Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

On May 4th Jews throughout the world will stop and remember the victims of the Holocaust. It is important that we remember. It is important that we never forget. This year, at Kehila Kedosha Janina, on May 1st, we will remember the victims and honor the role of Greek Orthodox Christians who risked their lives to save members of our community.
This newsletter, our 87th 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 8000 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 Betty Passy-Davis, a longtime member of Sisterhood. Our condolences to her family and friends.

~ We mourn the passing of Stama Askinazi Rosenberg who grew up on the Lower East Side on Broome Street. She is survived by her children Dr. Andrea Burwick and Cal Rosenberg.

~ We mourn the passing Al Negrin, born in Trikala, a survivor of the concentration camps who came to the United States and passed away in Ohio. Abraham (Al) Negrin was born April 5, 1924 in Trikala, Greece. His father was a hat maker and owned a store. Al was the oldest and had two siblings. When the Germans invaded Greece in April 1941, his family moved to the mountains to hide. However, he was studying accounting at the University of Athens with only two semesters to graduate, so he stayed in Athens, changing his name from Abraham Negrin to Alex Papadopoulos via a false ID provided by the resistance.
"After he graduated, Al fought in the resistance for the Greek People’s Liberation Army (ELAS). He was made a lieutenant because he was educated. In December 1943 Al’s sister became sick with typhoid fever, and his family left the mountains to take her to the hospital. The family felt safe and comfortable in their home so they decided to stay there for the winter. On March 23, 1944 at 4am the Germans arrived and arrested all the Jews. They spent 2-3 weeks in a camp in Larissa, Greece. They were packed into cattle cars, unable to sit down for 7 days, and arrived in Auschwitz. On arrival, people ages 18 to 40 walked into the camp. Women with children and the elderly were given a truck ride directly to the gas chambers. His mother, Sofia, was carrying her 3-year-old nephew, so she was gassed. Al and his father spent about 10 days there, were dehumanized, stripped of all clothes, tattooed, starved, and removed of emotion. They were sent to build a new camp that would hold 2000 Hungarian Jews. In mid-January 1945 when the Russians started approaching, they were put into open coal cars, and rode for five days to Bergen-Belsen, another death camp in East Germany. They worked at many different work camps over the next few months. The allies were approaching so the Germans took the prisoners on a march back to Bergen-Belsen. Al’s father got sick, so Al was forced to leave him on the side of the road to die just days before the liberation. Bergen-Belsen was liberated on April 15, 1945 by the British. When they arrived, Al weighed just 90 pounds. Al stayed in a DP camp for five months, where he met his wife, Anna. In September they returned to Greece where they were married. In 1954, an earthquake destroyed their home, so they decided to move the U.S. They moved to Columbus, Ohio with their two sons, and had a daughter after they arrived.”

Simcha

We celebrate the wedding of Alizah Salario and Lenny Sandlar on April 17th. May their life together bring them great joy.
Δikoi Mas, Los Muestros (our own) come home

This month we were honored with the visit of a great-grandson of Rabbi Jessula Levy, Jeremy Weinberg, Michael Erlichman, Brian & Roberta Caplin and Nili & Moshe Hakim. Moshe’s was born in Volos and his mother’s family were Dostis from Ioannina. So great that our little gem of a synagogue/museum has become a destination for people from all over the world!

School Groups continue to visit Kehila Kedosha Janina. Woodlands in Westchester has been visiting us for the last 12 years!
Past Event at Kehila Kedosha Janina

In April, we were honored to host the book signing of Tanais by Iosif Ventura. It was a moving event as Iosif’s poems were read in Greek and English.

Marvin Marcus & Iosif Ventura

The delightful children of Anna & Viktor Koen

Iosif Ventura & Professor Spyros Orfanos
Past Events in the New York City Area

When we heard that Professor Devin Naar was visiting Cedarhurst Long Island (the Sephardic Temple) on April 13th, we came out in force to hear him. Devin has been a dear friend of Kehila Kedosha Janina for years and we look forward to selling his soon-to-be-released book on Jewish Salonika.

