Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

The heat has been unrelenting in the New York Metropolitan area but that has not stopped us from our regular schedule. Thank G_D for air conditioning. It was one of the few concessions to modernity we allowed in our restoration project. We are honored that Kehila Kedosha Janina was chosen by New York Landmarks Conservancy for a matching grant to do our much needed pointing (this will prevent dampness from entering our building and will ensure the stability of our structure). This grant will be issued through their Sacred Sites division, but first we must raise $5000 to match the funds pledged by New York Landmarks Conservancy. This highly esteemed organization has been instrumental in helping us in the past and we are very grateful. If you want to be part of the continued preservation of Kehila Kedosha Janina, send your checks (made out to Kehila Kedosha Janina) to 280 Broome Street, New York, New York 10002. Thank you in advance.

This newsletter, our 30th, 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 4500 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 all are 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.
This month we have lost too many. Eddie Asser passed at the age of 84. We also lost Esther DeCastros Moses, Esther Cantos, Davie Levy (brother of Louie Levy), Nina Nissim Cohen (mother of Mimis Cohen) and Harriet Menachem. We send our condolences to their families. In addition, we mourn the passing of the following Saloniklis: Fanny Gracia (Florentin) Matalon died Friday, June 2 following surgery for a hip fracture. Born in Thessaloniki, Greece on April 24, 1920, to Irene and Moise Florentin, and Jaco (Jack) Beraha, the son of Eliahu and Estrea (Benozilo) Beraha, born February 16, 1916 in Salonika. (See extended epitaphs below). The Sephardic world also mourns the passing of Morrie Yohai (see epitaph below).

The Seattle Times on June 13, 2010

Fanny Gracia (Florentin) Matalon died Friday, June 2 following surgery for a hip fracture. Born in Thessaloniki, Greece on April 24, 1920, to Irene and Moise Florentin. Most of her family perished in Auschwitz during World War II, but she and her husband Leon survived by joining the Greek resistance fighters in the mountains of Greece. Captured there by the Germans, she spent time in a Nazi-run work camp until the Red Cross negotiated her release with the help of her brother-in-law Stratos Paraskevaidis. She then served as a volunteer nurse until the end of the war, when she received two medals of honor from the Queen of Greece. Reunited with Leon after the war, they emigrated to the U.S. with their young daughter Irene in 1951.

Jack Beraha & friend:
Thessaloniki before WWII
Jaco (Jack) Beraha, son of Eliahu and Estrea (Benozilo) Beraha, was born February 16, 1916 in Salonika, where his father was a candy manufacturer. Jaco had a brother Yehuda (Leon, b. 1912) and a sister Miriam (Marie, b. 1914). Jaco’s mother died shortly after his birth. His father then married Estrea’s sister, Sol, and together they had three more children: Baruch, Samuel and Yehoshua Salvador. During the 1930s Jaco was an active member of the Betar Zionist youth movement in Salonika. After the German invasion of Greece in April 1941, the Beraha family soon felt the impact of the economic persecution of the Jewish community. During the occupation Jaco’s sister Miriam married Samuel Rouben (October 1941), and his brother Yehuda married Victoria Sarfati (1943). On February 24, 1943 a ghetto was established in Salonika, and on March 15, the first of nineteen deportation transports was dispatched to Auschwitz. Before their scheduled transport Jaco, Miriam and her husband Samuel managed to escape from the Baron de Hirsch deportation assembly camp. After fleeing the camp, they found Samuel’s car and drove to the Italian consulate. There, they were given Italian papers and train tickets to Athens. Once they reached the capital they made contact with the underground and were given false identification papers. Through a friend of Samuel’s they met Dimoleon Lemone, a Greek Orthodox Christian who had lived in Turkey. As a former refugee, Lemone was sympathetic to their plight. He hid Jaco, Miriam and Samuel in his home in Piraeus for almost two years until the liberation. When the war was over, Jaco and Miriam found their half-brother Yeshua, the only other member of their family to have survived. The rest perished in Auschwitz.

