



NEWCOMERS

AN INFORMAL SOCIAL GROUP
WELCOMING NEW ARRIVALS TO ATHENS

<http://www.newcomersinathens.com>
newcomers.bulletinboard@gmail.com

Newsletter October 2020

Dear Members,

I'm finding it hard to believe it is already October, in a year that is rushing by unlike any other we've lived through.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has reminded us again to be vigilant and respect the current health and safety measures, the goal being to prevent an aggressive increase in Covid-19 cases and avoid even stricter measures that would lead to a lockdown. And so we must accept that "The mask is the vaccine until the vaccine is found... Together we will succeed again or together we will miss the opportunity," the Greek prime minister concluded.

It is heartening to see how the changes to our Bulletin Board guidelines have enabled members to share details of many activities and interests in which they can get involved. It's great to learn that there's a lot going on out there to keep our spirits up: for example, from reflexology, aromatherapy and meridian energy massage to jewelry making, and from guitar lessons in your home to Greek language lessons on line. I do hope you find a way to stay connected during these times when our usual socializing routines are under siege. One thing is for sure, the poem by our "Lunch Bunch Queen" will cheer you up!

Don't forget to "fall back" and change your clocks by one hour on Sunday 25th of October when Daylight Saving Time ends. It may feel like a long time since the blue skies of summer, but it also means an extra hour in bed!

Thanks go to our members for their contributions once again, for a decent mix of articles - without them there would be no newsletter! I must admit that Part 1 of Didi's article on the work of AmurteI prompted me again, not only to be thankful for my life, but also to despair over the inequalities endured by oppressed women today. I was also reminded of the inspiring words of Nelson Mandela that I displayed in my office for so many years, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." And, once again, I counted my blessings.

Do please send me your contributions and suggestions as we plan to stay connected via our newsletter, despite being unable to meet socially for the time being. Enjoy the changing season while you stay well and safe!

Chris Grant-Bear, Editor.



" The end of summer is not the end of the world. Here's to October . . . "

A. A. Milne

- 12th Canadian Thanksgiving Day
- 25th Clocks change
- 28th Oxi Day Greek holiday
- 31st Spooky Halloween

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Keep informed of upcoming events,
tours, get-togethers and meetings... Join
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NEWCOMERS MEMBERS USEFUL INFORMATION

Website: www.newcomersinathens.com

Bulletin Board: newcomers.bulletinboard@gmail.com

Emergency Numbers

<u>EU-WIDE EMERGENCY</u>	<u>112</u>
<u>POLICE EMERGENCY:</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>FIRE BRIGADE:</u>	<u>199</u>
<u>TOURIST POLICE</u>	<u>171</u>
<u>AMBULANCE</u>	<u>166</u>
<u>SOS MISSING CHILDREN:</u>	<u>1056</u>
<u>DOCTORS SOS</u>	<u>1016</u>
<u>EMERGENCY HOSPITALS</u>	<u>1535</u>
<u>POISON FIRST AID</u>	<u>210</u>
<u>8081464</u>	

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Newcomers is an informal, non-profit, social group run by a committed team of volunteers offering support, advice and information to new arrivals in Athens via monthly meetings, activities, a newsletter and an e-community Bulletin Board. Newcomers is also dedicated to doing rewarding work in the local community by helping a small number of worthy causes.

Formed to encourage people to meet each other, make new friends, and cope with the practical side of living in Greece as well as enrich their lives with culture, Newcomers welcomes all nationalities, with English as the common language.

Although informal, we have a team of committed volunteers who meet together regularly to take decisions and agree on issues affecting the group. Each volunteer provides help in various capacities. There are no membership or annual fees – only a small charge at each general meeting to cover costs.

If there are surplus funds left over from an event, the monies are donated to the charities supported by the group.

Newcomers Monthly General Meeting is held on the second Wednesday of each month from September to June in the Northern Suburb of Kifisia. Twice a year the meeting includes special luncheons. Meetings usually include a speaker who shares information about a specific topic of interest. New people are introduced, general announcements are made, upcoming activities are announced and any questions are answered.



This year OXI Day falls midweek, on a Wednesday. The 28th October, 1940, was the historic day on which Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas refused the Italian request to allow their troops stationed in the Italian protectorate of Albania, to enter Greece.

He simply said the word "OXI". In response to this brave refusal, a furious Mussolini ordered his troops to attack at once. And so, when the larger and fully prepared Italian Army crossed the Greek border, Greece was plunged into World War II.