Professor Devin Naar

Dr. Ino Benmayor

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Finkel
Harold is from the Cantos family of Ioannina
Greek Independence Day on April 10th in NYC

Our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulos, was honored to be a guest at the AJC farewell dinner for our beloved Consul General Giorgos Iliopoulos. Greece only sends us their best and Giorgos was the best of the best. He will be dearly missed. We look forward to welcoming the new Consul General to New York in May.

Our own Joel Negrin

Consul Manos Koubarakis
Upcoming Event at Kehila Kedosha Janina

GREEK JEWISH FESTIVAL

SUNDAY MAY 22
12PM – 6PM
BROOME ST BETWEEN ALLEN ST AND ELDRIDGE ST
LOWER EAST SIDE

DELICIOUS FOOD  LIVE MUSIC  KIDS ACTIVITIES
SYNAGOGUE TOURS  DANCING  VENDORS & GIFTS

FESTIVAL SPONSORS

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

FOR MORE INFO: GREEKJEWISHFESTIVAL.COM
Upcoming Events in New York City Area

Our friends at the Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy run excellent tours.

Great Ladies of the Lower East Side: Heroines, Balabustas, and Yiddisha Mammas! A Special Mother's Day Walking Tour

Sunday May 8, 2016

NEW TOUR! We begin this special Mother's Day walking tour with a drink at the historic dining room in The Henry Street Settlement, where Lillian D. Wald hosted distinguished guests ranging from President Theodore Roosevelt; W.E.B. Du Bois; and delegates of The National Negro Conference (after several NYC restaurants refused to accommodate the interracial group). Then we will walk the streets of the Lower East Side celebrating the lives of women: ordinary, unsung heroines who battled to raise their families and make a life in the New World, as well as some more famous inspiring women who played leading social, political and artistic roles in the neighborhood during the early 20th century. Examine how these women lived and how they each came to effect change in New York City and beyond.

The Museum at Eldridge Street will be our last stop, where we will have a light lunch donated in part by Kossar's Bialys.

This tour is co-sponsored with The Museum at Eldridge Street.
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Meeting Place: Meet in front of the Henry Street Settlement, 265 Henry Street right off of Montgomery Street
Fees/Info: $35 per person. Registration is required by end of the day Wed May 4, 2016. Space is limited - early registration is strongly suggested.

Click for more details and to register

Tenement Chic: Ornamentation and Architectural Walking Tour of the Lower East Side
Sunday, May 22, 2016

Garish gargoyles – Greek & Roman mythical beasts -- beautiful botanicals in terra cotta .... Why do these architectural sculptures adorn otherwise drab 19th century tenements? Who were the anonymous artisans that created these treasures, and what motivated the building developers to employ them?

These and other topics will be discussed as you journey with Urban Historian Barry Feldman through the Lower East Side. Trace the development of the typical tenement – a mid-19th century windowless box- to contemporary housing styles. Explore a middle class area which pre-dates the Civil War, and learn how building ornamentation influenced residential architecture in this ever evolving immigrant enclave.

Time: 10:45 a.m.
Meeting Place: Meet at Straus Square, the triangle across from the Forward Building at the intersection of East Broadway and Rutgers Street (Near Canal and Essex Streets)
Fees/Info: $20 Adult $18 senior & student ($2 additional day of tour)

Registration and More Information.
News from Jewish Greece

Ioannina

On March 25th, on the 72nd anniversary of the deportation of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, there were a series of moving events.

Among the speakers were Rika Benveniste, Michalis Spengos, Anatasia Loudarou, Dionysis Drosos, Nikos Anasasopoulos and Stathis Papastathopoulos.

Following the speeches, the highly acclaimed film, “Song of Life,” was shown. “Song of Life” is the story of the saving of the Jews of Zakynthos.
In 2003 UNESCO ratified the “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,” defined as a set of practices, representations, and expressions that communities recognize as vital for their culture. In the matter of Intangible Cultural Heritage, a specific area of investigation concerns some lost urban landmarks that keep arousing a broad public and scholarly interest.

This is precisely the case of Salonika’s lost synagogues.

