. It really will be a good opportunity to introduce them to it. I think when those people are seeing that month after month, whether they choose to join a chapter or go through Washington, DC and just pay a membership to be a member, at large.

There’s an extreme value to marketing the organization to people that know who we are and are probably great candidates to AHEPAns and Daughters of Penelope, Sons and Maids and that’s our future. It’ll make our lives easier. One of the expressions that was taught to me is as we get older, we’re supposed to work smarter, not harder. I think all of us would like to be able to bring membership in, being more efficient, using the technology that’s available to us and any other means that we may have.

We have 14,000 paid members, 14 and change, the Daughters have, I think, 8 ½ or 9 – that’s 23 with our youth – let’s just say 25. If you think about it – who in this room could not sign up -

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[START 2018\_Supreme\_Convention\_July\_23\_-\_27\_PART\_2.mp3]

MR. JIMMY KOKOTAS: … could not sign up, on a conservative basis, 10 people. Family members and friends. So what does that do? That takes us to a quarter of a million people that whether we’re going to the EU, or to the White House, or speaking on Capitol Hill, those quarter of a million people that prescribe to your newsletter and pay membership are still supporters of this organization. And numbers do matter because the numbers, right now, our work counts more than our numbers because we’re doing the work of a much larger organization because we have a good number of people that are dedicated but we know that it’s not a large number of that 14,000.

We know it’s probably a smaller number of that 14,000, just like when you look around you here. The representation is a small percentage but what do they say, it’s not the dog in the fight but the fight in the dog. And as we say in Greek [Greek language spoken 00:00:54 – 00:00:59] within the organization. Or as they like to call me a big - - So we can pull and carry a big load. But the numbers do matter. I know they would matter in Europe for the EU to hear numbers like that when we go there. I know they would matter here in Washington, DC.

So let’s see what we can do to bring these people in and come the month of November and December, maybe do a little fundraising, since we know these people. When they get their newsletter, let them see what AHEPA’s doing with the scholarships and everything else – whether it’s journey to Greece, whether it’s the hospitals and everything else. Maybe some of these people would make a $20.00 donation and contribute so that way we can be more philanthropic and get involved in more things and support more of these things that you bring forward to us.

One of the things that I find and we’ve discussed this quite a bit on the Lodge. We all pass through. There’s a lack of continuity at times within the organization. You guys at the grassroots level, when you’re chapter presidents and you’re there for three, four, five years have a lot more say in seeing certain things followed through. You also have a responsibility to work with your neighboring chapters. The way we meet here and we share ideas and leave here in a better frame of mind, if you’re not working with somebody – either mentoring them or being mentored right now, you’re really not fulfilling your duties.

You really aren’t. That’s what the organization is about is expanding. You don’t expand if you keep something good to yourself and you’re not expanding if you think you know it all. I encourage you all the way I’ve seen things and learned things from many of you traveling to chapters seeing what works, what doesn’t work, getting a feel for different things in different parts of the country, different parts of the world. To reach out, know who – there maybe 100 miles away but there should still be a relationship because when you’re trying to get new members, maybe you got some young that want to join and your chapter’s an older chapter.

Maybe one of the neighboring chapters, has a good event, a marketable event that you could bring somebody to. Or maybe you have an event that they could bring somebody to your event. But we must be working together. We must be working together, the exchange of ideas, cultivating what the next new project’s going to be. Seeing what we could do to strengthen our organization. We have the issue with the 20 somethings and 30 somethings whether it’s drawing the Sons of Pericles and the Maids. I’m a firm believe that we’re not going to get people to join the organization the way a lot of us are here just to come and work.

If we put an ad in the newspaper, and I’ve said this before, and asked people to come give us their time, their money, and their sweat – I don’t think you’re gonna get too many takers. Not right off the bat. But we must figure out how to get them in and nowadays getting people in it has to be a social aspect. It has to be something fun. Try to do a barbecue. Try to do something within your chapter that doesn’t involved AHEPA business, that doesn’t involve putting people to work or giving them a responsibility because most people have enough responsibilities and not enough time to do everything that they need to do in their own lives.

But if you can get them in and give them one or two social events, they’ll probably give you the $75.00 for a membership. And as they come to the social events and see the value of the organization of the good work being done whether it’s six months down the line or a year down the line, hopefully, they get involved and get more hands on. But I can’t tell you how many chapters I’ve been to and we are own worst enemy sometimes in what we do with people that come in. The numbers reflect that because every year we bring in 1,500 or 2,000 new people between reinstatements and initiations and every year we lose about 1,500 people.

Some of them unfortunately to death but a lot of them just walk away because they probably didn’t see too much value or weren’t getting what they expected within the organization. I encourage you to, if it’s not working, think about other ways to get it to work. There are a lot of good people in this room that have succeeded and a lot to be learned. And this is where, again, that being involved, the being active, the speaking to other people, getting some new ideas can only help us.

We are all here the rest of the week. We’re all here to listen to ideas, to take your ideas and see what we can come up with and maybe refine them to see what could work and can’t work. We’re all open-minded enough, this has been a great Lodge. I’ve been on the Supreme Lodge, now, for seven years. There have been a lot of great people to come through here. I’ve been on a lot of great teams. This is as good a team as we’ve had. One of the reasons it’s been as good a team as we’ve had is our Supreme President. Our Supreme President was open to any and every idea. Very practical and he set the tone because we have to be practical also.

If something sounds good, even though it wasn’t our idea, it takes a big man to give credit to somebody else or to be open to somebody else’s ideas; put it into effect, for the good of the order but that’s what we’re all here to do. We’re all here for the good of this order. Carl ran everywhere. Carl assumed the position kind of unexpectedly, altered his schedule with his family and his work and really made us look bad in a way, because we had to keep up with him. So for as much as George Horiates said that he did, it wasn’t that much. It sounded like a lot but it was nothing compared to what Carl did.

[applause]

MR. KOKOTAS: Although George did do a lot. I take that back. He did. They promised him dinner on all of the trips, too, and that’s one of the reasons he went on them but he did a lot.

[Background conversation]

MR. KOKOTAS: - - I’m not blowing smoke up your you know what, but I’m gonna say it anyway, Carl is as good a Supreme President that this organization has ever seen.

[applause]

MR. KOKOTAS: It was a privilege and a pleasure to serve with everybody. I look to continued success with our hopefully, soon to be, Supreme President Elect Loucas. We look forward to –

[applause] [Background conversation]

MR. KOKOTAS: He’s got big shoes to fill and it’s great to see you back, George. It’s great to see Demetrios back as well. Let’s not ever take our health for granted. Let’s work for a great year. Let’s work to strengthen the bonds within this room and to continue to make this organization great. Thank you very much.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much, Brother. We want to now accept both reports given by the Supreme Treasurer and the Supreme Secretary. Now we’ll call on our Supreme Vice President, Brother George E. Lucas. Bring him to the microphone. It’s so good to see you, Brother.

[applause]

MR. GEORGE LOUCAS: Thank you. Thank you. No? Thank you.

[Background conversation]

MR. LOUCAS: Good morning. Give me one second here ‘cause I’m trying to slip into the electronic age.

[Background conversation]

MR. LOUCAS: Okay, one second. One second. Thank you. Good afternoon by 19 minutes, brothers. 12:19. So mark your watches. We’ve got about one and a half hours to go. Not one groan in the room?

MALE VOICE 2: - - spoke for 35 minutes in case you’re wondering - -

MR. LOUCAS: Good afternoon. My name’s George Loucas, your Supreme Vice President.

[applause]

MR. LOUCAS: And I cannot tell you how happy I am to be here with you – to be back here with you. I’d like to take a moment to thank everybody for your expression of love, brotherhood, your thoughts and your prayers, starting with our Supreme President who came to my home when I was very sick to sit down and talk which really motivated me. Because at that point, I didn’t know what I was gonna do and I’m here today and I thank you for that. We’ve talked about how much that meant to me but thank you to the Supreme Lodge and all the brothers who’ve kept this ship afloat as is always done.

But Jimmy was right. It was at the last minute that Carl was summoned to assume the post and I’ve apologized to him for losing a year on the Supreme Lodge because he would have been Supreme Vice President for a year. There’s nothing more cherished than serving and that’s a lost year of potential service, of doing things like going to Brussels, or traveling the country to be with brothers. That’s what it’s about. So I vouched that when the time comes if he wants to do it again I’m gonna be the first one in line to support him and thank you, Carl, for everything you’ve done in the last year for our family and this AHEPA family.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you, though, in our AHEPA family and the domain. But I want to ask you all a question. What do you think is the most important ingredient to membership? The Supreme Vice President, really, if you look at the constitution and bylaws is charged with the duty of supporting the Supreme President and membership. I don’t know when or how that was thrown in there but it takes on many phones. I want to ask you – somebody tell me what do you think is the most important ingredient to membership? Anybody? I challenge you. Somebody give me an answer.

[Background conversation]

MR. LOUCAS: Cultivating new members. What else? Anybody else? The most important ingredient?

[Background conversation]

MR. LOUCAS: Friendship. We’re getting warm.

[Background conversation]

MR. LOUCAS: Visibility.

[Background conversation]

MR. LOUCAS: I – there you go. I submit to you that the most –

[Background conversation]

MR. LOUCAS: The most important ingredient to membership is brotherhood. That’s right. We all swore an oath to brotherhood. I see you doing that but it’s the truth. You know? I mean, I – we can all tell stories, right, of how we met another brother in AHEPA and became so close that the next thing you know we’ve asked them to baptize our children, right? Or asked them – I’m gonna put you in my will – something happens to me – would you take care of my kid, right? That’s what this gives us that nothing else gives us.

This bond of brotherhood. It’s from the heart. And you can’t get it anywhere else. That’s the root that makes this organization great. That’s what makes this a grassroots organization. And if you question that then you have to question why you’re an AHEPAn because later we’re gonna ask you why are you an AHEPAn? What is most important to you in the service of this organization? You come here to meet a brother and you do. And you become close. Then you invite another brother and you can’t wait for that brother that you just brought to the chapter to meet the brother that you’ve learned to love that’s next to you.

You’re gonna love this guy. Wait ‘til you meet him. And that brother meets the new one and, in fact, you were right. This guy’s great and now you have three and it goes on and on and on. And your challenge to take home is going to be every brother should be able to invite – and I’ll come back to that word – one new brother to your chapter. And shame on you if you can’t find one. Shame on you. Whether you’re a grandfather with a grandson turning 18 or a father with a son, who’s old enough or a nephew, a neighbor, somebody, somewhere.

And then you add one more part – one more ingredient. We had a conference a few years ago where I invited brothers to come in and give ideas and Kosta Butzokokis [phonetic] from Michigan, Ann Arbor, stood up and said what’s all this bullshit? Said you need one leader in the chapter, right? One brother who cares enough to hustle, somebody with character and leadership skills that other guys will follow. That’s the heartbeat of the chapter. Now you have the makings of something that’s ready to boil – a good rolling boil, you know?

They will follow. They’ll come and that’s what our chapters are like, right? Most of them are just like that. The ones that aren’t typically have lost that leader. That goes to what Jimmy said, we have a duty to recruit. We have a duty to identify new officers like Kosta did with Craig Theros, Supreme Governor of Region 5 and now he’s Supreme Governor. He identified a leader, called him and said you need to do more. You need to be an officer. That’s what officers need to do: identify new leaders and bring them in.

So I’m gonna invite you tomorrow from 1:00 to 3:00 to a brotherhood forum to talk about things like these. Membership – we’re all so worried – how do you eat an elephant? One piece at a time. Do you think that we’re the only fraternal organization having problems with membership in these days? The youth of today are not following our path. It’s our job to go get them and bring them in through social media or whatever it takes. We’re all working hard, hustling, to try to identify what that ingredient is to bring them in.

But you eat an elephant one piece at a time and we’re all working on membership but you know? I’m confident. I’m not worried about membership. Jimmy’s right; we get about 2,000 in every year. We’re all worried about membership. Every AHEPAn in this room thinks about membership. Every chapter is planning right now a barbecue, a networking event, right? Something to bring in new members. I doubt that anybody’s sitting on their hands and not thinking about membership. So I don’t really have any worries about membership. If you thought I was gonna get up and just talk about numbers, you’re wrong.

We all basically know what’s going on with the numbers. We do get about 2,000 in – two district governor conferences ago, we opened up a list of brothers who had fallen off our registers from the chapter level. I ask Basil – it’s the first year that I started looking into membership to drum up five years back every brother that we lost, distribute them to the chapters and give them the chance to go find them and bring them back. We focused on that and as a result we usually get about 1,000 to 1,500 new initiates a year nationally overall.

We usually get 250 to 500 reinstatements – a brother that had left for whatever reason and came back. And then we had that November or December, right? I still don’t know how that works. A 32 year member and I still don’t know how it works. Where if you pay at the end of the year, somebody gets a free ride of some sort – a month or a year – I don’t know. We decided to get rid of that and you know what? It didn’t go well. All of a sudden we lost numbers in a year and then two years but the reinstatement that we instituted saved us. And last year, we had an uptick in membership for the first time in a while.

Now, our Supreme President has applauded that effort and said, you know what? We need to go get new members again and our reinstatements ‘cause they fall off every year. So we’ll get our 2,000 and we’ll continue on but I am so confident that we’re gonna find the ideas to help us grow and it all begins with brotherhood. This thing that we find with each other that we can’t find anywhere else. Not everybody in here is Greek. I learned that a while ago when I gave a talk in Atlanta. But I know every Greek in here has probably heard at some point in time, when they talk to somebody that wasn’t Greek, oh, I knew somebody in my neighborhood.

Oh, I loved that family. They would always invite us in to eat. I even know some Greek words and they start rattling off all the cuss words, right? That principal is alive today. It does not – bring that neighborhood into your AHEPA chapter. I use the word invite because everybody likes to be noticed, appreciated, and liked, and to be invited to something. So many people say, you know, I was never asked to be an AHEPAn. Right there in your own church or wherever you are – so invite them and that’s what we’re gonna do. We’re gonna challenge everybody to invite a member – every one of you.

It doesn’t even have to be 10 like Jimmy said. Just one. But I mentioned that issue about all the secretaries in a chapter waiting ‘til year end to tender the moneys. No business waits to get all their money, right? At year end as they’re going – dipping into the checking account to pay bills every month – they can’t do that. It starts the beginning of the year – the fiscal year, your calendar year. You start writing your checks for your bills – same thing with the AHEPA headquarters. So we asked everybody to please collect the money per capita and get it in, starting at the beginning of the year.

So we could fund headquarters. And of course, we heard, well, do we really need headquarters. Well, I think so because it’s the heartbeat. Keeps everybody organized and running and if you read your AHEPAn magazine you’ll see our Supreme President talking to us about the true value of AHEPA and the power that it wields. It all begins with AHEPA headquarters at Washington. Well, I should say it all begins there – it kind of rises to the top there from the grassroots and the bonds that building block of two brothers. But we do need our headquarters and we do need to collect money starting at the beginning of the year and sending it in.

Your job is going to be when you get back to make sure that everybody’s paid up in their chapters and the checks sent in so that we can get the working capital that we need and to meet our numbers and not be in that fever pitch, madness, at the end of the year, calling everybody, saying, what’s going on? I need to thank every Supreme Governor in this room for every month convening telephone calls for membership. Two years ago we started with telephone conferences with District Governors and then this last year, Carl and Jimmy took it a step further and said let’s bring the Supreme Governors into the fold. It’s working.

Some are having monthly conferences, others do it differently but there’s a telephone conference and everybody reviews with the district governor, lieutenant governor, even boards of past governors – whatever everybody, anybody wants to do to go over things. To make sure that numbers are coming and the calls are being made consistently rather than waiting ‘til the year end. We’re gonna keep that going. I’d like to institute one more thing. Brother Jim Zafaros [phonetic] empire district 6 – when I became vice president he sent me a report about his district.

It was a breakdown of every chapter of who’s who in that chapter, who is that dynamic person that everybody follows. And is there a church element in that chapter or not, right? Is the priest in that chapter with AHEPA or against AHEPA? It’s a reality that we deal with beginning with the fact that we took an oath, outside the church. But it’s … well … I don’t know how to phrase this next point but we took this line of reporting, Carl, would you call it? And we took it now to this report and this report identifies every chapter and this concept of continuity of care becomes important.

Because this report fills in the incoming officer whether it’s a vice president about the heartbeat of a district and of every chapter. That person can step into the shoes of the person that was there before and know and not have to reinvent the wheel – everything there is to know about that district and that chapter. It will even tell you like, you know, what precipitated a downfall – was it a fight between brothers? So we’re going to try to institute this and ask every district governor to sit down with their board of district governors and create this report and we will distribute it as a template to follow.

You’ll be able to create this and every district governor coming in, every supreme governor coming in, every vice president coming in or officer will know what’s going on in every chapter, in every district. There’s even a step further that we’re going to implement through this website that we’re talking about and that’s a list serve. I took my family to Greece and I wanted to know, does any brother know anybody in Santorin or Samos or Hijos – recommend a good restaurant. There’s something called a list serve. It’s not a chat room but you’ll be able to sign up from the website and say you want to be a member.

You can send an email and it’s gonna go to the brotherhood and it may say, we’re having a pig roast this weekend if anybody’s in the area, please come. Or it may be point of information, I’m filling out forms, does anybody know the deadline. It will be a line of communication for all of us instantly. I think that’s a wonderful thing and it’s a benefit that we’ll be able to show new members coming in. I could go on and on – like I said, we all talk about membership. We all have ideas. Keep them coming. If you think there’s something we could do to help please tell us, meaning, you’re officers – whether it’s up the chain of command.

Teamwork, almost done … teamwork – that’s this continuity of care principle that we’re trying to do. Carl has ideas. He promised the US ambassador that we would be there to contribute in Thessaloniki to the 83rd International World Exposition. It’s my duty now to fulfill his promise. That’s continuity. An example of continuity of care – so with Carl’s help, I’m going to do that. Carl had other ideas and he’s asked us to continue. I have idea – we’re saying you don’t have to wait until you serve or become an officer to get an idea implemented. You can start now. That’s what you can say to young people or anybody who wants to be a brother.

If you want to give back to your community, why not make AHEPA your vehicle of choice to do that. Where else do you have a chance to take an idea and present it locally amongst your closest brothers who could then take it to a district level or even straight to a national level like Dogs for Veterans and have it adopted nationally? If you’ve got a dream in your heart, what better vehicle is there to proceed than AHEPA? Think about that concept. Where else would you go in your town to get a dream started of charity, charitable giving on a large scale?

What we have is impressive – use it and tell other people about it because that’s the other thing and I want somebody to write it down. Because this is important. If AHEPA spread the news of the good work we actually do we would have twice as many members, right? I came up with that. I forgot it so I wrote it down but think about that. If you look at our website, you’ll find Joe AHEPA. In there is how to communicate, how to spread the word of what we do. Some chapters make 500 sandwiches a month to give to the poor. I mean, there’s stories like this, right?

The milk in Michigan that brother Craig Theros started – I mean, it’s all over what we did in Houston, the firefighters in Greece – went to Hijos and saw the devastation. I mean, if we published that – I’m sure other people would be attracted because they could give back to their community and everybody feels the call to give back to their community or their fellow man at some point. So other than brotherhood that’s probably our other one and education and we go on and on. But it’s public relations and it’s easier now today to post news releases than ever before through the internet.

So we’re working on a way for each chapter to be able to put out a news release, every easily and effectively by the click of a button about something that your chapter has accomplished. That will attract eyeballs and bodies – warm bodies. AHEPA was founded to help Greek immigrants become American citizens. AHEPA today teaches the world ideals and principles founded in ancient Greece. If that doesn’t work the power of the will, right? Tell your grandkids or your son if you don’t come to this AHEPA event or sign up I’m yankin’ ya from the will. You’ll get that one that you’re supposed to bring in this year.

Thank you, brothers, for the love, support, thoughts, prayers. Thank you for all your work. Thank you, Carl, and the Supreme Lodge.

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much, Brother George, we accept your report as the Supreme Vice President. Before we adjourn, a recess for lunch, I want to ask the Supreme President if there are any comments or remarks you’d like to make at this time, just for the –

MALE VOICE 2: - - it’s a – thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HOLLISTER: I just want to remind everybody that in Avalon 1, 2, 3, and 4 we have representation from the patriarchate in Jerusalem here at 1:00. I would ask you not all to run away right now for lunch. Go to the restroom, get a glass of water, go and listen, and hear Anna speak. The Patriarchate in Jerusalem is very important to all of us and it holds the key to religious freedom for the world. It holds the important Christian sites, documents, the whole history of Christianity is beholden inside the Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

It’s something that everyone – I would make a personal request – everyone go in there. I know you’re not gonna sit there for two hours but please go in there and afford Anna the courtesy – she came here from Jerusalem at our request. It’s just an incredible.

MALE VOICE 2: - - you’re absolutely right.

MR. HOLLISTER: So I would ask you to do that. You know, I’m gonna do it a couple more times. I want to thank the Supreme Lodge. You all saw what I got to work with. We had a good year because of them. They had a good year because of all of you. So I thank you all for that.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much, Brother Carl. Yes, one more.

MALE VOICE 2: If I could have a - - number one - - –

MR. HORIATES: Number one, I just have a point of order. I’m trying to find out or request for information. I see the committees that are up – when are the committees meeting?

MALE VOICE 2: There on the board, right?

MR. HORIATES: They’re on the board. They’re up there. So anybody can sign up for a committee? All right, Mr. Chair, also, tonight at 6:30 – at 6:30 - - - I hope to see you there. Downstairs underneath this area, you see there’s a parking lot right next to the bay there. Beautiful parking lot. That’s where the jitneys are going to be to take you to Bungalow Beach tonight at 6:30. We’re gonna start – it’s gonna take like – an hour to try to get everybody to move like 300 people. With like four, 15 passenger buses. Please be timely in that regard and/or catch a cab and/or an Uber on your own to Bungalow Beach tonight.

We’re starting downstairs underneath this area. Don’t go on the other side of the casino where it says Ground Transportation or to valet or to the front. Underneath here, special for AHEPA – we’re gonna have four Jitneys that are being given to us on the cheap by a brother AHEPAn. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you, Brother George, so at this time, we’re at recess and we will reconvene at 2:15 in this room. 2:15, please.

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Brothers, good afternoon. We thank you for coming back. Our vice chair’s gonna get you all in order now.

MR. ANDREW ZACHARIADES: Everybody settle down, okay. - - We have important work to do here.

MALE VOICE 1: We’re gonna call on our board of auditors to give the report to the brothers, here, present for this session of the convention. We appreciate you sticking around. Unless something changes as soon as we conclude with this report, we’ll recess until tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. and continue with the business at that time. Unless there’s an objection. Hearing none, Brother Clawson – if you will.

[applause]

MR. CRAIG CLAWSON: The sound of my fan club, right? Well, everybody gets excited about numbers, don’t they?

MALE VOICE 1: Yep, you bet.

[Background conversation]

MR. CLAWSON: For those of you who don’t know me, I’m Craig Clawson, chairman of the board of auditors and I’m from Omaha, Nebraska, cornhusker chapter number 147. So, if you’ll look at your hymnals with the financials in them. The reason that we’re separate with the budget and the financials being issued in a separate document is because it takes us a long time to get the audit done with the outside auditors. I met with my committee. There’s three of us: Mike Pufafoutis [phonetic] and Ted Naugaranos [phonetic].

I met with them last Monday and Tuesday at headquarters. Tuesday morning we met with the outside auditors. We made about a dozen changes to the financial statements, some corrections, some odds and ends. We didn’t like the wording – updated some of the wording, etc. So we meet with them for a couple days and go over the report with the – in detail. So, what happened? Well, as usual, we approved our annual fee which is $44,000.00 and we also signed next year’s audit engagement letter for another year for a maximum fee of $46,500.00.

Personally, knowing what kind of accounting changes and the financial accounting standard board has implemented quite a few changes which we’re going to – we have to adopt most of them for next year and we’re gonna early adopt another one that would come down one or two years later to try to get ‘em all in one financial statement. I think the $2,500.00 increase – they’re gonna get burned on. Although, Patrice has got to do a lot more work to be able to provide them the information for them to complete their work.

Most of the work that – I should say by having Patrice at headquarters, being a former auditor of the AHEPA from a previous firm years ago, most of the papers are prepared for them and I would say that she says in preparation – somewhere between $20,000.00 and $30,000.00 just so everybody knows that we got a heck of a bargain at headquarters. Now, the main items – you can read the detailed report. Our auditors thought, as do we, that we need a little bit more robust conflict of interest statement.

A policy as well as a declaration from the members we do obtain the declaration from each of the incoming board of trustees and supreme council members an acknowledgement that they’ve read the constitution relative to the conflict of interest statement. But we think that’s just the bare bones deal; we really need to expand that as have most other nonprofit organizations. The contracts, again, the financial implications are supposed to be submitted to the board for their analysis. So, a lot of times that’s done. We know that it’s done but it’s not documented in their minutes adequately we feel.

It’s just a procedural issue but they really should document it in there so that we can go back and point to it. At headquarters, we have a small staff – five people. We need to have a complete procedures manual both for accounting and office management so that we know – should any of our players be unexpectedly removed due to an act of god or an assassination attempt by one of the members which we do get threats once in a while. But anyway, we do want to have a procedures manual so that succession planning – somebody can step in and fill the positions.

We – the plan at headquarters is particularly for the accounting side. The new membership software’s been implemented this year. It’s still in rough stages as far as the feeding of the input from the membership data into our financial accounting system. Some rough edges for the reconciliation purposes. Once that’s done we want to begin that and we hope to have something accomplished by next year on that. As usual, we have a couple recommendations. We have some recommendations that we gave to the board on some minor items and some notes on there – minutes and some of the things that to just document a little bit differently besides the contract things.

We have two issues relative to the financials that give us a little grief. The only division of the AHEPA that’s not at headquarters and has money not had headquarters is the bone marrow division that operates out of Chicago. They have a bone marrow registry. If you look at your financials this year, they didn’t have a bone marrow screening this year which is unusual. But they did have their annual basketball tournament and fundraiser. Now, these guys have about $238,000.00 in the bank out there and quite frankly, we think that money should be at headquarters in full but at least, a certain portion of that.

If they were to send $200,000.00 or something of that to headquarters to be part of our investment portfolio, we could get another $6,000.00 to $8,000.00 a year in revenue on the thing and we really think that they should do that. Furthermore, relative to risk and this is in your financial statement as well, we have cash in two banks that exceeds the $250,000.00 limit FDIC insured limit at banks. Totaling $337,000.00. Now that is less than it has been in the past – we’ve done a better job of that. We do suggest that maybe we consider transferring some of it to our investment advisor to increase earnings or even if it’s temporary for some kind of a temporary investment.

Or alternatively, to transfer it to a money market back and forth at a third bank. The problem is with all the bank mergers in Washington, DC, there aren’t any banks that are really close to us to be able to affect a deposit. We actually walk our checks over to a bank. We, the headquarters people have – with all the news about Wells Fargo haven’t had any money over at Wells Fargo for a while. So it’s difficult, I’d say. Your board of auditors has no responsibility for the financial statements of the AHEPA national housing corp, the AHEPA affordable housing management company and the Daughters of Penelope Foundation, Inc.

Those are autonomous entities that operate outside of headquarters. They’re completely separate from the order of AHEPA. All the rest of the AHEPA umbrella – the AHEPA daughters, Sons, Maids, educational foundation – bless you – and, etc. There’s 14 or 15 of them now. We’ve been almost to 20 and we’ve pared back a few of them. Anyway, those are all included in your financial statement. These three are specifically not. A comment on the books – we did get a clean audit report which is usual for us. We didn’t have any issues with the auditors – any fraud that was discovered, nay disagreements with them relative to how we accounted for a transaction.

We’re in good stead with them but also as you read the report that they did do tests of transactions. They look at significant transactions. They look at – test all the balances, verify cash receivables, etc. We got a clean audit report – again, most of that is due to the diligence of Patrice Faros [phonetic] our controller. Anyway, we’ve had some – it’s becoming an easier job – we haven’t got any issues or battles this year. So I’m open for questions. Mr. Chairman, if you’d mention to the brothers – since there’s so many people that are here that are interested in the financial statements I’ll be here all week.

The committee will be here beginning tomorrow and we’d be happy to answer any questions about the financials at any time. Thank you.

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you, brother.

[Background conversation]

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much, Brother, the audit committee’s report is accepted into the by the convention. We thank you for your work and all you do for AHEPA and for keeping the books straight for us. Brothers, at this time, we will adjourn until tomorrow morning and at 9:00 we will reconvene. We’re gonna recess now and –

[Background conversation]

MR. HOLLISTER: Yes.

MALE VOICE 1: I would like that, Basil, but if you would like to –

MR. BASIL MOSSAIDIS: [interposing] [crosstalk] talk anyway. Let me just do it for the record.

MR. HOLLISTER: Come on, Basil.

MALE VOICE 1: We’ll ask your indulgence for one additional report from our executive director.

MR. MOSSAIDIS: Yes, thank you. I can give my report to the assembled - -.

MALE VOICE 1: Yes, perfect. You will fulfill your obligation.

MR. MOSSAIDIS: This may be - - for my report, though, I have to tell you.

MR. HOLLISTER: We’d like everybody to please remain a little quiet.

MR. MOSSAIDIS: Yes, please.

MR. HOLLISTER: Please keep it down so we can hear the chairman’s report.

MR. MOSSAIDIS: Yeah, and you can all sit down please. Thank you, brothers. My report of course is in the year book. As in every year, I come to the convention and I really don’t read my report. I have it there. I’ve tendered it for you to read as part of the official minutes of the record. I would, however, like to go on the record and state that this year has been a very exciting year for us at headquarters, working along with our supreme president, Carl Hollister, who has really supported headquarters along the way and also, are you videotaping?

Because if you are, I’m going to button my button here, so it doesn’t look like I look a - -. One second. But in all honesty, in working with our supreme president has been a tremendous honor for all of us at headquarters. He has really shown a new level of commitment and dedication to the AHEPA. He’s done a tremendous outreaching to the chapters and I believe that as far as our message and our communication is concerned? He and the Lodge have really connected with a lot of the chapters.

The most recent issue of the AHEPA magazine shows our trip to Greece and Cypress where, at many occasions, being a retired military officer, himself, was asked to lay a wreath at the tombs of soldiers and the hero, the honored dead. That was really a proud moment for me as an individual because it really showed how important that is to us AHEPAns. So, I’d like to go on the record and really commend on the great job that our president has done. My report is a little bit philosophical towards the end when it talks about what it is that we should want our AHEPA to be.

I reflect back as a student of history on the words of John F. Kennedy that says, ask not what your country can do for you but you can do for your country. That’s the question we need to be asking ourselves as AHEPAns. It’s a two way street. AHEPA provides us with an outlet to engage in the community. We should be able to devote time and energy to making the program succeed. We’re not the bank of Gibraltar that everybody keeps calling us for send us money and send us money. If you want me – the office – to send money, that means we have to raise them money.

It’s not like we have a bank account somewhere that we just throw money at you. So I think it’s time that we sort of look and redefine what we want our AHEPA to be. Are we gonna be an organization that does things because it’s the right thing to do? Or we’re just gonna do things because it’s easy to do? I think that’s the message, really, that I’d like for our members to take back. I wrote that in my report. If there are any questions of me as your executive director, I’d love to answer them. If not, that’s probably the end of my report.

I will tell you that this morning, the president, I think announced it that we have a new website. It’s been updated. We’re going to host, I think, at some point, in here, a brief sort of overview with our new young man at our headquarters, Kosta Canteros [phonetic] who’s gonna show us the ins and outs of our new website. It’s really modernized and something that would make all of us very proud. So, Mr. Chairman, with that, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak.

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you, Brother Basil.

[applause]

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you, Brother Basil. We accept your report into the convention minutes. Brothers, I really appreciate you sticking around and being here for the last part of this afternoon session. In the interest of your time and those others that will make presentations we will recess now and reconvene in the morning at 9:00 in this room, okay? You have a question.

MALE VOICE 3: I have a general question –

MALE VOICE 1: If you will, please step to the mic. Just so it will be recorded. Your name, your chapter, and where you’re from.

[Background conversation]

MR. HOLLISTER: Turn the switch on.

[Background conversation]

MR. ELIAS BORSAS: My name is Elias Borsas [phonetic], I’m with AHEPA Chapter 383, Silver Springs, Maryland. I’m the vice president of the chapter. I have a question as far as outside of the national convention, my question is for chapters that are overseas in other countries. Are there similar type of conferences that they hold? Or can they – can presenters from those chapters join the national convention?

MALE VOICE 1: Brother Basil, you want to respond to the question, please?

MR. MOSSAIDIS: Sure. The districts outside the United States have district conventions. District 25 which is Greece, had theirs two weeks ago. District 28 which is the balance of Europe had their convention about a month ago. The Supreme President visited and District 27 is Cypress. They have their district convention much earlier like in the beginning of May. Actually the district governor of 27 is here with us. So, our national convention is really international convention. All of the chapters that are under the AHEPA charter banner are here. Districts can do whatever they want.

They set up their own agenda. They set up their own time. They’re not obligated to – we ask them that they do it at least once a year but they all come here and they speak.

MR. BORSAS: Okay, thank you.

MR. MOSSAIDIS: Uh huh.

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you, Brother Basil. Are there any other questions at this point in time?

MR. MOSSAIDIS: Well, I do have one more announcement to make, sorry. I forgot – I was just reading my updates. Tonight, there will be Jitney service, you know those little buses? From downstairs of this complex – there’s – if you go immediately downstairs next to the elevators – there’s a door. There’s a port a cuchere there. There will be Jitney service starting at 6:30 to take the people down to the beach, to the boardwalk event that’s at 8:00. So, please be aware of that. It’s free of charge transport down there or you can take a taxi down there. So, thanks.

MALE VOICE 1: Okay, Brother Basil, thank you very much. Hearing no other comments or questions, we will recess until tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m., please, thank you.

[applause]

[Background conversation]

MR. HOLLISTER: I have to say we’ve done incredible good job with crowd control. We’ve done a very good job with crowd control.

MALE VOICE 1: I give credit to the vice chair.

MR. ZACHARIADES: The vice chair will take credit for that one. I think …

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Test, test.

[Background conversation]

[END OF DAY]

AHEPA

**96TH AHEPA Supreme Convention**

**Atlantic City, NJ**

**July 24, 2018**

Ubiqus/Nation-Wide Reporting & Convention Coverage

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# 96th AHEPA Supreme Convention

MALE VOICE 1: Good morning, brothers. Can you hear me out there? At this time, we’d like to call today’s session to order. If you will, please stand and join me in a moment of silence for those who lost their lives in the fires in Greece. Lord, we call upon you this morning and ask your blessings on the AHEPA family supreme conventions and all the meetings and deliberations that go forth this week. We ask that you guide us, direct us, and show us the way. We thank you for the opportunity to gather and to promote the ideals of Hellenism. We ask your help, condolences to the families that lost loved ones in the forest fires in Greece.

In your name, we pray, Amen.

Thank you, brothers. At this time …

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you. We’ll try to get it turned up. Test. Test. Test. Volume.

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Test, test. A lot better, thank you. So, brothers, at this time, we’ll call on the Supreme Governor from Region 2, Cleon Kordistos to give a brief update on Region 2.

MR. CLEON KORDISTOS: Morning brothers.

ALL: Morning.

MR. KORDISTOS: Okay, my name is Cleon Kordistos and I was the supreme governor for Region 2 which encompasses district 3 and 4. Last year we had increases in both districts which good for the AHEPHA as we all know. I also spearheaded the Canines for Warriors project for District 4 and today we’re gonna present a check to buy one dog this afternoon. There are a lot of people that I wanted to thank quickly. Jim asked us to speak for not more than four minutes. Unfortunately that’s difficult for me but I’m gonna do the best I can. First I want to thank Jimmy Kokotas, who was my team leader, also instrumental in helping me get elected and Nick Korokostas for his guidance.

Also want to thank Carl – I worked well with Carl to prove that the AHEPA is significant in this world today. Also I want to thank my mentor, Angelo Loulos [phonetic] who I’ve been traveling with and we’ve been AHEPAns for the last 33 years together. He goes everywhere with me but unfortunately he was unable to come today due to a prior commitment. Also wanted to take time to thank my wife. We can’t do this AHEPA thing if our wives aren’t behind us. So special thanks to my wife, Susan Kordistos.

Once again, thank you, we did well. You guys have a great day and a great convention. Thank you.

[applause]

MALE VOICE 1: Thank you very much, Brother Cleon. At this time, I’m gonna call on our AHEPA Academy if they’re prepared to make their presentation now?

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Okay. As a reminder for later in the day, we’ll have the AHEPA service dog program presentation that will take place in this room from noon to 1:00. So we’re having this to be a joint presentation before the AHEPA brothers and the Daughters. So, just wanted to give you a heads up. That will take place and to please stick around for it. I think you’ll be very impressed with what’s taken place over the past year or so. We’ll also have two other sort of joint presentations before the AHEPAns and the Daughters.

One is the AHEPA Odyssey Charter School, Wilmington, Delaware and that is scheduled to take place around 10:30 and as you can appreciate this things are sort of fluid as far as the time and we’ll also have a presentation for St. Fortios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. That’ll take place around 11:15 today. I’m looking to see if Brother Nick is in the room so we can have the board of trustees report. It’s scheduled for 9:30 but since we were moving ahead with our presentations but I don’t see him yet. I saw him earlier but he’ll be here, I’m sure, at his scheduled time.

Are there any other committees that are prepared to present at this time?

MR. HOLLISTER: Just take one at a time.

MALE VOICE 1: Yeah, don’t rush. Don’t all join at once. Well, I’ll ask your indulgence for a few minutes until we have the board of trustees report.

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 1: Yes, sir, now I think you can get your coffee if you haven’t gotten it yet. [long pause] Brothers, if I can have your attention again. We’ll resume. We’ll call on our chairman of the board of trustees to come forward and give his report to us. Brother Nick?

MR. NICK AROUTZIDIS: Good morning, brothers. Before we start today, Mr. Chairman, if you allow me, I’d like to take a moment of silence – you already did? Okay for the? Oh, that’s good. Thank you. A couple of things I have to let you know before I go through my report. I believe everybody has this document. Your files. So, and also, just to let you know that if you have any questions, either you can talk to me. You ask me the question or if you want more details after my presentation, you can talk to me and I have Patrice here that we can answer all of your questions.

I’m very pleased to prevent the proposed budget for the financial year beginning April 1, 2018 and ending March 31, 2019 to you. The delegates of the 96th Supreme Convention for approval. It is very important for you to understand that the budget has been approved by the board of trustees and the supreme lodge. To help, following along, you will find the proposed budget in the separate financial packet. The budget schedule will also provide you with historical comparisons of the last year’s actual numbers compared to this fiscal year – budget and numbers.

The actual figures are in great details in the audit report in financial statements printed in the separate financial packet. Financial concerns over stabilizing membership combined with increasing cost were paramount in the budget development process. The board of trustees also discussed cash flow concerns about the timelines of chapters per capita payments and how a chapter delay is sending the per capita in meetings can put a strain in the AHEPA’s operating budget. This is very important. We talk about it every year.

As you know about our chapters they don’t send their per capital until December 31st. So the issue there is that the cash flow of the organization. The budget you have in front of you it’s a balanced budget. I will begin by first addressing income then expenses and then I will be glad to address, as I said, any questions you have if the time permits here on the floor or later on any time today. The budget income for the fiscal year, as you can see, it’s $1,118,108.00. Program services of 1200 – our income, AHEPA received from the credit card program and now they are a big program.

AHEPA has entered in to the MasterCard program with - - credit under this new program, the card holders will earn points on every purchase. I urge everybody to sign up for the new AHEPA card. This will give us more money at the end of the year. $1,200.00 for an organization who has over 12,500 people – it’s not a lot of money. Member services – it’s $590,000.00, 188 and this includes per capita for 12,975 paid members for a total asset of $583875 and decreased from the last two previous years, decreasing the membership from 13,250 and 13,815 respectively.

Initiation and instatement fees has been eliminated and $3,500.00 incrementing of AHEPA merchandise sales. So when we sell something through a third party, we get a commission. As you can see it’s $3,500.00. Management and general income category includes administrative cost of our location charged to other divisions of $246,620.00. Using a variety of factors including the effects of time, general and management cost are allocated among the various - - of AHEPA. Magazine revenues includes the $60,000.00 AHEPA receives from the AHEPA national housing corporation and their – and we are excited to announce a $15,000.00 advertising commitment from the ambulance.

An international airline known for luxurious flights that now offers a daily flight from Newark to Athens and it’s the first direct flight from U.S. to Greece and they started this program through 2012. Atlantic City convention is budgeted at the profit of $48,000.00. We have approximately 400 delegates and guests attending this year. We’re pleased to say that last year’s Orlando convention was a financial success and we netted $68,000.00 in revenues. Orlando’s success was due in part to the $82,175.00 received from scholarships.

These scholarships – sorry, sponsorships. These sponsorships are very, very important for our conventions and there is a reason why every year we have to subsidize the delegate’s fee and that’s where we find the money to be able to do that. So I urge every one of you to start thinking about next year and how you guys can help by introducing new sponsors. Investment income is estimated $127,000.00. Sorry, from the national - - investment, securities to the operating account and $25,000.00 from headquarters investment portfolio.

The investment income has remained relatively stable and you can see that from the financial statements. The expense portion of the budget of $1,118,108.00 begins with programs services and advertising and promotion for the order. Program services of $180,315.00 includes district rebates of $25,350.00, public relations of $84,965.00, appropriations of $70,000.00, member services is posited at $177,300.00 and this includes the AHEPA’s website expenses of $4,600.00. The social media consultant of $25,000.00, the AHEPA magazine publication and mailing at the cost of $119,000.00

Death benefits claims of $3,600.00 posits imprinting membership materials at $20,000.00 and member service and miscellaneous of $5,100.00. The next category includes management and general expenses of $760,493.00 to operate headquarters and it’s as follows: Salaries, approximately $490,682.00. Office operating expenses of $269,811.00. Before we bought and approving this budget, I want to point out to you how important a job AHEPA does in our community and how impressive a portfolio we should be proud of. I have witnessed a great renaissance in the AHEPA in our collective auctions clearly proves this.

It has been a great honor to serve the AHEPA in the capacity of the chairman of the board of trustees over the past year. I have been privileged to serve as the chairman and I felt confidence that the board will proceed with the agenda and progress made over the past year. I would like to note some of our accomplishments. Secure the financial shipment of medical supplies to Greece vast complaining AHEPA’s Greek relief efforts totaling over half a million dollars. Purchase wreaths for the AHEPA wreath laying service of 600 Greek Americans military heroes buried –

MALE VOICE 3: Which page are you on?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: I’m sorry.

MALE VOICE 3: What page are you on?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: I’m not on a page. That’s my speech and I’m just giving you some highlights what we did last year. Okay, you can – I believe you can find it, brother, some of this, on the page next to the – to this page – fourth page, I think.

MALE VOICE 1: Yeah, the pages aren’t numbered.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Anyway, I’m just going through some highlights what we have done in the past year, okay? Maintained the AHEPA journey to Greece program and secured $8,000.00 from the AHEPA national housing corporation. Raised our scholarship donations for the AHEPA supreme conventions sponsorships helping to defray costs of our delegates, as I mentioned earlier. Donate $10,000.00 the AHEPA hospital in the Thessalonoki as provided by the Horton Estate. Work with the –

[END 2018\_Supreme\_Convention\_July\_23\_-\_27\_PART\_2.mp3]

[START 2018\_Supreme\_Convention\_July\_23\_-\_27\_PART\_3.mp3]

MR. AROUTZIDIS: This has been a program that has been continuing since 2007 every year, and one of probably the most unique programs within AHEPA. So I’m going to give a quick overview as to what it is for those of you who haven’t heard it. But essentially AHEPA Academy is a leadership program, it’s a leadership and professional development program, for Greek-American high school students, that we’re basically bringing, trying to bring, the best of the best from across the country, both boys and girls, in their, after their junior year of high school, to Washington DC for a week, where we have a very intensive program that’s set out for them, where we’re taking them basically to both embassies, Greek Embassy, Cypriot Embassy. We’re taking them to Congress, we’re getting them guest lecturers coming onto campus.

This is at George Mason University, where we’ve had this since 2007. It’s, we’re looking at a small group, usually around 12 to 16 students. We’re not looking to make this, basically, a program that everybody can come to, because we’re really looking for exceptional students. The minimum requirement that we’re looking at is a 3.5 GPA, that’s an unweighted GPA for those of you who may have, be familiar with the fact that how GPAs now are calculated, where you can see, you know, students having GPAs over 4, sometimes approaching a 5. We’re trying to keep, you know, sort of the grade inflation out of the calculation and looking at, really, sort of, that pure student who’s looking at the top 10% of their class.

Traditionally, what we’re trying to get and we’ve gotten in the past are students who end up going to Ivy League schools. We’ve had, you know, Harvard, Columbia, Yale. We’ve had pretty much, you know, all the great schools on both east coast and west coast represented from the alumni of the program that end up going through. That week is really about focusing on professional development. We’re giving networking training, we’re doing team-building exercises, really things that these students are going to need, not so much in their college preparation, but really in their professional lives.

We’re trying to advance these students to thinking, you know, more of like five to ten years ahead of what happens when they get beyond university, beyond graduate school, and enter into real life, frankly, and what are the skills they’re going to need. And for over a decade, we were pretty successful in doing that.

Now I use the word “were,” because for the last two years we haven’t been able to attract and recruit enough students from across the country from your chapters to sustain a successful, viable program.

Two years ago, or actually last year, I was up here lamenting about the fact that we didn’t have enough applications to support having a class. It was the first time we cancelled the class in over 10 years. From 2007 to 2016, that was 10 straight classes, we had enough students—quality students—to support a program. To the point where we were even turning away students in some years, because it was that competitive of an application process.

What’s happened the last two years is something I can’t explain. I have my theories as to what have might have happened, but for years I’d like to point out that the chapters and the regions that have been consistent in supporting this program, District 7, basically the Connecticut chapters, they have very much made it a priority to send actively, in their communities, recruit students, tell them about the program, and generously sponsor the scholarship. And I mention a scholarship.

The cost of the chapter’s $1,000 for that week. That week, that thousand dollars covers lodging at George Mason University, covers the food for the week, covers all the cost of the programs and the full agenda that we do for the week. Because obviously the programs that we’re doing and when we’re taking them to, you know, cultural events, taking them to leadership, basically a team-building classes, things of that nature, these are things obviously that cost money.

That thousand dollars every year per student, we stretch that to the very limit. And in some years, you know, have basically needed to find ways to make that work. And that’s really dependent on the fact that, of a certain number of students that we’re able to attract. Below a certain number, the program would honestly lose money from year to year, based on that thousand-dollar scholarship.

But it’s a small price that we’re asking for these sponsoring chapters to give to these students, in the same way that a year later, when these students are graduating high school seniors, they’d be getting anywhere between that $500 to $1,000 scholarship from the chapter. You would hope that every chapter, you know, is able to do.

But the last two years we haven’t had a program. This year particularly, we only received nine applications from across the country. And of those nine applications, only five of those students, honestly, were even eligible. And some of them—and when I say eligible—not just from a perspective of, you know, grade points and things of that nature, but also the fact that some of these students applied without their chapters sponsoring them or wanting, being willing to sponsor them.

What I’ve heard over the years from students who have approached me and said, “Hey listen, I want to apply to this program but I go to my chapter and my chapter either says I’ve never heard of it, I don’t know anything about it, we’re not going to give you a $1,000 scholarship, who are you, is your parent an AHEPAN [phonetic]?” And we’ve made the eligibility requirements such that either the parents being either members of Order of AHEPA, Daughters of Penelope, grandparents being members of either of those two orders, or the, you know, if the students are lucky enough to have a viable Sons or Maids chapter in their area, they themselves are Sons or Maids, that would make them eligible.

We have always tried to make this program as inclusive as possible, and not let some of the, sort of, barriers to entry with what a lot of chapters like to say that “Oh, you have to be a member, your parents have to be a member for two years, or whatever, before you can become eligible for a scholarship.” But we’ve had chapters who have turned away deserving students and said, “Find your own way to get to AHEPA Academy.” And a lot of times that discourages them from even applying. The fact that we have, across the country, for a program that is, you know, distributed and promoted through, you know, not only the HEPA website but through the AHEPA weekly emails, there’s no reason that every chapter in this country shouldn’t be able, from year to year, to find a student.

I should be turning away students based on how much of a pool we have across the country between, you know, of all the 400 plus active chapters, whatever it is, that we should have. And that’s a very sad thing, brothers. Because this is a program that no one else is doing in any of the other Greek American organizations.

And I’m sure when Journey to Greece or any of those other folks come up here and talk about sort of the same struggles they’ve had in terms of recruiting, because their numbers have been low over the last few years as well, I think Journey to Greece cancelled one year in the last three years if I remember correctly. But those are programs where other Greek American organizations are actually doing a very similar program and they’re actually paying for it for a full ride.

This is a program that only AHEPA has been doing and really, and that was really when I started this program, I brought it to AHEPA under, sort of, the guise of thinking what do we do best in AHEPA? Scholarships. What age range do we do that best to? High school students. If AHEPA, who, you know, has traditionally over the years, always identified that senior in high school that they give that scholarship to and honor every year, they just need to find that kid one year earlier. And particularly since this is a co-ed program, that doesn’t matter if it’s a boy or a girl. Frankly we’ve had more girls in the program traditionally then we’ve had boys apply to the program.

But, you know, I’m sitting here now, looking at the future of this and saying this is two years of a lost generation of students. The way the program is set up, they can only apply during their junior year. So a student can’t, they miss this one year, they can’t come back. And what is that, what are they missing out on?

They’re missing out on an opportunity to network with other exceptional students. You know, of their own year across the country. The students that have gone through this program, they still stay together. They, you know, they will travel across the country to visit each other at their colleges, even some of them after college. I mean that’s how tight these bonds have become, because you’re talking about very much like-minded people who identified themselves at that early age, and we identified them, as being exceptional students and being motivated in a way that made these relationships different than even the students that, other Greek American students that they were with in GOYA or locally, anything like that.

They will always come to our program and say, “I have more in common with the students that I’ve met in this room this week, than any other Greek American, Greek Orthodox that I’ve met from home for, that I’ve known my whole lives.” And that’s sad that these students aren’t getting that opportunity. I will answer that question at the end, but…

It’s one of these things now where we’re looking at this program as at sort of in a crossroads, because if the program doesn’t continue next year, it’s going to get to the point where students aren’t even going to want to apply. You know. I’ve had chapters who’ve, you know, come to me and said, “Listen, how can we continue to promote this program,” you know, the good chapters, the program, the chapters that have been traditionally always sending us students, they’re saying now, “How can we continue to promote this program if it’s not going to happen?”

Because it is a big disappointment to these students. And then it’s also an opportunity cost. Because these students who are planning on coming to this program are obviously giving up other opportunities and other things that they say that they could be going to instead of coming to AHEPA Academy. But they take, sort of, that leap of faith, thinking that this is a unique opportunity that they won’t get anywhere else, but then when you have to tell these students sometime in April, you know, in May, when the applications shake out, that hey, we’re not going to have enough to do a program this year, that’s disappointment, and that’s usually their first initiation into AHEPA. And that’s sad when that happens, when the first time they, you know, learn about and get excited about something that AHEPA is there to offer is through a program and through a missed opportunity for them.

So I feel for those chapters and, you know, what I have to say to those chapters is we will, I will continue to try to put this program on, but what I need is the support of the chapters across the country to actively recruit, actively promote this program in their local communities.

Because that’s what it takes to get these students to apply. If you’re not promoting it in the same way you’d promoting your scholarships, these students, particularly the ones whose parents may have just joined AHEPA or aren’t even… And it’s a recruiting tool. That is the way we get parent to join AHEPA, is through a program like this. Particularly if it’s a year earlier than you normally would get a high school senior to do this. But we’re missing out on that opportunity.

The other challenge that we’re going to face is one of budget. When I started this program, you know, in 2007, that thousand-dollar budget, sure, it could cover it. This year, had we had the program, George Mason University came to me and basically said, “Thank you for your continued support for the last 10 years, but you guys are now considered a small conference, we’re doubling our rates. Our room rates.” So, and that’s just education just in and of itself. You know, the high cost of education, it scrolls down to even summer lodging.

But we’d be looking at having probably raise tuition 15 hundred to cover the fact that they’re doubling our, basically our room costs at that point. So, I mean, I’ll continue to explore other methods and other avenues, but, you know, that’s going to be a challenge to folks.

What I intend to do is, you know, I will be at Governor’s Conference, I’ve been to several Governor’s Conferences before and spoken this program. That’s probably where I would like to get some input from those chapters and those regions that want to see this program continue. It can’t just be me alone, really, you know, carrying this mantle anymore. And as I hate to say it, even for my perspective, I need younger input at this point. When I started this program, you know, over 10 years ago, there was a generational gap that wasn’t that far between me and those students. That gap is unfortunately getting larger.

So I will be looking to Sons and Maids, talking to them independently as well, about sort of getting a coalition together of people that can help take this program into the next 10 years, if the program can be sustained, and if AHEPA wants this program to continue, frankly.

My oldest alumni of this program are now 28 years old. They’re successful, they’re in, you know, law careers, medical careers, anything you can imagine right now, you know. But they’re busy. You know, they’re not going to be able to really devote the time to sort of take up that mantle for at least another five, maybe ten years, when they can then themselves are now established at that point where they can say, okay, now I can give back. But we need to have a gap in there, so. Yeah. But I can open it up to questions at this point, but that’s pretty much the extent of my thing.

