

## Doctors Stuck at Egypt-Gaza Border

RAFAH, Egypt (AP) - Greek anesthesiologist Dimitrios Mognie and another doctor arrived at this border crossing loaded with medical supplies to help Gazans wounded in the Israeli offensive. Instead, they have waited at the border for days.

On Tuesday, a representative from a Norwegian medical aid organization was allowed to enter the Gaza Strip from Rafah. But most doctors have been denied entry by Egyptian authorities and spend their days drinking tea and coffee at a small, dusty cafe near the crossing's metal gates.

"This is a shame," said Mognie, who used his vacation to travel from Greece to try to help in Gaza. He thought entering through Egypt, which has a narrow border with the Hamas-ruled strip, was his best bet.

"That in 2009 they have people in need of help from a doctor and we can go to help and they won't let us. This is crazy," said Mognie, who has worked in conflict zones from Iraq to Somalia.

Gaza's few hospitals have been swamped by more than 2,400 wounded in Israel's 11-day campaign to stop Hamas militants from launching rockets into Israel. Almost 600 Palestinians have been killed. Nearly half of the dead are civilians, according to U.N. and Palestinian officials.

Mognie and his colleague, both from the Greek organization Doctors for Peace, were the last in their group of six Greek doctors to remain at the Rafah border after arriving last Friday with medical supplies. The others returned home after being continually rebuffed by the Egyptian border guards.

Israel and Egypt first closed their borders with Gaza after Hamas took control of the area in June 2007. The Egyptian closure has been seen by some as abetting Israel's siege of the crowded strip, home to 1.4 million people.

Since Israel's offensive, Egypt has taken in a trickle of wounded Palestinians through the crossing at Rafah. The Egyptian government, the main mediator between Israel and Hamas, has said it would only open Rafah if moderate Palestinian forces of President Mahmoud Abbas are in charge of the crossing.

## Niarchos Foundation awards grant to St. Sophia Hellenic School in Utah



From Left, Back Row: Pete Giamalakis, Vice President; Nick Varanakos, Kerri Nakamura, Elaina Simos, Trustees; Dr. Susan Brady, Director; Vickie Foliass, Secretary; Fr. Michael Kouremetis, Dean and Mary Agrapides, Treasurer. Front Row: Greg Adondakis, Trustee; Roula Siklas, Program Director for Niarchos Foundation; Andrea Giamalakis, Development Coordinator; Marina Gianoulis, Trustee; Evangelia Koutsou, Consul of Education, San Francisco Consulate; Andrea Kussack, Program Director for Niarchos Foundation and Elaine M. Bapis, President.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation has awarded a three year grant to Saint Sophia Hellenic Orthodox School. Andrea M. Giamalakis, Development Coordinator for the school wrote the grant that benefited the Greek Language, the Scholarship/Financial Aid and Physical Education Programs.

Members of the Niarchos Foundation visited with students and faculty members on November 13, 2008. Program Directors Argyro (Roula) Siklas and Andrea Kussack participated in the school's morning music class, visited the individual classrooms and observed the Greek Language classes. Also visiting the school was special guest Evangelia Koutsou, Education Consul from the San Francisco Consulate. The Student Parent Associate hosted a luncheon for the special visitors.

Nick & Elaine Bapis hosted an evening reception for the visitors along with the Board of Trustees and special guests. Mrs. Elaine Bapis is one of the three original founders of the school along with



From Left: Roula Siklas, Program Director, Niarchos Foundation; Andrea Giamalakis, Development Coordinator and Grant Writer and Marina Gianoulis, Trustee.

Mrs. Vickie Foliass and Miss Margo Sotiriou, who were also present.

Saint Sophia was established in 1996 with a preschool and kindergarten. Now fully accredited as an

elementary school with six grades and 114 students, the school remains the only one of its kind in the state of Utah and the Mountain West States.

## John Catsimatidis: Going From Supermarkets to Oil

Continued from page 1

the banks and hedge funds lured in by the oil boom beat a hasty retreat when credit valves were shut starting in September.

