



HELLENIC LINK-MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

The World of Elementary Particles

On Sunday, December 9 at 3 pm, Hellenic Link-Midwest presents a lecture by Dr. Vaia Papadimitriou, assistant division head at Fermilab, titled "*The World of Elementary Particles*". The event will take place at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, on 10249 West Irving Park Road, in Schiller Park, Illinois, SE corner of Irving Park and Mannheim Road. Admission is free of charge for Hellenic Link-Midwest members and \$5 for non-members.

Dr. Papadimitriou will talk about the building blocks the world is made of, the forces that hold them together, about how elementary particles are made in Laboratories using powerful high energy accelerators, and how these subatomic particles are detected using giant detectors. She will discuss what was there in the "beginning" and what particle physicists and cosmologists are looking for now. She will talk about the current status of the efforts to develop a theory that describes all four known interactions between elementary particles and about the race to find a mysterious particle, the "Higgs" particle, thought to endow other particles with mass. Astrophysics experiments have shown that visible, or luminous, matter accounts for less than 10% of the entire mass in the universe. She will touch upon indications for the presence of invisible, or dark, matter and the dark energy that is expected to accelerate the expansion of the universe.

Dr. Vaia Papadimitriou received her B. Sc. degree in Physics from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in 1982. She spent a year as a graduate Fellow at the Institute of Nuclear Physics "DEMOKRITOS", Athens, Greece, and in 1983 she became a graduate student at the University of Chicago. She received from the University of Chicago her M.Sc. degree in Physics in 1985 and her Ph.D. degree in Physics in 1990. From 1990 to 1994 she worked at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory as a Leon Lederman Fellow, and in September 1994 she became Assistant Professor of Physics at Texas Tech University where in 2003 she was promoted to Professor. In August 2003 she assumed a Scientist staff position at Fermilab, and in September 2006 she became Assistant

Division Head of Fermilab's Accelerator Division. While at Fermilab, she maintains the position of an Adjunct Professor at Texas Tech University.

She is an author of about 400 publications in peer reviewed journals, and has made numerous presentations at National and International Conferences and Workshops.

Annual Dinner Dance - Scholarship Awards

The Annual Dinner Dance, New Year Celebration, and Scholarship Awards of Hellenic Link-Midwest will be held on Saturday, January 26, 2008, at the Four Point Sheraton Hotel, 10255 West Irving Road at Schiller Park. The proceeds from the Annual Dinner Dance are used to support the scholarships, cultural and educational programs, and all other activities of our organization. The generous support of our members and friends will be greatly appreciated. For tickets in advance, \$70 for adults and \$45 for children and students, please call 847-498-3686, or contact any of the Board Members. If you wish to purchase tickets at the door on the night of the event, the price will be \$80.

In Brief

Greek lifestyle is increasingly unhealthy

According to the results of a recent analysis of a number of European and Greek studies on lifestyle and habits, Modern Greeks have adopted a lifestyle significantly less healthy than that of previous decades. Their life expectancy has plummeted from the 2nd highest in the European Union in 1991 to the 11th place in 2004.

Professor of social medicine Ioannis Tountas said that Greeks are "committing a slow suicide" on a daily basis by eating too much, smoking incessantly, spending too much time in front of the television and completely ignoring the need to exercise or undergo regular medical exams. Greece holds one of the highest positions worldwide for rates of smoking; 49.9 percent of men and 30.8 percent of women are smokers and the tendency is for these numbers to increase. About 60 percent of the population is overweight, and Greeks are ranking as the

most overweight and obese nationality in Europe after the British.

Exercise appears to be a burden for Greeks; 55 percent of them declare that they do not exercise at all or very little; seven out of ten responding to a poll carried out by the "Alco" company said that they travel with their car or their motorcycle to and from their job, while more than half reveal that they use their car even for short distances. Dietician Haris Dimosthenopoulos said that "the complete lack of physical activity, the wrong kind and the quantity of food are the two main elements resulting from this extensive research."

Most worrisome is the evidence that Greeks have to a great extent abandoned their previously healthy Mediterranean diet. Current dietary trends are diverging as much as 50 percent from the Med diet model, and Greeks do not take precautionary actions against disease, while 35% of Greek adults are suffering from some chronic ailment. Most or almost all respondents to a survey of all ages said that they eat ready or fast food four times a week. More than half had gone on a diet in the past, and only half of them succeeded in maintaining a weight that was 5 percent less than their initial weight. Three out of ten said that they were disappointed with their diet and had regained the weight that they had lost or they gained even more. Replying to the question of what is the easiest thing to do to lose weight, exercise or a healthy diet, 38 percent said a diet was preferable compared to 54 percent who considered exercise almost inconceivable.