MR. PETER VERGADOS: Peter Vergados, Chapter 24, Boston District 8. I think I’m partially to blame as District 8 secretary. I did not, I know about this program, I think it’s a fantastic program, I know it’s been in existence for a long time, and I probably, by not sending an encyclical out to all my chapters, did not press the issue. However, I would suggest utilizing your supreme governors and get a formal letter down to the district governors, through the district secretaries, into the chapters, and at, tell them what’s going on, separate letter, and telling them the history about it and put the onus on the local district to get their chapters to get involved. I was at the District Governor’s Meeting last year, I do not remember that this being brought up to the Governors, so may I suggest that to keep this program, which is, I think fantastic, that you put the onus on the leadership to put the word out—

MR. KRONOS: [Interposing] Oh, certainly.

MR. VERGADOS: —as best as possible.

MR. KRONOS: No, and I appreciate that comment, and you know, I was not at Governor’s conference this past year, but I’ve been to most of them, and had, this has been brought up, and it was even to the point when under different administrations, frankly, they cast different supreme governors to even give this presentation on my behalf, even when I was available to do it, because they did want, you know, others to be, sort of, you know, knowledgeable about the program and, you know, versed in the program, so… But I do appreciate that comment, I do intend to do that, so… Any other questions?

MR. KAL KARDOUS: Kal Kardous from Chapter 2, Marathon 2 from Charlotte, North Carolina. I think we didn’t get enough communication about. That’s something very important, because our chapter give, we gave this year close to $22,000 in scholarship for high school and college. And we do it by how much their grade average, I mean we really… And we used to give it to any relatives who was a member. Now we changed it, because the parents have to be member or the grandparents and they have to be active.

MR. KRONOS: Right.

MR. KARDOUS: Because that’s the only way we can keep on recruiting. If we, if our family don’t join AHEPA, nobody’s going to join AHEPA. So we have to work hard in getting our young people to join, to carry AHEPA for the future. Now I don’t think, and I’m the president, I don’t recall getting anything, that’s first time I hear about it. And that’s very important program, because it will, that’s the best thing for youth, to have those kind of experience, and have tight relation. So I suggest that you send more, either through the newsletter or write an article in the magazine, or send us… who do you send request to?

MR. KRONOS: So, Brother, I appreciate the question. And actually your chapter has actually been one of the ones that has supported in the past.

MR. KARDOUS: Yeah.

MR. KRONOS: Your chapter has sent, from the city of North Carolina, probably the most, honestly. And this is the last… North Carolina, I think the last couple years hasn’t sent, but every other year, and particularly when, you know, when Jim Stasios was District Governor, I remember we received a lot of applications from North Carolina.

MR. KARDOUS: Yeah.

MR. KRONOS: Just last couple years hasn’t been that way, but your area typically hasn’t been the problem. In terms of how we’ve been getting the word out, it’s been going out on that weekly email that, you know, AHEPA sends out. It’s pretty much starting in January through, you know, April, it goes out every week. It’s usually the second article, honestly, in that. It’s been featured in the AHEPA magazine. You know, usually, I get headquarters to send out separate emails to everyone about it as well. So if you’re paying attention to other things at AHEPA, you’re getting exposed to that. I mean, and you know, from what I understand, the email list is 15,000 members at least.

MR. KARDOUS: Yeah.

MR. KRONOS: So, I mean, if it’s not reaching the members directly who have either grandchildren or children of that age, I don’t know what else, I mean, outside of force-feeding it, you know, to every single chapter president, which I used to do. I literally used to, you know, hand, basically hand-email every single chapter president and every single chapter officer in the very beginning to do that, to the point now where, you know, my email server is listed as a big spammer because of those efforts of sending out individual emails to everybody.

MR. KARDOUS: One way to embarrass those who don’t support it, is list name of who support and list of names that we waiting on them to support the program. Because that’s very essential and good program.

MR. KRONOS: Well, I mean, pretty much, yeah, I’d be embarrassing most of the order at this point, because literally it’s Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, you know, typically. New York is a special case because of the fact they have regents exams usually during that last week, depending on when the week, it’s usually the last week of June, so depending on when the calendar. But even New York last two years has been good about sending applications, and I’ve actually felt really bad about the fact that I haven’t had New York brothers in the last couple years.

MALE VOICE 1: Go ahead.

MR. JIM FABRIKIS: Jim Fabrikis, CJ 1, Toronto. Quick question, how many students do you need to actually run the program, and are Canadian students allowed to enter?

MR. KRONOS: Yes, okay. Good question. So typically where we’d like our sweet spot to be would be 12. That’s, I think that, both from a student dynamic and also from a financial dynamic, it works out best, because we’re looking at a ratio of, you know, with 12 students, 3 counselors, that’s a good sized group. We’ve had as high as 16, 17 in some years. The absolute lowest that I think I ever was able to do it with was 9, and that was a year where I think I accepted 11 and then 2 dropped out at the last minute. But I still was able to make it work with 9. Anything below that, it cheats the students of an experience, because that’s not a viable enough group where they feel that they’re making, you know, adequate connections, and it just, the logistics of the program just doesn’t work even financially or socially or even just, you know, educationally. Canadian students, we have had Canadian students in the past. I believe one that has actually come and then we had a few others that, you know, were accepted from years, but I think this year we would’ve had one from Toronto if had the program not been cancelled, so… Thank you. Anybody else?

MALE VOICE 2: Actually that brother had the question that I was going to ask, the minimum. But I just would like to say my son went through it about 10 years ago and it was a wonderful experience for him, I hope this continues. I think we probably have to look at publicizing outside of AHEPA circles and hope that they go through AHEPA. And use social media more, because the youth are all social media users. And I don’t know that we are to that extent. But it’s amazing to me that people don’t know about this wonderful program at the extent. So we got to publicize it and hit a lot harder.

MR. KRONOS: All right, thank you.

MR. CHRIS KAITSON: Chris Kaitson, District 16 Governor. The program’s an excellent program, I’ve looked at it before and tried to encourage some children. There’s a timing issue with graduating high school seniors. We have a large group that apply for AHEPA scholarships but at the time when the applications go out for those scholarships, that’s your deadline. And it’s a timing issue. If you’re able to extend the program into freshman or sophomore colleges, I don’t know the difficult with that, at least we’d then have a list of qualified applicants, we know their academic interests in AHEPA, and the scholarship program, it’d allow us to provide you with a greater list of folks. So it’s a timing issue with the knowledge of the list.

MR. KRONOS: Right, yeah. Just, for that, just a clarification. These are high school juniors that are applying.

MR. KAITSON: Yeah, seniors, okay.

MR. KRONOS: So these are before their senior year. Once they get to senior year, I hate to say it, you’ve lost them. Because they’re so busy getting ready, you know, for college, everything like that, and then getting this into college they’re already gone at that point, in terms of the effectiveness of the program, so, thank you.

MALE VOICE 3: Thank you, Brother. In the interest of time, we’ll take one other question and then we have to move on. Brother Kronos’ll be in the back of the room, anybody that wants to speak to him individually, I encourage you to do so.

MR. GREG SIMONES: So…

MALE VOICE 3: Yes.

MR. SIMONES: I can do mine?

MALE VOICE 3: Yes, ask…

MR. SIMONES: Okay.

MALE VOICE 3: State your name and chapter please.

MR. SIMONES: Yeah. Greg Simones, District 7, Yankee District 7, past district governor. I just had a gentleman who was interested in it. I know about AHEPA Academy, but I looked on the national website, and it used to have a direct link. It’s mentioned but it’s not direct-linked. I had to go to ahapacademy.com separately, but, you know, talking about getting information out, you should have it linked through the national website as well.

MR. KRONOS: It was, I think they just redesigned the website—

MR. SIMONES: [Interposing] Right, I just noticed that the website was redesigned—

MR. KRONOS: [Crosstalk] We haven’t, I think—

MR. SIMONES: [Interposing] But it’s mentioned and it’s not hot-linked on there if you go to the education page.

MR. KRONOS: Yeah, I think they’re still working on the education page.

MR. SIMONES: And one last thing, I just wanted to recognize one of our AHEPA Academy advocates, Mo Moshovos, who we lost, a past district governor, who was one of our biggest personal advocates for this program that I’m aware of, and just wanted to recognize his memory. It was a tremendous loss. But thank you, gentlemen.

MALE VOICE 3: Thank you very much, and we appreciate all the work that both of the Kronos brothers do in support of the AHEPA Academy. At this time I’m going to call on Past Supreme President Nick Karacostas to give us, sort of, an update on the St. Nicholas National Shrine Project.

MR. NICK KARACOSTAS: Thank you Mr. Chairman, good morning, brothers, welcome to Atlantic City, it’s an honor for me to be here today, to give you a very brief report about the St. Nicholas Shrine Greek Orthodox Church at Ground Zero. As many of you know, under the leadership of past supreme president Phillip Frangos, the AHEPA pledged, AHEPA was the only organization, to pledge a million dollars towards that fund-raising effort. We concluded that pledge by raising the money, thanks to all of you, our chapters and our members around the world. We had money come in from Canada, from Greece, and all around the United Sates.

Unfortunately, you do know the dire circumstances that the archdiocese has been under with regard to their recent financial strains. They recently conducted an audit through an external audit company that provided documentation and information that the archdiocese unfortunately took about four and a half million dollars from the St. Nicholas Fund which was supposed to be a separate trust and used it for their operating expenses, so they were required by law to pay that money back and they since have by taking a loan and putting the money back into the St. Nicholas Trust.

However, they don’t have the money at this time to finish the project and they’re trying to get it back on track. I’m proud to report that AHEPA did raise the million dollars. I want to report further that we had advanced $460,000 to the archdiocese; that was two years ago, before this financial crisis struck them. So we had advanced 460,000. We had another credit of 259,000, because many of our chapters and members sent the donations directly to the archdiocese instead of sending it to AHEPA headquarters. So that left the balance of $281,000, which we have, and we have that under the board of trustees’ authority. And that money will not be given to the archdiocese, I repeat, will not be given to the archdiocese, until the project is back on track.

So right now we’re waiting for the new business plan and the new budget that will be required to complete the project. I think as Greek Americans, you know, who believe in Greek Orthodoxy and also want to see this symbolic church be built on Ground Zero, we want them to get it back on track. And hopefully they’ll do that in short order and provide us with a budget, and once they do, and once we are certain that the money will be spent towards the completion of the project, we will deliver the balance of $281,000.

So that’s basically a very brief report. I don’t really want to entertain questions about the archdiocese’s financial situation, because that’s not what I’m here for. I’m sure you all have heard different stories. And they recently had their Clergy-Laity Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. So the Archbishop will be here with us on Thursday, so feel free to ask him. But don’t ask me. But other than that if you have any questions, I’m honored and privileged to answer them for you.

MALE VOICE 4: Thanks for the update.

MR. KARACOSTAS: Thank you, love you, brothers.

MALE VOICE 3: Thank you very much, Brother Nick, we appreciate your leadership on this project, and we’re proud that AHEPA has raised the million dollars that we had hoped to raise. So at this time we’re going to call on our Cypress and Hellenic Affairs Committee to report, and Andy Kaffes is going to make the report on behalf of the committee. Brother Andy?

MALE VOICE 5: Andy Kaffes, ladies and gentlemen.

MR. ANDY KAFFES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, convention officers, brothers. Good morning. I now need glasses, that’s how long this has been going on. It’s a pleasure to give the report of the Cypress Hellenic Affairs Committee for 2018, on behalf of its Chairman Savos Tsvikos. The committee wishes to thank Supreme President Carl Hollister, who was a former chairman of the Committee, for this leadership and confidence in the committee during the past year, and also the support and backing of the Supreme Lodge and Board of Trustees.

The yearbook, the committee, the report that’s in the yearbook, I’d just go over really briefly some highlights from that and a couple of the issues that committee covers. Namely, trying to grow the Hellenic Caucus in the Congress is one of the primary goals of the committee. It is a bipartisan Congressional Caucus in the US House of representatives. At the start of the 115th Congress in January of 2017, the number was 118, the Hellenic Caucus now stands at 126 members as of last week, a couple weeks ago. So we’ve lost a handful of caucus members to resignation and early retirement. If those of you who do follow congress has noticed there have been an immense amount of retirements and resignations announced.

So there have been a total of 64 members of the House, for example, who announced they will not be back for the next Congress when it begins in January. And this does not count those members who may lose their reelection bid in November. So we could be looking at a significant number of folks leaving the caucus come January 2019, when the 116th Congress commences, so we will certainly have a lot of work to do come the next congress.

On Capitol Hill Day, briefly, we had another wonderful day on May 16th. It’s a wonderful chance to exercise one’s civic responsibility and grassroots activism. We had approximately, well, we handed out at least 75 packets to congressional offices that day. We talked about a myriad of issues during the day. Obviously of course, ranging from foreign relations issues, but it also affords AHEPA family members to discuss some domestic policy issues, for example housing, or medical research, Thalassemia, things like that, with their members of Congress. So it was also a very productive day.

We had a kickoff reception in the morning where we heard from Congressman Gus Bilirakis the co-chair of Hellenic Caucus, and also Congressman Charlie Crist from Florida addressed our morning audience. During the day we took a group photo. At the photo, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney who is the other co-chair of Hellenic Caucus came out and greeted us and spoke to us, as did Congressman John Sarbanes as well.

At an evening reception that we have, we honor excellence in public service, we’re very proud to honor two trailblazing women of the US House of Representatives, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, who is the Chairman Americas of the Foreign Relations Committee in the House, Foreign Affairs Committee in the House. And also Congresswoman Niki Tsongas from Massachusetts, and obviously a champion of Greek American issues in the caucus. And both of those women will be retiring at the end of this year, so they are, will be missed, and there’re some big shoes to fill.

So we do thank Supreme President Hollister, Supreme Lodge, for making that evening possible. We continue to obviously engage with the administration whenever possible. Usually this involves briefings with state department officials at the department of state on Greece and Cyprus. And then any time any other Greek American groups come to Washington for their get-togethers, conferences, we also participate there as well. And also, you know, provide, have interaction with administrations officials there, too.

With respect to Congress there are several bills that are in the report that I won’t go into detail with, but they are in the report and a synopsis of each one is presented there. We do make it a point to chime in where relevant on certain pieces of legislation that are important to our mission and scope.

One of the big victories this year had to do in the area of federal funding and investment. We were, we weighed in to support for an increase of funding for Greece’s international military education and training program line item at the Department of State. In previous years this has been at about the $200,000 level, but during the past appropriations year for FY 2018, working with various offices, so specifically Senator Chris Van Hollen from Maryland was quite helpful and instrumental, as was Senator Lindsey Graham from South Carolina.

We saw the mark, the appropriation for Greece’s IMET program appropriated at a level of $1 million, which will provide for a significant number of additional training opportunities for Hellenic officers to come here to the United States to receive training and then take that training obviously back to Greece. It’s a very important program, and as Greece demonstrates more of a willingness to play more of a security role in the Eastern Mediterranean, programs like this are vital to that, especially with regard to Souda Bay.

We also chime in on various hearings wherever we can to submit questions for the record as well, and in other types of issues, too. Let’s see. We continue to monitor various other programs that we have obviously an interest in.

Turkey’s acts of provocation and aggressiveness in the Aegean during the past year have been extraordinarily egregious. Every time we do meet with the State Department, we do make it a point. We sent a letter to then Secretary Tillerson at the time that the State Department wrote back to us specifically in an email and said AHEPA’s concern is noted and the issue was brought to the Secretary’s attention because it was very timely. He was in Turkey at the time and we sent it to our State Department folks over there.

We continue to monitor Greece’s standing in the United States’ VISA Waver Program, which is an extremely important program for US-Greece relations and it’s a program that AHEPA really… it’s a policy, rather, that AHEPA really worked on and did a four-year campaign, and was successful in getting that done with the Department of Homeland Security.

And also just to wrap it up on the advancing relations with the American Jewish community, we continue to build upon this foundation that AHEPA laid back in the fall of 2010 with our colleagues in the American Jewish community. This, again, this past year, January 12 to 19, Supreme President Hollister led our Third International Leadership Mission to Israel, Cyprus, and Greece with our colleagues at the American Hellenic Institute at B’nai B’rith International at the conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which is an umbrella group that represents 52 American Jewish organizations.

So this was our third annual trip there. I shouldn’t say annual, biannual. Started in 2014 and it was, we were very well-received in all three countries. And we’re doing our part to strengthen that relationship as well. So that’s the report in a nutshell, thank you, brothers, for your time. Questions? Sorry.

MR. SCARVELES: Yeah, a question, Andy. Andy?

MR. PETER SERECE: May I—

MR. SCARVELES: [Interposing] Chapter 98, George Scarveles, Connecticut.

MR. SERECE: Excuse me, may I ask a question?

MR. SCARVELES: You were putting… Andrew…

MALE VOICE 6: One at a time, one at a time.

MR. SCARVELES: Question for Andrew. I’m sorry.

MR. SERECE: I think that - -

MR. SERECE: Oh, I’m sorry, go ahead.

MR. SCARVELES: Andrew, you were putting together a group, a grassroots group that filtered down into the chapters so that we can establish local identity with our local politicians. I was just wondering how that was coming along, or, I just thought it was a great idea because it got a chapter with a person who had a, hopefully a title that knew the local politicians that maybe filtered back up to you.

MR. KAFFES: Thanks, George, I appreciate you bringing that up. That’s a constant work in progress. It’s probably not to where it should be, but we constantly look for folks to, who are willing to be engaged in the grassroots process back home in your districts, to meet with the local district offices of members of Congress, back at Cypress Hellenic Affairs Committee Meeting we do have forms to fill out for folks who are interested to do that, and keeping those, the challenge there is keeping those folks engaged and educated on the issues as they occur. And that’s a challenge, I think, on our end, coming out of Washington. But there’s also a challenge, also, to identify folks as well. So long answer short, that’s still a work in progress and more needs to be done.

MR. SCARVELES: Again, thank you for all you’re doing and we’re working on the program in our local district.

MR. KAFFES: Thank you, yes, you guys have been great up there, thank you.

MR. SERECE: I’m Peter Serece [phonetic] from Chapter 454, Chandler, Arizona. The alliance between Greece, Cyprus, and Israel. Has this been advertised or perpetuated into the Islamic countries, so that they are aware of the alliance between the Judeo-Christian in the Eastern Mediterranean?

MR. KAFFES: Well, I’m sure those countries are aware. I mean, I don’t see how they would not be. I mean, I’m sure, you know, Turkey obviously has noted their relationship, which has become an alliance. Especially because of the, well not just the security measures that are going on, but, you know, the energy, the desire to develop and exploit hydrocarbons in the Eastern Mediterranean as well. It’s been clear, the alliance has made it clear, in their statements that they’ve issued, you know, after their summits, and they had another summit this year, again their fourth one, which is also very good. You know, that they are willing to open up their alliance to like-minded nations who have the same security goals and goals for peace and stability in that region. So, but, so I think the message is sent. Maybe more diplomatically, but I think it’s there.

MR. SERECE: I would personally like to see this turn into, this alliance turn into a NATO situation where… AHEPA’s involvement from the very beginning has been spectacular.

MR. KAFFES: Thank you.

MR. SERECE: I, it has really, in the forefront of this, with B’nai B’rith and so forth and so on. But—

MR. KAFFES: [Interposing] Yeah, we have great partners they’re wonderful—

MR. SERECE: [Interposing] That alliance is very, very important to be publicized in the Islamic community so that they know we have, they have, they’re, these countries are not alone.

MR. KAFFES: Right. And they’re making inroads with Egypt as well, and Jordan. The alliance, they’re making inroads with Egypt and Jordan as well. There’s summits going on with those countries, so it’s getting there, and I’m sorry, sir.

MALE VOICE 7: I just wanted to add that not only the strategic alliance with Israel is very important from Greece and Cyprus, and they, by extension, the United States, but Cyprus and Greece, primarily Cyprus, has led to some significant bilateral agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan. So they have a dual role to play, because they can be very effective with the traditionally Muslim countries, but at the same time, Greece and Cyprus offer Israel the only outlet out of their - - . And the last few years, we have been working very closely with the Israeli organizations and the Jewish lobby in the United Sates, and I have to tell you, I have to tell you, working against them in the past, when they were very close to Turkey, and working with them during this times, is day and night.

So we have to be very strategic, and we have to be able and we have to be willing to change our ways in order to advance our interest. We cannot be going like this. It is very poor - - . And a brother said earlier about grassroots. That’s where everything starts and that’s where everything ends. We have an opportunity to influence the American foreign policy. We cannot just be bystanders. And I have said that many times. Get involved at your local level. Get to know your elected officials. Let us know if you need any help, and we are there to help. But we can only make a difference if we are in the game. By standing on the bleachers, watching what’s going on, we’re doing ourselves an injustice. Thank you.

DR. ANDIANOPOLIS: Dr. Andianopolis [phonetic], Marathon, Chapter 2, Charlotte North Carolina. The first question is, whether it’s appropriate to address some issues that took place recently in Greece and I can keep you busy all morning about questions. Is it appropriate to bring these kind of questions or not?

MALE VOICE 3: What kind of questions?

DR. ANDIANOPOLIS: For example, the Macedonian discussions and the agreement that our President Mr. Tsipras and the Minister of Exterior Kotzias signed with Skopje President—

MALE VOICE 7: [Interposing] Let me make a distinction. He’s not our President and he’s not our Prime Minister. We are here as US citizens. Let’s make that distinction, because it carries a lot of consequences if we phrase it any other way.

DR. ANDIANOPOLIS: Yeah, well that’s why I asked the question. So what is the forum where we can bring these issues and connect somewhat the AHEPA activity to the institution of government in Greece? And then apply some criticism as far as to the actions that the Greek government has taken.

MALE VOICE 7: Well let me tell you one thing. We are not here as so-called foreign ministers of either Greece or Cyprus. We are here as ambassadors and soldiers in fighting a battle. We are not here to initiate and make policy. We have to respect what’s going on in Greece and Cyprus and yes, we can raise our questions and our concerns. But it will be totally inappropriate, in my opinion, as an organization, as a national organization. Local organizations could do it, but as AHEPA to go and condemn a proposed agreement, I think we are out of place. That’s my personal opinion.

DR. ANDIANOPOLIS: Then—

MALE VOICE 7: [Interposing] And let me go one step further. And every time we go to Washington, either on Capital Hill Day or other conferences we have there, we always brought up the Macedonian issue and the Macedonian name. It’s been an ongoing negotiation which concluded with the proposed agreement that is going to go to referendum in the former…

DR. ANDIANOPOLIS: Skopje.

MALE VOICE 7: Skopje, and is going to go to the Greek Parliament in Greece. It is ultimately up to the people of Greece and their elected officials to decide what is best for them. We can offer our advice and we can express our concerns, but we can be more effective if we do that privately than publicly. I don’t think it serves any purpose for us to come out and condemn a proposed agreement.

MALE VOICE 3: Brothers, I appreciate the importance of the topics you bring forward and I suggest that you—

DR. ANDIANOPOLIS: [Interposing] So can I reply to them statements?

MALE VOICE 3: We can later—

DR. ANDIANOPOLIS: [Interposing] Okay.

MALE VOICE 3: Right now, I’m sorry, but we have schedule to meet—

DR. ANDIANOPOLIS: [Interposing] Okay.

MALE VOICE 3: —and we’re behind schedule so we—

DR. ANDIANOPOLIS: [Interposing] And that’s why I asked the question. That’s okay.

MALE VOICE 3: We ask your indulgence. At this time we’re going to call on our Supreme President to make a statement. Okay, the Chairman of the Committee advised that anyone that wants to make comments or join in discussion to join their committee that their committee meeting’s going to take place shortly. After the Supreme President addresses us. Brother’s our Supreme President, Brother Carl Hollister.

MR. CARL HOLLISTER: All right. Hi, brothers. Sit down, sit down, sit down. You’re going to be hearing from me quite a bit. All right, there was an incident many of you saw on the news, we had wildfires in Greece’s Attica region. It’d broken out and they had been quite deadly. At least 60 persons are dead, including whole families with children. Prime Minister Tsipras has issued a plea. Greece is going to need all the support it can get. He has called for three days of national mourning. Many EU states and the State of Israel have already responded to Greece’s pleas. And we are grateful and very appreciative of their efforts.

These wildfires are the worst since August 2007. At that time AHEPA mobilized and transported 270 care packages totaling 250,000 worth of goods, and raised an additional $250,000 in financial assistance for Greece’s wildfire victims. This was led under then Supreme President Ike Gulas. It is time for us to stand by Greece again in their time of need. I’m calling on our chapters to mobilize, and I’m authorizing headquarters to make available the emergency relief fund, for the purpose of providing humanitarian aid and recovery assistance during this tragedy. I want you all to write down this website address: ahepa.org/donate. It would be a shame if we don’t see a lot of donations coming out of this convention before we adjourn on Thursday. It’s the end of my statement.

MALE VOICE 3: Thank you. Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Supreme President. We appreciate your leadership and the action that you’ve taken. At this time I’m going to call on our Supreme Vice Chair, Brother Zenon to introduce our program.

MR. ZENON CHRISTODOULOU: Brothers, welcome. We’re going to wait a few minutes for the daughters to come in as well, because they want to hear this presentation together along with the next two. Well, we are very honored to have with us today representatives from the Odyssey Charter School Dimitri Dandolos and Marina Mattheoudakis. We want to thank them so much, not just for joining us today, but for everything they’ve done for the past several years to make this dream a reality.

In Wilmington, Delaware, the Odyssey has set the gold standard for what we can do as a community. Education is one of the most important things in our charter, and they have risen to the highest heights to show us what can be done. They started with just a few grades, and now have from kindergarten through 11th grade. They are the highest ranked school in Delaware. Greeks and non-Greeks alike are learning to a higher standard and they’re learning the Greek language.

This is really something that we should embody and we should embrace through the country and through the AHEPA domain. They’ve done such an incredible job promoting Hellenism, the Greek language, and our culture, that to be honest, they are, in my opinion, the wedge into the mainstream American community. There’s no better way than to educate the youth in what Hellenism is all about, and in the value of the Greek language.

So I’m honored to have our dear friend with us, thank you for joining us, thank you for all you do, and thank you for all you have shown us, the way to improve our community to maintain our beloved Hellenism. Thank you.

Mr. DIMITRI DANDOLOS: Good morning, brothers and sisters, and Brother Zenon, thank you for all your kind words and the introduction. It’s much appreciated. Also want to thank our Supreme President for inviting us here. I also want to thank the, our Supreme President for inviting us here, and we’re honored to be amongst you. Many you of you have served AHEPA for many, many years, and you have accomplished so many things that make all of us very, very proud.

As Brother Zenon said, the effort started about 13 years ago, when a group of our chapter, Wilmington 95, decided to create a school as a simple gesture of saying thank you to our community and contributing to a very much needed service of providing quality education. Not only in our community but in the United States, Public Education, tuition-free.

First, we applied for a permit that would allow us to have an elementary school. Our dreams and aspirations were very modest. So the permit that was given to us was to start from kindergarten and go to grade five. We started in grades K through two, and in a matter of a year, we realized that this little school was providing us an opportunity to really fulfill even bigger better dreams and aspirations, and that was affirmed by the parents that had joined our school, first reluctantly and now they were telling us how happy they were to join Odyssey Charter School in the pursuit not only of higher education standards, but also utilizing the Greek language and culture as a tool that could allow our students to achieve those objectives.

So in short order, we went back to the Department of Education as our school was growing, and we applied for a charter that would allow us to grow into K through 12 operation. To control quality, we increased the grade one grade at a time, and this year, after our 12th year operating, we’re in grades K through 11.

In September, we’re going to have approximately 1,800 students and a waiting list of over 1,200 students. The school, as Brother Zenon said, is one of the top-rated schools in the nation, and we’re very proud to say that all Odyssey’s vision and mission is AHEPA’s Odyssey, vision, and mission. We represent the H, the E and the P in our efforts. And we’re doing that through high-quality, public, tuition-free education.

So here are some of the statistics that you can see there in terms of the impact our school is making in our community, not only in terms of a quality education we offer, but in terms of a number of students and staff that we have in our school.

We employ this year, over 220 faculty and staff. The school is growing to have an annual budget of over $25 million a year, and it’s growing. And most recently, we were very successful in acquiring a $34 million-dollar, tax-exempt bond that allowed us to purchase half a million square feet of buildings and about 36 acres of land, at the campus of the Dupont Company, that was abandoning those buildings and moving across the street in newer and modern facilities.

We retrofitted all those buildings; much of that work was done through fundraising, and right now our school not only has a beautiful academic program, but a beautiful campus in which we’re growing, and growing steadily.

Because we’re not selfish, instead of razing a number of the buildings on the property, we decided to maintain them, because there are other schools like us that are trying to do good in the community, and they need space. Space in New Castle County is very precious and very limited. So for both two good reasons, to help others to find the home like we’re trying to find the home for about eight years, and also to generate revenue for the school, take basically our assets and allow them to make money for us, income, two of our buildings on the campus are presently leased to another charter school—60,000 square feet—and another school, Ithaka Early Learning Center, which is also sponsored by the AHEPA Chapter 95 organization, is about to open its doors next year for the purpose of having there, children from ages of six weeks to five years old, where we can teach them in those preschool days, of how to become properly prepared to enter the world of kindergarten and the elementary school.

This is an area of education, again, that is totally lacking in the United States, and most recently educators have paid a great deal of attention in that field. Most importantly, we have also made the commitment that out of the 220 children that we’ll accept in that school, Ithaka Early Learning Center, 60% of them will come from under-privileged families.

Over the years, and you can see there on our educational campus, where this pretty stadium is, actually it’s a green field, this is our dream, we’re not there yet, we don’t have the money to do that. There used to be two buildings just like the other ones that we razed them. In the front buildings, the cluster of buildings on 21, 22, 23, and 24, these are numbers, I’m sorry, 21 and 22, these are numbers left behind from the Dupont Company because they had 40 buildings on this property, are now occupying our grades K through 11.

And we are about to build an athletic - - , arts and science center, in the front of Building 23, that’s the gray structure over there. In the back of the property is where we house attendance and we also planning to put the Ithaka Early Learning Center in collaboration with the University of Delaware and the University of Patras from Greece. And, by the way, the University of Patras of Greece, has one of the best departments that studies early education and in conjunction with the University of Delaware, they have assured us and they have become literally our partners to undertake the development of this educational institution. So we’re in very good hands there.

Let’s go back to, Marina, let’s go back to the educational model. When we first started the school, we were confronted with a harsh reality. What is the best way for us to teach the Greek language? And what we found out very quickly, that it’s not that simple. You cannot just take any teacher and any book and start teaching the language. It’s a very inefficient way. So for many, many years, we looked around to try and find the right individuals, people that have this kind of skill sets to help us develop that.

Fast forward a couple of years ago, we came across the folks from Aristotle University, more specifically Dr. Pericles Mitkas, who is the president of the University, the chancellor, and Dr. Marina Mattheoudakis, were sitting right next to me, and she’s a professor of applied and theoretical linguistics at Aristotle University, and also the president of Modern Greek Studies. After we had a number of conversations, we’re extremely pleased to combine forces with them, and Dr. Mitkas was very gracious to allow Dr. Mattheodakis to come to the US, where she has spent one year already working with us, developing and enhancing our Greek language program at the highest level.

Linguistically appropriate, and at the same time, allowing us to do what is now, is becoming for us—and us means all of AHEPA—because this is our school, this is AHEPA school, a very unique educational model, where we integrate through the use of the Greek language as a tool, the American and the Greek model of pedagogy, and we’re creating something very unique. And while we’re doing that, as you will see there, we’re taking an opportunity through the Greek language and humanities, to integrate with cross-curricular, inter-thematic, interdisciplinary ways, the language with mathematics and science, the arts, and this way we can create a very well-educated, [foreign audio] we say in Greek, global citizen. This is at play right now. This is what we’re developing right now. We’re very proud to say that not only we’re doing that, but also having the formidable partners, the very capable partners, of Aristotle University on our side.

Not only give us a great deal of comfort, but also give us a great deal of confidence to know that this dream that started 13 years ago, now is surpassing our expectations, and it’s contributing, not only to the quality of life for our community in Wilmington, but also it’s breaking barriers, nationally and internationally, through the different kinds of partnerships that we’re developing, and the kind of assets and resources through collaboration and working together, which is classical Greek, [foreign audio]. In many cases, we talk about how we Greeks don’t get together and we argue. [foreign audio], which means collaborative collaboration, competitive collaboration, is a Greek word, and through [foreign audio] collaboration, we’re getting all those things right now at Odyssey Charter School.

These are some of the accolades, and I say some of the accolades we have received continuously since we opened our doors. But one of the most telling indicators is that over 2,200 families have applied last year for almost 300 positions. And it’s important to know that a tiny percent, that’s about 3% of this families, have either Greek origin or Greek descendants, all of them are Americans. Our school is a very multi-cultural school. We have over 30% minorities at our school, we have close to 20% low income families, and a very tiny fraction of them are Greek.

You can see from the pictures there; we did a ceremony a couple of years ago to celebrate the 10th year anniversary of our school. The national anthem of Greece and the Olympic Hymn was sung by an African-American young lady. And she was spectacular.

Told you a little bit about the Ithaka Early Learning Center. This is another way for us to say thank you to our community, help those who helped us coming into this country as immigrants to become educated, to open up our business, and also contribute to the national and international educational conversation of what is the best way to teach children in the classroom. This is happening at Odyssey right now, and this is available to all of us in AHEPA.

We have gone through a very rigorous exercise over the years. We have put together all the systems and all the educational models. We have gone through trial and error, and right now we feel very comfortable to say to all of you in your communities, all this information that we have is open source, and is available to all of you. And we would love to work with you to begin more schools like that around the country. As you can see, the Ithaka Early Learning Center again, is a collaborative project with UFD and the University of Patras, and at the facility we have dedicated space of about 5,000 square feet for the researchers, which will include professors and graduate students to come in and do research with the children that we have available at the school. So a new education, new knowledge, can come out of that.

We tested this model, again, as I said, with Aristotle University, by bringing in the true experts and getting the most appropriate resources. It has worked for us and we’ll continue that path, leveraging the good name of our school, basically, and our efforts, all of us are volunteer at the school, to bringing partners that want to work with us. They respect our work and we, in return, respect and appreciate the things that they are doing for AHEPA, for pedagogy, and for Hellenism and philanthropy in the United States.

Of course, to get all those things done, we need support. We have done a lot of things right now, basically, with our own resources, by borrowing money, by being financially responsible, by producing good, excellent, educational outcomes, but we need to continue growing this school. A lot of this projects are funded by sometimes our partners, our donors, money that we receive from the State of Delaware which we put into very good work. The efficiency of every dollar used at our school is phenomenal.

But we need to grow that school, and a lot of these projects, whether they are facilities projects or academic projects, they need support, and we continuously look to bringing the extra resources we need to get our jobs done, our projects done.

We have brochures out at the table that you can take with you, and also there is a little video that we put together when we became brother/sister schools with - - School in Olympia, Greece, and we did ceremonies there. It’s a nice video that promotes the ideals of the Olympic games, true competition, and that little video reflects all these things.

But enough of me, thank you very much again. At this point, I would like to hand you over to Dr. Marina Mattheodakis, to give you an idea in more technical terms of all the good work that she’s done, Aristotle University has done through her, at our school, of how we can properly teach the Greek language and culture, and help others within our community. When I say community, I mean not only other schools, but also our churches where the language is used for the purpose of education our children, and programs that we’re putting in place right now through Dr. Marina’s help to enhance those things.

So thank you very much, and I’ll introduce to you Dr. Marina Mattheoudakis.

DR. MARINA MATTHEOUDAKIS: I’m stuck here. Okay. Good morning, and I will, no you cannot hear me. Now you can hear me, yes? So I’m going to give a very brief overview of the Greek program that runs at the school. And this program did not start this year, it started in 2008. So this program promotes the educational model that Mr. Dandolos has just talked about. So we are trying to combine the American language, the American educational program, with a Greek language educational program that is founded on the Hellenic heritage.

What do we mean when we say Greek language program or Greek educational program? It is something very broad that actually covers much more than Greek language teaching. So it has three axes, and the first one is a curricular program, and by curricular program I mean what we teach. What do we teach those children? There is an extra-curricular program that is very robust and very intensive, and it covers a lot of things that is also Greek culture and Greek music, and also there are all these networks of collaboration that we have built with several educational institutions in the US and in Greece.

So the Greek instructional program started in 2008, and this covered 25% of the curriculum of the school. So 25% of the curriculum was Greek. Greek language and Greek math. This became much more intensive this year in 2017, because we introduced a new immersion program which is very interesting, and I’m going to talk about it in a while. And of course we also have courses on Greeks studies that are appropriate for older students in 9th, 10th, and 11th grades. We also have extra-curricular clubs and activities that aim to introduce the Greek culture, and please remember that this is a school that actually addresses mostly American students, not students of Greek origin. We also have students of Greek origin, but we also have a very large number of non-Greek students, and this is why this school does an amazing job in promoting the Greek language and culture. So we also have extra Greek language classes not only for students but also for parents, and for teachers who want to learn Greek.

And the most important part of all is the network of collaborations that we have built with so many institutions starting from the Aristotle University, Harvard University, Delaware University, and also, we have a large number of schools in - - that they’re working with us. And we are building many, many more collaborations and networks with other institutions in Greece, like Patras, of course, and in the US.

So apart from the flash-model that started in 2008, I told you this covers 25% of the curriculum at school, this has been going on for 10 years, but this year this was intensified because we introduced the geo-language immersion program.

What does this mean? This means that kindergarteners that just started school, half of the day were taught in Greek, and half of the day were taught in English. So the whole curriculum became American and Greek, so we managed to integrate American language and Greek language curriculum into one. So half the day students were taught by a Greek teacher, and the rest of the day they are taught by an American teacher.

So math is taught in Greek, science is taught in Greek, Greek language of course, and then the rest of the day is ELA, English Language Arts, and some social studies in English. So you can see here in the diagram that the day is, and the curriculum, is split into two.

We had to write a new curriculum for those students, and this curriculum is written in Greek, because it is for Greek language teaching, but it has also been translated into English, so that everybody can access it and understand exactly what those students are taught. So their American, English-speaking parents are able to understand exactly what these kids are taught in Greek.

This fantastic new curriculum was nominated for an award last year, the innovation award for Delaware schools, and this was a huge success. Because it was the first year that it ran, it was something completely different, it was innovative, and please remember that we’re talking here about the Greek language. So in many respects it was very innovative and very successful.

So we think that we have managed to place, to build the foundations for the integration of Greek and American language and culture. And we are building, we are going to build on this foundation every year for every grade. So we are starting with first grade next year, and the year after with second grade, and it goes on.

A very important part of this school’s success is the networks of collaboration that it has built, and this collaboration are becoming bigger, greater, and they have more impact. And we are expecting to see the consequences of those collaborations very, very soon.

So one of the biggest collaborations that we are building right now because of me, because of the fact that I come from the Aristotle University, is a collaboration that we are building with the Aristotle University, and in particular, with the school of Modern Greek. Professor Mitkas, the director of the University’s going to present more about that, but what I’m going to say is that the school of Modern Greek is a university unit, an academic unit, it has a very long experience, since 1970, in teaching Greek as a foreign language, not as a mother tongue, as a foreign language to people who do not speak Greek. And it has had not just a long-standing experience, but a long history of successes.

It runs several courses on language, on culture, on archeology, there is a summer school for archeologists, and it runs both online and face-to-face courses and blended courses for the teaching of Greek and for the teaching of Greek for academic purposes. It has a multi-faceted program, very dynamic, very successful, very modern.

So what I want to do, is I want to bring the school of modern Greek to Delaware. I want to bring the school of modern Greek, the Aristotle University, at Odyssey, to Odyssey Charter School campus. You just heard from Dimitrios Dandolos how dynamic and how progressive the educational model of the school is. What we are trying to do is to join forces of a very strong academic institution like Aristotle University and of a very promising school K to 12, in Delaware. What I want to do, is I want to bring the School of Modern Greek to Odyssey in order to create a school for the teaching of modern Greek. Not just for Odyssey, but for the whole country.

The United States at this point is trying to promote the teaching and learning of foreign languages. You all know how much this is needed. And I’m not talking only about Greek, I’m talking about foreign languages in general. So what we want to see, first of all, is we want to help those teachers who teach Greek in the United States in order to become more able to teach Greek.

And they do need that. We are carrying out a survey right now, and we are looking into the profile of those teachers. And we see how much they need this support. So we feel that there is an urgent need for providing differentiated support to all those teachers of Greek in the United States. That’s why we want, we propose a found a branch of the School of Modern Greek at Odyssey Charter School. But this is going to help everybody, not just us.

We envision a custom-made training program organized and provided by the School of Modern Greek, Aristotle University. It will combine the best of the Aristotle University with the best of the American culture. So the expected benefits are many more than the ones that you can see here.

We want to create a strong linkage between the Aristotle University and the American Educational Institutions, there will be a continued academic support for all those involved, and of course we want to improve and standardize the quality of the Greek educational programs of the United States.

But there are broader benefits; we are going to share knowledge, we are going to share the best practices to everybody involved in the United States and the teaching and learning of foreign languages. We are going to boost interest in foreign language teaching and learning in the United States, and of course we are going to create bridges, cultural and language bridges, between the two nations. Thank you very much for listening to us.

We will listen to your questions, but perhaps first of all we have to invite Professor Mitkas to take the floor and present to you the Aristotle University and its potential and its programs. Thank you very much.

DR. MITKAS: Well, brothers and sisters, I bring you greetings from Mykelonia [phonetic], the real one, and its capital, Thessaloniki. I was born and raised in Florina in western Macedonia, and I went to school at Aristotle University at Thessaloniki and then I did my graduate studies at Syracuse University in upstate New York. I taught as a faculty of electrical and computer engineering at Colorado State University for 10 years, and there in Denver I became, I joined AHEPA, Chapter 145, in the early ‘90s. Now I do some work with Chapter 601, Constantinople, newest chapter of the organization. So it’s a great pleasure and a great honor to have a chance to, the opportunity to address the brothers in the annual convention. So thank you for this opportunity.

I serve as director, as we call the chancellor in Greece and in Europe, of a University, of Aristotle University. And for those of you who may not be familiar with the facts, the University’s named Aristotle because Aristotle was born in Stagira about 100 kilometers east of Thessaloniki, and he taught Alexander the Great in Mieza, very close to Naousa, about 50 kilometers west of Thessaloniki. So the University’s aptly named after Aristotle.

And it’s the largest university in Greece, with 84,000 students, about 12,000 of them are graduate students. It’s one of the best, we believe the best, in Greece. And it’s in the top 500 universities of the world. We are present around the city and in Northern Greece from Trikala to Serres. And we also maintain a large number of archeological expeditions, sites, all over Greece, including a site in Cyprus.

So we are a national university, but also, we strive to be an international university. We have a significant presence and collaboration within the Balkan Region, and in the Black Sea Region, and in fact, I’m the president of the Black Sea University Network, and the Balkan University Association for the current and the next year.

Our vision is to be an excellent public university with international outreach, and we manage to do just that. This is the latest thematic ranking, international ranking, and our top department is the Department of Philology, Classics, and Ancient History, which is number 16 in the world. And I like to say that we are one position above Yale University. So it’s a major achievement for this particular department. Language, Greek language, ancient Greek language. But we are also pretty good in other sciences and disciplines. We are also one of the largest research institutions in Greece, with major contributions and significant funding from European and national projects.

I was visiting the US two years ago in an effort to attract attention to our programs and to establish ties with the American universities, because I believe in the international exchanges and the ability that we have to host students from American colleges and universities. So I’m trying to build a study abroad program and a program with summer courses and other activities.

So we visited the University of Delaware where, you know, that there’s a Greek president, Dennis Assanis, whom I met. We visited other universities together with Marina Mattheodakis and we stopped, we paid a visit at the Odyssey Charter School, two years ago.

I was impressed by what I saw there, and we started talking about how we can help. And the help comes through the School of Modern Greek Language, which at the time had Marina Mattheodakis as its director. And Marina came here to Newark, sorry, to Wilmington, Delaware, and established all the activity that she previously described.

I met with Dimitri Dandolos and I am fully convinced that his vision for the school is unique and impressive. So we embarked in a joint effort to strengthen this collaboration. Marina gave you a very short description, brief description, of the School of Modern Language. I don’t want to repeat that, but it operates since 1970 and it was one of the only two in Greek—at the University of Athens in Greece, University of Athens in Salaniki, and it is considered the best in the country.

The numbers are in the tens of thousands of students, foreign students who have passed through the school over the years. In one year we have approximately 1,000 students from various countries taking lessons in modern Greek. And so we definitely have the expertise and the know-how and we have all kinds of programs that are not strictly language teaching in a class, but an immersion to the Greek culture and the modern Greek way.

In Thessaloniki, in our summer camp, in Halkidiki, in Kalandra, in other places like this, I think this is from an expedition in Stagira, he mentioned Stagira. So we provide online courses, tailor-made courses, to specific, even to non-traditional students. And as I said, I will just close with these two, new objectives of the School of Modern Greek. Provide online courses for advanced language levels, this would be of interest to schools in the US, to establish a branch of Aristotle University at Thessaloniki in the US, in Delaware, together with the Odyssey Charter School, and to establish, to strengthen more university partnerships with other universities in the US.

I believe it’s a noble goal and I believe it is fully in line with the AHEPA major effort to strengthen the educational component among the American Hellenic community, and disseminate the Greek values of education to the rest of the world. So I think you for your patience and support in this effort. Thank you very much.

MR. HOLLISTER: Pericles, Marina, Dimitri, outstanding program, great projects. As we spoke, I would love to introduce you to Christopher Brown, head of the Modern Greek Language Program at Ohio State University to get a tie-in with the Aristotle University in Ohio State. I think that’s a key.

I have to tell you, I took a trip to the AHEPA Odyssey school here, just about a month ago, and was absolutely blown away. The children there speak Greek better than most of you in this room. Certainly better than I. They learn Greek and they’re able to apply that and learn math and science in that language. It’s phenomenal. The programs there continue to grow each year.

This year you added a junior class. So it’s now K through 11. And in a year, it’s going to be K through 12, or two years K through 12. But they’ve been recognized by Harvard University. And they have a program during the summer that you have instructors that are able to go back and forth and it’s just an absolutely incredible program.

I was so taken aback by it that I committed that we’re going to do a regional banquet in Wilmington next year and we’re going to raise money for the school. And the Supreme President has bought into it for next year, ‘cause I told him I’d raise the money, so he took it off his back.

But this is a program that we have got to support as AHEPA-ns. We have got to support the modern Greek language program in Thessaloniki, we need to embrace greater ties to the United States, through our universities, through the work that Pericles is doing, and we have to continue the great work that’s going on at the AHEPA Odyssey school. I’m just blown away that you were able to get that Dupont campus, refurbish it, and continue to refurbish it, and be able to host as many classes and continue to grow each year. That’s just phenomenal. And I think you very much for being here, I hope you have time to enjoy some of the amenities of the hotel, don’t leave too soon, we have a great banquet on Thursday night. And it’s just an honor for us to have you here, thank you so much for your time.

As Supreme President, I get invited to go to a lot of festivities, programs, institutions, and represent the order of AHEPA. In January, I was invited to go down to St. Augustine, Florida, for a national board meeting for the St. Photios Shrine. And I have to tell you, next to being in Jerusalem, being at that Shrine was the most moving experience for myself, and it was also moving for my wife, and I think probably my, share with you why it was moving for my wife as well as I when we were there.

Polly Hillier is the executive Director of the St. Photios Shrine, and I asked that she come and make a presentation, because it’s important that AHEPA embrace not just education, but the religious aspects of our culture. And we can continue to help promote this Shrine.

It’s something everyone should go to. It is just a phenomenal, phenomenal facility. You learn so much when you’re there, and you walk away with a greater spiritual awareness of your faith and the history of our faith, that is unmatched going anywhere else. So, brothers, I give you Polly. Polly, thank you so much for being here.

MS. HILLIER: Good morning. What a wonderful presentation about Odyssey House, the Odyssey School. I am a graduate of Hellenic College, and I thought I was going to be going to St. Basil’s for the education program there, and the school had moved to Hellenic College. And my first job out of Hellenic College as a teacher certified by the state of Massachusetts was at St. Nicholas and Fleshing as their first fourth-grade teacher, as they grew to be the K through 12 school that they are today. So wish the Odyssey School all of the best.

Supreme President Carl Hollister, Executive Director Basil Mossaidis, officers, and past officers of AHEPA, Daughters, Sons of Pericles, Maids of Athena, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, congratulations on gathering here in Atlantic City for your 96th AHEPA Family Supreme Convention. Congratulations.

On behalf of the St. Photios Foundation, I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you during the week of this Family and Fellowship Meeting of Celebration Recognition, because we are recognizing this year the 250th anniversary of the first Greek settlement in America.

Now how many of you here never heard of St. Photios Shrine? Okay, well there’s always one. There’s always one. And I’m going to be talking to you in a minute.

Like Carl said, my name is Polly Hillier, Polexene, Maouris, Maouris Hillier. I serve as the executive director of St. Photios Shrine. I’ve been there for 13 years now. This first national Shrine of our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is located in the Avero House. And this house was a refuge for the survivors of the New Smyrna Colony, which was settled in 1768.

Now I want you to imagine in 1768, Britain was finally in charge of Florida, from Sir Francis Drake on they fought with the Spanish to get a hold of Florida. And for 20 full years, Florida was the 14th colony of this nation, in the new world. St. Augustine was the capital of the east Florida Province, Pensacola was the capital of the west Florida Province. There was a man, Sir Andrew Turnbull, who petitioned the Crown to please let us make an agricultural enterprise here, and he was going to populate it with Greeks.

Now why Greeks? Well he was actually an emissary for the British Crown in Asia Minor. He was actually what we would call today as an ambassador there. So he married a woman, Maria, which up until two years ago we thought she was of Greek decent. She actually was a French Huguenot, and her son Nicholas and two other children came with him over to Florida to settle the 105,000 acres, which today you all may have heard of New Smyrna beach, that was the New Smyrna Colony.

So this colony was a place that was ready for 500 people. By the time Turnbull went through the Mediterranean countries, he successfully collected over 1,400 people. He brought eight ships over and he signed them in in St. Augustine, in the customs house there. Many refused to get back on the ships, because over 300 of them died on the way over. And the others walked on what they called King’s Highway, today you would know that as US 1. That was the King’s Highway of that time period.

So why did the archdiocese buy the Avero House? Well in 1777, when three men escaped from that plantation and pled their case, because now, from the 1,300 people or so that should’ve been living, less than 500 of them were living due to the extreme conditions. And plus, though the Greeks were chosen because they were considered out of all the Mediterranean people, the best for this agrarian venture, the best farmers, the best cultivators, the best arborists, they did not have a resistance to malaria that the others happened to have. And so about 20 of those 500 Greeks all perished with their priest who came over with them.

See, out of all of the people that Turnbull brought, the people that he brought from Sparta, Arcadia, Mani, the Peloponnese area, from Crete, from Asia Minor, he didn’t pay for them. They actually just paid him to come over. Turnbull and the King, King George III, paid 500 pounds for the Greeks that they brought over. And so it’s Daniel Schafer, who is a retired University Professor in Florida and also the author of the curriculum for the fourth and eighth grade state history courses, he was invited to Dundee, Scotland, about three years ago, when Sir William Duncan’s estate gave up his papers.

And there, written, was the actual man who went before Turnbull to recruit these people. The amount of money he needed to secure these people, how Father Kreesantos [phonetic] and Father Serefeeth [phonetic] refused to go after getting to Mahon, Menorca, on to Florida, because they could see this was far more than what they had signed on for. We know this. This is a right history.

Many of you know this history, and I’m imploring you today to talk about it. As is inherent in any struggle, after a generation or two of enjoying the fruits of the labors of those who went before us, that passion and struggle and that understanding of what it takes to get to where we are diminishes. So when we remember those first Greeks who came pre-revolutionary history, who actually are a part of the thread of the fabric of what makes up immigration history. Not just Greek immigration history in America, we’re giving this legacy to our kids. It’s not going to die with us. It’s a shame that you hadn’t heard of it yet.

We do have hope, though. Because as many of you know, earlier this month was the 44th Biannual Clergy-Laity Congress of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. And I’ve been at the Shrine 13 years now, so this was my 7th Clergy-Laity as Director of the Shrine. And this is the first time that my volunteer Leslie Alex Phillips reported to me every single person who came to the booth had heard of the Shrine. And in fact, many had visited.

Because the Shrine is not just a memorial to those Greeks who came before us. ‘Cause the mission of the Shrine is to witness our Orthodox Christianity, to share our Hellenic culture, and the colonists of 1768. That’s our mission of the Shrine. However, the Shrine’s also an experience. And I’m going to share with you. I have fourth and eighth-graders coming all the time. I have university students who are studying architecture and history coming often. I have priests who come and bring, you know, on a pilgrimage with their Sunday school class or senior groups. I haven’t had any AHEPA groups coming by the way, yet. So I hope I get a few AHEPA groups coming.

However, one of the most profound experiences I had was watching a family member who’d been to the Shrine bring her family member whom she was praying for to the Shrine, and it was his very first time at the Shrine. And to see that joy, gratitude, and oneness at the Shrine. And Carl, I thank Cynthia to the Shrine and giving you your first experience at the Shrine, and for her being able to come after being there with your daughter, praying for you while you were deployed, to be able to be there with you as wholly and as beautiful and as giving as you both are, and so thank you.

