October 2015 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

As we approach the joyous holiday of Simchat Torah, we are so grateful for all we have accomplished this year. We invite you to join us for Simchat Torah to dance with our Torahs and partake of our traditional Kosher Greek-Jewish Kiddush. Simchat Torah services will be held on Monday, October 5th at 5:00 pm and Tuesday, October 6th at 9:15 am.

Traditional Romaniote Torah Scrolls of Kehila Kedosha Janina
This newsletter, our 80th will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website (www.kkjsm.org).

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

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

Passings

~ We mourn the passing of Nelly Nachmia, the daughter of Solomon and Polina Tabach, the mother of Kaden Benardout, Haim Nachmia and Matilda Zakar and the grandmother of Dorin Benardout, Moris and Deni Nachmia and Nelly and Edi Zakar.

Nelly of Blessed Memory was born September 7, 1928 in Komotini and passed on September 28, 2015 in Athens at the age of 87. She was the wife of Moisis Nachmias. May her memory be a blessing.

Simchas

~ We congratulate Brittney Mazza and Pat Mulrooney on their wedding on September 6th. Brittney is the daughter of Steven and Silvija Pukulis Mazza, the granddaughter of Malka (Millie) Asser and Ben Mazza, the great-granddaughter of Solomon Asser and Joyia Aptsy, and Elias (Papias) Mazza and Anna (Cabelli) Mazza, and the great-great-granddaughter of Menachem and Regina Asser. Brittney is descended from a long line of prominent Yanniote families.
~We congratulate Adam and LeAnn Paganetti on their marriage on 9/6/15, Adam is the son of Glenn and Kathy Paganetti, the grandson of Shirlee Cabillis Paganetti, the great-grandson of Moses (Morris) Cabillis and Eva Eliezer, the great-great grandson of David and Sarina Cabillis and Iosef and Rachel Eliasaf Eliezer. Adam is descended from a long line of Yanniotes.

Shirlee Paganetti and Adam Paganetti

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

Δikoi Mas, Los Muyestros (our own) come home

We were overjoyed to welcome members of the Coffino family to Kehla Kedosha Janina. This branch of the family is trying to piece together their family tree and we hope to be able to help them.

Michael Coffino

Members of the Coffino family with other visitors
Local Events of Interest

Registration is now open for the next in the Yiddish Book Center’s series of weekend courses, *The Rise and Fall of Ladino-Speaking Jews.*

Register now to get the early bird special.

Join us November 13-15, 2015, as Professor Devin E. Naar, chair of the Sephardic Studies Program at the University of Washington, traces the history of Sephardim—from the expulsion from Spain in 1492 to the establishment of Jewish communities in the eastern Mediterranean, and from the devastation wrought by the Holocaust to the experiences of Ladino-speaking Jews in the United States as they encountered Ashkenazi communities.

This course will provide many opportunities for learning and engaging with history and culture, including:

- four lectures by Professor Naar
- discussions
- film screenings
- a guided tour of the Yiddish Book Center
- catered kosher meals, and more.

For more information or to register now, visit yiddishbookcenter.org/ladino-weekend-course or call Sylvia Peterson at 413-256-4900 x143. The early bird special runs through July 30. Hotels in the area tend to fill up quickly, so we recommend that you make arrangements as soon as possible.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Center for what promises to be a fascinating program.
We threw out an appeal on Facebook for school photos from the Lower East Side and David Colchamiro, one of our most consistent contributors found this great photo of his father’s school picture from Harlem. David’s father, Eliezer (Louis) was quite bright and was one of the few chosen to attend the Speyer Experimental School in Harlem. The picture was taken January 26, 1927. The Harlem community was an important offshoot of the downtown Romaniote community. Louis Colchamiro’s achievement was yet another proof of what happened when Yanniotes left Ioannina and were able to attain a quality education.

A Sepharidic Candidate for Mayor of NYC in 1968

The East Village hippie who ran for president

Third-party candidates for president tend to come from out of the mainstream. That’s the case with Louis Abolafia, a 27-year-old East Village artist.

In the 1960s, Abolafia, the son of a florist, made a name for himself as an abstract expressionist painter who staged happenings around the Village and helped shelter teenage runaways in his East Fourth Street apartment.

