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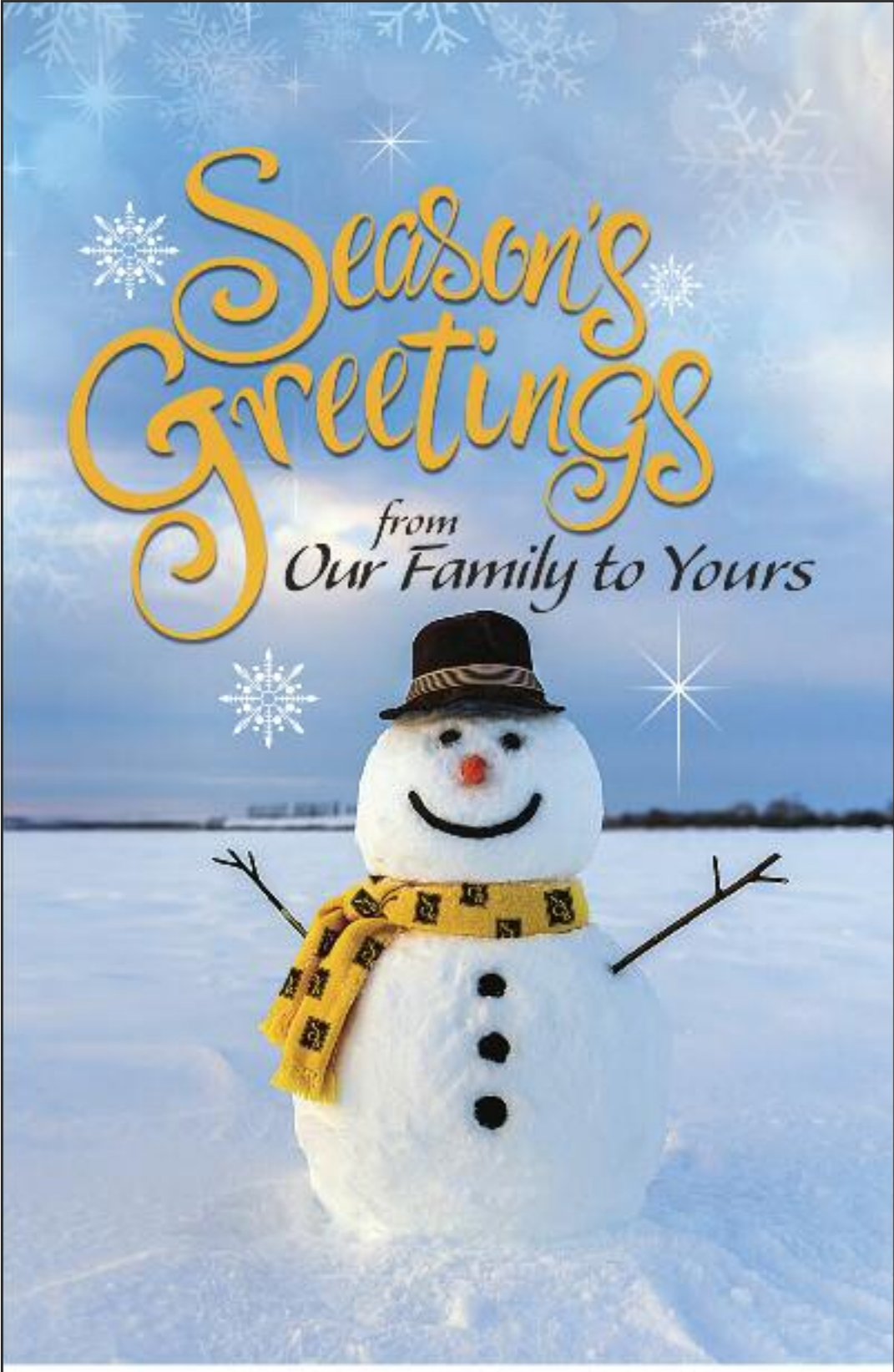
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Give Back This Christmas

By Stephanie Nikolopoulos

Sometime after Black Friday and Cyber Monday, when we're standing on yet another long line, our minds may begin to turn towards others who are less fortunate. We may feel a tug on our hearts as we remember the real reason for the season: the story of an unwed teenaged mother who gave birth to the Son of God and had to flee with her family as refugees to a foreign land. Jesus, whose very name is translated from the word that means "salvation," would go on to admonish His followers to feed the hungry, clothe the poor, welcome the stranger, and visit prisoners (Matthew 25:31-46). Whether you're looking to give a gift to someone on your shopping list that will benefit a person in need or want to give back as an act of Christian service, here are a few ideas for how to get started.

A21, founded by Greek Australian Christine Caine, is a nonprofit organization working to abolish twenty-first-century slavery – human trafficking that can take the form of sex trafficking and forced labor. Greece is among the eleven countries in which A21 works, and according to 1099, the Human Trafficking Resource Line sponsored by A21 Greece in partnership with other service providers, "Greece is known as 'the center of trafficking in Europe.'" A21 works with law enforcement, local governments, and NGOs to "free slaves and disrupt the demand" and provides restorative treatment such as medical attention and counseling. You can make donations directly to the nonprofit, and you may also purchase Liberty scarves, which exist to "restore dignity and to empower survivors of human trafficking." See www.A21.org.

The International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) "in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to respond." According to its website, "Over the last 23 years, on average IOCC has used 92¢ out of every dollar for programs that help people in need. The remainder goes toward administration and fundraising costs." There are several ways to give, including giving a gift in someone's honor, assembling various types of emergency gifts, and planning fundraisers. You can get more information at <https://www.iocc.org>.

Saint Basil Academy "is the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese home for children in need. The academy provides a loving Christian environment where resident children are nurtured to adulthood." Located in Garrison, NY, the 501c3 entity that was founded in 1944 seeks monetary donations for the living costs of the children and has an ongoing operational wish list on its site that includes everything from a baby monitor to sports equipment. The Academy also seeks volunteers who can tutor, become active role models, and become host families. Whether you have money to donate, items in good-working condition to give, or want to become personally involved in changing a child's life, visit <http://www.stbasil.goarch.org>.

The Smile of a Child provides "prevention activities for all children in Greece to address phenomena of violence and/or child disappearances, as well as provide medical preventative examinations." Located throughout Greece, it offers 24-

