

That's right, 2020 is Peggy Thomas' 60th reunion year! Here is Peggy's story: recollections of attending ACS in the 1950s, when it was an Anglo American school - very different from what many of us remember. And yet Peggy's feelings of belonging to something extraordinary during her years at ACS Athens resonate with all of us! Here's Peggy's memoir, and the twists and turns which followed her years in Athens.

I arrived late for the start of 5th grade with Mrs. Kent in 1952. The class was immersed in "mental maths" which I can now recall answering incorrectly, twice, when it was my turn. I don't remember anything between that inauspicious beginning and becoming completely at home in the class, with its English text books and the wonderful Enid Blyton adventure books. I quickly found out what cheeky meant! (I wonder why.) Mrs. Kent was a very good teacher and I was happy to be her class librarian. Her daughter Alison was three years ahead of me and was taught French by my mom, Peg Standish. The school was in Psychico, two bus stops towards Athens, from Athens College where Alison's father and my father taught.

Miss Freuen, who was head of the school, used to tell us stories from Shakespeare which I loved. It felt she was paying us all a great compliment, among other things, by teaching us something so interesting and important. The school in my small in northern New Jersey was very unimaginative: we had "reading books", but never "real books" and certainly nothing as posh as Shakespeare!

### KIFISSIA

The next year I started the sixth grade in Kifissia (top left). I didn't realize until I was nearly 40 and living in London that the schools were divided that way in accordance with the system in England: senior school starts at 11. I believed it was because the Psychico building, a beautiful family villa, was too small for any more grades.

It was at this point we started music appreciation with Metha Dickie, who also taught Latin. The music continued until 8th grade and has stayed with me all my life. In 7th grade a few of us had the winter term in Switzerland. Carol Paige and family had been used to going to a school in Chateau d'Oex in alternate years. Carol spoke fluent French and Greek, having been sent to a Greek school when she was little. She had lived in Greece for longer than most of us. The contrast between my life in Greece and my previous life was enormous.

It was a new world, and not just one! I got two new countries for the price of one, because of the English influence in the school, which increased when Dave King was made head. During my 8th grade we lived in a flat in his house where we got to know him and Olga very well. I was never taught by him in school but I learned a lot from them both by being so close.

We had wonderful teachers, from all over the world. Young people who were seeing the world would stop by and teach for a year or two. The children were also from all over. There were a few Greek Americans but I think Theo Rativand was the only Greek, except for his brother George who didn't spend as much time in the school as Theo did. Theo was in my brother's class and I have recently made friends with him thanks to the computer. He visited London a few years ago and I had the great pleasure of showing him and his son Nick the Parthenon Marbles in the British Museum.

By the 9th grade, we were living on Odos Levidou in Kifissia, and had Mr. Pimenides for English. We read Julius Caesar and The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner. Gerald Cole was still in the school at this point, one of the first children I got to know in the 5th grade. I was very impressed with him as he seemed so grown up. Since living in Yorkshire I have been in touch with him. I remember how delighted he was with the Coleridge poem.

My overriding impression of ACS Athens was that it was a stimulating environment and we were lucky to have such a good education. To be honest, it was the only place where I ever felt I belonged, a feeling that continued until I became a mother. Life's great since, but as a child I was often disconnected from people.

## FAMILY

After the 9th grade, with no discussion or explanation, our family returned to the States. My father had succession of jobs while my mother found a place in a New Jersey high school and continued a successful career teaching French. I left Greece with good French and pigeon Greek. It's a regret of my life that we weren't taught Greek beyond the 5th grade and that I never learned it well, which I could have done in 5 years at that age. However, I'm putting that right now by studying Greek and have made some good progress.

My brother Peter was in the school for 3 of those five years, the 8th, 11th and 12th. He was in Phillips Exeter in the States for the 9th and 10th grades but was taken back to Greece - again, no discussion!

My father, Pete, taught chemistry in Athens College and for the first three years we lived in a flat in the college. There is a reference to living there in *Less than a Year*. My brother Peter went to Bowdoin College and read French and German. He taught for a while and did various odd jobs for many years. He died tragically in 1985.


