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. Many 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 of our community, the Coalition is pleased to announce that donations were made in memory of Daniel Abraham, David & Esther Abraham, Rebecca Dalven Abraham, Molly & Joseph Levy, Marvin Marcus, Max & Eve Rose Eskononts, Esther Francis, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Rebecca Matza Houdiff, Jack & Beatrice Jacobson, Rebecca Elasof Kado, Leah Dostis Klarsfeld, Leon Lasdun, Abraham Levy, Abraham Marcado, Annie Shemo Marcado, Annette Matza, Mollie & Erza Matza, Hy Mooney, Sara Askenazi Moonie, Al Moses, Nat Negrin, Stella & Albert Negrin, Annie Openheim, Betty Mone Pardo, Morris Sabba, Annette Samuels, Sarah & Benny Serata, Irene Solomon, Lawrence Solomon, Molly & Sam Solomon, Sylvia Solomon Moller, and Albert Vamali.

Donations were made in honor of: Rose Eskononts, Esther Francis, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Chaim Kofinas, Joseph Levy, Marvin Marcus, Max & Eve Nachimias and Pamela Weinberg.

We were overjoyed to receive donations from the following individuals:

- Nachmias and Pamela Weinberg.
- Joseph Levy, Marvin Marcus, Max & Eve Rose Eskononts, Esther Francis, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Molly & Joseph Levy.

In celebration of Emily Vellelis’s 95th birthday, donations were made to Kehila Kedosha Janina in her memory.

The ongoing restoration of our beloved synagogue has, in many ways, been an “archaeological dig,” revealing fascinating findings about the Kehila Kedosha Janina 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, for the most part, poor, hard-working, observant Jews who composed 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. It should have read Nina Geik.

We apologize for the typographical error listing a donation “in memory” of Reba Geik. We had read Nina Geik.

The recipe for Kolokithokeftedes from Vicki (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 ⅛ to 1 inch. Cut out circles of dough with a cookie cutter or wire 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 koulourakia 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.

Brotherhood:
- Chaim Kofinas (for membership and burial)
- Steven M. Matza (for current members)
- Rose Eskononts
- Mollie & Bob Moses

Sisterhood:
- Betty Mone Pardo
- Sarah & Benny Serata
- Irene Solomon
- Lawrence Solomon
- Sylvia Solomon Moller
- Albert Vamali


The Romanovitch

Newsletter of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

Reflections

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 question. Our first objective is to keep our Kehila open as a house of worship and second to continue to inform others about our Romanovitch 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, Choronya Polia, Muchos Anos.

Sincerely,

Marvin Marcus

Message from our President

The Romanovitch

Edition 13, Fall 2008

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**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 infusion of "new blood" and hope, 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. Romanite and Sepharic, 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 you. 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.

Chryona Polla, Arnyos Muchos, L’Shana Tovah, Happy New Year to all.

Rose Ekonontos, President

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**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 Corfeites 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 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 Jessodia 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 believe in us. In this we thank our loyal members. We have never been large in number. Our strength has been the passion and commitment of our small cadre of volunteers who work tirelessly, not for a noted compensation. They are driven by a passion to make a difference. They have. We can say with pride that the world of Greek Jewry is better because of our existence.

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**Our Gang in World War II**

When the United States officially entered World War II on December 7, 1941, of the 135,492,471 individuals living on the soil of the United States, under 5 million 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 action, and more than 40,000 would return wounded. Among those brave men and women 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) Nachmanis of 2nd Infantry (Okla. Nachmanis’ older brother) and there would be those who would not return.

Arthur Rubenstein, son of Stella David and Harry Rubenstein, knew his body would never be recovered. Nissim Attas’ body was buried in Henri-Chapelle Permanent Cemetery in Belgium. This exhibit is dedicated to “Our Gang,” the Greek Jewish 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 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the opening of this exhibit on November 2, 2008 at 1:00pm.

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**Meet the Board: Ilias Hadjis**

Ilias Hadjis was born in Athens in 1957, his mother, Emilia from Chalida and his father, Mayor Hadjis opened a grocery shop, Hadjis Brothers, first on the corner of Livengton and Ludlow, and then at 100 Rivington. Ilias would work in the store and it would be this early experience that paved 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 granddaughter would look on with pride as ElI accomplished, among many other things, the site of the world’s largest learning about this special man.

A recent article in the New York Daily News (June 10, 2000) 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 as our Board President.

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**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 also impacted by a massive influx of traditional Spanish-speaking Sephardic Jews after the expulsion from Spain in 1492. By 1880, the percentage of Jews in the Greek-speaking Romanite 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 Jews would be over 90%, in Volos 130 Jews would be lost in the Holocaust, deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in March of 1944.

Rabbi Persach, and his close relationship with Metropoliton 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 (IKS), the community numbered 95 in 2001. For additional information on the Jewish Community of Volos, and a virtual historical website of IKSS: