

A master gravestone restorer battles time and the elements

Kai Nalenz of Gravestone Services of New England tells HFBA about his commitment to Silver Lake Cemetery

Gravestones have been part of my life since childhood. As a boy in Germany, I used to help my mother tend the markers in our church cemetery. Not many people, children or adults, had this privilege. In Germany, people lease a plot for 30 years. If they don't renew the lease, the stone is removed and, after a period of several years, the next body goes in.

Even though my father-in-law is a gravestone carver in Barre, Vermont, I actually learned the restoration craft from a wonderful gentleman named Fred Oakley. We shared the same love of gravestone conservation, and the same commitment to preserving a material culture that says so much about people's need to honor those who came before them.

I began my preservation work at Silver Lake in 2021 and was immediately moved by the story the cemetery told. Many Jews in earlier waves of immigration died as children or young adults. With limited education, they could not have had easy lives. I compare Silver Lake to some of the cemeteries I have helped restore in New

England, where I live. New Englanders typically outlived the Lower East Side Jewish immigrants by twenty years.

Silver Lake has been prey to the wear-and-tear of time, water and tree expansion. The landscape itself is waterlogged due to abnormal ground water conditions and a tendency to seasonal flooding. I have had to add quite a bit more gravel than usual, both to hold the stone in place and create additional drainage. Water is no friend to marble or granite. If left to the elements, even strong stone will start to "sugar."

Some stones have been buried in the ground for decades. To move and reset monuments, I use my two-ton mini-crane and motorized

wheelbarrow. As for restoration, I cannot always put the whole stone back together. Because of ground conditions, it could fall over again and likely cause more extensive damage. I preserve what we have and am gratified when I can save engraved words and images.

continued on page 2



Kai Nalenz has worked with Hebrew Free Burial Association to restore cemetery monuments since 2021.

Leave Your Mark

HFBA is on the way to its goal!

HFBA's Leave Your Mark campaign provides a simple stone marker for every gravesite. Over the past 31 years, we have placed stones on some 20,000 previously unmarked graves. And thanks to donors like you, we now have the funding to erect eight markers — each one bearing 100+ names of Jewish children buried at Silver Lake Cemetery.

Seven more markers — \$5,000 per four-foot marker

— will complete our task of memorializing each child's name. Can you help us reach our goal by August 1?

We also welcome a contribution of \$250, which pays for a grave marker at Mount Richmond and for a single name on a large monument at Silver Lake.

Please join us in our historic mission to preserve an important piece of our American Jewish heritage.

Kai Nalenz *...continued from page 1*

Restoration challenges

Restoring a broken stone takes at least two days. On Day 1, I straighten the piece remaining in the ground and adhere the top fragments to it. A day or two later, I use a hydraulic lime mortar to fill in persistent cracks. My longest repair involved many fragments and took five or six days. The work is exacting. You have to get it right the first time around. You don't get second chances in gravestone restoration. (See "before" and "after" photos at right).

When I am working at Silver Lake, quite often before the sun rises, I cannot help but think of all the sacrifices the Jewish immigrants made so that their descendants — and so many others — could have better lives. I feel fortunate that I get to play a part in preserving this piece of Jewish-American history. I don't have a job. I have a passion.

Donate your appreciated stocks

For those with appreciated assets looking to provide immediate support to our community, gifts of stock maximize your impact while maximizing your savings. When you cash out your stocks, you are required to pay capital gains tax. However, if you transfer the stock directly, you will be able to deduct the full amount of your stock, completely avoiding capital gains tax.

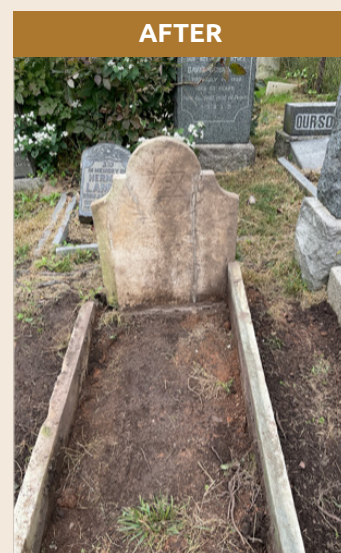
For more information visit:
www.hebrewfreeburial.org/stocks

A Tisha B'Av cemetery tradition

Tisha B'Av is the saddest day on the Jewish calendar. We mourn the destruction of our two temples in Jerusalem, as well as other disasters that befell the Jewish people on the 9th of Av. Ashkenazic Jewish tradition encourages us to visit a cemetery on Tisha B'Av afternoon.

