

Greetings

We are overjoyed to tell you that thanks to our generous supporters, the first stage of the restoration of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum is complete. The façade has been restored to its original beauty and we are now the pride of the neighborhood! The roof has been repaired (no more leaks!) and reproductions of the original stained glass windows now adorn our synagogue. Stop by and admire your Kehila!

Phase Two

Now, the next stage, the restoration and refurbishing of the interior, can begin. Hundreds of thousands of dollars will be necessary to complete the project: repair of damage from leaks; re-plastering; repair of interior structural damage due to wear and tear over the years; electrical updating and air conditioning; painting and carpeting. We also hope to provide additional exhibition space in our museum to enable the display of many items that are now in storage. In addition, refurbishing will take place in our “kafenion”, with the hope to provide more modern facilities for our ever-growing events. While we will be modernizing (when necessary) we will be preserving the essence of the original interior lovingly built with the hands of our original congregants. For example, rather than replacing the hand-made benches or bema, we will be restoring them. Often restoration can be more costly than replacement but the results will be more meaningful.

This is your Kehila and we wish to give you the opportunity to be a part of this project. There are many ways that you can give: donate in memory of a departed loved one or in honor of your children or grandchildren.

You can even specify which part of the Kehila you wish to have your donation applied to. Donations of \$10,000 or more will be honored with a plaque acknowledging their benevolence.

Message From Our President

Phase One of the Restoration of our Kehila is complete. The façade has been steam cleaned to its original buff-colored bricks; brand new stained glass windows, new doors and lanterns, along with a new roof and skylight are now in place. Isn't that wonderful! But, the most important element has not yet been restored. The spirit of our Kehila is at a low. We need you to help fill our benches. We need your physical presence, as well as your financial help. Come join us in prayer on Shabbat or any of our festive holidays.

Looking forward to greeting you in the Kehila.

Hy Genee

President

A Message From The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry

The Association has always been proud of our close alliance with Kehila Kedosha Janina. While the Association has acted as the representative of

Greek Jewry in the Diaspora, KKJ has truly become the center for Greek Jewry in the New York area. We recently jointly hosted a delegation of representatives of the Greek government, and have now established a travel center to Jewish Greece within the synagogue. As we jointly work to reinforce the small Jewish presence in Greece, and run annual tours to Jewish Greece, we realize just how important our presence is. This past October, 150 Yanniote Jews from within Greece and around the world gathered in Ioannina to celebrate Sukkoth with the Jews of the city, an event that would not have taken place without our presence. Join us on one of our tours in 2004. Your presence makes a difference. This year you will be able to plan your own itinerary. Cities of Jewish interest in our tours for 2004 include Ioannina, Athens, Chalkis, Salonika, Volos and Zakynthos. Support the Jews of Greece. Support the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry. Support the Kehila.

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos
President

Message from the Museum Director

As reported in the last newsletter, Isaac Dostis, the creator and first Director of the Museum at Kehila Kedosha, retired from the position last year. He passed the torch on to me, a responsibility I take very seriously. I am happy to report that our attendance at the museum has increased over last year and programs have been very well received. We are very much a part of the life of the Lower East Side and, in addition to the support we receive from the Lower East Side Conservancy and the groups they constantly bring us, we are on the “must see” list of those visiting the Tenement Museum and other synagogues in the area. We are very special, with a special story to tell. We’ve always known this. Now, more and more other people are also discovering “the only Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere”.

This year, 2004, will mark the 60th anniversary of the deportations of the Jewish Community of Ioannina and Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum will be opening a special memorial exhibit (on April 4, 2004) called ***Out of the Ashes***. We will pay our respects to those lost and applaud those who “rose from the ashes” to contribute to the world, in general, and specifically, to Greek Jewry and Romaniote Culture. The exhibit will include the story of the deportations accompanied by photographs and artwork. It will be the largest and most important exhibit to date, and I am honored and grateful that Isaac will be working with me on this exhibit. As part of the exhibit, there will be the release of a new book, ***Yannina-Journey To the Past*** by Eftihia Nachmias Nachman. Taking off where Rae Dalvin left off in her monumental work, ***The Jews Of Ioannina***, Eftihia recorded what life was like in Ioannina before the destruction in the Holocaust: how the holidays were celebrated, the specifics customs

and the dialect spoken by the Jews in the city. This book should be part of your library.