Those who sold their shares in SemGroup for the promise of a stake in a revived company include founder and former Chief Executive Tom Kivisto, named "Tulsa of the Year" by a local magazine in 2007.

While SemGroup over eight years grew from an oil startup to one of the largest private companies in the U.S., it collapsed in a matter of weeks. The company filed for bankruptcy in July after incurring a \$2.4 billion loss on bad bets on the price of oil.

SemGroup was both victim and perpetrator of oil's meteoric rise and fall. The wrong-way futures bets were large enough to have played a role in pushing oil prices to peak above \$147 a barrel during intraday trading on July 14, then to fall 15% the following week as the company rapidly exited its positions, market participants said at the time. The bankruptcy court has hired a former head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to look into those trades.

Several federal agencies have also examined Mr. Kivisto's trading practices, according to court documents.

Accusations that any trading was done improperly are "irresponsible" and "incorrect," said John Tucker, one of Mr. Kivisto's attorneys.

### CLEANING UP

But it's a convoluted corporate structure that's also keeping the company from getting back on its feet. Some of SemGroup's best assets - including tanks in Cushing, Okla., the key oil hub - were placed in a publicly traded subsidiary, and the ties between the two entities were severed shortly before SemGroup sought bankruptcy protection.

Those problems can be worked out once the company is out of bankruptcy court and operating freely, said Mr. Catsimatidis in an interview at his cluttered office above a car dealership in Hell's Kitchen, a Manhattan neighborhood removed from the city's financial district.

He said he plans on providing details of his reorganization plan in January. After that, it will be up to the court whether SemGroup emerges from bankruptcy or is sold off in parts.

While Mr. Catsimatidis, 60 years old, is better known for his groceries, he is no stranger to the oil sector. He acquired United Refining Co., a small Pennsylvania refining



ABOVE: John Catsimatidis points to the many photos and awards that adorn the walls in his office in New York City. BELOW: John Catsimatidis with New York Senator Chuck Schumer and President-Elect Barack Obama.

out of bankruptcy in 1986. In addition to United Refining and Gristedes, Mr. Catsimatidis owns real estate and a jet-leasing business. Forbes magazine estimated his net worth at \$2.1 billion in mid-September, days before equities markets tanked.

"Don't forget, we have a very good reputation in the marketplace," Mr. Catsimatidis said. "And it has nothing to do with a name. It's who's the head of it."

To convince creditors to sign on, he comes armed with \$450 million in cash raised in the public offering of United Refining Energy Corp., a financial vehicle unrelated to the refinery. He says that money could be used to turn SemGroup around, and will ask shareholders to unlock the funds once a reorganization plan takes form.

This war chest has allowed him to cut through the financing difficulties that have bedeviled other potential buyers, said Hugh Ray, a Houston attorney representing oil producers owed money by SemGroup.

"He's weighed in and said I'm here, I've got my money, and let's play," said Mr. Ray who also represented some United Refining Co. creditors.

After the 2007 split, SemGroup



LP focused on trading, while the public spinoff, SemGroup Energy Partners LP, operated pipelines and storage terminals, though nearly all the oil and products that it handled belonged to SemGroup LP.

Shortly before filing for bankruptcy, SemGroup LP lost control of SemGroup Energy Partners to two hedge funds. Both parts of the original SemGroup began to wither when the link was severed. For either company to survive, they have to join forces again, through a new long-term contract or a merger, analysts and industry watchers say.

Mr. Catsimatidis declined to comment on the prospect.

### EXPENDING ENERGY

"We've had certain discussions with them," he said, referring to SemGroup Energy Partners. "We're

looking for joint cooperation in order to make sure everything runs properly."

The two hedge funds declined to comment.

With SemGroup's value and both energy and credit markets near their nadir, a wide variety of strategies could yield strong profits when the economy begins to rebound, said Andrew Oram, an analyst with credit-ratings firm Moody's Investors Service, who has covered both United Refining and SemGroup.

"If something came along, and you knew it was a price you were never going to see again in your lifetime, you might buy it without knowing exactly how you would operate it to get value out of it," Mr. Oram said.

