Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Returning from a month of touring Greece, Cyprus and Israel with two special groups, this E-Newsletter is dedicated to our Greek Jewish Community, both in Greece and in the Diaspora who have had the passion, commitment and wisdom to pass on our special culture and traditions to the next generation. After this month, we are so much more secure in the future of our community than ever before.

This newsletter, our 101st, 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 8,500 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 museum@kkjsm.org

As always, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat Services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up by emailing info@kkjsm.org so we are sure that our Kiddush (traditional Greek Jewish Kosher lunch) is sufficient. If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush for a special occasion or an Adara, contact Sol.
Passings

This past month has been a truly sad one for us, as we lost icons of our Greek Jewish world, people who will leave a deep void in our lives.

Our condolences go out to past Sisterhood President, Molly Cohen, whose son, David, passed away at the age of 67 after falling during vacation with his family in Canada. David was the beloved son of Molly Matza Cohen and Ike Cohen. He is survived by wife and children, siblings (Rochelle and Estelle) and his mother, Molly. Our hearts go out to his family in this time of tragic loss. May his memory be for a blessing.

We mourn the passing of Marion Valitt, sister of Sandra Fox, daughter of Anna Negrin Hamburg and Al Hamburg (both OBM), granddaughter of Joseph Moses Negrin and Serena (Sarah) Ganis, both born in Ioannina and both OBM, great granddaughter of Moses Negrin and Leah Cohen (both born in Ioannina and both OBM) and great, great granddaughter of Eliyia Negrin and Hanoula Cohen (both born in Ioannina).
A tremendous void has been left in our community by the passing of Max Nachmias (1929-2017), a true Pasha. Max will long be remembered for his gentle spirit and loving smile. His wife, Eve, passed only a few months ago on April 28th. Max left us on July 11th after a long battle with Alzheimer's. He is survived by his daughter, Pamela Sheiffer, son-in-law, David Sheiffer, son, Stewart Nachmias, granddaughters, Emily and Rebecca Sheiffer and a world of loving friends.

Max was a past president of the Brotherhood of Janina and the Pashas, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Kehila Kedosha Janina. He was the son of Sam Nachmias and Bessie Nachmias (both OBM), both born in Ioannina, early immigrants to our NY community. The family lived across the street from Kehila Kedosha Janina. May his memory be for a blessing.
The larger than life figure of Willie Osmo (9/29/1939-7/17/2017) of Australia will be greatly missed by his family and large group of friends from around the world. We first met Willie at a gathering of Corfiotes in 2002 as we gathered to dedicate a Holocaust Memorial Plaque in the Synagogue of Corfu. His sister Aline was with us in Israel when we learned of his passing. May his memory be for a blessing.

We were greatly saddened to hear of the passing of Jeannette Molho, sister of Laura Molho. Jeanette was born in Salonika and survived the Occupation as a hidden child in Athens. We received the announcement from the AFJMG (American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece): “The American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece (AFJMG) mourn the passing of a founding member, member of the Board of Directors and past Treasurer, Jeannette Molho.

Jeannette Molho was born in Thessaloniki, Greece, in 1927. She and her immediate family survived the Holocaust by escaping to Athens, until the Liberation of Greece in October 1944. Following the family’s return to Thessaloniki, she resumed her piano studies, eventually graduating from the Music Conservatory, in 1951. In 1961 she moved to New York, where she worked as a vice president of the Israel Discount Bank until her retirement in 1994. She served as Treasurer of the AFJMG for over twenty years, from the early nineties on. Jeannette is survived by her sister, Dr. Laura Molho Sard, a nephew, a niece and her husband, and two grandnephews. Her many friends remember her for her devotion to duty, her loyalty, civility and culture, as well as her sense of humor.”

We were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Lena Elias Russo at the age of 95. Lena was born in Kastoria, Greece, and was among the 35 survivors of the community, deported to Auschwitz—Birkenau in March of 1944. Her long life, her beautiful family and her loving demeanor were a testimony to survival. The recently released movie Trezoros, produced by her son Larry Russo and Larry Confino has been shown all over the world and will stand as a loving tribute to her courage. She is survived by her three sons, Larry, Cliff and Albert, grandchildren and great-grandchild, loving extended family and friends throughout the world.
As always, we are overjoyed to share our simchas with you. We congratulate Joe and Karen Besca on their recent wedding and Emily Udler on the upcoming Bat Mitzvah of her oldest granddaughter, Noga. Emily and Joe are first cousins, both children of survivors from Ioannina and, how appropriate that both will be celebrating simchas. Every event, such as these, display our resilience as a people and celebrate our survival. Joe is the oldest child of Matilda Besso and Sam Besca, the grandson of Iosef Eliezer OBM and Rachil bat Shemos Eliasaf OBM (both of whom were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau). On his mother’s side, he was the grandson of Michael Besso, born in Arta and murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Annetta Judah Besso, born in Ioannina and murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau.
Noga is the granddaughter of Emily Isaacs and Avi Udler OBM, the great granddaughter of Rosa Bessos and Iakov Isaacs, both OBM and both born in Ioannina, the great great-granddaughter of Michael Besso, born in Arta and murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Annetta Judah Besso, born in Ioannina and murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

