

RECIPE FROM ROSE ESKONONTS: BUMUELOS DE PESACH

These traditional Passover delicacies are typically eaten for breakfast during the holiday, but may be eaten at any time and are served with simple syrup (*recipe to follow*) or powdered sugar. They are the Sephardic version of *matzoh brei*, by the Ashkenazi Jews, and have been compared to Italian *zeppoli*. Hope you enjoy!

Ingredients for Bumuelos: Matza, Eggs, Salt.

It takes one egg per each matza. (For this recipe, 12 eggs and 12 pieces of matza.) Soak the

matza in cold water for at least 10 to 15 minutes. Squeeze out all water and mash the matza with your hands. Sprinkle in salt (for this 12 matza, 12 egg mixture, I used a teaspoon of salt). Add one egg at a time, beating until all eggs are incorporated and the consistency is of thickened oatmeal.

Pour oil into bumuelo pan and heat over medium heat until hot. Add heaping tablespoonfuls of batter to heated oil, carefully. Turn each one when golden brown on the bottom and then golden brown on top. Repeat

procedure (adding more oil to pan as needed) until mixture is completely used. Drain on paper towels and serve with syrup or powdered sugar.

Ingredients for Simple Syrup: 2 cups sugar, 1 cup water and juice from ½ lemon

Boil sugar, water and lemon juice over medium heat (DO NOT USE HIGH HEAT), until the syrup coats a spoon, usually approx. 20 minutes will do.

This syrup may be made in advance and keeps very well.

DONATIONS HONORING INDIVIDUALS

Ralph Battino, Rose Eskononts, Sol & Koula Kofinas, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Eli Jenny's 80th birthday, Marvin Cohen's 70th birthday, Lawrence Isaac 80th birthday, Louie Levy 90th birthday, Lil Genee's 90th birthday, Eleanor Cohen's 90th birthday and the birth of Mateo Ashland Shumays, named after his great-grandfather Mathew Colchamiro.

SPECIAL DONATIONS "IN MEMORY" OF:

Sara & Jeremy Alderman, Israel & Mollie Askinazi, Leo Askinazi, James, Edward, Murray & Abe Asser, Irma Asser, Sam Atlas (Attas), David & Sally Bardavid, Battino & Cantos Families, Yessoula Besso, Jerome Binder, Clare Braunstein, Susan Solomon Cimino, Rachel & Solomon Cohen, Sarica & Morris Cohen, Diane Colchamiro, Nina Matza Eliassof, Murray Eskononts, Marvin Feldman, Mollie & Solomon Feldman, Hy Genee, Miriam & Hyman Hametz, Irwin Josephs, Stuart Julis, Rebecca Eliasof Kailo, Henry Levis, Hyman & David Levy, Lou Levy, Manny Levy, Sol & Louise Levy, Victor Levy, Harold Lubcher, Jerry Marcus,

Eli & Miriam Matsil, Anna Matsil, Mollie Matza, Dora Mazza, Hyman Menachem, Jack Michaels, Victoria Miles, Mosios Family, Rae & William Nachman, Mathew Naphtali, Evelyn Negrin, Irving Negrin, Louise & Renee Negrin, Esther & Joseph Politis, Esther & Elisha Russo, Azi Sarfatti, Esther & Isaac Sheby, Jerry Solomon, Murray Solomon, Stella Moses Steinfink & Jack Steinfink, Jack Taly, Bunny Taly, Vitas (Tally) Kaminsky, Murray Vitoulis, Betty & Julis Weise, Albert Yamali, Stella & Meyer Yomtov, Yomtov Family.

PASSINGS

We mourn the passing of the following: Isaac Albala, Debbie Alcabes, Leo Askinazi, Irma Asser, Moses Bechoropoulos, Murray Benjamin, Rhoda Calef, Marvin Cohen, Shirley Cooper, Matilda (Attas) Cossuto, Nina Matza Eliassof, Simon Frances, Rebecca Camhi Fromer, Rebecca Matza Ganis, Jesse Ganis, Oro Halegua, Essie (Ganis) Harris, Molly Kaplan, Andreas Kounio, Ben Lafazan, Deena Lafazan, Lou Levy, son of Victor Levy, Fina Lodico, Pepo Matalon, Annette Matsil, Dora Mazza, Mildred (Asser) Mazza, Victoria Miles,

Hyman Menachem, son of Jesse and Mollie Menachem, Victoria Miles, Eli Mioni, Julia (Sabba) Mordechai, David Mussey, Dinah Myone, Esther Nachman Pinsker, Isaac Nachman, Berry Nachmias, Elliot Nacmias, Matthew Naphtali, Evelyn Negrin, Murray Rosenthal, Mary Rouben, Sara Samuels, Sam Sansolo, Alice Shear, Eftihia Svolis, Ann Matza Uffer, Murray Vitoulis and Hy Yomtov.

