

HFBA MISSION STATEMENT

THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION devotes its resources to performing *chesed shel emet* (the ultimate act of loving kindness). It is the only agency in the New York metropolitan area dedicated to assuring that every Jew, regardless of financial means or religious affiliation, receives a dignified, traditional Jewish funeral and burial.

אגודת אהים חסד של אמת
The Hebrew
Free Burial
ASSOCIATION

Chesed

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 1 • FALL 2007 / ELUL 5767

THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION

was formed in 1888 on Manhattan's Lower East Side by a group of philanthropic and community-minded Jews who were committed to burying their indigent dead according to Jewish tradition, rather than having them buried in a mass grave in Potter's Field. Since its inception HFBA has interred nearly 60,000 Jews in its two cemeteries. HFBA is also committed to retrieving the identities of those interred and is attempting to provide a gravestone for each unmarked grave.

For more information about how you can help please see page 6.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bryan Alter, Esq.
Herbert Block
Andrew Feinman
Jack M. Gross
Andrea Harris
Ari Kadish
Gary Katz
Andrew Levy
Howard W. Millendorf
Richard Miller
Yitzhak Pastreich
Minna Monte Seitelman
Fred Sugarman
Jack Weiss, Esq.
Daniel Werlin

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Elliot P. Gibber
Maurice S. Spanbock, Esq.

RABBINIC ADVISORY BOARD

Rabbi Moshe Fuchs
Rabbi Moshe Gottesman
Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblatt
Rabbi Elchonon Zohn

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Amy Koplow

CEMETERY CHAPLAIN

Rabbi Shmuel Plafker

CHESED IS PUBLISHED BY

THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION

Renée Septimus, Editor

Adam Rawson, Graphic Designer

224 WEST 35TH STREET, ROOM 300

NEW YORK, NY 10001

PHONE: (212) 239-1662

FAX: (212) 239-1981

EMAIL: INFO@HEBREWFREEBURIAL.ORG

WEB: WWW.HEBREWFREEBURIAL.ORG

UJA Federation
of New York

THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Many people consider the highlight of the *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* services to be the very moving prayer, *Unesaneh Tokef*.

Unesaneh Tokef reminds us of our mortality and of the unpredictability of life and living. We reflect on the past and look forward, with trepidation, to the future. We think of those who may have perished by flood, disease, starvation or storm, calamities which are still all too common in our global community.



The powerful poetry of this prayer includes beautiful imagery and forceful metaphors and contrasts. Our G-d is a powerful king and caring shepherd. The great sound of the *shofar* will ring and a small, still voice will be heard. Some will experience calm, others, turbulence. Some will have strength and vigor, others pain and suffering. The fortunate will die in peace at their given time; the unfortunate will die too young or after prolonged affliction.

As we stand before the Almighty being judged, let each of us commit to repairing the very broken world in which we live. Let us promise ourselves to do our part in *tikkun olam*. Let us honor our Creator by treating all of His creations with integrity, honesty, dignity and respect, for the living as well as the dead.

HONOR AND RESPECT FOR THOSE WE REMEMBER

VISITING THE CEMETERY

Walking through HFBA's Silver Lake and Mount Richmond cemeteries, with their thousands of unmarked graves dating from 1892, one is saddened by thoughts of children who never grew up, of teenaged victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire who never grew old. One can feel the spirits and imagine the misfortunes of immigrants who were unable to live the "American dream" in the *goldeneh medineh*, and those who died alone and forgotten as victims of physical and mental illness, homelessness and destitution.

During the month of *Elul*, preceding the High Holy Days, our thoughts turn not only to our own mortality, but also to those whom we have lost. A common custom is to visit the graves of our ancestors and loved ones. We pay our respects, mourn their passing and acknowledge their impact on our lives. We are able to imagine history and destiny.