It is the outstanding bravery of Metaxas and the Greek people during the Second World War that is proudly remembered on OXI day.

OUR Legal column

Moving Abroad with Your Children (part 1)



This summer brought a rather sudden and important change in family law in Greece, by means of article 139 of law 4714/2020 which amended article 1519 of the Civil Code, in force as of 31st July 2020.

Up until that date, the parent who had exclusive custody of their child in Greece could choose the place of the child's residence and decide on it without needing the agreement of the other parent, even if this parent had contact rights for the child. The custodial parent could choose to live with the child and any place of his/her choice in Greece (i.e. in another city from the habitual residence of the other parent) or anywhere abroad, even as far as the USA or Australia.

The parent who does not live with the child could have still opposed the move by filing an emergency measures lawsuit, which would have had to be followed by another ordinary proceedings lawsuit of a more permanent nature, however the rule was absolute and the court predominantly allowed the parent who had custody of a child/children to remove them from Greece.

Naturally, there were exceptional cases where the staying parent could block the child from moving abroad, especially if s/he could prove that the move was against the best interest of the child, such

as when the child would lose all her/his friends and be alienated from her/his relatives or other people to whom the child was attached, or when any kind of contact with the parent who is not going to move with the child would be rendered impossible by the move. The child, if it were considered mature enough, would usually be interviewed by the judge, in order for her/his opinion to be heard.

All this has changed as of 31st July 2020. The new article 1519 of the Hellenic Civil Code states that a change of the place of residence of the child which substantially influences the contact rights of the parent with whom the child does not reside requires either an agreement of both parents or a decision of the court, not by means of emergency measures proceedings, which is relatively fast, by means of ordinary proceedings which will probably take an average of 18 months to be heard and decided on.

This means that any parent who wants to remove their children from Greece, for example because they found a better job in another part of the world or because they want to support an elderly parent in need of help, must either try to convince their ex-spouse for the benefits of this move for the child or be ready to fight a long and probably costly battle in court.

(To be continued next month)

Marylou and Karolina Andriakopoulou, lawyers to the Supreme Court of Greece and Members of the Athens Bar Association, have been practicing law for 25 years.

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Four Healthy Restaurants That Deliver to the Suburbs of Athens

by Tatiana Harkiolakis

Four Healthy Restaurants That Deliver to the Suburbs of Athens

Fall is back, and with it comes school and work amid an unpredictable pandemic. With the rise of delivery services, however, we don't have to kiss fun meals goodbye—nor do we have to settle for sad fast food on the days we don't want to cook. Below are four restaurants that dish up healthy cuisine and deliver it to the suburbs of Athens. For vegans and vegetarians, **Healthy Bites** (*Efterpis 3; 21 0805 2548*) recently moved from downtown to Maroussi. This bistro makes a huge range of dishes, from breakfast to dinner to dessert, all with organic ingredients and almost no animal products in sight. They even make vegan-ized versions of classic Greek dishes, including *gyros*, *moussaka*, and a classic grilled cheese *tost*.



When you want to add a bit of summer to your diet, order from **Mesogeios Thalassa** (*Leoforo Mesogeion 272; 2106521000*) in Holargos, where they have a daily menu of grilled fish and creative seafood dishes. Fish purists will love the grilled *lavraki* (sea bass), shrimps, and sardines, while the more experimental can try salmon burgers, potato croquettes with shrimp, or stuffed tomatoes and peppers with shrimp, mussels, and tuna.



Further down south, **Lyfe in a Bowl** (*Markou Mpotsari 1-3; 2108920989*) is the perfect stop (or order) for a light, healthy snack in Glyfada. They serve salads, grain bowls, and wraps, many of which are safe for vegans and vegetarians. Try the RainBowl with noodles, avocado, and peanut butter dressing or the falafel with cabbage and cherry tomatoes. Top it off with a smoothie, organic coffee, or sugar-free cookie.



And finally, **Slim Bites** may not deliver, but they're well worth a quick visit with locations in Vrilissia (*59 Pentelis Avenue; 2106646716*), Nea Erithrea (*373 Kifisias Avenue; 2106254165*), Neo Psychiko (*9 Solomou, 2106776764*), Kolonaki (*37 Patriarkou Ioakim; 2107224757*) and Glyfada (*Artemidos 8 & Leodikis; 21067006979*). This patisserie dishes up a variety of sweets made with stevia, and many of them are made without gluten or animal products. They also make cakes for events and children's birthday parties.