Up until 2012, 2013, my primary objective as director of the Shrine was to raise grassroots awareness of what the Shrine was. I brought my husband from New Zealand, I told him, “Listen honey, I worked in community mental health for 25 years, I’ve been working with sex abuse victims for the last 2 years here, I can’t do it anymore.” Somebody offered me this position at St. Photios, I think God is telling me enough, I think you can come and work, be back in the church. I started in the church, it was time to maybe finish in the church.

What I forgot is, I promised myself when I was teaching at St. Nicholas, I would never depend on the church for a salary again. And so here I was bringing my husband with me this time, to work for the church, and I was filled with naïve wonderment that here I was going to work at the jewel of St. George Street, everything I’ve read about the Shrine online before I got there, because to be honest with you, I had never heard of the Shrine before 2005, actually. ‘Cause it didn’t open until 1982. And I finished Hellenic College in 1979. So it was just a dream at that time.

The property was owned since 1965, but it really wasn’t until after the archeological dig in 1978 that it could go forward. So when I got there, to find that there was garbage piled high under the steps, that it was actually a bit rodent-infested, and that their primary problem was a leaky roof that caused mold to grow through, I called my husband who was busy trying to sell the house in New Zealand and finish up all his work there so he could come and join me.

He would ask me, “How’s it going?” And I say, “Oh, great, honey. I’ve got lots of people to help me and I know there’s lots of work for me to do so we don’t have to worry that I’ll be here for just like a year or two and then they’ll be done with me kind of thing.”

So we have come a long way. The Shrine needed someone to be passionate about it. The Shrine needed someone who, that was their front-and-center. And so with the grace of God, and with my husband’s extreme patience, it could be my baby. I’ve never had my own children, I’ve inherited four beautiful stepsons, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, but the Shrine is really my baby. And I want to tell you, it’s right to be your baby.

I can’t tell you how important the AHEPA is to the Shrine. In 1985, when the Shrine finally was being consecrated—it was opened in 1982. Excuse me for one second here. I just want to read to you from this. The AHEPA family was there at that consecration. And in the album, written afterwards, it talks about that February 10th, 1985 event.

“A highlight of the 3rd Annual St. Photios Feast Day Banquet was the burning of the mortgage. Lighting the match was AHEPA Supreme President Cleo Zambetis. By retiring the remaining mortgage $65,000, in addition to having sponsored a Shrine chapel fresco, the Order of AHEPA became the great benefactor of the National Shrine. AHEPA is the only great benefactor of the National Shrine.”

That one-off large gift was the first step in being debt-free. In today’s money, that $65,000 is worth $160,000. St. Photios Shrine is our Plymouth Rock. And I have to tell you that I can tell St. Photios Shrine is your Plymouth Rock. There are many organizations and individuals that support St. Photios Shrine. Today, there are few AHEPA chapters that support St. Photios Shrine. And I’m not talking $65,000. I’m, I have a challenge for you, okay.

The Philoptochos has about 500 Chapters. And every year the Philoptochos take a little bit of money from each chapter, whatever they deem from their heart or their capability, and they present a check to the Shrine every year, that’s part of our general operating. Sometimes it can be as much as $35,000, very odd. It can be as low as $15,000. But this year it was $20,000. And I have to tell you, the Shrine does not depend on what increment is, comes to it, thank God.

However, the Shrine depends on that steadfast, cheerful giver. So I want to challenge you to consider talking to the powers that be, and perhaps having a little line in your charitable giving to the Shrine. And that each of you send in whatever you want from your chapter. I don’t care if it’s $5, $10, $25, whatever, $1,000. And let AHEPA every year, not send $500 for Greek Landing Day or $500 for National Shrine Day.

Send it as a statement for your commitment, that you want to remember those colonists, that you want to witness Orthodoxy in the most unimaginable place that’s the colonial Spanish Quarter of a very Catholic town, in the middle of a tourism industry, where over 150,000 people pass through the doors every year, whose job it is, is to represent you and you and you as at the Shrine. On the street, to the public.

I want to thank Phillip Umalis [phonetic] who is not only an AHEPA and an archon but also a trustee on the St. Photios Foundation. I want to thank all the Supreme Presidents in the last 36 years have taken the time, like Mr. Galanis and Mr. Gulas, and all of you who have come through the Shrine. John Grossomanides who actually served on the Shrine board not only as AHEPA president that year, but for decades as the representative for the metropolis of Boston. I want you to be involved with the Shrine. If you are from a certain metropolis and think, you know what, the Shrine first in with my ideals, come, tell your metropolitan you would like to be a representative on the Shrine.

Your witness, you witness our history and you live our faith just by being AHEPA. You’re an amazing philanthropic organization, you are not only a group that impacts local and national organizations or the communities, but globally. I was just in Daughters, there’s daughters from Paris and Germany and England and… And it’s just an amazing thing. So I am overwhelmed and extremely grateful that you allowed me some of your time today. I think you from the bottom of my heart and I hope that you, too, get to come to the Shrine let alone learn about it.

And meanwhile, if you do nothing else, for the last 14 years, I have had an essay contest at the Shrine. The topics are, “There are many historic and sacred sites throughout the world, what makes St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine a historical and significant site for Greek Orthodox Christians?” Or, they can write on, every teenager, 13 to 19 can write, “Virtually every American born in the United States can trace their history to an ancestor who first arrived in America. Compare and contrast your family’s immigrant history with the immigrant history of the Greeks who came to the new world under the British indentured servitude act in 1768.”

I thank the AHEPA Speedway, Chapter number 410 for being a prior sponsor of the $850 in prize money, and today the Socrates Chapter in Jacksonville is the sponsor of that. So we thank those individual chapters and again I thank you for your time. God bless you and to a perfect week. Thank you.

Did anyone have any questions? Did anybody want to say they’ve been to the Shrine? Raise your hand if you’ve been to the Shrine. Very good. Thank you. Okay. I don’t want to take—

MR. HOLLISTER: If you haven’t been to the Shrine, now’s a great time to make up for it by writing a donation out to St. Photios Shrine.

MS. HILLIER: Thank you so much.

MALE VOICE 8: Brother President, Brother President, I rise just to say that Polly is manning a beautiful table out in the hallway that if you haven’t seen the Shrine, at least you see a picture of the beautiful chapel of the Shrine, and Polly can share with you different ways that you can write that donation. So please visit Polly over in the hallway.

MALE VOICE 3: Thank you, past Supreme Governor, thank you for your remarks and comments. And if you haven’t, like you said, but near the registration aisle, down that way you’ll see the exhibits and they have a desk there.

At this time we’ll be preparing for the AHEPA Service Dog Program Presentation, so we beg your indulgence a few minutes as we get the projector and the speakers lined up for that. And after we have the AHEPA Service Dog Program Presentation, we’ll have a brief announcement by the publications committee, we’ll then adjourn for lunch. So beg your patience for just a few minutes as we prepare for the next presentation.

[END 2018\_Supreme\_Convention\_July\_23\_-\_27\_PART\_3.mp3]

[START 2018\_Supreme\_Convention\_July\_23\_-\_27\_PART\_4.mp3]

[Crosstalk]

MR. JIM STASIOS: Brothers and sisters, may I have your attention, please? Brothers and sisters, may I have your attention, please? I know we like to socialize and to speak with one another but we have a program to present, and I ask your attention and to please be seated so that we can begin the program. [Greek] That's better. I should have done it in Greek all along. Brothers and sisters, please come in the room and have a seat.

I ask the brothers nearest the doors to please close the doors to eliminate any external noise. One brother, please close the doors. Thank you for your attention. We appreciate you taking time from your convention schedule to join us. My name is Jim Stasios. I'm serving as the Chairman of the AHEPA Supreme Convention. We welcome the Daughters of Penelope that have joined us and our special guests that have also joined us for this presentation. One last time, please close the door in the back corner of the room.

BROTHER DALTON: Is there any chance you can move about a half a - - right there [crosstalk]?

MR. STASIOS: Yes, we can. Thank you for bringing that to our attention, Brother Dalton.

[Crosstalk]

MR. STASIOS: See what happens when you have an able Vice-Chair?

[Laughter]

MR. STASIOS: Brother George, are you ready, my friend? I'll let Brother George come forward and take over the program.

[Applause]

MR. GEORGE BOORAS: I'm really happy that here in this room that there's wonderful AHEPA family, as it started out with AHEPA project, and as we went forth, well, AHEPA's been doing a good job. But when the Daughters of Penelope, they said, we have better - - homes too. Uncle, Father, Brother, and they, well, they answered the call. If someone was to ask me about the Daughters and the AHEPAns, We're walking shoulder-to-shoulder. So today we could say that from Last Vegas, 2016, to today, we are together with our efforts. There are 16 services dogs.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Those 16 service dogs are 16 rescued dogs, and so here we have a life saving a life. I'm happy tonight, because today we have with us representatives from K-9 for Warriors, and we're going to show some videos, and after the first video I want to make another--introduce two very, very special people that for myself inspires me to go beyond what I think I could do. Anyway, I think we should start this program with the first video, and the first video we're going to see are two moms.

[Video plays]

MR. ARCHIE BUBAS: These Mammoth County moms lost their Marine sons to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Now they're trying to do something about it for others.

MS. PATTY MALLOY: We realized when our sons came back that they had post-traumatic stress and we didn't know what to do or where to turn, and now we know that dogs truly help veterans.

MS. DEBBIE DALY: And that's all we want to do is help veterans. People are not helping them, or they're not reaching out to get the help. We're putting it out there for them, making it easier for them to get help.

[Music]

[Video ends]

MR. BOORAS: We just met Archie Bubas, Patty Malloy, Debbie Daly [all phonetic] who lost their sons to complications of PTSD. They had heard about our program. They didn't know anything about service dogs or what they do, and I was asked to meet with them and I did, and after hearing what these service dogs do they said, if only we would have known, maybe our sons would be alive today.

But they wanted to do something special and Patty owns a steakhouse, and she wanted to have a fundraiser, and they raised $26,000, but it takes $15,000 to name a dog. So from the goodness of my brother Chris Diamantoukos, Chris put up the other $4,000.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Allow me to introduce Patty Malloy and Debbie Daly.

[Applause]

MS. MALLOY: It's my honor to be here today. I'm not a good speaker but I'll give it a little quick shot and then I'll give it to Debbie.

[Crosstalk]

MS. DALY: You can't hear me? We are definitely proud Marine moms, and we know our boys are watching and smiling, and we're honored to do this. It was very important to us to name the dog, and we thought we'd get one dog, and we were trying to figure out a name that would bring Michael and James, both their names. So when we got the extra 4,000 we were just ecstatic, and we will be flying down to Florida to see our pups. Thank you all for being here.

[Applause]

MS. DALY: You're all helping veterans and that's what we want to do, but you all have helped me, and Patty as well. I can't tell you how much this touched my heart and just makes me smile every day. Thank you all. Appreciate it.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: The next video we're going to see, our Supreme President Carl Hollister has some friends at Ohio State, and the big game is Michigan against Ohio State. So Carl said, can you guys put together like a three-minute video so we could show it at half-time at one of the biggest games in the country in college football? We did, and we want to share that with you. Also at the end you're going to see a list of all the service dogs that are now - - have a family.

[Video plays]

[Music]

MALE VOICE 1: [Background noise] you don't become a solider overnight, nor do you become a civilian overnight; it takes time. Time with welcoming family and friends - - back. Others, well, they bring [applause] we are committing tonight $45,000 [applause].

[Music]

[Applause]

[Music]

[Applause]

[Music]

[Video ends]

MR. BOORAS: - - AHEPA - - you have the American flag and you have our dog AHEPA. Well, going forth here there's going to be on our letterheads, there's going to be AHEPA over here and Penelope will be there on all our letterheads. So we're doing this together. The next video we're going to see is by Dr. Jan Seahorn [phonetic].

She's going to explain to us a little bit about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and she's going to do it in a very simple way. We can all understand the way she explains it. Also she has a personal understanding of the subject because she married someone who had Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. But I want you to pay attention at the end. The end is the exclamation point to this.

DR. JAN SEAHORN: That's kind of what I feel like and my subject is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which I think I have today. So I'll start out with our poem. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpy had a great fall. All the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty together again.

One moment he's on the wall eating a hamburger, drinking a beer, talking about the Friday night football game, and then next minute he's a scrambled egg. His mind, his body, and his emotions are very different. So this is our active learning. I want you to look at the person to your right and to your left, and I want you to think, can you tell that this person has gone through some really traumatic event? No, I'm not going to ask you to raise your hands.

But the answer is probably "no" because we call it the hidden wound. I like to refer to it as the silent scream because it's very much in that person, but most of us can't see it, can't hear it, and can't feel it, but they can, and they're not going to talk about it.

Now, I have been married to my husband for over 40 years. He's a Vietnam vet. I didn't know him before he went over, which is probably a good thing. On the other hand, I didn't know what normal looked like for him - - in his eyes.

Now, our military and our first responders are highly trained to be in abnormal events so that they have normal--for them--responses to be able to survive battle. And even with all that training they cannot be inoculated against post-traumatic stress. By definition, post-traumatic stress is an anxiety disorder that develops in reaction to a physical injury or a severe mental or emotional distress.

Now, I'm not going to name all the ways you can get post-traumatic stress, all you have to do is look on your cell phone, open a paper, turn on the news, and there's millions of different types of ways you can get post-traumatic stress. Nightmares, night sweats, panic attacks, insomnia, which really messes up the brain for short-term memory and also your immune system; you kind of need sleep. Flashbacks, another story.

We like to go to Elitch, a big amusement park in Denver, and my boys and myself, we would usually go with neighbors and friends, except for this one Saturday; my husband decided to go with us. We have a favorite ride. It looked like a dragon, and it went up--some of you may know this--came down fast pulling those G's, woo-hoo. Went up, came down fast, and we were loving this. We could hardly wait to get him on that ride.

So we board and it goes up and it comes down, and it goes up, and it comes down, and I'm looking at my husband and he should be laughing, but he's turned white and ashen-colored, and he's starting to say in a very anxious voice, I've got to get off of this ride. You have to make it stop. I have got to get off of this ride, and you can't. It has 10 more fun cycles.

As soon as he got off he ran to a bathroom, threw up, came back, he's this ashen color still, and he says, we have to go home, I'm really sick, and we just thought it was that hot dog he ate for lunch. Makes sense, blame everything on hot dogs. But this was what was really happening: that ride triggered a flashback from when he was in Vietnam.

On one occasion he was flying right wing in helicopters, and they had gone into a hot combat zone to remove some wounded military. They were all loaded on the helicopter, they were starting to take off, 20, 30 feet off the ground. He being right wing hadn't quite buckled his seatbelt when the helicopter took a direct hit. He was blown out, and when he landed he looked at himself and he was covered in the oil, the gas, and the blood of everyone in that helicopter.

That was his flashback. That's what that fun ride did to him. It was anything but fun. Those overwhelming waves of emotion that you would do anything to get rid of just keep flowing. The personality changes where you're more anxious, you're more irritable, you may become angry. You may have feelings of detachment and you want to just isolate because you no longer fit into that normal world.

You used to, but you don't now, and trying to be with all of you when I'm not normal--hey, guys, you're my triggers. There are days when I don't want to be around people and nor does he. Eventually that may make us feel different about who we are, how we lived, how we proceed in our environment. And if you don't get a handle on it, this is what happens, is that your brain and your body start to wear out. High incidence of hypertension.

You have chronic incidence of strokes and different types of heart attacks. We know we have obesity, we have diabetes, we have ulcers, we have chronic fatigue syndrome. Just so many issues to our body when it starts to wear out. But this is what we can do. This is the good news. We can start healing but it's by doing something that helps us heal. Things like we know that cognitive therapy and feedback, biofeedback work.

We know that doing things like exercise helps us. And we're getting smarter, because if information is coming from our body, why not start working on our body first, like massage, yoga, tai chi, meditation? Because what those are doing is resetting our breathing back to normal. We take a lot of vets fly fishing because the motion of that fly back and forth mimics that good heart beat and that healthy breathing. We have our dog, he's a service dog, Bailey, just stroking him helps.

So there's all kinds of positive things that we can do to heal, and we've been practicing that for years. In the end it is not in the hoping that we might heal, it is in the doing that will help us move forward. I can tell you that this time in our lives, Maya Angelou says, "When we know better, we do better." We know better, and we practice hard. We're going to win that Hunger Games. We're going to be those survivors.

And in spite of those traumatic experiences we've become stronger, we've become more compassionate, not more doubtful. We've definitely become more grateful for every single thing we have in our lives and our days, versus angry at things we don't have or may have lost, and we've become wiser. Marshall Probst [phonetic] says, "In wisdom, you do not receive wisdom.

You discover it within yourselves after a journey that no one can take for you or with you." And in our silence we say this serenity prayer which calms us down, and we are learning to finally begin to bear what at once felt so unbearable to us, and to heal what once felt so shattered. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: So she told us what it is, how to deal with it, and she says here's the solution, the service dog. It wasn't about the medication. I was a combat infantry soldier, I was with the 1st Cavalry in Vietnam, and it was a tough situation. When, like I said before, nothing prepares you for war, and you don't come back being the same person. So I do want to say thanks to my wife, who's here, because I met her--

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: I met her three months before I got drafted, and that was a good thing. So when I came back--my wife Granita [phonetic].

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Our next video, this video that we showed when we started this program in Las Vegas, all we had was a hope and a dream, and we made it into a national project. I remember it had to go through a project committee, they had to approve it, and there was a bright guide in the project committee and they asked a lot of hard, tough questions.

After we made our presentation I remember the Chairman, Harry Carvalis [phonetic], and he said, you know, not only do the veterans need service dogs, he said, AHEPA needs a service dog program. As time went on, I understand that even more so.

So this video is about a soldier that was in a hard place, we're going to hear his story, and also--anyway, let's just see his story and we'll take it from there. Thank you.

[Video plays]

MR. RANDY DEXTER: Dear Captain, I can trace the moment when everything changed, when something snapped. April 5, 2005. I was serving in Iraq as a combat medic when our unit got hit with that IED. Nothing could have prepared me for what I saw that day. Nothing prepared me for life back home. I didn't know what PTSD was or that I was even suffering from it. I was a prisoner in my own home, unable to sleep without a nightmare.

I was taking 14 different medications a day; they made things worse, not better. Worst of all, there was a constant thought of taking my own life. And then I met you. Because of you, I'm not longer a prisoner in my own home. Just like my battle buddies were my eyes and ears in Iraq, you are my eyes and ears here in the States. You allow me to use your shoulders and hips as a brace when my wore-torn body is too sore to get up. You sleep in my bed, always making sure I am safe in my dreams.

You have saved my marriage and have completely enriched my children's lives. Best of all, I can't remember the last time I had a suicidal thought. I know you came from a rough place too, that you were found as a stray, that you were in a shelter and couldn't find the right home. I don't know exactly what you went through before we met, but I like to think that we're both veterans who have survived our own wars. Captain, you truly are my best friend. You've got my back.

I have an amazing life now because of you. You saved my life, man. You've made my life better than I ever thought it could be. Thank you.

[Video ends]

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Ladies and gentlemen, I want to introduce Randy Dexter [phonetic]. He's here today with his dog, Captain.

[Applause]

MR. DEXTER: Hi, everybody. I just want to say that I love AHEPA. Getting to meet a lot of you in Vegas two years ago and seeing you again--sorry, can you hear me now? Okay. Ah, here we go. I was saying, getting to meet a lot of you in Vegas and seeing you again and meeting a lot of people I didn't get the chance to meet, I've grown to love AHEPA a lot. So a lot has happened in the last two years since I last saw you. I now work for K9s. Captain and I--

[Applause]

MR. DEXTER: Yeah, right? Pretty cool.

[Applause]

MR. DEXTER: I have the best job in the world. Captain and I graduated from college. We were named the outstanding graduate, which was something four years ago I never would have thought could have happened. I no longer think about suicide.

Now I've dedicated my life to helping others. Being on the other side of the fence, getting to see the warriors get their dogs for the first time is truly amazing for me, because I know what Captain has done for my life. What these 16 dogs that you all have done in two years is really, really amazing. That's Adam, my buddy here, so that's 32 lives you just saved. That's phenomenal. You have no idea what that means - -.

[Applause]

MR. DEXTER: I just want to make a promise to you all now that I work for K9s that I will do my best to make sure that when these warriors come to our beautiful facility we will treat them with the utmost respect and kindness, as well as the dogs, make sure that they have amazing lives now that they're not in shelters, and doing great things. So on behalf of K9s, Captain and I thank you so much for all that you've done to support people like myself and dogs like Captain. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: All right, Adam, you're up; you and Molly.

[Applause]

MR. ADAM LAGRAND: Well, good afternoon, everyone. My name is Adam LaGrand. I'm an Air Force medic, retired, and before I joined the Air Force I was a Boy Scout, I was heavily involved with my community. I did everything I could, community service, and I think those are some of the values that I've learned from just meeting a few of you today that we can share together.

Then during my service I came back and I just wasn't the same, and then out of nowhere night terrors started as soon as I became a civilian after breaking my back and being retired medically. I didn't know what to do with myself, so I thought the best thing to do would be to shoot myself in the face and call it a night. Over the subsequent few years I stopped being a father and I couldn't be involved with my kids.

I'm able to actually go to my kid's gymnastics meets and go to their soccer practices and actually be a real member of society again. Randy and I, he didn't tell you this, but not only did we meet in K9s for Warriors, but we actually are involved with Student Veterans of America, and he was actually a chapter finalist for Student Veteran of the Year.

[Applause]

MR. LAGRAND: So me being a Student Veteran and a Chapter Leader at my university at Syracuse, I get to continue my mission. Molly gives me the tools to give back to the community and to be a father, and to be that brother, and it's not just here, have a dog, it's here, have a life back, and it's 360. So it's not just the 32 lives that you guys have saved so far, and I believe that number is going to grow, you're saving people for life. Thank you guys so much.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Also representing K9s for Warriors with us is Carrie Bennett [phonetic].

[Applause]

MR. CARRIE BENNETT: I'm Carrie Bennett, I'm the Associate Director of Development at K9s for Warriors. I've been with the program for over three years now, and I've had the amazing pleasure of knowing Demetry and George and meeting so many of you in the past day and a half. I want to say thank you so much for doing what you're doing. I've gotten to be part of K9s through just meeting somebody in the parking lot of Walgreen in Ponte Vedra Beach.

I came down from New Jersey, I was looking for something to do, I was in development, but I didn't find something yet when I moved down there. It was all through just meeting a warrior, giving a business card, handing it to me, and then the rest is history. This is my passion now to give back. My father was in World War II and he was one of the lucky ones. He never talked about the war, but he had a wonderful life. I now, with AHEPA, K9s for Warriors with AHEPA service dogs for warriors, we are making a huge change.

We are now saying we need to give back to these wonderful people who have given so much of their lives, their families, everything, their children, and now we can make a difference. A lot of times people don't want to see somebody who's hurt. The VA gives the medications, which is wonderful for the drug companies, but that doesn't help the veterans and their families. We are here to make the difference.

Our goal would be to put ourselves out of business; that's not going to happen. So our goal is to put more leashes in more hands, and with the help of all of you, I call you our guardian angels, we can make a huge difference going forward. We are here for the life of the veteran. A dog gets retired or passes, the veteran comes again, free of charge, to get another service dog. This is a prescription on four legs.

I want to thank you so much for all you do, and you can tell there's so much love in this room. With the help of George and Demetri and all of you, we can make a huge impact across America. On Thursday night we're going to graduate 457 warriors in seven years.

[Applause]

MS. BENNETT: We have rescued over 880 dogs, so not every dog makes the program. 90% of our dogs come from shelters and rescues. 10% of the program are puppies that are donated by breeders all across the country. I was a puppy raiser also. One was donated along with four other dogs from a breeder in Texas. Unfortunately, she did not make the program. Only one of the puppies out of the litter of puppies that we gave made the program. They're bred for too high a drive for hunting.

However, I adopted her, and she's made my life very enriched. Plus, the other four dogs I have, too. [Laughter] So we hope to spread our wings, go across the country, not just in Ponte Vedra. We want to now plot ourselves all around certain sections of the country, maybe Texas, maybe New Jersey, maybe California, Virginia, the high areas where we have a concentration of veterans. So I just want to thank you again for having us, and it's been a wonderful experience here today. Thank you.

We would love for you to watch Facebook Live on Thursday night, if you can, if not, we'll get the link so you can all watch. Penelope is graduating, and Karen, who made this happen for Penelope, will be joining us in Florida, so thank you.

[Applause]

MS. BENNETT: So if you like our Facebook page, for those of you who are not going to be in a meeting, you can watch - - you can watch it live. If not, I'll send a link to George and Demetri and they can share it all to you. So thank you again, and I hope you come visit and come for a tour of K9s. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: I want to take this opportunity right now, because this is not a one-man show, there's a group that was put together, and I wanted to acknowledge these guys, their dedication, their hard work, and I want to introduce Bob Pouniadis [phonetic], the Vice-Chairman. Bobby?

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: I want to introduce Demetry, Demetry Fernintopolis [phonetic]. Demetry is our Treasurer and he really does a great job. If you ever want anything done yesterday, he does it today, and he makes sure tomorrow everything's in place. I want to also introduce Demetri Eddis [phonetic], he's our Secretary.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: I want to introduce Wynn Storton. Wynn is our webmaster and a good friend.

[Applause, cheering]

MR. BOORAS: There's that California group. And Chris Diamantoukos, also, - -.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: And also over here we have my good friend Phil Vogis. We go back a long time together.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: And then we have George Heralampudis [phonetic].

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: And so we should be stopping here, but we need to go further here, because with him, he has his two children. He has his son Gregory, who just became an Eagle Scout.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Also, Savas Tsivikos, that pretty face back there, also is in the group.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: We'll go back over here to the - - children, so Gregory made AHEPA service dog - - his project for his Eagle Scouts, and so proud of him. But also he has his daughter, Nicole. Nicole belongs to--

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: --the Future Farmers of America, and I want to call them both up here because--come up, guys--because they did something pretty remarkable. They went and they told their peers about this program and they raised $5,000.

[Applause]

MR. GREGORY HERALAMPUDIS: Thank you. All right, so, I'm Greg. I'm an Eagle Scout from Troop 531 in Homedale, New Jersey, along with my sister.

MS. NICOLE HERALAMPUDIS: I'm Nicole Heralampudis and I'm the Vice President of the Freehold FFA Chapter in Freehold, New Jersey.

MR. HERALAMPUDIS: So I took it upon myself to reach out to AHEPA and see if they would like me to do anything for AHEPA Services Dogs for Warriors. So they didn't have any social media accounts, so I went out and I created a Twitter, a Facebook, and an Instagram account for AHEPA Service Dogs for Warriors.

On top of that, Nicole and I reached out to a club in our school called Patriot for Warriors who do the same thing. They do fundraising in our school to help support veterans who suffer from PTSD to help get dogs for them. So they did a few fundraisers in school and throughout the entire year we accumulated $5,000.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Do we want to take pictures of the group here?

[Crosstalk]

[Background noise]

MR. BOORAS: So I have a watch committee here telling me to move this program. When you have this behind you, I think it speaks for itself. We have some chapters, some districts that have raised some money, and they wanted to make a presentation to us here today. I'd like to call upon them. There's three chapters from Bergan [phonetic] County, New Jersey, who got together, and they raised $15,000.

We have from Tanofly [phonetic] Jim Beokos [phonetic], Whitecoff [phonetic], Charlie Charles, and from Paramis [phonetic] Chris Maveris [phonetic]. If you want to come up here, guys, and make a few short remarks?

[Applause]

MR. JIM BEOKOS: Thank you, George. As the Vice President of the Ramapo [phonetic] Chapter 453, a veteran and a 50-year member of the AHEPA, I have the distinct honor to share the paper that I can't read, the news that three Bergan County chapters of New Jersey, the Ramapo Chapter 453, Bergan Knights Chapter 285, and Alexander Hamilton Chapter 54, have coordinated their efforts and pledged 5,000 each, for a total of $15,000 to support the National AHEPA Service Dogs program.

[Applause]

MR. BEOKOS: These three AHEPA Chapters have dedicated members, many of whom are also veterans who understand the commitment of our warriors. We felt that our turn and our privileged to show our commitment to them by supporting the National AHEPA Service Dog for Warriors program. Thank you for your time, and God bless you all.

[Applause]

[Crosstalk]

MR. BOORAS: About a year ago I got a phone call from Indiana and it said "We're getting a Hoosier." Well, called me up about a month ago, he says, "I told you, we got a Hoosier." So I want to introduce the good guys there from Indiana, Paolos Denarcos [phonetic] and you have another group with you. Bring them up.

[Applause]

MR. PAOLOS DENARCOS: What a difference two or three years make. We went from talking about the project to having raised so much money for so many dogs. Just put up with me a couple of minutes. As an old academic, we always talk too much. So with me, I'm Paolos Denarcos, the District Governor for Indiana. In Indiana, the district large is making this presentation. I understand that Housing [phonetic] is making a presentation, although some of us are part of Housing, this is the AHEPA society.

From its humble beginnings 96 years ago, one member at a time, to today's success story, AHEPA continues to exist and serve. Why? Because every great story on the planet happened when someone decided not to give up, but get going no matter what, and did something about it. Brother George, this is what you and your team did with this project. You believed in the cause and took the bull by its horns, and the rest is history.

So did we from Hoosierland. We made a small donation of $500 last year and seeing is believing. We believed in what we show, and like you, we took the bull by its horns and here we are with another check for $15,131 - - Hoosier - -.

[Applause]

MR. DENARCOS: Thank you. We are very proud to help a deserving warrior. Yeah, you can open it. We will have the picture taken in a minute. This was a district-wide group effort. The chapters raised the money. Also the Governor's allocation is included. We set a goal of two-thirds - - funds, however, we were so enthusiastic with the project so much so that we raised the funds in just one-third. The chapters--we'll show the picture in a minute--we'll go down there in a minute - - [laughter]. They tried to - - us out, right?

The chapters that helped raised the funds are as follows: Chapter 78, Gary/Middleville [phonetic] Chapter, the Mother Lodge of District 12, established in 1925; Chapter 100 South Bend, Indiana, established in 1926; Chapter 123 Haven, Indiana, established in 1926; Chapter 157 Calumet/Sherryville, Indiana, established in 1927; Chapter 232 James/Whitcomb/Raleigh [phonetic] Chapter of Indianapolis, my home chapter, established in 1929, and the home chapter of the AHEPA National - - President, - - Angelo Bustoyovich [phonetic].

At this time I would like to introduce my team, Angelo Bustoyovich, Chapter 232, - - the Governor, - - Treasurer, Tom Goldberg, Chapter 157, Sherryville, - - Supreme Governor Sam Benjamin [phonetic] and also the AHEPAn of the year last year. Theo Pudianos [phonetic] Chapter 78, and George Demoris [phonetic] Chapter 78. I'm so grateful and thankful for all of those chapters.

[Applause]

MR. DENARCOS: Thank you. I'm thankful to all of our chapters, their officers and members, for their hard work and support with this worthy project. Without their involvement this would not happen.

Special thanks to the following Brothers: Brother Sam Benjamin, Grand Supreme President, Grand Supreme Governor Nick Avalos [phonetic], Grand Supreme Treasurer Tom Goldberg, and AHEPA National - - President Luco Starivios [phonetic], but last but not least, Nick Ganigos [phonetic] Executive Secretary of Chapter 78, whose insightful input and guidance in getting this program completed earlier than anticipated.

Thank you all, but more importantly, Brother George, I want to thank you and your team for getting involved in this project and for inspiring the rest of us to get involved as well. Our big thanks go our veterans for their service to our country. This is the least we can do for you.

[Applause]

MR. DENARCOS: You are - - but freedom is not free, as they say. All gave some, but some gave all, and some of our veterans have given their all. May God bless you, God bless America. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. DENARCOS: How about we take [crosstalk] picture [crosstalk]?

MR. BOORAS: Last year I was invited to make a presentation to the AHEPA Senior Citizen Housing. Now, we made a presentation, they could have said to us, thank you, but they said thank you, and here's an application for a grant. We filled out the application, we sent it in, and well, our Supreme President told me what happened at the meeting. I will share with you. Someone on the committee said I move that we give them $12,000. Our Supreme President said, well, it's going to be difficult trying to find a dog with three legs.

[Laughter]

MR. BOORAS: So they said give 'em the 15 and…

[Laughter]

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: And so I want to introduce--no, I want to leave him last because I think--I do want to introduce a person that I got to meet. I am moved, again, I am so happy she's here with us and the family. She had a horrible loss but she's here and we love her and we embrace her. So I want to introduce the Grand President of the Daughters, Eva Jean. Eva, are you here?

[Applause]

MS. EVA JEAN FOMALONT: Well, after all the beautiful things that have been said here today, we all know where our hearts are, we all know where our hands go into our purses and our pocketbooks. We have to support our veterans. My son-in-law is a retired veteran. He was in Iraq and he came home with a lot of things he never talks about, either. My daughter is over here. Lisa, stand up. There's my daughter. This is her husband.

[Applause]

MS. FOMALONT: So I want to say God bless the AHEPAn, the Daughters, and the Maids and Sons, because we get the message and we care. Our hearts are always where they belong, but now our money has to speak where our hearts are. Thank you to all the veterans who are standing here, because without you we wouldn't be standing here today having this meeting and being free to say whatever we feel. Thank you all, and thank you everybody for caring so much about my family.

[Applause]

MS. FOMALONT: We just lost my grandson who was 31 years old. But thank you so much, because we're here because you're family, and with all your loves and hugs, that's what's keeping us going one step at a time. Thank you all.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: So we all know the story that they wanted to give 12,000 and we couldn't find a three-legged service dog, and so I want to take this opportunity now to introduce the Chairman who invited us, Brother Angelo Kastaritis [phonetic]. Angelo?

[Applause]

MR. ANGELO KASTARITIS: I'd like to call on my Board members that are out here for AHEPA National Housing. Ike, come on up. Is Art Polly [phonetic] here? Okay, Art Polly--[crosstalk]--Tasso Kalanzi [phonetic]? Come on up. All our Housing Board Directors. While they're coming up here…

[Crosstalk]

MR. KASTARITIS: Any other Housing Board of Directors here? Okay. We'll make this fairly quick. About a year ago Phil Vogis came up to me and he asked me, "Is there something AHEPA National Housing can do for our new program, AHEPA Service Dogs?" I said, "Wow, that's a great idea, Phil. Let me have you come in and give a presentation." So Phil brought George and he gave a very emotional presentation that even made my spine tickle.

Because I have a brother who's a veteran, and I recently lost him; he passed away in December. So I know exactly what veterans go through, and I liked the program so much that basically we did the presentation, we brought it up for the Foundation as a grant, and the grant was approved this year in the amount of $15,000.

[Applause]

MR. KASTARITIS: I want to invite all of you tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. after the athletic luncheon to come and visit us in Room #18, Avalon 18, to learn more about AHEPA National Housing and how you can get a grant for your 501C3 charitable organization. So with that in mind, without any further ado, George, it's my privilege, on behalf of my Board of Directors who are all standing here, to give you this check for $15,000 for our service dog named Nick S.

[Applause]

MR. KASTARITIS: One of the things, I want to explain the name that we came up with, Nick S. As some of you know, we lost one of our original members, longtime members Nick Stratus [phonetic], and of course, Nick Smyrnis is still with us in Indianapolis. Nick was the original founder of AHEPA National Housing. Nick Stratus was a longtime President and Chairman of the Board of AHEPA National Housing.

So we decided to honor their memory, at least Nick Stratus' memory, Nick Smyrnis is still with us, and so we came up with Nick S. Is Terry Mitchell here too? Where's Terry at? He must be at the bar. All right. I invited Terry to come, too; Terry is our honorary Board member, but apparently he's not here right now. Anyway, thank you again, George, and good luck on your program.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Next is someone who I've always respected because he was a Major in the Army, not the Air Force, or Navy, or anyone else, but the Army. We sort of have a close bond. And retired Major Carl Hollister, he believed in this program, and - - value the friendship that we have developed, and I want to introduce our Grand Supreme President Carl Hollister.

[Applause]

MR. CARL HOLLISTER: Will you please sit down? Please sit down. George, you have reinvigorated a spark in the philanthropy of the Order of AHEPA, the entire AHEPA family; the Daughters, the Sons, the Maids, and the AHEPA. We thank you for that. People ask members all the time, why are you in AHEPA? Let me tell you why I'm in AHEPA. I'm in AHEPA because we do significant things for people's lives every day. This is a fantastic example of that. We are saving people's lives through this program. It's outstanding.

When I look at what Housing does, 5,000 people across the country have dignified living conditions. When I look at all the charity we do, when I see what Brother Ike Goulas [phonetic] has done with Cooley's anemia, that's why I'm an AHEPAn, because we make a significant difference in the lives of people every day. George, I just want to thank you so much. This project is eternal and I know that we're going to do more than just 16 dogs, and every one of them is going to have four legs, guys.

[Laughter]

MR. HOLLISTER: Thank you, George. Now, I need to steal the mic, different issue. This morning I made an announcement, issued a statement in the fires in Greece. The catastrophe, the numbers are going higher. Earlier today it was 60 days, now we're in excess of 80; they're still searching for bodies. I implore you, before we leave this convention, that we raise $50,000. When Ike Goulas was President, when they had the fires in 2007 in August, we were able to raise $250,000 for supplies. We were able to give an additional $250,000 as an AHEPA family to help people get back up on their feet.

I'm proud to tell you, as many of you have heard me say all year, I have a stacked deck in my lodge. My top four lodge officers, including myself, are putting up the first 1,000 apiece. The Daughters raised 1,000 passing the hat this morning. We got the bucket over there.

[Applause]

MR. HOLLISTER: This is what we're here about. We're here to help those that can't help themselves, for those that need a hand. This program for the dogs and the vets we must support, and right there's an immediate need for our brothers and sisters in Helenus [phonetic]. So Brother George, I'm going to be turning this over to you, because you're going to have to collect the rest of the money we can't get this week.

[Laughter]

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: And I pledge to do so.

MR. HOLLISTER: Thank you.

MR. BOORAS: You know, the gift I'm giving, it just keeps giving, and we have our friends in District 4, these guys are wonderful, and almost when this program started they said that we're going to get a service dog. I want to introduce Alex Barlamas and members of his committee from District 4. Alex? There he is.

[Applause]

MR. ALEX BARLAMAS: Hi. Brothers and Sisters of the AHEPA family, thank you for this opportunity to serve the AHEPA Service Dog for Warriors program. This - - I have with me are--I'm the immediate - - Governor, Alex Barlamas, we have our reigning District Governor Charles McKenzie [phonetic], reigning Supreme Governor Cleon Kordistis [phonetic].

We committed ourselves to a dog last year and we're here to say that we have fulfilled that dog, and that this time this was a joint project of our Daughters and our AHEPA. I'd like to ask all the District Officers, past District Officers, and past Supreme Officers of our Daughters and AHEPA please stand, from Power District 4.

[Applause]

MR. BARLAMAS: Then I'd also like to ask any member from Power District 4 to stand. A few of them don't want to stand, I see, but that's all right. The word "American-Hellenic" fits right into this project. The project was helped to build American warriors, and we are members of the Hellenic Society in America. So it's a worthwhile project, it's one of the most worthwhile projects I've seen AHEPA come through. I hope it continues.

I know we're continuing on our district level, and we have already raised some money towards our second dog, which we hope to present at next year's convention. At this time, Brother George, to you and your committee, we'd like to present a check to pay off the remainder of our dog from Power District 4 by the name of Philos [phonetic].

[Applause]

MR. CHARLES MCKENZIE: Thank you. When I first got on the Supreme Large, Carl made the statement that the AHEPA is significant, and when I first saw the video "Dear Captain," I still--this is the first time that I was able to get through it without crying. When District 4 decided that we were going to do this project, my wife said, "If you get to the end and you don't have enough money, you're going to take the money out of your IRA to finish the first dog."

[Laughter]

MR. MCKENZIE: But my Brothers and Sisters bailed me out, but my wife did give me the first donation to get the project started when Alex had appointed me as the point man. Randy, it was a pleasure meeting you through your video. I wish you the best of luck. This is a significant project that the AHEPA does. Let's continue to do this because 22 veterans a day commit suicide, and we as AHEPAns, that's what we're here for, to help our fellow mankind because we believe in Hellenic ideals; that's who we are, that's what we do. Thank you, again.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: My buddy over here, Charles McKenzie, I visited them in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and boy, I tell you, the presentation couldn't have been worse. The audio wasn't working, nothing was working, but these guys said, you don't have to sell us, you know? We're in.

So they're in, here he is, but not here. He says he's at work with Wells Fargo, and I approached him, I said, you know what, I think Wells Fargo could come up with three dogs. So one of the executives says, well, I think two sounds better. So I want to thank him, he gave us an application, he's helping us along with that application. Just AHEPA, AHEPA family, what we do, doing it together just feels so right.

I have another friend over here Charles Demoulis [phonetic]. Last year we were having a problem with our audio and he says, hey, I know about these things, and he helped us out. Well, here he is and he wants to make a donation from St. Petersburg, and so it's a privilege to have him, he's a good friend, also.

[Applause]

MR. CHARLES DEMOULIS: Brother George, I attended the presentation in Vegas. As a veteran from the Vietnam era, I cried like a baby. Last year when I attended your presentation, and I did again; hopefully I'm not going to start crying.

We went back and I represent two small chapters, the nearest Chapter 210 in St. Petersburg, the Daughters of Penelope St. Petersburg, and Chapter 15 AHEPA Chapter, we're going to kick off a donation like the Brothers from Indiana did with $500. There's going to be more coming from our chapters. Also I'm going to try to challenge District 2 to join us and come up with a big donation. Thank you and God bless you. God bless all the veterans.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: We've come to a conclusion. I just want to thank Karen Marousis [phonetic]. Karen was right from the beginning leading this program and she said I'm going to raise money, and she went to Tom - -, the Daughters there. The Daughters were unbelievable; they carried the AHEPAns. You were relentless. You raised the money and we got Penelope.

You could be flying down Thursday when we're having a banquet at 6:00, a banquet on Thursday, Penelope's going to be graduating. Karen, you're going to be there, and I just say thank you. Right from the beginning you were there. Love you for all that. In conclusion, just want to say, and when they say who did it, we can all say we did it together. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: We just want to do one ceremonial picture. We have a check here, a ceremonial check here, in the amount of $240,000. This is what AHEPA has raised together, and so we wanted to - - this presentation to K9s for Warriors. This is what we did together.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: Let's have one more round of applause for all of our heroes. If we could have all the veterans please stand so we could recognize you as well. All veterans. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: Brothers and Sisters, if I could have your attention for just another moment. Brothers, Sisters, thank you for your attention again. Thank you all, again. We're almost done before our lunch break, so if I could have your attention for just one more moment, please. Thank you very much. I so greatly appreciate your enthusiasm.

Thank you, Brothers and Sisters. Thank you. I had the pleasure this year of going with Brother George Garatzia [phonetic] to the New Jersey Vietnam Memorial. Brothers and Sisters, Brother George and I had a unique experience. I was very honored by it. Thank you all. Just your attention for just a few more moments. Some music playing. I like that it's interesting, but it's counter-productive. All right, when Brother George and I went to the Vietnam Memorial--

[Crosstalk]

MR. STASIOS: Brother George and I went to the Vietnam Memorial to lay a wreath on Veterans Day. Thank you. And the wonderful experience that we had and that I had to be honored to lay a wreath at the Vietnam Memorial to memorialize all of those who gave so much so we could live our charmed lives. What we did there was critically important, laying a wreath at the feet and in the memory of people who gave everything.

What we as AHEPAns do through this program, laying not just a wreath at the feet, but our hearts at the doorstep of our veterans, the people who risked everything and came back and needed us most. It's an amazing thing that we do, and when we call each other Brothers and Sisters it doesn't stop just in the AHEPA domain. We mean that every human being is our brother and our sister, and those who fought for us, those who worked for us, they are part of our family.

We will continue these efforts because that's what we do; that's our Hellenic tradition, that's our human responsibility. You do it selflessly, you do it to the benefit of everyone who knows you. Keep up the good work, we'll work together and continue to make a difference in the world. Now, one of the things that we do after is to promote our efforts, and the AHEPA voice is one of the strongest methods we can use to promote the great things that we do.

We are honored to have with us today the Chairman of the National AHEPA Publication Committee, John Melonopoulos, who will present to us his report and also one last thing, we're a little late in the day, but in Avalon Room 1 and 2 there will be a presentation on the blood disorder thalassemia, which is brought to us by AHEPA Chapter 64. It's right around the corner, so please attend if you can. Now, please welcome John Melonopoulos. Thank you.

MR. JOHN MELONOPOULOS: Brothers and sisters, every year we come to the convention and we do a competition for district-wide newspapers. We have 13 districts that we recognize that have newspapers, and we wish they were all here. For first place this year we have a third-party committee that makes the sections, I'm not involved with that, neither is Phil Vogis or Jimmy Stasios.

We're all members of the committee to try to draw the people in to take--bring in their issues. We do not participate in the selection process; that's done by a transparent group that has no involvement with the publication program. The first winners are the Yankee News from District 7.

[Applause] The Editor, Jack Isaac [phonetic] here, and reporter Greg Simolis [phonetic]. The next one is the second place organization, AHEPA Voice from District 5. [Applause] Where's Lee Malis [phonetic]? Lee? Lee Malos? We also have one honorable mention, the Triogram [phonetic] from District 3. [Applause]

[Background noise]

MR. BOORAS: Brothers and Sisters, I beg your indulgence one second, please. For the Brothers, we are recessing now. We will reconvene at 2:30. 2:30 we'll reconvene for a few more reports in this room. 2:30. Thank you.

[Lunch recess]

[Background noise]

MR. BOORAS: Thank you for your patience, and in respect for your time and the Brothers that have not come back for us to resume our general session, we will recess. We didn't convene now, but we'll recess and we'll convene in the morning at 9 a.m. 9 a.m., please. Please pass the word to the other Brothers that you see. Thank you.

[Crosstalk]

MR. BOORAS: Brothers, it's a challenge to get them here at 9. I doubt if we'd have any luck at 8.

MALE VOICE 2: The schedule says 8:00, so if you 9 now it's going to have to--I don't know, I'm just--this happens every year.

[Crosstalk]

MR. BOORAS: Okay, Brothers. We'll follow the schedule that was printed and say 8:00 in the morning. Thank you for bringing that to our attention.

[END OF DAY]

AHEPA

**96TH AHEPA Supreme Convention**

**Atlantic City, NJ**

**July 25, 2018**

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# 96th AHEPA Supreme Convention

[CONTINUE 2018\_Supreme\_Convention\_July\_23\_-\_27\_PART\_4.mp3]

[Break]

MR. BOORAS: Good morning, Brothers. Thank you for getting up early and coming into the convention hall. We thank you for that. At that time we'll call this General Session to order. I think it'd be appropriate, again, if we have a moment of silence for the tragedy of the forest fires in Greece and the loss of life there. So if you'll join me in a moment of silence, please.

[Silence]

MR. BOORAS: Thank you. Lord, our God, we thank you for this day, for this fraternal order and for the good that it does around the world. We ask your blessings on our convention and our deliberations for the remainder of the convention. We ask that you be with all the brothers, sisters, and their families represented here, and that all that we do will be pleasing unto you. In your name, we pray. Amen. Thank you, Brothers.

At this time we'll call on Supreme Governor Nick Dixie to give his report for the record.

MR. NICK DIXIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll give you some highlights from District 16 and District 17, which is part of Region 17. District 16, the Governor and I have been working on reestablishing some of the chapters in Oklahoma. We've had luck in getting Tulsa to participate and we're currently working on Oklahoma City. Dallas hosted a very successful honors banquet that I participated in. I visited or emailed virtually every chapter in Region 7.

There's still a problem with emailing addresses, and I think that's kind of universal. The addresses, it's not Headquarters' fault, the chapters don't send those in on timely manner. The membership of Region 7 is about 546, District 16 is about 603, with a total of about 1,100 members.

One of the biggest projects in District 16, we raised $100,000, including gift cards, to 39 recipients of the terrible flood they had in the Houston area. Some of the highlights of District 17, they raised dollars for the AHEPA Service Dog program, which many of y'all probably saw yesterday. They raised over $3,500 for district scholarships. They awarded $13,500 in scholarships to high school students.

They had a program for imaging - - for District 16. They were helpful in organizing the tri-district convention in Reno, Nevada. The proceeds going to the Warrior Dog program and another great project, is to combat sex trafficking in the Midwest. One important thing that they did was they updated the membership roster to eliminate old and aged numbers. That's my report. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Thank you very much, Brother Dixie. Appreciate your report. I think all the Supreme Governors have now reported and their reports have been included in the record. I'd like to officially accept all the reports that have been given by the committee chairs so far, if I've neglected to do that for the record. All those that have been presented have been accepted by the Chair.

MR. PHIL VOGIS: Brother Chairman, Phil Vogis, Past Supreme Governor, Region 3, one quick question to brother Nick. I'm looking at the 2017 - -.

MR. BOORAS: Yes, please, Brother Phil. This mic, just so it can be recorded. Again, state your name, Brother Phil, and chapter.

MR. VOGIS: Brother Phil Vogis, Past Supreme Governor, Region 3, Chapter 453, Whitecoff, New Jersey. Regarding the membership totals for District 16, it was reported in the 2017 there were 570 members. Did I hear you say you're up to 1,100 members?

MR. DIXIE: - - '16 and 17, both - -.

MR. VOGIS: In the region? Okay. Not just the district.

MR. DIXIE: Yes, - -.

MR. BOORAS: Brother Dixie, do you mind going to that microphone so that your response can be recorded?

MR. DIXIE: The 1,100 figure, 1,045 is for both District 16 and District 17 combined, not just 17.

MR. VOGIS: Okay, so you had growth there; that's wonderful. Thank you so much.

MR. DIXIE: Yes, sir.

MR. BOORAS: Thank you for that clarification. On the printed schedule of events--

MR. ANTHONY KOUZOUNIS: [interposing] Anthony Kouzounis, Past Supreme President.

MR. BOORAS: Yes.

MR. KOUZOUNIS: Brother Dixie is a little bit modest in his report, and I'd like to add the fact that he helped coordinate the fantastic Maria flood project and the entire state of Texas and the region of Houston. So he was the Chairman, I was the Coordinator, so he forgot to put that in his report, and I think it's very key what he did for that.

MR. DIXIE: Absolutely. Thank you, brother.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: Brother Wynn, since you entered into the convention hall, if you're prepared I'd like to call on you at this time to give the Veteran Affairs Committee report. We appreciate your flexibility in filling in as needed.

MR. WYNN STORTON: - - to be here. Always like photo props. We don't have that many gentlemen in the room, but those of you who are veterans, please stand. If you're a veteran, can you please stand?

[Applause]

MR. STORTON: We thank you for your service. I thank you for your service as a veteran, being on the Veterans Affairs Committee. The report that Colonel Vemvakis [phonetic], he couldn't be here today because his wife's in surgery, so be keeping them in your prayers, I'd appreciate it. Nothing too bad, but any time you're older and you go into surgery prayers help a lot.

I just want to bring out that on the Veterans Affairs Committee, I've been on there for the last three years plus, thanks to the Presidents that let me do that. This is one of the things I put out today. There's 246 names on there, which is great, 246 names, but we've got quite a few AHEPAns, quite a few veterans that don't have their names on there. Before I go and put it on the website, I would like to get more. This is just their names and their chapter, but on the website it'll have their name, service, branch, and all that, have that on there.

So this is kind of like a heads up; if you're name's not on there, it's a wake-up call. Maybe you got the pin in Orlando, maybe you got the pin at your chapter event, but for some reason I did not get the name. So just - - and all you have to do is go to AHEPAveterans.org and sign up. It's free to sign up, get your name on this free, but for the pin we're asking for a $10 donation and extra if you can.

Any extra goes to--any extra, we close out at the end of the year and it goes to a project that the Veterans Affairs Committee chooses. This year it's--my mind keeps going to Penelope House, but it's not that. It's the housing that they do at the bases that house the families that come visiting, for the veterans' families and stuff. So basically if there's any questions or requests, AHEPAveterans.org is where you can go for the website.

You go to the AHEPA.org website all the way to AHEPAveterans.org, it'll eventually have all the names posted on there, but at this point we're still collecting names. Future goals, we've got a couple more people coming on the committee that we're going to do more outreach towards veterans' care.

I know we have the DAV, that helps a lot, and we have a lot of people with the DAV working with veterans, and going to start directing helping them find their DAV person and have more opportunities, that way they can reach out to AHEPA to help themselves, and also the service dogs. That was a great program they had yesterday. We are part of that, we're helping with that as well.

So at this point is there any questions anybody has about Veterans' Affairs and what we've done and what we can do better?

MR. MICHAEL BATOS: Michael Batos [phonetic] Chapter 37, Syracuse, New York. I enjoy - - and I was in Orlando, also, so I've been coming to one of the conventions. From now on, started bringing other people. I've got my brother and my sister here; they enjoy it. So saying that, I'm very interest with the veterans. Being a veteran, of course, I appreciate you veterans that came after me and the ones that are serving right now.

I noticed that we have Chairs in each district, but I asked to assist and I was refused to assist. We got one Chair with no members of the committee, and I think my belief that the more people are involved, the more ideas we get, and also we train other people to follow. Being an older guy that I'm training young people in their jobs there--

MR. STORTON: [interposing] Is that from your district that you were--

MR. BATOS: [interposing] Yeah, in this - - I don't want to complain, it's just that one person to reach in every chapter and get a program going, and I'm not complaining. I volunteered to pitch in and help and I was told it's only a Chair and nobody else.