Tisha B'Av is observed from nightfall on August 6 and ends at night on August 7.

Mount Richmond Cemetery will be open from 9:00 AM - 3:45 PM sharp.



Kai Nalenz's restored gravestones at Silver Lake Cemetery



HFBA *Helps*

Names, details and images have been anonymized to preserve confidentiality.

Alice B., 101 and long widowed, lived with her nephew Stanley in her Long Island home. Stanley called HFBA in September 2021 to say his aunt died. Between the two of them, they had been receiving Social Security benefits with which they paid rent and living expenses. At the time of her death, Alice had one dollar in the bank and nothing set aside for burial. An estranged son would not contribute to HFBA's burial costs or authorize her burial. Stanley did not have a computer or internet access and was increasingly difficult to reach — a problem as well for the Nassau County Medical Examiner's office, which needed Stanley's signature to release his aunt's body. We involved the Nassau County Public Administrator and ultimately were able to bury Alice. Nobody came to her funeral.

Devora D., 54, was found dead in a Staten Island hotel room. When Misaskim, a Jewish not-for-profit organization that provides bereavement services to the Jewish community, learned of Devora's death, they shared her life story with us. In her twenties, Devora had left Ari, her two-year-old son, in the care of her mother and soon lost contact with her family. Devora abused alcohol and eventually received housing and supportive services from Project Hospitality, an interfaith organization dedicated to homeless Staten Islanders. After our own unsuccessful efforts to track down Devora's Social Security number, Project Hospitality found it for us. Devora's "dazed" son authorized the burial and one of his friends contributed to HFBA's funeral expenses. Devora's elderly mother initially said she was too weak to stand at the funeral, but with the help of two young women, she made it to Mount Richmond Cemetery. Several yeshiva students and some of Ari's friends carried the coffin and lowered it into the grave. Devora's mother told HFBA, "My daughter

wanted nothing to do with Judaism, and now look who is burying her."

Jim R., 75, was in poor health at a nursing home when Sofia, his social worker, called HFBA in February to request a pre-need burial application. Sofia told us Jim had a half-brother, **Steven L.**, 62, and gave us his home address. Unfortunately, Steven had brain cancer and was unaware that Jim was near death. Before Sofia could complete our application, Jim died.

As it turns out, Steven's daughter, Michelle L., was in New York visiting her ailing father. She learned of Uncle Jim's death, and as his next-of-kin, authorized his burial. She attended Jim's funeral at Mount Richmond Cemetery.

One day after Sofia called HFBA, we received a call from Steven's ex-wife. She had found us in a Google search. She told us Steven was Jewish, near death and penniless, and wanted to know what funeral services we could provide. We told her and then asked for Steven's address. When we began entering Steven's address into our system, it auto-filled in. We had just gotten it from Sofia: we were dealing with burial arrangements for two half-brothers within a mere 24 hours.

In April – one month after Jim died – Steven succumbed to cancer. Michelle now authorized her father's burial. The half-brothers were buried side-by-side at Mount Richmond.

Natalia Z., 51, a former elementary school teacher and Russian immigrant, was hospitalized with stage III cancer at a NYC medical center. We learned about Natalia when her elderly mother's neighbors, Misha and Sasha Sorkin, contacted HFBA. The Sorkin brothers told us that Natalia and her mother received Medicaid and disability payments but otherwise had no income. "Natalia's mother is 90 years old and in a panic about what to do when her daughter dies," they told us. We learned that Natalia's only other family member was her twentysomething daughter Veronica. When her disease advanced, Natalia moved back to Brooklyn to be near her mother. Veronica, a college student, remained in California. As Natalia's legal next-of-kin, Veronica called us to arrange a funeral for her mother and set up a pre-need arrangement for her grandmother. Three people attended Natalia's Mount Richmond funeral: her elderly mother, a home care attendant, and Natalia's ex-husband. Mr. Z had remained on friendly terms with Natalia and now served as translator during her funeral service.

