October 2013 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

We thank all of you who joined us for Holiday services. Our hearts were warmed by your presence.

This October, in Greensboro North Carolina, there will be the unveiling for Esther Politis Mordechai. Esther was deported from Ioannina in March of 1944 and was the only one of five siblings to survive. On her return to Ioannina, she married another survivor, Elias Mordechai. This November, we will have a special exhibit in our Museum in honor of Esther and Elias, lovingly donated by her daughter, Evelyn.
This newsletter, our 69th, 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 to 6000 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.

Passings

It is with great sadness that we report the following passings: Hermione Matsil, wife of Sol ben Morris Matsil; and sadly, 8 days later, Helen Matsil, wife of Albert Matsil, ben Morris Matsil. We also lost Hyman Morris Matza and Abraham Naftali.

Hermione was an active member of UJA and Sisterhood of Janina, and left behind her husband Sol (son of Morris Matsil of Blessed Memory who was born in Ioannina) and her two children David and Elicce. Our condolences to her family.

Abraham Naftali passed at the age of 87. He was the son of Benny (Barouch) Naftali of Ioannina and Sara Cohen of Crete. Abraham proudly served in the US Army during WWII. Our condolences to his family.

Naphtali Family

Hy Matza passed at the age of 92. He was a true patriarch of his family. He was one of seven siblings and the last surviving child of Anna Mevorah Matza and Moshe Aaron Matza of Kastoria.
Greece. He was a veteran of WWII and was with the first troops to liberate the Dachau Concentration Camp. He was the loving husband of the late Victoria Alevy Matza, father of Andrea Grass (Tony) and Marc (Robin), grandfather of Kimberly, Alexandra, Jacqueline and Cody. He travelled his own path on every road taken... a man of extraordinary strength. Our condolences to his family.

**Simchas**

We joyously celebrate the following simchas:

We celebrate the birth of Austin Abraham, son of Sara and Evan Dudley. Sara is the daughter of Sandy and Barry Fox. Austin Abraham is the great-grandson of Anna Negrin and Al Hamburg (both of Blessed Memory), the great-great-grandson of Joseph Moses Negrin and Serena (Sarah) Ganis Negrin (both born in Ioannina and both of Blessed Memory), the great-great-great grandson of Moses Negrin and Lula Cohen (both born in Ioannina and both of Blessed Memory) and the great-great-great-grandson of Elyia Negrin m. Hanoula Cohen (both born in Ioannina and both of Blessed Memory). A pasha is born!

![Sara Negrin (circa 1930's), Austin's great-great grandmother](image)

The 93rd birthday of Nina Matathias, born in Salonika to the Atoun family (Daniel and Rachel Atoun) and survived during the Occupation of Greece, in hiding in Volos with her infant son Asher. Nina is the widow of Jack Matathias who was born in Trikala.

![Nina Matathias](image)
We celebrate with great joy the 91st birthday of Lil Genee, widow of our beloved Hy Genee. We love this photo of Lil with her great-grandson, Jason.

Δικοί Μας, Λοσ Μεστρος (Our Own) Come Home

This month we were honored with visitors from many branches of our Greek-Jewish family.

Barbara Eskin from the Sabba family paid us a visit, as did Mordy Ishakis, born in Ioannina, both his mother and father survivors of the Holocaust, Daniel Weinberg, grandson of Rabbi Jessoula Levy and members of Vic Cabillis’ family.
Daniel and Susan Weinberg

Rabbi Jessoula Levy

Friends and relatives of Vic Cabillis

Casey Paganetti (great-nephew of Vic Cabillis)

Vic Cabillis with his brothers and sister
Visitors continue to flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina. This month we were honored with visitors from Spain, France and Greece, along with many, many old and new friends from around the USA.

We apologize for the appearance during our extensive restoration of our basement (communal room). As mentioned in previous e-newsletters, our ability to do this is due to the generous bequest from the estate of Ada Finifter of Blessed Memory. Our beautiful new floor has now been installed.
Our synagogue is open for services during the restoration and the museum is open every Sunday from 11-4.

