

# Chesed

HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION

Volume 7/No. 2

June 1996/Sivan 5756

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*Chesed* is published by the Hebrew Free Burial Association, 363 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10001. Telephone 212 239-1662 HFBA is a beneficiary of UJA/Federation.

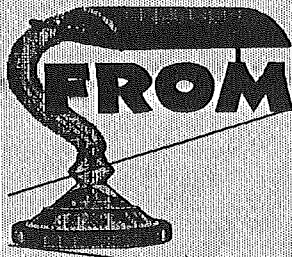
## HFBA TO MAKE MONUMENTS AVAILABLE TO CLIENTS

Providing the funds for a funeral is beyond the means of HFBA clients. Until now, however, adding a monument to mark the grave was something beyond the dreams of most client families.

The success of LEAVE YOUR MARK, our effort to mark the graves of indigents buried in Mt. Richmond Cemetery who no longer have family members to provide them, has led to an expansion of the program. HFBA will now make simple, modest monuments available to the families of indigents who would like the same consideration given to their loved ones.

Families will be able to order stones in a choice of two styles. Two samples are now on display at Mt. Richmond Cemetery, where orders can be placed. The monuments will be manufactured and shipped together with our annual LEAVE YOUR MARK stones in order to be able to pass the substantial savings realized to our client families.

"We are very pleased to offer these stones to those in need," said president Gerald E. Feldhamer. "Many people have asked how they could order a low cost, appropriate memorial to their recently deceased loved ones. We are happy to make the monuments available to everyone."



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

### APPROACHING THE MILLENIUM

Though it is only 1996, we seem to be overloading on the "dawn of a new century" hype. If the media are to be believed, the beginning of the 21st century will bring amazing technological, social, economic and political changes.

Pardon us if we defer the celebration a bit while we think back to the beginning of the last century.

As the year 1900 approached, the Hebrew Free Burial Association was still a relatively young organization. It was not even 20 years old, but it already occupied an important place in the Jewish community. From the beginning of the century until the end of World War I, Jewish immigration reached levels never before or after attained. The Lower East Side teemed with Jewish life, and it seemed like everyone either settled in New York or stopped here on their way to somewhere else.

During the first decades of the century, thousands of families called upon us to help them through the saddest moments of their lives: burying children, parents, brothers and sisters. Hundreds more had no one in America when they died. They were interred with the same respect and care as the rest of our clients.

We grew as New York's Jewish community grew. As Jewish neighborhoods became established in other boroughs, HFBA followed,

raising funds and providing funerals. By mid-century, New York's Jews were firmly ensconced in all five boroughs and in the suburbs. Again, we followed. As some of the *landschafts* societies brought over from Europe began to weaken, we helped strengthen them and ensure that community burial societies could continue to function in the new land.

What do we see when we look toward the year 2000? In many respects it will be a repeat of the last 100 years. Once again, Jewish immigration has climbed and we are here to help the New Americans. We still perform exactly the same function in much the same way as we did a century ago.

Of course, we're not totally in the 19th century. Modern administration and technology has helped us to become more efficient and effective, stretching your contributions further. Maintenance costs are climbing as our cemeteries age, and we must adapt and raise additional monies to repair the infrastructure and keep everything running smoothly.

We still depend on you. Since our first days, HFBA has existed because those who do not need our services believe that they must remain available for those who do. A decade ago, we began our second century of with an ambitious program to turn the cemeteries around so that visitors could find respite and tranquility. With your help, we have reached that goal. We are

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## High School Students Volunteer To Spruce Up Silver Lake Cemetery

What do you do if you are a high school student and you notice that a nearby cemetery could use a little "tidying up?" If you are one of a group of students from Temple Israel on Staten Island, you volunteer to clean up, of course.

Rabbi David Katz, spiritual leader of the congregation, noted proudly that the project was conceived and directed by the Talmud Torah students themselves. "The children saw a need in the community and addressed it in the most efficient and effective way possible. They showed tremendous *chesed* in cleaning

a cemetery that is infrequently visited and no longer used for burials."

Rabbi Shmuel Plafker, whose responsibilities as Associate Executive include supervising all maintenance work, emphasized that Silver Lake Cemetery receives regular maintenance from our contracted team. However, debris and wind-blown refuse often collect between the closely-spaced graves, particularly during a wet, freezing winter. He praised the students for the high standards of their work, which included a thorough inspection and cleaning of the refuse.

**A**

fascinating six minute videotape of the work of the Hebrew Free Burial Association is now available to interested donors. The short work describes our one hundred year history and provides a brief walking tour of Mt. Richmond Cemetery.