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The Romaniote

Newsletter of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

COMMUNITY

Our synagogue is called Kehila Kedosha Janina (The Holy Congregation of Janina). The word *kehila* has another meaning:

community. From antiquity to the present, a synagogue served the community. The congregation was the community. Our forefathers could have named their synagogue many things: synagogue, temple, congregation, but they chose the traditional name used in Greece among Romaniote Jews for a Jewish house of worship, "kehila." For the founding fathers of Kehila Kedosha Janina, the structure built in 1927 was more than a house of worship or a place to study. It was a place for the community to preserve its traditions, customs and language. The four walls of the structure would wrap itself around the "community" and embrace the congregants within, offering them security from the sometime hostile new world they found themselves living within. As they gathered to worship, connections were made, job opportunities were discovered, advice was offered and, often, marital matches proposed. The "community" was reinforced. The harshness of their lives eased.

With the passage of time the demographics of the "community" have changed. Geographically, the

"community" is no longer just on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, nor even just within the area of the northeastern United States.

Our spiritual "community" is now worldwide, as Kehila Kedosha Janina has become the center of Romaniote Jewry. Now, in a world no longer bound by traditional definitions of "community," our kehila still offers a place to worship, a place to remember and a place to preserve traditions and

customs: a place to conserve and a place to grow, a place that speaks of the past and reaches into the future. Our "community" now acts as an inspiration to other communities. Here on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, those of us involved in preservation, have a saying: "We all walk in someone else's footsteps. Make your imprints deep so that others may walk in yours." Our founders left deep imprints. Hopefully, we at Kehila Kedosha Janina have lived up to their expectations. Hopefully, we will leave deep imprints for the next generations to walk in.

Become part of our "community." Join us in prayer. Visit our Museum for events and tours. Join us in celebration.



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

Museum Founder: Isaac Dostis • Trustees: Marvin Marcus, President • Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director • Chaim Kofinas, Treasurer • Solomon Kofinas, Financial Secretary • Elliot Colchamiro, Recording Secretary

Jeffery Mordas, First Vice President • Rose Eskononts, Second Vice President • Marc Winthrop, Second Vice President • Martin Genee, Vice President • Lois Ledner, Vice President

*Deceased
Jesse Colchamiro • Leonard Colchamiro • Ilias Hadjis • Holly Kaye • Sol Matsil • Max Nachmias • Maurice Negrin • Jerry Pardo

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MESSAGE FROM THE SISTERHOOD OF JANINA

The Sisterhood has been an integral part of our community since its inception, thanks to the foresight of Leon Colchamiro who envisioned the role a philanthropic Sisterhood could play in the lives of the community. Initially, we were instrumental in helping out those in need in the community of Kehila Kedosha Janina. This was especially true during the holidays; e.g., Pesach making sure matzoth was available for all despite their ability to pay. Today, of course, the “community” is no longer confined to the Lower East Side, but has broadened to include ALL of the United States, for we have members in many ZIP codes outside of the tri-state area. Our arms also reach out across the ocean to encompass our community in both Israel and Greece.

We have asked our members to open up their hearts to help our synagogue in Ioannina repair their Torahs, and now have asked them to contribute to the repair of the Tikkim of these same Torahs. Our Sisterhood Newsletter goes out to members noting special occasions, both glad and sad, so that we may keep our “community” informed of our “comings and goings,” no matter how far away they may be. We are all bound together to Kehila Kedosha Janina, our home base, for this is the community where it all began.

Thank you,
Rose Eskononts
President

THE TRADITION OF THE ALEF

Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud to have the largest collection of Alefs (amulets created for the brit milah ceremony) in the world. In Ioannina and, for a short time after the community came to the USA, it was traditional to have an Alef made for each male child. To a lesser extent, it was also a tradition in the Romaniote communities of Arta, Preveza and Corfu. Over the course of years, many scholars have studied our Alefs, many pondering why and how it became a tradition in Romaniote communities west of the Pindos Mountains but not elsewhere in Greece. We still do not have an answer to that question but we have a good idea as to the purpose of the amulet. It was to protect the male child for forty days after the brit milah (circumcision) and contained

formulas, some traditional and others kabbalistic. In a standard Alef, there are the angels that protect the baby from Lilith (known to have a desire to steal male babies), the prayer of the Cohanim, the Shema, the 67th psalm (a psalm praising G_d) inside the menorah (traditional symbol of Judaism). The Patriarchs and the Matriarchs are also listed and, what is especially interesting in the Alef, Adam and Eve, and Moses and Tsiporah are also listed. On the bottom of the Alef, we have the genealogy of the baby when his Hebrew name is given to him at the brit milah ceremony and the names of his father and grandfather are also listed with prayers for his physical and spiritual health. In researching a recent acquisition, an Alef donated to the museum by Eli Jenny, one that had been held by his father,

