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# Trumbeta Shqiptare

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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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**Albanian-American**  
*National Organization*

May 2020

### *President's Message*

Greetings to all,

I hope this message finds you and your families safe and in good health. This has been a challenging year for all of us and for the world as we battle the COVID-19 pandemic.

Certain regions of our country have been affected much harder, such as New York, New Jersey, Michigan, and Illinois where there are large Albanian-American communities. Regrettably, this terrible virus indiscriminately took the lives of thousands upon thousands of our citizens, including dozens of members of the Albanian-American community, especially in the New York area.

On behalf of the AANO, we convey our sincerest condolences to the families and friends of those who have lost their loved ones. May our condolences bring you comfort and may our prayers ease the pain.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected our lives in many ways. While we are hopeful that the end of this dreadful pandemic is near, at this point there are many uncertainties about the near future effects of the virus, and for that reason the AANO's Executive Board and Board of Governors have **decided to cancel our 74<sup>th</sup> National Convention**, scheduled to take place in Philadelphia, from July 31-August 2, 2020.

We have also decided to keep our promise to the Albanian-American Community of Philadelphia and

### *Mesazhi i Presidentit*

hold our next Convention at the exact same place, **Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue Hotel, on August 6, 7, and 8, 2021. So, please save the dates!**

These are challenging times for all us, especially for not-for-profit organization like the AANO, run by volunteers. The scholarship funds are primary generated by our annual conventions, interest earnings and generous donations from our members and friends. With the recent stock market losses and the cancellation of our National Convention, we are faced with some immediate challenges to meet our financial goals. The only current resources we depend on are donations.

Any help, especially from those who have directly benefited from our Scholarship Program in the past, will be greatly appreciated. **To make a tax deductible donation, please go to [www.aano.org](http://www.aano.org) and select "Scholarship" tab. On the scholarship page you will see the "Donate" button.**

**If you are not an AANO member, the annual membership is only \$25.00, tax deductible. To become a member, click the "Membership" tab where you will find the membership link and more information about the benefits of the membership.**

Every dollar donated will be used to help Albanian-American students in pursuit of their higher education.

As every year, this year we had a remarkable number of students applying for our scholarships. We will select and announce this year's scholarship winners at our July meeting. We will notify the winners and post their names on our website.

Although we will not see each other this year at the Annual Convention, we wish the very best for all of you, your families and friends, and look forward to seeing you on the first weekend of August 2021, at the **Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue Hotel** for three days of all-Albanian fun.

As we get closer to the next convention, we will provide more detailed information. For information about all the AANO activities, please visit our website: [www.aano.org](http://www.aano.org). You can also find us on Face Book and Instagram.

On behalf of the entire AANO Organization, we thank you for your support, wishing you good health and prosperity.

Me shumë respekt,

*John K. Lulajuraj*

**John K. Lulajuraj**  
National President  
Albanian-American National Organization, Inc..



*The National Board wishes  
all of our members ...  
a Healthy, Safe and Happy Summer !!*



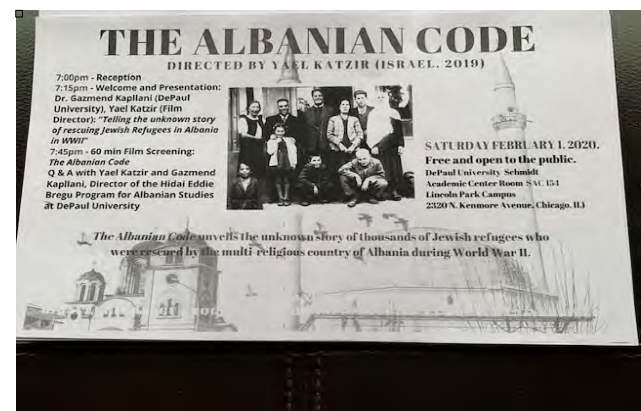
**Albanian-American**  
National Organization

## **CHAPTER ACTIVITIES**



**The Chicago Chapter** had voted to help Dr. Gazmend Kapllani in his endeavors to promote the Albanian Studies Minor Program at DePaul University. The forth-coming program was held in March and announcements regarding the launch were sent out.

He also hosted the director of **The Albanian Code**, which is shown in the clipping below.



Dr. Kapllani's work as a writer, researcher and teacher at DePaul University centers on themes of migration and identity, borders, totalitarianism, societies in transition, and how Albanian, Balkan and (Eastern) European history has shaped public and private narratives and memories.

Since 2012, Kapllani has been living in the US, where he was a Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and writer-in-residence at Brown University and Wellesley College.

Olga Titos, Chicago National Board of Governor, is proud to say that as of today the **Chicago Chapter** has 64 members. This just may be the largest chapter of the AANO. After last year's successful convention, many young people joined because they met each other, danced, and partied through the night. Way to go Chicago !!

