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# Trumbeta Shqiptare

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Volume 100

December 2017

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The Official Publication of the Albanian-American National Organization, Inc.



*“We, American citizens and Canadian citizens, of Albanian descent and others interested in Albanian-Americans, desiring to form and perpetuate a federation and promote its objectives and principles; to effect a perfect and harmonious understanding between ourselves and others, to promote the cause of good citizenship in the country in which we live; to stimulate the spirit of good fellowship and good cooperation; do hereby establish and ordain these By-Laws.”*

**Please visit us at: [www.AANO.org](http://www.AANO.org)**



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*Published Two Times A Year By  
The Albanian-American National Organization, Inc.  
Website: AANO.org*

**2017-2018  
NATIONAL OFFICERS & BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

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**Albanian-American**  
*National Organization*

**December 2017**

### *President's Message*

Greetings to All,

For the AANO, this was an exciting year as we added two chapters. We welcome the Philadelphia Chapter, a chapter that had been inactive for a few years. However, this year, under the excellent leadership of Elena Shomos, it has been reactivated. We also welcome the Dallas Chapter which was established as the end result of our 2017 Convention in Dallas.

On behalf of the AANO, I thank Igli Laci, the BOG of the Dallas Chapter, for all the help he has provided to the AANO. I thank the Albanian-American Community of greater Dallas for their warm reception. A special thanks to Mr. Nick Mehmeti and his family for their exceptional help and generosity. Mr. Mehmeti is a very successful businessman, a great patriot who loves and respects his Albanian heritage, and an extraordinary person who has helped and continues to help the Albanian Community in Dallas and elsewhere.

This was also our Queen Pageant year. We congratulate two beautiful and talented young ladies from Illinois who were selected as the AANO Queens, and will be serving successively in that capacity for the next four years. Georgya Borova is the AANO Queen for the first two years and Klea Gjoni will serve the remaining two years. Congratulations to both!

### *Mesazhi i Presidentit*

I congratulate the 2017 Scholarship recipients, wishing them much success in the pursuit of their educational endeavors.

I would also like to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt thanks to the AANO Executive Board, Board of Governors, the appointed Officers, and to all those who continue to help the AANO. The AANO is an organization of volunteers and it has functioned this way for 71 years. These special people devote a great amount of time and resources each and every year keeping the AANO moving forward, hence, continuing to make a positive difference in the lives of many young Albanian-Americans students by providing them with financial help, and at the same time, contributing to the preservation of our Albanian heritage in North America.

Washington DC here we come! Our 2018 Annual Convention will be held in Washington, DC. To obtain detailed information about the upcoming convention, including ticket reservations and the schedule of events, please visit our webpage [www.aano.org](http://www.aano.org). We will update all the information as it becomes available. Nevertheless, Washington, DC is one of our favorite places, and we plan to have a fantastic time. While the specifics of the Convention will follow, we know that the 72<sup>nd</sup> Convention will be held on August 3-5, 2018. Therefore, please mark your calendars now!

As we are getting ready for the 2018 Convention, we appreciate all the help and support you can provide to the AANO. One easy thing we can all do is encourage our family and friends to take a three-day trip to our Capital, on the first weekend in August 2018, and join us. This will be a fantastic time to make new friends or perhaps rekindling old relationships and celebrate our rich Albanian heritage.

As the holiday season is approaching, I would like to wish all of you, your families and friends, the very best for the Holiday Season. Happy, healthy and prosperous New Year! Gëzuar!

Mirupafshim në Kuvënderin e 72-të në Washington, DC.



*John K. Lulgjuraj*

John K. Lulgjuraj, National President  
Albanian-American National Organization, Inc.

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

### **72nd Annual AANO Convention**



**Washington, D.C.**  
**August 3 - August 5, 2018**



**[www.aano.org](http://www.aano.org)**



**Albanian-American**  
*National Organization*

## **CHAPTER ACTIVITIES**

### **Albany**

The Albany Chapter held their Christmas Party at Athos Restaurant following a short meeting on December 4, 2017. As always, a great time !!

### **Chicago**

The Chicago Chapter held their Holiday Party on December 1st and a good time was had by all. After a short meeting, dues were paid for 2018 and newly elected officers were named:

President – Perry Pero; Vice-President – Lea Bitta;  
Secretary – Nicole Poni; Treasurer – Ariana  
Guraziu; and Board of Governor – Olga Titos.

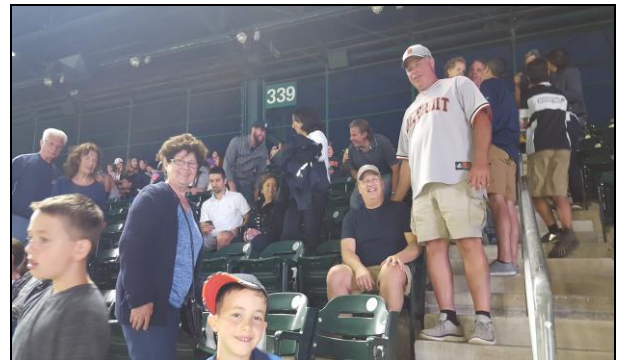
The Chicago Chapter wants to congratulate two of its lovely young ladies who were crowned AANO Queens at the Dallas Convention. Georgya Borova will uphold her duties for the years 2018 and 2019. Klea Gjoni will have the honor of being Queen for 2020 and 2021. The Chicago Chapter also wants to congratulate their families.



***Happy Holidays to everyone from the  
Chicago Chapter !!***

**Detroit**

The Detroit Chapter's 3rd Annual ***"Shqipos at the Tigers"*** took place on June 28, 2017 at Comerica Park. The Tigers took on the Kansas City Royals with 58 people in attendance and all had a great time. There were many kids this time, ranging in age from 1 to 78. The Tigers lost but the AANO got acknowledged on the big scoreboard and the loss did not dampen the spirits of the group. We hope to continue the tradition next year.



