

Opinions

Trip from Greece is odyssey



Looking On
Raz Autry

Folks who know my wife Ireni are aware she is Greek. Her mother and father came to America in 1929.

Having met Ireni at East Carolina University, and being a country boy seed, I wasn't aware of the Greeks' clanish ways. Little did I realize they preferred she marry a Greek rather than a clean cut country boy like me.

Surviving 34 years with the Greeks, I have come to love and appreciate them, especially Mama Toumaras, my Greek's mother. She was a Toumaras when I married into the family. Mr. Touraras died and she remarried. However, she will always be Mama Toumaras to me.

Over the years mama has been one of my favorite people. She is constantly looking after my business, even when I am not asking her. Mama is a constant talker. When we are together neither of us pay much attention to what the other says.

Mama is fiercely independent. She has a mind of her own and doesn't mind using it. Although her broken English hasn't improved over the years she still gets her message across.

Recently mama completed one of her many trips back home to Greece. The experience of that trip keeps life interesting around my house. In fact any trip mama takes keeps life interesting.

In July mama announced to Ireni and me she was going to Greece for four months. In a matter of fact statement she informed me she was expecting me to take her to the Raleigh-Durham airport. She was to return on December 27 at 7:30 p.m. We were instructed to be at the airport at the designated time.

December 27 came before we were ready, but mama couldn't wait. We arrived at 6:15 in plenty of time to have a light dinner.

The food had to be light with the prices the airport charge.

As 7:30 approached, we waited patiently in the waiting area. All planes were on time. The passengers began to descend on the terminal from the parked planes. Mama did not appear. Searching

frantically without success we came to the conclusion she had missed the 7:30 flight and would be in at 9:30.

Ireni spent the two hours engaged in one of her favorite activities; looking in the gift shops.

When the 9:30 passengers entered the terminal and mama wasn't among them, we headed for the main office. With the modern day equipment an airline can trace a passenger fairly easy. It was soon discovered through the computer, mama had missed her plane in Athens. Mama decided to be a good samaritan and help a lady select a bottle of wine.

Another airline scheduled her on a different plane and she arrived in New York too late and missed her flight to Washington. The airline assured us she would be in Washington by 11 p.m. and in Raleigh by 12.

Waiting patiently for a passenger to arrive at midnight who was supposed to be sleeping peacefully in her own bed was a frustrating experience.

As the big jet touched the runway, we anticipated an end to the long wait.

The last passenger entered the terminal, and no little grey headed Greek appeared. Back to the office we dashed, only to learn mama had missed her flight in Washington. Assured she would be taken to a motel and be in Raleigh by 8:55 the next morning; mama's daughter and I went looking a motel for the night.

Have you fellow sons-in-laws ever stayed in a motel without a tooth brush, razor, or pajamas. When I checked in, the clerk thought I was a vagrant or with someone else's wife. Ireni, as she always does, scraped up enough essentials for us to have a near comfortable night.

Seven sharp we arrived at the

airport, a full two hours before mama's scheduled arrival. After an expensive breakfast, reading all the available newspapers, the 8:55 plane arrived. So did all the passengers, except mama.

Bewildered by the turn of events, we stumbled back to the office.

The same gentleman was on duty and recognized us immediately. Dashing for the computer he started seeing the answer before we asked the question. Shaking his head in disbelief, he said,

"Would you believe she took the wrong plane and went to Dayton, Ohio?"

I said, "I could".
Comforting Ireni with the assurance she would be sent to Atlanta and on to Raleigh, Ireni quickly countered that if someone didn't meet her in Atlanta she would end up in San Francisco. It was agreed someone would get her by the arm in Atlanta, and put her on the flight to Raleigh.

Eighteen hours from the first expected arrival we sat and waited for mama's arrival time of 1:30 p.m. Not daring to utter the impossible I finally broke the silence. I suggested I borrow a lasso and catch her before she dashed across the terminal into another plane. No reply to my suggestion, only a weary look.