**The Detroit Chapter** wishes everyone good health and hopefully the ability to gather safely with Albanian hospitality very soon!

**The Washington, DC Chapter** is wishing you all be Well and Safe through this Pandemic! We all have to stand together because tough times never last, but strong people do.



My name is **Klea Gjonaj**, and I am this year's Miss AANO. Currently, I am a junior at the University of Michigan, studying Interdisciplinary Chemical Sciences with a focus on environmental health, on a pre-medical path. Originally, I am from Addison, Illinois, but now spend most of my time in the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan studying and working at my university in a research lab.

As someone who grew up in a very tightly knit Albanian community, it was an honor to win Miss AANO, and hope that I serve this community with as much love as it has given me. Thank you!

## ***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*





## 74<sup>th</sup> Annual AANO Convention Update



Due to the Coronavirus that has affected the entire world in 2020, the 74<sup>th</sup> Annual AANO Convention, scheduled to be held at the Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue Hotel from July 31 through August 2, 2020, has been postponed and will take place at the same location in 2021. Please see letter sent out to our members with regards to convention information.

We hope all of our members are staying healthy and safe as  
**"we are all in this together!"**

**GET CONNECTED !!!**

VISIT THE  
A.A.N.O. HOME PAGE



**www.AANO.ORG**

If you have information for the Home Page,  
Contact David Sosnowski  
(630) 618-9111 or [dsoz@microthunder.com](mailto:dsoz@microthunder.com)



**Albanian-American**  
National Organization



May 2020

Greetings to All,

We hope this communication finds you and your family well.

With the current situation caused by COVID-19, the AANO has decided to cancel our 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, which was scheduled to take place in Philadelphia, July 31 through August 2, 2020.

This was not an easy decision for us, as this is the only time in the 74 year history of the AANO, that an Annual Convention has been cancelled. However, being faced with many uncertainties on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the next few months, we believe that this is the right decision.

The good news is that we will keep our promise to the Albanian-American community of Philadelphia and hold our next Annual Convention, scheduled for August 6, 7, and 8, 2021, in Philadelphia. The 2021 Convention will be held at Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue Hotel, the same hotel that we were going to have this year's Convention.

We will keep you informed on all the details as we get closer to the 2021 event, however, **we do encourage you to save the dates.**

Although we are cancelling this year's Convention, this year, as every year in the past, we will continue to provide financial assistance to a number of Albanian-American students through our Scholarship Awards Program.

As you may be aware, the AANO's scholarship and operational budget is raised from three sources, (1) generous contributions from the Albanian-American community, (2) our Annual Convention and (3) interest earned from invested funds. With the

cancellation of the Annual Convention and the recent Stock Market losses, we are faced with some immediate challenges to meet our financial goals for the remainder of this year and for our scholarship contributions for 2021. The only resource we currently have is contributions from our members and friends.

To make your tax exempt contribution to the AANO's Scholarship Fund please visit [www.aano.org](http://www.aano.org). On the scholarship page you will see the "Donation" link. We know that these are challenging times for all of us, however, any contribution that you can make will be greatly appreciated.

The AANO is run by a dedicated group of volunteers, therefore, every dollar donated will be used to help Albanian-American students in pursuit of their higher education.

We are grateful for all the support we continue to receive from all of you for all these years, wishing you, your families and loved ones good health, prosperity and happiness, and we look forward to seeing you during our 2021 Annual Convention, which will be held on August 6, 7, and 8, 2021, in Philadelphia.

Best wishes,

National Officers and Chapter Board of Governors

**[www.AANO.ORG](http://www.AANO.ORG)**

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## ***SOCIAL NEWS***

### ***Babies***

#### **Washington, DC**



A big congratulations to AANO Washington, DC members, Sokol and Elona on the birth of their new born baby girl, Hanna Aliaj. Hanna was born on April 2, 2020 and her parents and grandparents are so excited for the new addition to the Aliaj Family.

### ***Mother's Day***

The Washington, DC Chapter, wishes all Moms and Expecting Moms: BELATED HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!!

***Special quote from Marcie to her mom,  
Iris Maluka, for Mother's Day!***



## Class Notes

### Chicago



Congratulations to Benjana Guraziu on her graduation from the Biostatistics MS Program at UNC Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health. Benjana is interviewing for Data Science positions.

She is a member of the Chicago AANO Chapter and the daughter of Ariana and Arben Guraziu, sister of Wendi.



Chicago Chapter member Xhorxha Hoxha graduated from the University of Miami, Florida, Summa Cum Laude with a BBA in Accounting and Marketing and with a minor in Political Science. We are all very proud of her.

### Detroit



Congratulations and best wishes to Eliza Alushi on her upcoming graduation from Livonia Stephenson High School with high honors. Eliza was also an integral member of the volleyball team.

