



**ORDER OF AHEPA**  
MOTHER LODGE FOUNDED JULY 26, 1922  
**YANKEE DISTRICT # 7**  
**2015 DISTRICT SPRING**  
**CONFERENCE, NEW BRITAIN, CT**  
**MARCH 14, 2015 MINUTES**

**COMBINED MEETING OF AHEPA FAMILY**

9:58 AM: The membership of the District 7 AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope gathered at the St. George Greek Orthodox Church Banquet Facility in New Britain, CT on March 14, 2015. Despite the cold and rainy weather, approximately 40 AHEPANs and Daughters were in attendance. The gathering was honored by the presence of Supreme Secretary, Andrew Zachariades, Supreme Counselor, Greg Stamos, Region 4 Supreme Governor, Frank Fotis, and Maids of Athena Grand Vice President, Tria Charnas. There were many PDGs from AHEPA and the daughters as well as Past Supreme President John Grossomanides. A majority of the District 7 Lodge officers from both branches of the AHEPA family were present. A fantastic lunch and great conversation was had by all.

A summary of the Spring Conference joint business meeting is as follows. Jack Isaac (New Britain Chapter President) welcomed the assembled AHEPANs and Daughters in attendance. It is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. George Greek Orthodox Church in New Britain. He remarked about the recent tragic loss of Fr. Matthew Baker to a car accident two weeks ago and pledged support of New Britain to the Norwich community in their time of need. This loss and of all departed AHEPANs was recognized by all by standing for a moment of silence. A bus is being sponsored by New Britain to go to New York City for the Greek Independence Day Parade. He referred all interested to Jimmy Lucas of New Britain for trip availability at \$20 a person. Reminders were given for two upcoming dates: March 29<sup>th</sup> for the bus trip to NYC and April 24<sup>th</sup> for the lecture at Yale University.

Donna Rados was next to speak on behalf of the Daughters of Penelope offering greetings on behalf of the host chapter. She introduced the District Governor, Myrsini Papoutsis, to address the gathering. She offered thanks to New Britain for hosting and providing a delicious meal. She recognized the PDGs in attendance. She also introduced the Grand Vice President of the Maids of Athena, Tria Charnas. The AHEPA District 7 Governor, Alex Bousioulis was introduced. Alex added his thanks to the Conference organizers and remarked about how well he has been received at all of the District events he has attended and how impressed he was at the quality of events that are being offered, especially the recent town hall meeting with Senator Chris Murphy sponsored by the Stamford Chapter. He recognized the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Selma, AL March participation by the AHEPA and Archbishop Demetrios. He went on to

recognize the assembled AHEPA dignitaries from the National and District Lodges. He went on to recognize the contributions of PSP John Grossomanides and PSG Nick Nikas helping to reorganize the chapter from Pawtucket, RI. The effort had taken several trips by the delegation and 15 new members were initiated on December 7, 2014. DG Alex introduced Penny Pecka who informed the assembled about the upcoming Nite at the Races which is a District fundraiser for Daughters and AHEPANs. She encouraged all members to sponsor a horse or to obtain donated prizes for the raffle. The day of the event was moved to Sunday due to input from restaurant owners asking for the change. Next Rick Pecka, Scholarship Chairman, gave his report informing the group about the scholarship form and instructions. The qualification standard has changed from a 2.5 to 3.0 minimum grade point average and the essay questions are now far more specific and more related to the AHEPA ideals than previously. The due date was changed only this year from April 15<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup> due to a late start in getting the applications out to the applicants. Questions from the floor were entertained. It was determined that the application will be in the next issue of the Yankee News and is currently on the website. The scholarship evaluator, located at Salve Regina University in RI will be using the following weighted criteria for applicant evaluation: 65% grade point average, 25% community involvement, and 10% essay. There was also discussion about sources of scholarship funds, how much will be available, and how it will be divided; none of which could be answered with certainty today. With all the discussion about how big the scholarship “pie” would be SG Frank Fotis remarked that today is Pi Day since the calendar date is 3/14/15. There was a request to have the PDF scholarship form be made available online as a fillable PDF form.