## GOINGS ON...

■ JANUARY 16 - 19

MONTREAL, Que. - Del Sol and Portokalada.com cordially invite the community to "Living It Up," an amazing 21 & over event for MLK weekend from January 16-19, 2009. "We are flying in DJs from NY and Chicago with special guest DJ John Grammatidis!" Save some of your energy for daylight hours, because skiing, snowboarding and tubing will all be available at the heavenly resort of Mt. Tremblant. If you just want to chill during the day, Montreal offers some of the most beautiful scenic views and architecture, amazing cafes and restaurants, casinos, and don't forget shopping and the spa. So are you ready for 4 Days and 3 Nights of Living It Up? The "Living It Up" package includes: 3 nights accommodations in Deluxe or Concierge level rooms, open bar welcome party Friday night at exclusive downtown nightclub, exclusive VIP parties Saturday & Sunday nights, free VIP admission to over 7 nightclubs, complimentary shuttles to parties each night, complimentary shuttles to the beautiful "Mt. Tremblant" on Saturday and Sunday, complimentary Shuttle to Tubing & Snowmobiling, let's make a deal Casino package wit \$20pp Casino Chips, complimentary double music CD, breakfast & hors d'oeuvres daily with concierge rooms. Package Price: Quad Price \$300 per person, Triple Price \$325 per person, Double Price \$375 per person. Conveniently located in the heart of downtown Montreal, this hotel boasts a spacious, elegant lobby, large well-appointed guestrooms with private balconies and a variety of full service amenities. The hotel is the ideal location for pleasure and only steps to Montreal's finest shopping, restaurants, nightclubs and attractions. You can book a Deluxe of Concierge Room. With 94 runs serviced by 13 state-of-the-art lifts, the mountain dominates a stunningly beautiful countryside. Those who live for the great outdoors and love to breathe clean air have the perfect playground. A paradise where ski and snowboard enthusiasts are both spoiled silly: ramps, rails and jumps as well as an Olympic caliber pipe. Taste the freedom, dare the mountain, live Tremblant to the fullest! For more information, go to [www.montreal.com](http://www.montreal.com).

■ JANUARY 17

CHICAGO - The Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center cordially invites the community to a lecture entitled "Orthodoxy and Hellenism in America" given by Paul G. Manolis, author of the monumental History of the Greek Church of America in Acts and Documents. This three volume work, with a fourth to come, documents the history of the Greek Archdiocese of America. The work has already received much critical acclaim as the authoritative voice on the subject of the history of the Greek American Church. The lecture will take place January 17, 2009 at the museum at 3:00 pm and admission is \$ 10.00 for non-members and \$ 8 for members. Manolis received his undergraduate degree from the University of California (Berkeley) and graduate degree from Harvard University. He was appointed Junior Fellow at the Dumbarton Oaks Institute of Byzantine Studies during his graduate studies. Manolis was first elected to the Archdiocesan Council in 1965. As a committee chairman he created the Orthodox Observer newspaper and raised a Patriarch Athenagoras statue at Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology. He is a representative to the National Council of Churches of America and a founder of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute at the Graduate Theological Union and UC-Berkeley. Manolis also serves as Adjunct Professor at the GTU and has served as Director and President of the Institute for many years. In recognition of his service to the church, Manolis was named a "Great Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate" by Patriarch Athenagoras. He was also awarded the Gold Cross of Mount Athos by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a Knight Commander of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the Medal of St. Paul from the Greek Archdiocese of America. For more information contact the museum at 312-655-1234.