She and her family are members of the Detroit Chapter of the AANO and attended their first convention last year. Eliza has been accepted and will attend the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor this fall. Her parents, Fatmir and Liri Alushi, and her grandparents, sister, and aunts and uncles are all very proud.

## Career

### Detroit

Congratulations to Luisa Zeneli Riza on her new full-time employment with the Novi District Court as a counter clerk dealing with the public. Now that she has one son in high school and one at Michigan State, she has started a full-time career of her own and from all reports she is unsurprisingly great and diligent in her new position. We wish her the best.

### Washington, DC

We congratulate Mrs. Valbona Selimaj for opening her new hair salon, **V Salon Academy**. She is an active and supportive member of the AANO DC Chapter. Thank you Valbona and good luck in your entrepreneurship. Well deserved!!





**Worcester**

Konstantina Lukes and her son Peter unveil her portrait during a ceremony in Worcester City Hall. Lukes is retiring after 38 years of public service to the City of Worcester (T&G Staff/Ashley Green)

By Craig Semon / Telegram & Gazette Staff

Dec 18, 2019 at 9:38 PM (*Excerpted*)

In celebration of 38 years of public service, the City of Worcester hosted a mayoral portrait unveiling for City Councilor-at-Large Konstantina “Konnies” B. Lukes at City Hall.

Councilor Lukes, who served as mayor from 2007 to 2010, has been an at-large city councilor for 30 years and previously served as a member of the School Committee for eight years.

During the presentation, she was cited for being the longest-serving city councilor, for being the first and only woman elected mayor of Worcester by the voters and quite possibly, the only Albanian-American ever elected mayor in any city of the United States.

After the unveiling of her portrait, Konstantina Lukes rattled off a list of people who had made an impact in her life, including her husband, James J. Lukes (who was in the hospital with pneumonia); her son, Peter Lukes; and her Albanian-born father.

“Never give up, and believe in what you’re doing,” Konstantina Lukes said.

**Get Well Wishes****Detroit**

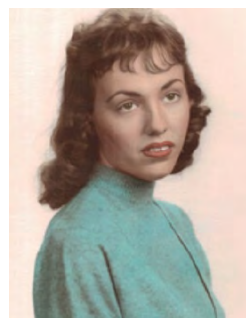
Well wishes to Amanda and Sam Majszak on a full recovery from Covid-19. Very fortunately their three children and Amanda’s grandmother, Sally Negip, stayed healthy the entire time!

**Obituaries****Chicago**

**Nick Nicholas**, husband of Mary Nicholas for 70 years, passed away on April 18, 2020. Nick was going to be 93 in August. He served St Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church for many years in different capacities, such as Parish Council President, Sunday School teacher, and was Santa Claus for the children.

Nick was one of the original members of the Chicago Chapter and served as Vice President for many years, as well as President of the Albanian-American National Organization.

Our condolences go to his wife Mary, his children Cathy, Cindy, and Craig, their spouses, his sister Christine Cosma, his sister-in-law Lea Bitta and his grandchildren.



**Patricia Titos** passed away on February 3, 2020 in her home at the age of 80 after a long illness. Loving sister of Olga, Vickey and the late Helen (Kenneth) Heyen; cherished daughter of the late Jacob and Froso; aunt of Lynda (John) Sparti.

Pat was one of the original members of the Chicago Chapter. She will be missed. May she rest in peace.

**Jani Depo** was born on January 4, 1934 in Sinica, Albania, and passed away here in Chicago on April 6, 2020. He is succeeded by his wife, Arthimi Depo and his three daughters, Mirela, Albana, and Edlira.



*"My grandfather was such a role model and inspiration to all of his grandchildren, and he was especially a huge part of my life. He taught us how to read, write, and speak Albanian, how to garden, how to dance all different kinds of valles, and most importantly, he taught us how to be hard workers. We miss him dearly and forever will be in our hearts."*

*Submitted by:*

Klea Gjonaj, Current AANO Queen



**Dennis Ginosi** passed away on May 1, 2020 at the age of 74 of a degenerate lung disease.

Dennis was a past member of the Chicago Chapter and was one of the first chapter members to receive an AANO scholarship award.

He attended Western Illinois University where he studied literature and philosophy. After graduation he was hired by the Chicago Tribune as an editor. He was recognized in 1988 by winning the national Heywood Broun Award for a series he edited about anti-gentrification movements in Chicago neighborhoods. His skills were also recognized in 1974, when he was selected as the lead editor of a 300,000-word special section that included a transcript of President Richard Nixon's secret White House recordings during the Watergate scandal.

He is survived by his wife, Kathleen Prendergast, his sister Marilyn Payton, and many nieces and nephews.

### Clearwater



**Donika (Theodhosi) Dindi** passed away on January 13, 2020 at the age of 92. Born in Tirana, Albania on April 15, 1927, Donika was the daughter of Harrilla and Nadezhda Theodhosi. Her father was the Inspector General of Albania during King Zog. She was the wife of the late Leonard Dindi and is survived by her daughters, Vasilika, Maria, Shpresa and Anila, and her grandchildren Paul, Leonardo and Adra.