Since its inception, HFBA has buried over 60,000 people. In each of the past several years, burials have averaged approximately 250, a significant percentage of those being immigrants from the former Soviet Union. During the 1990's at the height of the Russian immigration to the United States, at that time 75% of the 400 funerals performed yearly were for Russians. Currently, nearly 1,000 mourners crowd Mount Richmond each Sunday during the weeks preceding *Rosh Hashana* to embrace the memory of the departed members of this recent immigrant community.

RECITING THE KADDISH

An important custom associated with the *yahrzeit*, the anniversary of a death, is the recitation of the



kaddish, the prayer which glorifies the Almighty and His attributes. There is a widely held belief in traditional Judaism that reciting the *kaddish* with a *minyan* (quorum of ten men) in some way elevates the soul of the deceased through the glorification of G-d by the living.

If a relative is unable to say the *kaddish* at the appointed time, it is customary to arrange for it to be said by another. For a donation of \$180, HFBA will arrange for *kaddish* to be said every year on the *yahrzeit*, **regardless of whether or not the final resting place is at one of HFBA's cemeteries.**

Please contact the HFBA office at (212) 239-1662 to establish a "perpetual kaddish" (one said on the yearly anniversary). Alternatively, send \$180 along with your request and information about the deceased (including exact Hebrew name and Hebrew name of the decedent's father as well as the date of death) to the HFBA office in the enclosed envelope. Please include your telephone number.

MARKING GRAVES

Especially after the Holocaust, the idea of leaving a grave unmarked seems insensitive and cruel. In 1987, HFBA initiated the Leave Your Mark Campaign to begin marking all graves, inscribing the name and the dates of birth and death of each

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

HFBA HELPS

Some of our referrals are from the NYC Medical Examiner's Office or from the offices of the Public Administrator of each borough. Referrals also come from hospitals, nursing homes or other care facilities. Despite the fact that approximately 75% come from family members, neighbors or friends, there are no mourners at one third of our burials. HFBA chaplain Rabbi Shmuel Plafker stands alone at the grave.



Mrs. Rapp, an elderly woman who had been ill for some time, died and her body was picked up by a local Jewish funeral parlor. After determining that the family could not afford the fee, and after it was revealed that the District Attorney had a long-

standing investigation of elder abuse against her aide, Mrs. Rapp's remains were retrieved by the Medical Examiner, posthumously examined for signs of abuse and finally released to HFBA for burial.

A call came in to the HFBA office regarding a woman's body which had been in the morgue for four months. Her much younger husband was unconcerned and claimed that he did not know how to have her buried without expenditure. HFBA was able to convince him to release the body for burial. After consenting, he disappeared without attending the funeral or having any other contact with HFBA.

Mrs. Samuels was buried by HFBA while her husband was in a care facility with advanced Alzheimer's disease, unaware of her death. Six months later, Mr. Samuels' burial was also performed by HFBA. Their entire family of several generations rests in HFBA's Mount Richmond Cemetery.

**Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

decendent. On a regular basis, Rabbi Shmuel Plafker, HFBA's chaplain, walks through specific sections of Mount Richmond Cemetery, making note of each grave lacking identification. Extensive archival work done in our office follows. Much time is spent researching hand written records to match an individual with a particular gravesite.



HFBA has been able to mark all gravesites at Mount Richmond Cemetery for deaths occurring up until 1990. Through the generosity of HFBA supporters, over 300 graves received markers in the last year. A future campaign will be initiated to purchase markers for the thousands of unmarked or illegibly identified graves at our historic Silver Lake Cemetery.

UPON REQUEST, A COPY OF OUR ANNUAL REPORT MAY BE OBTAINED FROM OUR OFFICE, 224 W. 35TH STREET, ROOM 300, NEW YORK, NY 10001 OR FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, CHARITIES BUREAU, 120 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY 10271.

OUR HFBA DVD

A new video about HFBA is viewable on our website, www.hebrewfreeburial.org.

To request a free DVD, please contact us at:

info@hebrewfreeburial.org
212-239-1662



WE THANK OUR VOLUNTEERS...

