November 2015 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

This newsletter is in honor of the Moses family who honored us with their presence at a gathering in October to present a family siddur dating back to the early 19th century. See story in this issue.
This newsletter, our 81st will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website (www.kkjsm.org).

We now reach over 7000 households worldwide, with our community of ‘friends’ continually growing with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

As always, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up (papusoup@mindspring.com) so we are sure that our Kiddush (traditional Greek Jewish Kosher foods) is sufficient. If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush for a special occasion or an Adara, contact Sol.

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Passings

~ We mourn the passing of Rosaline (Roz) Matsil Gershuny, daughter of Harry Matsil OBM, Roz passed on October 11, 2015, just shy of her 94th birthday. She is survived by her sons, Howard and Lee, and loving family including her brothers, Milton and Reggie. The Matsil brothers, Behoraki, Harry and Morris were instrumental in founding the early Yanniote community in the United States. Bechoraki served as a rabbi in the Mapleton offshoot of Kehila Kedosha Janina, and Harry and Morris employed many Yanniotes in their “kimono” business.

~ We mourn the passing of Mollie Levy. Mollie was born on the Lower East Side to Greek-Jewish parents. Her grandfather was one of the co-founders of Kehila Kedosha Janina. Mollie is survived by her husband of 66 years, Albert Levy, son, Dr. Victor Levy, daughter, Esther Levy Symonds, son -law, Garth Symonds, grandchildren Daniella and Jonathan Symonds, loving family and friends.

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Simchas

~ We congratulate Rabbi Bernard Honan and Roslyn Vitoulis Honan on their 60th wedding anniversary. They were married Oct 16, 1955. Rabbi Honan is the great nephew of Rabbi Jessula Levy. Rabbi Levy’s wife was Esther Cantos, who was the sister of Morris Cantos, Bernard Honan’s grandfather. We thank Sarah Crocker for these excellent photos.

Bernard and Roslyn Honan wedding 10/16/1955

Max and Sarah Cantos Honan (Rabbi Bernard Honan’s Parents) with Sarah’s father, Morris

Morris & Rebecca Cantos Early 20th century

Sarah Cantos with Grandmother and Mother
~We congratulate Michael and Eleanor Matsas on their 55th wedding anniversary. Michael is the author of “Illusion of Safety” and Eleanor has become an expert on genealogy, researching many of the finds in our growing collection of family trees. Michael is the son of two Yanniotes, Leon Matsas and Esther Cohen Matsas. Michael, his sister Ninette and parents survived in hiding during the Occupation.

Eleanor and Michael

~We congratulate Steve (Savas) Negrin on his 82nd birthday. Born in Volos, Steve is an important part of the community of Kehila Kedosha Janina. His son, Maurice, is a member of our Board of Trustees. Steve is the son of Moise Negrin of Volos and Esther Mosios Negrin of Ioannina, both of Blessed Memory.

Steve Negrin and his son Maurice

~We congratulate David Solomon on his 90th birthday.
We congratulate Sylvia and Samuel Ringel on their 54th wedding anniversary. Sylvia is the daughter of two Yanniotes, David David and Rachel Barouch, both of Blessed Memory.

We welcome hearing about simchas from our community. It is truly our joy to share your joys.

Δikoi Mas, Los Muestros (our own) come home

Last month we were honored with the visitors from Israel, brought to our synagogue by Esther Gabrielides, and Renee and Michael Schaeffer (Renee is from the Negrin family).
Upcoming Museum Event at Kehila Kedosha Janina

On November 22nd Kehila Kedosha Janina is honored to one of our own, Jack Jacobs, who earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for exceptional heroism on the battlefields of Vietnam. He also holds three Bronze Stars and two Silver Stars. Jack will signing purchased copies of his book, “If Not Now, When?: Duty and Sacrifice In America’s Time of Need”

Where: Kehila Kedosha Janina  
280 Broome Street  
New York, NY 10002  
When: November 22, 2:00 pm  
Open to the public  
Refreshments served
News From Greece

Celebration of OXI Day

News From Jewish Greece

Thessaloniki

October 26, 2015

News story prompts reunion between German journalist, Greek Holocaust survivor

LINA GIANNAROU

Newspaper old-timers have a point when they say that the most beautiful stories can often be found in readers’ letters to the editors, and a fine example landed on the doorstep at Kathimerini recently, handwritten in a somewhat old-fashioned hand and sprinkled with just a few spelling mistakes.
“I apologize for any errors in Greek; I taught myself the language,” said the writer, 77-year-old Gizela Kalariti from Ulm in Germany. The surname comes from her late Greek husband but her knowledge of the language is all her own, learned long before she met him thanks to a deep love of all things Greek from a young age. Her attraction was inexplicable. In fact, her father asked her one day: “What is it about the country that draws you so strongly? Perhaps we have some distant relation?” Extensive research into the family’s genealogy failed to turn up a link. Before retiring, Kalariti worked as a journalist in a local newspaper, in which she had published a plethora of pieces on Greece.