Реставратор противостоит времени и силе тяжести на кладбище Сильвер Лейк

Кай Наленц - владелец компании по реставрации могильных памятников в Новой Англии

«Могильные камни стали частью моей жизни с самого детства. Я рос в Германии и ещё мальчиком помогал матери ухаживать за памятниками на кладбище при нашей церкви.

Ремеслу реставратора я выучился у замечательного Фреда Оу-кли в городке Барре, штат Вермонт. Мы оба влюблены в это занятие – сохранение надгробных памятников – и полны решимости увековечить эту часть культуры, выражающей нашу потребность почитать предков.

...Я начал восстановительные работы на кладбище Сильвер Лейк в 2021-м году и сразу же проникся его историей. Многие евреи первой волны иммиграции умерли в детстве или в отрочестве. У них была тяжёлая жизнь, в том числе из-за недостатка образования.

Кладбище Сильвер Лейк пришло в упадок из-за возраста, а также из-за воды и разрастания деревьев. Ландшафт здесь заболочен из-за высокого стояния грунтовых вод и частого сезонного подтопления. Мне пришлось использовать здесь намного больше чем обычно гравия, как для дополнительной опоры могильным камням, так и для улучшения дренажа.

...Работая на кладбище Сильвер Лейк, часто ещё до восхода солнца, я не могу не думать о тех лишениях, которые терпели еврейские иммигранты, чтобы потомки их жили лучше. Я ощущаю как огромную удачу участие в сохранении этой страницы американско-еврейской истории. Для меня это не работа, а подлинное увлечение.»

Доноры HFBA ежемесячно помогают в деле милосердия

Джо Хехт, наш ежемесячный донор с 2010 года

«Если Вы читаете эти строки, то вам повезло. Вы ложитесь спать на сытый желудок и просыпаетесь, имея крышу над головой. Даже если Вы небогаты, у Вас есть намного больше, чем у большинства людей в этом мире. Что касается меня, то делать ежемесячные пожертвования HFBA – это способ отблагодарить Вс-вышнего за мою замечательную семью, дружную еврейскую общину и финансовое благополучие.

Поколение моих родителей и дедушек и бабушек не было столь удачливо. Меня называли Йосеф Мордехай в честь деда, погибшего в Холокост. Я ощущаю ахраут – чувство ответственности – творить добро от его имени.»

Крейг Вольперт, наш ежемесячный донор с 2016 года

«Знакомы ли Вы с древнееврейским словом лишма? Оно означает сделать мицву без всякой мысли что-либо получить взамен.

Мои ежемесячные пожертвования Еврейскому Благотворительному Похоронному Бюро (HFBA), хоть и даются в духе лишма, тем не менее возвращаются ко мне множеством разных путей. Моя бабушка говорила: если даёшь на благотворительность, деньги опускаются в копилку, а затем поднимаются наружу, усиленные двадцатикратно.

Это и правда так. Когда стараешься делать добро, сам становишься более волеприимчив ко всему доброму и хорошему в мире.»

Пожалуйста, посмотрите, можете ли Вы давать на нужды HFBA хотя бы 18 долларов ежемесячно. Посетите нашу страничку

для спонсоров: <https://www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate/>. Или Вы можете отметить галочкой строчку о ежемесячном дарении в приложенном конверте. Мы будем искренне благодарны за пожертвование в любом размере. Заранее спасибо.

HFBA помогает

• **Деворе Д*** было 54 года когда она была найдена мёртвой в отеле на Стейтен Айленде. Еврейская некоммерческая организация Мисаским, помогающая скорбящим евреям, узнала о смерти Деворы и рассказала нам её биографию. В молодости Девора оставила своего двухлетнего сына Ари на попечение своей матери и вскоре перестала общаться с семьёй. Девора злоупотребляла алкоголем и в какой-то момент получила жильё и поддержку от программы *Гостеприимство (Hospitality)*, межконфессиональной организации, помогающей бездомным. Эта программа отследила номер социального страхования Деворы. Ари, сын Деворы, дал разрешение на похороны, а один из его друзей участвовал в оплате расходов на погребение. Престарелая мать Деворы смогла, хоть и с трудом, присутствовать на кладбище. Гроб несли друзья Ари и студенты ешивы.

