



# Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002

July 2008 e-mail newsletter

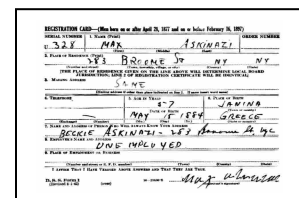
Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Our best wishes for a joyous summer. While last summer's weather in Greece was devastatingly hot and the countryside fell victim to destructive fires, this summer (so far), the weather in Greece has been much better than ours here in the United States. We wish our friends in Greece a beautiful and safe kalokeri.

This is the sixth of our increasingly popular e-newsletters. If you are on our e-mailing lists, you will receive our e-letter automatically. If for any reason you do not wish to receive the e-mail newsletter, please inform us.

### UPCOMING MUSEUM EVENTS

We are now working on a major exhibit that is due to open the first Sunday in November (in time for Veterans Day). This exhibit will highlight the role our community here in the United States played during World War II. The exhibit will contain photos and artifacts.



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Albert Hametz

Gabriel Sabat

Max Askenazi

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Thanks to the work of David Bellel, we have been able to access draft files for many members of our community. The draft for World War II was called the 'old man's draft' and all men, regardless of age were listed. This information gave us insights as to where many of our community lived and what their occupations were.

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As part of this exhibit, Marvin and Andrew Marcus and David Bellel will be video-taping veterans of WWII. Please contact us if you are interested in taking part in this project. We are still accepting additional material. Contact our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos ([kehila\\_kedosha\\_janina@netzero.net](mailto:kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net))

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## NEWS

### Kehila Kedosha Janina News

Our bema and Aron have now been refinished. The original wood has been revealed, both on the structures and on the platforms holding them. We were lucky to find Paolo Spano, a talented local artist born in Italy, who has a history of artistic synagogue restoration on the Lower East Side (he was instrumental in the interior restoration of the Bialystoker Synagogue). Paolo has been commissioned to do restoration of our marble commemorative plaques in the vestibule, a project that will be undertaken after the High Holy Days.



Aron Kodesh before restoration

### Website News

Our worldwide contacts continue to grow due to our website. In addition, Debra Colchamiro, daughter of our Board member, Elliot Colchamiro, along with her cousin, Charles Colchamiro, has initiated a very commendable project, a web-based family tree. The Colchamiro Family Tree will now be accessible to family members (by invitation so as not to transgress privacy issues). If you are a Colchamiro (or related to a Colchamiro) and wish to become part of this project (there are over 350 descendants now listed!) contact us at [kehila\\_kedosha\\_janina@netzero.net](mailto:kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net) and we will put you in contact with Debra.

Those who are not familiar with the Colchamiro family and wish to learn more about one of our founding families, please access our website [www.kkjsm.org](http://www.kkjsm.org) (under exhibits, past exhibits). Debra is also working on a Matza/Matsa/Mazza web-based family tree. With young people such as Debra Colchamiro taking an interest in our culture, our future is assured.



Wedding photo of Morris Colchamiro and Sarah Mazza Colchamiro  
(grandparents of Debra Colchamiro)

### **MUSEUM NEWS**

Our Museum founder, Isaac Dostis, initiated the Kehila Kedosha Janina Family Tree Project. On moving to Greece, Isaac handed over his work to the Museum. We are now in the process of computerizing the family trees. If you have a family tree that you have not shared with us, please send it to us (preferably via attachment in an e-mail to [kehila\\_kedosha\\_janina@netzero.net](mailto:kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net)). Your information will not be shared with anyone else without your permission.

The Museum is honored to be the recipient of a generous (\$5000 donation) enabling us to continue with our work. The donor wishes to remain anonymous. If you wish to donate any amount of money to either the synagogue or museum, we are a not-for-profit and a 501C3 (Kehila Kedosha Janina Preservation and Cultural Fund, Inc).

### **RECENT NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ON KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA**

If you missed the recent article in the New York Daily News on Ilias Hadjis and Kehila Kedosha Janina, a copy has been included in the attachment accompanying this e-newsletter.