MR. STORTON: Yeah, I have the same issue in my own district. I'm in District 20, Palm Springs, California, Southern California. The same issue there, I'm the Veterans Chair there as well and everybody wants recognition but they don't want to do the work. But if you're willing to do the work, just stand up and do it. When it comes to Veterans Day, just put on a program in your church, start there.

MR. BATOS: Yeah, well I chaired the one in our chapter, but I'm talking about getting--I travel a lot. I have the luxury in this time of my life that my kids are grown up. We all reach there. So I have time to travel, I have time to go places.

MR. STORTON: Well, on that, what we do in Arlington is bar-none, it's tremendous. Back in 2001 I went back with the Boy Scouts and I had just became an AHEPAn back then, that was a long time ago, but you come up and I see this wreath, and I go, what is this? Then you see these wreaths on there, and it's just on the AHEPAns. I was really proud to see that, and then went back in 2006, the same thing. I can't go every year, but it's an awesome project that Colonel Vemvakis runs, and it's - -.

We have national cemeteries all throughout the nation. Pick up that cross for that project in your--find your national cemetery and start that program there, and then have--just start reaching out. One day at a time, it'll happen.

MR. BATOS: By the way, I just wanted to congratulate you in front of everybody. You did a tremendous job the first time I talked to you on the phone, I think you remember when I got [crosstalk] and you talked to me like we knew each other for 100 years, you know? You're a very good person to talk to, and you do a tremendous job. Thank you.

MR. STORTON: Well, I learned it all from Past Presidents, that's all. That's it, that's all I really have for just introduction. I would like to--I do have veterans pins on me, so if you know a veteran that's in the house that would like it, I do have some forms, I have some pins on me. See me when I'm not busy, I don't know when that would be, but see me when I'm not busy and I'll get you set up. All right? Thank you for your time. Especially, thank you for your service. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. BOORAS: I'm going to ask Brother Wynn, just for the benefit of the Brothers that are in the room now, in addition, what can we do to help promote this and to gather information that can be added to the database?

MR. STORTON: Well, the database is a personal one. If you read the report, Colonel Vemvakis was very dear about me doing the lion's share. Yes, a couple years ago our committee quit, most of the committee quit, and I stayed on and fulfilled 163 orders that they would have just let go. They would say just leave them alone, we're not going to do it anymore.

But I stayed on board to fulfill those 163 pins that people requested. It's a personal thing, you do it by chapter, you can do it by district, you can have a veterans--it'd be great to see a veterans position, and I brought this up to legislation to change it in the by-laws as we have an Athletic Director, I'd like to see a Veterans Chair in every chapter and every district. That's something we pushed on legislative.

They said we already have enough positions that we can't fill anyway, so why add another one we can't fill? If you have a blank spot, just fill it in as Veterans Chair, that way it'll get a--we could put it on the veterans' website. You can reach out to other Veterans Chairs and communicate with each other, share your success. Every chapter will be different in what they can do for their veterans.

Every area has, whether it's Veterans of Foreign Wars or what they focus on, so the bottom line, we're here for the veterans no matter what. Did that answer it enough for you? It's basically just like anything with the chapter, do what you can in your city. What happens in New Jersey, it's different from California, so everybody has a different - -, but basically you just do it. Let it grow, make it grow.

MR. BATOS: Thank you.

[Crosstalk]

MR. BOORAS: Thank you, Brother Wynn. We appreciate all your hard work on behalf of the fraternity, what you're doing, and we ask everyone's cooperation in helping to spread the word and to gather the information so that we can recognize our veterans.

I wanted to make an announcement regarding the National Project Committee. Brother Tom Harry Kavalaris [phonetic] was going to be the Chairman of that committee and yesterday afternoon I received an email from him stating that because of the flight schedules and the weather, his flights were canceled several times, delayed several times, and ultimately canceled, so he is not going to be at the convention.

So I have appointed Brother Themis Frangos [phonetic] to be the Chair of that committee, and in the program schedule it has the committee meeting listed from 9 'til 12 in the Avalon Room 10, so if you had signed up for the National Projects Committee, just be aware that Brother Themis will be chairing that committee, and he had taken the sign-up sheet and he was reaching out to the brothers that had signed up for it so that they can attend that meeting later this morning. So I just wanted you to be aware of that and have in the record.

On the schedule it's showing 9 'til noon. [Crosstalk] Okay, so that's supersedes this, yes. Repeat that one? [Crosstalk] 10:30 'til 12 is when that Projects Committee will meet, so if you want to attend or participate you're welcome to do so.

Yes, Brother?

MR. ANASTASIOS STANPOULOS: Mr. Chairman, Anastasios Stanpoulos [phonetic], Chapter President, 170, I just had a question before you--

MR. BOORAS: [interposing] Please repeat it, it didn't get recorded.

MR. STANPOULOS: Yes. Chapter President, 170, Anastasios Stanpoulos, Hempstead, New York. My question just was on the scholarship awards and the athletic awards; are they two separate ones?

MR. BOORAS: Yes.

MR. STANPOULOS: We still don't have any info on the scholarship awards, or we do know when they're going to be?

MR. BOORAS: So at the athletic awards luncheon today they'll be making those presentations for the scholar athletes. Brother George Vorkas who heads the AHEPA Educational Foundation also wasn't able to come to the convention, so he has reached out to one of the Past Chairmen and he has agreed to make that report later.

MR. STANPOULOS: Oh, great, thank you.

MR. BOORAS: Yes. Thank you for your question.

MR. JIM KARAMANOS: Jim Karamanos [phonetic], member of the Monroe Chapter 75 of the 5th District, which comprises New Jersey and Delaware. I'm sorry for digressing about the order of business, but I would like to inform--if the members do not know that there are only 300,000 veterans from the greatest generation that are still surviving. That the greatest generation, meaning those who served during the Second World War, of course. 300,000 out of 15 million.

MR. BOORAS: Wow.

MR. NICK PAPADOPOULOS: Good morning, Nick Papadopoulos [phonetic], - - Governor, Region 10. We have a new web page and in there I looked, I don't know if you know about it, it's a new web page. I'm not going to go into how it is easy or it is not easy, but again, we have a district in Europe, District 28, and again, it's not showing on this web page. This happened before. I don't know what--we have to do something about it, but when we approved something over a year ago it should be noted. And there's no excuses.

Too many people were--not enough people to work and this and that. It's very simple. So I'm sorry for the tone of my voice; I'm getting upset, disgusted. So many times we have told the National Headquarters, and again in this new one it's not--I'm not saying to blame anybody, just please take a note and let the appropriate people know and then fix it as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

MR. BOORAS: Yes, sir.

[Crosstalk]

MR. BOORAS: Our webmaster will make a response?

MR. STORTON: I'm the webmaster for AHEPA.org. As of yesterday, I'm not. As of yesterday they launched a new website without letting me know. Is that the one you're talking about? There's a brand new website out, just launched. There's a brand new one, because the other one I had it on--Friday it was there, Saturday - - weekend, but Wednesday it was there.

You don't have to put all that in the notes. I don't want any negative stuff in the notes. But they changed it so the website has changed and it's in progress to be more stuff added. So the website is now being run by Headquarters, and I'm still onboard helping them, but the website is run by Headquarters, and they'll fix that, because we did have you on there before it's not on there now, but it will be on, addressed real soon.

Basos is going to talk about it later, the website. The whole issue's going to be brought up later in an open forum at the Governors' conference, I believe, at the Governors' gathering this afternoon.

MR. BOORAS: Brother, yes, go ahead.

MR. CHRIS PAPAS: Yeah, Chris Papas [phonetic], District Secretary in New York. I looked at the new website the other day. It looks a lot different. It's harder to find. Right now it's hard to find chapters and districts. Before, when Wynn had it, it was a big list with District 1, District 2. Now it's like a location map search thing, and it's difficult, so if they can try and modify that it would help a lot.

MR. BOORAS: Thank you, Brother.

MR. PAPAS: He did a great job on the website.

MR. BOORAS: Mr. Supreme President?

MR. HOLLISTER: Thank you. I was going to talk about the new website, do a demonstration and all that tomorrow as part of my report. One of the things we've been trying to do for years is to streamline the website, make it much more interactive and easier to find things. We've always had a website that had a lot of information in it, you just couldn't find anything. We're trying to get it more modern so that it's going to be easier for people outside of AHEPA to look at it. You've got to understand, we do need to cater to our membership, but that website--

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MR. HOLLISTER: --is the first piece of public relations that a non-AHEPA member sees when they search AHEPA on the internet. So we have to make it have a pop, have something that's going to be eye-capturing, and something that's going to be a tool. There's a lot of tools that we are adding as we go, and I think you're going to be very pleased with how interactive it is. We're going to get to the point where we have fillable PDFs online.

We already have on the membership portal that the chapters are not taking advantage of, of updating your rosters, because there is not a chapter in this room that has 100% accurate information at Headquarters as to emails, addresses, names, and numbers. So that's one of the things that I think would be a great takeaway for everyone in this room.

When you go back you have your chapter Presidents, your chapter Secretaries go online and update that information. Think of how many times we send out something for Headquarters and the return mail we get. Even though we're doing bulk rate, that's still a wasteful cost, just for something as simple as having accurate home addresses, let alone phone numbers, email addresses, et cetera. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Mr. President. So at this time we'll call on our AHEPA Housing Corporation to make their report to the delegates. Brother Angelo Kastaritis [phonetic].

MR. ANGELO KASTARITIS: I'm going to wait a minute because I've got some Board members coming in. They should be walking down here. But first of all, let me tell you that on the yearbook you may have noticed that my last year's report was in there, and I guess it was an error on the people that were transcribing the book. So that was last year's report. I do have a report for this year.

Give me a minute here, we'll see if they come in.

[Silence]

MR. KASTARITIS: Okay, here are some of the fellows. Well, there's a couple of fellows who just came in. There'll be a few more. Let me preface and make a quick announcement for later today, actually. In Room 18, Avalon 18, at 3:00 we will have an open session and discussion about the housing program, as far as any questions that you might have. We'll give you a quick update on some of the things that we're doing.

I know there are some Brothers around the country that talked to me yesterday and they wanted to come in and talk and see a little more detail than what my report will be today. So that'll be at 3-4:00 today this afternoon in Avalon 18, which is just down around the corner here, close to the registration desk.

Well, it's with deep sorrow this year that we announce that our long fellow colleague, former Chairman of the Board and President of our company, Nick Stratus, passed away. As most of you know, Nick Stratus was a pillar in our organization. He achieved the largest number of low-income senior housing buildings with 13 buildings in Mobile, Alabama, alone.

He also assisted in building the unit in Hoover, Alabama, named after AHEPA Daughters of Penelope District 1. May his long, tireless work be reminder to all of us. May his motivation to keep all of us going forward with a common goal, and may his legacy to continue to reflect AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope name in the communities that we serve. May his memory be internal.

We were also saddened this year by the passing of our former Vice President of ANHC, Brother George Anagnostis [phonetic] of Rhode Island. Brother George was our editor to the AHEPA Magazine who truly did an outstanding job in promoting ANHC and AMC activities with our national membership. May his memory also be eternal.

As reported again last year, the original Section 202 program of HUD for low income senior housing grants, as we have known it for the last 37 years, continue to be in a shutdown mode again this year. This has been a continued disappointment for our organization since the program was the main vehicle to allow the additional chapters the opportunity to invest modestly and to receive a 202 grant, not a mortgage, but a grant, for construction of an independent living housing facility.

As of this date it is uncertain whether or not the program will be on track again. If and when any announcement of the popular program returns, ANHC will announce to the chapters of the notification of funding, commonly known as NOFA, with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. ANHC and AMC has progressed with a diversification to Affordable Assisted Living Facilities which is commonly known as AALF program.

I'm pleased to announce that in January and February of this year we opened two of our first affordable assisted living facility buildings, one in the city of Indianapolis, and the other in the city of New Albany, Indiana, which is just across the river from Louisville, Kentucky.

The Indiana Housing and Development Authority closed on the tax credit bonds for the building of our first affordable assisted living projects in Indianapolis. This deal with the necessary guarantees and reserves will be close to $24 million. The equities provided through an affiliated of Berkshire Hathaway and the debt financing is with Dutch Bank.

The minority ownership will be a subsidiary of AHEPA Management Company, and then with the majority ownership during the tax period will be with the tax credit partners. Our second building in New Albany, Indiana was handled in the same manner. At the April 27th Annual AHEPA National Housing Meeting of the Board, we had our first dedication of the building in Indianapolis.

Our third AALF building is currently under construction in the city of Elkhart [phonetic], Indiana, which is just east of South Bend, Indiana in Northern Indiana. Please refer the AHEPA Magazine, they chose pictures of these beautiful buildings. If you're ever in Indianapolis and would like to see one of those, let me know and I'll be more than happy to give you a tour of the Indianapolis Assisted Living building.

Again this year ANHC and AMC will expense for advertising in the AHEPA Magazine as we've done every year in the last past years in the amount of $60,000. This will allow ANHC and AMC to promote senior housing with a national membership. In addition, ANHC and AMC will provide $10,000 each to the Sons and the Maids of Athena for their advertising. In return these organizations will provide advertising space for ANHC.

The ANHC continues the establishment of the Pioneer Scholarships in the name of the pioneers that AHEPA Housing had for us. The pride of the ANHC is the grant program which like entities of 501C3 designations are given every year. For the last 22 years ANHC has granted around $6 million in grants. These include the grants that we give to the local chapters under their grant program which is a foundation or charitable organization.

The following designees this year for ANHC grants are as follows: Newton School Foundation, $10,000; Penelope House Family Violence Center will get $12,000; the AHEPA Journey to Greece, $8,000; the Salute to Women for the Daughters of Penelope will be $2,000; Health Imperatives, Penelope Place, $10,00; Hellenic Museum of Michigan will be $2,000; AHEPA Hellenic History Tournament, $6,000; St. Samson Medical Clinic will be $2,000; AHEPA Service Dogs for Warriors program, $15,000; Crossroads of America, $3,000; and ANHC Pioneer Scholarships, $10,000.

$239,250 are set aside for grants to the local charitable foundations of the chapters that have housing projects in their location. So the total 2018 ANHC grants will be $319,250. That pretty much concludes my report. If there's anybody that has any questions I'd be more than happy to entertain them, Jim, at this time.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much, Brother Angelo. Any questions from the delegates?

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Good morning, again, Papadopoulos, Past Supreme Governor, Region 10. Thank you for the report. Outstanding record and performance. Just a background, I ran a house for older people in Greece, a privately owned company, and there's a lot of Greek Americans who use to be members of AHEPA and no longer are active, and they're always asking me how come AHEPA was so active in the United States? Don't they do any programs in Greece, something like they do in the United States?

I know the industry in Greece because I ran this company for two and a half years. It's not my own company, somebody else's company. They care--right now about 25% of the people in Greece are over--they need to be in-house, and then of course the tax laws and the laws, the Greek laws are so complex.

And I would think that maybe this September that AHEPA is sending, I understand, a delegation in Greece, and I have a lot of questions I'll ask you some other time, I'll ask of our Supreme President. Maybe somebody should come from your part of the organization and talk to the Ministry of Labor and - - policies; they're two different ministries. Discuss and see if AHEPA could do something. AHEPA has done so much for Greece - - for Greece as they're doing right now for the fires and so forth and so on.

But like everybody talks about AHEPA Hospital in - -. If AHEPA were to do an old age, whatever you call it, establishment in Greece, that would be a hit. That's the best publicity we can do. All kinds of trips you can take from the States and see the Prime Minister or the President or this and that, take a lot of pictures. The thing that will be most important, and perhaps I'd be willing to help as much as I can, perhaps you should look into that and hopefully it will be Supreme - - and so forth and so on. Thank you very much for your report. Thank you.

MR. KASTARITIS: Thank you, thank you. I know I've heard a lot about the housing situation in Greece and I know that's a big concern for a lot of people. One of the things that we've been so successful on, of course, is the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government has funded these programs, and to try to fund something in Greece, I don't think we can get the government to do it from here.

But down the road it might be something that we ought to take a look at because if we do get to be successful enough and it is prudent enough to do something in Greece, that would be fine. But right now I don't see it happening right away. Yes?

MALE VOICE 3: Brother Angelo, Brothers. I think also the generation of 501C3, I don't think Greece has this plan here, and there's a lot of restrictions - - and it's very important, like in the local foundations. - - will come from money, or somebody else that would come and do that. It tells you right there where the money can go. So that could be another problem that I think to consider. Thank you.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: I don't want to take your time on this, but in the church, this issue, this tax issue and so forth and so on, it sounds so difficult looking from the outside. It's about time we get there and we discuss this, because from the outside everything is difficult. It's like when I do a crossword puzzle. When I look at this I said, I can't do this, it's impossible. Then in 10 minutes, 20 minutes, I'm finished I did it. Okay, now, - - the metropolitan - - here's something like this, and there's was to work with the government.

We don't have a HUD there - - and this and that, but there's money to be found. There is also European money. Europe, Espa [phonetic] money they call it. They will give money for something to be done. But the problem is that fellows Greeks don't like to take the time to fill the paperwork. You have to prepare all kinds of reports like you do for HUD, and you know that, you're an expert at that.

So if you come in with your expertise and you go to the ministries, I think you will impress people, because AHEPA has done an outstanding job in the United States, and it's about time, give us this technology and then we'll take it on. We have the Governor from Greece now - - 37 chapters in Greece, and I think we should look into that very seriously, and not be this great bureaucracy.

Well, every place you go there is bureaucracy. I was many years in China. There's bureaucracy there, there's investment - -, because people go, because there's a need, and I think there's a need in Greece. Sorry for the--thank you - -.

MR. STASIOS: It's quite all right. Thank you. Any other questions? Yes.

FATHER IGNACIOS STAVRAPOULOS: Father Ignacios [phonetic] from Chapter 18, from Greece. Just continuing this, it's very important, AHEPA's name in Greece is very high, but we don't having nothing to continue - - in the future. All these homes, youth camps, other things; we are not registered in the U.N. has AHEPA for immigrants. There are so many million amounts from European states from Greece. No one works on this. This, we have to do something. Thank you, Brother Papadopoulos for this. Thank you.

MR. KASTARITIS: Thank you. Let me ask you, is Tony Gremmels [phonetic] still in Greece? He's not doing very well? Okay. Because Tony and I had talked about that and we discussed it. Yeah.

[Crosstalk]

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: You know, from time to time there has been efforts to start an old age home with Brother Gremmels, but he is indisposed now, ill. And then when Past--then Supreme President - - they talked about it. Then as a matter of fact Brother Vogis gave - - and this and that. They collected some money. But really we don't have the expertise. We need somebody who knows - - private company, I work for a private, I can help.

But I think you have--you need--when they see you in the government it'll mean a lot, because you have a record of accomplishment. We talk. We're just talkers. You have a record, and that record is very important. You have results. So hopefully you'll find some time to do that.

MR. STASIOS: We'll get to it, yeah. Any other questions?

MALE VOICE 4: Let me just add a comment. There's always challenges, but that's our job is to find solutions. I can tell you that I'm in the Pan Acarian [phonetic] Foundation and we do have an old age home in Greece that we work with the government to get done. It's in - -. It's the Pan Acarian old age home. The Acarians live longer than everyone else. They're the one that need the old age home.

MR. KASTARITIS: Any other questions? Before I step down, could members of my board from Housing all stand up so can introduce you all? First of all, Terry Mitchell, right there, raise your hand Terry. Everybody knows Terry. He's the honorary Board member, of the Executive Board. Next to him is Angelo Magramis [phonetic] from South Bend, Indiana. Next to Angelo is George Nordon [phonetic] from Syracuse, New York.

Next to George is Nick Callen [phonetic] from New Hampshire. Stephanie, Vice President of AHEPA Management Company. Jimmy Macras [phonetic] from Florida. Charles McKenzie from Allentown, Pennsylvania. John Zazukia [phonetic] from Columbia, South Carolina. Paolos Niarkos over here from South Bend AHEPA, and Supreme President from Dayton, Ohio. Did I get everybody? Did I miss anyone? Oh, right there, Mark Bollick [phonetic] from New Mexico, Albuquerque. He's the President of his project.

Any other Presidents of their project that are not on the Executive Board? I guess I've covered everybody. We're going to be meeting today and tomorrow. I want to invite all of you at 3:00 for an open session and we can discuss things, and maybe even talk a little bit about housing overseas. So Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. We appreciate your time. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother Angelo, and all the volunteer Board members that came into the convention hall this morning. We thank you for your service. We know that none of us are paid employees and all volunteers, and we appreciate you donating your time to this very good cause.

I see one of our Past Supreme Presidents entering the hall, so if he is prepared I'd be happy to call on him at this time for his report. Yes, sir.

[Crosstalk]

MR. STASIOS: We have our Credentials Chair now that'll give us the current update on the delegate count. Brother?

MR. MICHAEL PAPAPHOTES: Good morning, brothers. Brother Michael Papaphotes, Delphi 25, giving the current credentials. Count is at 218 with registration still open 'til noontime today.

MR. STASIOS: We appreciate that update on our delegate count. Brother Andrew Zachariades is going to give us our International Committee Report. Thank you, Brother.

MR. ANDREW ZACHARIADES: Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. ZACHARIADES: Good morning, Brothers. As our Chairman said, my name is Andrew Zachariades, Past Supreme President. I was privileged to chair the International Committee Meeting with Past Supreme President Brother Anthony Kouzounis. Yesterday we met from 9:00 to 11:30. There were 19 members, 19 brothers who attended the meeting. We touched on a number of subjects ranging from the issue of Fyrom, the ongoing struggles that the various chapters have overseas. We had a district Governor from Cyprus, Brother Phyno [phonetic] please stand up, District Governor from Cyprus.

[Applause]

MR. ZACHARIADES: District Governor from Greece Brother Stathios [phonetic].

[Applause]

MR. ZACHARIADES: We also have a Past Supreme Governor Sandy Papadopoulos who was there as well.

[Applause]

MR. ZACHARIADES: So one of the discussions - - issue, as we all know is a very complicated issues. As many people didn't like what transpired in Greece with what the government did, it's a treaty, we like it, we don't like it, the government agrees to signing it, they're in the process to sign it. We have to accept it because that's they're decision.

As difficult as some of these issues are to swallow, sometimes you have to live with what you're given. So unfortunately there are a lot of people who are against it, but just like in our country, it's a democratic process. We have to respect the process, whether we like it or not. So that was the discussion for a few minutes.

One of the issues that we had discussed, and I'll give kind of an overview, was that we had to be real careful with the chapters, not just the United States, but as well as the chapters overseas, that there's only one voice for the Order of AHEPA, and that person is the Supreme President.

We tend, at times, it doesn't make a difference, we're all brothers, we have to be very careful when we say things out in the public, and we have to be very careful when we make statements out in the public. Because sometimes - - contrary to whatever policy the Supreme President along with the Supreme Lodge has determined to be our policy. So that was a topic of discussion for quite a while.

Some of it's well-intentioned, some of it is not, and we're asking all the brothers, no matter where you're from, to please refrain from making public statements about public policy as it relates to AHEPA unless it's approved by Headquarters. Because that really makes a difference, because if we take a stance on an issue, there must be very good reason why we're taking a stance on something. So we have brothers going out there, and we'll just use Fyrom as an example, that AHEPA's against it, that would be against our policy.

So sometimes as the Supreme President, when he came in yesterday he gave his report, sometimes we don't say anything, and sometimes silence is just as powerful as making a statement. We discussed that--the brothers were saying that they know certain things, especially when it comes to overseas, and I tried to explain to everybody that they may know a piece of the pie, but we know the whole pie.

So when we're doing our research we do extensive research and we try to get all the facts. We deal directly with the ambassadors, we deal directly with the governments, so when the Supreme President makes a statement on something it's because it's been very carefully considered, it's been very carefully vetted, and we made our policy statement.

We also discussed, and I have no problem saying it, because I was Supreme President, I was very - - about it. That job known as Egeron [phonetic] from Turkey, we all know he's out of control. There's a great concern across the board on his tactics. I don't know if you brothers saw this on the news that came out the other day that now Greece and Turkey are at odds.

They expelled a couple of--I don't know if they were councils or whatever they did, they expelled two of them the other day and now they're going to expel some more people, and now Russia's going to expel some of their people. So it's an ongoing issue now, all of a sudden now Russia and Greece are at it.

So we'd like to be very careful about what we're going to be saying about this topic, anything related to this. So when we talk about Turkey it's a very volatile subject. It's volatile also because they have a patriarch where they worry about his safety. We have visited him many times over the years, but he's kind of isolate where he is, so we also have to remember we need to protect him, he's our spiritual father.

So when we say things we also have him in the back of our minds to make sure we don't do anything that in some way would hurt the standing of the church there. I know many of you brothers have been there. The - - is kind of in the middle of nowhere over there. He's isolated, and he hasn't had a meeting with everyone, only once recently in like five years, they've met only once. So it's not that great of a relationship.

As a side note, the chapters in Europe, all the chapters in the region, Region 10, are supposed to be submitting some sort of report to the International Committee. I was changing the by-laws last year. Somebody asked to respect the District Governors just during the course of the year just to submit a one-page simple update of what the chapters and what's going on in your district, because everybody wants to know what's going on. - - and I had discussed that the brothers in Cyprus, it's a small country as it is, they do quite a bit, and we'd like to know more of what's going on.

So we discussed that, some of the social media stuff - - post it. Sometimes we all assume that we all know what's going on; a lot of times we don't know what's going on because everybody is not on Facebook. Everybody doesn't have emails. So the only way we know what's going on is we use all the social media aspects so that way we can all know what we're doing.

Also the conduct, we're concerned about the overall conduct of the brothers. Just like we have here in the United States, when somebody is appointed or elected as a Supreme Lodge Officer, that person, that brother is to be treated with the respect that he's entitled to. Sometimes we take our friendships and attitudes for granted, and we have to remember when there is somebody whether he was appointed as a Supreme Governor, elected as a Supreme Governor, he is a Supreme Lodge Officer.

So the moment he is a Supreme Lodge Officer he's entitled to the respect that that office holds. We have to be careful, and this applies also in the United States, in Canada as well, how we conduct ourselves on a daily basis. So we ask that all the brothers be very careful. I know at times we disagree on subjects. If you have a big disagreement with somebody, you go outside, you take them to the side, and you have your discussions privately.

You try not to do things, and in Europe the brothers tend to do social media to vent their dislike of each other, and that's not the appropriate venue to do it, and that has to stop. It's not the place to do it. It's inappropriate, especially when you start using the AHEPA logo. The AHEPA logo is not for your personal business to vent your frustration with a particular person.

If you have an issue with somebody you call them up on the phone or you find a friend who knows him and you work it out privately. Facebook and all these blogs that are out there are not the venue to be venting and be disrespectful and cursing and conducting yourself inappropriately as a brother, especially when using the AHEPA emblem. So that was something we discussed in quite a bit of detail, and we're not going to tolerate too much of it, and if necessary we will take the necessary action to get these brothers to understand their responsibilities.

There was this big discussion about the proposal regarding the Supreme Governor of Region 10, whether he should be elected or not. I reminded the brothers of the Committee that we are an advisory board only, we have no authority to support, say yes or no to this issues. All the brothers have to vote accordingly, because that issue is in legislation. So legislation committee will do what they have to do.

So we only touched on it a little bit, for a little while. There was a discussion about it, however, it's going through legislation, it's going to be presented on later on today, and everybody, when you hear the legislation, you can then decide on your own merits whether you want to support it or not.

The Supreme President came in, gave his report on all the visitations that he did throughout Europe, very similar to all of the Past Supreme Presidents who have done that. We're trying to expand as much as possible the Supreme Lodge visiting Europe just as much as we visit the United States, so successfully year-in, year-out we are doing more of that, and showing that regardless of where you live, there's no such thing--so we're clear about this, we discussed it last year in detail--we're all brothers.

You may happen to live in Greece, you may happen to live in Cyprus or Brussels; we're all brothers. There's no such thing as a Cypria [phonetic] brother or a Canadian brother; you just happen to live in a particular country, and we're all the same, and we're all brothers, you just happen to live some place, and that's very important.

Because if we're going to continue growing this organization nationally, internationally, we have to be very respectful and remind ourselves that a brother is a brother no matter where lives. That was a big discussion yesterday. We talked about that in detail. We have to remember that because at times we tend to put--I'm just using Canada as an example--a Canadian brother. No such thing. A Cypria brother. No such thing. You are a brother AHEPAn who happens to live in a particular country, and we were going to be adamant about making sure that everybody understands.

We had also a brief discussion about what's going on in Australia. You brothers may not remember, Australia left the Order of AHEPA, our organization, back in 1938. They're technically and legally an independent organization to us, they just happened back in those days, they split off. The Australia AHEPA is combined with AHEPA - - Orders because of their own particular laws in Australia.

There are significant issues there to the extent there were major lawsuits, and it went all the way to their appellate court in Australia. This past June 30th essentially the Supreme Court there basically turned around and told them you better figure this out on your own. There are significant issues there. So Brother Anthony Kouzounis and I have no legal authority to get involved in Australia, but we're trying to know what's going on.

We're trying to keep tabs with what's going on. In the event something happens I'm going to try to bring them back into the fold. Not interfering, we're not telling them what to do. When I was Supreme President they tried to get me involved in the middle of their nonsense and I stayed away from it. The Daughters will show you how much trouble there was in Australia.

The Daughters have individual chapters in Australia. The Daughters of Penelope now have--the daughters here in the U.S. now have an Australian chapter. That's the extent of the difficulties that are going on in Australia. Australia is trying to infiltrate. They have a chapter in Greece and we're also concerned about them infiltrating into other parts of the world.

There's not much we can really do about it because, like I said, they're a legally independent organization so it's very difficult for us to tell them know. If you remember last year the Australian President came to the National Convention. We had some discussions privately. He kind of filled myself and Anthony in on the difficulties and the issues they face with this lawsuit and everything.

They have quite a bit of property there in Australia, but like I told them, not much we can do. You brothers are independent, we can't even send a Supreme Council there to help you. You brothers are on your own. If you want to talk to us you can talk to us. There's not much we can do. So brothers, that's an overview of the International Committee Meeting. It was a good meeting. Like I said, it was about two and a half hours. We had some good discussions.

That's my report, so I'll take any questions from the floor, if any. Brother Wynn?

MR. STORTON: - -. Wynn Storton, Chapter 528, - -. On the AHEPA branding, I heard a lot about Australia. They use exactly the same logo--

MR. ZACHARIADES: It's a little bit different.

MR. STORTON: Well, it's a little different, but the general public, it's the same. It's a little different, but they state on their website that they're international. They say that they have chapters in the United States.

MR. ZACHARIADES: They don't have any chapters in the United States.

MR. STORTON: I know they don't, but I'm just letting you know. They promote that they're worldwide, so it's something that I think legislation, that you guys should have them cease and desist or something, because if all the issues are--it's going to flow back, whether we have part of it or not.

MR. ZACHARIADES: We discussed this also. Back then in 1938 the AHEPA logo was not trademarked.

MR. STORTON: Right, yeah. They've been using it for so long--

MR. ZACHARIADES: [interposing] So it's hard to do anything as far as the logo goes. Like I said, it's a little bit different, I think it's got a bird and wings and something in the bottom of their emblem. But as far as that, there's not much we can do about it. That could not happen today.

MR. STORTON: I believe if we talked to the Canadian Presidents and let them know that they are part of Australia/Asia now, and not Australia, just Australia/Asia, but to not include the United States into their wording.

MR. ZACHARIADES: You brought it up to me and I'm going to discuss that with the Supreme Lodge so we're aware of what they're doing.

MR. STORTON: Yeah, that way we don't look like we're tied together. Because right now if someone goes to their website it looks like we're tied.

MR. ZACHARIADES: Right, yes. It's a good point. I'm going to bring it up to the incoming Supreme Lodge so they know exactly what's going on. Thank you. Appreciate that. Brothers, anything else? Okay, thank you very much. I hope you're enjoying the convention. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother Andy. We appreciate your report, and appreciate all the work that you and the committee are doing on the International Committee. At this time I'm going to call on Past Supreme Governor Phil Vogis to give us an update on the AHEPA Hospital Relief Committees work.

MR. VOGIS: Good morning, brothers. I want to take just a couple of minutes regarding this very, very important project that I've been involved with over the past five years. An appointment by the Supreme President on the AHEPA Hospital Relief Committee that is specifically geared to support the medical needs to the two hospitals in Greece, the AHEPA Hospital in Thessaloniki and the - - Hospital that has a wing that's known as the AHEPA wing.

These are two jewels that we have and we should be very proud because if you're tuned into any Greek TV station and they have coverage on medical issues, the AHEPA name comes right up, because everyone in Thessaloniki knows the AHEPA Hospital. I've had the pleasure of visiting these hospitals and working with the esteemed brother AHEPAns who are responsible for the existence of the these hospitals for the good name of the order of AHEPA.

It is our mission to support these two hospitals with medical supplies and medical equipment. There is a financial commitment that we have to receive an okay from National Headquarters - - transactions, once we find and locate all of the equipment or supplies. There's a lot of funding necessary to get these items to Greece, so it is very important, and I want you to understand that we can't take any action unless we have the approval from National.

The Supreme President, along with the Executive Director are the ones that coordinate this task. We've had the pleasure of sending equipment that these hospitals are currently using, hospital beds, medical equipment, equipment that have been used for operations, successful. Also AHEPA brothers who visit Greece that have a need for this medical issues, they have in those hospitals the right to go in and have medical surgeries or medical support.

We have had most recently several brothers here in the U.S. who have contacted me with the availability of medical equipment that we have sent to Greece, and I've worked with our committee to ensure that once these are inspected and approved to be shipped, because we do have international tariffs that we have to comply with, we then packaged all of the equipment and ship them to Greece, and we have our Supreme Governor who is responsible for the European transactions, along with the District Governor and the committee, the Hospital Committee that receives the equipment.

There is a process and we will stay the course of that to make sure that everything is being handled correctly. In touching up with some of the current shipments that we've made, I want to thank Brother Al Barich for receiving a specific hospital bed that we received from an AHEPA donor, a hospital bed that is designed for bed sores that cost some $60,000.

This was disassembled with the appropriate people from the factory and we packed it and shipped it along with miscellaneous accessories to Athens, and we want to thank the committee in Greece for working with us on this task.

I want to conclude with the following: you all have contacts out there, you all know medical institutions, you all have the access to doctors. Reach out to them. Let them know that AHEPA has a need. Most recently we received a call from Dayton, Ohio. The Vice Chairman, Dr. John Urse was in contact with a medical institution that had shut down, and we're looking at several million dollars of equipment potentially that could be sent to Greece.

It's a long process but it's worth exploring. I highly recommend to all of you to reach out to us, to this committee, and provide us the information in order for us to clear it through AHEPA National, through the Supreme President, and get the proper funding to get this equipment to Greece.

I want to thank the committee and I want to clearly say that if it's not for the committee's efforts, through Dr. Alfred Barrish, Brother Vacini [phonetic], Brother Nick Papadopoulos, and Brother George for making it possible. I want to thank you. Thank you for the time you have given me, brothers, and I wish you good deliberations. Any questions, we're here to give you the answers as we can do so. Thank you, Brother Al, for providing us that support.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother Phil. We appreciate your report and your work on this very important effort. At this time I'm going to call on Brother Joe Keane to give the report for the Hellenic Cultural Committee.

MR. JOE KEANE: Good morning, Brothers, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak to you. We are sponsoring a session this afternoon at 4:00. I have to read it to make sure I get the title correct. The Turkish irredentism and the Finlandization of the Eastern Mediterranean. That's quite a mouthful, and we have outstanding candidates who are going to be on the panel.

I would like to invite our moderator Lou Cassus [phonetic] to explain the title in a little bit, on what you can expect this afternoon. Lou is the Lieutenant Governor of the New York Chapter of the New York District. He's the President of the Delphi Chapter. He's moderated a number of these Hellenism sessions in New York. He's an educator in his own right. So we're fortunate to have him on the commission and the panel. Lou?

[Applause]

MR. LOU CASSUS: Thank you, Joe. So this afternoon at 4 p.m. we're going to have a really outstanding panel discussion. It's going to be unscripted. Two of our panelists flew in from Athens. One of them is Ambassador Gados [phonetic] who's sitting here today. Also we have Professor Kittroff [phonetic] who's a noted historian. He's a professor at Haverford.

We also have Professor Emeritus Marcus Templar [phonetic]. The discussion will be on really the issues that are taking places as it relates to Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean, and it'll focus on the geopolitics of the area. We will go into some of the issues that are taking place that affect all of us as it relates to things like rule of law and all the rest of that. In terms of some of the ideal we have regarding Hellenism, all the ideals that have been presented by the Hellenic Cultural Commission, but also in the mission statement of AHEPA itself.

The topics are going to be, and the issues discussed, are going to be things that affect many of us personally. Many of you are obviously involved in some of those issues, whether you're from the Hellenic Republic or you're from Cyprus. But our discussion will be basically a chatting among educators and people who are familiar with the area to talk about issues, not necessarily discuss who's right or wrong.

But the issue of Turkish irredentism and the Finlandization of the Eastern Mediterranean is an issue that affects the United States of America, and us as citizens of the United States, and certainly relates to our principles as AHEPA members.

I am going to have a disclaimer at the beginning of the discussion because I'm not necessarily going to be there as a moderator for AHEPA, let's say. So I'm also the President, just for those who don't know, of the East Mediterranean Business and Cultural Alliance, and that's how I will present myself as the moderator of the event.

Some of the issues that we discussed, in effect it is unscripted, maybe controversial. We will not take questions from the audience. It's going to be a discussion among people who have gotten together to discuss these particular issues.

We are going to talk about some of the issues, just so you know, the illegal occupation of the Cyprian lands, the escalating tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, the violation of international laws and agreements, the violating of Cyprian and Atlantic air and sea space, illegal action relating to Cyprus' exclusive economic zone, the weaponizing of refugees and migrants that's taking place right now, and has taken place, actually, for decades in the northern part of the Hellenic Republic.

Illegally invading other nations, for example, what's taking place in Syria right now relating to the Curds and the Turks. And some of the neo-Ottoman aspiration rhetoric that we hear constantly on the news. It should be an interesting discussion.

We're going to go, also, into a lot of the issues of who are the Turks, why are they operating that way, and I think it'll be very informative. I am going to after the panel discussion, I do have a program on - - FM which is the Eastern Mediterranean Business and Cultural Program. I will, in fact, have my panelists tonight, we're going to go live on--we're not in metropolitan area, per se, maybe for purposes of - - FM 91.5.

But we will be live on the internet and - - FM.org, and then we're going to be obviously in sound cloud so you can listen to that discussion any time. Thank you.

[Applause]

MALE VOICE 5: I have a question, please.

MR. STASIOS: Yes, Brother, please.

MALE VOICE 5: Mr. Chairman, I do not--and maybe I didn't hear--there were nothing about the latest agreement between Greece and Skopje for the name of - - to be included. Maybe it was too late to be included in this discussion there.

MR. KEANE: I've been asked by some people, including some of my panelists, to avoid the electrifying issue of Skopje. But since it's obviously unscripted, I'm not going to say that I'm not going to ask the question about Skopje. But we're going to take a different angle from it, it's not going to be for or against in terms of the name and all the rest of that.

Our discussion will be actually Turkey's influence on what's taking place or what has taken place with regards to Skopje, which is part of the discussion. It has to do with the irredentism aspect that we're talking about, and also the Finlandization aspect.

So again, it's going to be issues that are going to be in some cases, depending on what the questions are, but in my mind Skopje is going to jump out, I think. But we will discuss that, but again, in a different angle. Not for or against what's taking place right now in terms of the name and the agreement by the Hellenic Republic and other nations in the world, but we're going to take it from a different angle. We're going to take it from the Turkish angle and their influence on what took place as it related to the name.

My final comment, we don't want to overwhelm you with too much, but we do handle website, the HellenicCulturalCommission.com, and we would encourage you to visit it. Our intention going forward is to provide chapter Presidents with opportunities to sponsor Hellenism events, with speakers, with films, with books, with events. The most recent one is written up in our report in your delegate package.

If you read it, it's about Career Day. We had eight executives come in and talk about their career for the students in our community. It was an outstanding presentation, very well received, and the students really appreciated it and had an opportunity to discuss those opportunities and possibly end up with some internships and some mentoring from the community. One of the most valuable assets we have in AHEPA is the experience of our members. We need to share it with our students. So I'd ask you to look at those things.

Thank you very much. These are brochures I'll hand out on the table that Brother Kosnos put together. These are the profiles of the speakers this afternoon at 4:00. You might want to glance through it. They're in-depth knowledge is very formidable and we'll be answer any questions that come up regarding the topics we're going to be discussing.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much, Brother Joe Keane. Brother, one second, please.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: May I? Nick Papadopoulos, Past Supreme Governor for Region 10. Well, I have a problem. We have a problem in Greece and in Europe. We - - respect the policy of our organization that there's only one spokesman for the organization. It makes sense, it should be like this.

We also respect the statement that if we respect, we follow the decisions of local government, let's say in Greece right now, the Greek government agreed on something about Skopje, - - we also--the Greek government has discussion about the name of Skopje. So we have to follow that. That's nice, that's very good. However, I have to report, if I may, the feelings of some of my brothers in Greece and in Europe, and some of them are in this room. But they hesitate to say these things. I will say these things, I have no problem, because I speak out of love for AHEPA.

I'm a brother since 1986 and I have to tell you what some people think about this. They are very unhappy, the brothers in Greece and in Europe, especially in Europe, about some of these decisions that the Greek government has made. Of course you can say, well, that's their decision. The problem is the position that AHEPA takes. We're not asking AHEPA, nobody's asking AHEPA to go and fight against those decisions.

However, somehow when AHEPA visits Greece, and recently there were also - - so this is - -. I'm wondering if AHEPA is not taking a very passive position about this. Some people are saying in Greece, and I'm not saying this, please don't misunderstand me, they are saying it, I'm not saying it, that AHEPA operates as if, I'm sorry to say this, as a branch of the State Department of the United States.

Yesterday we heard from a Past Supreme President that we as an organization--he said something, we follow the policies of the United States and this and that. We are not an arm of the United States Government. We're an organization of Hellens, Greeks, Greek Americans, and Filolines [phonetic] around the world. So when I go back to Greece and Europe they're going to ask me what are they doing?

I'll tell them the AHEPA policy, what it is, of course, but I think the leadership of AHEPA should try to give a better explanation about these policies. Explain to the people, I think they're wise policies. I think AHEPA policies are wise policies, but on the other hand there are other people who don't think they are wise policies.

We cannot ignore, not just take the $45 dues and goodbye, see you next year. Their concerns have to be heard, have to be addressed. And I don't know, I hear there's no money in the budget, there's no money in the budget. We'll find the money, that's what we have leadership for, to find the money. And find the money, send people to Europe, send people to Greece, then maybe other people in the United States have the same views about the policies of AHEPA. And talk. We come to these conventions.

Very few people here in attendance. We have 15,000 members or 16,000 members. Only 262 have registered for the convention. Excuse me, for Christ's sake, this - - group. I think it's not enough to do it here. You have to out on the marketing guy. You have to get your message across, and your message is not getting across. We don't want to lose brothers. If somebody was to leave AHEPA, they can leave AHEPA, leave AHEPA for the right reason, not for the wrong reason, and the wrong reason is that they feel that they are not informed, they are left out.

Sorry for the long talk. I am representing--I'm telling you what people are saying in Europe. I may agree with some of them, I may not agree with some of them, but I agree with one thing. We're not doing enough communicating. We're not talking enough to the people. We're taking for granted. We're not to be taken for granted in Europe. You love the expansion in Europe, you love the expansion in Greece, that's great.

So put some resources in that area. Send your people to visit not once a year to take some pictures. Come - - come every three months or whatever it is and talk to us about those issues. Otherwise what are we going to do? We're going to leave AHEPA? No, we don't want to do that. We're AHEPA brothers. We're as much AHEPA as you are. Maybe in a different country, but we love AHEPA, we want to stay in AHEPA, and you have to show some interest in us. Talk to us. Thank you very much.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother Nick.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: Please come to the mic. Thank you, - -.

MR. ELIOT SEGLIVITCH: Eliot Seglivitch [phonetic] Chapter 51, District 6. I want to thank the committee for trying to educate us, because we all need some education. But what bothers me is 2.5 million from Skopje, play music and we dance to it. What they did, and I'm going to say this in Greek because I can say it better. It bothers me so much. There is no [Greek] or [Greek]. How are we going to deal with that? What about the Kosani [phonetic] - -? [Greek].

[Applause]

MR. PHILIP VOYETZOGLU: I'm going to give you my true name, which is Philip Voyetzoglu [phonetic] from Macedonia, from Varia [phonetic] from the great city of Alexander the Great. Those of you who have not traveled to Greece, take the time, go and see what we have. Treasures that no one else has them. And today to have renounced it, how can that be possible? We have future generations coming up that are going to accept this decision?

We sit here and we tremble when hear these words from these individuals, and I have to tell you I was very, very disappointed with the AHEPA Magazine to have put on its front cover a person or Prime Minister of a foreign nation or any politician in the front cover of our esteemed AHEPA Magazine. Brothers, let us not be victims, and I myself will never accept the decision by the Greek government, and I stand for it. We continue to have - -.

We will continue to resist that decision. And I hope the Skopjes understand that 75 years ago, and if you back through the history you'll see how these young kids from our territories were taken, including northern - - into Bulgaria, into Albania, into these Yugoslavian areas - - leave you with the following. And I think we all agree that when Tito [phonetic] split Yugoslavia, before splitting them they had a name which was Valdosta [phonetic]. That's the only name I will accept. Thank you so much.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, brother.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: Name and chapter, please.

MR. PAOLO NIARKOS: My name is Paolo Niarkos [phonetic], District Governor for Indiana. We all agree that this is what's been going on, but I don't know how this fits here with the Greek government signing the agreement. I write extensively, I'm part of the International Hellenic Association, academics - - and we're all against it. But I don't know what we can do about this.

This is - - voted for their government and the government did what they did. We're all against it, I don't disagree, it's pretty bad. But I don't know, we can argue about this for the next 24 hours here. So I don't know what we can do about it. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Good point. Brother?

MR. STATHIOS GIVELIDES: Stathios Givelides [phonetic], this is a District Governor of Greece #25 and coming from a very small city, it's the city Komotini. The total population of this city is approximately 60,000 people. Half of them belong to the Muslim minority. We face this increase, the Turkish - - who work - - embassy there.

So for that reason, most of the brothers, the reason they come in our chapter, which right now is getting more than 65 persons, comes because they believe AHEPA works, and I believe that, on the national issues, and believes that AHEPA is the only organization that protects this ethics of Hellenism. Most of the brothers right now, because I am just a month as Governor, why AHEPA doesn't do anything and doesn't declare the situation about - -?

And I explained to them some things that I believe, too. AHEPA works for this issue for how many years? And works differently, differently, quietly, and in cooperation with every Greek government no matter what, but we can because we're at a conference, a convention in Greece which participated more than 143 people. We decided then who we send here to the Supreme Lodge referendum.

Say that we're against all these issues, the language, the - - language, et cetera, et cetera. So why we don't make a referendum too from here about this issue to say that we're against the language, et cetera, et cetera. Because otherwise we have to answer something to our brothers. Answer something officially for our brothers. We take position from our positions, but we don’t have official answers. What we do and what we're going to do. Thank you very much.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, - -. We appreciate your--

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: --passion. Thank you very much. Name and chapter.

MR. GEORGE ANDREONOPOULOS: George Andreonopoulos [phonetic], Chapter #2, - - District 3. There is no question that the sentiment in this room from all speakers is in agreement with the fact that the issue of Macedonian issue of Skopje or whatever we're going to call it, is in agreement to the fact that this agreement that was signed last month is not going along with the sentiment of the majority of the population. - - of course the government, the present government agrees to this issue.

The problem I see with AHEPA, I'm trying to reconcile the feedback that I received from yesterday's meeting today. For example, in the report of Hellenic Commission, Cyprus and Hellenic Committee, was given by Brother Andrew Coffin [phonetic] and I tried to ask a question about the agreement that we signed. I was approached to the fact that I cannot ask the question. Now today it's a different room, it seems like it's a different room. And it sounds to me that there is a mixed message from the leadership of AHEPA. This is what - - thought.

I think it's a breakdown in communication of the AHEPA leadership due to the fact that - - a lot of steps in order to address these issues. That was made clear yesterday in the Cyprus and Hellenic - - Committee where there is action - -. However, this action was not communicated to the majority of the AHEPAn brothers.

I think that might give an answer to why we all complain why AHEPA is not doing anything - -. But - - AHEPA - - without communicating their activity. I think this needs to be addressed in terms of how to give an answer to all the speakers. They reflect the fact that the agreement that was signed, as far as the Macedonian issue, is not an agreement that the majority of the Greek population goes along.

So I bring this point to see whether--where I see the problem is, whether AHEPA can address this lack of communication between the - - activities and what the brothers perceive in the chapters. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: Yes, I'm now going to call on Past Supreme President. Did you want to…? Okay, excuse me just one moment.

MR. BATOS: Michael Batos, Chapter 37, Syracuse, New York. I'm honored to be here with this company. I have the - - from Past Supreme President - - Brother Socoriavitch [phonetic], and we then had a Hellenic Caucus in Washington, D.C. It's a very delicate matter. I was born in Greece. I came old enough after I finished all my schooling in Greece. So I'm not saying that I'm the most Greek in this room, but I'm very, very Greek. All my brothers and sisters are also there. I am crying inside.

I'm torn inside when I hear what's happening with the name Cyprus. If the Cyprus issue of Macedonia, I like to say Ma-ke-donia [phonetic] because Ma-se-donia [phonetic] is not Greek. So I like to have a K there. I think we should declare a change, Makedonia, when we talk instead of saying Macedonia. And for - - reason. I think the Hellenic Caucus can handle these issues. If we tried to handle it as an AHEPAn, it can backfire on us because we live in different countries with different laws.

And that's why we need to grow the Hellenic Caucus. There are groups here that have strong caucuses of their own. Take the Israeli, take other countries, not to mention other countries. They're much stronger than we are, so the only thing we can do if we grow the Hellenic Caucus, through them we can influence those decisions, because they can handle international issues.

This organization could get hurt more by announcing that we're in favor of this, or in favor or against that. And also we live in democratic countries. Greece is a democratic country. Maybe not as democratic as us now, but at least we recognize it as a democracy and we have to respect that. But by no means - - the crying and the sadness of everybody here, and I'm with you, too. I don't think anybody will object. But that's my belief how to handle that.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much, Brother.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: We'll take one more comment at this point and then we'll need for the interest of the reports to be made, we'll need to move on.

MR. LOUIS KATSOS: In that regard, what was just indicated right now, I'd like to--

MR. STASIOS: [interposing] Please state the name and Chapter.

MR. KATSOS: Yes, Louis Katsos [phonetic], President, Delphi 25, Lieutenant Governor, District 6. In reference to what was just discussed a second ago, here's an email from Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, the Founder of the Hellenic Caucus, which is basically what you were talking about.

"I offer my warmest regards, best wishes, and congratulations to the - - Katsos and the distinguished panel assembled, and the Hellenic Cultural Commission on the occasion of their very significant panel discussion entitled "Turkish Irredentism and the Finlandization of the Eastern Mediterranean."

The topic of this particular panel discussion if of primary importance to peace and security in the region, and represents U.S. interests. It is shameful that we find ourselves on the 44th black commemoration of Turkey's military invasion of Cyprus, still considering Turkey's illegal, shameful action.

Ironically, as we did then, we are now again discussing a military arms embargo and economic sanctions on Turkey in the U.S. Congress. Our shared Hellenic and American values of democracy, human rights, and respect for the rule of law must inform our policies, deeds, and actions.

Please contact my office if I could be of assistance to you and your members of the community. I look forward to working with you in the Hellenic Congressional Caucus on these serious concerns for freedom-loving people, and for the future of our great democracy."

I think what was indicated earlier, and we have to take this basic approach, is that we do have a Hellenic Caucus in Congress. Turkey, in fact, over the last few years, has given over $100 million, actually, to their particular causes. They're trying to imply that they are for democracy and for these other issues.

I think we have to be informed and I think that the principles of AHEPA, which have to do with the Octet of Hellenism and all the rest of that, are actually the discussion of what we're talking about right now.

Whether it has to do with the naming issue of the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia or all these other issues, yes, the Hellenic government made a decision a long time ago--a long time ago--about the name, and it had to do with certain influences that took place from other parts and other parties, including the United States, we have to state that, including the EU, and related in many degrees to the economic situation that they currently face. These are not great things.

This is not saying that AHEPA--because I heard negative things about AHEPA and I don't particularly care for them, by the way, hearing these things, or what are people thinking about AHEPA. AHEPA is with you, and AHEPA is with the chapters of this organization.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother. Yes.

[Applause]

DR. ALFRED BARICH: To wrap things up a little bit from the leadership perspective--can you hear me?

[Crosstalk]

MR. STASIOS: Name and number of the chapter, please.

DR. BARICH: I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Alfred Barich, Supreme Governor, Region 10, District 25 HGA3. Just to wrap things up and to explain a little bit further, because I believe we're all on the same page concerning the sentiments about this specific issue, so I won't elaborate on this. I just want to touch on some comments that were made concerning the leadership.

Past Supreme President Dan Dusak [phonetic] previously mentioned something that the Supreme Lodge has the whole pie. The chapters are living the situation and they have a piece of that pie.

So we need to have a proper communication back and forth, but it's not that the leadership has been inactive, they've been functioning on a different level. This is something that I've been receiving all the time and discussing. Now, I do agree, though, that the fact that the strength of AHEPA is mainly used for philanthropy, but this is a time, a historical time both for Greece and for Cyprus, that this power that our order has needs to be focused more on these historical events.