But why was she writing to Kathimerini now? It all started last April when she read an edition of the paper dated March 15, “with some delay,” she admits. A faithful reader for the past 25 years, Kalariti has her local newsagent save her copies of the Sunday editions of Kathimerini, Ta Nea and Efimerida ton Syntakton.

“But I had been busy and didn’t get my hands on the paper until some days later,” she wrote. As she eventually leafed through it her attention was drawn by a photograph with a story by Sakis Ioannidis on 87-year-old Heinz Kounio, one of the last survivors of the Holocaust, a Jew who had boarded the first train to leave Thessaloniki 70 years ago for Auschwitz. The sight of the photograph took Kalariti back 30 years.

“I grew more and more restless as the days passed. I kept thinking that I had to do something. But what? For me it was an incredible story,” she wrote to Kathimerini.

Kalariti has visited Thessaloniki in 1984 to research a story on the city’s Jews, over 90 percent of whom were exterminated in the Nazi death camps. As she wandered around the city, she happened on Kounio’s photography studio. They spent several hours talking.

Gizela Kalariti (left), 77, and 87-year-old Heinz Kounio (third from left), accompanied by his daughter, are seen during the event held in Ulm, Germany. Kounio, a Greek Jew who had been put on the first train to leave Thessaloniki for Auschwitz 70 years ago, spoke of his experience at the SS camps.

“That is when I got his book, ‘I Survived Death,’ which I’ve read three or four times. He had taken most of the photographs in the book. He told me that when the camp was liberated – he was just 35 kilos by then – the Americans asked him his profession. He told them he was a photographer and they gave him a camera. That is why we have so many original photographs from that event,” said Kalariti.
In 1988 Kalariti met Kounio’s sister Erica, but as the years passed, they eventually lost touch.

“But I didn’t forget them,” said Kalariti. “I didn’t know whether they were alive or dead until I read that Kathimerini paper.”

The story got her thinking. “I spent a week pacing around my apartment thinking of what I could do,” she said. She started by calling a friend who taught at the University of Ulm and pitched the idea of organizing a series of events on Greece.

“For so many years the German press has been insulting the Greeks, writing about their mistakes, that they are lazy; it’s not right. It’s not right to tar an entire people with the same brush.”

Her friend agreed with alacrity and she proposed a screening of Giorgos Avgeropoulos’s documentary on the Greek crisis, “Agora,” a talk by writer Petros Markaris on the last book of his trilogy on the crisis, “End Titles,” as well as presentations by Greek Holocaust survivors Argyris Sfountouris from Distomo, and, of course, Kounio.

Kalariti was concerned about whether Kounio would agree to travel.

“I looked through all my old address books, 30 years’ worth, and found his home phone number. I was nervous but told myself, ‘Be brave.’” Kounio, like the other three guests, accepted the invitation at once and spoke at the university on September 30.

“When he arrived I spent three or four hours with him at his hotel; we spoke a lot. It was such a lovely atmosphere, as though we were neighbors,” wrote Kalariti. “The event was a big success; you could hear a pin drop. Despite his years, he spoke for an hour-and-a-half about what he went through in the SS camps. His daughter, who had accompanied him, would help him when he choked up. It was amazing teamwork. I’m so happy it could all happen.

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From Hella Kounio Matalon about an emotional visit of her father, Holocaust survivor, Heinz Kounio, to a classroom in Thessaloniki in October.