A good number of people from Detroit made it to the Convention in Dallas and although it was a smaller convention, the Detroit group had a great time and got a chance to visit places like the Grassy Knoll, JFK Memorial, JFK Library, trolley tours, tours, etc.

The Detroit Chapter would like to welcome the two new Chapters that were ratified at the last Convention, namely, ***Philadelphia and Dallas!*** We really look forward to working with you and your members for a long time to come.

## Philadelphia

On October 3rd, members of the Philadelphia Chapter joined prospective members and others from the Philadelphia community for a presentation on the codices of Albania that have survived for centuries. The fantastic presentation was given by Joan Lena, Father Marian Paloka, and Oldi Morava of the Interconfessional Bible Society of Albania. The American Bible Society graciously hosted the event in their beautiful space. It was a splendid way to celebrate Albanian cultural heritage and learn more about works currently taking place in Albania to protect and distribute a precious piece of history. It was engaging, informative, and inspired a sense of "pride to be Albanian" in many of the attendees.

If you know anyone in the Philadelphia area that would like to join the AANO, please reach out to Elena Shomos ([elena.shomos@gmail.com](mailto:elena.shomos@gmail.com)).



*Ilirjan Papa (middle) with members of the Interconfessional Bible Society of Albania*



*Joan Lena and Marinela Prifti*

## *Attention Past Scholarship Winners*



We would love to know what you're doing !!

Please send your information to Gayle Orlow ([gorlow@comcast.net](mailto:gorlow@comcast.net)) and list the year that you won your scholarship, where you attended school, your major, and what has transpired since. If you like, attach a photo.

We enjoy keeping up to date on our Scholarship recipients.

**If you would like to make a donation to the AANO Scholarship Fund, please send your contribution to:**

### **AANO SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

**c/o Nancy Capstick  
15 Ellis Drive  
Worcester, MA 01609**

[ncapstick@hotmail.com](mailto:ncapstick@hotmail.com)



**Donations to the Scholarship Fund are  
Tax Deductible**



**Albanian-American**  
*National Organization*

**71st Annual Convention**  
&  
**24th Queen Pageant**

**August 4 -6, 2017**  
**Dallas, TX**

*(by Rich Rafail)*



This was the first venture into Texas by the AANO. We got a warm welcome from the local Albanian community. The convention took place at the Westin Galleria Dallas which was on the periphery of the main downtown area. Good for shoppers though, it was attached to the Galleria Mall.

Opening night on Friday, August 4th was addressed by President, Julia Black. She welcomed everyone to Dallas and acknowledged our new-found friends from Dallas. Before the dancing began, the 24th Queen Pageant took place. After judges interviewed several candidates for the position, the two finalists were called to the stage. The two finalists were from the Chicago Chapter, Georgya Borova and Klea Gjoni. They were both asked a final question before the judges decided upon a winner. Due to scheduling conflicts, one of the judges was not in attendance in the evening and the result was a tie. So the two women will be sharing the duties over the next several years.

After the Queen Pageant concluded, the contestants and the Board members began the first dance of the evening. The dance floor was filled the entire night. The local Dallas people were out in droves on the dance floor. A fun night was had by all. The

afterhour party was held up in the suite and many people, both local and National Board enjoyed themselves into the early hours of the morning.

Saturday allowed for an off day for people to explore Dallas. Several people took the opportunity to take the on and off bus tour of Dallas. Others took the opportunity to go shopping in the Galleria and dining in the various restaurants in the mall.

Saturday evening began with the formal cocktail hour before entering the banquet ballroom. Welcoming and President address was given by Julia Black. The Dallas Co-Chair Igli Laci also addressed the audience, as did the current queens. Finally, Gayle Orlow commented on the Scholarship Fund and what we do to help students in need. She also announced the winners of this year's scholarships and their background. One of the recipients, Klea Gjoni, was in attendance, and also one of our newly crowned queens. Gayle pointed out that a silent auction was held that evening for the benefit of the Scholarship Fund.

Dancing began after a served plated dinner. The dance floor was once again packed and everyone had a great time. After hours continued in the hospitality suite into the early hours of the morning.

Sunday afternoon's meeting began the culmination of the convention. New officers were elected: President - John Lulgjuraj, Vice President - Clodian Pepi, Treasurer - Richard Rafail, and Secretary - Gayle Orlow. The Philadelphia Chapter was adopted into the Organization and the Dallas Chapter petitioned to join the AANO were accepted as well. Comments were made by the Dallas people in attendance, and the site of the next convention was chosen. The 2018 Annual AANO Convention will be held in Washington, D.C. Following the official close of the convention, pastries and coffee were served.

For people who were staying through until Monday and locals who wanted to have an afternoon off with fun and entertainment, Sneaky Pete's was the place on Sunday evening. There everyone got to partake in a buffet dinner and drinks, both inside and outside of the restaurant. Well, another fun-filled AANO AANO convention has passed and we look forward to our next one in the our country's capital.

Congratulations to the following 2017 AANO Scholarship Fund recipients. The awards were presented at the 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention, and we wish all of our winners much success in their future endeavors:



**Deni Hoxha (Worcester, MA)**

Attending Harvard University  
Majoring in Economics, Minor in Government

**Klea Gjonaj (Addison, IL)**

Attending University of Michigan  
Majoring in Chemistry

**Angela Kristo (So. Milwaukee, WI)**

Attending Ohio State University  
Majoring in Neuroscience, Minor in Spanish

**Romina Lilollari (St. Petersburg, FL)**

Attending Harvard University  
Majoring in Government, Minor in Economics

**Lia Idrizi (So. Elgin, IL)**

Attending University of Illinois Urbana  
Bachelors and JD Degree in Consumer Economics,  
Minor in Business

**Gabriela Vukaj (Delray Beach, FL)**

Attending University of Florida  
Majoring in Civil Engineering, Minor in Finance

**Gjergji Camaj (Shelby Township, MI)**

Attending University of Michigan  
Majoring in Business

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*Special thanks to Gayle Orlow of Detroit who donated a gift certificate for the silent scholarship auction and 13-year-old Allonja Wilson of Detroit who donated two of her original paintings.*

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*Klea Gjonaj, scholarship winner and future AANO Queen from Chicago, in attendance at the Dallas Convention. Klea is currently attending school as a freshman in Michigan.*

**AANO Scholarship Search ...**

*Where are you today ?*



On behalf of the AANO Scholarship Fund, we would like to ask for your help in finding some of our alumni scholarship recipients. Any information you may have would be helpful, even if the winners are no longer with us, so we can update our records, as well as follow up and know something more about them (careers, hobbies, interests, etc).