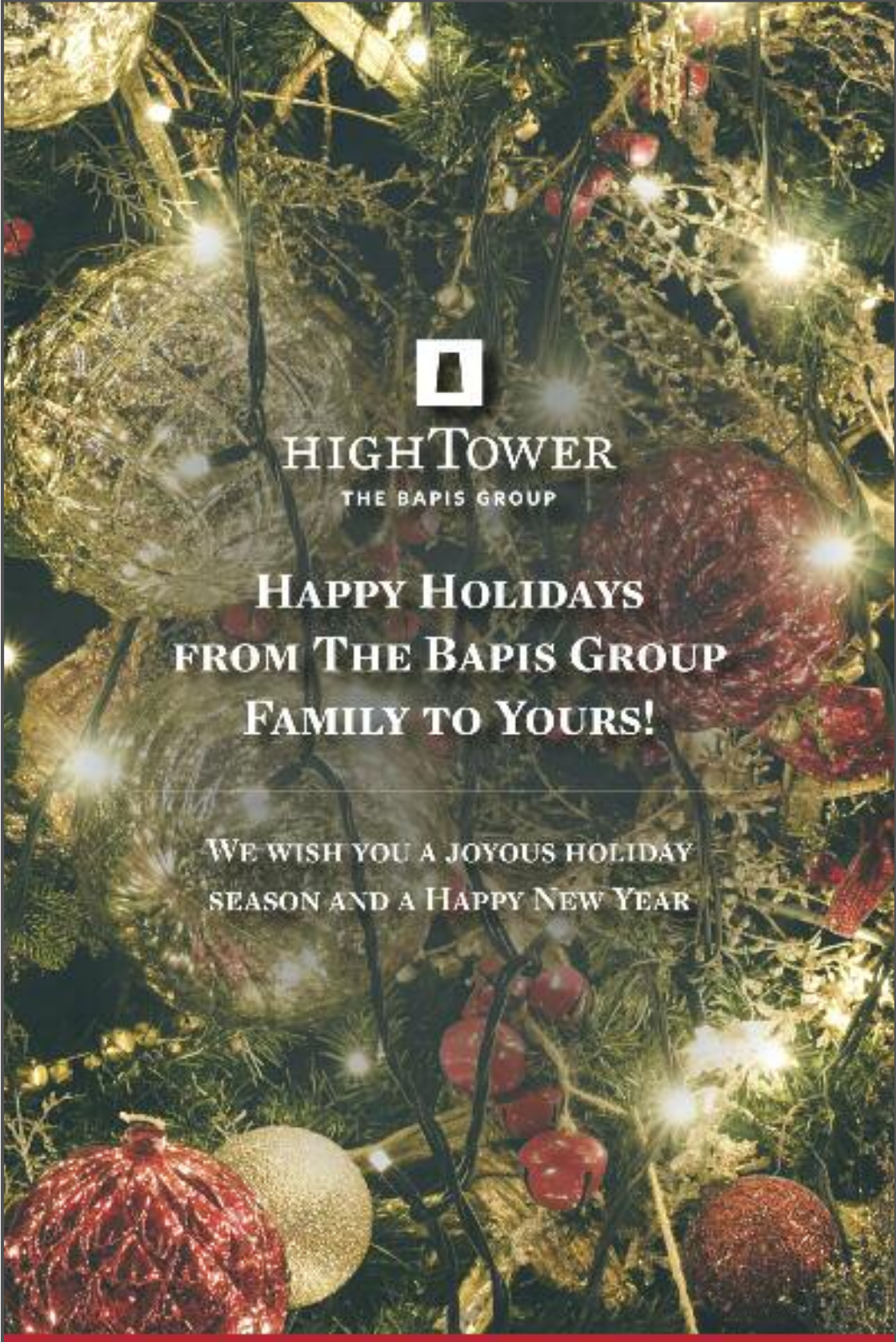



A21.ORG
Purchasing Liberty Scarves from A21 helps survivors of human trafficking.

hour "services for all children in Greece regardless of ethnicity and/or religion." The charity has been in existence for more than twenty years, and according to its website, "All economic data of the Foundation are publicized and annually checked by the Body of Sworn-in Accountants of Ernst and Young." In addition to making a donation, you can also purchase mugs, towels, key chains, and other merchandize – some of which have been manufactured by volunteers – to support the charity. Find out more at <https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en>.

Threads of Hope Hellas helps women exiting or avoiding prostitution through mentoring and by teaching them "valuable trade skills related to sewing, which we pray will give them a dignified source of income wherever they may go. More importantly, they study Scripture in community and learn about the Lord together." A non-profit civil partnership in Athens, sponsored by the charity Nea Zoi and EME Ministries, Threads of Hope Hellas not only accepts donations but also sells bags, aprons, oven mitts, and other accessories stitched by women who were once trafficked and are now free, and the money goes back to serving women in need. Beginning in the summer 2015, the bags were also made with 100% Greek cotton: "Given the growing gravity of the Greek economic crisis, we feel it is an important time to commit to sourcing our materials solely from textile manufacturers and resellers here in Greece." To read women's survival stories and peruse their goods, visit <http://www.threadsofhope.gr>.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it should help point you toward a few causes that may be on your heart. You may even decide to add charitable giving, volunteer work, or commitment to prayer for those in need as part of your New Year's resolutions.




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and the Greeks back in homeland
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Best Wishes for Merry Christmas

Let’s not forget spiritual
is the birth of Christ
the Son of God.
Peace on Earth to all

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The Christmas Season is the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By Eleni Sakellis

The Christmas season, as the song tells us, is “the most wonderful time of the year.” The spirit fills our hearts with warmth and charitable feelings as no other time of the year. Memories of Christmases past often come to mind while we decorate the tree and bake Yiayia’s famous recipes passed down through the generations. For those of us in the United States it seems like the season extends from the end of August and on through January and February by the relentless advertising and shopping, followed by the returning of gifts that didn’t fit or weren’t quite to our taste.

The Christmas songs have been playing in some stores for months now and some may even be experiencing fatigue from all the shopping, going from party to party, and preparing for the big Christmas feast. It can be easy to lose sight of the important things like spending time with family and friends, giving back to the less

fortunate, visiting a hospital or nursing home and offering a kind word to those forgotten people we often turn away from the rest of the year. It is easy to turn a blind eye, as we often do, to the suffering around us.

Many people hide behind work or family obligations, making excuses about the lack of time, and wishing they could do more.

Putting words into actions is not often a high priority. It is easier to throw money at a problem and say I did my good deed for the year, but it is the actions that count.

Our words mean nothing if we do the opposite of what we say; if we call ourselves Christians but don’t actually follow Christ and his teachings. He is “the reason for the season,” as they say, regardless of whether or not we have the bumper sticker, it makes sense to “keep Christ in Christmas.”

So while we are being crushed in the crowds of shoppers at the mall or staring at a computer screen ordering gifts online until are eyes are bleary,



we should take a moment and think what would Jesus do? We should be aware of the

crass materialism all around us, even if we feel we need to be a part of it, it should not com-

pletely consume us or our time. Getting or giving the perfect gift should be about love and not

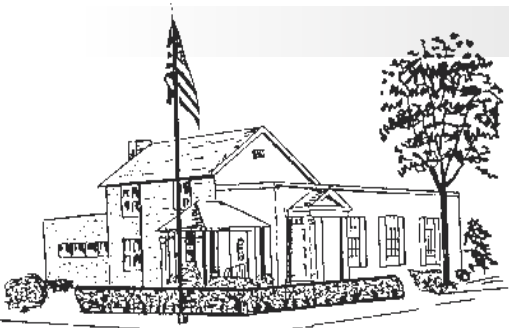
about things, since material possessions, objects, are left behind in this world.

The important things in life are priceless. Helping those in need, doing your best to make the world a better place, kindness towards others, those are the gifts that keep on giving throughout the year. The spirit of Christmas should be with us all year, along with the faith and good will toward humanity associated with the season. Once we accomplish that, anything is possible.

The traditions and values that have shaped our way of life should be especially celebrated and shared during the holidays, though we should also not lose sight of the true meaning behind those traditions and values. We do things for others not for show or for awards and recognition from the community, but because those things should be done and it is the right thing to do year round. When in doubt, think what would Yiayia and Pappou do.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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and a Blessed New Year

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wishes everyone
a Merry Christmas
and all the best in the coming year