Donika completed her education in Tirana with a special talent in drawing and painting, a quality she inherited from her mother and a rich spiritual life from her father. As a teenager, she liked to play tennis, ping pong and other sport activities that were common for her generation. In her early twenties, she started to work as a project designer for a city company where she met her future husband, Leonard Dindi. Co-workers in the company used to call them *"a couple made for each other."*

Donika was a special wife, mother and grandmother. She dedicated her life to her immediate and extended family unconditionally. Her passion for art, music, history and friendship was unique. Donika is the best example to live the life with honesty and love, not only for her four daughters and grandchildren, but for all the friends that spent time with her. She will be missed by a lot of people. We are blessed for her presence in our lives, leaving behind special memories, which will be cherished by all of us for the rest of our lives.

### Detroit



Condolences to the family of **Doris Alli Beers**, who passed away on February 12, 2020 at the age of 84. She was preceded in death by her first husband Jack Alli, second husband Walter Beers and her son Daren Alli. Loving mother of Mark (Laurie) Alli, John (Margaret) Alli and Brian Alli. Proud grandmother of Caitlin, Emily, Grace, Jack

Douglas, Rachel, Joey and Alexandria. Mother in law of Michele (Joe) Moore. Sister of Leon (Zizi) Shaplo.

Doris was a long-time AANO supporter. She and her husband Wally and son Brian had a wonderful time at the last convention in Albania. She and her sons have supported our conventions for many years. She will always be remembered for her sunny personality, positive attitude, and amazing smile. All of her friends and family will miss her dearly. Having passed during the pandemic outbreak, Doris' family has not yet had the opportunity to have a memorial with family and friends but hopefully will be able to celebrate her special life very soon. May her memory be eternal.

### **Worcester**



**Dhimitra "Dee" Dimitri** passed away on December 20, 2019. She was the daughter of Nerenza and Louis Vasil and predeceased by her husband of 64 years, Nikola Dimitri, her sisters Mary George and Victoria Adams, and daughter-in-law

Tamara Walker Dimitri. She is survived by her son, Dr. Dennis Dimitri, her daughter, Sandra Bisceglia and her husband, Matt of Plymouth, MA; grandsons Adam Bisceglia and his wife Juliet Moretti and Nicholas Bisceglia, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Dee was a lifelong member of St. Mary's Assumption Albanian Orthodox Church where she was always involved in its activities. As a young woman, she was the choir organist, and after her marriage to Nick in 1951, she continued as a member of the choir. She was a long time member of the St. Mary's Women's Guild and in the mid 1980's she became the first woman to be elected President of the St. Mary's Church Board. Dee was always involved in church activities often acting as a chairperson or volunteering on committees for many Albanian Festivals, church fundraisers, or social gatherings. She and Nick were enthusiastic participants and supporters of all these events while attending them with the life-long friends they made in the Albanian church community.

*As a note, Dee's daughter Sandra Bisceglia served the AANO National Board as Scholarship Chairwoman for many years.*

**Mrs. Pauline (Soter) Vasil** passed away on March 16, 2020 at the age of 90. She leaves her husband of 64 years, Peter Vasil; a son Gregory Vasil and his wife Katherine of Wellesley; and two grandchildren, Kristina and Michael.

Pauline was born in Worcester, daughter of the late Achilles and Krisulla (George) Soter. She graduated from Commerce High School and worked for many years as an office manager at Don Hodes and Associates Company. She was a member of St. Mary's Albanian Orthodox Church and was active in the Women's Guild.



**James John Lukes** passed away on April 26, 2020 at the age of 85. He was the son of John and Anna (Mitrush) Lukes. James is survived by his devoted wife and partner of fifty years, retired Worcester City Councilor, Vice Chair and Mayor, Konstantina

"Konnie" Lukes, a son, Peter Lukes and his wife, Dr. Andrea Chairamonte. He was a dedicated and loving grandfather to his grandson, Nikomedes Lukes. Jim leaves his sister, Gloria Naun, an aunt, Demetra Konde, nieces and nephews, other extended family members, and a host of friends, associates and colleagues. He was predeceased by his brother Mike.

Jim inherited a belief in hard work and education from his parents who were both born in Albania. He received his BS from Mass College of Pharmacy, his PhD in Medicinal Chemistry from the University of Connecticut, a Master's in Business Administration from Anna Maria College and a Master's in Public Health from the University of Massachusetts. He served in the US Air Force, during the Berlin Crisis in Germany from 1961 and honorably discharged with the rank of Staff Sergeant in 1963. Jim was a



Director of Cardiovascular Metabolic Research at the Rose Research and Diagnostic Center in Worcester where he developed and secured a patent for a clinical diagnostic procedure. He was an Assistant Professor in community and family medicine at the University of Mass Medical School, Associate Administrator at Mount Pleasant Hospital in Lynn, MA, and the Executive Director and Chief of Addictive Services at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Brighton, MA when he retired. In 2006, Jim was appointed to the prestigious position as a Fellow in the International Society of Addictive Medicine. He was also licensed as a nursing home administrator and a pharmacist.

