

TSINTZINIAN CHRONICLE

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The President's Message

by John Zacharias

We did it—the 2003 Convention, hereafter to be called the Tsintzinian Family Reunion was a total success. From the erection of the newly purchased 20 x 30 tent on Thursday afternoon to the send off Sunday morning breakfast, every activity was completed with great success and good attendance. We had close to 200 register which was our largest crowd in 6 years. The food was outstanding, the weather was perfect and the highlight of the reunion was Peter Dickson updating us all on the history of our Society. The mayor of Celoron attended and presented us with a Resolution proclaiming July 25-July 27 to be Tsintzina Society weekend in recognition of us meeting over 100 years. The Jamestown Post Journal sent a reporter to cover our reunion and a full page article and several pictures were the highlight of their September 13th Saturday Family Magazine section.



The success of our 2003 Reunion was the result of many people who in the past few years have decided to keep the Tsintzina spirit alive. Every member of the board of directors and the ladies auxiliary has found a way to help by doing something they enjoy doing. They have included other members who have special talents such as cooking, baking, or project supervision. Special thanks is extended to those who took on the responsibility for each special project like the raffles, the history presentation and the Children's Olympics.

What is in store for us next year? The Tsintzina Reunion is scheduled for July 29,30, 31, and August 1. Since everything went so well

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A Successful Board Meeting

The board met at Beaver Falls, PA for the annual fall meeting. Duane Ferencz was named the new membership chairman.

The 2003 Tsintzina convention was profitable, and the new Directory was a success. The board is contemplating a new pavillion to be built on the grounds. The pavillion will be a permanent structure built by our caretaker and his father. The cost will be shared between the Society and Roger.

Finally the 2004 Tsintzina Family Reunion dates were set at July 29 through August 1. See you there!!!

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PROCLAMATION

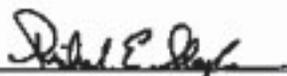
WHEREAS, the Tsintzina Society is celebrating their 100th anniversary of meeting in the Jamestown area, and

WHEREAS, they have been meeting in the Village of Celoron since 1917, and

WHEREAS, they have always been willing to support the Village of Celoron in any capacity possible,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that as Mayor of the Village of Celoron, I, Richard E. Slagle do hereby proclaim the weekend of July 25 to July 27, 2003 to be Tsintzina Society weekend in the Village of Celoron, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that I encourage all residents of the Village of Celoron to welcome the Society members and their guests, with friendship and best wishes.



Richard E. Slagle
Mayor

This Official Proclamation was given at the
2003 Tsintzina Convention
by Mayor Richard E. Slagle.

GROUP PICTURE GETS BURNED BY BLACKOUT

by John Zacharias

We are sorry to report that the 2003 Reunion Group Picture was a victim of the August East Coast Blackout. The professional photographer that took the picture transferred digital images to his hard drive right after the Re Union. Just prior to the blackout, he was working on his computer and as the result of the blackout, lost 2000 images out of 7000. He has had his hard drive re formatted hoping to recover his images. Ours were of the group of 2000 unable to be recovered. Hence, we are asking everyone who came this year to come back next year for a repeat sitting for this year's picture. Please plan on coming back. The picture will be taken at 5:45 p m on July 31, 2004.

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this year, there will be very little change to the schedule of activities or to the dinner menu. If you have any suggestions, please direct them to any board member. There is a consideration of building a permanent pavilion to replace the tent. This project will enhance the property value and attractiveness for local rental events which will generate more income for us. Regarding income, annual dues will be increased by \$5 in 2004.

Wishing everyone a happy holiday season and may 2004 be a healthy and prosperous year for all of us.

