



The year that was, review of 2008

By the President of the Canberra Pontian Club, John Efkarpidis

Dear friends,

Since our beginnings as the Pontian Club in Canberra back in October 2006, we have established both presence and participation in the national and international Pontian activities and agenda.

Indeed, the Canberra Pontian Club was represented at the international event of last year. In Athens on 4-6 July 2008, the 8th AGM International Confederation of Pontian Greeks was convened.

At the gathering, I also met the fellow Australian Pontians, Harry Tavlaridis, the President of the Federation of the Pontian Associations of Australia, Peter Jasonides as Alternate President of the Federation of Pontian Associations of Australia and Peter Papoulidis from the Pontian Association of NSW Panagia Soumela.



It was an amazing and overwhelming experience for me to meet with delegates from all over the world; USA, Germany, Russia, Lithuania, Georgia joined the great number of Greek participants.



More so the experience of meeting and speaking to two extraordinary Pontians: The author Christos Samouilidis with whom I have a personal connection, as he is my mother's hero and the most famous living Pontian, the Russian born Pontian cosmonaut Fyodor Nikolayevich Yurchikhin, my personal HERO. This man was awe-inspiring and made me so proud to be Pontian. He spoke the following languages and

in this order, Pontian, Russian (birth place), English and Greek (see Photo). We are hoping to bring the Pontian to Australia and Canberra. I will be keeping you updated on developments on this.

For the Canberra Pontian Club, the event of the year was undeniably the hosting of the AGM for The Federation of Pontian Associations of Australia was held in the Orpheus Room Hellenic Club on the 28th September 2008. The AGM was a success and as attended by at least one delegate from each State and Territory except Tasmania.

The year closed with me attending with Theo Dimarhos the 50th Anniversary Celebratory Dance for the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia. A great night, a big event and a goal worth celebrating (50 plus years).

Along the way, we held the first Antipodean Pontian Houseboat Fishing Competition (I know you are thinking this is an event that should also stay in history) and engaged in all social and cultural events in Canberra.

With all this in mind, I greet you and wish you the best for this year while asking you to forever honour the sacrifices and memory of our Pontian people and the Lost Homelands.
JE



Don't miss this Mediterranean experience, celebrating the richness and diversity of Greek food, music and the arts.

DATE: Sunday 8 February
TIME: 12.00pm – 5.00pm
VENUE: Garema Place
PRICE: FREE event



The Inaugural Pontian Houseboat Fishing Championship 2008

This event was held on the Clyde River from 2pm Friday the 19th of September until 9am Monday the 22nd September 2008. We hired 3, 10 berth houseboats from Clyde River Houseboats Batemans Bay NSW. We had 18 out of 19 show up with the following configuration:

Boat one, Pontos 1 had 7 fishermen onboard (the pros),

Boat two, Pontos 2 had 6 fishermen onboard (the young guys) and

Boat three, Pontos 3 had 5 fishermen onboard (the Adelaide connection).

The championship has three winning awards, 1 the largest fish, 2 the largest Dusky Flathead (Bream) and the most fish landed (legal size).

1st Prize The largest Fish was won by: Stefano Miniutti with a shovelnose shark on Pontos 2.

2nd Prize The largest Dusky/Bream was won by: Savvas Dimarhos with a Yellowfin Bream on Pontos 1.

3rd Prize The most legal fish landed was won by: Stefano Miniutti with a total of 7 legal fish, 2 shovelnose sharks, 4 Yellowfin Breams and a flounder on Pontos 2.



The Pontian Houseboat Fishing Championship 2009

Boys Weekend at Clyde River Houseboats Batemans Bay

Dear Friends,

The Canberra Pontian Club is happy to inform you that we have books 2, 8 Berth houseboats on the Clyde River for the 3rd, 4th, 5th and returning on 6th April 2009.

The cost will be \$350 per head, we have 16 positions available. This includes food & bait. Monies must be received by COB 1st March 2009.

This will be the second Pontian Houseboat Fishing Championship, details to follow.