Supreme Counselor Greg Stamos talked about his experiences associated with travel to Constantinople last Thanksgiving and the high regard with which the AHEPA organization is held around the world. He also talked about his participation in the Selma 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary march and pride in the involvement that AHEPA had in getting the Archbishop to attend to recreate his predecessor’s Archbishop Iakovos original efforts. He shared his recollection of the Selma event and that President Obama asked the Archbishop to give a prayer which was the only one given that day. He discussed the upcoming Yale University Symposium and reported about the 2014 event and encouraged people to attend this year. Greg Stamos promoted Capitol Hill Day which is happening Wednesday April 28<sup>th</sup> and discussed what will happen that day. It was decided that D7 needs to organize a table for the Banquet at the Capitol event. John Grossomanides suggested that Greg Stamos coordinate with the District which will talk to the Chapters to determine attendance and to invite their respective Representatives and Senators to the D7 table.


George Rados was asked to report on Hellenic Affairs. He is asking for support for a petition that the Pan Macedonian Society is preparing objecting to the name of the country calling itself Macedonia and the associated hostilities. He also reminded everyone of the upcoming Paideia sponsored Greek Independence Day celebration in Hartford. He asked for the chapters to remember to donate \$100 to Hellenic Affairs in Washington with the check to be made in care of Andrew Kaffes. George Scarveles asked about whether communications were made directly to the chapters as a reminder of this effort and they had not as of yet. The recommendation was made to run the funds through the District Treasurer who could then provide one payment to the National Hellenic Affairs Fund. The question was asked by John Grossomanides if all of our

Federal Representatives were members of the Hellenic Caucus. The answer was in the affirmative.

Supreme Secretary, Andy Zachariades, was asked to speak. He discussed Capitol Hill Day and listed the honorees and honored guests that are scheduled to be in attendance including Vice President Joe Biden and the Speaker of the House John Boehner among others. The Supreme Lodges of the AHEPA and Daughters are committed to the St. Nicholas Shrine fundraiser. He related his personal connection to 9/11 and the losses in his District and encouraged all assembled to support this effort. There was a question asked if there was a list of the Greek Americans killed during 9/11. During course of the discussion, it was determined via the internet that the number is 38 and the names and ages of those that perished that day can be found at <http://usa.greekreporter.com/2010/09/11/remembering-the-greek-american-victims-of-911/>. He said the platform for St. Nicholas is built and the building plans are being finalized but the completion date is uncertain right now. The hope is to commemorate the Greek Americans lost in 9/11 in some fashion, maybe by plaque.

DG Alex Boutsoulis adjourned the joint meeting at 10:58 AM with the AHEPA staying in the ballroom and the DOP moving to another room.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gregory Simones", is centered within a light blue rectangular box.

Gregory Simones  
District 7 Secretary



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**MEETING OF THE AHEPA**

11:17 AM: AHEPA District 7 meeting began in New Britain Church Ballroom. District Governor Alex Boutsoulis opened the meeting by asking everyone to introduce themselves. List of the 21 in attendance as follows: DG Alex Boutsoulis, Waterbury (#48), DS Greg Simones, New London (Winthrop #250), SG Frank Fotis, Boston, MA (Athens #24), SC Greg Stamos, New Haven (#98), SS Andy Zachariades, Jersey City, NJ (Hudson #108), Rick Pecka (son), Waterbury (#48), PDG Jack Issac, New Britain (#117), PDG Ernie Poole, Norwich (#110), PSP John Grossomanides, Norwich (#110), DLG Demetrius Tasoulas, New London (Winthrop #250), Nick Nickas, Stamford (#99), James Cocolis, Stamford (#99), PSG George Scarveles, New Haven (#98), George Bouzakis, Hartford (#58), Jerry Copsinis, Hartford (#58), PDG Emmanuel Moshovos, Hartford (#58), Michael Michael, Meriden (#126), I'm with him (unknown), PDS Andy Aros, New Britain (117), Rick Pecka (father), Waterbury (# 48), Jim Lucas, Bridgeport.