Addresses are very important so we can stay in touch, invite them to our events, and put them back on our mailing list. Please email any information to: [AANO.org](http://AANO.org).

A complete listing of our scholarship award winners follows on the next few pages ... starting from 1955 to 2016.



AANO Scholarship Award Winners  
1955 - 2017



1955	Nicholas C. Pano Dr. James L. Philip	1969	Catherine (Nicholas) Balinski Beverlee Vissar	1977	Stephen Burdumy Dr. Dennis Dimitri Mark Dionis Linda Herzog Vera Nako Dr. Barbara (Kelapire) Filis Valerie Kerxhalli	1983	Paul Costa Susan Joseph Christopher Costa Donna Ann Bacon David Prifti Elizabeth Vrato William J. Harris Gregory P. Vasil Deborah Sedares
1956	Diane G. (Chala) Michael Elene J. Pappas	1970	Catherine (Nicholas) Balinski Angela Ropi	1978	Elez Biberaj Linda Herzog Vera Nako Wendy Scott Elizabeth (Themel) Horn Diane Wilan	1984	Donna Ann Bacon Elizabeth Dove Dr. Barbara (Kelapire) Filis Susan Quamo Deborah Sedares Kendra Tanacea Gregory P. Vasil Elizabeth Vrato
1957	Dr. Theodore Lambert Dr. James L. Philip	1971	Robert Arthur Roberta (Christo) Alera	1979	Barbara E. Biagas Linda Herzog Michael Kane Audrey Kerxhalli Laura Michael Vera Nako	1985	Paul Dindy Dr. Barbara (Kelapire) Filis Michael Norman Steffon Victoria Vissar Elizabeth Vrato
1959	James Michael	1972	Margarita (Boyatzi) Dempsey Nancy (Pepi) Capstick Kevin Christo	1980	Dr. Carol (Arthur) Cola Patrice Dudula Linda Herzog James Robo	1986	Dhuart Ali Michael Gregory Deborah Sedares Michael Steffon Victoria Vissar
1960	Joanne Spiro Pamela (Stavrou) Dove	1973	Robert Arthur Diane Boria Diane Jance Carol Laska Carol Nache	1981	Dr. Carol (Arthur) Cola Christopher Costa Robert Hades Michael Kelapire Kola Mato Laura Michael Nina Tasi Gregory P. Vasil	1987	Paulette Mallios Callas Leslie Mallios Contoudis Laura Giantris Michael Gregory Stephen Nowmas Susan Quamo Kendra Tanacea
1961	Mary Naum	1974	Nancy (Pepi) Capstick Patrice Dudula Karen Ann Michael Paul Mina	1982	Donna Ann Bacon Christopher Costa Patrick G. Gallo Robert Hades Doreen D. Katsis Laura Michael William H. Shomos Ericka Wasso	1988	Christa Anastas Paulette Mallios Callas Leslie Mallios Contoudis Amanda Dove Laura Giantris
1962	Barry D. Stavrou	1975	Stephen Burdumy Dr. Ted Burdumy John Gusha Kathleen Kane Deborah (Kerxhalli) Creedon Dickson Sheh				
1963	Pamela Apostol Paul (Doukas) Mahon	1976	Dr. Ted Burdumy Keith Costa Dr. Dennis Dimitri Agim Demirali Sandra Dionis Joseph Harris Cynthia Theodos				
1964	Louis R. Pero						
1965	Michael Christopher Richard Detskas Carol (Naum) Fotos						
1966	Dr. Peter Anas Thomas Christo Michael Christopher Dennis Ginosi						
1967	Thomas Christo Pamela (Apostol) Kukla Stephen P. Stefani						
1968	John Anas Cheryl (Christo) Hemenway						

