

IN HONOR OR MEMORY

In response to our last newsletter, donations were made in honor or memory of the following:

The parents of Morris Gabrielides, Rose Askinazi, Abraham Battino, Benjamin Family from Ioannina, Jacob & Esther Besson, Nancy Burns Silver, Hyman & Esther Calef, Morrie Camb, Molly Cohen, Harry & Emily DeCastros Schreiberstein, Louis & Dora Dostis Cohen, Molly Dostis, Rachel & Samuel Cohen, Shirley & Morris Cohen, Elliot DeCastros, Leonard Elias, Louise & Michael Eliasof, Mickey Eliasof, Sam, Harry, Morris & Abe Eliasof, Rebecca Eliasof Kaito, Murray Eskononts, David Fishman, Hy Genee, Hyman & Miriam Hametz, Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulos, Albert Jenis, Max Joseph, Annette Joseph, Ezra Joseph, Molly Kaplan, Leon Lafazan, Joseph Levy, Sally Levy, Anna & Isaac Matsil, Eli Matsil, Matsil I. Matsil, Sam Matza, Norman Mazza, Florence and Abraham Mazzas, Abraham Solomon Mionis & Molly [Mazal] Levy Mionis, Alan Moses, Max Moses, William & Mollie Nachmias, Esther Negrin, Isaac Pardo, Leon Litson, Jennie [Janga] Sefekar & Jack [Jakov] Sefekar, Esther & Elisba Russo, Jerry Solomon, Joseph Solomon, Rae Levy Weinberg, and Eli Zagbar.

We sincerely thank all those who made donations in honor or memory of their loved ones. Special donations were made in honor of Ralph Battino on his 87th birthday by his family and an exceedingly generous donation was made by Anita Altman in memory of Hy Genee. Thank you all for thinking of us.

YANNIOTE WATERMELON RIND JELLY

Ellen Lichtenstein, the daughter of Joseph Levy and Stema Cohen, has been searching for a recipe for Yanniote Watermelon Rind Jelly. Her paternal grandmother Rebecca Levy made the “most delicious dessert” (according to Ellen) and she has not been able to find a recipe that comes close to duplicating it. Let’s find this recipe for Ellen! Send in your recipes or e-mail us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

PASSINGS

It is with sadness that we note the passing of these special Yanniotes and family members of Yanniotes: **Rachel Sama**, the mother of Fani Sama Negrin and grandmother of our Board member, Maurice Negrin; **Esther Negrin**, the mother of Steve and Ari Negrin and the grandmother of our Board member, Maurice Negrin; **Benjamin Levy**, father of Lisa Levy; **Nancy Burns Silver; Isaac Pardo**, father of Jerry Pardo; **Joseph [Jerry] Solomon** of Delray Beach; **Anna Negrin Hamburg**, mother of Sandra Fox; **Morris Jeuda**, husband of Esther Jeuda; **Stemma Chernin; Henry Isaac**, father of Bob Isaac; **Sbemo Eliasof**, the father of the President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, Moise Eliasof; and our dear **Elliot DeCastros**. We would also like to mention the passing of **Leon Levy**, founder of the American Sephardi Federation. In the midst of the war with Lebanon and Israel, tragedy struck our community when **Kobi Smilg**, the grandson of Samuel and Stella Koen of Ioannina was killed on July 25th in Lebanon during the IDF operations against Hezbollah. They will all be missed.

FIJOLETTES (FASOLAKIA) GREEN BEANS

Easy to make, nutritious and economical, this Greek vegetable dish was made in both Romaniote communities (like Ioannina) and Sephardic communities (like Veroia). This recipe is from Nikolas Stravroulakis’ **The Cookbook of the Jews of Greece**.

1½-2 pounds cleaned green beans with tops cut off
2 medium onions, finely chopped
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
3 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
2-3 cloves garlic
2 tbsps. celery leaves, chopped
salt and pepper
lemon juice

Cut beans into 4-5 inch lengths. Sauté onions in olive oil, add beans and cook, stirring for 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, garlic, salt and pepper, and just enough water to cover the beans. Sprinkle celery leaves over the top, cover and cook on low heat until tender. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Serve warm or cold. Serves 4-6.



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 Kassarla • Sam Nahoum • Solomon Schinasi
Trustees: Marvin Marcus, President • Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director • Chaim Kofinas, Treasurer • Solomon Kofinas, Financial Secretary • Elliot Colchamiro, Recording Secretary
Jeffery Mordos, First Vice President • Rose Eskononts, Second Vice President • Marc Winthrop, Second Vice President • Martin Genee, Vice President • Lois Ledner, Vice President
Jesse Colchamiro • Leonard Colchamiro • Isaac Dostis • Ilias Hadjis • Holly Kaye • Sol Matsil • Max Nachmias • Maurice Negrin

*Deceased

UPCOMING EVENTS

Due to our interior restorations, last year, special events had to be cancelled. We have a lot of catching up to do! Below you will find a complete list of our upcoming events.