Upcoming Exhibit at Kehila Kedosha Janina

In November 2013, we will open a special exhibit in honor and memory of Esther and Elias Mordechai, two survivors from Ioannina. We hope to expand this exhibit with other stories of those who survived as we approach the 70th anniversary of the deportations. We thank Evelyn Mordechai for sharing her photos with us.
Taken in Ioannina 1946
Esther Modechai is carrying her
daughter Rebecca

Family wedding in Ioannina before WWII

Evelyn carried by her mother Esther in Ioannina
Jewish Treasures of the Caribbean

Photographs by Wyatt Gallery

October 2nd, 2013
7:00 PM

For over five years, acclaimed photographer and Fulbright Fellow Wyatt Gallery has been documenting Sephardic historical sites of the Caribbean. Many of these precious sites are in danger of extinction as the Caribbean Sephardic communities dwindle.

Through these majestic photographs, Mr. Gallery takes us into the four remaining Synagogues with sand covered floors, the cemeteries from the 1600 and 1700's, as well as through the harrowing journey of how the Jews escaped persecution and created a flourishing community in the Caribbean and what is now the United States. Mr. Gallery will be giving our congregation the first preview of his beautiful fine-art photographs from his upcoming book Jewish Treasures of the Caribbean.

Presented in collaboration with

Central Park West at 70th Street, New York City • www.shearithisrael.org
Lower East Side: Then and Now Walking Tour
Sunday, October 13, 2013 | 10:45 am

Rich in history and tradition, the synagogues of the Lower East Side during the peak years of Jewish immigration are among the most distinctive sacred sites in New York. See sites where 19th century immigrants congregated, from the spectacular to the simple. Learn how Jewish Culture is being carried on at these same sites today.

Tour the Bialystoker Synagogue, the largest active orthodox congregation on the Lower East Side today; the exterior of Beth Hamedrash Hagadol - former home of the largest Russian-Jewish orthodox congregation in the United States; and Kehila Kedosha Janina, the only Romaniote (Greek heritage) synagogue in the Western Hemisphere.

Tour Historic East Broadway, featuring Shteibl Row, settlement houses, Seward Park, Strauss Square, and more. Lori and Paul Weissman, veteran guides with the LESJC, will take you on this tour. The Weissmans are multi-generational residents of the LES, and their passion for the neighborhood shows through, allowing you a rare insider's perspective.

Time: 10:45 AM

Meeting Place: Meet at the LESJC Kling & Niman Family Visitor Center 400 Grand St between Clinton & Suffolk Streets

Fees/Info: Adults: $18; seniors and students: $16 ($2 additional day of tour)

Click here to Register Today!

News from Jewish Greece

ΧΑΝΙΑ Αποκαλυπτήρια Μνημείου
Ο Δήμος Χανίων και το Κεντρικό Ισραηλιτικό Συμβούλιο Ελλάδος σας προσκαλούν στην τελετή αποκαλυπτηρίων του Μνημείου, αφιερωμένου στους Έλληνες Εβραίους της Κρήτης, άνδρες, γυναίκες και παιδιά, στους Χριστιανούς αντιστασιακούς του Νησιού και στους Ιταλούς αντιφασίστες αιχμαλώτους, που έπεσαν θύματα των ναζιστικών κατακτητών και βρήκαν τραγικό θάνατο στη βύθιση του Α/Τ «Τάναις» στις 9 Ιουνίου 1944 κατά τον Β’ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο.

Τα αποκαλυπτήρια θα γίνουν τη Δευτέρα 14 Οκτωβρίου 2013
Translation: The Municipality of Hania and the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece invites you to the unveiling of a monument in memory of the Jews of Crete, men, women and children, the Christians who fought in the Resistance on the island and the Italian anti-Fascist soldier who became victims of the Nazi Occupation and suffered a tragic death in the sinking of the Tania on June 9, 1944 during the Second World War. The unveiling will take place on October 14th at 11:00 am at Akti Miaouli at the gate of the city of Hania.

