

HISTORIC DISTRICTING

Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud to be a member of the Lower East Side Preservation Coalition, an organization established to help ensure that the Lower East Side will not fall victim to the rapid development that threatens to erode the fabric of the community. Other members of the Coalition include Angel Orensanz Foundation, City Lore, East Village Community Coalition, The Eldridge Street project, Hester Street Collaborative, Lower East Side People's Mutual Housing Association, and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum.

In addition to supporting historic districting, the Coalition is concerned with preserving the Lower East Side as an immigrant

neighborhood. On May 20, 2008, The National Foundation For Historic Preservation announced its 2008 List Of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places, a list that included the Lower East Side. In a video compiled by The History Channel, Kehila Kedosha Janina appeared in all its glory!

The proposal for Historic Districting has passed Community Board 3 (the first step) and now is in the hands of the Landmark Conservancy of the City of New York. It is now within the realm of possibility that the block of Broome between Allen and Eldridge, and the apartment buildings where so many of our early families lived, will be preserved as historic landmarks!

IN HONOR OR MEMORY

Donations were made **In Memory** of: Daniel Abraham, David & Esther Abraham, Rebecca Dalven Abraham, Molly & Israel Askinazi, Stella Battino, Marilyn Berkowitz, Molly Cohen, Morris & Sara Cohen, Rachel & Samuel Cohen, Shirley & Morris Cohen, Lula & Belu Eliasof, Murray Eskononts, Bernard Geik, Hy Genee, Morris Gilbert, William Goldman, Rebecca Matza Houllif, Marsha Jacobs, Jack & Beatrice Jacobson, Rebecca Eliasof Kailo, Leah Dostis Klarsfeld, Leon Lafazan, Abraham Levy, Abraham Marcadis, Annie Shemo Marcadis, Annette Matsil, Mollie & Ezra Matza, Hy Mionie, Sara Askenazi Mionie, Al Moses, Nat Negrin, Stella & Albert Negrin, Anne Openheim, Betty Mione Pardo, Morris Sabba, Annette Samuels, Sarah & Benny Serata, Irene Solomon, Lawrence Solomon, Molly & Sam Solomon, Sylvia Solomon Meller, and Albert Yamali.

Donations were made **In Honor** of: Rose Eskononts, Esther Francis, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Chaim Kofinas, Joseph Levy, Marvin Marcus, Max & Eve Nachmias and Pamela Weinberg.

We were overjoyed to receive donations **In Celebration** of Emily Velellis's 95th birthday and Rhea Levy Walco's 80th birthday.

We apologize for the typographical error listing a donation "in memory" of Reba Geik. It should have read Nina Geik.

PASSINGS

It is with great sorrow that we note the passing of our dear friends: Solly (Asch) Askinazi, Sara Colchamiro Burakoff, Lillian Cassorla, Salom Giosef, Zino Kofinas, Rebecca Matza Houllif, Jack Michaels, Anne Oppenheim, Annette Samuels, Irene Solomon and Abraham Watkin. We greatly appreciate those who made generous donations to Kehila Kedosha Janina in their memory.

RECIPE FOR KOURABIEDES FROM VOLOS

(Courtesy of Nikos Stavroulakis, *Cookbook of the Jews of Greece*)

1 lb. sweet butter, softened at room temperature
1 cup superfine sugar
½ cup almonds, finely chopped
2 cups flour
2 cups confectioners' sugar

Preheat oven to 350°. Beat the softened butter in a large bowl until it is pale and creamy. Slowly add the sugar, while beating, and continue until the mixture is very smooth. Add the almonds. Stir in the flour, and then with your fingers

work the flour into the butter mixture until a fine dough is formed. Roll out on a well-floured board to a thickness of ½ to 1 inch. Cut out circles of dough with a cookie cutter or wine glass and place on a buttered baking sheet. Bake at 350° for at least 20 minutes, or until they are a very pale rose color. Remove from the sheet to cool. When cool, put the confectioners' sugar in a large bowl, roll each kourabiye in the sugar and then stack them in a large dish. You can sprinkle rose water into the confectioners' sugar for an extra touch of elegance. Makes approximately 25 to 30.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Brotherhood

Chaim Kofinas
[for membership and burials]:
845-356-0844
Steven M. Matza
[dues for current members]:
732-792-0725