We celebrate the birth of Emma Parente, the first child of Michel Parente and his beautiful wife Funda. Mazal Tov to Dolly and Solon Parente. A new Saloniklia is born! Waiting anxiously for a photo!

Finally, we are looking forward to celebrating the 98th birthday of Ralph Battino on August 5th.

Ralph leading the Pashas in a dance at a Florida reunion
Dikoi Mas (Our Own) Come Home

In July, we were honored with the visits of members of the Barwald family, descendants of the Saddock, Soussis and Cabelis families, all early founders of Kehila Kedosha Janina, and the Deutchmans, descendants of the Colchamiro family, another of our early founding families. It is so important to us that, after 100 years, these families still remember their roots and come to Kehila Kedosha Janina to reconnect.

Visitors

Among the many visitors to Kehila Kedosha Janina during the month of July were Eyal and Rebecca Ardit from Florida.
Having visited Greece from June 30-July 9th and again from July 18-27, along with Cyprus from July 9-13 and Israel from July 13-18, much of this newsletter will be news from the Greek-Jewish world in Greece, Cyprus and Israel.

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**Updates on News from Jewish Greece**

**TRIKALA**

While a substantial number of donations has come in towards the restoration of the Synagogue in Trikala and, we would like to thank those who sent in donations. Please continue to do so. We want to make this restoration a reality. Those interested in taking part in this important project can contact the Central Board of Greece directly (info@kis.gr) and the Jewish Community of Trikala (iakov.venouziou@gmail.com). For those who wish to give a donation within the United States (tax deductible) you can send your contributions to The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, 1 Hanson Place, Huntington NY 11743. **All funds collected will go towards saving the synagogue.**

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**IOANNINA**

We are happy to report that the synagogue in Ioannina has been partially repaired, securing the building after a recent earthquake, additional repairs, including replacement of windows is needed. As a reminder, “I just received an appeal from the Jewish Community of Ioannina. An earthquake in late October caused severe damage to stone walls of the synagogue. While a grant was received from Germany, it was not sufficient. The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry will be spear-heading an appeal. Funds can be sent directly to the Jewish Community of Ioannina (make notation that the funds are for repair of synagogue) or to The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, 1 Hanson Place, Huntington NY 11743. If you wish to make a bank transfer to the community's bank account (or to that of the Association) e-mail me at museum@kkjsm.org.”

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Each year that we visit Ioannina, one of our most delightful stops is the Gani Foundation, located in the former home of Joseph and Esther Ganis at Soutsou 26 (Email: igani@otenet.gr). The Foundation does excellent work in promoting cultural events in the city and publishing books on a variety of subjects. Do visit the foundation when in the city and, of course, do leave a donation to enable them to continue their important work.

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*Esther and Joseph Ganis*
Some examples of recent Gani Foundation publications

LARISSA

In the evening of Monday July 17, 2017, an individual dressed as a monk who calls himself ‘father Kleomenis’ - a cult figure, popular for his bigoted ideas and YouTube posts- attacked and vandalized the Holocaust Monument in Larissa, situated in the central Jewish Martyrs Square of the city. In his video posted on YouTube, the alleged monk curses the Jews, denies the Holocaust and calls on the local patriots of Larissa to intervene and demolish the Monument. "Father" Kleomenis spits, kicks and throws eggs at the Monument. Some of his characteristic quotes: “Here, we read 6 million! Fairy tales... Shit on their faces, merely 600.000 Hitler wiped out!”. Kleomenis spits on the Monument and says: "Satanic Jews". He kicks the Monument and says: “Curse on your dirty Monuments” and continues: “Worms, Jewish bitches, this has to fall. The stinking Jewishness has to be taken down from Larissa. Rise up! Patriotic organizations of Larissa take it down, bring the bulldozer on!” Local police was notified and legal procedure was enacted. Investigation is ongoing. The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS) and the Jewish Community of Larissa issued press releases. The Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church issued an announcement disassociating itself from the "monk" and condemning his actions.
The Municipality of Larissa issued an Announcement condemning the attack. The General Secretary of Religious Affairs George Kalantzis, as well as the General Secretary for Transparency and Human Rights Maria Giannakaki reacted swiftly by providing the Public Prosecutor of Larissa, the Racist Crimes Department of the Police, and the Cyber Crime Police Department with the relevant evidence. The President of the Jewish Community of Larissa pressed charges against the perpetrator. The Greek Helsinki Monitor also pressed charges against the “so called ‘father Kleomenis’ for a series of racist crimes”.