A nudist who came up with the cheeky campaign slogan “What Have I Got to Hide,” Abolafia decided to run for president in the 1968 election.

His ticket was the “Love” party, according to a New Yorker article from 1967, and his campaign kicked off with a “love in” at the Village Theater.
News From Jewish Greece

Expressing the spirit of social awareness, solidarity and giving of the Greek Jewry, the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS) proudly participates in the humanitarian initiative of the American Jewish Committee and Isra-AID providing assistance to the Syrian refugees on the island of Lesvos.

AJC’s Press Release: “September 21, 2015 -- New York -- AJC has donated funds and dispatched staff to Greece to support a much-needed relief effort led by Isra-AID to assist Syrian refugees, who have arrived in the European Union nation in massive numbers this year.

Even in these troubled economic times Greeks (both Jewish and Christian) have not forgotten their humanity.
Thursday, September 24, 2015

The Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece (KIS) sent a congratulatory letter to the Prime Minister of Greece.

A number of anti-Semitic and racist tweets, posted in the past by Independent Greeks MP Dimitris Kammenos, triggered a massive response on social media on the night of September 23, 2015, that ultimately resulted with the resignation of MP D. Kammenos, just a few hours after his appointment as deputy Transport Minister in the newly formed Greek coalition Government.

On this issue, the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece addressed to Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras the following letter:

"Please accept the warmest congratulations of the Greek Jewry on the occasion of your re-election as Prime Minister of Greece.

We wish to inform you that from the evening of last Tuesday Sept. 22, until the evening of Wednesday Sept. 23, the Greek Jews, as well as the Jews all over the world, observed the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, a holiday dedicated to judgment, introspection, self-awareness, self-criticism and forgiveness. According to Judaism this is a day of prayer asking God to grant health, peace and justice to all humanity.

Mr. President, we wish to express our satisfaction over the fact that on this precise day, a person that had expressed hideous and insulting views against the Jews, against civilization and against the democratic feeling of the Greek society, was removed from your Government following the outrage of thousands of people on the social media that have sent a clear message against racism and anti-Semitism.

With the removal of this person from your Government a determined message was sent: that racism and anti-Semitism have no place in Greece, neither should have a place in Europe.

We wish you the best of success in this difficult duty that you have assumed for the benefit of Greece and the Greek people."

Athens, September 24, 2015
The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece

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Articles of Interest

We thank Vickie Conan for the fascinating article in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle of November 25, 1936. See the article in the attachment.

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We, at Kehila Kedosha Janina, are proud to say that, along with the Sisterhood of Janina and the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, we made a substantial donation to help needy Jews in Greece during these difficult times. Our community has never failed to do the right thing. We continue to fund raise for this worthy cause. If you wish to send in donations, checks should be made out to The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry and sent to the same at 1 Hanson Place, Huntington, NY 11743.
Assumedly, this bulletin for October 2015 will reach you right in the middle of the Succoth holiday – during "Hol Hamoed" – usually translated as the "intermediate" days of the festival. These days have a sort of 'semi-holiday' status, meaning that while not having the restrictions of the full first and last holidays, we are still in 'festival mode', by trying as much as possible to avoid mundane or routine weekday activities as much as possible, as well as continuing to 'live' and eat in Succoth – those little temporary "booths" that are so unique to the Jewish people.

Last month, we discussed the universal character of Succoth in terms of the sacrificial ritual of offering a total of 70 bullocks over the holiday in a decreasing number each day, symbolizing our concern for the welfare of the entire world. But no less an important aspect of the holiday, and perhaps even more so, is the symbolism for the Jewish people itself in the form of the Succah. More than almost any other symbol of the Jew's undying faith in G-d is the very idea of the Succah, which, by definition, must be a "temporary" dwelling. The vast majority of Succoth are usually made of wood panels or cloth held up by metal frames, built especially for the holiday. However, the two mandatory stipulations for a Succah to be "kosher" for use are that the roof must be made of simple wood, including tree branches, and totally exposed to the sky, i.e., not under trees, awnings, protruding verandas and the like. Furthermore, the wood roof cannot be weather proof, meaning a person sitting in the Succah must be able to look up and see the stars. And these requirements take on an added dimension when we consider the timing of the holiday: In Israel at the onset of autumn and the coming of rain, not to mention so many other countries, where it is already winter and sitting in a Succah with winter coats is not uncommon!

