After we left the museum, we visited the two synagogues on Melidoni Street, immediately across the street from one another. The street is gated and guarded by an armed policeman as a precaution against potential terrorist incidents. We first went to the Beth Shalom synagogue, which is the only actively used synagogue for the 3,500 Jews in Athens today. Ms. Asser introduced us to Rabbi Jacob Kosch, who studied in France and Israel, inasmuch as there are no rabbinical schools in Greece. The outside of the building has simple lines and is quite remarkable. The interior of the synagogue is mostly done in wood paneling and has a warm and comfortable feeling. Directly across the street is the Ianniotiki synagogue, which had been built by Romaniothe Jews from Ionnina. It is located on the second floor of the building. The lower floor houses the Athens Jewish community offices. We obtained the key to the synagogue from the office staff and walked through a hallway into a courtyard. The courtyard was fully paved except for a small area from which one large palm tree grew. We walked up the narrow exterior stairs to a walkway, and unlocked the door. This synagogue was smaller and seemed older than the synagogue across the street. We later learned that it is mostly used for special occasions. It is elegant in its simplicity.

RHODES

We had the opportunity to see one other Jewish site in Greece when we stopped in Rhodes a few days later. We had seen a website for the Jewish Museum of Rhodes before our travels began at www.RhodesJewishMuseum.org. We sought out the island’s synagogue and adjacent museum. Finding the street in the old walled city of Rhodes was not too difficult, as it was clearly labeled and the synagogue is noted on tourist maps. As we walked toward the synagogue and museum, we knew that we were in what had once been the Jewish quarter of the city. We could see Hebrew inscriptions above some of the doorways, signifying houses built by prominent Jewish families. However, many of these buildings appeared to be in poor repair. Unfortunately, we had no information about the buildings and knew virtually nothing about the Jewish community that once existed here. As we walked through iron gates, that some buildings had interior courtyards with interesting floor patterns formed by smooth black and white stones. In some courtyards, the stone patterns were intact, while in others the patterns were quite deteriorated.

We could not find the synagogue itself, but luckily, we asked directions from an elderly woman. Lucia Modiano Sulam turned out to be the keeper of the synagogue and was kind enough to guide us to it. She was a Holocaust survivor, with tattooed numbers on her forearm.

We were quite unprepared for what we found when we entered Kahal Shalom synagogue. The synagogue, in very good condition, was more elaborate than the synagogues we had seen in Athens. Crystal chandeliers, silver Bimah, a huge scroll case, and pet cats lay on the floor. The mosaic floor inside was made of the same black and white smooth stones that we had seen elsewhere. Here, one also saw the beamed ceiling arranged in more elaborate patterns. Chairs were placed on the two long sides of the interior and the wooden bimah was in the middle of the room.

Just across the synagogue entrance is a courtyard which has a stone mosaic floor. It is well preserved.

We also visited the Jewish Museum of Rhodes, which is across the street from the synagogue. This is a new museum in its first stage of development. Aron Hasson, a Los Angeles attorney whose family came from Rhodes, founded it. The museum currently consists of one room with three large ceilinged panels. When we were there, the museum exhibition consisted of photographs and other printed materials.

TOURISM TO JEWISH SITES IN GREECE

We knew that the Jewish population in Greece had been decimated by the Holocaust, and that only remnants of that once-thriving community remain today, as a reminder to travelers and tourists. I have been struck by the difficulty in obtaining information about Jewish sites in Athens and Jewish history of Greece. It is not understood why one organization or resource does not reference another. Organizations that have websites or access to the Internet should have hypertext links to other Jewish sites, movies, museums, including e-mail links to facilities that may not yet have a website.

There should be a list of bibliographic references about Jewish tourist sites in Athens. When we were in the Jewish Museum of Greece shop in Athens, I was stunned to find an English language book about the Jews of Athens (Dalven, R., The Jews of Ioannina, Philadelphia, 1992). I purchased the book immediately! Likewise, it was through word of mouth from both Victor Kerem (publisher of the electronic newsletter Sefarad) and Elias Messinas (editor of Kol haKEHILA) that I learned of the fascinating book written by Dr. Michael Matsas entitled The Illusion of Safety; The Story of the Greek Jews During the Second World War (New York, 1997). In reading these books and in speaking with both Messinas and Kerem whom I recently met in Jerusalem, I understand that the Greek Jews, unlike Jews in some other parts of Europe, had ample opportunity to flee or hide from the Nazis. In instance after instance the warnings of the catastrophic consequences of not fleeing or hiding were not disseminated, or the seriousness of the situation was minimized. The inaction among the communities was poor.

When we visited Rhodes, we stood on its acropolis and clearly saw the Turkish coast only 11 miles away. It was difficult to come to terms with the complacency of the Jewish population of Rhodes in 1944 that resulted in their slaughter. They were among the last Greek Jews to be sent to Auschwitz. By 1944, other communities in Greece had already been eliminated. Safety lay only 11 miles away. The city of Rhodes did not even flee to the island’s countryside. Perhaps a reader can explain this puzzling apparent fact.

The lesson today seems clear. To preserve the remnants of the Greek Jewish heritage, various interested organizations should cooperate with each other. They should use electronic links to one another whenever possible. The Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens should have information about Jewish sites throughout Greece. The Jewish Museum of Rhodes should also link to as many Jewish sites throughout Greece as possible. We should use electronic links to one another whenever possible. The Jewish sites throughout Greece should be made available at each of the sites and at Tourist Offices. Never again should the Jewish communities be weakened by poor communication among various components. Certainly, not in this age of electronic communications and the Internet. There are many more birthdays.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE FOURTH BIRTHDAY OF THE PROVIDENCE GAY MEN’S CHORUS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the Providence Gay Men’s Chorus, which celebrated its fourth anniversary on November 14, 1999. I would like to thank the Chorus for its four years of involvement, during which time the members have shared not only their melodic voices with the citizens of Rhode Island, but also their hopes and ambitions for a better world.