Today was an exceptionally emotional day. Escorting my father in an event in the 7th Lykion (High school) of Thessaloniki where he was invited, I found myself in a packed events hall, where all the students stood up and applauded my father for more than 3 minutes. In a school with inspired teachers and exceptional students, the 1st class of which (16 years) have been occupied last year with a project on the Holocaust. They have been awarded with a prize by the Ministry of Education for their excellent video and travelled to Krakow to visit the concentration camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Congratulations to the school, to the students and to their teachers! The teachers are those who inspire the children, are those who push them to achieve miracles. This school, these teachers, these students deserve more than congratulations! They can be the cause and the example to make our society change to the better!
The photo is taken the moment of the entrance of my father in the school.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “CENTERS & DIASPORAS” IN ATHENS BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Thursday, 22 October 2015 08:25

In recognition of the special place of Orthodox Christianity in the Greek tradition and the special place of Judaism in the life of the people of Israel, a Christian-Jewish colloquium was held in Athens on October 20-21, 2015 to celebrate 25 years of full relations between Greece and Israel. The conference, convened by the Liaison Office of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Office of Interreligious and Intercultural Affairs together with the Department for International Interreligious Affairs of AJC (the American Jewish Committee), sought to highlight the connections of religion, culture and identity, that are central to the life of both traditions.

The meeting provided a unique opportunity to affirm the bonds of friendship, understanding and cooperation that have been forged between Orthodoxy and Judaism over recent decades in particular by the Ecumenical Patriarchate under the leadership of His All Holiness Bartholomew. Among the principle affirmations of the colloquium were the commitment to freedom of religion and conscience, the repudiation of all bigotry and especially violence - in particular when such is used in the name of religion, and thus a commitment to work together to combat all negative prejudice and persecution, especially on religious grounds. The conference was hosted by the Israeli Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic Ms. Irit Ben Abba and the attendees were also privileged to enjoy a special concert of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra’s String Quartet at the Acropolis Museum which also celebrated the milestone in Greece-Israel relations.

Press Release from the Office of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Interreligious and Intercultural Affairs & AJC – American Jewish Committee Athens, October 21, 2015
KIS ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE IMPLICATIONS BY DIMITRIS GIANNAKOPOULOS

Friday, 16 October 2015 12:42

The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece expresses the Greek Jewry’s strong protest for the unacceptable references to names of our coreligionists, made by the representative of the Greek pharmaceutical industry and president of VIANEX Dimitris Giannakopoulos, in the Greek Parliament, during the hearing of October 14, 2015, with Greece’s social sectors regarding the omnibus draft Bill. In the same spirit the reproduction of these references by MP Nikos Nikolopoulos is equally worrisome.

We believe that the policy of defusing Jewish conspiracy theories aiming at promoting business—or other—interests is ignoble and opportunistic.

The representative of the pharmaceutical industry with his dangerous attitude to implicate by name our coreligionists—the Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee and a member of the Athens Jewish Community—in order to support his argument—without any proof at all—implies a connection between economic crisis and the Jews.

The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece expresses the hope that the views of Mr. Giannakopoulos, which aliment anti-Semitism in our country, do not represent the sector of pharmaceuticals at large, and certainly should not leave their mark on the Hellenic Parliament. Athens, October 16, 2015

Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece

On October 4th, we were honored with a gathering from the Moses (Moshon/Moise) family on the occasion of the donation of a family siddur brought to the United States from Ioannina with the arrival of the patriarch, Mordechai, of this branch of the family in 1908. The siddur has been ascertained to be from the 19th century. We so appreciate the donation and were gratified to see so many members of the family gather in our synagogue/museum to remember their heritage.
In terms of Jewish holidays and commemorative events, November is totally empty. Unfortunately however, recent events in Israel, which may still be going on as this bulletin comes out, have more than made up for any "calm" period on the Jewish calendar. And as horrible as the recent terrorist attacks and their consequences are for everyone involved, there seems to be a rather broad consensus by both victims and perpetrators that the motivation for such attacks comes from the incitement of Palestinian and even Israeli Moslem religious and political leaders as they accuse Israel and Jews of trying to conquer, take over, destroy, contaminate and desecrate the Al Aqsa compound, since, in the Palestinian revisionist historical narrative, there was never any Jewish Temple there in the first place, and, therefore, no valid Jewish connection to Jerusalem exists at all! And while this twisted and totally false version of history is not new, unfortunately more and more individuals and even governments are beginning to question Judaism’s claims regarding the very existence of the Temples and/or their true locations. This is evidenced by recent articles in the international press, including the New York Times.