Now, just to assuage the concern of people, I was in contact with the European Commissioner responsible for international affairs, and I'm saying this because everybody is concerned, the position of the Commissioner was very clear on the fact that until this agreement that was signed, until all the articles that were agreed upon by both sides have been fulfilled, as the European Union is concerned, the name will continue to be Fyrom.

This is something that I believe that our Congress should look into, and the person who's responsible now, I don't know if it's Ileana Reece [phonetic] still or somebody else, they should do something similar. I think AHEPA should come out and say the position of the European Union is that until these articles have been fulfilled, which they will not be fulfilled.

I think we all understand how the functions are, because politics is posturing. So there is a very, very nil chance that on both sides these articles will be fulfilled. So if our Congress can come up, and if AHEPA can pressure our Congress to come out with a similar position, I think the problem is basically solved. What bothers us more is the fact that that Greek government did what it did. Now, there may be other agreements as we know well, what we see is the tip of the iceberg always in politics.

But I think it would be very good for AHEPA to pressure our Congress and the Committee on International Affairs and our new Supreme President, whomever he may be, should take this on as a major first priority to get a similar decision from Congress. So therefore we're basically tabling the decision. Thank you very much.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much, Brother.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: At this time I'm going to call on our brother that's visiting from Greece, the very Reverend Ignacios Stavropoulos [phonetic], to give us a brief update, please. And at last year's Supreme Convention we addressed the monastery there in Greece and the support that would be given, so he's just updating us.

FATHER STAVRAPOULOS: Good morning, everybody. I would ask for your patience for my English. I will try to express my thoughts. My name is Ignacios Stavropoulos, born in New York, 1958, but I lived all my life in Greece. We have a chapter in Nafpaktos 18, Chapter 18, Lepanto 1951, the historical date of Lepanto, Battle of Lepanto.

And I traveled here from Greece not to complain but to ask--to bring some information from Greece here, and to ask your support, your prayers. Not your money. A brother told me, Father, don't ask for money, but ask for support. So what happened in Nafpaktos area, I live in a monastery, the - - Monastery.

40 years ago, this monastery established in 1980, and we do the mostly social program we do there is working with families and with youth camps. Our chapter works for philanthropy, supports those programs, but now I'm turning not to political, let's say, explanation, but what happened within the last 10 years, the whole taxation system returns to maybe Communist-style. I don't know how to explain it. I have nothing to talk about this government now, because this happened in the last 10 years.

The whole taxation system put on all the bills, gas, telephone bills, and electricity; taxes, more and more and more and more. What happened with this? All small organizations, as we are, we have to pay taxes more and more and more when we're - - we can some 1,000 Euro electricity we pay more than 2,500 Euros. Because on the bill every second month appears a new tax.

I'm not able to count and to transform and to inform. Maybe you know this. I hope my English is understandable because I don't use English. If there is any problem I can turn immediately to the Greek language. It's okay. So what happened now? We have in our chapter the idea to protect, let's say, the cost we have, because our monastery pays all the expenses for the camp. We are not able through families to cover.

Until now, today, for example, we have 300 - - boys and girls in our camp, July and August. We cut out about 25 girls, and I don't know until now how many boys, because until now when we are here, the program will finish - - of August, until the end of August, because of no more money. This year we pay the electricity for last year. So there is only one way to cut this, and what this is, is this solar program.

We have announced it from last year as a national AHEPA project - -. I came here because we are not able to proceed with the right way, and I know as the Secretary of the chapter, I don't know how to do this. I was happy yesterday when I saw the program with the service dogs is successful, and also I was happy because so many participants support this program. I am alone. No one, but I have all of you to support the program, not me.

My expenses to travel here was covered by my brother John Stavros from New York, and by another brother who is very sick now, and I need to ask your prayers, Pete Katkouris [phonetic] from Charlotte, he paid the ticket. And I am here to ask your support and, please, at least I ask this program we announced from last year as a national AHEPA program, at least to be on our website, AHEPA website. There is no--no one talks about this.

Second, I kindly ask you, and I'll finish with this, from your chapters, from all delegators as persons from - - I don't know from where, from God, to support this, and also to send some money. Thank you very much.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Father.

[Applause]

MR. LARRY OLJAK: Larry Oljak [phonetic] of Chapter 277, North Carolina. I'd like to thank Father Ignacios for so clearly explaining the need for solar power, and being from North Carolina I can assure the brothers that North Carolina is the 17th state in the nation with solar power and wind power, and I'd certainly urge that we support the project that Father Ignacios has told us about. So thank you very much. I think we'll be doing very nicely to get the Lord's natural economy and power into the hands of a place that gives us spiritual power. Thank you.

FATHER STAVROPOULOS: Thank you. Thank you, Brother.

MR. DEMETRIOS KIRKILES: If I may address the Chair. Hello? I kind of hijacked the microphone. Demetrios Kirkiles, Supreme Counselor.

I was President, Vice Chair, when this project was approved, and I wish to compliment the Father for completing 50% of the project so far. It's to AHEPA's credit that our name is associated with this project, and I think it behooves us to continue our efforts to encourage support for this project, because it's timely, it's something we can get our name out, and it shows that we are forward-thinking, because AHEPA must keep moving forward. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. STAVROPOULOS: Thank you very much.

MR. OSTASIOS KEVALIDES: Ostasios Kevalides [phonetic], District Governor of District 25, Greece. I totally support this project. Somehow this monastery, something - - later on started thinking that they need money, too. You know why that happened? Because they do very good work over there.

MR. STAVROPOULOS: Thank you.

MR. KEVALIDES: Everyone I ask to visit Nafpaktos and to visit this monastery. This monastery helps to work and train many, many kids over there, gives very good ethics and values of the society, and we decided to back it in a national project because we want to help this monastery. Let's help them to complete this project, too. They work 24 hours and you have to visit it, it's a very nice place, a very quiet place.

Usually we make our first District Lodge meeting, we started from this monastery because of the confessions we did this year. So congratulations, and we support it totally from Greece this project.

[Applause]

MR. STAVROPOULOS: Thank you. Allow me please to say a word more. There is a problem behind - - I have licensed three years bureaucracy in Greece to take this problem from the government. I don't like to lose the license. The projects proceed. Thank you.

MR. CONSTANTINE MIKALOPOULOS: Brother Ignacios, my name is Constantine Mikalopoulos [phonetic], District 16, Chapter 29, Houston, Texas. I got a comment to add. Basically what you're trying to say is that we should increase our stewardship percentages here in the USA, and what I mean by stewardship is when you give, giving comes from within the heart itself, because the more you give, the more you will be rewarded in Jesus' kingdom.

Giving is very, very important. Even St. Nicholas of Myra gave to the poor children in Asia Minor during the 2nd Century of the Church, like around 300, during the same time as Emperor Constantine. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. BARICH: Alfred Barich, Supreme Governor, Region 10, District 25, HA3, - - Chapter. I just want to say that I do believe it would be very significant if at some point our leadership could visit the monastery, but whether that happens or not, all these pamphlets you all see on your tables have the telephones.

So any of you, whether you're going together with the leadership on a trip to Greece, or as individuals, I beckon you to call Father Ignacios, and I'm sure he would love to have you visit the monastery, stay there, so that not only the leadership but also the membership can understand things that are being done.

I think that's very important to have - -. So with your permission, Father Ignacios, I think that it's important. You all take one of these pamphlets, keep the phones. Whenever you're in Greece, just give them a call. You will be amazed at the things that you'll see. Thank you.

FATHER STAVROPOULOS: Thank you very much.

[Applause]

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Nick Papadopoulos, Past Supreme Governor, Region 10, Past District Governor in Greece. I was the Governor when the chapter was established in Nafpaktos, and what attracted me, this is a - - monastery for Greece, it's not--they have a radio station, they have a lot of these summer camping programs for boys, girls, et cetera. Then they organized the AHEPA beach volley tourney in Nafpaktos was just finished.

Then Father Ignacios, who is the Secretary of the chapter, he talked to us about this project, and the money they save from the electricity, it will go for all these philanthropic work they are doing. The last thing is, we had a convention, an AHEPA convention in 2012 in Nafpaktos, and people came there, and we had so much food. Then everybody said there's monks, eat well. We ate very well.

So I support the project, not because I'm from Greece and he's from Greece, it's a really good project, and I agree with Brother Barich, Supreme Governor Brother Barich, that you should visit this place, and you can stay in the monastery at the very low rate of like 10 Euros a day, or something like this. A special rate.

FATHER STAVRAPOULOS: For free.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: For free. Stay for free. Okay, I hope everybody contributes. I've contributed. I'll contribute again, and I hope every brother here gives some money [crosstalk] put some money out. Thank you.

FATHER STAVRAPOULOS: Thank you very much.

[Applause]

MR. CHRIS DIAMANTOUKOS: Chris Diamantoukos, Camden Chapter 69. Father Ignacios, you mentioned earlier about the change in taxes in Greece. I'm not sure if you're aware, but the tax structure changed also here in the United States. One thing that I think is very important to me and others is that when we make donations, that we don't run into any problems--how should I say it--obstacles--in deducting those donations on our tax returns.

So I urge you and others, and other important causes to make sure that that vehicle exists. I'm not an expert in these things, but I can tell you I don't want to send money to a bank account, but if I see something to say, hey, this is tax deductible, this, that, and the other thing, I support those things. So just something not just for your effort, but for others, I think it's very, very important.

FATHER STAVRAPOULOS: We just - - I didn't want to be long talking. Thank you for the question, it was very useful. We just have now Metamorphosis Hands of Hope and recognize tax deductible, any donation.

Who wants to donate, contact me by email, I will inform you direct with a - -. It's a - - law firm in New York, and Metamorphosis Hands of Hope recognized by the State, and any donation is recognized. Thank you for the question. It was my mistake of--thank you. Thank you, Brother. Thank you, and you are all invited. We have our - - five and six - - Metamorphosis Satirus [phonetic]. If anyone is in Greece, you are invited, and good fish, also.

MR. DIAMANTOUKOS: Thank you, Father.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Father.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: Is Brother Paul Neal [phonetic] in the hall? Okay. At this time if they're ready we'll call on the Legislative Committee. Did we get our audio visual worked out?

MR. STAVROS VENEKOS: Good morning, brothers. Stavros Venekos [phonetic], PDG, Chapter 72, Trenton, New Jersey, and I was appointed Chair for the Convention Legislative Committee. I was also the Chair for the Standing Legislative Committee throughout the year. It was comprised of myself, the Vice Chairman Demi Francos [phonetic], Past Supreme President John Grosinides [phonetic], Past District Governor Matt Kochivar [phonetic], and Anthony Horates [phonetic] and James Langendorf [phonetic].

Proposals were submitted according to Article 25 of the Constitution and by-laws during the year. The proper format, substance, timely. We heard the proposals, make recommendations, and those in turn are submitted to the Convention Legislative Committee for discussion and action. We met yesterday as the Convention Legislative Committee, over 20 brothers, to review and discuss the proposals.

The proposals for this body were also posted yesterday. They're along the corner, there's three proposals that we'll be discussing today for the brothers' approval. Also I'd like to thank all the brothers that came yesterday and thanking them for their service.

Even if we had the technical working, the font's kind of small anyhow, so maybe we're better this way. Proposal #1 was submitted by Sofia, the Bulgaria Chapter 603, May 17, 2018, certified by Minos Anastaciades [phonetic], Chapter Secretary, A603. The brief explanation is to amend the AHEPA Constitution to allow the Supreme Convention delegates from the chapters in Region 10 to elect the Supreme Governor from that region.

The current language has the Supreme Governor being appointed by the Supreme President with approval by the Lodge. The current proposed change to Article 15, Section A of the Constitution is as follows. I'll read the full language so it's in context.

"The Supreme Lodge of this Order shall be comprised of the following Supreme Officers: Supreme President, Supreme Vice President, who shall be a citizen of the United States; Canadian President, who will be a citizen of Canada; Supreme Secretary, Supreme Treasurer, Supreme Counselor, Supreme Athletic Director."

And here's where the change comes in.

"And nine Supreme Regional Governors, eight who shall be citizens of the United States, and the ninth Supreme Regional Governor who shall be a citizen or legal resident of a country within Region 10." That's the proposed language. It was approved by the Convention Legislative Committee, and that's before the brothers now. So I can take any questions, comments.

[Crosstalk]

MR. NIARKOS: Paolo Niarkos, Indiana. It's hard to hear or see this. Can we put this on the board to read to follow the discussion?

MR. VENEKOS: That's what I've been trying for the last half-hour.

MR. NIARKOS: By the time you started, I don't know where it started or where we're headed with that.

MR. VENEKOS: Well, the proposals are on the wall, like I just said, and like I just said, for the last half-hour we've been trying to put it on the laptop, and two different laptops, the HDMI cord is not working. I can give you the proposal up here and I'll read it again. I have one copy, but it's posted on the wall. That's the best I can do.

MR. STASIOS: I'm sorry, Brothers. We had some unforeseen audio visual problems where it wasn't able to display it on the screen, but as the brother said, it's posted here on this wall. You can see those two or three sheets of paper that are down here on the wall.

MR. VENEKOS: And it's been posted since yesterday - -.

MR. DIAMANTOUKOS: I might be able to help you on that. Chris Diamantoukos, Camden Chapter 69. Real quick, Brother, - -, you mentioned the President and the Vice President, excuse me, Supreme President, Supreme Vice President, must be citizens of the United States. Does it also carry forward to Secretary, Treasurer, and--

MR. VENEKOS: [interposing] That wasn't presented. The only change to this constitutional change that was before the brothers deals with the Supreme Governors. I just read the whole language of the provision so it wasn't out of context. That's the only thing that's before the brothers here, is modifying the Supreme Governor [crosstalk] and for the election of the Region 10 Governor, to have him be elected versus being appointed, and that was submitted by the Sofia Chapter.

MR. DIAMANTOUKOS: So am I interpreting correctly, as it stands now the Constitution does not have a requirement?

MR. VENEKOS: I'm not at a point to enter a legal ruling. I would defer to the Supreme Counselor on any advisory - - if you want to go there.

MR. DIAMANTOUKOS: Thank you.

MR. VENEKOS: This is the proposal that's been submitted, and that’s before the brothers here for discussion and any action.

MR. DIAMANTOUKOS: Thank you. I'll look it up myself. Thank you.

MR. VENEKOS: Any other comments, discussion - -?

MR. STASIOS: If there are no other questions or comments we'll move to the second item.

[Crosstalk]

MR. STASIOS: Okay, just for a point of information and so the brothers understand the procedure, I'm going to defer to the brother here to tell us.

MR. VENEKOS: I'll defer to the Supreme Counselor to tell me when I'm in error, just like my wife whenever I'm wrong. At this time I went through the Standing Legislative Committee to the Convention Legislative Committee. It passed there. It's before the brothers here. It has to pass here by a majority vote to be put on the ballot.

Once it comes to the ballot, since this is a change to the Constitution, it will require a two-thirds vote, so that's the process we're at now. But we don’t get to the two-thirds vote on the ballot until we get past the floor.

[Crosstalk]

MR. KOUZOUNIS: Brother Chairman, I rise to put in the motion to approve this suggestion by the report by the Strategic Legislative Committee for this proposal to allow the brothers in Region 10, I think as it reads in legalese, please excuse me, but from being an appointed position to be an elected position by the brothers in Region 10. I move to approve that motion.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. There's been a motion on the floor to approve the--

MR. KOUZOUNIS: [interposing] I didn't identify myself, but Anthony Kouzounis, past Supreme President, District 16, Chapter 29.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you for the record. We need a second. Please, I'm sorry, please go to the mic so it's recorded.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Nick Papadopoulos, Past Supreme Governor. If you want to second it, you second it, then I'll make some comments. Please, sir.

MR. FRANK FORDIS: Frank Fordis, Athens Chapter 24, Boston, District 8. I second the motion. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much. Any other discussion? Please.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Okay, Nick Papadopoulos, Past Supreme Governor, Region 10. Region 10 is a new development about five years ago, but Greece and Cyprus, who are members - - exist as - - since the year 2000 for Greece. You approved it at the New Orleans Convention in Cyprus. - -. Now the Region 10, the - - they're - - started opening by me in 2012. '13, '14, '15, now we have 10 chapters in Europe.

So when you talk about electing the Supreme Governor for Region 10, you're not just talking about Europe, you're talking about Greece, you're talking about Greece, you're talking about Cyprus, you're talking about an entity that exists for many years, as well as the chapters in Europe. Question is, are they ready to be elected? Well, I've been there for so many years, yes, I think they are ready to be elected.

There are a lot of good people there, like in this country, in these chapters, and there are some people there are not so good, but that's okay, that's life, everybody's not perfect. They are brothers. The people from Greece, they are there from the year 2000, and some members here from the year 2000. In Cyprus we have the District Governor from Cyprus, Falos Patirus [phonetic] and in Europe there is at least some of them six, seven, eight years. Some of them from Europe used to be member of chapters in Greece. So these people are ready.

Yes, it's a natural progression, and the question, why wasn't it made an elected position from the beginning? Well, they had thought about it. That's the past. Let's just forget about the past and let's think about the present and about the future. Right now we have 150 members in Europe, the 628. There's 50 members in the 627 in Cyprus. There's 600 members in District 25, that's Greece. You're talking about a lot of brothers and a lot of years of AHEPA experience. So obviously I wholly support and I hope that you will consider it favorably to pass this resolution. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much, Brother Nick.

[Applause]

MR. STASIOS: I've been informed as a point of parliamentary procedure because this came from a standing committee that it didn't need to be seconded from the floor, so just for the record.

[Crosstalk]

MR. KIRKILES: One moment, please. Mr. Chairman.

MR. STASIOS: Yes.

MR. KIRKILES: I proudly rise thank Brother Nick and Brother Alfred Barich, who have acted as the first two Supreme Governors from Region 10 during the enormous growth of that region. I think it's worthy of the brothers to note this proposal comes not from Greece, not from Cyprus, but from our chapter in Bulgaria. We have grown, and it's to their credit that they have grown so well and so responsibly. There's always going to be issues. We're Greeks, we always have issues.

So I think brothers take note of what has happened, who has happened, and I just personally want to thank these two brothers for all the enormous work they've done. I've enjoyed serving on the Lodge with them over the years, and the help they've given me personally when I've done things like the Marathon Team in Greece, where they've stood up and helped us out. So thank you very much, and thank you, my brothers.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother Demetry. Yes?

MR. GIVELIDES: I'm Stathios Givelides, District Governor from Greece. I totally supported and I agree with all the brothers that speak before me, and I'm putting in your mind other things.

More people are going, more brothers are going to come from Europe right now. The case that we're going to be elected, more people they like to come here. This is good for AHEPA, because the people right now who want especially to involve in AHEPA situations, so think about that in this - - 11 people. I think after that we're going to be more than 25 or 30. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, brother. Yes?

[Applause]

MR. PETER CERIS: My name is Peter Ceris [phonetic], District 20, Chapter 454. Is the Supreme Governor of District 10 going to be elected here at the Supreme Convention, as the rest of our Supreme--

MR. STASIOS: [interposing] If it passes here and it passes on the ballot it would be effective the following year, if I understand correctly.

[Crosstalk]

MR. STASIOS: So just for clarification, if it passes here on the floor and passes on the--if it passes here on the floor and passes on the ballot then it'll be effective next year. So the motion has been presented from the standing committee. I'll ask for a voice vote at this time. All those in favor, please say "aye."

MANY: Aye.

MR. STASIOS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Let it be recorded it passed unanimously.

MR. VENEKOS: The technical issues have been resolved. Before we get to Proposal 2, if anybody wants to come by afterwards, review the exact language, we have some copies, but they're also on the board.

Proposal 2 was submitted by Nicholas Dixie, District 16. It was actually submitted last year, June 24, 2017, but because it didn't abide by Article 25 of the constitutional by-laws it was ruled untimely last year, that's why it's being heard today. The explanation is this would award up to a four-year complimentary membership to students and foster a new generation of members.

There is no current language in the by-laws as to this provision, but it would be in Article 3, Section D, and the proposed language that's been submitted is: "National Scholarship recipients, every person who receives a National Scholarship shall be awarded for four years or until graduation, whichever comes first, a complimentary membership in the Order of the Sons of Pericles or the Maids of Athena in accordance with the rules and regulations establishing the qualified candidates for membership in the Constitution and by-laws of the Order of AHEPA.

If a subsequent National Scholarship is awarded, the four years of complimentary membership shall commence and end with the receipt of the first scholarship award." That was presented and passed by the Standing Legislative Committee to be submitted to the Convention Legislative Committee, but with no recommendation, and passed by the Convention Legislative Committee yesterday as Proposal 2.

MR. STASIOS: So Proposal 2 has been brought forward by the Standing Committee, it doesn't need a second. Is there any discussion or questions?

MR. VENEKOS: As this is a by-law change, again, it'll need a majority vote by this body, but if it does go to the ballot it will require a simple majority vote, another two-thirds vote since it's a by-law change.

MR. TED REEDIS: Ted Reedis [phonetic], Liberty Chapter 532 in Clifton, New Jersey. So it says a complimentary membership to the Sons of Pericles, but they're at the age of dual membership. Why do they not also have a complimentary membership to the Order of AHEPA? Was that considered?

MR. VENEKOS: This was the proposal as submitted by District 16, but also I'd like to defer to the Supreme Counselor. I thought you were going to comment - -.

MR. SUPREME COUNSELOR: The brother is correct in saying that this does only address the Sons of Pericles, however, the dual membership issue is in a separate part of the Constitution and is addressed there. So once they get the--if they're 18, then they get the dual membership.

You may have a--sorry--the issue of dual membership is addressed in a separate part of the Constitution. If a scholarship recipient is 17 he only gets Sons of Pericles. Once his complimentary membership encompasses his age of 18, then he becomes a dual member, pursuant to the other provision of the Constitution. It's good to keep it separate because it keeps it clarified.

You may have a genius who's 14 years old and goes to college; he can't be a dual member automatically, so that's why we keep it separate. For those who are curious about why Maids of Athena, the Maids of Athena are actually provided in the AHEPA Constitution and by-laws. It's an odd piece of trivia, but an AHEPA chapter can sponsor a Maids of Athena chapter.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much, Supreme Counselor. Yes, Brother?

MR. LOUIS ATSAVES: I'm sorry, I just wanted to--good morning, Mr. Chairman. Louis Atsaves, North Shore Chapter 94 and current Supreme Athletic Director. If this includes the National Scholarships awarded by athletics annually, I would be wildly in favor of this proposal. I believe from the language, which I quickly read off that board it does, but I just want to confirm that it does include the annual 8-10 scholarships that we award.

MR. KIRKILES: If I may, Mr. Chairman? Demetrios Kirkiles, Chapter 392, District 2, current serving Supreme Counselor. My observation of that it says AHEPA National Scholarship, period. So if it's--

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MALE VOICE 1: …AHEPA National Scholarship, it doesn't differentiate between whether it's an academic scholarship or an athletic scholarship and would encompass the athletics. And that's my opinion on the record at this Supreme Convention.

MALE VOICE 2: Thank you. With that in mind then, I would strongly support the passage of not only this resolution but its election on the ballot on Friday or Thursday or whenever we have elections. Thank you very much.

MR. DEMETRIOS C. KIRKILES: May I, Mr. Chairman, may I put my $0.02 in?

MR. JIM STASIOS: Yes sir, a little closer to the mic, just…

MR. KIRKILES: Oh, I apologize. Again, Demetrios Kirkiles, current serving Supreme Counselor. I stand in favor of this. It is something new; it's innovative. Other organizations have been doing this, and it behooves us to do the same thing. It would probably cost us somewhere around $50 at most to mail out an AHEPA Magazine or something to these people. So it's forward-thinking, it's generating potential future members, and why not? It's time we do something a little bit different to get a different result. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. Yes, brother.

MR. TED VITTAS: Yeah again, Ted Vittas, chapter 532. So as a Sons advisor for ten years, I strongly support this legislation. We tried to do this in our district, but raising the funds to pay their dues is a challenge with all the other things that we have to raise money for. We really weren't able to do it successfully. So starting from the top down and doing this across the board in every district, I think it's a win-win for our whole organization.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you brother. Any other questions or comments?

MALE VOICE 3: I have one final comment. During our deliberations, we were asked why didn't we extend it to the districts or the chapters. The simple answer is that's not the proposal before us. However, if any of the enlightened brothers present have a desire to have their district scholarships on the same level, look, there's the language. Just change the word national to district, and submit the proposal this year to the standing committee. You can do it via your chapter or your district lodge. Just saying, not telling you what to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much. Any other questions or comments regarding this? Yes? Okay, hearing and seeing none, we'll ask for a voice vote on the proposal. All those in favor say aye.

[Ayes heard]

MR. STASIOS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, it carries unanimously.

MALE VOICE 1: And the last proposal, it's actually not amending, it's actually not a change to the constitution. It's not a change to the constitution or bylaws. It actually was submitted by the national board of trustees based upon the recommendation by the national board of auditors in regards to the declaration of trust of the AHEPA's national trust fund. The explanation, this modifies section 3B of the Declaration of Trust, specifically adopting the recommendation of the board of auditors adjusting the investment ratio, which is currently 55%, to up to 70%.

The reason it's coming before the brothers here is this trust agreement, which I think is from 2004, authorizing these actions has a specific section, section 2, that pertains that if there's going to be any termination, adjustment, changes to this trust agreement, it has to be submitted to this body, this floor, and be approved by a two-thirds vote passage, or actually a two-thirds vote of the registered delegates for passage. The exact language, thank you, is basically changing section B, keeping it identical, but just making the change of not more than 55% to changing it to not more than 70%. Actually submitted by the national board of trustees, sorry, not - -. Any questions?

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. Any questions on the third proposal.

MALE VOICE 2: Call the question.

MR. STASIOS: Call the question. All those in favor of the motion.

[Ayes heard]

MR. STASIOS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Unanimously pass, thank you.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: Brothers, I'd like to apologize for the technical issues. Also, I think I went to sleep around 4:35 because of the poker game, and I did better than my father, Brother Lee Millas. Oh, I have to repeat this. I went to sleep around 4:35 - - playing in the AHEPA poker tournament, and I beat my father. I got past Lee, and I got past Karacha [phonetic] and a couple of other brothers.

MALE VOICE 4: Yeah, but you're a lousy player.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: Well I took fourth place. It's better to be lucky than good anyhow.

MR. STASIOS: I also participated in that poker tournament, but I had to go to bed earlier, sorry. We need to turn up the mic a little. Test again. I'm going to call again to see if Brother Paul Neal is in the hall, Brother Paul Neal. We'll be calling on him later. We were notified by the chairman of the AHEPA Educational Foundation that he at the last minute, he wasn't going to be able to attend the convention and brother Paul Neal is going to be filling that role and giving the report for the educational foundation. So we ask your indulgence for just a couple of minutes. We'll next be bringing on the Sons of Pericles national advisor brother Sandy Papadopoulos, but I know he's with that group, and so he should be here very, very shortly. Yeah, I understand. Maybe we could get someone from the hotel that can check on that. Maybe the AV people can come and assist us. Test, test, test. Okay, brothers. At this time, I'm calling on Brother Sandy Papadopoulos, the national advisor to the Sons of Pericles to give his report. We thank him for his time, dedication, and effort to assist with this junior order.

MR. SANDY J. PAPADOPOULOS: Good morning. Everybody can see me? Everybody's good? My name is Sandy Papadopoulos. Can you hear me above the mic or no?

[Crosstalk]

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: My name is Sandy Papadopoulos. I'm from the Mother Lodge chapter number one in Atlanta, Georgia. I am the national Sons advisor, and I'm very, very proud to be that. As you can read probably in the in the yearbook, the Sons had a very good year. Very proud to say that they doubled their membership. They started about 13 new chapters across the United States and Canada, and in Greece. And overall they did exactly what was expected of them to do. As our national project this year, Brother Supreme President had basically urged us to commit to the junior auxiliaries, and I think that we did a decent job of that. I think we could have done better with the help of some of the Supreme Lodge Officers, namely George Horiates, who pretty much started district five over again, so thank you for that George.

And a few others in key areas, Chicago is back and running, and even Canada, I mean Winnipeg has a chapter again. We need as Sons and as a past, I'm standing here in front of you, as a past Supreme President of the Sons of Pericles. And I'm very proud to be that, almost as proud as being in AHEPA in general. But it's a struggle for the youth. It's a very, very big struggle for the youth. And they're going to come in here and speak to you guys and let, just to show you what they're all about. They need help, but you guys need help too. And understand what I mean by that. It's no disrespect to anyone in this room, but they know a lot more stuff than you think. They can probably get you guys to the next level when it comes to certain aspects of your chapter, and you guys need to let them do that. Because I said this last year on the floor, and I'll say it again here, I'm sick and tired of hearing that the Sons are our future. Let me say that again: I'm sick and tired of hearing that the Sons are our future. They're our present, and you need to treat them as such. Thank you, thank you.

We have incredible programs that we should give and give to our youth, and we should actually make the youth aware of, okay. We have the AHEPA Academy that we don't utilize at all, at all. We can't get 12 kids to come to DC to actually get mentored by our other brothers in the DC area to show them what it's all about to go through life and get a job and do things the right way? We can't get kids to go to the Journey to Greece? That's on us. That's not on the kids. That's on each and every one of you in this room to do, and we need to make sure that we start doing that, not just because it was mandated by us by the Supreme President to actually have our junior auxiliaries as a national project. The junior auxiliary should never be a national project. We don't need the charity to be the junior auxiliaries. And last year, as much as I appreciate the fact that we actually focused on it, shame on us, [foreign audio 00:11:47 – 00:11:48] us that we had to get it to that point, that it had to be a "national project."

Please understand, I'm trying to say this to you with all the love that I can, but it's disheartening, because we need to get our youth involved, because I see my hair is getting grayer. And the more hair that I get gray and I don't see much black hair and blond hair and brown hair in this room, then sooner or later, this room that had 1,000 delegates, now only has 200 delegates if that. You guys can do the math; numbers don't lie. Get your kids involved, get your grandkids involved, get your nieces and nephews involved, okay. Bring another brother, a younger brother to a meeting and get them involved, please. That's it for me. I'm going to wait for the guys to come from the lodge. Do you have any questions for me? I would be glad to answer them now. Here we go.

MR. PETER CERISE: Peter Cerise [phonetic], district 20, chapter 454. All the time I have known about the Sons, and I wasn't a Son, is you get a group of guys that they want to start a chapter or activate a dead chapter or dark chapter…

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Reactivate.

MR. CERISE: And they don't seem to be able to perpetuate that chapter by bringing in younger members. They become a clique. They become, that chapter goes dark, and you have to wait for the next group to be enthusiastic about doing it. I don't have an answer; I don't know what to do. But I think somebody more intelligent than I am would have to come up with a way to perpetuate these chapters and bring in the younger members.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: So I don't have a great answer for that. But I have a comment to that. What's different about when we bring in new members to be the AHEPA and we don't retain the membership, there's nothing different about that. The only difference is, is that because we don't have as many youth, we bring in eight kids.

MR. CERISE: Yeah.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: And because the eight kids don't have another eight kids to bring with them, all of a sudden now if those kids leave, then you're stuck. My suggestion would be, and this is what I suggest with every Sons chapter that or any Sons that actually try to start a chapter, is if you get a core group of eight, make sure that you identify the one person that's the leader, one person, that's all it takes is one person, and then they need to be able to mentor not necessarily their best friend, but another person within that group and then find a kid that's about four years younger than them to be able to have under their wing. That's the only way it's going to work. And the same thing applies for AHEPA chapters. I mean I'm trying to bring in my Sons to come into the AHEPA chapter and put them under my wing so that they know how to run our AHEPA chapter. Now in Atlanta we have a bunch of guys, so it's easier for us. But I'm assuming you're in Chandler, no.

MR. CERISE: Chandler, Arizona.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Chandler, right? So Chandler, I don't think you have 30 kids to pool from, right?

MR. CERISE: Oh, no, no, no.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Yeah.

MR. CERISE: Not even close.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: But still, it takes, all it takes is eight, eight and two strong ones. One that one guy can absolutely lead with, and another guy beneath him that he can actually kind of delegate.

MR. CERISE: I've tried joint meetings with the Sons. I've tried bringing in, going around the church and seeing if I get the younger kids to join the older ones, and they just don't want to do it. I just, I don't know what to do.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: So my father used to tell me, and I'll say this in Greece, [foreign audio 00:16:01 – 00:16:03]. There's no such thing is I can only, I don't want to. So I can't force a kid to want to do it.

MR. CERISE: Oh yeah, right. You can't.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: But I can definitely, I can definitely push them to try to do it, right. So at that point, it's on them. I can't you know, there's a sense of entitlement that a lot of kids that age have now, frankly. And if they don't go through everything to understand what it means to actually put a chapter, go through every position, every office, if they don't know that, they won't appreciate what they have. And they won't appreciate what they've started. That's why I'm very proud of our Atlanta Sons for getting back to where they are. I mean the next Supreme President of the Sons will probably be from Atlanta. That's a big step for us when we didn't have a Sons chapter for about, I don't know, ten years after I was Sons president. So the fact that we've got a Supreme President coming up I think is very, is kudos to the kids that started it. But yeah, keep trying, and the guys on the lodge will help you, I promise. They will.

MR. CERISE: Thank you.

MR. JAMES DEDAKIS: James DeDakis, proud member of chapter, Tri-City chapter 454 in Chandler and current District 20 governor. Brother Sandy…

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Good poker player too.

MR. DEDAKIS: I want to commend and totally support everything that you said and in the manner in which you said it, because I know it came from love in your heart, and sometimes it's a tough message. But you're doing a great job, and we need to support that. And it should not be a national project; I wholeheartedly agree with that. Thank you.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Thank you, thank you very much. Oh, Brother Basil would like to…

MR. BASIL N. MOSSAIDIS: Basil Mossaidis, past Supreme President, Sons of Pericles, chapter…

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: I don't recognize you, sir.

MR. MOSSAIDIS: Chapter 515. You're not the chairman. The chairman recognizes me.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Dang it.

MR. MOSSAIDIS: I wanted to thank you Sandy, for your service. I think you're doing an outstanding job, and I'm here just to offer my support and headquarters support to do whatever is necessary for our young people, because all of you always say that they're the future. But I'll tell you something. We're not really good when we use that as an excuse, right, where we preach, we say the words, but we don't provide the action. So whatever you need from us, my chapter, my district I know is very supportive. We started, we restarted a chapter in our district. So we're there for you. So good job, and continued success.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Thank you, thank you. Coming from a mentor of mine, that means a lot so…

MR. MICHAEL LABATOS: Michael Labatos, chapter 37, Syracuse, New York. I love the comments you made. I think - - is now our future, is our present, because I see in our church, in our parish, and I say they kids are our future. Okay, the three-year olds are our future. The teenagers and up, they're not our future. They're the present. Please put in the magazine for the whole year, every quarter, - -, please send emails and preach it through the AHEPA domain, because that's one of our salvation.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Thank you, thank you.

MR. VITTAS: Ted Venus, Liberty Chapter 532 in Clifton, New Jersey, also Sons advisor over the last ten years in New Jersey. So we were very lucky. This year we were able to reactivate our district. We have four active chapters today, and I can't say, since I've been here for ten years that we had that over the ten years. It's only a recent development. I think a lot of that has to do with this convention. But what strikes me is number one, the Sons of Pericles need to fundraise. It's very hard to find, to get them to pay their dues a lot of times. I'm surprised. You probably have to raise that money. And the other thing is the old formula of a basketball tournament doesn't work that much anymore. There's not that many athletes out there, but we have to innovate in finding ways to find programs that appeal to them. Oddly enough, the Wyckoff chapter that I've been advisor for, their big project is a community garden. And that's the first thing I've ever heard that they really wanted to do that, and they're enthused about it, and that's just one example of a program that would pull them together. So again, we have to innovate, and we have to help them raise money, and I'm sure we'll be successful.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: So let me comment on that real quick, real quick. So what you're saying Ted is that it's tougher for us to get people in and keep them in, right?

MR. VITTAS: Yes, absolutely.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Exactly the same parallel I can give to the AHEPA. It's tough for us to get them in and keep them in. So it's not just the ongoing struggle of the Sons of Pericles. The difference is it's tough for us to retain the kids because they're at a different level than we are when it comes to how their brain works really, okay. They have to be constantly occupied with something. So if you don't have something there for them to be able to do, which I say all the time, then they get complacent about it, which is like what we do in the AHEPA. We just don't, we get complacent. We expect someone else to do the job for them. So my suggestion for all and I've told them in their meetings today, they've got to do something for themselves when it comes down to it, and they can probably find things for us to do as AHEPANs that will actually better our chapter and grow our chapters as well. That's just my suggestion.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you brothers for your comments. I asked the brothers in the room to please hold down your conversations because we have good microphones, and they're picking up all of the conversation, and sometimes we're not able to hear the speaker, so I yield now to the brother at the microphone.

MR. CONSTANTINE MIKOLOPOULOS: Brother Constantine Mikolopoulos, district 16, chapter 29, Houston, Texas. I am so very proud of the Sons of Pericles today because when I was 17 or 18, I used to be part of the Sons of Pericles too until I reached my twenties when I gained dual membership for both the Sons and the AHEPA. And I should comment, Brother Sandy, about the sense that they are the present of AHEPA because the Sons are not just the future of AHEPA, but they are the now of the AHEPA. They are part of our AHEPA family. Go Sons.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Be careful. Epondian [phonetic] is coming to the mic.

MR. ELIAS TSEKERIDES: Elias Tsekerides, chapter 51, district six. I'm going to call you [foreign audio 00:23:04] on that, Sandy.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Please do; please do.

MR. TSEKERIDES: I'm proud of the work you do. That's the only reason I came here, to graduate you. I mean I came to the mic to congratulate for the work you do. Keep it up, and I want to see you up and up in the AHEPA. Thank you.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Thank you, thank you, thank you.

MR. DEMI PAMBOUKES: My name is Brother Demi Pamboukes. I'm the newly elected district governor, district six, New York State. And I concur. The future is now for our Sons. Very proudly, I'm very proud to announce that we reactivated two chapters…

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Yes, you did.

MR. PAMBOUKES: For the sons, one in New Rochelle and also in Hempstead, total 24 new members. We're having them participate in all of our chapter meetings. We're giving them responsibilities. It's true. They have a lot to offer. We must listen to what they have to say. We cannot tell them that oh, we tried something five or ten years ago, your ideas are not going to work. Young people do not want to hear that. So let's please open our arms. Let's welcome them to our chapter meetings, and I congratulate you in all of your endeavors for the Sons of Pericles.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Thank you.

MR. PAMPOUKES: Thank you.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Thank you. I'm going to make one little comment here, one little comment. How many of you guys can actually navigate a website? Do you even know what I mean when I say that? How many of you guys can actually set up a website or send emails regularly and all that stuff? Okay, that's good. That's good. Those kids can probably build you a website. They can probably start up a server for you and do the things that you probably don't know how to do a lot easier and quicker than you can, all right. And the things that don't work, that didn't work five years ago, like this brother said, you know, that's all BS. It didn't work five years ago because you tried it, not because they tried it. They didn't try to help you with it. You tried it, and it didn't work for you. And we're afraid of the things that we don't know and we don't understand. Those kids understand a lot more than you think they do. Thank you.

DR. EVANS FARRES: Yes, Evans Farres, district ten past governor. Last night is a great example of what happened. My son is 18 years old, and he was not allowed in the festivities. He is in a dance group in Michigan there, and he wanted to come in. You had to be 21. He was relegated upstairs. There was nobody there for him upstairs. We have to be inclusive. We have to continue to be inclusive with the young people as well.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Do you want me to comment on that?

DR. FARRES: That is my comment. I mean we're not being inclusive.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: So I think…

DR. FARRES: We're not being inclusive.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Atlantic City or Vegas is kind of a special case where we can't actually get kids to be in certain areas at certain times. Last night until 9:00 if I'm not mistaken, we did have the kids upstairs in an area…

DR. FARRES: He went up there; there were none up there.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: I mean I was up there at 8:30, and there were people up there. By 9:00 if they're gone, then I mean I went back downstairs to make sure, but they seemed to be okay up there. But I think a lot of the kids just saw that there was nothing for them to do upstairs, so they went back downstairs to try to see if they can get in, and they couldn't get in. But you're absolutely right. When we have other AHEPA, like last year in Orlando when we had dances and stuff, all the kids were there. My daughter who's five…

DR. FARRES: Sure.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Was dancing and having fun, you know, all night.

DR. FARRES: Make it more inclusive. Have a cash bar if that's the case. The other thing is my son went to GOYA, and he put out a little survey. And in the survey, he found that everybody did not like the politics. The young people don't want to do the politics. They want to have their own organizations; they want to have their own fun, so to speak.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: So the good thing about the Sons and the Maids is that there is no politics. With younger auxiliaries, they're kind of, you know, they know what goes on in AHEPA. And shame on us for letting that happen, right. But it doesn't apply to the Sons and the Maids. It really doesn't. They should want to join because they can do something better and different. They can. And it's on them to do that; it really is. And politics doesn't play in the Sons. It used to. When Basil was around, I mean I remember. It was bad, but it's not like it was before.

DR. FARRES: Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, brothers. We'll let those that are at the microphone speak, and then we'll need to move on. Yes, brother. Sorry, brother.

MR. LOUIS ATSAVES: Thank you, brother. Lou Atsaves, North Shore chapter 94. I'm hearing tons of ideas on how we can add members to the Sons coming out of this room, and I hear that every year. But quite frankly, why don't we try something radical? Why don't we just ask those who are Sons what interests them and start working towards building a program or helping them build a program for what interests them? Likewise, about five or six years ago, there was a poll taken nationally of all the AHEPANs of what interested AHEPANs, what interested people to join AHEPA, what turned them on, with turned them off. And to my knowledge, after five, six years, we have not adopted a single turn-on proposal. So why don't we all just start listening to what others outside of this room and just open up those doors, and start listening to them? And maybe we can grow ourselves, and maybe we can watch the Sons grow as well. Thank you.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: So one quick comment on that. When I was Supreme President of the Sons, I tasked my governors to actually put out a survey at each district convention about why people are in the AHEPA, why - -, they Sons of Pericles or their kids Sons of Pericles, number one answer is because my friend joined right, my friend joined the AHEPA, and that's why I'm joining the AHEPA. That's a great answer until your friends get older, and then they don't bring in more friends and so on and so forth.

So Brother Lou is right. We don't, we have asked them. We don't implement the things. I mean we try to implement, but Basil is basically alone headquarters, if you think about it. The Sons and Maids, the junior auxiliaries have Stephanie. We've got four people, five people at headquarters that run, and hear me out when I say this, they have to deal with 15,000 Greeks, okay. And understand what that means. It's tough enough for us to deal with 200 Greeks in here. If they have to put up with all, I mean it's, listen. I am Greek through and through. All of you that know me know that. But I know what it's like to deal with us, and sometimes we should stop being Greek about things and actually do things the smart way, 'cause everybody knows, everybody thinks they know what's right. And we just have to kind of think about it a little bit.

So my suggestion is what Brother Lou said is right. When those kids come in here today, which they're going to be coming here in like five minutes, you guys should ask them that. Brother Lou should ask them that. What do you want from us? What would get you to come in? What would get you and your friends to come in and stay in, not just come in, stay in.

MR. PHIL VOGIS: Brother Phil Vogis, past Supreme Governor, region three, chapter 453. Brother Sandy, great job. And your progress, - - the same thing. However, since we are all brothers and we have dual member brothers, I don't see any of those dual member brothers here. I think it's important that you as the advisor, you should open up the dual members to come here, not only to come and show, but participate in this forum for those five days we're here. There will be an awakening, and we want to hear from them. As you said, they will be leading us in the future. So perhaps we want to start now to ask them to sit with us and deliberate. They are dual members.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Right. I don't disagree with that, Phil--

MR. VOGIS: [Interposing] They should be here.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Yeah, I don't disagree with that. The only thing I would say is when they're in their twenties and they're in either, in the summertime they're not in college, they might be, but they have jobs.

MR. VOGIS: They have the right to vote. They have the right to vote.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: They have the right to vote if they're a delegate, right.

MR. VOGIS: They are delegates.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: More often than not, more often than not, the senior brothers are the ones who actually come and be delegates.

MR. VOGIS: Of course.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: And so I understand what you're saying, and I want them to be involved in the process. I really would like for them to be involved in the process, and they should. And that's something they should do. They have their meetings today, so I will say today is out okay, for most of them. But they need to get involved in the process. But the process is kind of screwy sometimes, right. So let's call it, let's call it what it is. And sometimes that's what turns them off about being a part of the AHEPA, right. So we kind of have to walk, we're walking on eggshells when it comes to that.

'Cause I'll be frank with you. Do you guys remember the 2001 convention in Puerto Rico, when we had a division of the house? And it was the first time I was a delegate. And I went as an AHEPA delegate, not a Sons delegate. I went in there, and I saw, and I know Brother Frank was there, past Supreme President. I'm sure Brother Galanis was there. I saw these people that were arguing across the room with each other about no, you need to come over with us and no, with no disrespect with walkers, you know, like people pulling them from one side to the other. I saw Dr. John Simocles [phonetic] from West Palm Beach. Back then he was a delegate. I literally cried in front of him because I saw something I never wanted to see. And it turned me off so much that I was this, I actually didn't come around for about five to six years, because I don't want to see that, right?

MR. VOGIS: Right.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: I want us to be united. I understand we have disagreements, and I understand that we have to have some discussion. But to have something like that happen when you're like 26, and you see that, it turns you off. It really does turn you off. So luckily we don't have that going on now, but understand that that's an issue sometimes.

MR. VOGIS: Thank you.

MR. JIM KARAMONOS: Jim Karamonos [phonetic], Monroe chapter number 75 of New Brunswick, New Jersey, district five, which encompasses New Jersey and Delaware. I'm going to change the direction, and I don't know if it has been said about the number of chapters and the number of members of our junior order Sons of Pericles.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: The actual number? Is that what you're asking, the actual number?

MR. KARAMONOS: The actual number, and also the number of chapters.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: The number of chapters I believe is, if I have my report, it's like 20 something if I'm not mistaken. But the number I do not have, but I will get it for you. When the guys come in, they will definitely be able to tell you that.

MR. KARAMONOS: Thank you very much.

MR. KIRKILES: Demetrios…

MR. STASIOS: Supreme Counselor, the last one please.

MR. KIRKILES: Yes. I just want to remind everybody, and I wish to add to Brother Vogs' comments. We are I would say the ultimate Hellenic grassroots organization. We took steps to ensure that no Son can be turned away from an AHEPA chapter meeting. So while we can point to national, we can point to, we need them as delegates to our Supreme Convention. I would challenge every brother here to remind you these are our sons, our grandchildren, our children. Invite them, drag them to your AHEPA meeting. Make them feel like they should be going. There is no reason, and when they're in the meeting, don't say shut up and sit down. Say what's your opinion on this? Ask for their opinion and listen. Make them feel like they are they are welcome.

The issue is not our ages. I can tell you from personal experience. One of the youngest guys that was ever in my chapter was 100 years old, literally. He had an outlook on life that was younger than anybody in their thirties. And I miss him dearly, but I say bring them into your chapter meetings. You don't need a Sons chapter. Start with a Son-at-large. Initiate using the AHEPA ceremony. You can do that. But if you do nothing, you get nothing. If you try nothing, you will get nothing. It's time for us to realize that we are personally responsible for bringing these children in and raising young men into gentlemen, into the kind of people we aspire to be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much.

MR. RICK ROSCOE: Rick Roscoe, president Trenton AHEPA 72, district five. This is my second term of president this year, and three years before that I was the treasurer of our chapter. We have initiated a multitude of millennial young men into our chapter. They're initiated, and then they go. We lose them. We are not embracing the young men and engaging them once they go through the initiation process. I as a president, I'm scratching my head on trying to figure out how I can get these guys involved. If anybody in the room has any ideas, I'd certainly like to hear them. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you brother for your comments. We'll be bringing in the Sons of Pericles lodge in just a minute. While we're waiting, I'm going to call on Brother Nick Nikas to just give us a plug for the Hellenic History Tournament that's going to be taking place.

MR. NICK NIKAS: Hi. My name is Nick Nikas. I'm from Stamford chapter…all right. Can you hear me now? Okay. I'm from chapter 99 in Stamford, Connecticut. One of the things that I've done in my life that make me the most proud is that I started out this thing called the Hellenic History Tournament. I would like to point out to you if you look at the words that make up AHEPA, the words are American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. Which one do you think is the operative word? I would say it's Hellenic. That's why I joined the AHEPA. I am a Helene, lead and I wanted to do something about it. So the basic problem as I see it is particularly as our young people don't speak Greek anymore, the only thing of substance that's left besides [foreign audio 00:39:51 – 00:39:52] is if they learn the history of their ancestors. I believe this is a motivating, a strong motivating force to allow them to keep even a little spark of the Hellenic identity as they grow old.

And so that's why I embarked on this, actually became district governor in district seven, and we started this thing in 2009. We've got 20 teams of three young people, if we're talking about how to attract young people. And we've been doing this, this is going to be our tenth year now. In about six years, there was a second regional tournament that was initiated by Themis Frangos in Chicago. They have been doing it now for four years. Then a couple of years later they initiated one, Steve Marmarou [and George Horiates, they initiated one in Greater Philadelphia. They have been doing this now for two years. And this year we had one in Toronto, Canada. So that's why we're now calling it the international tournament.

So all I am asking you to do please is to come look at the tournament that we're doing tomorrow. It starts from 10:00 in the morning to 3:30 in the afternoon. Now you don't have to be there for the whole time. But we're going to have teams competing for the international championship. Just come in there and look at a match. Participate in a match; see how well you know the answers to the questions. And if you enjoy what you see, I would urge you to try and put together a regional tournament in your district or in a great city or wherever you are, so that we can expand this. Thank you, I appreciate everything that you can do to make this grow faster and bigger. Thank you very…

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother Nick and thank you for the work that you've done in the past and continue to do in this great program. How many of you have ever attended one of the Hellenic History Tournaments? Show of hands? Better than I thought, good, good. I hope you'll take advantage of while that's taking place at this convention to sit in and listen to the program. Yes, brother.

MR. DALTON RESPASS: Dalton Respass, district eight, Worcester chapter number 80. I have not been here every minute of this convention, but could you give us a delegate count? I haven't heard it yet. How many people are here?

MR. STASIOS: Yes, it was reported earlier today.

MR. RESPASS: I'm sorry; I missed it.

MR. STASIOS: It's okay. If the secretary has that handy, we'll give you that number, yes.

MR. RESPASS: Okay, thank you.

[Crosstalk]

MR. GEORGE BOORAS: 218 here.

MR. STASIOS: 218 is what you remember? 218 is confirmed by the convention secretary. That's the number of delegates. They must have been through last night. I yield the microphone to our convention vice chairman for a moment.

DR. ZENON CHRISTODOULOU: Thank you all, brothers. Can everybody hear me? Because there is an incredibly important message. Just to tell a little bit about this convention, we were thinking about having it outdoors, but we thought it might get a little hot, and maybe it might even rain a little bit. So we thought it would be nice to bring it indoors where it is nicely air-conditioned and we could all be comfortable, we could all talk and go about our day and live our lives. Unfortunately, our brothers and sisters in Greece don't have that luxury today. Their houses, their businesses, their cars, their lives have been engulfed in flames, taking everything they know and turning it into ashes. We have a little video to show you currently what's happening in our beloved homeland.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: I should've used these mics over there.

[Video played]

FEMALE VOICE: Engulfing homes and spreading uncontrollably, Greece is seeing its worst wildfire in more than a decade. On Monday, officials said it's killed at least - - people so far near Athens, many of them burning to death as they tried to escape the flames overnight. The Red Cross - - said they discovered another 16 bodies on Tuesday. More than 100 others have been injured, including over a dozen children. - - was the worst hit, a popular tourist destination - - capital.

MALE VOICE 4: The flames were chasing us all the way to the water and burned our backs - -.

FEMALE VOICE: Others say the fire was so fast they didn't even realize what had happened. Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras cut short a trip to Bosnia on Monday to rush to - -. The country has also asked for help from the - -. Cyprus has offered to send personnel and fire - -. Greece has seen its worst wildfire - -.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: As we can see, international news is reporting the terrible tragedy that's happening in Greece. We can move on; unfortunately we don't have great sound. This is an opportunity for us brothers to do what's most important to us, to help a fellow human being, a fellow Helene. Just last year, I was taking my family to Greece, and we had a wonderful trip through the Peloponnesus, and we went from Kalamata to my village in Sparta. And we took the old road, if many of you remember the old road. And when I got to the very top of this beautiful mountain pass, I saw some statues of some Greek soldiers from World War II who resisted the Germans in the invasion. And of course I stopped to show my daughters and my wife what Greece stands for and what Greeks are all about.

And there was a huge plaque next to it, which I didn't recognize at first, but as I got closer I noticed that it was a tribute and a monument to the people who helped rebuild after the last terrible forest fires on the Peloponnesus. And number one on that list of contributors, number one, the first name I saw was AHEPA. We came together, and we made a difference. This is going to require our efforts and our unity once again. Greece is just getting back on track, and they're faced with this horrible tragedy, a year in which their tourism is expected to surpass 32 million visitors. It's tragic. And it's time for us to come together as AHEPANs. We consider each other as brothers and sisters, and that's very true.

But now is the time for us to prove it. We all dip into our pockets. Money represents past efforts that we've put in to generate it. We can't go there and rebuild houses. We can't go there and patch up the lives that have been destroyed. We can't go there and recreate their economy. But what we can do is take the results of our efforts, which is the money we have and the wealth and the resources we can contribute, and send it to them so they can be helped. Now we Greeks remember our heroes. We remember the history. We heard just now about the Hellenic History Tournament. Now is the time for us to make the next chapter of history.

