

SEPHARDIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

A very special thanks to Rabbi Nissim Elnecave and Shelomo Alfassa of the International Sephardic Leadership Council who fell in love with our synagogue and have been so supportive, giving guidance and offering help, if necessary, in providing someone to lead our services. When our sanctuary was forced to move downstairs during restoration, they even rededicated the temporary sanctuary with a new mezzuzah. Find our more about this organization at <http://www.sephardiccouncil.org>.

APPRECIATION TO DEANNA COHEN WALLACH-MARCUS

Our appreciation to Deanna Cohen Wallach-Marcus for her donation to our Family Archive Collection. Deanna worked for years to compile a family history of both her Yanniote and Salonika branches of the family, and then had the material published. We commend her for her work and hope that it acts as an inspiration for others. What we fail to document now will be lost in the future.

SISTER SYNAGOGUES

Almost from the very beginning, as our community of Yanniote Jews began to arrive from Greece and settle on the Lower East Side of New York City, other congregations, sister synagogues, began to be established. We are now in the process of doing research on two aspects of the history of Kehila Kedosha Janina: Bar Mitzvahs, Simchas and funerals that took place at the Kehila on Broome Street, and history of the sister synagogues (such as Kehila Kedosha Janina of Mapleton in Brooklyn and Sheerith Israel of Janina in the Bronx). Please pass on any information you have. It will be greatly appreciated. Contact us at our e-mail: kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

RESEARCH ON YANNIOTE JEWS IN ALBANIA

This winter, while in Ioannina, Isaac Dostis interviewed Jews who had connections with the Jewish Community of Avlona in Albania. Close to the Albanian border, there were many Jews from Ioannina who had family ties in Avlona. Isaac will be returning in September and is looking to continue his research here. If you have Avlona connections, contact Isaac at act1presents@optonline.net.

PASSINGS

It is with sadness that we note the passing of these special Yanniotes:

Solomon Sameh, born in Athens, father of Esther Perl and Joseph Sameh. **Aleasoff Moses**, husband of Esther Moses of Deerfield Beach, Florida. **John Justin** (Colchamiro family) who still maintained his own apartment at the age of 97. **Pepo (Joseph) Battino**, former President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, father of Zanet Battino, Director of the Jewish Museum of Greece. **Morris Jenny**, devoted husband of Gail. **Bobby Koulias**, wife of Jerry Garet. **Eli Matsil**, husband of Annette Katz. **Mick-ey Eliasof**, wife of Elias (Hy). **Eli Cassorla**, son of Rabbi and Lillian Cassorla. **Rebecca Eliasof Kailo**, sister of Elias Eliasof and **Sarika Vrachoritits** of Ioannina.

They will all be missed.

SPOUTSPOUNTZIA

Dough:

2 eggs
¼ cup oil
½ cup sugar
2-1/2 cup flour
1 tsp. baking powder
pinch of baking soda
Blend sugar and oil,
add eggs, then flour.
Chill dough.

Filling:

1 cup of walnuts
finely ground
pinch of cloves
½ tsp. cinnamon
½ cup sugar
3 tablespoons honey
3 tablespoons water

Heat the sugar, honey and water together in a small saucepan until almost boiling. Mix the nuts and spices together, then add the warm honey mixture to the nuts. Roll small balls (about the size of a large grape) using water to keep the mixture from sticking to your hands. If the mixture is too wet, use cookie crumbs (vanilla wafers or graham) to thicken a little. Count the balls and set aside.

Using floured hands, separate the chilled dough into an equal number of balls as you have honey/nut balls. These should be slightly larger than the honey balls. Roll each ball on a floured surface into a flat circle and place one honey ball just below the center of the dough. Fold the top over and press the edges to seal. Place on a lightly sprayed or nonstick cookie sheet, spaced at least an inch apart and bake at 375° for 10-15 minutes until barely tan. Remove and let cool before taking off the cookie sheet.

**This recipe was contributed by Al Barouch.*



KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA SYNAGOGUE AND MUSEUM

*Founder: Joseph I. Josephs *Honorary Life Members: Michael Aronesty • Morris L. Cohen • Morris David • Morris Eskonants • Hyman Genee • Joseph Kassarla • Sam Nahoum • Solomon Schinasi
Trustees: Marvin Marcus, President • Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos, Museum Director • Chaim Kofinas, Treasurer • Solomon Kofinas, Financial Secretary • Elliot Colchamiro, Recording Secretary • Jeffery Mordos, First Vice President
Rose Eskonants, Second Vice President • Marc Winthrop, Second Vice President • Lois Genee Ledner, Vice President • Martin Genee, Vice President • Jesse Colchamiro • Leonard Colchamiro • Isaac Dostis • Ilias Hadjis
Holly Kaye • Sol Matsil • Max Nachmias • David Negrin • Maurice Negrin • Randi Schoer-Vagelatos

UPCOMING EVENTS

With our interior restoration still in progress, it is impossible to print a calendar of upcoming events. Access our Web site (<http://www.kkjsm.org>) for updates and announcements of our grand reopening and rededication. Of course, we will be open for Shabbat services and the High Holidays. Join us.