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On Earth*

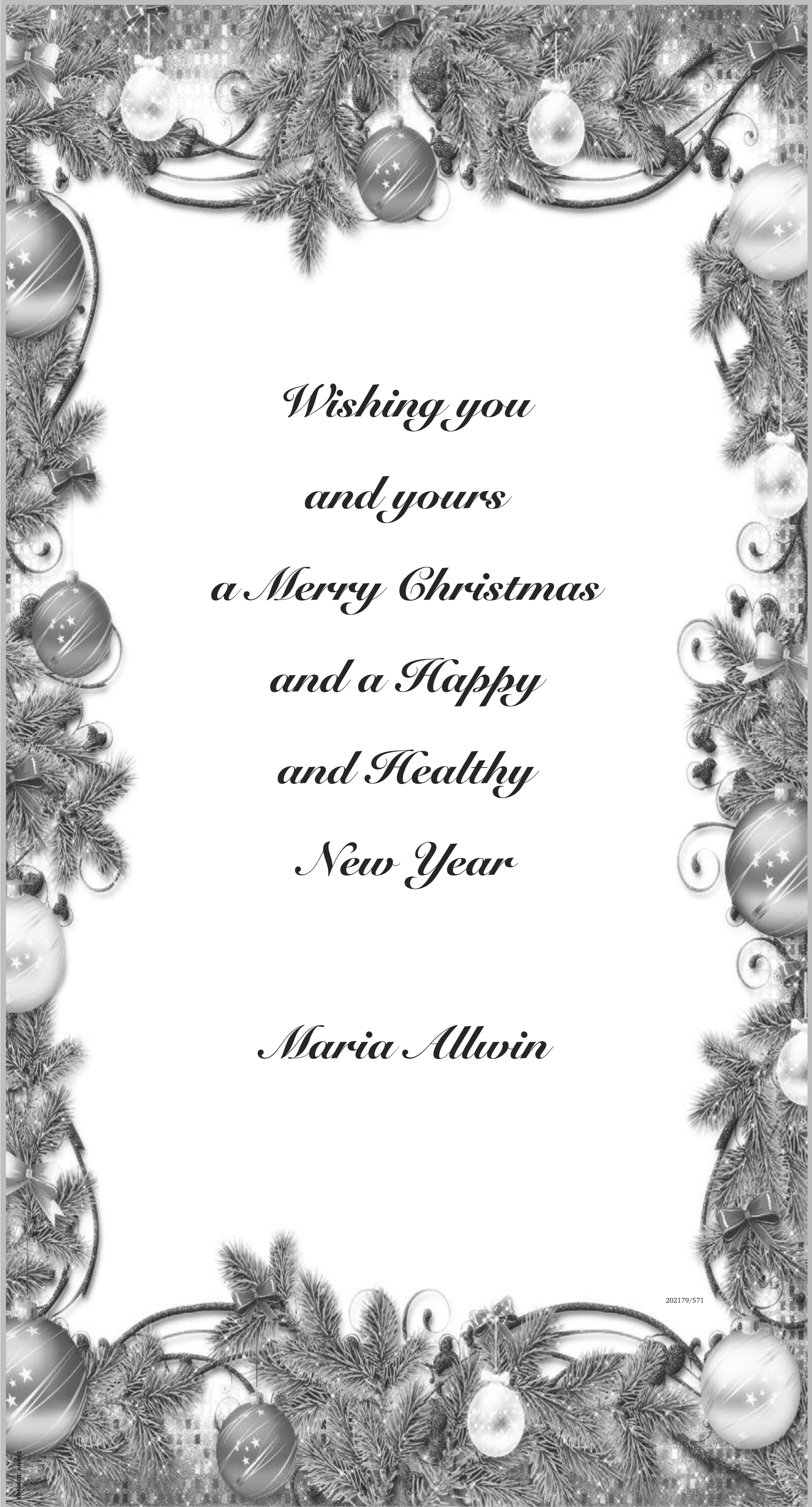


Best wishes for a
Joyous Christmas
and a Healthy and
Prosperous New Year!




Merry Christmas – Enjoy the Holidays!





*Wishing you
and yours
a Merry Christmas
and a Happy
and Healthy
New Year*

Maria Allwin



*A very blessed
and joyous Christmas
and a healthy, peaceful
and prosperous New Year*

.....

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TNH/ELENI SAKELLIS
The Westchester County Greek Youth Orchestra performed a Christmas Concert at the Greek Consulate.

Axion Estin Foundation Christmas Reception at Greek Consulate

By Eleni Sakellis

NEW YORK – The Axion Estin Foundation (AEF) Annual Christmas Reception was held on December 15 at the Consulate General of Greece in New York. The event celebrated the fourth year of Byzantine Pop-Ups at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and included a delightful Christmas Concert by the Westchester County Greek Youth Orchestra led by conductor Thanos Kokkalas.

Among those in attendance were the Consul General of Greece in New York Konstantinos Koutras and his wife Popita Pavli, Consul of Greece Spyridoula-Ioanna Zochiou, AEF Executive Director Angelo Lampousis, Maria Dikeakos-AEF President of the Board of Directors, Fr. Robert Stephanopoulos and his wife Presbyteria Nikki, as well as many members of the community.

Kokkalas gave a brief introduction to the Christmas Concert noting the dedication of the students to their music studies and especially to the Greek musical heritage and tradition. The concert began with the Apolitikion for Christmas followed by O Come All Ye Faithful in Greek and English, Christougena Protougena, Silent Night, What Child is This, and the Kalanta for New Year's and Christmas.


The second half of the concert featured Greek songs including Tou Gamou composed by Mikis Theodorakis, Enas Kombos i Hara Mou by Stavros Kougiumtzis, H Balada tou Ouri by Manos Hatzidakis and Nikos Gatsos, Odos Oneiron by Manos Hatzidakis, To Oneiro tou Polemisti by Demetris Yfantis, the traditional Tzivaeri, and concluded with Manos Hatzidakis' O Kyr Antonis.

The Westchester County Greek Youth Orchestra's musicians are: Alexander Mulder (violin I), Manolis Huerta (violin I), George Kalyvas (violin I), Simos Dimas (violin II), Maria Haralampopoulos (violin II), Elaine Poulos (viola), Hannah Laskaris (viola), Dimitrios Haralampopoulos (viola), Christina Huerta (piano), Achilles Siouzos (piano), Andreas Mulder (trumpet), Daphne Ballas (bass clarinet), Michael Dalaris (bouzouki), Eleni Papastefanou (voice), Panagiotis Papastefanou (voice), and Elaina Poulos (voice).

The enchanting performance by these young musicians, and especially the impressive vocals by Eleni Papastefanou, Panagiotis Papastefanou, and Elaina Poulos, brought the Greek Christmas spirit to everyone in attendance. Knowing that the traditional songs are in good hands for the future made the audience proud.

The event was held under the auspices of the Consulate General of Greece in New York. The Axion Estin Foundation's Mostly Orthros Festival is a highlight of the holiday season in New York featuring wonderful events and fascinating discussions to expand the public's appreciation of the season and of Byzantine music and tradition.

The AEF is a not-for-profit educational organization with a core mission of promoting Byzantine Music and the Arts. AEF gratefully acknowledged the lead support by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and The Rev. Peter N. Kyriakos Endowment Fund.



“As when God became man in Bethlehem
the eternal Word became flesh,
so in the Bible, the glory of God veils itself...”
St. John Chrysostom

**Merry Christmas
and A Happy New Year**

Dr. John & Helen Collis and Family

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AHEPA Family Christmas Party at Holy Cross Whitestone

By Eleni Sakellis

WHITESTONE – The AHEPA Family Christmas Party was held on December 17 at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Whitestone. The celebration took place after the Divine Liturgy and was sponsored by the AHEPA District 6 Lodge and hosted by the Andreas T. Stamboulidis Parthenon Chapter. The children of St. Basil’s Academy were in attendance at the free luncheon which also celebrated the feast day of St. Dionysios of Zakynthos, Archbishop of Aegina, and the name day of Holy Cross presiding priest Fr. Dionysios Anagnostopoulos. Also present were members of the clergy who assisted Fr. Anag-

nostopoulos in the Divine Liturgy, Fr. Nathanael Symeonides, Fr. Chrysostom Panos, Fr. George Anastasiou, and Fr. Nicholas Soteropoulos, as well as guest chanter Photios Ketsetzis- Professor of Byzantine Music Emeritus at Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and Archon Protopsaltis of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Ketsetzis was honored this year by the Axion Estin Foundation for his lifelong contributions to Byzantine music education. The foundation issued a commemorative journal in honor of Ketsetzis, who was present and actively involved in the 2017 Mostly Orthros festival this weekend. He served as Protop-

saltis from 1977 to 1983 at the National Shrine of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Panagia Megalochari) of Tinos, Greece. From 1992 to 2010 he served at Hellenic College and Holy Cross as Professor, Protopsaltis of the Holy Cross Chapel, and Director of the St. Romanos the Melodist Byzantine Choir. He was trained under renowned master cantors Dimitrios Sourlantzis and Thrasyvoulos Stanitsas. Fr. Anagnostopoulos thanked everyone in attendance for attending his name day celebration, especially AHEPA and Ted (Theodosios) Stamas- Empire District 6 Lodge District Governor, and the Ladies Philoptochos Society for their efforts. He




PHOTOS: TNH/COSTAS BEJ
Seated, left to right: Tom Dushas, Lou Katsos, and Ted Malgarinos. Standing: Magician Kamarr, John Delagrammatikas, Paul Makropoulos, Fr. Dionysios Anagnostopoulos, Jimmy Kokotas, Dimitrios Skartsariaris, Chris Gallis, Ted Stamas, Argyris Argitakos, and Mike Papafotis.



Fr. Dionysios Anagnostopoulos gave the blessing at the AHEPA Christmas Party luncheon in the Vasilios and Athanasia Kartsonis Hall at Holy Cross Church.

noted the wonderful work AHEPA does for Hellenism worldwide and mentioned meeting a group of Ahepans in Greece on their way to visit a monastery and explaining to Greeks in Greece what great work the organization does for Hellenism, children, the Greek Orthodox faith, and for the community across the globe. Fr. Anagnostopoulos noted especially AHEPA’s many charitable efforts and the hospital in Thessaloniki among the many good works of the organization, adding the blessing that St. Dionysios give them strength to continue their efforts. Ted Stamas welcomed everyone to the Christmas party and noted the many fellow Ahepans present as well as the Daughters of Penelope. He thanked the Ladies Philoptochos Society of Holy Cross, noting that the event “would not be possible without them” and the Parish Council, especially President Effie Karalekas. Stamas also acknowledged the presence of the children from St. Basil’s Academy and their guardians and pointed out that St. Basil’s Academy relies on donations from the Philoptochos, AHEPA, the Daughters of Penelope, and individuals to continue its mission, and not at all from the Archdiocese. Stamas said that gift cards would be distributed to the children from St. Basil’s and donations were made by AHEPA and the Daughters of Penelope and encouraged those present who were moved to help to donate and also to join the organizations as they are looking to grow the chapter. He concluded by thanking Fr. Dionysios for his spiritual guidance and for sharing his name day celebration with the AHEPA Christmas party. A magician entertained the children and the party concluded with the singing of Christmas carols. Among those in attendance were Tom Dushas- AHEPA Region 3 NY/NJ/DE Supreme Governor, AHEPA Supreme Secretary Jimmy Kokotas, Dimitrios Skartsariaris, Lou Katsos, Argyris Argitakos, Dr. Sotirios Stergiopoulos and his wife Martina (née Argitakos) and son Georgios.