We are especially grateful to the many volunteers from the **Solomon Schechter School of Queens**, who recently helped with the upkeep of our cemeteries. **All the volunteers have made a valuable contribution to *chesed shel emet*.**



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER IN OUR OFFICE OR ARE PART OF A GROUP WILLING TO WORK AT OUR CEMETERIES, PLEASE CALL HFBA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AMY KOPLOW AT (212) 239-1662.

FROM THE MAILBAG



I am very impressed with the clean-up efforts – other cemeteries should look to you as a model. Involving yeshiva students is a practical means to harness manpower and a great demonstration of *chinuch* (educating the young). What a *kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of the divine name)! *Kol Hakavod* (congratulations)!

E.K.

Thanks deeply for visiting the Solomon Schechter Day School of Bergen County...to speak with our students...It was a very powerful and positive introduction for most of these students to the *mitzvot* of *chesed shel emet* (acts of loving-kindness). I feel that the positive reception you received...will encourage my institution to raise its level of participation in the activities of HFBA in the future.

Rabbi Allen Selis
Middle School Jewish Studies Coordinator
Solomon Schechter Day School of Bergen County

MOUNT RICHMOND CEMETERY JEWISH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE — FALL 2007

*Please note that the cemetery will be closing early on the day prior to each festival.

Wednesday	Sept 12	Erev Rosh Hashana	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM SHARP
Thursday	Sept 13	Rosh Hashana	CLOSED
Friday	Sept 14	Rosh Hashana	CLOSED
Friday	Sept 21	Erev Yom Kippur	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM SHARP
Saturday	Sept 22	Yom Kippur	CLOSED
Wednesday	Sept 26	Erev Sukkot	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM SHARP
Thursday	Sept 27	Sukkot	CLOSED
Friday	Sept 28	Sukkot	CLOSED
Wednesday	Oct 3	Hoshana Rabbah	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM SHARP
Thursday	Oct 4	Shmini Atzeret	CLOSED
Friday	Oct 5	Simchat Torah	CLOSED

**YIZKOR IS RECITED ON
YOM KIPPUR (9/22)
AND
SHMINI ATZERET (10/4)**

**THE CEMETERY ALWAYS
CLOSES AT 1:00 PM
ON FRIDAYS YEAR ROUND
AND REOPENS SUNDAYS
AT 9:00 AM**

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

Молитва Кадиш

Готовщина смерти - *Йорцайт* - это особое время, когда душа покойного имеет особо сильную связь с родственниками. В *Йорцайт* отдают дань памяти умершего, вспоминают о нём и размышляют над сущностью его жизни. В этот день принято читать молитву *Кадиш*, буквально - "освящение", обязательно в присутствии миньяна (кворума из 10 совершеннолетних мужчин). Еврейская традиция нам говорит, что прославление живущими святости и величия Всевышнего возвышает душу покойного в будущем мире.

Если у родственников нет возможности в день *Йорцайт* самим прочесть *Кадиш*, то обычай предписывает позаботиться о его прочтении другими людьми. **Пожертвование на сумму 180 долларов** гарантирует организацию Еврейским Благотворительным Похоронным Обществом HFBA «Вечного Кадиша» - ежегодного чтения молитвы *Кадиш* в *Йорцайт*, **не зависимо от того, покоится ли близкий Вам человек на одном из наших кладбищ.**

Пожалуйста звоните нам по телефону **(212) 239-1662** чтобы заказать «Вечный Кадиш». Также Вы можете прислать пожертворание по почте, с указанием даты и времени смерти, еврейского имени покойного и еврейского имени его отца. Пожалуйста не забудьте указать Ваш телефон на случай если потребуется уточнить эту информацию. Установление «Вечного Кадиша» предоставит Вам возможность не только почтить память близких, но и исполнить высочайшую *мицву* - помочь с достоинством проводить в последний путь малоимущих согласно еврейской традиции.