Congratulations to Richard and Michelle Sufrin Solomon on their marriage.

Richard had his ufruf at Kehila Kedosha Janina.

SCHEDULE FOR HIGH HOLIDAY SERVICES:

SEPTEMBER

Sunday: September 17th
7:00 pm Selichot services
Friday: September 22nd
5:45 pm Erev Rosh HaShana
Saturday: September 23rd
8:30 am Rosh HaShana, first day
5:30 pm Mincha and Tashlich
Sunday: September 24th
8:30 am Rosh HaShana: second day
Saturday: September 30th
9:00 am Shabbat Teshuva

OCTOBER

Sunday: October 1st
5:45 pm Erev Yom Kippur: Kol Nidre
Monday: October 2nd
8:00 am Yom Kippur
6:00 pm Neila
Saturday: October 7th
9:00 am Succoth: first day
Sunday: October 8th
9:00 am Succoth: second day
Friday: October 13th
7:00 am Hoshana Raba
Saturday: October 14th
8:45 am Shemini Atzeret [Yiskor]
5:30 pm Erev Simchat Torah
Sunday: October 15th
8:45 am Simchat Torah
Saturday: October 21st
8:45 am Shabbat Bereshith

The Romaniote

Newsletter of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

IN MEMORY OF HY GENE

On February 13, 2006, shortly before this newsletter was to be published, our beloved President, Hy Genee, the backbone of our congregation and our synagogue, suddenly passed away. Originally, we had thought to publish a short, special memorial newsletter in March and then

the original newsletter in September, but as those who knew Hy began to send us their thoughts and memories, the decision was made to combine both for this double issue, with a special pull-out section dedicated to Hy. For those of us who had the honor of knowing and working with Hy, he will always be with us. May his blessed memory inspire us to continue with renewed strength to make his dreams a reality.



MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT
OF BLESSED MEMORY,
HY GENE

The only thing that was missing from the original newsletter was Hy's message, his "message from the President," an integral part of each newsletter. A call was made to Hy's home the morning of February 13th and Hy's last words to me were, "You know what I want to say." Yes, we do:

"I want to thank all those who called and sent cards during my illness. I have loved being part of this extended family of Greek Jews and am very proud of what we have been able to accomplish. The best way you can remember me is to continue with our mission. Be proud of who you are. Cherish your past, our unique culture and traditions. Keep supporting our synagogue and museum but, most importantly, never forsake your Judaism. Every time you set foot in Kehila Kedosha Janina, especially on Shabbat, I will be there with you in spirit."

MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT: MARVIN MARCUS

The passing of Hy Genee has left the members of the Board of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum with a deep sense of loss. His presence at the Kehila was a beacon to all Yannottes for so many years. Hy's personal knowledge of the Lower East Side, the families that lived there, and their relatives, is irreplaceable.

Hy Genee provided the members of the synagogue with continuity and purpose. Seeing him every Saturday, the spiritual leader of our Kehila, was a joy I will never forget. His personal dedication to the Kehila and the Romaniote Community will long be remembered.

The Board sends its deepest condolences to the Genee family, especially Lillie whom he fondly called Missy. We will miss the wisdom, tenacity, and devotion of a man who provided us with the strength of character not often seen in our lifetime.

—Marvin Marcus
President, Kehila Kedosha Janina

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APPEAL FROM THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF IOANNINA

This past summer, while visiting Ioannina, our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, was approached by the President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, Moses Eliasof, for help in a much needed restoration project on the only still-existing synagogue in Ioannina. During the course of an extremely wet winter, water had damaged the exterior stones, causing leakage into the sanctuary. A temporary patching was done, but this was far from permanent.

This is not the first time that the small community in Ioannina has sought our help. We have been there to help raise funds for the restoration of the cemetery (a project that is still ongoing). In fact, over the course of the years since the establishment of the Kehila in 1926/7, we take pride in never having let down our sister

community in Greece. Whether it be aiding in immigration at the beginning of the 20th century, welcoming survivors after the devastation of the community during the Holocaust, or helping financially with necessary projects that were beyond the means of the decimated community, Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud that we have always been there, and will continue to be there in whatever capacity the Jewish Community of Ioannina might need us.