'Smart Eyes' navigator device

Fifty "Smart Eyes" navigation system devices developed to assist the blind were presented recently to as many sight-impaired persons in a special ceremony at the Thessaloniki Concert Hall. The system was developed about three years ago by the Telecommunications Laboratory of the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Thessaloniki, and in 2004 won the first prize in an international contest held in Brazil. The same system will be presented to another 100 recipients in Athens in early December.

It consists of a hand-held computer equipped with Bluetooth connections and earphones that can hook up to a GPS receiver and a voice communication system. A digital map collects data from the GPS, processes it, and provides information to the user. The system issues audio signals warning the user when he or she is approaching a selected destination, such as a bus stop, traffic lights or specific buildings.

"Smart Eyes" was sponsored by the companies Cosmote, Microsoft Hellas and Geomatics.

From the Treasures of Hellenic Thought

Excerpts from the Discourses of Epictetus

Epictetus, one of the great Stoic philosophers, lived from 55 AD to 135 AD. Before the rise of Christianity, the Stoics advocated the brotherhood of humanity and the natural equality of all human beings. Their ideas had a strong influence on Christian theology.

Of providence (continued from last issue)

... Come then do you also having observed these things look to the faculties which you have, and when you have looked at them, say: "Bring now, O Zeus, any difficulty that Thou pleasest, for I have means given to me by Thee and powers for honoring myself through the things which happen." You do not so; but you sit still, trembling for fear that some things will happen, and weeping, and lamenting and groaning for what does happen: and then you blame the gods. For what is the consequence of such meanness of spirit but impiety? And yet God has not only given us these faculties; by which we shall be able to bear everything that happens without being depressed or broken by it; but, like a good king and a true father, He has given us these faculties free from hindrance, subject to no compulsion unimpeded, and has put them entirely in our own power, without even having reserved to Himself any power of hindering or impeding. You, who have received these powers free and as your own, use them not: you do not even see what you have received, and from whom; some of you being blinded to the giver, and not even acknowledging your benefactor, and others, through meanness of spirit, betaking yourselves to fault finding and making charges against God. Yet I will show to you that you have powers and means for greatness of soul and manliness, but what powers you have for finding fault and making accusations, do you show me.

How from the fact that we are akin to God a man may proceed to the consequences

If the things are true which are said by the philosophers about the kinship between God and man, what else remains for men to do than what Socrates did? Never in reply to the question, to what country you belong, say that you are an Athenian or a Corinthian, but that you are a citizen of the world. For why do you say that you are an Athenian, and why do you not say that you belong to the small nook only into which your poor body was cast at birth? Is it not plain that you call yourself an Athenian or Corinthian from the place which has a greater authority

and comprises not only that small nook itself and all your family, but even the whole country from which the stock of your progenitors is derived down to you? He then who has observed with intelligence the administration of the world, and has learned that the greatest and supreme and the most comprehensive community is that which is composed of men and God, and that from God have descended the seeds not only to my father and grandfather, but to all beings which are generated on the earth and are produced, and particularly to rational beings - for these only are by their nature formed to have communion with God, being by means of reason conjoined with Him - why should not such a man call himself a citizen of the world, why not a son of God, and why should he be afraid of anything which happens among men? Is kinship with Caesar or with any other of the powerful in Rome sufficient to enable us to live in safety, and above contempt and without any fear at all? And to have God for your maker and father and guardian, shall not this release us from sorrows and fears?

But a man may say, "Whence shall I get bread to eat when I have nothing?"

And how do slaves, and runaways, on what do they rely when they leave their masters? Do they rely on their lands or slaves, or their vessels of silver? They rely on nothing but themselves, and food does not fail them. And shall it be necessary for one among us who is a philosopher to travel into foreign parts, and trust to and rely on others, and not to take care of himself, and shall he be inferior to irrational animals and more cowardly, each of which, being self-sufficient, neither fails to get its proper food, nor to find a suitable way of living, and one conformable to nature?

I indeed think that the old man ought to be sitting here, not to contrive how you may have no mean thoughts nor mean and ignoble talk about yourselves, but to take care that there be not among us any young men of such a mind that, when they have recognized their kinship to God, and that we are fettered by these bonds, the body, I mean, and its possessions, and whatever else on account of them is necessary to us for the economy and commerce of life, they should intend to throw off these things as if they were burdens painful and intolerable, and to depart to their kinsmen. But this is the labour that your teacher and instructor ought to be employed upon, if he really were what he should be. You should come to him and say, "Epictetus, we can no longer endure being bound to this poor body, and feeding it and giving it drink, and rest, and cleaning it, and for the sake of the body complying with the wishes of these and of those. Are not these things

indifferent and nothing to us, and is not death no evil? And are we not in a manner kinsmen of God, and did we not come from Him? Allow us to depart to the place from which we came; allow us to be released at last from these bonds by which we are bound and weighed down. Here there are robbers and thieves and courts of justice, and those who are named tyrants, and think that they have some power over us by means of the body and its possessions. Permit us to show them that they have no power over any man." And I on my part would say, "Friends, wait for God; when He shall give the signal and release you from this service, then go to Him; but for the present endure to dwell in this place where He has put you: short indeed is this time of your dwelling here, and easy to bear for those who are so disposed: for what tyrant or what thief, or what courts of justice, are formidable to those who have thus considered as things of no value the body and the possessions of the body? Wait then, do not depart without a reason."