Happy **H**olidays
from your
Tsintzinian **F**amily

Congratulations Ria

by Kaleroy Zervos

Congratulations to Ria Zervos, daughter of Dr. Skevos and Barbara Zervos of Youngstown, Ohio and granddaughter of Loy (Chelekis) Georgetson. She recently ran the relay portion of the Alcatraz XXIII: Escape From the Rock Triathlon in San Francisco where she lives and works as a personal trainer. Her team came in First Place for this event. She runs marathons in her free time to raise money for the Leukemia Society, including races in both Hawaii and Dublin, Ireland.



After three years in Nicosia, Cyprus, as Head of the English and Drama Departments at the American International School, Kaleroy Zervos, daughter of Dr. Skevos and Barbara Zervos of Youngstown, Ohio, and granddaughter of Loy (Chelekis) Georgetson, will be moving to Bogota, Colombia, to teach middle school English and drama at Colegio Nueva Granada this fall. Prior to Cyprus, she taught two years at The Columbus School in Medellin, Colombia, as well as in Akron, Ohio, before entering the international school system.

**Plan ahead for the
2004 Tsintzina
Family Reunion!!**

TSINTZINIAN HISTORY SHOW PRESENTED AT CONVENTION

by Pauline Costianes

After a hiatus of 10 years, Tsintzinian historian Peter Dickson gave his presentation on the Tsintzinian immigration on Saturday afternoon at this year's Convention. There were many of us who had so looked forward to hearing this marvelous program again, and all the chairs were filled for that afternoon's program.

Peter detailed the saga of Cristos Tsakonas, the "Christopher Columbus" of Tsintzinian immigration. With only one companion, he came to New York City, and despite the discouragements offered by the Greek consul, managed to stay here and make a good life for himself, and by extension, many young Tsintzinian men whom he encouraged to come here. We came to understand the backdrop of American history, and understand how such events as the Civil War, the Great Chicago Fire, etc., affected the patterns of immigration of our ancestors. We learned about the foundation of the Greek-American Fruit Company, and how some of our people made it all the way out to Hawaii, and were involved in the anti-annexation movement against the American government.

All these fascinating facts were accompanied by slides which took years for Peter to compile, and which really deepened our understanding of the stories that unfolded.

We would certainly hope that Peter returns annually, as 10 years is way too long a break to hear and see this well-researched and painstakingly compiled unique story of our Tsintzinian ancestors' new lives in America. Thank you Peter!



ICONOGRAPHY

Written by the hand of the
servant of God

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www.comeandseeicons.com/ferencz.htm

Circle of Life



Tsintzinian women and men are shown dancing the Tsamiko, a traditional slow dance from the Grecian city of Sparta. This picture, taken at 10 p.m. is several hours before the Tsintzinians get into full gear. Below, the Aegeans, an impromptu Greek band made of residents of Ithaca and Rochester warm up before playing at the Convention. Insert, below right, plentiful portions of green beans, seasoned potatoes, half chicken breasts and salads with feta cheese grace the tables during the main course of the Friday night dinner at the Tsintzina Club. Shown eating and merry making are many members of the Laskaris Family.

As published in the
Jamestown Post Journal
by Steven M. Sweeney

He danced the night away to saucy, dissonant tunes of the session band, the “Aegeans.” Nimble in his sway, George Laskaris continued in a century old tradition of living his heritage.

“One, two, three, four ... five, six, seven, kick and back one, two, three and forward again,” he said reading the choreographed motions of Greek family and friends dancing the Tsamiko. “This dance is slow. It is a Spartan dance, what you

might say is the “official” dance of Sparta.”

Those gathered for this annual convention are like Laskaris, they are direct descendants of emigrants from the same Grecian village near Sparta: Tsintzina (sin-zin-a).

“The thing is ... you see this, look at all these people. Don’t call it a Tsintzinian convention, call it a Tsintzinian family reunion. That’s what it is,” the retired RCA quality control manager from Memphis, Tenn., said. “What else can I tell you, I would not give it up for anything. I’ve never been to Greece but this is like Greece, except in New York

State ... in Celoron.”

