

DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE

EL CAMINO REAL DISTRICT 20 CONVENTION MINUTES

Woodland Hills, California

May 30-31, 2025

The opening ceremonies for the District 20 convention began at 9:15AM followed by separate business sessions for the AHEPANs and Daughters of Penelope (DOP).

The Daughters of Penelope official Opening of the business session in 2025 was conducted by District Governor (DG) Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159, at 09:58 AM May 30th. A booklet with the agenda, 2024 convention minutes, District Lodge, and chapter reports was distributed to the delegates and guests present.

District Marshal (DM) Peleleilani Synder, Philia# 380, escorted the Grand Governor (GG) of Zone IV, Linda Belba into the room.

The opening prayer was offered by District Lieutenant Governor (LTG) Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340.

DM Peleleilani Synder, Philia #380, offered the memorial service for our departed sisters.

- Angeliki Pappas ALKANDRE #43
- Helen Goumas DELOS #103
- Katherine Vassilakis OKEANOS #419
- PDG Lois Kotzambasis PHOEBUS #146

Roll call of Delegates: Voting strength at 10:15 AM was 15.

Election of Convention Officers:

- **Convention Chairman:** DG Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159, was nominated by PDG Georgia Souris, Aegina #340.
- **Convention Vice-Chairman:** LTG Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340, was nominated by DG Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159
- **Convention Secretary:** District Maids of Athena Advisor Nikki Kopan, Philia #380, was nominated by Elly Kopan, Philia #380

Oath of office was administered by GG Zone IV, Linda Belba

Past District Governors (PDG) Georgia Souris, Aegina #340, and Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340 were introduced by DG Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159. Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340 was announced as the 2015 National Penelope of the Year.

Georgia Souris, PDG, Aegina #340, was appointed at the **Parliamentarian**. Athena Pallas, Amphitrite #151, and Julie Karoutas, Helenos #432, were appointed as **Sentinels**. Linda Kotsakis, Aegina #340, and Georgia Lipane, Helenos #432, were appointed **Tellers**.

Adoption of Convention Agenda: Cynthia Bekiaris, Helenos #432, **moved** to accept the agenda as presented with any necessary changes. PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340, seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Adoption of Convention Minutes: Barbara Cogert, Hyperia #94, **moved** to accept the minutes for 2024 as published. Mari Giannopoulous, Minos #159, seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Announcement of Committee Chairs:

- Budget: District Treasurer (DT) Irene Grevas, Philia #380
- Convention/Conference Cities Liaison: Theresa Fardelos, Aegina #340
- District Project: LTG Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340
- Elections/Nominations: Cynthia Bekiaris, Helenos #432
- Penelope of the Year: PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340
- Legislation: DG Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159
- Maids of Athena, Growth & Expansion, Community Relations / Communications / Internet and Ways & Means will be discussed during Open Forum.

Breakout out sessions for the committees headed by each committee chair were from 10:15AM to 12:00PM

A **Recess** was called at 12:00PM.

Afternoon Business Session

Convention Chairman, DG Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159, called the session to order at 1:46 PM. Credentials Report: Voting strength was 14.

Committee Reports:

Audit Report: Lisa Watts, Philia #380, presented the audit report from May 25, 2025.

The District 20 Daughters of Penelope audit was performed on Sunday May25th. The Audit committee consisted of Nicki Cometa and Lisa Watts. Also present was District Treasurer Rene Grevas and Sofie Batshoun, DG. The audit covered the period from 6/6/2024 to 5/30/2025. Effectively, 6/1/24-5/31/25. Nothing transpired before the end of our fiscal year. Bank statements and the check book were examined from June 2024 through May 2025, the last bank statement received.

The following recommendations were offered: The Budget, line #33-Misc., this expense should have a breakout of the event(s) attributed to the expense. An explanation would alleviate any concerns for further information at audit.

A summary report is recommended for each month that would give an overview of activity.

Roll call of delegates: Voting Strength was 16.

District Project: Committee Chair LTG Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340

Committee members: Barbara Cogert, Hyperia #94, Mari Giannopoulos, Minos #159, Georgia Lipane, Helenos #432 and observers, Stella Schiewe, Minos #159, and Mary Pruitt, Minos #159.