We thank Shelomo Alfassa for the following epitaph:

It is with tremendous sadness that I relay the news of the passing of Morrie R. Yohai of Blessed Memory who died Tuesday night at 91 years. Morrie was a modest person, a traditional Sephardic gentleman that lived his life immersed in the world around him as well as a life revering the Torah.

Morrie was born to Spanish-speaking Jewish parents from Ottoman Turkey. He was a kid from New York City who loved Coney Island. He grew up to be an American patriot. He joined the Navy after the attack on Pearl Harbor and became a Marine Corps pilot during the war. He became a successful businessman, a poet and a leader in the Jewish non-profit world. His loss is a loss to the Sephardic community and the greater Jewish and non-Jewish world.

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Museum News

We have received treasures for our exhibit on families and we love the fact that connections have been made. Jeff Mordos submitted his brit milah photo and standing behind his proud mother was the grandmother of Stu Forman and Len Neuhaus. Mark the date: November 14th. Remember----you must have submitted a photo to get an invite to the opening reception.
Of course, the baby photos are always our favorites. See if you can recognize any of our Board members.
Cultural Events

New York City

Please Save the Date

**KNOX MARTIN - Women: Black and White Paintings**

at Woodward Gallery

September 15 - November 13, 2010

Artist's reception: Saturday, September 25, 6-8pm

Washington DC

For those of you lucky enough to live in the Washington DC area, mark your calendars for the first TV showing of Ed Askinazi’s film “Last Greeks on Broome Street.” **************

Sunday, September 12th, 2pm.

WETA, Channel 26 in Washington, DC.

This will be the film’s broadcast premiere and will reach DC, VA and Maryland.

Melbourne Australia


Salonika bound in Melbourne

Previous Events

The Sephardic Book Fair was a great success and we thank Shelomo Alfassa for his photos.

Rabbi Marc Angels

Maria Cohen Ioannides, author of “Shout in the Sunshine”
Historian seeks to raise awareness of Greek Jewry
by Jill Garbi
Special to NJ Jewish News

July 6, 2010

For the last eight years, Devin Naar has been on a journey, seeking to discover his family roots and raise awareness of the culture of the Sephardi Jews of Greece.

Earlier this month, his journey took him home — to Lawrenceville, the town he grew up in, where on June 6 he shared the fruits of his research at the 10th Annual Dorothy Koppelman Memorial Holocaust Lecture at Rider University.

More than 130 people — many from the Sephardi communities of Mercer and Bucks counties — attended the program at the university’s Julius and Dorothy Koppelman Holocaust/Genocide Resource Center. A doctoral candidate in Jewish studies at Stanford University, Naar, 27, has followed a quest that has taken him around the globe — from Salonica to New Jersey, where his explorations uncovered personal as well as historic connections. In Greece, he pored over hundreds of ancient documents, most in Greek and Ladino, the ancient language of the Sephardi Jews, which he taught himself to read. Throughout his research, Naar said, he also strove for fluency in Hebrew, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and Italian so that he would be better able to understand the material he found in the ever-changing languages of his ancestors. "It turns out that I’m one of the few people in the world who can read Ladino, which is somewhat sad," said Naar, who plans to become a professor of Sephardi history and culture.

After the expulsion of the Jews from “Sepharad” in 1492 — following their centuries-old contributions to the Golden Age of the Iberian peninsula — Sephardi Jews were transplanted to the Islamic world, then reintroduced to the Western world. Naar’s forebears settled in Salonica, where, a century ago, 90,000 Jews resided in a city of 170,000 people. Jews were so dominant in the local society that the commerce of Salonica closed on Shabbat. Close to 90 percent of the Jews of Greece were murdered by the Nazis. In Salonica today, 1,000 Jews remain in a city of one million inhabitants.