* The Announcement of KIS (Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece):
Shame and outrage are the feelings that one feels when realizing what happened in Larissa on Monday July 17, 2017: The shameful and upsetting incident of the desecration of the Holocaust Monument of Larissa –the first Holocaust Monument erected in Greece in 1987, in the memory of the Greek Jews deported and exterminated in the Nazi death camps. This highly significant Monument was vulgarly vandalized, with offensive expressions and brutal actions, by a robed clergyman who apparently has no affiliation to the Greek Orthodox Church. On the same day leaflets of relevant anti-Semitic content were strewn across the Monument and the Square of Jewish Martyrs of Larissa. The case is being handled by the Police and the justice system. The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece asked the competent Authorities to arrest the perpetrator and bring him to justice. In addition KIS expresses the Greek Jewry’s belief that the society of Larissa and all local institutions will firmly condemn the incident, will isolate the perpetrators and will treat with respect the Holocaust Monument of Larissa and the Jewish Community which is an integral part of the city, that they will ultimately respect the city’s very cultural heritage and civilization, as the people of Larissa have always done in the course of history. Athens July 18, 2017, Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece

Serres

On Wednesday, July 26, 2017, the President of KIS, Mr. David Saltiel, KIS Board member, Mr. Sakis Leon, along David Tarampoulos, and Kostas Stathopoulos had a formal meeting with the Mayor of Serres Mr. Petro Angelidi and Vice Mayor of Technical Services Mr. Ilia Gkotsi. During the meeting the history of the Jewish presence of in the city of Serres and how to educate people on the history of Jews in the city were discussed.

Serres, before the Holocaust, had a thriving Jewish Community which was perfectly in harmony with the local population and maintained a synagogue, Jewish school and cemetery. During the Holocaust lost almost all members of the Jewish Community of Serres were lost. In 2000 the Municipality of Serres posted votive column in the former Jewish School in memory of the city exterminated Jews.
Rhodes

July 23rd was the 73rd anniversary of the deportation of the Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos. Services were held on the island Friday night, July 21st, Saturday, July 22nd and a concert was presented on July 23rd. Rhodeslis from around the world attended.

Sammy and Selma Modiano

Rabbi Negrin leading Services

Thessaloniki

A disturbing article from the newspaper, Macedonia Sunday.

Newspaper “Macedonia Sunday,” 7/23/17, Joseph VAENI:

In recent years Salonikan summer –besides increased plant life and trips to Chalkidiki, has also been characterized by the unexpected increase in tourists visiting the city. Many are amazed to discover that there are scattered Jewish gravestones scattered throughout the city.

The tombstones were taken from the Old Jewish Cemetery in the city, the largest in Europe, with more than 350,000 graves from the 2nd century until 1944, spanning 350 acres of the site where the campus of Aristotle University is now located. The cemetery was located outside the walls and outside the city until the 19th
century, when Thessaloniki expanded east. After the fire of 1917 there were constant pressures from Greek authorities, who claimed that the land was needed for the expansion of the city. Certainly it is worth noting that the nearby Christian cemetery of the Annunciation remained intact and survives to this day. In other European countries the historical Jewish cemeteries remained intact, although located in the center of cities.

During the occupation the prewar desires of the Christian part of the city found receptive German ears and so began the disaster in December 1942. The tombstones and brick tombs were used during the postwar occupation but mainly by various individuals and organizations as building material. From individuals using them to build houses or marketing the materials. From the Metropolis for the repair or restoration of churches, such as St. Dimitrios and Ag. Sophia, the Thessaloniki municipality for public works such as the construction of avenues, the paving of the Rotunda, the White Tower square, and the Royal Theater. Sidewalks were made of looted relics centuries old and later sold to the municipality of Kalamaria. Even organizations, that we would expect to resist, such as the University or the archaeological service, did not. Even today, one can see the results of looting that took place during the occupation.