Tatiana Harkiolakis
www.facebook.com/TheAthenianSite

When the world won't hold us – Creating a new holding experience

by Alexandra Kovacevic Konstantatou



Leafing through the last issue of *Psychotherapy Networker*, a leading magazine in the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy, I came across an interesting article by Dr. Gabor Matte, an expert on trauma. He points out that many of us carry a great deal of anxiety that we usually cover up or distract ourselves from, through work, relationships, going to the bars and restaurants, watching sports, exercising. Some of these are good things to do, but they can also function as a way of binding or diverting our anxieties.

Now that there are fewer of those options for coping, people's anxieties are rising, and that's showing up in their behavior. Dr. Matte is emphasizing that is **important to remember that anxiety was not born of the COVID-19 pandemic**. It was there before, and in almost every case, it goes back to people's earliest experiences. However we're responding to this situation, whatever we're experiencing these days -including panic, grief, inspiration, connection - is part of our beginnings.

How we perceive ourselves as being held by the world reflects how we were held in the beginning. Did our earliest caregivers have a presence of awareness, self-knowledge, attunement, and lack of stress? Right now, while the world may not be holding us in those qualities, we have an opportunity to feel what it may have been like for us at the start, and to try to heal it for ourselves and for those around us.

Agency and our choices in taking responsibility for our selves

Dr. Matte continues to point out that suffering and trauma are not the same thing. We should not assume that we've all been or will be traumatized by the circumstances right now. Trauma is not the same as pain. Trauma is not the same as fear. Those are natural responses to events. Trauma is when we get stuck around those events and their impact on us. **Trauma, in some ways, is a resistance to grief. Genuine grieving is the opposite of trauma.**

Some people choose to get out there marching, protesting and taking action - or supporting those who do – and they won't necessarily be traumatized, because they're **responding actively** to something painful, cruel, and very unjust. If you respond with that sense of agency, this will not have to be traumatic.

On the other hand, if this situation triggers in some people a deeply held sense of **helplessness and a primordial sense of isolation**, then it can reinforce the trauma that already lives in us. So the first thing to realize is that, while it may not be accessible to all of us at all times, **the capacity to act with a sense of agency is there.**

How do we therapists support our clients and the people who are relying on us? One way to activate our agency in times like these, where we cannot change the outside reality, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is to hire a professional counsellor to help us

When I am working with my clients I am using a person-centered approach to therapy. Created by one of the most influential psychologists of all times, Carl Rogers, it is a **humanistic, holistic, relational, and experiential approach.**

In a session with my clients, we focus on experiencing and expressing feelings in the here and now. Our goal is to create a therapeutic alliance, thus creating a climate where a client can overcome blocks to growth. I would help my client explore his denied or distorted aspects of self, in order to become more aware and willing to accept himself, (as life itself) - as a process of change. My belief is that each person is capable of finding his own direction, reflecting actualizing

tendency that exists in all human beings; my role is to facilitate this process by being a skilled companion on his journey of self-discovery.

Depathologizing a distress The symptoms of stress, depression, physical problems or issues at work, or in a relationships (or lack of meaningful human relationships) are only a sign to look deeper and discover what is causing them. Symptoms are not there to pathologize a person's distress, or to put a label on him. Looked at from this angle, they are welcoming signals warning us to pay attention and correct our path. That is why I do not use the medication which numbs, not only the symptoms, but the emotions that come with them, taking us out of the therapeutic process.

Empathy, unconditional positive regard for each of my clients, and a genuineness are my attitudes and my compass when creating **a relationship that heals** and a **new holding experience** for my clients.

In this way, we are all in this together.

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SAY NO... by Pauline Leyden Zoulias, October 2020.

The COVID-19 crisis has dwarfed the climate crisis. Worries about health and the economy have been foremost on most news channels. It's easy to forget that there is a climate crisis. Whilst we've all been struggling with COVID-19, news that the Thwaites ice shelf in the Antarctica is melting at a faster rate and breaking off from the main ice shelf seemed to go fairly unreported on the news. This ice shelf also known as the 'doomsday' glacier can destabilize the whole area causing ice to melt and subsequently water levels to rise around the world. The dire predictions that by 2050 there will be no summer ice left in Antarctica. Coastal cities such as Thessaloniki would be flooded if this happens. It seems it is not a matter of IF but WHEN.

This summer has also seen more fires in California causing devastation to many communities and there have been an unusually high number of hurricanes in the Atlantic this year which is the result of warmer seas. CLIMATE CHANGE IS HERE.

