

TOMATO ORZO WITH MEAT (KREAS ME KRITHARAKI) BY FANY NEGRIN (MAURICE’S MOM)

2 pounds of beef or veal
2 ripe tomatoes
1 onion
1 green pepper
1 can of fresh tomato
sauce 6-8 oz
1 bay leaf
1/2 of olive oil
Salt and pepper
2 cups of orzo (pasta)

Cut the meat into serving portions and place it into a roasting pot. Cut the ripe tomatoes, onion and green pepper into small pieces. Add all of the ingredients above, including the tomato sauces and bay leaf. Add olive oil and pepper. Allow

the dish to boil in medium to low heat until the meat is well done. When the meat is almost done, pour 4 cups of hot water, add 2 cups of orzo pasta and stir until it is done. Add salt when meat is done. Serve it hot and enjoy!

DONATIONS HONORING INDIVIDUALS

Morris & Rebecca Cantos, Rose Eskononts, Jessula (James) Ezra, Elizabeth Gabriel, Martin Genee, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Chaim Kofinas, Abraham Levy, Louie Levy, Mollie Matsil, Meyer Mazza, Jaden Hunter Messing, Eve Nachmias, Max Nachmias, Jerry Pardo.

SPECIAL DONATIONS “IN MEMORY” OF:

Benjamin Askinazi, Fay Askinazi, Israel Askinazi, Joe Askinazi, Mollie Askinazi, Morris Askinazi, Abe Asser, Edward Asser, Irma Asser, James Asser, Millie Asser, Murray Asser, Sam Atlas (Attas), Anna Attas, Solomon Attas, Marlene Baharlias, David Bardavid, Sally Bardavid, Abe Battino, Abraham Battino, Manny Battino, Ralph (Blackie) Battino, Stella Battino, Samuel Bedney, David Bessos, Elda Bessos, Jerry Binder, Leona Shalomith Brown, Vic Cabillis, Calderon family, Esther Calef, Hyman Calef, Abraham Cantos, Sarah Cantos, Harold Chernin, Stema Chernin, Abraham I. Cohen, Esther Cohen, Frances Cohen, Jacob Cohen, Louis Cohen, Marvin Cohen, Moe Cohen, Morris S. Cohen, Reketa Cohen, Diane Colchamiro, Elias Colchamiro, Jesse E. Colchamiro, Spiranza Colchamiro, Esther Corito, Saby Corito, Ann Danchak, David M. David, Esther DeCastro, Mathew DeCastro, Elliot DeCastros, Rosina Moses Demaios, Becky Besso Douek, Dorothy Elison, Elias Esdra, Rachel Esdra, Michael Ezra, Essie Ezratty, Sarah Ezratty, Jean Matsil Fishman, Sabetai Gadol, Arthur Gaines, Rebecca Johanna Geik, Abe Genee, Bechoraki Genee, Fannie Genee, Hy Genee, Lil Genee, Sally Genee, Esther Hazan, Irving Hazan, Max Honan, Sarah Honan, Hanen J. Isaac, Beatrice Jacobson, Jack Jacobson, Irwin Joseph, Leon Josephs, Leonard Josephs, Irving Kaye, Rachel Kaye, Sarah