One project was presented: “Water by Women” (WBW) with a focus on the Navajo Nation. Linda Kotakis, Aegina, #340, asked if we send our proceeds to nationals for “Water by Women”. LTG Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340, clarified that the District proceeds raised are allocated for the Navajo Nation, specifically. The National obligation is a separate donation to the global Water by Women organization towards the water kits. A packet on the Water by Women program that included the mission of the program, how to make a Ribbed Crochet Water Filter Sock, and how to make a Hang Up Loop for the syringe, was given to all in attendance.

LTG Michelle Lotakis, Aegina #340 motioned to accept the Water By Women – Navajo Nation project as the 2025-26 District project. DM Peleilani Synder, Philia #380, seconded the motion. The report was accepted unanimously.

The work to bring water filtration systems to the Navajo people is all made possible through the dedicated services of three Navajo women who serve as WBW Team Navajo. They are well respected spiritual and health leaders who provide WBW filter training at health fairs and to individuals.

Legislation: DG Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159

The Mandates had not been updated since June 2022. The District Lodge reviewed the mandates and came up with a list of recommendations to present at the District Convention. Each section was reviewed, and delegates were encouraged to comment on the recommendations. Changes were recommended in the following sections: Chapter, Convention City, District Convention, District Conference, Sisterhood Conference, District Lodge and District Governor. All recommended changes were approved. The changes to the Convention City section will need to be discussed with AHEPA. See attached Legislation Report for breakdown of changes.

Budget: DT Irene Marie Grevas, Philia #380

Committee members: PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340, Elly Kopan, Philia #380, Georgia Lipane, Helenos #432, and observers, Lisa Watts, Philia #380, and Mary Pruitt, Minos #159.

DT Irene Marie Grevas, Philia #380, presented the district finances: Checking: \$14,325.71, Savings: \$1,125.17, CD \$5,379.90 (renews in August). Total: \$20,830.78.

The district fiscal year has been from June 1st to May 31st. The District Lodge decided to move to match the National fiscal year which is September 1st to August 31st. DT Irene Marie Grevas, Philia #380, stated that it is a good year to switch as the Western Regional District Convention

(WRDC) receipt of \$3,500.00 this year will help absorb the expense of two Supreme Convention registrations falling under the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

The District Budget was presented. Actual budget 2024-2025: Total Receipts: \$12,382.00, Total Disbursements: \$12,635.48. DT Irene Marie Grevas, Philia #380, moved to accept the proposed budget of \$16,520 for 2025-2026. Athena Pallas, Amphitrite #151 seconded the motion. Motion Carried. See attached Budget for 2025-2026.

Convention /Conference Cities Liaison: Chair Theresa Fardelos, Aegina #340.

After speaking with the AHEPA Liaison, the proposed conference locations are as follows:

- 2026 Midwinter Conference: Anaheim, CA
- 2026 June District Convention: Tucson, AZ
- Committee reported that WRDC will be hosted by District 20 in 2027, so more details to follow

Chair Theresa Fardelos, Aegina #340, moved to accept the report on behalf of her committee.

Penelope of the Year: Committee Chair PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340. Committee members: GG Zone IV Linda Belba, PDG Georgia Souris, Aegina #340, DM Peleleilani Synder, Philia #380, Linda Kotsakis, Aegina #340, and observer Jane Coccia, Hyperia #94.

Usually there is just one member from each chapter, but since only one application was received this year, the rule was suspended. PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340, read the application and it was approved. The Penelope of the Year is Dianne Evripidou, Aegina #340. Axia!

The committee made a recommendation to remind members of past changes to the rules. For example, if an applicant has only done something at the chapter level, report that. Previously, if an applicant had only done something at the chapter level, their application could not move to District, and if they had not done something at District, their application could not move to National. The rules have been relaxed and it was encouraged to remind Sisters of this. The committee also suggested when the application is posted online, the chapter officers should pass out the application to all members so that everyone is able to see what the application is asking for and to plan ahead.

PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340, discussed the updated application process that would be proposed at the upcoming Supreme Convention in July 2025 in Orlando, FL.