- 1989 Alexandra Bendo  
Paulette Mallios Callas  
Leslie Mallios Contoudis  
Neki Demirali  
Amanda Dove  
Kristin Giantris  
Laura Giantris  
Michael Gregory  
Frank Lescas
- 1990 Laura Giantris  
Jennifer Gregory  
David Kukla  
Stephen Laska  
Beth Payton  
Michelle Pero  
John Sedares  
Catherine Sotir
- 1991 Andre Bendo  
Katherine Dove  
Mark Doku  
Lisa Gregory  
Michael Gregory  
Paul Laska  
Frank Lescas  
John Sedares  
Catherine Sotir
- 1992 Sophia Bell  
Andre Bendo  
Marc Bendo  
Sharif Chocol  
Amy Giantris  
Richard Haxhi  
Geraldine Idrizi  
Paul Laska  
Frank Lescas  
Susan Pando  
Stephanie Pero
- 1993 Andre Bendo  
Paige Cokos  
Katherine Dove  
Michael Gregory  
Stephanie Kosta  
Gregory Makeski  
Sarah Matto  
Catherine Sotir  
Emina Zagonjori
- 1994 Andre Bendo  
Jeanne Davidson  
Nadia Chochol  
Laura Giantris  
Geraldine Idrizi  
Haneme Idrizi  
Geraldina Kica  
Susan Pando  
Stephanie Pero  
Christian Telly  
Emina Zagonjori
- 1995 Paige Cokos  
Arian Giantris  
Geraldine Idrizi  
Adelina Kabashi  
Stephanie Kosta  
Emily Liolin  
Robin Metaj  
Stephanie Pero  
Peter Themel  
Arlinda Shtuni
- 1996 Brad Bardy  
Marc Bendo  
Kuitim Beqiri  
Paige Cokos  
Jason Costa  
Arian Giantris  
Shpresa Idrizi  
Stephanie Kosta  
Medija Muslimi  
Amanti Xhafaj
- 1997 Amir Qazim Arifi  
Brie Cokos  
Michael Duro  
Stephanie Kosta  
Tara Malick  
Nicole Pappas  
Michael Rouvina  
Peter Themel
- 1998 Brie Cokos  
Emily Prudente  
Nicole Pappas  
Suzanna Agolli  
Arthur Cane  
Brad Bardy  
Krista Tona Anastas  
Flori Prifti  
Monika Shehi
- 1999 Stephanie Kosta  
Brie Cokos  
Timothy Vasil  
Timothy Pappas  
Dina Wieland  
Alketa Hysenbegasi  
Mentor Mustafa
- 2000 Tom Elezovic  
Stephanie Kosta  
John Vukelj  
Gerti Tashko  
Brie Cokos  
Zheni Gjoka
- 2001 Allyson Themel  
Daniel Kristo  
Omela Rora  
Erinda Begeja  
Tana Lala  
Nik Gjurashaj  
Stephanie Kosta  
Alex Ivezaj  
Nicole Nelson  
Iris Bakllamaj  
Lindita Bresa
- 2002 Jondi Prifti  
Omela Rora  
Jennifer Rouvina  
Raina Filip  
Alex Ivezaj  
Danielle Masek  
Haneme Idrizi
- 2003 Alban Merezepa  
Alex Ivezaj  
Allyson Themel  
Nemi Nick Emini  
Nicole Nelson  
Danielle Masek  
Gjina Junacaj  
Erinda Begeja  
Faton Bislimi  
Petraq Treko
- 2004 Faton Bislimi  
Betim Deva  
Jonela Toci  
Travis John D'Angelo  
Roze Uka  
Gjina Junacaj  
Laret Rusha  
Klementina Sula  
Ana Bashi  
Nicole Nelson
- 2005 Andrew Stergio  
Michele Nelson  
Danielle Masek  
Nicole Nelson  
Juliana Basko  
Blerta Mandro  
Erisa Panajoti  
Arjon Bala  
Bebka Gjoksi  
Sebastian Berisha
- 2006 Lidia Bardhi  
Ershela Durresi  
Endri Hoxha  
Alida Hysenllari  
Michele Nelson  
Alba Topallaj
- 2007 Zamira Aliko  
Fiori Alite  
Aldo Marini  
Mirlinda Caton  
Blerta Shtino  
Floreta Canaj

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2008 Michele Nelson<br>Iris Mile<br>Helena Bala<br>Anela Zekiri<br>Noela Leka            | 2012 Anxhela Dimitri<br>Henris Zaimaj<br>Helena Sumbulla<br>Rebecca Barolli                            |
| 2009 Ermal Rapaj<br>Alba Lika<br>Rialda Kuc<br>Elina Katro<br>Helena Bala                | 2013 Eliada Zraj<br>Anxhala Mila<br>Kein Bejko<br>Iliria Camaj<br>Iva Hoxha<br>Ferdeza Zekiri          |
| 2010 Cvelina Popa<br>Erblina Koci<br>Ana Dede<br>Adam Nicholas<br>Caroli Caroline Collo  | 2014 Wendy Guraziu<br>Eliada Ziraj<br>Adela Lilollari<br>Atdhetare Ame<br>Elio Daci<br>Ekaterin Gjonaj |
| 2011 Kimberly Oswald<br>Beltina Gjeloshi<br>Linda Camaj<br>Livia Marku<br>Xhilda Xhemali | 2015 Enerita Ziraj<br>Margarita Sumbulla<br>Diana Djurasevic<br>Anxhela Mile                           |
|  | 2016 Eneida Zeraj<br>Arianita Krasniqi<br>Evangelica Louis Purdy<br>Nancy Gjata<br>Edi Mosheqaj        |

*The National Board wishes  
all of our members ...  
a Happy Holiday Season !!*



***Congratulations to our newly crowned AANO National Queens ... Georgya Borova will serve for the first two years and Klea Gjoni will serve the remaining two years. Both of these lovely young ladies are from Chicago, Illinois. Congratulations to both !!***

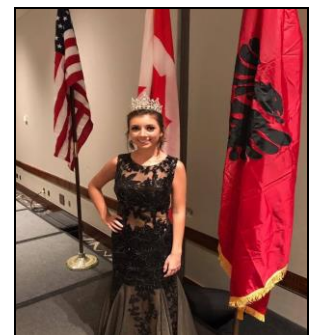


### *Message from our newly crowned National Queen ...*

Hello everyone!

My name is Georgya Borova and I am your new Miss AANO Queen. I am 20 years old and currently a full-time college student in Chicago, Illinois. I am going to school to become a dental hygienist and I am getting my Bachelors Degree in Healthcare Management. During my free time, I enjoy singing, dancing, traveling, and swimming. Aside from working as a dental receptionist and dental assistant, I also teach the Albanian kids in my community the beautiful traditional Albanian dances. Nothing makes me happier than keeping the Albanian language and culture alive. I look forward to not only seeing what the future holds for me as the new Miss AANO Queen, but also for what the future has in store for the AANO community. I am very thankful and feel beyond blessed to have this opportunity. See you all in the summer!

