

AHEPA District 20 Convention Report

June 25, 2005

District 20 Marshal: John Triantafyllos, M.D.

Report for District 20: inclusive of Chapter 152 (Hesperia), Chapter 444 (Heartland) and Chapter 373 (Rose Bowl).

I attended the St. Anthony's festival (September 2004) in Pasadena, which was very successful due to all participants' hard work especially with heavy participation by the local AHEPA Chapter's volunteer work at the festival. Large crowds, great food and great music made this a great festival.

Since the prior Pasadena District Convention of 2004, I have attended the Halloween Glendi (October 30, 2004) sponsored by Chapter 373. As always it was perfectly planned and executed with a large attendance. This was an excellent family event. Kudos to Chapter President Steve Tripodes and his officers as well as the Daughter's Chapter for their hard work as always

On November 20, 2004 I attended the Santa Barbara's Chapter Glendi held at St. Barbara's Church. This was a model event that should be duplicated by the other chapters in our district. There was plenty of local Ahepa support as well as regional support and community support. The food, music and overall socializing were excellent. President Costas Brown and his chapter should be given high praise for their hard work and effort in this annual event.

Visitations I attended in March included the joint visitation of the San Fernando Valley Chapter and the Burbank Chapter on March 9, 2005. This was held at the Village Café in Woodland Hills. It was a very good visit with my brothers including the discussion of possible merging of the two chapters into one and the possibility of them hosting the District Convention in 2006.

The visitation at San Bernardino/Arrowhead Chapter was held on March 13, 2005 following church services at St. Elias The Prophet Greek Orthodox Church. A Spaghetti luncheon was prepared and it was absolutely delicious. After the visitation several members of the district lodge and the host Chapter visited the property that will be the site of the first AHEPA senior housing to be belt in the Western territory of AHEPA.

I as well as District Governor (Zach Prineas), District Treasurer (Greg Mallis), District Secretary (Peter Triantafyllos) as well as other PDGs of District 20 attended the farewell Dinner for Consul General of Greece Demitrios Zevalakis at Dr. James Kallins's home on May 28, 2005.

All and all it has been an interesting experience during the past year, during my tenure as District 20 Marshal. However, as I have stated previously verbally and through my prior report at the Midyear Conference in San Pedro California, The Order of AHEPA as an organization has many difficulties facing it in the 21st century.

More specifically, in my observation over the past 3 years of our District and its respective chapters, it is in my humble opinion that we are in deep trouble and face extinction. There are more members leaving (death, or to old to participate) our district than new and younger members coming in at this time. We have relatively few if any Sons or Maids of Athena Chapters that are active. Even though my home Chapter in Pasadena is very proactive and

progressive it still boggles the mind that we have 80 plus members and only 15-20 show up to any one meeting.

The message at our yearly District conventions and the midyear winter conferences should be more upbeat and less futile bickering over trivial matters which have absolutely no appeal to the potential younger members. They need a reason to join! The mission statement also needs to be changed to reflect the times of the 21st century. PDG Dean Tripodes should be applauded in his continuous and tireless effort to promote business networking in the hopes of a real Greek-American Business and Chamber of Conference materializing. This is the future my brothers. If we don't act now, our district as well as or other western U.S. districts will wither away on the vine of fraternity and brotherhood and just plainly cease to exist. Each District convention I have attended over the past 3 years appears to draw fewer and fewer crowds. This is extremely alarming and worrisome.

We must also educate our Hellenic American youth as well all Hellenic Americans about what it means to be Greek and to take pride our heritage. Remember Greek culture and history predates Christianity by at least 3000 years, it didn't start with the Greek Orthodox Church! Our youth and their families must be re-introduced with the vibrant rich culture and history of our ancient forefathers. Additionally, Greek culture after Constantine the Great is also very rich and vibrant, therefore, we must strive to teach our young as well as those who have become detached from their roots about more Modern Greek culture of the prior 1000 years from the Common Era. Other peoples have succeeded including the Jews and Armenians to hold their cultures at the center of their existence wherever they may be, why shouldn't we do the same?

Therefore, I strongly recommend that we need to overhaul our thinking before it truly is to late to save AHEPA out here in the western U.S. The future of our Ahepa organization depends on these key factors and reforms.

Fraternally yours,

John Triantafyllos, M.D.
District 20 Marshall