Sunday: April 15
Annual Yom HaShoah Services: 1:00pm

Sunday: April 22
Crossing Delancey: 1:00pm-3:00pm. Come “cross” Delancey for a reading of literature and poetry in our new Museum: highlighting Arlene Schulman, Nikos Alexiou and Eleni Gage as they read from their recently published works. Authors will be there to sign book purchases. Proceeds to benefit Kehila Kedosha Janina. Refreshments will be served.

Sunday: April 29
A Day of Celebrating the Life of Hy Genee: 1:00pm-3:00pm. So many who loved Hy could not be there to say goodbye to him. As a very small token of our love for this special man, we have set aside a day of remembering Hy. A special memorial plaque will be unveiled, a never-before-seen video of Hy will be shown and an exhibit in the Museum in his honor will be unveiled. Refreshments will be served.

Sunday: May 6
Koula’s Kitchen returns! 1:00pm-3:00pm. Join Koula and her helpers as they demonstrate and prepare delicious Greek-Jewish delicacies. Enjoy the dishes afterwards! This event is always highly subscribed. Reserve your space. \$5 fee.

Sunday: May 20
Rededication of Kehila Kedosha Janina and the unveiling of the Landmark Plaque. This high-profile event will publicly applaud the accomplishments of this small synagogue on the Lower East Side. Join with politicians and dignitaries as we celebrate our 80 years on Broome Street and rededicate our newly refurbished synagogue. 1:00pm-3:00pm.

Saturday: June 2
Special Shabbat services in honor of our Five-Way Anniversary Gala (see Sisterhood article on page 2). Services start at 9:30am.

Sunday: June 3
Museum closed. We will all be dancing in Oceanside in honor of our respective anniversaries.

Sunday: June 24
Our very popular Summer Book Sale has returned. Every book is on sale, some at unbelievable closeout prices. All proceeds benefit the Museum. 1:00pm-3:00pm. Refreshments served.

The Romaniote

Newsletter of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

THE SECOND STAGE OF OUR RESTORATION IS COMPLETE

It took a little longer than expected and involved more patience than anticipated, but the dust is cleared and the interior of our synagogue has been restored to its 1927 splendor. As an historical landmark, we had to preserve the architectural integrity of the structure, but we could have gutted the interior and started from scratch. It probably would have been easier. It certainly would have been less costly. But, it would have borne little resemblance to the synagogue the founders had created. We chose to take the more challenging road and keep not only the architectural integrity of the building but also preserve the essence of the synagogue constructed in 1927. We replaced the tin ceilings with exact duplicates of the original (the company that provided the original ceiling was still in business). The stenciled walls are replicas of the original. An architectural anthropologist unearthed five layers of paint and we chose one. The original wood floor in the sanctuary was



discovered under layers of ugly linoleum, telling a story all its own: in 1927, having recently come from Greece, a wooden floor meant that you were a peasant. These immigrants were now here in the New World and linoleum was all the rage. Restoring the original wood floor set the restoration project back three months, but it was well worth it. The original wooden benches, made by Morris Yomtov’s father, were repainted. The chandelier, made from the remnants of originals donated by the Attas family, was taken apart, cleaned and restored. The decorations on the bema and Aron were shined, and new lighting, replicas of period 1920’s chandeliers, replaced the fluorescent lamps. Our one concession to modernization was the installing of non-intrusive air-conditioning on all levels.

We did it! And, we never once closed our doors! We survived the dust and disarray and we are now ready to greet our visitors and congregants in our “new” sanctuary and museum.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Phase two of our restoration is complete. The main sanctuary and the women’s gallery have been brought back to their original beauty. It is now our hope to raise funds for the restoration of our basement, which we hope will be a multi-use space. As always, your presence provides the most important aspect of our revitalization.

Join us whenever possible and become a part of both our spiritual and cultural life.

—Marvin Marcus
Honored to be your President

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MESSAGE FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Having to dismantle the existing Museum and set up temporary exhibits while the restoration continued proved challenging but, as so often happens, something positive came out of the negative. Seeing the women's gallery stripped of everything enabled me to take a second look at the space and how to make the best use of my limited "real estate." In the process, a new Museum came into being. It was my decision to have half of the Museum tell the story of Greek Jewry in general, and Romaniote Jewry specifically, ending with their unfortunate demise in the Holocaust, and the other half of the Museum concentrate on their life here in the New World. The Museum is still a work in progress and will continue to be so. I have arranged exhibits that enable me to easily remove and replace artifacts, photos and documents with similar ones, allowing for more of our artifacts to be displayed.

