

# Pasta For Pete Raises Colon Cancer Awareness, and Funds, in New Jersey

By Constantine S. Sirigos  
TNH Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD, NJ – The friends and family of Peter Markou that held a fundraiser in support of his battle against cancer sent a number of beautiful and powerful messages on a sunny Sunday afternoon when they could have been elsewhere. One was their love for him and their solidarity with his wife Margie and his daughter Maria, and with the Markou and Emporellis Families.

The other is that with some thought, and planning, and sacrifice, people can make a big difference in the world.

The blue and white balloons that filled the union hall of local 1004 of the IUPAT, District Council 711 in Springfield, NJ, could have represented the Hellenic homeland of the families, but on April 21 the balloons with the dark blue ribbons ones stood for the fight against colon cancer.

The hundreds of people that turned out and the dozens of gift baskets and other prizes for the tricky tray raffles symbolized love for friends and neighbors that filled the room and also proved that one need not be rich to be a philanthropist.

Markou's family could not say enough to thank the many donors, or the men and women who cooked all day long, including the families O'Donnel, Karabin, Coppa, Capodice, Matty, Kowtowski, Seanlow, Dumbrowski, Hanlon, and Anner.

The event lasted from 2 to 7 PM and was called "Pasta for Pete." George Coppa summed it all up: "Friends are treasures. Good friends are like good family."



A LOT OF LOVE IN THE ROOM: Peter Markou (standing 5th from left) behind his wife Margie and sister-in-law Tara and flanked by his Brother Teddy and his daughter Maria. The

Peter's brother Teddy, who organized the event, told TNH "You can't put a price on what they do. Anyone can reach into their pocket, but what they do comes from the heart," he said as he pounded the left side of his chest.

The beautifully-decorated hall, the energy of the cooks and the warmth of the guests brought some heartwarming smiles to Peter, who was also busy making sure his guests were taken care of, often dashing off the refill the coffee machine.

He has worked hard all his life as an auto mechanic and he was in no mood to let the others do all the work at Pasta for Pete.

Markou was also strengthened by the prayers of his mother Maria and sister Tina, who live in Greece but were not able to attend, and of his friends and family on the beautiful island of Siphnos, and by the toughness he learned from his late father John, who also taught him all about automobile engines.

Margie's parents come from Mitiline, where she was also born, said she was "overwhelmed by the love and support from family and friends and family we don't even know. I can't find the words but I want to express my deepest gratitude, especially for my brother-in-law Teddy."

Pasta for Pete fundraiser, in support of his battle against cancer, is a shining example of human love and compassion at its finest.

She also expressed appreciation for the generosity of her parents, Maria and Manoli Emporellis, and her uncle Jimmy Emporellis and his family.

Maria said "I could not have asked for a better outcome." She told TNH that her father is responding well to chemotherapy. The spots on his lungs and liver are in remission and they are awaiting the results of a cat scan of the colon.

Her cousin Tina, daughter of her uncle Teddy and aunt Tara, is a hair stylist and she was happy to work her magic on a Sunday, offering haircuts – buzz cuts for the young boys, including her brother T.J.

The core group of volunteers

and donors are connected with the Colonia High School softball team of her first cousin Tierney – who went on to graduate from Iona College, where she starred as an outfielder.

Teddy Markou told TNH that people approached him about doing something for his brother Peter as soon as they learned of his diagnosis. The waited for good weather – and a breather from the other three fundraisers he recently helped coordinate. God smiled on them with a blue sky.

The friends and family gathered in the hall of Teddy Markou's union, which was also a major ally of their effort. He expressed his deep thanks to

Joseph Estevez, the business agent of local 1004 of the IUPAT District Council 711, who secured and set up the hall – at no charge. "The union bought 140 tickets and donated \$500 right away," he said.

He and his colleagues are the ones that paint some of the major public and private facilities, including bridges, in the New York Metropolitan area.