Leon of Blessed Memory, and given to Eli after his father passed, we were finally able to find out for whom the Alef had been made. The name on the bottom did not bear the name of anyone in the family and, in addition, it was very strange that the mother’s name was also mentioned, something that is not included in a traditional alef. Thanks to Len Neuhaus, the mystery has been solved. The Alef was made for a sick child, an older sibling of Leon, who did not survive infancy. Now, Solomon ben Morris ben Haim Jenny has been added to the family tree, born and died in 1892. In addition, because the mother and grandmother were added to the prayers, we now know that Haim’s wife was named Firo. Our revelations continue.

THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF GREEK JEWRY

The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry was founded in 1997. Our initial mission was to organize Greek Jewry in the Diaspora to work on restoration projects in Greece. Aware of how few we were in number, and how those who had immigrated to other European countries, Israel and the United States still preserved their local identities (Yanniotes, Corfiotes, Saloniklis, Rhodeslis, Kastorilis, etc.), we had wanted to unite Greek Jewry to work together on projects that went beyond local affiliations. We have succeeded. A few of the many examples of joint collaboration were Yanniotes contributing to the memorial plaque in Corfu; Saloniklis helping in restoration

projects in Ioannina, and how all were involved in raising funds to help restore Etz Hayyim in Crete after an unfortunate arson attack in January 2010.

As part of our endeavor to create a community of Greek Jewry, we have published a number of books and have run, and continue to run, annual tours to Jewish Greece, enabling interested individuals to learn about our little corner of the world and to facilitate Greek Jewry to reconnect with their roots. In the Spring of 2011, we visited Salonika, Ioannina, Corfu and Athens, with a fascinating day trip to Albania. In 2012, we visited Salonika, Ioannina, Arta,

Preveza, Athens and Chalkis, with a three-day cruise in the Aegean. In June 2013, we helped celebrate a Bar Mitzvah in Ioannina and, for the first time, included Bulgaria, Skopje and Bitola (Monastir) in addition to Salonika and Athens. Get on our mailing list to join us on a future tour.

We are proud of the community we have created. We have made a difference. Become a member of the Association (check off the box on the appeal card for further info) and join us.

Marcia Haddad
Ikonomopoulos
President

BECHORAKIS GHENIS

In 2012, we had two family reunions in the Genee/Jenny family, both to celebrate special birthdays, Lil Genee’s 90th and Eli Jenny’s 80th. The Jenny and Genee families are related to each other. The spellings of the names were changed during immigration. In the Ioannina Municipal Archives the surname was spelled Geni (or misspelled Gini). Marty Genee’s father, Hy of Blessed Memory, was a Genee on his father’s side and a Jenny on his mother’s. As part of the research for the reunions, we created exhibits to honor the families. We finally found Hy’s father, Morris, on a ship manifest. He was listed as Bechorakis Ghenis. On the ship manifest he is listed as a laborer going to A. Negrin, his “countryman.” He had \$10 in his possession and was 5’6”, dark complexioned with black

hair and brown eyes. Bechorakis was detained at Ellis Island because the young boy from the Atas family that he had brought with him was awaiting the arrival of his father. We can only imagine his thoughts, arriving in a new land, not speaking the language and watching as others from his ship went ashore.

The ship on which Bechorakis traveled was the Marsalia, leaving Patras on June 4th in 1907 and arriving on the 21st. On the same ship was a Bechorakis Miyioni (Abraham Mione), grandfather of Jerry Pardo, who also sits on our Board of Directors. I can envision Abraham and Morris (the two Bechorakis) watching from Heaven as we conduct our Board Meetings and feeling satisfied that the “community” they helped create has flourished.



MEET THE BOARD: MARTY GENEE

In Marty Genee's own words: "I have often wondered if one individual, if one person can truly make a difference. Will my vote in this election really matter? Will my letter/petition to an elected official change anything? I do know of one instance in which one individual did make a difference. That individual was my father, Hyman Genee, of blessed memory, who kept the Kehila Kedosha Janina going in the lean years. While today making minyan on Shabbat and the holidays is sometimes difficult, the Kehila is open and operating thanks to a core of regulars and dedicated members of the Board of



Directors of the Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum. My father kept the synagogue going; he maintained traditions and a sense of community, until interest in Greek/Romaniote Jewry resulted in the establishment of a museum, landmark status and ultimately the rebirth of a community. This community has members all over the world and communicates through email correspondence, a website and Facebook.

