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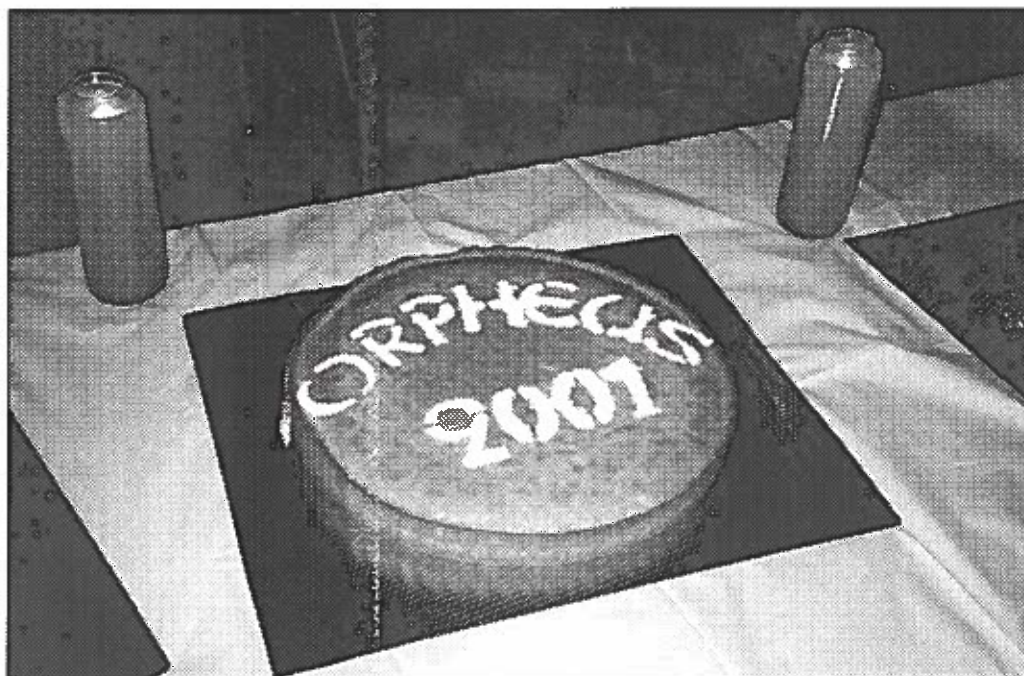
Orpheus Family Gathers for Annual Vasilopita Celebration

Friends and families of the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society gathered to celebrate the traditional cutting of the *Vasilopita* on Saturday, January 13. Over 250 current members, youth group kids and their families, and even past members came out to support this year's event, which was held at the community center of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Des Plaines.

Fr. John Rallis, pastor of St. John, began the evening with a blessing of the *Vasilopites*, which were prepared once again by long-time Orpheus supporter, Mrs. Dina Sianis. A

short program recognizing the Orpheus leadership followed dinner—each director was presented an Orpheus "survival kit", which included t-shirts, foot massagers, and other items which will certainly come in handy the next year. A five-minute slide-show recapped the events of the past year as photographs from the previous year's performances and events were projected onto a large movie screen. The Orpheus Youth Group was then joined by members of the adult group for a short presentation. The evening continued with music provided by DJ Dino Dallas and an Orpheus musical