In addition, Kehila Kedosha Janina will be publishing a Memorial Book, *In Memory of the Jewish Community of Ioannina*, listing the names, ages, and occupations of those lost in the Holocaust (see article on Archival Records). It is our responsibility to those lost in the Holocaust from Ioannina, so that their names shall be remembered for eternity

Update on Ioannina Cemetery

Great strides have been made in the cleanup of the Jewish cemetery in Ioannina. Although there was two unfortunate instances of anti-Semitic desecrations in the cemetery this past year, fortunately no serious damage was done and, as a way of showing support for the small Jewish community of the city, the new Mayor of Ioannina has supplied two municipal workers to help in the cleanup. The cement walkway now extends to the rear of the cemetery and trees and overgrowth has been cleared away. Many formerly hidden tombstones are now uncovered and funds have been raised (through the gathering for Sukkoth and contributions from the Brotherhood of Janina, Kehila Kedosha Janina and The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry) to continue the cleanup and start on documentation and restoration of the tombstones. Of course, additional funds will be needed. The community is so grateful for our support and hopes that it will continue.

Archival Records

KKJ has come into possession of two very important sets of archival records: the community archives of the Jewish Community of Ioannina based on entries of births and deaths in the municipal registers, and the lists of both those who perished in the Holocaust, and those who survived. All information is now being translated from Greek to English (with the help of Nina Kaplanides and Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos) and entered into a database.

The Holocaust records will become part of a Memorial Book (In Memory of the Jewish Community of Ioannina), available free to those attending the opening of the memorial exhibit in April (see article on Museum and “Out of the Ashes”), and, afterwards, for a small charge. In addition to the names, ages and occupations of the victims, the book will include an introduction by Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos and inserts on life in Ioannina at the time of the deportations.

Fascinating information has been revealed in the archives. There was a worldwide flu epidemic in 1918 and it took its toll in Ioannina. There were also a number of young men who gave their lives for their country: in the Balkan Wars, the Asia Minor Conflict of 1922 and on the Albanian Front (Greece’s entry into WWII). While men are listed in detail, giving their father’s first name as reference, women are listed as “the daughter”

or “the wife” of the male head of the family and, with the exception of those lost in the Holocaust, their deaths are not recorded. Even in the list of victims of the Holocaust, the conservative, male dominated nature of the community is revealed: only a small fraction of the women worked—most were listed as “housewives”, even those unmarried women who still resided at home. Also, in the list of victims, along with the family connections, year of birth and, in many instances, the street they lived on, occupations were listed. Therefore, we can see the economic composition of the community in 1944: most men were listed as “merchants” and only a hand full of women held occupations (4 seamstresses, two women who worked with their husbands as taverna owners, and one teacher). Most young men went to work at an early age (education rarely went past age 16) and joined their fathers in business. There was very little room for upward mobility. It is easy to understand why so many Yanniotes immigrated for better opportunities. This is why the founders of our Kehila came to the United States.

With every \$100 donation towards the restoration of Kehila Kedosha Janina, you will be able to receive a personal computer print out of everyplace your family name appears in the archives. Although the records are not complete (there are certain gaps which we hope to correct in the future), this information will be priceless for those wishing to research their roots in Ioannina and complete family trees.

Highlighted Book of the Year

Sites and Synagogue of Jewish Greece by Nikos Stavroulakis is still the definitive book on Jewish Greece, complete with histories of all the Jewish communities and photos of synagogues past and present. Whether you are an armchair traveler or plan a trip to Greece, this book is a must read. If it is not part of your library, make sure it is! One of the few places you can get this book outside of Greece is through Kehila Kedosha Janina: price \$25 plus shipping and handling.