He appreciated his ethnic heritage and public service. *He served as the President of the Albanian-American National Organization*, a member of the Worcester Human Rights Commission and as co-chair in Worcester County with his wife, Konstantina Lukes, of the campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment. Jim will be remembered for his infinite work ethic, steadfast self-reliance, and his kind spirit as a loving husband, father and grandfather. He will be dearly missed by his family and friends.



**Julia (Balli) Vishnja** passed away on May 1, 2020 at the age of 98. She leaves a daughter Denise Baker and her husband Dale, son-in-law Jerry Young, 3 grandchildren, 3 great grandchildren, 2 sisters, Sally Yphantes and Carol Kauzens and several nieces, nephews and cousins. She was predeceased by her husband of 41 years Vasil "Bill" Vishnja, a daughter Cynthia (Vishnja) Young, and sisters Helen Verdy and Phyllis Matto.

Julia was born in Dardha, Albania, the daughter of Kosta and Olga (Vello) Balli, and came to the U.S. when she was 8 years old. She worked in her husband's store, Fairlawn Tailoring, for more 30 years and was a member of St. Mary's Assumption Albanian Orthodox Church.

She enjoyed knitting, crocheting, and cooking, especially making her coveted, delicious lakror

(spinach pie). She took pride in continuing time-honored Albanian traditions. When often asked why she looked so good at her age of "98" she would simply reply, "Don't worry!" We should all take her up on that advice! She will be dearly missed by her family, friends and all who knew her.

**Phyllis (Thamel) Chaban** passed away on May 18, 2020 at the age of 92. She was the daughter of Stilian and Zissa Thamel and was predeceased by her brothers George and Billy, sister-in-law Martha, and nephew George. She leaves her son, Yosef, and his wife Kathleen, as well as two grandchildren, Molly and Leo, and nephew Stephen Thamel, his wife Gina, and their children, Maxwell and Ethan.

**Elsie Vangel** passed away this May 2020. She is predeceased by her husband of 71 years, George Vangel, and her son Richard. Elsie is survived by her children, Kenneth and Cynthia; her grandchildren, Michael, Courtney and Alexandra; her great grandchildren, Tyler and Samantha; many nieces, nephews and extended family.

Elsie and her family were long-time supporters of the AANO and attended many of their events over the years.

*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!**





George Washington is of Albanian descent, according to Reuters!



**The mother of the US historical president was of Albanian from Peja region. It is believed that President Washington himself left a letter who is written for America to protect Albanians at any time and in any way.**

*By John McCallum / Reuters*

The Institute of Biochemistry and Genetics, headquartered in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, has published the results of the latest genetic research of world leaders, according to which it emerges that the historic president of the United States of America, George Washington, has been of Albanian descent.

The institute, which has been researching broadly the genetic samples of the former US president who led the country in the liberation war against the British Kingdom, concludes that Washington was 50 percent Albanian, meaning that one of his parents is 100 percent Albanian.

While the Basel Institute does not go into details about this epochal revelation, experts from other areas have been hastening to confirm this assertion, invoking also other, genealogy and linguistic evidence.

George Washington was the US's main political and military leader in the years 1775-1799, who led the country to victory in the liberation war against Great Britain, was at the helm of the country at the time of the writing of the Constitution, and developed presidential practices of Government that even today are the foundations of the work at the White House.

In the US, he is considered the "Nation's Father".

#### **The Albanian mother**

According to linguist Albert Myko, of the Institute of Linguistics at Berkley University, Calif., USA, there are other evidence that the mother of George Washington was Albanian.

"George Washington was the son of Augustin Washington and Mary Ball Washington. Mary in fact is

Mary Bala, whose parents were from Peja, in today's Kosovo. Marija was born in Lively, Virginia, USA in 1708, but her parents came there in 1706, after a long voyage, by boat that started from Ragusa today's Dubrovnik, and led them through Britain to the Promised Land, America. The history of Washington's grandparents travel from Kosovo to America is described in the Mary Ball Washington biography of Virginia Carmichael, published in 1850. There is even rumored that Balaj had come from a village called Sinic, that could be a confusion of the name of the village of Isniqu, in the municipality of Deçan, says Myko, who shows that this story has long been kept hidden in the shelves of the White House and that the mention of the Albanian descent of Washington has been removed from the forbidden list of US National Security Council just recently.

In this regard, officials from the White House agreed to say only that "it was not by chance that US Vice President Joe Biden mentioned President Washington in relation to the Prime Minister of Kosovo."

