

Greek Australians step up to the crease

Greek Australian cricketers head to Corfu in September for Corfu's first Cricket Festival. Cricket is not a sport one readily associates with Greece, but it is on a good wicket on Corfu, where it's been played since 1823.

And this September, the newly-formed Australian Hellenic Cricket Council (AHCF) will be stepping up to the crease in Corfu's first Cricket Festival.

AHCF president Nick Hatzoglou said the inaugural 15-day tour, in partnership with the AFL Multicultural Program, was designed to promote traditional Australian sports in Greece.

He said sports such as cricket and AFL football have long given new arrivals in Australia an opportunity to integrate into a multicultural society.

"Ironically, today we will begin a voyage which will see these sports provide an opportunity for children of the

Diaspora to explore the cultural essence of the land of their forefathers," he said.

Hatzoglou said the tour was on a good wicket with Greek foreign ministry, who have arranged civic receptions for the team with the mayors of Athens, Thessaloniki and Corfu, and a possible audience with Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou.

Kane Liossis is on the under-18 touring team which, along with the senior side, is independently selected of the best Greek Australian players.

The 17 year old Greek Australian cricket fanatic said although he does speak some Greek, he's never been to Greece.

"I don't think 15 days is enough," he said.

"I want to stay and explore, and see family."

The Australian Hellenic Cricket Foundation was formed this year to enhance cultural ties, promote cricket



talent, and build relationships with the Greek Diaspora, in particular the Hellenic Cricket Foundation in Corfu.

Sports Without Borders Executive Chair, James Dimitriou, who will also be on the trip, said it was also a good opportunity to promote AFL to the Greek press.

He said they'd be discussing the possibility of including a 30-player Greek team in the

AFL International Series, which will be held across Melbourne, Sydney and the Gold Coast in August 2011.

The tour, which leaves Melbourne on September 7, will be chaperoned by cricket-enthusiast Greek Australians, including 'Macca', or Mithridates, and 'Dazza', or Demosthenes.

'Dazza,' also known as Phillip Evangelides, said he

didn't speak any English when he started school in Australia, but he had never been to Greece until he was 46 years old.

He said the trip was important "for our kids to have 'filias' - friendship - with our mother country."

"We're using sport to get our kids - Greek kids, Aussie kids - to have a holiday in Greece, but with sport as a reason for that," he said.

Comedian George Kapiniaris, who was at the launch of the tour, said it was important to teach Greek Australian children about Greece's long history.

"And then Jesus said, 'don't do anything till I get back,' and we didn't, and that's why we're in financial ruin," Kapiniaris joked.

He said he grew up watching cricket with his dad, who would always tell him: "That Dennis Lilly is a Greek bloke."

(source: neos kosmos)

Cocktail mix of life's woes

DISHEVELLED, comical, racy, and of course, dramatic.

Gladesville resident and stage actor Melinda Nassif is set to star in the new play, Baraki, hosted by Take Away Theatre and Sydney Fringe. Baraki (small bar in Greek), establishes itself as a raucous black comedy, with a group of twenty-something hipsters invading the space of an inner-west bar.

Set against the climate of world economic upheaval, Baraki is a cocktail mix of life's woes and wonders. Melinda plays the character of Jenny, an Australian-Greek girl who has just returned home from an affair-ridden trip to Greece.

Focusing on passion and humour, Melinda believes the play represents the relationships we all stumble upon in life.

"Baraki is all about life and its laughs, really," Melinda said. "It is definitely a light-hearted, hilarious approach to relationship breakdowns."

As a Gladesville local, Melinda's pursuit and passion for theatre has taken her all over Sydney and even Australia.

Although in a full-time job at SBS, Melinda has been in several productions, juggling the time constraints of working life and the stage. In February 2009, Melinda played a support-



ing role in the critically acclaimed Guantanamo Bay drama, Waiting for Mamdough, showing at both the Short and Sweet Festival at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) and the Adelaide Fringe Festival.

"I really enjoy inhabiting a new character and being able to understand different walks of life," she said.

"It can be a lot of fun when you let go of what people think."

In Waiting for Mamdough, Melinda played the wife of Mamdough Habib, an Australian citizen who was illegally detained for 3 1/2 years in Guantanamo Bay.

"Being brought up as a Catholic, I found it a bit of a challenge to adapt to the role of a Muslim wife," Melinda said.

"It was quite foreign to me at first, but when I really got into the character and tried to become the personality needed for the play, I felt at ease."

While the character of Jenny, a frivolous and flirtatious Greek-Australian girl, seems worlds away from Waiting for Mamdough, Melinda still thinks there are similarities to both roles and her own life.

"I've grown up as a Lebanese-Australian, so I can understand the sense of cultural difference that both of the characters experience on the stage."

Baraki will open at the Cyprus Community Club in Stanmore on September 16. For bookings, please call 9990 4980.

Article from Northern District Times



Mature age students: NUGAS turns 40

Young Greek Australians will converge in Sydney next weekend, for the annual National Union of Greek Students (NUGAS) AGM, celebrating NUGAS's 40th year.

NUGAS National President Harry Mavrolefteros said the meeting will involve annual elections of the national committee, as well as a catch up on issues that are important to young Greek-Australian students.

"Greek language is obviously really important to us," he said, "and so is Macedonia and Cyprus, so we'll be talking about those."

The AGM will also launch NUGAS's updated website, www.nugas.org.au, as well as the second annual edition of Epimetheus magazine.

Last year's inaugural edition included addresses to the young Greek community from the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the then Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull.

For the first time, the NUGAS AGM will include a full weekend of social events, including go-karting, clubbing and dinner at a Greek tavern.

For more information about the meeting and social weekend contact Harry Mavrolefteros - president@nugas.org.au

(source: neos kosmos)