Naar said his research is motivated by his desire to introduce Americans to a rich and diverse culture he feels has been largely written out of history.
“Growing up in an Ashkenazi community in Lawrenceville, I have encountered a general lack of knowledge about my culture. I’d like to make some space in the context of world Judaism for this interesting culture that sits at the precipice between the East and the West.”

Naar’s father’s family left Greece during World War I and settled in New Brunswick, where his great-grandfather served as the rabbi of the Sephardi synagogue now located in Highland Park and known as Congregation Etz Ahaim. Sermons were conducted there in Ladino and Hebrew, and synagogue records were handwritten in Ladino until the 1940s.

Through his research, Naar discovered he shares ancestors, dating back to 16th-century Portugal, with Judge David Naar (1800-1880), a prominent political figure in New Jersey during the Civil War era, who served as the first Jewish mayor of an American town — Elizabeth.

Naar’s informative and moving lecture captivated the Rider University audience, said attendee Vicki Cabot, daughter of the late Dorothy Koppelman, whose memory the lecture series honors and who also shares roots with Naar — her mother also came to the United States from Salonica.

“Devin recognized the contributions of Sephardi Jewry and the tensions past generations encountered in trying to preserve their rich cultural and religious heritage while assimilating into American life,” said Cabot, who travels from her home in Phoenix, Ariz., every year to gather with many members of her family at the annual Rider lecture. “He also touched on the enormous losses suffered during the Holocaust, particularly with the decimation of the Jewish community of Salonica. After my grandmother emigrated, most of her family remained behind in Greece and perished in the Holocaust.”

Naar has published several articles and book chapters and lectured at Yale, Georgetown, Stanford, and Oxford universities as well as The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Sorbonne in Paris. He said his voyage back in time has been worth the effort but his quest continues.

“Now, more than ever before, I am proud to be not just a Jew, but a Sephardi Jew, with identified and yet-to-be-identified ancient roots,” he said.

Thanks to Leon Saltiel
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We applaud Rhonda Matza Saldias Amira for her dedication and work. The Matza family reunion on the West Coast was a great success. Hopefully, the Matzas on the East Coast will arrange a similar event.

News of Interest
Summer 2010
Judaica Europeana is a network of heritage institutions, which will bring Jewish culture to Europeana – a portal of Europe’s museums, archives and libraries. In 2010, Europeana will provide access to 10 million digital items with the help of targeted projects such as Judaica Europeana that are co-funded by the European Commission. Europeana’s target for 2015 is 15 million objects.

How does it work?
Judaica Europeana works with cultural institutions to digitize content which documents the Jewish contribution to European heritage. The dispersed, multilingual and multi-faceted Jewish collections will become accessible under the single digital roof of Europeana, whose sophisticated search engine will enable users to find, view and compare the treasures of Jewish culture.

Read and see more about Judaica Europeana

Judaica Europeana Partners and their Collections
The project is led by the European Association for Jewish Culture in London and the Judaica Collection at the Goethe University Library in Frankfurt. The other members of the network are based in Amsterdam, Athens, Bologna, Budapest, Jerusalem, London, Paris, Rome, Toledo and Warsaw (see www.judaica-europeana.eu/partners.html). The list will grow as new members become involved. In this newsletter and its future editions, we shall present some objects from our Partners’ collections.

A spotlight on the photographic collection of the Jewish Museum of Greece
We shall begin with the fascinating collection of the Jewish Museum of Greece (JMG) in Athens, where documented Jewish presence dates back to the 3rd century BCE. The Museum’s artifacts reflect the history and traditions of the Romaniote and Sephardic Jews of Greece.