Sisterhood

Rose Eskononts:
718-648-7374

Pashas

Arty Taub:
845-271-4250

Association of Friends of Greek Jewry

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos: 631-367-3905

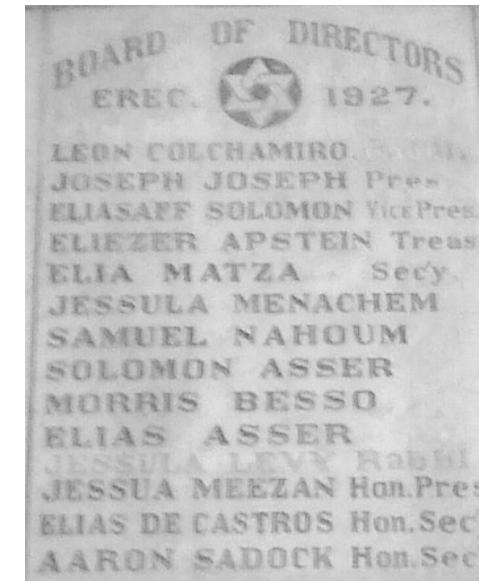
The Romaniote

Newsletter of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

REFLECTIONS

The ongoing restoration of our beloved synagogue has, in many ways, been an "archeological dig," revealing interesting findings about the original community. When the synagogue was first constructed in 1927, the community then living on the Lower East Side probably numbered no more than 50 families, many families having already moved to the outer boroughs of the Bronx and Brooklyn. These were, for the most part, poor, hard-working, observant Jews for whom their religion permeated all aspects of their daily life. In addition, they dearly loved their "Greek" culture and traditions. The Kehila (community) was formally incorporated in the New York City in 1914, but the property to build a synagogue was not acquired until 1921. It would take five years to raise the funds to erect the humble structure, and they would erect the structure themselves.

They would build the Aron Kodesh, lining it with tin to fireproof it. They would place the bema in the center of the synagogue, and they would forfeit the conventional east/west orientation, the layout of the building plot making that impossible. They certainly built everything to last, the number of nails in the Aron way beyond the actual amount needed



(no doubt, the nails were a donation!). They would cover the wood floor. In 1927, back in Ioannina, having a wood floor meant you were a peasant. They were here now in America and they were going to be American! What was the rage in 1927? Linoleum! And our beautiful wood floor in the sanctuary, hidden from view until recently unearthed during our interior restoration, was covered with layer after layer of linoleum. We have lovingly restored the original hand-stenciled walls, an inexpensive way of simulating wallpaper in 1927, and as much as possible, preserved the original interior, thereby conveying the essence of who this congregation was.

There are still puzzles being unearthed during our ongoing restoration. Two "erasures," were discovered during our beginning stages of the cleaning and restoring of the donor marble plaques in the entranceway. We don't know why and these will likely remain unsolved mysteries. What is no mystery is the

response to our efforts. Visitors from around the world have come to view our ongoing restoration, and the overwhelming reaction has been one of appreciative applause. We humbly bow in gratitude to all those who have made this possible.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The High Holy Days are a time of introspection. Have we done what we set out to do? How can we improve our lives and the lives of others? These questions require some thought. We at the synagogue ask ourselves the same questions. Our first objective is to keep our Kehila open as a house of worship and second to continue to inform others about our Romaniote heritage through the Museum and its efforts.

This year, we have made many new friends and have continued to provide services every Shabbat as we have done for over 80 years. Every Saturday we gather and greet people from around the world wishing to learn more about our unique heritage.

I thank all those individuals who have worked so hard to maintain our presence and who continue to be an active part of our community.

You can also help. Spend some time with us. Come visit Pray with us and may we continue to be in your thoughts throughout the year. L'Shana Tovah, Chronya Polla, Muchos Anos.

Sincerely,
Marvin Marcus



KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM

Founder*: Joseph I. Josephs Life President*: Hyman Genee Life Members*: Michael Aronesty • Morris L. Cohen • Morris David • Morris Eskononts • Joseph Kassorla • Sam Nahoum • Solomon Schinasi
Trustees: Marvin Marcus, President • Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director • Chaim Kofinas, Treasurer • Solomon Kofinas, Financial Secretary • Elliot Colchamiro, Recording Secretary
Jeffery Mordos, First Vice President • Rose Eskononts, Second Vice President • Marc Winthrop, Second Vice President • Martin Genee, Vice President • Lois Ledner, Vice President
Jesse Colchamiro • Leonard Colchamiro • Ilias Hadjijs • Holly Kaye • Sol Matsil • Max Nachmias • Maurice Negrin

*Deceased

280 Broome Street • NYC 10002 • 212-431-1619
www.kkjsm.org or e-mail at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net

MESSAGE FROM THE SISTERHOOD OF JANINA

The Sisterhood, proudly 76 years young, is in the midst of a renaissance – true, we have lost a number of our stalwart, original members during the past years, but are also fortunate to have a resurgence of second- and third-generation new membership. It is with these new members that The Sisterhood is receiving a much needed transfusion of “new blood” and hopefully, new leaders to guide us into the coming years. We trust that we will continue to be the philanthropic arm of Kehila Kedosha Janina and the Charter Member of the Sephardic Home. These two very important institutions of our community, Romaniote and Sephardic, serve entirely different purposes for our people. One fosters the spiritual, or the soul

of the people, and the other nurtures the physical needs of our aged and infirm. We need both and for this reason have made them the main thrust of our philanthropy. Please, if you are not already a member, or know someone who is not, contact us and join us. You will be enriched and also help to perpetuate a tradition that has survived throughout the years and with your help, hopefully, will continue far into the future.

