The Hebrew (emetery 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

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

Cemetery

Association

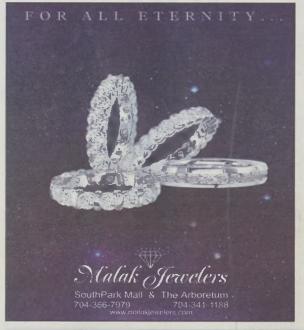
We bury our dead in traditional white linen shrouds and plain pine coffins to remind us that death is the great equalizer. According to Rabbis Ron Isaacs and Kerry Olitzky, "In the democracy of death, all are equal, no matter what their social or economic status." It is the soul that ultimately defines the person, not the materi-

al 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 Kodsi at 704-364-4112. ❖



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 com-

mitment 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 Edelstein, Lvnn Steve Lepow, and Cheryl Slane for the Special Needs Department. Weiser

received the "Next Generation" Award, and David Van Glish was acknowledged as the LJCC's Leadership Charlotte

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 Smul President. Peter Corresponding Secretary, Ken Golder - Recording Secretary, and

President Roni 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.

Representative. Roni Fishkin - Past President.

Staff members 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

connect our entire Jewish popula-

tion, and where warm, personal

customer service makes our mem-

bers feel genuinely valued.

Executive Director Philip Berman

spoke of the considerable invest-

ment the LJCC Board of Directors

has made in our facilities this past