My five children are now aged 44 to 55 and are all living here in England. One has MS which luckily for her is under control and doesn't stop her doing anything. They have 9 children between them and there are two great grandchildren on the way. So I count myself very lucky. Living in Greece was a wonderful experience for me and the school was a great part of that. If I had been sent to a Greek school I would have emerged with fluent Greek but I doubt if I would have had a better education. There was so much emphasis on going to college in the American

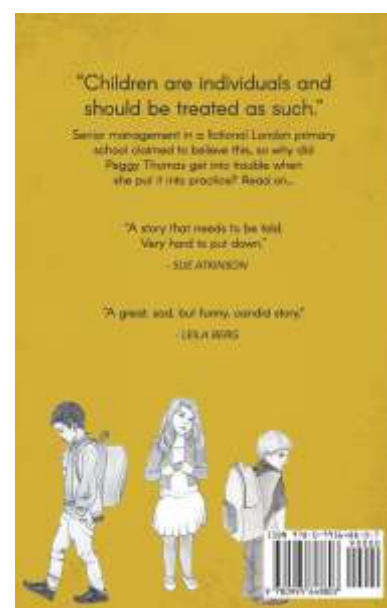
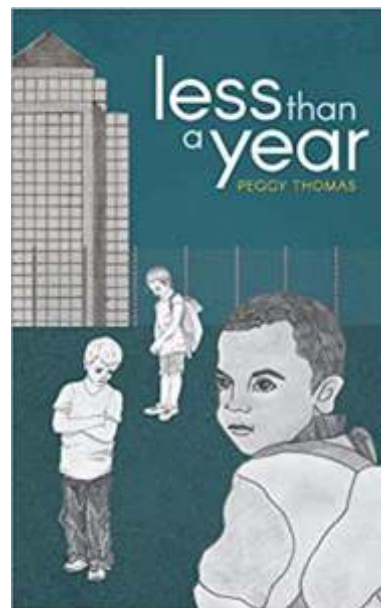
system, and in our family, that I didn't realise for many years that actually the education I received before 18 was more important to my life. I'm glad of the further education, but I understand how many people skip college and become, during their lives, very educated people.

## TWISTS AND TURNS

I went to Smith College in Massachusetts and then New York University. During my junior I married a Welshman called David Thomas (as so many Welshmen are) and we left New York for Pembroke Dock in 1963. This was another culture shock to put it mildly. Our first baby was born in 1965 and very soon after we left for Geneva. David was with the Foreign Office. We had one year there, followed by one in Paris and another in Brussels. David changed jobs frequently and my career consisted in having babies - 5 in all - and keeping the family on an even keel.

During all this I discovered La Leche League, the American organization that promotes breastfeeding. I can take the credit for introducing LLL to Britain. After ten years, a group of us split and founded the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers over which I presided for another ten years. By then, David's quirky behaviour had become full-blown manic depression. I turned myself into a teacher and wrote a book about my one and only year of presiding over my own class. The job was in the East End and it was quite a year. The book is called "*Less than a Year*" and can be found on the internet. There are also e-copies and an audio version. [LINK](#)

So my career, is like my life - full of twists and turns. 



# The OWL

MAY 2020  
OP ED



By  
EVEL EKONOMAKIS  
*Class of '77*  
From TheGeopolitics.com

If the crisis teaches anything, it is to remind us of the importance of people engaged in the real economy. Workers in production and essential services will rise to the occasion. They will defend their jobs against ownership, and will do this for their own benefit and that of the rest of society.

## Forward to the Past: Covid-19 and Our Brave New Future

No more kisses, handshakes or blowing out birthday candles. But that is alright. We can live with these changes. How people behave in the post-pandemic reality is a different question. There are horses and mules among us. When the rider falls off the horse, the horse usually waits for her to climb back on. The mule, however, might kick or bite the rider.

Twelve years have passed since the 2008 financial meltdown. Millions experienced a drop in their standard of living and endured harsh austerity measures. It is reasonable to expect that the average inhabitant of Uniontown, Pennsylvania in the U.S. and Nottingham in the UK will react differently to the “new normal” than the average resident of Atherton, California and Windsor. And the behavior of the typical Greek or Spaniard will not be the same as that of the typical Finn or Dane.

Conspiracy theorists insist on secret Orwellian schemes by a cabal of fabulously wealthy individuals. Apparently, people like Bill Gates want to kill off millions and turn the rest of us into micro chipped serfs in a debt-ridden, neo-feudal world order. Yet if the “Illuminati” have unleashed this virus on the world, they must be a sorry crew of dunces. Even assuming the pandemic kills a lot more people than projected, what do modern-day Johann Adam Weishaupts have to gain from this? History provides no clues. With one third of the population of Europe depleted by the Black Death, the price of labor soared in the 14th and 15th centuries and the value of land and capital plummeted. Workers ate and dressed better, and lords complained the humble turned up their noses at work. Clearly, this state of affairs cannot benefit the world’s puppet masters.