What do we stand for? [Foreign audio 00:48:54], it's a wonderful word. We talk about it. We brag about it, as we should. But now is the time to put it together and to make those deeds prove our words. We will not be forgotten, brothers. The 100, 500 or a $1,000 that we're going to contribute individually to help this cause, we won't miss it. We won't. Don't buy another tie. That's 100 bucks. Don't go golfing. That's another 100 bucks. Damn. Drink Dunkin Donuts instead of Starbucks. Add it up over a year. That's a couple hundred bucks, which is more important, which is more valuable, which will generate the history.

Like I said, we remember our heroes. It's been a long time, but we still remember the names of Odysseus and Achilles and Agamemnon. I've seen you guys. We're not ready for battle. So we won't be remembered in that light. But we will be remembered for the heart and for the love that we show. AHEPARelief.org is a website that I don't just want us individually to contribute to. We need to talk to our friends and our neighbors. Let them know that our country, hardworking, decent wonderful people have just been afflicted by something they had nothing to do with. Imagine your business, your home, your car, your family, gone through no fault of your own. And then imagine somebody half a world away picking up a phone or clicking a button on a website to make your life better. That's the Hellenism we all know. That's the Hellenism that survives, and Athens, the epicenter of this tragedy, and of Hellenic history in many ways, is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. And flames are encroaching on it. We will not take that chance. We cannot take that chance.

So I encourage each of you to think about this as yet another important cause in our litany of great causes. But this is urgent. This is critical. It is happening now, and we can send an enormously strong message. Before we leave this convention, I would love to be able to tell the Greek government, the national press, the Greek press, and the world that within hours, AHEPA stood up. We stood together, we stood strong, and we're helping people around the world rebuild their lives. That's what we're about. Brothers, please join me. We will have something before the end of this convention so we can do what's right. [Foreign audio 00:52:03], just the honor of doing the right thing. I can't think of a better example than this right here and right now. So I want to thank you and encourage you to please follow us on this mission and join us on yet another journey, to make another Greek tragedy a thing of the past. Thank you brothers.

MR. STASIOS: I thank our convention vice chair for his passion and enthusiasm for this effort. We encourage all the brothers to participate at whatever level you're comfortable with, where…we're waiting for our Sons of Pericles Supreme Lodge to come into the room.

GEORGE: Mr. Chair, just to follow up on the vice chair's presentation of today's news and yesterday's news, if there are any chapters and/or districts that are able to and/or individuals in addition to those who made those commitments yesterday, all throughout the convention, please see the chair, tell him what amount that you can give and give now, as opposed to waiting 'til October, having a fundraiser doing a raffle, doing a carwash, go and having a, you know, like a macaroni, you know, lunch after church. What can we do now? We would like to see that fund that the Supreme President opened up swell here. You passed legislation earlier today giving Europeans the rights that we have in terms of voting for their Supreme Governor. We understand, and we travel there. It's our homeland; we should be able to support it now. Please consider giving now. Don't wait. We have individuals there. We need medical supplies. Burn victims, the creams aren't available. It's not a good scene right now in Greece. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you Brother George, appreciate your comments.

MALE VOICE 5: I'd like to let everybody know that uses the website, the donate button on the website is set up for wildfires already. If you want to make a credit card donation, you can go in through there.

MR. PAUL MACROPOULOS: My name is Paul Macropoulos, district six marshal. Also I have been about almost ten years the chairman for the 5th Avenue parade in New York for those of you who doesn't know that. Thank you very much, and I encourage everybody to follow me and do the same thing right now, like George said. Thank you brothers.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you brother. We appreciate your initial contribution to help us with this fundraising effort.

[Crosstalk]

GEORGE: Brothers, whatever you can, - -, 20, 50, - -, every little bit helps. We'll be sending it immediately.

MALE VOICE 3: Get a credit card up there.

GEORGE: And credit cards.

MALE VOICE 5: All right brothers, it's time to be generous. I don't want you to use up all your cash right now 'cause in a few moments, we're going to bring in the best-looking part of the order of AHEPA, the wisest part of the order of AHEPA, and the most, brightest future of the Order of AHEPA. And that's the Maids of Athena. I want to welcome the Maids of Athena to please come on in. Sophia Shakolas, Grand President, entire Grand Lodge. We have Maids Advisor Charrie Regopoulos.

MS. SOPHIA SHAKOLAS: So I also brought the Sons with me; I hope that's okay. So we just wanted to take a few minutes to give you guys a brief update on the Maids of Athena and their doings this year. I'm first going to introduce you to my Grand Lodge. So I have Grand Vice President Tatiana Tsaprailis from Calgary, Canada. I have Vasi Hatzopoulos, Grand Governor from Ottawa, Canada. I have Kyra Vidas, Grand Treasurer from Chicago, Illinois, Theodora Ronstadt from Chicago, Illinois, Grand Secretary, and then of course Charrie Regopoulos, our Grand Advisor to the Maids of Athena.

So the Maids of Athena Grand Lodge and our Maids have been busy at work this year. We have reactivated and started nine new chapters and totaling over a hundred new members in the Order of the Maids of Athena. On a national scale, our fundraising projects this year, my president's project selected by me was the Cyprus Children's Fund, which was a tribute to my parents in our island of Cyprus. We have raised over $6,000 dollars my president's project and are still collecting donations.

In a joint effort with the Sons of Pericles, our national project is St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, New York. Our goal is $25,000. We are still selling $20 raffle tickets, and the grand prize is $1,500s, second prize is $500, and the winning ticket will be drawn at the grand banquet. So our Maids of Athena and Sons of Pericles still have tickets for sale. That's all of my updates. Oh, also a special thank you to our sponsors. We have a banner out in the hallway to the handful of you who made sponsorship donations towards our national project. We thank you for those generous contributions, and we are inching towards our $25,000 goal. So if you're interested in purchasing a raffle ticket, please raise your hand, and one of these lovely ladies or handsome gentlemen will make their way over to you. But I am going to pass the mic along to Supreme President Carl.

MR. CARL HOLLISTER: It's a great honor for me being a Buckeye to be able to work with so many Buckeyes, Charrie Regopoulos, Maids Advisor is a Buckeye. George Loucas, the next Supreme President, is a Buckeye. But the pride of the Buckeyes is the Supreme President of the order. Please come out, Billy.

MR. BILL POULOS: I don't know about me being the pride of the Buckeye district, but I think Carl is. I think we all can agree about that too. But anyway, thank you for allowing us to be in your meetings today. As you can see, we've got a nice delegation, Sons and Maids as well. We're happy to be here. The Sons have had a busy year. That better, George? Sorry. We've had a busy year. We started 13 chapters across the country and Canada. That is in large part due to Brother Carl bringing us to the forefront of the AHEPA family. We wouldn't be able to do without his help, and Brother George. We've got three chapters in New Jersey alone, and we're thrilled to get these guys up and running. Is there any questions for anybody, for me?

MALE VOICE 7: How strong are the brothers?

MR. POULOS: How strong are the brothers, like physically? We are just, we are just shy of 300 right now, which is low. But due to all the new chapter activations and non-dual members, those that are underage, we're ticking closer to 500.

GEORGE: Beautiful.

MR. POULOS: Brother George.

GEORGE: Mr. President, and we came into your room and asked you, and also going to ask the Grand President of the Maids, what recommendations do you have for us? A comment was made earlier by one of the brothers here that we would like to hear from you what we can do to help you in your cause.

MR. POULOS: Well, a lot of things that come to mind is that we need your support 100% in any capacity that you can give. We like to be as involved with our AHEPA chapters locally as we can. That means AHEPANs inviting the Sons to all of your events. I'm from Canton, Ohio, and in Ohio they always brought my Sons chapter out to sell 50/50 raffle tickets. They have a golf outing every year; we were there. They have another outing in the fall, A Night at the Races. The Sons were there as well. Just getting the Sons involved with whatever events are going on is very, very crucial. Inviting the Sons to your meetings, to your monthly meetings is another great, great way to keep them involved and to have a good relationship there. The biggest thing for me that I found success with is that the Sons need they have a relationship with the AHEPANs, with their chapters. And that means getting involved everywhere. So those are two very crucial points that I think work well everywhere and have had a great success rate.

One final thing I wanted to say is that we voted as a delegation and as a Supreme Lodge to write a check for the fires that are going on in Athens. We will be presenting it as soon as we can. And I just wanted to let everyone know about that. We're doing our best to collect more by our governors' conference. We've challenged our chapters to have local fundraisers to come up with whatever they can do to donate to the cause, so we feel very strongly about it.

MR. ARTHUR PAPPAYLION: My name is Arthur Pappaylion, and I'm with the Thomas Edison chapter 287 of Asbury Park, New Jersey. We've been looking into the process of establishing the sons and daughters of chapters, shall we say. But what steps have you found successful in organizing the youth to be able to join your organization, when you're in competition with GOYA? And I'm also an ex-member of Goya.

MR. POULOS: Me as well. It's tough; it's tough. In certain areas, GOYA is strong. In other areas, the Sons are strong. We found it best to be able just to gather the guys together to host a local event, do something fun, maybe bowling, maybe whatever it is the kids are interested in, get them together, start from there. Everything snowball slowly and slowly from there, but being able to be in front of them, maybe have a couple, the local what AHEPANs together, have them come out to this event, speak on AHEPA, speak on the Sons, get everything together there. There's really a lot of different ways you can do it, but that's what we found best, to have a small little event, like a welcome-type of thing, introduce everything there, and it snowballs from there.

MR. PAPPAYLION: Thank you very much.

MR. POULOS: You're very welcome. If there are no other questions, I want to thank you all again, and very fruitful deliberations to everyone. We appreciate it. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much. They were asking for some more raffle tickets, and I think they're sold out. Oh, the Sons will get tickets to us. Is there anyone that hasn't purchased one of their raffle tickets? See one of the Sons during the remainder of this week. It will help you support that project. We thank our Grand President Sophia and our Supreme President, Brother Bill, the work that you all have done and will continue to do. We appreciate all that you do for the good of the order. We congratulate you on the year that you've had. And that those that will be moving it on through the chairs and serving next year, we encourage you and give you our support. Thank you.

MALE VOICE 5: Thank you, guys.

MR. AROUTIZIDIS: So we beg your indulgence for a couple of minutes as we prepare for our next special guest. And after we have the introduction and the presentation of our Grand President of the Daughters of Penelope, then we'll be recessing for the day and ask you to attend the athletic luncheon, and that will conclude the general session for today. In your booklet, in your schedule you'll see other events that may be taking place today, but not in this room.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: Brothers hello again, and I apologize. We just had some great suggestions to get a credit card machine set up for donations. We have it set up. We have an account that has been already set up to be earmarked for the fires in Athens. So on your way out where the registration was, you can make a contribution by credit card as well. And I'd like to say that the first district to step up is District 20, who has pledged $1,000 dollars and will expedite the check to us immediately. Thank you, brother. Thank you also very much. I believe that concludes everything until we get the Grand President to join us. Thank you, brothers.

MR. STASIOS: So we appreciate the brothers that are broadcast donations and checks forward. Brother Zenon will give us a total so far from the money collected today. And as he said, there's a credit card at the registration desk where you picked up your AHEPA delegate package. And at that place, if you care to do so, you can make a contribution by credit card. So brother, we might need a calculator.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: I'm just overwhelmed by a check for $1,000, a personal check for $1,000. And I'm going to embarrass my good brother Tasos Kalantzis. Tasos. That's fantastic, thank you. I'll have a tally for you in just a moment.

MR. STASIOS: While we're waiting, I just want to remind you of a couple of events, one that was referred to this morning by the Hellenic Cultural Commission. That event is taking place today. Just trying to find the time on the flier that I had in front of me, but I don't see it at a glance. Also tonight, the Jersey Shore Dance and Comedy Night, the Aegean Duo and Basile the Comedian will be performing.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: With the $1,000 from District 20, we have raised almost instantaneously $2,620.

MR. JOHN LEVAS: John Levas, chapter president, Gold Coast, Long Island. That number is inaccurate. Add another $500. We just had a meeting from our chapter, and the chapter is donating $500.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: $3,120. Fantastic.

MALE VOICE 5: So what's next?

MR. STASIOS: I appreciate you asking what's next. We're waiting for our Grand President for the Daughters of Penelope, who will be entering the room very shortly. So brothers, as I was mentioning, the Hellenic Cultural Commission presentation will take place at 4:00. Consult your program. At this time brothers, I'll ask that you please rise as we have our Grand President of the Daughters of Penelope escorted by our Supreme President.

MS. EVA JEAN FOMALONT: Hello brother AHEPANs. How are you? Well I have to say isn't this a marvelous convention? Thank you. Hi brothers, how are you? Good, okay, let's hear it. What a marvelous convention, and what an exciting convention. You can almost feel the hum all through this casino, as noisy as it is here. I just want to say thank you so much to Brother Carl for allowing me to come and say hello to you again.

The Daughters have had a really wonderful year, but a lot is contribute to the fact that we work together as an AHEPA family, which is so important to this organization. So the unity between the Daughters, the AHEPANs, 'cause we're all one family, but somewhere along the line, I know it's terrible to be the speaker that holds you from lunch, I know. Nobody wants to be the last speaker before a lunch or the first speaker after lunch. So I'm going to keep this very, very short. But I wanted to say I appreciate the fact that you all in all your chapters, in all your districts work together with the Daughters of Penelope and your Maids and Sons, and we see that in the growth that we've had this year. And we have had growth. We have had a lot of interest in the Daughters. And that's what we need. We need to keep our membership up, of course. We all know that. I'm preaching to the choir. The people who are here know that.

Thank you, George. George is my savior all through Greece, and Zen was my savior, Zeen [phonetic] was my savior all through Greece because they were carrying my luggage. And it's true; it really is true. And it was very, very heavy because I had gifts, not to mention the clothes I had, but I had all these gifts in there, and it was very, very fortunate. And Carl kept saying that don't lose the Grand President, whatever you do. And thank God they didn't lose me, Carl. I felt like a little girl again, to be honest. They kept saying where's EJ, where's EJ, where's Evan Jean, where's Eva Jean? And it was such a good feeling.

But the biggest feeling I have to tell you when we got off the plane in Greece, the reception, the reception for the AHEPA family was unbelievable. I mean I had to step back and say this is wonderful. AHEPA's name is so well known across this US of A and Canada, for all our Canadians that work so hard, and in Europe, unbelievable. So it was a pleasure and an honor to be the Grand President this year. I can't tell you how many wonderful people I met, how many people I didn't know. You think you know everybody, but you don't. And some of the nicest things are all the new people that I didn't know. So we have had growth. We started five chapters this year, three in Europe, Brussels, London, Paris. Ad I didn't get to go to any of those unfortunately, but I did get to do the initiations on Skype, so that was wonderful. And for those of you who know how technically challenged I am, that was really amazing that I got this - -. That part was great.

We opened two new chapters in the US of A. We have three more waiting to be opened by the new lodge that's coming in. And you're going to be very pleased with our new lodge. It's a dynamite lodge of wonderful people. I had a great team to work with on the Daughter side and on the AHEPA side. And I tell you my brother got a little jealous this year because every time he wanted me to do something, I said I got to go with the AHEPANs. I have to go with my AHEPAN brothers. So he's getting a little bit upset at you guys, you know. But he loves you; he loves you. Doesn't belong, but anyhow we're working on him, so we have some time to keep working on him to become an AHEPAN.

So once again I want to say thank you. I look forward to addressing you at the banquet. I don't want to keep you from lunch. If you have any questions for me, I'd be more than happy to answer them. Are there any questions? Are we a great team? And I do have to say how much I respect and honor your Supreme Lodge and Brother Carl, who truly, truly is a man of his word. In the beginning of the year he said to us we're going to be a team, we're going to work together. And I said that's what I want, and that's what I got. So thank you very much, AHEPA. We love you; I love you.

MR. HOLLISTER: I got to tell you how comfortable Eva Jean was no matter where we went. She was comfortable in front of presidents. She was comfortable in front of the patriarch. She's comfortable with foreign ministers, ambassadors, very confident and always comfortable and in her space. But the one time that I was most impressed on her ability to be comfortable in any situation is when we flew on a Chinook helicopter from Athens to Ikaria. I have flown on 100 missions on a Chinook. I've never seen anyone sleep on a Chinook before in my life. I was talking to Eva Jean. We had taken off, and as soon as we got over the sea, I realized that she was out. But it was a pleasure to serve with you, Eva Jean. Thank you for all that you did for us this year. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you brothers. We'll call on our Supreme Convention Vice Chair to give us an update on the collections for the fire relief efforts.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: With other contributions including chapter 72 from New Jersey, my district, this district, district number five, a contribution of $500 has now brought us to $4,600. It's fantastic. And the credit card machine is waiting for you at the registration area if you want to charge something by credit card.

MALE VOICE 6: Make another 500 please, from chapter 37. I just got the okay on the phone.

MALE VOICE 3: Outstanding. Okay, brothers. I don't want this to end. You're going to hear about this at every event we have until the convention closes. But I want to announce right now that I'm choosing as chairman for the fire relief project, Dr. Z. You're going to be the point man.

MR. STASIOS: [Foreign audio 01:20:49]. All right, brothers. I thank you for your attention and your cooperation. We will be adjourning now, recessing now. We'll reconvene in the morning at 9:00 a.m. Please attend the athletic luncheon that's going on. It starts at 12:30 if I remember correctly. Thank you very much.

[END 2018\_Supreme\_Convention\_July\_23\_-\_27\_PART\_6.mp3]

AHEPA

**96th AHEPA Supreme Convention**

**Atlantic City, NJ**

**July 26, 2018**

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# 96th AHEPA Supreme Convention

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MR. JIM STASIOS: Good morning brothers. Good morning and welcome to today's session. We'll call it to order now at 9:20. Appreciate your patience. Before we begin, let's have our opening prayer. We ask you to please stand for again, for a moment of silence, a moment of silence for those who have lost their lives in the tragic fires in Greece. Thank you. While you're standing, please join me in the Lord's Prayer. Our father who is in heaven, hallowed be thy name. They kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. In the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us, amen. Thank you, you may be seated.

We thank you for your patience this morning. I hope you understand that there are a lot of variables in play right now, trying to line up the Skype presentation with the ambassador and some, so there's a lot of things that aren't fixed in time. So we appreciate your patience and understanding as we continue with today's session. So we we'll now get an update on our delegate count, and we'll ask for the committee to please come forward and give their report.

MR. MICHAEL C. PAPAPHOTES: Good morning, brothers. Brother Michael Papaphotes, Delphi 25, district 6. As of 6:00 last night, we have 233 registered delegates, 12 alternates, and 221 are eligible to vote. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, brother. Appreciate your work. And again, this count is as of last night so if there are any other, so we'll give you that count before we have the elections.

MR. JIM KARAMONOS: I'm sorry for monopolizing the microphone. However, what…

MR. STASIOS: Name and chapter, please.

MR. KARAMONOS: I'm sorry. Jim Karamonos [phonetic], Monroe chapter number 75 of New Brunswick, New Jersey, not Piscataway, 5th district, which encompasses New Jersey and Delaware. What is the schedule for today specifically?

MR. STASIOS: As I mentioned a moment ago, there are some variables in play. The intention was to have the nominations at 11:00, the elections in the afternoon, giving headquarters time to print the ballots and to have that so we don't have the brothers trying to go to a meeting to vote at midnight.

MR. KARAMONOS: Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: So that's the tentative plan. It's not etched in stone, so we appreciate your understanding. But that's the tentative schedule as I stand before you. At this time we're going to call on a report from our National Projects Committee. I had appointed Brother Harry Kavalaris in Charlotte to be the chair of this committee, and at the last minute he was not able to make it because of the thunderstorms from the airport he was flying out of, and they got postponed and then ultimately delayed, and he wouldn't get in here in time for a meeting. So we're going to call on Brother Marshall Ansel [phonetic] to give the report on behalf of the committee that he and Thamos Frangos [phonetic] co-chaired. Thank you, brother.

MR. MARSHALL ANSEL: Good morning, brothers. Marshall Ansel, Lieutenant Governor, district 17. We had a full room of more than 23 brothers for our national projects meeting. We had several projects brought to the committee, and we talked about the existing warrior dogs project which was spoken about as a template for how a project should be presented, and its success is very evident.

The following was presented for approvals to come to the floor. There was a membership recruitment with the Greek folk dance. The AHEPA relief building project that's ongoing and approved out there in Greece right now through their chapter and district was talked about. And we also received an update on the HJ1's 2016 approved hospital report project, which is close to, it's being completed. So the first presenter, our brother Doug Harris requested we make an effort to boost our membership by having our Sons and Maids have a Greek folk dance competition. And national convention, the recommendation was to work on the details, and the committee voted and approved to have Brother Doug come back with a full report of more details.

The AHEPA Building Relief is an important project. We heard some details about a building that was can be razed. They were going to tear down this building, and the chapter stepped in working with the mayor to renovate and update this building to be considered the AHEPA Relief Building museum. And this is dating back to the forties until recently. In working with the town people, we found that this was a worthy project. There was some discussion about finances. The project was well laid out. The funding for this project was supported by, the chapter itself had raised over EUR 9,000. The mayor himself said that he would help fund this project. The total project cost was EUR 84,000. And the funding is evident and available for this project to move forward.

We felt that our support was important because over in Greece now being tied with Americans to throw an American flag on top of a building over there where Russia is coming in and some other countries, we thought this was a great national project to get behind. So it was approved unanimously to bring this to the membership at this meeting here and get approval from you to support this project. So at this time, I'd like to ask if there's any questions about any details about this project. I know I gave a brief summary of what this is about. But if you have some questions, please.

MR. GEORGE KARVELIS: George Karvelis [phonetic], chapter 98, past Supreme Governor. Brother Marshall, did this group presentation go through their chapter and their district lodge prior to, it's my understanding they have, that prior to going to your committee…

MR. ANSEL: Absolutely. It was approved at a local chapter level. They did some fundraising. It went to their district level, and it was approved there. And then we got reports and were given plenty of documentation on the procedure of how this was going to happen.

MR. KARVELIS: I'd like to make a nomination that this project be approved by this assembly to go forward.

MR. ANSEL: Okay, so there's been a nomination, yeah.

[Crosstalk]

MR. KARVELIS: Sorry about, - -. I'd like to make a motion that this project be food approved to go forward. I was about an hour - -.

MR. STASIOS: Okay, there's been a motion made to approve this one. Do we have a second?

MR. FRANK FORIS: Second.

MR. STASIOS: Step to the mic please just for the record so we'll have it recorded. Turn it on Brother Frank, please.

MALE VOICE 1: What city is it in and where? What city, where's the building? Quickly, what city is it in?

MR. FORIS: Excuse me, no time for discussion. It has to be seconded.

MALE VOICE 2: I heard that.

MR. FORIS: I'm Frank Foris [phonetic] - - chapter 24, Boston. I second the motion.

MALE VOICE 3: Boston still has a chapter?

MR. STASIOS: So there's been a motion placed on the floor; it's been seconded. The question was asked by the brothers. I'll get to that in a minute. So it's been made and seconded in time for discussion.

MR. PETE VAGATOS: Yeah, Pete Vagatos [phonetic], chapter 24, district 8. I kind of missed it. Can you tell us what city it's located in and a little bit of history of the building, quickly?

MR. STASIOS: Understanding it's in Alexandroupolis, Alexandroupolis, from the Northern Greece…

MR. VAGATOS: I know where, yeah.

MR. ANSEL: And again, the details of that is the building by the town was going to be leveled, and it has a lot of history and meaning been started again with the name AHEPA involved and so forth. And the mayor was able to work with our district governor over here. He met with him ten days ago and approved to give the building, the building will be owned by the chapter in AHEPA. So the small fee of EUR 84,000, 30% is even put together before the project's even started, and the funds will come readily after that.

MR. STASIOS: Brothers, any other questions or comments? Hearing and seeing none, we'll call the question. All those in favor of the proposal, please say aye.

[Ayes heard]

MR. STASIOS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? It passes unanimously.

MR. ANSEL: Okay. The importance of our project that was approved as a national project, I don’t know if you all remember a few years ago. HJ1 brought us information about a wing of a hospital which was given to us to put together a medical library. And a lot of effort and time has been put on by our brothers over there in Athens to organize this and get this moving. There's a lot of moving parts to working with doctors and the informational highway that it's coming through for these doctors to go to this library and pull this information. So basically we set up, and the project will be done, it's almost near completion here towards the end of the year, this updated information for doctors to use when they're performing operations, or if they need to know the most updated facts about some of the diseases, recovery, all that that they're working with. So at this time I'd like to call on Brother Theris [phonetic] to show us a little information about how we're doing on this project that we approved a couple of years ago and where we are at this time for having it completed.

THERIS: Thank you, brother. So brethren all, good morning. First of all, good morning. Excuse me for my potential nervousness, but the incidents in back in Greece, and especially nearby Athens to not let me any room for, to be happy, so…

MR. ANSEL: Are you okay?

THERIS: Yeah.

[Background conversation]

MALE VOICE 2: You have audio on there - -?

THERIS: No, just presentation. So today I'm going to give you a brief progress report about their project, the national project that was initiated, discussed and, approved in, initiated in, from our chapter HJ1 from Athens, Greece, the so-called - - chapter or central Athens, the project which was presented to the convention in Las Vegas and was approved. Here I'm going to give you a brief presentation on the progress report that, of the project and a quick background. This project was initiated for EUR 250,000 and was about the upgrade of Evangelismos's hospital library into a digital library, which would incorporate the digitization of the existing hardcopy books and the connection with several medical databases, which will enable all doctors from Evangelismos and from other areas of Greece to have access to information which would benefit not only the hospital, but most important the patients.

During the project, we had several phases. And in October 2017, National Bank of Greece has stepped in and passed their will to give a specific wing to Evangelismos called the NBG wing, which we've decided, all of us decided to have the medical library within. So instead of constructing the library and upgraded it, we transformed the project into a digital project, which means actually that we were giving a specific space of 225 sq. m or 2,000 sq. ft. as you say in the US and to make our installations there. At the moment, at that time the project was upgraded to 350, but to cut a long story short, we had some negotiations with National Bank of Greece, and we managed to lower our participation in 250 because we managed to convince them to put all necessary establishments and to have a turnkey solution instead of, a turnkey solution apart from furniture, - -, and electronic equipment. So here you can see some photos of the Supreme Governor visiting the property in 2018, in May 2018. And this is the existing condition as I photographed it in on the 19th, on the 17th of July just before visiting the US.

The project that, the timeframe is that the project will be delivered from NBG on the 1st of September for reasons that they have to do not only with the time from NBG, but with the request from Evangelismos Hospital in order to be able to operate it for their own reasons. So the main progress report has to do with what we have done so far. We managed to divide the project into four phases. In phase one, we have the library furniture and related equipment, and this is the estimated budget for the library. We received tenders, so this is not a definitive number, but this is an indicative number which will enable us to put all furniture and installations needed for physical operation: chairs, tables, cases. Phase number two, as I told you part of our work is also to add the computer hardware and software which enable this library to become operational. This is also an indicative proposal that we get from an interested entity.

Now phase three, the start date will be January 2019. This was also something that was communicated from Athens to me late yesterday, because as you can see after NBG went into the project, everything is very flexible, and it's very driven by NBG. So we're giving different timeframes from the different times of…

MALE VOICE 1: What is NBG?

THERIS: NBG is National Bank of Greece, excuse me. Sorry? Yes, sorry, National Bank of Greece, I'm sure you all know National Bank of Greece, but in Athens we call it for abbreviation reasons NBG. So phase three has to do with software installations and services. These are the software which will be needed for the digital library to become operational. This is the platform in which everybody is going to work in.

And we were expecting to be completed in July 2019. And the start date after July 2019 is implementation and installation of connectivity licensed software. Bear in mind that most costs from this project are these types of, are these types of licensing and software which enable everybody to get access to these databases. These databases are very costly obviously for Greek financial standards. They cost around 100,000 for two years. And this is going to be ongoing, which means that we will have to pay EUR 50,000 to 70,000. Bear in mind that all figures are Euros, the 50,000 to 70,000 every year just to keep the database going.

So this is the total budget cost to July 2019, which it's actually what we added for the three first phases. And this is what we have gathered up to now. Now we have deposits of from nearly EUR 60,000 plus confirmed donations from two corporate donors of EUR 5,000 each. And moreover, $20,400 US. We are expecting the promised donations that were made during the gala of May 10, 2018 of $14,000 US, $5,000 US--sorry, $5,000 Canadian and EUR 2,000, which will elevate the approximate total amount on hand up to EUR 100,000.

I have to tell you that these are the photos of the gala that was made, that was, that we drove in 2018, in May 2018 together with, these are members of the committee. And this was the event. Supreme Governor and distinguished members of AHEPA and armed forces, Supreme President, sorry. And we can all see here that it went well. Some photos from donors, yeah.

So now about the sponsorship, bear in mind that we're not here to ask for any money. We believe that we can proceed and complete the project by ourselves. But we have two things to bear in mind. First of all, there are some donations that were made on the gala and we are still expecting the money, which is number one. Number two is that we have issued this letter which is to all our brethren and can be distributed accordingly, which says what is the scope of this project. And most importantly, what will be the sponsorship levels of and support levels. So everyone will give more than EUR 1,000, their name will be placed in the list of sponsors within the library. So there will be a dedicated place in which everyone who will give money for this project, his name and his heritage of him or her and their family will be there forever.

And for any additional, you can see on the left we have the alpha bank accounts for Euros and US dollars. We have an issue in Greece, so you have to, if your currency in Euros, you have to give it, you have to deposit in a different account. And you can visit and see the online continuation and progress of the project, visiting the page [www.AHEPA.gr/aml](http://www.AHEPA.gr/aml). I'm free and open to discuss and explain to you everything you would like with my limitations of knowledge. But for any additional information, I can give you the names of the committee. These are the two co-chairs, Dr. Nuchis [phonetic], who is a doctor in Evangelismos Hospital, and Brother Kosfariskos [phonetic] is also co-chair of their committee for this project, and they can reply to you accordingly. Thank you. At this point I would like to introduce Don Duches [phonetic], who is the liaison between here and the Greek chapter, who would like to talk briefly about this project. Thank you.

MR. DON DUCHES: [Foreign audio 01:54:11] bravo, wonderful job. My involvement is right from the inception, and I should have started this, but I thought that Leftheri [phonetic] should go forward. This is a project that's done all by the chapter in Greece, HJ1. And they have a wonderful team of people working there. When we started, I was introduced to this project by Brother Nick Papadopoulos and Dr. Nuchis, at which time we thought it was a good idea, and it was only in the idea form. This was four years ago.

And we went forward, and I, we were able to meet with the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. And they are experts at, and have made many generous contributions to the hospitals in Greece. And it was, we formulated this idea together with the Niarchos Foundation, and we were able to go forward. And then Nick, I mean Fondas [phonetic], - - Fondas Gufaris [phonetic] came into the picture with Dr. Nuchis and Dr. Hondrus [phonetic], and we were able to get the property. And we made it a national project. And now the chapter is doing this with the members of their own group. My position is just as a liaison in the United States. And we go from there, and I think that this body should accept the report that was made by Leftheri and give him our full support. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you brothers for the update of the national project. Yes, brother.

MR. GEORGE SCARVELES: Well, I'd like to…

MR. STASIOS: Name and chapter, please.

MR. SCARVELES: I'd like to thank the chapter. I think the presentation has been wonderful. I think the presentation you have here…

MR. STASIOS: Brother, for the record, name and chapter, please.

MR. SCARVELES: Oh, I'm George Scarveles, chapter 98, New Haven, Connecticut. Maybe you can get a copy of this DVD so that we can get it out to the districts so that they can explain a lot of what's happening here. I think I'd just like to bring to your attention before making a motion to accept your report as submitted, I think it's a phenomenal update, but there's a little bit more to this, and that is that AHEPA will have its name of Evangelismos in this particular wing, and that goes a little further from the presentation because from what I understand, your Medicare program doesn't work in Greece, or your Medicare card. But being an AHEPAN is like going into the hospital in Thessaloniki. You'll have a presence or a preference with this program being at Evangelismos. So I think it's beyond being a great program. It's a necessity. It's like an insurance card if you're traveling abroad for us anyhow. So again, I'd like to make a motion that this upgrade be accepted, and we take full pleasure in working with the HJ1 chapter in Greece.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. The report has been accepted by the chair. I don't know that we'd need a second. At this…I beg your pardon?

MR. CHRISTOS ARGIRIOU: The committee report, does that need motion, or a second?

MALE VOICE 2: Please step to the microphone.

MR. STASIOS: Okay, step to the microphone please. I think we can just accept a second. Who wanted to second the motion? Yes?

MR. ARGIRIOU: Morning, brothers. Christos Argiriou, Canadian president. I was with the delegation to Greece. I personally visited the site. Everything to my satisfaction that I'd like to pass on to you. The project looks good. Leftheri, you did a wonderful presentation, thank you. And I'd like to second the motion for this project.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. So there's a motion to accept the report; it's been seconded. Any discussion? Hearing none, we'll…please step to the mic.

MALE VOICE 2: Through the chair.

MR. STASIOS: Through the microphone, please. I'm sorry. Name and chapter. And in the interest of time, Brother Basil has a report to give us, so please. Yes.

MR. FORIS: Frank Foris, Athens chapter 24, district 8. I have questions for Leftheri whenever the time comes, on this report.

MR. STASIOS: I'm sorry; I didn't hear.

MR. FORIS: I have questions for the report presenter, on the report that he gave us when the time comes.

MR. STASIOS: Can you talk offline about it, or is this something we need to do now?

MR. FORIS: No.

MR. STASIOS: Okay.

MR. FORIS: My question is when the library is established, what revenues would it have when a doctor--

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MR. FORIS: …access are, it's going to be free, or it's going to be charged? These items were not covered. Thank you.

MR. ANSEL: If I can real quick, there will be a charge. It is a revenue-generating operation. This is not free in donations, 'cause we're going to have to pay for this pipeline of information coming in, and the doctors realize they'll have to do that whether they get a membership or whether, however that is done. Those are some details, the fine details they're working out. But like he said, it's on the website, all the updated stuff. He updates that once a week. So when we get to that point, but it will be something where there's a revenue-generating project.

THERIS: Since this question was addressed to me, I have to reply in person. So I would like to say that first of all Evangelismos and AHEPA have a very tight connection. As brother said before, every AHEPAN who comes to Greece has the privilege of being accepted and treated for free for any medical condition that he or their family may suffer, both in Athens and in Thessaloniki.

Furthermore, Evangelismos has helped HJ1, and HJ1 chapter is also helping Evangelismos. So there will be a charge, but if there is a study on how there will be this type of charge. And for more information, as I told you in the very beginning, more relevant persons to reply on this are the people named in this letter, Dr. Nuchis and Brother Kufaris [phonetic]. So if you have any additional information, please contact them directly, and they can give you all the relevant answers. We have a 15-member committee working for two years now for this project, and I'm sure they will be able to provide any information that you like orally or written. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you brothers, we appreciate it. So there's a motion on the floor that's been seconded to accept the report. All those in favor, say aye.

[Ayes heard]

MR. STASIOS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Carries unanimous. Thank you, the report of the National Projects Committee has been accepted, so we'll now call on our Executive Director, Brother Basil.

MR. BASIL N. MOSSAIDIS: Thank you, Brother Jim. I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman. I was asked to come and speak this morning to give you sort of an update on what we're doing. Headquarters is seating the banquet right now, so the tickets, the district governors or whoever is responsible for the district, the tickets will be ready around 12:00. Today because of the wildfire situation, the AHEPA reached out to the Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt in Athens. He will be speaking to us live via Skype at 12:30 in this room. So please tell all the delegates to come, and the Supreme President will be here, and we will be talking directly to the US Embassy in Athens, our ambassador there, which is very exciting. And then at some point this, after that presentation, we'll have a presentation on the new website which will be up here as well.

What other issues did we need to discuss, Mr. Chairman, that you need from headquarters? Elections is dictated by the chairman and the officers up here. So when they call for nominations, after the nominations are accepted, the chairman will give me a directive to create a ballot if there is any contested races, and the legislative issues. So elections will be held once the ballot is finished and approved by the chairman. And then I will make ready a room that we can vote in. But I don't know what time that will be. You guys control that. No, it will be today. It'll be this afternoon. I mean I was told, yeah, it will be before the banquet. I was told that nominations will be today this morning sometime, and that I can have the ballot ready within a half an hour. And then we'll have elections, and the results will be done before 5:00 today. All right? Thank you. Thanks.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you Brother Basil for that update. Dr. Z, do you want to introduce the next…

DR. ZENON CHRISTODOULOU: Brothers, we're honored to have our Piraeus chapter come and present some of their findings and some of the results of their great year of effort. So please welcome to the stage our, thank you, brother.

MALE VOICE 3: Ladies, [foreign audio 00:05:20 – 00:05:21], only brothers and the gentleman. None I speak very good English. [Foreign audio 00:05:27 – 00:09:24].

MR. STASIOS: I've asked our Vice Chairman to give a brief translation for those that don't speak and understand Greek so bear with us just a moment. We thank the brother for coming before us and to give his thoughts and ideas.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: Thank you brother. Just briefly to summarize, our good brother from Piraeus wants to express his gratitude and his joy for being part of AHEPA and for being here and for all the things that we do and to recognize the great accomplishments that Greeks have made in this great country of ours in America. Additionally, he wants to express some concern perhaps that some of us feel as well that just sending money to the fire relief effort might not be the best use of our money, and we agree with that. Actually when we speak with the ambassador today, we had talks this morning with Athens, and we are going to find the appropriate effort to direct our money towards. It will not be put to waste; it will not be put in directions that they don't need us to put it in. It will not recreate things that have been solved already. But we share your concern brother, thank you. We are altogether united and on top of that. Additionally, he's very happy to be part of AHEPA, to be part of this great effort and to make sure and he will continue to make sure that people in Greece understand the great efforts that AHEPA makes to make sure that the name and the brand and the intentions of our great organization resound loud and clear with the Greeks and with the Greek government. Thank you very much, brother.

DR. ANDRONOPOLIS: Mr. Chairman.

MR. STASIOS: Yes, brother?

DR. ANDRONOPOLIS: Dr. Andronopolis [phonetic], chapter - -, number two. In addition to the translation of, to the summary of the speech from brother from Piraeus, he point to two projects that they plan to do. They want to put in one - -, and the other project is to donate or AHEPA to donate three fire machines in order to help suppress the fires. I have two comments in regards to this project to the brother. Brother, I will ask you, I'm asking you, the one comment is a little bit funny. Piraeus is for - - that they left with a - -. Now we have a significant number of - - that they - -. So maybe we need another monument in their Venezelis [phonetic] airport for - -. The question is more serious in regards to the approach, preventing fires and donating three fire trucks is a small step toward the direction of preventing fires. The question is do you have plans for a larger design to prevent fires because obviously Greece is very sensitive to the fires because there is no rain. The vegetation is dry, and it's very easy with the winds to expand the fire. So the trucks is one step. Do you have any other plans to prevent fires? That's the question. [Foreign audio 00:13:19 – 00:13:22]?

MALE VOICE 3: [Foreign audio 00:13:26 – 00:13:27].

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: Just so we know, because we all have such great intentions, it was my understanding as of this morning that Germany is already sending fire trucks. It doesn't make sense for us to give things that we think they need. Give us a few days to figure out what they actually need, and we'll supply that. So with all good intentions, thank you…

DR. ANDRONOPOLIS: Yeah.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: With all our good intentions, let's wait to see what they need. As a matter of fact, everyone in the world is sending thousands and millions of gallons of water. They actually told us this morning stop sending water. We wouldn't know that. We would send more water. Let's wait to see what they need. All right, we need to respond to their needs, not to our impression or our perception of their needs. We're working very closely, and we will make sure they get what they need when they need it. That's our pledge to you.

DR. ANDRONOPOLIS: Thank you.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: Thank you. Brother.

MALE VOICE 3: [Foreign audio 00:14:20 ­­– 00:14:21], this is governor of Greece. As you know very well from the beginning of this tragic event, we communicate the district lodge of Greece with the supreme right now, and we decide all together to open an account and collect money because we had, until we have, be communicate with - - and the mayors, et cetera, et cetera, they told us until now we don't need anything else. Wait, wait. For that reason we decided all together, and supreme president decide to just write an article. So they sent also the message to our chapters. We open an account right now in a district to work besides the account - -, so we work together to confront this tragic event. Thank you very much.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: There's only one thing we can guarantee. We can guarantee that they need our help. We just don't know which way yet. We're also finding doctors that can go over there and treat the people who are affected, but we don't know whether we need dermatologists for skin grafts. Doctor, you can talk better about this, or we need people to help them with smoke inhalation. So we have to wait to see what they need. Doctor.

DR. ALFRED BARICH: Alfred Barich, Supreme Governor, region ten. First of all, I agree with the brothers who spoke and with the brother from Piraeus. It would be better for the visibility of AHEPA definitely if we're going to do something, to do something that will remain, because cash is cash, and it goes however it goes. But having a fire truck or fire plane or whatever - - depending on what we're going to give, it's significant because it will remain, and the AHEPA logo will be there.

Second, I just want to let you all know because I'm in touch too, my chapter in Thessaloniki has coordinated with the AHEPA Hospital and blood is being given and sent. Also with the medical association in Thessaloniki that I've been in touch with, and specialist doctors who are needed are going there, including that they're gathering medical supplies, exactly what is needed and being sent down to Athens. So there is a mobilization on all levels. And like you said very correctly, let's wait and hear whatever is needed from here which may not be available there. That is more significant. Thank you.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: Thank you. Thank you very much. And one more comment.

MR. CONSTANTINE GEORGE MIKOLOPOLIS: I just got a comment on, not…okay. Constantine, Constantine George Mikolopolis [phonetic] the Second, district 16 Houston, Texas, AHEPA chapter 29, Alexander the Great. I got a comment to add. Giving is very important, and I think what you're doing is a wonderful cause, and the more we give, we are representing Jesus of Nazareth.

DR. CHRISTODOULOU: Amen. Thank you, brother. Thank you all very much.

MR. NICK PAPADOPOULOS: May I speak? Nick Papadopoulos, past Supreme Governor, Region ten. A few years ago, we had the fires in Elia. And a lot of money was collected and sent to Greece. Then if you years after that, a number of people from the States were asking questions. Where did the money go? Who took the money? And this always happens. When you send money, you always want accounting. So without being, I have no, nothing bad in my mind, but I think it's very important. So in the future we can ask for money again to show the people a full accounting where every penny went. Because for Elia, for those fires as far as I know, there were general accounting. It be a very specific accounting, so we in Greece who may be involved in disbursing the money, we don't want to be accused that we didn't keep things clear, okay. I hope we take this into account. Thank you very much.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother Nick, appreciate it. At this time I'm going to call on our Grievance Committee to give their report and ask for Brother Charles Stamoulis to come forward. We thank him for his service all week long.

MR. CHARLES STAMOULIS: Brothers, good morning. I'm Charles Stamoulis, chapter 15, district two, the beautiful state of Florida. We have better weather than Atlantic City. We the committee met through the week. And we had, what happened is there was about 20 brothers, I was notified by Brother Basil that there was 20 people that were going to appear at the Grievance Committee, and they wanted me to come in early out on a Sunday and possibly have a meeting Sunday night or Monday morning so we can see the brothers because it was basically late reporting. In the meantime, Sandy decided to send out a letter out to the Supreme Lodge and ask him to see everybody they had that was in question at the Supreme Lodge, yes, they - - on. So they made our life a little easier.

What we did, we had to deal with four brothers during the week, and one was about five minutes ago. And basically the dues were paid, but there were different circumstances. One was from Greece. And they email the delegates, but instead of sending it to the - - delegates at the AHEPA, it was mailed to another branch of the AHEPA, and they never got it on time. The other case was a father and a son, same name, same first name, same last name, junior and senior. When the secretary sent the report in, instead of the father's ID number, he put the son's ID number. So of course we decided - - him.

We had another one that it was basically late. And the one that we had this morning is a brand new president. He has no secretary; he has no treasurer. They're really struggling, and he tried to do it himself, and it was 22 days late sending the information in. So all four brothers were seated by the committee. My committee consisted from Nick Dixie [phonetic], James Sirks [phonetic], Steven Marko [phonetic], and Sam Benjamin [phonetic]. Mr. Chairman, I rise for the dismissal, discharge of the Grievance Committee.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much Brother Charles. Let's give him a hand. We appreciate the work of the committee. We accept the report and discharge you of your responsibilities during this convention. So I think we've done a good job and gone out of our way to try to be fair and equitable to all the brothers, and that should speak well for all of us.

There's still a couple of reports that we need to hear before we finish our report list. And one of those is the Cooley's Anemia, and Past Supreme President Ike Gulas is in the breakfast with the Past Supreme Presidents as we speak. So he may be joining us at the conclusion of their breakfast. And then the AHEPA Educational Foundation, are we ready? We had an email at the last minute from Brother George Vorkas, and because of business commitments, he was not able to come in and attend the convention. So some other committee members that serve on that committee, and I serve on that committee as well, but I didn't think it would be appropriate for me to be making the report, so we ask Brother Alex Geourntas to report on behalf of our committee.

MR. ALEX GEOURNTAS: Thank you brothers. Good morning everyone. My name's Alex Geourntas. I'm from Athens chapter 24 in Boston. I'm also a past Supreme Governor and from district eight. So I'm going to give the report on behalf of our chairman of the AHEPA Educational Foundation. I have to wear my glasses. Can't see. Fellow delegates and brothers, I am happy to report on behalf of the AHEPA Educational Foundation board chairman George Vorkas, who unfortunately could not be with us this week due to work commitments, the AHEPA Educational Foundation has had a busy year and a successful round of offering significant scholarships to recipients well deserving and appreciative of our work because of the generosity of the order of AHEPA. Specifically the foundation offers scholarships based on revenue realized from investments managed by the AHEPA Board of Trustees.

Number one, the current balance of our portfolio on the income, interest income is 120,000. This represents a significant increase over the past several years. As a result of this investment income, we are able to support a growing number of worthy recipients with mostly $2,000 scholarships. This year we gave out 52 scholarships, totaling, excuse me, 26 scholarships totaling $52,000. We will continue to work on ways to develop a fundraiser during the year so we can have more funds to give out. Our plan is to finalize a fundraiser at the next board meeting held at the district governor's conference in October in Washington, DC. The AHEPA Educational Foundation Board thanks everyone for their support and ask you that you will consider ways to increase your own chapters' and districts' commitment to support the educational aspirations of worthy students in your own neighborhoods. Respectfully submitted, George Vorkas. Thank you, brothers

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother Alex.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Microphone please.

MR. STASIOS: I'm sorry, brother just for the record, name and chapter.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Please, please say, Nick Papadopoulos, past Supreme Governor, region 10. In Greece, in district 25, and I'm sure in district 28 in Europe and district - - in Cyprus, we haven't had any recipients of scholarships from the United States. And we have sent the application. We know the deadlines and all that. We have translated into Greek for those who don't speak very good, couldn't read or write English, whatever. And the application is geared to American students, to American standards, the kinds of information they're asking, for the - - that. And the question is we sent a couple of applications a couple of times that people were turned down. Maybe there's good reason for that. The question being asked in Greece, myself when I was district governor is this thing about scholarships, this is not for outside United States. It's only for the US, not for Europe. Is there some suggestions you have so that we who boys and girls and relatives in Europe, we can participate and see some applications finally? One time we received $1,000. One was the national application. These were cancelled. And so nobody from region ten can benefit from these scholarships that are approved in the United States. Thank you.

MR. GEOURNTAS: Thank you brother. Well historically most of the scholarships yes, have been given within the United States and probably Canada as well. But I think we have had discussions about that for district ten to accept applications. So at our district governors meeting, that will be discussed in October, so there may be some news on that pretty soon. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, brother. We, the chair accepts the report of the AHEPA Educational Foundation.

DR. ANDRONOPOLIS: Some comments regarding the scholarships.

MR. STASIOS: Name and chapter for the record.

DR. ANDRONOPOLIS: Dr. Andronopolis, Marathon chapter two, Charlotte, North Carolina. There is a good point from Brother Papadopoulos about being able to evaluate in Greece the qualifications of the applicants. So one idea is a proposal to create their own application form with the stages of education or activities that the students agrees are developing then to be evaluated on the basis of their standards rather than the American standards. That's one proposal. Now here in Charlotte, North Carolina, the chapter give scholarships. So the other proposal is the chapter in Greece, in Athens to give proposals from their own money rather than expecting money from the United States. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, brother. I think at this point in time we'll just take a short recess. Give us a stretch break, and then let's plan to reconvene in about 15 minutes. Okay. If there's no objections, we'll be in recess for about 15 minutes. 15 minutes, please.

[Background conversation]

MR. STASIOS: Brothers, we have just about five minutes or less before we reconvene. So if you can start coming to your seats we can move along. And any brothers out in the hall, if you'll invite them in the hallway, please invite them in the convention room.

MR. CARL HOLLISTER: Brothers, please come in and find a seat. We're already running about 20 minutes behind. We still have some presentations, two reports before we get to nominations. And we have to be ready at 12:30 for the US Ambassador. He's not waiting on us. We lost the chairman.

MR. STASIOS: Brothers, we'll be calling this session back to order. Invite their brothers that are out on the hall to please come in so that we can continue. Thank you very much brothers for your attentiveness. At this time we'll ask our Supreme President to come forward to the podium and to introduce our next brother. Please brothers, Supreme President.

MR. HOLLISTER: Sit down, we don't have time for up and down all day here. Very gracious. All right, there's two reports that need to be provided to the body today. And I want to introduce the next person that's going to get up and give a report. The Canadian president has done an outstanding job for the Order of AHEPA of this year. He represented the order with Supreme Treasurer Horiates in Thessaloniki early in September. He represented the order on the AHEPA excursion in the spring. He represented the order throughout Canada and the United States. He must have driven 20,000 miles, and it must have cost him 100 grand in gas 'cause he's got this gas guzzler. This thing's huge. But I guess he had a shower in the back, and he could just save money on the hotels.

Christos Argiriou is an outstanding example of leadership that we have in the Order of AHEPA. He's just been exemplary. He's been a confidant of mine. He's been a trusted advisor, counselor. The trip that we took to Israel, to Jerusalem was probably the most moving experience of my life from a faith-based standpoint, and I know it was with Christos. My brother Cristos and I are brothers for life. At this time, I would ask Brother Christos to please come up and give the report of the Canadian President

MR. CHRISTOS ARGIRIOU: Good morning. Brothers. What a year it's been for me. If you're looking for the definition of a lucky person, you're looking at one, the luckiest AHEPAN, the administrative year '17–'18. An unbelievable year, and mainly it has to do with our Supreme President Carl Hollister who gave me all of these opportunities to live through unforgettable moments and to cherish memories for life and to understand what AHEPA is and to carry AHEPA in my heart for the rest of my life. It was an unbelievable experience, especially for a delinquent brother who five years ago was drifting away from AHEPA, and Dr. Grossamides [phonetic] and Andy Zachariades decided to come on Western Canada's chapters' visitation, where then other brothers realized I was an AHEPAN, but a delinquent AHEPAN who wasn't always supporting AHEPA but not personal.

It was the beginning of something that developed to be the best thing in my life. I was lucky as I mentioned earlier because I was elected the same time Carl Hollister was elected to be our supreme president. He took me under his wing with all the advice and encouragement I got from all the other past supreme presidents, who wholeheartedly welcomed me and told me don't worry. Christos. You're new, but we are here for you. All our experiences, you can count on being yours too. I want to thank all of the other past supreme presidents for their support. And there our feelings where we can explain, and I will start with that. There are other feelings we cannot explain and transfer to anyone. I will make a mention of those too.

When our Supreme President Carl Hollister asked me to go to Thessaloniki, I had no clue what in reality AHEPA was. Together with George Horiates, we went there to welcome our ecumenical patriarch on a celebration that AHEPA organized on his 25 five years of patriarchal presence and performers and being our spiritual father for all Greek Orthodox people everywhere in the world. What an unbelievable experience that started my, it was the beginning of more to follow.

And then to my extreme surprise in Tarpon Springs, being at the epiphany celebrations there, when our supreme president came to me and said Cristos, I'd like to invite you to come with us on a leadership mission to Greece, Cyprus, and Israel, that is a feeling that I cannot explain to you. I can't find words to make you understand what it felt like. I will refrain, with thank yous for now as I want to say a few more things.

I literally meant that when I said Carl took me under his wing. Then the leadership mission began in Greece. Brothers, I know speaking to such brain trust here, and dedicated AHEPANs for many years, me trying to tell you about AHEPA is like a grandson telling the papou I'll show you where our vineyard is. [Foreign audio 00:52:23 –00:52:25]. The vineyard takes years to develop. The grandson found it ready-made, ready-to-harvest grapes and make wine. The papou built it up from the roots, from small seedlings. So I don't want to sound like I'm telling my papou where - - is. You already know what AHEPA is, but I'd like to pass onto you my experience.

The doors of the prime minister opened for AHEPA. The doors of the president of democracy opened for AHEPA. The doors of the Ministry of Defense opened for AHEPA. The minister of trade, the minister of tourism, all the important ministries, including the Parliament opened up for AHEPA. Did I know what AHEPA was until that moment? You already guessed I didn't.