• **Наталья З*** (51 год), была учительницей начальных классов, эмигрировавшей в своё время из России. Её поместили в одну из нью-йоркских больниц на третьей стадии рака. Мы узнали о Наталье, когда соседи её престарелой матери, Михаил и Александр Соркины, связались с HFBA. Братья сообщили, что Наталья и её мать получают пособия по Медикейду и по инвалидности, и других доходов у семьи нет. «Матери Наталья уже девяносто, и она в панике, не знает что делать когда Наталья умрёт», рассказали они.

Вероника, дочь Натальи, позвонила нам из Калифорнии, чтобы организовать похороны матери и договориться о будущих похоронах бабушки. На кладбище HFBA Маунт Ричмонд присутствовали трое: мать Натальи, сиделка и бывший муж Натальи, сохранивший с ней хорошие отношения.

** имена изменены*

Знакомьтесь – Дорон Бар-Лев, член Совета директоров HFBA

«Около десяти лет я был донором HFBA, а потом, после нескольких бесед с Эми Коплоу, исполнительным директором, я узнал намного больше об этой замечательной организации, и Эми предложила мне присоединиться к совету директоров, когда освободится место. Офис, где я работаю юристом по общественным финансам, всего в трёх кварталах от HFBA. Примерно через год, после дополнительной проверки, совет проголосовал за мою кандидатуру.

Деятельность HFBA задевает лучшие струны моей души, и я глубоко признателен за возможность участия в ней. Я надеюсь, что мой опыт по менеджменту, знание государственных облигаций и вопросов землепользования полезны здесь. В будущем нам понадобится ещё одно кладбище, и эти знания пригодятся для достижения долгосрочных целей HFBA.

На восьмивёсельной лодке, где четверо гребут справа и четверо слева, все прикладывают одинаковое усилие в одном ритме. После двух лет в Совете директоров я вполне могу сравнить нас с таким экипажем из восьми гребцов. Мы работаем дружно и слаженно, чтобы сделать HFBA – организацию, нацеленную на милосердие к усопшим – ещё лучше».

HFBA donors make a difference every month

Joey Hecht: "I've been a monthly donor since 2010"



If you're in a position to read these words, you're blessed. You go to sleep with a full belly. You wake up with a roof over your head. Even if you're not so privileged, you've got more than most other people in the world.

For me, setting up a monthly donation schedule with HFBA was my way of showing appreciation to *Hashem* for having endowed me with a beautiful family, a supportive community, and financial stability.

My parents' and grandparents' generation were not so lucky. I'm named Yosef Mordechai after my grandfather, who perished in the Holocaust. I have a strong feeling of *achrayut* — responsibility — to do good in his name. He never had the good fortune to do that himself.

So many people HFBA serves at end-of-life do not get the opportunity to advocate for themselves. If they could, they would say, "Please help me have a dignified departure from this world." But they can't. Making an automatic monthly donation helps me guarantee I'm doing *chesed shel emet* every day — just as HFBA does.

I believe in karma. When you do good, good comes back to you. *Chesed* is a reciprocal relationship: we show our devotion to *Hashem* and He shows His devotion to us.

Craig Wolpert: "I've been a monthly donor since 2016"



Are you familiar with the Hebrew word "*lishmah*?" It refers to doing a *mitzvah* without any personal gain in return, just as the eighteenth-century Italian Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzuto — the *Ramchal* — talked about in his writings. You honor *Hashem* by doing His work.

And yet my monthly donation to HFBA, given in the spirit of *lishmah*, comes back to me in so many different forms, and in so many beautiful instances. My grandmother used to say that when you make a charitable donation, it goes into this big pot, and it comes out with twenty times more power.

It's true. My giving to HFBA has come back to me in health, happiness, and personal success. When you try to do good, you become a person receptive to the goodness in the world.

Nobody does what HFBA does for Jews in their final hour on this earth. By now, my monthly charitable donation doesn't feel like enough. I also set up a trust this wonderful organization will receive after I pass away. The *lishmah* HFBA does touches so many lives in this world and beyond.

Consider making an ongoing monthly gift. Visit our donor page at <https://www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate/>.

You may also check off the monthly donation box in our enclosed envelope.
We are deeply grateful for any amount — and thank you.