Laskaris has attended the reunion sporadically since the 1930s and said he feels that it is much more than a society of villagers.

“I used to pull my wife’s pig tails. When we got married, there were 300 people,” he said. “The kids love it because they meet people like them. The grandkids love it, they enjoy setting up tables, setting up chairs. I met family I never knew existed, it means a tremendous amount.”

While taking shots at the

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popular movie, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, Laskaris said it did have some unifying factors.

“There wasn’t anything good about that movie but everyone loved it because they found something in common,” he said. “The Italians, the Polish, the Irish” discovered commonalities among their cultures.

Even though absurd elements of the movie are less recognizable in real life, it still applies. One woman, who asked not to be identified, said after 100 years, one of the original purposes of the convention survives.

“Don’t let them kid you, this is still a place for the girls to meet nice Greek boys,” she said.

A Unique History

The Tsintzinians trace the beginning of their American heritage to the emigration of Christos C. Chacona from Greece to Chicago in 1873. He pounced upon opportunities in that city, rebuilding itself after the Great Fire of 1871.

“Really this was the ultimate boom town. They were really 20 to 30 years ahead of most Greeks,” explained group historian Peter

Dickson of Arlington, Va. “There were so many Irish and Italians, they didn’t need the support. The reason why Greek immigration is so different is they used a chain of support.”

Labeled by Dickson as the “Greek Moses,” Chacona encouraged other enterprising individuals from his home of Tsintzina to immigrate to America also. He later made connections in Wisconsin and Michigan before firmly settling in the Northeast to establish the Greek American Fruit Co. Tsintzinians associated with Chacona later formed the base of Greek communities in Chicago, Philadelphia and Hawaii.

“They sort of snaked their way from Youngstown (Ohio), to Franklin, Oil City, Warren and Jamestown. One of the original two stores in Jamestown was on Second street,” the historian said.

The Jamestown Directory from 1895 lists an advertisement for the company located at 121 Main St. on the corner of Second Street. John D. Chechery, manager of the Jamestown store and George J. Politis organized the first reunion banquet that year to honor Chacona who had settled in Jamestown. As a gift of appreciation for his work in hastening their arrival in the United

States, the group presented him with his mortgage, paid in full.

“That year they decided to make the conventions annual. (In 1896) these plans collapsed when ... six or seven other Tsintzinians suddenly decided to return to Greece to attend the revival of the Olympic Games in Athens that same year,” Dickson said.

Meeting sporadically in Erie, Franklin, Pa., and Chautauqua County, they eventually made a permanent home out of the old Celoron Moose Lodge.

“This is such an ideal place. If you do a family thing, where do you go? Where do you stay? Who does the dishes?,” historian Peter Nickles said of the early and present conventions. “The priest would come ... there’d be 30 christenings. They did that why? ... Because the godparents would be here. That’s what they did here – christenings, weddings.” With the exception of the war years of 1943, 1944 and 1945, the Greek village’s descendants have met annually in Celoron since 1921.

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At left, sisters Bess Canelos of Pittsburgh, Cleo Grant of Youngstown, Ohio, Loy Geortgson of Pittsburgh and Irene Parthemios of Youngstown who remember earlier times when they rented rooms from Celoron residents in the once popular resort village.

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Nickles recalled his childhood impressions.

“My memory, as a seven year old coming to Jamestown, I was a little boy staying at the Hotel Jamestown,” he said. “My cousins grew up with me. Come to Jamestown

and you’ll find the rest of your family. The convention started on Tuesday. My father knew if they took off the last week of July, his cousins and brothers would do the same.”

Amplifying the comments of his friend, Dickson is still amazed at the uniqueness of it all. “One of the reasons the bonding was so good was these people were mountaineers. The mountain people tend to be more clannish,” he said. “I was blown away to do comparisons. Doesn’t everybody do this? They don’t. The closest are Irish, but they are more regionally based. (We are) a unique story.”