The Community is very grateful to us, as expressed by a recent letter, “On part of all the members of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, we convey our deepest thanks for your help every time that relevant need arises....You know that with meager economic means we are confronting difficult work to preserve the sacred monument of our precious faith, and

preserve the unity and morale that binds our members together. Actions, such as those of Kehila Kedosha Janina, give us, apart from valuable economic support, the spiritual strength to continue this work. We wish to convey to you that, on our part, we feel that you are always with us in spite of the great geographical distance that separates us. Your valuable aid, your immediate response to our appeals and the feelings with which you cherish our Community have raised our consciousness as to our real benefactors. Our brethren at Kehila Kedosha Janina have never let us down.”

Funds for the restoration project (a needed \$15,000) will be raised by Kehila Kedosha Janina, Sisterhood of Janina and the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry.

MESSAGE FROM SISTERHOOD

Throughout the decades, from our establishment almost 75 years ago, Sisterhood of Janina has never deserted the Jewish Community of Ioannina. In our early years, we were there to help poor girls with dowries, without which they could not get married. We were there to help with major restorations on the synagogue in Ioannina whenever we were asked. We will be there now to help the small community of less than 50. Sisterhood, along with Kehila Kedosha Janina and the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, will raise the \$15,000 necessary. Sisterhood will match the first \$5,000 contributed.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF GREEK JEWRY

The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, along with Kehila Kedosha Janina and the Sisterhood of Janina, has pledged to raise the \$15,000 necessary for the restoration of the synagogue in Ioannina. We are honored to be part of this effort. This past winter, our Vice President, Isaac Dostis (founder of the Museum at Kehila Kedosha Janina) spent three months in Ioannina, enabling us to have continuous communication

with the community. Through his efforts, lost family members were found, and communication between members of the community and their family in the United States became possible. Isaac, a professional writer, also gathered precious reflections on the past in Ioannina, which he has gratefully shared with us. If you wish a copy of “Old Janina, Lost Janina” let us know. It would be a pleasure to mail a copy to you.

There will be two trips to Ioannina this year; one in the beginning of July (check with the Association at friends_greek_jewry@netzero.net to see if there are still openings), visiting Athens, Ioannina, Arta, Preveza and Corfu, with a possible extension to Salonika, and one for Rosh HaShana that will highlight the sharing of the holiday with the Jewish Community of Ioannina and Yanniote Jews from all over the world. Do join us!

Our last newsletter (Fall 2005), our first biannual newsletter, was our most successful newsletter to date! Thank you to all those of you who contributed so generously and a special thanks to Elias Eliasof and William Sabba for their exceedingly generous support. In addition to donations made in honor of Rabbi Matslaich Matsil and Hy Genee, friends and relatives made donations in memory or in honor of:

Daniel & Rebecca Dalven Abraham, Eline Abrams, Morris Albalá, Claire Askinazi, Murray Asser, Ralph Battino, Sol & Molly Battino, Stella Battino, Victor Benjamin, Prof. Sami Beraba, Jack Calderon, Abraham I. & Rose Cohen, Charles & Betty Colchamiro, Jess Colchamiro, Elias & Astrea Decastros, David & Esther Dostis, Dora Dostis Family, Isaac Dostis, Abe Eliasof, Louise & Michael Eliasof, Sam, Harry, Morris & Abe Eliasof, Morris & Rachel Eliassof, Alexis Ann Eskenazi, Murray Eskononts, Sarab Ezratty, David Fishman, Esther Frances, Louis Gessula, Dr. Martin Louis Grossman, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Isaac Hametz, Avram & Louisa Isaac, John Justin, Rebecca Eliasof Kailo, Pola Kellerman, Julia Koben, Leon Lafazan, Benjamin Levine, Albert Lewis,

Abraham Levy, Albert Levy, Joseph Levy, Joseph & Pearl Levy, Stamoula Levy, Esther Liascos, Charles Littman, Leo Mallab, Morris & Julia Matbhos, Sarina & Naoum Matsa, Eli Matsil, Aaron Matza, Sam Matza, Abraham & Florence Mazzas, Sara Michaels, Elias Mordechai, Lucille & Abraham Naphtali, Mollie & Abraham Negrin, Morris Negrin, Betty Pardo, Matthew Pardo, The Prager Family, Lillian Reisher, George Rotbman, Esther & Elisha Russo, Solomon Sameh, Michael & Rebecca Samuels, Jack & Jennie Sefekar, Edward & Hyman Serota, Benjamin Shapiro, Michelle Shapiro, Mollie & Samuel Solomon, Richard & Michelle Solomon (on their marriage), George Tragos, Randi & Gerry Vagelatos, Morris (Mac) Varon, Jennie & Charles Weiser and Albert Yamale.

