

HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION

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**In This Issue**

② HFBA reaches to Arkansas to bring home a young Jewish woman who died in a car accident.

③ A South Shore community join the Annual Chayei Sarah education and fund raising effort in Long Beach.

④ Another successful Siyum Mishnayos marks the end of one year of learning -- and the beginning of the next.

⑤ HALB girls learn that Chesed can be very sweaty work at Silver Lake Cemetery.

⑥ More From Our Mailbox: Grateful relatives write to thank HFBA -- and you!

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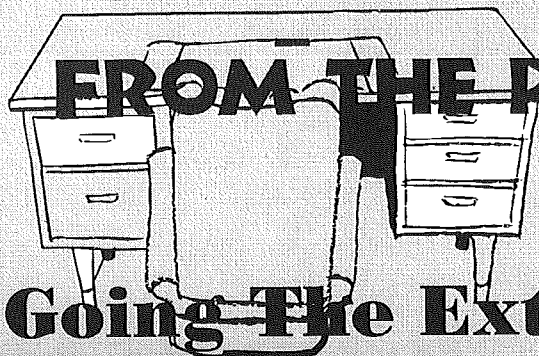
# Singles Meet to "Leave Their Mark"

Most young people in their 20s and 30s are thinking of the robust years ahead of them. HFBA's Young Leadership group, rallied by Rabbi Allen Schwartz of Congregation Ohab Zedek of Manhattan, turned their thoughts to the end of life at a special dessert reception hosted by organization president Gerald E. Feldhamer, and his wife, Karin.

Admission to the party, which was held on February 24<sup>th</sup>, was by more than invitation. Every person in the room joined our "Leave Your Mark" project, sponsoring at least one marker that will be placed over an unmarked grave in Mt. Richmond Cemetery. The enthusiastic response of the Upper West Side singles at the event has helped HFBA come closer to its goal of placing simple monuments over every unmarked grave in the cemetery.

The young people were visibly moved by Rabbi Schwartz's remarks about the importance of having a tangible indicator of who is buried in each grave. Rabbi Schwartz's personal donation of five markers, dedicated to the memory of those in his father's family who died in the Holocaust, encouraged each participant to do the maximum possible for HFBA.

*Continued on page 4*



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

### Going The Extra Thousand Miles

Svetlana Dragoy died in a tragic car accident while on vacation with a friend. The New York resident and mother of two was a passenger in a car that went off a bridge in Russelville, Arkansas, and was killed instantly. But thanks to the Hebrew Free Burial Association, her family was not stranded in its time of need.

Svetlana and her mother Rozalia are recent immigrants to the United States. Mrs. Rozalia's misery was compounded by the fact that she did not have enough money to transport her daughter's body from Arkansas, where it lay in a local mortuary, to New York. How could she bring her daughter home and provide her with a Jewish burial?

When Rozalia Dragoy first came to us, she was panicked. The cost of a funeral, plot and burial were more than she could imagine saving in a decade. But even if she could afford a bare bones funeral, she would need to lay out several thousand dollars for transporting her daughter's body before she could even begin to bury her.

Our staff members immediately began

making arrangements for her daughter's funeral. However, there was still the problem of transporting the body and paying the Arkansas mortuary where Ms. Dragoy's remains were stored.

As you might expect, those fees were paid by the Hebrew Free Burial Association. On August 26, Rozalia Dragoy was able to lay her daughter to rest, surrounded by her family, friends and the caring environment of the HFBA.

The sad story of Svetlana Dragoy illustrates both the need for the HFBA and for the generous contributions of our friends and supporters. The vast majority of our burials are relatively simple to arrange and execute. We know in advance how much they will cost. But when a case like Svetlana's arrives, we must have the ability to go beyond, to reach deep into our pockets and do whatever we must to ensure that an indigent Jew can be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

Thankfully, situations like these don't occur too often. When they do arise, I am thankful once again that we have friends like you to whom we can turn, so that people like Rozalia Dragoy can continue to turn to us.

*Gerald E. Feldhamer*

## Chayei Sarah Breakfast Reaches Out To Encompass Oceanside Community

The Hebrew Free Burial Association's increasingly successful citywide Chayei Sarah campaign, which raises both funds and awareness for the agency, got a welcome boost from this year's Long Beach breakfast.

