

Greek-Americans proud to see Games in Athens

By Anthony D. Advincula
Journal correspondent

They have lived in America for decades, but for many Greek-Americans in Jersey City, yesterday's opening ceremonies of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens spurred memories of home.

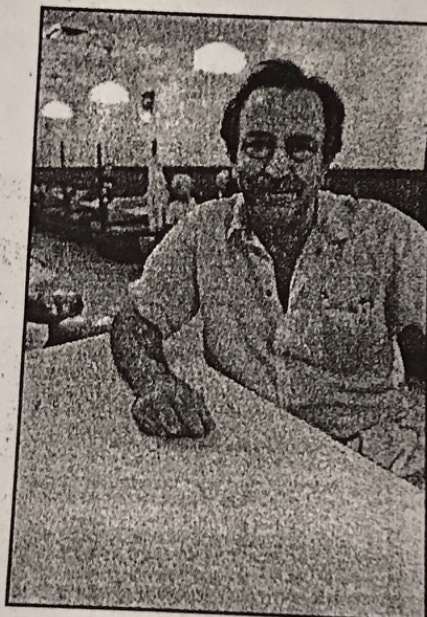
"It's time for us to be happy and proud," 72-year-old John Mehos of Greenville Avenue said. "Although most of us here may not be able to go back there for the event, our hearts and minds are certainly going to Athens."

Mehos, who has been living in Jersey City since 1936, is the president of the Evangelismos Greek Orthodox Church on Montgomery Street. Most of the church members, he said, will be watching Olympic coverage on TV.

"Because the Games will be held in different places around the country, it's a great opportunity to show our Greek hospitality. It's very rewarding for the players, tourists, and the people of Greece," Mehos said.

Despite the heavy criticism of Greece's handling of the Games' preparation — everything from readiness to cost overruns to security — Mehos said he believes the country has proven it is qualified to host the event.

The Games will certainly offer a taste of home, 60-year-old Andreas Biakos, owner of the Flamingo Diner on Montgomery Street, said.



Journal photo by Andrew Miller

ANDREAS BIAKOS will be avidly watching the 2004 Olympic Games being hosted by his native Greece. Biakos, owner of the Flamingo Restaurant in Jersey City, said he is "very, very proud" that the Games returned to where it all began.

"How would you feel when a very special event is happening again in the place where you came from?" he said. "After 2,700 years, the Olympics is back to where it all began. Of course, I'm very, very proud."

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