#### **Washington DC**

However, the latest discovery, perhaps sheds light on some other aspects of American involvement in Kosovo and support for Albanians in general. The well-known American author, Carl Woodward, who has written dozens of documentary books to US presidents and stories from the White House, says that while researching archives for his Clinton presidential book, published in 2004 under the title "Clinton House", found a George Washington-proclamation letter about Albanians.

"I remember when I got the letter to show to Bill Clinton in one of the many book interviews, and I said, 'Look, Bill, what I've discovered from the Washington archives', he said: 'I've seen it Carl, I've seen it. If I would not have seen it, God knows if we would have intervened in Kosovo,'" says Woodward, known as a journalist, reporter and author who has so far won four Pulitzer awards.

He says he did not include the Washington letter in Clinton's book, because he now prepares a special book for Washington and his Albanian ancestry. Woodward says he is thinking of the book title, "George Washington: The First Albanian in the White

House," or perhaps "An Albanian from Kosovo that created the State of America".

"In a way, the US engagement in favor of Albanians is a debt that America now owes back to the people that created the founder of America itself. See, from my research it is clear that even President Woodrow Wilson read this letter when it was decided to establish an independent state of Albania," says Woodward, and adds that equally, President Nixon was the key person who contributed to Achieving Kosovo's autonomy, with the 1974 Constitution.

"Nixon and Tito had a meeting somewhere in 1970, in which the US president vowed \$ 5 billion in aid to Yugoslavia from 500 million a year until 1980, in exchange for full autonomy for Kosovo. Tito agreed, and everything started - the creation of the University of Prishtina, the constitutional amendments of 1971, the 1974 Constitution, and so on" Woodward notes.

"Even a continuation of the aid has been foreseen in a discussion between Tito and the other US President Jimmy Carter for the years 1980-1990, for which Tito was ready to give to Kosovo the status of the republic. But Tito died, Serbs moved against autonomy, Americans stopped helping ... the rest you know," he said.

However, Woodward believes that all US presidents read the Washington letter and have been obliged to assist Albanians in different ways and in different stages of history.

The American author does not want to reveal the paper's content, saying "I have to wait for my book to go out", but says that what Washington wrote will clarify much about US reports with Albanians.

### Meet Margin B. Alexander



A talented Albanian-American composer and pianist, with a soul full of energy and fantasy, vividly exhibited in his original work.

Margin, a New York City resident, from early stages discovered that his ultimate mission as a composer/performer was to touch as many hearts as possible with his music. His strong commitment and unique creativity led him to develop unique techniques that would intertwine the traditional with the new style in order to develop a unique genre of music that would be embraced by everyone.

From an early age, Margin realized that creating music was one of his strongest passions, hence, he commenced with musical training in Europe, by studying accordion and piano at the age of 14.

Margin graduated from Montclair State University. He holds a B.A. in Music Composition as well and Masters' Degree from the same school.

During his studies at Montclair State University, Margin had the opportunity to study music composition under the tutelage of Grammy Award Winning composer, Robert L. Aldridge.

So far in his career, Margin, has had many opportunities to perform in numerous concerts, score films, accompany well-known artists and hold his own recitals privately and publicly around the world, particularly in Europe and North America. His work has been shared both digitally and live stage performances such as Carnegie Hall, Symphony Hall, Opera America, MAMAC Museum of Nice, Zodiac Festival, IBLA Grand Prize etc. He had the opportunity to participate in numerous music festivals and performing events, both as a composer and a performer as well as collaborate with many ensembles, music societies and solo artists.

Margin is fluent in five languages, Albanian, English, Italian, Macedonian and Spanish.

The love and admiration for culture, music, knowledge, languages, instruments and all the life experiences that he has acquired from living around the world have created a volcano of inspiration that can only be conveyed through the original music he writes.

To listen to some of his work please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGl5GMOw9Og>

## BESA, A TRUE STORY

My name is Pertef Bylykbashi, son of Zenel and Resmije Bylykbashi. As a boy, I lived in Pilur with my family and extended family. When my homeland was taken over by the Communists, our family, like many others, endured the hardships brought on by their regime.

Because of our stand for democracy and freedom, some family members were executed, some escaped, some were given life sentences in prison, and some sentenced to years of hard work in the communist labor camps.

I escaped Albania in 1957 from the labor camp, leaving many family members behind; my mother Resmije died in the labor camp at Saver, and I would not see my brothers and sisters again, as well as many other relatives, for more than 40 years.

I have written an autobiography entitled **BESA, A TRUE STORY** that gives an insight to the families that were destroyed by communism. It is available in audio, digital, hardcopy and softcopy print on Amazon, Kindle, Apple, Barnes&Noble. I would be honored if any of you read BESA, and if you find it worthy, please leave a review with Amazon.

