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EU pact main policy goal, PM says

Speaking in Parl't ahead of confidence vote on Wednesday, Papademos seeks commitment to reforms. Triggering a debate which is to end in a confidence vote in the new government on Wednesday, the speech set out the administration's policy platform.

eurozone.

Triggering a debate which is to culminate in a confidence vote in the new government on Wednesday, the speech set out the administration's policy platform without any surprises. The key



The prime minister of the country's new interim government, Lucas Papademos, on Monday stressed that the chief aim of his administration is to implement the decisions of an October 26 European Union summit, where the latest debt deal for Greece was agreed, and to secure the next tranche of rescue aid without which the country risks defaulting and being ejected from the

goals are to make good on commitments to foreign creditors, secure crucial aid and resume talks negotiations to receive further loans, Papademos said.

He added that he foresaw no new austerity measures before 2013 but that

(Continued on p. 2)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our newspaper has received lately several letters from various organizations regarding the Federation of Hellenic American Organizations of Illinois (Enosis). The Editor considered it an obligation to publish below three photocopies of those letters.



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF ILLINOIS

Lisa Madigan
ATTORNEY GENERAL

July 19, 2011

Findings for: Federation of Hellenic American Organizations of Illinois (Enosis)
From: Charitable Trust Bureau
In reference to: Accusations of miss-appropriation of funds

Be it hereby stated, that upon investigation into the charges implied against the above noted Federation on June 10, 2011, and in review of the Federation's responses to the said charges, this Bureau finds the following;

That there is no evidence of any miss-appropriation of the funds received by the Federation of Hellenic American Organizations of Illinois (Enosis). This Finding further concludes that there is no evidence of any miss-appropriation in the handling of these funds by its President, or any other Officer of the Federation.

It is further recommended by the Bureau that additional safeguards be implemented for the future signing of checks.



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF ILLINOIS

Lisa Madigan
ATTORNEY GENERAL

October 25, 2011

Mitchell M. Iseberg, Esq.
Law Offices of Mitchell M. Iseberg
180 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 2900
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Re: Inquiry regarding Federation of Hellenic American Organizations of Illinois- ENOSIS
Our File No. 99-99,1397

Mr. Iseberg:

Thank you for confirming both (a) that you are Angie Verros's attorney and (b) that Ms. Verros was never duly removed as a member of the Board of Directors of the Federation of Hellenic American Organizations of Illinois- ENOSIS (hereinafter "ENOSIS").

As I informed you, while ENOSIS's most recent annual report on file with the Secretary of State lists Ms. Verros as an ENOSIS Director, persons at ENOSIS have referred to Ms. Verros as the "former Treasurer", and we were unsure whether she was still on the ENOSIS board.

First, per your request, I can confirm that this Office did not create the enclosed unsigned document dated July 19, 2011 which purports to be written on Attorney General letterhead and purports to contain "Findings for: Federation of Hellenic [sic] American Organizations of Illinois" by the "Charitable Trust Bureau" relating to "Accusations of miss-appropriation [sic] of funds." (See copy of said document enclosed.)

Indeed, our file in this matter remains open as we continue to attempt to ascertain whether and to what extent any violations of Illinois laws relating to charities has occurred and whether and to what extent this Office is required to take action.

Second, also per your request, please find enclosed a copy of our most recent letter (dated October 6, 2011) to the ENOSIS board of directors (to which ENOSIS is in the process of responding).

MITCHELL M. ISEBERG
ATTORNEY AT LAW

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November 11, 2011

Re: The Federation of Hellenic American Organizations of Illinois- ENOSIS

To whom it may concern:

The undersigned represents Ms. Angie Verros, the Treasurer of ENOSIS in connection with certain defamatory allegations made against her by certain officers of ENOSIS. In July of this year, articles appeared in several publications serving the Greek community (the "Articles") regarding a claim made by Ms. Verros of alleged misappropriation of funds from ENOSIS' accounts.

The Articles sought to exculpate the Federation and its Officers from the alleged misappropriation based upon a letter dated July 19, 2011, purportedly from the Illinois Attorney General's office. I have personally confirmed with the Attorney General's office that the July 19 letter was a forgery and incorrectly asserted that the Attorney General's Office had favorably concluded its investigation, when in fact just the opposite was true. Please find attached (with enclosures), a copy of a letter dated October 25, 2011, from the Attorney General's Office, Barry Goldberg, Assistant Bureau Chief, Bureau of Charitable Trusts (the "Letter"). In the Letter, Mr. Goldberg confirms to me that the July 19, 2011 letter was a forgery and that, in fact, the Attorney General's investigation of the alleged misappropriation remains open. He also enclosed as part of the correspondence, previous letters sent to ENOSIS seeking their cooperation in turning over documents, which as of October 25 had still not been complied with. In these letters Mr. Goldberg also advised as to the seriousness of the charge and the control steps needed to be taken by the Federation (which we also believe have not been complied with). He also requested that certain documents retained by Ms. Verros be returned to ENOSIS which request was promptly complied with.

