

HOWLIES, from page 12

"Howlie". It's from the Hawaiian term "houle," which is a derogatory term for the white man. It means a cruel dispirited person.

Bill Ladd told me one of his fantasies is "to move to Hawaii and perform music there." The music he and his band mates played this night appeared to take many of the listeners into a fantasy world of sorts.

One patron, Sally McLo-hon, lived in Hawaii for a good number of years. She said she wholly adores Hawaiian music. She couldn't explain why she has such a deep affection for the music, saying "I've loved it since the seventies. The guitar picking is just fascinating." She said the music is "just the most incredible thing..."

Hawaiian music today is becoming more mainstream, much more popular. National Public Radio now often plays Hawaiian music and it receives more play on FM stations. The Howlies' performance demonstrated why this is the case. In the Soap Box this night, bright smiles and expressions of happiness were widespread.

Describing the sound of Hawaiian music is very difficult. The terms unique and up-lifting fit very well, but they don't describe the tone, pitch, pace, resonance or quality of the sounds. One must hear this music to fully understand it.



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doomed and tragic love affair and an inventor who boils old sneakers in a small apartment just to see what will happen. An impossibly crass conclusion awaits those who cry out for a happy ending. Pompous kid abusers, Mr. Sir, played by John Voight and the Warden, played by Sigourney Weaver are given their just deserts. Well, sort of, because the State of Texas has never been too hard on white people, and the Warden (Sigourney Weaver) deserves mercy because she was forced to dig holes as a child. Whether you've lost your best friend or just your car keys, duck in and see *Holes*— before your eyes. You'll be glad you did.



Joy in Motion The 11th Annual St. Nicholas Greek Festival

by Andrea Barilla

What is it about the St. Nicholas Greek Festival that draws thousands of people under its tents? Might it be the spicy smell of gyro meat sizzling in the pans? Or the baklava, with its sweet flaky layers doused in honey? Could it be the exotic beauty of the dancers, attired in rich embroidered costumes and jewelry? Or the festival musicians, playing oddly shaped instruments that mask out highway sounds or worry, allowing the observer to be transported to a small Greek village in the summer?

When you first step under the tent, your senses are bombarded with people, noise, and food. Children weave through the tables, playing tag games with their friends; families are sitting together, laughing and eating off stacked plates. The band, named the Odyssey, encourages everyone to dance.

"C'mon people, come and dance, have some fun," they say.

"Nothing breaks the ice like a Greek dance," ex-claims Van Caplanson. He and his wife are here for their third year, and Van is having a ball. Although he was born in New York, his family is from Asia Minor, a region in the eastern Mediterranean strongly influenced by a long history of Greek absorption. He tells me that in New York, his family danced all the time, at every gathering.

"Our dancing," he explains, "allows guys and girls to get... to know each other."

Greek dancing is an intimate act, in that physical closeness is a common trait. Almost every dance requires a handhold, whether it is the more elaborate shoulder clasp, or merely taking the hand of the person next to you. In fact, many dances are done with the entire group linked together, moving in a counterclockwise circle or standing in a line.

The St. Nicholas Dance Group steps onto the dance floor, dressed in richly colored costumes, each different, each intricate. The older ladies are wearing full dresses in earthy colors, decorated with a sash or embroidered apron tied around their waists, long earrings, and a decorative headpiece.

"They are dressed like I like to dress," says one woman at my table.

The preschoolers and kindergartners wear flowing white gowns with bright red vests and headpieces. The guys are dressed just as elaborately. The younger dancers are dressed all in white with an embroidered belt around their waist, while the others wear black pants with an embroidered vest over crisp white shirts.

Nota Dukas, one of the senior dancers, designed all the costumes herself, a total of sixty,



Antonia Ioannou, her work brings others joy.



Greek dance brings glamour and passion mingled with tradition and music.

for each member of the group.

She began work on them in October, putting in full eight hour days, according to one festival worker. She used magazine pictures and museum visits as visual aids. However, she was lucky to receive a gift of an authentic Pontic dress, which enabled her to render this style perfectly and win the gold medal at their last competition.