DG Alex asked Greg Simones to present the minutes from the last meeting. He presented a summary of the minutes from the Fall meeting. Demetrius Tasoulas moved to approve the minutes and George Scarveles seconded. Discussion: Nick Nikas offered to make minutes available on the District website. Greg informed the membership that he has minutes of the combined meeting of the District as well as the AHEPA only minutes and that they were available separately. The membership wished those minutes to remain separate but wanted both. There doesn't appear to have been a formal approval of those minutes.

DG Alex asked Greg Stamos if there was anything else to add to his combined meeting report earlier today. Regarding Capitol Hill Day, he said that he would likely be the only one meeting with the Federal Representatives of Congress from our District. It helps to have a team to make the job of meeting all of these people more likely. One person might get to two meetings whereas two or more might be able to get to all seven offices for CT or all four for RI. He asked that all of us that are able to help AHEPA help Hellenism and spread that awareness to Congress. A question was asked about what to expect from that day in terms of events and cost. Greg responded that it is an all day event starting early with a briefing and policy information packets from Andy Kaffes. They are then sent out around 9 AM or so to meet with the Congressional representatives. The meetings continue until early afternoon then there are a couple of hours to

get ready for the black tie event starting around 6 PM. The event is at the Willard Hotel. Questions continued about alternate hotels and rates and Andy Zachariades helped to explain what was done by Headquarters to evaluate all the options. There is hope to have a District 7 table at the banquet. Another point discussed was whether we formally invite our Representatives to join us at the D7 table. It has been done by other Districts but questions remain whether they can accept the gift of an invitation to the banquet. A recommendation was made by John Grossomanides to have Greg Stamos coordinate through the chapters closest to Congress members to contact them on behalf of the District to see whether they would like to attend the banquet.

DG Alex asked Jack Isaac to speak about the Yale University Symposium. Jack has become concerned about the rise of Islamic militancy and its severe impact on the indigenous Christian populations. He explained that AHEPANs tend to do well with big projects but are not stepping up on societally significant human tragedy issues. Islamic fundamentalism has become a huge problem to the region and used the example of 200,000 Christians leaving the city of Mosel in a 24 hour period. The Islamic State put an “N” for Nazarene on the Christians doors to identify them. They were given several choices; convert, pay an exorbitant fee to remain Christian, leave the area, or be killed. The types of killings are barbaric by any standard (beheadings and burnings). These are fellow Christians that are being brutalized and killed and AHEPA should take a stronger stand on issues such as these. Several brothers asked for a summary of the issues brought up by Brother Jack to be assembled so they could be used on Capitol Hill Day to educate our Congress members of these atrocities. Supreme Secretary Andy said that there was a conference call involving himself, the Supreme President, Executive Director, and Andy Kaffes about the recent beheadings and whether AHEPA should make a statement about those events. Discussions are ongoing about how to address these issues in the future since they hadn’t been addressed before and so far no policy exists. There is a risk of threats to our executive leaders depending on our response to these types of issues. There have been threats to our executive officers in the past. John Grossomanides corrected the record to say that we do have a history of speaking out against injustices. Brother Rick Pecka added that he worked with Andy Kaffes during his time with the Sons and he is a great resource and the Order should place their faith in him to guide us in the appropriate way. Brother Jack reminded the assembled that while we deliberate this issue, people are dying. After further deliberations, John Grossomanides made a motion that the Supreme Lodge members in attendance be directed to advance this cause on behalf of the District. It was seconded by George Rados and George Scarveles. Motion Discussion: Frank Fotis supported the right of the District to direct the Supreme Lodge to consider this issue through a motion which was just done and he respects that motion. Demetrius Tasoulas wants to amend the motion so that once a statement is synthesized that it be directed to all of our Congressional representatives simultaneously as it is publicized. John G. approved of the friendly amendment to the original motion. The amended motion was unanimously approved.