Our Tours to Jewish Greece: June 30-July 18 and July 18-July 27

Our first Tour included Rhodes, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Cyprus and Israel and our second tour, which included young people between the ages of 22-34, were both tremendous successes. These tours enable our community to reconnect with their roots, visit the cities where their families came from and reinforce the Jewish presence in Greece. We are proud that we have been running these tours for 20 years and, now for the first time, we are reconnecting the next generation. Our next tour will be from September 19-October 4th and will enable our group to celebrate the High Holidays in Greece. We still have limited availability so, if you are interested, contact us at museum@kkjsm.org for the itinerary and prices (information can also be found on our website: www.kkjsm.org).
Rhodes was as beautiful as always as we celebrated Kabbalat Shabbat in Kahal Shalom Synagogue.

Esther Morhaime visits the island of her family’s heritage

Salonika always enables us to visit old friends, the Jewish Museum, Jewish cemetery and synagogue.

Holocaust Memorial in Salonika

Hella Kounio Matalion with her daughter Kelly and the new addition to the family
A visit to Veroia is always a special treat.

Aaron Hasson’s family came from Veroia. On our tour he was able to visit.

On our way to Ioannina, we made a short stop in Kastoria. One of our participants had family roots there and we always like to accommodate the needs of our travelers.
A visit to Ioannina is always the highlight of our Tour to Jewish Greece, especially when our group is filled with Yanniotes. This tour had Schinasi, Askinazi, Solomon, Ovadia, David, Samuel and Eliasof descendants. Here they are holding the photos of their ancestors in the synagogue of Ioannina.
A special part of this tour was our ability to visit Cyprus and learn of the special relationship to Israel. From 1946-1949, Jews, most of whom survived the horrors of the Holocaust, were trying to reach their promised homeland, Eretz Israel. Great Britain was given the mandate for the establishment of the State of Israel but, rather than expediting the return of Jewish refugees, detained thousands in internment camps on the island of Cyprus. Our group was able to visit the former British Military Hospital where many Jewish babies were born. Therefore, in addition to taking in the beauty of this special island and enjoying the hospitality of the Cypriots, we had emotional experiences and learned of a history few know. Special thanks to Antonis Antoniou who expedited our travels.
The finale of our first tour was a trip to Greek-Jewish Israel, a part of Israel very few Jews know about. We visited the Greek Club in Jerusalem and were surprised by a visit of the Greek-Jewish basketball team in Israel for the Maccabi Games. We visit the Italian Synagogue for Shabbat services, the Moshav created by Greek Jews in 1937 (Moshav Tsur Moshe named after the philanthropic Greek-Jewish doctor born in Ioannina, Moshe Kofinas), Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa. While in Tel Aviv, we reconnected with the Hassid brothers who we had met in Corfu in 2015 (their mother, Rosa, had been saved by the islanders of Ereikousa). All in all, this was a fantastic ending to our tour.
Young Professionals Tour of Jewish Greece

Our second tour (from July 18-27) was made up of young people, most of whom had Greek Jewish roots, all of whom had Sephardic or Romaniote roots, from the ages of 22-34. We traveled to Salonika, Veroia, Ioannina, Arta, Athens, and Mykonos. This group was a credit to their generation and our community. Their passion was palatable.
News of Interest from the Balkans

Turkey

Founder of ‘JEWS OF TIRE’ from Turkey: “It is our responsibility to share our Jewish Community’s stories with the world”

Located approximately southeast side of Izmir city, Tire is not often mentioned when speaking of Jews from Turkey. While searching the archives, Murat Sanus, a director at the Municipality of Tire, discovered the old pictures of Tirean Jewish couples and then his journey began...

Could you tell us a little about ‘Jews of Tire Project’? How did it start?

I am the director of external relations and social projects at the Municipality of Tire, Izmir Province in western Turkey. In 2013, during a research among the archive of marriage contracts, I saw the pictures of Tirean Jewish couples. They were extraordinarily well-dressed in 1920s and 1930s. It was like a European Community living in a small Turkish town. It was very interesting to me. Then, I decided to discover more of our old Jewish Community. I have studied maybe more than 150.000 documents up to now. Official and religious marriage contracts, birth certificates, school, military service, deed, funeral records and more. We have also found nearly 300 old tombstones, mainly from underground, and collected them at a new Jewish cemetery after transcribing and archiving them all. Now, the database consists of each and every Jew who lived from 1800s to 1960s at Tire, plus some more from older centuries, 6.500 in total. You can find them at: www.jewsoftire.com.
This bulletin will probably reach everyone either on, or close to, the 9th of Av (Tisha B'Av), which falls on August 1st this year. As we know, this 25-hour fast is ostensibly the saddest day on the Jewish calendar, commemorating the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem, as well as many other tragic events over the centuries that so terribly affected the Jewish people: the start of WWI, the final date of expulsion of the Jews from Spain and more.