People like Spiro [phonetic] started the Embeli [phonetic] many years ago, and then we were lucky to live moments of being unforgettable. Then we went to Cyprus. Ah, I'm sorry. I must say, and to the [foreign audio 00:54:11 – 00:54:12] who built that Embeli, I'd like you to know that the grandson is of much importance and extreme, extreme capable at a presentation to AHEPA. You have no idea what it felt like when Carl was talking with the prime minister, with president of democracy, with, to all of those people who are being paid thousands and thousands of Euros, and for our volunteer, to speak the way he did, I'd like you all to be very proud of our supreme president Carl Hollister.

There will be more of that. There will be more of that because when we went to Cyprus right after Greece. You have no idea what happened in Cyprus. All the things I said about Greece, plus, their president by the prime minister wanted to be an AHEPAN because of how Carl Hollister represented our beloved association, our beloved organization. [Foreign audio 00:55:58], he asked to be a brother, and our supreme president put the pin on his lapel. And because he admired our supreme president perform in all of those offices he went, to the president's office, to the palace, to the council of all representatives, everywhere we went in Cyprus, Carl was performing like very, like supremely, supremely. Then we went to Israel, strangers between strangers, in - - to us, Israel. We were together with other organizations. And then we visited all of those, the Knesset, ministry of exterior, the minister of interior, the minister of defense, whatever.

Earlier in this convention, someone said how the supreme president was able to do so much in one year. I'll tell you something else. You'll be surprised how much he can tell in one sentence. In one sentence, he tell a full story. It's amazing. In a few words, he covers a whole subject fully, not - - or that's missing. The minister of defense in Israel, he was amazed when Carl, Brother, President, I'll say Carl. You said that we are brothers. Carl asked the question and a small comment, and then it was the turn of the minister of defense to answer. He was thinking he was taking time and thinking what to say. And he said you said it all. Our supreme president said it all. He couldn't add or say anything because in one quick sentence, the supreme president covered it all. He had nothing to say. He said you said it all. That's our supreme president. And what an honor it was to me to be sitting next to him, because he never left me somewhere on the side. Christos, here. Christos, here. Unbelievable, brothers. Unbelievable feelings, unforgettable moments.

Then we had a chance in Jerusalem to visit the holy sites. That is when I truly felt being a brother to the supreme president, because until then he was the supreme president, the person up there, the supreme president. But - - both of us visiting the holy sites and holding hands, then I was comfortable, and I can say we became real brothers. The emotions, the emotional feelings we both felt during that visit, it was unbelievable.

And again what AHEPA is, thousands of people who are lining up to go to certain, pray their points, but then the monks were pushing people. Make room for AHEPA to go straight first. Not one moment of waiting because we wanted to see it all. AHEPA, of all the people in the Holy Land lining up, AHEPA went between the lines and was prioritized to go first. That's our organization. It's an unbelievable organization we have. And then on the presidents' excursion, again I had the pleasure to be with our supreme president because he gave me the chance.

And that is an unbelievable feeling, and I don't want to repeat most of what I said earlier on the leadership mission. Exactly the same, plus more to indicate the strength and the acceptance of our organization. If we all know in our hearts what truly AHEPA is and how it is appreciated abroad, we will all agree that every, every Greek person or not in North America should be an AHEPAN. If all of us know the importance of AHEPA and acceptance of AHEPA across the pond, we will all agree everybody should be an AHEPAN. We must do our best. At least I pledge from now on to do the best I can to educate everyone I have a chance to talk to, to become an AHEPAN. It's very important.

It is also a very well-lubricated machine. I was also amazed with our executive director Basil Mossaidis. He's an unbelievable man. He's the newest, the most powerful computer they developed. I guess they must have picked his brain to make this technology work. So much organization, so much work, it's an unbelievable thing. Brother Andy Zachariades, you know on my first governor seminar in San Francisco, you gave me all the reasons to be a dedicated AHEPAN. Brother Carol Hollister, you made me full blood AHEPAN. I thank you so much. I appreciate all you've done.

This Embeli the previous people planted, it can produce a lot of juice. We can harvest a lot of grapes; we can make a lot of wine. We must continue to do that. Some blessed man way back in 1922 thought of this idea. And ah, Ikaria, I have to say something about Ikaria. They thought of AHEPA, and they started at this organization. The way, the best way I can put it into perspective is the ancient Greeks built several monuments in Greece and are now out of the wonders in the world, they built the Parthenon on the Acropolis, and it still is the jewel of Greece. They build Delphus, the [foreign audio 01:05:11 – 01:05:12], the Vivoni [phonetic], the Philippos, everywhere. They built monuments in Knossos that are the jewels. I believe AHEPA is one of the jewels outside Greece.

People were blessed by God to make this, to start this organization. And when God gives his blessing, he doesn't pull it back. It's a blessed organization. God doesn't retract his blessings because he's too big to do that. And under God, we can take advantage of his blessings and carry this organization to higher standards and to higher heights. And we are lucky enough to have leaders like our supreme president to represent this organization and the president-elect George Loucas of equal abilities and capabilities to carry this organization in higher standards and higher levels.

You already know I'm emotional and losing my track. Please forgive me for that, because the emotion was running high. And I missed saying Ikaria. You know, it was a wonderful, wonderful feeling, see the two Ikarians, Icarus and George Horiates being in their homeland. What an acceptance by the people, what a generosity from their heart, walking in the land of their ancestors. You could see the enthusiasm and the emotion flowing on the streets of Ikaria. The people in Ikaria I believe you know in their prayers from the visit to forward when they go - - with Carl and Yorgo [phonetic]. I wish some day without organization I go to my home, to my [foreign audio 01:08:16] representing this organization in some capacity where the people in my [foreign audio 01:08:25] embrace me the way they embraced Carl and Yorgo. You all have a good picture of everything I wanted to say. Anything more, going to make a difference. I love you all. I thank you all.

MR. HOLLISTER: All right brothers, we got to keep this moving along. Going to hand out some awards right now. I got to tell you about one of the best surprises I had this year as supreme president. I get a letter from chapter 53 saying the supreme president's not been here in years. I need, we'd like to get a visitation. I call up Nick Karakas. I go Nick, I've got offices in St. Louis, I've got clients there. Getting there is easy. I go tell me what you guys have been doing this year. He goes, "Well, not much. We endowed a Hellenic Studies chair at the University of Missouri in Colombia." I go you did what? They endowed a Hellenic studies chair at the University of Missouri. So I created the 2018 Supreme President Award for Education, and this is going to be presented to AHEPA St. Louis chapter 53.

Where is Anthony? Kouzounis, where is he at? I got to tell you the year started for me this year with the, okay, with the Blue Dream event. Then we had a crisis. We had a crisis called Hurricane Harvey. And Past Supreme President Anthony Kouzounis and his chapter mobilized immediately, just as we did this week. We opened the AHEPA emergency relief fund. And at Past Supreme President Kouzounis's request, I went to Houston to go see what was going on.

I was soon followed by Brother Jimmy Kokotas, who was out there working, literally hammering up some walls, helping on some repairs and what not. But I've got to tell you, that's one of the best things about the Order of AHEPA. We respond, and we respond in a big way. This year it was not a difficult decision to define who would be the chapter of the year. For their outstanding work that continues a year later, the Alexander the Great chapter 29 in Houston, Texas is the chapter of the year. Brother Anthony.

MR. ANTHONY KOUZOUNIS: When you have great leaders, we have them. This man right here and the whole Houston group that was affected, he went to them. They cried on his shoulder. The emotions are still, [foreign audio 01:12:45 – 01:12:46]. I mean it's unbelievable what this man did. And we just carried out his wishes, not his wishes, but his enthusiasm, his support, initially giving us $15,000 dollars just to start helping the people that were affected tremendously. And they're still being affected because it was such a mass destruction throughout the city of Houston. The wealthy, the poor, the in between, the businesses, they're still recovering, and this man was there. Anyway, thank you so much. I accept in the honor of my entire group of people in Alexander the Great. We're still working. We gave money to 39 individuals. Three turned it down because they said thank you very much, we appreciate it, our insurance has covered everything. Just the fact that you have acknowledged us is enough, and they didn't accept it. So more than 41 people we were able to touch in their heart. Thank you. Chris is our district governor.

MR. HOLLISTER: Chris, come on up here.

MR. KOUZOUNIS: Fantastic man. He just had surgery on his knee, so he's walking real slow, but he's here. - - Alexander the Great, a great leader, thank you.

MR. HOLLISTER: You know, When you sit around Basil and you talk about the Order of AHEPA, his big saying is M&M, money and members. This year we grew our membership. We grew it by getting reinstatements back, and we grew it by having new initiations. This year it was not a challenge to figure out who was going to be district of the year. It's a district that is always involved in the Greek Independence Day Parade in New York. It's a district that gets involved with all the major initiatives of the Order of AHEPA. And it's the district that grew the most and is the largest by members. It is the Empire District, number six. Come on up.

All right, brothers. Now you know we had the crisis, Hurricane Harvey. We had the crisis, didn't just go through the Gulf Coast. It went in the Atlantic. Florida was absolutely smashed in many areas. Puerto Rico is still devastated, and Puerto Rico on top of that is bankrupt. When I saw what was going on in district two, and I saw the leadership of the district governor going out and raising funds, coordinating his efforts with all the relief groups in the panhandle and all the way down in Puerto Rico, and you saw a press release not too long ago on some items that he helped facilitate to buy for some of the hospitals to be able to take care of infants, imagine losing your house and you have newborn babies at home. You need to be able to provide for them. The District Governor of the Year Award goes to Gus Pantelides from Florida. Accepting on his behalf is Jim Sirkos [phonetic]. And for those of you that can't picture what Gus looks like, he thinks it's Magnum P.I.

Brothers, I'm going to give my report. It's great. AHEPA is great. Z, you're going to pinch me in the ass if I can't get through this. All right, so we start the yea. We go to the Blue Dream event in the Hamptons. Get the phone call from Father Alex. AHEPA needs representation here. Went out, raised $5,000. We had representation there. And we got to work for the Navy SEALs to help support Trident House, and Trident House is where the SEALs' families go when they've lost their SEAL.

And that's where the military gives them all the benefits, emotional, financial, work, all kinds of things, fantastic. And I had a moment of a flashback because one of the SEALs that was there was Commander Hector Delgado, who served with me on two missions in Asadabad, in Afghanistan in 2004. Just shows you how small this world is. Then we have Hurricane Harvey. We already had it set up that I was going to be at the Pan-Ikarian Convention to be the keynote speaker, to talk about AHEPA.

During that four-day convention, I carved out two days to go down to Houston to be with Anthony, because that devastation needed an immediate response. And you all responded. We had chapters, we had districts that donated money. We got a ton of Home Depot cards. It was just absolutely fantastic.

Before we had the district governors' conference, we had established the concept of regional membership teams. That idea came from Brother Jimmy Kokotas. We had every supreme governor form a committee with the district governors and at least two PDGs in each one of the districts that they represented. And I got to tell you, the region five supreme governor did a fantastic job keeping everyone in the loop, informing not only the Supreme Lodge, but informing all the district governors when they were falling short. That was very important. Craig did an outstanding job there, and I greatly appreciate your service.

All the supreme governors did a pretty good job. Some had bigger challenges than others. I would say that Brother Alfred Barich, where are you at, Doc? By landmass alone, he has the largest region. By personalities alone, he has the most challenges. But we are all brothers, and we work together. And I thank you for everything that you did this year with us.

Now what we did membership-wise is this year with this regional team concept, because it's a short fuse from the end of the convention to December 31st, so the low-hanging fruit to go after is always reinstatements. That's where the priority should be. And then you go after new initiations after January 1. And that's what we did, and that's why we grew the membership, which I'm very pleased to say that not only did we grow the membership, we decreased the amount by percentage of total of the lifetime members as a total membership. That's significant because that means more of the members are paying per capita to their chapters or districts and to headquarters. That's an important point from a financial standing.

We had significant events throughout. We were asked by the US State Department to host a state dinner for Prime Minister Tsipras, absolutely fantastic. We held workshops. We had the district governors' conference. We had events throughout the year. And one of the things that I wanted to do was I wanted to reach out across the domain in the United States. And one of the best ways to do that in our opinion was to have regional banquets.

So the folks in district 20 took the lead under Supreme Governor George Booras to set up the first regional banquet in LA. It was an outstanding event, an outstanding workshop. The workshop was well-attended. The banquet was very, how do I say, the camaraderie was excellent. The sharing of ideas was excellent. It was just a fabulous, fabulous event. The next regional banquet we wanted was in Dallas. And each one of them, we're going to build up throughout the year. And in Dallas we honored heroes that helped on the Harvey relief and a father and son who combined had been in AHEPA for 70 years. That's fantastic to be able to do that, 'cause one of the things we don't do enough of is honor all of you that do great works throughout the year.

The next regional banquet we held was in Columbus, Ohio. We did it at the State Capital. It was pretty intoxicating to be inside the State Capital, having that venue of classic Greek architecture. For those of you that do not know, one of the reasons we chose the capital of Ohio is because Austin in Ohio and Columbus are the two capitals that have the most Greek architecture in them. So to be in there with the columns, to be in there with the marble was just phenomenal. That event, we raised money. We went out, and we got sponsors for the dinner. No one had to buy a ticket to get in. Dinner was on us; donations were on them. That was the motto. And we raised over $25,000. Half that money went to the Sons and Maids, and the other half went to the Modern Greek Language Program at Ohio State University. That was significant. We know we can do more.

If you go back to Orlando a year ago, what we talked about was having a focus on our brand, having a focus on being with different Hellenic organizations. Obviously membership, working with the Daughters, supporting the junior orders. Everything that we've tried to do this year has been focused on our brand. And if you look the level of respect we receive when we go to AHC, when we go to our AHI, when we go to THI, when we go to the Pan-Ikarian, no matter where we go, we are shown tremendous respect, always offered an opportunity to lead a discussion. We're invited to so many things to participate, not to just show up. And that's what we have to do every day in our chapters and our districts. We have to participate, not just show up.

So many chapters do so many significant things. We can motivate other chapters if we just share some of the messages, some of the successes that we have. I look at what's going on in Michigan. I can't believe I'm saying Michigan twice 'cause they don't like Michigan. But I look at what they do in Flint. The relief efforts don't stop. They just did another truckload of milk up there for the kids. I mean it's phenomenal. We each can find something in our own communities that we can effect a positive change on. And that's really what AHEPA is about. It's not about meeting up with a couple of people to have a drink. It's not about meeting up with a couple of people to gossip. It's about making effective positive change in the communities in which we live. And that that's what we have to do. And again I'll say it. AHEPA is great because we do a great job at that.

It's amazing how large we are when you look just from a geographic stance. When I look at what's been done in Bulgaria, when I look at what's been done in Greece, when I look at what's been done throughout Brussels, Germany, and Cyprus, it's just amazing. The people that we have in our leadership positions are very well-respected in their countries, in their communities. And that's a key; that's what we always want to have. We want to have the right people in the right place, and we are blessed with that. We have an opportunity before us to continue to grow the Order of AHEPA. And you'll see later they're going to put up the new website. You can see some of the initiatives that have gone through. You're going to see opportunities. Obviously the Greek fires, that's an opportunity for us to respond.

We can continue to grow and be meaningful and significant in many areas. And we need to honor things that are traditional. If I look at what Paul Macropoulos has done with the New York Greek Independence Day Parade as the chair, I think it's amazing how you're able to pull so many groups together, and amazing that, I'm amazed how it starts on time with that many Greeks in one room fighting over one doughnut before they get in line. Just, that's amazing.

But we do things as a team. Everything is going to be done as a team. Whether it's a supreme president, district governor, chapter president, you have to have your team in place. If it were not for Brother Kazounas [phonetic], if it were not for Brother Galanis coming with me to the enthronement of Metropolate Nathaniel [phonetic], if it were not for Past Supreme President Frangos coming down to Columbus for the regional banquet, if it were not for Past Supreme President Ike Gulas, who gave me constant advice and would chastise me about not rooting for Alabama during the fall, if it wasn't for Nick Karacostas, all the past supreme presidents have been outstanding for me. They helped the order by helping the supreme president.

The shoes I had to fill falling in behind Andy Zachariades, did I come close that time? I had big shoes to fill. And what we've been trying to do is continuity and unity. You've all heard about unity. And I think we have AHEPA going in one direction. I think it's the same direction. And I think we have the team that's going to take us to greater heights. I think we're all going to support the next Supreme Lodge. And what Andy has been to me, I hope to be for George Loucas. I'm just going to say AHEPA is great. I love you all. Thank you for the opportunity to serve this great order.

MR. FRANK MANIOS: Mr. President, Mr. President, Mr. President. Mr. President, Carl Hollister, Frank Manios, Warren, Ohio, past supreme president. I take this microphone, and I want to congratulate our Supreme President Carl Hollister for his services, his yeoman services throughout this past year. Believe me, I know I wasn't there with him, but I know from past experience that he gave of his talents, and he gave of his treasury. And I'll tell you in an old Greek way, he kept us [foreign audio 01:34:17 –01:34:18] throughout his presidency. And I want to personally congratulate him, but I also want to thank him personally for his services to our order. Thank you, and [foreign audio 01:34:29 – 01:34:30].

MR. ANDY ZACHARIADES: Mr. Chairman.

MR. STASIOS: Yes, Brother Andy, Past Supreme President Zachariades.

MR. ZACHARIADES: I rise a point of privilege. When Brother Paul took over, he took the baton. It was a difficult time 'cause our brother was, vice president - - was ill. And Brother Paul stepped up. He took the baton, and he took our organization to heights that we never thought before. So I rise as he served with me, and I will congratulate him for not missing a step, for taking us to a place where we never thought we'll be here today. Brother Paul, I love you, job well done.

MR. HOLLISTER: Thank you. Brothers, brothers, brothers, I'm going to recognize Taso, and then I've got to make an announcement, and then I have to get on a call with the ambassador. Brother Taso.

MR. TASO KALANTZIS: Good morning. Brothers, on behalf of this district number 11, who are very proud, who are very thankful, we thank you Brother, President, Brother Supreme President Carl Hollister for the excellent, excellent job that you perform for our order. Thank you my friend. Good luck to you.

MR. HOLLISTER: Thank you. Thank you. Brothers, you know we have brothers and sisters in crisis in Greece. Okay. The death or continues to mount. The amount of property damage is significant. There are 175 burn victims that are waiting for treatment. So we are working with the US government. I'm going to pop on a call here with the ambassador, and then we're all going to listen to the ambassador. We're going to Skype in at 12:30 with him. And at 12:30, that's not Greek time, that's 12:30, I want to thank some brothers that have been stepping up. The Loucas Law Firm gave us $1,000 this morning for Greek fire relief. Brother Lou Katzos [phonetic] stepped up and wrote a check for $5,000. There's no reason we cannot leave today with 100,000 in pledges.

Our website actually crashed last night because so many people were on making donations. And Constantine and Andrew were quick, Johnny on the spot, got it back up. It's working very efficiently right now. So please encourage your brothers to be making some contributions online. It's vital. I'm going to save some things for tonight. But AHEPA is great. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: We want to thank both our Canadian president and our supreme president for their very emotional and detailed reports. We could feel the enthusiasm, the love for AHEPA that they both shared with us this morning. Picking up on the supreme president's last comments as far as contributions to the AHEPA fire relief effort, if there are any other brothers, chapters, districts that want to make a pledge or a contribution, I ask that you see our convention Vice Chair Dr. Z to accept those pledges. Before we move onto the nominations I still, we still have two committees to enter their reports for the record. I call on Brother, Past Supreme Governor Phil Vogis who at the last minute has accepted to be the resolutions chair. I ask that you hold down your conversation so you can hear the brother, and so it can be entered in the record, and we can move on as expeditiously as possible. [Foreign audio 01:39:40 – 01:39:43].

MR. PHIL VOGIS: Thank you for coming and attending this session on my behalf. Good morning everyone. I have been asked to provide you the two resolutions that we have received from the committee. However, the committee met and decided to make a slight revision. Therefore I called upon our attorney, Brother Lou. Brother Lou, would you come up to the podium to read the resolutions? Brother Lou is our vice chairman. Brother George Hanos, president of chapter 455, Brother Wynn Storton, district governor 20, and Brother Bob Fourniadis is district five treasure. We have two resolutions that we will read to you, and we look for your total support. I'm little bit nervous because yesterday I attended that commission, that Hellenic commission, and my blood pressure went up the roof. I had to take two pills. So Brother Lou.

MR. LOU KAZTOS: Good morning everyone. I'm a member of the committee, and since I'm the one with the laptop, I have the resolutions here. Let me read Resolution number one on behalf of the committee. And it reads as follows. Whereas within the Order of AHEPA, the AHEPA Hellenic History Tournament has enjoyed great success over the span of nine years, originating with Yankee District Seven in 2008. Whereas the AHEPA Hellenic History Tournament has since grown, adding three regional rounds, including Chicago, Illinois, New Jersey, and Toronto, Ontario, and concluding with an international championship tournament held annually at the AHEPA Supreme Convention starting in 2017. Be it resolved that each district adopt and implement a regional round of the AHEPA Hellenic History Tournament and expand the promotion of Hellenism through education of our youth and attendees of our communities.

MR. VOGIS: We'd like a motion to accept this resolution.

MR. STASIOS: Please step to the mic and identify your name, brother, and your chapter for the record.

MR. COSMOS MARANDOS: Cosmos Marandos, chapter 35, district nine, Nashua, New Hampshire, current Board of Trustees. I so move the motion.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, brother. Is there a second to the motion? Past Canadian president, yes brother--

MR. KEN MATZIORINIS: [Interposing] Past Canadian President Matziorinis, CJ seven, district 23. I second the motion.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. The motion has been made and seconded. Any discussion? Hearing and seeing none, I call the question. All those in--

MR. PETER CERISE: [Interposing] Peter Cerise, district 20, chapter 454. This is as a zone, not individual districts, am I correct? This is the…

MR. STASIOS: He said zones and not districts.

MR. VOGIS: No, districts.

MR. STASIOS: He said districts.

MR. CERISE: Each district?

MR. VOGIS: Each district.

MR. CERISE: Each district have a history?

MR. VOGIS: That is correct. It encompasses the entire Order of AHEPA.

MR. CERISE: Oh, okay.

MR. STASIOS: Our parliamentarian has instructed the chair since it came from a committee we don't need a second. So the motion has been brought forward by the committee. We've had a chance for questions or discussion. Seeing no others, I call the question. All those in favor, say aye.

[Ayes heard]

MR. STASIOS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Unanimously accepted by the brothers. Thank you.

MR. VOGIS: Thank you, brothers. We have the second resolution that Brother Lou will read to you.

MR. KATZOS: Thank you. We've labeled this resolution number two, and it's very short. Whereas the winners of the national championship tournaments of the AHEPA Hellenic History Tournament receive the national tournament cup, be it resolved that the name of the cup be named the Nicolas Nikas International Championship Cup, to honor the founder and originator of the AHEPA Hellenic History Tournament.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. So the motion has come from the committee. Any questions or concerns at this time?

MR. MATZIORINIS: I'd like to move the motion. Ken Matziorinis, past Canadian president, CJ seven, district 23.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. So the motion has come from a committee. It is accepted by the chair. All those in favor say aye.

[Ayes heard]

MR. STASIOS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Unanimously accepted, thank you.

MR. VOGIS: I would like to ask Brother Nick Nikas has to stand if he's in the assembly. I understand he's working with a tournament. Brothers, thank you very much.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much, Brother Phil. We thank you for your leadership of this effort. I'm Past Supreme President Brother Ike Gulas, appreciate his patience in dealing with me this week. He's going to give us the report on Cooley's Anemia Committee. Thank you.

MR. IKE GULAS: Hello, brothers. AHEPA does so many things so well. We respond to crisis like the fires in Greece like we did in 2007. To me that's a sprint. The Cooley's Anemia Committee, which has been around since the fifties, is a marathon. We have raised millions of dollars, raised awareness to bring this disease that affects Greeks, Italians, people of Mediterranean heritage, to the forefront.

And we're almost to the finish line. There are several studies that are being undertaken now with gene therapy, different forms of it, where actually thalassemia has been cured. It's still in the trial phases, and we don't know if there are any long-term effects. But several patients have benefited from the modern research and gene therapy. And as Cooley's Anemia chairman and somebody who has a son that has Cooley's Anemia, believe me, we followed very closely. This past year we also gave money to St. Jude. St. Jude is one of the researchers that are working on current thalassemia. We've supported them for a long time, but I think it's time that we step up a little bit more and support them a little bit more because they're making advancements.

And I really think there's a light at the end of the tunnel. But to get there, we need to raise more money. And I know everybody gets up here and says we got to raise money. It's not that hard. I have canisters in the back of the room. We've been doing this for 50 years. And some of the chapters are fantastic at putting these canisters out around their communities and then sending them in. Each one holds about 200, $250 and change. And I ask all of you to take some, take them back home with you, put them out. When they fill up, send them to headquarters. I mean that's the easiest thing you can do, and it's greatly appreciated.

In the meantime, we're working to get AHEPA in the forefront as far as Cooley's Anemia and what we do, Andrew Kaffes and I have been following a bill that was presented and passed on the Senate floor yesterday involving sickle-cell. Republican Congress, I mean Senator from South Carolina put forward a bill, and it was passed. Andrew and I are going to see about maybe adding a rider to that bill where they talk about thalassemia and thalassemia research. And we're also going to try to get in front of the health committee and testify this next year. So I thank all of you that support Cooley's. I urge you to continue it because like I said, what greater testament to the Order of AHEPA for us to be around when we actually cure this disease which has affected our people for thousands of years. So I appreciate it and look forward to seeing you next year. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you, Brother Ike. We appreciate your leadership on this committee, and we ask the brothers here in the convention hall to please take some of the canisters back with you. It's an easy way to help raise money for this cause. Thank you very much. So at this time if I'm not mistaken, I think I've accepted all of the reports from all the committees that are scheduled to reports. I think at this time we'll be moving onto nominations for our officers. So we'll start at, we're at nominations for officers.

MALE VOICE 4: Mr. Chair, the suggestion to the chair would be if we could do the supreme governors regions one through eight first, and then we will address the balance of the nominees.

MR. STASIOS: Right. And when the connection understands that we have a hard stop today because of the Skype call with the ambassador so yes, we'll start with the, yeah, 12:30 is the hard stop, so we'll start with the supreme governors. Are there any nominations for the supreme governors? Region number one.

MALE VOICE 4: What I'm suggesting is each, an individual from each region that knows what's going on in that region, please come forward. So let's wake up. Let the record show that I'm actually here. You didn't see me because I'm too short apparently. Is that what it is? I mean that's unbelievable. Speak evil of no one.

MR. STASIOS: Yes.

MALE VOICE 4: Whatever happened to that? I rise to nominate Brother Pete Nassos for the position of supreme governor, region one. He is currently the supreme governor of region one. He is from the Mother Lodge chapter number one, Atlanta, Georgia. He's done a fine job, and he would be a fine addition to the Supreme Lodge, so I nominate Brother Pete Nassos.

MR. STASIOS: Brother Pete Nassos has been nominated for region one. Is there a second?

MR. GULAS: Ike Gulas from chapter three, district one. Second Pete Nassos' nomination.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much brother. We have a nomination and a second. Is there any discussion? Any other nominations? Any other nominations? Any other nominations? Not hearing any, we'll close the nominations for region one supreme governor and move to region two supreme governor.

MR. LARRY ODZAK: Name is Larry Odzak of chapter 277. I have a great pleasure and honor to nominate for the supreme governor of region two, Brother George Papaspyrou. George has made an excellent start in the AHEPA many, many years ago and has continued to grow and to become better at his job. And that's saying a lot actually. And he's one of the best people that I can think of and that my chapter and others can think of in North Carolina and the rest of the region to be our next supreme governor. Thank you.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. The name of Brother George Papaspyrou has been nominated. Is there a second from region two?

MR. ANGELO TOUTSI: Angelo Toutsi, chapter 438. I second the motion to nominate him. And he's been an excellent governor, past treasurer, and contributor to the district.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much. Any other nominations for region two supreme governor? Any other nominations, any other nominations? Hearing none, nominations are closed. We'll now move to region three. Is there a nomination for supreme governor, region three?

MALE VOICE 5: Mr. Chairman, it's a pleasure. Representative, Region number three, to nominate an individual for supreme governor who was the one person that was instrumental in the Service Dogs for Warriors program. And he has done an excellent job as everybody knows in that capacity. He's done an excellent job in our district and in this chapter, and it gives me great pleasure to nominate for the office of supreme governor none other than the guy that doesn't talk too much, George Karatzis [phonetic] for supreme governor.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. Is there a second to the nomination? I yield to the supreme governor to…

MALE VOICE 5: Oh, can I do this?

MALE VOICE 6: Wait a minute, Mr. Chairman. There's an argument going on.

MALE VOICE 5: No, no, no.

MR. STASIOS: Is there a second to the nomination?

MR. TOM DUSHAS: Yes I would. Tom Dushas, past supreme governor of region three. It gives me great pleasure to second the nomination. And since I'm from New York from district six, I thought it was appropriate to do it. And maybe Phil Vogis can do a third.

MR. STASIOS: We have a nomination of Brother George Karatzis as the supreme governor for region two. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? I stand corrected. Region three, any other nominations? Do you rise to make another nomination?

MR. JIM KARAMANOS: Jim Karamanos [phonetic], Monroe chapter number 75 of New Brunswick, New Jersey, not Piscataway, district five, which encompasses New Jersey and Delaware. I move the nominations be closed for the office of supreme governor in the - - region.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. There's been a motion to close nominations. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor?

[Ayes heard]

MR. STASIOS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Hearing none, we we'll move onto region four. Is there a nomination for supreme governor for region four? Is there a nomination for supreme governor, region four? Yes, brother. Please step to the mic as quickly as you can. Thank you.

MR. DALTON RESPASS: Wear me out, brother. Dalton Respass, district eight, chapter 80. I'd like to stand--what?

MR. STASIOS: Yes, brother?

MR. RESPASS: And present the name of Brother Jack Isaac, who is our current supreme governor. We'd like to have him work with us again. Thank you brother.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. Brother Jack Isaac has been nominated for supreme governor, region four. Is there a second?

MR. NICK CALLAN: Nick Callan [phonetic], chapter 35, Nashua, New Hampshire, district number nine. I wholeheartedly second the motion of Jack Isaac for region four as Supreme Governor.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you. So it's been moved and seconded. Are there any other nominations for supreme governor region four? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, we will close it and move to region five, supreme governor, region five, Yes, Mr. Supreme President?

MR. HOLLISTER: Carl Hollister, supreme president, Order of AHEPA. I am in region five, Buckeye District 11. We share the region with that region up north or that district up north, as Woody Hayes would say. I want to nominate Craig Theros [phonetic] for the position of supreme governor, region five. He's an outstanding human being, an outstanding athlete, an outstanding AHEPAN. And he has tremendous leadership skills that we need in that region. I nominate Craig Theros.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you Brother Supreme President. Brother Craig Theros has been nominated. Is there a second? From the microphone please.

MR. PHILLIP FRANGOS: I do not mean in any way to take the - -.

MR. STASIOS: Yes brother, past supreme president Phillip--

MR. FRANGOS: [Interposing] Phillip Frangos, past supreme president, district ten, Order of AHEPA. I have to, to my two supreme presidents here, show that there is unanimity. We talk about unity of the parties in the AHEPA. There is unity in this nomination between Michigan and Ohio. Those Ohioans finally realized our football teams are not that good. They've got, they've got us beat this time, but we do have some good talent, and that is manifested by none other than Brother Craig Theros, and I'm honored to second his nomination.

MR. STASIOS: Thank you very much. Brother, Supreme Governor Craig Theros has been nominated. Are there any other nominations for supreme governor, region five? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, nominations are closed. We move to region six. Is there any nominations? Yes, brother.

MALE VOICE 7: Thank you brother.

[END 2018\_Supreme\_Convention\_July\_23\_-\_27\_PART\_7.mp3]

[START 2018\_Supreme\_Convention\_July\_23\_-\_27\_PART\_8.mp3]

MR. LOUIS ATSAVES: Louis Atsaves, Northshore chapter 94. It is my distinct honor and privilege to nominate at this time for Supreme Governor for our region 6, Brother Peter Lekas. Brother Lekas has served as District Governor for several terms in our region. He has served in an exemplary fashion. He has also been the President of our chapter. Brother Peter's family and my family go way back to when we were both little tykes. My father was President of the Parish Council of St. Demetrius in Chicago. His father was Vice-President of the Parish Council at that time. So, just to give you an idea how closely we've worked together.

Peter is a facilitator, he is a unifier, he is someone who always finds a solution to every problem and it is with great pride and joy I place his name into nomination today.

MR. NICK AROUTZIDIS: Thank you very much, is there a second.

MR. DON VANOVER: Don Vanover, District 14, chapter 66, current Supreme Governor of region 6. I second the motion.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, the nominations been made and seconded. Are there any other nominations for region 6, Supreme Governor?

MR. PANOS NIARCHOS: Mr. Chairman, I rise too. This is Panos Niarchos, current District 12 Governor, chapter 232, Indianapolis. I rise to nominate Brother Sam Benjamin for the region 6. Sam is from District 12, chapter 78. He is a very dedicated AHEPA, a 50-year member. Our first District Governor, first chapter President. Last year he was the AHEPAn of the year, the national AHEPAn of the year.

He single handily raised $50,000 for St. Nicholas shrine. He is instrumental with - - $50,000 for the warrior dog. Sam participates in his charity's functions. He reads just about every district of our regions for their district conventions. And I'm very proud to nominate Brother Sam Benjamin for region 6 Supreme Governor. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, is there a second?

MR. TOM GOBER: Tom Gober [phonetic], past Supreme Treasurer, District 12, - - chapter 157. I second that nomination.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. Nomination has been made and seconded. Any other nominations for Supreme Governor region 6? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations have been closed. We now move to region 7. Yes, please.

MALE VOICE 2: Brothers, I want to read you a release to President Erdiwan [phonetic] and the Turkish government. I have a message on behalf of the President of the United States of America. Release Pastor Andrew Brunson [phonetic] now or be prepared to face the consequences.

If Turkey does not take immediate action to free this innocent man of faith and send him home to America; the United States will impose significant sanctions on Turkey until Pastor Andrew Brunson is free. As put out by Vice President Pence on behalf of the U.S. government. Don't ever doubt we don't have a voice in Washington.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you very much for that important announcement. I now ask for nominations for Supreme Governor for region 7, any nominations? Yes, brother.

MR. CHRIS KAITSON: Good morning brothers, Chris Kaitson, Houston, Texas, Alexander the Great, chapter number 29 and also District Governor of District 16.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Brothers, please give the Brother the mic, your attention, thank you.

MR. KAITSON: It gives me great honor to nominate an individual who's been a lifetime member of AHEPA. That has achieved every office possible in the chapter, district. Has served as Supreme Governor in the past. He continues to serve his chapter and the region. He served on the Leadership Committee of the Hurricane Harvey relief fund that devastated the Gulf coast.

He also serves on the District Convention Committee which was just held last month. As well as the Mid-Year Conference, which was held six months earlier. He's been very active and it gives me great honor to nominate Nick Dixie for Supreme Governor.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, is there a second to the nomination?

MR. GEORGE POLODOORS: George Polodoors [phonetic], District 16, chapter 29. I second the nomination for Nick Dixie. He's probably the longest serving Supreme Governor right now and we're going to keep him serving. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. Brother Nick Dixie has been nominated. Are there any other nominations for region 7 Supreme Governor? Any other nominations? Any other nominations? Hearing none, nominations are closed. We move now to region 8, Supreme Governor region 8. Any nominations?

MR. JIM DUDAKAS: Jim Dudakas [phonetic], District 20 Governor, proud member of Tri-City chapter 454. I'd like to nominate a man who has been a past District Governor, District Governor of the year. He's currently the District AHEPAn of the year, he sits on multiple committees. He sat as multiple offices at his chapter and the district. I am so proud to nominate a man who's very impactful in what he does. He's proven to be in a short period of time, a great mentor and friend. I nominate Wynn Storton for Supreme Governor of region 8.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Is there a second to the nomination?

MR. ANDY GARANTINO: Andy Garantino [phonetic], past Supreme Secretary. It is my great pleasure to second the motion.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, the nomination has been seconded. Our current Supreme Governor of region 8.

MR. GEORGE BOORAS: George Booras, as current Supreme Governor of region 8, I would also like to second that nomination. I have known and worked with Wynn for a number of years. Although I'm in District 21 and Wynn is in District 20, we are truly brothers in AHEPA. I have great respect for Wynn's leadership and his ability to get the job done. There's no finer person that we could have as Supreme Governor for our region.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. Brother Wynn Storton has been nominated. Are there any other nominations for Supreme Governor, region 8? Any other nominations? Any other nominations? Hearing none, nominations are closed. Thank you very much, we now move onto, we're going to go in reverse order with the Supreme Counselor, is that next? Athletic Director, okay.

MR. GEORGE HORIATES: Mr. Chair? George Horiates, Camden chapter 69. We're from south Jersey, we're from south Jersey.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Please continue.

MR. HORIATES: I rise to nominate for the Board of Auditors, Brother Chris Gallus [phonetic] on behalf of both parties together in what we've discussed over the last few days. Brother Chris is an outstanding individual having previously served on the Board of Auditors. We believe it appropriate to have Brother Chris' services used again in that capacity.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, is there a second?

MR. JIMMY KOKOTAS: Brother Chairmen, I rise to second that nomination of Brother Christopher Gallus. My name is Jimmy Kokotas, I'm the President of the Carl Hollister fan club. For anybody who makes a $10 donation to Greece, you'll be getting a blow-up doll of Carl that you can take home with you after the convention. So, I'd like to second that nomination for Brother Christopher Gallus. He has served us well on the Board of Auditors before. He is a CPA, so he's more than qualified and his family has a long-standing wonderful tradition in the order of AHEPA. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. So, the Brother Chris Gallus has been nominated. Any other nominations? Any other nominations? Hearing none, we'll move on.

MR. HORIATES: Okay, we're going to move onto the AHEPA Board of Trustees. It's my honor to nominate on behalf of both parties, I think universally accepted on behalf of all of us as AHEPAns. A great man, past Supreme President, former Chair of the Board of Trustees; Brother Nick Caracostas.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. Brother Nick Caracostas has been nominated, is there a second? Yes, brother, please state your name.

MR. KOKOTAS: Jimmy Kokotas, Coney Island chapter 200. Once again, President of the Carl Hollister fan club. Before I was the President of the Carl Hollister fan club, I was the President of the Nick Caracostas fan club. As there are many people here that are members. I second the motion or the nomination, I should say. I finer AHEPAn, we do not have for those of you who have not been on the Supreme Lodge and have not seen the workings in this organization. Whether he has held a title as Supreme President or any other title that he has held. Nick Caracostas is always there for this organization to help do what's right.

To help everybody in whatever capacity they're serving this organization, sharing his wisdom and his guidance. Without a doubt, he is a continuous unsung hero of this organization. So, I proudly rise to second that nomination.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you very much. Are there any other nominations?

MR. HORIATES: There are two positions open Mr. Chair. The other position that is open. On behalf of the Vice-President of the Carl Hollister fan club, I rise to nominate Brother Hollister. I know it's a love affair with him this week. But he's not going to be yesterday's pizza tomorrow. What we want him to do is also serve on the Board of Trustees. He's done an impeccable job in terms of fundraising. We all know that. I couldn't be prouder of him, I couldn't be prouder of him. So, I rise on behalf of both parties to nominate Brother Carl.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, is there a second?

MR. KARACOSTAS: Good morning brothers, Mr. Chair, Nick Karacostas, past Supreme President, past Chairman of the Board. It's my honor to rise to second this nomination on behalf of Brother Carl Hollister. You've all seen the great work that he did this year. There's no one more deserving than the accolades that we've placed upon him this whole week. But we don't want him to retire. We want him to continue these great works. What better way to have continuity and to keep Carl working on behalf of a better AHEPA than to have him on the Board of Trustees. So, I proudly second the nomination. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you Brother Nick. So, there's two positions open on the Board of Trustees.

MR. PHILLIP FRANGOS: Again, Mr. Chairman, if I may impose. Phillip Frangos, past Supreme President. Five years ago, a tremendous evolution for the fraternity began with the agreement of unity and five individuals were anointed as the next five to be honored by you as Supreme President. I had the privilege and honor of being the first. Along with John Galanis and Andy Zachariades and George Loucas and Carl Hollister, we had a tremendous team. I know I speak for John Galanis too that we were privileged to be able to sit down at the table and work with the talents of people like Andy Zachariades and Carl Hollister.

When Carl became President this year, I predicted great things for him. As I said before, it's hard for somebody from Michigan to recognize the talents. But dammit Carl, you've been a hell of a President and I don't care if Ohio State beats Michigan ten years in a row. As long as we have you, all is well with the world. And by the way, I have a picture in my phone that was taken, he's even got my little grandson as a little Buckeye. Anybody that wants to see the picture, it's on there. God bless you Carl.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, so we have two nominations for the Board of Trustees. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Current and last call, any other nominations? Hearing none, we close the nominations for the Board of Trustees.

MR. HORIATES: Mr. Chair, continuing on. We have the Supreme Athletic Director. I would like to have our son's advisor, Brother Sandy Papadopoulos on behalf of both the parties again. And on behalf of all of us for this position.

MR. SANDY PAPADOPOULOS: Thank you brothers, Sandy Papadopoulos, National Sons Advisor, mother lodge chapter number 1, Atlanta, Georgia. I have no fan club affiliation. Just want to make sure everybody knows that. I rise to nominate or rise as high as I can to nominate a very, very dear friend. I promised him I won't get too mushy. As you guys all know, as you brothers all know, the athletic department after Doc died, passed away was kind of imbalanced. We had Sprucing's [phonetic] who came in and served us for a couple years.

Then past Supreme President Nigul [phonetic] has tried to ride the ship again. Then, we have the current Athletic Director, Brother Louis Atsaves who has done a fantastic job for the past five years. I do not envy his position at all. What better way to continue the legacy that his brother left in having Chris Atsaves from Chicago, Illinois to step in and actually take over the position of Athletic Director. This man has worked tirelessly in the area of Chicago to make sure that the golf program, the bowling program, everything in Chicago is done right. We consistently have over 30 or 35 golfers at every national event from Chicago because of Chris. He's been my right hand. I've also been the National Golf Director for the AHEPA and he's been my right and left hand at every event. It is my honor to submit the name of Chris Atsaves for Supreme Athletic Director of the order of AHEPA.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, is there a second?

MR. LOUIS ATSAVES: Thank you brother. On behalf of the Supreme National Committee of Athletics and Louis Atsaves, Northshore chapter 94 and my personal relationship with my brother, Chris Atsaves. I rise to second his nomination with great pride. He will do a phenomenal job for us.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, have the nomination of Brother Chris Atsaves for Supreme Athletic Director. Any other nominations? Any other nominations? Hearing none, nominations are closed.

MR. HORIATES: Brother Chair, again, on behalf of the unity, state my name, George Horiate. On behalf of both the parties, the AHEPA first party and the New Horizons Party, I present to you for Supreme Counselor a nomination by our current Supreme Counselor, Brother Demetri Kirkiles.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you.

MR. DEMETRIOS C. KIRKILES: Mr. Chairman, Demetrios C. Kirkiles, current serving Supreme Counselor, order of AHEPA, chapter 394, district 2. It is my honor and pleasure to nominate my brother and friend. Brother Louis Atsaves for the next Supreme Counselor for the order of AHEPA. It is an awesome responsibility since the Supreme Counselor is charged with being responsible as legal advisor of all four bodies of the order of AHEPA. I am confident my brother, Louis Atsaves, is more than up to the task. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, is there a second to the nomination?

MR. GEORGE LOUCAS: Yes, Mr. Chair, George Loucas, Supreme Vice President, chapter 480, Cleveland, Ohio. I rise to second the nomination of brother Louis Atsaves as Supreme Counselor. When I took my role as Supreme Counselor, I faced a very difficult task dealing with AHEPA athletics. It was an unfavorable task that I had to carry out. And I looked to.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Excuse me brother, one moment. May I ask the other brothers in the room that are having conversations to either step out in the hall or hold it down in due respect for the process. Yes brother.

MR. LOUCAS: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I look to Louis Atsaves for advice and counsel. He was there to provide it and it was wise counsel and helped shepherd us through that terrible time. Today, it's floating in the right direction, that ship. Then when I needed to file a lawsuit in Chicago on behalf of Prince, the deceased singer, I was able to call upon Louis Atsaves in Chicago as a brother but also as a professional. He's always there no matter what the call entails. That's somebody upon whom we all may rely. Thank you, brothers.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, so we have a nomination and a second for Brother Louis Atsaves as Supreme Counselor. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? The nominations are closed.

MR. HORIATES: Mr. Chair, for the office of Canadian President, the parties do have an agreement with regards to that. The entire half the continent has an agreement and I would like to introduce for a nominating speech; our current Chair of the Board of Trustees, former Canadian President, Brother Nick Aroutzidis [phonetic].

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Brother?

MR. NICK AROUTZIDIS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to nominate Christos Argiriou for the Canadian President for the following year. Christos has done a great job not only for Canada but the AHEPA as a whole. So, I'm very proud of him and I wish him good luck for the next year.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you very much. Brother Christos Argiriou has been nominated, is there a second?

MR. KEN MATCHARANIES: Yes, there is a second term. Ken Matcharanies [phonetic], past Canadian President, chapter 007, district 23. It also gives me the utmost pleasure and pride to second the nomination of Brother Nick Aroutzidis for the position of Canadian President, Christos Argiriou. As Brother Nick said, he's done good. Not only for the Canadian domain of which we are immensely proud of. But for the entire AHEPA domain and Hellenism. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you brother. Are there any other nominations for the office of Canadian President? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations are closed.

MR. HORIATES: Mr. Chair?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes?

MR. HORIATES: Moving along, we have for the office of Supreme Treasurer of the order of AHEPA. Again, by consensus of the parties. It is my honor, Mr. Chair, to place into nomination, the name of George Booras. Current Supreme Governor and the man that has been taking the minutes for you all weekend long. Many of you have been out here drinking, having fun, volleyball but poor Brother George has been stuck on that stage writing everything that we say. It's my honor, Brother George, to nominate you on behalf of all of us for the office of Supreme Treasurer.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Brother George Booras has been nominated. Is there a second?

MR. KARACOSTAS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, Nick Karacostas, past Supreme President. I rise to second the nomination for our good friend and brother from the west coast, George Booras. He's a dedicated AHEPAn. He's worked very diligently on the west coast and now he has done a great job as Supreme Governor. As the outgoing Supreme Governor and it would be an honor for us to have him as our next Supreme Treasurer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, thank you. Brother George Booras' name has been placed in nomination. Are there any other nominations for the office of Supreme Treasurer?

MALE VOICE 3: I'd like to just say one word about George Booras, Brother George. It was voted unanimously at our most recent western regional district convention that George was our favorite son. The way he's been engaged, soft spoken and carries a big stick. I have nothing but respect for you Brother George. You've been a friend, you've been a good coach and I wish you all the success in the world on the Supreme Lodge. On behalf of district 20.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. Are there any other nominations for the office of Supreme Treasurer? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, nominations are closed.

MR. HORIATES: For the office of Supreme Secretary, by agreement, Brother Zachariades is pushing me away from the microphone.

MR. ANDREW ZACHARIADES: Mr. Chairman, brothers of our national convention here, Atlantic City. I rise to nominate a brother AHEPAn who has served this organization in many capacities. I've worked with him for many years in my district on a district lodge. As Chairman of 5th district, AHEPA cancer research foundation. Equally and very importantly as a past Supreme Counselor of our great organization.

However, he has proven his leadership skills over the past number of years as he has guided us along with other brothers in forming harmony and peace after many years of fighting within our organization. He has shown his skills, his patience, his temperament. That he is truly qualified to continue working up on the Supreme Lodge. It is my honor and privilege to put in the nomination for Supreme Secretary, Brother George Horiates.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. Is there a second to the nomination of Brother Horiates?

MR. CARL HOLLISTER: Yes, Carl Hollister, Supreme President, order of AHEPA. Brothers, I rise to second the nomination of an individual who wears Hellenism on his sleeves. Who goes to no distance, is limitless on what he will do for the order of AHEPA. For someone that was one of the key planners of this convention. For someone that's been a key planner for previous conventions. For someone that has served in so many capacities at the district level, the national level. Who along with Jim Scofield created unity for the order of AHEPA.

For someone who I don't just call him a brother, he's my cousin. George Horiates should be the next Supreme Secretary, order of AHEPA.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. Brother George Horiates has been nominated for the office of Supreme Secretary. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations are closed.

MR. HORIATES: Mr. Chairman, continuing on with the nominations for the office of Supreme Vice President. I rise to nominate one of my brothers from my district who has been by my side for the last 15 years. He's from Brooklyn, New York. He's literally served in every position in his chapter, in every position for our district. He's two term District Governor. He was a two turn Supreme Governor. He truly exemplifies the meaning of AHEPA brother. I place the nomination of Brother Jimmy Kokotas for the office of Supreme Vice President.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Brother Jimmy Kokotas has been nominated for the office of Supreme Vice President. Is there a second?

MR. HOLLISTER: Brothers, Carl Hollister, Supreme President, Jimmy Kokotas fan club. I rise to second the nomination of an individual that I've gotten to know through his hard work. Through his dedication. Through his fundraising. For all that he's done. For everything that he has done for the order of AHEPA at the district level, the region level and at the national level. He literally is one of the handful of folks that will roll up his sleeves and do something. Jimmy gets things done. Jimmy Kokotas should be the Supreme Vice President of the order of AHEPA.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. Brother Jimmy Kokotas has been nominated for the office of Supreme Vice President. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations are closed. Brother?

MR. HORIATES: Mr. Chair, there is one position remaining. However, in due deference to the video Skype that will be occurring and also, due deference to what will be I'm sure glowing reports and responses. With the regards to that position. I ask that we suspend at the present time awaiting that conference call.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. I'll take it under advisement and the Chair decides to, Mr. Supreme President. I think it's a valid point for us to consider. So, we will suspend at this time the process of nominations then to be resumed as soon as the Skype conference is concluded.

MR. HORIATES: Okay brothers, I'm going to make an announcement. Canton, Ohio, chapter 59 just gave us $1,000 for the Greek fires relief. Brother Jim?

JIM: Chapter 161, Orlando, Florida donates $1,000 bucks to the fires - -.

MALE VOICE 4: Mr. Brother Supreme President, - - district 12 donates $500.

MALE VOICE 5: - - chapter 157, district 12, $500.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you brothers. We're having the incoming Skype call, so let's please hold all - -.

MALE VOICE 6: - - Supreme Secretary, member of the 454.

MR. HORIATES: Brothers, we're going to shut down. The Ambassador's going to be on in a moment.

MALE VOICE 6: Should I finish this? Okay, it's my pleasure to announce chapter 454, $1,000.

MALE VOICE 7: Chapter 15, district 2, $500.

MALE VOICE 8: Chapter 195, district 4, $1,000.

MALE VOICE 9: Can you hear me? Okay is it too much? Okay, excellent. Ambassador is just in the other room, he should be here in just a couple minutes. Is this picture okay? Framing? Excellent, alright. I should be there next time. 2020 it's here, 2021? 2021, alright. The Ambassador is here. Should we put him straight on or he'll come and you'll?

MR. HOLLISTER: No, no, put him straight on. We have 300 people in a room here.

MALE VOICE 9: Got it, okay. Hello to everybody from Greece. Alright sir.

MR. AMBASSADOR: Look who's there.

MR. HOLLISTER: Mr. Ambassador, how are you?

MR. AMBASSADOR: Good morning, how are you, great to see you.

MR. HOLLISTER: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today.

MR. AMBASSADOR: No, my pleasure. Before I forget, congratulations on your Founder's Day today. I've been watching everything from the events there in the States. So, I really appreciate the opportunity to dial in for a little bit in the context of what I consider a really strong partnership between the embassy and AHEPA. So, thanks for giving me the opportunity.

MR. HOLLISTER: Outstanding, we appreciate all the work that you do for the Diaspera [phonetic] and for the governments of the United States and Greece.

MR. AMBASSADOR: Thank you, do you want me to give you a little bit of an update on what's been happening here the past few days?

MR. HOLLISTER: Yes, please.

MR. AMBASSADOR: So, first of all, I mean just some atmospherics from what happened on Monday. Most of you know Athens well. So, there were two fires that broke out. The first was a large one which was still burning when I drove through it this morning, around Kineta. So, towards the Peloponnese and towards Corinth from Athens. That is a less populated area but it was of great concern to the government because it's near the big refinery complex. As I said, it was a very large, very hot fire that broke out on Monday afternoon.

The same afternoon around 5:00 or so, a second major fire broke out near Rafina, towards this village of Mati. I think a lot of you know that area because it's when you're driving on the road towards Marathonas and Shinas Beach out of Athens. What happened there was really unprecedented because instead of having the Meltemi winds coming from the north, which are typical. The wind was blowing from the south which meant the fires which started up on Penteli Mountain were going down the hill towards the populated areas and towards the coast. Which is heavily developed there with tourist properties. We were watching this and really amazing, amazing images even before sunset of the flames coming into the populated areas. It was about that time that the winds picked up. Even here at the residence, my wife and I were sort of saying, we need to say a prayer for all these folks in Rafina because the wind was rattling the trees and the roof. We're now getting reports that the wind speed got up to 120 kilometers an hour. So, it was very much a sort of super fire storm. Very, very similar to what happened in my home state in California last year. Where you have this combination of high winds, dry, hot conditions and then fires which moved into residential areas.

The fire itself that came into Mati where the great catastrophe happened was really unprecedented. In having a large brush fire like this in a densely populated area right up against the sea. You've seen all the images and the stories. The causalities are now over 80. I will say there were some heroic actions that evening by the - - services, by the Coast Guard, by the Navy. The Navy called in three ships to pick up people who had run into the sea. I was very proud of the fact that some of what we're using were the Chinook helicopters that the United States provider over the past year or so.