We need not linger on Jewish sources for the existence, holiness and yearning for the Temple and Jerusalem itself, and of course Jews’ eternal connection with Jerusalem. More important perhaps, are the many non-Jewish historical, archeological and documented sources of the existence of the Temples in Jerusalem and on the Temple Mount.

First of all, Jewish, Christian and Muslim tradition has always held the Mount sacred and none questioned the existence of the Temples. The English-language "A Brief Guide to al-Haram al-Sharif," published by the Supreme Muslim Council itself in 1925, states: "The site is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest (perhaps from pre-historic) times. Its identity with the site of Solomon’s Temple is beyond dispute. As well as being sacred to Jews, the hilltop plaza, which could go back as much as 5,000 years, is sacred to Muslims as the place from which the Prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven."

There is virtually not a single description of Jerusalem in Arabic from the Middle Ages, or even the earlier period or later one, that does not relate to Haram al-Sharif as the site of the Temple. Furthermore, from the Babylonians and Romans to the Greeks and Persians, the Jewish Temples on the Mount were recorded. The Letter of Aristeas, for example, from the second century B.C.E., describes how King Ptolemy (285-247 B.C.E.) was urged by his conscientious librarian to have the scriptures and laws of the Jews translated for his library. Ptolemy sent Aristeas to the Jewish high priest Eliezer, who agreed to cooperate, and Ptolemy rewarded Eliezer with silver for the temple sacrifices.
As for the Romans, Titus was never coy about his crowning achievement in crushing the Jewish rebellion in 70 C.E. and destroying the Temple in Jerusalem. And as is well known, The Arch of Titus in Rome shows the procession following the plunder of the Temple by the Romans, including the menorah they removed. And as a final sign of Roman contempt for the holy site – as well as try and erase any trace of "Jewish" Jerusalem - the site was completely leveled, a sanctuary to Jupiter was built on the Temple Mount, and statues of Roman deities were erected in the city which was renamed Aelia Capitolina, in honor of the emperor Hadrian.

Finally, many scholars of Islam confirm that the main reason that the Al Aqsa mosque and Dome of the Rock were built on the Temple mount was specifically because the Holy Temple had stood there!
Numerous other non-Jewish, and especially Arabic and Moslem archeological and historical sources could be shown and quoted to prove the connection of Jews and Judaism to Jerusalem as well as the existence of both Temples. Suffice to say, that the latest Palestinian propaganda campaign denying these basic facts is obviously a political ploy – albeit a strong and unfortunately effective one – to deny any legitimacy to our eternal devotion and connection to Jerusalem and the Holy Temples that were destroyed. It is therefore incumbent upon Jews everywhere, no matter what their political opinions regarding the Israel-Palestinian conflict, to understand our connection, both physically and spiritually, to Jerusalem, and that this eternal and historical fact can never be broken or denied.

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Request For Our Help

Seeking relatives or descendants of Albert or Abraham Cohen son of Judah Cohen and Marika origin from Larissa and Volos in Greece. Albert fought and survived the fighting on the Albanian Front in 1940 (in Klisoura). We believe that a descendant was part of a group visiting Thessaloniki in May 2015. Anyone who knows anything please contact: sokapeta@gmail.com. Thank you very much.

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For those in the New York metropolitan area seeking a Romaniote mohel, we are proud to include the information of Rabbi Michael Albala.

Rabbi Michael Albala
Certified Mohel.
Sefardic & Ashkenaz Customs.

Home: 718-769-0028
Cell: 718-877-4345

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**Recommended sites on the internet.**

Do access the moving testimony of Rebecca Yomtov Hauser, a Yanniote survivor of the Holocaust.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbPudYTSWqs&list=PL_fMIWKr6JjZOLkq3fT_OtPcrnF3iMZyv

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**Sephardic drink store**

http://vanishingnewyork.blogspot.com/2015/10/elpine-revisited.html

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**Turkish words in Greek**

https://www.facebook.com/mary.andronikides/posts/10206213694440446

Reminder: Kehila Kedosha Janina now has its own Page on Facebook. Do access for interesting articles and news related to our community.
So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.

If you would like to make a contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina, please send your check (in US dollars) made out to *Kehila Kedosha Janina*, to us at 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 (attention Marcia). Your donation will enable us to continue to hold services and preserve our special traditions and customs, and to tell our unique story through our Museum.

When you are in New York, visit us on Broome Street. We are open for services every Saturday and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11-4 and, by appointment during the week.