The forged document, which was re-printed in the various papers, stated "that there is no evidence of any miss-appropriation of the funds received by ... ENOSIS." (sic). The letter further stated that the AG further concluded that there was no "miss-appropriation" (sic) by its President of any other Officer of the Federation. Beyond the juvenile misspelling, the letter was obviously a forgery (the body was cut and pasted and contained no signature). My understanding is that the Attorney General is conducting an independent criminal investigation to determine who authored and published the forged document.

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THE PLATFORM OF THE GREEK PRESS

- 1.To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
- 2.To support the ideas of the Hellenic-Christian tradition
- 3.To promote the preservation of the Greek language
- 4.To encourage all worthy Community causes
- 5 To assist all the Greek-American fraternal, cultural patriotic and religious organizations
- 6.To install Americanism in the Greek-American community
- 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

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EU pact main policy goal, PM says

(From p. 1)

it was important that measures Greece has agreed to -- including cutbacks in the state sector and the opening of closed professions -- are implemented without delay.

sioner Olli Rehn, Amadeu Altafaj, suggested that Brussels would not take no for an answer. "We continue to wait for a clear and unequivocal expression -- in writing -- about the engagement of the responsible political forces in Greece to the decisions taken on October 26,"



"The task of this government is disproportionately large compared to the time it will have in power, so we must not delay," Papademos said in his first speech in Parliament.

The former banker, who has served as vice president of the European Central Bank, added that he had accepted the invitation to assume the role of interim premier because "Greece's position in the eurozone is at stake."

The premier also requested the "commitment" of party leaders in the new three-member coalition, apparently referring to a demand by EU officials for Greek political leaders to provide written guarantees accepting the terms of the new rescue program.

"This should not be seen as the demand of faceless institutions," Papademos said. "The guarantees are chiefly for our own national interest but are also a duty to the nations which are showing us solidarity."

The premier's comments came just a few hours after EU officials pressed their demands for reassurances as conservative New Democracy leader Antonis Samaras continued to resist them.

A spokesman for European Monetary and Economic Affairs Commis-

Altafaj said.

Meanwhile sources said that representatives of Greece's foreign creditors -- the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary fund, known collectively as the troika -- would probably return to Athens for talks with government officials at the end of this week. At the end of last week, the troika were expected back in the capital on Monday.

In his parliamentary speech, the new premier also sought to show that he was aware of the impact of the debt crisis on Greeks. "Social cohesion is being tested, and people feel dismayed as, despite their sacrifices, the progress of efforts to tackle the crisis remains uncertain," he said. But he insisted that there was hope. "There will come a time when the collective effort will start paying off and there will be a break in the recession," he said.

The PM said he viewed his administration's term as "a bridge to carry the country to economic recovery." But he said he needed help to succeed. "I cannot complete this mission alone."

Koraes Elementary inaugurates Enjoy a Thanksgiving Day Feast!

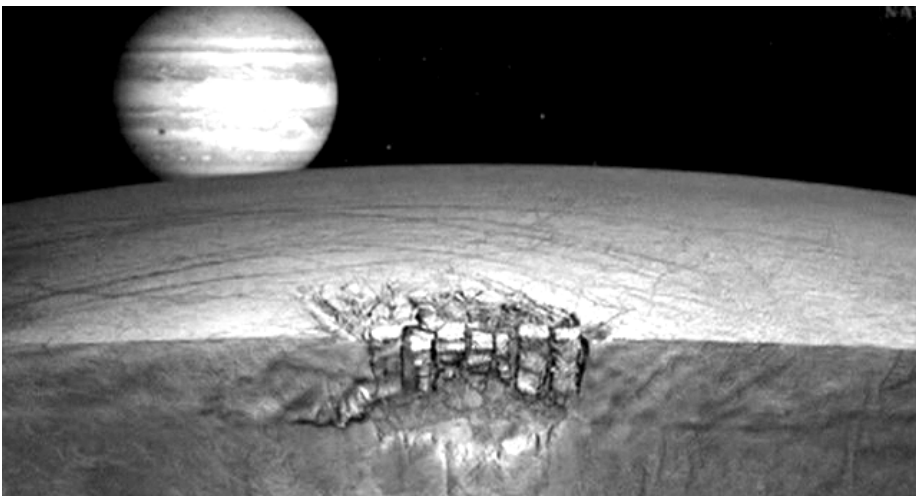


On Thursday 10, 2011 Koraes Elementary School, affiliated with SS Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Palos Hills, took part in a Thanksgiving Day Feast. The meal was prepared by the Koraes Parent Teacher Association (KPTA) and was enjoyed by the clergy, faculty and students. The students contributed to the celebration by decorating placemats that told what they were thankful for in their lives. The lower grades made and wore pilgrim hats and American Indian headdresses. Pictured from left to right in photo Eighth grade students, Annabella Gofis, Helen Paris and Antonia Stamatoukos.