We applaud and endorse the efforts to establish a Holocaust Museum & Education Center in Salonika.
At times, during the 17th through early 20th centuries, Jewish inhabitants constituted up to three fourths of Thessaloniki’s population, a crossroads port city named after the sister of Alexander the Great. In 1911, David Ben Gurion visited this city sung as “Jerusalem of the Balkans,” and “Mother of Israel,” for its exemplary, organized Jewish community, a model in his dream for the modern State of Israel.

In Thessaloniki, more than 500,000 Jewish gravesites, some dating to Ancient Greece in Europe’s oldest Jewish cemetery, were destroyed during the Holocaust. More than 50,000 souls, synagogues, Yeshivas and literary and business societies were wiped out. Today, a few vandalized tombstones and proud old Jewish mansions and bazaars still guard against time and oblivion.

**STEP ONE – UNIQUE HISTORIC SITE**

The president of the Jewish community, David Saltiel, last week announced securing a strategically situated parcel of land for use in connection with the first Holocaust Museum and Education Center.

It is near the abandoned old railroad station where the Nazis herded their victims into asphyxiating boxcars for the final trip to Northern Europe’s death camps. Jews from other cities were also brought here. It was a 7-day trip to Auschwitz endured by families packed standing in the boxcars, near a barrel used as a toilet for 90 people. This Museum will be unique in its presence at the site where the Nazi mass crimes launched the final chapter locally.

**STEP TWO**

The Team of Chicago architect Roula Alakiotou-Borenstine will travel to
construction costs as we prepare for presentation materials. Roula Associates provides this essential work as a donation to the project. However, economy travel and accommodation costs for the visit still need to be covered.

WE NEED YOUR HELP
Please send us your contributions to cover immediate costs for the visit and materials. All funds beyond immediate expenses will be assigned to project costs including document fees and assembling a team of structural, mechanical and civil engineers.

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TODAY
Please today use any one of the three easy options through this link and respond no later than October 20, 2013.

CONTRIBUTE NOW »

News From Greece

“Greek authorities arrest neo-Nazi party leaders
By REUTERS
09/28/2013 13:01
Police nab leader, two lawmakers and party members from Greece’s far-right Golden Dawn party.

Greece’s Golden Dawn leader Nikolaos Mihaloliakos Photo: REUTERS/ Yannis Behrakis
ATHENS - Greek police arrested the leader, two lawmakers and party members from the far-right Golden Dawn party on Saturday, and charged one member with being an accomplice to the killing of an anti-fascist rapper, a police official said. Police said party leader Nikolaos Mihaloliakos, spokesman Ilias Kasidiaris, two other lawmakers and 10 members had been arrested on charges of founding a criminal organization. They are due to appear in court this weekend to be formally charged.
Related:
• 'Greek 'Anti-Semitic' minister not a worry'
• Greek far-right party loses support after anti-racism rapper's death
Golden Dawn, ranked Greece's third most popular party in opinion polls, is under investigation for the murder of Pavlos Fissas which sparked violent protests and a crackdown on political extremism.
The party has denied any links to the killing and Mihaloliakos has warned the party could pull its 18 lawmakers from parliament if the crackdown does not stop.

If potential by-elections were won by the opposition, as some polls indicate, Greece's fragile two-party coalition would become politically untenable, Mihaloliakos has argued. "Shame on them, the people will lift Golden Dawn higher," Ilias Panagiotaros, a Golden Dawn lawmaker told reporters before his arrest.

The party has 18 out of parliament's 300 lawmakers and scored 14 percent of voter support in opinion polls before the stabbing. A poll this week showed its backing had fallen to as low as 6.7 percent.

Greek lawmakers do not lose their political rights or seats unless there is a final court ruling against them but the government has proposed a law that could block state funding for Golden Dawn if police find links to Fissas's murder.