Keeping the Faith

“It waxes and wanes. Our main challenge is to figure out how to keep kids coming,” said Pauline Costianes. “Because of 9-11 people decided not to come last year.” Fighting others’ fears of travel and families interested in more local concerns, Tsintzinian board member Duane Ferencz, 30, admonished people with an excuse to stay home.

“My generation of kids aren’t as present. My friends in my teens,

were 15 in number, now there are only four or five of us,” he said. “A lot of what I’ve heard it was something very personal, a death in the

family. I seem to make it here and I keep in touch with those that still come.”

Ferencz, a native of Pittsburgh, remains optimistic about the younger generations he sees

taking over the reigns of leadership in a few years.

“That 15 to 25 (age group) is connecting and coming back,” he said of younger cousins and friends. “I’m very, very proud to be the third generation ... I say let’s do more things for that generation so they’re more interested in coming back.”

With a spirit of tradition solidly ingrained, the board member has made the pilgrimage to Celoron since he was four, making this his 26th convention.

“To me it’s not a family reunion, it’s a tradition carried on from generation to generation,” he said. “I saw my grandfather doing his fair share of work. He got me interested and taught me to pay my dues” to the club.

As zealous as Ferencz with his heritage, John Zacharias described that hard work and stereotypical closeness of Greek friends and families are often exaggerated, but

not myths. To understand their story is to understand them and why they trek to their clubhouse every year.

“I think it is the maintenance of tradition, culture, social relationship that have been continued more than 100 years. A person who lives across the street from the clubhouse may wonder, ‘What are they? What are they doing?’” he said.

To elaborate, Zacharias drew a comparison between the specific Greek organization and other organizations that trace their origins to a single, common point.

“We’ve been able to keep this all together for the past 100 years,” he said. “It is like the Daughter’s of the American Revolution. These are people that can trace their roots to the American Revolution. This would be a similar thing — we are an organization of people that came to America for freedom and opportunity and don’t want to forget that.”



George Laskaris, above right, points out his place in a 1930s picture of the Tsintzinianreunion as Irene Parthemios looks on.



**Honored and Remembered
Tsintzinians**

James G. Chacona

(09/18/2003) James G. Chacona Sr., 77, passed away on September 16, 2003, in Round Rock, Texas. The youngest of 13 children, he graduated from Strong Vincent High School in Erie in 1943 and proudly served in the US Navy during WWII aboard the USS Alaska. He returned to Erie after the war and worked in his family's restaurant and candy store as a chocolateer. He married his wife Joan in 1947 and moved to Los Gatos, CA, in 1956. In 1990 he and his wife moved to Sonora, CA, and then to Cedar Park, TX, in 1998. He is survived by his lovely wife, Joan; his brother, Coogo; sons, George, Peter, Jim and Chris; daughter, Kathleen; and grandchildren, Phaedra, Joshua, Justin, Nathan, Kevin and Stephanie.

John Siatras

John James Siatras, 65, passed away on Saturday, August 23rd, 2003.

He was born in Cambridge, Ohio and was a district manager for EURO Impact. He was a member of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church of Akron, and was formerly the owner of the Golden Egg Restaurant in Akron.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Evelyn of Ravenna, Ohio; Mother Christine; sons, James (Kathleen) of Sommers, Conn., Christopher (Christine) of Wadsworth, Ohio, Gregory (Brenda) and Van all of Akron, Ohio.

The Orthodox Marriage Ceremony: Why It Is the Way It Is

**By Fr. Andrew Harrison, Pastor,
St. Luke's Orthodox Church, Palos Hills, IL**

In January the Parish Council surveyed St. Luke parishioners regarding our strategic plan. Four responses to the survey were related to the Orthodox Marriage ceremony. This is significant, and I feel compelled to address these concerns.