**I**f you would like a copy of the video, please contact the HFBA office, 212 239-1662.

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE  
THAT THE FOLLOWING NAMES  
HAVE BEEN ADDED TO OUR  
LEAVE YOUR MARK DONOR PLAQUE  
IN THE MT. RICHMOND CEMETERY  
CHAPEL BUILDING:

*In memory of Anna and Max Bashist*  
*In memory of Kopel and Hana Jaienstein*  
*Eleanor and Lawrence Butner*  
*The Martyrs Reb Yechiel Ben Dov Berish*  
*Rochel Leah Bas Reb Shlomo Zev*  
*Reb Daniel Ben Reb Moshe Halperin*  
*Bracha Bas Nechama*  
*Mr. and Mrs. Avi Levin*  
*In Memory of Lena and Max Berman and Hermian and Jacob Teller*  
*Moshe, Ariel and Avrohom Feldhamer*  
*Bomstein and Wisnicki Families who perished in the Holocaust*

The Hebrew Free Burial Association thanks  
the Jeanette and Nathan Weinberg  
Foundation for their generous grant. The  
new funds will provide free burials for  
recent immigrants of the former Soviet  
Union.

## THREE HUNDRED GRAVE MARKERS UNVEILED AS LEAVE YOUR MARK GROWS

*Entire Family Among Those Whose Resting Places Are  
Marked*

It was a mild spring day at Mt. Richmond Cemetery, the kind that almost makes people forget that they are standing in a burial ground that holds tens of thousands of departed souls. The air was fresh and clean, and all was silent except for the chirping of the early spring birds and their young.

The cemetery was nearly empty except for the small group who arrived to witness the unveiling of 300 simple stone monuments in various sections of the cemetery. As they walked along the main road, their serene mood matched the tranquil landscape, the soft sunlight drifting through budding trees and shrubs.

The annual LEAVE YOUR MARK unveiling has become a private event, attended only by HFBA board members who substitute for the families of the deceased. Each year the sense of mission grows stronger as more graves are marked and more poignant stories uncovered during the weeks of archival research that accompanies the program.

### **Young Family Among The Deceased**

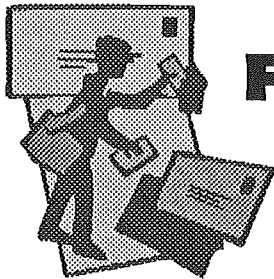
This year the tragic story of Rudolph and Mollie Steingart and their young daughter, Rose, became known at last.

Rudolph and Mollie had immigrated to America in 1910. The next year Rose was born, the first in the family to receive American citizenship. They lived in a small East Side apartment.

The new year of 1916 had just begun when all three were asphyxiated by incompletely burned gases given off by the coal-burning furnace that heated their building. Rudolph was 28, Mollie was 26 and little Rose was only five years old.

The Hebrew Free Burial Association was notified of the tragedy by a brother-in-law who, like many immigrants, could not afford to bury the family. They were laid to rest at Mt. Richmond Cemetery.

For eighty years their graves were anonymous. Thanks to LEAVE YOUR MARK supporters, they will now be known to all who visit Mt. Richmond.



## FROM THE MAILBOX....

Dear Mr. Feldhamer:

My heartfelt thanks to the Hebrew Free Burial Association for sending me the framed certificate acknowledging my participation in LEAVE YOUR MARK. I shall always treasure the beautifully designed certificate as well as your very warm, kind words in the letter accompanying it.

May your wonderful organization never lack the means to continue to be a true friend to so many of our less fortunate brethren.

R.G.

Dear Ms. Wiesel:

Thank you very much for sending the video. It was very touching.

I never knew the Hebrew Free Burial Association existed until six months ago...

Like the man in the video, I too searched for my brother for many years. I was determined to find him, and I did (at Mt. Richmond Cemetery).

Enclosed is a gift for the wonderful work that the Hebrew Free Burial Association does. Thank you so much for your effort.

HP

Dear Mr. Gross:

Enclosed is a check for \$600 for four tombstones. It would have special meaning for me if you could use it for the Willowbrook children as I had a brother-in-law who was in a similar institution for many years until his death.

M.F.

## Did You Know?

Making a donation to the Hebrew Free Burial Association in your will is as simple as inserting a sentence....

Call Sandra Wiesel,  
HFBA Administrator,  
at 212 239-1662  
for more information.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

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closer to our dream of marking every grave in Mt. Richmond Cemetery with a simple monument.

We enter the new millenium gratified to know that our friends and supporters remain united with us and determined to provide a Jewish burial for every Jew. We look forward to your continued involvement.