Chronya Polla, Anyos Muchos, L'Shana Tovah,
Happy New Year to all.

Rose Eskononts, *President*

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF GREEK JEWRY

As the Association celebrates ten years of existence, we look back with pride on all we have accomplished. We have been instrumental in gathering support and funds for major restoration projects in Greece, whether it be Kahal Shalom on the island of Rhodes or both the synagogue and Jewish cemetery in the city of Ioannina. In 2002 it was the Association that helped raise funds from Corfiotes around the world and commissioned a marble memorial plaque inside the synagogue on the island of Corfu commemorating the family names of those who perished in the Holocaust so that their names may be inscribed for eternity. In 2004, it was the Association that was asked by the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki to reach out to Saloniklis in the Diaspora and help to distribute its bi-annual periodical, El Avenir.

In a short ten years, we have proudly published two important books: in 2004 the English translation of Eftihia Nachman's *Yannina–Journey To the Past*, and in 2005, Isaac Dostis' *Ten Gold Medals–Glory or Freedom*, the first enabling a larger English-speaking audience to learn about Yannina [Janina/Ioannina] and the customs and traditions of the small Jewish

Community of the city, a community that was almost completely destroyed in the Holocaust, and the second bringing the story of the Greek Holocaust to a younger audience so that, hopefully, we can raise a generation that knows of our losses.

The Association's annual tours to Jewish Greece have served as another means of reinforcing the Jewish presence in Greece and in reconnecting diasporic Greek-Jews with their roots. Our planned Colchamiro family reunion in June of 2009 is next on our list. Join us to celebrate the 144th anniversary of the marriage of Jessoula and Rachel Colchamiro in the synagogue of Ioannina!

From its inception ten years ago, the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry has been a grassroots organization, dependent on the donations of those who have believed in us. For this we thank our loyal members. We have never been large in number. Our strength has been the passion and commitment of our staff, all of who work tirelessly without financial compensation. They are driven by a passion to make a difference. They have. We have. We can say with pride that the world of Greek Jewry is better because of our existence.

MESSAGE FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Work continues on our newest exhibit, “Our Gang in World War II,” due to open Sunday, November 2nd (*see accompanying article on the “Our Gang” exhibit*). What was initially conceived as a photo exhibit has now grown into a multimedia display, with photos, medals, uniforms, taped interviews and the oral reading of excerpts from “Our Gang,” a family newsletter put out by the Barouch family to inform family and friends of what was happening with their loved ones as they served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Extensive work has been done on the computerization of our family tree connection. The family tree project was initiated by Isaac Dostis and now, with the computerization, cross-referencing is becoming possible. The old saying that “everyone was related to everyone in Ioannina” may very well be true! If you haven't submitted your own family tree, please do so, or get in touch with

us so that we can help you in creating a family tree of your own. To supplement the work we are doing at Kehila Kedosha Janina, Debra Colchamiro and her cousin Charles, have created an excellent website enabling over 1000 “family” members to now connect with the Colchamiro. Debra has also initiated a Matza/Matsa/Mazza communication to work on connecting various family trees from this potentially interrelated family group. Bravo Debra! Debra's great-grandfather Leon Colchamiro was also an initiator, one of the driving forces behind the creation of the synagogue, Brotherhood and the Sisterhood. The apple does not fall far from the tree.

So much is now happening in both the Museum and the synagogue that our biannual Romaniote newsletter is just not enough. The Museum now distributes via the Internet a monthly e-newsletter, enabling the world to

learn of our news and that of the world of Greek Jewry. If you are not presently receiving the e-newsletter, e-mail us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net and we will remedy this.

One of the most successful new ventures is our “lunch tour,” a kosher Greek Jewish lunch accompanied by a complete tour of both the Museum and the synagogue. “Feed them and they will come,” and come and come! Just this year alone we have hosted numerous Brandeis, Hadassah, JCC and synagogue groups. The true testimony of our success is the necessity for groups to book additional tours because the first, and sometimes the second, were booked to capacity. To find out more about our lunch tours, access our website at <http://www.kkjsm.org>.