The special - - were using training which we had actually provided. Things like how to do water insertion. They were doing this under high seas, very unpredictable winds and considerable personal risk. There were dozens of people who were pulled from the sea through these rescue missions in the evening. It became very complicated as darkness fell and then there was so much smoke being generated that often times people that had gone into the sea became disoriented and they didn't know where they were swimming to. The stories were that even the Navy as they were trying to do rescue operations and the Coast Guard, they couldn't see people.

Because the smoke was so thick. We were contacted by the government with a request for assistance that evening. I'm very proud of how European command responded. Really a quicker pace, General Scaparati [phonetic] led the effort to re-task some of our ISR. The surveillance resources that UCOMM had to provide overflights. We used some of the M29 observation drones. The ones that have recently been based out of Lunsa [phonetic]. We used a P8 aircraft which were flying out of Simonella, Italy. Again, advanced U.S. Navy surveillance aircraft. - - which is flying also out of Simonella deployed. So, we brought a lot of U.S. military resources to there to answer the government request. I met with Minister - - on Tuesday morning. A very long and good meeting. This is what he described to me of what the military and Coast Guard had been doing. Gave me a briefing of a helicopter flight that he had done of the fire effected areas. It was really pretty horrific.

And also expressed profound appreciation of how quickly the U.S. government as European command responded to this request for assistance. I'm very proud of how - - with our military partners on that. It really was a whole of government, U.S. effort. We're now just focused on recovery. As I said, the fires in Kineta were still burning as of this morning when I was driving down to the Peloponnese at the sea at - -. The Chinook still in operation. But we had some very - - rain storms this afternoon and I think that's probably extinguished most of the fires. Although, it has given rights to some flooding. And I suspect will be our next problem now.

At the humanitarian level, I want to express enormous appreciation for what AHEPA is doing with your fundraising efforts and encourage more of it. But also, the embassy's been involved, we had a - - Navy ship in town this week, the U.S.S. - -. The sailors off of the Mt. Whitney did a clothing drive working with the local NPO here. - - embassy - - participating in blood drives or those that are injured and remained hospitalized. We're continuing to look at what additional assistance we can provide.

We also, I should say, are very proud of technical exchange program between my home state of California, Cal Fire and the Hellenic Fire Services. We began this a year ago and it was really led by people from the Diaspara [phonetic]. By Markus Spinolocous [phonetic] and some of that family and then John Sipoletes [phonetic] from Washington has been a big champion on this. So, we've been working with Cal Fire to get technical assistance and training in exchanges of experiences between California and Greece. Which, again, there's so much complementarian terms of the challenges that we face and environment of change in climate. The last thing I will say is I think for Greece which has - - eight years of economic crisis, an unprecedented refugee crisis and now this, the highest number of casualties in many decades from this kind of a fire disaster. There's a really a sense of society - - taken a - -. But, I've also, as always in Greece been impressed by the resilience, the courage, the strong sense of community.

One of our embassy employees who happens to live, has a vacation home in Mati described the disappearance of his personal boat used by some people to head out to sea on the evening. He was very gracious and said, I don't know if I'll ever see my boat again but I take some solace from the fact that it was used to save lives on that terrible evening. So, that's where we are. Again, we'll appreciate you for what you and the rest of the AHEPA team are leading on this. I'm very much informed - - partnership with - - in September. - - shaping up very, very well.

We're going to have at least one member of Congress, a very large U.S. government commitment, fantastic turnout from corporate America. All of our biggest companies; Microsoft, Coca Cola, Pfizer, Facebook. You name it, Lockheed Martin. A really all-star performance from our big companies. A commitment to putting the best face on America and on our partnership with Greece. So, I hope that helps. You - - any of the team have any questions, I'd be happy to spend a minute or two if that would be helpful.

MR. HOLLISTER: Mr. Ambassador, I think we're doing a pretty good job here raising funds. Our AHEPA family has been very generous. We've just released $50,000. We're probably going to release an additional $50,000 in the next few days. That money though, we want to make sure it gets directed to the NGO's that are on the ground that are productive and efficient. We would like to know, what is the greatest need right now? Which areas should we be prioritizing with the NGO's on where to make sure our dollars are best spent for relief efforts?

MR. AMBASSADOR: Really important question. I think the government has been messaging along several different lines. First of all, there are a lot of people that have to put their lives back together. There's an emergency requirement for non-perishable food stuff, for water. The word has gone out for a blood drive. I think beyond that, the Greek NGO community, just like it did in response to the refugee crisis, it started to pull itself together. What I would suggest Carl, let's stay in touch. I know Basil is already talking to Monica and our public affairs team. We'll be happy to put you in touch with some of the partners that we've been hearing from with their specific requirements.

But what I would emphasize is, the needs are great. There has been a real sense of appreciation for the way the United States specifically has responded to this crisis. And of course, as you and I have talked about so often, AHEPA has a fantastically proud history of stepping up in moments of need. So, I will be happy to stay in touch as the crisis continues to evolve and as the government refines its response and identifies additional requirements. But I think as always in these situations, the hardest part is the transition from emergency relief which draws headlines and everybody wants to be helpful. To helping many, many people try to put their lives back together again.

MR. HOLLISTER: As you know Mr. Ambassador, we will be there for the tip. We will have a team there September 8th. We're looking right now about perhaps sending a team over there sooner to focus on this crisis. What is the capacity for the hotels? With all of the NGO's coming in, you got international Red Cross, what's the capacity to house people that are trying to do relief efforts?

MR. AMBASSADOR: So, I think, Athens is okay right now. We're coming into August as you know. That's the time when so much is booked up. I should say, one of the American companies that's responded really commendably to this crisis has been Air BnB which announced that they are making Air BnB facilities available at no charge to people who are displaced in the fire effected regions. Again, a great example of America corporate volunteerism and the spirit of helping others that is such a defining aspect of our society. I haven't heard any specific constraints on hotels and all of that yet.

I should say also of course, you have your legacy relationship with the AHEPA hospital here in Athens. It would useful I think, also to speak with them. Because some of the people who are survivors, they've got some serious burn cases. I saw the first report of somebody today who died from the burns and smoke inhalation they suffered during the fire. It was, again, what I would emphasize and I wish there was a way I could capture this.

A really unprecedented nature of the fire storm. Temperatures on the order of 1,000 degrees, winds as I said, steady stayed winds of 60 kilometers per hour gusting up to 120. So, this created the kind of disaster that few societies are equipped to deal with. And certainly, Greece having already suffered all of the difficulties of the past eight years. So, the needs are great going forward.

MR. HOLLISTER: We are mobilizing, we are raising funds, we will be there in September. If there's anything that we can do in the meantime besides working with some of the NGO's and the hospitals, please let us know where you think our priority of effort should be focused.

MR. AMBASSADOR: Okay, we'll be very happy to do that. We'll keep you posted as we move forward in this effort. And, very much looking forward to seeing you and the rest of the team in Veslanici [phonetic]. It's going to be a great opportunity to highlight the very best of the U.S.

MR. HOLLISTER: Thank you, we look forward to seeing you as well.

MR. AMBASSADOR: Thank you.

MR. HOLLISTER: Thank you Mr. Ambassador.

MR. AMBASSADOR: Thanks a lot.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: We'd like to call the convention back in session. We'll continue with our nominations.

MR. HOLLISTER: Real quick, I'd like to announce that AHEPA mother lodge chapter number 1, Atlanta, Georgia will be giving $2,000 towards the relief efforts.

MR. DEMI PAMBUKAS: Brief announcement, District Governor Demi Pambukas [phonetic]. District 6 would like to donate $1,000 for the fire relief fund. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS0: District 11 has donated $500 and I think when I go back, we're going to do another $500 to make $1,000 from district 11.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you district 11.

MR. JOHN LEVAS: John Levas, Gold Coast, chapter 456. I received the phone call this morning from the Chairman of the Board from Gold Coast Bank in cooperation with AHEPA and our chapter to do fundraisers effort for the fire victims in Greece. The Bank is going to turn around and do a tremendous fundraiser also with the Greek American Chamber of Commerce from New York as well. So, we're going to be putting this package together and doing a very big fundraiser out of New York. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you.

MR. ATHANASIOS ARGIRIOU: Athanasios Argiriou [phonetic] up in Winnipeg, Canada. I pledge $1,000 towards the help of the brothers and sisters in Greece. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you brother.

MR. PETER LEKAS: Peter Lekas from Chicago, Northshore chapter 94. We'd like to pledge $1,000 towards the relief fund. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you brother.

MR. COSMAS DIAMANDES: Cosmas Diamandes [phonetic] from chapter 69, Camden, New Jersey and we will also pledge $1,000. Thank you.

MR. DEMETRI ORFANATOPOLOUS: Demetri Orfanatopolous [phonetic] from the Homedale New Jersey chapter 517. We'd like to pledge $1,000.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you.

MR. JAMES AFILLAS: James Afillas [phonetic], New Rochelle 405. The Executive Committee this morning agreed to pledge $1,000.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. We thank all the brothers in the chapters and districts that have made pledges. Yes brother?

MR. HORIATES: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. Brother Contas [phonetic] please come forward. Come forward George. As also the Chair of the Panacarian [phonetic] Foundation, on behalf of myself, Ms. Former Grand President, Siffananties [phonetic] and Brother Contas. The Panacarian Foundation pledges $5,000.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Wow, bravo, thank you.

MR. GEORGE CONTAS: My wife and I, Elian Tratas Contas and myself, George add $1,000 to the Panacarian Brotherhood so it can be $6,000.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Bravo, thank you.

MR. HORIATES: It is with joy that I introduce Brother, past Supreme President, Frank Manios, where are you?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Up here at the podium.

MR. HORIATES: I'll shut up, thank you sir. He wishes to place a name in nomination that we all know and love.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you.

MR. FRANK MANIOS: Past Supreme President and past Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Franklin Manios, past Supreme President and past Chairman of the Board of Trustees from Warren, Ohio but born in Weirton, West Virginia. First, right off, let me say to you that I love the AHEPA. I love every part of it, every bit of it and its endeavors regarding family and education and compassion for human beings, it's meaning in every aspect of life. It's because of this that I endorse George E. Loucas for the office of Supreme President of the order of AHEPA.

As he embodies each and every aspect of these traditions and will serve us well. George comes from a family of AHEPAns, of AHEPA tradition. His grandfather was George E. Loucas, Supreme President back in the old days. George E. Loucas, grandfather George was a member of the giants, one of the giants of this order back in the days of the formation of this AHEPA. Which included people like V. Itabetes [phonetic], it included people like John Thevas [phonetic], it included people like Louis Manchioti [phonetic] and so many, many more that formed the basic culture back in the 50's of the order of AHEPA which we represent today.

George as a young man, listened to his grandfather and learned the ideals of the order of AHEPA. George E. Loucas Senior went to Morgantown, West Virginia and studied law. When he went to Morgantown, West Virginia, he washed dishes in order to pay for his tuition at West Virginia University. Later on, our younger George E. Loucas also goes to Morgantown and he studies pharmacy at West Virginia University and completes his studies and is a practicing pharmacist in the state of West Virginia and Ohio.

But George wanted a little bit more. He wanted to be a lawyer so he moved to Cleveland and he went to John Marshall Law School. By the way, when he goes to John Marshall Law School, he came under the tutelage of John Manis [phonetic]. I don't know if you folks know, past Supreme Counselor and federal district judge, John Manis. One of the strictest disciplinarians and one of the most feared AHEPAS in the order of AHEPA back in that day. But he taught George well and George has become the successful lawyer in property rights and personal injuries.

Back to his family, George comes from an AHEPA family. His mother, Mary Paris from Birkenstock, Pennsylvania. By the way, also the home, if anybody remembers Mike Schoolis [phonetic] who was on the hall of fame from Birkenstock, Pennsylvania. But Mary married Emmanuel Loucas and they have two children, Leslie and Max and they're here with us today. His dad was a practicing attorney and his uncle was, by the way, he was a twin. His uncle was a practicing pharmacist. So, education, education, education. His sisters, Penny and Cathy, both are practicing attorneys.

Penny is a federal district judge. Is this progress? Is this AHEPA? Is this education? I think so. Recently, his health was a little bit of a problem but George faced it head on and beat it. He is in fine health today. As I said in the beginning, I love the AHEPA but that's one of the reasons that I endorse and nominate George for the Supreme presidency. Because he too loves the AHEPA from the top of his hair to his toes. And I guarantee you that with his passion, his zeal, passion for the order of AHEPA. He will continue the forward progress of this order through 2019. Thank you, George congratulations.

MR. HORIATES: Brothers, I beg your indulgence for a few more minutes as I rise to second the nomination of Brother George E. Loucas for the highest office in the order of AHEPA, Supreme President. You've heard some great background regarding George that Frank so eloquently articulated. But you need to know three things. He's a family man, he's a professional and he's a good Christian. That's what makes up good brothers in the order of AHEPA. He cares about this organization, he grew up in this organization, he certainly has the lineage and his blood flows AHEPA. No one will serve us better than George E. Loucas. So, I place, I second the nomination of the name of George E. Loucas for the highest office in the order of AHEPA, Supreme President.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: The name of Brother George Loucas has been nominated for the office of Supreme President and seconded. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I call on the nominee.

MR. LOUCAS: I always have to have my iPad, if only I knew how to operate it. Brothers, AHEPA family, walk with me. The year, 1959. The place, Los Angeles, California. Where, specifically? The AHEPA Supreme Convention. Back in the day when there were so many delegates that they had one half votes each delegate, each delegate carried one half of a vote. There was an AHEPAn there running for Supreme President. At the same time, on the other side of the country, there was a baby coming into the world in Wierton, West Virginia. Same place where the Supreme President was running for office. On the west coast, it was George E. Loucas and on the east coast it was George E. Loucas. That date was August 20th. He was elected that night.

The same night the baby was born and the baby of course carried from then on, the name, George E. Loucas. Our lives have been intertwined from that moment onward. The common thread has always been, other than blood, AHEPA. Fast forward, when, 1970. Where? Athens, Greece. Specifically, another AHEPA Supreme Convention in Athens. I was a ten-year-old boy, some of you bear with me, heard this yesterday. My parents entrusted me to my grandfather who was Chairman of the convention. I went up to the room with he and Mr. Mazarakos [phonetic], his dear friend. I woke up at 3:00 o'clock in the morning, there was no Pappous. I thought I saw him there that night when I went to bed. I knew it. I woke up at 4:00 in the morning, he still wasn't there. 5:00 in the morning, he still wasn't there. He was at a caucus. That was the beginning of my exposure to AHEPA. Later that day, I'm on the rooftop overlooking the Parthenon and he has an AHEPA dignitary there with our family. He says, - - you will say the Parthemon [phonetic]. I became so nervous I couldn't get through it. I couldn't get through it until I had my own family finally and I taught them the Parthemon since that day. Because AHEPA and its dignitaries and its influence was shown to me earlier on and I was intimidated. Fast forward, 1982.

Where? Morgantown, West Virginia. WVU School of Pharmacy. Yeah, it's just like you imagined, I lived in a trailer. I had just graduated pharmacy school and the phone rang. Hello, do you know who this is young man? It was the Honorable John M. Manios from Cleveland, Ohio. The Senior District Judge that our brother, past Supreme President, Frank Manios just mentioned. He happened to be the Supreme Counselor at that convention all the way back in 1959. I heard you want to become a lawyer, he said. Yes sir, that's true. I told your grandfather that I would look out for you. You will submit your application to the Cleveland Marshall College of Law and come to Cleveland where I will put you under my wing and look out for you.

Two weeks later, I was on my way to Cleveland. Those are the type of bonds, that's the type of influence AHEPA has had on my life. I want you all to think about that. How powerful a bond that is. Fast forward, 1999. Cleveland chapter 480. The judge had died. There was another chapter in Cleveland called the George E. Loucas chapter. I went to my brothers and I said, do you mind if I pay my grandfather's memory honor and transfer now? Because I had since married, all my kids were baptized in the church where that chapter was located. They said, please with our blessing, go. And I did.

I mention that to give thought that this man, posthumously, my grandfather was so loved by his brothers in Cleveland that they named their chapter after him. What kind of bonds are born that motivate brothers to do such a thing? And, what are the odds that I should end up in Cleveland with AHEPA intertwining in my life, pushing me in places that I had never thought or even considered going. The closest thing I knew of Cleveland was Cedar Pointe, the park if anybody knows it. I raised a family and then, the telephone call. Years later, eight years ago. Fast forward, I'm in my law office and the phone rings and it's past Supreme President, Frank Manios. George, how are you? Good, how's the family? Great. We'd like for you to run for Supreme Counselor. Oh shit. I had always expected that somehow, someway if the time came and I was called upon that I would answer, I would step up and step forward and answer the call. And there was the call.

I was raising a family, starting a law practice and I thought, oh crap, do I really have the time for this? So, I went and he insured me. He said, don't worry, there's no election. We have peace, so you don't have to worry about the time that it takes to politic. Beautiful. Honey, I just received a phone call, we have two young kids, 7 and 11 at the time. I explained to her and she knew the influence of AHEPA in my life and our family. There was no way she was going to stand in my way and she supported it. I went to my father and asked for his blessing because he was not a big AHEPAn. He said, son, I paid the supreme sacrifice to AHEPA.

I gave them my father. So, for all of you that worked day and night for AHEPA and truly love this organization, there are prices to be paid. Families often time get left behind. That's what happened to my Father but he said, it's a great organization. Step forward but include your family and you have my blessing. And I strived from that moment forward to include my family and to make sure that if I left them, it was for a worthy cause for AHEPA and not just to take off for nothing. I went to Miami and I met George Horiates. We had an infamous brawl, hell of a race. So much for peace. But, for a moment, unity if precious. The next year, we had another race.

If you've been involved in AHEPA politics, you know that when the vote comes down and you end up 20 short and you lose and you want to take your toys and head home. And you feel resentment and you don't want to give to AHEPA, that's what politics does. It can make you look at every brother and say, hmm, did he screw me or not? Right, instead of saying, thank you. No questions, no resentments. Pure unadulterated brotherhood, full support. That represents unity to me. So, why have I gone through all of this? Thank you for being patient and listening to this story of mine. I mention this because AHEPA is generational. This is five for our family. My family is sitting there. My son just turned 18, this year he will be initiated. My Grandfather George had his father join. George too, my Dad and his twin, three, me four and him five. Am I a legacy? Hell yeah, I'm a legacy. Many of you are legacies. It's time for you to create legacies. AHEPA has a history. We talk about Greece's history every day. AHEPA has a history that needs to be remembered. Now, as we head into our 100th anniversary, more than ever before. A history is important to everything.

Right? I mean, art, science, politics. We must remember our history and include it as we design our future. It was past Supreme President, Earl Macras [phonetic] who said, just the other day, AHEPAns are thirsty for vision. As we head into this second 100 years. Thirsty for meaning, take that home to your chapters. Thirsty for vision and remember your history and your generations. And your legacies, are you going to create a legacy? Everybody has a duty to create a legacy. This thing that we have, AHEPA it's great and we slap each other on the back.

We say it all the time but it's not really just the thing. It's far greater. It's the product of a sacred bond that begins with our oath to one another. Has anybody stopped to re-read the oath that they took? Me, 32 years ago. Our oath to God but not more importantly, our oath to God but our oath to one another to love and respect one another and our families. And, voila, we are an AHEPAn family. We truly are a band of brothers but Carl Hollister said beautifully last night. AHEPA membership is not a right, rather a responsibility and a duty. It should be a privilege and an honor.

I challenge each of you to remember that. It's an honor like Kennedy. What can you do for AHEPA? A single bond unites us one brother to another and I have to say this. I can give, I don't know how many examples like the one I gave you of Judge Manios. Decades later calling to fulfill a promise to a brother. I know brothers that I have that I could call to help with my family if I had to. And, I've received calls to help. It's a no brainer. That's what we do for one another. But what makes us do that? It's this bond and this year I'm going to ask everybody to go back in time and reflect.

What is AHEPA about? It begins with this simple basic bond that is truly, really intangible and so complicated. When you ask another brother to come with you in AHEPA and you take an oath. And you roll up your sleeves and you work. Whether you deliver milk for children whose blood is laden with lead and you want to help them remove the lead. Or whether you want to fight a hurricane with relief down in Houston or help people who have lost lives from a fire in Athens. You roll up your sleeves and you join hands with that brother and you really get to know that brother under those circumstances.

Then, you really start to care for one another. And then you invite another brother to come into AHEPA and you say to the brother, that you just formed this strong relationship with. I got this guy that I'm going to invite and you're really going to like him. A year later, that brother says to you, I am so glad you brought that brother to us in this chapter. That's how we started and that's how we continue. But I'm going to challenge everybody to make their own legacy and invite another brother to join AHEPA.

I can't imagine that there isn't somebody in your life with whom you wish to create a legacy. Like Costa Bustacocas [phonetic] who saw, one of many that he brought in, Supreme Governor region 5, Craig Theros. Introduced him to AHEPA, Craig didn't like the politics, left for a while. Costa recognized in him qualities, brought him back and pushed him to become an officer. We all have that duty to recognize people coming up and push them to better themselves and to better our organization to move forward.

Which is what he did and now Craig is Supreme Governor, two terms. That's how we grow and it's not just Helens, it's Phil Helens, everybody loves Greek yogurt, everybody loves a Greek. And don't forget that. AHEPA was created to teach immigrants how to be Americans. AHEPA today teaches Americans ideals of ancient Greek. Beginning with Alotemo [phonetic]. With every action we take, democracy, family, education, community, charity. Love one another and - - God.

Spread the word, invite somebody to join you. Honor your brother by introducing another who takes an oath to be their brother because you're not going to get this feeling anywhere else. We do great things but that bond is the feeling that makes me keep coming back and I challenge you again to ask yourselves, what is it that truly makes you tick in AHEPA? Everyone at some point, let me go back to invite for one second. I've heard so many guys say, well nobody asked me to be an AHEPAn. Doctor Mike, we all love him in our chapter now. I asked him to be in AHEPA and he said, why? I said because you're Greek. But you know what? It takes a little more but once he met everybody and became involved, he is very well loved in our chapter and we can't go without him.

That's what I'm trying to push. That's what I'm trying to identify. That's why I use the word invite rather than just ask because you're Greek. Make a point of identifying somebody. Everybody wants to feel good. Let them know they're special and invite them to be an AHEPAn and join you in this beautiful brotherhood that we have and this AHEPA family that we have. Everyone at some point in life comes to the realization that they must give back to their community. Why not choose AHEPA to give back? The vehicle of choice to give back to your community. Where else can you bring an idea to your chapter, take it to a district and then to national and have a simple idea, love in your heart become reality?

Like Dogs for Warriors? Where? And you get to be with your brothers at the same time. My esteemed brothers, Officers Carl Hollister, thank you from the bottom of my heart. For leading me and our past Supreme Presidents for teaching me. The Supreme Lodge, thank you for everything. Thank you for all the work you do for AHEPA. The same with past and present officers in here. The delegates and family and friends. Thank you for your support especially over the last year. It was tough and we had a decision to make about coming back.

At the end of the day, here we are with the help of our God, - -, thank you Nick Karacostas and AHEPA, our AHEPA family. We said thank you by way of a note to everybody that we left on the table. I would like most importantly to thank my family who has stood by me these last years. My daughter is no longer seven as you will see and my son is no longer 11 as when we entered the race against George Horiates. But, would you stand please family? And Mom, Yaya has to get up, thank you. My wife, Sandra, my Mom, Mary Loucas, my son, Emmanuel and my daughter, Alexandra. Thank you for your love and support. Thank you to the brothers and the sisters of the buckeye, the great buckeye family. I'm challenging district 6, we've got two brothers back to back. North and south Ohio coming up as Supremes. I challenge you to do it. This is the first grandfather, grandson Supreme Presidents. First time, almost 100 years, too long. Frangos [phonetic], get moving, we need our first father, son Supreme President duo. Thank you to this glorious AHEPA brotherhood whom I love so deeply.

For entrusting me with this mantle of leadership. I honor you, our fraternity, our AHEPA family and especially this office. I'm reminded of John Galanis who was so humble in accepting his position. He said, I can't believe that I'm at the head of this organization that's so well loved, so well recognized. It's not the man but the office that commands the respect. I will carry that message also. I very much respect the office that I now hold or will shortly, as of tomorrow. I thank you, from the bottom of my heart. I'm humbled to be standing here before you. I heartily, happily, earnestly accept the nomination brothers, thanks.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you Brother George. I'm going to take a moment of personal privilege to say the first time I met Brother George Loucas. I was going through the Chairs of capital district 3. We had our district convention in Hopewell, Virginia. He and his beautiful family were there and we were meeting each other for the first time. My wife was helping with Greek dancing out on the floor with his kids. It's an image that I carry with me for many, many years and hope to continue. So, the end of my point of personal privilege. Brother Horiates, continue.

MR. HORIATES: Brother Stacious [phonetic], Mr. Chair. On behalf of all of us, we would like to congratulate you and your team for sitting up there all week long.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you brother.

MR. HORIATES: However, our work is not quite done yet and I have a motion with regards to the legislation. The record would reflect that we have approved on the floor to go on the ballot those three issues that we had talked about. I move that as opposed to going on the ballot, we can approve them today if it's unanimous. That's my motion.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: So, there's a motion on the floor, is there a second? For the record, entered into the record of the mic please, thank you.

MR. KARACOSTAS: Nick Karacostas, past Supreme President. I second that motion to dispense with the ballots.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you. So, the motion was dealing with the legislation that passed unanimously on the floor. Is there any discussion? One second, the Supreme Counselor.

MR. HORIATES: The Supreme Counselor is making the suggestion that if it's unanimous, it's a suspension of the rule. Do the parties agree on that Mr. Counselor, Mr. Parliamentarian?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: The Parliamentarian advises the Chair that if there's any objection, we must go to a ballot. So, I take this opportunity to ask the brothers here assembled. Does anyone object to us continuing with this proposed legislative change? Are there any objections? Are there any objections?

MR. HORIATES: No objection here, I just want to point out that there's only one contest here. That's for the brothers from the specific region where there's two candidates running. So, if we don't do away with this motion. In other words, if we don't approve this motion than everybody is going to have to come vote for the amendment. For those amendments because you have to check the ballot. So, if there's an objection, we're going to have to make a ballot just for that particular region and the three amendments.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Correct. So again, I ask the delegates. Is there an objection to us passing here on the floor unanimously to accept it? Any objections? Any objections? Any objections? Hearing none, there've been no objections.

MR. HORIATES: Thank you Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, that being said, the one region that there will be a run off. We will have, I guess ballots and balloting potentially this afternoon. I'm going to ask, if we can, have the Executive Director come in to give us a little instruction. In that regard as well as to give us instruction on the banquet and distribution of tickets.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes, he is advised the Chair that the tickets for the banquet are going to be available at the registration desk and they will be distributed to the District Governors who will in turn distribute those to the delegates from their districts. So, the District Governors, you will pick up the banquet tickets at the registration desk and then distribute them to your delegates. Yes?

MR. AROUTZIDIS1: Mr. Chairman, again, it's only that one district that will be voting. Just as a point of information for the brothers. One of the reasons we follow Demeter's is because George Demeter wrote those rules based on the procedures based on the United States Congress. It allows for this to be done. So, we're following in a strong tradition and there's a historical reason for us to be able to do this. So, we should be very proud we're still following Demeter's.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you very much. So, for just the clarification the brothers will know, it's region 6 in which we have a contested race. And only the brothers from that region will be voting. The two districts. Is it two districts? Excuse me, three districts. Any districts that fall under that region 6 will be the ones voting and we'll get a clarification from Basil. But we said this afternoon so we hope it'll be from 2:00 to 4:00 o'clock, probably.

MR. AROUTZIDIS2: Brother, brother? As being one of the individuals from that region, I would strongly recommend that everyone from the region be given some specific instructions on where we go to cast our ballots. So, nobody feels left out in this particular process. We have three districts involved and we have for the first time in 15 years, a disagreement. So, I would like to make sure that everybody gets the ballot box and vote accordingly to their wishes. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: So, we will recess shortly and we will reconvene at 2:30 in this room for those to receive directions from the Executive Director. Yes, we can do a good of the order in just one moment. I'm going to call on Brother Wynn Storton at this time for just a couple of minutes. Brother Wynn? Okay, there's been a point of order made, one moment.

MR. KIRKILES: Mr. Chairman?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes, I yield the floor to the Supreme Counselor.

MR. KIRKILES: Demetrios Kirkiles, Supreme Counselor. Brothers, this is important. Two of the changes are amendments to the constitution and by-laws. One is to the order of AHEPA national trust which is amended through a separate process. It does require two thirds vote to pass. That's the one which changes the investment ratio from 55% to 70%. Technically and fiduciarily, I believe that we should put it in writing and record our ballots to be safe. Now, we can try and waive that by doing a show of hands. If the Chair finds that a minimum of two thirds present of registered delegates in this room, it must be the actual registered delegates. That’s the problem.

The trust is amended via a separate process and it must be registered delegates. Despite the fact that the order of AHEPA requires secret ballots, we can do it by hand and it is a very simple change. Just a number. If the Chair feels that two thirds of the delegates are present and two thirds of the registered delegates have voted in the affirmative, then the waiver would stand. Respectfully, sir.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Okay, so now I'll do a show of hands.

MR. HORIATES: Call the original motion, so they can vote on it.

MR. KIRKILES: So, I move that we suspend the rules and allow for a hand ballot to indicate a two thirds approval of the registered delegates to the 96th order of AHEPA Supreme Convention.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, is there a second to the motion.

MR. KARACOSTAS: I'll second that, Nick Karacostas, past Supreme President.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you.

MR. KIRKILES: The reason for this is because it's the national trust. That includes our building.

MR. AROUTZIDIS3: I think you said delegates, it's delegates present.

MR. KIRKILES: No, the trust specifically states, must be registered delegates. If the Chair finds that there are sufficient registered delegates present in this room. Then, we have a quorum enough to.

MR. AROUTZIDIS3: I think it says two thirds of voting people.

MR. KIRKILES: No sir, no sir. I've read them.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: The Counselor has ruled in the Chair yields to him.

MR. KIRKILES: I defer to the Parliamentarian's opinion.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: The Parliamentarian?

MR. AROUTZIDIS4: If I may, Mr. Chairman.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Excuse me just a moment, we have 238 voting delegates.

MR. HORIATES: Exactly. Mr. Chairman, if I may. I'm going to have the current Supreme Governors up here in front of the screen and we're going to count credentials in this room to make sure that we've got the two thirds to be able to do this.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes sir? I'll follow your direction.

MR. HORIATES: Supreme Governors, please get over here.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: All the Supreme Governors in the room please meet up front here with the Supreme President for a delegate count.

MR. HORIATES: We need two thirds present, that's all.

Mr. Chairman, can you request the doors to the floor be secured?

MR. AROUTZIDIS4: Yes, will the doors to the convention room please be secured?

MR. AROUTZIDIS5: Alright, come on, raise your hand - -. We need to get an accurate count here to save us all some time.

MR. PETE SIREES: Mr. Chairman, point of information.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes sir.

MR. SIREES: Pete Sirees [phonetic] from district 20, chapter 454. You just said 238 and we were told before it was 233.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: In the meantime, I consulted.

MR. SIREES: In the meantime, we had five more?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: I consulted, yes, the Credentials Committee was advised that the current voting strength is 238.

MR. SIREES: 238, thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Whenever I texted him and he gave me the number.

MR. HORIATES: Excuse me guys, can everybody have a seat? We're having trouble counting. I need everyone to sit at a table. Everyone needs to sit at a table please and remain seated if you're a delegate so we can get an accurate count of what's going on. Please, once you're seated, do not get up so that the governors can do their job and count correctly. We're waiting on everyone to get seated or else we will not start counting and we're just going to delay the process. It'll take that much longer. Please everyone sit down. Everyone sit down please - -. No, I need everyone to sit down. Alright, Craig, Don, Tom grab a row. Please do not get up until these men have actually counted you, please.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Brothers, if I can have your attention again for a moment. Have your attention please. So, in consideration of everyone's time and effort and things that'll happen for the rest of the day. We're going to have a ask your indulgence while I'm speaking now on a couple of things of the moment. They're printing up a ballot so that we'll have a written ballot dealing with the legislative issue that requires two thirds vote. So, if we can do that.

MR. HORIATES: Brother Jim, Brother Chair and just point of information. What we are referring to is proposal number three. Has the Chair ruled the proposal number one and proposal number two have passed by acclimation?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes.

MR. HORIATES: Okay, very well. So, it's merely proposal number three that we're looking at. Brother Basil will be making a paper ballot, is that correct? If the Chair decides that we can vote for region 6 now, maybe we can round them up. All members of region 6 can you make a declaration that they're going to do it at 2:30 or what? Mr. Chair, we have individuals from region 6, I think you have to make a ruling in terms of that.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: I understand Brother and things are very fluid in change as we stand here. I understand and I think that the brothers from the region that there's a contested race will have a ballot and that they can vote. So, we'll have a ballot for the region. So that will be the region 8. All the brothers from region 8, they'll have a ballot and they'll vote. I stand corrected, yes.

MR. AROUTZIDIS6: Mr. Chair, I'm from region 6. Through the Chair, it was mentioned earlier 238. People went to get something to eat. It's not fair.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Region 6 is the contested race. The Chair understands the concern of the brothers and I am empathizing with you. We'll have a written ballot for those brothers to vote and it won't start until 2:30, as we said. They'll have a written ballot. They'll be voting in this. The brothers from the region will be on this side of the room and they'll have a ballot which they can cast a vote. And you won't have to come back at midnight to do so. Okay, so I'm yielding back.

MR. AROUTZIDIS7: Brother Chair? Brother Chair.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes brother?

MR. AROUTZIDIS7: That question has been asked.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Can I have your attention please? There's a brother at the microphone.

MR. AROUTZIDIS7: For the sake of the election process that's going on in 6, so we understand. The poll is going to be in this room?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes, we'll have ballots printed.

MR. AROUTZIDIS7: From when to when? Starting at 2:30, we have people that are in various things that are going on. So, we just need to make sure we give them all enough time to come in and cast their vote.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Right.

MR. AROUTZIDIS7: So, 2:30 to what? 4:00, 5:00? When does it end.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: When does balloting end? That's a good question. I think an hour and a half is a reasonable length of time. Do we know how many delegates there are from that region?

MR. AROUTZIDIS2: The reason why we ask when does balloting end. We have two delegates involved in the basketball tournament now. One is involved in the game in progress. We have another one who is attending and is Co-Chair of the Hellenic Academy Tournament that we just passed resolutions on. I'm not sure what time they'll finish. So, we need to give them some kind of a deadline or give them some kind of latitude to come in and vote because again, this is the first time in 15 years that we have had a contested race in region 6.

Before then, we always had a gentlemen's agreement which is not being honored by one individual tonight. So, give us a deadline so we can get everybody in. So, everybody can have their say so on what's going on here.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Okay, so for the region that's involved, 2:30 to 4:30 will be the opportunity to cast your ballot and the polls could possibly close earlier if all those delegates that have registered have already voted. We have the number that have voted, it could close earlier. So, in fairness, 2:30 to 4:30 for all the brothers in the region where the contested race.

MR. JOHN MELONOPOULOS: Chairman, John Melonopoulos, district 10, - - chapter.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Can I have your attention please brothers?

MR. MELONOPOULOS: President for life, since we're going to be back here at 2:30, it's 1:40. Can we recess till 2:30 and come on back?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yeah, we only have a few more minutes for the whole convention and then the other brothers will come back from that region to cast their ballots. So, is Brother Wynn Storton still in the room? Brother Wynn, I apologize. You know this is very fluid and we ask your cooperation and give our brother the attention that he deserves. Brother Wynn gave a brief report earlier dealing with the Veteran's Committee and he just wanted to update everyone.

MR. WYNN STORTON: Thank you for your time. I gave my report yesterday morning to the six of us that were here. So, I thought if I asked for permission to speak while we have a few more men in the room. At this time, real quick, if you can, all the Veterans please stand up. Veterans, any Veteran. Thank you, thank you for your service. Pete Sirees is wearing AHEPA Veteran medal. Pete, stand up and do a modeling, Vanna White. He's wearing the Veterans medal that we've been giving out the last few years.

2011, that was presented by Congress. That's an improved medallion, approved medal to be worn on civilian wear and military uniforms as a congressional approved award given to Veterans of AHEPA and to daughters. So, it's AHEPA family, daughters, sons, - - any Veteran is able to get it. I've been on a committee for the last three, four years and we're trying to populate the names of the veterans. I know a lot of you received the award but the name may not have come to me. Me, as a webmaster, Co-Chairman of the committee.

Colonel Vandackis [phonetic] Chairman of Committee could not be here. Please keep him and his wife in your prayers, she's going through surgery at this time. So, he could not be at the convention and support us. But he's been at Arlington Cemetery this last year doing the wreath ceremony. Which we'll talk about. These are the names that I have to date. This is the names, every name I have registered and their chapter. So, when I post it on a website, it'll have more of your information that you provide me.

So, right now I just have the names and the website. You can take a picture of it later. It'll be out in the hall. But I know we have a lot more veterans than 246. So, please get your name. I do have some forms with me and some medals with me if you would like one today. I only have a few but I can gladly get you one. Or, go to AHEPAveterans.org. Registration is free, so registration's free, we just ask for a $10 donation for the medal, shipping included. You can buy a nice box which I didn't bring down with me to memorialize your father or brother and it has a nice box. That's $75, shipping including, includes the medal in it. You have it engraved with whatever you'd like to say on it. That can be ordered on AHEPAveterans.org and we gladly would like to pursue that. That's our main mission for the last three years.

We'll hopefully have this list up on the website as a scrolling memorial for AHEPA veterans. Please, we're not looking for all veterans, there's a lot of veterans sites out there. We're looking for AHEPA veterans to recognize our AHEPA members, daughters included, everybody. So, at this point, this is where we're at for the Veteran's Committee. Moving forward we got a lot of things in progress. George Loucas, we're talking, he's got a program. Where we're going to start offering through the Veteran's Affairs Committee.

We got the service dogs which is great, awesome, we support them and then run themselves. We totally support them and we're glad that they're part of the Veteran's program. We are moving forward to make the Veteran's Affairs program include more veterans' services. Working with the DAV, working with different disabilities or personal things towards AHEPA veterans. So, that's something that's going to be worked on this next year on the next years committee. Hopefully by next year, we'll have more stuff.

It'll be updated on a website throughout the year. Things will be sent out. If you read AHEPA Magazine, we're proud to have Carl Hollister on the cover. And, we have four pages in there devoted to the veterans. We greatly appreciate the support. Inside the book is a letter from Colonel. So, please read it. His report for the year and I'll take any questions if anybody has questions at the time. Does anybody have questions about Veteran's Affairs? Yes sir? I was just trying to cut this quick. I know everybody is busy and hungry.

MR. MIKE LABADOS: Mike Labados [phonetic] chapter 37, Syracuse, New York. Of course, I'm a veteran. I talked to you, great job no more worthwhile cause than honoring the veterans. Not because I'm a veteran but even before I was. I was supporting them. My question is, is it only for U.S. citizens or veterans, non-U.S. citizens are okay? My second question is, is there anyway, legally of course, always we talk legally. Not any other way. To do something for Hellen, living in the United States that are citizens of the United States or non-citizens that have served in the war theater as allied forces, second World War, Korea. For instance, my Dad served there, is there anything that can be done there to give them the medal?

MR. STORTON: This medal, like I said is congressionally approved by the United States Congress. It's given to any AHEPAn who served in the military. So, if you're a Greek who served in the Greek military and you would like an American medal, God bless you, we'll give it to you.

MR. LABADOS: We do have several in our chapter, that's why I made a question.

MR. STORTON: Bottom line, it's an American medal for the American Congress, that's why it's got the red, white and blue. We're not going to make a blue and white one for the Greeks, I apologize.

MR. LABADOS: I'm with you on that.

MR. STORTON: This is approval from American Congress. Yes sir? Yes, you're welcome to it. If you're willing to wear the red, white and blue on it, we gladly give you any recognition. We recognize all veterans. That's what I said, I said it three times Peter. It's an AHEPAn award. It's not anybody. I'm not going to duplicate efforts that are excellently done by every veteran group out there. But, we would just like AHEPAns to be registered. You can put on a pass registration. We're asking for your AHEPAn number. If you don't know it, call us, we'll get it for you. Yes sir? Canada too.

MR. AROUTZIDIS8: Brother Wynn, congratulations on the great work you're doing. This is what I just got up to confirm. Because, we also have some AHEPAns who have served in Afghanistan as well. As part of the Canada's contribution to the war.

MR. STORTON: Correct, for the United Nations.

MR. AROUTZIDIS8: But to clarify, it's an AHEPA medal first. So, it's given to all AHEPAns.

MR. STORTON: As long as everybody knows, it's the United States Congressional approved. So, if you're wearing to wear congressional, we're willing to give it to you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS8: With pleasure, thank you.

MR. NICK PAPADOPOULOS: Nick Papadopoulos, past Supreme Governor region 10. Point of information, in reference to the post of the American veterans, I'm a member. We accept as members, veterans of the Greek Army because the regulations say that we're an allied nation. So, perhaps AHEPA should think about gibing this arrangement for them.

MR. STORTON: Okay, that's something we'll work with the other brothers about getting if we're looking for.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Okay, I'm just point of information.

MR. STORTON: This is just for the medal that has been approved by Congress. If we're going to work on another medal for others.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: You're missing the point; the point is not the medal. The point is recognition. They're people who worked, who served in foreign armies. Friends of the United States, they're working for the United States. A bigger body than the AHEPA Veteran's Group has accepted them as members. So, it's not for the medals. They have lots of medals. Some of them are U.S. medals. Anyway, you think about it, okay, point of reference. Thank you.

MR. STORTON: On the website, it will tell you where you served.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Okay, thank you.

MR. STORTON: So, if you put down that you served in foreign wars, foreign or for America, it will be stated as such.

MR. SIREES: Pete Sirees from chapter 454, district 20. This is the, by an act of Congress. This is the only medal that can be worn on an active military uniform.

MR. STORTON: Right, correct.

MR. SIREES: In the United States, from a private group. The other thing is, I have to say is my chapter gave, bought medals and gave it all of our veterans. Couple of them had not paid their dues in a while. When we gave them the medal, they reinstated. I just thought I'd mention that. It is a hook that you might be able to use.

MR. STORTON: Thank you. I just got asked if there's a certificate as well? Yes, there is. There's a word document certificate and a PDF. So, whatever you feel comfortable working with. If you want something else, RTF, email me directly from the website. You can download it yourself. All you have to do is put your name in. I will, right now I have the Supreme President, Carl Hollister…

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MR. STORTON: …and it's not going to change for a couple more days until I steal George Lucas' signature and I can add it to it.

So, right now, if you want to wait a couple days for this next year. But certificates are available to download from website. I recommend, if you want a nice certificate from us, I can make one for you. But, if you want it quicker, you can download it, fill in a name and present.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: We thank Brother Wynn and the Colonel Vanvakias for his work on behalf of AHEPA the Veteran's Committee. So, as we're using a little bit of this time, we're having Basil and the staff, they're printing the ballots. They will bring them in shortly and we will vote on the change to that trust document. They'll do that after we finish this part. Brother Basil's entering the room now.

MR. AROUTZIDIS9: You're talking, we can't hear you. Everybody's talking.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Brothers, will you please give us your attention as we try to conclude our business? Okay, so we'll be distributing the ballots and this is for the legislative item that deals with the trust in changing the percentage that's used in the investments. Only the delegates with your nametag. The credentials Chair is here, one second.

MR. KIRKILES: Brothers, this is to amend, this is only to amend the trust by written. I read, it specifically states here in the AHEPA trust. All those who vote in favor, the two thirds that vote in favor must constitute at least the majority of all AHEPA delegates registered at such convention. In essence, two thirds registered delegates. And it's here in writing, anyone who wants to take a look at it, may.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Okay, so Brother Basil is distributing the ballot for this.

MR. KIRKILES: However, Mr. Chairman, if we don't have a majority of the delegates present right now then this vote is improper. Brother Parliamentarian?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Please, could I have brothers at the door. Please, yeah, the brothers, please take your seats.

MR. SAVAS TSIVIKOS: Mr. Chairman, Savas Tsivikos.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Can I have quiet in the room please?

MR. TSIVIKOS: It's been very frustrating because we are hearing conflicting stories here. Now, how long is the voting going to last? It doesn't matter if we are two thirds here as long as two thirds vote. And, the voting from what I understand is not going to take five minutes and then that's it. You have to give a time that way we give the opportunity to the delegates to vote. Please, someone clarify what we're doing here.

MR. KIRKILES: I take that as an objection Mr. Chairman. The easiest solution if we would just want to cut the gordian knot is just tell everybody, vote as always. We'll have a separate ballot and do it all the old way. That includes the proposal to. Mr. Chairman, this is getting out of hand.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Hold on, brothers, this is not working. Brother Basil.

MR. AROUTZIDIS9: Sit down everybody. Everybody take your seats, please sit down.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Brother Basil? Brother Basil?

MR. KIRKILES: Brother Basil?

MR. BASIL: Yes?

MR. KIRKILES: The Chair would like to talk to you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: This is not working. We've had it questioned in the form of an objection regarding the time of the voting and everyone's not here. It's not anyone's fault but I think the fairest thing to do is just to have the elections. Like we said earlier, between 2:30 and 4:30 today, all those can come and vote and the contested race for the Supreme Governorship will take place at that time. We have an objection on the floor so we have to honor.

MR. KIRKILES: Does anybody else object? I just need to hear something.

MR. BASIL: We have everybody here now, we have the ballots ready for the amendment. Let's get that over with.

MR. AROUTZIDIS9: Everybody take your seats. Everybody take a seat. Show Basil your credentials, get a ballot.

MR. KIRKILES: May I have a ruling from the Parliamentarian?

MR. PARLIAMENTARIAN: Brother Nick, Brother Karacostas, the issue is not. I mean we have a lot of delegates here. But we have to meet a two thirds majority of those who vote on the issue and there's two requirements to pass this. And, a majority of the registered delegation must vote in favor of it. So, we could have 100 votes in favor of it here and say, okay we passed it. But you haven't because you need 114 delegates. I'm not sure.

MR. BASIL: There's more than 114. There's about 160 people in this room.

MR. PARLIAMENTARIAN: If there's 160 people, we can proceed.

MR. BASIL: You know what we could do, we could count these ballots after they're. Mr. Parliamentarian, please. After these ballots are submitted, we will have the count. If it falls short, we'll do it again. But let's try, everybody's here.

MR. PARLIAMENTARIAN: Okay, alright.

MR. KIRKILES: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion.

MR. PARLIAMENTARIAN: - - brought up by Brother Demetri. Just so you know and he's correct.

MR. KIRKILES: Excuse me, would you please listen to the Parliamentarian? We are herding cats here. The Parliamentarian is making a statement and he's clarifying it for you. If you choose not to listen, don't tell us you don't understand.

MR. PARLIAMENTARIAN: So, the bottom line is, if you're here, don't walk out and not vote. We've got 226 registered delegates. There's 12 alternates. We need two thirds of those who vote and those who vote in favor have to constitute 114 or more. If it passes unanimously as it did verbally, we won't have a problem. So, let's take the vote.

MR. KIRKILES: Mr. Chairman, may I make a motion? Mr. Chairman, may I make a motion?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes.

MR. KIRKILES: Guys, I'm trying to make a motion here.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Go ahead brother.

MR. KIRKILES: Mr. Chairman, may I make a motion that these paper ballots be included in the record since this is an amendment to the AHEPA national trust? Which includes all the assets of the order of AHEPA so that there is a permanent record establishing that we followed procedures to amend the trust correctly. And that they be included in either the minutes of the convention or the minutes of the Board of Trustees?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes, do we need a second?

MR. KIRKILES: Is there a second?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Is there a second to the motion?

MR. KIRKILES: It's just to preserve the paper ballots.

MR. JAMES HUTCHINSON: James Hutchinson, district 23 of Canada, chapter CJ7. I second the motion presented.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, the motions been seconded. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor of the motion say aye.

CROWD: Aye.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? The motion carries, thank you.

MR. BASIL: Excuse me just one more second, one more second. The people that are alternates.

MR. KIRKILES: Brothers, you were sent here representing your chapters and the AHEPA domain. Please pay attention, this is the national trust. I cannot emphasize how important it is we do it right. Thank you.

MR. BASIL: Alright, again please. The people that are alternates will vote but you have to bring me your paper so we can put it into an envelope in case it's needed. Then we will count your vote. That's all I ask. Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Okay, so the ballots are being distributed now. When you're done with your ballot, you can bring it up to the Vice-Chair. Please fold them.

MR. KIRKILES: Basil, Basil. Make sure you get the guys in the HUD meeting.

MR. BASIL: Mr. Chairman, could we get the alternates to come up to get their ballot with their envelope please?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: If there are any alternates in the room, please come up to the podium to get your ballot. Any alternates. Brother Basil, an alternate.

MALE VOICE 20: Mr. Chairman, a point of information before the brothers leave.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Brothers, let's have your attention a minute.

MR. HORIATES: A point of information Mr. Chairman while they're tallying the vote. I want to remind everybody that at 3:30 there will be a movie presentation in the Avalon room 1415 by a Greek American AHEPAn producer/director. Please make sure you get there to see that. Tonight, the doors will open at 6:30 in that room over there next to us for the banquet. All banquet tickets are ready. District governors can go to the office and pick them up.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Has everyone turned in their ballot? Has everyone cast their ballot and turned it in? Anymore ballots out on the floor?

MR. KIRKILES: Mr. Chairman. Has everyone voted?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Has everyone voted?

MR. KIRKILES: Mr. Chairman, we have visitors on the floor right now during a ballot which is parliamentary inappropriate.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you.

MR. KIRKILES: We request the room be cleared which it is now being cleared. Anyone else with a ballot, raise your hand. Mr. Chairman, one more.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: One more ballot.

MR. KIRKILES: Following this brother's completion, I request. Mr. Chairman, I move the balloting be closed.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Okay, there's a motion that the balloting be closed. Is there a second to that motion? You need a second?

MR. KARACOSTAS: I'll second, Nick Karacostas, past Supreme President.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you Brother Nick.

MR. KARACOSTAS: Everybody's voted correct? Everybody submitted their ballots correct? Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: So, there's been a motion to close. All those in favor, say aye.

CROWD: Aye.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Carries, thank you.

MR. KIRKILES: Declare the ballot is closed. Mr. Chairman, am I correct in that you have declared the balloting closed?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: I did.

MR. KIRKILES: Thank you sir.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Balloting is closed for this issue only. The secretary brings the vote count.

MALE VOICE 6: We have a total of 129 ballots that were cast. We needed to achieve at least 114 total ballots cast. The yes votes were 115. No votes, 14. So, it has more than the required majority.

MR. KIRKILES: Mr. Chairman, for the record.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: - - please.

MR. KIRKILES: Demetrios Kirkiles, Supreme Counselor, order of AHEPA, Supreme Watch. I'd like the record to reflect that this vote was taken in accordance with the declaration of trust of the order of AHEPA, national trust fund. Adopted in 2004 by the order of AHEPA and that it complied with section 11 of that trust regarding amendments that it be done by a written instrument, which it was done, and that it constituted two thirds vote of the members present. And, a majority of all registered AHEPA delegates. Thank you, sir.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you, it's been read into the record. So, unless someone has other business to bring forth, I think we're done. Yes sir, brother?

MR. ELIAS SEGERIOS: Elias Segerios [phonetic] chapter 51, district 6. I just want to thank the local committee for the wonderful job they did having us here in Atlantic City.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes, I agree. Thank you, brother.

MR. SEGERIOS: Thank you.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Brother George?

MR. HORIATES: Can we have a declaration as to how many alternates voted?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: The number of alternates voting, 12.

MR. HORIATES: 12, I'm not a math major but Brother Parliamentarian and Brother Counselor, does that in any way affect the vote? 12 ballots? Is there a declaration by the Chair, brothers please? Is there a declaration by the Chair that those 12 alternate votes will not impact this vote?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes. Yes, we're, I think we've written.

MR. HORIATES: So, they said the math works?

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Yes.

MR. HORIATES: Okay, thank you.

MR. KIRKILES: It is in accordance with the national trust. It would not affect the outcome and I would also point out that the AHEPA national director personally and individually gave and issued ballots to the individuals. Those who did, were uncertain, identified their ballots as alternate and they were put in sealed envelopes to ensure that there was no change in the outcome.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: Thank you.

MALE VOICE 21: Brothers, there's only a few of us left here. I know it may have not been popular. We may not appreciate it at the time but looking back, I think we have to thank former Supreme Counselor Kirkiles for keeping us to the letter of the law. Bravo.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: We're recessing now and the delegates that are from the region 6 where there's a contested Supreme Governor's race, they can come back in and get the ballots. They'll be voting between 2:30 and 4:30 today.

MALE VOICE 22: Brother Chairman, I just want it to be on record that the ballots that we just now cast remain in headquarters so we have a paper trail of what's going on. The ballots not be destroyed.

MR. AROUTZIDIS: So noted, thank you. Thank you brothers, appreciate your patience today. Recess, yes.

MR. ZACHARIADES: For all those interested, the results of the region 6 Supreme Governor election have been tallied and the winner is recorded as Peter Lekas. All available delegates voted and the vote was confirmed. With that, it is my great pleasure as the Vice-Chair of the 2018 Supreme AHEPA convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. At this hour, I'm happy to call this convention closed.

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