DEDICATION

Many articles have been written about Kehila Kedosha Janina, initially forecasting the demise of the community and our beloved synagogue. As our community persevered and continued to, not only maintaining a functioning Jewish house of worship but, also, becoming a major tourist attraction, highlighted by visits to our Museum, many wondered why. Why was this community that so many thought would pass into oblivion, still viable in the modern world? One word may hold the key: dedication.

The members of our community have dedicated themselves to preserving Kehila Kedosha Janina as both a Romaniote Jewish house of worship and a museum that tells the story of the community. While the second part of our story, preserving the museum, has been a relatively easier task, the preservation of Kehila Kedosha Janina as a Romaniote Jewish synagogue has been more difficult. Demographics have changed and many of our congregants no longer live close to the Lower East Side. In addition, for many our services are different from what they are used to. For many Orthodox Jews on the Lower East Side, our Orthodoxy is different from theirs and, for many of our congregants, the fact that we still separate men and women during Shabbat service is a deterrent. These are issues that are discussed and reviewed by our Board of Trustees but the general consensus has been to continue to adhere to our traditions and dedicate ourselves to increasing synagogue attendance. It has been working, maybe not to the extent we would have liked but, contrary to those who thought we would close, we haven’t done so, nor do we intend to do so.

Your help is always needed. We need your spiritual support as well as your financial support. Come visit us for services. Celebrate your simchas in our sanctuary. Dedicate yourself to preserving our community.
Dear Friends,

As President of Kehila Kedosha Janina for the past 10 years, I have been confronted by many challenges. Many times I wondered how Hy Genee, of blessed memory, kept KKJ running for so many years. In conversations with him, he believed in the perseverance of our congregation. As Moses transferred responsibility for the Jewish people to Joshua, so did Hy believe our Kehila would continue with a new group of leaders.

In order to sustain any religious institution today, a lot of help is needed. Financial issues are always a burden, but for KKJ our major thrust has always been to keep our Kehila open and functioning. It is my belief that there has always been something very special about our home. The warm feeling people get when they visit, the people who choose to visit on Shabbat from around the world, the school children who are amazed by our museum, all provide the backdrop of why we still exist.

Our purpose is multifold; continue the traditions of the Romaniote Jews, act as a beacon to remind visitors of the Romaniote and Sephardic communities that once flourished on the Lower East Side, and to be the ancestral home for the grandchildren and great grandchildren of our members. Most importantly we give voice to those Greek Jews who perished during the Holocaust. We carry forward a great responsibility of history; never to forget.

When you visit our Kehila, you will understand why we continue to move forward in our goal to keep the flame alive. I therefore wish to thank all the members of the Board of KKJ who have each contributed, in his and her own way, working towards a common goal. I would also like to thank Seth and my sons, Andrew and Ethan, for representing the spirit of what Hy Genee so prophetically spoke of.

May we continue to work together on this most important endeavor.

With Sincere Gratitude,

Marvin Marcus,
President Kehila Kedosha Janina

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MESSAGE FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

When I took over as the Museum Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina in June of 2004, I was so aware of the obligation I had to the community that founded the synagogue and who had entrusted the museum with the care of their precious family heirlooms. I wanted this museum to be their museum and the displays to reflect their dedication to the synagogue.

To date I have worked on a number of exhibits: family exhibits about the founding families (Matsil, Colchamiro and David), exhibits on the involvement of the New York community in World War II (Our Gang) and immigration (Memories) and two special exhibits on Weddings and Families. A new exhibit will open in 2017, timed with the 90th anniversary of our synagogue. We are also working on digitizing the past exhibits so that they can be accessed on laptops in our Museum.

Since the opening in 2014 of our Communal Room/Education Center, made possible by a generous bequest from Ada Finifter, we have held numerous lectures, film showings and book presentations, all of which have been standing room only. We have become a venue on the Lower East Side and attracting, not only members of our own community but, also, residents of the Lower East Side and interested visitors from around the world.

Our Museum has, also, disseminated knowledge to other institutions around the world. Our Museum Director has acted as a resource to the
Jewish Museums in Trieste and Venice on Romaniote Jewish presence in those cities and, just recently, submitted a paper that was published in a journal published by the University of Ioannina. The paper references the emigration of Yanniote Jews from Ioannina to the United States.

We are now, also, involved in the creation of a Historical District on the Lower East Side of Manhattan south of Houston, working with the Lower East Side Preservation Initiative. It is so important to preserve a section of the neighborhood so that when we tell our story of immigration, we are surrounded by the buildings that our people lived in, so that we do not stand in isolation but are part of the whole story.

I often joke that my position as Museum Director has legitimized my obsession. I feel infused with the dedication this community had to its heritage and hope that my own dedication permits me to tell their special story. Of course, nothing could be done without the help of my dedicated volunteers. Thank you Sol and Koula Kofinas, Stuart Chernin, and all my Board of Trustees members who volunteer on a regular basis.

Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director

**Message from the President of the Sisterhood of Janina**

Sisterhood of Janina, began in 1932, in the height of the “Great Depression” and, today, is still a viable, functioning organization dedicated to our founders’ mission, philanthropy. This was and has been the driving force of our undertakings.

In the beginning, we were dedicated to financially helping those among us most in need. When the country found its way back to solvency, as did our members, we broadened our scope. No longer was it necessary to distribute financial aid and matzot and wine at Pesach, from the steps of Kehila Kedosha Janina. Ensuring our brethren in Janina, Greece, would never be in need, we sent quarterly checks to those needy survivors in Janina; we helped repair the roof of our sister synagogue in Janina; clean-up the cemetery. Our dedication never wavered; our generous and dedicated members’ hearts and wallets were always there for us when the necessity arose. Kehila Kedosha Janina is foremost on our offerings, as was the Sephardic Home, which we aided from its inception to its recent sale.

Purchasing a fully-cardiac-equipped ambulance for Israel was one of our most enthusiastic and successful philanthropic efforts. Our members’ generosity knew no bounds, and, as a result, we closed Broome Street to traffic (a first in its history) and were recipients of a gracious certificate of gratitude from ARMDI [American Red Magen David/Israel.]

As long as we are able, our dedication to offer assistance when and where our co-religionists require, our members are at the ready, with open hearts, to be of service.

Sisterhood is 84+ years young, and we hope to continue our philanthropic efforts, doing what we have been doing, for many years to come, with, compassion, generosity and dedication. It’s what our founders envisioned all those many years ago, and we hope we have succeeded, and exceeded, in fulfilling their expectations.

Rose Eskononts, Sisterhood President

**Message from the President of the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry**

The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry is now entering its 20th year and we are so proud of all we have accomplished. We have raised funds for projects throughout Greece, from help in restoring Jewish cemeteries, repairing synagogues and raising funds for a Holocaust Education Center in Greece. One of our most rewarding accomplishments has been to honor Greek Orthodox Christians who risked their lives to save Greek Jews during the Holocaust with our prestigious Award of Moral Courage and to submit their names to Yad Vashem for inclusion in the Righteous Among Nations. In 2015, this award was bestowed upon the small island of Ereikousa off the coast of Corfu in an emotional ceremony on the island.
Our tours have gone viral. Simply put, no one is doing what we are doing. No one has been able to connect Greek Jews with the communities their families came from. Our tours to Jewish Greece are life-changing experiences, not only for Greek Jewry but, also for non-Greek Jews and non-Jews that often join our tours. In 2016 we had to run two tours to accommodate all those who wanted to see, and experience, the very special world of Greek Jewry.

In 2017 (June 29-July 13) we will be visiting Rhodes, Salonika, Ioannina and Cyprus with an optional extension to “Greek-Jewish” Israel. Do join us for a future tour to Jewish Greece. Do become a member of the Association and enable us to continue to help Greek Jewry.

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos
President, Association of Friends of Greek Jewry

**Greek Jewish Young Professionals Network**

Recently formed in 2015, our mission is to provide a venue where young professionals of Romaniote and Sephardic descent can come together in a fun, meaningful, and welcoming environment. By building off our shared culture and heritage, we host professional and social programs that help us advance our careers, our community, and our Jewish education. We aim to connect the next generation of Sephardic and Romaniote Jews in the NYC area by offering a setting where we can share ideas, knowledge, traditions, and business opportunities. We welcome descendants from Greece, Turkey, the Balkans; from both traditionally Greek-speaking Romaniote or Ladino-speaking Sephardic communities. Programs are held across New York City and include community dinners, holiday parties, cooking classes, guest lectures, a Romaniote and Sephardic educational series, and more. We are open to any other ideas as well! We welcome young Sephardic and Romaniote Jews in their 20’s and 30’s. To learn more and receive information on future events, send your name and email to GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com. Attention: Andrew Marcus

**Meet the Board: Elliot Colchamiro**

In one of our early newsletters (2003) we highlighted the Colchamiro brothers, the grandsons of one of our founding fathers, Leon Colchamiro. Time has come to honor them separately. When learning that Elliot Colchamiro (fondly called the “middle brother”) will be spending most of his time in Florida and will be stepping down after more than fifteen years of service as our Recording Secretary, it was felt that the time was perfect to honor him separately from his brothers.