LTG Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340, motioned to adjourn the business meeting. Stella Schiewe, Minos #159, seconded. Meeting adjourned at 3:30PM.

Convention Chairman, DG Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159, opened the Saturday morning business session at 09:13 AM on May 31st, 2025.

Credentials Report: Voting Strength 17

Committee Reports Open Forum:

Maids of Athena: We currently have no Maids chapters in our District. LTG Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340, stated that they are asking for a special dispensation for a 16-year-old to join Aegina #340 vs. Maids of Athena member at-large. The hope is that this would lead to more young women wanting to join and the reactivation of a Maids chapter within the Chandler, AZ area.

Growth and Expansion: District 20 currently has 314 members, 186 members (59%) are paid for 2025. There were 29 new members, which is a 15% increase in district membership. 128 members have not paid for 2025.

LTG Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340, stated that growth and expansion is easy because you just need to initiate, but retention is the hard part. We need to mentor the new members and encourage them to come to conferences and conventions. Linda Kotakis, Aegina #340, had an idea for retention that we maybe need to have activities for the younger women.

Communication Relations/Communication/Internet:

Last year, the delegates at the WRDC had asked for more social media presence. The District Lodge has a Facebook page: Daughters of Penelope – El Camino Real District 20 and begun an Instagram page, Handle: DOP_District20. Many Sisters would like a training on how to access the pages/utilize social media. This may be something to be done on a chapter level.

GG Zone IV, Linda Belba mentioned that we have seen an increase in Sisters not reading emails and asked what would help encourage people to read them. Several ideas were mentioned, including ones used currently by several members when sending emails.

A reminder was also given to everyone to be diligent about spam emails. Lodge members will never ask for money/gift cards.

An email was sent to the chapters regarding the DOP Academy. There is an upcoming session on how to use the membership portal on June 10th via zoom at 6:30pm PST. This is a special session for District 20 members.

Ways and Means:

Ways and Means refers to how money can be made for the district and or chapter.

10 out of 11 chapters submitted their reports and these can be reviewed pages in the agenda book on pages 28 to 47. Each chapter listed various activities their respective chapters conduct in order to raise funds.

Elections/Nominations Report: Committee Chair: Cynthia Bekaris, Helenos #432, presented the following slate:

- District Governor: Krystal Sofia Batshoun, Minos #159 was nominated by committee
- District Lt. Governor: Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340, was nominated by committee
- District Secretary: Nikki Kopan, Philia #380, was nominated by committee
- District Treasurer: Vacant
- District Marshal: Vacant

PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340, called a point of order and reminded the delegation that once the slate has been read, the floor is opened for any other nominations.

Convention Chair Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159 called for nominations for each of the positions.

- DG Krystal Sofia Batshoun, Minos #159, was nominated by the Committee. There were no other nominations.
- LTG Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340, was nominated by the Committee. There were no other nominations.
- DMOA Nikki Kopan, Philia #380, was nominated by the Committee. There were no other nominations.
- DMOA Nikki Kopan, Philia #380, was nominated by Irene Marie Grevas, Philia #380. DG Sofie Batshoun, Minos #159, reminded Sisters that our bylaws allow for the positions of District Secretary and District Treasurer to be combined. DMOA Nikki Kopan, Philia #380, accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations.
- DM Peleleilani Synder, Philia #380, was nominated by LTG Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340. DM Peleleilani Synder, Philia #380, accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations.

PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340 will continue was DOP Advisor and the position will be combined with the Maids of Athena Advisor at this time as a cost saving measure.

Convention Chairman DG Krystal Sofia Batshoun, Minos #159 announced the elected officers for 2025/2026.

- District Governor: Krystal Sofia Batshoun, Minos #159
- District Lieutenant Governor: Michele Lotakis, Aegina #340
- District Secretary and Treasurer: Nikki Kopan, Philia #380
- District Marshall: Peleleilani Snyder, Philia #380
- Advisor DOP/Advisor MOA: PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340

The Oath of Office to the District Lodge was administered by GG Zone IV, Linda Belba.

