September 2015 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

We wish our friends a Happy and Healthy New Year surrounded by family and friends. May 5775 bring peace throughout the world. May we continue to grow and flourish. May our wealth be counted, not in material possessions but, rather, in the love of family, friends and community. L’Shanah Tovah, Xronia Polla, Anos Muchos y Buenos. Attached to this e-newsletter you will find our Holiday schedule. Do join us for services. Our seats are free and our hearts are open.
As we approach the High Holidays we would like to remind our Jewish friends that on Yom Kippur it is traditional to recite memorial prayers for the dearly departed. In many synagogues this ritual is observed by conducting a Yizkor service. At the Kehila Kedosha Janina we follow the centuries-old Romaniote custom of our people by reciting Hashkavoth (memorial prayers) and the individual names of our dearly departed during the Kol Nidre/Yom Kippur Eve service. If you wish to honor the memory of your family members or friends in this very special way, please e-mail us their names ASAP at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net. It is customary to include a voluntary donation of your choosing.

This newsletter, our 79th 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.kkjism.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 Gene Rook, husband of Eve Kraus who was the daughter of Sarah and Elliot Kraus both of Blessed Memory (and granddaughter of Elias and Speranza Colchamro both of Blessed memory and the great-granddaughter of Jessoula and Rachel Colchamiro of Ioannina). Gene passed on August 19, 2016 just short of his 75th birthday.
Simchas

~ Shale Breite, son of Robin & Marshall Breite, grandson of Minnie and Manny Battino was married on August 22nd. Ralph Battino is great uncle to Shale. We are awaiting wedding photos.

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

Δικοί Μας, Λος Μυστρός (οι εκατόντες) επέστρεψαν μας

In August, we were blessed with the visit of members of the Meezan and Matathias (Mathews/Mathios) families.

About nine months ago, we received an emotional e-mail from Michelle Langmeade, whose late father had spent his whole life trying to find out about his father's family. What he did know was that his father's surname “Mathews” had probably been changed from Matathias or Mathios and that his father had come from the Bronx, from the Greek-Jewish world. Michelle’s father, Albert (Avraam Mathews) was the only child of Morris Mathews and Miriam (Mary) Berkowitz. Miriam was the second wife of Morris and the family relocated to Chicago where Albert was born. Albert was born in 1945 and his father Morris died in 1945. In fact, Morris is buried in a Brotherhood plot in Mt. Carmel.

With the help of Ancestry.com, we were able to piece together many of the pieces of the puzzle. Morris Matathias (Mathews) had a family in the Bronx. His wife was Esther Zaccar and there were four children, Michael Matathias (b. 9/18/1917), Rose Matathias (b. 2/25/1919-d.), Leon Matathias (b. 10/30/1922) and Jesse Matathias (b. 7/28/1924). These would have been aunts and uncles of Albert.

Morris also had siblings: Sarah, Rozina, David, Rachel and Mollie. Simply put, Michelle has a large extended family that she is trying to re-connect to. If you have information that can help us, please get in touch with Kehila Kedosha Janina at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net. This is a story that has waited seventy years for completion. We love happy endings.
Kehila Kedosha Janina has the most fascinating visitors

This lovely young lady came into our synagogue because she believes her grandmother was of Cochin Jewish background. She is hungry to learn about this Jewish community. Anyone who can help please contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net

News From Jewish Greece

As we all know, during the economic crisis in Greece, Jews have not been spared. We at Kehila Kedosha Janina are honored to say that we, along with the Sisterhood of Janina and The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry made a substantial donation to help Jews in need in Greece. Our campaign continues. If you wish to give, please contact us.
Events of Interest in New York City

Events at the Clemente

VISUAL ARTS

Curated by Ross Jordan

Surface Place
Surface Place brings together seven artists and alumni of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago interested in the abstraction of place. Material and visual elements from the streets of L.A., a Chicago urban garden, and the Alaskan wilderness are distilled, flattened, and reorganized. Place is constructed using the metaphors of painting; painting as illusion, painting as window on to the world, painting as a mirror of identity. From a variety of approaches to the process of abstraction these artists make strange places from familiar materials and elements. Learn more HERE.

Participating artists include: Manuel Lopez, Jan Christopher-Berkson, Gabrielle Garland, Betany Porter, Shonna Pryor, Tully Satre, Daniel Schmid

Opening Reception:
Thursday Sept 3, 2015 6-9PM

August 21-September 25, 2015
Abrazo Interno Gallery, 2nd floor
Gallery Hours: 3:30-7:00pm, 7 days a week
This exhibition is free and open to the public

Arnold Weissberg

Havana and New York: Unexpected Views
Photographer Arnold Weissberg’s Havana and New York: Unexpected Views explores how photography can help the viewer to see outside of his or her own every day experience. Focusing on diverse communities in both Cuba and New York City, Weissberg's photos challenge our preconceived notions, whether they be of a dilapidated and crumbling Cuba or of who we picture walking down Madison Avenue on an average day in New York. The photos capture moments of celebration of Sikh, Irish, Polish, Dominican, and Greek culture during parades on the streets of New York as well as moments of cultural celebration in Cuba. Learn more HERE.