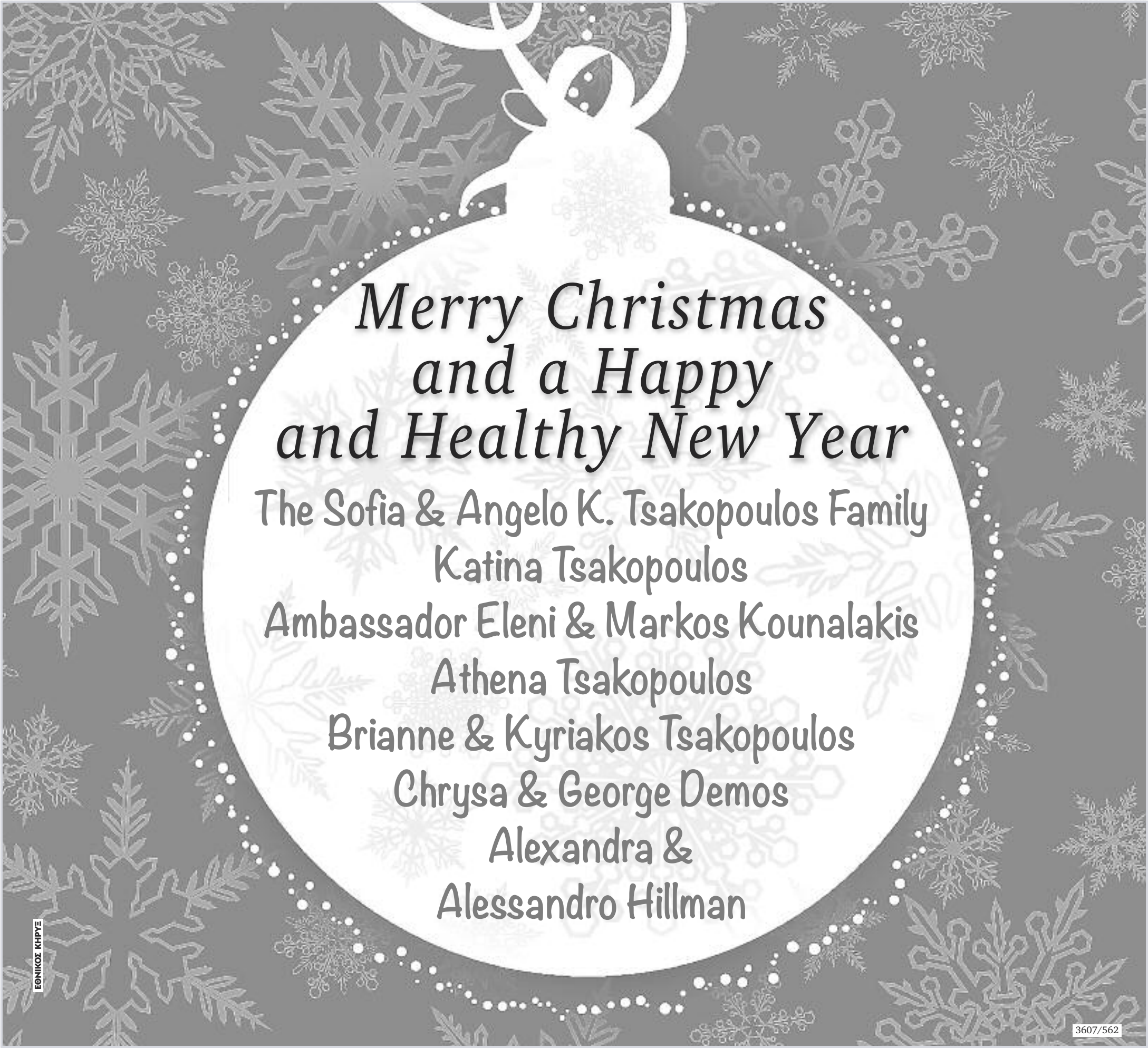
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Holiday Season
And Prosperous 2018

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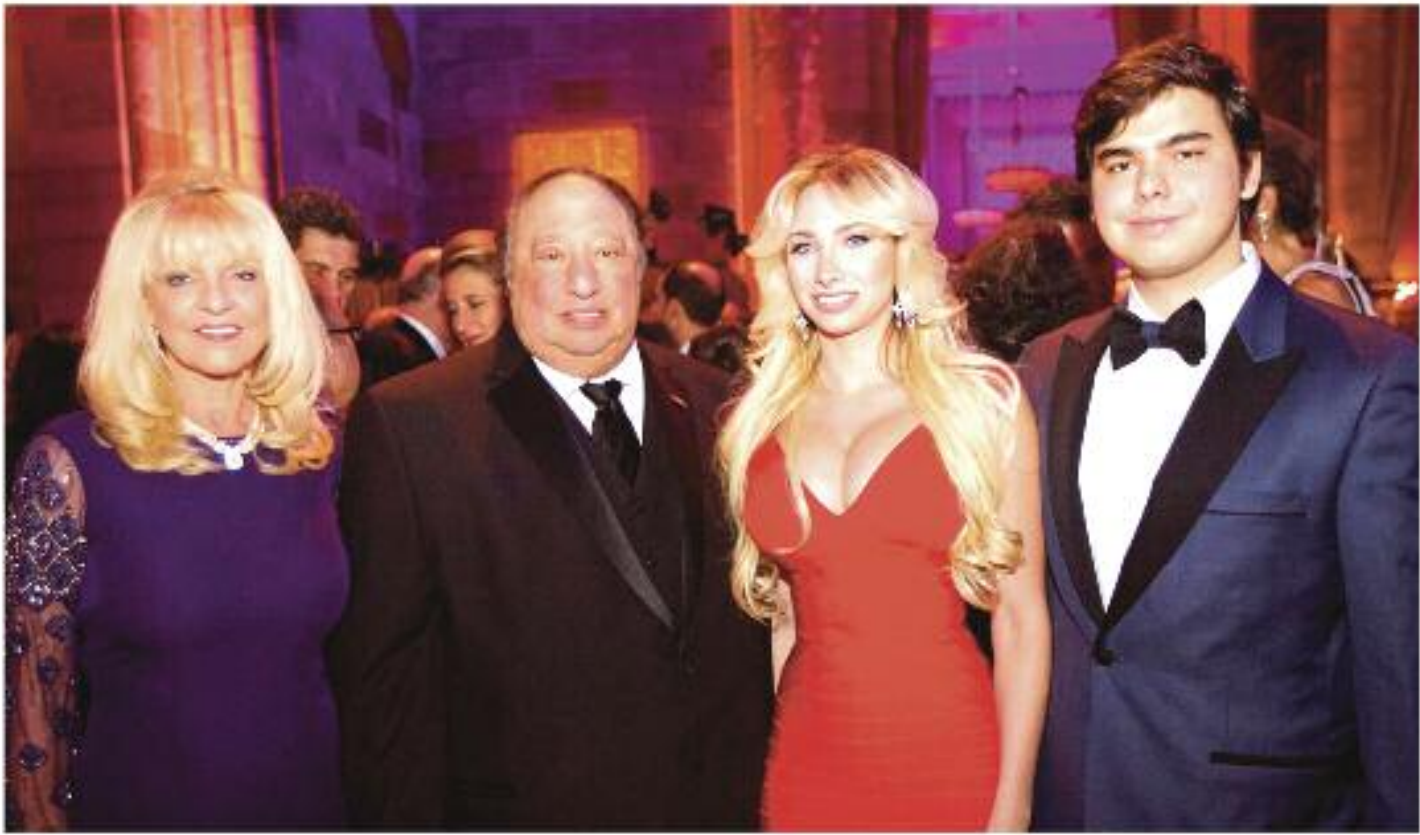
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and a Happy
and Healthy New Year