Karphoff, Sol Karphoff, Alan Kerstman, Esther Lafazan, Joseph Lafazan, Becky Levy, Ben Levy, Rabbi Jessoula Levy, Joseph Levy, Louis Levy, Sally Levy, Vincent Mandragona, Morris Matathia, Alvin Matsil, Annette Matsil, Michael Matsil, Morris Matsil, Raymond Matsil, Renee Matsil, Abraham Matza, Celia Matza, Eric Matza, Michael Matza, Esther Mazleah, Sally Mazza, Ida Meezan, Sylvia Solomon Meller, Menachem family, Eleanor Menachem, Mollie Menachem, Yesulla Menachem, Michael Menahem, Jack Meones, Abe Miles, Victoria Miles, Elias Mordechai, Esther Politis Mordechai, Max Moses, Stella Moses, Haim (Victor) Mosios, David Mussey, Isaac Nachman, Mollie Nachmias, Willie Nachmias, Anna Negrin, David Negrin, Diana Negrin, Morris Negrin, Ralph Negrin, Robert Negrin, Samuel Negrin, Shirley Negrin, Alexander Neuhaus, Beatrice (David) Norris, Jerome Norris, Haim Notrica, Lilly Notrica, Sol Paintner, Jim Pappas, Mathew Pardo, Esmeralda Pinto, Samuel Pinto, Esther Politis, Joseph Politis Manny Rosmarin, Rose Rosmarin, Celia Rumsey, Elisha Russo, Esther Russo, Samuels Family, Sam Samuels, Sarah Samuels, Shirley Sarica, Azi Sarfatti, Saul Schneider, Jack Sefekar, Jennie Sefekar, Freda Slodki, Michael Slodki, Annette Solomon, Irene Solomon, Jerry Solomon, Joseph Solomon, Molly Solomon, Murray Solomon, Sam Solomon, Joseph Soriano, Emily Velleli, Burton J. Weiser, Benjamin Younger, Nathaniel Younger.

PASSINGS

We mourn the passing of the following: Anita Attas, Marlene Baharlias, Abe Battino, Daryl Battino, Manny Battino, Esther Askinazi Baum, Moses Bechoropoulos, Julie Benjamin Blanke, Lynne Binder, Vic Cabillis, Manny Avram Cantos, Dorothea Capon, Murray (Morris) Cohen, Anna Dastis, Becky Besso Douek, Florence

(Foula) Eliassof, Essie Ezratti, Mollie Feder, Jean Matsil Fishman, Maurice Franses, Lillian Genee, Lilly Glassman, Judy Harris, Molly (Epstein/Apsty) Jacobs, Julia Jeuda, Irwin Joseph Josephs, Leonard Kaplan, Victoria Levi, Zak Levis, Connie Levy. Estelle Levy, Zacharia S. Levy, Leo Mallah, Samuel L. Marash, Isaac Matalon, Annette Matsil, Esther Nassi Matsil, Hermione Matsil, Eric Matza, Hyman Morris Matza, Eleanor Menachem, Michael Menahem, Jack Meones, Medi Atoun Mesrahi, Allen Michelson, Lewis Moses, Haim (Victor) Mosios, Bertha Myones, Isaac Nachman, Abraham Naftali, Dorothy Lagary Naphtali, Edna Naphtali, Alexander Neuhaus, Paul Oberman, Mathilda Pardo, Jack Rhodes, Beatrice Sabba, Pearl Salem, Dora Levy Saltiel, Abraham Samuels, Mollie Petrillo Smith, Gloria Sananes Stein, Jack Uffer, Emily Velleli, Stanley Vitoulis, Anita Attas Watnick, Freida Ganis Weiner, Marcel Yoel.

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The Romaniote

Newsletter of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

So often we are asked the question, “How do we ensure that our traditions and customs are passed on to the next generation?” This is a challenge faced by all communities. Our challenge is made even greater because of the fact that we are so few in number and so distinct. Nowhere are we more aware of this than during



our weekly services, when we often struggle for a minyan. In recent years, a promising sign that we do have a future are the younger members of our community who have absorbed the traditions and customs, and not only attend services on a regular basis but often step up to the bema to help. This is especially highlighted during the High Holidays when Andrew Marcus, his brother Ethan and Seth Kofinas share in blowing the shofar, a symbolic call of spiritual reawakening. Just recently, Andrew Marcus became our newest member of the Board of Directors, ensuring that our traditions and customs are being passed on to the next generation.

We are fortunate in that our founding fathers had a very clear idea of who they were and, although surrounded by Jews of other traditions, both Ashkenazi and Sephardic, were proud of their

distinctive Romaniote traditions. Although they could have attended any one of the hundreds of synagogues on the Lower East Side, they needed a place to hear their distinctive style of chanting, speak their Greek and eat their traditional foods at communal kiddushes. They passed their love of

who they were on to their children and, in turn, their children passed it on to theirs, ensuring that the traditions and customs would be passed “from generation to generation.”