There were many other sponsors and donors. They offered restaurant gift certificates, tickets to Yankee games and rock concerts, T-shirts autographed by New York Giants stars, therapeutic massages and many more. There were also popular 50/50 raffles.

The financial strain can be as painful as the illness, and that is why the family appreciates everyone who donated time, talent, and treasure, including the Philoptochos of the Metropolis of New Jersey, and the National Philoptochos, office, who provided grants that are helping with the family's mortgage payments.

They also offered invaluable advice and referrals, through Paulette Giannakopoulos of the Department of Social Work of National Philoptochos, and Eleni Constantinidis, Second Vice President of the Philoptochos of the Metropolis of New Jersey and Social Services Chairperson.

Margie's first cousin Venetoula Zamarra told TNH that under such circumstances, "people show their true colors, and who you see who is a true friend. They either show up or they don't show up."

To make a donation send an email to Maria Markou at: mmarkou0129@gmail.com.

# Saginaw Township's St. Demetrios Church, in MI, Reinstalls its Iconic Art

By Sue White  
mlive.com

SAGINAW TOWNSHIP, MI – For 32 years, St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church has celebrated the traditions of the old world, worshipping at an east-facing altar in a church of domes and arches and sharing its food and culture at its annual Greek Festival every June.

But in its 75th anniversary year, the congregation serving many across the state reached into its roots in Saginaw. The iconography, or religious art, that once screened the altar in the renovated St. Paul Lutheran Church at Fifth and Lapeer on Saginaw's East Side and sur-

vived a fire there in 1950 hangs again in the church at Mackinaw and McCarty.

"The church officially started meeting in 1937," said Nick Makrianis, a first-generation Greek-American like many in today's congregation, the sons and daughters of St. Demetrios' immigrant founders.

"Several men came to Saginaw from Greece in the late 1920s, and by 1934, they had 26 Greek businesses downtown," most of them restaurants such as the Best Ever, the Star Lunch and the Washington, said Christ A. Anagnost.

"It was when the men went back to Greece to marry and brought their wives to Saginaw

that the women insisted on having a church."

The parishioners first met in the Vlassis Hall, above the Vlassis family's restaurant on Court near Michigan, "on the third story, a big climb for our members," Makrianis said.

It was a growing congregation that finally moved into the former Lutheran church in 1940.

"The old-timers are all gone now," said Kosmas G. Kastros, though walking through the church's hallway is like stepping into the past as Kastros, Anagnost, Makrianis and the Rev. Ireneaus Cox share the history of the newly framed iconography hanging on its walls.

Vivid renditions of the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus, John the Baptist, archangels Michael and Gabriel and the church's patron saint are there, the benefactors noted in Greek at the bottom of the eight paintings.

Inside the sanctuary hangs the three crystal chandeliers that came in pieces from Greece in 1940, along with the remaining two panels from the original screen and the 12 smaller icons that ran across the top tier of the screen. Rather than used to hide the altar from the congregation, Cox said, the panels historically show what is invisibly present at the services.

Visitors to this summer's Greek Festival, held Friday through Sunday, June 14-16, on the grounds at McCarty and Mackinaw, can see the retrieved

art during guided tours of the church, Kastros said.

"We had given all the old icons to the Ukrainian church on Stephens," Makrianis said, after a new screen was commissioned in 1986 by Byzantine artist George S. Papastamatiou. "Then, when the church didn't have enough of a membership anymore, it closed."

"I asked the archbishop if we

could have the screen back, and the ladies there said if we wanted it, we could take it," Cox said.

As with many churches, the size of the congregation at St. Demetrios has declined since its peak in 1970, Cox said. But it has started drawing converts to the Eastern Orthodox faith, as he converted himself.

"While the western churches

reflect on Christ's sufferings, everything in the Greek Orthodox church is flavored with the resurrection," he said, adding that they will celebrate Easter on May 5 this year, aligned with the traditional Passover. "It's positive and upbeat; we look at everything through the light of the resurrection.

"As a convert, that's refreshing to me."