График работы кладбища Mt. Richmond в еврейские праздники ~ Осень 2007 г.

*Кладбище всегда закрыто на Шаббат с 1:00 дня в пятницу до 9:00 утра в воскресенье.

С вопросами о расписании звоните нам в оффис по телефону 212-239-1662

Rosh Hashana: Новый Год

Среда, 12 сентября	канун Нового Года	с 9:00 утра до 1:00 дня
Четверг, 13 сентября	Новый Год	ЗАКРЫТО
Пятница, 14 сентября	Новый Год	ЗАКРЫТО

Yom Kippur: Йом Киппур

Пятница, 21 сентября	канун Йом Киппура	с 9:00 утра до 1:00 дня
Суббота, 22 сентября	Шаббат, Йом Киппур	ЗАКРЫТО

Sukkot, Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah: Суккот, Шмини Ацерет и Симхат Тора

Среда, 26 октября	канун Суккота	с 9:00 утра до 1:00 дня
Четверг, 27 октября	Суккот	ЗАКРЫТО
Пятница, 28 октября	Суккот	ЗАКРЫТО
Среда, 3 октября	Хошана Раба	с 9:00 утра до 1:00 дня
Четверг, 4 октября	Шмини Ацерет	ЗАКРЫТО
Пятница, 5 октября	Симхат Тора	ЗАКРЫТО

Поминальная молитва *ИЦКОР* читается:
в Йом Киппур, в субботу, 22 сентября
на Шмини Ацерет, в четверг, 4 октября



We are pleased to announce that the following names have been added to our

Leave Your Mark

Donor Plaque in the Weinberg Chapel
at Mt. Richmond Cemetery:

PROFESSOR PHYLLIS GOLD GLUCK

HILDA HESS

JANET KREMSKY

THOMAS H. MAUPIN

MURRAY AND GLORIA OSTRIN

CHAIM AND COHAVIT SCHONFELD

Please consider adding your name by sponsoring four grave markers for unmarked graves for \$600.



CHESED SHEL EMET—HOW YOU CAN HELP

PLACE HFBA *tzedakah* boxes in a house of *shiva* or in your home, school or local kosher establishment.

CELEBRATE a *simcha* or commemorate a loss with HFBA cards. Cards cost \$10 and can include a personalized message.

ENROLL a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in our “Mitzvah Circle” by suggesting a gift to HFBA to your guests. The generous child who shares his/her *simcha* in this way receives a framed certificate.

DONATE your property, used vehicle or boat to HFBA.

ESTABLISH an HFBA Forever Gift Annuity or Charitable Trust Plan. In addition to the guaranteed income and tax benefits, these plans ensure that HFBA’s promise of a Jewish burial to future generations of indigent Jews will be fulfilled.

REMEMBER to include HFBA in your will with a bequest.

CONTRIBUTE to HFBA to ensure an annual *Yahrzeit* reminder for your lost loved ones.

“LEAVE YOUR MARK” by sponsoring a grave marker for an unmarked grave for a donation of

\$150 and you will receive a framed certificate. Sponsor four markers and a plaque with your name will be added to our roster at the Weinberg Chapel at Mt. Richmond Cemetery.

ARRANGE for *kaddish* to be said for the eleven month mourning period following a death of a relative or friend for a donation of \$360.

INSTITUTE a perpetual *Yahrzeit Kaddish* for your loved one for a donation of \$180.

SPONSOR perpetual grave care for an indigent’s grave for \$600.

VOLUNTEER with your friends, classmates, fellow group members, or family at our cemeteries as part of our Cemetery Clean-Up Project.

GIVE us your old *talleisim* for use as part of the dress for deceased men who HFBA will be called upon to bury.

USE your clerical skills in our midtown office as a volunteer.

GET INVOLVED as a professional with HFBA by donating your expertise and skills in an area that can help us.



Original pushka from 1909 at HFBA’s Mount Richmond Cemetery

PLEASE HELP OUT TODAY BY SENDING A DONATION IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.