

**PEOPLE  
LIKE US...**

Every week, "Kosmos" newspaper will be presenting stories of Greeks in Australia. If you would like to share your story with us, send us an email and your favourite photo at: [kosmos@kosmos.com.au](mailto:kosmos@kosmos.com.au)



**TWO WORDS ABOUT ME**

I am an individual without any distinctive achievements, deeds or talents. I am at peace with myself. My life is a revered appreciation of the pleasures that this planet offers. I am eternally grateful that I live as a human being and not as an animal, a plant or some of the myriads of minerals and amalgams. I always maintain a stable, unyielding pursuit to live without friction or hubris with the whole world regardless of origins, religion or culture.

**WHERE I WAS BORN**

I was born in the cosmopolitan Alexandria, Egypt, to Greek parents. This beautiful city that was home to us a long time ago now is an intangible memory. We are still nursing the bitterness and pain impacted on us by the expulsion and the forced immigration.

**DATE OF BIRTH**

I was born on the 28th of June 1926 according to the old Julian calendar. The church, shortly afterwards, adapted the present Gregorian Calendar, and agreed as many other nations did, to adjust the loss because of the miscalculation by adding eleven days - the accumulated error. So my birthday was adjusted to the 11th of July. In June 1944 conscripts who were born in 1926 up to the 30th of June were called for service. I presented myself to the conscription centre but I was told I was exempted because my official birthday was in July. I was very disappointed because I wanted to serve. Despite all the pleading with my father to consent to my volunteering to join the Navy was ignored. But now, so many years later, I'm grateful because I did not participate in the civil war.

**FAMILY STATUS:**

Our family belonged economically to the middle class. Yet, we, for thankfully short periods, experienced the despair that sickness and unemployment bring to human lives. These days are deeply embedded in my mind and finally steered me to socialism.

**MY ORIGINS**

My origins on both sides of my parents are Greek. Their surnames have religious meanings. My father Protopsaltis (meaning first chorister of a church choir, cantor), my mother Diacopoulos (meaning the son of a deacon). My father allegedly stems from Constantinople and my mother from Peloponnesian and Cretan backgrounds.

**ABOUT MY WORK**

When I arrived in Australia in 1949 getting a job was an easy exercise. I worked in various industries, warehouses, on the wharves, engineering workshops the Taxation Department and the PMG (Aus-

**Dimitris (Jim) Saltis**  
writer of "My four homes"

tralia Post). It took me eight years to find a job that rewarded me psychologically and financially. I worked in this profession for some forty years and changed employers three times during that period. My job was to estimate costs, prepare tenders for general engineering, steel constructions and equipment of all sorts for the mining and electricity generating industries. Work has always been a source of gratification for me. I rate employment as a major human right that governments and multinationals seem to ignore.

**MY INTERESTS**

I have a special interest in glossology and literature not only in Greek, but also, English, Italian and French. I regret that I have just about lost my knowledge of Arabic and I can only enjoy translations of great Egyptian authors such as the Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz and the most recent El Asswanny. I enjoy Arabic music, especially the popular singer Abdel Wahab, Oum Kalsoum and Asmahan. The refugees from Asia Minor brought with them the REBETIKA, we from Egypt brought the T-SIFTETELI.

I spend many evenings watching movies from all countries on SBS and World movies. Technology reduced the geographical limitations. Our planet is shrinking and we are getting closer to people who have very different cultures. We accept each other; we know why these differences exist!

My main interest and preoccupation is writing. My first book "My four homes" is a candid description of what life was like before the Pill, the segregation of the genders and the liberation of the WOMAN who now is freed

from the need of a chastity belt.

**MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GREECE**

Unfortunately I have no family ties with Greece. I only have friends that the passing of time reduced the intensity of nostalgia and the desire to meet again. Also the threat of sickness or even death is a deterrent to travelling. The closest friend I had in Greece died a few years ago. My other best friend lives in Cyprus since the sixties. Now I am compelled to keeping in touch by phone and e-mails. My loyalty and love will always be for Greece.

**ABOUT MY LIFE IN AUSTRALIA**

Life in Australia has always been pleasant and leisurely. This country has offered me freedom, opportunities and economic independence. Here, I found social security, freedom, cleanliness, altruism, mateship and the meaning of a "fair go".

**WHAT I DON'T LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN AUSTRALIA**

I regret the remoteness, the isolation from Europe and generally the Western civilisation. The typical Australian has changed considerably over the last fifty years. You and I, our children and now our grandchildren contributed to this. But the process is still in progress.

I don't like what is going on with the indigenous people. They are excluded. Not by a democratic majority but by noisy subversive manipulating powerful minorities. The same people who oppose an Australian republic. We will achieve our goal for a national identity when we will stop asking either from interest or because of some ulterior motive "where do you come from mate".

**IF I WOULD LIKE TO LIVE IN GREECE ONE DAY AND WHY**

I have no desire to live in Greece. I would have liked to visit Greece more often and stay there longer to witness and absorb the unique human amalgam that we call Greekness. I am most grateful for the accident of birth that created me to be Greek. I love Greece's history, its' contributions to thinking, the science and the fine arts. But I was in Greece in 1946 to 1948, and I witnessed brutality, discord and manic hate between the political factions. The bitterness I felt then is still very strong.

The dictatorships before and after WW11 did not heal my feelings They were so incompatible with the claim that we indeed are the only people on



this earth to formulate and apply successfully true democracy, with equal value voting and without the dictatorial veto.

**MY PERSONAL DREAM**

My persistent dream was to become a respected author. I published my first book in 2004 when I was 78. The title being "The Four homes" an autobiography which was published in Athens. I translated the book into English with the title "My Four homes" and will be published in Sydney. A third Book in Greek, "Curses, Wishes and Exorcisms" a novel about life in the late thirties in Egypt, is with a publisher in Greece.

I am writing another novel about forbidden loves and harsh customs that destroyed many lives.

I can foresee that my dream will not be realised due to my age and the time slot of my stories. Literature is like fashion. It changes. I wonder if Shakespeare, the Bronte sisters, Thomas Mann, Kafka, and the great writers of Europe would have been successful had they lived today instead of their own centuries. Today's authors write stories focusing on the suitability of their story for adaptation to movies, because films bring accolades and most importantly, money.

**MY LIFE PHILOSOPHY**

Humans are the Creator's ultimate achievement. It is the only object on our planet that has an absolute and unique value for each one of us. It is our duty to respect it, preserve it and try to extend it to its maximum potential. Yet substantial parts of national expenditures are targeted for warfare. It is sickening that scientists are hard at work designing weapons that will maximise loss of human life, but buildings and equipment will be preserved. It is frightening to think that a civilised nation can in less than ten years manage to cause the death of fifty million people and top it up with the massacre of holocaust. Let us all agree to the inflexible axiom that life is the only phenomenon on this earth that is irreplaceable. That rule to be the Alpha of our moral code with everything, all the way down to Omega, corrected to comply with the cardinal resolution. Worry about life! The soul will find its way to heaven.