Pictures of the world



White House shooting suspect Oscar Ortega arrested. Law enforcement officials examine a White House window for damage. The window thought to have been hit is on the south side of the White House. A man wanted in connection with a shooting near the White House has been arrested, the US Secret Service says. Authorities in Indiana, Pennsylvania held Oscar Ramiro Ortega-Hernandez, 21, on Wednesday, officials said. Two bullets were found at the White House, one of which struck a protective window when it was fired. The casings were found on the grounds during a probe launched after Friday's shooting, but have not yet been "conclusively connected" to it.



Scientists have found the best evidence yet for water just beneath the surface of Jupiter's icy moon, Europa. Analysis of the moon's surface suggests plumes of warmer water well up beneath its icy shell, melting and fracturing the outer layers. The results, published in the journal *Nature*, predict that small lakes exist only 3km below the crust. Any liquid water could represent a potential habitat for life.

Nonpartisan group offers US political alternative

A nonpartisan group said on Wednesday it has gathered millions of signatures, and millions of dollars, from voters so unhappy with the toxic U.S. political climate that they want a centrist independent to run for president in 2012.

The group, Americans Elect, is creating an Internet-based third party in which registered voters will choose someone to run against the Republican nominee and Barack Obama when the Democratic president vies for re-election next year.

So far, Americans Elect has gathered more than 1.9 million signatures in support of its petition to get on the ballot in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., and raised almost \$22 million.

"There is a huge receptivity across the board to an independent candidate," Douglas Schoen, Americans Elect's chief strategist, a former adviser to politicians including President Bill Clinton and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, told a news conference.

With polls showing that 80 percent of Americans are unhappy with how the country is being governed, there has been a growing support for an alternative to politicians from the two major parties who seem unable to work together.

STARBUCKS CHIEF FOR PRESIDENT?

Backers of the idea have expressed support for everyone from Bloomberg, a former Republican who is now an independent, to Howard Schultz, the chief executive of coffee firm Starbucks, as possible third-party candidates.

Americans Elect was founded by the wealthy investor Peter Ackerman. Its officers include political veterans from both parties who say they are tired of the current poisonous divide between U.S. Democrats and Republicans.

Americans Elect insists its goal is not

to defeat any particular candidate. But, citing Herman Cain's low-budget campaign and strong showing in the Republican primary field, they say they believe their candidate could win a significant share of the 2012 vote.

That could be bad news for Obama. The only two incumbent presidents who have failed to be re-elected in the past 32 years were Democrat Jimmy Carter and Republican George H.W. Bush, both when third-party candidates won significant votes.

Americans Elect is using the Internet to run a "virtual" direct primary, in which any American who is registered to vote can help select its presidential candidate.

Americans Elect has qualified to have its candidate on the ballot in seven states and is awaiting word on its petitions to do so in four others, while collecting signatures in 13 more. The rest will come in 2012.

The group has set itself up as a non-profit, which does not have to release the names of its donors. Campaign finance activists say the group is violating the tax code and have filed a complaint with the Internal Revenue Service.

"A political party is not entitled to be treated as a 'social welfare' organization under federal tax laws and is required to disclose its donors. Period," said Fred Wertheimer, president of the campaign finance watchdog Democracy 21.

Americans Elect's leaders say they are merely offering voters an alternative to the current two-party system, not backing a particular political agenda.



Dr. Peter J. Pantan, a graduate of the Brown University School of Medicine, is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology, a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, and former president of the Chicago Ophthalmological Society.

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Dr. Peter Pantan Discusses ALL LASER LASIK

Dr. Pantan, What is ALL LASER LASIK?

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ALL LASER LASIK allows us to treat patients with every type of refractive error--nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism and presbyopia. Problems common to other types of lasers such as glare, halos and decreased night vision have been virtually eliminated with Ziemer-WaveLight laser treatments.

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How do I find out if ALL LASER LASIK is right for me?

I invite you to visit the Pantan Eye Center and see the Ziemer-WaveLight laser system. Our trained physicians can determine if these exciting technologies are right for you. We are able to evaluate, treat and follow-up our ALL LASER LASIK patients in one convenient location. All of your care will be personally directed by Dr. Pantan.

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info@plantyourrootsingreece.com

To Reverse the Loss of Greece's Forests

Someday our descendants will see the rich, lush mountains of Greece, and that will be our living legacy to them. Make the dream a reality... "Plant Your Roots in Greece"

Since ancient times—even more so now—the value of trees to Greece has been immeasurable and their loss has been heartbreaking. "Plant Your Roots in Greece" offers you a unique opportunity to become an integral part of this splendor now and forever.

Today the enemy of Greece's forests is not warfare but forest fires which, with subsequent erosion, create a vicious cycle of forest and loss soil. Where mountains were once lush, they are now barren, the rich soil washed away, the once plentiful flora and fauna gone. The Greek government has recognized the critical problems and is committing major resources to this reforestation effort.

The Plant Your Roots in Greece Foundation

The program will be a magnitude unmatched since the Greek American community came to Greece's assistance after the devastation of World War II and the subsequent Civil War. The program centers around the ability of anyone, of Greek descent or not, or anyone who is concerned and wishes to restore Greece's natural splendor, to plant a tree in Greece in their name or in the name of a loved one or friend.

Be a Part of History

At a minimum donation of \$20 for two trees, including an inscribed certificate, the program is affordable to all. It is expected that millions of trees can be planted through this program and there will be vast forests in the name of individuals, associations and corporations as a manifestation of their love for Greece.

In addition to tree planting, an aggressive program of fire-fighting has been instituted and in 1999, for the first time in millennia, reforestation exceeded destruction from fires.

The first forest was planted in Sounion in 1999 with the help of the Federation of ENOSIS and was named the "Forest of Illinois." Since then, several plantings have taken place in the area of Sounion. Trees have also been planted on the island of Samos, Samothrace, at Ancient Olympia, Vouliagmeni, Kalavryta, Arcadia, Delphi, Maniaki, Thraki, Crete, Messinia, Serres, Arta, Dion Pierias, Penteli and Patras.

Matching Funds from the European Community

It is the single largest environmental program in the European Union for Greece and will be one of the most massive efforts in history involving the planting and cultivation of seedlings.

The government of Greece has also arranged with the European Union for the EU to match on a one-to-one basis the dollars generated through the Plant Your Roots program. Thus, for every tree we plant, the EU will match funds for four additional trees.

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- ☐ \$10,000 and more as donation

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ for _____ trees

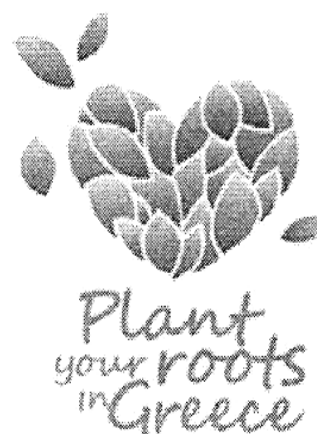
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The trees will be planted in honor of or memory of anyone you designate. All gifts will be acknowledged with a beautifully inscribed certificate of classic green elegance of the Greek mountains. Please indicate in whose honor or memory the gift is being made and the name and address of the person who should receive the certificate.

Plant Your Roots in Greece Foundation is a not-for-profit, tax exempt organization under the auspices of SAE / USA and HANC, offers contribution opportunities both to those who wish to support primarily victims of fire and those who wish to contribute to reforestation.



NEWS FROM GREECE

Labor Institute chief warns over unemployment

The majority of Greece's workforce has become redundant, Savas Robolis, economics professor and director of the Labor Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE-ADEDY), told Skai television on Tuesday.

«Unemployment rates keep rising from quarter to quarter,» Robolis said. «4.1 million are working and 4.5 million -- unemployed and pensioners -- are not. How is it possible for the few to feed the many?» he added.

Last week, data released by the Hellenic Statistical Authority set the unemployment rate for August at a record level of 18.4 percent, an increase of 364,353 layoffs from August 2010, when the unemployment rate was at 12.2 percent.

According to the scientific director of the country's largest labor association, just 300,000 of the country's official 1 million jobless receive unemployment benefits for a period of 12 months, adding that once their benefit period has expired, they are forced to turn to their families for financial assistance.

Robolis also rang the alarm bell for the country's social security foundations, which, he said, are having to turn to internal borrowing in order to meet the additional strain of rising unemployment and

decreasing intakes from benefit payments.

He also referred to a recent statement by former Prime Minister George Papandreou, who had said that the government's aim was for there to be one employed person in every Greek household, calling the statement «unfortunate» and saying that «this would mean financial and social destruction, with 1.5 million people unemployed.»

The economics professor was, however, upbeat about the new interim government's plan to make better use of funds available under the National Strategic Reference Framework to boost large infrastructure projects, saying this may contribute to curbing a further increase in unemployment in 2012. «Competitiveness is not about reducing the cost of labor and decon-structing the social security system, but about providing high quality services at a low cost with productive infrastructures,» Robolis told Skai.

