Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

As we approach the High Holidays, we at Kehila Kedosha Janina, the only Romaniote Synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, prepare to celebrate in our historic synagogue and invite all to join us. With our 113th E-Newsletter, we are reminded of how important and special we are. In July, we had the opportunity to visit both Romaniote and Sephardic communities in the Balkans, making important connections and educating others on who we are. Through the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, the Matza family enjoyed a special tour to their roots, Sephardic Rhodes and Romaniote Ioannina, passing their heritage on to the next generation.

Matt Phillips from the Matza family carrying the Torah scroll in Ioannina
This newsletter, our 113\textsuperscript{th} 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 9,000 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 museum@kkjsm.org.

As always, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up by emailing info@kkjsm.org 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.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Passings}
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We mourn the passing of Esther Mathios Levitz at the age of 96 years. Esther was the daughter of Abraham Mathios (born in Ioannina) and Leah Negrin, born in the USA of Yanniote descent, and the granddaughter of Matathias and Esther Negrin, both early immigrants to our Romaniote community in New York. Esther is survived by loving family and friends.

Matathias Matathias (Mathios)

Esther Mathios wedding to Reuben Silverstein (d. 1971)
We mourn the passing of Rabbi Bernard Honan, son of Sarah Cantos (born in Ioannina) and Max (Menachem) Honan (born in Kastoria) at the age of 90. Bernard is survived by his wife of 62 years, Roslyn Vitoulis, and his children, Sarah Crocker, Lydia Honan and Michael Honan and a loving extended family and community. From the Huntsville, Alabama Times of August 1, 2018: “Rabbi Bernard M. Honan, 90, of Huntsville, Alabama passed away on July 29, 2018. He was born in Brooklyn, NY. He was a graduate of Boys High School, City College of NY, Hebrew Union College where he received his Masters of Hebrew Letters and a Masters of Hebrew Literature, a PhD in Administration and Higher Education from the University of Alabama, and Doctor of Divinity from the Hebrew Union College in recognition of his first 25 years of service as a Rabbi of his 67 year career. He was a Captain in the US Air Force and was a Mason. Rabbi Honan served many congregations including Charlottesville, VA, NY, Westfield, NJ, Sharon, PA, Hillel at the University of Alabama, Hillel at the University of Virginia, Florence, AL; Longview, TX; Tyler, TX; and served as a retired interim Rabbi for Temple B’nai Sholom. One of his loves was doing Torah scribe work. Rabbi Honan loved his wife, children, grandchildren, and extended family, and loved to tell stories about and to them. He loved to read and learn, then teach and discuss any subject. People describe him as a very loving, gentle, kind man, who freely loved, respected and served everyone he met. Survivors include his wife of 62 years, Roslyn Honan; children, Sara Crocker (Charles), Lydia Honan, and Michael Honan (Roxanne Travelute); and grandchildren, Rachel and Benjamin Honan. The funeral service will be at Temple B’nai Sholom on Wednesday, August 1, 2018 at 1 p.m., with Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs and Cantor Jessica Roskin officiating. Burial will be in Maple Hill Cemetery (www.laughlinservice.com). In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Temple B’nai Sholom, Bloom Hillel Student Center at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, or Russel Hill Cancer Foundation.”
We mourn the recent passing of Becky Matathias Camhi, mother of Penny Santiago and David Camhi. Becky was the widow of Charles Camhi and one of six children of Sophie Svolis and Matathias Matathias. Becky was the granddaughter of Jeudah Svolis and Refka bat Bochor Matathias. When Becky’s mother, Sophie, came to the United States from Ioannina, Greece, she left behind a large family of eight siblings. All but one, Ebbie (Avraam) Svolis, would die in the Holocaust. Becky was born at 283 Broome Street and was a long time resident of the Lower East Side. Her daughter, Penny, along with her son-in-law, Ralph, are dedicated volunteers at Kehila Kedosha Janina.
Simchas

We congratulate Esther Misrahi Elting and Mickey Elting on the birth of their grandson, Ezra Jacob Cohen.

A big Mazal Tov to our Pasha, Ralph Battino on the celebration of his 99th birthday on August 5th. Ralph is the son of Sadik Battino and Anna DeCastro, both born in Ioannina. We, at Kehila Kedosha Janina, celebrate this special man.

Ralph WWII Hero

Sadik and Anna Battino with Louise, Manny and Ralph
Our synagogue is more than just a place of worship, and a place of study and learning, with our museum and extensive library. It is also a place to preserve traditions and customs and a living memorial to those Greek-Jews who perished in the Holocaust. In addition, it as a place to welcome “Our Own.” Each month, Greek Jews, both Romaniote and Sephardic, come to visit the center of Greek Jewry in the United States, often the place their own ancestors worshipped.

Greg Matza and nephew Matt
Visitors Flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina

What an iconic photo, as a tour group lines up to visit KKJ

We welcomed the visit of Doreen Alhadeff and guests from Spain in anticipation of an exhibit at the Center of Jewish History on sites of Jewish interest in Spain.

Special Visit by the Manos Family

Visiting from California, Eric and Lisa Manos, their 3 boys, Caleb (soon to be Bar Mitzvahed), Ethan and Benjamin, along with their grandmother, Rachel Fainberg.
Past Events of Interest in the Greek Jewish World in the United States

Hundreds of people joined Congregation Ezra Bessaroth and the Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation in Seattle for a special film screening, guest lecture, and memorial event dedicated to the memory of the Jewish Communities of Rhodes and Cos who perished in the Holocaust. This powerful event included a special guest presentation from the Consul General of Mexico as well as a panel presentation on the important role diplomats played as rescuers during the Holocaust.

Events of Interest in the Greek Jewish World

August 20, 2018 in Cedarhurst
Summer 2019 Young Professionals Tour of Jewish Greece

The Greek Jewish & Sephardic Young Professionals Network is organizing a special Tour of Jewish Greece for Summer 2019. The tour is customized for young professionals and open to people in their 20’s and 30’s. For more information email the Network at GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com

The Greek Jewish & Sephardic Young Professionals Network

Tour of Jewish Greece
Summer 2019 – Exact Dates TBD

Includes Salonika, Rhodes, Ioannina, Kastoria, & Athens

Rediscover your heritage and connect with other young Greek Jews on this once-in-a-lifetime experience

For more information email GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com
News from Jewish Greece

XIth Congress of the European Association for Jewish Studies
5-19 July 2018, Krakow – Poland
The Eleventh Congress of the European Association for Jewish Studies took place in Krakow in Poland, from 15th to 19th July 2018. The conference was held in four major Polish academic institutions, hosted by the Instytut Judaistyki Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego (Jagiellonian University). More than 800 scholars and students from Europe, the States, and Israel and beyond attended the Congress. The congress theme was Searching for Roots of Jewish Traditions. Papers in all fields of Jewish studies were presented in parallel sessions. The European Association for Jewish Studies (E AJ S) is the sole umbrella organization for Europe representing this field of university studies. Its aims are the encouragement and support of the research and teaching of Jewish studies at university level in Europe, and other places of higher education and learning. The congress is held every four years.

The Jewish Museum of Greece (JMG) and its researcher Mrs. Anastasia Loudarou, archaeologist – MSc., Phd candidate in ancient Jewish History (AUTH) participated in the congress for a consecutive time, thanks to the generous financial support and assistance of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece (AFJMG). The JMG would like to express its deep thanks to the President of the AFJMG, Mr. Solomon Asser and its Board of Directors for their generosity and kind spirit, which has provided encouragement and support enriching the Museum’s research and institutional values.

The JMG’s researcher attended several sessions throughout the congress and on Wednesday 18, July 2018, at the Pedagogical University in Krakow, the JMG took part with a presentation in the thematic congress’s session under the title “Southeastern European Jewish History and Culture”: The Future Research in Jewish Studies in Southeastern Europe supported by the National Library of Israel. The session panel entitled “At the South East Europe: Meeting the Challenges for Archivists and Scholars” was organized by the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe, UK with participants from the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Israel and the Jewish Community of Novi Sad, Serbia. The all-day session was concluded with a round table discussion among scholars and the participants.
Wildfires Outside of Athens

MATI, Greece (AP) — Fire officials in Greece raised the death toll from a wildfire that raged through a coastal area east of Athens to 91 and reported that 25 people were missing Sunday, six days after Europe’s deadliest forest fire in more than a century.

Before the national fire service updated the official number of fatalities, it stood at 86 as hundreds of mourners attended a Sunday morning memorial service for the victims in the seaside village hardest-hit by the blaze. The fire sped flames through the village of Mati, a popular resort spot, without warning on July 23. A database maintained by the Centre for the Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters in Brussels shows it as the deadliest wildfire in Europe since 1900.

The vast majority of victims died in the fire itself, though a number drowned in the sea while fleeing the flames. Until Sunday night, Greek officials had not provided a tally of the people reported missing. Hellenic Fire Service spokeswoman Stavroula Malliri provided a breakdown that illustrated why the death toll continued to expand and the list of people thought to be missing was difficult to draw up with precision. Malliri said that as of Sunday evening, 59 victims had been identified from bodies or remains and another four people injured in the fire had died in area hospitals. But identities have not yet been linked to another 28 sets of remains, she said.