"While I did not experience the Kehila when it was fully operational (i.e., daily services, complete Shabbat services every week, and all the holidays), I did attend a full Kehila on the High Holidays. I remember very long services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, especially Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur if we had a 30-minute break between Musaf and Mincha we were lucky. I contrast this to my post marriage experience at Ashkinazi shuls where the break was two to three hours. My Dad taught me how to blow shofar, which enabled me to participate directly in the service. I recited my Maftir and Haftorah Romaniote style at

my Bar Mitzvah in the Ashkinazi shul where I went to Hebrew school. My favorite services are on the eve of a holiday: Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Pesach, Shavuot. I truly enjoy the Arvit melodies and the special Holiday Piyyut. Some of the Piyyut are not in the prayer books and you had to have the special handwritten photocopied document to fully participate.

"I learned a lot from my Dad and have incorporated much Romaniote tradition in my observance. Friday night kiddush is recited Greek style, with my wife Marla participating at the appropriate times.

I lead my Pesach seder as my father did (well, pretty close); I taught my daughter Arielle to recite a few of her Friday Bat Mitzvah prayers Greek style; this was a great surprise for my Dad. My son Jordan knows the Shabbat morning melodies. I believe I have successfully instilled an appreciation for the Romaniote traditions in both Arielle and Jordan. My wife Marla, a zig-a-zuk, has accepted these traditions and also makes a terrific spanokopita. I have followed directly in my Dad's footsteps in servicing the Romaniote community by becoming a member of the Brotherhood Board of Directors and its President from 2005 to 2009. I will continue to serve the Kehila by attending Shabbat services as often as possible and work hard as a member of the Board of Directors."

Marty is a graduate of Stuyvesant High School and Brooklyn and Baruch colleges. He has worked for City of New York agencies for 37 years and has been married to his wife Marla for 37 years. They have two children, Arielle who is married to Josh, and Jordan.

MEMORIES

In the Spring of 2011 our present exhibit, our most extensive to date, opened to a packed house. "Memories" tells the story of the world they left behind, the world they found here (especially on the Lower East Side) and the arduous journey over. It is truly the story of our community. We are particularly grateful to municipalities in Ioannina and Salonika for sharing archival photos with us, many of which have never been on display anywhere else. Our special thanks to Bob Bedford from the Foundation for the Study of Sephardic Culture for sharing his collection of photos of pre-1917 Salonika, before the devastating fire that destroyed so much of the old city. In addition, Marvin and Andrew Marcus located historical photos of our particular corner of the Lower East Side that have become part of our present exhibit.

"Memories" has given us the opportunity to do extensive research on ship manifests and census records, both of which have given us priceless information on the early Greek Jewish community in New York. This information has enabled us to have mini-exhibits highlighting some of our founding families, the exhibits

acting as adjuncts for special events: birthdays, memorials, family reunions. To date, we have told the story of the Moses family at Malcolm Varon's surprise birthday party, the Genee family at Lil Genee's 90th birthday celebration, the Josephs and Hametz families at Irwin Josephs' memorial, and the Jenny family at Eli Jenny's surprise birthday party. You may access our website (www.kkjsm.org) to get a glimpse of these exhibits as well as past exhibits: Our Gang, Weddings (Something Old, Something New), and Families (Dikoi Mas, Los Muestros). Do come to visit us to see our synagogue and Museum.

As always nothing could be done without the help of our volunteers and the support of our Board of Directors. A very special thanks to Sol Kofinas.



MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

If I could turn back time, what would I see at the corner of Broome Street and Allen Street? Max Nachmias playing stickball; Sophie, Anna, and Estelle Yohanan walking to their father's store, Success Apron; and Mevorah Apparel Manufacturing on the corner next door to the Kehila.

Across the street at 275 Broome, we see Rabbi Cohen, Emanuel DeCastro, the Askinazis/Eskononts, and Betty Miones, mother of Board Member Jerry Pardo. Next door, we also see a young Tica Benjamin, future wife of Max Negrin.

The neighborhood has changed quite a bit, becoming the new home of Asian immigrants and young professionals. One thing that has not changed is Kehila Kedosha Janina's presence on Broome Street. Through the efforts of our

Board of Directors, the museum at KKJ, and many volunteers, we continue to be a part of the history of the Lower East Side.

The one thing we need most of all is your support. We have always depended upon your financial support but equally important is your presence at the Kehila. A commitment to join us for services, see our new exhibits at the museum, or just visit and share old stories will help to preserve our long history on Broome Street.

It is with great joy on behalf of the Board of Directors that I wish all our friends and families a Happy and Healthy New Year, L'Shana Tova, Chronia Pola, Anos Muchos y Buenos.

Sincerely,
Marvin Marcus
President