Maybe this time will be different

By Alexis Papachelas

Something an experienced New Democracy cadre told me Thursday afternoon stuck with me. He said that for three days, as negotiations to find

the next prime minister wavered, the switchboard at the conservative party's headquarters was bombarded by exasperated ND supporters. But he said the complaints died down soon after the new premier, Lucas Papademos, made his first public statement. Maybe it was just coincidence, but maybe there is an explanation.

Clearly people's rage won't just die down overnight. Unemployment, high taxes and the incessant attack on the middle classes' quality of life make this anger justifiable. Maybe, though, we will all take a step back from the edge of the abyss

Papademos recently exuded a sense of calm and knowledge of the tough situation. He isn't part of a burnt-out political status quo that battled tooth and nail over the last few days to survive and keep control of the system. Maybe Greeks will now realize that beyond the regulars on the political debates on their TV screens, there are actually people with knowledge and morals who can offer something positive to the country when it needs it so desperately.

Maybe a calm and honest analysis of the situation will help dispel the many myths that have emerged to fan the flames of rage, such as that there is a third path for Greece to follow other than strict fiscal discipline and remaining in the euro, or returning to the drachma, or the story about a great national betrayal through the presence of foreign technocrats, or even the idea that we

can bring about a renegotiation of our lending terms and embarrass the Europeans.

I know that all this sounds optimistic. The party mechanisms will fight to ensure that the Papademos government does not succeed. The left will revert to its usual role and the uber-patriots on the right and left will again start talking about the occupation of the Fourth Reich. The high priests of populism and the drachma will create another conspiracy, dismissing Papademos as a puppet of the international banking system.

However, maybe something has changed after the fiasco of George Papandreou's appearance at Cannes and the emergence of a new type of government. Maybe raw honesty, reliability, correct negotiation with our partners and dignity will for now act as a strong antidote to the madness, hysteria and violence that made us stand out so much more than any other country experiencing a debt crisis.

A sober voice of reason

by the Editor

A sober voice of logic and responsibility was heard in the Greek Parliament Monday, as newly appointed Prime Minister Lucas Papademos outlined the true dilemmas facing the country that will determine whether Greece will remain in the eurozone or not.

The moment of truth has now come for political leaders and anyone who holds a position of responsibility in the public sphere. Based on what Papademos said, in order for the country to avoid a major defeat, it is necessary to reach an understanding, to show unity and to swiftly move ahead with the implementation of the country's pledges. For this to happen, genuine support from the country's politicians -- some of whom helped to create the mess Greece is now in due to poor management or because they nurtured false expectations -- will be vital.

The only way for the country to avoid a terrible tragedy is for them to start behaving more honestly and to stand by the government during these crucial few months. Can they bear to do so, or do their own and their parties' interests come first?

Plastics mogul charged with 2-mln-euro tax evasion

A 47-year-old businessman -- the owner of a major plastics manufacturer -- is to face an Athens prosecutor on Wednesday on charges of withholding more than 2 million euros in taxes from the state.

Members of a special police unit set up to tackle tax evasion arrested the man in the southern coastal suburb of Vouliagmeni on Tuesday morning.

According to police, the suspect owes 2.09 million euros in outstanding taxes to the state.

State assets set for privatization

The government is pushing for the speedy privatization of state assets such as gaming company OPAP, the Athens Water and Sewage Company (EYDAP) and the latter's Thessaloniki equivalent, EYATH.

After representatives of Greece's international creditors demanded that more state properties be transferred to the privatization fund before the disbursement of the sixth tranche of the country's bailout package, Athens rushed to enhance its contents.

Following the October 27 eurozone summit agreement, along with the other members of the ministerial committee for privatizations, Finance Minister Evangelos Venizelos signed for the transfer to the fund of certain state properties, including a 29 percent stake in OPAP, 27 percent of EYDAP, 40 percent of EYATH, and 23 percent of the port authorities of Piraeus and Thessaloniki.



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5 Worst Fast-Food Breakfasts



The holidays are just about here, and between errands and travels, you may have to hit up a fast-food joint or coffee-house in search of breakfast. The bad news: There's plenty of junky temptation out there. The good news: Lots of franchises have jumped on the health bandwagon and now offer better alternatives. Here's what to avoid, as well as better-for-you choices:

Starbucks

What to skip: Like most coffeehouses, Starbucks' bakery menu has plenty of obvious calorie and fat bombs: donuts, fritters, croissants, and the like. But their Zucchini Walnut Muffin is a wolf in healthy sheep's clothing. It has a whopping 490 calories, 28 grams of fat, and 490 milligrams of sodium.