The survey comments referred specifically to two American practices: "Giving the bride away," and the use of instrumental music, especially the song, "Here Comes the Bride." Both of these have been introduced by some Orthodox jurisdictions into Orthodox wedding services. The practice of "giving the bride away" comes from Medieval European times when women were considered property that was purchased for a price (dowry).

In contemporary Catholic and Protestant worship "giving the bride away" has come to mean that the father bestows the protection of his daughter on her husband. This tends to degrade the Biblical teaching about equality of men and women.

In Orthodox tradition the bride is not considered the property of the father or the husband. No dowry is involved. A father escorting his daughter into the church is a nice tradition, but it is not part of the Orthodox ceremony. In no way can it be called "giving the bride away."

The use of instrumental music is also not a traditional part of Or-



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Faces at the 2003 Convention



An Enjoyable Stay at Tsintzina – August 2003

By Nikolaos Caravassos,

author of *Recollections of Survival*,

soon to be available in Greek as *ἡμῶν ἡμέρες ἐπιβίωσης*

Throughout the months of August and September, festivals known as *ἑορτασμοί* are common throughout Greece and especially in the villages of Laconia. In the past, people would bring their goods to sell, to barter, or to rent a horse for a year in return for enough wheat to feed a family for the same span of time. There was always an assortment of food, especially roasted piglets, homemade wine, sweets, and live music and dancing. These festivals last for several days.



My recent trip in August to my village, Tsintzina, rewarded me with a musical celebration, *ἑορτασμός*, the evening after my day of arrival. What a surprise? Tsintzina is nestled between several hills covered with pine forests. The smell of pine in the air as I strolled out of my Hostel room with my brother for a leisurely walk to the Psito Spring took my breath away. The roar of the water as it traveled through the village and the wind whistling through the pine trees were the only sounds. Upon our return to the village, the kafenia had opened and we sat with some of our friends for Greek coffee. Throughout the day very few people were up and about as if the village was a sleepy, lost in time place.

As night came, the inhabitants and visitors filled the tavernas and kafenia. I saw a lot of friends and met a few strangers, as I sat with my relatives for dinner at Panouli's taverna. That's when I heard about the *ἑορτασμός*, which was about to start, as we were finishing dinner. It took place at the plateia below the lodge where I stayed. It began a 10:00 in the evening and lasted until 4:30 the next morning attracting several hundred people from neighboring villages, such as Vasara, Veria, Hrisafa and as far away as Sparti. The music can be heard throughout Tsintzina, so even those who could not attend the celebration enjoyed a musical night of traditional, *ἄσματα*, as well as *ἄσματα* while everyone got up and danced and sang along. I left sometime after three in the morning and I could hear the music and singing until I fell asleep.



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thodox worship. In 692 the Byzantine Emperor Justinian called the Council in Trullo (Quinisext Council). This Council followed the 2nd and 3rd Ecumenical Councils (553 and 680-81, respectively) and dealt with disciplinary matters not covered by the Ecumenical Councils. The Council in Trullo decreed that instrumental music couldn't be used in the church. In modern times, however, some Orthodox jurisdictions have adopted the use of an organ and the song, "Here Comes the Bride." This song comes from the opera *Lohengrin*, composed in 1850 by the German musician, Richard Wagner.

Catholic and Protestant wedding services are very similar because they have the same roots and are based on legal agreements and covenants. Thus, these wedding services do contain "Here Comes the Bride" (or some other selected song), as well as a mutual recitation of vows, the placing of rings, and the legal pronouncement by the clergy that the bride and groom are now man and wife. None of this exists in the Orthodox Wedding service.

So why have these practices been tacked on to some Orthodox wedding ceremonies? This may have come about in an attempt to make the non-English Orthodox wedding service intelligible to non-Orthodox Americans. I believe this happens when Orthodox Christians feel embarrassed about Orthodox worship, and they try to make it palatable for non-Orthodox people.

In the Orthodox Church, Marriage, Sacrament, is both a mystery and a martyrdom, not a legal contract. The Orthodox wedding cer-

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