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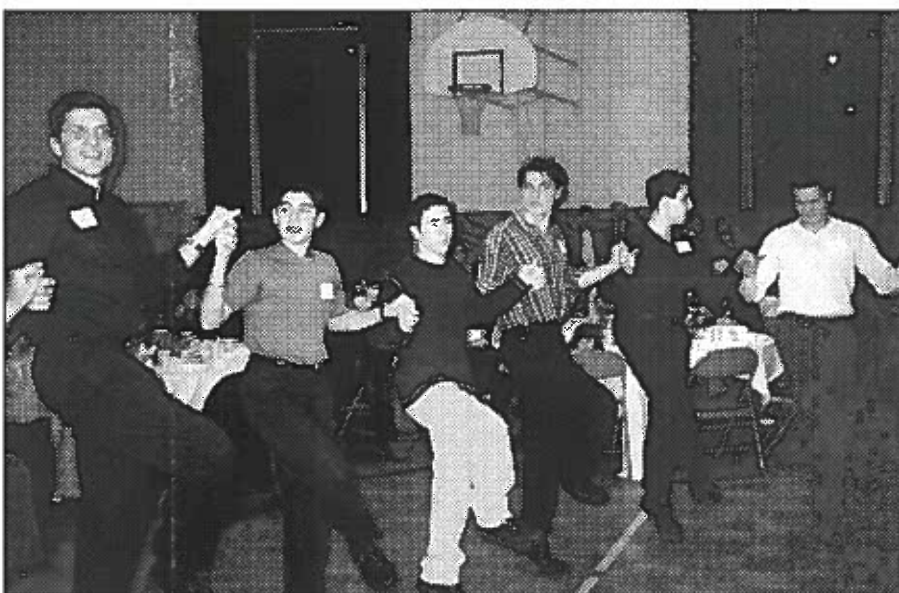
One of the delicious Vasilopites prepared for the event by Mrs. Dina Sianis.

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ensemble, featuring our very own *bouzouki*, guitar, *toumbeleki*, and tambourine players and vocal performances by Sophia Tsiplanitis, an Orpheus member who is known for her solos during our performances throughout the year.

Celebrating the cutting of the *Vasilopita* has now become an Orpheus tradition of itself and provides the members of the troupe a chance to remember the highlights of the past year and set an enthusiastic tone for the year to come. Comparing this year's event with the first *Vasilopita* (which was held 4 years ago in a member's home and was attended by only a handful of members) truly shows how much this troupe has grown over the years, especially since the establishment of the Orpheus Youth Group.

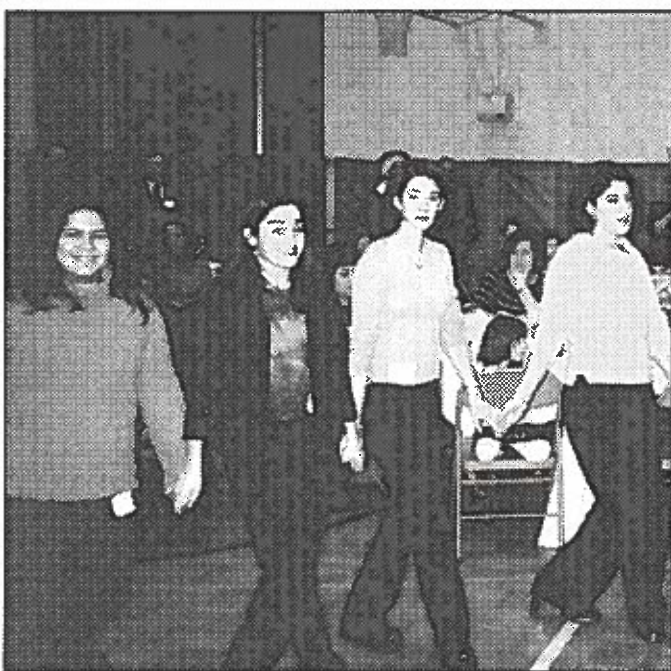
Many thanks to Pat Tomaras for chairing this event and to the many people who donated items, prepared food, and helped organize and execute this event. What a way to kick off 2001! Let's have a great year! ☐



Orpheus Youth and Adult members dance the Tsamiko.



Father John Rallis, pastor of St. John, blessing the Vasilopites.



Orpheus girls dancing Dimitroula from Macedonia.

Happy New Year!