Life was much simpler then. The community lived close to the synagogue, making it easy to attend services. There were not the distractions of the outside world competing with their traditions and customs: no TV, iPads or smart phones. No one complained of long services. After all, what else was there to do on a Saturday when the whole community gathered together in the synagogue?

Life is different now. The challenges are greater but, with your help, we will succeed. Support us financially and do try and join us for services. Your presence means so much to us.



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 Kassoria • Sam Nahoum • Solomon Schinasi
Museum Founder: Isaac Dastis • Trustees: Marvin Marcus, President • Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director • Chaim Kofinas, Treasurer • Solomon Kofinas, Financial Secretary • Elliot Colchamiro, Recording Secretary
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Jesse Colchamiro • Leonard Colchamiro • Ilias Hadjis • Holly Kaye • Andrew Marcus • Sol Matsil • Maurice Negrin • Leonard Neuhaus • Jerry Pardo

*Deceased

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Recently, at the Kehila, we had a discussion about receiving the Ten Commandments from Hashem at Mount Sinai. Our ancestors were told firsthand how they were to live their lives. It then became their responsibility to transmit this information to future generations.

Just as for Moses and the Jewish people at the time of the Exodus from Egypt, so too do we have the responsibility to preserve customs and heritage for future generations. The Board of Directors of KKJ and I have been given a responsibility; to perpetuate the liturgy and customs of Yanniot Jews. Although our Board is committed to the survival and continuation of our institution, we simply cannot do this on our own. We ask that you, descendants of the original founders from Janina (children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren), help us in our endeavor to ensure that our institution not only survives, but thrives in the coming years.

Join us in celebrating Shabbat and High Holiday Services as much as you can, experiencing the many traditional songs

and liturgy unique to our people. Impress upon your children and grandchildren the importance of their heritage. Introduce them to our extended family; one that they may have never known existed. By doing so, you will help perpetuate your Greek Jewish roots.

To our younger members, speak to the elders of your family and share the experiences of their youth. Time is fleeting. What wonderful things you will learn. We have a rich history most people are not aware of and you should find great pride in it.

We at Kehila Kedosha Janina hope to continue to share our special place in the Jewish world. Your support, whether it is by visiting the Kehila and participating in our services, or by donating in memory of loved ones and establishing long-term bequests, will help sustain us for years to come.

Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy New Year: L'Shana Tova, Chronia Polla and Muchos Anos.

Sincerely,
Marvin Marcus,
President

MESSAGE FROM 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 (Yanniot, Corfiotes, Saloniklis, Rhodeslis, Kastorilis, et al.), 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 Yanniot 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 annual tours to Jewish Greece, enabling interested individuals to learn about our little corner of the world and to enable Greek Jewry to reconnect with their roots. In June 2013, we celebrated a Bar Mitzvah in Ioannina (Max Abraham), and our tour in 2014 went viral and many people had to be turned away. Our 2015 tour is already sold out. If you wish to see the itinerary, access the Kehila Kedosha Janina website

(www.kkjsm.org), and if you wish to get on our wait list in case of possible cancellations, e-mail us at friends_greek_jewry@netzero.net. Our tours are a perfect example of how we pass on our special culture to future generations. The 2014 tour included many multigeneration groups and the ages ranged from 23 to 82! Get on our mailing list to join us on a future tour.

We are proud of our work. The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry is proud that 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
Ikonopoulou,
President

MESSAGE FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

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 have found that this exhibit has, also, given us the opportunity to tell the stories of special individuals in our community. A central display case has been used to celebrate birthdays, memorialize lost members and gather families together for reunions to carry our story "from generation to generation." Our present exhibit in this central display case was created by Evelyn Mordechai in memory of her mother, Esther Politis Mordechai, and has received such positive reviews that we hate to part with it! It will, most likely, become a semipermanent exhibit.