On top of all this, we have a growing crisis worldwide with plastics and medical waste caused by the COVID-19 crisis. The amount of toxins in the environment has increased in the form of disinfectant, bleaches, hand sanitizer. It seems that as governments move to ban single use plastics in the form of straws, coffee cup, bags, cotton sticks, coffee stirrers etc.. they are being replaced by plastic masks, plastic gloves, plastic gowns, plastic containers for hand sanitizer, plastic goggles and plastic visors! With this COVID crisis, we seem to have taken many steps backwards! And we are only 7 months into it!

The problem with climate change is that it may seem that there is little we can do on an individual level. It needs changes in policy and laws but if we look at the things that we can change then we can each make a difference. One of the things I read this year is that it's better if as many people as possible make some changes rather than a few people making huge changes. And changes made at a local level can have an immediate effect on our life now. For example: clearing a beach of plastic means that we have a nicer place to swim; reducing our household waste means that the bins will not be overflowing, reducing household rubbish at source means fewer bags to carry out to the bins etc...

My main thrust has always been to produce less waste at home and to clear litter especially plastic from the environment. I have to admit, it has been tougher during COVID-19. I gave in to my panic about disinfecting everything and bought chlorine for the first time in years and the family all needed masks. Luckily, though as a family we had developed some strong habits and we were able to continue to produce less waste as the crisis continued.

It's all about choices. It's all about doing whatever you can to help and believing that every little helps.

Many people I know made their own masks. My sewing is not very good so I bought washable cotton masks from the pharmacy. We use soap and water rather than hand sanitizer, which is better for the skin and there have been worries about the overuse of hand sanitizer and the emergence of super bugs. I'm using an ecological disinfectant rather than chlorine for around the house to disinfect door handles, light switches and surfaces etc...

I've been more careful when picking up litter and always ensure that I wear my gardening gloves now. Invariably, picking up litter now includes picking up discarded masks and plastic gloves. I read that before throwing masks away one should cut the straps so that wildlife do not become tangled up in them. If you must wear plastic gloves, cut the fingers up before throwing them away to protect wildlife. Of course, it goes without saying, make sure they are firmly in the bin and so will not fly about in the environment and become a litter problem.

It's even more important in these difficult days that we say NO to single use plastic and each do our best to reduce plastic in the environment.

REFUSE THE PLASTIC. SAY NO TO PLASTIC. SWITCH TO REUSABLE ITEMS!

Reusable, washable masks, soap and water for washing hands, no gloves (or reusable ones if you must).

Stay well, stay safe but at the same time protect the environment. It is possible to do both...



Unique opportunity! Great topic idea for your English Language Students!

Citizens and organisations are invited to send ideas to the Greek Ministry of Environment for **the new 'Greece Without Single Use Plastics' project**

The Ministry, together with the Laskaridis Foundation, is calling for self-funded ideas that will promote reusing practices and the replacement of single-use plastics with alternative new materials. The recently launched campaign aims to mobilize all citizens and raise awareness on the protection of the environment and the elimination of single-use plastics in Greece.

Those interested can send their proposals to sup@prv.ypeka.gr until May 30, 2021.

From Martina, our foreign correspondent in Tunisia

Back to school

Martina, Tuesday September 29th, 02:51am



The beginning of a new season. My boys started school more than a month ago after five months of not seeing their friends and teachers in the real world. Eleven weeks of distance learning and home confinement, then a summer of relative freedom after a most profound global shock. This freedom was enjoyed at a price. It was the first summer in my life of 49 years that I have not spent in Greece with my family. For my children too, the first time in their lives that they have not been to Greece and spent the summer on the beach with their cousins.

I think back to the first day of school a month ago. Not yet fully awake, and completely out of character, I entered the car in my boxer short pajamas. No makeup. No sunglasses. My boys combed and handsome, diligently ready for their long awaited day with masks on, looked at me questioningly, and mouthed a polite, "Mama?". The practice of a daily routine outside of the house a concept long forgotten, I went through clumsy motions distractedly. As we approached the drop off, I beheld the school principal next to a live school mascot all in masks and in a most festive mood and scene. In my increased wakefulness I realized with a surge of panic and shame that this was not only an important day in the context of our time, it was also the last back to school day for my oldest boy. I cried all the way home and wasn't able to stop for some time. It was an important day on many fronts and I had failed to honor it as it should have been.