Georgya Borova



*Memories from the 71<sup>st</sup> Annual  
AANO Convention and  
24<sup>th</sup> Queen Pageant  
Dallas, Texas*

*(Photos courtesy of Julia Black, Rich Rafail,  
Klodjan Pepi, and Iris Maluka)*



**National President Julia Black with our newly crowned Queens (and future queen)**



**2017-2019 new AANO Queen, Georgya Borova from Chicago seated next to future 2019-2021 Queen Klea Gjonaj, also from Chicago, along with Allonja Wilson from Detroit.**



**New AANO Queen Georgya Borova with future 2019-2021 Queen Klea Gjonaj, and the two judges, Henry Clark, attorney from Dallas, Texas, and Tadd Harburn, CFO of Mott Children's Health Center in Detroit.**



**Future Queen hopeful, 2035, Kile Wilson from Detroit, age 6, dressed up for Friday night at the Convention.**





*Sunday Night at Sneaky Petes ....*



**Nik Mehmeti from Dallas graciously hosted a group of AANO attendees from around the US and Canada for cheesecake and desserts after the Sunday night event which he hosted at his restaurant, Sneaky Petes. A great time was had by all in attendance and we want to thank Nik for his generosity!**



**Group from Clearwater, Dallas, Boston, Detroit, New York, Toronto, and Worcester in front of the hotel after the Sunday night event at Sneaky Pete's.**

*Exploring Dallas ....*

The Wilson Family, Alexandra, Lonny, Allonja and Kile of Detroit sightseeing with Tadd Harburn and National President Julia Black of Detroit, and Queen and future Queen, Georgya Borova and Klea Gjonaj of Chicago at the JFK Memorial during the Dallas Convention weekend.



Enjoying the Dallas view

***SOCIAL NEWS******Engagement/Wedding*****Detroit**

Congratulations to the entire Ramolli Family on the recent engagement of Drita Ramolli to Bujar Jakupi of Chicago. We wish them much happiness.

***Anniversary*****Worcester**

Congratulations to Tom and Jan Rouvina on the occasion of their 46<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, November 7, 2017. We wish them many more wonderful years together !!

***REMINDER ...***

*If you have any news, or newsworthy articles, you would like to see included in Trumbeta Shqiptare, please forward the information to the editor.*

*Thank you for your continued support!*

*Babies*

New York



Stephanie (Rafail) and Bill Angarano are the new parents of Giavella Riley, born on November 30, 2017, weighing 8 lbs., 1 oz. and 19 inches long. Seen here with grandpa Rich Rafail.

*Birthday Wishes*

Washington, DC



AANO members joining in on the celebration of Daniel Boci's 10-year birthday.

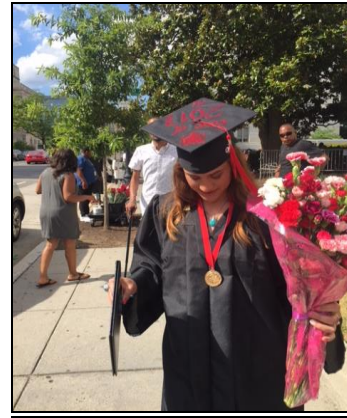
*Graduations/Class Notes*



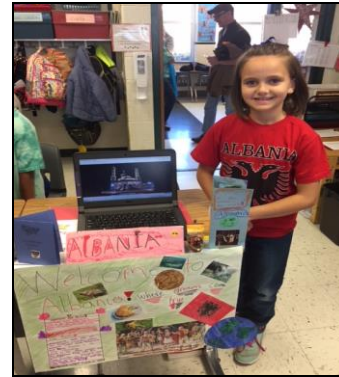
Detroit

Congratulations to Anton Karamuco who recently received his Bachelor's Degree in Accounting. Anton is already employed in his field and making his parents, long-time AANO supporters Beni Karamuco and Dr. Diana Karamuco, very proud. We wish him continued success.

Washington, DC



Congratulations to Evisa Selimaj on her graduation from the Art Institute. We wish her much success in the years ahead.



Marcie Maluka presenting her Albanian cultural project at the Hutchison Farm Elementary School.



**Worcester**

Congratulations to Emily Greco, daughter of Leslie (Athanas) Greco and Barry Greco, and granddaughter of Helen Athanas of Chatham, MA, on her recent graduation from Monomoy Regional High School. Emily was Class Vice President and a member of the National Honor Society and the National Art Honor Society. She started her studies at Bentley University in Waltham, MA this past Fall, majoring in accounting.

**Awards**

Celebrating the Ms. Donika Boci Award in Washington, DC, saluating Excellence in the Albanian-American Community.

**Travel****Chicago**

Diane Pero recently went on a trip to the Holy Land. Other people on the trip were Bishop Ilia Katre and New York Chapter member Al Foundos. A good time was had by all.

**Obituaries****Albany**

The one-year anniversary of the death of a long-time member, ***Dhimitra Kita***, the daughter of Louis Apostol and sister of Paul Apostol and Louise Mabin, who emigrated to Albany from Albania in 1993, was commemorated on October 7, 2017 at the cemetery and followed with a memorial meal attended by her family and friends. May her memory be eternal.

**Boston**

***Paul C. Pando*** passed away on July 15, 2017 at the age of 81. Son of the late Louis and Margaret (Pano) Pando, Paul leaves behind many loving cousins, relatives and friends, both near and far. He was a long time parishioner and treasurer of St. George Albanian Orthodox Cathedral in South Boston, and long-time member of the Boston Chapter AANO.

**Chicago**

The Chicago Chapter lost one of its long-time members this year, ***Dale Payton***. Dale was the husband of Marilyn Ginosi Payton and father of two daughters and many grandchildren. Dale will be missed.

**Detroit**

Condolences to Detroit members Rapo and Evi Nazarko on the death of Evi's father, ***Kostandin Rusha***, who was pictured at their wedding in the last issue of the Trumbeta. Condolences also go to his wife, Marjeta. May his memory be eternal.

Condolences to the Elezi Family and friends on the recent passing of ***Sabina Elezi***, the widow of Xhafer

Elezi, after a long illness. Sabina had supported a number of AANO Conventions in Detroit and Las Vegas. May she always be remembered.