Thank You,
Marcia Haddad Ikonopoulou

OUR GANG IN WORLD WAR II

When the United States officially entered World War II on December 7, 1941, of the 133,402,471 individuals living on the soil of the United States, under 5 million were Jews (less than 3% of the total population), but 550,000 would serve in the armed forces of the United States from 1941 to 1945 (4.3% of the



total armed forces). About 11,000 would die in battle and more than 40,000 would return wounded. Among those brave men who served were many of our own. Many would be wounded. Ralph Battino would receive the Purple Heart for his injuries at Okinawa. There would be those who were taken as prisoners of war, including Isaac (Pat) Nachmias of 279 Broome Street (Max Nachmias' older brother)

and there would be those who would not return. Arthur Rubenstein, son of Stella David and Harry Rubenstein, would be shot down in the Pacific in 1944 at the age of 19. His body would never be recovered. Nissim Attas would die in Europe, buried in Henri-Chapelle Permanent Cemetery in Belgium. This exhibit is dedicated to “Our Gang,” Greek Jews, most sons of immigrants from Ioannina, many from the Lower East Side, who proudly fought to defend their country. Jews by faith, Americans by nationality, Greeks by ethnicity, they would make us all proud. **Join us for the opening of this exhibit on November 2, 2008 at 1:00pm.**



MEET THE BOARD: ILIAS HADJIS

Misfortune on Greek soil, a devastating earthquake in the city of Volos (*see accompanying article on the Jewish presence in Volos*), would bring the Hadjis family to New York in 1955. Our community and our synagogue would benefit from the unfortunate turn of events. Ilias Hadjis had experienced many other upheavals in his life, but he and his family would plow ahead, work hard and persevere. It is this attitude and these strengths that Ilias brings to our Board of Directors. Ilias Hadjis was born in Athens in 1937; his mother, Emilia from Chalkis and his father, Mayer from Volos. The family would move to Volos in 1938 and it would be here that Ilias would spend his early years. World War II, and the occupation of Greece, would

turn their lives upside down. The Hadjis family would be forced to flee to Athens and, with the help of Greek Christians, survived the devastation of the Holocaust. Members of Ilias' extended family in Greece would not be so lucky: 13 would perish. After the liberation of Greece in 1944, the family would return to Volos to pick up the pieces of their lives, only to be forced to leave again a short 11 years later. In New York City, settling on the Lower East Side, Mayer Hadjis opened a grocery store, Hadjis Brothers, first on the corner of Rivington and Ludlow, and then at 100 Rivington. Eli would work in the store and it would be this early experience that would pave the way for his relationship with Gristedes (where, now, even in retirement, Eli

still continues to work). In the interim, Eli would marry his wife, Cookie, and begin his own family. His loving daughter and grandson look on with pride at Eli's accomplishments, and now the rest of the world is learning about this special man. A recent article in the *New York Daily News* (June 10, 2008) applauds Eli's contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina. We also applaud the contributions of Ilias Hadjis. Thank you, Eli. The Board of Kehila Kedosha Janina is fortunate to have you!



JEWISH PRESENCE IN VOLOS

Jews have lived in the vicinity of Volos (a seaport on the eastern coast of mainland Greece) for at least 2,000 years and, as early as the 12th century, a flourishing Jewish community was mentioned here (by the medieval Jewish diarist, Benjamin of Tudela). The community was a Romaniote community but was definitely influenced by a massive influx of traditional Spanish-speaking Sephardic Jews after the expulsion from Spain in 1492. Where, in most instances the Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews would be absorbed into the Sephardic culture (Ioannina being one of the few

exceptions), in Volos, it appears that the two communities lived alongside each other in relative harmony. The proximity to Salonika, and the growth of that city as a major center of Sephardic mercantile trade and manufacturing, would add to the prosperity of Volos and the Jewish presence in the city.

In 1940, there were 882 Jews living in Volos. Unlike in many other parts of Greece, where the percentages of losses would be over 90%, in Volos 130 Jews would be lost in the Holocaust, deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in March of 1944.

Rabbi Pessach, and his close relationship with Metropolitan Bishop Ioakim, enabled Jews to flee the city. Many Jews from Volos actively fought in the Resistance and Christians in surrounding villages were instrumental in helping the Jews to survive. According to the Central Board of Jewish Communities (KIS), the Community numbered 95 in 2001. For additional information on the Jewish Community of Volos, access the official website of KIS: <http://www.kis.gr> and do read our article on the Mourtzoukou Factory in Volos in our archives at www.kkjsm.org.