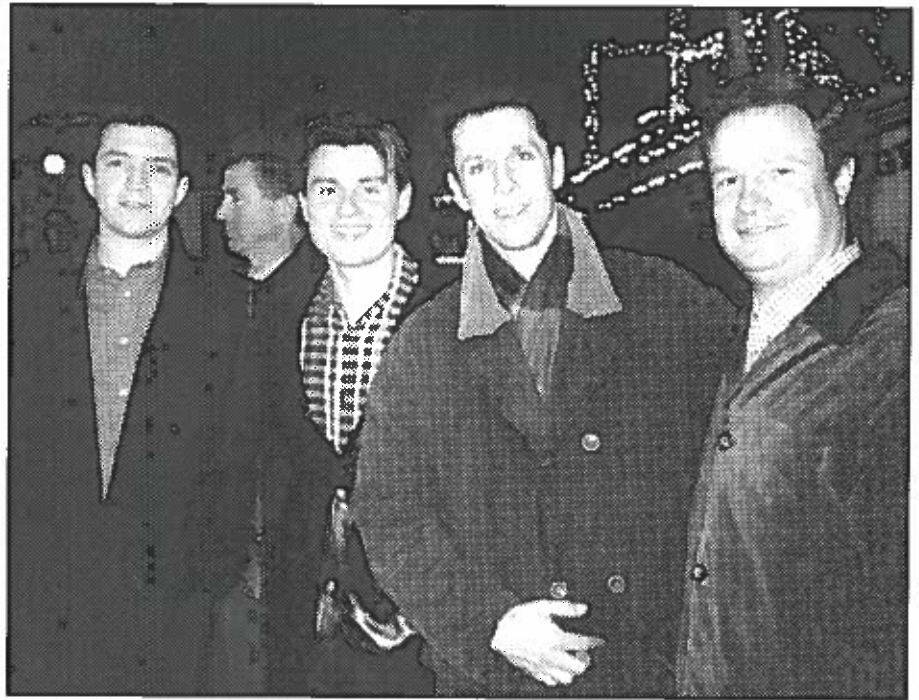
Orpheus Returns to Tarpon Springs, Florida

Participating at dance conferences has always been an exciting opportunity for instructors and members of the Orpheus Dance Troupe. Thus, when news first came that the Winter Dance Conference was going to be held again this year during Epiphany weekend at Tarpon Springs, e-mail messages filled Orpheus cyberspace! After the binary dust had settled, five OHFS members, Kostas Economou, Nikos Paras, Harry Georgakopoulos, Zafiro Papastratakos and John Economou found themselves on various, scheduled or not (!), flights heading for Tampa, Florida.

John Lulias and Steve Peppes organized the conference along with other members of the local Greek community. Mr. Lulias was the director of the Leventia Dance Group for many years. His group had visited and performed in Chicago on several occasions including the Chicago Diocese Dance Conferences. Mr. Lulias is the brother of Metropolitan Nikitas of Hong Kong.

Workshop sessions were intense during the first two days of the conference. Regional dances from Asia Minor were taught with emphasis in the areas of Pontos, Ikonio, Cappadocia, Erythraia, Lykaonia and Propontida. Joe Graziosi, a 'tor in North America, taught Pontian dances. Lazaros Hatzipanagiotou, a member of the renowned Lyceum of Greek Women Dance Group of Athens, Greece, instructed dances from other regions of Asia Minor. Both instructors are familiar to OHFS members from previous conferences and are an invaluable source of knowledge. Even though some material had been taught in the past, the repetition showed us that there was room for improvement. In the world of Greek folk dance, beyond the basic technical steps, there is an infinite domain associated with the style of each dance that can only be mastered through constant repetition and research.

The social events of the conference began with an outdoor *glendi* (feast) and group performances at the sponge docks of Tarpon Springs. Despite the unseasonably cool temperatures, it was enjoyable just being in this historic arena where Greeks, primarily from the island of Kalymnos, settled almost a century ago. Their main occupation, sponge diving, is still evident in various



From left: Harry Georgakopoulos, Nikos Paras, Lyceum of Ellinidon instructor Lazaros Hatzipanagiotou and John Economou at the sponge docks in Tarpon Springs.

monuments, shops, wall murals, and boat rides for tourists. Our hearts and bodies were warmed even more the next night at the Kalymnian House. The cause was not only the higher temperatures, but the scenic and humble setting. All conference participants, along with local guests, became one soul, one synchronized step and voice as they enjoyed the music offered by local musicians in impromptu expressions of their talents. This small gathering demonstrated an unparalleled energy and pathos. Even Orpheus member Harry Georgakopoulos brought the crowd to its feet with his splendid *bouzouki* playing. Nikos Paras accompanied him playing the guitar.