Things to Bring On Our Houseboats:

Just Top Sheets only for Double, Single Beds or sleeping bag, Personal Effects, Bath Towels, Videos, CDs, DVDs, BYOG and FISHING GEAR!!!!

Departure and Return:

All hires commence at 2pm on the first date of hire. Hire terminates at 9:30 am on the last day of hire. Late returns will incur a penalty against the bond.

Drivers:

Drivers of the Houseboat must be at least 18 years of age and must hold a current Vehicle Driver's License. Do not drink and drive the houseboat. Maritime Services Officers patrol the river.

Repairs and Alterations:

No repairs or alterations to equipment are to be carried out by the hirer or his/her party without express instructions of the owners unless such repairs or alterations are made in circumstances where immediate safety is at risk. Any unauthorised repairs or alterations will incur a penalty against the bond.

General Conditions and Notes:

No access to the houseboat roof at any time.

Do not enter the water whilst the houseboat is underway or the motor is operational.

10 Berth houseboats are licensed to carry only 10 people.

No pets or firearms allowed.

No electrical appliances, other than those provided, may be used without prior arrangements.

The houseboat must remain between the Batemans Bay Bridge and the upper Clyde River markers.

Motor vehicles can be left at the boat shed parking area (at owner's risk) or removed to a secure parking area at \$4.00 a night.



Dealing With Genocide (Greece, Armenia, Turkey)

By Dean Kalimniou

Recently the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, replying to questions by journalists from European Union countries called for an unbiased study of the "allegations" as he called them, that one million Armenians have been killed by Ottoman troops during World War One as the result of a planned genocide. "We want to open our archives to those persons who allege that a genocide took place. If the other countries were truly genuine they would do the same thing. Teams of historians from both sides can research the archives so that the truth can be told. We do not want successive generations to live under the shadow of continuous hatred."

At first instance, these sentiments seem laudable. It is the first time within living history that a Turkish leader has spoken publicly about the issue of genocide without issuing a blatant denial or hurling invective at those who state that it did occur.

This has caused great optimism within certain circles that maintain that closer ties with the European Union are responsible for this 'spring' and that increased ties will lead to the development of a 'mature' Turkey, able to cast aside the fetters of nationalist myth-construction and view the past objectively.

Even more tantalising to scholars is the promise of opening up the archives. Much of the Ottoman archives have remained closed to public viewing ever since the formation of the Turkish state, a little while after an International Tribunal in the early twenties was able to examine some of these and on their basis, along with that of witnesses, to

conclude that the Ottoman regime was in fact guilty of genocide. Since that time however, the archives have remained closed and western scholarship on the genocide has basically been restricted to research of the contemporary documents and dispatches used by consular authorities of Western Powers, operating in Turkey. Henry Morgenthau's eyewitness account of the horrors of the Armenian genocide is extraordinarily moving and persuasive evidence while Bill Balakian's recent book 'Burning Tigris' is also an interesting account of how the Armenian genocide was perceived by Americans in Turkey and America and how government policy towards it has shifted since.



When one looks past the smoke-screen of Erdoğan's attestations of friendliness and abjuring of hatred, a few key words stand out. These are 'alleged genocide,' underlying the contention that the Turkish policy of denial still remains, although if there is a shift, it is that it is now a policy of 'denial until proven guilty,' and the proposition that if Turkey is guilty of

withholding evidence about the genocide, then other countries are also complicit in this, thus shifting the onus of proof from Turkey to a broader base.

Life for Turks who decide to take an alternative to the 'official' view of history experience great hardships in Turkey. If Erdoğan is genuine about studying the genocide then the prerequisite step surely is to make the discussion of history free and unfettered within Turkish society, something that it currently is not. Only then will it be understood that Western countries rarely make history the cause for political strife but rather a catalyst for healing.

Up coming Events for 2009

- 8 February: Multicultural Festival - Glendi
28 March: 25 March Greece Independence Day Dance
3 – 6 April: Pontian Houseboat Fishing Championship 2009
September: Annual Snow Trip
31 November: 28 October Oxi Day Dance
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