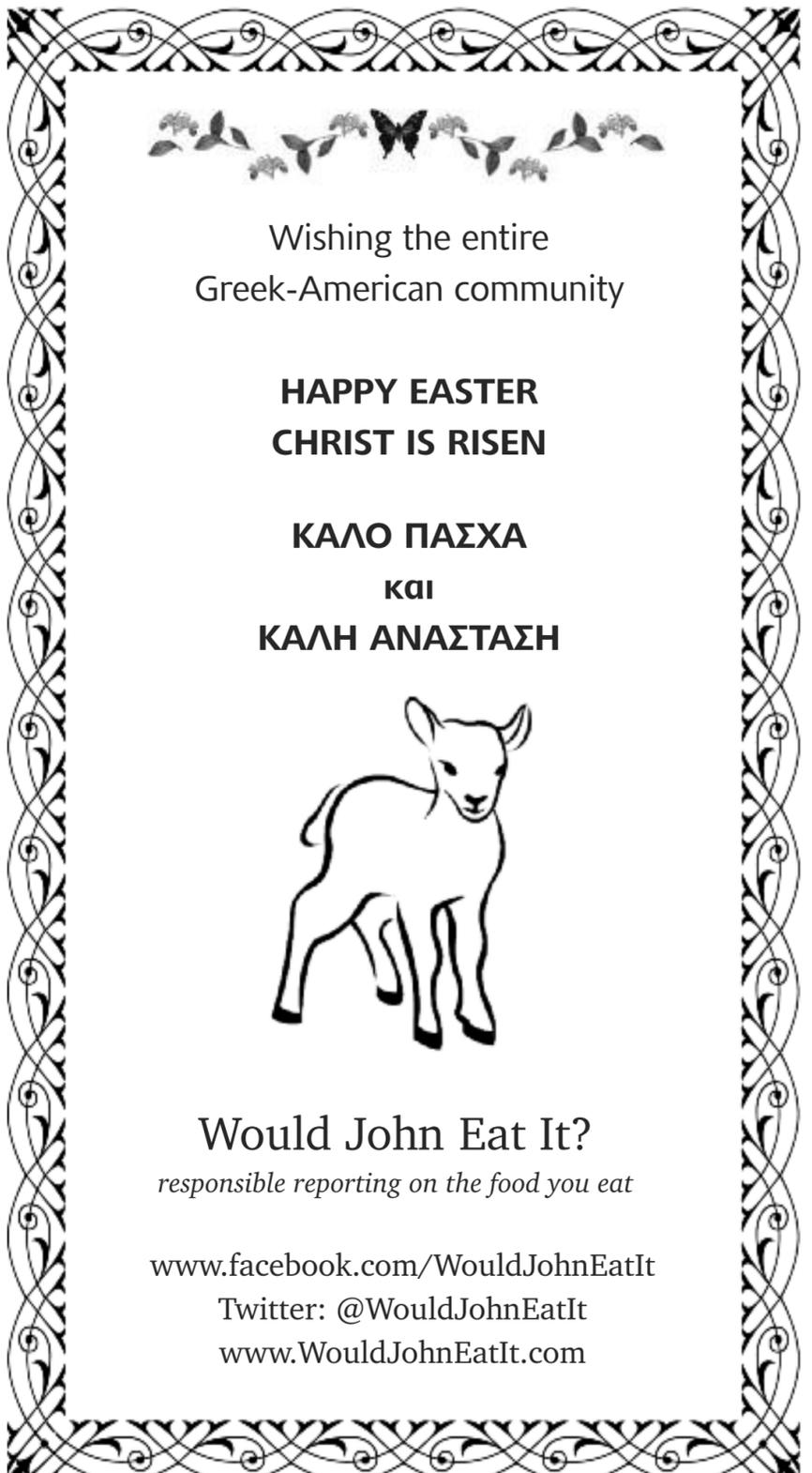


The sanctuary at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church features ornate artwork. The Michigan church is 75 years old.

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