For the first time, the neighboring community of Oceanside was an active participant in the breakfast. Rabbi Jay Yaacov Schwartz, spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Oceanside, was honored with the Rabbinic Achievement Award. Members of the Oceanside community mingled with their Long Beach neighbors at the morning event.



Shellie and Bernie Neumark, Long Beach residents and tireless workers within the Jewish community, received the Anshei Chesed Award for their ongoing involvement in Jewish affairs. The Neumarks are supporters of the Chabad movement regionally, nationally and internationally and supporters of Bikur Cholim in Long Beach.

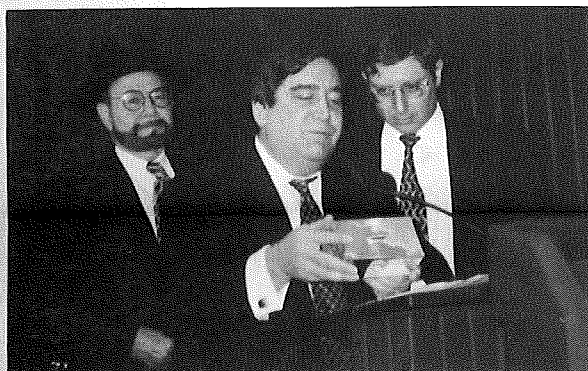
In addition to serving as rabbi of the Young Israel of Oceanside, Rabbi Schwartz is a counselor in private practice. He holds masters degrees in history and philosophy from Yeshiva University as well as a masters in counseling from the Post Graduate Center for Mental Health. He and his wife, Elisheva, are the parents of a young daughter.



*(Above) HFBA First Vice President Bjorn Bamberger presents the Anshei Chesed Award to Bernie and Shellie Neumark of Long Beach.*

*(Left) Rabbi Jay Yaacov Schwartz, spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Oceanside, accepts the Rabbinic Achievement Award from his colleague, Rabbi Chaim Wakstak of the Young Israel of Long Beach.*

## Annual Siyum Mishnayos Pays Tribute to West Side Community Leaders



*HFBA Treasurer Jack M. Gross reads the inscription on the Rabbinic Achievement Award just prior to presenting it to Rabbi Allen Schwartz, spiritual leader of Congregation Ohab Zedek.*

In just a few years, the HFBA's Siyum Mishnayos has taken on the tone of a memorable happening on New York's Upper West Side. The festive gathering marks the end of a period of study in memory of those buried in Mt. Richmond Cemetery during the Hebrew Year 5758 and those who perished in the Holocaust and were never buried properly. It is attended by the scores of men who have studied a portion of the *Mishnah* in the past year as part of this ongoing program as well as by friends and supporters of the HFBA.

An overflow crowd gathered to honor two community leaders at this year's Siyum. Rabbi Allen Schwartz of Congregation Ohab Zedek was recognized for his outstanding leadership of one of the community's major religious institutions. Philanthropist Jack Weinreb received the Anshei Chesed award for his many accomplishments in all areas of Jewish life.



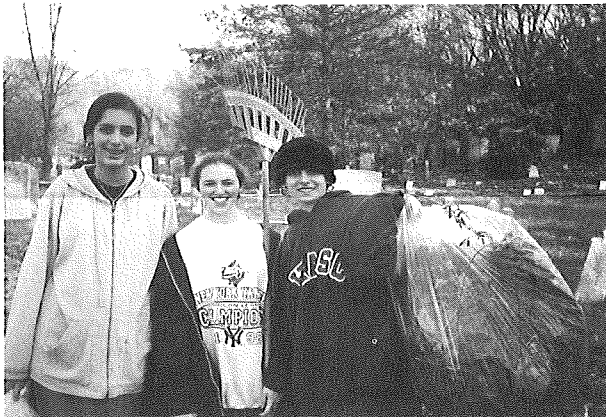
*Rabbi Chaskell Besser, a member of HFBA's board of directors, and President Gerald E. Feldhamer, congratulate Jacob Weinreb as he receives his award.*

## Singles Meet To "Leave Their Mark"

*Cont. from page 1*

Singles in the greater metropolitan area who are interested in participating in future events are urged to send their names and addresses to the office with a note requesting that they be added to the Young Leadership mailing list.