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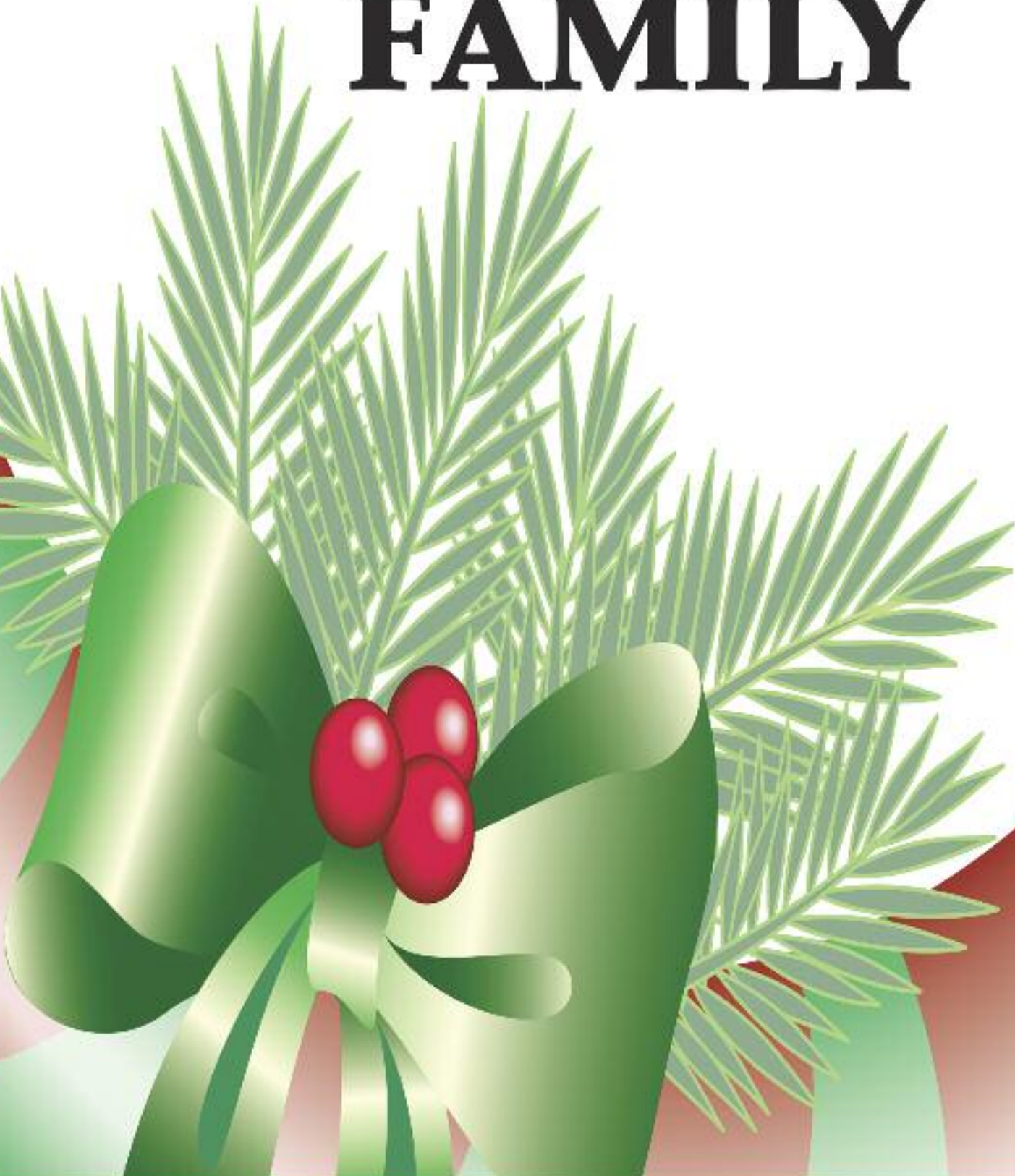
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CHRISTMAS
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR**



from the
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FAMILY**





*The Supreme President of the Order of AHEPA, Carl R. Hollister
on behalf of his entire Supreme Lodge and all the officers
and members of the Order of AHEPA, wishes everyone*

Merry Christmas &

Happy New Year

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Make this Holiday Season More Cozy

By **Stephanie Nikolopoulos**

The Danes may have created the gentle art of “hygge” – that is, living cozily and well with community during the long Scandinavian winter months – but the Greek ideal of “philoxenia,” which refers to the ancient act of hospitality, means Greeks embrace a cozy lifestyle of togetherness throughout the entire year.

While Greece is world renowned for welcoming tourists to its white sand beaches in the summer, the country is just as beautiful when its mountaintops and milky white ruins are dusted is a cov-

golden glow. The flickering of the fire feels organic and ethereal, conjuring up the light that is shared from one person to the next until all the candles are lit at midnight during the Greek Orthodox Easter service. Instead of the lambada Easter candle, try lighting one of these: Waks is a Greek-based retailer that makes candles in such delectable scents as salt water, sweet fig and pomegranate, and oak fire; Gina Balourdas’ Etsy shop My Greek Home sells candles that “will warm up every room with the scents of tropical fruits, citrus and exotic mountain greens”; Archipelago Botanicals may be American but its San-

torini Soy Candle will whisk you to the Greek islands with its “exotic and rich scent, blending lotus flower, bergamot and lemon leaf.”

Next, consider some heartwarming meals and beverages. Avgolemono, a Greek chicken soup that you can easily find recipes for online or in most Greek cookbooks, is a cure all for winter. Baking meanwhile can be therapeutic. Paying attention to detailed recipes creates mindfulness, and kneading the dough may be a stress reliever. The warmth of the oven may warm your home, and the sweetness of the spices may invigorate your spirit. This is a wonderful season to bake your treasured heirloom recipes for kourabiedes and melomakarona. These two varieties of Greek Christmas cookies are always a fun treat to have on hand for when guests arrive unannounced to fill your home



ering of pristine snow. The serenity of the landscape and the warm neighborliness of the people set the tone for Greek hygge. A cozy Greek lifestyle is particularly sweet in the quieter winter months and can be emulated in your own home no matter where you live.

First, set the scene for creating an inviting and comfortable home in which you and your family and friends can hunker down when it’s too cold to go outdoors. Long before IKEA made sheepskin rugs ubiquitous to minimalist Scandinavian chic, rug makers in the mountains of Greece were hand-making flokati rugs. These shag wool rugs are naturally a beautiful off-white that add warmth and character to any home’s design aesthetic. Imported rugs can be purchased from most rug dealers.

With evening lasting longer, candlelight offers a soothing

torini Soy Candle will whisk you to the Greek islands with its “exotic and rich scent, blending lotus flower, bergamot and lemon leaf.”

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with cheer.

A warm drink is always festive! Put a Greek twist on your standard hot chocolate by making a Kourabiedes White Hot Chocolate. Simply prepare your favorite white hot chocolate mix (such as Land O Lakes Arctic White Hot Cocoa Mix or Serendipity 3’s Frrrozen Hot White Chocolate Mix) with a few cloves (to taste) and rim your mug with a coat of powdered sugar. You can leave it virgin or you can add a splash of brandy to it. If hot chocolate doesn’t suit your mood, perhaps you can make a mulled Greek wine, a strong Greek coffee, or aromatic Greek mountain tea.

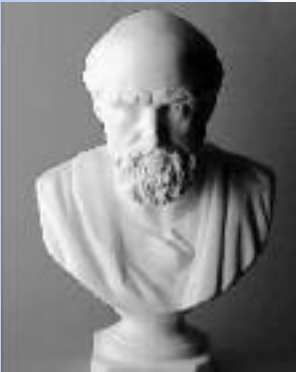
Now that you’ve entered into a more relaxed state, you may enjoy more reflective activities. Consider hosting a grown-up coloring book party or simply putting on some soft music and letting your mind wander as you color on your own. There are a number of beautifully illustrated Greek coloring books on the market, such as Sara Alexi’s The Greek Village Coloring Book; A Coloring Book of the Odyssey from the Art of Ancient Greece; and Rachel Mintz’s Ancient Greek Classic Pottery Vase Décor Coloring book.