The collection of photographs and personal testimonies offer interesting vistas on Jewish life in Greek cities. There have been Jewish residents in Ioannina as early as 9th century CE; the presence of a significant community dates back to 1611 when Jews were settled by the Ottoman authorities in the city’s fortress. In 1913, the community welcomed liberation from Ottoman rule. The Romaniote Jews of Ioannina achieved high levels of cultural and economic development. Megali Rouga (the Main Street), next to the fortress, became the largest of the Jewish neighborhoods with a prominent New Synagogue and a school. Today the Main Street is renamed after the poet and Talmudist Yossef Eliya and only traces of this neighborhood remain after its population was decimated by the war.

Zanet Nahmias, who was born in 1925, paints a picture of a happy community:
Read and see more about Jewish urban life in Ioannina before World War II

A photograph from the Jewish Museum London tells a story
The Jewish Museum London (JML) re-opened recently following a £10m refurbishment. The new exhibition galleries place the Jewish story firmly in the wider context of British history. The collection reflects the diversity of the Jewish community and the stories of successive waves of immigrants from different continents.

One section of the exhibition is devoted to the Jewish refugees from continental Europe, who came to Britain in the 1930s. A photograph from the JML collection bears...
the caption 'For the first time: W Finkler's family 1 July 1930'. It shows the Finkler family who originally lived in Vienna: Walter, Hansi and their daughter Evelyn, who was born on 4 April 1930. As conditions for Jews in Austria grew increasingly worse under Hitler, the Finklers decided they must leave the country and they all had separate journeys to make.

Read and see more about the photograph from the Jewish Museum London

Conferences and Seminars
A busy programme of conferences and seminars featuring Judaica Europeana has unfolded since the launch of the project in February 2010. A full list of events in Amsterdam, Berlin, Florence, Ravenna and Jerusalem can be seen at www.judaica-europeana.eu/events.html. A few highlights:

A Seminar on Digital Access to Jewish Collections in Germany took place in the imposing building of the Pergammon Museum in Berlin in March. The seminar was held jointly by the European Association for Jewish Culture (EAJC) and the Institute for Museum Research, Berlin (SMB). Presentations by Dr Rachel Heuberger (Goethe University, Frankfurt), Lena Stanley-Clamp (EAJC, London) and other speakers can be accessed at www.judaica-europeana.eu/events.html

Read and see more about conferences and seminars

We thank Joseph Bruno Levy from Argentina for this information on Judaica-Europeana.

I am writing you to request help for a very important Sephardic Jewish non-profit organization.

JIMENA--Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa-- is working to preserve and commemorate the lives of Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, many of whose stories of dispossession and exile are left untold. As one of the only organizations in North America working on this front, it is our duty to share personal memoirs, educate about the injustice that existed, and advocate for those whose voices have been silenced. In order to do so, we are creating country specific websites that highlight the history, personal accounts, culture, music, and photos of each region.

While we have successfully collected photos and documents from our members who are mostly located on the West Coast, we are still in need of more pictures from these countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen.

For the JIMENA websites, we are searching for photographs that reflect Jewish life, such as family holidays, traditional meals, synagogues, schools, life-cycle events and communal life which will enhance our site greatly. Finally, the history of the Jewish life in Iraq has not always been desirable and it is important for us to document the story of exile through copies of emigration documents, passports, and visas.

It would be a greatly appreciated if you could pass this email along to your members. For those who would like to contribute photos to the website, please send copies of the photos to: JIMENA at 459 Fulton St, San Francisco CA 94102 or scan and email them to elana franko@jimena.org.
If you would like to learn more about our organization, I encourage you to take a look at our website or give us a call. www.jimena.org.

Much appreciation,
Elana Franko
JIMENA intern
415-626-5062

News of interest to Greek Jews

We enclose the following press release from the organization that closed down the El Al counter at Venizelos Airport in Greece on July 14th:

Athens, July 14, 2010

PRESS RELEASE

“Today, early in the morning trade unions of PAME blocked the counter of the Israeli airline EL-AL in the Eleftherios Venizelos airport of Athens for two hours, causing delay to the flight 542 from Athens to Tel Aviv.