Relatives or friends reported 25 people who were considered officially missing, Malliri said.

A fire service official said some or all of the 25 missing people could be among the yet-identified remains of the dead. The official requested anonymity because the fire still is under investigation. At the morning memorial service in Mati, the senior local Greek Orthodox Church official, Bishop Kyrillos, said the community was grieving the simultaneous loss of family, neighbors and friends.

“There’s fewer of us now than usually,” the bishop said. “It is the victims of the recent fire that are missing — friends, relatives and acquaintances, next-door people that we saw every day in town and on the beach.”

Greek authorities have said they have reason to believe the fire resulted from arson and turned so deadly because winds of up to 100 kilometers per hour (62 mph) buffeted the pine-forested seaside resorts at the time. The Greek government also has come under criticism for how buildings and roads were laid out in the area and an alleged lack of adequate preparation for fire season. More than 2,000 homes were damaged in the fire and roughly a quarter will have to be demolished, Greek officials said Friday.

In the wake of the horrific wildfires, our Community Leadership has been in touch with the Ισραηλιτική Κοινότητα Αθηνών / Jewish Community of Athens to see if we can provide any assistance to them at this difficult time. As of now, only one Jewish community member has lost their home, but thankfully sustained little injuries in the wake of the fire. The Jewish Community of Athens has started a relief campaign to help the thousands of Greeks affected by this national tragedy. If you would like to learn more on how to support their relief campaign, please go to [http://athjcom.gr/dorees-donations/](http://athjcom.gr/dorees-donations/) and select "Mati" from the dropdown donation button. We pray that the people of Greece should know no more sorrow and should find comfort at this extraordinarily difficult time.
Tours to Jewish Greece 2018

Private Matza Family Tour

Richard and Judi Matza had been to Greece before, twice visiting the ancestral home of Richard’s family, the Benvenistes from Rhodes and the Matzas from Ioannina, but this trip was of utmost importance to Richard. He wanted his children and grandchildren to know where they had come from. Organized with the help of Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulou (President of the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry and Museum Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina) the family visited Rhodes, Ioannina and Athens.
Tour of Jewish Greece and the Balkans

The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry organized a special tour to the Jewish Balkans. Among those participating were the President of Kehila Kedosha Janina, Marvin Marcus, his sons, Andrew and Ethan, and Rabbi Nissim Elencave. The group travelled from Greece (Salonika) to Bitola (former Monastir), to Kosova, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Sarajevo), and Albania, then making our way to Ioannina and Athens. Along the way, we learned about Jewish life, struggles to preserve communities, tales of courage where non-Jews saved their Jewish neighbors, present needs, and accomplishments. In Bitola, former Monastir, ancestral home of Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulos’ Rousso great-grandfather and Mark Calderon’s family, we admired the work on the restoration of the Jewish cemetery and, due to the multi-talented participants in the tour, we were able to read epitaphs in Hebrew and Judeo-Espanyol.
Monastir was a traditional Sephardic community with close ties to the Jewish communities of Kastoria and Salonika. Jews started to leave in the last quarter of the 19th century with the breakup of the former Ottoman Turkish Empire. The small city still has many Turkish influences, especially in the area of the bazaar. If you look carefully, you can still find signs of its Jewish past. In the Spring of 1943, the Bulgarians rounded up the Jewish community and handed them over to the Germans, where they met their death at Treblinka.

In Kosova, we learned of the courage of Albanians who risked their lives to save Jews. Our guides were Leke and Junghe, two friends of Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulus, whom she met at Yad Vashem during conferences for Museum Directors and educators. Leke and Junghe lead an organization called “Besa,” seeking out stories of Jews saved by Albanians outside of Albania. While in Pristina (the capital of Kosova), we visited the former Jewish cemetery.
The highlight of our trip to Kosova was a greeting by the Mayor’s office in Dechan, the town where Jews were saved in Leke’s family house. We also learned of the suffering of those from Kosova and the convoluted history of the region. Kosova yearns to become recognized by the EU, NATO, and the United Nations, and there are neighboring countries that are preventing this.