The symbolism is clear: our total faith, belief and dependence on G-d. We 'leave' our comfortable and well insulated permanent homes for a full week to 'live' in a flimsy and totally exposed hut in a season when most people would prefer to be indoors. And while Jewish law certainly exempts us from sitting in a Succah under extreme or highly uncomfortable weather conditions, the symbolism is still valid. By 'moving' into the Succah – and in fact many Jews eat, sleep and even relax there for the entire holiday – we demonstrate tangibly our firm belief that our lives are ultimately totally dependent on G-d. Perhaps even more significant, we do this as part and parcel – and even the essence- of a holiday, in joy and in full confidence of G-d's mercies and benevolence.

And while other religions and cultures certainly have their own symbols for demonstrating their faith and commitment to G-d, a "midrash" (homiletic interpretation) illustrates the unique idea of the Succah in terms of the nations of the world and the special relationship between G-d and the Jewish people (my own paraphrasing): The nations of the world came before G-d with a complaint: Why did G-d choose the Jewish people over other nations? G-d answers them that the main reason is the fact that they accepted the Torah and all the commandments. The nations responded by saying that had they been offered the Torah, who is to say that they would not have accepted it? G-d was rather skeptical, but decided to test their claim. He gave them a relatively 'easy' commandment, which was to build and enter Succoth. They gladly did this, but then G-d caused the sun to become extremely penetrating and the Succoth almost unbearably
hot. Immediately everyone abandoned the Succoth. G-d then reprimanded the nations and said: "You can't even keep a relatively easy commandment because of some discomfort, so how can you expect you to keep the entire Torah".

Ironically, however, and in fact as part of the continuation of this midrash, our Prophets proclaim unequivocally that ultimately all the nations of the world will celebrate Succoth in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. No less than for the Jewish people, they will also tangibly demonstrate their recognition the special relationship between G-d and the Jewish people and G-d's power and authority over the entire world. Hag Succoth Sameah!

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We are happy to announce that our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, has submitted a paper for a journal that will be part of an exhibit at the University of Ioannina on immigration of both Greek-Christians and Greek-Jews from Epirus to the United States. Of course, Marcia's paper is on the Jewish aspect of this immigration. Photos of early immigrants, such as the one below, were also submitted.

Abraham David in Front of his shop at 98 Allen Street.
Greek Jewish Young Professionals Network

“Today, there are unfortunately too few remaining organizations that bring together the next generation of our community. Although many families are spread out across the New York metropolitan area, we believe that it is imperative that we unite the future leaders of our Sephardic and Romaniote community and build the connections necessary to sustain this community. This is why we are excited to announce that we will be forming the new Greek Jewish Young Professionals Network.

This organization is looking to assemble young Sephardic and Romaniote Jews ages 18-35 and host programs and events where we can meet each other and rebuild the foundation of our community. Programs will be held across New York City and can include communal dinners, concerts, street art tours, art gallery-hopping, parties, street festivals, service projects, and more. They are open to any other ideas as well! It is so important that you help us spread the word about this new initiative. If you are a young person of Sephardic or Romaniote heritage and live in the NYC metropolitan region, we would love to have you join us. If your children or grandchildren live in the NYC metropolitan region, please ask them if they would be interested in participating in this new Greek Jewish Young Professionals Network. (They welcome young Sephardim or Romaniotes from other countries as well!).

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in this new exciting effort, please email your name and contact information to Andrew Marcus at GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com. This is a brand new endeavor and they already have a number of interested young people. No commitment is necessary. Andrew will keep you informed of upcoming Young Professionals events.

Thank you!
Andrew Marcus”

We just received this exciting information from Moses Eliasaf, President of the Jewish Community:

I have to inform you that Ioannina is one of the candidate Greek cities for the Cultural Capital of Europe for the 2021. For the success of this task your support is crucial. Thus, the Mayor of the city will send you soon an official letter asking you on behalf of KKJ a letter of support of the Ioannina candidacy as well as your suggestions and proposals. It is well understood that the promotion of the multicultural character of our historical city with its strong Jewish past and the productive and active Jewish diaspora which you are a vivid paradigm can substantially contribute to the success of this effort.
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.