With Christmas upon us, the season may also have you feeling more connected with your faith. The Church encourages a number of fellowship events, and you may also continue worshipping at home through reading the story of Jesus’ birth in the Bible (Luke 2 is an easy place to start), memorizing Bible verses each day of Advent (John 3:16 is perhaps the most famous), and praying. Starting a prayer journal and gratitude journal may help you carry the Spirit of the season in your heart even on the coldest of days – both physically and metaphorically.

With your heart and mind in the right place, you will feel more centered during the rush of the holiday season. Carving out time for yourself will paradoxically also help you find more time for the people who matter to you most as well as to those who may need your special Greek touch of philoxenia. Whether you invite someone into your home, treat a homeless person to a hot cup of coffee on a cold winter day, or write a letter to an old friend, you can extend warm feelings toward others.

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Spyros G.E. Mezitis, MD, PhD



wishes to all Hellenes and Philhellenes
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May we celebrate Christmas and the New Year
by re-dedicating ourselves to the promotion and protection of
Hellenic and Orthodox issues in 2018.

And a special thank you to **The National Herald**
for all it does in this regard.

201116/342

Byzantine Pop-Ups at Metropolitan Museum of Art

By Eleni Sakellis

NEW YORK – The Axion Estin Foundation Chanters performed the Byzantine Pop-Ups on December 15 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's (MMA) Medieval Sculpture Hall, Gallery 305, in front of the only full-scale, authorized painting of the Deesis Mosaic from Hagia Sophia. The original mosaic displaying the Deesis (Christ flanked by the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist) was one of the finest works produced in Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire.

Concealed for centuries after the fall of the city to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, the mosaic was one of the many in Hagia Sophia restored by the Byzantine Institute of America in the late 1930s. The newly revealed mosaics were the focus of an exhibition at the Museum in 1944, when this work was featured.

The dramatic setting with its festive and holy atmosphere enhanced by the beautifully decorated Christmas tree surrounded by the Neapolitan Baroque Creche attracted Byzantine music enthusiasts as well as a curious crowd of museum visitors.

Christos Chalkias struck the talanto to signal the start of the performance. Specially made for the Byzantine Pop-Ups by the Xenophontos monastery, the talanto, a wooden plank used instead of a bell in monasteries of the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition, summons the monks to prayer and meals.

Among the hymns performed was Christ is Born, Glorify Him and continued with Christmas chants and carols from the Byzantine Empire. The music included scores in multiple language as they have been transmitted orally or preserved in centuries-old Greek music manuscripts. The versions in Arabic are informed by the original work conducted by legendary Lebanese cantor Mitri el-Murr. The versions in Armenian pay tribute to the once-thriving Armenian community of Aleppo, through the study of renditions as they were preserved until the start of the devastating civil war in Syria. The versions in Russian reflect ongoing explorations on the use of the Church Slavonic language, intoned and inspired by the Byzantine music modal system as interpreted by the late Lycourgos Angelopoulos.

Among those in attendance at the event were Consul General of Greece in New York Konstantinos Koutras, Consul of Greece Spyridoula-Ioanna Zochiou, and AGAPW Founder and President Olga Alexakos.

The museum visitors were captivated by the powerful voices of the chanters. Some had come only to see the Christmas tree and were pleasantly surprised by the performance that took place. Many attendees were of Greek descent and recognized the hymns and carols, noting that “now they felt the true spirit of Christmas.” There were three performances of the



PHOTOS: TNH/ELENI SAKELLIS

The Axion Estin Foundation Chanters on the balcony performed in front of the only full-scale, authorized painting of the Deesis Mosaic from Hagia Sophia at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Axion Estin Foundation Chanter Christos Chalkias strikes the talanto to begin the Byzantine Pop-Ups at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, followed by fellow chanter Nektarios Antoniou.

Byzantine Pop-Ups at 4, 6, and 8 PM and all were free with admission to the museum.

The performers, an international ensemble of singers in the Axion Estin Foundation Chanters, included Eleftherios Eleftheriadis, Christos Chalkias, Nektarios Antoniou, Rassem El Massih, Spyro Antonopoulos, Georgios Theodoridis, Stephen Esper, Constantine Kokenes, Theodore Brakatselos, Nicholas Reeves, and Eustratios Gatanas.

Eleftheriadis, Director of the Axion Estin Chanters, is the foundation's artist in residence since 2013. This year marks his fourth appearance in the Byzantine Pop-Ups at The Metropolitan Museum of Art following three previous performances in the Byzantine Pop-Ups (December 2014, 2015, and 2016), as well as in the concerts Looking East from Byzantium (March 2015) and Al-Quds: Jerusalem (December 2016) both at The Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium. Eleftheriadis is affiliated with the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine Church and the William Spyropoulos School, both in Flushing, New York.

The Byzantine Pop-Ups are made possible by the Axion Estin Foundation (AEF), a not-for-profit educational organization with a core mission of promoting Byzantine Music and the Arts. AEF seeks to stimulate appreciation and study of this art form through its unique network of academic, music, arts, and liturgical organizations in the United States and internationally.

AEF produces programming, events, and publications in a comprehensive effort to broaden understanding and audience for Byzantine Music in the United States.

Lead Support for Axion Estin Foundation's Byzantine Pop-Up Concerts at The Metropolitan Museum of Art was provided by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Major support for Axion Estin Foundation's Byzantine Pop-Up Concerts at The Metropolitan Museum of Art was also provided by The Rev. Peter N. Kyriakos Endowment Fund.



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Our Favorite Recipes for Christmas

By Eleni Sakellis

The Christmas feast can take on epic proportions in the Greek tradition. The classic Greek favorites are almost always present at the Christmas feast, roasted meats, pastitsio, mousaka, spanakopita, a selection of cheeses- feta, kasseri, kefalograviera, dips such as taramosalata, and a variety of olives, plus the American traditional foods like roasted turkey with stuffing. The following menu for a Christmas meal includes some of the favorites and some variations to try. The desserts during the holiday season can also go on for days, but no Christmas dessert table is complete without baklava, kourambiedes, melomakarona, and decorated sugar cookies. Festive desserts can be time-consuming to put together, especially when the oven is occupied with the savory foods for dinner. The following desserts can be made ahead of time and will delight your guests this Christmas. As always, we wish you all the best

in your cooking endeavors and Merry Christmas!

Christmas Dinner Menu

Roasted Turkey with Gravy
Roasted Pork Loin
Baked Potatoes
Greek Salad with Herbs
Greek Cheese Course

Christmas Desserts

Baklava
Sugar Cookies
Gingerbread People

Roasted Turkey

1 turkey fresh or frozen, thawed according to package directions
4 lemons
4 carrots, peeled
4 celery stalks



Merry Christmas
Happy, Healthy, Prosperous
and very Productive New Year



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Greek sea salt
Freshly ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Remove the gizzards and any labels from the turkey. Rinse it with cold water and place in a large roasting pan. Juice the lemons and reserve the squeezed out rinds to stuff into the turkey's cavity. Pour the lemon juice over the turkey. Add the carrots and celery stalks to the pan. Salt the turkey and add freshly ground pepper. Roast the turkey until golden brown according to the times on the package and turning the turkey twice, once when the breast starts to color and then again



after the back is golden brown. After the first turn, salt and pepper the back of the turkey and continue roasting. If your oven has a convection roast setting, use it, but raise the oven temperature to 400 degrees. Allow the roasted turkey to rest at least 15-20 minutes before carving. Reserve the pan juices to make gravy.

Gravy

Reserved pan juices
2-4 tablespoons dry white wine

Water
2-3 tablespoons lemon juice to taste
5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
Salt and pepper

The recipe for gravy is more a technique than a strict recipe. The amount you make often depends on the size of the turkey and how much liquid is left after roasting. Adjustments to the amount and flavor of the gravy are made with the addition of white wine, water and lemon juice. The thickener used in this method is all purpose flour. The recipe above is for a turkey

Continued on page 24



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Depression, the Unwelcome Holiday Guest

By Aria Socratous

Ice skating at Times Square, watching the snow glisten in Central Park, viewing the winter wonderland displays in flagship stores along Fifth Avenue and the tree lighting spark Christmas spirit. We are told that Christmas should be the happiest time of year, an opportunity to be joyful and grateful with family, friends, and colleagues. But where does the truth stand?

According to the National Institute of Health, Christmas is the time of year that people experience a high incidence of depression. Hospitals and police forces report high incidences of suicide and attempted suicide. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and other mental health professionals report a significant increase in patients complaining about depression.