### New York



**Elizabeth Leka** (1933-2017), 84, passed away peacefully at home over the Thanksgiving weekend surrounded by her family. Elizabeth was born in Gjirokastra, Albania in 1933. Her parents, Kadri and Tefta Chipi, brought four-year-old Elizabeth to America in 1937. Elizabeth graduated with honors from Brooklyn College where she majored in the Spanish language and literature. After graduation, she worked as a translator at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and as a teacher. She earned her Master's Degree from Brooklyn College, specializing in the Spanish language and literature. She taught in the Brooklyn, New York City and Louisville, KY public schools. Elizabeth was a longtime member and a President of the AANO New York Chapter. She also co-founded with her husband, Dr. Agim Leka, the Albanian Language School in Woodhaven, Jamaica, Queens in 1967. She is survived by her husband Dr. Agim Leka, sons Donald and Drini Leka, grandchildren Dylan, Owen and Jade and sister Diana Repishti. May her memory be eternal.

The New York Chapter sends condolences to the family of Liz Leka, who fell asleep in the Lord on November 24, 2017. Liz was admired, respected and loved by many and will be greatly missed.

### Worcester

**Michael Costa**, 63, passed way on September 22, 2017. He is survived by his daughter, Katherine (Katie) Costa Rumery and his two grandchildren,

Savannah Bousquet and Cullen Rumery. Michael is also survived by his sister Andrea Costa Forte and her husband Joseph Forte Jr. of Ruskin, FL. His family also consisted of several cousins, aunts and uncle. Born in Southbridge, MA, Michael was the son of the late Constantine ("Cookie") Costa and Catherine George Costa.

**Olga Thanas**, 93, passed away on October 8, 2017. She leaves a daughter, Patricia Thanas, three sons, Arthur, Anthony Thanas and his wife Valerie, and Philip Thanas and his wife Kesarin Phayakchon; a brother, Peter Vangel and his wife Lilian and their children, three grandchildren, and a niece Dottie Vasel and her family. She is pre-deceased by her sister Cynthia and her husband Mike Vangel. Olga was very active in the mothers club, and volunteering her time for church activities.



**Philip D. Giantris** passed away suddenly on October 19, 2017 in a hospital in Tirana, Albania, surrounded by family and friends. He was 74 years old and a current resident of Southport Island, Maine. Philip was husband to D. Sally Giantris for over 52 years and father to Kristin Giantris and Arian Giantris Clements. He enjoyed being a vivacious grandfather to his grandchildren: Olive, Sophie, and Isaac, and a beloved uncle and godfather to his many loving nieces and nephews and their families. He is pre-deceased by his parents Mihallaq and Elefteria Giantris, brother Louis, and sister Helen Doku.

He graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1965 and earned a degree in civil engineering. He was commissioned a First Lieutenant upon graduation and served in the US Army Corps of Engineers in Vietnam in 1968. Upon return from

Vietnam, he obtained his Masters in Business from Boston University.

Philip worked for Metcalf & Eddy Inc. and Bird Corporation before opening his own consulting business in the early 1990's that took him all over the world. In 2000, he established his own consulting company in Albania, Valu Add Management Services, a company specializing in water sector utility management with an Albanian staff of professional engineers, economists and business management specialists.

Beyond his professional goals, this return to Albania fulfilled a longtime goal and promise he made to his mother to help Albania, his parents' homeland. In the same year he opened Valu Add Management Services, he became the driving force behind the formation and growth of the Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania (SHUKALB), where he served as a volunteer Executive Director.

Philip was a seasoned professional in the provision of policy and technical advisory services in the water, wastewater and solid waste infrastructure sector. His unique knowledge of the key issues that define success in the water sector made him and his firm a valued advisory resource to the governments of South Africa, Romania, Egypt, Israel, Kosovo, Montenegro, Lebanon, Jordan, Philippines and Albania.

He touched so many people with his example of determination, hard work, and business ethics, but also with his compassion, care and love. Philip was a man with a big heart. He embodied the philosophy: "To Whom Much is Given, Much is Expected," and Philip never stopped helping people in need. His philanthropic deeds were countless. He was a continuous contributor to the Orthodox Church in Albania and "Protagonistet School." In addition, helped to raise funds for different Albanian institutions with a particular focus on children—the orphanage in Korca, Albania, the Children's Home at Saint Vlash and the Mother and Child Foundation of Albania. He was also a long standing Board Member of the Harry Fultz Institute.

## International Water Association



Arlinda Ibrahimllari (Chairperson of the Future Water Leaders Steering Committee of the IWA), Diane D'Arras, and Philip Giantris at IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition 2016, in Brisbane.

*Our deepest sympathy to the families of our recently departed former members and friends of the AANO.*

**I Përjetshëm Kutimi i Tyre!  
May their Memories be Eternal!**

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## From: Metat Idrizi, BOG of the Clearwater Chapter

The AANO – Clearwater Chapter, along with other local Albanian-American Organizations in the Tampa-Bay area, was very active in the Albanian Flag Day celebration. Besides actively taking part in some of the formal evening celebrations on Tuesday, November 28th, the City of Clearwater honored our community by raising the Albanian Flag, next to the Stars and Stripes, in the front of the City Hall.



Participating on this great event were many members of the Albanian-American Community, the Honorable George Cretecos, the Mayor of the City of Clearwater, as well many members of the City Council.

Ms. Rovena Kalifaj, President of the Albanian-American Heritage Foundation of Tampa-Bay, opened the event by thanking the Mayor, the City Council and all the participants, wishing them Happy Albanian Independence Day and introducing the Mayor of Clearwater, Mr. Cretecos. Addressing the crowd, Mayor Cretecos, very knowledgeable on Albanian history, talked about the proud history of the Albanian Nation. “The Albanian Flag,” he said, “red with the double-headed eagle in the middle” has a proud history. The two-headed eagle in the middle, one representing the proud past, while the other representing the bright future for the Albanian Nation. He congratulated the Albanian-American community of Clearwater for their great contributions to making this a great city.