Our visit to Sarajevo, and the celebration of Shabbat with the Jewish community, was one of the highlights of our trip. Thanks to the coordination of Professor Eli Tauber, we had a fascinating program, highlighting the history of the community, visiting the Jewish Museum, seeing the Jewish cemetery and touring the Jewish sites. Devastated by the war (1992-1995), signs of the hostilities are still apparent (bullet holes in buildings and in the Jewish cemetery), roses painted on the sidewalk to mark spots where victims fell, and the exceedingly emotional Museum of Crimes Against Humanity. Through all of this, the passion to continue a Jewish presence in the city is still apparent.
Sarajevo Jewish Cemetery

While major Jewish organizations talk of discontinuing the “triaging” of the Jewish community, in our opinion, this community is too precious to abandon.

Sarajevo Jewish Museum

Professor Eli Tauber
There is no doubt that one of the highlights of our visit to Sarajevo was seeing our dear friend, former Consul General of Greece in New York, Georgios Iliopoulos, now the Ambassador of Greece to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Ethan Marcus, Rabbi Elnecave, Ambassador Iliopoulos, Marcia Ikonomopoulos, Marvin Marcus, Andrew Marcus

Rabbi Elnecave, Ambassador Iliopoulos, Marcia Ikonomopoulos, Eli Tauber, Marvin Marcus
Finally, in Sarajevo, we were able to visit the Sarajevo Haggadah and acquire an excellent copy that is now in our library at Kehila Kedosha Janina. The Haggadah dates back to the 1300’s and is thought to originate from Barcelona. It is one of the oldest Sephardic Haggadahs in the world.

Before returning to Greece, we stopped in Albania, to visit Rabbi Finman in Tirana. Rabbi Finman has been diligently working to provide kosher food throughout the Balkans and to spearhead the revival of the small Jewish community in Albania.
Our time in Greece included our first Shabbat in Salonika, and a tour with our dear friend Hella Kounio Matalon, a visit to nearby Serres to walk in the neighborhood where relatives of one of our participants once lived, an always emotional experience in Ioannina and our moving finale in Athens.

Salonika

Rabbi Aaron Israel and Rabbi Nissim Elnecave

The Marcus family and Rabbi Elnecave

Holocaust Memorial in Salonika
Ethan and Andrew in Salonika

Dina Benun outside possible ancestral home in Serres
Ioannina

Moses Eliasof, President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina

Ross Garelick Bell
Hametz Family Has A Life-Changing Experience

Anyone who does not believe in miracles has to join one of our trips. We knew where the former Hametz house was and we were even able to locate it with its change of address, but the intention was to try to step inside. Seemed impossible. No one was around and, then, as we are taking a group family picture in front of the house, a young man walks towards us and wants to know what we are doing. We explain that their family had lived here. He was renting part of the house and offered to bring us inside!

Our last stop was Athens, where Rabbi Gabriel Negrin treated us to a special Wednesday evening service and short lecture on the tikim and Torahs inside the Romaniote synagogue.

Victor Borbolis, Rabbi Negrin, Marvin Marcus and Rabbi Elnecave
Israel

Following the tour of Greece, Rabbi Nissim Elneve, the Executive Director of the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, and Marvin and Ethan Marcus finished their tour in Israel. They had the opportunity to meet with Prof. Shmuel Refael Vivante and Dr. Suzy Gross of the Salti Center for Ladino Studies at Bar Ilan University, discussing the development of new Ladino educational materials as well as ways to teach communal traditions to the next generation. Rabbi Elneve also had the special honor of attending the Sephardic Educational Center’s (SEC) Metivta Rabbinical Seminar in Jerusalem led by Rabbi Daniel Bouskila. More than a dozen Sephardic rabbis from around the world including from Turkey and the Balkans gathered in Jerusalem to discuss new ways to collaborate, support one another, and instill Sephardic traditions and identity within their communities.

Ethan Marcus, Dr. Suzy Gross, Prof. Shmuel Refael Vivante, Marvin Marcus, Rabbi Elneve.

Rabbi Naftali Haleva of Istanbul, Rabbi Nissim Elneve, SEC Director Rabbi Daniel Bouskila, Rabbi Hayim Amshalem of Jerusalem, and Rabbi Emanuel Ventura of Sao Paolo Brazil
Since the saddest day in the Jewish calendar – Tisha B’Av – was marked on July 22nd, for the entire month of August, we will be within a period of “Nehama” – comfort, coming on the heels of three intensive weeks of less and more severe mourning that culminated in Tisha B’Av.