The completion of our new communal room and education center, made possible by a generous bequest from Dr. Ada Weintraub Finifter, granddaughter of Leon Colchamiro, one of our founding fathers, now enables us to expand museum activities in our new space. Just since its opening, we have had book presentations, lectures, and film showings, making use of our new state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment. In addition, in what was once our "hallway," and is now our "Gallery," we can beautifully display additional exhibits. The present exhibit is that of the photos of Vincent Giordano, of blessed memory, photos taken of the synagogue in Ioannina, and who would have thought that our synagogue/museum would become a venue for concerts? But, in the last couple of years, we have successfully hosted Kol Dodi (three times!), Carol Freeman (performing rebetika) and, most recently, the Elias Ladino Ensemble. We have a wait list for future exhibits and future performers!

Our communal/education room now can, also, display photos and, in March of 2014, on the 70th anniversary of the deportations from Ioannina, Volos and Athens, a photo exhibit opened with pictures of members of our own

community who survived and went on with their life. Among those photos displayed are those of Maurice Negrin's family. This year is also the 70th anniversary of deportations from Arta, Preveza, Rhodes, Corfu, Kastoria, Chalkis, Patras, Larissa, Trikala and Crete, and during the course of the year films will be shown remembering those who perished and celebrating those who survived.

Our Museum is visited by thousands throughout the year, coming from other neighborhoods in New York City, surrounding states, across the country, and other countries throughout the world. We were part of Lower East Side History Month and New York City Sacred Sites. All of these visitors are now part of our ever-growing extended community.

Our Museum publishes a monthly e-newsletter. If you do not yet receive this, contact us through our website (www.kkjsm.org).

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 and Koula Kofinas, who are always there to give of their time. As a display of how our synagogue/museum has instilled a love of community and how this is passed "from generation to generation," we now have an extensive list of new volunteers. Special thanks to Maurice Negrin (see the article on Maurice in this issue), Ivan Hametz (son of Haim Hametz, grandson of Rabbi Israel Hametz and nephew of Ovadiah Hametz), and Matt Hanson (son of Judy Asser Brown, grandson of Manny Asser and great-grandson of Solomon Asser). Of course, both Andrew and Ethan Marcus continue to be two of our most industrious volunteers, following in the footsteps of our President, Marvin Marcus. One of our new volunteers, Corrine Gittleman, may not have been born into this community, but her passion and commitment has made her one of our most valuable volunteers.

Do come to visit us to see our synagogue and Museum. Become involved! Become impassioned!

Marcia Haddad Ikonopoulou,
Museum Director



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SISTERHOOD

L'Dor va Dor, in Hebrew, literally means from one generation to another. This is precisely what comprises Sisterhood of Janina. In 1932, Leon Colchamiro, of blessed memory, envisioned a philanthropic organization to augment Kehila Kedosha Janina's spiritual contribution to the community. Thus, Sisterhood was created... thank you, Leon. We are at the 82-year mark of our existence, and very proud of what we have accomplished, and what we will in the future.

Our membership, currently at approximately 225, is comprised of many second- and third-generation women, some of whom vividly remember attending Sisterhood meetings with their moms, conducted in Greek! Imagine that! Today, we are an amalgam of Romaniote and Sephardim, dedicated to philanthropic and charitable causes. We, in fact, have some three-and-more-generation members. I, for one, am one – my mother-in-law, of blessed memory, Tehru Eskononts, started it back in the beginning. Then I, through the auspices of Mathilda Cossuto, became a member, at the unlikely of places... a Pasha weekend at the Raleigh Hotel in the Catskills! My daughter and my niece comprise



the third generation of our family.

We have many such examples: the Solomon clan, Audrey and daughter and daughter-in-law; Edie and her daughter and daughter-in-law; Lillie Genee (OBM) and her daughter, and daughter-in-law and granddaughters; Selma Matsil-Gilberg and her daughter and niece; and the list goes on...who knows how many more? If you are of a generational family, please let us know.

Throughout the years, we have donated to the Sephardic Home for the Aged and are charter members, selling "bricks for a dollar" to fund the completion of the building, where many of our founding members resided for years.

Our records show that Israel, Ioannina and Salonika in Greece were recipients of our members' generosity... not to mention, of course, our own beloved Kehila Kedosha Janina. We're looking forward to many more "generations" joining us in continuing the good work envisioned by our founders. Won't you join us and become a generational family...mother, daughter, etc. We welcome you with open arms.