This action was a part of the international campaign of the World Federation of Trade Unions against the continuous blockade of Gaza by the government of Israel which has the support of American and European Imperialists.

During our stay at the airport we condemned the government of Israel for its assassinations and inhuman attitude towards the people of Palestine. We also condemned the hypocrisy of the Greek government and the other governments of the E.U.

We expressed our solidarity with the struggle of the working class and the people of Palestine for a free and independent state, having east Jerusalem as its capital.

The Executive Secretariat”

While we condemn the actions of this organization, we applaud the recent visit of Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou to Israel.

Jerusalem Post July 21, 2010
Greek PM’s visit signals warming ties By HERB KEINON

“As a chill continues to blow through Israel’s ties with Ankara, those with Athens are warming considerably, as evidenced by Wednesday’s visit by Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou.

This will be the first visit to Israel by a Greek prime minister since Konstantinos Mitsotakis came in 1992.
Papandreou, whose father, Andreas, served as prime minister of Greece twice (1981 to 1989, and 1993 to 1996) and was known for pro-Palestinian, anti-Israeli leanings, has chartered a more moderate policy toward Israel than his predecessors since taking office last October.

George Papandreou’s grandfather, George senior, was also prime minister.

Once considered among the harshest critics of Israel inside the EU, along with countries such as Ireland, Sweden, Portugal and Belgium, Greece is no longer in that “basket,” one diplomatic official said.

Papandreou, whose 36-hour visit will be rich in symbolic gestures, is scheduled to arrive on Wednesday afternoon and go immediately to a meeting with President Shimon Peres, whom he knows from the Socialist International.

Papandreou has been president of that body since 2006.

Papandreou will then visit Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III in the Old City, followed by a meeting with Greek Holocaust survivors.

On Thursday, his day will start with a wreath-laying ceremony at Herzl’s tomb, followed by a visit to Yad Vashem.

He is then scheduled to hold a working lunch with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, and back to back meetings with Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and opposition head Tzipi Livni.

He will then go to Ramallah for a meeting with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

Papandreou met Netanyahu coincidentally at a restaurant in Moscow in February, and – according to diplomatic officials – they hit it off. Both have strong American roots, as Papandreou was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1952, when his father was a professor there.

“They have a good personal chemistry,” one official said.

He noted that the two leaders spoke a number of times in the past few months, since some of the ships trying to break the blockade of Gaza, including the recent Libyan-sponsored ship, set sail from Greek ports.

**Tensions with Turkey lead to warming relationship with Greece**

People in government said there was no doubt that the recent tension with Turkey has led to a warming of the relationship between Israel and some of Turkey’s historic rivals, such as Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria. The Cypriot and Bulgarian foreign ministers paid visits to Israel earlier this year.

According to one diplomatic official, the Greeks – looking at the Israeli-Turkish, and Turkish-US tensions – are realizing that strategic alliances in the region are changing, and that this might be a good time to get closer to Israel as a way of warming ties with Washington.

When Israel had a close strategic alliance with Turkey, the official said, Athens gave up any thought of forging such an alliance with Israel.

But now the situation with Ankara has changed, and Athens is seeing more opportunities with Israel.
Diplomatic officials also said that Greece’s economic difficulties also had something to do with the warming of ties, with Athens working on the assumption that if it raised its diplomatic profile, and started to be seen as a significant player in the region, then this might help it convince the international community to give it the economic assistance it seeks.

Ankara, meanwhile, has continued strengthening its relations with Hamas, with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu meeting Hamas chief Khalad Mashaal in Damascus on Monday.

According to the Turkish daily Hürriyet, Davutoglu and Mashaal discussed the Hamas-Fatah division, and “reviewed the efforts to revive peace talks between Palestine and Israel.”

The paper quoted Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan as saying Hamas was not a terrorist organization, but rather “a resistance group defending [its] territory.”