Meet Doron Bar-Levav HFBA board member

"We're all pulling together"

I had been a regular donor for about a decade before I called Amy Koplow, HFBA's executive director, to learn more about this extraordinary organization. My office at Harris Beach, PLLC, where I work as a public finance lawyer, is three blocks from HFBA's office, and in the course of several conversations, Amy suggested I consider joining her board when a position opened up. About a year later it did, and after some additional vetting, I was voted in.

For me, HFBA touched the right heartstrings and I am deeply moved to be part of its mission. For HFBA, I believe I bring useful experience with governance, government bonds, and land-use issues to the table. One day we will need to open up another cemetery and I'll be ready



to apply my professional skills to HFBA's long-term strategic needs.

I also sit on the Jewish National Fund's New York City board. Nearly everyone in the Jewish world knows about JNF's work with land-use issues in Israel. Not as many know about the dignity HFBA affords any Jew who dies without enough money, friends or family to obtain a traditional burial. For me, and for my fellow board members, our commitment stems from the desire to help Jews in their loneliest hour. We all share the same motivation.

If you've ever been in an eight-man scull, where four people sit on one side, four on the other, you all have to pull on the oars with the same effort at the same time. After two and a half years on the board, I can say we are like that eight-man scull: in sync with each other, all pulling together to help HFBA be the best *chesed* organization it can be.

**We need your help now
more than ever**



**Donate online at
www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate**

Giving on our secure website is easy
and efficient!

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.

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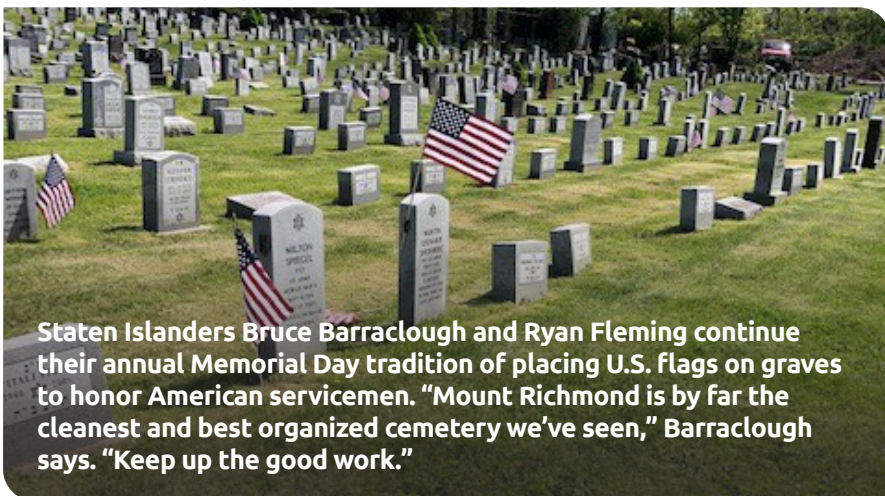


HFBA breakfast shines a light on acts of loving-kindness



The Riverdale (Bronx) community hosted its first in-person HFBA breakfast since 2019. Four individuals, committed to the unity and spiritual health of the local Jewish community, received HFBA's annual awards on March 27 at the Riverdale Jewish Center.

Pictured, from left: Shari Safra, HFBA board president; Andrea Harris, breakfast chair and board member; Amy Koplow, executive director; honorees Leah Ferster, Ilana Gordon, and Shifra Landowne; Daniel Pilarski, first VP; David Knapp and Bryan Alter, board members. Not pictured: Allon Franklin (honoree).



Staten Islanders Bruce Barraclough and Ryan Fleming continue their annual Memorial Day tradition of placing U.S. flags on graves to honor American servicemen. "Mount Richmond is by far the cleanest and best organized cemetery we've seen," Barraclough says. "Keep up the good work."

Remember HFBA in your will

Give a gift that lasts forever and costs nothing today

The pandemic has shown us how crucial a will is for ourselves and our loved ones. Writing a will can help you:

- Assign guardians for your children and your pets
- Make a plan for your assets and possessions
- Remember HFBA and other organizations you care about
- Dictate your funeral wishes

FREEWILL

Use "FreeWill," a no-cost tool that takes 20 minutes to create or update a will. You can find it at www.hebrewfreeburial.org/freewill.

Create your legacy and protect what matters to you. Use your smartphone's QR reader to access more information about Freewill.