Something like this ought to be said by the teacher to ingenuous youths. But now what happens? The teacher is a lifeless body, and you are lifeless bodies. When you have been well filled to-day, you sit down and lament about the morrow, how you shall get something to eat. Wretch, if you have it, you will have it; if you have it not, you will depart from life. The door is open. Why do you grieve? Where does there remain any room for tears? And where is there occasion for flattery? Why shall one man envy another? Why should a man admire the rich or the powerful, even if they be both very strong and of violent temper? For what will they do to us? We shall not care for that which they can do; and what we do care for, that they cannot do. How did Socrates behave with respect to these matters? Why, in what other way than a man ought to do who was convinced that he was a kinsman of the gods? "If you say to me now," said Socrates to his judges, "'We will acquit you on the condition that you no longer discourse in the way in which you have hitherto discoursed, nor trouble either our young or our old men,' I shall answer, 'you make yourselves ridiculous by thinking that, if one of our commanders has appointed me to a certain post, it is my duty to keep and maintain it, and to resolve to die a thousand times rather than desert it; but if God has put us in any place and way of life, we ought to desert it?'" Socrates speaks like a man who is really a kinsman of the gods. But we think about ourselves as if we were only stomachs, and intestines, and shameful parts; we fear, we desire; we flatter those who are able to help us in these matters, and we fear them also.

(to be continued)

From The Riches Of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry by Constantine Cavafy

Τρώες

Είν' η προσπάθειές μας, των συφοριασμένων,
είν' η προσπάθειές μας σαν των Τρώων.
Κομμάτι κατορθώνουμε· κομμάτι
παίρνουμε επάνω μας· κι αρχίζουμε
νάχουμε θάρρος και καλές ελπίδες.

Μα πάντα κάτι βγαίνει και μας σταματά.
Ο Αχιλλεύς στην τάφρον εμπροστά μας
βγαίνει και με φωνές μεγάλες μας τρομάζει.—

Είν' η προσπάθειές μας σαν των Τρώων.
Θαρρούμε πως με απόφασι και τόλμη
θ' αλλάξουμε της τύχης την καταφορά,
κ' έξω στεκόμεθα ν' αγωνισθούμε.

Αλλ' όταν η μεγάλη κρίσις έλθει,
η τόλμη κ' η απόφασίς μας χάνονται·
ταράττεται η ψυχή μας, παραλύει·
κι ολόγυρα απ' τα τείχη τρέχουμε
ζητώντας να γλυτώσουμε με την φυγή.

Ομως η πτώσις μας είναι βεβαία. Επάνω,
στα τείχη, άρχισεν ήδη ο θρήνος.
Των ημερών μας αναμνήσεις κλαιν κ' αισθήματα.
Πικρά για μας ο Πρίαμος κ' η Εκάβη κλαίνει.

Επέστρεφε

Επέστρεφε συχνά και παίρνε με,
αγαπημένη αίσθησις επέστρεφε και παίρνε με --
όταν ξυπνά του σώματος η μνήμη,
κ' επιθυμία παληά ξαναπερνά στο αίμα·
όταν τα χείλη και το δέρμα ενθυμούνται,
κ' αισθάνονται τα χέρια σαν ν' αγγίζουν πάλι.

Επέστρεφε συχνά και παίρνε με την νύχτα,
όταν τα χείλη και το δέρμα ενθυμούνται....

Trojans

Our efforts are those of the unfortunate;
our efforts are like those of the Trojans.
Somewhat we succeed; somewhat
we regain confidence; and we start
to have courage and high hopes.

But something always happens and stops us.
Achilles in the trench before us
emerges and with loud cries terrifies us—

Our efforts are like those of the Trojans.
We believe that with resolution and daring
we will alter the blows of destiny,
and we stand outside to do battle.

But when the great crisis comes,
our daring and our resolution vanish;
our soul is agitated, paralyzed;
and we run around the walls
seeking to save ourselves in flight.

Nevertheless, our fall is certain. Above,
on the walls, the mourning has already begun.
The memories and the sentiments of our days weep.
Bitterly Priam and Hecuba weep for us.

Return

Return often and take me,
beloved sensation, return and take me --
when the memory of the body awakens,
and an old desire runs again through the blood;
when the lips and the skin remember,
and the hands feel as if they touch again.

Return often and take me at night,
when the lips and the skin remember....