We now have exhibits on weddings, Yanniot textile firms, the Yanniot home in the New World, synagogue decoration, Purim, the Brotherhood and the Sisterhood. On April 29th, we will unveil a new exhibit on the late Hy Genee (see upcoming events). I am

looking for ketubbahs, old wedding photos, marriage certificates, photos of children or adults in costume for Purim, old family photos (especially of those whose families established small textile firms) and anything to do with the Sisterhood or Brotherhood. I am especially grateful to Shirlee Paganetti and Ed Coffina for sharing so many of their family treasures. Shirlee's parents' wedding photo and marriage certificate are now on display in the wedding exhibit and Ed generously donated a number of items from the estate of his late mother, Mildred Coffina, including a bank book from the Sisterhood account dating back to the 1950's. I wish to thank both the Sisterhood and the Brotherhood for contributing funds for display cases to tell the story of these two organizations. Finally, although I might have complained in the past, I am eternally grateful to the Yanniotes who never threw anything away! In looking through the piles of papers, most stuffed into cabinets and not looked at for years, I uncovered treasures, like the 1942 letter from a young man who explained that he could not attend the Brotherhood meeting to sign the constitution since he had been called up

to military duty with the US Army, and the original incorporation papers of the congregation dating to 1914 stating that most of them were citizens of the United States — an obvious exaggeration!

Our Museum space now hosts "installations" created by Judy Moonelis. Specifically inspired by Kehila Kedosha Janina, this exhibit is the first of what will be many additional art exhibits in our upstairs gallery. Do come and see it before it is scheduled to come down on June 24th.

Finally, I wish to thank my volunteers, especially my volunteer coordinator, Ilias Hadjis, and Sol Kofinas, who has been there throughout the chaos of the restoration, often overcoming insurmountable obstacles. My Assistant Director, Maurice Negrin has been of tremendous help in the creation of the new museum, and Arlene Schulman [of the David family] has offered not only her organizational skills but also numerous creative ideas.

Come visit us! We're the talk of the neighborhood.

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos
Museum Director

PHASE THREE OF OUR RESTORATION

We are now ready to start phase three of our restoration. It is our hope to create a multi-purpose room in our communal area in the basement. The space will be used not only for kiddushes after services but also when the Museum is open to the public, as a kafenion [Greek coffee house] where refreshments

will be offered, and as a multimedia research center. Visitors will be able to access archival records from Ioannina, genealogical research and Holocaust records. In addition, our library will be increased enabling Kehila Kedosha Janina to be not only a synagogue and museum but also a place of learning and

research. For special events, the space will be easily converted to accommodate film showings, PowerPoint or slide presentations, and lectures. Become a part of our revitalization. Contribute to phase three of our restoration.

FAMILY REUNIONS

On March 18th, Kehila Kedosha Janina celebrated the Colchamiro — all 11 branches of the dynasty started by Jessula and Rachel Galanos Colchamiro. Our synagogue hosted this special family with refreshments and music, special video showings and artifacts displayed throughout the Museum in

their honor. The next family we will be celebrating will be the Askinazi family (Eskenazi, Schinasi, Eskononts), the date still to be determined. If you want to gather your family together under our roof and meet family members, you might not even know (or want to know!) existed, contact us. We'll

do the research, make the contacts, send the invitations, and provide the entertainment and refreshments. All you have to do is show up. What better place for a Yanniot family gathering than within the walls of the synagogue founded by your ancestors.

MESSAGE FROM THE SISTERHOOD OF JANINA

Sisterhood of Janina, established in 1932, is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year and we welcome you all to participate in the journal that will be published to honor these multiple anniversaries of: The Brotherhood of Janina/Good Hope Society, 100 years; Kehila Kedosha Janina, 80 years; Sisterhood, 75 years; Pashas, 50 years; and, the baby of the brood, our KKJ Museum, 10 years old! Please take advantage of these historic events by sending an ad to be published in the journal commemorating these organizations. The journal is dedicated to the incomparable Hy Genee, who for 40+ years single-handedly kept Kehila Kedosha Janina a viable, vibrant synagogue. Without his dedication and devotion, KKJ would not be functional today. Send your journal ad to Rose Eskononts, President, Sisterhood

of Janina, 2430 Haring Street #3J, Brooklyn, NY 11235. Chai listings are \$18; booster ads \$36; business cards \$50; 1/4 page ads \$75; ½-page ads are \$100; full-page ads are \$175. For further information, please call Rose at (718) 648-7374. All full-page ads are entitled to include a photo at no additional cost. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have your message appear in the record of this historic endeavor. We look forward to seeing you on June 2nd at KKJ for the Special Shabbat Service honoring our Five-Way Anniversary Gala, and Sunday, June 3rd for the actual Gala itself. Please get your reservations in early so you are not locked out.