What to order: The Strawberry & Blueberry Yogurt Parfait has 300 calories and just 3.5 grams of fat (none of it saturated), along with a satisfying 7 grams of protein and 3 grams of fat. Crave a hot breakfast? The Starbucks Perfect Oatmeal clocks in with 140 calories, 2.5 grams fat, and 4 grams of fiber

McDonald's

What to skip: You'd think one of those Egg McMuffins is the worst breakfast offender. Nope, that honor goes to the Big Breakfast with Hotcakes. It weighs in at a heart-stopping 1,090 calories, 56 grams of fat (including nearly all the saturated fat you should have for the day), and 2,150 milligrams of sodium.

What to order: The 290-calorie Fruit & Maple Oatmeal has 5 grams of protein and 5 grams of fiber. Nice! Even better, order it without brown sugar and request light cream to save 50 calories and slash the fat in half. Can't resist the Egg McMuffin? Order it without the American cheese and it comes in at a not-so-awful 250 calories, 9 grams of fat, and 15 grams of protein.

Jamba Juice

What to skip: C'mon, how bad can a smoothie be? Depends what you order. Choose a 24-ounce (that's the Original size) Peanut Butter Moo'd and you'll slurp down 770 calories before you know it.

What to order: Lots of places are serving oatmeal these days, but Jamba's is made from hearty steel-cut oats made with a touch of soymilk. Order yours plain with a cut-up banana. It's just 240 calories, but has 6 grams of fiber and 9 grams of protein that will hold you over until lunchtime.

Subway

What to skip: The Breakfast B.M.T. Melt, with its hefty 480 calories and 22 grams of fat, is sure to make you drag all morning long.

What to order: The Black Forest Ham, Egg & Cheese -- on a muffin with an egg white -- offers ample indulgence for 170 calories and 4 grams of fat. The 14 grams of protein and 5 grams of fiber will keep you satisfied in the a.m.

Bruegger's Bagels

What to skip: Resist the sesame bagel with cream cheese. This classic combo tallies at 440 calories and 14 grams of fat. Hey, bagels have gotten big, and those schmears of cream cheese are generous, too.

What to order: Go for the Skinny Sesame Bagel with light garden veggie cream cheese. It has just 310 calories. Even better, swap the cream cheese for hummus, which has heart-healthy fat, satisfying protein, and 20 percent of the iron you need for the day.



Syrian army defectors attack a military intelligence base near Damascus, opposition groups say, in what would be their highest-profile attack so far.

Pictures of the world



US to send marines to Australia The US is to begin deploying 2,500 military personnel to Australia to boost security in the Pacific region, President Obama says on a visit.



Mario Monti has unveiled a new, technocratic cabinet meant to steer Italy through its debt crisis after the fall of Silvio Berlusconi's government.

Mr Monti, who has now been sworn in, appointed a banker to lead a super-ministry of development, infrastructure and transport.

Mr Monti, a former EU commissioner, has sought to reassure markets that Italy will overcome its debt crisis. Italy's borrowing costs have fallen back below the critical 7% level. The European Central Bank eased the pressure, pushing costs down by buying up Italian bonds.

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United marks nation's first biofuel-powered commercial flight

Continental Airlines Flight 1403 made history when it landed at O'Hare International Airport on Monday, becoming the first revenue passenger trip in the U.S. powered by biofuel.

The Boeing 737-800, which was painted in the new environmental "eco-skies" livery of United Airlines and flown by Continental pilots, burned a "green jet fuel" derived partially from genetically modified algae that feeds off plant waste and produces oil. In completing the Continental flight from Houston, parent company United Continental Holdings Inc. thus won by a scant two days the competition to launch the first biofuel-powered air service in the U.S.

More U.S. airlines are expected to join the effort to fly more cleanly — and eventually more economically — than the use of traditional, petroleum-based Jet-A fuel allows, based on a crude oil price of \$100 a barrel or higher, experts said. But there are unanswered questions regarding how long it will take for biofuel to become an economical alternative to traditional fuel and what the cost will be for the financially struggling aviation industry.

Boeing Co. projects, for example, small-scale commercial production of new biofuels derived from algae, sewage sludge or municipal waste beginning as early as three years from now. United announced Monday that it signed a letter of intent with Solazyme Inc., which provided the biofuel for Monday's Continental flight, to buy 20 million gallons of algae-derived biofuel annually. Delivery would start as early as 2014, officials said. The move comes four months after international aviation regulators approved the use of biofuels. In recent weeks, several airlines in Europe have operated biofuel-powered flights. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines in June became the first airline in the world to operate a commercial flight on biofuels.