MESSAGE FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Work on the interior restoration of the synagogue (that, of course, also includes the museum in the women's section) has put the opening of new exhibits on hold. That does not mean that we have not been busy! Our traveling exhibit at the Westchester Jewish Center in Mamaroneck, as part of Vincent Giordano's “Before the Flame Goes Out” photographic exhibit, was a huge success and enabled us to bring our story to a wider audience. Our contribution to the exhibit was the display of artifacts highlighting the life cycles (birth, coming of age, marriage and death) of the Romaniote Jews of Ioannina. It is our hope to bring this exhibit to other communities outside of New York. If you have a suitable venue, do get in touch with us.

This past June, in cooperation with the Lower East Side Conservancy, as part of the panel presentation on the historical significance of the Lower East Side, Kehila Kedosha Janina and

the story of the Jews of Ioannina was represented at the New York State Historical Conference by our Museum Director, who also presented a paper on the Romaniotes at the International Jewish Genealogical Conference in New York this past August [access our Web site (<http://www.kkjsm.org>) for information on upcoming events].

Both “Koula's Kitchen” and our film festival were exceedingly well attended this year, and we anxiously look forward to our new air-conditioned communal room where we can comfortably house large groups even in the summer.

A special thanks to our new volunteer, Athens-born Abraham Sabbas (whose family was from Preveza), for his valuable help.

—Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos

MEET THE BOARD: MAX NACHMIAS

Max Nachmias has continuously displayed his love for his heritage and has exemplified by his continual work his commitment to the perpetuation of this precious Yanniote heritage. It is therefore with great honor that we highlight, as part of our “Meet the Board” series, Max Nachmias, son of Samuel Nachmias and Bessie Naftaly, both born in Ioannina and married in NYC in March of 1920. Samuel and Bessie would have five children, Max the next to last. The Nachmias family moved to 279 Broome Street, directly across from the Kehila, in 1929 and Max was born on the kitchen table that same year. Max earned a degree of Bachelor of Civil Engineering

in January 1951 and a Masters in Business Administration at CCNY Bernard Baruch College in 1960. Eve, his wife of 55 years, lived across the street at 282 Broome Street. Max and Eve have two children and two grandchildren. Max was employed, after graduation, at the Brooklyn Navy Yard as a Naval Architect from 1951 to 1956. He then was employed at MSTs branch of the Navy as a Naval Architect from 1956 to 1984, when he retired. In addition to his deep commitment to the Brotherhood of Janina, Max has remained deeply committed to the Pashas, a social organization created by Greek Jews [see article on the Pashas]. Now spending part of the year in

Florida, Max is instrumental in organizing the annual reunion of Pashas in Florida, one of the organization's most successful events. Once back in New York, Max faithfully attends Kehila Kedosha Janina Board meetings, enriching them by his presence and insights. Thank you, Pasha, for your loyal commitment to Kehila Kedosha Janina. We are indeed lucky to have you!



THE PASHAS

According to legend, the *Pashas* were created close to 50 years ago, in 1957. The exact origin of the organization's name, *Pasha* (a term of endearment used by all Greek-Jewish mothers when describing their sons, all perfect “princes” to be sure), varies according to who is telling it. One colorful thread that weaves its way through all the stories is the desire to keep their heritage alive. From its very inception, the *Pashas* was a social organization committed to the pursuit and perpetuation of Greek-Jewish traditions. Gatherings would

be centered around Greek music, dancing and, of course, foods. The *Pashas* have monthly meetings, twice annual weekends in the Catskill Mountains, an annual picnic in Eisenhower Park, an annual dinner dance and, with the help of Max Nachmias, an annual reunion in Florida where *Pashades* from around the world come to gather, reminisce and enjoy their precious shared heritage. Now, approaching 50, the organization is dwindling in membership and there is fear that one day soon it will no longer exist. All you have to do to become a *Pasha* is be a male of Greek-Jewish background (or the wife of one). If you are interested, let us know!

UPDATE ON THE INTERIOR RESTORATION

The first stages of our interior restoration started (finally!) on February 8th. During the months of February through August extensive work will be going on, updating our electricity and installing much needed air-conditioning.

When it is necessary to close the sanctuary, Saturday services will be held in

the temporary sanctuary in the communal room downstairs. The Museum will be open every Sunday throughout the restoration. When work begins on the women's section (where the present Museum is housed), a temporary museum will be relocated in the basement and services will resume in the main sanctuary.

There are those who thought we would close during this restoration. We will not. We are stubborn people. A little dust and disarray will not deter us. After all, Greek Jews have the longest continuous presence in the European Diaspora and, though there were over 100 synagogues on the Lower East Side in the beginning of the 20th century, Kehila Kedosha Janina is one of only five original Jewish houses of worship where services are still conducted.

People flock to see our synagogue and museum, but they also come to hear our precious story. Our story hasn't changed. Our building will now become a more hospitable repository of that story.