Davutoglu was in Damascus for half a day, during which he met Syrian President Bashar Assad and visiting Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri.”


For these pictures of Papandreaou at Yad Vashem we thank Leon Saltiel

Unfortunately, there has been another anti-Semitic incident in Greece:

Another Anti-Semitic incident in Greece

We thank “Isaac Abravanel” for the following:

Vandalism of the Jewish Museum [ 22/07/2010 ]
For the first time in its history the Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens became a target when unknown perpetrators painted red swastikas on its walls yesterday night at 23.30. Another sad event in the chain of antisemitic events this year in Greece – we remind you of the double arson of the Synagogue of Hania, the vandalisms against the Jewish cemeteries in Ioannina and Thessaloniki and the attack against the Shoah Memorial in Rhodes.

The impressive aspect is that the Museum is well guarded and the perpetrators were recorded by the security cameras, they were either ignorant or extremely audacious. What can you do? Simply go and visit the Jewish Museum of Greece, one of the most beautiful museums in the center of Athens and founding member of the most important effort to record the European Jewish heritage. The website of the Museum with instructions on how to get there, opening hours and photos from the displays can be found as a link on our website www.kkjsm.org.

We thank “Isaac Abravanel” (pseudonym) for the following review of Radio Sepharad.

Sometimes there is news so good that truly elates you. Still, when I learned about a new radio program about the Greek Jewry and the Sephardic culture I almost didn’t believe it and I was cautious. But now a month has passed and I can say that it has not only conquered me but I also believe that it is one of the most important developments in the cultural landscape of the Greek Jewish communities.

Radio Seferad (www.radiosefarad.com) is a radio station, mainly on the internet, of the Federation of the Jewish Communities of Spain and whose public are the whole of Spain, the Spanish speaking Jews of the USA, Latin America but also the ladino speaking Jews around the world. Thanks to the passion of Angela Maria Arbeláez and the support of the Jewish Community of Salonica, the most important Sephardic community in the word after 1492, a new radio show came on the air with the name "Desde Grecia, akí Salónika/From Greece, Here Salonica".
Even though Stefanos Becharas’ plans for the formal unveiling of the magnificent equestrian statue in honor of Mordechai Frizis was marred by the reaction to the flotilla incident in Israel (see e-newsletter of July 2010 on our website www.kkjsm.org) we are happy to show you photos of the statue in Chalkis.

Requests

Elaine Morris responded to our photo of the Eliezer/Besca family in our most recent issue of the Romaniote (you can access all past issues of the Romaniote on line at our website (www.kkjsm.org) and is looking for information on her family. Elaine Morris is looking for an aunt Eva Eliezer (Beska) Solomon who married a Solomon Solomon. Her father Eliezer Beska (son of Moses Eliezer and Hanoula Matza) born in 1905 joined Eva’s family when he came to the USA. Please contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

Rhonda Amira Saldias (from the Matza family) is looking for IDs of individuals in the following photo taken at the marriage of Eliezer and Rachel Matza.
Responses to our last newsletter requests

We identified the sailors. Jerry Pardo recognized them as his uncle Gary Camhi (on the left) and (on the right) Jackie Nehama, deceased, son of Sam Nehama (born in Salonika) and Tillie Pardo (born in Monastir). Thank you Jerry.

New Books

I'm pleased to inform you that, after much effort, I completed the book on my family. (Genealogia di una famiglia ebraica levantina: i Gesuà da Corfù a Venezia nel XIX° secolo) Herewith attached please find an image of the book.
The book (360 pages) has not been published but just printed in 55 numbered copies and distributed to the family members and few institutions which kindly allowed me to insert some images in my work. A copy was sent to the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. I would be very grateful if you could publicize the news in your E-Newsletter; it could be the starting point for some new interesting contact with some distant relative of mine. You never can tell...Thank you very much. Edoardo Salvadori

edoardo.salvadori@tele2.it