Part of the beauty of using advanced biofuels is that no modifications are needed to commercial airplanes; the biofuels are a drop-in replacement for high-octane Jet-A, officials said. "You don't have any difference at all in terms of performance of the airplane or operations by the pilot," said Capt. Jackson Seltzer, a 25-year Continental veteran who flew Monday's flight to O'Hare from Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport. The 737 was fueled with 60 percent traditional petroleum-based jet fuel and 40 percent aviation biofuel made from algal oil, officials said.

The technology converts inedible natural oils and wastes into a more environmentally friendly jet fuel that offers as much as an 85 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared with fossil fuels, officials said. United officials declined to estimate how long it would take to integrate alternative fuels into their system, but they noted the airline used 3.3 billion gallons of Jet-A in 2010.

Pete McDonald, United Airlines' executive vice president and chief operations officer, said the cost of Monday's biofuel flight was "about the same" as a regular flight. "For the long term we need for this to be competitive with Jet-A to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and reduce emissions," he said. "It's going to take a number of years, but you have to start somewhere and this is our first step."

The 20 million gallons that United plans to buy from Solazyme represents 0.6 percent of the airline's jet fuel consumption, said Jimmy Samartzis, United's managing director of global environment affairs and sustainability. "The bottom line for us is, this is another example of actions that are needed to be taken to commercialize advanced biofuel production," Samartzis said.

Solazyme officials, who dubbed their algae-derived fuel Solajet, shared the optimism. "We founded the company in a garage in Palo Alto (Calif.) eight years ago," said Harrison Dillon, Solazyme president and chief technology officer. "Today is a historic day and we've come a long way, but we have a lot of growth ahead."

Fuel accounts for the largest segment, 36 percent, of airline industry operating costs, according to the International Air Transport Association.

The aviation sector, which was responsible for 2 percent of total carbon dioxide emissions in 2000, will increase its share to 3 percent by 2030, according to research by McKinsey & Co.

cientists boost battery strength with small holes

Power plug Batteries built from the novel material mix could be fully charged from flat in 15 minutes. Batteries for phones and laptops could soon recharge ten times faster and hold a charge ten times larger than current technology allows.

Scientists at Northwestern University in the US have changed the materials in lithium-ion batteries to boost their abilities. One change involves poking millions of minuscule holes in the battery.

Batteries built using the novel technique could be in the shops within five years, estimate the scientists.

Fast movers

A mobile phone battery built using the Northwestern techniques would charge from flat in 15 minutes and last a week before needing a recharge. The density and movement of lithium ions are key to the process.

Dr Harold Kung and his team at Northwestern said they have found a way to cram more of the ions in and to speed up their movement by altering the materials used to manufacture a battery.

The maximum charge has been boosted by replacing sheets of silicon with tiny clusters of the substance to increase the amount of lithium ions a battery can hold on to. The recharging speed has been accelerated using a chemical oxidation process which drills small holes - just 20-40 nanometers wide - in the atom-thick sheets of graphene that batteries are made of.

This helps lithium ions move and find a place to be stored much faster.

The downside is that the recharging and power gains fall off sharply after a battery has been charged about 150 times.

"Even after 150 charges, which would be one year or more of operation, the battery is still five times more effective than lithium-ion batteries on the market today," said lead scientist Prof Harold Kung from the chemical and biological engineering department at Northwestern.

So far, the work done by the team has concentrated on making improvements to anodes - where the current flows into the batteries when they are providing power.

The group now plans to study the cathode - where the current flows out - to make further improvements.

A paper detailing the work of Prof Kung and his co-workers has been published in the journal Advanced Energy Materials.

Italy's Silvio Berlusconi in his own words

Silvio Berlusconi Silvio Berlusconi is known for his blunt, sometimes confrontational language

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is famed for making his views known in blunt, colourful, sometimes combative language. At times he strays into what one of his predecessors, Massimo D'Alema, described as "planetary gaffes".

Here is a selection of quotations from Mr Berlusconi on a range of topics over his years in and out of office.

On Italy's debt crisis

Speaking on 13 August 2011, as he announced a raft of new austerity measures: "Our hearts are bleeding. This government had bragged that it never put its hands in the pockets of Italians but the world situation changed. We are facing the biggest global challenge."

But on 4 November 2011, he told a news conference at the end of a G20 summit: "The life in Italy is the life of a wealthy country: consumptions haven't diminished, it's hard to find seats on planes, our restaurants are full of people."

Scandals over his private life

Mr Berlusconi - caught in a series of scandals over his private life, including his alleged dealings with younger women and prostitutes - has frequently turned to a pithy phrase in an attempt to shrug off the allegations.

For instance, in April 2011, he said: "When asked if they would like to have sex with me, 30% of women said, 'Yes', while the other 70% replied, 'What, again?'"