I am attaching the postcard I use for marketing mail outs that has a brief synopsis of my story, and a picture of the monument I erected in Bilisht, Albania in 2008 that proudly displays the Albanian Flag, the American Flag, and the European Flag.

It is important that future generations know and remember the sacrifices that were made to protect our beloved Albania. **BESA, A TRUE STORY** has many "life's lessons" that can be a valuable tool for the youth today.

I would enjoy hearing from you on your thoughts after you read BESA. My cell number is below, as well as my address.

Respectfully,

Pertef Bylykbashi  
Cell: 860-508-5154  
28474 Tasca Drive  
Bonita Springs, Florida 34135



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



## Explore The Albanian Riviera ...

The Albanian Riviera is a place where the sun stretches across the deep sea, where there are splendid configurations of rocky and isolated small beaches, and the mountains and hillsides are covered in Mediterranean vegetation with charming villages constructed between the mountains and sea.

*The Albanian Riviera is blessed with 300 days of sun. The average temperature in January is 10 degrees C. and the average temperature in July is 25 degrees C.*

The Ionian coastline is known for having fascinating beaches with deep and very clean waters. Younger crowds tend to visit the Ionian beaches as the area offers many opportunities for those interested in water sports like diving, boat tours, etc.

Some of the most exotic and interesting beaches in the south of Albania are Dhërmi, Jal, Himara, Qeparo, Borsh, Saranda and Ksamil.

From the Llogara Pass, which is 1,057 meters above sea level, the breathtaking coast can be seen as if from the vantage point of an airplane.



**Cika Mountain, Llogara – Vlore**

The first beach here is Dhërmi in Palasë which has a length of 1.5 km. This is one of the most exotic and tranquil beaches of the Albanian coastal zone complete with rich blue waters. This beach is popular for water sports and is

sometimes even the destination for the parachutes that launch from Llogara Pass.

Dhërmi is located a little further south and is one of the most frequented and important tourist places along the Albanian coast. The crystal-clear waters, isolated beaches, water sports and diving make this the preferred beach of younger generation. The different beaches that are part of Dhërmi are Jaliksari, Shkambo and Gjipea.



**Gjipe Beach – Albania**

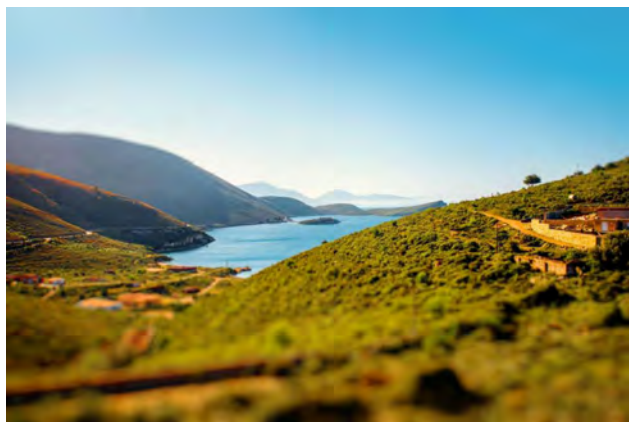
The beach of Gjipea has a beautiful shape. Past this beach there is a stream that has made a canyon with 70 meters high walls. Located near the beach of Dhërmi is the Cave of Pirates which tourists can access only by boat or ferry. There are also hotels, restaurants and summer clubs located nearby.

Throughout this entire area, family tourism has developed, where tourists can choose to rent guesthouses or reside in a variety of hotels nearby. Near Himara 8 km south of Dhërmi, you will find the village of Vuno, which is the central area of the Albanian Riviera. It is a tourist town that comes to life during the summer season thanks to the younger generations that come here.

In this area are beaches of Spile, Potam, Llamaniand and Livadhja. All of them stand out for their deep waters, navigability and rocky characteristics. After Borsh is Qeparo and the



small tectonic gulf of Porto Palermo where Ali Pasha castle is located.



**Porto Palermo – Albania**

Borsh, is one of the longer beach areas of the Albanian Riviera protected by a collection of massive Mediterranean vegetation, primarily citrus and olive plantations. Family tourism has also become very popular in this area. Between here and the city of Saranda, one can find the beaches of Bunec, Kakome and Krokëy whose collective length runs about three km and each with beautiful, crystal-clear water.



**Albania Riviera – Borsh**

The city of Saranda is the most populous urban area on the Albanian Riviera and a very big tourist destination, especially enjoyed by newly married couples on their honeymoon. The city and surrounding areas offer a range of hotels catering to five-star travelers as well as the more

budget conscious, while home rentals also remain an option. The city is well-located on the coast only 9 km away from the Greek island of Corfu. Daily ferries offer connections between Saranda and Corfu making this southern Albanian city a good base for European and international tourists.