Following the Mayor of Clearwater was the keynote speaker of the event, the National President of the AANO, Mr. John Lulgjuraj. After expressing heartfelt thanks to the Honorable Mayor and the members of the City Council for making this event possible, he talked about some of the striking similarities between the two flags flying next to each other, the Stars and Stripes and the Red Flag with the Double-Headed Eagle. Mr. Lulgjuraj said, “They both represent the ultimate sacrifice of their people, seeking freedom and liberty. Neither of them ever led in battles to concur other land or nations, but rather to protect and defend freedom.

At the beginning of the 15th century, when the Ottoman Empire launched the massive invasion of Europe, it was this flag, in the hand of our legendary hero, George Kastrioti Skenderbeg, that led his small but brave army to successfully defend the western civilization against the Ottoman invasion for over quarter of a century. Many historians agree that if it weren't for the brave resistance of the Albanian nation against the Ottomans, Europe would have fallen.

Similarly, if it were not for the Stars and Stripes, the American Flag, leading the brave men and women of this great Nation, Europe would have, most likely, vanished under the evil Nazi ideology.

Obviously this is one of the many instances, throughout the globe, that the brave men and women of America, under the Stars and Stripes, have made their ultimate sacrifice for the freedom of others.

While the American Flag, since the founding days of this great nation, has become the symbol of freedom and liberty, America has become a safe haven for millions upon millions of people, from the different corners of the world, who have found protection, freedom and opportunity.

Many people may not be aware that during the Second World War, as the Jewish population in Europe was being detained and brutally eliminated by the Nazis and over 6 million Jews were killed, the only country in Europe where the Jewish population grew dramatically was Albania.

Throughout the Second World War, not a single Jewish person was detained nor lost a life in Albania. Albania became a safe haven for the Jewish population. You see ladies and gentleman, the flag that all of us are honoring today, carries a traditional code of honor called “*Besa*” which in English means “Word of Honor.” If an Albanian gives you her or his “*Besa*,” you can rest assured the promise will be kept.

This code of honor also states that a guest in your house, regardless who the guest may be, is worthy of total honor and respect, including, if necessary, sacrificing the lives of the family members in order to protect the life of the guest. That is why thousands of Jews found safe haven among families in Albania. They were protected by the Albanian families who were hiding them, making them members of their own families, changing their names and identities, to make sure that they were well protected. All this was done to honor the code called “*Besa*” which dates back thousands of years, used and honored by the predecessors of the Albanian Nation, Pellazgo-Illyrians.

Many of you may not know that when Albert Einstein sought to emigrate to the West, the only

country that facilitated him was Albania. He traveled to the West with an Albanian passport. For those of you who will be visiting Washington, DC in the future, please visit the Holocaust Museum and you will learn much more on this subject.

Among the participants at this great event was Dr. Anna Cohen, President of AAWO (Albanian American Women’s Organization), Motrat Qiriazhi. In her remarks, Dr. Cohen stated that as a proud Albanian of Jewish heritage, she was one the people whose family was saved by an Albanian family during the Second World War.

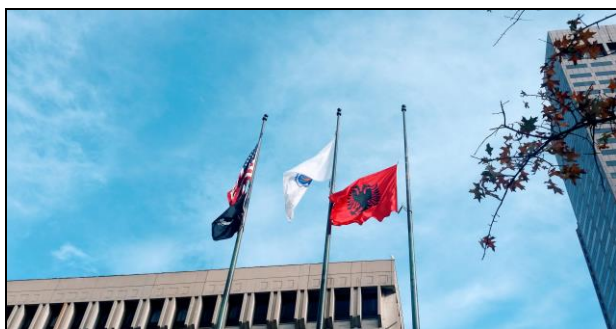


*After cutting of the cake by the Mayor of Clearwater, the event continued with Albanian music and dancing “valle.”*



## BOSTON, MA FLAG DAY CELEBRATION 2017

We in Boston were very happy to attend the Albanian Independence Day festivities, starting with the flag raising ceremony in front of Boston City Hall, a beautiful event that this year, too, was well attended by Albanian-Americans of all ages. Subsequently we attended the Independence Day party organized by MaasBesa, where we had a chance to catch up with old friends and community activists, but also make new many new friends.



*Flag raising at Boston City Hall*



*Jim Michael, Erina Pepi, Shpresa Theodhosi-Michael, and Klodjan Pepi*



*Community activists Fuat Memelli, Petrit Alibeaj, Klodjan & Erina Pepi, Rita & Adem Salii*

## Celebrating Flag Day 2017 ... Washington, DC Chapter

*(Photos by Iris Maluka)*



*Selimaj Family*



*Albanian-American Young Generation*



The AANO Washington, DC Chapter continues to hold activities in the DC area. Way to go AANO Chapter Members & Participants!

Thanks to all the Washington, DC members for their continued support and dedication.



Iris Maluka, President  
Washington, DC Chapter



*Washington, DC Chapter members and friends celebrating the 2016 New Year*



*New Year 2016 with the Bega Family*



*Watching Soccer – France vs. Albania (May 2017)*

*Celebrating the Holiday Season from Chicago are Chapter Members Pascal Gjikhima, Perry Pero, and Spiro Haxhi*



Membership to the A.A.N.O. is valid for only one year. If you would like more information about becoming a member, contact your local chapter or look on our web site for a chapter near you.

[www.AANO.org](http://www.AANO.org)



Faik Konica -  
Dritëhijet e Një Diplomati



(Photos from the event courtesy of Klodjan Pepi)



It was our pleasure to attend and support the promotion of the book, "Faik Konica - Dritëhijet e Një Diplomati" by researcher Agron Alibali. The event was organized by the Worcester Vatra Chapter on September 23, 2017 at the Albanian-owned Nuovo Restaurant in Worcester, MA.

The book is the result of many years of research, which, not only provides much insight into the relationship of Faik Konica with the other Albanian patriots of his time, but also achieved in Mr. Alibali tracking down a portion of Faik Konica's personal library of about 276 books and and delivering it to the National Archives in Tirana, Albania.