Networking and exchanging ideas with other instructors and dance groups is always another rewarding aspect of such conferences. Meeting people that share the same values, dreams, dedication and enthusiasm is most encouraging. It is amazing what some of the groups have accomplished and are, in their own right, small miracles. We were inspired by their stories and perhaps some of their ideas can be implemented in Chicago. The Epiphany celebration in Tarpon Springs is an event that every Greek American has to witness at least

once in their lives. As many as 45,000 people surrounded Spring Bayou to watch the young boys dive into its chilly waters in search of a white cross and a spiritual blessing. The observance began three hours earlier with the Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas church led by Archbishop Demetrios, the primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The church clergy, dressed their golden robes, then guided a formal procession to Spring Bayou for the Great Blessing of the waters. Young boys and girls dressed in colorful costumes paraded down the street as the St. Nicholas choir sang Sunday service hymns. Dance group performances followed during the festivities held for this occasion.

As our flight was approaching O' Hare airport and the snow-covered grounds became the primary scenery, our hearts were full of anticipation and excitement to share our experiences of our time in Tarpon Springs. We hope more OHFS members will have the opportunity to be part of similar events in the future. ☐

Orpheus Celebrates Christmas Traditions at the Museum of Science and Industry

Brightly colored Christmas trees reflecting ethnic traditions from countries all over the world served as the festive backdrop for the Orpheus Dance Troupe's annual performance at the Museum of Science and Industry's "Festival of Lights". The festival includes holiday presentations from ethnic groups representing over 40 countries and highlights the customs and rituals of each country's holiday/wintertime celebrations.

This marks the second year in a row that both the Orpheus adult and youth groups participated in this popular festival. The Orpheus dance group has been participating at the festivities for the last eight years. Both groups introduced new material to the enthusiastic appreciation of their audience, which included many family members and friends!

This year, 50 youth dancers and 26 adult dancers wore an impressive selection of mainland and island costumes for this important performance in the Orpheus calendar. The event also featured the greatest number of performers and the most dances ever presented at a single performance! The quality of the groups' routines went beyond dancing skill, as more than 10 different regions of Greece were represented during the one-hour

presentation. Way to go, Orpheus!

The Youth Group took the stage first with a suite of dances from Epirus, and continued with dances from the mainland, Thrace, and the island of Kos. Of special note was the suite of *Anteikrystoi* (couples dances) from the area of Metsovo in Epirus, which was performed by advanced members of the youth group. This year, a specific area of concentration for the youth has been learning the intricacies of dancing in couples, and the youngsters danced with a great deal of expression and skill! A popular Christmas carol from Epirus served as the youth's finale, and their young voices joyfully celebrated the season with "*Irthane Ta Fota*."

New material was presented by the adult group, including *Gialo-Gialo* from Asia Minor, and a lyrical *Karsilamas* from

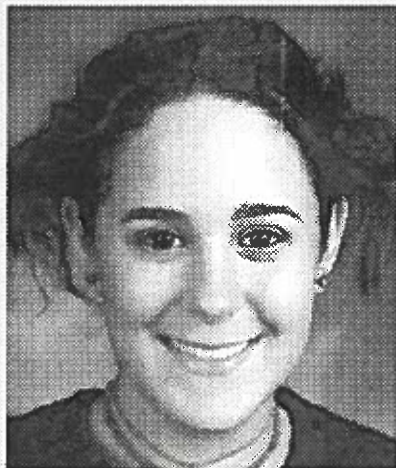


Orpheus Youth members performing dances from Epirus.

Lesvos, which involves snapping fingers and moving arms to the beat of the music. A special highlight of this performance was the introduction of two unusual dances from Asia Minor, *Konialis* and *Silis*. In both dances, two sets of spoons are held between the dancers' fingers to snap to the beat as they dance. The complexity of these dances was apparent as the dancers

spotlight on Orpheus Youth dancer...

Patricia Minakakis



Name:
Patricia Minakakis

Home Town:
Mount Prospect, Illinois

Parents/Family from:
My mom is from Tripoli, Arcadias and my father from Sparti, Laconias.

Occupation:
I am freshman student at Prospect High School.

moved in couples across the stage, coordinating their dance steps with the clicking sounds of the spoons. Another element of note was two well-known folk dances the group performed while singing "Milo Mou Kokkino" and "Endeka" from Macedonia.