Traditionally, the 3-week period of semi-mourning begins on the fast of the 17th of Tammuz and ends with Tisha B'Av. Immediately thereafter, the Jewish world recuperates and in fact the next special day in the month of Av is, according to the Talmud, one of the happiest days in Judaism: the 15th of Av (Tu B'Av), which celebrates some of the most positive events in Jewish history, as well as being the day when Jewish men and women would try and find their life-partners in marriage. In more modern times, once Tisha B'Av ends, Jews everywhere begin vacations, travel and hold happy family events, things that were either forbidden or considered untasteful until Tisha B'Av.

But there is still a downside, because with all due respect to our commemoration, prayers mourning, constant anticipation of the Messiah and the fervent hope that the third Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, it hasn't yet happened. Why is that? Can we even ask the question? After all, we do believe that the final redemption will come when G-d decides it is time, so is there really anything we can do as individuals and a group that might help speed-up the process.

Though it may be surprising to many, the answer is an unequivocal yes, and in fact, we could say that it really depends almost entirely on us. According to Jewish tradition – and the Prophets – the first Temple was destroyed because of our own sins, and the most serious at that: bloodshed, incestual relationships and idol worship. As a result, G-d, in his ire, decided that despite endless warnings by the Prophets that were totally ignored by the people, there was no choice but to destroy G-d's own house, as it were. The Jews were subsequently exiled to Babylonia for 70 years. The shock of losing Judaism's national and religious center brought people back to their senses, and the Temple was rebuilt and the exiles allowed to return to Jerusalem by the ruling Persian king.

As for the second Temple, our sages teach us that the reason for its destruction was what we call "sinat hinam" – baseless hatred of one Jew to another! In fact, as is cited in a number of sources, the second Temple generation was considered wise, G-d fearing and meticulous in their observance of all the commandments! The three cardinal sins that caused the first Temple's destruction were no more, and in terms of the relationship between man and G-d and what we might call religious ritual, we reached spiritual peaks unheard of previously. The problem was in the man to fellow-man relationship. Incredibly, and frightening contemporary in many ways, the baseless hatred prevalent at the time was reflected in each person or sect considering other people and sects whose Judaism was observed somewhat differently than them, as being blasphemers and illegitimate Jews! On the most basic level, this was manifested in one family not eating at another's home (they are not kosher enough), and otherwise warning members of the same sect to stay away from "those people"...But on a far more significant and horrible level, these attitudes eventually led to actual infighting and even bloodshed, since each group felt that it was the only legitimate heir to Jewish tradition.
The historian Josephus and even Talmudic sources record the terrible arguments between the extremists and the mainstream population in how – if at all – Rome could be accommodated to prevent the destruction. These sources note that the extremists even destroyed food supplies and assassinated "traitors" in the days approaching the destruction, since they refused to see any compromise in their exclusive outlook against Rome. So ultimately, this horrible hate and infighting indeed led to the destruction of the second Temple, and an exile that has not formally ended to this day.

I think the message is clear: We can often be our own worst enemies. As individuals, congregations and sectors, we need not agree with all others, but nor can we denigrate and dismiss them as being illegitimate because of our differences.

In many ways, "sinat hinam" continues apace, and may be even worse than then. In fact, another Talmudic dictum teaches us that in every generation the Temple is not rebuilt, it is as if it was destroyed during that generation. Considering the idea of "sinat hinam", the Talmud's dictum is frighteningly true.

May G-d cause us to mend our decisive ways and bring the final redemption forthwith!

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**Messages from our Community**

Hy Matza is looking for the children and/or grandchildren and/or great-grandchildren of Sally Matza who married John Abdel in NYC circa 1930. Hy Matza was the ring bearer at age 6 at the wedding. We have been able to find out that Sally and John were married on October 17, 1931 and the couple is listed in the 1940 census as living at #1455 Townsend Avenue in the Bronx. John is listed as age 40, born in Athens Greece, a college grad and working as a civil engineer for the Parks Department. Sally is listed as 27 years old, born in NY and completing the third year of high school. The couple is listed as having three daughters, Rhoda, age 7, Joan, age 5 and Irene, age 2. If you can help Hy, please contact us at museum@kkjsm.org.

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**Research**

After our visit to the Former British Military Hospital in Cyprus and learning that 300 Greek Jews passed through the internment camp, we are seeking the names of these Greek-Jewish internees. Please send any info you have to museum@kkjsm.org.
New acquisitions for our Kehila Kedosha Janina library

Treasures from Rhodes for our Gift Shop