Thank you. Rose Eskononts, President.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF GREEK JEWRY

As the Association enters its 10th year, we are proud of what we have accomplished. We continue to be the only organization in the United States dedicated exclusively to Greek Jewry, reaching out to more Greek Jews worldwide than any other organization in existence. We joined with Kehila Kedosha Janina and The Sisterhood of Janina in helping to raise

funds for the restoration of the synagogue in Ioannina. We are proud to be working with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in their effort to acquire photos and documents of pre-WWII Greek-Jewish life to fill an obvious void in their present acquisitions. In July of 2006, we visited Athens, Ioannina, Corfu and Salonika for our annual summer tour to Jewish

Greece, and joined with Yanniotes from around the world as they gathered for Rosh HaShanah in Ioannina. Our tour for 2007 (Athens, Ioannina [with the Bar Mitzvah of Seth Kofina], Salonika and a three-day cruise) is already filled to capacity. Get on our mailing list for future tours. Be with us in 2008.

MEET THE BOARD: OUR NEW PRESIDENT MARVIN MARCUS

When we lost our late President, Hy Genee, we knew there was no way that any mortal could possibly fill his shoes. We needed leadership, we also needed dedication and, above all, we needed someone who had shown his commitment to Kehila Kedosha Janina. There was no doubt in any of our minds that Marvin Marcus, a member of our Board and longtime member of the congregation, had all these qualifications.

Marvin was born on the Lower East Side to parents of traditional Sephardic background and, in many ways, his coming of age was reflective of the changes that were taking place in the neighborhood. Marvin's mother, Lillie Balaran, was born and raised on the Lower East Side, her family having left the Ottoman Empire due to the political upheavals in the Balkans. Marvin's father, Louie Marcus, was born in Veroia, Greece. The original family name, Mordechai, was changed during immigration. Marvin and his family attended the Kehila Beth El Synagogue at 133 Eldridge, originally founded by Shearith Israel to offer

religious services and education to Balkan Sephardic Jewry. When Kehila Beth El closed, the family attended services at the Monastir Synagogue located at 173 Eldridge until that synagogue was forced to close and rent space in a building owned by Young Israel (E. Broadway and Clinton), where Rabbi Cassorla officiated. In the mid-1980's the Marcus family would become congregants of Kehila Kedosha Janina, now the only remaining synagogue on the Lower East Side where one could find Greek Jews worshipping. Marvin has worshipped regularly at Kehila Kedosha Janina for over twenty years.

Marvin received his Bachelor of Science in Psychology from CCNY and his MS in Special Education, taught in the New York City public school system for over thirty years and is now a Learning Disability Specialist. He married his wife Phyllis Caplan in 1990 and is the proud father of two young men, Andrew (who celebrated his Bar Mitzvah at Kehila Kedosha Janina in 2005 to a packed house) and Ethan, who hopefully will do the same in 2009.



Marvin's tireless dedication to Kehila Kedosha Janina, and his commitment to our continuity, inspires us all. If Marvin is a reflection of our future, we are in good hands.

VEROIA



The community figures prominently in the Christian Gospels of Saint Paul, as the Apostle praises the Jews of Veroia for allowing him to preach in their synagogue. The community was never large, but grew to prominence with the arrival of Spanish-speaking Jews expelled from Spain in 1492. The community had close family and business connections with nearby Salonika.

The natural flowing river on which the city was built, and alongside which the synagogue and the Jewish quarter [Barbouta] were constructed, was used to wash dyed fabrics, often supplied to textile merchants in Salonika.

Some common surnames of the Jews of Veroia are Alvo, Azaria, Benrubi, Daniel, Emmanuel, Mordechai, Pinto, Pipano, Sabetai, Sarfati and Stroumsa.

On the site where Saint Paul once preached there now stands a recently restored

synagogue and work has been started on restoring the homes in the Barbouta.

The municipality wishes to draw tourists to the city, especially those Christian pilgrims who want to "walk in the footsteps of St. Paul."

Only one Jewish family continues to live in Veroia. In 1940, the community numbered 850. In March of 1943, a total of 680 would be deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, only 131 returning in an unfortunately futile attempt to reestablish the community. By 1959, there would only be 36 and, today, an estimated 4 Jews reside in the city.

The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry is working on the Memorial Book for the Jewish Community of Veroia. If you have information or photos you would like to contribute, please contact us at friends_greek_jewry@netzero.net.