Even though Tunisia followed suit with Europe by implementing a full lockdown last March, the nation had not really felt the virus. It is only now with the second wave that the real impact of this pandemic is being experienced here, with infections soaring each day. While in March infections were in the double digits with very few deaths, now we are well within four digits in numbers of infections, and the hospitals are feeling the strain. Even with these numbers the streets are full of people and life goes on in a most surreal masked way. There is a kind of complacency, and diminished fear in the light of this never ending threat. The economy could not bear another full lock down. Yet new measures are constantly discussed, rumored, put in place and revised, and the threat of closing down again is constant.

Only a month has gone by since the return to a full and joyful campus at back to school day, and the threat of an imminent change to distance learning is expected from day to day. I am surprised at my own surprise on hearing this. In March the same had happened with only a tiny fraction of the numbers. Still I was unprepared. Again.

It is 4:40am, and reading back all my articles for the newsletter since February, I am struck by my over confidence and arrogance. So much has changed since then. If anything is to be taken away from the state of our current reality it is to keep an open mind and a humble and positive spirit. More than anything to resolve to take each day at a time and honor it as it should be, in a state of preparedness, fully clothed with makeup on even under the mask.

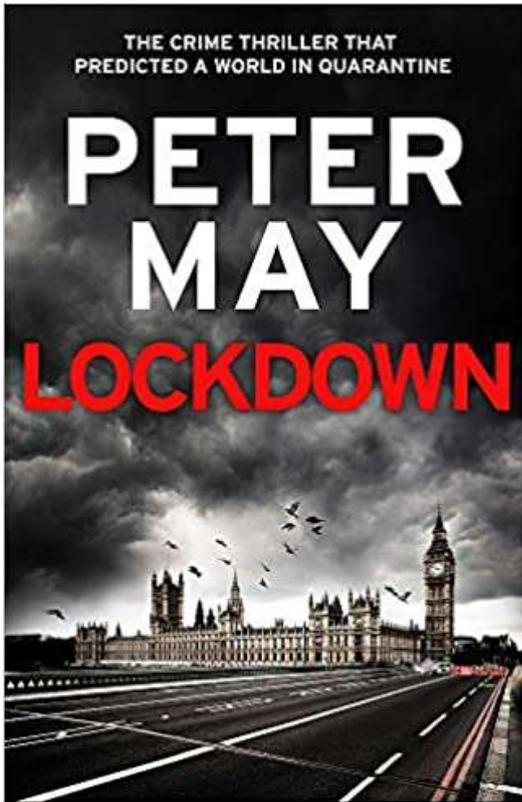
Martina Anagnostou

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Book Reviews by Di Drymoussis

Lockdown by Peter May

Di Drymoussis reports, "I've just finished reading, 'Lockdown' by Peter May. I heard that it had been written 15 years ago and rejected by publishers as being too unrealistic."



Bill Gates forecast an epidemic five years ago. The British government banned publication of the Cygnus review which forecast a probable pandemic three years ago.

Peter May saw it coming, and so did others - but not Westminster. With the world having spent the last few months in a pandemic where so many background factors are ringing true, this was the perfect time to release a well-researched book on this subject. I gather Peter May did not change a single word of it!

What a page-turner it turned out to be! A superbly written story, set during a horrific pandemic that's wiping out the population of London in days. A child is murdered. Then a retiring detective is given

the task to find out why and who did it. Add a professional killer into the mix, a mystery person and you have a rollercoaster of a ride to the end.

So - a deadly virus has caused a global pandemic, plunging London into lockdown. Thousands of lives have been lost. Health and emergency services are overwhelmed. Sound familiar? A building site for a temporary hospital turns up a bag containing the bones of a murdered child. A remorseless killer has been at work and will stop at nothing to prevent the bones being identified.

Enter D.I. Jack MacNeil who is counting down the hours of his final day. A career in ruins, a marriage which is over and the virus touching his own family, Jack doesn't have much more to lose. Jack will stop at nothing to track down the child's killer but, with limited time left at work and sinister forces tracking his every move prepared to kill again to conceal the truth, will Jack be able to reach the truth in time - or will he be stopped by the virus or the killers first?