In January 2013 the local Jewish Museum inaugurated the exhibition entitled A city in search of its kehilot; invisible cultural monuments of Salonika. Based on new research material, the curator Dr. Evangelos Hekimoglou encouraged visitors to recognize the exact location of a number of historical synagogues, thus gaining knowledge of the “layers of the past” underlying the central business district and the present image of the city.

Today, on reaching Salonika, planes will often fly over the historic center, still partly surrounded by its Byzantine walls. The roads parallel to the coast are clearly visible, as is Aristotelous Street, the main feature of the reconstruction which gave the Greek government an opportunity to reshape the city. A Civic Axis originally meant to concentrating institutional buildings, Aristotelous Street was built over an area which had been home to the Jewish quarter for four hundred years.
From March 20-April 20th there was an exhibit of Old Photographs of Thessaloniki entitled “Stories of the Streets.”

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Athens

Greece unveils monument to lawmakers killed in Holocaust

Parliament’s speaker apologizes for delay: “75 years is too long for us to honor colleagues who were killed by the Nazis.”

BY JTA April 23, 2016

"The Greek Parliament has erected a monument to eight Greek Jewish lawmakers who were killed by the Nazis during the Second World War."
The white marble tablet engraved with the eight names was unveiled on Wednesday by Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament Nikos Voutsis.

Six of the parliament members were among the tens of thousands of Greek Jews who were murdered in Auschwitz, while two others were killed fighting with the Greek resistance. Some 60,000 Greek Jews died in the Holocaust, according to the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem.

Voutsis apologized for the decades-long delay in commemorating the Jewish parliament members.

'For 75 years this has been on the conscience of this house. Seventy-five is too long for us to honor our colleagues who were killed by the Nazis,’ Voutsis said at the ceremony, which was attended by representatives of all the Greek political parties except the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn.

The heads of the Greek Jewish community and Israeli diplomats attended the ceremony.

'This monument to them will stand forever in the Greek Parliament and it is the least we can do to honor their great sacrifice,’ said Voutsis. They were our colleagues, elected by the Greek people and were our fellow citizens.’”

News from Greece

Athens

"Ancient mass graves found in Athens seen as significant discovery

Archaeologists have discovered two mass graves near the Greek capital containing the skeletons of 80 men who may have been followers of ancient would-be tyrant Cylon of Athens.

Regional archaeological services director Stella Chryssoulaki laid out the theory Thursday as she unveiled the findings at the Central Archaeological Council, the custodians of Greece's ancient heritage.

Given "the high importance of these discoveries," the council is launching further investigations,” the culture ministry said in a statement.
Two small vases discovered amongst the skeletons have allowed archaeologists to date the graves from between 675 and 650 BC, "a period of great political turmoil in the region," the ministry said.

The skeletons were found lined up, some on their backs and others on their stomachs. A total of 36 had their hands bound with iron.

They were discovered during excavations at an ancient cemetery on Athens' seaside outskirts, on the construction site of the new National Library of Greece and National Opera.

Archaeologists found the teeth of the men to be in good condition, indicating they were young and healthy.

This boosts the theory that they could have been followers of Cylon, a nobleman whose failed coup in the 7th century BC is detailed in the accounts of ancient historians Herodotus and Thucydides.

Cylon, a former Olympic champion, sought to rule Athens as a tyrant. But Athenians opposed the coup attempt and he and his supporters were forced to seek refuge in the Acropolis, the citadel that is today the Greek capital's biggest tourist attraction.

The conspirators eventually surrendered after winning guarantees that their lives would be spared.

But Megacles, of the powerful Alcmaeonid clan, had the men massacred as an act condemned as sacrilegious by the city authorities.

Historians say this dramatic chapter in the story of ancient Athens showed the aristocracy's resistance to the political transformation that would eventually herald Athenian democracy 2,500 years ago.”


Pope visits Greece

Pope Francis made a trip to the Greek island of Lesbos on April 16. The visit was aimed at supporting refugees and drawing attention to the front line of Europe's migrant crisis.
Hundreds of thousands of refugees, many fleeing war in Syria, have poured onto the Aegean island over the past year, triggering Europe’s biggest humanitarian crisis in generations.

