

Hellenic Societies Crown Miss Greek Independence



Photos ETA Press

Miss Greek Independence Georgia Lilikas (r.) is joined by Junior Miss Greek Independence Anna Zarkas, following the pageant competition held at the Federation of Hellenic Societies in Astoria.

annual Greek Independence Day Parade in Manhattan on Sunday, April 2, starting at 1 p.m. at the Essex House Hotel, 59th Street and Central Park South, proceeding north along Fifth Avenue and ending at 79th Street. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg will lead the lineup of four grand marshals with Andrew A. Athens, president, World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE); John G. Rangos, Sr., head of The John G. Rangos, Sr. Charitable Foundation and Paul Stathouloupoulos, president and chief executive officer, Marathon National Bank of New York.

Lilikas competed against eight other young women for the title. "I was really surprised [to win]. I competed because I was a Modern Greek studies minor and president of the Hellenic Cultural Association at Rutgers last year," Lilikas said. "This is a good way for me to continue promoting Hellenism and Greek studies in higher education." She presently works in pharmaceutical advertising in New Jersey. Her goal is to be a positive role model for the younger generation. "You have to step up and out of the box and create a new movement to have people listen to you, and hopefully that will trickle down to other universities," Lilikas added.

A Junior Miss Greek Independence competition also took place. The title winner was 18-year-old Anna Zarkas. Both pageants included several question-and-answer rounds on Hellenic culture and ideals. More than 100 people watched the competition.

More than 80,000 participants and spectators from across the New York area and tri-state region are expected to attend

the parade, which features more than 40 floats and marching bands, many in Greek ethnic costumes. Also participating will be the Evzones, the official Greek Presidential Guard, Greek and United States government officials and media personalities.

The celebration on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, the largest in the country, commemorates the 185th anniversary of Greek Independence. It also honors Greeks who sacrificed to preserve the ideals of freedom, democracy, and independence from the Ottoman Empire's rule over tyranny and oppression.

The Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York, organizer of the annual Greek Independence Day parade, is a not-for-profit organization comprised of nearly 200 civic, cultural, regional, and professional organizations. Its mission is to preserve and promote Hellenic culture and heritage throughout the five boroughs of New York.

After 400 years of rule by the Ottoman Empire, Greece declared its independence on March 25, 1821. The annual Greek Independence Day parade is held on the closest Sunday to March 25 in a dual celebration integrally connected with the Christian Feast of the Annunciation. The annual commemoration brings together thousands of Greek-American civic, religious and political organizations, representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church and American and Greek government officials.

The Modern Greek Studies Program at Rutgers University covers the language, literature, politics, history, religion and culture of Modern Greece. The program holds the Odysseus Elytis Chair in honor of Elytis, Greece's 1979 Nobel Laureate. (www.moderngreek-studies.rutgers.edu)

Gazette on film a movie review by Rose A. Whitney

'Crash' Richly Deserves Best Film Oscar

Following its well deserved Oscar win for Best Picture of the year, the recent re-release of "Crash" offers audiences another wonderful opportunity to see this incredible film for the first time or even for an encore viewing. "Crash" is a complex mosaic of multiple intertwining, interlocking lives and events which characteristically collide in an often unexpected and shocking manner, mercilessly laying bare our preconceived racial and gender stereotypes and prejudices. The result is a mind- and heart-altering vision and experience which haunts us long after the film ends.

Written and directed by Paul Haggis who also wrote the screenplay for "Million Dollar Baby", this film, which features several prominent actors, is a model of ensemble acting at its best. All the actors are of equal importance as they successfully combine their individual talents to create the end result--a dynamic, unforgettable film.

Sandra Bullock and Brendan Fraser are a politically prominent white couple (he is the Los Angeles District Attorney) who experience crime "up close and personal" when they are the victims of a violent carjacking. The political and personal consequences of this event reveal their previously hidden, deep-seated biases.

Terrance Howard and Thandie Newton are an African-American couple whose middle class affluence provides them no immunity from the ethnic prejudices of some members of the L.A. Police Department. As a consequence, their marriage is seriously jeopardized while

they struggle to recover from their traumatic encounter with police.

Matt Dillon (Oscar nominee for Best Supporting Actor for this role) and Ryan Phillippe are white L.A. police officer partners who each in his own way struggles to handle the overwhelming stress of his job. Dillon, a 17-year veteran who appears to be burned out and suffering from stress fatigue, does eventually reveal a glimmer of the compassion for humanity he once had in a dramatic encounter with Thandie Newton. Phillippe is a rookie officer who views Dillon's actions and normally biased attitude as reprehensible, but soon finds himself in an untenable confrontation which ends tragically and reveals his own failure in response to stress. Don Cheadle (also one of the film's producers) is an African-American detective who struggles with daily prejudices on the job, problems with a sick mother, a delinquent younger brother and a Latino girlfriend.

Other significant characters include a Latino locksmith who becomes embroiled in a misunderstanding triggered by a language difference with a Persian store owner which leads to a potentially fatal incident involving the locksmith's young daughter.

A complementary backdrop to the film, the riveting musical score, which includes the song "In the Deep" (Oscar nominee for Best Original Song), helps to create a haunting and often mesmerizing effect on the viewer.

"Crash" is a must-see film and should be required viewing for every resident of every city in America.



Some 70 students attended the lecture.

Photos Catherine Tsounis

unteer work includes working at local animal shelters, the Philoptohos Society of my church and the Cancer Center for kids at Winthrop University Hospital in Mineola. I am the spokesperson for Estelle's Dressy Dresses in Farmingdale, Long Island." She smiled. "If you have a news tip for the Long Island Bureau, please send me an e-mail at shall@cbs.com or fax me at (516) 742-8616."

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live. I worked three jobs and kept focused. What does not kill you makes you stronger. No one feels a woman can be successful without sleeping [around] to get ahead. I made my own opportunities through hard work and competence."

She has been at CBS for more than four years. "I report on everything from court cases, crimes and charity events on Long Island and New York City." Hall said. "My broadcasts are on CBS 880 AM Tuesdays through Saturdays. I am normally on the air every hour."

When she came to New York City, "The Greek American community embraced me on Long Island," she said. "I am a member of the Archangel's Church in Glen Cove. Every Easter I return to Ohio in order to decorate the Epitafio (Christ's tomb) on Good Friday. I do not party, go to bars or drink alcohol. I work three jobs. My vol-