The parents of the Colchamiro brothers, Sarah and Morris, met and married in New York but both trace their roots back to Janina (Ioannina) Greece. Morris was a manufacturer of children’s pajamas in New York and both were very active in the founding of the Sephardic Home. Sarah, who was proud of being born in Janina and passing through Ellis Island, was active in the Sisterhood of Janina, serving two terms as its President. She was most proud of the many years she served as the manager of the boutique in the Sephardic Home.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, as all the Colchamiros were, Elliot earned his Bachelor’s degree in civil engineering as a subway commuter traveling from Kings Highway all the way to 125th Street in Manhattan to attend CCNY’s uptown school of engineering. After earning his degree in 1963, Elliot worked on aircraft structures in Long Island's
defense industry, while completing his graduate degree at Polytechnic Institute of New York, and his license as a Professional Engineer. He became a college professor very early in his career, seeking a life style which provided him with more time to spend with his family. He realized that, as a professor, he could combine his engineering skills with his love of teaching. He is very proud of his forty year career as professor at CUNY's New York City College of Technology. During his last fifteen years at the college he served as department chairman. Now, his visits to the Kehila are an opportunity to enjoy the synagogue rituals and sounds that he fondly remembers experiencing as a boy attending the Kehila Kedosha Janina of Mapleton in Brooklyn.

For ten years after his retirement Elliot served as a volunteer "gallery educator", giving tours at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, A Living Monument to the Holocaust and also as a volunteer archivist at the New York City office of the National Archives and Records Administration. Once a month he represented the National Archives, making presentations at the Ellis Island Museum.

Elliot's wife, Gladys, was a childhood friend with whom he reunited and married in 2004. Together they have nine grandchildren. He lost his first wife, Linda, in 2003. She was the mother of his two children, Debra and Eric. Elliot is very much a family man, dedicated to his children and grandchildren and, of course, dedicated to his Romaniote heritage and Kehila Kedosha Janina. Now in Delray Beach Florida, Elliot is a volunteer with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. He is also a performer with his wife Gladys in his condo's theater group. We are so lucky to have Elliot on our Board of Trustees, now spreading the word of our special community to Jewish groups in south Florida.

Thank you, Elliot for everything you do for us.

THE STORY OF IMMIGRATION OF THE COLCHAMIRO FAMILY

The Colchamiro family was one of our founding families but it was not a Colchamiro who has the distinction of the first member of the Jewish Community of Ioannina to come to New York. That distinction goes to Zacharia Yomtov who arrived in the port of New York on January 11, 1899. The first member of the Colchamiro family to arrive in New York harbor was the youngest son of Jessula and Rachel Colchamiro. Elias arrived with his sister, Hanoula, and husband, Isaac Cohen. Elias' name on the ship manifest reads as Elias Matathias, giving credence to the oral history of the family that the surname “Colchamiro” was a nickname. Elias sailed on the SS Moltke, the steamship originating Hamburg on November 23, 1903 and Elias, his sister Hanoula and brother-in-law Isaac boarding in Cherbourg on November 25th, arriving in New York on December 5th. Leon and Julia Colchamiro, the grandparents of Elliot and his brothers, Jesse and Leonard, did not arrive in New York until July 22, 1905. The oldest brother, Matathias, did not come to the USA until 1913, taking care of his elderly parents. The oldest daughter, Simcha, arrived in 1906 which was the year when the greatest number of Yanniotes left. Why 1906? The answer is understandable; a major steamship company offered a discount of 50% and many Yanniotes took advantage of this opportunity. The other daughters followed (Esther in 1909, followed by Mollie and Rifkoula, with Malka coming in 1912. As mentioned earlier, Hanoula arrived in 1903. When Asser, the second oldest brother died in 1919 of appendicitis, his widow Steroula brought her young children over in 1920. Only one Colchamiro sibling did not make the journey to the New World. Dinoula stayed with her family, dying shortly before WWII and, unfortunately, most of her family (Bakolas) died in the Holocaust. In our new museum exhibit of 2017, we will highlight the immigration stories of Romaniote Jews to the USA. It is because of their dedication to preserve their traditions and customs that we are still here.
NEW COOKBOOK IN THE MAKING

We have started collecting recipes for a new Greek-Jewish cookbook which will be sold through Kehila Kedosha Janina. We envision this cookbook as more than just a collection of recipes. It will be our story, as Greek Jews, told through our favorite foods, stories of the recipes (where they came from, the family members who handed them down) and photos of our families. Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos (from the Errera and Rousso families) and Sara Crocker (from the Cantos and Honan families) will be collecting the recipes through an e-mail especially set up for this procedure (jewishgreekrecip@gmail.com). Acclaimed chef Jason Kaplan (one side of his family was Romaniote and the other side Sephardic) will be testing the recipes. We cannot do this without you! You do not have to live in the USA to send in recipes.