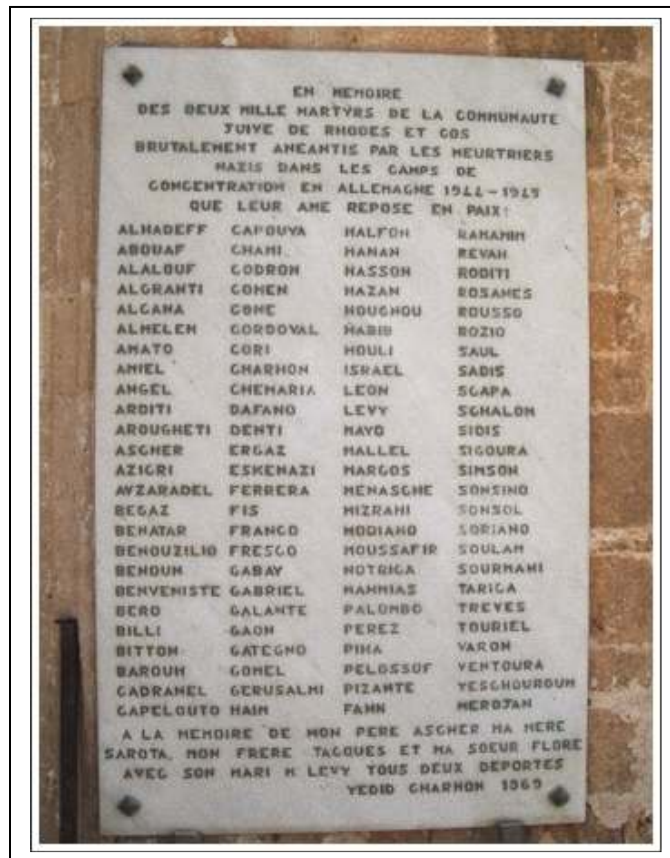
## Ilias Hadjis

For those of you who may not know Eli (born in Volos) you can learn more about him in our upcoming Romaniote (due out before the High Holy Days). The Romaniote is mailed to over 3000 households, and if you wish to receive future issues, please e-mail us your postal address. We mail throughout the world!

### NEWS FROM GREECE

On July 23, 1944, the Jewish Community of Rhodes was rounded up and deported. They would arrive at Auschwitz-Birkenau on August 14<sup>th</sup>. The present Community numbers less than 40 members.

There will a gathering on the island of Rhodes from July 23-27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to commemorate the victims of Rhodes. If you are interested, contact the Jewish Community of Rhodes ([info@jewishrhodes.org](mailto:info@jewishrhodes.org)).



Rhodes Memorial Plaque

Report on the status of both the Jewish cemeteries of Ioannina and the former Jewish Cemetery of Salonika (in light of recent misinformation that has been circulating on the internet).

The internet can be a marvelous thing (as attested to by our ability to communicate with so many with just a 'click of the mouse') but it, unfortunately, can also be a means to spread misinformation. Just recently, July 1<sup>st</sup>, there was a reprint (in JTA) of one of these examples of misinformation, a report that originally 'surfaced' over a year ago and was

**just recently publicized as 'breaking news.' The original 'report' was that human remains were being destroyed during the construction of the metro over the grounds of the former Jewish Cemetery in Salonika. There was a similar report last year about the Jewish cemetery of Ioannina (that human bones were scattered in the cemetery). In both instances these claims remain unsubstantiated. What the intentions are of those who report these instances (and in the case of Salonika, providing false photos!), we do not know. We just wish to assure our friends of Greek Jewish background and other Jews who might be concerned, that these claims are not true.**



**Salonika**

**In addition, Greece has strong Jewish leadership and, in the case of Salonika, the Jewish Community has been closely watching the construction of the Metro to assure that there is no desecration on the grounds of what once was a Jewish cemetery. Moses Konstantini, President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities, has requested that the area of the Metro station at Aristotle University be studied to assure that there are no human remains that might be disturbed and, only then, should the station be allowed to be built.**

**For those who have their roots in Greece, it always is a painful subject that the remains of loved ones may not be receiving proper care and, in the case of locales where there are no longer Jewish presence or only the remnants of one, these concerns become more urgent, as in the case of Salonika, where the destruction of the Jewish cemetery in 1942 by the Germans is an especially painful subject.**

**In Ioannina, Kehila Kedosha Janina and The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry have worked over the decades to aid the small Jewish community to preserve and restore their cemetery. It is our obligation. As Ben Franklin said, "Show me your cemeteries, and I will tell you what kind of people you have."**





**Ioannina Jewish Cemetery: Tombs of Rabbi Levy and his wife**



**Vandalism of Corfu Jewish Cemetery 1891**

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**Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street, New York NY 10002**  
[kehila\\_kedosha\\_janina@netzero.net](mailto:kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net)      [www.kkjsm.org](http://www.kkjsm.org)