## YESHIVA STUDENTS' CHESED PROJECT TAKES THEM TO SILVER LAKE



*HALB students Mindy Levine and Bryna Billauer and Mrs. Atara Segal, coordinator of the school's Chesed program, were all smiles after the cleanup at Silver Lake Cemetery.*

Two busloads of girls from the Hebrew Academy of Long Beach learned that *chesed* is sometimes very sweaty work when they filled more than 100 garbage bags with raked leaves at the Silver Lake Cemetery this fall.

Accompanied by three members of the Hebrew Academy's staff, Mrs. Atara Segal, Mrs. Kadosh and Mrs. Levner, the girls brought their rakes and their energy to Silver Lake. Under the direction of Rabbi Shmuel Plafker, they spent several hours helping to ensure that the graves at Silver Lake Cemetery remain free of natural debris and accessible to visitors.

Kudos are due to the girls and their accompanying staff members who made the trip, and to the girls' high school of the Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, located in Hewlett Bay Park.

## New Names Added to Leave Your Mark Plaque

Sixteen new names have been added to the Donor Plaque at Mt. Richmond Cemetery. Each represents an individual or family who has contributed a minimum of four markers as part of our "Leave Your Mark" program.

Louis & Miriam Leifer,

*In Memory of our beloved parents*

Murry & Faye Kagan

In Memory of Yehuda Ariel Ben Yechiel Tzvi Liker

Anne & Howard Rosman,

*In Memory of Jennie Rosman*

In Memory of Yosef Shaja & Mirel Kirschenbaum  
and Saul and Leo Kirschenbaum

In Memory of Morris & Rebecca Polen,

*by their sons*

Ernest G. Kahn,

*In Memory of Siegbert & Kate Vorchheimer*

Dr. Allan J. Scher,

*In Memory of Ephraim David Scher*

Dr. & Mrs. Walter Wasser,

*In Memory of Marcel Parsons*

Sharon & Stephen Wieder, *In Memory of Lottie &  
Morris Diamond and Toby & Mayer Wieder*

Adam Block

Shirley & Louis Cooper

Rose & Joseph Godick

Ann & Joel Green

Sara Miriam & Yaakov Rubin

Albert Schultz

To Honor the Memory of Mr. Walter & Ms. Leoni  
Michel

In Memory of Elmer Drier

For information on how you can join this  
dedicated group, contact the HFBA office at 212  
239-1662.



## From The Mailbox...

Service. Service. Service. As everyone knows, it can turn a good experience into a great one. As the following letters attest, it can also make an unbearable sorrow less devastating to bereaved relatives.

Dear HFBA:

I wish to thank Rabbi Plafker for the time, kindness and understanding he showed me, my sister and my brother-in-law when we went to the cemetery on a very hot day in August.

He was very involved with my cousin's burial and went so far as to go to her house, where they showed him her birth certificate to demonstrate that she was a *Bas Yisroel* (a Jewish woman).

Unfortunately, we had not known of her whereabouts. But thanks to HFBA, she had a Jewish burial. We are grateful for this *chesed shel emeth* (final kindness).

Sincerely,

Rabbi and Mrs. K.K.

Dear Mr. Feldhamer:

*It is with profound appreciation that I write this letter.*

*Last Sunday my penniless sister died in a New York convalescent hospital. While I tried to seek help from California, the social worker, Lori Denton, told me about the Hebrew Free Burial Association.*

*In less than an hour, Mrs. Leist called me in California to make final arrangements. Her kind yet vigilant attention allowed me to make immediate arrangements for a flight to New Jersey. During my hasty and tearful departure, I had visions of my kind and forgiving sister being buried in a squalid pauper's field in a deteriorated area of New York. Knowing myself, I would have carried this pain with me for the rest of my life. I have always expected perfection from myself, no matter what my station in life at the time.*

*Upon meeting Rabbi Shmuel Plafker at this graceful, reverent place called Mt. Richmond Cemetery, I found immediate peace. I couldn't express my gratitude eloquently enough to Rabbi Plafker for the blessed service he is performing with your organization.*

*I have lived in California for 30 years, where everything is based upon wealth, even among Jews. This experience with your organization and Rabbi Plafker have validated my Jewish roots and the substance of our magnificent religion.*

*Warmest thanks,*

*S.P.*