Gazing down the long walkway to the incoming passengers from the 1:30 plan I finally saw a little grey haired lady resembling mama.

Approaching me with the wild look of a rabbit who had been chased by a fox, mama grinned as only she can.

My first words to her were, "Mama, do you want to go back to Greece?"

Her reply was, "Aihicais to Meowlosou"?

Letters Policy

Letters to the editor are encouraged and welcomed. Writers should keep letters as short as possible. Names, addresses and telephone numbers should be included and all letters must be signed. Names will be printed, however, other information will be kept confidential. We reserve the right to edit letters for good taste and brevity. Letters should be received by *The News-Journal* by noon on the Monday of the publication week.

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"Don't worry, Nancy, if Star Wars isn't feasible, I'm ready to lasso the incoming warheads before they hit the ground!"

Cigarette tax being proposed

Calling cigarette smoking the nation's "No. one public health problem," three of the nation's largest public health organizations asked Congress recently to double the excise tax on cigarettes to 32 cents a pack, a move that would net the Treasury about \$8.2 billion a year.

Just a thought.
SUPER RICH . . . 299 super-rich Americans paid no federal income tax in 1982. They claimed enough deductions, credits and investment losses to wipe out their U.S. tax liability, although some paid taxes to foreign governments.

MARIJUANA . . . Americans harvested a record of 16.6 billion worth of marijuana last year, marking the first time that domestically grown "pot" has supplied more than half the nation's demand, the National Organization for the Reform of



Cliff Blue
People and Issues

Marijuana said recently.
ON ASPIRIN . . . An unpublished government study shows children given aspirin for chicken pox or flu have a 25 times greater risk of developing often-fatal Reye's syndrome, a consumer group said recently. They renewed demands that aspirin warnings be placed on labels.

RED, WHITE & BLUE . . . A new license plate for diplomats is being seen on Washington, D.C. cars. The red, white and blue plates identify the automobiles of

foreign diplomats and are part of an effort to keep the diplomats from flouting U.S. laws.

GROCERY PRICES . . . Which state has the highest food sales per store employee? (Alaska, \$156,400 per employee.) The state which added the most grocery stores between 1977 and 1982? Florida with 482 new stores.

SENIOR SALARIES . . . Senior salaries at Nucor Corp., a Charlotte steel concern, will rise an average of 4.5% to 5% in 1985, down from 6 percent last year. New York-based National Patent Development Corp. won't be as generous with raises as it was in 1984; the president expects to cut the average bonus by 50% to 75%. Raises at NCR Corp. and Sonat, Inc. in Birmingham, Alabama, will be at last year's levels, says the Wall Street Journal.

Teachers, Take Newspapers Back To School

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This time of year, off-peak times weekdays are from 1 pm to 4 pm and 9 pm to 6 am and all day Saturday and Sunday

National Newspaper in Education (NIE) Week is coming March 4-8, 1985. The Newspaper in Education program encourages the use of newspapers for a variety of educational purposes. National NIE Week emphasizes the importance of reading and writing and is a cooperative effort of the International Reading Association and newspapers.

Teachers, use ads, maps, graphs, and schedules to teach reading and math. Show students how to write news stories, editorials, ads, and reviews. Also have them write letters to the editor and use newspapers to update research projects. Ask them to discuss the judgments that are made in interviews and editorials. Most important, have them read daily to develop the habit of reading and to keep well informed.

The News-Journal is interested in the newspaper being used to further the education of Hoke County students. We have past editions which can be used in the classroom and will make current issues available at a reduced price on a limited basis. If teachers are interested in using *The News-Journal* in the classroom, give us a call at 876-2121.

A special edition of the state's Newspaper in Education newsletter, DATELINE NC, is available free of charge. The newsletter features teaching ideas for use during NIE Week. To receive the newsletter, send the coupon below to the N.C. NIE Foundation. Return the coupon before February 24.

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