August 6-September 12, 2015
LES Gallery, 1st floor
Our Community

Teatro SEA

Don Chico with Wings

Facto Teatro's Don Chico with Wings is a funny tale of a man who decides he needs to fly. Based on a story by Mexican writer Eraclio Zepeda, it speaks of ingenuity, creativity, surrealism and human adventure and shows that, for some, the sky is the limit. And Facto Teatro teams up with Berlin-based illustrator Barbara Steinitz for Duraznos azules (Blue Peaches), a story about a boy who wants to find out why the peach tree in his grandmother's garden is producing blue peaches. Learn more HERE.

Performances in Spanish
Saturday Sept 19th at 3:00 & 4:00pm
Teatro SEA, 1st floor
Admission is $20 for adults and $10 for children.
Purchase tickets HERE

Shalom to one and all!

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel

"Tikkun Olam" – 'repairing' or improving the world, is a Jewish concept that has inspired endless efforts by social-justice movements the world over. And of course, Jews are always at the forefront of such movements, since Judaism itself sees social justice, morality and ethics as a religious obligation.

It is no surprise, then, why the High Holy Day season emphasizes "tikkun olam" and concern for all humanity. Along with each individual Jew's internal reflection, repentance and the celebration of G-d's special relationship with the Jewish people on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, are Judaism's no less mandatory prayers and practices on behalf of the world at large.

Yet this worthy and lofty idea is somewhat tempered by the "thanks" we receive by the nations of the world in terms of Jew hatred and seemingly endless attempts to destroy us, whether physically or spiritually. In fact it seems almost cruel for G-d to expect our unbridled commitment to improve the world and pray for its nations, while those same nations treat us with such contempt, to put it mildly. Is there any compensation we can, or even should expect from G-d for our efforts?
In fact, the answer can be found in the symbolism of the sacrificial rituals practiced in the Temple on Succoth. Over the 7 days of festival, a total of 70 bullocks were but in a decreasing number each day: on the first day 13, the second day, 12, third day 11 and so on, until the seventh day, when 7 bulls were sacrificed. What, therefore, is the significance of offering 70 bullocks, and why in a decreasing number each day?

The first question is discussed in the Talmud in Tractate Succah: "Why seventy bulls? For the seventy nations.", which symbolize all the nations of the world in Biblical literature. Seventy bulls are offered on behalf of each of those nations, for their benefit and expiation, as well as to ask that rain fall on all living things: "just as the dove makes atonement for the pilgrims, so Israel makes atonement for the other nations, since the seventy bullocks offered on Succoth correspond to the seventy nations, and are brought so that the earth may not be left desolate of them" (homiletic interpretation of a verse in the "Song of Songs"). Here we have the basic concern and requirement to improve the world and help its nations.

As far as the descending order, another Midrashic [homiletic] source, explains: "Seventy bullocks were sacrificed on the festival, for the seventy nations of the world........ Just as the bullocks decreased in number as the festival progressed, thus the nations are diminished, but Israel is not diminished."

The decreasing number of bulls symbolizes our hope that G-d will reward our efforts by reducing the stature of the nations of the world who oppose and persecute us, and raising Israel's stature in Messianic times.

So we will eventually be rewarded for our "tikkun olam" efforts, though apparently not in this world. Nonetheless, the basic requirement to continue to pray for the welfare of the entire world remains with us, no matter how we are treated in return. This is certainly not easy, and the compensation has yet to come, but we must be comforted in knowing that "Am Yisrael Hai" – the people of Israel lives! Shana Tova to one and all!

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Correction

In our last e-newsletter we printed one of our favorite photos, that of Lulu Moise with some of her daughters and granddaughters, along with another picture of Lulu taken later. In the second picture, there was an error in identifying the individuals in the photo. Thanks to Esther Stone, of the Ganis family, we can correct our error.
From Esther Stone: "The picture was taken approximately in 1926 or thereabouts, and it shows Lula with four of her granddaughters -- my grandmother Julia’s four daughters. The woman top left is my mother, Leah (Mathios). Top right is her older sister Flo (Israel). In the middle is the next eldest sister, Esther (Harris), and seated on the left is the youngest sister, Rachel (Countess).”

We love this photo of our dear friend Nikos Stavroulakis, taken a number of years ago when he visited the USA.

Photo from Vickie Yiannias

Stavroulakis was her teacher at the American Academy in Athens in 1998

We have recently been approached by the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City and The Museum of the Jewish Presence in the United States (located in Philadelphia) for photos having to do with Jewish participation in WWI. Please share your photos with us so we can share them with these prestigious museums and enable the story of Greek-American Jewish participation in WWI to be told.

We would love photos of Greek-Jews in the United States in uniform, any correspondences that survived, copies of draft registrations, etc. Please contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.
Solomon (Shorty) Matsa in Boston, ready to leave for Europe to serve in the US Army in WWI. His friends from the Lower East Side have gone to send him off.
Avraam Attias, 1917 US Army

Sadik Battino draft card for WWI
Aron Sadock draft card for WWI

Websites of Interest

http://forward.com/culture/318154/reviving-judeo-spanish/
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.