Greece's finance minister played down the risk of political instability after the arrests. "There is no risk of destabilisation," Yannis Stournaras told reporters after a meeting in which Prime Minister Antonis Samaras briefed Greece's European Union and International Monetary Fund lenders on the crackdown against the party."

BRAVO-----FINALLY-----

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Our Readers Share Their Thoughts

This coming year, 2014, will mark the 70th anniversary of the deportations from Ioannina, Arta, Preveza, Chalkis, Volos, Trikala, Larissa, Kastoria, Corfu, Rhodes, Crete and Kos. We will be hosting a number of special events and exhibits in memory of those who left us 70 years ago. We will also be creating a special exhibit on survivors, collecting their stories and memories. The first of these is Naki's story (in an attachment with this e-newsletter and soon to be on our website). Send us your stories: kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Shalom to one and all!

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel

Since the High Holy Days came so early, for the first time in many years there are no holidays at all in October. However, with the coming of the Hebrew month of Heshvan on October 5th, the main item on the agenda for Israel is rain.

As we all know, unleashed forces of nature in the form of torrential rains can be cruel and unforgiving. On the other hand, no less a tragedy can be drought, especially in places where natural rainfall is an existential necessity for the water supply. The Land of Israel is still basically totally dependent on rainfall for its water supply, which for virtually the entire country comes from Lake
Kinneret (Sea of Galilee). Therefore, despite the desalinization of sea-water, when there is not enough rain in the proper season, the lake's water level falls to dangerously low levels and water rationing is instituted. But as far as Judaism is concerned, this is not the result of some random geophysical natural state, but rather Divine determination. In fact, an entire Talmudic tractate, called "Fasts", is devoted to the problems of Israel suffering from either too little or too much rain, with our Sages prescribing and directing an entire series of fasts, special prayers and repentance in order to remedy these situations and their dire consequences. The Talmud informs us that most of the "keys" to the "gates" of various resources, actions and situations were given by God to angels as his messengers, except for three "keys" kept by Him personally: for the revival of the dead at the End of Days, [healthy] childbirth for both mother and newborn, and rain. Therefore, Jewish tradition sees the abundance or lack of rain as an indication of God's satisfaction or displeasure with our actions, especially in the Land of Israel, with all its social and economic implications.

The rainy season in Israel is confined to late autumn-winter (approximately October to March). However, since rainfall is seen as being a Divine gift, Judaism does not take it for granted, and prescribes an entire process of requesting and praying for rain. We begin by "mentioning" the onset of rainy season on Simhat Torah in our daily prayers. In Israel only this is followed by the addition of a more formal prayer request in the silent devotion starting on the 7th of Heshvan (October 10th this year). Ashkenazi Jews merely modify one of the existing blessings in the silent devotion, while Sephardic Jews actually change the entire blessing for this purpose. Then we wait and see what happens. Our Sages set certain dates to determine whether we are receiving enough rain. As each one passes, if too little or too much rain has fallen, a series of private and public fasts as well as special prayer sessions are gradually instituted in order to try and assuage God's apparent anger for our misconduct. As the season progresses, prayers and fasting are intensified as needed, but once spring comes, i.e., the month of Nissan, such activity ceases, and the assumption is that we did not repent enough for our misdeeds on a community level. We therefore must bear the consequences and hope for more rain the following year. As for Jews living outside of Israel, the date set to pray for rain (via the same blessings described above) is December 5th or 6th (depending on the year), based on a formula set by our sages during the Babylonian exile for the Diaspora, based on 60 days after the onset of autumn based on the Jewish calendar, which is the month of Tishrei. And though the northern and southern hemispheres have very different seasons, our Sages set a uniform date for the entire Diaspora based on the northern hemisphere, where the vast majority of the Jewish People have always lived.