Dancing at the "Festival of Lights" festival is a great venue for the group to introduce new material and has always been a fun way for Orpheus to celebrate the holidays through song and dance. ▣



Orpheus members performing dances from the Eastern Aegean islands and Asia Minor.



Orpheus Youth members performing Tsamika.

Time dancing with Orpheus:

This is my second year dancing.

Thoughts on dancing:

It is good exercise for your legs and it is really cool to know so many different dances from all over Greece.

Favorite Dance:

I love *Pentozalis* (island of Crete) and *Dimitroula* (Macedonia).

Most vivid Orpheus memory:

When we had that little dinner dance party at Golden Flame, after the Skokie festival performance. Everyone was having so much fun and we were so relaxed.

Favorite Greek dish:

Egg-lemon soup and potatoes in the oven. "*Soupa-avgolemono kai patates sto forno*".

Favorite place in Greece:

I haven't been in Greece in over eight years so I do not remember much.

Hobbies/Sports/other interest:

I play soccer!! And I like to listen to music a lot.

Where I heard about Orpheus:

Through people talking about the group and from watching them perform at a church picnic. ▣

Greek Pride in Indiana

Columbus is a relatively small town located approximately 43 miles south of Indianapolis. It boasts a population of roughly 35,000 and it is located smack down in the middle of the great state of Indiana. Despite its diminutive size and its remote locality, few people realize that Columbus is one of the most influential cities in the United States! Some call it "America's Architectural Showplace." Indeed, Columbus has earned world-wide recognition for its modern architecture. In 1991, the American Institute of Architects surveyed 829 of its members. They ranked Columbus 6th among U.S. cities in architectural quality and innovation. Only Chicago, New York, Washington, San Francisco, and Boston were ranked higher.

Every year, the Columbus Area Arts Council hosts a multicultural celebration that takes place in the downtown area. Last year, the Greek community acted as the host for this event. As part of the multicultural exhibition program, the

Orpheus dance troupe was invited by the Greek community, and in particular by Dr. Peter Leonard, to perform Greek dances from the mainland and island regions of Greece. The Orpheus dancers were honored by the invitation and indeed rose to the occasion.

The trip to Columbus was reminiscent of a kamikaze air raid. We left on a Friday night from Chicago and returned the very next evening. Unlike the kamikaze pilots however, all the Orpheus dancers returned safely to their home base.

Saturday was indeed a busy day, jam-packed with various multicultural exhibitions and events. The celebrations commenced with a wonderful parade in the Columbus downtown area. The members of the Greek Community had constructed a large float that undoubtedly stole the performance. The theme of the float was the return of the Olympic 2004 Games to their rightful place of birth. Greece!

During the parade, members of the Orpheus dance troupe, accompanied by some of the Greeks of Columbus, handed out dozens of miniature Greek flags to all the little children who were enjoying the festivities in the company of their parents. Some of the Orpheus dancers were even performing the *tsamiko* dance, as the float was slowly inching its way towards the finish line.

The parade in downtown Columbus marked only the commencement of the multicultural festivities. A plethora of food kiosks—representing the fine cuisine of many different countries—were set up along a closed-off section in the center of the town. On top of that, various vendors offered their unique native products at very reasonable prices to the public. Even I could not resist the urge to purchase a bongo drum that was handmade in Senegal Africa.

The festivities continued throughout the rest of the day as different cultural groups provided hours of musical and dancing entertainment. The Orpheus dance troupe presented a mainland and an island program. Both of these performances drew large crowds and were really well received by the audience.

The Orpheus folks would like to thank the Columbus Area Arts Council, Dr. Peter Leonard and the Greeks of Columbus Indiana for making us feel like part of the community. We look forward to hopefully repeating this wonderful experience in the future. ☐



Dr. Peter Leonard with members of Orpheus Dance Troupe before the start of the Ethnic parade.

Voice of Greece speaks to Orpheus

Radio reporter Ms. Katerina Thanasoula contacted the Orpheus Dance Troupe to give an interview on her radio program. Ms. Thanasoula works for ERA-5, the Greek National Radio, whose Channel 5 hosts the *Voice of Greece*. The *Voice of Greece* can be heard throughout the world at low frequencies. The Greek National Radio and TV have started special programming featuring individuals and organizations of the Greek Diaspora throughout the world. Some of these stories can be found on the station's web site at www.ert.gr.