Meet the Board

As promised in our last newsletter, we will continue to highlight members of our dynamic Board established to assure the continuance of Kehila Kedosha Janina. All of our Board Members have made an emotional and spiritual commitment to work for the Kehila, to assure its permanence as a Romaniote synagogue, and to support the Museum, often acting as volunteers and docents. No one better exemplifies the spirit of our Board than Rose Eskononts, who is also the President of the Sisterhood of Janina (see article on Sisterhood). Rose, although not a Yanniote herself (her parents, Solomon and Dora Capon, came from Salonika), was born on the Lower East Side (109 Ludlow Street) and has played a continual role in support of Kehila Kedosha Janina. Rose’s late husband, Murray, was a driving force in the Brotherhood of Janina and

First Vice President of the synagogue until his passing in 2000. Rose is now carrying on the family tradition of selfless dedication and, because of her extensive experience in the business world as an Office Manager at Forbes Magazine, now handles the bank accounts, and receipts and payments, for the Kehila. Rose is tireless in her dedication. Thank you, Rose Eskononts. We are truly lucky to have you.

The Sisterhood of Janina

The Sisterhood of Janina was established in 1932, just 5 years after the building of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue. From its very creation, by the late Leon Colchamiro, the Sisterhood has acted as a benevolent charitable organization, serving Jews throughout the world. The Sisterhood is a living testimony to the success of the first experiment in America of an organization of Judeo/Greek women, of Janina parentage and, although always small in number, has been able to perform great feats. In 1991, the Sisterhood sponsored 37 Albanian Jews (whose parentage was from Janina) to the shores of the United States. In June of 2003, the Sisterhood purchased a fully, cardiac-equipped ambulance for Israel, through the auspices of ARMDI (American Red Magen David for Israel). The Sisterhood is a charter member of the Sephardic Home for the Aged, and every year spends “Monday After Mothers’ Day” at The Home, bringing personal gifts to the female residents, and making a substantial donation. Throughout the years, the Sisterhood has raised funds to support the Jewish Community of Ioannina, and continues to act as a loving network of support for the Kehila. Support the Sisterhood. Become a member.

What better way to perpetuate your Yanniote heritage than by cooking a traditional dish from Ioannina. Of course, getting these recipes are never easy. Our nonas and mothers never wrote them down. When asked about the measurements for ingredients, the answer was: when it tastes right, or a pinch of this and a handful of that! How long should we cook something? Until it’s done, of course! Thanks to Rose Eskononts, we print a recipe for Patrijan, a traditional eggplant dish from Ioannina. Note; This recipe can be used for Pessach.

Patrijan

1 Eggplant or more depending on how much you want to make.

For each medium, boiled whole eggplant:

8 ozs. Farmer cheese (some people use ricotta), a nice chunk of Feta, and a generous amount of grated Kaskaval or Kasserri cheese

2-3 eggs

a bit of salt

at least a quarter-cupful of matzah meal

Eggplants are cut up and boiled in salted water until tender. Rinse under cold water and remove pulp from skin (without breaking skin). Mash

pulp and add to cheese/egg mixture. Add matzah meal to bind.

Line greased pan with eggplant skins (shiny side down) and pour cheese mixture on top.

Bake in 350 degree until nicely golden brown (30 minutes at the very least, more, depending on individual ovens until golden brown.

Serve warm or cold. Can be an appetizer, side dish or main dish.

Upcoming Events From October 2004 To April 2005

October

Sunday, October 3, 1:00 pm

Celebrate Sukkoth in the traditional style of the Romaniotes.

Sunday, October 17, 1:00 pm

Slide presentation on the Acropolis,
with lecture by Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos.
Visit the wonders of the ancient Greek world.
No charge: contribution to Kehila is appreciated.

November

November 14, 1:00

Koula's Kitchen: learn how to cook eggplant Yanniote style. \$10 admission.

December

December 5, 1:00 pm

Hanukah Party.

2005

January

Sunday, January 16th 1:00 pm

Third Annual Greek-Jewish Film Festival.
Films to be announced. Admission \$10.

March

Sunday, March 13th 1:00 pm

Book presentation: Isaac Dostis will present his acclaimed children's book,

Ten Gold Medals: Freedom or Glory, a children's book on the Holocaust in Greece.

Sunday, March 20th 1:00 pm

Greek dancing at Kehila Kedosha Janina. \$10 admission.

Sunday, March 27th 1:00 pm

Purim Party. Come in costumes! Join the fun.

April

Sunday, April 17th 1:00 pm

Lecture on celebrating Pessach Yanniote style accompanied by excerpts on the Romaniote liturgy for Pessach. A great way to prepare for the upcoming holiday. \$5 admission.