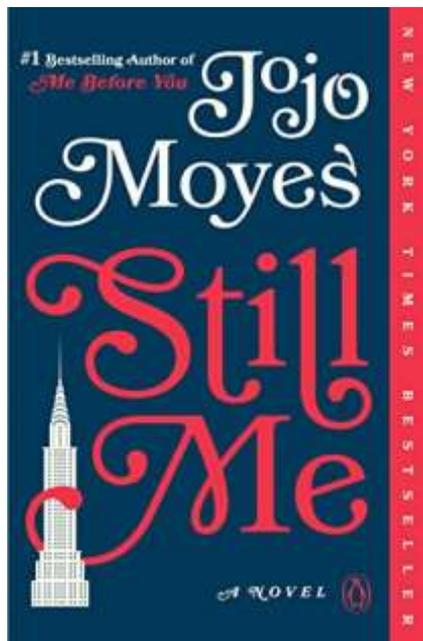
This is a well produced story with believable track lines and a dystopian feeling that permeates throughout. This book is a roller coaster of emotions, all taking place within the space of 24 hours - which is probably about the time it took me to race through it. A book full of twists and turns that I could not put down. Written 15 years ago, it is entirely prophetic when you look at what is happening today.

There is the inevitable violence and love interest. As it all builds to a thrilling climax, the reader is left on the edge of their seat, wanting more. Once hooked, you'll find it difficult to put down. You won't want it to end, but you'll be desperate to find out the ending... and the ending is unbelievably good. The finale was about the betrayal of a population over capitalism and greed.

Brilliant!

Still Me – by JoJo Moyes

Di's second review choice is the final book in a JoJo Moyes' trilogy.



Still Me If you haven't read the previous two novels, **Me Before You** and **After You**, please do so before reading this - you need them for the back story.

I've read most of JoJo Moyes novels and I've not been disappointed with any of them. All very different and all great reads. Anyone who has read the two previous novels will be familiar with the quirky Lou (Louisa) Clarke. In this final book in the trilogy, **Still Me**, Lou has taken the plunge and headed to a new job as an assistant/companion to the wife of a super-rich philanthropist in New York. This final episode brings many ups and downs for Lou but sees her really evolving into the person she knows she should be.

You have to love Lou. She is so down to earth that pretty much everyone can relate to her. She gets in embarrassing situations, says the wrong things, has the same relationship issues with families, partners and puts her foot in it often. This is what makes her so lovable, she is so very human, you cringe for her, you laugh with her and you feel for her. As well as adjusting to being away from home, surrounded by ridiculous wealth, Lou is trying to juggle a

long distance relationship when she meets someone who brings up many feelings from the past. Questioning her relationship, what she wants, dealing with the family dramas of her own and her new employers it is anything but dull for Lou or the readers.

I love authors whose books are so compelling that they make you want to abandon all the urgent things you have to do and just lose yourself in the story. JoJo Moyes is definitely one of those authors. She has introduced wonderful characters such as the Gopniks, the family that employs her; Agnes the (2nd) wife; Tabitha, the daughter of Mr Gopnik; Ilaria, the housekeeper; and Mrs de Witt, the irascible old lady who lives all alone in a vast apartment next to Louisa's employers with her adored, squinty eyed, bad tempered dog, Dean Martin. Moyes has the ability to bring characters very much to life with their rudeness, their flaws, and their humility.

Lou herself is the sort of heroine you want to cheer on as she struggles with the complexities of a long-distance relationship. She faces up to the sort of adversity which would send most of us running for the airport and the first flight home. This is not just a love story, it is about making difficult choices and trying to discover who you really are.

Following Lou with her 'saviour' complex has been an enjoyable journey, sometimes very sad and sometimes just very uplifting and funny. I so much enjoyed the book that I found myself deliberately slowing down my reading pace so I didn't finish it too quickly. Having read the first book I felt nothing could ever match up, and perhaps the middle book was the least gripping of the three, but this final book brought it all together. It was never going to be an unhappy ending of course - just what happens and to whom.

The book is full of fascinating details about the lifestyle of America's ultra-rich, but I also found it a page-turner. I was sorry to finish the book knowing it was the end of her story. It was beautifully written, with a great conclusion. I'll miss Louisa Clarke and her eclectic tastes very much.

For All My Wonderful Lunch Bunchers!

by Kathy Cambas

As I write this in September
Memories return as I remember

A group of ladies, charming all
Who'd gather round about each fall

To savor various eating places
And grace them with their lovely
faces.



SEPTEMBER

Crispy duck at "Wagamama"
Just as good as Yokohama

OCTOBER

"Psarokokkalo" was THE place
For octopus, shrimp, and
bouillabaisse

NOVEMBER

"Common Secret" , our Christmas
treat
Plus a lottery prize...good enough to
eat!

JANUARY

"Yellow" fever came our way
But turned into a red-hot day

FEBRUARY

Buffalo wings at "Wings & Rings"
Yummier than just about anything

And afterwards we took a run
(Because we couldn't bear to stop
the fun)

To "All About Lemon" where we
dined
On scrumptious desserts, so divine!