At the end of the previous year, as allegations swirled about escorts and "Bunga, bunga" parties, the PM deadpanned the line: "I unfortunately have never in my life been to a wild party."

However, the talk of scandal has got under his collar at times. He told Il Giornale newspaper in an interview on 12 August 2009 that he had nothing to apologise for and no skeletons in his cupboard: "I deserve to be left in peace: enough violations of privacy."

Questioned on the sex allegations in late July, Mr Berlusconi admitted: "I am not a saint, you've all understood that."

In an earlier interview with gossip magazine Chi, Mr Berlusconi denied he pays for sex, adding: "I never understood where the satisfaction is when you're missing the pleasure of conquest."

More bluntly, in November 2010 Mr Berlusconi hit out with the following: "It's better to like beautiful girls than to be gay."

Battles with the courts

On the news in October 2009 that Italy's constitutional court had overturned a law granting him immunity from prosecution while in office:

"Lucky that there's Silvio, otherwise we'd be completely in the hands of these gentlemen of the left... I will defend myself in the courts, exposing the accusers to ridicule, showing all Italians what stuff they're made of and what stuff I'm made of." Earlier, he insisted that the charges against him were farcical and that his administration would "govern for five years with or without the law".

His view of Italy's judiciary in June 2008: a "cancerous growth". On judges pursuing former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti on charges relating to the Mafia: "Those judges are doubly mad! In the first place, because they are politically mad, and in the second place because they are mad anyway."

"If they do that job, it is because they are anthropologically different from the rest of the human race."

Politics and the Italian Left

In November 2011, facing the biggest crisis of his leadership, he said: "I want to look those who want to betray me in the face."

He is quoted as saying on 9 April 2008: "The left has no taste, even when it comes to women." On left-wing voters at a conference of retailers during the 2006 campaign: "I trust the intelligence of the Italian people too much to think that there

are so many pricks around who would vote against their own best interests."

Promising to put family values at the centre of his campaign for the April 2006 general election: "I will try to meet your expectations, and I promise from now on, two-and-a-half months of absolute sexual abstinence, until [election day on] 9 April." He later insisted the pledge was "just a joke".

On Mussolini

"Mussolini never killed anyone. Mussolini used to send people on vacation in internal exile."

In the wake of 11 September

"We must be aware of the superiority of our civilisation, a system that has guaranteed well-being, respect for human rights and - in contrast with Islamic countries - respect for religious and political rights, a system that has as its value understanding of diversity and tolerance..."The West will continue to conquer peoples, even if it means a confrontation with another civilisation, Islam, firmly entrenched where it was 1,400 years ago."

His response to worldwide condemnation of the above speech: "They have tried to hang me on an isolated word, taken out of context from my whole speech." "I did not say anything against the Islamic civilisation... It's the work of some people in the Italian leftist press who wanted to tarnish my image and destroy my long-standing relations with Arabs and Muslims."

On his alleged conflict of interest as prime minister and one of Italy's biggest tycoons, with major media holdings: "If I, taking care of everyone's interests, also take care of my own, you can't talk about a conflict of interest."

President Obama's skin colour

Of Barack Obama, upon his election as US president in November 2008, he said: "[Mr Obama is] young, handsome and untanned".

His response to the wave of criticism following the remark: "God save us from imbeciles... How can you take such a great compliment negatively?"

An unabashed Mr Berlusconi rehashed the jibe on his return from the G20 summit in Pittsburgh on 28 September 2009: "Ah, Barack Obama. You won't believe it, but the two of them sunbathe together, because the wife is also tanned."

The L'Aquila earthquake

In general Mr Berlusconi won praise for his handling of an earthquake that hit central Italy on 6 April - except for his advice to homeless survivors that they should see their plight "like a weekend of camping."

Women

In September 2010, speaking at a youth rally, saying women should marry rich, older men: "Women are lining up to marry me. Legend has it, I know how to do it."

In January 2007, Mr Berlusconi was forced to issue a public apology to his wife, after she accused him of flirting with two women.

"If I wasn't already married, I would marry you right away," Mrs Berlusconi accused him of telling women at a TV awards dinner. "With you, I'd go anywhere," he was quoted as telling another woman.

On Italian secretaries Another reason to invest in Italy is that we have beautiful secretaries... superb girls."

On himself

After his immunity from prosecution was lifted by the Constitutional Court in October 2009, he declared: "I am without doubt the person who's been the most persecuted in the entire history of the world and the history of man." "In my opinion, and not only mine, I am the best prime minister we can find today." Previously, on the same theme: "I am the Jesus Christ of politics. I am a patient victim, I put up with everyone, I sacrifice myself for everyone." "The best political leader in Europe and in the world."