■ JANUARY 25

CICERO, Ill. - The Orthodox Christian Clergy Association of Greater Chicago, on behalf of the 80 Ortho-

dox Christian churches in the Greater Chicago area cordially invite the community to a prayer service marking National Sanctity of Life Day at the St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church (1220 S. 60th Court) in Cicero, Illinois on Sunday, January 25 at 6:00 PM. Believe that all human life is sacred, the worship service will emphasize forgiveness and the tragedy of 50 million abortions since the Roe v. Wade decision in 1974. The Service will be sponsored by the Orthodox Christian Clergy Association of Greater Chicago, on behalf of the 80 Orthodox Christian churches in the Greater Chicago area. The homilist will be Rev. Fr. Nicholas Jonas, pastor of the Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Palos Hills. The service will begin at 6 p.m. and will be followed by a brief presentation on the sanctity of life given by Ms. Nikolia Rallis. Ms. Rallis is a senior at Northwestern University and has been active in the Pro-Life movement for many years. Her campus involvement in the pro-life movement has included volunteering at a crisis pregnancy center, bringing speakers to her college campus and she is also the co-founder of Orthodox Christian Youth for Life. All are invited to attend and parking is free. For more information, contact St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church (708) 656-2927.

■ FEBRUARY 7

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Washington National Opera Women's Committee and His Excellency The Ambassador of Greece cordially invite the community to "The Midwinter Gala," at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium on Saturday, February 7, 2009 at 6:30 PM. Rebecca Miller and Sally Cox are the Gala Co-Chairs. A not to be missed black-tie gala - join us for dinner and dancing as we celebrate Thessaloniki through the ages! For individual tickets, please call The Midwinter Gala Office at 202-295-2437 or e-mail [MGala@dc-opera.org](mailto:MGala@dc-opera.org). For corporate sponsorships, please call 202-295-2431 or e-mail [MGala@dc-opera.org](mailto:MGala@dc-opera.org).

■ FEBRUARY 10

NEW YORK - The Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce cordially invite the community to their Joint Shipping Conference, "How Will Shipping Survive the Perfect Storm?" at The New York Helmsley Hotel (212 East 42nd Street) on Sunday, February 10, 2009 at 8:15 AM. Members: \$625 (additional from same firm: \$575); Non-Members: \$695. Full program and speakers to be announced. Registration/coffee begins at 8:15 AM. Conclusion/Networking Reception begin at 5:00 PM.

■ APRIL 2-6

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. - The Hellenic News of America and the 18th Hermes Expo International cordially invite the community to The 18th Hermes Expo from April 2-6, 2009. Starting from New York and going to Philadelphia, The Expo will take place on the weekend of April 4-5, 2009 with a 120 Booth Exhibits at the Tropicana on the Atlantic City Boardwalk, New Jersey, April 2, 2009 - A Greek Food and Wine Tasting Mixer, Reception, Press Conference and B2B meetings based on profiles at the Queens Art Museum in cooperation with the Queens Chamber of Commerce, April 3, 2009 - At the Governors Mansion Mixer, Drexel University Seminar on Tourism and New Technology: Reception and B2B meetings based on profiles, April 4 - 5, 2009 - The Tropicana Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ Exhibition Conference - A major happening for Greek Americans, Americans interested in Greece and South Eastern Europe and other Ethnic Markets. Symposium Brunch on Saturday 10AM-1 PM, Grand opening at 1 PM, 120 Booths meetings B2B, Dinner Awards Entertainment and a Sunday Brunch Networking, April 6, 2009 - A Grand Reception Mixer at the Honorable Aris Melissaratos Estate, Baltimore, MD. For more information, please visit [Info@HermesExpo.com](mailto:Info@HermesExpo.com).

■ NOTE TO OUR READERS

This calendar of events section is a complimentary service to the Greek American community. All parishes, organizations and institutions are encouraged to e-mail their information 3-4 weeks ahead of time, and no later than Monday of the week before the event, to [english.edition@thenationalherald.com](mailto:english.edition@thenationalherald.com).

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### Vote on our website!

You have the chance to express your opinion on our website on an important question in the news. The results will be published in our printed edition next week along with the question for that week.

The question this week is: Is Israel justified in its attack on Hamas?

Yes  
 No  
 Maybe

The results for last week's question: Is Barack Obama the correct choice as The National Herald's Man of the Year?

33% voted "Yes"  
57% voted "No"  
10% voted "I don't know"

Please vote at: [www.thenationalherald.com](http://www.thenationalherald.com)