AND THEN.....

COVID-19 arrived for good
And now we're all stuck
Eating comfort food.

But don't despair
We'll meet again
I don't know where
And I don't know when

But I can promise
When we do,
We'll have our cake
And eat it too!

#

Recipe of the Month – Ratatouille Niçoise

Mary's recipe for October is Ratatouille Niçoise

4 large white or yellow onions
800g long aubergines
1kg tomatoes
1 red pepper and 1 yellow pepper
1kg small Niçois "trompette" courgettes, with flowers
4 cloves garlic
1 dollop anchovy paste
1 sprig thyme, a bay leaf and 3 sprigs parsley
0.1g saffron
1 sugar cube
1 onion stuck with 2 cloves (optional)
olive oil, salt and pepper, to taste
olives (optional) and basil (optional)



First, prepare the vegetables: Slice the onions. Cut the aubergines into 1cm rounds. Stick them lightly with the point of a knife, sprinkle with salt to help them release their liquid and set aside. Dunk the tomatoes in boiling water for 30 seconds, then peel and crush with a fork. Remove the seeds from the peppers and cut into 1cm strips. Cut the courgettes into rounds about 1cm thick. Peel the garlic and slice very thinly.

In a large cast iron pot, cook the onion in olive oil seasoned with the anchovy paste. Add a sprig of thyme and season with pepper. Stir with a wooden spoon. As soon as the onion starts to turn golden but before it browns, add the crushed tomatoes, bay leaf, parsley, saffron, clove-stuck onion (if using) and a sugar cube to reduce the acidity of the tomato.

In one or several pans, separately fry the aubergines (10 minutes), peppers (10 minutes) and courgettes (5 minutes) in olive oil, removing each vegetable and setting aside before moving on to the next. Season with salt and pepper and remove any excess oil by draining each vegetable on paper towels before transferring to the tomato sauce.

Cover the pot of vegetables and tomato sauce with parchment paper and then the lid of the pot. Simmer 40 to 45 minutes, preferably in an oven at between 150° and 180° C. Remove the clove-stuck onion, and season to taste. Add olives and a touch of basil (if using) just before serving.

The Humble Spud: Can it have a healthy place in our diet?



A King Edward? A Jersey Royal? A Ruby Lou? Fried, mashed, roasted, baked, or - my favorite, boiled and served with a knob of butter – the humble spuds are a pantry staple, and the ultimate comfort food. However, the potato does not appear too often on “healthy eating plans” or fancy fashionable diets, despite the fact that both white and sweet potatoes can be healthy for us.

The main issue with potatoes and weight loss is how potatoes are most often consumed: in chip or fry form. Because frying chips in oil adds a lot of fat and calories, and they’re often dusted with a lot of salt, regular intake of both can impede weight loss.

Any type of potato is a nutrient-rich whole food: sweet and white potatoes are packed with fibre and white potatoes even contain more potassium than a banana. What really sets white and sweet potatoes apart is their percentage of healthy beta carotene, which is the pigment that colors sweet potatoes a beautiful orange.

So what’s the nutritional differences between them? Sweet potatoes contain more fiber. White potatoes have slightly more calories and protein, a few more grams of carbohydrates, and more potassium compared with a sweet one. Both types of potatoes provide a good source of vitamin C., so if you are limiting your fruit intake, a potato or sweet potato is a good way to get more of this vitamin, essential for bone health and forming blood vessels.

Even if You Have Diabetes, You Can Still Eat Potatoes People with diabetes can and should eat potatoes. The issue concerns the serving sizes as eating a large potato may unknowingly send glucose levels soaring. An appropriate serving is a potato that can fit in the palm of your hand. If you can’t find a spud that small, then just eat half or split it between two people.

Some Healthy Ways to Enjoy a Potato

- Try a baked sweet potato with sauteed broccoli, drizzled with olive oil and a piece of salmon.
- Cut a potato into strips and bake in the oven to make “fries.”
- Chop up to add to a soup, or puree and stir in a soup to make it “creamy”.
- Drizzle with olive oil, wrap in a foil packet, and grill.
- Toss into a frittata.
- You can even mash a steamed sweet potato and put into a yogurt bowl with nut butter.

You can find a way to top your spud with whatever you’d like, just use serving sizes as a guide. That means 2 tablespoons (tbsp) of sour cream, plain Greek yogurt, or a pat of butter on a baked potato, or dipping roasted potatoes in 2 tbsp of ketchup.