The real reasons have to do with unrealistic expectations and excessive self-reflection for many people. A lot of them get highly depressed during Christ-



mas season due to excessive commercialization, extreme focus on gifts and perfect social activities such as gourmet gala dinners, invitations to parties, and VIP social gatherings.

On the other hand, others get depressed because Christmas appears to be a trigger to engage in excessive self-reflection and rumination about the inadequacies of life, feeling sentiments of failure of self-fulfillment in comparison with other people who seem to have and

live the ideal life.

Many people feel very lonely during Christmas period because they have suffered the loss of a loved one or their job.

But how can anyone cope with those feelings of depression and loneliness? Mental health providers have some advice to recommend such as setting boundaries regarding the money spent on gifts and the number of social events, not to accept any "ideal" representation of Christmas that the me-

dia, institutions, or other people try to make people believe, to lower expectations and any attachment to what it should look like, to be present and enjoy each moment as best anybody can, to become involved in giving through charities and worthwhile causes that help less fortunate people, to be grateful for what we have in our lives, rather than focusing on what we don't have, to take action and engage in activities that give us pleasure and joy and to see Christmas as the opportunity to engage in loving kindness, generosity of spirit, and gratitude for others in our life.

The Christmas season is considered a very tough time for a lot of people today and the reason for that derives from the fact that we live in a materialistic society where personal and spiritual needs have been neglected. First of all, we have to remember that we are human beings with spirit and needs, and material objects are unable to satisfy our soul.

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas,
Happy Holidays and a Wonderful New Year!



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Our Favorite Recipes for Christmas

Continued from page 24

Greek Salad with Herbs

4 medium cucumber, diced
6 large tomatoes, diced
1 large red onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup Greek green olives, pitted and chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
4 tablespoons red wine vinegar
4 tablespoons Greek extra virgin olive oil
1/3 cup fresh chopped fresh parsley
1/3 cup fresh chopped fresh dill
1/2 cup crumbled feta, Dodonis or Arahovas

In a large salad bowl, toss all the ingredients together to mix thoroughly. Serve as a side dish or vegetarian main course.

Greek Cheese Plate

Greek cheeses are a great addition to the Christmas meal. You can set out a variety of your favorites for an appetizer or at the end of the meal as a cheese course. Try the diverse regional options available and the milder to sharper versions of kasseri, feta, and kefalograviera. Pair the cheeses with wonderful Greek wines and enjoy.

Christmas Desserts

Baklava

2 pounds of chopped nuts, almonds, walnuts, pistachios or a combination
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground cloves (optional)
2 pounds phyllo dough
2 cups melted butter
Whole cloves (optional)

For the syrup
2 cups sugar
2 cups water
1 cup honey
1 three-inch cinnamon stick
5-6 whole cloves



1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 two-inch piece lemon peel

In a mixing bowl, stir together the nuts, ground cinnamon, and the ground cloves, if using. Set aside. Brush the baking pan with some of the melted butter and line the baking pan with a sheet of phyllo dough, brush the phyllo with butter, and place another sheet on top, buttering that one, and repeating until there are 5 or 6 sheets of phyllo in the pan. Sprinkle the nut-spice mixture evenly over the buttered phyllo sheets, then top with a sheet of phyllo and brush with butter, and continue until 5 phyllo sheets make up the top layer with the top-most a nice whole one. Brush the top layer with butter and cut into diamond shapes or squares with a sharp knife all the way through to the bottom layer. Pierce the top center of each cut piece with a whole clove, if using, and bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for about an hour or until the baklava is golden brown.

While the baklava is baking in the oven, make the syrup. Boil the sugar and the water in a saucepan for five minutes. Add the honey, the spices, lemon juice, and lemon peel and simmer for another 5 minutes. Keep the syrup hot. Remove the baked baklava from the oven and pour the syrup over it right out of the oven. Allow the syrup to absorb and the baklava to



cool completely before serving.

Sugar Cookies

4 cups all-purpose, unbleached flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup unsalted butter
1 cup sugar
2/3 cup Greek honey
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
1 large egg, beaten

In a mixing bowl, whisk to-

gether the flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside. In a saucepan over medium high heat, melt the butter with the sugar and the honey, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Pour into a separate bowl and allow to cool for 5 minutes. Add the beaten egg to the cooled butter mixture and whisk until well-combined. Add the flour mixture and stir just until combined. Divide the dough in half and cover each half with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for 2 hours. The dough can also be chilled overnight if preferred, just allow it to stand at

room temperature for 5-10 minutes before rolling out. Roll each half on a lightly floured work surface to 1/8 inch thickness. Cut out shapes with cookie cutters and place on an ungreased cookie sheet one inch apart and bake in a preheated 375 degree oven for 10 minutes or until the edges of the cookies are lightly browned, rotating the pans about halfway through baking to ensure even baking. Cool on the cookie sheet for 2 minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Gingerbread People


6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened at room temperature
1/3 cup shortening

In the mixing bowl of a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and the shortening for 30 seconds to combine. Add the sugar, brown sugar, and egg and beat until fluffy. Beat in the honey and the coffee. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and beat until combined. Divide the dough in half, shaping each half into a disk. Wrap tightly with plastic wrap and chill until the dough is easy to roll out, about an hour or two. The dough can be chilled overnight if preferred, just allow it to thaw for 5-10 minutes at room temperature before rolling out. On a lightly floured work surface roll the dough to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut out gingerbread people with 4-6 inch cookie cutters or other shapes, if



1 cup sugar
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1 egg
1/4 cup Greek honey
2 tablespoons strong coffee
2 1/4 cups all-purpose, unbleached flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon Greek sea salt
Frosting
Colored sugar
Candies for decorating


preferred. A sharp knife can also be used to cut out gingerbread people freehand, if desired. Place the shapes on a greased cookie sheet one inch apart and bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 8-10 minutes, or until the edges are lightly browned, rotating the pans about halfway through the baking process. Cool for 2 minutes on the cookie sheet, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Pipe frosting decorations onto the cookies, faces and clothes onto the gingerbread people, and sprinkle with colored sugar or add candies.



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ΕΘΝΙΚΟΣ ΚΗΡΥΞ

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Merry Christmas

WISHING YOU A BLESSED CHRISTMAS SEASON
AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR.

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A Gift Guide for Everyone on Your List

By Stephanie Nikolopoulos

In the midst of our Christmas shopping, it may become evident that some people on our lists already have so much it seems entirely difficult to find a unique present for them. Sure, you could present them with a gift certificate to a big-box retailer, but if you're looking for something a little more personal and a lot more Greek, here are a few ideas.

For the animal lover: Stray animals have for many years been an issue in Greece, but with the economic crisis there are more animals in need. Friends of the Strays of Greece, a UK-backed charity in Greece, provides vulnerable cats and dogs with shelter, food, and medical attention. You can sponsor them through <http://www.straysofgreece.org>.

For the art patron: The Acropolis Museum offers a variety of gifts ranging from jewelry to home décor and toys. There are, for example, ties inspired by an Attic silver tetradrachm from 400 BC for men and stoles with details of ancient inscriptions for women. You can purchase them at the gift shop: <http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/content/gifts-him>.



For the coworker: Buying anything too personal for colleagues can prove tricky, so chocolate is a delicious way to show your appreciation. New York-based Chocolat Moderne, founded by Greek-American Joan Coukos, offers gourmet selections such as Holiday Avant-Garde Bars in Cranberry Orange and Gingerbread as well as a London Christmas Pudding box of bon-bons. For more information, visit <http://chocolatmoderne.com>.

For the foodie: A gift certi-

ficate to a local Greek restaurant is always a welcome opportunity for someone to enjoy a delicious meal outside of the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Many of the more famous Greek chefs have published cookbooks which make for a keepsake the recipient can use once they've used up the gift certificate.

For the Girlboss: The Greek-American founder of the fashion retail business Nasty Gal created a bestselling memoir with #GIRLBOSS, and this year's fol-

low-up, The Girlboss Workbook, is a quirky guide for sassy entrepreneurs. Featuring "tips, checklists, and fill-in-the-blanks," it guides dreamers into becoming doers. It is available at bookstores.

For the newest grandchild: WildAtHeartGifts offers feeding bibs and infant clothing emblazoned with phrases such as "I love Yiayia and Papou" and "Koukla" on them. Available through Etsy at <https://www.etsy.com/shop/WildAtHeartGifts>.

For the armchair traveler: For the first time in history, Homer's The Odyssey has been translated into English by a woman. Emily Wilson brings the epic poem to life in a fresh way yet stays true to matching the number of lines of the original Greek text. It is available in bookstores and online.