The Providence Gay Men’s Chorus, which began in 1995 as a group of eight, now has 50 members. In addition to their musical talent, one of the attributes that is most unique about the Chorus, and most appreciated, is the group’s mission to promote tolerance. As we know, the real work of fostering support for people with diverse backgrounds and lifestyles usually happens slowly, and within the context of shared activities and community. The Providence Gay Men’s Chorus reaches out with its concerts to expand the boundaries of community. By working to create an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding, their work benefits not only the citizens of Rhode Island, but ultimately the entire nation.

I am pleased to make it known that November 14, 1999 was not only the fourth anniversary of the Chorus, but also was declared Providence Gay Men’s Chorus Day in the State of Rhode Island. Mr. President, I ask that a gubernatorial proclamation from the Governor of my home state of Rhode Island proclaiming November 14th as "Providence Gay Men’s Chorus Day" be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

I join in the chorus of voices supporting the Providence Gay Men’s Chorus’ dual mission of creating beautiful music and promoting mutual respect and understanding. I know this talented musical group will continue its good work and I wish them many, many more birthdays.

The proclamation follows.
TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM AND OLENE DOYLE

- Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I am proud to stand before my colleagues today and pay tribute to a couple who have so positively influenced the people of Washington County, Vermont over the course of their lives. William and Olene Doyle will be honored as the Washington County Citizens of the Year by the Green Mountain Council of Boy Scouts on November 14, 1999, as Providence Gay Men’s Chorus Day.

BRET WAGNER ON RUSSIAN NUCLEAR MATERIALS

- Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is important that we remember how vital our nuclear nonproliferation programs are to our national security. That’s why I was pleased, in recent weeks, to see two articles by Brett Wagner in the San Francisco Chronicle and in the Wall Street Journal, which I would like to submit for the RECORD.

WASHINGTON COUNTY’S THREE STATE SENATORS, a role in which he has thrived for over three decades as a skilled teacher and a master of the Vermont political rules. Bill has been an invaluable mentor and mediator in the Vermont State House. Bill has written two books, including "The Vermont Political Tradition," which is regarded by many to be a must read of the Vermont political history. He has also taken his passion for government and politics and created the annual "Doyle Poll," our yearly gauge of public opinion on the hottest and sometimes most controversial issues facing Vermonsters. While admittedly unscientific, the poll’s results are soundly reflective of Vermont sentiment.

As the son of an art teacher, I have always held a deep respect for the arts and for those who are able to inspire creativity in our nation’s young people. Olene Doyle has taught art in elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions in the central Vermont region. Her dedication to arts and education led her to volunteer positions on the local school board in Montpelier, as well as on the board of the Wood Art Gallery, where, incidentally, I now hold the annual Congressional Arts Competition.

Bill and Olene raised three wonderful children. However, they have never stopped teaching as evidenced by their ongoing community service and involvement in their local church and non-profit organizations. Given the countless hours they dedicate to community service, it is noteworthy that the couple finds the time to pursue personal hobbies such as golf and gardening. While I have never had the privilege of seeing the Doyle gardens, I have been told they are a vibrant reflection of the life Bill and Olene give to everything they do.

I am thankful for the opportunity to express my heartfelt praise. I can think of few couples more worthy of this award. Years of partnership and devotion to each other have inevitably spilled over into the Vermont community, where Bill and Olene have truly made their mark as two of Vermont’s most influential and giving people.

Sure that Russian weapons-grade, highly-enriched uranium does not fall into the wrong hands. We need to live up to our agreement with Russia and strengthen our nuclear, chemical and biological nonproliferation program with that nation. Our future could well depend on it.

I believe that Mr. Wagner’s articles will be of interest to all of us in Congress who care about these issues, and I ask that they be printed in the RECORD.

The articles follow:

(From the San Francisco Chronicle, Oct. 22, 1999)

U.S. MUST MOVE QUICKLY TO BUY RUSSIA’S EXCESS NUKES

(By Brett Wagner)

Without a doubt, what’s been most frustrating about being a national security specialist in the 1990s has been urging that the United States buy the hundreds of tons of undersecured excess weapon-grade uranium scattered across Russia — a seemingly endless struggle to balance the federal budget.

My, how things change.

Today, Washington is awash in an unprecedented trillion-dollar budget surplus — a surplus expected to surpass $100 billion in the next fiscal year alone.

Politicians from both major parties are busy, of course, debating what to do with all the extra money. Unfortunately, neither party has even mentioned Russia’s offer to sell its enormous stockpiles of excess weapon-grade uranium to the United States as quickly as possible in exchange for badly needed hard currency.

Congressional and presidential priorities aside, it’s hard to imagine a better time to reconsider this issue.

By now, almost everyone who reads the newspaper or watches the evening news knows that Russia has yet to develop any reliable means of securing its enormous stockpiles of weapon-grade uranium and plutonium — an accounting system capable of keeping track of them.

And as the media often remind us, these materials have already begun leaking into the hands of rogue states and terrorist groups.

Rogue states and terrorist groups openly hostile to the United States have already attempted several times to purchase nuclear warheads or material from Russian nuclear workers.

There is no reliable way of keeping a nuclear weapon or contraband from being smuggled into U.S. territory if it ever does fall into the wrong hands. The U.S. is at risk.

What most people don’t seem to remember, however, is that for several years now Russia has been trying to sell these same undersecured stockpiles of highly enriched uranium to the United States for use as nuclear fuel in commercial power plants and, what’s more, that an agreement designed to help further this goal was signed by President Clinton and Russian leader Boris Yeltsin in February 1993.