Are we perhaps witnessing a sinister plan to concentrate capital even further? This is happening right now; it always does when companies go bankrupt. Are the world’s “overlords” trying to grab an even greater share of cheap labor? Obviously, the situation created by the pandemic is a great opportunity for companies to cut wages. However, any advantage gained from lowering wages is offset by the tremendous decline in world trade. Despite policies of austerity, quantitative easing, buying securities and keeping interest rates near zero, the volume of world trade was falling long before the Covid-19 crisis appeared.

The dominos are falling predictably. Europe and North America will continue to consume less and China will not produce as much. In turn, countries like Brazil, Argentina, Australia and Canada will export fewer raw materials to



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China. It is easy to see how trade barriers may lead to more trade wars. This all spells Great Depression 2.0.

Yet we appear to be lucky in our misfortune. These are not the 1930s. The West is not preparing to “self-cannibalize” in a great war again. A major blow to the global economy will not lead to WWII because nuclear weapons make total war utterly insane and thus highly improbable. Not to mention that post-modern wars no longer solve economic crises as they are far more expensive.

We have crossed the Rubicon. How can the EU, China, Russia and the U.S. return to the status quo ante in terms of military expenditure? With the exception of some regional powers like Turkey and Iran, which country’s citizens will now acquiesce to spending astronomical sums on military might? Covid-19 is a powerful one-two punch to both the planet’s military-industrial complexes and the very urge to conduct politics by “other” means.

The crisis is also a huge damper on Chinese economic expansion, both at home and abroad. China’s GDP growth rate is currently below the 6 percentage points experts say leads to social unrest. The Red Giant holds \$3 trillion in foreign currency reserves and has some room for maneuver. But what happens when its huge housing market bubble bursts?

Not so long ago, everyone was talking about the imminent arrival of an “Asian Age” or “Asian Century.” The “march” of the East of course started after WWII, when China became the world’s factory. A few weeks ago, just before the Covid-19 lockdown, Asia’s share of world GDP was nearing the 50 percent mark. But this may all end now. By investing in the real economy, the West is in a position to step back onto center stage. Needless to say, the planet would be a better place if East and West cooperated as equal partners in a global economy run according to a sustainable plan we can all agree on.

In the glutted market of the 1970s and 1980s, big capital investors sought profit in the financial sector, real estate bubbles and commodity markets. Will investors in the West take advantage of the falling cost of labor and funnel money into production? Will they reinvent themselves as new Henry Fords, John Rockefellers and Andrew Carnegies? In the U.S., will

Donald Trump’s 2016 promise to revive the rust belt finally be realized?

Governments will try to use Keynesian strategies to deal with the economic crisis. They will throw money at it, hoping this will work. But their chances of success will turn on whether or not they invest in jobs that grow the economy and improve people’s lives—and this at a very difficult juncture when demand is far greater than supply and the ability to pay.

The lockdown has taught us all the importance of the real economy. If neoliberal capitalists do not act fast, someone else will step into the breach to steer society away from “bubble” capitalism towards a citizen-propelled expansion of the real economy. People working in production and essential services will rise to the occasion. In defending their jobs and asserting themselves at their place of work, they will be helping their families and society at large.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Evel Economakis teaches IB history at Ionios Lyceum in Athens, Greece. His literary work is often published in Geist, Canada’s award-winning literary magazine. He also contributes political commentary to Britain’s current affairs and politics magazine, The New Statesman. He has written eight books, including illustrated children’s books, most in English, but a few in Russian and Greek as well.



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## Professional Notes

# BizNET Alum NEWS



**Natalia Linos is Running for Congress**  
She is a Harvard-trained epidemiologist, social justice advocate, and a mother of three. She is running to represent Massachusetts's Fourth Congressional District because we urgently need a voice for science and equity in Congress!



Enjoy this beautiful performance by  
ACS Athens Alumna  
Chrisanthi Veloudaki  
Vissi d' Arte from Puccini's Tosca







Judge Theodora Gaïtas appointed to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Gaïtas will fill the vacancy in August. In his announcement Monday, Gov. Walz said Gaïtas "has a reputation for excellence and an unquestionable commitment to fairness and justice for Minnesotans."



**BUCHWALD**

Buchwald has added former Entertainment One executive, Angela Nikas, to its television literary agent roster.



Nikas began her career at Playtone Productions working for Tom Hanks and Gary Goetzman.



Gerry Cavadias' Republic is open once again! Leoforos Alexandras 49, Athens



Hellenic American Leadership Council hosts a conversation with ACS Athens Alumnus Tom Ellis, Editor in Chief of Kathimerini English Edition, on Greece's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and the initial phases of its gradual exit from the lockdown.





Fine Artist Dimitris Milionis.  
Two of his many works. Please click button below if you're interested in contacting him.



ACS Athens Alum Peter Hunt:  
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