

The Hebrew Cemetery Association

By Lorrie Klemons, Publicity

It is painful to lose someone you love. It is even more painful to grieve by yourself, isolated and alone. One of the great things about being Jewish is our tradition. Just as there is a Jewish way of life, so too, is there a Jewish way of death. Our Judaism provides us with a pattern of practice and ritual for every aspect of death. Keenly sensitive to the needs of the bereaved, our traditions and rituals incorporate the utmost regard for the dying and the deepest concern for those left behind to mourn.

When you lose someone you love you feel shock, despair, isolation, anger, at times, even guilt. How does one cope with the bar-

rage of emotions that arise at such a catastrophic loss? How can one channel these emotions into positive and productive expressions of grief?

Judaism teaches us to love life. That love is so much more passionate when we embrace the traditions and rituals that give it true meaning. When we embrace life in even the most mundane of activities, we bring ourselves to a higher spiritual level. In Judaism, our attitudes about death are shaped by our love of life... for Judaism is a way life. So when we bury someone we love, our being takes on another whole existence as our Jewish rites of mourning become more for us the living than for the dead.

Our Jewish practices of mourning serve to both honor the deceased and comfort the bereaved. While those who lay dying often lose their sense of identity, isolated by their very own American society, Jewish tradition recognizes that death is part of everyday life and teaches us to face it with realism and honesty. The tearing of a mourner's garment or the wearing of a torn piece of black ribbon is a sign of the tear in our hearts as we publicly confront the death of a loved one.

We bury our dead in traditional white linen shrouds and plain pine coffins to remind us that death is the great equalizer. According to Rabbis Ron Isaacs and Kerry Olitzky, "In the democracy of

death, all are equal, no matter what their social or economic status." It is the soul that ultimately defines the person, not the material possessions that one boasts. The Zohar states that "...That which constitutes a real person is the soul, the rest being only garments which cover the inner essence."

As we celebrate the holiday of Hanukkah, we remember the Divine intervention of our God and the miracles that He blessed us with... particularly the Miracle of Light. At this season when we reflect on our historical victories over our oppressors, try and find a way to bring God into your life at a higher level to further elevate your soul. Allow Him to be both your Protector and your Partner as you face the mysteries and realities of living and ultimately of dying. Allow Him to

be your rod and your staff as you seek the strength to overcome the challenges of life and the grief of death. Our Judaism teaches us to love God. At our times of greatest need, our faith can comfort and console.

Your community can also offer you the strength you need. Find that strength by reaching out and joining hands with the other 700+ Charlottean Jews who together support the ideals of Jewish communal life... and death... through their membership in the Hebrew Cemetery Association. Membership in the cemetery helps to elevate your soul by guaranteeing a holy and dignified resting place for all those who precede you in eternal life. For more information about membership benefits, graves, prepaid funeral costs, or endowment donations, call Cemetery Director Joe Kodsai at 704-364-4112. ☆



Hebrew Cemetery Association

FOR ALL ETERNITY...

Malak Jewelers
SouthPark Mall & The Arboretum
704-366-7979 704-341-1188
www.malakjewelers.com

Levine JCC Annual Meeting an Award-Filled Evening

The Sandra and Leon Levine Jewish Community Center's 21st annual meeting was held on October 9, 2007, and combined a review of past accomplishments with a bright vision for the future. Co-chaired by Linda Lepow and Anne Sinsheimer, the meeting opened with a D'var Torah by Larry Schwartz, Vice President of the LJCC.

Outstanding LJCC volunteers were then honored with Leadership Appreciation Awards. Lori and Eric Sklut were honored with the President and Executive Director Award for their ongoing commitment, support, and invaluable advice to the LJCC. Larry Brown received the Volunteer of



Dana Cohen, Lori Trapani, Larry Schwartz, and Terri Schoenhardt.

the Year Award for all of the time, energy, and good humor he puts into coaching for Maccabi and youth athletics, as well as his commitment to men's softball. Program Service Awards were presented to Wilma Asrael for her work with the Arts Department, to Dana Cohen, Teri Schoenhardt, and Lori Trapani for the Aquatics Department, and to Lynn Edelstein, Steve Lepow, and Cheryl Slane for the Special Needs Department. Lauren Weiser received the "Next Generation" Award, and David Van Glish was acknowledged as the LJCC's Leadership Charlotte Representative.

Scott Menaker, Nominating Committee Chairperson, introduced the new members of the Board of Directors: John Box, Kenny Kahn, Ellyn Gross, John Baron, and Stacey Slomka. The slate was elected as presented, including the Officers: Judy August - President, Larry Schwartz - Vice President, Michael Stier - Vice President, Michael Newman - Vice President, Peter Smul - Corresponding Secretary, Ken Golder - Recording Secretary, and Roni Fishkin - Past President.

Out-going President Roni Fishkin spoke of the many accom-

plishments the LJCC leadership and staff have achieved, and thanked all involved for their efforts. She then introduced incoming President, Judy August. Judy thanked Roni for her leadership over the past two years and her ongoing commitment to the Organization. August spoke of her goals for the Center, where members contin-

ue to be dazzled by updated facilities, where staff and lay leadership seek innovative programming ideas in order to reach out and



Phil Berman, LJCC Executive Director, Roni Fishkin, past president of LJCC, and Eric and Lori Sklut.

connect our entire Jewish population, and where warm, personal customer service makes our members feel genuinely valued. Executive Director Philip Berman spoke of the considerable investment the LJCC Board of Directors has made in our facilities this past year.

Staff members Daphne Williams and Mark DiDonato were recognized for their LJCC service anniversaries, at 15 years and ten years, respectively. The entire LJCC staff was also recognized by the Board for their outstanding commitment and professionalism and the wonderful atmosphere they create on a daily basis. ☆

Happy Chanukah

Simple Thoughts For A Happier New Year...

Think freely. Practice patience. Smile often. Savor special moments. Live God's message. Make new friends. Rediscover old ones. Tell those you love that you do. Feel deeply. Forget trouble. Forgive an enemy. Hope. Grow. Be crazy. Count your blessings. Observe miracles. Make them happen. Discard worry. Give. Give in. Trust enough to take. Pick some flowers. Share them. Keep a promise. Look for rainbows. Gaze at stars. See beauty everywhere. Work hard. Be wise. Try to understand. Take time for people. Make time for yourself. Laugh heartily. Spread joy. Take a chance. Reach out. Let someone in. Try something new. Slow down. Be soft sometimes. Believe in yourself. Trust others. See a sunrise. Listen to rain. Reminisce. Cry when you need to. Trust life. Have faith. Enjoy wonder. Comfort a friend. Have good ideas. Make some mistakes. Learn from them. Celebrate life.

Jan Michelson

Matti Oran Reider
Specializing in Service Since 1985!

704.849.6654 Office
704.904.7250 Mobile

Experience • Knowledge • Service