Butter and sour cream might not be traditionally “healthy” because they add saturated fat, but as long as you’re sticking with the recommended serving size, these toppings are part of a nutritious meal.

The smaller New potatoes, with their lighter, thinner skin have an innate smooth, buttery flavor that doesn’t need anything added to taste great. Simply boil the small spuds until tender and enjoy.

Enjoy your next helping of a delicious spud!

Part 1 of an article by Didi and the AMURTEL team, which led me to count my blessings.

A big thank you to the wonderful women at Newcomers!



Many thanks to Newcomers for your generous charity donation of 1000 euros back in the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis. Though we didn't have a chance to properly thank you, we were so grateful. It helped us during lockdown when income became unpredictable.

Due to your help and others like you, we are able to continue our refugee programs of prenatal/postnatal midwifery care, breastfeeding and infant nutrition, and sexual reproductive health literacy/gender based violence support, all in Arabic, Farsi, French and English.

From the viewpoint of our center in Platia Viktorias, it's obvious that the refugee situation has hit another crisis point. Not since 2016 have the number of homeless been as high as the last months. The square is once again full of families newly arrived from the islands, sleeping rough with nowhere to go. Every day, homeless pregnant women and mothers with infants come to us asking for accommodation and help with basic needs.

An example is Solange. A 25 year old homeless refugee and single mother, she came to us four months ago in the last stages of pregnancy. We gave her antenatal care, food and infant supplies as well as the limited suggestions we have for housing. After giving birth, the hospital discharged her but kept the baby due to Solange still being homeless. After a long struggle, she's finally found accommodation only to be told that her son has been sent to an orphanage. Now she must go through the courts to get him back. Though legal work and housing are not directly in our mandate, we are supporting her and others like her as much as we can.

On a brighter note, many women coming for our services leave feeling stronger, more knowledgeable and ready to help others. An amazing 93% of mothers told us in a survey that they use the knowledge gained in the educational

support groups to help other mothers in their communities. That means that the work is having a greater impact than we even know as mothers become valuable community resources.

Glory is one of these dynamic, pro-active mothers. Originally from Nigeria, she took our breastfeeding peer-to-peer training course and has made a youtube video aimed at women from African countries. It was heartwarming to see her enthusiastically encouraging mothers to breastfeed with accurate and well-presented information. She became so inspired by taking our course that she decided to continue her education and was accepted to study in a university in the UK.

Sexual reproductive health and gender based violence are two areas that affect almost all the women coming to AMURTEL and in which we see a lot of change. For most Middle Eastern women, primarily from Afghanistan and Syria with fewer from Iraq and Iran, it is huge to overcome the intense taboos and shame of even saying aloud words relating to female body parts, let alone discussing any of it. It is not uncommon for them to have no idea where their menstrual blood comes from or how fertilization occurs, as two examples among many. This is particularly true for Afghan women, where illiteracy and lack of education are high. Most often very shy and embarrassed in the beginning, they soon enjoy learning female anatomy and physiology and the menstrual cycle, moving through related topics to finally ending with contraception and family spacing. Following this are discussions on women's rights, social gender norms, what constitutes violence and where they can get help if needed.

Nasrin, an Afghan woman from a small village, admitted that the idea of a woman having such rights had never occurred to her. She and her friends have begun talking about this amongst themselves and have begun standing up to their husbands. Engaged at 15 and married at 17 to her cousin whom she did not love but was forced to marry, Nasrin says the beatings that she received every day of her life from her husband have begun to decrease. She feels hopeful that with time and further acclimation into European society, they will decrease even more.

Part 2 of Didi's report on Amurtel will appear in the November newsletter.

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The **Athens Marathon**, scheduled to take place November 7-9, has been cancelled due to the **coronavirus (Covid-19)** pandemic.



The Hellenic Athletics Federation (SEGAS) underlined that every possible effort had been made with the Greek health authorities for the 38th Athens marathon to proceed as planned. But unfortunately, "Even by following a very strict manual of rules and regulations, staging only the Marathon Race and not the shorter races, reducing the number of participants and having all participants to go through a Covid-19 test before the Race, at the expenses of our Federation, was not enough," SEGAS said. The aforementioned measures could not secure the absolute safety of each runner's health, which is its top priority.

SEGAS said that it will launch a new, Special Edition Virtual Race, which will be a race for all and full of surprises. "We are very optimistic that after this pandemic is over we will all run together in our races in 2021, a very important year for Greece since it coincides with the anniversary of the 200 years after the Greek revolution," SEGAS said.