GG Zone IV Linda Belba addressed the assembly. Conventions bring people together. As an only child, we are her sisters. She shared what she has learned: how to manage her time, to be an active listener, and leadership skills. She has been a member of DOP for 15-16 years and after 2

years as GG IV, she is not moving up on the Grand Lodge. When she first began, she became secretary right away. She encourages everyone to get their new members involved.

She discussed the Grand Lodge news. This year's theme was "Bee the Buzz" and discussed the various challenges that Grand Vice President Antoinette held. She went on to discuss that four new chapters were chartered globally, in Florida, Colorado, Greece and Germany. Additionally, four chapters were reactivated in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Nebraska, and Idaho. Total paid membership at the end of 2024 was approximately 6,101 members.

She discussed the DOP Academy and encouraged everyone to participate and complete the program, but especially the top officers in each chapter. The list of District 20 Chapters was reviewed for reactivation opportunities, although Alkandre was inaccurately listed as inactive. DG Sofie Batshoun mentioned that she has been trying to reactivate Pyramid #304 in Anaheim for several years.

District Governor's Report: District Governor Sofie Batshoun offered her Report. She did not read the report presented in the booklet but encouraged everyone to take a moment to do so.

Special Presentations: DG Sofie Batshoun gave each of the 2024-2025 board members a Certificate of Appreciation and a Daughters of Penelope notebook. Hyperia #94 received a chapter certificate for initiating six new members, increasing their membership by 26%. GG IV Linda Belba was presented with a gift and a donation to the district scholarship fund for District 21.

Good of the Order: PDG Carol Stathopoulos, Aegina #340, congratulated DG Sofie Batshoun on a wonderful year. She has watched her grow up in DOP and knew that one day Sofie would be the District 20 DG. She wishes her all the best in her future with the DOP.

Barbara Cogert, Hyperia #94, asked if the DOP Academy sessions could be recorded to watch at a later time, due to them being at an awkward time for the West coast. GG Zone IV, Linda Belba stated the Grand Vice President does not encourage recording and prefers everyone to view it live, but that she would ask again.

Closing Prayer: The convention closing prayer was read by DM Peleleilani Snyder, Philia #380.

Adjournment: The convention was adjourned at 10:46AM

Respectfully submitted.

Nikki Kopan
Convention Secretary

Delegate List - Daughters of Penelope				
Attendance District #20 May 2025				
District Lodge	Name	Fri AM	Fri PM	Sat AM
Governor	Sofie Batshoun	x	x	x
Lt. Governor	Michele Lotakis	x	x	x
Treasurer	Rene Grevas	-	x	x
Marshal	Peleilani Synder	x	x	x
DOP Advisor	Carol Stathopoulos, PDG	x	x	x
Maid's Advisor	Nikki Kopan	x	x	x
Chapter Name & Number	Past District Governors			
Aegina #340	Georgia Souris, PDG	x	x	x
Chapter Name & Number	Delegates (Voting Power)			
Hyperia #94	Barbara Cogert	x	x	x
Phoebus #146	Dee Dee Orcutt	-	-	x
Amphitrite #151	Athena Pallas	-	x	x
Minos #159	Mari Giannopoulos	x	x	x
Minos #159	Nancy Angelos	x	x	-
Aegina #340	Theresa Fardelos	x	x	x
Aegina #340	Linda Kotsakis	x	x	x
Helenos #432	Cynthia Bekiaris	x	x	x
Helenos #432	Georgia Lipane	x	x	x
Helenos #432	Julie Karoutas	x	x	x
Philia #380	Elly Kopan	x	x	x
Philia #380	Demetra Koutrodmios	-	-	x
Chapter Name & Number	Observers			
Daphne #29	Linda Belba, Grand Governor, IV	x	x	x
Alkandre #43	Virginia Noyes	-	x	x
Alkandre #43	Alexis Noyes	-	-	x
Alkandre #43	Jodi Litchfield	-	-	x
Hyperia #94	Jane Coccia	x	x	-
Hyperia #94	Marcia Brahos	-	-	x
Minos #159	Stella Schiewe	x	x	x
Minos #159	Mary Pruitt	x	x	x
Minos #159	Marcelle Lambropoulos	x	x	x
Philia #380	Lisa Watts	x	x	-
Delegates		15	17	18
Observers		10	7	8
Totals		25	24	26