Nota is wearing a Pontic costume, an indigo velvet dress, with gold stitching, and a red silk sash and underlay.

"See, the Pontic costumes are the ones with the slits," she says, opening her skirt to reveal red silk bloomers. "See? The pantaloons! The pantaloons!" she ex-claims as she pulls the silk wider to reveal just how baggy the pants can be.

The St. Nicholas Dancers, from the age of four to sixty-six, are scheduled to begin their tour of Greece. Their show is called a tour, as each Greek region has its own dance variations, depending on the cultures that live there, the climate, and the land topography. An example is the Ikariotikos, which the elementary, junior and senior dancers perform. The Ikariotikos comes from the small island of Ikaria, part of the Greek Aegean Islands.

As the song progresses, the dancers, holding the shoulder of their neighbor move their feet more quickly and with more emphasis. This type of dance is often called a leaping dance. Island dances tend to have many leaping movements because of the warm weather and light clothing.

These dancers have only been practicing for three years and have already surpassed long established groups in cities like Atlanta-winning medals each of the three years they have competed in the Hellenic Dance Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. This past March, they won three gold medals in the junior and senior divisions and also for their costumes.

Antonia Ioannou is the group's dance instructor, and her sister, Christina Wetherington assists her. Antonia is the typical Greek beauty— thick black hair, dark eyes and olive skin. She hasn't leaped into the group blindly; she researched long and hard into traditional Greek dance and studied videotapes of professional Greek dance groups. She even hosted a three-day workshop with the famous Nikos Zournatzidis, director of the Dora Statou Ballet in Athens. Each of the age groups practices individually for two hours each week at St. Nicholas.

After the dance, I talk with George Rallis, one of the senior dancers. He has been dancing with the group since their beginning three years ago, when he was still in high school. He

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joined the group for the education it would give him. A Greek-American, he was beginning to feel "a bit too American." He noticed the closeness of the other Greek young adults at church, and on youth group occasions, when there was dancing, he noticed its power to bring everyone together.

"I wanted to pass my culture on to my future children," he explains.

Food is another entrance into Greek culture. According to festival vendor, Dianne Brown, whose daughter has recently converted to her husband's Greek Orthodox religion, "When I go to dinner at my daughter's in-laws, they always bundle us up with food when we leave. It's offensive if you don't accept it. So you take the food."

When I stepped into the pastry room of the church on Friday, Mary Malahias slipped me a finikia cookie, shooing me away so the others wouldn't see what she did. Today, Des Saffo hands me a sample container of pastries, despite the ladies' panic that they're running out. "Here, it's a gift," she says.

While outside the band plays loudly and people are dancing or eating baklava, inside St. Nicholas, there is no noise, save for whispers or the voice of Father Regis as he gave us a lesson on the Greek Orthodox Church. The church is stunning, awash with color and religious murals depicting the saints and church events, like the Last Supper and Pentecost. It is almost celestial, like sitting in a heavenly pew. As Father Regis teaches church history, pointing out the various aspects of this church, one woman keeps raising her hand to clarify or challenge what he has just said. For awhile he responds to her patiently, then finally declares with a Ray Romano sigh: "This is my mother everyone—she wants to make sure I don't forget anything."

This year the church tours are the largest yet. One tour had sixty to eighty people and another lasted about three hours, until all questions were answered. All the pamphlets in the church lobby have been taken. "They were jammed before," says Father Regis.

Outside, he is bombarded with children. He tells me about his own children, two boys and two girls. One of his daughters was dancing earlier in the day. "She's the striking one," he declares. It strikes me that this pastor, with his affectionate demeanor, ponytail, and openly expressed pride in his family does not fit with what I had always envisioned the Orthodox Church to be.

