

# Edith Piaf love letter goes under the hammer

Epistle to Greek actor sold for 1,500 euros

A passionate love letter written by French singer Edith Piaf to a Greek actor more than half a century ago, telling him, "Don't let my heart die," fetched 1,500 euros (\$1,989) at auction in Greece on Friday.

Piaf, who died of cancer at the age of 47 in 1963, wrote the letter to budding Greek heartthrob Dimitris Horn in 1946 – the year she recorded "La Vie en Rose" – just two days after meeting him at a performance in Athens.

The singer, who had a series of

lovers and fought addictions to drugs and alcohol throughout her life, wrote the letter to Horn while she was already in a relationship with French actor and singer Yves Montand.

According to an excerpt printed in the auction catalog, Piaf, using a pet name for the actor, declared: "I love you like I have never loved. Taki, don't let my heart die!"

The letter, a telegram and a program of her performance in Athens was sold among 500 other artifacts at the Plaza Hotel in the Greek capital.

The telegram also expresses Piaf's love and asks Horn to reply to her secretly. "She said she would give it all, that she needed him... The whole letter is passion and desperation," auctioneer Petros Vergos told Reuters before the sale. "No woman has ever said such things to me."

Vergos said the affair fizzled out either because Horn, six years her junior, did not share her passion or because they both had other partners.

Coincidentally, the sale took place

exactly 11 years after the Horn's death on January 16, 1998.

"Congratulations, you have obtained the most famous document of the evening," Vergos said from the podium to the buyer, who left without making any comment.

Piaf had the stage name "La Môme" or "little wail" because of her diminutive stature. The film "La Vie en Rose," which garnered an Oscar last year for French actress Marion Cotillard in the role of Piaf, has revived interest in her life and music.

## Police Search in Mesogeia & Boiotia

Any evidence that could lead to location and arrest of shipping magnate Periklis Panagopoulos kidnapers is under police microscope. Authorities are carefully examining the videos sent to Mr. Panagopoulos wife and carrying out investigations in the regions of Attika, Boiotia and Korinthos. Police believe that the mastermind of the kidnapping has a criminal record.

### Happy Ending

In his first statements at noon, on Tuesday, 12 hours after the happy ending of his 8 day kidnapping, Mr. Panagopoulos emerged deeply moved by the peoples high interest in his dramatic adventure.

He was released shortly after midnight, on Monday and left at a rest area along Athens Av. Between Skaramaga and Dafni, where a police patrol found him and next his wife came to pick him up.

Although he did not reveal details on conditions during his kidnapping, he said that kidnapers treated him well and provided his medicine.

# Assumption Greek Orthodox gets new copper dome



*For a few hours, the overhead view inside the new Assumption Greek Orthodox Church building in Lyndon was of the natural heavens. associated with "the dome of heaven" in the Byzantine-style Christian church – had been removed, and a new copper-colored, aluminum roof with eight sides had yet to be installed.*

After the new roof and a cross were in place – and the roof had withstood a downpour that followed the next day – the Rev. Larry Legakis exclaimed: "Glory be!"

"Everyone was calling," he said. "Does it leak? Does it leak?" The answer was "no."

"It keeps with the integrity of the Byzantine tradition, and it's water-

tight," he said.

The dome replacement project represented another milestone, Legakis said, in the church's four-year journey to move from Old Louisville to the new church building at Ormsby Lane and New La Grange Road.

By early February, church members hope to finally be in their new building, after finishing work is completed in-

side.

The building was constructed nearly two years ago, but it's been unoccupied because of the leak.

Members have been meeting in a more conventional-looking building next door on the 3-acre site that they bought from a ministries group for \$395,000 in 2004. That building will be partially razed and expanded for other church uses.

The site is across Ormsby Lane from the Holly Pointe condominium homes.

The church had no room to expand at its former site on Fifth Street near Breckinridge Street, where it had been since 1927. More of its members also now live farther east.

"The contractor was never able to pinpoint the exact cause of the leak," said Stephanos Kyriacou, the project manager for the church. "The last two years have been a little tough."

Church members have mixed feelings about giving up the blue exterior dome, he said. "Some people are sad to see that not work out."

But seeing the overall project finally completed is "a dream come true," said church member Nancy Geromes. "It's a very exciting day."

Legakis and other church leaders say they are still in negotiations about liability and possible reimbursement for the cost of the new roof and its installation.

## MORE HELP FOR HOMEOWNERS IN MORTGAGE STRESS

The Rees Government launched a new guide for people suffering mortgage stress, as new figures show more than 1,500 homes were repossessed last year.

Attorney General John Hatzistergos said The Mortgage Stress Handbook, produced by Legal Aid NSW, offered practical advice for anyone in danger of losing their home or experiencing financial difficulty.

"This is a valuable new resource which informs people in mortgage stress of their options and includes information on where to turn for further assistance," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"If you are having problems making ends meet, the best thing you can do is know your rights and act early."

The Handbook covers a range of scenarios, including advice on what to do if:

- You have missed a loan payment;
- Your financial lender has contacted you;
- You have received a default notice; or
- The Sheriff is at your door.

Copies are available at [www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/mortgagestresshandbook](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/mortgagestresshandbook) or phone (02) 9219 5028.

Mr Hatzistergos said home repossession rates had remained consistently high over the past three years.

"Since 2006, the annual number of repossessions has exceeded 1,500, which is almost three times higher than in 2004, when 560 homes were taken," he said.

"Further, the State Government's free legal helpline - LawAccess NSW - took more than 15,000 calls last year from people experiencing problems with debt.

"The Rees Government is committed to helping NSW homeowners in mortgage stress get the assistance they need in a convenient and accessible way.

Last year, Legal Aid NSW ran a number of public information forums in Western Sydney and on the Central Coast on how to deal with mortgage stress.

"I am pleased to announce that additional forums aimed at first homebuyers will be held in Newcastle and Dapto later this year, with a range of legal and financial experts to provide information and advice," Mr Hatzistergos said.