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If you have information for the Home Page,  
Contact Klodjan Pepi:  
(617) 642-6857 or [johnclodian@yahoo.com](mailto:johnclodian@yahoo.com)

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## Recipe

### Kol Burek me Presh- Swirled Burek with Leeks



#### Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. thawed filo dough
- 1 container of cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 2-3 sprigs of leeks
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs

Chop leeks and rinse dirt off. Saute leeks in a pan with a little butter and oil, cook until soft. In a mixing bowl, combine the cheeses, leeks and 1 egg, season with a little salt. In another mixing bowl, combine 2 eggs, milk, and olive oil, season with a little salt. For every roll you make, you will need 2 sheets of filo dough.

Prepare baking sheet, grease pan and place a piece of parchment (it helps remove the burek without sticking to the pan).

With a pastry brush, brush the egg/milkwash lightly over the sheet of filo, with a tablespoon spread filling straight across the filo near the edge of the sheet. Roll up tightly and make into a tight swirl. Continue brushing, filling and rolling, place all the rolls as you make them to continue a round swirl in the pan.

Pour the remaining milk/egg mixture over the burek. Bake at 375 until golden, a half hour up to 40 minutes depending on your oven. ***Ju Bëftë Mirë!***

Recipe courtesy of  
*"When Feta Met Olive with Donika"*

Alketta Marishta, a past member of the Chicago Chapter, now living in Dublin, Ireland with her husband Koli and son Marlon (now in his teens who was asked to play with the Albanian soccer team), shared this interesting article about the Albanian alphabet which is the work of Edon Muhaxheri.

### Edon Muhaxheri 'revives' first Albanian alphabet of Naum Veqilharxhi

By Oculus News [8 months ago](#)



**Edon Muhaxheri is a student who years ago won a scholarship for Fulbright program, while he opened the exhibition as part of his graduation in Maryland Institute College of Art.**

He devoted this exhibition to Naum Veqilharxhi, the inventor of Albanian Renaissance and author of the first Albanian ABC.

"I have a special passion for Albanian culture. During research for my thesis I wanted to connect my work with Automaton and culture. I challenged my self with one of the most complicated Automaton, the one who writes" Muhaxheri shows some details for KultPlus.

The school where he operates with Albanian project is the oldest school of art in America. His studies are focused on the design and construction of mechanical toys known as Automate. These mechanical toys have been present more than 400 years ago, while the peak of their development has been achieved in 1700-1800 by European watchmaker.

He shows that during the investigation, noted that Naum Veqilharxhi has designed a special alphabet, and after consulting with various linguists, Edoni realized that this alphabet had lost. With a simple online search, he says he found incomplete view of a different alphabet from the Latin, Greek or Arabic.

He found later a copy of the original first edition of 1844.

"I was amazed by the creativity of Naum Veqilharxhi. I was shocked by the fact that nobody talks about this national treasure. I started work on identifying the Albanian original letters and their use in the typographical elements."



His story is remarkable, a passionate young man who wants who is dedicated to decipher something of the Albanian past

"Then I digitized the writing Naum and I created modern font families, in a way that Vithkuqi (as

Naumi calls his alphabet, according to the village he comes from) can be used for recreation today" Edoni says.

He says he understands that this script today can not be introduced in the Albanian language but nevertheless undoubtedly represents a part of the Albanian cultural heritage, and should lighten or used further at least only in the world of design, perhaps in national symbols.



He plans to publish the book next month bringing thus a brief history of the events that led to the attempt to create an original Albanian alphabet.

"There I've described the journey of the Greek, Roman, Slavic letters and the establishment of the Albanian alphabet. The study reaffirms through historical acts that Illyrians and Albanians are the same people who at various times were called differently from the surrounding nations. In the meantime the work about Automate who writes are in the final phase" Muhaxheri says.

A larger version of the exhibition will be opened in Washington at the end of the month, in order to attract even more attention of world art galleries about Albanian culture. /Oculus News

## Kënga e ALFABETIT e krijuar nga motrat Qiriazi i... - Vasil Sofokli Tole

Kënga e ALFABETIT e krijuar nga motrat Qiriazi i është kushtuar alfabetit shqip të dalë nga Kongresi i Manastirit prej 14–22 nentor 1908.

Fale vendimeve te tij, u krijua një alfabet i ri, i mbështetur i tëri në alfabetin latin, shkronjat e të cilit plotësoheshin me nëntë dyshkronjësha (dh, gj, ll, nj, rr, sh, th, xh, zh) dhe me dy shkronja me shenja diakritike (ç, ë).

Vendimet u mirëpritën nga rrethet kulturore shqiptare brenda dhe jashtë vendit dhe u vunë menjëherë në zbatim.

### I.

Sot është dita shqipëtarë  
Të përpiqemi,  
Alfabetin tonë ta mbrojmë  
Shpejt o burrani  
Shkronjat tona janë të arta  
Këto duamë.  
Ref.  
Shqipëri, atdhe i dashur!  
Ne s'të lëmë, ty të varfër.

### II.

Armiqtë o shqipëtarë  
Po përpiqenë,  
Shkronjat turçe dhe gërqishte  
Të na japënë,  
Le t'i mbajnë ata për vehte,  
Kemi tonatë.

### III.

Ata duan shqipëtarë,  
Ndarjen tonë,  
Këtë punë shumë kthjelltë,  
E treguanë,  
Ngrihuni shpejt t'u tregojmë  
Se ne s'durojmë.

## 19. "Alfabeti shqip"

Grazioso

fjalët: P. Qirjas




(<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1496802783670047&set=pcb.1496805027003156&type=3>)



# Trumbeta Shqiptare



The Official Publication of The Albanian-American National Organization, Inc.

**A.A.N.O., Inc.**  
**Trumbeta Shqiptare Headquarters**  
**100 Piedmont Street**  
**Worcester, MA 01609**