Even today, the importance of a "rainy year" is paramount for Israel, and while most of us are used to being disappointed when something is "rained out", and eagerly hope that it will stop, that is not the case in Israel. Quite the contrary: More common is to hear happy and even excited voices of men, women and children when it starts to rain in the Holy Land, with the only wish being that "may it rain even more!" Let us all hope and pray that both Israel and the Diaspora enjoy a very "wet" and healthy year!

Requests for our help

Debbie Kelton, of the Corito family, has been researching her family tree and has come across the family name “HALAZ,” which puzzles us because we can find no such name in our birth records from Ioannina. We appreciate any help in solving this mystery.

Isaac Dostis, founder of the Museum at Kehila Kedosha Janina, is presently working on a new project: a self-guided walking tour of Jewish Ioannina. See the attachment with this e-newsletter for further details on how to help Isaac.
Al Nacson visited us recently and when looking at the addition of the Kehila Kedosha Janina of Mapleton memorial plaques on the wall in our sanctuary, Al mentioned that he attended Mapleton when his family came to New York from Egypt in the 1950s (the family had originated in Corfu). He wanted to know if any of us knew a Morris Cohen “the pajama king.” We now throw that out to our readers. If you can help Al, e-mail us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

We are looking for relatives of Israel Mionis (nickname Bonas) who came to the United States. Sarina Menahem contacted us from Israel. Her grandfather, Israel Mionis died fighting for Greece in 1914 leaving his wife widowed. Sarina Mordechai Mionis remarried Elias Cohen, raising her daughter Louisa from her first marriage and Elias’ four children from his first marriage. They had an additional two children together (Markos and Ilias Cohen). She and her family perished in the Holocaust. Her granddaughter, Sarina, is now looking for any descendants of Israel’s siblings who came to the USA before WWII. Israel’s father’s name was Haim. If you can help Sarina, e-mail us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

News of Interest to All

This year in Cordoba, Spain, there was the celebration of Sukkoth with a sukkah and all!

See attachment

We are honored to announce a series of important conferences in Skopje sponsored by Bar-Ilan University Faculty of Jewish Studies, the Dahan Center of Bar-Ilan University for Culture, Society and Education in the Sephardic Heritage, the Holocaust Center For the Jews of Macedonia, Ahkelon Academic College, Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts, Saints Cyril and Methodius University, Ministry of Religious Services and the Center For Ladino Studies. We are so proud that two of our dear friends, Dr. Paul Isaac Hagouel from Thessaloniki and Leka Rezniqi from Pristina Kosova, will be among the presenters. A full program is in the attachment.

We are proud of the accomplishments of Gabriella Levy, daughter of Jesse and Olivia Levy, granddaughter of Morris and Yvette Levy and great-granddaughter of Rabbi Jessoula and Esther Cantos Levy:

From Gabriella:

Dear Family & Friends, from near and far,

It gives me immense pleasure to be able to announce the official launch of the immerLit website! Take a look...

www.immerlit.com

Since the beginning of 2013, I have been researching, designing, & creating translucent porcelain lighting fixtures. About four months ago, this became immerLit, an official company that seamlessly integrates fine art, design & function.

immerLit light fixtures elegantly illuminate indoor spaces with the natural beauty of translucent porcelain. immerLit works closely with individuals, designers & architects. All of the designs are customizable.
Currently, immerLit offers pendant lighting for sale on the website. In the coming months, new fixture styles will be added including: sconces, table & floor lamps, and much more.

There are many exciting upcoming plans for immerLit. Please click on this link to subscribe to receive official immerLit news and updates. Please also make sure to follow immerLit on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter: @immerlit. Lastly, please take a moment to forward this email to anyone you know who might be interested & spread the word (& light)!

Your time and effort is greatly appreciated!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart,

Gabriella

--

Gabriella Levy
Founder & Creative Director @immerLit
www.immerlit.com

Websites to enjoy

Kehila Kedosha Jannina is honored to have put on loan an exhibit on Romaniote Jews at the Library of Michigan State College, as part of the bequest of Ada Finifter of Blessed Memory.

http://www.lib.msu.edu/library/features/387/
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) 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.