The interview was broadcast in English with OHFS director John Economou who provided information about the history and activities of the organization. Ms. Thanasoula's initial contact with OHFS was through its web site which she found to be very impressive in appearance and equally informative. ☐



ELUNIKI RADIOPHONIA
TILEORASSI



Members of Orpheus with members of the Hellenic Five band during the "World Music and Cultures" presentation at Concordia University this past November.

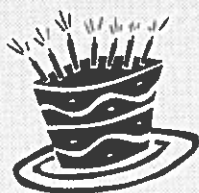


Orpheus dancers during the "Olive and Wine Festival" at Papagus Greek Taverna this past October.

personals

Congratulations to Patty Panagakis and Spero Droulias who were married on October 15, and to former Orpheus member Patty Angelos and her husband Alex Maillis. *Na zeisete!*

Best wishes to Kiki Kakavas and her fiancée John Kouchoukos who were engaged in November. The couple are planning an October wedding. *Kala stefana!*



Birthday wishes to Anna Colis on January 1, Antoni Giannopoulos on January 19, Valerie Pontikis on January 6, Nicole Alexopoulos January 9, Elaine Leberis on January 31, Peter Papageorgiou on February 7, Peter Vass on February 7,

Sophia Tsiplanitis on February 15, Nicholas Vass on February 16, John Mellos on February 19, Victoria Arvanitis on February 19, Amanda Stamelos on February 28, Pamela Economos on March 13, Kiki Kakavas on March 14, Michael Kleronomos on March 18, and Bia Adams on March 19.



Namesday greetings to Bessie Grosso, Kiki Kakavas, Vasiliki Kourkouvis, William Pierce and Valerie Pontikis on January 1, Joanna Chiotis, Ioanna Harrison, John Economou, and John Mellos on January 7, Antonis Giannopoulos and Tony Louras on January 17, Tom Mihalopoulos on January 18. ☐

performance schedule

Girl Scouts International Event
Benjamin Elementary School
West Chicago, IL
Friday, February 23
7:30 p.m.

Kalavrita Society Dinner Dance
Crystal Palace Banquets
Des Plaines, IL
Saturday, March 24
8:00 p.m.

Serbian Monastery
Balkan Festival
Grayslake, IL
Saturday, April 21
7:00 p.m.

Greek Independence Day Celebration
St. John The Baptist Church *(to be confirmed)*
Des Plaines, IL
Sunday, March 18
3:00 p.m.

Greek American Parade
Greek Town
Chicago, IL
Sunday, March 25
2:00 p.m.

Performance schedule and times are subject to change. For the latest information visit <http://www.ohfs.org>.

practice schedule

Orpheus Adult Group

Beginner/Intermediate:

6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Intermediate/Advanced:

7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Every Thursday at:

River Park Field House
5100 N. Francisco
Chicago, IL
312.742.7516

Orpheus Youth Group

Every Thursday at:

6:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
River Park Field House
5100 N. Francisco
Chicago, IL
312.742.7516

Every Saturday at:

1:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.
New Church
74 Park Drive
Glenview, IL

Youth Group: Dancers ages 10-14 (Chicago and Glenview locations).

Beginners: Members with little or no previous dance experience.

Intermediate: Dancers who have shown progress in the beginners' class attend the last hour of practice. At the discretion of the instructors, the intermediate level dancers will be practicing in a separate line.

All dancers, especially beginners, are encouraged to obtain a personal tape of the music used for performances, in order to practice on one's own and become accustomed to the music. Please provide John or Kostas Economou with a blank cassette tape.

Submissions for the Spring issue of *Lynx* will be accepted until March 15, 2001. We are always interested in educational essays/articles dealing with the subjects of Greek folk dance, folk music, and folk traditions. We continue to accept personal announcements and all other submissions pertinent to the dance troupe and its membership. If an individual wishes to contribute material on a continuous basis, please inform the Editor.

606 Greendale Rd
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