This period of comfort, which lasts exactly 7 Shabbatot, comes from a series of special ‘haftarot’ the portions from various books of the Prophets read every Shabbat and holiday after the Torah reading. Aptly named, “Sheva D’Nehemta” – which is Aramaic for “the Seven of Comfort”, these particular sections, all taken from the book of Isaiah, were selected by our Sages to illustrate how God comforted Israel after the destruction of the Temple, since despite the fact that God Himself decided that the Temple had to be destroyed because of Israel’s transgressions, He wants to comfort us and ensure that we understand that no matter how severe the punishment, He will never completely abandon His chosen people. And though each haftarah can be associated on an individual basis with its corresponding Torah portion, one of Jewry’s greatest sages, Rabbi David Abudirham, who lived in Seville in the 14th century, saw a very specific message not only in each haftarah of comfort, but also in their specific order, which reveals an amazing insight into Israel’s relationship with God.

On the first Shabbat after Tisha B’Av, Parshat V’ethanan”, we read Isaiah 40:1-26, which begins “Nahamu Ami”: “May my people be comforted”. In fact, this Shabbat is popularly known as “Shabbat Nahamu” because of it’s being the first Shabbat after our mourning period, and for many Orthodox Jews especially, this is when summer vacation really begins. This haftarah, the first in the series of the “seven of comfort”, focuses on God sending His prophet to Israel to offer His words of comfort and condolences for our mourning.

But in his innovative commentary, The Abudirham points out that the subsequent haftarah, from Isaiah 49:14 – 51:3 (Parshat Ekev), which begins “Vatomer Zion” – “And Zion said…” is Israel’s reply to the messenger Prophet, telling the Prophet that with all due respect, we do not accept these words of comfort through a messenger: Our mourning and sorrow are severe enough to warrant God offering His comfort directly to His people! Apparently, as the haftarah continues, “God has abandoned us” since he can’t find it in His heart to comfort us directly!!

While some would say this is pure “hutzpah”, the third haftarah in the series, “Ania S’ara” (Parshat Re’eh), Isaiah 54:11-55:5, has the Prophet returning Israel’s message to God, and saying, quite frankly, that “they are not comforted” by proxy, and this is their definitive reply! Obviously, one would not be surprised if God’s reply to this outright rebuff by His own people would be anger, or even worse, since, after all, who are we to question His intentions and words?

But God’s reply is quite the opposite: He basically accepts the rebuke, and in the following haftarah (Parshat Shoftim), Isaiah 51: 12- 52:12, basically replies that there is apparently a misunderstanding, and that “Anochi” – I myself, am offering my comfort, and did not mean for you to understand that I meant to do it by proxy. And as proof, in the next two haftaroth: Isaiah 54: 1-10 (Parshat Ki Teitzei), and Isaiah 60: 1-22 (Parshat Ki Tavo), God proves His sincerity by first showing how He could never abandon His people, just as a mother could never abandon her child, no matter what he or she may have done, and finally declaring that Israel should arise and rejoice because here I am offering my personal comfort directly to my people, and not
through any messenger. This culminates in the last haftarah, Isaiah 61: 10 – 63:9 (Parshiot Netzim-Vayeilech) when Israel exclaims “I will rejoice” since we are indeed finally comforted by God Himself.

Obviously, the message is twofold: the primary mission of God’s offering comfort to Israel and emphasizing the eternity of our covenant, but also in showing the intimacy and closeness of the God-Israel relationship, where, in very specific instances, Israel can even rebuke God when we feel He has done us injustice, and whereby God even accepts such rebuke! Can any other people claim such closeness or intimacy with the Creator of the Universe? I think not, and may we indeed merit the culmination of this unique and unprecedented intimacy in seeing and helping to bring the final redemption, speedily in our days!

New Items for Sale

From Rhodes:

- CD of Traditional Sephardic Music from Rhodes $20
- Rhodeslis recipes on a CD $20
- Jewish Community of Rhodes Guidebook to the Jewish Quarter of Rhodes $20
From Ioannina:

CD plus booklet of Haggadah from Ioannina chanted by Samuel Cohen of Blessed Memory $25

Jewish Community of Ioannina Journey Through Time $20

The Jewish Community of Ioannina $25

From Salonika:

En la Mar Ay Una Torre (from Thessaloniki, performed by the Jewish Community Choir) $25

From Sarajevo:

CD Flory Jagoda Music $20

Bosnian Sephardic Cuisine $15

Ladino Songs from Sarajevo $20

To order any of these items, email museum@kkjsm.org to confirm availability. Postage and Handling $5 for the first item and $2 for each additional item.
Picture of the Month

Preveza 1845
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 morning at 9:30am and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm and by appointment during the week.

Kehila Kedosha Janina E-Newsletter – Number 113
August 2018
Kehila Kedosha Janina
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Website: www.kkjsm.org
Email: museum@kkjsm.org

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