Rose Eskononts,
President

CONTINUED RESEARCH ON ROMANIOTE IMMIGRATION

Our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, has been busy working on a book on Romaniote Jews in New York, hoping to fill a void in the literature on Greek Jewry. Researching different aspects of the immigrant story of this community has been very much a part of the project.

One question has already been answered: who was

the first of the Yanniotes to immigrate to New York? This distinction goes to Zacharia Yomtov, arriving in the port of New York on a cold (15°F) winter day on January 11, 1899, with 20 dollars in his pocket, destination 11 Madison Street in Lower Manhattan. He left from Avlona in Albania and traveled to the USA on the SS California, leaving Naples

in December of 1898. So many questions still need to be answered; especially, what made Zacharia leave in 1898 when most of the other Yanniotes did not leave until after 1902?

Do you have immigration stories to share? Please contact us at:

kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

MEET THE BOARD: MAURICE NEGRIN

Maurice Negrin is one of the youngest members of our Board of Directors, born in 1975 and, in many ways, symbolizes "from generation to generation." Both of Maurice's parents (Savas Negrin and Fani Sava Negrin) were born in Greece, Savas (Steve) in Volos and Fani in Athens.

Maurice's grandparents (Moisie Negrin and Esther Mosios, Moisie Sama and Rachel Matza) were all born in Ioannina, Greece at the turn of the 20th century. Maurice describes them as religious and family oriented. Maurice's family, like many others in our community, suffered tremendous losses during the Holocaust but, fortunately, were also the recipients of help from Greek Orthodox Christians, enabling them to survive the war. While Fani's parents remained in Greece, Savas' parents immigrated to America in the 1950s and settled on the Lower East Side. They settled on Delancey Street. In Maurice's own words, "I grew up in a culture where real values, both family and moral, were more important than money, things and entertainment, something I think has become somewhat lost in modern society."

The family moved to Queens, close to Astoria, and both Maurice and his older sister, Esther, found themselves torn between two worlds. "On most days I was a U.S. born Greek-American kid, would visit my maternal grandparents in Athens every summer, and was pretty well-versed in Greek language, culture, foods, dance, music, media and movies. My name, however, was Maurice Negrin and not 'Nickolikis Stephanopoulos,' and I did not celebrate a Greek name day, and somehow felt a little different from many of the other Greek kids. We did not celebrate Christmas and Easter. On holidays, I was Jewish. We fasted on Yom Kippur, would light candles on Hanukkah and eat matzah



on Passover, but many times I felt a little different in Jewish circles. I was not Greek enough for the Greeks and not Jewish enough for the Jews, except when visiting my paternal grandparents' synagogue (Kehila Kedosha Janina) on the Lower East Side."

Maurice earned two degrees in Psychology from CUNY/Hunter College while working as a physical fitness trainer. After graduating, he worked with adults with developmental disabilities, doing testing, counseling and staff development. Eight years later, he returned to school with the New York City Teaching Fellows program and earned a Masters in Education for middle and high school at Queens College. He has since worked as a special education teacher and dean in a high school in Queens.

"The truth, is growing up, I didn't really know what a Romaniote Jew was. I didn't really realize the uniqueness of it or how this little synagogue on the Lower East Side where my grandfather used to pray, and where my grandmother looked on from the balcony, was so special. Through a series of a few spirited, devoted and God sent individuals, the Kehila Kedosha Janina stands today, and lives to tell the story of a culture and a people that history could have easily erased and forgotten. Today it is an inspiring museum and a functional synagogue, a time machine to a people and a culture of the past almost destroyed, but also a place of purity and holiness, where God's presence can be felt and where we can be reminded what faith is truly about. A little building built in 1927 by Jews from Greece that serves as the spiritual home and a beacon of light for Greek Sephardic and Romaniote Jews all over the world."

Maurice, thank you for your passion and commitment, and for carrying the flame into the next generation. We are truly blessed to have you on the Board of Directors of Kehila Kedosha Janina.