DG Alex called on Nick Nickas to discuss membership. Brother Nick shared that the term lobbyist came from the lobby of the Hotel Willard where lobbyists would gather to engage the presidents when they would go there for a drink. As far as membership, the good news is that the Order of AHEPA membership is up by around 300 people. The bad news is the District membership went down by 29 members and it is the lowest point in our history since 2009. He

recommended that we all go back to our chapters and try to find ways to improve membership. Four Chapters in the District increased their membership. They are New Haven which increased by 4 members, Stamford had 5 new members, Pawtucket, RI added 15 new members as they were reactivated, and New London grew by one member. The other 11 Chapters are down for the year 2014. In the calculation of District Per Capita, dual Sons/AHEPA members must be subtracted since they do not pay per capita. There are 9 dual members each from Waterbury and Stamford for a total of 18. The District dues are \$11 per person and the bills have been sent out. Payments should be returned to the District Treasurer by mail. John Grossomanides asked whether there was a District Membership Coordinator. DG Alex answered there was not but one would be appointed. Rick Pecka asked, "How many members in good standing does the District have in District 7 at year's end 2014?" The answer was 817 losing 29 from the previous year. In 2009, the number of members was 765 (a recent low point); 2010 was 822; 2011 was 869 (a recent high point). Rick Pecka pointed out that the membership drop over the last year is 3.4%. There were calls again for a membership coordinator to oversee and manage troubled chapters such as Norwalk, Danbury, and Providence. John G. recommended the need for a comprehensive plan to deal with these chapters beyond an email or phone call. The Meriden Chapter asked for an additional membership payment grace period at the end of the year since they had a miscue that lead to per capita not being paid to national last year. Nick Nikas explained that the year-end deadline is hard for membership numbers although late payment will credit the members years of active service to AHEPA. Discussion continued involving input from our Supreme Secretary that the Chapters have a fiduciary obligation to send in monies collected for the year paid. Headquarters loses money and the District loses the \$2 that goes back from national. If every chapter had sent in their monies on time, we would have nearly 1,000 additional members on the rolls that are not counted officially for the whole of AHEPA. The recommendation was made that Chapters pay quarterly to National to keep their payments up to date rather than one lump sum at the end of the year risking that it may not get there in time. Nick Nikas recognized John Bochanis from Bridgeport (who was not present at the beginning of the meeting) making him the 22<sup>nd</sup> member in attendance.

Nick Nikas continued his report with updates about the Hellenic History Tournament (HHT). He is bound by the rules of the Tournament to give a financial report to the District. Last year there were 14 teams and we collected from all District 7 Chapters except for Meriden, Norwalk, and Danielson, each owing \$100. However, they are not bound to pay the money since it is voluntary participation. The HHT treasury started 2014 with \$1,573 and \$6,222 total expenses ending with a current balance of \$2,043. He explained that the intent was never to make money but the reason that it has over the last 2 years is because of the increase in participation of teams from outside of the District. Greg Stamos praised Brother Nick calling the HHT an example of a crown jewel that personifies and exemplifies the "E" in AHEPA. He said that this event is growing with a HHT event held in Chicago last year. The Supreme Lodge hopes and expects in the next couple of years for there to be four regional tournaments with the four winners meeting at the National Convention. Greg made a motion to accept Brother Nick's report and applauded his efforts in this endeavor. It was seconded by George Rados. Nick Nikas announced that the new flyers and documentation are available on the website. He said that there is a young man, Vasilios Diakogeorgiou, from the Stamford Chapter that works for UBS in Hartford and lives in North Haven that has volunteered to coordinate a mentorship program for high school and college students. He said that this is where we should be spending our efforts by helping young

people. Vasilios has gathered a team of professionals to mentor young students. The difficulty has been in identifying students to be mentored. He said information went out to the chapters asking for mentors and students and he is asking for support from the AHEPA chapters and individual members. The conversation turned back to the HHT and whether or not the \$100 fee for each chapter could be reduced since we have a surplus. Nick explained that he is reluctant to do that if there is a later need to increase the fee again. The consensus was to leave the fee structure as it is since a need may arise as the HHT grows nationally for those funds to be used by the District for team travel to the national Convention.

Rick Pecka was asked to speak about the District Scholarship. He passed out a list for brothers to sign up if they want the application forms emailed to them. He also mentioned that only the instructions page and not the application form were currently available on the District website.

DG Alex gave an update about the Yankee News. The next Yankee News issue should be out by Tuesday with the scholarship application included. The YN Board has been working on changes to the newsletter with Alex Boutsioulis and Jack Isaac acting as coeditors, along with assistance from Andy Aros. John Melonopoulos and John Grossomanides have made tremendous efforts to bring in many more ads than previous years making it more profitable. The DG praised the past efforts of Krystyna Kazakos as layout editor of the YN. John Grossomanides inquired as to who is the new layout editor. Her name is Terry Plumley from the St. George Church in New Britain and will act as publicist. The labor is divided among more people and doesn't rely on just one person. Krystyna did the work on a volunteer basis but Terry is being paid \$150 per issue. Alex said he spent at least 85 hours working on getting the Fall issue ready for publication and it was too much work for one person to do, especially on a volunteer basis. Discussion followed concerning publication deadlines and dates, especially with the next issue being the Convention issue and the need to possibly move the publication date up earlier getting the information out about hotels and registration pricing to allow for a reasonable response time from potential attendees.

DG Alex went on to discuss the October 24<sup>th</sup> PDG Dinner Dance saying it is also the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Oxi Day. It is his hope to turn it into a fundraiser for St. Nicholas Shrine. The other event around that time of the year will be the Fall Conference to be hosted by the Bridgeport Chapter on October 3<sup>rd</sup> (John Bochanis, Chapter President).

The next topic is the District Scholarship Dinner in New London scheduled for August 16<sup>th</sup>. From now on there will be a four chapter rotation consisting of New London, Bridgeport, New Britain, and Waterbury. District 7 is a two state district and this will allow the scholarship dinner to be close to most chapters on a rotating basis and take some of the burden off of New Britain and Waterbury who have been hosting these events consistently.

DG Alex opened the discussion to the membership in attendance. Rick Pecka Sr. commented that many members take too much time during the meetings and as a consequence the meetings get dragged out longer. He also said that information that was discussed was restated at other points during the meeting and that is redundant. Alex acknowledged the concern and that he hopes to achieve an improvement in the future.

Mo Moshovos spoke about the AHEPA Academy. He is passionate about the program and Hartford has sent 4 students over the last 3 years. He urged the brothers to check out the AHEPA website and print out the application. He feels it is the biggest bang for the buck at \$1,000 per student.

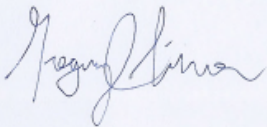
Ernie Poole discussed fundraising of \$632,000 for the Baker family on Go Fund Me and the Norwich church is also accepting checks on behalf of the family. He also mentioned a candlestick bowling tournament up in Lynn, MA that some District 7 members might attend for extending fellowship to our neighboring Bay State District. Jack Isaac wanted to make sure that the PDG Dinner in October wording on the website be changed since it reads like it is only for him and Penny Pecka and it should be for all PDGs. Nick Nikas said that the updated wording of the event will be changed on the District website. John Grossomanides asked about the Supreme Convention room rate and registration fees. Supreme Secretary Andy contacted Basil Mossaidis regarding the Supreme Convention specific and he was advised that the information would be available within a week. Greg Simones advised the membership that he visited the national website and there were two links for registration and hotel information. There was some confusion as to whether more information was forthcoming from Headquarters. Rick Pecka, District Sons Advisor, advocated for our junior orders. He challenged the chapters to go home and attempt to create strong Sons chapters since they become future AHEPANs. This would aid in solving our membership challenges. John G. announced that in the last year Norwich has reactivated both Daughters and Maids chapters. Greg Simones offered a recommendation that nearby chapters such as Norwich and New London pool resources for junior orders if the critical mass of people is not available in just one chapter. Rick Pecka said both New London and Norwich having had former Sons chapters would find it easy to reactivate them not having to petition for a charter. Michael Michael asked whether an AHEPAN could have dual membership in more than one chapter. The answer was that it is against the AHEPA constitution per our Supreme Counselor and Supreme Secretary. Andy Zachariades wanted to offer thanks to the assembled brothers. He offered that one of the best ways to help membership is through member retention. It is an easy way to keep membership numbers up in a chapter. Mo Moshovos added that the 3Rs for membership are retention, recruitment, and reinstatement. DG Alex thanked all in attendance for a good meeting.

Motion to Adjourn made by Rick Pecka

Seconded by Jack Isaac

Meeting Adjourned at 12:50 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gregory Simones", is centered within a light blue rectangular box.

Gregory Simones  
District Secretary