For the host and hostess: Create a gift basket featuring Greek specialty products. For example, create a basket full of goodies for enhancing their mezze by including such treats as Kalamata olive tapenade, imported Greek honey, and a nice bottle of Greek wine.

For the man whose cares more about his hair than John Stamos' Uncle Jesse character does: Curlisto offers a range of hair-care products made specifically for men, such as scalp stimulants, styling gel, and travel sets. Created by Christos, a Cypriot who now owns a salon in New York City and has A-list and royalty clientele, Curlisto products can be found at www.curlisto.com.

For the woman who loves natural beauty products: Korres has a variety of deals and kits this holiday season. The Greek beauty brand was "born out of a homeopathic pharmacy more



than 20 years ago" and uses "natural ingredients of the highest quality" to create their skin-care line, bath and body products, fragrances, and cosmetics.

Bonding and creating memories is sometimes the best gift of all, so remember that heartfelt letters, printed photographs of time spent together, and impromptu get-togethers for Christmas cookie baking or building snowmen go a long way in making the season meaningful.

How to Stock Your Holiday Bar Cart

By Stephanie Nikolopoulos

With company gathering for holiday parties and family reunions, a well-stocked bar cart will help keep the festivities merry. Anyone can pull together a standard selection of beverages, but you can make yours stand out by creating a Greek-inspired Christmas soiree.

First up, the bar cart. If you don't already own one, consider purchasing a cart with a Greek key design. Williams Sonoma's Greek Key Bar Cart is a dramatic one that comes in either antique

still and sparkling water. Give visitors a taste of Greece with Ouzon, a virgin ouzo-flavored soda that you can purchase in select retailers and online. Given that anise is a love-it-or-hate-it flavor, you may want to have plenty of backup sodas. If you want a nonalcoholic alternative to the rakomelo, create a warming citrus punch: mandarins are seasonal winter fruits in the Mediterranean and pair nicely with cloves, star anise, and cinnamon, calling to mind the popular Greek Christmas cookie Melomakarona. You can find a



brass or polished nickel. A more multipurpose alternative is a small table, and the online retailer One Kings Lane's Aston Greek Key Round Side Table nestles nicely next to armchairs and sofas. If you already have ample flat surface for your bar, a tray can also corral bottles. Overstock.com offers a variety of trays with Greek key designs. Sticking with a metallic adds a bit of glam, and you can wind white twinkling lights or pine branches around the frame of the cart, table, or tray.

Now, it's time to stock the bar! For a unique Greek red wine, try Gaia Wine's Agiorgitiko by Gaia 2015. Its herbal notes are earthy with a flavor evocative of oregano. If you'd like a dry white retsina, Kechris Winery's The Tear of the Pine is an award-winning selection. For beer, there's always the Greek brands Mythos and Peiraiiki.

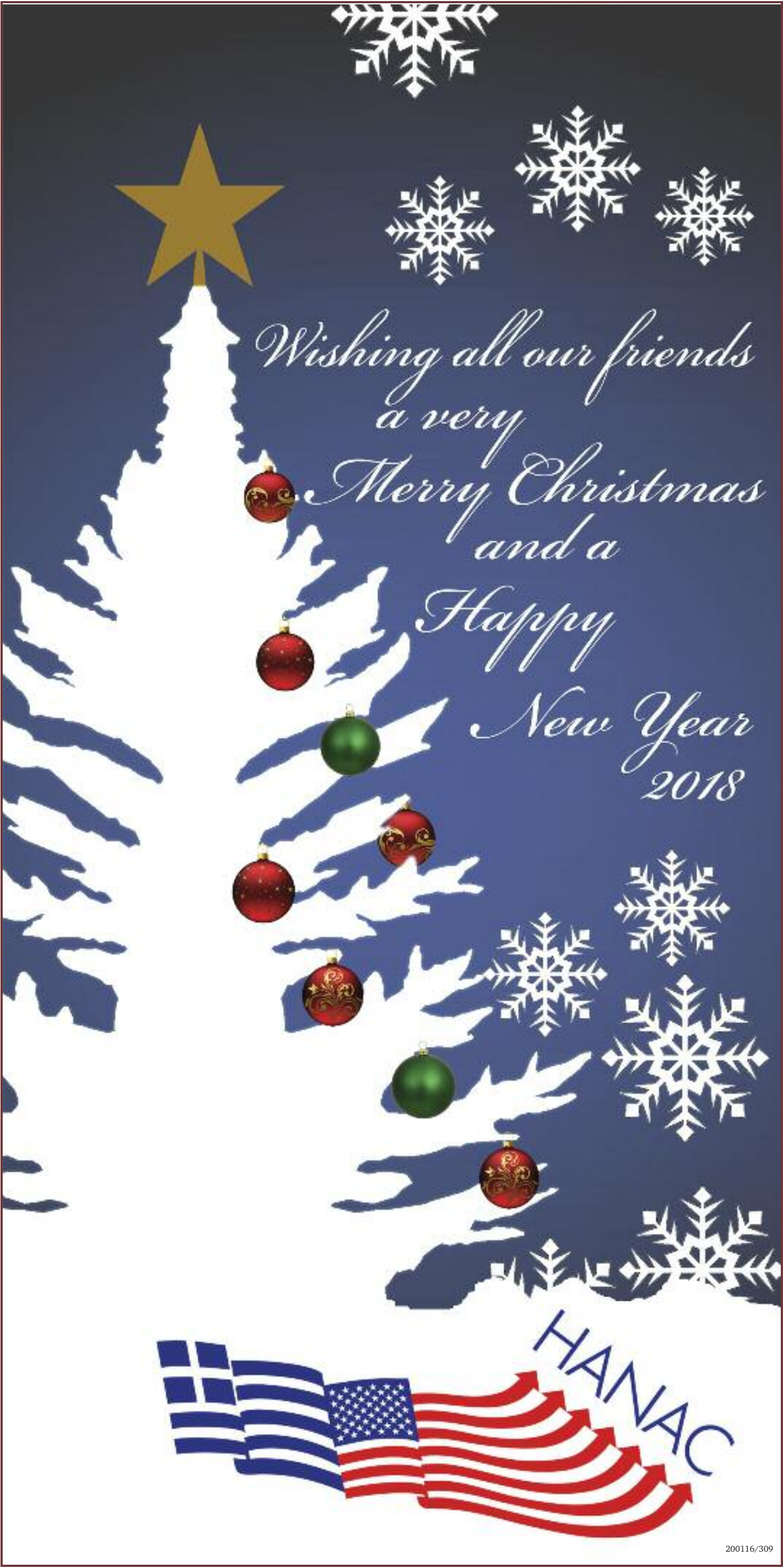
In addition to the usual assortment of gins, rums, and whiskeys, add in your favorite Greek liquors, such as ouzo and the Greek brandy Metaxa. The crowning glory of your winter holiday bar cart should be rakomelo, which you can purchase bottled or make yourself by adding 2 teaspoons of honey and 1 teaspoon of spices (a mixture of cardamom and cinnamon) to every 4 shots of raki. Served warm, it is a delightful mixed drink on a cold night.

Be sure to also offer a variety of nonalcoholic drinks, including

variety of recipes to suit your tastes online.

Take your Greek Christmas bar to the next level with the right garnishes and accessories. Consider bunching sticks of cinnamon together that can act as sweet-smelling décor as well as swizzle sticks for mixing drinks. Freeze edible glitter into ice cubes for a real "wow" effect. You could do red and green glitter for Christmas colors or even do gold stars in honor of the star of Bethlehem the magi saw. Wilton is one popular brand for edible glitter and is available at select drugstores and Michael's craft store. Another option is to freeze sections of fruit that can be used to cool drinks.

Candied nuts, roasted chestnuts, and dried figs in festive bowls make delicious seasonal snacks so guests don't drink on an empty stomach. For cocktail napkins, consider Katy Michele Designs' elegant linen napkins with a Greek key design and your monogram, which you can get stitched in such colors as evergreen, poinsettia, or metallic gold; available through Etsy. For disposable paper napkins, you may prefer the Vintage Gold Greek Meander Pattern Napkin available through Zazzle. Lastly, keep guests entertained with Mixed Up: Cocktail Recipes (and Flash Fiction) for the Discerning Drinker (and Reader), edited by Greek-American writer Nick Mamatras and Molly Tanzer. As always, drink responsibly.





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***Best Wishes for
A Very Merry Christmas
to you & your families***



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