Along Saranda you will find some smaller beaches like Central and Liman. Usually, tourists prefer to visit one of the more frequented places, Ksamil, which is located between the peninsula of Ksamil and lagoon of Butrint hosting a number of hotels and restaurants, near the beach of Ksamil are 4 small islands covered by Mediterranean vegetation with a surface of 8.9 ha.



**Ksamil – Albania**

*Taken from the Albanian National Tourist Agency website (Albania.al)*

## Recipes

### Supë Pulë – Chicken Lemon Rice Soup



*Courtesy of Sonila Zarate*

This Chicken Lemon Rice Soup is one of the best soups for when you're feeling sick or on a cold winter day.

**Prep Time:** 5 minutes    **Cook Time:** 1 hour

#### Ingredients:

1 leftover rotisserie chicken  
10 cups water  
2 celery stocks  
1 yellow onion  
3 eggs  
1 cup rice (pearl rice or short grain rice is best)  
1 lemon  
1 tsp. salt  
0.5 tbsp. oregano  
2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley (optional for decoration)  
butter (optional)  
black pepper (optional)

**Instructions:** Add leftover rotisserie chicken in a big pot. Add 8 cups of water and set temp to high. Once water starts to boil, lower temperature to medium and cover the pot. Let boil for about 30 minutes. Turn heat off. Remove chicken and place in a deep plate or platter. Let it cool enough to handle by hand. In the meantime clean and chop celery in big pieces, (cut the celery sticks in half). Peel onion, and cut in about 4 big pieces. Add that to pot.

Strain the chicken stock. You can throw away the remains from straining the stock. Keep about 1 – 1.5 cups of stock aside and pour the rest of the stock in the pot. Add 2 more cups of water to the pot.

When chicken is cool to handle by hand, start removing all pieces of chicken from the carcass. When removed by hand they're usually bite size which is perfect for the soup.

Turn heat on to medium. Add chicken bites back into the stock. When stock starts to boil, add rice,

oregano, and salt. Let it boil so the rice cooks. Once finished cooking and you have tested for salt and adjusted to taste, turn heat to simmer.

Whisk the eggs in a deep bowl. Juice the lemon and add to the eggs, keep whisking. Get the stock you put aside earlier, it might still be warm but it shouldn't be hot, otherwise the eggs will curdle.

Pour 1-2 oz. of stock into the bowl at a time with one hand while still whisking with the other hand. You want the warm stock to raise the temperature of the eggs slowly so they don't curdle. Once you are done with this process then you can grab a ladle of stock/rice and add to the bowl, whisk vigorously.

Pour the egg-lemon-stock mix into the soup and stir well. Let the soup get hot but not to boiling temperature. Serve warm. Add sliced lemon, parsley and black pepper on the soup bowl to taste.



### Qifqi – Albanian Rice Balls

*Courtesy of The Schizo Chef*

Qifqi – Albanian Rice Balls are a quick and easy appetizer to serve at any party!

**Prep Time:** 30 minutes    **Cook Time:** 30 minutes

#### Ingredients:

1 cup rice  
4 eggs  
1 teaspoon dried mint or more to taste  
½ teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 ½ teaspoons salt or more to taste  
olive oil for cooking

**Instructions:** Bring 2 cups of water to a boil. Add rice, reduce heat to low, cover and steam until rice has absorbed all of the water, about 15 minutes. Leave to cool to room temperature.

In a bowl, beat 4 eggs with the mint, black pepper and salt. Add the rice and mix until thoroughly combined and rice is well coated with the egg.

Heat a molded pan and brush each cavity with a little olive oil. Using an ice cream scoop, fill each cavity with the rice. Cover and cook on low heat 5-10 minutes on each side until golden and crispy.

Serve with ajvar or your favorite Balkan vegetable spread.



## ***Ti me je si nje Gonxhe***

*(You are like a Flower Bud)*  
**Popular Albanian Song**

Ti më jë si një gonxhe  
E bukur lulzimi  
Ti më jë si një gonxhe  
E bukur lulzimi

Nuk të gjindet shoqja  
Veç në kopshtin tim  
Nuk të gjindet shoqja  
Veç në kopshtin tim

Hajde moj beja moj  
Hajde lule moj shebojë  
Hajde moj beja moj  
Hajde lule moj shebojë

T'gjitha shoqet t'kan inat  
Se ti je e bukur  
T'gjitha shoqet t'kan inat  
Se ti je e bukur

Shoqet le t'pëlcasin  
gjer sa unë të du  
Shoqet le t'pëlcasin  
gjer sa unë të du

Hajde moj beja moj  
Hajde lule moj shebojë  
Hajde moj beja moj  
Hajde lule moj shebojë

F'tyra jote si pranverë  
Syni yt i zi  
F'tyra jote si pranverë  
Syni yt i zi

per mimozat tuja  
dielli paska ra  
per mimozat tuja  
dielli paska ra

Hajde moj beja moj  
Hajde lule moj shebojë  
Hajde moj beja moj  
Hajde lule moj shebojë



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