As I step outside to rejoin the festivities, I start to wonder. Maybe the Greeks have a special gift for making people happy. Or maybe they're happy because so many of us have come to share what they've created. Or maybe it has something to do with the church? For awhile I sit talking with a woman who had stopped on her way downtown. She has decided to have spinakopita for dinner, and I ask if she would explain to me what she is eating. But instead, she laughs, offering me some. Then I think, something's happening. A woman I don't know, nicely dressed, refined, invites me to take food off her plate. I guess it means here, everyone is family.

On the Other Hand Life Span, Eternity, and Immortality



by Jim Megivern

If life is the great gift, the basic human value, the good beyond compare, it is easy to understand why people have always pondered what promotes the highest quality of life. Is there, for instance, an ideal human life span that might reasonably be advocated? Is the difference between merely living and living well to be measured in intervals of time? In touching on this subject the Psalmist observed that: "The years of our life are three score and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away." (Psalm 90:10). Longevity in itself was thus not seen as the ideal.

The question of life span is subordinate to the quality of life issue. This is all the more so when earthly life is not the only consideration. Belief in some kind of life after death, a standard part of many religious traditions, deeply affects the way in which this life is viewed. Yet the understanding of what "shuffling off this mortal coil" entails has varied widely and usually remains notoriously vague. Traditional religious language is highly metaphorical, but so is any other kind of language that tries to speak of an unknown realm, a kind of life other than that which is commonly experienced.

Modern science has raised an additional bevy of questions about the significance of the extension of human life this side of the grave. It has been estimated, looking back, that average life expectancy has increased at a rate of some three months per year over the past century and a half. No serious scientist projects this as likely to lead to immortality, but it certainly leaves the question of ideal life span completely up in the air. The number of controversies is already significant over how this constant extending of the human life span ought to be assessed. To be alive today is to live, on average, nearly twice as many years as predecessors of a century ago.

Jay Olshansky, a demographic researcher at the University of Chicago, hits on one obvious problem in noting that "we don't want to make ourselves older longer, we want to make ourselves younger longer." The current proliferation of assisted-living facilities for our aging population, and all the financial burdens associated with this trend, underscores this point. Greater longevity itself is not what is to be pursued. Three alternate goals have already been suggested, based on different evaluations of the results of modern science.

- 1) Since the average life span has risen to nearly seventy-seven years for U.S. women, and since the average for Japanese women is now up to eighty-five, the most elevated anywhere, perhaps that should be viewed as the 'normal' human aging limit for the future.
- 2) A second view, pointing to the recent case of a French woman who lived to be 122, and others elsewhere of nearly that age, says that perhaps this ought to be judged as the ideal range for the future.
- 3) And a third view, maximizing beyond what has already been seen, proposes 150 years or more as the goal toward which modern science is taking us.


What is often left aside in such speculations is any real consideration of the full impact of such life spans on the structures and experiences of human families and societies. Olshansky has cautioned that "a multi-billion dollar industry today offers a bewildering array of herbs, vitamins, hormones, or lifestyle changes that are supposed to slow aging, prevent disease, and lengthen life. These 'discoveries' are big news to the aging baby-boom generation. Unfortunately, the touted benefits of many of these treatments are either unproven, grossly exaggerated, or just plain false."

He and co-author Bruce Carnes, in *The Quest for Immortality*, try to help readers to "demystify the complex language and concepts of science" so as to distinguish real science from all the media hype. They find little real basis for the excessively optimistic claims of radically altering the aging process and conquering all the maladies that invariably afflict the human condition. While acknowledging that great progress has been made in diminishing and controlling disease, they see many fallacies in the conclusions the enthusiasts try to draw from these results.

Another source from which sobering reflections have come is that of Leon R. Kass, chair of the President's Council on Bioethics. In *Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity*, he too insists that longevity in itself is not the point. An "obsession" to extend life might be a thinly-veiled denial of the reality of death, a refusal to accept our finitude. Pushing death back another twenty years is not the kind of immortality for which the human spirit yearns. "Man longs not so much for deathlessness as for wholeness, wisdom, goodness, and godliness."

Kass has some interesting things to say about another way in which many people have often been inclined to interpret 'immortality', i.e., by

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