Under a contested plan, the European Union started returning newcomers to Turkey this month. The Pope took 12 of the refugees back to the Vatican.

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel

The official Hebrew date for Israel Independence Day – "Yom Ha’atzma’ut" is the 5th of Iyar, since it was on Friday, the 5th of Iyar, 5708 – May 14th, 1948, that David Ben Gurion read out the "Megillat Atzma’ut" (the Israeli Declaration of Independence), declaring the founding of a new Jewish commonwealth in the ancient Land of Israel to be called "the State of Israel". However, when the 5th of Iyar falls on a Friday, as it does this year, all official celebrations are advanced to Thursday, the 4th of Iyar, in order to avoid any overlapping of festivities with Shabbat. So this year, Yom Ha’atzma’ut will be celebrated throughout Israel on May 12th.

It is safe to assume that in the eyes of the vast majority of the Jewish world, the founding of the State of Israel is part and parcel of Jewish destiny and the fulfillment of the "ingathering of the exiles" in our ancient God-given homeland. And from a Jewish religious perspective, Israel’s birth and success are ordained and guided by G-d. So besides barbeques, festivities and official ceremonies, we celebrate "Yom Ha’atzma’ut" with special festive prayers of thanksgiving and synagogue and community celebrations for the miracles G-d has performed for us in modern times.

It is therefore very interesting to consider how one of Judaism's greatest medieval sages actually predicted the rebirth of the Jewish nation in its homeland and the return of Jerusalem to Jewish sovereignty. Yehuda Ben Shmuel, also known as "Yehuda He-Hassid" (Yehuda the Pious) lived at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries in Regensburg, Germany. He was the founder and leader of what was the first "Hassidic" movement in Germany, predating classic Eastern-European Hassidism by hundreds of years, with an emphasis on 'piety', and living a highly spiritual and often more physically-deprived lives. His most seminal work "Sefer HaHassidim" – The Book of the Pious, contains many fundamental Jewish ethical ideas, and he is credited with originating many Ashkenazi Jewish customs, as well as having an impact on the Sephardic world. But it was in his second major work, "Sefer Hagematria" – Book of Calculations, where he uncannily predicts Jewish history some 300 years before even the first event occurred. Based on Biblical calculations and astrological observations, he offers: "When the Ottomans [Turks] conquer Jerusalem, they will rule over Jerusalem for eight jubilees. Afterwards Jerusalem will become no-man’s land for one jubilee, and then in the ninth jubilee it will once again come back into the possession of the Jewish nation", signifying the beginning of the final Messianic era.
Keeping in mind that one jubilee = 50 years according to the Bible, we can see how amazing Yehuda He-Hassid’s predictions were, since the first ones only came true 300 years after his death! In 1517 the Ottoman Turks conquered the Mamluks, who had ruled Jerusalem since 1250, consequently ruling the Land of Israel for "8 jubilees", i.e. 8 x 50, or exactly 400 years, until 1917. That year, the British conquered the Ottomans, and the League of Nations conferred the British Mandate on the Holy Land and Jerusalem, therefore making the latter 'no-man's land' according to international law at that time. This state-of-affairs lasted exactly 'one jubilee' (50 years), until 1967, when Jerusalem reverted to Jewish-Israeli ownership and sovereignty. Therefore, according to Yehuda He-Hassid, the final Messianic era began then.
And in fact, many Rabbinical leaders took the same position after the Six Day War, since all of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount, was returning to Jewish control.

So when we celebrate "Yom Ha'atzma'ut" this year, we can see these uncanny predictions as further reinforcement and confirmation of the Jewish people’s logical, natural, and divine connection with the Land of Israel and State of Israel. Am Yisrael Hai, and may the State of Israel continue to grow and prosper in peace!

Corrections:

I read your Newsletter dated April 2016. The article about my aunt Betty Rawiszer had some major errors. Her mother was Julia Negrin Hanock from Ioannina and her father was Jack Hanock from Albania. They were not her grandparents. Mollie Hanock Jenis was not Betty’s mother. She was her sister and was born in Ioannina. The rest of the article was correct.
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.

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Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street, New York NY 10002
E-mail: kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net
Web Site: www.kkjsm.org