ELLIOT COLCHAMIRO’S RECIPE FOR SPANAKOPITA

My mother, Sarah was a wonderful cook. She never used a written recipe for her spanakopita, nor indeed for anything that she prepared. She seemed to cook everything by “instinct”. While growing up I had watched her preparing spanakopita many times. She would buy her feta cheese and filo pastry at “Sahadi”, a still popular Middle Eastern specialty store on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn.

Ingredients for the Filling
(may be frozen well before the final preparation)

1 1/2 lbs. frozen chopped spinach (6 boxes)
1 large leek (cut into small pieces)
1 bunch green onions (scallions) (cut into small pieces)
1 very large onion, 1 bunch parsley, 1 bunch dill (all diced finely)
4 eggs (added during the final preparation)
1 lb. crumbled feta cheese (added during the final preparation)
1 box frozen filo pastry (available at any super market)
Olive oil for brushing the filo
Grated cheese (kaskeval or any slightly sharp hard cheese)
Sour cream or Tzatziki sauce for serving

Preparation of the Filling
1. Sweat the onions combined with the leeks over low heat until soft.
2. Add the scallions, parsley, and dill and the defrosted “well drained” spinach.
3. Cook slowly (low heat) until all is well blended and aromatic.
4. Freeze (if desired) for use days or even weeks later.

Preparation of the Final Product
1. Add the 4 beaten eggs and the crumbled feta cheese to the defrosted mixture and blend thoroughly.
2. Using a pastry brush, oil the bottom of a disposable aluminum pan (20” x 12” x ¾ inch deep)
3. Layer 10-12 individual sheets of filo dough on the bottom of the pan, painting each one with olive oil, using a pastry brush. Allow the filo sheets to overlap onto the sides of the pan.
4. Gently place the entire spinach mixture into the pan, uniformly thick.
5. Sprinkle grated cheese on top of the mixture.
6. Layer an additional 10-12 individual sheets of filo dough on the top of the mixture again painting each sheet with olive oil, using a pastry brush. Any overlapping sheets on the sides of the pan may now be folded on top of the other sheets.
7. Gently score the entire top of the pan (going no deeper than the top layer of filo) into small serving size rectangles.
8. Lightly sprinkle a few drops of water on the top of the filo dough to minimize any curling up during baking.
9. Bake at 350 degrees for 45-50 minutes or until top is brown and flaky.
10. Allow to cool to “eating” temperature.
11. Slice and serve with a dollop of sour cream or tzatziki sauce on each piece.
The title of this newsletter is “Dedication” and those of us who had the honor of knowing and working with Hy Genee of Blessed Memory, learned firsthand what dedication, loving dedication, was all about. It was so beautiful, and appropriate, to witness the dedication of Broome Street at the corner of Allen, with the co-naming of “Hy Genee Way.” We are so proud!

PASSINGS

Since our last newsletter the following donations were made to Kehila Kedosha Janina. We sincerely thank the donors.

**IN MEMORY**


**IN HONOR**

Rose Eskononts, Hy Genee, Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulous, Stema Levy, Andrew Marcus, Marvin Marcus, Sol & Irene Matsil, Jarod Pardo, Rafa Shumays, Alex Samuels on his 90th birthday, Dave Solomon on his 90th birthday and Audrey Solomon on her 85th birthday.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS**

**Brotherhood**
Steven M. Matza
President
732-792-0725

Stuart Weiselberg
Financial Secretary - Dues
732-536-4179

**Dues Questions and Applications for Membership**

David Binder
Financial Secretary - Notice of Death
718-224-7754

*Call in the event of a death in family, monument/permit issues*

**Martin Golden**
718-848-1746
*Same as David Binder if you cannot reach him*

**Sinai Chapel**
718-445-0300 or 800-446-0406
*In an emergency, please contact David Binder or Martin Golden*

**Sisterhood of Janina**
Rose Eskononts: President: rosegesk2@aol.com or 718-648-7374